

THE GLOBAL COMPETENCES. ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYERS' DEMAND FOR GLOBAL COMPETENCES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. *The internationalization of companies has led to the diversification of demand for competences and to an increased competition in the labor market. For the labor market, it has become more common to adopt the concept of global citizenship in terms of competences and economic competitiveness when recruiting human resources. The global citizenship is the principal outcome of international education and is also linked to the internationalization of the curriculum. Developing the international curricula means preparing the graduates to live and work in a global world and enabling students to obtain both the social and the professional competences necessary to obtain a job anywhere in the world. In Romania, the employers have increased their demand for global competencies and practical skills in recent years due to the internationalization of companies and markets that are strongly connected to the necessity of hiring adaptable and flexible employees with analytical capacity and a high level of professionalism and integrity. These competences are found more and more often in employers' adverts for entry jobs. This trend has become challenging (seen both as an opportunity and a threat) especially for young graduates since they are facing the rapid changes from the labor market. Nowadays, the development of technology has facilitated the connection between the demand and the supply on the labor market via social networks or e-jobs platforms. The use of dedicated social networks for human resources recruitment has implications for the way the competition for obtaining a job at both national and international level changes and diversifies. The purpose of this article is to analyze the global competences required for the employment of young graduates of Economics in the Romanian labor market. For this purpose, the study aims to identify and to analyze the global competences required for entry-level jobs related to graduates of Economics (e.g. junior Accountant, junior financial analyst, junior Marketing expert). In this regard, the analysis is based on job requirements from human resources recruitment networks and e-jobs platforms (LinkedIn, bestjobs and e-jobs). Afterward, the paper synthesizes the results and builds a matrix of global competences based on the level of relevance; this matrix represents the fundamentals needed for designing the internationalized curricula.*

Keywords: *curricula; global competences; labor market; internationalization; competitiveness.*

Introduction

Major changes have influenced the international economy and the main changes have been the rapid development of direct foreign investment in national economies and the constant growth of international commerce (Cantwell & Janne, 2000; Hirst & Thompson, 2002, pp.98-101; Voinea, 2007, pp.31-32). The authors mention that the multinational companies (MNC) are responsible for direct foreign investments in local industries and that there are important changes in local markets as a result of their presence. MNC have brought also important changes in Romanian economy as Eurostat Report (Eurostat, 2014) highlights „in some selected Central European economies, such as Estonia, Romania, and Slovakia, the foreign-controlled companies play a substantial role in the economic performance in their economies”. Starting from these statements, the present study aims to analyze the implication of internationalization of the companies and of MNC presence in Romanian markets from the perspective of Romanian labor market demand for global competences. To achieve this, the paper will present, on the one hand, the main characteristics of global competences, the connections between the international market characteristics and the increasing demand for global competences, and on the other hand, the importance of global competences for increasing employability on the labor market. The role of this analysis is to identify which are global competences required by employers in order to help the universities to meet this demand and to apply changes in the curricula by providing high employability skills and competences. Thus, the literature review will show the categories of skills that form the global competences, the connection of each category with the specific feature of the international market and, ultimately, the importance of global competences for increasing employability of young graduates.

In the methodology section, the present paper will use for determining the most wanted profiles in graduates the technique of content analysis of internet-advertised posts for jobs on three social network platforms (LinkedIn, bestjobs and e-jobs) in order to describe in a systematical and quantitative manner the content of communication (Chelcea, 2007, p.568). For this purpose, we have selected 50 job adverts for young Economist graduates in which were present at least three global competences. Thus, by synthesizing and coding the data, we have built a matrix of global competences that shows which are the most important global competences demanded by Romanian employers.

The conclusions of this paper highlight that the global competences are often present in the job adverts for young graduates and this is a direct consequence of the Romanian labor market openness to internationalization.

