
The Importance of Employees' Competencies: A Comparison between Educational and Business Perspective

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of the presented research is to evaluate whether employers' expectations and needs related to the competencies of potential employees are properly identified by educational institutions do institutions responsible for education and training know which competencies are considered significant by business, and if they do not what are the areas of potential discrepancies?

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research was based on comparison between opinions of managers of companies operating in eastern Poland (381 cases), and representatives of educational institutions, universities, vocational, technical and secondary schools located in this area (389 cases). For each group, self reporting questionnaire was designed, in which participants were asked to evaluate the importance of 39 competencies from four groups: social, personal, managerial and professional. Obtained values were analysed and compared between groups using Man-Whitney's U test.

Findings: During the research the hierarchies of the importance of employee competencies were established. In the opinion of managers, the most important are four personal competencies, i.e., scrupulousness, professional and work development, time management and kindness, least important, whole group of managerial competencies, but also IT skills, process management and foreign languages. The representatives of educational institutions assume that the most important is a whole set of interpersonal skills, least, those grouped in 'managerial' category. Additionally, the gap in the perception of those competencies by both groups was identified. The main differences include (1) slight overestimation of the importance of all competencies by teachers and (2) significant overestimation of the importance of most of the personal and professional competencies.

Practical Implications: There are two categories of practical implications resulting from the research. First of all, it provides information for employees on expectations of potential employers, and therefore makes it possible to gain advantage on a labour market. Secondly, it may be considered as a clear roadmap for educational institutions, defining the areas of teaching processes which should be modified in order to make them more adjusted to local companies' needs and their structure of expectations.

Originality/Value: In existing research related to employee competencies there was no attempt of comparison of two groups, one responsible for development, second interested in accessing those competencies and of the identification of the gap in the perception of competencies' importance between them.

Keywords: Employee competencies, education, perception gap.

JEL codes: M12, I21.

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1. Introduction

Employees' competencies are unanimously considered to be one of the most important resources, critical for every type of organisation, regardless of its character or area of activity. Without them, company not only would not be able to compete on the market, but also to operate, and even survive in the long term, while obtaining personnel with a proper set of competencies most probably would lead to gaining advantage on the market. Because of that, employee competencies for many years have been drawing both academic and business researchers' attention.

There are many definitions of 'competency', which may be perceived either in general, as a human's characteristic, or in a professional environment context. Boyatzis (2008) claim that a competency is a capability or ability, a set of behaviour organised around an underlying construct, called the 'intent'. Spencer and Spencer (1993) perceive competency as a personal characteristic of an individual that facilitates superior performance in a particular situation, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation consider competency a set of knowledge, features and skills that a person needs to accomplish an activity within a specific job (El Asame and Wakrim, 2018) while Torkkeli and Tuominen define competency as a cross-functional integration and coordination of capabilities (Torkkeli and Tuominen, 2002). Comprehensive overview of competency definitions was presented and discussed by Sampson and Fytros (2008), while main characteristics summarised by El Asame and Wakrim (2018), who pointed out that competency (1) is a combination of various resources (knowledge, skills, motives etc.), which goes beyond a simple possession of these resources, (2) is characterised by integrated series of resources, (3) is a process that mobilise resources to perform a task, (4) may have a different level of performance, (5) depends on the context, conditions and characteristics of situation, and (6) describes some activities defined by a function, role or a task.

Regardless of assumed definition, undoubtedly employee competencies significantly influence employee performance and thus company's results and its ability to successfully deliver the offer to the customers (Díaz-Fernández *et al.*, 2014). The direct relationship between employee competencies and their performance was evaluated e.g., by Kolibáčová (2015), in the area of soft skills by Ibrahim *et al.* (2017), while in the context of emotional competence by Kim *et al.* (2009). The influence of the employee competencies on the company performance was evaluated e.g., by Potnuru and Sahoo (2016), who proved that that employee competencies are instrumental in improving organizational effectiveness, and by Wang *et al.* (2004) who evaluated decomposed effects of core competencies, as defined by Thomas and Bogner (1994), and observed their significant influence on firm's performance (Wang *et al.*, 2004). Theoretical discussion of those relationships and their consequences for strategic management was presented by Murray (2003). Former research also found out that competencies mediate the relationship between human

resource practices and company performance as well as directly influence the later (Esch *et al.*, 2018; Kaur and Kaur, 2021).

