

THE YOUNG GRADUATES AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN ROMANIA. SOME RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH ¹

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Rezumat: Problemele tinerei generații (15-24 de ani), legate de piața forței de muncă au crescut in ultimii 10 ani. Chiar și în analizele statistice europene tinerii sunt prezentați ca fiind foarte expuși la sărăcie, excludere socială și discriminare pe piața forței de muncă. În România, unele cercetări sociologice au subliniat faptul că problemele sociale cu acestor tineri sunt diverse: de la devalorizarea diplomelor la intenția de a emigra. În acest articol vrem să prezentăm câteva rezultate ale unor cercetări sociale recente din România cu privire la cetățenii mai tineri care au dreptul de a lucra, angajabilitatea acestora și problemele legate de piața forței de muncă.

Cuvinte cheie: muncă, tânăra generație, piața muncii, angajabilitate, cercetare socială.

Abstract: The problems of the young generation (15-24 years) related with the labor market are increased in the last decade. Even in the European statistical analysis these young's are presented like very expose to the poverty, social exclusion and discrimination on the labor market. In Romania some social research emphasized that social problems with this young people are diverse: from diplomas devaluation to the migration intention. In this article we want to present some results of some latest social research in Romania about the younger citizens that have the right to work, their employability and related issues with labor market.

Key words: work, young generation, labor market, employability, social research.

Résumé: Les problèmes de la jeune génération (15-24 ans) en rapport avec le marché du travail sont augmentés dans la dernière décennie. Même dans l'analyse des statistiques européennes les jeunes sont présentés comme très exposé à la pauvreté, à l'exclusion sociale et à la discrimination dans le marché du travail. En Roumanie, des recherches sociales ont souligné que les problèmes sociaux avec cette jeunes sont variés: de la dévaluation des diplômes à l'intention d'émigrer. Dans cet article, nous voulons présenter quelques résultats de certaines recherches sociale les plus récentes en Roumanie sur les citoyens les plus jeunes qui ont le droit au travail, leur employabilité et les questions liées aux marché du travail.

¹ This article presents some results who was already written in a previous forms within two projects where the author was implicated: Project POSDRU/70/6.2/S/41911 "Equality at the employment and at the work place – information and awareness campaign for changes of the social attitudes and stereotypes at the employment and at the work place"; Project POSDRU/60/2.1/S/41750 "Graduates and the labor market". Both projects were co-financed from the European Social Found by Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

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Mots clé: travail, jeune génération, marche de travail, employabilité, recherche sociale.

General considerations

The problem of employability is for the last decades in the spotlight of the UE and in the principal European documents. If we refer only to the Lisbon strategy (2000) which prepared the European Union to be “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world”, we recall some goals/ forecasts set then:

- Economic growth of 3% per year by 2010 and creating over 20 million new jobs

- Achieving a 70% occupancy rate overall and 60% for women

- Increase the employment rate for people aged 55-64 to over 50%

We mention that in 2005 was returned on the agreed in 2000 and have resulted in four Priority Areas: research and innovation, investing in people and modernizing labor markets, unlocking business potential and energy / climate problem. As can be seen, the employability issue (with emphasis on flexi security, skills and lifelong learning), remained the focus of European forums. The return on these aims in 2010 adjusted the economic crisis of expectations although the upward trend has remained constant. It specifies, however, that employment growth has not led to reduction of those living in poverty. In this context there are new predictions for the coming years.

Returning to the issue of employability we want to remember that it means “a person's ability to be employed” in specific market conditions and having a set of knowledge and skills. Employability must, however, extended as required to designate and ability to maintain a job and find another if necessary (Hillage J., Pollard, E., 1998).

This definition fails to explain the complexity of this concept that can be seen in the dual economic and political perspective in a time of ‘democratization of uncertainty’ even if we talk about knowledge economy (P. Brown et al., 2003). It is inferred from this that the entry on the labor market is becoming more problematic since occupational change and adaptation is accelerated and universities or educational programs are sometimes slow. Not accidentally, universities may have the ability to raise the employed graduates and to assume this like a criterion of quality (even though a young man have the minimum criteria of employability but because the crisis is not yet employed or is employed in foreign areas of the basic training). Educational institutions must be regarded as related to national employment policies, related with the employers (and their expectations) and with mobility and fragility of the labor market, given the growing demand for super-skilled workforce in an unstable economical environment.

