

Tiina Hautala

**Business and working life expectations of secondary-
level education graduates in terms of International
competence in Southern Ostrobothnia**

Thesis

Spring 2012

Business School

Degree program in International Business

International Business

Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulu
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Thesis Abstract

Faculty: Business School

Degree programme: Business

Specialisation: BBA

Author/s: Tiina Hautala

Title of thesis: Business and working life expectations of secondary-level education graduates in terms of International competence in Southern Ostrobothnia

Supervisor/s: Ritva Leppänen

Year: 2012 Pages: 53

Number of appendices: 4

The goal of the thesis is to find out what international competence is and what competencies are needed in secondary education and, especially in the curriculum of upper secondary schools, so that the students would be more aware and ready to face the increasingly multilingual, multicultural and globalizing world in their future work or studies.

The theoretical part deals with competence and intercultural competence as a concept. The goal is to clarify the concept of competence by using theoretical studies made by researchers. The theoretical part also discusses what secondary education is and how curriculum planning works in upper secondary school. The principles of the curricula of universities of applied sciences were taken as a comparison, and those of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences were used as an example.

The study material for the empirical part of this thesis was collected by sending the questionnaire to several companies across Southern Ostrobothnia. The survey took place in May 2012, and it was carried out by sending a questionnaire via email. The interviewees were also contacted by phone to remind them of the study.

Based on the results of the thesis, upper secondary school will have some guideline to add international competencies to their curriculum and hopefully be able to give stronger start for the young people to face international world, so they will no longer find the foreign cultures and languages so intimidating and strange.

Keywords: competence, intercultural competence, secondary education, upper secondary school

SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

Koulutusyksikkö: Liiketoiminta

Koulutusohjelma: Liiketalous

Suuntautumisvaihtoehto: BBA

Tekijä(t): Tiina Hautala

Työn nimi: Työelämän odotukset toiselta asteelta valmistuneiden kansainvälisyyskompetenssien suhteen Etelä-Pohjanmaalla

Ohjaaja(t): Ritva Leppänen

Vuosi: 2012 Sivumäärä: 53 Liitteiden lukumäärä: 4

Tämän työn tarkoituksena on tutkia, mikä on kansainvälinen kompetenssi ja mitä kansainvälisiä kompetensseja tarvitaan toisen asteen koulutuksessa ja varsinkin lukiokoulutuksessa, jotta opiskelijat olisivat tietoisempia ja valmiimpia kohtaamaan monikielisen, multikulttuurisen ja globaalin maailman tulevissa opinnoissaan ja työssään.

Teoriaosassa käydään läpi, mitä kompetenssit ja kulttuurikompetenssit ovat käsitteenä. Tavoitteena on selventää kompetenssi-käsitettä tutkimalla ja käyttämällä apuna tutkijoiden aikaisempia tutkimuksia. Teoriaosuudessa käydään myös läpi, mitä on toisen asteen koulutus ja miten opintosuunnittelu toimii lukiokoulutuksessa ja mitkä ovat sen perusteet. Ammattikorkeakoulun opintosuunnitelmaperusteet otettiin mukaan vertailukohdaksi, ja Seinäjoen Ammattikorkeakoulun opintosuunnitelmaperusteita käytettiin esimerkkinä.

Empiirisen osan tutkimusaineisto kerättiin lähettämällä kysely eteläpohjalaisille yrityksille. Kysely toteutettiin toukokuussa 2012 lähettämällä sähköinen kyselylomake sähköpostilla yrityksille. Kohde yrityksille myös soitettiin ja heitä muistutettiin kyselystä.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia tullaan käyttämään apuna Seinäjoen lukion tulevassa opintosuunnitelman teossa. Lukion tarkoituksena on lisätä opintosuunnitelmaansa kansainvälisiä kompetensseja ja näin myös lisätä nuorten valmiuksia, jotta he olisivat valmiita kohtaamaan kansainvälisen maailman haasteet valmistuttuaan.

Keywords: kompetenssi, kulttuurikompetenssi, lukio, toisen asteen koulutus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis abstract	2
Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä.....	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
Tables and figures	6
1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 COMPETENCE.....	10
2.1 Competence.....	10
2.2 Intercultural competence.....	11
2.3 Intercultural competence in education.....	14
3 SECONDARY EDUCATION.....	18
3.1 Curriculum planning in upper secondary school.....	18
3.1.1 Upper secondary school curriculum planning principles	18
3.1.2 Upper secondary school missions and value basis.....	19
3.2 Cultural competence in upper secondary school.....	19
3.3 Linguistic competence in upper secondary school	21
3.4 Upper secondary vocational school	22
4 HIGHER EDUCATION.....	24
4.1 International competences in University of Applied Sciences.....	24
4.2 Degree Program competencies.....	24
5 INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH AREA: SOUTHERN OSTROBOTHNIA	26
5.1 Business structure.....	26
5.2 Population structure	28
6 RESEARCH	29
6.1 Methods used in implementation of the research.....	29
6.2 Research subject	31
6.3 Questionnaire structure.....	31
6.3.1 Background information	32
6.3.2 Competencies needed from young workers.....	32

7	RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH	36
7.1	Background information	37
7.1.1	Company size	38
7.1.2	How International the company is?	38
7.1.3	Regions of operations	40
7.2	Language skills	41
7.2.1	Communication skills	42
7.2.2	Other competences required	43
7.2.3	Additional competences	44
7.2.4	Present situation	46
7.2.5	Arguments	48
8	CONCLUSION	51
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
	APPENDICES	56

Tables and figures

TABLE 1 Components of Intercultural competence	13
TABLE 2 Dimensions of promoting intercultural competence in education	17
FIGURE 1 Number of major businesses by field in Southern Ostrobothnia	27
FIGURE 2 Population of major foreign nationalities in Southern Ostrobothnia	28
FIGURE 3 Main line of business	37
FIGURE 4 Size of the company by number of employees	38
FIGURE 5 Major regions of export, amount of companies	40
FIGURE 6 Foreign languages that are important for the company	41
FIGURE 7 Communication skills	42
FIGURE 8 Competences required from young workers	43
FIGURE 9 Present situations of young workers competences	46
TABLE 3 Opinion by arguments, number by companies amount	50

1 INTRODUCTION

It is useful for everyone to learn about cultural differences in order to be able to act effectively in another country. There is of course a different approach and focus involved in the training, depending on the need for intercultural learning (Lehtonen, 1994)

This thesis researches what international competence is and what competences are needed for secondary education and especially upper secondary schools curriculum, so that the students would be more aware and ready to face the increasingly multilingual, multicultural and globalizing world in their future work or studies.

As the researcher of this thesis I have always had keen interest towards young people's language skills and especially their level of English. I have noticed that many of the young people know English, but are afraid to use it when needed. There are of course those who only know English through internet use and through games they play online or with game consoles. When needed to use the language in work either face-to-face, through emails (answering, writing) or in phone conversations, the skills are not even adequate. Although they might have large vocabulary from the language, they do not know how to use it. The schools, all the way from the basic school, teach grammar and vocabulary, but not how to use it in the practice that much. Although it is also important to learn words and how to form sentences correctly, it would also be important to learn practical use of the language.

Basis for this thesis was the request from the Seinäjoki upper secondary school Deputy Head Teijo Päckilä. The school was interested in creating international competences to provide better base for the graduating students to get into post-graduate studies and later on get employed. Upper secondary education

graduates have to face more international working life than people ten years ago, the employers also value and emphasize international skills more than before. Therefore students need to master the international skills and require the teaching of these skills already from the beginning of their studies.

According to Mr. Päckilä also knowledge of different cultures and that how to deal with people with different backgrounds needs improvement. Attitudes towards people with different backgrounds can sometimes be prejudice and judgmental among young people. This of course depends on many things, such as the environment where the young has grown up in and what kind of social connections the young has had during his/her life. By learning about different cultures, the prejudices can be dispelled and in time perhaps even deleted.

Structure

The theoretical part will discuss competence and intercultural competence as a concept. The goal is to define the concept of competence by using theoretical studies made by researchers. Theoretical part also explains what secondary education is and how curriculum planning works in upper secondary school and in vocational school. University of Applied Sciences curriculum plan was taken as a comparison, and Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences curriculum principals and its international competences in the curriculum were set as an example of higher education.

The study material for the empiric part of this thesis was collected by interviewing several companies around Southern Ostrobothnia. The interviews were carried out in May 2012, by sending a questionnaire via email. Interviewees were also contacted by phone, to remind them of the research.

Based on the results of the thesis, upper secondary school will have some guideline to add international competencies to their curriculum and hopefully be able to give stronger start for the young people to face international world, so they will no longer find the foreign cultures and languages so intimidating and strange.

2 COMPETENCE

Intercultural competence does not mean that you should try to imitate others or go native. (Bartlett, Davidsson 2003, 137)

Definition

Competence: Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur in any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career.

(businessdictionary.com)

2.1 Competence

Competence as a term is often used as a synonym for knowledge and skills. Conceptual meaning of competence is however more work- and task-oriented: individual who possesses competence is qualified and has the education required by the work and through it has the ability to perform the needed tasks. (Hätönen 2003,13) For example you can say that authorized nanny has the competence to work as childcare provider but other persons who do not have the educational background but are taking care of children only have the needed know-how for the work.

University of Applied Sciences has described generic competencies for each area of expertise. Emphasis of these areas may vary depending on the subject of studies, but they are somewhat the guidelines for each school to define their own competencies. Competencies create steady base for operating in working life, co-operation and development of expertise. For example the international competence must be part of each university of applied science graduates common

work life readiness, but for those who study international business; this competence will naturally be part of their professional knowhow.

