

# Flexible Graduate is Successful Graduate. Key Factors of Successful Job Interview, Results of a Comparative Analysis

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## Abstract

The conditions on the labour market have changed dramatically in the last twenty years and the importance of human resources has increased. A company has to find, keep, and educate those workers who are able to adapt quickly to changes in the market. Such a company is then able to innovate constantly, which ensures its long-term competitiveness. Moreover, after finishing their education young people experience problems when seeking suitable employment. University graduates face stronger competition from other graduates when seeking employment. This target risk group of university graduates in particular is included in the primary research, together with the other side of the labour market, employers. The importance of individual criteria that are pivotal for employers during job interviews was examined on the basis of an anonymous questionnaire. 18 criteria were assessed and compared on a scale from 1 to 5. The correlation between the rate of importance of the given criterion and the group of respondents was tested. It was discovered that the criterion employers consider the most important is the flexibility and adaptability of a job candidate. This criterion is followed by willingness to learn, loyalty, and self-reliance. Those considered least important were these criteria: a stay abroad, courses/certificates, and studying at a particular university. On the other hand, the students consider the most important criteria to be foreign language skills, followed by communication skills, and willingness to learn and an internship during their studies. The criteria that were seen as the most important were: self-confidence, experience of a stay abroad, and the particular university that the student graduated from. The most significant difference in the assessment of the criteria between the employers and students was identified as being an internship during one's studies.

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*Keywords: new HRM trend, job interview, competence, unemployment, labour market, graduates, employers, competitiveness, labour market in the Czech Republic*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The widening gap between the needs and requirements of employers and preferences of graduates has a negative influence on the situation in the labour market. Despite the increasing quality of education of young people, their employability has been worsening since the 2008 crisis and they are thus becoming a risk group in the labour market. This issue is being encountered not only on a national or European level but globally and that makes it highly topical.

Concerning the question of the knowledge possessed by graduates, the soft skills of employees have become very important and a competence approach has been increasingly applied when



selecting new employees. A question then arises: what should a person/graduate be like in order to succeed in the labour market? As a result of changes in the external environment, the importance of the flexibility and adaptability of both employees and companies has been rising. Companies are pressured to innovate to keep their position in the market. This opens up an opportunity for graduates because they are generally perceived as flexible, adaptable, with good knowledge of foreign languages and IT, and having new ideas.

The aim of this article is to determine the importance of individual criteria that are pivotal for both an employer (a research sample of 756 employers in the Czech Republic) and a university graduate (a research sample of 840 students) when recruiting a new employee from among university graduates. Another aim is to determine the extent of the importance of the criteria and to perform a comparative analysis of the evaluation of the criteria from the point of view of both employers and university graduates. The correlation between the degree of preference of the given criteria and groups of respondents will be examined through the testing of the hypotheses.

## **2. IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN BUSINESS**

The labour market is undergoing dramatic changes, with significant implications for human resources. The forces driving change include the rapid deployment of information technology, the globalization of the economy, and the increasingly competitive (Burma, 2014). Organizations today must face a new world of work that requires a dramatic change in strategies for leadership, talent, and human resources. In this new world of work, the barriers between work and life have been all but eliminated. Employees are constantly connected to their jobs through pervasive mobile technology (Bersin et al., 2015). All these facts mean that the role of human resources has changed significantly in the last 20 years. New trends and methods have appeared that have caused changes in the competences and roles of human resource managers.

Human resources are defined as a pivotal factor in the organization (Armstrong, 2007) that provides a competitive advantage. As Velasco (2012) stated, the ability to find and keep competent employees is the most important and the most demanding task for the company. Human capital is able to learn, innovate, and be creative, which, with proper motivation, ensures the long-term survival of the company (Bontis et al., 1999). Because the education and experience of employees determine the skills that the company has at its disposal, employees' adaptability constitutes the company's flexibility and the loyalty of its employees represents the company's ability to retain its competitive advantage (Grant, 1991). Therefore the style of leadership in the company is an important element in the competitiveness growth and business performance (Belas, 2013). HRM has the ability to create, protect, and build an organizational culture. The organizational culture is the cornerstone of creativity and innovation and especially in an international environment plays a vital role in the success of any organization (Stanleigh, 2014).