In this context the volume and diversity of knowledge and skills required in the labor market continues to be a subject of intense study and research. In much research

we talk about transversal skills, in others we talk about emotional intelligence (P. Promis, 2008) etc.

Recent sociological research brought other arguments: in recent years employability has been linked to flexi security, to objective conditions on the labor market and to the subjective perceptions of it (Berntson, E. et al, 2006), with the differences between the expectations of young employees and employers (Arne L. Kalleberg, 1994), with the continued growth of atypical employment (Hevenstone D., 2010) with the stock of human, cultural and social capital (V. Smith, 2010), with the responsibility of the employers towards the unemployed.

All these pronounced difficulties are reflected primarily on the segment aged 15-24 years with low rate of employment.

In an important work named *Combating poverty and social exclusion. A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010* for this segment of 15-24 years the employee rate is very different for different countries:

Table 1. Employment rate for the population 15-24 years in Europe

Country	Employment rate 15-24 years	Employment rate 15-24 years by sex	
		M	F
EU-27	37.6%	40.4%	34.6%
Island	71.7%	70.1%	73.5%
Holland	69.3%	69.8%	68.8%
Norway	57.3%	56.5%	58.1%
Great Britain	52.4%	53.8%	51%
...			
Bulgaria	26.3%	29.3%	23.1%
Romania	24.8%	29.1%	20.2%
Hungary	20%	23.2%	16.8%

In the Table 1 we can see some differences between countries and the position of Romania where we have very low rate.

From the European statistics we can see that at the European level the exposure to poverty of the young's is more than European average. In Romania one from three children and one of five young with age between 15 and 24 years are exposed to poverty.

Other important research at the European level was made by Gallup Org. in the field of Eurobarometer: *Employers' perception of graduate employability* (Nov. 2010), a great survey in 27 states and in economic firms with over 50 employees. The principal skills required by the employers: working in group (67%), specific skills for various activities (62%), communications skills (60%), computer working skills (60%),

action abilities in new situations (60%), previous experience (53%) etc. For the next 5-10 years very important will be the skills related with the computer, communication and information added to the specific skills of the base domain of specialization.

Romanian research

There are a lot of researches in this area. We speak for the first time about a research named *Romanian employee (public or private) and the labor market* (2008) realized by TNS SCOP at the demand of Romanian Government. The respondents indicated that the straighten of the labor market is good to be based by the employee conversion (66%), attraction of the international migrant local labor force (67%), attraction of the rural labor force (56%). In these research was confirmed the tendency of the long term employability (88%) such as general strategy for the Romanian employers.

Another Romanian research was DOCIS - „Development of the one operational system of the qualification in higher education from Romania (Beneficiary ACPART Romania)³. Some of the results are important to cite here:

- the average time to find a job for the advanced studies graduates is four months after the graduation
- for the first job very important are the transversal skills (knowing a strange language, TIC capabilities etc.). Just in medical sciences are very important the scientific skills.
- a half of the young employees want to change their first job
- it is a great probability for the social sciences graduates to work in a different specialization
- a majority of a young graduates work in private firms
- the employees are confidence in state universities
- the employees consider that is the role of the universities: to analyze the situation on the labor market; to give some solutions in case of specific dysfunctions; to improve the practical stages of the students

These conclusions and others emphasize the gap between scholar offer and the reality of the labor market. On the other hand is very important to make attention to the role of the transversal skills and the capacity of the university to manage this issue.

The employability for the younger vs. employers

³ Project POSDRU/2/1.2/S/2 “Development of the one operational system of the qualification in higher education from Romania”; financed from the European Social Found by Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

In 2010 and 2011 I was implicated in a project called “Equality in hiring and at the work place; information and awareness campaign in view of social attitude and stereotypes change at hiring and at the work place⁴. In 2011 we made a survey research on the representative sample from the employees (1512 persons from public or private firms with a supra-representation with 500 persons – young’s aged between 15-24 years).

