

# Comparative Analysis of Labour Market Demand for the Economics Graduates in Romania and Poland

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## **Abstract**

*The changes recorded in the business, professional and cultural environment at the global level explain the phenomenon of internationalization of demand for skills and competencies necessary for the labour market. Given the increasing influence of companies operating on international markets, in this article, it is proposed to identify the demand for skills and competencies required for the largest labour markets in Eastern Europe, respectively Romania and Poland. Starting from previous studies that highlighted the wide typology and the classification of skills and abilities based on the theoretical concepts related to global competencies formation, the present work analyzes the use of global competences in job requirements for HE Economics' graduates in Romania and Poland. Thus, the paper proposes an analysis at employers' level in order to identify the demand for global competencies necessary for employment for HE Economics graduates. The study will use a qualitative research method based on content analysis of job announcements for HE Economics' graduates. The results are obtained from the uses of the contingency matrix for employment adverts from Romania and Poland that select HE Economics' graduates. The results identified a wide range of similarities but also a few differences in terms of demand of skills and abilities for HE Economics' graduates from Romania and Poland.*

**Keywords:** Labour market, HE graduates, Global competences, LinkedIn

**JEL classification:** J2, F6, I2

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## **1. Introduction**

This research article will identify to what extent the trends registered at the global level on the labour market, also influence the labour market in Romania and Poland. It is of interest to identify whether, or not, these trends present particularities specific to Eastern European countries. These countries were chosen because they have the largest population in this area of Europe and a similar

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trajectory in terms of labour market challenges and the opening of HE to provide an international curriculum according to global markets demands (EC, 2016; EP, 2015; IEMU, 2015; Kaminska, 2016; Nicolescu & Păun, 2009; Nicolescu, 2014; Wronowska, 2018). In these circumstances, it is of interest to establish some key aspects regarding the demand for global competencies, especially for young HE graduates, on the labour market in Romania and Poland. Thus, the literature review section will identify, based on studies undertaken in Romania and Poland, the universities' and the governments' efforts to provide graduates with competitive skills, the employers' opinion regarding the global competencies and abilities required from HE graduates, and also the potential of young generations of HE graduates to contribute to the economic development of the two countries. The literature review section will continue with a description of skills and abilities used in this study to identify the employers' demand for global competencies.

Recent studies (Bernhard & Russmann, 2023; Kahlawi et al., 2023; Pirog & Hibszer, 2023) showed that online ads represent the best source of information regarding employers' demand for competencies. In that context, the methodology uses a content analysis of job announcements for graduates of economic higher education studies in Romania and Poland. This method is considered suitable to understand changes and trends in labour market (Sodhi & Son, 2010) as this research was undertaken in two different time periods: during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania and Poland.

The results were obtained from the analysis of 400 employment adverts (200 during and 200 after COVID-19 Pandemic) from Romania and Poland that select HE Economics' graduates. The conclusion presents many global aspects that are present on these two labour markets and even a high demand for some skills and abilities globally recognized.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Labour market and HE graduates. Aspects recorded in Romania and Poland**

The labour market had a major role in orienting students from Romania and Poland to certain study programs. Thus, in Romania, after 1990, the demand for graduates of economic and law studies led to development opportunities for private universities to cover this increased demand. At the same time, the state universities have diversified their educational offer for the two fields, economic and law, to the detriment of technical and medical fields that experienced a decrease in demand, respectively a stagnation (Korka & Nicolescu, 2007). Similarly, in Poland, the social sciences, humanities and economic fields also experienced an increase in demand (Kaminska, 2016).

There were sustained efforts from the universities and governments of the two countries to cover the demand for skills and abilities necessary on the national labour markets. In both countries, the efforts were targeted towards

internationalization and quality assurance of HE institutions. In more concrete terms, in both countries, specific national strategies have been adopted (IEMU, 2015; OECD, 2017; EC, 2020; MSHE Poland, 2019; EC, 2019). These strategies aim at actions related, on one hand, to internationalization of HE and on the other hand, to quality improving in the management of HE institutions.

The main activities related to internationalization of HE mentioned in these strategies were: a) developing programs taught in English and other foreign languages and developing the language skills of teachers, b) creating an international environment through extracurricular activities and attracting international lecturers/ teachers c) students and teachers international mobility including other cross border activities like collaboration with international researchers to develop transnational research programs. Regarding the quality of educational management, the strategies provide activities related to: a) improving the quality of teaching through the professional training of teachers and researchers, b) improving services for national and international students, c) promoting educational offers abroad through the websites: [www.studyinromania.gov.ro](http://www.studyinromania.gov.ro) and [www.go-poland.pl](http://www.go-poland.pl) and d) digitalization of certain process in order to improve management quality.