### **2.1 University graduates as a risk group in the labor market**

The position of graduates has changed dramatically in recent years. Especially university graduates face stronger competition from other graduates when seeking employment. This is a result of the development of tertiary education. The pressure to have a higher qualification in tertiary



education is a typical trend across Europe (Horakova, 2015). However, higher education does not automatically guarantee the higher quality of an employee or higher productivity. The problem of the employability of graduates has been appearing in recent years, not only in the Czech Republic but also in other EU member states. For example, as Nemeč (2013) stated, the unemployment of young people burdens the Member States by the amount of €150 billion according to the Eurofound calculations.

Unemployment is one of the epiphenomena of a market economy. The rate of unemployment of graduates is also monitored. Attention is primarily focused on long-term unemployment because countries with a significantly high proportion of long-term unemployment of young people can experience social discontent and growing manifestations of distrust of the democratic system. This type of unemployment damages the economy and society in several ways: it burdens government budgets, leads to economic losses, and has psychological impacts (Burdova & Chamoutova, 2011). The situation is so serious that its solution becomes one of the priorities even for Brussels. The Youth Strategy 2010 – 2018 and Europe 2020 define unemployment aims. One of the aims is 75% employment of the population between the ages of 20 – 64, another one is to provide at least 40% of people between the ages of 30 – 34 with tertiary education and reduce the share of early leaves from education (Vojtech & Chamoutova, 2012).

The issue of educating young people is very topical in the Czech Republic and appeals to specialists focusing on the development and forecasting of future trends from the perspective of demographers, sociologists, economists, political scientists but also other scientific disciplines. It also appeals to the general public that deals with regional development, communities, and families (Svarcova & Gabrhel, 2012).

As is stated in the ESF study (2005), the Czech Republic can ensure its long-term economic growth only if it has sufficient amount of educated, qualified, and adaptable people in the labor market. The government therefore has to provide such (institutional, legislative, and social) conditions so that people are able to succeed in the labor as best as possible. This will raise competitiveness of Czech labor force in the EU and elsewhere.

The Czech labor market has also been significantly influenced by the transformation process that started after 1989 which for graduates means that the end of their studies does not automatically ensure a job position corresponding with their education. The other problem can be that the occupational structure of graduates does not follow the needs of the labor market in particular focused on industry (Svarcova, 2016). At the same time, as Carless (2007) points out, globalization is an opportunity as employees are under today's global conditions forced to work in multi-functional teams and are more connected with the world around. Then, the demand for workers with great language and communication skills arises. Graduates can meet these criteria despite they lack previous work experience. As they are generally perceived, as intelligent and able to learn quickly, flexible and adaptable, and with the sense of responsibility and team work.

In the report analyzing employability of graduates, Koucky and Zelenka (2011) states that European countries have been experiencing changes in functions and roles of university education in their societies and economies in the last decade. Growing dynamics, diversity, and variability of labor markets leads to the gradual weakening of relations of education to particular profes-

sions and strengthens the development of transferable skills. The obligation of an educational institution is to prepare an individual for life in such a way that with an acquired professional, scientific, social and civic competence the individual will be able to cope with current and possibly future requirements of the labor market, thus achieving employability. Another long-term goal of the educational system is also the adjustment of its outputs to the requirements of the labor market (Benes, 2001). If universities want to remain faithful to their mission, they have to develop not only its field of study so that it correlates with the requirements of contemporary world. They should also care not only for students but also for their graduates. Fulfilling of this requirement is possible only if educational institutions possess current information about the needs and preferences of employers and changes in the labor market. It is therefore necessary to inform students about the situation in the labor market and introduce them to requirements of employers. If students do not have sufficient information about conditions in the labor market and requirements of employers, they are exposed to the risk that they will present different skills and abilities than are required by employers during job interviews. This may result in a failure at a job interview.

