How to be a Succesful Graduate?
Results of a Comparative Analysis of the Demand and Supply
on the Labour Market

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Abstract: - EU countries have been experiencing a difficult period of time in recent years. New trends have been appearing due to the economic crisis and growing competitive environment. These trends influence the labour market and human resource management in organizations. One of the endangered groups in the labour market are university graduates. Cluster analysis was used to investigate the development of the unemployment rate of young people. The results show that the Czech Republic does not have a similar development of unemployment as its neighbouring countries; however, its development is similar to Slovenia and Malta. Quantitative research among employers was used to research the demand in the labour market in the Czech Republic. The results summarise opinions of 1 046 employers. As the key criteria for employers, the research identified flexibility and adaptability, willingness to learn and loyalty. These are required by employers when they are hiring a new employee from among graduates. Factors regarded as necessary if a graduated wants to succeed in the labour market were selected for the detailed analysis. These criteria include flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills or abroad stays. It was identified that there are differences between preferences of the given criteria among individual company types. The research of the supply in the labour market was conducted among 491 last year university students. Contrary to employers, students consider as the most important factors foreign language skills, communication skills, and willingness to learn.

1 Human Resources in an Organization

Human resources are defined as a key factor in the organization that provides a competitive advantage. [1]. The ability to find and keep competent employees is the most important and the most demanding task for the company. [2] Because education and experience of employees determine skills that the company has at its disposal, employees' adaptability constitutes the company's flexibility and loyalty of its employees means the company's ability to retain its competitive advantage. [3]

The importance of human resources has increased with the arrival of the economic crisis. The crisis forced many companies to transform. This meant a great opportunity for companies to improve relations with suppliers, customers, and even with their own employees. Human resources played a key role in this process as a source of innovation and inspiration. To be able to retain a competitive advantage, the company has to find, keep, and educate or train those workers who are able to quickly adapt to changes in the market; workers capable of using their capital and potential in the company. Such company is then able to constantly innovate which ensures its long-term competitiveness.

The Czech Republic has been as well as other EU countries influenced by global processes. Changes of external environment caused that EU countries are far more exposed to competitive pressures. On one hand, there is a less resource-demanding developing economy, information and communication technologies and nanotechnologies are quickly spreading, representing a potential to create new vacancies. On the other hand, the competitive environment becomes stronger, population grows older, the number of people in productive age decreases, and social relations change [4]. Many new trends appear in Human

Resource Management that influence employing, selection and work organization in companies, e.g. short term employment contracts, part-time work, flexible working hours, work at home, job-sharing, employee selection through assessment centres, subcontracting, outsourcing etc., but above all there is an increasing importance of requirements on the holistic competence of participants in managerial processes, i.e. requirements on owners, managers and employees.

More emphasis is now laid even on working environment and overall corporate policy. Also the importance of balance between work and personal life, leisure time, and friendly working environment has become prominent. [5] All these factors influence the labour market and human resources management in the organization. [4]

So that workers could provide their company with a competitive advantage, it is necessary to search for such employees who have developed not only professional knowledge, technical knowledge and language skills, but also those who excel in interpersonal relations. They also have to have excellent communication and business skills, are capable of team-work, and act with a high degree of empathy. Therefore, the system of choosing and hiring a new employee becomes a sophisticated and carefully prepared process. That, however, may represent a problem for graduates seeking their first employment. At the same time, it is an opportunity as employees are under today's global conditions forced to work in multifunctional teams and are more connected with the world around. Then, the demand for workers with great language and communication skills arises. Graduates can meet these criteria although they lack previous work experience.

The Czech labour market has also been significantly influenced by the transformation process that started after 1989. For graduates means that the end of their studies does not automatically ensures a work position corresponding with their education.

As the labour market conditions were dynamically changing in the last twenty years, the orientation of the young generation in search of professional aspiration and entering the labour market has been worsening [6]. Another reason of the worsened situation for graduates is also the increasing number of university educated people in all European countries. Graduates start to experience difficulties when they are seeking their first employment. [7] One possibility how to increase employability of young people is higher education. Employability is understood as the ability to acquire and maintain their first job. [8]

Human capital constitutes an important factor in the organization as it is the combination of intelligence, skills, and experience, thus providing the company with its special character. Human capital is able to learn, innovate, and be creative which with proper motivation ensures long-term survival of the company. [9] Human resource development is now understood in both domestic and international economic and social contexts. Managers who are aware of the importance of human resources do everything to effectively manage the process of seeking and selecting new employees. [10] That increases the requirements for future HR managers since they will be forced to learn new terminology and procedures in the context of trends that are emerging in the field. [11]

Selection and development of employees are processes that are in the centre of attention of managers not only as a result of the economic and financial crisis. Each company spends enormous resources to attract employees who will ensure future competitive advantages. Human resource management is then understood as an interconnection of competitiveness and innovations.

