

The Situation of Doctoral Candidates within Europe

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The Survey Basic Information

Eurodoc Survey on the Situation of Doctoral Candidates in Europe

Is the first European-wide survey of doctoral researchers on this scale

Succeeded in activating the participation of 8900 doctoral candidates from about 30 countries.

The Survey Basic Information

Eurodoc Survey on the Situation of Doctoral Candidates in Europe

Is an online survey (programmed with software „QTAFI“ by INCHER)

Conducted in cooperation with the international Center for Higher Education Research (INCHER), University of Kassel

The Survey Basic Information

Attempted to address key questions that remain unanswered:

What is the real situation, concerning current employment conditions, social benefits and working conditions, for doctoral candidates in Europe?

Where are the real differences between European countries, cultures and models of doctoral education and what can we learn from them?

The Survey Structure

Questionnaire touching upon the following topics:

Qualification

Career path (*status, contract conditions, different sectors of the employment market, motive for the dissertation*)

Finance (*amount, limitation*)

Training and Supervision (*training of faculties, training courses, regularity and quality of supervision*)

Working conditions (*workload, maternity/paternity*)

Results of scientific work (*publications, conferences, etc.*)

Mobility (*past/planned mobility, kind of mobility (teaching, research, exchange programme, etc.), financing*)

Socio-demographic indicators (*gender, children, social background, etc.*)

