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# STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF THE PRACTICAL TRAINING IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HELD AT THE LEVEL OF ILFOV COUNTY, ROMANIA, IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2023 – 2024

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***Abstract***

*The primary objective of career and technical education (CTE) is to enhance the school's contribution to the rapid and efficient transition to a competitive economy based on innovation, knowledge, and inclusivity. In addition to these aspects, we must consider the challenges posed by the swift phenomenon of demographic ageing and external migration flows, leading to the conclusion that CTE will increasingly need to address the immediate needs of employers in Romania. Career and technical education, through its objectives, aligns with the dual role of education: economic and social. Therefore, CTE cannot be narrowly focused on fulfilling the immediate requirements of a specific job; rather, it must ensure the preparation for a successful career that facilitates socio-professional integration. Under these conditions, CTE must be viewed as a stage in the lifelong learning process, which is immediately followed by workplace learning to adapt to its specific demands. In this context, the study aimed to present a study case regarding the quality of the practical training in vocational and technical education experienced at the level of Ilfov County, Romania, in the school year 2023 – 2024. The questionnaire method was applied to a sample of 679 enrolled scholars in high schools with a technological profile in Ilfov County, Romania. Statistical analysis and processing and Likert scale quantified the scholars' responses for identifying solutions to improve practical training courses, to evaluate the system applied, and employment intention after completing the studies and their career path.*

***Key words*****:** *practical training, vocational and technological education, traineeship*

## INTRODUCTION

High school education ensures the continuation of studies in compulsory education (9th and 10th grades) and in higher education (11th and 12th grades), developing, deepening, and customizing previous learning skills (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) formats. High school education includes the following streams and profiles:
a) the theoretical branch, with humanistic and real profiles;
b) the technological chain, with technical profiles, services, natural resources, and environmental protection;
c) the vocational sector, with military, theological, sports, artistic, and pedagogical profiles.
The duration of studies in high school education, the full-time form of education, is 4 years, following the framework plans approved by the Ministry of Education. For some forms of full-time and part-time education, the duration of studies is extended by one year. High school studies are completed with the National Baccalaureate Exam and Certification Exam for graduates of the technological and vocational streams. High school graduates without a Baccalaureate Diploma can continue their studies in post-secondary education and can subsequently obtain the 5th qualification level. Graduates with a Baccalaureate degree can continue their studies in post-secondary education to obtain a level 5 qualification or in higher education in any qualification 6, 7, and 8 according to the EQF European Qualifications Framework [7], [8], [9], [16].
On the other hand, vocational education has the following forms of organization:
- professional education, with a duration of 3 years, organized after the completion of the

8th grade, as part of the upper secondary education, starting from the 2014/2015 school year, based on a framework contract concluded between the educational unit and the economic operators involved in professional training of students;
- dual education with a duration of 3 years, organized after the completion of the 8th grade, as part of higher secondary education, starting with the 2017/2018 school year, based on a partnership contract concluded between one or more economic operators or between an association/a consortium of economic operators, the educational unit and the administrative-territorial unit within the radius of which the school unit is located. A practical training contract concluded between the educational unit - the economic agent, and the student;
- practical training programmes with a duration of 720 hours, organized after the completion of the 10th grade of high school, a form of organization currently specific to "Second chance" type programs.
In professional education, subjects for compulsory education and specialized training modules for obtaining a professional qualification are covered. The studies are completed with a certification exam. Graduates who pass the professional qualification certification exam acquire a level 3 qualification certificate of the National Qualifications Framework (skilled worker) and the descriptive supplement of the certificate, according to Europass [6].
The literature in the field emphasizes the need of vocational training and technological education in order to empower the youth to become more employable [ 2, 3, 5, 12].
In this context, the purpose of the research is to analyse the quality of the practical training in vocational and technical education experienced at the level of Ilfov County, Romania, in the school year 2023 – 2024.
This research is a continuation of the previous studies [2, 3].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The development of CTE is a priority of the Ilfov County School Inspectorate, also defined by the strategic target of the Institutional Development Plan - TS3: The development of professional and technical education and the correlation of the educational offer with the requirements of the labour market, with a view to a good socio-professional insertion of the graduates.
This priority was based on two directions:
✓ developing the skills of CTE students for a good socio-professional insertion on the local and European labour market;
✓ the geospatial characteristics of Ilfov county that favour the development of CTE, as a result of the interest shown by students for the much more theoretical education in Bucharest.
The Erasmus+ VET (Vocational Education and Training) mobility projects implemented over the past years in educational institutions across Ilfov County have contributed to the development of CTE. These mobility programs have taken place both individually (at *Cezar Nicolau* Brănești Technological High School and *Nicolae Bălcescu* Voluntari Technological High School) and within a consortium, which included the aforementioned high schools along with the Forest College *Theodor Pietraru* Brănești, *Barbu Știrbey* Buftea Technological High School, *Dumitru Dumitrescu* Buftea Technological High School, and *Pamfil Șeicaru* Ciorogârla Technological High School. So, 5 of the 7 technological high schools in Ilfov were represented in mobilities/traineeships for students in Europe, with obvious positive effects regarding the socio-professional adaptation of the graduates.
Dual education is on the rise, becoming a suitable alternative for students who are unable to adapt to the demands of high school education. Currently, students are enrolled in this form of education in the "Pamfil Șeicaru" Technological High School units, Ciorogârla – with the following professional qualifications: auto mechanic, CNC machine operator, inorganic chemical industry operator and distributor receptionist; "Cezar Nicolau" Technological High School, Brănești - with the following professional qualifications: Baker-pastry-preparer of flour products and Meat and fish products preparer; "Barbu

