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WYŻSZA SZKOŁA
TURYSTYKI I EKOLOGII

KOMPETENCJE ZAWODOWE
W PRZEMYŚLE SPOTKAŃ (MICE)
VOCATIONAL COMPETENCIES IN MICE SECTOR

SUCHA BESKIDZKA 2021

WSTiE

EURECYS

DIALOG of Transformation®
Certifield Service EDU SMART Training Centre
UKPRN 10066595

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The report was prepared by the Project Team under scientific editing

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The project “Vocational competence in MICE sector” aims to improve and increase professional competence and the ability to use various types of tools needed on the market and required by organizers of events in the MICE industry (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events). The project is carried out in parallel on the Polish, Irish and Hungarian markets.

Until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MICE sector, nowadays known as the meetings industry, was a thriving and rapidly growing industry, and its role in the economy was constantly growing. This translated into customer expectations as well as the needs and competence of employees operating in this industry. Currently, due to the market situation caused by the pandemic, the effects of the crisis have also reached the meetings industry, which is closely related to the tourism sector and HORECA. The need of competence development of MICE employees, and thus the reconstruction of the industry, will also affect the functioning of the entire tourist market.

The main goal of the project, including this diagnostic report, is to create a qualification standard and a model of a new HR development system based on professional competencies in the MICE industry. The assumption was to develop tools and solutions allowing for the development of key and professional competencies of event organizers, thus improving the quality of services and increasing soft skills allowing for building local and inter-industry partnerships (e.g. HORECA). The World Tourism Organization confirms that MICE is an important branch for the development of enterprises and cities related to the tourism sector. Identifying and deepening the competencies of qualifications may turn out to be the way of rebuilding the sector.

This issue has now become the subject of discussions among entrepreneurs in the sector, looking for both conditions for reconstruction and competitiveness, which are expressed, among others, by the Kaohsiung Protocol – Strategic Recovery Framework for the Global Events Industry (ICCA, 2020) and the Cracow Network Protocol (2021).

1. A review of definitions

Currently, the term "meeting industry" is used. The term replaced the previously used (but still functioning) terms of "business tourism", "MICE sector" (an acronym derived from M – Meetings, I – Incentives, C – Congresses or Conferences, and E – Exhibitions or Events).

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) uses the term "meetings industry" to denote organization, promotion, sales, and service delivery for association, government and corporate meetings, incentive travel, seminars, conventions and conferences, business events, technical visits, exhibitions, and fairs.

The definitional and substantive scope of the sector is evolving because UNWTO has proposed the development of a new category of activity related to the meetings industry, which is included in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). The new category tries to define the meetings industry through an additional new class of 'convention and trade show organizers. According to the recommendations, this industry includes the organization, promotion, and management of events such as fairs, conventions, congresses, and conferences, regardless of whether they relate to the management and commission charged by the operation of the facility where the event takes place. Hence, industry associations, i.e. the International Congress and Convention Association, Reed Travel Exhibitions and Meeting Professionals International, proposed the introduction of the name "the meetings and events industry".

However, after consultations with the industry and other international organizations, the term "meetings industry" gained greater approval, considering that the term "event" was too broad[1].

The meetings industry is treated as a part of the economy related to the management and organization of meetings and business, political and economic events and is divided into:

- **"association meetings"** – national and international conferences and congresses without a clear division into governmental and non-governmental meetings,
- **"corporate event"** – corporate event (training, workshops, seminars, press conferences, product launches),
- **"incentive event"** – trips/ incentive trips of a gratifying, discretionary nature, combined with activities aimed at integration,
- **"fairs/ exhibitions"** – events on any subject, taking place at the exhibition facilities.

Despite the different theme of going on a trip, the meetings industry and leisure tourism show a certain similarity, as emphasized by Gołembski (2009). It also points out that business tourists use basic tourist services and, in their free time, meet the same needs as tourists traveling for purposes other than business. This similarity, therefore, applies to the use of the same infrastructure, but in the case of the MICE market, it is extended by many additional elements[2].

[1] Celuch K., Międzynarodowy przemysł spotkań jako przykład działań na rzecz intensyfikacji wykorzystania przestrzeni turystycznej, W: Marketing miejsc – teraźniejszość czy przyszłość?, Zeszyty Naukowe, Vistula, nr.40/2015
[2] Swarbrooke J., Horne S., Business Travel and Tourism, Routledge, London, 2001

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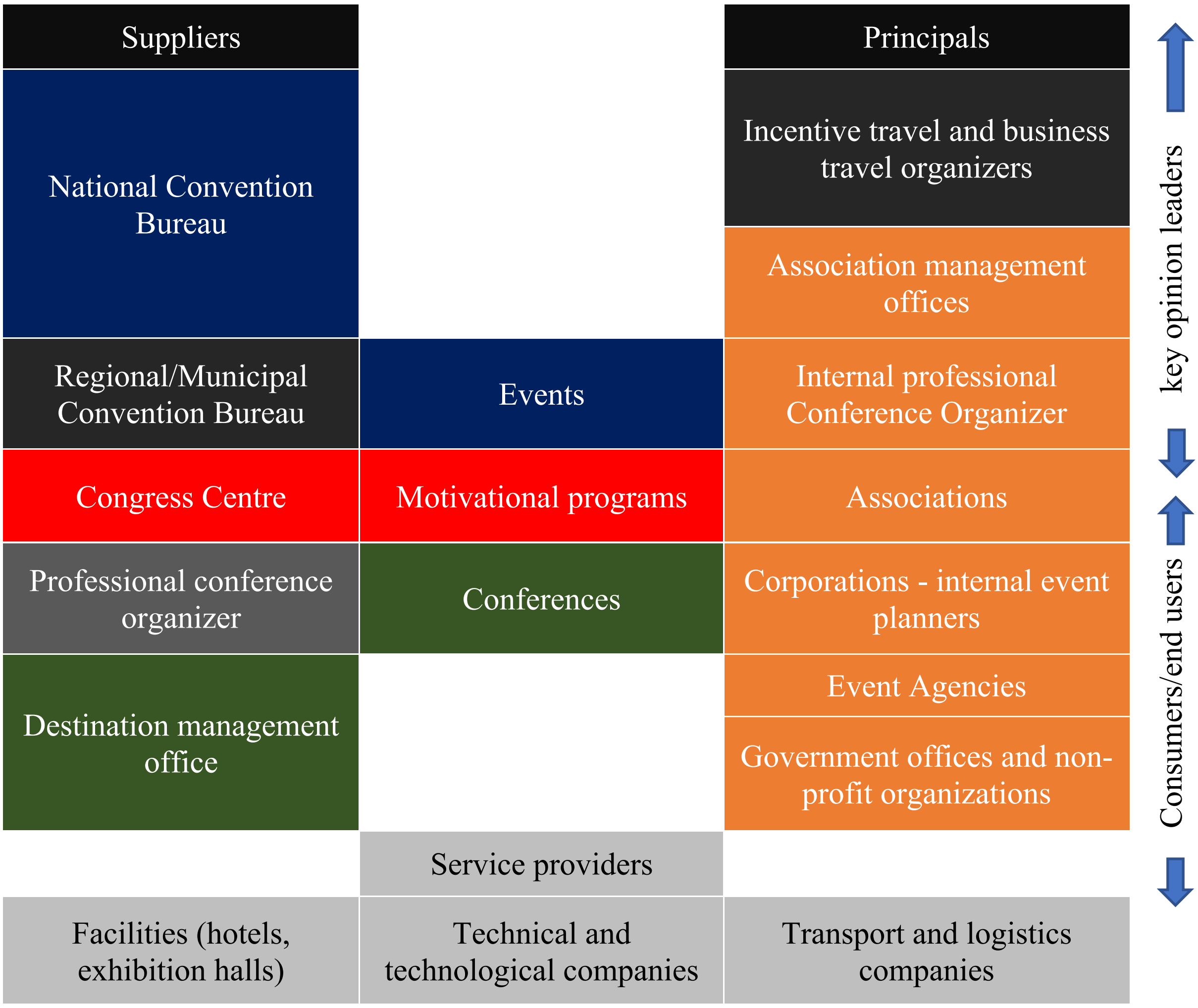
The MICE industry is clearly divided into the market of suppliers and principals, which in the English nomenclature are referred to as sellers and buyers.

Fig. 1. Global market for suppliers and customers in the meetings industry



Source: Celuch K., 2014, Przemysł spotkań. Wiedza, produkt, motywacja, Akademia Finansów i Biznesu Vistula, Warszawa

More and more cities are building their economic and tourist potential by relying on the meetings industry[3]. Three of the five criteria characterizing a city with international functions relate to the meetings industry: the existence of infrastructure for the organization of international events (hotels, conference rooms, convention centres), the transnational importance of the city in the field of business and/or cultural tourism, and the provision of services at an international level, for example of fairs, international exhibitions, and others. The number of international conferences is a significant measure of economic competitiveness used to build recognized world rankings of cities, e.g. Global City Index, Global City Competitiveness Index, and Cities of Opportunity.

Hence, for many cities, the meetings industry becomes the industry of economic development, emphasized in strategic documents[4], and the purpose of managing the meetings industry has an organizational structure, often of a public-private nature, commonly called the Convention Bureau.

K. Borodako points out that "...the meetings industry is a complex and fragmented market that combines the interests of many stakeholders. It is composed of both entities representing the **supply side, i.e. service providers, and the demand side, i.e. customers, and intermediaries**. The group of suppliers includes the congress and conference centres, accommodation facilities, transport companies, the catering industry, tourist attractions, audio-visual service providers, scenographers, companies with appropriate equipment for the construction of exhibition stands or stages, translators, and many other subcontractors providing

[3] Zmyślony P., Piechota N., Znaczenie przemysłu spotkań w kształtowaniu potencjału turystycznego miast, W: Celuch, K. (red.), Zarządzanie i organizacja przemysłu spotkań w Polsce. Teoria i praktyka, 2014
[4] for, among others: Walas B., Polityka zrównoważonej turystyki Krakowa na lata 2021-2028, UMK, Kraków, 2021

partial services, often for entertainment, rented in connection with the program of the meeting, e.g. jugglers, pyrotechnics, etc. The other side of the market is represented by entities reporting demand for meeting organization services, which expect to achieve specific goals as a result of the preparation and implementation of a given event. Corporations, associations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations are most often mentioned here. Agents are an equally important group of entities operating in the meetings industry. They can represent both clients (ordering the preparation of a given meeting) and suppliers (e.g. responsibility for marketing the place). In this group, the following are most often mentioned: Professional Congress/ Conferences Organizer – PCO, incentive travel organizers, Destination Management Companies – DCM, Convention Bureau – CB and Venue Finder Agency".[5]

The group of intermediaries is important, therefore the analysis being the subject of this report is based on their opinions.

The main meeting generating markets are:

- **corporate market** – related to the sector of enterprises, banks, and other financial institutions,
- **non-corporate market** – associations, including those related to international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

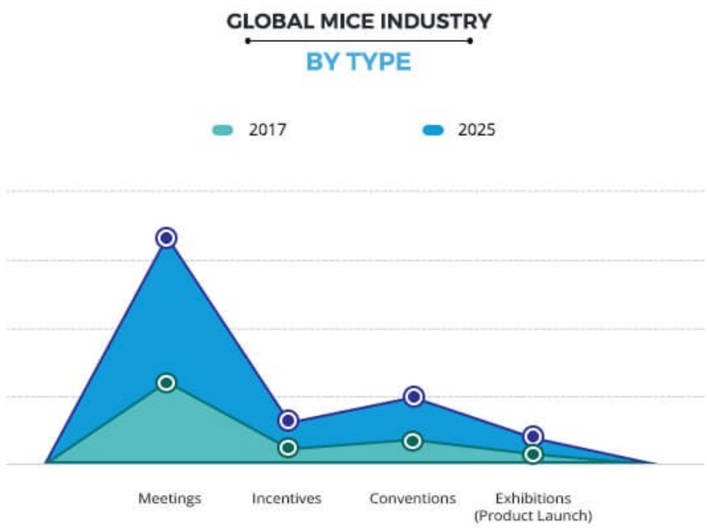
The greatest demand in MICE tourism is in the areas of IT, economics, and medicine.

[5] Borodako K., Berbeka J., Rudnicki M., 2015, Zarządzanie innowacjami w przemyśle spotkań, CH Beck

2. The meetings industry in the face of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

Globally, the MICE industry is dominated by the meetings segment (mainly face-to-face). In Europe, 18% of trips are business-related, while the remaining MICE segments collectively only get 6% share (of which 48% - conference tourism, 42% - exhibitions, 10% - incentive trips). The largest market share is held by Germany, France, and Switzerland, which account for around one-third of European business tourism. The multi-year trend, measured before the pandemic, was extremely favourable[6], as illustrated in the figure below.

Fig. 2 Development trend of the meetings industry



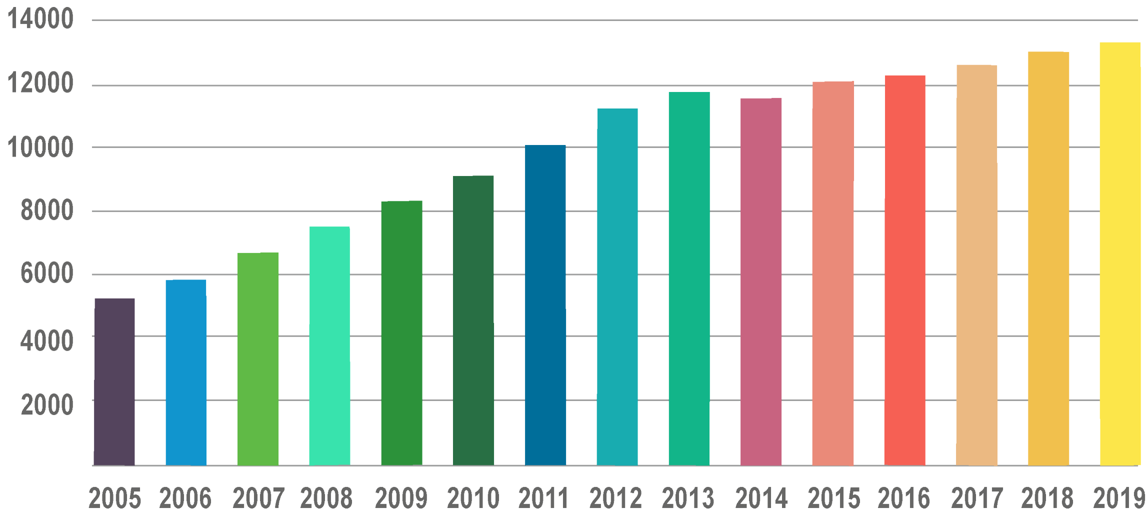
Source: https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/MICE-industry-market

In regional terms, the position of Europe as a region for the reception of events also indicated its growing importance. The 2019 statistics of the International Congress and

[6] https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/MICE-industry-market

Convention Association ICCA recorded 13,254 rotating association meetings, which was the highest recorded annual number with an increase of 317 meetings compared to the previous year.

Fig. 3. Number of meetings in 2005-2019



Graph represents the number of meetings as identified by ICCA the immediate year after

Source: https://www.iccaworld.org/newsarchives/archivedetails.cfm?id=2894936

Paris comes first in the ranking in terms of the number of association meetings in 2019, followed by Lisbon, the city with the highest increase in the number of events (+38), with an advancing character. Valencia (44 places higher) and Istanbul (40 places higher) recorded an impressive increase in the Top 50 list in terms of the number of meetings held there, taking respectively 48th and 44th places[7].

[7] https://www.iccaworld.org/newsarchives/archivedetails.cfm?id=2894936

Tab.1. ICCA Statistics 2019 Top 20 Country and City Rankings

City			Country		
1	Paris	237	1	U.S.A	934
2	Lisbon	190	2	Germany	714
3	Berlin	176	3	France	595
4	Barcelona	156	4	Spain	578
5	Madrid	154	5	United Kingdom	567
6	Vienna	149	6	Italy	550
7	Singapore	148	7	China – P.R.	539
8	London	143	8	Japan	527
9	Prague	138	9	Netherlands	356
10	Tokyo	131	10	Portugal	342
11	Buenos Aires	127	11	Canada	336
12	Copenhagen	125	12	Australia	272
13	Bangkok	124	13	Republic of Korea	248
14	Amsterdam	120	14	Belgium	237
15	Seoul	114	15	Sweden	237
16	Dublin	109	16	Austria	231
17	Athens	107	17	Switzerland	221
18	Rome	102	18	Argentina	214
19	Taipei	101	19	Poland	213

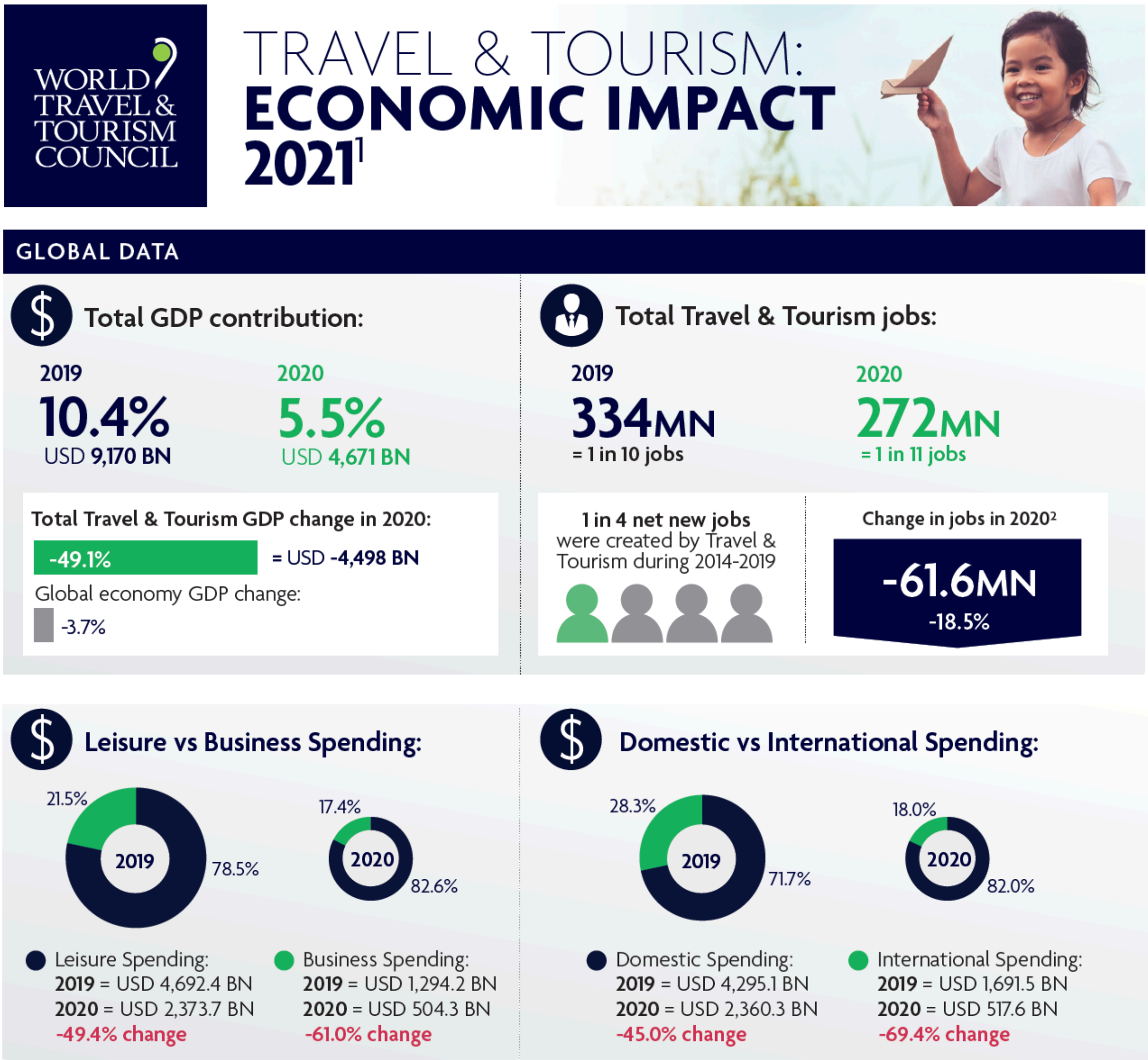
Source: https://www.iccaworld.org/newsarchives/archivedetails.cfm?id=2894936

In 2019, Paris and London offered over 1,000 conference hotels to host business events and accommodate participants. Paris was also the leading city in Europe in terms of the number of business meetings with 237 events. Germany was the most popular country in Europe in terms of business events, with over 700 international meetings held in 2019. Congresses, conferences, and seminars consistently have the largest share in this type of event - almost 58% in 2019.[8]

[8] Meetings industry in Europe - statistics & facts, Published by Statista Research Department, Dec 3, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed the market situation. WTTC data indicate that there has been a catastrophic regression in the global tourism economy.

Fig. 4. Travel and tourism economic impact 2021



[1] This data includes the direct, indirect, and induced impact of Travel & Tourism. Source: WTTC and Oxford Economics. All values are in constant 2020 prices & exchange rates. As reported in March 2021
[2] Where countries or regions have implemented job support schemes and supported jobs are still recorded as employment by national statistical authorities, job losses exclude those supported jobs (where known).

Source: https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact

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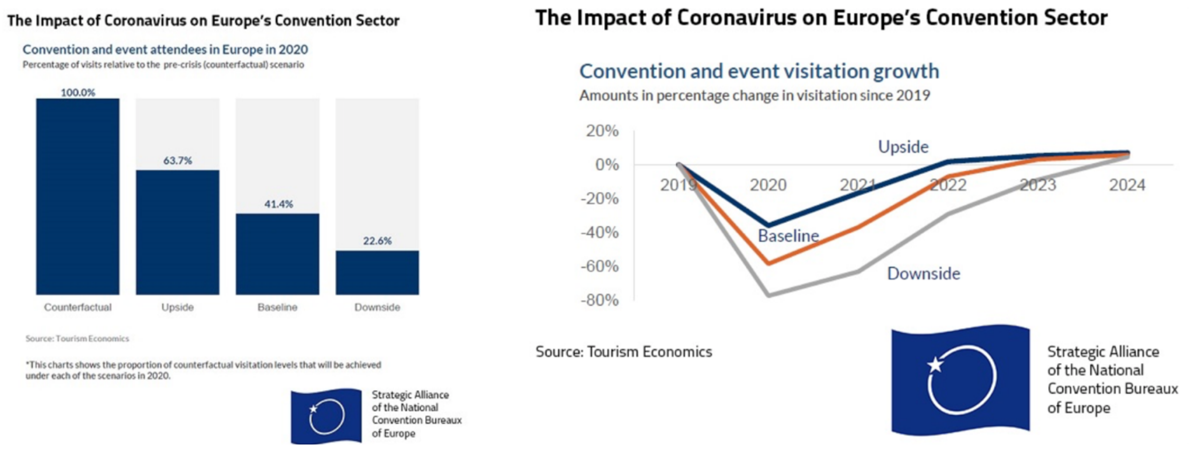
Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe has published the results of a study on the impact of the coronavirus on the European meetings industry.

Fig. 5. The impact of Coronavirus on Europe's Convention Sector



Source: https://www.pot.gov.pl/en/poland-convention/news/study-on-impact-of-coronavirus-on-european-convention-sector

Tab.2. The impact of Coronavirus on Europe's Convention Sector

Convention and event attendees in Europe in 2020*	
Scenario	Percentage of visits to the pre-crisis scenario
Counterfactual	100%
Upside	63,7%
Baseline	41,4%
Downside	22,6%

* This table represents the proportion of the counterfactual levels that will be achieved under each of the scenarios in 2020
Source: Tourism Economics

The analysis published by Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company, aims to create a constructive description of the process of recovering the meetings and conferences sector from the crisis and to develop three possible scenarios reflecting the scope of the impact of the current situation.

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According to the basic model, participation in both national and international events will continue to be influenced by some negative sentiment, reducing the number of participants by 25% in 2021 and 5% in 2022, before finally recovering in 2023. The pessimistic scenario takes into account alternative forecasts assuming a decline in the number of conference tourism participants between 36% and 77% in 2020, followed by a sharp or more prolonged recovery, respectively. Government restrictions on the size of meetings are also expected in 2021, as well as a stronger impact of negative moods among potential participants (resulting from their concerns) and a full improvement in 2024 at the earliest.

When developing the above scenarios, the actions taken by governments, companies, and individuals to mitigate the effects of the pandemic were taken into account. These activities determine the impact of the crisis on the meetings and conferences industry to the greatest extent. In particular, three responsible factors were taken into account in the analysis:

- events that have been cancelled or postponed as a result of a voluntary decision by the organizers or in response to government restrictions on group meetings,
- official travel restrictions, both governmental and corporate,
- individual concerns that may cause potential participants to drop out.[9]

However, in individual interviews with the **managers of Polish MICE companies**, which are the subject of this report, free statements were obtained regarding the assessment of the prospect of recovery after the pandemic of the MICE sector, broken down by the segment of congresses and conferences, incentive trips, events and fairs, and exhibitions:

[9] https://www.pot.gov.pl/pl/pcb/news/analiza-wplywu-covid-19-na-europejski-rynek-spotkan

in the segment of congresses and conferences
this will be the latest recovery segment, with a significant share of hybrid events.
less numerous, delayed
Associations will permanently include hybrid and virtual formulas in the organization of events. The geographic rotation will change in favour of smaller regional events versus global major events. The return to the volume of projects from 2019 will be possible in 2024 at the earliest.
More events in the hybrid formula, but not earlier than 2022. There will also be events in which the number of physically present participants will be smaller.
only in 2022 we will return to fairly normal congresses
in domestic traffic, I estimate at 40-50% in the 3rd and 4th quarter in 2021 *international congresses in 2022 at 40%, in 2023 at 50%*
long-term 2-3 years
small spring, then maybe bigger
Rebuilding the segment in the pre-pandemic formula will be difficult, but possible. Many events will be organized in a hybrid way, in a large sanitary regime, but the need to organize traditional meetings involving direct interpersonal contact will return..
It will take at least a few years to recover from the pre-pandemic state. During this time, such events will take place in a hybrid or online formula. The speed of the worldwide immunization process will have a huge impact on the return to this type of face-to-face event. Depending on the pandemic situation in the coming years, however, smaller events of this type will prevail at the beginning.
gradually starting with smaller meetings, starting in May
slow return, great caution, 2022
smaller events, rather hybrid ones
difficult but possible
from the perspective of observing the situation, it seems that it will be different. Congresses and conferences will come back, but to what extent. I think that the number of participants will decrease, we will wait a long time for the return of big events, rather expect smaller ones.

in the incentive travel segment
Due to the proximity of physical contact, the segment will recover as the pandemic subsides
in 2021 only business trips will return, but to a significantly limited extent, incentives will return in 2022 and corporations will pay more attention to the sanitary safety of the destination country, and they will prioritize sustainable destinations and a high level of pro-ecological behavior
full loosening of sanitary restrictions will allow us to return to the incentive market
the sector will return to "normal" at the latest of all. First, all travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, etc. have to be removed. Corporations are still working online, so until they return to work in "real world" it is difficult to talk about incentive travel.
traveling abroad in 2021 about 20% of traffic, 2022 – 35-45%, 2023 about 60-70%
long-term, 3-4 years, more events in the country
only after clients are vaccinated – 2022
Many companies are already thinking about organizing typical incentive trips and returning to meetings in interesting places in a traditional form. Of course, the sanitary regime is a priority.
A faster recovery can be expected in this segment than in the congresses and conferences segment. I think incentive travel to Poland will start to recover very slowly in the second half of the year. However, the groups will be much smaller, they will come mostly from the EU and countries neighbouring Poland, and the budgets allocated to this type of trips will be cut by clients.
in spring 2022
great care, late planning, year 2023
only after the pandemic, i.e. 2023
Incentive travel will come back, because motivation, especially nowadays, is important. But the trips will focus on small groups with a very interesting, exclusive program.

in the segment of events
corporations' attitudes towards the organization of events are also unknown
as far as possible and hybrid concepts
events will recover in about 2 years, but this is the fastest anyway compared to other sectors, when they can recover to pre-pandemic levels
probably large principals will limit the number of events
I think smaller, local events may start to come back in summer 2021. We will have to wait until 2022 for large events such as festivals.
3rd or 4th quarter 2021 at the level of approx. 40%
2 years and significantly smaller budgets
as soon as they allow it
The organizers are already planning new events, but to a much lesser extent in terms of the number of participants. The number of participants will gradually increase over time.
It will take at least 2-3 years for the state to recover from before the pandemic. During this time, such events will take place in a hybrid formula or online in specially prepared studios and locations.
mass events only in spring 2022
great caution, late planning, 2023
hybrid
positively
People are fed up with sitting at remote events. The assumption of events is the fact that the participants experience some impressions, they meet, these are the factors that make the events happen. Events will come back, but they will also be limited.

In the segment of fairs and exhibitions
in two years they will come back, but also in the form of Internet "Auctions"
smaller in terms of the number of exhibitors and visitors
B2B fairs for industries that were not seriously affected by the pandemic will return in 2022. Events that were targeted at industries that suffered very severely as a result of the pandemic may also disappear from the calendars. Trade fairs for the tourism sector will be significantly limited. B2C trade fairs will return when sanitary restrictions are lifted.
many B2C events will move online
Regional events should start in the fall of 2021. The big, traditional international fair has and will have the biggest problem. It is estimated that there may be a problem with global events until 2023.
2021 – about 25%, 2022 – 40% 2023 – 70%
June or the fall months of 2021
As in the case of events, trade fairs and exhibitions will recover gradually and a rapid increase in exhibitors or visitors should not be assumed.
It will take at least a few years for the pandemic to recover. During this time, such events will be held mostly online, and their return will be determined by the process of vaccinating the world's population.
September 2021
possible return in 2022, maintaining the sanitary regime and a reduced number of visitors
the current form of B2C trade fairs is unlikely to come back before 2024
Fairs and exhibitions will come back, but in a different formula. Covid and post-covid constraints will result in a different scale. People want to meet, talk. All MICE segments will return, however, it will be a new formula that will result from various types of restrictions, travel safety, movement, direct contact. Today it is difficult to comment on this issue because it is not known how the fate of the pandemic will unfold and what the message will be to the world. One thing is certain that human nature will push everyone to interpersonal contact, and thus it is a good sign for MICE to revive, but under some conditions we will find out later, but we must be ready.

Among **Hungarian MICE representatives**, only a few forecast a quick economic recovery, which can be attributed to their stronger economic situation and ability to change.

Most doubts were raised in the segment of incentive travel, congresses, conferences, and events, which may face a faster recovery, even if in different forms (hybrid events).

in the segment of congresses and conferences
Slow return, due to the strengthening of the online world, the previous level is probably not achievable
The number of conferences requiring in-person presence will decrease. It will also be important to organize virtual events in the future. Even after the end of the pandemic, the number of events requiring personal presence (e.g. professional trips, field exercises) is increasing.
The situation in this sector is extremely difficult. No increase of the order of magnitude is expected in the next two years. National and international events will only be possible by adhering to strict rules.
Presumably some of the already adopted online methods will be permanent
Following the pandemic, there will be dumping and then everything will slowly return to what it was

in the incentive travel segment
depending on the resumption of tourism as soon as possible, slow growth
It will be difficult to rebuild trust
Slow recovery, many companies tend to save capital reserves
Full recovery - it may turn out that extensive virtual services will help to develop the incentive travel market
We expect growth, especially in terms of travel opportunities

in the segment of events
it largely depends on the degree of public trust
a quick explosion of short "events"
We are not positive about these events, as we cannot rule out further epidemics such as the one for which we were not prepared.

Looking for countermeasures to the pandemic situation, analytical institutions and international organizations try to find assessments of the conditions and tools for the recovery of the meetings industry sector. There are likely trends as well as recommendations for actions taken in the changed reality.

For example, **the ICCA Kaohsiung protocol** is a strategic framework to revitalize the conduct of global meetings and events, as the COVID-19 pandemic is becoming a catalyst accelerating the transformation of this sector.[10] It provides a framework for integrated strategies and describes the future of the global event industry. The strategic framework developed for the Kaohsiung Protocol was constructed in the context of macro-global trends affecting society and business in general, as well as all the characteristic micro-trends for the MICE industry.

This protocol describes likely macro trends as well as those that are specific to the meetings industry.

MACRO TRENDS
1. Accelerating the digital economy
2. Ongoing challenges related to the logistics/distribution of vaccines
3. Continuation of the global recession
4. Exponential growth in the number of remote workers
5. Accelerating people's adoption of remote technologies
6. Raising awareness of diversity, equality, and inclusion
7. Permanent adoption of physical distance
8. Increased recognition of the effects of climate change
9. Accelerating e-commerce
10. Long-term health and safety concerns
11. Increased concerns about mental and physical health
12. Increasing the impact of artificial intelligence on personal/ professional life
13. Increase in consolidation in all industries
14. Mass disruption of global supply chains

[10] Kaohsiung Protocol – Strategic Recovery Framework for the Global Events Industry, ICCA, Next Factor, December 2020

15. Accelerating growth in the Asia-Pacific region
16. A sharp increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises closures
17. Increase in investments in ESG[11] (environment, society, management)
18. Accelerating the improvement of the qualifications of the workforce
19. "Decimation" of urban centres (e.g., offices, hotels, restaurants)
20. Increase of intersectoral convergence
21. Lack of trust in global institutions and leadership
22. Shifting government investment in clean technologies
23. Greater recognition of the benefits of smart cities, cars etc.
24. Transition from a shareholder economy to a stakeholder economy
25. Global growth of nationalism
26. Improving cooperation between the public and private sectors
27. Increasing the role of circular economies
28. The reversal of globalization
29. More leadership at local and regional government level
30. Increasing awareness of the brand's purpose.

MICRO TRENDS IN THE MICE SECTOR

1. Development of hybrid events
2. Growing demand for flexible contract terms
3. Evolution of the business model for events
4. Slow return of big events
5. Raising awareness of the need for more innovative thinking
6. Growing opportunities related to digital transformation
7. More and more emphasis on risk reduction
8. Evolution of the value for sponsors of digital events
9. Ease of travel restrictions

10. Permanent reduction in the number of business trips
11. Decline in the average size of the convention
12. Growing awareness that the number of F2F meetings before Covid-19 will not return
13. Increase in production costs
14. Growing importance of event/experience design
15. Diversifying the roles of event organizers

[11] ESG – an abbreviation denoting factors on which ratings and non-financial assessments of companies, countries, and other organizations are based. They consist of 3 elements: E – Environmental, S – Social responsibility, and G – Corporate governance

16. Increase in controlled event environments *17. Increasing the number of closed hotels* *18. Understand that DMO/CVB funding will not improve over the years* *19. Formation of micro-events* *20. Raising awareness that the F2F event is only one of many channels* *21. Long-term losses in air transport capacity* *22. Change in meeting customer needs in the first place* *23. Increased consolidation of the event industry* *24. Increase in consolidation and closing associations* *25. Increase real-time 1-to-1 engagement with participants* *26. Growing demand for targeted social media strategies/metrics* *27. Long-term loss of major events in medium-sized cities* *28. Greater emphasis on measurable results as the main value of the event* *29. Trust is the new currency* *30. Increased alignment between the event's strategy and economic development* *31. Increasing the amount of data collected to measure everything* *32. Increasing the number of closed facilities* *33. Increase in bookings in the short-term rental system* *34. Increased competition for subsidies to the organization of events* *35. Declining availability of industrial supplies* *36. Acceleration of junior leadership in the events sector* *37. Increasingly adopting tiered membership and pay-to-play models* *38. Growing DMO / CVB Consolidation, Economic Development, Chambers* *39. Higher overall demand for event space in 2022* *40. Long-term loss of DMC* *41. Less interest in the rest of the effects of events* *42. Creation of large outdoor spaces* *43. Growing shortages of staff and subcontractors.*

Many of the indicated micro-trends are related to the competencies of the staff.

The KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol is an extremely interesting initiative, inspired by the Protocol from Kaohsiung ICCA. The document was created by representatives of the Krakow MICE industry as an introduction to a joint operating strategy, with a plan to update the provisions later, and was published in March 2021.[12] It is a collection of good practices and recommendations for use in post-pandemic reality, setting out a list of key strategies that will enable the further development of the meetings and events industry. The identified lines of action include innovative business models, shared risk, digital restructuring, and hybrid events, and strategies for increased involvement of all stakeholders.

