



# Youth Employability Study

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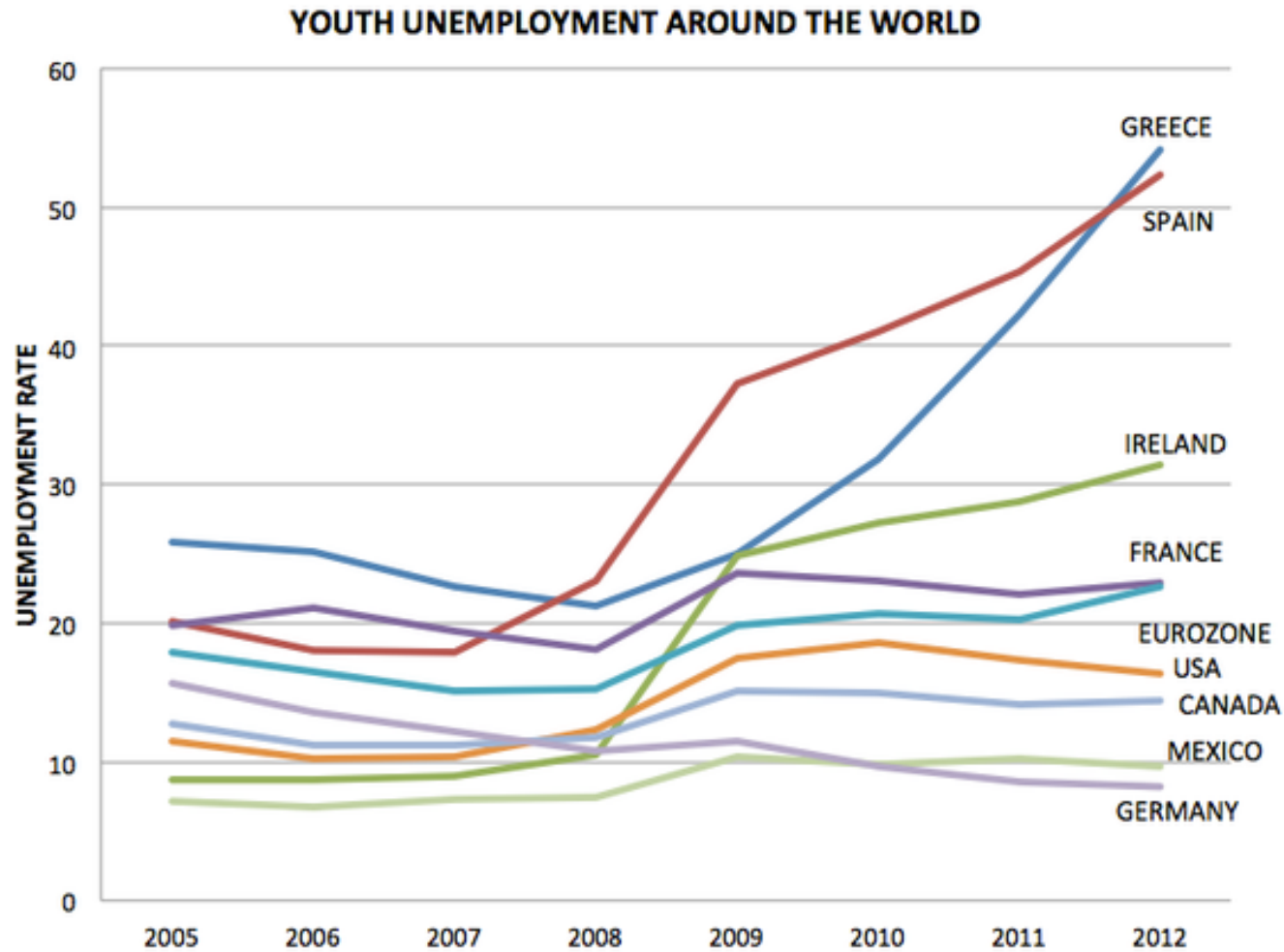
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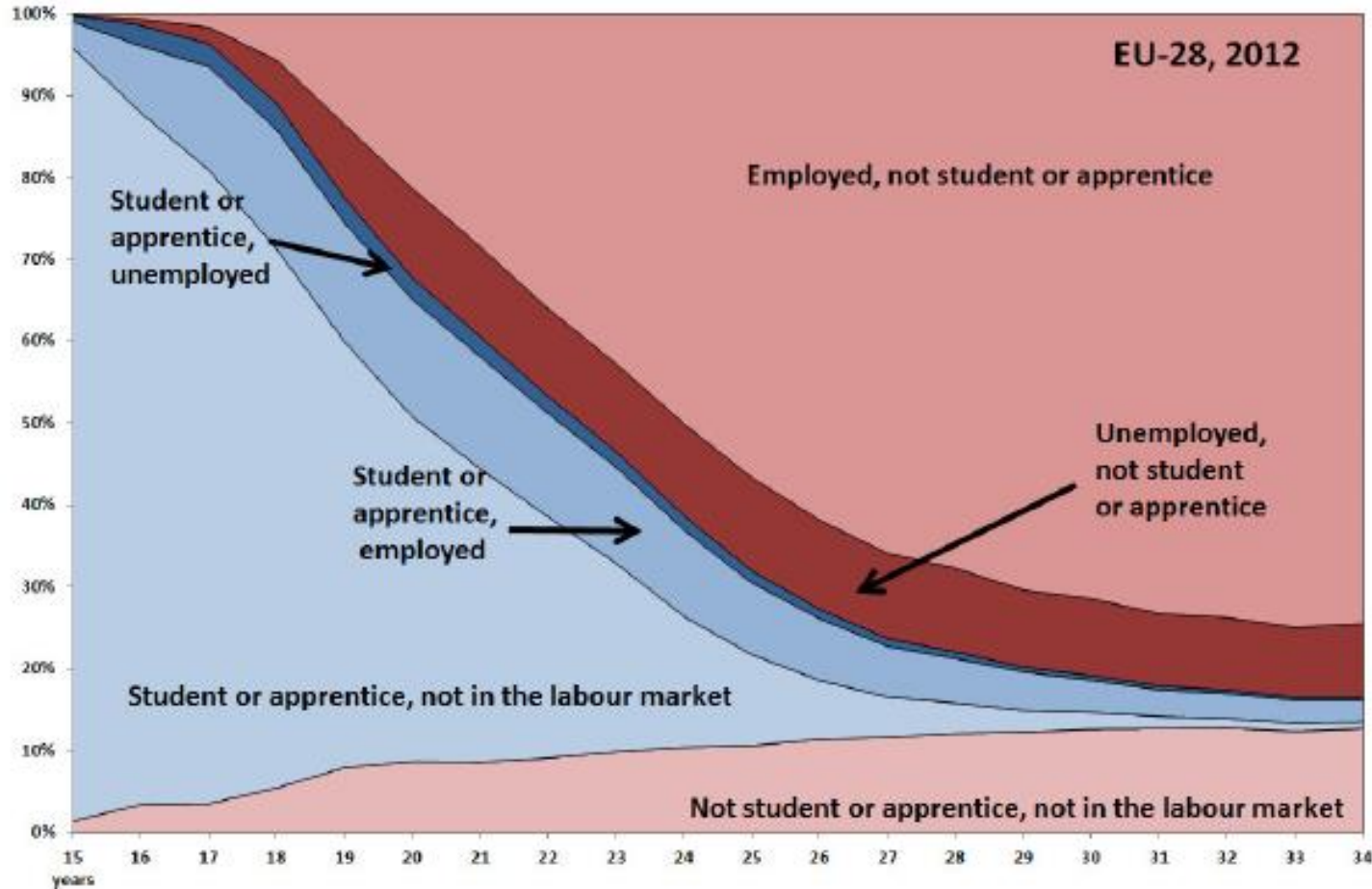
*Assistant Professor of Marketing,  
Academic Director of the MSc in Marketing*

*ALBA Graduate Business School  
at The American College of Greece*

# Study Motivation

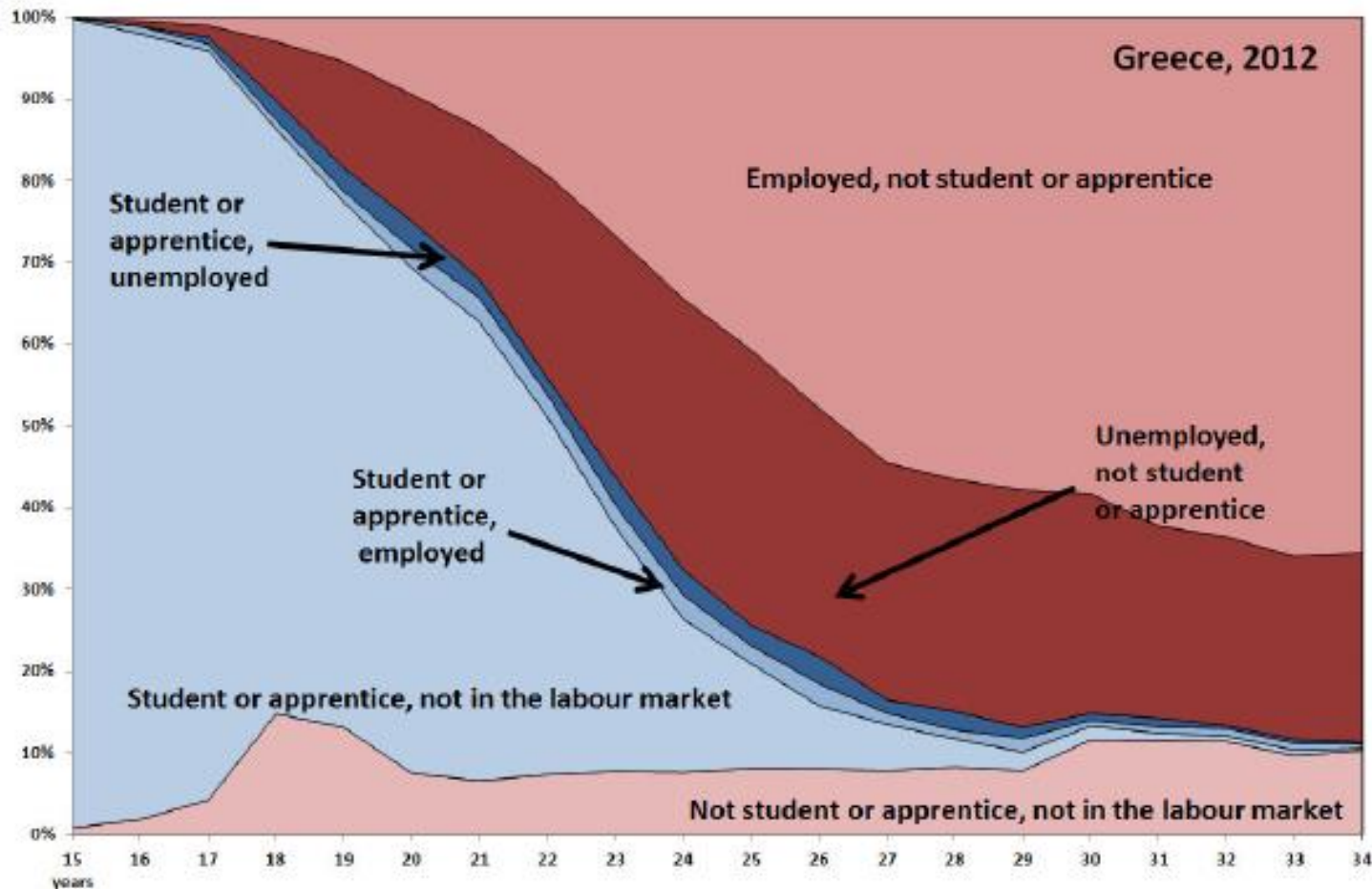


# Youth participation in labor market and education



Source: Eurostat 2013

# Youth participation in labor market and education



# Study Motivation



- To contribute to the dialogue on youth employability facilitators and obstacles in Greece.
- To provide multi-source empirical data from various stakeholders.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge on youth employability factors.
- To provide actionable knowledge and policy suggestions.

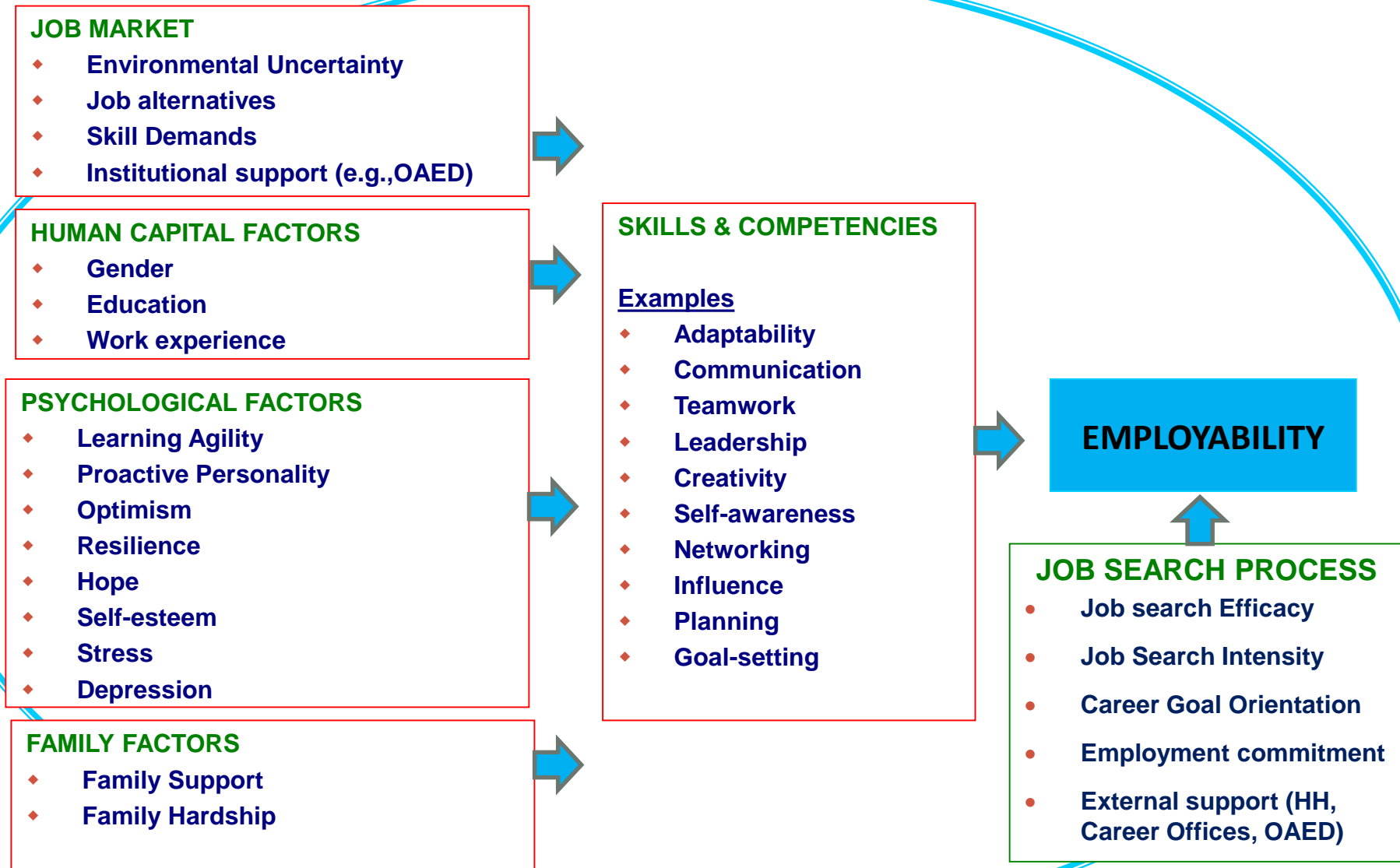
Our **target** group: Young graduates ( $\leq 29$  years)

# Employability Definition



- “The combination of factors which enables individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during career” (Cedefop, 2008).
- Complex notion but common ground:
  - The interaction product of two groups of factors:  
(a) individual differences and skills, and (b) job market factors.

# Research Model



# Research Strategy



## ***Multi-pronged: 3 sub-studies***

### ✓ Study 1: Qualitative Data Collection

- Focus groups & interviews with key stakeholders

### ✓ Study 2: Quantitative Data Collection

- Unemployed and employed young graduates' questionnaire

### ✓ Study 3: Quantitative Data Collection

- HR Managers' questionnaire



# Study 1: Qualitative data

- ✓ Conducted in January 2013
- ✓ 3 focus groups of 6-8 participants each
  - Institutional (e.g. INE GSEE, EVEA, etc.)
  - HR managers
  - Head hunters
- ✓ Personal interviews with University and College career offices (September - October 2013)

# Study 1: Qualitative data

- Central themes across focus groups:
  - Employability = flexibility, multitasking, broadband thinking, multicultural perspective.
  - To a large extent young graduates lack this kind of skills.
  - Undergraduate education needs to incorporate systematically the development of these skills through teamwork/experiential learning activities.
  - To a large extent employers lack the structures that will allow young graduates to enter efficiently their organizations.
  - The generations gap makes young graduates entrance to companies harder.

# Study 1: Qualitative data

- Central themes across interviews:
  - Employability = versatility, communication skills, realistic goal setting, creativity, entrepreneurial spirit
  - Young graduates lack this kind of skills.
  - Undergraduate and even secondary education needs to incorporate systematically the development of these skills.
  - Career offices across Universities and Colleges need to cooperate and to each other and become the bridge between educational institutions and industries.

# Study 2: Main Survey



- ✓ Conducted in April – June 2013
- ✓ Advertised by Kariera.gr and other media platforms (e.g., social media, interviews in newspapers).
- ✓ Scholarships by ALBA and Kariera as an incentive to participate.
- ✓ 1387 participants in total.
- ✓ 42% unemployed.

