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**Message from the
International President**

Dear SIEC-ISBE Friends,

Welcome to the 156th edition of The *International Journal for Business Education*, formerly known as *The Review*. Our journal is a double blind, peer-reviewed publication for global business educators by global business educators. The journal is published once per year. ISBE members provide in-depth research articles that can be helpful in the classroom or with administrative responsibilities. Each article, based upon research conducted by our members, adds to the body of knowledge in global business education. As in the past, a brochure for the upcoming conference will be included.

I want to thank Tamra Davis, Ph.D. of the USA Chapter and Michaela Stock, Ph.D. of the Austrian Chapter for taking on the task of editors. I also want to take a moment to thank our reviewers. The complete list of reviewers can be seen on our Editoral Board page. Your expertise was beneficial in helping improve the quality of the accepted manuscripts and offering guidance for improvement to those authors whose work was not accepted this year. Thank you to Lisa Pitts for serving as copy editor.

Our international conference will be located in Graz, Austria. The conference theme, Entrepreneurship Education—Regional and International, is an exciting theme that is very appropriate as our organization celebrates 115 years of excellence in Business Education. I hope to see you at the 2016 conference and our future conferences as well. Future conferences are planned in the following locations:

2017—Puerto Rico

2018—Iceland

We are seeking proposals for conferences in 2019 and beyond.

With warmest SIEC-ISBE regards until we meet again,

Petra Bragadottir
SIEC-ISBE International President
Iceland
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**Review Process**

The International Journal for Business Education is a double-blind, peer-reviewed journal. Due to the international nature of the journal, two or more editors work together to facilitate the review process. All manuscripts that originate from the United States are handled by the editor from outside of the United States. This editor assigns the manuscripts to the appropriate reviewers, handles all correspondence with the author(s) and reviewers, and makes the final decision on acceptance. Manuscripts that originate from outside the United States are handled by the editor from the United States. Again, this editor assigns the manuscripts to the appropriate reviewers, handles all correspondence with the author(s) and reviewers, and makes the final decision on acceptance. By following this process, it is possible that one or more of the editors may also have a manuscript published in the journal. Additionally, it is also possible that someone who has submitted a manuscript is also a member of the Editorial Review Board.

**Editorial Review Board**

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## NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF SIEC-ISBE GENERAL SECRETARY

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a.  a thorough knowledge of SIEC-ISBE, including its history, activities, operations, and future direction

b.  active participation in several SIEC-ISBE activities, including the annual International conferences

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- maintain the Permanent Office of SIEC-ISBE and perform all secretarial and financial duties as well as other duties assigned by the President, Executive Committee, and/or the Board
- work cooperatively with the International President in establishing agendas, budgets, and activities
- maintain effective communication and provide essential information between and among the International President, Assembly of Delegates, the Board, and the Executive Committee
- maintain archives for SIEC-ISBE
- communicate effectively with individuals, institutions, and organizations, both internally and externally
- promote SIEC-ISBE both nationally and internationally
- commit time and energy to SIEC-ISBE

d.  commitment to attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, the Board, and the Assembly of Delegates at the yearly International Conference

**All applications (no longer than two pages) must be sent to the International President, Petra Bragadottir, petra@fa.is  by June 1, 2016.  Profiles of the candidates should cover the above-mentioned points.  Additional background information or experiences regarding qualifications for the position may be included. Candidates must be present at the International Conference and will be interviewed by the Election Committee at the International Conference; the nomination will be presented to the Assembly of Delegates for approval.**

**Preface**

I would like to thank the wonderful professionals who filled the role of reviewers for this year's journal. Due to the number of manuscripts received, multiple reviewers were needed. Without their assistance, the job of editor would have been much more difficult. Thank you to the entire Editorial Board who are SIEC-ISBE members and volunteered to help when asked. Thank you. Also, a thank you to Lisa Pitts for agreeing to be the copy editor this year.

We hope that you find the articles included in this year's The *International Journal for Business Education* interesting. Thank you to everyone who submitted a manuscript for consideration. Without your submissions, we would not have had a journal.

*Michaela Stock, Ph.D. and Tamra S. Davis, Ph.D.*
*SIEC-ISBE Editors 2016*

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## Insiders' Perspectives on Project Based Learning:
## A Comparison of US and Israeli Approaches

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Abstract

*High school students and teachers in two countries (US and Israel) were interviewed to ascertain their perspectives about their Project Based Learning (PBL) experiences. Perspectives were evaluated to determine to what degree PBL approaches were based on the eight essential elements of PBL and whether PBL courses contributed effectively to workplace preparedness. Differences between teachers and students and between countries were identified. Results revealed that PBL programs incorporating the eight essential elements are more effective in preparing students to enter today's work environment. Students perceive stronger benefits from their PBL experiences than teachers perceive. Additionally, the perspectives of Israeli teachers and students were more similar to each other than the perspectives of US teachers and students.*

Keywords: Project Based Learning; progressive education; Israel and United States; qualitative research

**Introduction**

Educational institutions across the globe are adopting new pedagogies with the intention of better preparing the next generation of business employees and combating the dissatisfaction of businesses hiring business major graduates (Ravitz, 2008; Weisblat & Bresciani, 2012). These pedagogies, coined "progressive," are meant to develop the skills, not just the knowledge, employees require to keep a business afloat in today's global market (Ravitz, 2008; Cernavskis, 2015). In a global market that is constantly evolving, employers are looking for people whose abilities transcend rote memorization of facts and the completion of monotonous assignments (Seeley, 2009; Cernavskis, 2015). Therefore, we ask the question, "Are these pedagogies living up to their claims?"

One reason for the rise in popularity of progressive pedagogies is that they develop the skills most valuable in primarily entrepreneurial firms inside and outside of the United States (Römer-Paakkanen & Takanen-Körperich, 2011). Among these valued skills are technological savviness, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and innovation (the heart and soul of new businesses). Small

and medium enterprises (SMEs), an example of predominantly entrepreneurial firms, make up 99.7% of all employer firms in both the United States and Israel (Rothwell & Zegveld, 1982; Small Business Act Fact Sheet, 2013; Small Business Facts, 2011). These firms are also significant in hiring, employing half (50%) of the private sector working population of the United States and over half (66.5%) of the private sector working population of Israel (Small Business Act Fact Sheet, 2013; Statistics about Business Size, 2008; Firoozmand et al., 2015).

In countries like the United States and Israel, SMEs are regarded as the epitome of the free market, generating the most radical innovations and requiring entrepreneurial inclinations on the part of the workers in order to succeed in the business (Rothwell & Zegveld, 1982). With such a large proportion of workers entering the business field and working in SMEs in particular, entrepreneurial learning approaches need to be implemented so that high employment and innovation needs can be met (Westerholm, 2010). A study by Slepcevic-Zach, Wimmer, Stock, and Paechter (2015) of two vocational schools in Austria demonstrated that hands-on experiences increase students' professionalism and teamwork, therefore better preparing them to function in the outside world. Pedagogies whose values are in line with those of entrepreneurial institutions include in their curriculum an emphasis on presentation, fluency with technology, skills that assist with self-directed learning, and team skills (Baker, 2007; Riebenbauer & Slepcevic-Zach, 2013). These institutions develop their students' readiness for the workforce.

One such pedagogy is Project Based Learning (PBL), which is characterized by its emphasis on both the learning and application of the content in a context that empowers the students to apply it (Stock, Riebenbauer & Winklebauer, 2010; Thomas, 2000). This approach is accomplished by implementing projects into the curriculum, meaning that there is a measurable output which demonstrates competency in subject areas. These projects can be anything from small, one-day activities to large, interdisciplinary, semester-long products that incorporate design, revision, and exhibition of the final product (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). The essence of this pedagogy can be traced as far back as Socrates, who required his students to question their surroundings and think critically (Boss, 2011; Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013). John Dewey, an unknowing proponent of PBL, fought for an educational system that more closely resembled the "real world" through the use of engaging experiences and learning of skills that help students cope with an ever-changing world (Boss, 2011; Coffey, 2008). Other famous names in education, that together defined the progressivist movement that fostered PBL, include Francis Parker, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget, among others (Boss, 2011; Peterson, 2012).

The ideals of the progressivist movement culminated in a book called *The Project Method*, written by William Heard Kilpatrick (1918). This book served as the catalyst for project modulated education that was eventually coined project-based learning (Peterson, 2012; Stock, Riebenbauer, & Winklebauer, 2010). Kilpatrick's theories were further developed by the Buck Institute of Education (BIE) to derive the Eight Essential Elements (Table 1), which serve as the guideline for what must be present in a meaningful project (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010).

Table 1

*Eight Essential Elements of Successful Projects*

| Essential Element | Description - Successful academic projects should: |
|---|---|
| 1. Significant Content | incorporate concepts directly related to the core of the academic subject<br>extend beyond academic subject to address other knowledge and skills needed by students |
| 2. 21st Century Skills | require teamwork<br>strengthen critical thinking skills<br>require problem solving<br>encourage higher-order thinking<br>encourage creativity and idea expression |
| 3. In-Depth Inquiry | require rigorous research<br>encourage questions to be asked<br>require identification and use of appropriate resources<br>necessitate that students answer challenging questions |
| 4. Driving Question | use open-ended questions to guide students through the project<br>use questions to focus work and deepen learning<br>use questions to frame issues logically for students |
| 5. Need to Know | culminate in a final product that creates the context for learning content<br>facilitate students' understanding of the need to gain knowledge and skills in order to complete the project |
| 6. Voice and Choice | allow students to have a say in some aspects of project<br>students have opportunity to make decisions |
| 7. Revision and Reflection | provide appropriate feedback/critiques of interim work product<br>allow students to respond to feedback by revising and resubmitting<br>encourage high-quality discussions among students to facilitate metacognitive understanding |
| 8. Public Audience | provide the opportunity for formal presentation of work product to external stakeholders<br>capitalize on using external audiences to increase student motivation and project authenticity |

*Adapted from Buck Institute of Education (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010).*

In May of 2015, the BIE unveiled a revision to the original theoretical framework. This new, research-based revision is called Gold Standard PBL and is split into two major components: Essential

Project Design Elements and Project Based Teaching Practices (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015). The Essential Project Design Elements consist of the important factors to consider when designing a project and greatly resemble the Eight Essential Elements described in Table 1 (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015). The Project Based Teaching Practices highlight the instructional and cultural changes that are required to transition from a traditional to a progressive classroom (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015). Because Gold Standard PBL was released after the data collection and analysis were completed for this study, this framework was not used for this study.

However, there are concerns that PBL is not universally applicable. Because the definition of a project is so broad, teachers are offered little to no support at its inception, and how PBL is defined and implemented varies from school to school and country to country (Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013). In application, projects require that the subject matter allows for creativity and hands-on activity. Therefore, subjects that rely more heavily on teacher-led instruction may not be as capable of producing an engaging or relevant project (Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013; Thomas, 2000).

**Purpose of Study**

The researchers ask the question, "What is the insider's perception of project-based learning?" in order to find out if students and teachers feel that this pedagogy adequately prepares students for the business and job world by adhering to the Eight Essential Elements of PBL (Table 1). By interviewing students and teachers in two schools currently implementing PBL, we were able to compare different experiences. From this comparison, we developed an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the pedagogy, particularly in the individual schools and preparing students for the workforce.

The purpose of the study was to explore whether institutions implementing project-based learning (PBL) are upholding the "eight essential elements" and preparing students for the workforce from the point-of-view of those learning and teaching within these institutions. Additionally, this study set out to understand how the perceptions of teachers and students within a school differ, as well as how the perceptions of students and teachers between the two countries compare.

**Methodology**

Since the basics of this research hinged on the perceptions of the participants about their PBL experiences, we used interview methodology for data collection. Semi-structured interview questions were utilized.

After several readings, the interview notes were organized by interview question and their relevance to the respective essential elements. From these organized data, a chart was created that allowed for side-by-side comparisons of students, teachers, and schools (Table 2). Observations made using these data were used to create Table 3, which ranks students' and teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the essential elements at their respective schools. Responses that were related to

the perception of student readiness for the workforce were ranked and displayed in Table 4. The results from Table 3 and Table 4 were then summarized in Figure 1, which displays both the perception of adherence to the eight elements and students' readiness for the workforce.

The schools selected for this study were The Gary and Jerri-Ann Jacobs High Tech High (HTH) in San Diego, California, USA and Mevo'ot HaNegev (MHN) in Kibbutz Shuval, Israel. Both schools exist in countries where entrepreneurial and professional business skills are greatly valued, and both schools are public high schools that implement projects into their curriculum. Because these two schools share similar teaching philosophies and practices, seek to prepare their students to function in entrepreneurial environments, and are located in highly entrepreneurial countries, these schools were ideal for a comparative analysis of their students' and teachers' perceptions of their PBL experiences.

**Data Collection**

Interview methodology was used to collect data. Both the student and teacher interviews were divided into two parts. The first part inquired about the PBL environment established by the school. These questions were derived primarily from those raised by Blumenfeld, et al. (1991) in their article "Motivating project-based learning: Sustaining the doing, supporting the learning." The second part of the interview required participants to provide in-depth descriptions of one project in which they had participated and to answer questions that would shed some light on whether or not the project possessed all eight essential elements. The interview questionnaires were pre-tested with one teacher and one student to assure that the interviewer was receiving relevant data and the participant was clear on what was being asked of him or her. The questions were then modified based on the comments made by the test subjects.

Because this study had the objective of evaluating PBL from the perspective of the participants (students and teachers), it was important that the participants represented a range of experiences and expertise. For this reason, administrators at each institution were asked to nominate faculty participants who represented high, medium, and low levels of experience with PBL and student participants who represented different levels of PBL performance. Three teachers and eight students from each high school were interviewed. The teacher and student lists provided by the administration contained more than the minimum number of participants at each school in case any participants withdrew during the study. To assure that no gender biases might affect the results an equal number of males and females (students and teachers) were interviewed.

All interviews were conducted on the school campus, in privacy, and in the native tongue of the individual being interviewed. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participant and in a conversational-type manner. Each interview was recorded and averaged 40 minutes. The author did not take any notes while recording. Once all interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, only omitting stutters, "uhms" and "ehs".

**Data Analysis**

The interviews were analyzed in a style referred to as Framework Analysis, in which the data collected already corresponds to a given framework (Lacey & Luff, 2001). For this study, the interviews were analyzed in the context of the eight essential elements. The data analysis process included familiarizing ourselves with the raw data, organizing it into responses to similar questions and questions that correspond to the same essential element, structuring that data into comprehensive charts, comparing our approach with accepted approaches, and sharing our findings with representatives from our pool of participants.

During the first step, familiarization, the transcribed interviews were reread. As the interviews were being read, spelling errors were corrected and the documents were reformatted to improve readability. To increase the reliability of the subsequent analyses, the interview results were refined and reduced to include only those questions for which at least 80% of the participants had responded. In addition, during this first step some initial classification of the questions took place and a data analysis journal to document the process was begun.

The second step (coding) required the categorization of responses by survey question and sub-categorization by the eight essential elements. Each group of participants (students and teachers) within each school was coded separately, resulting in four groups of data. The data were then re-examined and generalized to encompass more of the participants' perceptions. After several iterations of re-examination, the general observations of the eight essential elements in each school became apparent.

Step three (charting) was comprised of two parts: 1) data organization to allow for side-by-side comparisons between teachers and students by country and 2) data interpretation to facilitate an assessment of PBL effectiveness. Table 2 contains the summarized responses to the interview questions, categorized by group. Each row represents an essential element. Most elements required more than one question to capture the element. The rows within the essential elements represent responses to different questions relating to that essential element. Because the teachers tended to give lengthier answers to questions, the teachers, on the whole, answered fewer questions than the students, hence the blank boxes under the teacher columns.

The second part of the charting step utilized the side-by-side comparisons of the responses from Table 2 to create a diagram identifying the perceived impacts of the PBL experience on workplace readiness. A two-by-two diagram was used to reflect these impacts. Workplace readiness was assessed from the interview questions that directly related to the critical workplace skills identified previously (technological savviness, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and innovation). To assess the implications of the eight elements, the summary results shown in Table 2 were scored to reflect the magnitude with which the perceptions voiced by the students and teachers aligned with the definitions of the elements. Workplace readiness was plotted on the X-axis using a scale of 0 - 10. Adherence to the eight elements was plotted on the Y-axis using a scale of 0 - 8.

Table 2

*Data Reduction: General Observations*

| Elements | Students | | Teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Israel* | *United States* | *Israel* | *United States* |
| 1. Significant Content | Primarily learned skills and content | Primarily learned emotional, technical, and communication skills | Helped students develop personally, technically, and in their abilities to revise | Helped students develop intellectually and personally |
| | Did not witness teacher collaboration but knew it existed | Witnessed teacher collaboration but wanted it to increase | Were mentors for future life, skills, and learning | Taught technical and soft skills |
| | | | Feel the goal of education is to prepare students for life and increase their mental abilities | Feel the goal of education is to produce functioning citizens |
| 2. 21st Century Skills | Were taught responsibility and time management | Some were taught responsibility and time management and some were not | Taught responsibility and time management indirectly and by using suggestions | Taught responsibility and time management indirectly through project work |
| | Found and used technology in all classes | Found and used technology frequently but not always | Observed that project groups were positive when it came to communication and assisting one another but some negative dynamics arose | Observed that small project groups demonstrated effective communication skills; larger groups tended to be hindered by poor time management and communication skills |
| | Had positive experiences working in groups | Had positive experiences working in groups, but would like to see better ways to assign students to groups | | |
| 3. In-Depth Inquiry | Were provided with some information sources but also had to find their own sources | Had to find their own sources | Felt students equally used teacher-directed and self-sought resources | Felt students relied on resources that students were either provided by the teacher or directed to by the teacher |
| | Said they received sufficient guidance from teachers | Most said they received sufficient guidance, but some said little to no support was provided | Were always open to helping students, but students often helped each other | Were the main source of guidance for students |
| | Project Process = Learned background → Chose topic → Researched and designed work → Made revisions→ Completed project→ (Some) Exhibited results | Project Process = Learned background → Chose topic → Formed groups → Chose topic → Researched and designed work → Made revisions → Completed project → Exhibited results | | |
| 4. Driving Question | Were typically motivated for the life of the project | Were typically motivated at the beginning or end of the project | Believe projects enhance understanding of the course content and expose students to real-world problems (and how to apply what they are learning to solve these problems) | Believe projects make the content more fun to learn and easier to apply; projects encourage ownership of the content and sometimes solidifies understanding by |
| | Tended to feel a strong sense of pride in their work | Tended to feel a strong sense of pride in their work | | |
| | Felt that projects or scenarios were sometimes realistic | Felt that projects or scenarios were usually realistic | | |
| 5. Need to Know | Typically learned about the project through a lesson or verbal introduction; felt excited but were aware the project meant hard work | Typically learned about the project through an interactive activity or verbal introduction; felt excited | Introduced the project by asking the driving question and explaining it, often using examples done in the past to help clarify | Introduced the project by teaching the content, discussing possible applications, and explaining the project verbally |
| | Typically felt that the project was very important because of the amount of effort that would be put into it | Typically felt that the project was very important because of the amount of effort that would be put into it | | |
| 6. Voice and Choice | Felt the opportunity for student input was limited to classes and projects | Felt the opportunity for student input was possible but very limited | Indicated students did have a voice in the topic/project selection (consistent with the course subject matter) | Indicated students did have a voice in the topic/project selection (consistent with the course subject matter) |
| 7. Revision and Reflection | Dealt with failure by conversing one-on-one with teachers or reflecting and revising their work | Most dealt with failure by initially feeling bad but then taking actions to improve themselves, however, a few students simply made no effort to improve while others asked the teacher to solve the problem | Felt that peer critique opportunities existed but these need to be increased | Felt that peer critique opportunities existed but these needed to be improved or increased |
| | Learned to get academic help as well as to study on their own | Learned technical skills (note taking/analyzing text) or personal skills (open mind/motivation/being around right people) | | |
| | Said projects experiences could be improved by either allowing for more revisions or making projects more fun | Said projects could be improved by rethinking the scope, allowing for more revisions, improving time management, and improving the structure of the project | | |
| 8. Public Audience | Felt that incorporating projects into the curriculum made their school more professional than neighboring schools | Felt that incorporating projects into the curriculum made their school more professional than neighboring schools | Believe the impact the project had on the community was visible on the homes and parents of students, as well as the students themselves | Believe the impact the project had on the community was minimal or nonexistent |

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Responses from each group were scored to reflect the adherence of the responses to the eight essential elements. Each of the eight elements was worth one point. The score a group received for its adherence to each element was based on the number of questions associated with that element. Each question comprising an element earned an equal portion of the one point. A perfect score on every element would result in a total score of eight. For example, for an element comprised of two questions, each question was worth ½ point. Each response to a question could score one of three ways: adhering to the element (full credit), partly adhering to the element (half credit), and not adhering to the element (no credit). Table 3 provides the results of the scoring process for adherence to the eight essential elements.