The key benefits of implementing the CRACOW NETWORK Protocol include a clear model of cooperation within the initiative, joint building, promotion and lobbying of the city's offer, gaining competitive advantage of the city of Cracow, PR, and transparency of involved entities, integration of partners and suppliers in the field of knowledge exchange, creation of innovative tools, including hybrid and online events. As part of joint risk management, the signatories (187 companies) defined, among others, a policy of no cost cancellations, insurance for participants, payment terms, or order changes.

Other recommendations precisely describe the key potential phenomena, such as trends identified for each year by K. Celuch[13]:

Destinations "reinvented"	New business solutions; searching for partnerships and financing outside the meetings industry; transfers and cancellations
Distance, disinfection, mask	Implementation and compliance with the rules that will become applicable in individual regions of the world and will be related to the organization of meetings. Ultimately, this means that for fewer participants, large spaces will be required, and new space plans and configurations will be required to optimize the space. This will ultimately create a trend for smaller events.

[12] Protocol CRACOW NETWORK, March 2021

[13] Celuch K., Trendy 2021, Wiedza, produkt, motywacja, wpływ, in: Celuch Consulting, 2021

Virtual hybrids	Create high production value events with a simple all-in-one solution. Hybrid, virtual and physical events become one production.
Personalization of motivation	Group travel can be replaced by other employee motivation tools. According to the Incentive Research Foundation, individual incentives and personalized employee compensation will be even more popular. Therefore, when analysing the motivating process including incentive travel, there will be an increase in demand for private and exclusive destinations.
Thinking inward	Thinking inward is primarily about looking from a different perspective, although it is not about the "out of the box" direction. The year 2021 is the time when the business model, plans, strategy, and communication tools should be redefined.
Experiencing experiences	Modifications to health and safety services are an integral part of sustaining events during a pandemic, which has increased the need for even more small moments and human interaction than ever before. The organizers of the meetings were forced to build virtual experiences, including musical performances, tastings or virtual travels. In addition, a solution was started to involve the participants in what we call "experiencing experiences".
Back to "we"	Consumers are increasingly bored with non-functional solutions that do not meet their needs. No company or person is safe in today's social media world, and it is consumers who want companies to be mindful of greater equality and ethics. In the following years, starting in 2021, significant work will take place on combining voice control with new technologies. Consumers will begin to gain more control over their voice and begin to perceive the individual's social power through technology. Also, a discussion will begin on a more informed approach to data sharing. People will start demanding digital privacy and identity freedom. They will start asking for more in return for access to their digital identities. Activism is becoming

	more and more a struggle for a shared experience that is not only comparable to joint activities on social media. Moving away from traditional protest and the desire for transformative societal change, a more human-centric approach to data is emerging that enables people to control how their personal information is collected and shared.
Festivaling	The risk of spreading Covid-19 is less significant externally. It can also lead to outdoor events to allow more guests to participate and to ensure a safe and comfortable distance between participants. On the other hand, the possibility of organizing mass events causes new concerns about their organization, bearing in mind the guidelines or sanitary needs. Outdoor spaces can also be considered for organizing corporate events, as a reinvented option for a team or company meeting is to consider planning an outdoor event like a patio, garden, or theatre.
Locally, not globally	With fewer people willing to travel, future events will be smaller, so consider smaller facilities or buildings with more customization options. At the same time, people are demanding more personalization of the events they participate in. Planning multiple options and setting up pathways that allow participants to adapt to a given environment will be a key responsibility of the planners. More personalized events will require more creativity, but ultimately their added value will be what attracts participants. As climate change is one of the most important issues of modern society, consumers are taking a closer look at their consumption habits and want to introduce changes today that will lead to a better future, i.e., taking care of what is local, "mine".
Sustainable development	The drive to sustainability in the meetings industry has been gaining momentum in recent years. But 2021 could be a turning point - planners go beyond simple measures to adopt a circular

	economy, where almost all event materials are reused or recycled. The event sector generates a huge amount of waste that goes well beyond bottles, cups, and straws. Thanks to the restriction of travel, meals and the introduction of virtual events, the environment became the big winner of these actions from the beginning of the pandemic. With a focus on sustainability and waste reduction, participants will expect sustainable incentives and environmentally friendly initiatives when they attend events.

Celuch K., Trendy 2021, Wiedza, produkt, motywacja, wpływ, w: Celuch Consulting, 2021

3. The meetings industry in Poland

Thanks to the integrated activities of interested institutions, the meetings industry in Poland is well described in the annual reports of the Poland Convention Bureau[14] - "Industry Meetings and Events in Poland". It attempts to define the size of the market for organizing meetings and events in Poland. Developed annually by the Polish Tourist Organization in cooperation with the municipal and regional Convention Bureaux and with recommended organizers of congresses and incentive trips, it presents the collected results on the number and size of meetings and events organized in Poland. Reports of this type are also prepared at the level of some cities. The role of Poland on the European meetings market has been systematically growing. Poland has clearly better and more accurate analyses of the sector than Ireland and Hungary.

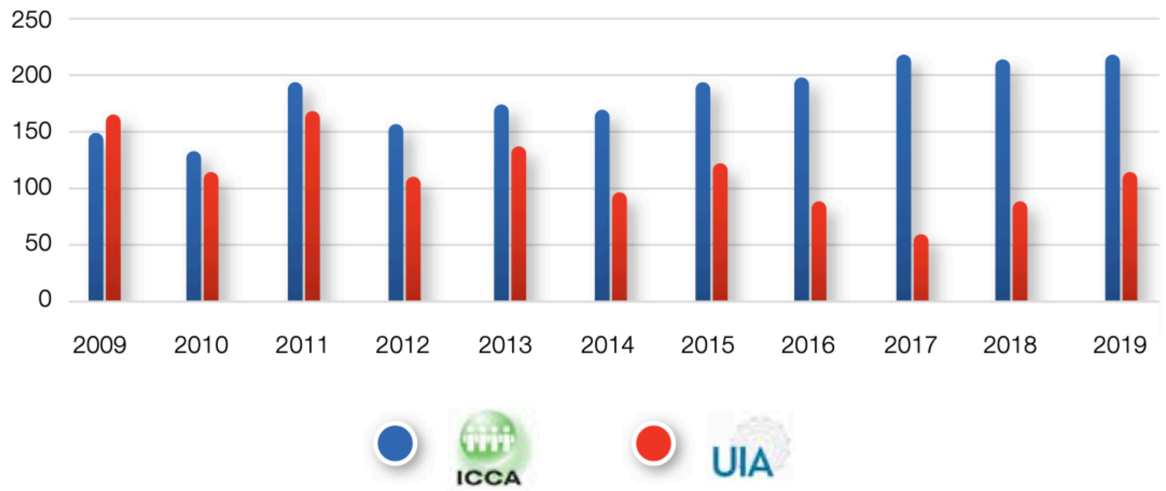
[14] https://www.pot.gov.pl/pl/dzialalnosc/poland-convention-bureau. Poland Meetings & Events Industry Report, 2020, POT, PCB

Tab. 3. Number of corporate events in Poland

	2017	2018	2019
Number of events	9800	9100	11000
Number of participants	1 5648 000	1 700 000	1 441 000

Source: Celuch K., own study based on the report "Poland Meetings & Events Industry Report"

Tab. 4. Number of meetings organized in Poland according to ICCA and UIA statistics in 2009-2019



Source: Meetings and events industry in Poland, Report 2020, Polish Tourism Organization, 2020

According to the results of the Poland Events Impact 2020 study, the contribution of the meetings industry to GDP is 1.5%. In 2019, meetings and events generated approximately PLN 35 billion in contribution to the Polish economy, and over 16.3 million national and international participants took part in meetings and events. The contribution to employment in the meetings industry amounted to over 220,000 jobs.[15]

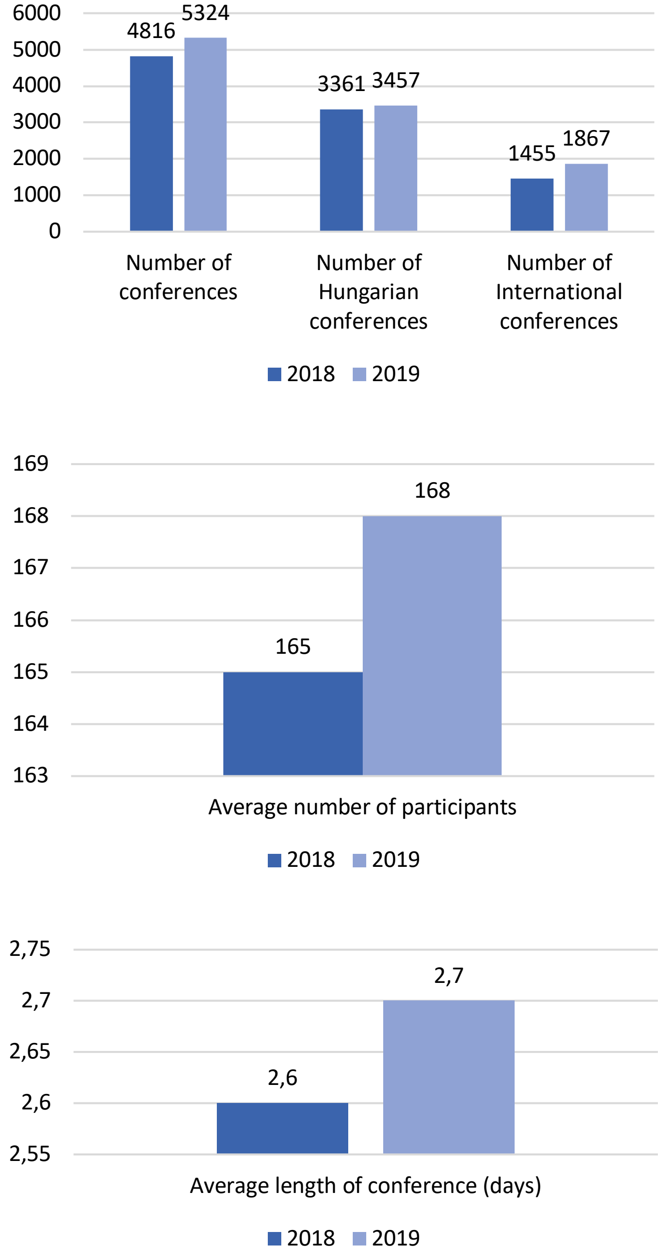
[15] https://www.waszaturystyka.pl/polski-przemysl-spotkan-dal-w-2019-roku-15-pkb/

4. MICE sector in Hungary

In Hungary, most MICE travel events are concentrated in Budapest, which has achieved a dominant position in the market of international congresses and federal meetings, which is an excellent result in both global and European markets. In addition, smaller cities are also not without significance, such as Szeged, Pécs and Debrecen, which are the locations of most of the Budapest conferences according to MTÜ statistics (Hungarian Tourism Agency 2018).

In Hungary, the Congress Office operates within the Hungarian Tourism Agency and deals with the domestic MICE market. The scope of activities includes, inter alia, mapping of supply and demand conditions in the market, appropriate collection and dissemination of data and information, and informing potential principals. According to the Hungarian Convention Bureau, positive trends were observed in the meetings and conferences segment until 2019. According to the Budapest Convention Bureau, in 2019 the number of events increased by 10.6%, the number of international events by 28.3% and the number of participants by 12.5%. In 2019, Budapest took 26th place in the ICCA ranking of the potential of conference rooms (International Congress and Convention Association) and 15th place in the ranking of European cities.

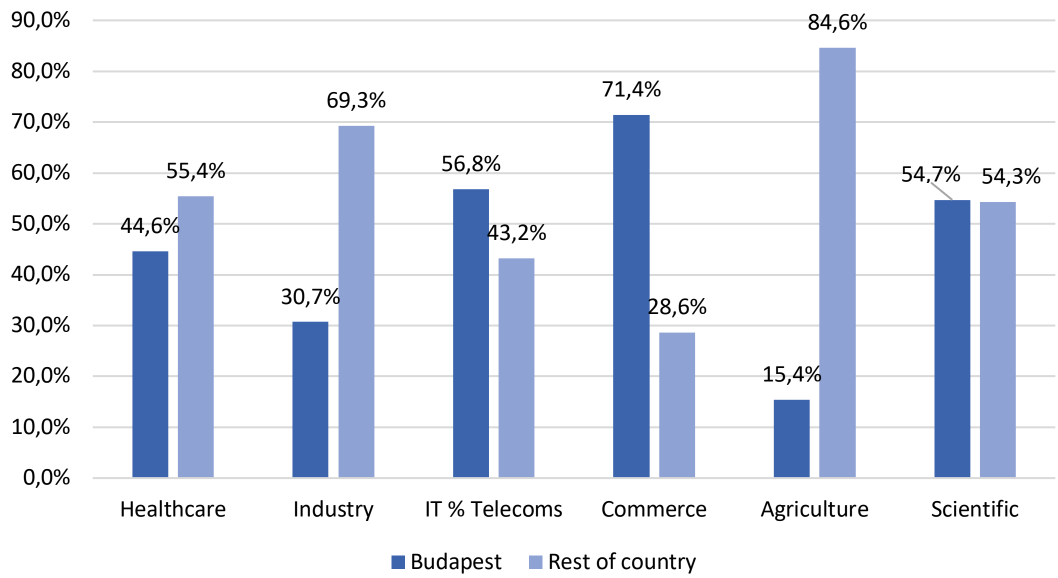
Fig. 4 Indicators of the MICE sector in Hungary



Source: own study based on Tourism bulletin XII. year, issue 2. (in Hungarian)

The location of the conference was also influenced by their subject matter, with a particular emphasis on those that usually included some field trips or site visits, such as agricultural, forestry or industrial conferences where the main part of the conference was organized outside Budapest[16].

Fig. 5. Location of MICE events



Source: own study based on Tourism bulletin XII. year, issue 2. (in Hungarian)

[16] Tourism bulletin XII. year, issue 2. (in Hungarian)

5. MICE sector in Ireland

The events industry is diverse with a mix of large and small firms. There are many freelancers and many temporary workers employed in the industry. Types of activities in chich firms were mostly involved:

- Live events 42%
- Event organiser 37%
- Outdoor 34%
- Conference 32%

The industry consists of a mix of companies and sole traders. They are supported by a number of supplier (80%), freelancers (68%), venues (60%), entertainers (49%) and travel agents (10%).

A 2016 report on the UK events industry revealed that industry to be worth €50.9b (£42.3b at 2016 exchange rt). This was updated to €80b in 2020 (£70bn) by the Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP). Effectively growing 12% p.a. Although the latter is an industry report it seems to be correct. The Bureau of Labour Statistics in the US put expected growth for meeting and event planners at 11%, while Allied market research put it at 10.3% per annum. Most firms estimated their annual revenue income between 0-250k £ (29%). The lowest annual revenue income is over 10 million by only 4% of the firms. Another data point is the global industry, which it is estimated to be $1.1tn in 2018. Using GNI* we can estimate that the Irish economy amounts to 0.29% of the global economy, which would place the Irish equivalent figure of €3.2 bn (at 2018 exchange rates). The MICE industry in Ireland had an output of €2.2bn. When we add on growth since 2017 and other aspects of events it rises to 3bn without accounting. In 2015, it was worth €669m to the Irish economy, this reflects a 35% increase since 2011. It accounts for 16% of overseas tourism spend in Ireland and is one of the highest yield sectors in tourism. Promotable business has accelerated at an even faster pace, growing 52% in the last five years. Each Business Tourism delegate is worth an average €1,500 per visit. This is almost three times that of the leisure tourist. In the Number of meetings per country in 2015 ICCA Global Ranking, Ireland was ranked 26th with 125 meetings. In 2015 Ireland ranked 19 in Europe in ICCA rankings and 32 worldwide, while Dublin ranked 18 in top 20 cities worldwide.

On average, international delegates stayed about 4.9 days in Ireland corporate conferences/ meetings and association conferences, account for over 200,000 overseas tourists[17].

By supporting the Regional Convention Bureaux in Shannon, Cork, Kerry and Galway, the National Tourism Development Authority is focused on expanding MICE operations beyond the Irish capital. The MICE team[18] from Fáilte Ireland's Meet in Ireland is working with Tourism Ireland to take full advantage of Ireland's potential as a business tourism destination. The organization works closely with the Association of Irish Professional Conference Organizers (AIPCO), the most important professional association of conference organizers in Ireland.

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[17] https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Business%20Tourism/A-Z-of-MICE-2017.pdf

[18] Meet in Ireland is a global MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events/ Exhibitions) brand for an island of Ireland.

The heart of the MICE sector in Ireland is Dublin, which is back on the list in the top 20 cities worldwide.

6. Competencies and Qualifications

Focusing on the quality of services, improving the skills of MICE specialists, and deepening the professional knowledge of specialists based on current trends will contribute to strengthening the professional industry, especially in the post-pandemic period. The skills of the MICE sector employees are especially important in the development of their careers, offering high-quality services, but also directly influencing the development of the tourism industry, including MICE. Considering the dynamic development of the MICE sector, it is important to accept the challenge of developing the work standards of the event organizer to systematize their activities, enrich their professional skills, raise professional qualifications and multitask that accompany this profession daily. The event organizers, as MICE employees, are the target group of the project. Raising and adjusting their qualifications to the market needs, developing creative and entrepreneurial attitudes in society, and awareness of lifelong learning are of particular importance for vocational education, including the MICE sector.

The tourism economy, which is one of the sectors determining the development of cities, has a positive effect also on other branches of the economy. The Hays and Oxford Economics report showed that the world economy was in the best shape for many years, but economic development revealed many new problems in the labour market**. Currently, the greatest challenge is the competency gap**, which may systematically increase, considering the growing demand for qualified employees[19]. The competency gap has been defined as a shortage of skills or qualifications compared to those desired for a given job position.[20] Staff problems, according to employers and experts in the broadly understood tourism sector, are currently the most bothering issue of the domestic and European labour market. [21] It is worth noting, however, that the problem is not the shortage of staff, but the quality of competencies.

The analysis of studies and reports on the situation on the labour market clearly indicates that economic development and investment growth largely depend on the possibility of acquiring qualified employees[22].

Employee's professional competencies are perceived through the prism of knowledge, skills and social competencies, including descriptors constituting the reference framework for learning outcomes, resulting from the recommendations of the Polish Qualifications Framework and the Integrated Qualifications System, based on three categories:

1. **knowledge** – a set of descriptions of objects and facts, principles, theories, and practices, assimilated in the learning process, relating to the field of learning or professional activity,
2. **skills** – the ability acquired in the learning process to perform tasks and solve problems relevant to the field of learning or professional activity,

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[19] http://www.hays.pl/notatki-prasowe-hays/luka-kompetencyjna-wyzwaniem-dla-światowych-rynków-pracy-1489596

[20] A competency gap is defined as a maladjustment of the competency potential to the requirements necessary to achieve the set goals.

[21] Polski rynek pracy – wyzwania i kierunki działań na podstawie badań Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego 2010–2015 pod redakcją Jarosława Górniaka, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości Warszawa – Kraków 2015

[22] Burzyński T. (red), Badanie opinii pracodawców dotyczącej luki kompetencyjnej kadr w sektorze, raport w ramach projektu 2.12 „Zwiększenie wiedzy o potrzebach kwalifikacyjno-zawodowych" POWR.02.12.00-00-0010/16, Kraków 2017 – 2018, Instytutu Turystyki sp. z o.o.,

3. **social competencies** – the ability to shape one's own development as well as autonomous and responsible participation in professional and social life, taking into account the ethical context of one's own conduct.

Regardless of the differences in the understanding of social competencies, researchers recognize them as properties that determine the effectiveness of the functioning of an individual and a team.[23] Modern, efficient management aims to create a competitive advantage through the speed of reaction to new opportunities and problems, the flexibility of both labour resources and organizational structure, and then the integration of all resources.

Competencies are also defined as: "the scope of knowledge, skills and responsibilities, as well as powers of attorney and powers granted on the basis of qualifications to act and decide and make judgments".

The **qualifications** themselves, on the other hand, **are defined as the sum of the education, professional experience and skills of the employee.** Therefore, it can be concluded that qualifications constitute the basis for shaping competencies[24]. According to another definition, a competence is a conglomerate consisting of:

- acquired knowledge,
- skills,
- attitudes.

[23] among others: Argyle, M. (2002). Psychologia stosunków międzyludzkich, Warszawa, PWN.; Smółka, P. (2008). Kompetencje społeczne – uwarunkowania i metody pomiaru. W: Ciarkowska W. , Oniszczenko W. (red.), Szkice z psychologii różnic indywidualnych (s. 258-268). Warszawa, Scholar.
[24]Whiddett S., Hollyforde S. (2003), Modele kompetencyjne w zarządzaniu zasobami ludzkimi, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków.

Some authors add a fourth competency element to the three components identified above, namely personality traits.

Among the social competencies are those included in the table below.

Tab. 5. Social competencies

1	building relationships with customers
2	work ethics
3	ethics in dealing with clients
4	interpersonal communication
5	availability
6	coping with conflict situations
7	solving problems and conflicts
8	proper self-presentation
9	motivating oneself and others
10	emotional bond with the company
11	professional integration
12	ability to cooperate with the environment
13	ability to adapt to changing conditions
14	improvement of qualifications

Source: own study

On the other hand, the essential personality traits are:

Tab. 6. Personality traits

assertiveness
empathy
loyalty
creativity
dutifulness
scrupulousness
kindness
composure
ability to conduct discussions

Source: own study

For analytical purposes, competencies can be aggregated according to the list defined below, which allows distinguishing hard, knowledge-based competencies and various types of skills as soft competencies.

Hard competencies. measurable skills (education, professional knowledge)
Analytical skills. ability to assess the situation, approach the task from different points of view, look for different perspectives, collect specific information and identify key issues to be addressed
Technical skills.
Flexibility, ability to adapt to the prevailing conditions, the ability to set priorities. coping with many tasks, i.e., setting priorities, adapting to changing conditions or requirements, and division of work.
Interpersonal skills. Ability to work in a group, with colleagues, inspiring others to act, engaging in joint projects, as well as mitigating emerging conflicts.
Leadership, management skills. There are personality types of leader by nature and individuals who acquire this leadership. Leaders can easily manage a small group of people.
Toleration and awareness of diversity. In virtually every position, there is a tremendous variety of personalities, types of people who have all sorts of belief systems.
Planning and organizational skills. The ability to design, plan, organize, and implement projects and tasks within the allotted time. They also include goal setting.
Ability to solve simple and complex problems, creativity. A light approach to problems solved with a creative mind, quickly connecting one thought to another to find the best solution. Design thinking.

Source: own study

By analysing the trends, it is possible to compile how they translate into the competence profile of the managerial staff.

Tab. 7. Competency profiles

Role/tasks	Attitudes/traits	Knowledge, experience	Skills, possibilities
leaders	institutionally oriented leaders	understanding the company in its environment	balancing adjustments and challenges
undermining assumptions, creating long-term goals and ambitions	taking up challenges	extensive management knowledge	the ability to create a demanding work environment, the ability to inspire

Source: Sterniczuk H., Nowe trendy w zarządzaniu a kierunki doskonalenia kadr, IBD Business School, Warszawa, https://ibd.pl/wiedza-dla-biznesu/nowe-trendy-w-zarzadzaniu-a-kierunki-doskonalenia-kadr/

The most important competencies and skills for all segments of the MICE sector for the management and employees are the conditions for adaptation to the changing environment. While the meetings and events segment is clearly dominant, the following competencies and skills are needed across all segments but in different proportions.

MANAGEMENT		OPERATIVE STAFF
Top managers/ CEO/owners	**Functional/line managers**	**Knowledge of their MICE segment**
Knowing the MICE sector	Knowing the MICE sector	Professional skills
Strategic planning & audits	Implementing strategies	Willingness to learn
Assessment of monitoring results	Monitoring in their department	Multiskilling – for teamwork
Financial planning - investments	Supervision of operative staff	First contact with clients
Market decisions	Identifying competence needs	Good self-presentation
Strategic marketing	Identifying skills shortages	Communication with clients
HR planning (whole company)	Departmental HR management	Communication with managers
Stress tolerance	Stress tolerance	Stress tolerance
Communication with employees	Dept. financial management	Planning own work
Communication with clients	Communication with employees	Team working abilities & skills
Communication with stakeholders	Communication with clients	Availability
PR-planning – key contacts	Communication with stakeholders	Good interpersonal skills
Multi-cultural knowledge & skills	Multi-cultural knowledge & skills	Multi-cultural knowledge & skills
Accreditation procedures	Conflict management	Creativity in problem solving
Introduction of standards	Media communication	Technical skills
Setting up company policies	Appropriate language skills	Appropriate language skills
Media communication	MICE logistic planning	Working in information-noise
Appropriate language skills	MICE logistic management	MICE logistic implementation
Conflict management (top level)	Project management	Social tolerance & adaptability
Managing changes – new strategies	Event management & marketing	Empathy
Ability for self-assessment	Ability for self-assessment	Ability for self-assessment
IT-skills	IT-skills	IT-skills
Contact with policymakers	Adaptation to change	Adaptation to change
Contact with authorities	Exhibition marketing	Health and safety skills
Regional networking	Local & regional networking	Basic conflict management
International networking	International networking	Environmental awareness

7. Diagnosis and needs of the meetings industry in Poland in the area of competencies

The meetings industry is a complex and fragmented market that connects the interests of many stakeholders. It is composed of both entities representing the supply side, i.e. service providers, and the demand side, i.e. customers, and intermediaries. The group of suppliers includes congress and conference centres, accommodation facilities, transport companies, the catering industry, tourist attractions, audio-visual service providers, scenographers, companies with the appropriate equipment for the construction of exhibition stands or stages, simultaneous interpreters and other subcontractors of partial services.

The other side of the market is represented by entities reporting demand for meeting organization services, which expect to achieve specific goals as a result of the preparation and implementation of a given event. Corporations, associations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations are most often mentioned here. Agents are an equally important group of entities operating in the meetings industry.

They can represent both clients (orders to prepare a given meeting) and suppliers (responsibility for marketing the place). This group includes the most frequently mentioned Professional Congress / Conferences Organizer (PCO), incentive travel organizers, Destination Management Companies (DCM), and Convention Bureau (CB).[25]

[25] Borodako K., Berbeka J., Rudnicki M., Zarzadzanie innowacjami w przemyśle spotkań, CH Beck, 2015, s.16

Methodology

The distinction between companies from the MICE sector is important for the methodological concept of a diagnosis and indication of competence needs. Four groups of intermediaries were included in the empirical research:

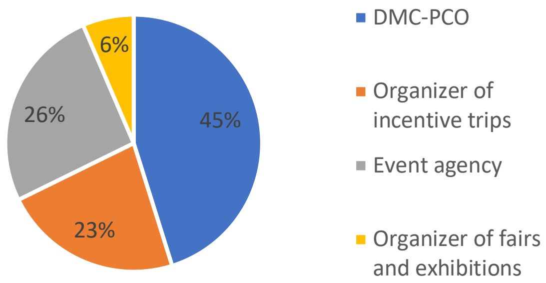
- Professional Congress Organizer – PCO,
- incentives travel organizers,
- Destination Management Companies - DCM, event agencies,
- organizers of fairs and exhibitions.

Hotel facilities were excluded from the research sample because they were considered as event locations.

The empirical research was based on the questionnaires of two surveys conducted using the CAWI technique (questionnaires identical in each country) from among companies representing the above four groups of intermediaries. In each country (Poland, Ireland, Hungary), in line with the concept, at least 30 questionnaires with employers, 20 questionnaires with employees and 15 individual interviews (10 interviews in Hungary) were conducted. The research was conducted from December 2020 to February 2021.

The research of the group managing companies in the MICE sector in Poland (including members of PCCA – Polish Conference and Congress Association) covered 31 people, 45% of whom were representatives of PCO / DMC, and nearly ¼ organizers of incentive trips (23%) and agencies event (26%). The smallest (6%) number of respondents represented the organizers of fairs and exhibitions.

Fig. 6. Type of business activity



The sample included 18 companies with a certificate issued by the Poland Convention Bureau at the Polish Tourist Organization or other certifying institutions, which testify to the competence credibility of the respondents.

Tab. 8. Having a certificate of quality or recommendation

	Having a recommendation/ certificate, e.g. Convention Bureau or other organization
Yes	18
No	13

The vast majority of companies have at least 10 years of experience in the market.

Tab. 9. The period of the company's operation on the market

	The company's operating time (in absolute numbers of responses)
up to 5 years	2
6-10 years	4
over 10 years	25

The socio-professional structure of the surveyed managers is illustrated by the charts below, which testify to the market experience of managers, measured by age or seniority in the meetings industry.

Fig. 7. Gender structure

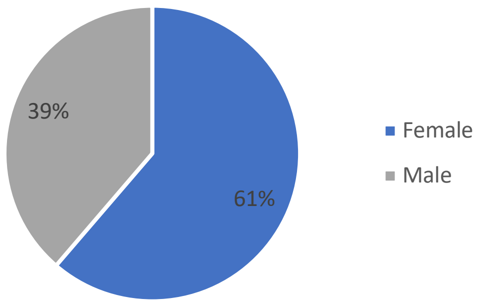


Fig. 8. Age structure

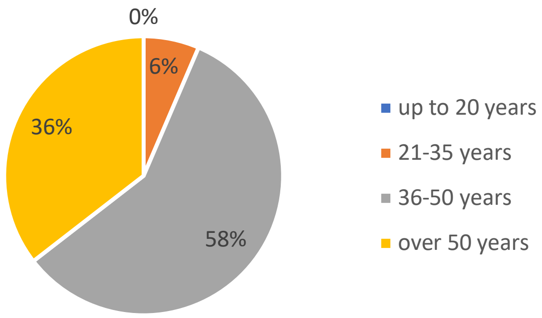
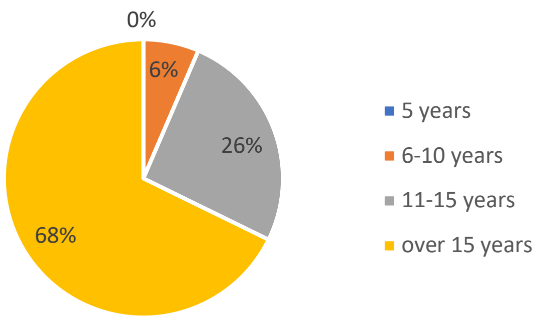


Fig. 9. Seniority in the MICE sector



7.1. Competencies in the opinion of managers

The competency analysis assessed:

- the level of usefulness of knowledge for a team of employees,
- necessary competencies depending on the position in the company,
- actual and expected social competencies to check the competency gap,
- aggregate employee competencies,
- the expected level of personality traits,
- self-assessment of own managerial competencies,
- needs, areas, and tools for improving qualifications,
- the role of competencies in the company's operations in the post-pandemic period.

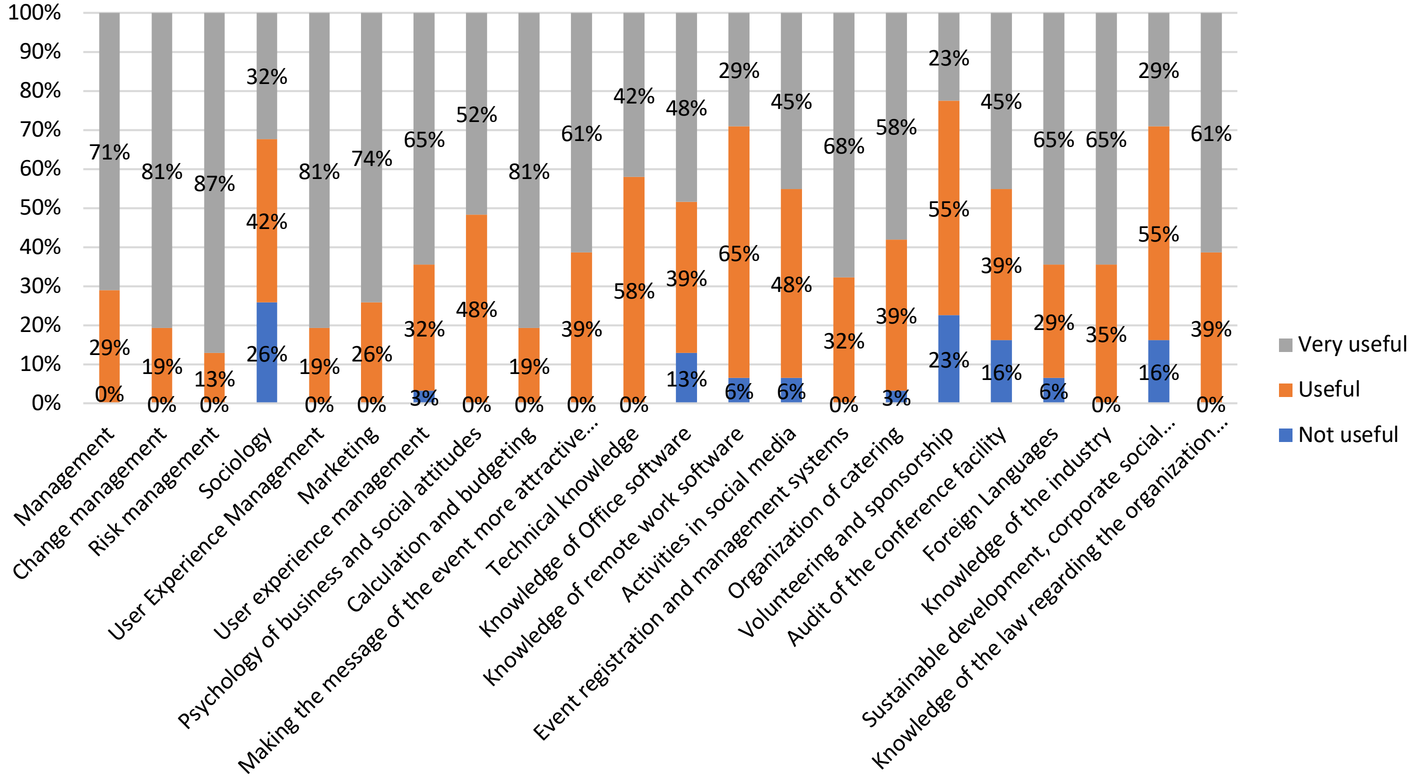
The questions were closed with a list of possible answers, except for questions related to the assessment of the importance of competencies in the MICE sector.

The respondents were asked to classify the areas of knowledge as useful or not useful for the functioning of the enterprise in the MICE sector (Fig. 10).

They found the knowledge of risk and change management, calculation and budgeting, negotiation, and marketing to be the most useful. Especially the first two areas of very useful knowledge are probably related to the crisis in the sector caused by the pandemic. Sociology (26% of responses), volunteering and sponsorship (21%), audit of a conference facility (16%), or sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (16%) were considered useless.