Competencies are wide mixture of skills – combination of individuals' knowhow, skills and attitudes- Competencies describe qualification, performance qualification and ability to perform the tasks included to work.

2.2 Intercultural competence

According to Bartlett and Davidsson, intercultural competences involve four main points (Improve your global competence, 2003, 138). These four parts include:

Intrapersonal skills

- a positive self-understanding
- to be able to be oneself
- to be able to participate in social situations without too much anxiety

Communication skills which include

- good knowledge of foreign languages
- flexibility and adaptability
- ability to master interpersonal communication
- social sensitivity
- politeness and courtesy

Psychological adaptability

- stress adaptation
- coping with frustration
- coping with uncertainty

Cultural know-how

- knowing the structures and behavioral patterns of the society and organizations
- knowing the values of the target society
- knowing the norms and rules of the target society

For young, who apply to work in international company these skills are vital for success in their work.

In comparison to Bartlett and Davidssons research there are other researches about intercultural competence. In the following Table 1, we can see the components of intercultural competencies by Lies Sercu, who has researched international competencies and competences in general in many of his works.

<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture specific and culture general knowledge • Knowledge of self and other • Knowledge of interaction: individual and societal • Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication
<p>Skills/Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to interpret and relate • Ability to discover and/or interact • Ability to acquire new knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction • Metacognitive strategies to direct own learning
<p>Attitudes/Traits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude to relativize self and value others • Positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence • General disposition characterized by critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own

TABLE 1 Components of Intercultural competence

(Foreign Language teachers and intercultural Competence: An international investigation, Lies Sercu 2005)

As in the Table 1 can be seen, Sercu has classified three different components which are important in intercultural competence. Those three points are knowledge, which includes points about knowing oneself and others and understanding other and own culture; skills/behavior which includes points about abilities to discover, learn and interpret new knowledge; attitudes/traits which includes positive attitude towards learning new and adapting new knowledge and value other persons.

2.3 Intercultural competence in education

Learning intercultural and intercultural competences attitude has a major role. You have to have the right attitude, openness, confidence and curiosity. You also need to be ready for constant change, for there are no readymade models or rules on how others will behave. Learning process also almost always has conflicts because there is always diversity of perception different cultures have of time, space, social and personal relations, communication style, decision making, leadership style, etc. Also many other factors influence people's thinking, behavior, communication, and cultural adaptation. (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003)

In 2004, in co-operation with European Union Leonardo da Vinci program, a project called INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment) was conducted. The project was a result of engineering industry companies need to identify 'cultural awareness' training for trainees and employees. In INCA there was described three levels of competence levels, which according to Lies Sercu, in his own research (Testing the Untestable in Language Education, 2010), might only be helpful for the student, but not so much for the assessor to evaluate the student. That might be so, but should not the teachers also have some sort of a scale to use when evaluating a student?

The assessment levels by INCA project are:

- Level 1 – Basic Competence
The student is reasonably tolerant towards other values, customs and practices although he/she might find them odd or surprising and approve or disapprove.
- Level 2 – Intermediate Competence
Student is able to more easily respond in a neutral way to differences, rather than just to disapproving or approving.
- Level 3 – Full Competence
Student is able to intercede when difficulties arise and tactfully support other members of the group in understanding each other. Student is confident enough to take a polite stand over issues, despite his/her respect for the viewpoint of others.

(INCA 2004)

These assessment levels by INCA project shows what is expected from students who are learning intercultural competence. This assessment scale could be used almost in any kind of education as a guideline; the scales used normally in upper secondary school just have more levels. But as said by Sercu, it is a good guideline especially for teachers and for the employers too. (Testing the untestable in Language education, Sercu 2010, 29)

Table 2 describes points which are important in international education. This figure has also been made by Lies Sercu, 2010. In the figure it has been explained what are the learning goals in three different main points. These three main points are so called guidelines for teachers to help the student by: assisting the learner in improving learning of interculture, in perfecting intercultural communicating skills, imagining and adopting an intercultural identity.

Each of the specific goals listed can be used by teachers as starting points for designing teaching tasks and activities that will allow them to assess learning of interculture in their language learners, and set in motion a new cycle of learning, assessing for learning, learning and again assessing and showing possibilities for learning. (Sercu 2010)

Learning dimensions described in the following table 2 are useful in any teaching work, whether it is in upper secondary school or in workplace. Learning goals give clear and simple understanding about what is important to master under each stage when learning intercultural competence.

Assist the learner in improving learning of interculture	Assist the learner in perfecting intercultural communicating skills	Assist the learner in imagining and adopting an intercultural identity
<p>Learning goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve language competencies for intercultural communication - acquire culture-specific (own and other) and culture-general knowledge - become aware of cross-cultural relationships (similarities and differences; political economic, global, cultural,...relationships) - gain insight into ways in which culture affects language and communication - gain understanding of learning demands of the subject matter and the learning process - gain insight into one's own intercultural learning preferences - gain insight into advantages and disadvantages of community (group) learning and individual learning of interculture - know and understand the assessment criteria and learning goals for interculture 	<p>Learning goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - acquire the skill to operate cultural and intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of (real-time) communication and in intercultural dialogue - acquire the skill to clarify one's own understanding of culture in relation to others' understanding of culture - acquire the ability to communicate in and learn from intercultural dialogue - acquire the ability to operate (Metacognitive) strategies to direct one's own and others' learning of interculture - acquire the skill to assess one's own learning outcomes and learning processes 	<p>Learning goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop intercultural sensitivity that is, mindfulness of and attention to intercultural issues at play in interaction - develop an essentially positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence and acting interculturality - develop the willingness to engage with otherness and learn from it - develop the ability to assess oneself with respect to being or not being an intercultural being

TABLE 2 Dimensions of promoting intercultural competence in education
(Testing the Untestable in Language education, Sercu 2010, 23)

3 SECONDARY EDUCATION

Upper secondary schools provide general education, which is organized in courses instead of grade levels, allowing students themselves to choose their courses. The nominal duration of general upper secondary education is three years. In 2008 just under 14 per cent of the age group finishing upper secondary school spent more than three years completing their general upper secondary education. The final upper secondary school examination is the national matriculation examination. The total number of students was 114,200. In 2007 32,600 students passed the matriculation examination. (Kyrö, 2008)

3.1 Curriculum planning in upper secondary school

3.1.1 Upper secondary school curriculum planning principles

In upper secondary school, there is no straight definition for international competences or for international education, like University of applied sciences has. However Finnish Board of Education has defined general upper secondary school mission and value basis in 2003. As a general mission for upper secondary school the Board of Education has defined, among other things, that upper secondary school must give the students readiness to answer the challenges from society and environment and the ability and skills to study things from different points of view. As value basis the Board of Education has determined among many other things, that the teaching is based on Finnish cultural history which is part of Nordic and European cultural heritage, and that this cultural history must be valued, evaluated and renewed.

3.1.2 Upper secondary school missions and value basis

Missions in education

Upper secondary school must prepare student so that the student is able to answer all the challenges given by the society and environment, and also ability to examine subjects from different point of views. Student must be guided to work as responsible and able to take care of commitments as a member of society and future working force. Upper secondary school education must support the development of student's self-knowledge and positive growth to adulthood, and also encourage student to lifetime learning and development.

Value basis in education

Upper secondary school education in Finland is based on Finnish history of civilization, which is part of Nordic and European cultural heritage. In upper secondary school students are taught to preserve asses and renew this cultural heritage. Students are guided towards tolerance and international co-operation.

The basis is the respect of life and human rights. Cultural ideal is to pursuit of truth, humanity and justice. (Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2003, Opetushallitus)

3.2 Cultural competence in upper secondary school

“Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another.” (Hofstede, 1984)

In 2011 Finland's Board of Education and international mobility co-operation organization CIMO, in co-operation with schools and municipality representatives, have drafted a quality recommendation, which is meant to help with basic schools and upper secondary schools international self-assessment. With the help of this quality recommendation the schools are able to identify the

success points in international operations and its needs of development, and also direct the activities towards better results.

(Finland's Board of Education and CIMO)

Basis for the cultural knowledge should be taught from the beginning of the school life, from the pre-school, so that when young people first time need to encounter foreign or just different culture, they know it is not scary and they know how to deal with it. In the present and future world it is more crucial to know at least something about the other cultures, so that conflicts and errors may be avoided. It is been seen all over the world what happens when people do not understand the backgrounds of another person and think that this person has offended you.

Upper secondary school study plan by Board of Education defines that education must offer student the opportunity to build own cultural identity through mother tongue, analyzing the past, religion, art and environmental experiences and through other subjects that the student feels important to him/herself. Student must comprehend what are the common Nordic, European and universally human values and how the lack or need of them manifest in everyday life, Finnish society and in the world. Upper secondary school has to enforce student's positive cultural identity and knowledge, which enable the intercultural actions and the success in international co-operation. (Opetushallitus, 2012)

Although it has all been said in the upper secondary school study plan, creating specific international competences for the courses and for the education itself gives clearer guidelines to what needs to be studied and taught.

3.3 Linguistic competence in upper secondary school

When talking about linguistic knowledge it usually refers to how a person knows foreign language and how well the person is able to use it. The concept of linguistic knowledge has developed towards more communicative direction and understandable knowledge of language is considered as precious skill. Managing of a language has nowadays the meaning such skill level that “person understands and knows how to use language specific enough, smoothly enough and according to the situation and so that it complies the communication needs of a person him-/herself”. (Opetushallitus, 1998)

Studying foreign languages develops student’s intercultural communication skills, it gives them skills and knowledge how to use and understand the language, at the same time it gives an opportunity to develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the culture being studied. In this case particularly the view of European identity and European multilingualism and multiculturalism is taken in to consideration. Foreign language studied in a school is therefore at the same time skill, knowledge and cultural subject.

