

THE OPINION SURVEY **EXPERIENCES** **TOUR**

*The Perspective of Students
on Vocational Education and Training*





THE OPINION SURVEY
EXPERIENCES
TOUR

*The Perspective of Students
on Vocational Education and Training*

The opinion expressed in this document represents the view of VET students and the interpretation of the author, while is not necessarily representative of the position of the UNDP Albania.

© UNDP ALBANIA
"Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania

DESIGN
HL Branding

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



THE OPINION SURVEY
EXPERIENCES
TOUR

*The Perspective of Students
on Vocational Education and Training*



FOREWORD

Experiences and opinions matter. In Vocational Education and Training (VET), students' experiences, the quality, outcomes, and effectiveness of VET provision may have a significant impact not only on the individual's education choice but also on policy-making and the image of VET in communities.

This first SD4E survey on students' experience in VET complements previous analyses such as "Review of Albania's vocational education and training system, May 2020". The survey provides insights on the attractiveness and image of VET, satisfaction with different aspects of the system, priorities, and suggestions for future improvements.

About 1006 face-to-face interviews conducted among students of 12th and 13th grades in different schools provided abundant insights to understand and include their point of view into our future work, strategy design, and decision making.

VET can play a strategic role in providing Albania with a workforce ready for the challenges ahead. Improving and maintaining high-level workforce skills and competencies is essential to ensuring Albania remains competitive and innovative against increasing global competition, fast-changing labor-market needs, and demographic challenges.

Despite the challenges VET faces in Albania, the results show an overall positive attitude towards VET effectiveness and has a great image compared to general education according to students. VET provides a qualified workforce in high demand in the market and knowledgeable students ready for further university studies. Students value upper secondary VET to obtain a profession, secure a job, and develop their skills.

The students themselves are the most advanced promotion instrument VET could invest in, so understanding their take on VET is crucial. The ability of VET to equip students with the right skills through a good teaching environment and prospects for the labor market is essential and a decisive element in making VET an attractive option and growing among future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is produced by Skills Development for Employment Programme (SD4E), financed by Swiss Development Cooperation and implemented by UNDP Albania, under the supervision of the Programme Coordinators Ms. Ada Shima, Ms. Besa Fuga, Mr. Klevis Hysa, Ms. Silvana Haxhiaj, Ms. Sonila Limaj, led by Mr. Eno Ngjela.

The project is supported by Ms. Delina Ibrahimaj, Minister of Finance, and Mr. Stavri Lako, Head of Sector, Sector of Vocational Education.

SD4E is thankful to all VET providers who participated in the project, as well as the academic staff who actively facilitated the students' participation in both the qualitative and quantitative study.

SD4E is grateful to all the students at VET schools who actively participated in the "The Experiences Tour" project and genuinely shared their perspectives and giving voice to their peers all over Albania in the "Students' Perspective on Vocational Education and Training, Opinion Survey".

"The Experiences Tour" included a research project and a promotional campaign, oriented towards experiential and gamification elements designed, authored, and implemented by HL Branding and Insight Sage.

The opinion expressed in this document represents the views of VET students and the author's interpretation and is not necessarily representative of the position of UNDP Albania.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
Executive summary	8

1. INTRODUCTION- METHODOLOGY 16

1.1 Objectives of the report	18
1.2 Qualitative phase	19
1.3 Quantitative phase.....	20
1.3.1 Sample design and target group	20
1.3.2 The quantitative questionnaire	24
1.4 Gamification phase.....	24

2. PROFILE OF VET STUDENTS 26

2.1 Free time activities	28
2.2 Employment	30
2.3 Concerns of youths.....	35
2.4 Accommodation of students	38

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY 40

3.1 Source of information about VET.....	42
3.2 Objection toward VET choice and image in the community	46

4. IMAGE OF VET 48

4.1 General VET image and the role in society	50
4.2 VET image compared with the general education.....	52
4.3 VET image in relation to the labour market VET	53

5. SATISFACTION WITH VET 54

5.1 Satisfaction with knowledge attained at VET.....	56
5.2 Satisfaction with different aspects of VET schools	59
5.3 Practical learning at schools and businesses / other organization	62
5.4 Satisfaction VET professional practical learning at school.....	64
5.5 Satisfaction VET professional practices at businesses (WBL)	65
5.6 Recommendation of VET education vs general education.....	66

6. CAREER GUIDANCE AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE 68

6.1 Career guidance- main advisor	70
6.2 Future plans.....	71
6.3 Emigration	76
6.4 Reflection about the future.....	77

7. VET PRIORITIES 78

ANNEXES	82
1 List of tables and figures	84
2 The quantitative questionnaire	85

EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY

In the frame of the Skills Development for Employment Programme (SD4E) and its efforts to support the Government of Albania in designing VET policies that meet the needs of students, UNDP aimed to conduct a study that explores perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of upper secondary VET students, on several key dimensions of VET.

Choosing a learning pathway

The primary sources of VET information are informal. Family and relatives are the primary sources of information, promoters, and advisors for students pursuing VET education. Former VET students (siblings, cousins, etc.) within the close communities serve as role models and reference points, stimulating youths' interest in VET fields of study. The attraction for the specific field of choice is a fundamental reason for choosing VET, second only to the need to get a specialization to secure a job in the future. The high level of interest and declared passion for their chosen fields is an exciting insight that suggests students stay loyal to their respective fields while deciding on their future endeavors. Only one-fifth of students declare they will follow different professional directions from the one they are currently studying.

VET schools play a secondary role as a source of information, promoter, and advisor by inviting students to VET through events such as VET open days or elementary school visits to promote VET among 9th graders. These activities add up to the interest in selecting VET education and the information around the topic. However, they are not the key for most students, suggesting that schools can accomplish more to promote VET education within communities.

Very few students have experienced objections against their choice to follow VET secondary education, mainly coming from their peers and family members. Students believe these oppositions are groundless and driven by a lack of knowledge about the depth of skills learned in VET.

Youth profile

The profile of youths choosing to study in VET is similar to their peers in general education, as far as their main life activities are concerned. A central activity in youths' life is the time spent with family members and friends inside and outside school. Technology takes a considerable place in youth's life, especially time spent on social media platforms for hobbies and fun activities, but not to support their VET field of study. Students follow artists, sportspeople, or lifestyle celebrities on social media. Still, they do not follow professionals or influencers within their fields of study to learn more about their skills, advice, or careers. The leading digital activity related to VET is following their school page on social media (Facebook and Instagram). Students' main hobbies and secondary activities outside the digital scene are related to sports and different arts, while literature or religion are topics of interest for a minority.

Technology addiction and smoking are the most frequent distressing activities reported by students. More alarming activities, such as alcohol use, hashish, marijuana, and heavy drugs, have a relatively lower frequency. Family economic difficulties play a role in a considerable segment of VET students.

THE HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST AND DECLARED PASSION FOR THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS IS AN EXCITING INSIGHT THAT SUGGESTS **STUDENTS STAY LOYAL TO THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS** WHILE DECIDING ON THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS

TECHNOLOGY TAKES A CONSIDERABLE PLACE IN YOUTH'S LIFE, ESPECIALLY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR HOBBIES AND FUN ACTIVITIES, BUT NOT TO SUPPORT THEIR VET FIELD OF STUDY. STUDENTS FOLLOW ARTISTS, SPORTSPEOPLE, OR LIFESTYLE CELEBRITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

VET image

The VET's image in Albania is firmly positive among VET students and around 9 in 10 VET students think vocational education is an excellent choice for young people like them. While they recognize VET plays a positive role in strengthening the country's economy, they do not believe it has a significant impact on reducing unemployment.

Most VET students (68%) believe their VET education prepares them better for university studies than general education, identifying earlier training as an advantage. However, students refrain from defining VET education as more challenging than general secondary education or as having students with better grades. Most VET students (67%) believe that institutions and communities must prioritize VET over general education.

Most VET students (91%) trust their curricula to equip them with the skills required by the labor market, leading thus to well-paid jobs. Similarly, the majority (88%) believe their education and final diploma give them good opportunities to work abroad.

Employment

37% of VET students work in parallel to their studies, mainly in part-time jobs. It is an encouraging result that 61% of them work in the same area they study or in similar ones. The employment rate is higher among students studying construction, food processing, geodesy, mechanics, vehicles and transportation services, and food processing. Employment among male VET students is almost 3.5 times higher than among female VET students. The employment rate increases as they progress in age or grade.

37%
of VET students work in parallel to their studies, mainly in part-time jobs

Employment among male VET students is almost 3.5 times higher than among female VET students. The employment rate increases as they progress in age or grade.

Satisfaction with VET

VET students are pretty satisfied with the different dimensions of their education. Their opinions on VET components are solely based on their experience in their respective schools, with no benchmarks to compare and no information about other VET schools' progress within or outside the country.

The highest performance indicators include teachers' communication skills and professional qualifications, especially teachers of practical learning at school. High satisfaction is measured even regarding practical and theoretical professional knowledge.

The lower satisfaction levels relate to the lack of extracurricular activities, dormitory conditions, the lack of knowledge and skills received about computers and technology, not sufficient measures to eliminate bullying, the location of the school, and the school's physical conditions (facilities, heating, toilets, etc.).

VET Practical learning

The reported scores for participation in practical learning are high (+90%) among VET students participating in this survey.

Respondents report higher satisfaction with practical learning at business premises. Practical learning at schools also scores well, despite needing more supplies, including raw materials, up-to-date equipment, machinery, and tools for effective learning. During the open discussions, some students even suggest negligence from school staff in better managing materials, equipment, machinery, or tools.

Career guidance

VET students' primary and most vital career guidance is family with whom they discuss their professional plans and get information concerning the job market or university studies. The secondary pillar is the larger personal community, such as the bigger family, cousins, and friends. Students are not familiar with the career counselor role within schools. Most of them are not familiar with the term. However, career guidance within schools seems to take place through teachers, who incorporate this task in their day-to-day communication with students.

The future after VET

One-half of VET students, plan to pursue their university studies after finishing vocational school. Mainly they will pursue further education in the same fields of study, believing additional studies will give them better professional opportunities. Once graduated, 34% of VET students intend to primarily focus on finding a job and not pursuing other education, at least at the time.

Generally, VET students are optimistic about finding a job locally immediately after finishing school. They declare to be mainly clear regarding the future VET education offers them and are satisfied with it.

Yet, one-third plan to emigrate to work of study in other countries.

THE VET PRIORITIES

ACCORDING TO STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY, PRIORITIES TO FURTHER IMPROVE VET INCLUDE:

1 INCREASE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES

2 INCREASE VET SCHOOLS AND THE VARIETY OF FIELDS OF STUDY

3 INVESTMENTS IN SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDINGS, TOOLS, AND EQUIPMENT

4 FURTHER PROMOTE AND IMPROVE VET IMAGE

5 REFRESHED KNOWLEDGE AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT TO LABOR MARKET NEEDS

6 INVESTMENT IN TEACHERS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

1

PROFILI

I NXËNËSVE

This survey provides a snapshot of the current VET system from the student's point of view based on primary data from both qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.1 Objectives of the report

This survey provides a snapshot of the current VET system from the student's point of view based on primary data from both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study research objectives include:

Measure VET attractiveness among students

Understand the perception around VET and the impact on the society

Determine the existing carrier guidance channels

Assess the teaching and learning environment

Identify challenges and needs for improvements

1.2 Qualitative phase

The qualitative method is used as the first layer, being exploratory in nature, thus providing rich content for the questionnaire designs. The insight gathered from the qualitative phase is used in the commentary of this research report for a better understanding of the qualitative results.

The qualitative stage from November to December 2021 includes four focus groups with 9-10 participants each and an average duration of 2.5 hours. At this stage, four schools were involved, representing the entire country: north, south, east, and central Albania, with a

diversified representation in the size of schools and fields of study. The group discussions were facilitated with a semi-structured guide covering all the steps of the student's journey into VET. Furthermore, free association techniques were applied during group discussions to uncover the spontaneous image of VET, along with anonymous mini-individual questionnaires to collect sensitive information regarding school issues and social problems.

The focus group participants are 11th-13th grade VET students. The participant's selection considered gender and academic achievement (low, medium, and high) to ensure a good level of representation of all student's profiles.

SCHOOLS VISITED IN THE QUALITATIVE PHASE

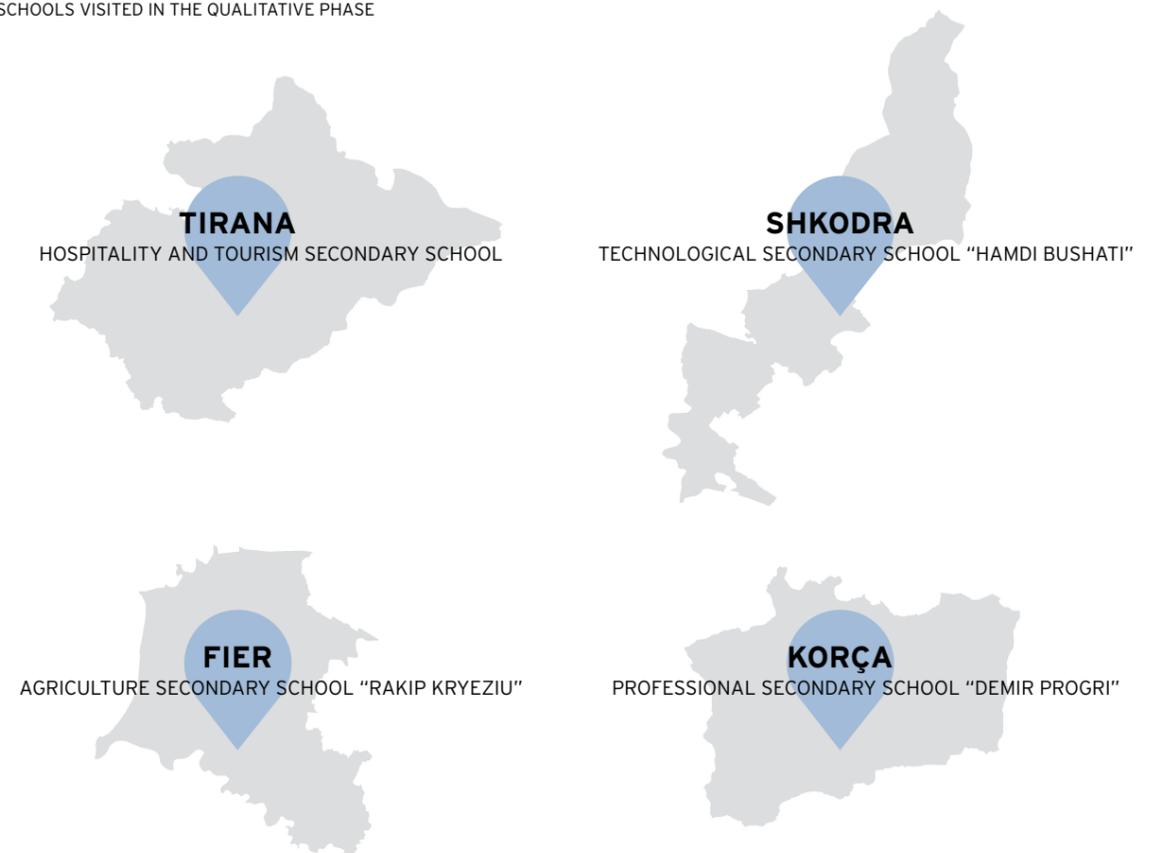


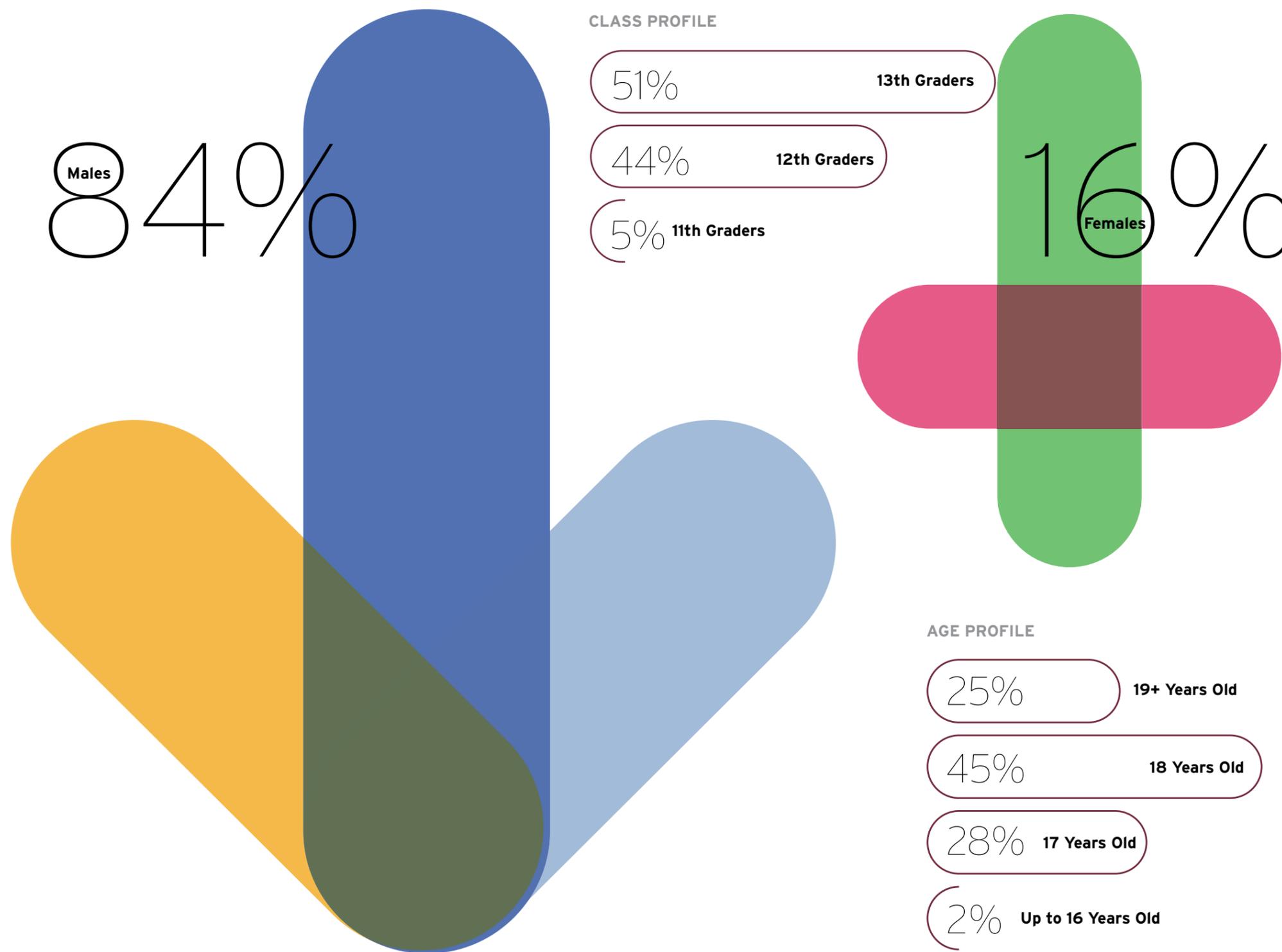
FIGURE 1
GENDER PROFILE

1.3 Quantitative phase

The research project surveyed students at the secondary level of vocational schools in Albania, asking them various questions about VET in Albania. Data collection was completed through Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), a face-to-face data collection method in which interviewers use tablets to record the answers given during the interview. The usage of the CAPI method contributed to reducing interview duration, minimizing input errors, and enabling good monitoring of interviewers' work throughout the fieldwork duration.

1.3.1 Sample design and target group

The research surveys 49 students of the 11th grade (5%), 446 students of the 12th grade (44%), and 511 students of the 13th grade (51%). The survey target group is 12th - 13th-grade students who are more experienced with the education system and have developed more robust critical thinking considering their more mature age. When necessary, a small portion of the sample was collected among 11th-grade students because the total number of 12th - 13th graders in some small schools is smaller than the sample needed. The chosen respondents do not include any 10th graders. Most interviewed students are between 17-19 years old, with few exceptions.



The sample reflects location representativeness; thus, each city is represented with at least one school in the survey sample structure or more than one

according to the number of schools per city. Data were collected in Berat, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastër, Korçë, Lezhë, Pogradec, Shkodër, Tiranë, and Vlorë prefecture. Each school is

represented with 50 structured interviews to enable school analyses and comparisons between them. The last layer considers fields of study representativeness. All 20 fields of study

are part of the survey, and the sample structure reflects their weight in the VET system, with slight variations, due to amalgamation with rigorous sampling criteria per school.