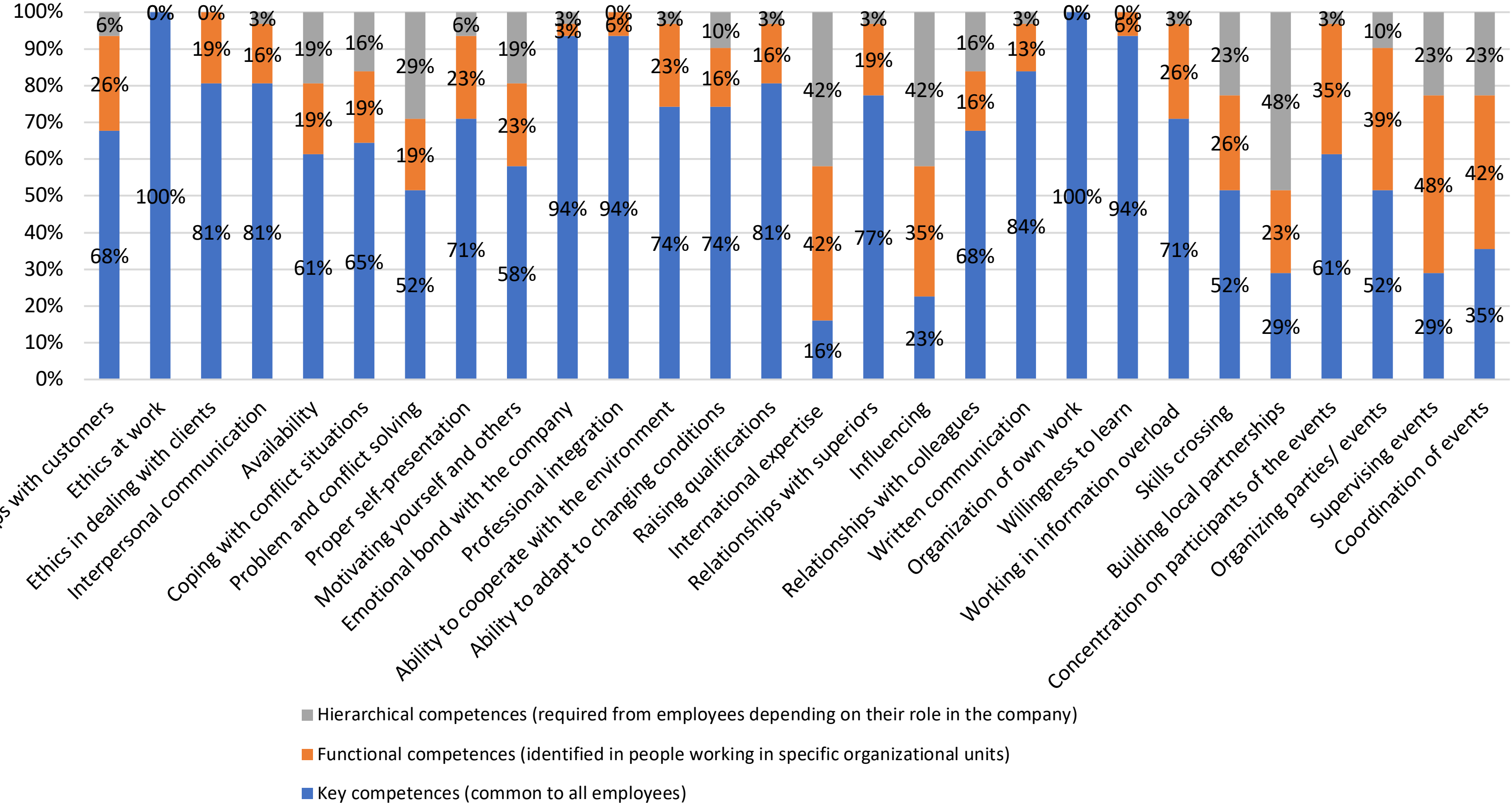
Knowledge in the field of business psychology, making the message more attractive, technical knowledge, event registration and management systems, and knowledge of the industry were considered to be at least useful (without indications unhelpful).

Fig. 10. Assessment of the usefulness of knowledge in the field of MICE



Depending on the occupational position (Fig. 11), the most important competencies, regardless of the position held, were: ethics and organization of one's work (100% of responses), as well as emotional bond with the company and professional integration (94% of responses each). The hierarchical competencies include building local partnerships (48%), influencing (42%), international expertise (42%), and problem and conflict solving (29%). For functional competencies that can be identified in people with organizational functions in specific cells, the highest percentage of indications was obtained by organizing events (39%), supervising events (49%), coordination (42%), and working in information overload and skills crossing (23% of responses each). Such an assessment of competencies is logical as it indicates those tasks whose performance is expected depending on the operational position in the company.

Fig. 11. The necessary type of employee competencies depending on the position in the company



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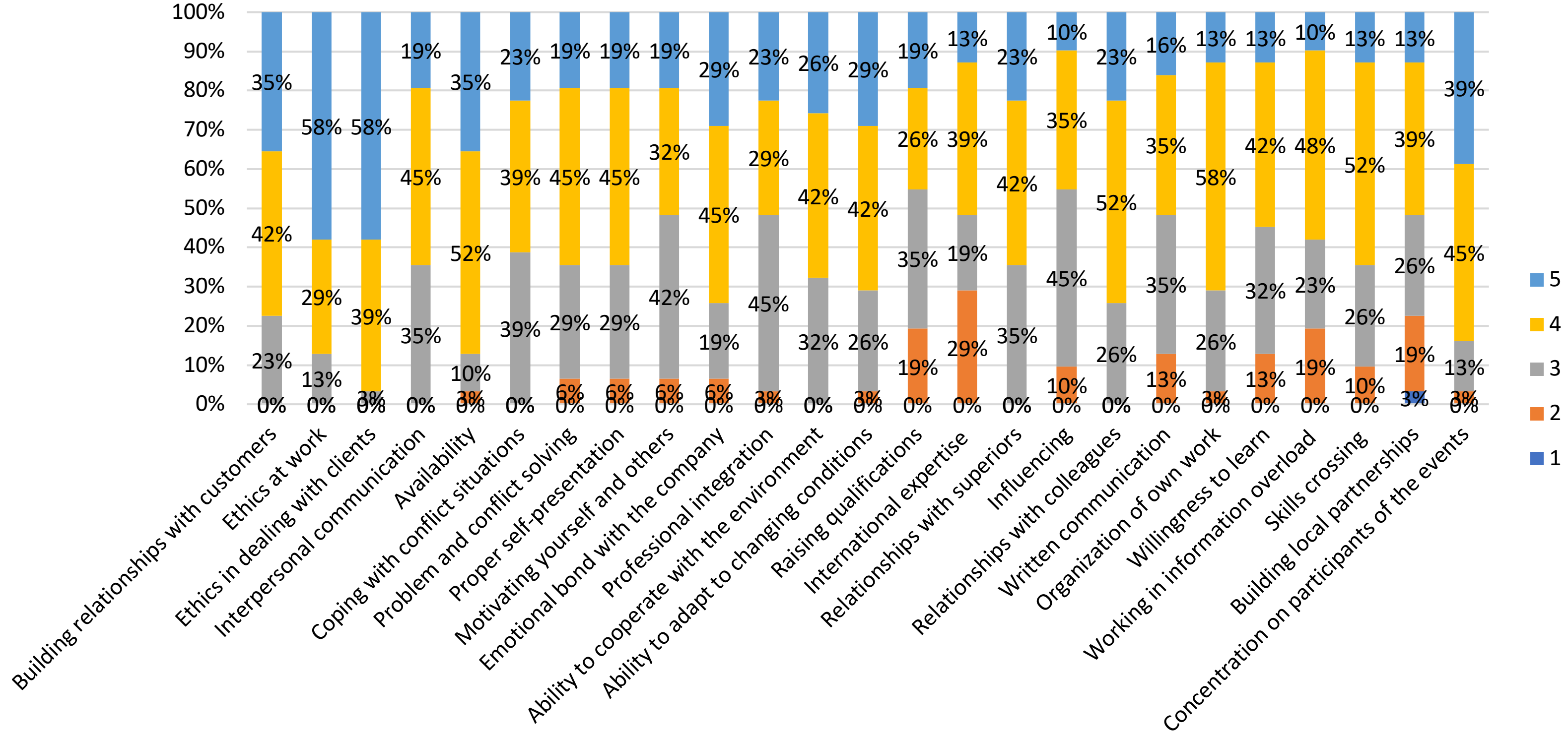
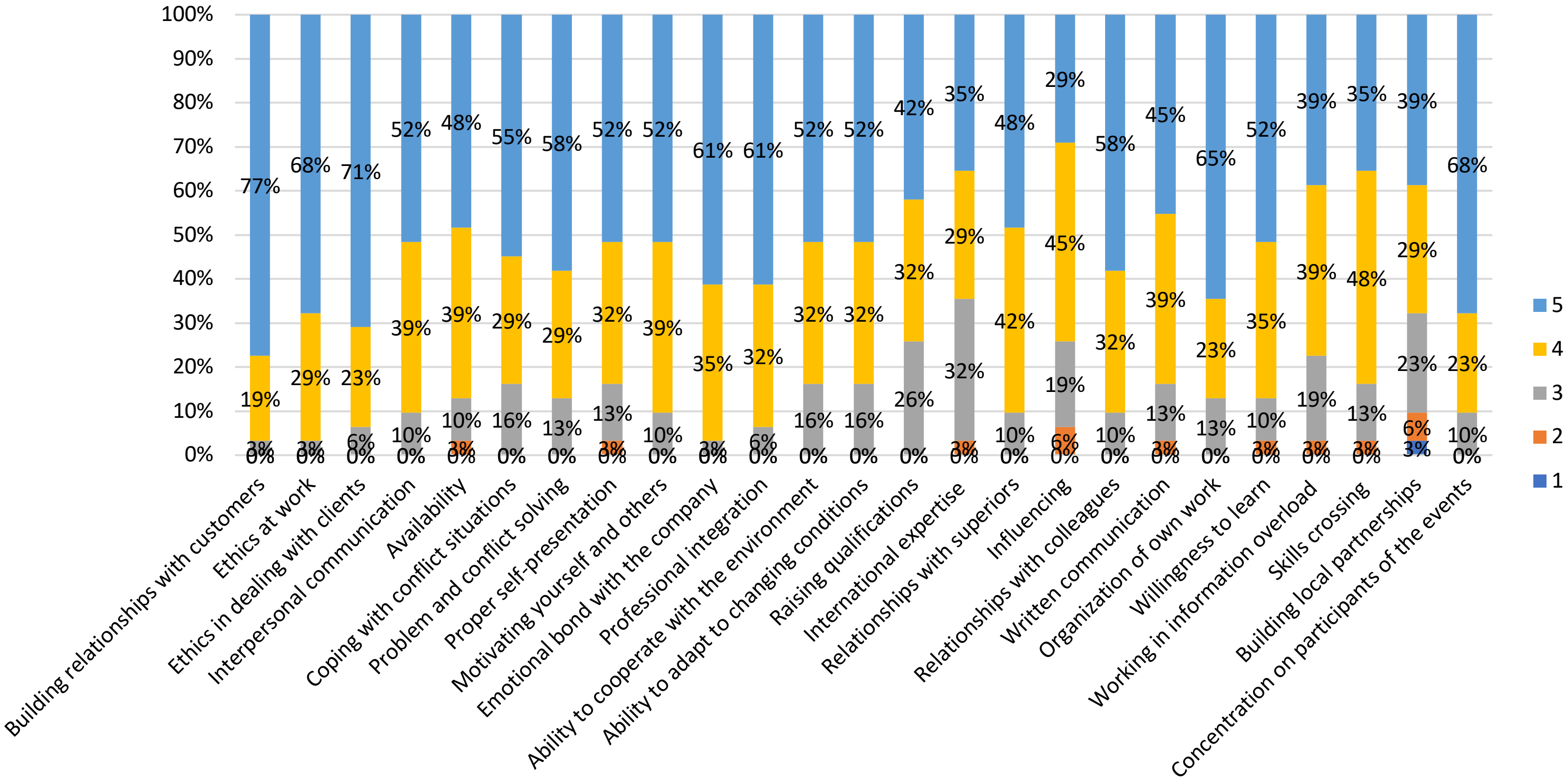
The competencies considered desirable were then compared with the assessment of the actual competencies of the team (Fig. 12) of the surveyed company, assessed on a scale from 1 (the lowest competencies) to 5 (the highest competencies). At the highest level (5 points), only half of the respondents indicated ethics at work and in contacts with clients. On the other hand, the lowest (1 point) level of competencies was indicated with regard to international experience (29%), building local partnerships (19%) or raising qualifications (19%) and the willingness to learn (13%).

Fig. 12. Actual social competencies of the enterprise team



The comparison of actual competencies with the expected ones (Fig. 13) allows for the identification of the competency gap. Expectations are higher than the actual state.

Fig. 13 Expected social competencies of the enterprise team



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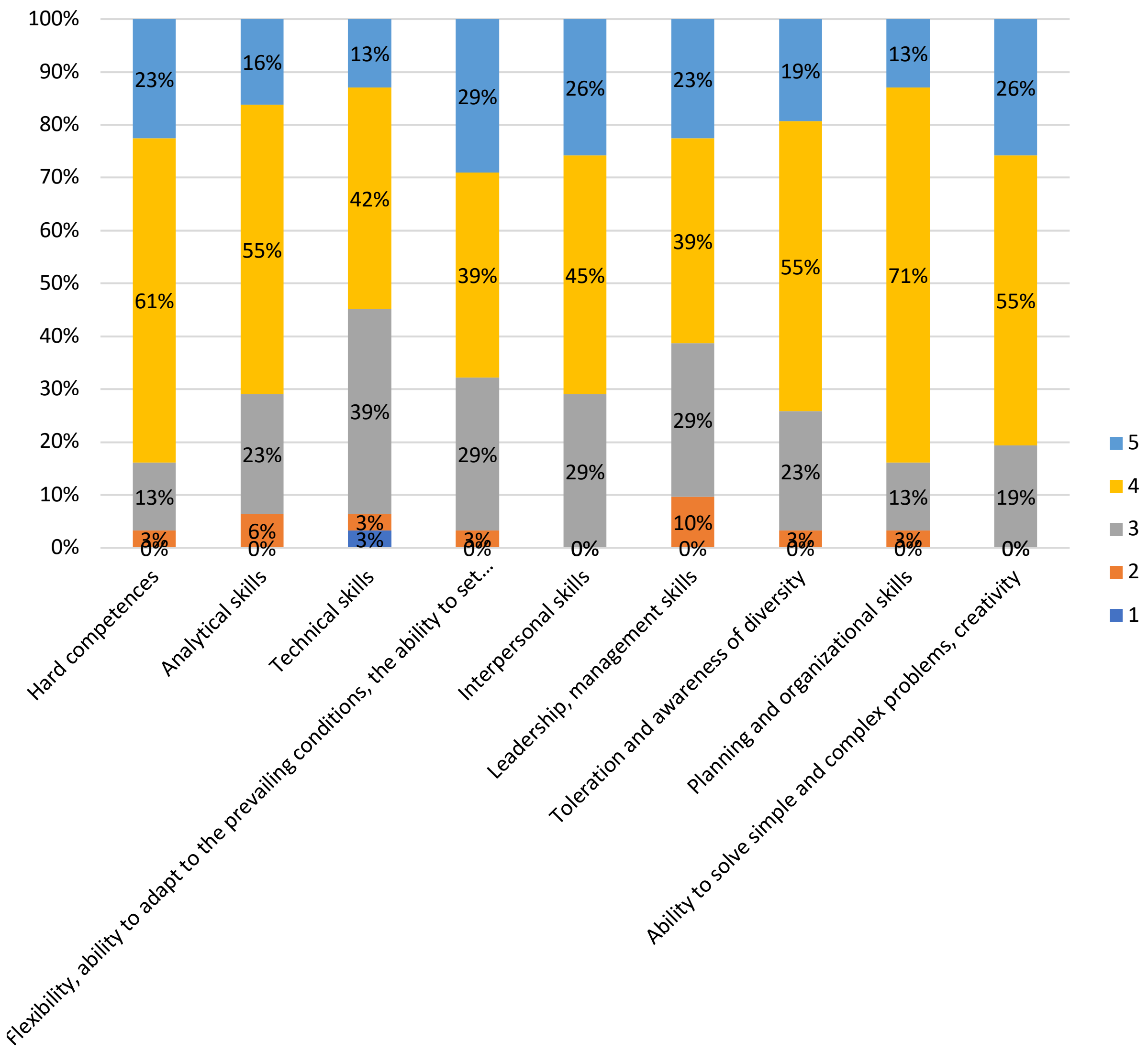
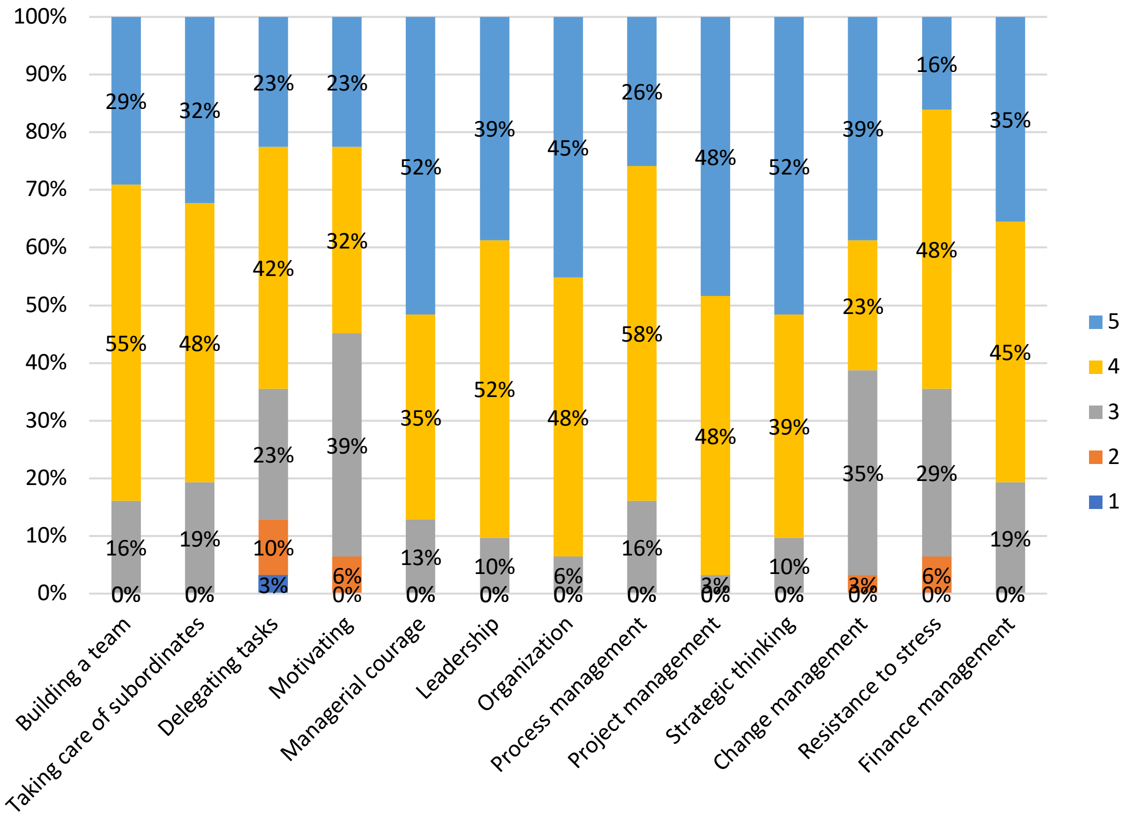
When assessing, in accordance with the assumed methodology, the aggregated components of employee competencies, the highest-rated were hard competencies, the ability to solve uncomplicated problems, and planning, understanding, and flexibility. Lower grades can be noted for leadership, technical and analytical skills.

Fig. 14. Aggregated components of employee competencies



Managers also faced the self-assessment of their managerial competencies. They rated their competencies related to delegating tasks, motivating and stress resistance as the lowest. On the other hand, the highest indicators (5 and 4 points) were assigned to leadership, organization, project management, strategic thinking, team building and financial management.

Fig. 15 Own managerial competencies



Indications of the actual level of the personality traits of the team are visible in the ratings at the level of the highest values (4 and 5) for all traits except for "prioritizing" (51% of respondents rated this trait at levels 3 and 4). A very highly rated indicator (45% of indications of 5 points) of loyalty to the employer or kindness (42%) should be considered beneficial in managing companies.

Tab. 10. The actual level of personality traits of the enterprise team

	Assertiveness	Empathy	Loyalty to the employer	Creativity	Dutifulness	Diligence	Kindness	Restraint	Ability to conduct discussion	Prioritizing
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%
3	39%	19%	26%	26%	16%	10%	6%	29%	35%	45%
4	52%	48%	29%	39%	55%	61%	52%	52%	45%	42%
5	10%	32%	45%	32%	29%	29%	42%	19%	16%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Raising the competencies and qualifications of employees is perceived by 68% of respondents (tab. 11) as one of the planned measures to overcome the pandemic crisis.

Tab. 11. Planned long-term actions to recover from the pandemic crisis

	Seeking financial support, including from EU funds	Switching to another activity partially or completely	Company reorganization / restructuring	New forms of enterprise management	Raising the competencies and qualifications of employees
Yes	87%	32%	71%	65%	68%
No	3%	55%	26%	32%	19%
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	10%	13%	3%	3%	13%
Sum of responses	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Increasing digitization / automation	Activities run remotely / virtually	Expanding the portfolio of services	Mergers, acquisitions	Reducing employment
Yes	81%	68%	84%	16%	65%
No	16%	23%	13%	65%	26%
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	3%	10%	3%	19%	10%
Sum of responses	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Based on the interviews, the CEOs concluded that the most pressing problems of the MICE sector requiring solutions in terms of competencies are:

new forms of the offer
digital competencies
how to change the business profile and acquire knowledge that allows you to apply for EU grants
crisis management
adaptation to change, change management, resignation from old habits and solutions mix of competencies in one person and looking for new solutions, focusing on the quality of the service and individual requirements of the participant
support in the field of soft skills as well as flexibility and openness to team changes
in terms of competencies, I do not see any pressing problems now
Continuous improvement of qualifications and a wide exchange of knowledge about the MICE sector on international markets and an attempt to make the best use of the experiences of these organizers
Implementation of events / conferences in the hybrid or online formula. It is impossible to organize an incentive trip in such a formula and it makes no sense.
technical possibilities of hybrid events.
work ethic with clients, responsibility
Creation with sanitary conditions
new reality and new standards
professional development is always important, the time we have been given should be used to expand our competencies.

As many as 93% of respondents (fig. 16) agree with the thesis that improving competencies is a development opportunity for a company, both in the area of hard and soft competencies (fig. 17), practical knowledge, including knowledge based on case studies.

Fig.16 Raising competencies as an opportunity for the company

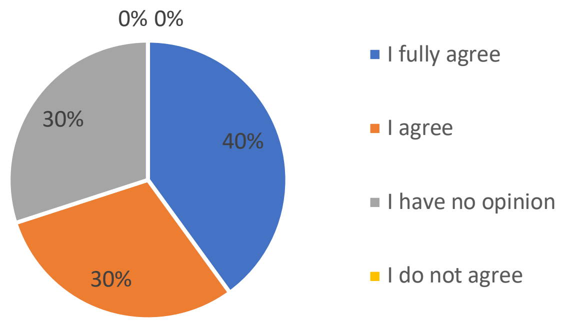


Fig. 17 Areas of increasing team competencies

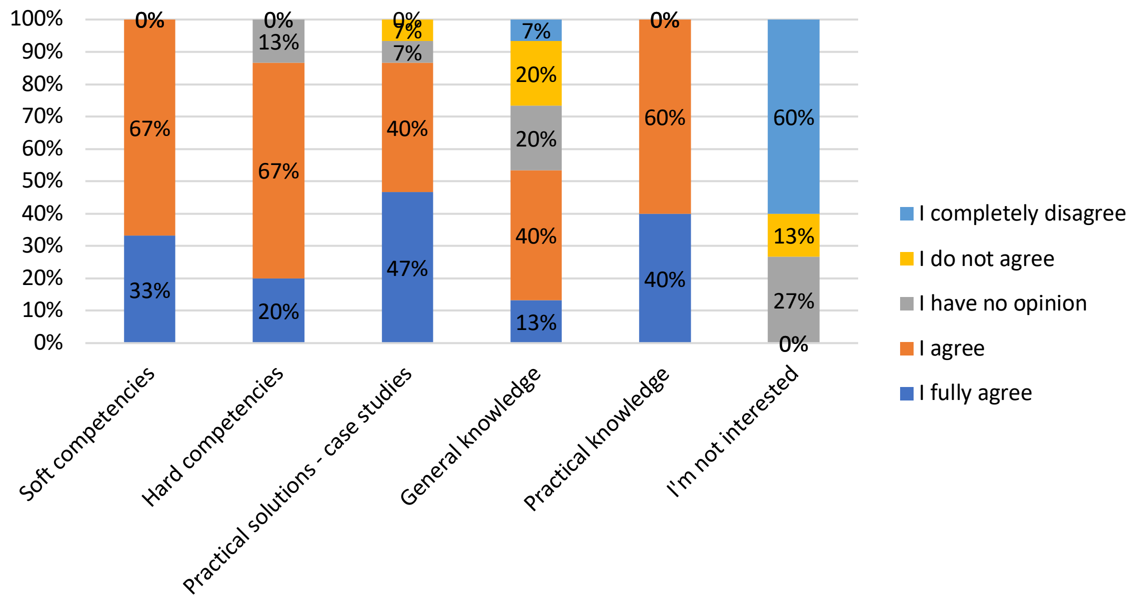
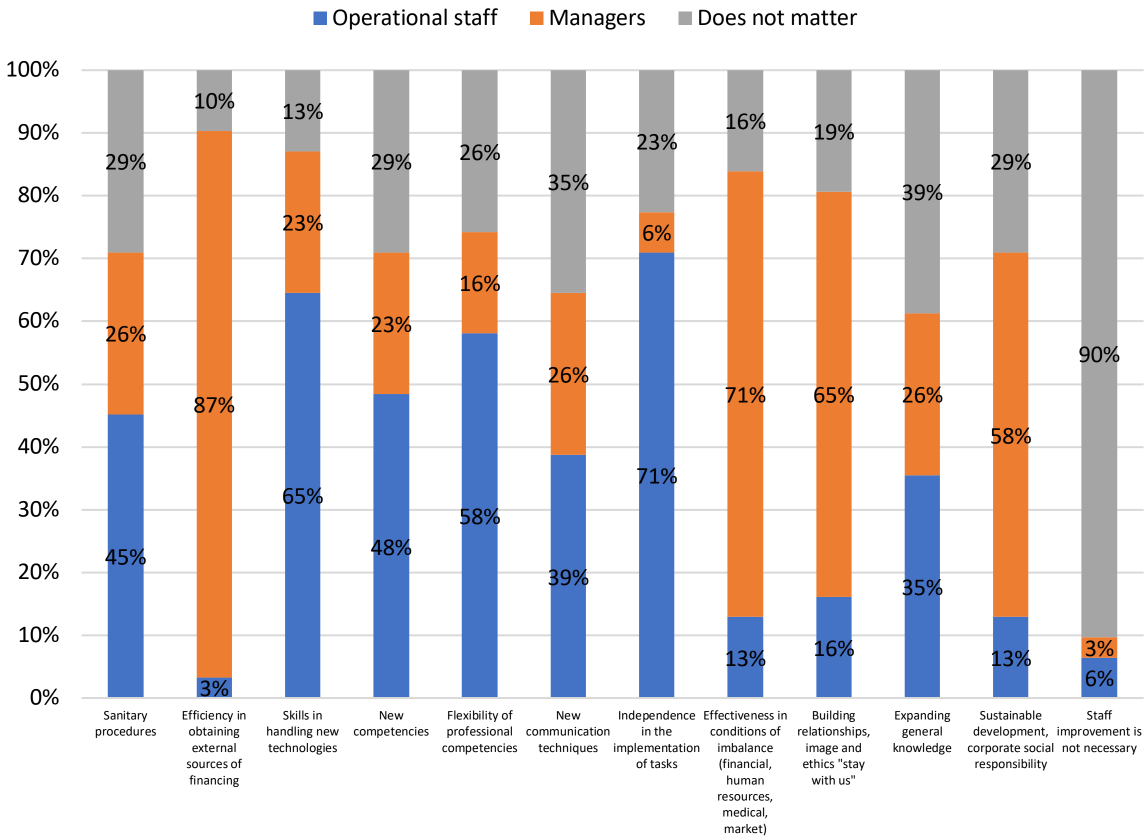
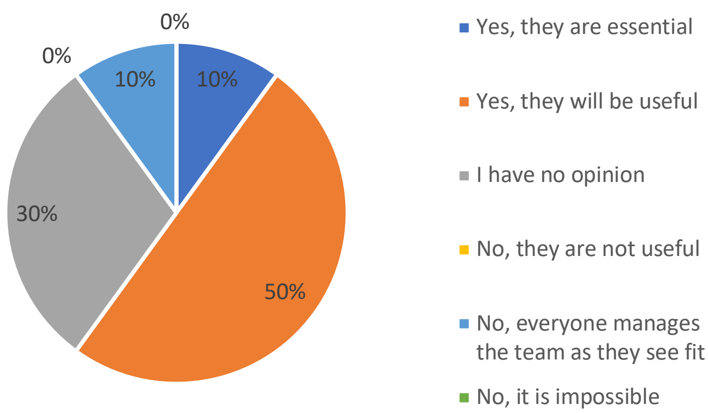


Fig. 18 Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



Managers of MICE companies see no contraindications for the development of unified qualification standards in the sector (fig. 19), which is part of the Integrated Qualifications System process.

Fig. 19 The need to develop unified qualification standards in the MICE sector



The expected forms of improving qualifications are related to audio-visual materials (training videos), case studies, thematic tests, training guides and manuals or simulation games (Fig. 20). All of these forms are practical knowledge. Employers are willing to allocate funds for such forms of training, even partially (Fig. 21).

Fig. 20 The most interesting forms of skills improvement tools

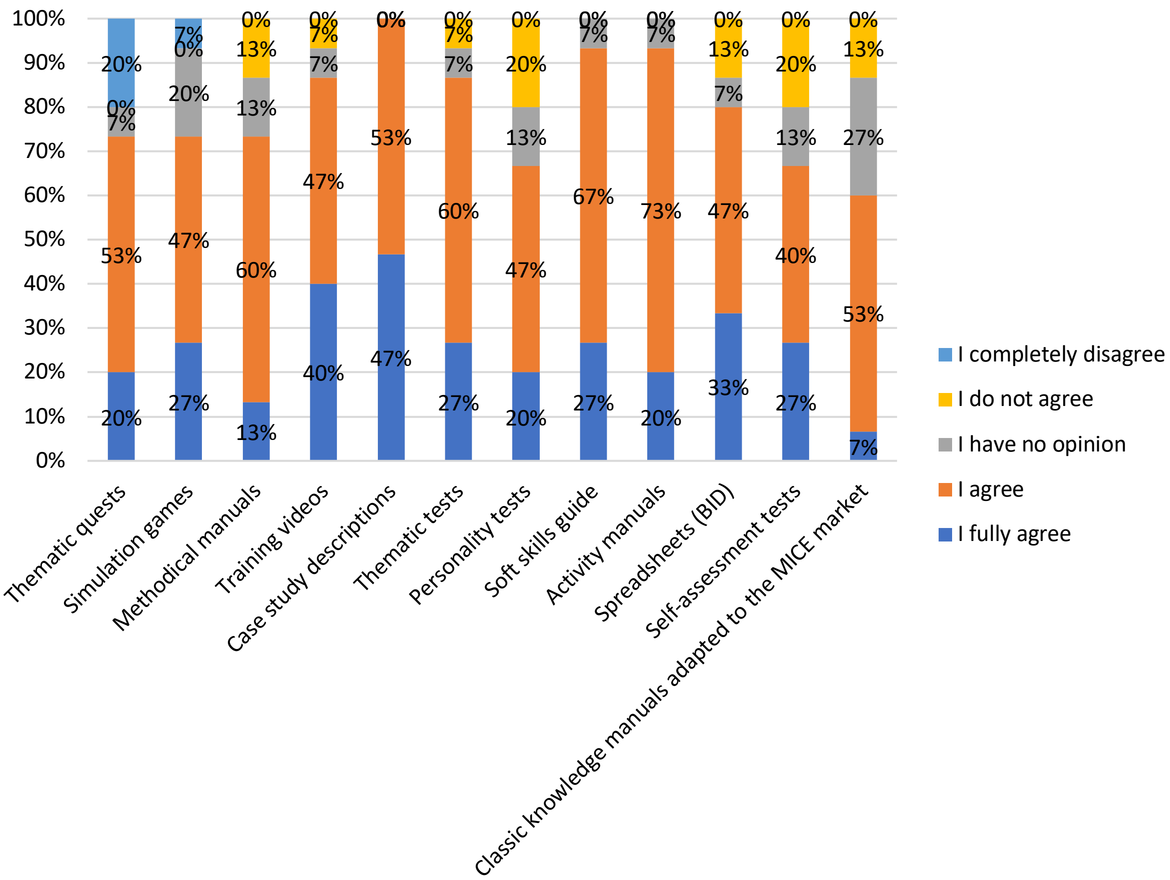
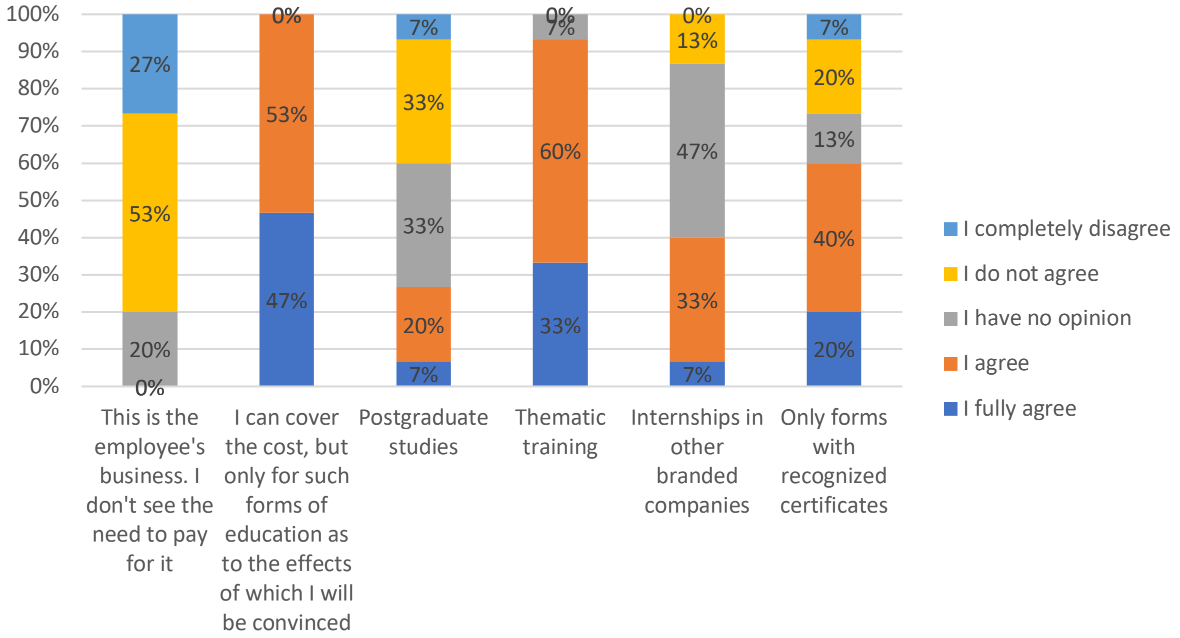


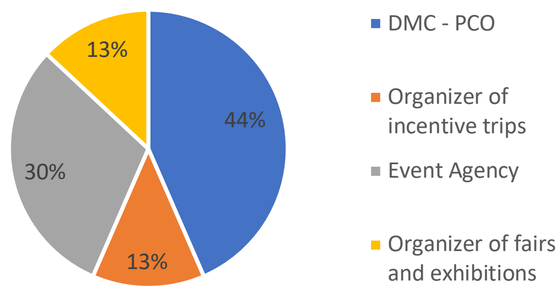
Fig. 21. Forms of increasing competencies for which the company would be able to cover the costs, at least partially



7.2. Competencies in the opinion of employees

The study of the group of employees of MICE sector enterprises covered 24 people, 44% of whom were representatives of PCO / DMC, 30% of event agencies, and 13% of incentive trip organizers and organizers of fairs and exhibitions.

Fig. 22. Type of business activity



The following charts illustrate the socio-professional structure of the surveyed managers.

