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THE RESULTS OF A STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO THE DEMAND FOR COMPETENCIES IN THE LABOR MARKET

DAVIT NARMANIA, EKA CHOKHELI, EKATERINE GULUA, SESILI TABATADZE

Abstract:

The paper is dedicated to the study of students' attitudes towards the challenges of quality management at the largest higher education institution of Georgia, how students assess the market requirements for competencies, and whether they perceive that they receive proper knowledge relevant to modern market requirements.

The aim of the research is: a) to study students' attitudes, how accurately they perceive the labor market attitude towards qualifications, and how much they feel that they are receiving adequate knowledge of the market; B) to develop recommendations for the Faculty of Economics and Business of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University to improve the teaching of appropriate competencies and students' attitude towards the learning process.

The paper is based on the university grant of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University: "Study of the compliance of qualifications of graduates with the labor market requirements of Georgia", which was carried out by the academic staff of the Department of Management and Administration. The paper is based on: the analysis of secondary information about the Georgian labor market in general, the Qualitative analysis of the Georgian higher education system and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University educational process management mechanisms, as well as the Quantitative analysis of the study on attitudes of TSU Faculty of Economics and Business students and representatives of employer organizations to the above challenges.

The survey was conducted using the anonymous survey method, based on a specially designed questionnaire. Out of 200 pre-selected employees, the questionnaire which comprised 69 questions were completed by 137 employers. And a questionnaire consisting of 70 questions for students was distributed to 511 employed and unemployed students according to the specifics of the content. The data were processed using the SPSS Statistics program, both general frequency analysis and cross-tabulation analysis were performed, as well as the reliability of the data and the level of relationships between the variables were determined on the basis of Chi-Square Tests, Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation Analysis, Linear Regression.

In the paper, the analysis of the challenges identified by the results of qualitative and quantitative research formed the basis for finding ways to improve the learning process of TSU Faculty of Economics and Business and developing appropriate recommendations that we think will help the university and stakeholders interested in this issue/field.

Keywords:

Labor Market, Tertiary Education, Learning Outcomes, Qualification, Competency, Skills.

JEL Classification: I21, M19, D83

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INTRODUCTION:

Human resources are the basis of organizations' distinctiveness and competitive advantage (Chatzkel, J L;, 2004)**.** For the employer, the labor market actually has a demand for competence. In this case, competence refers to the individual's ability, level of knowledge, ability to understand, realize, judge and act to perform the duties assigned to him properly, without mistakes, to cope with the relevant challenges, to adapt to the extreme environment. This perspective distinguishes between sectoral and general competencies, as well as functional, intellectual, situational, and social **competencies** (Kennedy, Declan; Hyland, Áine; Ryan, Norma;, 2009)**.** It is also defined as knowledge, its understanding and application skills, capabilities, responsibilities and attitudes - an asset that must be constantly increased, both through self-renewal and learning by the employee, as well as through the efforts of the employer (González, Julia; Wagenaar, Robert;, 2008)**.**

In this article, it is important for us to know the market demands for competencies (Campbell, David; Edgar, David; Stonehouse, George;, 2011) and how well the university creates and develops the competencies required by students, and no less important is how well students realize that they are getting the right competencies, what attitude they have towards the learning process. Here the knowledge triangle brings together business, educational institutions and students. (Gulua, Ekaterine; Mikaberidze, Akaki, 2015)

● From the perspective of the organization, a competence is more like an asset, while competency development is a more practical or at least an action-oriented approach aimed at developing these assets. The goal of competency development is to expand the organization from command and control objectives to learning and self-renewal capabilities. “The organization can use a variety of ways for managing human resources to improve the human capital of the organization. For example, they can buy human capital on the market (pay package) or create it inside (training, development) ” (Jackson, S E; Schuler , R S;, 2007)**.** The competencies of "decoding talents" (Strack, Rainer; Booker, Mike ; Kovács-Ondrejk, Orsolya ;, 2018) and "creating talents" (Caye, Jean-Michel; Hinshaw, Karin ;, 2011) form an important basis for proper action on the part of the organization (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2020)**.**

● The educational institution together with the student creates the relevant competencies for the market, delivers them to the market and itself as an organization has a demand for competencies. Accordingly, in order to provide the market with an adequate "product", it has to create appropriate competencies by attracting highly qualified academic and administrative staff and constantly improving their qualifications (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2020) . It also needs to take care of customer expectations (Zeithaml, Valarie A; Bitner, Mary Jo; Gremler, Dwayne D;, 2013)., (Voss, R; Gruber, T; Szmigin, I;, 2007) and how well stakeholders perceive the "product" it creates (Ng C L, Irene; Forbes, Jeannie;, 2008)**.**

●The student’s attitude is to get from the institution and create an adequate market competence. (Kharadze, Natalia; Gulua, Ekaterine, 2016)**.**

Understanding this unity allows higher education institutions to improve the learning process and create proper management and marketing systems through the conceptualization of the system (MUNTHIU, Maria-Cristiana; TURTOI, Maria; TUŢĂ, Mihaela; ZARA, Adina Iulia;, 2014) Covid-pandemic, post-Covid situations, present these directions from a completely new perspective.

In order to understand the competencies created by higher education and the realities of the demand for it, it is interesting to mention a few facts from the Georgian context. Getting higher education is an important part of the Georgian social culture. If not for the lack of financial access the number of those wishing for higher education would have been much higher. Despite the economic difficulties, the higher education market is growing from year to year. From 2018, the enrollment rate in higher education institutions exceeds 60%, according to 2020 data, the number of students is 152.8 thousand. At the same time, it should be noted that higher education in Georgia slightly increases the chances of employment and increases salaries by only 26%. The unemployment rate of the population with higher education in Georgia has been higher than the level of unemployment of the population with general education for years, however, although the distinction has been decreasing for the last ten years, the unemployment rate is the lowest among those with primary or basic education (Bochorishvili, Eva; Peranidze, Nino;, 2020). The latter may be related to the criterion for determining the unemployment indicator, which significantly reduces the real unemployment rate.[1]

The questionnaire survey was preceded by an agreement on the details of the research between the authors of the grant project. To conduct the research, we made a hard and soft skills analysis based on the objectives of the research; We discussed behavioral, functional and professional competencies; Intellectual, situational, social competencies; Sectoral (transferable) and general competencies. Out of 30 components of instrumental, interpersonal and systemic competencies, 16 competencies were selected. We developed a questionnaire to determine which competencies students and employers prefer and how they rank them.

