

FiFOBi

Developing business competencies in school

Fit for business (?) Developing business competencies in German lower secondary schools

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Developing business competencies in school



Summary of the presentation

1. **Background information**
2. Results of the curriculum analysis
3. Results of the teacher interviews
4. Comparison
5. Social partner voices
6. Evaluation and recommendations

Background information

Education system

- In Germany, the state's functions are shared out between the Federal Government and the 16 *Länder* (states)
- The *Länder* are fundamentally responsible for education and culture.
→ “cultural sovereignty” of the *Länder*”
- All legislation on schools, including the development of curricula, is *Land* legislation

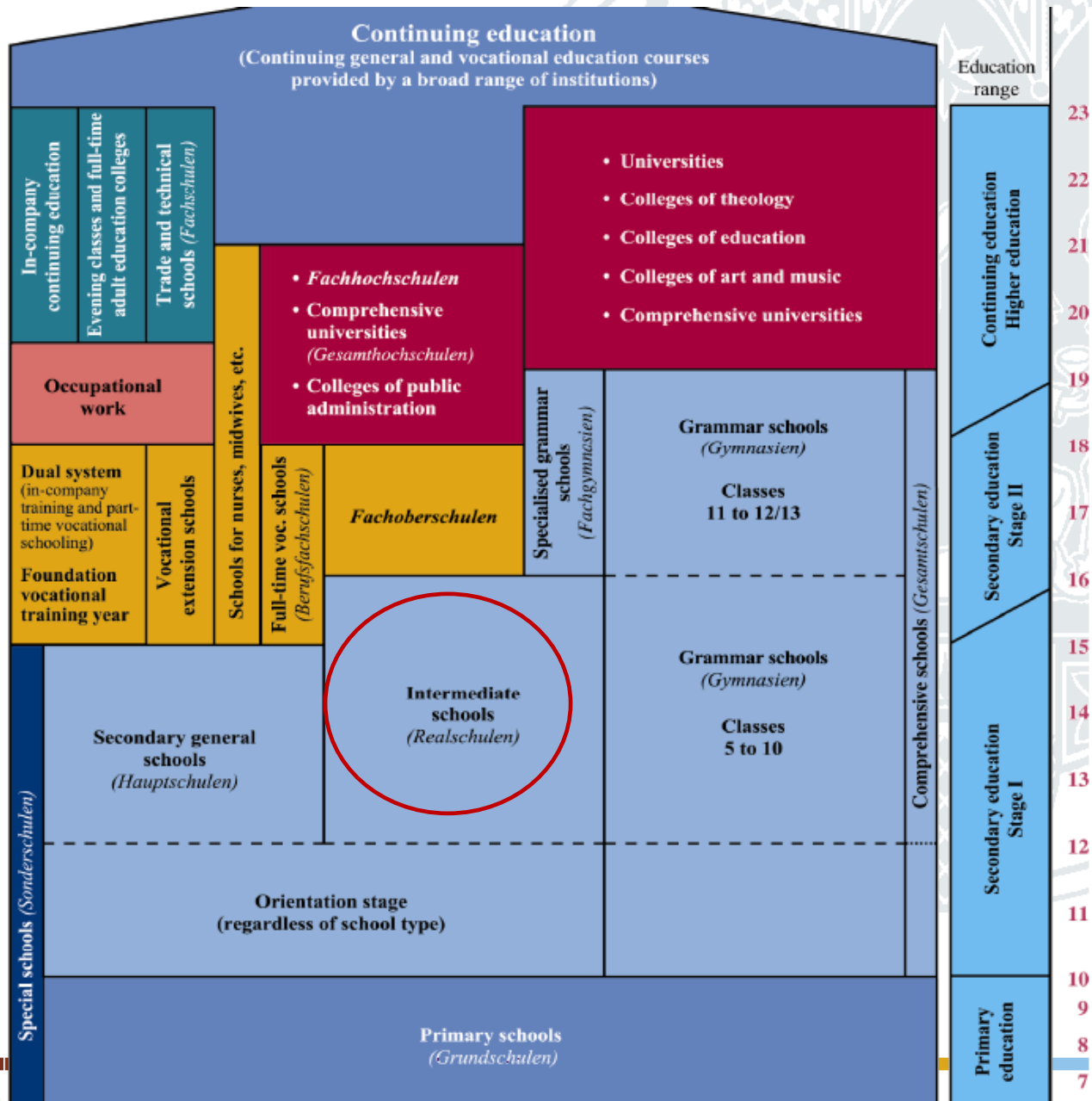


Out of 16, the curricula of
2 *Länder* were analyzed

– *North Rhine-
Westphalia* (most
populated Land)

– *Baden-
Wuerttemberg*
(second largest Land)





Research Layout

Definition of the analysis framework

What does pre-vocational education mean?

