

THE FINAL REPORT ON SKILLS AND COMPETENCES OF YOUTH - SLOVAKIA

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1. Introduction

Many experts in the fields of sociology, education, philosophy, psychology and economics have tried to define the notion of competence. Their efforts have been shaped by their educational and cultural backgrounds as well as their linguistic origins.

1.1 Definition of key words: Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

Knowledge is sometimes viewed as if it was a concrete manifestation of abstract intelligence, but it is actually the result of an interaction between intelligence (capacity to learn) and situation (opportunity to learn), so is more socially-constructed than intelligence. Knowledge includes theory and concepts and tacit knowledge gained as a result of the experience of performing certain tasks. Understanding refers to more holistic knowledge of processes and contexts and may be distinguished as know-why, as opposed know-that. Each knowledge and learning hierarchy therefore rests on primary mental abilities, with the implicit assumption of a general learning transfer capacity and logic of knowledge acquisition. In all domains there is some logic that acquiring and comprehending new knowledge demands facilitating cognitive prerequisites and specific knowledge and skills. Given this interaction between knowledge and skills, their separation in a typology is not easy.¹

In everyday language, it has long been the practice to distinguish between information - data arranged in meaningful patterns - and knowledge - which has historically been regarded as something that is believed, that is true (for pragmatic knowledge, that works) and that is reliable. The interchangeable use of information and knowledge can be confusing if it is not made clear that knowledge is being used in a new and unusual sense, and can seem unscrupulous insofar as the intent is to attach the prestige of (true) knowledge to mere information.²

Behaviours: behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately during intercultural encounters; flexibility in cultural behaviour; flexibility in communicative behaviour; and having an action orientation, that is, a disposition for action in society in order to enhance the common good, especially through the reduction of prejudice, discrimination and conflict.

¹ Winterton, J. et al **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences**, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.25

² Deming, S. **What is knowledge**. Available: <http://www.stevedenning.com/Knowledge-Management/what-is-knowledge.aspx>

Attitudes: respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgement; willingness to tolerate ambiguity and valuing cultural diversity.³

Knowledge means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.⁴

Skills is a combination of ability, knowledge and experience that enables a person to do something well.⁵ Usually the term skill is used to refer to a level of performance, in the sense of accuracy and speed in performing particular tasks (skilled performance). Skilled performance has long been a subject of psychological enquiry and is of obvious interest to employers.⁶

Skills mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive or practical skills.⁷

Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.⁸

A group of competencies that have attracted a great deal of attention in recent years are generic skills, also known as subject-independent or transversal competencies. They are not bound to any specific discipline, but can be applied to a whole range of subject areas and settings.⁹ Key competences are context-independent, applicable and effective across different institutional settings, occupations and tasks. These typically include basal competences, such as literacy, numeracy, general education; methodological competences, like problem solving, IT skills; communication skills, including writing and presentation skills; and judgment competences, such as critical thinking.¹⁰ Today's societies place challenging

³ Pantea, M-C. **Mapping of competences needed by youth workers to support young people in international learning mobility project.** Available: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2721/Mapping_of_competencies_Final.pdf

⁴ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

⁵ Boyatzis, R.E. and Kolb, D.A. **From learning styles to learning skills: the executive skills profile.** Available: <http://learningfromexperience.com/media/2010/08/Executive-skills-profile.pdf>

⁶ Winterton, J. et al. **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences**, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.26

⁷ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

⁸ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

⁹ Key Competencies A developing concept in general compulsory education. Eurydice, 2002, ISBN 2-87116-346-

4 Available: <http://www.edmide.gr/KEIMENA%20E.U/key%20competences%20Europe.pdf> p.15

¹⁰ Winterton, J. et al **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences**, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.33

demands on individuals, who are confronted with complexity in many parts of their lives. What do these demands imply for key competencies that individuals need to acquire? Defining such competencies can improve assessments of how well prepared young people and adults are for life's challenges, as well as identify overarching goals for education systems and lifelong learning.¹¹

| LEARNING OUTCOME DEFINITION | Learning outcomes means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| BASIC CONCEPTS | E.Q.F. DEFINITION | E.U. PARLAMENT & COMMISSION DEFINITION | COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE | BLOOM TAXONOMY | |
| KNOWLEDGE | In the context of EQF, KNOWLEDGE is described as Theoretical and/or factual knowledge. | KNOWLEDGE means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. | KNOWLEDGE could be WHAT IS IT In terms of verbs: KNOWS | Select | recognize |
| | | | | mention | identify |
| | | | | name | place |
| | | | | define | describe |
| | | | | ... | |
| SKILLS | In the context of EQF, SKILLS is described as Cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical skills (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, material tools and instruments). | SKILLS means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems | SKILLS could be HOW CAN BE DONE In terms of verbs: UNDERSTANDS | Explain | express |
| | | | | interpret | distinguish |
| | | | | classify | inter |
| | | | | give | priority |
| | | | | analyse | judge |
| COMPETENCE | In the context of EQF, COMPETENCE is described in terms of Responsibility and autonomy | COMPETENCE means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work in study situations and in professional and personal development | COMPETENCE it could be the APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS In terms of verbs: APPLIES / DEVELOPS | Use | solve, |
| | | | | produce | create |
| | | | | organize | |
| | | | | ... | |
| | | | | | |

¹¹ Rychen, D.S. and. Salganik L.H: **The definition and selection of key competencies**. OECD, 2001. Available: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>. p.4

Tab. 1 Learning outcome definition¹²

1.2 Key competences

In 2000, the then 175 members of the ILO adopted a Resolution concerning human resources training and development, which defined employability skills as: ... the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work.¹³

Employability results from several factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills – and is critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets.¹⁴

The employment situation of young people today is characterized specifically by high unemployment and underemployment, lower quality jobs and difficult transitions into decent work, which combined, contribute to the detachment of the current generation from the labour market altogether.¹⁵

The European Commission has developed several tools to make it easier to match people's skills with those needed on the labour market. As an example, Europass is a direct CV service to help individuals to show their professional experience and skills so that employers can correctly understand and appreciate them. Or the European Qualifications Framework, a Europe-wide reference tool that, once fully put in place at the national level, will help people to make their qualifications more readable and portable across Europe. Partnerships between universities and schools on the one hand and enterprises on the other are crucial when it comes to matching the needs for skills on the labour market with those people can actually offer. The European Commission has set up an EU Forum for University-Business Dialogue for this purpose.¹⁶

Europe needs not only more skills, but also the right skills. As the nature of work changes, employers are increasingly looking for key competences such as creativity,

¹² Learning outcome based on E.Q.F. and ECVET system. Guide for the development of PROA Professional Profiles (PPP)

¹³ Resolution on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development. 97th Session the International Labour Conference, 2008.