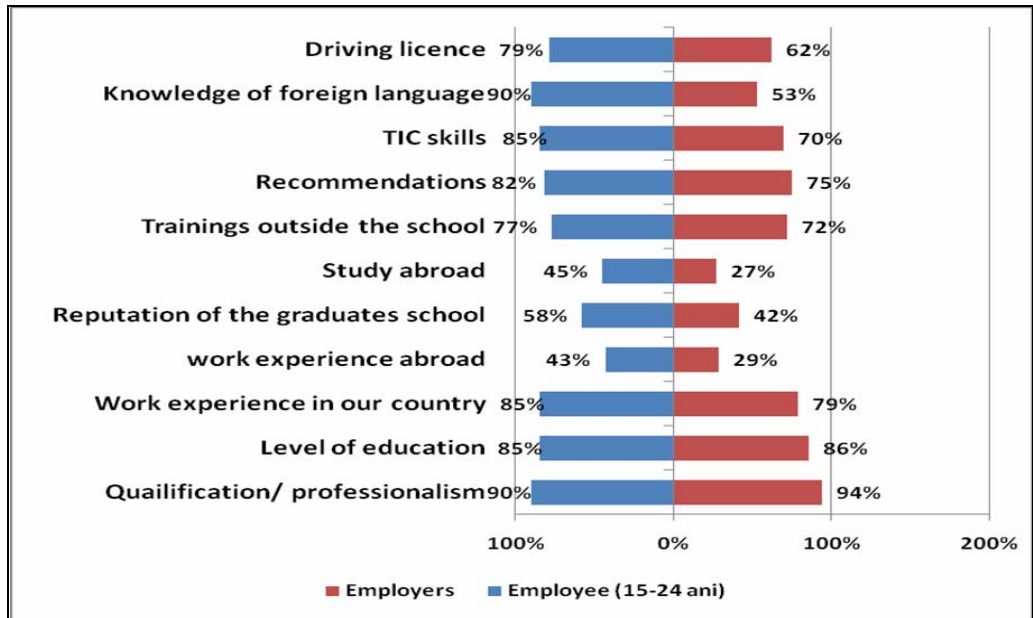
Total survey error at the 95% confidence interval was +/- 2, 6%; field research was made between 1 July and 7 august 2011. The young employees consider for example some sources of satisfaction at work:

Table 2. The degree of satisfaction about work place

	Content and very content (%)
1.Salary/ income	78%
2.Diverse activities at work	54%
3.Material condition at work (technical characteristic and equipment)	60%
4.Working hours	61%
5.Pack of suplimentary payoff (cars, asurance, paid holidays etc.)	32%
6.Relations with coleagues	72%
7.Relations with bosses	68%
8.Programs of qualification or improvement	51%

In majority the degree of satisfaction is great but we have observed the lowest percent for the packs of supplementary payoff or for alternative programs. Another important indicator is the degree of perceived concordance between study/school and work. In this case the percent for the entire population was 80%. For the young employee 26% percent declare that the job is under the vocational training, 54% declare that the job is in domain of services (normally for undergraduates) and just 25% have a superior position. Very important observation was the fact that between the employers and the young’s employees there are some differences presented in the graphic below:

⁴ The Project was co-financed from the European Social Found by Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013 – “Invest in People!” and had like partners: University of Bucharest, University B. Bolyai of Cluj, university Alexandru Ioan Cuza from Iași, The Group for Applied Economy, The Agency for communitarian Development “Together”, and National Block Union.



Graphic 1. What is important at the entry on the labor market?

We can observe some great differences between responses: 17% differences for necessity to have driver license, 37% differences for the knowledge of foreign language or 16% differences for the reputation of the school. We understand that the transversal skills are overbid by the younger employee even if they emphasize the role of education or qualification. Within this context other opinions of the employers can be very interesting and we have made another research on the 503 private managers (a national representative sample with total survey error +/- 4, 45% at the 95% confidence interval) between 1 July – 7 August, 2011. The opinions of these employers are very steady:

Table nr. 3. Opinions about the younger employability (aged 15-24 years)

	Total accord or rather accord
The schools don't prepare the younger for the market demands	86%
The younger are trained theoretically but not practically	85%

Today the younger are less motivated to work	73%
The younger ask for great salary from the beginning	71%
We can't make investments for the young's training if they want to leave the firm	71%
The younger don't accept jobs that are different from their study	65%
We do not employ younger without experience	59%

We can observe a great pessimism of the respondents related with the younger employee. In Romanian labor market is very important for the younger to have experience in the field work, an experience than they cannot have. In this case the employer's proposals are: qualifications at the work place, indenture or voluntary participations!