Literature review

The global competences. Increasing employability in the labor market

The globalization process has brought many changes in the way companies perceive the development of their business and thus important changes in the process of recruiting the workforce. Also, the globalization is seen as the main factor leading to the development of the multinational companies or increasing the importance of an international component of the business/company. Companies' organizational culture plays an important role in becoming more innovative, taking advantages of work

creativity and gaining market advantages (Zhang, Larkin & Lucey, 2017). In terms of human resources, the innovative company is seen as an entity where all its members are involved in creating new products, services or processes (Sarros et al., 2008, cited in Zhang, Larkin & Lucey, 2017). Also, the same study mentions that in competitive and innovative companies, the employees are encouraged to develop independent thinking and creativity, to cultivate engagement and enthusiasm, to collaborate efficiently with the team, to know how to prioritize their tasks and to adapt and solve different issues. In this regard, starting from innovation and technology development we are witnessing nowadays the growth of the importance of global professions and global competences (van der Wende, 2018; WEF, 2016). These studies have showed that engineering is among the most globalized and regulated professions. The curriculum for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is internationalized because their content is already universal, being facilitated by the use of mathematics and/or by computer languages as universal languages. Also, this complex of technical fields (STEM) “was among the first fields to switch to English”, being created and developed “in a global science system, with strong international cooperation and broad use of English as scientific lingua franca” (van der Wende, 2018).

If global professions are relatively simple to identify, for defining and understanding the global competences we propose a deeper analysis starting from showing the link between international markets’ characteristics and the recognized need for global competences on the international labor market. Before describing the correlation presented in Table no. 1, we will put forward a few general definitions and theoretical aspects regarding global competences.

The term of global competences is usually used with reference to curriculum internationalization (Morais & Ogden, 2011), employability (Yorke & Knight, 2006) and with global citizenship (Morais & Ogden, 2011; Shultz, 2007). Internationalization of curriculum represents the internationalization of the educational content, including the new teaching and learning instruments, distance learning, programs in a foreign language, interdisciplinary curricula covering more than one country, leading on the one hand to joint/ double degrees from different countries and, on the other hand, to internationally recognized professional qualifications (Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Knight, 2004; Nicolescu, 2014; Van der Wende, 1997).

Employability is defined by Yorke & Knight (2016) as “a set of achievements – skills, understanding and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain development and be successful in their chosen occupation, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”. Thus, employability is seen as an individual adaptation through qualities and competences to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and is applied in different contexts by those in work or by those seeking work (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2004).

The term of global citizenship is used as a “multidimensional construct that hinges on the interrelated dimensions of Social Responsibility, Global Competence, and Global Civic Engagement” (Morais & Ogden, 2011). The conceptual model realized by Morais and Ogden (2011) describes each dimension of global citizenship, all three dimensions being important for increasing the employability in the perspective of increasing the transnational mobility of knowledge and skills (Shultz, 2007).

The global competences are the interpersonal skills recognized internationally (Deardorff, 2014; OECD, 2016, pp.4-6) and are related to a sum of abilities and expertise among which we mention: the ability to solve the problems and to find information, the ability to work under pressure, to develop and coordinate multicultural teams, the ability to deal with different communication styles, to hold international expertise, foreign language abilities, international market skills and general world business knowledge (Bush & Bush, 1998; Yu et al., 2005; van der Wende, 2018). The global competences are also called the “21st century skills” (van der Wende, 2018), covering four categories of skills needed in international markets: relational skills, motivational skills, perception skills and linguistic skills (Filip & Iamandi, 2012, pp.56-57).

The relational skills are related to interpersonal relation skills like flexibility, adaptability, tolerance, the cultural empathy, intellectual curiosity about the rest of the world, the ability to understand and not judge others’ cultural values (OECD, 2016, pp.4-6; Roberts, Kossek & Ozeki, 1998, p.100; Filip & Iamandi, 2012).

The motivational skills are related to self - confidence, personal interest for international experience and international environment, self-discipline, the desire to learn, develop and apply new programs or work techniques (Ken & Cheah, 2012; Filip & Iamandi, 2012).

The perception skills are in connection with the capacity to understand and analyze issues from multiple perspectives and also to take the best decisions in uncertainty conditions, creativity, critical thinking (Filip & Iamandi, 2012; Deardorff, 2014; OECD, 2016, pp.4-6).

The linguistic skills refer to foreign language abilities, especially to a very good knowledge of English language, as lingua franca, communication and non-verbal communication (Petcu et al., 2015, pp.12-13; van der Wende, 2018; Filip & Iamandi, 2012).