¹⁴ HRD Recommendation 195, 2004; this was reinforced in the Resolution on Youth Employment 2005.

¹⁵ Brewer, L: Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills. International Labour Organization 2013, ISBN 9789221275343 (web pdf) Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_213452.pdf, p.4

¹⁶ <http://www.newskillsnetwork.eu/doc/454?download=false>

communication and analytical skills, self management, social aptitudes and the ability to work and communicate in a multicultural environment. These competences are not only an asset for economic wellbeing, but also for personal well-being, citizenship and social cohesion. In order to prepare both young people and adults so they can adapt to these changing environments, we need to rethink education and ensure that learners develop these key competences. In its Communication on "**Key competences for a changing world**" the Commission focuses on progress in Member States towards these objectives.

This framework defines eight key competences and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these. It gives an overview of the key competences considered necessary for all in the knowledge-based society. This overview is followed by a more detailed description of the definitions and the corresponding knowledge, skills and attitudes in each of the eight domains.

The National Council for Adult Training approved, by Decision no. 86/24.06.2088, in compliance with the European Union's and the European Union Council's Recommendation on the key competencies lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), The List of key competencies, common to various professions, a list that includes:

- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- **communication in foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organize one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behavior that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked

to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;

- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

However, key competencies are the only ones that should be considered for employment. Besides these, there are a series of other competencies and general abilities that an employee should have. These, however, can be more or less important, depending on the employee's profession, the nature of work, the position held.¹⁷

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings.¹⁸

CEDEFOP – the EU's vocational education and training agency – is also preparing a complementary study providing projections of skill supply which help to identify skill mismatches and shortages.

In market economies, product markets influence labour demand, and skill requirements are driven by employer choices in designing jobs (e.g. which tasks are delegated, which can be substituted by technology, which rely on nonroutine tasks). Job candidates and potential employees also come to the labour market with varying knowledge, competencies and abilities that can be broadly defined as “skills”, or the outcome of individuals' choices of education, training and of their work experience, combined with innate abilities and preferences.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ciuhureanu, A.T., Gorski, H., Balteş, N., **Study on the needs of competencies and abilities for the graduates' adaptation to the requirements of the labour market in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy**. Annals of the University of Petroșani, Economics, 11(3), 2011, 35-46 Available: <http://www.upet.ro/annals/economics/pdf/2011/part3/Ciuhureanu-Gorski.pdf>

¹⁸ Available: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm

¹⁹ **Matching Skills and Labour Market Needs Building Social Partnerships for Better Skills and Better Jobs**. World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Employment. 2014. Available: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_Employment_MatchingSkillsLabourMarket_Report_2014.pdf.p.7

2. Youth competences as a key element on the labour market

2.1 Youth unemployment in EU

Youth unemployment is one of Europe's most pressing problems. In the current economic and financial crisis the lack of job opportunities has affected young people more than any other group in society; this is reflected in high and increasing youth unemployment rates and levels of precariousness. In Europe, more than 5.68 million young people are unemployed. The average rate of youth unemployment (23.4%) is more than double the overall unemployment rate (10.7%). Even before the crisis the youth unemployment rate was particularly high (17% compared with an average rate of 7% in 2008).²⁰

The European Commission identifies 13 key actions at European level that should help to ensure these four key priorities (better-functioning labour markets; a more skilled workforce; better job quality and working conditions; stronger policies to promote job creation and demand for labour). The agenda is complemented by two other EU flagship initiatives under Europe 2020, aiming to address the concerns of specific groups: 'Youth on the move' and 'European platform against poverty and social exclusion'.²¹

The reasons for the youth unemployment are very complex and the main reasons are different in every country. The main factors are the current crisis in the EURO-zone, the education and qualification of the young people and the discrepancy between offer and demand on the job markets. Moreover, young people with a migration background are disadvantaged. Not only poorly educated young people have bad opportunities to find a job in the moment. Even well-educated people have problems to find a job through the economic crisis.²² Another reason for the high youth unemployment rate is that during the crisis more young people lost their job than older people. This is explainable through the fact, that it is easier to resign people which are shorter employed.

Despite high levels of unemployment, many employers still cannot find the right skills to fill job vacancies. Before the economic downturn, about four million jobs remained unfilled throughout the EU. Europe misses out on major employment opportunities because

²⁰European social partners: **Framework of actions on youth employment**. 2013 Available: http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/201306_Framework_of_Actions_Youth_Employment_final.pdf

²¹ **New skills and jobs in Europe: Pathways towards full employment**. EU 2012 ISBN 978-92-79-25973-9

²² Caritas. **Erschreckend viele Jugendliche in Europa sind arbeitslos**. 2013 Available: <http://www.caritas.de/neue-caritas/jahrbuch/leseprobe.aspx>.

of significant mobility and skill-mismatch problems. And it is not just about an unfilled job – it is also a forfeited economic opportunity.²³

ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. ESCO is part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission services launched the project in 2010 with an open stakeholder consultation. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – supported by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training Cedefop – coordinates the development of ESCO. Stakeholders are closely involved in the development and dissemination of ESCO. The ESCO classification identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. It systematically shows the relationships between the different concepts.