When scoring the perception of readiness for the workforce, we returned to the questions and identified those which related to the five critical workplace skills. Each group could score a maximum of ten points (two per skill). The responses to questions illuminating the practice of the critical workplace skills scored one of three ways: nonexistent (no points), somewhat existent (one point), and existent (two points).

The fourth and final step (rigor and validation) required us to check our approach and our results. We did this assessment by comparing our approach with what had been described by Lacey and Luff (2001) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). These articles were used to guide our approach to ensure it was consistent with acceptable practices. Once the data reduction process was complete, we shared our results with one teacher and one student from each school to confirm that we were correctly interpreting what they implied, as recommended by Lacey and Luff (2001). We chose participants who were willing to assist us and had them verify that the conclusions we reached from the interview data were realistic and reasonable. Participants were aware that differences of opinion would exist among respondents, and were requested to take this into account before agreeing that our conclusions were appropriate.

**Observations**

During the interview process, several general observations were made. It seemed that teachers were very comfortable divulging their perceptions and experiences with less prompting from the interviewer, which we attributed to their experience in explaining abstract concepts and opinions to students. In contrast, students were less likely to provide in-depth responses to questions. We attributed this behavior primarily to boredom, which is completely understandable considering the interviewees were teenagers.

The researchers also noticed that students were often confused when asked questions about methods for expressing and communicating ideas in their work, although these questions were shown to be clear during the pilot. For future research, questions that delve into personal development, which can be abstract or difficult to capture in an interview, might need to be more carefully worded to

contribute to better responses from students. Alternatively, student responses may be more complete if there are fewer and simpler questions.

**Results**

The results of the data collection are summarized in the table of general observations (Table 2). These observations were translated into two tables. One table disaggregated student and teacher responses from the two schools according to their adherence to the essential elements (Table 3), and the other table disaggregated responses from students and teachers according to student readiness for the workforce (Table 4).

Table 3, which compares students' and teachers' perceptions of how much their respective schools adhere to the essential elements, highlights some interesting differences in perceptions. When responding to questions asking about significant content, Israeli students believed that what they were learning was important, while US students didn't feel as strongly. This difference of opinion could exist because most of the Israeli students cited soft skills, such as using technology effectively and public speaking, as significant content, and most of the US students cited course and career specific curriculum as significant content. From these responses we concluded that many of the Israeli students were satisfied with the development of workplace skills, but some of the US students were less satisfied with their course curricula. Some of the Israeli teachers felt limited in their choices of curricula and, in turn, the significance of the content because of the need to prepare students for the Bagrut tests, which the teachers explained were a series of standardized exams given at the end of the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades and are a critical component of the college admission process. The US teachers did not feel that they were experiencing limitations in choice of content.

Table 3

*Data Reduction: Adherence to Elements*

| Elements | Students | | Teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Israel | United States | Israel | United States |
| 1. Significant Content | 1 | 0.75 | 0.833 | 1 |
| 2. 21st Century Skills | 1 | 0.667 | 1 | 1 |
| 3. In-Depth Inquiry | 0.666 | 0.833 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. Driving Question | 0.833 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. Need to Know | 0.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| 6. Voice and Choice | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| 7. Revision and Reflection | 1 | 0.833 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| 8. Public Audience | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5.999 | 6.083 | 5.333 | 4.5 |

  With respect to the use of technology and other 21st century skills, teachers at both schools claimed that their respective students were using technology or practicing 21st century skills such as presenting, problem solving, or teamwork on a daily basis. Israeli students, too, claimed that they use some form of technology for every single class. US students said that they often used technology and practiced these 21st century skills but not necessarily every day or in every class. Teachers in the two countries had similar perceptions about 21st century skills, whereas students in the two countries had differing perceptions.

Table 4

*Data Reduction: Readiness for the Workforce*

| Essential Skill | Students | | Teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Israel | United States | Israel | United States |
| Technology | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Creativity | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Critical Thinking | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Communication | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Innovation | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 8 | 6 | 7 |

With questions regarding in-depth inquiry, there were differences in perception between participants in the US and in Israel. An interesting contradiction occurred between US students and teachers. US students felt that they had to find most of their own resources for completing assignments, but the US teachers felt that students relied on them to provide resources. This seeming contradiction is probably the result of the different perceptions that students and teachers have about their experience in the classroom. US teachers may be occupied with a student who needs more guidance, leaving the more self-sufficient students to work on their own or support one another. In contrast to the situation in the US, Israeli students and teachers felt that the resources students used to complete their assignments were equally sought out individually by students and provided by a teacher. Israeli students claimed that they received sufficient guidance, and Israeli teachers claimed that they gave sufficient guidance for the project. Teachers in both countries seem to have similar perceptions in level of guidance provided to their students, while students have different perceptions on the level of guidance provided to them by teachers.

Most students responded positively to questions regarding the driving question. However, Israeli students felt less strongly than US students about the realism of scenarios and projects. The Israeli students who did not believe the scenarios were wholly realistic emphasized that they

appreciated the attempt to make the projects realistic, and the projects were more realistic than those occurring in neighboring traditional schools.       With respect to the manner in which projects are introduced, students at both schools had experience with verbal project introductions and were excited to begin their projects. Only US students claimed that their projects were introduced with an activity that emphasized the reason they needed to learn the skills and curriculum required to complete the project. However, Israeli students revealed that activities were incorporated throughout the project rather than used only to introduce the project.

When asked about student voice and choice within the school and classroom, students at both schools responded by saying that they felt that they had little say in 1) the topic they were assigned for the project, 2) decisions they made within that project, and 3) the group mates they were assigned to work with. Teachers, also said that student decision-making within the project was restricted but that some degree of freedom existed.

Students at both schools showed ample use of revision and reflection claiming that they used these tools to improve upon failures and ask for help. A few US students said that they do not work on revision and reflection in class and simply accept failure when it comes. US and Israeli teachers confirmed that peer critiques were used for peer feedback. However, both groups of teachers admitted that more frequent use of peer critiques would be beneficial.

Students at both schools felt that their work made an impact on their respective communities. Interestingly, teachers at both schools disagreed with their students' perceptions. These seemingly polar perceptions between students and teachers probably stems from differing views of what constitutes "impacting the community." Interview results revealed that teachers interpreted community impact to mean tangible results that affect professionals or organizations. In contrast, students appear to view community impact as simply sharing their final products with schoolmates and relatives.

All of our observations were then translated into a two by two matrix (Figure 1) to facilitate an assessment of the implications of the PBL approach on preparation for entry into the workforce. On one axis, the perception of adherence to the eight essential elements is measured; on the other, the perception of workforce readiness is measured.

The results (as evidence by all ratings falling in the upper right hand quadrant) reveal that, in general, the closer the PBL curriculum adheres to the eight essential elements, the stronger the perception of workforce readiness (as evidence by students' ability to utilize technology, think critically, communicate effectively, design innovatively, and use creativity). While responses from all four study groups support this relationship between adherence to the elements and workforce readiness, it is noteworthy that some differences exist. First, there are differences between how participants in the two countries perceive their readiness. US students appear to have a stronger perception of their readiness to enter the workplace than do Israeli students. A similar contrast exists with respect to teachers' perceptions of student readiness. US teachers feel that their students are better prepared for the

workforce than Israeli teachers do. Second, there are differences between student and teacher perceptions in the two countries. Students and teachers in Israel have very similar perceptions of student readiness for the workplace. In contrast, US students appear to have a much more positive perception about their readiness than their teachers do.

**Conclusions**

The evidence from our study results suggests that in these two schools, a greater adherence to the eight elements in the PBL curriculum could mean a stronger project-based learning experience and better preparation to enter the workforce. These eight elements, and their newly revised counterparts, are likely critical to the development of today's workforce.

These results showcase the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of project-based learning in both schools, as perceived by students and teachers, respectively. These perceptions can begin to reveal some possible changes for policy and practice within these schools as well as clarify the need for further research.

According to the results presented above, some minor changes in the application of the PBL pedagogy at both schools could improve adherence to the eight elements and, in turn, improve workforce readiness. At Mevo'ot HaNegev, an increased effort in exhibiting completed projects to the community could be effective, particularly in addressing the unrealistic feeling some students expressed regarding their projects. Although Israeli students expressed initial excitement when introduced to a new project, introducing the project in a dynamic and active way perhaps with a field trip or interactive event - could help maintain that excitement throughout the project. In contrast, at High Tech High, the experience could be strengthened with more explicit instruction and practice with 21st century skills and technology on a consistent basis. Additionally, US students seem to need more support and mentorship to deal with failure as a part of their educational experience. At both schools, integrating peer critiques more frequently into the project process and exhibiting projects to the external community could contribute to improved project results as well as increased learning benefits for the students.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The differences in the perceptions between students and teachers as well as between US and Israeli participants do not appear to be explained completely by adherence to the eight essential elements of PBL. As seen in Figure 1, in both countries students perceive there to be a stronger adherence to the eight elements than do the teachers, but this difference is greater between US students and teachers than between Israeli students and teachers. These results raise the question of why the perceptions of students and teachers in Israel are so similar while the perceptions of students and teachers in the US are so different. With respect to the differences between student and teacher perspectives, is it possible that teachers underestimate the benefits of PBL because of the implementation difficulties teachers encounter? Or is it more likely that students have a misconception of their learning and development in class? With respect to the differences in perceptions between US

and Israeli participants, are the differences culturally based or do they arise from differences in approach? The answers to these questions will influence the direction of future research on the effectiveness of PBL.

Because project-based learning is an important component in today's educational environment, and because PBL is difficult to implement, more research is needed to assure that interested teachers have all the supporting resources they need to be successful in providing the most beneficial experience for their students. Our research results suggest a number of avenues that should be pursued to increase knowledge of the PBL approach and its effectiveness. Because perceptions are subjective, future research must move into the arena of objective data collection to demonstrate PBL effectiveness on the basis of its learning outcomes (such as demonstration of skills and competencies) (Stock, Riebenbauer, & Winklebauer, 2010). This research must extend beyond the United States and Israel. The results of this study are specific to these two countries. PBL is strongly influenced by the school culture and the country's culture. The nature of the culture of these two countries are specific and cannot necessarily inform us about other countries. If we want to extrapolate and make comparisons with other countries, we need to do further research based on data collection in the other countries. Since today's workplace is global, it will also be important to undertake detailed research on cultural differences in the PBL environment. Finally, the use of project-based learning in universities must also be researched in order to assess its effectiveness in this environment.

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**Graduate expectations and experiences:**
**Business degrees delivered through vocational and academic partnership**

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**Abstract**

*Non-traditional ways of achieving a business qualification are becoming more common and popular internationally. In this case study from New Zealand, a joint delivery model including full credit between two higher education institutions, a vocational-based polytechnic and a traditional university, shows the strong foundations that can be built to assist a diverse student group moving into higher levels of study.*

*A representative sample of graduates (2009-2014) from the New Zealand Diploma in Business taught at a polytechnic who then progressed to a business or management degree with a partner university were surveyed to gauge student expectations and experiences of both study environments. In particular, the survey focused on how the diploma programme assists the students in transitioning from a vocational based introductory programme to an academic business degree. Graduates' employment outcomes were then compared to their initial enrolment expectations and key contributors to success were identified.*

*The paper describes the findings from the study and discusses the implications for those who are managing and teaching the qualifications at both levels. The overall purpose of the inquiry is to ensure that the quality of the student experience is enhanced and the teaching and learning delivery options offered through this inter-institutional approach are aligned to the needs and expectations of the learners. Of particular interest are the comments from students around both content knowledge and skills generated through their studies that have directly contributed to their current work role and the connection they make between the polytechnic and university experience and their longer term career aspirations. Key skills graduates gained as outcomes of the NZ Diploma in Business qualification were identified relative to their current employment.*

*Other findings discussed include: Maori graduates are less likely to be employed and less likely to continue on to degree studies. Male graduates are less likely to use the diploma skills in their employment. Lower age group students rate the diploma more highly for preparing them for degree studies and in assisting them with completion of their degree than do mature students.*

*Overall the majority of participants were highly satisfied with the learning foundation that they built as a result of transitioning from a diploma programme into a fully-fledged university environment.*

**Introduction**

A collaborative approach to delivering a business degree by two institutions in different regions was seen as meeting the demands and needs of students incorporating learning through a foundation diploma programme and higher degree level studies.

The New Zealand Diploma in Business level 6 (NZ Dip Bus), delivered by the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP), will typically take full-time students two years to complete. The Diploma is made up of New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) curriculum prescriptions delivered nationally by Polytechnics, the first year structured similar to a University business degree.

Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP) offers the NZ Dip Bus to students as either a face-to-face delivery model or as an online option. One of the major benefits and points of difference for the BOPP NZ Dip Bus students is that they receive guaranteed credit transfer of their diploma courses into the University of Waikato's (UOW) business degrees Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS), Bachelor of Business Analysis (Financial) (BBA(Fin)) and Bachelor of Tourism (B Tour). The guaranteed credit is conditional upon a student receiving a B grade average over all NZ Dip Bus courses.

The proposed research was undertaken to gain evidence of the success or not of the partnership delivery model and to guide future strategic decisions when considering the economic growth of the region.

The aims of this study were to:

- Gain a better understanding of student expectations and perceptions of the NZ Dip Bus/ UOW Business degree pathway jointly delivered by the partnership institutions of BOPP and UOW
- Identify student demographic groups enrolled in the pathway programme to better facilitate enhancement and experiences, and
- Gain an understanding of the Business degree graduate outcomes in relation to student expectations of employment.

While this study is situated firmly within the context of a specific New Zealand institutional partnership and educational programme, it is likely that others in the tertiary or higher education profession will recognise elements of the approach taken, and that the findings from this study may therefore have relevance in wider international settings.

**Literature review**

**Vocational academic partnership**.

Tertiary education institutions both in New Zealand and internationally use vocational diploma programmes as a foundation pathway leading to a higher education degree. There are very few pathway

arrangements in place, however, that guarantee a student can receive full credit transfer and therefore complete a degree without being time disadvantaged. Wheelahan (2000) in Moodie (2008: 135) describes unified programmes as either 'customised' where a student is awarded one qualification by incorporating curriculum from both vocational and higher education sectors, 'integrated' where one programme issues two qualifications such as a certificate and bachelor's degree that are delivered concurrently, 'dual-award' which are cross-sector integrated and 'nested' which are integrated but delivered in sequence.

The pathway partnership between BOPP and UOW could be defined as a 'hybrid' of both integrated and dual-award programmes being both cross-sector and two qualifications awarded. Collaboration between a vocational polytechnic and an academic university is limited by the learning philosophies and ideologies of the two types of institutions. Negotiating a delivery and credit agreement for the benefit of students is therefore restricted by those institutional differences. For example, there perception that a vocational institution delivers curriculum at a lower standard or level than a university, or that universities do not deliver work-ready graduates. The first year at least of a business degree is general or generic in structure. Beck (1991: 92) was of the opinion that "A general education is neither vocational nor academic. What results from collaboration can draw on both academic cultures. The key word is understanding."

### Expectations and employability.

In a study about the expectations of undergraduate students, Geyde, et al. (2007: 286) found that the main reason students made the choice to study was to 'improve' their prospects of future employment. In other words they viewed their commitment to study as an investment in 'employability'. Kandiko and Mawer (2013) conducted a similar survey of the views of UK tertiary students investigating expectations and perceptions of the 'quality of their learning experience'. They found that students' expectations were clear about wanting the institution to support their career prospects. A recommendation was made that tertiary institutions should have a focus on how to enhance student employability because of the time and money students are investing in their education.

Guenole, Englert and Taylor (2003) concluded that Maori applicants were less likely to be employed than Europeans when organisations placed a "considerable weight on cognitive ability test scores in their selection processes." Jackson and Fisher (2007) found that survey participants gave "less favourable assessments of low merit Maori in comparison to low merit New Zealand European/Pakeha applicants" when viewing curricula vitae. Harris, Tanner and Knouse (1996) suggested that minority groups should be targeted for internships earlier in their academic careers to gain work experience that is relevant and improve their resume.

Brine and Waller (2004) argued that mature students bring background issues or 'baggage' to tertiary studies which is a disadvantage later at the post-graduate employment stage. Morgeson et al. (2008) reviewed twenty-one studies on age discrimination during the employment interview process.

They found that factors other than age also disadvantaged the applicant such as employment fitness and qualifications. Woodfield (2011), when researching UK graduates, found that 'mature' students had an advantage in finding paid employment in particular after degree completion, however at the age of 50, employment opportunities in general diminished.

**Methodology**

NZ Dip Bus graduates from 2009-2014 were surveyed by email with two follow-up reminders. The surveys were sent to 349 valid email addresses of graduates, and over a two week period, 107 responses were received (30.6% response rate).

A series of questions identifying the demographic characteristics of graduates were asked together with closed and open questions about their Diploma and Degree experiences. The questions were dependent on whether the respondent continued on to enrol with the University of Waikato and complete a business degree or alternatively finished studies after the NZ Dip Bus. Students were also asked to expand on their ratings with key reasons including a comparison of their initial expectations and graduate outcomes.

IBM SPSS Statistics was used as an analysis tool for the data including descriptive statistics and correlation in particular identifying relationships between demographic groups, ranking answers and key theme responses.

Contingency table analyses were performed to summarise the relationships between demographic variables and responses using chi-squared tests. This enabled the identification of significant associations in particular when considering gender, ethnicity and age.

**Results**

**Demographics.**

More than two thirds (69.6%) of valid responses (71) were female which is consistent with the gender enrolment data over that period 2009-2014. Also consistent with enrolments was the ages of respondents with more than 60% being 30 years or less at the time of the survey, that is, after they had graduated with either a degree or diploma.

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Figure 1. NZ Dip Bus graduates by ethnicity
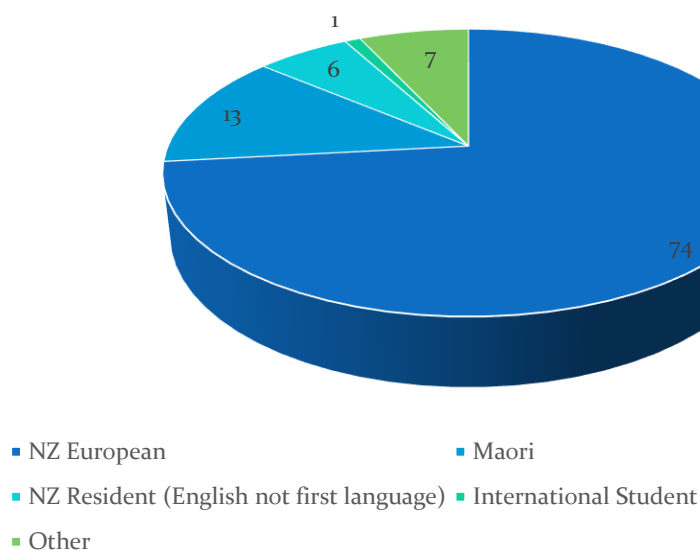
Although the participants in this survey are primarily NZ European, the actual demographics of graduates from the programme include a much larger number of Maori students, comprising around 20% of total graduates.

**Employment Outcomes.**

Graduates were asked whether they were currently in employment with 80% stating yes and 20% currently not employed. Graduates who identified as employed were asked: "Is your current employment related to your NZ Diploma in Business?" In total, 55% of respondents stated yes and 45% no. Graduates were also asked: "Do you use the skills obtained during your NZ Diploma in Business?" Of the 104 students who responded to the question, 75% said yes and 25% no. They were then asked to identify which skills they use in their employment. Key word analysis was used to identify the main themes. Figure 2 represents the key employment skills identified with teamwork, reporting, communication, presentations and research as the most valued by graduates. Accounting and marketing were the most identified subject-specific skills.