Știrbey" Technological High School, Buftea - with the following professional qualifications: Distributor receptionist and Salesman and "Mihail Kogălniceanu" Theoretical High School - with the following professional qualification: Hotel worker [15].

Practical training courses are specific to career and technical education and involve the combination of direct, real experience and simulated experience, in imaginative work situations, representing a form of participative learning that maximizes the retention rate of information for the student. After completing the practical training courses, the students acquire skills and skills necessary for integration into the labour market, as the practical training hours provide an opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in school [10], [14].

The information that was the basis of this study was collected using the questionnaire method. This is a method or technique often used in descriptive research. Through the questionnaire, the selected group of people (called the sample) fills in the requested data and expresses their opinions, regarding the conditions for carrying out the practical activities, the way in which the organizational aspects were fulfilled, the skills acquired by participating in the traineeships, such as and suggestions regarding assessment methods [1], [13].

The data was collected between September and November 2024, the questionnaires being conducted in digital format. The questionnaire was made up of 11 Likert scale items, which express both agreement/disagreement with some statements describing the school environment, as well as the intensity of agreement/disagreement.

Întrebările au fost construite pornind de la analizarea conceptului-cheie al evaluării reprezentat în acest caz de caracteristicile stagiilor de pregătire practică, mijloacele și modalitățile de implementare și desfășurare a acestora, dar și instrumentele de evaluare utilizate. Apart from the 11 questions obtained in this way, we formulated four open questions aimed at identifying solutions to improve practical training courses, four items about a series of respondents' data (gender, age, class, the specialization they study) and four dichotomous and semi-open questions, independent variables according to which the analysis of the answers was carried out [4], [11].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The applied questionnaire is structured in four sections which are made up of questions related to general characteristics of the educational environment from which the respondents come, questions related to theoretical notions and their applicability in practical training courses, the way of carrying out the practical courses, the evaluation system applied, up to questions referring to the employment intention after completing the studies and their career path.

**A. In the first section of the questionnaire**, dichotomous and semi-open questions (1-4) were applied to which the students filled in information regarding:

***1. their age category:*** 48% of the respondents belong to the 14-16-year-old category, 51% to the 17-19-year-old category and 1% to the 20-26-year-old category)

***2. the level at which they are assigned*** (9$^{th}$ grade, 10$^{th}$ grade, 11$^{th}$ grade,12$^{th}$ grade)

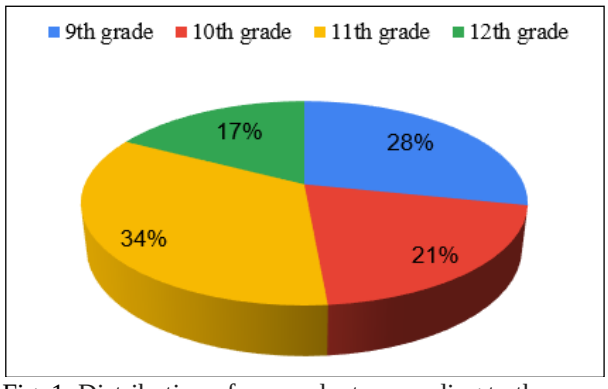


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents according to the class in which they are enrolled
Source: Own contribution.

***3. the area of origin***: 27% of the respondents come from the rural area, respectively 73% from the urban area

***4. the specialization in which they are enrolled:*** Tourism and food; Trade; Economics; Environmental Protection; Agriculture; Forestry; Mechanics; Electronics and automation; Health; Manufacture of

wooden products; Aesthetics and hygiene of the human body; Textile and leather industry; Construction and public works.