2.2 Situation on the Slovak labour market

The total unemployment rate in Slovakia amounted in March 2015 to 12,06 percent. This means that about 369.455 people available for immediate work are looking for a job – or rather (better to say) are registered at labour offices. The situation around Slovakia differs depending on regions. Some places there are workers lacking, in other places jobs are missing. The willingness to travel to get a job or to relocate has recently been surprisingly on the decline. The prevailing group of the unemployed is young people, especially graduates who cannot apply their knowledge in practice. Young Slovaks with complete elementary or secondary education are the worst off. Youths with higher secondary education have a lower unemployment rate, but it is still higher than the European average. The rate of ability to get employed is influenced by education, experience, language skills and also the very willingness to work.²⁴

In 2002, Slovakia enacted the Law on Employment Services, a state-financed framework for internships and apprenticeships. The intention was to guarantee the young unemployed some employment experience and to prevent them from working illegally. The mechanism is currently used by employers mostly for temporary jobs and it is mostly viewed as a tool for preserving the working experience of the unemployed. Employers bear no labour costs for employing young people temporarily and the young unemployed are not bound by any working contract. This allows employers to rotate the young unemployed without creating real jobs. The state-sponsored internship scheme does have some positive effects, as it at least provides some work experience. However, similar to other internship programs, only a very low number of participants find a permanent job through this

²³ Göran Hultin. **The global 'war' for talent: labour-market policies for Europe 2020**. Available: http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/114263/ichaptersection_singledocument/1c05e3bd-7867-4d54-aeda-a00ec5e2ade7/en/Chap14.pdf

²⁴ Available: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20057376/unemployment-in-slovakia-and-the-impact-of-hr.html>

mechanism. Slovakia's experience, while worse than others, is not dramatically different from the situation elsewhere. Young people have been encountering problems finding a job for a long time in the majority of EU member states. Internships, with a weak prospect of turning into a real job, are widespread in many older EU member states.²⁵

The current system of career services in Slovakia does not cover the needs of all citizens who would be interested in them. Career consulting focuses on the client's current problems and it does not see his career development in the long term prospects. Counselling services in schools focus mostly on further studies and only minimally develop the students' career perception that goes beyond school education. Educational advisors do not always have the appropriate competencies. In the field of employment services, counselling is carried out in the context of information and advisory services. Consulting services in offices of labour are focused mostly on the quantity of clients and personnel are understaffed. Long-term registered, low-skilled and young unemployed are those who most need high level of individualized care in the field of continuing education for the purpose of professional, vocational and personal development. Current high mismatch between the skills of graduates and the requirements of the labour market increases even more the risk of protracted registration as jobseekers. Therefore, the strengthening of career guidance and counselling form an essential tool for equipping current and future workforce with needed skills and thus a tool to expand the job success possibilities for our people. Therefore it is necessary to seek constantly new opportunities and solutions, to extend consultancy services to other institutions and to establish partner networks of labour market actors in order to form the workforce capable of responding to the needs of the labour market. For this reason it is necessary to improve the level of professionalism and guidance also by familiarizing and comparing with other foreign experience.²⁶

²⁵ Martišková, M. **EU's Youth Guarantee is unlikely to dramatically help Slovakia's young unemployed.** Available: <https://visegradrevue.eu/eus-youth-guarantee-is-unlikely-to-dramatically-help-slovakias-young-unemployed/>

²⁶ **Career guidance in partner countries. Slovakia** Available: <http://www.careercare.eu/en/news/81-career-guidance-in-partner-countries>

3. Methodology description - the concept and organization of research

3.1 Objectives of the research

- creating research tools: test of competences for youth and students, script of the in depth interview for employers.
- translation of the final version of the research tools into 4 languages
- conducting research in 4 countries: 60 x 4 tests of competences in schools; 60 x 4 test of competences among students, 15 x 4 in-depth interviews with employers
- coding of the tests of competences and interviews
- analysing and writing the final report on skills and competences of youth

3.2 Description of the group tested and test methodology

Tests of competences in schools-Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during free time of students and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1F92qU7qTjGXa44tCm0_YlDvIc48tBJ6zFmqGN3jGNsU/viwwform?usp=send_form

The questionnaire was published on the web side: <http://www.nkos.sk/news/dotaznik-pre-studentov-strednych-skol/>

The number of participants: planned number of respondent 60, the actual number of respondents n=83

Tables 1, 2 and 3 (Annex A) present background characteristics. Characteristic of respondents:

1. Grammar school, High School (Gymnasium): 4-8 years; provides general secondary education and prepares for further study at universities and other higher education institutions. (n=44, 53%)

We tested students from:

Gymnasium st. Cyril and Method in Nitra, <http://gcm.sk/>

Business Academy st. Thomas Aquinas in Žilina <http://www.oataza.edu.sk/>

Secondary industry school in Kysucké Nové Mesto <http://www.spsknm.sk/ssknm/>

2. Specialized Secondary School: 4-5 years; provides specialized education and usually prepares students for further study at higher education institutions. (n=0, 0%)
3. Conservatories: 4-5 years; special type of professional school providing specializing in fields such as Music, Singing, Dancing and Dramatic Arts. (n=0, 0%)
4. Vocational School: 2-4 years; prepares students for careers that are based in manual or practical occupations. Secondary vocational schools consist of general education and vocational training and students regularly attend practical classes, training centre and real working places to learn practical skills in the given profession. Vocational education in Slovakia is offered in two, three (n=10, 12%) or four years of study. (n=29, 35%)

We tested students from: Vocational school in Nové Zámky <http://www.soujesnz.sk/>

Sex

Male: n=23, (27,7%) female: n = 60 (72,3%)

Place of living

The city: n= 37 (44,6%) The village: n=46 (55,4%)

Questionnaire for students of universities was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during free time of students and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/108VrUBvH1ZFBxbmwvmF3bmXCcyEthTJQHjXijUX8Ng8/vi/ewform?usp=send_form

Respondents were from University/College with the following focus: (n=63).

We tested students of Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Education, department of management, www.pf.ku.sk, University of Žilina, The Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, www.uniza.sk, Slovak Agriculture University in Nitra, Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development, www.spu.sk and Comenius University in Bratislava. www.uniba.sk.

Tables 1,2 and 3 (Annex B) present background characteristic of respondents.

| Study programme (Tab.1) | N | % |
|-------------------------|---|------|
| others | 0 | 0 |
| social science | 2 | 3,17 |
| natural science | 2 | 3,17 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| humanistic and pedagogical science | 5 | 7,94 |
| technical science | 10 | 15,87 |
| economic science and management | 44 | 69,84 |
| | n=63 | 100,00% |

Tab. 2 (Annex B) Sex: Male: n=19, (30%) female: n = 44 (70%)

Tab. 3 (Annex B) Type of study: full time study n=49 (78%), part time n= 14 (22%)

Tab. 4 (Annex B) Level of study: Bachelor level n=50 (79%), master level n= 13 (21%).