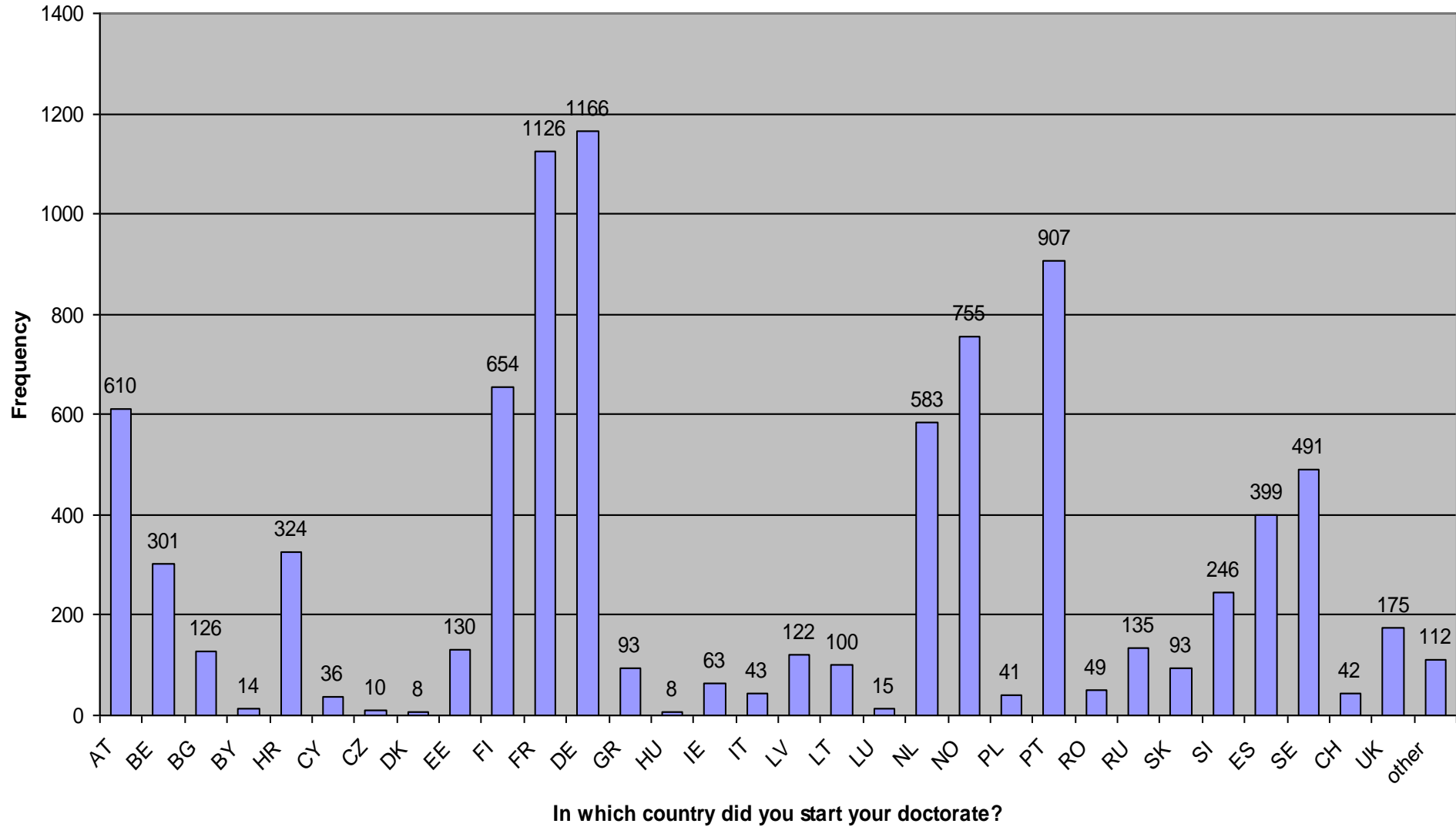
Sample

More than 30 countries

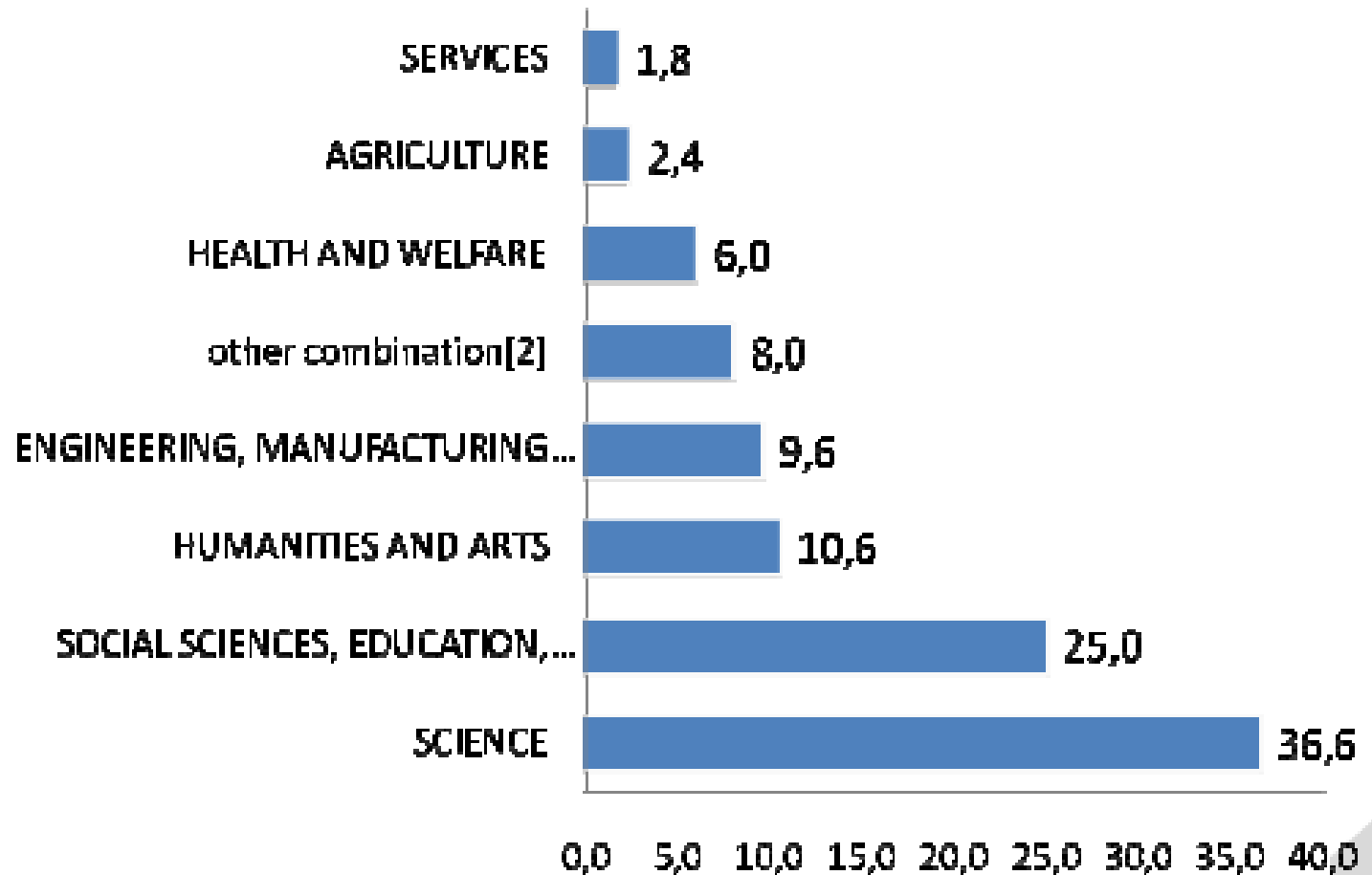
20 countries - Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia

Countries that were underscoring 0,5% and was therefore excluded from the evaluation - Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the UK

Survey on the situation of doctoral candidates, sample distribution by "country start of doctorate"
(n=8977)



- Field of science



ISCED classification scheme

The Survey Results

Sections:

Mobility

Career path and Qualifications

Training, Supervision and Results of
Scientific Work

Funding and Working conditions

Training, Supervision and Results of Scientific Work

Training

Development of knowledge and skills

Provision of Training

Compulsoriness of Training

Satisfaction of Training

Supervision

Supervision – Feedback

Relationship – Doctoral candidates and their Supervisors

Supervision – Rating of Supervisor's Role

Supervision - Supervisors' Workload

Results of Scientific Work

Publications

Development of knowledge and skills

What is the level of competencies of doctoral candidates at the start of their studies and during?

