

The Transition of Young People from Study to Employment in the Light of Student Work

Vesna NOVAK, Anja ŽNIDARŠIČ

University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Kidričeva cesta 55a, 4000 Kranj, Slovenia
vesna.novak@fov.uni-mb.si, anja.znidarsic@fov.uni-mb.si

Background and Purpose: We are living in a time of accelerated globalization, which has a far-reaching impact for youth employment. Therefore, the paper presents the problem of the transition of tertiary educated young people into the working environment in terms of the importance of education and gaining work experience during their studies. The main purpose of the study was to analyze the attitudes and thinking of students regarding the selection of studies and work experience that young people are gaining during their studies with student work in connection with their job prospects.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The data used in our research come from a broader research on Slovenian Youths (SY) dating back to 2013. Among all the respondents of SY we selected those who classified themselves as students aged between 19 and 24, who filled out the part of the questionnaire pertaining to employment. The research hypotheses were tested with the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent samples t-test.

Results: We found that among students who chose to study for different reasons there were differences in the belief that they will immediately find employment after graduating. We also found that between those students who supported themselves during their studies and those who only studied there were differences in individual statements regarding their transition from education to employment. We concluded that work during their studies, especially in the field of the profession they were studying for, had a positive impact on the thinking of students pertaining to the transition toward employment.

Conclusion: The analysis of employment issues faced by young people with tertiary education was supported by empirical data, while in conclusion suggestions for improvement were presented. The article also deepens the understanding of the problems of youth employment in a broader perspective and the understanding of the observed developments in society.

Keywords: *youth employment; tertiary education; work experience; job search*

1 Introduction

Over the last decade, the economic crisis has had a major impact on the functioning of the labour market in the European Union. According to Eurostat data, until 2014 there was a decline in employment and an increase in unemployment, especially among young people. This is consistent with the statements of various authors (Coleman, 2000; Sprangers, 1992; Teichler, 2009) claiming that the economic downturn, spreading of new technologies, rational-

ization of jobs, etc. mainly affect the young people, including those with the highest levels of education. The problem is, above all, the fact that youth unemployment in most EU countries is more than two times higher than the total unemployment rate (Eurostat, 2017). Dietrich (2012) describes a variety of reasons for high youth unemployment in Europe. In addition to the economic crisis he mentions the big role of the education system that does not offer young people knowledge and skills needed in the labour market, lack of mentoring for young people, improper re-

cruitment policy and lack of work experience. In addition to working experience, many authors (e.g. Baydetsky, 2013; Donik, Pajnkihar & Bernik, 2015; Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós & Juhász, 2016; Sokół & Figurska, 2017) classify professionalism and level of education among the factors of successful youth employment.

The 21st century is characterized by a knowledge-based economy, so it is not surprising that one of the strategic objectives of the European Union is also the increase in the share of tertiary education (Europe 2020, 2010) by 2020. Domains and Arim (2016) state that higher education has also been promoted to ensure the safe financial future of young people. Ule and Živoder (2012) warn that educational capital does not necessarily mean a better position on the labour market, as it has proved to be ineffective in Slovenia and the unemployment rate of young people with tertiary education has increased sharply. Other authors also mention the difficulty of the transition of graduates to the workplace. Murphy, Blustein, Bohling and Platt (2010), as well as Alves and Korhonen (2016), report that transition from tertiary education to work is increasingly longer, and above all diverse and individualized. In addition to a longer period of unemployment, Domen and Arim (2016) mention the increase in precarious work, and thus the association of young people with mental health problems, for example, depression.

Allen and van der Velden (2011), Støeren and Arnesen (2011), Humburg, van der Velden and Verhagen (2013) classify their work experience, especially those related to the study program, among the most important factors for the successful and appropriate employment of graduates. Robert and Saar (2012) have shown that student work has a positive impact on the employability of graduates, if it is related to the field of study. Alves and Korhonen (2016) mention that each work during the course of tertiary education contributes to the growth of social capital, which facilitates graduates to become involved in the working environment. Scott (2012: 189) also emphasizes the positive significance of work experience and mentions that students can develop soft skills even in relatively low-skilled jobs, build career networks, and gain references and information that enables better job matches later in life.

In many countries across Europe, the phenomenon of student jobs is widespread in addition to study (Hauschildt, Gwosć, Netz and Mishra (2015). In Slovenia, as many as 67% of students are performing work during study (Eurostudent SI 2010, 2010). According to the above facts, graduation would be expected to facilitate the inclusion of graduates into the working environment. However, of particular concern are the Eurostat data (2018) according to which Slovenia has high unemployment rate among young people with tertiary education compared to other countries in the European Union, especially in the 25-29 years age group. In the European Union, unemployment among young people with tertiary education is only higher in Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus and Croatia. In this age

bracket, which coincides with the period after the end of studying, Slovenian youth is actively involved in finding a job. Since at this age, young people are much more mature and have mostly formed goals and desires to meet different expectations (e.g. to prove themselves in their profession, to make a home for themselves, and to have a family), perception of unemployment is much more difficult.

According to the findings of Powers and Wojtkiewicz (2004), students begin to be aware of the importance of employment opportunities too late, i.e. only a few years before seeking employment, therefore, we were wondering whether young people are even aware of the problems they will face in the labour market. Therefore, the aim of the research was to find out the views and reflections of Slovenian students regarding the choice of study and employment opportunities in connection with the work experience acquired through student work. In the paper, we first reviewed literature in relation to education, work experience and employment of young people. We used the literature review as the basis for the setting up of research hypotheses which we studied with the analysis of the research among Slovenian students. In the end, we discussed the results and presented the limitations and proposals for further research.

