

## Questionnaire for the Postgraduate Professional Progress

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**DOI Link:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v3-i5/112>

**Published Date:** 22 May 2013

### **Abstract**

The present study is a sequel of the studies on following of the high school and university graduates' professional itinerary, as a part of the "The correlation of the graduates' competences and knowledge with the desiderates of the labor market" research project, coordinated by the Marketing Faculty of the "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University. The aim of this study is to identify the motivation of high-school pupils to follow a postgraduate professional path based on indubitable aptitudes, which are specific to the learning process and to that of gaining knowledge in higher education units.

**Keywords:** Performance firm, performance employee

### **Introduction**

The questions of this study wanted to identify the respondents' native aptitudes, the extent to which these had been developed by the educational process and if the high-school pupils would follow a career that would be correlated to their abilities and knowledge in the study domain.

We must note that the respondents had been chosen from a number of five economic and technical high-schools in Bucharest. Most of the interviewed ones were in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, as we considered important the opinion of those who are facing the maturity exam.

### **1. Acknowledged aptitudes** by the interviewed high-school students

By means of this question we wanted to notice the extent to which pupils acknowledge their native aptitudes.

Aptitudes are determined, on the one hand, by the potentialities given in the genetic program (predispositions) and, on the other hand, by the conditions in which these latent potentialities become active ones.

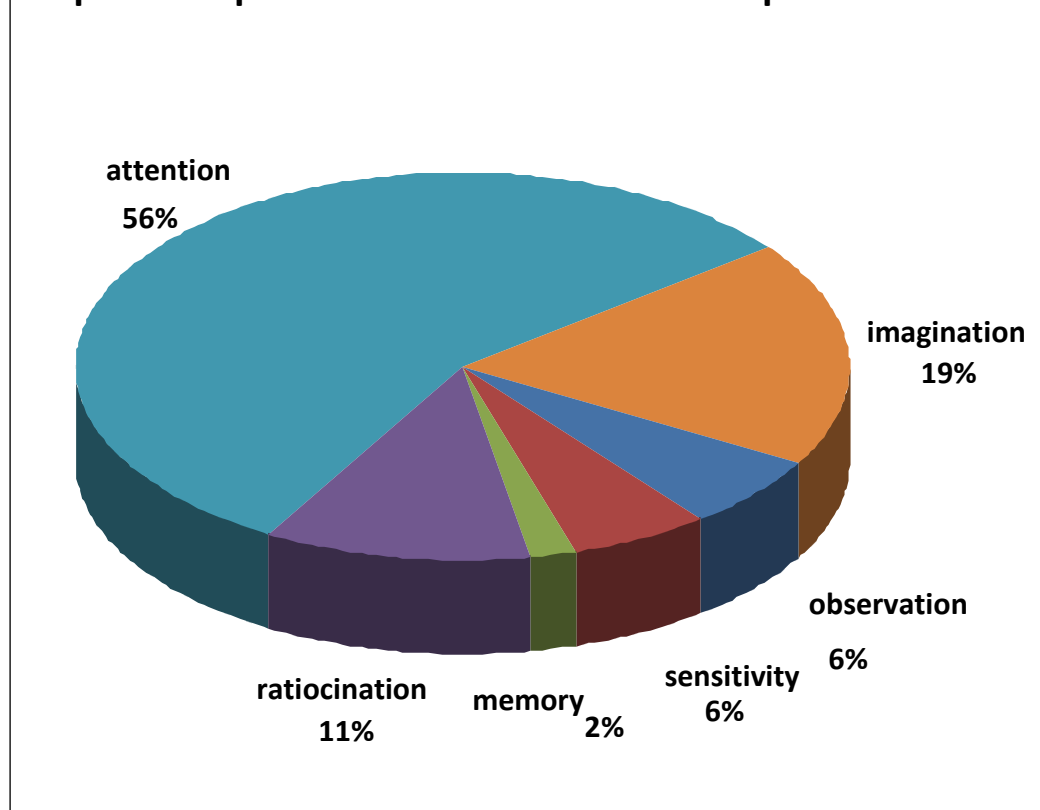
Therefore, when conditioned by predispositions, aptitudes always form and develop in the process of activity, in relation to a concrete activity in which the hereditary premises are intensely exerted.

Aptitudes are related to all the other components of psychic life, the entire personality system and the other subsystems of personality, and these things influence the individual's performance.

According to the operational degree and to the applicability degree in various activity domains, we distinguish the following aptitudes:

**General aptitudes** – which are necessary and efficient in various activity domains, representing the operational core of all types of activity – **intelligence**: (observation, sensitivity, memory and ratiocination).

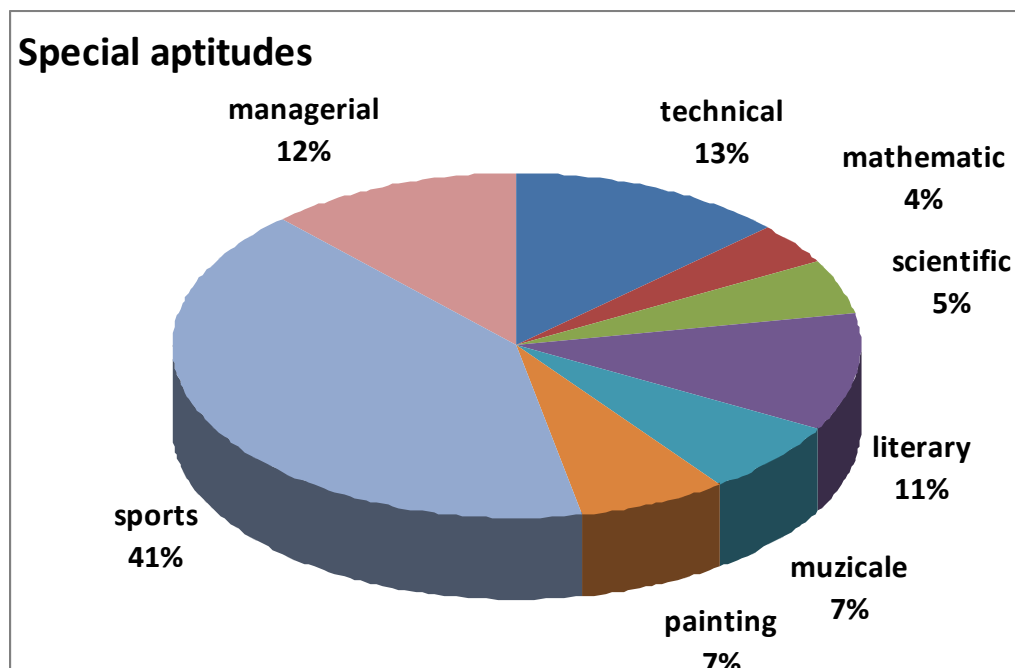
### Graphical Representation of the General Aptitudes



The analysis of the received answers provided the following results: approximately half of the students acknowledge the importance of attention (56%), imagination (19%) and only few of them consider ratiocination (11%), sensitivity (6%), observation (6%) and memory (2%) as being determinant.

Therefore, we can appreciate that the respondents are more interested in the esoteric part, highlighting skills related to communication and artistic sense.

**Special aptitudes** - have a narrow applicability and condition the success only in one field of activity – **professional aptitudes**: technical, mathematic, scientific, literary, music, painting, sports, managerial.



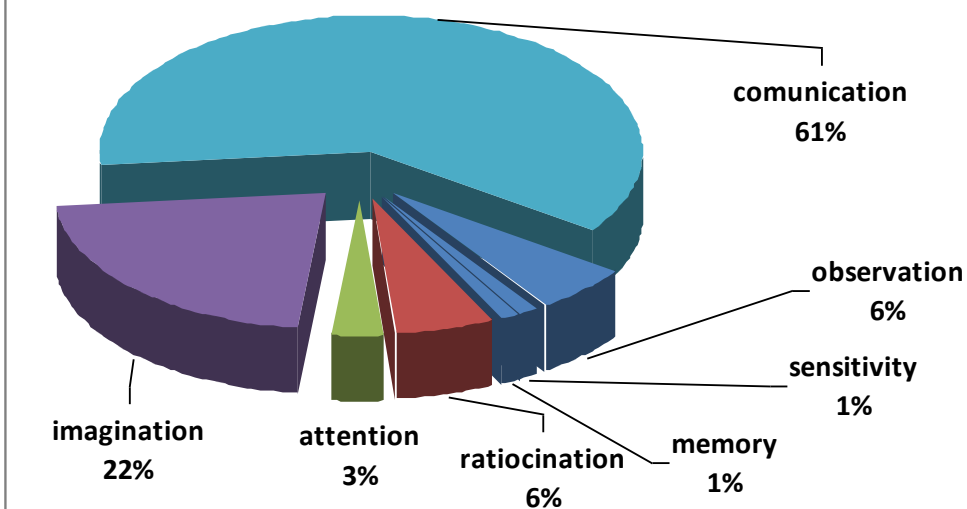
The analysis of the received answers shows that the special acknowledged aptitudes of high-school students are mainly sports (41%), followed by the technical ones (13%), managerial (12%), literary (11%), the artistic and scientific ones holding a secondary place or even a minimal one: painting (7%), scientific (5%) and mathematic (4%).

Therefore, we can appreciate that the creative-scientific side is not highly exploited inside students' interest field and this also proves a lack in what regards the involvement of the educational policy in developing this type of aptitudes. Hence, it is necessary to impose a higher implication of educational policy decision makers by creating science and cultural-artistic clubs that would be intensely promoted in schools. There is a clear influence of mass-media in what regards students' interest in sports, this being an extremely benefic thing if these aptitudes would be used in order to harmoniously develop the individual, its competitive spirit, the strictness and discipline of sportsmen.

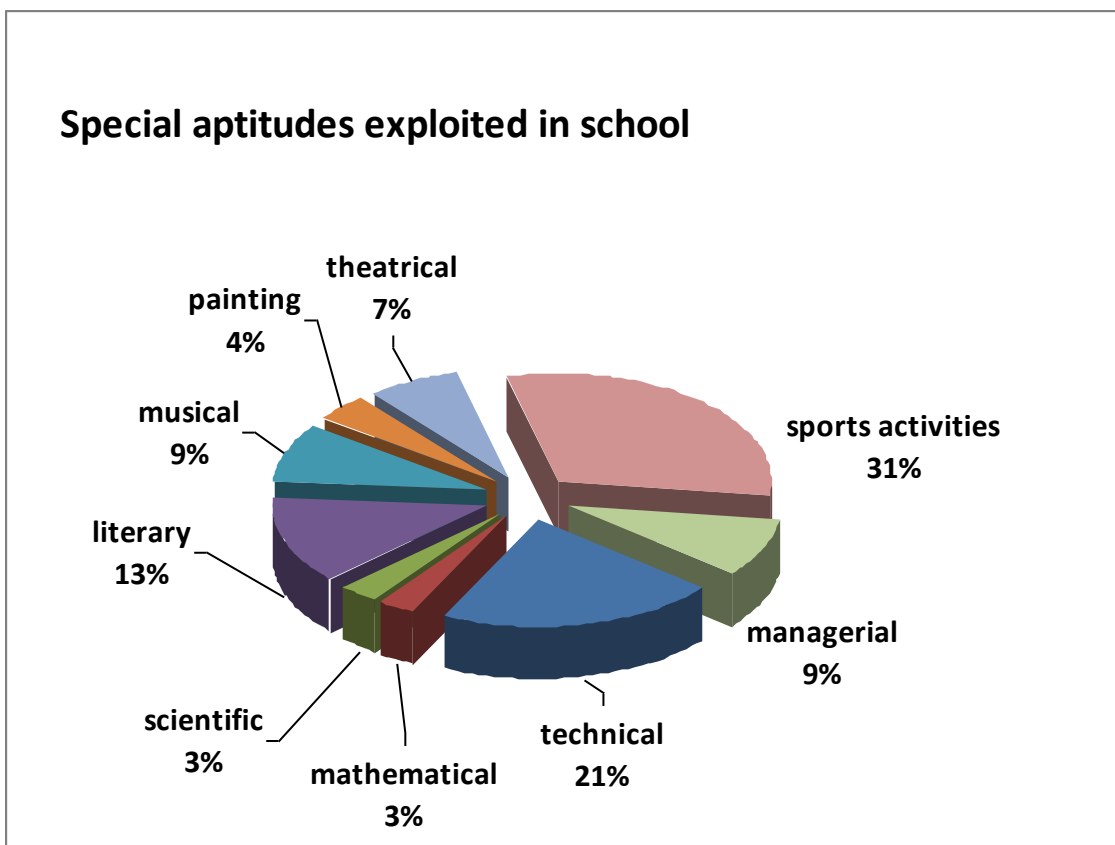
## 2. Aptitudes exploited in specific school activities

By means of this question we notices the extent to which students acknowledge the general aptitudes they possess and try, with the help of school-specific means, to stimulate these general aptitudes in order to transform them into general competences.

