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Does the social competence of future employees conform with the expectations of employers?

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DOES THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE EMPLOYEES CONFORM TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS?

A successful transition of adolescents to job market requires adjusting competence to the demands of employers. This research aims at comparing the conformity between social competence of students – future employees, and the expectations of employers. Social competence was studied on a group of UKW students in Bydgoszcz (*N*=211), whereas the expectations of employers were operationalised as job requirements posted in job offers (325 offers). The requirements of social competence were analysed with regards to other demanded soft skills, job attitudes and individual traits. Employers most frequently expect cooperation and social mindedness while students are characterised by the best developed cooperation skills and social resourcefulness. In sectors traditionally geared towards hard skills (industry, construction, transport, IT), social competence of students is higher than the requirements. Conversely, consulting sectors (education/counselling, finances/insurance) require higher social competence than students have.

Key words: social competence, expectations of employers, students, transition to job market

INTRODUCTION

Competence determines human effectiveness in general, in every life situation, nonetheless, it is traditionally associated with professional effectiveness. One of the hallmarks of professional effectiveness is the success in taking up job, especially the first one. The transition from school to job market during the period of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2001) is blurred and includes a whole range of other transitions and decisions concerning extraprofessional areas and social roles serving the accumulation of career capital (Rożnowski, 2009; Bańka, 2015). The transition to the world of work is a long-standing process and, facing the uncertainty of one's life situation and the unpredictability of socio-economical changes, it may even expand on the whole period of professional activity (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). The contemporary rules of career are related to a new understanding of work unconnected with the notion of qualifications. The modern work is oriented towards a mainly team process and not organizational functions. It requires an employee to be flexible, resourceful and self-employed in various areas of work, following various regulations and in various sectors (Hall, 1996; Arthur et al. 2005; Bańka 2007; Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). The factor which conditions the successful transition of emerging adults is competence matched to the context of work.

Competence includes knowledge, skills and attitude towards work which are adequate to current activities and the context of work. Competence reveals itself while carrying out particular work. It is a dynamic structure prone to undergoing changes influenced by internal and external factors (Kwiatkowski & Symela, 2001).

Competence manifests itself as competent behaviour or is defined as a trait of an individual (Jurek, 2012). This behavioural approach sees competence as a proper, effective and economically efficient behaviour. Competent behaviour is seen as a ratio of the size of obtained effects to the effort expenditure. Competent individuals obtain valuable, high results without extensive effort connected with the undertaken activity (Boyatzis, 1982; Jurek, 2012).

Competence understood as a trait comes from the individual differences approach. Competence is connected with skills and traits of an individual as well as the whole of their knowledge and attitudes they employ in effective activity (Kowalczyk, 2014). Competence as such account for a human potential which may (but does not have to) be revealed. It may manifest itself only in particular situations. The competence traits serve to infer the manifestation of competent behaviour with a certain probability.

Competence which seems especially valuable in the changing reality 3N (incontinuity, instability, unpredictability) is that, which may be applied in various projects

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of professional work and that, which strengthens flexibility and resourcefulness of adolescents (Bańka, 2007; Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). Social competence accounts for such type of competence.

Social competence among with others create a list of key competence in the job market. Paweł Smółka (2008) suggests social competence be encompassed as one of five in typological approach. The first group is made up of hard skills (technical), i.e. knowledge and professional skills necessary to work in a given position e.g. secretary's knowledge of office software or IT specialist's programming skills. The second group of competence is language competence – speaking mother and foreign languages. Cognitive competence (proper information processing, synthesizing and concluding, strategic thinking) account for the third group of competence. The fourth group of competence consists of physical competence such as strength, endurance, perceptual-motor coordination. The fifth group of competence is the social competence denoted also as socio-psychological competence or soft skills. A good example of such may be the ability to develop a relationship and exert influence or team management (Smółka, 2008). Therefore, social competence may be defined as: complex skills that condition the effectiveness in coping social situations acquired by an individual through social training (Matczak, 2001; Matczak & Martowska, 2013). Although, there are various divisions of competence existing in management sciences and social sciences (Sidor-Rządkowska, 2011), they may not be regarded as full or separate. Nevertheless, social competence is always defined as soft competence (soft skills).