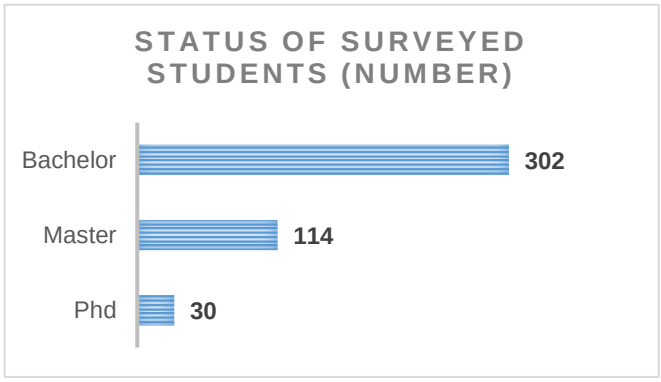
Based on the content of the research, questions were separated: for employed students of all levels (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral), for unemployed students and for employers. Common questions for everyone were assessing the importance of the listed competencies. The student had to evaluate which competencies he/she thought were important for the employer, assess how much he/she was receiving the appropriate competencies from the university. And the employer had to answer in detail according to the specialization of the new recruits which competencies his/her organization preferred.

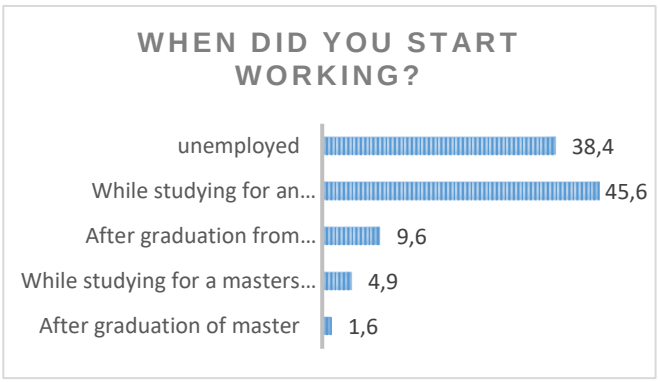
The questionnaire survey of students and employers was conducted from May 14 to October 27, 2021.

Out of 511 students surveyed, 68% were undergraduate students or bachelors, 25% were postgraduates or masters, 7% were doctoral students. Most of the students started working while studying for the undergraduate degree, 38% of the students were unemployed, 24% of the latter (47 students) were not looking for a job in order to devote more time to study. See the distribution of the surveyed students according to the status and starting a job in **Diagram (1, 2) .**

[1] https://www.geostat.ge/en

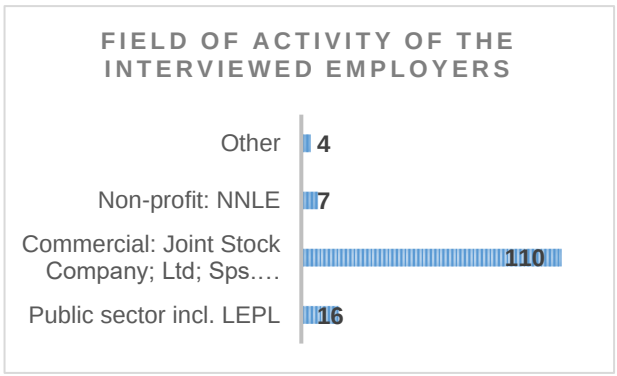
Diagram 1, 2 *- Surveyed students by statuses (1) and Distribution of respondents according to the period of starting the work (2)*

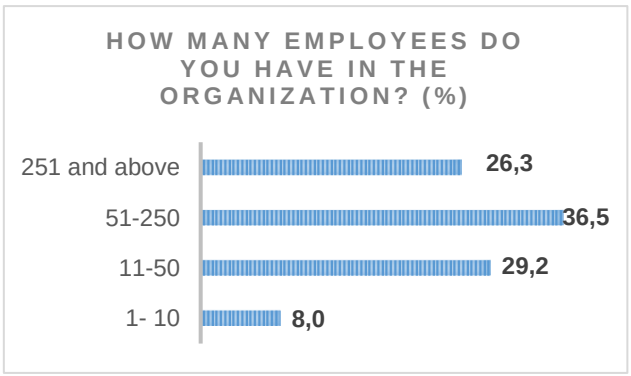




80% of the employers were commercial organizations, the public sector was 12%, the non-profit sector was 7%, and the mixed sector was 3%. There were 50 employer companies with 51 to 250 employees, 40 – from 11 to 50 employees, 36 companies had more than 251 employees. See the distribution of the employers according to the form of ownership and the number of employees in **Diagram (3,4).**

Diagram 3-4: *Field of activity of the interviewed employers (3) and Distribution of surveyed organizations by number of employees (4)*



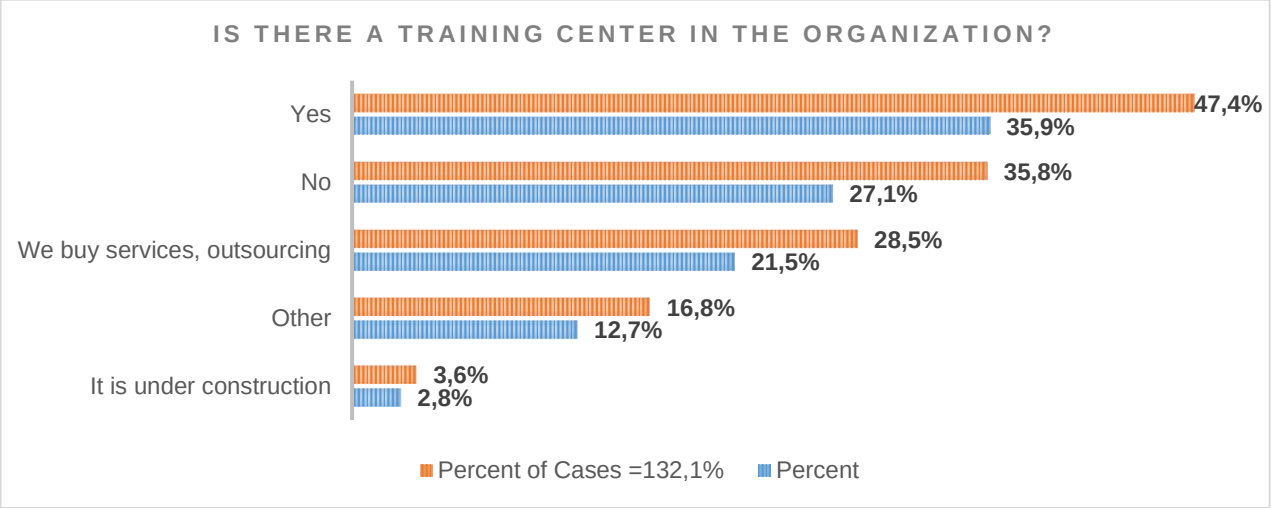


The objectives of our paper are: 1. to find out employers' attitude towards competencies in the labor market; 2. to determine how well students perceive market demands. 3. to determine whether students believe that they are receiving appropriate knowledge at a higher education institution.