FIGURE 2
SAMPLE PER SCHOOL

% - weight of the school sample in the total sample n - absolute number of sample interviewed in each school

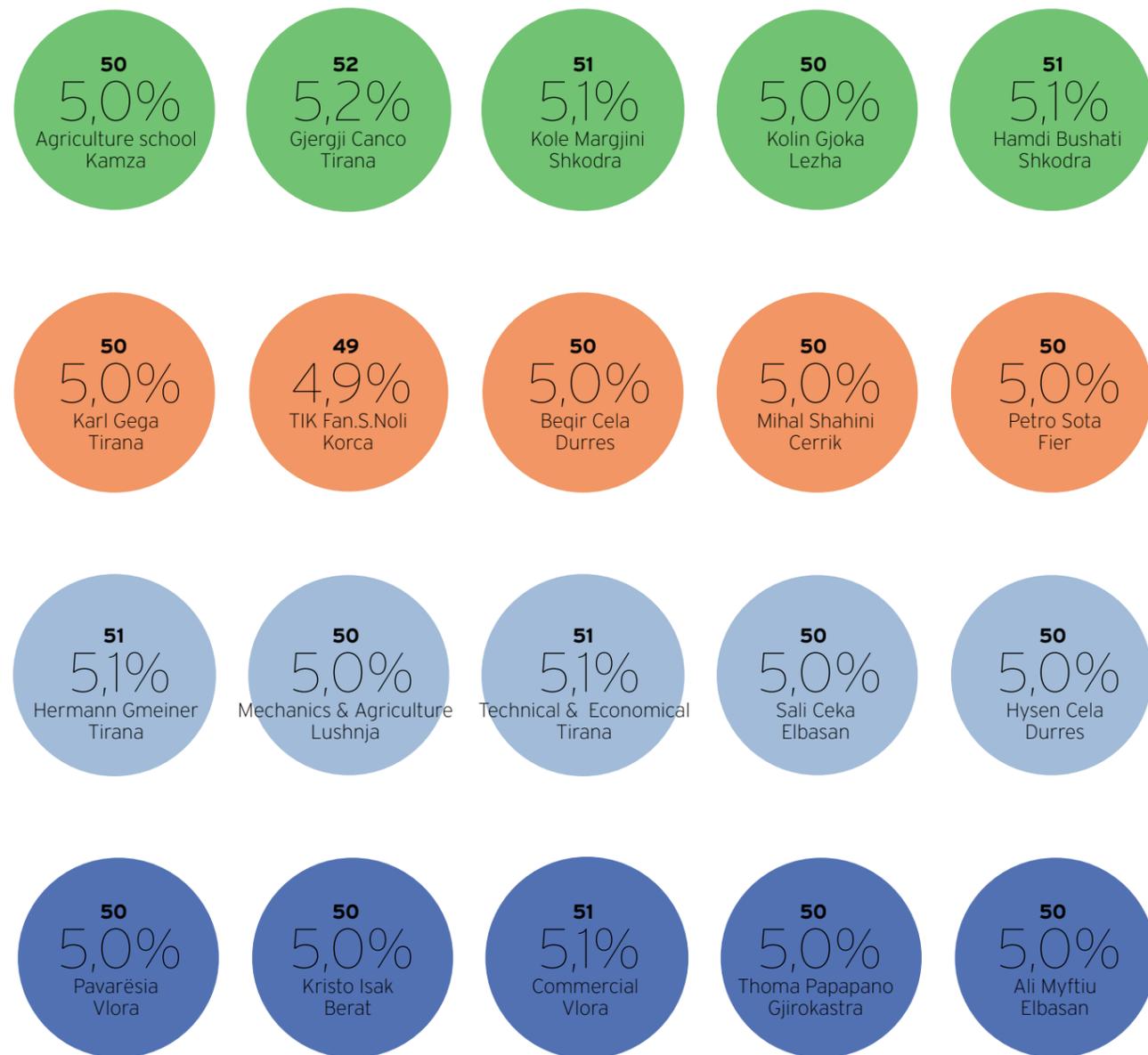
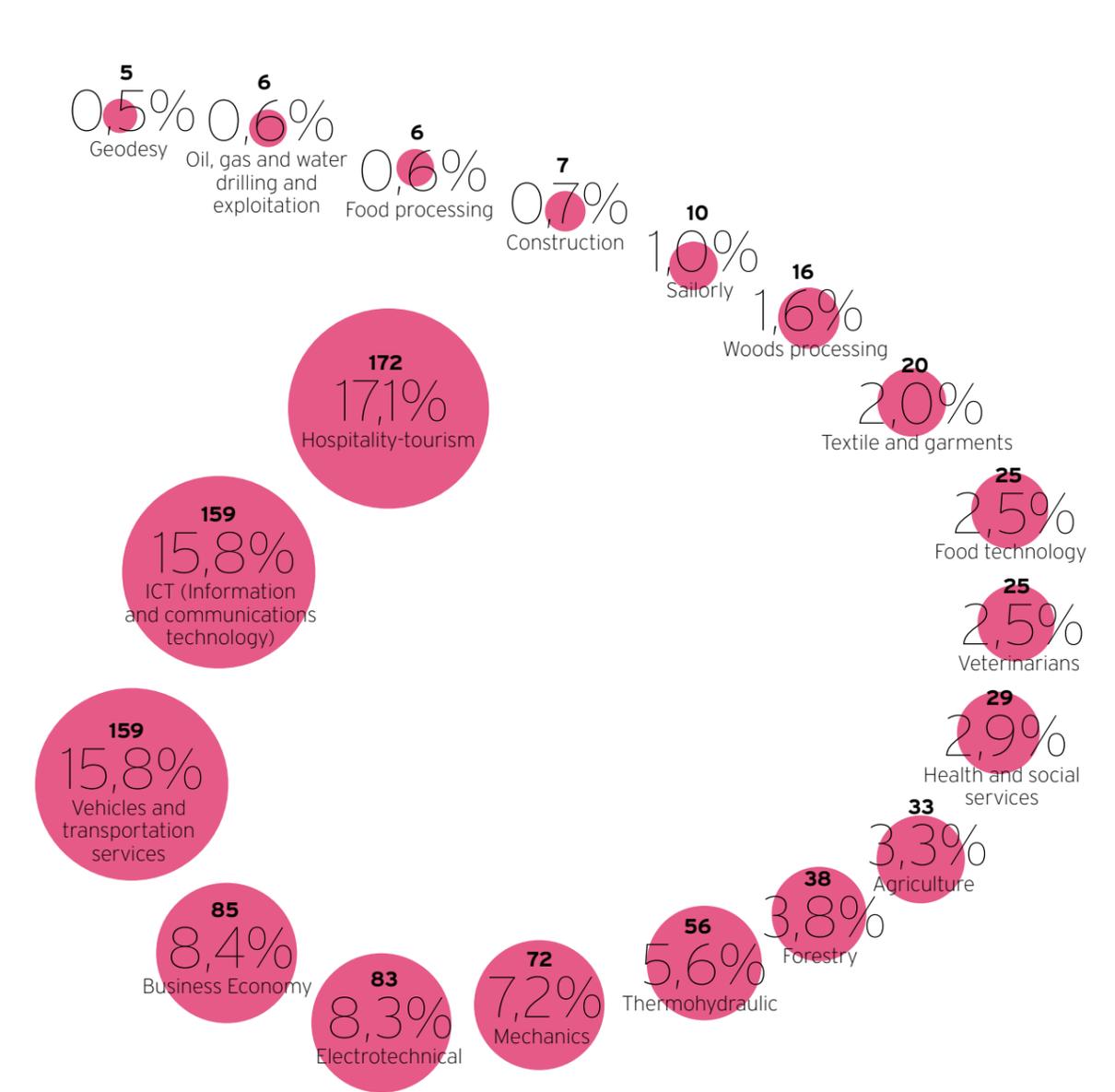


FIGURE 3
SAMPLE PER FIELD OF STUDIES

% - weight of the field of studies sample in the total sample n - absolute number of sample interviewed per field of studies



1.3.2 The quantitative questionnaire

The quantitative questionnaire covers a wide range of topics following the research objectives articulated along the five main areas of investigation. During the interviewing process, printed cards with prompted responses were used on some of the questions so that respondents could read the answers themselves for a better understanding, in parallel to the interviewers reading aloud.

Before finalizing the instrument and starting the data collection process, pilot phase with 16 students was conducted at "Hospitality and Tourism" secondary school in Tirana. This process aimed to test the degree of comprehensibility, the fluency of completing the questionnaire to help complete the final fine-tuning of the research instrument, the questionnaire.

1.4 Gamification phase

Throughout the entire research data collection period, the communication and social media team was part of the Experiences Tour team.

Their goal was to raise students' engagement in the process through entertaining experiences. The team had designed different activations where students' engagement through gamifying experiences was the main task.

Combining multimedia elements with skills was the primary tool to engage students. Students were encouraged to participate in live polls, social media interviews, games, and competitions through different activities. All these activities combined well both the knowledge that students are learning in school

with their passions, which they usually develop outside schools.

The content developed by the team was usually uploaded online on the same day. Social Media channels are the platforms where Gjen.R lives, and, in a month, it tripled its followers on Instagram (main app) by engaging followers with high-quality content.

Students themselves were invited to be in the lead regarding the content in

With the team's support, students were invited to develop content on their own to be published on Gjen.R platforms. This philosophy, "Let me do it myself" fits well with the age range in general and the VET students specifically.

Overall, the entertaining section of the

process helped the entire job become easier to be grasped by the students but also by the teaching staff. This also helped to build bridges with the students for future engagements while showcasing its immense potential to the public.

The content developed by the team was usually uploaded online on the same day. Social Media channels are the platforms where Gjen.R lives, and, in a month, it tripled its followers on Instagram



2

THE PROFILE

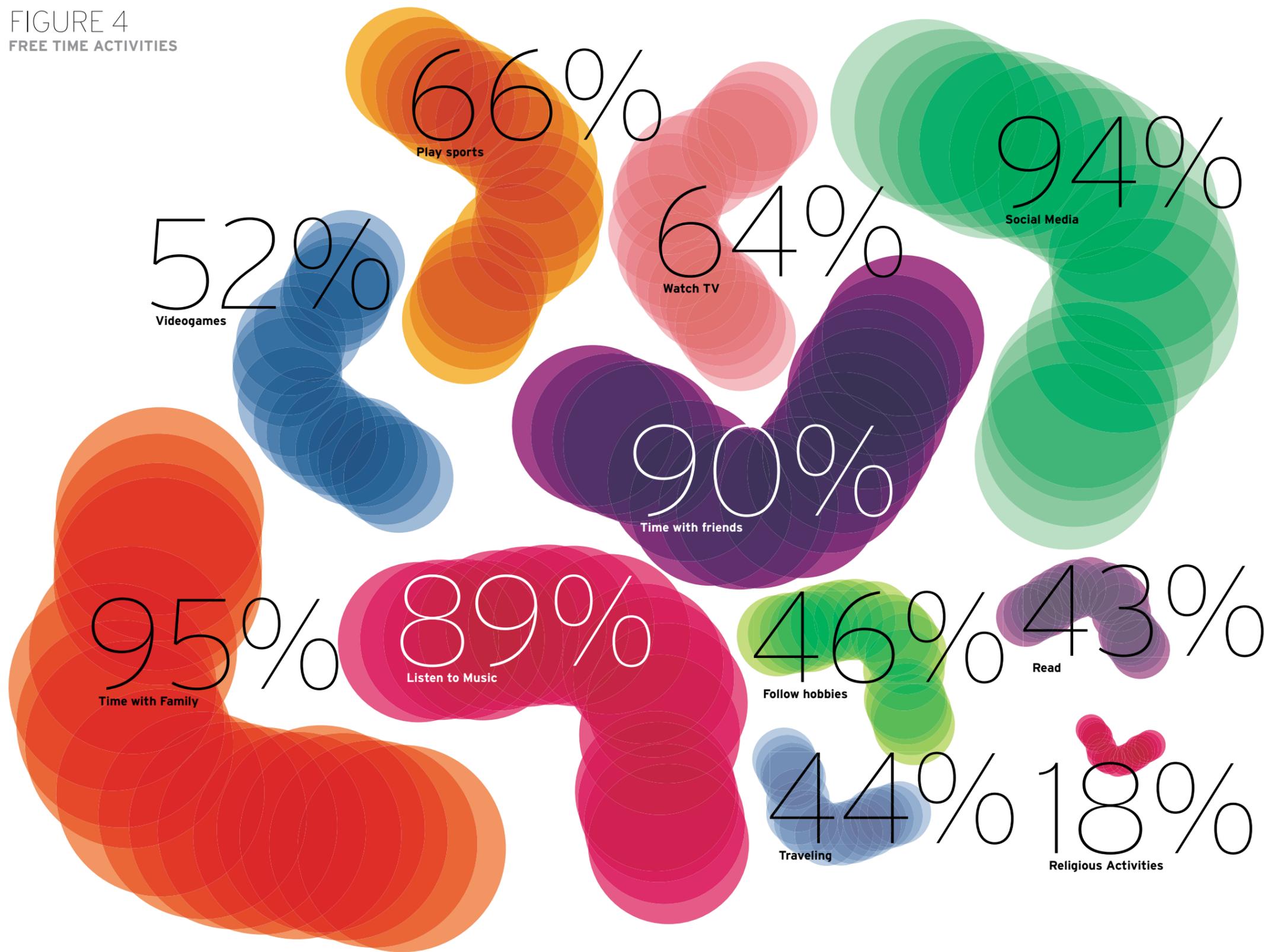
OF

VET STUDENTS

2.1 Free time activities of VET youth

Spending time with family and friends is the main activity among Albanian youths studying in vocational schools part of this survey. Technology, though, takes a considerable place in youth's life since 94% spend time using social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat or playing games (boys 55% vs girls 35%). Social media operate as a tool to connect, follow entertainment content, and to a lesser extent to, get informed on local and global news. Following celebrities on social media is not a central activity while using social media. Even less common is following professional role models or professional pages (e.g. Gordon Ramsay, Elon Musk etc). Watching TV is a background activity, while multi-screening on other devices and the main TV programs that spark youth interest are sports and soap operas. Sports are pretty popular hobbies, especially among boys (boys 70% vs girls 43%), with disciplines like football, volleyball, athletics, and gym strength exercises. Sports are important social activities and play a key role in fraternizing, but they are also preferred for the stress and anxiety relief role. Other more artistic hobbies dominated by females, such as photography, painting, ballet, writing, etc., are motivated by self-expression and enriching the inner world. Travelling out of town on weekends is a family activity quite enjoyable for youths in search of exploration of the country. Still, most students travel on weekends to visit their hometowns or villages, far from the school premises. 43% declare they read literature apart from their school's books. Despite relatively high theism and personal religious belief among Albanians, attending religious activities are not highly popular among VET students.

FIGURE 4
FREE TIME ACTIVITIES



2.2 Employment of VET students

Employment among students surveyed is at the rate of 37%. This includes 21% working part-time, 16% working full-time, i.e. a few hours per day or during weekends when they are free from school. Among the interviewed working students, 61% are employed in jobs in the same field they study or related fields, leading them to expect better-paid jobs upon graduation, having already taken their first steps in their career. The typical jobs not related to the student's fields of

study (38%) are mostly in the hospitality and tourism sector, such as bar stewards, bartenders, shop keepers, or helping in family businesses in different agricultural sectors.

The employment rate of VET students is higher among those who plan to work or become entrepreneurs after finishing their secondary studies and lower among those who plan to continue further studies through university or professional courses.

Employment among male VET students interviewed is almost 3.5 times higher than

among females. This significant difference comes from general social attitudes toward gender traits and specific job profiles perceived mostly as masculine and less safe for females. Group discussions shed light on the solid gender identity some sectors have. Students perceive branches such as mechanics, electronics, vehicles, and transportation services, thermohydraulic as exclusively masculine sectors. Similarly, both genders perceive the cuisine sector as mainly a male sector even though many females choose it. The

arguments supporting this gender profiling of sectors are the differences in physical features among genders, psychological endurance between genders, and the different interests they naturally have in life. Both girls' and boys' students consider these prejudices natural but not erroneous or discriminatory.

As expected, the correlation between grade, and employment rate is positive and students of higher grades have higher employment rates, and it goes up to 40% among the 13th graders.

Some fields of studies appear to offer better

FIGURE 5
EMPLOYMENT DURING STUDIES

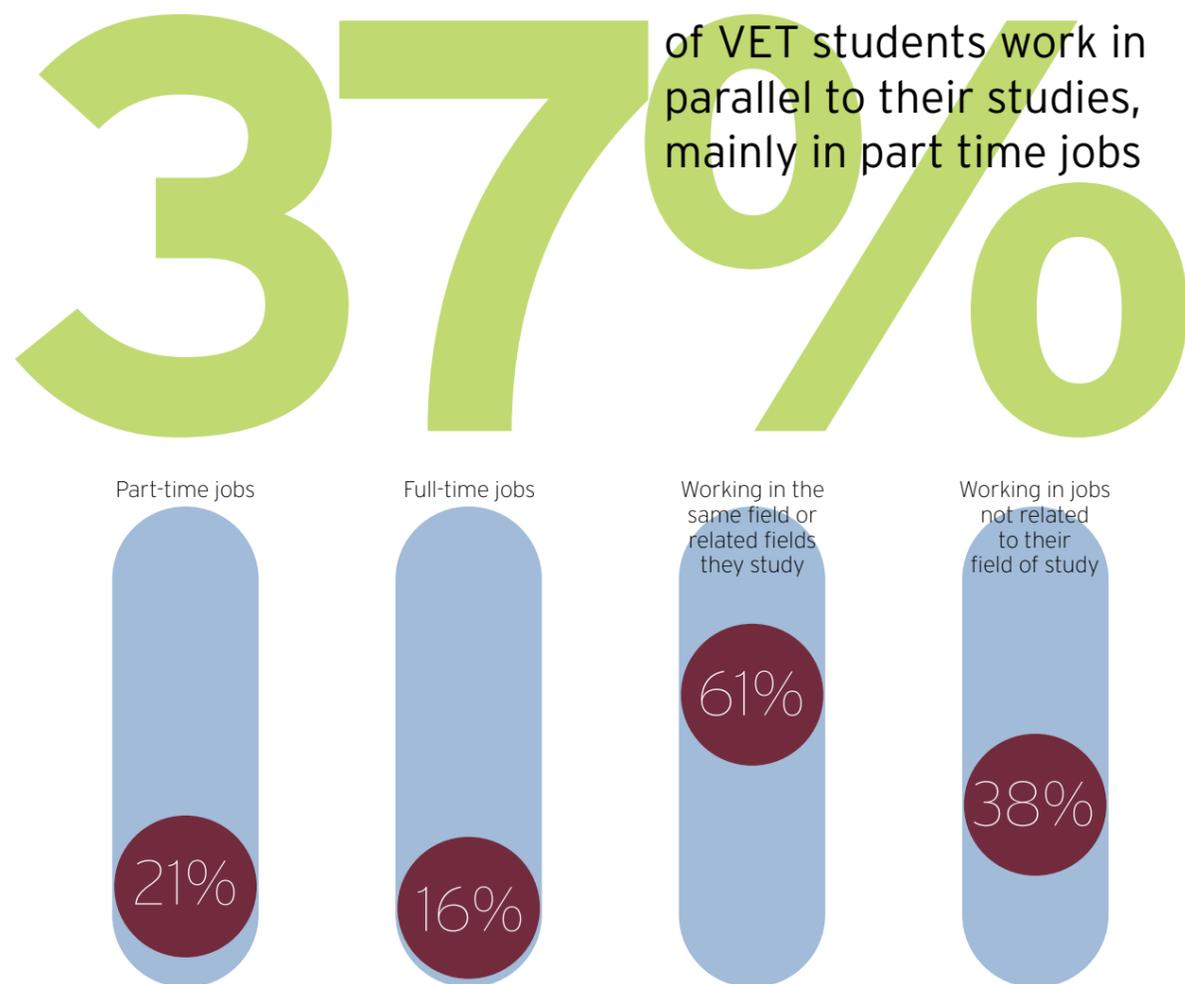
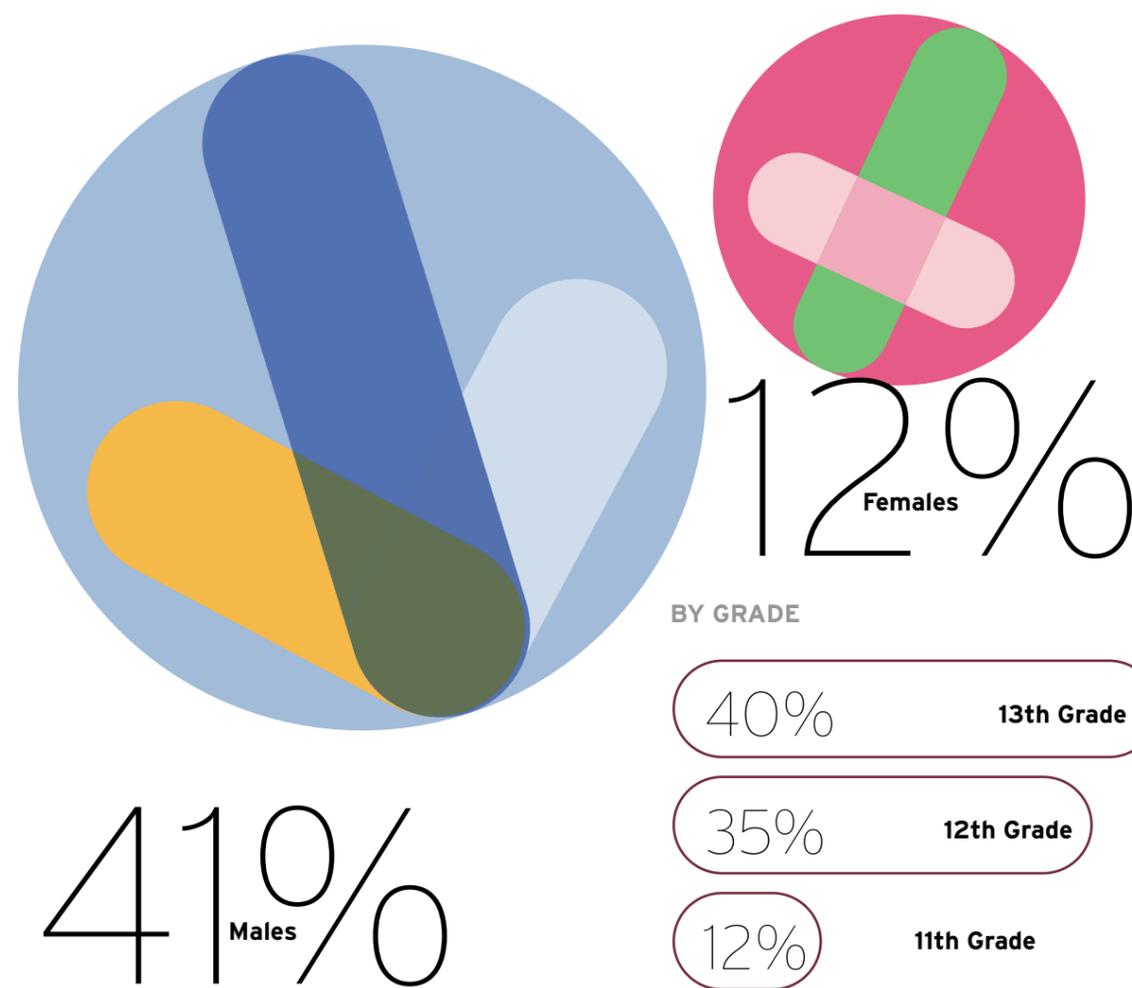


FIGURE 6
EMPLOYMENT DURING STUDIES BY GENDER AND AGE



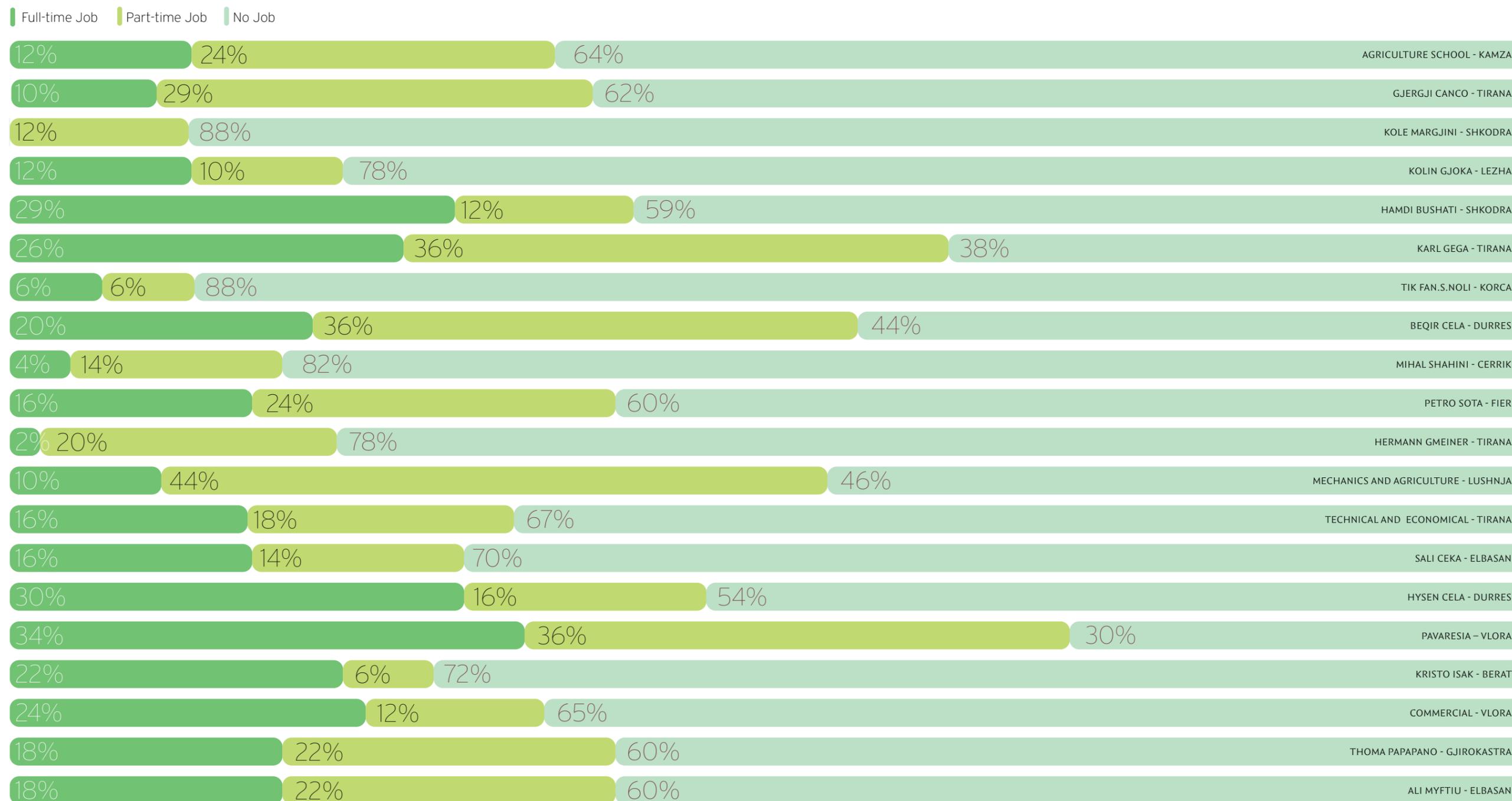
market opportunities for part time jobs or low entry level employees since they have higher employment rate among VET students.