The impact of the competencies on the employees' and companies' performance leads to the question on their potential hierarchy, which would express differences in the degrees to which particular, possible competencies are necessary for an organization. Unfortunately, the research on that subject is scarce, mostly because such classifications would be visibly dependent on the company type, size, region and the market on which it operates. Obviously, even competencies necessary for particular posts would differ, therefore creating any kind of general hierarchy of competencies would be at least problematic. Nevertheless, it is possible to create such a hierarchy representing importance perception by companies of some category, from a geographical region or just a particular company. More often, however, research are aimed at the evaluation of the importance and a role of one, particular competency.

One of a few research directly aimed at competencies classification based on the criterion of their importance for the companies was presented by Rainsbury *et al.* (2002). Within it, the importance of competencies in the students' perception was discussed, and computer literacy, customer service orientation, teamwork and co-operation, self-confidence, and willingness to learn were found out to be ranked most important. In other research Burrus *et al.* (2013) suggested five competencies considered to be important for most occupations. They were: problem solving, teamwork, fluid intelligence, achievement and innovation, and communication skills.

Although in most cases employee competencies are discussed from the point of view of a company or employee performance within it, there is also a second category of organisations involved: educational institutions, responsible, to fairly significant extend, for creation and development of those competencies. Certainly, quite often employers take actions, e.g., trainings, aimed at competency development, nevertheless, it is schools' and universities' main responsibility to supply labour market with adequately prepared workforce. Such a role of educational institutions directly lead to the question about their ability to properly identify possible needs and expectations of potential employers, especially given the fact, that pretty often companies perceive themselves entirely responsible for the development of staff competencies. Such assumption may suggest that they find potential employees inadequately prepared to professional work – such gap was discussed e.g., in Spain by Hernández-March *et al.* (2009) or in Romania by Deaconu *et al.* (2014).

2. Research Methodology

The main aim of the research was to evaluate whether managers' and teachers' perception of the importance of employees' competencies are consistent, and if not, what are the main areas and size of the gap between them and if this gap is

consistent to gaps identified in other countries. To achieve it, three research questions had to be addressed:

- Q1. What is the evaluation of the importance of possible employee's competencies among the managers?
- Q2. What is the evaluation of the importance of possible employee's competencies among the representatives of educational institutions?
- Q3. Are there any statistically significant differences between the evaluation of these competencies in abovementioned groups?

In order to gather the data necessary for answering abovementioned questions, two separate questionnaires were designed - one meant for managers, second – for representatives of educational institutions – secondary schools, vocational schools and university teachers and headmasters. In each of them participants were asked about the significance of a set of 39 competencies. Managers – to what extent each employee competence is considered important in their company, teachers – to what extent they believe particular competence is important in a job market.

The range of included competencies was established on the basis of earlier works in this field – especially those of Boyatzis (2008), Rainsbury *et al.* (2002), Eicker *et al.* (2008), Yaşar *et al.* (2013), Grzybowska and Łupicka (2017) as well as the Universal Competence Model framework developed by Filipowicz (2016). The competencies were subsequently divided into four categories:

1. Social competencies – competencies related to the interpersonal abilities of the employee, which included teamwork, communicativeness, identification with the company, customer focus, intra-company cooperation, solving the conflicts, social influence, sharing knowledge and building relationships.
2. Personal competencies – related to the personality traits and intellectual abilities that influence the quality of work and the performance of an employee, including scrupulousness, kindness, oneself and time management, professional/work development, problem solving, self-reliance, decision making, the pursuit of results, analytical thinking and innovativeness.
3. Managerial competencies – related to managing and organising work of a group: motivating others, planning, strategic thinking, team building, company organizing, delegating, project management, leadership and team management.
4. Professional competencies – which included specific knowledge and skills related to particular occupation and profession; those competencies included knowledge and application of hygiene and health and safety rules, professional knowledge, knowledge and application of procedures, technical skills, knowledge and application of the principles of ecology and sustainable development, business orientation, administration/record keeping, negotiating, foreign languages, process management and IT skills.