Task 1: To find out employers' attitude towards competencies in the labor market;

We wondered how organizations create competencies within their organization. Out of 137 surveyed organizations, 65 have a training /teaching center, in 5 organizations it is in the process of being established, and 39 organizations use outsourcing **(See Diagram5).**

Diagram 5: *Distribution of training center existence in the surveyed organizations*



We were also interested in the cross-tabulation between the number of employees in the organization and the existence of training centers. It turned out that organizations with 251 and more employees have training/teaching centers in 31 out of 36 companies. 9 companies with 11-50 employees have their own training center, half of the companies with 51 to 250 employees (out of 50 companies) - 25 companies have a training center. **(See Table 1)**

Table 1: Crosstabulation - between the number of employees in the organization and the existence of training centers

Crosstabulation								
		Is there a training center in the organization?					Total*	Total**
		Yes	No	It is under construction	We buy services, outsourcing	Other		
Number of employees in the organization (Number)	1- 10	0	9	0	2	1	11	12
	11-50	9	24	2	21	4	40	60
	51-250	25	13	2	14	11	50	65
	251 and above	31	3	1	2	7	36	44
Total		65	49	5	39	23	137	181
* **Percentages and totals are based on respondents.**								
** **Percentages and totals are based on responses.**								

68% of the surveyed employers (93 companies) think that it is difficult to find qualified staff always, or often. Rare cases of this problem are reported by only 5 companies **[See Diagram 6].**

Diagram 6: Respondents' opinion on the following question - It is difficult to find qualified staff in the Georgian labor market

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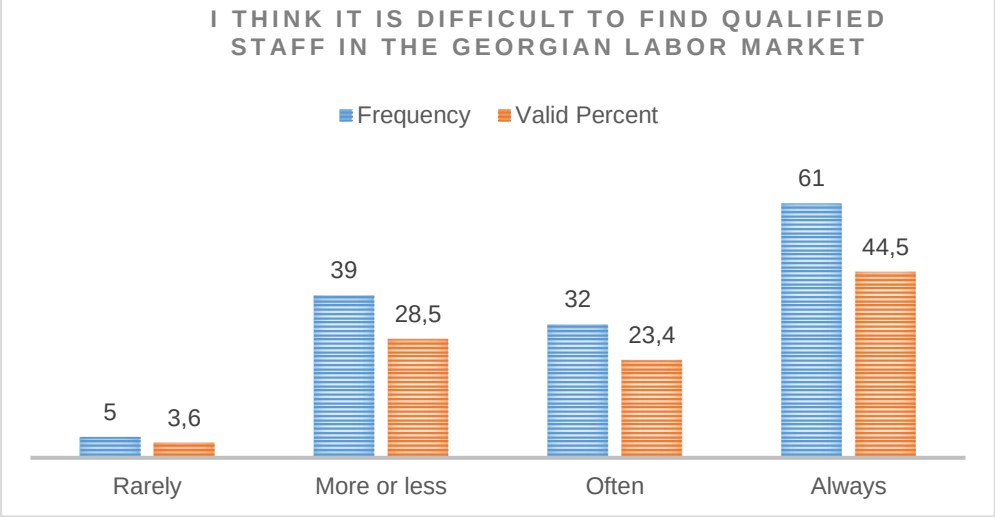


From staffing methods, out of the 137 companies 71 companies (52%) do not or rarely seek staff at universities. This figure may suggest that these organizations have no demand for highly skilled workforce. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of them - 84% (115 companies) do not even look for job applicants at vocational schools. We can conclude that the surveyed companies rarely apply to profile schools for staff selection. Most of the respondents 53% (73 companies) state that they always find staff through personal contacts. Not a small number - an additional 16.8% state that they use this method often, which is 96 companies in total (70%).

Interestingly, 60 companies (44%) do not shy away to state that they more or less or often recruit staff from other organizations when selecting staff. 45.3% of companies more or less use outsourcing and intermediary organizations, 58 companies (42.3%) do not use this method, or rarely use it. 91 (66.4%) companies often or always use the method of finding applicants by publishing an announcement. This method is used by more than 33 companies (24%) of the surveyed ones) **[See Table 2].**

Table 2: Respondents' opinion on the following question - What staffing methods do you use?

What staffing methods do you use?		I do not		rarely		more or less		often		always	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
1	Posting a vacancy announcement	4	2.9	9	6.6	33	24.1	53	38.7	38	27.7
2	Finding in universities	15	10.9	56	40.9	49	35.8	13	9.5	4	2.9
3	Finding in vocational schools	83	60.6	32	23.4	11	8.0	5	3.6	6	4.4
4	Search through intermediary companies, employment agencies	25	18.2	33	24.1	62	45.3	15	10.9	2	1.5
5	Transfer from competitors or other organizations	22	16.1	55	40.1	42	30.7	18	13.1		
6	Search by personal contacts	6	4.4	14	10.2	21	15.3	23	16.8	73	53.3

The study has also found that there is a linear relationship between the number of employees and the methods of finding staff. The Anova test confirmed that the model, which shows a linear regression between the number of employees and the methods of finding staff, is reliable **[See Table 3].**

Table 3: Results of the linear relationship between the number of employees and the methods of finding staff

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.206	6	2.868	3.809	.002[b]
	Residual	97.860	130	.753		
	Total	115.066	136			
a. Dependent Variable: Number of employees in the organization						

b. Predictors: (Constant), Search through personal contacts 6, search in universities 2, post job vacancies 1, recruit from competitors or other organizations 5, search in vocational schools 3, search through intermediary companies, employment agencies Outsourcing 4

The correlation analysis showed the following:

● A statistically significant, weak, positive correlation (at the level of 0.300 **) was found between the following variables: a) we use recruitment methods to recruit from competitors or other organizations, and b) we perform search through personal contacts.

The reliability of the relationship between the variables was also confirmed by the **Chi-Square tests [See Table 4].**

Table 4: Confirm the validity of the relationship between the variables (Chi-Square Tests)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.386[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	41.069	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.243	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 11 cells (55.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

● A negative, weak, but statistically significant correlation was found between the following variables: "We search for staff through personal contacts" and a) "We have higher education staff in the main circle (with a bachelor's or master's degree)"; b) We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students. (At -.478 ** and -437 ** levels respectively) the reliability of the relationship between the above variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square tests **[See tables: 5,6].**

Table 5. *Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	56.028[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	58.835	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.042	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 17 cells (68.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.

