

---

## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND TRANSFORMED ENVIRONMENT IN GEORGIA

**Lili Bibilashvili**

Doctor of Social Sciences Doctor of  
*East European University*

**Iela Piralishvili**

Phylosophy Master MSc in Human Resource  
*East European University*

**Nino Gonashvili**

Management and Industrial Relations  
*East European University*

### Abstract

Under the aegis of East European University there has been conducted the research on comprehension and identification of the base competencies in the Georgian labour market in the conditions of the differing informational and communication mode caused by the accelerated tempo of the VUCA (volatility-uncertainty-complexity-ambiguity) world. Resulting from qualitative changes in the market and increased competition, together with education, the development of necessary competencies in parallel with learning is becoming vital. According to modern HR Management trends and practices, when recruiting, together with the technical knowledge, there is assessed the basic transfer competencies corresponding to the position and determined by the organization.

The main line of the research is aligned with the basic idea of the EU and EC framework document Education and Training, 2020, in compliance with which development of the relevant and high quality knowledge, skills and competencies is carried out through delivering of continuous education and they are closely linked to employment, innovation, active citizenship and welfare. The research of the global human capital trends, conducted by the consulting company Deloitte in 2018-2021, served as the basis for the research.

Using the quantitative survey there was studied the attitude of the post-graduates and final course students of all three levels in relation to obtaining and developing the basic competencies in the institutions of higher education. The research shows the results of the analyses carried out based on the data obtained from the focus groups involving the representatives of various clusters and the in-depth interviews with the experts of the education, business and HR resource spheres. It should be mentioned that the basic competencies highlighted within the Georgian labour market are different and covers the trends current in the world only partially. Digital skills, communication skills and knowledge of foreign languages are the basic transferable skills, having been named by all players in the labour market. The remaining transferable skills are discussed in the research.

**The results of the research will be useful not only for the institutions of higher education, but also for employers and job seekers.** The recommendations given at the end of the research **can become also the part of the action plan for the institutions of higher education and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.**

**Keywords:** *competencies, professions of the future, digital skills, communication skills, transferable skills*

---

## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND TRANSFORMED ENVIRONMENT IN GEORGIA

**Lili Bibilashvili**

Doctor of Social Sciences Doctor of  
*East European University*

**Iela Piralishvili**

Phylosophy Master MSc in Human Resource  
*East European University*

**Nino Gonashvili**

Management and Industrial Relations  
*East European University*

The Pandemic and the global „lockdown“ respectively changed not only the lifestyle on the planet but significantly transformed the world’s development vector. A totally new vision of political and economic life is required in the current conditions. The quality of transformation in this recent short period of time challenges not only countries and their future development strategies, but also each and every citizen of those countries. People have to realize the ongoing changes they face and think of future needs.

The academic version of education, as many other processes existing in the old cultural paradigm, is experiencing serious turbulence. The situation, that the format of the education sphere cannot be the same as during the previous years, is the only obvious fact. However, education is the only basic foundation in the transformed world that can nurture a new lifestyle. This theme challenged the whole education sphere and pulled it in front of a new reality. The education sector in Georgia mainly reflects the global education models and this is understandable but it is crucial to ensure that the education system provides the new generation with those main competencies that can be leveraged and youth can apply them while adapting to a rapidly changing environment.

Respectively, VUCA world, globalization, increased competition, etc. create difficulties not just for professionals and employees but also for employers/companies. In the conditions of full modernization, there is a real battle for talent and headhunting is highly demanded to respond to these challenges. This clearly proves the lack of competencies conditioned by modern requirements that hinder organizational development and this then is reflected on the economy of the country and, respectively, the quality of life of the population.

The government of Georgia realizes the role and importance of education and states: „Education and science are the foundation for the economic and sustainable development of the country“.<sup>1</sup> Despite the clear statement, the reality is far from the declared approach. Firstly, policy makers should comprehend the idea of the education system itself and crucial competencies need to be proclaimed that will make the transformation and recovery of the educational system possible under the current circumstances and challenges. If we look at this and other similar problems in a holistic way, we can find that we are facing the acquisition of the new ideological basis.