In both questionnaires each competence was evaluated on a 5-point numeric scale, in which low values represented negligible, while high values – significant or critical importance. Simultaneously, participants in the questionnaire for companies were asked about a size of the company, its area of operations, industry, structure of employment and current situation, while in the questionnaire aimed at educational institutions – about the formal level of education, location, number of students etc.

As it was assumed earlier, two distinctive groups were included in the research, representatives of companies, managers and owners, and representatives of educational institutions, teachers. The target sample size was determined using statistical formulas based on the acceptable error margin (0.15 for mean average – i.e., 3%) and assumed confidence level of the measurement (95%), with SD established through a pilot survey. Final sample size was 389 for teachers and 381 for managers. The research was conducted in 14 districts located in Eastern Poland, with the number of educational institutions and companies representatives from each region proportional to the shares of those institutions in the general populations of respective organisations, and to the structure of the institutions, level of education for educational institutions and employment size for companies.

In the last step, particular organisations were randomly chosen from publicly available lists and their representatives asked to participate in the research. The survey was carried out in the period from May 11, 2020 to June 28, 2020 by means of an online survey.

The procedure of data analysis implemented in the discussed research included three steps:

1. in each group mean average for each competence was calculated - hierarchies of employee competencies significance were established;
2. Mann–Whitney U test was used in order to compare distributions of evaluations of each competence between two included groups; the U test was chosen due to the fact, that distributions of evaluations were not normally distributed and the variables are ordinal;
3. distributions of mean averages were standardized (separately for each group of participants) in order to provide direct comparability of both groups; thanks to the standardization, absolute hierarchy was converted into a relative one, in which a particular competence location expresses its evaluation in the comparison to the significance average for entire set of competencies.

It also should be pointed out, that such hierarchies are specific for particular region and a composition of organisations, hence they should not be directly compared to other research. The aim of preparing them was to provide ground for comparison of institutions operating in the same, in terms of geographical localisation, labour

market, and therefore, for identifying a potential gap between the perception of competencies in both groups.

3. Results

3.1 Absolute Values Comparison

After gathering the data, in order to establish the hierarchy of competencies' importance, mean averages for each competency were calculated. Their values for both groups the teachers and the managers were presented in the Table 1.

As it may be noticed, in the first group – the group of teachers, personal competencies are considered the most important, both in the perspective of particular competencies as well as a category as a whole. In that category, the highest mean average was observed in the case of innovativeness (4.46), which is the single most important competency in that group, professional and work development, oneself and time management (both 4.43) as well as scrupulousness (4.38) and problem solving (4.37).

The teacher's group consider social skills to be nearly as important as professional ones. Within it, building relationships was considered most important competence, with the mean average of 4.03, closely followed by communicativeness, teamwork (both 4.27) and the ability of intra-company cooperation (4.24). In this category social influence was considered the least important competence (4.07), nevertheless given the mean average of opinions, it is still perceived as a fairly important skill.

Next two categories of competencies – managerial and professional, were evaluated by the group of teachers visibly lower, although all particular items from both categories achieved mean averages of evaluations significantly higher than the middle of used measurement scale, therefore it can be safely assumed that they are still considered valuable and important. Most important, in those two categories, were the knowledge of foreign languages (4.17), professional knowledge (3.68) and technical skills (3.89). The least important – delegating (3.09), project management (3.13) and company organising (3.14). It is also ought to be mentioned that managerial competencies are, in this groups of participants, considered less important than professional ones.