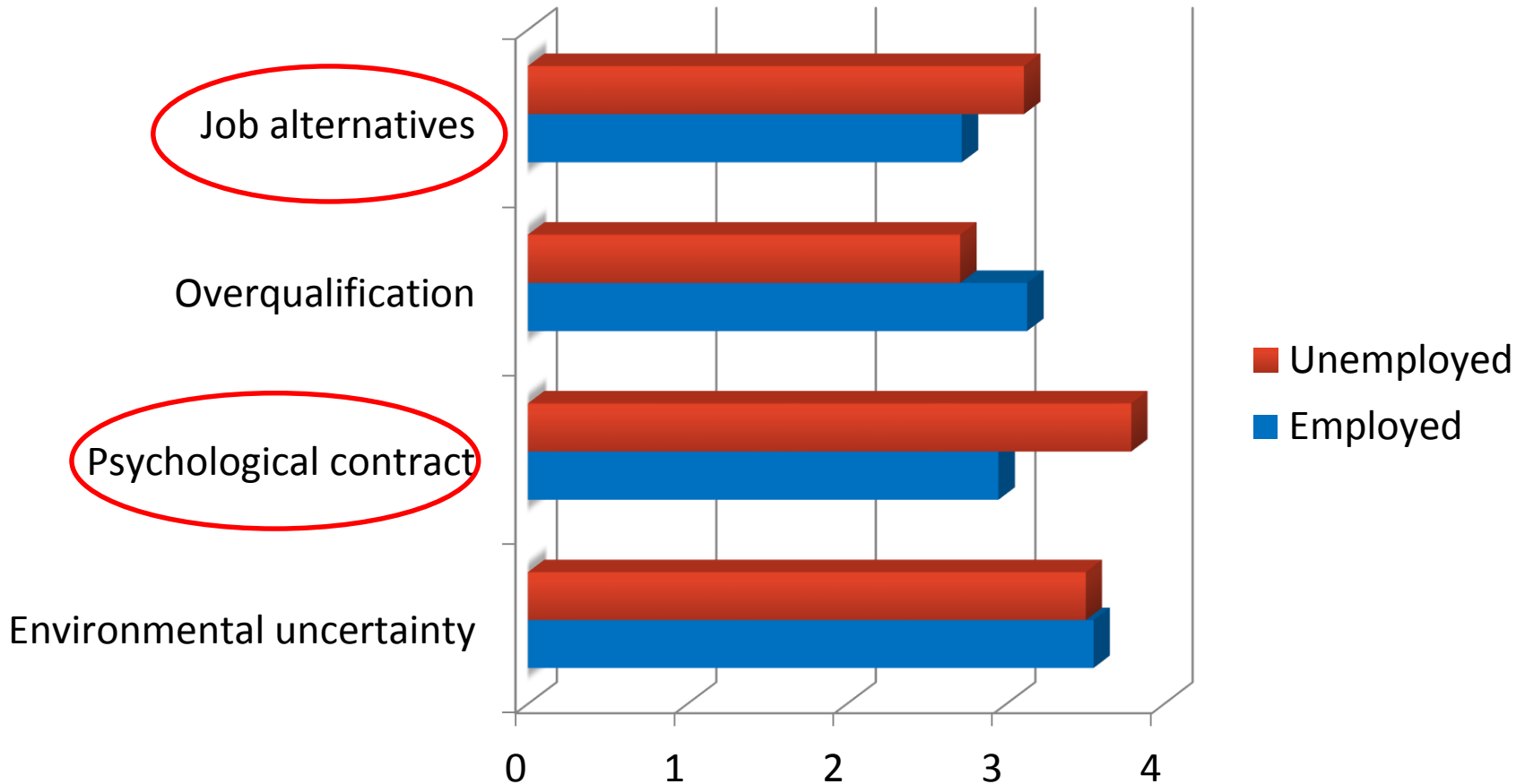


	Unemployed	Employed
Youth ( $\leq 29$ )	67%	33%
Women	51%	44.2%
Bachelors Degree	65%	43%
Work experience	2 years	8 years



# Job market & Employer-related Perceptions

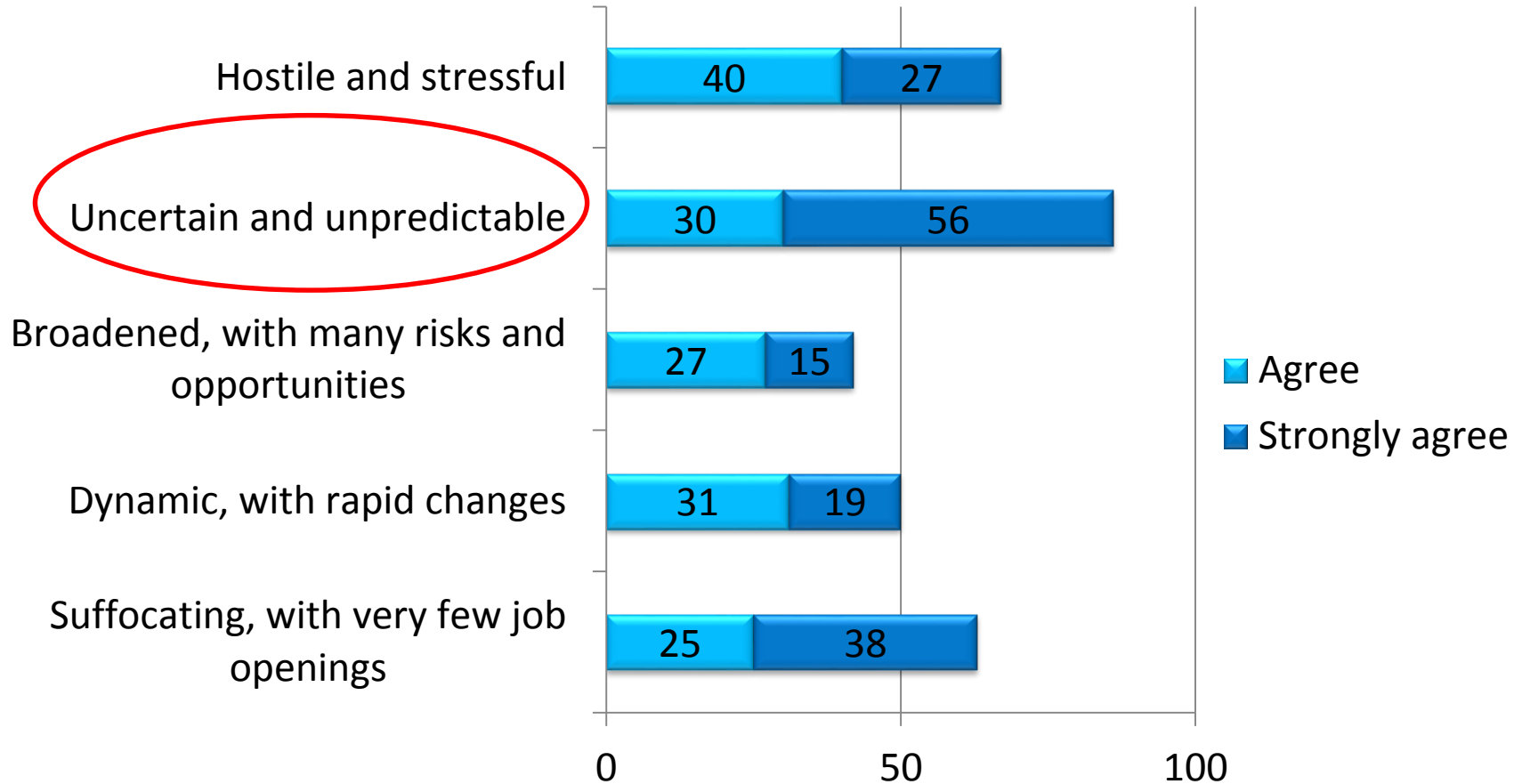
# Market- and employer-related perceptions ( $\leq 29$ )



# Psychological contract expectations ( $\leq 29$ )

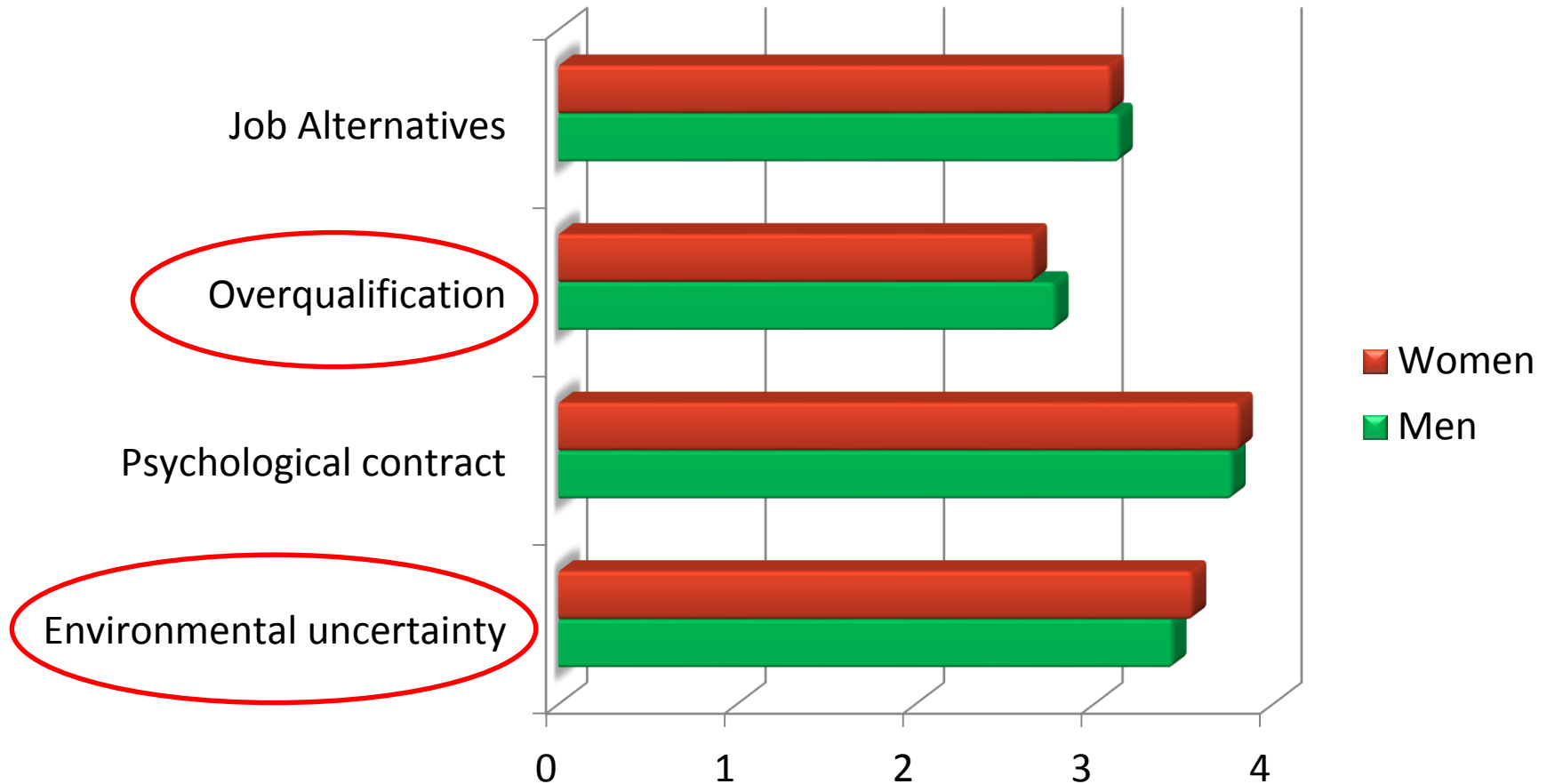


# Perceptions of the labor environment ( $\leq 29$ )

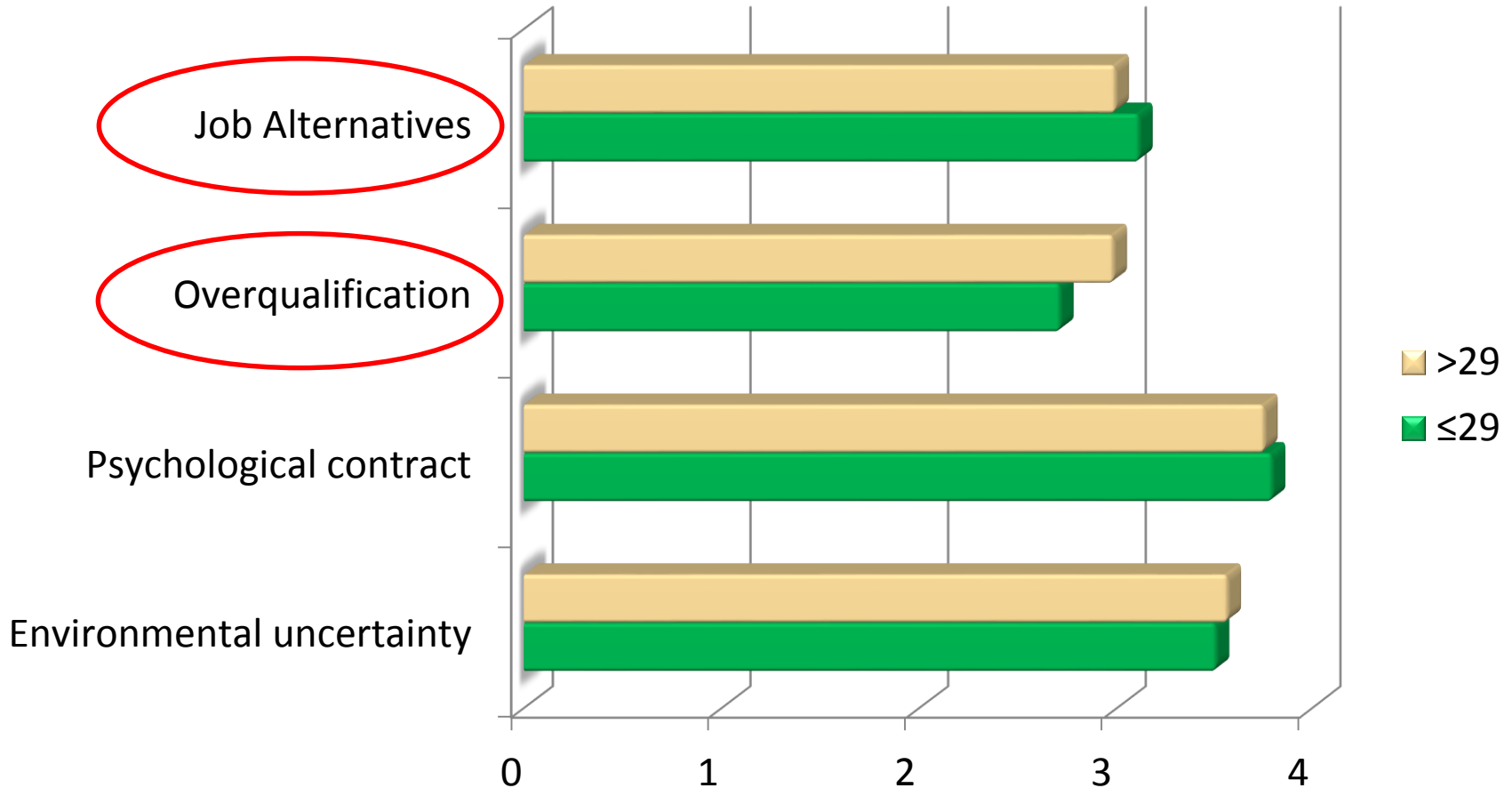




# Market- and employer-related perceptions ( $\leq 29$ )



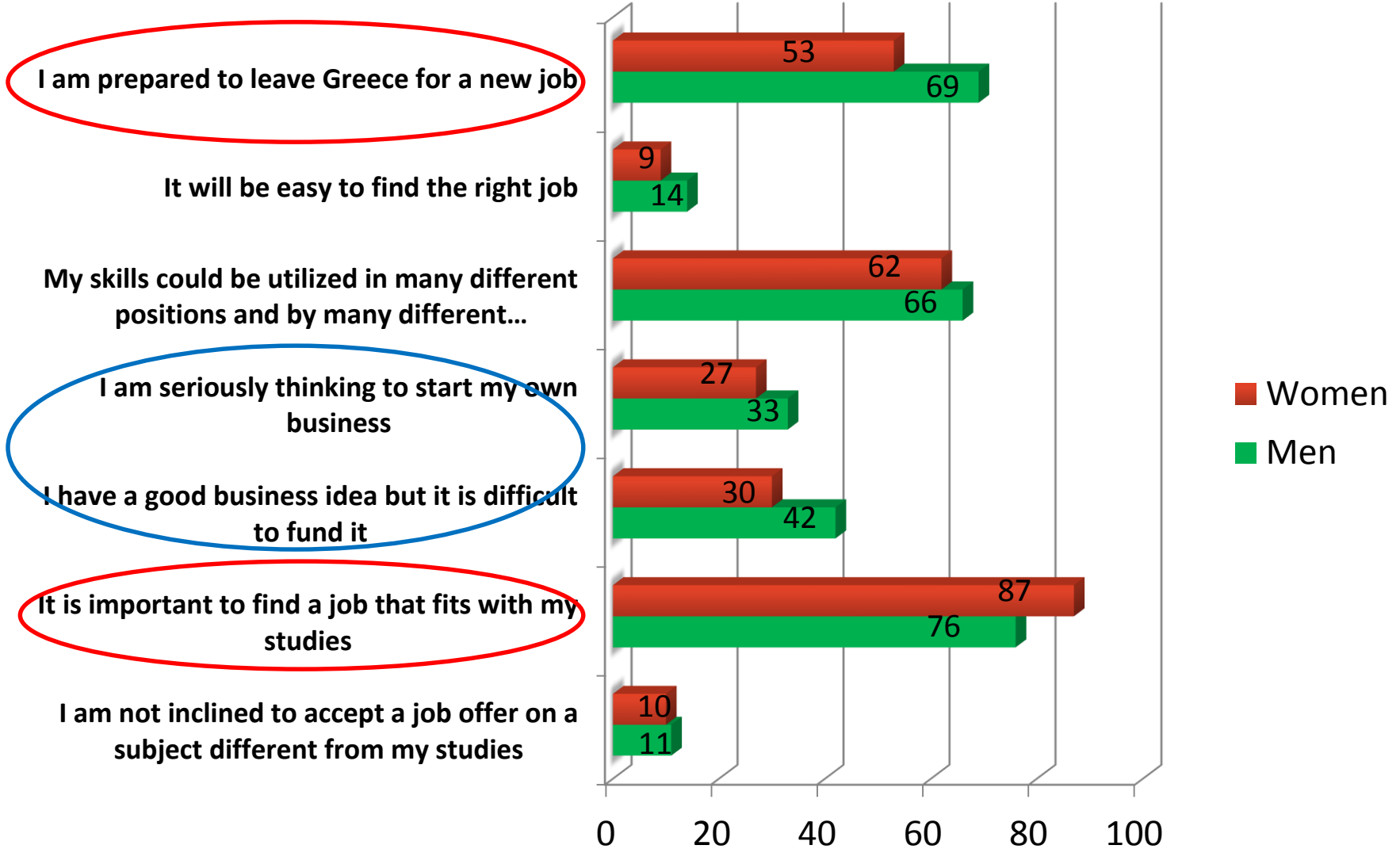
# Market- and employer-related perceptions (Unemployed)