From the survey:

Rather good starting level of knowledge and skills mastery

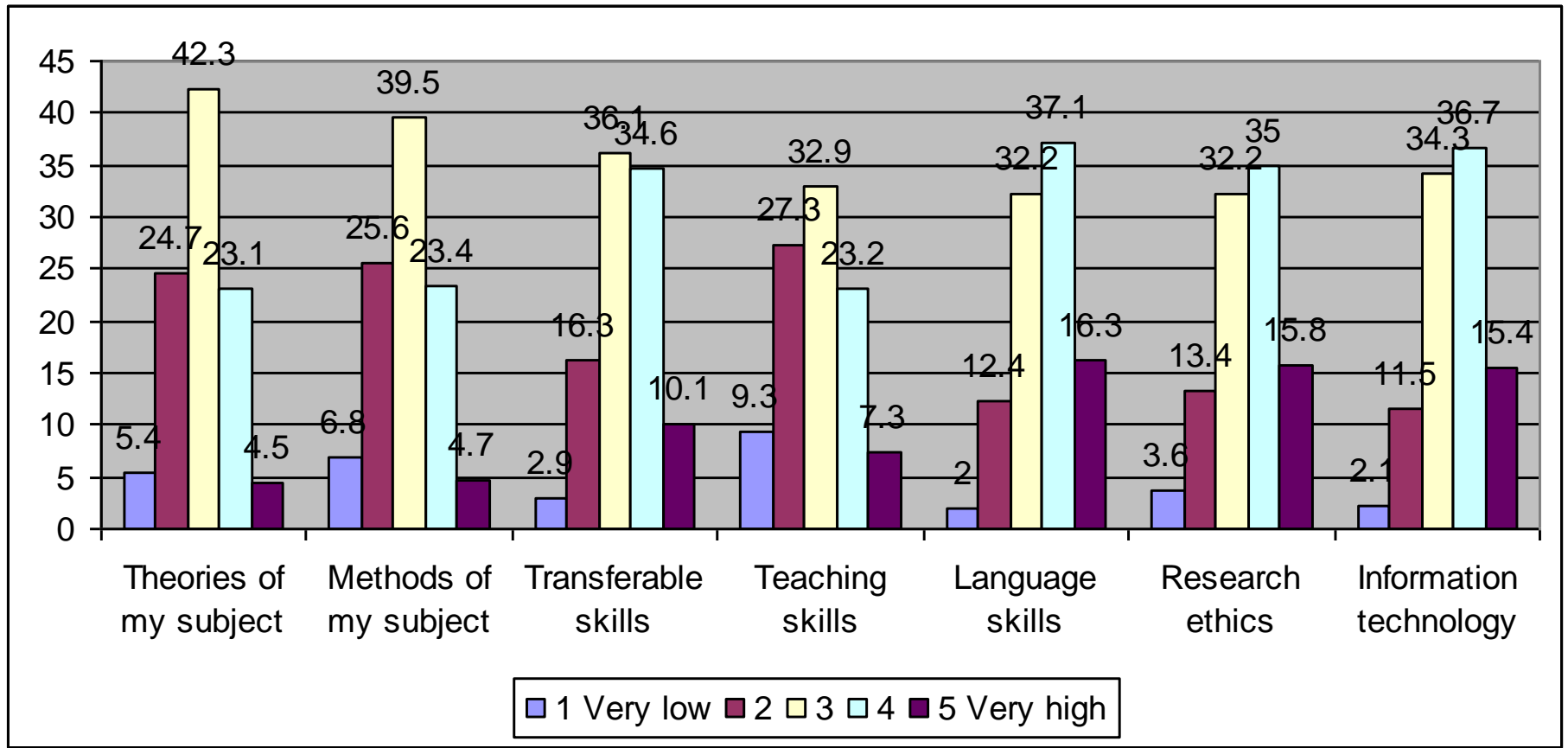
Increase between these two moments is evident