2 Literature review

2.1 The importance of education and employment

In modern societies, knowledge is essential for the development and advancement of economy. Välimaa and Hoffman (2008) even use the term “knowledge-based society” for developed societies. Education has proven to be an important factor affecting youth unemployment (European Union, 2014) and education is therefore encouraged, especially tertiary. In its strategy (Europe 2020, 2010), the EU stated that it is necessary to achieve that 40% of the population aged 30-34 will obtain tertiary education by 2020. In Slovenia, we achieved this goal already in 2013 and, according to Eurostat data, the share is still growing, thus being much higher than the average in the EU. Even among young people in the age group of 20-24 years and those in the 25-29 years age group, there is an increase in the proportion of those with the tertiary education.

Hanushek and Woessmann (2010) found that the tertiary education obtained exerts a positive impact on economic growth, however, the effect is even greater if the offer of individuals who have achieved this level of education meets the demand in the labour market. In 2014, 47.3% of young people between 20 and 24 years were included in tertiary education in Slovenia (Eurostat, 2016), therefore ranking among the top EU countries. On the other hand, many authors point to the problem of over-education

(Groeneveld and Hartog, 2004; Mørch and Du Bois-Rey-
mond, 2006; Quintini, 2011; Baert, Cockx and Verhaest,
2013) resulting in numerous disadvantages. We could say
that education is becoming a necessary but not sufficient
condition for employment, therefore, it is necessary to re-
gard the issue of tertiary education and youth employabil-
ity problems from a broader perspective.

Potočnik (2009) studied the motives of entering a uni-
versity and perception of Croatian students regarding the
success in searching for employment. She found that gen-
der, age and years of study were not important factors, as
differences arose from objective factors. Most of the stu-
dents attended the desired faculty, mainly because of their
interest in the field of study, followed by the high employ-
ability in a certain profession. Most students thought that
they will find employment easily. Since this is a period in
which we are faced with high unemployment of graduates,
it is understandable that young people want to know the
job prospects of each profession before actually choosing a
study. Thus, the study which delivers the most reliable em-
ployment has an important role when young people choose
their fields of study. The HEGESCO survey results (Allen,
Coenen and Humburg, 2011) show that graduates with a
BSc degree in information sciences, technical sciences
and health sciences find a job sooner than the graduates of
humanities, social sciences and services. This could there-
fore be the reason behind the increase in recent years of
enrolments in science, computer science and health care in
Slovenia, while enrolment in social sciences, business and
law decreased (SURs, 2016). On the other hand, it is al-
ways necessary to take into account internal factors that af-
fect the selection of studies and the related personal values.
Most authors mention how important it is to consider one's
own desires when choosing a study, because this condi-
tions the success of individuals in their studies and later
work. Man namely spends a third of his life in the working
environment where he/she develops and achieves self-re-
alization which, as Galimberti (2009) puts it, represents
the key condition for happiness. Therefore, we wanted to
know why young people chose certain studies, was this
really their desire or have they reached this decision due to
better job opportunities.

2.2 Work experience and employment

Panzaru (2013) mentioned that a financial crisis, when
employers are looking for experienced staff, signifies a
major problem for young people experiencing transition
from education to employment. During their studies they
only rarely obtain formal work experience to assist them
in finding employment. Therefore, it is important that stu-
dents are working in the industries they were educated for
as the work experience gained during their studies, espe-
cially those related to the content of the study program,
have a significant impact regarding the shorter search time

and the adequacy of employment after graduation (Robert
in Saar, 2012). Støren and Arnesen (2011) note that work
experience related to their studies reduce the possibility for
all kinds of mismatched employments (horizontal and ver-
tical) and for unemployment. Thus, the difference between
the impact of work related to studies is important. The
authors claim that work which is not related to the study
content exerts a lesser impact on the success of obtaining
a job after graduation. Similar were the findings by van
der Velden and Allen (2011). The authors stated that work
which is not related to the study in the long term allows for
a certain protection against unemployment, but it does not
help graduates to find work quickly, nor does it increase
the chances of higher pay for their work.

EUROSTUDENT survey data show that in most coun-
tries at least two out of five students are involved in em-
ployment activities closely related to their field of study. In
Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Romania and Sweden,
this share is at least 50% (Hauschildt et al., 2015: 103). In
Slovenia, the majority of students obtain work experience
before the first employment through student work that falls
into the group of atypical employments (Kosi, Nastav and
Šušteršič, 2010). In our opinion, the problem lies in the
fact that their professional skills are largely unrelated to
the study area. However, this work experience should not
be ignored, since Souto-Otero et al. (2012) demonstrated
that a large part of the competencies that employers are
looking for include soft skills: communication skills, abil-
ity of team work, flexibility, self-confidence, etc. Thus, the
student work that is not directly related to the field of study
is seen as an advantage in finding a job, because students
in addition to the acquisition of soft skills also learn about
the reality of the labour market, get to know the employ-
ers and establish important connections for finding a job
after graduation. We wanted to know whether the majority
of students perform student work related to their field of
study and what are the views of these students pertaining
to the seeking of employment after graduation.