### General aptitudes exploited in school



Therefore, we can notice as general tendency the special place occupied by communication (61%) in the top of the general aptitudes exploited in school, followed by imagination (22%), which highlights the correlation between general and acknowledged aptitudes, on the one hand and the respondents' availability for a series of activities that imply dialogue, role playing, interactive teaching and listening methods. At the opposite pole there are the general personal aptitudes: ratiocination (6%), observation (5%), attention (3%), sensitivity and memory (1%).

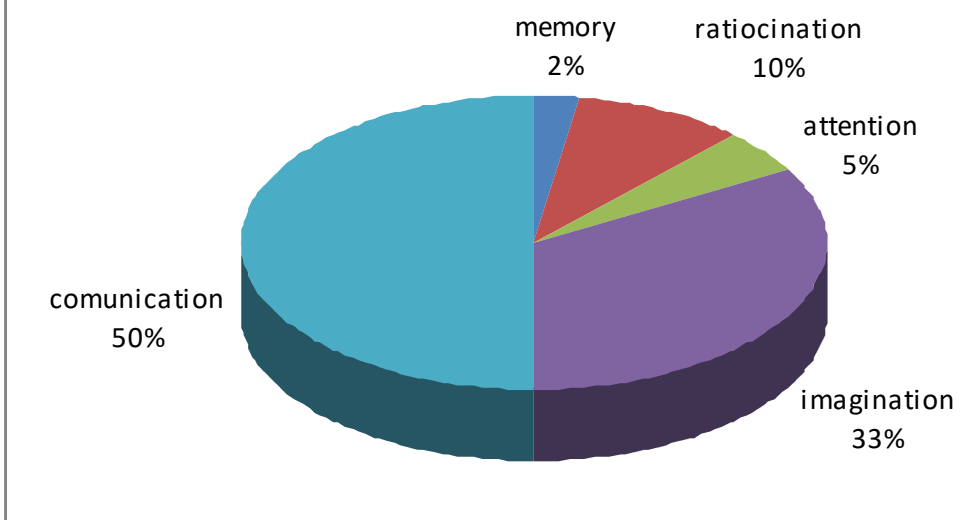


The analysis of the data shows that we can assess the pupils' special interest in sports activities (31%), followed by the technical aptitudes (21%) and the literary ones (13%). Therefore, it has been noticed a tendency towards exploiting those activities that follow the line of special aptitudes, underlining the acknowledgement of the native heritage and its exploitation. The general exploited aptitudes play a secondary role: musical (9%), mathematics and scientific (3%), mainly respecting the proportion of acknowledged general aptitudes, a normal thing if we consider the fact that high-schools included in the research range are exclusively technical and economic.

### **3. Aptitudes exploited in specific extracurricular activities**

The interest regarding this question was that of discovering the extent to which students are preoccupied in cultivating some aptitudes even outside school classes, in extracurricular activities in the form of informal meetings. Hence, 50% of the respondents showed that 50% of the general aptitudes are related to communication, 33% to imagination, and this proves the students' interest in free, engaging and motivational activities.

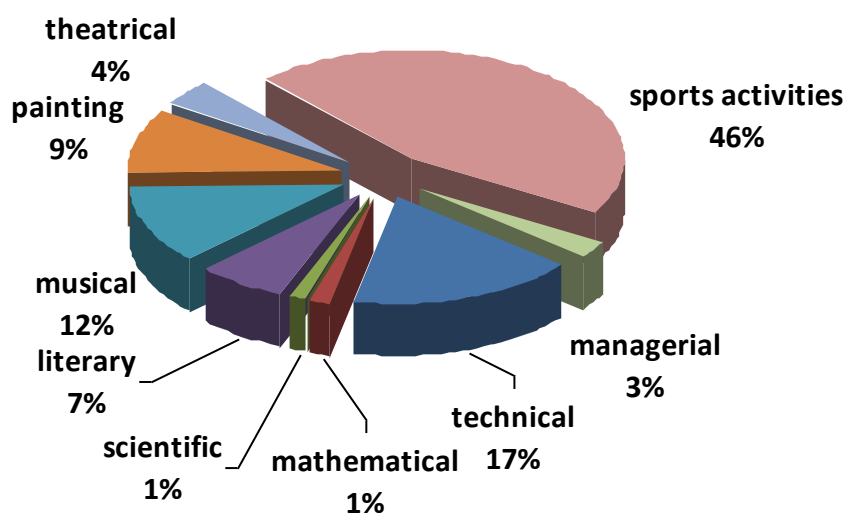
### General aptitudes exploited in specific extracurricular activities



In what regards the special aptitudes exploited outside school, an impressive number of respondents answered that they are interested in sports activities (46%) or in activities that develop technical abilities (17%), musical abilities (12%), painting abilities (9%) and literary abilities (7%).

The analysis of these data shows underlines the importance that has to be given to developing students' motivation for cultivating these abilities outside school, in extracurricular activities taking place in clubs or other special locations that could develop their initiative, teamwork spirit and groups affiliation feelings.

### Special aptitudes exploited outside school



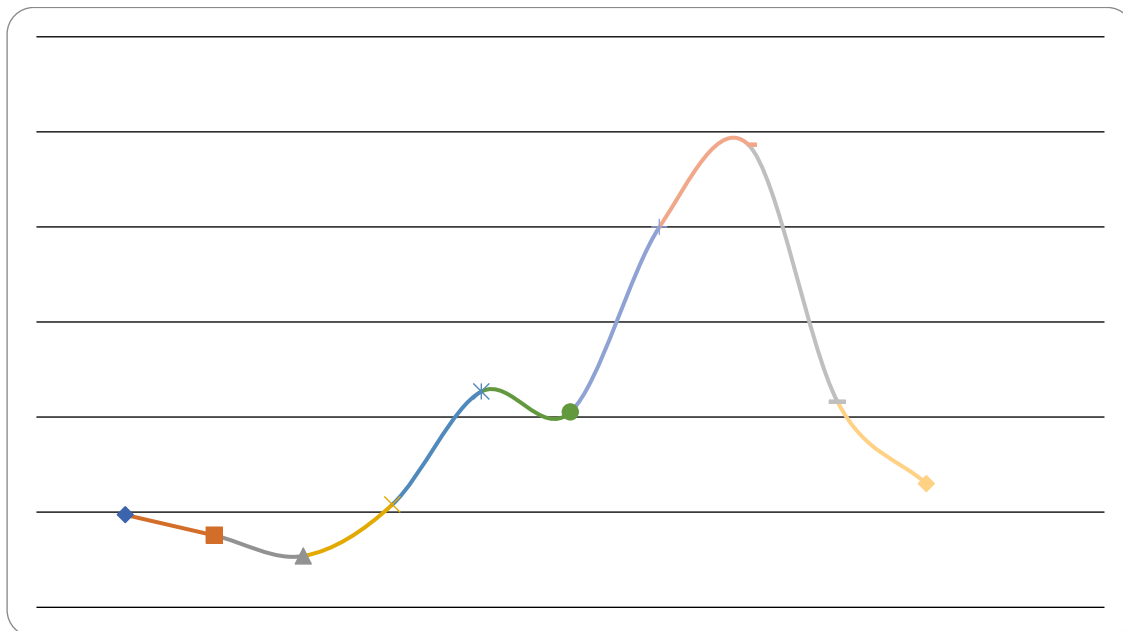
4. To what extent does school support you in developing your own interest domains?  
Rate your answer on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest

Mark	Percentage
1	4,86%
2	3,78%
3	2,70%
4	5,41%
5	11,35%
6	10,27%
7	20,00%
8	24,32%
9	10,81%
10	6,49%

The analysis of the responses given by students shows a low assessment of the part that school plays in developing personal interest domains. Therefore, only 6.49% of the respondents grade with the highest rank the fact that schools get involved in developing their students' interest domains, 10.81% of the respondents mark the same involvement with 9, most of them (24.32%) giving 8 or 7 (20%). This distribution shows an average relation between school and students in specific interest fields. Under these circumstances, it is considered to be opportune the increase of school's involvement in motivating the students,

in providing counseling for interest problems, without affecting the formal environment that is specific to the learning process.

The graphical representation of the mark-respondents' percentage relationship:



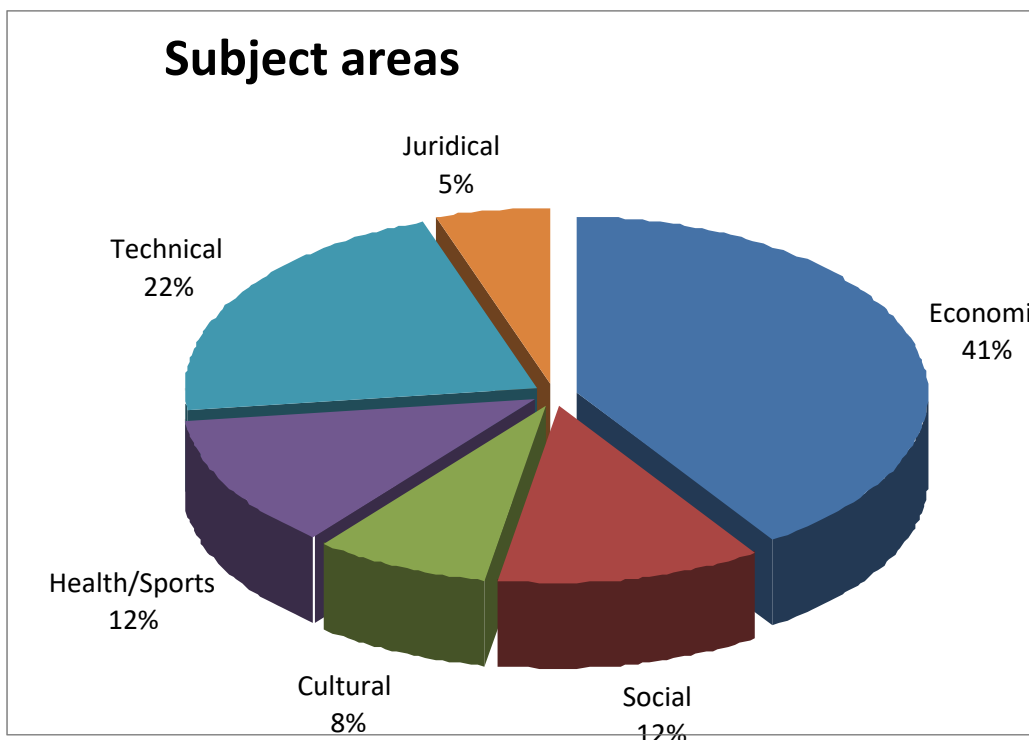
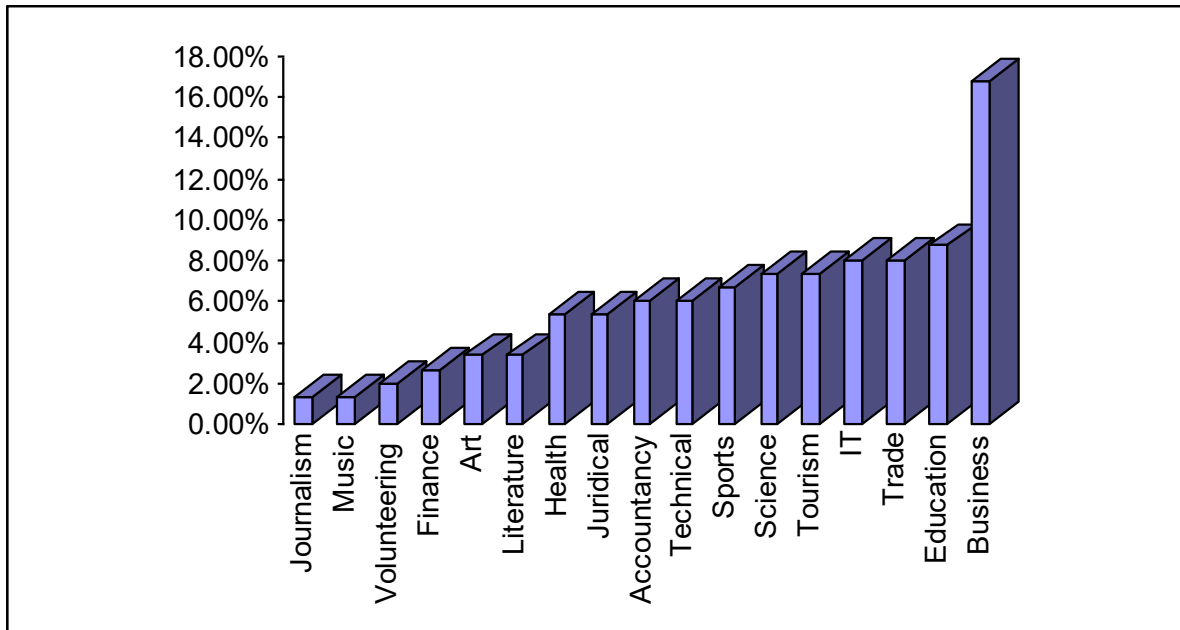
Where Ox:-marks, 1-10