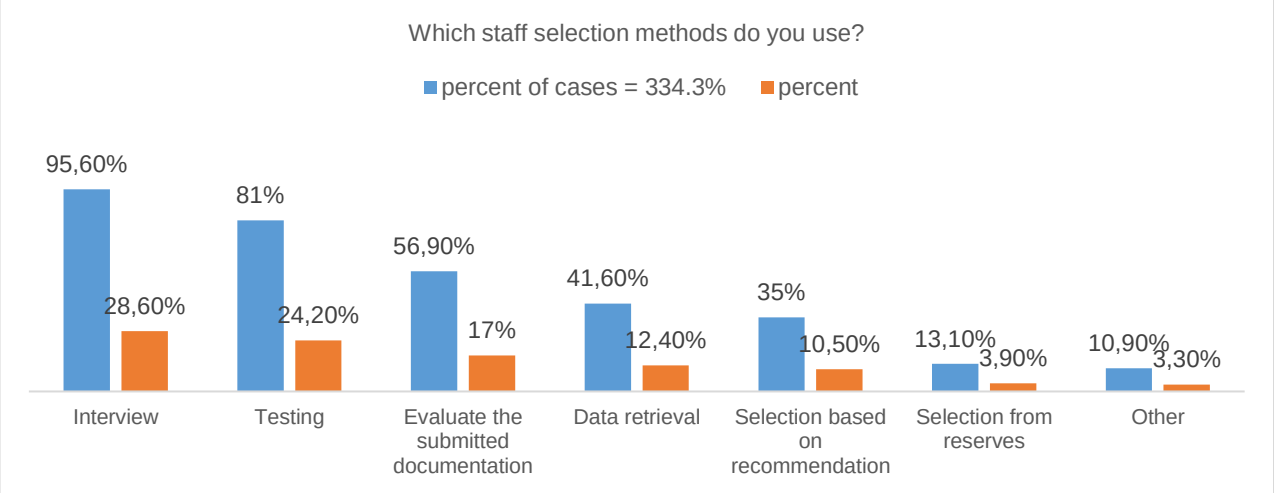
Table 6*. Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	45.319[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	47.369	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.944	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 13 cells (65.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .57.

● Among the methods of personnel selection, the most commonly used is an interview method in the a total of surveyed companies, the following is testing and evaluation of the submitted documents. The least used method by the companies is staff selection from their own reserves (this method is used by 18 companies in total) **[See Diagram7].**

Diagram 7: Respondents' opinion on the following question - Which staff selection methods do you use? (%)



● Statistically significant, positive, average, or strong correlations were found between the following methods for selecting staff named by employers: data sampling, evaluation of submitted documentation, testing, interviewing, and recommendation sampling **[See Table 7].**

Table 7: Correlation between personnel selection methods

		1.Data selection	2. Evaluation of the submitted documentation	3.Testing	4.Interview	5.Selection based on recommendation
1.Data selection	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**	.600**	.644**	.[b]
2. Evaluation of the submitted documentation	Pearson Correlation	.812**	1	.780**	.848**	.713**
3.Testing	Pearson Correlation	.600**	.780**	1	.861**	.713**
4.Interview	Pearson Correlation	.644**	.848**	.861**	1	.713**
5.Selection based on recommendation	Pearson Correlation	.[b]	.713**	.713**	.713**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

Data selection, evaluation of submitted documentation, testing, the reliability of connection between an interview and selection based on recommendation was also confirmed by the Pearson Chi-square test (at 0.000 level).

We were interested in the organizations that use the selection from reserves (18 companies) how many of them have their own training center. The cross-tabulation table showed that there are 12 such companies. 65 surveyed organizations have a training center [See Table 8].

Table 8: Crosstabulation between staffing methods and training center in the organization

			What staffing methods do you use?							Total
			Data selection	Evaluation of the submitted documentation	Testing	Interview	Selection based on recommendation	Selection from reserves	Other	
Is there a training center in the organization?	Yes	Count	27	37	56	65	19	12	8	65
	No	Count	20	27	36	44	17	3	3	49
	It is under construction	Count	4	4	4	5	2	2	1	5
	We buy services, outsourcing	Count	14	28	35	38	15	4	0	39
	Other	Count	8	11	19	22	6	0	6	23
Total		Count	57	78	111	131	48	18	13	137

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Group

We offered the employers some evidence and calculated the frequency of their intensity. Employers more or less consider the academic achievement of the contenders, although they often have to select a candidate with a different specialty in the workplace, although this almost does not happen at the higher level. It is also rare, or more or less, to hire individuals with a higher education degree at the fundamental level **[See Table 9].**

Table 9: Frequency of intensity in the employer's opinion

		1.Never		2.Rarely		3. More or less		4. Often		5. Always	
			%		%		%		%		%
1	When hiring a beginner specialist, we pay attention to the candidate's academic attendance at the higher education institution. (GPI).	10	7.3	19	13.9	56	40.9	46	33.6	6	4.4
2	We have higher education staff employed in the main position (already with a bachelor's or master's degree)	7	5.1	58	42.3	31	22.6	23	16.8	18	13.1
3	We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students			13	9.5	83	60.6	27	19.7	14	10.2
4	It is possible to hire a candidate without a profile education in the higher than average level position (we have)	58	42.3	38	27.7	21	15.3	16	11.7	4	2.9
5	We consider the views of a low-level employee when making important, high-level decisions.			53	38.7	56	40.9	21	15.3	7	5.1
6	We hire a candidate with another specialty to a position that provided for the employment of a person with a certain specialty.	7	5.1	21	15.3	39	28.5	67	48.9	3	2.2
7	I think it is difficult to find qualified staff in the Georgian labor market.			5	3.6	39	28.5	32	23.4	61	44.5

Most employers offer more or less flexible work schedules to employed students, 41 companies offering frequently or always. Also most of them - 102 companies more or less or often pay attention to the academic performance of the job applicants (GPI) **[See Table 10].**

Table 10: Crosstabulation – between candidate's academic achievement and flexible work schedule for employed students

		We pa we pay attention to the candidate's academic achievement (GPI) in higher education.					Total
		Never	Rarely	More or less	Often	Always	
We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students	Rarely	0	3	6	4	0	13
	More or less	2	8	38	30	5	83
	Often	2	7	11	7	0	27
	Always	6	1	1	5	1	14
Total		10	19	56	46	6	137

The reliability of the relationship between these two variables was confirmed by the Chi-Square Test [See Table 11].

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.738[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.931	12	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.745	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .57.

It should be noted that a negative, statistically significant but weak correlation was found between these two variables **[See Table 12].**

Table 12: Correlations between candidate's academic achievement and flexible work schedule for employed students

		We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students	We pay attention to the candidate's academic achievement (GPI) in higher education.
We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students	Pearson Correlation	1	-.223**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	137	137
We pay attention to the candidate's academic achievement (GPI) in higher education.	Pearson Correlation	-.223**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A statistically significant, positive, mean correlation was found between the following variables: a) "We take into account the views of a low-level employee when making important, high-level decisions."; b) "It is possible to hire a candidate without a profile education at the level above the average (we hire)."; c) "We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students" **[See Table 13].**

Table 13: Correlations between different component

		We take into account the views of the low-level employee when making decisions	It is possible to hire a candidate without a profile education in the above-average level	We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students
We take into account the views of the low-level employee when making decisions	Pearson Correlation	1	.532**	.533**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	137	137	137

It is possible to hire a candidate without a profile education in the above-average level	Pearson Correlation	.532**	1	.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	137	137	137
We have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students	Pearson Correlation	.533**	.409**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	137	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Anova test confirmed the reliability of the model **[See Table 14].**

Table 14: Model reliability with anova test

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.078	2	20.039	45.086	.000[b]
	Residual	59.557	134	.444		
	Total	99.635	136			

a. Dependent Variable: We take into account the views of the low-level employee when making decisions.

b. Predictors: (Constant), It is possible to hire a candidate without a profile education in the higher than average level, we have developed a flexible work schedule for employed students

The Chi-Square Test confirmed that the relationship between these variables is reliable (at 0.000 level) **[See Tables: 15,16].**

Table 15: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	79.238[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	69.664	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	38.431	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Table 16: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61.797[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.755	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	38.655	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 7 cells (43.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .66.

