



PR1: Identification of skills, competences and knowledge requirements of tourism university students on today's highly complex and dynamic labour market

Czech republic

Structure of the research sample

Business	Number
Accommodation facility	32
Travel agency	5
Destination management organization	9
Catering facility	3
Spa facility	1
Total	50

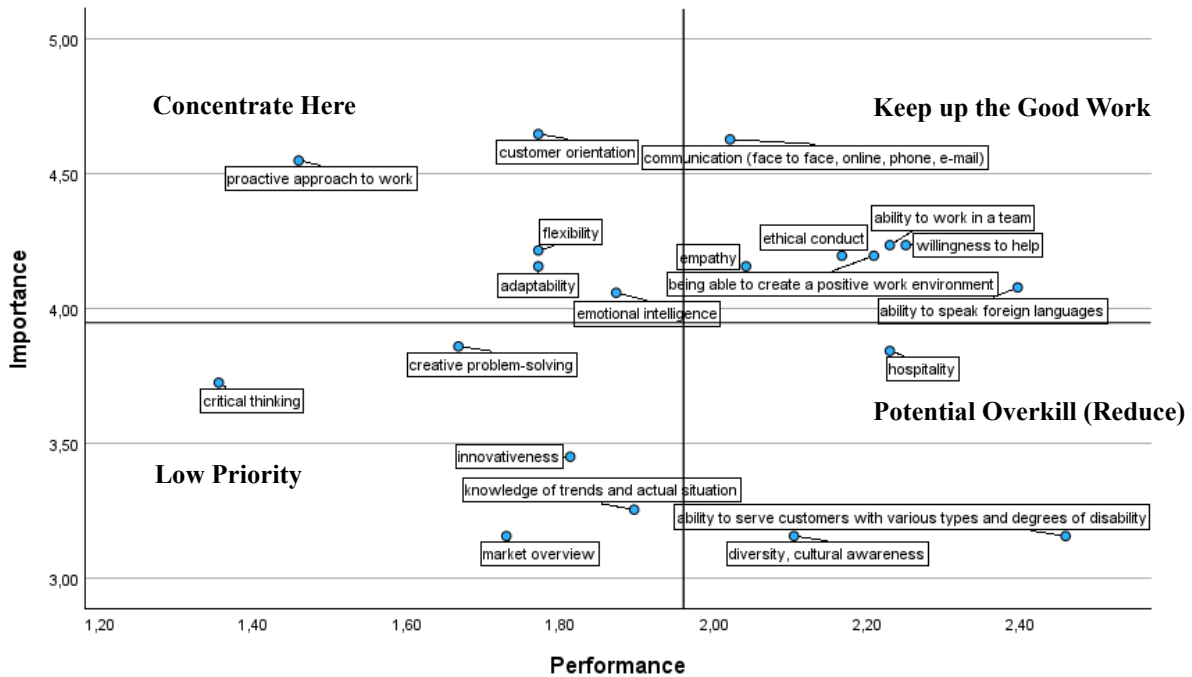
The collected data were analysed by importance-performance analysis (IPA). Moreover, the qualitative analysis was done by the Word Cruncher Analysis; in order to find out the most frequent words and word clouds were used to graphically present the outcomes.

The graphical interpretation of the importance-performance analysis (IPA) is presented in the following figures. Applying the data-centered quadrants approach, the results were analysed using the mean values of the available data. By identifying the most crucial attributes, IPA yields insights into which skills, competences and knowledge areas educators should focus.





