

Project Title: **Innovative Student-Centred Learning (SCL) Practices fueled with ITC-tools and university – industry cooperation towards reinforcement of Business & Engineering Entrepreneurships education – "InoLearn 4 BEEs"**

Grant Agreement: 2017-1-RO01-KA203-037145

P4 - URAK

Survey report of Thematic Map – support for Innovative Toolkit with Intercultural Student–Centered Learning Resources part of O2/A2 activities

Project Objective PO2

Capacitate and elevate the students' innovative knowledge, entrepreneurship & digital skills through the toolkit with intercultural knowledge resources embedded in Innovative Student-Centered Learning Practices, by capitalizing on the values brought by the involvement of 74 stakeholders from different industries

Intellectual Output - O2

Innovative Toolkit with Intercultural Student–Centered Learning Resources (Ino -Toolkit with intercultural SCL resources)

O2/A2 activity description:

Design and develop Student – Centered **intercultural knowledge resources** for business, engineering & entrepreneurship education fields, mapped on entrepreneurial phases and built on different cultural contexts and industries

Activity A2

-organize quarterly focus group sessions with practitioners and professionals from industry chosen to identify, define, and draw up **thematic maps**

Participants – target group

the involvement of enterprises, civil society organizations, and public entities from different industries within RO, BG, SK, and PO.

Objectives of thematic maps:

The research objectives consist in:

1. To identify and defining important elements for design the content of structure of thematic map built on the entrepreneurial process, support for develop Intercultural Knowledge Resource with intercultural views deeply embedded in entrepreneurial learning concept, customized on each of the fields Business Education and Engineering and Entrepreneurship Education
2. To collect advisable opinions, analyze and statistically compute the situations from employer view for:
 - Real-Life Problems of The Business/industry sector as a **base for study case development**
 - Relevant Achievements in the sector – as a **base for best practices/case examples**

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- Challenges and Opportunities –as a **base for scenarios and project-based applications**.
3. To deliver a common approach from employers' view related to the Opportunity recognition and idea feasibility, Business model concepts and Enterprise development

Participants at statistical research:

Teachers/researchers and technicals from each P1 to P6:

1. Methodology for primary research on the target group sample

The process of collecting relevant employers view was performed during the interval of M9 to M10 months. The method for collecting data was electronic based through the on-line Google Forms at the following address:

- For Romanian industry stakeholders: <https://is.gd/ahuLx8>
- For Bulgarian industry stakeholders: <https://is.gd/7X8ZGu>
- For Slovakian industry stakeholders: <https://is.gd/qY89V9>
- For Polish industry stakeholders: <https://is.gd/QjPGKY>

The process of collecting practitioners and professionals from industry views targets at least 74 respondents from o businesses from: Banking, ITC, FMCG, Communication /Public relations, Client services and ITC, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and Shared Service Center especially in IT/ITC (SSC), Machine-building; Automotive, Oil & Gas, energy, distributions & logistics, R&D, including 13 public administrations and/or governmental entities and 13 from civil society organizations: from RO, from BG, from SK, from PL.

As primary data sources (data obtained directly from the Romanian economic environment), it has been used information collected during the interval M9 to M10 months.

The questionnaire and results analysis, as well as their adaptation, were achieved through the participation of all project partners. They were involved in creating and implementing the questionnaire to ensure quality based on their expertise and experience. The activity manager was P1, who coordinated and assured the creation and implementation of the questionnaire according to the quality manual. At partner level for adapting to local specifics, decisions were taken by each partner's Local Project Meetings partner (LPM) partner. Each project partner used local utility to implement communication with practitioners and professionals.

The following steps for creating the questionnaire are described below:

1.1 Specifying desired information and research objectives

The identification of the information and objectives was performed by extracting them from the general purpose of the project and from PO2, based on

- to design the content of digital teaching modules with intercultural views deeply embedded in entrepreneurial learning concept, customized on each of the fields in BEE education
- to define, articulate and harmonize the personalized knowledge resources based on capturing the needs and learning expectations of local businesses, labour market, and civil society sectors from RO, BG, SK, and PO cultures.

1.2 Establish the method of data collection and elaboration of questions: content, type, quality, order, pre-modification.

It has been decided that the best way to collect valuable information is through the questionnaire. Other options included, face-to-face interviews and e-mail. Each method has advantages and disadvantages and has been

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analyzed against the level of quality, the number of respondents to reach, the degree of complexity, the availability of the participation of the respondents and the available staff.

1.3 Design the physical characteristics of the questionnaire

We have analyzed the variants of questions: structured, unstructured, or a combination of the two. The difficulty with unstructured ones lies in the weight of the analysis of the answers and their structuring in a worksheet. For precision of results and ease of completing the questionnaire, it was proposed and decided to use the partially structured questions in order to alleviate the disadvantages of both variants.

1.4 Approval of the questionnaire

At the end of the structure of the questionnaire, the quality team analyzed and concluded that it responds to the objectives originally proposed.

1.5 Preparing the final version and translating the questionnaire

At this stage each leader from the partner and his team adapted to local needs and translated the questions.