Oy:-respondents' percentage corresponding to each mark

**5. Which are your own interest domains that you intend to develop in postgraduate education?**

Domain	Percent
Art	3,36%
Music	1,34%
Science	7,38%
Literature	3,36%
Sports	6,71%
Education	8,72%
Health	5,37%
IT	8,05%
Technical	6,04%
Trade	8,05%
Finance	2,68%
Accountancy	6,04%
Journalism	1,34%
Business	16,78%
Juridical	5,37%
Tourism	7,38%

Volunteering	2,01%
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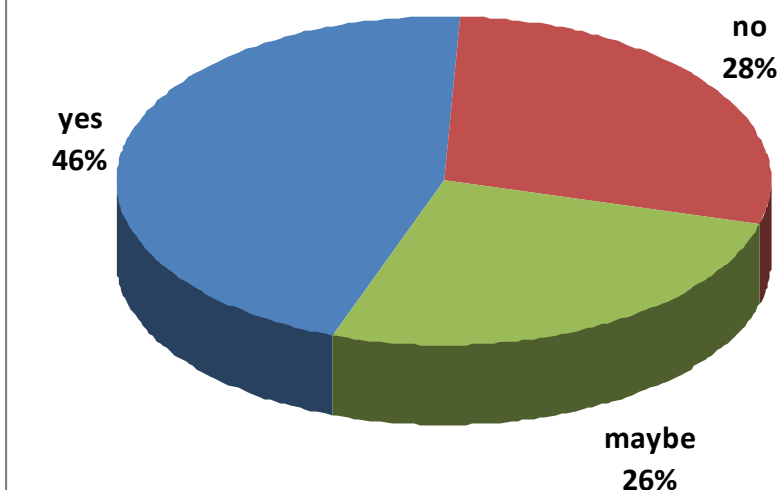


As a result of the analysis of students' responses in what regards their own interest domains that they intend to fathom in the course of postgraduate education, the first place is held by the economic field 41% (business-16.78%, trade- 8.05%, tourism- 7.37%, accountancy- 6.04, finance-2.68%), followed by the technical one- 22% (IT-8.05%, science-7.38%, tehcnical-6.04%), the social one-12% (education-8.72%, volunteering 2,01%) and the health/sports one-12% (sports- 6,71%, health- 5,37%), and the domains presenting the lowest interest are the cultural one (8%) and the juridical domain (5%). In this way, we perceive students' high

interest in the economic field, which could highlight the young generation’s interest for using and efficiently allotting economic resources in order to increase their welfare and that of their community.

**6. Have you developed these interest domains inside the high-school education framework?**

**The extent to which the areas of interest within the school have been developed**

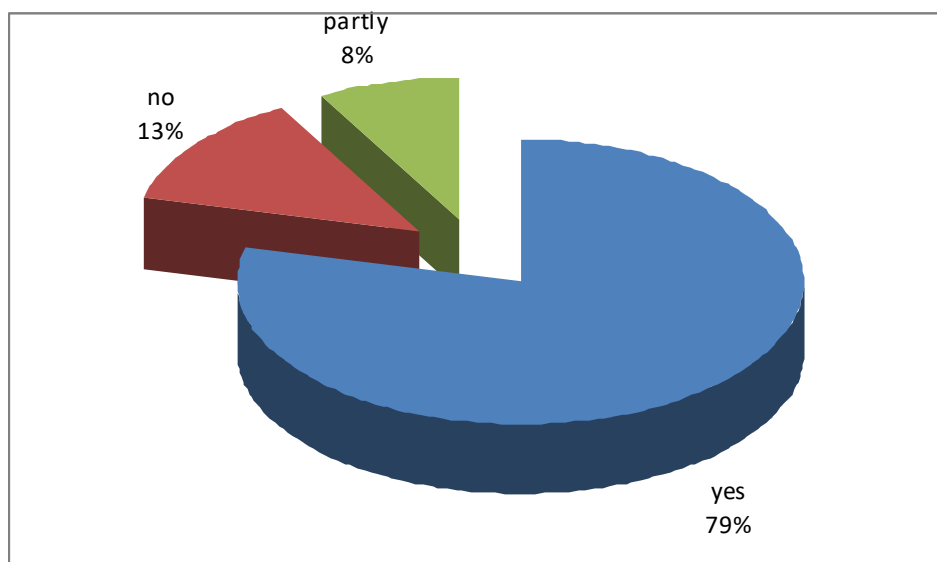


Students relate the interest for studying some activity domains inside the postgraduate educational framework with their high-school preoccupations (45%), 29% of the respondents show they hadn’t studied or been interested in these domains during high-school and 26% of the respondents partially developed their interest domain that they further intend to fathom.

It is certain that in most of its parts, the high-school curricula do not correlate with the university curricula, except for the fundamental domains. This is a natural thing if we take into

consideration the fact that high-school education must offer the student the basic competences, which are fundamental for a general education, creating possibilities for the student to enlarge his knowledge and to fathom the theoretical disciplines.

**7. Do you consider that your level of knowledge allows you to become a candidate for developing the professional path inside the framework of higher education?**

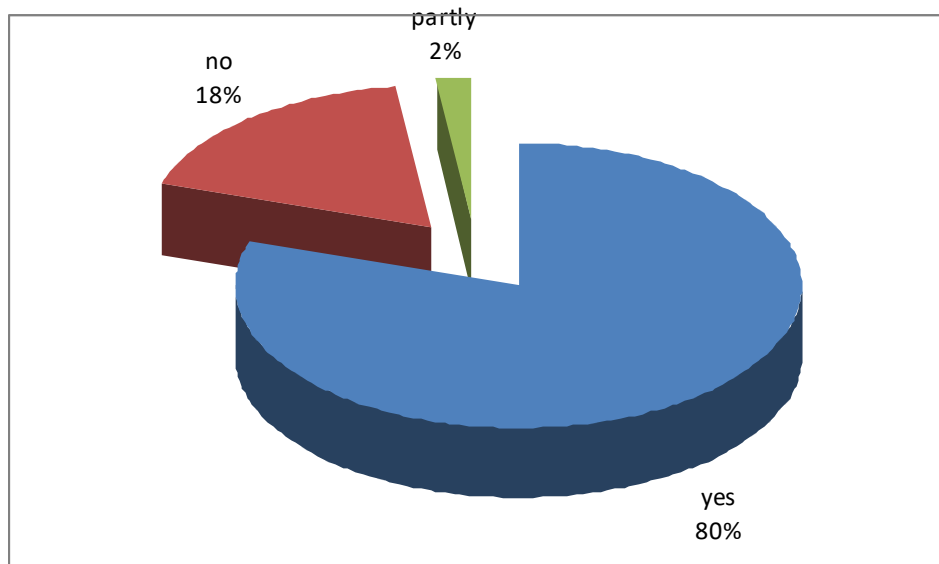


The problem appears when the student don not possess a high volume of knowledge that would allow its specialization in a specific activity field. In these conditions, there could appear significant differences between the competence accumulating capacity and the employer's requirements on a specific labor market. This is the reason why the questionnaire is interested in obtaining information related to the student's capacity/ability of reaching a higher level in education.

Therefore, 79% of the respondents consider themselves able to attend higher education courses, 13% consider themselves unable and 8% partially prepared. However, in order to assure a veridical image, the percent of those who considered being prepared has to be correlated with the number of those who graduated and then with the percent of those who entered the labor market.

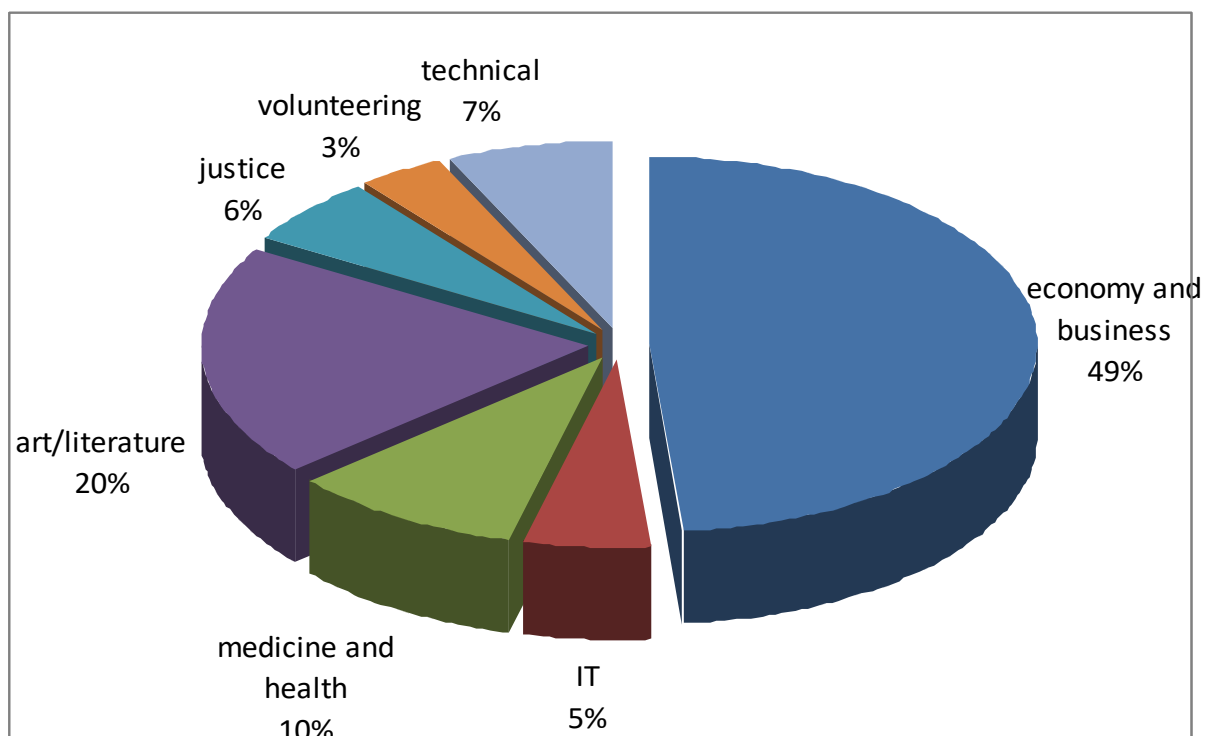
Currently, the Romanian educational system faces the problem of the legitimacy of studies, of the students' capacity of entering the labor market in order to create economic welfare that would be able to cover the population's development needs. These objectives can be reached by means of a correct and closely monitored education, but we also need to adapt the educational strategy to the future's requirements.