Social competence is regarded as developmental achievement relatively independent of formal education or factual knowledge unlike hard, professional competence. Furthermore, social competence is longer valid and independent of a trade or professional activities. Being regarded as universal competence, they are desired by various employers in numerous sectors of job market. Social competence serves both the employees and organizations. On the one hand, effective relationships with clients, effective cooperation with partners in the work process, exerting influence on others as well as being insusceptible raises effectiveness at work (Argyle, 1991; Jakubowska, 1996). On the other hand, it allows individuals to practice social behaviour which becomes an occasion to strengthen core skills and attitudes towards work, the validity of which contributes to building the career of tomorrow.

The correspondence between the competence requirements and held professional competence is visible in the educational and job markets. The concept of education adopted by the European Union in the European Qualifications Framework and, eventually, in Polish Qualifications Framework abandons the notion of profession and qualifications which would be confirmed by a formal certificate and moves towards competence and competent behaviour. Such education gathers students who collect life competence (the career capital) getting ready for effective (quick and persistent) entering into job market (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). The knowledge of current expectations in the job market and the capital of various competence allows students to achieve "professional life maturity" (Bańka, 2015) and potential supplementation of competence deficiencies.

Employers seeking workers concentrate on their competence matched (supplementarily or complementarily) to job requirements and organizational purposes, both short- and long-term (Czarnota-Bojarska, 2010). Employers who run their own businesses according to the rules of human capital modify the organization in such a way that the exploitation of individual competence of an employee is beneficial for them and the company, now and in the future (Noworol, 2006; Bańka, 2007; Turska, 2014). Employers who manage their businesses according to the filter model seek workers who would fit perfectly for the pattern of current organizational requirements (Kostera, 2001; Drucker, 2001; Dołhasz, Fudaliński, Kosała & Smutek, 2009).

Regardless of the sector or the organization's managing model, employers offer work based on projects performed in unstable work place, activities and method contexts. Such work requires cooperation and proper communication i.e. social and cognitive competences as well as an attitude towards the work. They account for universal competence useful in a great number (if not all) sectors of economy. The sector which most heavily relies on social competence is consulting and service activity. It is associated with personal relationships between employees, individual approach to clients, developed counselling and help activity provided for clients and contracting parties. Consulting and services account for either leading aim of a business (e.g. trading, banking and finances) or an important part of the manufacturing sector: production, construction or transport. The services sector in Poland employs nearly twice as many workers as industry and six times as many as agriculture (data obtained from The Polish Central Statistical Office [GUS] from 2017 http://rynekpracy.org/x/902899). In this respect, it is worthwhile to expect a great number of companies to value particular soft competence, especially social competence (Matczak & Martowska, 2013).

The analysis of recruitment offers allows for concluding which extraprofessional skills are expected from potential workers (Jurek, 2010). Among the first five expectations aroused by employers which graduates ought to meet are: effective communication, knowledge of foreign languages, openness to study and permanent development, engagement and ability to work in a team (Budnikowski, Dabrowski, Gąsior & Macioł, 2012). The most frequently desired universal skills according to the analysis of 300 job offers from 2011 are: communication competence (19% of offers), good work organization (18%), ability to work in a team (13%), analytical thinking and solving problems (10%), focusing on the aim (10%), coping stress (4%) as well as creativity and openness to

changes (3%) (Jurek, 2012). The unknown methodology of the research halts its deeper analysis, however, studies show that soft skills including social competence are sought.

The studies on the expectations from candidates and the directions of business development are the subject of statistical analyses carried out by job agencies and career agencies. However, it is noteworthy that scientific reports are modest and rarely updated. There is also a lack of valid comparisons of job market expectations and the skills and competence held by future employees.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research aimed to compare the conformity between social competence of students and the competence expected by employers. Based on the classification of competence, the authors analyzed the level of social competence of future job candidates and the frequency of such expectations in the job market. Additionally the frequency of demand for social competence was compared with the demand for hard (professional) and cognitive skills as well as the attitude towards work (engagement and interest in working).