The research unit was a company/association/public institution or a foundation/small enterprise unit. The survey unit was the employed that provided the information. The information obtained is relevant and gives an image of real-life problems of the business/ sector, relevant achievements in the sector and challenges and opportunities in order to create base for **study case development, best practices/case examples, scenarios and project-based applications.**

2. Research Variables

The research variables were built on target group profile to coherently embrace the characteristics, perceptions and expectations for practitioners and/ or professionals from company, as follow:

Practitioners and/ or professionals from company

The research variables aim at analyzing the views of employees on the real needs of the sector, the relevant challenges in the sector, the opportunities offered by the domain and the collection of practical proposals feasible for the implementation of these concepts in reality, which have been divided into four categories:

2.1 Profile of company

Company profile aims to analyze certain demographic characterizes such as: type of company (private and/or public), the operating industry sector, size (in number of employees) and the level of the job for those who responded. The basic variables in this case it was:

- *Type of company*
- *The domain of the activity*
- *Number of employee in organization*
- *The level of the job*

2.2. Real-Life Problems of the business/ industry sector

Research on real-life problems aims to capturing the real needs, enrich teaching, improve learning experience to contribute at students' skills in a competitive market and support learning expectation of local business, labour market and civil society from RO, BG, SK, PL cultures.

- *Business failure perceptions* – aims to identify the principal elements that contribute to business failure

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- *Barriers for starting new business* - which are the main barriers that can prevent future graduates from starting a business
- *Factors with negatively impact* - which are the main factors that can prevent future graduates from starting a business
- *Reliable solutions for overcome the development problems* - which are and how they can find viable solutions to overcome development problems

2.3 Relevant Achievements in the sector

Research on relevant industry achievements aims to gather from industry practitioners where more business-related investment has been made by companies, focusing on them reinforces students' ability to make appropriate decisions for their professional careers.

- *Investment level in company in last two year* - the level of agreement is identified for more proposals for sectors where investments can be made
- *Introducing and using innovation* - identify the agreement or disagreement for more proposals of types of areas where innovation can be brought

2.4 Challenges and Opportunities

Research on challenges and opportunities aims to identify future development drivers and levels for applying them. In this way HE institutions are accountable for equipping graduates with smart digital skills, creative thinking, problem solving through innovate and use new technologies, because 50% of European population has lacking basis in this domains.

- *Important development drivers for company* – base on important identified development drivers is being watched level of importance
- *Relevance of factors for possible barriers* – base on important identified possible barriers is being watched level of importance
- *Main actions for development* - base on important identified actions for development the three most important are noted
- *Young HE graduates attitudes related to the job* - by selecting the most important attitudes it is intended to mark their level of importance
- *Satisfaction level related to the young HE graduates attitudes at work* - by selecting the most important attitudes of young He graduates it is intended to mark their satisfaction level of importance
- *Satisfaction level related to the young HE graduates skills at work* - by selecting the most important skills of young He graduates it is intended to mark their satisfaction level of importance
- *Importance of criteria's for hiring a young HE* - by selecting the most important criteria on hiring graduates it is intended to mark their level of importance

3. Target group/ Sample Description - Practitioners and/ or professionals from company

The research was conducted on a sample of 96 de respondents, industry involved in developing, testing and validating knowledge resources for e-learning experiences: Banking, ITC, FMCG, Communication /Public relations, Client services and ITC; Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and Shared Service Center especially in IT/ITC (SSC),

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Machine-building; Automotive ; Oil & Gas, energy, distributions & logistics, R&D, association/ public institution or a foundation varying in size from less than 10 to more than 250 employees.

The minimum sample size respects the value established in the application of the InnoLearn4BEEs project (**minimum 74 respondents: 48 businesses, 13 civil society organizations, 13 public administrations**). We would have wanted to have a much larger sample. It was difficult to convince a large number of practitioners to participate. Possible reasons for this attitude might be:

- fear to make public their position (although we guaranteed anonymity).
- hesitation to admit they ignore this field, although we included in the questionnaire clarifying definitions/explanations of the concepts used.
- lack of time, although the questionnaire may be completed in under 15 minutes.
- lack of interest.

Information gathering was done in online questionnaire define as a Google Form, accessed through the site <https://www.inolearn4bees.org>.

The results from the first panel defining profile of respondents show the profile of Romanian Practitioners from the company/ association/ public institution or a foundation/small enterprise unit participating in the project survey.

These were for each partner country respondents.

Practitioners / Professionals from **Bulgarian** company

The study targeted **Bulgarian** Practitioners with **38** respondents filling in the questionnaires.

3.1 The questionnaire respondents are classified in **type of company**

- A local enterprise (SME) = 31 (82%),
- A professional association = 1 (3%),
- Civil society organization = 4 (10%)
- Governmental entity = 2 (5%).



