Are Our Students Ready to Become Successful Employees? A Comparative Analysis of Seven Countries

Öğrencilerimiz Başarılı Çalışan Olmaya Hazır mı? Yedi Ülkenin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Özet

Bu makale, başarılı çalışanlar olmak için öğrencilerin gelecekteki iş performanslarına yönelik tutumlarına odaklanmaktadır. İşteki başarı, yedi ülkenin (Litvanya, Polonya, İspanya, Türkiye, İran, Portekiz ve Estonya) öğrencilerinin gelecekteki çalışma performanslarına karşı tutumlarını; yetenekleri, becerilerini geliştiren yöntemler, motivasyon ve çevresel etkenleri kullanarak ölçülmüştür. Bu ankete toplamda 1355 öğrenci katılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, veri analizi için betimleyici yöntemler, ortalamaların karşılaştırılması ve Cronbach alfa gibi istatistiksel yöntemler kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, becerilerin ve özellikle eğitim yöntemlerinin, aldıkları maaşlara bakılmaksızın, öğrencilerin daha iyi çalışma motivasyonunu etkilediğini göstermiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, öğrencilerin temel becerilerini ve insanlarla ilgili becerilerini en önemli olarak gördüklerini göstermiştir. Ayrıca elde edilen sonuçlar öğrenciler arasında tutumları bakımından bazı kültürel farklılıklar bulunduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Litvanyalılar, Polonyalı ve İranlılar bire bir eğitim yöntemlerini; Portekizliler, İspanyollar ve Türkiyeliler ise grup eğitim yöntemlerini en çok tercih ettikleri eğitim yöntemleri olarak sıralamışlardır. Ayrıca, diğer ülkelerle karşılaştırıldığında İspanyol öğrencilerin çevresel faktörlere çok daha fazla önem verdiği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Çevre, gelişim yöntemleri, kültürel farklılıklar, öğrencilerin becerileri, öğrencilerin motivasyonu, performans.

Abstract

The article focuses on students' attitudes towards their future job performance in relation to becoming successful employees. The level of employee success was measured using the attitudes toward future work performance of students from seven countries (Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Portugal and Estonia) through their assessment of skills, skill developing methods, motivation and environmental factors. A total of 1,355 students participated in the survey. In this study, the data analysis was performed using statistical methods including descriptive methods, comparison of means and Cronbach's alpha. Results of the study show that skills and especially training methods influence students' motivation to work more effectively regardless of the salary received. The results also demonstrate that most students regard basic and people-related skills as the most important factors, but cultural differences were also noticed. Lithuanian, Polish and Iranian participants ranked one-to-one training methods as having the most impact on their development, while Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish students preferred group training methods. Moreover, in comparison to the students from other countries, the Spanish participants considered environmental factors to be extremely important.

Keywords: Cultural differences, development methods, environment, performance, students' motivation, students' skills.

Mobility and working abroad have become a modern method for career development and success (Nowicka, 2007; Roda, 2015). It is estimated that in 2017, approximately 56.8 million people worldwide moved abroad, constituting 0.77% of the total global population (Finaccord, 2014). In a world that allows people to move around freely, intercultural issues pose various challenges for institutions of higher education in preparing specialists as well as for organizations looking for good employees. Additionally, as has been shown in the research of Dearden, Reed and Van Reenen (2000) there exists a strong relationship between qualifications, employment and earnings. Gile and Campbell

(2003), on the other hand, were concerned that recruiters find young people's skills insufficient while Trank and Ryners (2003) warn us that organizations seek employees with skills directly needed in their job. This also corresponds to the fact that many countries have to deal with the problem of high unemployment of young people which leads to huge social problems including the reduced positive perspectives for university students making them lose their motivation to study; and undermining their hopes for successful future work and life. Furthermore, many young people faced with this uncertainty feel that they cannot start building a family, which causes, in the long run, lower birth rates.

Business schools, therefore, must remain particularly attentive and make sure that students are provided with the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are needed for success in the business world.

These issues have become very important and have been analysed in several aspects. For example, Bye, Pushkar and Conway (2007), Debnath, Tandon and Pointer (2007), Hancock (2007), Ruban, McCoach, McGuire and Reis, (2003) as well as Griffin, Jones and Spann (2008) explored students' motives. Questions of employee skill development along with the advantages gained through their competencies were analyzed by Katz (1974), Analoui (1993), Peterson and Van Fleet (2004), Guinipero, Handfield and Eltantawy (2006), Kazlauskaite and Buciuniene (2008), Savaneviciene, Stukaite and Silingiene (2008), Zakarevicius and Zuperkiene (2008), Kumpikaite and Ciarniene (2008), Kumpikaite-Valiuniene, Glinska, Aslan and Ramirez (2016a), Kumpikaite-Valiuniene, Rollnik-Sadowska and Glinska (2016b) and others. Studies dealing with students and their future work performance, however, are fragmental and need more exploration within the cultural context. This paper focuses on these issues and aims to explore the attitudes of students from seven countries toward their future job performance in relation to becoming successful employees with special attention to intercultural differences.

In this paper, predicted success of employees is measured using students' attitudes to their future work performance.

This paper contributes to the cross-cultural management and education literature. First, we contribute to educational literature by drawing on a performance framework to explore students' attitudes toward their future work, based on skills, motivation and environment. Our second contribution is to the cross-cultural management literature, through the comparison of results based on students' attitudes toward their skills, the methods for their development, motivation, and environmental factors.

The paper is structured in the following manner: the first part presents the theoretical background, including job per-

formance and its elements such as skills, their development, motivation and environment. This is followed by the part of the work which deals with methodology describing the research model and the study context. The final portion presents the results followed by the conclusions, a discussion, and study limitations.

Theoretical Background

Performance is a function consisting of multiple factors including employees' knowledge, abilities, motivation and beliefs (Beitler, 2005; Blanchard & Thacker, 2004), and can be presented as a formula (█ Equation 1).

■ Equation 1

Performance = KSAs + Motivation + Environment

The criteria making up the performance equation are analysed in more detail in the other subsections of this article.

Skills As a Factor of Job Performance

Hogarth et al. (*cited by* Gills & Campbell, 2003) state that at least a third of the organizations that experience skill shortage or skill gaps report their negative effects on organizational performance. According to the Business Dictionary (2016), skills are described as the ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and/or people (interpersonal skills) (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2016b).

As has been mentioned in the introduction, we presume that university students who study business will hold managerial positions in the future. The paper, therefore, focuses on managerial skills.

Labbaf, Analoui and Cusworth (1996) claim that the typology for skill description developed by Katz (1974) is the most notable as it divides skills into 3 main types: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skills are specific skills needed by an individual to perform some specialized task. According to Katz (1974) they require proficiency in a certain, specialized field such as engineering, computers, finance or manufacturing and generally mean working with things, not people.

Katz's model (1974) describes human skills as connected with the person's ability to work cooperatively with and understand others, to communicate effectively, to motivate, to understand behavioural principles, to work in a group, to resolve conflicts, and to be a team player. More recently, Analoui (1993) has also qualified teamwork, dealing with conflicts, communication, and creating organizational climate as

people-related skills. The third type of ability is conceptual skills (Katz, 1974), which focus on ideas and concepts. Conceptual skills are described as mental abilities that allow the manager to understand the interactions between different work units within the organization, the effect of changes within any part of the system, and the organization's role in the system. However, as Analoui (1993) and Kakabadse and Margerison (1985) note, Katz's (1974) model does not address a set of very important skills connected with analytical and self-development abilities. The above-mentioned authors claim that these skills are now believed to be highly influential in terms of achieving managerial effectiveness. That is the reason that, other than people-related skills, Analoui (1993; 1998) also highlighted 3 other types of skills which include task-related, analytical, and self-related skills.

In the context of other typologies, it is possible to enumerate the works of Cameron and Tschirhart (1988), Peterson and Van Fleet (2002), Whetten and Cameron (2002) and Charalambos et al. (2007). On the basis of their factor analysis, Cameron and Tschirhart (1988) highlighted four main groups of skills: human relations, competitiveness and control, innovation and rational thinking.

Charalambos et al. (2007) expanded Katz's typology and developed it by dividing each of Katz's categories into two; thus creating the following six categories:

- **Technical:** operational factors and organizing work and people;
- **Human:** personal traits and behavioural factors;
- **Conceptual:** communication skills and team work management.