# Job Alternatives & Fit (Unemployed)



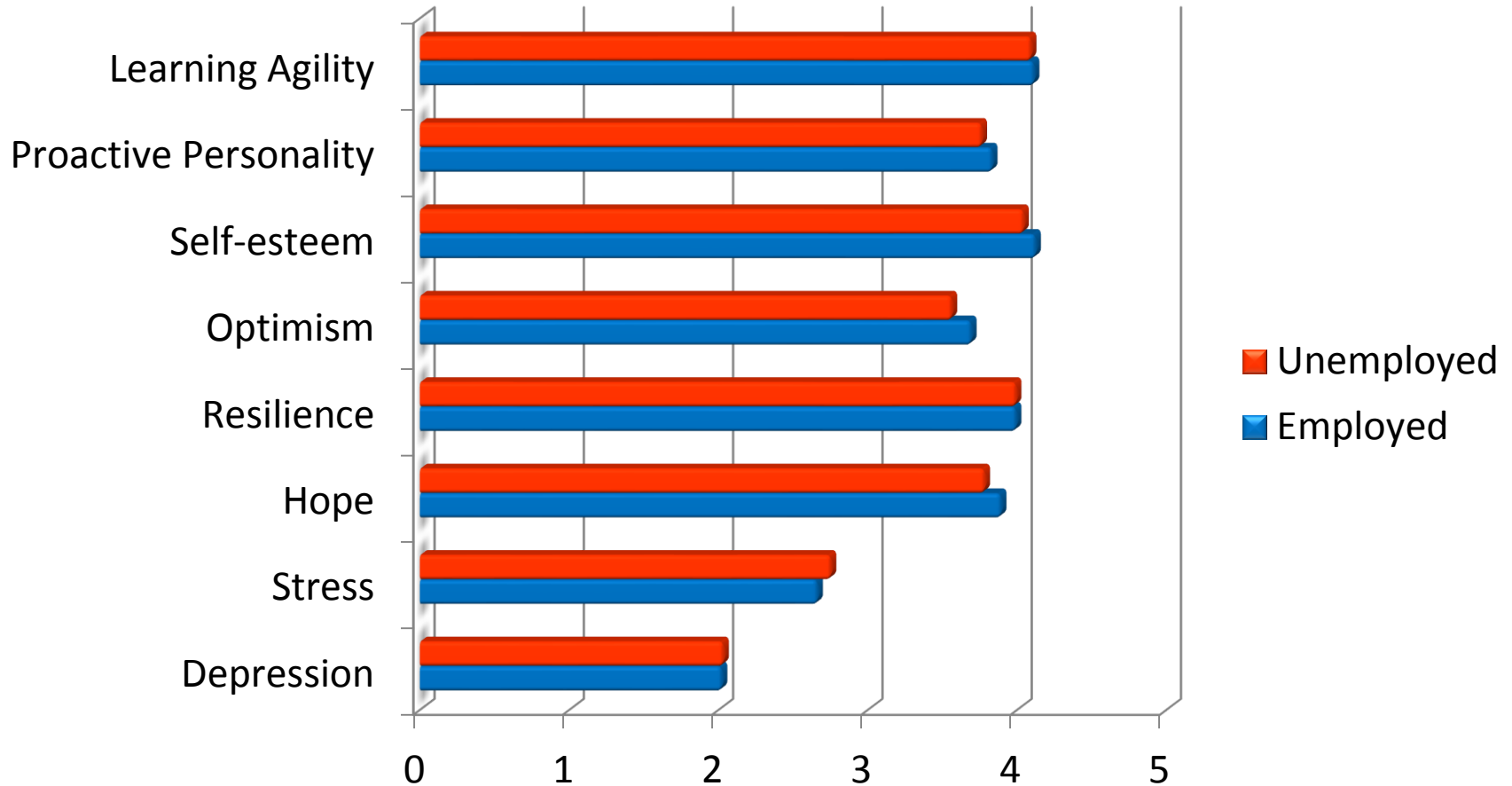
# Job Alternatives & Fit ( $\leq 29$ & Unemployed)



