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“In the future, it will be intellectuals who will be the rich”.
W. Churchill

STUDENTS COMPETING ON LABOUR MARKET AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL CAREER – RESULTES OF RESEARCHES

Abstract

Many young people dream of entering the labour market in an effective way and getting a satisfying job that would enable them to develop. More and more people are becoming aware of the fact that in order to be successful in this sphere of life, they must plan their career as early as possible, receive proper education, gain qualifications and abilities that satisfy the requirements of modern economies.

The present article describes the profile of an employee that meets expectations held by employers on Polish labour market. Furthermore, it presents the results of the survey conducted among students in economic fields attending University of Szczecin in which they have expressed their expectations about career and actions taken while planning professional career. Such information can be a hint both for employers and employees but also for authorities (at different levels of economy) and professional education system since they have to adjust their actions to changing socio-economic conditions (not only on the labour market).

Key words: skills that employees are supposed to posses, students vs. professional career.

Introduction

Technological progress, development of communication and IT technologies, liberalization of trade and international exchange as well as more and more profound globalization processes affect not only changes in the structure of particular economies but also labour market itself. Changes on the labour market are reflected in among other things:

- changes in labour demand with reference to qualifications (Johnson 1997),
- individualization of relations between employee and firm,
- changing attitudes and expectations held by employees both present and potential ones, including students, about character, working conditions and job (which is expressed, among other things, in proceeding emancipation processes),
- growing importance of abilities and human capital that brings about necessity for continuing education entered to improve educational status, broaden knowledge and adjust to requirements set out by employers (Maniak 2007, 60-61).

As far as the economy is concerned, the aforementioned phenomena bring about necessity for flexibility understood as ability to adjust to changing socio-economic conditions (or even ability to create new sphere of acting). Thus, both employers and employees should be flexible on the labour market.

Students occupy a special role among potential employees. They form a unique social group that is represented by young people who very often enter labour market and seek employment after graduation for the first time. As far as Polish labour market – characterized by considerable instability – is concerned, young people (the majority of whom have not acquired any professional experience) face obstacles to employment. At the same time, students are a considerable resource of potential and very desirable labour force in the economy.

In the age of globalization and development of knowledge-based economy, there is a growing demand for qualified personnel with higher education who are characterized by values satisfying the needs identified by modern economies. Such a state of affairs stems from higher rate of technological progress based mainly on the computerization of information transfer and production technologies. Demand for a number of traditional professions has been reduced or is not observed at all. Fast progress and diffusion of new technological solutions (together with new forms of labour organization) lead to a considerable decline in demand for poorly or non-qualified personnel (Kryńska 2004, 237). Such phenomena occur in Poland as well.

Students (and then graduates of higher education institutions), though have not gained professional experience yet, are potential employees who constitute a “nervous system” of a firm. As a rule, they acquire unique, strong and universal qualifications during studies, which improves their chances of gaining employment.

Employers looking for applicants with certain qualifications should, for at least two reasons, get to know expectations held by students about professional career. First of all, to get to know what students pay attention to while seeking employment, thanks to which labour demand could be better adjusted to labour supply. Secondly, to provide potential employees with latest information concerning the requirements that applicants should meet as well as working conditions offered. Such information is also a hint for authorities (at different levels of economy) and professional education system about a kind of employees sought by employers and implies that there is a need for a proper change in education system so that employees could adjust to the requirements of contemporary labour market in a better way.

Therefore, the present article is aimed at presenting:

1. the profile of a desirable employee on contemporary labour market in a synthetic way;
2. the results of the questionnaire survey on expectations held by students in economic fields attending University of Szczecin about professional career and comparing them with results of survey conducted in particular voivodships as well as all-Poland results, in order to determine to what extent expectations held by employers correspond to expectations held by students.

Profile of employee meeting current requirements of labour market

It is people who meet expectations held by employers who have the greatest chances of finding employment on contemporary labour market. The following three main groups of competence (skills, qualifications) demanded of employees are usually distinguished (Andrycz 1996):

- technical (ability to use popular and new technologies);
- business (specialist and general knowledge, abilities connected with particular trades, ability to solve problems and take decisions);

- interpersonal (teamwork, communicativeness, motivation, ability to adapt) connected with certain characteristics and predisposition.