## 2.2 Important criteria/requirements/skills of graduates

Although the issue of recruiting graduates is significant, it is still poorly understood (Velasco, 2012). Various researches have been - through various methods - trying to determine the criteria that are important for employers during job interviews. Some researches aim at a set of criteria that are important for employers generally and others are trying to determine criteria that are pivotal for employers in various industries or particular job positions or particular countries (Peppas, 2006). But many studies have proved the importance of qualities known as soft skills. For example the study performed in 1994 determined communication skills as the main criterion (Ray et al., 1994). And in 2003 M. Messmer performed a study focused on vacancies in accounting where the most important were considered sincerity and honesty (Messmer, 2003). A research performed in Chicago in 2001 identified as the most important communication skills, problem solving skills, listening skills, and team work. From among personal qualities then there are ethics, responsibility, and flexibility (Gabric & McFadden, 2001). In 2008, a similar survey identified as the most important motivation and interest and also IT skills, team work, and willingness to learn (Branine, 2008). And as one of the most recent survey performed in 2012 showed, companies value more graduates' personal qualities than their education (Velasco, 2012).

A similar research was performed in the Czech Republic in 2012 by the National Institute for Education. The research focused on key competences of graduates based on the level of their education, i.e., graduates with the certificate of apprenticeship, graduates with school leaving examination certificate, and university graduates. The research determined communication skills, problem solving skills, and responsibility as the most important ones (Ulovec, 2014).

The importance of the set of personal qualities started to rise along with new types of organizations emerging in the form of decentralization, globalization, or various forms of company transformations. The result of this trend is the interest of companies in greater control over the area of human resources and increased interest of employers in personal qualities of job seek-



ers (Team of authors, 1993). As Peppas (2006) states, generally the most important qualities for employers (based on the results of the above researches) are communication skills, motivation, initiative, enthusiasm and self-confidence.

### 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

One of the research questions of this article is to explore which criteria are important for Czech employers during the recruitment process of new employees from among graduates. Especially: What skills, qualities, and knowledge employers seek? And which is the most valuable?

The second research question is whether future graduates are aware of requirements of employers and if they attribute the same level of importance to the criteria. This issue is considerable because in the case of significant differences between the expectations of employers and graduates, serious problems may arise during job interviews and university graduates will be less successful in the labor market.

The results of this study are applicable for both employers and educational institutions. This study can be an inspiration for educational institutions in terms of how to prepare graduates for employers' requirements.

The quantitative research was performed through an anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire results serve for the testing of hypotheses. The choice of this research tool allowed for inclusion of a wide sample of respondents. In the first and broadest part, employers assessed individual criteria that they consider when recruiting new employees from among graduates according to their importance. The criteria were assessed on the scale of answers from 1 (does not influence employment) to 5 (has fundamental influence on employment). The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions and some of them were opened to be answered freely and will be used as source for future study. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions related to the employers (types of business entities, size of company, business branch, etc.).

The quantitative research on the side of supply in the labor market was performed in cooperation with the last year students of Tomas Bata University (TBU). They were asked the same questions as employers. The comparison of the questionnaire survey from the perspectives of both employers and TBU students is performed further in the article.

Data for processing of key/pivotal factors of success in job interviews were obtained by quantitative research performed in two phases. In the first phase, which was carried out during 2013, 292 responses were collected, 3 responses were discarded. The second phase performed at the beginning of 2014 brought 756 valid responses. In the first phase, questionnaires were collected by personal visits of companies by the students of the Faculty of Management and Economics at Tomas Bata University. The second phase was carried out electronically. The electronic form of the questionnaire was created in software focused on creating questioners. Companies' contact details were obtained from the database of companies Albertina. The database, bought in order to perform the research, includes data about companies registered in the Czech market in all industries. More than 26 thousand companies were contacted. The above mentioned 756 responses were collected.

Employers assessed individual criteria they consider according to their importance during the recruitment process of new employees from among graduates. The data was consequently processed and evaluated in a number of statistical computer programs. The questionnaire was extended based on suggestions of employers in the first phase of the research. 828 Czech companies, i.e., companies that are entirely owned by a natural person or legal entity, and 217 foreign companies or companies with foreign capital, i.e., companies that are partly or entirely owned by a foreign natural person or legal entity, participated in the survey. According to the size, there were 149 micro companies (under 10 employees), 481 small-size companies (under 50 employees), 258 medium-size companies (under 250 employees), and 157 large-size companies (over 250 employees).