Construction, food processing, geodesy, mechanics, vehicles and transportation services, and food processing are among fields of study,

where employment rates are between 50- 75%. According to focus group testimony, the main factors influencing students' engagement in the

job market are the low economic level of families and immediate financial needs. Other factors influencing employment are the opportunities in

FIGURE 7
EMPLOYMENT DURING STUDIES BY SCHOOL

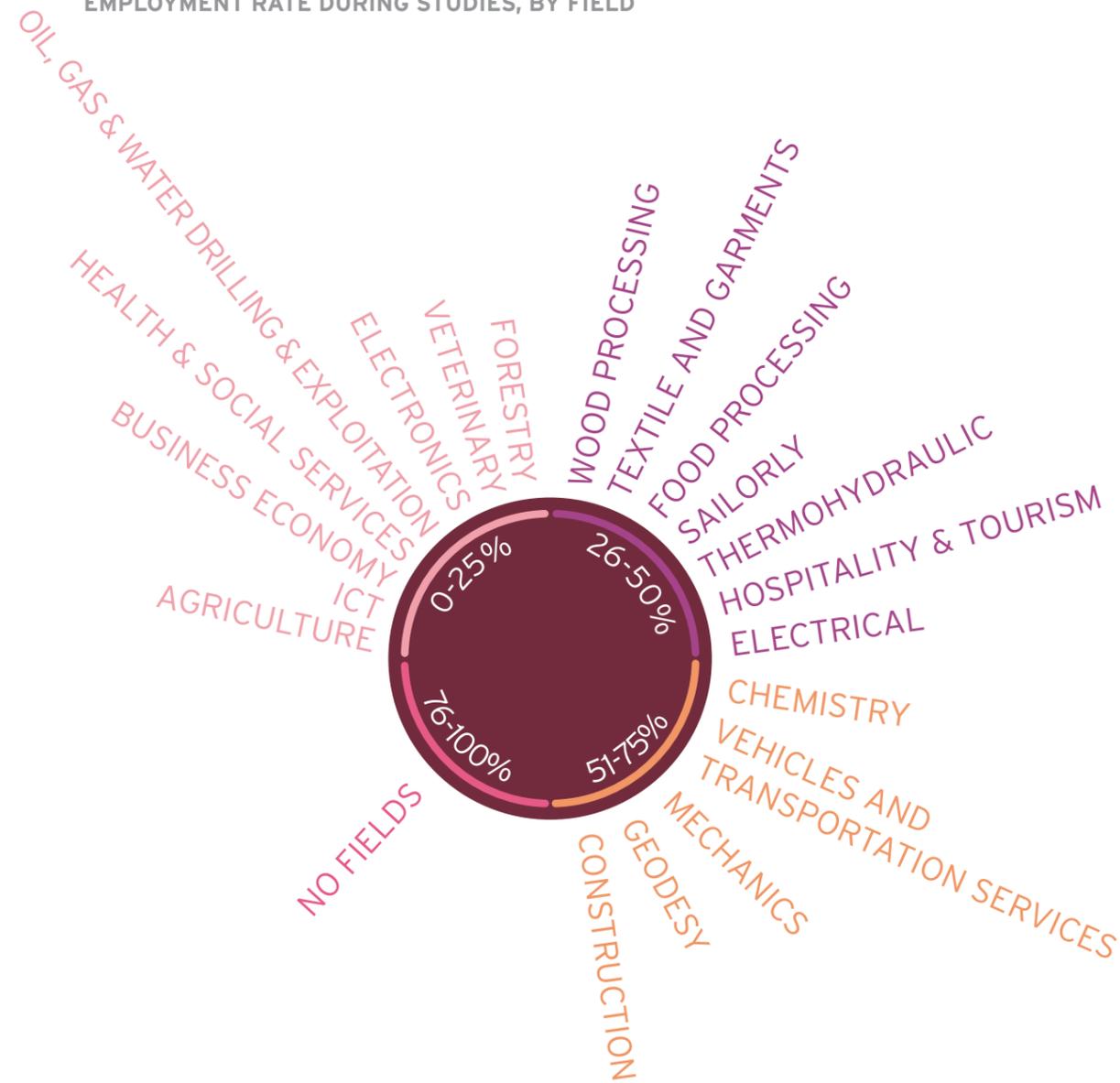


the market related to the city, region, and field of study. Pavarësia School in Vlora, Karl Gega in Tirana, Beqir Çela in Durrës, and Mechanics and Agriculture School in Lushnja have the highest employment rate among the interviewed students.

Some fields of study offer better market

opportunities for part-time jobs or low entry-level employees since they have higher employment rates among VET students. Construction, food processing, geodesy, mechanics, vehicles and transportation services, and food processing are fields of study, with employment rates between 50-75%.

FIGURE 8
EMPLOYMENT RATE DURING STUDIES, BY FIELD



2.3 Life concerns of VET students

This study explored the concerns students have in their lives and their frequency. Context is essential because it helps us understand the environment youths operate in and gives us the framework for every effective future intervention in schools and communities.

Difficulties related to the school results are a key reported concern, reported by half of the respondents in a high degree and by a third in a medium degree. Economic difficulties in the family are the most prominent among family-related concerns (38% declare this happens always or often). In comparison, difficulties in relationships with parents are reported as a frequent concern by only 18% of the respondents.

61% of youths interviewed declare smoking is a high-frequency activity among them (always + often), 21% report alcohol use, 13% use hashish or marijuana, and 4% use heavy drugs, always according to the student's perception. Discussions related to these activities, perceived as unfavorable by society, are not accessible.

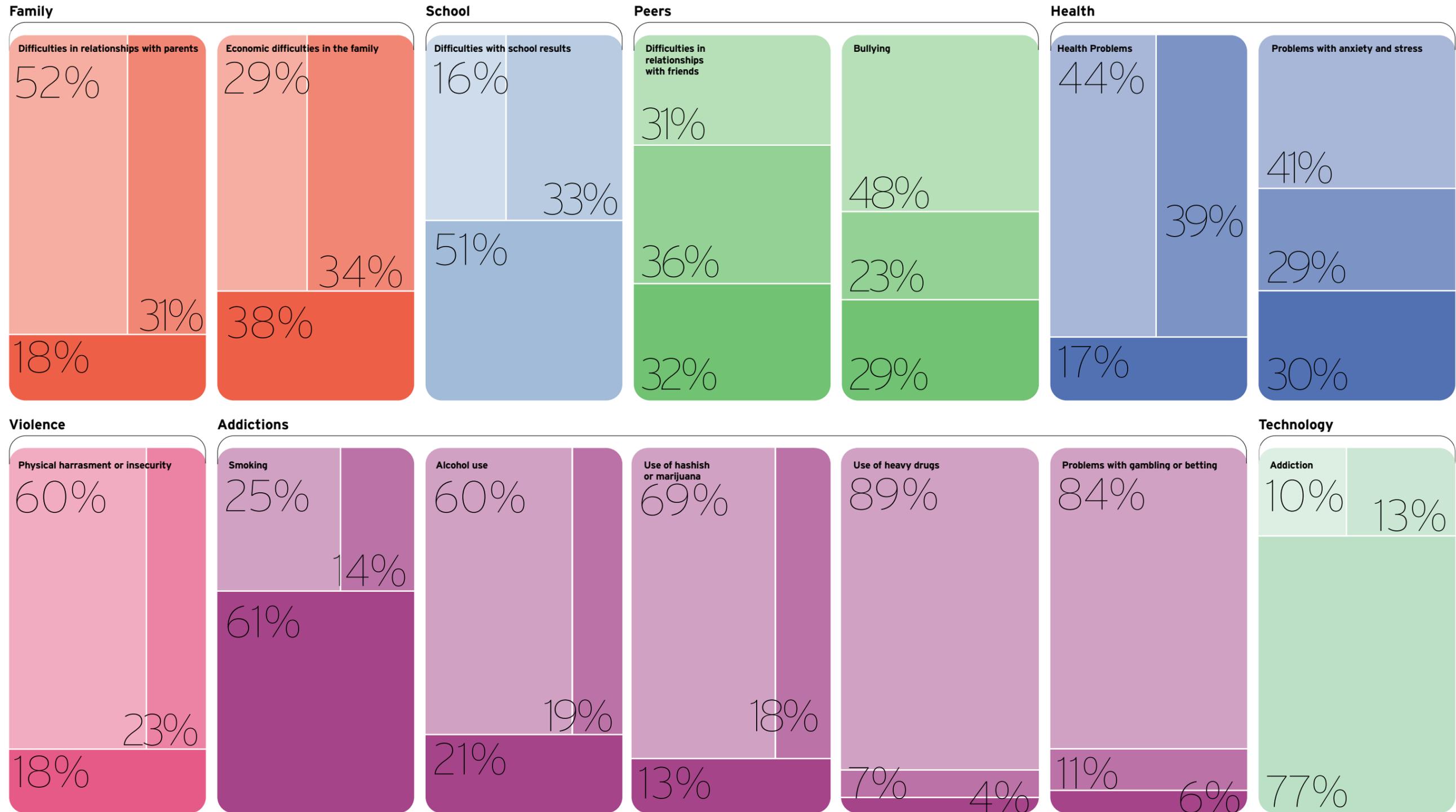
Students tend to refrain from commenting, except when discussing smoking, which is a more manageable topic. Bullying phenomena are reported to occur always or often by 29% of the interviewees, and on average, or sometimes by 23%, and focus group discussions elaborated further on the phenomena. Each school seems to have a niche segment composed of "problematic" boys, creating trouble for other students and teachers. Students suggest harsher penalties, antibullying programs, and even expulsion because these negative behaviours are pretty troubling. The origin (urban vs. rural) is the principal reason for prejudice and discrimination, followed by geographic location (north, central south), economic status, parents' professions or class, gender, and religion.

77% of the interviewed VET students consider technology addiction a high-frequency phenomenon. However, further discussions showed low-intensity concern about such a topic because of personal accountability; technology addiction is perceived as a personal choice rather than a social problem needing external action to be solved.

61% OF YOUTHS INTERVIEWED DECLARE SMOKING IS A HIGH-FREQUENCY ACTIVITY AMONG THEM (ALWAYS + OFTEN), 21% REPORT ALCOHOL USE, 13% USE HASHISH OR MARIJUANA, AND 4% USE HEAVY DRUGS

FIGURE 9
STUDENTS LIFE'S CONCERNS

Low Frequency Medium Frequency High Frequency

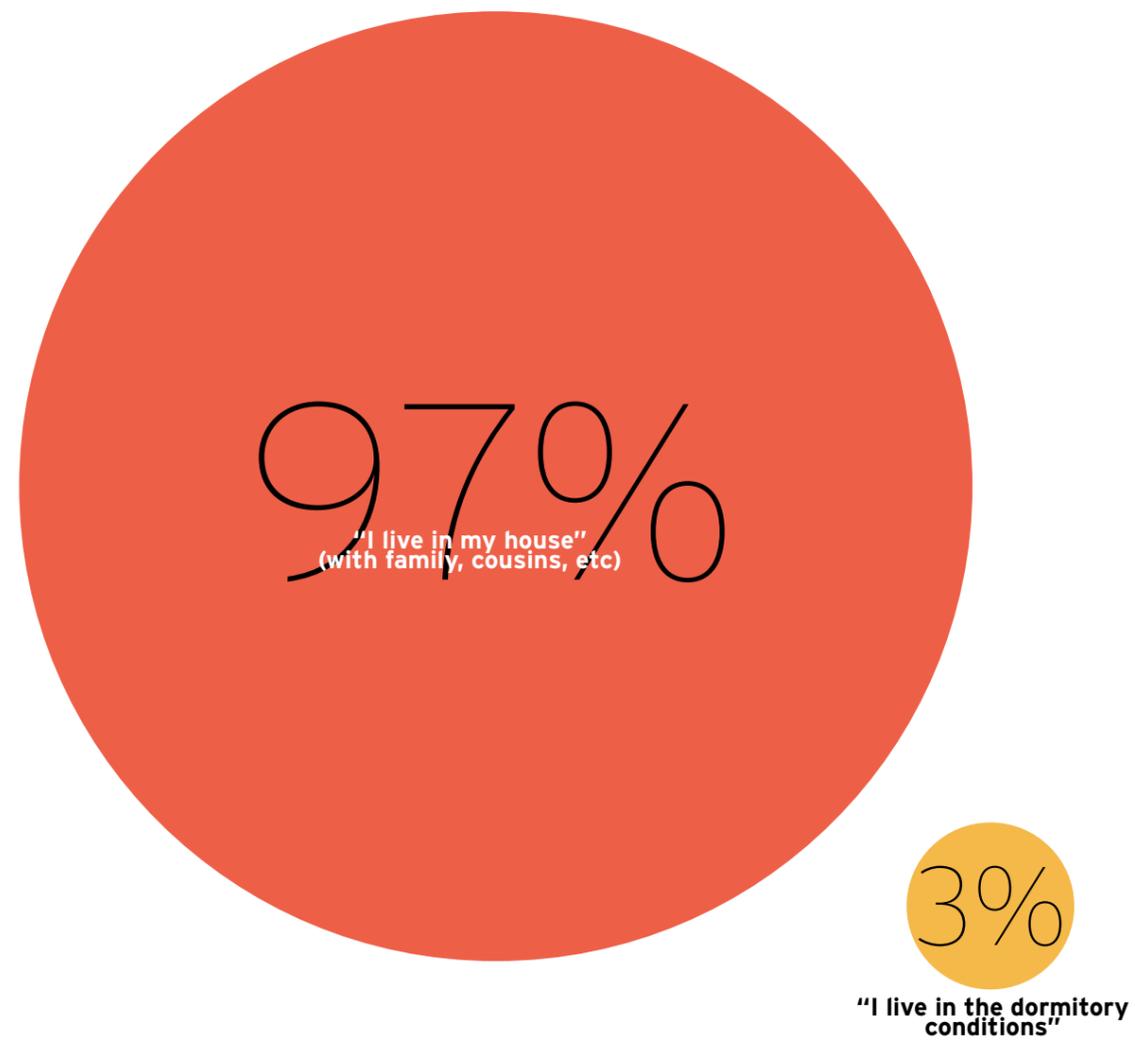


2.4 Accommodation of students

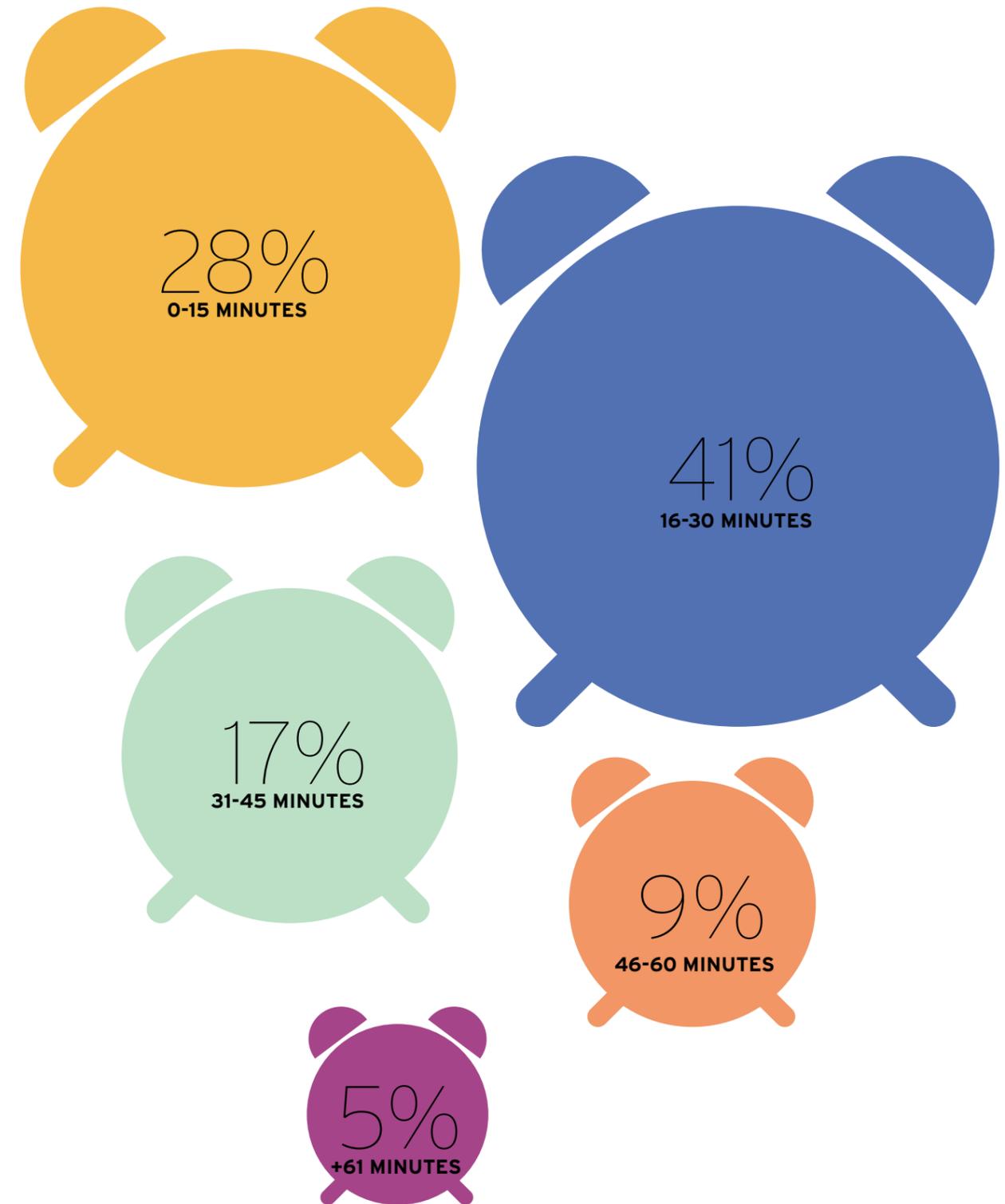
The vast majority of VET students live in their own homes, i.e. with their close or larger family or relatives if their own family home is in a different city or village far away from the VET school. Only 3% of the VET students live in schools' dormitories. 69% of the students have relatively easy access to school since

they travel less than 30 minutes one way. On average, students need to travel 26 minutes every morning to school. Those travelling longer use public transportation and sometimes family vehicles but do not hesitate to demand dedicated school transportation or transport cost reimbursement.

FIGURE 10
LIVING CONDITIONS



TIME SPENT ECERY MORNING TO ACCESS SCHOOLS



3

THE BEGINNING

OF

THE JOURNEY

The primary sources of information of the interviewed students regarding vocational schools and their fields of study are informal. Family, relatives, and friends are the primary influencers, promoters, and sources of information.

3.1 Source of information regarding VET

The primary sources of information of the interviewed students regarding vocational schools and their fields of study are informal. Family, relatives, and friends are the primary influencers, promoters, and sources of information, and in many cases, at least one close connection has earlier attended the school they currently study. The official school websites or social media pages are used lightly (5%) at the beginning of the VET journey.