Goal is always, that the student:

- knows how to communicate with the culturally characteristic way of the target language
- knows how to estimate own linguistic knowledge
- knows own strengths and points of development as communicator and language learner
- Is able to develop own linguistic knowledge, developmental needs and the learning and communication tasks in terms of appropriate strategies.

(Lukion Opetussuunnitelman perusteet, Nuorille tarkoitettun lukiokoulutuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet Opetushallitus)

Working in international environment requires knowing at least one foreign language, which in Finland is not so hard because there is mandatory teaching of English from the 3rd grade in basic school and Swedish from the 7th grade. Also many children are taken into international language groups from very early age. Parents want their children to have good base for language learning, because they know there will be great need for it in the children future.

Although there are good basis for language learning in Finland, many young people in Finland do not have enough knowledge of the language and do not know how to use it. After graduating from basic school, young people should be able to use the basics of a language, but in many cases they do not dare to communicate in English because of the fear of using it wrong.

A study was made in 2009 by University of Jyväskylä about how much and how well Finnish people use English in their own mind. They sent the interview to 3 000 Finns and got answer from 1 495 persons. Those who answered, 63% said that they have been studying English more than 6 years, still only 35,1% said they feel that they can speak English fluently or fairly fluently and 32,3% answered that they can write English fluently or fairly fluently. (National Survey on the English Language in Finland: Uses, means and attitudes 2009)

3.4 Upper secondary vocational school

Similar to upper secondary school studies, upper secondary vocational education and training lasts three years and provides eligibility to apply to higher education institutions. Even though the proportion of basic education leavers opting for vocational studies is smaller when compared with upper secondary school entrants, the total number of students starting vocational education and training is higher than the total number of upper secondary school entrants. This is due to the fact that those starting vocational studies

come from several age groups, whereas upper secondary school studies are generally pursued immediately after comprehensive school.

4 HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1 International competences in University of Applied Sciences (UAS)

Arene ry has outlined general competences guide in 2006 that determines general competences for all the UASs. In this guide it says that student is internationally competent when s|he:

- understands differences between cultures and is able to co-operate with people from different cultural backgrounds
- understands the impacts and opportunities of international development on his/hers own field of studies
- possesses the oral and written knowledge of at least one foreign language which is needed in his/her own field of studies and in the development of it

(Arene ry General competences for UAS 2006)

In comparison Seinäjoki UAS defines international competence as follows:

- possesses the language skill needed in own working field
- is able to work in multicultural co-operation
- takes into consideration own working fields international development impacts and opportunities

(Seinäjoki UAS Curriculum Plan 2011-2012)

4.2 Degree Program competencies

For comparison to upper secondary school competences, in UAS internationalization competence and intercultural competence have been outlined as follows:

Internationalization competence -possesses communicative competence necessary for one's work and for professional development in the subject field:

- is able to operate in a multicultural environment
- takes into account the effects of and opportunities for internationalization development in one's own field

Intercultural Adaptability A Bachelor of Business Administration (IB):

- is able to evaluate the differences between national, organisational and occupational cultures and to outline strategies for adapting to these differences in e.g. human resources management, marketing and intercultural communication
- is able to identify the relevant dimensions of cultures and develop self-awareness with regard to one's own cultural background
- is able to adapt one's behaviour to the standards of other cultures and to maintain an international network essential to one's duties.

(Seinäjoki UAS study curricula 2011-2012)

Generally the competencies required from the international business students graduating are:

International business expert is able to analyze, design, and execute different international functions for firms. Student has comprehensive understanding of international business, marketing and leadership.

5 INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH AREA: SOUTHERN OSTROBOTHNIA

Southern Ostrobothnia is well known for its characteristic culture. Most of the people know the area for its strong cultural history. People in the area are often described as strong willed, and sometimes even stubborn, which probably manifests in the entrepreneurial way of mind.

5.1 Business structure

The region is the national leader in the production of foodstuff. New innovations produce new products and new companies each year in this sector. Employing a large number of engineers, entrepreneurs, and experts the metal and hi-tech industry sector of the region is internationally oriented, growing, and technologically advanced. The wood sector of the region has also a lot of cooperation with foreign companies. (Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia)

Southern Ostrobothnia has long been known for its entrepreneurship and the large number of small and medium size enterprises. Growth oriented and diversified business activity is being developed in the region. In the future, the entrepreneurial region will invest in particular in the development of entrepreneurship in the welfare and service sectors. It is also considered as one of the key resources of the regions development. In 2009 the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia started South Ostrobothnia internationalization project, which aimed to internationalize the region and make it more attractive for international projects and co-operations as well as new international businesses. (Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, 2009)

It has been the goal of Regional council of South Ostrobothnia from 2009 to internationalize Southern Ostrobothnia. The Regional council created four

groups to research the opportunities of internationalization in four different fields. First group was meant to study educational, research and project operations. The goal was to internationalize the education and get more international students in the area, to create readiness for internationalization and enhance the cultural sensitivity and also by using international project and research activity improve the knowhow and competitiveness in the region.

Second group was meant to research immigration and integration of the foreigners, which goal was to enhance the cultural diversity in the area and to create work related migration. Third group researched the international business environment and how to enhance the export and import from and to the region. Fourth group focused on the international tourism, culture and infrastructure and set as a goal to improve the tourism in the region. (Kitinoja, 2009)

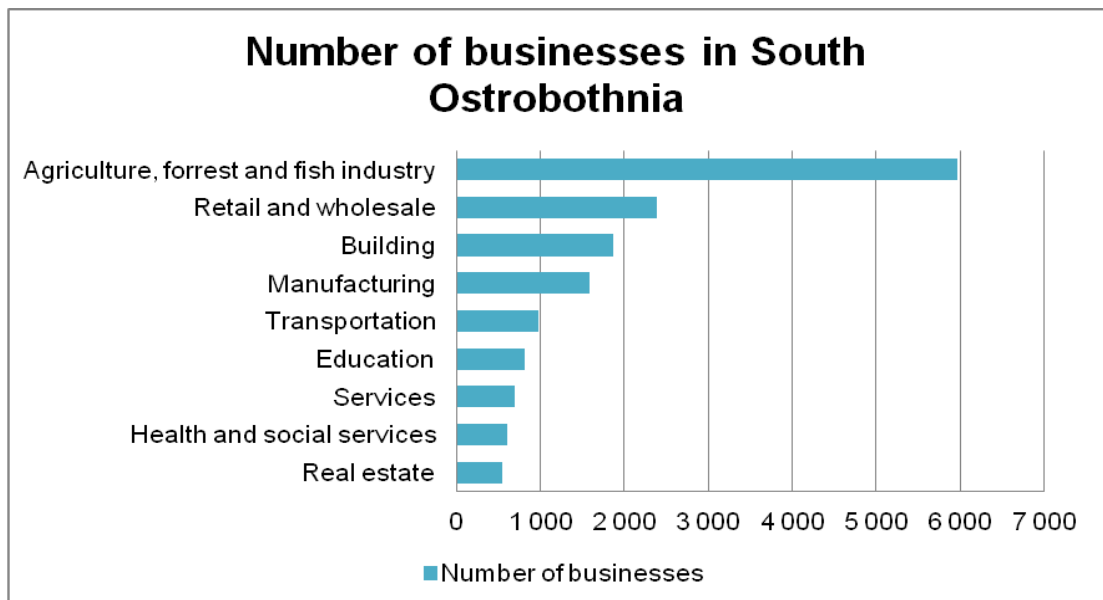


FIGURE 1 Number of major businesses by field in Southern Ostrobothnia (Tilastokeskus, , Finland 2012)

As seen in the statistical figure above, the major amount of businesses consists on agriculture, forest and fish industry with 5 966 businesses and entrepreneur,

which is second largest in the country only after Southwest Finland and about 10.4% of whole Finland agricultural enterprises. Other fields do not have that large amount of businesses, for example the second largest business field is retail and whole sale, which has only 2 387 businesses or entrepreneurs in Southern Ostrobothnia. That makes it only 7th in the whole Finland.

5.2 Population structure

Population in the area in the end of 2011 was 193 735 which is about 3.6% of whole Finland. There was 183 133 foreign people living in Finland in 2011, which is about 3, 39 percent of the whole population in Finland. Major foreign groups were from Russia and Estonia. In Southern Ostrobothnia there were 2 434 foreign people, which is about 1, 26 percent of the whole regions population. Most foreign people were from Estonia and Russia. (Tilastokeskus, Väestötilastot, Finland 2012)

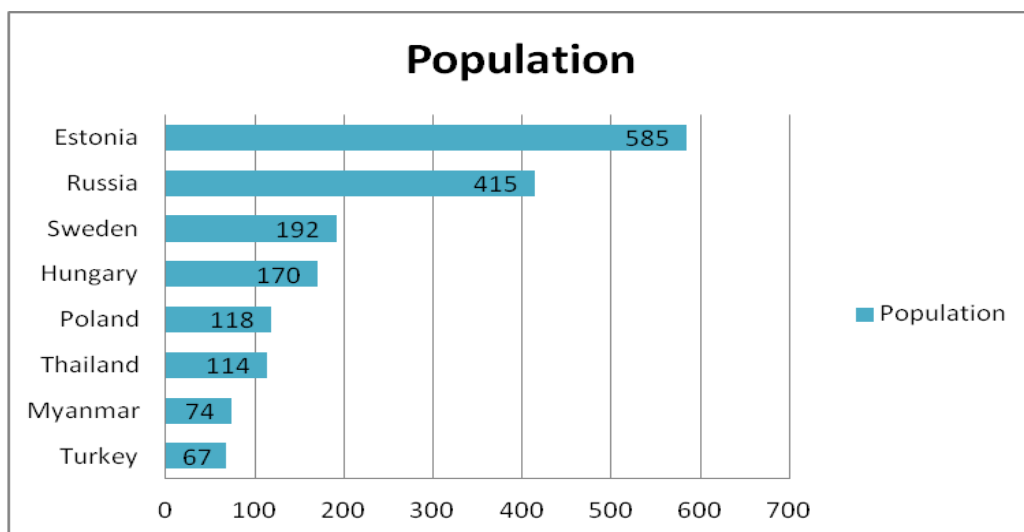


FIGURE 2 Population of major foreign nationalities in Southern Ostrobothnia (Tilastokeskus, Väestötilastot, Finland 2012)

6 RESEARCH

The goal of the research was to find out the needs and opinions of international companies regarding the competencies of young people graduating from upper secondary school. It also focused to young people who apply to work practice during or after the school. Based on the results of this research the upper secondary school is planning to create international competencies for their courses, so that young people will have better readiness for their future.

