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Author: Neringa Tolstych

Contributor / supervision: Eglė Zybartienė

Reviewed by Prof. doc. Genutė Gedvilienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Education

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This thematic perspective was prepared based on data collected through the first Cedefop European public opinion survey on VET. The European report can be found at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5562_en.pdf

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an interpretation of the results of the European public opinion survey on vocational education and training (VET) in the target group of Lithuania.

High quality vocational education and training system serves as an important tool of educational policy in improving labour market situation, fighting unemployment and reducing social exclusion in the European Union (EU). Vocational education and training system providing people with necessary skills not only leads them to well-paid jobs, but also substantially improves their quality of life. Unfortunately, in today's context, national vocational education and training systems of the EU are still facing the challenges of attractiveness in relation to negative stereotypes and attitudes that vocational education and training is the last choice of the learning path after general education. VET policy makers are lacking factual data on the reasons and factors determining the attractiveness of vocational education in society ⁽¹⁾.

With the aim to resolve the above mentioned issue, the first European public opinion survey on vocational education and training (hereinafter the survey) was carried out in June 2016. The survey was organised by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). The aim of the survey was to reveal the EU citizens' understanding of, and attitudes towards the VET. The survey was conducted in 28 Member States. The target group of the survey consisted of people over 15 years old from different social and demographic groups. During the survey the total of 35 646 interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. The representative sample of Lithuania consisted of 1 004 respondents.

Questions of the survey covered four different areas in relation to VET: awareness and knowledge of VET, attractiveness and access to VET, experience and satisfaction of VET users, outcomes and effectiveness of VET. The main focus of the questions of the survey was the initial vocational education and training at the level of upper secondary education. The following definition of VET was given to the respondents: *'vocational education is designed to give participants the practical and technical skills, know-how and understanding*

⁽¹⁾ Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62, pp. 10. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5562> [accessed 6.9.2017]

necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade. In the following questions, we refer to vocational education which takes place at upper secondary education at 16 to 18 years old' (²).

The Lithuanian education system comprises general education (primary, lower and upper secondary education), initial vocational education and training (VET) at lower, upper and post-secondary levels, continuing VET (CVET) and higher education (college and university studies) (³).

After completion of lower secondary education students can choose upper secondary education programmes, VET programmes at ISCED 3 level (leading to EQF level 3 professional qualification), or VET programmes conducted along with the upper secondary education programme (EQF level 4) leading to a school leaving (*matura*) certificate with a possibility continue their studies at higher education institutions. Graduates of upper secondary programmes leading to a *matura* certificate (either vocational or general education-oriented) may enter either post-secondary VET (ISCED 454) leading to EQF level 4 VET qualification or higher education (ISCED 6) programmes leading to EQF levels 6-8 (⁴). In the future, VET qualifications at EQF level 5 will be available for those with EQF level 4 VET qualification and at least three-year work experience.

VET programmes are designed for different age and educational background students. VET programme is made up of individual modules designed to provide vocational and personal development as well as acquisition of specific qualification. On the basis of the modules Lithuanian modular programmes of levels 1 to 5 may be prepared. Modular programmes of vocational education and training are based on the competences and the number of credits needed to obtain these competences. Initial vocational education and training is intended for the acquisition of a first qualification and completion of general lower or upper secondary education programme.

(²) Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62, pp. 18. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5562> [11.9.2017].

(³) Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre. (2016). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Lithuania*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports, pp. 11-12. https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_LT.pdf [11.9.2017].

(⁴) Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre. (2016). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Lithuania*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports, pp. 11. https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_LT.pdf [11.9.2017].

In 2014-17, 41 sectoral practical training centres were established in Lithuania using the European Union's Structural Funds and the budget of the Republic of Lithuania. Sectoral practical training centres (SPTC) are training workshops, practical work stations, laboratories equipped with modern practical training facilities intended for one or several economic sectors of Lithuania. SPTC's were established in VET institutions. Services of the SPTC's are open not only to the students of various VET institutions, but to the students from general education schools, colleges and employees from sector enterprises, institutions, etc. as well.

Vocational education and training system in Lithuania is still facing challenges in the area of the attractiveness of VET. This is reflected by a low number of people participating in the vocational training in the level of upper secondary education. Lithuania is still facing the negative stereotype that VET institutions are chosen by the least advanced students. For decades, higher education in Lithuania was associated with higher quality of life, stable income and consolidation of social status. The attractiveness of vocational education and training at personal level is more related to prestige, and since young people are characterised by a feeling of enthusiasm and high self-esteem, they are more likely to choose their studies in the system of higher education, regardless of their propensity for practical work.

As evidenced in Tables 1 and 2, although participation in VET, in contrast to general education and higher education, is currently stable or even increases at post-secondary non-tertiary level, participation in VET at upper-secondary education level remains one of the lowest among EU countries (in 2014, 26.7% in Lithuania, EU-28 average 47.4%) ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre. (2016). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Lithuania*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports, pp. 16, 18.
https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_LT.pdf [11.9.2018].

Table 1. Participation in IVET

		2010	2013	2014	2015
Total number of students in IVET (000)		49.4	45.6	46.5	46.5
Programmes at lower secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	4.9	4.9	5.0	5.3
	Share of VET students, compared to GE orientation students, %	2.2	2.6	2.7	3.0
Programmes at upper secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	30.8	23.0	21.6	20.5
	Share of VET students, compared to GE orientation students, %	28.4	26.7	26.8	27.2
Programmes at post-secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	13.7	17.7	19.9	20.7

Source: Statistics Lithuania database of indicators. <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/web/guest> [accessed 31.8.2016].

Table 2. Participation in higher VET

	2010	2013	2014	2015
Total number of colleges	23	24	24	23
Total number of students in higher VET (000)	53.3	43.6	41.5	39.8
Share of students in colleges, compared to total number of students in universities, professional bachelor and bachelor degrees (%)	36	38	38	39

Source: Statistics Lithuania database of indicators. <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/web/guest> [accessed 30.6.2017].

Today, the most negative impact on the attractiveness of VET is made by economic factors, first of all by uncompetitive wages and existing polarisation of income. For example, 60% of VET graduates in 2014/15 became employed a year after the graduation of the IVET programme, of them, on the average, 63% worked in the workplaces corresponding to the level of the gained qualification. In 2015, average income of the IVET graduates, 12 months after the graduation of the studies, was about EUR 525. At the same time, average income of the graduates of the first and second cycle higher education programmes, 12 months after the graduation, was about EUR 745, and the average wage (gross) in the country, in June, 2016, was about EUR 772 ⁽⁶⁾. In Lithuania systematic complex measures are used to increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training, including integration of sectoral practical training centres, improvement of VET qualifications, development of modular VET, implementation of VET

⁽⁶⁾ Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (2017). *Profesinio mokymo būklės apžvalga [Overview of Lithuanian vocational education and training status]*. pp. 73 [5.9.2018].

promotion activities at national level, development of VET internationalisation ⁽⁷⁾. In order to achieve the maximum result in the implementation of these activities, EU Structural Funds are also used ⁽⁸⁾.

This article provides general interpretation of the results of the survey, taking into account the context of Lithuanian vocational education and training. The interpretation was limited to the extent of the study results provided by Cedefop and Cedefop guidelines for preparation of the article. Interpretation of the data did not take into account the demographic characteristics of the target group of Lithuanian population.

⁽⁷⁾ Ministry of Education and Science (2017). *Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2017 m. birželio 28 d. įsakymas Nr. V-536 „Dėl mokymosi visą gyvenimą plėtros 2017-2020 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo“*. [Legal act on approval of the action plan for lifelong learning development 2017-20]. <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/8d34ecd05c0411e79198ffdb108a3753> [5.10.2017].

⁽⁸⁾ Ministry of Education and Science (2015). *Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2015 m. balandžio 23 d. įsakymas Nr. V-380 (aktuali redakcija)*. [Legal Act on the approval of the plan for the implementation of the implementation measures of a priority under the operational programme for the eu structural funds investments for 2014-20, and of the national description for the calculation of monitoring indicators (latest edition)]. <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/51bd7b80ee3411e4927fda1d051299fb/KNfEkPfguS> [10.10.2017].

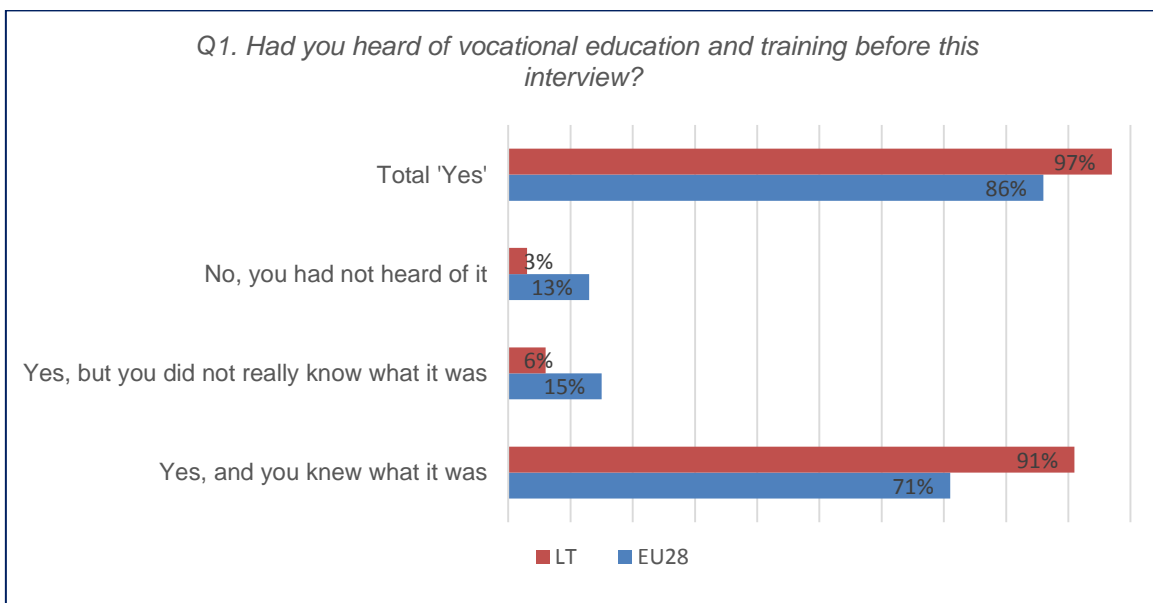
CHAPTER 1.