**8. Do you consider necessary choosing a vocational faculty according to your professional competences?**



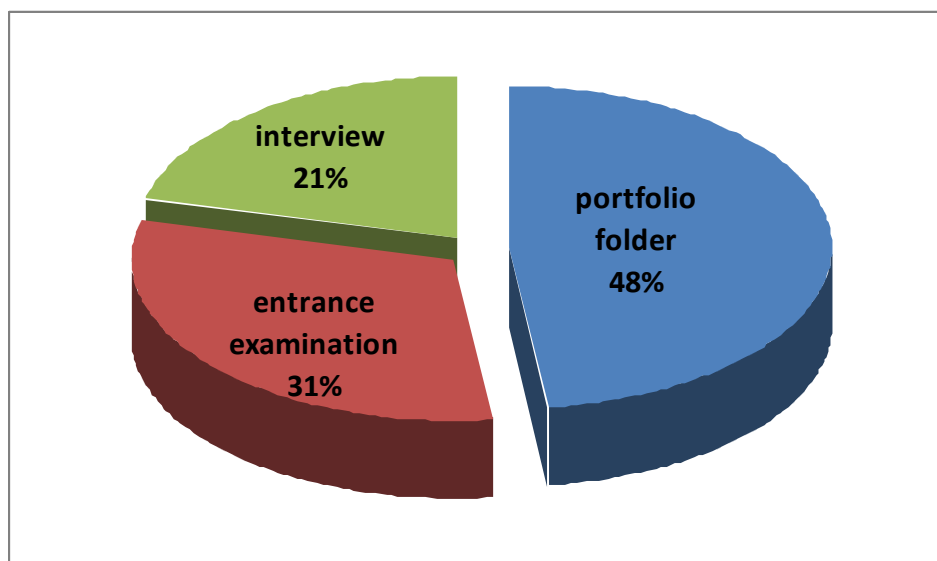
This is an extremely important thing if taking into account that youth wants to specialize in the domain in which they have abilities and in which they want to develop them. The analysis of the data shows that 80% of the respondents consider as being optimal choosing a faculty in their domain of competence, 18% do not consider it necessary, while 2% have a neutral attitude.

9. State your own interest domains



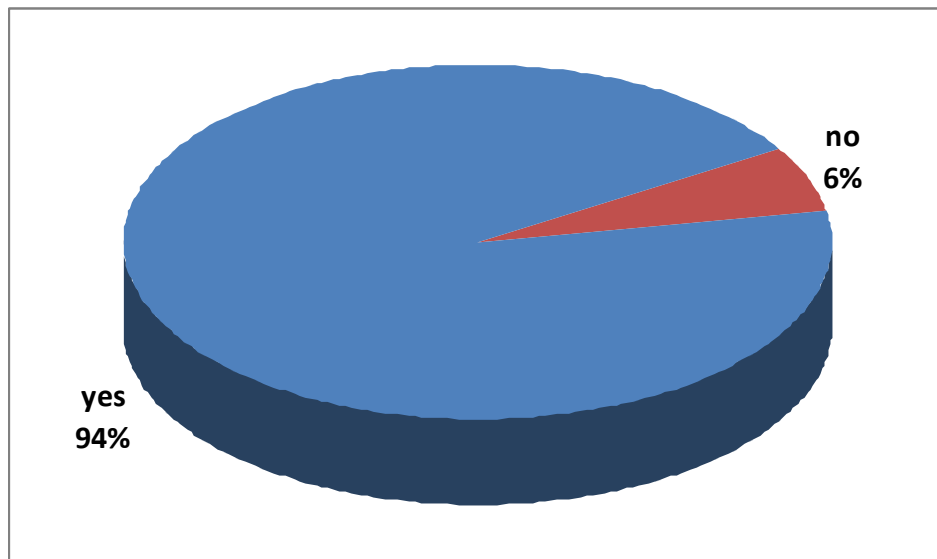
As highlighted by the answers above, most of the respondents consider the following interest domains: economy and business (49%), art/literature (20%) and medicine and health (10%), at the opposite pole being the technical domain (7%), justice (6%), IT (5%) and volunteering (3%).

**10. How do you think that the admission to the postgraduate educational system that you want to develop should be done?**



This question's relevance consists of testing the students' interest in a complex and strict preparation in order to attend a new educational stage, postgraduate studies. It also tests the possibility of taking into consideration a rigorous students' preparation in order to satisfy all the requirements of a themes portfolio that would be necessary for the admission. In Romania there are only two forms of the entrance examination: the written exam and the interview-based admission. The admission based on a portfolio folder is not very common in Romania, being a method by means of which the higher education system becomes an important part of the high-school pupil's preparation, disseminating its requirements and especially its educational offers that are adapted to the student's needs and interest. The portfolio folder contains a series of the student's projects and achievement in his interest field, being essential in determining both the student and the university to become partners in the educational process.

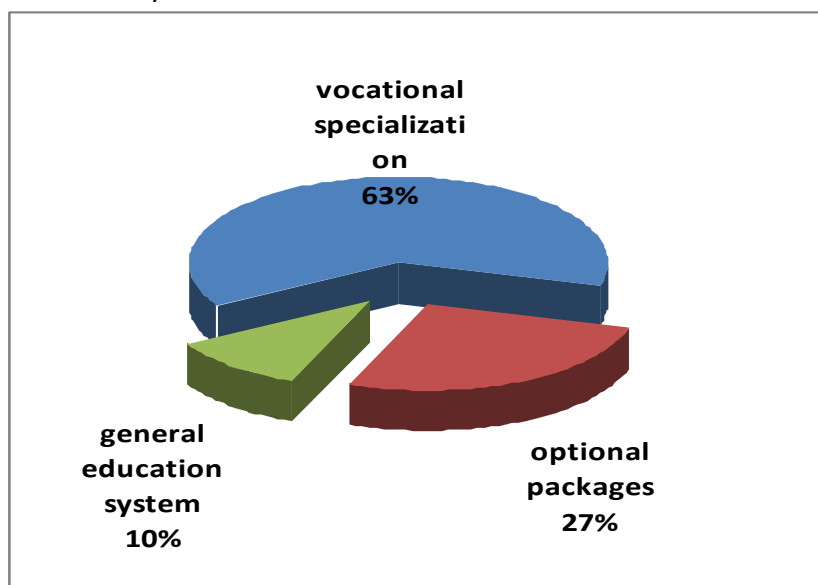
**11. Do you consider personal abilities based career development as being opportune?**



94 % of the respondents consider opportune the development of career according to personal abilities. This is a highly important fact as it combines the student’s motivation and his effective capacity of assimilating knowledge that would contribute to short term personal development and long term career development.

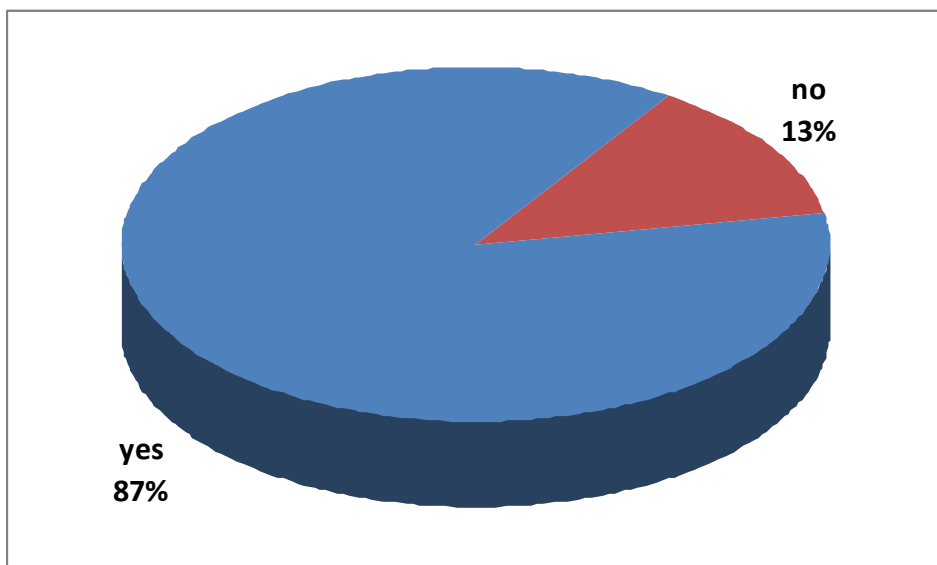
**12. How should these abilities be developed inside study programs?**

63 % of the respondents consider that the curricula should focus on vocational specialization, 27% are interested in developing their professional development on the basis of some optional packages, while only 10% consider interesting the development of a general education system.



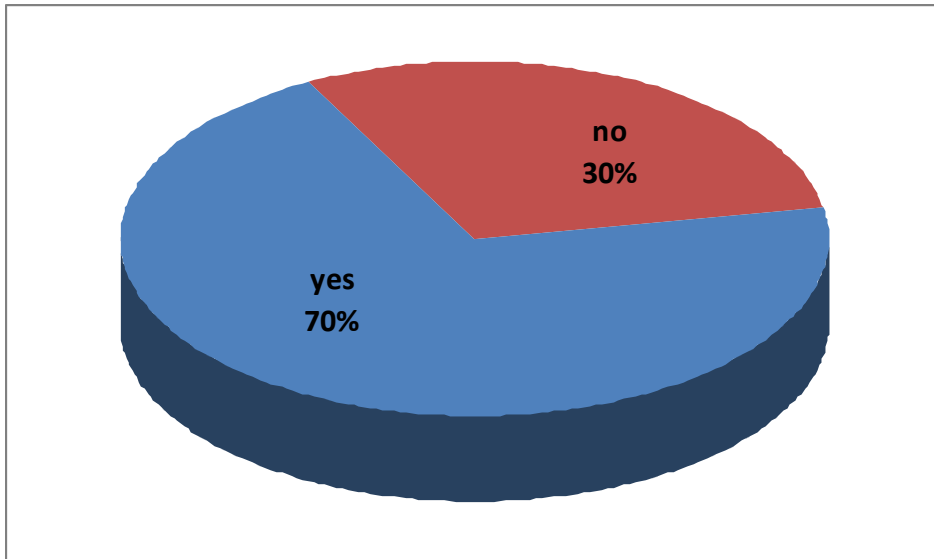
The development of curricula on the basis of vocational specialization is necessary in the conditions of a rigorous preparation that would minimize the risk of not fitting the labor market after graduation. Under these circumstances, it is very important to continue the studies and the professional development in a direction in which the student has already proven abilities and competences.

**13. Should professional preparation be related to labor market's requests?**



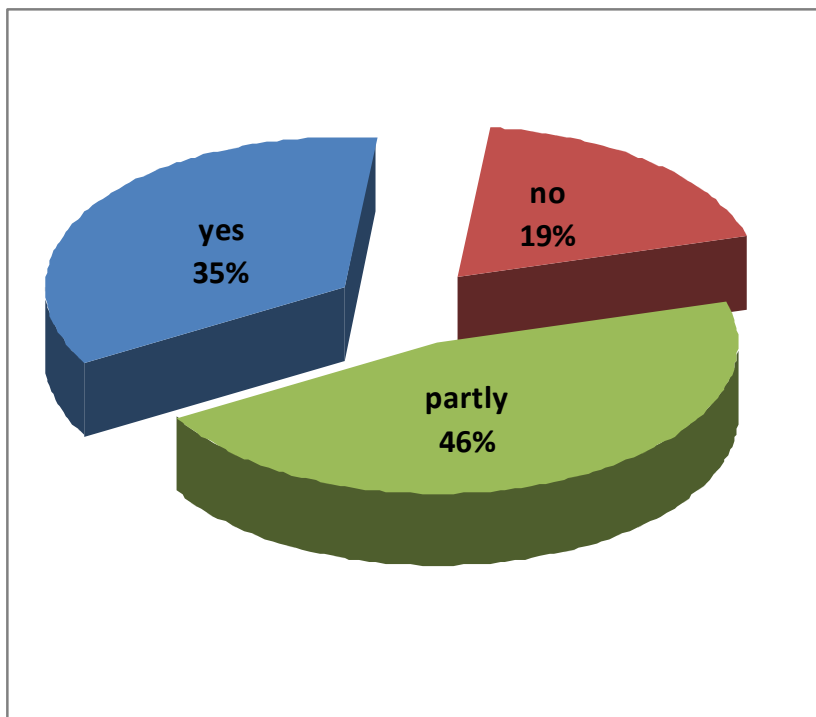
The response to this question is very pertinent (87% consider that is necessary to relate the professional training with the labor market's requirements) and it shows the respondents' maturity in what regards the perception of labor market and its requirements in relation to the graduates' professional training.