In turn, Whetten and Cameron (2002), as well as McKenna (2004) divided managerial skills for executives into three areas:

- **Personal skills.** These skills include developing self-awareness, managing stress and solving problems creatively.
- **Interpersonal skills.** Those skills concern communicating supportively, gaining power and influence, managing conflict and motivating employees.
- **Group skills.** This third group involves empowering, delegating and building effective teams.

Guinipero et al. (2006) proposed 5 skills required by supply managers, however, it should be mentioned that these may not be as important or necessary to managers in other areas:

- Team building skills which include leadership, decision-making, influencing and compromising;
- Strategic planning skills involving project scoping, goal setting and execution;
- Communication skills such as presentation, public speaking, listening and writing;

- Technical skills including web-enabled research and sourcing analysis;
- Broader financial skills such as cost accounting and making a business case.

Peterson and Van Fleet (2004), on the other hand, analysed and summarised 23 textbooks resulting in the identification of ten main skills. The main analysed skill typologies are provided in ■ Figure 1.

In summing up the typologies presented above, it is possible to ascertain that management scholars and practitioners agree that managers must possess a mix of core skills to perform their roles effectively, with the majority of them identifying human and task-related (technical) skills.

Katz (1974)	• Technical • Human • Conceptual
Analoui (1993; 1998)	• Task related • People-related • Analytical • Self-related
Charalambos et al. (2007)	• Operational factors • Organizing word and people • Personal traits • Behavioral factors • Communication • Teamwork management
Whetten & Cameron (2002)	• Personal skills • Interpersonal skills • Group skills
Cameron & Tschirhart (1988)	• Human relations • Competitiveness and control • Innovation • Rational thinking
Peterson & Van Fleet (2004)	• Technical • Analytic • Decision making • Human • Communication • Interpersonal • Conceptual • Diagnostic • Flexible • Administrative
Guinipero et al. (2006)	• Team building skills • Strategic planning skills • Communication skills • Technical skills • Financial skills

■ **Figure 1.** Skill typologies.

Skill Development

Scientific literature contains various methods of skill development. On the basis of an analysis of works completed by Mankin (2009), Noe (2005), and Kumpikaite and Ciarniene (2008), we present a summary of method types in ▪▪ Figure 2.

Individual or self-education methods are those which allow trainees to learn on their own, independently from others. Technology-based learning, such as web-based or basic PC-based training programs and video have became very popular in recent times, since it is very easy to adapt them for individual learning. One-to-one learning methods are now viewed as a method where a student learns using a computer. However, in this paper, we adhere to the traditional understanding where one-to-one learning is described as two people working together where a trainee is instructed in the learning process by another person - a teacher or another student. However, it is the group methods which are considered to be the best for fostering development (Kumpikaite & Ciarniene, 2008). These
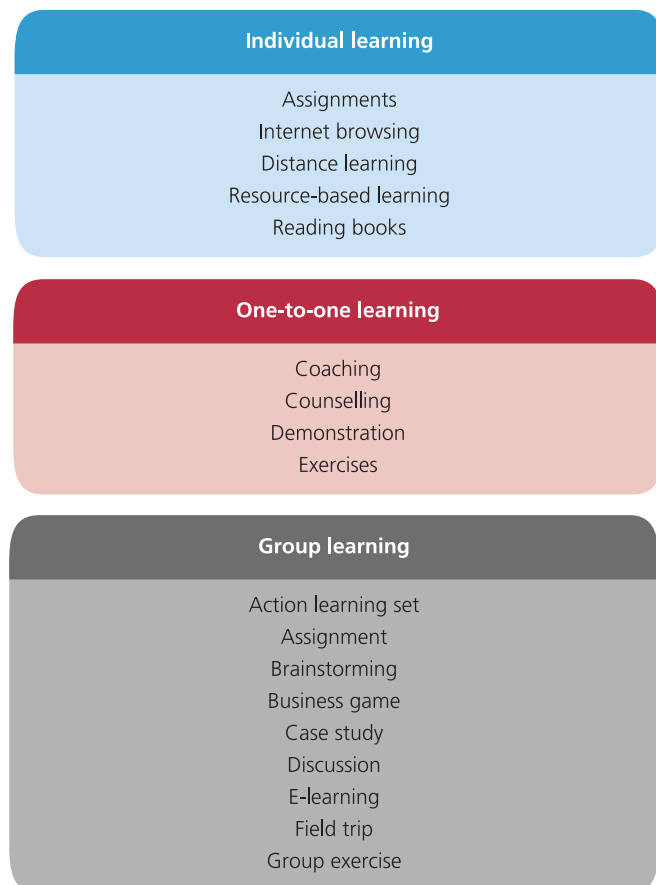

Individual learning

Assignments
Internet browsing
Distance learning
Resource-based learning
Reading books

One-to-one learning

Coaching
Counselling
Demonstration
Exercises

Group learning

Action learning set
Assignment
Brainstorming
Business game
Case study
Discussion
E-learning
Field trip
Group exercise

▪▪ **Figure 2.** Skill development methods.

include many different types of methods, with some being more modern, such as e-learning, business games, debates or case studies, and others being more traditional, such as lectures, group projects or discussions.

Motivation As a Factor of Job Performance

In his research into performance motivation, Beitler (2005) analysed behavioural and cognitive theories and developed a motivation model which is presented in ▪▪ Equation 2.

▪▪ **Equation 2**

Level of Motivation = Expectation of Success × Trust in Receiving the Reward × Perceived Value of the Reward

However, usefulness of this model is limited when it concerns the evaluation of attitudes of people who do not work. That is the reason that, in this case, the authors decided to use Maslow's hierarchy of needs, fully aware that it was developed in 1943, as well as that it has been the object of many criticisms (Geller, 1982) but also bearing in mind that this theory is still the most popular. Its basic assumptions are the following:

- Basic needs including physiological and safety needs. These needs are connected with the maintenance of the human body and keeping people from harm. By becoming rich, strong and powerful, or through making good friends, people can make themselves feel safe.
- Psychological needs involving social and esteem needs involve people's respect, influence or participation in groups.
- Self-fulfilment or self-actualization needs include achieving a person's full potential with creative activities and are connected to the desire for self-fulfilment (Maslow, 1967).

Of course, it is difficult to delineate and separate all of these needs clearly, since they are connected and overlap, and cannot, therefore, be easily classified into five independent groups (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976), a fact that was agreed upon by Maslow (1967) himself. In the next decade Wahba and Bridwell (1976) proposed that human needs should be categorized as either maintenance or growth. Based on Maslow's theory, these authors suggest that physiological and safety needs should be included in the maintenance needs group, and other needs such as those identified by Maslow, including belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization should be classified as growth needs.

Although Maslow did not specify the needs of the organization and workplace, Geller (1982) claims that some practi-

cal applications stemming from his ideas, such as allowing people room for development, creativity and innovation, can result from them. Moreover, Stretton (1994), Locke and Latham (1990), as well as Shoura and Singh (1999), applied Maslow's theory in the workplace of upper level managers. It is possible, therefore, to use a combination of Maslow's (1967) and Wahba and Bridwell's (1976) classifications of needs in the study.

The Environment As a Factor of Job Performance

According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), the organizational environment is conceptualized as an entity that lies outside the boundary of the organization, providing the organization with raw materials and other resources (inputs), and absorbing its products and services (outputs). Generally, an organization's environment can be divided into general and specific environments. The general environment includes the broad economic, political/legal, socio-cultural, demographic, technological and global conditions that may affect students' studies and future jobs. The specific environment includes those constituencies that have a direct and immediate impact on the students' preparation for work such as personal health and abilities to study and work, as well as the support of their families.

According to Daft (1984), an organization's environment is defined as all the elements existing outside the boundary of the organization that have the potential to affect all or part of the organization. Daft identified 10 factors including industry, raw materials, human resources, financial resources, markets, technology, general economy, government/legal, socio-cultural and international, that may have an impact on particular organizations.

The Context of Cultural Differences

Giles and Campbell (2003) analysed a set of studies and determined that skills can make a considerable contribution to productivity and that this varies in different countries in the stock of human capital. Moreover, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for successful intercultural work and communication have to be recognized, discussed and practiced (Huber-Krieger & Strange, 2003), and the impact of national culture on expectations of self and others in leadership positions remains an important issue (Stelter, 2002). However, Danis and Shipilov (2002) examined the degree of generalization in managerial skills among countries, and suggested that similar generalizations should not be accepted because the business environment of each country has a strong influence on managerial behaviour.

