THE COMPETENCIES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES - BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC OFFER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PETROŞANI AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYERS IN THE JIU VALLEY

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ABSTRACT: *The quality of an educational system is reflected not only in the instructive performances of the educational actors, but also to the extent that ensures a proper integration on the labor market. One of the main objectives of the University of Petroşani, in a society where the jobs market is in constant transformation, is to approach the educational environment at professional, managing to obtain a better correlation of the competencies with the needs of the labor market. The combination of professional skills developed during the academic route to open up real prospects of social and professional integration of young specialists*.

KEY WORDS: *graduates, employers, competence, skills, demand, supply.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *J24.*

1. CONCEPTUAL ISSUE

Professional competence is the ability to apply, to transfer and combine their knowledge and skills in work situations and environments, to carry out various activities required in the workplace, at the level of the quality specified in the standard occupational.(http://legislatiamuncii.manager.ro/a/3654/ce-sunt-competentele-profesionale.html).

In other words, professional competence represents to use of harmonious merging involves knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to obtain the expected results at the workplace.

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Knowledge are that information which a holder must have in order to better understand what you need to do. Knowledge are given by the previous experiences, but also the quality and accessibility of information.

Automated skills are a component of human activity that can be effected with a minimum effort, mindful that facilitates quick and spontaneous activities. Skills are formed by repetition through drill and practice, as a result of which it forms a dynamic stereotype.

Attitude constitutes the constant reference to certain aspects of social life or in his own person, which orients and assessed a person's behavior. Attitude is a constant way to react to different situations, whereby a person is selective and preferential.

Thus, to be competent in a professional domain means: to apply specialist knowledge, to use specific skills to analyze and to make decisions, to be creative, to work with others as a member of a team, to communicate effectively, to adapt to the work environment specifically, to deal with personal and professional stress and unforeseen situations.

In the second half of the 20th century as a competence unit intensely debated, becoming intensely conceptual lately at the core of the debates and researches in various fields, such as psychology, human resource management, and, of course, teaching academic subjects. Analyzing semantic dimensions of his unilateral, often have created confusion and overlapping of meaning and significance with regard to the definition of competence.

Definition extracted from documents drawn up by the European Commission is as follows: key competences constitutes a transferable and all-in-one package of knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for the fulfillment of all individuals and personal development, social inclusion and employability. These must be developed pending the completion of compulsory education and to act as a foundation for learning throughout their lives. (*Competenţele-cheie pentru Educaţia pe tot parcursul vieţii – un cadru de referinţă european,* 2004).

Key competences are essential in a knowledge-based society and guarantee more flexibility in terms of labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to the constant changes that occur in a world increasingly more interconnected. These skills are also a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness and contributes to employee motivation and satisfaction, and quality of work.

In the literature (Goraş-Postică, 2008, pp. 5-14), the concept of competence is defined as an Assembly/integrated knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes acquired by pupils through learning and deployed in specific contexts pupil achievement, adapted to the age and cognitive level, in order to resolve certain problems that you can encounter in real life.

The basic document for guiding the process of determination and selection of professional competences in the University area is CNC-national framework of qualifications, which presents itself as an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to the a set of criteria that correspond to specific levels of learning achieved, establishes the structure of qualifications, provides national recognition, as well as compatibility and international comparability of qualifications acquired in the education system initial and continuous training, being at the same

time, the instrument through which they can be recognized, measured, and related results immediate and lasting/long-term learning (outputs and outcomes). General and specific competencies for a given specialty is materialized in the disciplinary curricular) and is formed by a functional range of content and appropriate technologies. Of course, interactive teaching strategies are best shown in training skills, which has big advantages in the development of cognitive, social intelligence and emotional of the future specialists. (Goraş-Postică, 2013, pp.31-36).

Life in contemporary society is characterized by complexity and dynamism in the ascension, therefore students need to be able to integrate and to operate in a complex, dynamic environment for "the basis for the orientation of the competences is located the activity, which means you can make more sense and, in general, supposed to be able to learn, to be able to build, to be able to treat, to be able to coordinate ". Thus, it appears that an educational system focused on competence must focus on forming capacity of solving problems in novel situations. This phenomenon to use skills in context formats again, slightly similar to the previous integration was given the designation of one removed. Skills required for such transfer is in the area of training to learn to learn, which is one of the key competences should be formed on the banks of the school and developed fruitfully in higher education at all levels. (Sclifos, 2010, pp.5-18).