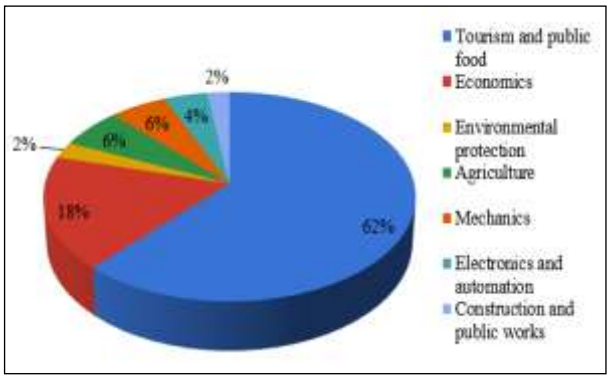


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents according to the specialization in which they are enrolled
Source: Own contribution.

Table 1. Respondent distribution based on enrolled specialization

| Educational unit | Profile | No. of valid answers |
|---|---|---|
| **Theoretical High School "Mihail Kogălniceanu", Snagov, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 178 |
| **Technical High School "Vintilă Brătianu", Dragomirești-Vale, Ilfov** | Economics | 11 |
| | Environmental protection | 17 |
| | Agriculture | 21 |
| **Technical High School "Nicoale Bălcescu", Voluntari, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 17 |
| | Economics | 16 |
| **Technical High School "Barbu Știrbey", Buftea, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 98 |
| | Economics | 62 |
| **Technical High School "Pamfil Șeicaru", Ciorogârla, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 21 |
| | Economics | 14 |
| | Mechanics | 18 |
| | Electronics and automation | 13 |
| **Technical High School "Doamna Chiajna", Roșu, Chiajna, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 57 |
| | Electronics and automation | 16 |
| **Technical High School "Cezar Nicolau", Brănești, Ilfov** | Tourism and public food | 48 |
| | Economics | 16 |
| | Mechanics | 20 |
| | Construction, installations, and public works | 15 |
| | Agriculture | 21 |
| **Total respondents** | | **679** |

Source: Own contribution.

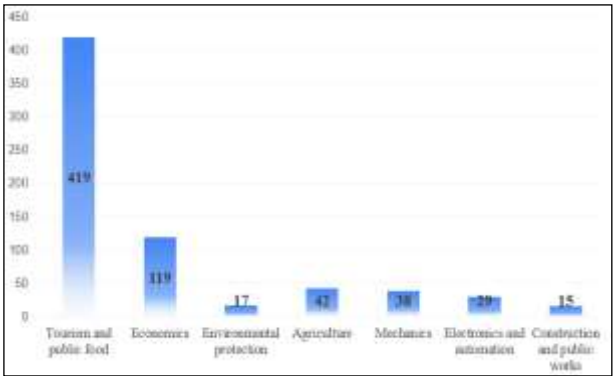


Fig. 3. Distribution of the respondents based on the enrolled specialization
Source: Own contribution.

**B. The second section of the questionnaire** presents respondents with a series of ranked-response questions. Through these questions, respondents are required to prioritize the answer options in order of the importance they assign to each. Research has shown that this type of question effectively captures the beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and values of the surveyed individuals.

To analyze the quality of the traineeships, several variables were identified, each based on a series of items from the administered questionnaire. Through the questionnaire, respondents were asked to express their level of satisfaction using a scale with the following response options: (1) – totally unsatisfactory, (2) – unsatisfactory, (3) – average, (4) – good, and (5) – very good. Each response option on this scale was assigned a corresponding value (the figures in parentheses); this coding corresponds to the logic according to which a higher agreement for the item in question expresses an agreement or a closeness to the general characteristic sought.

In the following section, we have analysed each variable based on the students' answers to the questions and, accordingly, the averages obtained.

***5. The conditions for carrying out the practice activity:***

*a) working conditions (space, atmosphere, etc.)*

*b) to what extent the equipment provided by the economic operator was appropriate for carrying out the activities within the practical training*

*c) evaluate the level of guidance provided by the tutor appointed by the host company*
*d) evaluate the level of intercollegiate collaboration during practical activities*

To assess the level of satisfaction regarding the conditions under which activities were conducted, a variable was developed, described by four items related to the internal factors of the economic operator. The variable referring to activity conditions was structured based on four specific items: working conditions, the equipment provided, the guidance offered by the tutor, and intercollegiate collaboration. Figure 4 illustrates that this variable registers the highest average satisfaction level concerning the alignment between the equipment provided and the assigned work tasks. This finding underscores the importance of conducting traineeships within economic operators that actively involve students in all stages of the technological workflow and integrate them into the working environment.