Social competence of students understood as traits were measured by PROKOS questionnaire (Social Competence Profile) (Matczak & Martowska, 2013). The questionnaire consists of 90 items, 60 diagnostic items and 30 buffer items. The analysis of the results allows to compute a general result and a result for each of five subscales such as: assertiveness, cooperation, social mindedness, resourcefulness and community awareness. The general result is the sum of points obtained in all five scales (min. 60 points, max. 240 points). The number of point possible to obtain is different in different subscales.

Assertiveness (min. 14 pts, max. 56 pts) connected with the ability to exert influence on others with simultaneous resistance. It is connected with effective autopresentation in social exposition situations. It is also connected with managing competence such as delegating and executing tasks. Cooperation (min. 16 pts, max. 64 pts) concerns i.a. providing support and taking care of others, resolving conflicts, collaborating with others. Social mindedness (min. 11 pts, max. 44 pts) is the ability to establish and maintain informal relationships with people, arousing interest in oneself. It is also the ability to cope social exposition or the ability to express and understand emotions. Resourcefulness (min. 13 pts, max. 52 pts) is connected with fulfilling tasks based on cooperation with others. It is the ability to ask for help and the awareness of one's rights and their execution. Community awareness (min. 6 pts, max. 24 pts) is related to the ability to notice social needs and aims as well as organizing activities aimed at their fulfilment. The authors of the questionnaire emphasize that community awareness competence is especially useful for the work for common welfare organizations (Matczak & Martowska, 2013).

The participants of the research were students of Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (UKW). The samples were drawn in layers of 10% of the population of each faculty. The total number of respondents reached 211 1st-year students of 5 UKW faculties: The Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, The Faculty of Mathematics and Technology, The Humanistic Faculty, The Faculty of Physical Culture, Health and Tourism, The Faculty of Administration and Social Sciences. Due to small number of respondents from The Faculty of Environmental Studies and The Faculty of Musical Education, these groups are not included in the study.

The employers' expectations were studied through analyzing the requirements posted in job offers on job websites. The job offers encompassed 13 sectors (education/consulting, health care/social welfare, IT/telecommunication, culture/art, finances/insurance, science/technology; administration/legal counselling; construction; transport; farm and food production/forestry; tourism/entertainment; industrial production; services/sales), represented by 25, randomly chosen job offers. The analysis of the requirements posted in the job offers involved their classification into categories: hard skills (technical, professional) and soft skills. The latter included social competence (according to the typology of Matczak & Martowska, 2013), individual traits (mainly cognitive) and attitude towards work. Individual traits were those which manifest themselves regardless of interpersonal contacts e.g.: creativity, analytical thinking, coping stress, self-organization. Finally, the attitude towards work was regarded as the approach of a candidate to work in cognitive, behavioural and emotional spheres such as: motivation, engagement, willingness to develop. The authors analyzed 325 job offers gathered from the following recruitment services: pracuj.pl, praca.pl, infopraca.pl, szybkopraca.pl, przedstawiciele.pl, kariera.pl, goldenline.pl, jobs4.pl, gowork.pl, ibroker.pl, monsterpolska.pl, jobexpress.pl, karierawfinansach.pl, linguajob.pl, gratka.pl and dlastudenta.pl. The analysis of the job offers and the studies on students were carried out in 2015.

It has been assumed that out of concern for building career capital, students enter the job market already during university studies and are mobile and flexible with regards to the place and the trade (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017). Therefore, studying 1st-year students of one university and the analysis of job offers in Poland are good examples of appraising the competence matching of candidates (present or future) with the global job market. The research preceded the realization of a project as part of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (POWER): Qualified, Active, Communicative Graduates from UKW.

The following research questions have been formulated: 1) What kinds of social competence do employers require from candidates, and which ones are the most frequent? 2) What kinds of social competence are revealed by candidates at the point of transition to job market? 3) Are there any differences between the frequency of

formulated employers' requirements and the social competence of candidates? Due to the lack of research in subject literature on the conformity between social competence of candidates and demand for it in the job market, the authors contented themselves with the research questions and did not formulate any hypotheses.

