

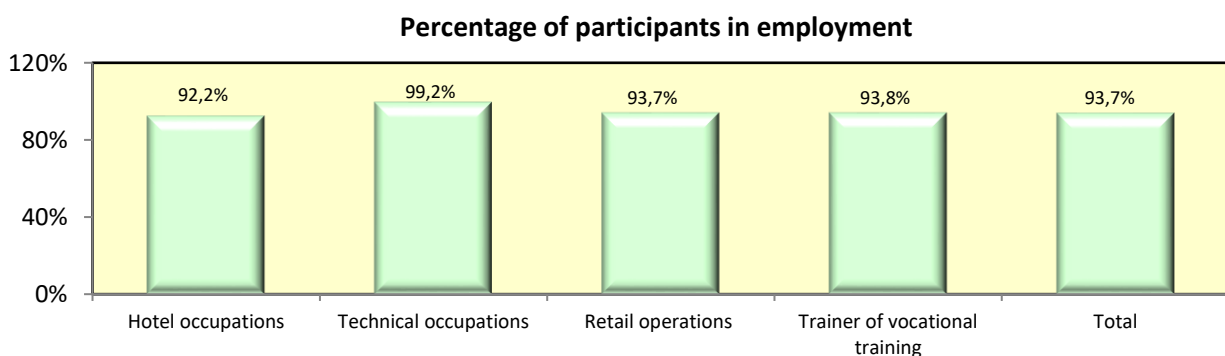
EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (2013-2019)

The evaluation of social interventions, including human resource training and development activities, is considered very important by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA). For the HRDA, the assessment, accountability and transparency regarding the impact of its interventions on the human resources, the enterprises and overall the economy and society of Cyprus is a firm objective. The study which evaluates the impact of the System of Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) on the persons that were certified during the period 2013-2019, while at the same time collecting the views of enterprises whose employees have been certified and of the Centres for Assessment of Vocational Qualifications (CAVQ)/Assessment Centres that have certified persons, was conducted in this context. The SVQ aims at upgrading the human resources through the assessment and certification of the vocational qualifications of candidates. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) of the European Union (EU) in the framework of the Operational Programme «Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion» during the programming period 2014-2020.

The main objective of the study is the evaluation of the impact of the SVQ on the persons that were certified during the period 2013-2019, while at the same time collecting the views of enterprises whose employees have been certified and of CAVQ/Assessment Centres that have certified persons. The data were collected using appropriately designed questionnaires to the participants, the enterprises they were employed and the CAVQ/Assessment Centres. The population of participants is 2.692 persons and the sample covered in the telephone survey amounts to 1.954 persons with a statistical error of 1,0%. The data are analysed by grouping the standards in which persons were certified, namely hotel occupations, technical occupations, retail operations and the trainer of vocational training. The survey in the enterprises that had more than 5 employees who were certified was conducted to 21 out of 33 enterprises and in the CAVQ/Assessment Centres to 39 out of 47 that have certified persons during the period 2013-2019.

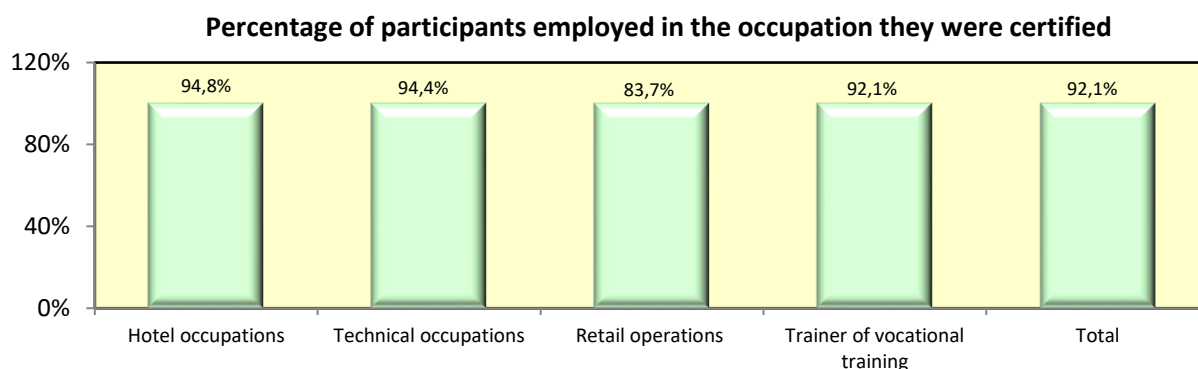
A. Impact of the SVQ on employability

The vast majority of the participants (93,7%) were employed at the time of the field research, about 3,6 years after their certification. During certification, the vast majority of the participants (93,3%) were employed. Of those who were employed during certification, 95,9% remained employed during the field research, while 2,2% were unemployed and 1,9% were inactive.