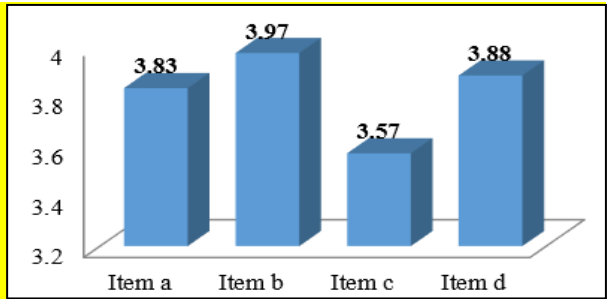


Fig. 4. The conditions for carrying out practical training activities
Source: Own contribution.

***6. The way in which the organizational aspects were fulfilled:***

*a. practice period and daily schedule*
*b. the partners' activity corresponded to the students' expectations*
*c. the activity of the partners did not create problems in the running of the program*

The organization of the traineeships led to the development of another variable, described by three items that reflect the level of student engagement in the activities of the host economic agents, as well as their satisfaction regarding the duration of the traineeship. The data obtained from the questionnaire indicate that the traineeships were not negatively affected by the activity of the economic operators, with this item receiving the highest level of satisfaction. However, analyzing this variable also reveals a lower level of satisfaction concerning the duration of the traineeship and the students' daily schedule.

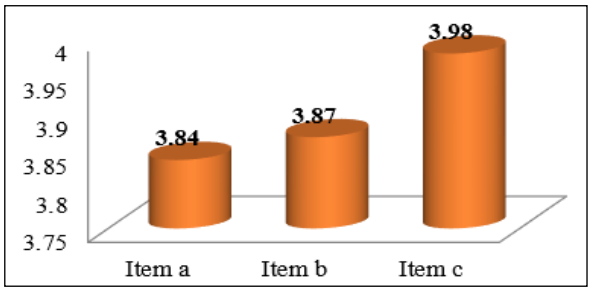


Fig. 5. The fulfilment of organizational aspects
Source: Own contribution.

***7. The economic operators fulfilled the students' expectations related to:***

*a. availability*
*b. cooperation*
*c. stimulating active participation in practice*
*d. flexibility/diversity of the proposed program*
*e. creating an appropriate environment*
*f. communicability*
*g. proper logistics*

Starting from the indicators of availability, cooperation, stimulation, flexibility of the program, environment, communication and logistics, the variable satisfaction of students' expectations regarding collaboration with economic operators was constructed. In its case, we observe from the data analysed in Figure 8 that the maximum satisfaction of the students was recorded by the environment corresponding to the instructional-educational process, and the minimum level of satisfaction was represented by the flexibility/diversity of the program.

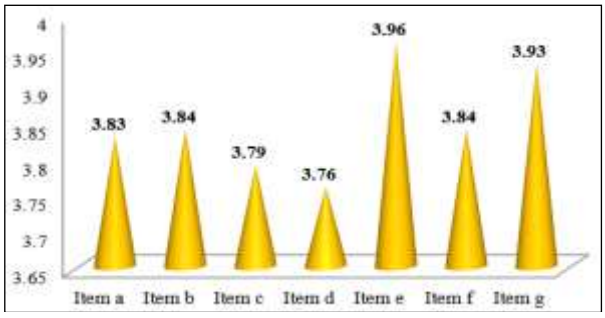


Fig. 6. Students' satisfaction with business operators' performance
Source: Own contribution.

***8. To what extent does the students' traineeship contribute to:***

*a. the development of practical skills*
*b. developing teamwork skills*
*c. practical application of the acquired theoretical knowledge*
*d. increasing the degree of responsibility towards the assigned tasks*
*e. entering the labour market as a graduate*

From the perspective of the five items developed based on the enhancement of practical and teamwork skills, the applicability of theoretical knowledge, and the empowerment of practitioners for their integration into the labour market, the variable "contribution to the development of students' work skills and capacities" was constructed.

The data presented in Figure 7 indicate that a significant number of respondents believe that traineeships play a crucial role in fostering students' sense of responsibility toward their assigned tasks.

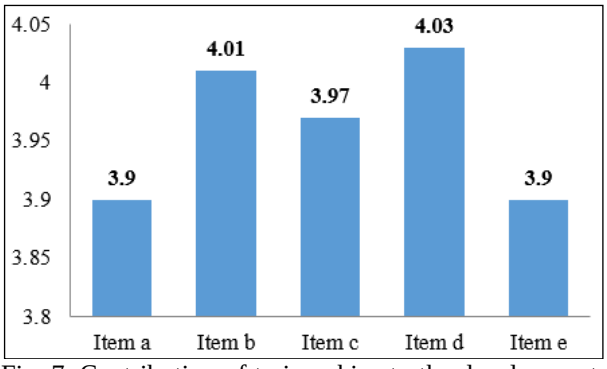


Fig. 7. Contribution of traineeships to the development of skills and work capacities
Source: Own contribution.