One in four students declares they got information from teachers of other staff at 9th

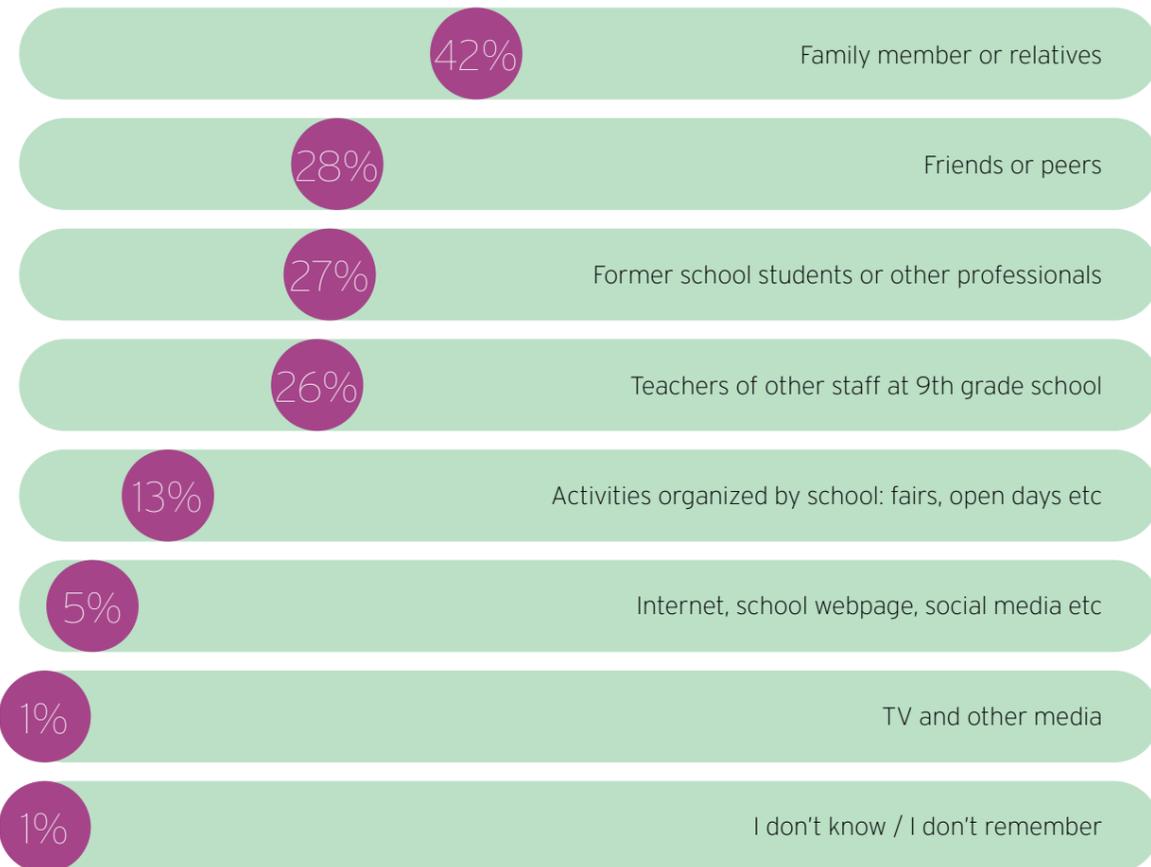
grade school, which is also considered a reliable and trustful source of information.

VET information from TV or other media, is almost inexistent and it has no direct role in the process, also considering the low TV viewership among young people of this age. 13% have attended school presentation activities (Open Day) or school visits before attending the VET school. Such activities receive good reviews as adequate promotional and information sources.

The two main reasons students report driving their VET choice include obtaining a profession (63%) and passion for the fields of study (55%) and the craft they are getting specialized in. The

FIGURE 11

SOURCE OF INFORMATION INFLUENCING SCHOOL CHOICE



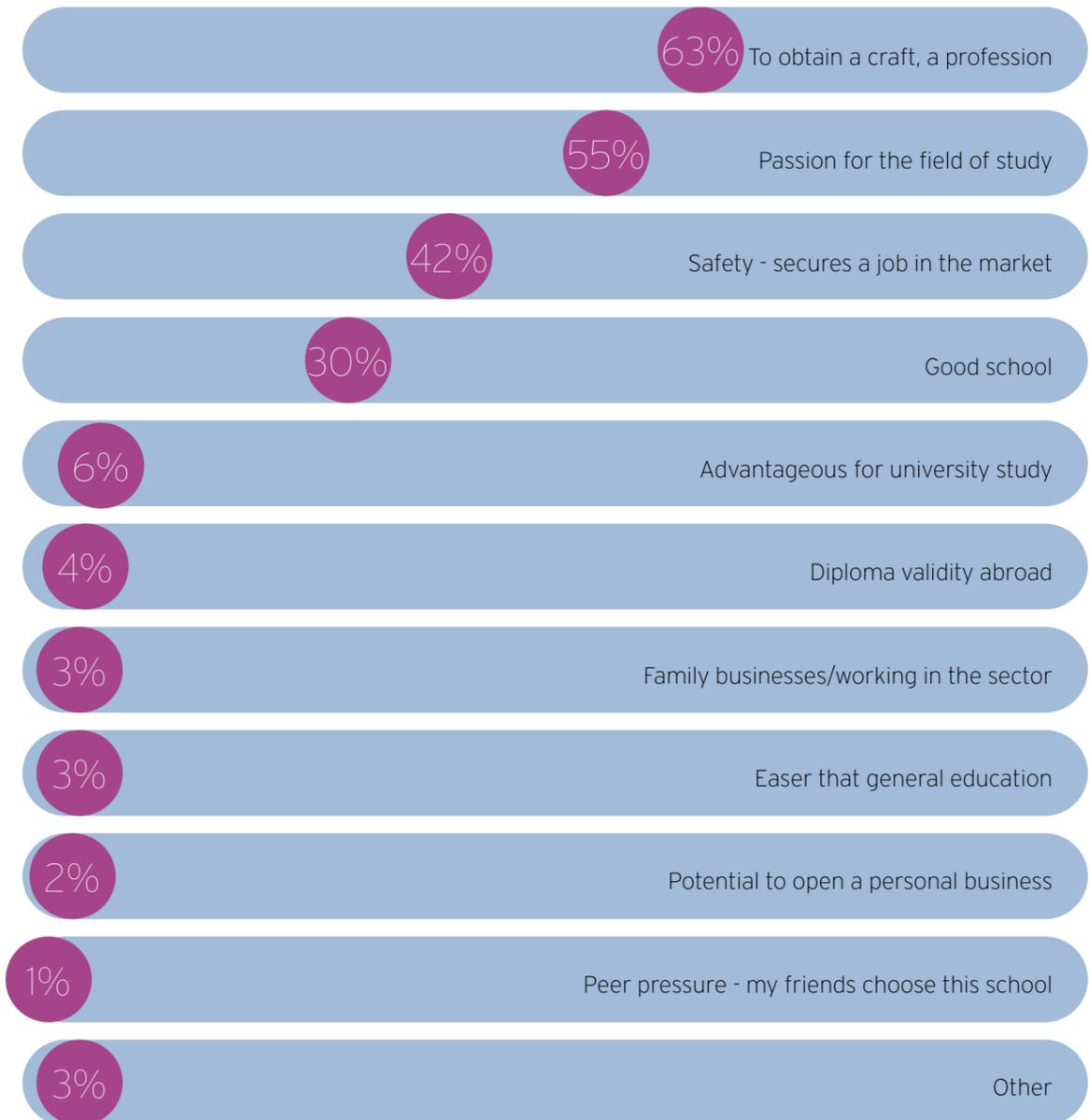
guarantee of a secure job (42%) as the third reason for choosing VET confirms their chosen fields of study and curricula correspond with market demand, at least from the student's point of view. 1 in 3 students states to have chosen their school because of its good reputation, endorsed mainly by family and close relatives, as

mentioned in the previous section.

Other supportive motives include the recognition of their diploma in other countries, the family business in the same sector or the potential to start their own business and the less demanding education compared to the general education, and peer pressure.

FIGURE 12

REASONS FOR CHOOSING VET



The level of attachment and passion expressed does not seem to be the same for the different fields of study, with some being reportedly more exciting fields than others. Hospitality and tourism, sailorly, textile and garments, and ICT are among the fields scoring up to 75% for this indicator and serving as the primary catalyst for the VET choice.

The level of attachment and passion expressed also varies from school to school. "Hermann Gmeiner" in Tirana and "Fan.S.Noli" in Korca, covering ICT fields, are among the most favorite because of the enthusiasm for these fields of study. These two schools are followed by "Ali Myftiu" in Elbasan and "Hamdi Bushati" in Shkodra, suggesting it is not only the fields of study fueling their passion but even the school atmosphere, the quality of learning, and the school reputation.

FIGURE 13
PASSION FOR THE FIELD OF STUDY, AS A MAIN CATALYST FOR VET CHOICE

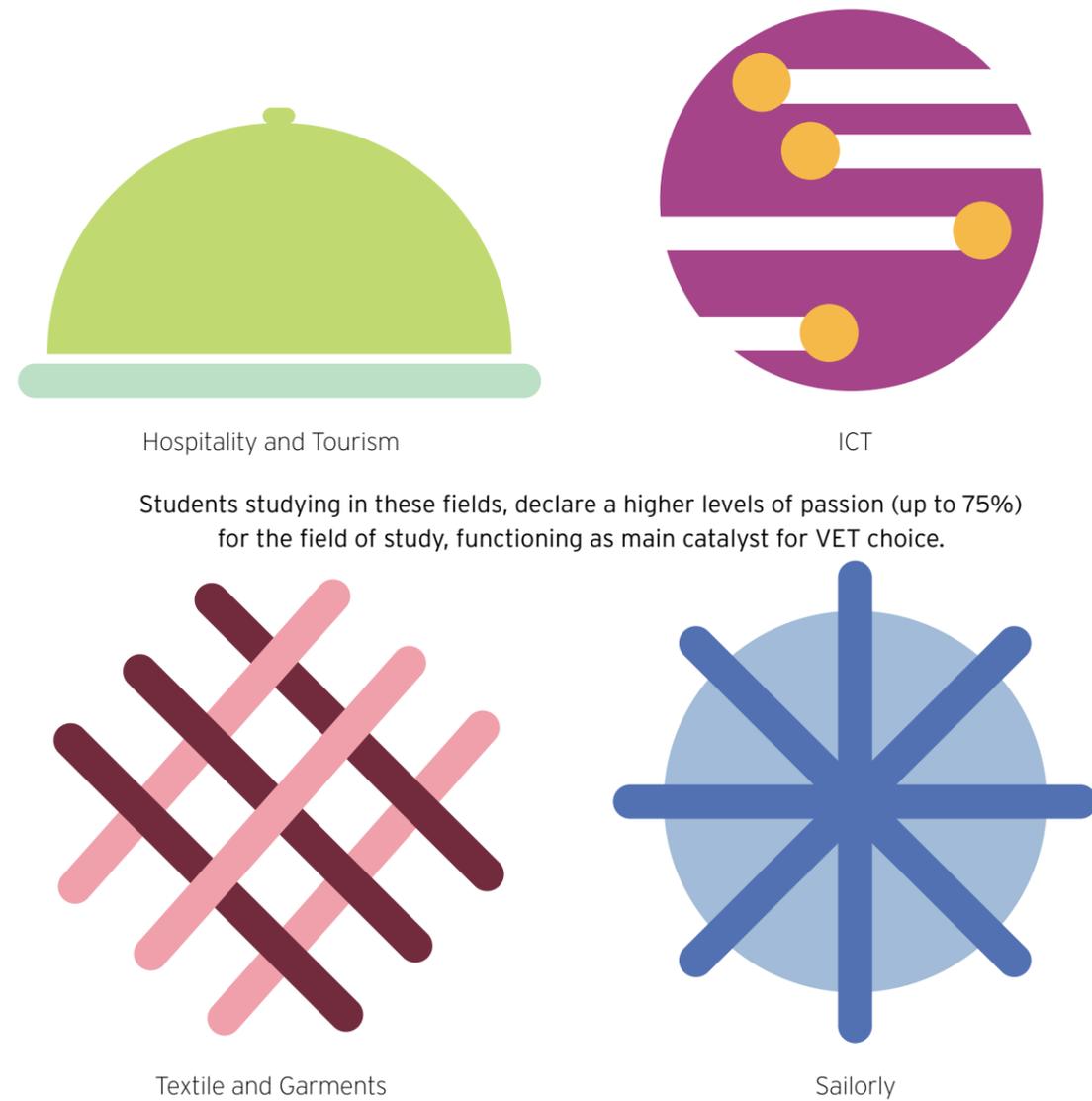
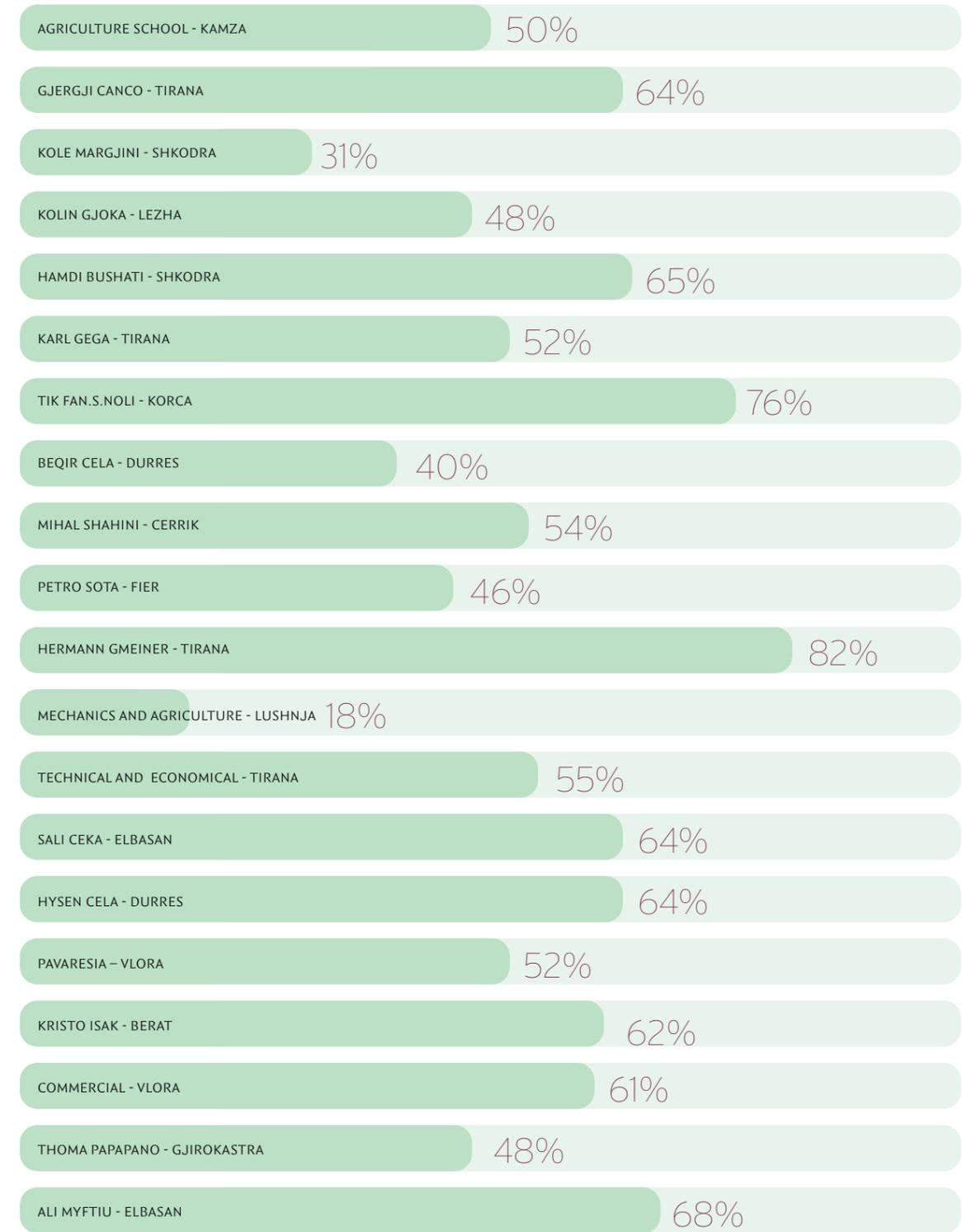


FIGURE 14
I HAVE A PASSION FOR THE FIELD OF STUDY, AS A MAIN CATALYST FOR VET CHOICE



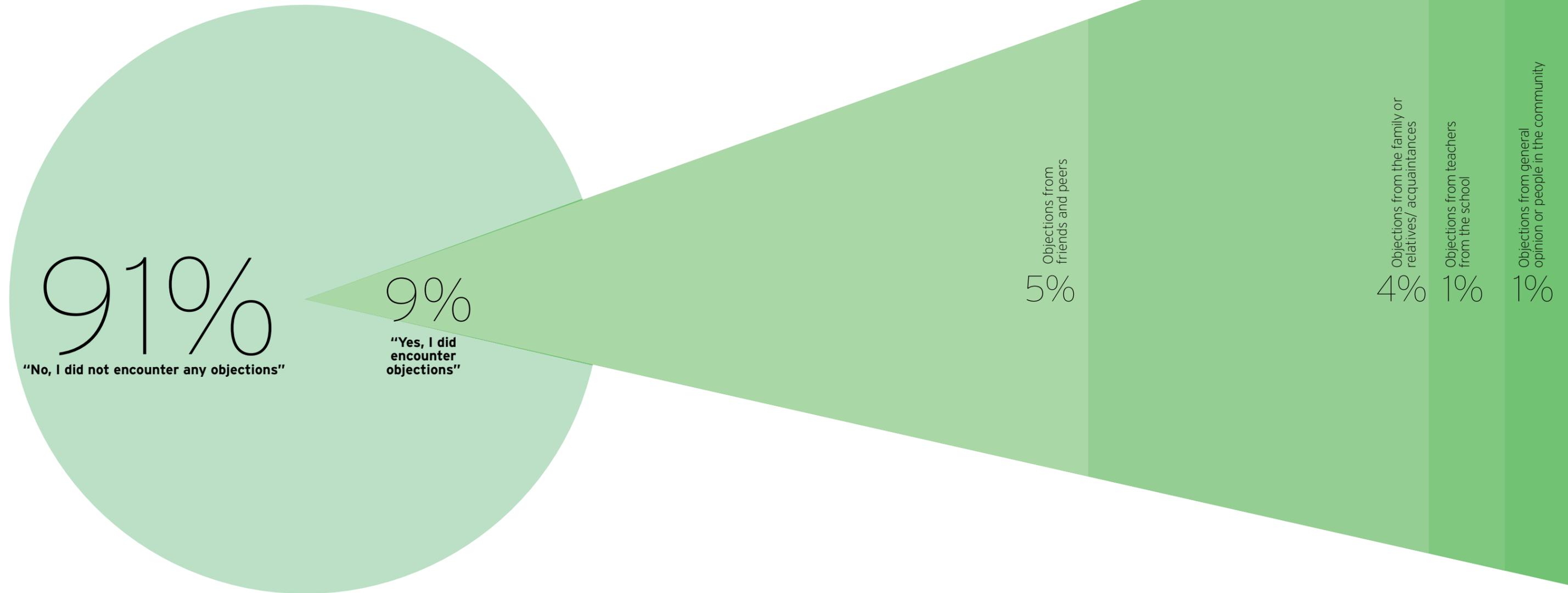
3.2 Objection toward VET choice and image in the community

Only 1 in 10 students reported they had experienced objections from other people toward VET choice, mostly from peers than family or relatives. Students believe these objections originate from a lack of awareness about the variety of fields of study schools offer, a lack of knowledge of the depth of

skills acquired in these schools, a lack of understanding of the market opportunities, and finally, because of the gender identity certain professions have. They strongly imply other youths studying in general education still lack the depth of information and understanding of VET schools. Pursuing their choice seemed easy for many students who had had support and guidance from other family and relatives with a good understanding of the benefits of the selection.

FIGURE 15

OBJECTIONS AGAINST VET SCHOOL CHOICE IN THE STUDENT'S COMMUNITY



4

THE IMAGE

OF

THE VET

While reading the results, it is essential to remember that students' perception is formed on their understanding of their fields of study and school, given that students find it challenging to respond by thinking about the VET system as a whole

Attractiveness in VET has been defined as its capacity to encourage individuals to choose vocational education and training; offer quality qualifications that open up career prospects; persuade employers to recruit holders of VET certificates (Cedefop, 2014, p. 30). This survey has measured attractiveness through a series of questions related to the image of VET and its perceived benefits by turning abstract concepts into measurable observations.

While reading the results, it is essential to remember that students' perception is formed on their understanding of their fields of study and school, given that students find it challenging to respond by thinking about the VET system as a whole. However, based on the sample representativeness, the research findings reflect the image among all VET students in Albania.

4.1 General VET image and its role in society

The image of VET is strongly positive in Albania among its students. Around 9 in 10 VET students contemplate vocational education at the upper secondary stage is an excellent choice for young people like them. Just less than 1 in 10 students is somehow uncertain about that. VET students uphold the validity of their choice in any discussion, arguing that VET education leads to securer professional paths, empowers young people, and unlocks the potential for further studies and specialization.

Detecting perceptions of VET's role in society, more than four in five agree that VET strengthens our country's economy (45% strongly agree and 34% agree). VET students believe this education brings positive benefits because it contributes to a qualified market workforce and helps advance specific sectors like

i.e. tourism, a key economic pillar for Albania.

However, when it comes to the role of VET in reducing unemployment, youths are sceptical, arguing that the number of jobs is what it is and that the qualification of workers would mainly improve the quality but not have a considerable effect on the employment rate.

Only 1 in 10 students perceive VET has a bad image in their community, while the vast majority refuse this claim. Group discussions reveal the strong advocacy role students play in promoting VET education. They refuse to accept any opposing views that the community might have created, dismissing them as uninformed and wrong judgments thus acknowledging their existence. These results suggest the vital need of VET students to defend VET image and the need to overcome inappropriate misconceptions about their education.