When we asked the employer which competencies they prefer when selecting beginner specialists- the highest rating (68%) was given to the ability of applying knowledge in practice, followed by the ability to analyze and synthesize, the ability to work in a team, the ability to take initiative and start a business, etc. **[See Table 17].**

Table 17: Asked by the employer which competencies they prefer when selecting beginner specialists

Question to the employer: What skills do you prefer when selecting a novice beginner specialist? (Compound of two questions in%)		**Never or rarely**	**More or less**	**Often**	**Always**
6	Ability to apply knowledge in practice	.7	5.8	24.8	68.6
3	Ability to analyze and synthesize	2.2	8.0	24.8	65.0
8	Ability to work in a group	1.5	8.8	42.3	47.4
11	Initiative and ability to start a business	1.5	19.7	34.3	44.5
14	Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	1.5	16.1	43.8	38.7
13	Ability to adapt to a new environment	2.2	15.3	47.4	35.0
16	Leadership	3.6	23.4	42.3	30.7
7	Ability to work independently	2.2	18.2	52.6	27.0
2	ability to learn	2.2	8.8	65.7	23.4
4	To solve the problem	5.8	16.8	56.9	20.4
5	Decision-making skills	4.4	21.2	56.9	17.5
9	Ability to think critically and self-critically	10.9	46.0	29.2	13.9
15	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	29.2	38.0	19.0	13.9
10	Ability to generate new ideas	2.2	30.7	55.5	11.7
17	Other basic skills	65.0	19.7	5.1	10.2
1	Thorough basic knowledge of the profession	13.8	57.7	21.2	7.3
18	Other additional skills	66.4	18.2	8.8	6.6
12	Ability to communicate with non-specialists	30.7	46.0	17.5	5.8

The general picture of the correlations between the variables is as follows: there is a statistically significant, positive mean correlation between problem-solving ability and decision-making ability (at 0.658 ** level) **[See Table 18].**

Table 18: Correlation between “To solve the problem” and “Decision-making skills”

		4. To solve the problem	5. Decision-making skills
4. To solve the problem	Pearson Correlation	1	.658**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	137	137
5. Decision-making skills	Pearson Correlation	.658**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Also the Chi-Square Test found the relationship between these two variables to be reliable **[See Table 19].**

Table 19: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	115.413[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	103.209	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	58.962	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 10 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .35.

There is a statistically significant, positive average correlation between the ability to generate new ideas and the ability to take the initiative and start a business (at 0.548 ** level). **[See Table 20].**

Table 20: Correlations between Ability to generate new ideas and Initiative and business start-up skills

		2. Ability to generate new ideas	3. Initiative and business start-up skills
2. Ability to generate new ideas	Pearson Correlation	1	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	137	137
3. Initiative and business start-up skills	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the cross-tabulation relationship between the above variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square test **[See Table 21].**

Table 21: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	66.697[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	54.305	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.899	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

There is also a statistically significant, positive average correlation (at the level of 0.587 **) between respect for diversity and multiculturalism and the ability to communicate with non-specialists [See Table 22].

Table 22: Correlation between Ability to communicate with non-specialists and Respect for diversity and multiculturalism

		4. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	7. Respect for diversity and multiculturalism
4. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	Pearson Correlation	1	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	137	137
7. Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	Pearson Correlation	.587**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the relationship between the variables was determined (at 0.000 level) **[See Table 23].**

Table 23: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	86.546[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	82.948	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	46.881	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 15 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

There is also an average, positive, statistically significant correlation between the ability to adapt to the new environment and a sense of commitment to ethics (at 0.551**level) **[See Table 24].**

Table 24: Correlation between Ability to adapt to a new environment and Awareness of the obligation to protect ethics

		5. Ability to adapt to a new environment	6. Awareness of the obligation to protect ethics
5. Ability to adapt to a new environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	137	137
6. Awareness of the obligation to protect ethics	Pearson Correlation	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	137	137

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the relationship between these variables has been confirmed (at 0.000 level) **[See Table 25].**

Table 25: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.475[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	60.024	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	41.352	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

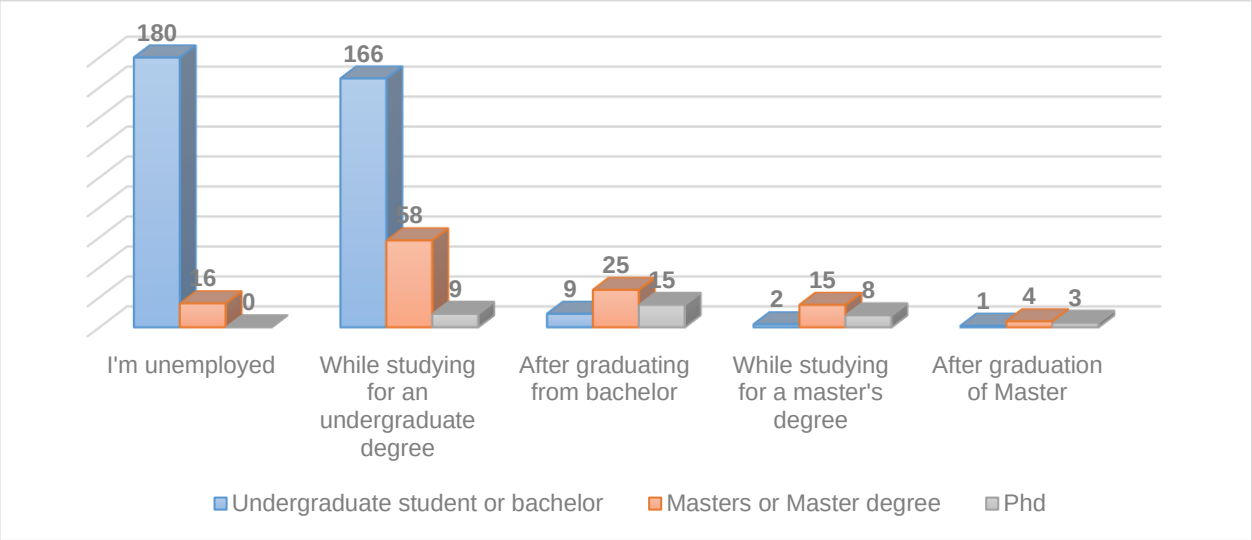
a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

From the above we can conclude that the opinions expressed by the employers are logically interconnected and the data obtained are reliable.