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Figure 2. Key employment skills
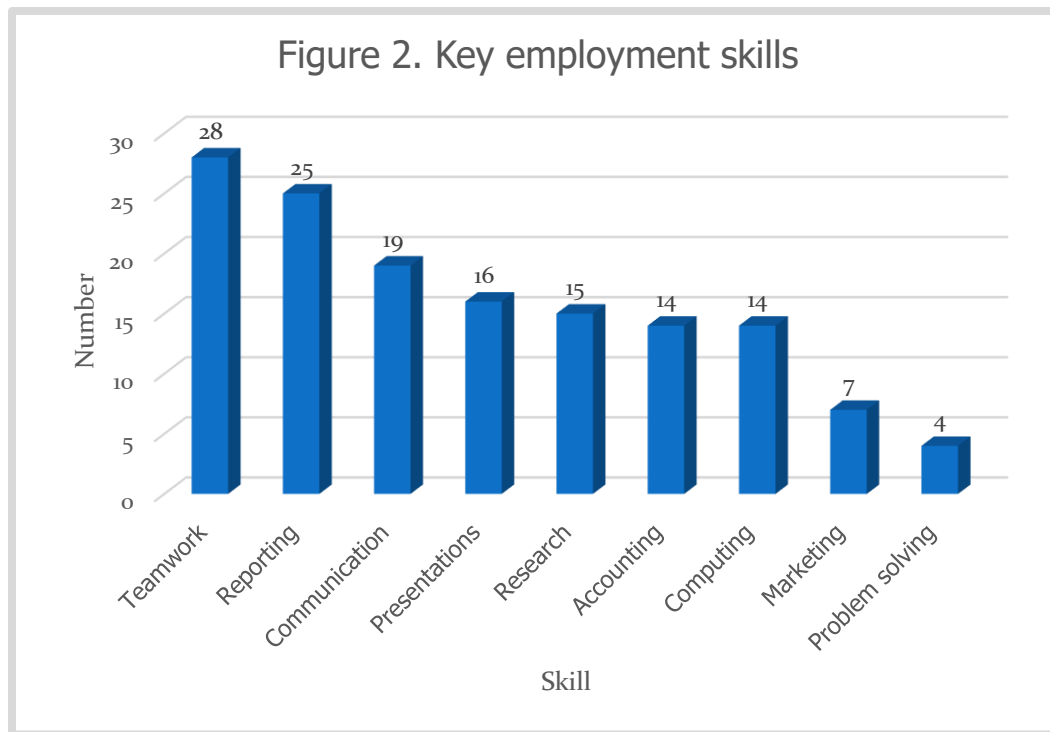
A contingency table analysis (SPSS) was conducted to establish whether there were significant relationships between gender and whether respondents use the skills learned during diploma studies in their employment. A significant relationship was found between these two variables, $X^2$ (DF = 1, n = 91) = 6.528, $p < 0.05$, with 83% of female graduates stating yes they use the skills compared to 58% of male graduates. A significant relationship was also found between gender and whether graduates used the knowledge they learned from the diploma, $X^2$ (DF = 1, n = 91) = 4.197, $p < 0.05$, with 86% of female graduates stating yes compared to 68% of male graduates.

An additional question that could be asked in future research is: what types of employment are male NZ Dip Bus graduates finding where they are not using the skills or content knowledge learned during their studies?

An analysis was also conducted to establish whether there were any significant relationships between ethnicity and whether graduates had obtained employment. A significant relationship was found between these two variables, $X^2$ (DF = 4, n = 100) = 14.776, $p < 0.05$, with 89% of New Zealand European graduates being currently employed compared to 46% of Maori graduates.

This raises further questions in particular why are fewer Maori graduates gaining employment and can this outcome be influenced through programme or Bay of Plenty Polytechnic institutional changes?

A significant relationship was also identified between the age of the NZ Dip Bus graduates and whether they use the skills learned in their diploma studies in their employment. $X^2$ (DF = 2, n = 70) = 8.048, p < 0.05 with 71.4% of graduates 30 years of age or less reported using the skills learned in their diploma studies compared to 57% in the age group 31-40 years. Conversely in the 41+ age group 95.7% of respondents stated yes.

**Degree pathway.**

In response to the question: "Did you later enrol for a degree programme at the University of Waikato?", 72 NZ Dip Bus graduates or 69.9% stated yes and 9 of the students who stated no continued studies at other Universities both in New Zealand and elsewhere. The students who did not enrol in a degree programme after graduating were asked why. Twenty-six responses to this question were received with 16 of those stating they had gained employment. Time as well as financial constraints had been the main motivation for not continuing on with the degree pathway. The students who did not continue with the degree pathway were asked "What aspects of the Diploma in Business programme provided the most value?" In total 13 students stated that 'generic knowledge' was the main aspect.

An analysis was also conducted to establish whether there were any significant relationships between ethnicity and whether graduates later enrolled for a degree programme at the University of Waikato. A significant relationship was found between these two variables, $X^2$ (DF = 4, n = 100) = 8.308, p < 0.05, with 76% of NZ European graduates later enrolling in a degree compared to 38% of Maori graduates. Of those who did enrol in a degree programme, only 20% of Maori completed their degree compared to 66% of NZ European graduates.

When considering that 46% of Maori graduates are not employed and only 38% later enrolled in a degree programme, additional research questions outside of the scope of this report need to be considered: why are Maori graduates not being employed and why are Maori graduates not continuing on with further degree studies?

An analysis of the age of graduates and whether they later enrolled in the UOW degree programme was undertaken. A significant relationship was established, $X^2$ (DF = 2, n = 71) = 6.007, p < 0.05, with 77% of graduates 30 years of age or less later enrolling in a UOW degree programme compared to 69% of graduates 31-40 years of age and 50% in the 41+ age group. We could infer from this relationship that graduate respondents in older age groups are less likely to enrol in a business degree following successful completion of the NZ Dip Bus.

**Expectations.**

Students who went onto to study in the business degree programmes (n=72) were then asked about their expectations of future studies with the University of Waikato.

Figure 3. Degree study expectations
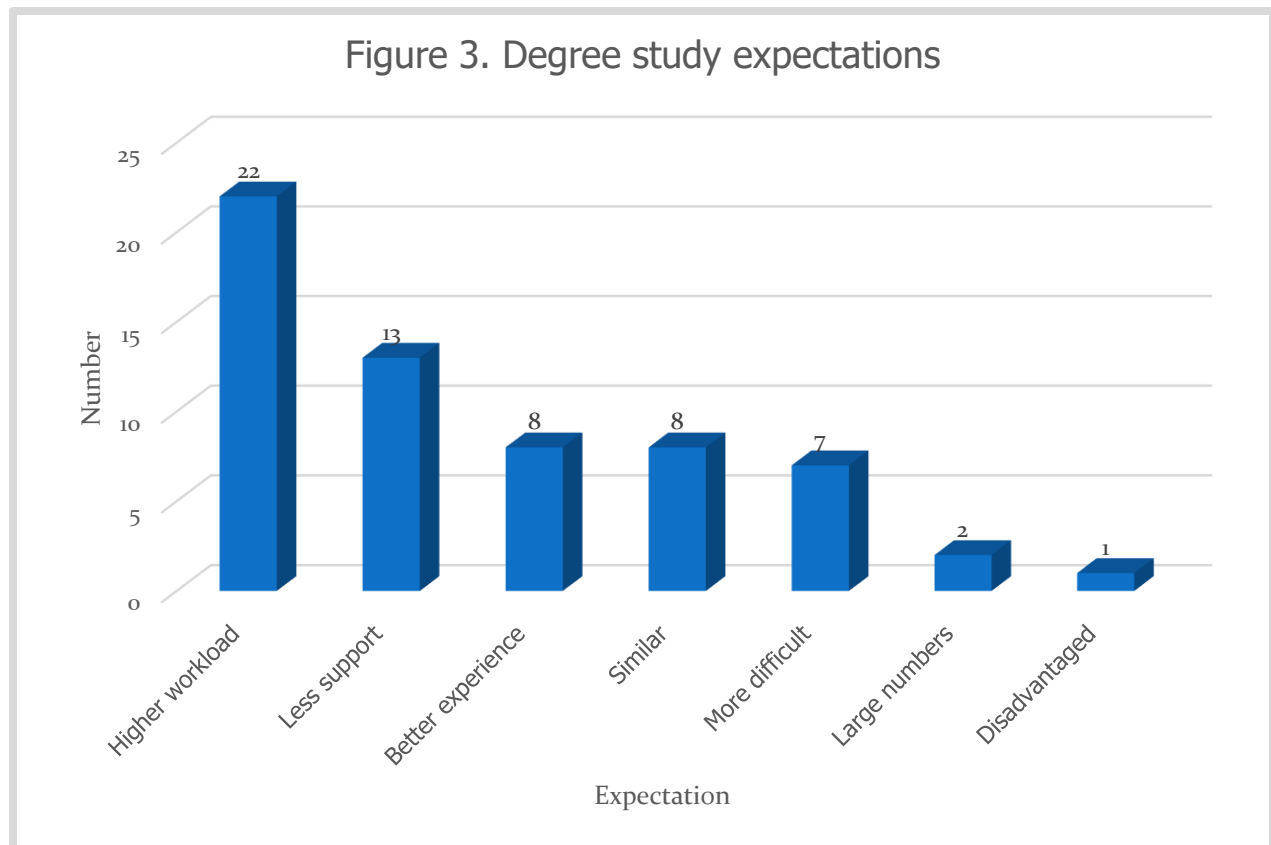
The majority of students (42) believed that the business degree programme would have a higher workload, less support, or would be a more difficult learning environment after graduating with their NZ Diploma in Business (refer figure 3).

Ninety-seven percent of the students who responded to this question stated that the NZ Dip Bus pathway assisted them in the transition to study at the University of Waikato. When asked to expand on their answer as to how the diploma assisted or inhibited their degree studies, 43 students identified 'foundation knowledge' as the characteristic of the diploma that most helped them transition.

Students were asked to rate the diploma from 1 to 5 (1 being 'not at all helpful' and 5 being 'very helpful' in preparing them for study at the University of Waikato.

The mean response was 4.18 corresponding to an overall rating of 83.6%. 59 of 67 students (88%) rated the Diploma as either 'helpful' or 'very helpful' and no students rated the Diploma as 'not at all helpful'. When asked to give a reason for their rating, being a 'strong foundation' was cited by (26) students with 'strong support' (11) and the 'not enough preparation' (7) as the most common negative reason for their rating.

An analysis of the age of graduates and their rating of the diploma as preparation for University studies was taken. A significant relationship was found, $X^2$ (DF = 6, n = 66) = 19.883, p < 0.05, with 93.5%

of graduate students aged 30 years or less stating the diploma was 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in preparing them for University studies compared to 75% in the age group 31 +.

Reasons for not graduating included 'still to complete', 'studying other qualifications' and 'work opportunities'.

**Perceptions of value.**

Students were asked to rate from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all valuable and 5 being very valuable) "how valuable was the NZ Diploma in Business/University of Waikato pathway in assisting you in completing your degree?" 41 students responded to the question with the mean response as 4.1 corresponding to an overall rating of 83.4%.

An analysis of the age of graduates and their rating of the value of the diploma in assisting them with the completion of the degree was undertaken. A significant relationship was established, $X^2$ (DF = 8, n = 41) = 15.403, $p < 0.05$, with 93.1% of students in the age group 30 years or less stating that the diploma was 'valuable' or 'very valuable' in assisting them with completion of the degree compared to 66.7% of graduates 31 years of age or more. A further research question outside the scope of this report could be: why was the diploma rated lower by students in higher age groups in assisting them with completion of their degree?

Of the 42 students who responded to the question "What was the name of your qualification?" 18 had completed a BMS or Bachelor of Management Studies and 18 a BBA (Fin) or Bachelor of Business Analysis (Financial).

Of the students who had completed a degree, 83% completed in Tauranga. 98% indicated they would recommend this study location to future NZ Diploma in Business students. The main reasons indicated that they 'can stay in Tauranga' and the 'supportive staff'.

Students who completed a degree were asked "Are you now employed in a role related to your degree qualification?" Forty students responded, of whom 25 or 62.5% stated yes and 15 or 37.5% no. Thirty-two students expanded on their answer by explaining how this outcome matched their expectations when they first enrolled. The comment themes were 'exceeded' (7), 'matched' (19) and 'not matched' (6).

**Discussion**

Graduates surveyed place a high value on the pathway programme that the two institutions have developed. The partnership represents a unique 'hybrid' type delivery model which works considering that a vocational Polytechnic and an academic University have different philosophies and ideas on educational delivery. One of the main barriers, and also the reasons for a successful outcome, is that staff teach across the pathway at all levels. Staff who teach on the diploma also teach across the degree at the higher levels by facilitating the classes in a partnership with university lecturers.

Additionally, at the management level heads of departments see the partnership as beneficial to both institutions and students.

Another reason for success is that the pathway package offered by both institutions is seamless to the students whereby their programmes are aligned and a study plan is available for both qualifications. In total, 76% of NZ European graduates continued on to enrol in the degree programme with the University compared to Maori 38%. The New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015) states "The priority is more Pasifika learners achieving at level 4 and above, particularly in work-related qualifications and bachelor degrees and higher." The reasons for significantly fewer Maori or Pasifika diploma graduates enrolling in the degree programme requires additional research. Graduates confirmed that their expectations of transitioning from the diploma to the degree programme would mean a higher workload and less support. However, graduates overwhelmingly agreed (97%) that the Diploma as a foundation assisted them in that transition.

Student employability is a key focus of the NZ Dip Bus programme at undergraduate level. Kinash, Crane and Schulz (2014) concluded that strategies such as work placements and internships are the most significant to enhance a student's employability. Internships, cadetships, graduate recruitment and student job search form a major part of the NZ Dip Bus programme and the student culture. An example of this focus is the formalised cadet scheme between BOPP and the Port of Tauranga whereby students are employed on a part-time basis whilst studying full-time. A high percentage of NZ European graduates (89%) identified as employed compared to Maori graduates (46%). This is a concern and requires additional research outside the scope of this report. Additionally, male graduates compared to female were more likely to be employed in jobs where their study skills were not utilised.

Most recent studies support that the 'soft' skills identified by graduates in this survey such as communication, teamwork and reporting, are more important to employers than the content knowledge acquired during their studies (Azim et.al 2010; Magogwe et.al 2014; Sultana 2014). Ray and Stallard (1994) analysed the perceptions of Human Resource managers when selecting new business graduates identifying in order of importance: communication, listening, problem-solving and interpersonal skills. Interestingly teamwork was chosen by graduates as the most valuable skill acquired through their studies for employment.

**Recommended research questions**

1. What types of employment are male graduates obtaining in comparison to female?
2. Why are fewer Maori graduates finding employment?
3. Why are fewer Maori graduates continuing with degree studies?

**Conclusions**

The pathway package offered by the two institutions, a vocational polytechnic and an academic university, is considered by graduates to be highly successful for both employment outcomes and as a

seamless model for obtaining two qualifications. The success can be attributed to both the structure of the model and the staff from both institutions that work closely together to deliver the programme. Students expected that the transition from a diploma to a degree would be difficult but identified that the diploma as a foundation assisted them greatly in that transition. The 'soft' skills that graduates obtained during their studies were regarded as the most important for their current employment.

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**Promote Interculturalism, Leadership Communication, and Professionalism in Your Students:**
**Success with a Corporate Communication Certificate**

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**Abstract**

Business educators share a common interest in encouraging their students to improve intercultural, leadership communication, and professionalism skills to enable and promote increased fulfilment, character development, and advancement toward graduation, in addition to improving student employability after graduation. While career success depends on the standards and knowledge of character and behavioral traits, much more than on technical knowledge, these attributes define the qualities desired across various professions (Barnhart, 2013) in these three areas. For example, Holmes (2015) found that the values and communication rules of discourse systems may be different from that which is expected in the international workplace.

A Certificate in Corporate Communication promotes the skillsets for interculturalism, leadership communication, and professionalism. With the positive feedback already received from several entities, including business executives; the student success of relevant development of skillsets for any business or non-business major; and the opportunity to showcase the communication courses to all students and programs at the University, the Certificate of Corporate Communication has already proven its success.

**Introduction**

Requirements of the 21st Century workplace directly affect business education curricula (Kelley & Bridges, 2005). Today's businesses face many challenges and opportunities including attracting and retaining the most talented workforce possible to remain competitive. As organizations restructure to become more proactive and innovative, they find it necessary to push decision-making authority to lower-levels, use cross-functional teams, and encourage lifelong learning. This restructuring results in the interrelationships of communication, culture, and strategy becoming more visible as organizations transform their business practices in response to changing challenges and opportunities.

Cornelissen (2014) discussed corporate communication as an integrated approach to managing communication as it transcends the specialists of individual boundaries of practitioners within

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organizations as well as multinational to strategic interests of organizations at large. Many more disciplines are involved in corporate communication by design, advertising, internal (employee) communication, crisis communication, investor relations, media, and change communication. An important aspect of this new function is that it focuses on the organization as a whole and how communication imparts to all key internal and external stakeholders, regardless of discipline, hence corporate communication (Cornelissen, 2014).

After knowing that the relationships among communication, culture, and strategy are critical to organizational competitiveness, the following question arises: What roles do interculturalism, leadership communication, and professionalism play in supporting organizational goals? A research study that determines the practice of different companies would help to create a better overview of what companies think about the importance of these relationships.

Sharp and Brumberger (2013) found that only one of the top 50 undergraduate business schools listed in Bloomberg Businessweek 2011 rankings actually had an official business communication program; none of the institutions had a certificate in business or corporate communication. Van Huss and Schmohe (2014) called for re-energizing business education to emphasize those skills identified by Hult Labs (2014) including: communication, self-awareness, cross-cultural competency, team skills, collaboration, the ability to persuade others, and problem solving.

Business educators have incorporated the teaching of interpersonal, teamwork, critical thinking, and leadership skills for several years (Moody, Stewart, & Bolt-Lee, 2002); yet, business educators have been criticized for not adequately developing students' relevant, real-world skills emphasizing problem solving and leadership communication skills (Conrad & Newberry, 2012; Hult Labs, 2014). Lentz (2013) stressed that business communication professors must facilitate effective writing by nurturing student writing as a habit rather than as a skill set.

The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of selected top-level business executives in the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States regarding specific communication skillsets employees need in the three categories: interculturalism, leadership communication, and professionalism. To bridge the gap between real-world practice and classroom instruction, the results of the research were used to inform curriculum decisions leading to the development of a Certificate in Corporate Communication.

**Methodology, Demographics, and Survey**

To assess business executives' ratings regarding communication skills needed in the workplace, the primary data for this research were collected from surveying 150 selected top-level business executives in the Midwest and Southeast Regions of the United States including members of the School of Business Advisory Council who provide curriculum advice. Each participant was sent an invitation email and survey link to rate his/her perceptions on the specific skill sets of (a) interculturalism (b) leadership communication, and (c) professionalism. The research instrument in this study included 20

questions on a Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). All respondents also had the opportunity to provide additional comments to further enhance their responses to the item ratings. The survey covered the three dimensions of workplace skills. In total, 78 questionnaires were completed.

Of the 78 respondents, 54 were male (69%) and 24, female (31%). The positions held by the executives included: Director/General Manager, 28 (36%); Vice President, 14 (18%); CEO/Owner/President, 11 (14%); Human Resources Manager, 11 (14%); Communication Officer/Trainer, 5 (6%); Administrator/Office Manager, 4 (5%); Controller, 4 (5%); and Global Head of Research, 1 (1%) for a total of 99% due to rounding.

Items the executives rated in the survey are shown below.

**Interculturalism.**

1. Recognize communication styles and problem-solving strategies for a culture, identify potential for misunderstandings, compare expectations of self and others.
2. Be aware of how judgments of value and reality are made by self and others, become sensitive to different ways of speaking and listening, develop readiness for making encounters and dialogue.
3. Develop language skills, research skills, analytic, interpretive, and rhetorical skills; language-learning, and cross-cultural skills.
4. Avoid idioms and jargon; avoid long, complex sentences; use active voice; avoid referring to readers by nationality.
5. Stress collaboration, use cross-functional teams, and experiment with different forms of organizational structure and leadership.
6. Demonstrate respect in various cultural contexts; being open to the idea of changing cultural attitudes.