Curriculum analysis

Counting and categorizing key words in the curriculum

Quantitative analysis

Interviews with teachers

Semi-structured interview guideline

Qualitative analysis

Interviews with social partners

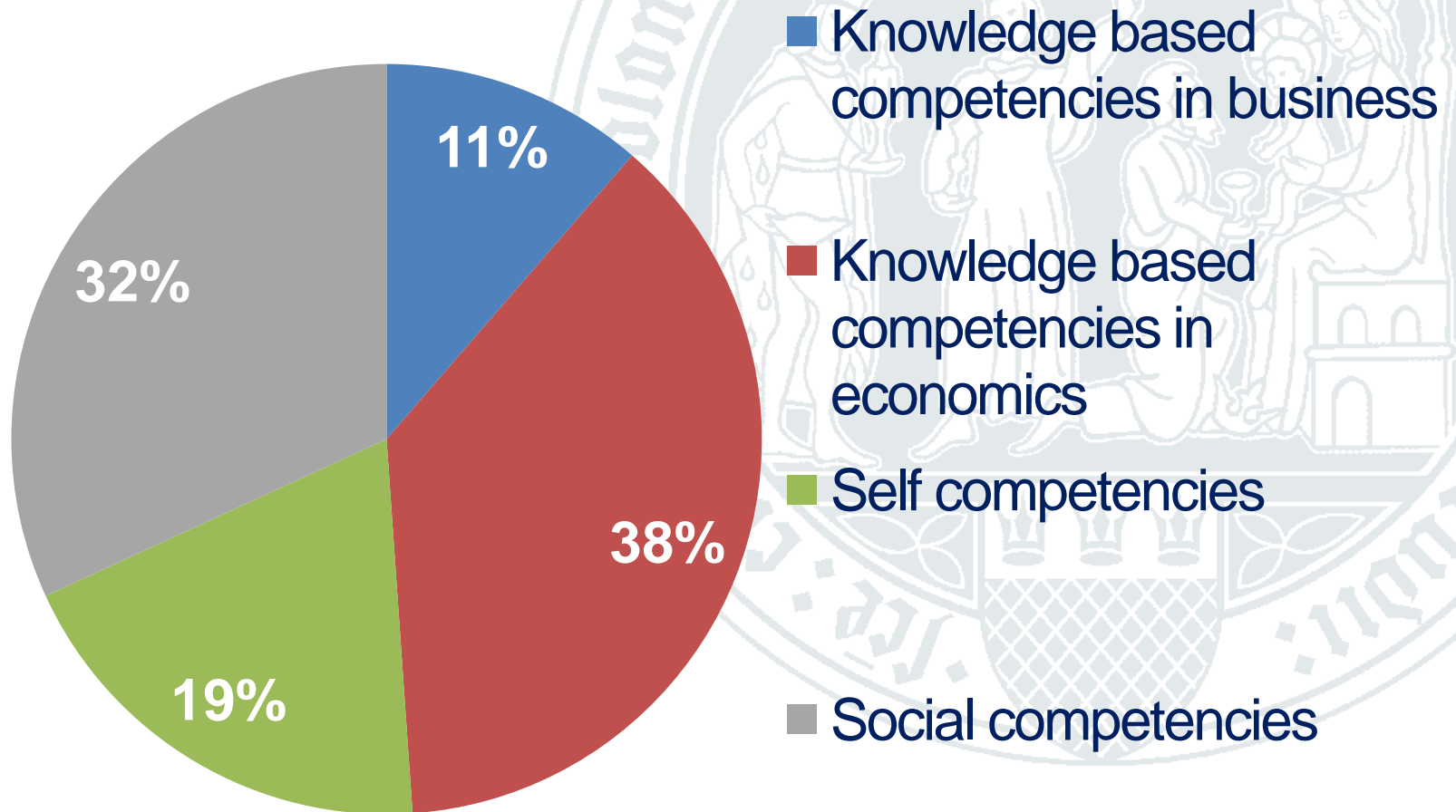
Semi-structured interview guideline

