Hegyi-Halmos, N. (2026). Labour market expectations towards hr professionals: insights from a content analysis of job advertisements. In C. Krause, C. Nägele, R. Schröder, M. Rosalska, & S. Romero-Rodriguez (Eds.), *Career guidance in schools from European and international perspectives: Designing transfer in career guidance between science and practice* (pp. 98–117). Career Lead/OAPublishing. https://doi.org/10.21240/cleg/2026/clc/98

Labour Market Expectations Towards HR Professionals: Insights from a Content Analysis of Job Advertisements

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Abstract

Context: The rapid technological, economic and societal transformation of the labour market significantly shapes employer expectations, particularly in knowledge-intensive fields such as Human Resources (HR). Digitalisation, growing sustainability requirements and globalisation have increased the value of transferable competencies that support adaptation to continuous change, while industry-specific knowledge such as HR software proficiency, familiarity with labour law or data-driven decision-making has become equally indispensable. Although several international forecasts (e.g., World Economic Forum, OECD, Cedefop) highlight similar trends, few domestic studies examine how these appear in concrete labour market expectations, especially for HR professionals. Clarifying these expectations provides valuable insights for individuals considering an HR career and for career guidance practitioners who support them.
Approach: This study aimed to identify the competency requirements explicitly formulated in job advertisements for HR roles, compare them with international labour market forecasts and illustrate the internal diversity of the HR profession. We collected 618 online job advertisements in February–March 2025, of which 504 met the inclusion criteria and were analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis focused on job categories, organisation types, required qualifications, work experience, language skills and the competencies explicitly listed in the postings. Examining competency requirements across different HR roles enabled us to identify patterns that may inform career guidance processes.
Findings: Results show that communication skills, accuracy, problem-solving ability, flexibility and digital competencies (e.g., MS Office, HR software) appear as core expectations across nearly all HR roles. These findings align with international forecasts that emphasise transversal skills, continuous learning and adaptability as key to labour market success. Language proficiency particularly English interpersonal skills, customer orientation and leadership abilities also feature prominently, especially in strategic and managerial positions within HR.
Conclusion: The study provides evidence-based insights that can directly support career guidance and counselling in the HR domain. It identifies the fundamental competencies required across HR positions, while also highlighting role-specific expectations that distinguish different HR specialisations. The results underscore the importance of realistic, well-informed career

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planning for individuals interested in HR, given the profession's growing complexity and internal differentiation. By offering a structured overview of the skills valued by employers, the study supports career guidance practitioners in helping individuals assess their strengths, identify areas for development and navigate diverse HR career paths.

Keywords

content analysis, job advertisements, workforce skills, HR professionals, career guidance

1 Introduction

In recent years, the labour market has undergone radical transformation, driven by technological progress, globalisation, and societal change. Although labour market forecasts had already predicted significant shifts 10–15 years ago, events of the past five years particularly the COVID-19 pandemic and the accelerated pace of digitalisation have further emphasised the importance of employees' adaptability and skill development (IFTF 2011; PwC 2017; Manpower 2016; World Economic Forum 2016, 2023, 2025; Cedefop, 2023; OECD, 2024). Today, the development of workforce competencies is shaped primarily by three factors: technological advancements, economic transformation, and social changes.

Technological progress not only leads to the disappearance of certain occupations but also gives rise to new jobs and fundamentally transforms existing roles. The spread of automation and artificial intelligence continuously reshapes the world of work, creating entirely new work structures that demand new types of competencies from employees (Frey & Osborne, 2017; McKinsey, 2022). Routine tasks are increasingly performed by machines, gradually eliminating repetitive job roles while elevating the value of positions that rely on human skills, creativity, and strategic thinking. Data-driven decision-making and the operation of automated systems have become basic requirements across most sectors, resulting in digital literacy and technological adaptability becoming key competencies. New technologies are transforming not only modes of communication but also collaboration practices and organisational structures (Manyika & Sneader, 2018).

Globalisation and the emergence of the gig economy have also created new economic challenges. As the labour market becomes increasingly international, flexible and digital work has become more widespread, requiring workers to possess skills such as independent time management, virtual teamwork, and intercultural communication. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–21) marked a turning point, accelerating these changes and normalising remote, hybrid, and online work arrangements (World Economic Forum, 2020). The expansion of the gig economy is also compelling employees to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, as an increasing number of people work on a contract or project basis rather than in traditional employment relationships.

Demographic changes, growing diversity, and greater emphasis on inclusion are also reshaping the labour market (OECD, 2021). Ageing societies are creating a heightened need for lifelong learning and continuous workforce upskilling. Companies increasingly recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce and place greater emphasis on equal opportunities and inclusive corporate cultures. These trends elevate the importance of soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity. The significance of lifelong learning and reskilling programs has gradually increased over the past decade and has become essential in recent years due to rapidly evolving competency demands (Lukács & Dorner, 2021).