Starting from these four categories of skills, we can also identify the implications of the international markets in developing the competences and in increasing the requirements for global competences. Thus, the Table below shows the correlation between the development of the international market and the growing demand for global competencies establishing for each category of competence the international markets’ attributes that generated this demand.

The information from Table no. 1 highlights that not only one category of skills is needed for covering one specific feature of the international market. Competences like “Critical thinking” and “Personal interest for international experience and international environment” are generated by the complexity of the international market, “The capacity to analyze a state from multiple perspectives”. “Communication” and “Efficient communication in a foreign language” are generated by the heterogeneity of the international market, “Flexibility”, “Ability to learn new working procedures” and “Adaptability” are generated by the dynamism of the international markets, “Creativity” and “Customer orientation and results orientation” are generated by the competitiveness of the international markets, “Ability to prioritize the activities and to evaluate the available resources” and “Ability to evaluate the risks” are generated by the

uncertainty of the international markets (Danciu, 2009, pp.102-103; Filip & Iamandi, 2012; Guy, 2009, pp.8-13; OECD, 2016, pp.4-6; Vătămănescu & Andrei, 2014, pp.59-60).

Table 1. The correlation between the development of international market and the growing demand for global competencies (Source: Adapted from OECD, 2016, pp. 4-6; Danciu, 2009, pp.102-103; Vătămănescu & Andrei, 2014, pp.59-60; Guy, 2009, pp.8-13; Filip & Iamandi, 2012)

Characteristics of the international market	Category of skills	Global competencies	The need for global competences on the international labor market
Complexity	Relational skills Perception skills Motivational skills	Critical thinking Personal interest in international experience and international environment	To understand and evaluate complex situations To understand and anticipate new trends in international markets
Heterogeneousess	Perception skills Linguistic skills	The capacity to analyze a state from multiple perspectives Communication Efficient communication in a foreign language	To take the best decision under market heterogeneity To be able to communicate effectively with multicultural working teams
Dynamism	Relational skills Motivational skills	Flexibility Ability to learn new working procedures Adaptability	To adapt to different situations and conditions
Competitiveness	Perception skills Relational skills	Creativity Customer orientation and results orientation	To generate innovation for the company To generate profit and to increase the market share for the company
Uncertainty	Perception skills Motivational skills	Ability to prioritize the activities and to evaluate the available resources Ability to evaluate the risks Self-motivation and confidence to evaluate the international environment	To reduce the costs and resources used in current business To make the business more efficient To involve efficiently in growing the company's business in the international environment

The global competences are widely used in adverts when recruiting graduates. Studies have shown that a content analysis of internet-advertised posts of e-jobs platforms or social networks is used to identify the changing demands for competences on labor market (Ken & Cheah, 2012; McMurray et al., 2015; Roux & Jager, 2016). This type of analysis guides and helps all stakeholders to respond to the changes imposed by the globalization process on the labor market: universities when adapting the curricula; students when choosing their university, their programs and when applying for a job; employers when searching for the best employees; states, political and economic unions and international associations when establishing new policies for increasing employability (McMurray et al., 2015). Thus, this type of study is meant to show, on the one hand, the most important skills and capabilities required by the employers when recruiting young graduates, and, on the other hand, the gaps in the competences held by the young graduates and employers' demands (McMurray et al., 2015; Roux & Jager, 2016).

Methodology

Studies have shown that companies are dependent on resources residing outside the company (Sawyer & Sprinkle, 2003, pp.114-120; Gebert-Persson, Mattsson & Öberg, 2014). For the companies, it became more common to develop the connection with the human resources through e-jobs platforms or career networks (Gebert-Persson, Mattsson & Öberg, 2014).