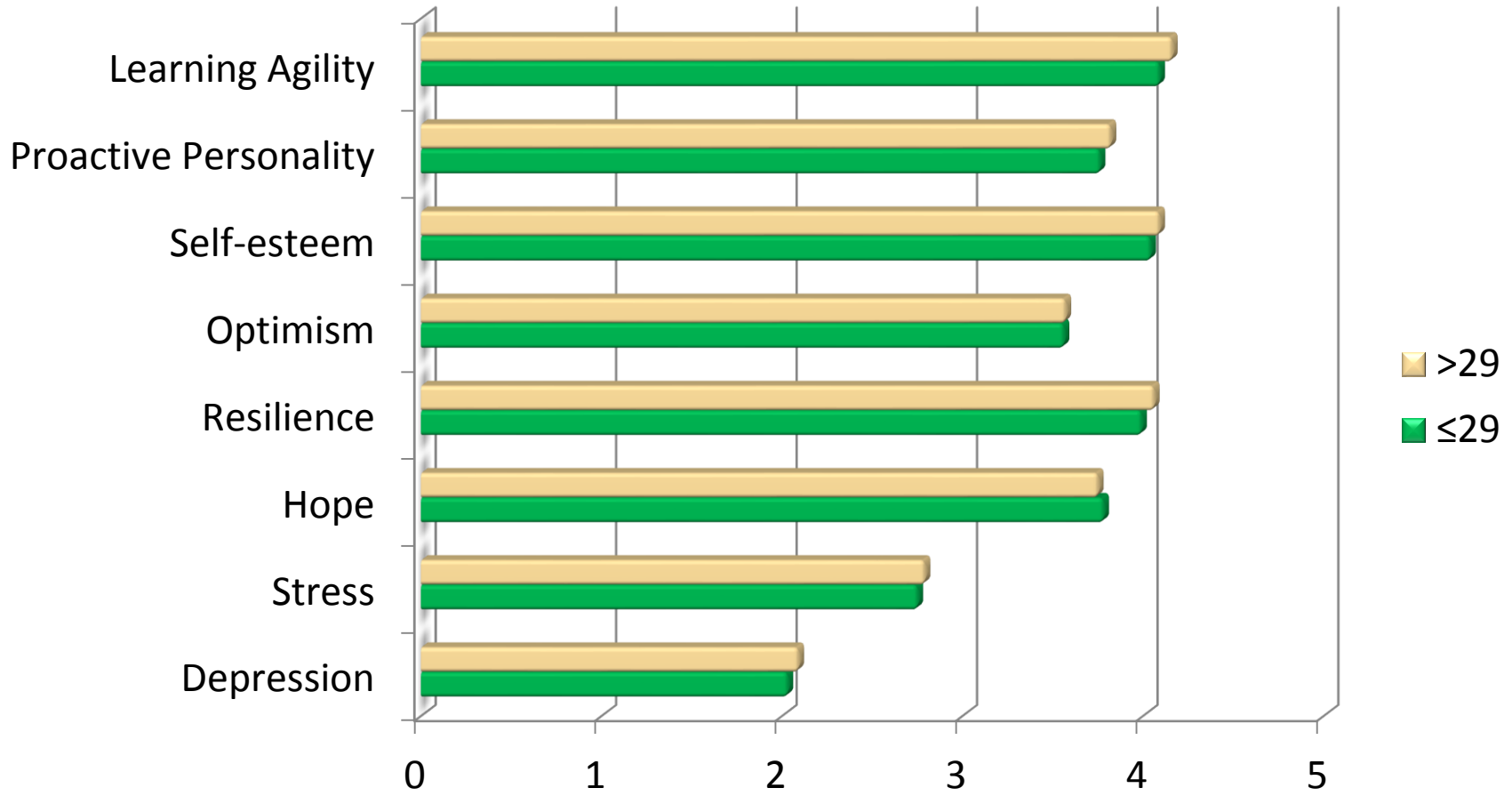


# Psychological Factors

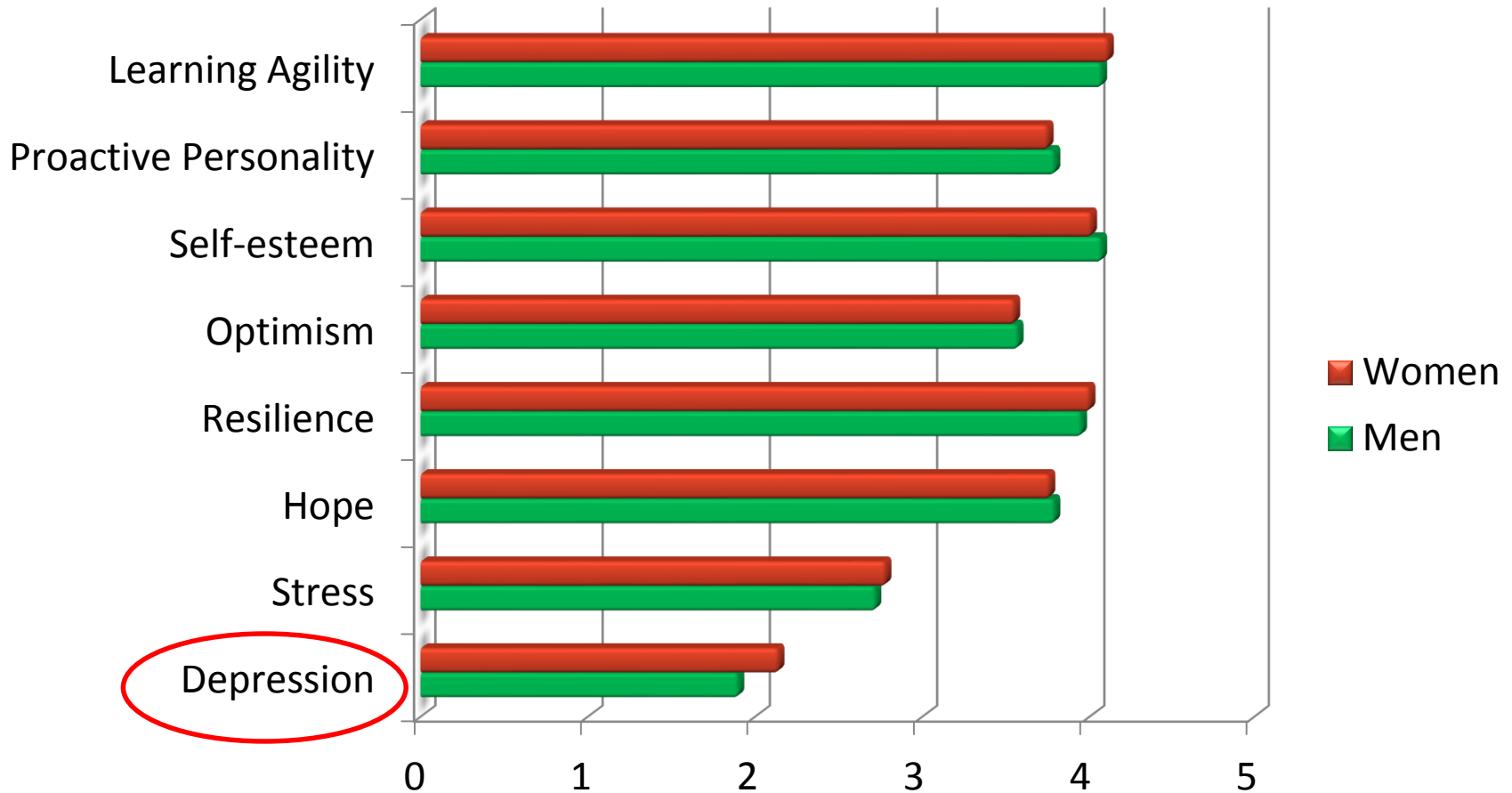
# Psychological Factors



# Psychological Factors (Unemployed)



# Psychological Factors ( $\leq 29$ & Unemployed)

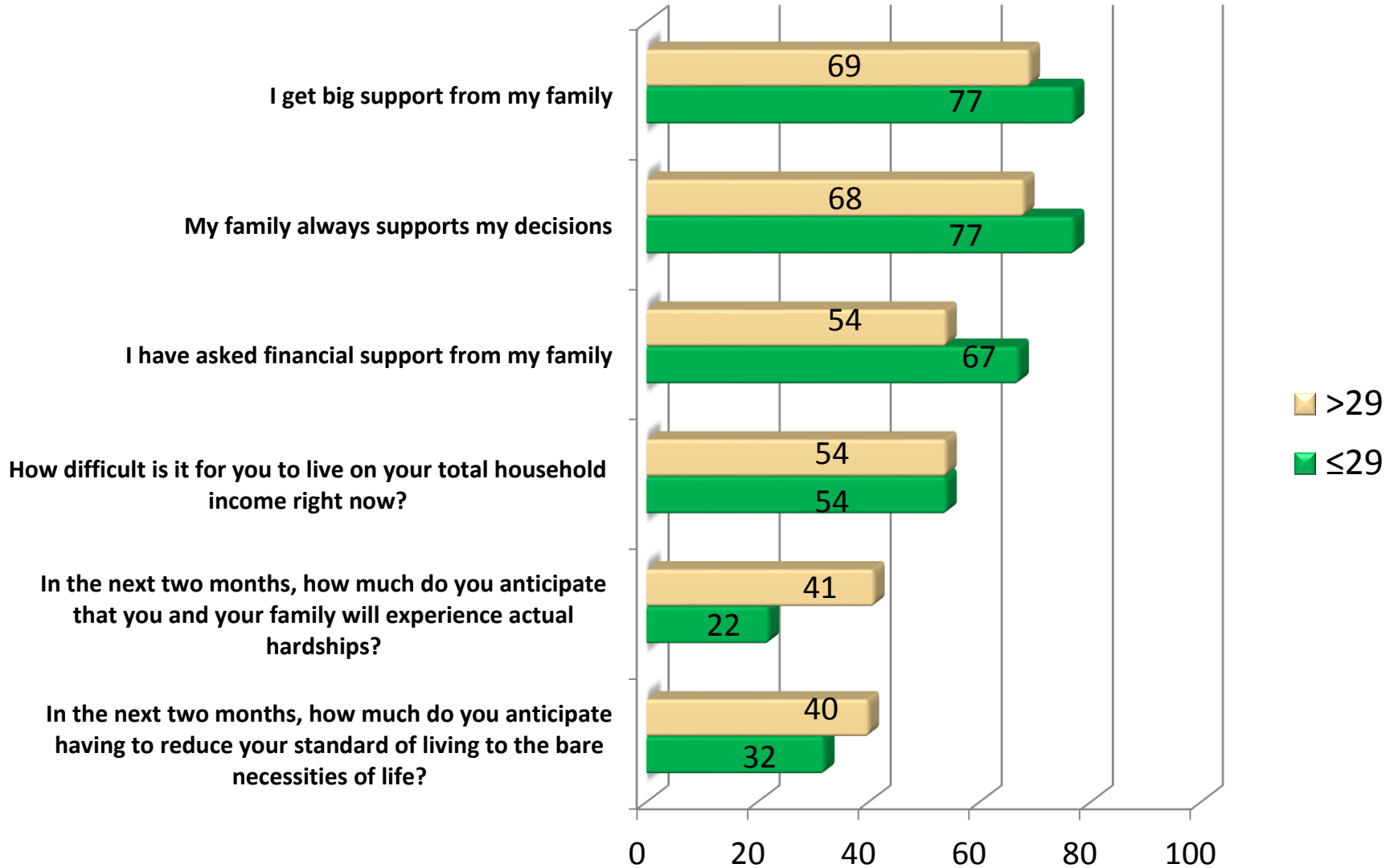






# Family Factors

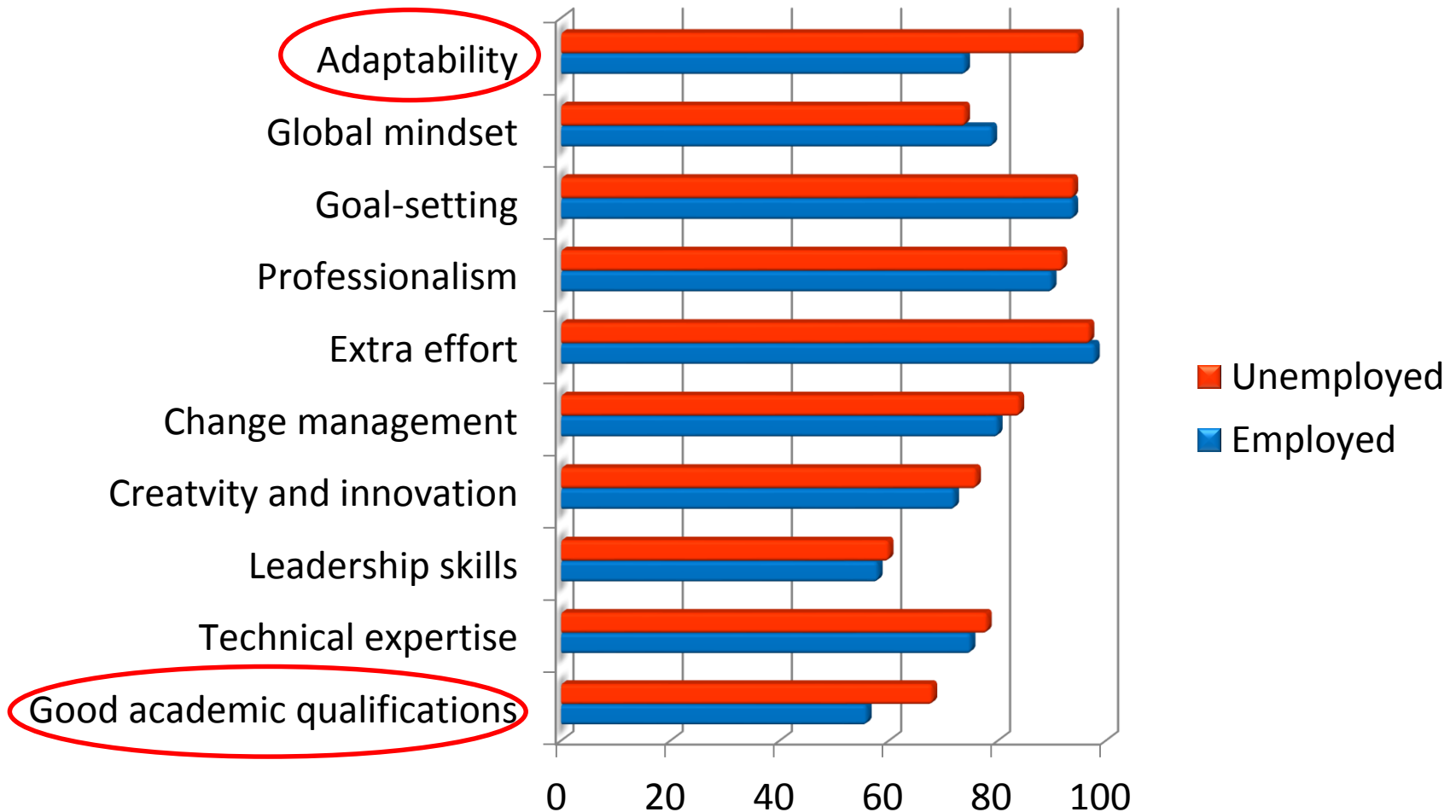
# Family Support & Hardship



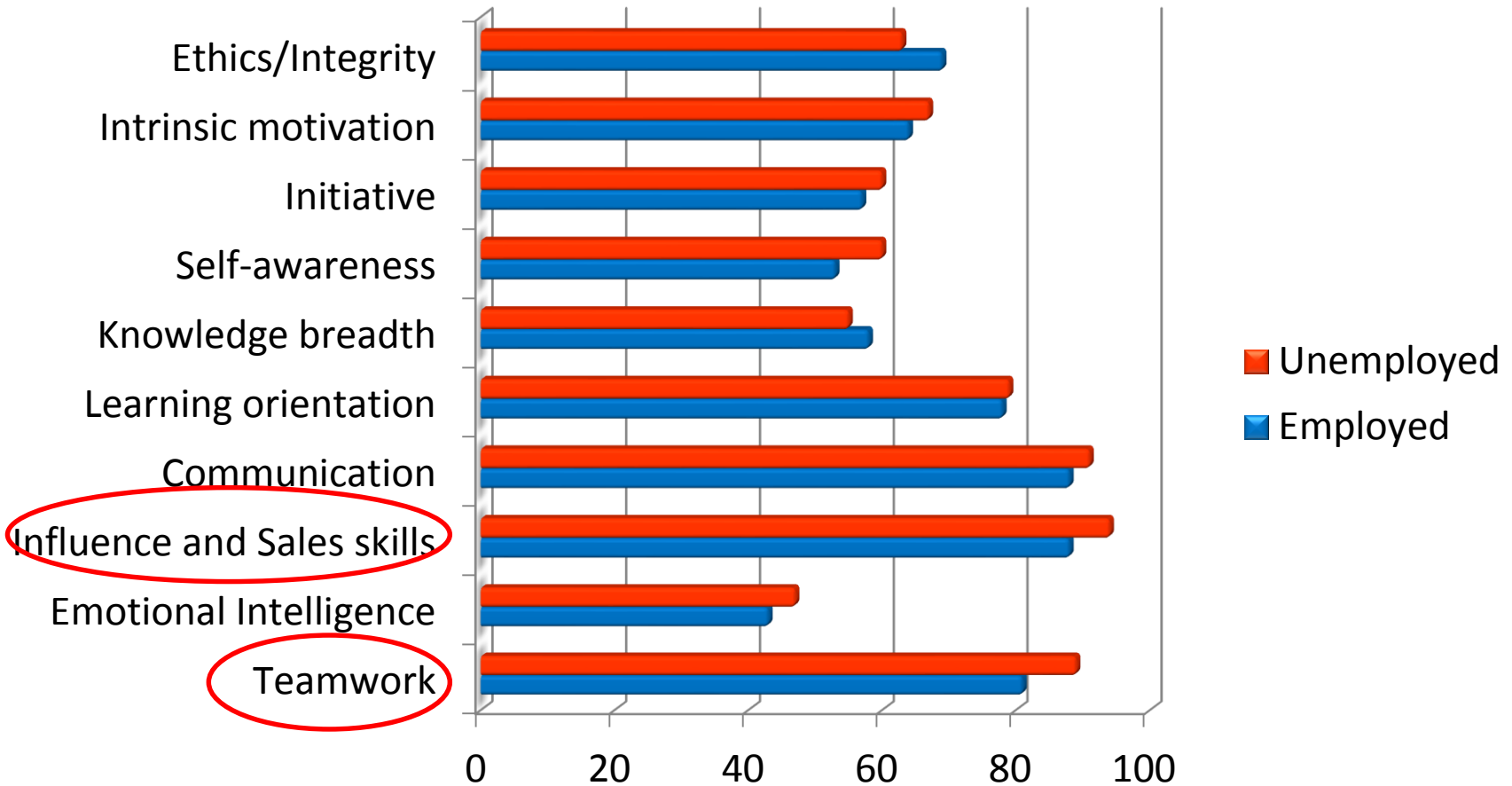


# Skills and Competencies

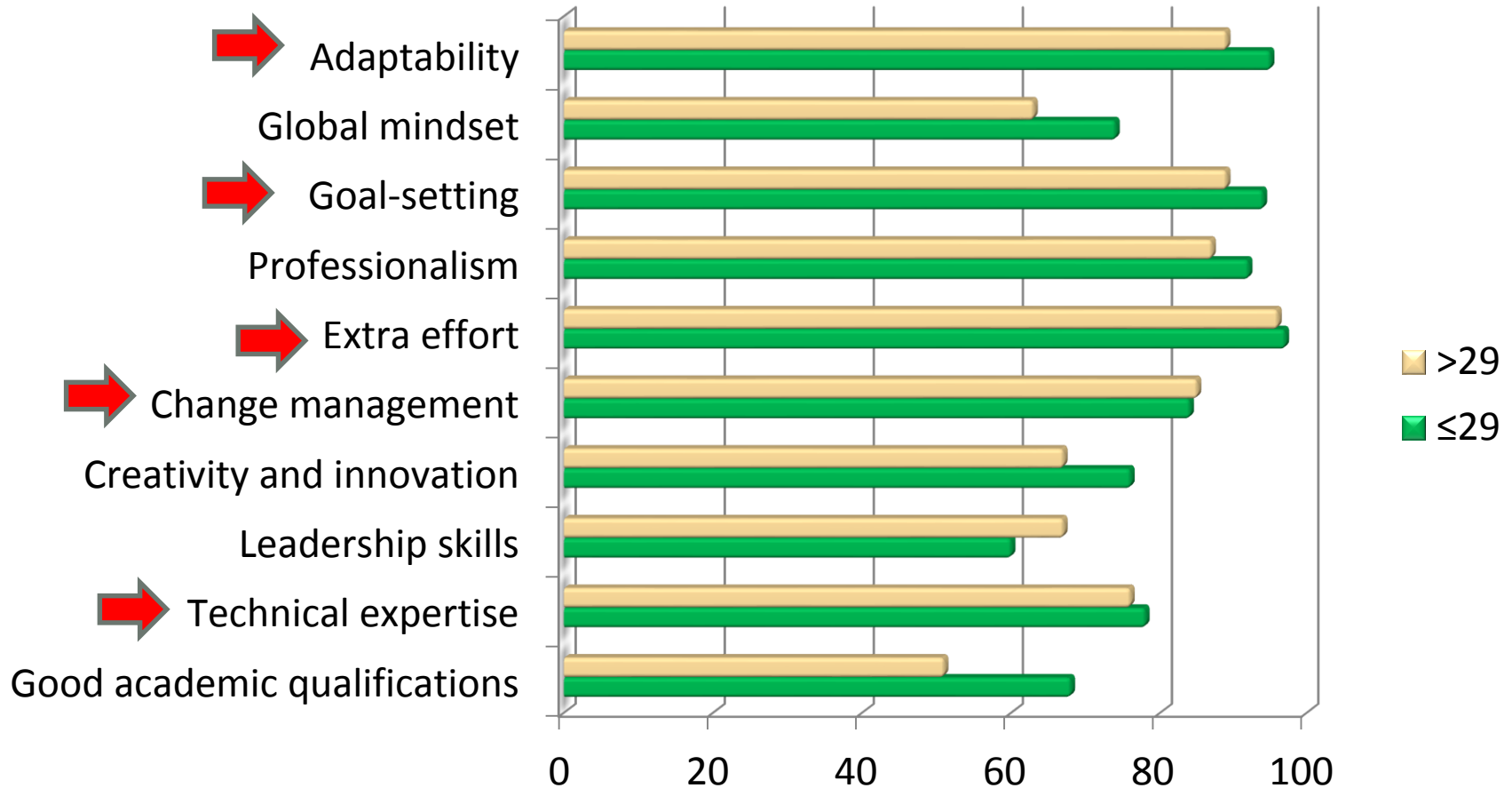
# Competencies that companies want (≤29)



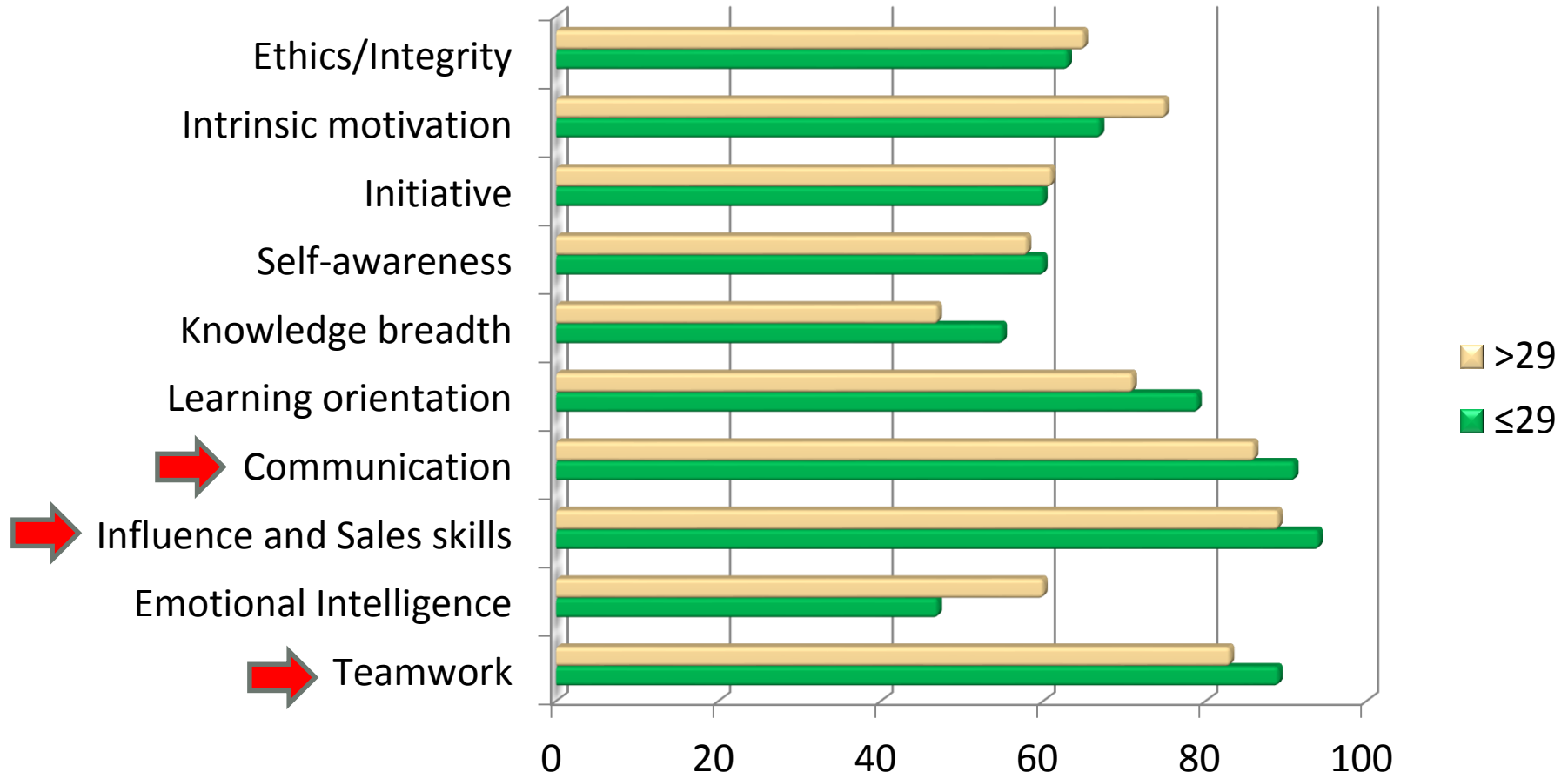
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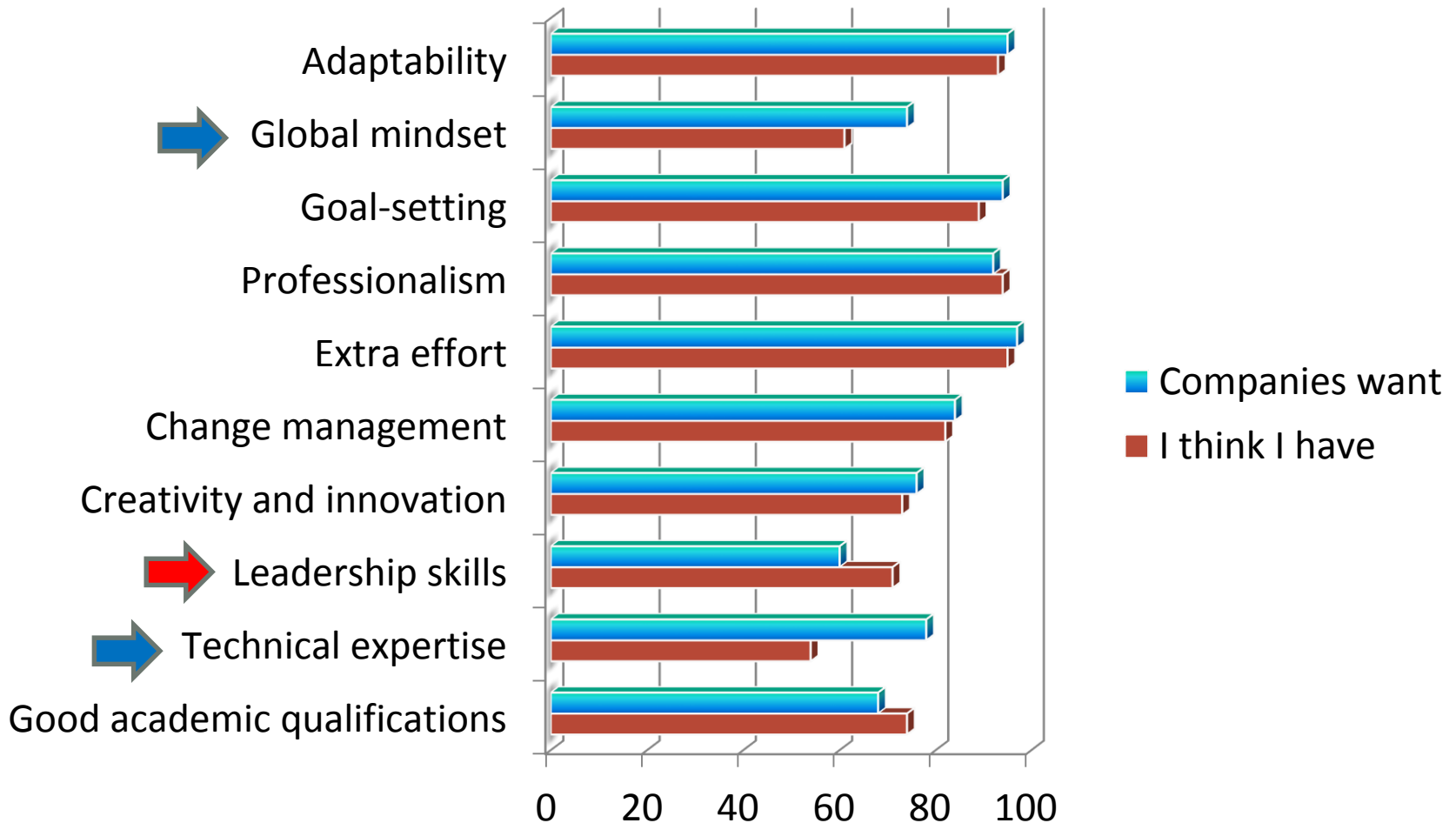
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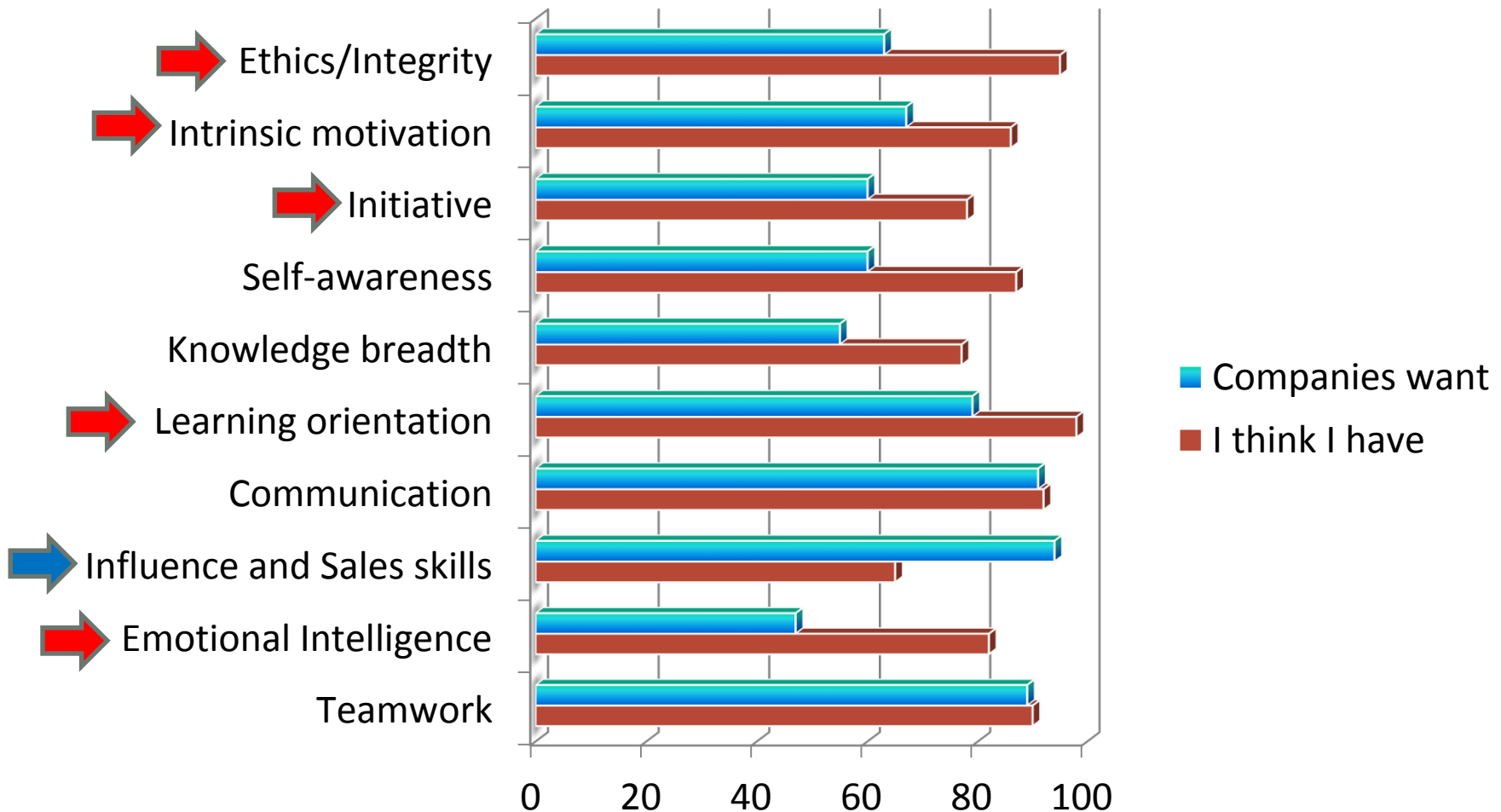