UNQUANTIFIED INSIGHT

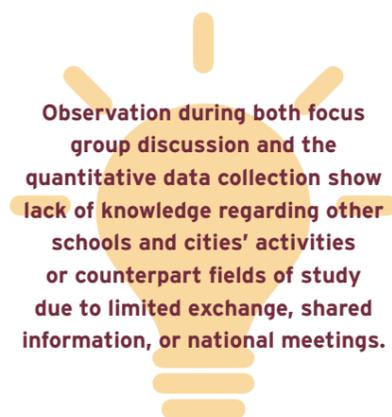
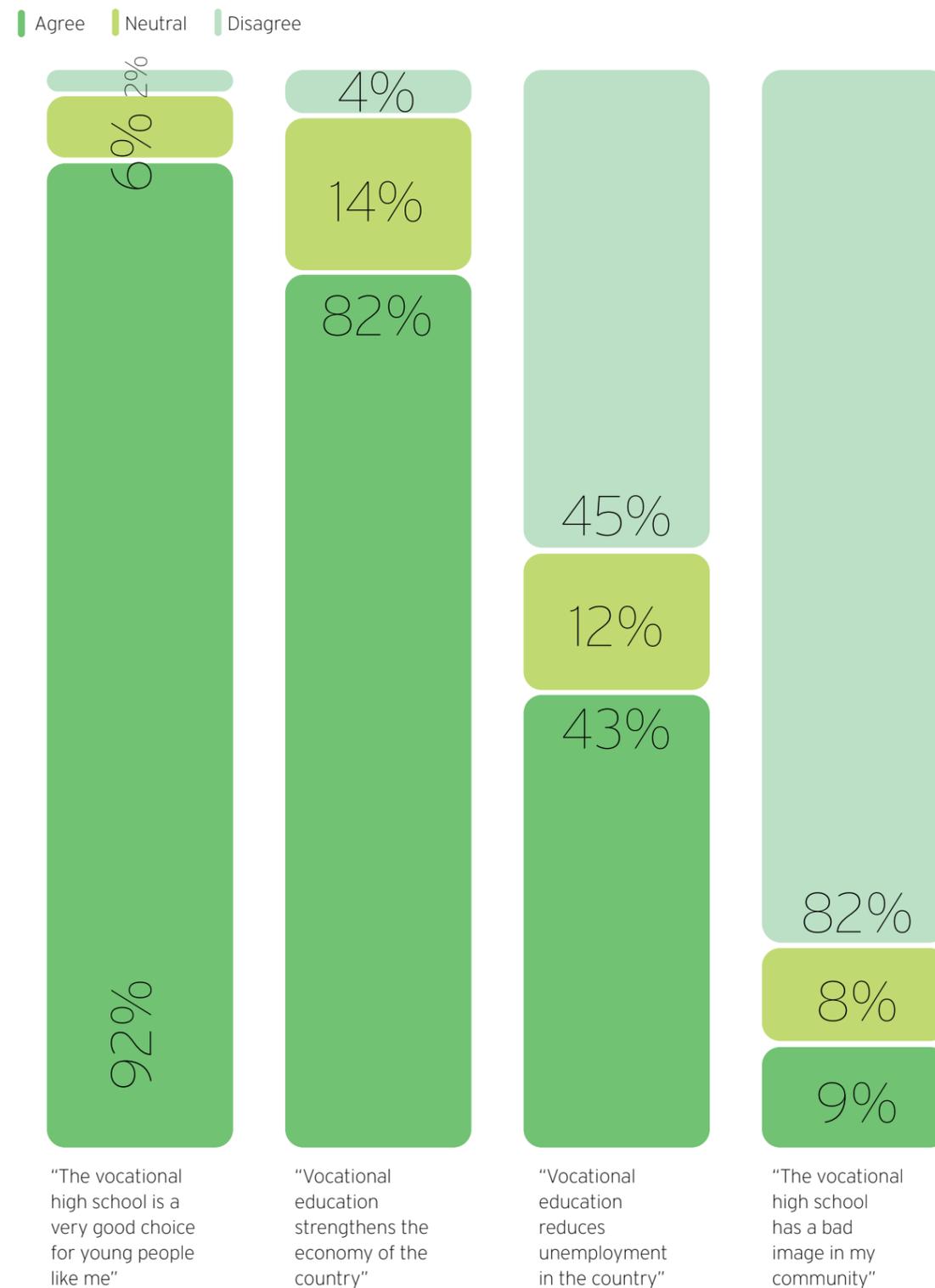


FIGURE 16
GENERAL VET IMAGE AND THE ROLE IN SOCIETY



4.2 VET image compared to general education

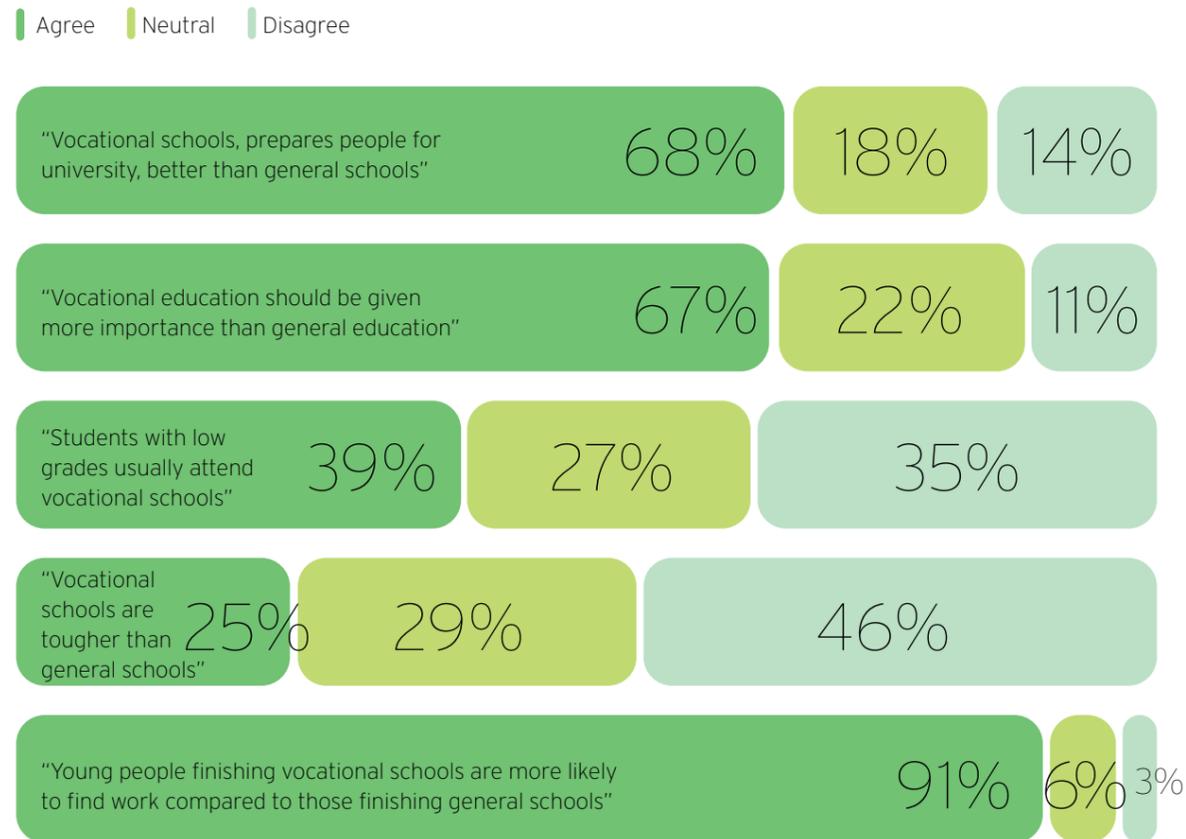
According to VET students' point of view, vocational education looks to take over general education in preparing young people for university. General education advantages, they claim, lay in in-depth education in general subjects (math, physics, literature, etc.). In contrast, vocational education's advantage lies in in-depth education in specialized subjects. According to VET students, early and in-depth specialization is a more substantial advantage. Nevertheless, only 1 in 4 assume vocational schools are more challenging than general schools.

In the previous decades, the inflated number of low-grade students (due to "night schools")

tainted the VET image in the communities; however, this image is balanced out among current VET students. 39% believe low grades students usually attend vocational schools, but on the other hand, almost the same, 35% oppose this notion, while 27% thinks VET has all kind of students as any other school. The indicator's scores fluctuate significantly from one school to the other, suggesting that it is not a VET image attribute as a whole but specific for some schools with fewer investments to attract good students or less appealing fields.

More than half of VET students wish for a more noteworthy focus on vocational education from all relevant actors; ministry, investors, supporting organizations, businesses, and communities.

FIGURE 17
VET IMAGE COMPARED WITH THE GENERAL EDUCATION

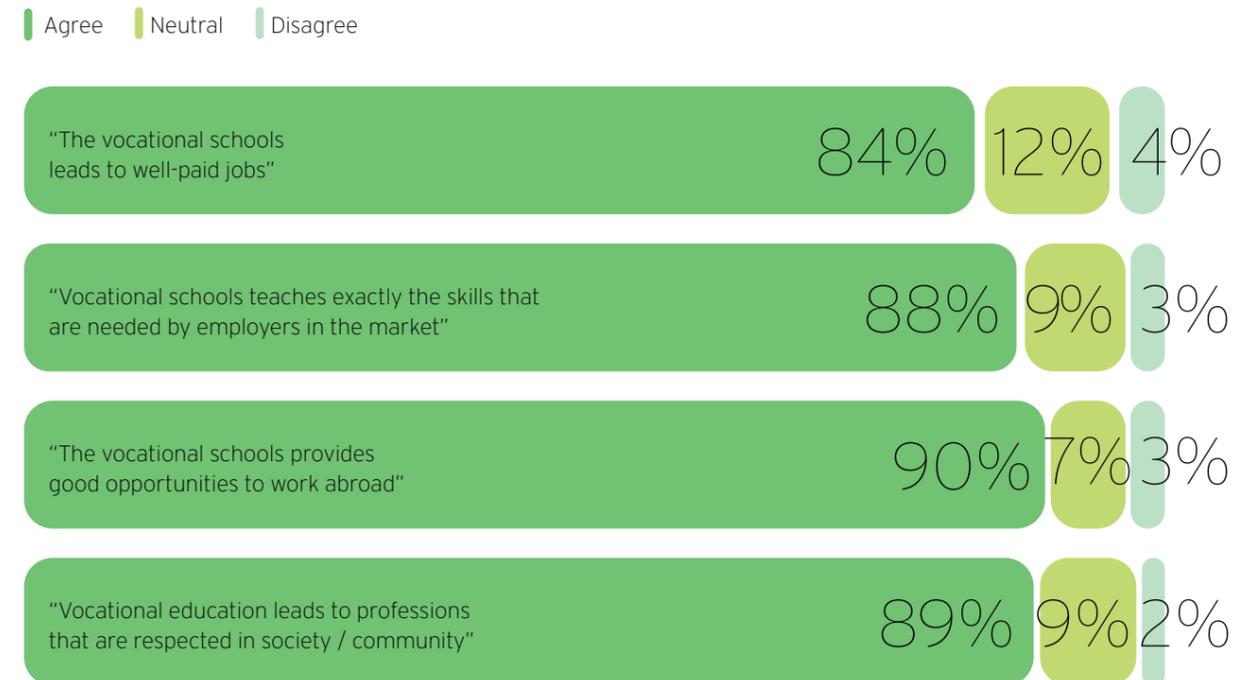


4.3 VET image in relation to the labor market

The critical purpose of VET is to prepare individuals for the job market by equipping them with the skills they need to join the workforce. The quality of education is thus measured by the programs' relevance to the labor market. 88% of the students believe schools deliver on this indicator despite the constant need to stay up to date, especially in more progressive fields. Additionally, 84% of them believe vocational school leads to well-paid jobs. During discussions, participants showed that they have actual market knowledge, especially students employed in parallel to their studies.

The belief that vocational schools provide good opportunities to work abroad (91%) could be a factor boosting the high level of emigration intent (figure 30) and, in a few cases, is even the reason for choosing VET (figure 12). In line with the exceptionally positive image of VET, 89% of students trust vocational education leads to professions that are well-respected in society or community. "We don't learn how to hold a tray; we learn how to become experts in our fields. Few people don't understand the depth of our knowledge, but we are here to show them and claim respect for our profession as in other countries", said one young student studying hospitality and tourism.

FIGURE 18
VET IMAGE IN RELATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET



5

THE LEVEL

OF

SATISFACTION

WITH

The long list of measured indicators in terms of satisfaction is grouped in 4 main categories 1. knowledge attained at VET schools, 2. different aspects of VET schools, 3. professional practices at VET schools and 4. professional practices in businesses (WBL)

VET

As stated in the objectives section, this study aimed to understand the current teaching and learning environment, a general perception on what is good and what is wrong in their school and identify challenges that need to be overcome and addressed. The long list of measured indicators in terms of satisfaction is grouped in 4 main categories 1. knowledge attained at VET schools, 2. different aspects of VET schools, 3. professional practices at VET schools and 4. professional practices in businesses (WBL)

5.1 Satisfaction with the knowledge attained at VET schools

Respondents following vocational education at the upper secondary level are fairly satisfied with the knowledge and skills attained in VET. The average score of all indicators measured is 4.3 on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 represents being totally unsatisfied and 5 represents being totally satisfied.

The theoretical knowledge of the specific field of study is the highest indicator in terms of satisfaction. 91% of students declared themselves very satisfied or satisfied with the theoretical knowledge regarding their professions. Satisfaction with practical learning regarding their professions is ranked third, and 88% of students claim to be very satisfied or satisfied. Among these two indicators, ranked second in satisfaction scores, is knowledge of discipline and accuracy. According to the students, there are no dedicated classes for discipline and accuracy, and these aspects are part of theoretical and practical learning.

88% of students declare to be very

satisfied or satisfied with knowledge about the labor market and employment opportunities, while 87% with knowledge about communication and collaboration with people (soft skills). These indicators positioned fourth and fifth in ranking could qualify as the “moderate scoring indicators” in a comparable scoring system. Nonetheless, the absolute values for each of them are significantly flattering, and only 3-4% of the students declare themselves not satisfied.

Sometimes students need to think before scoring such indicators because such knowledge is fragmented during the learning process. The detailed discussion shows there is always room for improvement in structuring such knowledge, which teachers currently incorporate in class according to their expertise and appetite.

88% are satisfied with general subjects and learning (math, literature, physics etc.). The indicator ranks sixth on the list. Discussion around this indicator concentrates on the quantity of such knowledge rather than the quality. The student’s comments are polarized; low-grade students summon more lightweight curricula on general subjects, while others acknowledge general topics essential for their education and individual development and don’t wish to receive less.

15% of the students state they are not quite satisfied, with the knowledge received about laws and regulations in their fields of study because such capability depends mainly on their teacher’s willingness, competence, and information. The same applied to knowledge about safety and health at work, where 20% expressed reservations for the same reasons.

In contrast to the above indicators, which despite the need for advancement, still keep students generally content, knowledge and skills in technology and computers, score considerably lower. Nearly half of the students declare themselves unsatisfied or neutrally satisfied with this topic. Students request available IT laboratories and a much more intense curriculum on applied technology, given that technology is integrated into every sector of the economy

and is deemed necessary knowledge in today’s market despite the field of study.

ICT schools such as “Hermann Gmeiner” in Tirana or “Fan.S.Noli” in Korça, demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with technology and computer skills. Other schools such as “Beqir Cela” and “Hysen Cela” in Durrës, “Hamdi Bushati” in Shkodra, Karl Gega” in Tirana and Agriculture in Lushnje, on the other hand, score highly dissatisfied (figure 20).

FIGURE 19

SATISFACTION WITH KNOWLEDGE ATTAINED AT VET SCHOOLS

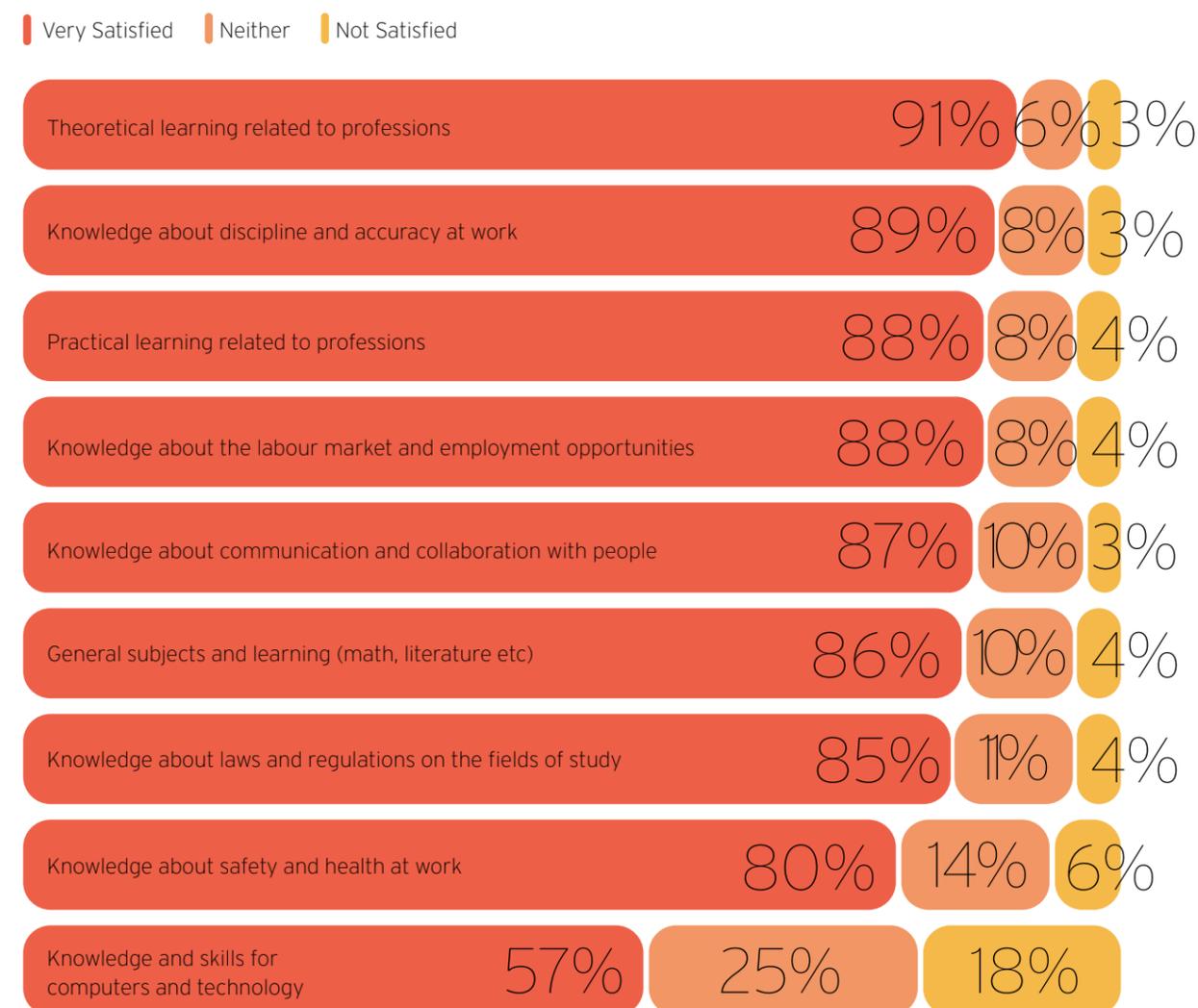
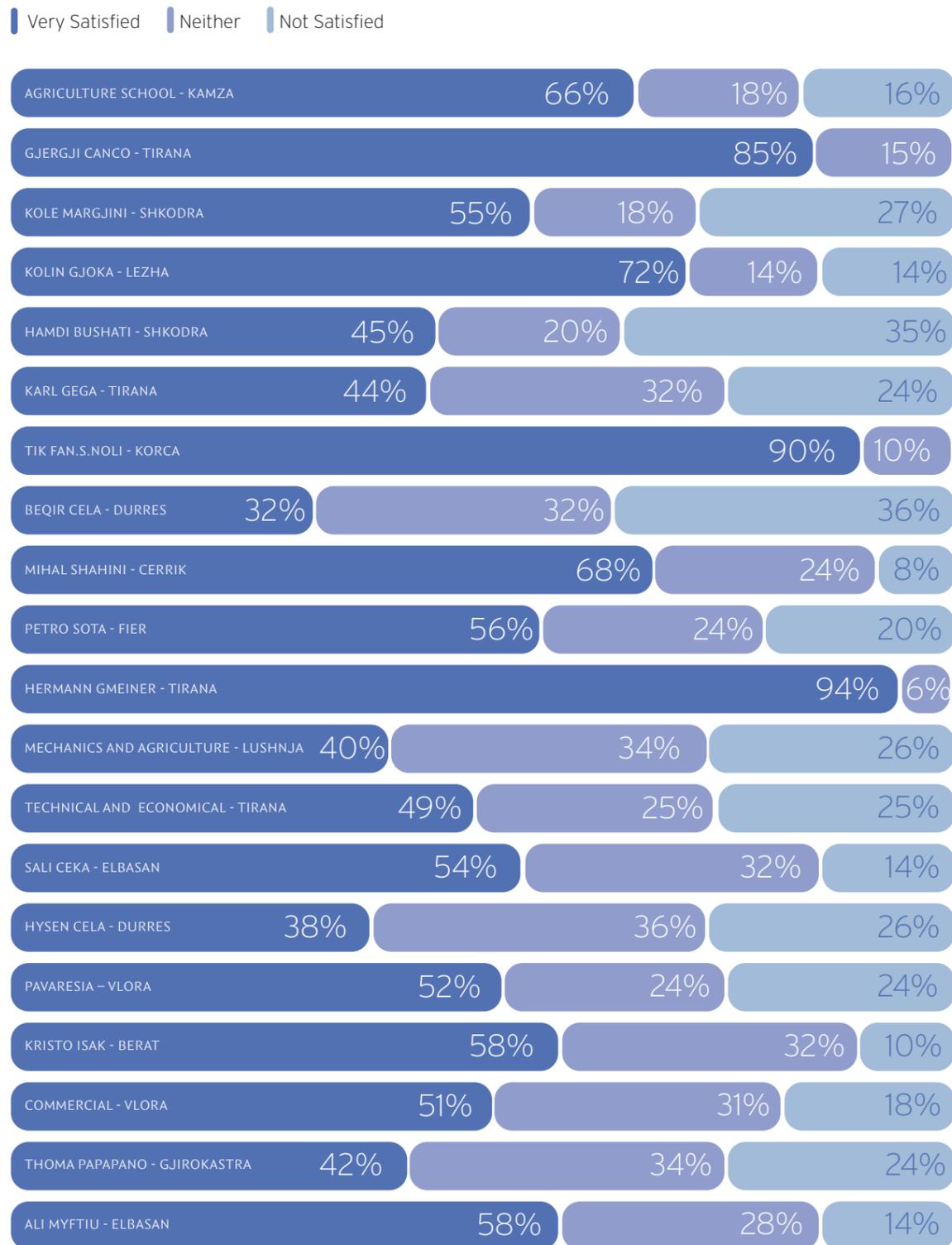


FIGURE 20
SATISFACTION WITH KNOWLEDGE ATTAINED AT VET SCHOOLS



5.2 Satisfaction with different aspects of VET schools

Teachers at the core of learning are not only a vital component in the system but also a highly praised one. 92% of the students are very satisfied or satisfied with the professional qualification of their teachers, making this among the highest scoring indicator among all four categories measured. Naturally, the human affinity adds to the score, but group discussion backs up the score, confirming the acknowledgement of teachers' dedication and qualifications in their respective fields.