The second phase research answers of employers (756 employers) were selected for the purpose of this research. For the comparison analysis, the questionnaire survey among the TBU students was performed at the beginning of the summer semester in February 2014 and in September 2014. The target group consisted of students of six faculties of TBU during their last year of studies (606 third year bachelor degree program students and 234 second year master's degree program students). Altogether, 840 valid questionnaires were collected. The questionnaires were collected during personal attendance of summer semester introduction seminars on all TBU faculties. The research sample consisted of 215 male students and 525 female students.

The questionnaire for students consisted of the same questions in the same order as the one for employers to enable the comparison of individual preferences. The computer program XLStatistics was used to answer the research questions and to verify formulated hypotheses. The applied test included: Pearson chi-square and t-test.

In the case that students are well-informed about the labor market, there will not be a statistically important difference between the degree of preferences of the given criterion for employers and future graduates. Research questions and hypothesis formulation

The purpose of this article to is to answer several research questions:

Q<sub>1</sub>: What criteria are pivotal for employers when recruiting a new employee from among graduates? For the purposes of this article 4 pivotal/key criteria are considered.

Q<sub>2</sub>: What criteria are the least important? The 3 last criteria are considered.

Q<sub>3</sub>: What criteria are for an employer pivotal according to students?

Q<sub>4</sub>: What criteria are for an employer the least important according to students?

A comparative analysis will be performed based on the ascertained answers.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no correlation between the rate of preference of the given criterion and the group of respondents.

The hypothesis will be tested individually for each criterion using the Pearson chi-square test. If the test proves correlation between the rate of preference and the group of respondents or if it is proved that there is a statistically significant difference between answers from the groups of employers and students, the criteria will be tested using the t-test.



## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 4.1 Analysis research results for demand in the labor market

It can be concluded based on the mean value assessment of individual criteria that employers consider as the most important flexibility and adaptability of a job candidate, these are followed by willingness to learn, loyalty, and self-reliance. As the least important, they consider the criteria: abroad stay, other courses/certificates, and graduating from a particular university. The standard deviation shows how much are employers in agreement or disagreement in their assessments of individual criteria. They are most in agreement when considering the degree of preference of the criteria self-reliance and flexibility and adaptability. They are the least in agreement with the criteria: a particular university and abroad stay. The last column of the table includes the criteria in descending order according to the ascertained importance.

Tab. 1 – Assessment results of individual criteria for the demand side of the labor market, employers. Source: Own

Criterion	Mean	St Dev	N	↓
communication skills	3,9444	0,9585	756	flexibility/adaptability
knowledge of own field	3,8122	1,0878	756	willingness to learn
interpersonal/social skills	3,9656	0,9114	756	loyalty/dedication
university reputation/particular uni	2,9431	1,3003	756	self reliance
IT/IS knowledge	3,4550	0,9803	756	team work
loyalty/dedication	4,1944	0,9181	756	interpersonal/social skills
team work	4,1640	0,9103	756	communication skills
other courses/certificate	2,7275	1,1050	756	knowledge of own field
internships during HE	3,2725	1,1322	756	organizational skills
willingness to learn	4,2315	0,8367	756	general overview
flexibility/adaptability	4,3056	0,7826	756	foreign language skills
foreign language skills	3,6495	1,1370	756	IT/IS knowledge
abroad stay	2,3796	1,1417	756	internships during HE
confidence	3,2579	0,8905	756	confidence
self reliance	4,1786	0,7572	756	references
general overview	3,6746	0,9076	756	university reputation/particular uni
references	2,9868	1,0978	756	other courses/certificate
organizational skills	3,7381	0,9194	756	abroad stay

The criteria are ordered according to the degree of importance into the graph below. The graph shows the rate of importance of individual criteria for employers. Employers assessed the importance 18 criteria on the scale, where 1 (does not influence employment) to 5 (influences employment significantly). The detailed graph for example shows that the criterion self-reliance is the most important. Only 2% of employers chose the importance of

1 or 2 on the scale for the criterion. High importance, i.e. 4 and 5, were chosen for the criteria flexibility and adaptability (88%), willingness to learn and self-reliance (85%). As highly important was also my employers considered team work (81%).