RESULTS

REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED ON JOB CANDIDATES

The first stage of the analysis was to describe the requirements imposed by employers on candidates. Table 1 contains the analysis of the requirements posted in job offers. The least requirements, on average, were indicated in job offers from such sectors like farm and food production and forestry, whereas the most were noticed in finances/insurance and science and technology.

The highest demand for soft skills (% of soft skills) is in the sector of tourism/entertainment and administration/legal counselling, whereas the lowest in IT/telecommunication. In general the demand for soft skills in comparison to professional, hard skills is high and reaches 46% of all requirements. Surprising is the fact that employers in sectors based on contact with clients e.g. finances and insurance or education and consulting expect candidates to hold more hard skills than soft skills.

The distribution of the demand for social competence in the job offers is presented in Table 2. The most frequent demand for social competence is manifested by employers from education and consulting trade as well as finances and insurance. The lowest demand for social competence is in science and technology, in production trades as well as farm and food production/forestry and in technical sectors: IT/telecommunication, construction or transport.

Table 2 shows the number of requirements of soft competence (social, attitude to work and individual traits) imposed on candidates in particular sectors and in total (last 3 columns). In 5 sectors (education/consulting, health care/social welfare, finances/insurance, IT/telecommunication and science/technology) social competence is more expected than the other two categories of competence. It's curious why trades traditionally based on social contacts require so little social competence: services/sales and tourism/entertainment. These sectors demand more soft skills than core skills (table 1), however, among the soft skills attitude to work and individual traits (personality and cognitive) outweigh social competence (Table 2). In the following 8 sectors – mainly manufacturing trades as well as culture/art and administration/legal counselling, employers also tend to promote individual traits than social competence. The summary results of all job offers show that the job market demands proper personality traits like conscientiousness, resistance to stress, self-organization and cognitive efficiency: creativity, analytical thinking rather than social competence.

Among social competence, the most frequently required skills are cooperation and social mindedness. The first one is most often desired by companies from trades like education/consulting and finances/insurance (21 times per each 25 offers). The social mindedness is most often indicated by finances/insurance companies, it appears 19 times per 25 offers. On average, cooperation

Table 1
The number of required skills, the average number of requirements in particular sectors and the percentage of the required soft/hard skills of all

Job offers in particular trades (*N*=325, in each trade *n*=25)	sum of required skills	average number of sills per offer	sum of soft skills	% soft skills of all	sum of hard skills	% core hard of all
education/consulting	220	8.8	106	48.2	114	51.8
health care/social welfare	155	6.2	77	49.7	78	50.3
IT/ telecommunication	168	6.7	37	22.0	131	78.0
culture/art	222	8.9	115	51.8	107	48.2
finances/insurance	230	9.2	97	42.2	133	57.8
science/technology	229	9.2	80	34.9	149	65.1
administration/legal counselling	206	8.2	116	56.3	90	43.7
construction	162	6.5	76	46.9	86	53.1
transport	179	7.2	84	46.9	95	53.1
farm and food production/ forestry	127	5.1	56	44.1	71	55.9
tourism/entertainment	160	6.4	93	58.1	67	41.9
industrial production	182	7.3	74	40.7	108	59.3
services/sales	170	6.8	89	52.4	81	47.6
sectors in total	2410	7.4	1100	45.7	1310	54.3

Table 2
The number of requirements of social competence in job offers: A – assertiveness, C – cooperation, SM – social mindedness, R – resourcefulness, CA – community awareness (in brackets % of particular skills of against total social competence)