Cultural Context

The analysis of students' attitudes to job performance within the intercultural context was considered in Hofstede's studies. Hofstede (Hofstede & Bond, 1984) divided cultures into six dimensions:

- Power distance presents power and inequality as fundamental facts of any society, a fact of which anybody with some international experience will be aware.
- The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity
- Individualism versus collectivism specifies the degree to which individuals integrate into groups.
- Masculinity versus femininity refers to the distribution of emotional roles between genders, another fundamental issue in all societies with a range of approaches.
- Long versus Short-Term Orientation. Long-term oriented societies foster pragmatic virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular, saving, persistence, and adapting to changing circumstances. Short-term oriented societies promote virtues such as national pride related to the past and present.
- Indulgence versus Restraint. An indulgent society allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. A restrained society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Method

Research Context

The study was carried out in seven countries located in various regions of the world: Iran, an Asian country, the neighbouring Turkey located on two continents, two long-standing European Union members (members since 1996) from Southern Europe - Spain and Portugal, and relatively new European Union countries (gained membership in 2004) situated on the coast of the Baltic Sea - Estonia, Lithuania and Poland.

Turkey has a large population of young people who have difficulties in finding a job in a reasonable time after graduation, a fact that is caused by a lack of available positions. Moreover, their language skills learned at Turkish universities do not allow them to compete on the international level. Iran is known as a restrictive country and many young Iranian people, if provided with an opportunity, prefer to emigrate. Lithuania, Poland and Estonia have older populations with many young people immigrating to other developed countries of the EU. All three of these countries were, for a long time,

under Soviet rule with Lithuania and Estonia being annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union. They regained their independence in 1990. Spain is known for its high unemployment of young people while Portugal has decreased its unemployment rate, but their young people unemployment rate has remained high at about 24.6% in 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017). All mentioned EU countries have high emigration rates.

To illustrate these countries' cultural differences, the authors applied the six dimensions developed by Hofstede (Hofstede & Bond, 1984) described on the http://geert-hofstede.com/ website (Hofstede, 2016). Statistical general information is presented in ▮▮ Table 1.

Individualism

Turkey, with a score of 37, Iran, with a score of 41, and Portugal with a score of 27, are collectivistic societies. This is manifested by a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that the family, the extended family, or an extended relationship. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and overrides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow group members. Based on its score, Spain also looks collectivist, but compared with other areas of the world, it is clearly an individualist country. This, however, allows the Spanish to relate quite easily to certain other, mainly non-European cultures, which perceive other European cultures as aggressive and blunt (Hofstede, 2016). Poland, Lithuania and Estonia, all achieving a score of 60, are individualist societies. It is interesting that Lithuania remained individualist during the soviet occupation. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In individualist societies, offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, and management is the management of individuals. This dimension corresponds with people's motivation. For that reason, we will compare these results with results of skill development methods from our study.

Power Distance

Turkey, Iran, Portugal, Spain and Poland receive intermediate scores varying from 57 up to 68, marking them as hierarchical societies characterized by being dependent and hierarchical where superiors are often inaccessible and people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification with the ideal boss being a father figure. On the organizational level, showing a lack of interest towards a subordinate means that this person is not relevant within the organization, making the employee feel unmotivated. Negative feedback is very distressing so the employee finds it more than difficult to provide his boss with negative information. That is why the boss needs to remain aware of this difficulty and search for seemingly unimportant signals, helping him to discover real problems and prevent them from becoming relevant. At the same time, achievement of relatively low scores in this dimension by Lithuanians (42) and Estonians (40) shows their tendencies to prefer equality and the decentralization of power and decision-making. Control and formal supervision is generally disliked among the younger generation, demonstrating a preference for teamwork and an open management style. However, among the older generation which has experienced Russian and Soviet dominance, there is a sense of loyalty and deference towards authority, and people having higher social status. It is also important to note that Lithuania showed a preference for teamwork even during the Communist era, with work units commonly meeting to discuss ideas and create plans.

▮▮ **Table 1.** Hofstede's cultural dimensions in countries being analyzed.

Country	Individualism/ Collectivism	Masculinity	Long-term orientation	Indulgence	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance
TR	Collectivism (37)	Feminine (45)	Short/Long (46)	Medium (49)	Large (66)	Unc. avoiding (85)
IR	Collectivism (41)	Feminine (43)	Short-term (14)	Restrained (40)	Large (58)	Unc. avoiding (59)
ES	Indiv/Collect (51)	Masc/Fem (42)	Short/Long (48)	Restrained (44)	Large (57)	Unc. avoiding (86)
PT	Collectivism (27)	Masc/Fem (31)	Short-term (28)	Restrained (33)	Large (63)	Unc. avoiding (99)
EE	Individualism (60)	Feminine (30)	Long-term (82)	Restrained (16)	Small (57)	Unc. avoiding (60)
LT	Individualism (60)	Feminine (19)	Long-term (82)	Restrained (16)	Small (42)	Unc. avoiding (65)
PL	Individualism (60)	Masculinity (64)	Short/Long (38)	Restrained (29)	Large (68)	Unc. avoiding (93)

Masculinity

In this category Turkey achieved a score of 45, Iran 43, Estonia 30, and Lithuania 17, placing them on the feminine side of the scale. This means that their society is driven by a certain amount of modesty and fairness. In feminine countries, the focus is on "working in order to live", managers strive for consensus, and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their careers. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured with focus on the well-being of all. Poland's score of 64 marks it as a masculine society. In masculine countries people "live in order to work", managers are expected to be decisive and assertive, the emphasis is on equity, competition and performance, and conflicts are resolved by fighting them out. With a score of 31, Portugal, along with Spain which achieved a score of 42, are considered to be consensus countries where polarization or excessive competitiveness are not appreciated. In these places, concern for the weak or the needy is high and these people generate a natural current of sympathy. In regard to management managers like to consult their subordinates to learn their opinions and make their decisions with consideration to them. In politics, it is desirable to have the participation of all minorities, and to try to avoid the dominant presence of just one winning party. These countries are in opposition to 'the winner takes all' approach.

Uncertainty Avoidance

In this dimension, Iran gained a score of 59, showing a high preference for avoiding uncertainty while Turkey scored 85, revealing a huge need for laws and rules. This dimension defines Portugal and Spain with Spain attaining a score of 86, Poland a 93 and Portugal a whopping 99. Lithuania and Estonia are also uncertainty-avoiding countries with scores of 65 and 60. Countries exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour, and are intolerant to unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures, there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work), time is money, and people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard.

Long-term Orientation

Turkey's intermediate score of 46 is in the middle of the scale; so no dominant cultural preference can be inferred. Iran's very low score of 14 indicates that it has a strongly normative cultural orientation. Poland's low score of 38 and Portugal's score of 28 show that these cultures prefer normative thought over the pragmatic. People in such societies have a strong need to establish absolute Truths, and are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and focus on achieving quick results.

Despite an intermediate score of 48, Spain is considered to be a normative country, as well. Lithuanian and Estonian on the other hand, both attaining a very high score of 82, are cultures which are extremely pragmatic. In societies with a pragmatic orientation, people believe that truth, to a high degree, depends on the situation, context and time. They show an ability to easily adapt traditions to changing conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest - thriftiness and perseverance in achieving results.

Indulgence

With an intermediate score of 49, a characteristic corresponding to this dimension cannot be determined for Turkey. The low score in this dimension means that Iran (score 40), Spain (score 44), Portugal (score 33), and Poland (score 29) have a culture of restraint. Lithuania and Estonia share a very low score of 16, indicating that their cultures are very restrained in nature. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism and, in contrast to indulgent societies, do not put much emphasis on leisure time, and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

To sum up, we could state that all these countries represent different regions and cultures requiring deeper comparison analysis.

Research Model and Research Questions

A literature review with special focus on Analoui's (1998) skill description, Wahba and Bridwell's (1976) and Maslow's definitions of motives, as well as Daft's (1984) characterization of the environment, were used to evaluate students' attitudes toward work performance on the basis of a model developed by Blanchard and Thacker (2004). A deeper analysis of the generalised results of this study is presented in Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al. (2016a). The conceptual research model for this study is presented in ▮▮ Figure 3.