Our study is using the quantitative approach of content analysis (Chelcea, 2007) when considering jobs adverts for Economics graduates in the Romanian labor market. The present analysis is using the information from three social networks and e-jobs platforms: LinkedIn, bestjobs and e-jobs and the analyzed items are all the adverts for junior Accountant, junior Financial analyst, junior Marketing expert and junior Economist. For selecting these jobs, we used the search function from the platforms during April and May 2018. In the first search, we found over 100 non-repetitive adverts (59 in April and 43 in May), containing the keywords junior Accountant, junior Financial Analyst, junior Marketing expert and junior Economist for Romanian labor market. Then we identified the most frequent 10 global competences present in the adverts and after that, the purpose of our study was to identify in one advert at least three global competences. Since the collected data were relatively small, we used for content analysis the Microsoft Excel worksheet and we selected 50 adverts for young Economist graduates in which were present at least three global competences as were defined in OECD (2016), Deardorff (2014) and Filip & Iamandi (2012). The selected global competences were:

- 1 Self- motivated person/ enthusiasm and commitment;
- 2 Very organized and detail oriented;
- 3 "customer first" oriented attitude/ delivering quality results to deadlines;
- 4 Excellent communication and writing skills/ good team skills;
- 5 Excellent knowledge of the English Language;
- 6 Excellent knowledge of German/ French/ Italian language;
- 7 Ability to work in a multinational/ multicultural environment;
- 8 Flexibility;
- 9 Good problems solving skills, thinking critically and an analytical mindset;
- 10 Willingness to learn/ eager to acquire experience in a professional environment.

The network approach to the study of global competences used on one hand the systematic analysis of empirical data and on the other hand the 0 and 1 coding for absence or presence of the global competences in the companies' adverts. Thus, synthesizing and coding the data, we have built a matrix of global competences based on the selection described above. In Table no. 2 we present the results in the form of a matrix in which the first column is represented by the adverts (from 1 to 50 as are described in Appendix) and the first line is represented by the 10 selected global competences.

Table 2. The matrix of global competences in Romanian adverts
(Source: Content analysis from LinkedIn, e-jobs and Bestjobs)

Competences/ Adverts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
1	1	1		1	1				1	1	6
2	1				1		1	1			4
3	1		1	1		1	1		1		6
4		1		1	1		1	1	1	1	7
5		1			1	1			1		4
6	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	8
7	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		7
8	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	9
9	1	1			1	1			1		5
10	1	1		1	1				1		5
11	1	1		1	1	1					5
12	1	1	1	1	1	1				1	7
13	1				1					1	3
14	1			1	1			1	1	1	6
15	1	1		1	1				1		5
16	1	1		1	1			1		1	6
17		1		1	1						3
18	1	1								1	3
19		1		1	1						3
20	1	1		1	1		1	1	1		7
21	1	1		1	1		1	1	1		7
22	1	1		1	1			1	1		6
23	1		1	1	1				1	1	6
24	1	1		1	1			1	1		6
25	1	1	1	1	1			1		1	7
26	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		8

Competences/ Adverts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
27	1			1	1			1	1		5
28	1	1		1	1				1		5
29	1	1	1	1	1		1		1		7
30	1	1	1	1	1				1		6
31	1	1		1	1			1	1		6
32	1	1	1	1	1				1		6
33	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		8
34	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		7
35	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		7
36		1	1	1	1			1	1		6
37	1		1	1	1			1	1		6
38		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
39	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	8
40	1	1		1	1				1		5
41	1	1	1	1	1				1		6
42	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	9
43				1					1	1	3
44	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		7
45	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		7
46	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	8
47	1	1		1	1	1		1	1		7
48	1		1	1	1			1			5
49	1	1		1	1				1		5
50	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	9
TOTAL	43	40	23	45	47	9	13	29	39	17	

Analyzing the results from the matrix we can identify the main global competences that are present in the adverts. For the employers, motivational skills like *self- motivated person/ enthusiasm and commitment* (43 adverts from 50 selected), perception skills and linguistic skills like *very organized and detail oriented* (40 adverts from 50 selected), *excellent communication and writing skills/good team skills* (45 adverts from 50 selected), *excellent knowledge of English language* (47 adverts from 50 selected), *good problems solving skills, thinking critically and an analytical mindset* (39 adverts from 50 selected) are the most important global competences that they search in a candidate when recruiting young graduates. Connecting this information with the companies' profiles presented in the Appendix, the matrix results are explained, on the one hand, by the presence of MNC in Romania and, on the other hand, by the internationalization process that characterizes the labor market in Romania (Eurostat, 2014).

The results regarding the presence of the global competences in the adverts are similar with those obtained in other studies - McMurray et al. (2015), Roux and Jager (2016), Jackson, Sibson and Riebe (2018), which show that skills areas required by employers include communication, decision-making and problem-solving, self-management and team-working skills. The results showed that the Romanian employers require workforce prepared for the international environment and the advertised posts present information regarding not only professional expertise, but also global competences when looking for hiring the best Romanian graduates.

