

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES: JUNIOR ACADEMICS' PERSPECTIVE

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1. (Broader) research context
2. Changes in the academic profession, academics' roles and competencies
3. Research methodology
4. Research results and discussion
5. Summary, open questions and conclusions



3 (Broader) research context

APROFRAME project/ research; **Academic Profession Competencies Profile: Between New Requirements and Possibilities**



What are the competencies academics need at the beginning of their senior academic career?



Changes in the academic profession, academics' roles and competencies

Changes in the academic profession

(Enders, 1999; Honan, Teferra, 2001; Kovač, Ledić and Rafajac, 2002; Altbach, 2006; Kogan and Teichler, 2007; Cummings, 2008; Pedro, 2009; Scott, 2009; Ledić, 2012; Turk and Ledić, 2014; Turk 2015a, 2015b; Turk and Ledić, 2016)

Appearance of new and restructuring of existing jobs;
Meeting new demands and performing new activities

(Musselin, 2007)

Demands for new, and redefining the existing competencies

Teaching and research - part of a broader range of activities

Development of research management as the *sine qua non* direction of the researchers' career development in the future (Musselin, 2007; Rončević, & Rafajac, 2012; Kehm, & Teichler, 2013; Turk, 2015, 2016) Manager-academic as the bearer of changes, initiator of reforms and new activities (Deem, 2001)



5 Research methodology (1/2)

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Examine the attitudes of Croatian academics on the importance and mastery of academic profession competencies for successful accomplishment of academic tasks at the beginning of their senior academic career



6 Research methodology (2/2)

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Variables

- Research field
- Organizational form of the university
- Academic position
- Sex
- Age

Sample

- 1130 research participants
- 7 Croatian universities

Procedures and instruments for collecting data

- On-line survey
- Survey questionnaire
- 45 items - competencies of the academic profession
- Likert scale

Data processing

- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 23.0.)
- univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistics



7 Research results and discussion

- Factor analysis results → 5 groups/ factors of academic profession competencies

**TEACHING COMPETENCIES
RESEARCH MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES
THIRD MISSION COMPETENCIES
COMPETENCIES FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING AND INNOVATION**

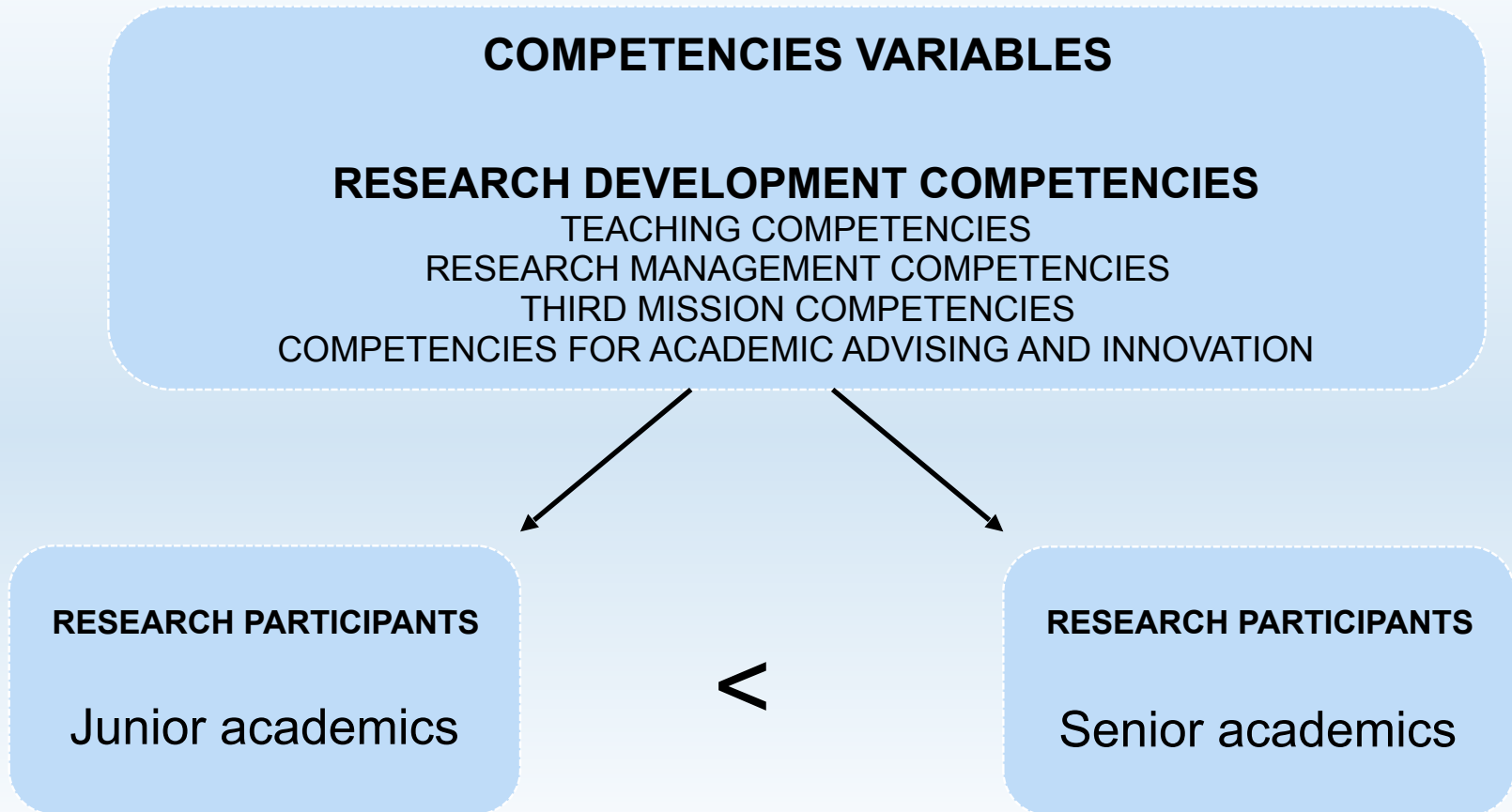
RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES

- Familiarizing oneself with the basic principles of academic writing and publishing
- Using efficient strategies of critical assessment and literature analysis
- Keeping up-to-date with professional development and committing to constant personal growth with regard to basic academic activities
- Working in an interdisciplinary environment



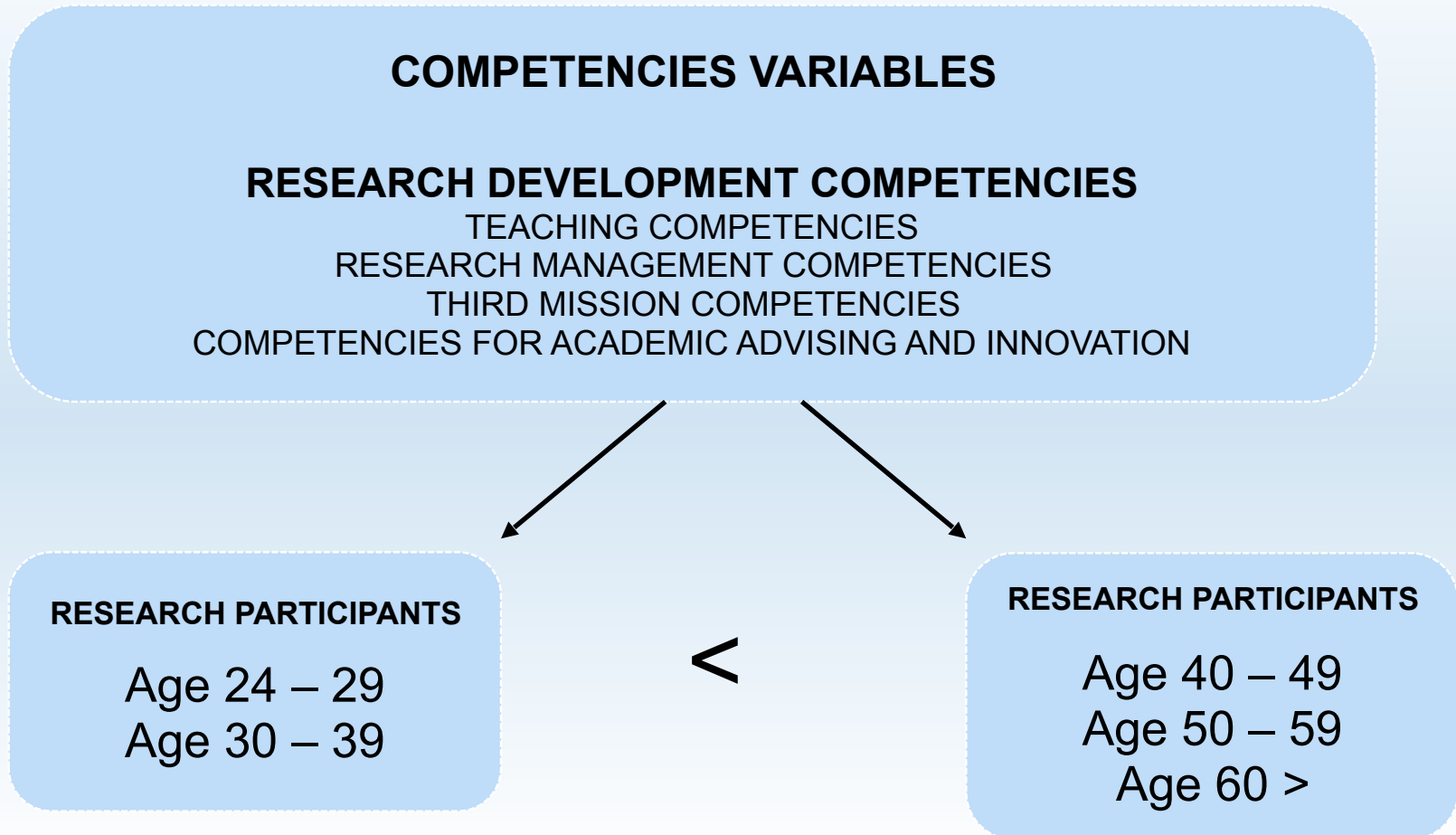
8 Research results and discussion

- Senior academics/ junior academics → perception of importance



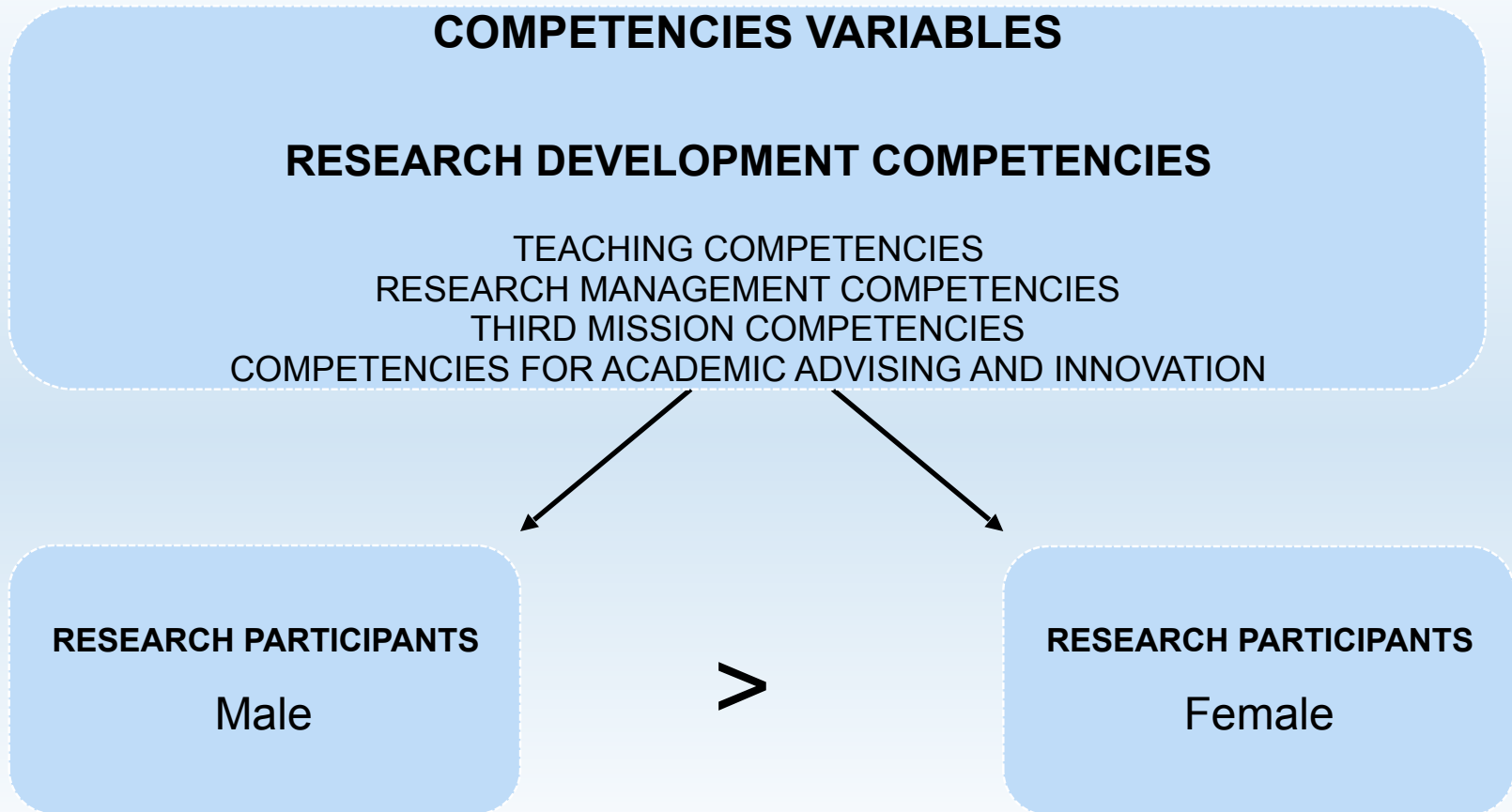
9 Research results and discussion

- Age → perception of importance



10 Research results and discussion

- Sex → perception of importance

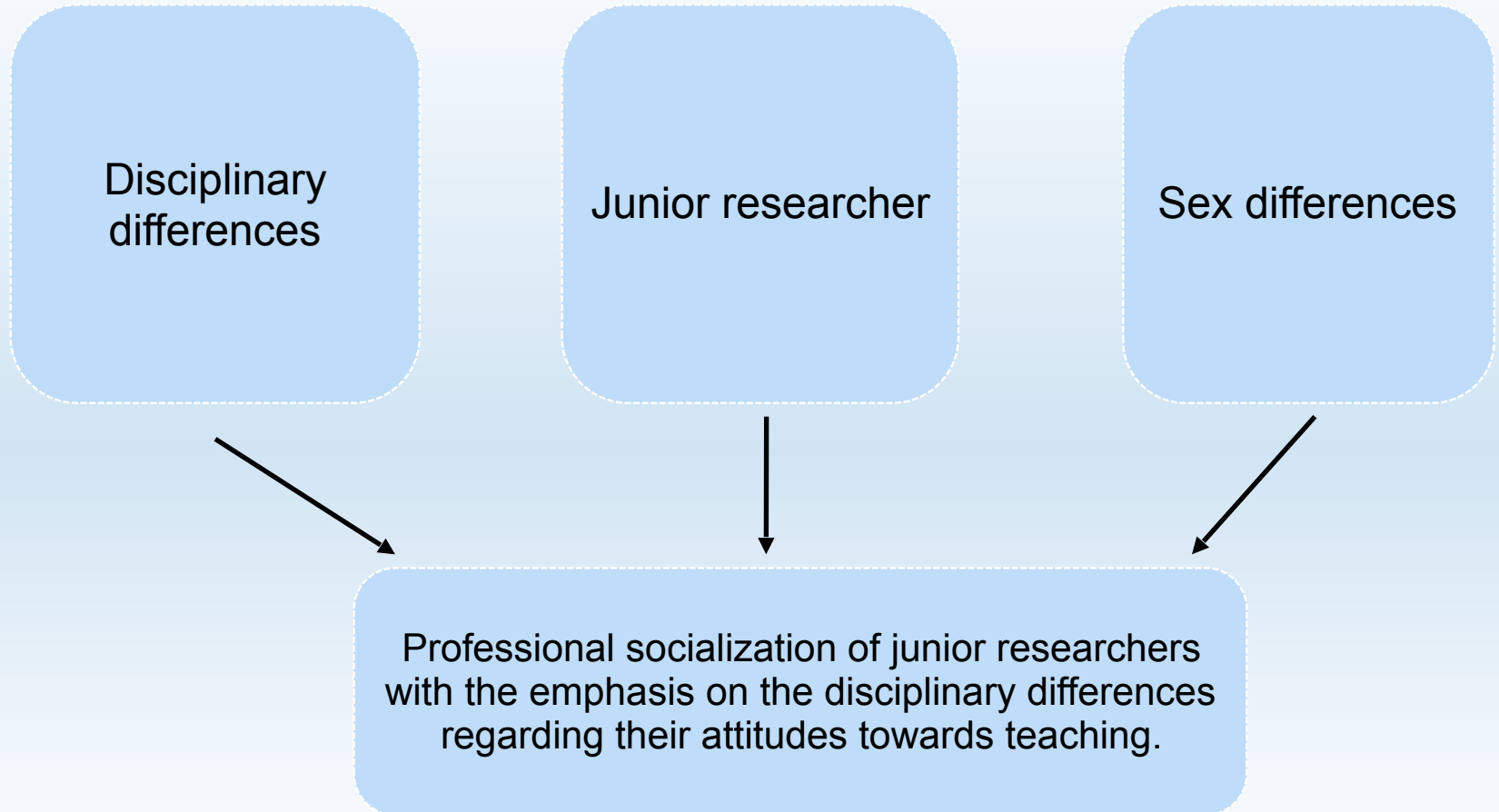


Summary, open questions and conclusions

- ▶ What are the reasons for the differences in the assessment of the research development competencies between the junior and senior academics?
- ▶ Does the lower assessment of the importance of these competencies point to a weaker motivation for their acquisition?



12 Summary, open questions and conclusions



- ▶ academics from humanities, social sciences and arts assign statistically significantly lower importance to research development competencies in comparison with the academics from natural, technical and biotechnical sciences and biomedicine