Fig.1 The type of Romanian company whose employees were involved in the responses
 Source: Author's own realization based on the surveyed data

3.2 The questionnaire respondents are classified in **company activity area/ domain:**

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- a) Fast moving consumer goods/ FMCG = 7 (18%),
- b) Banking = 1 (3%),
- c) Communication and/or public relations = 1 (3%),
- d) ITC sector = 2 (5%),
- e) Distribution and logistics sector = 5 (13%)
- f) Business process outsourcing (BPO) = 3 (8%)
- g) Shared services Centre in ITC = 0(0%)
- h) Research and development = 4 (11%)
- i) Oil and gas = 2 (5%)
- j) Energy = 2 (5%)
- k) Machine building = 3 (8%)
- l) Automotive = 2 (5%)
- m) Scenic art sector = 1 (3%)
- n) Healthcare = 1 (3%)
- o) Manufacture = 4 (11%)

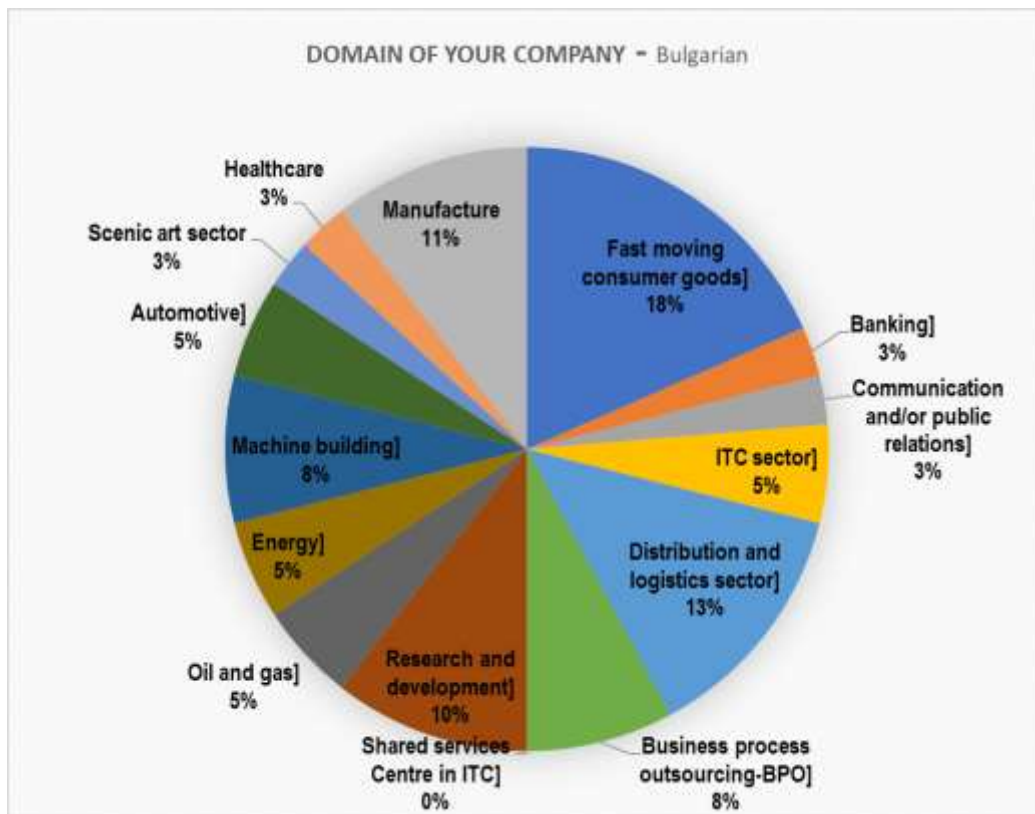


Fig.2 The domain activity of Bulgarian company whose employees were involved in the responses
Source: Author's own realization based on the surveyed data

3.3 The questionnaire respondents are classified in the number of employees/ company

- Less than 10 employees = 10 (26%)
- Between 11-50 employees = 14 (37%)
- Between 51-250 employees = 6 (16%)
- Greater than 250 employees = 8 (21%)



Fig.3 The percent of organizations responses split by numbers of employees
 Source: Author's own realization based on the surveyed data

3.4 The questionnaire respondents are classified in importance of their job level in the company

- Execution with technical responsibilities = 10 (26%)
- Management with decision making responsibilities = 28 (74%)



Fig.4 Balance between execution and managerial level of jobs for respondents
 Source: Author's own realization based on the surveyed data

4. Results of data analysis

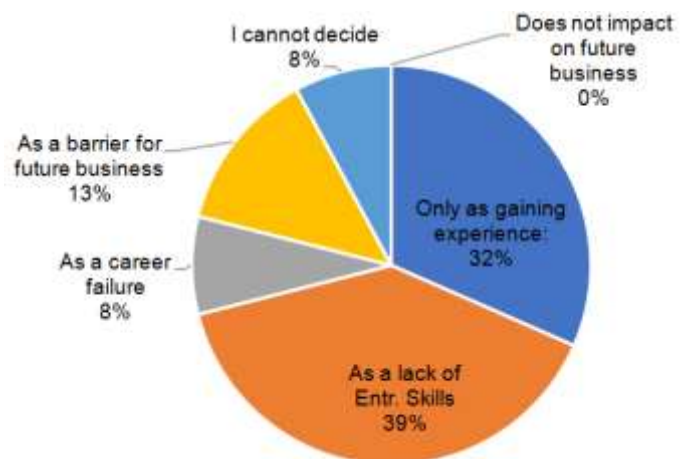
(A). REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS OF THE BUSINESS / SECTOR linked to phase:

i) Opportunity, Recognition and Idea Feasibility

4.1.A How do you think that business failure is perceived in your country? (one choice)

Most people think failure in previous business might have positive impact on current or future activity, because it may show you what entrepreneurial skill did you miss (39%) or to be source of a valuable experience for the future (32%).