In parallel with technological, economic, and societal changes, the expectations for professional competencies are continuously increasing, requiring ever higher levels of qualification

(Tóth et al., 2015). Transferable skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability have become especially important, as they enable employees to respond flexibly to rapid change (Cimatti, 2016; Bridgstock, 2009). At the same time, the demand for industry-specific knowledge, such as programming, financial analysis, or project management, is also on the rise (Autor et al., 2023). The success of knowledge-based economies depends on the continuous development and up-to-date maintenance of skills. Manpower (2016) described this trend as a "skills revolution", highlighting the role of enduring competencies such as creativity, emotional intelligence, and cognitive flexibility, which support the resolution of complex tasks and complement technology. More and more employers seek candidates who combine specialised expertise with broadly applicable competencies (Zerényi, 2017).

Our research aims to explore both general labour market and HR-specific competency expectations, thereby supporting career guidance and counselling processes. The job-advertisement-based approach enables individuals interested in the HR field to gain insight into entry requirements, essential competencies and the skill profiles associated with different HR career paths. In this way, the study contributes to more informed career-choice decisions and to more deliberate, well-structured career development.

2 Competency Reconfiguration in the Labour Market Context

Technological, economic, and societal changes are significantly transforming the value and nature of competencies required in the labour market. This reconfiguration involves shifts in both qualification requirements and expectations regarding skills and abilities. The rising expectations for workforce qualifications are often described as "upskilling", while the broadening scope and content of required skills is referred to as "multiskilling" (Czibik et al., 2013). According to Cedefop's 2018 forecast, the proportion of highly skilled jobs was projected to increase substantially, rising from 31% in 2016 to an estimated 40% by 2030. Simultaneously, certain sectors are experiencing a decline in qualification requirements a phenomenon known as "deskilling", which is linked to the spread of automation and computer-controlled technologies.

Which competencies lose value, which remain essential, and which new forms of knowledge, skills or personal characteristics become decisive in the ongoing transformation of the labour market is ultimately shaped through the interaction of the actors involved. From a market-oriented perspective, workplace competency expectations emerge and evolve dynamically in the relationship between employers and employees, continually adapting to changes in the economic environment. Expectations towards employees therefore cannot be regarded as static variables; rather, they are constantly reshaped within the supply demand system of the labour market. A more precise understanding of this process, and of how competency requirements are changing, is of relevance to all stakeholders' employers, employees, educational institutions preparing the future workforce, as well as individuals interested in the profession and career guidance practitioners who support them.

The primary drivers behind competency reconfiguration can be observed on the demand side. In modern, developed economies, employing a suitably skilled workforce is the only economically viable option for employers. As technological advancement progresses, the demand for low-skilled labour decreases, while the need for highly skilled workers grows even though attracting and retaining such talent is increasingly costly and may require poaching from com-

petitors (Kopátsy, 2011). These technological, economic, and societal shifts compel organisations to rethink and reshape their operations, human resource management, and expectations of their employees.

Labour market surveys generally do not distinguish between demand for talent, knowledge, abilities, and competencies, as these factors are often inseparable in practice (Szabó, 2011). Gallardo-Gallardo (2013) also highlight the similarities between the concepts of talent and competency. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) regard these terms as categories with overlapping content. Talent is a complex phenomenon with multiple interpretations in the literature. According to Renzulli (2003), talent consists of a cluster of high intellectual ability, creativity, and strong motivation. Talent can be defined as an innate attribute, a potential, or as outstanding performance (Szabó, 2011). This interpretation of talent closely aligns with the management concept of competency, which links competency to high performance (McClelland, 1973). Employers "buy talent in packages" (Szabó, 2011), seeking individuals with diverse competencies who can successfully tackle tasks. Achieving this general capacity for effective action (Wilkens, 2004) requires knowledge, skills, aptitudes, abilities, and motivation. As Leplat describes it, competency is a structured, dynamic combination of these elements (Szelestey, 2008). From a pedagogical perspective, the innate and learned components of these elements differ, which determines their potential for development (Nagy, 2007). From a corporate viewpoint, however, the focus lies primarily on identifying the personal success criteria and competency components necessary for exceptional performance (Tóthné Téglás, 2016). Given that, in practice, talent, competency, knowledge, and skills are often difficult to separate (Hámori-Szabó, 2017), examining the competency components associated with high performance may help provide a more nuanced understanding of the issue of talent shortages.

3 Contemporary Labour Market Competency Expectations

Recent labour market trends can be summarised based on three major international reports: studies by the World Economic Forum (2025), the OECD (2024), and Cedefop (2023) all emphasise that digitalisation, the transition towards sustainability, and technological advancements are fundamentally reshaping the competencies expected of employees. Jobs are becoming increasingly knowledge-intensive, transversal and soft skills are gaining in value, while technical and digital skills are becoming baseline requirements.