Considering the above, the research on basic competency models reviews the required competencies of new and future professions developed in the VUCA world. Based on the current trends, technological changes, automation and the development of artificial intelligence dictate different demands that highlight the necessity and importance of the relevant skills.

The given research uses the literature based on the existing research, which enables us to show the place and necessity of our research in complex activities. And, based on the research results, we are given the opportunity to find out the ideological preconditions, which can be used as some kind of guide.

---

<sup>1</sup> Unified Strategy of Education and Science in Georgia 2017-2021

It is undeniable that education is the fundamental pillar of human values. Its pragmatic role for the ethnos, nation or state is unambiguously evident. In countries with a strong economy, according to empirical research, there is a confirmed casual link between education and economic growth on the both macro and micro economical levels. Nowadays, the achievements in the cognitive skills test are used as the measure of modern education in the economy, and from the point of view of the micro economy, there is reviewed relationship between an individual's educational achievements and return on education. According to the standard understanding as high is the level of formal education, as high is an individual's income. The international researches show, that a year spent by an individual on formal education results in a 10% increase in his/her income. During the recent years, the return on education has decreased due to increasing the availability of formal education. As a result, the competition in the local labour market increases and low-income jobs are appearing, which, in its turn, lowers the individual financial return on education (Mariam Amashukeli, Diana Lezhava, Nino Gugusvhili, 2017). „According to IFTF research, the top skills that future employees will need to be successful include contextualized intelligence-a nuanced understanding of society, business, culture, and people – and an entrepreneurial mindset“ (2022 Deloitte CxO Sustainability Report, (2020).

In compliance with the EU and EC framework document Education and Training 2020, development of basic skills should support development of basic competencies, such as: **creativity, entrepreneurship, initiative, digital competencies, knowledge of foreign languages, critical thinking, electronic literacy and knowledge of multimedia**. The human capital with the mentioned competencies will be able to respond to the requirements of rapidly developing digital and green economy or climatic or demographic changes.

The research of the states with developed economies have become the basis for the research of the situation with the competencies in Georgia. Many European countries, USA and other developed states started thinking of and researching the professions of the future several years ago. When thinking of the professions of the future, it is crucial to review the basic competencies, as application of transferring competencies becomes possible from the perspective of certain professions and positions. During recent, decades a set of basic competencies has been defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Three dimensions have been determined: **knowledge, skills and personal characteristics**.

Based on the research of the global trends related to human capital, carried out by the consulting company Deloitte in 2018 and 2020 (Deloitte Insights, „The Rise of the Social Enterprise“, 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends), it is clear that great development of automation and artificial intelligence in the world has drastically changed the requirements against the labour force and their distribution. The majority of the 42 respondents, taking part in the research, expect that artificial intelligence will be widely used by organizations in the nearest 3-5 years. The gigantic technological companies are making serious investments in this sphere and the progress is quite rapid. The trend, eventually, will cause changes in the work structure. The technological progress causes the development of more service oriented, interpersonal and social skills, without which reaching the results corresponding to new professions will be difficult. According to Deloitte research (2018), the collection of the main skills and competencies of the future labour force will be as follows:

*Table 1*

| Main skills and competencies of the future labour force (Deloitte – 2018) |                         |                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Technical skills                                                          | Process analyses skills | Sensor abilities         |
| Complex problem resolving skills                                          | Social skills           | Psycho-motoric abilities |
| Cognitive abilities                                                       | Content analyses skills | Physical abilities       |

The research of the World Economic Forum (Oct 21, 2020) also confirms that human skills, such as **critical thinking, problem-solving and self-management** will be the most important in the upcoming decade.