Fig. 23. Gender of the respondents

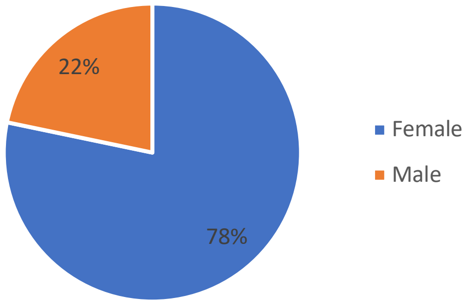


Fig. 24. Age of the respondents

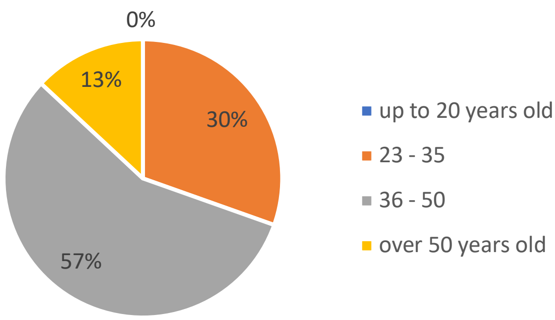
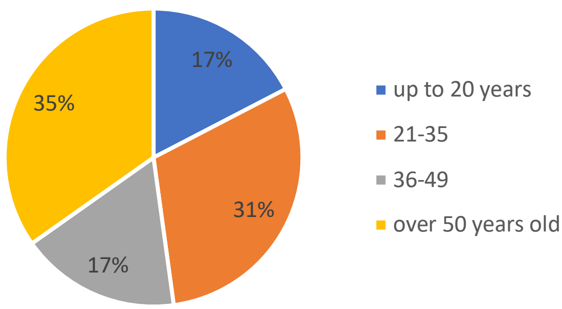
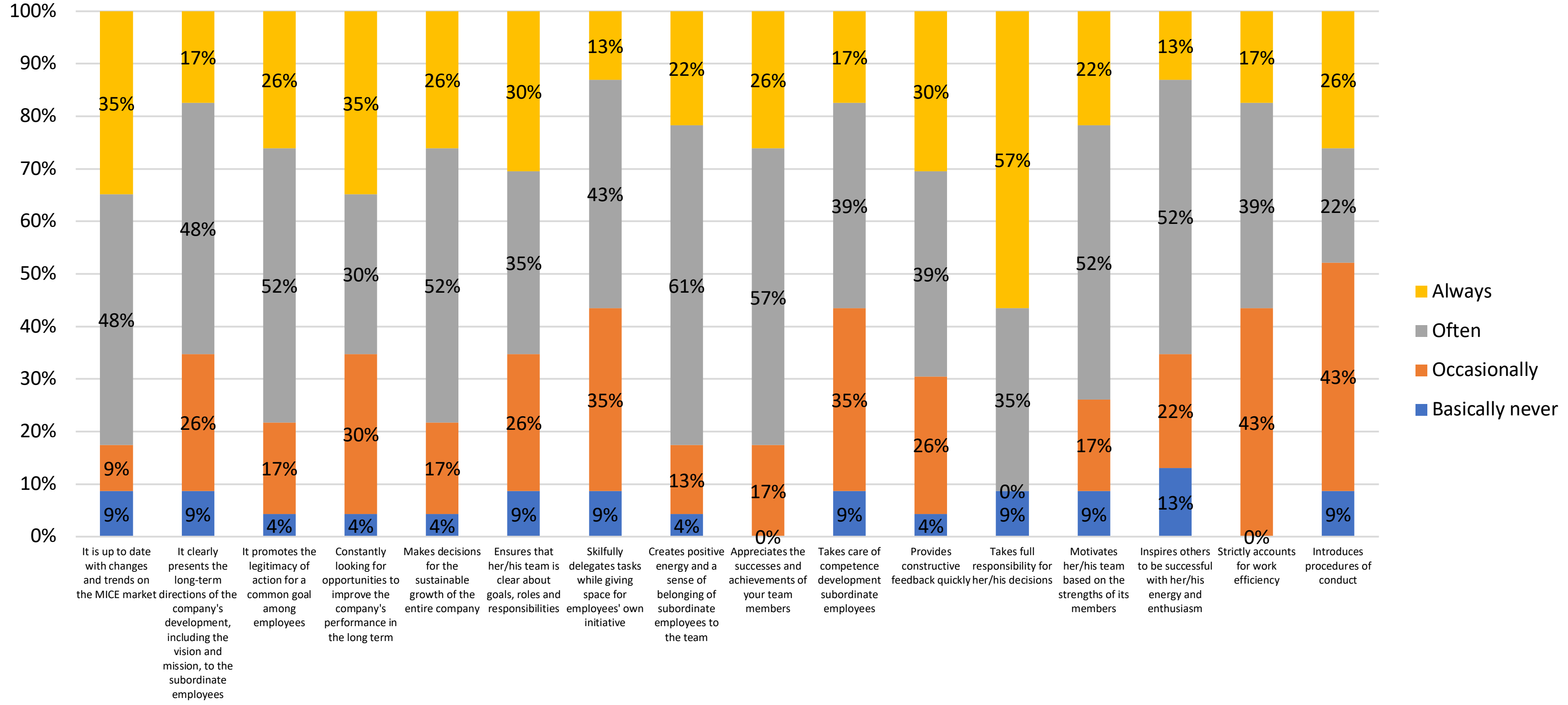


Fig. 25. Work experience in the MICE sector (not necessarily in the current company)



When assessing the competencies of managers (fig. 26), employees indicated that in the **"always" category**, they take responsibility for the decisions made (57% of responses), keep up with the trends on the MICE market or look for opportunities to increase the company's efficiency (35% each). In the **"sporadically" category**, the most frequently mentioned were the introduction of procedures of conduct (43%), strict accounting of work efficiency (43%), care for improving employee competencies (35% of responses) or making sure that goals, roles and responsibilities are clear for employees (35%). The **category "basically never"** received a maximum of 11% of responses. On this basis, the image of the management skills of the owners and managers of the sector companies should be assessed positively.

Fig. 26 Assessment of the competencies of the CEO



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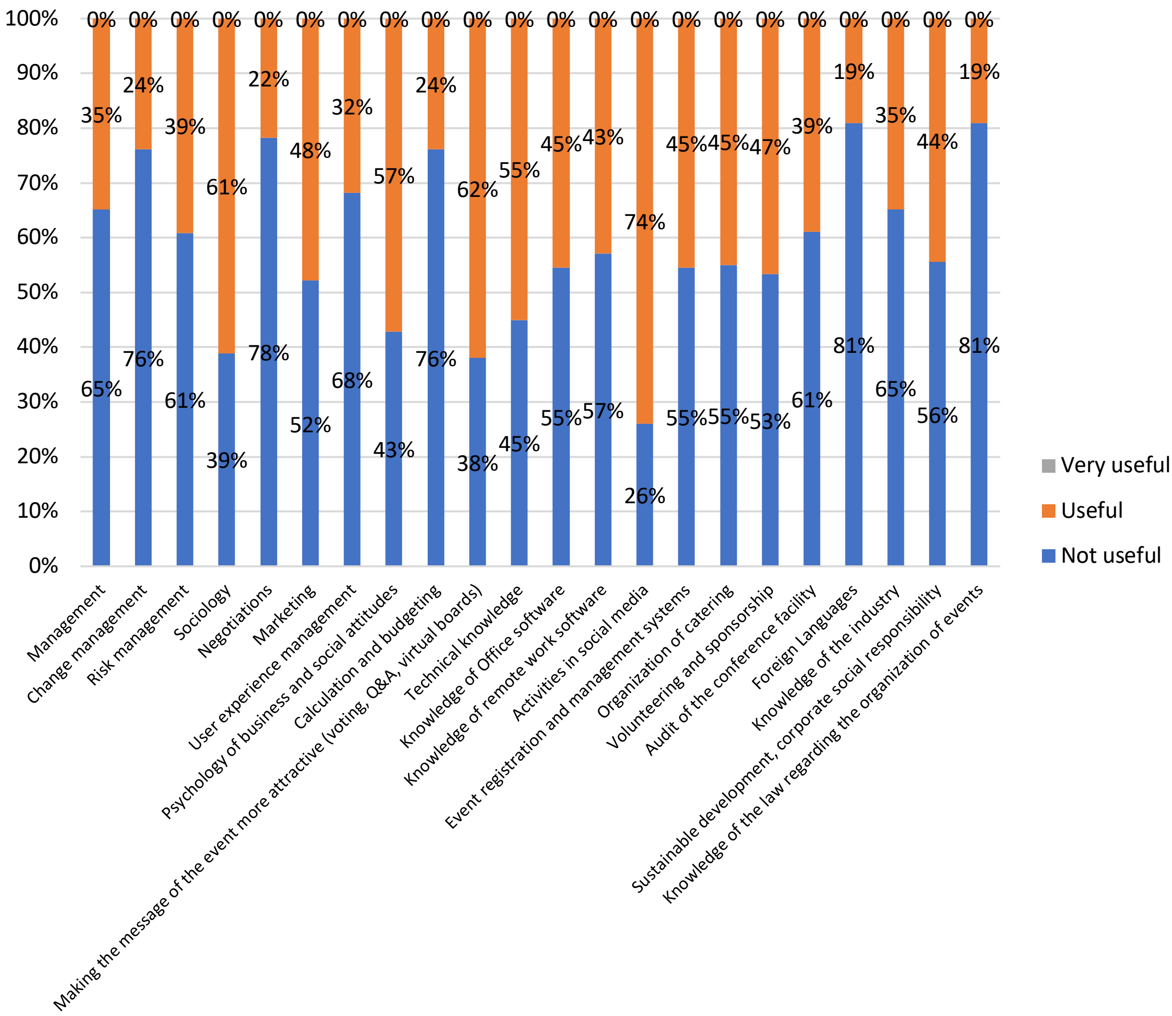
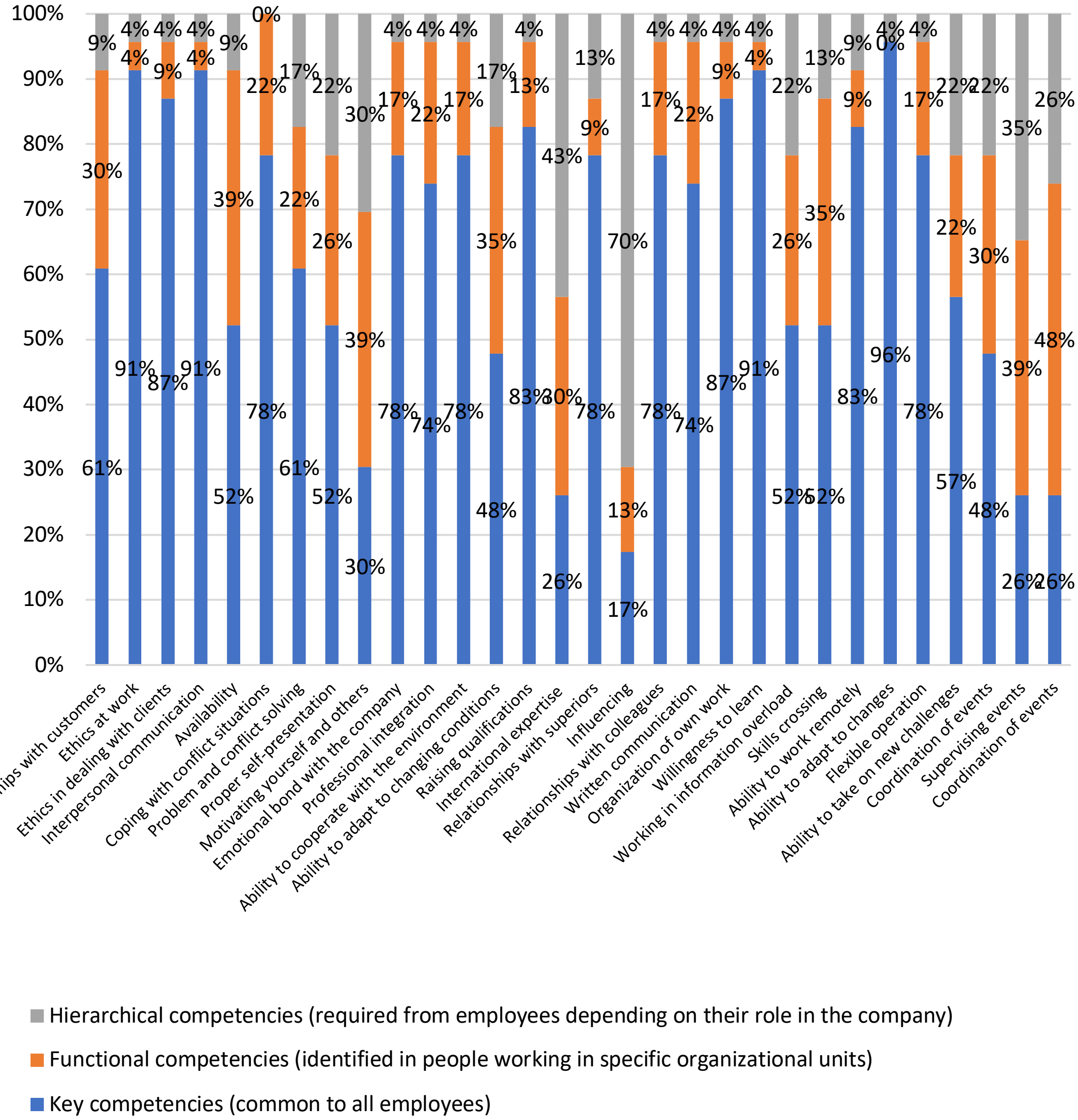
Among the subjects of usefulness for work in the areas of knowledge, the highest percentage of indications concerned the knowledge of law and foreign languages (81% of indications), negotiations (78%), change management and calculation / budgeting (76% each). None of the areas of the proposed category of knowledge were found to be unhelpful.

Fig. 27. Usefulness of knowledge in the field of MICE



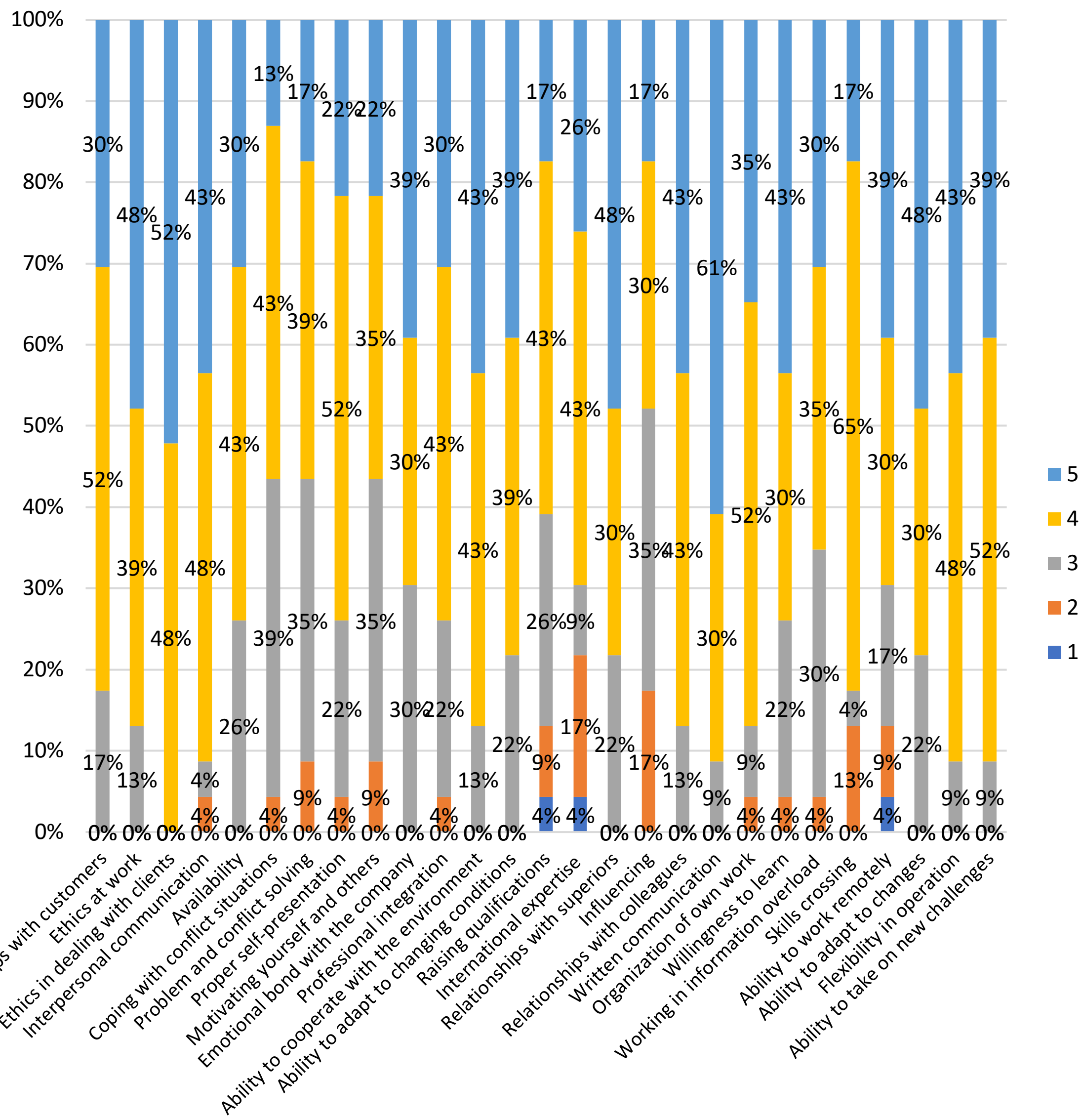
When dividing competencies between job positions in the company, the correct names are those that belong to the management and those that apply to all employees (Fig. 28), which proves that the respondents recognize the company's organizational culture.

Fig. 28 Necessary type of staff competencies depending on the position in the company



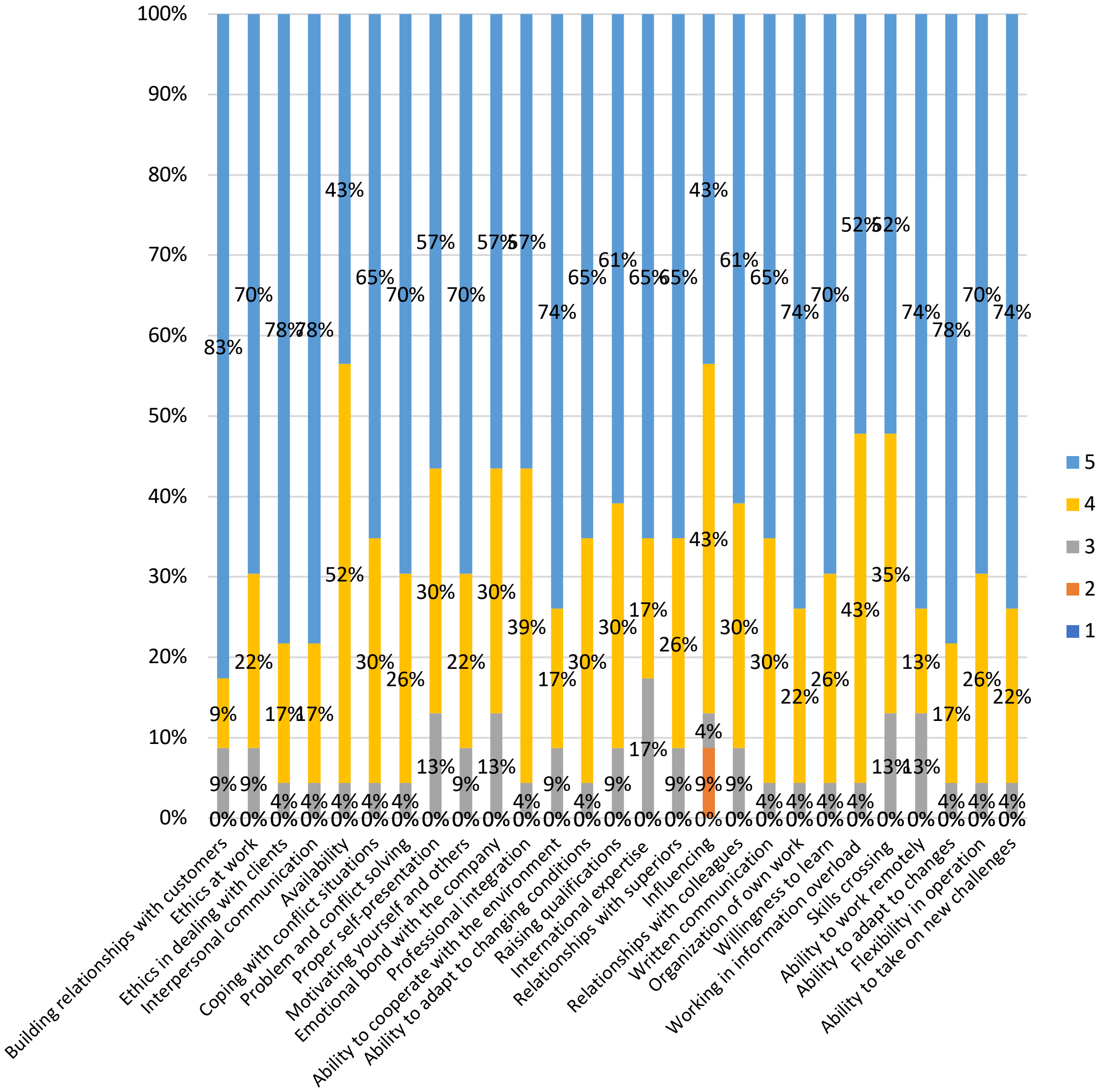
In the self-assessment of actual, own social competencies, measured on a scale of 1 to 5, low values (3 points) were awarded to availability, problem-solving and conflict-solving skills, self-motivation, and professional integration. Lack of competencies (values 1 and 2) refers to competencies such as skills crossing, influencing, international training, or qualification improvement.

Fig. 29. Own social competencies at the actual level



The expected own competencies obtained clearly higher values (Fig. 30) and only influencing is not accepted by 9% of employees.

Fig. 30. Own social competencies at the expected level



When we compare the actual and expected competencies, especially those related to relationships, it can be presumed that the lower results of indications are related to personality traits, among which assertiveness and empathy were rated relatively lowest (Fig. 31).

Fig. 31. The actual level of the personality traits of the team

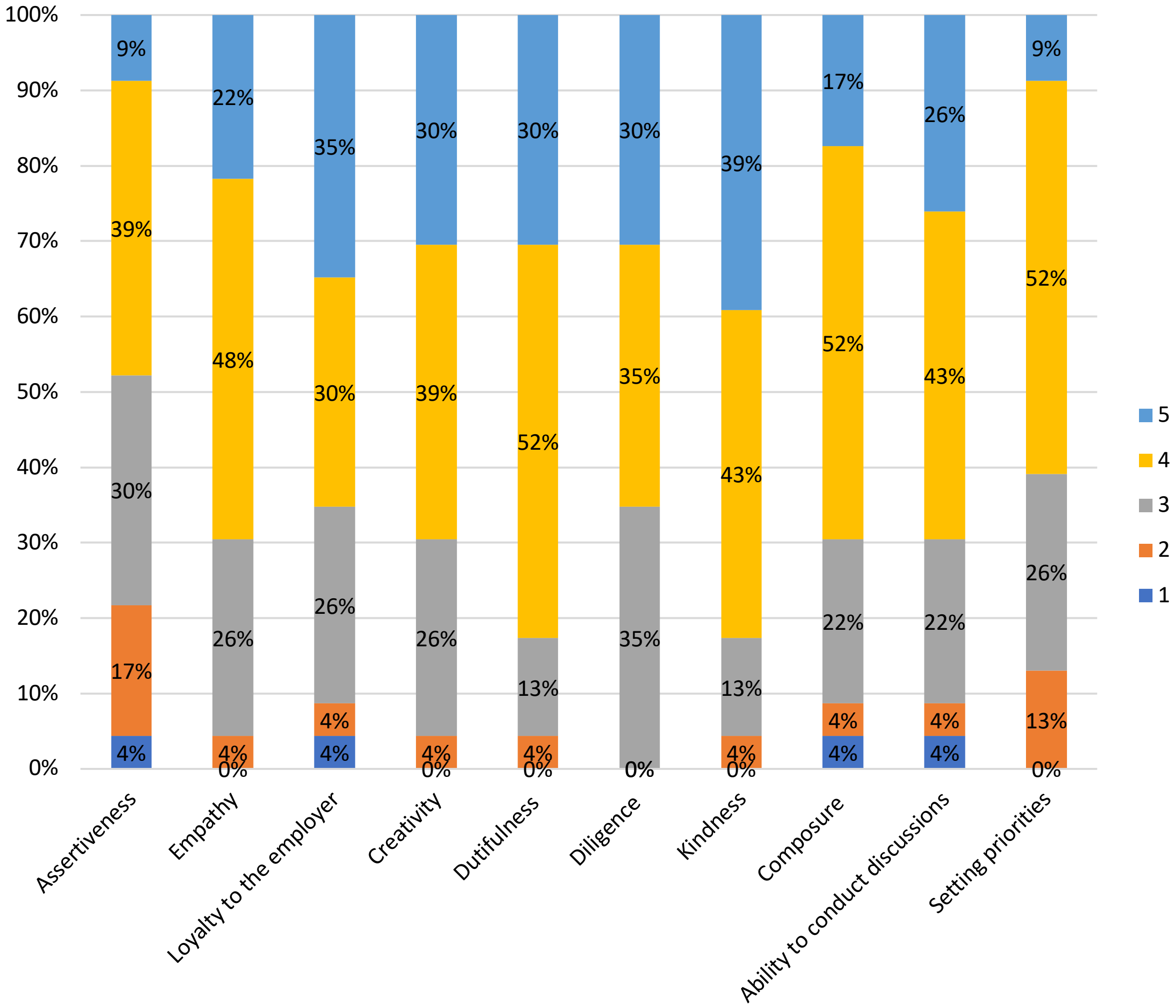
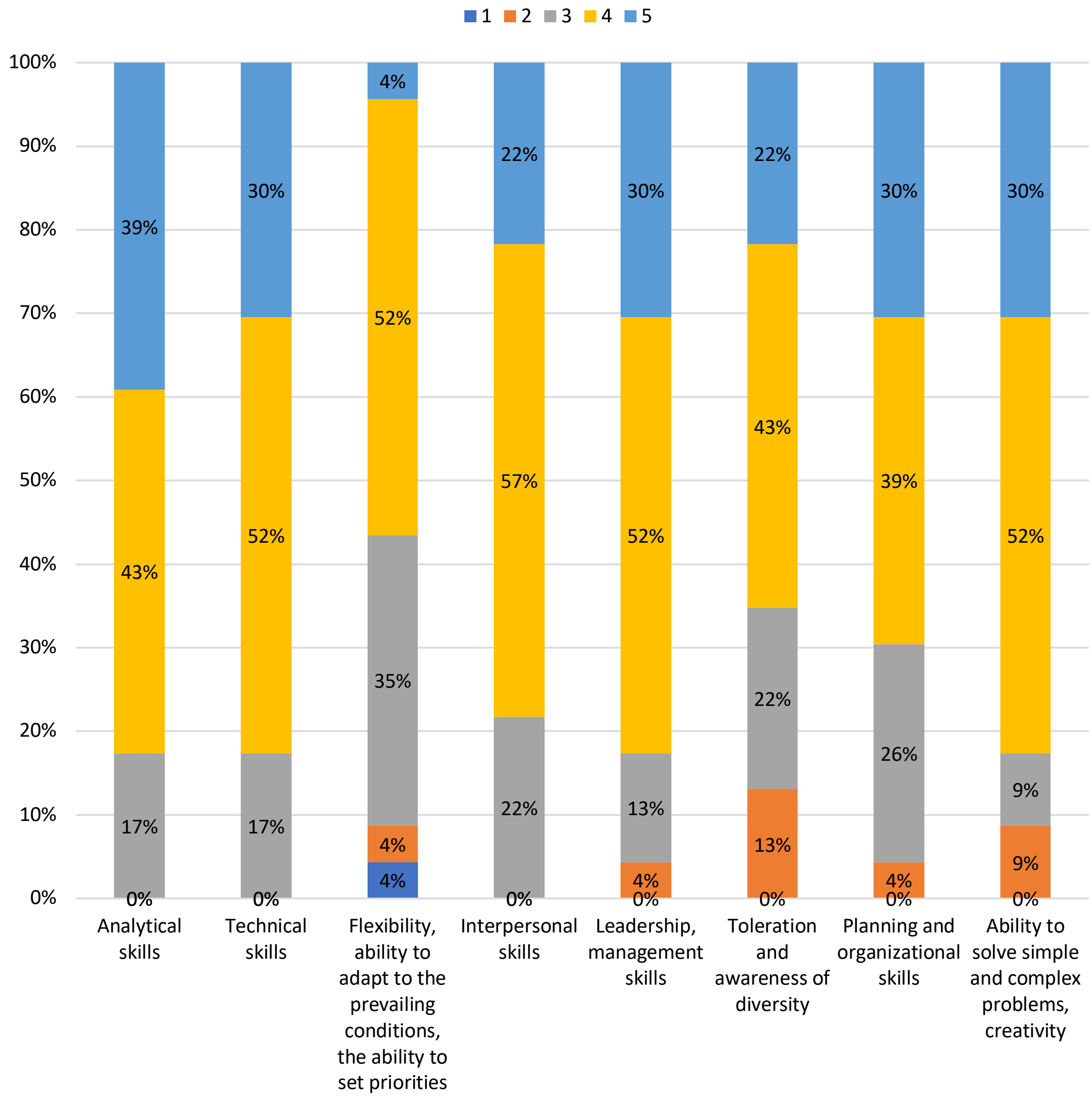
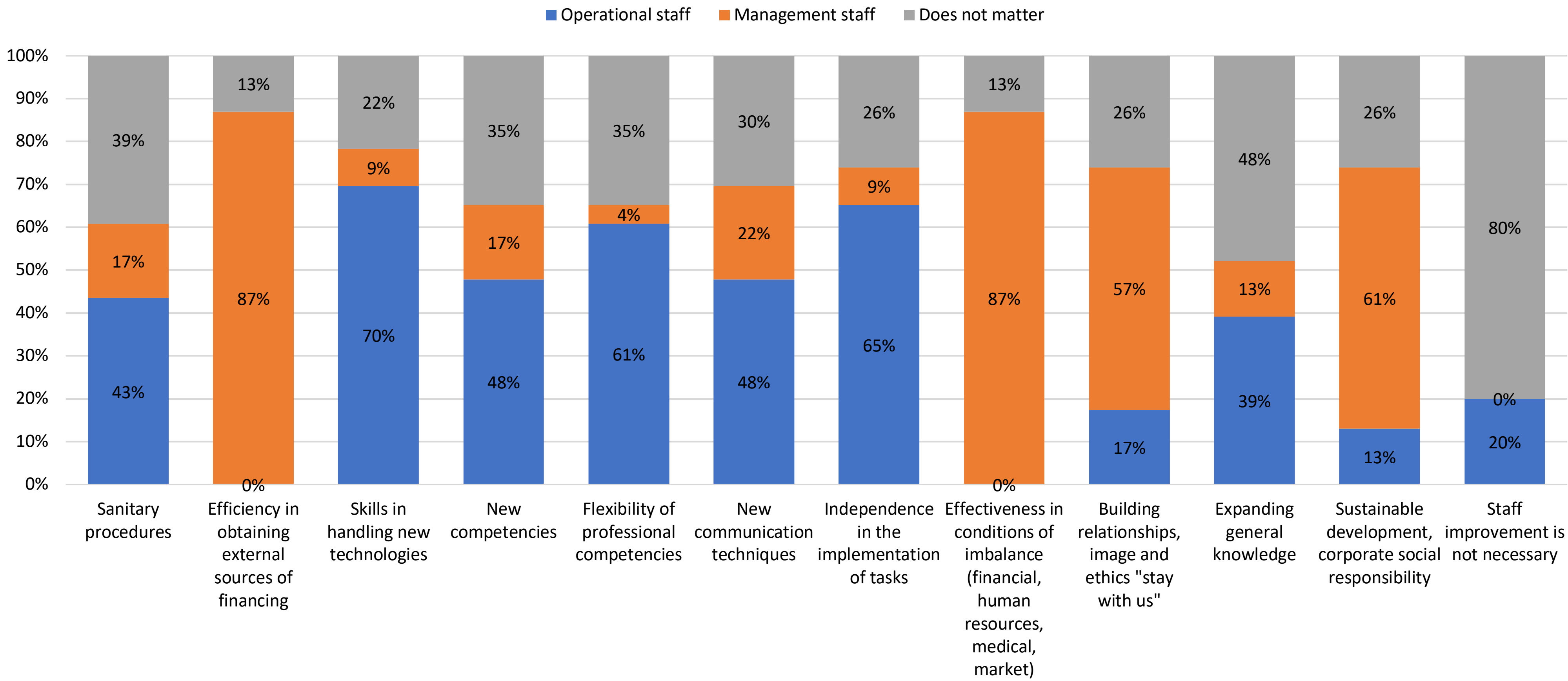


Fig. 32. Own, aggregated components of competencies



The greatest number of professional development needs related to operational staff are: support for new technologies, independence of task execution, flexibility or knowledge of sanitary procedures related to the pandemic.

Fig. 33. Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



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8. Diagnosis and needs of the meetings industry in Hungary in the area of competence

The assumed target group of the study included 30 employers / managers, 20 employees and 10 in-depth interviews with employers of the sector companies, taking into account their geographical distribution (Fig. 34), in which the main part of the respondents was in Budapest (50%). The second largest area was the Balaton region and its direct commercial area, including the western thermal belt of Hungary (40%) and finally the north-eastern part of the country, where there is the eastern thermal belt and famous agricultural centers and national parks (10% of respondents).

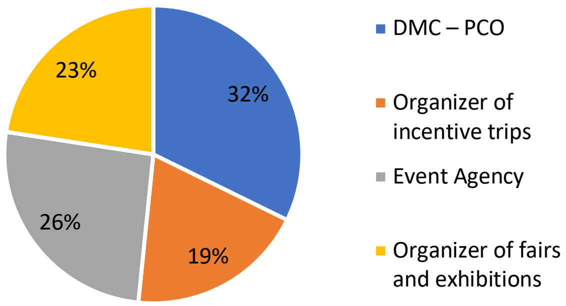
Fig. 34 Geographical distribution of places where the headquarters of the surveyed enterprises are located

Source: own study

8.1. Competencies in the opinions of managers

The employers' survey shows an even distribution between different MICE sectors, where the DMC – PCO segment dominates, followed by event and exhibition organizers and incentive travel organizers.

Pic. 35. Structure of companies in the sample



Most of the surveyed companies do not have any certificate confirming the quality and professional competencies.

Fig. 36. Having a certificate

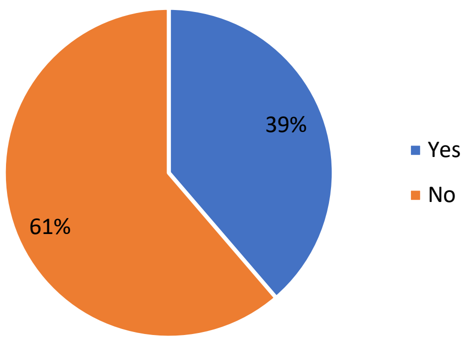
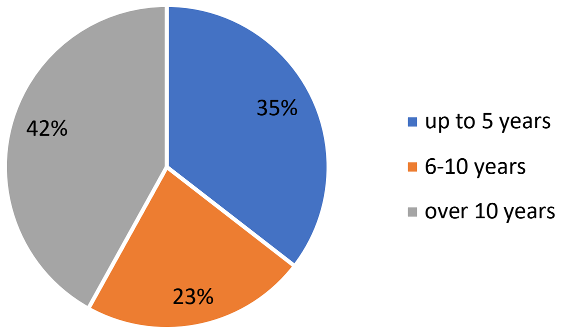


Fig. 37. The time of the company's operation on the market



The figures below show some features of the respondents' structure.