To fulfil the goals of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

- **RQ1:** What are the cultural differences in students' attitudes toward future work performance?
- **RQ2:** What are the cultural differences in students' evaluation of their skills needed for future work?
- **RQ3:** What are the cultural differences in students' preference in skill-developing methods?
- **RQ4:** What are the cultural differences in motivational factors which students value in their future work?
- **RQ5:** What are the cultural differences in the students' evaluation of future employment environmental factors?
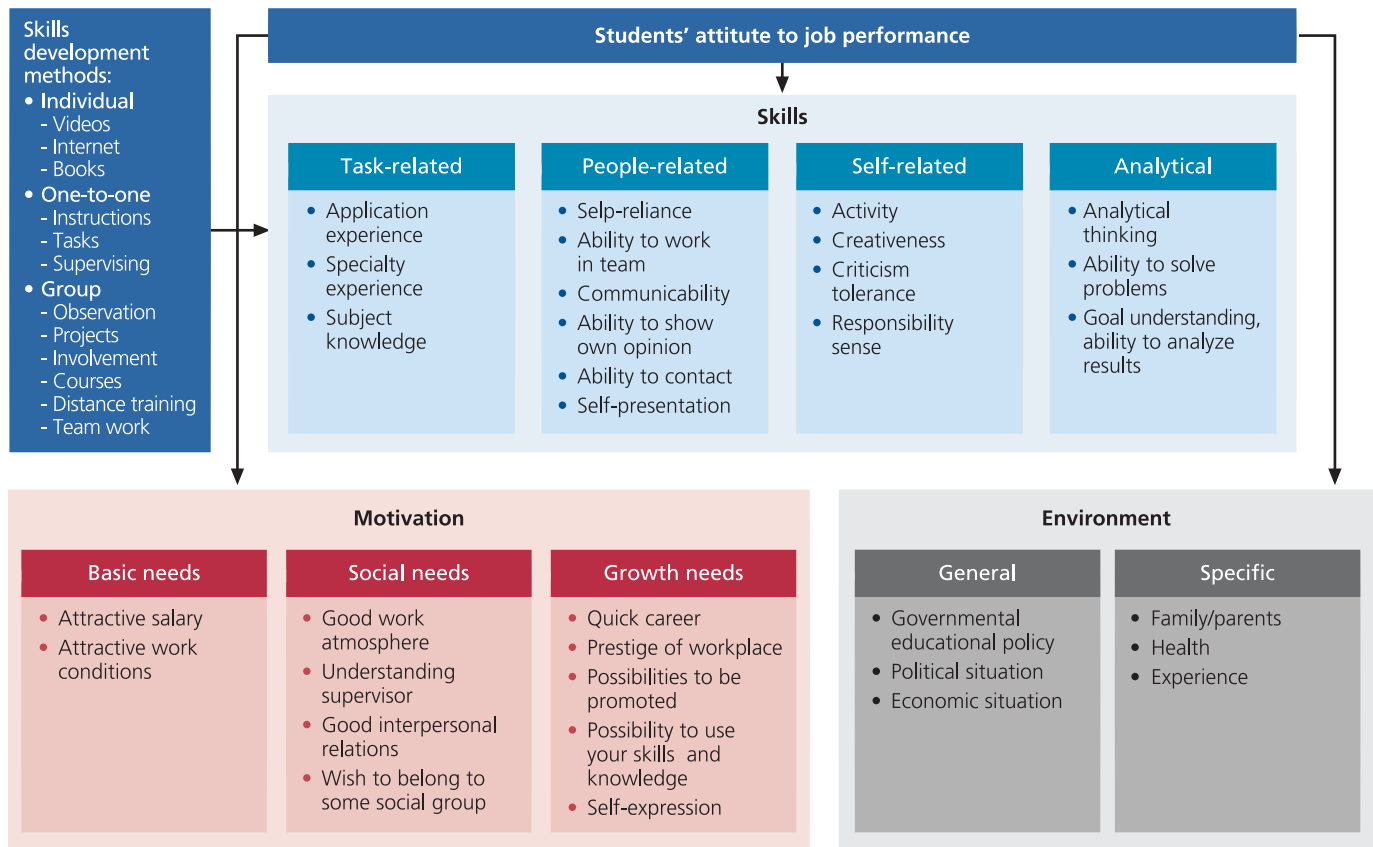
Figure 3. Research model of students' attitudes toward job performance.

Sampling Method and Data Collection

A questionnaire was chosen as the research instrument for this study. An original questionnaire was prepared in Lithuanian and tested in previous studies (Kumpikaite, 2009; Kumpikaite & Alas, 2009), and then translated into English and into all respondents' languages using the double translation method (McGorry, 2000). The survey, based on the convenience sampling method, was conducted online due to the students' high level of Internet use, with the exception of Estonia and Portugal where printed questionnaires were used.

The questionnaire consisted of four question groups constructed on the basis of the scientific literature analysis and the proposed research model (■ Figure 3):

- Students' needs and motivation to work;
- The level of students' current level of skill development;
- Skill development methods;
- The environment which has an influence on work and performance.

The students were provided with a list of factors and asked to evaluate all of them. The four-point Likert scale was used for

question evaluation where 0 meant not at all important / not developed at all, 1- slightly important/slightly developed, 2- important / developed, and 3- very important/very developed.

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS with descriptive analysis, comparison of means, Cronbach's alpha, ANOVA analysis for highlighting statistical cultural differences for sub-groups according to countries, and regression analysis was performed to achieve the aims of the study.

The reliability of the instrument was checked through the use of Cronbach's alpha (■ Table 2). All question groups

Table 2. Reliability of the questionnaire.

Group of questions	Cronbach's alpha	N of items
Motives	.837	11
Skills	.861	16
Methods	.730	12
Environment	.709	7
Total	.887	46

were shown to have the Cronbach's alpha value higher than the significance value of 0.7 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Sample Characteristics

1,355 students from seven countries studying business, management or administration participated in the study. Students from two universities in Lithuania and Turkey, and from one university in all other cases participated in this study. In a comparison of these universities, the samples of business students are representative, with the exception of Portugal. However, for reasons of anonymity, the details concerning these particular universities can not be presented. 53.8% of the participants were females. The specific number and gender characteristics are presented in ◼◼ Table 3. In regard to the respondents' year of study, their distribution was as follows: 27.6%-1st year, 45.1%-2nd year, 12.2%-3rd year, 14.5-4th and 0.4% of 5th year.

Results

General Results of the Study

◼◼ Figure 4 presents the students' general attitude to performance calculated on the basis of their skill evaluation, motivation and the impact of the environment (◼◼ Figure 3). A descriptive analysis presenting a mean of answers, with the maximum pos-

◼◼ **Table 3.** General information about respondents.

Country	No of respondents	Percent of males
Lithuania (LT)	322	41.9
Estonia (EE)	34	61.8
Poland (PL)	208	44.2
Spain (ESP)	127	34.6
Portugal (PT)	35	65.7
Turkey (TR)	436	47.7
Iran (IR)	193	53.4

