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EUROPLAT EMPLOYABILITY SURVEY: CORE FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union
Problem of Employability of Psychology study graduates

- A student’s potential for employment
  - in terms of his/her knowledge, skills, competencies, qualifications
- Issue raised by post-Bologna process with split study programmes in psychology:

  What can bachelors (B.A.s) of Psychology do?

- Core questions for research survey:
  - Learn about the context and the meaning in which the concept of employability is used
    - QUALITATIVE SURVEY – presented at EUROPLAT 2011 meeting in Istanbul
  - How is employability of psychology graduates perceived and improved across Europe?
    - QUANTITATIVE SURVEY – this presentation ;)

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Objectives of the quantitative part of employability survey

At national level and institutional level (psychology departments) across Europe:

1) how relevant the employability/employment issue is;

2) what the current problems are in the employability/employment area;

3) to explore the best practices in dealing with employability/employment issues.
Sample & Method

- **snowball procedure** – seeds sent to 32 Europlat project partners from different psychology departments and the 52 associated Europlat partners.
- only **228** valid responses (32 countries), **188** academics
- **university teachers** or teacher-researchers, teacher-practitioners
  - Some responses from teachers or psychologists in service or...
- **online survey** (mostly closed questions)
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*No country

AUSTRIA
BULGARIA
CROATIA
CYPRUS
CZECH REP.
DENMARK
ESTONIA
FINLAND
FRANCE
GERMANY
GREECE
HUNGARY
ICELAND
IRELAND
ITALY
ISRAEL
Ireland
ICELAND
HUNGARY
GREECE
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ESTONIA
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CROATIA
BULGARIA
AUSTRIA
*No country
I think that in the national context, employability or employment of psychology graduates with BACHELOR degrees is currently (n = 147)

- Not an issue: 10.9%
- A new issue: 28.6%
- A known but unresolved: 42.2%
- A recognised, researched, solutions implemented: 18.4%
Unemployment is currently a problem for (n = 147)

- Psychology bachelors as well as masters: 46.9%
- Psychology bachelors only: 17.7%
- Psychology masters only: 14.3%
- Not a problem: 8.2%
- I do not have data/information about this: 12.9%
Evidence: Collection of employment / employability data (by national agency etc).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes, data are available specifically about psychology graduates</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes, but no specific data are available about psychology graduates</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., only aggregated results are public)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no, and I wish there was something like that</td>
<td>45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no, and I do not see any need for such an activity</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes, data are available specifically about psychology graduates</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- No records available at the department - 45 %
- No informal records kept - 80 %
Conclusion: Prevailing attitude of the general psychological community towards the bachelor graduates (n = 140)

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<tr>
<td>they are welcomed as a new addition that can potentially make psychology stronger</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they are perceived with distrust as a new competition possibly lowering the standards</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they are not at all perceived as members of psychological community (e.g., should not call themselves “psychologists”)</td>
<td>19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bachelor degree is seen only as a temporary/provisional degree on the way towards a masters degree (no one should want to stay on this level)</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really do not know</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they are welcomed as a new addition that can potentially make psychology stronger

they are perceived with distrust as a new competition possibly lowering the standards

they are not at all perceived as members of psychological community (e.g. should not call themselves “psychologists”)

bachelor degree is seen only as a temporary/provisional degree on the way towards a masters degree (no one should want to)

I really do not know
Competencies of BA’s

• Research and Methodology
• Social, interpersonal skills
• Knowledge of psychological theories
• Statistics and Data analysis
• Communication skills
• Testing, assessment
• Critical, logical thinking
• Writing skills
• Counselling, guidance, intervention
• Presentation skills
• IT and computer skills
Positions for Psychology BA’s

- **Traditional fields**: educational psychology, organizational psychology, counselling
- Teaching, education
- Human resources field
- Marketing, advertising
- Managers
- Administration, secretary
- Research, survey, marketing research
- Journalist
Perceived major problems with employability of bachelors (n=81)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>there are too many bachelors and not enough jobs for them</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychology graduates compete for the same jobs with non-graduates (e.g. therapy...)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities at departments aimed at the bachelors’ employability issue (n=106)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>informal discussions with colleagues</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal sessions (i.e., with goals and clear implications for the study programme)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research project(s) focused on employability</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curricular changes specifically aimed at increasing employability (new courses, modules, activities etc.)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opening new specialised or vocational bachelor-level study programs</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conferences/meetings with potential employers</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiations with representatives of psychological professional societies</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incorporation/engagement of potential employers into study programme (e.g. internships, student projects...)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promote self-employment (e.g. unregulated psychological services, Internet services ...)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promote the building of one’s own/unique portfolio of competencies (specialised certificates...)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: Is the employability of psychology B.A.’s an issue?

- **DEVELOPED ISSUE**
  - B.A.’s are part of labour market and psychological community, multiple strategies being implemented.
  - UK, Ireland, and Cyprus

- **UNRESOLVED ISSUE**
  - Solutions (simple) have been proposed but they do not work (Estonia, Lithuania),
  - Scepticism and calls for the return to the pre-Bologna system (Italy).

- **NEW ISSUE**
  - Bachelor jobseekers a new phenomenon (Latvia, Czech Rep, Slovenia), discussions are under way, expectations.

- **NO ISSUE**
  - Slovakia – not enough B.A.’s to cause trouble OR it’s students’ responsibility.
Conclusion: Developmental stages perspective of psychology B.A.’s employability

1. **Not an issue**
   - B.A. is just a formal degree (*everyone goes to M.A. study*)

2. **Protectionism**
   - B.A.’s want to become professional „kind of“ psychologists (*professional community shouldn’t let them*)

3. **Special arrangements**
   - System of qualifications (*further education allowing B.A.’s into psychological professions; exploration of niches is profession for B.A.’s; non-professionals skill not accepted by professional community*)

4. **Programme Differentiation**
   a) Professional B.A. studies – *further education – psychology profession (EuroPsy approved)*
   b) Non-professional B.A. studies – *exploration of non-professional employment (professional community acceptance)*
Psychology M.A.’s employability

- only 10-20% seek jobs outside traditional psychological profession at most departments

- major issue
  - not enough jobs (50% of responses)
Employability Report available at [www.europlat.org](http://www.europlat.org)

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THANK YOU

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