Task 2. - Determining how well students perceive market demands.

A)The cross-tabulation between university status and length of service shows that the majority of employed students started working during their undergraduate studies **[See Diagram 8].**

Diagram 8: Cross-tabulation between university status and period of commencement of work



The Chi-Square Test shows that there is a reliable relationship between these two **[See Table 26].**

Table 26: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	249.447[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	250.410	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	179.279	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

B)The rating of competencies named as important for the employer by the position of the interviewed students is as follows: the ability to apply knowledge in practice, the ability to analyze and synthesize, the ability to learn, the ability to make decisions **[See Table 27].**

Table 27: Rating of competencies named important to the employer by the position of the students surveyed

Question to the student: What do you think, which competencies of the candidate to be selected are important for the employer? (%)		1. does not matter	2. Has a value below average	3. has a mean value	4. It matters	5. is very important
6	Ability to apply knowledge in practice	3.1	2.2	6.3	27.2	61.3
3	Ability to analyze and synthesize	3.5	2.5	7.6	30.5	55.8
2	ability to learn	3.1	3.3	7.4	32.3	53.8
5	Decision-making skills	2.9	3.3	8.6	32.7	52.4
4	To solve the problem	2.9	2.0	8.4	35.8	50.9
14	Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	4.3	3.9	12.3	30.9	48.5
7	Ability to work independently	3.1	2.0	10.8	35.8	48.3
8	Ability to work in a group	4.1	1.6	11.4	37.2	45.8
9	Ability to think critically and self-critically	4.3	4.1	12.5	34.8	44.2
13	Ability to adapt to a new environment	4.1	3.9	12.9	38.9	40.1
10	Ability to generate new ideas	5.1	4.9	17.6	35.0	37.4
15	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	5.9	8.0	17.4	31.9	36.8
11	Initiative and ability to start a business	4.5	4.5	20.4	35.6	35.0
1	Thorough basic knowledge of the profession	5.5	6.3	23.7	34.1	30.5

16	Leadership	6.1	7.0	24.1	36.0	26.8
12	Ability to communicate with non-specialists	5.3	6.8	26.8	35.2	25.8
17	Other basic skills	16.4	11.9	23.5	26.6	21.5

Students found correlations between assessments of competencies important to the employer. The reliability of their connections was verified by the Chi-Square Tests.

A statistically significant, strong positive correlation (at 0.750** level) was found between the learning ability and the ability to analyze and synthesize **[See Table 28].**

Table 28: Correlations between ability to learn and Ability to analyze and synthesize (For the next question: which competencies of the candidate to be selected are important for the employer?)

		2. ability to learn	3. Ability to analyze and synthesize
2. ability to learn)	Pearson Correlation	1	.750**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	511	511
3. Ability to analyze and synthesize	Pearson Correlation	.750**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	511	511

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the association of these variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square Test (at 0.000 level) **[See Table 29].**

Table 29: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	553.670[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	333.697	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	286.689	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

A statistically significant, average positive correlation (at 0.731** level) was found between the ability to analyze and synthesize and the ability to apply knowledge in practice **[See Table 30].**

Table 30: Correlations between ability to learn and Ability to analyze and synthesize (For the next question: which competencies of the candidate to be selected are important for the employer?)

		3. Ability to analyze and synthesize	6. Ability to apply knowledge in practice
3. Ability to analyze and synthesize	Pearson Correlation	1	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	511	511
6. Ability to apply knowledge in practice	Pearson Correlation	.731**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	511	511

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A reliable relationship between the ability to analyze and synthesize and the ability to apply knowledge in practice was confirmed by the Chi-Square Test at 0.000 level **[See Table 31].**

Table 31: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	576.077[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	296.872	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	272.278	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

a. 13 cells (52.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.

A statistically significant, strong positive correlation (at 0.841** level) was found between the decision-making ability and the problem-solving ability [See Table 32].

Table 32: Correlations between Problem solving ability and Decision-making skills

		Problem solving ability	Decision-making skills
Problem solving ability	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	511	511
Decision-making skills	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	511	511

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the relationship of the above variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square test **[See Table 33].**

Table 33: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	854.237[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	513.653	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	360.746	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .29.

There was also a strong positive statistically significant correlation between initiative and business start-up ability and the ability to generate new ideas (at 0.871 ** level) **[See Table 34]**

Table 34: Correlations between Problem solving ability and Decision-making skills

		Problem solving ability	Decision-making skills
Problem solving ability	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	511	511
Decision-making skills	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	511	511

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the relationship between the above two variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square test (at 0.000 level) **[See table 35].**

Table 35: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	854.237[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	513.653	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	360.746	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

a. 11 cells (44.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .29.

A strong, positive statistically significant correlation was found between respect for diversity and multiculturalism and a sense of commitment to ethics at the level of 0.803 ** [See Table 36].

Table 36: Correlation between Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics and Respect for diversity and multiculturalism

		Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism
Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	Pearson Correlation	1	.803**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	511	511
Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	Pearson Correlation	.803**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	511	511

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability between the assessment scores for these competencies according to the Chi-Square test was found to be at the level of 0.000 [See Table 37].

Table 37: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	728.400[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	551.274	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	328.647	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	511		