**14. Do you think that changing the curricula according to labor market's requirements is really necessary?**



70% of the respondents think that is good to modify the curricula according to labor market's requirements. By means of this question we try to make the students acknowledge the importance of correlating specialty studies to the labor market's future tendencies, which mainly points to the need of developing a medium and long term employment strategy that would take into account the students' both quantitative and qualitative dimension, the specialization degree of workforce, its absorption capacity on the labor market, the added value created by the workforce and its weight in the Gross Domestic Product. Moreover, it is necessary to ensure the welfare produced by the trained workforce, by means of both function of income and the enlarged capacity of satisfying workforce's needs and freedoms.

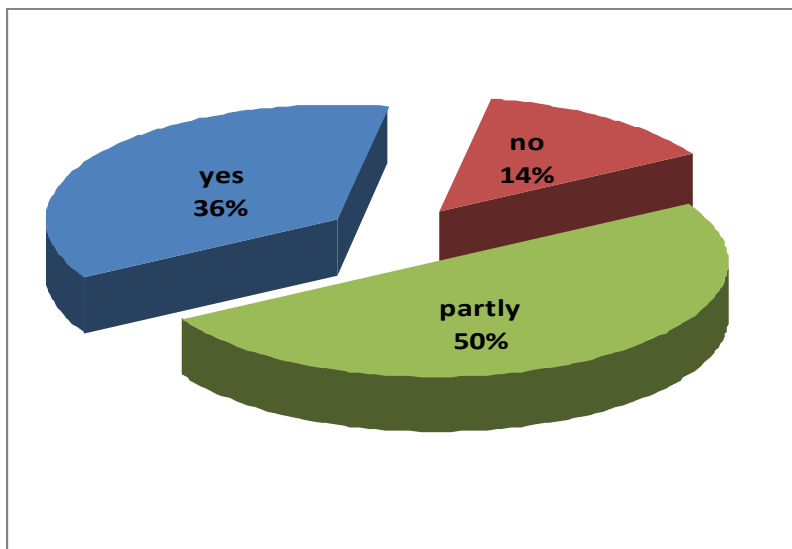
**15. At the end of high school studies do you possess the specific competences for a certain field that would ensure your employment in the domain that you are studying?**



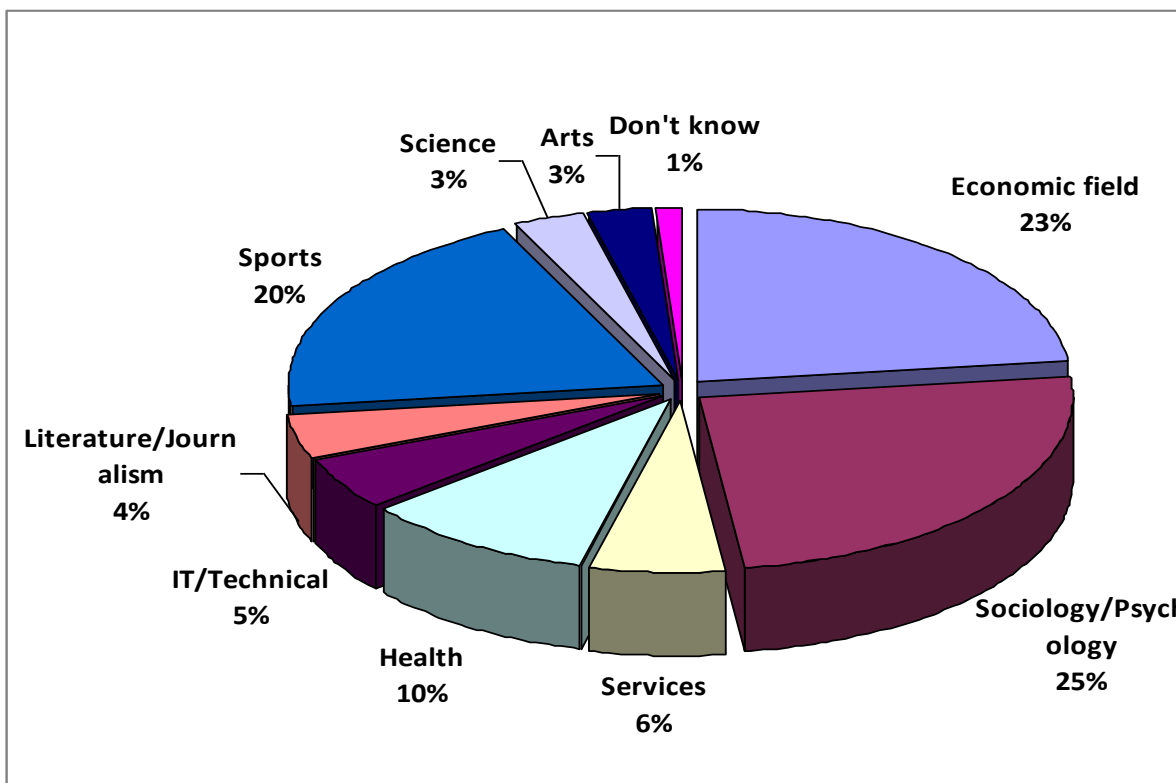
Due to their specialization field (economic or technical), 46% of the respondents consider themselves partially prepared for labor market after graduation (which is not a negative aspect because it implies the possibility of going back to school after graduating from high school), 35% consider themselves prepared, which shows a certain level of professional competences that would allow them to get employed or the student's acknowledgment regarding the limited resources (physiological, psychological and material) needed for further studies.

#### **16. Could you extend this thing for university studies also?**

In what regards the interest for university studies, the answers were the following: 50% of the respondents consider themselves to be partially prepared (which underlines their ability to assess their professional competences and the need of improving them by means of a university program), 36% consider to be prepared and only 14% consider themselves unprepared.

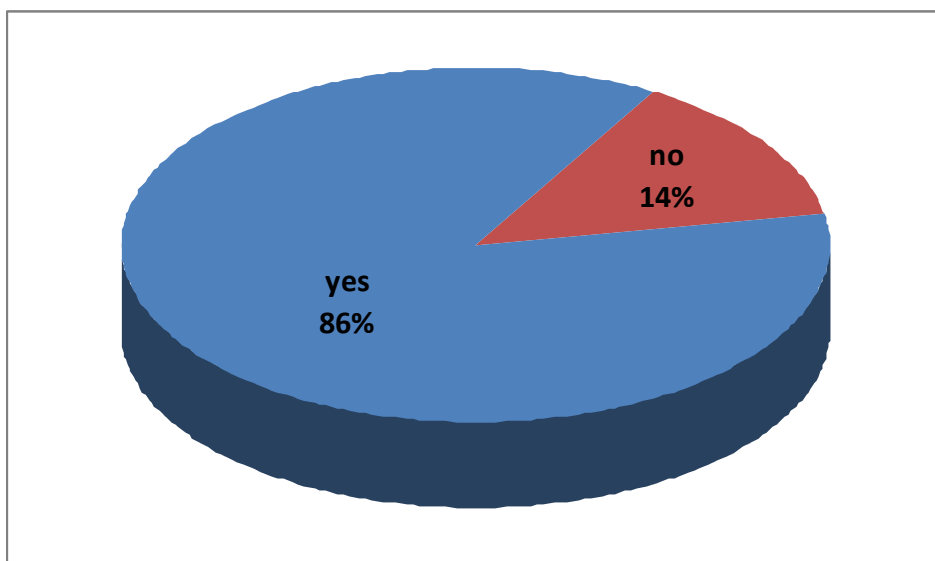


**17. Identify the domains that you would like to study**



The analysis of the answers given by high school students showed a large interest for sociology/psychology (25%), taking into consideration the need of self assessment, that of establishing interpersonal relationships, of understanding the part that communication plays inside the organization and for its development; an important part is played by the interest in the economic field (23%), the explanation being related to the specialization of the questioned students; another domain is sports (20%), as they admitted to practice it both in school and outside it, followed by health (10%). The other domains do not present as much interest as the one stated above: services (6%), IT (5%), literature (4%), art and science (3%).

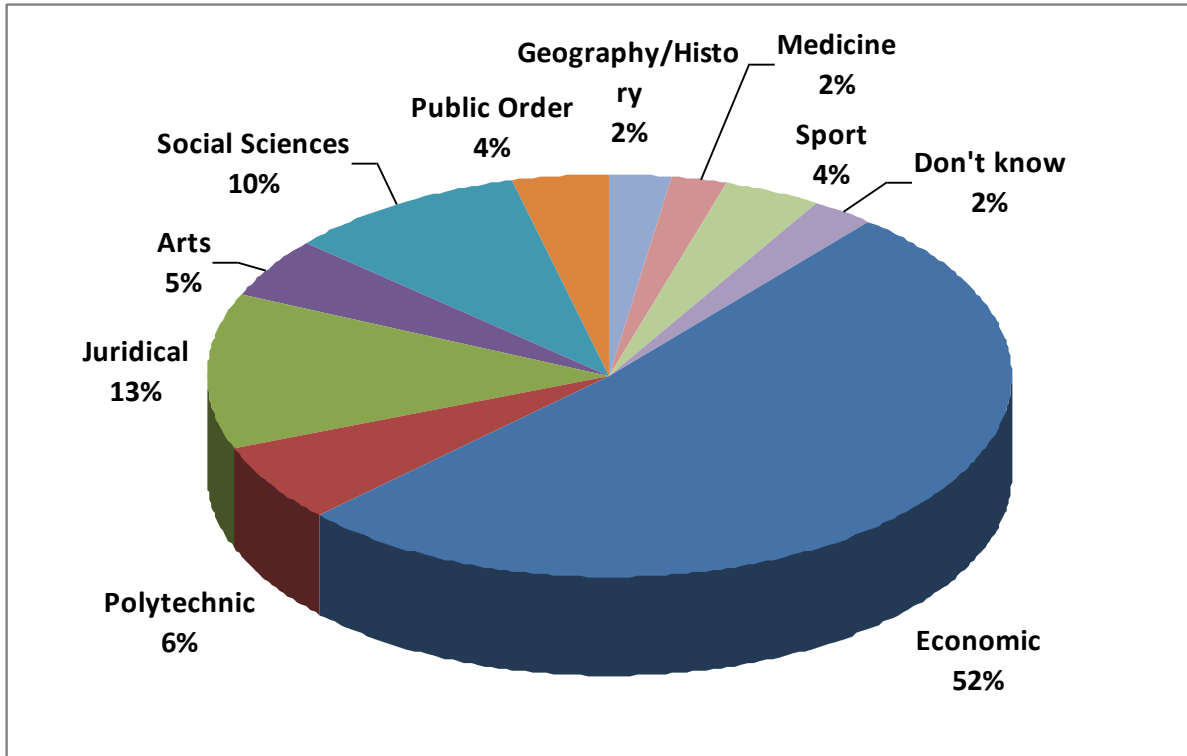
**18. State if your interest fields are included in the university curricula and if you are ready for attending a higher education programme.**



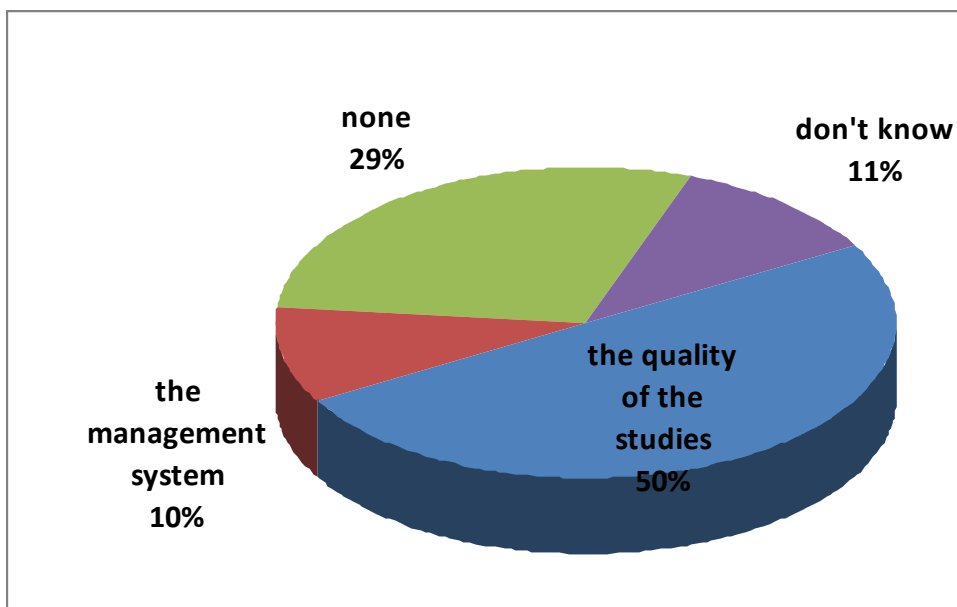
The objective of this question is to verify if high school graduates are familiarized with the curricula of the university they want to continue their studies. 86% of the respondents know the content of the university curricula and appreciate that the university they are going to attend fit their profile.