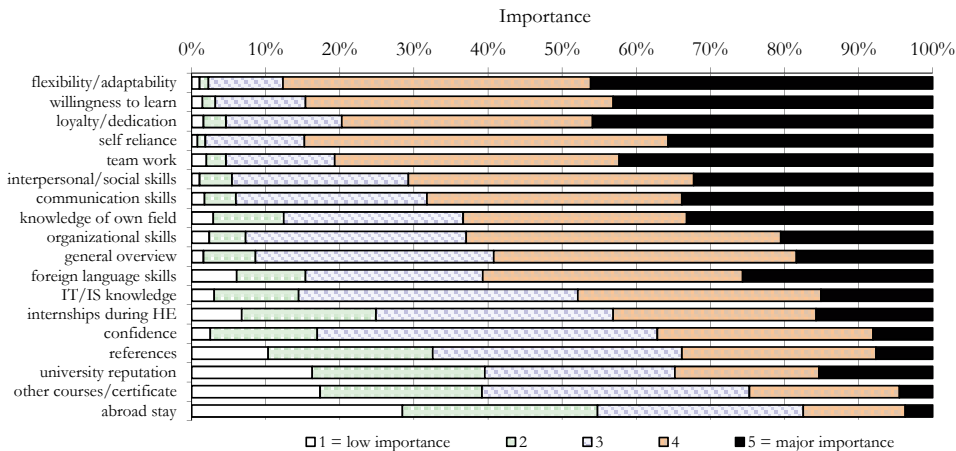


Fig. 1 – Graphic representation of the importance degree assessment of 18 criteria by employers. Source: Own

## 4.2 Analysis results for supply in the labor market

Representatives of supply in the labor market are students from TBU faculties: Faculty of Applied Informatics, Faculty of Management and Economics, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Multimedia Communications, Faculty of Logistics and Crisis Management, and Faculty of Technology.

It can be concluded based on the mean value assessment of individual criteria that students consider as the most important foreign language skills, followed by communication skills, willingness to learn, and internship during their studies. As the least important, they consider the criteria: self-confidence, abroad stay experience, and a particular university. The standard deviation shows how much are students in agreement or disagreement in their assessments of individual criteria.

They are most in agreement when considering the degree of preference of the criteria willingness to learn, self-reliance, and foreign language skills. They are the least in agreement with the criteria: a particular university and abroad stay.

The last column of the table includes the criteria ordered according to the students' expectations of how are these criteria assessed during job interviews.



Tab. 2 – Individual criteria assessment results for the supply side of the labor market, future university graduates. Source: Own

Criterion	Mean	St Dev	N	↓
communication skills	4,2254	0,8342	834	foreign language skills
knowledge of own field	3,6715	0,9982	834	communication skills
interpersonal/social skills	3,6319	0,9232	834	willingness to learn
university reputation/particular uni	2,8945	0,9998	834	internships during HE
IT/IS knowledge	3,4760	0,9180	834	flexibility/adaptability
loyalty/dedication	3,7254	0,9540	834	self reliance
team work	3,8573	0,8402	834	team work
other courses/certificate	3,4832	0,9984	834	loyalty/dedication
internships during HE	4,1415	0,9672	834	knowledge of own field
willingness to learn	4,7386	0,8168	834	interpersonal/social skills
flexibility/adaptability	4,1307	0,8436	834	organizational skills
foreign language skills	4,3405	0,8296	834	other courses/certificate
abroad stay	3,0624	1,0582	834	IT/IS knowledge
confidence	3,2938	0,8537	834	general overview
self reliance	4,0588	0,8171	834	references
general overview	3,4628	0,9408	834	confidence
references	3,3741	0,9370	834	abroad stay
organizational skills	3,6007	0,8316	834	university reputation/particular uni

The criteria are ordered according to the degree of importance into the graph below. The graph shows the students' rate of importance of individual criteria. Students assessed the same criteria on the scale from 1 (does not influence employment) to 5 (influences employment significantly). The graph shows the opinions of students about the importance of individual criteria for employers. It is evident that the highest evaluation (4 and 5) was given to the criterion foreign language skills (85% of students), followed by communication skills (84%), and willingness to learn (82%). As the least important criterion (assessment 1 and 2) was identified studying at a particular university (35%) and abroad stay (29%).