# Perceptions of company expectations and personal competencies ( $\leq 29$ )





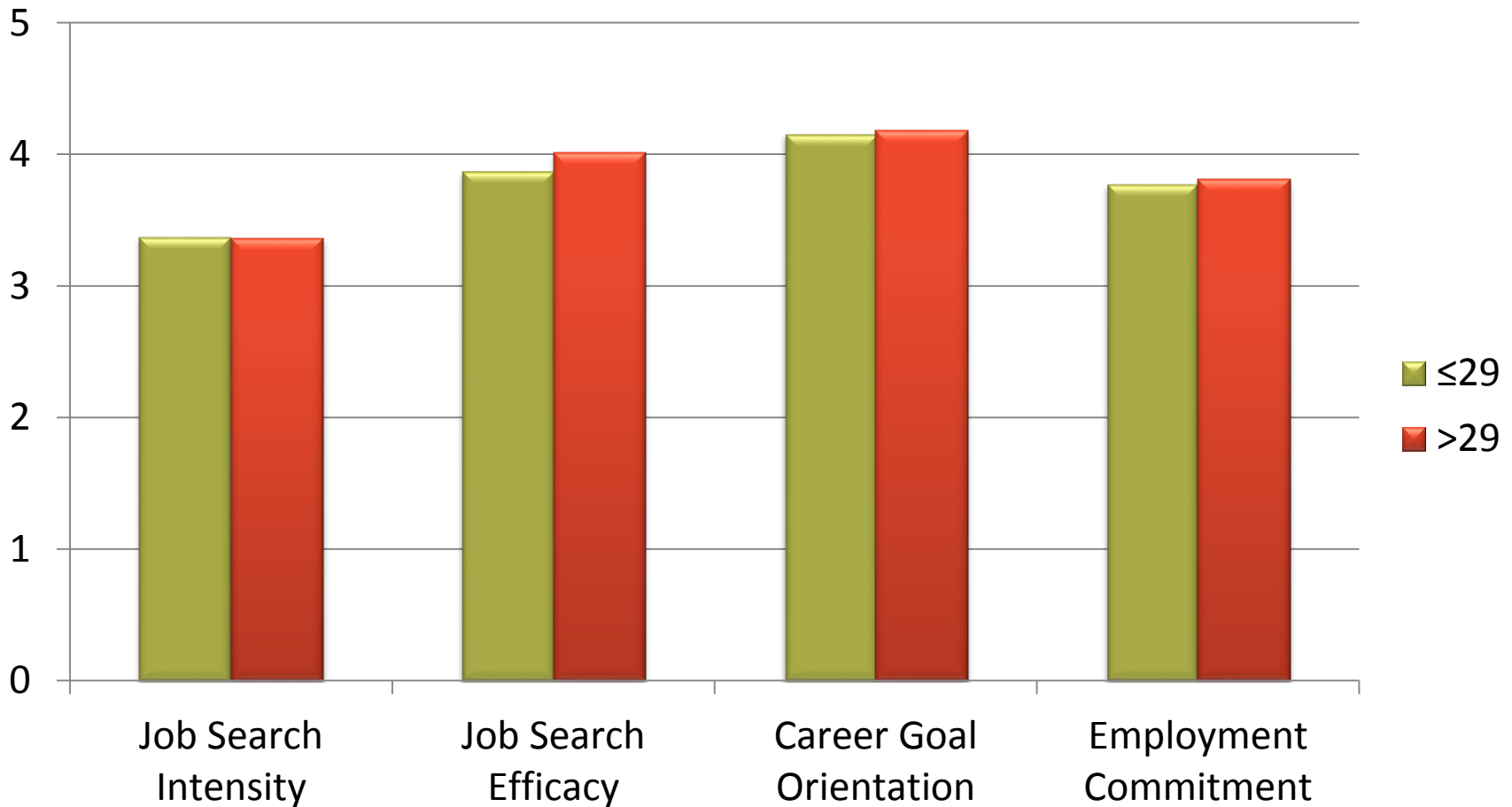
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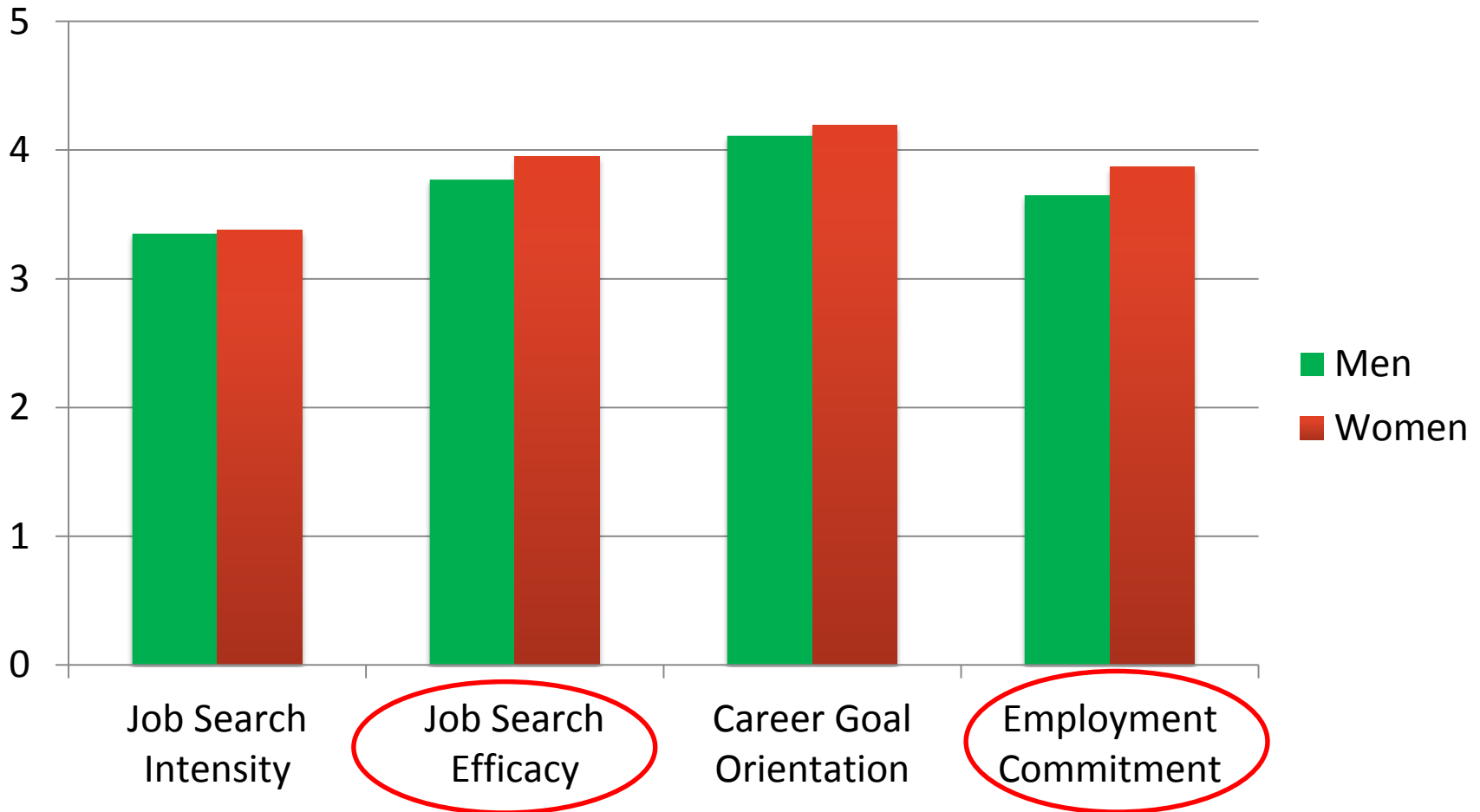


# Job Search Process

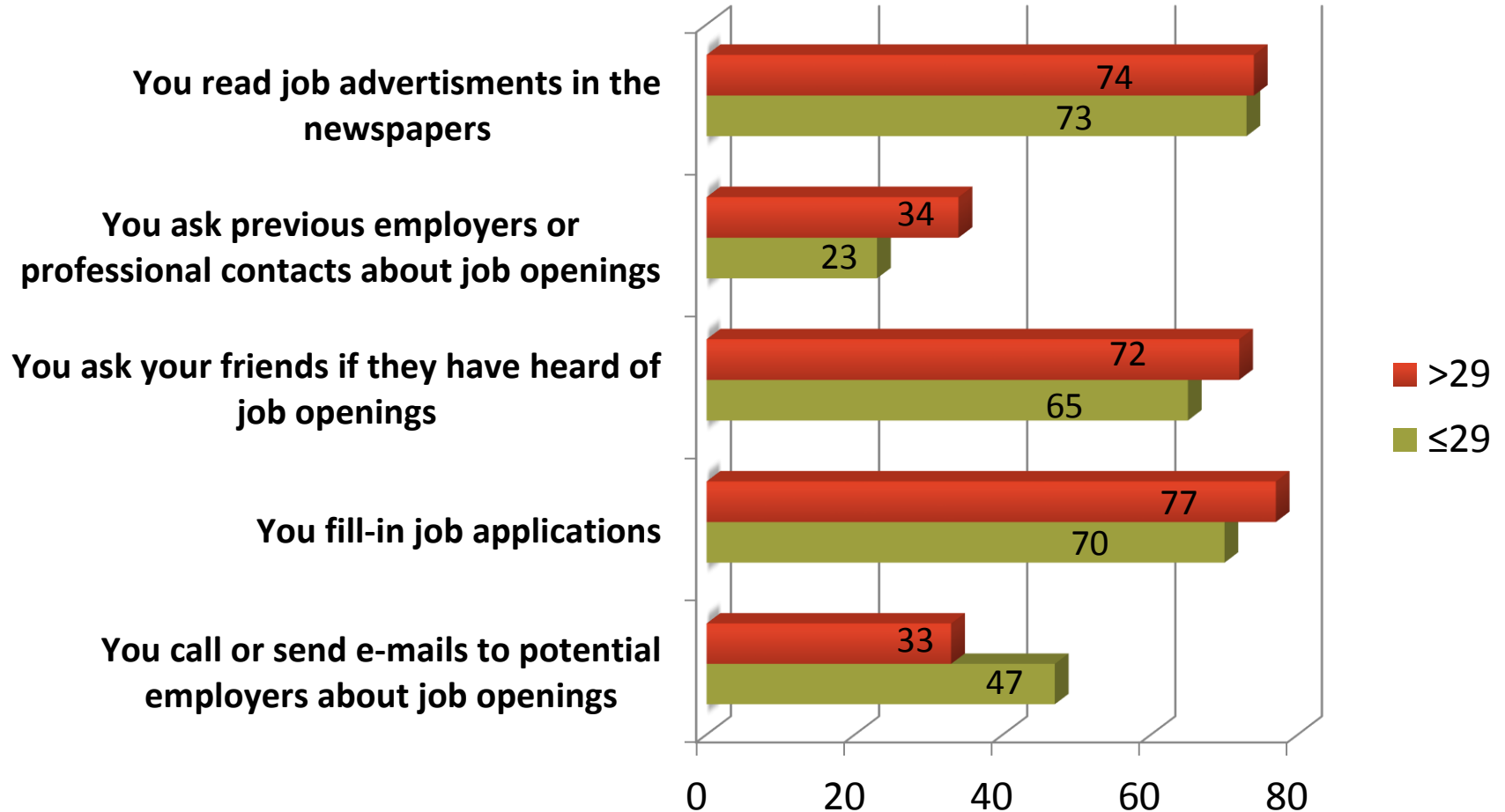
# Job Search (Unemployed)



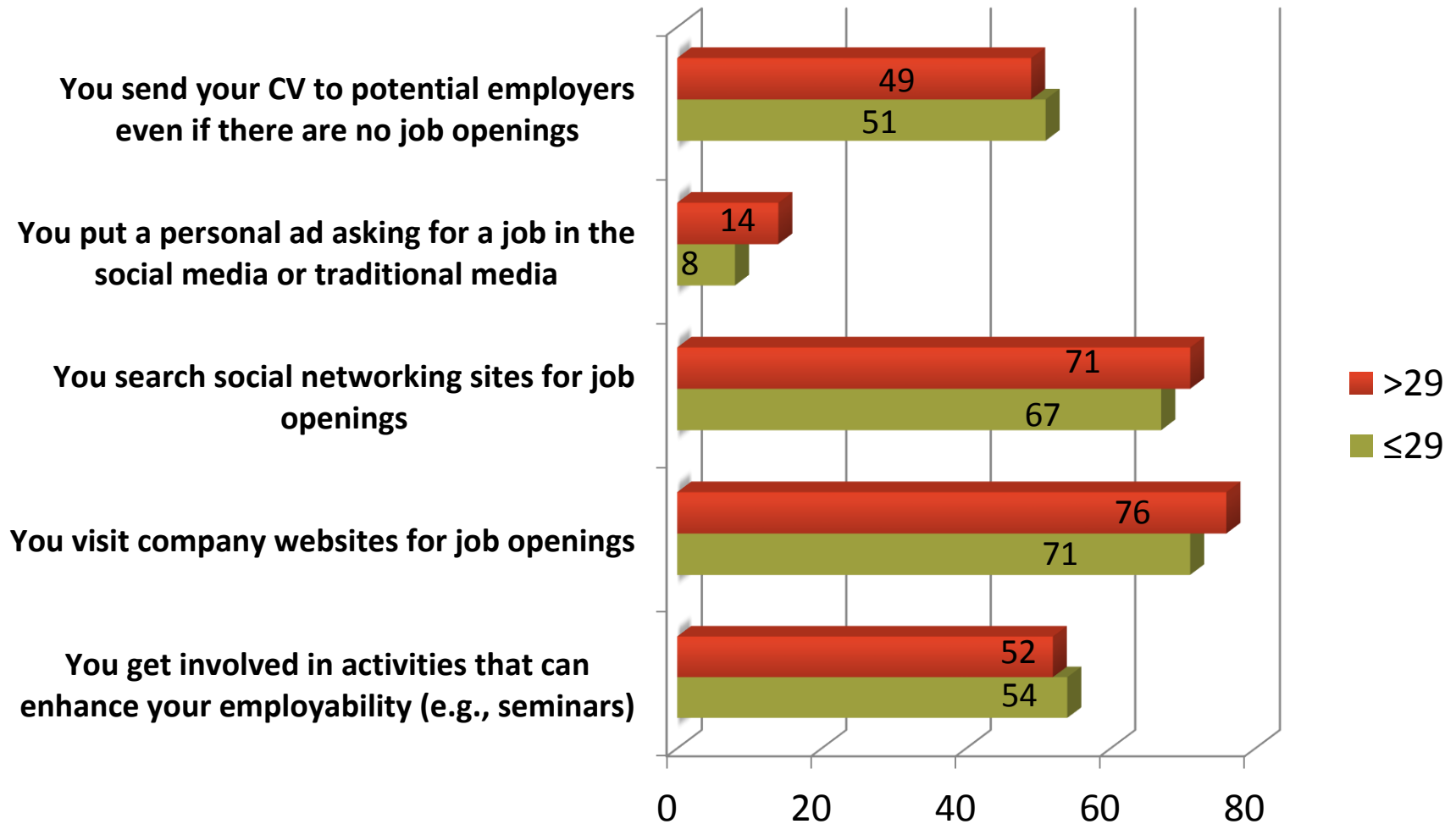
# Job Search ( $\leq 29$ & Unemployed)