However,

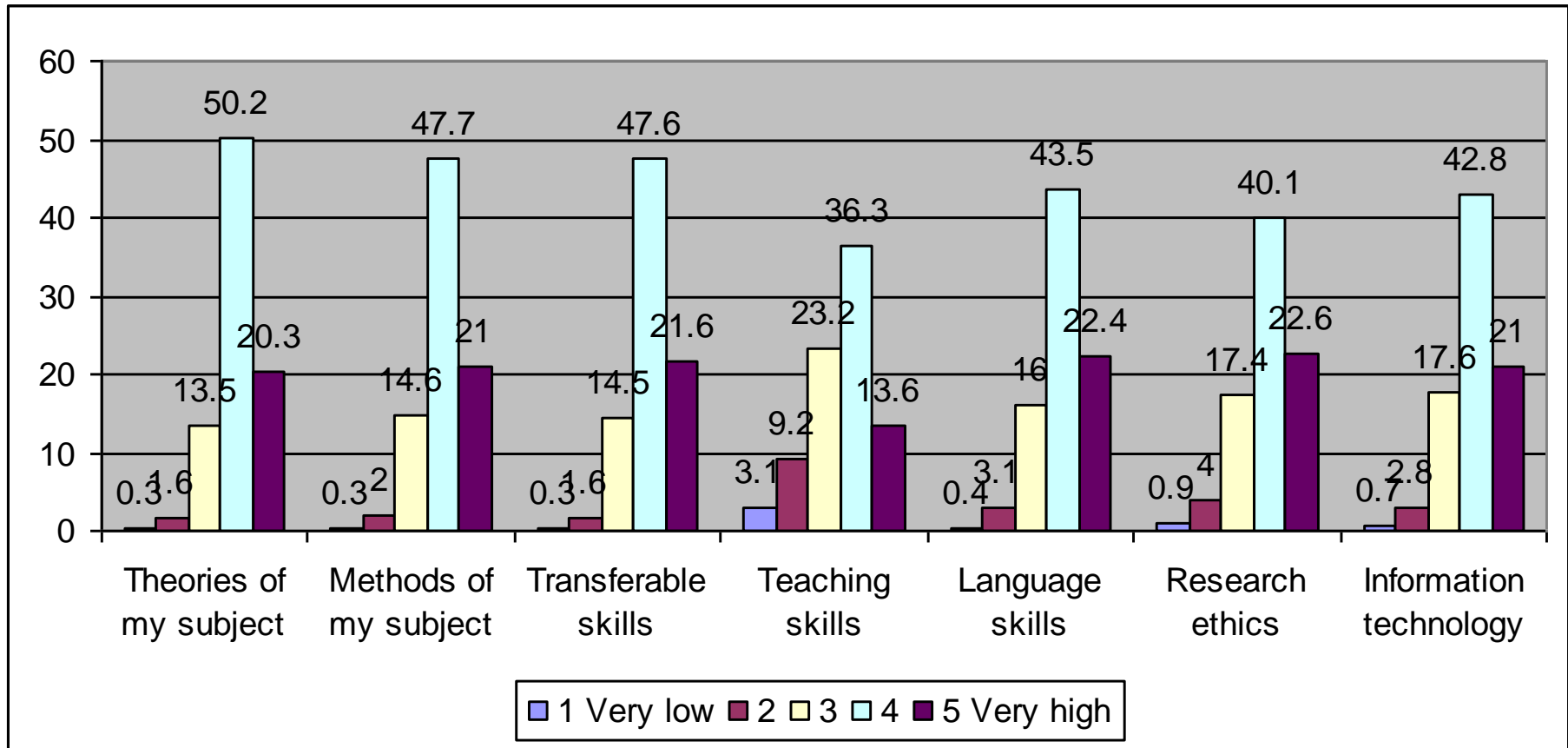
This is the subjective view of the respondents.

Besides there is no information of level of mastery of the skills stated.

Initial level of knowledge and competencies



Level of competencies during the course of doctoral studies



Provision of Training

Do universities provide training for the doctoral candidates?

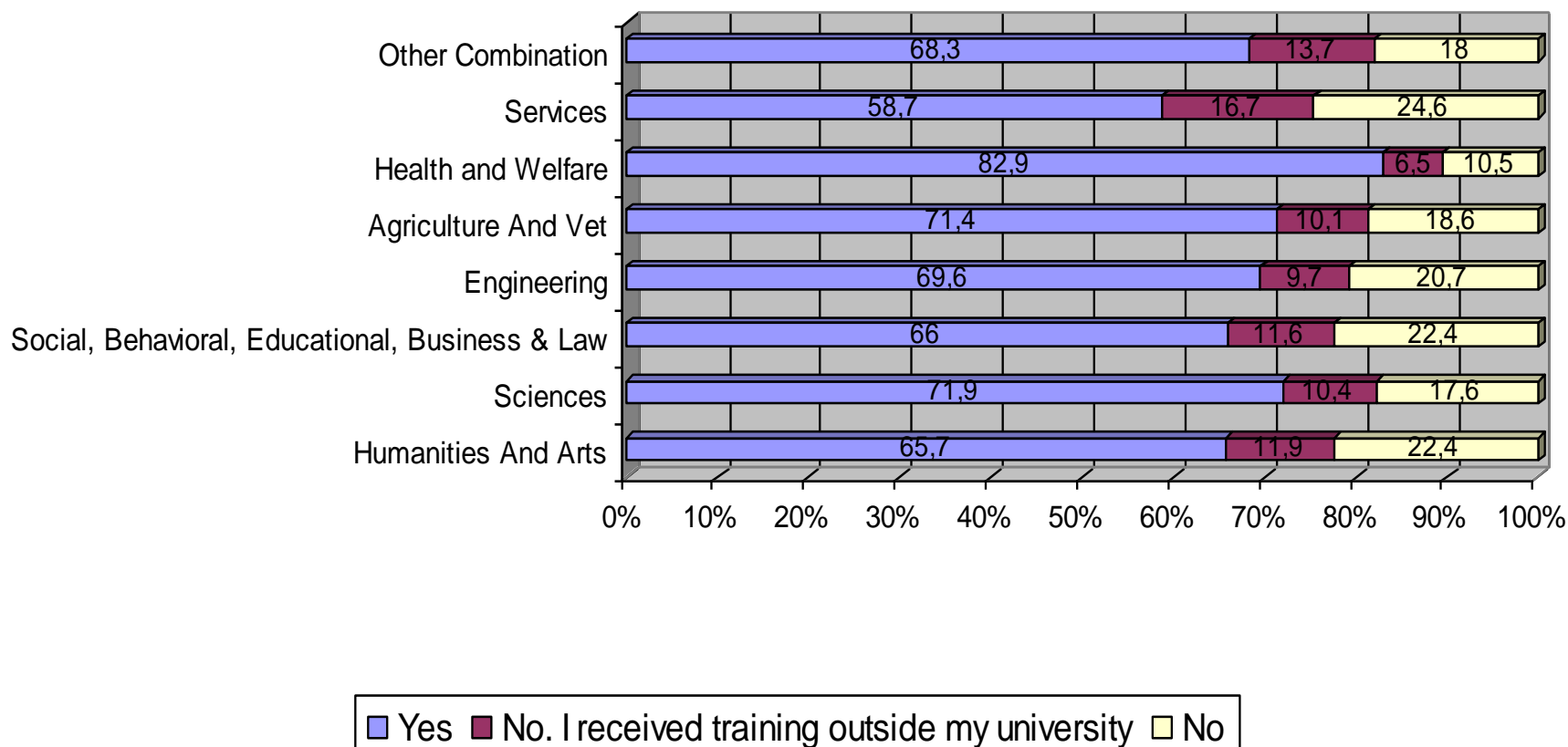
From the survey:

Most of the Doctoral candidates have received training during their doctoral studies (69,7%).

Only 19,4 % state the opposite.

10,9% declare having received training outside their university.

Training of Doctoral candidates by fields of study



Training of doctoral candidates by countries

Doctoral candidates in West and North European countries usually receive training during their doctoral studies (Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, United Kingdom), than the doctoral candidates in Central and East Europe.

Compulsoriness of Training

How do universities guarantee that their doctoral candidates are well qualified?

What about satisfaction?

From the survey:

Training on theories and methods on research subject, and research ethics can be both voluntary and mandatory.

Training on transferable skills, language skills, teaching skills and information technology are predominantly voluntary.

Satisfaction of Training

What about satisfaction from the training?

From the survey:

It is interesting to notice that half of the sample didn't answer this question.

Satisfaction on teaching skills, language skills and information technology at an average level

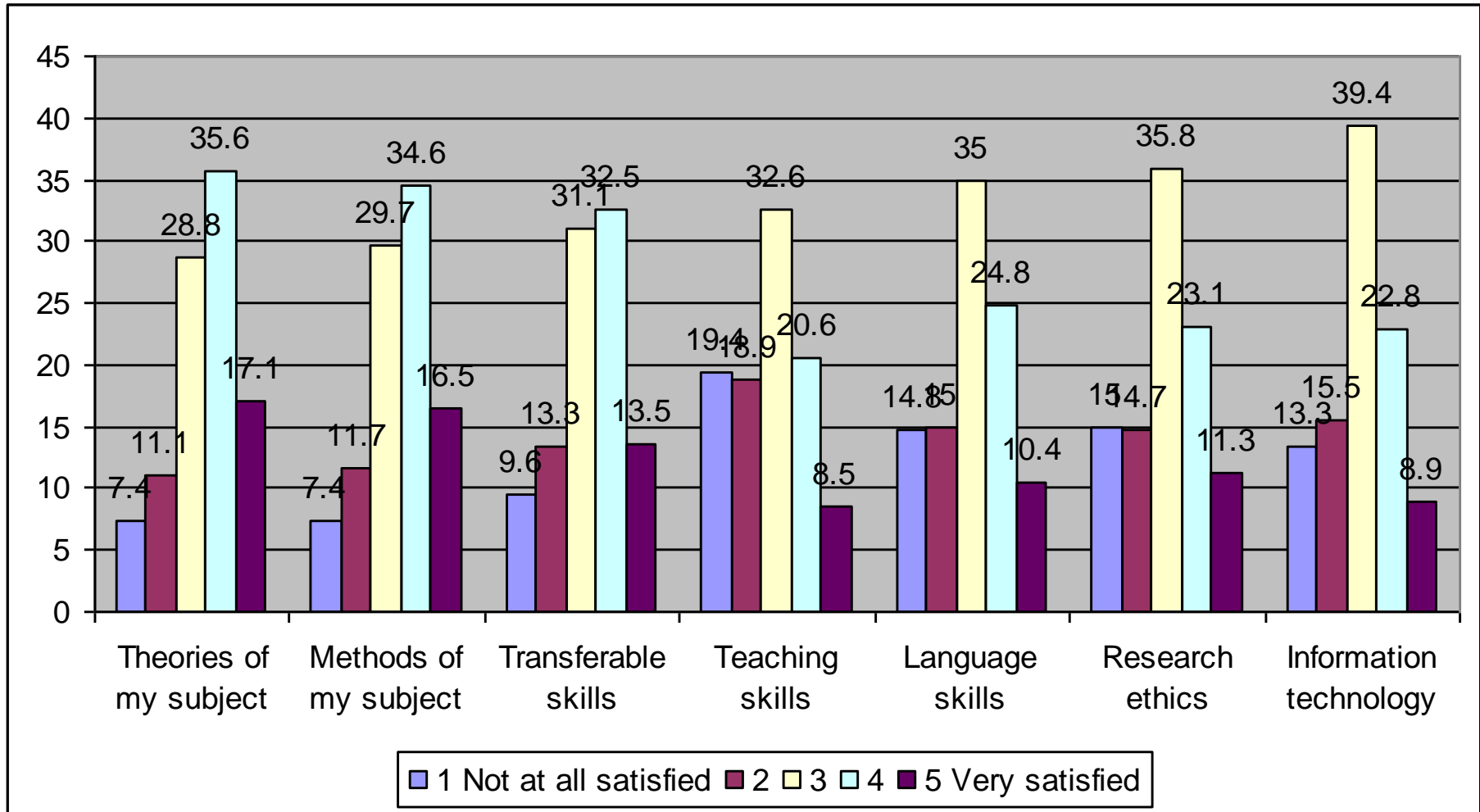
Average or above average is the satisfaction of transferable skills and acquisition of knowledge in theories and methods on their research subject

Satisfaction of Training

One should bear in mind that there is a huge difference between the different areas of knowledge and subjects of research.

