

Recognition of foreign education – impact from a labour market perspective

Studying the cases of Norway and Sweden

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Motivation

- What characterizes the **largest groups of applicants**, and what prerequisites do they have in the Norwegian and the Swedish labor market?
- To what extent do the applicants **use the recognition** in job search processes?
- Do the applicants feel that the recognition is in demand in the **labor market**, and has a significance for their career opportunities?
- To what extent do the applicants use the recognition for **further studies**?
- Is the recognition requested and valued by relevant **employers**? What importance does it have in a recruitment process?
- What is the significance of the recognition for **inclusion and integration** in Norwegian and Swedish labor market?
In both short- and long-time perspective.
- Understanding how HK-dirs and UHRs services can be **further developed** to meet stakeholders and applicants needs better.

Methods

The study was conducted by the independent social science research institute NIFU (The Nordic Institute for Studies of Innovation, Research and Education)

- 3 introductory interviews with key personnel at NOKUT (now HK-dir)
- Investigation of aggregated data (2018 – 2020), existing information of the general recognition scheme and relevant studies
- In November 2021, a survey was distributed to all the persons who had applied for NOKUT/HK-dirs general recognition within in the period of time 2018 – 2020
- 21 semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders within the Norwegian labor market

The study was conducted by UHR's department of Policy Analysis together with the Department of Qualifications Recognition

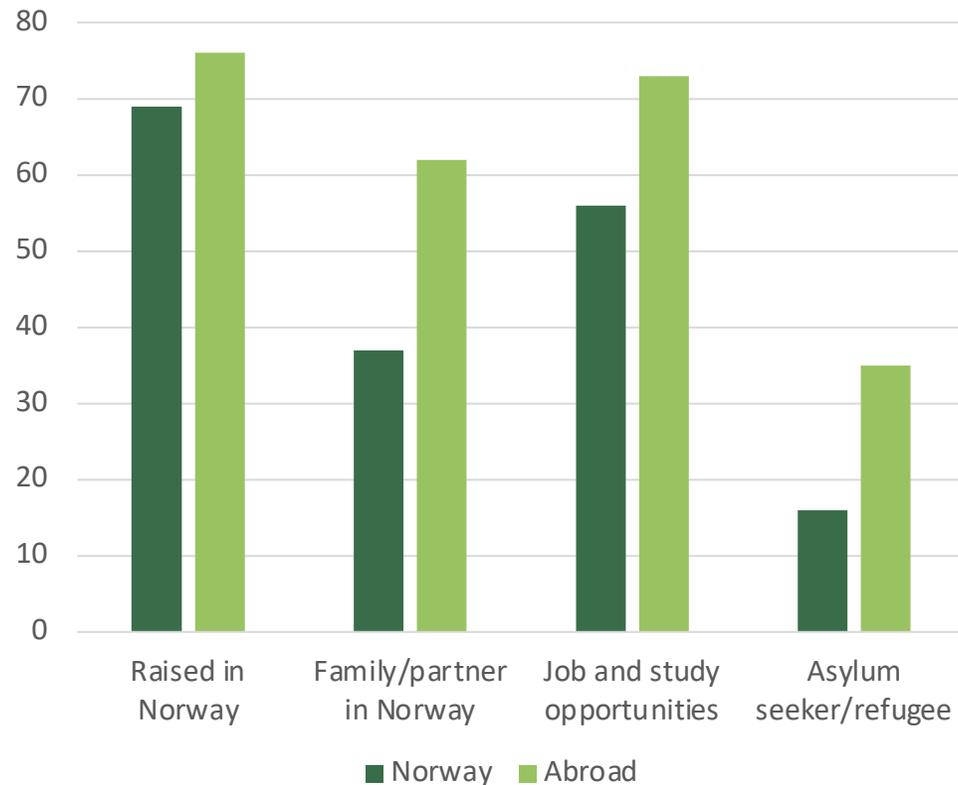
Analyze three study levels: Academic, post-secondary vocational and upper secondary

Five partial studies (quantitative and qualitative methods):

- Literature review
- Statistical analyses (data from UHR's internal database merged with data from Statistics Sweden)
 - Use of comparison group
 - Comparison before and after the assessment
- Surveys (employers and applicants)
- Statistical analysis (national admission and adult education)
- Follow up of the 2014 study (statistics and interviews)

