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After the Apprenticeship in Salzburg

An empirical survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates three years after acquiring the apprenticeship diploma

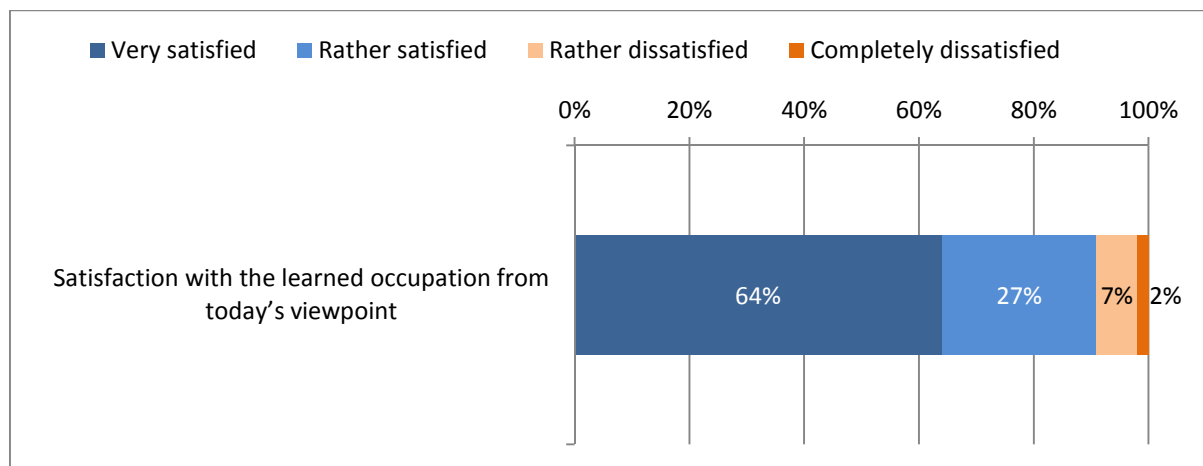
Some 47% of Salzburg's youths of each age group take up apprenticeship training. This means that apprenticeship is by far the most important initial vocational education and training (IVET) pathway for young people in Salzburg at upper secondary level. This survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates three years after acquiring their apprenticeship diploma underlines (also in retrospect) the success of the apprenticeship training scheme based on the graduates' satisfaction and professional success. The challenges of apprenticeship training are mainly in terms of image and recognition/appreciation.

For this study, which was carried out in June 2012, (n=277) of Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates who had graduated – that is: completed their apprenticeship period – in 2009 were questioned using a written questionnaire (by post).

In retrospect, the majority of the questioned Salzburg apprenticeship graduates perceive their training as very positive. From today's viewpoint (that is three years after receiving their diploma), 91% are still (very or rather) satisfied with their learned occupation, almost two thirds (64%) are even very satisfied (cf. Diagram 1).

DIAGRAM 1:

Satisfaction with the learned occupation from today's viewpoint



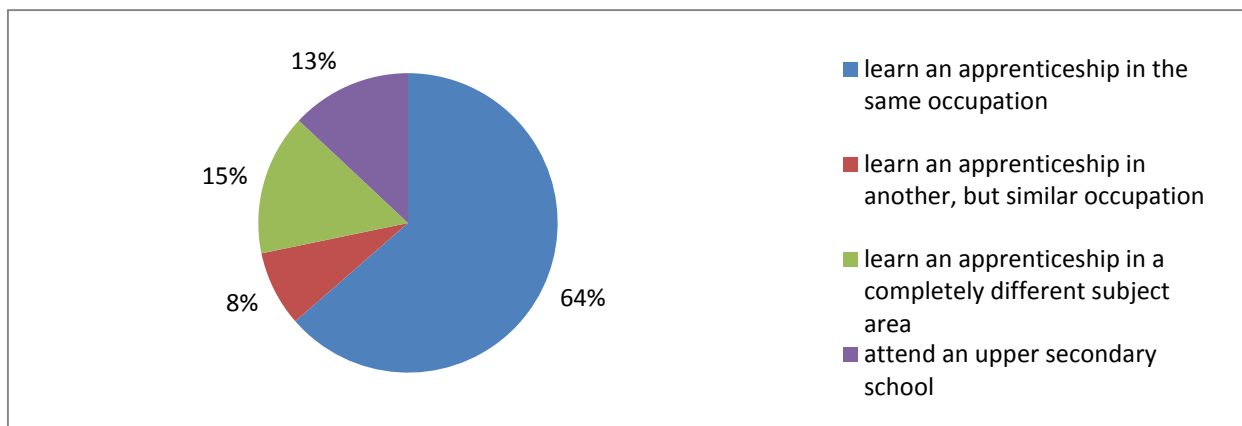
Source: ibw 2012 survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates (n=277)