The greater and the more rare abilities the students on a particular market will possess, the greater their chances of finding employment. All-Poland survey (on contemporary labour market in the scope of predisposition that students have as far as professional career is concerned and expectations held by employers about this group of applicants) shows that other than professional (interpersonal) skills play a major role¹ (Błaszczak 2008, B12). Other than professional skills occupy the second and third positions (after knowledge of foreign languages that was placed first and was chosen by 98.5% of respondents), which indicates that employers pay attention to communication skills (75%) and ability to work in a team (66%). Requirements connected with knowledge acquired as a result of graduating in a particular field of study (64%) occupied the fourth position. According to employers, it is this knowledge that is one of competence Polish graduates lack to the greatest extent (13% of HR managers claimed so). Over two fifths of employees paid attention to grades that the students attained during studies. Employers believe that being a top student and receiving good grades do not always go hand in hand with knowledge and skills they require. Hence, this requirement occupied the lowest position in the ranking. Similar conclusions had been presented in the report entitled “Employment for the Young” (Report published by AIG and “Gazeta Wyborcza” in 2002) in which it had been stated that describing an ideal applicant, employers usually referred to particular qualifications that he/she should have to get a job. At the same time, they mentioned certain universal characteristics that improve the attractiveness of applicants. Apart from experience and practical knowledge necessary in a particular profession, the following traits have been mentioned:

- the fact that applicant is appropriate for a job; in this case a considerable emphasis has been put on predisposition for a profession or a certain job, i.e. personality, temperament, spontaneity, innovativeness, etc.;
- communicativeness understood as ability to work in a group or readiness to get in touch with clients;
- activity and initiative that reflect independence and resourcefulness of applicant;
- commitment to work carried out;
- flexibility – ability to adjust to various working conditions and readiness to act beyond responsibilities and qualifications;
- availability, which often entails that a person agrees to work during atypical working hours and/or non-standard form of employment.

As far as other than professional skills are concerned, continuing education, improving professional qualifications and gaining new skills are of major importance taken the “usefulness” of students (applicants in general) for a job. Thanks to the aforementioned actions, they are ready to change profession if the demand is subject to change. Graduating in the field of study, even the one that perfectly matches the present (then) situation on labour market, does not guarantee finding employment in the future. Dynamic changes taking place in environment and on labour market may make young people not only change a job several times but also change profession during the period of professional activity (just as it is observed in the developed countries). Meanwhile according to the aforementioned report from the survey entitled “Start a Career”, 13.4% of employers claim that students lack the ability to acquire new skills. Similar conclusions, though referring to adult population, can be drawn while comparing e.g. indicator showing the total of adult population in continuing education

¹ The survey was conducted jointly by Polish Association of Personnel Management and advisory company Accenture as a part of the 2nd edition of all-Poland campaign entitled “Start a Career”. Opinions held by managers and HR specialists employed in Polish firms were collected from December 2007 to March 2008.

and education in Poland and the EU during the period 2000-2006 (Table 1).

Table 1. Share of adults in continuing education and education during the period 2000-2006.

Year	Poland	EU (15)	EU (25)
2000	:	8.0	7.5
2001	4.3	8.0	7.5
2002	4.2	8.1	7.6
2003	4.4	6.5	9.8
2004	5.0	7.3	10.7
2005	4.9	8.1	11.2
2006	4.7	8.2	11.1
Poland's goal – the year 2013 (a)	10.0	12.5 (b)	12.5

(a) according to PO KL

(b) according to Lisbon Strategy until the year 2010

Source: own elaboration based on (Operation Programme Human Capital. National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw 2007 and <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/structuralindicators>)

The indicator showing the share of adults in continuing education in Poland is nearly two times lower than EU average. Furthermore, it remained at a fixed level during last seven years. Adult Poles are less eager to enter education than their peers from other EU Member States. Such unwillingness may be a barrier to finding employment in trades related to new technologies and may make it difficult to retrain in the future. The fact that indicator under consideration is lower than in other EU countries shows, among other things, how much effort should be made to propagate continuing education in order to bridge educational gap between Poland and other Member States and achieve the level anticipated.

In such a situation, it becomes necessary to put an emphasis on continuing education, retraining and professional development. Adjusting the process of education to real needs and requirements of labour market are the most essential issues. If continuing education is supposed to bring about real effects, effective education system must be provided. Continuing education should be correlated with traditional forms of education in such a way so that one could freely go from one form of education to another at all levels. As far as higher education is concerned, enabling students to go from one to another field of study at particular levels (BA studies, MA studies, doctoral studies) and hence change the profile of educational status was achieved thanks to, among other things, adjusting the organization of studies in Polish higher education institutions to requirements of EU Bologna process.