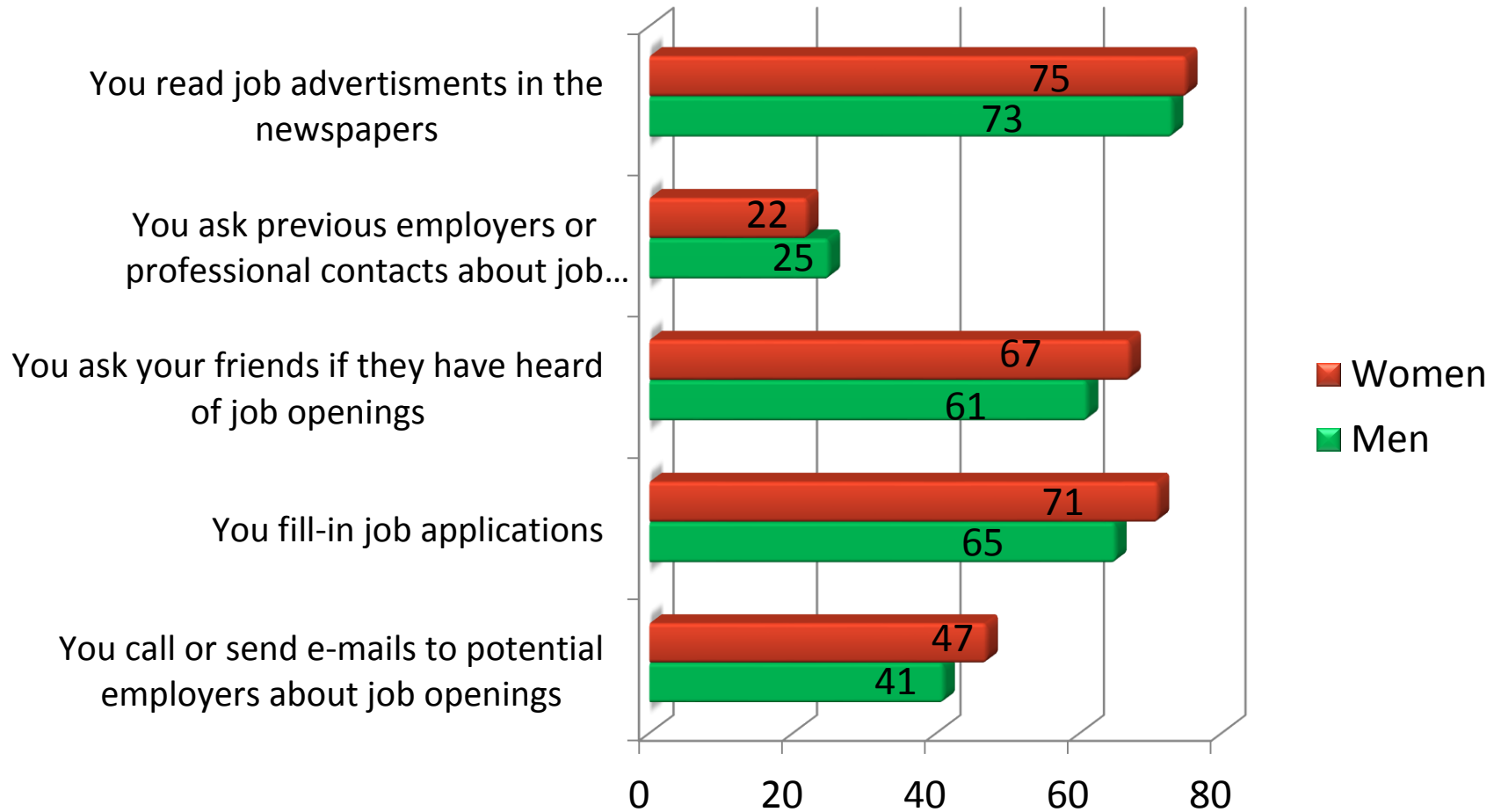
# Job Search Behaviors



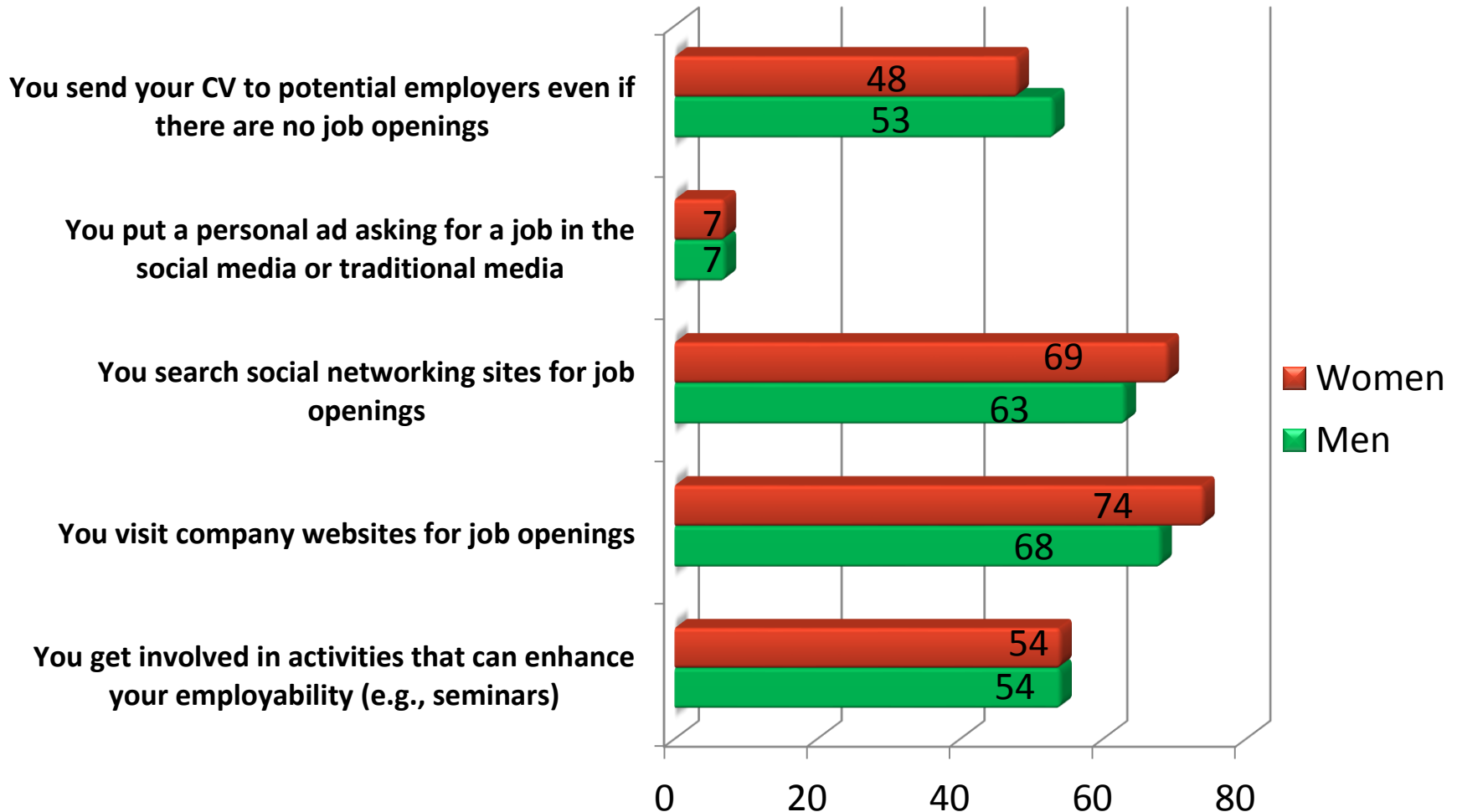
# Job Search Behaviors



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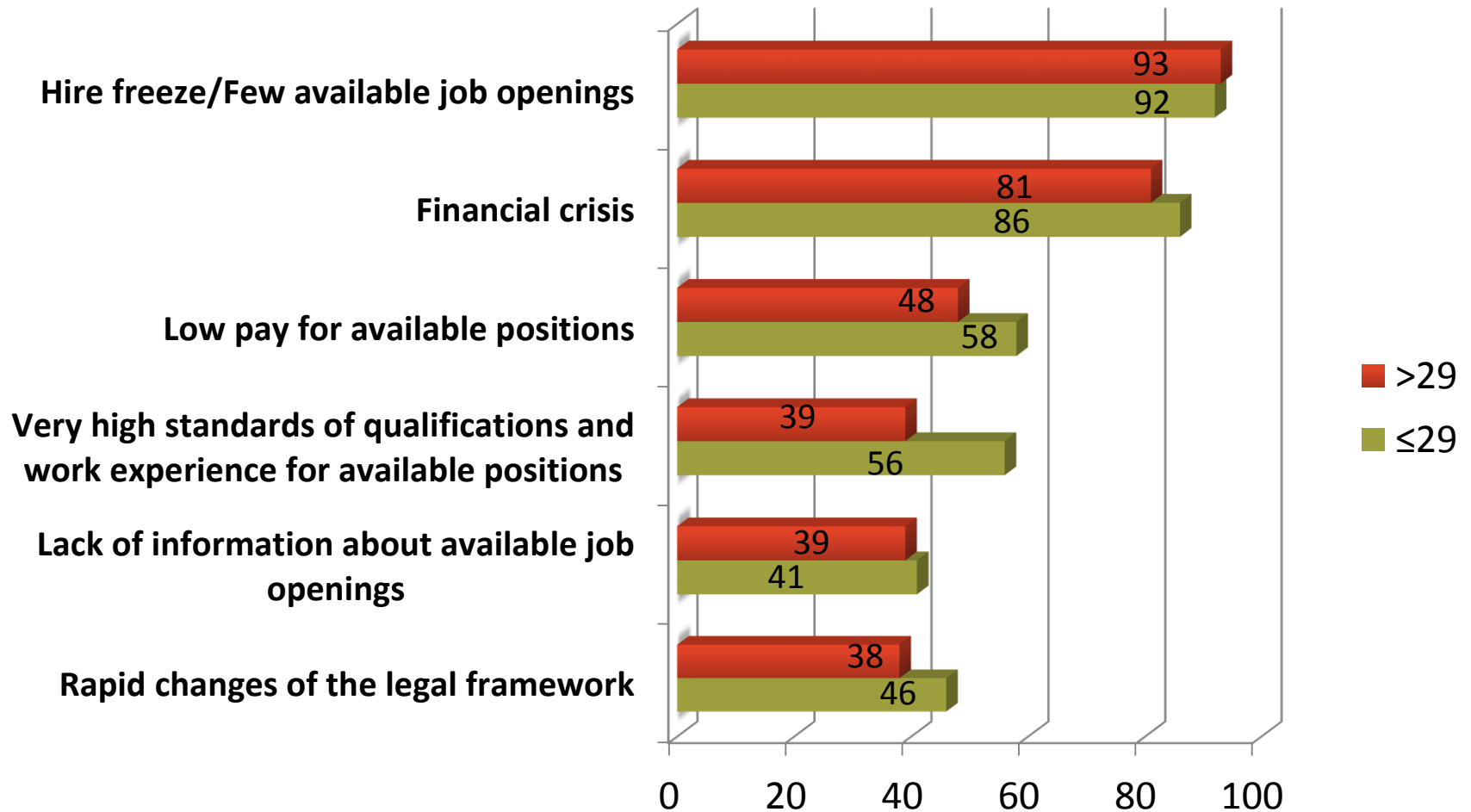
# Use of Career Services



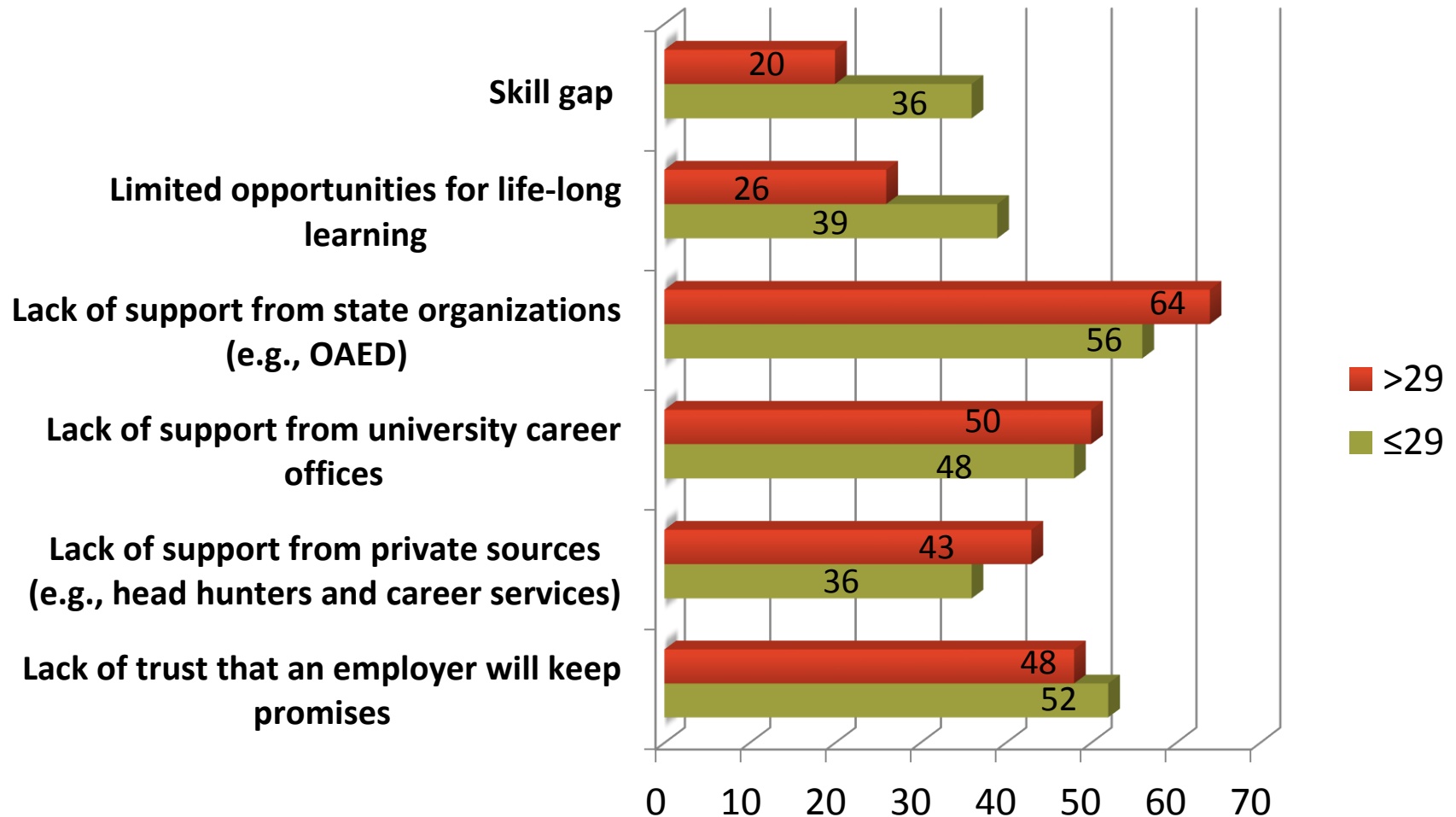
	Use	Effectiveness
Headhunters	6%	10%
University Career Office	39%	15%
OAED	51%	6%
Voucher Program	48%	30%
Internships	66%	53%

**Per month:** On average, 20 applications submitted and 1 interview conducted

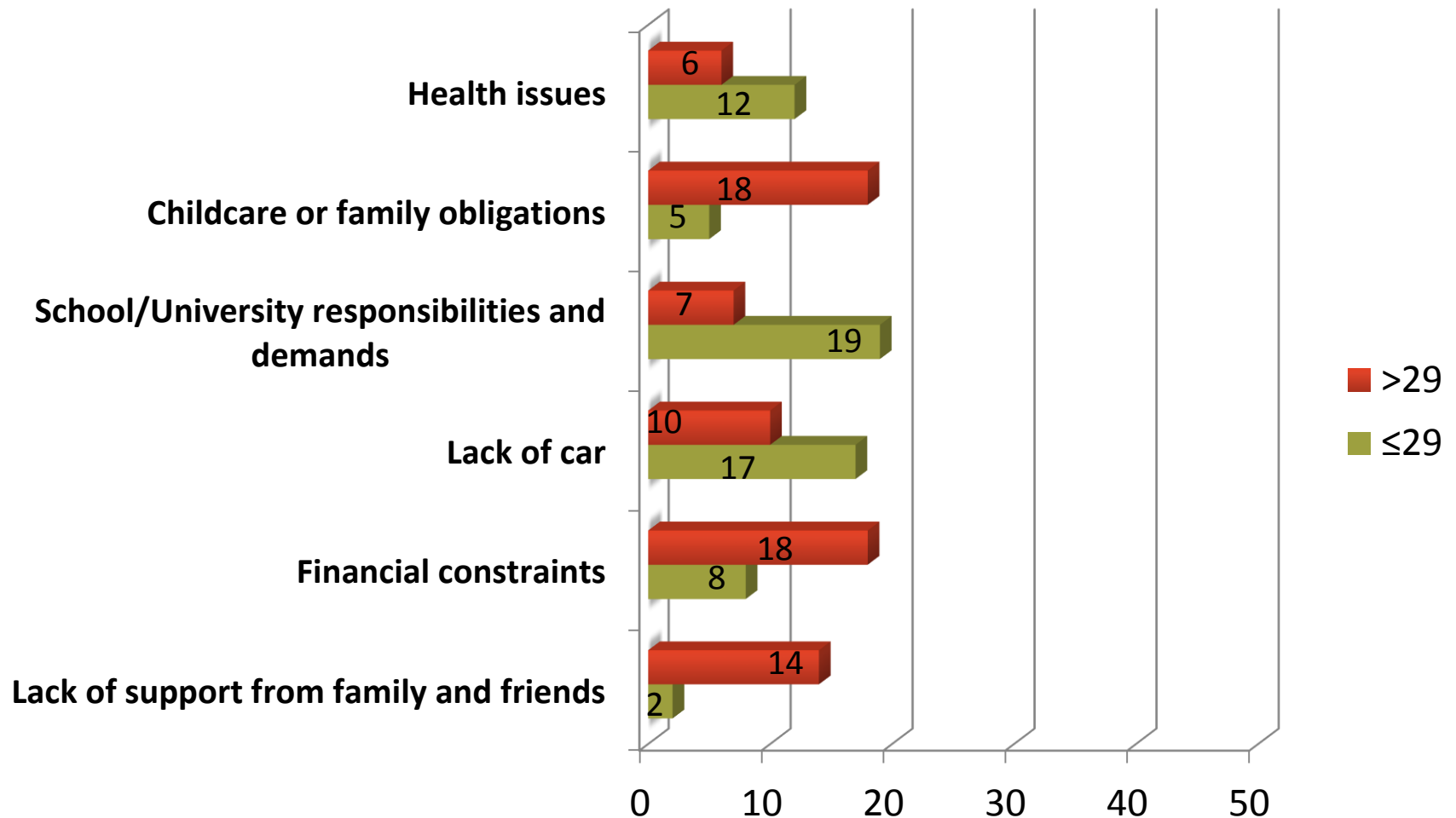
# Major obstacles



# Major obstacles



# Personal obstacles





# Employability Perceptions

# Employability perceptions (Unemployed)

Overall employability

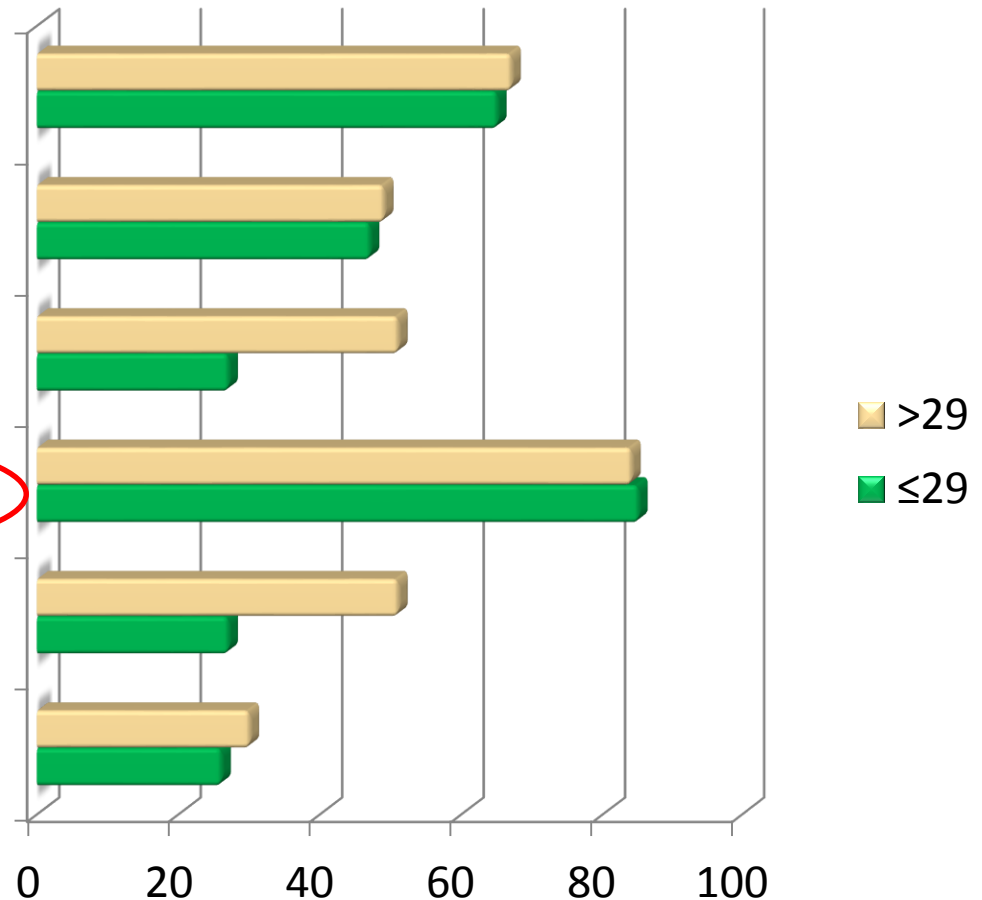
I have good prospects in the job market because of my qualifications

People with similar work experience to mine have high value in the job market

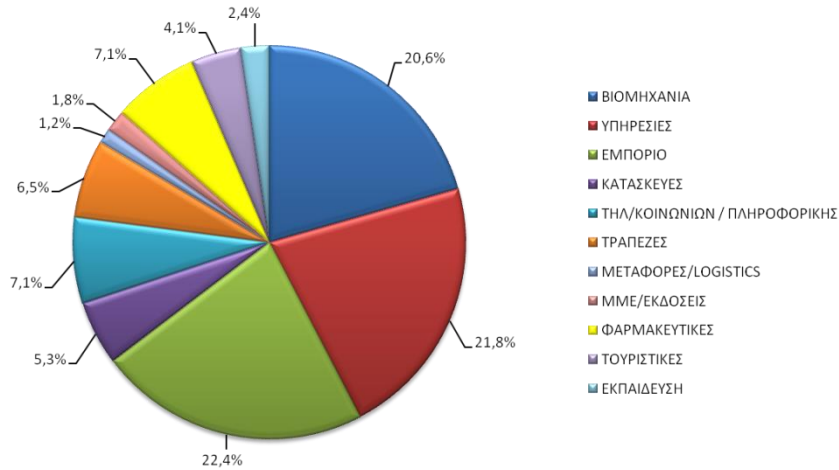
People with similar functional expertise to mine have high value in the job market

I can use my professional networks to promote my career

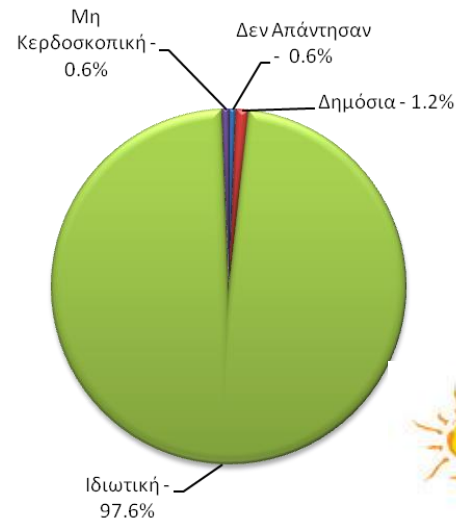
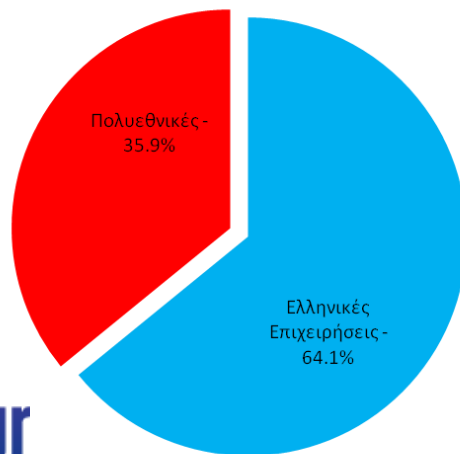
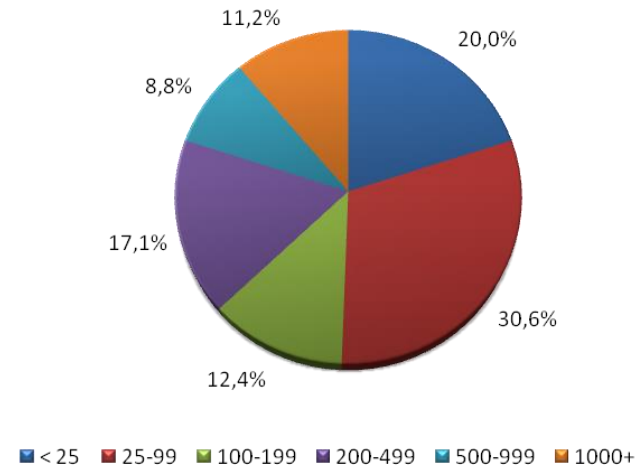
I believe I have a competitive advantage in this job market