Knowledge and awareness of vocational education and training

This section of the article discusses the results of assessment of the knowledge and awareness of VET by the target group of Lithuanian population. The results were analysed in the following aspects: public awareness of vocational education and training and their conscious perception of what it is, general approach to vocational education and training, external factors leading to the choice of the respondents' learning path.

In order to determine the general level of Lithuanian population's awareness about VET, the respondents were asked to express their opinion if they have heard anything about vocational education and training before this interview and if they understand what it is (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Level of respondents' awareness of VET



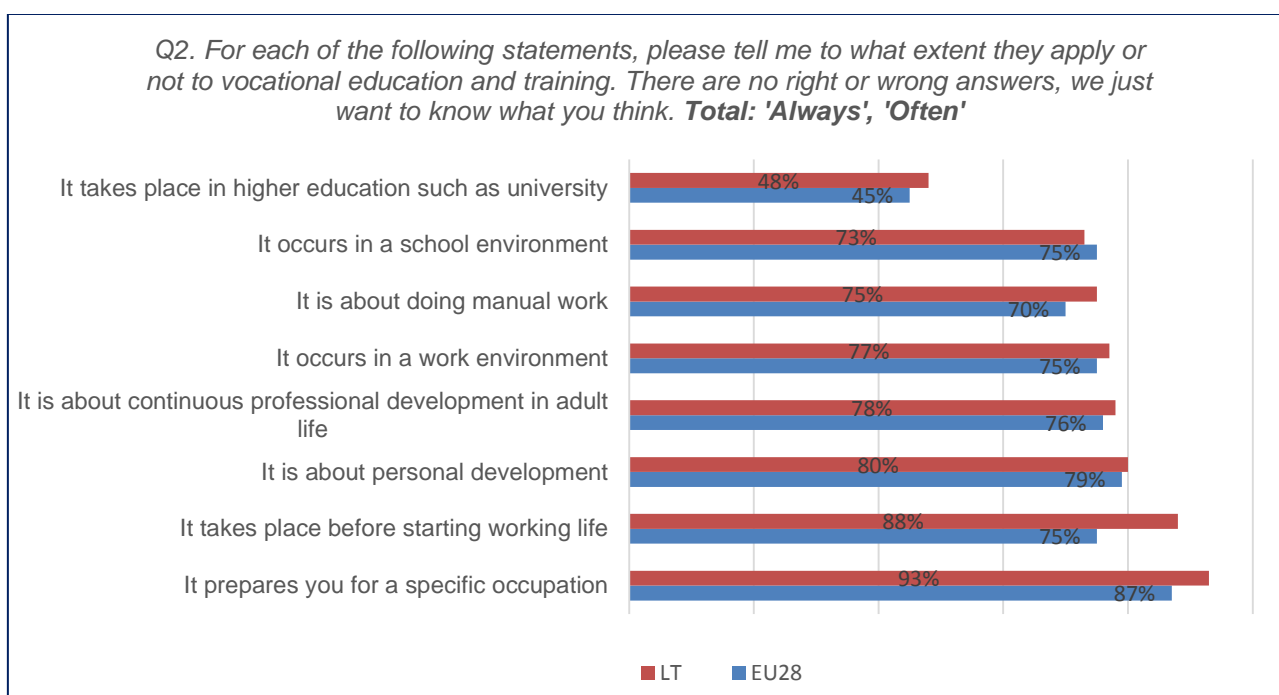
The majority (91%, respective EU average is 71%) of the respondents say they that they had heard of VET and know precisely what it is. Less than a tenth (6%, respective EU average is 15%) of the respondents say they had heard about VET, but they do not really know what it is. A very small part (3%,

respective EU average is 13%) of the respondents state that they had not heard anything about vocational education and training at all.

The data of the survey show that most respondents had not only heard about vocational training they are also aware of what it is. The general awareness of the VET in the target group of Lithuanian population amounts to the total of 97% and exceeds the EU average by more than ten percentage points (EU average is 86%).

In order to analyse the general attitude of the Lithuanian population towards vocational education and training, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the statements made regarding the features of vocational education and training system (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Respondents' general perception of VET



The majority of the respondents agree that VET prepares a person for a specific occupation (93%, respective EU average is 87%), it shall take place before starting working life (88%, respective EU average is 75%), is about personal development (80%, respective EU average is 79%). More than three quarters of respondents believe that vocational education and training should provide ample opportunities for adults to develop their professional competences (78%, respective EU average is 76%), it occurs in a work environment (77%,

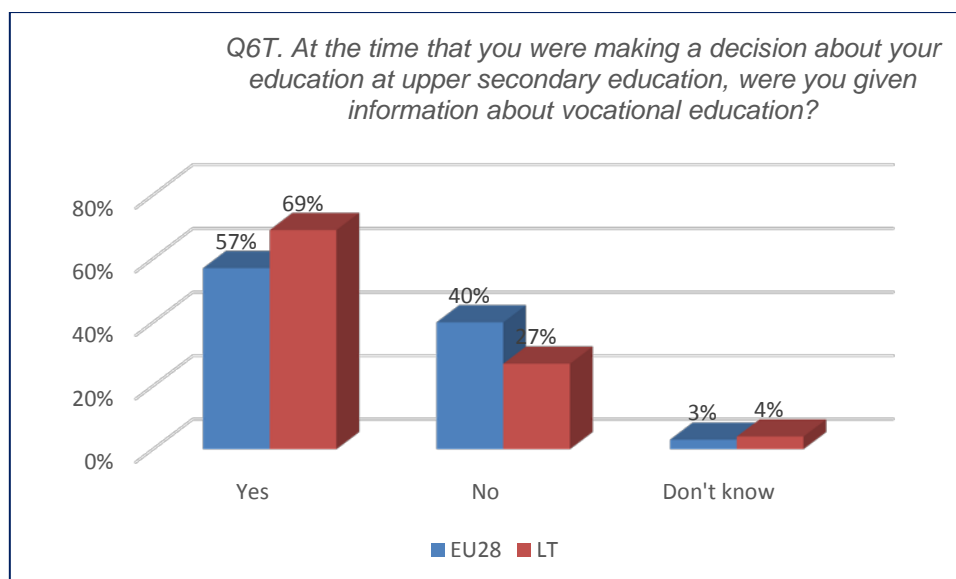
respective EU average is 75%). Three quarters of the respondents say that VET qualifications are about doing manual work

(75%, respective EU average is 70%) and shall occur in a school environment (73%, respective EU average is 75%). The smallest part (48%, respective EU average is 45%) of the respondents think that VET takes place in higher education such as university.

Analysis of the survey data in relation to the EU average shows that almost all results of the target group of Lithuanian population correspond to the EU average. However, statements that 'VET prepares you for a specific occupation' and 'it takes place before starting working life' exceed the EU average by almost ten percentage points.

In order to assess the extent of provision of information in relation to vocational education and training information and guidance system, the respondents were asked whether they were given information about vocational education when they were making a decision between general education and VET (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Extent of provision of information in relation to VET information and guidance system

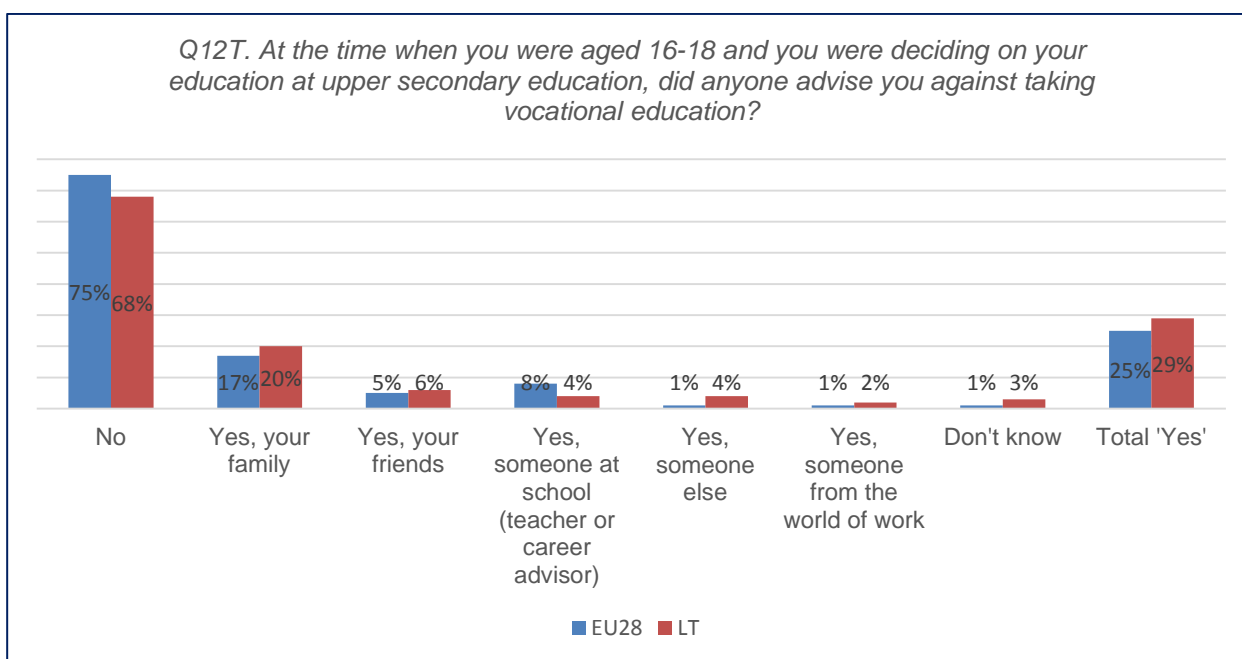


The data obtained during the survey showed that the majority (69%, respective EU average is 57%) of the respondents were given information about vocational education when they were making a decision on their educational path. More than a quarter (27%, respective EU average is 40%) of the respondents were not provided with information about vocational education when they were making a decision on their educational path.

Analysis of the survey data in relation to the EU average shows that the results of the target group of Lithuanian population exceeded to the EU average by almost ten percentage points.