6.1 Methods used in implementation of the research

The research was implemented by using a questionnaire which included structured questions and some non-structured, open questions. The answer-in-scale questions were chosen to help the interviewee to finish the questionnaire in shorter time. Open questions were chosen for two reasons, first of all some interviewees might have something more to say and secondly some questions simply did not have a scale to implement all the possible answers.

The questionnaire was firstly based on the information received from the meeting held with the Seinäjoki upper secondary school Deputy Head Teijo Päckilä on March 12th 2012. In the meeting Mr. Päckilä told what are the expectations and needs from upper secondary school point of view. Main competencies, which they wanted to research, were the competencies that international companies in Southern Ostrobothnia expected from the young people, who just have graduated from high school, and who will be the ones applying to work in those international companies in the future. In the conversation with Mr. Päckilä following points came to surface:

Social skills: the school wanted to find out how well the young people know how to behave in social situations, such as answering the phone or talking face-to-face with different people from different backgrounds.

Linguistic skills: how well young are able to communicate in different language and use it in writing, such as answering and writing an email.

Cultural and attitude skills: how young people behave when meeting a person from different background and how well they are able to understand and cope with different cultures.

International business skills: how well young are able to do business with people from different cultural backgrounds and how well they know the different characteristics from different cultures, also find out young people's international marketing skills.

Legislation know-how: do young people know their own legislative rights and responsibilities.

As making the questionnaire, these points were the main base for the information wanted to be received from the companies. Also theory by Lies Sercu about components of intercultural competence (Table 1) was used to form the questions. In this theory Sercu goes through three points which are important when learning intercultural competence: knowledge, skills/behavior and attitudes/traits.

The questionnaire was done in co-operation with Seinäjoki secondary school Deputy Head Teijo Päckilä and Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Business, International coordinator Ritva Leppänen. It was also tested, before sending forward to interviewees, with some acquaintances who were working in international companies. Help for crafting the questionnaire into electric version was received from Teemu Hautala.

6.2 Research subject

As the subject of this research I chose international companies from Southern Ostrobothnia region. To help gather applicable companies for the research, secondary vocational business school was a great help. A list of companies hiring young students for practical work was given for use of this research. Most of those companies however were small firms, which only made business in the local area or domestically. Therefore it was necessary to verify that the companies selected were applicable for this researches purpose.

Besides using the given list, some of the companies were chosen by simply visiting different local well-known companies' webpages, also some of the companies were found by using regional entrepreneurs' webpage and again visiting those companies' webpages to verify the applicability.

As criteria for choosing the applicable companies, their internationality was taken into consideration. Some of the companies were smaller sized, less than ten persons, but had international co-operation to many countries. Some however were well-known in the region and usually those who were known to hire young for work practice and summer work.

6.3 Questionnaire structure

Questionnaire was divided into following sections: Background information questions 1-5 and Competencies expected from young (situation now and situation expected) questions 6-11. Last was asked if there were anything else the interviewees wanted to bring out, or if there were anything they would want to change in secondary education concerning the subject.

6.3.1 Background information

As the background information for the company it was necessary to know in which field the company was working at, a multiple-choice question was found as the best solution keeping in mind it would be easiest to analyze and for the interviewee to choose their field. Six choices were given which the last one was open answer, choices were selected by using the same options that questionnaires in Finland Statistic center had used in their questionnaires.

Size of the company was important to know, so that it would give clearer view to the diversity of the companies used in the research. The scale was the same used in generally when determining the size of a company by its staff, in four different choices: 1-10, 11-50, 51-250 and 251-.

Fourth question was an open question asking how international the company was. This method for asking this question was chosen because there was not universal theoretical scale to determine how international a company is.

Fifth question was to clear the fourth question by asking which regions the company does business or co-operation with. Scale was created by using the common countries, Finnish companies do business with. The regions were not chosen therefore by using geographical areas, but dividing continents to smaller parts: Northern Europe, East Europe, South Europe, Middle Europe, Russia, Asia, Middle East, North America, South America and Australia.

6.3.2 Competencies needed from young workers

The part of the questionnaire where competencies of the young workers were asked was the key point of whole research. In this part the present situation with the competencies among young people was asked. It was convenient to know

what the situation is at the moment, for after that it was easier to compare these answers to the following questions about what the companies needed.

The questions in this section were multiple choice questions, to ease the interviewees answering and later analyze of the questions.

First it was convenient to find out which languages are important for the companies. Options were given from the major basic languages used in Europe, such as English, Swedish, German, French, Russian and Spanish; last point was left open, for it was pointless to line out all the languages known.

Next it was necessary to know: what was the level, among young workers / trainees in literal, communication skills and phone communication skills. Scale used in this question was from Excellent to Satisfactory. Following shows how the scale was determined:

Excellent: Knowhow is in excellent level: young has high-level knowledge and skills and ability and willingness to apply, develop and promote competence in their work.

Good: Knowhow is commendable: young has commendable knowledge and skills and the ability and willingness to apply and develop this competence in their work.

Adequate: Knowhow is good medium: young has good knowledge and skills and the ability to apply this competence in their work.

Satisfactory: Knowhow is satisfactory: young skills are limited to internalizing basic information and skills.

The companies' opinion about what the young workers should know and possess when working in international surroundings was the next point in this questionnaire. Scale of five was used to implement how important particular competence was for the company. The scale was: very important, fairly important, cannot say, fairly unimportant, unimportant. There were ten competencies to consider:

Attitude and motivation: Does the young workers have good motivation in work and how they deal with the work and tasks generally and in international work.

Social skills: Do the young workers have the ability to come along well with other workers, with different backgrounds, in the company.

Literal communication skills: How well young workers are able to communicate through emails in international surroundings.

Communication skills: How well young workers are able to communicate with other workers and customers face-to-face and through phone, who have different cultural background.

Spontaneity: Are the young workers eager to take action by themselves and without someone telling them all the time, what to do.

Cultural know-how: How well young workers know other cultures and the differences between their own culture and some other.

Interaction with other cultures: How well are young workers able to confront other cultures and work with them?

Teamwork: How well young workers work in teams generally and especially in teams where there are people from other cultures.

Basic knowledge about commerce: Does the young workers have knowledge about commerce and how does it all work.

Knowledge about own rights and responsibilities as worker: Does the young worker have enough knowledge about their rights as worker (e.g. working times and rights for certain breaks) in work and what responsibilities include them.

After this question a blank space was left, where the interviewee was able to leave any other comments about what competencies they felt important for the young workers to know.

As the previous question was about what the young workers should know now, the following question was about what the situation presently was. The same ten competencies were used to determine this. As a scale the same scale than in the question about communication skills, from Excellent to Adequate was used.

Last point in the questionnaire was how the companies found the current situation when young workers operate in international surroundings. The question was implemented by using claims which were answered by selecting from scale of four from: Agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree.

Eight claims were used and they were based on the information received from the interview with upper secondary school Deputy Head Teijo Päckilä. The claims were as follows:

- Young workers readiness to work in international surroundings/communities is generally sufficient.
- Young workers have sufficient know-how and skills to participate in the implementation of international projects.
- Young workers understand well the tasks signed for them.
- Young workers are very motivated towards the tasks signed for them.
- Young workers have generally positive attitude towards the tasks signed for them.
- Young workers come along well with other workers in the company.
- Young workers are able to communicate well with foreign language.
- Young workers are able to communicate literally in foreign language.

Last point was again an open question where the companies could leave a comment about what they would develop in second degree education.

7 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The questionnaire was first sent by email to 34 companies on Monday May 7th 2012 and they were given five days' time to answer it. Some answers came already during the same day, but because after four days' time there did not seem to be enough answerers, a follow up call was necessary. All the rest 30 companies were called and required if they have received the email and if they would be willing to answer the questionnaire. About half of the companies declined to answer any such research and some did not have the time at the moment, for it being very busy time for many businesses.

Therefore research cannot be generalized to all the Southern Ostrobothnia companies, the questionnaire was answered by only eleven companies. The answering percentage was under 50%, about 32%, but as the companies were approached twice with different methods, it did not feel right to harass them anymore. The companies who did answer represent the major and most well-known companies in the region of Southern Ostrobothnia.

Because some companies asked not to mention their name in the research, the answers are only presented as overall results.

Answers were analyzed by using the Google document program, which was the same program used to make the whole questionnaire. Because all the answers were in Finnish and this thesis is written in English, the answers needed to be rewritten and re-modified with Microsoft Excel 2007 into English and suitable form.

Some answers are shown by percentage and in figures and some in tables. The method by question was chosen by what would be the easiest to analyze and for the reader to understand.

7.1 Background information

First questions were about the background of the companies. It was needed to know the line of business, companies' size, how international the company is and what regions the company exports.