Fig. 38 Gender structure

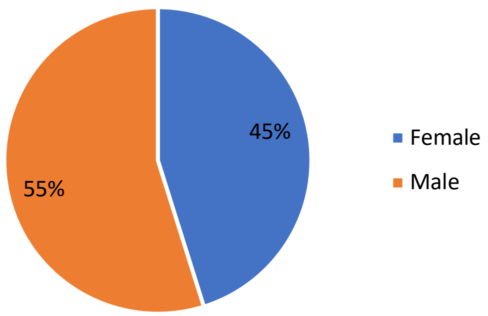


Fig. 39 Age structure

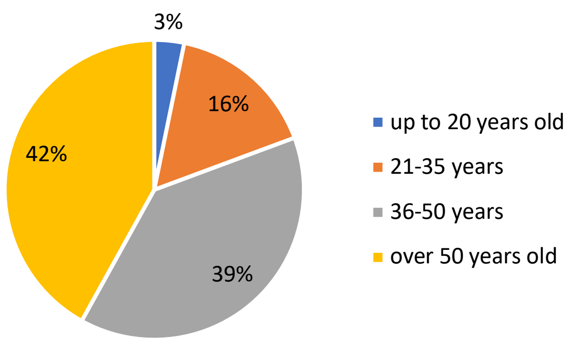
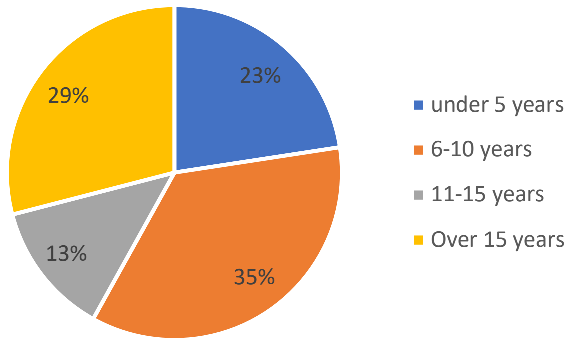


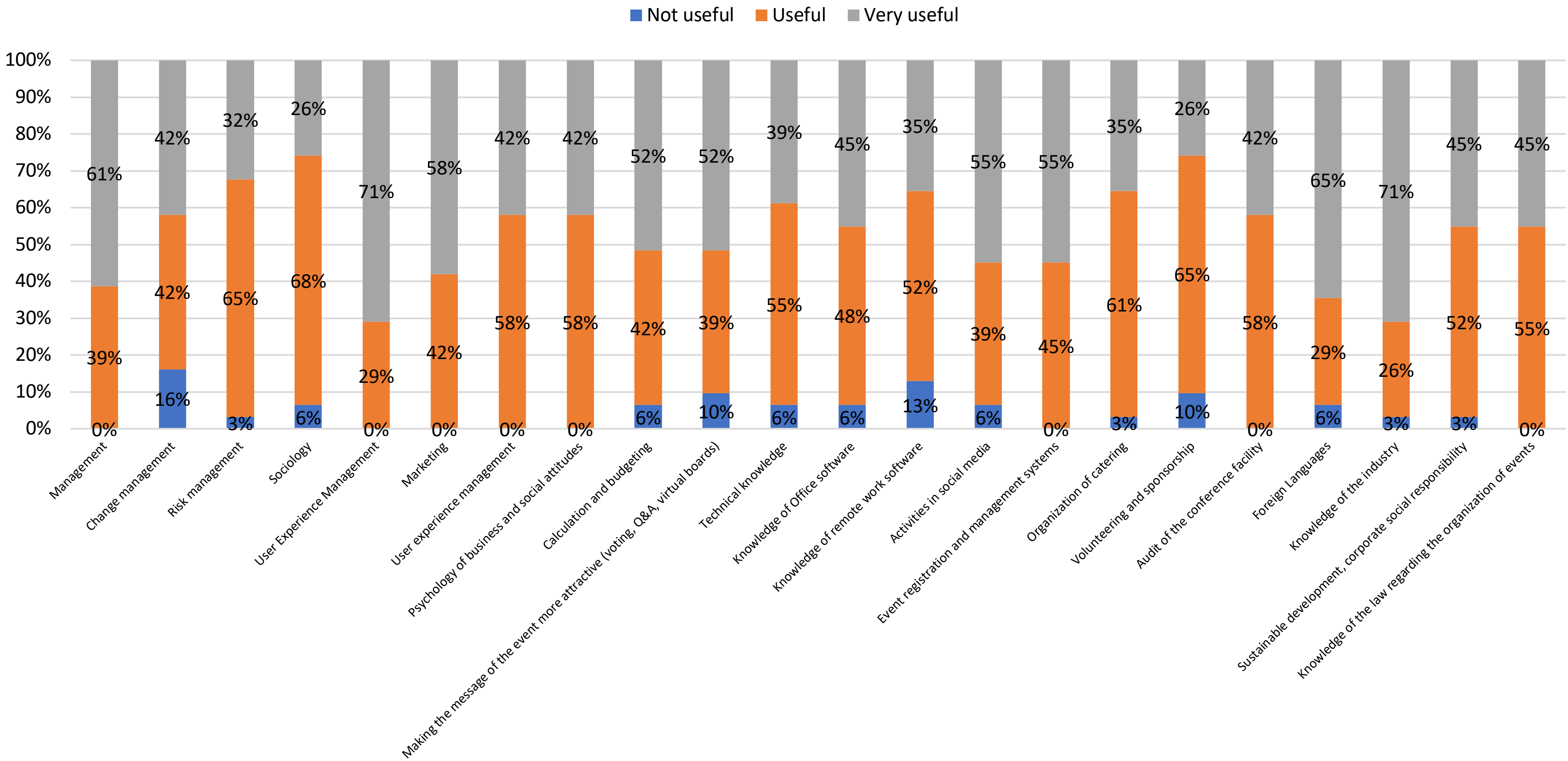
Fig. 40 Work experience in the MICE sector



The respondents were asked to classify the areas of knowledge as useful or not useful for the functioning of the MICE sector (fig. 41).

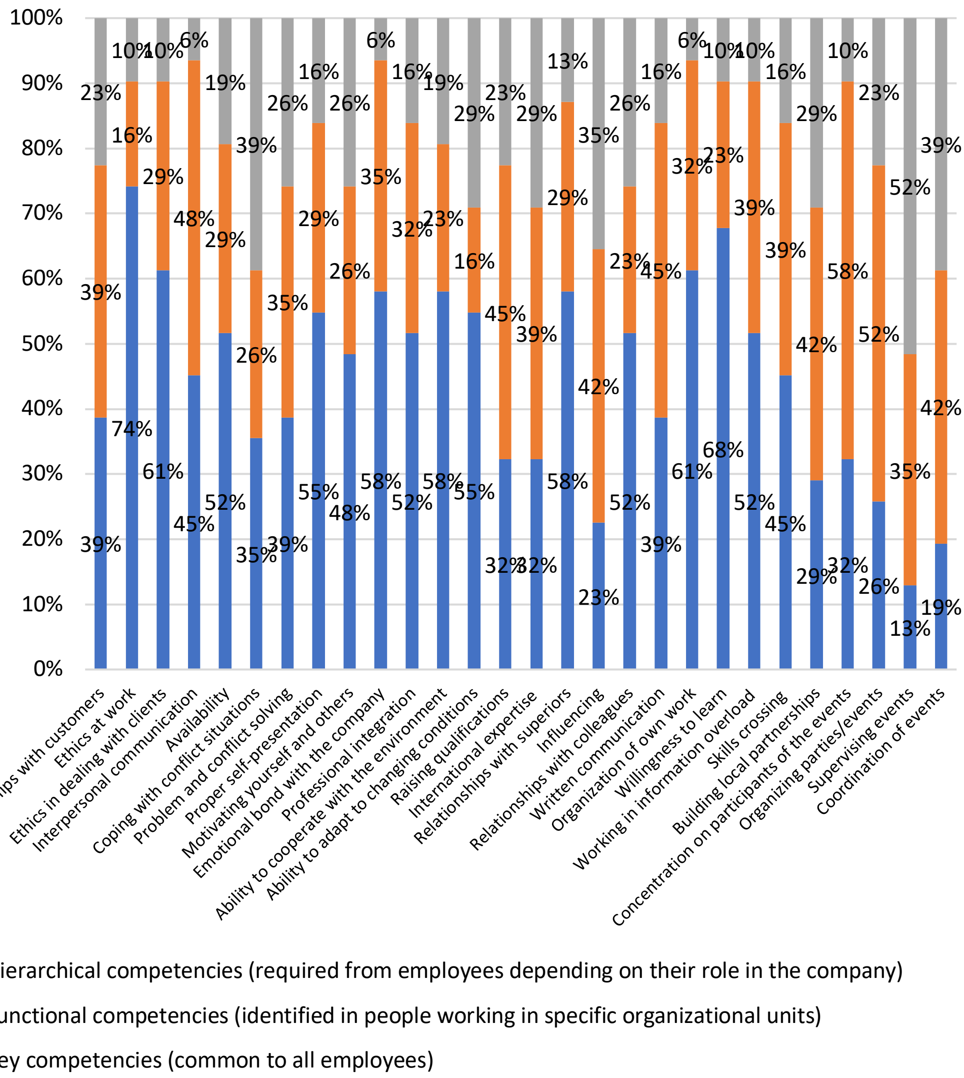
They found the knowledge of negotiation and industry, foreign languages, and management knowledge the most useful. Sociology (26% of responses), volunteering and sponsorship (21%), audit of a conference facility (16%), or sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (16%) were considered useless. Every sixth respondent (16%) did not see change management as a useful area of knowledge, which clearly distinguishes Hungarian employers from Polish ones. Several other areas of knowledge, shown in the figure, received from 3 to 13 percent indications as useless.

Fig. 41. Assessment of the usefulness of knowledge in the MICE sphere



Depending on the professional position (Fig. 42), the most important competencies, regardless of the position held, were: work ethics and readiness to learn, as well as ethics in dealing with clients and organization of own work. Among hierarchical competencies, solving problems and conflicts as well as dealing with conflict situations as well as supervising and coordinating events were distinguished.

Fig. 42 Necessary type of staff competencies depending on the position in the company



For functional competencies that occur in people working in specific organizational units, the highest percentage of indications was obtained, respectively, by organization and concentration on event participants, raising qualifications, interpersonal communication, work with information noise, cross-skills, or building relationships with clients. Such an assessment of competencies is logical as it indicates the tasks that are expected to be performed depending on the operational position in the company.

The comparison of actual competencies with the expected ones (fig. 43) allows for the identification of the competency gap. Expectations are higher than the actual state.

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Fig. 43. The actual social competencies of the enterprise team

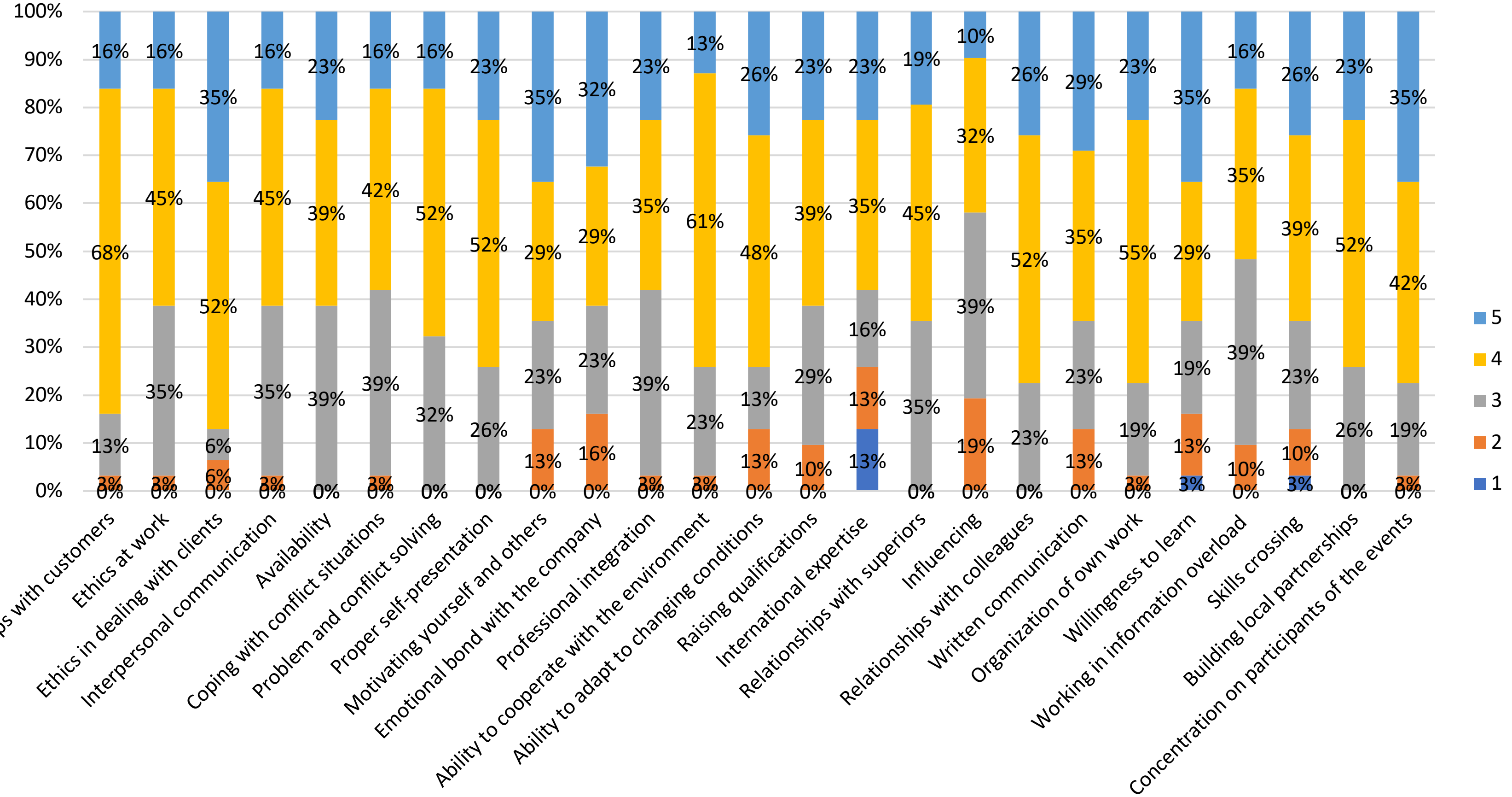

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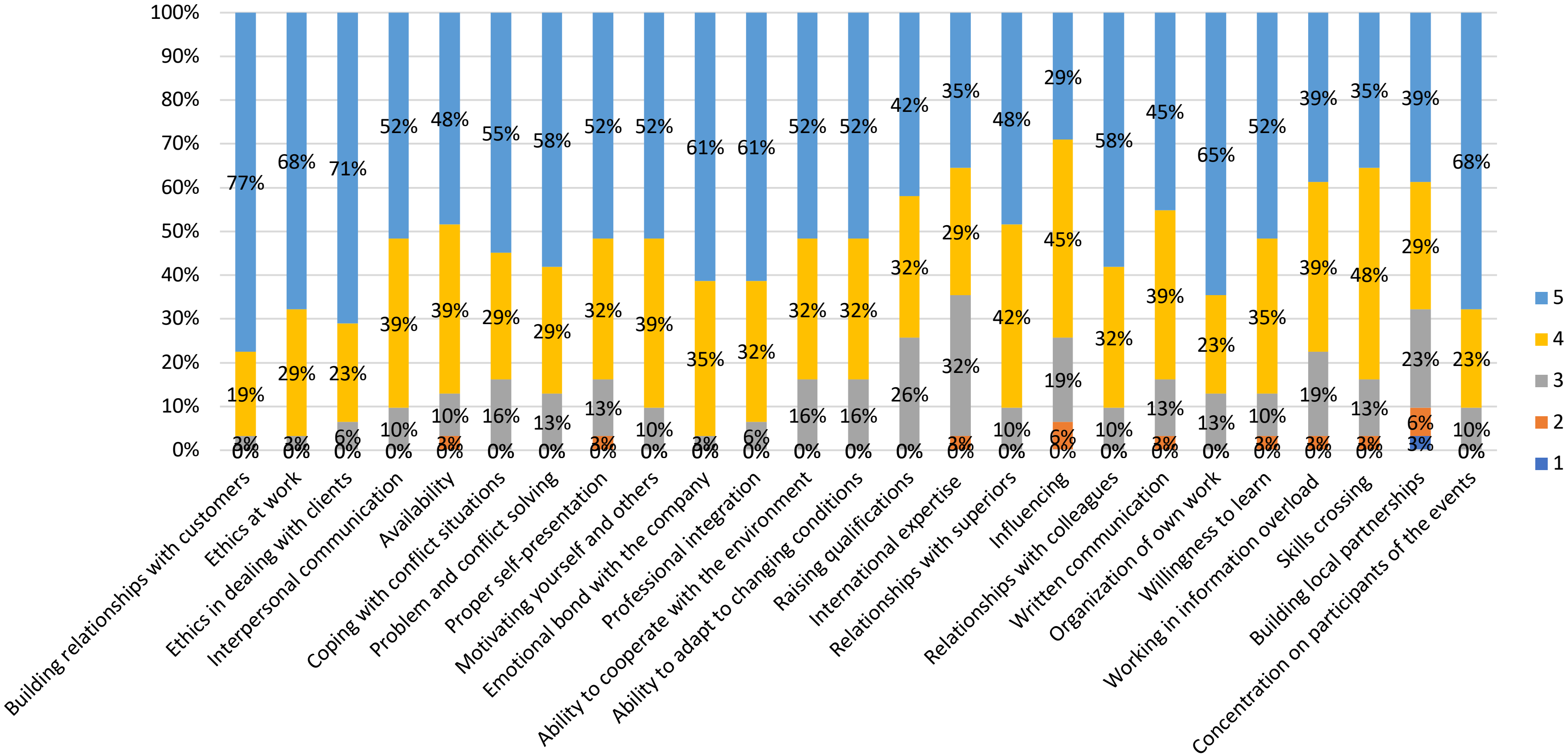
Fig. 44. The expected social competencies of the enterprise team



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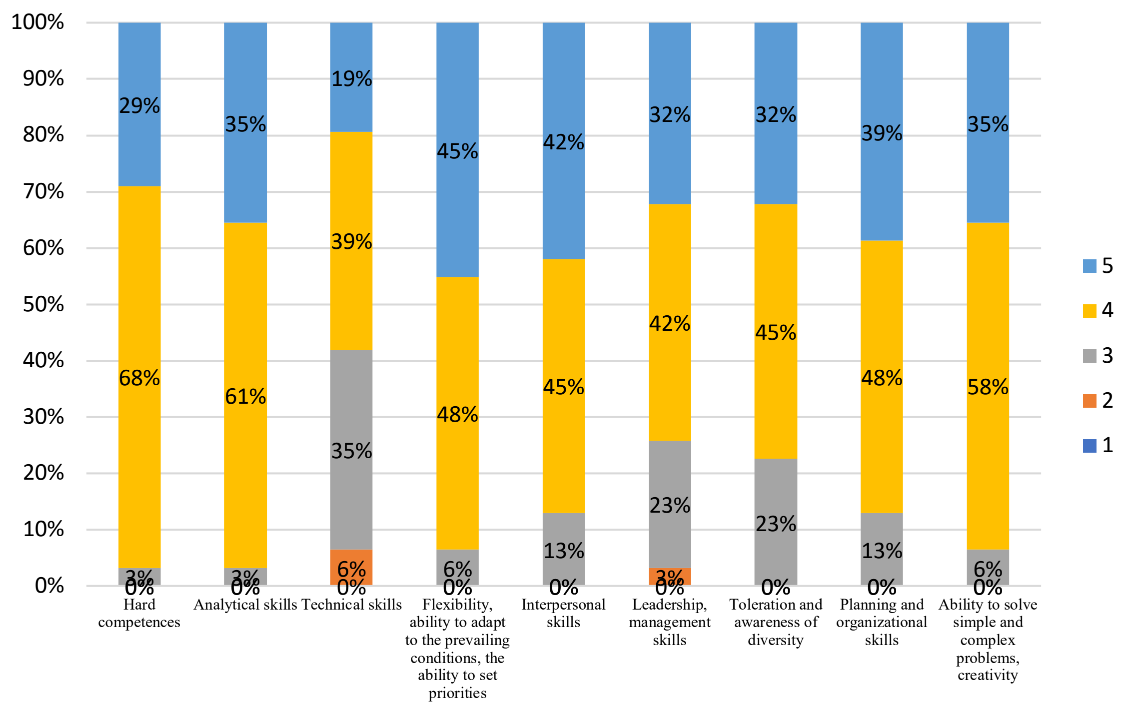
The analysis of the assessment of the personality traits of the team shows a statistically significant percentage indicating a low (value 1 and 2) level of diligence (tab. 12).

Tab.12. The actual level of personality traits of the enterprise team

	Assertiveness	Empathy	Loyalty to the employer	Creativity	Dutifulness	Diligence	Kindness	Restraint	Ability to conduct discussion	Prioritizing
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	3%	0%	10%	10%	3%	19%	0%	0%	13%	6%
3	32%	39%	29%	16%	26%	42%	13%	45%	35%	23%
4	55%	45%	32%	42%	58%	10%	65%	29%	32%	42%
5	10%	16%	29%	32%	13%	13%	23%	26%	19%	29%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Aggregate competencies concern in the greatest percentage the indications of flexibility, interpersonal skills as well as planning and organization of work.

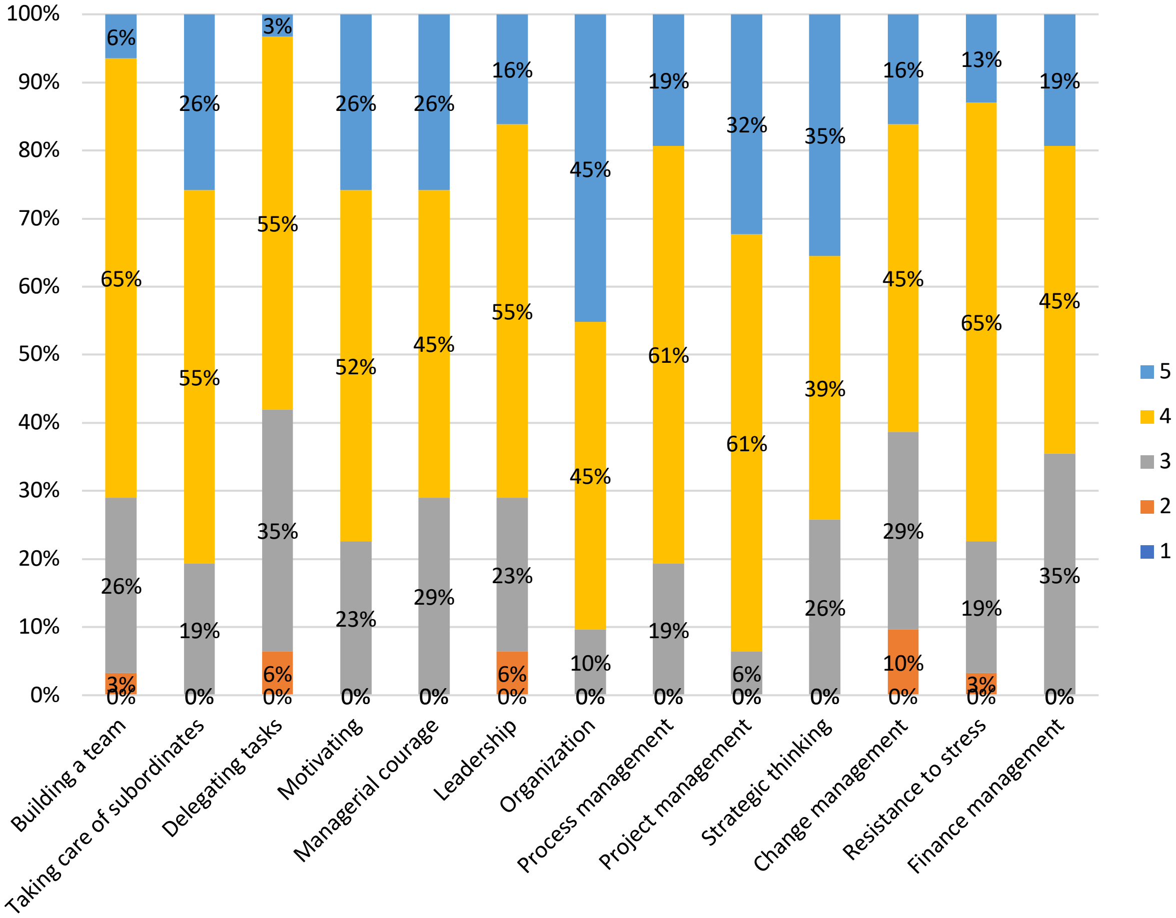
Fig. 45. Aggregated components of employee competencies



The aggregated competencies with indicators 4 and 5 were marked by over 90% of the respondents and concerned hard competencies, analytical skills, or the ability to solve simple problems.

When assessing their own competencies, managers rated those relating to organizing (Fig. 46), strategic thinking, and project management the highest. Few pointed to their weaknesses as change management skills, task delegation, and even leadership skills. Nevertheless, the overall assessment of the competencies is high.

Fig. 46. Own managerial competencies



Raising the competencies and qualifications of employees is perceived as a tool for overcoming the pandemic crisis (tab. 13).

Tab. 13. Planned long-term actions to recover from the pandemic crisis

	Seeking financial support, including from EU funds	Switching to another activity partially or completely	Company reorganization / restructuring	New forms of enterprise management	Raising the competencies and qualifications of employees
Yes	71%	39%	39%	32%	77%
No	13%	48%	45%	52%	13%
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	16%	13%	16%	16%	10%
Sum of responses	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Increasing digitization / automation	Activities run remotely / virtually	Expanding the portfolio of services	Mergers, acquisitions	Reducing employment
Yes	77%	71%	81%	58%	55%
No	19%	23%	13%	26%	23%
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	3%	6%	6%	16%	23%
Sum of responses	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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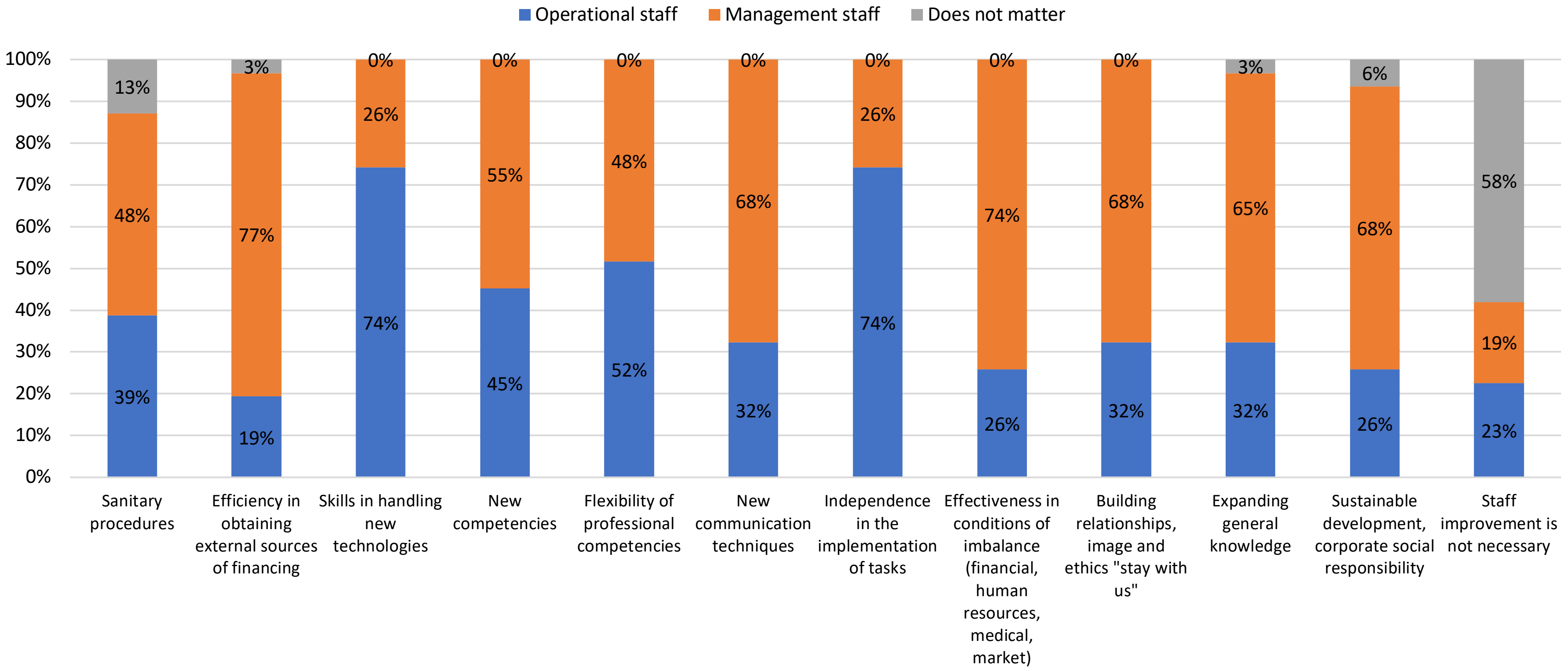
Fig. 47. Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



Based on the interviews, the CEOs concluded that the most pressing problems of the MICE sector requiring solutions in terms of competencies are:

- *employees' language skills, software knowledge, communication development,*
- *adapting to new challenges,*
- *information flow,*
- *personalized solutions,*
- *strategic planning, language skills,*
- *broader vocational training,*
- *expanding existing knowledge, especially on social media,*
- *keeping specialists in the company,*
- *limited travel opportunities.*

Raising the team's competencies is seen as an opportunity to rebuild the company.

Fig. 48. Raising competencies as an opportunity for the company (n = 10)

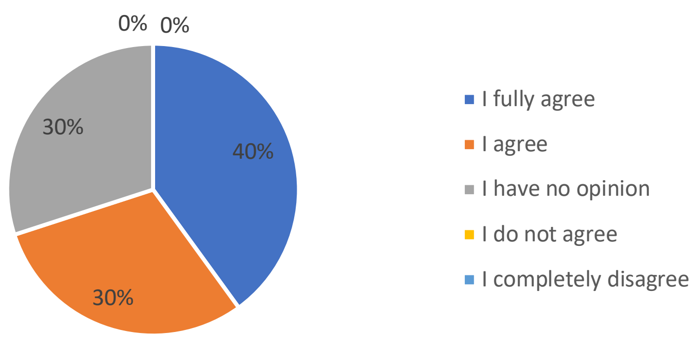
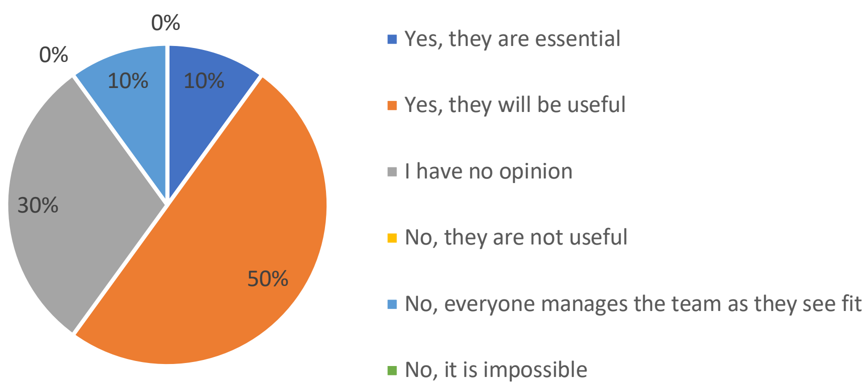


Fig. 49. The need to develop unified qualification standards in the MICE sector



The expected forms of improving qualifications are related to case studies, thematic tests, training guides and manuals, training videos or simulation games (Fig. 50). All of them are practical knowledge. Employers are willing to allocate funds for such forms of training, even partially (Fig. 51).

Fig. 50. The most interesting forms of skills improvement tools

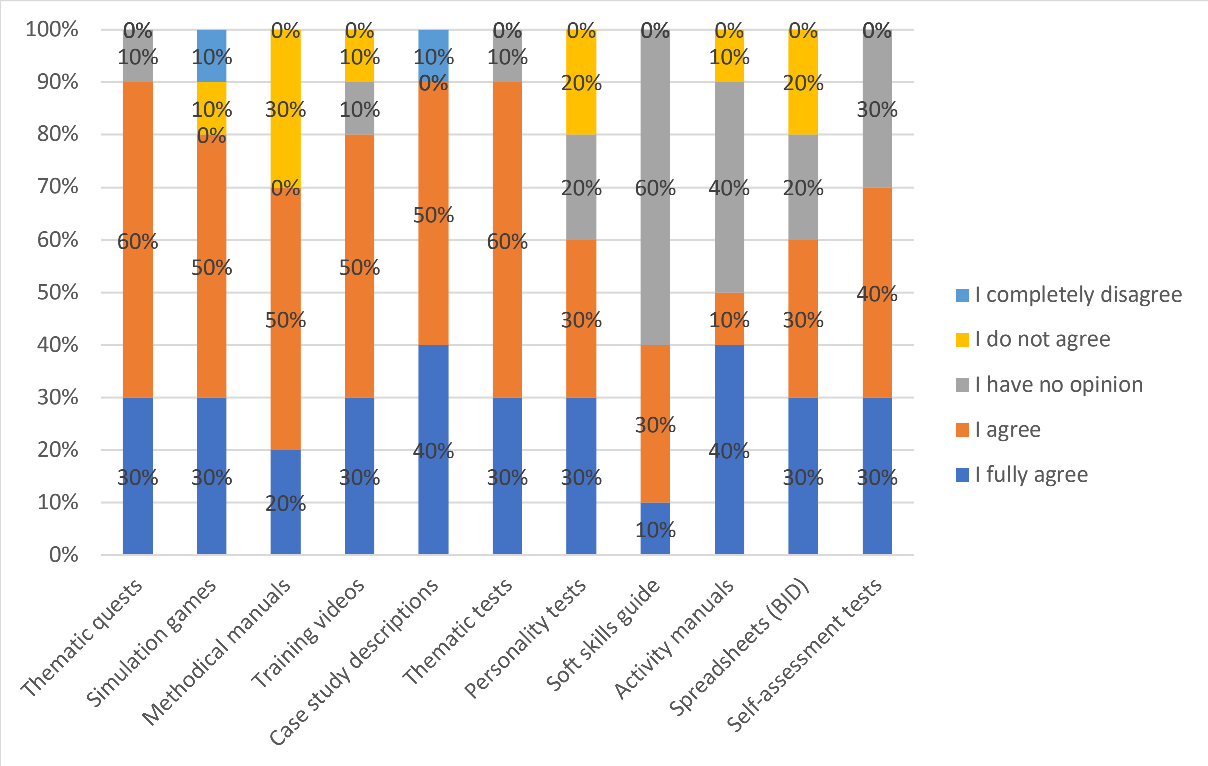
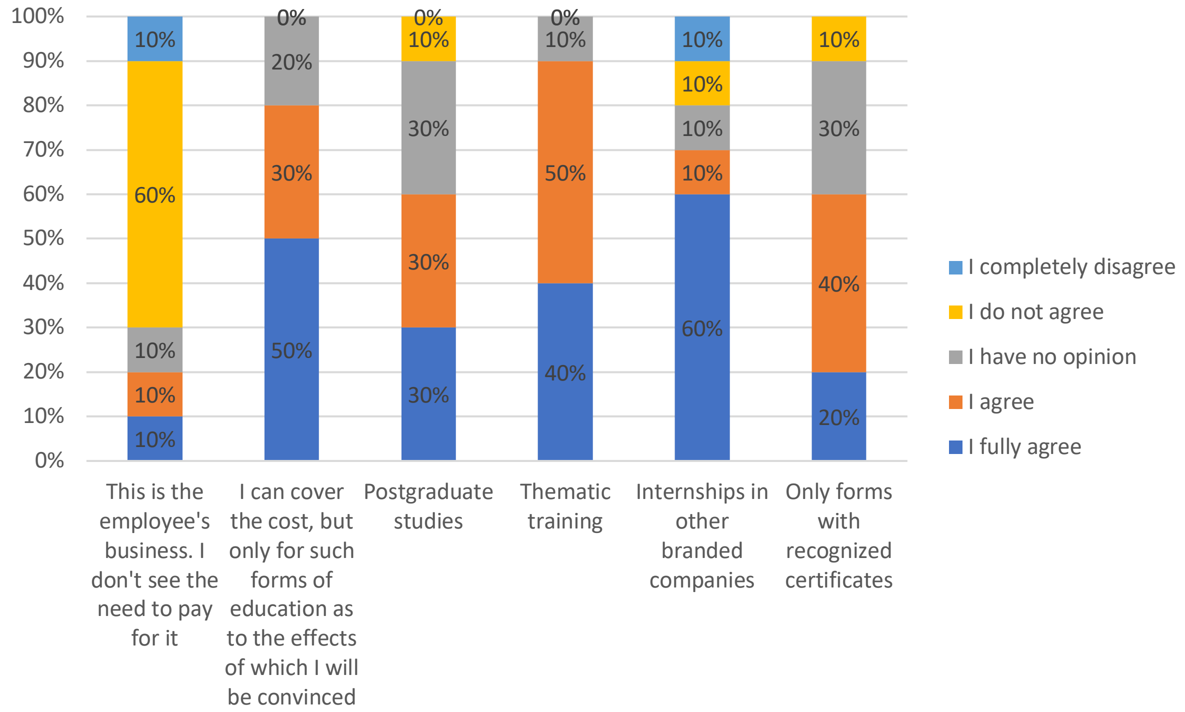


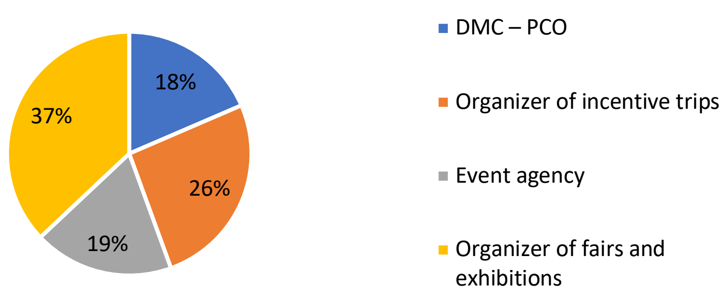
Fig. 51. Forms of increasing competencies for which the company would be able to cover the costs, even partially



8.2. Competencies in the opinions of employees

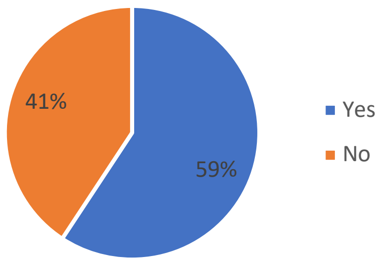
The research covered a group of 24 employees of MICE sector enterprises, 44% of whom were representatives of PCO/DMC, 30% of event agencies, and 13% of incentive trip organizers and fair and exhibition organizers.