2.3 Seeking employment

Scarpetta, Sonnet and Manfredi (2010) mention two im-
portant groups in young jobseekers: young people who
are moving from one limited term employment to another
and young people who, after unsuccessful job search, re-
turn to the education process. As regards the first group of
young people (moving from one limited term employment
to another), it should be noted that the European labour
market recorded an increase in non-standard forms of em-
ployment. The report (ILO, 2015) mentions that is why
policymakers and institutions began to advocate reform
of the labour market in order to reduce the regulatory gap
between workers in standard and non-standard forms of
employment. Slovenia is one of the EU countries with the
highest percentage of the fixed-term and short-term em-

ployment, as well as temporary jobs (Eurofound, 2012; Eurostat, 2015). Ignjatović and Trbanc (2009) stated that both forms should be a springboard for the transition of young people into regular employment, however, they often lead to unemployment. We could say that the individual risk of young people is growing as partial and precarious jobs do not provide individuals with material and social security. Because such forms of work do not guarantee independence, as they only last a short time (Ule and Živoder, 2012), young people do not become independent, but rather prolong the stay with their parents, which is a trend in all of the Mediterranean countries (Klanjšek, 2013: 5-6). Another group of young people who, after an unsuccessful job search, return to the process of education are regarded by Ule and Živoder (2012) as a result of the lack of job opportunities and the equation of higher education with a better position in the labour market.

After 1990, Slovenia began to be faced with the chaotic transition of young people from education to employment. There has been a rise in youth unemployment, temporary and part-time employment, with the young remaining unemployed for longer or shorter periods of time when changing employment, while obtaining additional education in the form of in-service course or during unemployment. Standing (2014) draws attention to the weaknesses in precarious work, as these do not bring security and stability to individuals. The author continues by asserting that a person can only develop strong identity in a predictable and secure environment, while workers in atypical forms of work are subject to persistent insecurity and anxiety. Particularly worrying is the fact that in the last ten years there was an increase in unemployed graduates which is not proportional to the increase in the volume of relevant jobs.

According to data from the DEHEMS project (Melink and Pavlin, 2009) Slovenia is among the countries where graduates on average (depending on the direction of their study) need a relatively long period between the end of the study and their first employment. Therefore, we wanted to know which factors were relevant to students in finding a job.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research hypotheses

Based on extensive literature review we stated for research hypotheses:

The issue of the choice of study and students' attitudes towards employment opportunities was based on the findings of various authors (e.g. Groeneweld and Hartog, 2004; Potočnik, 2009; Allen, Coenen & Humburg, 2011) and presented the following hypothesis:

- RH1: Between the students who selected their studies for various reasons (exact wording stated in Table 3) there are differences in the belief that they will find a job immediately after graduation.

The issue of performing student work during study related to the direction of students' study and attitudes towards employment opportunities was based on the findings of numerous authors (e.g. Van der Velden and Allen, 2011; Støeren and Arnesen, 2011; Souto-Otero, Ulicna, Schaepekens and Bognar, 2012 Robert and Saar, 2012; Panzaru, 2013; Hauschildt, Gwosć, Netz and Mishra, 2015) and the following hypotheses were made:

- RH2: Between the students who work and those who do not work during their studies differences exist, on average, regarding the belief that after graduation they will immediately find a job.
- RH3: Between the students who work in their profession and those who do not differences exist, on average, regarding the belief that after graduation they will immediately find a job.

The issue of finding a job and the factors that appear important to students in finding a job was based on the findings of various authors (e.g. Scarpetta, Sonnet and Manfredi, 2010; Ule and Živoder, 2012; Klanjšek, 2013; Humburg, van der Velden and Verhagen, 2013) and the following hypothesis was put forward:

- RH4: Between the students who work and those who do not work during their studies differences exist, on average, regarding the assessment of factors (acquaintances/friends, professionalism, education, political connections, luck) which they consider to be important in finding a job.

The research hypotheses were tested by independent samples t-test and ANOVA. The assumptions of both test were checked prior the statistical tests were conducted (normality of the variable under study in each group was verified by coefficient of skewness and kurtosis as suggested by Field (2013)), but details are not provided.

3.2 Data collection and sample

The data are part of a broader research on Slovenian Youths (SY) dating back to 2013 (Flere et al., 2014). The main research interests were focused on demographic changes and intergenerational cooperation, education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, living and housing conditions, lifestyles, health and welfare, media, political participation, mobility and globalization. The probability sampling (stratified quota sampling) included young Slovenians aged 16 to 27.

Among all the respondents of SY (907 participants) we selected those who classified themselves as students aged

between 19 and 24, who filled out (fully or at least part) the part of the questionnaire pertaining to employment. Of the 272 respondents, 37.5% were males and 62.5% females. The average age of respondents was 21.85 years with standard deviation equal to 1.61 years. Respondents were selected from all regions: 14.0% from the capital city, 4.4% from the second largest city, 13.2% from cities with more than 10,001 inhabitants, 16.9% from cities with more than 2,000 and less or equal to 10,000 inhabitants, while the majority of respondents (51.5%) originated from smaller towns with less than 2,000 inhabitants.

4 Results

First we present the descriptive statistics of questionnaire items included in the research hypotheses. The item 'I believe I will find a job after graduation' was measured with a 3-point scale where 1 signified 'I believe I will find a job immediately after graduation', 2 stood for 'I believe I will eventually find a job, and 3 meant 'I do not believe I will find a job'. On 3-point scale respondents evaluated the item with average 2.11 and standard deviation 0.716 (frequencies are presented in Table 1).

Students were asked to rank five factors of job seeking according their importance from 1 the most important to 5 the least important (Table 2). On average, the most important factor (on the whole sample) was acquaintances/friends ($M=2.14$, $SD=1.254$), followed by education ($M=2.53$, $SD=1.258$), expertise ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.131$), and luck ($M=3.57$, $SD=1.320$). On average, the least important factor of job seeking was political connections ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.366$).