Besides there is no specific information on the type of training received, its quality, depth, duration, among other aspects.

Level of satisfaction from the training received



Support in receiving training

Do supervisors support doctoral candidates
in receiving training?

If yes, how?

From the data:

54,4% rate it either as good or very good.

Supervision - Feedback

Supervisor – provision of feedback with regards to
doctoral candidate research and scientific work

Is just feedback enough?

What type of feedback do they receive?

Is it useful?

From the data:

64,3% of the respondents state that the feedback they
receive is either useful or very useful

But useful in what regard?

Relationship - Doctoral candidates and their Supervisors

Are there any official, written regulations for that?

The status of doctoral candidates varies all along a continuum in which some are only students and others are full-time working.

This can be a contract or university regulations.

Relationship - Doctoral candidates and their Supervisors

From the data:

More than half of the Doctoral candidates (57.2%) have guidelines or regulations on their supervisor's role.

23,8% don't.

A little more disturbing is the fact that 17.7% claim to not know if there's even any available.

Relationship - Doctoral candidates and their Supervisors

Reasons for that:

Lack of knowledge?

Unavailability of such kind of regulations?

Lack of easy and direct access?

Undone job by the supervisors or the university's administrative offices?

Careless of doctoral candidates?

Supervision – Rating of Supervisor's Role

How do doctoral candidates rate the way supervisors perform their role?

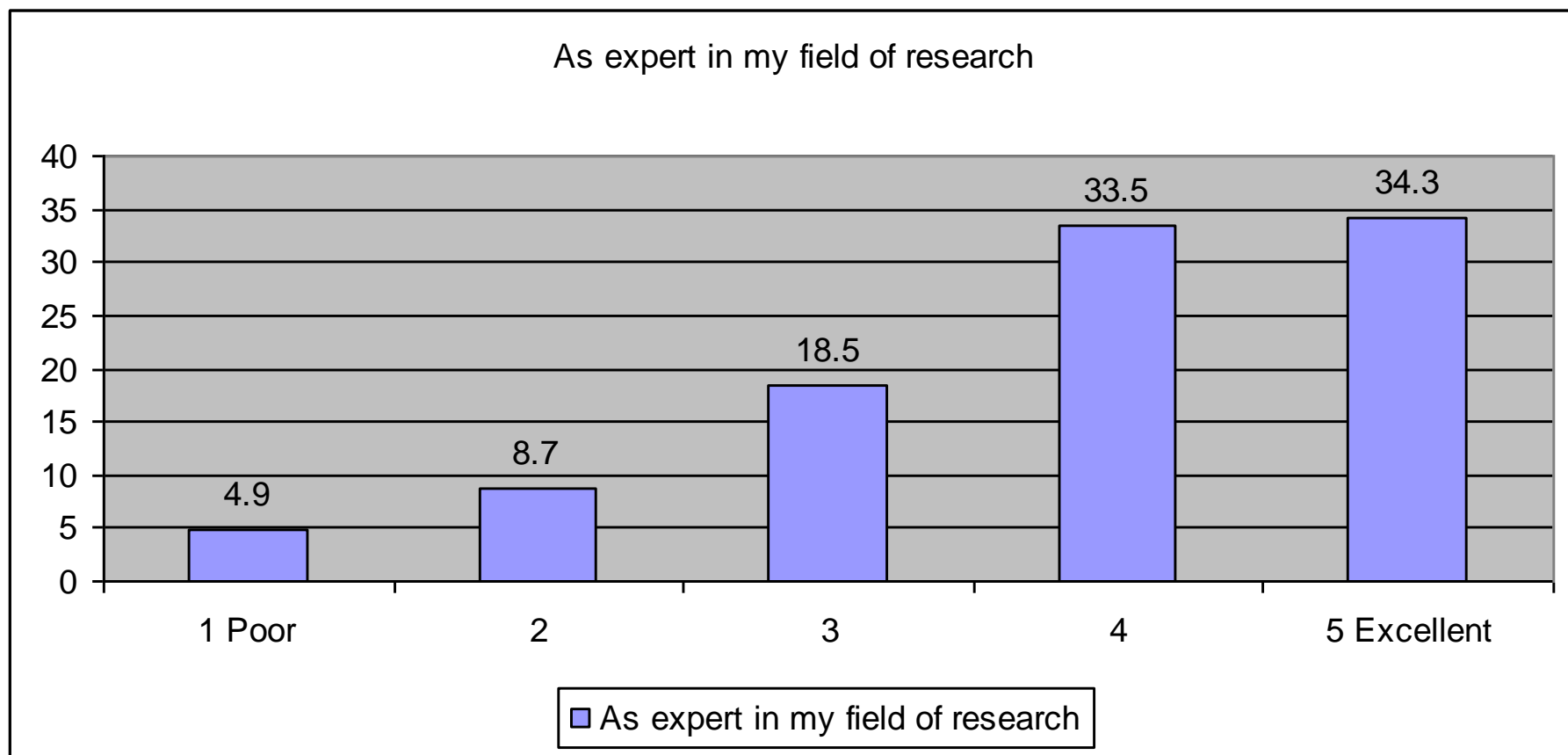
From the data:

As it happens, supervisors are highly rated for both:

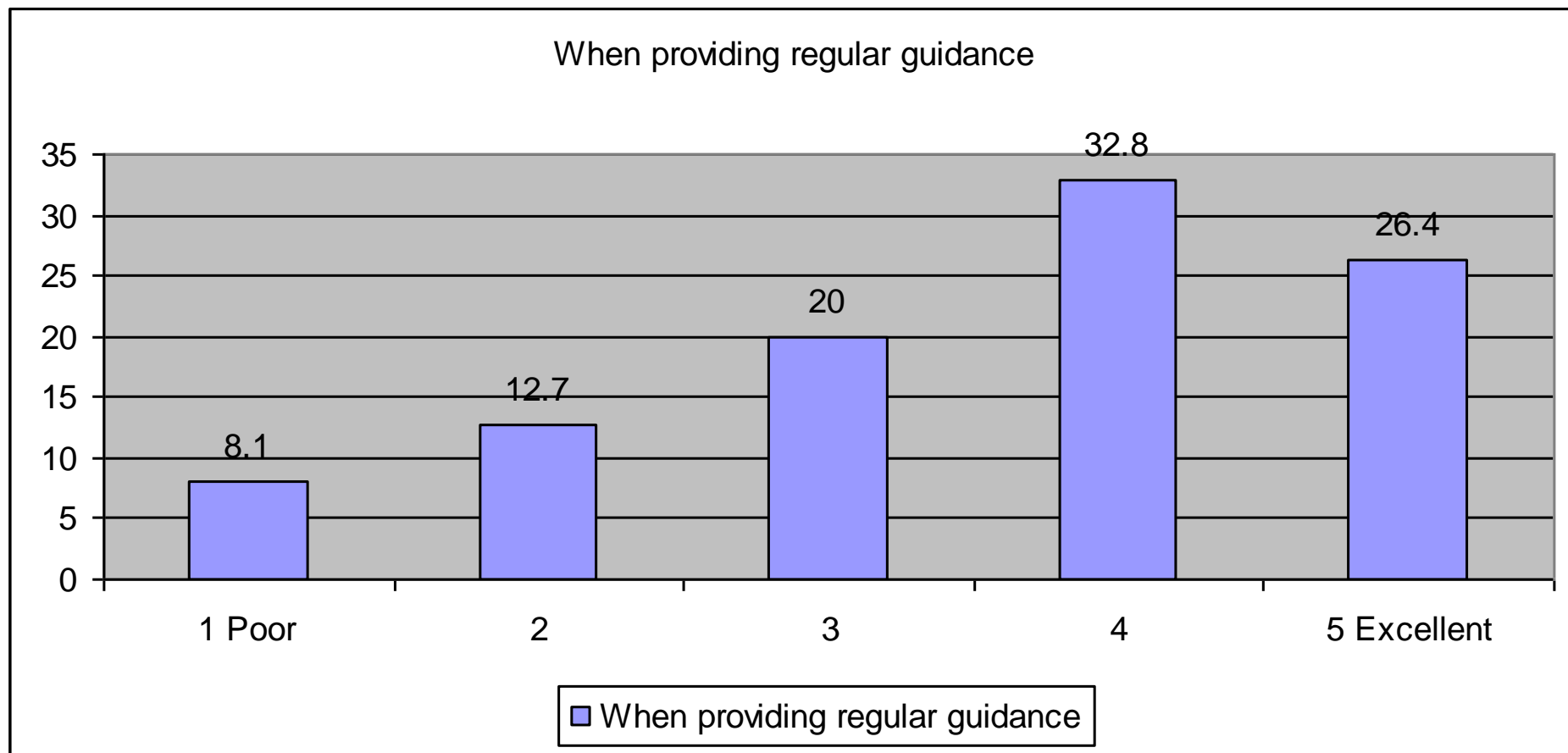
as experts in the field and
as providers of guidance

It should, yet again; stress that this is the subjective view of the doctoral candidates.

Rating of supervisors with regards to their role as experts in the field



Rating of supervisors with regards to provision of regular guidance



Supervision - Supervisors' Workload

How many Doctoral Candidates per supervisor?

From the data:

One third of the supervisors (32%) have 3 to 4 doctoral candidates

Another 28,2% have 1 or 2

Quite high is the percentage of those having between 5 to 9 doctoral students under their supervision – 22,7%

Supervision - Supervisors' Workload

How many doctoral candidates a supervisor can manage at the same time?

So, that the quality of their work to be guaranteed.