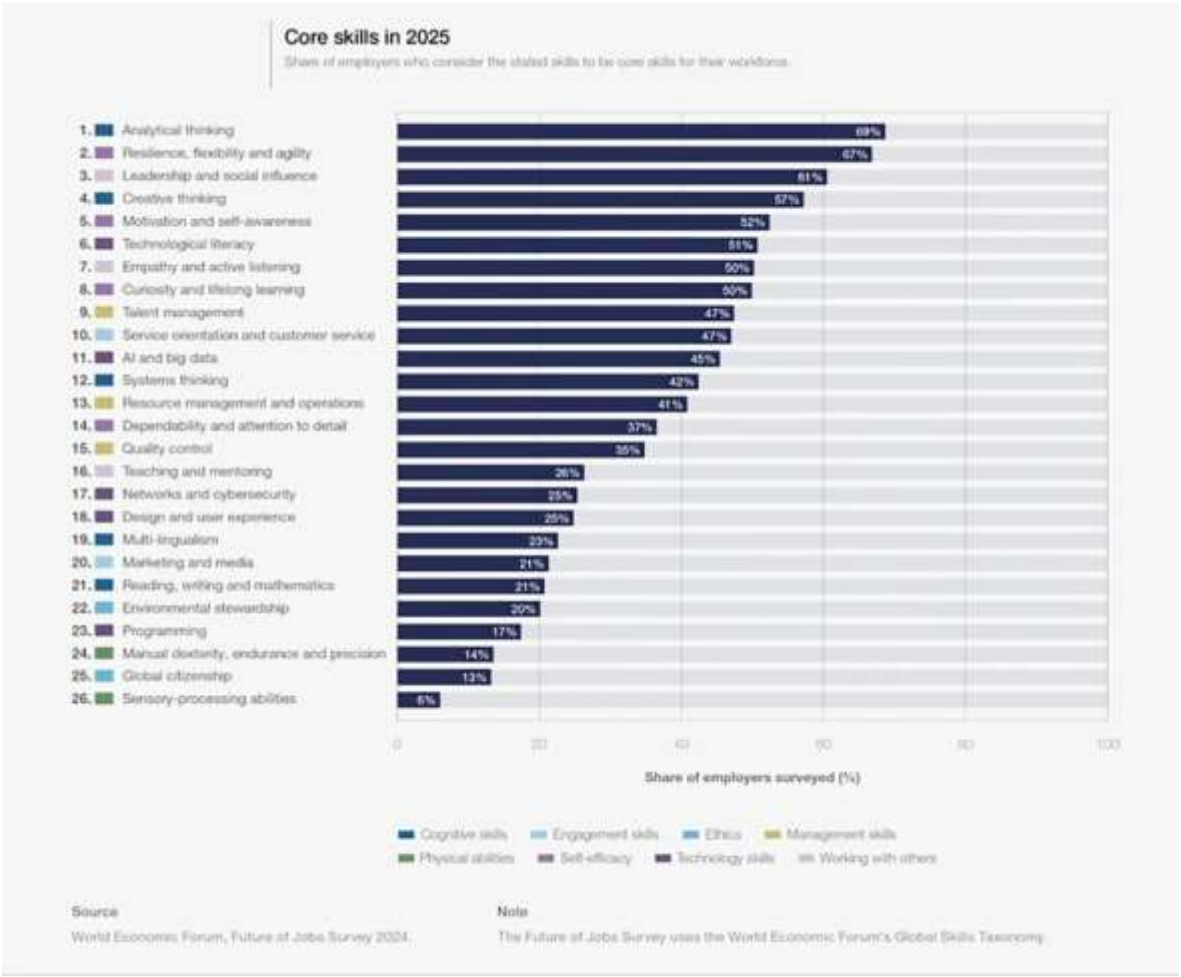
According to the WEF *Future of Jobs Report 2025* (2025), analytical thinking remains the most essential skill that employers expect. In addition, flexibility, agility, and adaptability are receiving increasing emphasis, alongside leadership and social influence skills. Creative thinking, motivation, and self-awareness are also among the key competencies for the future. The report forecasts that by 2030, there will be a steady rise in demand for technical knowledge related to AI and Big Data, alongside a growing importance of lifelong learning and collaboration skills. The uncertain and volatile VUCA environment (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) further reinforces the relevance of resilience and agility. Nearly three-quarters of companies anticipate that the demand for these skills will continue to grow in the coming years.

The OECD's Future Skills Summit 2024 (2024) highlights three main areas of core competencies: fundamental cognitive skills (such as literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy); social-emotional and communication skills (including collaboration, conflict management, and perseverance); and metacognitive skills (such as self-reflection, learning strategies, and goal orientation). Metacognitive competencies are particularly important because they enable individuals to adapt quickly and to manage their own learning processes consciously. The OECD report

also confirms that skills related to artificial intelligence such as AI development and data management are becoming essential not only in the technology sector but across almost all industries.

According to Cedefop's Skills in Transition: The Way to 2035 (2023), Europe will require a true skills revolution to achieve both the green and digital transitions. Proficiency in STEM fields, digital literacy, and knowledge related to the green economy will become indispensable. The report draws attention to the phenomenon of workplace "job upgrading", where jobs are demanding increasingly higher levels of knowledge and technical expertise. Alongside technical skills, the importance of transversal and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, systems thinking, and problem-solving is also growing. Cedefop emphasises that empathy and a people-centred approach will be key to ensuring a fair and sustainable transition (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Expected Competencies 2025



Note. World Economic Forum "Future of Jobs Report 2025"

3.1 Key Trends by Competency Categories

Personal and social competencies

All three reports consistently indicate that the importance of personal and interpersonal skills is expected to grow. Flexibility, perseverance, emotional stability, and self-regulation are

now considered fundamental prerequisites for successful employment. Leadership skills, motivation, and the capacity for social influence are also increasingly emphasised, as managing rapid change requires proactive and inspiring leaders. According to WEF (2025) data, 75% of employers expect the importance of adaptability and agility to continue to increase by 2030. The OECD (2024) also highlights that developing socio-emotional and metacognitive skills is not only an economic necessity but also a societal priority.