Table 1. *Evaluation of the importance of competences – managers and educational institutions*

Competence		Teachers			Managers		
		N	Mean avg.	Std. dev.	N	Mean avg.	Std. dev.
Social	Building relationships	283	4.304	0.719	295	3.902	1.289
	Sharing knowledge	284	4.197	0.834	295	3.963	1.230
	Identification with the company	283	4.198	0.857	294	4.146	1.075
	Communicativeness	284	4.275	0.833	294	4.167	1.113

Competence	Teachers			Managers			
	N	Mean avg.	Std. dev.	N	Mean avg.	Std. dev.	
Customer focus	283	4.177	0.878	294	4.146	1.131	
Teamwork	283	4.272	0.808	294	4.201	1.037	
Solving the conflicts	283	4.177	0.840	294	4.054	1.155	
Intra-company cooperation	282	4.241	0.786	294	4.136	1.106	
Social influence	283	4.074	0.775	292	4.014	1.230	
Personal	The pursuit of results	284	4.317	0.666	296	4.108	1.130
	Innovativeness	285	4.460	0.679	295	4.064	1.198
	Analytical thinking	284	4.320	0.766	295	4.078	1.168
	Self-reliance	285	4.361	0.745	296	4.199	1.079
	Decision making	284	4.423	0.721	296	4.176	1.094
	Problem solving	284	4.373	0.714	296	4.233	1.097
	Scrupulousness	285	4.375	0.699	297	4.539	0.830
	Professional/work development	284	4.433	0.703	297	4.421	0.909
	Oneself and time management	284	4.433	0.687	296	4.497	0.864
	Kindness	285	4.295	0.653	296	4.544	0.847
Managerial	Team management	277	3.329	1.016	286	2.794	1.296
	Project management	278	3.126	1.125	286	2.836	1.267
	Leadership	278	3.331	1.097	286	2.808	1.293
	Planning	277	3.440	1.064	286	2.927	1.326
	Strategic thinking	277	3.390	1.053	285	2.877	1.309
	Motivating others	278	3.342	1.131	286	2.941	1.306
	Delegating	278	3.094	1.192	286	2.853	1.311
	Team building	276	3.290	1.067	286	2.874	1.311
	Company organizing	277	3.144	0.997	286	2.871	1.298
Professional	Foreign languages	294	4.173	0.822	296	2.834	1.324
	Process management	283	3.442	0.993	285	2.796	1.439
	Professional knowledge	288	3.868	1.071	302	3.874	1.189
	Technical skills	290	3.859	1.000	292	3.322	1.359
	IT skills	291	3.749	0.937	289	2.543	1.377
	Knowledge and app. of procedures	285	3.660	0.964	290	3.631	1.213
	Business orientation	283	3.329	1.066	291	3.206	1.384
	Negotiating	282	3.220	1.051	286	2.955	1.410
	Administration/record keeping	283	3.449	1.065	289	3.215	1.442
	Knowledge and application of hygiene and health and safety rules	287	3.822	0.961	292	3.990	1.156
Knowledge and application of the principles of ecology and sustainable development	283	3.403	0.979	286	3.220	1.323	

Source: Own research.

Relatively different hierarchy of the importance of included competencies may be noticed in the group of managers. That group, again, perceive personal and social skills as visibly more important than professional and managerial ones. Among managers, however, only four competences visibly dominated the hierarchy of importance – that was kindness (4.54), scrupulousness (4.53), oneself and time management (4.48) and professional and work development (4.42). Less but still evidently important was problem solving (4.23), teamwork (4.20) and self-reliance (4.20).

Surprisingly, as the least important competence managers perceive IT skills (mean average of 2.43), which may be the result of the fact, that research sample included representatives of different companies, operating in different industries, most of

which were not related to high technologies. Negligible values of mean averages were also observed in the case of all managerial competencies, especially in team management, process management (both 2.79) and leadership (2.81). Interestingly enough, professional competencies were not perceived as a way more important than managerial category – highest level of importance was attributed to the knowledge and application of hygiene and health, and safety rules (3.99), as well as to professional knowledge (3.87).