Qualitative analysis

Results of the curriculum analysis

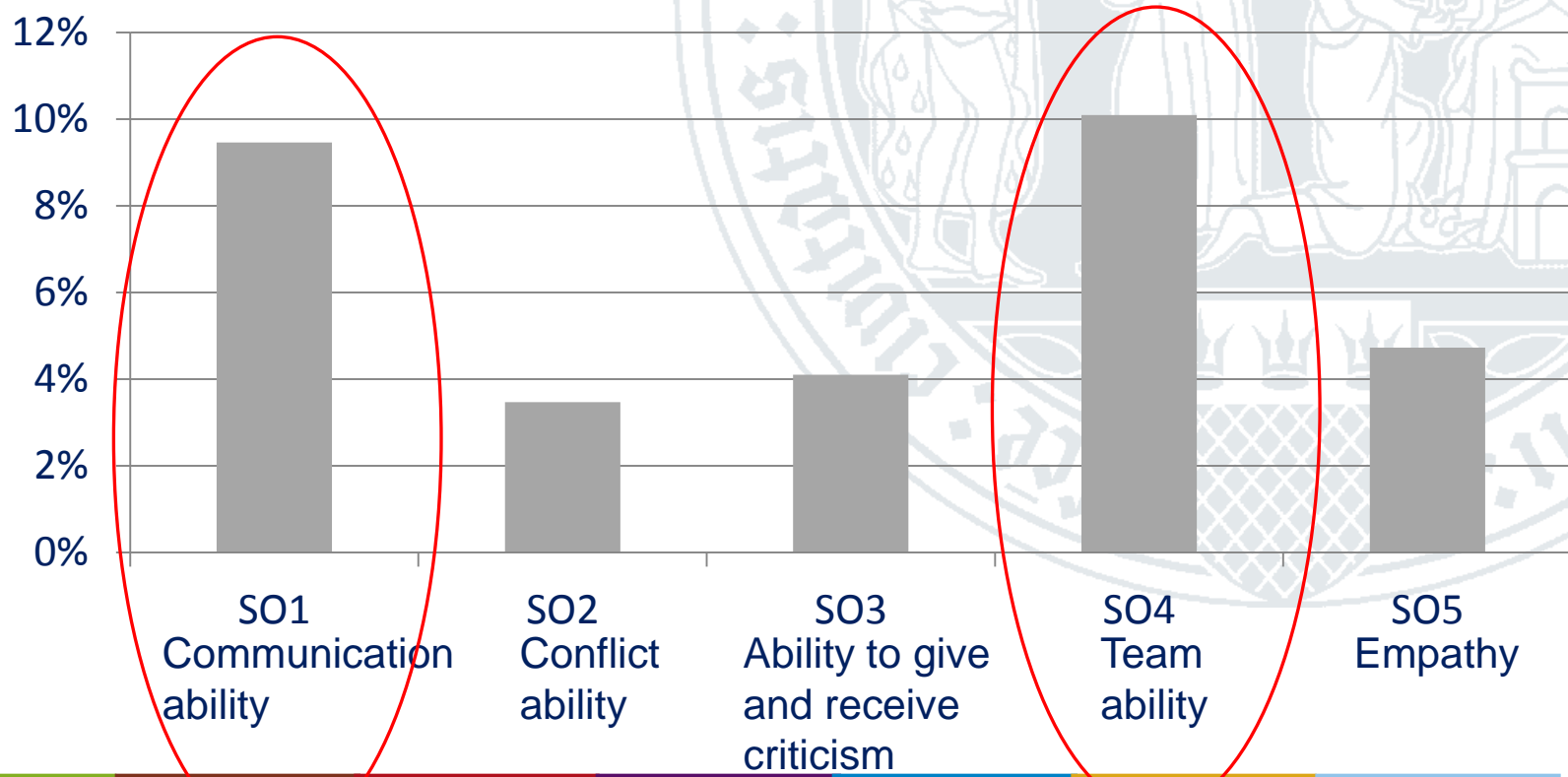
- In none of the two *Länder* pre-vocational (or economic/ business) education is taught as an independent subject
- Pre-vocational education is mainly integrated in subjects like Civic education or Social Science