In order to find out whether decisions of the respondents on taking vocational education at upper secondary education level were influenced by any negative external factors, the respondents were asked whether anyone advised them against taking this type of education (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Negative external factors that have influenced the respondent's choice of taking vocational education at upper secondary education level



The major part (68%, respective EU average is 75%) of the respondents claim they did not encounter any negative opinions on vocational education.

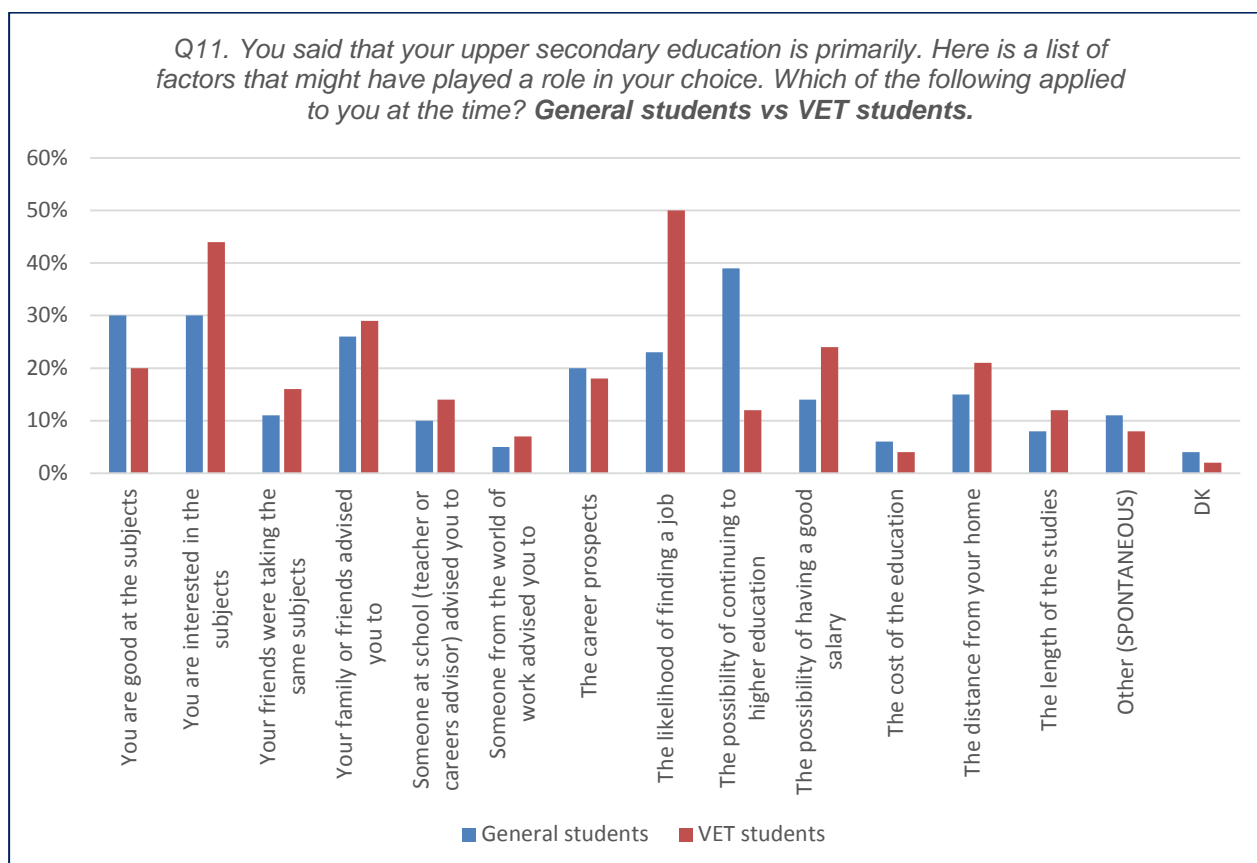
Almost a quarter (20%, respective EU average is 17%) of respondents claim that their family members were against their choice. A very small number of the respondents say that negative attitudes on vocational training were expressed by their friends (6%, respective EU average is 5%), someone from their school (4%, respective EU average is 8%), someone else (4% respective EU average is 1%). The smallest share (2%, respective EU average is 1%) of the respondents said that someone from the world of work opposed their choice.

The data of the survey shows that the majority of the respondents did not encounter any negative attitudes about vocational education. However, it should be noted, that more than a quarter (29%, respective EU average is 25%) of the respondents are still facing negative attitudes towards vocational education.

In order to determine the specific reasons why the respondents chose to do either general or vocational education, they were asked to express their opinion on given statements.

The data of the survey were analysed according to the education – general or vocational – acquired or sought by the target group of Lithuanian population (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Reasons for choosing vocational education institutions



The majority of vocational education and training students claim that their choice of taking VET was guided by the likelihood of finding a job (50%) and interest in the subjects (44%). More than a quarter (29%) of VET students indicate that they were advised by family members or friends. Less than a quarter of VET students indicate the possibility of having a good salary (24%), the distance from their home (21%), good success of the subjects (20%), career prospects (18%), friends taking the same subjects (16%), advise from someone at school (14%), the possibility of continuing to higher education (12%), the length of studies (12%). The smallest part of the respondents said that the

decision was based on 'Other' (8%), advice of someone from the world of work (7%) and the cost of the education (4%).

The majority of general education students claim that their choice of taking general education was determined by the possibility of continuing to higher education (39%) and interest in the subjects (30%). More than a quarter (26%) of general education students said they were advised by family members or friends. Less than a quarter of GE students indicated the likelihood of finding a job (23%) and career prospects (20%). More than a tenth of the respondents claim their choice was influenced by the distance from their home (15%), the possibility of having a good salary (14%), friends taking the same subjects (11%), and 'Other' (11%). Less than a tenth of the respondents indicated advice from someone at school (10%), and the length of studies (8%). The smallest part of the respondents said that the decision was based on the cost of the education (6%) and advice of someone from the world of work (5%).

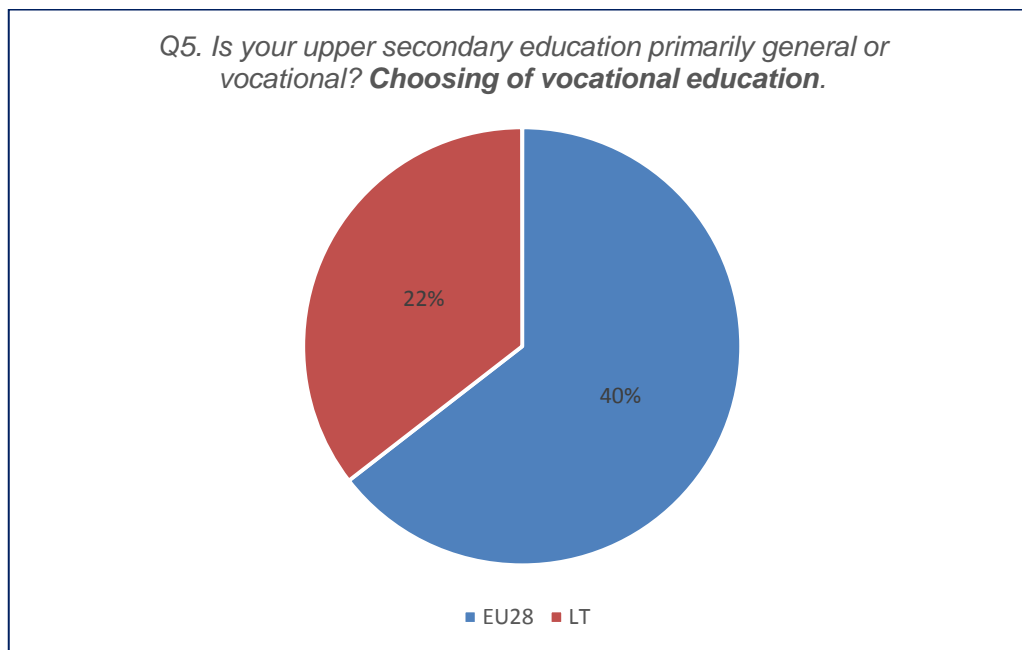
The data of the survey show that the reasons for making choices among the members of the target groups of Lithuanian population representing different education and training subsystems in most cases have the same comparative weight. However, according to the data of the survey, the respondents who expecting to graduate immediately after entering the labour market became more likely to choose vocational training (60% of vocational school students, 23% of general education students). Respondents who sought to pursue their studies in higher education more often opted for general education (39% of general education students, 12% of vocational education students).

However, based on the data of the survey, respondents who expected to enter the labour market immediately after graduation, were choosing vocational education more often (60% of VET students, 23% of GE students). Respondents, who were willing to continue to a higher level of education, were more likely to choose general education (39% of GE students, 12% of VET students).

Analysis of the differences with the EU average shows that Lithuanian target group is less likely to indicate the reasons of choosing their educational path related to 'interest in the subjects' (33%, respective EU average is 41%), advices given by family members or friends (26%, respective EU average is 33%) or advise from someone at school (11%, respective EU average is 18%). The reasons of choosing educational path related to success, propensity for the subjects chosen (28%, respective EU average is 31%) and the fact that 'their friends were taking the same subjects' (12%, respective EU average is 12% as well) corresponds to the EU average.

In order to determine the percentage of young people aged 16-18 participating in VET, the respondents were asked what their choice was – general or vocational education and training (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Results of choosing educational path among the respondents



The results of the survey show that less than a quarter (22%, respective EU average is 40%) of the respondents only claim that they chose VET institution when they were 16-18 years old.

In summary, it can be stated that general knowledge about vocational education and training in Lithuania reaches its target audience to a large extent. Lithuanian people are aware of what vocational education and training is and show a positive attitude towards it. The majority of the respondents say they were given information on possibilities of taking VET. Interpretation of the survey data suggests that according to Lithuanian people vocational education and training is associated with qualifications before starting working life, develop the general qualifications of adults, it takes place both at school and in workplace; for the majority, VET qualifications are about doing manual work. Vocational education and training in Lithuania still encounters negative attitude, however it is not dominant. Family members are most likely to advice against VET level. The main challenge is to attract more people to VET at upper secondary level. In interpreting the survey data in relation to the EU average, the situation in Lithuania is better in terms of general knowledge and awareness of the

population about vocational education and training. However, rate of participation in vocational education at upper secondary level is one of the lowest in the EU.