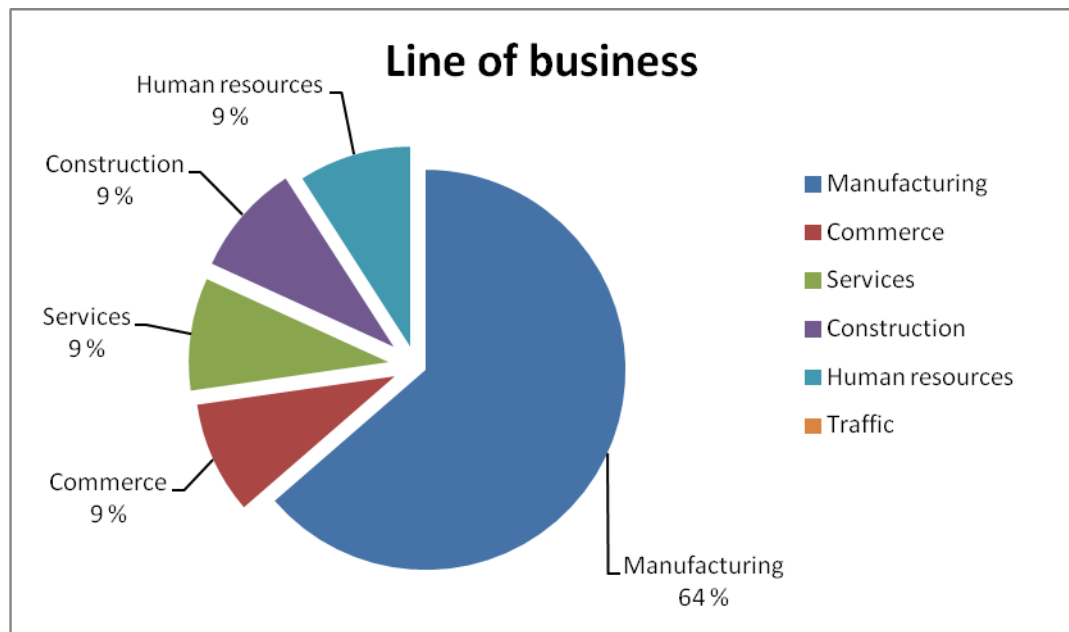


FIGURE 3 Main line of business

Seven of the companies interviewed for this research work in manufacturing (64%), that was the most answered option. Other fields of business were commerce, services, construction and human resources which each had one company working in. This was not a surprise, for the region of Southern Ostrobothnia is well known for the manufacturing.

7.1.1 Company size

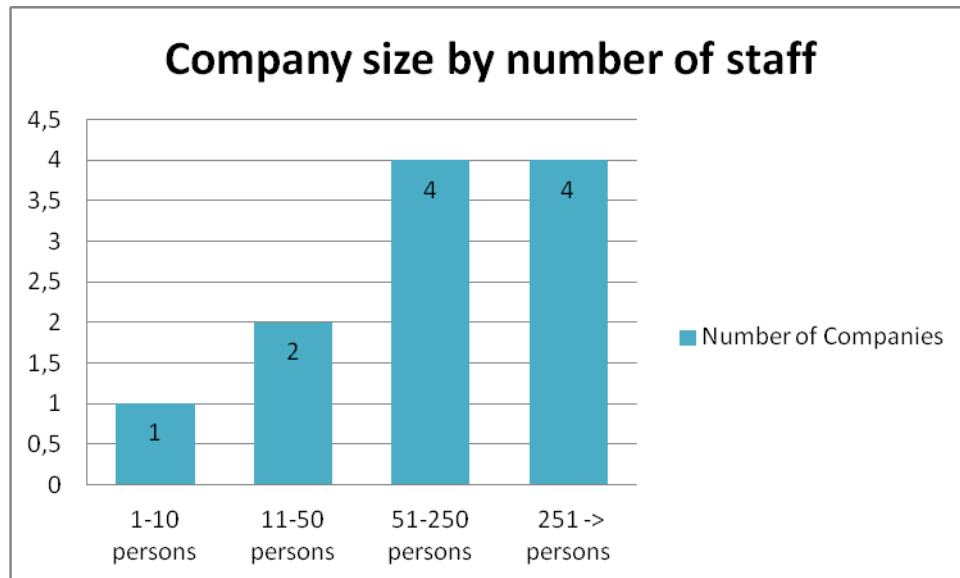


FIGURE 4 Size of the company by number of employees

From companies which took part to this research 9% answered they have less than 10 employees working in their company, which makes them micro-enterprise. 18% said they have 11-50 employees, which means they are small-enterprise. 37% had 51-250 employees, which means that most of the companies that took part to this research are medium sized enterprises. Rest 36% said they have more than 250 employees, which means they are a large enterprise. As said before, one criterion used to choose the companies for this thesis, was that they are biggest employers in the region.

7.1.2 How International the company is?

Fourth question about how international the company was had very diverse answers.

To as how internationalized the company was, was described as follows:

“Through car imports.”

“Company is internationalizing in the near future. At the moment we are doing our first international sales. At the moment we also have foreign intern trainee working in our company.”

“The actual commercial operations, such as agreements and payments happen 99 percent with domestic parties. From customers however major part is international concerns or they have significant operations outside of Finland. Because of this English as a language is in daily usage in literally communication, email communication and production and reading of documents. Smaller part of company staff requires English communication skills at times of some customer meetings or phone conversations.”

“Our company is developing and strongly internationalizing family business. Main markets are Nordic countries, East- and Middle Europe and Russia. Exports share from turnover is at the moment over 70%.”

“More than half of the production is exported, meaning that major part of the customers is outside of Finland.”

“Our company is very international.”

“Parent company is Swedish, and we have operations in the Nordic countries, that make us international.”

“From our production about 38% is exported. Main export countries are Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.”

“Parent company is located in Sweden, offices in Europe and agents all around the world.”

“Our company operates at the moment in 27 different countries, so international is big part in daily working routines.”

7.1.3 Regions of operations



FIGURE 5 Major regions of export, amount of companies

One of the companies did not answer for this question. Rest of the companies all answered that they have international co-operation to Nordic countries, to Russia and Middle Europe both operations had six companies and half said they have operations in Eastern Europe. One company had operations in Australia, one in South America, one in Middle East, two in North America, two in Asia and two in South Europe. Only one company had operations in each region, meaning that only this company alone from the answerers had operations to Australia, South America and to Middle East.

As can be seen from this and the previous answers, the companies interviewed for this research are very international, although there were few smaller sized companies included to the research. The fact that only six companies out of eleven companies does business into Russia was somewhat surprising, it would have been anticipated that more companies answer Russia because it is one of the neighboring countries. Otherwise the answers were not that surprising, but it

gave good indication of where do the Southern Ostrobothnia companies do business in and that it is not only to Nordic countries.

7.2 Language skills

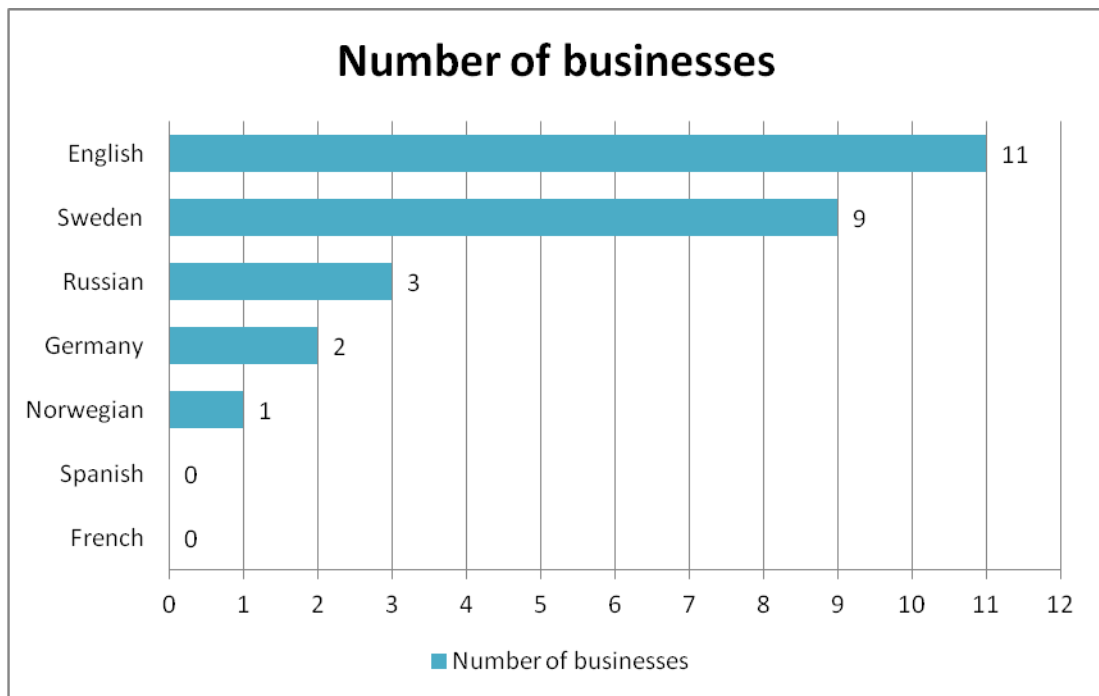


FIGURE 6 Foreign languages that are important for the company

When asked what of the following languages are important for companies, all of the interviewees chose English as the first important language. Nine companies (82%) said Swedish is important in their business. Three (27%) choose Russian, two (18%) choose Germany and one company (9%) said Norwegian is important for their business. As could have been predicted, English was the first language that all the companies involved in international operations find English as the most important language in their business.