In the case of adults in continuing education (including students), employer is an essential partner who participate in the organization of training that improve the quality of labour resources. Actions that employers (e.g. who need personnel with higher technical education) take in the process of continuing education to provide themselves with certain specialists are e.g. student scholarship programmes or paying the tuition fees charged to students in fields wanted from the perspective of needs identified by firms. Expenditure borne by employers on continuing education constitutes c.a. 0.8% of labour costs in Poland (Nowak-Lewandowska 2007, 144-145). As a part of National Employment Plan, emphasis is put on improving the competitiveness of firms through training, postgraduate studies, scholarships/placements, consultancy connected with training addressed to employers and

employees. Possibility of creating a company training fund within a firm (which has been defined by Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions Act dated April 20, 2004) is an incentive to increase the value of personnel via various forms of continuing education. As provided for by the aforementioned Act, employer may collect financial means for personnel training and provide employees (present and potential ones) with professional development opportunities, which is of profound importance while, among other things, recruiting new employees (which is going to be discussed in another section of the present article). Besides, by investing in continuing education, employers exert a positive influence on the extent to which employees (students as well) involve in acquiring new skills, due to which not only they but also the entire economy achieve certain results.

Therefore, persons who have the greatest chances of being successful on contemporary labour market are those who have received higher education, are highly qualified, have gained professional experience, are flexible, creative, well motivated and willing to acquire new skills all the time.

Having learnt what skills and abilities employers require of their employees (and hence students as well), it is worth analyzing to what extent these requirements correspond to expectations held by students about professional career. In order to do so, questionnaire survey has been conducted. The results of the survey are going to be presented in the subsequent section of the article.

The survey was carried out in November 2007 (with the aid of scientific circles and student's self-government) in the form of direct questionnaires that were filled in by 300 students in full-time studies attending the Faculty of Economics and Management at the University of Szczecin. The selection of the sample had a layer character depending on the year and field of study (students in particular years constituted 20% of the group under examination whereas the share of students in particular fields of study, i.e. Management, Economics, Finance and Accounting, and Informatics and Econometrics represented 25% each).

Expectations held by students about professional career in the light of the questionnaire survey

Many young people dream of entering the labour market in an effective way and getting a satisfying job that would enable them to develop. More and more people are becoming aware that in order to be successful in this sphere of life, they must plan their career as early as possible.

As far as the survey conducted among students attending economic fields at University of Szczecin is concerned, it follows that the majority of them regard the choice of field of study as an important stage in planning professional career and fulfilling the professional goals in the future. The students participating in the survey stated that the following factors had a major influence on the choice of field of study they had made:

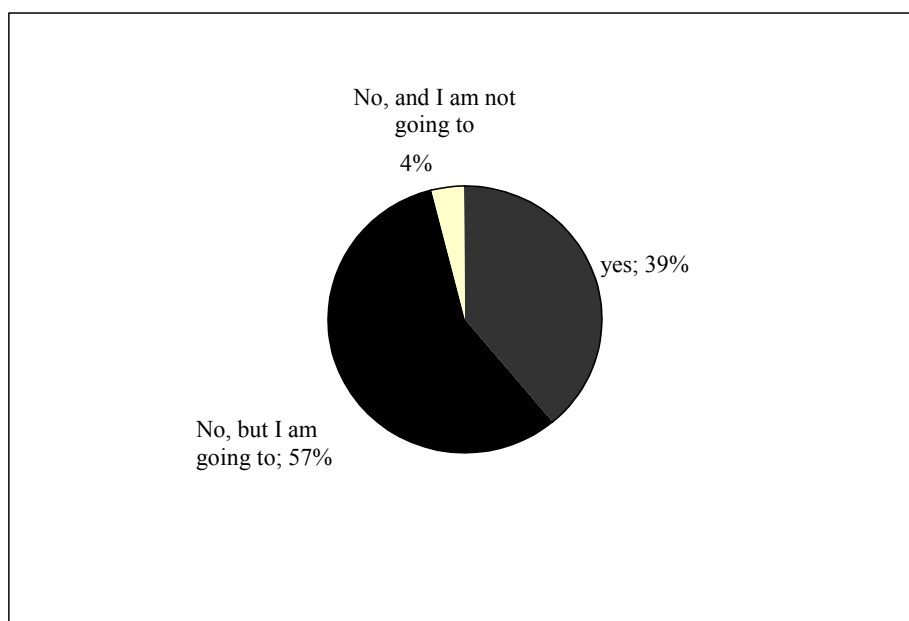
- ease of finding employment after graduation – 85% of students consider this factor as very important,
- possibility of finding interesting job that would be in accordance with one's interests – 75% of respondents,
- possibility of having high earnings – 70% of answers,
- possibility of having a professional career understood as working one's way up the career ladder – 69% of respondents,
- possibility of achieving high social status – 41% of respondents.