The labour market of Georgia is distinguished by certain peculiarities. According to the report of the year 2019 of the European Training Foundation, serious obstacles have been created from the point of view of effective management of the Georgian labour market due to lack of proper public institutes. In 2007 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) commenced the research related to the inappropriateness of the skills in the Georgian labour market. The survey of the year 2010 showed that in the conditions of mass unemployment

the majority of employers were not able to hire people with suitable qualifications, experience and skills. The Inappropriateness of the skills, generally, shows up, when the delivered skills do not correspond to the required skills, or when the people represented in the labour market do not have the required skills needed by the employer (European Training Foundation, 2019). A similar trend is still being maintained even today – on the one hand, high unemployment indicator and, on the other hand, difficulty to find the human capital needed by employers and hire them. The problem is complex and requires proper investigation, though, according to the current data, there are various challenges in the Georgian labour market, particularly the following: the country, resulting from its economic situation, is not able to employ the labour force represented in the labour market; at the same time, we have the overqualified labour force in the labour market, which have diplomas, though they still do not have the necessary skills. Finally, having analyzed the available information, we can conclude, that in an epoch full of challenges, the strategic vision of the development of relevant competencies and planning of development of the relevant competencies about the future professions is becoming necessary.

According to Cherkezishvili, Sanikidze and Gibbs (2020), resulting from the situation current in Georgia, a more flexible and multi-directional relationship is necessary between the business, academy and Government. The necessity of this very relationship is given in this research.

Due to the interdisciplinary character of the topic being researched and the lack of data, there have been used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Using the quantitative method there has been defined the attitude of post-graduates and final-year students of all three levels – to what extent they developed the required base competencies in the higher education institutions during the process of education. Ant the qualitative method enabled us to define the reasons supporting (or hindering) the provision of the labour market with the required competencies today and in the future.

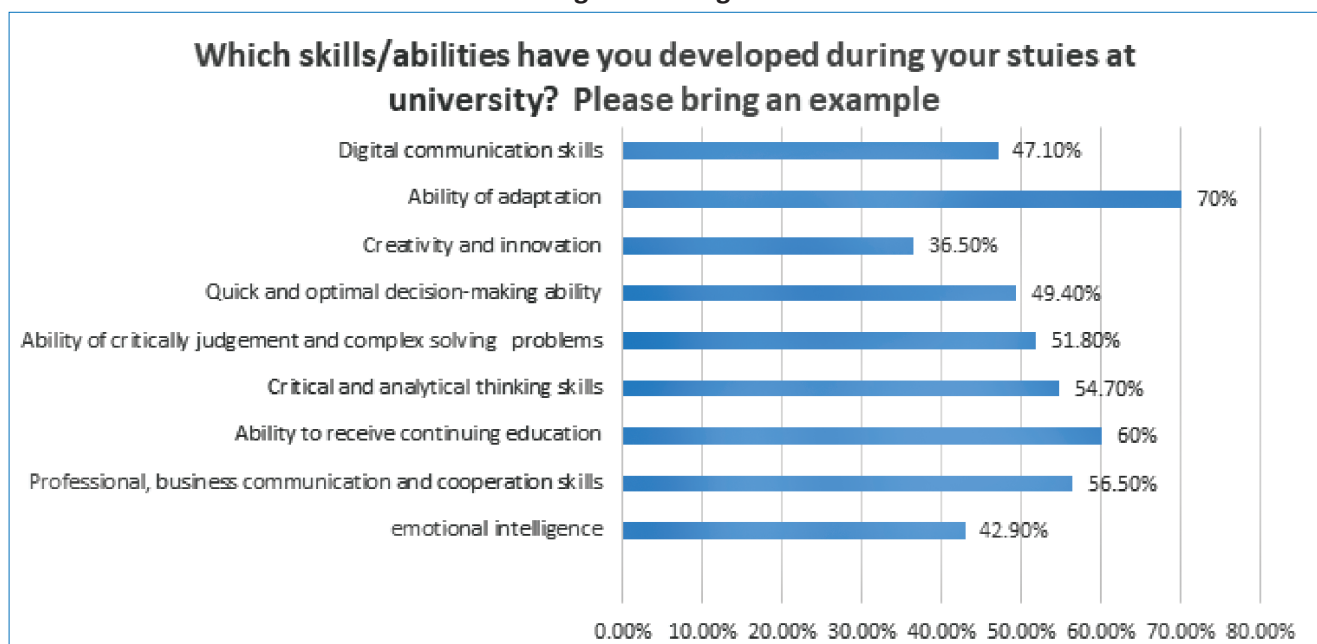
While selecting the experts, certain criteria were considered: experts“ professionalism, experience and availability. In-depth interviews were conducted with the **business representatives, HR experts, and education experts.**