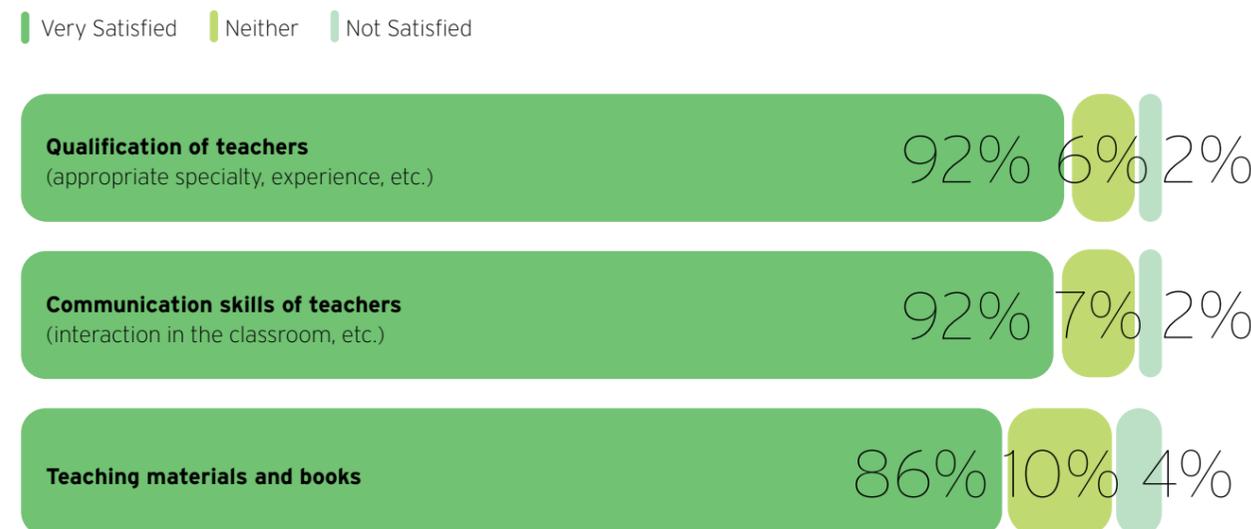
Less than 1 in 10 students are reluctant and suggest improvement in the teaching staff, including improvement in teaching methodology, deeper specialization in their respective fields, younger teachers, reliable information delivery, etc.

Communication is the second scoring indicator, with 9 in 10 students being very satisfied or satisfied with the professional

communication skills of their teachers. Suggested areas for improvement include mainly the teacher-student dialogue as two-way communication with increased interactivity.

Despite indications of teaching materials consisting mainly of photocopied materials, the reported scores are favorable. 86% declared themselves satisfied, and 14% were not happy or partially satisfied with the teaching materials. As a typical phenomenon in Albania, students are habituated and do not seem heavily concerned about it. Enhancements are enquired not on the form but the content of books and materials, which are not always updated with modern learning. Students point out the need for more frequent refreshes of written knowledge. "We went to a vet clinic the other day to check some injections we had learned about the previous week, but the vet told us that such injections had long been out of use. We no longer apply such methods, he told us", said a 13th grader studying veterinary.

FIGURE 21
SATISFACTION WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF VET SCHOOLS



*SCORES MEASURED AMONG THOSE LIVING IN DORMITORIES

Satisfaction with discipline and order achieved moderate results compared to other indicators. 82% of VET students declare to be highly satisfied or satisfied with this indicator, while 18% show some concern. Some schools report a lack of discipline more than others, but students quickly justified it by the dynamism and zest characterizing their group age. Moreover, they say that discipline issues are an ordinary reality for every school in the country, even the general education ones; thus, it is not a distinct aspect of VET schools.

During discussions, students report low recognition of concrete activities concerning the cooperation of schools with the relevant business. The same insight is recounted regarding school promotion in the local community. 80% declare satisfaction with

both indicators, while 20% declare a lack of satisfaction or impartiality. While examining the subject, students have difficulty recognizing many activities their school undertakes to promote promotion in the local and business community. On the other hand, they also lack wisdom about what better could be done on the matter, which explains the relatively high measured scores.

School's physical conditions are the most articulated issue in some schools while already a conquered matter in many other schools that have reached high standards after investments and reconstruction.

1 in 4 students is not satisfied with their school physical condition. Problems reported during the discussion are:

- old classrooms and desks

- damaged buildings
- massively lack of heating systems
- inadequate lighting
- improper bathrooms
- no proper cleanliness, and
- lack of consolidated libraries.

Predominantly students share discontent about the limited spaces in laboratories or classrooms where practical learning occurs that hinder their mastery of the most critical knowledge in VET school.

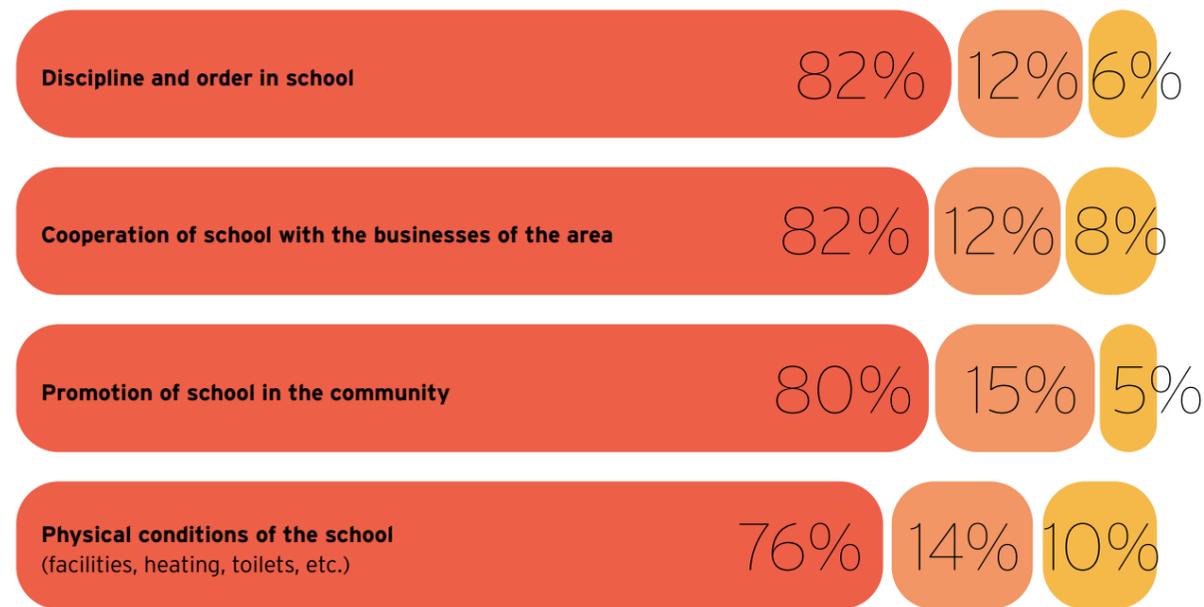
The creation of sports centers is another constant demand in the suggestion for improvements question. Sports activities are not pivotal in the professional learning path. However, students pinpoint them as meaningful and necessary for engaging teenagers in healthy social activities, away from cafeterias, alcohol, and drugs.

31% of students voice discontentment with their school location, especially compared to their peers in general schools, with better access or central areas. 1 in 3 students needs to travel longer than 30 minutes to reach school. Spontaneous propositions vary from school buses and travel reimbursement to changes in school locations.

The least favorite schools in terms of site areas are the Commercial school in Vlora, followed by Tirana schools such as Gjergji Canco, Karl Gega, Hermann Gmeiner, and Beqir Cela in Durrës. Some students articulate a noteworthy request for some flexibility in the morning schedule, particularly for students traveling from villages, suburban areas, or even from different cities. 5% travel more than an hour under challenging conditions only to face a closed door.

FIGURE 21 (CONTINUING)
SATISFACTION WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF VET SCHOOLS

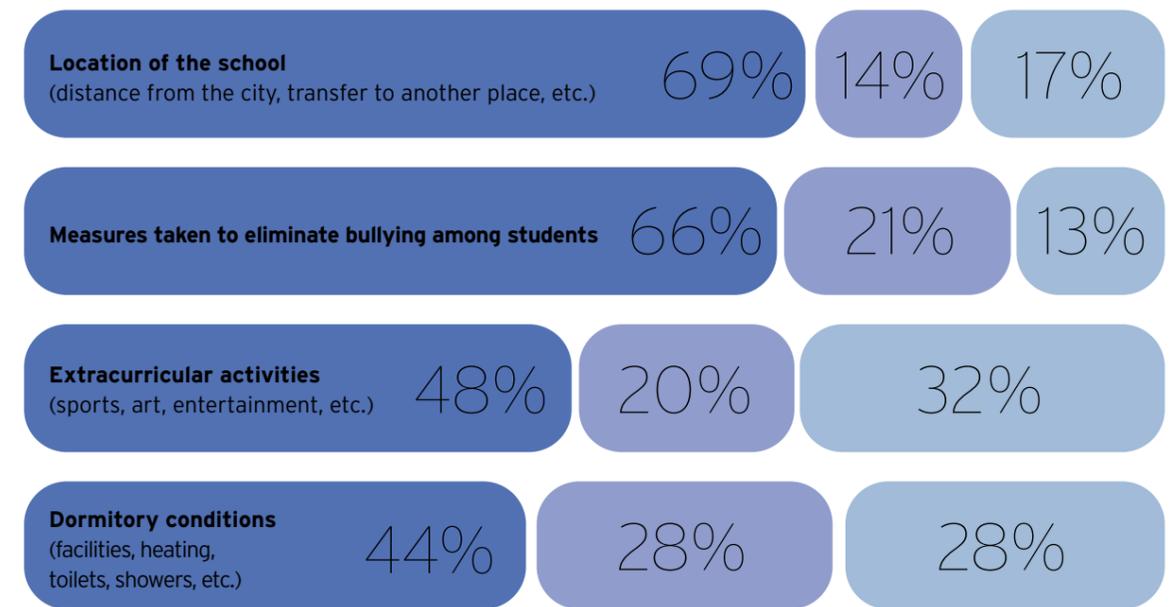
Very Satisfied Neither Not Satisfied



*SCORES MEASURED AMONG THOSE LIVING IN DORMITORIES

FIGURE 21 (CONTINUING)
SATISFACTION WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF VET SCHOOLS

Very Satisfied Neither Not Satisfied



*SCORES MEASURED AMONG THOSE LIVING IN DORMITORIES

“By 7.45 am, the door closes, and we miss the whole day because of a few more minutes stuck in traffic. A group of us, together with the senator, went to raise the issue with the school principal, but the door still closes precisely at 7.45 am.”, said a student in Shkodra.

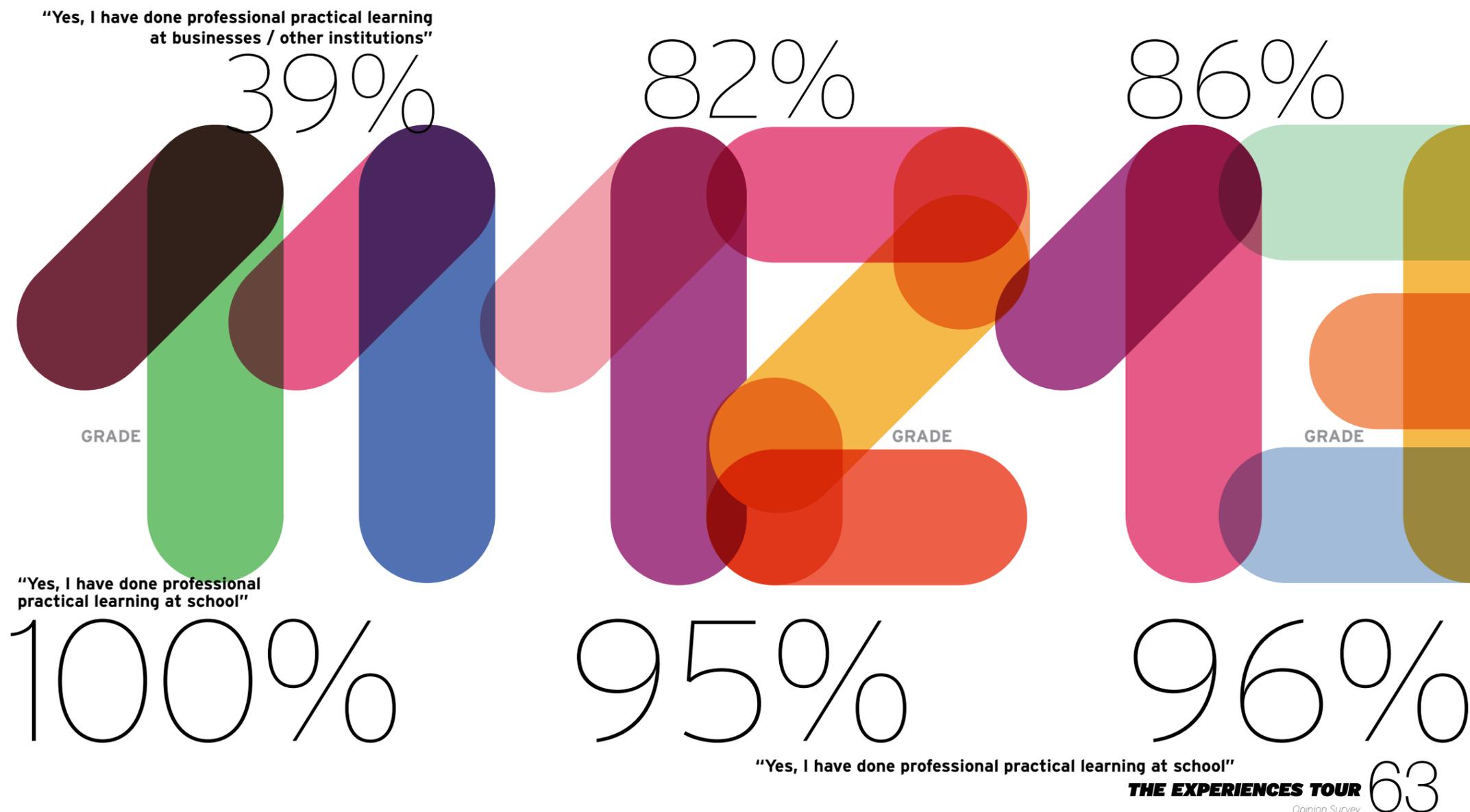
Everybody is familiar with the term bullying, its concept and effects. Many have participated in antibullying school campaigns or psychologist antibullying education sessions. Still, bullying exists, and 1 in 3 students is not satisfied with the measures taken by their school to counter this ugly phenomenon, which targets the youngest, especially the most vulnerable ones. Students request better-coordinated efforts from teachers and directors and radical punishments for bullies. School staff easily pardon bullies or aggressive students instead of expelling them from the school, which is the right approach according to several.

52% declare themselves as not satisfied or neutral about extracurricular activities. The qualitative discussion and open-ended questions in the qualitative questionnaire stress the need for extracurricular activities among VET students. Visibly, there is an intense appetite for more social, art and sports activities, outings, and expeditions. VET students feel left behind and excluded from the fun compared to their general education peers, which hurts their pride. “Especially now that the pandemic times are behind, why can’t we do more school excursions or fun things as other schools do?” is repeated among VET students in every city all over Albania.

School dormitories mark the least satisfying component among all measured in this survey. 56% declare themselves not entirely satisfied with dormitory conditions; therefore, only 3% of the respondents have chosen dormitories

as their primary accommodation. Requests for improvement revolve around new furniture and heating during cold winter days as critical needed improvements.

FIGURE 22
PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICAL LEARNING AT SCHOOL AND BUSINESSES / OTHER INSTITUTIONS



5.3 Practical learning at schools and businesses/other organization

The forms of practical learning in the VET system range from purely school-based, where practical learning takes place in school facilities, laboratories or other outdoor areas, to company visits, internships, and real work experience.

96% of VET students report participating in practical learning at school laboratories and 82% in practical learning in businesses or other organizations. This high exposure to practical knowledge is praiseworthy, considering the pandemic restriction during 2020-2021.

5.4 Satisfaction with practical learning at school

As presented earlier in the report, the teaching staff is among the highest-performing components in VET students' eyes. Going a step further, we discovered that teachers of professional practical learning are at the top of this hierarchy scoring the highest among 29 different attributes measured in this survey clustered into four categories. Practical learning teachers have the closest affinity with students and serve as their focal point and pillar within the school system. Hence 96% of the students declare themselves satisfied or highly satisfied, 3% neutral, and only 1% dissatisfied.

Contentment with working environments,

laboratories of workshop spaces at schools is positioned in the second group of indicators, scoring relatively moderate. 83% of VET students declare to be highly satisfied or satisfied with this indicator, while 17% see significant room for improvement, such as dedicated spaces and more modern laboratories. The weakest point of practical learning at VET schools is supplies with raw materials, work equipment, machinery, or tools. Nearly 1 in 4 students demand more materials and modernized equipment, machinery, or tools to practice learning.

An important insight discovered during group discussion relates to tools and machinery management. Some schools already have modern equipment and machinery donated by

different benefactors, but according to students, they are not being utilized and lay under dust locked away. Some respondents are unsure why, but others blame the school staff for lack of will to put instruments for students' good use with trivial arguments and justifications.

"We have more keys than a proper car service workshop, but they won't let us use them. They are worried we might break them. We have even heard rumors that there is a computer system for Mercedes cars in our school, where you can check the car's systems, but we have never seen it. They keep them locked worrying about finances because nobody wants to take the responsibility if something gets broken", voiced a student studying for vehicles and transportation services.

5.5 Satisfaction with practical learning at businesses (WBL)

Students highly praise all components of practical learning at businesses or other organizations. All indicators measured score above 90% in satisfaction measurement.

9 in 10 students declare they are satisfied with the safety conditions during professional practical learning at businesses, the practical knowledge gained, the expertise of their instructor/s, the communication of the staff, and finally, the tools available during the professional practice at businesses premises.

As they emphasize, practical learning in business or work-based learning is indispensable

FIGURE 23 SATISFACTION WITH PRACTICAL LEARNING AT VET SCHOOLS

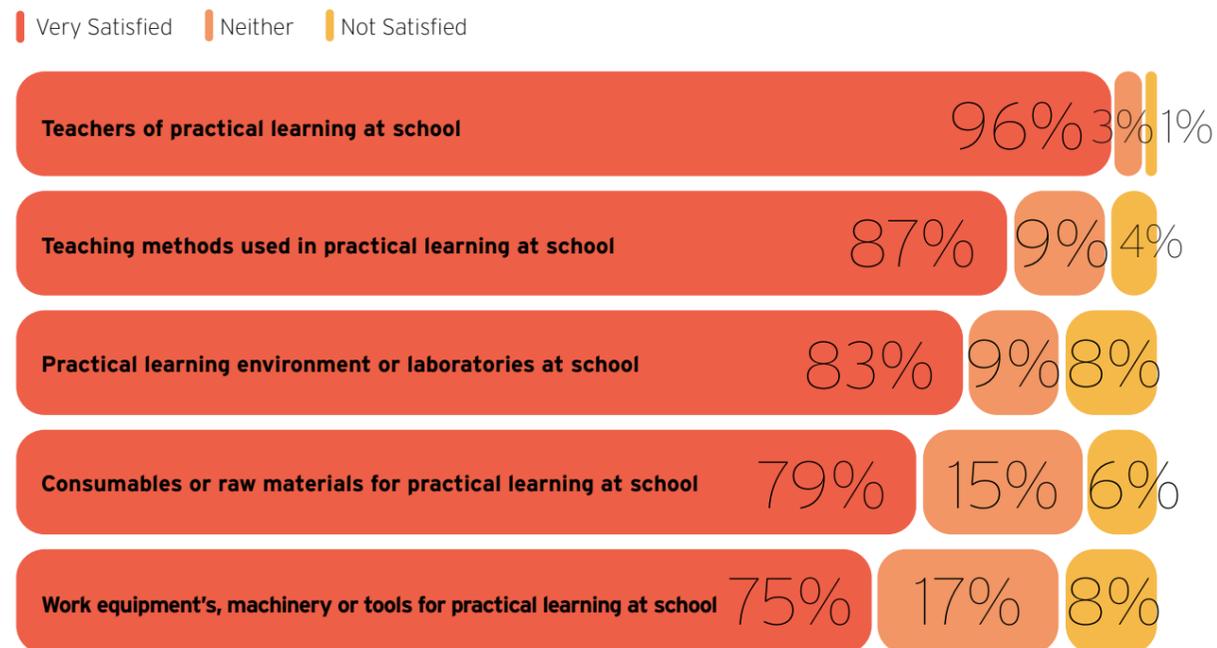


FIGURE 24 SATISFACTION WITH PRACTICAL LEARNING IN BUSINESSES (WBL)



for students' qualifications and advancement. Practical education at schools is limited to processes and equipment at hand; therefore, never enough. Most businesses do not follow a particular program or receive school orientation but guide students into business processes as per their need for supporting functions, time, and willingness to involve them.

Many declare they find learning opportunities, using their connections, relieving teachers from the burden of going around the city to find business collaborators. Additionally, teachers seem to discriminate between good and less performing students, prioritizing the former when feeding prospects for practical learning in businesses. Some students seem to agree with such inequality when it benefits them, but others demand to have the same opportunities despite their grades and school performance.