sible value of 4, was used for this analysis. Students seeking to become good employees should, first of all, gain sufficient skills. It must be mentioned that the lowest score was for task-related skills (an average of just 1.85). The research results indicate that students ranked people-related skills the highest (an average score of 2.32). Analytical abilities, or those skills which could help them secure good employment in the future, were rated relatively high (an average score 2.28), higher than self-related skills (an average score 2.18) but lower than people-related skills. Considering the average scores produced by the students, it turns out that material aspects connected with future work are thought to be the most important group of motivational factors (an average score of 2.59), achieving the highest score among all
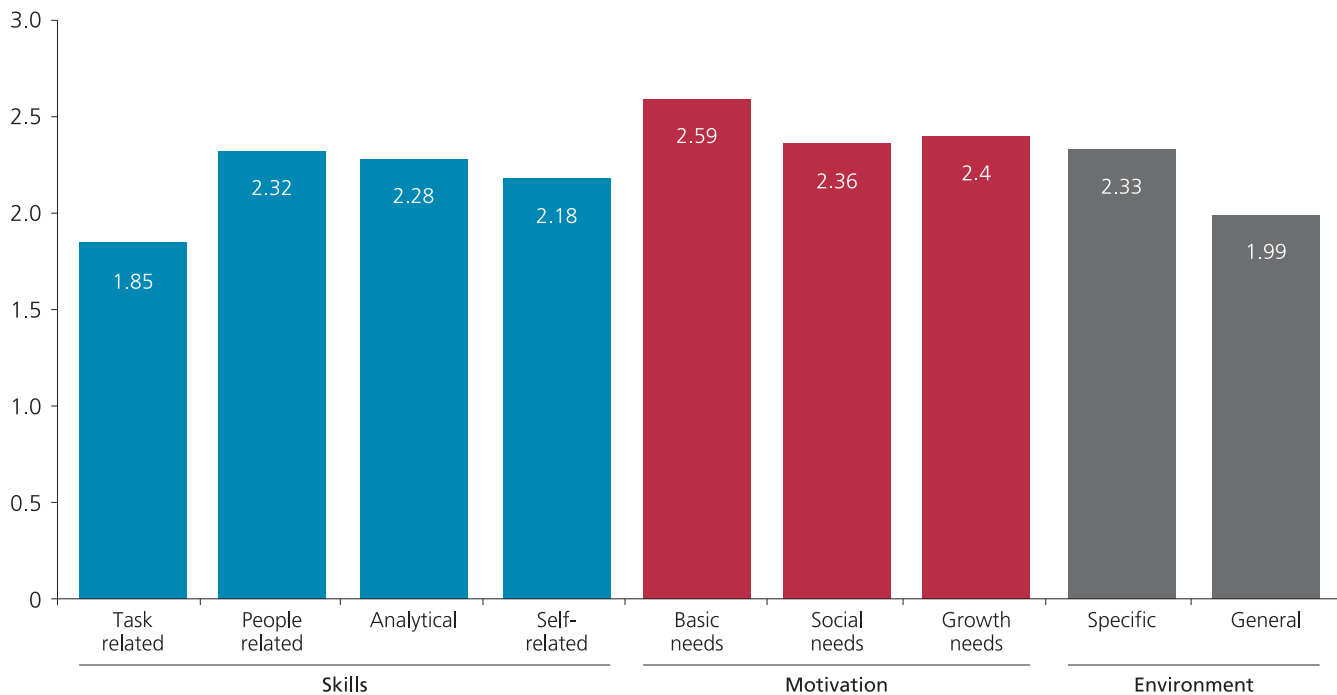

◼◼ **Figure 4.** Mean values of students' answers indicating their attitudes toward performance.

other groups of criteria. This is not surprising since students are young and try to earn enough of their own money to satisfy their basic needs themselves and to become independent. In addition, after looking at their evaluation of the environment, it is possible to see that students considered specific environment to be much more important than the general environment, with the average score in this category adding up to 1.99. Comparing all three groups of criteria motivation was ranked the highest (an average score of 2.45) with all other criteria, attaining the value of 2.16.

Regression analysis was used to check the various criteria influencing the students' inner motivation evaluated using the statement: "You want to perform the work which you have been assigned as best as possible, regardless of the salary you receive". When performance factors skills, motivation, and the environment are used in the model, the results show that motives do not have any impact. Skills and the environment, however, have a positive effect on carrying out the assigned work (■ Equation 3). This proves that skills have a higher impact than the environment on students' attitude toward performance.

■ Equation 3

You want to perform the work which you have been assigned as best as possible regardless of the salary you receive = 1.28 +0.197*Skills+ 0.153*Environment

After plugging in skills from the development training factors' group into the same regression model, it became symptomatic with positive skills and training. Motives and the environment have no significance within that model, presented in ■ Equation 4. It means that skills, and especially training methods, influence students' motivation to work better despite the received salary.

■ Equation 4

You want to perform the work which you have been assigned as best as possible regardless of the salary you receive =1.130+0.225* Skills+0.256*Training

Models become significant at <0.05 value.

Comparison of Students from Particular Countries

■ Table 4 presents the importance of factors by countries. Students from Turkey, Iran, Portugal and Poland selected sense of responsibility as their most developed skill. This skill is considered to be a self-related skill. Others considered other skills to be the most important: The Spanish ranked their ability to make contacts (a people-related skill) as the most crucial. The Estonians, on the other hand, believed their ability to express their own opinions (a people-related skill) to be the most significant, with the Lithuanians gauging tolerance to criticism (self-related) as having the highest importance. The Turks and the Estonians additionally feel that they are also well prepared for future employment through their ability to express their own opinions and communicability. Another very important fact is that students from Spain also highly value their subject knowledge (part of task-related skills) which is very important for future performance. It is also interesting that, compared to the students from other countries, Polish students also highly value their self-reliance.

The students from Poland, Lithuania, Iran, Portugal, and Estonia admitted that they would be highly motivated with the right economic factors in connection to attractive work conditions and salaries. Students from Turkey and Spain are motivated by factors which satisfy their higher needs such as self-expression, the possibility to use their skills and knowledge, and the social element of good atmosphere at the workplace.

Only Polish students ranked education as the most important environmental factor. With the exception of Spanish stu-

■ **Table 4.** Importance of factors by country (mean value).

Students from	The most important motivational factors	The most developed skills	The most important factors of environment
Lithuania	Attractive work conditions (2.66)	Tolerance to criticism (2.47)	Your health (2.47)
Turkey	Self-expression (2.74)	Sense of responsibility (2.58)	Your health (2.64)
Iran	Attractive work conditions (2.79)	Sense of responsibility (2.46)	Your health (2.68)
Spain	Possibility to use your skills and knowledge (2.97)	Ability to make contacts (2.88)	Economic situation of a country (2.65)
Portugal	Attractive salary (2.83)	Sense of responsibility (2.85)	Your health (2.30)
Estonia	Attractive salary (2.55)	Ability to show own opinion (2.53)	Your health (2.39)
Poland	Attractive salary (2.69)	Sense of responsibility (2.50)	Education (background) (2.60)

dents, all others put their health first (█ Table 4), with this factor being chosen as the second by the Polish students. Students from Spain ranked their economic situation as the most influential factor.

Skill Evaluation

Results of the ANOVA analysis comparing the chosen countries as pairs are presented in █ Table 5. Sixteen statistical differences were found between Portugal and all other countries. In all cases, students from Portugal evaluated their skills higher than those of other nationalities, and it may be that they have over-evaluated their skills; but such an assumption requires a more in-depth study. The next largest number of 11 differences occurred in 2 cases: between Spain and Poland, as well as Spain and Turkey. Polish and Turkish students considered application experience, communicability, the ability to solve problems, and sense of responsibility to be more important than the Spanish students did. However, the Spanish students considered subject knowledge, the ability to make contacts, the ability to express their own opinions, the ability to work in a team, analytical thinking, understanding of goals, and tolerance to criticism to be more important than did the Polish students. The Spanish students in comparison to the Turkish students held subject knowledge, specialty experience, the ability to make contacts, the ability to work in a team, analytical thinking, goal understanding, and tolerance to criticism in higher esteem. The Turkish students, on the other hand, judged application experience, communicability, the ability to solve problems, and their sense of responsibility to be more important than the Spanish students.

No statistical differences were found comparing the evaluation of skills between the Lithuanian and Estonian respondents. Only two differences were found in comparisons of Estonia with Poland, Iran, and Turkey, and they dealt with application experience and creativeness, with Polish, Turkish and Iranian students deeming those two qualities to be more important than did the Estonians.

The greatest number (16 pairs) of differences was recorded in regard to application experience and the lowest number of differences were found in relation to activity (6) and self-reliance (7).

Methods of student development have been presented in █ Table 6. Overall, the students considered group development methods to be the best followed by one-to-one and individual methods. However, there were cultural differences between countries and the Lithuanian, Iranian and Polish students believed one-to-one methods to be the most effective while the Turkish, Portuguese and Spanish students regarded group training methods as the most beneficial. Special tasks

were considered to be the most helpful method by the Lithuanians, project performance and team work by the Turks and reading of educational literature and development courses by the Iranians. The Spanish and Portuguese students valued team work the most and the Polish participants valued consideration of a received task with their supervisor the most. Values assigned to specific tasks by the Spanish students were the highest while those of the Portuguese were the lowest among all explored countries. This is an interesting finding, as these countries are neighbours; but this issue may need a deeper analysis.

Evaluation of Motivation

Statistical results of students' motivation toward future work based on an ANOVA analysis are presented in █ Table 7. In the comparison between Portugal and Estonia, statistical differences were found in all 11 categories. However, just one difference was found in the motives of students from Lithuania and Estonia, and between Estonia and Poland, where the understanding of their supervisor is less important to the Estonians than to the Lithuanians, and the possibility of promotion is more important to the Estonian than to Polish students.