***9. To what extent do you think it is necessary for students' pre-practice training to include:***

*a. a career counselling and guidance module*
*b. basic elements of organizational communication, teamwork*
*c. specialized training in the field of activity of the company/institution*
*d. information about the organizational and decision-making structure of a company/institution*
*e. concepts related to organizational culture and corporate social responsibility*

The importance of prior theoretical preparation before engaging in practical training constitutes a variable structured into five items, assessing respondents' satisfaction with career counseling and guidance, elements of organizational communication, training in the economic operator's field of activity, the provision of information regarding its organizational and decision-making structure, as well as concepts related to organizational culture. The data presented in Figure 8 indicate that a significant number of respondents support theoretical preparation concerning the organizational and decision-making structure of a company or institution.

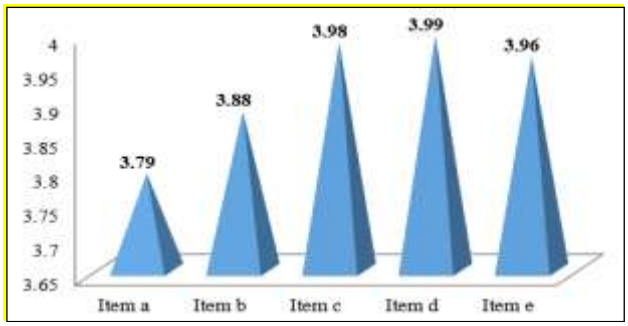


Fig. 8. The importance of theoretical preparation before traineeships
Source: Own contribution.

***10. To what extent do you consider the following ways of evaluating the traineeship to be appropriate?***

*a. assessment along the way by the practice tutor appointed by the company/institution*
*b. evaluation at the end, based on the tutor's characterization*
*c. the combined evaluation, both during and at the end of the traineeship by characterizing the tutor and noting the practical activities, the project or other documentation made in the company/institution*
*d. conducting evaluations on an online platform*

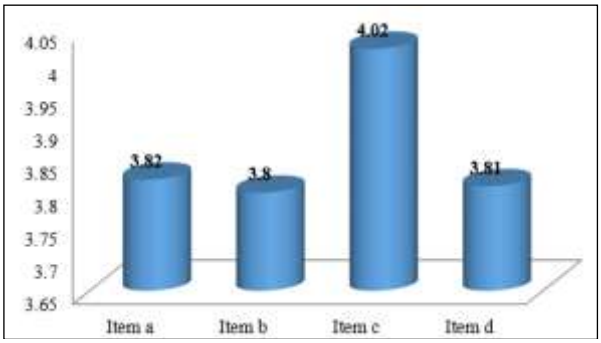


Fig. 9. Methods of evaluating traineeship periods
Source: Own contribution.

In order to ensure the implementation of a quality instructional-educational process, the level of knowledge, skills and skills acquired by the students must be periodically checked. Another variable influencing the quality of the traineeships is the evaluation process. To assess the level of satisfaction with the methods and tools used for evaluation, four items were developed.

Interpreting the results obtained from the administered questionnaire, it is evident that the majority of respondents support a combined evaluation method—both during and at the end of the traineeship—as it provides a clearer insight into the trainee's level of preparation.

***11. Do you rate the effectiveness of the following forms of communication between the practice manager and the students?***

*a. Daily, through a student group coordinator*

*b. Telephone communication with all students, at their initiative*

*c. Daily participation in meetings held at the company headquarters*

*d. Constant communication through an online platform*

Communication is a significant component influencing the teaching-learning-evaluation process. One key variable that attracted respondents' attention was the communication between students and the teacher responsible for coordinating the traineeships. This variable was developed based on four items that specify the communication methods deemed effective in facilitating the smooth conduct of practical training programs.

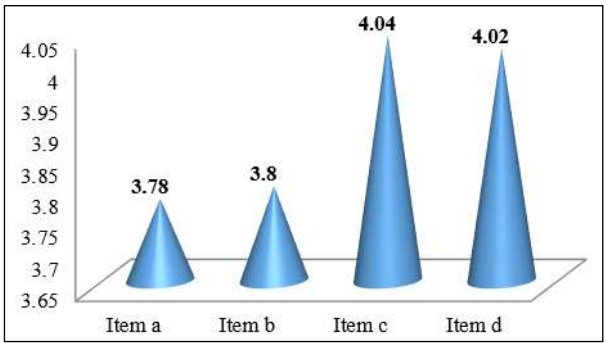


Fig. 10. Communication between the teaching staff responsible for traineeships and students

Source: Own contribution.

Figure 10 illustrates that the majority of respondents favour both traditional and modern communication methods. They consider daily meetings at the premises of the partner economic operator to be the most effective way of ensuring communication between teachers and students. At the same time, they also support modern communication methods available through online platforms.