**Leadership Communication.**

1. Recognize communication skills necessary to organizations' internal and external communication situations.
2. Interact as a team member in solving organizational communication problems.
3. Analyze the communication skills used daily by organizational leaders.
4. Recognize training and development needs of a global workforce.
5. Use appropriate crisis communication approaches in dealing with unexpected internal and external threats.
6. Consider alternatives, ethical issues, implications, and consequences in the business decision-making process.

**Professionalism.**

1. Write clear, accurate, concise, and purposeful documents that have strategic impact and produce effective results.
2. Demonstrate excellent oral communication skills, expressing ideas clearly and precisely, speaking effectively, and presenting professionally.
3. Show the ability to listen effectively; create rapport during a conversation.
4. Practice effective interpersonal skills, including eye contact, body language, voice inflection, and firm handshake.
5. Portray business and/or personal skills of self-confidence, poise, preparation, business attire, appearance.

**Data Findings and Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative executives' responses and supporting literature will be discussed in three areas: Interculturalism, Leadership Communication, and Professionalism.

**Interculturalism.**

One element that business executives surveyed desire in their employees is a strong sense of interculturalism, which focuses on their ability to draw similarities and differences among diverse cultures, geographic locations, and people. Executives surveyed rated the awareness, sensitivity, and preparedness for international dialogues and interactions as the top skill in this category with a rating of 5.53. The ability to demonstrate respect in various cultural contexts and being open to changing cultural attitudes was also highly rated by the executives with a 5.45 rating average. In addition, stressing collaboration, using cross-functional teams, and experimenting with different forms of organizational structure and leadership are all highly valued skills with an average rating of 5.40 as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1

*Interculturalism*

| Interculturalism | SA | A | N | D | SD | NA | Rating Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Be aware of how judgments of value and reality are made by self and others, become sensitive to different ways of speaking and listening, develop readiness for making encounters and dialogue. | 45 | 29 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.53 |
| Demonstrate respect in various cultural contexts; being open to the idea of changing cultural attitudes and needs. | 40 | 33 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.45 |
| Stress collaboration, use cross-functional teams, and experiment with different forms of organizational structure and leadership. | 36 | 36 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.40 |
| Recognize communication styles and problem-solving strategies for a culture, identify potential for misunderstandings, compare expectations of self and others. | 36 | 37 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5.38 |
| Avoid idioms and jargon; avoid long, complex sentences; use active voice; avoid referring to readers by nationality. | 36 | 35 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5.36 |
| Develop language skills, research skills, analytic, interpretive, and rhetorical skills; language-learning, and cross-cultural skills. | 36 | 26 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5.25 |

Not surprisingly, the executives also saw the importance of understanding the communication styles of different cultural audiences and the need for targeting communication to the audience using knowledge of the cultural, 5.38 rating; avoiding confusing words specific to one particular culture and demeaning language, 5.36 rating; and developing language and cross-cultural skills to aid in communicating with different cultures, 5.25 rating.

These findings were consistent with previous intercultural studies. For example, Guilherme, Keating, and Hoppe (2010) stressed the need for intercultural responsibility in the workplace, recognizing that identities have been socially and culturally built from different ethnic characteristics

and influences. This responsibility lies with both employers and employees in recognizing communication styles, acknowledging discourses, and developing professional relationships with one another (Holmes, 2015). Therefore, employees need the background knowledge to work effectively with diverse cultures (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007).

Research has typically centered on documenting cultural differences that can disrupt intercultural relationships (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002; Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007). It is often challenging to work across cultural boundaries because people frequently perceive individuals from other cultures as possible adversaries with diverse values, beliefs, and styles of interacting (Li & Scullion, 2006; Toh & DeNisi, 2005; Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007). Guo, Cockburn-Wootten, and Munshi (2014) found that exploiting these different perspectives, instead of managing diverse perceptions, leads to unique perspective and creative outcomes.

The foundation for collaboration in organizations stems from emotional involvement and genuine caring for one another's well-being and the belief that others are responsible and competent (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007). Additionally, interpersonal trust can enable social interactions that facilitate informal collaboration and teamwork, inter-organizational partnerships, and leadership (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007).

Intercultural researchers have studied how diverse employees handle specific events as they work together (Bond, 2003; Smith, 2003), finding workplace communication a challenge (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007); for example, knowing the appropriate non-verbal communication required when greeting someone—whether to shake hands, hug, kiss, bow, or other response (Holmes, 2015). Acknowledging general value differences that may affect intercultural interaction and forming an understanding and basis for working together productively can be highly useful in developing a quality interpersonal relationship (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007).

Ladegaard and Jenks (2015) discussed the importance of multicultural experiences within an organization because interculturalism leads to a more professional, adaptable organization. Interculturalism should be integrated into education for students to be able to better interpret intercultural situations; for example, one effective instructional method might be to use emotional intelligence in case studies (Fall, Kelly, MacDonald, Primm, & Holmes, 2013). In order for employees to be more experienced with interculturalism, it should be included in their education, as well as everyday practice (Tupas, 2014).

**Leadership Communication.**

In the area of leadership communication, executives surveyed responded with a rating of 5.73 that the most important skill was to recognize communication skills necessary to an organization's internal and external communication situations. Teamwork was the second most valued skill with an above average rating of 5.60. As executives highlighted recent business problems related to ethics and crisis communication, they rated considering alternatives, ethical issues, implications, and consequences

in business decision making and communicating through crises as the third and fourth most important skills with above average ratings of 5.44 and 5.41 as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Leadership Communication*

| Leadership Communication | SA | A | N | D | SD | NA | Rating Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognize communication skills necessary to organizations' internal and external communication situations. | 57 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.73 |
| Interact as a team member in solving organizational communication problems. | 50 | 25 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.60 |
| Consider alternatives, ethical issues, implications, and consequences in the business decision-making process. | 42 | 30 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5.44 |
| Use appropriate crisis communication approaches in dealing with unexpected internal and external threats. | 38 | 34 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.41 |
| Analyze the communication skills used daily by organizational leaders. | 27 | 29 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5.01 |
| Recognize training and development needs of a global workforce. | 23 | 26 | 23 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4.85 |

In open-ended responses, two executives surveyed also pointed out that not all employees are in leadership roles; however, daily communication regarding the status of engagements, problems, obstacles, and other workplace issues is critical. Care should be taken in analyzing the communication skills of leaders as this could lead to a negative attitude and frustration if the leader's skills do not meet the employee's preconceived notions. The executives suggested that a proactive and direct communication strategy with the leader could help to avoid this problem.

Three other skills were mentioned by executives as being important for leadership communication: conflict resolution, problem solving, and specific corporate communication for international issues. An overall important open-ended comment was made by one executive who emphasized that employees should recognize the goal for the company is more important than a personal immediate goal.

Leaders and employees should collaborate to develop common goals, shared tasks, integrated roles, interpersonal relationships, team identity, and collective recognition that reinforce those cooperative goals (Yi-Feng & Tjosvold, 2007). Further, leaders should see and pursue opportunities that change creates and must mobilize the resources of others to achieve their objectives (Dees, 2001). Because employees respect leaders who take the time to have a conversation, the most effective way

for leaders to communicate internally is with information-focused face-to-face dialogue (Men, 2014), where leaders express their ideas and beliefs openly (Dees, 2001). Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough (2015) also found that internal motivational communication that conveyed top-down strategic information was a factor leading to success in leadership communication.

**Professionalism.**

The area of professionalism drew the executives surveyed highest ratings of the three categories, indicating the importance executives place on these skills. Employees' ability to express ideas clearly and precisely in written and oral communication were critically important to the organization as rated by the executives at 5.92. Additionally, the ability to listen effectively and create rapport during a conversation were also highly valued skills with a rating of 5.91. Executives rated the ability to write clear, accurate, concise, and purposeful documents that have strategic impact and produce effective results and practice effective interpersonal and non-verbal skills as the third and fourth most important skills with above average ratings of 5.81 and 5.79 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Professionalism*

| Professionalism | SA | A | N | D | SD | NA | Rating Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstrate excellent oral communication skills, expressing ideas clearly and precisely, speaking effectively, and presenting professionally. | 72 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.92 |
| Show the ability to listen effectively; create rapport during a conversation. | 71 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.91 |
| Write clear, accurate, concise, and purposeful documents that have strategic impact and produce effective results. | 62 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.81 |
| Practice effective interpersonal skills, including eye contact, body language, voice inflection, and firm handshake. | 62 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.79 |
| Portray business and/or personal skills of self-confidence, poise, preparation, business attire, appearance. | 58 | 16 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.71 |

Other open-ended responses shared advice from the executives surveyed included the following: work to gain confidence in communicating as no one can do this for you, it must come from within; recognize that developing professionalism is a life-long course that must be continuously refined in the classroom and workplace. As one executive stated, "Walk, Talk, and Look the Part!" Another respondent indicated that being able to present and sell ideas, persuade, effectively collaborate, and build consensus are the keys to success.

Discussions of professionalism are present in many studies across academic disciplines (e.g., communication, management, education, and cultural studies). Despite this vast research, the concept of professionalism needs further exploration in relation to individual identity (Banghart, 2013).

Professionals not only perform a job, but also exhibit a particular set of mannerisms set forth by the larger professional community (Banghart, 2013; Kelley & Bridges, 2005). Robles (2012) made an important distinction between two skillsets, describing "hard skills" as technical competency specific to one's job and "soft skills" as interpersonal/people skills or personal attributes of individuals. While studies propose that professionalism involves numerous competencies, skills, and characteristics, there is a trend toward the interpersonal competence, or the "softer" skills, weighing more profoundly upon the notion of professionalism (Banghart, 2013).

Professionalism can be defined by the specific expectations for communication and behaviors associated with professionals (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007) that is learned through self-regulation and improvement as a means to succeed with the help of skillsets, motivations, interests, etc. (Kelley & Bridges, 2005; Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). Professional skills necessary for successful career progression include listening, writing, speaking, and etiquette skills (Clark, 2010; Kelley & Bridges, 2005) as well as courtesy, posture/body language, and attire/appropriate dress (Clark, 2010).

One of the most important elements business executives look for in employees and recent graduates is the level of professionalism of the job candidate (Kouchaki, 2015). Professional skills are highly valued by employers, and employers expect college graduates to have these skills as a condition of employment (Evetts, 2011; Kelley & Bridges, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2000).

**Literature Review of Corporate Communication Competence and Certificates**

Because corporate communication is a critical competency of leadership positions via a wide array of industries, the ability to communicate effectively is a critical skill (Purdue University Online, 2016). Educators have written extensively on the topic of how to bridge the gap between the skills that employers want and the skills they are taught in higher education (Kelley & Bridges, 2005).

Sigmar, Hynes, and Hill (2012) stated that learning these skills while in school is essential to developing future employees who are able to deal with extensive networks, intercultural issues, diverse teams, and business etiquette and professionalism. While students develop strong writing habits and a

firm foundation of knowledge in their corporate communications classes, they must continue to reinforce those behaviors through continuous practice and improvement (Lentz, 2013).

Corporate or business communication programs, especially if they offer advanced courses in business communication, are particularly well-positioned to develop corporate communication certificates (Sharp & Brumberger, 2013). A corporate communication certificate program enables greater coverage of current topics and further legitimizes corporate communication as a valuable field of study within business. Sharp and Brumberger (2013) suggested that the ongoing lack of certificate programs at the top business schools means that business communication is still seen only as a complement to other business programs rather than a field in and of itself.

Based on the results of this research, executives find the three areas of skills defined in this study to be important to the success of their organizations and employees in the workplace. To help students develop these three skills areas, a Certificate in Corporate Communication has been developed to emphasize the highly valued items in this survey. The Certificate is offered to any undergraduate major, including business majors, to help prepare them for employers' expectations in the workplace. While certificates in corporate communication can be obtained online through graduate schools (e.g., Ball State University, 2016; Barry University, 2016; Concordia University, 2016; Harvard University, 2016; Purdue University Online, 2016; University of Central Florida, 2016), undergraduate certificate programs with structured courses dedicated to corporate communication are scarce (Sharp & Brumberger, 2013).

**Certificate Implementation Based on Study Results**

A nine-hour Corporate Communication Certificate was created by the Department of Management, Marketing, and International Business. Students earn the certificate after successfully completing three courses: Professional Communication (CCT 201) or Managerial Reports (CCT 300W), International Business Communication (CCT 310), and Integrated Corporate Communication (CCT 550). The CCT 201 class is for any major; the CCT 300W is for business majors only.  CCT 310 and CCT 550 can be taken by either business or non-business majors. These courses emphasize the three areas included in the survey.  The course descriptions are shown below:

- **Professional Communication**. Principles and practices of modern professional communication; various types of professional letters and reports are studied; emphasis on writing letters and reports.
- **Managerial Reports**. A writing intensive study of applications of communication theory, research methods, and information technology to communication within organizations. Includes common communication tasks faced by managers; communication task and audience analysis; collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data. Emphasizes written and oral reporting.
- **International Business Communication**. Characteristics of cultural differences that alter communication symbols and meanings for international business activity. Topics include

culture profiles and conducting business, business protocol, international documents/U. S. documents, negotiation strategies, and oral presentations to intercultural business audiences.

- **Integrated Corporate Communication**. Examines effective integrated communication skills to achieve organizational objectives. Emphasizes analysis and application of communication process and strategies for managerial decision-making. Examines change process, corporate culture, and negotiation issues. Provides corporate training component.

The certificate helps students develop in the areas of interculturalism (e.g., international business communication, diversity skills); leadership (e.g., crisis communication, stakeholder communication, corporate training); and professionalism (e.g., written reports, oral presentation, interpersonal skills).

This Certificate in Corporate Communication is applicable to students in any major, including nursing, psychology, teaching, social work, police studies, education, aviation, physical and occupational therapy, among others. Flyers were created and distributed to Advising Offices across campus, to support staff in Administrative Offices, and to Recruitment Offices. Flyers were also posted on Bulletin Boards throughout campus buildings and displayed on electronic monitors.

Upon completion of the three required classes, students receive a certificate signed by the Department Chair and the Corporate Communication and Technology Coordinator in recognition of their accomplishment.

**Conclusions**

The importance of intercultural skills, leadership communication abilities, and professionalism was relatively clear-cut based on the findings of this quantitative and qualitative data analysis: scores in sub-skills for all three areas were above average indicating the significance executives placed on those skills.

Business executives value and are seeking intercultural skills, leadership communication abilities, and professionalism in their employees. Seeking business executives input into curriculum issues can provide valuable information to help faculty understand the demands and expectations of the business workplace. Developing and offering a Certificate in Corporate Communication is one strategy to help students succeed in meeting these employers' expectations.

The field of business communication is moving forward and the majority of well-respected programs continue to maintain some level of commitment to including business communication in the curriculum. Departments of business communication do not offer undergraduate certificates. Several universities offer undergraduate courses in a sequence, but the courses do not result in a corporate communication certificate.

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Faculty in programs for business communication should pursue developing certificate programs to help increase their visibility and comparative influence within their universities. More integration of corporate communication with interculturalism, leadership, and professional communication is necessary if business programs want to graduate students whose communication skills are commensurate with their discipline-specific business knowledge.

**Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions above, business educators should explore ways to develop students' professionalism, intercultural skills, and leadership communication abilities. The following recommendations are made for business educators who are seeking to promote student success through the development of these three skills and abilities.

- Incorporate elements of professionalism in corporate communication courses, while stressing to students the importance of life-long learning. Include as many real-world exercises and cases as possible.
- Encourage and practice active listening in all communication courses. Consider creating classroom etiquette rules that promote active listening and professional skills.
- Stress the importance of focused conversations with colleagues and supervisors in the workplace. Encourage students to disengage from social media and electronic devices while engaging in face-to-face conversations in the classroom and beyond.
- Consider creating extra-curricular professional development opportunities to enhance students' communication, leadership, intercultural, and professional skills. Such activities might include workshops, seminars, lecture series, case competitions, student organizations, etc.
- Involve business executives in your planning of corporate communication course descriptions; they will provide advocacy for your cause.
- Recommendations are also made for business educators who are considering creating a Certificate in Corporate Communication.
- Seek buy-in from administrators who are decision makers for your discipline area.
- Consider how to maximize the resources you have and minimize the need for additional classes or faculty.
- Communicate with advisors throughout campus to encourage support for the Certificate.
- Encourage faculty to help promote the certificate in their classes and in advising sessions with students.
- Visit area high schools and freshmen summer orientation classes to inform students about the opportunity to complete the certificate.

Additionally, suggestions for future research are provided.

- Design future research projects to expand the involvement of business executives in various geographic areas and industries.
- Explore business executives' ideas regarding future alliances needed between businesses and educational institutions to help promote student success.
- Compare and contrast the research results from future studies conducted in different cultures and countries.

**Implications**

Students, advisors, alumni, campus administrators, and business executives have responded favorably to the certificate. In fact, executives have asked that the offerings be expanded to non-credit classes for workplace employees who need to develop their communication skills, refine their professionalism, and build their confidence. While a certificate promises no guarantee of a graduate's future behavior, just as a high GPA does not ensure intelligence, the expected correlation offers prospective employers with an extra, beneficial indicator.

Although student success is the primary goal for the certificate, a secondary benefit is the opportunity to showcase the communication courses to all programs on campus. Business communication educators must promote their programs, classes, and quality of instruction. A Certificate in Corporate Communication will help achieve these goals.

Not only do business communication faculty need to ensure that corporate communication is represented in the business curriculum at their universities, but they also need to ensure that those courses include topics such as interculturalism, professional, and leadership communication. These issues are central to business communication efforts. Making these subjects essential to the business curricula and developing certificate programs in corporate communication will provide students with the foundation knowledge, awareness, and writing/speaking behaviors they need in today's workplace. Additionally, the inclusion of corporate communication certificates will promote the status of corporate communication as a discipline.

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**An Examination of the Authorship of Publicly Available NBEA and
ISBE International Business Education Journal Articles, 2001-2015**

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**Abstract**

This study of the two NBEA and ISBE international business education journals, the International Journal for Business Education *and the* Journal for Global Business Education*, examined the accessibility of the journals and the authorship characteristics of publicly available articles published in the journals between 2001 and 2015. Over 55% of the articles published in both journals were multiple authorship efforts, with inter-institutional collaborations constituting the greatest number of collaborations. Author rankings as well as adjusted authorship rankings were calculated for the two journals.*

**Introduction**

It has been said that the literature of an academic discipline is its lifeblood; in other words, a discipline is only as strong as its literature. If its literature is robust, cutting-edge, and accessible, then the disciplines and their practitioners thrive. Conversely, if the literature of a discipline is weak, repetitive, and not accessible to members and the wider profession, a discipline may be deemed weak and ineffective and held in low regard. Further, the ability to access historical records is necessary to leaving a professional legacy.

Developed by the National Business Education Association (NBEA), which is a U.S.-American association, the National Standards for Business Education (NBEA, 2013) include standards for ten content areas: accounting, business law, career development, communication, economics and personal finance, entrepreneurship, information technology, international business, management, and marketing. In fact, the introduction to the National Standards emphasizes "the call for a globally literate knowledge worker" (2013, p. ix).

The Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education (PCBEE), a U.S.-American commission comprised of business educators that has had members from Canada and Puerto Rico, in its Statements No. 52 (1997), This We Believe About the Role of Business Education in the Global Marketplace, and No. 74 (2004), This We Believe About Business Education in a Global Environment, has underscored the need for student mastery of global knowledge and skills. Further, Policy Statement No. 74 emphasizes that "business teacher educators should be involved in research as well as in curriculum

design to enhance preparation of business educators for their roles as global business educators" (2004, p. 17).

Who then are the authors of publically available articles that have been published in the two leading international business education journals of NBEA and ISBE during the new millennium— specifically from 2001 to 2015? The authorship characteristics of articles appearing in the *International Journal for Business Education (IJBE)* and the *Journal for Global Business Education (JGBE)* were examined for this study to determine the extent of sole-authored and multiple-authored articles, the countries in which authors of international business education journals reside, the types of collaboration in which authors engaged, and authorship rankings.

**Review of the Literature**

Accessibility to the scholarship of a discipline is critical for members of the profession as well as non-members who could benefit from the research findings of the discipline. The business education literature has not always been as accessible as it needs to be, even for well-informed practitioners (Blaszczynski & Scott, 2003a). This inaccessibility of the literature not only may harm authors whose work will not be cited and thus will have little impact as measured by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International (2012) but also will impede authors in constructing a robust literature review without access to the results of recent research studies (Blaszczynski & Scott, 2003b).