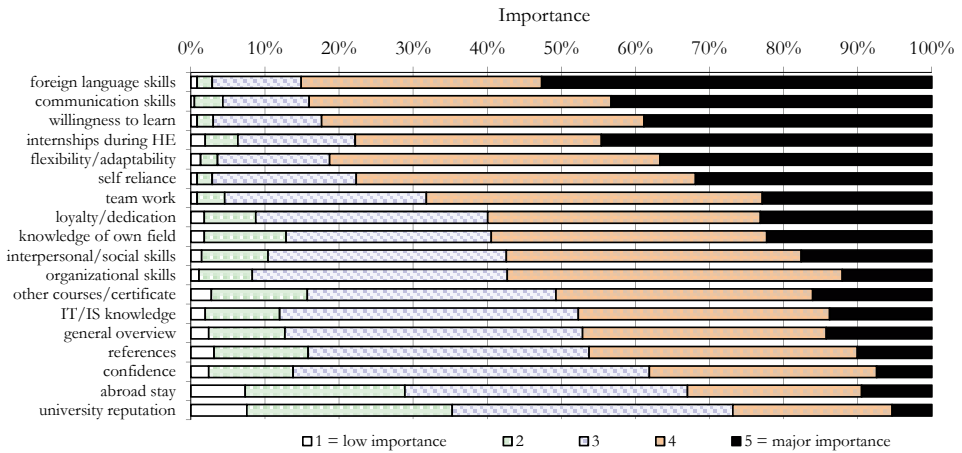


Fig. 2 – Graphic representation of the importance degree assessment of 18 criteria by future university graduates. Source: Own

### 4.3 Comparative analysis results

A comparative analysis was performed for the rate of preferences of individual criteria of employers and students.

The Pearson chi-square test was used to test the null hypothesis for each criterion:

$H_0$ : There is no correlation between the rate of preference of the given criterion and the group of respondents.

In other words, there is no statistically significant difference between the opinions of employers and students for the given criterion.

If the correlation between the rate of preference and the group of respondents was proved, the criteria were further tested using the t-test. A group represents employers and B group represents students. The following null hypothesis was tested by the

t-test:

$$H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0.$$

The results of individual tests are in Table 3. The tested level of significance is  $\alpha = 0,05$

Tab. 3 – Results of hypotheses tests. Source: Own

Criterion	Pearson chi-square test		Skew		MED		Mean		t-test			
	p-value		A	B	A	B	A	B	$\chi^2 - \chi^2$	p-value	Results	
communication skills	8,58557E-13	< $\alpha$	-0,6488	-1,0398	4	4	3,944444	4,22542	-0,28098	7E-10	< $\alpha$	A < B
knowledge of own field	1,41128E-05	< $\alpha$	-0,6125	-0,04094	4	4	3,81217	3,67146	0,140706	0,007476	< $\alpha$	A > B
interpersonal/social skills	9,74888E-12	< $\alpha$	-0,6162	-0,3354	4	4	3,96561	3,63189	0,333714	6,66E-13	< $\alpha$	A > B
university reputation/particular uni	6,27748E-18	< $\alpha$	0,08032	0,08256	3	3	2,94312	2,89448	0,048637	0,406766	> $\alpha$	
IT/IS knowledge	0,411063505	> $\alpha$	-0,2419	-0,1578	3	3	3,45503	3,47602	-0,02099	0,660362	> $\alpha$	
loyalty/dedication	8,3838E-24	< $\alpha$	-1,1253	-0,4092	4	4	4,19444	3,72542	0,469025	8,22E-23	< $\alpha$	A > B
team work	1,1149E-17	< $\alpha$	-1,1746	-0,4441	4	4	4,16402	3,85731	0,306707	5,06E-12	< $\alpha$	A > B
other courses/certificate	4,40348E-39	< $\alpha$	-0,0188	-0,2766	3	4	2,72751	3,48321	-0,7557	2,21E-43	< $\alpha$	A < B
internships during HE	6,50088E-52	< $\alpha$	-0,1761	-1,092	3	4	3,27249	4,14149	-0,869	1,57E-55	< $\alpha$	A < B
willingness to learn	0,227628283	> $\alpha$	-1,2322	-0,939	4	4	4,23148	4,7386	0,057621	0,165649	> $\alpha$	
flexibility/adaptability	0,000421909	< $\alpha$	-1,2757	-1,0089	4	4	4,30556	4,1307	0,17486	1,92E-05	< $\alpha$	A > B
foreign language skills	5,87751E-37	< $\alpha$	-0,6595	-1,2743	4	5	3,64947	4,34053	-0,69106	2,92E-40	< $\alpha$	A < B
abroad stay	3,83555E-33	< $\alpha$	0,37566	-0,0149	2	3	2,37963	3,06235	-0,68272	2,25E-33	< $\alpha$	A < B
confidence	0,43398122	> $\alpha$	-0,055	-0,1144	3	3	3,26794	3,29376	-0,03583	0,413998	> $\alpha$	
self reliance	0,007746404	< $\alpha$	-0,8969	-0,7041	4	4	4,17857	4,05875	0,119818	0,002447	< $\alpha$	A > B
general overview	6,75804E-05	< $\alpha$	-0,3886	-0,1828	4	3	3,6746	3,46283	0,211773	5,35E-06	< $\alpha$	A > B
references	2,8852E-14	< $\alpha$	-0,0943	-0,299	3	3	2,98677	3,3741	-0,38733	8,82E-14	< $\alpha$	A < B
organizational skills	1,19819E-05	< $\alpha$	-0,576	-0,3472	4	4	3,7381	3,60072	0,137376	0,001885	< $\alpha$	A > B