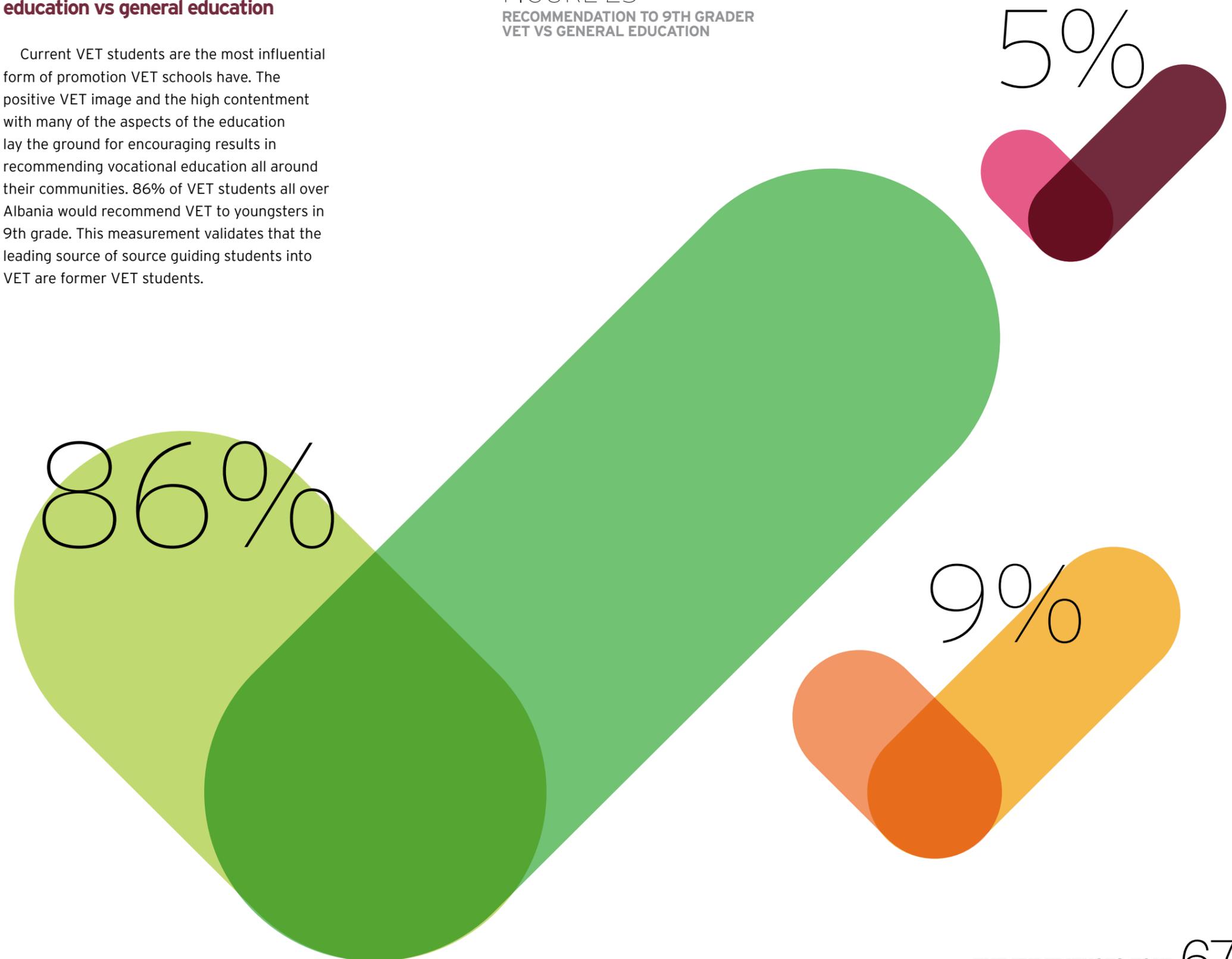
"Business companies treat us like an employee and want us to do everything an employee does. We have no program to follow, just the business agenda, which helps us learn even more," stated a girl studying hospitality and tourism.

"Businesses and institutions used to welcome us, but things have changed a bit since the pandemic ", said another girl studying health and social services.

5.6 Recommendation of VET education vs general education

Current VET students are the most influential form of promotion VET schools have. The positive VET image and the high contentment with many of the aspects of the education lay the ground for encouraging results in recommending vocational education all around their communities. 86% of VET students all over Albania would recommend VET to youngsters in 9th grade. This measurement validates that the leading source of source guiding students into VET are former VET students.

FIGURE 25
RECOMMENDATION TO 9TH GRADER
VET VS GENERAL EDUCATION



6

CAREER

GUIDANCE

AND

PLANS

FOR

THE

9 in 10 VET students discuss their professional future with their close family members or relatives, while 1 in 3 acknowledges friends or peers at school as a career guidance source.

FUTURE

6.1 Career guidance - main advisor

The principal career guidance advisors are personal contacts

9 in 10 VET students discuss their professional future with their close family members or relatives, while 1 in 3 acknowledges friends or peers at school as a career guidance source. As presented earlier in the report, family members and relatives endorsed VET as the best education alternative earlier at the judgment point when deciding about their secondary education level, especially when they are formed VET students. This community continues to operate as career guidance for students and the primary advisor during schooling and the job-seeking process. Families are especially well-aware when employed in the sector or own businesses in a specific industry related to students' fields of study. Another factor explaining the high sustenance in personal contacts is trust.

Only 26% identify teachers are their career advisors guiding students to choose the right career path based on their academic knowledge, capabilities, and skills. Only 2% of the students identify school career counselors for their role. Students are oftentimes not familiar with the "career counselors" title or position since this function is usually assumed by teachers and not by dedicated school staff. During group discussions, no participants knew if their school had an appointed career counselor. Yet, all acknowledged that teachers integrated job-related information and career guidance during classes, particularly practical learning teachers.

The business ecosystem is a source of information and advice utilized by not many students, even though 9 in 10 survey participants had participated in at least one practical learning session in the business environment (figure 22), and 37% are currently employed (figure 5).

Affinity with business people and instructors is recognized as a source of market knowledge, although personal objectives and plans and examined, argued, and determined within the family microcosmos.

knowledge, and skills acquired at VET schools. 6% of them will attend professional courses or training to consolidate their professional profile further or expand it into other areas of interest. Both groups, the future university students and the alternative education students, indicate they will try to support themselves with during further studies. However, such employment is planned to be secondary or seasonal to support their advanced education agendas.

34% of VET students plan to focus primarily on finding a job and working after the completion of secondary vocational education. They do not intend to adhere to further education, at least at the time.

The question intended to determine plans is intentionally designed as a single alternative question so that it could stress out the fundamental motivation of students and their

6.2 Future plans

1 in 2 VET students plans to pursue university studies upon ending their secondary vocational education, mainly in the same fields of study they follow. Drove by ambition and determination they believe further studies will give them better opportunities for their professional future. Throughout discussions, a sense of pride and perceived superiority arises compared to general education students. VET students perceive themselves as better prepared for further university studies because of their familiarity with the sector, supplemental

FIGURE 26

CAREER GUIDANCE - ADVISORS ON FURTHER AND CAREER DECISION

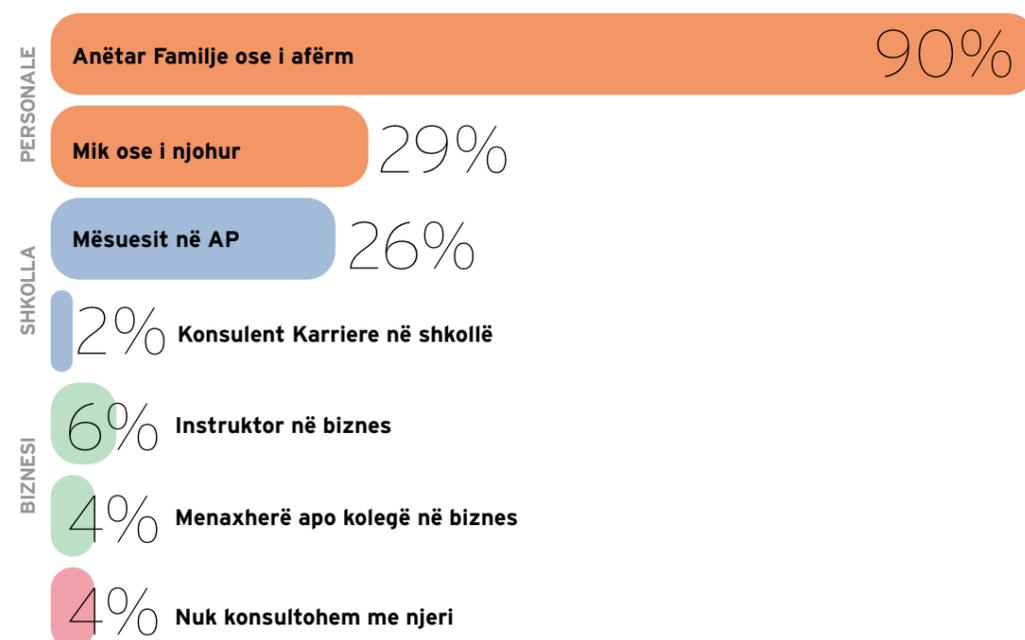
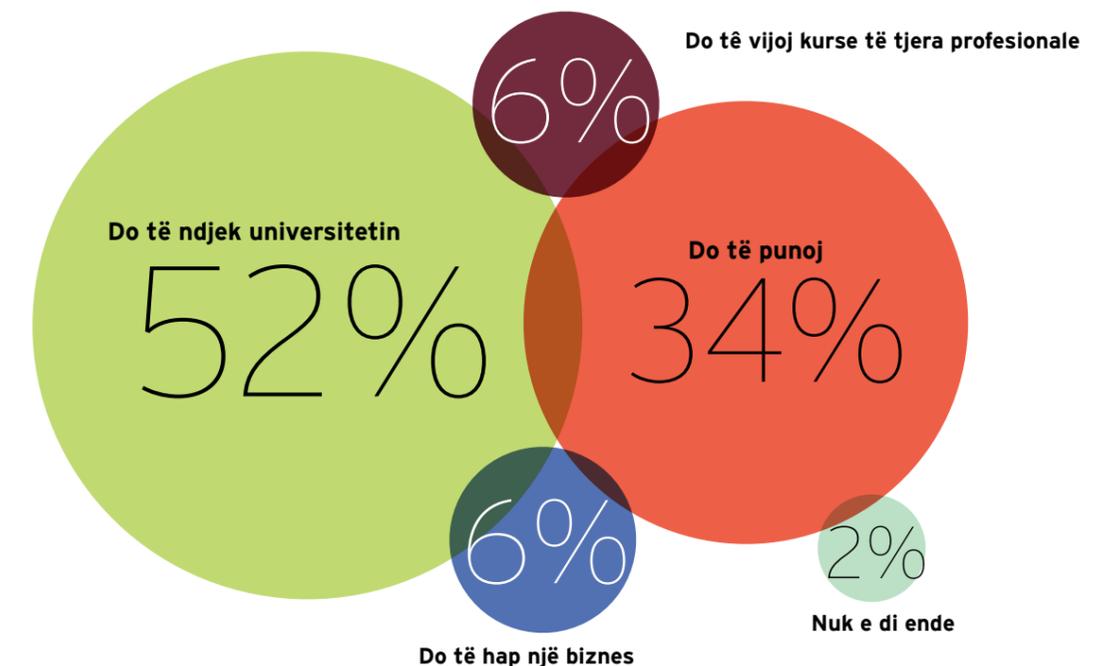


FIGURE 27

UPCOMING PLANS AT THE END OF VET



predominantly future objectives. The piloting phase of the survey revealed a tendency to state all-inclusive plans such as advanced education while working and perhaps opening a business on the side too. By demanding a single answer, we better understand priorities and key future trends.

Gender results exhibit significant differences in the future path outlook. 80% of the female respondents intend to pursue university studies

vs. 47% of the male respondents. On the contrary, 10% of the female students plan to get a job immediately after finishing school as their primary occupation vs. 38% of the male students. The intention to become entrepreneurs immediately after finishing school is low among both genders, with no drastic differences, respectively 4% for females and 6% for males.

Factors influencing students' future professional choices are many; the family's

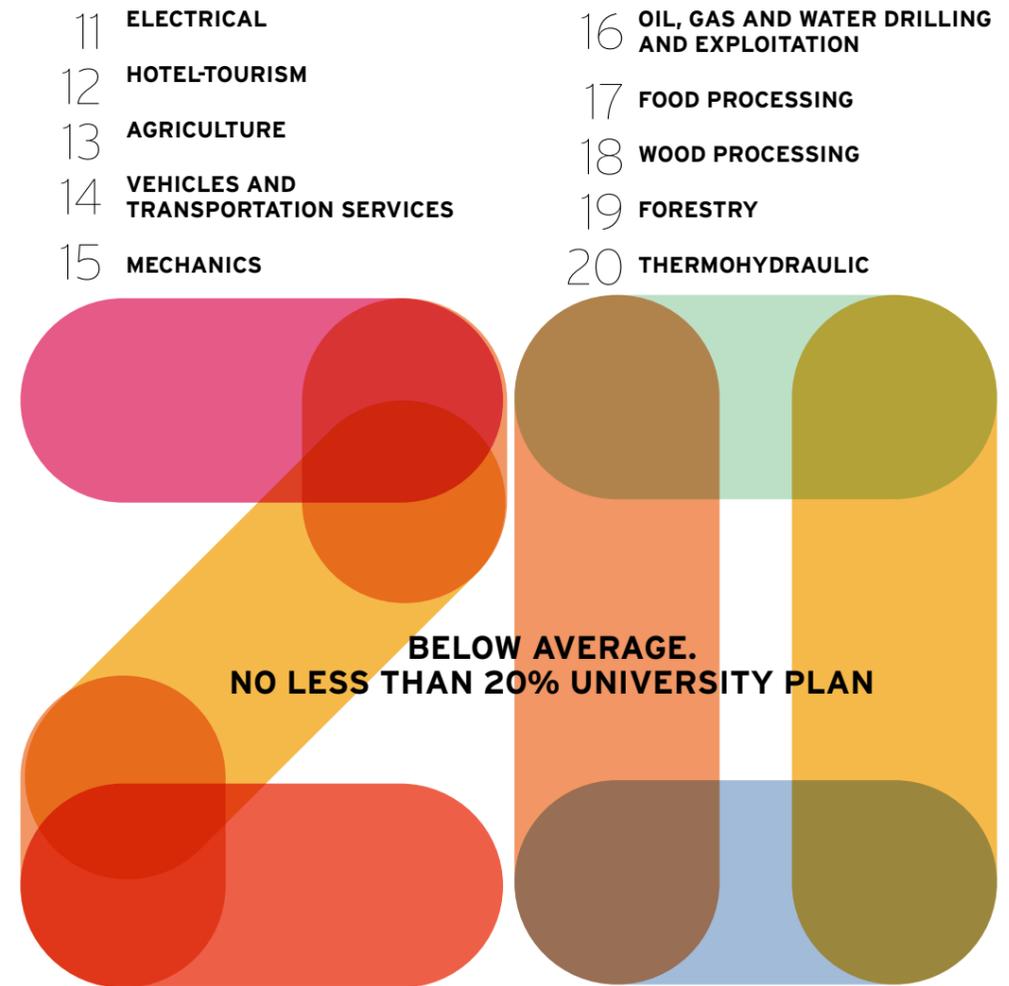
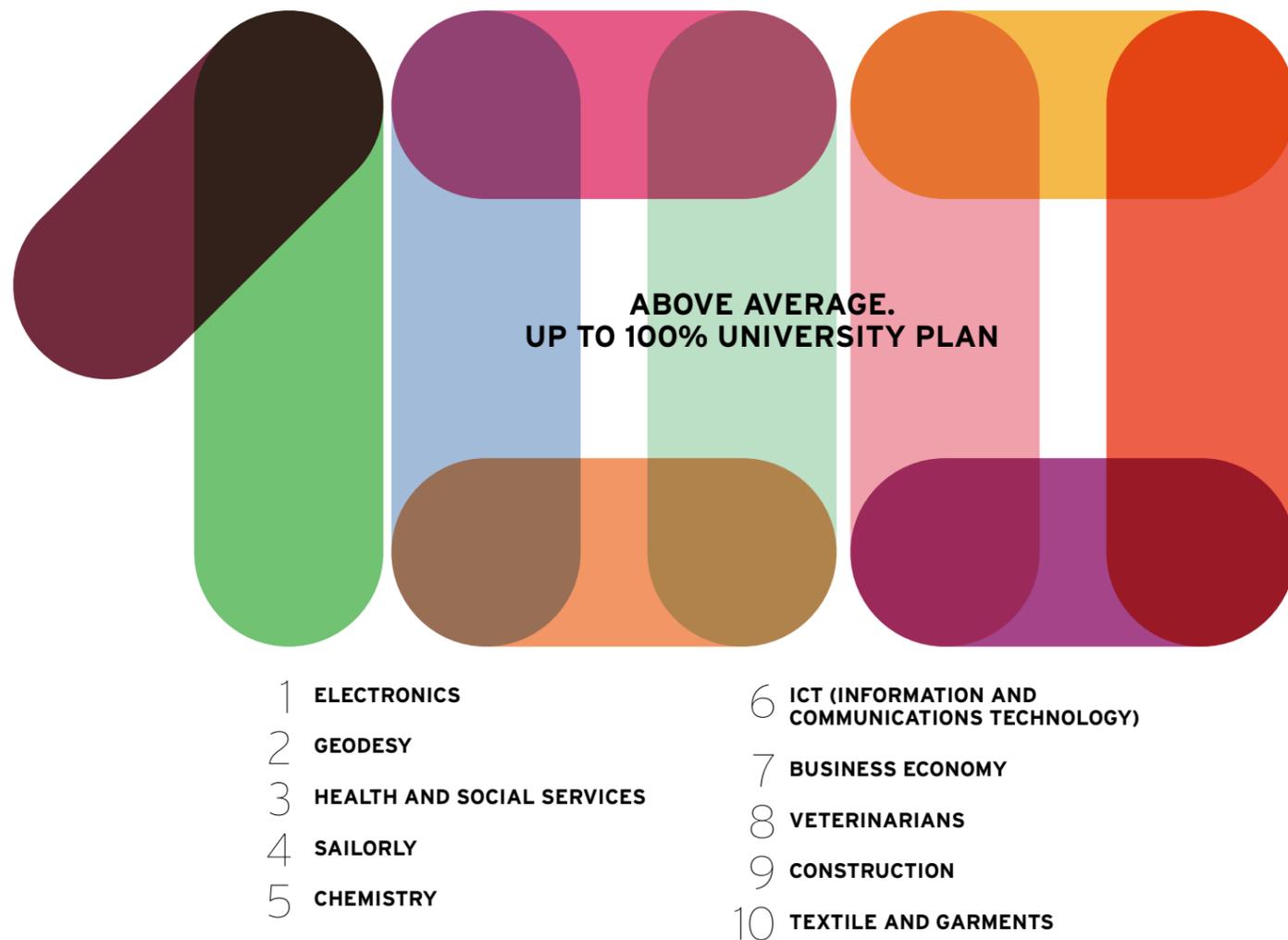
economic conditions, connections and safety net available, personal ambition, grades and results, gender, the fields they study, etc.

The quantified results reveal significant differences in future choices among students in different fields of study. Students following studies in electronics, geodesy, health and social services, sailor, chemistry and ICT, business economy, veterinary, construction, and textile are keener into further studies. The discussion reveals they have a thorough vision and have

already identified future fields of study and universities matching their secondary vocational education background, knowledge, and skills.

Students currently studying in electrical, hotel-tourism, agriculture, vehicles and transportation services, mechanics, oil, gas and water drilling and exploitation, food processing, wood processing, forestry and thermohydraulic fields declare lower intention to continue higher education and higher intent to work at the end of the VET studies.

FIGURE 28
PLAN TO FOLLOW UNIVERSITY STUDIES (PERCENTAGE)



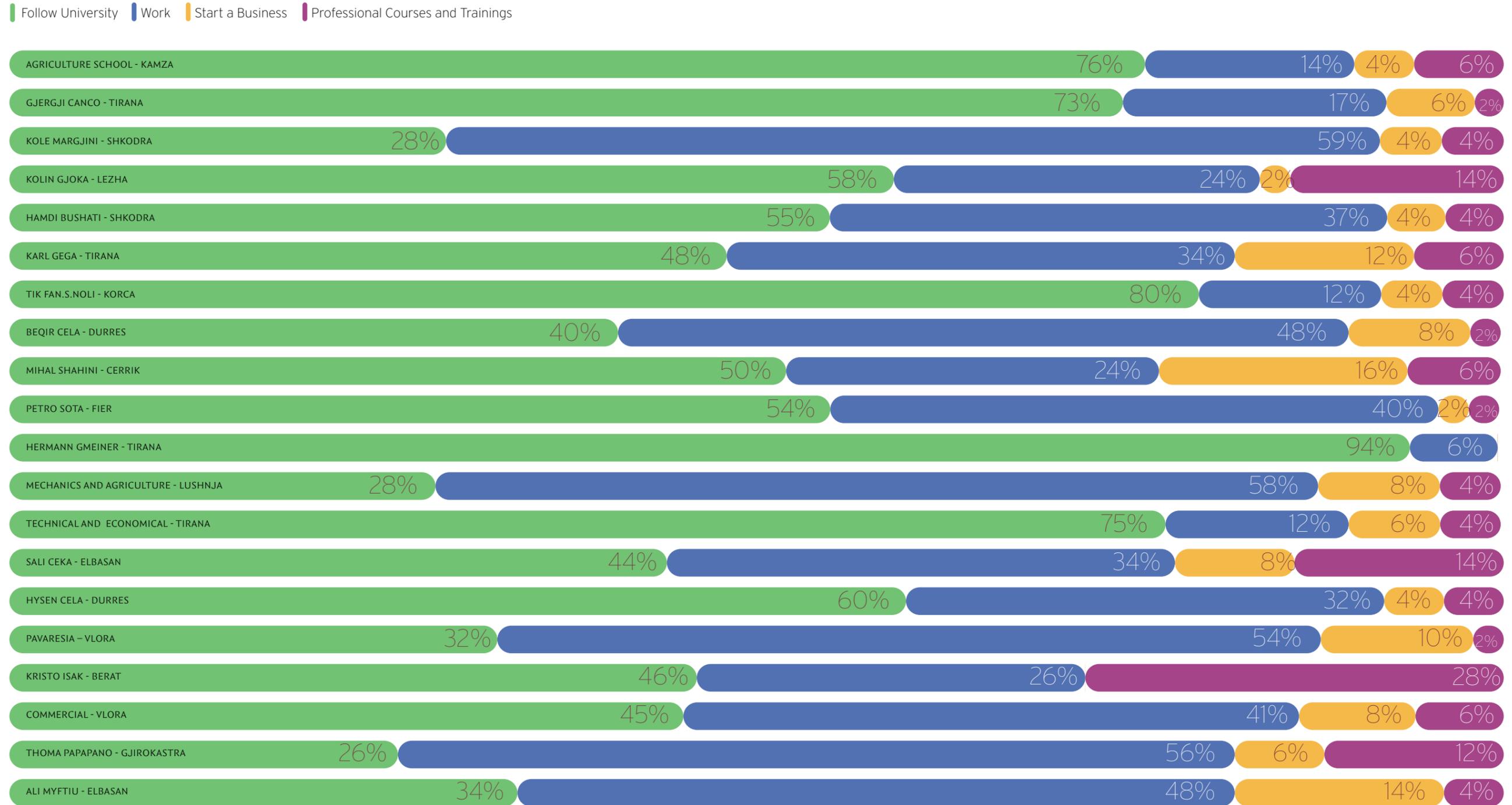
Research findings about the student's upcoming plans dictate discriminatory results

not only in the fields of study but even in the school or living settings. Students studying in

Tirana are keener to pursue university studies than in other cities, potentially due to easier

access to universities and more economic power.