A large percentage of positive answers to the question about the importance that the aforementioned factors had for students while they were choosing a field of study indicated

that young people first of all, noticed relationship between receiving higher education and possibilities of satisfying one's needs in the future (both fundamental as well as of higher order) and secondly, regarded economic fields of study as facilitating the fulfillment of professional goals.

In the course of studies, 39% of students (60% of whom were fourth and fifth years students) took and 57% was going to take actions (first and second year students in particular) that would make it easier to gain professional experience so that they could fulfill professional goals the way they had planned (Chart 1). On-the-job training (90% of answers) and placement with firms as well as participation in courses and training that provide with additional skills and qualifications (74% and 74% of answers respectively) were the most often chosen variants. In order to develop their professional potential, 36% of students are going to enter postgraduate studies while 16% - MBA studies. Every fourth respondent have gained or is going to gain additional experience useful in professional career by working as a volunteer (Table 2).

Chart 1. Students taking actions connected with planning the professional career in %



Source: results of the survey.

Table 2. Actions that have been or will be taken by students because of professional career they have planned (in % of respondents altogether).

Item number	Actions	Have been taken	Will be taken
1.	On-the-job training	29.7	60.7
2.	Placements with firms	9.3	64.7
3.	Working as a volunteer	11.7	13.7
4.	Participation in courses/training providing with additional skills and qualifications	31.7	42.3
5.	Postgraduate studies	0.3	35.7
6.	MBA studies	0.0	16.3

Source: results of the survey.

The results presented indicate that the vast majority of respondents are aware they must have professional experience and plan their career, and hence undergo not only free professional training but even work as volunteers or incur additional expenditure on courses/training improving their skills. Only a small percentage of students (4%) had not taken and was not going to take any actions connected with career planning. This indicator is over three times lower than all-Poland indicator (14% of students have not planned their career) that has been presented in the aforementioned report from the 2nd all-Poland social campaign entitled "Start a Career" (Report: Expectations... 2008)², which may indicate that people studying economic fields have a bit more pragmatic attitude toward professional career. This state of affairs may stem from the fact that situation on voivodship labour market is difficult. Zachodniopomorskie voivodship has been occupying the second position in rankings showing unemployment in Poland for many years, which most students are aware of and which makes them make more effort to find employment and hence to plan their career and gain professional experience as soon as during studies. Therefore, it can be stated that students are trying to adjust to requirements imposed by employers.

Generally speaking, professional career is a professional development that a particular individual is going to undergo during his/her life. Nevertheless, understanding of this notion is burdened with subjectivism as people may want to achieve different professional goals and hold different positions. Thus, everybody should decide what is best for him/her depending on his/her interests, abilities, personality, system of values or condition (Podolska-Filipowicz 2007). Students participating in the survey equate career with satisfaction with a job (48% of answers) and high earnings (47%). 31% equate it with working as an outstanding specialist in one's field. On average, every fifth student understand professional career as managing one's own firm or holding managerial position. The percentage of students who would like to establish their own firms is very similar to voivodship indicator (18.66%) presented in the report from questionnaire survey conducted among unemployed persons who have graduated from higher education institutions in Zachodniopomorskie voivodship from June 1, 2004 to April 30, 2005. The survey referred to entrepreneurship in this socio-occupational group (Report: Labour Market... 2005).

For every sixth or seventh respondent career means prestige of a job, possibility of working one's way up the career ladder, job in accordance with one's predisposition and personality and providing one with a sense of security and stability, as well as job offering the possibility of cultivating one's interests. According to students, such aspects as necessity to improve one's skills and develop, possibility of deciding about what to do, job giving a sense of being needed or bringing benefits to other people, or job providing social recognition were equated with professional career to the smallest extent (each chosen by several per cent of students, Table 3).