2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The study was conducted during the period June-September 2017, on a number of subjects, 60 being graduates of the University of Petroşani and beneficiaries of the services of the University Counseling Center, the vast majority of them being licensed in a single specialization.

The research method applied was indirect inquiry by questionnaires. The questionnaire addressed subjects was divided into 14 questions, through which it was desired to be highlight the level of competencies, skills and abilities acquired by them upon completion of academic studies.

Also, the results obtained as a result of processing the questionnaire represents the next step, namely the prerequisites for designing a plan for counseling that future graduates to improve their competences and to shape the attitude consistent with the expectations of employers.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

In view of obtaining as detailed information as possible regarding competencies and knowledge expected by employers to be found with University of Petroşani graduates, we have been looking both for key competencies, proposed in a Recommendation of the European Parliament, and for competencies/knowledge that are specific to domains of companies involved in research.

A part of the competencies centralized as a result of the analysis of the participants' responses, are also to be found in the table with key competencies, developed at UE level. We wish to underline that these classifications do not exclude

each other; they help us create a detailed picture of the companies' expectations regarding UPET graduates' competencies. We feel that these competencies should increase the employability level for the UP graduates.

In fact, more important than skills are rare or special specific powers, in the absence of which even the best quality cannot be recovered. Sure what makes you unique from professional point of view counts, however, long-term success depends on the specific indispensable expertise. In other words, there are a number of competencies sought of any employer. They are essential for both finding the best job, and for further professional development. (http://www.portal-resurseumane.ro/competente-si-evaluare-149/cele-5-competente-profesionale-care-garanteaza-succesul-in-cariera-14355.html):

1. *Competence of communication (verbal and written).* The abilities of listening, of dialogue and to express themselves coherently in writing are essential in any field at any level. Suffice it to say that those who are very well prepared, but are not able to communicate in the professional environment, have a major disadvantage in relation to those less prepared, but very good communicators.

2. *Analytical and research competence.* In any profession, it is advisable to know to evaluate a situation, to collect and analyze information, to develop more prospects. Any employer seeking professionals who can't find answers and can solve problems. Also in this category falls the ability to optimize a process, a situation, to think strategically. And these skills are rapidly evolving professionals in their career.

3. *IT competence.* Basic skills IT is indispensable in almost any field. What will make the difference are the abilities which extend beyond this basic knowledge. It's not changing specialization or career reorientation, but only to explore the abundance of IT competence can distinguish you from the other candidates.

4. *Flexibility.* Work environment becomes increasingly complex and at the same time, volatile. Show your employer that you are the person who will need and you will be able to, regardless of changes in the organization.

5. *Interpersonal competence.* The difference between interpersonal competencies and powers of communication depends on the degree of subjectivity. Nobody works completely isolated, any professional activity involves and their relationships with each other.

From a list of 18 skills/competencies of graduates working analyzed both undergraduate and employers from different fields, some of which have been the subject of previous sociological research, we wanted to capture the level of self-discovery at the time of graduation, young people on the one hand and on the other hand, the suggestions of the representatives of labor market in the area of the Valley of Jiu addressed to institutions of higher education from Romania with regard to the formation of competence among their educational products.

From the analysis of the responses of the respondents, ranking the first six places in order of importance, notice a few differences between the responses of the two groups of subjects. It should be noted, however, that the average percentages are slightly higher in the evaluations made by employers in respect of all 18 skills/competencies. This is explainable and because, as he describes them, the