Some students (n=33. 53%) have short time work experiences, some ones are employed (n=21, 33%). Only nine students have not any work experience. 22% of students work for an agreement on work performance. 16% of students work on an agreement on work activities. Students are not satisfied with the university and study programs, which they currently studying (n=21, 34%). 15 students would choose the same study programme on other university (25%). See Tab.5 (Annex B).

Questionnaire for employers was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during working time of employers and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1URZN-LUedE6CDzfRi5qjiEpdUsZCzkCQj02O1qyaNdM/viewform?usp=send_form

We tested 3 industry companies, 2 agriculture and food companies, 5 service and trade companies, 5 marketing companies and 1 public office (n=16). You can see in Tab.1 Annex C. There are 12 small companies, 2 middle and 2 large companies, 15 companies are private and 1 is public. The place of companies is district Žilina, Ružomberok, Poprad and Dolný Kubín. (Tab.2 Annex C)

Date and place of the research: March 2015 – June 2015.

- Secondary and vocation schools: Nové Zámky, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Nitra a Žilina
- Universities: Ružomberok, Žilina, Nitra, Bratislava
- Companies: Žilina, Ružomberok, Poprad and Dolný Kubín

Based on the analysis of literature and Project **“Competencies for Labour Market” Project in the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic.”**²⁷ Competence Model was identified which includes the following 14 key competencies:

1. Competency for effective communication
2. Competency for co-operation
3. Competency for entrepreneurship
4. Competency for flexibility
5. Competency for customer orientation
6. Competency for efficiency
7. Competency for independence and decisiveness
8. Competency for solving problems
9. Competency for organizing and planning
10. Competency for life-long learning
11. Competency for proactive approach
12. Competency for stress resiliency
13. Competency for exploring and orientation in information
14. Competency for communication in foreign languages.

This competence model we use in the **Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools.**

In the questionnaire for university students and for employers we used our own competency model containing 24 competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities.

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Presentation skills |
| 2. Communication skills and negotiation |
| 3. Knowledge of conditions, under which professional knowledge and theory can be applied in practice. |
| 4. Ability to learn and organize learning |
| 5. The level of writing skills |
| 6. Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge |
| 7. General knowledge and outlook |
| 8. The ability to run business and lead a team. |
| 9. Active approach to work |
| 10. The ability of independent decision-making |
| 11. Ability to handle difficult situations and obstacles |
| 12. The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice. |
| 13. Ability to adapt to changing circumstances |
| 14. Legal capacity |
| 15. The ability to engage in teamwork.. |
| 16. Entrepreneurship, to have a "nose" for new opportunities. |

²⁷ <http://www.mamenato.cz/www/index.php?id=8>

| |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17. The ability to think and act economically / economic competence. |
| 18. Computer skills |
| 19. Skills to work with information |
| 20. Ability to take responsibility. |
| 21. Ability to identify and solve problems |
| 22. The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting |
| 23. Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment.. |
| 24. Foreign language proficiency. |
| 25. Language proficiency in their mother tongue. |
| 26. Mathematical proficiency |

Data/information were collected and analysed by Excel. We used bar graphs²⁸ and pie graphs.²⁹

²⁸ Bar graphs should be used for categoric, ordered, and discrete variables. If the number of units in a discrete variable is large it may be displayed as a continuous variable.

²⁹ Pie graphs (sometimes called pie or circle charts) are used to show the parts that make up a whole. They can be useful for comparing the size of relative parts. Because it is difficult to compare different circle graphs, and often hard to compare the angles of different sectors of the pie, it is sometimes better to choose other sorts of graphs.

4. Analysis of the results

4.1 Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools

Referring to Figure 1 (or Tab. 4 annex A), we can see that 28% (23) of the respondents haven't got any work experience. The survey shows that 36% (30) of the students have got extensive work experience.