**19. Which are the Romanian Universities that you would apply for?**

Even if the economic field was the students' second interest domain, following the social one, the respondents' answers prove that 52% would apply for an economic higher education institution, 13 % a juridical one and 10% a social one. At the opposite pole there are the technical institutions (6%), art institutions (5%), public order and sports institutions (4%), Geography/History and medicine (2%).

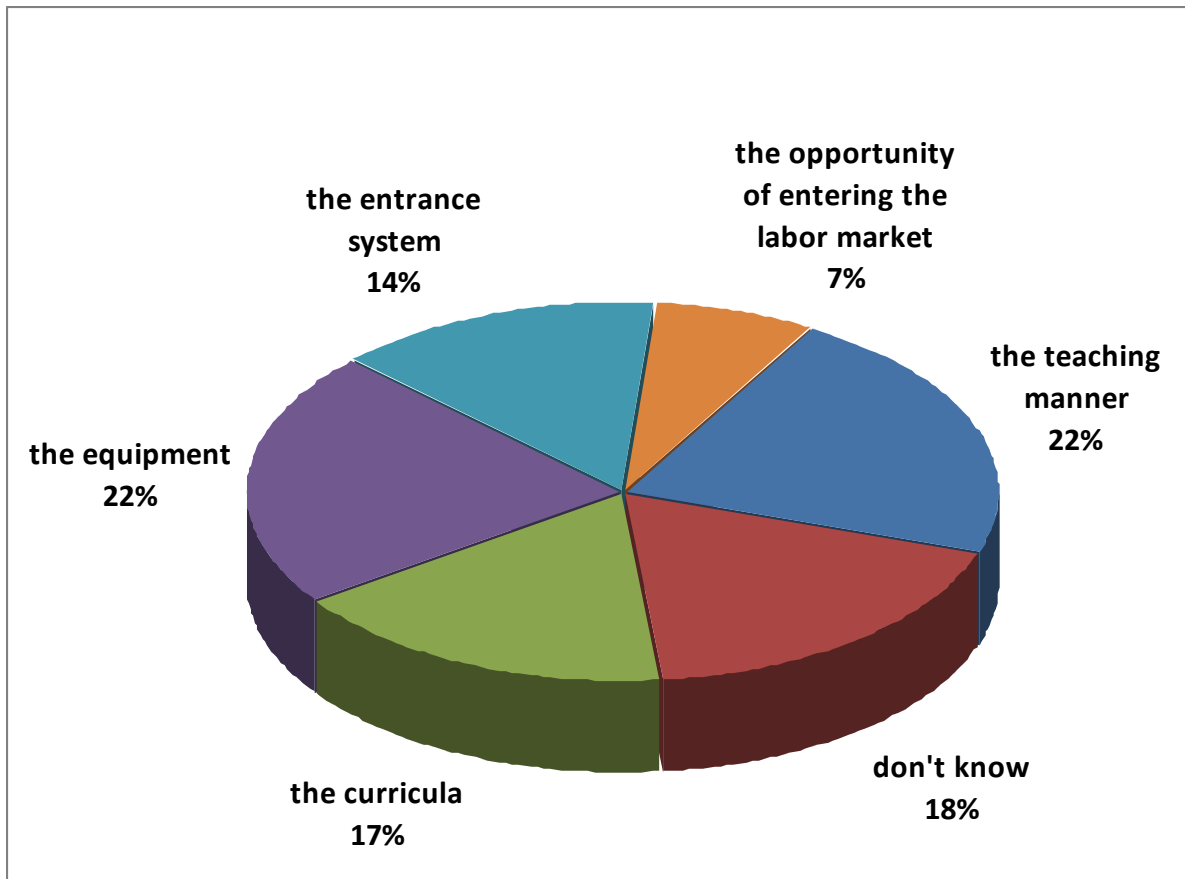


20. Which are the common elements of the Romanian universities and the foreign ones?



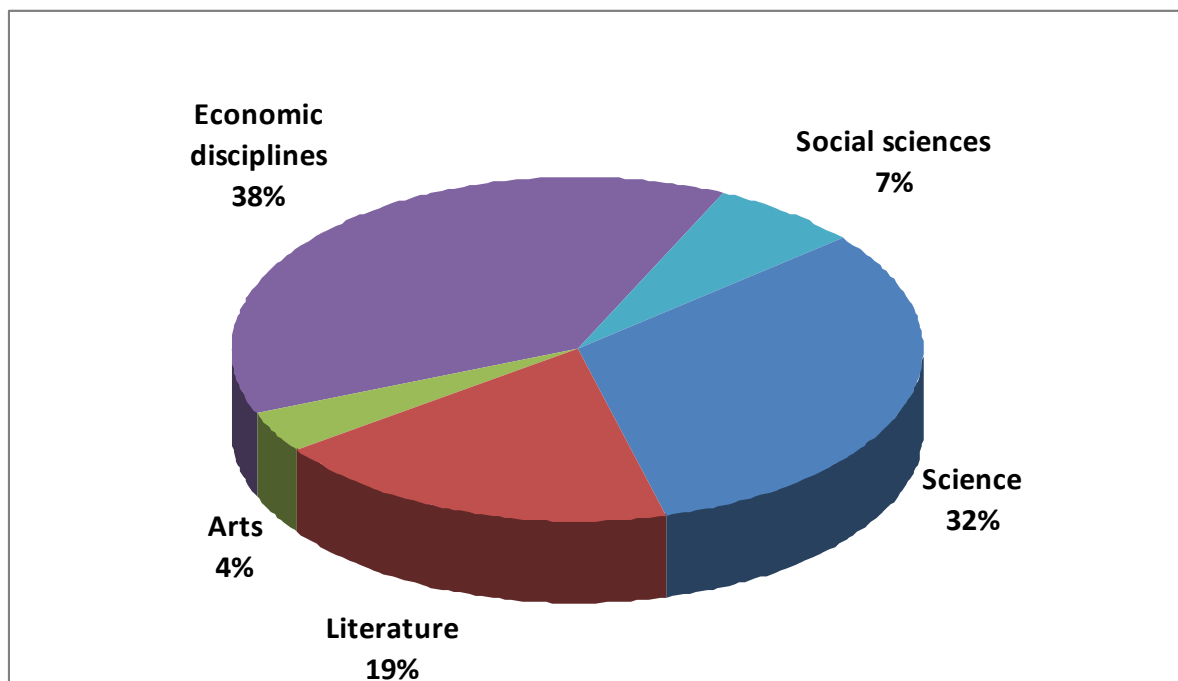
By means of this question, the respondents are questioned regarding the degree in which they are familiar with the Romanian universities as compared to the foreign one, being highly known that more and more students choose to study abroad because of reasons such as: the quality of studies, the student-professor relationship, strictness, grading system, practical training, possibilities to finance the studies, the opportunity of finding a part time job. Therefore, 50% of them consider that the common elements are related to quality of studies, 29% do not think that there are common elements, 10% mention the university management and 11% do not possess this kind of information.

**21. Which are the elements that mark the differences between the Romanian and the foreign universities?**



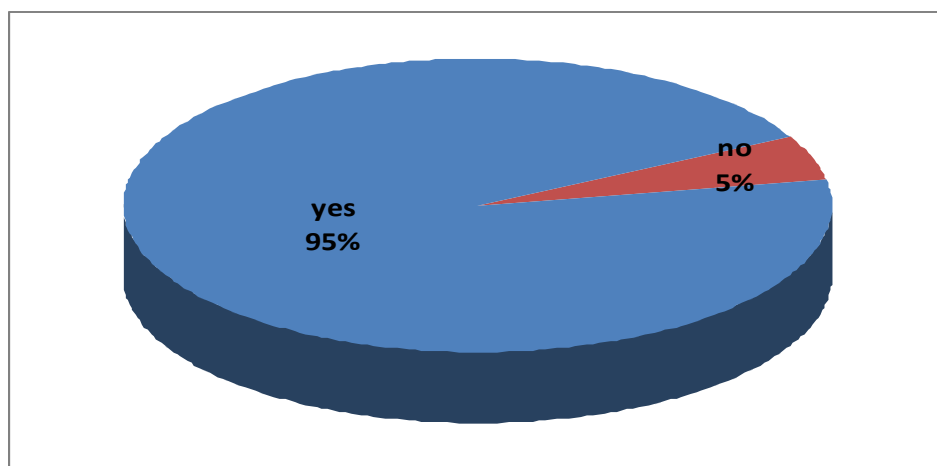
In what regards the differentiation elements between the Romanian and the foreign universities, 22% of the respondents think of the teaching manner and equipment, 18% do not possess this type of information, 17% mention the curricula, 14% the entrance system and only 7% the opportunity of entering the labor market.

**22. Which are the disciplines in which you were interested in high school?**



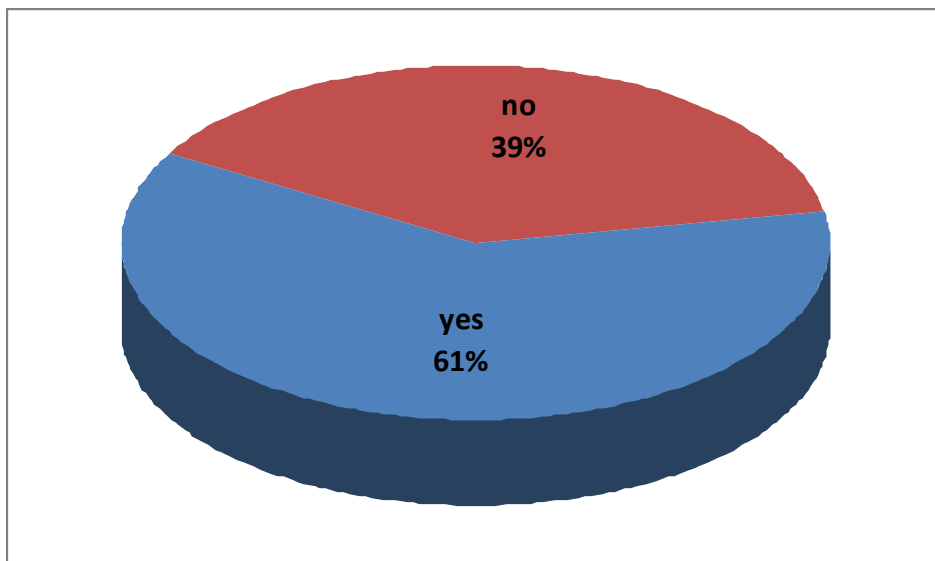
The analysis of the presented data shows that high school students are mostly interested in economic disciplines (38%), followed by science (32%), literature (19%), social sciences (7%) and arts (4%). This distribution is related to the students' high school specialization.