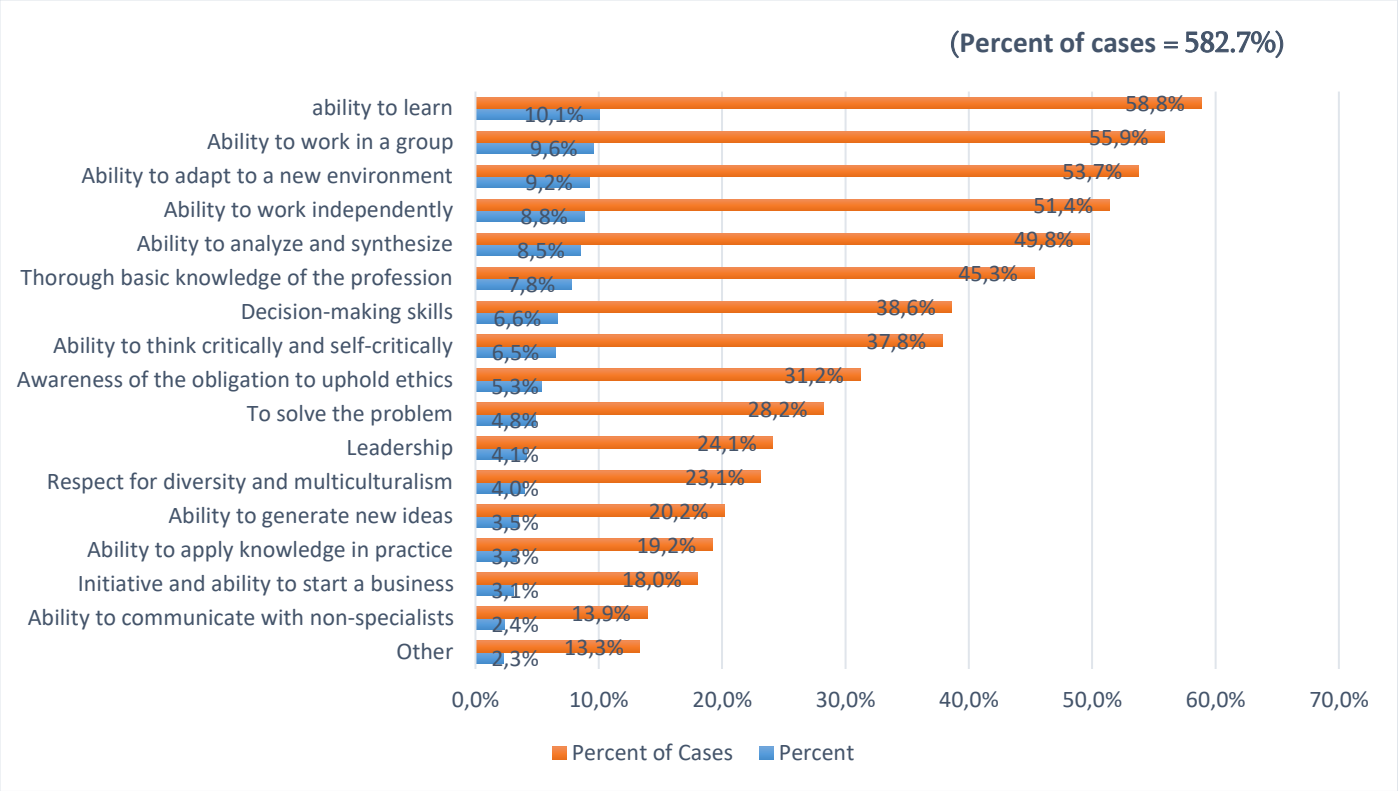
a. 7 cells (28.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.17.

In conclusion, to the question: "Which competencies of the candidate do you think are important for the employer?" there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the responses on all competencies, also the Chi-Square test confirmed the interrelationship of all variables (at 0.000) level.

Task 3. Determining whether students believe that they are acquiring appropriate knowledge at a higher education institution.

The survey asked students, "What skills does studying at university help them to develop?" - the first place was taken by the ability to study (59%), followed by the ability to work in a group, the ability to adapt to a new environment, the ability to analyze and synthesize, etc. **[See Diagram 9].**

Diagram 9: Which competencies did studying at the university help you to develop?



We checked the relationship between the above variables by Pearson Correlation Analysis method, and the reliability of the relationship between the variables by the Chi-Square test.

► Statistically significant, very strong correlations were found: between the ability to work in a group - critical thinking and self-criticism skills (at 0.936 ** level) and the ability to generate new ideas (at 0.909 ** level), and between the ability to think critically and self-critically and the ability to generate new ideas (at 0.941 ** level) **[See Table 38].**

Table 38: Correlation between Ability to work in groups, Ability to think critically and self-critically and Ability to generate new ideas

Also based on the Chi-Square test it was found that the relationship between these two variables is very reliable **[See Table 39, 40, 41].**

		8. Ability to work in groups	9. Ability to think critically and self-critically	10. Ability to generate new ideas
8. Ability to work in groups	Pearson Correlation	1	.936**	.909**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	139	96	63
9. Ability to think critically and self-critically	Pearson Correlation	.936**	1	.941**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	96	96	63
10. Ability to generate new ideas	Pearson Correlation	.909**	.941**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	63	63	63

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 39: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	423.736[a]	64	.000
Likelihood Ratio	251.631	64	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	83.289	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	96		

a. 78 cells (96.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 40: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	152.050[a]	42	.000
Likelihood Ratio	137.127	42	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	51.246	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 55 cells (98.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 41: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	188.710[a]	42	.000
Likelihood Ratio	157.688	42	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	54.931	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 55 cells (98.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

► A very strong, positive, statistically significant correlation was found between the ability to think critically and self-critically and the ability to generate new ideas and the ability to take an initiative and start a business **[See Table 42].**

Table 42: Correlation between Ability to think critically and self-critically and Initiative and ability to start a business

		9. Ability to think critically and self-critically	11. Initiative and ability to start a business
9. Ability to think critically and self-critically	Pearson Correlation	1	.904**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	96	43
11. Initiative and ability to start a business	Pearson Correlation	.904**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	43	43

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between these variables was confirmed by the Chi-Square test at 0.000 level **[See Table 43].**

Table 43: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	114.826[a]	36	.000
Likelihood Ratio	94.715	36	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.307	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	43		

a. 48 cells (98.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

► A very strong, statistically significant positive correlation was found between the ability to generate new ideas - the ability to take an initiative and start a business, the ability to communicate with non-specialists, the ability to adapt to a new environment **[See Table 44].**

Table 44: Correlations between Ability to generate new ideas, Initiative and ability to start a business and others

		10. Ability to generate new ideas	11. Initiative and ability to start a business	12. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	13. Ability to adapt to a new environment
10. Ability to generate new ideas	Pearson Correlation	1	.968**	.944**	.901**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	63	43	29	25
11. Initiative and ability to start a business	Pearson Correlation	.968**	1	.962**	.901**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	43	43	29	25
12. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	Pearson Correlation	.944**	.962**	1	.991**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	29	29	29	25
13. Ability to adapt to a new environment	Pearson Correlation	.901**	.901**	.991**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	25	25	25	25

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationships between these variables were found to be very reliable through the Chi-Square test **[See Tables: 45,46,47].**

Table 45: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	181.556[a]	36	.000
Likelihood Ratio	118.496	36	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.347	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	43		

a. 48 cells (98.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Table 46: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	110.291[a]	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	63.807	25	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.966	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	29		

a. 35 cells (97.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 47: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.656[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	47.947	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.462	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	25		

a. 24 cells (96.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

► The table also shows that there is a very strong, statistically significant positive correlation between the skills of taking an initiative and starting a business and the ability to communicate with non-specialists (at 0.962 ** level), between taking an initiative and business start-up skills and the ability to adapt to a new environment (at 0.962 ** level). The relationship between these variables was also confirmed by the Chi-Square test **[See Tables:48,49].**

Table 48: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	106.545[a]	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	64.486	25	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.887	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	29		

a. 35 cells (97.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 49: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.656[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	47.947	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.462	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	25		

a. 24 cells (96.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

► There is a very strong, statistically significant positive correlation between the ability to communicate with non-specialists and a) the ability to adapt to a new environment (at 0.991 ** level) and b) the commitment to ethics (at 0.957 ** level) **[See Table 50].**