Conclusion: thematic map to include topics about the most important entrepreneurial skills (according to various researches) and how the to be taught in the SCL approach with ITC. Also, some real cases from unsuccessful businesses may be interesting to outline the most important lessons learned from failure.



please fill out figure, and primary statistically analyses (2-3 rows), for each questions, and some conclusions necessary to develop thematic map (EN, BG)

4.2.A Please mention the top three barriers for starting a new business, that are linked with your domain (notate 1,2,3):

Lower average score, more important barrier.

On average all barriers have close results, but the two most important are: (1) the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge – score 1,56; (2) lack of business idea – score 1,75; (3) lack of personal experience and lack of business idea – both have equal score 1,86. The easiest to overcome is the barrier for lack of advice and information (2,33), maybe because of internet resources and educational publications available freely.

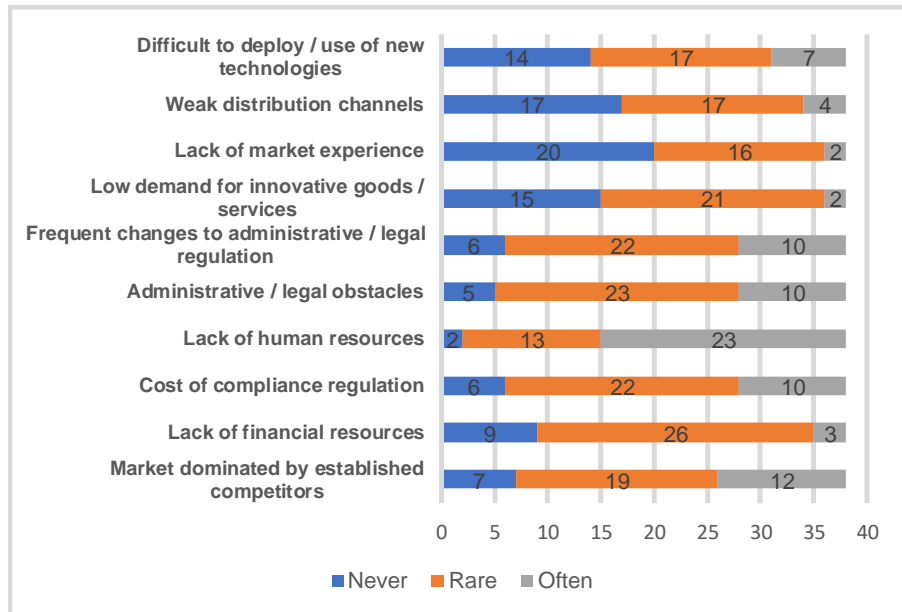


Conclusion: thematic map to include different approaches and sources for gaining entrepreneurial knowledge, self-testing and self-evaluation exercises. Also, various approaches for design and identification of business ideas should be suggested to students.

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4.3.A Which of the following factors has negatively affected the development of your company and at what level?

The most negatively affecting factor among the Bulgarian respondents is the lack of human resources (23 answers "Often"). If we look at answers "Rare" we have to take in mind the factors about the lack of financial resources (26 answers), administrative and legal obstacles (23 answers), frequent changes in regulations (22 answers) and cost of compliance to regulations (22 answers). Those last three factors are also the most often met as negative factors (10 answers "Often" per each).



Conclusion: the main question is how to overcome the shortage of human resources, which is perceived as a major barrier for the business development. Here the thematic map on the SCL might include knowledge and skills how to elaborate successful strategies for identifying, selecting, training and career development of human resources that will construct the company staff. Given the difficult demographic conditions in Bulgaria and most EU countries, some innovative and flexible approaches for attracting staff by organizing internships to students, part-time employment, home-office working, modern systems for calculation of remuneration and social responsibility towards staff members and their families.

Another point is thematic map to include guidelines and training materials for identifying different sources of financial resources, incl. venture capital, business angels, funding programs (national, European, international), improving the financial literacy of young people and skills for budgeting of activities. The next important issue is connected with legal literacy, which needs students to improve their skills for dealing with administrative procedures and understanding legislative texts in order to better adapt the overall behavior of the company to the legal environment.

4.4.A Which of the following can be reliable solutions to overcome obstacles/problems related to the development of your organization/ business/ unit?

It seems that the most reliable solution to overcome obstacles is to make a strong internal change of processes (4,58) which could enable and foster other factors for solving the existing problems in business. The other supporting solutions are to buy new technologies and equipment (4,32) and together with that to train the employees for new skills in their work (4,24).

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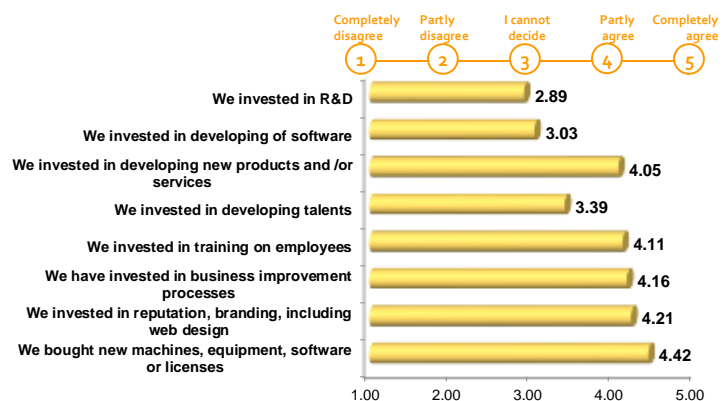


Conclusion: the thematic map may include elements focused on design of business processes and mainly by application of digital solutions for that – for example ERP, MRP, MES software systems, that goes hand by hand with the appropriate training of human resources – digital skills and knowledge for professional career within the Industry 4.0.

