

ISSUES REGARDING THE GRADUATES' COMPETENCES IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT OF LABOUR MARKET

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INTRODUCTION

- Our research is part of the efforts made by the Romanian Agency for the Qualifications in Higher-Education (ACPART) in order to define the National Qualifications Framework, which are to be integrated in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- ACPART is in charge with the description of every qualification resulted from the 1st cycle of higher education in Romania, under the strategic project “DOCIS” (POSDRU/2/1.2/S/2) financed from the European Social Fund.

INTRODUCTION

- Inside this huge project, our team has dealt with defining competences for a specific study program “Business administration in hospitality industry”.
- In the EQF, a learning outcome (competence) is defined as a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research focused on 2 directions:

- To find the opinions of the employers about the competences that a graduate should have (10 in-depth interviews).
- To evaluate the attitudes of the graduates regarding the contribution of learning process to their competences (3 focus groups).
- The main aim of this research was to find ways to harmonize the positions of the two parts that meet each other on the labour market: **graduates and employers.**

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Requirements of companies for future employees

- The main competences that a graduate should have in order to receive a job in their companies are related to:
 - building relationships with customers,
 - using computer systems,
 - having sales and negotiation abilities,
 - communication in foreign languages,
 - making financial analysis,
 - organising the work place
- **Mainly transversal competences**

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Requirements of companies for future employees

- The appreciations of managers regarding the actual competences of graduates tend to the same outcomes:
 - the graduates are quite good prepared from the theoretical point of view but they have not enough practical experience
 - many times the employers **prefer persons with previous experience** against new graduates in spite of their conviction that for a company it is better to build a **team which contains new and loyal workers instead of having a high fluctuation of experienced people** that are interested only in their personal advantages.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Requirements of companies for future employees

- Some of the interviewed managers are available to hire young graduates which are willing to learn in order to reach to top positions inside the company.
- But they want new employees to understand that they have to follow some stages that go from lower to higher positions.
- Many graduates have no patience to promote on better jobs, as they want from the beginning high positions with very good wages.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Attitudes of graduates regarding their competences

- The graduates are unhappy with the new Bologna system, being convinced that the old system was better.
- They perceive the curriculum as being very general, with few specialty courses that were not enough deepened.
- They are also unsatisfied that it is necessary to follow master studies in order to complete a university degree.
- Another weak point was considered the gap between the theory and real work activities, being necessary to include more hours of practical activities in the curriculum.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Attitudes of graduates regarding their competences