majority of graduates are in a stage of self-knowledge, being at the level they need to practice in a safe context different skills, learn about them, to discover what are the skills, but also weaknesses that you have in relation to a career that they want to build.
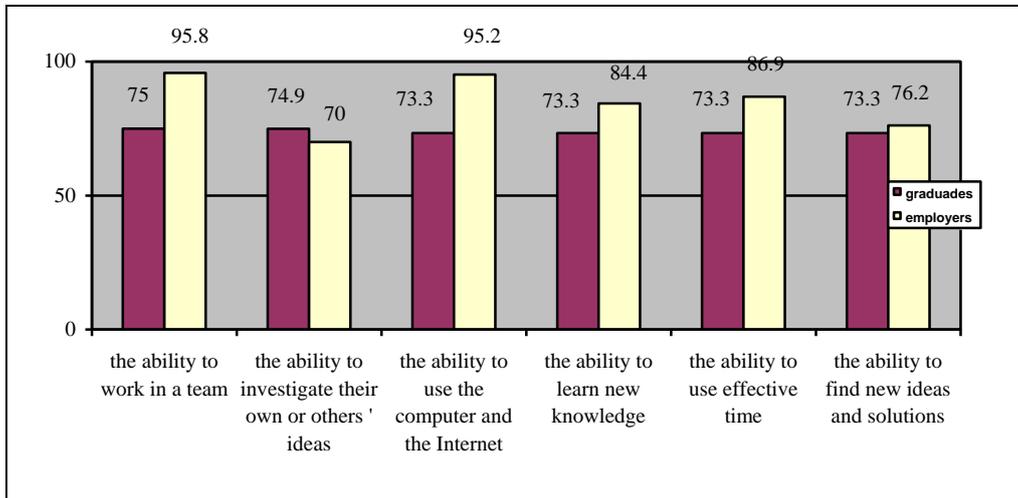
* *data on employers ' responses were obtained through a survey conducted in June 2016, on a number of 29 employers in the Jiu Valley.*

**Figure 1. Importance of competencies in the opinion of the graduates and employers (%)**

With regard to the work environment, have been analyzed in a list of 10 values, and through a rank in order of importance, notice in Figure No. 2, that the majority of the graduates interviewed focuses on possibilities of promotion data from the workplace on the professional prestige and last but not least, on an attractive salary.
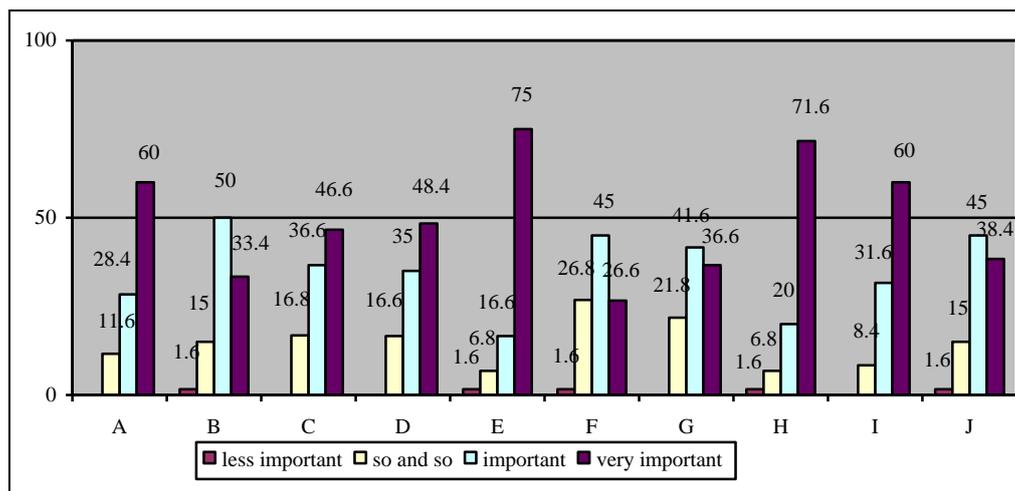
A - professional stability; B- flexible schedule; C - proximity in relation to family; D - team work strongly built; E - attractive salary; F - challenging job tasks; G - organizational values recognized; H - promotional opportunities; I - professional prestige; J - selfless attitude;

Figure 2. Values in relation to the work environment (%)