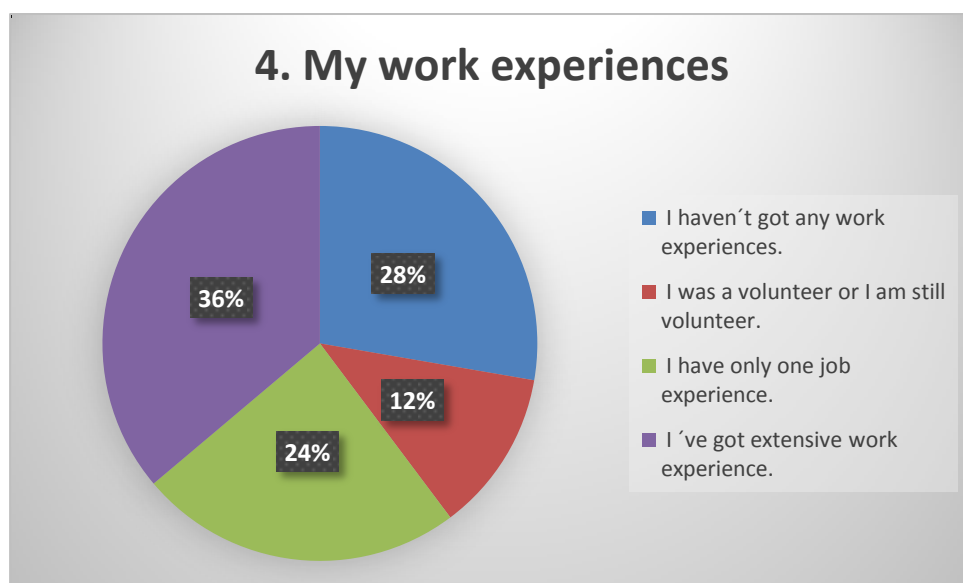


Figure1 Work experience of students in vocation schools

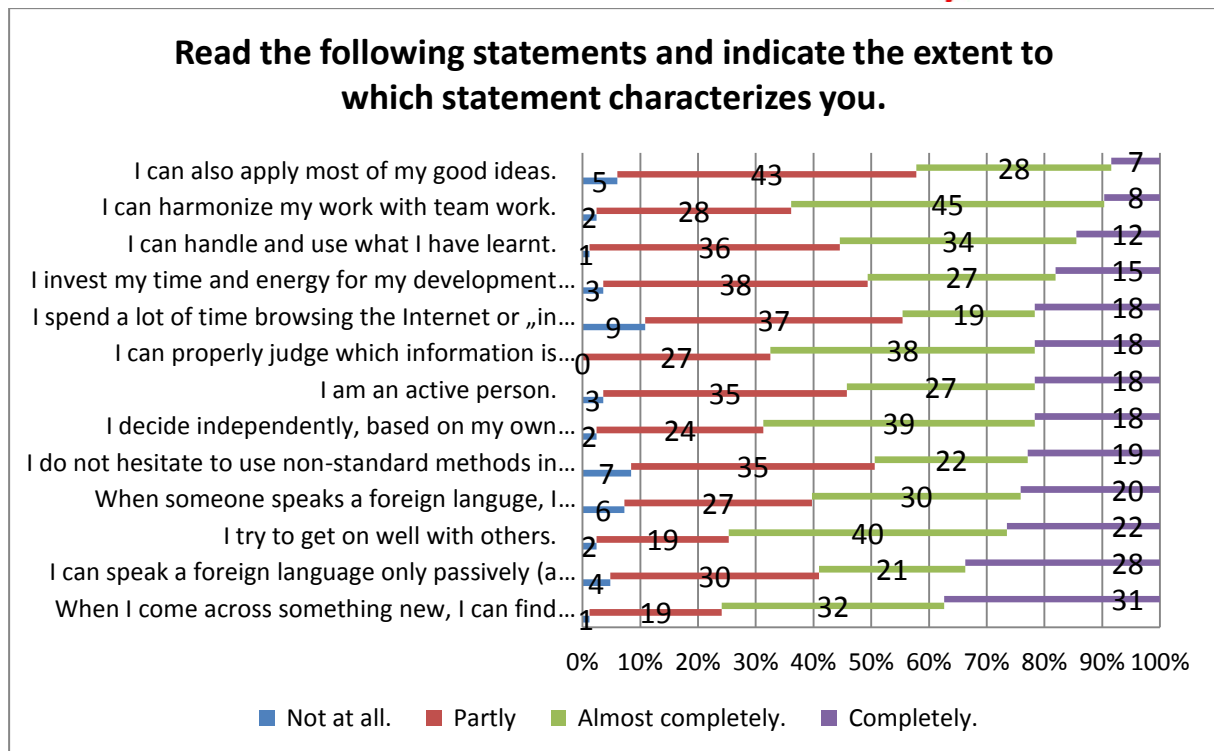


Figure 2. Which statement characterizes of respondent.

Pupils characterize ourselves as people with the following competencies: competence to discover and orientation in information (completely n=31, 37,3%), competency for co-operation and team work (completely n=21, 26,5%), competency for flexibility (completely n=19, 22,9%)

On the basis of the questionnaire and the responses of pupils, we found that pupils are absent following competencies: competency for entrepreneurship and competency for proactive approach (Almost completely and completely n= 35, 57,80%). The surprise for us are the ratings of expressing an opinion: *I spend a lot of time browsing the Internet or „in the field“, trying to find if there is anything interesting, that might be useful for me.* (Almost completely and completely n=37, 44,6 %) This is in contrast if we compare *When I come across something new, I can find the necessary information.* (Almost completely and completely n=63, 75,90%). We expect that students search for information concerning the work purposefully and necessarily only. (Exactly results are in Tab. 5 Annex A)

Analysis of self-assessment of competencies (Tab. 6. Annex A)

| Competence | Opinion | MAX | | Opinion | MIN | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Competency for proactive approach | When it suits me and I want it, I am looking for them. | 33 | 39,80% | I prefer best practices. It is necessary to take the effort. | 11 | 13,30% |
| Competency for | I have no troubles with | 44 | 53,00% | Basically I avoid strange as I | 7 | 8,40% |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------|
| effective communication | presentation in front of large groups and interact with strangers, but I have to prepare for it. | | | have a big stage fright, neither preparation help me. Safely I feel only among acquaintance and my friend. | | |
| Competency for stress resiliency | I can work under pressure or under unfavourable conditions, but this makes me tired and I do not feel at easy. | 30 | 36,10% | I am the person who manages work under pressure or under unflavoured conditions. | 12 | 14,50% |
| Competency for exploring and orientation in information | If it is a common thing, I offer my knowledge willingly and openly and participate in the performance of various tasks, but only if it a superior (teacher) ask me to do so. | 35 | 42,20% | I dislike sharing my knowledge and experience. Quid pro quo | 6 | 7,20% |
| Competency for co-operation | I know listening is just as important as talking, and I respect it. | 41 | 49,40% | Why should I listen anybody, when I know that I understand it better? Let him listens me. | 3 | 3,60% |
| | If people bother me with their requirements, I always "explode". | 41 | 49,40% | I was angry and upset when people bother me with their requirements. | 5 | 6,00% |
| | I have got a sense of co-operation. | 44 | 53,00% | If I have to work in a team, I do it but it is difficult for me to adopt myself to others. | 8 | 9,60% |
| Competency for independence and decisiveness | I can defend my own opinion, but I often make angry those who have a different opinion. | 28 | 33,70% | To accept and adopt the opinion of others is easier and simpler. Especially if it is a minor matter. | 5 | 6,00% |
| Competency for organizing and planning | I can select the right priorities which lead to achieving my goal. | 42 | 50,60% | What is important I let on the experienced? | 10 | 12,00% |
| | Venturing into new activities I find exciting | 38 | 45,80% | I can work in a systematic and planned way. | 37 | 44,60% |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|--------|
| | and I like doing it. | | | | | |
| | I am cool. | 56 | 67,50% | Occasionally, I feel like going crazy. | 27 | 32,50% |
| Competency for flexibility | Repeatedly I managed to come up with, to suggest or create something original and interesting. | 26 | 31,30% | Why am I to invent something new while the old works or is run-in. | 14 | 16,90% |
| | I don't mind when sometimes I don't know exactly what to do. Somehow I do it. | 30 | 36,10% | I like to work exactly according to the procedures and systematically, changes do not disturb me. | 13 | 15,70% |
| | I'm ready for altering changes and situation, but it must not be often. | 34 | 41,00% | Each change makes me nervous and disturbs me. | 9 | 10,80% |
| Competency for entrepreneurship | I am always ready to support good suggestions that can help solve a problem. | 54 | 65,10% | I advocate only my suggestions and initiative. I do not support opinions of others, I prefer to stay silent. | 1 | 1,20% |
| | My motivation is to earn money for a better life. | 59 | 71,10% | To earn money to pay debts I have got. | 7 | 8,40% |
| Competency for life-long learning | When I teach or explain something, people understand me. | 53 | 63,90% | Presentation of my ideas to dilettante people is difficult for me | 30 | 36,10% |
| | I already applied something new in practice. | 39 | 47,00% | I use almost everything. | 14 | 16,90% |