(B). RELEVANT ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SECTOR linked to phase:
 ii) Business Model Concepts

4.1.B Mark your agreement related to the investment level your company made during the last two years:

The investments are mainly made in new machines and technologies (4,42), but also connected with web solutions (4,21). The weakest point is the investment in R&D (2,89) and developing software (3,03), which means that those companies are mainly end users of already introduced by someone else research and software ideas.



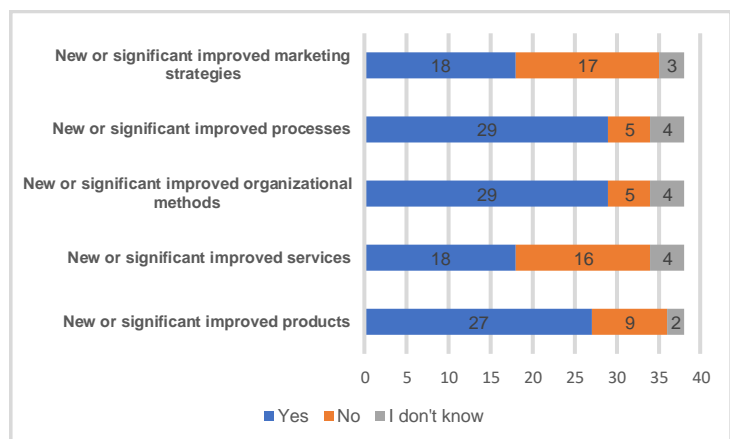
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Conclusion: the thematic map could suggest topics about decision-making and elaborating strategies for appropriate investing, so that young specialists to be skilled in deciding in what to invest corporate financial resources. Another issue is the low level of investing in research activities and development of innovative thinking in employees. This is a sign that companies prefer to be end-users of innovations, than developing their own projects, which corresponds to the question how to build competitive advantages and to increase the innovative performance of the company.

4.2.B Has your company introduced any of the following types of innovations in the last two year?

The most applied innovations are organizational and process innovations. Then come the improved products. Maybe the reason for that is that implementing process and organizational innovations in most cases need less costs and time, compared to product innovations, which is a barrier in front most of small and medium enterprises.

Conclusion: the thematic map could include knowledge and skills on how to identify, measure and manage the factors from internal and external environment, that exert influence on innovative activeness of the company. So, the main question could be what to do in order to have better innovative performance of the company.

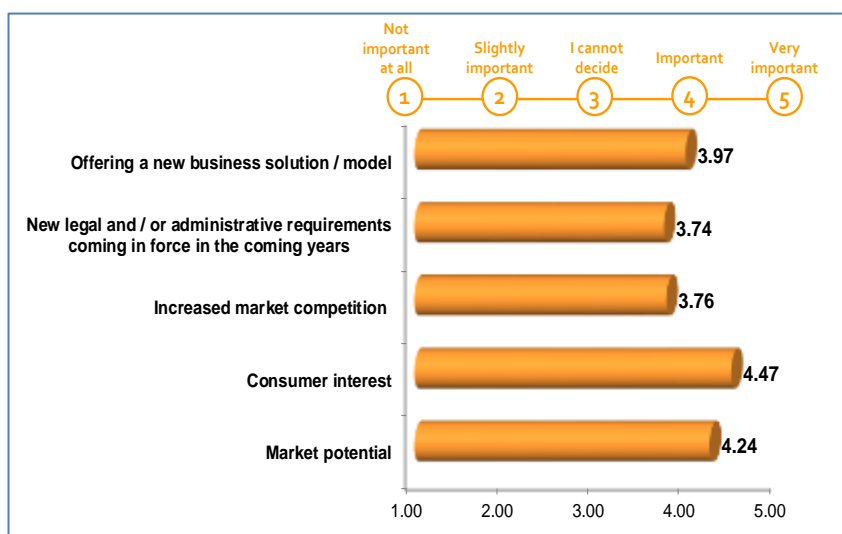


(C). CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES linked to phase:
 iii) Enterprise Development

4.1.C Considering your experience, which is the IMPORTANCE/ RELEVANCE of future development DRIVERS for your company/ organization/ business?

The consumers and the market are the two factors that are more than important, which shows the strong orientation of interviewed companies towards responding to consumer needs, which will bring the corporate success.

Conclusion: the thematic map might include modern approaches for evaluation of consumer behavior, application of digital technological instruments for market research, elaboration of communication policy towards consumers, based on new pathways for contacting the market auditorium.