The first research hypothesis was tested with the analysis of variance (ANOVA). Of the entire sample (Table 3),

the lowest score regarding expectations that they will find a job immediately after graduation was achieved by students who chose a study for which they thought that there was a real possibility for enrolment, although the study did not coincide with their wishes ($M=2.56$), followed by students who were studying what they wanted to study ($M=2.08$). The highest average scores regarding expectations were recorded by respondents who chose a study which provided jobs, although this study did not coincide with their wishes ($M=1.95$).

ANOVA (Table 3) showed that there existed statistically significant differences among three groups of students regarding their beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation ($F=4.007$, $df1=2$, $df2=241$, $p=0.019$) at 5% significance level.

Thereafter, the ANOVA multiple comparisons with Hochberg's GT2 test, which is suitable for unequal group sizes (Field, 2013), were performed. Results revealed that students who chose a study with real possibilities to enroll, although the study did not coincide with their wishes, have on average had different expectations that they would find a job immediately after graduation than students who were studying what they wanted to study ($p=0.025$) at 5% significance level. Similarly, students who chose a study with real possibilities to enrol, although the study did not coincide with their wishes had different expectations than students who chose a study which provided jobs, although this study did not coincide with their wishes ($p=0.032$ at 5% significance level. Therefore, the first research hypothesis could be confirmed.

The second research hypothesis was tested with the independent samples t-test (Table 4). On the 3-point scale (ranging from 1 - 'I believe that I will immediately find a job' to 3 - 'I do not believe that I will find a job'), the students who worked during their studies estimated their

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages for questions regarding study program and work during the study

Question	Answers	N	%
Choose of a study program	I am studying what I wanted to study.	221	85%
	I chose a study, which provides jobs, although this study does not coincide with my wishes.	20	8%
	I chose a study for which I thought that there was a real possibility for enrolment, although this study does not coincide with my wishes.	19	7%
Finding a job after graduation	I will find a job immediately	52	21%
	I will eventually find a job	120	48%
	I will not get a job	79	31%
Working during the study	Yes	173	64%
	No	98	36%
Working in the field for which they are trained	Not working in their profession	115	66%
	Working in their profession	58	34%

Table 2: Frequencies and descriptive statistics for importance of five factors in job seeking

Factors of job seeking	Percentages					Descriptive statistics		
	1 - the most important	2	3	4	5 - the least important	N	M	SD
Acquaintances / friends	45%	17%	20%	13%	5%	271	2,14	1,254
Expertise	10%	29%	26%	27%	8%	271	2,93	1,131
Education	27%	25%	22%	19%	7%	271	2,53	1,258
Political connections	8%	15%	12%	18%	48%	271	3,83	1,366
Luck	9%	14%	20%	24%	33%	271	3,57	1,320

Table 3: Results of ANOVA for students' beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation according to the three groups of study selection criterion

Study selection criterion	Descriptive statistics			Results of ANOVA	
	N	M	SD	F	Sig.
I am studying what I wanted to study.	209	2.08	0.703	4.007	0.019
I chose a study, which provides jobs, although this study does not coincide with my wishes.	19	1.95	0.780		
I chose a study for which I thought that there was a real possibility for enrolment, although this study does not coincide with my wishes.	16	2.56	0.629		

Table 4: Results of t-test for independent samples for students' beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation according their work status

	Descriptive statistics						Results of t-test		
	Students who work during their studies			Students who do not work during their studies					
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students' beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation	163	2.14	0.710	87	2.03	0.723	1.124	248	0.262

possibilities that they would find a job immediately after graduation with an average of 2.14, while the mean value for the respondents who did not work equaled 2.03. The two-sided p-value was 0.262 ($t = 1.124$, $df = 248$), indicating that there existed no statistically significant differences in beliefs on possibilities of immediately finding a job after graduation at 5% significance level between students who did or did not work. Therefore, the second research hypothesis could not be confirmed.

Students who work in their profession estimated the possibilities that they would find employment immediately after graduation with a mean value of 1.95, while those

who worked but not in their profession scored the mean value of 2.24 (Table 5). The two-sided p-value of the independent samples t-test was 0.011 ($t = -2.575$, $df = 161$), indicating that there existed statistically significant differences in beliefs on possibilities of immediately finding a job after graduation at 5% significance level between students who did or did not work in their profession. Therefore, the third research hypothesis could be confirmed.

Students ranked five factors (acquaintances/friends, expertise, education, political connections, and luck) from 1 - the most important to 5 -the least important (Table 6). For each of the five factors t-tests were performed aimed

Table 5: Results of t-test for independent samples for students' beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation according their work in profession

	Descriptive statistics						Results of t-test		
	Students who work in their profession			Students who do not work in their profession					
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students' beliefs that they will find a job immediately after graduation	56	1.95	0.749	107	2.24	0.671	-2.575	161	0.011

Table 6: Results of five t-tests for importance of factors for job seeking according to the groups of students who did or did not work

	Descriptive statistics						Results of t-tests		
	Students who work			Students who do not work					
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Luck	172	3.55	1.348	98	3.61	1.273	-0.358	268	0.720
Political connections	172	3.67	1.427	98	4.11	1.209	-2.713	229.9	0.007
Education	172	2.71	1.323	98	2.20	1.074	3.410	236.8	0.001
Expertise	172	2.94	1.119	98	2.91	1.158	0.194	268	0.846
Acquaintances/friends	172	2.13	1.266	98	2.16	1.241	-0.186	268	0.853

at testing differences between the students who worked during their studies and those who did not. At 5% significance level, the differences were confirmed for education ($t = 3.410$, $df = 236.8$, $p = 0.001$) and political connections ($t = -2.713$, $df = 229.9$, $p = 0.007$). Therefore, the fourth research hypothesis could not be confirmed, since differences were confirmed only for two of the five factors.