Fig. 52. Business type



The sample included employees of both companies with and without quality certificates.

Fig. 53. Having a certificate



The following charts illustrate the socio-professional structure of the surveyed managers.

Fig. 54. Gender structure

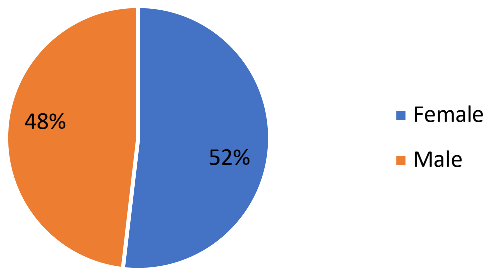


Fig. 55. Age structure

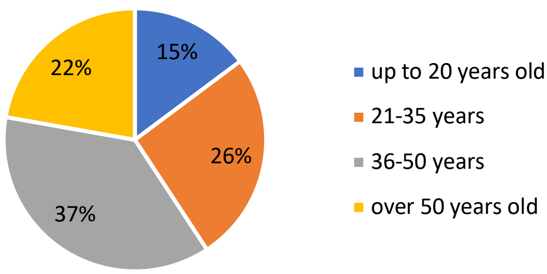
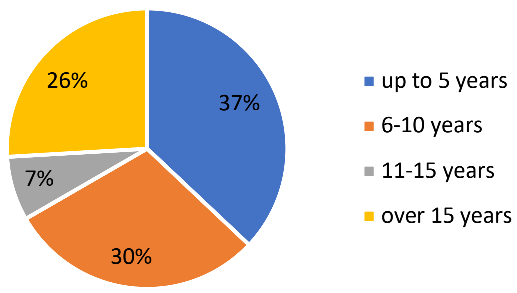


Fig. 56. Work experience in the MICE sector



When assessing the competencies of managers (Fig. 57), employees indicated that in the **category "always"** they take responsibility for the decisions made (44% of responses), they make sure that "the team has clarity of goals, roles and responsibilities" (41%), introducing procedures internal procedures (33%), appreciate the successes of employees (31%) or look for opportunities to increase the efficiency of the company's operations (35% each).

In the **"sporadic" category**, the most frequently mentioned knowledge of trends in the industry and making decisions serving the entire company (44% each), strict accounting of work efficiency (33%), attention to increasing employee competencies (30% of responses) or presenting employees with a long-term vision of the company (39%).

The **category "basically never"** received a maximum of 11% of responses. On this basis, the image of the management skills of owners and managers of companies in the sector should be assessed positively, and it is differentiated, as evidenced by the fact that in some areas of competence there is a similar number of indications defined as "always" and "sporadically".

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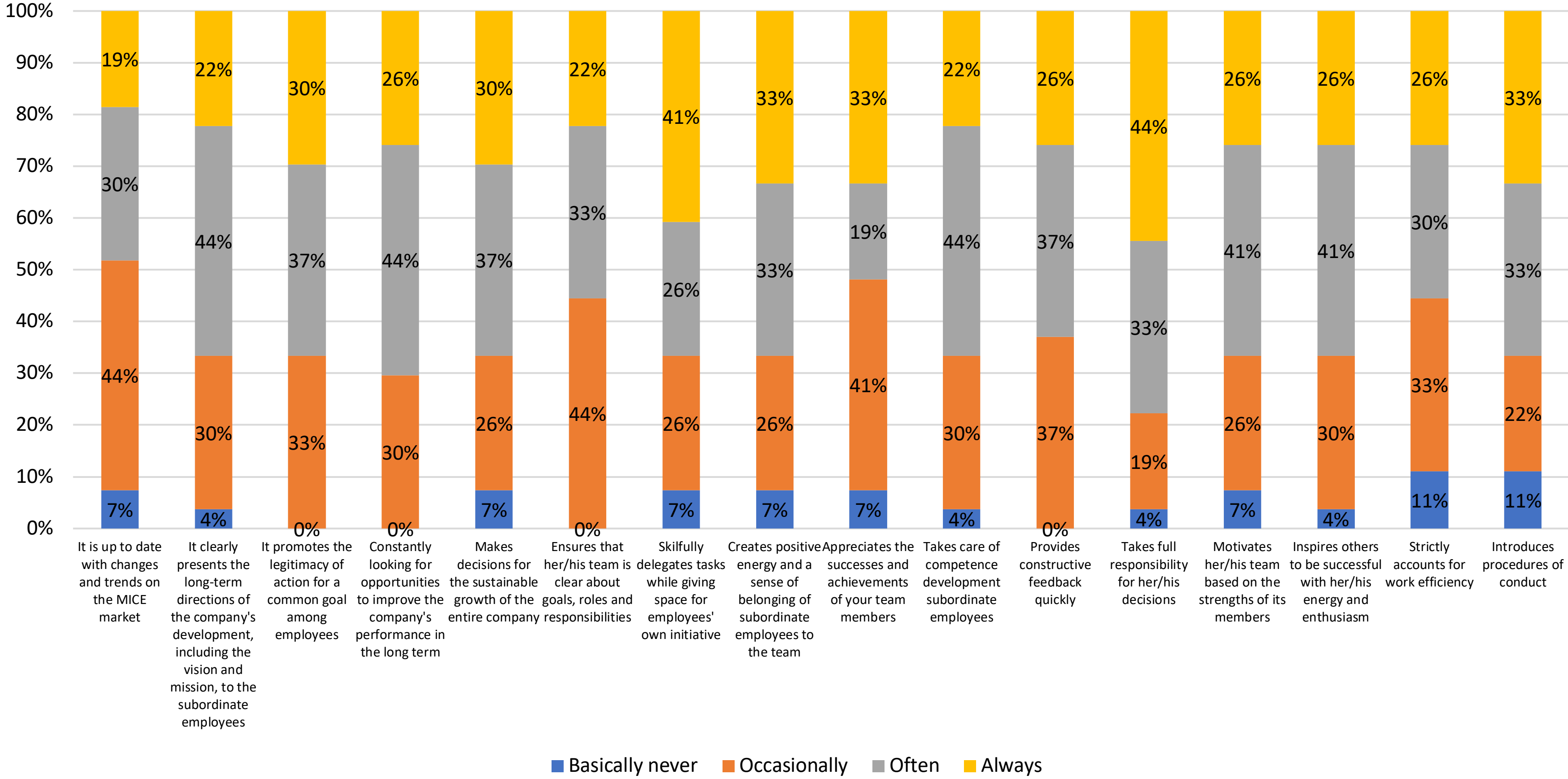
Fig. 57. Assessment of the competencies of the CEO



	Basically never	Occasionally	Often	Always
It is up to date with changes and trends on the MICE market	7%	44%	30%	19%
It clearly presents the long-term directions of the company's development, including the vision and mission, to the subordinate employees	4%	30%	44%	22%
It promotes the legitimacy of action for a common goal among employees	0%	33%	37%	30%
Constantly looking for opportunities to improve the company's performance in the long term	0%	30%	44%	26%
Makes decisions for the sustainable growth of the entire company	7%	26%	37%	30%
Ensures that her/his team is clear about goals, roles and responsibilities	0%	44%	33%	22%
Skilfully delegates tasks while giving space for employees' own initiative	7%	26%	26%	41%
Creates positive energy and a sense of belonging of subordinate employees to the team	7%	26%	33%	33%
Appreciates the successes and achievements of your team members	7%	41%	19%	33%
Takes care of competence development subordinate employees	4%	30%	44%	22%
Provides constructive feedback quickly	0%	37%	37%	26%
Takes full responsibility for her/his decisions	4%	19%	33%	44%
Motivates her/his team based on the strengths of its members	7%	26%	41%	26%
Inspires others to be successful with her/his energy and enthusiasm	4%	30%	41%	26%
Strictly accounts for work efficiency	11%	33%	30%	26%
Introduces procedures of conduct	11%	22%	33%	33%

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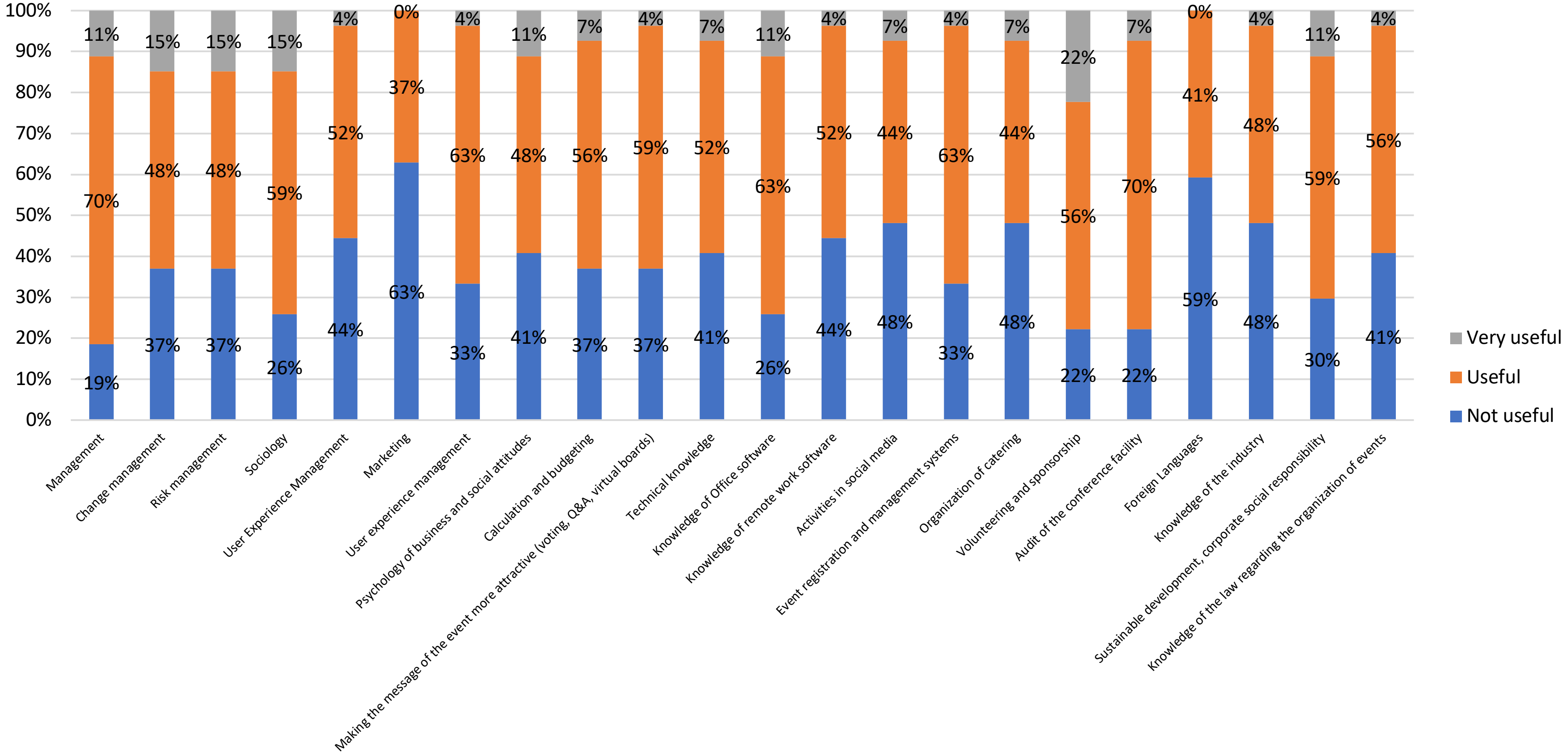
Knowledge in the field of marketing (63%), foreign languages (59%), organization of catering and social media activities (48% each) was considered "very useful". They perceive the usefulness of knowledge in the "useful" category received the greatest support in the area of knowledge of registration systems and event management (63%), knowledge of Office software (63%) or customer experience management (63%). On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who considered knowledge useless was 11-15% in relation to change management, risk, sociology, and nearly every fifth person (22%) underestimated the knowledge of volunteering and sponsorship.

Fig. 58. Usefulness of knowledge in the MICE sphere



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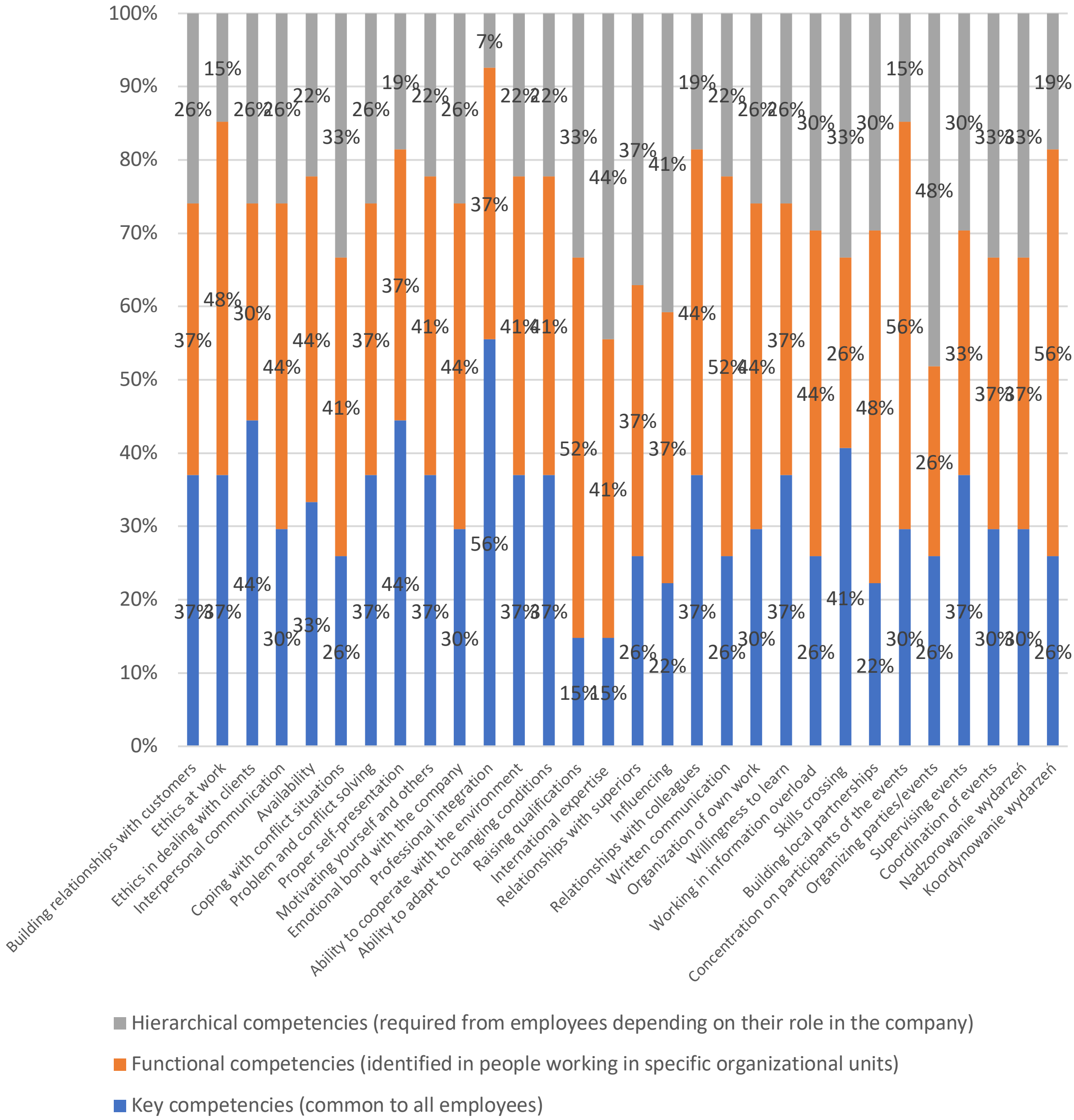
When distributing competencies between job positions in the company, the correct list is made of those that belong to the management and those that apply to all employees (fig. 59), which proves that the respondents correctly recognize the company's organizational culture.

Fig. 59. The necessary type of staff competencies depending on the position in the company



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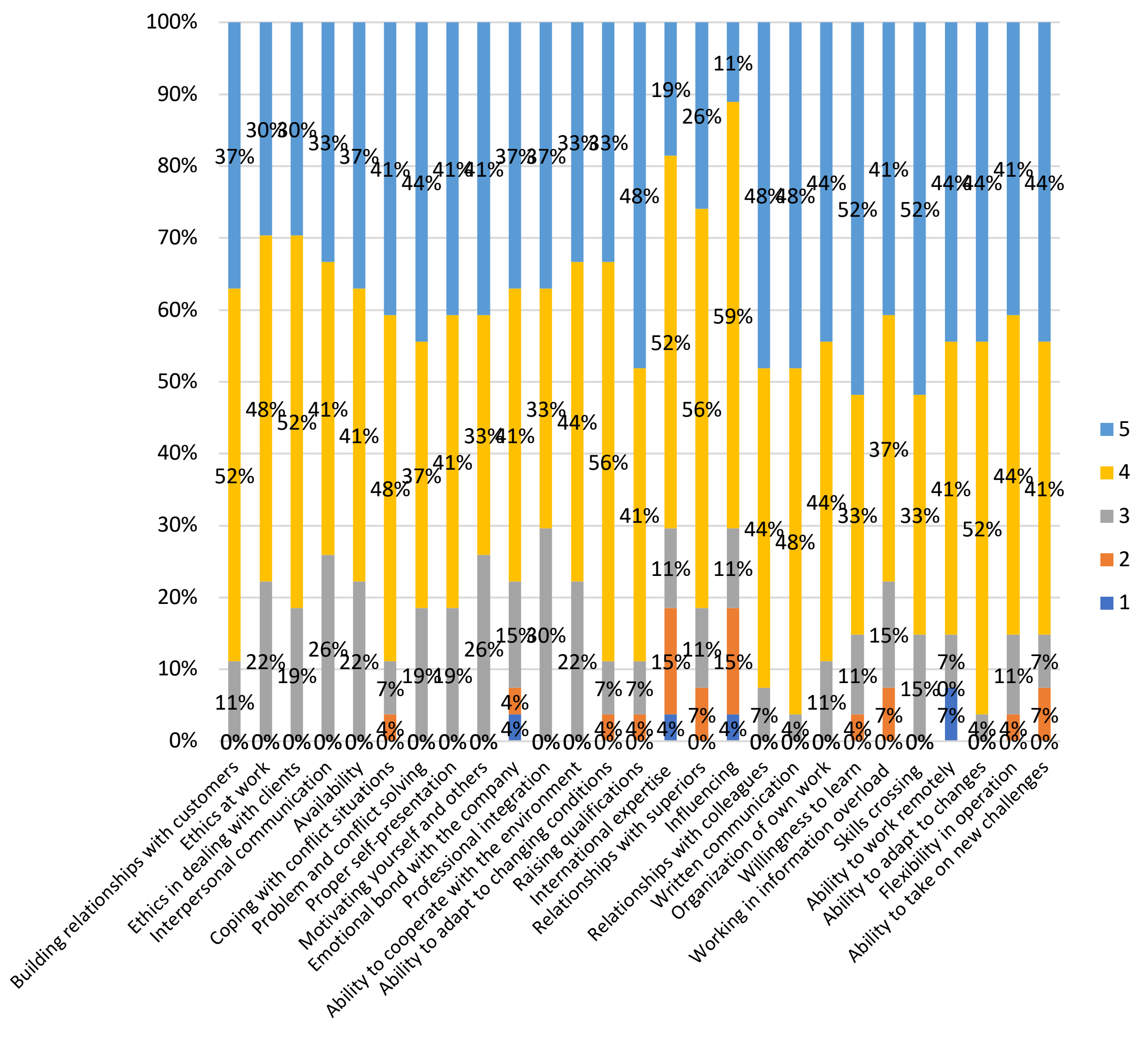
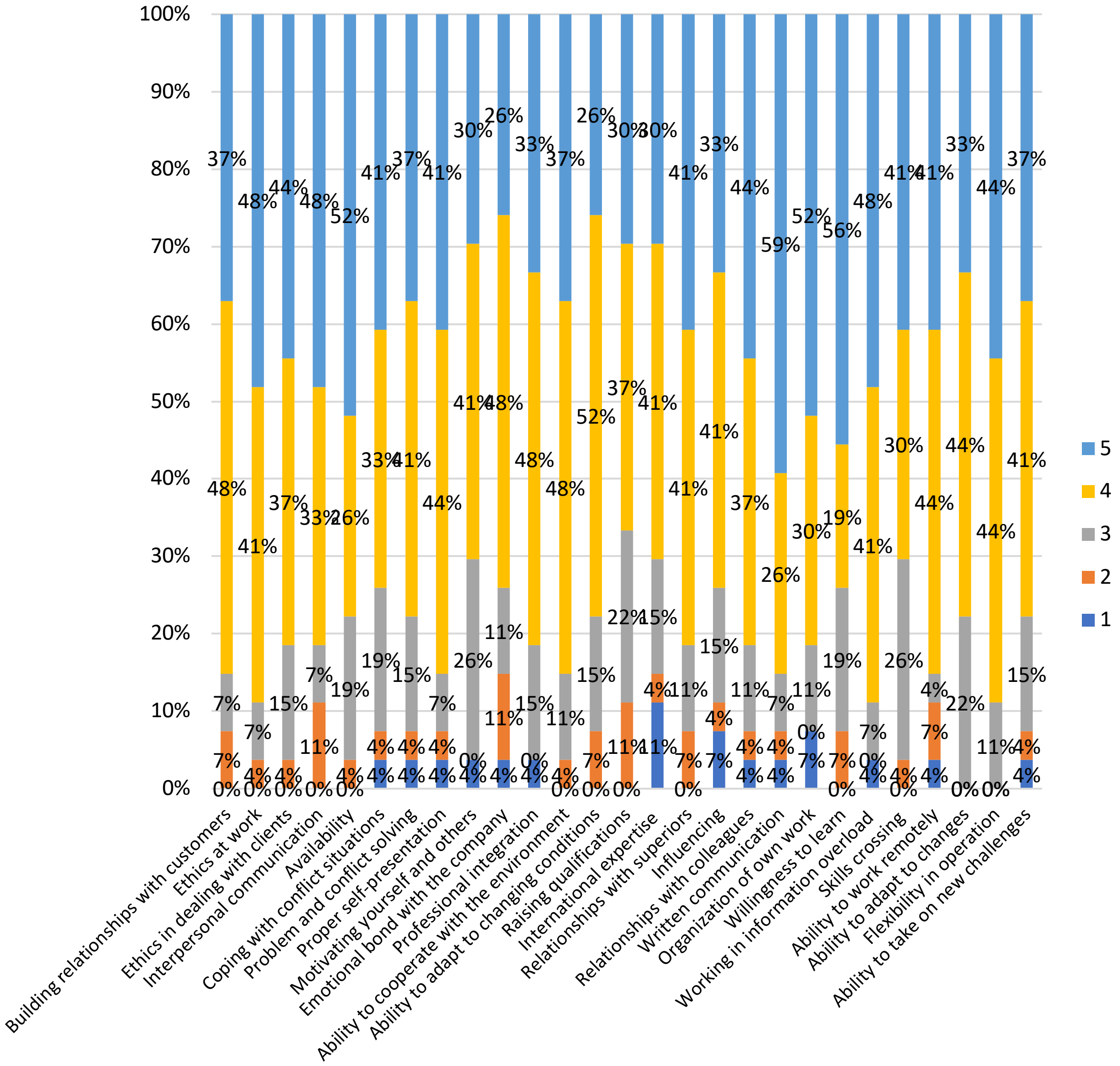
In the self-assessment of actual, own social competencies, measured on a scale of 1 to 5, low values (maximum 3 points) were awarded by almost one-third of the respondents to interpersonal communication, professional integration, or international familiarity. On the other hand, the maximum level (5 points) was attributed by half of the respondents to readiness to learn and cross skills (52% each), as well as relationships with colleagues and written communication (48% each).

Fig. 60. Own social competencies at the actual level



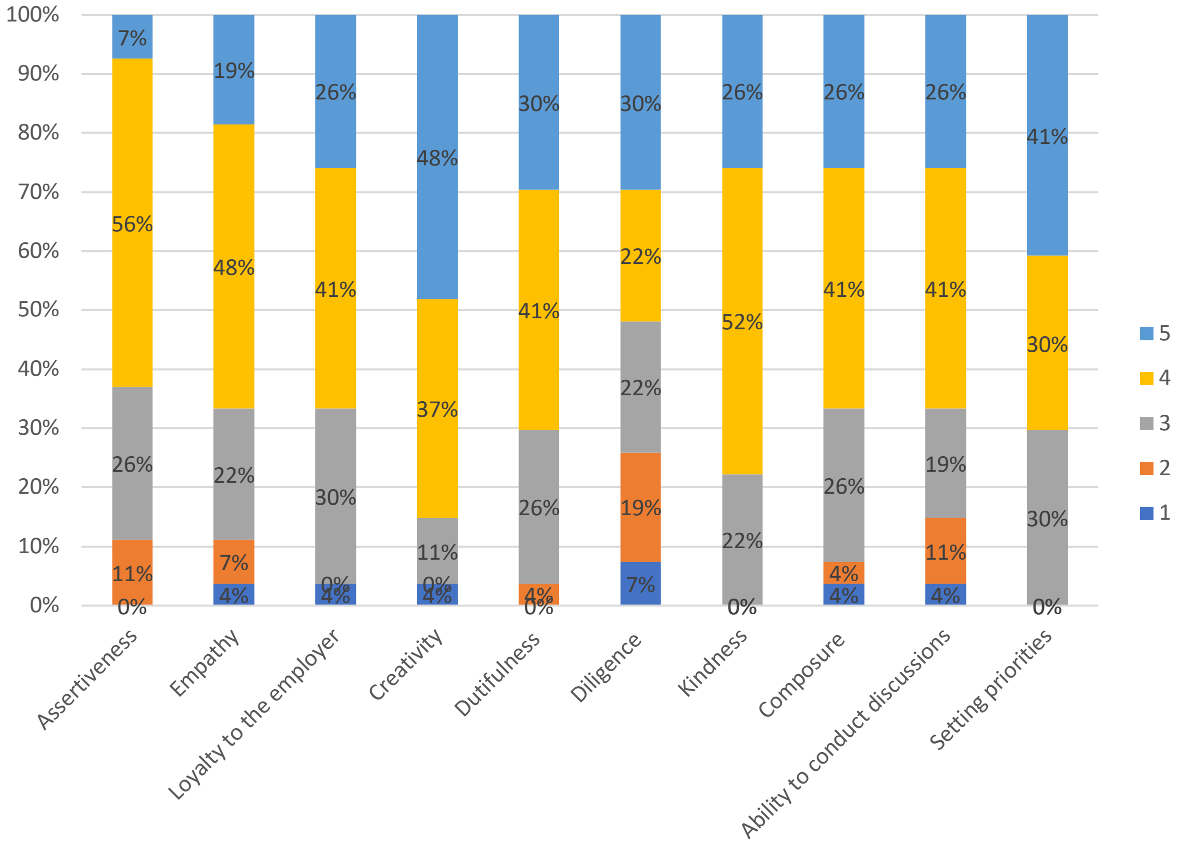
The expected own competencies obtained significantly higher values, and only international expertise obtained the lowest value in 11% of employees (fig. 61).

Fig. 61. Own social competencies at the expected level



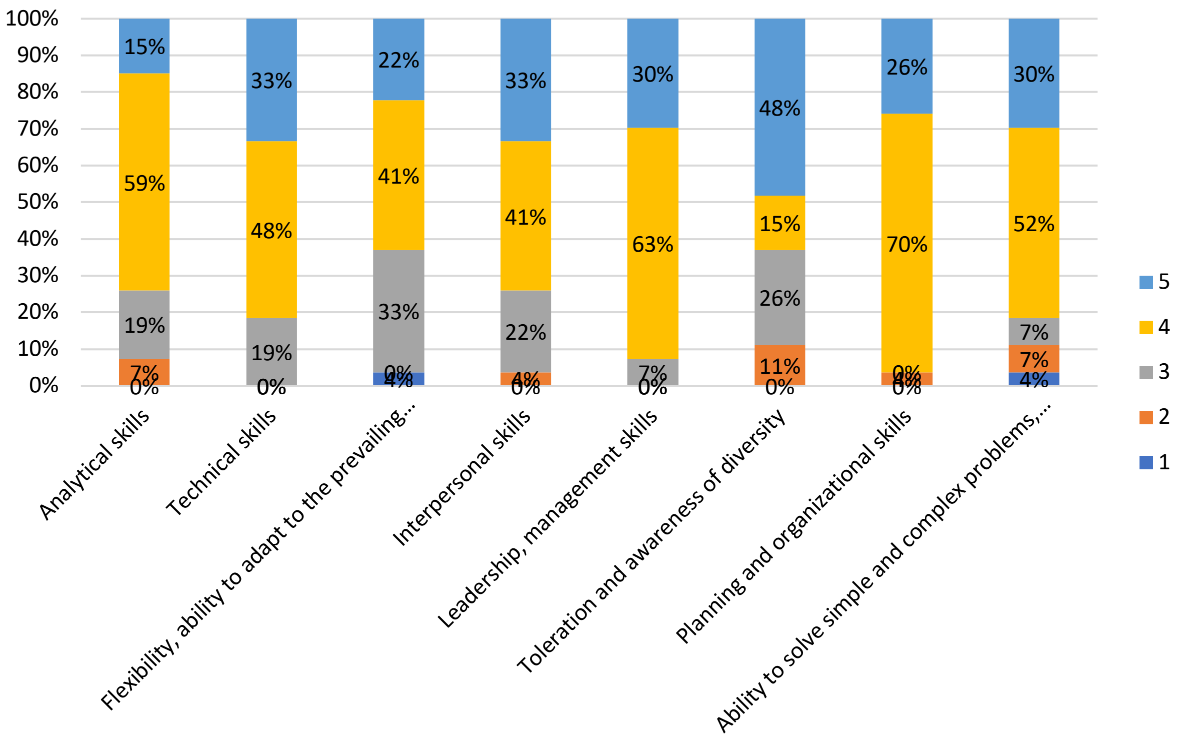
When we compare the actual and expected competencies, especially those related to relationships, it can be presumed that the lower results of indications are related to personality traits, among which assertiveness, empathy, and the ability to conduct discussions were rated the lowest (fig. 62).

Fig. 62 The actual level of the personality traits of the team



Aggregate competencies concern, in the greatest percentage, leadership/management skills, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and planning and organization of work. Employees (18%) also indicated the ability to solve simple problems (maximum 3 points), which is inconsistent with the declared management skills.

Fig. 63. Own, aggregated components of competencies



The needs for professional development, relating only to operational staff, mainly concern indications of independence, new communication techniques, flexibility, sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. Surprisingly, only 19% of respondents attribute to the operational staff a desire to learn about sanitary procedures related to the pandemic.

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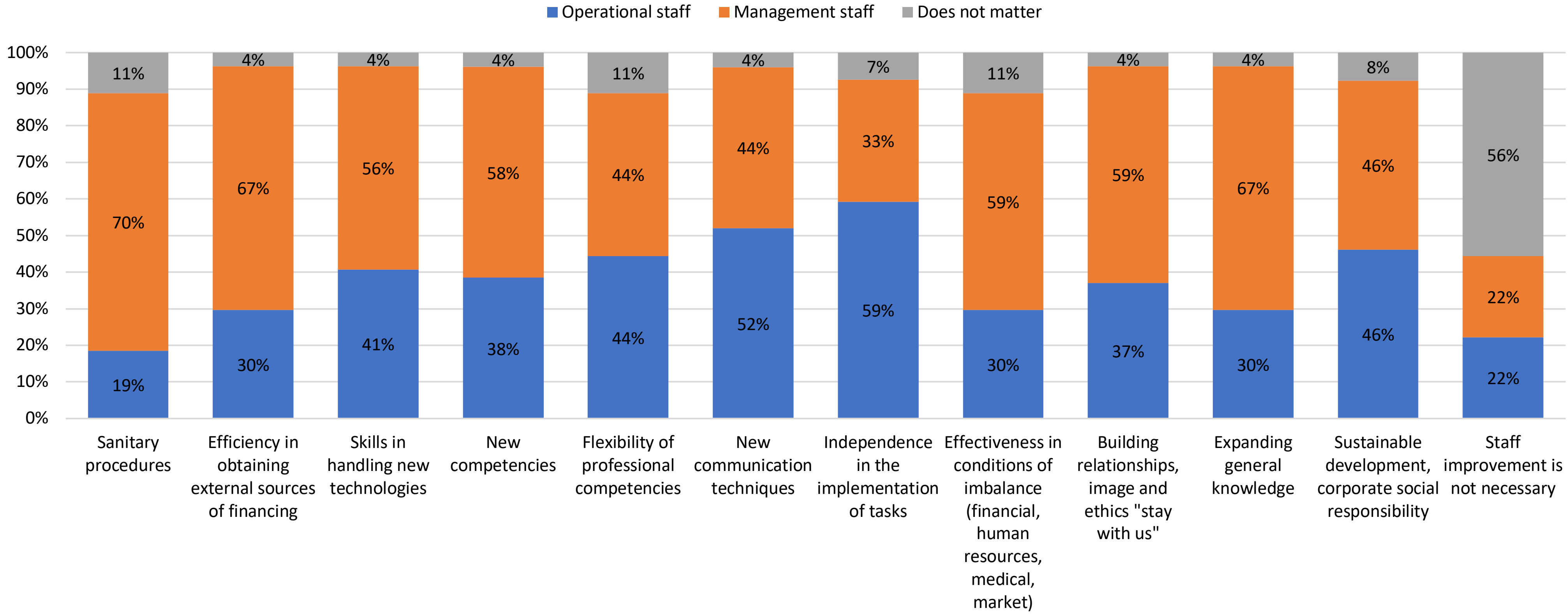
Fig. 64. Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



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9. Diagnosis and needs of the meetings industry in Ireland in terms of competence

9.1. Competencies in the opinion of managers

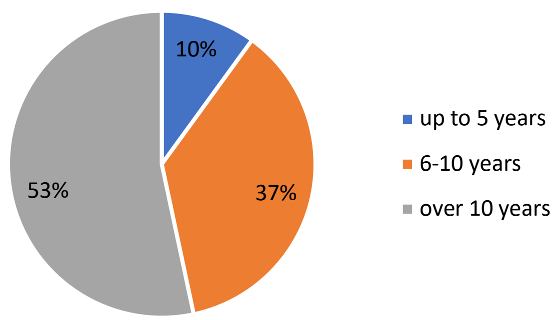
The research covered 30 people from the group of managers of MICE sector enterprises, 47% of whom were representatives of PCO / DMC, organizers of incentive trips (17%) and event agencies (23%). The smallest (13%) number of respondents represented the organizers of fairs and exhibitions.

Tab. 14. Type of activity of the respondents

DMC - PCO	14
Organizer of incentive trips	5
Event agency	7
Organizer of fairs and exhibitions	4
Total	30

In the sample, half of the companies have a certificate, and the other half do not have such a document. Most companies have at least 10 years of experience in the market.

Fig. 65. The period of the company's operation on the market



The following charts illustrate the socio-professional structure of the surveyed managers.