Appreciation regarding the related values work, seen in Figure 2, is supported by the opinion of graduates with respect to factors motivators for continued employment, but also the factors that lead to change in the workplace. Thus, more than one-third of the respondents of the study considers that the opportunity to acquire new knowledge in the field of interest (38.3%) and opportunities for career advancement that we make available the company (36.6%) are the main factors that ensures the maintenance of the job. Instead, a third says that an environment that prevents professional development could be the main impetus for change in the workplace.
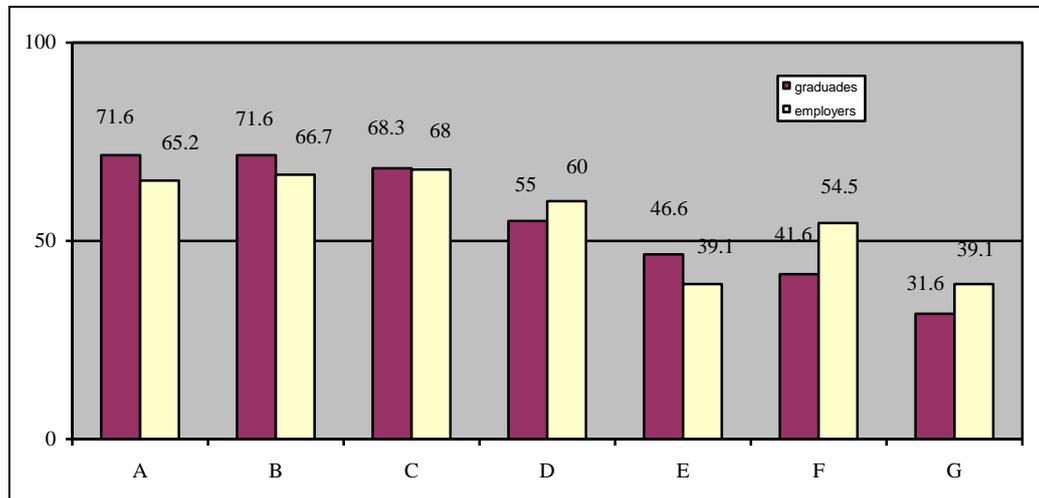
* data on employers ' responses were obtained through a survey conducted in June 2016, on a number of 29 employers in the Jiu Valley.

A- employers are rather interested in the skills and knowledge of students and previous work experience, and less specialization program or the prestige of the University

B- presentation at the interview and personality are the factors that have the greatest importance in getting the first job

C- the knowledge and skills employees need in the workplace, are acquired even at work, and less during the academic studies

D- employers are placing a foreign language knowledge and skills working with the computer as having equal importance with the presentation and the interview with personality type

E- for both graduates and recruiters, skills acquired in the program of studies is employed, compared with cross-sectional competences

F- finding the first job, relationship skills in a team are more important than those acquired in the program of studies

G- for recruiters, according to the results of the examination and the reputation of the University are not important in the hiring decision

Figure 3. The importance accorded to the following statements regarding the competences acquired during undergraduate studies/required in the labor market (%)

For the young at the beginning of their carrier, access to as much information as possible regarding the employing company, the expectations regarding the ideal candidate is important. A candidate will convince by his /her personality, experience, the way he/she looks at his/her professional advancement, aptitudes showing that he/she might bring a plus value to the company. A common factor regarding the expectations of the employers is volunteering, involvement in various activities during the education years, stages of practice. Participation in these activities is looked upon by the employers as a way of gaining experience.

In the process of professional selection, the expertise of work capacity intervenes, this representing the identification of the existing agreement between the individual and the profession, more accurately, between the physical and psycho-social availability of the individual and the professional requirements. (Jigău, 2001, p.158).

Professional competence is the ability to perform the activities required to work at the level of the quality specified in the occupational standard. Professional skills are acquired about formal, non-formal or informal (http://caravanacarierei.bns.ro/ wp.content/uploads/sites/2/2012/12/Competente_abilitati_pentru_integrare_piata_mun cii.pdf).

Through formal way means scrolling a program organized by a training provider. Through non-formal learning path means practicing some specific activities directly to work or self-training. Through informal means the way the arrangements for vocational training unstructured and unsystematic unintentional contact with various-sources of socio-educational field, family, society or professional environment.