It is interesting that the neighbouring countries of Spain and Portugal had as many as eight statistical differences, while Lithuania and Poland had four, and Turkey and Iran had three differences.

In comparing the differences according to varying motives, there were 17 differences in 21 cases related to the understanding of a supervisor, with this statistical difference not being found between Lithuania and Poland, Iran and Turkey, Spain and Estonia, as well as Estonia and Poland.

Sixteen statistical differences in the 21 comparisons of country pairs were found for the following motives: wanting to belong to some social group, fast career, prestige of the workplace, possibility to use one's skills and self-expression.

Just seven cases, the lowest number of differences, turned up in the category of good work atmosphere. This criterion is more important to the Portuguese than to students from all other explored countries with the exception of Iran. Good working atmosphere is also more important to Iranians than to Estonians.

The motivational factor of an attractive salary was the subject of ten statistical differences, in half of the explored cases.

Environment as a Factor Influencing Work Performance

Evaluation of students' attitudes toward the environment as a factor having an impact on their future work focused on statistical differences based on their culture (█ Table 8).

No environmental statistical differences were found between Estonia and Portugal. The greatest number of statis-

Table 5. Analysed students' attitudes to skills.

Countries	Measures	Task-related			People-related						Analytical			Self-related				Amount of statistical differences
		Subject knowledge	Specialty experience	Application experience	Self-presentation	Ability to contact	Ability to show own opinion	Communicability	Ability to work in team	Self-reliance	Ability to solve problems	Analytic thinking	Goal understanding, ability to plan, analyse results	Responsibility sense	Creativeness	Activity	Tolerance to criticism	
LT-TR	Mean diff. (I-J)	.302*	.183	-.303*	.238*	.039	-.147	-.086	.033	-.186*	-.009	.141	.053	-.421*	-.039	-.027	.594*	6
	Sig.	.000	.189	.000	.002	.994	.161	.754	.998	.048	1.000	.246	.972	.000	.995	.999	.000	
LT-IR	Mean diff.	.015	-.269	-.397*	-.255*	-.113	-.119	-.074	-.091	-.191	-.146	.095	.093	-.296*	-.230*	-.204	.306*	5
	Sig.	1.000	.057	.000	.011	.705	.711	.956	.875	.179	.322	.876	.867	.002	.044	.123	.040	
LT-ES	Mean diff.	-.697*	-.401*	.180	.340*	-.577*	-.274*	.417*	-.819*	-.230	.271*	-.661*	-.567*	.136	-.208	-.068	-.026	10
	Sig.	.000	.003	.351	.001	.000	.016	.000	.000	.122	.008	.000	.000	.688	.188	.987	1.000	
LT-PT	Mean diff.	-1.777*	-1.907*	-1.896*	-1.241*	-1.195*	-1.240*	-1.361*	-1.359*	-1.372*	-1.416*	-1.117*	-1.055*	-1.669*	-1.426*	-1.402*	-.701*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	
LT-EE	Mean diff.	-.061	-.329	.304	-.147	-.028	-.288	-.132	-.101	-.029	-.183	-.022	.360	-.307	.426	-.221	.203	0
	Sig.	1.000	.603	.434	.961	1.000	.458	.971	.993	1.000	.840	1.000	.187	.413	.086	.804	.954	
LT-PL	Mean diff.	.122	-.651*	-.639*	.143	-.082	.134	-.138	-.024	-.226	-.138	-.015	.084	-.338*	-.171	-.072	.652*	4
	Sig.	.726	.000	.000	.494	.913	.560	.471	1.000	.069	.425	1.000	.924	.000	.294	.972	.000	
TR-IR	Mean diff.	-.288*	-.453*	-.094	-.493*	-.152	.029	.012	-.123	-.004	-.137	-.046	.040	.125	-.190	-.177	-.288*	4
	Sig.	.001	.000	.840	.000	.261	1.000	1.000	.534	1.000	.310	.995	.997	.576	.108	.191	.033	
TR-ES	Mean diff.	-.999*	-.584*	.483*	.102	-.616*	-.127	.503*	-.852*	-.044	.279*	-.801*	-.620*	.557*	-.169	-.041	-.620*	11
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.863	.000	.670	.000	.000	.998	.002	.000	.000	.000	.364	.999	.000	
TR-PT	Mean diff.	-2.079*	-2.090*	-1.593*	-1.479*	-1.234*	-1.093*	-1.275*	-1.391*	-1.185*	-1.407*	-1.258*	-1.108*	-1.248*	-1.387*	-1.374*	-1.295*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
TR-EE	Mean diff.	-.363	-.512	.607*	-.385	-.067	-.140	-.047	-.134	.158	-.174	-.163	.306	.114	.465*	-.193	-.391	2
	Sig.	.226	.094	.001	.135	.999	.963	1.000	.969	.951	.860	.937	.350	.989	.037	.877	.440	
TR-PL	Mean diff.	-.181	-.834*	-.336*	-.095	-.121	.281*	-.052	-.056	-.040	-.129	-.156	.031	.083	-.131	-.045	.058	3
	Sig.	.190	.000	.000	.840	.529	.001	.987	.983	.998	.421	.340	.999	.912	.537	.997	.996	
IR-ES	Mean diff.	-.711*	-.131	.577*	.595*	-.463*	-.155	.491*	-.729*	-.039	.416*	-.755*	-.660*	.432*	.021	.136	-.332	10
	Sig.	.000	.913	.000	.000	.000	.621	.000	.000	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.792	.092	
IR-PT	Mean diff.	-1.792*	-1.637*	-1.499*	-.986*	-1.082*	-1.122*	-1.287*	-1.268*	-1.181*	-1.270*	-1.212*	-1.148*	-1.373*	-1.197*	-1.198*	-1.007*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
IR-EE	Mean diff.	-.075	-.059	.701*	.108	.085	-.169	-.058	-.011	.162	-.037	-.117	.267	-.011	.656*	-.017	-.103	2
	Sig.	.999	1.000	.000	.993	.998	.929	1.000	1.000	.954	1.000	.990	.580	1.000	.001	1.000	.999	
IR-PL	Mean diff.	.107	-.382*	-.242	.398*	.031	.252*	-.064	.067	-.035	.008	-.110	-.009	-.042	.059	.132	.346*	4
	Sig.	.882	.004	.057	.000	1.000	.048	.987	.982	1.000	1.000	.863	1.000	.999	.993	.749	.032	
ES-PT	Mean diff.	-1.081*	-1.506*	-2.076*	-1.582*	-.618*	-.966*	-1.778*	-.539*	-1.141*	-1.687*	-.457*	-.488*	-1.805*	-1.218*	-1.333*	-.675*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.000	.049	.017	.000	.000	.000	.014	
ES-EE	Mean diff.	.636*	.072	.124	-.487*	.549*	-.014	-.550*	.718*	.202	-.453*	.638*	.927*	-.443	.634*	-.152	.229	9
	Sig.	.003	1.000	.989	.040	.008	1.000	.007	.000	.893	.032	.002	.000	.092	.002	.971	.936	
ES-PL	Mean diff.	.818*	-.251	-.819*	-.197	.494*	.408*	-.555*	.796*	.004	-.408*	.645*	.651*	-.473*	.038	-.003	.678*	11
	Sig.	.000	.314	.000	.336	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	1.000	.000	
PT-EE	Mean diff.	1.717*	1.578*	2.200*	1.094*	1.167*	.952*	1.229*	1.257*	1.343*	1.233*	1.095*	1.414*	1.362*	1.852*	1.181*	.905*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.010	
PT-PL	Mean diff.	1.899*	1.255*	1.257*	1.384*	1.113*	1.374*	1.223*	1.335*	1.145*	1.278*	1.102*	1.139*	1.331*	1.256*	1.330*	1.353*	16
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
EE-PL	Mean diff.	.182	-.322	-.943*	.290	-.054	.422	-.006	.078	-.198	.045	.007	-.276	-.030	-.597*	.149	.448	2
	Sig.	.922	.657	.000	.514	1.000	.088	1.000	.999	.891	1.000	1.000	.547	1.000	.004	.971	.322	
Amount of differences		13	12	16	13	11	10	11	11	7	11	11	11	12	11	6	13	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6. Skill development methods.