Based on the information, collected as a result of the in-depth interviews, additional meetings and focusing on the problems in the form of „a round table“ became necessary. The interviews were also conducted with **two focus groups.** The Round Table gathered **education experts, representatives of the business association, employers and post-graduates.**

Based on the analyses of the obtained results it can be said that the respondents named the following as the especially necessary competencies: **critical judgement and the skill of complex resolution of problems and the skill of critical and analytical thinking.**

Chart 1

#### List of skills gained in higher education



---

Despite the fact that the skills of adaptation and getting an uninterrupted education were named as the skills obtained at the university, the students do not think that the mentioned skills are the most important among the competencies. Resulting from the students' answers, the highest impact of the university was found in the development of skills related to adaptation, communication and uninterrupted development. The research revealed that the **respondents require** from the institutes of higher education **development of the skills of critical thinking and judgement**.

When selecting the basic issues for the research, we, the researchers, were basically thinking about four topics: education, as the country's policy; uninterruptedness of the theme of education in the Georgian culture; professionalism and education at the institution of higher education. Respectively, in the qualitative research the stress was made on *selection of the respondents, who were working for legislative agencies; executive agencies; were the experts of the sphere; were working in the business sphere – businessmen (company owners, managers) and were the highly qualified experts working in the direction of the human resource management*.

Besides, we appealed to the **groups interested in the issues of education and working for the legislative or executive agencies** in order to show the vision of some people interested in the policy of education of the legislative and executive agencies. We tried to separate and select, as a single research direction, the people, who agreed to be interviewed (in some cases it was very difficult to contact those, related to the education policy on the legislative level). As we were limited in our choice, we have met people who are really and sincerely interested in the modernization of the Georgian education system.

In order to make clearer the basic preconditions the people, who had to administer the education system in the epoch of transition, are relying on, we separated them as „a target group“.

On the one hand, our choice was stipulated by the fact that they know extremely well the situation, creating the educational problems right now and right here and, presumably, if they are not resolved now, they will cause a more serious situation, which will be the direct result of the issues unresolved today. Upon the in-depth interviews conducted on these issues on individual level, we thought conducting a focus group methodologically justified, which enabled us to distinguish clearly intersecting and complimentary provisions.

During the research, the stress was made on the marks determined as the framework of the competencies against which the evaluation is made. It turned out, that **1. the competencies, selected in the sociological research, rarely repeat the list of the competencies taken out from the transcript materials; 2. the majority of the experts is not speaking about the skills, which we have in the sociological research. At the same time two experts are drawing special attention to the responsibility, which is not on our list; 3. none of the experts identifies the topics such as: a. the competencies required in the world labour market; b. the competencies required in the labour market of Georgia; 4. clear identification of the competencies of post-graduates of the institutions of higher education is not possible**.

According to the results of social research and opinions of the experts expressed in relation to the table given above the **cognitive skills: communication, processing of the information, problem resolution, learning, digital literacy** can be deemed the main competencies.

Out of the interpersonal skills, broke down in the research in the following way – understanding/self-reflection, cognition, adaptability, coping with stress, self-management/management of others, organization, responsibility, creativity, initiative, evaluation and risk-taking – the respondents, mainly, are naming only some of them: **1. adaptation skill; 2. responsibility; 3. organization; 4. creativity** (listed by topic frequency).

We would like to mention here, that **digital literacy and knowledge of the English language** are the most frequently mentioned issues. This is the only topic, in relation to which all the respondents have expressed their opinions. Respectively, **technical skills** are deemed to be the first priority of the educational system. Although, the theoretical materials or practical tuition related to the development of technical skills are very seldom in the educational (of course it does not apply to the bachelor programs oriented on technical training).