The scope and statistical significance of the differences in the evaluation of the importance of competencies between educational instructions and business representatives were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Absolute differences in competencies evaluation*

Group	Competence	Mean avg.		Diff.	p-value
		Managers	Teachers		
Social	Building relationships	3,902	4,304	0,402	0,015
	Sharing knowledge	3,963	4,197	0,234	0,265
	Identif. with the company	4,146	4,198	0,052	0,644
	Communicativeness	4,167	4,275	0,108	0,997
	Customer focus	4,146	4,177	0,030	0,319
	Teamwork	4,201	4,272	0,071	0,829
	Solving the conflicts	4,054	4,177	0,122	0,974
	Intra-company cooperation	4,136	4,241	0,105	0,802
Social influence	4,014	4,074	0,061	0,100	
Personal	The pursuit of results	4,108	4,317	0,209	0,615
	Innovativeness	4,064	4,460	0,395	0,004
	Analytical thinking	4,078	4,320	0,242	0,207
	Self-reliance	4,199	4,361	0,162	0,577
	Decision making	4,176	4,423	0,247	0,105
	Problem solving	4,233	4,373	0,140	0,864
	Scrupulousness	4,539	4,375	-0,163	<0,001
	Professional/work development	4,421	4,433	0,012	0,220
Oneself and time management	4,497	4,433	-0,064	0,011	
Kindness	4,544	4,295	-0,249	<0,001	
Managerial	Team management	2,794	3,329	0,535	<0,001
	Project management	2,836	3,126	0,290	0,004
	Leadership	2,808	3,331	0,523	<0,001
	Planning	2,927	3,440	0,514	<0,001
	Strategic thinking	2,877	3,390	0,513	<0,001
	Motivating others	2,941	3,342	0,401	<0,001
	Delegating	2,853	3,094	0,240	0,028
	Team building	2,874	3,290	0,416	<0,001
Company organizing	2,871	3,144	0,274	0,005	
Professional	Foreign languages	2,834	4,173	1,339	<0,001
	Process management	2,796	3,442	0,645	<0,001
	Professional knowledge	3,874	3,868	-0,006	0,546
	Technical skills	3,322	3,859	0,537	<0,001
	IT skills	2,543	3,749	1,206	<0,001
	Knowledge and app. of proc.	3,631	3,660	0,029	0,585
	Business orientation	3,206	3,329	0,122	0,580
	Negotiating	2,955	3,220	0,265	0,026
	Administration/record keeping	3,215	3,449	0,234	0,160
	Health and safety rules	3,990	3,822	-0,167	0,004
Principles of ecology and sustainable development	3,220	3,403	0,183	0,194	

Source: *Own research.*

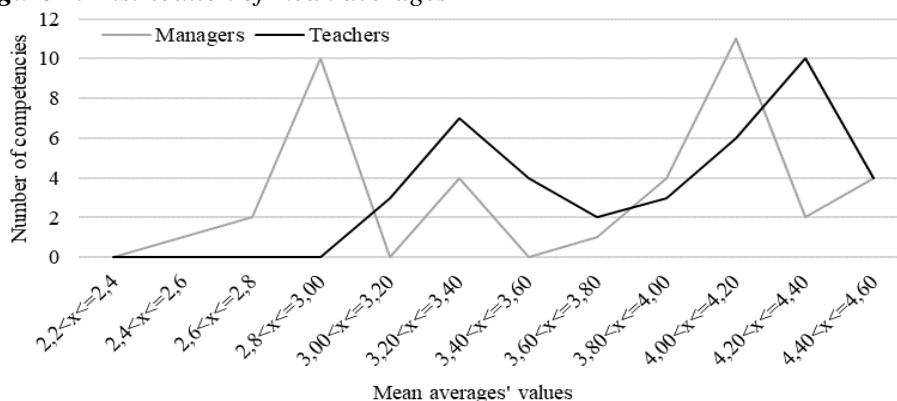
As it can be noticed, it is possible to divide included competencies into two groups:

1. group one, consisting of social and personal competencies – in which there are mostly no significant differences between opinions of the aforementioned two categories of participants; in these categories significant differences were observed only in the case of five out of nineteen competencies, namely in the case of building relationships and innovativeness which are overestimated, as well as in the case of scrupulousness, oneself and time management, and kindness, which are underestimated by teachers;
2. group two, consisting of managerial and professional competencies – in which in most cases there are statistically significant differences between groups' opinions; here, the importance of nearly all competencies were overestimated by teachers, only following health and safety rules are considered to be more important by managers; additionally, no significant difference was observed in the case of several professional competencies – professional knowledge, knowledge and application of procedures, business orientation, administration and record keeping, and following principles of ecology and sustainable development.