Communication and collaboration

Collaboration, effective communication, and persuasion have become key competencies across almost every sector. The Cedefop (2023) report emphasises that interpersonal skills strengthen functional cooperation between organisational units and facilitate effective engagement with stakeholders. According to the OECD (2024) and Cedefop (2023), cultural sensitivity, active listening, and empathy are difficult to automate, which means these skills will continue to provide a competitive advantage in the long term.

Learning competency

Openness to continuous learning has now become a basic requirement. According to the latest data from the WEF (2025), half of employers already regard lifelong learning as a core competency, and three-quarters expect its importance to increase further. OECD (2024) data support this finding, showing that adult participation in learning is steadily rising across the EU, yet significant gaps remain. Learning skills not only enhance individual employability but also have positive effects on social participation, democratic engagement, and public health indicators. Cedefop (2023) specifically highlights the role of flexible learning formats such as micro-credentials, short courses, and online training which help to update skills quickly. Increasing participation in adult education is a shared responsibility of employers and government.

Problem-solving skills and analytical thinking

Problem-solving especially its analytical and creative dimensions is one of the competencies most resistant to automation. According to the WEF (2025) survey, 70% of companies consider it fundamental, with creative thinking also ranking among the top priorities. The OECD (2024) likewise emphasises that these skills are transversal, meaning they are relevant across all industries. Cedefop (2023) highlights systems thinking, critical thinking, and innovation skills as essential foundations for sustainable and digital solutions.

Digital competencies

All three reports agree that digital skills including ICT literacy, programming, data management, and cybersecurity are now expected in every job role. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalisation, making digital literacy and information management essential for remote work and online learning alike. According to the WEF, demand for generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) skills is rising sharply, with 80% of companies anticipating increased demand for Big Data and AI-related competencies. OECD (2024) data show that nearly half of the EU's adult population still needs to develop basic digital skills. Cedefop (2023) emphasises that digital transformation is not limited to the technology sector: automation and robotics are appearing across all industries, making digital competencies a transversal core requirement.

The international reports reviewed clearly indicate that the future labour market will require competency profiles that strike a balance between technical knowledge, digital literacy

and human soft skills. Analytical thinking, problem-solving, communication, leadership abilities, openness to lifelong learning and digital readiness are all essential for employees to adapt successfully to sustainability-driven and technological transformations. These trends are equally significant for career choice and career development, as technological and societal changes are creating new tasks and new job roles in many professions including HR while also reshaping the content and expectations of existing positions.

4 Investigation

4.1 Methodology

Our research aimed to explore what expectations employers have of HR professionals in terms of qualifications, language skills, work experience, and competencies. We sought to understand how the generally expected competencies highlighted in labour market forecasts appear specifically within the HR field. Are there distinctive competency requirements characteristic of different HR specialisations? To what extent does the type of employer influence the expected competencies, and how do these requirements vary in rank across different HR areas? To answer these questions, we conducted an analysis of online job advertisements.

The analysis of online job advertisements offers several advantages: it enables the collection of relatively large amounts of data in a cost-effective and easily accessible manner, which is essential for quantitative analysis. Job advertisements provide real-time information and reflect current employer expectations, thus serving as a valuable data source for career guidance as well. On the one hand, they make it possible to identify typical entry requirements (e.g., qualifications, language proficiency, work experience, competencies) for different positions; on the other hand, they offer insights into the expectations relevant for career progression within the profession. Because current job postings allow labour market trends to be monitored continuously, they also provide a solid basis for potential longitudinal studies. As naturally occurring texts not responses to researcher-generated questions they more accurately reflect labour market needs and directly reveal organisational expectations.

At the same time, online job advertisements may present certain limitations. They can include generic or template-based requirements (e.g., competencies listed independently of the specific job role, or the overemphasis of trend-driven skills) and may describe ideal rather than genuinely necessary attributes of the position. Job advertisements also tend to overrepresent the expectations of larger companies (Lipovac and Babic, 2021) and those roles for which labour shortages are more pronounced. Positions typically filled through referrals or headhunting such as managerial roles may be underrepresented or absent. A further advantage, however, is that data derived from job advertisements can be analysed using a flexible combination of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches.

4.2 Data Collection

During the data collection phase, we gathered 618 online job advertisements posted between 6 February and 5 March 2025. The sample included those advertisements that explicitly referred to an HR-related position and contained at least three competency requirements formulated by the employer. Thus, inclusion in the sample was determined primarily by the content of the advertisement rather than by the characteristics of the organisation. No restrictions were applied regarding industry, organisational size or ownership; any organisation operating

in Hungary could be included if its advertisement met the above criteria. Job postings were collected from several major online job portals and corporate career pages (see Table 1).