This opens many opportunities for young candidates and most importantly graduates who are perceived as a possible source of new talents for the company. However, after 2007, as a result of the economic crisis the number of vacancies decreases, unemployment increases and social exclusion spreads. Poverty increases which leads to the necessity to solve social problems. These are warnings for national and also European policies. Many social programs have been created to help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. [12] Some programs are directly aimed at youth unemployment because the unemployment rate of young people is more sensitive to fluctuations of the business cycle. [13]

Europe and the European Union have been experiencing a difficult period of time. The signal is the economic stagnation, debt-burdened south European countries, and rising unemployment. [14] For example, the unemployment of young according to the Eurofound calculations burdens the Member States by the amount of €150 billion. [15] The situation is so serious that its solution becomes one of the priorities even for Brussels. The Youth Strategy 2010 – 2018 and Europe 2020, the aims regarding employment have been defined. One of the aims is 75% employment of the population between the ages of 20 – 64, another one is to provide at least 40% of people between the ages of

30 – 34 with tertiary education and reduce the share of early leaves from education. [16]

Graduates have always constituted one of the risk-groups of economically active people who have difficulties to succeed on the labour market. They are disadvantaged because they lack work experience and work habits. On the other hand, they are highly qualified, flexible, bring in new ideas and energy, IT skills, and foreign language skills. [17]

When recruiting and selecting potential candidates is now more frequently used the competency approach. It means the identification of competences characteristic for the successful candidate needed for a particular vacancy. Therefore, the most important questions are: What should be the person who will perform the given position like? This is the reason why the importance of candidate's personal characteristics increases. The characteristics are known as soft skills. It includes those characteristics that are connected to personality and character traits.

Although the issue of hiring graduates is significant, it is still poorly understood. [2] Various researches have been - through various methods - trying to determine the criteria that are important for employers during job interviews. Some researches aim at a set of criteria that are important for employers generally and others are trying to determine criteria that are key for employers in various industries or particular job positions or particular countries. [18] But many studies have proved the importance of qualities known as soft skills. The importance of the set of personal qualities started to rise along with new types of organizations emerging in the form of decentralization, globalization, or various forms of company transformations. The result of this trend is the interest of companies in greater control over the area of human resources and the increased interest of employers in personal qualities of job seekers. [19]

Generally the most important qualities for employers are communication skills, motivation, initiative, enthusiasm and self-confidence. [18]

A research carried out in Chicago in 2001 identified as the most important communication skills, problem solving skills, listening skills, and team work ability. From among personal qualities then ethics, responsibility, and flexibility. [20] In 2008 a similar survey identified as the most important motivation and interest and also IT skills, team work skills, and willingness to learn. [21] And as one of the most recent survey, in 2012, showed, companies value more graduates' personal qualities than their education. [2]

Graduates are generally perceived as intelligent and able to learn quickly, as flexible and adaptable with the sense of responsibility and team work. [22] However, at present, university graduates face intense competition when seeking their first employment due to the increasing number of university students. Therefore, it is important for job seekers, and most significantly for graduates, to attend a job interview with a clear idea as to what qualities and skills are employers expecting. Graduates with wrong information may face the risk of losing a job opportunity as a result of their inadequate self-presentation of certain personal qualities. [20]

2 Research Objectives and Methodology

One of the research questions of this article is to explore which criteria are important for Czech employers during recruitment process of new employees from among graduates. Especially: What skills, qualities, and knowledge employers look for? And which is the most valuable?

The second research question is whether future graduates are aware of requirements of employers and if they attribute the same level of importance to the criteria. This issue is considerable because in the case of significant differences between the expectations of employers and graduates, serious problems may arise during job interviews and university graduates will be less successful in the labour market.

The results of this study are applicable for both employers and educational institutions. This study can be an inspiration for educational institutions in terms of how to prepare graduates for employers' requirements.

Macroeconomic data were processed based on the data published in the Eurostat database and for their evaluation, the statistical software Statistica was used. Similarities between the development of total unemployment and unemployment of young people up to 25 years of age were identified using cluster analysis method.