Previous work experience and participation in the Norwegian labor market

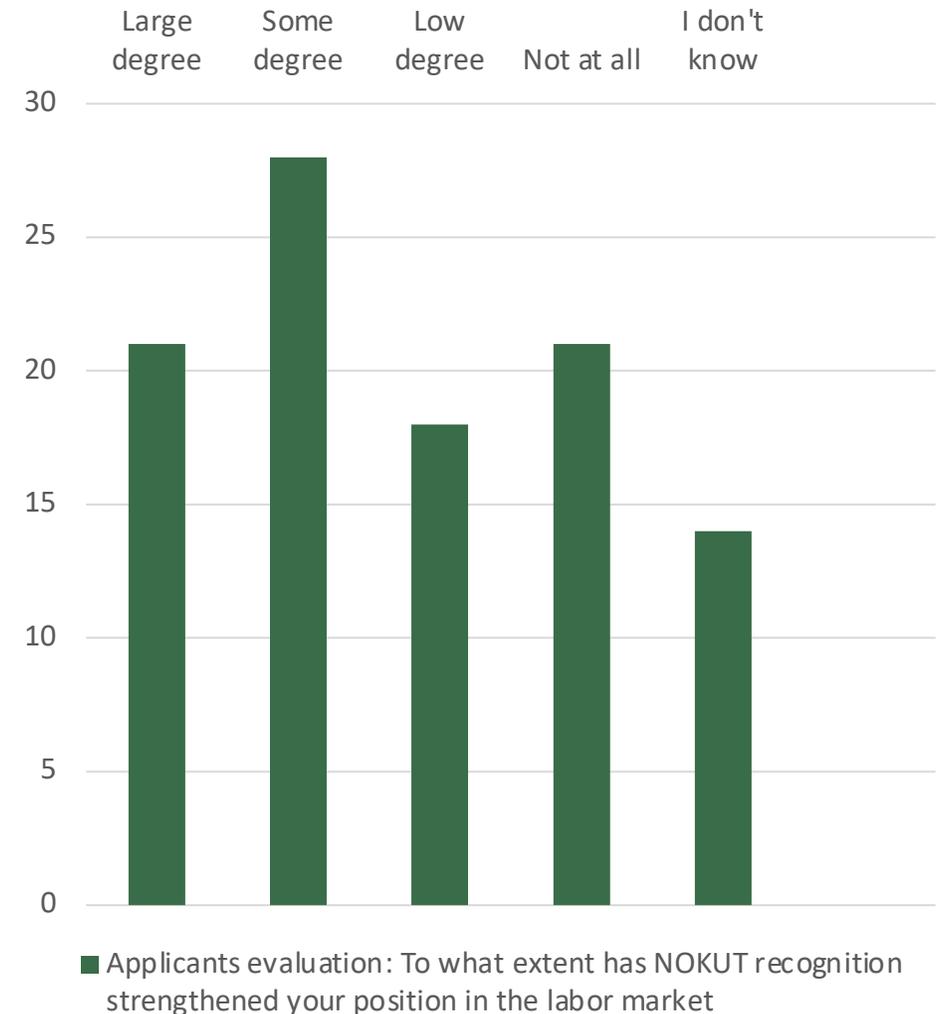
Most of our respondents have
work experience



- 66,2% of the respondents are working
- 14% unemployed
- Relatively high degree of **mismatch**
- **Norwegian language skills and work experience** from the Norwegian labor market reduces the chances of mismatch
- Comparing the answers among the respondents having their education recognized by HK-dir, to the ones who were rejected, a marginal positive effect was found among the ones that obtained a recognition when it came to labor market participation
- Comparing the same groups as above, no significant differences were discovered when it came to degree of mismatch

Use of the general recognition document

- 4/5 applicants have used the recognition:
 - 1/2 applying for jobs
 - 2/5 applying for further studies
 - 1/4 salary placement
 - 1/5 position placement
- 49% states that the recognition has strengthened their opportunities, while 37% states that it has not
- The respondents emphasized other factors as more relevant than the general recognition document



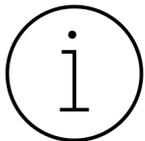
Employer perspective

The general recognition scheme is valued among Norwegian employers!



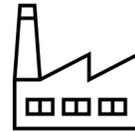
What employers appreciated:

- Quality assurance
- Risk reduction
- Work relief



What employers lacked:

- A thorough description of the content and quality of the education
- More information regarding how HK-dir reached their conclusions
- Verification information



HK-dirs services are not well known

Differences within:

- **Public** vs. private sector
- Labor market vs. sector **of higher education**



Reasons why some employers do not use NOKUTs services:

- Use of commercial companies for background checks
- Need for a substantive, not formal, assessment
- Lack of knowledge of HK-dirs recognition scheme and other services

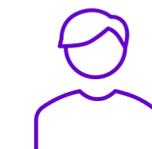
The presence of an approval is not a decisive factor for employment

Employer perspective



- *Six in ten know that there is an authority that assess foreign higher education*
- *One in four had **seen a statement***
- *Two-thirds believe that the statement has been **important in a recruitment situation***
- *The most important function of the statement is a reassurance that the foreign education is **recognized by a Swedish authority** and that it clarifies the **level and content** of the education*
- *The biggest obstacle is **lack of language**.*
- ***Uncertainty** about foreign education is also a negative factor*

Key findings from the 2014 study



Applicant perspective:
Used the statement (75%)
Helpful
Difficulties finding jobs
matching the education

Employer perspective



Survey 2022 - 244 respondents

Municipalities, private companies,
Correctional service (state)
Areas that are most represented among
UHR's cases on assessment

- *It was significant for most employers who came into contact with it*
- *It influenced the decision to hire*
- *It was used most early in the recruitment process (selection)*
- *Level and authenticity was considered most important*

***Is the recognition requested and valued by relevant employers?
What importance does it have in a recruitment process?***



***The statement
is relevant
when it is
known***

Employer perspective

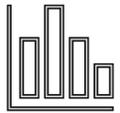
Do employers trust foreign education?

- *35 % had high confidence in foreign education*
- *60 % have some confidence in foreign education*
- *the greatest confidence in educations from the Nordics and the EU*
- *the lowest confidence in educations from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East*



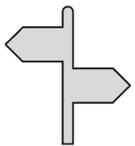
The evaluation
statement most
needed where
confidence is lacking
the most

Can we measure the value of our services?



Challenging getting hold of reference material:

- Statistical data
- Reference groups



Mismatching information



Difficult to measure/exclude the impact of other factors

”The human factor”

- The notion of mismatch between formal qualifications and actual work tasks is subjective
- What makes an employer ”trust” a foreign qualification?
- So much more than formal qualifications are valued by employers...

Thank you for your attention

Godkjenning til gavn? Undersøkelse av NOKUTs
generelle godkjenningsordning for utenlandsk høyere
utdanning

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Recognition of foreign education - a tool for
integration?
Integrationsprojekt - Universitets- och högskolerådet
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