An overwhelming majority are also still very or rather satisfied with training at the company (82%) and at part-time vocational school (88%) three years afterwards. The interviewees see need and/or potential for improvement in training, among other things, for a small portion of (mostly) small and medium-sized enterprises and some respondents also in cooperation among training companies on the one hand and between training companies and vocational schools on the other, which

quite a few would like to be more practice-oriented. 87% of the questioned Salzburg apprenticeship graduates would, if they were 15 years old, (even three years after acquiring the apprenticeship diploma) again choose apprenticeship training, while only 13% would opt for an upper secondary school. The overwhelming majority would also select the same apprenticeship occupation again (64%), 8% a similar one, and 15% a completely different one (cf. Diagram 2).

DIAGRAM 2:

Selection of training from today's viewpoint
If you were again 15 years old, would you ...

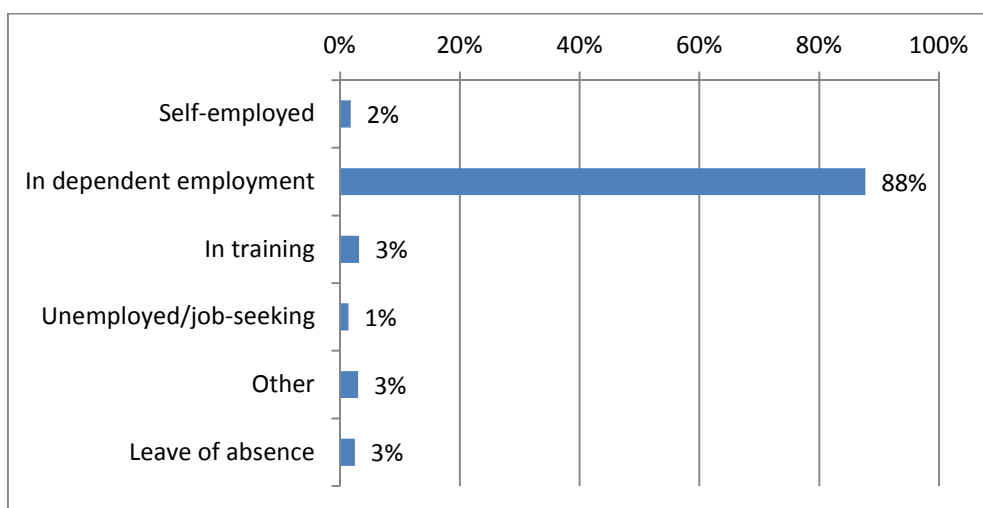


Source: ibw 2012 survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates (n=277)

Note: The category "Other" was not used by any respondent

DIAGRAM 3:

Current occupational status of the questioned Salzburg apprenticeship graduates



Source: ibw 2012 survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates (n=277)

Note: "Other" = voluntary social year, au pair, military, etc.