Data for processing of key factors of success in job interviews were obtained by quantitative research carried out in two phases. In the first phase which was carried out during 2013, 292 responses were gathered, 3 responses were discarded. The second phase carried out at the beginning of 2014 brought 757 valid responses. In the first phase, questionnaires were collected by personal visits of companies by students of the Faculty of

Management and Economics at Tomas Bata University (TBU). The second phase was carried out electronically. The electronic form of the questionnaire was created in software focused on creating questioners. More than 26 thousand companies were contacted. The above mentioned 757 responses were gathered this way.

Employers assessed individual criteria which they consider according to their importance during the process of hiring a new employee from among graduates. Criteria were evaluated on the scale from 1 (no influence on employment) to 5 (substantial impact on employment). Data was consequently processed and evaluated in a number of statistical computer programs.

829 Czech companies and 217 foreign companies or companies with foreign capital participated in the survey. According to size, were 149 micro companies (under 10 employees), 482 small-size companies (under 50 employees), 258 medium-size companies (under 250 employees), and 157 large-size companies (over 250 employees).

For the comparison analysis, a questionnaire survey among the TBU students was carried out at the beginning of the summer semester in February 2014. The target group consisted of students of five faculties of Tomas Bata University in Zlín during their last year of studies (404 third year bachelor degree program students and 87 second year master's degree program students). Altogether, 491 valid questionnaires were collected. Questionnaires were collected during personal attendance of summer semester introduction seminars on these faculties: Faculty of Applied Informatics, Faculty of Management and Economics, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Multimedia Communications, and Faculty of Technology. The research sample consisted of 178 male students and 313 female students.

The questionnaire for students consisted of the same questions in the same order as the one for employers to enable the comparison of individual preferences. The questionnaire survey focused on several areas. Partial criteria considered as key in the current global world for both employees and companies were chosen for this article. Criteria that were thoroughly analyzed are flexibility and adaptability and foreign language skills or abroad stay.

2.1 Research questions and hypothesis formulation:

1. The development of unemployment rate and unemployment rate of young people in the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries. Are there similarities in the development between these countries?

2. The importance of foreign language skills and abroad stay criteria in the relation to company ownership type. It is presumed that these criteria are as important for Czech companies as they are important for foreign companies or companies with foreign capital.

H_{01}: The degree of preference of the factor foreign language skills is not dependent on the company ownership type.

H_{02}: The degree of preference of the factor abroad stay is not dependent on the company ownership type.

3. The requirement of flexibility and adaptability is more important for smaller companies. It is presumed that the smaller company, the more important flexibility and adaptability factor is.

H_{03}: The degree of importance of flexibility and adaptability factor is not dependent on company size.

4. How aware are future graduates of the labour market? Are they aware of which criteria are significant for employers? Do they consider criteria that are key in today's globalized world as important as their future employers? The criteria that are the subject of the comparison analysis are flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills and abroad stays.

H_{04}: The importance of the key criteria is not dependent on the type of the group of respondents (employers/students).

In the case that students are well informed about the labour market, there will not be a statistically important difference between the degree of preferences of the given criterion for employers and future graduates.

The computer program XLStatistics was used to answer the research questions and to verify formulated hypotheses. The applied test included: Pearson Chi-square and t-test.

4 Unemployment, Youth Unemployment, Preferences of Employers

4.1 Unemployment, youth unemployment

Countries directly neighbouring with the Czech Republic were chosen for comparison of the unemployment rate. While Austria and Germany are among countries with low unemployment rates (in

2013, 4.9% in Austria and 5.3% in Germany), Slovakia and Poland are among countries with the unemployment rate higher than the one of the Czech Republic.

Table 1 shows the unemployment rate development and its year-on-year growth or decline. The most notable declines in the unemployment rates occurred between the years 2006 – 2008. Consequently, we can observe an increase in 2009 in all selected countries as a result of the economic crisis. Already in 2010, however, countries such as Austria and Germany showed a decrease in the unemployment rate while the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia recorded another increase. Only in 2011 a year-on-year decrease in the unemployment rate in all the mentioned countries with the exception of Poland is apparent. Compared to that, in 2012 another increase in unemployment was recorded in all countries with the exception of Germany. The same was observed in 2013, a decrease in unemployment was recorded only in Germany.