Business education has a long history of conducting reputational rankings of journals. Blair and Balanchandran (2002) studied the reputation of business education journals based upon listings in the 1998 and 2000 editions of *Cabell's Directory of Publication Opportunities*. Unfortunately, The *Review* was not listed in *Cabell's Directory* at that time, and the *JGBE* had not published its first issue.

A later study of the reputational rankings of business education journals ranked 53 business education journals as essential, very useful, useful, marginal, and of unknown value (Scott, Blaszczynski, Green, & Fagerheim, 2008). The top three ranked journals were The *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, which is now the *Journal for Business Education Research*; the *NABTE Review* (which is now the *Business Teacher Education Journal*); and the NBEA Yearbooks. The *JGBE* was ranked ninth and classified as a very useful business education periodical. The *IJBE*, which at that time was titled *The Review*, was ranked fifteenth and classified among the useful business education periodicals.

Business education literature authorship has been a focus of research. Stitt-Gohdes (2000) analyzed the authorship affiliation of articles published in *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal* and the *NABTE Review*. Additionally, Blaszczynski and Scott (2004) analyzed authorship characteristics of research articles that appeared in The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal and the *NABTE Review*. Most of the articles were written by women; the co-authorship rate was 53% for *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal* and 70% for the *NABTE Review*.

AACSB International is emphasizing the impact of faculty research for practice and the community as well as its academic impact. Two possible indicators of academic impact include citation counts such as those generated through Google Scholar or Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)/Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) and download counts for electronic journals (AACSB International, 2012).

Collaboration among faculty members is valued by institutions and the AACSB International (AACSB International, 2012). Manton and English (2007) found that almost three-quarters of articles in leading business journals among the disciplines were co-authored. A study conducted by Blaszczynski, Scott, and Green (2009) revealed that 51% of the total publications of vital business educators were co-authored.

In addition to sole authorship, some scholars calculate adjusted authorship, which takes into consideration the number of authors per article. Knight, Fult, and Bashaw (2000) used adjusted authorship in their study of *Journal of Business Research* authorship. Adjusted authorship is determined by dividing the number of articles by the number of total authors of those articles. For example, if an author contributed to four articles with a total of eight authors, the adjusted authorship would be .5.

A review of the business education literature revealed no studies about the authorship of international business education literature. As a result, this study was undertaken to fill part of the gap in the literature.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to determine the authorship characteristics--including country of residence, type of authorship, type of collaboration, and authorship rankings--of articles recently published in the 2009-2015 issues of the *IJBE* and in the 2001-2015 issues of the *JGBE*, as well as to examine the accessibility of the journal issues.

The following research questions were investigated for the *IJBE* and the *JGBE*:

1. How accessible are the journals in terms of print copies in libraries, inclusion in library databases, and on websites?
2. What is the proportion of sole authored and multiple authored articles?
3. From what countries are the authors of articles published recently in the two journals?
4. In what types of collaboration do article authors engage?
5. What is the ranking of authors who published in the *IJBE*?
6. What is the ranking of authors who published in the *JGBE*?

**Methods of Research**

The researcher reviewed publically available issues of the two National Business Education Association/International Society for Business Education (NBEA/ISBE) publications selected for this study

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of the business education literature to determine authorship characteristics and retrievability of journal issues. ISBE is known in Europe as Societe Internationale Pour L'enseignement Commercial (SIEC).

The researcher examined 7 issues (those issues that were publicly available) of *The Review* and its successor, the *IJBE*, published from 2009 through 2015, and 13 issues of the *JGBE* published from 2001 to 2015. These literature sources are described more fully in the following sections.

### Journal for Global Business Education

The *JGBE* began publication in 2001 and has been produced yearly except for 2013. To publish in the refereed journal, authors must be a current member of both NBEA and ISBE. Published annually, the Call for Papers states that "manuscripts should focus on the philosophy, theory, or practices related to international business education at all levels of instruction" (NBEA/ISBE, 2014, p. 31).

### The International Journal for Business Education (The Review)

Originally named *The Review*, the journal name was changed to the *IJBE* in 2011. Authors must be current members of their respective national chapter or an international member of the organization; authors from the United States must be current members of both NBEA and ISBE to publish in this refereed journal. In recent years, the number of articles has grown from two to four or more per issue. Published annually, the *Publication Guidelines for Authors* states that the mission of the journal is to provide international business educators with articles concerning current and/or future teaching strategies as they relate to business education, research-based articles on topics of interest to business educators, and technology ideas for business education. The focus can be from any area of business education that would be of interest to an international business education audience; including, technology, communications, leadership, management, marketing, etc. (SIEC-ISBE, n.d.a).

### Limitations of the Study

While many attempts were made to locate articles in the *IJBE*, online searches yielded merely four libraries that held the journals. Unfortunately, entire issues of a journal are not accessible through Interlibrary Loan, only individual articles. Without a table of contents to identify articles, it was not possible to track down content. One 2005 issue of the *IJBE* contained reports of the international conference presentations but no articles. As a result, that issue was not included in this analysis.

Further, it should be noted that the researcher contacted several colleagues as well as ISBE board members to obtain personal copies of *The Review.* Some colleagues as noted were able to provide a few of the missing journal issues, while other colleagues had edited their professional libraries and no longer owned older issues of the journals. The researcher had access to all of the *JGBE* issues.

In addition, having some authors entering and leaving the profession at various times over the 15-year period of the study may skew the reported authorship statistics.

**Findings**

The findings section is organized around the research questions about the accessibility of the journals to both members and non-members of the sponsoring organizations, the number of article authors, the countries in which the authors of articles reside, the type and number of authorship collaborations, and the ranking of authors for both the *IJBE* and the *JGBE*.

**Details about the Selected Journals.**  Relevant details about the two journals that form the basis for this investigation are shown in Table 1. The *IJBE* has been published since 1903, while the *JGBE* had a much more recent genesis of 2001, almost 100 years later.

Table 1
*Details about the Selected Journal Titles*

| Journal title | First Issue | Years | Vol./no. | No. of Articles | *Cabell's* Listing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *IJBE* | 1903 | 2009-2015 | 149-155 | 28 | Yes |
| *JGBE* | 2001 | 2001-2012, 2014 | 1-12, 14[a] | 58 | No |

[a]Note: *JGBE* was not published in 2013.

Previously, the *JGBE* was listed in *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities* and had a reported acceptance rate of 50% for 2012 and is not currently listed in the directory. The journal, which received few submissions during 2013 and was not published, has since been revived and published a 2014 issue with the 2015 issue in process. During the time frame of the study, the average length of *IJBE* articles was longer as evidenced by the Call for Papers guidelines. *IJBE* requests manuscripts up to 10 pages, single-spaced (SIEC-ISBE, n.d.a), while the *JGBE* asks for 15 double-spaced pages, with a maximum of 3,000 words (NBEA/ISBE, 2014).

Research Question 1 asked, "How accessible are the journals in terms of print copies in libraries, inclusion in library databases, and on websites?" The journals, while available to members of both NBEA and ISBE, are not currently indexed by any database. WorldCat, a database that includes over 10,000 libraries worldwide (WorldCat.org, 2016), searches revealed that four university libraries have a few copies of *The Review* but not a complete set, while some issues of the *JGBE* are available in 350 libraries worldwide as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
*Accessibility of the Journals*

| Location | *IJBE* | *JGBE* |
|---|---|---|

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| In library databases | No | No |
| On organizational websites | Yes[a] | Yes[b] |
| In hard copy in libraries | 4 libraries | 350 libraries |

_____

[a]Note. The 2009 through 2012 issues are publicly available, while access to the 2013-2015 issues is restricted to NBEA/ISBE members only.

[b]Note. With the exception of the 2004 issue, all issues published from 2001-2014 are publically available as of January 20, 2016.

The 2009-2012 issues of the *IJBE* are publically available from the ISBE-SIEC website, while the 2013-2015 issues are available to members only. With the exception of the 2004 issue, the 2001-2014 Issues of the *JGBE* are available online at the organizational website.

**Type of Authorship**

Research Question 2 asked, "What is the proportion of sole authored and multiple authored articles?" In both the *IJBE* and the *JGBE* over 40% of the journal articles were sole authored, with more than one-third of the articles written by two authors as shown in Table 3. The number of article authors ranged from one to four for the *International Journal for Business Education* and from one to five for the *Journal for Global Business Education*. The average number of authors was 1.79 for the *IJBE* and 1.93 for the *JGBE*. In comparison with the 51% co-authoring trend reported by Blaszczynski, Scott and Green (2009), more of the recently published *IJBE* and *JGBE* articles are co-authored 57% and 60% respectively.

Table 3

*Number of Article Authors*

| Number of Authors | *IJBE* Number | N=28 % | *JGBE* Number | N=58 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| One | 12 | 43 | 23 | 40 |
| Two | 11 | 39 | 22 | 38 |
| Three | 4 | 14 | 9 | 16 |
| Four | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Five | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |

Research Question 3 asked, "From what countries are the authors of articles published in the two journals?" Both journals attract authors from a range of countries as depicted in Table 4. While 2009-2015 *IJBE* authors hail primarily from European countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, and Sweden) with Austrian authors comprising over 54% of article authors, 91% of the *JGBE* authors are from North America; i.e., the United States of America (USA) with three article authors residing in South America (Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador). Perhaps the uneven distribution of international

authors between the journals is attributable to the respective journals being more prominent in the section of the world where they have their origin and primary membership.

**Type and Number of Collaborations**

Research Question 4 asked, "In what types of collaboration do article authors engage?" As depicted in Table 5, over 50% of author collaborations are intra-institutional with all article authors employed at the same institution. Some collaboration with colleagues from different educational institutions located in the same country occurred among authors of articles published in both journals; however, only one study published in the *IJBE* and three studies published in the *JGBE* were completed with colleagues residing in a different country or countries.

Table 4

*Countries in which Authors Reside*

|  | IJBE | | JGBE | |
| Country | Number | % | Number | % |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Austria | 27 | 54 | 3 | 3 |
| Brazil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Chile | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Ecuador | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Finland | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Norway | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Poland | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Sweden | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | 13 | 26 | 103 | 91 |
| Total | 50 | | 112 | |

During the time frame of the study, *JGBE* authors collaborated more frequently with students, including both doctoral level and baccalaureate level students, than did authors of articles appearing in the *IJBE*. Notably, students were the lead authors in all three articles co-authored with students in the *JGBE*.

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Table 5
*Type and Number of Authorship Collaborations*

| Type of Collaboration | | IJBE | | JGBE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | |
| **Institutional** | | | | | |
| Intra-institutional | | 11 | 79 | 19 | 54 |
| Different institution, same level/country | 1 | 6 | 11 | 31 | |
| With colleagues in a different country | 1 | 6 | 3 | 9 | |
| **Personal** | | | | | |
| University and community college | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | |
| With a doctoral student | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | |
| With a non-doctoral, graduate student | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| With an undergraduate student | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | |
| With a businessperson | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

**Authorship Rankings**

Research Question 5 asked, "What is the ranking of authors who published in the *IJBE*?"

The greatest number of articles to which one author contributed was six for the *IJBE/The Review* as shown in Table 6. Adjusted authorship rankings, which account for the number of authors of each article, are shown in Table 7. Note that the adjusted authorships change the author rankings. Some review, tenure, and promotion committee members calculate adjusted authorship rankings since some believe that scholars should have a balance of sole-authored and collaborative publications in their research portfolios.

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Table 6
*Ranking of Top 5 Authors Published in the IJBE, 2009-2015*

| Ranking | Author | No. of Articles |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Stock, Michaela | 6 |
| 2 | Slepcevic-Zach, Peter | 6 |
| 3 | Blaszczynski, Carol | 4 |
| 4 | Riebenbauer, Elisabeth | 4 |
| 5 | Greimel-Fuhrmann, Bettina | 2 |

Table 7
*Ranking of Top 5 Authors Published in the IJBE, Adjusted Authorship, 2009-2015*

| Ranking | Author | No. of Articles | No. of Authors | Adjusted Authorship |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Blaszczynski, Carol | 4 | 4 | 1.00 |
| 2 | Greimel,-Furhmann, Bettina | 2 | 2 | 1.00 |
| 3 | Riebenbauer, Elisabeth | 4 | 9 | 0.44 |
| 4 | Slepcevic-Zach, Peter | 6 | 14 | 0.43 |
| 5 | Stock, Michaela | 6 | 16 | 0.38 |

Research Question 6 asked, "What is the ranking of authors who published in the *JGBE*?" During the study time frame, the greatest number of articles published by one author in the *JGBE* was 9 as shown in Table 8. When authorship was adjusted for the number of contributing authors, the rankings changed as shown in Table 9. Interestingly, there is not much overlap between the authors of the two journals.  Most authors of articles published from 2009 to 2015 in the *IJBE* hailed from Europe, with one author in the United States. The top five authors of *JGBE* articles reside in the United States. These results are not surprising given the history of the journals and the location of the majority of each sponsoring organization's members. Only one author ranked among the top five for both journals. Faculty tend to publish in outlets that fit the reward systems of their institutions.

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Table 8
*Ranking of Top 5 Authors Published in the JGBE, 2001-2015*

| Ranking | Author | No. of Articles |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Blaszczynski, Carol | 9 |
| 2 | James, Marianne | 7 |
| 3 | Scott, James Calvert | 5 |
| 4 | Waldman, Lila | 3 |
| 5 | Zhu, Pinfan | 3 |

Table 9
*Ranking of Top 5 Authors Published in the JGBE, Adjusted Authorship, 2001-2015*

| Ranking | Author | No. of Articles | No. of Authors | Adjusted Authorship |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Scott, James Calvert | 5 | 5 | 1.00 |
| 2 | Zhu, Pinfan | 3 | 4 | 0.75 |
| 3 | Blaszczynski, Carol | 9 | 20 | 0.45 |
| 4 | James, Marianne | 7 | 16 | 0.44 |
| 5 | Waldman, Lila | 3 | 8 | 0.38 |

**Conclusions**

The leading international business education journals of NBEA and ISBE provide articles of interest to business educators; however, the research findings and pedagogical insights are not always widely accessible to others beyond the members of the journal sponsoring organizations. Without indexing in a major database, the excellent work international business education scholars produce can rarely be cited by other authors. Without citations, the scholarly work has little impact, a measure that is increasingly used by accreditation bodies such as the AACSB International to evaluate scholarly work of faculty.

The proportion of sole-authored and multiple-authored articles in the *IJBE* and the *JGBE* is in line with other business education journals (Blaszczynski, Scott, & Green, 2009; Blaszczynski & Scott, 2004). While authors of articles published between 2009 and 2015 in the *IJBE* are typically from Europe with some from the USA, authors of articles published in the *JGBE* are typically from the USA. Attracting

authors from additional countries could potentially enrich the literature and help to make both journals more global.

Authors of articles published in both journals engage in collaboration with colleagues at the same institution, and some collaborate with colleagues in the same country. Little collaboration occurs with colleagues who reside in a different country. Only a few collaborations occurred with students, and no article collaborations with businesspersons occurred.

## Recommendations for the Editorial Boards of the NBEA/ISBE International Business Education Journals

The organizations sponsoring the two international business education journals that comprised the focus of this study should strive to have the publications indexed in a leading database to expand the accessibility of the international business education literature. The organizations have made an excellent effort to make the article issues available on the organizational website. While this access is important for members, opening up database access to others could increase the visibility of both the literature and the discipline. Further, such access would encourage citations of the literature and help to ensure that the literature does not quickly disappear into a void, rarely, if ever, to be found again.

The sponsoring organization of the *JGBE* should consider listing the journal with *Cabell's Directory* to increase the number of submissions from a wide-ranging potential authorship.

Given that authorship in these journals is predominantly from Austria and the US, the organizations should strive to increase the awareness/recognition of the journals in countries other than the US and Austria. As a consequence, the reputation as an international journal would rise.

## Recommendations for International Business Education Researchers

Efforts should be made by business education researchers to invite colleagues from nations other than one's home country to collaborate on international business education research projects. Although sometimes challenging because of cultural differences, such collaborations could expand the number of countries and cultures represented in the literature enriching and strengthening the literature in the process. In addition to connecting with potential collaborators at the NBEA and SIEC-ISBE conferences, researchers may indicate interest in research collaborations by indicating areas of expertise in the knowledge database for international business education using the SIEC-ISBE Contact Form accessible via the SIEC-ISBE Publications website (SIEC-ISBE, n.d.).

Faculty members who have the time and inclination to work with students could assist worthy students in obtaining their first publications. Collaborating with students is time-consuming and may require extensive mentoring; however, the psychic reward of assisting students with their first publication is high.

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**The use of social media to make personnel decisions in education**

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**Abstract**

*Given the ubiquitous nature of social media, it is important for prospective and current teachers to be aware of the impact of a personal digital footprint upon their career.  Teachers are held to a higher standard due to the public nature of their employment.  Teachers represent the school district not only during the school day, but beyond the work day.  The study surveyed school principals or hiring managers in Illinois, USA about the use of social media to screen or censure teachers.  Approximately 2300 principals were contacted; however, only 80 responded to the survey.  Of the responses, approximately 50 percent of the schools indicated a review of social media to make employment decisions.  Facebook and Twitter are the two most popular social media platforms and the two that most potential employers search.  Both platforms can offer a negative view of a potential candidate, as well as be used in grounds for discipline and/or termination of a teacher for inappropriate behaviors (e.g. unprofessional posts and inappropriate pictures).  Further research is needed to determine the depth and breadth of social media screenings in regards to school personnel.*

**Introduction**

Social media has been defined in multiple ways; however, most definitions include three key elements: 1) individuals construct a public, or semi-public, profile on a social media platform; 2) invite others to be a friend, follower, or connection; and 3) use the social media platform to communicate (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013).  Given the ubiquitous nature and worldwide use of social media, it is important for prospective and current teachers to be aware of the impact of a personal digital footprint upon their career.  This study is an initial attempt to understand the extent social media is reviewed by school administrators as they make personnel decisions and serves as a pilot study for future research in the area.  For business education teachers, the information presented in this study is important because courses or instructional modules about the impact of a digital footprint are typically taught by the business/computer teachers within the school districts.  As the professional educator teaching digital media literacy, business education teachers hold the responsibility of not only presenting themselves in a professional manner, but also teaching their students the importance of a professional online presence.

**Background**

Search the Internet for the term "Teacher fired over Facebook" and dozens of hits return.  A teacher from Cohasset, Massachusetts was asked to resign for posting comments calling students

"germbags" and parents "arrogant" (CBS News, 2010).  In New Hampshire, a 35-year veteran teacher was fired for violating the school policy prohibiting friending students on Facebook (CBS Local Media, 2014).  Simpson (2010), in an article for *Tomorrow's Teachers,* wrote about multiple examples of teachers and aspiring teachers who have been fired, disciplined, or not hired based upon their social media profiles.  Simpson explained teacher free speech rights are limited.  The First Amendment only protects teacher speech if it is a matter of public concern, and probationary teachers may face disciplinary action if their speech is perceived as disturbing to the workplace.

A review of the relevant literature yielded mixed results.  Little is available from academic sources concerning how social media is used in an academic human resources context; however, popular literature provides multiple examples of anecdotal data about the use of social media in personnel decisions.   From the academic literature, the primary focus addresses the use of social media as a tool in candidate selection for businesses in increasing numbers; however, students may not be fully aware that recruiters view data from social media sites.  Instead, many students appear to be confident in their ability to secure their accounts via the privacy settings located within the social media site (Madden, et al., 2013), thus hiding or limiting outsiders from viewing their profiles.  The literature raises more questions than answers, including how social media is used for recruitment, marketing, and selection in the hiring process.  Additional questions raised include the lack of human resources policies regarding social media scrutiny in the hiring decision, the need to investigate for generational cohort differences, legal considerations in using social media, privacy concerns, and the ROI analysis of using social medial for recruitment.  Little information is available in the literature about how hiring managers make decisions based upon applicant's social media site.