Based on the information gained from the parties engaged in the research and the participants it can be said that *the main actors of the educational system do not work in coordination and do not share the existing needs with each other. Very often they cannot talk about or justify quite well the necessity of certain skills*. Respectively, **this chaotic information will not be reflected in the approaches and programs of the institutions of higher education**.

---

The majority of the **questioned students** engaged in the research think that the skills of critical judgement and complex problem solving, also the skill of critical and analytical thinking should be the most important ones, but the **experts of education** think the most important are the skills of transfer-adaptation and communication, but the parties participating in the **focus group** grant priority to the skills of emotional intelligence, empathy and teamwork. The **business** talks about the importance of digital literacy, knowledge of the English language and responsibility (one expert emphasized also the art of rhetoric).

When we start describing the human capital of the state of tomorrow, we think the most important to be the ideological pillars, which build the future activities in any country. These are the **general skills**: creativity, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, taking initiative, digital competencies, knowledge of foreign languages, electronic literacy and knowledge of multimedia. **Personal characteristics**: responsibility, emotional intelligence, staying within the limits of any communication etiquette, trust, tolerance, orientation on self-knowledge, management of own emotions, self-motivation, self-confidence, reliability, and sense of conscience.

The human capital having these competencies will easily be able to respond to the rapidly changing requirements of the digital and green economy or climate and demographic changes. **The professional knowledge, skills and personal characteristics** are the attributes of the creative human capital, which, in the conditions of corresponding training, will **lead us to the human capital necessary for business**, the abilities of which can be described as follows: technical skills; skills of complex problem resolution; cognitive abilities; process analyzing skills; social and communication skills; context analyzing skills; sensor abilities; psycho-motoric abilities; physical abilities.

If critical thinking, creativity and skills of self-management or managing others are added to all these, **it will be a perfect resource for fair reflection and distribution of the country's economy and its benefits not just over a small social group, but over the entire social system.**

In the epoch of great crisis, when adjusting to the new mode is difficult even for the businesses of developed countries, the businesses of the countries like ours will face more problems and that is why **the transferable skills of the people will be the basic support, which will the business human resources rely on.**

We think the **flexibility on the part of the state in the institutions of higher education** is extremely important. *Learning-teaching is a creative process and the administration, Ministry of Education or quality management service should only assist the relationship between the tutors and students rather than* **direct their activities using inflexible standards and management skills.**

The research was almost finished and we were talking about the world changed by the pandemic results and new business needs, when a new situation emerged for the businesses and the entire planet – the war – aggression of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine and threat directed to the Eastern European and other countries. The number of Ukrainian refugees equals several million and we do not know the trend of increasing of this number in any of the countries. Except for the war, the forceful migration is a new problem for the world order and is absolutely new situation for the business, which needs understanding and adaptation. The special attention should be paid to the modern quickly changing world, the high tempo of technological development, VUCA makes the world live under differing rules and laws. The time has never been so accelerated and valuable as it is today – „Rapidity is the new business currency<sup>2</sup> and if the organization is not able to balance between the internal and external tempos, the problems will become inevitable.

Knowledge and methods are getting old quickly, trends are changing. This applies to any sphere – industry, public or private sectors. The Rapid development of technologies requires quick actions, quick decision-making, quick adaptation, multi-functionality, multi-skills and flexibility.

For quite some time now the demand for talents and professionals with high potential (HiPO) is growing in the world. And it is natural, managing business in the digital era, except for quick acquisition of knowledge, requires the skills mentioned above (and other skills also) and the shortage of these skills is a permanent problem for organizations. Many factors can be the determinants of the current situation, but such factors as changing generations and values, the most talked about and painful phenomenon of the COVID 19 period – Great Resignation, the characteristic features of the country's education system, peculiarities of the industry and sphere, national, organizational culture, etc.