Tab. 2 Analysis of self-assessment of competencies

Analysis values of students: (5 values)

- very important values are *health, family, friendship, confidence and love.*
- important values are *work, recognition in a group, money, property, house and justice.*
- partial important values are *social prestige and human recognition, carrier, tradition, power and a car,*

- the least important values are *gold and jewellery, power, tradition, faith and religion, social prestige and human recognition*. (Tab.7, Annex A)

4.2 Questionnaire for students of universities

The Figure 3 shows the relationship between work and study. 86% of students reported that they have work experience, but 33% said that their work is not related to the curriculum and 7% of students reported that the current work do not require a university education. (Tab.8 Annex B)

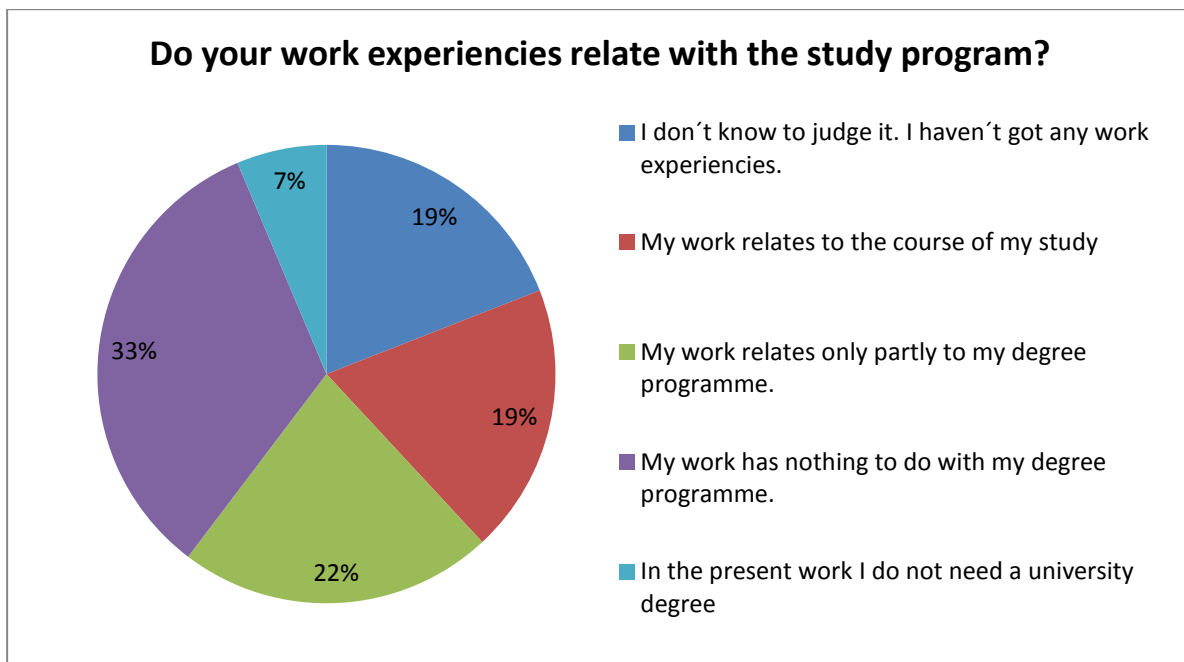


Figure 3 The relationship between work and study

Answers to the question *How does university prepare you in terms of the following competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities)?* confirms the fact that universities do not prepare students to practice. Frequency evaluation 6 points (high level of preparation) was low (max 9 students). (Tab. 9 Annex B)

5 competencies acquired by the university (6 points - high level of preparation): *Computer skills (n=9), The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting skills, The ability to engage in teamwork, Ability to take responsibility. Presentation skills. (n=7)*

5 competencies acquired by the university (5 points): *Presentation skills. (n=19) The level of writing skills. (n=18) The ability of independent decision-making, (n=17) The ability to engage in teamwork. (n=17) Ability to take responsibility.(n=16).*

5 competences which have not received the university (1 point – low level of preparation): *Foreign language proficiency. (n=17), Language proficiency in their mother tongue. (n=13),*

Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment (n=11), Entrepreneurship, to have a "nose" for new opportunities. (n=10) Mathematical proficiency (n=10).

Answers to the question *How is the level of your interest to learn these competencies in the university?* confirms students' interest in following competences:

5 competencies with the highest level of interesting (6 point): *The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting (n=23), The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice (n=23), Ability to handle difficult situations and obstacles (n=22), Ability to identify and solve problems (n=20), Ability to take responsibility (n=19).*

5 competencies with the highest level of interesting (6 point): *Mathematical proficiency (n=10), Language proficiency in their mother tongue (n=5), Foreign language proficiency. (n=4), Ability to work in a multicultural/international environment (n=3), The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting (n=2).* (Tab. 10 Annex B)

Answers to the question *Which of the following competencies you need in your work?* reflect the practical use of competencies at work:

5 competencies that are necessary for the performance of work (6 points - I cannot do my work without competence): *The ability to take responsibility (n=25). Be able to communicate and negotiate with people (n=20), The ability to work under stress (n=19), Active approach to work (n=18), The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice. (n=18)*

5 competencies that they never needed: *Presentation skills (n=10) Capacity to lead an organisation and ability to lead a team (n=9), Legal capacity (n=9), Computer skills (n=8), General knowledge and outlook (n=8).* (Tab. 11 Annex B)

The results of self-evaluation of selected competencies were very diverse.