Results of the curriculum analysis



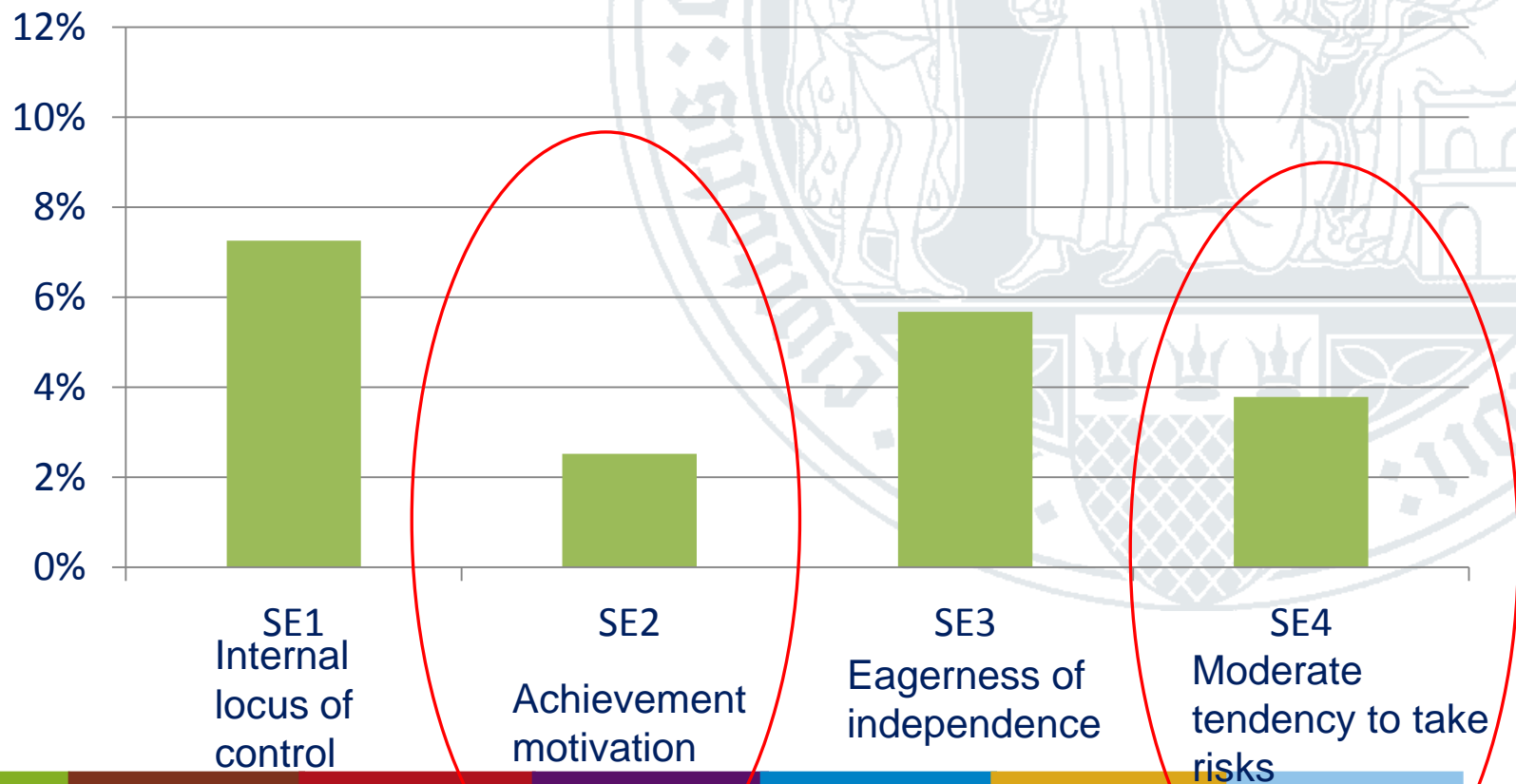
Results of the curriculum analysis

Allocation in the field of *social competencies*



Results of the curriculum analysis

Allocation in the field of self competencies with emphasis on entrepreneurial thinking