### Use of social media in human resources

In 2015, over one billion people were logged into Facebook at the same time (Facebook, 2015).  The universal nature of social media creates a minefield for both employees and employers.  Although engaging privacy settings gives the illusion of privacy in social media, unless the account is set to be unsearchable, it is possible for any interested person, organization, or future employer to find "a user's networks, mutual friends, and profile picture" (Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013, p. 126).  Because of its widespread use, Chauhan, Buckley, and Harvey (2013) predict more human resource departments add a Facebook search to screen applicants.  CareerBuilder.com (2015) surveyed potential employers in their annual social media recruitment survey to discover how the companies use social media in the hiring process.  The results show a rising trend in researching job candidates' online profiles, up from 39 percent in 2013 to 52 percent in 2015.  Additionally, 35 percent of the employers indicated that the absence of social media is not only a red flag, but that they would be less inclined to interview someone who did not have an online presence.  Almost half of the hiring managers found something in the online profile that caused them to not hire a candidate.  The impact of social media postings has the potential to impact across the spectrum of the education profession.  Schools may be searching for social media postings of potential teachers or current teachers to make personnel decisions.  The news media has reported multiple cases where Facebook postings have resulted in disciplinary action for teachers and prospective teachers.

### Implications for job seekers

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For a potential teacher, knowing what employers seek in an online profile search can be useful. From the CareerBuilder.com survey (2015), employers provided a list of things that prevent a person from being offered a position in a business setting.

- Provocative or inappropriate photographs—46 percent
- Information about candidate drinking or using drugs—40 percent
- Candidate bad-mouthed previous company or fellow employee—34 percent
- Poor communication skills—30 percent
- Discriminatory comments related to race, religion, gender, etc.—29 percent

Employers also indicated the things that would encourage them to hire a candidate.

- Background information supported job qualifications—42 percent
- Personality came across as a good fit with company culture—38 percent
- Site conveyed a professional image—38 percent
- Great communication skills—37 percent
- Creativity—36 percent (¶ 3).

It is interesting to note that the behaviors listed as negative from the potential employers are the areas where teens are increasing their social media postings; however, younger teens are becoming more aware of the impact of their internet reputation and are taking steps to manage it by utilizing the privacy settings within the accounts and limiting contacts within the site (Madden, et al., 2013).

Currently, "there are no federal or state laws that specifically prevent employers from viewing and/or using information gathered from an unrestricted SNW [Social Network Website] profile to make hiring decisions with regard to unrestricted profiles" (Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013, p. 130). Additionally, teachers are held to a higher standard due to the public nature of their employment. Teachers represent the school district not only during the school day, but beyond the work day. Simpson (2010) wrote, "in the seminal *Pickering v. Board of Education* [Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563, 1968] case, the Supreme Court held that it's not a First Amendment violation to dismiss probationary teachers for what they say or write, if their speech involves merely personal things (*i.e.* doesn't address broader social/political issues of the day), or if the speech might disturb the workplace" (¶ 2). Understanding that teachers are held to a higher standard, all current and future teachers should be cautious in the use of social media.

### Implications for employers

By utilizing more online search engines in the candidate selection process, the legal implications of using social media are being questioned. Employers face a challenge when using social media networks to research candidates because the available information may not be consistent among the applicants. Through the use of these sites, the potential for individual bias in hiring decisions is high. Social media networks can provide access to identifying information about applicants such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disabilities, all of which are protected classifications under multiple federal laws (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). In Illinois, if a person has privacy settings enabled to protect the private information, the person has a common law right to privacy (Hidy & McDonald, 2013).

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Additionally, it is illegal for an employer to request user names and passwords from job applicants (Strumwasser, 2014); however, as stated in the case of *Pickering v. Board of Education*:

> By choosing to teach in the public schools, plaintiff undertook the obligation to refrain from conduct which in the absence of such position he would have an undoubted right to engage in. While tenure provisions of the School Code protect teachers in their positions from political or arbitrary interference, they are not intended to preclude dismissal where the conduct is detrimental to the efficient operation and administration of the schools of the district. (*Pickering v. Board of Education*, 1968)

The case has been used as grounds for teacher censure and or dismissal related to postings on social media (Simpson, 2010).

Another concern is the reliability of the data from social networking sites. Davison, Maraist, and Bing (2011) question the reliability and validity of using data from social networking sites to measure job-relevant characteristics; specifically, they ask if it is possible to measure personality traits from social postings? They also question if the information has been posted to generate a perceived image for the person. Is the person posting to impress friends or family? "For example, individuals may 'fake good' if they think their parents or employers will see the webpage, or even 'fake bad' if they think friends will view the webpage" (p. 156).

Concerning schools, the concept of *negligent hiring* requires consideration. Organizations that are involved in areas of public safety (e.g. education) should conduct criminal background checks as part of the screening process in order to find potential illegal behavior. As part of a criminal background check, an Internet search of the candidate is typically conducted. If a social media site does not have privacy settings enacted, it is probably permissible for the background check to access the site; however, U.S. law is developing in this area. In order to minimize the chance of a lawsuit about privacy invasion, school districts may want to include language in the background check consent to include social networking sites (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

Internationally, employers need to be aware of individual laws within the various jurisdictions. For example, in the US, the candidate must provide written permission for a background check; whereas, in the UK, the candidate has the right to review the background check report for accuracy before it is provided to the employer. In France, terms of use prohibit employers from using the site to gather information for professional use or for recruiting purposes. Other countries, such as Germany and Switzerland only allow professional sites (*e.g.* LinkedIn) to be used in employment decisions and prohibit the use of Facebook to gather information (Russell & Stutz, 2014).

If using social media as part of the hiring process, employers need to be cautious in hiring decisions to document the reasons for not hiring a candidate, and those reasons should be consistent with the job requirements. The reason for additional caution in this area is that through a review of social media, protected information that cannot be used in the hiring process within the US becomes visible to employers, e.g. photos which can reveal a protected classification (race, disability), marital status, children, and potentially religious preferences. Formal written policies and training in how to utilize social media is important for all employers.

**Purpose of the Study**

Given the prevalence of social media in everyday lives and the use of social media by many businesses (CareerBuilder, LLC, 2015), the researchers were interested in how social media is used in the educational system.  Multiple anecdotal and media sources are available (CBS Local Media, 2014; CBS News, 2010; Simpson, 2010); however, research in the area of using social media networks as part of human resources decisions is relatively new and limited, and the use of social media for personnel decisions research is almost non-existent  (Davison, Maraist, & Bing, 2011).  Additionally, a lack of scholarly research into the issue of social media use for personnel decisions within the educational system was discovered.  This study seeks to begin the discussion by answering the following question. How are primary, secondary, and upper secondary schools using social media in the hiring and evaluation process?

**Research Design and Methodology**

**Participants and procedure**

Given the desire to compare social media use across various types and sizes of schools, a database was developed of principals' names and e-mails from a publicly available information sources. This contact information was gathered from all public schools in the State of Illinois, United States. Within Illinois, there are 866 districts (Illinois State Board of Education, 2013). After compilation of data was complete, the database consisted of 3,700 individual principals; however, two large districts indicated that they would not participate due to internal review board policies; approximately 8% didn't have email contacts listed, leaving 2,895 principals and corresponding emails.  The researchers have learned that most of the larger school districts in Illinois have internal review boards that blocked the survey request; however, no list of schools with internal review processes is currently available to those wishing to conduct research in the public schools.   As a result, the researchers determined to continue the study as a pilot study, from which future research could be designed and conducted within this area.

The survey (see Appendix) consisted of 46 questions, although not all respondents answered all 46 questions due to the use of skip-logic. The initial three questions asked the administrators to select all social media brands their school uses in the hiring process from an extensive list. Next, respondents were asked to rank the social media platforms their schools use for hiring the most. After these initial questions, the survey then asked detailed questions about six different social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest). The first question for each platform asked individuals if their institution used the specific platform. If yes, the survey automatically presented five specific questions on that particular platform. If the respondent selected that their institution did not use the platform, it skipped those five questions. Given this skip logic, the number of questions asked varied from respondent to respondent. The range was 21-46 questions answered.

The survey link was then e-mailed to the principal at each school. Over the course of two weeks, the survey link was e-mailed three times as a reminder to complete the survey. In total, the survey link was sent to 2,895 principals; email kickbacks for errors or spam filters (approximately 20 percent) immediately reduced this number to 2,316. Usable data was received from 78 respondents giving an

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overall response rate of 3.34 percent. Due to the low response rate, investigators attempted to reach the respondents via another mechanism. The Principal's Association for the given state agreed to include the information regarding the survey, including the link in its weekly email to all members. This garnered an additional two respondents, giving a usable sample of 80 respondents with a response rate of 3.5 percent; however, 80 unique school districts responded to the survey for a 9.2 percent response rate of Illinois school districts.

Overall the sample consisted of 32 percent Elementary, 20 percent Middle School/Junior High, and 38 percent High School buildings. The majority (52 percent) of respondents had 26-50 teachers employed in the respective school. Sixteen percent had 1-25 teachers, while 14 percent had 41-75 teachers employed in the respective school. The remaining 17 percent had more than 100 teachers employed in their school.

**Findings**

**Use of social media in hiring and evaluation**

Principals for each school were asked to select which social media platforms the district and/or building has used in the hiring and evaluation process for its teachers. Results indicate 50 percent (n=40) of respondents use some type of social media for the hiring and evaluation process, while 50 percent reported never using social media for this purpose. In terms of specific platforms, 36 percent indicated they have used Facebook to screen, hire or evaluate candidates/teachers. Twitter was the second most used with 15 percent. While no one reported using Instagram or Pinterest for the hiring and evaluation process, LinkedIn (11 percent) and YouTube (6 percent) have been used. The following table presents an overview of key findings with details discussed thereafter.

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Table 1
*Summary of Results*

|  | Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | YouTube |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of buildings using this social media platform in hiring and evaluation process | 29 36% | 12 15% | 9 11% | 5 6% |
| Recruiting | 10 12% | 0 0% | 30 38% | 0 0% |
| Screening | 80 100% | 80 100% | 70 88% | 80 100% |
| Selection | 10 12% | 15 18% | 11 13% | 20 25% |
| "Occasionally" this platform has had negative impact on hiring | 61 76% | 44 55% | 35 44% | 0 0% |
| "Frequently" this platform has had negative impact on hiring | 3 4% | 7 9% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| Platform has been used for basis of disciplinary action and/or termination | 23 29% | 7 9% | 0 0% | 0 0% |

**Facebook**

For those buildings using Facebook in their personnel decisions, all of them (100 percent) reported using it for screening purposes. A small number of those (12 percent) also use it for recruiting and selecting. When asked about the information gathered from Facebook on potential candidates, the majority agree that it: 1) presents a positive picture of the candidate (92 percent); 2) helps evaluate the personality of the candidate (88 percent); 3) helps evaluate the fit of the candidate with the school culture (92 percent); 4) helps evaluate the ethical standards of the candidate (96 percent); and 5) helps evaluate the professionalism of the candidate (100 percent). Despite these generally positive reports, 76 percent of respondents indicated that the information gathered has occasionally had a negative impact on the hiring decision.

When reviewing some of the qualitative feedback in regards to Facebook and the hiring process, professionalism (or lack of) in an applicant's Facebook account was a key trigger in the hiring process. Examples of these comments include: *inappropriate pictures/comments in reference to school (6); comments on FB were inappropriate or unprofessional (14); images don't portray a professional appearance (9); and inappropriate activities (5), photos or language used (6).* In addition to Facebook impacting the screening process, 29 percent of respondents indicated that Facebook has also been used as the basis for disciplinary action or termination. Seven qualitative comments revealed that disciplinary action and dismissal has occurred for unprofessional behavior on Facebook.

**Twitter**

For those buildings using Twitter in their personnel decisions, all of them (100 percent) reported using it for screening purposes. Eighteen percent also reported using it for selection, while no one reported using Twitter as a recruitment tool. When asked about the information gathered from Twitter on potential candidates, the majority agree that it: 1) presents a positive picture of the candidate (91 percent); 2) helps evaluate the personality of the candidate (100 percent); 3) helps evaluate the fit of the candidate with the school culture (100 percent); 4) helps evaluate the ethical standards of the candidate (100 percent); and 5) helps evaluate the professionalism of the candidate (100 percent). Over half (63 percent) the schools who reported using Twitter reported that Twitter has had a negative impact on the hiring decision. Similar to Facebook, inappropriate language and negative tweets were reported in the qualitative comments as reasons for removing a candidate from consideration. Qualitative response examples include: *inappropriate language used (3) and unprofessional actions conducted (2)*. No qualitative response indicated that disciplinary action had been taken as a result of Twitter usage.

**LinkedIn & YouTube**

Similar to Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn (88 percent) and YouTube (100 percent) are used primarily for screening purposes, with a small number using LinkedIn for recruiting (38 percent) and a small number (25 percent) using YouTube for selection. Responses for LinkedIn and YouTube also echo Facebook and Twitter in that it generally presents the candidate in a positive light. YouTube was reported as never having a negative impact on the hiring process, while a small number (44 percent) reported LinkedIn having an occasional negative impact. Qualitative responses about LinkedIn and YouTube were limited. The two comments made concerning LinkedIn referenced frequent job changes or lack of job experiences posted on the profile. No comments were made about the use of YouTube.

**Qualitative comments**

In addition to responding to specific questions on various social media platforms, principals were also asked to provide additional feedback relating to the building's use of social media and the hiring process. These comments supported what the data revealed – schools seem to be either for or against using social media in the hiring process.

A sample of the comments in support of using social media in the process included:

- Social media can instantly provide important information about a candidate that a resume cannot (3)
- We use Facebook, YouTube, and any social media available to us to prescreen potential candidates (6)

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On the other extreme, some schools prefer to avoid social media, sample comments included:

- We do not design a systematic means of screening candidates through social media nor do we have a defined policy on the use of social media to evaluate candidates (3)
- We do not currently use social media in the hiring process at the building level (4)
- We are very cautious to use much social media (3)

**Discussion**

Although the low response rate does not allow for generalization beyond the sample, it is interesting to note that the number of school districts reporting the use of social media in the application process of 50 percent, mirrors what was found by CareerBuilder (2015) in that 52 percent of businesses are using social media. The reasons for hiring or not hiring a candidate was also consistent between the reporting school districts and the CareerBuilder survey. With approximately 50 percent of the school districts using social media in the initial screen process, pre-service and current teachers need to be aware of the dangers of a negative digital footprint. Facebook and Twitter are the two most popular social media platforms and the two that most potential employers search. Both platforms can offer a negative view of a potential candidate, as well as be used in grounds for discipline and/or termination of a teacher for inappropriate behaviors (*e.g.* unprofessional posts and inappropriate pictures). Based upon the limited response, the information found in this study is being offered as a first step that future research can use as a pilot study upon which to build additional studies.

**Limitations**

A major limitation of this study is the small number of principals responding to the survey which could lead to a response bias that impacts the ability to generalize the data in any way. An additional response bias could be present in that it is conceivable people who do not use social media may be less likely to participate in a survey about the topic, leading to the possibility of overestimating the phenomenon describe. The researchers made multiple attempts to obtain the information, including multiple reminders and the use of the professional association for principals. Additionally, the researchers discovered that multiple school districts had an internal review process prohibiting research studies from outside the school district. The researchers did not have access to a list of school districts with a private review process. An additional study to determine which of the 866 school districts within the State of Illinois utilize an internal review procedure would be helpful to all researchers wishing to conduct studies within the public schools.

Based upon the findings in this study, further research is needed to determine the depth and breadth of social media screenings in regard to school personnel. Examples of future studies include:

- A qualitative study of school leaders to determine social media policies of the school district
- A review of case law pertaining to the use of social media in school personnel decision-making
- Continued research into how each specific social media platform is used in personnel decision-making procedures
- A study on the perceptions of business teacher candidates on the use of social media in the personnel decision-making process.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Social media is pervasive in today's society. Data seems to indicate that the digital footprint of teacher candidates is evaluated for personnel purposes, just as social media is part of business personnel decisions. Learning if or how social media profiles are included in the hiring process should inform teacher candidates how best to prepare for a career in public schools. Teacher education programs should not only teach about managing online reputations; they should also prepare teacher candidates to create lessons on building a positive digital footprint for their future students. As this study indicates, school districts are using social media sites as part of the hiring process, and the districts are finding negative information about candidates, primarily on Facebook and Twitter profiles. Since teachers are held to a higher standard and probationary teachers can be dismissed without regard to Freedom of Speech rights, it is important for teachers and teacher candidates to be aware of the impact of a digital footprint on their career. For business teachers, a unit about the use of social media in hiring decisions would be helpful as these teachers prepare their students to be future employees.

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**Appendix**

**Survey Questions**

Editor's Note:  The survey asked the same questions for each of the social media platforms. Only the questions for the first platform were included in the appendix.

Q1. The following is a list of social media brands. Please read the entire list and select ALL social media brands that the district and/or building use in the hiring and evaluation process for its teacher. (Select all that apply.)

- ❑ Facebook
- ❑ Instagram
- ❑ LinkedIn
- ❑ Pinterest
- ❑ Twitter
- ❑ YouTube
- ❑ Other - Please specify below _____

Q2. Please rank the following social media platforms according to the ones your building uses the most. Drag social media platforms that your building uses to Group 1 and then RANK in order of most used. A ranking of 1 means your building uses that social media platform the MOST. If you do NOT use a specified platform, then do to Group 1.

| Please rank the items you have placed in this box. Thank you. |
|---|
| _____ Facebook |
| _____ Instagram |
| _____ LinkedIn |
| _____ Pinterest |
| _____ Twitter |
| _____ YouTube |

Q3. Please answer the following questions in regards to how YOUR BUILDING uses the specific social media site to screen, hire, and evaluate teachers in your building.

Does your building use Facebook to screen, hire, and evaluate teachers in your building?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip to Q9.

Q4. How does your building use Facebook through the hiring process? (Select all that apply)

❑ Recruiting
❑ Screening
❑ Selection
❑ Other - Please specify below _____

Q5. Please answer the following questions according to the information the building gathers from on potential candidates. In general, the information gathered:

| | Strongly Agree | Generally Agree | Moderately Agree | Moderately Disagree | Generally Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Enough Information to Evaluate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| presents a positive picture of the candidate. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| helps evaluate the personality of the candidate. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| helps evaluate the fit of the candidate with the school culture. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| helps evaluate the ethical standards of the candidate. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| helps evaluate the professionalism of the candidate. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q6. How often has the information gathered from Facebook on a candidate negatively impacted a hiring decision?

○ Not At All
○ Occasionally
○ Frequently

If Not At All Is Selected, Then Skip To Q8.

Q7. Please provide examples of when Facebook has negatively impacted a hiring decision.

Q8. Has Facebook ever been the basis for disciplinary action and/or termination?

○ No
○ Yes - please elaborate below _____

Q39. Do you restrict how your teachers use social media?

○ Yes. Please briefly explain how this is done. _____
○ No

Q40. Please answer the following questions in regards to your building (Select All that Apply)

❑ Elementary
❑ Middle School / Junior High
❑ High School

Q41. How many teachers are employed in your building?

○ 1-25
○ 26-50
○ 51-75
○ 76-100
○ 101-125
○ 126-150
○ 150+

Q42. Please share any additional comments relating to your building's use of social media and teachers.

**Higher education in Ukraine in the context of**
**global and national challenges of the 21st century1**

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**Abstract**

*Education for sustainable business development is an important institution of the integration process of the knowledge economy. This situation also concerns Ukraine, which is currently experiencing particularly difficult times of its state formation.*

*This article investigates the state of the situation in the field of higher education in Ukraine, geopolitical, economic and other transformations of the 21 century.*

**Introduction**

The Ukrainian society, even in the most difficult times in its history, has not lost faith in a better future. It has always aspired to be part of the European community and has grounds for that.

Ukraine possesses the most fertile black earth and numerous minerals. With the territory of 0.4% of the world's land area and number of inhabitants of 0.8% of the total world's population, it extracts 5% of the world's minerals and refined products (in particular, 14% – iron ore, 30% – manganese and 7% – coal (Brininstool, 2011). It is an aerospace state. Its aviation industry has a complete cycle of aircraft production. It can quickly convert the production of "Electron" TV sets into trams of the same brand, produce high quality skiing equipment (particularly of such famous brands as "Fisher", "Blitsard"). It occupies the ninth position in the world among the biggest weapon exporters (Ukraine is included into top, 2015). Our population has surprised the world with the volunteerism scale.

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[1] Although this article is not the style normally published in *IJBE*, the editors determined that the information presented in this paper would be of interest to the international community of business educators.

At the same time, Ukraine is a leader on corruption. By the number of billionaires possessing the capital of doubtful origin, Ukraine is among the top countries in the world; ranking 11th in Europe and 27th in the world. The aggregate extent of their net assets equals the expenditure section volume of Ukraine's state budget. From the standpoint of business assessments, it could be positively perceived, if not for the incredibly low price of human labor (see Figure 1).