Soft skills, competences and knowledge

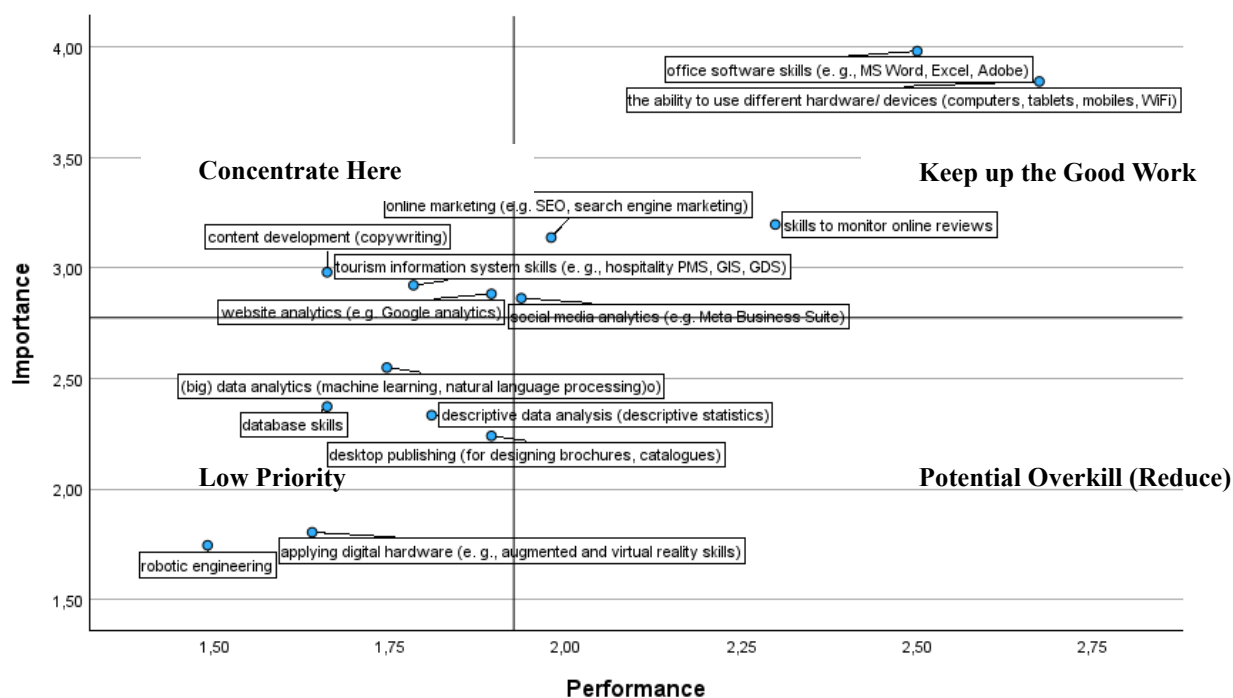


The skills in the quadrant of high importance but low performance called „Concentrate Here“ are critical for employers but are currently underdeveloped among graduates. Key skills, competencies and knowledge in this area include proactive approach to work, flexibility, adaptability, customer orientation and emotional intelligence. These skills exhibit a significant gap between their importance and the current performance level of graduates. Employers emphasize the necessity to enhance these areas during the educational process, as these skills are essential for workplace success but are not adequately mastered by students. The next quadrant „Keep Up the Good Work“, that describes high importance and high performance, includes skills that are both highly valued by employers and well-performed by graduates. Skills such as communication (face-to-face, online, phone, e-mail), willingness to help, ethical conduct, ability to speak foreign languages, ability to work in a team, and creating a positive work environment fall into this category. The alignment of high importance and high performance indicates that current educational practices are effectively equipping students with these essential competencies. The recommendation here is to maintain and continue strengthening these skills, as they are crucial and currently well-developed.

Skills in the quadrant „Low Priority“ are those where graduates perform well but are considered less important by employers. Skills such as market overview, ability to serve customers with various types and degrees of disability, and diversity and cultural awareness are included here.