- ▶ junior academics assign statistically significantly lower importance to research development competencies in comparison with the senior academics
- ▶ research participants with less working experience (junior researchers) assign statistically significantly lower importance to research development competencies in comparison with the senior ones
- ▶ men from the academic community assign statistically significantly higher importance to research development competencies in comparison with women



14 Qualitative research

Research question:

In what manner are the important implicit and explicit elements of the academic profession acquired through professional socialization?



15 Research methodology (1/2)

Research aim



To examine the experiences of the academics in Croatia regarding the manner of acquiring important knowledge and competencies through the process of professional socialization



16 Research methodology (2/2)

- ▶ **SAMPLE:** 33 participants from all public universities in Croatia, from all research fields

- ▶ **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS:** in-depth interviews (phenomenology and narative) , interview protocol

- ▶ **DATA ANALYSIS:** MAXQDA software for qualitative analysis



Preliminary results: Acquiring research development competencies

Nobody taught us how to conduct a research, how to write a paper. I didn't have any of that. I had to, at my faculty, I had to learn that along the way. Generally, to conceive how to optimize this writing together with all of it, everything, it was experiential learning. (NS 23)

As for writing, I can now say I'm a lot more confident, that now...I am still honing it, I still struggle to get things out, but when a person writes their Ph.D thesis, it is easier, when you write those 200 pages, so writing is a bit better now. But at the beginning, I was scared, but I knew I had to do that for my promotion, that I need these things, so I just did it because I had to. Now I have more ideas, I know my specialization so I write more and I commit to it and I have no problems with publishing or sitting down and writing a paper. (HS 38)



Preliminary results: Acquiring research development competencies

In education. Suppose you really want something, to be sent somewhere. If it's possible to do that from the department resources. Some can do it, others can't. So, I'm sorry that...for example I didn't have the opportunity to go somewhere and get more education. For example, I'm interested in statistics and would like that. And somehow...on the other hand I understand that today it is difficult. There was more money before, now there is less money. You have to schlep with some kind of a project and I understand you need to balance here. So, it's not a responsibility of a one person. There is less money for sure. (BH 31)

Well yes, at first, it was actually hard to get into this laboratory work and perfect it because it's just something that takes time, and some luck...I mean luck..something other than...it's not taking a book and reading it. You have to be persistent, sometimes the experiment will succeed, sometimes you will fail, sometimes it's so crowded in the laboratory that you have to wait for your turn. And I don't know, you start working at 2pm and stay until 6, 7 pm. That part was difficult. And at the time I thought that some things can be done in only one way. Now, a man with experience can see that it's not always so strict, that you have more freedom. That part was difficult at the beginning. (BH 29)



Thank you for your attention





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