Country	Measures	Individual learning				One-to-one learning				Group learning						
		Watching of training programs (films etc.)	Internet browsing	Reading of educational literature	Total	Considering of received task with the superviso	Instructions of others	Special tasks	Total	Observation, what others do	Project performing	Involvement into other work areas	Development course	Distance training	Team work	Total
Lithuania	Mean	1.94	1.75	1.97	1.89	2.12	1.81	2.36	2.10	1.86	2.15	2.11	2.31	1.68	2.26	2.06
	Median	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Turkey	Mean	1.80	1.88	2.10	1.92	1.83	1.09	1.37	1.43	1.62	2.17	1.66	2.17	1.98	2.17	1.96
	Median	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	1.00	1.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Iran	Mean	2.11	2.20	2.45	2.26	2.26	2.41	2.22	2.30	1.87	2.18	2.18	2.45	1.12	2.41	2.03
	Median	2.00	2.00	3.00		2.00	3.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	
Spain	Mean	1.97	-	1.88	1.93	2.18	1.98	-	2,08	1.98	2.41	2.33	2.30	1.64	2.50	2.19
	Median	2.00	-	2.00		2.00	2.00	-		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	
Portugal	Mean	1.42	1.97	1.44	1.61	1.56	1.44	1.44	1.48	1.47	1.51	1.67	1.94	1.00	2.22	1.64
	Median	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	
Poland	Mean	1.88	2.21	2.09	2.06	2.34	2.22	1.97	2.18	1.90	2.28	1.93	2.26	.97	2.21	1.92
	Median	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	
Total	Mean	1.90	1.94	2.08	1.97	2.04	1.68	1.85	1.86	1.78	2.18	1.95	2.26	1.66	2.27	2.02
	Median	2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Total	Mean	1.97				1.86				2.02						

tical differences was found in relation to Spain. All six statistical differences were found in its comparison with Turkey, Estonia, Poland and Portugal. In addition, 6 differences were found between Lithuanian and Iran. In this case, all factors were more important to Iranians.

A similar situation occurred in consideration of the results of comparisons between Spain with Estonia and Portugal, with all factors being more important to the Spanish students. In cases comparing Spain to Turkey and Poland, experience is more important to the Turkish and Polish students with all other factors being more relevant to the Spanish students. Looking at factorial differences, as many as 16 were found in respect to the economic situation of a country and experience, with only 8 statistical differences dealing with health.

Discussion and Conclusion

The countries considered in the present study are quite different. Lithuania and Estonia have almost no natural resources and, as a result, their cultures are based on human capital and knowledge. They also take full advantage of their possibility to move freely inside the EU and the ability to find jobs in different member countries of the EU. Poland is a relatively wealthy and fast-developing country; but it is also quite new to the EU, and its development level is lower than that of the old members of the EU. For that reason, emigration of the labour force from Poland to the EU is also high. When it comes to Spain and Portugal, both have natural resources, and are old members of the EU; but, due economic crises and decisions making mistakes at the governmental level, they face very high unemployment rates. The unemployment rates for young people in individual countries at the end of 2014 were as follows: 51.7% in Spain, 33.3% in Portugal, 19.2% in Turkey, 18.5% in Lithuania, and 14.4% in Estonia (Eurostat, 2015). That is why the subject of higher education students' preparation to become successful employees is crucial. Iran and Turkey both possess extensive natural resources. Iran, however, due to various issues, is less competitive internationally; and mainly depends on its natural resources making the government the main employment provider. In this respect, Iran could be compared to Iraq or Saudi Arabia where government jobs are the main source for people to earn a living. Turkey, on the other hand, is very big but its development is uneven. The present study considered students from two newer universities located in developing regions where the majority of citizens depend on government jobs or agriculture which do not need a lot of training or special abilities. In conclusion, it is clear that there exist different requirements for employment in countries considered in the study.

Table 7. Motives driving participant students.

Countries	Measures	Basic needs		Social needs				Growth needs					Amount of statistical differences
		Attractive salary	Attractive work conditions	Good work atmosphere	Understanding supervisor	Good interpersonal relations	Wish to belong to some social group	Quick career	Prestige of workplace	Possibilities to be promoted	Possibility to use your skills and knowledge	Self-expression	
LT-TR	Mean dif. (I-J)	.323*	.166*	-.096	-.167*	-.147	-.376*	-.285*	-.437*	-.057	-.056	-.369*	7
	Sig.	.000	.018	.527	.043	.163	.000	.000	.000	.962	.952	.000	
LT-IR	Mean diff.	-.008	-.129	-.145	-.315*	-.228*	-.569*	-.503*	-.575*	-.145	-.075	-.357*	6
	Sig.	1.000	.354	.255	.000	.026	.000	.000	.000	.388	.920	.000	
LT-ES	Mean diff.	-.070	.231*	.031	.429*	-.538*	-.699*	-.772*	-.716*	-.048	-.373*	-.350*	8
	Sig.	.945	.015	.999	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.997	.000	.000	
LT-PT	Mean diff.	-1.175*	-.836*	-.485*	-.781*	-.311	-1.058*	-1.114*	-1.383*	-.958*	-.794*	-1.154*	9
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.217	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
LT-EE	Mean diff.	.085	.193	.216	.472*	.265	.128	.241	.102	.270	.360	.344	1
	Sig.	.990	.633	.546	.004	.441	.985	.709	.994	.422	.064	.072	
LT-PL	Mean diff.	-.058	.002	.056	.147	.063	.358*	.186	.157	.848*	.258*	.431*	4
	Sig.	.959	1.000	.974	.333	.978	.001	.294	.505	.000	.003	.000	
TR-IR	Mean diff.	-.331*	-.295*	-.049	-.149	-.081	-.193	-.219*	-.138	-.089	-.020	.012	3
	Sig.	.000	.000	.979	.187	.877	.145	.049	.498	.804	1.000	1.000	
TR-ES	Mean diff.	-.393*	.065	.127	.595*	-.391*	-.323*	-.487*	-.279*	.009	-.318*	.019	7
	Sig.	.000	.950	.462	.000	.000	.005	.000	.018	1.000	.000	1.000	
TR-PT	Mean diff.	-1.498*	-1.002*	-.389*	-.615*	-.164	-.683*	-.829*	-.947*	-.901*	-.738*	-.785*	10
	Sig.	.000	.000	.011	.000	.861	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
TR-EE	Mean diff.	-.238	.027	.312	.639*	.412*	.504*	.525*	.539*	.326	.415*	.713*	7
	Sig.	.329	1.000	.105	.000	.030	.023	.009	.006	.168	.012	.000	
TR-PL	Mean diff.	-.381*	-.164*	.152	.314*	.210*	.734*	.470*	.594*	.905*	.313*	.800*	10
	Sig.	.000	.041	.106	.000	.026	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
IR-ES	Mean diff.	-.062	.359*	.176	.744*	-.310*	-.130	-.268	-.141	.097	-.298*	.007	4
	Sig.	.975	.000	.224	.000	.005	.851	.085	.771	.908	.003	1.000	
IR-PT	Mean diff.	-1,167*	-.707*	-.340	-.466*	-.084	-.489*	-.611*	-.809*	-.812*	-.719*	-.797*	9
	Sig.	.000	.000	.066	.005	.996	.034	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	
IR-EE	Mean diff.	.093	.322	.361*	.787*	.493*	.697*	.744*	.677*	.415*	.435*	.701*	9
	Sig.	.985	.089	.049	.000	.007	.000	.000	.000	.042	.012	.000	
IR-PL	Mean diff.	-.050	.131	.201*	.462*	.291*	.927*	.689*	.732*	.994*	.333*	.788*	9
	Sig.	.985	.393	.046	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
ES-PT	Mean diff.	-1.105*	-1.067*	-.516*	-1.210*	.227	-.359	-.342	-.667*	-.909*	-.420*	-.803*	8
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.668	.306	.329	.001	.000	.021	.000	
ES-EE	Mean diff.	.155	-.038	.185	.043	.804*	.828*	1.012*	.818*	.318	.733*	.694*	6
	Sig.	.856	1.000	.768	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.280	.000	.000	
ES-PL	Mean diff.	.012	-.228*	.025	-.282*	.601*	1.057*	.957*	.873*	.896*	.631*	.781*	9
	Sig.	1.000	.025	1.000	.010	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
PT-EE	Mean diff.	1.260*	1.029*	.701*	1.253*	.577*	1.187*	1.355*	1.485*	1.227*	1.154*	1.497*	11
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.020	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
PT-PL	Mean diff.	1.117*	.838*	.541*	.929*	.374	1.416*	1.299*	1.540*	1.806*	1.052*	1.584*	10
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.084	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
EE-PL	Mean diff.	-.143	-.191	-.160	-.325	-.202	.229	-.055	.055	.578*	-.102	.087	1
	Sig.	.880	.662	.847	.164	.769	.815	1.000	1.000	.001	.986	.993	
Amount of differences		10	12	7	17	11	16	16	16	12	16	16	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8. Students' attitudes toward the environment.