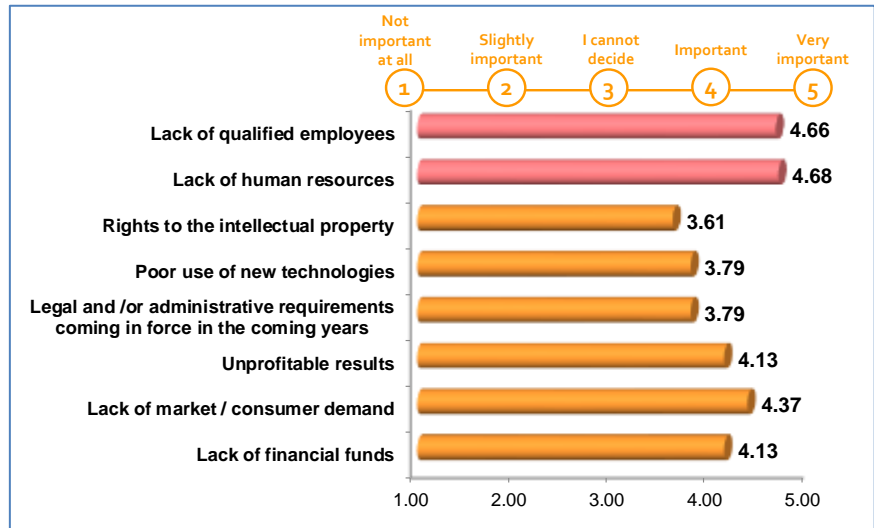


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4.2.C Considering your experience, which is the IMPORTANCE/ RELEVANCE of future development BARRIERS for your company/ organization/ business?

The two most influential barriers according to the respondents in the Bulgarian survey are connected with the characteristics of the human capital, needed for the business development.

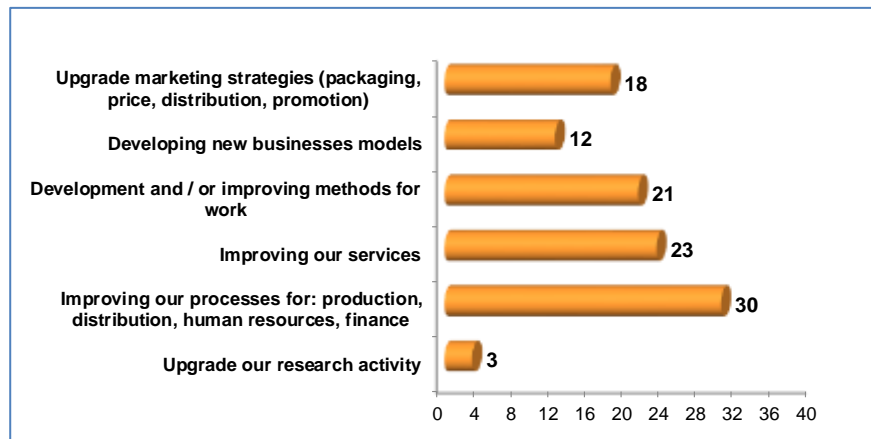
Conclusion: as suggested also in question 4.3.A, the main question is how to overcome the shortage of human resources, which is perceived as a major barrier for the business development. Here the thematic map on the SCL might include knowledge and skills how to elaborate successful strategies for identifying, selecting, training and career development of human resources that will construct the company staff. Given the difficult demographic conditions in Bulgaria and most EU countries, some innovative and flexible approaches for attracting staff by organizing internships to students, part-time employment, home-office working, modern systems for calculation of remuneration and social responsibility towards staff members and their families.



4.3.C What will be the main actions for the development of your organization in the next period? (mark three options)

Number of selections per option, maximum value is 38.

The aim of this question was to find out the main possibilities for the development of the organization. The respondents are asked to choose among six statements and they could select maximum three of its. The most preferred answer is connected with adapting and improving processes in different dimensions.

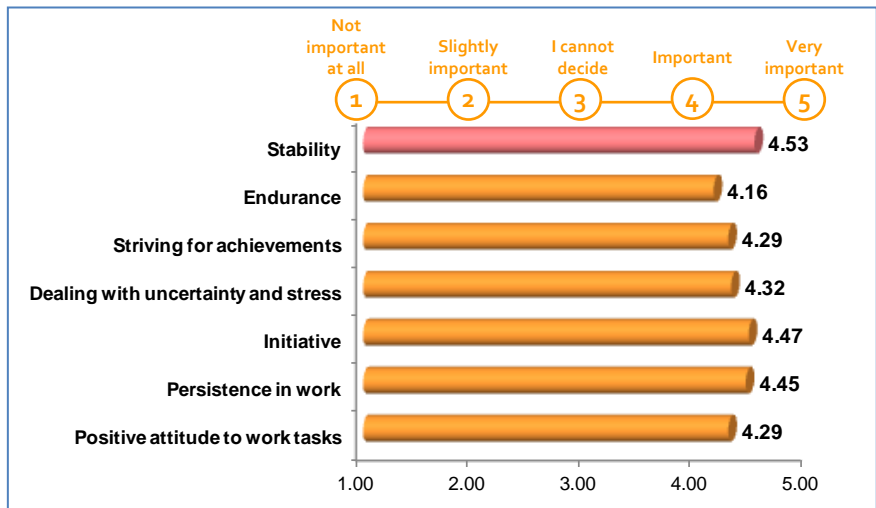


Conclusion: the thematic map could include knowledge and skills on how to identify, measure and manage the factors from internal and external environment, that exert influence mostly on process innovations. This could be combined with skills for organizing the procedures for elaborating the new process solutions, or in general the overall management approaches focused on process innovations.