Moreover, by the same comparative analysis between the opinions of both groups of subjects, are highlighted and other aspects of paramount importance with relation to the link between the competencies acquired by graduates in the academic and real market needs jobs.
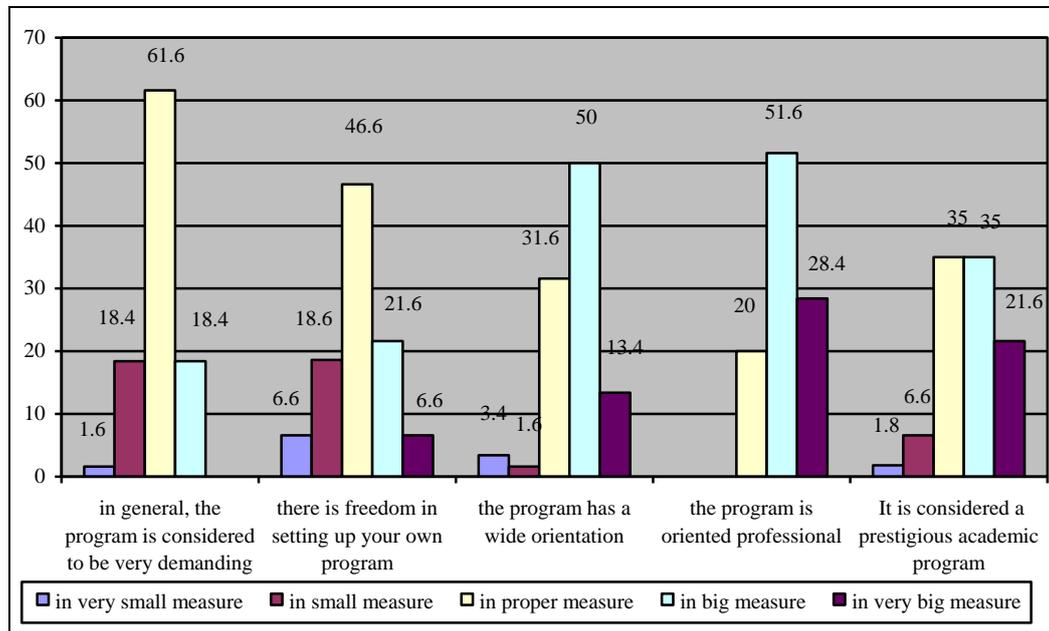
Figure 4. Description of the study program (%)

Even though more than two-thirds of respondents in favor of the agreement says its acquisition of knowledge and skills from the time of occupation for a job, and less during the academic studies, 80% of them appreciate the professional orientation the program of studies which have graduated more than half (56.6%) recognize the prestige.

This appreciation in relation to the academic route followed by lies and the percentage of those who recognize the usefulness of the studies completed.