The resulting sample reflects the competency expectations of a diverse and heterogeneous set of organisations; however, it cannot be considered representative in the classical statistical sense, as inclusion was based on targeted content filtering. The aim of the methodological approach was to construct the broadest possible yet content-wise consistent corpus of job advertisements that would allow for the identification of typical competency profiles associated with HR roles.

After organising and filtering the collected job advertisements, a total of 504 online postings remained in the sample, all of which met the criteria and were deemed relevant for the research. Following data cleaning, this dataset of 504 job ads was analysed with a focus on seven aspects: job title, type of organisation, required qualifications, required language skills and proficiency level, required work experience, and the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected. Among the required competencies, only those that appeared in at least five job advertisements were included in the competency list. The data analysis was conducted using the Jamovi software.

Table 1
Distribution of Job Advertisements by Source

Source	Count	% of Total
profession.hu	285	56.5%
linkedin.com	64	12.7%
indeed.com	33	6.5%
jobline.hu	33	6.5%
company website	27	5.4%
cvonline.hu	23	4.6%
jooble.org	10	2.0%
careerjet.hu	5	1.0%
workline.hu	4	0.8%
other	20	4%

Note. N = 504 relevant job advertisements

4.3 Results

Job titles

The positions appearing in the analysed job advertisements were grouped into 15 categories (see Table 2). Among the postings in the sample, the most common were for recruiter roles (77), followed by positions in payroll and labour administration (64), HR generalist (57), HR manager (45), HR specialist (44), and HR Business Partner (41). Additionally, 5.8% of the postings sought a training and development specialist (29), 5.6% were for HR interns (28), 5.4% for HR assistants (27), 5% for HR controllers (25), 4.2% for HR associates (21), 4% for HR coordinators (20), and 3.4% for HR administrators (17).

Table 2
Distribution of Job Positions

Position	Count	% of Total
Recruiter	77	15.3%
Payroll and Labour Administration	64	12.7%
HR Generalist	57	11.3%
HR Manager	45	8.9%
HR Specialist	44	8.7%
HR Business Partner	41	8.1%
Learning and Development Specialist	29	5.8%
HR Intern	28	5.6%
HR Assistant	27	5.4%
HR Controller	25	5.0%
HR Associate	21	4.2%
HR Coordinator	20	4.0%
HR Administrator	17	3.4%
HR Services Manager	6	1.2%
HR Digitalisation	3	0.6%

Note. N = 504 relevant job advertisements

Types of Employers

The job advertisements included in this study referred to positions offered by employers in Hungary. A diverse range of organisations were represented in the sample (see Table 3). The largest share came from multinational companies (198) and large domestic enterprises (145), together accounting for 68.1% of all analysed postings, thus somewhat overrepresenting the requirements of larger employers. The sample also included 83 domestic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), 29 international companies, 19 public sector institutions, 13 student cooperatives, 9 HR service providers, and 8 non-profit organisations.

Required qualifications

Among the job advertisements in the sample, 93.6% (471) specified explicit requirements regarding the expected qualifications. For most positions (163), a higher education degree was required, but the field of study was not always specified. A total of 74 postings required a higher education degree specifically in the field of HR, while in 15 cases, a degree in economics was stated as a requirement. For 86 positions, a secondary education level was sufficient, while 84 postings asked for a field-specific qualification related to the given position but did not specify the level. In 49 postings primarily for internship roles ongoing higher education studies were acceptable (28 in HR, economics, or finance, and 21 without a specified field) (see Table 4).

We examined whether there was a relationship between the positions included in the sample and the required qualifications (see Table 5). The results show that ongoing higher education studies are primarily expected for HR intern positions (26) and, to a lesser extent, for recruiter roles (12). A qualification specifically in HR is most required for HR Business Partner (22), HR Generalist (19), HR Manager (19), and recruiter positions (19). A higher education

degree without a specified field was most frequently expected for HR Generalist (26) and recruiter roles (25). A secondary education level was sufficient in 11 postings for HR assistants (representing 40.7% of all HR assistant positions), in 13 postings for HR coordinators (65% of all such positions), and in 18 postings for payroll and labour administration roles (28% of these positions). Recruiter postings most frequently lacked any reference to required qualifications in the text (10). The chi-square test results indicate a significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2(112, N = 504) = 510$, $p < .001$. The Cramer's V value of 0.35 suggests a moderate-strength relationship.

Table 3
Distribution of Employer Types

Employer Type	Count	% of Total
Multinational Company	198	39.3%
Large Domestic Company	145	28.8%
SME (Small and Medium Enterprise)	83	16.5%
International Company	29	5.8%
Public Sector Institution	19	3.8%
Student Cooperative	13	2.6%
HR Service Provider	9	1.8%
Non-profit/Charity Organisation	8	1.6%

Note. N = 504 relevant job advertisements

Table 4
Distribution of Required Qualifications

Qualification	Count	% of Total
Higher Education Degree	163	32.3%
Secondary Education	86	17.1%
Field-Specific Qualification	84	16.7%
Higher Education Degree in HR	74	14.7%
Ongoing Higher Education Studies in HR/Economics/Finance	28	5.6%
Ongoing Higher Education Studies (Field Not Specified)	21	4.2%
Higher Education Degree in Economics	15	3.0%
None	33	6.5%

Note. N = 504 relevant job advertisements

Required Work Experience

We examined how required work experience appears in the job advertisements included in the sample. In 23% of the postings (116), there was no reference to required work experience. In 4.4% (22) of the advertisements, at least one year of work experience was specified, in 30.2% (152) two to three years of experience, in 25.4% (128) three to five years, in 13.7% (69) five to ten years, and in 3.4% (17) more than ten years of experience was required.