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4.4.C In your opinion, which is the **IMPORTANCE** of the young HE graduates' **ATTITUDES** related to the job?

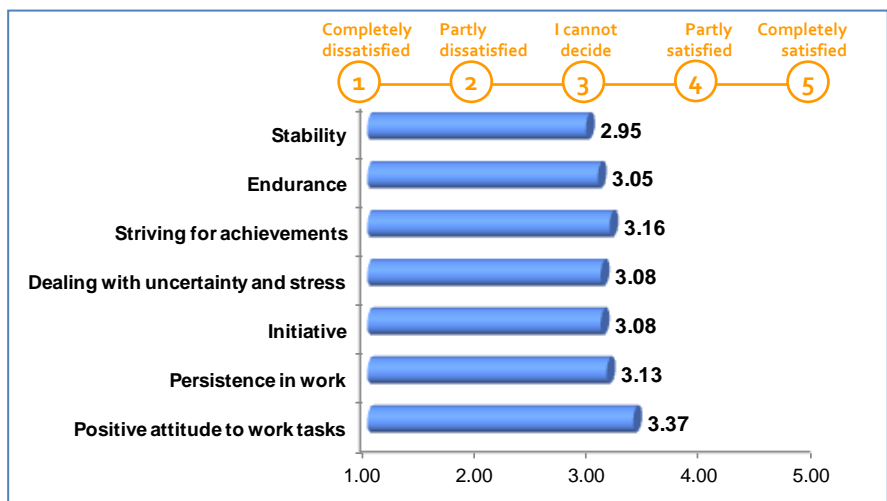
The results of all attitudes, subject to rating, are very close. It seems that according to the respondents the importance of all elements is very strong – individual results are over 4 (important) and some of them go above 4.50, which describes them as very important. Stability is the only one that scores a result above the medium – 4.53. The next one is Initiative (4.47) and after that is Persistence in work (4.45). The other factors fluctuate between 4.16 (Endurance) and 4.32 (Dealing with uncertainty and stress).



Conclusion: the thematic map may include some readings and approaches that explain the relevance of those skills to the job, why they are important and how they exert influence on job results.

4.5.C Considering your experience as an employer, mark your **SATISFACTION LEVEL** related to the young HE graduates' **ATTITUDES** at work.

The same attitudes, evaluated in the previous question, are now evaluated from the viewpoint of employers and their satisfaction level. Here the scores are lower, it seems that employers are not so satisfied with the performance of the young graduates. All the attitudes have medium marks, below any satisfaction. The only element with a bit higher result is the Positive attitude to work task. But, it seems that it is not enough only to be positive without any other efforts to do the job and to improve the performance.

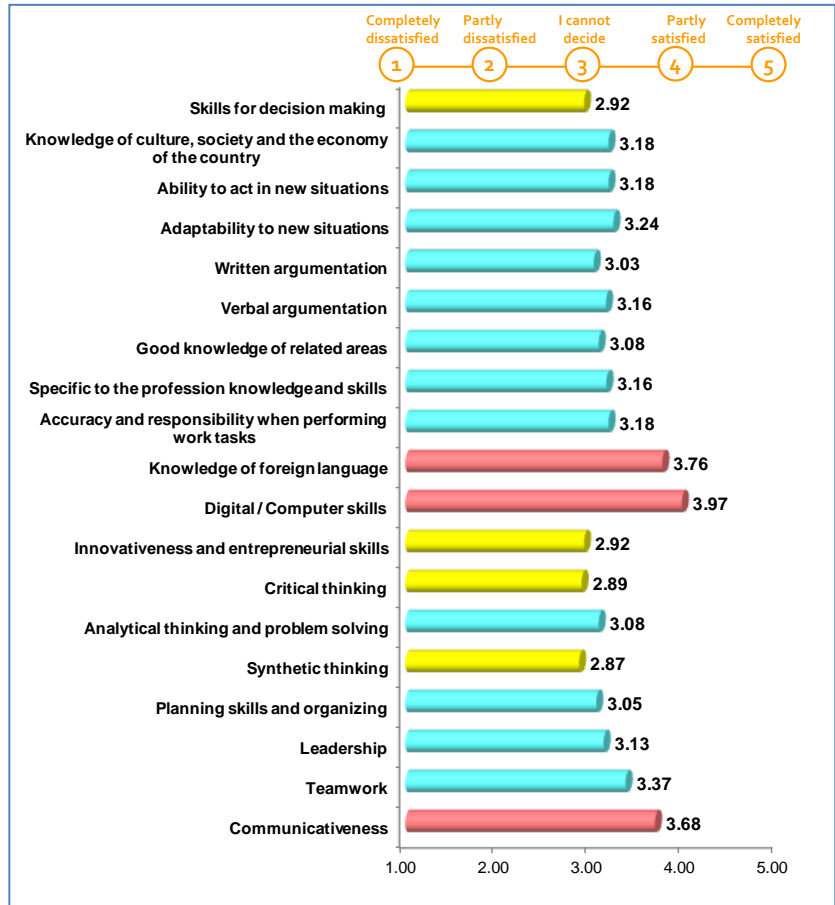


Conclusion: the thematic map may put focus on acquiring the so-called soft skills, that could be a valuable additive to the core specialty of the students. Even if they are taught in engineering field, those skills could play a significant role on their options for better professional development. Some training approaches like case study analysis, simulations and scenarios could be very useful in this field.