Also, the studies from both countries showed that tracking graduates' careers is a beneficial activity in order to increase quality in HE and develop curricula that will provide competences in accordance with labour market demand (Cojocariu & Dămian, 2017; Nicolescu & Dima, 2010; Păcurariu, 2019; Hojda et al., 2022; Wronowska, 2018). Also, studies conducted in Poland showed that, in general, the extracurricular activities, such as internships, volunteering or studying abroad as part of an international mobility have a positive effect on future employment chances (Hojda et al., 2022). Similar, in Romania, studies showed that the internship activities have the role of providing practical skills for students (Marinaş et al., 2018; Nicolescu & Păun, 2009). For this reason, in their study, Marinaş and colleagues (2018) find that the cooperation between the university and employers is essential for: a) drawing practice objectives, organizing and evaluating the practice activity; b) ensuring the practical skills and competences for students.

More applied, in the economic field, in Romania, the curricula were updated focussing especially on topics related to market economy (Korka & Nicolescu, 2007) supported by teaching in English or other foreign languages (German or French) (Bordean & Borza, 2013; Carciu & Muresan, 2020) and opening towards an internationalized curriculum (Alexe et al., 2014; Carciu & Muresan, 2020; Cojocariu & Dămian, 2017; Nicolescu & Păun, 2009; Pînzaru et al. 2017). Also, obtaining entrepreneurial skills through the curricula (Nistoreanu & Gheorghe, 2014) or encouraging students' research activity (Mohanu et al, 2020) were mentioned as universities efforts to provide skills and abilities in accordance to labour market demand. In Poland, the economic universities' efforts to provide graduates with competitive skills on the labour market represented a main concern for the institutional management, being highlighted the need for close cooperation

with the business environment (Gawrycka et al., 2020) in order to achieve transferable skills (Fryczynska & Ciecierski, 2020; Sienkiewicz et al., 2014).

However, studies carried out in Romania and Poland, regarding the necessary competencies required by employers, showed that, in general, HE graduates lack certain skills and abilities. In Romania, the practical skill is demanded by both employers and graduates (Alexe et al., 2014; Marinaş et al., 2018; Nicolescu & Păun, 2009) and is still perceived by students/graduates and employers as being poorly represented (Butum, 2022). In Poland, those skills and abilities refers to critical thinking (Kaminska, 2016), integrity, adaptability (punctuality, acceptance of responsibilities, ability to work in stressful conditions) and communication skills (ability to work and communicate efficient in teams) (Sienkiewicz et al., 2014) but also professional and practical competences (Gawrycka et al., 2020). Still, the studies conducted in both countries showed that the employers recognize the potential of young generations of graduates in terms of creativity, confidence and openness to new opportunities (Gawrycka et al., 2020, Pinzaru et al., 2017) being able to use new media and technologies. Also, a study conducted by Fryczynska & Ciecierski (2020) pointed out that the employee from organizations, whose activity is centered on creation, ICT and innovative technology, develop relational skills. Also, this type of organization interacts with a large number of companies and customers, encouraging cross-departmental cooperation to solve problems and use innovation to develop new services needed by the market. This can mean, that most of the time, the employers rely on certain competences related to the latent potential of HE graduates. Thus, the employers are willing to hire young HE graduates since they have a great intuitive ability to learn new operations required at the workplace but with a high supervision, confirmation from the part of those who check their results and specialized training in order to show them how to perform tasks at the workplace (Pinzaru et al. 2017).

## **2.2 Global competences for labour market**

The global competence is a complex term defined by literature. It comprises a wide range of skills and abilities that are necessary on international labour market as more employers worldwide are expecting to hire employee with a diverse experience in the international environment. In a previous study (Butum et al., 2020) were highlighted six different core groups of global competencies (GC) (International, Personal, Career Management, Workplace, Theoretical and Practical) and 23 skills and abilities belonging to a core group of global competencies. In present study, were chosen only 4 core groups of GC, comprising 18 global skills and abilities as seen in Table 1. The skills and abilities belonging to Career Management are supposed to be owned by those who use the online recruitment platforms and are not required by job ads. Also, the skills and abilities belonging Professional skills and abilities are supposed to be obtain after graduation and the employers are usually looking for the candidates with the best

professional knowledge. For this reason, in the present study will be used only the global skills and abilities (GSA) detailed in Table 1.