Expectations regarding work experience showed interesting patterns in relation to specific positions (see Table 6). The highest levels of experience were expected for HR Manager and HR Business Partner positions. In job advertisements for HR Managers, 80% required at least

three years of experience (15 specified three to five years, 13 specified five to ten years, and 8 specified more than ten years). For HR Business Partner positions, 75.6% required at least three years of experience (14 postings specified three to five years, 17 specified five to ten years). For HR intern roles, only two postings mentioned any work experience requirement, while for HR assistant positions, 13 postings did not include any such requirement—representing 48.1% of all HR assistant roles. The results of the chi-square test show a significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2(70, N = 504) = 343$, $p < .001$. The Cramer's V value of 0.369 indicates a moderate-strength relationship.

Foreign language proficiency

In 33% of the job advertisements in the sample (166), no explicit requirement for foreign language proficiency was specified. Most postings required knowledge of English (309), while other languages appeared only rarely (6 for German, 1 for Russian). In 22 postings, candidates were expected to be able to communicate in more than one foreign language. Regarding proficiency level, most advertisements (145) required intermediate-level skills, while 136 postings specified that applicants should be "fluent", "excellent", "business-proficient", or have an advanced level. In 51 postings, no specific language level was indicated.

In terms of specific positions, the highest level of language proficiency was expected for HR Business Partner roles (16 postings, 39% of all HRBP positions), HR Specialist positions (20, or 45.4%), HR Manager positions (22, or 48.8%), and recruiter roles (24, or 31.1%). Language requirements were least common for payroll and labour administration roles (36 postings, 56%). According to the results of the chi-square test, there is a significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2(56, N = 504) = 115$, $p < .001$. The Cramer's V value of 0.239 indicates a weak to moderate relationship (see Table 7).

Foreign language proficiency by types of organisations

We examined the relationship between required language proficiency and the types of organisations represented in the sample. Language skills as a requirement appeared across all organisation types, although they were more prevalent among multinational and international companies. According to the results of the chi-square test, there is a significant association between the two variables, $\chi^2(28, N = 504) = 69.6$, $p < .001$. The Cramer's V value of 0.186 indicates a weak relationship (see Table 8).

Table 5
Distribution of Required Qualifications by Job Position

Position	Higher Ed. HR	Higher Ed. Economics	Higher Education	Ongoing Higher Ed.	Ongoing Higher Ed.*	Secondary Education	None	Field-Specific Qualification	Total
HR Business Partner	10	0	16	2	1	0	0	12	41
HR admin	0	0	4	0	0	6	5	2	17
HR Assistant	5	0	6	0	0	11	3	1	27
HR Digitalisation	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
HR Generalist	11	0	26	0	6	4	2	8	57
HR Intern	0	0	0	12	14	1	1	0	28
HR Controller	6	5	6	0	1	2	0	5	25
HR Coordinator	3	0	3	0	0	13	0	1	20
HR Associate	0	0	7	0	0	10	0	4	21
HR Specialist	9	4	19	0	0	5	3	4	44
HR Services Manager	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
HR Manager	14	3	18	0	0	2	3	5	45
Learning & Dev. Specialist	5	0	12	0	0	3	1	8	29
Payroll and Labour Admin.	1	1	13	0	1	18	4	26	64
Recruiter	9	2	25	7	5	11	10	8	77
Total	74	15	163	21	28	86	32	84	504

Note.* in HR/ Economics/Finance. Jamovi data table. Chi-square test, df = 112, N = 504, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = 0.35.

Table 6
Distribution of Required Work Experience by Job Position

Job Position	**0**	**1 Year**	**2–3 Years**	**3–5 Years**	**5–10 Years**	**10+ Years**	**Total**
HR Business Partner	5	0	5	14	17	0	41
HR Admin	2	5	8	2	0	0	17
HR Assistant	13	3	11	0	0	0	27
HR Digitalisation	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
HR Generalist	8	0	23	15	10	1	57
HR Intern	26	1	1	0	0	0	28
HR Controller	4	0	11	3	7	0	25
HR Coordinator	5	1	8	4	2	0	20
HR Associate	3	2	14	1	0	1	21
HR Specialist	4	2	9	20	7	2	44
HR Services Manager	0	0	0	2	1	3	6
HR Manager	4	2	3	15	13	8	45
Training & Development Specialist	5	2	10	11	1	0	29
Payroll and Labour Administration	8	1	21	24	8	2	64
Recruiter	29	3	28	15	2	0	77
Total	116	22	152	128	69	17	504

Note. Jamovi data table. Chi-square test, df = 70, N = 504, p < .001, Cramer's V = 0.369.