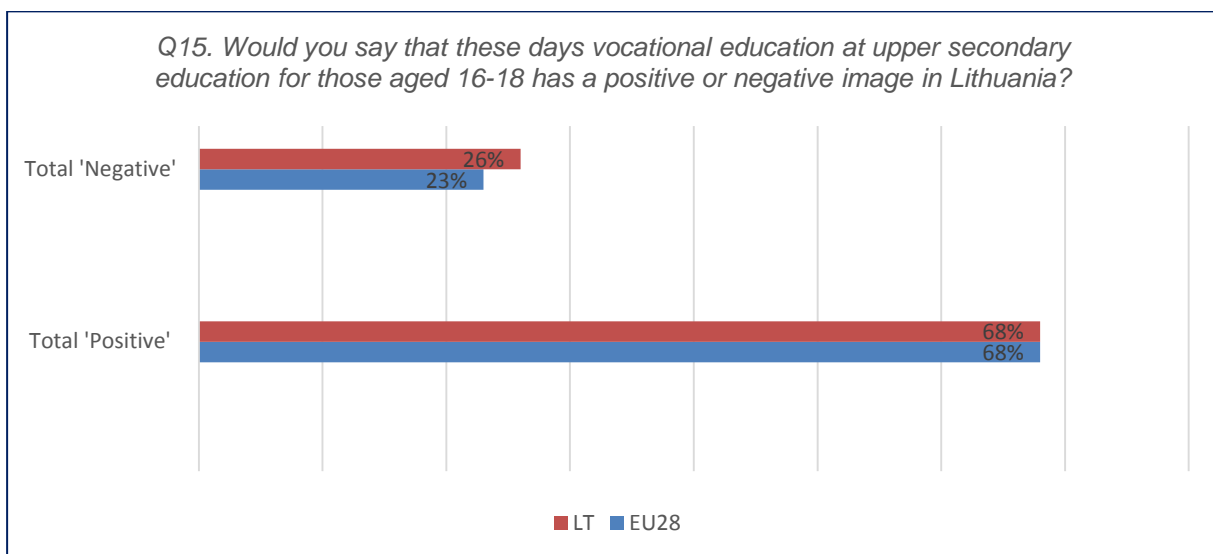
CHAPTER 2.

Attractiveness and access to VET

This section of the article discusses the results of assessing the attractiveness and access of VET in Lithuania. The results were analysed in the following aspects: assessment of VET attractiveness in relation to the qualification acquired, general image of VET, VET participants' involvement in labour market, permeability possibilities and person's transitioning between different levels of education systems (general education, VET, higher education).

In order to determine if nowadays vocational education of young people aged 16-18 is attractive, respondents were asked to share their opinion on vocational education of young people aged 16-18 in Lithuania (Figure 8).

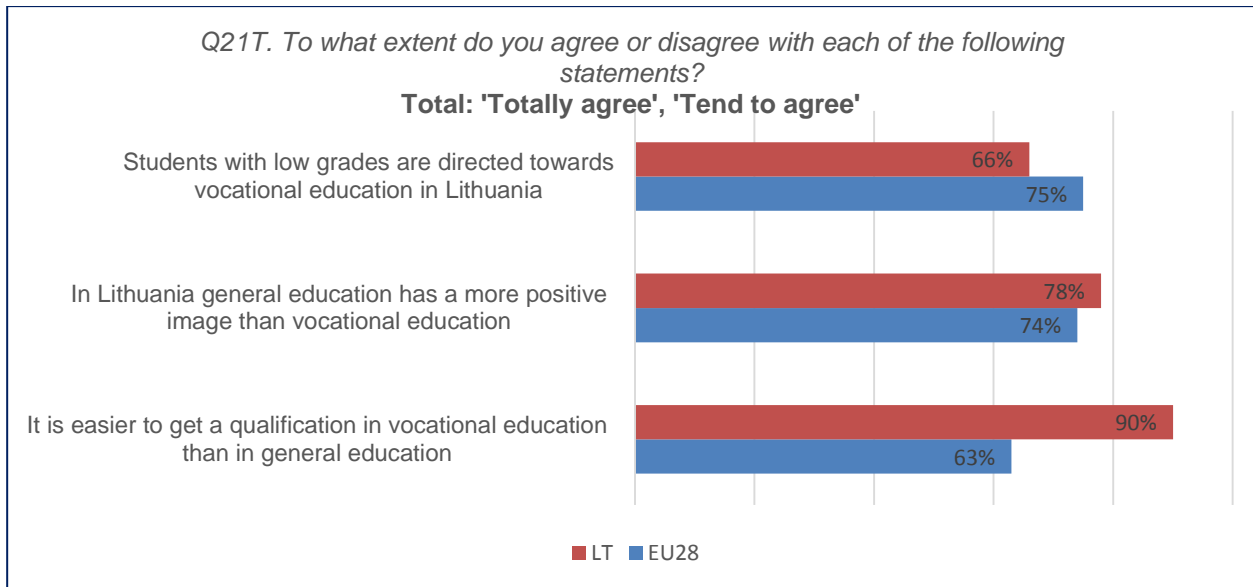
Figure 7. Tendencies of VET attractiveness in Lithuania in relation to vet of young people aged 16-18



The majority (68%, respective EU average is 68% as well) of the respondents say they have a positive attitude towards vocational education of young people aged 16-18. More than a quarter (26%, respective EU average is 23%) of the respondents claim they have a negative attitude towards vocational education of young people aged 16-18.

In order to determine the attitude of Lithuanian population towards comparison of general and vocational education, respondents were asked to say to what extent they agree with the following statements (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Respondents' attitudes towards comparison of general and vocational education

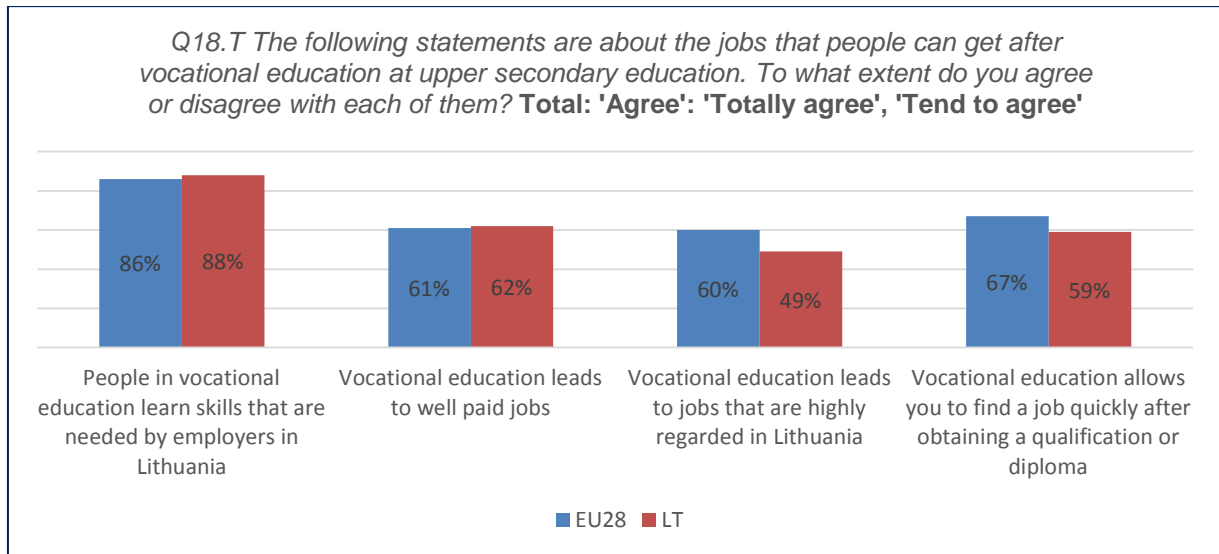


The majority (90%, respective EU average is 63%) of the respondents agree that it is easier to get a qualification in vocational education than in general education. More than three quarters (78%, respective EU average is 74%) of the respondents agree that in Lithuania general education has a more positive image than vocational education. More than a half (66%, respective EU average is 75%) of the respondents agree that in Lithuania that students with low grades are directed towards vocational education.

The data of the survey showed that general education has a more positive image than vocational education. However, vocational education more than general education is designed to give participants practical skills in relation to specific qualification.

In order to find out the opinion of Lithuanian population on the added value of vocational education diploma, respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the following statements (Figure 10).

Figure 9. Respondents' opinion towards the added value of vocational education diploma