The majority of participants were employed as Professionals (38,3%), followed by Service and Sales workers (20,9%). By occupational group, the majority of participants were employed as Business and administration

professionals (14,6%), followed by Teaching professionals, 13,4%. The vast majority of the participants (92,1%) remained in the occupation they were certified. The smaller percentage of participants who were certified and remained in that occupation was found in retail operations (83,7%).



The average gross monthly salary of the employed participants was €1.514. More than 8 out of 10 participants (83,5%) were in full-time and permanent employment, with the percentage of those certified in technical occupations being significantly higher (98,4%) and the percentage of those certified in hotel occupations (77,6%) being lower.

The majority of participants (80,0%) continued to work in the same enterprise they were employed when they were certified through SVQ.

More than 8 out of 10 employed participants (81,1%) reported that the enterprises recognised positively the acquisition of a professional qualification through the SVQ. The majority (77,8%) reported that the SVQ improved to a very good or good degree their career path and 84,9% consider that the connection between current tasks and the knowledge acquired during their participation in the SVQ is very good or good.

Almost 7 out of 10 participants who were either unemployed or inactive during certification and remained so during the field research (68,7%), reported that they did not find a job after the completion of their participation in the SVQ. The main reasons for being unemployed are the “difficulties in finding any kind of job” (26,4%) and “age” (14,0%). More than 5 out of 10 inactive participants (52,9%) stated that the main reason for their withdrawal from the labour market is “retirement”.

B. Benefits gained by the participants from certification

The employed participants reported that the main benefit from their participation in the SVQ was “improving their professional knowledge and skills” (45,8%). The participants, in total, reported that the main benefits of certification were “improving their personal knowledge and skills” (23,7%) and “improving their personal development” (22,7%).

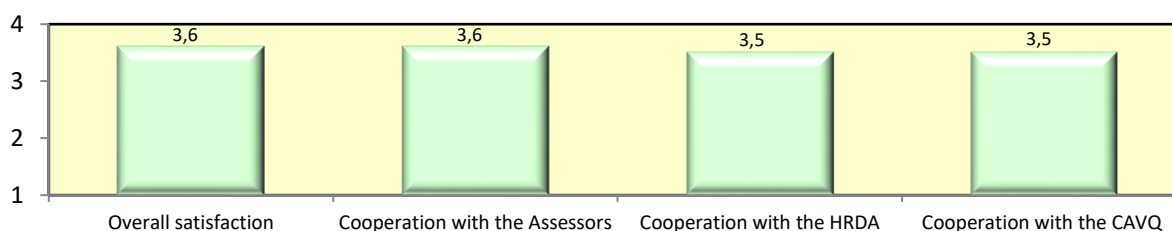
Almost 9 out of 10 participants (88,6%), consider very useful or useful the knowledge and skills acquired by participating in the SVQ. Almost 8 out of 10 (76,4%) consider that their participation in the SVQ has improved their employment prospects to a very good or good degree.

C. Satisfaction of participants from their participation in the SVQ

93,2% of the participants were either very satisfied or satisfied¹ from their participation in the SVQ and 92,9% would recommend others to participate. The vast majority of participants in the SVQ were either very satisfied or satisfied by their cooperation with the Assessors (93,3%), the HRDA (86,7%) and the CAVQ (88,6%).

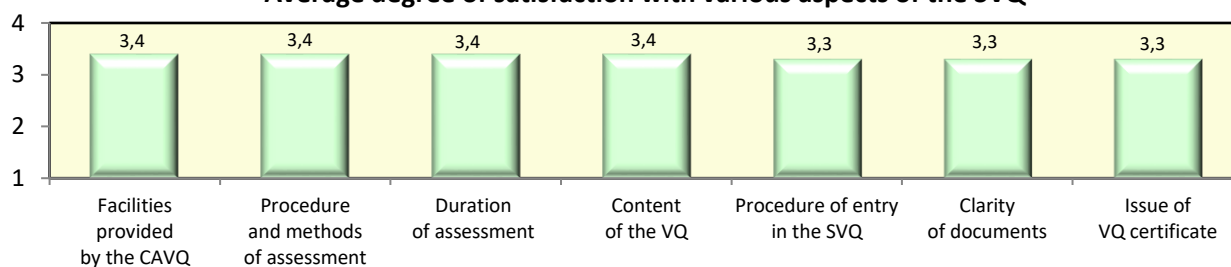
¹ The scale used was: 1: Not satisfied, 2: Partially satisfied, 3: Satisfied, 4: Very satisfied.