Tab. 1 – Year-on-year increase or decrease in unemployment rate. Data source: Eurostat

Country/year	YoY rise/decline										
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Austria	+0.1	+0.6	+0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.6	+1.0	-0.4	-0.2	+0.1	+0.6
Austria - young	+1.4	+1.6	+0.6	-1.2	-0.4	-0.7	+2.0	-1.2	-0.5	+0.4	+0.5
Germany	+1.1	+0.7	+0.8	-1.0	-1.6	-1.2	+0.3	-0.7	-1.2	-0.4	-0.2
Germany - young	+1.7	+2.2	+1.8	-1.8	-1.9	-1.3	+0.6	-1.3	-1.3	-0.5	-0.2
Czech Republic	**+0.5**	**+0.5**	**-0.4**	**-0.8**	**-1.8**	**-0.9**	**+2.3**	**+0.6**	**-0.6**	**+0.3**	**+0.0**
Czech Rep. - young	**+1.6**	**+2.8**	**-1.1**	**-1.8**	**-6.8**	**-0.8**	**+6.7**	**+1.7**	**-0.2**	**+1.4**	**-0.6**
Poland	-0.2	-0.7	-1.2	-4.0	-4.3	-2.5	+1.0	+1.6	+0.0	+0.4	+0.2
Poland - young	-0.6	-2.3	-2.7	-7.1	-8.2	-4.4	+3.4	+3.1	+2.1	+0.7	+0.8
Slovakia	-1.1	+0.7	-2.0	-2.9	-2.3	-1.6	+2.5	+2.4	-0.8	+0.3	+0.3
Slovakia - young	-4.3	-0.4	-3.0	-3.4	-6.4	-1.3	+8.3	+6.3	-0.2	+0.3	-0.3

If we focus on the unemployment rate among young people up to 25 years of age, it is apparent that its growth or decrease shows much steeper progression than the total unemployment. The Czech Republic saw an unemployment rate decrease of especially young during 2005 – 2008. The most significant decrease was recorded in 2007. Between 2008 and 2009 it rose by 6.7% on year-on-year basis and in 2010 it rose yet again by 1.7%. A slight decrease was observed in 2011 (0.2%) and in 2012 the unemployment rate shows another year-on-year increase by 1.4%. The youth unemployment decreased last year. Despite this decrease the youth unemployment rate in the Czech Republic in 2013 was 18.9%.

On the contrary, Austria and Germany managed to rather reduce the unemployment of young in the last 6 years. Even in 2009 the increase of unemployment among young was not as dramatic as it was in the Czech Republic. The most significant

increase in the unemployment of young up to 25 years of age was observed in 2009 in Slovakia (an increase of 8.3%). Further dramatic increase occurred a year later in 2010 by 6.3%. In 2013, the youth unemployment rate in Austria rose to 9.2% and in Germany decreased to 7.9%. Slovakia managed to decrease the youth unemployment rate to 33.7%. In Poland, the rate increased to 27.3%.

The cluster analysis method was used to determine similarities in unemployment rates in individual countries. If we concentrate on the development of total unemployment in the EU countries we see that the Czech Republic has similar development as Malta, Romania, and Sweden. On the other hand, neighbouring Slovakia is with its development in unemployment more similar to Poland, Bulgaria, and Croatia.

The Czech Republic is with its youth unemployment rate development most similar to countries such as Slovenia and Malta, while Slovakia is similar to Croatia, Spain, and Greece which are countries where the youth unemployment rate is very high. Results of cluster analysis of youth unemployment are provided in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 – Cluster analysis, young unemployment rates EU countries. Data source: Eurostat
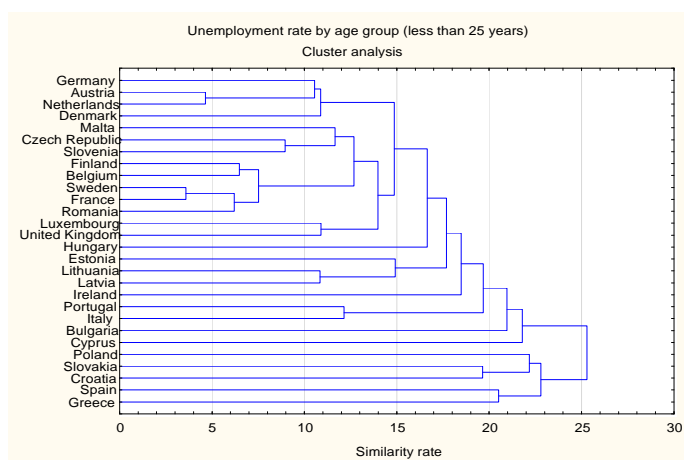