**Global skills and abilities required in the recruitment process**

**Table 1**

<b>Global skills and abilities</b>	<b>GSA</b>
<b>International skills and abilities:</b>	
Communication and ability to work in teams	GSA1
English language proficiency	GSA2
A second foreign language proficiency	GSA3
Understanding the international political, economic and business context	GSA4
Ability to work in multidisciplinary teams	GSA5
Ability to work in multicultural teams	GSA6
<b>Personal skills and abilities:</b>	
Integrity	GSA7
Adaptability and stress resilience	GSA8
Initiative and proactive can-do attitude	GSA9
<b>Workplace skills and abilities:</b>	
Planning and time management skills	GSA10
Organization	GSA11
Problem solving	GSA12
Orientation towards customers and results	GSA13
Critical thinking	GSA14
<b>Practical skills and abilities:</b>	
Correct use of principles and theoretical knowledge in practice	GSA15
ICT skills	GSA16
Numerical skills	GSA17
Ability to understand the business reality	GSA18

*Source:* Butum et al., 2020

### **3. Methodology**

The objective of this research is to identify the GSA demanded by employers through online announcements for job vacancies in Romania and Poland.

The research question used for this study is: How does employers' demand for GSA from young HE graduates of Economic Studies changed in the last 3-4 years?

The research method applied for this study is the content analysis of job announcements for graduates of economic higher education studies. A study by Suarta et al. (2018) considers content analysis as the most appropriate method to identify the demand for skills and competencies from employers by using job advertisements and applying selection criteria according to the specific analysis objectives.

In the present study, were analysed the online job ads (available through one online recruitment platform) from Romania and Poland in order to identify the global skills and abilities required by employers and the frequency of their appearance by applying the contingency matrix (Chelcea, 2001: 230). Only the ads that presented at least 3 global skills and abilities (GSA) out of the 18 considered in this study were selected for the present analysis.

The important advantages of the widespread use of the online recruitment networks are related, on the one hand, to the use of limited resources (time and money) in the process of selection and employment, and on the other hand, to easy access to a very large number of applicants belonging to the young generation and not only (Villeda & McCamey, 2018).

The LinkedIn online employment platform was used in data collection and analysis process as this platform is used both in Romanian and Poland labour market for recruitment selection. Also, the platform presents a series of advantages given, in the one hand, by its wide use at global level, being preferred by the young generation and, on the other hand, by the scale of recruitment development both by multinational companies and by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through this platform (Basak & Calisir, 2014; Chiang & Suen, 2015). Also, these studies showed that, LinkedIn is the most used online platform in employees recruitment field replacing, over time, the classic Curriculum vitae. The presence of the 500 richest companies worldwide on this platform indicates the international and multidisciplinary character of personnel recruitment, this network attracting an increasing number of active applicants (those looking for a job) and passive applicants (those who already have a job).

In conclusion, the approach to analyse the content of LinkedIn job ads for young graduates presents many advantages including search engines that will facilitate the selection of only certain announcements – in this particular case, announcements for junior economist positions/ graduate of economic studies with application in Romania and Poland and the possibility to provide a unitary analysis for the labour market in Romania and Poland for the chosen segment: graduates with a specialization in Economics.

The present study aims at analysing a number of 400 active and non-repetitive job ads for young economists, from the LinkedIn network, from Romania and Poland during and after COVID-19 pandemic. The first selection of 200 job ads (100 for Romania and 100 for Poland labour market) was undertaken during pandemic (between June - November 2020). The second selection of 200 job ads was undertaken after the pandemic (between February - April 2024). Also, of these, 100 ads are intended for the Romanian labour market and 100 are intended for the Poland labour market. In order to select the announcements aimed at young economists, the search engines and filters of the recruitment platform LinkedIn were used.

Thus, for each country, the announcements for graduates of economic studies (entry level), synthesized by position and country were selected as presented in Table 2.

**Synthesis of job announcements for young Economic graduates,  
Romania and Poland**

**Table 2**

The position specified in the job announcement	Romania		Polonia	
	2020	2024	2020	2024
Economist (without specifying the department)	21	29	13	4
Economist for marketing department (marketing specialist, graduate of Economic HE)	21	8	26	23
Economist for financial department (financial analyst)	30	26	38	41
Economist for financial and accountancy department (accountant, graduate of HE)	28	37	23	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* authors, Synthesis of job announcements from LinkedIn

The announcements published in English, Romanian and Polish language contained various titles for the 4 categories summarised in Table 2. For example: for the position of Economist for the marketing department, the announcements were selected for junior economist for marketing research, junior market analysis, junior economist marketing, marketing assistant, graduate of Economic HE; for the position of Economist for the financial department, the announcements were selected for junior economist for credit analysis, financial analysis and reporting of financial statements; and for the position of Economist for the accounting department, the announcements were selected for junior economist for financial accounting department (accounting records, audit and accounting reporting, including international reports in companies with international activity).