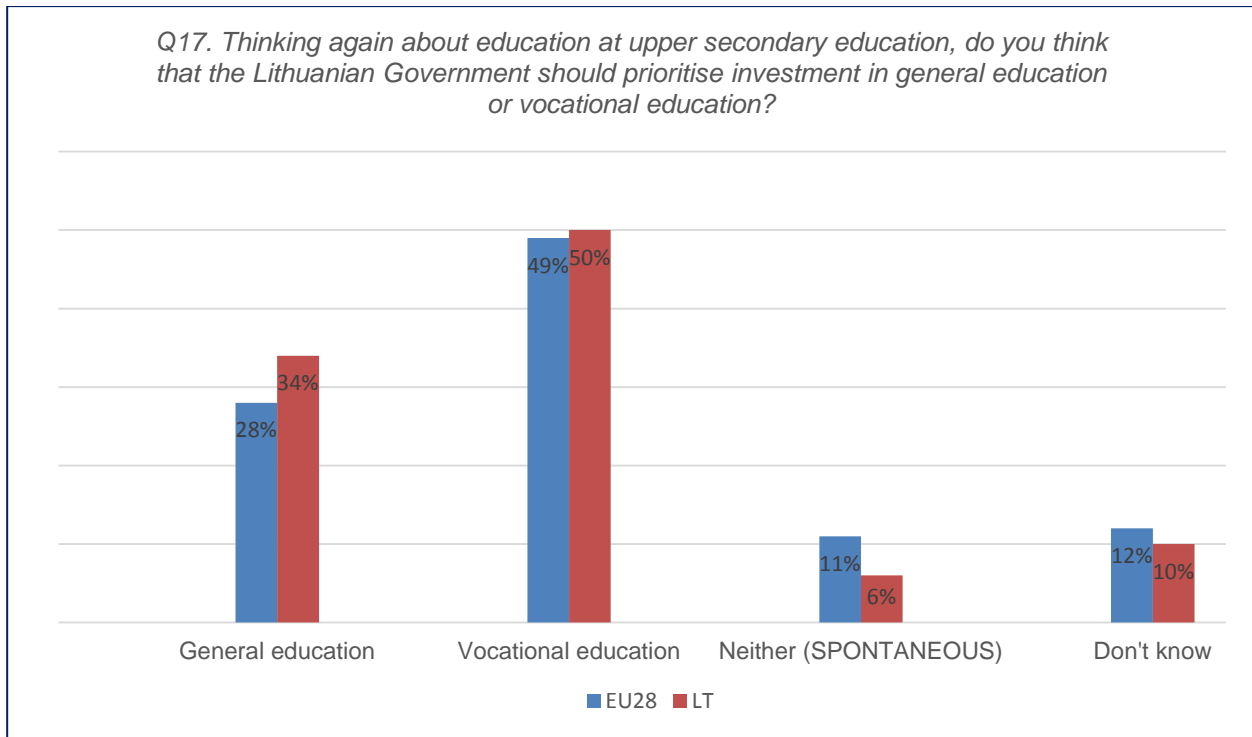


The majority (88%, respective EU average is 86%) of the respondents agree that VET teaches skills needed by employers in Lithuania. More than a half of the respondents agree that vocational education leads to well-paid jobs (62%, respective EU average is 61%) and allows people to find jobs quickly after obtaining diploma or qualification (59%, respective EU average is 67%). The smallest number (49%, respective EU average is 60%) of the respondents agree with the statement that VET leads to highly regarded jobs in Lithuania.

According to the data of the survey, the majority of the participants in the target group of Lithuanian population agree that VET teaches skills needed by employers in Lithuania and allows finding well-paid jobs quickly. However, only about a half of the target group of Lithuanian population think that diploma or qualification leads to highly regarded jobs.

In order to determine the attitude of Lithuanian population in relation to their country's strategic approach to educational priorities, respondents were asked if Lithuanian government should prioritise investment in general education or vocational education and training at the level of upper secondary education (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Respondents' opinion in relation to their country's strategic approach to educational priorities

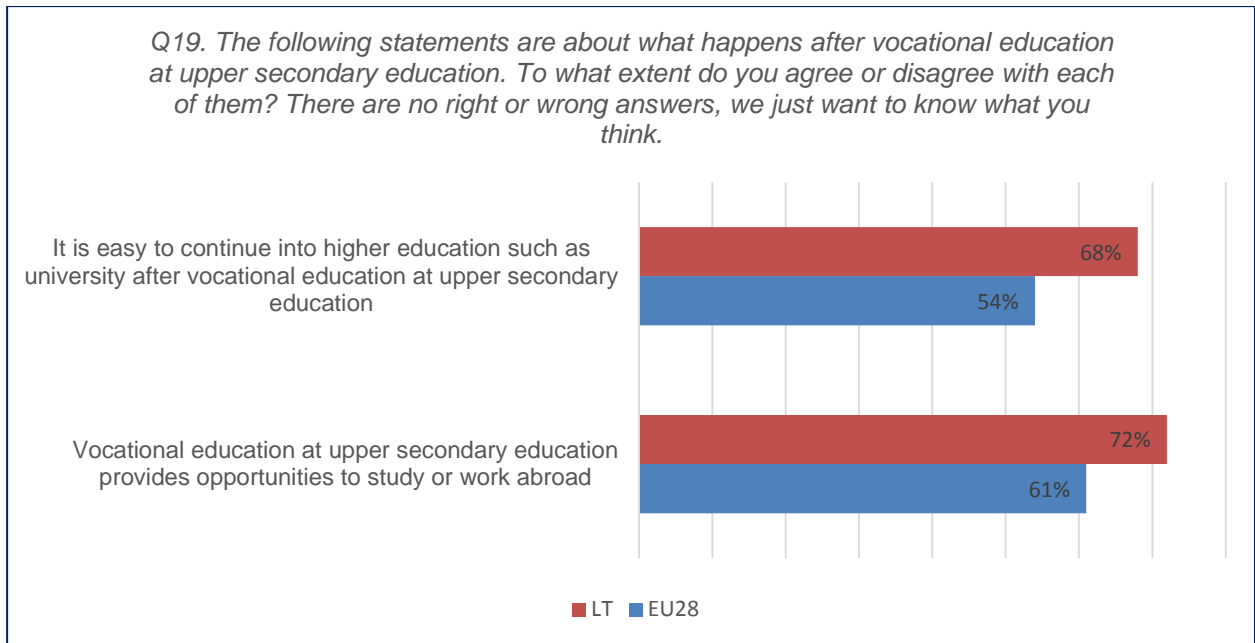


The majority (50%, respective EU average is 49%) of the respondents say that Lithuanian government should prioritise investment in vocational education and training at the level of upper secondary education. More than a quarter (34%, respective EU average is 28%) of the respondents say that Lithuanian government should prioritise general education.

According to the data of the survey, the majority of the participants of the target group of Lithuanian population think that investment in vocational education and training at the level of upper secondary education should be prioritized.

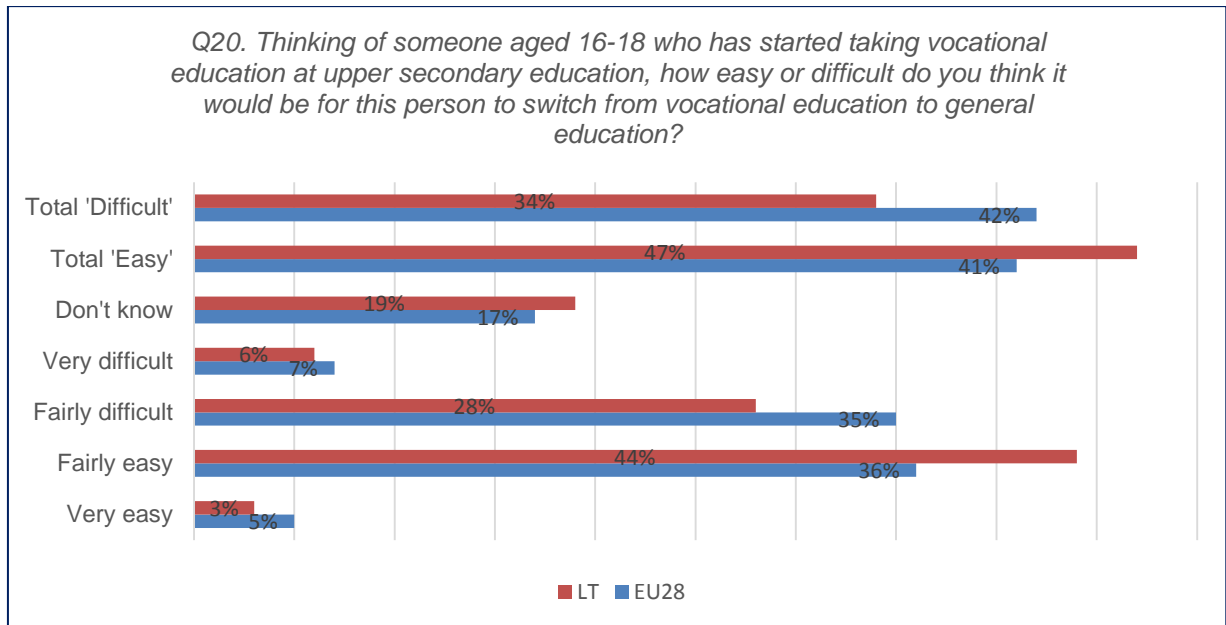
In order to find out the opinion of Lithuanian population on the flexibility for people to transition between education types and permeability possibilities in VET, respondents were asked to share the extent they agree or disagree with the following statements (Figure 12 and Figure 13).

Figure 11. Respondents' opinion on the permeability possibilities in VET and transitioning from VET to higher education



Nearly three quarters (72%, respective EU average is 61%) agree that 'vocational education acquired at the level of upper secondary education provides opportunities to work or study abroad. More than a half (68%, respective EU average is 54%) of the respondents agree that *'it is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education'*.

Figure 12. Respondents' opinion on person's transitioning from VET to general education



Nearly half (47%, respective EU average is 41%) of the respondents claim it would be easy for young people aged 16 to 18 who had started vocational education at upper secondary education to switch to general education. More than a quarter (34%, respective EU average is 42%) of the respondents claim that it would be difficult for such young people to switch from VET to general education.

The data of the survey show that almost every second respondent thinks it would be easy for young people aged 16 to 18 who had started vocational education at upper secondary education to switch to general education.

In summary, it can be stated that the image of vocational education of young people aged 16-18 is more positive than negative. However, in interpreting the data of the survey, the attractiveness of vocational education in Lithuania may be assessed in two ways. On one hand, it may be stated that in Lithuania general education has a more positive image than vocational education, there is still a prevailing stereotype that students with lower achievements in education are choosing vocational education, vocational education qualifications still lack the necessary prestige. On the other hand, vocational education in Lithuania meet the needs of the labour market, provides good employment opportunities, allows finding a well-paid job, easier acquisition of qualification at the level of vocational education than general education, provides opportunities to work or study abroad, and continue studies at higher education. Lithuanian government

should prioritise investment in vocational education and training. Ensuring a clear mechanism of transitioning from vocational education to the general education should be a challenge.

Analysis of the survey data in relation to the EU average shows that the relevance of vocational education in achieving skills needed by employers and the possibilities of finding a well-paid job almost corresponds to the EU average. However, in EU vocational education qualifications are valued more than in Lithuania.