Fig. 66. The gender structure of the respondents

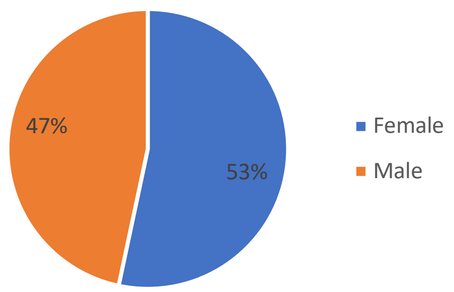


Fig. 67. Age structure

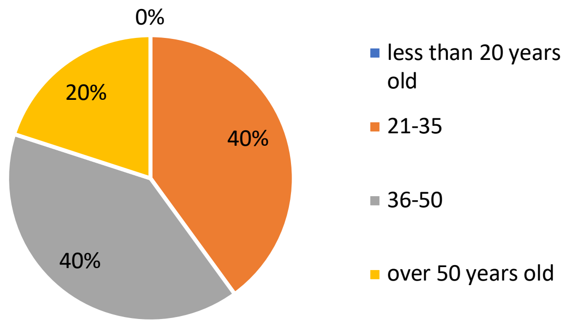
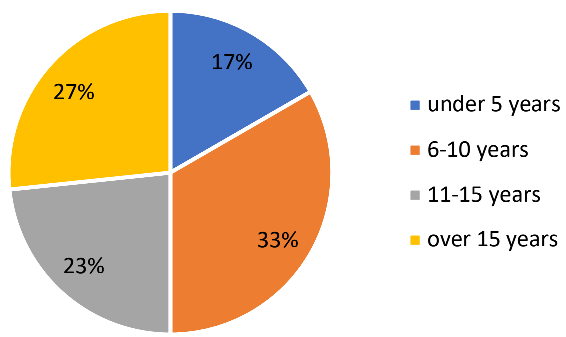


Fig. 68. Work experience in the MICE sector



The respondents were asked to classify the areas of knowledge as useful or not useful for the functioning of the enterprise in the MICE sector (Fig. 69).

They found the knowledge of risk and change management, calculation and budgeting, negotiation and marketing to be the most useful. Especially the first two areas of "very useful" knowledge are probably related to the crisis in the sector caused by the pandemic. A small number of respondents considered several areas of knowledge as useless.

The highest percentage of respondents considered knowledge in the field of business psychology or experience management to be at least useful (without indications "unhelpful").

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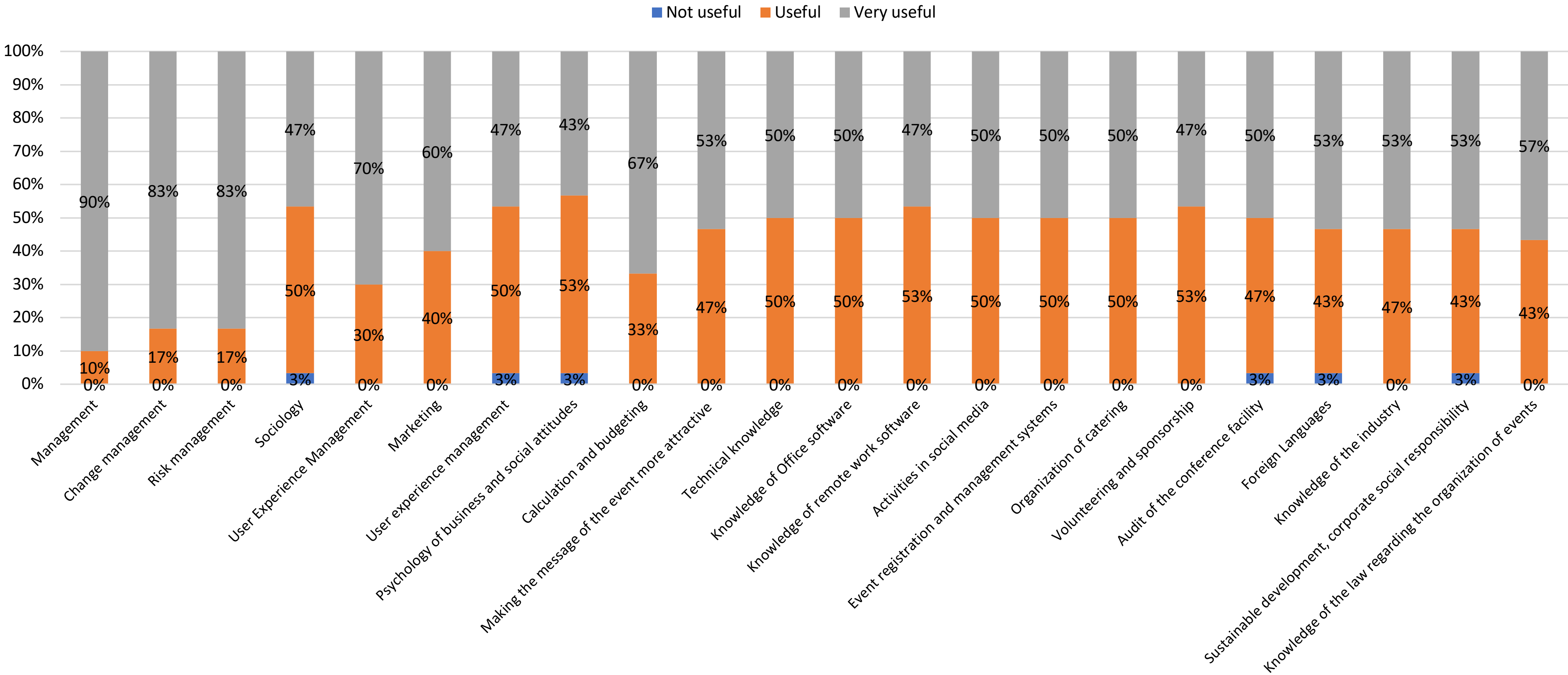
Fig. 69. Assessment of the usefulness of knowledge in the MICE sphere



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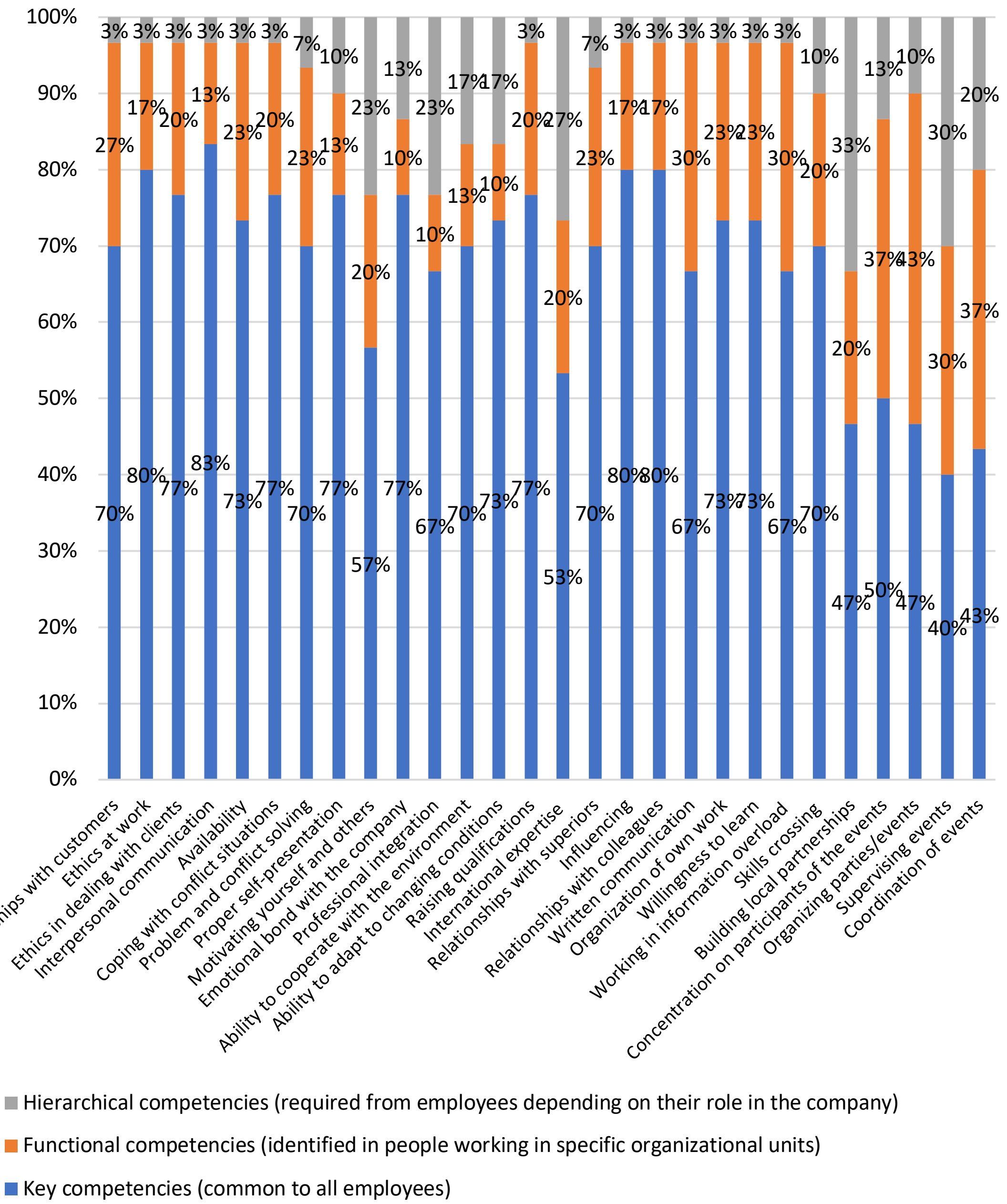
Depending on the job positions held in the company, key competencies are mentioned by practically most of the respondents, except for those assigned to the management staff (building local partnerships, supervision, and coordination).

Fig. 70. The necessary type of staff competencies depending on the position in the company



A comparison of actual and expected social competencies indicates a gap, but it may be declarative (figs. 71 and 72).

Fig. 71. Actual social competencies of the enterprise team

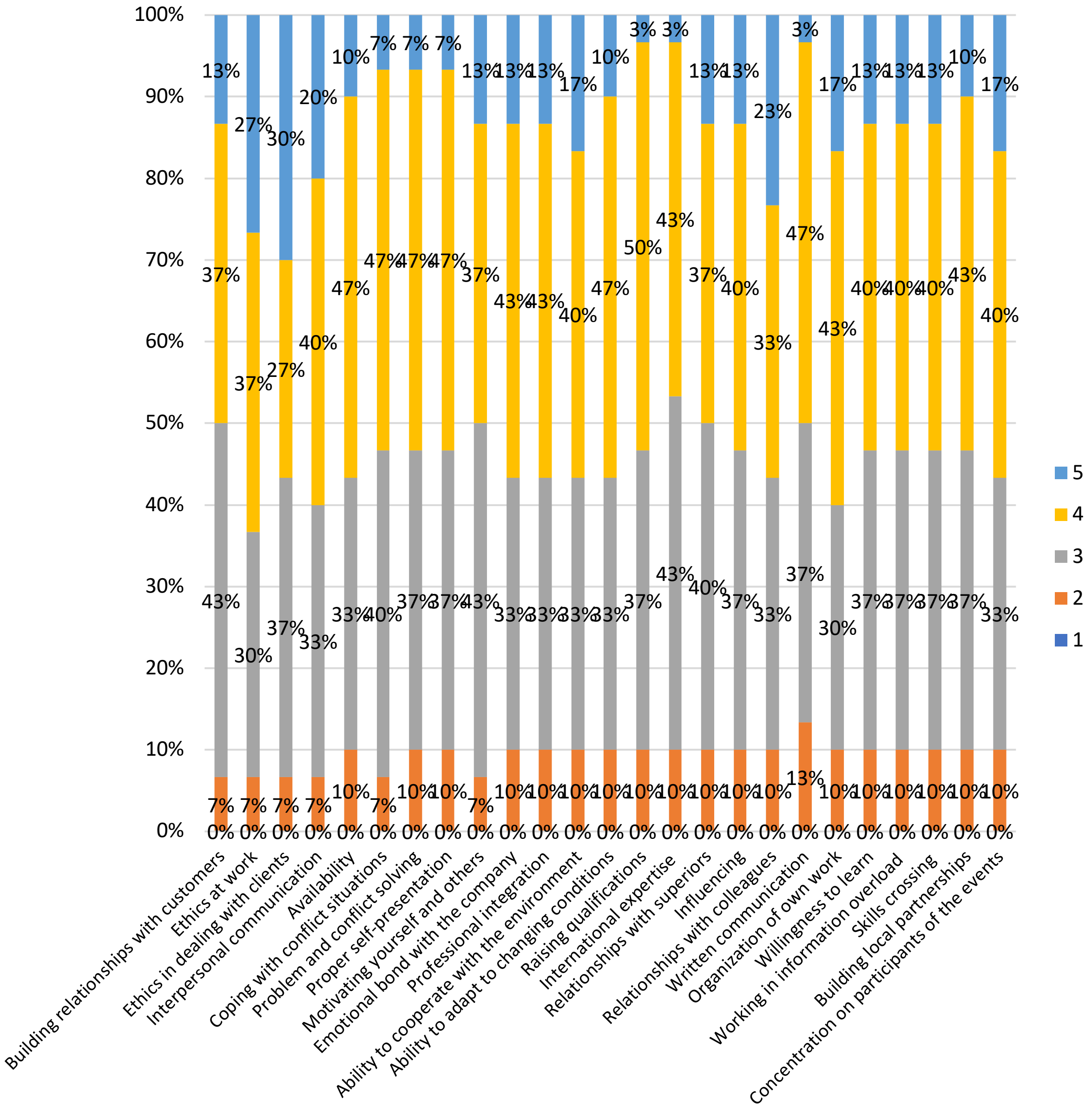
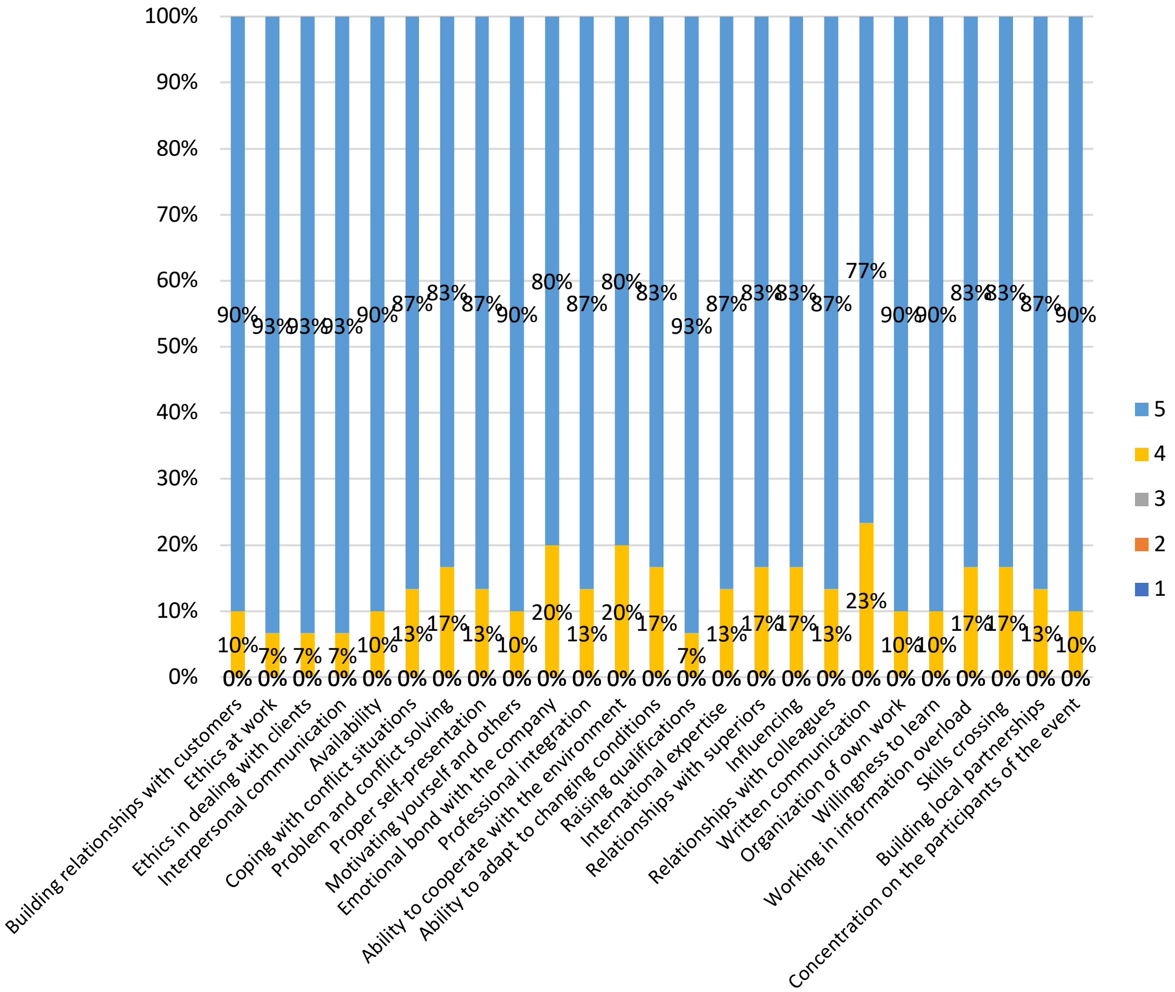


Fig. 72. The expected social competencies of the enterprise team



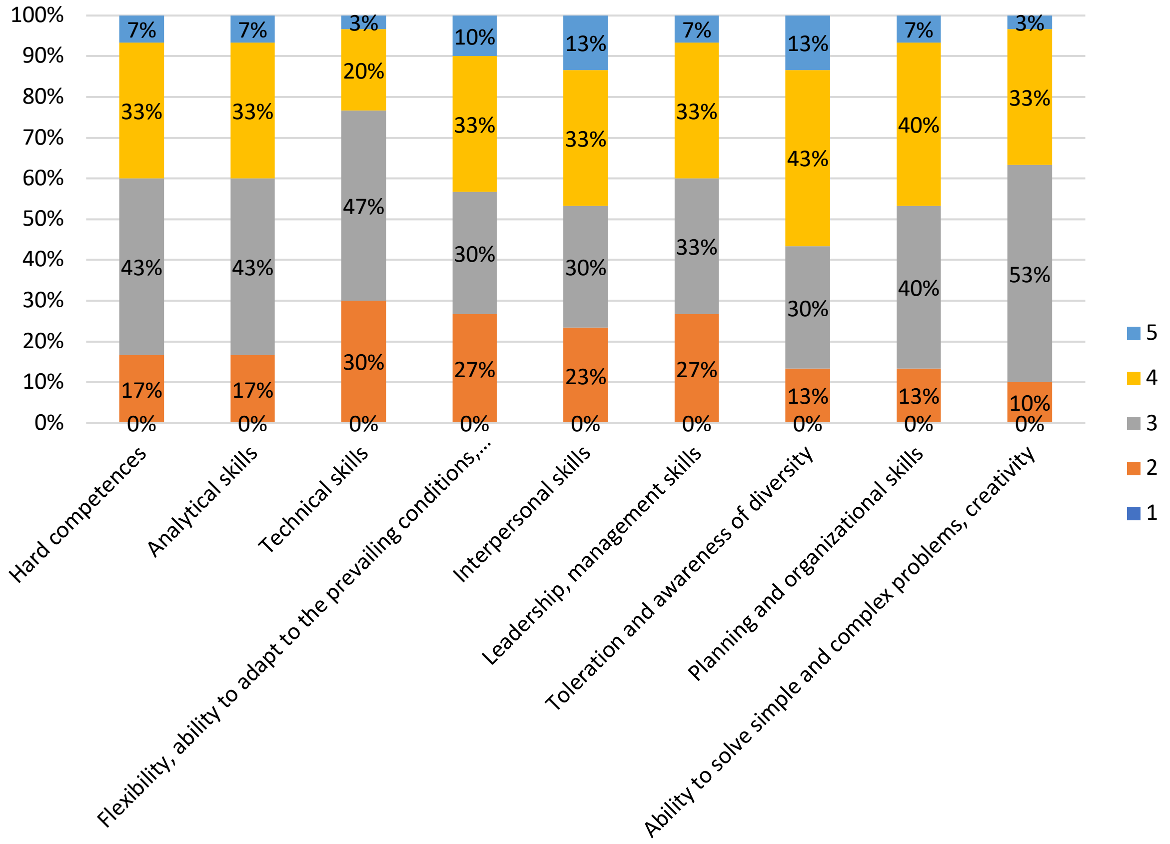
The assessment of the personality traits of employees in Irish companies is very high.

Tab. 15. The actual level of personality traits of the enterprise team

	Assertiveness	Empathy	Loyalty to the employer	Creativity	Dutifulness	Diligence	Kindness	Restraint	Ability to conduct discussion	Prioritizing
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	13%	13%
3	53%	23%	53%	40%	50%	50%	20%	33%	40%	37%
4	40%	57%	43%	53%	43%	43%	47%	47%	40%	43%
5	7%	20%	0%	7%	7%	7%	33%	7%	7%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

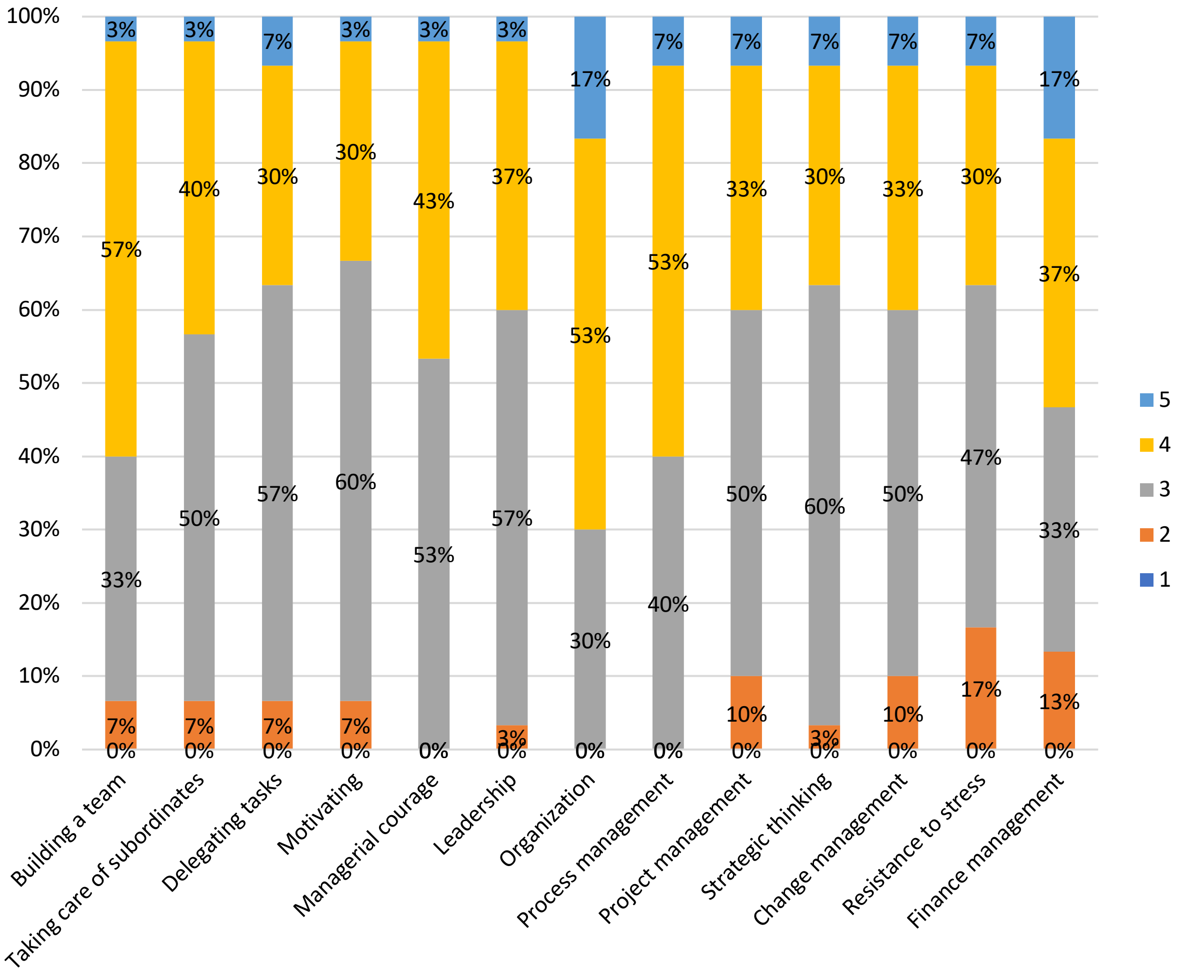
Summarized, aggregated competencies with points 4 and 5 were indicated by no more than 50% of the respondents and were lower than those assessed by Polish and Hungarian employers.

Fig. 73. Aggregated components of employee competencies



The assessment of own managerial competencies indicates reliability, as the highest-level indications (5 points) are generally below 10% of indications, and the 3-point mark prevails. A certain gap is noticed in the competencies of change management, finances, and stress resistance.

Fig. 74. Own managerial competencies



The period of the pandemic, which puts the MICE sector in an extremely difficult situation, because the sector has the latest prospect of reconstruction, makes it necessary to look for new forms of activity. At the same time, improving the competencies of employees' qualifications is to play an important role in this process.

Tab.16. Planned long-term actions to recover from the pandemic crisis

	Seeking financial support, including from EU funds	Switching to another activity partially or completely	Company reorganization / restructuring	New forms of enterprise management	Raising the competencies and qualifications of employees
Yes	28	15	24	26	25
No	0	10	3	2	2
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	2	5	3	2	3
Sum of responses	30	30	30	30	30

	Increasing digitization / automation	Activities run remotely / virtually	Expanding the portfolio of services	Mergers, acquisitions	Reducing employment
Yes	18	26	26	22	23
No	5	1	0	3	4
This does not apply to my company / I have no opinion	7	3	4	5	3
Sum of responses	30	30	30	30	30

Based on the interviews, the CEOs concluded that the most pressing problems of the MICE sector requiring solutions in terms of competencies are:

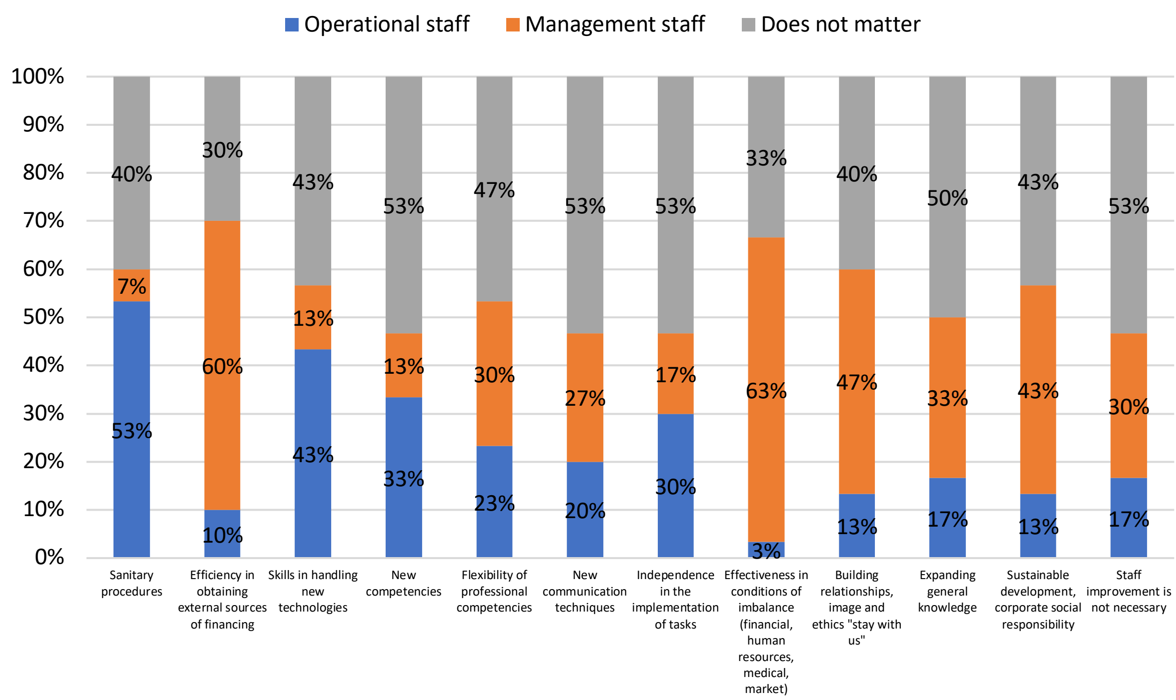
we need skills in managing online events during a pandemic and internet marketing skills; stress management, compliance with new technologies
lack of hard skills in the IT area
closed rooms and very strict regulations
lack of competence and appropriate standards. Sometimes I feel that our company has stopped growing especially now during a pandemic
Uncertainty, new regulations, closure, mass changes with no solutions.
MICE's survival strategies are insufficiently described. Due to severe travel restrictions and border closures, the MICE industry has faced a reduction in demand. The companies faced financial, economic and mental problems

A completely new era has dawned. What worked in the last year before Covid doesn't work anymore. I think the most pressing problem is the lack of general skills and adaptation methods to support the MICE sector.
No permission for face to face events. Lack of proper courses and strategies for business owners.

It is also confirmed by the 90% number of indications of the role of competencies in the chances of the reconstruction/development of companies.

Respondents ascribe to the management team the acquisition of competencies in the area of effectiveness in the conditions of imbalance and obtaining external financing (Fig. 75). On the other hand, operational staff is mainly expected to acquire competencies in the area of sanitary procedures and new technologies.

Fig. 75. Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



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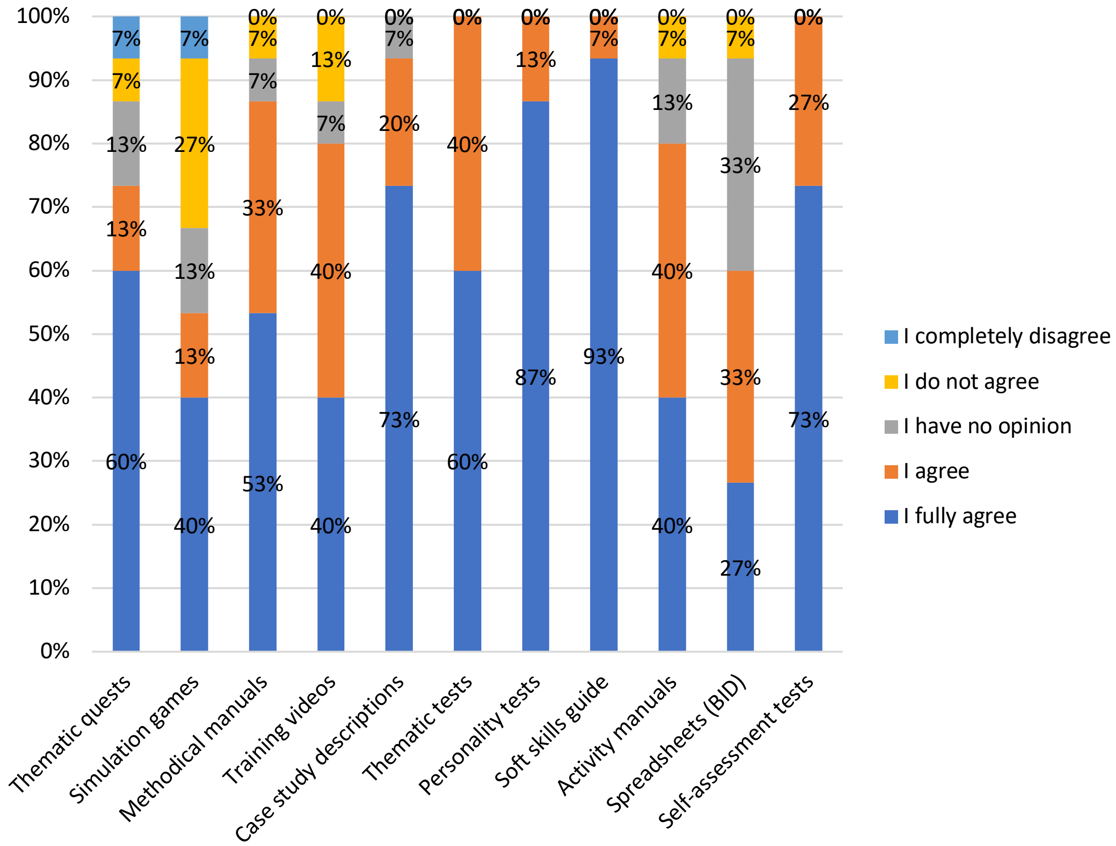
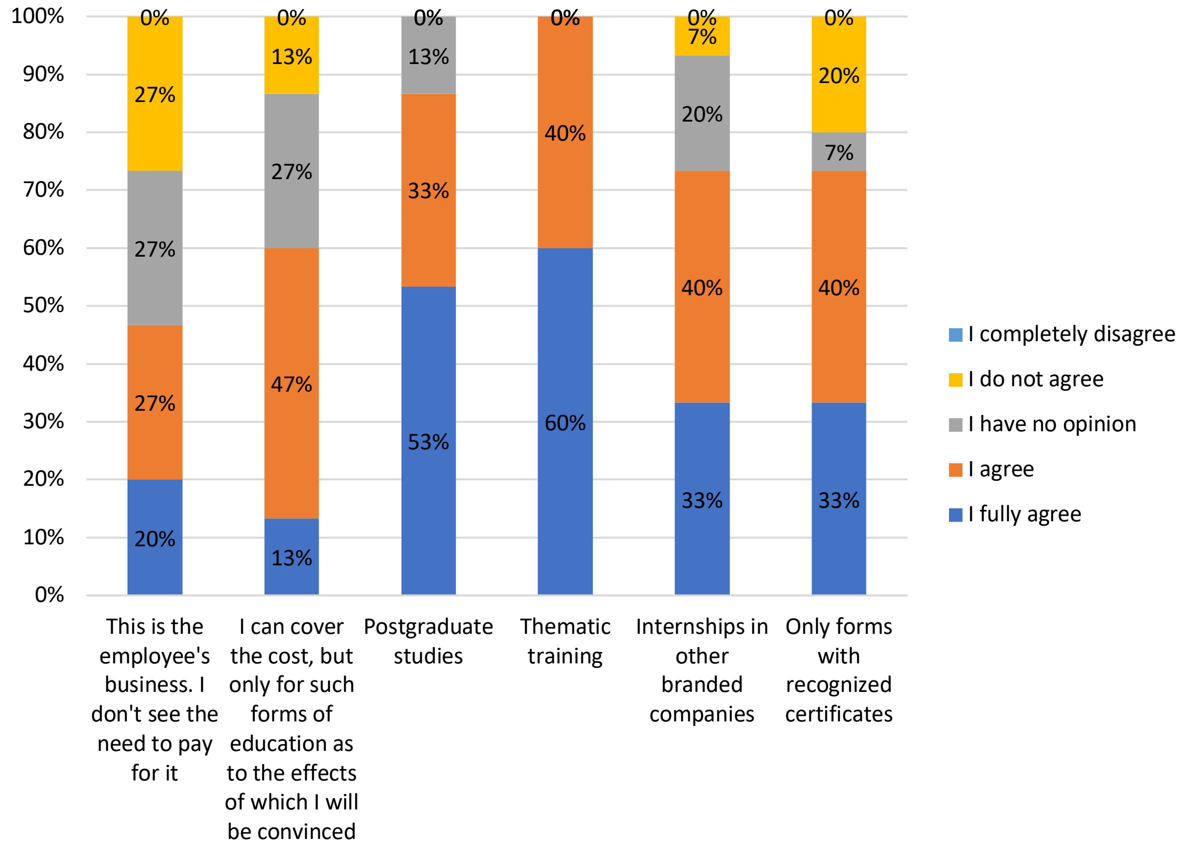
According to the respondents, the most interesting forms of improving the qualifications of employees are those related to learning about practical solutions in the industry, such as: case study analysis, methodological and task guides, or soft skill guides. A very high value was given to the personality and self-esteem tests (fig. 76).

Fig. 76. The most interesting forms of skills improvement tools



Managers asked about their willingness to cover, at least partially, the costs of improving employee competencies, answered this question positively, and they mainly wanted to finance thematic training (preferably certified), postgraduate studies and internships (fig. 77).

