ACADEMIC PROFESSION COMPETENCIES: RESULTS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The research project “Academic Profession Competencies Profile: Between new Requirements and Possibilities” (APROFRAME), is supported by Croatian Science Foundation.
Academic profession competencies: research results

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Examine the attitudes of Croatian academics on the importance and mastery of academic profession competencies for successful accomplishment of academic tasks at the beginning of their senior academic career.
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Research results (Turk & Ledić, 2015b, Turk & Ledić, 2016a, 2016b):

- academics from humanities, social sciences and arts in comparison with the academics from natural, technical and biotechnical sciences and biomedicine;
- women in comparison with men;
- junior academics in comparison with senior ones;
- research participants with less working experience in comparison with the research participants with more working experience.
Describe and explain the process of professional socialisation (of junior researchers) within the system of higher education and science in Croatia.
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Academic profession competencies: challenges

Research results (Turk & Ledić, 2015b, Turk & Ledić, 2016a, 2016b):

- A sense of insecurity and insufficient support as one of the main characteristics of the professional socialisation into the teaching profession.
- Junior researchers adopt affirmative attitudes (willingness, eagerness and love) towards teaching during the process of professional socialisation.
- International mobility and networking are the key elements for the junior researchers’ professional socialisation into the international disciplinary community, their research maturity as well as for attaining legitimacy in the early phases of their academic career.
Academic profession competencies: challenges

Research results (Turk & Ledić, 2015b, Turk & Ledić, 2016a, 2016b):

- the mentorship of junior researchers takes place in between formal and informal mentoring, whereby the characteristics of the personal relationship occupy a prominent position in successful professional socialisation
- female participants’ professional socialisation experience is burdened by various obstacles and problems
- the results point to a neglect of the institutions with regard to quality development of the junior researchers, a practice of excessive teaching and administrative tasks as well as utter disregard in terms of mentoring
- the results also point to a widespread practice of gender discrimination, most pronounced when it comes to motherhood
Academic profession competencies: recommendations

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Academic profession competencies: recommendations for policy makers and higher education institutions

Based on the proposed competency profile

- Defining the employment criteria which are based on knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Organisation of the academic staff development in accordance with the defined competencies required for work in the institution or profession
- Achievement evaluation which is based on the defined procedures and connected to the promotion, dependent on the competency-based measurable achievements
- Planning the future direction of the development of the institution or profession and redefining the requirements for the academics
Based on the research results on the professional socialisation (of junior researchers) into the academic profession (1/2)

- To structure and carefully plan the professional socialisation into different research fields/disciplines because it is a prerequisite for the formation of junior researchers’ stable identity
- To establish a balance with regard to the teaching and research overload
- To provide the academic development programmes for junior researchers which are based on the competency profile
- To improve the doctoral study programmes in order for them to strongly contribute to the acquisition and development of the research competencies
- To encourage junior researchers to establish a connection between their research and teaching activities
- To establish the mechanisms and strategies for the strengthening of mentorship at the institutional level
Based on the research results on the professional socialisation (of junior researchers) into the academic profession (2/2)

- To promote the alternative forms of mentoring
- To encourage the discussion on the challenges of mobility management in science and higher education
- To deliberate on the development of the incentive institutional policies and practices for the realisation of mobility in science and higher education
- To detect and change the gender-based discriminatory institutional practices and provide a systematic institutional support to the female junior researchers
- To recognise academic capitalism as an additional factor in the science and higher education system development and as the challenge for the development of the junior researchers' professional identity
Academic profession competencies: recommendations for future research

- To focus on the exploration of the process of the junior researchers' professional identity development
- To encourage further research on the junior researchers' mastery level of the academic profession competencies
- To conduct a more comprehensive analysis and exploration of mentoring in the science and higher education system in Croatia
- To encourage research on academic mobility
- To explore and analyse the institutional practices regarding the junior researchers’ academic development
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Thank you for your attention

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