***12. To what extent do you consider the following activities of the practice coordinator to be important?***

*a. implementation of the student evaluation process along the way and at the end*

*b. permanent communication with students and tutors*

*c. permanent monitoring of the traineeships to achieve the objectives of the programme*

*d. substantiation of internal reports intended for the management of the educational unit*

Another variable analyzed through this questionnaire is the role of the teacher in coordinating the traineeships. This variable is based on four items: the teacher's involvement in the evaluation process, continuous communication with students and tutors, ongoing monitoring of the traineeships, and the development of reports on the conducted traineeships. According to the data presented in Figure 11, the majority of respondents believe that the coordinating teacher has two primary roles: maintaining continuous communication with students and traineeship's tutors and monitoring the traineeship activities to ensure that the established objectives are achieved.

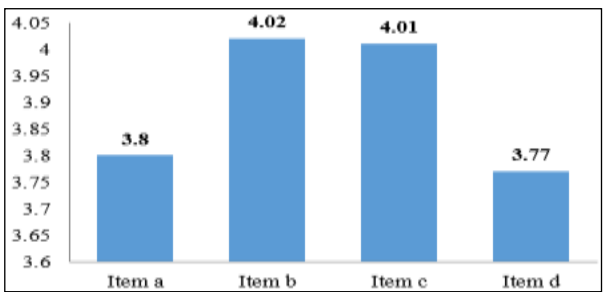


Fig. 11. Importance of the activity of the educational coordinator of the traineeships

Source: Own contribution.

***13. The relevance of the traineeship for training as a specialist:***

*a. the degree of inclusion of the activity carried out in the recommended theme*

*b. to what extent the objectives/tasks were clearly outlined and their achievement was followed*

*c. the degree of use of the knowledge acquired in the theoretical training*

*d. to what extent are you satisfied with the acquired practical skills*

A variable assessing the impact of the traineeships on students' professional development consists of four items that focus respondents' attention on the following aspects: the relevance of activities concerning the study program, the clarity of assigned tasks and the monitoring of their completion, the applicability of theoretical knowledge, and the practical skills acquired. According to the data presented in Figure 12, it is noteworthy that the majority of respondents placed particular emphasis on the clarity with which objectives and work tasks were defined, as well as on the establishment of clear goals for their achievement.

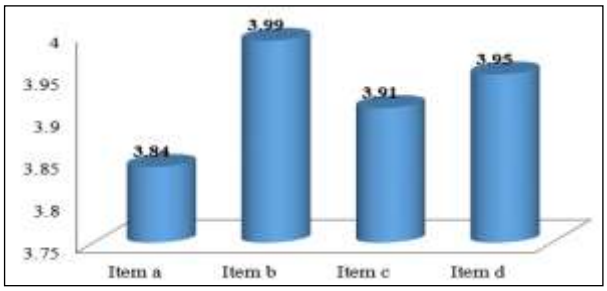


Fig. 12. The relevance of traineeships in the professional training of students
Source: Own contribution.

***14. What do you think are the main attributes that student traineeships should fulfil?***

*a. the proper arrangement and equipment of the spaces intended for the practical traineeships*

*b. ensuring permanent monitoring and feedback throughout the traineeship*

*c. suitability of the contents of the practice program to the requirements of the labour market*

*d. the access of students, teaching staff and practice partners to digital tools to facilitate the planning, running and monitoring of activities/traineeships, communication between all parties involved, involvement in the organization of activities*

The practical training courses have a significant value, representing an instructive educational process that facilitates the assimilation of skills, abilities and skills that cannot be achieved based on theoretical notions. Regarding the usefulness of traineeships, the respondents expressed their opinion on the main attributes that they should fulfil. For this, four items were built that are based on the conditions for carrying out such activities, monitoring and permanent feedback, the correlation of contents with the requirements of the labour market, and the access of all those involved to digital tools to optimize the activity of these practical training schemes.

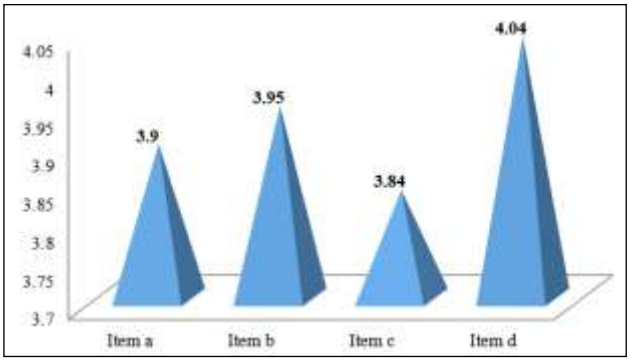


Fig. 13. Main attributes that traineeships should fulfil
Source: Own contribution.