Figure 5 shows that two-thirds of respondents considered that the program of graduate studies is useful for developing their own personalities, while more than half of the study subjects appreciate program of study as a graduate being available for the development of a long-term professional career (55%) and more than 45%, in order to obtain a job after graduation (48.3%).
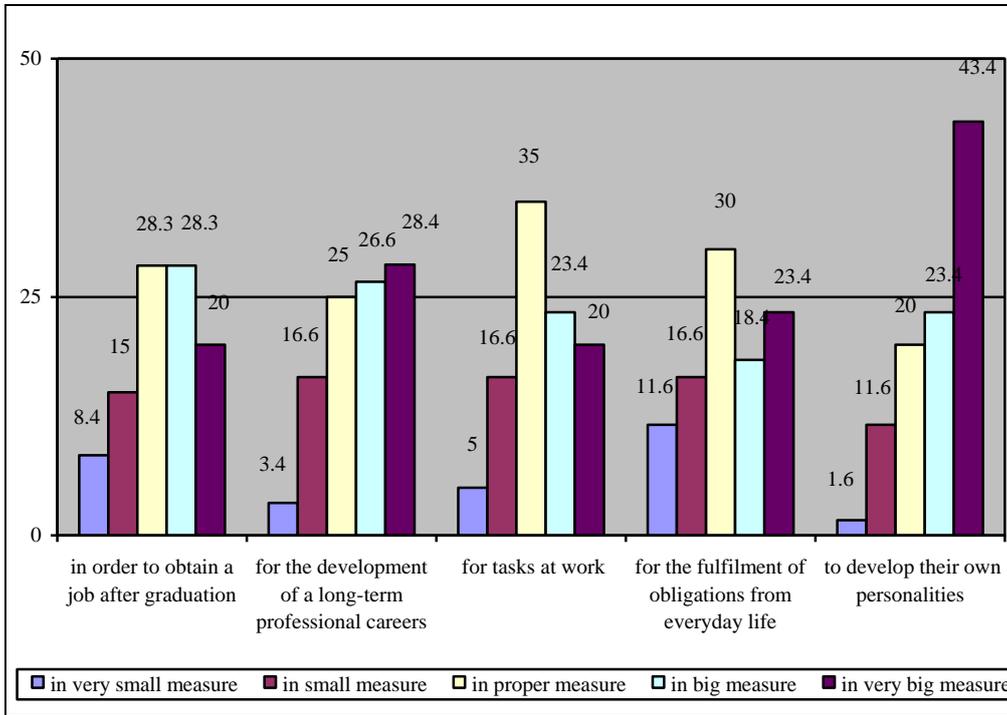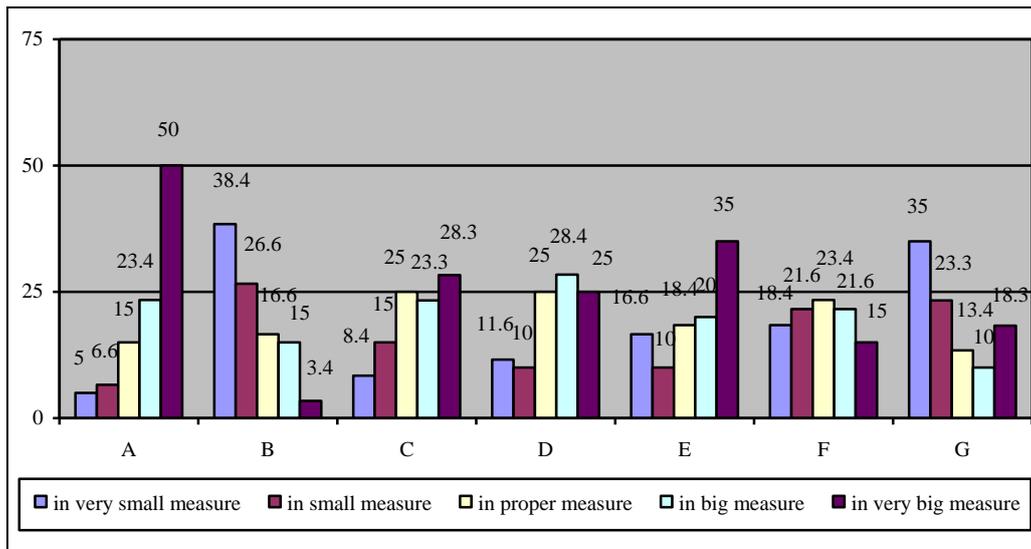
Figure. 5. The usefulness of the study program (%)

Moreover, in the event of a new election, the percentage of those who say they would opt for higher education is significant (73.4%).

Furthermore, more than half say they would choose the same program and in a similar percentage, the same educational establishment.

A- *decides to follow (again) higher education*
B- *decides to leave abroad before graduation, for finding a job*
C- *choose to follow the same program license*
D- *choose the same institution of higher education*
E- *choose to continue your studies with a graduate studies (master) at the same University*
F- *choose to continue your studies with a graduate studies (master) at another University in the country*
G- *choose to continue your studies with a graduate studies (master) to another University abroad*

Figure 6. If you had the choice again, what would you do (%)

4. CONCLUSIONS

Education and training systems should provide the appropriate range of expertise, including digital and key competencies, education in the field of media and communication in a foreign language. They must also ensure that the possession by young graduates from secondary and tertiary education has the powers necessary to achieve a rapid and successful transition towards employment. The fight against school abandonment early educational outcomes and weak in basic competencies, such as literacy, numeric and scientific powers, including among adults, is an essential element for inclusion, filling a place employment and development.

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