# Study 3: HR Survey



170 responses

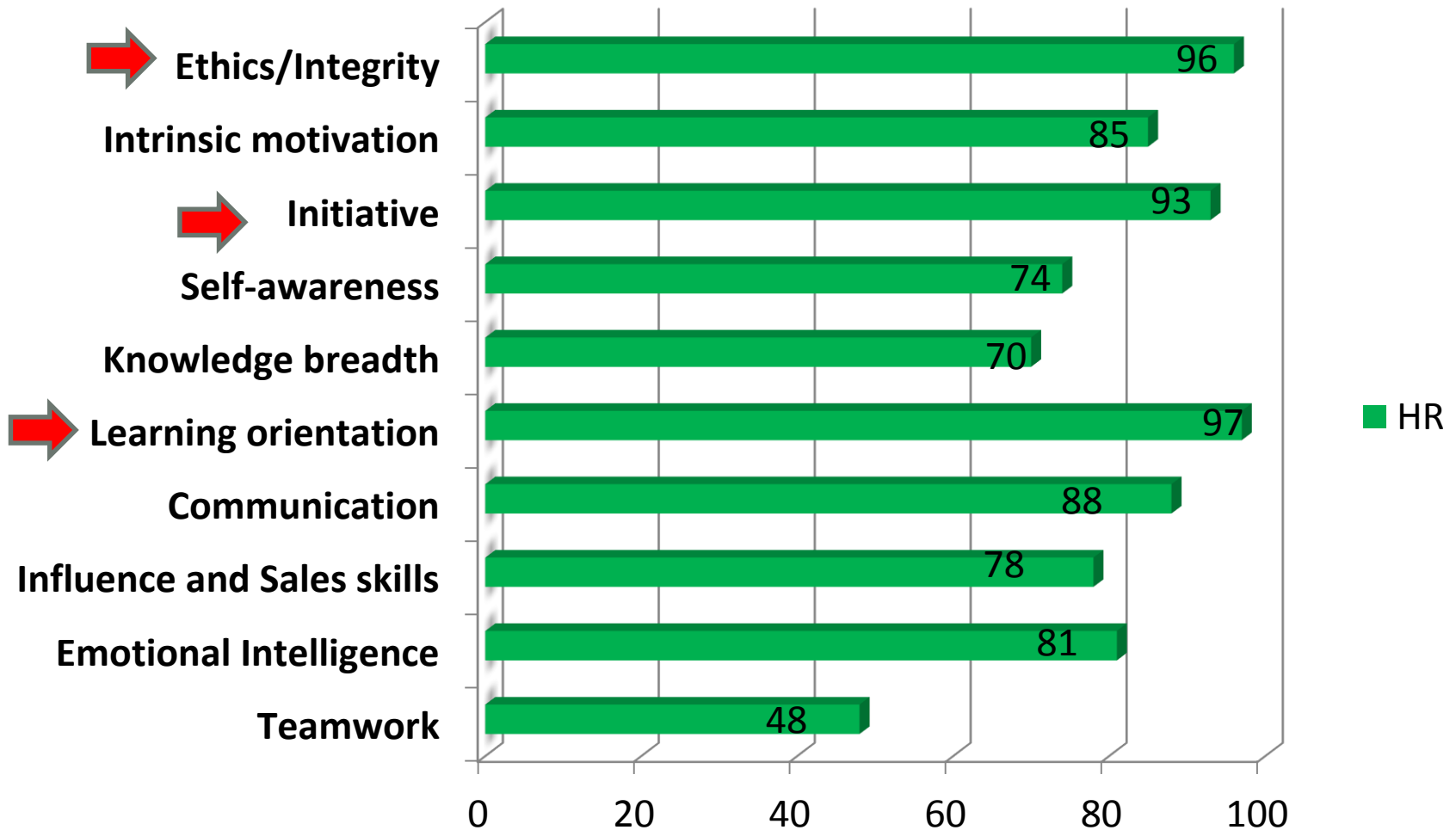


# Key competencies





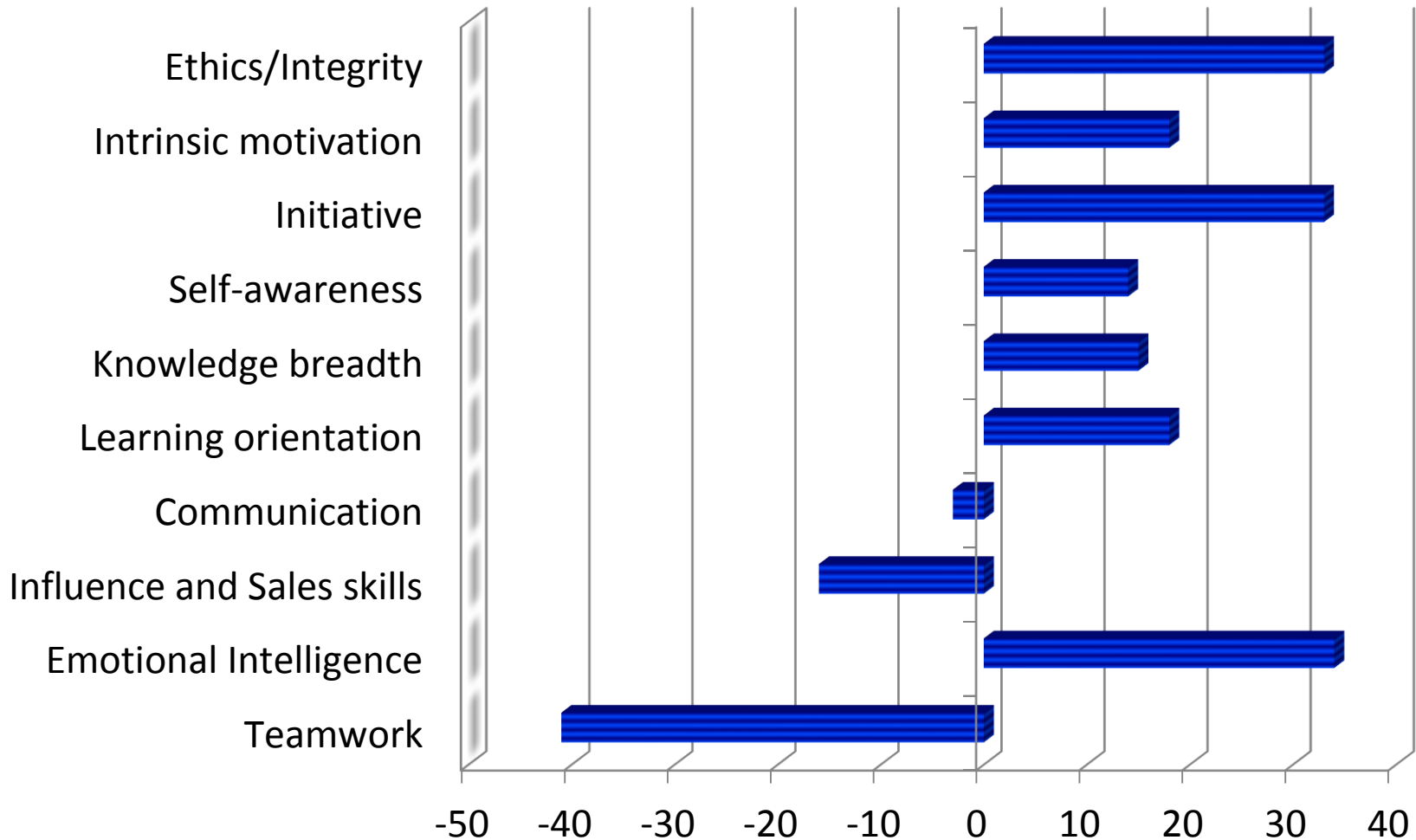
# Key competencies



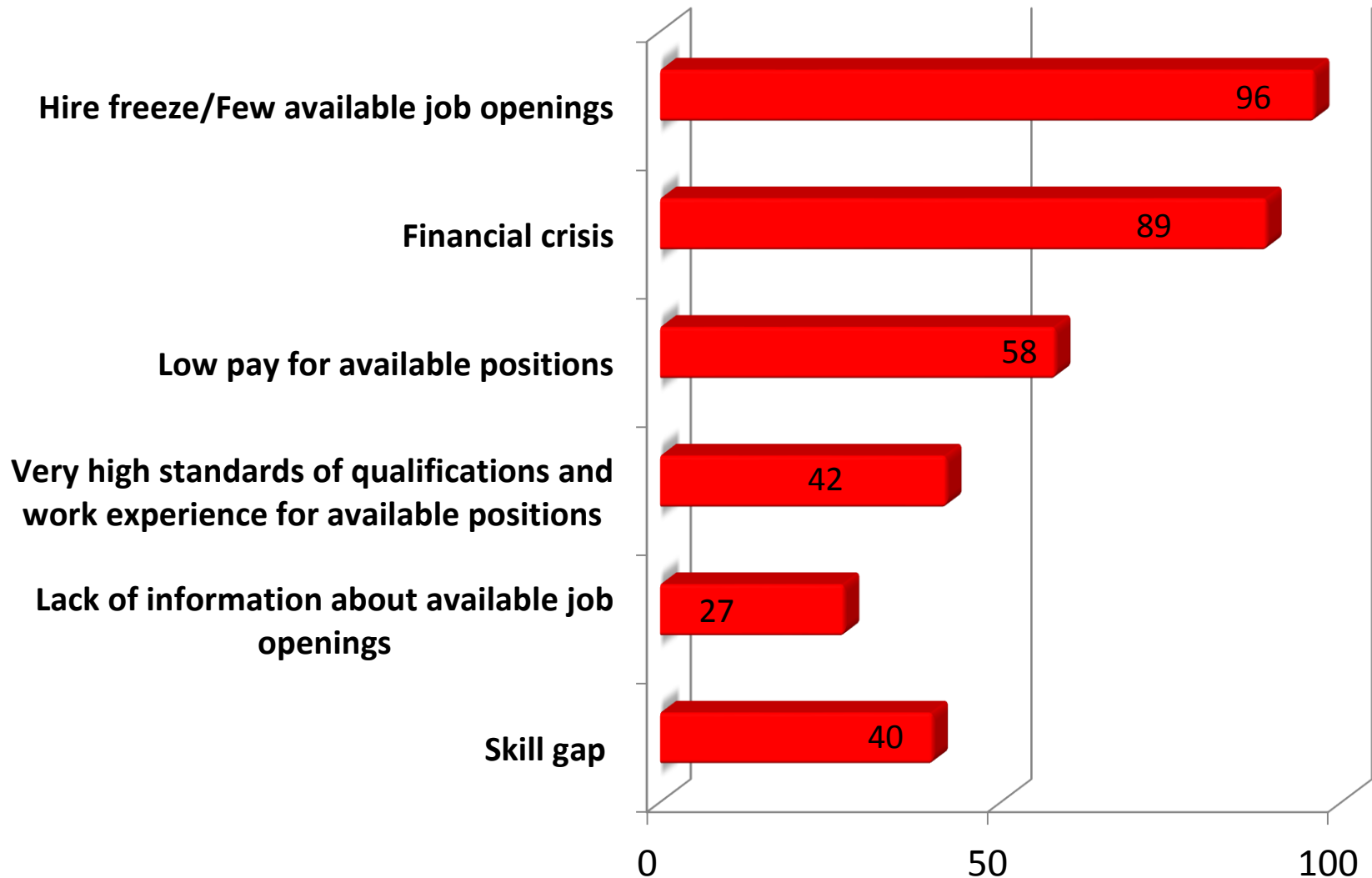
# Differences of HR and youth perceptions



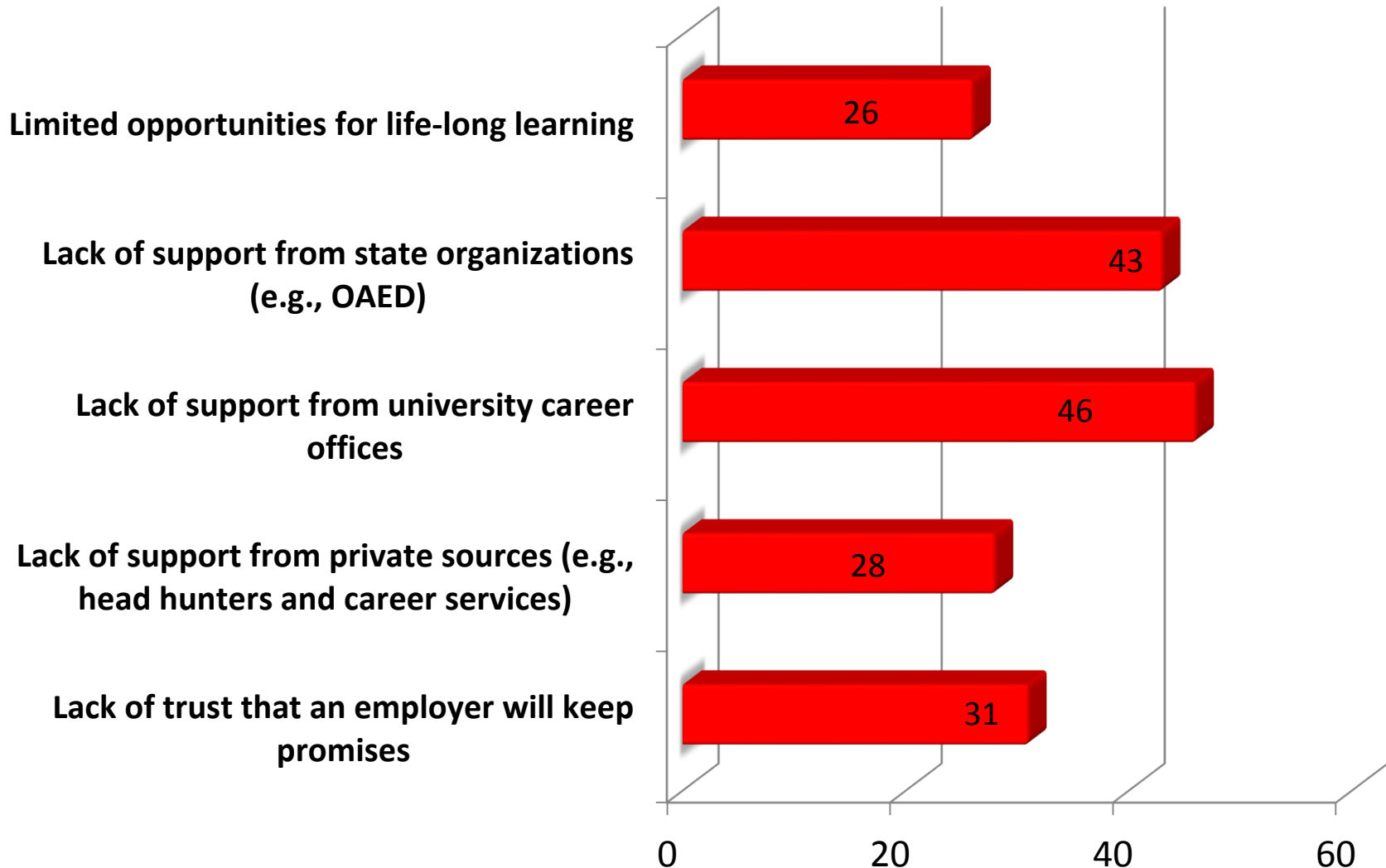
# Differences of HR and youth perceptions



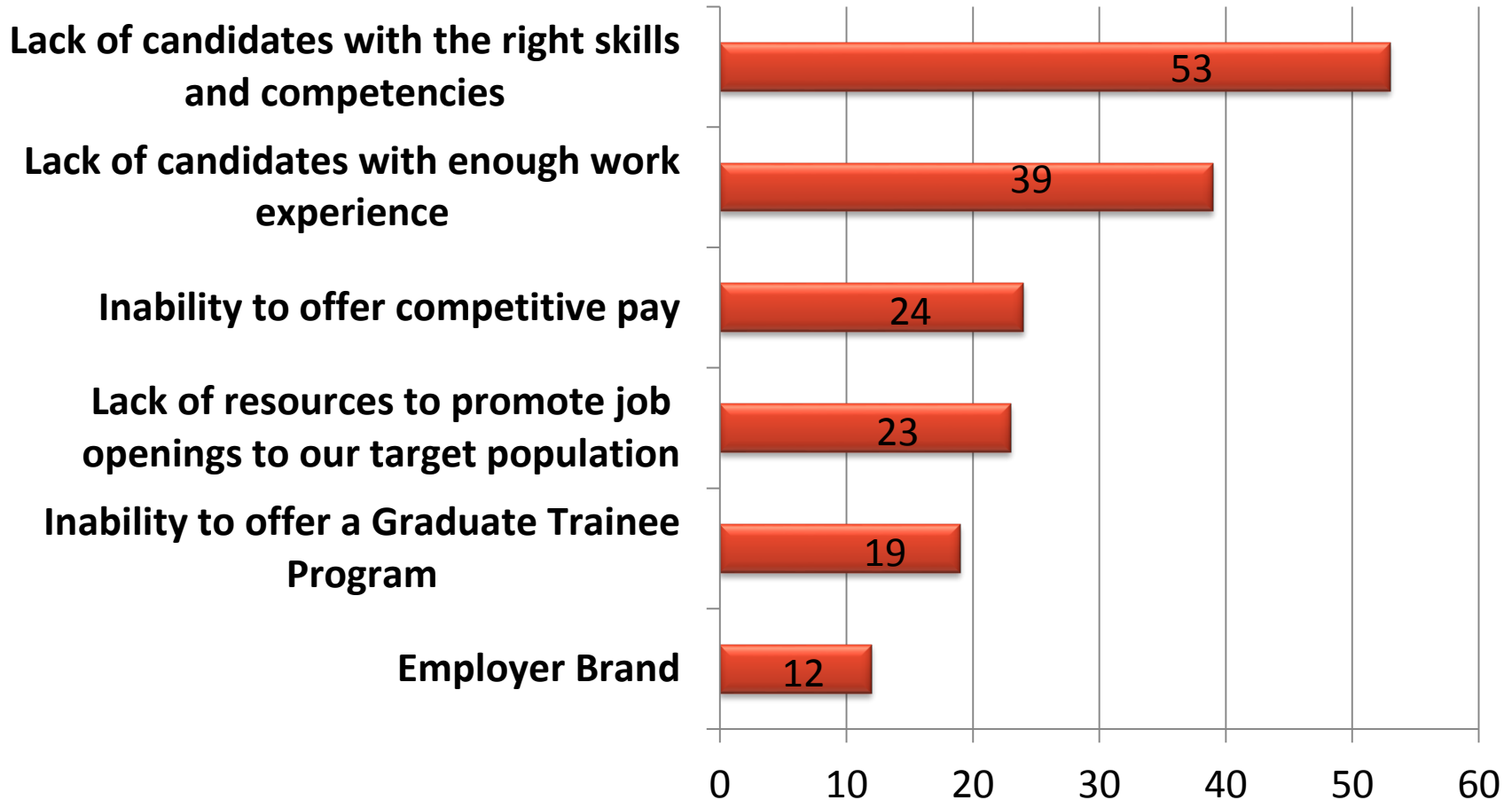
# Major obstacles for youth



# Major obstacles for youth



# Major challenges when hiring young graduates



# Recruitment activity



Percentage of job openings targeted at young graduates in the last 6 months

Industrial	Services	Retail	Construction	IT	Banking	Pharma	Tourism
47%	50%	43%	64%	47%	28%	22%	58%