Figure 13 shows that the majority of respondents consider it opportune for those involved to have access to digital tools to help optimize traineeships by facilitating the planning, running and monitoring of activities.

***15. What do you consider to be the main benefits for the students participating in the traineeships carried out within some economic operators?***

*a. the possibility of familiarization with a work environment*

*b. acquiring knowledge specific to the field of training*

*c. training of practical skills specific to the field of activity*

*d. the opportunity to learn/acquire skills directly from tutors/specialized staff working in the field of activity*
*e. the opportunity to meet potential future employers*
*f. training in communication skills, teamwork, flexibility*

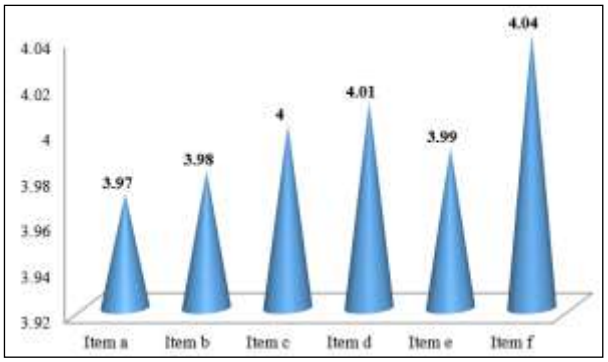


Fig. 14. Benefits that the traineeships offer to students
Source: Own contribution.

The questionnaire respondents expressed their views on the benefits of participating in the traineeships by ranking six items related to workplace familiarization, acquisition of specific knowledge, development of specialized competencies, the opportunity to learn from specialists and connect with potential employers, as well as the enhancement of communication skills, teamwork, and flexibility. Analyzing the data presented in Figure 16, it is evident that a significant number of respondents place great importance on the development of communication skills, teamwork, and flexibility.

**C.** The third section of the applied questionnaire is made up of a set of dichotomous and semi-open questions (from 16 to 19) through which the respondents express their opinion regarding the alternation of hours of theoretical training and practical training, the optimal size of the professional practice, employment intention in the studied field, as well as job offers received, to which the students responded by choosing one of the options available

***16. In your opinion, do you think there should be more hours of practical or theoretical training in the acquired specialization?***

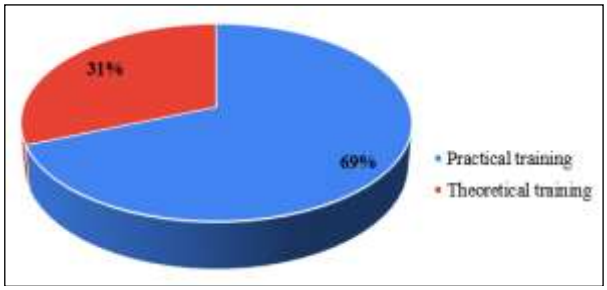


Fig. 15. Respondents' opinions on practical and theoretical training
Source: Own contribution

***17. What period do you think is optimal to carry out a traineeship?***

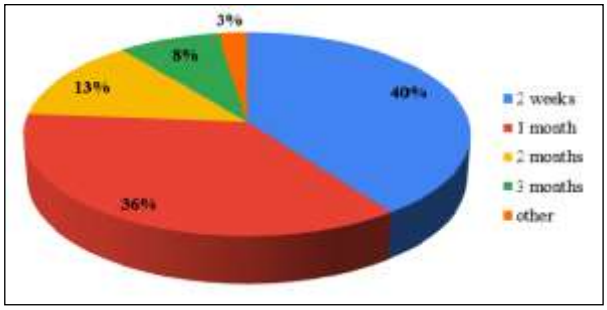


Fig. 16. Respondents' opinions regarding the duration of traineeships
Source: Own contribution.

***18. After completing the study program do you intend to work in the field you are studying?***

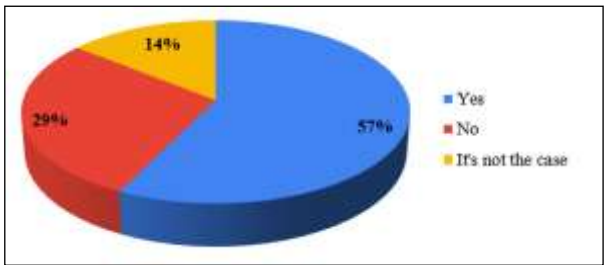


Fig. 17. Respondents' opinions regarding the intention to work in the field they are studying
Source: Own contribution.