7.2.1 Communication skills

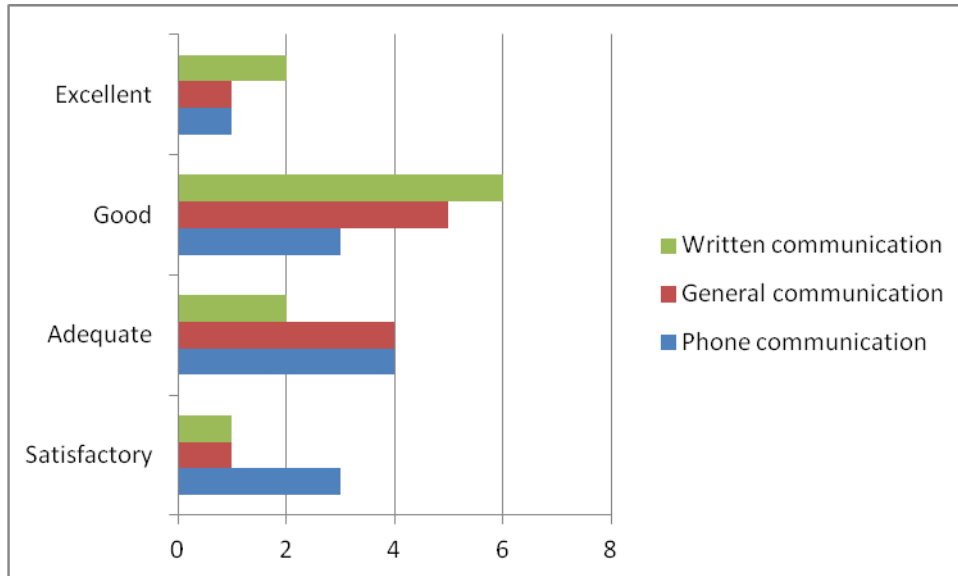


FIGURE 7 Communication skills

Answers varied when asked about the present situation with communication skills among young workers. Written communication was described generally good, eight companies out of eleven felt that literal communication skills were generally good or excellent (73%). Three companies described the level either adequate or satisfactory (27%).

Phone communication skills were mostly described as adequate or satisfactory; seven out of eleven (36%) felt phone communication skills were poor. Only four companies felt phone communication skills were in good or excellent level (63%).

General communication skills were felt either excellent or good by six companies out of eleven (54%) and adequate or satisfactory by five companies (45%).

According to the answers it seems like most difficulties with communication were when communicating through phone. Which is generally taking believable, for it is hard for even many adults to have a conversation through phone, even in own mother tongue not to talk about using some foreign language.

7.2.2 Other competences required

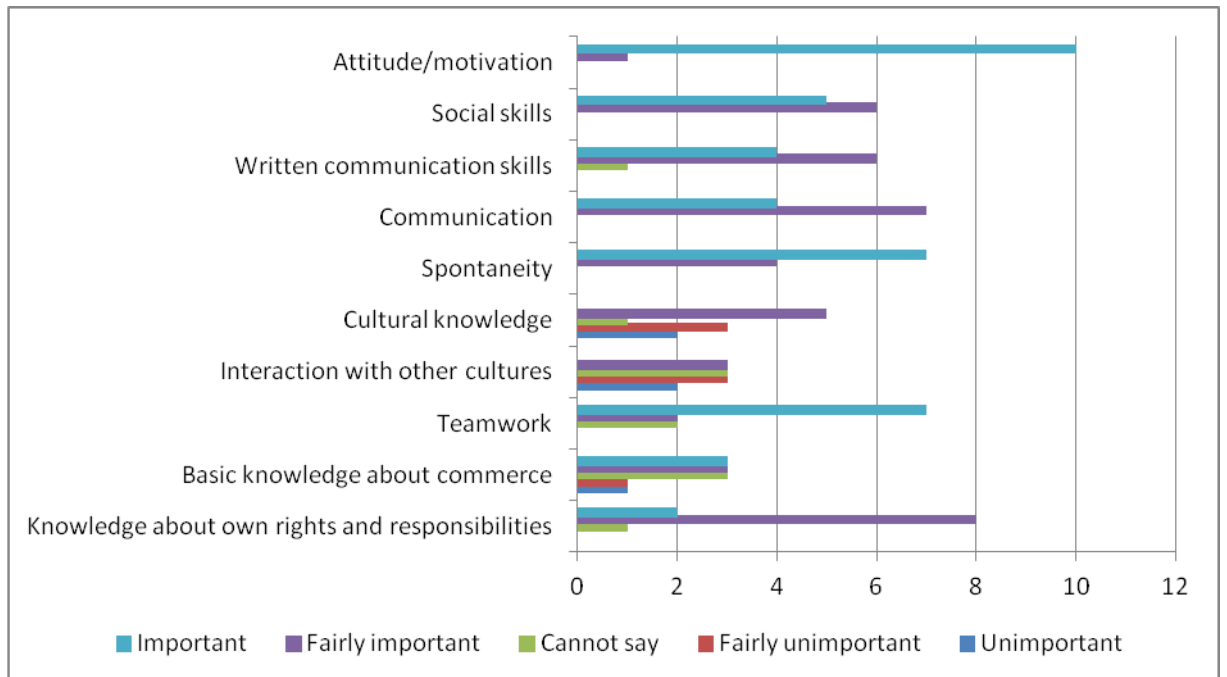


FIGURE 8 Competences required from young workers

When asking about needed competences among young workers, the answers by competence had little variation. The answers by each competence were as follows:

Attitude/motivation: All but one company answered that this competence is important, one answered that it was fairly important.

Social skills: As in previous question everybody felt that it is either important or fairly important competence among young workers. Six out of eleven (55%) felt that social skills is fairly important competence and rest five (45%) felt it was important.

Written communication skills: One company could not say if this competence is important or not for their company. Rest of the companies felt it either important or fairly important (91%).

Communication skills: Again all the companies answered that communication skills are either important or fairly important. Four out of eleven (36%)

companies felt it is important and seven out of eleven (64%) felt it as fairly important.

Spontaneity: As generally, this competence is always felt important by all employers. Seven out of eleven (64%) felt this competence important and four out of eleven (36%) felt it fairly important.

Cultural knowledge: This question split the opinions among companies. Nobody felt this competence as important. Five out of eleven (45%) felt it was fairly important competence for young workers, three (27%) felt it fairly unimportant and two felt it unimportant (18%). One company could not say if it is important competence or not.

Interaction with other cultures: Nobody felt this competence as important. Three (27%) felt it fairly important, three (27%) felt it fairly unimportant and two (18%) felt it unimportant. Three could not say their opinion about it.

Teamwork: This competence was felt mostly important or fairly important. Only two companies did not have an opinion. Seven (64%) felt it important competence and two (18%) fairly important.

Basic knowledge about commerce: Answers varied among companies. Six (54%) felt it either important or fairly important, both had three answers. As unimportant and fairly unimportant this competence was felt by two (18%) companies. Three companies did not have an opinion.

Knowledge about own rights and responsibilities: Most of the companies felt that this competence is important among young workers. Two (18%) said it is important and eight (73%) said it is fairly important competence. One company did not have an opinion.

7.2.3 Additional competences

Open questions about what other competences the companies value, received some answers. Following comments were posted:

“Good motivation towards work, good employee skills.”

“General interest towards everything, willingness/eager to learn new things.”

“When starting in the company, new employee must be “re-taught”, among other things, the basic skills of commerce. Of course previously acquired general knowledge has its advantage and serves as a basis for induction happening in the workplace.”

“Good computer skills, knowledge of basic computer programs.”

These answers were quite general, and as could have been predicted, many employers hope that the young workers and workers in general have good motivation towards the work and basic skills of the tools needed to complete the work. One company pointed out that employees will be anyhow re-taught to the work, no matter what their level before applying to work. That makes sense, since there are no universal methods used in each company, and the way of working differs depending on the company and how they are used to do certain things.

7.2.4 Present situation

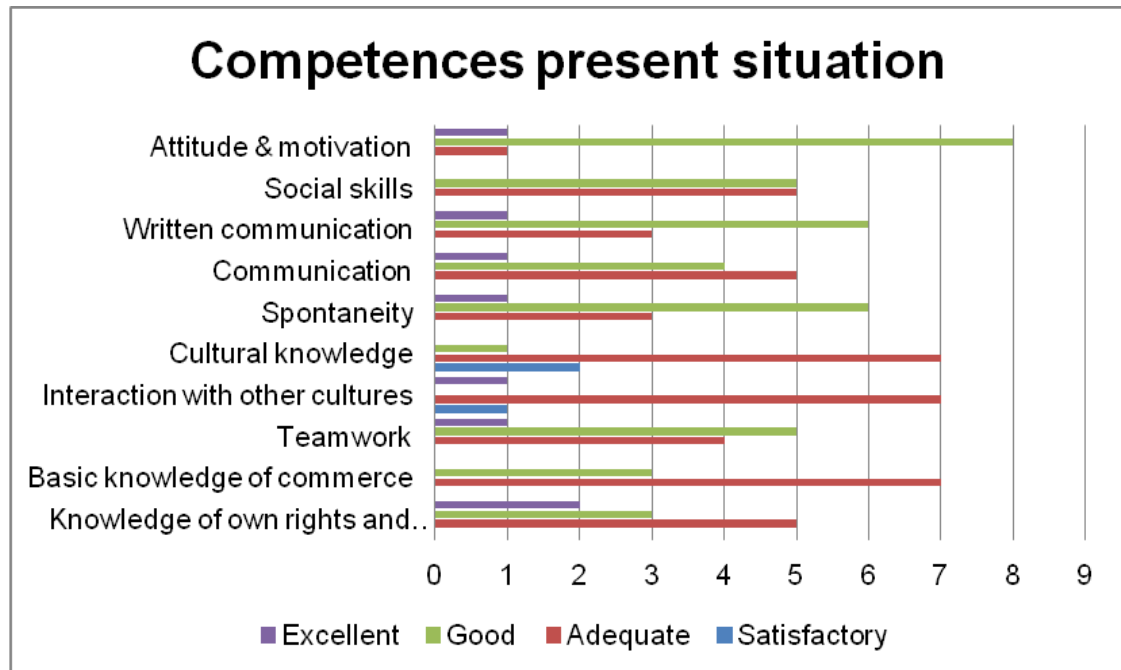


FIGURE 9 Present situations of young workers competences

This question was asked to find out what the situation among young workers is at the moment from the company point of view.