| Countries | Measures | General | | | Specific | | | Amount of statistical differences |
		Governmental educational policy	Economic situation of country	Political situation of country	Your health	Family/Parents	Experience	
LT-TR	Mean diff. (I-J)	-.690*	-.159	-.004	-.173*	-.670*	-.351*	4
	Sig.	.000	.143	1.000	.013	.000	.000	
LT-IR	Mean diff.	-.564*	-.257*	-.481*	-.207*	-.645*	-.271*	6
	Sig.	.000	.015	.000	.017	.000	.048	
LT-ES	Mean diff.	-1.232*	-1.669*	-.404*	-.646*	-1.767*	.043	5
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	1.000	
LT-PT	Mean diff.	.556	,881*	.522	.172	-.261	1.852*	2
	Sig.	.063	.000	.196	.925	.771	.000	
LT-EE	Mean diff.	.427	.838*	.464	.085	-.387	1.869*	2
	Sig.	.099	.000	.121	.994	.115	.000	
LT-PL	Mean diff.	.189	.073	.222	-.049	-.150	-.586*	1
	Sig.	.204	.963	.147	.987	.371	.000	
TR-IR	Mean diff.	.126	-.098	-.477*	-.034	.025	.080	1
	Sig.	.595	.817	.000	.997	1.000	.960	
TR-ES	Mean diff.	-.542*	-1.510*	-.400*	-.474*	-1.097*	.394*	6
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.001	
TR-PT	Mean diff.	1.245*	1.040*	.526	.344	.409	2.202*	3
	Sig.	.000	.000	.179	.270	.241	.000	
TR-EE	Mean diff.	1.116*	.997*	.468	.257	.283	2.220*	3
	Sig.	.000	.000	.104	.373	.437	.000	
TR-PL	Mean diff.	.879*	.232*	.226	.124	.520*	-.235	3
	Sig.	.000	.019	.086	.334	.000	.058	
IR-ES	Mean diff.	-.668*	-1.413*	.077	-.439*	-1.122*	.315	4
	Sig.	.000	.000	.992	.000	.000	.057	
IR-PT	Mean diff.	1.120*	1.138*	1.003*	.379	.384	2.123*	4
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.196	.347	.000	
IR-EE	Mean diff.	.991*	1.094*	.945*	.292	.259	2.141*	4
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.270	.600	.000	
IR-PL	Mean diff.	.753*	.330*	.703*	.158	.495*	-.315*	5
	Sig.	.000	.002	.000	.241	.000	.018	
ES-PT	Mean diff.	1.787*	2.551*	.926*	.818*	1.506*	1.808*	6
	Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	
ES-EE	Mean diff.	1.658*	2.507*	.868*	.731*	1.380*	1.826*	6
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
ES-PL	Mean diff.	1.421*	1.743*	.626*	.597*	1.617*	-.629*	6
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
PT-EE	Mean diff.	-.129	-.044	-.058	-.087	-.126	.018	0
	Sig.	.998	1.000	1.000	.999	.998	1.000	
PT-PL	Mean diff.	-.367	-.808*	-.300	-.221	.111	-2.437*	2
	Sig.	.509	.001	.823	.800	.997	.000	
EE-PL	Mean diff.	-.238	-.765*	-.242	-.134	.237	-2.455*	2
	Sig.	.769	.000	.838	.947	.700	.000	
Amount of differences		14	16	10	8	9	16	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The aim of the study was to explore cultural differences of students in evaluating various factors in regard to work performance. The smallest number of statistical differences was found between Lithuania and Estonia. Respondents of these two countries evaluated various skills very similarly, and no statistical difference was very high. In respect to future performance, the only real difference between these two countries concerned the evaluation of the understanding of their supervisor, which was more important to Lithuanians. Most differences were recorded in respect to the evaluation of environmental factors, but this number was not high at two and dealt with the economic situation and experience which have more importance for the future performance of Lithuanians. These similarities can be explained by the countries' very similar historical background within the last century. It is also confirmed by the model of cultural differences developed by Hofstede, presented in ▮▮ Table 1, where we could see that these two countries are culturally similar.

Another fact that is worth noting is that the Spanish students put much more emphasis on environmental factors than the participants from other countries. This is not surprising since the country has had a high unemployment rate, reaching as high as 26.6% (Greece's unemployment rate was slightly lower in 2012 at 26%), which in October of 2015 (Eurostat, 2015) decreased slightly to 21.6%. This means that students feel unsafe and very dependent on the environmental situation, resulting in quite a lot of differences in the evaluation of environmental factors, especially the importance of family/parents, a factor that is much more significant in hierarchical countries such as Turkey, Iran, Portugal or Spain.

When discussing the level of students' skills, it should be mentioned that the students' evaluations of them are quite low. Results of the present study showed that students consider their basic skills and people-related skills as very high. Interesting results were recorded in respect to Portugal, with the respondents from this country rated their skills much higher than those from other countries. Our assumption is that the Portuguese students over-rated them, but this cannot be proven on the basis of this study.

The Lithuanians ranked their tolerance to criticism higher than the Iranians, Turks and Poles, but lower than the Portuguese. This could be attributed to the country's highly feminine character (with a masculinity score of just 19), making the Lithuanians modest and trying to keep a low profile by usually communicating with a soft, diplomatic voice in order not to offend anyone. For Lithuanians, conflicts are always very threatening because they endanger the wellbeing of everyone, yet another trait which is indicative of a feminine culture. The collectivist countries considered their sense of responsibility as

better developed in comparison to the individualist countries like Lithuania, Estonia, and Poland. This could probably be explained with the fact that collectivist countries are more responsible for each other in groups, while in individualist countries everyone is responsible for themselves.

On the basis of these findings, the authors conclude that university professors should pay close attention to the education of students and their skill development. Most students considered group training methods as most valuable in terms of development; but the Lithuanian, Polish and Iranian students ranked one-to-one training methods as the most useful to their development. The Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish participants, on the other hand, selected group training methods as the most beneficial. This finding mostly corresponds to Hofstede's dimension of individualism-collectivism. As has been mentioned earlier, Poland and Lithuania are individualist societies whose individualism increased after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which resulted in an increase in national wealth, less dependency on traditional agriculture, the introduction of more modern technology, more urban living, more social mobility, a better educational system and, a larger middle-class. Today, the new generation of workers is more focused on their own performance rather than that of groups. What is more, Lithuanians speak plainly without any exaggeration or understatement, another representation of individualism. Another interesting conclusion from the results of our study is that Iranians, whose country is considered to be collectivist, did not select group-training methods as being the most developmentally beneficial.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that the results provided some insight into the intercultural context of students' performance evaluation based on their rating of motives to be satisfied in their future work, their skill development, methods for their development, and environmental factors influencing future work and its performance. These results could be useful to university professors as well as employers in fostering better understanding of their labour force and helping to find better means for its development. This study, however, should be treated as an introduction to these issues which require further and more in-depth research.

Limitations and Future Research

One theoretical limitation of our study is the fact that we were not able to conduct specific studies regarding every criteria being explored, and focused on them together as elements of performance. Another, maybe the most important limitation, is the unequal sampling in country groups and convenient sample selection. Our data is not sufficient to represent explored

phenomena at the country level. Moreover, geographical distribution of samples within these countries was not used. In the majority of cases, students from one university participated in this study, with especially small samples of respondents from Portugal and Estonia. What is more, samples of males and females taking part in the survey were not equal, and students from different study years were recruited to participate in this survey. These issues could, therefore, have influenced the representativeness of study results, especially in regard to skill evaluation.

In regard to future research, it would be both very interesting as well as beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study on students of these same countries to see whether, in a few years, their opinions will change due to the fast pace of the globalization process, new technical developments, increasing popularity of IT in study processes, and more liberal mobility of labour forces among countries.

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