Employability of the higher education graduates

Another project initiated by UEFISCDI named „The graduates and the labor market”⁵ was concentrated with the study about higher education graduates from the generations 2005 and 2009.

The participation to this project was voluntarily and there was 55 universities (41 state universities and 14 private universities). These universities had 140 500 graduates (in 2009) and 69500 graduates (in 2005). The respondents were announced by mail to have access at one special on line questionnaire. Finally the sample was composed by 38800 respondents (27 050 from the 2009 promotion and 11 750 from the 2005 promotion). Some results are very interesting for our investigation about employability:

- the graduates from 2009 promotion find a job more difficult. They need an average of 6.6 months for hiring while the graduates from 2005 need an average of 3.9 months!

- over the 80% of graduates from the 2005 are employed while just 50% of graduates from 2009 are hiring. The great majority are hiring indefinitely.

- about 60% from graduates are hiring in the departments of origin.

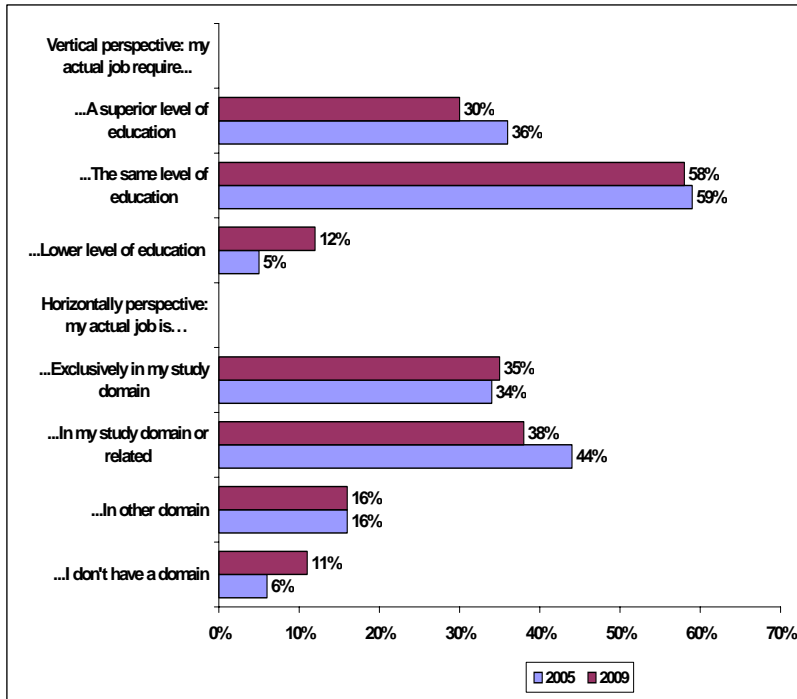
The analysis of the employability was due from two perspectives:

- horizontally perspective (refer to the extent that employee work in the specialization domain of study or related).

⁵ Implemented by CNFIS, UEFISCDI Romania. The partner of the project was INCHER-Kassel, University of Kassel, Germany.

- vertical perspective (refer to the perceptions of the graduates about sub/supra qualification at the work place).

These issues are represented in the graphic below:



Graphic 2. Evaluation of job from the horizontally and vertically perspectives

We can see that over 50% graduates from both generations have a job at the same level of education.

Conclusions

The research about employability must continue and is necessary that in schools/universities is functional an informational system, with continuity over the years for a good evaluation of the insertion on the labor market and for a feed back about employability. The aim is the flexibility of the relation between teachers and employers in actual condition of global economical crisis.

The youngest with 15-24 years have major difficulties starting with professional orientation and with the educational offer (more or less adapted to socio-economic situation on the labor market).

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