Skills/trade	A (%)	C(%)	SM(%)	R(%)	CA(%)	Sum of social competence in a trade	Sum of requirements of attitude to work	Sum of requirements of individual traits
education/consulting	9(18.4)	21(42.9)	12(24.5)	5(10.2)	2(4.1)	49	29	28
health care/social welfare	3(7.9)	16(42.1)	10(26.3)	0	9(23.7)	38	22	17
IT/ telecommunication	3(20)	10(66.7)	2(13.3)	0	0	15	10	12
culture/art	7(17.1)	17(41.5)	13(31.7)	3(7.3)	1(2.4)	41	25	49
finances/insurance	12(18.5)	21(32.3)	19(29.2)	9(13.8)	4(6.2)	65	14	18
science/technology	8(21.6)	15(40.5)	11(29.7)	0	3(8.1)	37	23	20
administration/legal counselling	2(6.9)	12(41.4)	11(37.9)	4(13.8)	0	29	23	64
construction	2(10.5)	8(42.1)	3(15.8)	6(20.7)	0	19	15	42
transport	2(11.8)	6(35.3)	3(17.6)	6(35.3)	0	17	21	46
farm and food production/ forestry	1(12.5)	5(62.5)	1(12.5)	1(12.5)	0	8	20	28
tourism/entertainment	1(5.3)	7(36.8)	9(47.4)	2(10.5)	0	19	23	51
industrial production	0	11(64.7)	3(17.6)	1(5.9)	2(11.8)	17	19	38
services/sales	2(10.5)	3(15.8)	7(36.8)	5(26.3)	2(10.5)	19	20	50
sectors in total	52(13.9)	152(40.8)	104(27.9)	42(11.3)	23(6.1)	373	264	463

appears in every second offer, while social mindedness– in every third offer (3rd and 4th columns in Table 2).

The differences of significantly higher demand for cooperation and social mindedness over other skills in 13 trades are confirmed by the value of Friedman χ^2 coefficient (Friedman's ANOVA χ^2=35.4, p=.001) and the significantly high effect size of Kendall's W=.68. The analysis of differences between pairs (Wilcoxon signed rank test) indicates that cooperation (M=11.7, SD=5.9) is considerably more frequently desired by employers than other types of social competence. On second place of the expected types of competence is social mindedness (M=8; SD=5.4) which is more often indicated than assertiveness (M=4; SD=3,7), resourcefulness (M=3.2; SD=2.9) and community awareness (M=1.8; SD=2.6).

The least frequently, on the same level, demanded skills are resourcefulness and community awareness. The latter are never indicated by employers from 6 trades traditionally concentrating on hard skills: IT/telecommunication, construction and transport, farm and food production, administration/legal services as well as tourism/entertainment (cf. Table 2).

STUDENTS' SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Social competence of students is well developed (min. 5th sten). About 80% of students achieve at least average results and among them 22.3% obtain increased and high results (min. 7th sten). The results presented in Table 3 confirm that students reveal the best developed cooperation and resourcefulness competences above other types. They also manifest assertiveness but less frequently than resourcefulness and cooperation. Students less frequently reveal community awareness and social mindedness.

The comparison of mean results of social competence among students of various institutes showed differences concerning cooperation (F=4.44; p=.001), community awareness competence (F=4.5; p=.001) and, eventually, social competence in general (F=3.39; p=.01). The post hoc analysis of the comparisons shows that the differences concern only students of The Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Technology, who reveal significantly lower (p=.002) mean cooperation (M=4.93) and significantly lower (p=.02) community awareness competence (M=4.9) in contrast with the students of The Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology (respectively M=6.52, M=6.57). The community awareness competence held by the students of mathematics, physics and technology is lower (p=.04) than among students of administration and social sciences (M=6.62). Regardless of the faculty of the university, students reveal similar level of assertiveness, social mindedness and resourcefulness competence. Cooperation and community awareness competence are on similar level among students of The Institute of Physical Culture and Tourism, Humanistic, Administration and Social Sciences as well as Pedagogy and Psychology and higher than among the rest of students.

Table 3
Differences in the intensification of social competence in UKW students (*N*=207) Friedman's ANOVA χ^2=761.8, *p*=.0001; Kendall's W=.92

Competence	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	M	SD	Statistically significant differences (Wilcoxon signed rank test)
Cooperation (C)	4.995	1034	52.35	5.26	C>A; C>SM; C>R; C>CA
Social mindedness (SM)	2.140	443	32.97	5.58	SM<A; SM<R; SM>CA; SM<C
Assertiveness (A)	3.287	681	39.92	5.60	A>CA; A<R; A<C
Resourcefulness (R)	3.577	741	41.37	4.66	R>CA
Community awareness (CA)	1.000	207	16.25	3.27	

EMPLOYERS' REQUIREMENTS AGAINST SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS

In order to compare the frequency of demanding particular social competence requirements and the revealed competence of students, both measurements were converted to a 10-point sten scale. Table 4 presents mean results of the indications of social competence requirements in job offers and social competence of students. Tests of differences between mean values for requirements and competence indicate a similar level of frequency of employers' requirements and students' competence.