Table 7
Distribution of Required Language Proficiency Levels by Job Position

Job Position	Not Re-quired	Level Not Specified	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Total
HR Business Partner	7	5	0	13	16	41
HR Admin	5	3	0	3	6	17
HR Assistant	11	4	0	10	2	27
HR Digitalisation	0	2	0	1	0	3
HR Generalist	18	6	2	19	12	57
HR Intern	13	2	0	6	7	28
HR Controller	14	0	0	6	5	25
HR Coordinator	6	1	0	11	2	20
HR Associate	12	1	1	5	2	21
HR Specialist	9	5	0	10	20	44
HR Services Manager	3	0	0	1	2	6
HR Manager	6	2	0	15	22	45
Training & Dev. Specialist	4	2	1	16	6	29
Payroll and Labour Admin.	36	7	1	10	10	64
Recruiter	21	11	2	19	24	77
Total	165	51	7	145	136	504

Note. Jamovi data table. Chi-square test, df = 56, N = 504, p < .001, Cramer's V = 0.239.

Table 8
Distribution of Required Language Proficiency by Organisation Type

Organisation Type	English	Not Required / No Data	German	Russian	Multiple Languages	Total
Large Domestic Company	81	62	0	0	2	145
HR Service Provider	6	2	0	0	1	9
Student Cooperative	7	5	0	0	1	13
SME (Small and Medium Enterprise)	45	36	0	1	1	83
Public Sector Institution	5	14	0	0	0	19
Multinational Company	140	37	5	0	16	198
International Company	22	5	1	0	1	29
Non-profit/Charity Organisation	3	5	0	0	0	8
Total	309	166	6	1	22	504

Note. Jamovi data table. Chi-square test, df = 28, N = 504, p < .001, Cramer's V = 0.186.

Knowledge, skills and abilities

In analysing the sample included in this study, we considered only those competencies that appeared in at least 10 job advertisements. Table 9 shows how many postings listed each of the 29 competencies. The most frequently required competency was communication skills, which appeared in more than half of the analysed job advertisements (256) (Table 9).

We examined how the demand for the above competencies appeared in job advertisements for different positions. Based on the frequency with which each competency was mentioned in the postings related to specific positions, we ranked the competencies in order of importance for each job role. Table 10 presents the top five competencies for each position.

In the international literature review, the frameworks presented (WEF, OECD and Cedefop) consistently highlight five major competency categories: personal and social competencies, communication and collaboration, learning competency, problem-solving and analytical thinking, and digital competencies. The 29 competencies identified in our research were grouped according to this structure (see Table 11). This approach enables a direct comparison between the expectations appearing in Hungarian job advertisements and international trends, making it possible to identify the areas in which the competency profiles of HR positions follow similar patterns to those observed globally. At the same time, the categorisation supports a clearer interpretation of the competencies and enhances their applicability within career guidance processes (Table 11).

The competency areas highlighted in the WEF, OECD and Cedefop reports such as communication, collaboration, digital literacy, problem-solving and adaptability also appeared among the most frequently required skills in the Hungarian job advertisements. The dominance of the personal and social competencies and the communication and collaboration categories indicates that the HR profession remains strongly human-centred. At the same time, the presence of digital competencies and problem-solving and analytical thinking shows that HR tasks are becoming increasingly technology- and data-driven. The lower occurrence of the learning competency draws attention to the fact that, although continuous learning is emphasised internationally, it is less explicitly articulated in the Hungarian job postings. These patterns provide

valuable insights for career guidance and counselling processes, particularly in presenting the diversity of the HR profession and its increasingly competency-intensive nature.

Table 9
Frequency of Required Competencies

Competencies	count	percentage
Communication Skills	256	50,7%
MS Office Proficiency	252	50%
Accuracy and Precision	245	48,6%
HR Software Proficiency	152	30,1%
Proactivity and Flexibility	144	28,5%
Ability to Work Independently	127	25,1%
Problem-Solving Skills	117	23,2%
Excel Proficiency	115	22,8%
Knowledge of Relevant Legislation	111	22%
Teamwork and Collaboration	101	20%
Positive Attitude	69	13,6%
Organisational Skills	62	12,3%
Analytical Thinking	48	9,5%
Reliability	39	7,7%
Openness to Learning	37	7,3%
Customer Orientation	37	7,3%
Networking Skills	36	7,1%
Leadership Skills	36	7,1%
Empathy	34	6,7%
Systems Thinking	33	6,5%
Resilience (Ability to Work Under Pressure)	29	5,7%
Creativity	28	5,5%
Confidence	27	5,3%
Strategic Thinking	25	4,9%
Interpersonal Skills	24	4,7%
Sense of Responsibility	22	4,3%
Business Mindset	16	3,1%
Multitasking	14	2,7%
Presentation Skills	12	2,3%