Table 3 shows the companies' profiles from which were collected the data (advertised job vacancies for entry-level Economists). In both countries there is a greater presence of companies that operate internationally in both analysed periods (during and after the pandemic). Therefore, the analysis is based mainly on ads promoted by multinational and HR companies as presented in Table 3.

Another aspect, related to ads' selection, is that the majority of announcements were written in English as is presented in Table 4. For the ads written in Polish language, Google translate was used for the analysis of GSA present in the employment announcements.

**The profile of the companies that advertised job vacancies for entry level Economists**

**Table 3**

Company profile	Number of identified ads.			
	Romania		Poland	
	2020	2024	2020	2024
International/ Multinational company	68	61	82	74
Employment agencies (HR agencies)	15	14	10	17
National company	16	25	8	9
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

*Source:* authors, Synthesis of results analysis for job announcements from LinkedIn

**The language used in the selected ads that advertised job vacancies for entry level Economist**

**Table 4**

Ads. language	Number of identified ads.			
	Romania		Poland	
	2020	2024	2020	2024
The national official language	22	47	10	24
English language	78	53	90	76
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

*Source:* authors, Synthesis of results analysis for job announcements from LinkedIn

**4. Results and discussion**

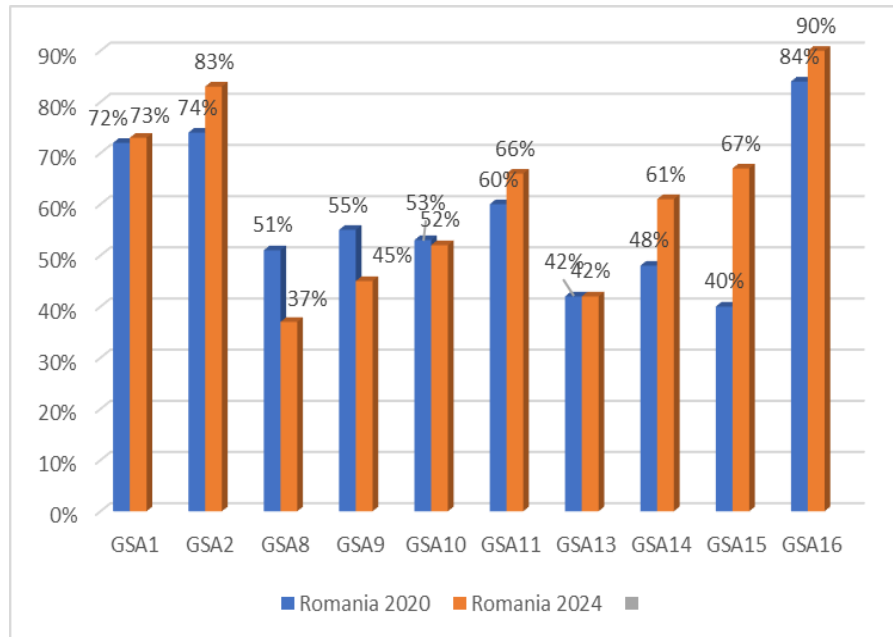
The frequency of occurrence for the GSA with the most important presence in job ads, in the two selected periods (during and after the pandemic) is presented in Figure 1 (Romania) and Figure 2 (Poland).

The analysis of GSA shows that there are some similarities regarding the employers' demand for GSA in these countries viewing some ascending trends recorded from the two selected periods (during and after the pandemic). Thus, from the core group of GC "Practical skills and abilities", *ICT skills* (GSA16) and *Correct use of principles and theoretical knowledge in practice* (GSA15) recorded important grow in employers demand from young graduates reaching at 90%/90% (GSA 16) respectively 67%/ 88% (GSA 15) for Romania/ Poland. This can be attributed, on one hand, to the adoption of hybrid work regimes (one to four days presence at office) in more and more companies and on the other hand, to the employers' preference to work with graduates who have previous work experience, even previous internship or volunteering involvement. These results are similar with those of Hojda, Roszkowska and Trojak (2020) who showed that the graduates' success is influenced not only by the studied discipline but also by other undertaken activities and their personal involvement in the self - education process.