5 Discussion

5.1 Reasons for the selection of a study and the transition from education to employment

Our analysis of the SY research showed that the majority of respondents (85%) stated that they were studying what they wanted to study (Table 1). The result can be explained by the possibility of a wide selection of studies which are certainly enabled by the new role of universities. The latter have become accessible to a wider circle of students, while also higher education institutions with new programs emerged, which should have a positive impact on competitiveness in education. This is a gratifying figure, but it raises the problem of rising unemployment of young graduates. The problems are mainly reflected in

those young people who have either graduated from new faculties or new courses that employers are not familiar with. Consequently, after the completion of tertiary education many young people are prepared to accept work at a lower position and at a lower salary (Toš, 2004).

Only 8% of respondents chose a study which provides jobs (Table 1), although the study did not coincide with their wishes. The fact that an individual chose to study what he/she wants is important as this is the only way to achieve personal satisfaction also after joining the work environment. On the other hand, Medveš and Muršak (2010) noted that young people did not think of qualifications in the functional way anymore, so job prospects are gradually losing importance in deciding for a certain university. The fact is that the field of study plays an important role in recruiting graduates, as mentioned by the authors of the HEGESCO and REFLEX studies (Allen, Coenen and Humburg, 2011; van der Velden and Allen, 2011). The results of these projects indicate that the labour market is slowly becoming saturated as far as certain professions in the social sciences and humanities are concerned, making it harder for the tertiary educated graduates to get a job in their field of study than their peers in the fields of science and technology. Therefore, many authors (ILO, 2013) highlight the problem of over-education, causing large costs to various countries. These young people, in spite

of their tertiary education, may become redundant as was demonstrated by Rifkin (2004) who perceives an increasingly automated world as the biggest problem.

The remaining 7% of respondents chose a study for which they thought that there was a real possibility for enrolment, although the study did not coincide with their wishes (Table 1). It is a fact that for young people under 19 years of age studying has become a way of life. In Slovenia, more than 90% of students who have completed secondary education and qualify for enrolment in degree programs end up actually enrolling in tertiary education. Medveš and Muršak (2010) interpret the continuation of education at the tertiary level in Slovenia as a response of young people to the risk of social marginalization experienced by those who achieved only lower or vocational education. The problem lies in the fact that employment at the levels of skilled workforce provides neither social prestige nor income above the poverty line.

By analyzing the SY research, we found that only 21% of respondents believed that after graduation they will find work immediately, while 31% of respondents indicated that they will not get a job, and the majority (48%) of them believed that they will eventually find a job (Table 1). We believe that in relation to the labour market situation the respondents had realistic expectations. It is namely a worrying fact that the young people after graduation cannot readily be incorporated into the working environment, because youth is a dynamic period of life that is full of passages in various fields. Of these the transition from education to the world of employment is among the most difficult and crucial to the continued development of young people. Society needs to be aware that the unemployment of educated youth is especially critical both in terms of designing their attitude toward work and work ethic as well as for their self-esteem and, more broadly, in terms of society as a whole. Therefore, we believe that already during their studies more attention should be focused on the links that allow improving the employability of graduates. In Slovenia, the biggest expectations are placed in the activities of career centers within educational institutions, set up over the past few years.

We wanted to check whether there were differences between the students who selected a certain study for various reasons as regards the assertion that they will soon find employment. By testing the hypothesis H1 we found that there were differences between the group of students choosing the statement *'I chose a study for which I thought that there was a real possibility for enrolment, although this study does not coincide with my wishes'*, and the other two groups of respondents (*'I am studying what I wanted to study'* and *'I chose a study which provides jobs, although this study does not coincide with my wishes'*). Students who have chosen a particular study only because of the real possibility for entry into a certain faculty, although the studies are not consistent with their wishes, generally considered they will not find employment im-

mediately after graduating. The reason can be found in the fact that in Slovenia more enrolment positions are tendered for free tertiary education as there are students who have completed their secondary education. By entering tertiary education, young people obtain the status of a university student which allows them to work via student referrals. It is a temporary and occasional form of work which is very popular for employers in Slovenia due to non-bureaucratic procedures. In this way, students have a greater chance to obtain a job compared to other forms of work that are available to young people without student status. The downside of work via the student referrals is when taking advantage of student status only because of the work, which often appears in the form of fictional enrolments.

5.2 Student work and the transition from education to employment

We explored how the possibility of obtaining employment after graduating was perceived by students who worked during their studies and how it was understood by those who did not work. By analyzing the SY research, we found that of all the respondents two-thirds were students who worked during their studies, while one-third did not work. Various authors have studied the positive and negative sides brought by work that was performed by students during their studies. Among the positive aspects most often referred to are the obtained work experience that enable better employment opportunities (Humburg et al., 2013). Since gaining work experience before finding first employment presents a problem any work that a person can obtain while studying is welcome as it enables young people to develop soft skills which are very important for employers when selecting a suitable candidate for a particular job. Therefore, we assumed that students working during their studies will think differently about the possibility of employment after graduation, as during work they can already familiarise themselves with potential employers, working environment, and they also have the opportunity to talk about job opportunities. However, by testing the hypothesis H2 we did not find significant differences in beliefs on possibilities of immediately finding a job after graduation between students who did or did not work.