Competency for effective communication and negotiation. (Tab. 12 Annex B)

When talking to someone, my thought fleeing to other topics. (n=13, max. frequency: not like me at all). I often start a sentence with the words "Yes, but ..." (n=19, max. frequency: not really like me), At talk I use the word "I" more often than the words "you". (n=24, max. frequency: not much like me), When another speaks, I listen to him with interest, and did not interrupt him. (n=39 max. max. frequency: a bit like me and that's me).

Presentation skills. (Tab. 13 Annex B)

I do not open a discussion after the presentations, (n=17, max. frequency: not like me at all). I do not use gesticulation. (n=16, max. frequency: not really like me), I do not say content; I want to be surprised listeners. (n=23, max. frequency: not much like me), I keep eye contact with the audience. (n=26 max. max. frequency: a bit like me), I fear the audience questions I can always prepare a presentation (n=18, max. frequency that's me)

Competency for co-operation (Tab. 14 Annex B)

On suggestions and ideas of colleagues I respond positively and support them. (n=15, max. frequency that's me) (n=31 max. max. frequency: a bit like me),

Competency for entrepreneurship and proactive approach (Tab. 15 Annex B)

I have a many ideas (n=16, max. frequency that's me), *I know judge the situation and assess risks.* (n=27 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for flexibility (Tab. 16 Annex B)

Everything needs its schedules, rules and procedures. Time horizons requires outlook and flexible open mind. (n=29 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Managerial competence. Organization and management of team. (Tab. 17 Annex B)

Orders and requirements I can formulate clearly and distinctly. (n=30 max. max. frequency: a bit like me). *The work I perceive rather complex in mutual interconnections.* (n=28 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for life-long learning (Tab. 18 Annex B)

If something does not work, I look for a solution unless I find it. (n=15, max. frequency that's me), *I can work with the study material in electronic form.* (n=24 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for stress resiliency (Tab. 19 Annex B)

I have to control on what is happening around me. (n=11, max. frequency that's me),

Competency for solving problems (Tab. 20 Annex B)

Together with others, I'm trying to look at the problem from all angles, so that problem was solved in the best way. (n=19, max. frequency that's me), *I tried to explain to all the logic of my view, purpose and / or advantages of my solutions.* (n=19, max. frequency that's me).

Planning and organizing activities (Tab. 21 Annex B)

Maximum response rates were: *I am planning a trip.* (n=37), *I have a financial reserve, even though small.* (n=36). Minimum response rates were: *I am chaotic.* (n=5) *Financially I do not care about the future. The money is and will be.* (n=6)

Competency for independence and decisiveness. (Tab. 22 Annex B)

Maximum response rates were: *I advise by the view that "Any advice is good."* (n=37), *I watch my bank account, in order I knew what payments I realized* (n=36). Minimum response

rates were: *I often live on debt, but I do not mind* (n=3), *I do not watch my bank account, spending money till I have it* (n=3).

Answers of question *What could be interested in your future employer?* have been unequivocal. *Foreign language proficiency. My work experience and practice* (n=53). Only 12 students mean, that The topic of his (her) thesis and his (her) research area could be interested in future employer. (Tab. 23 Annex B)

Strengths of respondents: *work experiences, communication skills, responsibly, knowing my strengths and weaknesses, first impression, flexibility, study results, engagement, skill, enthusiasm, passion for work, PC skills.*

Weaknesses of respondents: *name of alma mater, nationality, little work experience, health, stage fright, stress, age.*

4.3 Questionnaire for employers

Most employers responded that regularly receive high school graduates (8 respondents) and universities (6 respondents). (Tab. 4 Annex C).

Jobseeker in companies should have the following competencies:

5 points, the most important competence: *Presentation skills.* (n=9, 56,25%), *Ability to communicate and negotiate with people* (n=9, 56,25%) *Customer orientation* (n=9, 56,25%).

4 points: *Be able to think and act economically / economic competence.* (n=9, 56,25%), *The ability to identify and solve problems.* *Computer skills* (n=7, 43,75%)

3 points: *Computer skills.* *Foreign language proficiency* (n=6, 37,5%)

2 points: *Language proficiency in a mother tongue.* *Active approach to work.* (n=6, 37,5%)

1 point, the least important competence: *General knowledge and outlook* (n=10, 62,5%), *Ability to learn and organize learning* (n=8, 50%), *Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge* (n=5, 31,25%) (Tab.5 Annex C)

Young jobseekers from vocation or secondary schools have the following competencies: *Active approach to work.* *Entrepreneurship, have a "nose" for new opportunities.* *Customer orientation* (n=5, 31,25%). The lowest level of competencies in the opinion of employers: *Presentation skills* (n=10, 62,5%), *Foreign language proficiency.* (n=9, 56,25%), *Mathematical knowledge.* *The ability to identify and solve problems* (n=8, 50%). (Tab.6 Annex C)

Young jobseekers from university have the following competencies: *Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge* (n=6, 37,5%), *Presentation skills* (n=6, 37,5%), *General knowledge and outlook* (n=5, 31,25%). The lowest level of competencies in the opinion of

employers: *The ability to identify and solve problems* (n=8, 50%), *Ability to resolve conflicts. Mathematical knowledge.* (n=5, 31,25%). (Tab.7 Annex C)