***19. Have you received job offers from practice partners?***

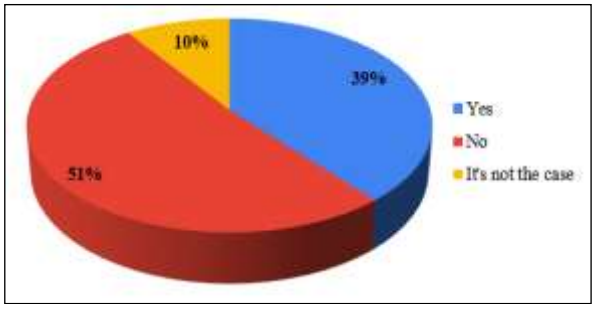


Fig. 18. Respondents' opinions regarding job offers
Source: Own contribution.

**D**. The fourth section of the questionnaire is made up of open questions (from 20 to 23) to which the students can answer using their own words, being used in the exploratory stage of the inquiry, in which the aim is rather to identify and describe the full range of situations, behaviours, attitudes, etc., than establishing their frequency (the answers to these questions being impossible, or very difficult, to codify).

***20. List 5 positive aspects of the traineeship, in descending order of their importance.***

The answers that prevailed to this question referred to the development of communication capabilities with clients, Formation of skills and abilities specific to the specialization they are studying, strengthening of inter-human relationships, Development of team spirit, the opportunity to interact with specialists and potential employers, increasing work skills by practising them in practice, getting familiar with the work environment.

***21. How do you think the process of carrying out the traineeships can be improved?***

To this question, the student respondents offered some suggestions regarding the improvement of the traineeship process: diversifying partnerships with economic agents, empowering students and staff in the practice units, improving communication between students - teaching staff - practice tutors, and increasing material incentives.

***22. What contents would you like to be included in the practical training courses?***

Questioned about the contents they would like to be introduced in the study programs, the students suggested that in the activities they carry out at the practical operators, they should be involved in administrative and economic activities, as well as in all stages of the technological flow for the realization of finished products.

***23. What other ways of evaluating the traineeship (except for the options mentioned in point 10) do you think would be effective?***

Concerning the evaluation methods of the practical training courses, the respondents propose to apply the collegial evaluation as well, observing the degree of involvement of the colleagues in carrying out the work tasks, corroborated with the evaluation carried out by the practical tutor and the coordinating teaching staff.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis regarding the quality of traineeships in vocational and technical education was carried out based on the answers given by 679 students enrolled in high schools with a technological profile in Ilfov County to the Questionnaire for evaluating the implementation of traineeships for students in the 2023 school year - 2024. The empirical data were collected between September and November 2024. The questionnaires were distributed to the students in the format electronically.

The analysis highlighted the skills and professional competencies that the students want to develop during the practical training hours. The highest averages were obtained for: increasing the degree of responsibility towards assigned tasks (4.03); developing teamwork skills (4.01); training of communication skills, teamwork, and flexibility (4.04); training of practical skills specific to the field of activity (4.00); the acquisition of knowledge specific to the field of training (3.98) and the practical application of the acquired theoretical knowledge (3.97).

The analysis also sought to identify the respondents' expectations regarding traineeship evaluation activities. According to the averages, the main expectations of the students refer to the combined assessment, both during and at the end of the programme, by characterizing the tutor and marking the practical activities, the project or other documentation made in the company/institution (4.02).

The first and probably the most important recommendation refers to the relationship of the tutors (employees of the host economic agents who have direct duties and activities to guide the student trainees) with the students. The analysis highlighted the fact that the majority of students consider the relationship with the tutor and the guidance received from him/her to be essential for the smooth running of the practical training courses, and as such, during the practical training hours, the tutors

should act as mentors for the young trainees. The high expectations of the students from the tutors can be turned into key points or success factors of the traineeships only with the agreement, dedication and interest of the latter.

Concerning the competencies/skills that the respondents want to develop as a result of their traineeships, we recommend that tutors focus on competencies/skills that tend to be transversal and avoid or limit as much as possible competences/skills with too specific character (although here it is up to the tutors, in collaboration with each practitioner, to distinguish between specific and transversal skills/competences according to the individual development needs of the students). Tutors should also emphasize those activities and tasks that can ensure personal development (acquiring new knowledge, discovering new skills/competencies or strengthening existing ones) and increase the employability of graduates.

The analysis also highlighted that a considerable percentage of respondents are not motivated to maintain contact with host economic agents, which can be seen as a problematic issue. The purpose of traineeships should extend beyond merely fulfilling the period allocated by the school year calendar in host organizations; instead, these programmes and weekly practical training hours should establish a connection between students and host economic agents—a connection that can later prove beneficial (directly or indirectly) for integrating graduates into the labour market.

Future graduates can—and, more importantly, should—view traineeships as an opportunity to engage with the professional world, organizations, and industry experts while laying the foundations for informal networks that can aid in securing employment after graduation.

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