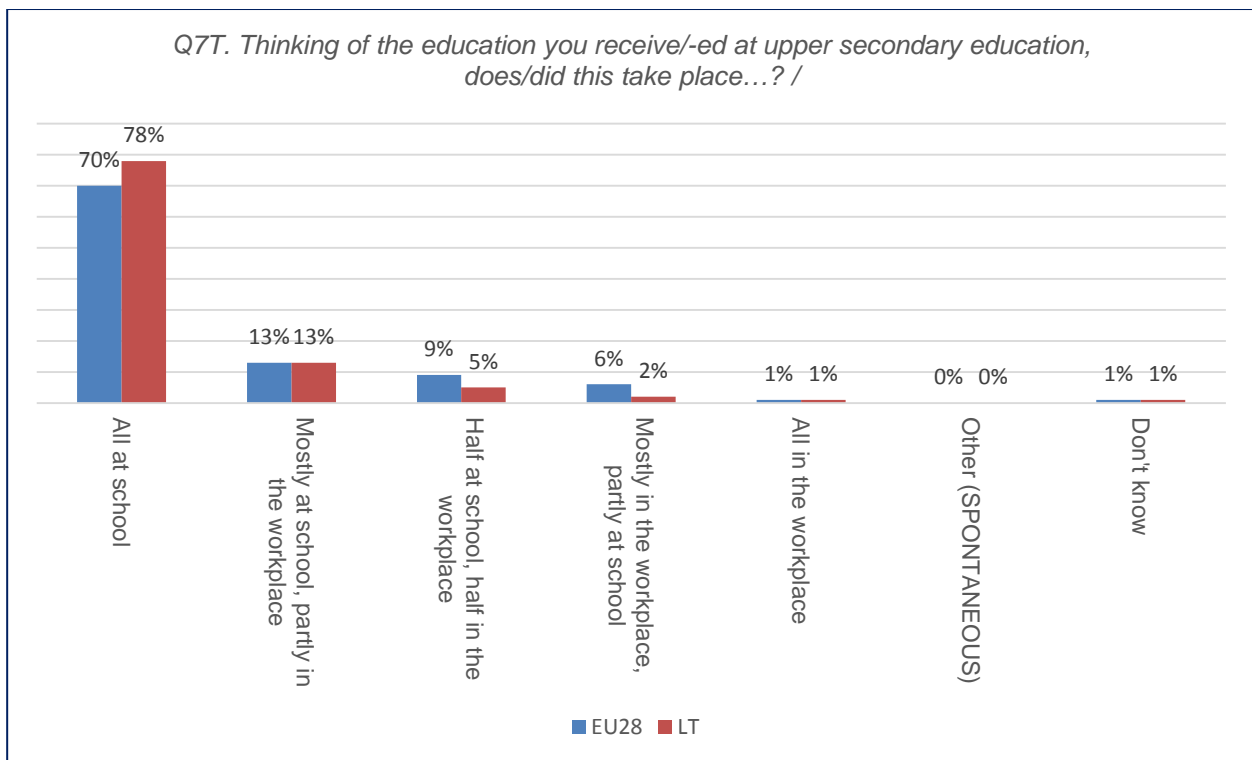
CHAPTER 3.

VET participants' experience and satisfaction with vocational education

This section of the article analyses the results of the assessment of experience obtained during the studies at the upper secondary education level and satisfaction with vocational education in the target group of Lithuanian population. The results were analysed in accordance with the following aspects: place of education, development of skills and satisfaction with the quality of education.

In order to find out the opinion of the VET participants on the experience obtained at the level of upper secondary education, respondents were asked where their education took place (Figure 14).

Figure 13. Respondents' experience at the level of upper secondary education: places of education



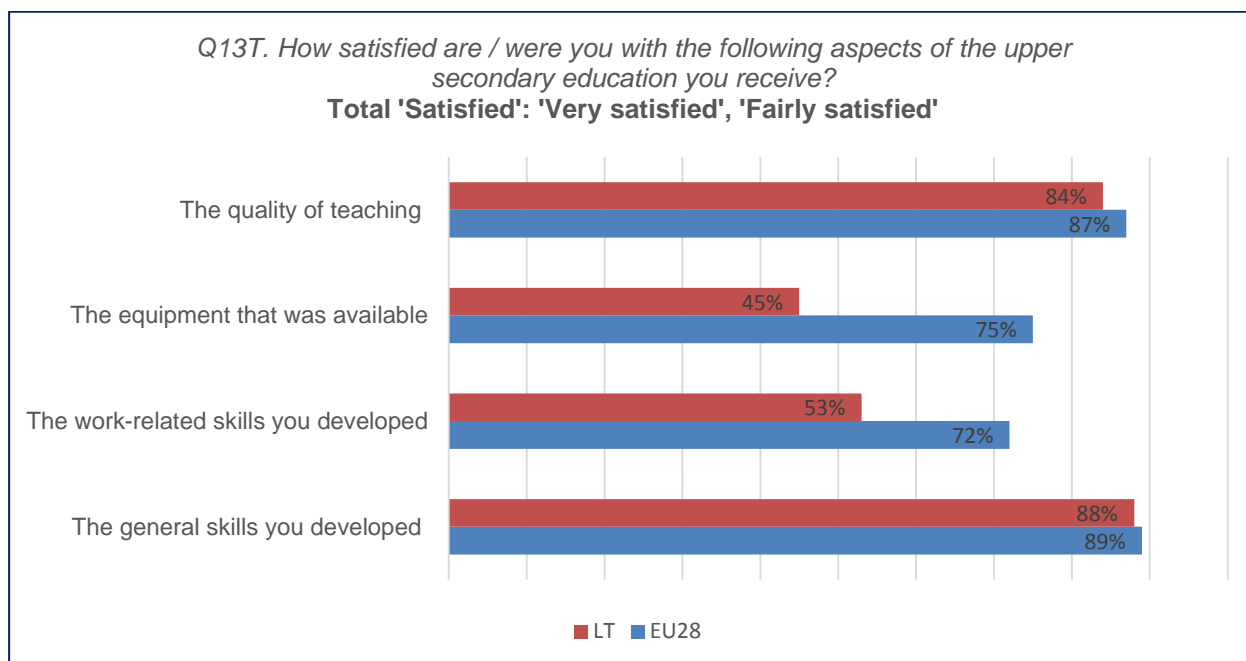
The majority (78%, respective EU average is 70%) of the respondents say that their education took place only in school. More than a tenth (13%, respective EU average is 13% as well) of the respondents claim that their education took

place mostly at school and partly in the workplace. A very small share (5%, respective EU average is 9%) of the respondents say that their education was split equally between school and workplace. The smallest share of the respondents claim that their education took place mostly in the workplace and partly in school (2%, respective EU average is 6%) and that their education took place only in the workplace (1%, respective EU average is 1% as well).

According to the data of the survey, in Lithuania education at the upper secondary education level takes place mostly at school. Compared to the EU average, the form of education when education takes place both at school and in the workplace is far behind the EU average. However, the form of education taking place only in the workplace corresponds the EU average.

In order to determine the level of satisfaction with education at the upper secondary education level, respondents were asked to share their assessment of the following statements (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Respondents' level of satisfaction with education at the upper secondary education level



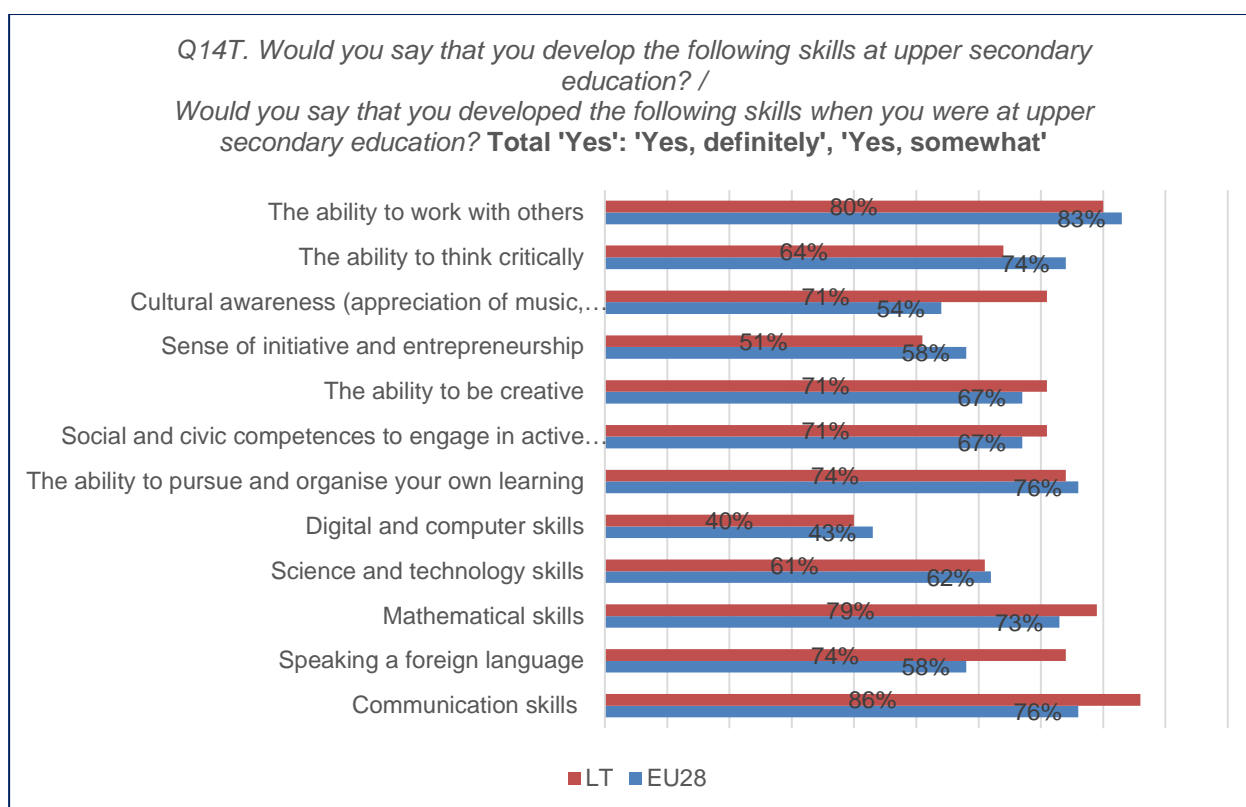
The majority of the respondents say that they were satisfied with the general skills they developed at the upper secondary education level (88%, respective EU average is 89%) as well as the quality of the education (84%, respective EU average is 87%). More than a half of the respondents (53%, respective EU average is 72%) say they were satisfied with their work-related skills developed.