² Students from Warszawa, Kraków, Wrocław, Łódź, Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot participated in All-Poland survey.

Table 3. Comparison between results of local and all-Poland surveys on the way students understand professional career (in % of answers altogether)

Item number	Specification	Results of the survey conducted in Faculty of Economics and Management (WNEiZ) at University of Szczecin*	Results of all-Poland survey (average) **
1.	satisfaction with a job	48.3	63.0
2.	high earnings	47.3	37.5
3.	working as an outstanding specialist in one's field	30.7	-
4.	managing one's own firm	23.0	28.0
5.	holding a managerial position	21.0	30.0
6.	possibility of professional development	20.7	over 75.0
7.	prestige of a job	17.0	-
8.	possibility of working one's way up the career ladder	17.0	37.5
9.	job in accordance with my predisposition and personality	16.0	-
10.	job providing one with a sense of security and stability	14.3	37.5
11.	possibility of cultivating one's interests	14.0	-
12.	job requiring the development of one's skills	9.3	13.4
13.	possibility of deciding what to do	6.0	-
14.	job making one feel needed	6.0	-
15.	social recognition	5.3	-
16.	work bringing benefits to other people	2.0	-

* respondents could choose max 3 answers.

** results were given in the form of ranges of percentage of answers and hence weighted average was calculated to provide a relative comparability.

Source: results of own survey and (Report: Expectations... 2008)

Having compared the results of the survey in which students attending WNEiZ participated with the results of all-Poland survey, it can be noticed that in the majority of cases, all-Poland indicators are higher than indicators from the survey conducted. This fact indicates that persons studying in WNEiZ have low expectations about professional career, which may result from a limited number of job offers (also addressed to people with higher education) in a region (compared to other regions of a country developing more dynamically), specificity of a local labour market, smaller competitiveness of voivodship labour market, students' awareness of real working conditions and hence lack of self-confidence reflected in the fact they regard themselves a slightly valuable employees, which leads to, among other things, lower expectations about a job. In such a situation, employers from Zachodniopomorskie voivodship find it easy (theoretically) to recruit students and graduates

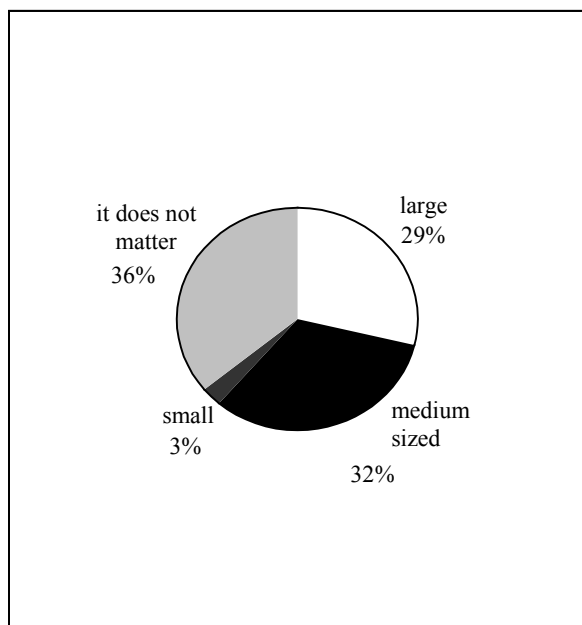
(i.e. highly qualified personnel). On the other hand, the level of some indicators (marked with the following numbers: 5,6,8,11,12,13) may indicate that students are not so flexible, go-getting, creative or willing to develop their skills as employers would like them to be (this fact has been discussed while describing a desirable profile of employee on contemporary labour market).

One can follow different career paths depending on the kind of work carried out and also kind of firm in which he/she works. The majority of students participating in the survey did not pay much attention to the form of ownership, capital origin or the size of a firm in which they would like to find employment (Chart 2 a, b, c). The remaining students declared they would like to work in a private firm (43%), medium-sized firm (32%) and a firm with rather Polish capital (26%).