For the question about competences at the moment one company did not answer and therefore the answers are only from ten companies. Competences were scaled from excellent to good and the answers by competence were as follows:

Attitude/motivation: One company felt this competence among young workers as on excellent level, and eight as good level. One company felt that it is at adequate level.

Social skills: None of the companies felt that this competence was at excellent level or sufficient level. Half felt young workers had good level in social skills and half adequate level.

Written communication: One company felt this competence to be at excellent level, six as good level and three as adequate level. No one thought it to be in satisfactory level.

Communication: Five companies felt that this competence was on excellent level or good level, four as excellent and one as good. Rest five companies thought it was on adequate level. No-one felt it to be on satisfactory level.

Spontaneity: Seven companies felt this competence to be on excellent or good level and three as on adequate level.

Cultural knowledge: No-one felt this competence to be at excellent level, one company felt it to be at good level. Seven said it to be at adequate level and two said is at satisfactory level.

Interaction with other cultures: One company felt this competence to be at excellent level, seven as adequate level and one at satisfactory level.

Teamwork: One felt ability to teamwork to be at excellent level among young workers, five felt it to be at good level and four felt it to be at adequate level.

Basic knowledge about commerce: Three companies felt it to be at good level and seven as adequate level.

Knowledge about own rights and responsibilities: Two companies scaled knowledge about own rights and responsibilities to be at excellent level, three felt it to be at good level and five saw it only at adequate level.

One competence had most variation among answers, this was social skills, half of the companies felt it to be only at adequate level and half as good level. This could be explained by the fact that many young people might still be finding themselves and therefore be shy to socialize with unfamiliar people. However this can be taught away, by practicing social situations in school the young would have better readiness to confront different social situations. Attitude also affects to this a lot. According to the answers, attitude level was scaled as excellent only by 10% of the companies; 80% of the companies saw it to be on

good level. There was also one company which said it is only adequate level in their point of view.

Communication and written communication skills were seen to be mostly adequate or good, this can also be seen in the following question where most companies somewhat agree that most young people do have good communication skills.

Cultural knowledge and cultural interaction seemed to be one point that was said to be on adequate level by many of the companies. Both competences were scaled to be adequate by 70% of the interviewed companies who answered this question. This can be interpreted as there is great need for cultural education. However, as seen from the earlier question answers, where the competences needed were asked, many of the companies do not feel that these competences are that important for the company itself.

7.2.5 Arguments

Last part of the questionnaire had eight arguments, where companies needed to answer if they agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree. The answers have been analyzed by writing the argument in to a table and marking by number, how many of the answerers agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed or disagreed.

The opinions varied among companies, one company did not answer at all to this question, which means that only ten companies gave their opinion. According to the answers can be interpreted that mostly companies agree that the young workers have good skills to work, but some points could have some improvement to do, such as attitude, motivation and ability to be part of implementing companies' international projects.

Only argument that all the companies agreed (30%) or somewhat agreed (70%), was that young workers come along well with other workers in the company. When asked if young workers have sufficient skills and knowhow to be part of implementing companies international projects, the opinions went half and half, half of the companies answered that they somewhat disagree and other half either agreed or somewhat agreed.

Ability to work in international surroundings was agreed or somewhat agreed to be good by 70% of the interviewees who answered to the question. 30% somewhat agreed with this.

According to the companies, attitude towards tasks assigned for young workers and motivation towards the tasks were generally good, most agreed with this, although motivation had more variation among opinions, only 60% agreed or somewhat agreed and 40% only somewhat agreed with this.

Argument	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
<i>Young workers ability to work in international surroundings are generally good</i>	1	6	3	0
<i>Young workers have sufficient skills and knowhow to be part of implementing company's international projects</i>	1	4	5	0
<i>Young workers understand well tasks assigned for them</i>	1	8	1	0
<i>Young workers are motivated towards the tasks assigned for them</i>	2	4	4	0
<i>Young workers attitude towards tasks assigned for them is generally positive</i>	2	6	1	1
<i>Young workers come along well with other workers in the company</i>	3	7	0	0
<i>Young workers are able to communicate in a foreign language</i>	1	7	2	0
<i>Young workers are able to communicate in writing with foreign language</i>	1	8	1	0

TABLE 3 Opinion by arguments, number by companies' amount

8 CONCLUSION

Due to the time limitation, it was difficult to carry out the research as in large scale. One problem was also to find the right person from the companies to answer these questions, in many cases a phone call was needed to find out whom to send the questionnaire. Some companies did not answer only because they did not have a single person to take care of employing young persons, but many different persons who all were in charge of their own fields' employers.

The response rate was only 32%. Although all the companies were also contacted personally by phone, some of the companies just did not want to have anything to do with such questionnaires and some just were too busy to answer it.

More comprehensive research would have been made by first doing the questionnaire before the summer, when most young people go to summer work, and then do a follow-up inquiry during autumn, when the companies could have had more accurate picture about what competences needed improvement.

Although the research was only done in a small scale, the answers give some indication what the situation is among young workers competence in Southern Ostrobothnia today, and what does the companies expect for them to know. Companies that were interviewed are according to the answers, very international and have lot of operations abroad.

As could be seen from the first questions, language knowledge is important for many companies, especially English, which was chosen as the most important language by all the companies. English is the common language when doing business, but there were also other languages that were thought to be important for the young workers to master. Swedish was also appreciated by major part (82%) of the companies. Other languages mentioned were Russian, German

and Norwegian. The notion that can be made from these answers is that it is vital to learn English and Swedish in Finnish schools, but it is also important to master a third foreign language when working in international companies. It can also improve the work opportunities for a young person who has just graduated and is applying for the first work.

The research gave answers to questions about what the companies think about the competence level among young people who have just graduated and have started working in a company or will have an internship in a company. It is shown according to the answers, that there are many development areas among young people's international competences. The problem is not only in the language learning, but also using it in practice and not being afraid of doing mistakes.

The main problem points that came out, when analyzing the answers, were that many companies feel that when it comes to communicating through phone the young workers have the most troubles as was the case with social skills, where half of the interviewees told the level was adequate. Also teamwork ability was thought to need more improvement. Attitude and motivation skills were thought to be generally good, but there was also some improvement needed.

According to the results of the research it can be interpreted, that young people are familiar with the international world. But when needing to face it in work, they might have problems. By using the language at the school and getting familiar with international surrounding world, these problems and frights could be solved or at least eased.

The fact is that international teaching, not only teaching in English or through some other language, is needed more. By international teaching we could

understand e.g. cultural interaction and how to use the languages and communicate with foreign people in practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ammatillisten perustutkintojen perusteet, [Online publication]. [Ref. 3.5.2012]
Available at: http://oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot/ammattikoulutus
- Arene ry General competences for UAS 2006 [Ref. 24.4.2012]. Available at:
<http://www.ncp.fi/ects/>
- Bartlett, Catherine, Aira Davidsson 2003. Improve Your Global Competence:
Multikustannus / Multiprint Oy
- Business Dictionary, [Website]. [Ref. 25.4.2012] Available at:
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/competence.html>
- Etelä-Pohjanmaan liitto [Online website]. [Ref. 13.5.2012] Available at:
<http://www.epliitto.fi/>
- Hofstede, G. 1984. National cultures and corporate cultures. In L.A. Samovar &
R.E. Porter (Eds.), Communication Between Cultures. Belmont, CA:
Wadsworth.
- Hätönen, H. 2003. Osaamiskartoituksesta kehittämiseen. Helsinki: Educa
- INCA-project, 2004. [Online website]. [Ref. 4.5.2012] Available at:
<http://www.incaproject.org/>
- Kyrö, M. 2008. International comparisons of some features of Finnish Education
and Training.
OPH.fi [Online publication]. [Referred 14.5.2012] Available at:
http://www.oph.fi/download/140518_international_comparisons_of_some_features_of_finnish_education_and_training.pdf
- Lies Secru 2005. Foreign Language teachers and intercultural Competence: An
international investigation: Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Lies Secru, Amos Paran 2010. Testing the untestable in Language Education:
Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2003, Opetushallitus. [Online publication],
[Ref. 26.4.2012]. Available at:

http://www.oph.fi/koulutuksen_jarjestaminen/opetussuunnitelmien_ja_tutkintojen_perusteet/lukiokoulutus

National Survey on the English Language in Finland: Uses, means and attitudes 2009. [Online publication], [Ref. 2.5.2012] Available at: <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/journal/volumes/05/chapter7.html>

OPH.fi – Opetushallitus: Koulutus ja tutkinnot [Online website], [Ref. 25.4.2012] Available at: http://oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot

Raportti, ISO-hanke Etelä-Pohjanmaan liitto 30.6.2009 Teemu Kitinoja. [Online publication], [Ref. 27.4.2012] Available at: http://www.epliitto.fi/upload/files/Kansainvalistymisen_nykytila_raportti.pdf

Seinäjoki UAS Curriculum Plan 2011-2012 [Online publication], [Ref. 27.4.2012]. Available at: <http://ops.seamk.fi/fi/index.php?category=2011-2012&page=ammattikorkeakouluopinnot>

Seinäjoki UAS Curriculum Plan 2011-2012 [Online publication] [Ref. 27.4.2012] Available at: <http://ops.seamk.fi/fi/index.php?category=2011-2012&page=ammattikorkeakouluopinnot>

Tilastokeskus. [Online website], [Ref. 3.5.2012]. Available at: <http://stat.fi/> - Väestö, Teollisuus, Yritykset

Väestöliitto: Tiivistelmä YK:n väestörahasen vuosiraportista, State of the World Population 2008. [Online publication], [Ref. 27.4.2012]. Available at: <http://vaestoliitto-fi-bin.directo.fi/@Bin/136b4a446b032a35f208e45a6dd293bb/1337267472/application/pdf/313062/UNFPAKulttuurintuntemuskehityksenavaimena.pdf>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Cover letter

Hyvä vastaanottaja,

Olen kansainvälisen liiketalouden opiskelija Seinäjoen Ammattikorkeakoulusta. Olen tekemässä opinnäytetyötä Seinäjoen lukiolle. Työssäni pyrin selvittämään nuorten työnhakijoiden/työharjoittelijoiden kansainvälisyyteen liittyvien tietojen ja taitojen tasoa tällä hetkellä.