The smallest share (45%, respective EU average is 75%) of the respondents claim that they were satisfied with the access to educational facilities.

According to the data of the survey, the respondents were satisfied with the general skills developed at the level of upper secondary education and their work-related skills as well as the quality of education. The majority of the results obtained from the target group of Lithuanian population correspond to the EU average. However, comparison of the results of the target group of Lithuanian population to the EU average, shows that satisfaction with the work-related skills falls behind by ten percentage points, and satisfaction with the access to educational facilities is lower thirty percentage points lower than the EU average.

In order to determine the specific skills developed by the respondents while at the upper secondary education level, respondents were asked to specify the skills (Figure 16).

Figure 15. Specific skills developed by respondents at the upper secondary education level



Majority of the respondents say they have developed communication skills (86%, respective EU average is 76%), ability to work with others (80%, respective EU average is 83%), mathematic skills (79%, respective EU average is 73%). Nearly three quarters of the respondents say they have acquired skills to speak

foreign language (74%, respective EU average is 58%), ability to pursue and organise their own learning (74%, respective EU average is 76%), creative skills (71%, respective EU average is 67%), cultural awareness (music, acting, literature and visual arts) (71%, respective EU average is 54%). More than a half of the respondents claim that they have acquired social and civic competences to engage in active democratic participation (65%, respective EU average is 60%), ability to think critically (64%, respective EU average is 74%), science and technology skills (61%, respective EU average is 62%), and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (51%, respective EU average is 58%). The smallest share of the respondents say (40%, respective EU average is 43%) that they have developed digital and computer skills.

The data of the survey shows that communication skills, ability to work with others and mathematical skills were developed the most at the upper secondary education level. The smallest share of the respondents claim they have developed digital and computer skills. Skills related to learning speak foreign language and cultural awareness (music, acting, literature and visual arts) exceed the EU average by nearly ten percentage points. In the area of developing critical thinking Lithuania is ten percentage points behind the EU average.

In summary, it can be stated that in Lithuania development of skills and quality of education at the upper secondary education level satisfies the needs of students. Communication skills, ability to work with others, mathematical skills and abilities to speak foreign language are developed most extensively at the upper secondary education level. Digital and computer skills as well as critical thinking skills are developed less commonly at the upper secondary education level. In Lithuania, challenges are faced when developing work-related skills, ensuring an appropriate access to educational facilities. The data of the survey showed the weakest spots of the VET system in Lithuania, towards strengthening of which attempts are made by implementing dual apprenticeship and enabling more effective sectoral practical training centres. At the same time, the answers of the respondents reveal that introduction of apprenticeship and establishment of sectoral practical training centres is slow and still does not significantly influence the development of the working skills and access to the equipment.

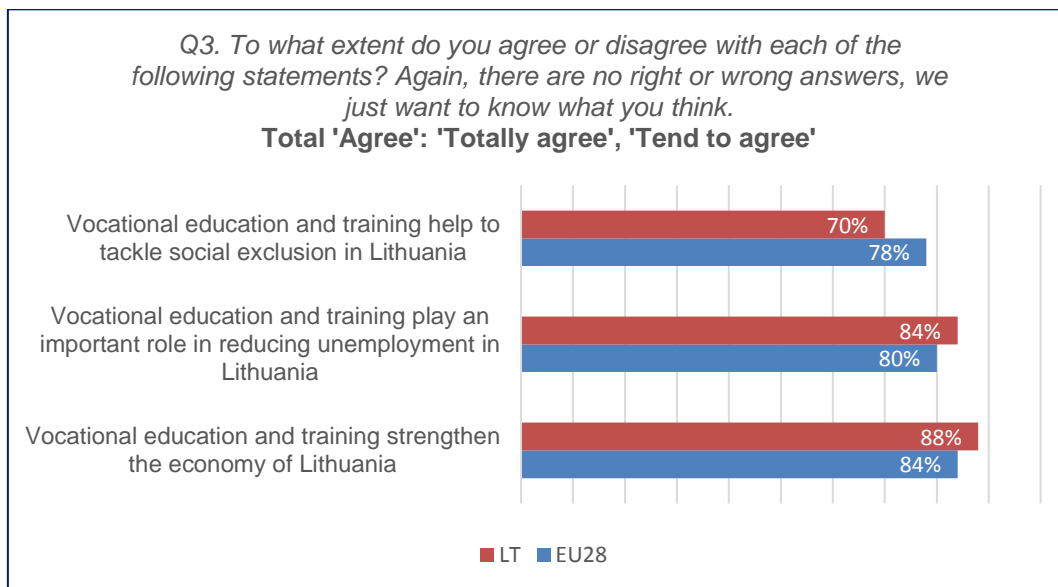
CHAPTER 4.

Outcomes and effectiveness of VET

This section of the article discusses the results on the assessment of vocational education and training outcomes and effectiveness. The results were analysed in accordance with the following aspects: role of VET, benefits of VET, outcomes of VET in relation to individuals, effectiveness of VET.

In order to determine what is the role prescribed by the respondents to VET in relation to the economic and social life of Lithuania, respondents were asked to express their opinion in terms of the following statements (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Role of VET in economic and social life of Lithuania

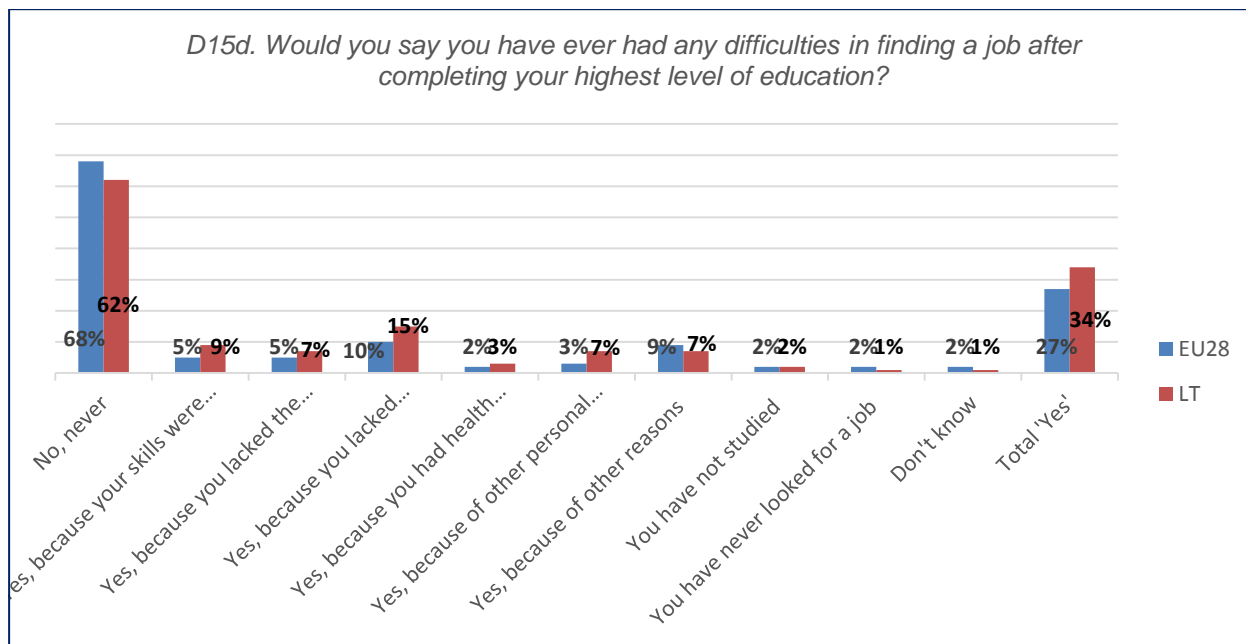


Majority of the respondents agree that vocational education and training strengthens the economy of Lithuania (88%, respective EU average is 84%) and plays an important role in reducing unemployment in Lithuania (84%, respective EU average is 80%). The smallest share (70%, respective EU average is 78%) of the respondents agree that Vocational education and training helps to tackle social exclusion.

The data of the survey shows that the majority of the respondents agree with the statement that vocational education and training is important to the economic and social life of Lithuania.

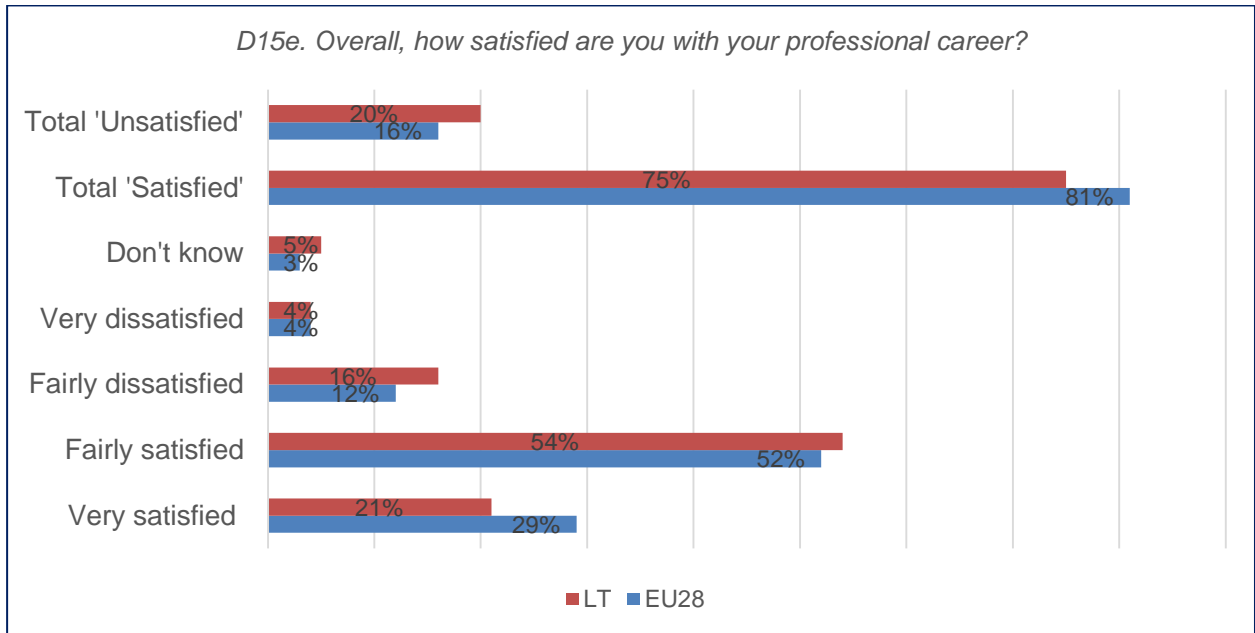
In order to assess the role of education in the perspective of individual's career, respondents were asked to Express their opinion on the following statements (Figures 18, 19, 20).