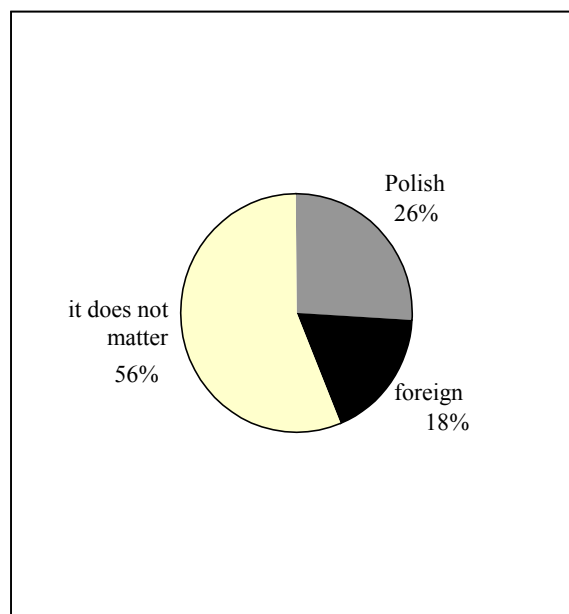
In the case of voivodship survey, answers given by respondents with reference to the aforementioned criteria were a bit different (Report: Market... 2005), namely taking the form of ownership into account, 42% of students declared the willingness to work in public institution (most often in public administration), 26% in higher education institutions, research institutes and schools, and only the remaining 38% wanted to find employment in a private firm. Therefore, it may be stated that graduates preferred a job that would provide them with a sense of relative security (job in a state-owned institutions is considered as such) and regular earnings (despite the fact that these earnings are not very high in their opinion) than a job that would not guarantee continuity of employment and earnings. Such answers could have resulted from a situation on voivodship labour market and difficulties in finding a job (sometimes any job).

Certain differences were also observed in preferences as to the size of a firm in which graduates would like to gain employment in the year 2005. And so, 33% of respondents wanted to work in a large firm, 35% in medium-sized and 32% in small one. It can be noticed that the distribution of answers was proportional. Taken students attending WNEiZ into consideration, only 3% of respondents declared willingness to work in small firm whereas 36% claimed that the size of a firm did not matter. This fact indicates they are sure they are well prepared and can cope with working "anywhere".

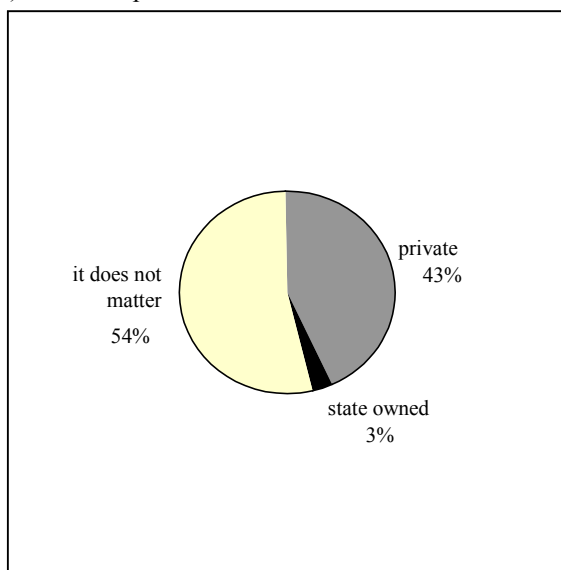
Chart. 2. Students' preferences as to the kind of firm as a place of employment in % of answers altogether



a) Students' preferences as to the size of firm



b) Students' preferences as to the origin of firm's capital.



c) Students' preferences as to the form of ownership.

Source: results of the survey.

Having compared voivodship and faculty surveys, it can be stated that persons studying economic fields at University of Szczecin display greater courage and find it easier to adjust to conditions on labour market (where, just as in Poland, small and medium-sized firms and private firms are prevailing among employers), thanks to which they are more flexible (which is a very desirable characteristics in the opinion of employers).

Survey to which WNEiZ students responded has also shown that it is trade in which a firm functions that is more important to students seeking employment than the aforementioned criteria. Trade is of no importance only to 19% of respondents. The highest number of persons would like to work in:

- financial services – 38% answers,

- trade – 21.3%,
- IT – 11.7%,
- tourism/hotel industry/catering – 8.3%,
- transport/logistics – 7.3% of answers.

Answers given were very similar to the structure of job offers on voivodship market, which implied that students were realists and paid close attention to potential employment.