Hard skills, competences and knowledge

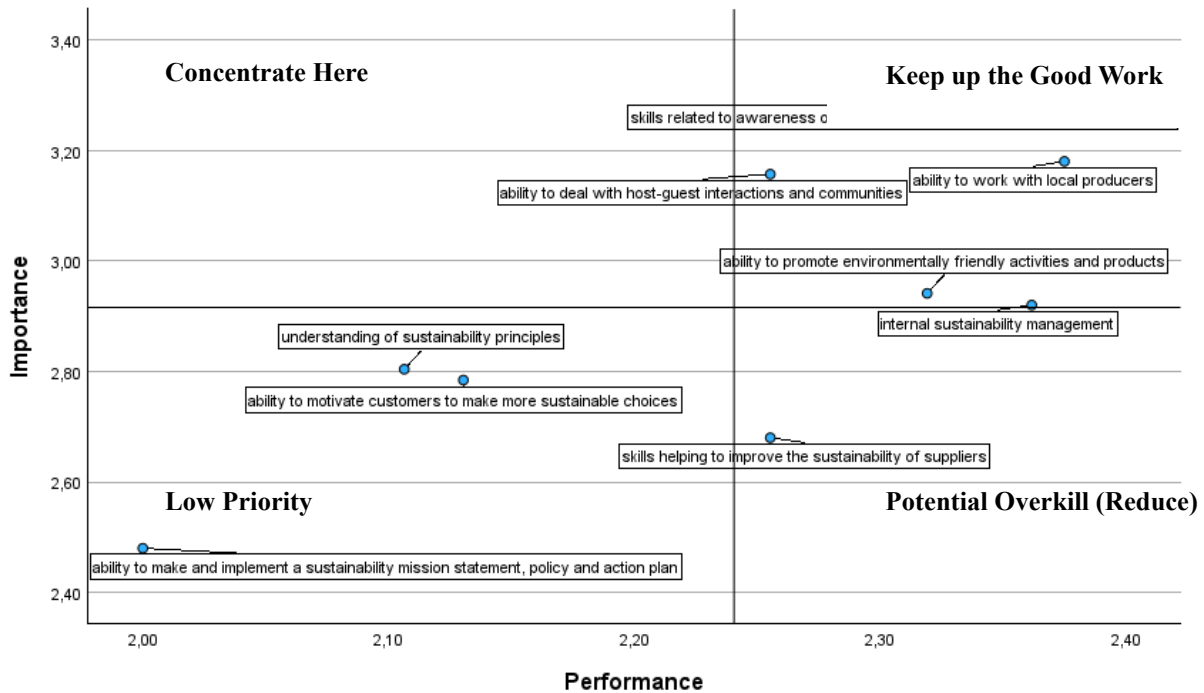


The analysis of hard skills, competencies, and knowledge from the provided research highlights several critical insights. In the top-left quadrant, there is a pressing need to improve skills that are highly important to employers but where graduates currently underperform. These include online marketing (e.g., SEO, search engine marketing), content development (copywriting), and tourism information system skills (e.g., hospitality PMS, GIS, GDS). Addressing these gaps should be a priority in the educational curriculum. On the other hand, the top-right quadrant shows skills where both importance and performance are high, such as office software skills (e.g., MS Word, Excel, Adobe) and the ability to use different hardware/devices (computers, tablets, mobiles, WiFi). These competencies are well-developed among graduates and are highly valued by employers. Meanwhile, the bottom-left quadrant contains skills that are less critical and also underdeveloped, such as robotic engineering and applying digital hardware (e.g., augmented and virtual reality skills), suggesting these areas require less immediate focus. Finally, the bottom-right quadrant shows skills like database skills and desktop publishing that are performed well but considered less important.





Sustainability skills, competences and knowledge



The analysis of sustainability skills highlights several key areas that need attention. The top-right quadrant includes skills that are both important and well-performed, such as promoting environmentally friendly activities and products, internal sustainability management, and the ability to deal with host-guest interactions and communities, and the ability to work with local producers. These areas indicate successful educational outcomes that should be maintained.

In the bottom-left quadrant, which features skills of lower importance and performance, we see competencies like the ability to make and implement a sustainability mission statement, policy, and action plan, understanding sustainability principles or ability to motivate customers to make more sustainable choices. While these skills are less critical, they still contribute to a well-rounded sustainability education. Finally, the bottom-right quadrant includes skills that are well-performed but considered less important, such as improving the sustainability of suppliers.