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the assessments of given criteria by the groups of employers and university students. According to the Pearson chi-square test, the hypothesis concerned with the independence of responses was not rejected for only three criteria. These criteria are IT knowledge, willingness to learn, and self-confidence. The test results imply that for these criteria, no statistically significant difference between the responses of the employers and students was found. Furthermore, a t-test was also performed and it revealed agreement in the preference regarding a particular university.

Also noteworthy is the skewness of individual sets. Negative skewness shows that most respondents chose higher values than the mean value in the set. The mean value is then reduced by the further answers of some respondents. It is therefore necessary to consider e.g. even the value of the median.

The following graph shows the differences of preferences between the employers and students. As is apparent, considerable differences in opinions are identified for the criteria relating to foreign language skills and courses/certificates. The most considerable difference was, however, identified for the criterion of an internship during higher education. The students consider this criterion much more important than the employers do.

As mentioned above, according to the results of the tests that were performed, the most significant agreement is in the criteria concerning knowledge of IT, self-confidence, a particular university, and willingness to learn.

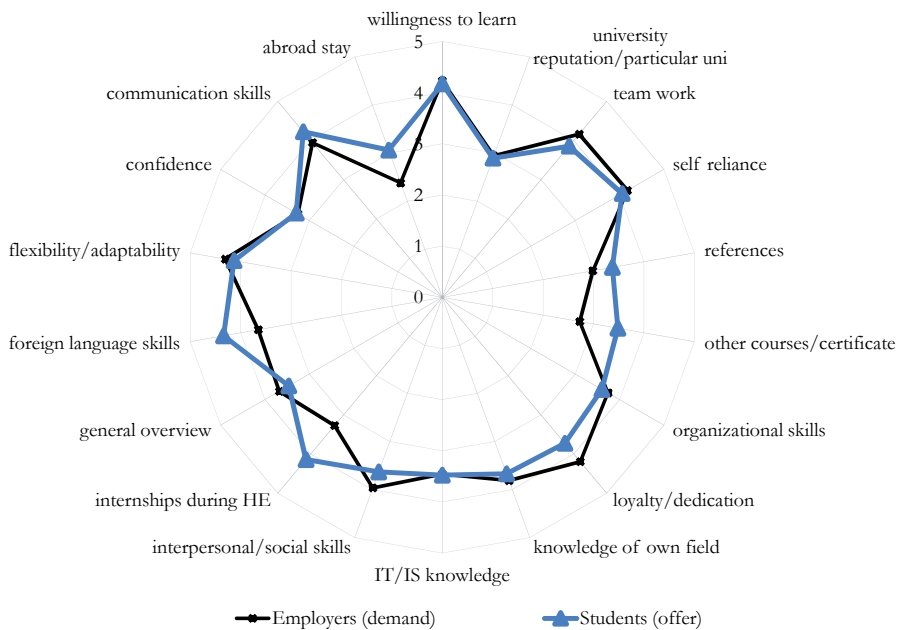


Fig. 3 – Graphic representation of criteria preference differences of employers and future university graduates. Source: Own

