

They were students who had already obtained a bachelor's degree and who were about 1.5 years away from graduation and entering the labor market. In the research period, 52% of students worked in 2014, 49% in 2015, 54% in 2016, and 72% of students worked in 2017. The results showed that the main reasons for working were financial (45% of working students, four-year average) or financial combined with the desire to gain professional experience (38%). The level of remuneration was of major importance when choosing a workplace (43%), but the importance of acquiring new competences grew in the last year of survey. A small percentage of students planned to continue working in the same place after graduation (10.5%). More than half of the students who were not working were going to look for a job [4]. The possibility of combining studies and work depends not only on the cost of studying but also on how time-consuming study programs are. For example, economics is relatively less time-consuming than other programs and has a small proportion of laboratory classes. Universities often organize classes so as to reduce the costs and time allocated to commuting and, as a result, they schedule classes only 3 or 4 days a week. The remaining days (including weekends) can be devoted to work. Additionally, participation in lectures is usually optional (only seminars are mandatory). Employers willingly hire students on the basis of flexible contracts. The problem is, however, the frequent incompatibility of the type of work performed with the field of study. Work allows students to acquire general social competences, but rarely professional ones.

Student employment during a pandemic COVID-19—instead of conclusions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in the second quarter of 2020 the level of economic activity dropped. GDP in Poland decreased by 8.9% compared to the same period the previous year. The number of employed decreased slightly, but paid employment was lost mainly by those working on the basis of flexible, fixed-term contracts, beyond the statistics. All HEI in Poland have switched to online education. Students have more free time (they did not spend time commuting, working in the library, youth events, trips, etc.), but there are fewer job opportunities. The global student surveys conducted in May–June 2020 by CovidSocLab [5] showed that in Poland 11% of the surveyed students lost their job permanently, 18% temporarily, 11% had their salary reduced, and only 20% continued to work as before. Judging from these statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to change the patterns of student employment.

References and notes

- [1] Hauschildt, K., Vogtle, E. M. & Gwosć, C. (2018). Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. *Eurostudent VI 2016-2018*. - Synopsis of indicators, Bielfield, Bertelsman Verlag.
- [2] Statistics Poland. (2019), *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland 2019*.

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[4] For more detailed data see: Ostoj I. (2018). Reasons full-time students of economics in Poland undertake jobs. *Managerial Economics*, 19(1), 117-132.; Ostoj, I. (2020). The significance of motivations and selected effects of student employment in the course of studies: A case of an economics study program in Poland. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 9(1), 165-177..

[5] CovidSocLab. Retrived from <http://www.covidsoclab.org/>

Combining study and work in Belarus: the effects of state job assignment

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This paper discusses the Belarusian practice of student employment taking into account the state assignment of work to graduates.

State regulation of the first workplace

Higher education in Belarus has a specific feature: there is a state regulation mandating the first workplace for graduates whose study was state funded. Currently, just under 45% of all students do not pay for their education, therefore their first job is according to the state assignment. Students do not like this rule because the state jobs are less paid than jobs in the private sector. In 2015, when Belarus joined the Bologna process, the country promised to follow Bologna principles, and the rejection of mandatory work placement was one of the main requirements of the Bologna system. However, this did not happen, and remains a problem for thousands of young graduates who want to make their own decisions about their place of work. This feature of the Soviet period, restored in 1997, is viewed by the state as the students working off their higher education and an easy way to fill unattractive (although necessary) workplaces.

Overall, student attitudes to labor employment are formed under the contradictory influence of state social policy, on the one hand, and their personal interests constructed by mass media and market ideology, on the other. The state

provides the first workplace for graduates i.e. guarantees them employment. The second factor, individual interests and the media, stimulates expectations of a high quality of life and a well-paid job from the beginning of their employment.

According to previous research, some students agree to take the state job assignment, either following traditional work values or not being able to avoid a state workplace. We selected three groups of students. The first group are those enrolled in studies on the recommendations of state enterprises and institutions and receive scholarships from them. In accordance with the law, such specialists must work for five years. The second group are those whose study is state funded and who are obliged to work in the state job assignment for two years. The third group are those who pay for their study but can ask for a state assignment, if they do not want to, or cannot find a job.

How to Avoid a State Work Assignment

Most state-funded students try to avoid the state assigned workplace because they want to find a job on their own. They use several strategies for this. A popular strategy is to find a job themselves and provide an official request from this organization for their placement. This request is welcomed by the leadership of universities, if it is sent from government organizations that correspond to the student's profession. It also requires a guarantee from this organization that the graduate will work for two years. Employers do not appreciate this mechanism because they have to provide benefits to the young professionals. During the last few years students have been allowed to work in the private sector if the job corresponds to the student's area of study. Students have to find a potential employer and be employed there before they graduate, which means the students need to work in parallel to their studies. Otherwise it will be difficult to demonstrate their professional qualities and competences for the future employer who usually need young workers with some experience.

According to research data, around one third of the students in Belarus have a job. The question is whether these students differ from the rest in their value orientations, gender, or area of studies (technical, natural science and social).

National Case Study

We have been researching student value orientations, including labor attitudes, for several years [1]. However, only in 2016 did our survey include the questions necessary for analysing student motivation for employment during their study, their expectations regarding their future work and the qualities that will be in demand in the workplace. The national sample included ten universities that represent three major areas of study (technical, natural science and social). The proportion of males and females corresponded to the national division of students. The initial sample consisted of more than 450 students; for our analysis of students' attitudes to their future work, we selected only 3rd and 4th year students who are concerned about their future employment. Our final sample included 275 students.

Our study revealed that 40% of senior students are not looking for a job, 30% are combining study and work, another 30% are looking for work. A student's labor status is not statistically related to the course of study, gender or area of study. Differences between groups in academic achievements are also not statistically significant. The major difference between those who have a job and those who do not is the conditions of study (state-funded or private). Motivations to work include the desire to find a good workplace (and avoid the state job assignment) and to get work experience. Some students mentioned the need to earn money for living expenses.

There are no differences in work expectations between those who are already employed and those who are not: 67% of those who are already working and 60% of those who are not looking for work said that they want to work in their specialty. These results are in line with the nationwide survey of Belarusian youth about workplace criteria.

Conclusion

The state job assignment cannot prevent students from looking for employment in accordance with their interests and education and which pays high salaries. Instead, it stimulates students to work and study in parallel. Students who are already working (about 30%) rely on themselves for finding employment. Therefore, student employment is the best strategy for bypassing the state work assignment and a way to gain work experience.

Notes

[1] The data are in the archive of the Department of Sociology, Belarusian State University

Student work, competencies and employment: a case study of Slovenia

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Student work and controversies

The employment status of Slovenian students during the academic year is diverse: they either do not work (42%), engage in full-time employment (7%), engage in other contractual employments (5%), or engage in student work (46%) [1]. The latter is temporary or occasional work, flexible enough to be combined with the study calendar and