Figure1: Payment of labour: Location of Ukraine[2]

The countries of the EU and Ukraine (January 2015, EUR)

|  | The minimum wage, euro | Average wage, euro |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ukraine | 36 | 135 |
| Bulgaria | 184 | 333 |
| Romania | 218 | 395 |
| Litva | 300 | 524 |
| Czech Republic | 332 | 702 |
| Latvia | 360 | 504 |
| Slovakia | 380 | 745 |
| Estonia | 390 | 735 |
| Croatia | 396 | 712 |
| Poland | 410 | 750 |
| Portugal | 589 | 805 |
| Greece | 683 | 704 |
| Spain | 756 | 1615 |
| Slovenia | 790 | 1000 |
| Great Britain | 1379 | 2101 |
| France | 1458 | 2449 |
| Ireland | 1462 | 2160 |
| Germany | 1473 | 2054 |
| Belgium | 1502 | 1940 |
| Netherlands | 1502 | 2136 |
| Luxembourg | 1923 | 3189 |

Now, against the background of high European aspirations of the Ukrainian society, it is important to know *"What do Europeans think of Ukraine?"* Social surveys show that there is no

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[2] AVERAGE WAGE –UKRAINE - 135 Euro, THE MINIMUM WAGE –UKRAINE - 36 Euro. Average monthly wages and salaries per employee (June 2015 year) in educational activities – 158 $.

Ukraine-phobia among EU citizens (Hetmanchuk, 2015). The doors of the European Union remain open to Ukrainians if the Ukrainians can overcome the most painful diseases like corruption, oligarchs' influence, and poverty. So, the aspiration of EU citizens and Ukrainians who are also demanding radical reforms coincide.

The Ukrainian society is well aware that *higher education* is a crucial factor in solving problems and in achieving the goals of millennium development. Therefore, it is important to identify the unique problems facing Ukraine in the field of higher education considering the country's development possibility of state and contemporary civilization changes.

The purpose of this article is to identify the main factors, restrictions, and improvement directions of institutional support for the development of higher education in Ukraine with regard to global and national challenges of the 21st century.

The research presented in this article is based on the principles of systematic and comparative analysis, as well as methods of statistics and sociology. The empirical base of the research is data of national and international statistics and special sociological surveys on the issues of economy and management of higher education in Ukraine.

**Ukraine in the international rankings**

Ukraine does not currently occupy the best position in the international rankings of economic freedom, ease of doing business, and global competitiveness. This is illustrated by Figure 2 (Doing Business, 2014; Global Innovation Index, 2014; Global Competitiveness Report, 2014-2015;  Global Enabling Trade Report, 2014; Index of Economic Freedom, 2014; Human Development Index and its Components; 2014; Logistics performance index, 2014; Sustainable Society Index, 2014).



Figure 2: Ukraine in the international rankings

| Index | Ranking |
|---|---|
| Sustainable Society Index/Human… | 33/151 |
| Global Innovation Index | 63/94 |
| Logistics Performance Index | 71/215 |
| SSI/Economic Wellbeing | 75/151 |
| The Global Competitiveness Index | 76/144 |
| Enabling Trade Index | 83/138 |
| Human Development Index | 83/187 |
| SSI/Environmental Wellbeing | 88/151 |
| Doing Business (ease of doing business) | 112/186 |
| Index of Economic Freedom | 155/186 |

However, on the other hand, Ukraine occupies better position in the world rankings concerning human development, thanks to education.

Therefore, among the consideration in the complex political, social, and economic factors, which may affect the advancement of Ukraine's position in the international sustainability rankings through business, reforming of higher education institutions plays a special role, particularly in the area of business education.

Obviously, Ukraine will have its own way of educational business reforms. The historical context of the development of the state and its regions will play a prominent role.

So, in the 19th and 20th centuries in Ukraine quite a different culture of entrepreneurship was formed, and thus of business education environment as well. For example, in Western Ukraine the activity of the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the ethnic Pole Andrii Sheptytskyi had a huge influence. With his support in Galicia immediately after the First World War, the active development of national and religious life (in full symbiosis of fundamental components of nation's support) began. In less than 10 years, Galicians became a real modern nation with their banks, schools, the Academy of Sciences (Shevchenko Scientific Society), the National Museum, developed agriculture and their own industry. The slogan "Buy Ukrainian Products" was practical only on condition of full self-providing of the nation with everything needed (Inzhuvatova, 2014).

In the 20th century the Ukrainian High School met the turbulent 1990s, the years of the "wild capitalism" having only five specialties ("Economic Cybernetics", "Planning and Organization of the Economy", "Accounting and Audit", "Automated Control Systems" and "Construction Economy") at economic faculties of the universities (the first and second level of higher education according to the International Classification System of Education of the UN).

Only with the development of Ukraine as an independent state in 1991 came the formation of the private ownership institute, development of small and medium business, and financial institutions.

During 1991-2015 in Ukraine (1997, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2015) the list of specialties changed five times, under which specialist training was held in economics, entrepreneurship and management. As of 2014/2015 academic year in Ukraine a bachelor diploma of 16 training areas in the field of business education was obtained by 24.4% of all university students in Ukraine (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Subject areas of business education in Ukraine (source: The list of disciplines and specialties, 2015; The list of disciplines and specialties, 2006; The list of disciplines and specialties, 1997)*

| Ukraine in the Soviet Union until 1991 | Ukraine as an independent country until 2016 | Ukraine as an independent country since 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| • Economic Cybernetics<br>• Planning and Organization of the Economy<br>• Accounting and Audit<br>• Automated Control Systems<br>• Construction Economy | • International Economic Relations<br>• International Business<br>• Economic Theory<br>• International Economics<br>• Business Economics<br>• Personnel Management and Labor Economics<br>• Applied Statistics<br>• Marketing<br>• Finance and Credit<br>• Accounting and Audit<br>• Commodity and Business Entrepreneurship<br>• Management<br>• Hotel and Restaurant Business<br>• Tourism | • Economics<br>• International Economic Relations<br>• Accounting and Taxation<br>• Finance<br>• Banking and Insurance<br>• Management<br>• Public Management and Administration<br>• Marketing<br>• Entrepreneurship, Trade and Exchange Activities<br>• Hotel and Restaurant Business<br>• Tourism |

In April 2015 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved a new draft on the list of disciplines and specialties, in which the number of the specialties at the "Bachelor" level are reduced from 160 to 100. In the business education area given the International Classification System of Education of the UN (ISCED) the number of specialties is going to be reduced from 16 to 10. The list is intended not only to harmonize Ukrainian educational classifications with international analogues, but also begin the process of developing new standards of higher education quality by defined specialties.

The approval of the new list of specialties has caused mixed reaction in the high school of Ukraine as it results in the resistance of the academic community that is not ready for reforms.

Analysis of the dynamics of the student number in Ukraine show, despite economic, socio-cultural and political problems, Ukrainians traditionally try to get higher education. The evidence of this is the international statistics on the educational level in the human development index by the method of UNDP. In 2014, just in terms of "Expected years of

schooling" Ukraine significantly improved its ranking in the evaluation of national human capital (see Table 2).

Table 2
*Human Development Index in Ukraine and other countries (source: Human Development Report, 2014)*

| | Human Development Index | | Its components | | | Population with at least some secondary education, (% ages 25 and older) (2005-2012 pp.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ranks | Value | Life expectancy at birth | Expected years of schooling | Gross national income (GNI) per capita (2011 PPP $) | |
| VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
| United States | 5 | 0,914 | 78,9 | 16,5 | 52,3 | 95,0 |
| Germany | 6 | 0,911 | 80,7 | 16,3 | 43,0 | 96,6 |
| Poland | 35 | 0,834 | 76,4 | 15,5 | 21,5 | 82,3 |
| HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
| Russian Federation | 57 | 0,778 | 68,0 | 14,0 | 22,6 | 90,9 |
| Ukraine | 83 | 0,734 | 68,5 | 15,1 | 8,2 | 93,5 |

## Key global and national trends in the development of higher education, including business education in particular

The modern development of higher education in Ukraine, and specifically business education, is stipulated by the influence of both traditional and new factors. Determent factors include globalization and increasing migration mobility of the population, regionalization of the public development, demographic situation, institutional changes in the country, etc. Let us examine them in detail.

### 1. Globalization and increasing migration mobility of the population

According to the dynamics of foreign educational migration, Ukraine today is among the twenty ten countries. According to the UN data, 62% of the import of higher education services

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Ukraine, is provided by Ukrainian student migration to Poland, Germany and also to the Russian Federation (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Where do Ukrainian students go? (Source: Global flow of tertiary-level students, 2012)
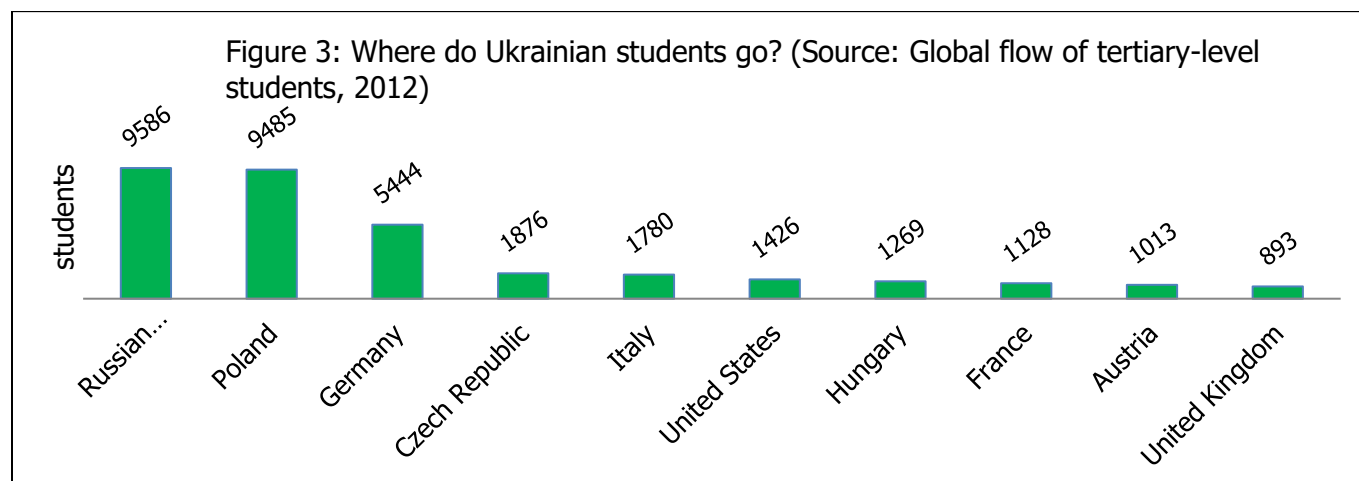
As for the internal mobility of students in Ukraine, unlike many European countries, it is not as common. According to the results of the survey of university students, which was carried out by the authors of the article in 2013 (Hrynkevych, O., 2013) in Lviv and Cherkasy (Non-probable sample included 120 students of Ivan Franko Lviv National University, "Lviv Polytechnic University", Bohdan Khmelnytskyi Cherkasy National University), only 32% of respondents expressed a desire to study in another region of Ukraine while 83% of students would like to study in another country of the world. On the basis of similar observations in Ukraine, and reasoning from the experience of forming political nations of Europe, German researchers Claudia Date and Uwe Date (Date, C & Date U, 2009) argue that "without mass student migration, which would become a bridge for communication between East and West, in Ukraine a national communicative community cannot grow from the regionally divided society".

## 2. Regionalization of the social development

Among the important factors of educational migration, which define its main directions in Ukraine and other countries, there is disproportional regional development. Factors impacting this development include opportunities for obtaining quality education, educational opportunities in others countries and regions of the world, employment problems in rural areas or depressed regions. It is important to note that the economic level of a country's development plays a significant, but not decisive, role in choosing the country of study.

This information is proved by the results of correlation analysis of interconnection between the share of foreign students in the countries of the world and the GDP indicator per capita. The correlation between the studied indicators is only 0.595 and shows an existing but

not very strong relationship. In general, the importance of the influence of the above mentioned factors of educational migration for every country has its own regional features.

Regarding prospect for business education in Ukraine in the context of regions it is important to consider first, the factor of specialization of the regional economy, and accordingly – future needs of regional labor markets; second, the factor of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to the military events in the East of Ukraine.

In the first case is an extremely acute problem of creating new jobs that meet the new trends of the labor market development, in the second one – the problems of labor retraining, obtaining additional or related professions among internally displaced persons.

## 3.   Demographic situation

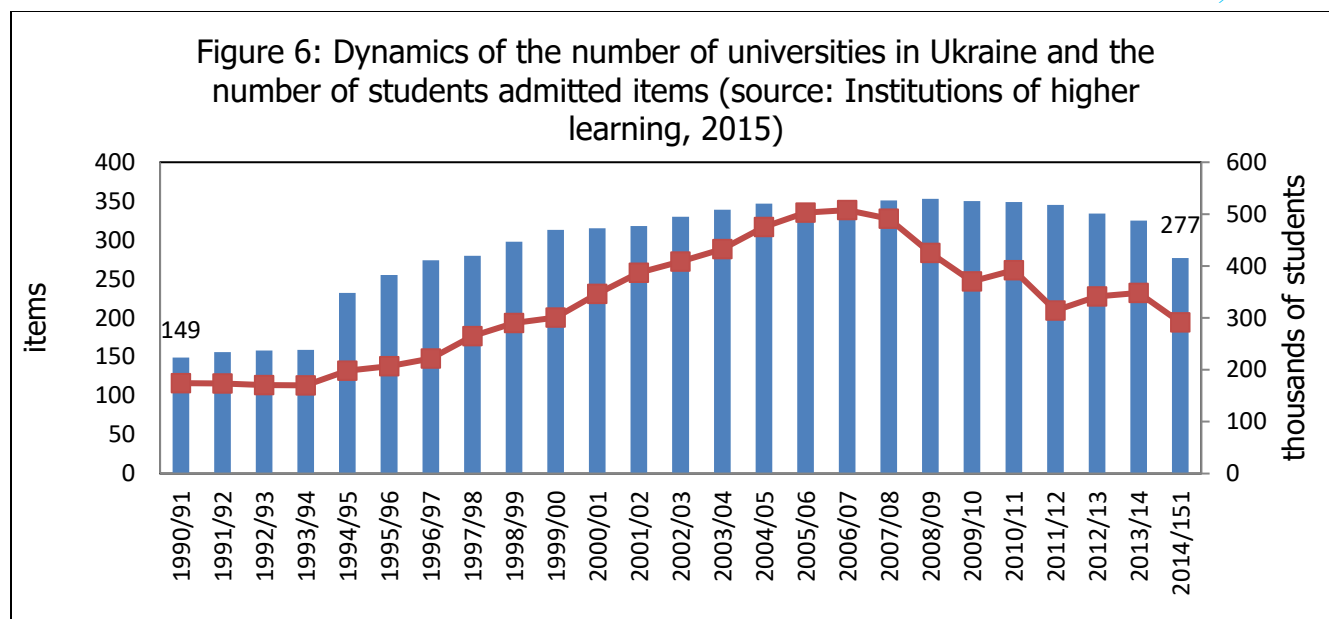In Ukraine, this factor practically reflects temporary "collapse" of educational services market capacity due to the natural losses of Ukraine's demographic potential. The decline in the birth rate since the early 1990s has led to the negative dynamics of the volumes of entering Ukrainian higher educational establishments since 2007 (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Demografic situation - 2015: location Ukraine
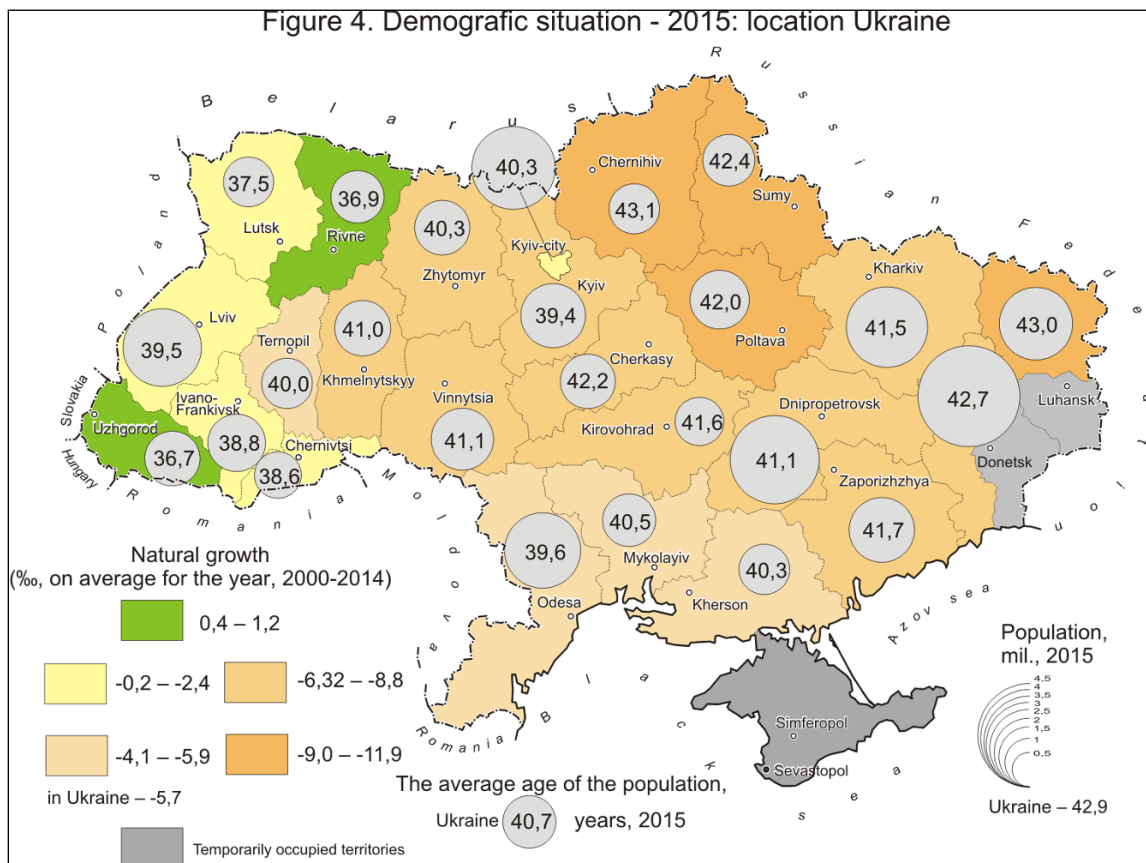
The correlation coefficient between these indicators considering lag for the period of 2004-2014 amounted to 0.907. On the basis of the correlation-regression analysis the authors did a forecast of the dynamics of the admission volumes to Ukrainian higher educational establishments by 2031. The forecast estimates indicate an annual decrease in the number of students and saving the negative dynamics of this indicator by 2020 (See Figure 5).