## 5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the article was to determine the importance of 18 selected criteria that are pivotal for employers when recruiting a new employee from among university graduates. Further aims were to determine the rate of importance of these criteria and perform a comparative analysis of the assessment of the criteria by employers and university graduates. The correlation between the rate of preference for the given criteria and the group of respondents was investigated by means of statistical testing. The application of quantitative research among 756 employers from the Czech market determined that the most significant criterion for employing graduates is the job candidate's flexibility and adaptability. Then companies lay emphasis on willingness to learn, loyalty, and self-reliance. The importance of the criteria was also confirmed by a variety of other research studies (Velasco, 2012; Gabric & McFadden, 2001; Peppas, 2006; Ray et al., 1994; Messmer, 2003; Branine, 2008; Ulovec, 2014). Employers see the following as the least important criteria: a stay abroad, courses/certificates, and studying at a particular university. Students in the last year of their studies at Tomas Bata University in Zlin consider the most important criteria to be foreign language skills, communication skills, willingness to learn, and an internship during their studies. According to the students, employers consider these criteria the least important: a particular university, a stay abroad, and self-confidence. The tests that were performed (Pearson chi-square test and t-test) revealed agreement in the opinions of the employers and students for these criteria: IT knowledge, willingness to learn, and self-confidence. The most significant differences between the opinions were for the criterion relating to an internship during higher education. The students consider this criterion more important than the employers do. As mentioned above, according to the tests, there is agreement on these criteria: knowledge of IT, self-confidence, a particular university, and willingness to learn.

The results of this study show that students are not well informed about the situation in the labour market. They attribute importance to different criteria than their possible future employers do. This may cause a lot of trouble when seeking a new job. They will probably focus on presenting different skills than those that are important for employers. Because of this, they may fail at a job interview. Moreover, stronger competition in the labour market means that students are forced to be more watchful even during their studies. The education system can prepare graduates according to the situation in the labour market and train them in skills that are important for employers. But this model cannot be applied successfully if students are not fully dedicated. The responsibility for finding and keeping a job after their education rests on them. Students have to be interested in new HRM trends and keep an eye on signals from the labour market even from their first year at university.

Czech students still have weaknesses in their flexibility and adaptability. They are looking for a new job only on the Czech market. They are not used to considering moving for a job. If they spread the borders of their search to the global market, they may find their dream job much faster.

The conclusions of the detailed analysis can serve as an informative background for career consultants at schools because it reveals problematic areas of university graduate employment. Furthermore, the conclusions can be used by university students and employers. Harmonizing the requirements of the demand and supply sides will increase the employability of graduates in the

labour market and improve the university graduate recruiting process. If the implementation of these findings is successful the time between graduation and starting employment will be shortened.

It is, however, necessary to take into consideration the fact that job interviews are influenced by many factors, not only those described in the quantitative research. Personal sympathies or family ties also play their role within companies. Considering the individual preferences of each human resource professional, it is not possible to describe, specify, and quantify all the factors that are vital for recruiting a job candidate. Even the dynamically changing conditions in the labour market influence the selection of suitable candidates. Factors that companies currently consider pivotal can change along with the development of the market. Regular updating of the research results is therefore necessary.

One way to improve the employability of graduates is an increase in the number of trainee programmes for new employees, because some companies are not satisfied with the number of talented job applicants from among university graduates. A trainee programme may help, because a graduate has not applied for a particular working place. He or she has the opportunity to meet different duties during a period of a few months. Employers and new employees gain enough time to present themselves to each other. This can help to recognize hidden talent.

The recommendations for education policy are first to adjust the education system to produce graduates who are broadly employable in the labour market (Team of authors, 2013). They should be flexible, independent, and with as broad a range of competencies as possible, especially those considered as pivotal.

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