Regarding the fact that students usually aspire to work in chosen sectors, according to their fields of study/education it seems worthwhile to carry out an analysis of the matching between the requirements of particular sectors and social competence of students of various faculties. The requirements of social competence in various sectors were compared with the competence of students which is presented in Table 5.

The analysis of mean requirements of social competence indicated in particular sectors and students' competence shows high diversification in those compared. In certain sectors there is conformity between the requirements and competence. For example, the requirements of social competence in such trades as health care/social welfare, culture/art and science/technology match the revealed social competence of students of all faculties with the exception of the Faculty of Mathematics and Technology. Students of this faculty hold insufficient competence for the demand. In certain sectors, which generally hardly require social competence from their candidates, the students declare higher competence then demanded. Such trades are: IT/telecommunication, construction, transport, farm and food production/forestry, industrial production, tourism/entertainment. Other sectors, such as: education/consulting and finances/insurance have higher expectations of social competence than revealed by students (cf. effect size; Cohen, 1988).

The detailed analysis of the most probable sectors in which students of particular faculties would like to pursue their careers shows the insufficient social competence of students of three faculties: Humanistic, Physical Culture and Sport as well as Administration and Social Sciences who could potentially work in education/consulting. Similarly, the students of Administration and Social Sciences and Mathematics and Technology aspiring to work in finances/insurance do not meet the expectations with regards to social competence. The students of Mathematics and Technology manifest a lower level of social competence against the demand for it in sectors like science/technology, originally targeted at this group of candidates.

Table 4
Differences between mean results for employers' requirements and students' social competence

	Employers' requirements		Students' competence		*t* (*df*=220)	*p*
Requirements/competence	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Assertiveness	5.38	2.14	5.68	1.87	.55	.58
Cooperation	5.54	1.94	6.00	1.66	.95	.34
Social mindedness	5.62	2.02	5.91	1.93	.54	.59
Resourcefulness	5.46	2.11	5.99	1.73	1.06	.29
Community awareness	5.38	1.76	5.92	1.89	.99	.32
Social competence in total	5.48	1.52	5.90	1.52	.98	.33

Table 5
Requirements of social competence (R) in particular trades against social competence of students (C) of particular faculties (comparison of the differences between means) R>C requirements are higher than competence; C>R students' competence is higher than requirements as well as the effect size (Cohen's d or Hedges'g)