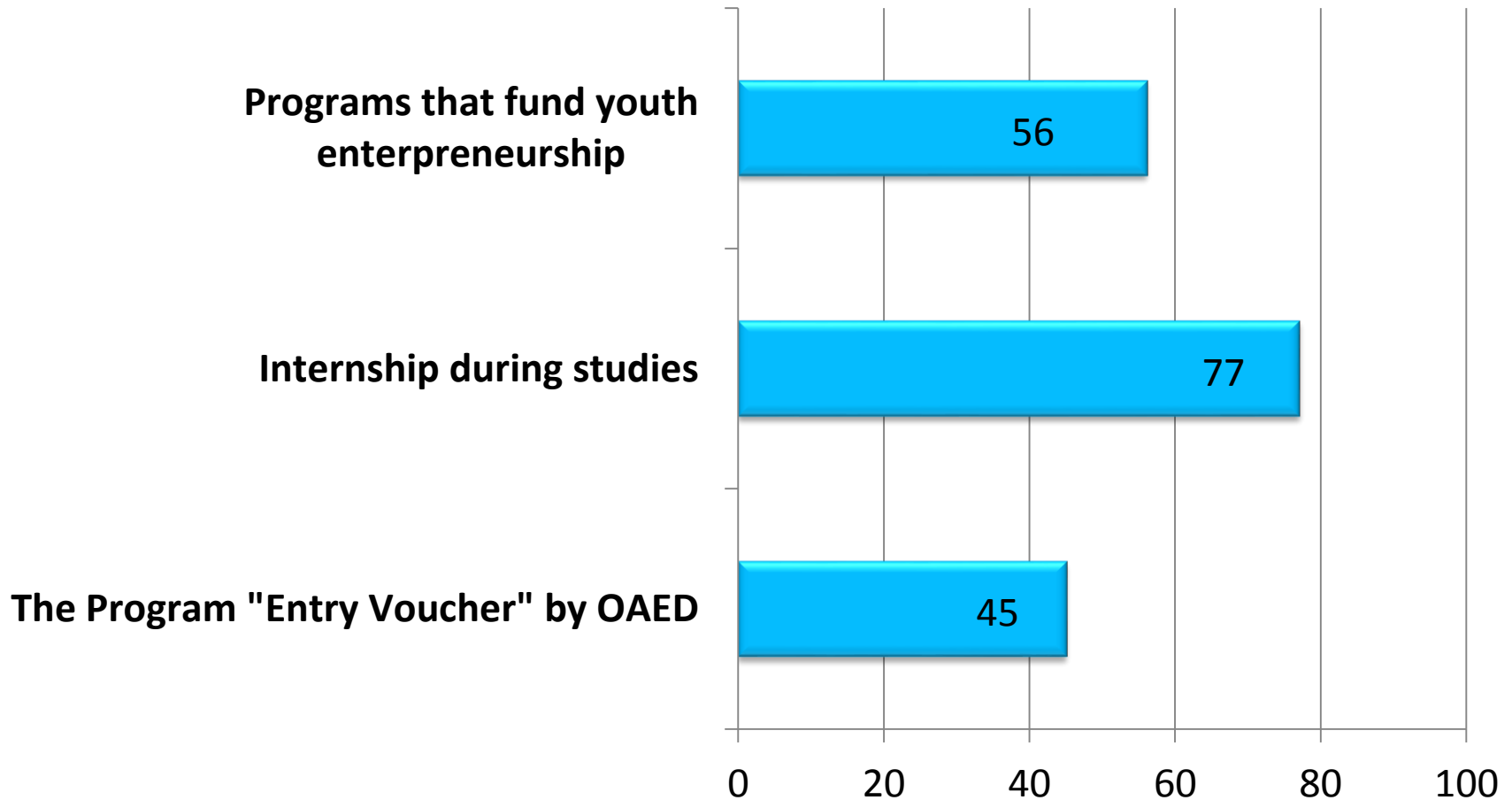
Average number of CVs for every new job opening targeted at young graduates

Industrial	Services	Retail	Construction	IT	Banking	Pharma	Tourism
242	183	351	472	254	121	138	231

Average position filling time (in days)

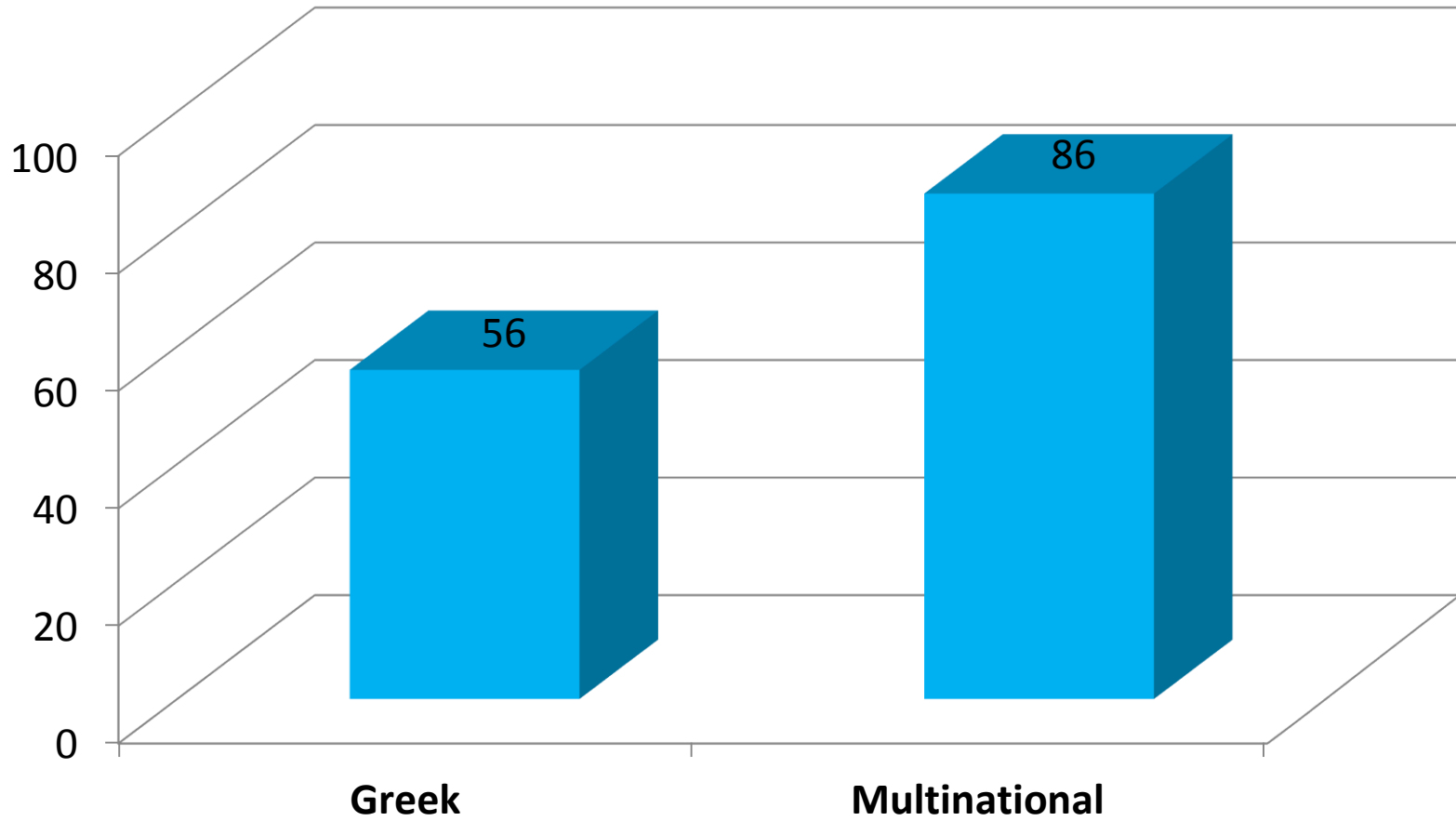
Industrial	Services	Retail	Construction	IT	Banking	Pharma	Tourism
31	32	33	42	39	34	34	29

# Facilitators of youth employability

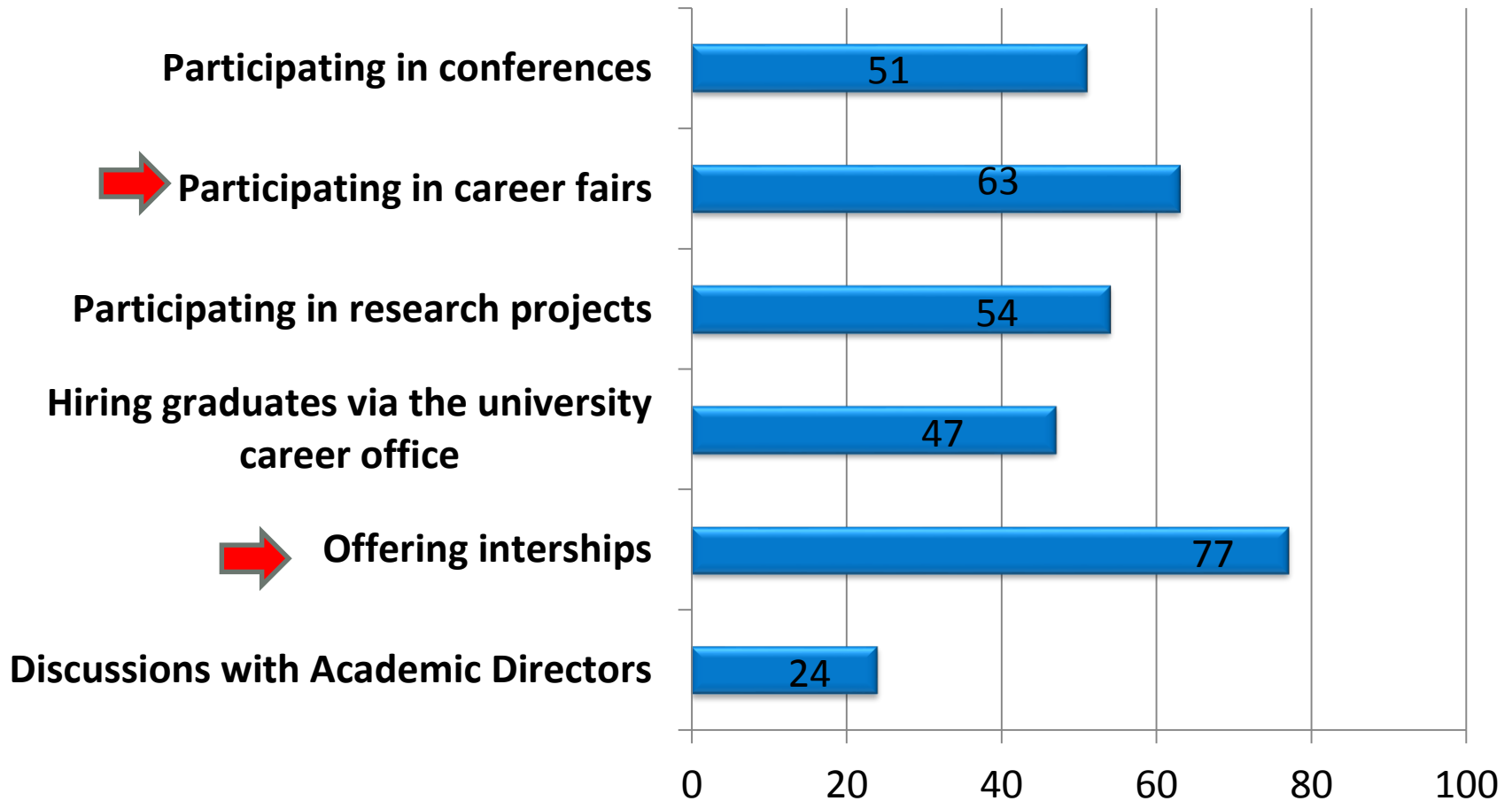




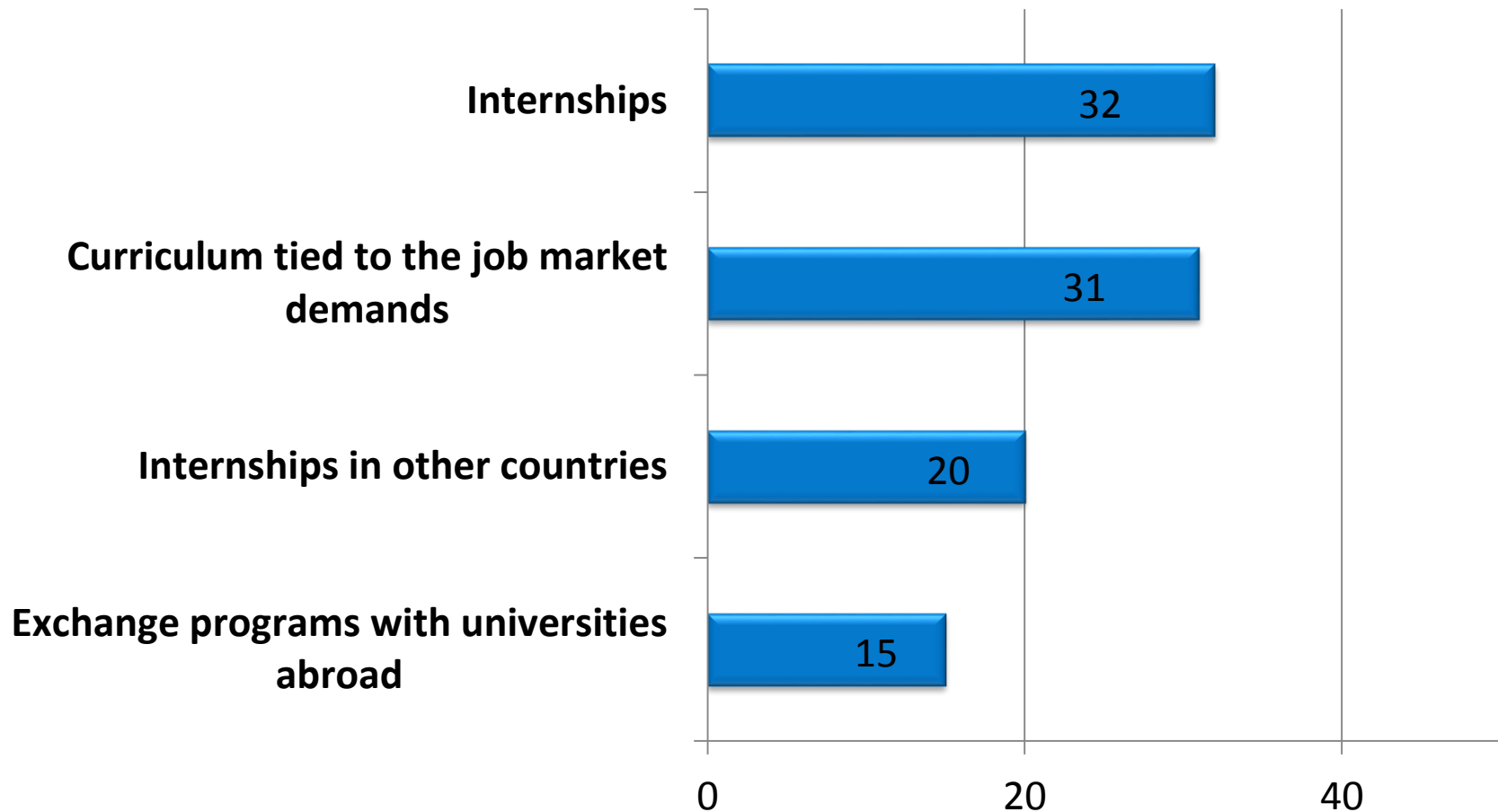
# University Involvement



# Types of involvement



# What should universities do?



# Conclusions



- Adaptability, flexibility, learning agility, knowledge breadth and multi-cultural perspective are seen as key competencies for employability across all stakeholder groups.
- Furthermore, ethics and integrity, change management and emotional intelligence are valued highly by employers.

# Conclusions



- The highest mismatch between young graduates' and employers' perspective is observed in relation to leadership skills, initiative, ethics/integrity and emotional intelligence.
- Young graduates tend to generally overestimate their possessing key competencies and perceive themselves as overqualified.

# Conclusions



- 86% of young graduates perceive the labor market as uncertain and unpredictable and only 42 % see it as broadened with many opportunities.
- Unemployed young graduates tend to have inflated expectations about their future employer's ability to contribute to their employability and career development (78%).
- On the other hand, they have lower expectations regarding pay (43%) and job security (47%).

# Conclusions



- 60% of young graduates are prepared to leave Greece for a new job.
- Only 30% are currently thinking to engage in entrepreneurial activity.
- 82% state that it is important for them to find a job that fits with their academic studies.
- 89% are, however, willing to accept a job offer on something different from their study subject.

# Conclusions



- Young graduates have high levels of self-esteem, resilience and optimism and low levels of depression and stress.
- No significant differences were found on psychological factors between younger and older participants.
- Young graduates receive high levels of support (both psychological and financial) from their family (more than 70% of them).
- Approximately 22% of them expect their families to experience serious hardship (food, housing etc.) in the next 6 months.



# Conclusions



- The majority of them actively engage in job search behaviors mainly via the internet and traditional media.
- They consider internships as a highly effective tool (53%) whereas OAED services are seen as ineffective (6%) although they did value the Entry-Voucher Program (29%).
- As major obstacles in their job search they consider the hire freeze, the financial crisis, the lack of support from state organizations and career offices, the low pay offered for available positions and the high expectations for qualifications and work experience.
- Employers also have a similar view about the above obstacles.

# Conclusions



- Employers report as major challenges when hiring young graduates the lack of applicants with the right skills and competencies (skill gap) (53%) and their lack of work experience (39%).
- All stakeholder groups agree that skill gap is an important problem for youth employability.
- As major facilitators, employers considered the internships (77%) and funding programs for entrepreneurship (56%) whereas they were slightly less enthusiastic about the Entry-Voucher program (45%).

# Conclusions



- 86% of the multinationals and 56% of the Greek companies have tried to collaborate with universities.
- They mainly offered internships (77% ) and participated in career fairs (63%).
- Only 24% said they tried to discuss with academic directors about incorporating insights about market needs in existing curricula.

# Conclusions



- All stakeholders agree that undergraduate and even secondary education needs to incorporate systematically the development of key skills and competencies.
- The career offices of different universities and colleges expressed the need to collaborate with each other (get out of a silo mentality) and play a more strategic role as the bridge between educational institutions and industries.

# In Overall...



- We experience a paradigm shift in our thinking about employment:
  - From lifetime employment to flexible forms.
  - From passive forms of employability to active forms.
  - From a need for knowledge and technical capability to a need for soft skills.
  - From a national focus to a global focus.
- Our results suggest that young graduates are aware of these changes and of the need for new competencies and transferable skills.
- They are still however reluctant to let go of traditional safety nets (e.g., family support, emphasis on the subject of study rather than the skills obtained, reluctance for early entry to employment, high expectations regarding the first job).

# In Overall...



- The skill & competencies gap is a reality. The only way to minimize this distance in perceptions is to create platforms where businesses and young people interact in a more constant basis.
- Educational institutions need to train people in the “jungle” => End of the monolithic and static view of education of students as empty vessels that need to be filled in with knowledge.
- High value of internships for both companies and young people.

# In Overall...



- Diagnosis is only phase 1. In the intervention phases an overarching strategy is needed.
- We need to emphasize **synergies** rather than differences.
  - Key associations and social partners closely interacting with each other for common initiatives.
  - Actively seeking global best practices but respecting the peculiarities of the Greek market.
  - Letting go of ankyloses and taboos of the past (e.g., public vs. private, paternalistic approach to youth issues).
  - Branding globally our educational institutions as centers of academic excellence (e.g., in medicine, engineering and many other fields).

# In Overall...



- We need to protect our youth from negative *cohort* and *imprinting effects* of unemployment.
- We must be able to provide productive employment and decent work for all:
  - **Quantity** of employment (jobless growth?).
  - **Quality** of employment (Fair pay? Regularity? Social security?).
  - **Access** to employment opportunities (what about the disadvantaged groups?).





# Thank you

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