Normalized data

Research Layout

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Qualitative analysis

Results of the teacher interviews

Background information:

- Six schools in Nord-Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg
- 13 teacher (7 female/ 6 male)
- Teaching experience of the teachers between 1 and 38 years
- 7 out of the 13 teachers have working experience out of the educational sector
- 8 out of 13 teachers teaching the subject social science (economics) gave gained a diploma for teaching these subject

Results of the teacher interviews

Individual stress/ focus of the teachers within pre-vocational/ economic education

- Inclusion of the lives of the pupils
- Focus on practical experiences in the world of work (internships)
- Promototion of the self and social competencies

“I think self-confidence and personal strengths are absolutely important, especially when somebody wants to achieve more than just standing behind the bakery counter, for example. In that case they should be communicative and should be able to talk more than one sentence to somebody. Plus they have to be a team player.”

[Teacher in Germany]

Results of the teacher interviews

Knowledge based competencies in economics

- *“I don’t recognise the importance of Economics in that sense. I don’t think the students need economic theory. They should be familiar with the issues they will face as citizens, as consumers and as employees. But I don’t think they need to know about the conditions for a perfect market.”*

[Teacher in Germany]



- *“I don’t think the students learn enough about the actual economy, even within Economics. The way it has been taught so far, only a third of the time at most is spent on the actual economy. And many colleagues don’t do even that but cover Sociology, Civic Education, and so on instead.”*

[Teacher in Germany]

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Comparison of the results

Item of comparison	Curriculum analysis	Teacher interviews
Knowledge based competencies in economic	Nearly 40% of the coded items	In comparison to business knowledge: economic knowledge is overrepresented
	High focus on topics, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade and globalization - Understanding basic economic phenomena 	High focus on topics like, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade and globalization - Government policies and it's influences on economic
Knowledge competencies in business	Lowest rating in the curriculum analysis (about 11%)	Teachers often do not see the relevance.
	The specific role of businesses is usually considered only as part of the broader political economy and not dealt with from a narrower company perspective.	The role of business is taught within the field of career guidance (preparing pupils for their internships)

Comparison of the results

Item of comparison	Curriculum analysis	Teacher interviews
Social competencies	Over 30% of the coded items	Teachers rated it (together with self competencies) as most important competency in prevocational education, - BUT they complained about the missing time in the curriculum
	Focus on developing competencies in teamwork (11%)	
Self competencies with emphasis on entrepreneurial thinking	Dominance of the sub-competencies decision-making, self-organising etc. Less focus on risk-management	Teachers rated it (together with social competencies) as most important competency in prevocational education, - BUT they do not see the relevance on developing classical entrepreneurial competencies

Comparison of the results

Interpretation

- Realisation of prescribed curriculum is influenced by the availability of materials and resources
- Enacted/ taught curriculum depends strongly on personal interests or teacher's former field of study
- Strong link between teacher's perception of the importance of pre-vocational education (and here mainly economic and business education) and teacher's individual background

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Semi-structured interview guideline

Qualitative analysis

Social partners voices

Background information

- 1 Union
- 2 Employee committees
- 1 Employer organisations
- 1 Firm



Social partners voices

Both, employer as employee representatives highlighted...

- the importance of basic cultural skills such as reading, writing and calculating.
- the importance of self competencies in a broader understanding: Pupils should be motivated, self confident and ready to perform.
- the significance of social competencies, whereas communication skills and the ability to work in a team were mainly named by the representatives of employers and firms.

Social partners voices

Both, employer as employee representatives agreed that...

- knowledge based competencies in business and economics are less important for a successful transition from compulsory school into vocational education and training
- A training officer of a firm called it as “nice to have” but not very relevant in the recruitment process of apprentices

Social partners voices

Challenges mentioned by the social partners

- *„There is no practical relevance. I don't think that a two-week internship in grade nine is enough to prepare pupils for choosing a job for the rest of their lives.“*

[representative of an employee committee]

- In the field of knowledge based competencies in business and economics curricula in compulsory schools focus mainly on consumerism and consumer protection but they neglect the role of the firms.
(Mostly criticized by employer representatives)

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6. **Evaluation and recommendations**

Evaluation and recommendations based on the German results

- Extension of teacher education in economics, management and also Economics didactics.
- Expansion of training for teachers in the field of economics, management and Economics didactics.
- Further development of complex teaching-learning arrangements (eg. case studies, simulations, student companies / young enterprises).
- Intensification and active promotion of partnerships between schools and external partners (eg. businesses, local government institutions).