Requirements for an “ideal” employee



The word cloud illustrates the key attributes and skills desired in an ideal employee. Important characteristics include being a "team player," "communicative," "flexible," "hardworking," and "independent." These characteristics suggest that employers highly value individuals who can collaborate effectively, adapt to various situations, and demonstrate reliability and dedication.

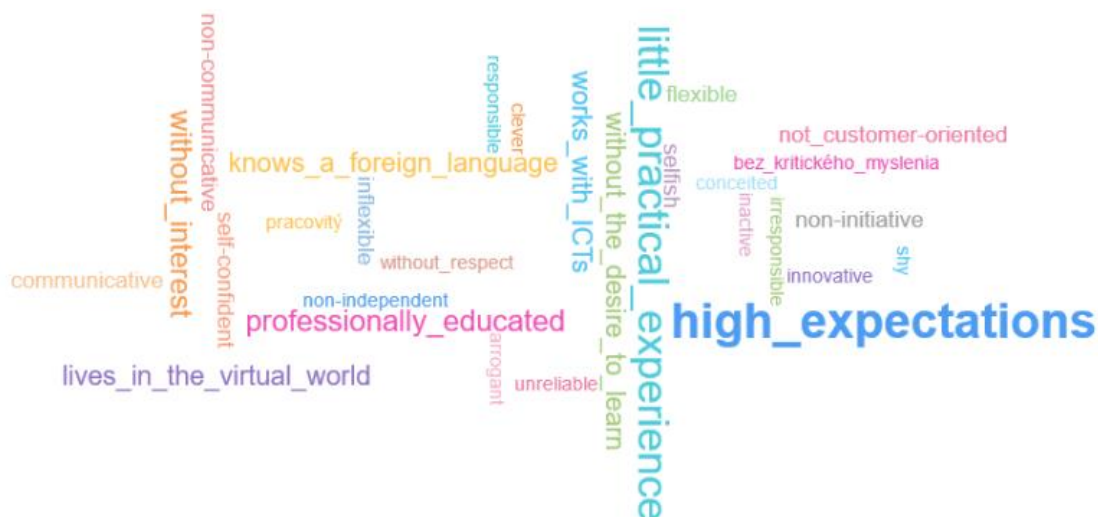
Attributes like "customer-oriented," "proactive," "multilingual," and "technology-savvy" indicate a preference for employees who can anticipate and meet customer needs, take initiative, and leverage technology in their roles. The emphasis on being "educated in the field" and "able to solve crisis situations" reflects the importance of expertise and problem-solving abilities.

Other notable qualities include being "responsible," "reliable," "empathetic," and "able to learn," which highlight the importance of dependability, emotional intelligence, and continuous improvement.





Characteristics of university a graduate according to the employers



The word cloud reflects employers' perceptions of university graduates, highlighting several areas of concern and strengths. The most prominent negative attributes include "little practical experience" and "high expectations," indicating that graduates are often seen as having theoretical knowledge but lacking real-world application, while also expecting high compensation or roles beyond their current capability.

Terms such as "professionally educated," "knows a foreign language," and "works with ICTs" suggest that graduates are recognized for their formal education, language skills, and proficiency with information and communication technologies. However, these positives are overshadowed by numerous negative traits. Employers also note issues like being "without interest," "non-communicative," "selfish," "non-initiative," and "not customer-oriented."

Additional terms like "arrogant," "irresponsible," "inflexible," and "inactive" further paint a picture of graduates who may struggle with adapting to workplace norms and demands.





Conclusion

The obtained results indicate the need for changes in teaching content, methods and techniques in order to make a fit between the graduates' skills and the real needs of the labour market represented by the employers' expectations. The obtained results can be applied to the learning process by employing carefully selected student tasks to make a progress in the required skills. Higher education institutions should focus more intensively on developing the critical soft skills such as *proactivity, flexibility, adaptability, customer orientation and emotional intelligence*. These skills should be more essential parts of the learning process. As far as hard skills, there is a need to prioritize the topics of *online marketing, content development, and tourism information system skills*. Employers increasingly value candidates who possess knowledge and commitment to sustainable practices.

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