Hauschildt et al. (2015) refer to the fact that type of work conducted during studies is important as working in the same profession for which the students are training has a very positive impact on employability. Therefore, we only analyzed the students who work. Among them, only 34% worked in the field for which they were trained, while 66% of them did not work in the field for which they were trained. By testing the hypothesis H3 we found significant differences in beliefs on possibilities of immediately finding a job after graduation between students who did or did not work in their profession. We found that those who work in their profession largely considered that they will

find a job immediately after graduation, so we can assume that they were aware of the importance of such work experience. This was appreciated, since Humburg et al. (2013) found that employers in recruiting graduates attach great importance to relevant work experience – work experience related to their field of work. They connect them with the expertise and knowledge of the working environment, therefore, they exert a major impact on the selection of a suitable candidate.

5.3 Seeking employment

Our analysis of the SY research showed that among the factors the respondents considered important in finding employment acquaintances and friends were regarded most important, followed by education, professionalism, luck), while the least important were the political connections. The importance of acquaintances and friends can be attributed to the increasingly widespread networking, both personal as well as via the Internet which has become an important tool for social life. The methods of employers are namely increasingly changing as they also use modern ways of getting to know the candidates. Montgomery's and Kugler's studies (as quoted in Pelizzari 2004) also show that the informal links are often a successful way of searching for a job.

We thought that the students who were in direct contact with the employer will assess the mentioned options differently, as they could follow the issue of employment in the workplace. Nevertheless, by testing the hypothesis H4 we did not find the significant differences between the students who worked during their studies and those who did not. In assessing the significance of individual factors only differences regarding the factor of 'education' were statistically significant, as this factor was considered less important by the students who worked during studies, compared to the students who did not work. This might be due to the fact¹ that students perform works via the student referrals that are easy to carry out and are mostly not associated with their profession (Kosi et al., 2010). Based on the results of the SY research we could claim that students were aware of the importance of informal connections in the search for employment, while also realizing the importance of education and professionalism.

6 Conclusion

The transition of young people from study to the working environment represents a particular problem for individual countries of the European Union. Among them is Slovenia, which has been experiencing a high unemployment rate

for young people with tertiary education for many years. We examined the mentioned issues from the point of view of the opinions and attitudes of Slovenian students towards employment after completing their studies. We found that among the students who chose to study only because of the real possibility for enrolment, although the study did not match their wishes, and those who have chosen the study because of their desire or because of the possibility of employment, there were differences in the belief that after completing their studies they would immediately find a job. Furthermore, we found that between students who work and those who do not work on average there were no differences in the belief that they will find a job immediately after finishing their studies. There were, however, differences between students who perform student work in their field of study and those who perform work outside their field of study. Those students who worked in their field to a greater extent considered that they will find employment at the end of their studies. The last finding was that between students who work and those who do not work on average there were no differences in the assessment of the factors that they found important in finding a job. In assessing the relevance of individual factors, statistically significant differences were found only in the "education" factor, which is why this factor was considered as less important by students who worked in comparison with students who did not work.

It can be concluded that working during their studies, especially in their study field, has a positive impact on the thinking of students as they believe to a greater extent that they will obtain employment immediately after graduation, while their expectations regarding job search are more realistic. As employers also claim that work experience of graduates are very important, in addition to their generic competences, and sometimes in the selection process even make up for other deficiencies (Humburg et al., 2013), we see opportunities in the accelerated integration of education with practice. This can be greatly contributed to by career centers which only emerged at faculties in Slovenia in recent years, as among their important duties they also include the care for better employability of graduates. As intermediaries between employers and educational institutions they allow students to gain work experience in the field of their studies, through practice, project work, student work, etc. Experience, gained by students through international mobility (eg the Erasmus programme), can also facilitate the transition to the working environment, as the Bryla (2015) confirmed the positive impact of international student mobility on their employability.

In the research analysis, we limited ourselves to the part on employment which represents only one of the twelve sets of the extensive survey on the life of Slovenian

¹ Physical and other undemanding works together account 71.6 % of all work performed by students through the students referrals (Kosi, Nastav & Šušteršič, 2010).

youth. A disadvantage of the survey may also be a sample from which institutionalized residents were excluded, i.e. students who do not live at their permanent address (for example, those staying in student dormitories). We believe that it would be useful to repeat the survey and check if the views of young people or students on employment changed.

In the future, it would be sensible to carry out a survey of the state of affairs and on employment positions and considerations on graduates, and at the same time to conduct a survey on the needs for tertiary educated personnel among employers. This would give a more complete picture of the needs for tertiary educated youth, while mass education in terms of marketing higher education and subservience to the logic of capital, as Leurogetel (2003) calls it, would be replaced by the quality and employability of graduates.