Evaluation and recommendations based on the German results

- Expansion of the integration of career choices in the area of teaching pre-voc.education / economic and business education.
- Establishment of an independent subject / course (or area) of economics and business management in public schools of secondary level 1.
- Adequate coverage of the economic and management contents in exams.



Dankeschön!

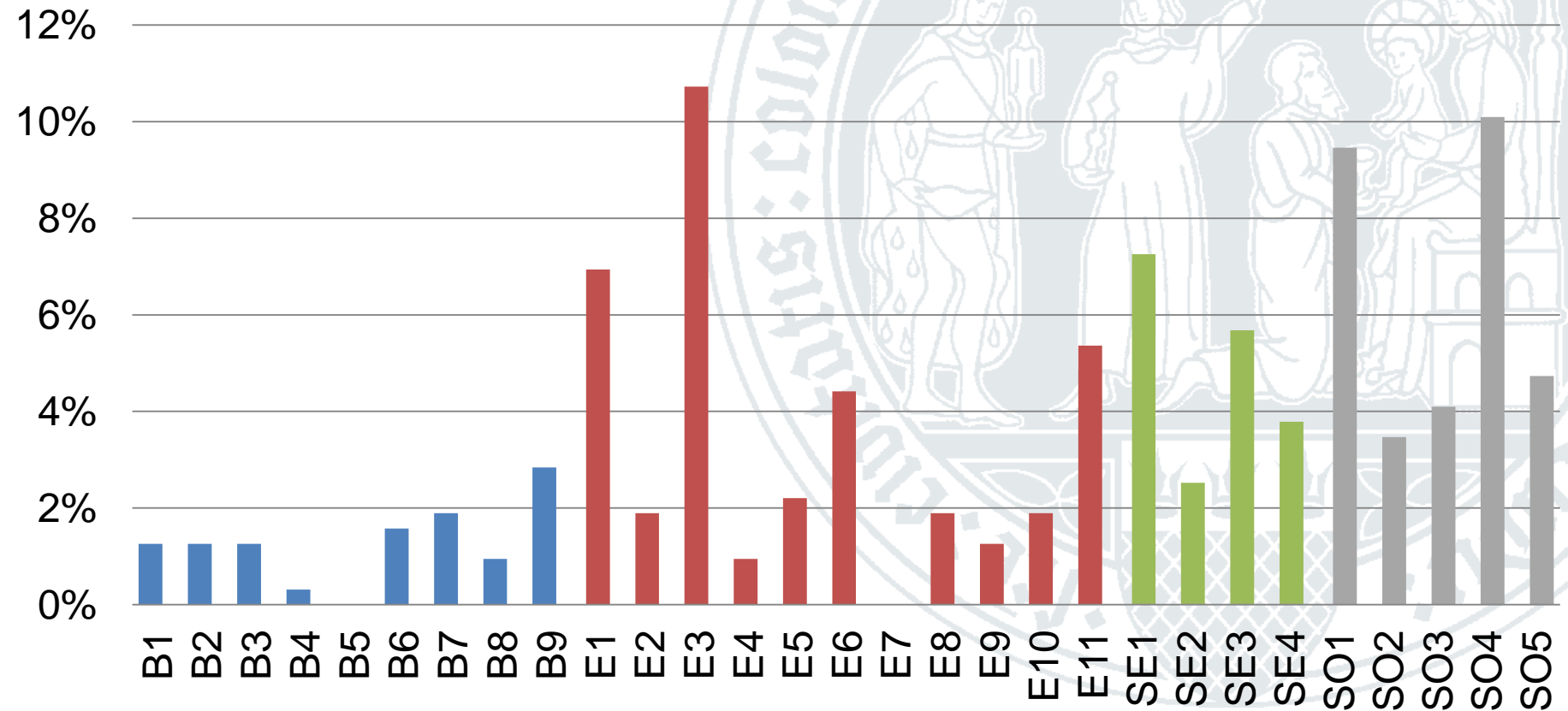


Thank you!

