

SKILLS GAP AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: ESSENCE, CAUSES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME

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The article investigates the essence of skills gap as one of the types of skills mismatches. The importance of having progressive cognitive, socio-emotional and technical skills for the employee and the employer is substantiated individually. It is found out that when hiring applicants for a qualified job and appointing them to the position, their skills are assessed by employers in terms of their importance and level of satisfaction (compliance with the employers' requirements). The difference, which demonstrates the inconsistency of the required skills with the existing ones, forms a skills gap. The study of the essence of the terms identical to skills gaps enables the author to define skills gap as an existing type of their mismatch, namely the lack of each specialized key skill required to sustain high job performance at the appropriate level (medium, high) within the position (professional duties).

Based on the generalization and study of the opinions of labour market research experts, three key factors that cause a skills gap are identified. They are technology, education and training. The technological factor determines the importance of educational and training factors, as technological revolutions cause global changes in the world of labour, the emergence of new professions and positions, and, accordingly, affect the need for the formation of new professional skills. Acquisition of modern professional qualifications and mastery of the necessary skills are provided through high-quality education and lifelong learning.

Based on the global survey of the existing gap in key skills among university graduates, conducted by QS Global Employer Survey 2018 taking into account the survey among employers and university graduates, a discrepancy is found in almost all 15 skills available in the analysis, in terms of both importance and satisfaction for employers. At the same time, the results of the survey among university graduates show differences in assessments between the two groups of respondents on the criterion of priority of key skills. According to the author, this discrepancy is the result of the diversity of focus on results and expectations of the use of skills among respondents. On the one hand, it is explained by the differences in experience and deep understanding of business fundamentals. On the other hand, it is caused by the mental gap between generation X (most employers belong to this category), Y (millennials) and Z (represented by young people who have recently graduated from educational institutions). Based on the study of behavioral and mental characteristics of these generations, an important role of generation Z in the formation of the world labor force and its growing influence on future global trends in the labor market are highlighted.

The study identifies the main causes that deepen the existing skills gap. It is explained by the uncertainty of the procedure for identifying key skills in the employers' personnel policy, which complicates the process of planning the need for these skills. The other factors include the imperfection of enterprise personnel policy in terms of employment; maladaptation of traditional education to digital transformations; weakness of integration links between business and education, which makes it impossible to bridge the existing skills gap; pandemic COVID-19.

The paper outlines the main ways to overcome the skills gap, which is becoming especially important in the post-pandemic period. They include the formation of a modern system for forecasting skills needs for the long term at the macro level; reforming the employment policy at the micro level, more active use of outsourcing services by employers; introduction of the transformed (adapted to modern conditions of viral crisis) model of training enterprise employees through apprenticeship.

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