3.2 Relative Values Comparison

As it can be noticed, the distributions of mean averages representing evaluations of particular competencies in both groups differ visibly (Figure 1), with managers providing mostly lower evaluations than those of educational institutions representatives. Therefore, in order to achieve full comparability between groups, sets of mean averages were standardised – separately for each group.

Figure 1. Distribution of mean averages



Source: Own research.

Standardisation, in this situation, resulted in converting values of the mean averages to the distribution in which the value of 0 represented average importance of the competence in that group of participants, positive values, above, and negative

below-average importance. Each unit of distance in such a scale represents a distance of one standard deviation from the mean average for all competencies in the unstandardised set of averages. Thanks to such a procedure, it was possible to directly compare managers and teachers in the degree to which they perceive particular competence's importance in comparison to other competencies included in the research (Table 3) i.e., compare not absolute values but locations in the hierarchy of importance.

Table 3. *Relative differences in competencies evaluation*

Group	Competence	Standardised mean averages		Difference
		Managers	Teachers	
Professional	Hygiene and health, and safety rules	0,586	-0,114	-0,700
Personal	Kindness	1,451	0,887	-0,563
Professional	Business orientation	-0,637	-1,160	-0,523
Professional	Knowledge and app. of procedures	0,026	-0,458	-0,485
Managerial	Delegating	-1,187	-1,658	-0,471
Professional	Professional knowledge	0,406	-0,017	-0,422
Managerial	Company organizing	-1,160	-1,550	-0,390
Professional	The principles of ecology and sustainable development	-0,615	-1,003	-0,388
Personal	Scrupulousness	1,443	1,059	-0,384
Managerial	Project management	-1,215	-1,590	-0,375
Professional	Negotiating	-1,029	-1,391	-0,361
Professional	Administration/record keeping	-0,624	-0,905	-0,282
Social	Social influence	0,623	0,420	-0,203
Personal	Oneself and time management	1,377	1,181	-0,196
Social	Customer focus	0,830	0,637	-0,193
Social	Identification with the company	0,830	0,682	-0,148
Managerial	Team building	-1,155	-1,242	-0,088
Managerial	Motivating others	-1,051	-1,132	-0,081
Personal	Professional/work development	1,259	1,181	-0,078
Social	Teamwork	0,915	0,839	-0,076
Social	Solving the conflicts	0,687	0,637	-0,050
Social	Intra-company cooperation	0,814	0,774	-0,040
Social	Communicativeness	0,862	0,845	-0,017
Personal	Problem solving	0,966	1,054	0,088
Managerial	Leadership	-1,258	-1,155	0,103
Personal	Self-reliance	0,913	1,029	0,116
Managerial	Strategic thinking	-1,150	-1,030	0,120
Managerial	Team management	-1,280	-1,160	0,120
Social	Sharing knowledge	0,544	0,681	0,137
Managerial	Planning	-1,073	-0,923	0,150
Personal	The pursuit of results	0,771	0,934	0,164
Personal	Analytical thinking	0,724	0,942	0,218
Personal	Decision making	0,876	1,158	0,282
Professional	Process management	-1,276	-0,920	0,355
Professional	Technical skills	-0,456	-0,037	0,419
Social	Building relationships	0,449	0,907	0,458
Personal	Innovativeness	0,702	1,237	0,535
Professional	IT skills	-1,671	-0,269	1,402
Professional	Foreign languages	-1,217	0,630	1,847

Source: *Own research.*

As it can be noticed, comparing standardised values reveals additional areas of discrepancies between the perception of competencies' importance among two groups included in the research. Three categories of such gap may be defined:

1. competencies which are higher in the managers', while relatively lower in the teachers' hierarchy of importance – those, with negative value of difference; this group includes knowledge and application of hygiene and health and safety rules, kindness, business orientation, knowledge and application of procedures, delegating and professional knowledge;
2. competencies which are higher in the teachers' while relatively lower in the managers' hierarchy of importance – those, with positive value of difference; in this group competencies such as foreign languages, IT skills, innovativeness, building relationships and technical skills are included;
3. competencies, which have similar place in both hierarchies – with value of the difference close to zero, e.g. problem solving, communicativeness, intra-company cooperation, solving the conflicts, teamwork or professional and work development.

4. Conclusions

The presented data leads to the conclusion that in fact there is a visible gap between the way employee competencies are perceived by those, who are interested in having access to them – managers, and those responsible for their development educational institution and their representatives. The first conclusion from the research is that the managers' expectations expressed in competences' importance evaluation seem to be inconsistent, to some degree, with those visible in literature.

Competencies mentioned by Burrus or Rainsbury (*Burrus et al., 2013; Rainsbury et al., 2002*) e.g., teamwork, problem solving or communication skills are considered noteworthy, but they are not at the top of hierarchies, apart from professional and work development, which is tantamount to Burrus' willingness to learn. What is interesting, those competencies are, in fact, considered quite important by representatives of educational institutions.

That situation may be caused by the sample of companies used in the research, which included representative set of fairly different companies - also those small, those which do not operate in high-tech industries and those who do not hire specialised staff. Perhaps that is the reason why four, very job-agnostic, elementary competencies were considered significant. Kindness – which is responsible for successful interacting with other people and is a base for positive relationship, with both colleagues and customers, scrupulousness which represents expected attitude towards tasks, willingness to develop professionally – which is responsible for growth and gaining new skills and abilities, and oneself and time management – which express ability to successfully operate and complete assignments. Therefore, managers expectations may be summarised as three factors: willingness to grow, orderliness and positive attitude to people.

What was also quite interesting, was the average position of professional competencies, especially IT skills, which importance was, in fact, below average,

and that of foreign languages. Again, most probably it was caused by the structure of included companies, but also leads to the observation that although we experience transition to an information-based society and development of high-tech industries, there are, and most probably, there will still be jobs which are not based on extensive use of technology – in fact, set of developed IT skills is rather expected in small category of professions.

Most of the rest is based on a basic set of IT abilities which, nowadays, are considered computer literacy, and are demonstrated by most members of society. There were only two professional competencies that achieved above-average evaluation of their significance: professional knowledge and knowledge and application of hygiene, health and safety rules – most likely because they directly impact employee performance, provide results and protect employer from potential costs.

There is also a visible gap in importance assessment between both groups included in the research. Certainly, educational institutions properly identify general expectations of the companies – personal competencies were considered most important, social – visibly less, but still significant, professional achieved above average, while managerial – average evaluation of the importance. There were, however, several areas of visible differences, which, to some degree, may prove the lack of understanding and communication between educational institutions and business environment.

Additionally, it should be pointed out, that, apart from discrepancies in the hierarchies of competencies, managers in general tended to evaluate particular competencies, in terms of their importance, visibly lower than the teachers. There may be several possible explanations behind such phenomenon. First of all, it could be a sign of lack of trust in educational system – by diminishing the significance of particular competencies the managers may suggest that educational system do not develop them in adequate level or that even though employee has such competence, it is not beneficial to the company, because it is not developed properly or in a way expected by the company. Secondly, it is possible that employers and managers prefer to train staff their own way in order to achieve preferred combination of skills and abilities, and because of that, they marginalise those already available.

Certainly, it is possible that such difference was in fact caused by teachers opinions and expectations. It may mean, that employees expect very short, concise and simple set of competencies – professional knowledge as well as several personal and social ones, which reflect rather person's character, than some abilities that can be trained. The rest may be just educational institutions' belief expressing what business environment could possibly need. That situation again suggests developing better means and channels of communication between business and educational environments.

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