Additional material



Differentiated results of the German Curriculum analysis (normalized data)

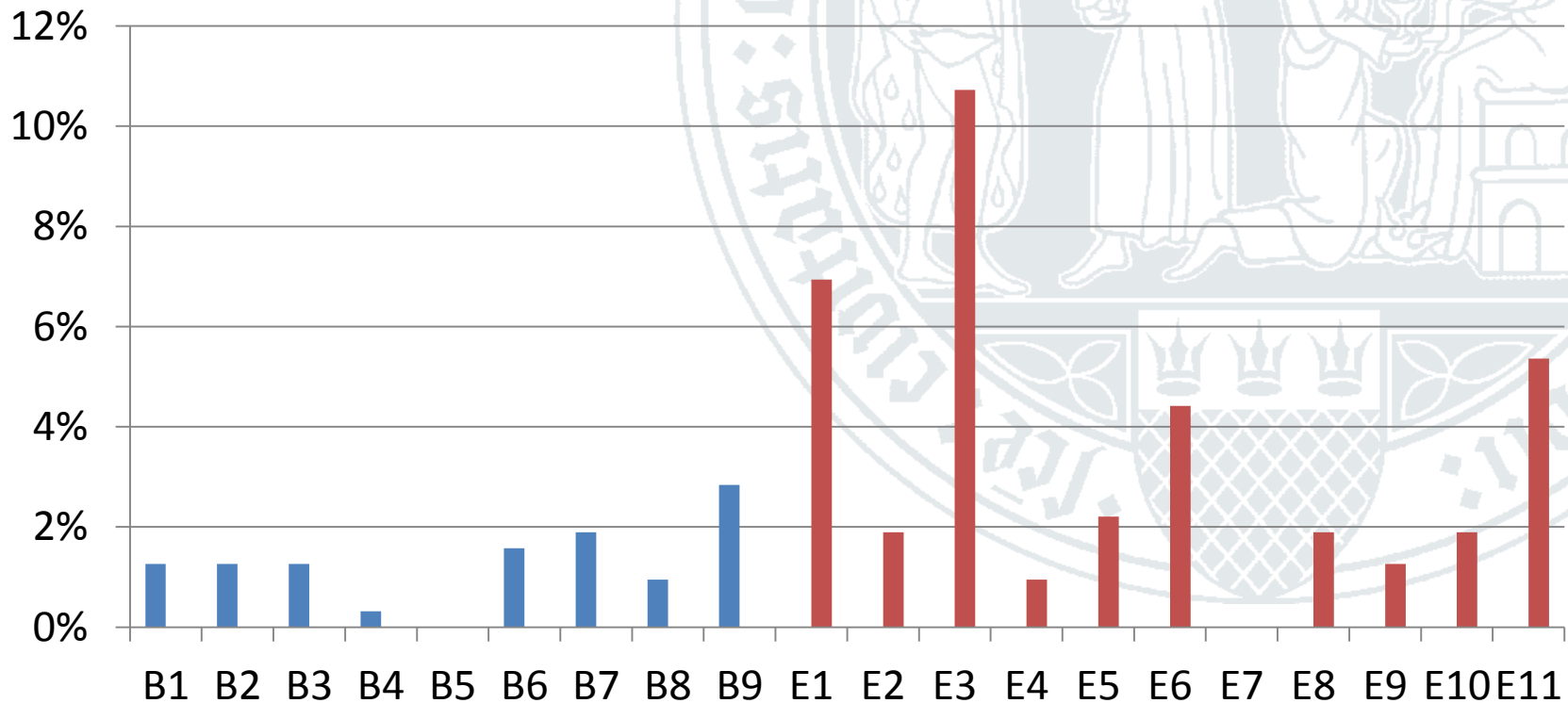


- Knowledge based competencies in business
- Knowledge based competencies in economic
- Self competencies with emphasis on entrepreneurial thinking
- Social competencies



Results of the curriculum analysis

Allocation in the field of knowledge based competencies in economics and business



Results of the project: International comparison



Curruculum analysis