**23. Are these disciplines part of the Romanian universities' curricula?**



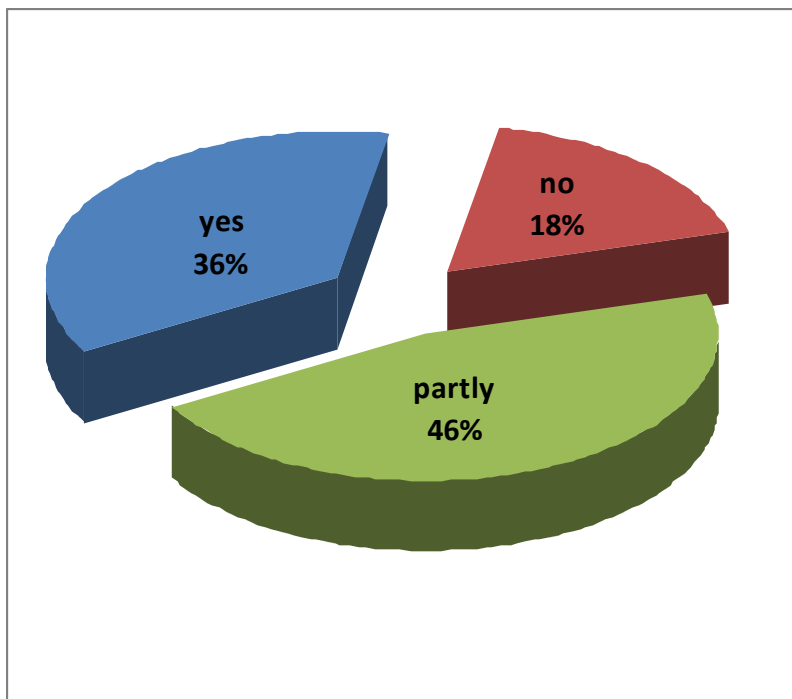
The analysis of the answers proves the existence of a correspondence between the high school curricula and the university one in what regards the interest fields.

**24. Would you be willing to choose a Post secondary-school and foremen's vocational education?**



This question wants to test the students' self-assessment degree and the manner in which they assess the acquired aptitudes and competences required to attend the courses of a higher education system. If they don't consider themselves able to go to apply for university or if their intention is to enter the labor market, students can choose to attend a Post secondary-school and foremen's vocational education, which provide them average competences (61%). The problem that arises is the extent to which students are able to self-assess the knowledge or competences gained. Another problem is the necessity of external evaluations, by a specialized team, which would give a decisive result for the student's choice regarding his professional path.

**25. Do you consider that post-secondary school graduates are disadvantaged on labor market?**

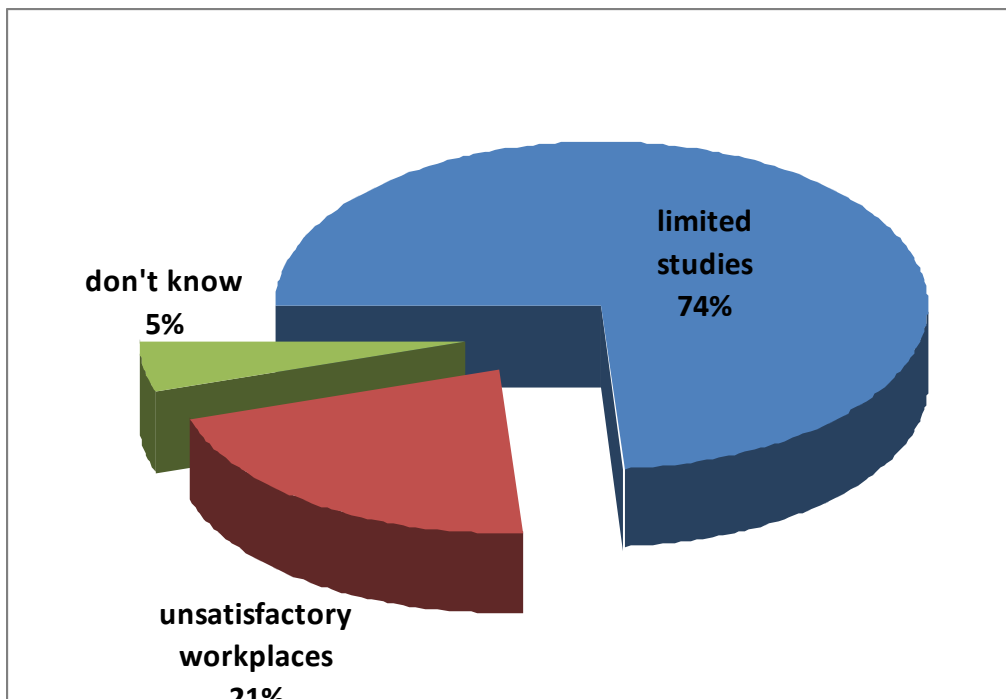


The answer to this question is the same with Romania's labor and educational markets' quality. The respondents considered the disadvantaged to be partial (46%) because of limited studies and labor market status, 36% considered the disadvantage to be significant as compared to university graduates, while 18% consider that there is no disadvantage.

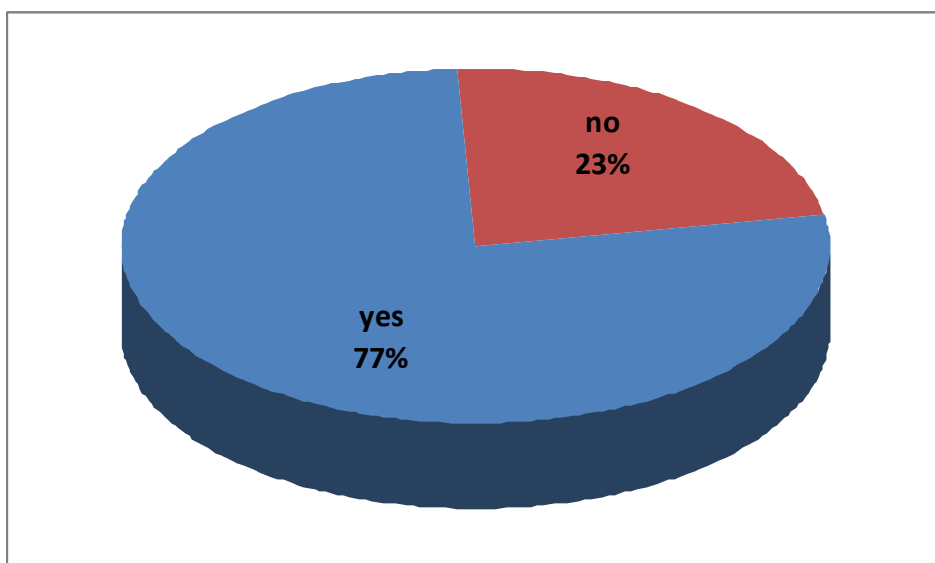
## 26. What is the reason?

As showed above, the respondents consider that the major disadvantage is represented by limited studies (74%) which don't allow them to occupy main positions inside the company, the result being a low income, followed by unsatisfactory workplaces (21%) mainly belonging to services and execution domain.

It is certain that this action wants to make the students aware of the necessity of a pertinent assessment, based on support provided by specialists in education, on creating educational paths in which each students would be able to find its place according to its own abilities and competences, the access to labor market of all graduates categories regardless their training level, income and social position.



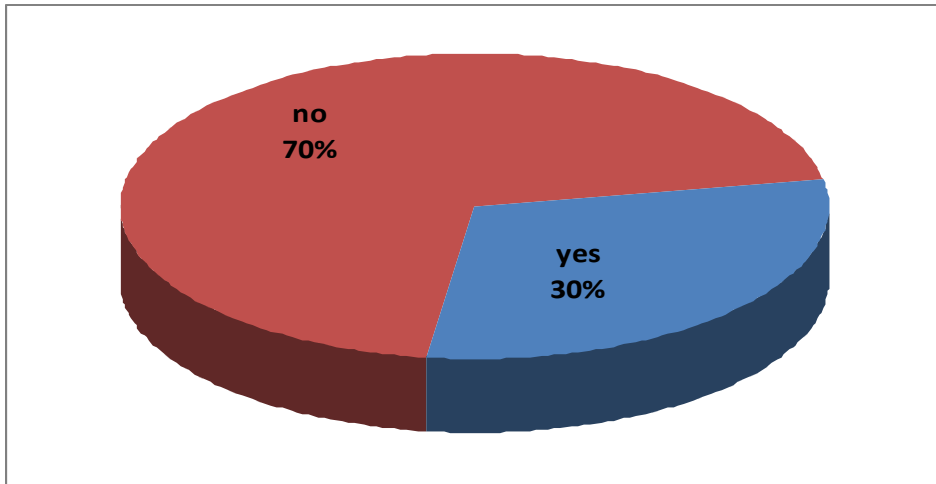
**27. Do you consider career counseling to be necessary?**



Romanian schools have the advantage of a career counselor's assistance, but the results of this counseling are not convincing in what regards the student's choice for a certain specialization for which he has competences and abilities. The study's intention is that of highlighting the work of the vocational counselor, of initiating entrance procedures based on a series of projects portfolio accepted by a complex team made of specialists, psychologists and career counselors. Therefore, universities would be able to notice the professional path of a high school graduate in order to guide him towards performance, by giving him confidence and determination.

The questionnaire showed that the answers highlighted the importance of a career counselor (77%).

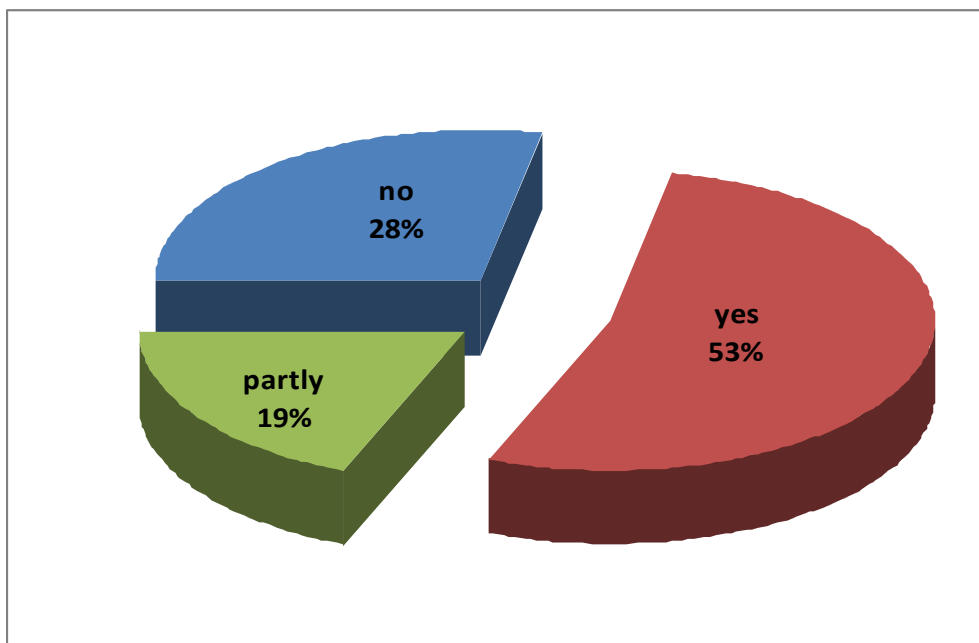
**28. Do you have information about a career counseling office in your school or in other educational institution that you would like to be a part of?**



Most of the respondents (70%) do not know about the existence of a career counselor in their school who would be willing to work with students in order to increase their determination for study or for following a certain career.

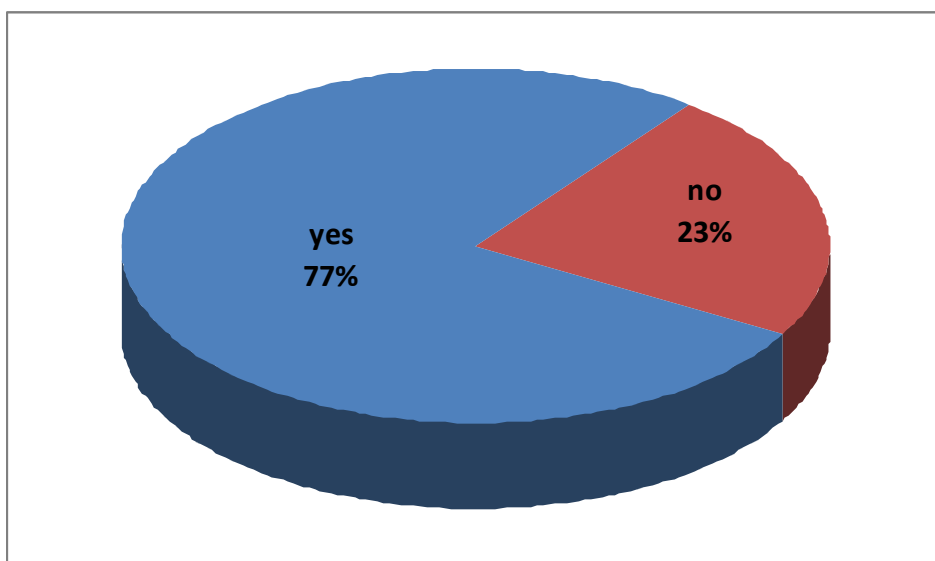
This fact proves to be very serious, because these career counseling offices exist in schools, at least at an organizational level. By means of this study we want to acknowledge the students' interest in this type of activity and to underline the importance of the activity developed in such offices.