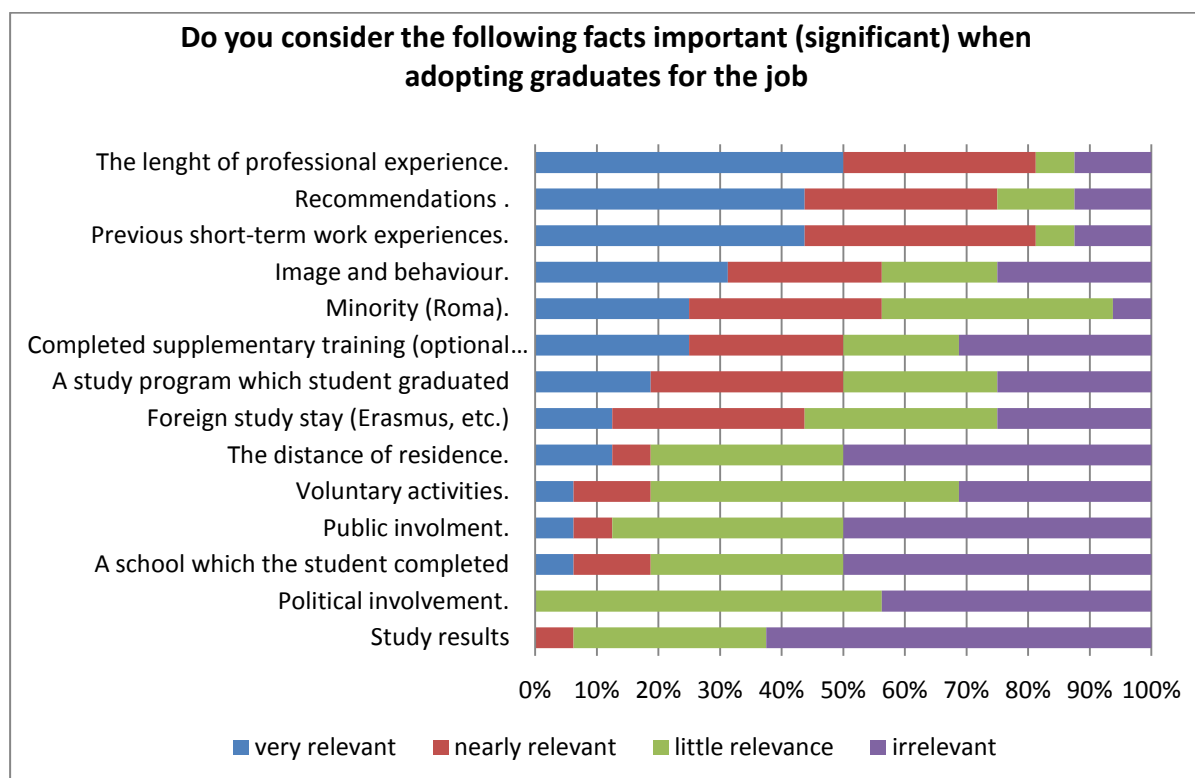


Figure 4 Do you consider the following facts important (significant) when adopting graduates for the job?

The Figure 4 shows what is important for employers. 50% of respondents underline *The length of professional experience* (n=8). Others important facts are: *Recommendations*, *Previous short-term work experiences* (n=7, 43,75%), *Image and behaviour.* (n=5, 31,25%). Irrelevant facts for employers are: *Study results* (n=10, 62,5%) *A school which the student completed*, *The distance of residence* (n=8, 50%)

If we have studied the results of questions, what is important for employers (4 points and 5 points), we compile the following order of priority:

| Competencies | 4 points | 5 points (the most important) | n |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|----|
| Customer orientation. | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| Be able to think and act economically / economic competence. | 9 | 5 | 14 |
| The ability to identify and solve problems. | 7 | 4 | 11 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|----|
| Ability to communicate and negotiate with people. | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| Presentation skills. | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| Ability to resolve conflicts. | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| The level of writing skills. | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Entrepreneurship, have a "nose" for new opportunities. | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Ability to adapt to changing circumstances. | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Foreign language proficiency. | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Computer skills. | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Knowledge of condition, under which professional knowledge and theory can be applied in practice. | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| The ability to engage in teamwork. | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| The skills to work with informations. | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| The ability of independent decision-making. | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment. | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Ability to organize and plan work. | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Active approach to work. | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Language proficiency in a mother tongue. | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting. | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Mathematical knowledge. | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Legal capacity. | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Ability to learn and organize learning. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge. | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| General knowledge and outlook. | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Tab. Employer's priority of competences

5. Conclusions

Employers have the following priorities: *Customer orientation, Be able to think and act economically/economic competence, The ability to identify and solve problems, Ability to communicate and negotiate with people, Presentation skills, Ability to resolve conflicts, The level of writing skills.* Students think that they will receive the following competences at the university: *Presentation skills, Ability to take responsibility, The ability to engage in teamwork, The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting, The ability of independent decision-making.* Based on the research we see that the disproportion between the real needs of employers and training and education of school students. Combating youth unemployment is one of the most important and most urgent challenges that states face in every continent of the globe. We are all responsible for carrying on the measures that we have adopted and purposefully reinforcing and extending them.

6. Recommendations

The development of youth unemployment is influenced by inappropriate cross-references between education systems and the labour market. The existence of appropriate skills is the most important requirement for employment growth.

1. The link between the labour market and education should be improved by regular analysis of hard market data, such as salaries of graduates and graduates' unemployment rates by educational fields and schools.
2. The selection of a suitable area of study has an important role to play even though there is an appropriate awareness of the labour market and increasing issues in the structure of unemployment.
3. It is necessary to connect formal and informal education, to better connect the educational system with practical knowledge and support practically oriented subjects and skills, to raise awareness of parents when it comes to responsible and practically-applicable selection of studies for their children, to realise career advice that would encompass both parents and children, and students.
4. Slovakia's experience, while worse than others, is not dramatically different from the situation elsewhere. Young people have been encountering problems finding a job for a long time in the majority of EU member states. Internships, with a weak prospect of turning into a real job, are widespread in many older EU member states. The Youth Guarantee is not a bad policy. The question is whether in the individual states the scheme is going to change the approach to labour market policy and improve the connectivity of labour market needs and education of school graduates, or whether it will, perversely, lead dropouts and graduates into a never-ending chain of internships. The example of Slovakia, where the government never provided a complex framework for school-to-work transitions even in the face of staggeringly high youth unemployment, is not encouraging. Policy makers should use the momentum provided by the ongoing discussion on the Youth Guarantee to pressure the weak-performing member states into a range of further labour market reforms.³⁰
5. Finally, social dialogue is a key instrument for mobilising social partners to invest in the right skills through education and lifelong learning. The Commission will invite social partners to develop joint initiatives to promote skills forecasting and upgrading, and to accompany short-term restructuring and will also consult with social partners at the sectoral level.³¹

³⁰ Martišková, M. **EU's Youth Guarantee is unlikely to dramatically help Slovakia's young unemployed.**

<https://visegradrevue.eu/eus-youth-guarantee-is-unlikely-to-dramatically-help-slovakias-young-unemployed/>

³¹ **Towards a new vocational training more adjusted to the new competencies, abilities and needs of the labour market.** Mutual Learning Programme 2009 Peer Reviews (Spring)

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