Trade	The Humanistic Faculty *M*=6.07; *SD*=1.86; *N*=82	The Faculty of Phys. Cult. and Sport *M*=5.86; *SD*=1.67; *N*=22	The Faculty of Admin. and Soc. Sci. *M*=6.33; *SD*=1.74; *N*=21	The Faculty of Math. and Techn. *M*=4.96; *SD*=1.58; *N*=27	The Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology *M*=6.48; *SD*=1.77; *N*=46
education/ consulting (M=7.2; SD=.84; N=25)	*p*=.004 R>C *d*=.78	*p*=.009 R>C *d*=1.01	*p*=.030 R>C *d*=.64	*p*=.001 R>C *d*=1.77	*p*=.060
health care/ social welfare M=6.2; SD=2.59; N=25	*p*=.780	*p*=.060	*p*=.850	*p*=.041 R>C *d*=.58	*p*=.590
IT/ telecommunication M=4; SD=1; N=25	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.20	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.35	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.64	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=.73	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.60
culture/art M=6.2; SD=1.1; N=25	*p*=.074	*p*=.410	*p*=.760	*p*=.002 R>C *d*=.91	*p*=.470
finances/ insurance M=9.2; SD=1.3; N=25	*p*=.001 g Hedges=1.79	*p*=.001 R>C *d*=2.23	*p*=.001 R>C *d*=1.87	*p*=.001 R>C *d*=2.93	*p*=.001 R>C *g* Hedges=1.70
science/ technology M=6.2; SD=1.9; N=25, p=.76	*p*=.760	*p*=.560	*p*=.810	*p*=.010 R>C *d*=.71	*p*=.540
administration/ legal counselling M=5.4; SD=1.34; N=25	*p*=.009 C>R *g* Hedges=.38	*p*=.300	*p*=.050 C>R *d*=.60	*p*=.290	*p*=.010 C>R *g* Hedges=.66
construction M=4.6; SD=1.34; N=25	*p*=.004 C>R *g* Hedges=.84	*p*=.004 C>R *g* Hedges=.84	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.11	*p*=.380	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.15
transport M=4.6; SD=1.34; N=25	*p*=.004 C>R *g* Hedges=.84	*p*=.004 C>R *g* Hedges=.84	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.11	*p*=.382	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.15
farm and food production/forestry M=3.6; SD=.55; N=25	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.50	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.50	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=2.12	*p*=.002 C>R *d*=1.15	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.96
tourism/ entertainment M=4.6; SD=.89; N=25	*p*=.002 C>R *g* Hedges=.87	*p*=.002 C>R *g* Hedges=.87	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.25	*p*=.322	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.23
industrial production M=4.4; SD=1.14; N=25	*p*=.000 C>R *g* Hedges=.97	*p*=.00 C>R *g* Hedges=.97	*p*=.001 C>R *d*=1.31	*p*=.152	*p*=.001 C>R *g* Hedges=1.30
services/ sales M=5; SD=1.58; N=25	*p*=.011 C>R *g* Hedges=.59	*p*=.011 C>R *g* Hedges=.59	*p*=.009 C>R *d*=.08	*p*=.928	*p*=.008 C>R *g* Hedges=.87

One may observe conformity of competence with the potential sector of employment between students of The Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology and the branches of education/consulting, health care/social welfare and culture/art. The students of this faculty would also easily apply their social competence in services/sales as well as administration/legal counselling.

The students of Mathematics and Technology hold social competence which matches the requirements of all related sectors, in particular: IT/telecommunication, industry or construction and transport. However, they declare lower competence than expected in science/technology and education/consulting.

The students of Administration and Social Sciences, Humanistic and Physical Culture and Sport hold competence which conforms with the requirements of numerous related sectors with the exception of education/consulting.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The requirements of soft competence (social, individual traits and cognitive) encompasses 45.7% of all requirements imposed on candidates. In case of certain sectors the number exceeds 50% (tourism/entertainment; administration/legal counselling; service/sales; culture/art). Employers' demands of soft competence in a ratio of 50% to all, is concordant with such transformations of the job market as individual contact with clients, highly developed marketing and consulting, collaboration with sectors and companies as well as the dynamics and growing pace of working. The transformations require efficiency in self-management and in relationships. The presented research shows that the most favoured social competence is cooperation and social mindedness. Effective communication as a symptom of social mindedness and the ability to cooperate have been indicated by employers as the key competence expected from young workers (Budnikowski, Dabrowski, Gąsior & Macioł, 2012).

It has been acknowledged that the social competence of students, especially cooperation and resourcefulness, is well developed. The skills of cooperation and resourcefulness are trained throughout the period of education, therefore they most frequently manifest themselves among students. The former is frequently expected by the employers. The least developed competence among students is the community awareness competence. It is strongly related to personal sensitivity and altruistic behaviour. Such competence is difficult to develop in the course of higher education when rivalry, competition and egoism (Bańka & Trzeciak, 2017) as well as resourcefulness and sociability prevail. In business, altruism and helping are not the key areas of activity (they may only contribute to the company's image), hence it is not surprising that community awareness competence is not among the skills employers most desire. It is possible that the so called third sector of economy – associations and civic organizations (not studied in this paper) would demand such competence.