Table 50: Correlations between Ability to communicate with non-specialists, Ability to adapt to a new environment, Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics

		12. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	13. Ability to adapt to a new environment	14. Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics
12. Ability to communicate with non-specialists	Pearson Correlation	1	.991**	.957**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	29	25	19
13. Ability to adapt to a new environment	Pearson Correlation	.991**	1	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	25	25	19
14. Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	Pearson Correlation	.957**	.972**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	19	19	19

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The reliability of the relationship between these variables was confirmed by the Chi-Square test (at 0.000 level) **[See Tables 51,52].**

Table 51: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	84.375[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	62.710	16	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	23.553	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	25		

a. 24 cells (96.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Table 52: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.556[a]	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	28.198	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.488	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	19		

a. 11 cells (91.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

► There is also a very strong, statistically significant, positive correlation (at 0.972 ** level) between the ability to adapt to a new environment and a sense of commitment to ethics. The reliability of the connection between them was also confirmed by the Chi-Square test **[See Table 52].**

Table 52: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.444[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.017	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.991	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	19		

a. 15 cells (93.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this section is that the answers to the question asked to the students: "Which competence did studying at the university help you to develop?" A statistically significant positive, average, strong, or very strong answers were found out based on Pearson Correlation Analysis. The reliability of the relationship between the answers is also confirmed by the Chi-Square tests.

If we combine the general results of the above 3 tasks, we will see that the 2 most important competencies for employers (the ability to apply knowledge in practice and the ability to analyze and synthesize) are accurately perceived by most students **[See Table 54].** At the same time their opinion about whether they get these skills from the university - it ranks fifth and fourteenth in the ranking. From the students' point of view, the university helps them less in developing the ability to apply knowledge in practice. For the employer, the third most important thing is the "ability to work in a group", which from the students' point of view is the second in ranking among the skills received from the university. Taking an initiative and the ability to start a business is fourth in the ranking for the employer. Perception of this need is thirteenth in the ranking for students, and also in their view this skill is the fifteenth among those developed at university.

Table 54: Comparing the opinions of employers and students

N		According to the student - Competencies important to the employer		Competencies important to the employer		According to the student - Which skills does the university help students develop?
1	6	Ability to apply knowledge in practice	6	Ability to apply knowledge in practice	2	ability to learn
2	3	Ability to analyze and synthesize	3	Ability to analyze and synthesize	8	Ability to work in a group
3	2	ability to learn	8	Ability to work in a group	13	Ability to adapt to a new environment
4	5	Decision-making skills	11	Initiative and ability to start a business	7	Ability to work independently
5	4	To solve the problem	14	Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	3	Ability to analyze and synthesize
6	14	Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics	13	Ability to adapt to a new environment	1	Thorough basic knowledge of the profession
7	7	Ability to work independently	16	Leadership	5	Decision-making skills

8	8	Ability to work in a group	7	Ability to work independently	9	Ability to think critically and self-critically
9	9	Ability to think critically and self-critically	2	ability to learn	14	Awareness of the obligation to uphold ethics
10	13	Ability to adapt to a new environment	4	To solve the problem	4	To solve the problem
11	10	Ability to generate new ideas	5	Decision-making skills	16	Leadership
12	15	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	9	Ability to think critically and self-critically	15	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism
13	11	Initiative and ability to start a business	15	Respect for diversity and multiculturalism	10	Ability to generate new ideas
14	1	Thorough basic knowledge of the profession	10	Ability to generate new ideas	6	Ability to apply knowledge in practice
15	16	Leadership	1	Thorough basic knowledge of the profession	11	Initiative and ability to start a business
16	12	Ability to communicate with non-specialists	12	Ability to communicate with non-specialists	12	Ability to communicate with non-specialists

The role of higher education is growing in terms of a compliance of the young people's competencies with the labor market requirements (Tremblay, Karine; Lalancette, Diane; Roseveare, Deborah;, 2012), (Nizharadze, David; Chokheli, Eka;, 2018), (Chokheli, E; Alphenidze, O;, 2015). At the same time, it can significantly improve business outcomes in terms of providing them with competent staff (Davies, Brent ; Davies, Barbara J;, 2001), (Kasradze, Tea, 2018), (Chokheli, Eka;, 2012), as the latter operates in a rather difficult environment even in the face of the Covid-Pandemic challenges (Nizharadze, David;, 2021). Programs suitable for the labor market, practice-oriented training, close collaboration with business through the use of sophisticated management system (Paichadze, N; Chokheli, E; Keshelashvili , G; Kharkheli, M; Tielidze, Sh; Tchuradze, G;, 2016) (Goletiani, et al., 2021), these are experienced strategies that significantly reduce the unemployment among people with higher education (Kasradze, Tea; Zarnadze, Nino, 2018), increase the prestige, efficiency and effectiveness of business and higher education.

The analysis of the results of our current and previous studies (Narmania, David; Chokheli, Eka; Kharkheli, Manana; Keshelashvili, Giuli; Kikutadze, Vasil; Gulua, Ekaterine; Vardiashvili, Nino; Tofuria, Beka; Gavardashvili, Davit;, 2021); (Gulua, Ekaterine, 2017) , (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2018),

(Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2019) has given us the opportunity to fully understand the existing challenges and make recommendations for problem solving.

This study has found that 92% of the students prefer practice-oriented learning (the similar results were found in other similar studies) (Kasradze, Tea; Gulua, Ekaterine, 2021), 76% prefer infrastructure to be improved, 75% prefer programs to be improved. 72% of the **employers** want the university to have the programs tailored to the labor market, 56% - programs to be improved, 56% - to be established closer contacts with business.

► An important role in the reform of the management system of higher education institutions can play an effective management of state projects in this direction and the reasonable policy of the government (Tabatadze, Sesili;, 2019). Democratization of processes, publicity, discussions of current challenges will expand the involvement of administrative, academic staff and students in solving problems and accelerate outcomes as well as students' conscious attitude towards the learning process.

► Summing up the respondents' views towards the existing challenges showed that the concern is to increase the authority of the document proving higher education among employers, which can be achieved only through the implementation of multi-year, targeted measures;

►A platform for close cooperation between the university and business should be created, on the basis of which knowledge and experience will be shared, joint challenges will be addressed.

►The purpose of the teaching process is to develop independent, critical, creative thinking skills, teamwork skills, etc. in students. For this it is necessary to introduce a specific teaching methodology, including the prohibition of plagiarism in students' analytical papers, for the latter it is necessary to equip lecturers with appropriate mechanisms, to launch a platform for publishing student papers;

►For improving the practical courses at higher education institutions it is important: to regulate the workload norms of professors, it is necessary to take care of their development, trainings, incentives, it is important to equip the educational process with appropriate technical means, to improve the infrastructure.

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