Conclusions

The Romanian labor market has become aligned to the international market changes in terms of requirements for global competences, which is also valid in the recruitment of young graduates. The present study shows that competences like communication and excellent knowledge of the English language are the most required and they represent the key global competences that provide employability for the young graduates. Also, global competences from the category of the motivational skills (self-motivated person/enthusiasm and commitment) are in high demand, being present in 43 out of 50 adverts for Economics' graduates. Not only do the MNCs' adverts contain specifications regarding the global competences, but also other institutions adverts such as banks, financial and accountancy institutions have the same requirements. This could lead to the conclusion that the Romanian labor market has become aligned to international requirements in terms of demand for competences. Also, the global competences can be found in high percentages in job adverts, which signals that owning them leads to a high rate of employability. Thus, this study could guide the universities in designing the curricula specially to cover the gap between the demand and the supply of competences (Nicolescu & Păun, 2009) in the internationalization of markets context. By using this approach, the universities will provide internationalized learning for all the students instead of isolated international experiences for just a small number of students. For a thorough analyze of the supply of global competences as they are given by curricula, we need to undertake a different research, in order to establish whether the actual curricula are already internationalized, and in this case we need to identify what are the global competences that are missing from the curricula or whether we need to find the conceptual models for designing internationalized curricula.

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Appendix 1

- 1 Advert1 (KPMG - JA)
- 2 Advert2 (JYSC JA)
- 3 Advert3 (DB Schenker GS, JA)
- 4 Advert4 (Accenture, JA)
- 5 Advert5 (Shindler, JA)
- 6 Advert6 (Eckerle Automotive SRL, JA)
- 7 Advert7 (Emerson, JA)
- 8 Advert8 (EY, JA)
- 9 Advert9 (Lagardere, JA)
- 10 Advert10 (WNS Global services, JA)
- 11 Advert11 (Stefanini, JM)
- 12 Advert12 (BRD JM)
- 13 Advert13 (Horizon Global, JF)

- 14 Advert14 (NHR Agropartners, JA)
- 15 Advert15 (Ideall, JA)
- 16 Advert16 (McCann Erickson, JA)
- 17 Advert17 (Emag, JE)
- 18 Advert18 (Smartpoint Consulting SRL, JE)
- 19 Advert19 (BRC, JF)
- 20 Advert20 (Contexpert, JA)
- 21 Advert21 (Honeywell, JF)
- 22 Advert22 (IBM, JE)
- 23 Advert23 (CBRE Romania, JE)
- 24 Advert24 (Vauban, JE)
- 25 Advert25 (Continental, JF)
- 26 Advert26 (Alpha Bank, JF)
- 27 Advert27 (TTA echipamente, JF)
- 28 Advert28 (SC La fantana, JF)
- 29 Advert29 (Telekom Romania, JF)
- 30 Advert30 (CETELM IFN SA, JF)
- 31 Advert31 (Manpower Romania SRL, JF)
- 32 Advert32 (EBC, JF)
- 33 Advert33 (Vodafone, JE)
- 34 Advert34 (Orange, JA)
- 35 Advert35 (Kaufland, JE)
- 36 Advert36 (B. Transilvania, JF)
- 37 Advert37 (Romp petrol, JF)
- 38 Advert38 (Renault Romania, JE)
- 39 Advert39 (HP Inc Romania, JF)
- 40 Advert40 (UTI, JE)
- 41 Advert41 (OTP Bank, JE)
- 42 Advert42 (Oracle, JM)
- 43 Advert43 (Cec Bank, JE)
- 44 Advert44 (Altex, JE)
- 45 Advert45 (Carrefour, JA)
- 46 Advert46 (Credit Agricole, JE)
- 47 Advert47 (Veolia, JA)
- 48 Advert48 (Fan Curier, JA)
- 49 Advert49 (CSI Instal, JE)
- 50 Advert50 (Auchan Romania, JA)

Where JE= junior Economist; JA= junior Accountant; JF= junior Financial Analyst; JM= junior Marketing Expert.