4.6.C Considering your past experience as an employer, please mark your **SATISFACTION LEVEL** related to the young HE graduates' **SKILLS** at work

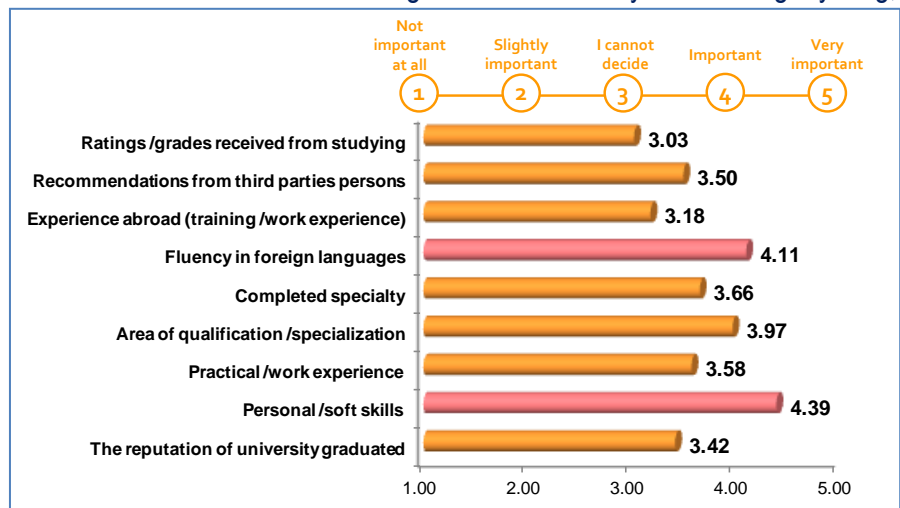
The set of skills under evaluation includes a lot of elements. Most of them achieve medium score – between 3.03 and 3.37. There are three skills that have the highest results for employers' satisfaction: (1) Digital/ Computer Skills – 3.97, (2) Knowledge of foreign language – 3.76, and (3) Communicativeness – 3.68. Those three elements are close to the partial satisfaction with level of 4. On the other side, with the weakest score are four elements – Synthetic thinking, Critical thinking, Innovativeness and entrepreneurial skills, Skills on decision making.

Conclusion: it seems that some skills, connected with thinking should be improved. Thus, the thematic map could include some approaches for training of such soft skills, which are applicable in different economic activities.



4.7.C In your opinion, which is the **IMPORTANCE** of the following **CRITERIA** when you are hiring a young, HE graduates:

Interesting here are the first two positions, that illustrated the need for transferable skills: (1) the Personal/Soft skills – 4.39, and the Fluency of foreign languages – 4.11. Those are the only two criteria that succeed to go over the level of 4 – Important. But it should also be noted that all



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the factors are over 3.00, which means that they all have close level of importance.

Conclusion: the thematic map should pay attention to those criteria, that could be developed during the study, especially to define the most wanted foreign languages from the companies, together with very detailed and precise definition of the types of personal soft skills, needed to apply for a job position.

Overall conclusion:

The interviewed companies from the Bulgarian survey are mostly SMEs (82%) from various business sectors. Most of them think that business failure has a negative vision in the national culture and this could be overcome if the most important entrepreneurial skills are thought and trained to young people, together with some skills how to extract the feedback from failure and to turn it into lessons learned. This is confirmed by the importance of some barriers, where the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge is among most important.

The future business development is prevented mostly by the shortage of human and financial resources, combined with insufficient legal literacy, which leads to the conclusion that most entities need skilled professionals who could deal with financial issues and to be able to stick to legal procedures. In most cases the next stage of the overall strategy of the respondents relies on process innovations, acquisition of new technologies and equipment and upgrading the employee's qualification in the respective directions with skills and knowledge, applicable for professional career within the Industry 4.0. And given the fact that most of the companies already have experience with organizational and process innovations by investing in new machines and technologies, cloud solutions, answering to the strategical goal to meet the customers' needs and market's trends.

Results show that the problem with human resources is the major one. And here the importance of the thematic map is significant: on the one hand it should suggest approaches in the SCL for developing of the needed skills and attitudes among young people for their successful professional career in the future; on the other hand, the thematic map should support student to develop skills for selecting, mentoring and guiding of other people, who should possess the above mentioned set of skills and attitudes. In other words, to educate students not only to be qualified and skillful employees, but also leaders, visioners, and entrepreneurs that inspire others to be successful.

5. Conclusion from thematic map:

- **one document** with the conclusion from practitioners and professionals, part of the thematic map.

Progress:

Technicians from each of P1 to P6 jointly support and complement the technical development of knowledge resources, communicate with teachers in the production of tasks, assure effective link with stakeholders from industries

The progress of the tasks and working deadlines are regularly managing through Local Project Meetings (LPM):

- Each partner leader should allocate tasks to project team members
- Each partner leader should monitor team activity and notate progress in "Monitoring and progress reporting plan"
- All intermediate versions are analyzed and checked by the Quality Team of the consortium through activity O2/A2.
- The final quality check of the O2 is assessed against the planned values of the quantitative and qualitative indicators associated, by the Quality Team through activity O2/A2.