Average degree of overall satisfaction from the participation in the SVQ and the cooperation with the Assessors, the HRDA and the CAVQ



The participants were satisfied with various aspects of the SVQ.

Average degree of satisfaction with various aspects of the SVQ



D. Enterprises whose employees have been certified

The majority of enterprises were overall very satisfied (81,0%) from the participation of their employees in the SVQ. Almost 9 out of 10 enterprises (85,7%) reported that the employees who have certified their vocational qualifications (VQ) have better performance and 66,7% reported that the certification of vocational qualifications is considered during the recruitment process. Over 7 out of 10 enterprises (71,4%) reward employees who have been certified, the main methods being the «professional development» (33,3%) and the «upgrading of duties» (28,6%).

It is noteworthy that all enterprises stated that they would encourage their employees to participate in the SVQ to certify their vocational qualifications. Also, more than 9 out of 10 enterprises (95,2%) reported that they would encourage other enterprises to motivate their employees to certify vocational qualifications through the SVQ.

E. CAVQ/Assessment Centres

The CAVQ that participated in the survey stated that overall they were satisfied with both the SVQ certification process (69,2%) and their cooperation with the HRDA (84,6%). Almost 9 out of 10 CAVQ considered their level of accessibility to the SVQ as very good (25,6%) or good (61,5%). It is noteworthy that more than 9 out of 10 CAVQ (94,9%) would encourage enterprises to motivate their employees to participate in the SVQ and certify their vocational qualifications.

F. Concluding remarks

The SVQ seems to achieve to a great degree the aim of upgrading the human resources through the evaluation of the knowledge, skills and competences of persons and contributes to the increase of the productivity of employees and enterprises. The improvement of the knowledge and skills of persons through the process of certification is indisputable and it was stated as a benefit both by the individuals themselves and the enterprises whose employees have been certified as well as by the CAVQ/Assessment Centres. The usefulness of the SVQ is particularly evident from the high degree of satisfaction expressed by the participants.

The CAVQ and the Assessors of Vocational Qualifications are important factors for the success of the SVQ. Ensuring the quality of the services provided by CAVQ and the Assessors, but also their assessment through a study, as well as the completion of a survey by the participants following certification, is particularly important.

The expansion of the SVQ will be achieved if, among others, all regulated occupations include the VQ certificates issued by the HRDA in the criteria for the licence to practice the occupation. The evaluation and certification in the context of the SVQ of all graduates of the Technical Schools and Tertiary Education Institutions that offer relevant fields of study, will contribute to the further promotion of the SVQ. It is also important that Vocational Qualifications Standards become a reference point for the training programmes subsidised by the HRDA. At the same time, it is considered necessary to give it further promotion and publicity.

G. Demographic data of participants

The demographic data for the participants' gender refer to the 2.692 persons who were certified, while the data for the age, the educational level and district refer to the 1.954 persons who participated in the telephone survey.

- Gender: Men (50,4%), Women (49,6%)
- Age: 16-24 (1,6%), 25-39 (40,2%), 40-54 (41,8%), 55-64 (14,4%), 65+ (1,6%), Don't answer (0,4%)
- Education: Primary (5,2%), Lower secondary (Gymnasium) (5,3%), Upper secondary (Lyceum) (16,9%), Technical schools (7,2%), Post-secondary (13,0%), Bachelor's degree (23,3%), Master's degree (24,9%), Doctoral degree (4,2%)
- District: Nicosia (36,0%), Limassol (20,3%), Larnaca (17,1%), Paphos (13,8%), Famagusta (12,8%)

H. Characteristics of enterprises

The data refer to the characteristics of the 21 enterprises whose employees have been certified and have participated in the survey.

- Sectors of economic activity: Hotels (52,4% - 11 enterprises), Legal and accounting activities (19,0% - 4 enterprises), Education (14,3% - 3 universities), Telecommunications (9,5% - 2 enterprises), Banks (4,8% - 1 bank)
- Size: 1-9 persons (4,8%), 10-49 persons (9,5%), 50-249 persons (33,3%), 250+ persons (52,4%)

I. Characteristics of CAVQ/Assessment Centres

The data refer to the characteristics of the 39 CAVQ/Assessment Centres which participated in the process of certification of vocational qualifications and have participated in the survey.

- Main sectors of economic activity: Education (64,0%), Retail trade (7,7%), Consultancy services (7,7%), Manufacture of food products (5,1%), Hotels (5,1%)
- Size: 1-9 persons (51,3%), 10-49 persons (17,9%), 50-249 persons (20,5%), 250+ persons (7,7%), Don't know/Don't answer (2,6%)