Figure 17. Role of the highest education acquired by a respondent in the perspective of individual's career



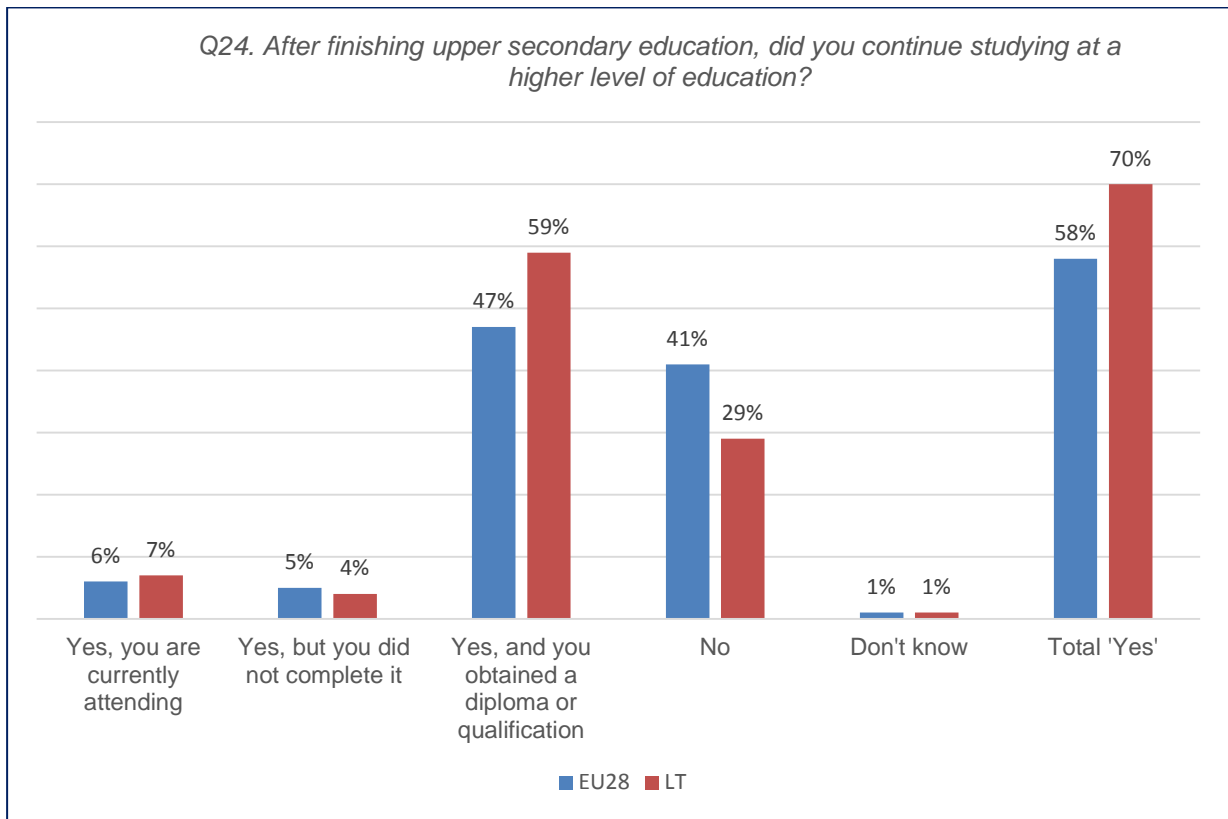
More than a half (62%, respective EU average is 68%) of the respondents claim that they never had any difficulties in finding a job after completing their highest level of education. More than a tenth (15%, respective EU average is 10%) of the respondents claim that they had difficulties in finding a job, because they lacked relevant work experience. Less than a tenth of the respondents claim they had difficulties in finding a job, because their skills were considered too low (9%, respective EU average is 5%), they lacked qualifications or diplomas (7%, respective EU average is 5%), because of other personal issues (7%, respective EU average is 3%), because of other issues (7%, respective EU average is 9%). A very small share of the respondents say they had difficulties in finding a job, because they had health issues (3%, respective EU average is 2%), they did not study (2%, respective EU average is 2%), or never tried to find a job (1%, respective EU average is 2%).

Figure 18. Respondents' satisfaction with their professional career



Three quarters (75%, respective EU average is 81%) of the respondents say they were satisfied with their professional career.

Figure 19. Respondents' education after finishing upper secondary education



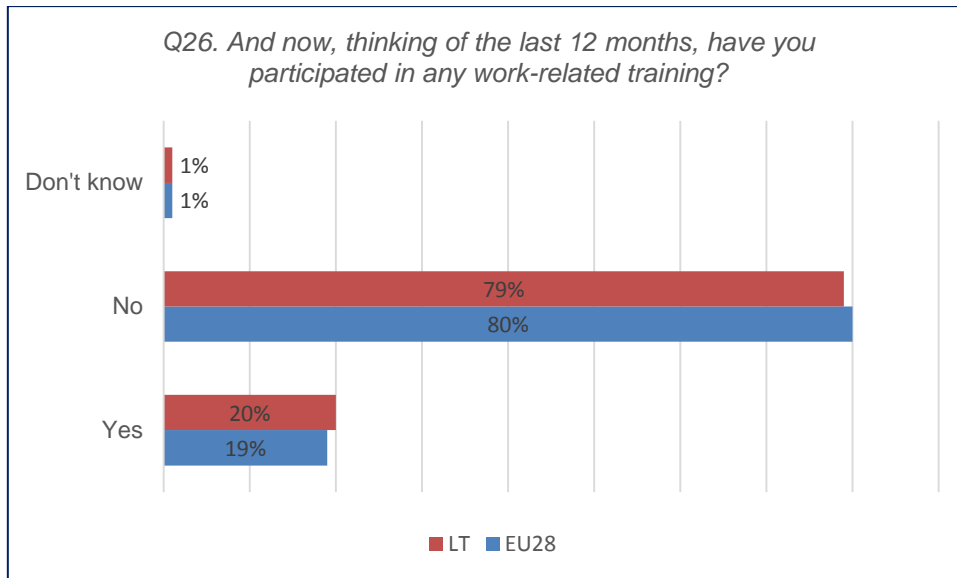
More than a half of the respondents (59%, respective EU average is 47%) say they continued studying to obtain a higher level of education and a diploma or qualification. Less than a tenth (7%, respective EU average is 6%) of the respondents say they were currently attending to obtain higher education. The smallest share (4%, respective EU average is 5%) of the respondents say that after the upper secondary education level they continued their studies, but did not complete them.

More than a quarter (29%, respective EU average is 41%) of the respondents say they did not continue their studies to obtain higher education.

The data of the survey shows that the majority (70%, respective EU average is 58%) of the respondents say they continued studying to obtain a higher level of education.

In order to determine if the respondents are actively participating in qualification training activities, they were asked if during the last 12 months they have participated in any work-related training (Figure 21).

Figure 20. Respondents' participation in qualification training activities during the last 12 months



Majority (79%, respective EU average is 80%) of the respondents did not participate in any work-related training during the last 12 months. Only less than a quarter of the respondents (20%, respective EU average is 19%) said they have participated in work-related training during the last 12 months.

The data of the survey show that the majority of the respondents did not participate in any work-related training during the last 12 months.

In summary, it can be stated that vocational education is considered as a strategic tool significantly contributing to economic growth, level of unemployment and social exclusion. In interpreting the results of the survey, it can be stated that acquired education provides the individual with the prospects of successful career: most participants never had any difficulties of finding a job, they were satisfied with their professional career, more than half of them continued their education in order to obtain higher education. Difficulties in finding a job were experienced by the respondents who were lacking work experience or their skills were considered to be too small. The challenge is to include a larger percentage of Lithuanian's population in the activities of professional training.

CHAPTER 5.

Conclusions and directions for further development of the survey

Sustainable and successful development of vocational education and training is possible only if we have adequate data, so that it is possible to implement evidence-based policies. The general public opinion about vocational education and training is essential for concluding if vocational education and training is an attractive educational tool or no. The attractiveness of vocational education and training is determined by targeted efforts of the participants of the vocational education and training system itself to improve the quality of vocational education and training, respond to the needs of the society and to communicate the message to target audiences through communication process. It also depends on existing stereotypes about vocational education and training system and economic perspectives of VET programmes graduates.

To develop a positive image of vocational education and training, first of all, Lithuanian society must develop its values related to respect for working-class professions. Development of vocational education and training in Lithuania is creating positive changes, however these changes need to be widely publicised, so that the target audiences could learn about the current state of the vocational education, the changes taking place therein and the challenges to be expected. General knowledge about vocational education and training reaches the target audience to a large extent, but there is still a very small number of 16-18 year old people in Lithuania is involved in vocational education and training at the upper secondary education level. Nowadays context is the reason adults need to continuously improve their professional qualifications; therefore, it is necessary to create conditions for Lithuanian people to develop their professional practical skills as actively as possible employing the possibilities of vocational education and training.

The survey produced significant data on the opinion of Lithuanian people towards relevant issues in relation to vocational education and training. The data of the survey showing that awareness related to vocational education and training and the image of vocational education and training among young people in Lithuania is quite close to the EU average, but the indicators of selecting vocational education path in Lithuania are lower than the EU average – indicates the issue for further research in Lithuania – why is this so?

However, the result of the survey allows analysing only a very generalised attitude of the public towards vocational education and training at the upper secondary education level. It is advisable to supplement the field of the survey with the data that could extend the analysed aspects of vocational education and training, revealing deeper causes of the phenomena under study.

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