4.2 Skills and qualities employers look for

Preferences of employers were identified using quantitative research. That is, what requirements employers have for graduates and what characteristics have graduates successful at job interviews. Employers assessed individual criteria on the scale of 1 - 5 points. The Figure 2 below includes individual preferences of employers according to the results of the survey. The criteria in the graph are arranged from top to bottom in the order according to the total degree of importance. The figure shows the proportional degree of

importance of the individual criteria according to the scale 1 – does not influence employment, 2, 3, 4, 5 – has a major influence on employment. Companies value the most flexibility and adaptability, willingness to learn and loyalty to the employer.

Fig. 2 – Skills and qualities CZ employers look for, assessment according to the scale 1 - 5
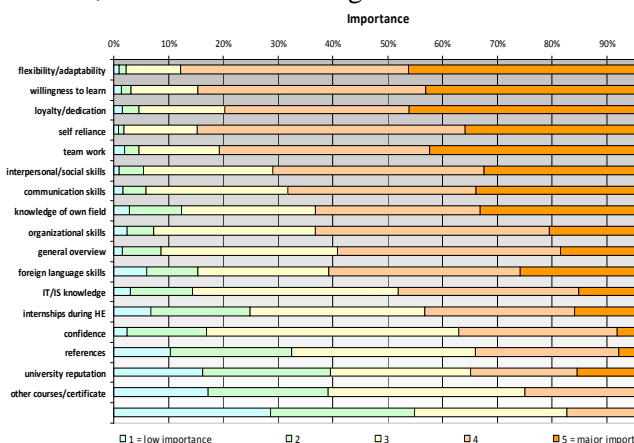
(The criteria in the graph are arranged according to the total degree of importance.)

The constantly repeated recommendation to students to undergo practice or internships during studies seems to be less important. Rather than work experience, employers value more IT and foreign language skills and general knowledge. As the least important criteria they consider abroad stays and certificates of supplementary education. Table 2 shows the average level of importance of individual criteria for employers. The overview is provided for illustration and comparison of levels of importance of individual criteria with the key criteria that are considered as very important in the globalized world.

The researched criteria: flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills and abroad stays are highlighted in the following matrix comparison (see Tab 2.) The average level of importance of the individual criteria is provided in the last column. The other columns show the differences in the level of importance of the individual criteria to the researched key criteria. The t-test with congruence of two mean values $\mu_1 \leftrightarrow \mu_2$ was used.

Tab. 2 – Matrix comparison of the key criteria, the t-test with congruence of two mean values (employers' perception)

criterion	abroad stay	foreign language skills	flexibility/ adaptability	mean value
flexibility/adaptability	+1.9299	+0.6548	**0.0000**	4.3056
willingness to learn	+1.8545	+0.5794	-0.0754	4.2302
loyalty/dedication	+1.8201	+0.5450	-0.1098	4.1958
self reliance	+1.8042	+0.5291	-0.1257	4.1799
team work	+1.7884	+0.5132	-0.1415	4.1640
interpersonal/social skills	+1.5926	+0.3175	-0.3373	3.9683
communication skills	+1.5688	+0.2937	-0.3611	3.9444
knowledge of own field	+1.4339	+0.1587	-0.4960	3.8095
organizational skills	+1.3638	+0.0886	-0.5661	3.7394
general overview	+1.2976	+0.0225	-0.6323	3.6733
foreign language skills	+1.2751	**0.0000**	-0.6548	3.6508
IT/IS knowledge	+1.0807	-0.1944	-0.8492	3.4563
internships during HE	+0.8959	-0.3793	-1.0340	3.2715
confidence	+0.8810	-0.3942	-1.0489	3.2566
references	+0.6138	-0.6614	-1.3161	2.9894
university reputation	+0.5675	-0.7077	-1.3624	2.9431
other courses/certificate	+0.3532	-0.9220	-1.5767	2.7288
abroad stay	**0.0000**	-1.2751	-1.9299	2.3757

Flexibility and adaptability were assessed by employers with the level of importance of 4.3 points in average (5 is the highest level of importance), foreign language skills with 3.7 points and abroad stays with 2.4 (1 is the least important).