Professional success

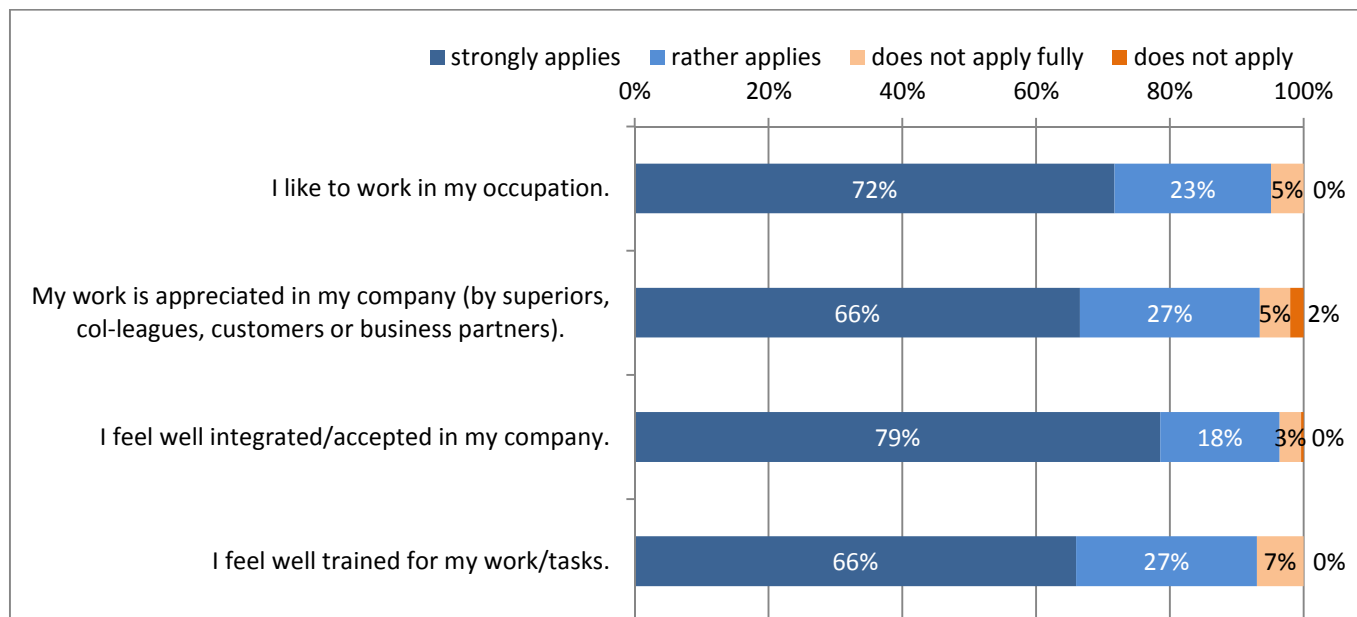
The professional success of the questioned apprenticeship graduates three years after acquiring their diploma in Salzburg is particularly impressive (cf. Diagram 3): Merely 1% of apprenticeship graduates are unemployed, 90% are currently employed (88% in dependent employment).

96% of employees are employed at skilled worker's level or higher, 20% even (already) as executives. In addition,

Diagram 4 illustrates that 95% like to work in their occupation (very much or rather), 93% state that their work is appreciated in their company (strongly applies or rather applies). 97% feel well integrated/accepted in their company. 93% see themselves (also) well trained for their current work/tasks (even 89% of those who no longer work in their learned occupation). This last mentioned figure in particular proves that apprenticeship training as a rule represents a good basic qualification – even for those who change their career path later on.

DIAGRAM 4:

Satisfaction with the currently practised occupation
(of the share of 90% who are self-employed or in dependent employment)



Source: ibw 2012 survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates (n=277)

Comparison with friends of the same age who have attended an upper secondary school