The common average workload of supervisors is from 4 to 6 candidates

A "workload model" for academic staff, which ensures that supervisors allocate enough time for each doctoral candidate

(EUA Report 2005)

Results of Scientific Work – Publications

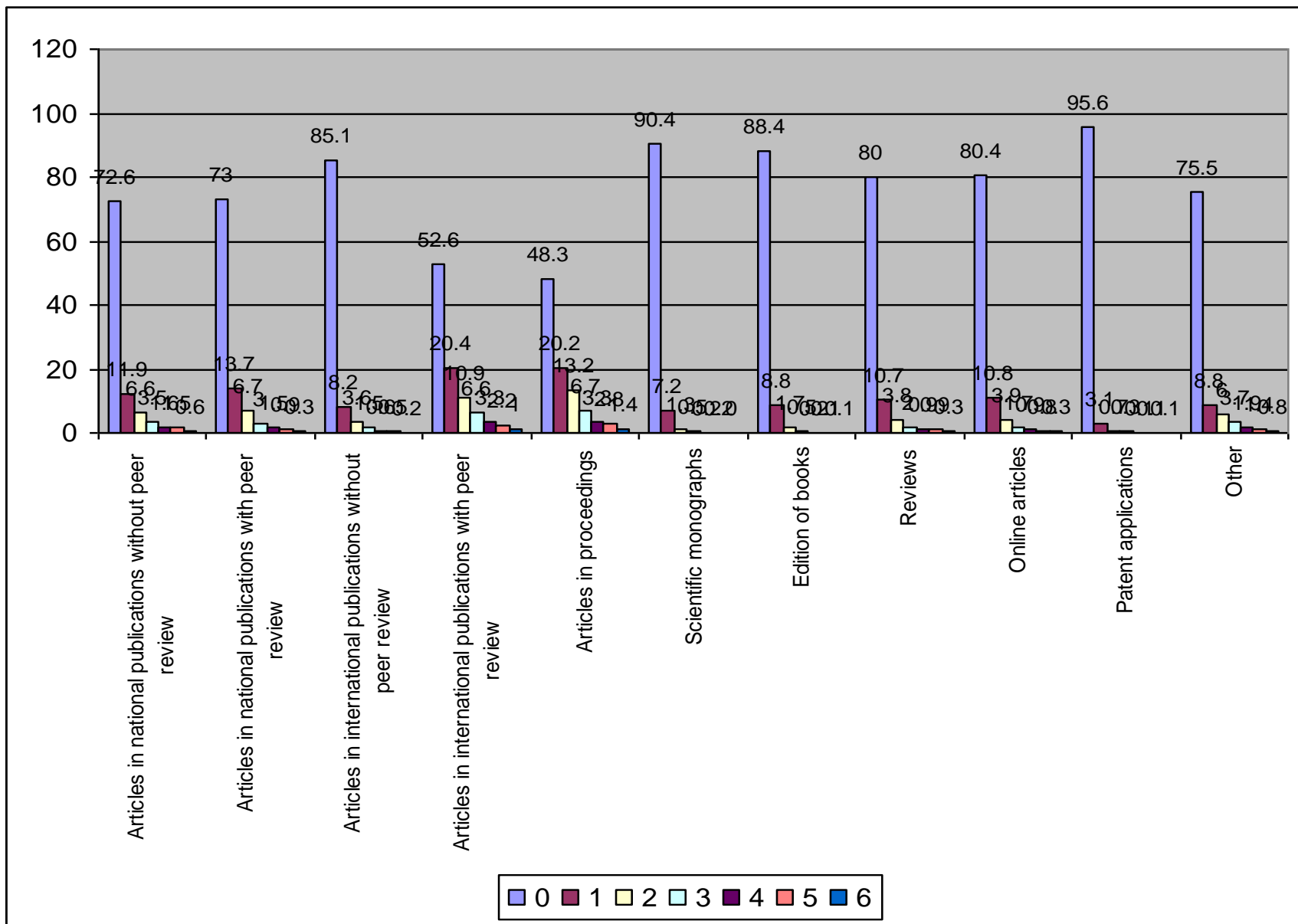
A very significant component of doctoral candidates' academic work concerns publishing.

From the data:

Most of the doctoral candidates have no publications of the listed kinds.

Most of them have one, sometimes two articles in proceedings or international publications with peer review.

Publications



TRAINING

There is a need of:

Common standards for training of
Doctoral candidates within the
European countries - a framework
outlining the range of competencies
that people graduating a PhD
programme should have

TRAINING

There is a need of:

Universities must guarantee the quality of the Doctoral candidates they “produce” - quality assurance of the PhD programmes

TRAINING

There is a need of:

Universities must take into account the needs for education of doctoral candidates and guarantee the quality of the training they provide for them – provision of relevant training for doctoral candidates and assuring the quality of that training

SUPERVISION

There is a need of:

Common standards for supervision of
Doctoral candidates within the
European countries

SUPERVISION

There is a need of:

Assuring the quality of supervision – mechanisms and procedures of appointment of supervisors, ways of assessment and evaluation of their work, training of supervisors; supervision agreements, defining supervisors' roles and responsibilities

SUPERVISION

There is a need of:

"Workload models" for supervisors which ensure that supervision responsibilities are feasible alongside other teaching, research and/or service duties

From here on ...

Further analysis

Country analysis

Opening the data-set for general
scientific public

Policy papers

Outcome papers

Thank you for your attention!

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