The exploration analysis, the Pearson Chi-square test in the computer program XLStatistics, was used to verify the set hypotheses. The difference in the rate of importance of individual criteria was assessed by the t-test in XLStatistics.

H_{01}: The degree of preference of the factor foreign language skills is not dependent on the company ownership type.

Chi-square	13.4277	
p-value	0.00936	$< \alpha$

On the level of importance 0.05 the null hypothesis was not verified. A statistically important difference between the degree of preference of Czech companies and foreign companies for the criterion foreign language skills was identified.

H_{02}: The degree of preference of the factor abroad stay is not dependent on the company ownership type.

Chi-square	42.2191	
p-value	1.5025^{E-08}	$< \alpha$

On the level of importance 0.05 the null hypothesis was not verified. A statistically important difference between the degree of

preference of Czech companies and foreign companies for the criterion abroad stay was identified.

	t-test $\mu_1 > < \mu_2$	Hypothesis Tests
foreign language skills	$x_1 - x_2 = 0.278$	Foreign > Czech
abroad stay	$x_1 - x_2 = 0.585$	Foreign > Czech

The t-test proved higher degree of preference of both criteria for foreign companies or companies with foreign capital.

The research question can be answered with the explanation that Czech and foreign companies see the criteria differently. The results of the t-test confirmed assumption that both criteria are more important for foreign companies or companies with foreign capital.

H_{03}: The level of importance of flexibility and adaptability factor is not dependent on the size of the company.

Chi-square	9.3828	
p-value	0.6699	$> \alpha$

The hypothesis was verified. A statistically significant dependence between company size and the degree of preference of the factor flexibility and adaptability was not proved. This criterion has the same importance for all company sizes.

4.3 The results of the comparison analysis on the side of supply in the labour market

In order to determine whether future university graduates are aware of employers' requirements a quantitative research among students of the university was conducted. Students answered the same questions as employers. By comparing the results, it is possible to determine whether students attach to the key criteria the same importance as employers.

The criteria flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills and abroad stays will be examined in detail.

As the figure 3 shows students consider as the most important criteria foreign language skills, communication skills and willingness to learn. They also assume that work experience or internships gained during studies is also significant. As the least important they consider abroad stays and university reputation. The criteria in the graph are arranged

from top to bottom in the order according to their overall level of importance. The figure shows proportional level of importance of the individual criteria according to the scale: 1 – does not influence employment, 2, 3, 4, 5 – has a major influence on employment.

Fig. 3 – Skills and qualities CZ employers look for, students' perception, evaluation according to the scale 1 – 5
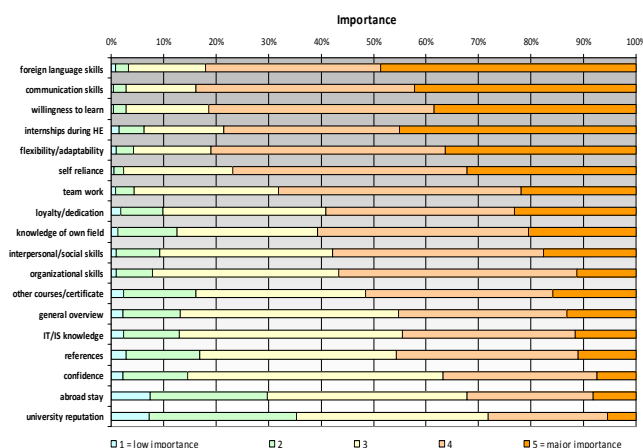
(The criteria in the graph are arranged according to the overall level of importance.)

The criteria: flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills and abroad stays are highlighted in the following matrix comparison (see Tab 3.) The average level of importance of the individual criteria is provided in the last column. The other columns show the differences in the level of importance of the individual criteria to the researched key criteria. The t-test with congruence of two mean values was used $\mu_1 <> \mu_2$.