Selvitystä varten toivoisin saavani teidän yrityksen näkemyksen tämän hetkisestä tilanteesta, sekä siitä mitä kansainvälisyyteen liittyviä asioita teidän mielestänne tulisi lukio-opetuksessa ja toisen asteen ammatillisessa opetuksessa korostaa.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen ei vie aikaanne kuin viisi minuuttia.

Kyselyn loppuun olen jättänyt vapaaehtoisen kommentointimahdollisuuden siitä, mitä haluaisitte eniten painottaa toisen asteen opetuksessa.

Vastaukset tullaan esittämään opinnäytetyössä kokonaistuloksina, joten yksittäisen vastaajan tiedot eivät paljastu.

Mikäli teillä on kysymyksiä tutkimuksesta tai haluatte lisätietoja, voitte olla yhteydessä minuun alla olevan sähköpostiosoitteen kautta. Vastaan mielelläni tutkimusta koskeviin kysymyksiin.

Kiitoksia etukäteen vastauksistanne!

Linkki kyselyyn:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEhVQmJyWFZKeFROUFphUzRPUTIMYXc6MQ>

Tiina Hautala

tiina.hautala@seamk.fi

Dear Recipient,

I am an International Business Student from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. I am working on a research thesis for Seinäjoki Upper Secondary school. In my work I have a goal to research present competence levels of young trainees and graduates who are applying for work in international companies.

For the research I would wish to have your opinion about current situation, and what subjects in your opinion should be stressed in secondary education.

Answering the question takes only five minutes.

At the end of the questionnaire I have added voluntary commentary opportunity of what you would most stress in secondary education.

Answers will be analyzed as collective answers, so that personal opinions will not be enhanced or revealed.

Should you have any questions about the research or you would like any information, you are most welcome to contact me through the email address below.

Thank you in advance!

Link for the questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEhVQmJyWFZKeFROUFphUzRPUTIMYXc6MQ>

Tiina Hautala

tiina.hautala@seamk.fi

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire

A. Taustakysymykset:

1) Yrityksen nimi:

2) Yrityksenne päätoimiala:

- teollisuus
- kauppa
- palvelut
- rakentaminen
- liikenne
- Muu:

3) Yrityksen henkilöstömäärä:

- 1–10 henkilöä
- 11–50 henkilöä
- 51–250 henkilöä
- 251→ henkilöä

4) Miten määrittelisitte yrityksenne kansainvälisyyttä tällä hetkellä? Vapaa vastaus

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It contains no text. On the right side, there are three small square buttons stacked vertically, and on the bottom left and right sides, there are small square buttons with left and right arrow symbols respectively.

5) Mihin alueille yrityksenne tekee kauppaa tällä hetkellä?

- Pohjoismaat
- Itä-Eurooppa
- Etelä-Eurooppa
- Keski-Eurooppa
- Venäjä
- Aasia
- Lähi-itä
- Pohjois-Amerikka
- Etelä-Amerikka
- Australia

B. Nuorilta vaadittavat tiedot ja taidot (nykytilanne ja tarve)

6) Mitkä kielitaidot ovat tärkeitä yrityksellenne?

- englanti
- ruotsi
- saksa
- ranska
- venäjä
- espanja
- Muu:

7) Mikä on tämänhetkinen taso kielitaidoissa nuorten työntekijöiden/harjoittelijoiden keskuudessa yleisesti?

1=Erinomainen 2=Hyvä 3=Kohtalainen 4= Tyydyttävä

	1	2	3	4
a) Kirjallinen (esim. sähköpostien kirjoittaminen ja vastaaminen)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Yleinen kommunikaatio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Puhelinkeskustelutaito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8) Mitkä tiedot ja taidot koette tärkeiksi nuorten työnhakijoiden/nuorten harjoittelijoiden kohdalla, heidän työskennellessä kansainvälisessä ympäristössä?

1=Erittäin tärkeä 2=Jokseenkin tärkeä 3=Ei osaa sanoa 4=Vähemmän tärkeä 5=Ei lainkaan tärkeä

	1	2	3	4	5
a) Asenne ja motivaatio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Sosiaaliset taidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Kirjalliset viestintätaidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Suulliset viestintätaidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Oma-aloitteisuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Kulttuuri tietämys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Kanssakäyminen muiden kulttuurien kanssa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Tiimityöskentely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Kaupankäynnin perusteet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Tietämys omista oikeuksista ja velvollisuuksista työntekijänä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9) Muita vaadittavia/tarvittavia tietoja ja taitoja? Vapaa vastaus

10) Mikä on tämänhetkinen taso nuorten työntekijöiden/harjoittelijoiden kansainvälisissä tiedoissa ja taidoissa?

1=Erinomainen 2=Hyvä 3=Kohtalainen 4=Tyydyttävä

	1	2	3	4
a) Asenne ja motivaatio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Sosiaaliset taidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Kirjalliset viestintätaidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Suulliset viestintätaidot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Oma-aloitteisuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Kulttuurituntemus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Kanssakäyminen muiden kulttuurien kanssa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Tiimityöskentely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Kaupankäynnin perusteet (esim. asiakaspalvelutaidot, alan tuntemus)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Tietämys omista oikeuksista ja velvollisuuksista työntekijänä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11) Vastaa seuraaviin väittämiin millaisena koet tämänhetkisen tilanteen nuorten työskennellessä kansainvälisissä tilanteissa. 1=täysin samaa mieltä 2=jokseenkin samaa mieltä 3=jokseenkin eri mieltä 4=täysin eri mieltä

	1	2	3	4
1. Nuorten valmiudet työskennellä kansainvälisessä ympäristössä/yhteisössä ovat yleisesti ottaen riittävät	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Nuorilla on riittävät tiedot ja taidot olla mukana toteuttamassa yrityksen kansainvälisiä projekteja	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Nuoret ymmärtävät heille määrätty työtöhtävät hyvin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Nuoret ovat motivoituneita heille määrättäviin työtöhtäviin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Nuorten asenne työtöhtäviään kohtaan on yleisesti ottaen positiivinen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Nuoret tulevat hyvin toimeen yrityksen muiden työntekijöiden kanssa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Nuoret ovat kykeneviä kommunikoimaan vieraalla kielellä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Nuoret osaavat kommunikoida kirjallisesti vieraalla kielellä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12) Mitä muuta haluaisitte kehittää toisen asteen koulutuksessa?

A. Background questions:

1) Company name:

2) Company's main line of business:

- manufacturing
- commerce
- services
- building
- traffic
- other:

3) Company personnel:

- 1–10 persons
- 11–50 persons
- 51–250 persons
- 251–> persons

4) How would you determine your company's internationality?

Open answer:



5) Which regions does your company do business?

- Nordic countries
- Eastern Europe
- Southern Europe
- Middle Europe
- Russia
- Asia
- Middle East
- North America
- South America
- Australia

B. Competences needed from young workers (present situation and need)

6) Which languages are important for your company?

- English
- Swedish
- German
- French
- Russian
- Spanish
- other:

7) What is the present situation with the languages among young workers?
1=Excellent 2=Good 3=Adequate 4= Satisfactory

	1	2	3	4
a) Written (e.g. writing and answering emails)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) General communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Phone conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8) Which competences you find important among young workers when they operate in international surroundings?

1= Very important 2= Somewhat important 3= Cannot say 4= Somewhat unimportant
5= Unimportant

	1	2	3	4	5
a) Attitude / motivation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Social skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Literal communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Spontaneity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Cultural knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Interaction with other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Basic knowledge of commerce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Knowledge of own rights and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9) Other competences?
Open answer:

10) What is the current situation in competences among young workers? 1= Excellent
2= Good 3= Adequate 4= Satisfactory

	1	2	3	4
a) Attitude / motivation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Social skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Written communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Spontaneity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Cultural knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Interaction with other cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Basic knowledge of commerce (e.g. customer service)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Knowledge of own rights and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11) Answer following arguments by how you see the current situation among young workers when they work in international surroundings.

1= Agree 2= Somewhat agree 3= Somewhat disagree 4= Disagree

	1	2	3	4
1. Young workers ability to operate in multicultural environment is generally good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Young workers are able to be part of implementing company's international projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Young workers understand well the tasks assigned for them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Young workers are motivated towards the tasks assigned for them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Young workers attitude towards tasks assigned for them is generally good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Young workers come along well with other workers in the company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Young workers are able to communicate in a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Young workers are able to communicate literally in foreign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12) Mitä muuta haluaisitte kehittää toisen asteen koulutuksessa?