Also, similar ascending trends, in both countries, are recorded for *Communication and ability to work in teams* (GSA1) and *English language*

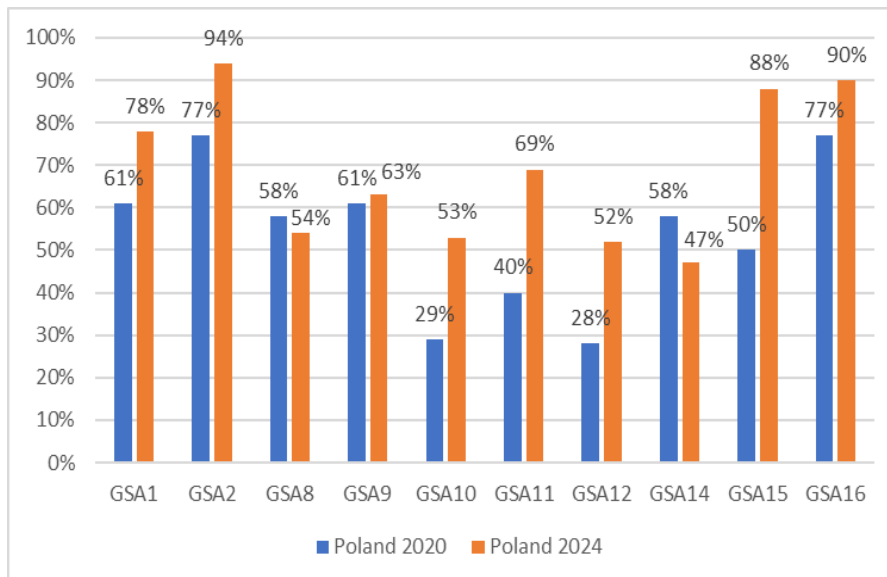


*proficiency (GSA2)* belonging to the core group of GC “International skills and abilities”. In both countries, in 2024, 94% respectively 83% (Poland respectively Romania) of selected announcements are requiring *English language proficiency* vs. 77%/ 74% (Poland/ Romania) of selected announcements from 2020. Similar, the demand for *Communication and ability to work in teams* encountered a grow in the selected announcements from the year 2024: 78%/ 73% (Poland/ Romania) vs from the year 2020: 61%/ 72% (Poland/ Romania). Also, as similarity, employers demand for *Organization (GSA11)* encountered a grow in 2024: 69%/66% (Poland/ Romania) vs 2020: 40%/60% (Poland/Romania).



**Figure 1. GSA in job ads in Romania during and after the pandemic for Economics HE graduates**

A particularity for Romania is that employers’ demand for *Critical thinking (GSA 14)* encountered a greater presence in 2024 (61%) vs 2020 (48%) in the selected ads.



**Figure 2. GSA in job ads in Poland during and after the pandemic for Economics HE graduates**

In Poland, other GSA were more present in 2024 as compared to 2020, in job ads: *Adaptability and stress resilience* (GSA8) 58%/ 54% (2020/2024), *Initiative and proactive can-do attitude* (GSA9) 61%/63% (2020/2024) and *Problem solving* (GSA12) 28%/52% (2020/2024) as seen in [Figure 2](#). The fact that there are variations from one period to another, of a decrease in demand for certain skills may be due to labour market imperfections, since this market is dictated more by the requirements of employers looking for employees at a certain moment (Krajewska & Krajewski, 2020). For this reason, the obtained results rather show that at least 10 of the considered GSA (those presented in Figure 1 and 2) are demanded by employers when looking for fresh graduates even if the frequency of their appearance in ads might be lower than 50%. This study shows also that in the two analysed countries there are more similarities than differences and this is mostly due to the presence of companies that operate at international level. These companies are much more interested to hire employees with GSA to solve job duties.

The present study came to support other studies that analysed the labour market demands in the two countries. These studies showed that employers' demand for competences comprises solid professional expertise (Nicolescu & Păun, 2009) and a series of interpersonal skills, globally recognized and transferable from one workplace to another (Deaconu et al., 2014; Fryczynska & Ciecierski, 2020; Sienkiewicz et al., 2014).

## 5. Conclusions

The results of the present study show that, in the two analysed countries, there are some ascending trends of the labour market demand for GSA (from 2020 to 2024). This could be rather interpreted as a global trend in labour market and not as particularity for labour markets from Eastern Europe. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the expansion of labour market demand for some skills such as: *ICT skills* (GSA16) or *Communication and ability to work in teams* (GSA1) since these GSA are crucial for working in various conditions: remote, hybrid or office presence. Furthermore, the demand for *English language proficiency* (GSA2) and *Correct use of principles and theoretical knowledge in practice* and *Organization* (GSA15) can be considered as some of the most demanded skills and abilities that are also required globally because the employers are looking for graduates with constant concerns for involvement in professional life.

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