Literature

- Allen, J. & van der Velden, R. (2011). Introduction. In J. Allen, S. Pavlin & R. van der Velden, (Eds.), *Competencies and Early Labour Market Careers of Higher Education Graduates in Europe*, pp. 7-10. Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences.
- Allen, J., Coenen, J. & Humburg, M. (2011). The role of Higher Education in Producing Relevant Competences. In J. Allen, S. Pavlin & R. van der Velden, (Eds.), *Competencies and Early Labour Market Careers of Higher Education Graduates in Europe*, pp. 55-73. Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences.
- Alves, M.G. & Korhonen, V. (2016). Transitions and trajectories from higher education to work and back – A comparison between Finnish and Portuguese graduates. *European Educational Research Journal*, 15(6): 676–695, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116661200>
- Baert, S., Cockx, B. & Verhaest, D. (2013). Overeducation at the start of the career: Stepping stone or trap? *Labour Economics*, no. 25: 123–140. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2013.04.013>
- Baydetsky P. (2013). State Management of Labor and Education Services Markets in Ukraine. *Journal of International Studies*, 6(1): 79-86, Available 30.3.2018 at http://www.jois.eu/files/Vol_6_1_Baydetsky.pdf.
- Bencsik A., Horváth-Csikós G. & Juhász T. (2016). Y and Z Generations at Workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(3): 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2016.03.06>
- Bryła, P. (2015). The impact of international student mobility on subsequent employment and professional career: a large-scale survey among Polish former Erasmus students. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 176: 633-641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.521>
- Coleman, J. S. (2000). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. In E. L. Lesser (Ed.), *Knowledge and Social Capital: Foundations and Applications*, pp. 17-41 Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Dietrich, H. (2012). *Youth unemployment in Europe: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Findings*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Retrieved 10 August 2016 from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/09227.pdf>
- Domene, J.F. & Arim, R.G. (2016). Associations Between Depression, Employment, and Relationship Status During the Transition into the Workforce: A Gendered Phenomenon? *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 50(1):35-50. Available 30.3.2018 at http://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/article/view/2826/pdf_1
- Donik, B., Pajnikihar, M. & Bernik, M. (2015). Employability of Nursing Care Graduates. *Organizacija*, 48(4): 287-298. <https://doi.org/10.1515/orga-2015-0023>
- Eurofound. (2012). *NEETs-Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2806/41578>
- Europe 2020 (2010). Communication from the Commission Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, European Commission, Brussels, Available 20.9.2017 at <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>
- European Union. (2014). *The European Union explained: Education, training, youth and sport*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, doi: 10.2775/5364
- Eurostat. (2015). *Being young in Europe today*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, <https://doi.org/10.2785/59267>
- Eurostat. (2016). Students in tertiary education - as % of 20-24 years old in the population. Retrieved 13 November 2016 from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=educ_uoe_enrt08
- Eurostat. (2017). Unemployment by sex and age - annual average. Retrieved 3 March 2017 from http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=unert_a&lang=en
- Eurostat (2018). Unemployment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level (%). Retrieved 29 March 2018 from http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en
- Eurostudent SI 2010. (2010). *Economic, Social and Housing Conditions, and the International Mobility of Students in Slovenia*. Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Retrieved 11 April 2017 from http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/Visoko_solstvo/Eurostudent_AN_2010.pdf
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. London: SAGE.

- Flere, S., Klanjšek, R., Lavrič, M., Kirbiš, A., Tavčar Kranjc, M., Divjak, M., Boroja, T., Zagorc, B. & Naterer, A. (2014). *Slovenska Mladina 2013: Življenje v času deziluzij, tveganja in prekarnosti: datoteka podatkov [Slovenian Youth 2013: Living in times of disillusionment, risk and precarity: database]*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Arhiv družboslovnih podatkov [distribution], 2014. ADP - IDNo: MLA13.
- Galimberti, U. (2009). *I miti del nostro tempo [The Myths of Our Time]*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Groeneveld, S. & Hartog, J. (2004). Overeducation, wages and promotions within the firm. *Labour Economics* 11(6): 701–714, <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2003.11.005>
- Hanushek, E. A. & Woessmann, L. (2010). *How much do Educational Outcomes Matter in OECD Countries?* Discussion Paper No. 5401. Retrieved 13 April 2017 from <http://repec.iza.org/dp5401.pdf>
- Hauschildt, K., Gwosć, C., Netz, N. & Mishra, S. (2015). *Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe: Synopsis of Indicators EUROSTUDENT V 2012–2015*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3278/6001920bw>
- Humburg, M., van der Velden, R. & Verhagen, A. (2013). *The Employability of Higher Education Graduates: The Employers' Perspective*. European Union, doi: 10.2766/54258.
- Ignjatović, M., & Trbanc, M. (2009). Zaposlovanje in brezposelnost mladih: aktivni, fleksibilni in prilagodljivi [Employment and unemployment of young people: active, flexible and adaptable]. In T. Rakar, & U. Boljka (Eds.), *Med otroštvom in odraslostjo: analiza položaja mladih v Sloveniji 2009 [Between childhood and adulthood: Analysis of the situation of young people in Slovenia in 2009]*, pp. 39-56. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Urad za mladino in Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo. Retrieved 10 August 2016 from http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/PDF_verzija_Med-otroštvom-in-odraslostjo.pdf
- ILO. (2013). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A generation at risk*. Geneva: International Labour Office. Retrieved 13 November 2016 from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_212423.pdf
- ILO. (2015). *Non-standard forms of employment: Report for discussion at the Meeting of Experts on Non-Standard Forms of Employment (Geneva, 16–19 February 2015)*. Geneva: International Labour Office, Conditions of Work and Equality Department. Retrieved 12 November 2016 from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_336934.pdf
- Klanjšek, R. (2013). Living Conditions and Socioeconomic Situation of Youth. In *Slovenian Youth 2013: Living in times of disillusionment, risk and precarity*, Executive Summary, pp. 4-6. Retrieved 10 May 2016 from [tent/uploads/2014/01/Executive-Summary-of-results-of-Slovenian-Youth-2013-study1.pdf](http://projects.ff.uni-mb.si/~cepso/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Executive-Summary-of-results-of-Slovenian-Youth-2013-study1.pdf)
- Kosi, T., Nastav, B. & Šušteršič, J. (2010). Pomen študentskega dela z vidika trga dela in uspešnosti [The Impact of Student Work on the Labour Market and Students' Academic Performance]. *IB Revija* 44(3-4): 65-80. Retrieved 7 April 2017 from http://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/publikacije/ib/2010/3-4-2010-splet.pdf
- Lerougetel, A. (2003). French Students Protests University Reform. World Socialist Web site. Retrieved 10 October 2017 from <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2003/12/fran-d17.html>
- Medveš, Z. & Muršak, J. (2010). Transition in the educational system - is it a question of systemic technicalities or social strategy? *Contemporary Educational Studies*, no. 2: 14-21. Retrieved 12 May 2017 from http://www.sodobna-pedagogika.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2010_2_eng_01_medves_mursak_transition_in_the_educational.pdf
- Melink, M. & Pavlin, S. (2009). *Employability of Graduates and Higher Education Management Systems: Final report of DEHEMS project*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences. Retrieved 10 Januar 2017 from http://www.dehems-project.eu/static/uploaded/files/files/results/DEHEMS_REPORT_final.pdf
- Mörch, S. & Du Bois-Reymond, M. (2006). Learning in Times of Modernization. In M. Du Bois-Reymond, & L. Chisholm (Eds.), *The Modernization of Youth Transition in Europe: New Directions for Child and Adolescent*, no. 113: 23-35. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. doi: 10.1002/cd.166.
- Murphy, K. A., Blustein, D. L., Bohlig, A. J., & Platt, M. G. (2010). The college-to-career transition: An exploration of emerging adulthood. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 88(2):174–181, <http://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2010.tb00006.x>
- Panzaru, C. (2013). The Determinants of Youth Unemployment: A Times Series Cross-Sectional Data Analysis. *Revista de Asistență Socială*, 12(1): 71-80.
- Pellizzari, M. (2004). Do Friends and Relatives Help in Getting a Good Job?. *CEP Discussion Paper No 623*. London: School of Economics. Retrieved 19 February 2017 from http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/19980/1/Do_Friends_and_Relatives_Really_Help_in_Getting_a_Good_Job.pdf
- Potočnik, D. (2009). Izbor studija: motivacijska struktura upisa i očekivani uspjeh u pronalasku željenoga posla [Going to University: Motivation Structure and Expectations for Finding a Desired Job]. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*. 46(3/4): 265-284
- Powers, R. & Wojtkiewicz, R. (2004). Occupational Aspirations, Gender, and Educational Attainment. *Sociological Spectrum*, 24 (5): 601–622, <http://doi.org/10.1080/02732170490448784>