FIGURE 29
FUTURE PLANS AFTER COMPLETION OF VET STUDIES, BY SCHOOL

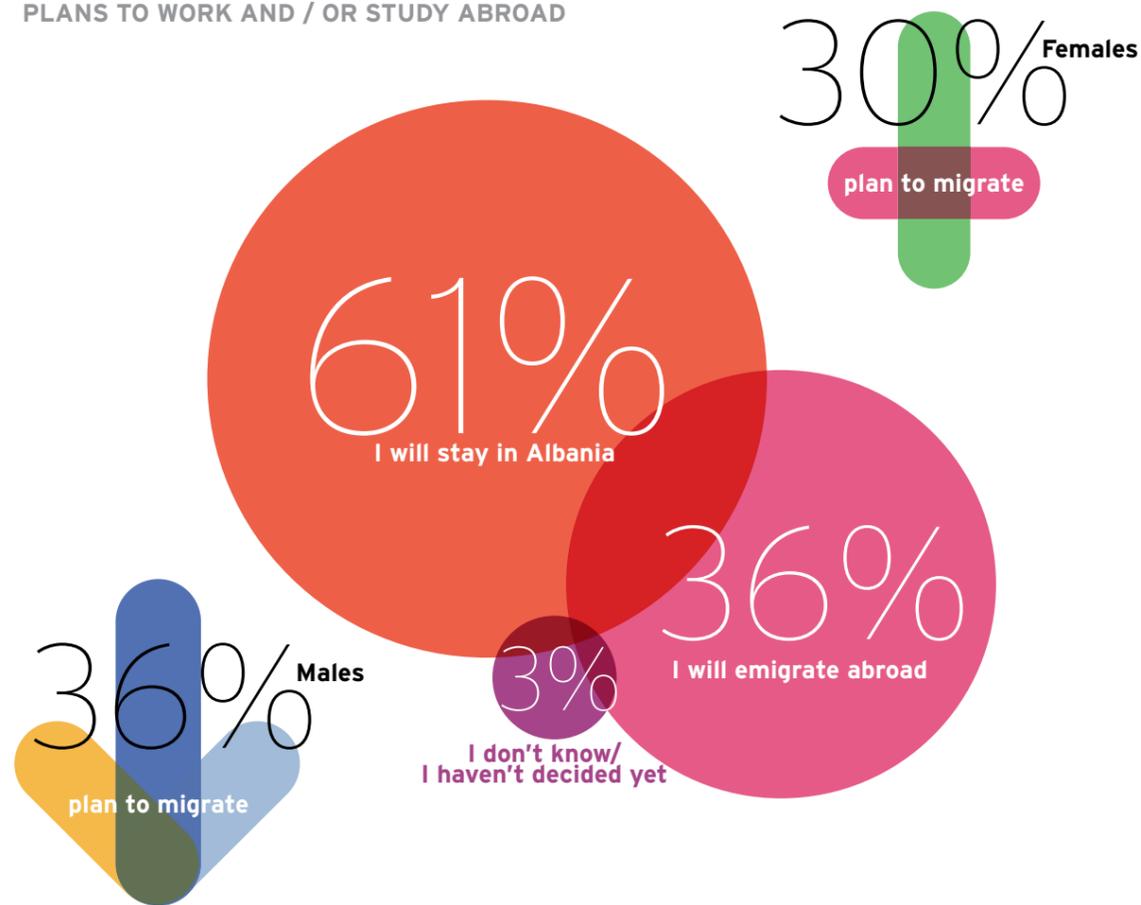


6.3 Emigration future plans

Emigration is a hot topic in the Albanian arena, generating controversies between views considering it a normal modern phenomenon and those considering it an alarming one. When asked where they intend to see their plans through, 36% of the VET students declare plans to emigrate and create a permanent life in other countries. Fewer find it appealing to study and work abroad for some years and later return, professionally advanced, and ready to build their own businesses in their home country. More than half (53%) of those planning to emigrate, plan to work and find jobs preferably within their

VET profile, although it is clear to them that this would not always be possible, while 36% plan to primarily follow further studies. The most preferred countries to move abroad are west European countries, US, and Canada because of the high standard of living, better wages and better education. Nevertheless, the country of choice is ultimately determined by the whereabouts of their family or relatives living abroad, which function as anchors and are usually advocating and supporting youths' emigration plans. Male students state higher degree of intention to emigrate after finishing VET studies compare than female students, but the difference is not radical (males 37% vs. females 30%).

FIGURE 30
PLANS TO WORK AND / OR STUDY ABROAD

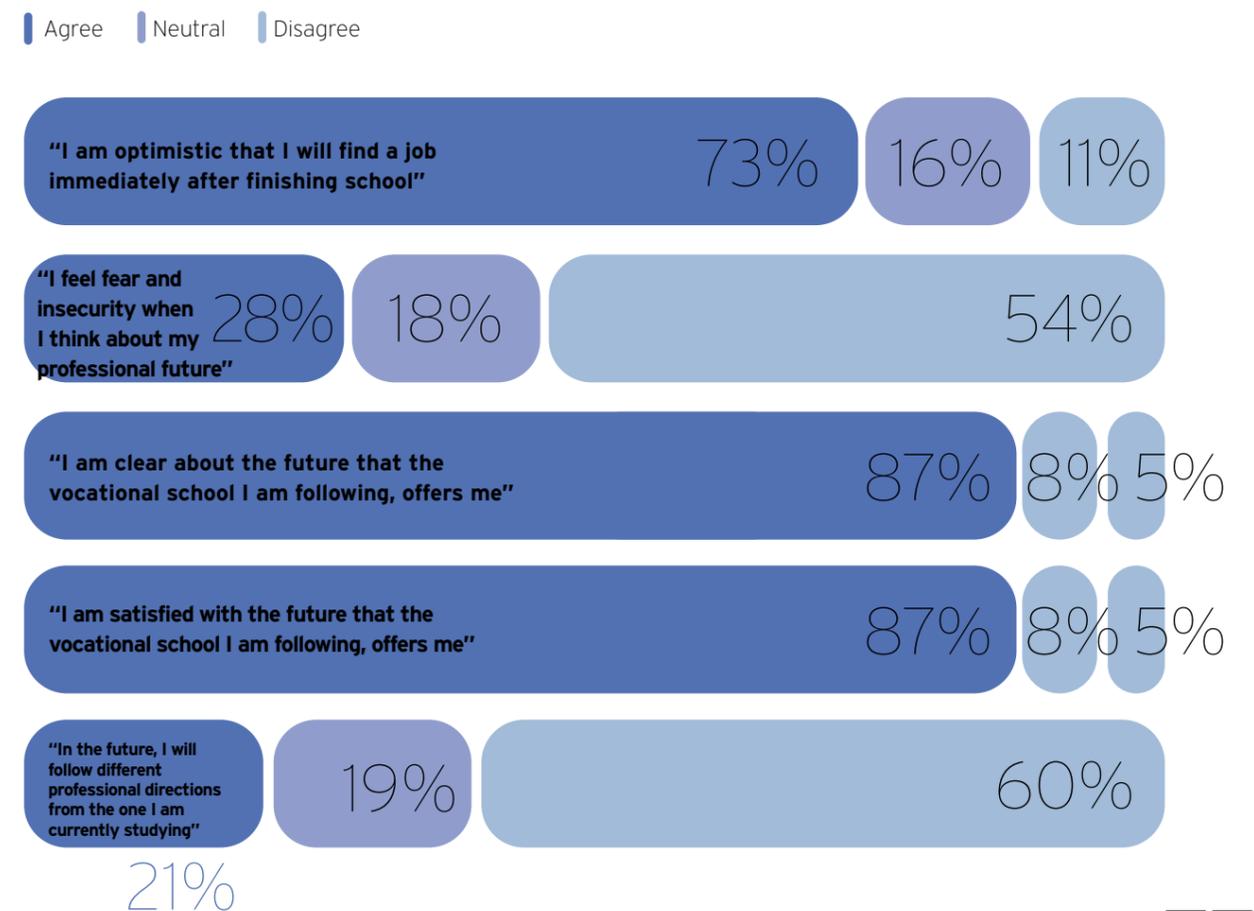


6.4 Reflections about the future

73% of the interviewed VET students are optimistic they will find a job that utilizes their acquired skills immediately after finishing VET school, even though not all plan doing so. 16% declare themselves uncertain about the opportunity to secure a specialized job, and 11% are pessimistic about the prospect. The skeptics also report feeling fear and insecurity (28%) when they think about their professional future due to the many variables this equation holds: university vs. work, staying in the country or emigrating, etc. Almost 9 out of 10 students stand clear concerning the future VET education reserves them and

are satisfied with it, confirming their firm stand in favor of the vocational education system, as seen earlier in the image findings. 2 out of 10 VET students announce they will follow different professional directions from the one they are currently studying. At the same time, 6 out of 10 will probably stay loyal to their earlier choice, illustrating why more than half proclaimed it their passion choice. The neutral ones, almost 2 out of 10, wish to keep their options open or follow other directions within the same sector but with different specializations. I am studying hospitality and tourism, but I want to be a tour guide for foreigners in the future and then open my travel and tourism agency", said one girl in Tirana.

FIGURE 31
FUTURE CONTEMPLATIONS, EXPECTATION AND ATTITUDES



7

VET

PRIORITIES

The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 - 2022, section B, is dedicated to plans and policies on “offering quality vocational education and training to youth and adults”

Section B of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 - 2022 is dedicated to plans and policies on “offering quality vocational education and training to youth and adults”.

Students are presented with the prominent points included in this strategy so that they can prioritize among them according to their viewpoints.

FIGURE 32
VET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

List of tables

Table 1: VET schools visited in the qualitative phase

List of figures

Figure 1: Gender, class, and age profile
 Figure 2: Sample per school
 Figure 3: Sample per fields of study
 Figure 4: Free time activities
 Figure 5: Employment during studies
 Figure 6: Employment during studies by gender and grade
 Figure 7: Employment during studies by per schools
 Figure 8: Employment per fields of studies
 Figure 9: Student's life concerns
 Figure 10: Living condition and time spent every morning to school
 Figure 11: Source of information influencing school choice
 Figure 12: Reason for choosing VET
 Figure 13: Pasion for the field of studies as a main catalyst for VET choice
 Figure 14: Pasion for the field of studies as a main catalyst for VET choice- schools
 Figure 15: Objections against VET school choice in the students' community
 Figure 16: General VET image and the role in society
 Figure 17: Vet image compared with the general education
 Figure 18: VET image in relation to the labour market
 Figure 19: Satisfaction with knowledge attained at VET schools
 Figure 20: Satisfaction with knowledge about using computers and technology
 Figure 21: Satisfaction with different aspects of VET schools
 Figure 22: Practical learning
 Figure 23: Satisfaction with professional practices at VET schools
 Figure 24: Satisfaction with professional practices in businesses (WBL)
 Figure 25: Recommendation to 9th grade pupils - VET vs. general education
 Figure 26: Career guidance
 Figure 27: Future plans after the completion of VET studies
 Figure 28: Plans to follow universities studies
 Figure 29: Future plans after completion of VET studies, by school
 Figure 30: Plans to work and or study abroad

Figure 31: Future contemplations, expectation, and attributes

Figure 32: VET priorities according to students for future strategies

ANNEX 2 QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. City. ONE ANSWER

- Berat
- Cërrik
- Durrës
- Elbasan
- Fier
- Gjirokastër
- Kamëz
- Korçë
- Lezhë
- Lushnjë
- Pogradec
- Shkodër
- Tiranë
- Vlorë

2. School name. ONE ANSWER

- School Profesionale Bujqësore Kamëz
- School Teknike Elektrike "Gjergji Canco" - Tiranë
- School Teknike Pyjore "Kolë Margjini" - Shkodër
- School Profesionale "Kolin Gjoka" - Lezhë
- School Teknologjike "Hamdi Bushati" - Shkodër
- School Shkolla Ndertimit "Karl Gega" - Tiranë
- School Mesme Profesionale TIK "Fan.S.Noli" - Korçë
- School Profesionale "Beqir Çela" - Durrës
- School "Mihal Shahini" Cërrik
- School "Petro Sota" - Fier
- School profesionale "Hermann Gmeiner" - Tiranë
- School Mekanike Bujqësore, Lushnje
- School Teknike Ekonomike - Tiranë
- School "Sali Ceka"- Elbasan
- School e Mesme Teknologjike "Hysen Çela" - Durrës
- School Industriale "Pavarësia" - Vlorë
- School e Mesme Profesionale "Kristo Isak" -Berat
- School "Tregtare" - Vlorë

- School Professionale “Thoma Papapano” - Gjirokastër
 - School “Ali Myftiu” - Elbasan
3. **Gender. ONE ANSWER**
- Female
 - Male
4. **In which class do you currently study? ONE ANSWER**
- 10th grade - CLOSE INTERVIEW
 - 11th grade - CONTINUE INTERVIEW
 - 12th grade - CONTINUE INTERVIEW
 - 13th grade - CONTINUE INTERVIEW
5. **In which field do you currently study? ONE ANSWER**
- Agriculture
 - Sailorly
 - Business Economy
 - Electrotechnical
 - Electronical
 - Geodesy
 - Hotel-tourism
 - Oil, gas and water drilling and exploitation
 - Mechanics
 - Construction
 - Woods processing
 - Forestry
 - Vehicles and transportation services
 - Health and social services
 - Chemical technology
 - Food processing
 - Textile and garments
 - Thermohydraulic
 - ICT (Information and communications technology)
 - Veterinarians
 - Other, pls write down _____
6. **How old are you? ONE ANSWER**
- Up to 15 years old
 - 16 years old
 - 17 years old
 - 18 years old

–19+ years old

7. **Where do you live while studying in VET? MULTIPLE ANSWER**
- In the school dormitory
 - In my house
8. **How many minutes do you spend every morning to go to school? ONE ANSWER**
- 0 - 15 minutes
 - 16 - 30 minutes
 - 31 - 45 minutes
 - 46 - 60 minutes
 - 61+ minutes
9. **Do you work right now, while studying in VET? ONE ANSWER**
- Yes, I work part time (less than 20 hours per week)
 - Yes, I work full time (20-48 hours per week)
 - No, I don't work

IF IT WORKS SO Q.11 = CODE 1 AND 2, THEN ASK

10. Is the job your do somehow related to your field of studies? ONE ANSWER
- Yes, the job I do, is in the same field or related fields to the one I study at VET
 - No, the job I do have is no related to my field of studies at VET

11. How do you spend your free time at home or outside home, when you are not at school or studying? MULTIPLE ANSWER

- Watch TV
- Read
- Listen to music
- Play sports
- Follow sport activities (e.g., go to the stadium, watch on TV, follow news in regard to sports etc)
- Follow hobbies I am passionate about (e.g., music, painting, photography, ballet, etc)
- Go out or spend time with friends
- Use social media (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, etc)
- Use internet for researching different topics
- Video games, in electronic equipment's, mobile etc
- Spend time with family (spend time with them, visit bigger families' members etc)
- Traveling, spend weekends out of town

- Religious activities (I go at church, mosques etc)
- Other- please write

12. Where have you heard about your vocational school, for the first time?

MULTIPLE ANSWER

- From close family member or other families
- From friends or other peers of your age
- From former students at the school and other professionals
- From teachers of other staff at 9th grade school
- From activities organised by school: fairs, open days, presentations etc
- From internet: school webpage, social media etc
- From TV and other media
- I don't know/I don't remember
- Other, please write _____

13. Why did you choose this school when you decided 3-4 years ago? Tell me all the reasons you thought at the time or that other told you. MULTIPLE ANSWER

- To obtain a craft, a professions
- It is a good school
- It secures a safe job in the market
- I have a passion for the field of study
- I have parents/relatives working/ have businesses in this field
- The potential to open my own business
- My friends choose this school
- It was suggested to me from family and/or other relatives
- It was suggested to me from teachers and/or school staff
- It gives advantages for university studies in the same field
- The diploma is recognised in other countries
- It is easier than general education/ high school
- I don't know/ I don't remember
- Other, please write

14. Did you encounter OBJECTIONS about choosing this school? Who advised you NOT to choose the vocational school? MULTIPLE ANSWER

- No, I did not encounter objections
- Yes, the family or relatives
- Yes, teachers from the school
- Yes, friends and peers
- Yes, general opinion or people in the community
- I don't know/I don't remember
- Yes, Other, please write _____

15. I will read you some statements that others have said about vocational school.

Tell me how much agree or disagree, with the following scale:

- Strongly agree (5)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Averagely (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Totally Disagree (1)
- I don't know (0)

- The vocational high school is a very good choice for young people like me.
- The vocational high school has a bad image in my community.
- Young people who finish vocational high school are more likely to find work compared to those who finish general education.
- Vocational high schools, prepares young people for university, better than general education.
- Students with low grades usually attend vocational high schools.
- Vocational high school is tougher than general education.
- The vocational high school gives good opportunities to work abroad.
- The vocational high school leads to well-paid jobs.

16. I will read you some statements that others have said about the role of vocational education in society. Tell me how much agree or disagree, with the following scale

- Strongly agree (5)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Averagely (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Totally Disagree (1)
- I don't know (0)

- Vocational education should be given more importance than general education.
- Vocational education strengthens the economy of the country.
- Vocational education reduces unemployment in the country.
- Vocational education teaches exactly the skills that employers need in the market.
- Vocational education leads to professions that are respected in society / community.

17. **How satisfied are you with the knowledge you get in school in each of the following categories? Rate your satisfaction with the scale:**

- Very satisfied (5)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Moderately (3)
- Not satisfied (2)
- Totally satisfied (1)
- I don't know (0)

- With general subjects and education (math, literature etc)
- With theoretical training related to the profession
- With practical training related to the profession
- With knowledge for using computers and technology
- With knowledge about safety and health at work
- With knowledge about communication and collaborating with other people
- With knowledge about discipline and accuracy at work
- With knowledge of laws and regulations on the profession and the sector
- With knowledge about the labour market and employment opportunities

18. **How satisfied are you with the following accepts of the schooling? Please rate your satisfaction with the scale:**

- Very satisfied (5)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Moderately (3)
- Not satisfied (2)
- Totally satisfied (1)
- I don't know (0)

- With the physical conditions of the school (facilities, heating, toilets, etc.)
- With dormitory conditions (facilities, heating, toilets, showers, etc.)
- With the location of the school (distance from the city, transfer to another place, etc.)
- With the communication skills of teachers (interaction in the classroom, etc.)
- With the professional qualification of teachers (appropriate speciality, experience, etc.)
- With teaching materials and books
- With discipline and order in school
- With the measures taken to eliminate bullying among students
- With various extracurricular activities (sports, art, entertainment, etc.)
- With the cooperation of the school with the businesses of the area
- With the promotion of school in the community

19. **Did you do professional practice while studying in vocational high school? Where were this done at school or at businesses/ other institutions? MULTIPLE ANSWER**

1. Yes, professional practice at school
2. Yes, professional practice at businesses/ other institution
3. No, I have not done practical work - GO TO Q.23

ASK IF Q.21=1

20. **How satisfied are you with the below aspects of the professional practice at school? Please rate your satisfaction with the scale:**

- Very satisfied (5)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Moderately (3)
- Not satisfied (2)
- Totally satisfied (1)
- I don't know (0)

- With the professional practice environment or laboratory at school
- With the teaching methods you use in professional practice at school
- With the teacher of professional practice at school
- With consumables or raw materials for professional practice at school
- With work equipment (machinery or tools) for professional practice at school
- With safety conditions for professional practice at school

ASK IF Q.21=2

21. **How satisfied are you with the below aspects of the professional practice (internship) at businesses or other institution? Please rate your satisfaction with the scale:**

- Very satisfied (5)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Moderately (3)
- Not satisfied (2)
- Totally satisfied (1)
- I don't know (0)

- With the practical knowledge you gain during the professional practice at businesses
- With the tools available during the professional practice at businesses
- With the expertise of the instructor during the professional practice at businesses
- With communication of the staff during the professional practice at businesses
- With safety conditions during the professional practice at businesses

22. What will you do after finishing vocational high school? ONE ANSWER

- I will follow universities studies
- I will continue other professional courses and trainings
- I will work/find a job
- I will start a business / become an entrepreneur
- I don't know/ I haven't decided
- Other- please write _____

23. Will you follow your future plans in Albania, or aboard after finishing the vocational school? ONE ANSWER

- I will emigrate aboard
- I will stay in Albania
- I don't know/ I haven't decided yet
- Other, please write _____

24. With whom do you discuss your professional future? MULTIPLE ANSWER

- With family or other relatives
- With teachers at school
- With career counsellor at school (if any)
- With friends and peers
- With the business instructor where I do the internship
- With the manager / business colleagues where I work
- I DO NOT CONSULT ANYONE
- Other, please write _____

25. Thinking about your expectations and goals for the future, how much do you agree with these statements by using the scale:

- Strongly agree (5)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Averagely (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Totally Disagree (1)
- I don't know (0)

- I feel fear and insecurity when I think about my professional future
- I am optimistic that I will find a job immediately after finishing school
- I am clear about the future that the vocational school I am following, offers me
- I am satisfied with the future that the vocational school I am following, offers me
- In the future, I will follow different professional directions from the one I am currently studying

26. Which of the following areas is most important to enhance the quality of vocational education in Albania? THREE ANSWERS

- Investing in teachers teaching skills and knowledge
- Investing in school infrastructure, buildings, tools and equipment
- Adapting fields of studies and knowledge to the businesses demands
- Increasing youth employment
- Improving the image and promotion of vocational schools
- Increase in number of vocational schools and fields of studies
- Other, please write _____

27. What improvement do you find necessary in your vocational school? OPEN QUESTION

WRITE DOWN _____

28. Which education would you recommend to a young person in 9th grade, vocational or general education? ONE ANSWER

- Vocational education
- General education
- It depends on the person (SPONTANEOUS)
- I don't know/ I am not sure

29. Finally, I will read you some concerns that young people like you may experience. How often do you think your peers experience each of them? Rate each category with the scale:

- Always (5)
- Often (4)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (2)
- Never (1)
- I don't know (0)

- Difficulties in relationships with friends
- Difficulties in relationships with parents
- Difficulties with school results
- Economic difficulties in the family
- Difficult to find work
- Bullying
- Physical harassment or insecurity
- Smoking

- Alcohol use
- Use of hashish or marijuana
- Use of heavy drugs (e.g., cocaine, heroin, etc.)
- Problems with gambling or betting
- Health problems
- Problems with anxiety and stress
- Dependence on technology



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË
MINISTRIA E FINANCËVE
DHE EKONOMISË