Tab. 3 – Matrix comparison of the key criteria, the t-test with congruence of two mean values (students' perception)

criterion	abroad stay	foreign language skills	flexibility/ adaptability	mean value
foreign language skills	+1.2353	**0.0000**	+0.1460	4.2657
communication skills	+1.1968	-0.0385	+0.1075	4.2272
willingness to learn	+1.1359	-0.0994	+0.0467	4.1663
internships during HE	+1.1258	-0.1095	+0.0365	4.1562
flexibility/adaptability	+1.0892	-0.1460	**0.0000**	4.1197
self reliance	+1.0304	-0.2049	-0.0588	4.0609
team work	+0.8174	-0.4178	-0.2718	3.8479
loyalty/dedication	+0.6734	-0.5619	-0.4158	3.7039
knowledge of own field	+0.6430	-0.5923	-0.4462	3.6734
interpersonal/social skills	+0.6207	-0.6146	-0.4686	3.6511
organizational skills	+0.5598	-0.6755	-0.5294	3.5903
other courses/certificate	+0.4564	-0.7789	-0.6329	3.4868
general overview	+0.3996	-0.8357	-0.6897	3.4300
IT/IS knowledge	+0.3753	-0.8600	-0.7140	3.4057
references	+0.3387	-0.8966	-0.7505	3.3692
confidence	+0.2434	-0.9919	-0.8458	3.2738
abroad stay	**0.0000**	-1.2353	-1.0892	3.0304
university reputation	-0.1197	-1.3550	-1.2089	2.9108

With the highest grade students rated foreign language skills – the level of importance was 4.3 in average and communication skills with 4.2. The least important were abroad stays 3.0 and university reputation 2.9.

The same criteria that were analyzed in detail for employers were selected for the comparison analysis. If students were well informed about the requirements of the labour market there would not arise a statistically important difference between the evaluation of the given criteria by employers and students. The following null hypothesis was tested.

H_{04}: The importance of the key criteria is not dependent on the group of respondents (employers/students).

	Pearson Chi-square	p – value	Hypothesis Tests
foreign language skills	99.2672	1.4088^{E-20}	$< \alpha \rightarrow$ not verified
flexibility/adaptability	19.4785	0.0006	$< \alpha \rightarrow$ not verified
abroad stay	106.2117	4.6738^{E-22}	$< \alpha \rightarrow$ not verified

The null hypothesis was not verified for any of the selected criteria. Therefore there is a statistically important difference between the perception of importance of the given criteria by students and their future employers.

4 Conclusion

The Czech Republic managed to decrease the youth unemployment rate between the years 2005 – 2008. A significant increase in the unemployment came in 2009 as a result of the economic crisis. The development of youth unemployment in the Czech Republic is not similar to any of its neighbouring countries. The method of cluster analysis found that the Czech Republic is most similar with its development of youth unemployment rate to countries such as Slovenia and Malta. On the other hand, Slovakia is with its youth unemployment rate development very similar to countries such as Spain, Greece, and Croatia. These countries show very high long-term youth unemployment rate (under 25 years of age).

The application of quantitative research among 1 046 employers from Czech market determined that the most significant criterion for employing graduates is their flexibility and adaptability. Then companies lay emphasis on willingness to learn, loyalty, and self reliance.

Differences between the preferences of Czech and foreign employers (from Czech market) in relation to foreign language skills and abroad stay criteria were analysed in the detail survey. The survey consisted of 1 046 responses in the first and second phases of the research. As the economy of the Czech Republic is relatively open and dependent on foreign trade the same level of preference was assumed. However, these hypotheses were not verified. Higher importance of both factors was proved for foreign companies. Contrary, flexibility and adaptability are considered by all companies as equally important regardless of company size. A statistically significant difference between preferences of the given criterion for micro, small, medium, and large-size companies was not found.

The comparison analysis of the results of the research showed that the groups of respondents perceive the criteria differently. While employers lay emphasis on flexibility and adaptability, willingness to learn, loyalty to the employer and independence, students provide as the first foreign language skills, communication skills, willingness to learn and gaining work experience during studies.

In detail were investigated the criteria flexibility and adaptability, foreign language skills and abroad stays. The hypothesis about the independence of responses was not verified. A statistically important difference between the perception of the level of importance of the given criteria by students and employers was discovered. An in detail comparison analysis of the other criteria will the subject of further research.

If students are not well informed about the requirements of their future employers there may appear problems upon entering the labour market and seeking their first employment. During job interviews, graduates will try to present qualities, skills, and traits that are not key for employers, i.e. not the most important. This may result in a failure at job interviews and the period from finishing university studies to employment can be considerably longer which represents substantial costs.

Educational institutions should conduct the research among employers regularly and also regularly inform students about the results because the requirements of employers can change along with changing conditions on the labour market.

Recommendations for education policy are firstly to adjust the education system to produce graduates broadly employable on the labour market. They

should be flexible, independent, with as broad range of competencies as possible, especially those considered as key. [23]

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