**29. Do you trust the opinion of a career counselor regarding your professional path?**



The answers prove the students' availability of collaborating with career counselors (53%), of being interested in their professional path in what regards their education or career choice.

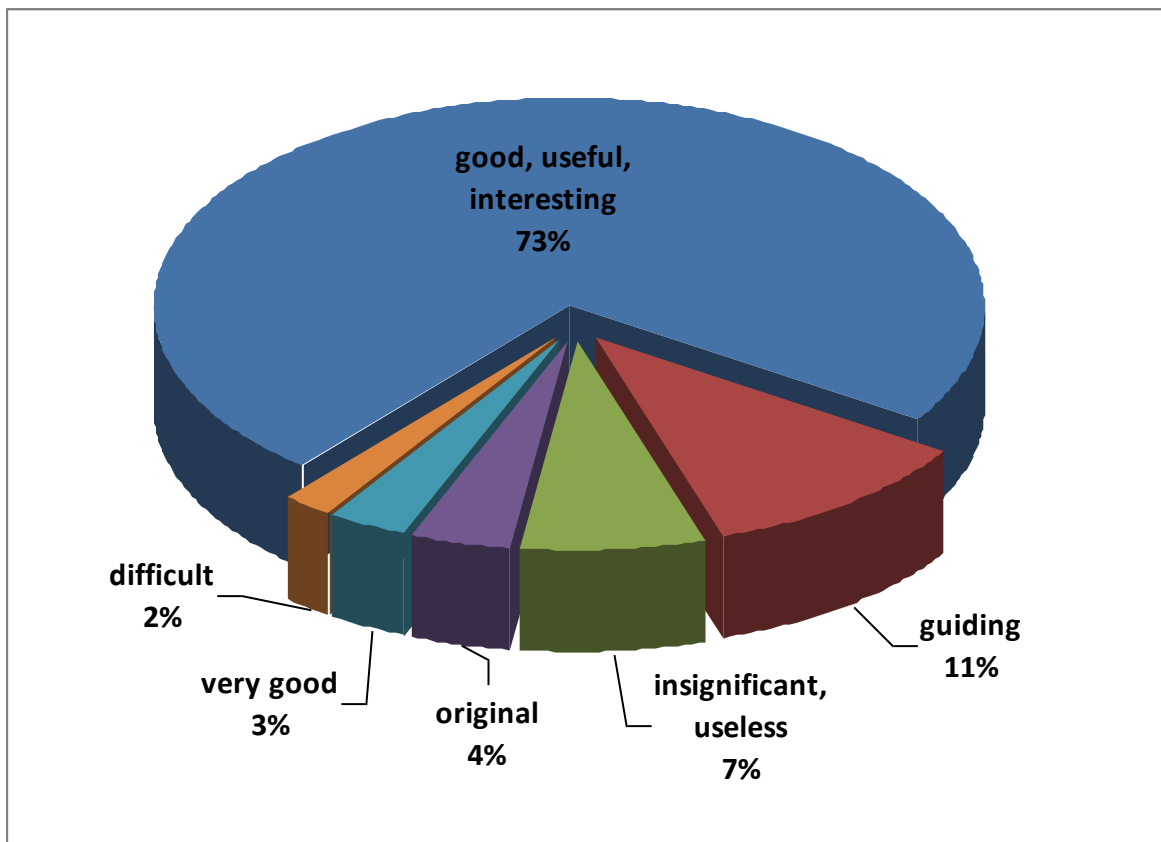
**30. Do you find this questionnaire necessary?**



This questionnaire's objective is that of drawing the future graduate's psychological profile. The questions took into consideration the student's acknowledgment of his native and acquired aptitudes and the extent to which he has been motivated to exploit these aptitudes in order to transform them in competences.

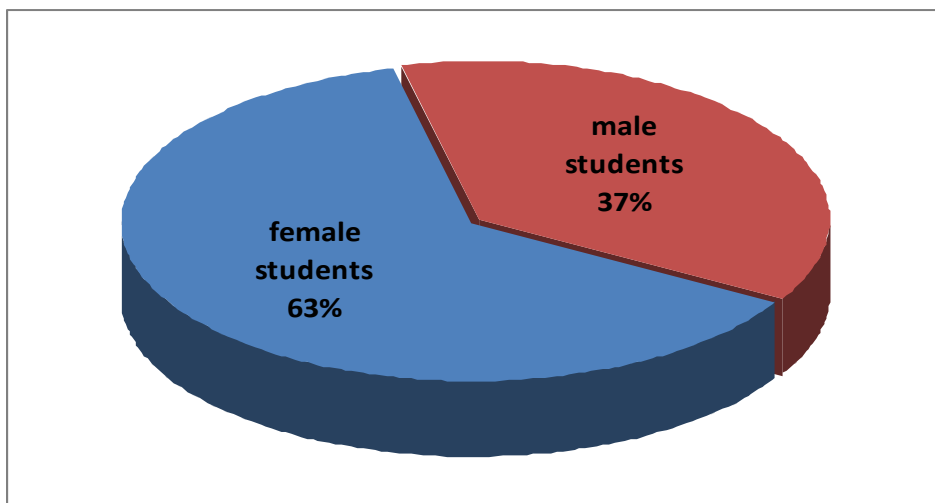
A high number of respondents (77%) were receptive to this cause, proving maturity and strictness in what regarded their answers.

**31. Which is this questionnaire's main feature?**



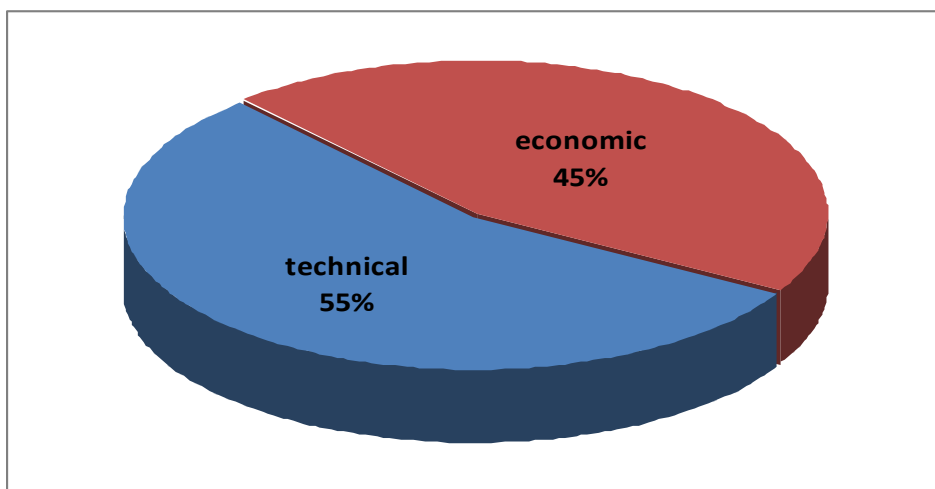
Most of the respondents considered that the main attributes of this questionnaire are: good, useful, interesting (73%), guiding (11%), insignificant, useless (7%), original (4%), very good (3%), difficult (2%).

**32. Gender**



This study verifies the situation presented in national statistics regarding the high number of female students (63%) as compared to that of male students (37%). This fact implies a certain approach of the university curricula, respecting some peculiarities of female students. Moreover, the process of making the curricula more flexible could take into consideration the introduction of vocational specialization courses and the adaptation of optional packages to the requirements of labor market.

### 33. High school profile



As mentioned from the beginning of this study, the respondents come from technical (55%) and economic (45%) high schools in Bucharest. This choice was based on the beneficiary's interest (economic university) of studying the pupils' psychological presumption of becoming students and their motivation to apply for university.

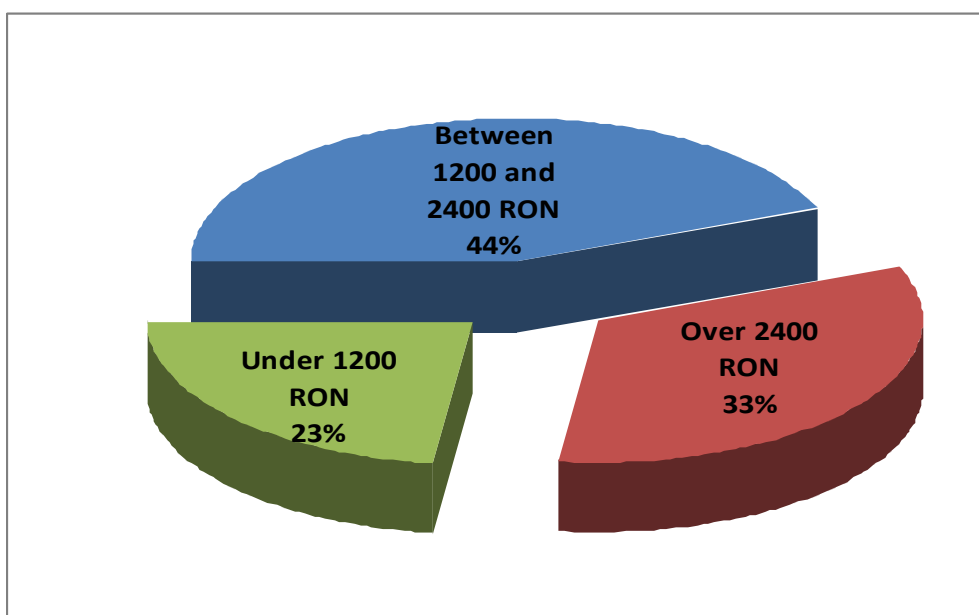
### 34. What is your family's income?

The intention of this question is to estimate the family's financial support in what regards the educational process, taking into consideration the fact that a great part of the materials' costs are paid by the student. Moreover, it tries to identify the intention of an early entrance on

the labor market of students with poor financial possibilities, to supervise their education and to take measures for reducing eventual discrepancies or failure.

The amount of the family's income is a start point for creating facilities for students to get involved in training stages or partially paid internships in order to help them from a financial point of view.

The analysis of the data shows that 44% of the respondents declare an above average income, between 1200 and 2400 Ron. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to establish a financial support strategy for students, especially for those who have to pay for their studies.



### **Conclusions**

This study's aim was to make high school pupils aware of the fact that there are certain professional exigencies specific to education and labor markets, highlighting the necessity of taking into account each student's abilities and competences, the collaboration in what regards the choose of the professional or educational path with the help of a career counselor.

The objective of this study was to test the extent to which the Romanian educational system/market is known, without drawing a hierarchy based on preferences, but one based on interest fields, on the university curricula or those elements that differentiate between Romanian and foreign universities.

As an overview, the respondents proved to know which are the advantages and disadvantages of graduating a short or long term post-secondary school, our interest being that of underlining the necessity of making a choice based on own possibilities and motivation, regardless the remuneration level or status.

The analysis of the questionnaire provided the following results:

- The necessity to reactivate the professional and career counseling offices in each educational unit in order to improve the pupil-specialist-teacher-parent relationship;
- Taking into consideration the introduction of optional packages in the high school curricula in order to valorize each pupil's abilities, providing a competences based educational system, not a memorizing based one;
- The introduction in every high school of an activity portfolio folder in order to assess the educational path of the pupil. This element could become a decisive one in the post-graduate studies system's admission, being useful in the employment process also.

This study wanted to create a functional relationship between pupil and counselor, on the one hand and high school/post-secondary school – employer, on the other hand, in order to ensure a good self acknowledgement, the ability of keeping up with the requirements of a superior educational unit and the necessity of a correlation between the interest field and the higher education unit's features in order to increase future performance inside the larger labor market's framework.