Fig. 77. Forms of increasing competencies for which the company would be able to cover the costs, at least partially



Tab. 17. The need to develop unified qualification standards in the MICE sector

Yes, they are essential	14
Yes, they will be useful	0
I have no opinion	1
No, they are not useful	0
No, everyone manages the team as they see fit	0
No, it is impossible	0

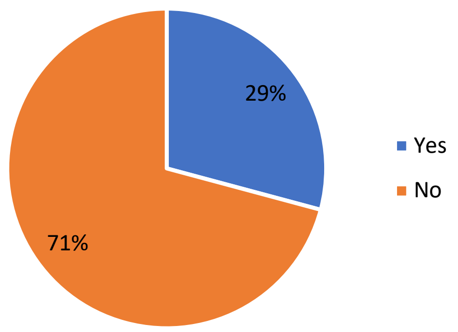
9.2. Competencies in the opinion of employees

The study of the group of employees of companies in the MICE sector in Ireland covered 24 people, among whom 33% were representatives of PCO/ DMC, 25% of event agencies, 21% of incentive trip organizers and organizers of fairs and exhibitions (21%). Most of the represented companies did not have any industry certificates.

Tab. 18. Business type

DMC – PCO	8
Organizer of incentive trips	5
Event agency	6
Organizer of fairs and exhibitions	5
Total	**24**

Fig. 78. Having recommendations



The following charts illustrate the socio-professional structure of the surveyed managers.

Fig. 79. Gender

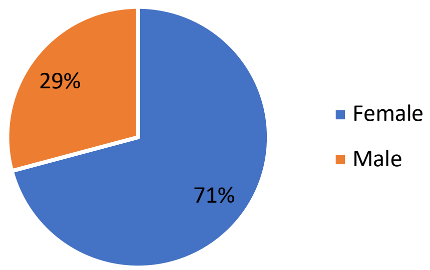


Fig. 80. Age

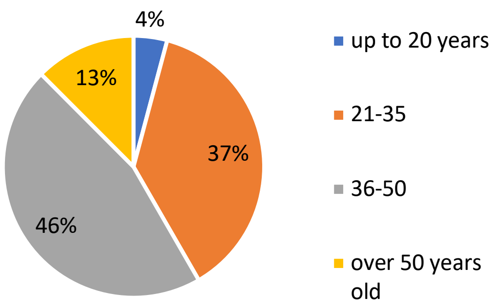
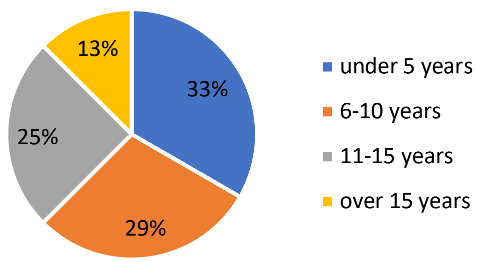


Fig. 81. Work experience in the MICE sector



Employees assessing the management staff, in the range from 33% to 58% of the respondents, stated that they use their competencies "often" and in most cases only "sporadically". These results are clearly lower than those obtained on the Polish and Hungarian markets.

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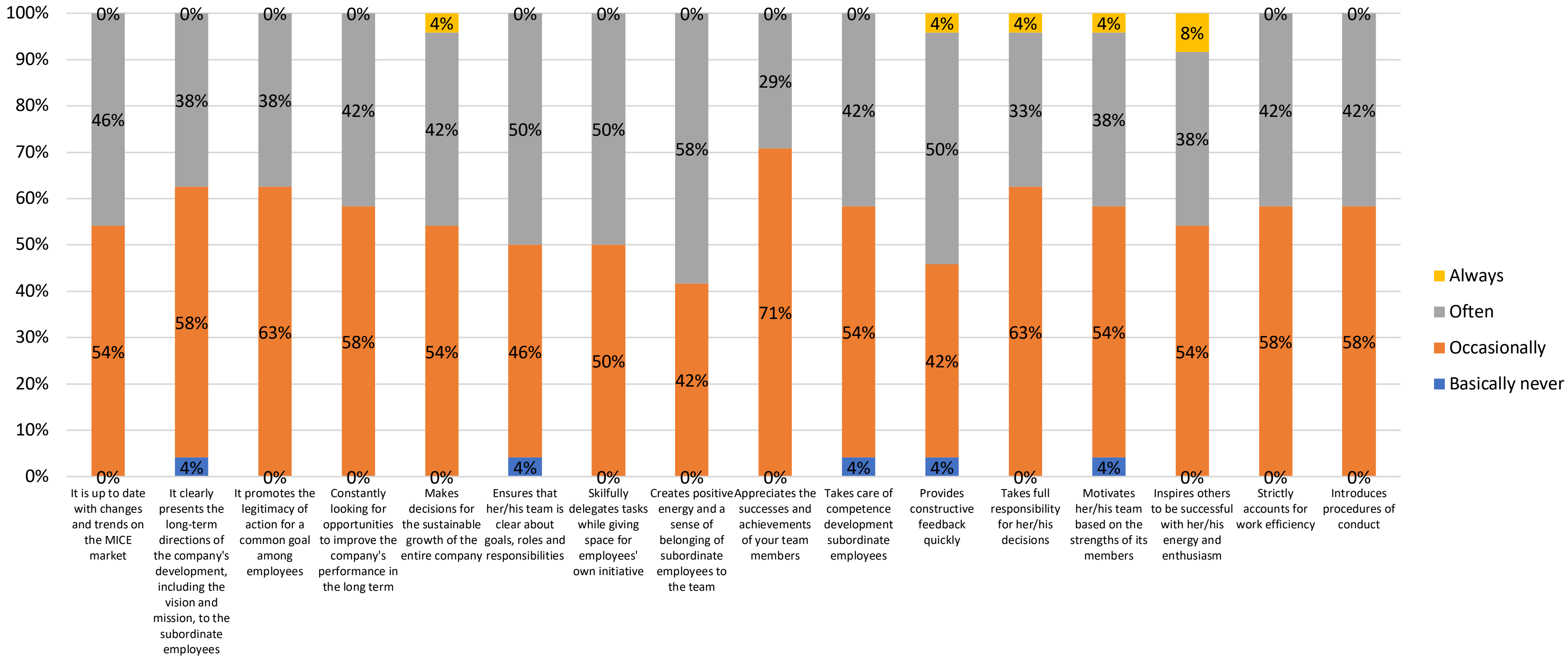
Fig. 82. Assessment of the competencies of the CEO



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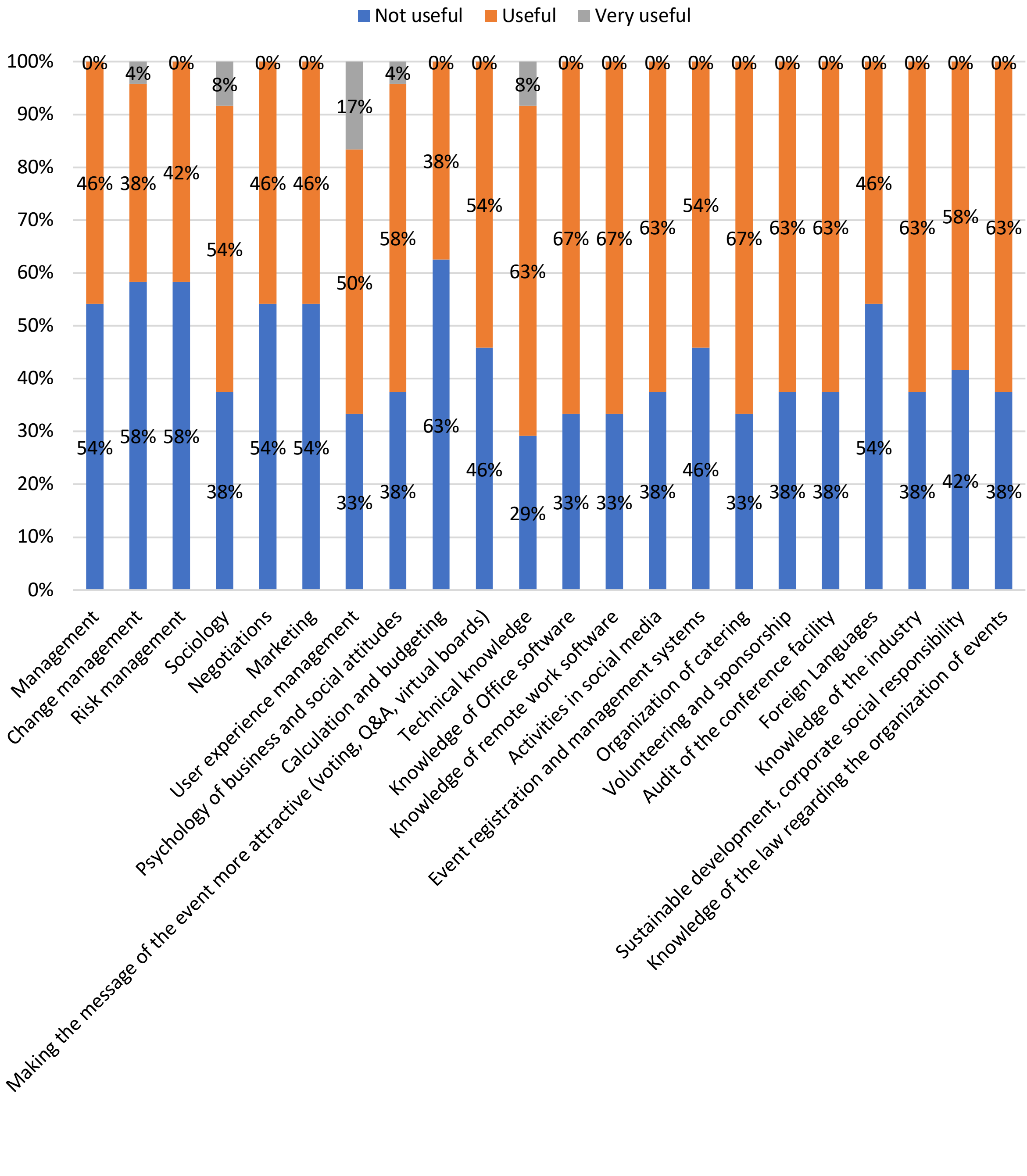
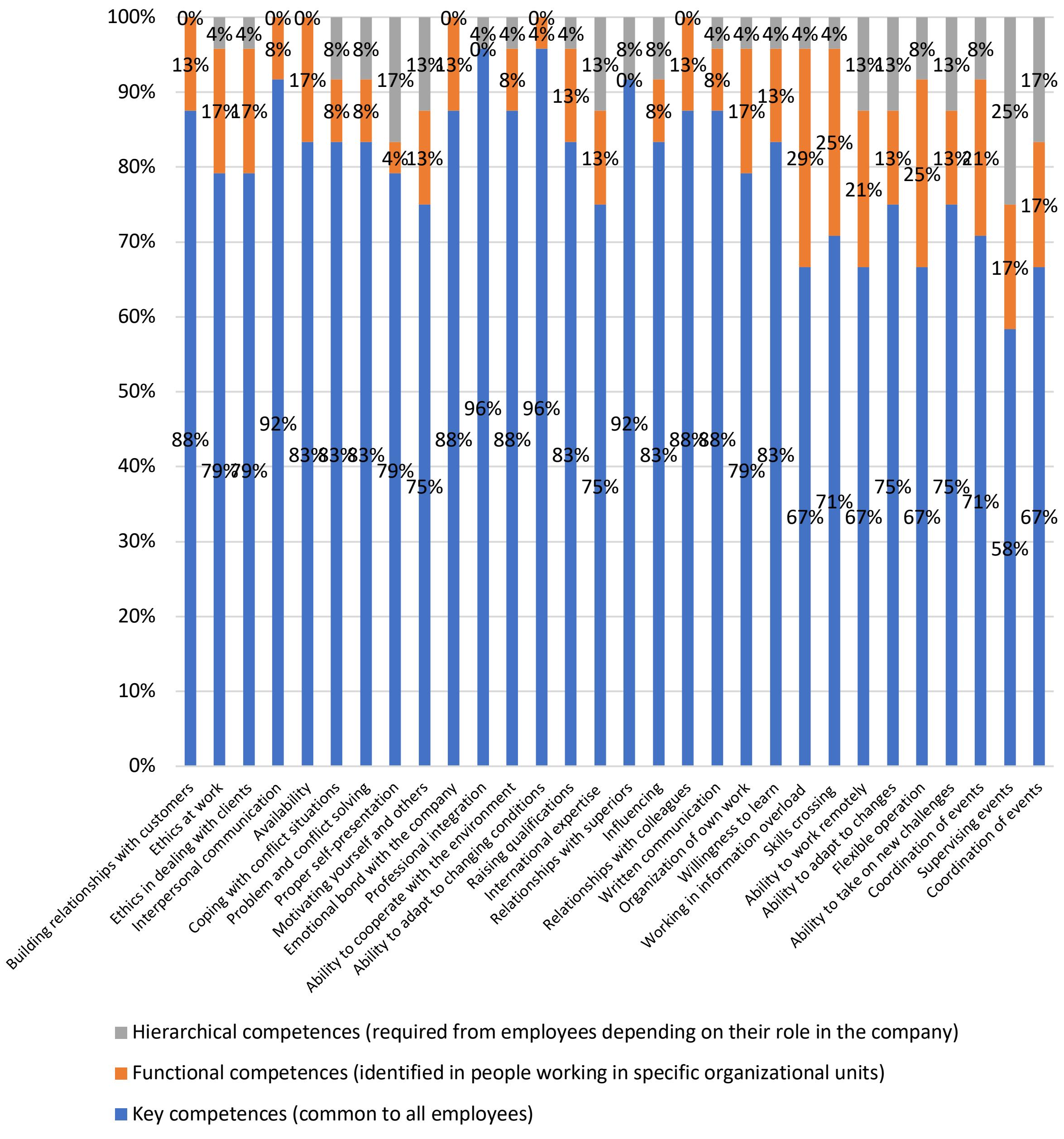
The structure of the usefulness of knowledge was widely accepted, except for the management of experience, 17% of the respondents were not convinced of its value (fig. 83).

Fig. 83. Useful knowledge in the MICE sphere



In some simplification, it can be said that the Irish see the versatility of the necessary competencies, regardless of their position in the company (Fig. 84).

Fig. 84 The necessary type of staff competencies depending on the position in the company



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The relation of the declared social competencies to their expected level shows a strong competency gap, characteristic for employees from each of the three analysed countries (Figs. 85 and 86).

Fig. 85. Own social competencies at the actual level

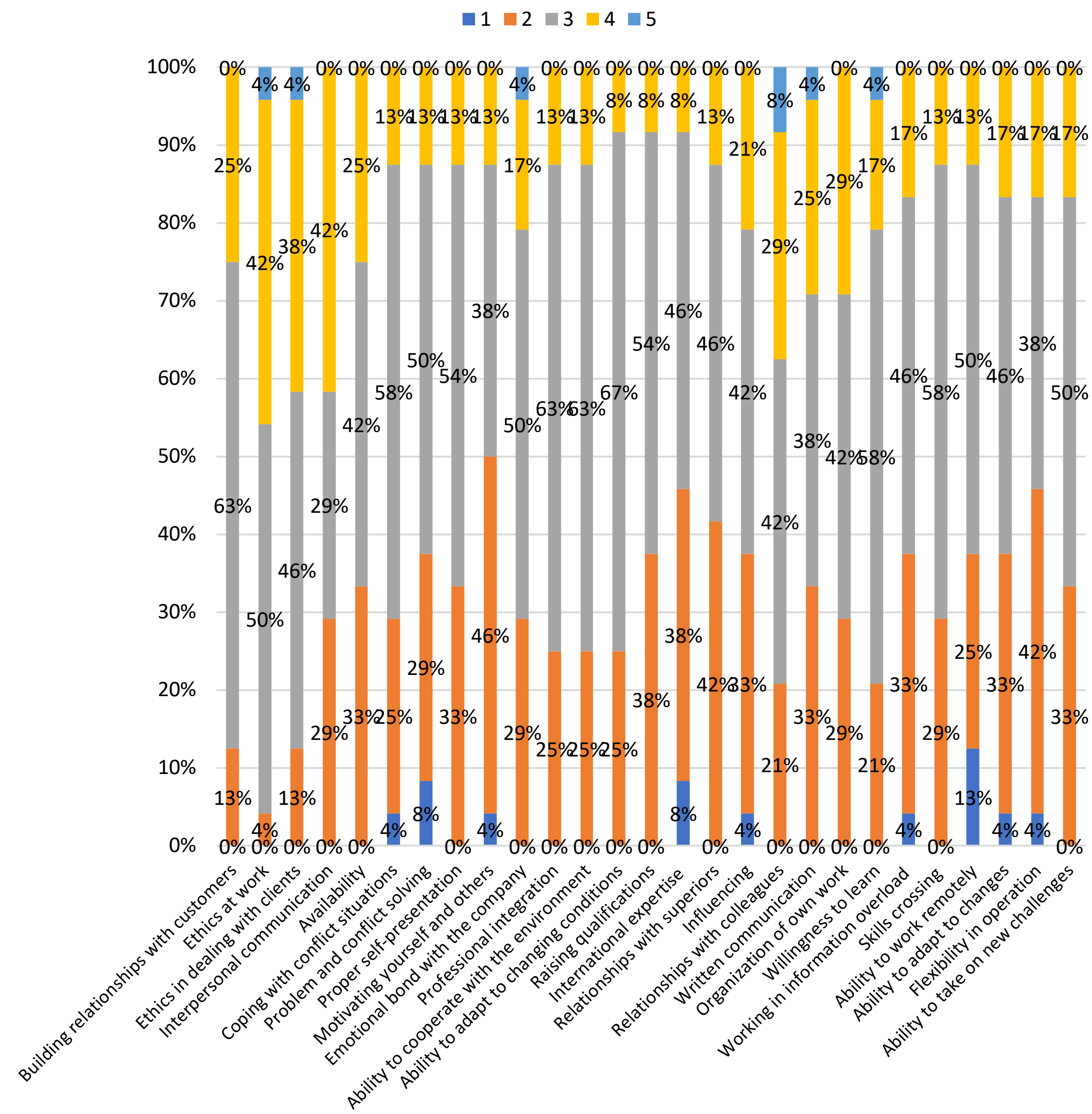
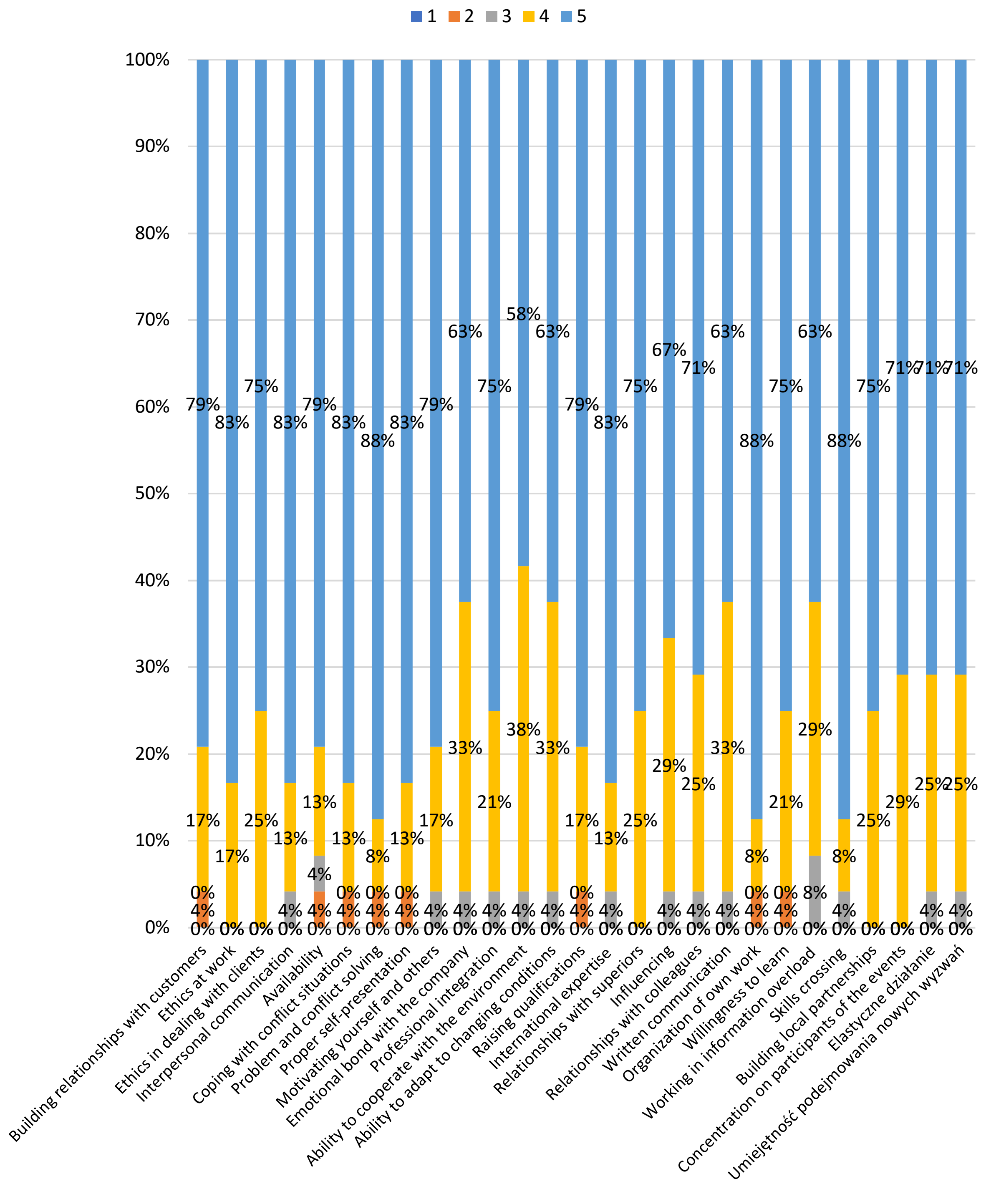
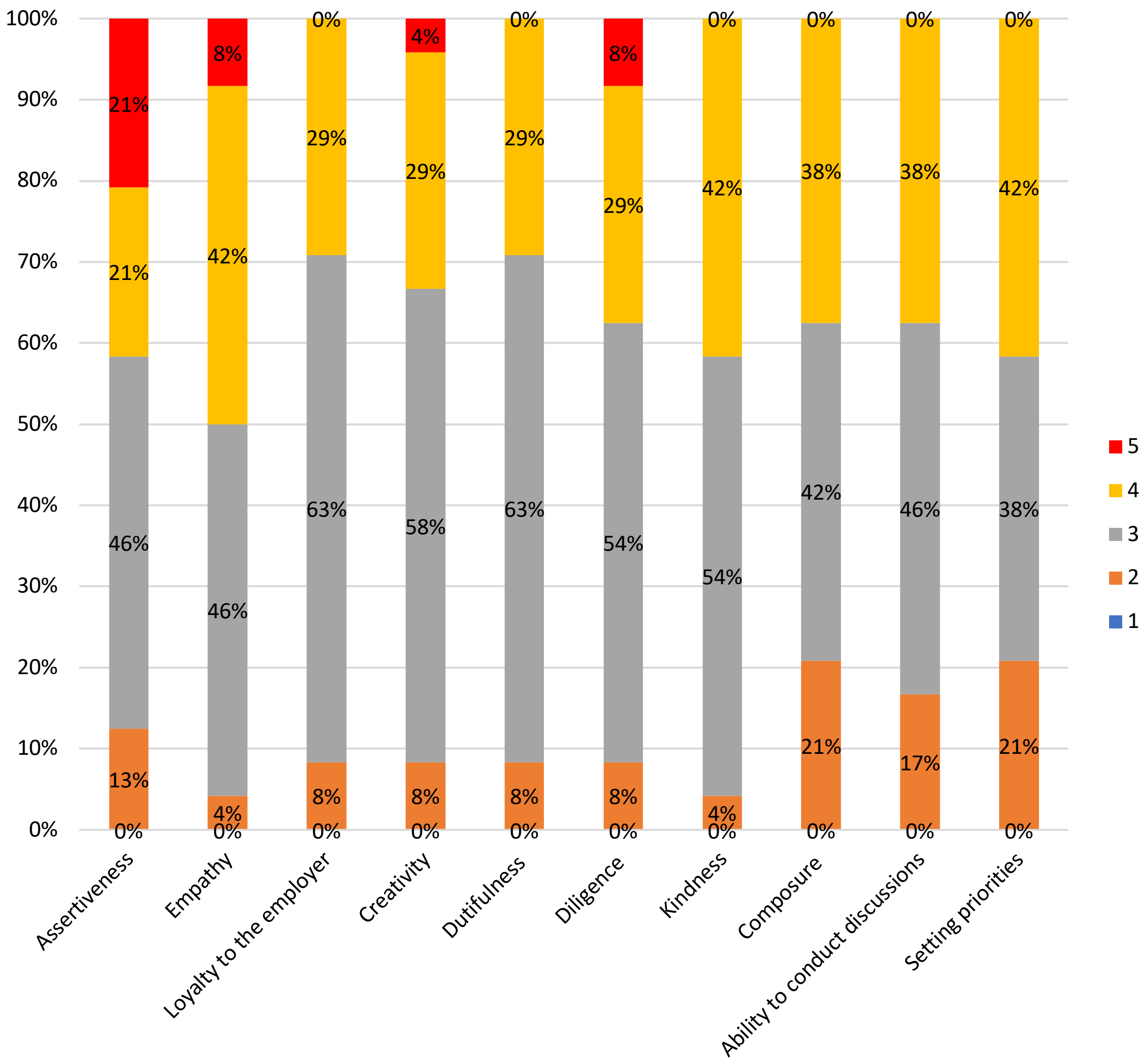


Fig. 86. Own social competencies at the expected level



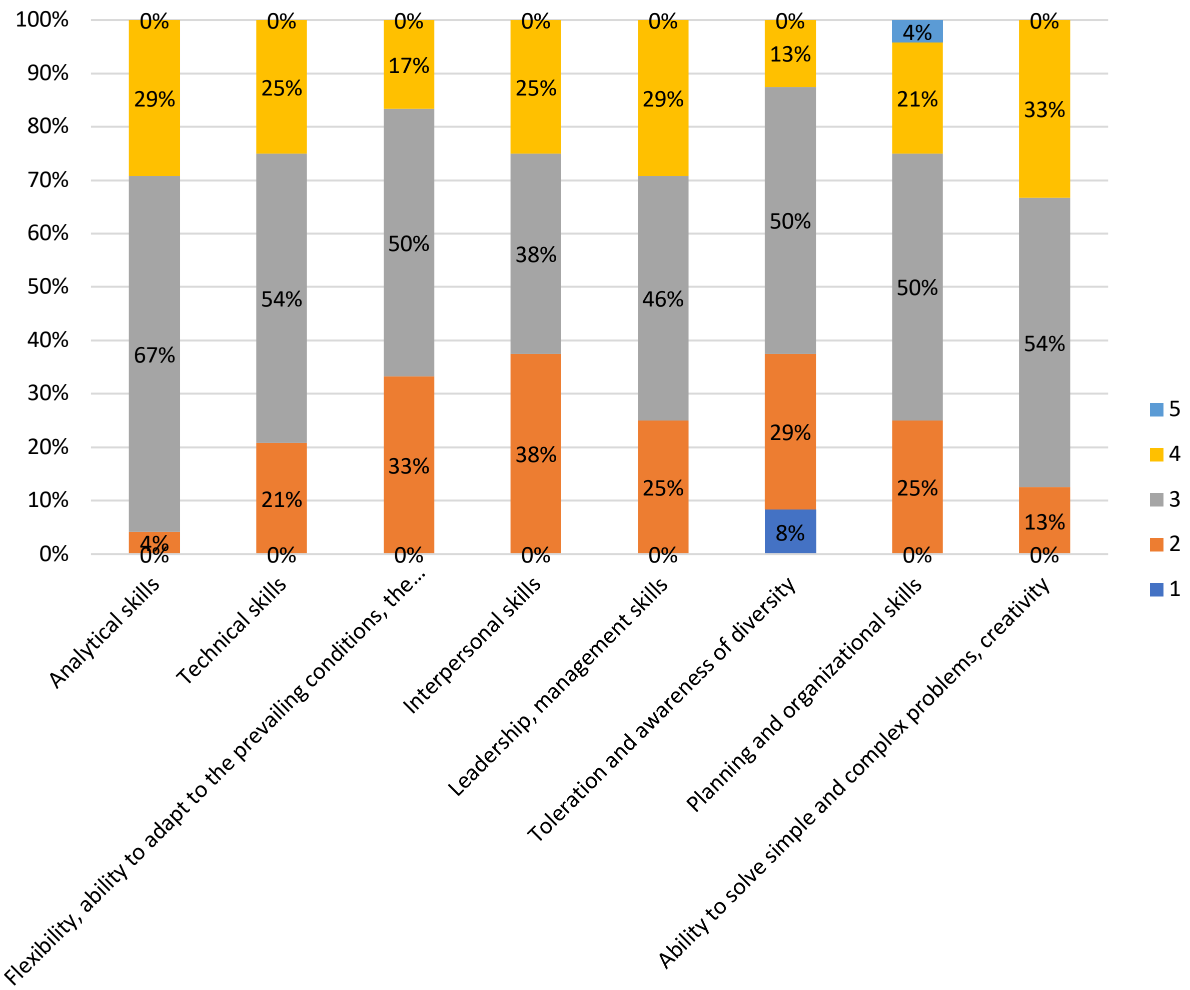
Personality traits were assessed relatively low, which leads to the conclusion that the training programs should be expanded with content in the field of business psychology.

Fig. 87. The actual level of the personality traits of the team



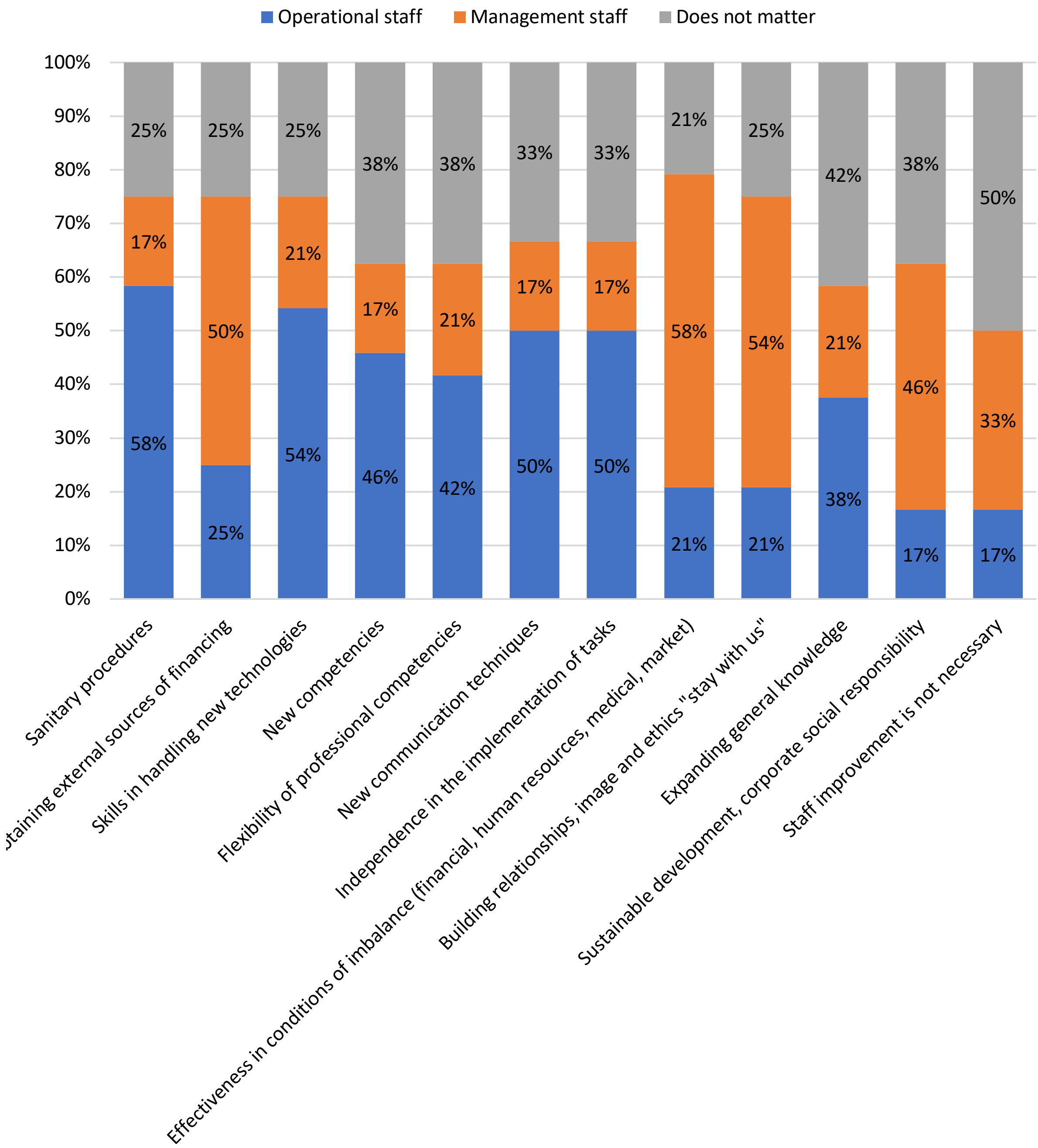
Aggregation of competencies also indicates the need to improve soft skills (Fig. 88).

Fig. 88. Own, aggregated components of competencies



The sector employees see the need to acquire competencies in the field of sanitary procedures, new technologies, communication techniques, or independence in the implementation of assigned tasks in the education process (Fig. 89). They see strategic areas of company management as the area of competence of the management staff.

Fig. 89. Areas of staff development in the MICE sector in the near future



10. Summary

Research results show that managers in the MICE sector already have a high level of competencies, and at the same time articulate a desire to further improve them. Especially in areas that strengthen the ability to develop and maintain a business in a sector that is likely to recover slowly at the latest. In addition to the knowledge and skills related to the professionalisation of operating activities, the need to acquire competencies allowing for overcoming the pandemic crisis, and exemplified by, for example, change and risk management or new technologies, was emphasized. Business psychology may play a significant role in formal or non-formal education.

The research did not show any significant differences in opinions expressed by representatives of the sector in the three analysed countries but showed the existing competency gaps.

The process of further education is noticed by industry associations because, in order to meet the needs of the industry, in January 2021, ICCA announced an educational program called "ICCA Skills - Leadership in Global Events Education". We read in the justification that: 2020 was a challenging year for ICCA and for our industry but throughout the discussions and interactions in the many forums, webinars and our Annual Congress, ICCA members expressed a strong wish to continue its transformation and to lead and inspire innovation new business opportunities for members and the ICCA community, both now and in the future. It is in that spirit of innovation we are delighted to share with you the launch of a ground-breaking business events industry initiative, Having identified the need to support the enhancement our industry's educational programmes, combining the extensive knowledge and passion of the ICCA community, we have developed **ICCA Skills** to be at the forefront of global business events education.

ICCA is proud to be launching this certification programme for its membership and the industry to meet the challenges of the need for new business models, enhanced professionalism and standards in the industry. With courses beginning in the third quarter of 2021, ICCA will grant recognition to an industry professional who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by the association. Certification will:

- Identify qualified professionals
- Ensure recognition of expertise
- Enhance credibility and prestige to individuals in the industry
- Provide a vehicle for professional development

The in-depth curriculum will be developed and delivered by industry experts, including inspirational business leaders, academics and ICCA members, delivered through on-site and online learning environments. ICCA Skills will commence in September 2021, starting with **Certified International Convention Specialist (CICS)**, designed for member employees aiming for their first management position and **Certified International Convention Executive (CICE)** created for managers with at least three years' experience. **CICS** and **CICE** certification are marks of excellence and provides graduates with recognition of their expertise, enhances their credibility, and professional development opportunities. **ICCA Skills** will be guided by a diversified Certification Committee, including implementing standards, requirements and course content approval. An Academic Curriculum Sub-Committee

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comprising university representatives and ICCA members will support these activities to guarantee relevancy and rigour. Gaining Edge, an ICCA member, has come forward to provide logistical and operational support during the initiative's preliminary phases. Other ICCA consultant members will be an integral part of the programme development.

By building a HR management model based on recommended and extended management competencies, with particular emphasis on strategic management and product development, an ideal MICE manager should be able to:

1. recognize and interpret the context and connections of industry processes;
2. understand the specifics of the conference and event tourism (MICE) sector, operating systems, regulatory processes and the system of influence of these organizations;
3. develop the strategies and plans of the organization,
4. manage conference and event services,
5. become familiar with the elements of the product in line with demand trends and the application of the results of innovation and development in the field of product development, in particular for conference centres, conference hotels, event venues;
6. use appropriate methods to organize the implementation of plans, define tasks, manage and control processes;
7. demonstrate team management skills, including motivation and integration,
8. care for improving the competencies of the operational staff.

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