- Quintini, G. (2011). Over-qualified or under-skilled: A review of existing literature. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, no. 121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kg58j9d7b6d-en>
- Rifkin, J. (2004). *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-market Era*. New York: J. P. Tarcher/Penguin.
- Robert, P. & Saar, E. (2012). Learning and Working: The Impact of the 'Double Status Position' on the Labour Market Entry Process of Graduates in CEE Countries. *European Sociological Review*, 28(6): 742–754, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcr091>
- Scarpetta, S., Sonnet, A. & Manfredi, T. (2010). Rising Youth Unemployment During The Crisis: How to Prevent Negative Long-term Consequences on a Generation? *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Papers*, no. 106. Retrieved 26 August 2016 from <http://www.oecd.org/employment/youthforum/44986030.pdf>
- Scott-Clayton, J. (2012). What Explains Trend in Labor Supply Among U.S. Undergraduates? *National Tax Journal*, 65(1):181-210, <http://doi.org/10.3386/w17744>
- Sokół, A. & Figurska, I. (2017). Creativity as one of the core competencies of studying knowledge workers. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 5(1): 23-35, [http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2017.5.1\(2\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2017.5.1(2))
- Souto-Otero, M., Ulicna, D., Schaepkens, L. & Bognar, V. (2012). *Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in youth organisations on young people's employability*. Retrieved 14 April 2017 from http://euroscoutinfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ReportNFE_PRINT.pdf
- Sprangers, M. (1992). *Explaining Unemployment Duration. An Integrative Approach*. Utrecht: University Utrecht.
- Standing, G. (2014). *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London [etc.]: Bloomsbury.
- Støren, L. A., & Arnesen, C. Å. (2011). Winners and Losers. In J. Allen & R. Van der Velden (Ed.), *The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society: New Challenges for Higher Education*, pp. 199-241, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1353-6>
- SURS. (2016). Tertiary education participation - general overview. Retrieved 12 December 2016 from http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Database/Dem_soc/09_izobrazevanje/08_terciarno_izobraz/01_09550_vpisani_splosno/01_09550_vpisani_splosno.asp
- Teichler, U. (2009). *Higher Education and the World of Work: Conceptual Frameworks, Comparative Perspectives, Empirical Findings*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Toš, N. (2004). *Slovensko javno mnenje 2004/2: Evropska družboslovna raziskava [Slovene Public Opinion Survey 2004/2: European Social Survey]*. Ljubljana: Arhiv družboslovnih podatkov.
- Ule, M. & Živoder, A. (2012). Student youth in Slovenia - in search of a future. *Sociologija: Journal for Sociology, Social Psychology and Social Anthropology* 54(2): 315-332, <https://doi.org/10.2298/SOC1202315U>
- Van der Velden, R. & Allen, J. (2011). The flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society: Required Competences and the Role of Higher Education. In J. Allen & R. van der Velden (Eds.), *The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society: New Challenges for Higher Education*, pp. 15-55. Dodrecht: Springer, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1353-6>
- Välilmaa, J. & Hoffman, D. (2008). Knowledge Society Discourse and Higher Education. *Higher Education* 56(3): 265-285, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-008-9123-7>
-
- Vesna Novak** is an Assistant Professor of Human Resource Management at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Slovenia. She is an author or co-author of various publications published in Slovenia and abroad. Her research interests are mainly focused on the field of staffing, labour market, and employment of vulnerable groups.
-
- Anja Žnidaršič** is an Associate Professor of Quantitative Methods at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor, Slovenia. Her main research interests are social network analysis, microenterprises, information-communication technology, students' performance in methodological courses, and technology adoption.