The social competence requirements less frequently appear in production, construction and transport. These sectors, traditionally based on hard professional competences, data analysis, mathematical calculations and modelling require more cognitive competence and unassisted analytical work. They are targeted towards material products, operating machines where social contacts present a rather instrumental character and not the aim of its own.

The highest demand for social competence exists in such sectors as finances/insurance, education/consulting, culture/art, where professional tasks concern supporting and helping and the professional success depends on efficient communication, persuasion and kindness.

Comparing the categories of social competence, the most frequently reported are requirements of cooperation and social mindedness. It seems absolutely understandable. The ability to support, resolve conflicts, cooperate with others (cooperation competence) or cope social exposure, establish informal interpersonal relationships or understand emotions (social mindedness competence) are the traits of an employee which translate into their effective cooperation with the team and the relationships with clients.

The analysis of the average employers' requirements and the average competence of students shows no differences which means that students match the demand with regards to the whole of social competence. Such a result could suggest a mild transition of students into job market. The data published in the Manpower Group report (2015) does not confirm such a conformity. It was indicated that the deficits in soft competence (communicative) account for 5% of the difficulties in filling positions.

It is worthwhile to verify whether people with particular education (core skills) hold sufficient and expected soft skills including social competence. We assumed that that students choose the field of study according to their professional aspirations, after graduating they are supposed to apply for a job which is suitable for their education. The aspirations of the students of pedagogy and psychology concern education/consulting; social welfare/health care; entertainment/tourism. The students of this faculty, compared to other faculties, declare the highest level of social competence which makes them suitable for these and all remaining sectors (with the exception of finances/insurance). The strongest incompatibility of competence is observed between the students of The Faculty of Mathematics and Technology and the sector of science and technology and between students of different institutes than pedagogy and psychology and the trade of education and consulting.

Beside social competence, important and desired soft skills in a great number of sectors are the attitude to work (e.g. motivation) and individual traits (cognitive and personality such like conscientiousness, resilience). These results confirm other results obtained in previous studies concerning the requirements of employers (cf. Budnikowski, Dabrowski, Gąsior & Macioł, 2012; Jurek, 2012). The deficits in social competence visible on the eve of economical transformations in 1989 are now dispersed. The changeability and the development of economy and companies exert higher and higher cognitive efficiency as well as coping time pressure and task overload, therefore the strong demand for such competence.

Low demand for social competence in services/sales or tourism/entertainment and high demand for other soft competences match the aims of organization and properties of candidates who fail to express sufficient enthusiasm and penchant for cooperating with others.

PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Considering the employers' expectations as well as reports of still existing difficulties in choosing competent workers Manpower Group (2015) it seems worthwhile to support the development of social competence of students. It is not only due to their aspiration to take up job in particular sectors but also to the fact that soft competence (i.a. social intelligence) is regarded as key competence of the future (Turska, 2015). On the one hand, such activities are undertaken and can be undertaken by universities. An example of such, apart from the obligatory classes like interpersonal training (realized in The Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology UKW), may be the project realized as part of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (POWER): Qualified, Active, Communicative Graduates of UKW. The participating students have the chance to take part in courses developing their soft competence e.g. auto-presentation, easy functioning in the job market or public performances. On the other hand investing in the development of soft competence (including social competence and the desired personality traits) of the employees may not be omitted by companies and enterprises functioning in the world of growing competition and demand for specialist knowledge (Tomczak, 2017). The emphasis put to soft competence ought not to eclipse the importance of developing core skills which account for the major (over 50% on average) part of the employers' expectations.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations to the presented study include the fact that it concerned a relatively small sample (N=211) from a single university and a single city. The research did not encompass students of universities providing education in different fields of science (e.g. medicine, artistic education, agriculture). The principle of diversification of the fields of study was maintained as well as the presumption of universality of social competence or mobility and flexibility of students regarding future workplace, nevertheless, these do not authorise the wide generalization of the results. Another limitation may be the fact that the study regarded 1st-year students. Assuming that social competence is developed over the entire life span and higher studies undoubtedly contribute to their development, it may not be excluded that the level of competence and its conformity with the demands of employers would be higher among students in their final year of education.

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