Figure 5: Forecast estimates of the dynamics of the admission volumes to Ukrainian higher educational establishments based on a regression model depending on the birth rate level
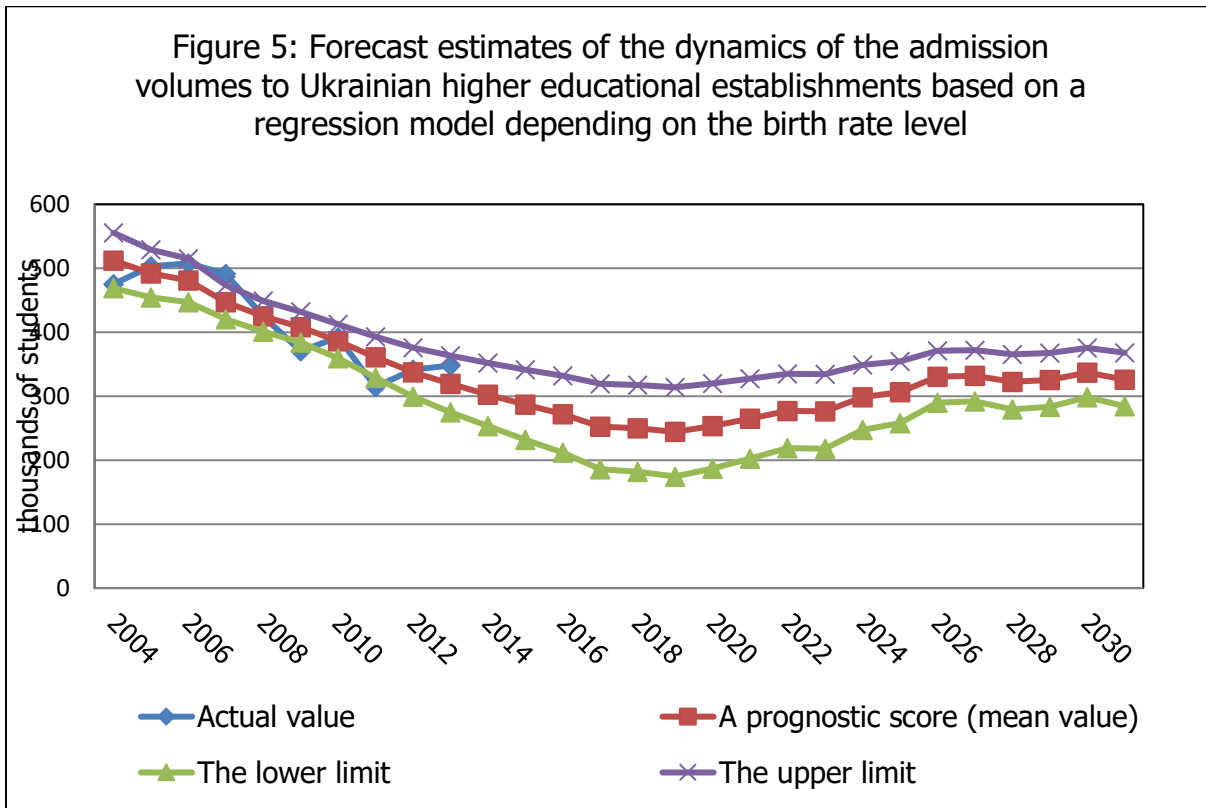
The decrease in admission numbers in Ukraine universities is happening on the background of quite a high number of different types of establishments (see Figure 6), and, respectively, leads to more relevant problems of competitiveness management in higher education.

Figure 6: Dynamics of the number of universities in Ukraine and the number of students admitted items (source: Institutions of higher learning, 2015)

## 4. Institutional transformations in Ukraine

This factor is related to the introduction of the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" in the July of 2014. For the first time since the independence, the new Law declares in the preamble the importance of creating legal and organizational conditions of "increasing the cooperation of state authorities, business and higher education on the principles of universities' autonomy" (On Higher Education, 2014). The law provides a legal basis for the harmonization of educational activity in Ukraine with relevant international and European standards, gives more autonomy to universities, especially in determining the content of educational curricula, and provides their students with the opportunity of a real subject choice (not less than 25% of all educational credits).

**Results of national surveys of the quality of higher education in Ukraine and graduate employability**

In Ukraine, among the main institutional factors that affect the decision of young people in choosing the direction of further training include (a) the state order for specialist training, and (b) the national and international university rankings.

The statistical analysis of the relationship between the number of state orders for bachelors' training at Universities and the number of applications submitted by applicants (on the example of the specialty of "Management" in Lviv region) in 2014 showed that the correlation coefficient between these indicators was 0,872 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: The scattering diagram of the numbers of state order for bachelors' training at Universities and the number of applications submitted by applicants
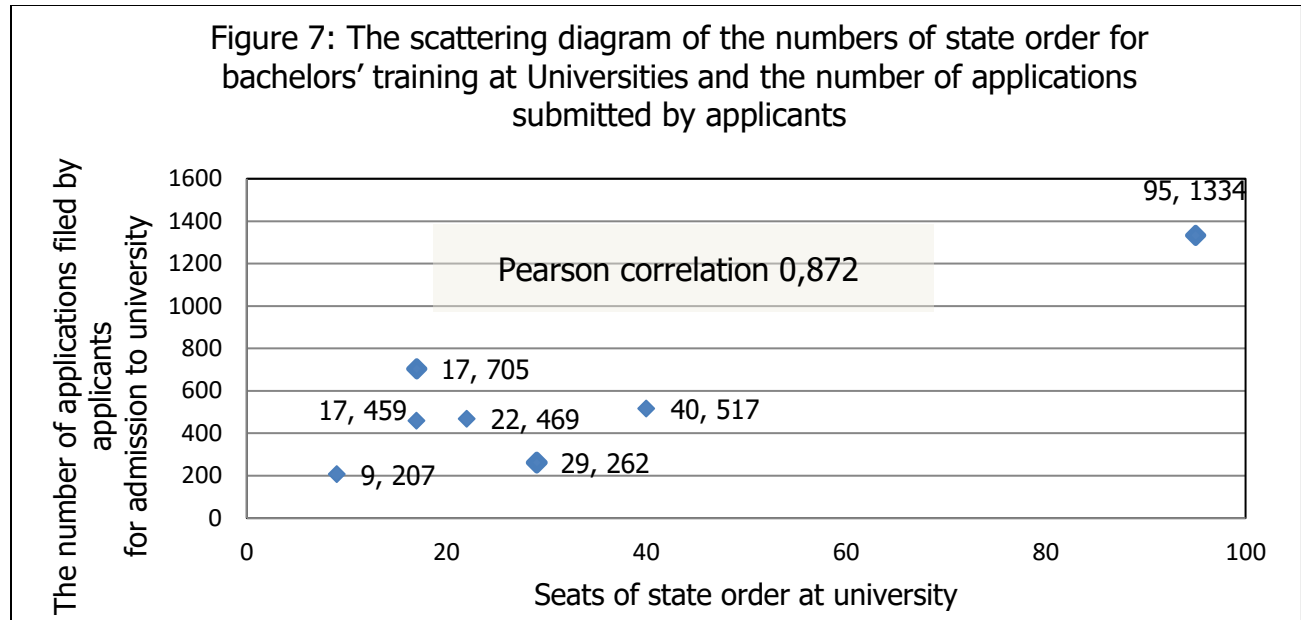
Source: own elaboration

This fact means that state institutions, especially the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, has a significant impact on the regulation of supply and demand in the education services market.

As for the rankings of World University in 2015 (QS World University Rankings 2014/15), six Ukrainian universities were included into the list of the best universities in the world for the first time since the independence: Taras Shevchenko National University (421), N. V. Karazin Kharkiv National University (481), National Technical University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" (551), Sumy State University (651), National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" and Donetsk National University (701).
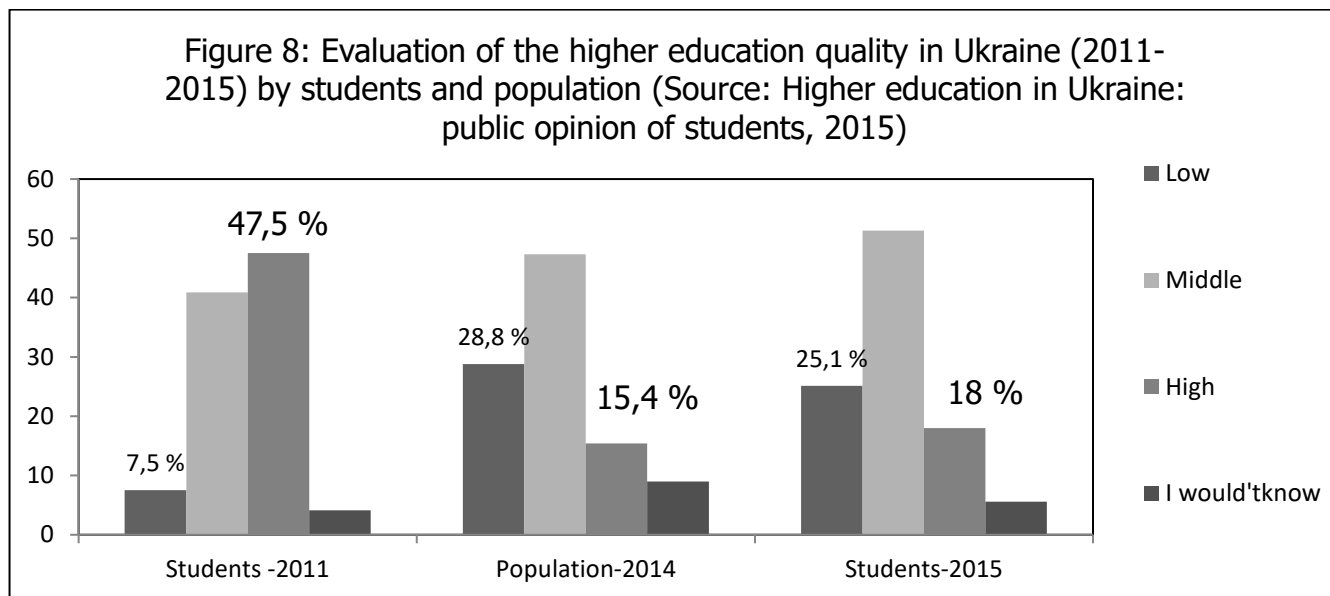
Thus, global and national factors of higher education development considered above pose new requirements for Ukraine to improve its quality and competitiveness.

We distribute main tools, which can improve the quality and competitiveness of higher education in Ukraine:

– Survey of the quality of higher education;
– Using of non-financial tools: creating new professional standards;
– Using of financial tools: cooperation with private companies;
– Survey of employment and unemployment of graduates.

First, monitoring of the quality of higher education. In March 2015, within the project "Reforming of Higher Education", which is funded by the International Renaissance Foundation,

a nationwide survey of students about the quality of higher education was held. The results showed that Ukrainian students began demanding much concern for quality education they get. If in 2011 almost half of the respondents considered Ukrainian higher education of high quality, in 2015 their number decreased by more than two and a half times (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: Evaluation of the higher education quality in Ukraine (2011-2015) by students and population (Source: Higher education in Ukraine: public opinion of students, 2015)
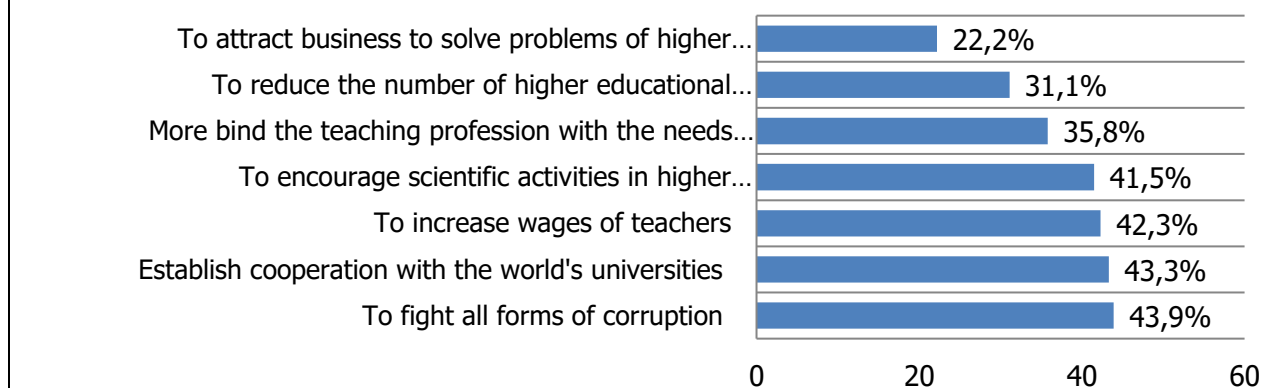
According to a five-point scale, Ukrainian students who study in the area of business education evaluated the quality of education in this area at 3.2. Most students think that the most serious problems of higher education, which require urgent solution, are the following ones (Higher education in Ukraine: public opinion of students, 2015):

– non-recognition of diplomas of most domestic universities in the world (51%);
– teaching non-conformity with market requirements (41%);
– corruption of university teaching staff (39%);
– low quality education in Ukrainian universities compared with the global level (32%).

Second, non-financial instruments of improving the quality of higher business education. The analysis of priority measures to solve this problem in Ukraine (Figure 9) points to the need for the development and implementation of professional educational standards. For leading Ukrainian universities international cooperation with employers, business schools and public associations, in particular – International Society for Business Education (for the formation of a modern system of external evaluation of business education quality) is very important.

Figure 9: Priority measures in solving the problem of the quality of higher education in Ukraine (Source: Higher education in Ukraine: public opinion of students, 2015)

| Measure | Percentage |
|---|---|
| To attract business to solve problems of higher… | 22,2% |
| To reduce the number of higher educational… | 31,1% |
| More bind the teaching profession with the needs… | 35,8% |
| To encourage scientific activities in higher… | 41,5% |
| To increase wages of teachers | 42,3% |
| Establish cooperation with the world's universities | 43,3% |
| To fight all forms of corruption | 43,9% |

Third, financial instruments of improving the quality of higher business education. To form the national system of external evaluation of higher education in Ukraine is important for stimulating cooperation with private companies/businesses. The main financing agents in higher education of Ukraine are budget administrators (central and regional/local government institutions) and households (see Table 3).

Table 3
*Expenses sharing on higher education in Ukraine according to the financing sources (Source: National Accounts of the Education in Ukraine, 2013)*

| | General expenses, mln. hrn. | | | General expenses structure, % | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2007 p. | 2010 p. | 2013 p. | 2007 p. | 2010 p. | 2013 p. |
| Total including by financing sources | 12890,7 | 25097,3 | 30158,6 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| Central Government | 11852,4 | 22854,3 | 27191,0 | 53,2 | 60,7 | 63,1 |
| Regional budgets/Local authorities | 1038,4 | 2243,0 | 2967,7 | 4,7 | 6,0 | 6,9 |
| Private companies | 326,5 | 490,6 | 437,2 | 1,5 | 1,3 | 1,0 |
| Households | 9052,1 | 12072,6 | 12505,1 | 40,6 | 32,1 | 29,0 |

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The results of expenditures analysis in higher education show that the biggest share of expenditures in 2013 was in the state sector − 70.0%. The share of the private sector was 30.0%, of which only 1% was connected with the expenditures of private companies. Over the last six years, the situation in financing higher education has had a similar structure, the biggest specific weight of spending on higher education accounts for the public sector and households

The analysis of financing sources of higher education in Ukraine gives grounds to assert practical absence of direct influence on the development of this sector of the economy by private companies. In our opinion, this fact largely explains the problem of weak relationships between the content and organizational forms of obtaining higher education in Ukraine, including in the business area with its real needs.

Low participation of private companies in financing higher education does not motivate business to a more responsible relationship with universities in the training and employment of graduates. This conclusion is confirmed by the results of a national survey of graduates and employers to study the experience and employment problems of university students. By the level of employment in the specialty graduates who have received business education have the worst indicator (total 46%). The overall employment indicator of graduates with a higher business education diploma in 2013 was 74% (The experience of university graduates' employment, 2013).

Fourth, marketing of higher business education. The vast majority of employers (55%-57%) believe that domestic universities produce economists and lawyers in excess (The experience of university graduates' employment, 2013). At the same time, representatives of universities and some employers noted that, despite the excess of graduates with economic and legal education in the labor market, to find a highly-qualified young employee of these specialties' can still be a daunting task.

According to 72% of the representatives of companies-employers, current graduates have overestimated:

- expectations on wages, 53%
- ideas of their ability, 51%
- career expectations, 31%
- expectations concerning working conditions, n/a.

In general, the problem of effective employment remains the most urgent among the young, as evidenced by the official statistics on the unemployment rate in Ukraine (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: The unemployment rate among people in Ukraine, %
(Source: ILO unemployment rate in 2014, Ukraine)
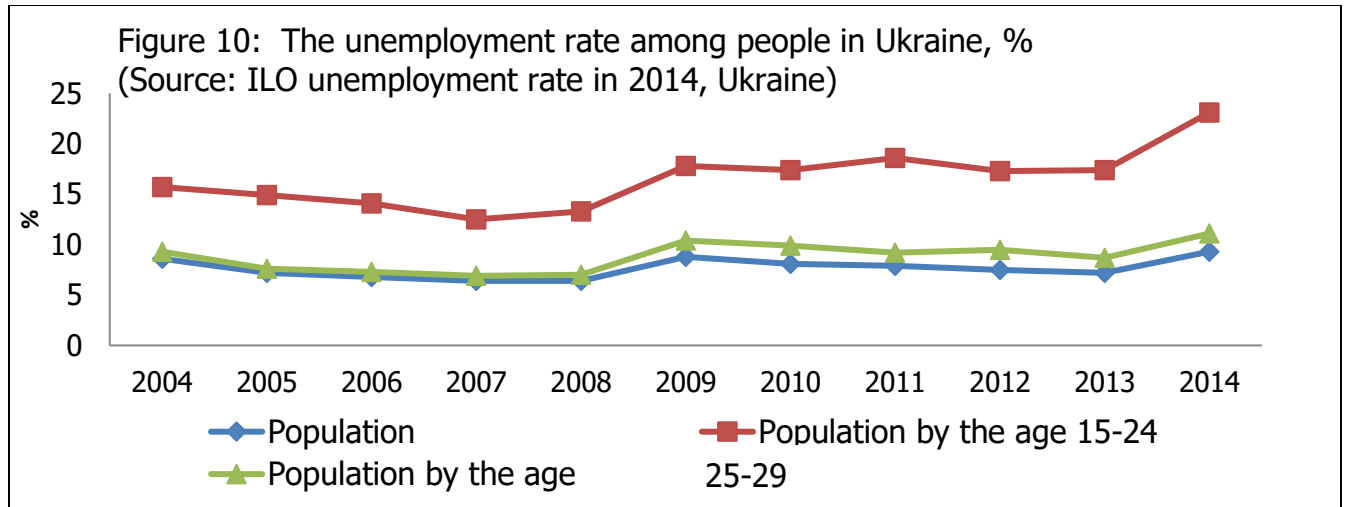


The problem of effective employment and unemployment of the young is topical not only for Ukraine. According to Euro statistics data, in April 2014 the unemployment rate among young people under 25 years in the Euro area countries was 23.9%, ranging from 7.9% in Germany to 55.4% in Greece (Unemployment rate, 2014).

**Conclusions**

1. Modern Ukraine as a European state, despite the complexity of geopolitical, economic and other transformations, is demonstrating its commitment to European ideals and values of the education priority as a factor of society's sustainable development. The evidence of this European loyalty is the indicators of the educational level of the population, and also the expenditures of the Central Government and most Ukrainians on higher education.

2. The Dignity Revolution in Ukraine in 2013 accelerated transformation processes of all public institutions in the country, including higher education areas. Today Ukraine is doing everything possible to reintegrate into the European realm, from which it was forcibly ousted in the 17th century. The approval of the new Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education", a new classification of educational specialties' consistent with international standards (ISCED), the establishment of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the National Employment Agency are key institutional factors that are designed to ensure the integration of the Ukrainian higher education into the European educational space.

3. The Ukrainian High School getting rid of inferiority complex declares improving the quality and competitiveness of Ukrainian higher education in the world educational space as its main goal. In this way, Ukraine has to overcome a huge number of obstacles. The inertia of educational organizations, insufficient activity of the academic community in defending their rights and freedoms, unwillingness of universities' administrative management in many cases to

implement European principles of academic freedom, autonomy, and therefore, responsibility for the results of educational activity are among the most significant ones.

4. One of the determining factors of implementation of national development tasks of business education in the context of sustainable development global goals is to strengthen the cooperation between public authorities, business, and higher education on the principles of universities' autonomy. In this context, the following steps are extremely important for Ukraine: increasing social responsibility of business at all stages of human capital formation; joint development of new standards in the business education area, identification of prospective staffing needs for the business sector of the economy; development and implementation of special certificate programs in business education for different categories of the consumers of educational services, including professors of Ukrainian universities.

The Ukrainian academic community, being aware of joint responsibility for the implementation of global goals of sustainable business development, needs special international support. We are interested primarily in the implementation of international projects of social responsibility of all social relations entities. One of these projects can be study and implementation of positive practices of the cooperation of universities, business, and government authorities in solving urgent problems of sustainable business development.

5. Further research can be carried out concerning the assessment of positive and negative consequences of the increase in the number of students' international education migration.

It is desirable to conduct a special survey of Ukrainian students getting higher education abroad (the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Poland, etc.) to determine effective teaching methods in the field of business education.

The issue of the development of international educational programs in the field of business education that can meet the educational needs of students, taking into account cultural differences in their countries of origin, still remains urgent.

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