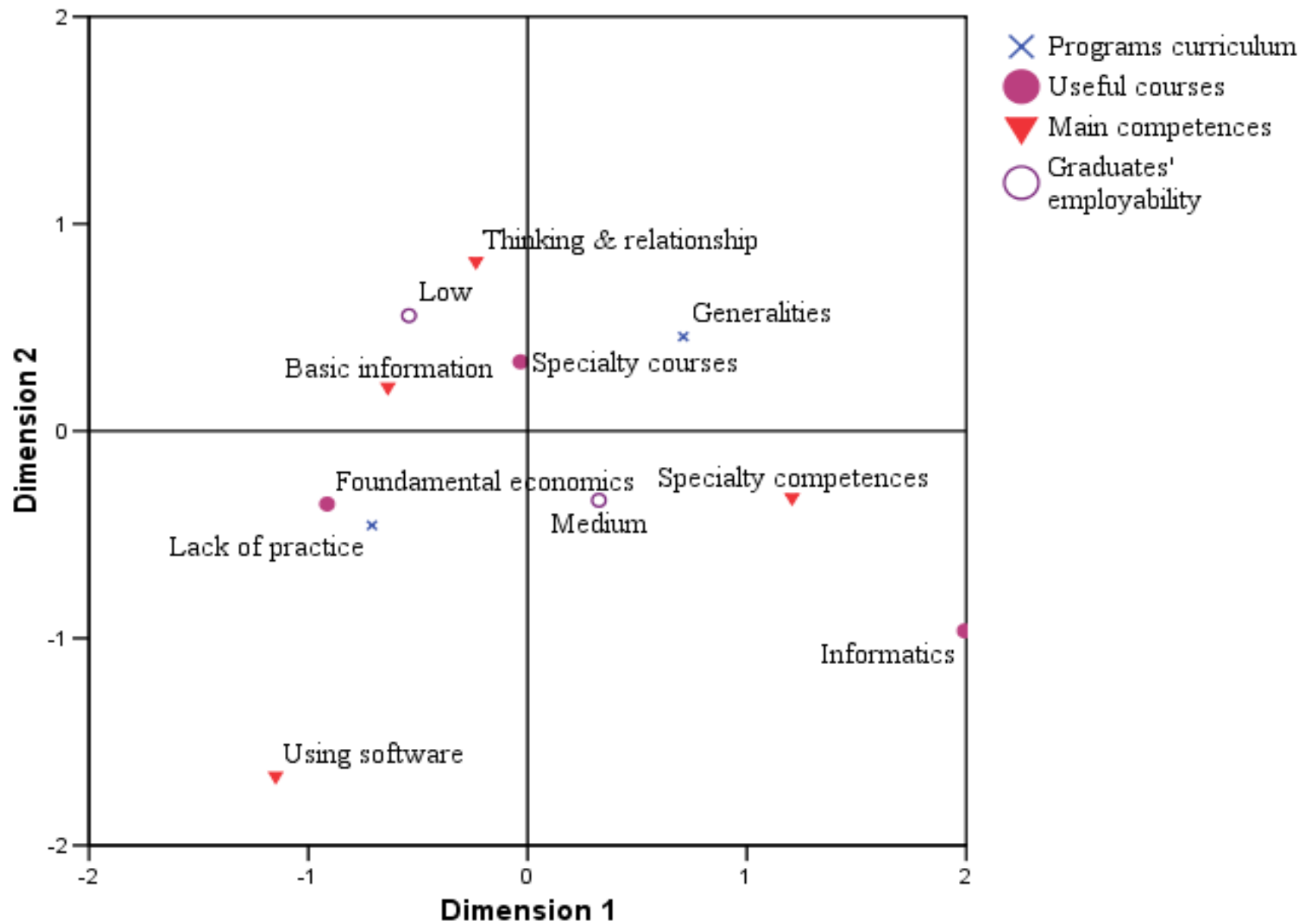
- Talking about the graduates' perspective to find a job after finishing the first cycle - they feel are not enough prepared for a job, the employers asking often for previous experience.
- They perceive a threat from the graduates of certain private own faculties, which are considered with a lower level of competences.
- In spite of this fact, they sustain that the employers do not make the difference between these two types of graduates.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Attitudes of graduates regarding their competences

- Trying to find some associations between the graduates' opinions, we applied a statistical analysis known as the homogeneity analysis (HOMALS)
- The method allows one to describe the relationships between two or more nominal variables in a low-dimensional space.
- Objects within the same category are plotted close to each other, whereas objects in different categories are plotted far apart.

Quantifications



CONCLUSIONS

- It is necessary to obtain a harmonization of the positions that both employers and graduates have at the moment.
- It is necessary a higher cooperation between universities and companies in order to:
 - involve students in practical activities
 - organise seminars with the participation of specialists from companies.
- In this manner, every part could be better informed about the expectations of the other part and the curriculum of the study programs may be improved.

CONCLUSIONS

- The management of every faculty should put in practice the tools of strategic marketing - with a high focus on students' needs.
- Defining the competences as the scope of DOCIS project has to be only a starting point of a good strategy to reform the study programs in order to obtain a higher customer satisfaction.
- In this kind of changing program the cooperation with the employers is crucial.

LIMITS

- The samples used are not representative
- The methods are qualitative ones
- But they gave us some directions to be followed in future researches and strategies



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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!