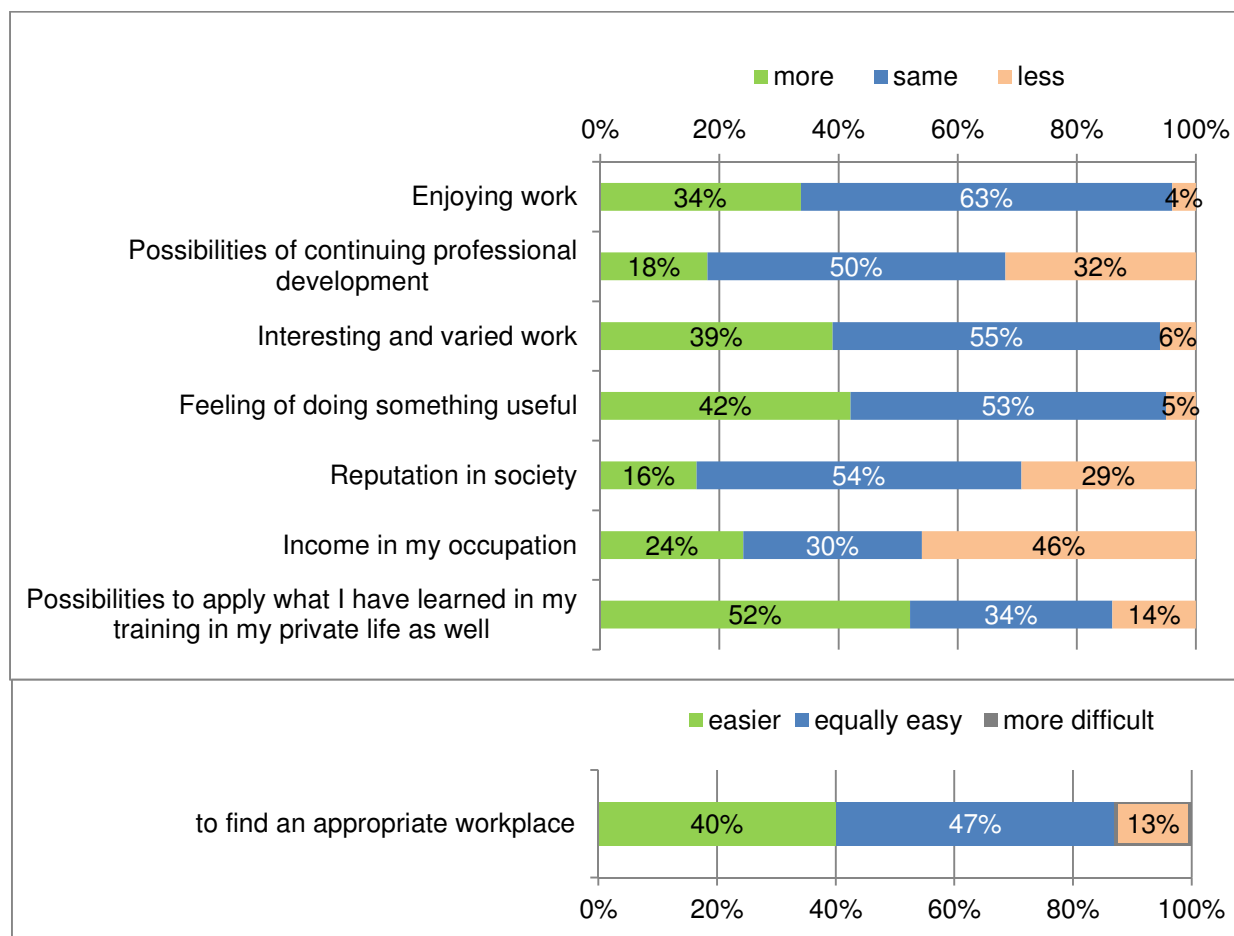
Even when comparing them with friends of the same age (cf. Diagram 5) who have attended an upper secondary school (whether with or without the certificate which provides access to higher education called *Matura*), the questioned apprenticeship graduates frequently perceive that they are at an advantage: They think that it will more likely be easier for them to find an appropriate workplace, that they enjoy work more, that their work is more interesting and varied, and they also state that they more often have the feeling that they do something useful with their work. At the same time, they perceive more possibilities to apply what they have learned in their training in their private life as well.

Salzburg's questioned apprenticeship graduates see themselves as more disadvantaged compared with friends of the same age who have attended an upper secondary school (whether with or without *Matura*) merely in aspects which have something to do with the external assessment/recognition of their work and qualification; these are: their possibilities of continuing professional development, their reputation in society, and their income (which largely depends on their

occupational group) which is, of course, also linked directly with their recognition – both from their employer and customers. After all, in the end the issue of recognition by society is also related to the price that can be achieved in the market which customers are prepared to pay for the work of apprenticeship graduates. And even if this perception (by some) of income-related disadvantage compared to graduates of upper secondary schools in the first years on the job does not correspond to the average values specified in qualification-related professional career monitoring of Statistics Austria¹, this financial disadvantage is nevertheless a reality in the perception of some apprenticeship graduates and certainly also in some occupational groups and sectors (including the public service). In connection with appreciation by society and continuing professional development options, reference is made here to discussions about the recognition and upgrading of vocational education and training as well as associated concepts (keywords: introduction of colleges of advanced vocational studies or *Berufsakademien* and the Bachelor Professional degree to be awarded there).

DIAGRAM 5:

Comparison with employed friends of the same age who have attended an upper secondary school (with or without the certificate which provides access to higher education called *Matura*)



Source: ibw 2012 survey among Salzburg apprenticeship graduates (n=277)

Summary and conclusions

To sum up, it can definitely be stated that the survey among Salzburg's apprenticeship graduates three years after acquiring their apprenticeship diploma confirms the (professional) success of the apprenticeship training scheme and its graduates. To safeguard this scheme and the future skilled workforce in the long term and in view of the medium-term threat of a skilled workers' shortage (due to demographic reasons) – on account of the current decline in the number of 15-year-olds and medium-term strong increase in retirements – particular efforts are required to maintain the currently high

attractiveness of the apprenticeship training scheme for young people and make it sufficiently visible to the public as well as gain the social and economic recognition due for apprenticeship training.

¹ Cf. Dornmayr, Helmut / Nowak, Sabine (2012): 2012 Survey of Apprenticeship Training, ibw Research Report, Vienna.

The entire study can be obtained from ibw in a printed form (ibw research report no. 172, ISBN 978-3-902742-61-2) or [online](#).