---

<sup>2</sup> Salesforce's CEO Marc Benioff

---

Out of the above-mentioned reasons changing of generations has a serious impact on the international labour market. Y generation should be mentioned especially, as it has introduced significant changes into the labour market. It has changed the roles of the players and deprived employers of their management leverages, who earlier were the main actors among three labour market players (employers, work seekers, state). The Y generation, representing about 75% of the current labour market, is directing the employer the conditions and insufficient fulfilment of such conditions or even a small deviation can become the reason for quitting the job.

The difficulties, related to attracting and maintaining talent, have become even more serious due to the phenomenon of Great Resignation during the COVID 19 period and the appearance of the Z generation in the labour market caused quite serious confusion among employers. This is the generation, having strengthened the job seekers' positions and they turned out to be a tough call for employers. The attitude to work of the Baby Boomers and X generation radically differs from the representatives of the Y and Z generations. The values of the latter do not show devotion, which was characteristic for the previous generations. In response to such scale of the manpower drain companies are trying to increase salaries, offer better benefits, improve working conditions, etc., but the result has not proved to be efficient and effective. Manpower drain is still the problem. Though, the changes of workplaces noticed in the nearest past in companies, is not related to the Great Resignation, it was perceptible also earlier, before the COVID 19 pandemic. More interesting and perhaps more important changes are related to moving to Dynamic Teams in companies.<sup>3</sup>

The Dynamic Teams, to some extent, are quite innovative and effective groups in organizations. They create significant associations, cause quite long-term effect and show impact. Though, these teams and their values are invisible and become unnoticed.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulties, related to globalization – „winning over“ the talents, absence of geographical-territorial borders, demographic problems, etc. - are added to the above-mentioned challenges.

As we can see, in this complicated situation, transferable skills, adaptation skills, a sound understanding of the changes between the roles of employers and employees and, which is the most important, understanding of the role of the state in the development of the country, has the greatest importance. It is obvious, that development of a country depends on the employee competencies of a certain, concrete company and organization and the competencies depend on the quality of the education system.

As a recommendation, based on the processed information, it can be concluded that **the institutions of higher education, relying on this and other similar research, can highlight important transferable skills, the plan of development of which skills will be integrated with all the subjects being studied at the university and, after graduation, the university should have the criteria to evaluate such skills.** Such a policy will show the greatest role of skills in developing a person as a professional. Besides, institutions of higher education will be able to become more flexible to the novelties and meet the market needs in the process of changes in the labour market and business requirements.

---

<sup>3</sup> Tom Bennett – FORBES, Feb 23, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Amy Wilson – SAP News Center Dynamic Teams Will Power the Future of Work October 13, 2021

---

## REFERENCES

- Cherkezishvili, D. Sanikidze, T. Gibbs, P. (2020), „Modern Challenges: The Socio-Political Issues of Introducing Professional and Practice in Doctoral Education in the Emerging Economy of Georgia“, *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 26 p.98-113.
- Mariam Amashukeli, Diana Lezhava, Nino Gugusvhili, 2017, p. 11  
„Education Return, Labor Market and Job Satisfaction in Georgia“.
- Unified Strategy of Education and Science in Georgia 2017-2021, p. 8  
[https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/MESStrategy\\_2017-2021.pdf](https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/MESStrategy_2017-2021.pdf)
- 2022 Deloitte CxO Sustainability Report, (2020), „The Best Job Skills For The Future Are Inherently Human“, available at  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2020/01/24/the-best-job-skills-for-the-future-are-inherently-human/?sh=2fe05f9f61c6> (accessed 12 January 2022)
- Deloitte Insights, „The Rise of the Social Enterprise“, 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital
- Deloitte Insights, „2018 Deloitte skills gap and future of work in manufacturing study“
- Tom Bennett (FORBES Feb 23, 2022 )
- „Say Goodbye To The Great Resignation And Hello To Dynamic Teams“
- World Economic Forum
- „These are the top 10 job skills of tomorrow – and how long it takes to learn them“ Oct 21, 2020