Note. N = 504 relevant job advertisements

Table 10
Ranking of Required Competencies by Job Position

Job Position	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
HR Admin	MS Office Proficiency	Accuracy and Precision	Communication Skills	HR Software Proficiency	Knowledge of Relevant Legislation
HR Assistant	MS Office Proficiency	Accuracy and Precision	Communication Skills	Proactivity and Flexibility	Teamwork and Collaboration
HR Intern	MS Office Proficiency	Communication Skills	Excel Proficiency	Problem-Solving Skills	Teamwork and Collaboration
HR Coordinator	Accuracy and Precision	MS Office Proficiency	Communication Skills	Proactivity and Flexibility	Teamwork and Collaboration
HR Specialist	MS Office Proficiency	Communication Skills	Problem-Solving Skills	HR Software Proficiency	Accuracy and Precision
HR Manager	Communication Skills	Leadership Skills	Accuracy and Precision	Proactivity and Flexibility	HR Software Proficiency
HR Business Partner	Communication Skills	Problem-Solving Skills	Knowledge of Relevant Legislation	Proactivity and Flexibility	Accuracy and Precision
HR Generalist	Communication Skills	Accuracy and Precision	MS Office Proficiency	Knowledge of Relevant Legislation	Proactivity and Flexibility
HR Associate	Accuracy and Precision	MS Office Proficiency	Communication Skills	Knowledge of Relevant Legislation	Ability to Work Independently
HR Controller	Analytical Thinking	Excel Proficiency	Accuracy and Precision	MS Office Proficiency	HR Software Proficiency
Training & Development Specialist	MS Office Proficiency	Communication Skills	HR Software Proficiency	Proactivity and Flexibility	Accuracy and Precision
Payroll and Labour Administration	Accuracy and Precision	MS Office Proficiency	HR Software Proficiency	Knowledge of Relevant Legislation	Excel Proficiency
Recruiter	Communication Skills	MS Office Proficiency	Accuracy and Precision	Positive Attitude	Proactivity and Flexibility

Note. Autor's own editing

Table 11
Competency Categories Based on the International Framework

Competency Category (based on international frameworks)	Competencies Identified in the Study
Personal and social competencies	Accuracy and Precision Proactivity and Flexibility Ability to Work Independently Reliability Positive Attitude Sense of Responsibility Empathy Confidence Resilience (Ability to Work Under Pressure) Customer Orientation Leadership Skills Business Mindset Networking Skills Organisational Skills Multitasking Strategic Thinking
Communication & collaboration	Communication Skills Teamwork and Collaboration Presentation Skills Interpersonal Skills
Learning competency	Openness to Learning
Problem-solving & analytical thinking	Problem-Solving Skills Analytical Thinking Creativity Systems Thinking
Digital competencies	MS Office Proficiency Excel Proficiency HR Software Proficiency

Note. Autor's own editing

5 Conclusion

One of the key takeaways from this research is that online job advertisements clearly illustrate the competency expectations that have now become fundamental requirements for HR professionals' expectations that align closely with trends identified in international labour market forecasts. Digitalisation, the transition towards sustainability, and the global reconfiguration of the labour market all underscore that the HR professionals of the future must be equipped not only with industry-specific expertise but also with transversal and adaptive skills. The job postings analysed show unambiguously that communication skills, accuracy, and confident use of digital tools (e.g., MS Office, HR software) continue to play a prominent role. Additionally, problem-solving skills, analytical thinking, organisational skills, flexibility, and proactivity are among the competencies most frequently required.

It is worth emphasising that these real-world job market data are consistent with the trends highlighted by the World Economic Forum, the OECD, and Cedefop reports. These international forecasts repeatedly draw attention to the growing importance of soft skills, creative thinking, leadership, collaboration, and lifelong learning. This pattern is evident in the HR field as well: the competency rankings by position clearly show that even in more administrative roles, problem-solving, proactivity, and adaptable communication are expected, while strategic thinking and leadership abilities are particularly emphasised in managerial or business partner roles. Language skills, especially English, have also become indispensable requirements, reflecting the demands of an increasingly globalised work environment.

Our findings are particularly relevant for career guidance and counselling. For individuals considering a career in HR, the results clearly demonstrate that general familiarity with the HR field is insufficient for making well-informed career decisions: different HR roles require distinct sets of skills and knowledge. Since the analysis highlights the competency differences between areas such as recruitment, HR generalist roles, HR Business Partner positions, payroll, and learning and development, career guidance practitioners can provide data-driven, evidence-based support to clients during career exploration and decision-making. The categorisation of competencies according to the international framework also illustrates that HR roles simultaneously require strong human-centred and digital capabilities. This is a particularly important message for prospective HR professionals, who often associate the field primarily with interpersonal work, while the job advertisements clearly indicate the significant weight of data-driven, administrative and system-oriented tasks. As a result, HR emerges as a career pathway that demands not only strong interpersonal skills but increasingly robust technological knowledge and analytical thinking.

The findings further support career counsellors in helping future HR professionals assess their strengths, identify areas for development and plan their long-term career progression. The competency profiles make it evident that HR is not a homogeneous field but one that is highly differentiated, requiring conscious and deliberate career planning. By updating and clarifying the entry requirements associated with various HR pathways, the study assists career guidance professionals in communicating realistic expectations to individuals preparing to enter the field.

Overall, the research demonstrates that analysing job advertisements provides a valuable foundation for supporting career-related decision-making in the HR domain. The structured exploration of competencies deepens career understanding, enables the differentiated presentation of career opportunities and strengthens the evidence base for tools used in career guidance. Taken together, these insights help individuals interested in HR make more informed and deliberate choices among professional pathways, while also enhancing the quality of support that career guidance practitioners can provide.

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