At the same time, students attending economic fields are critical about Zachodniopomorski labour market. Although 31% of respondents could not express their opinion about the matter, only every fourth respondent believes that persons in different professions and with different qualifications can find employment on local market. 40% of students claim that only specialists needed on the market can gain employment while according to nearly 5%, it is impossible to find a job. Such a situation makes students seek employment outside their place of residence. Nearly 45% of respondents declared they would leave Szczecin. In this group, 23% of students would go to another Polish city, c.a. 20% would go to one of EU Member States whereas almost 2% would leave the EU. The percentage of respondents who would like to go abroad is two times higher than in all-Poland survey (Report: Expectations... 2008), which indicates that people living in a region under discussion face considerable difficulties in finding a job.

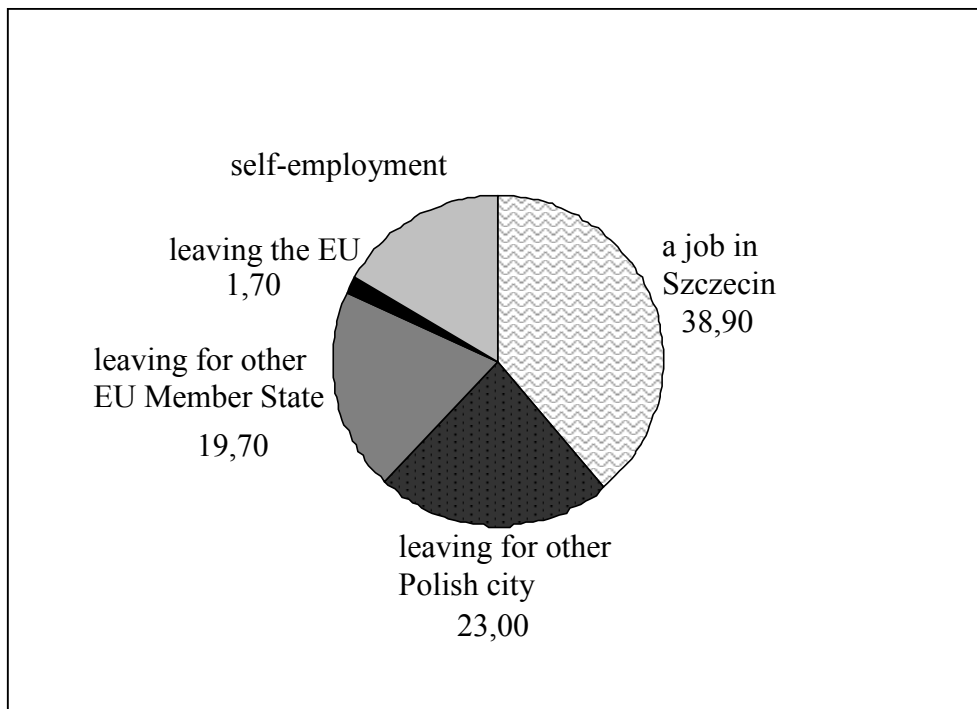
About 39% of respondents are going to look for a job in Szczecin after graduation. Only every sixth graduate declared he/she would “take the matter into his/her own hands” and set up his/her own firm (Chart 3). This indicator is nearly two times lower in comparison with the results of voivodship survey in which almost 36% of respondents stated they would establish their own companies (Report: Labour Market... 2005), which implied that students were not willing to set up their own firms although they had been theoretically prepared to do so during studies. To stand up for the students, it can be stated that thanks to knowledge they have acquired they are aware of difficulties in managing a company and are more realistic about it than persons graduating in non-economic fields. This also indicates that actions taken by local authorities to make economy more dynamic and create better living and working conditions in a region are not sufficient to prevent educated people from job migration. Such a migration drains highly qualified personnel, which is harmful to a region and society.

Work is an important element of one’s life. Some people may even consider it the most important and giving a meaning to their lives. Yet, most people of working age regard it a necessity thanks to which they can raise as large financial means as possible and spend it on consumption (Jastrzębska-Smolaga 2000, 35-38)³. Furthermore, professional career enables one to satisfy many needs important to him/her such as self-realization, recognition, belonging to a group, competition, creation or development. Therefore, an ordinary human being devotes not only a considerable part of his/her time but also energy to professional life and has certain expectations about this sphere of his/her activity. Students in economic fields responding to the survey consider it the most important to work in a firm that complies with labour legislation, cares of employees and provides them with possibility of professional development and high earnings (over 80% of respondents stated that the aforementioned factors played a major role; Table 4). Other aspects important to respondents in their future career are as follows: promotion opportunities, sense of security and stability as well as atmosphere at work understood as interpersonal relations (over 70% of answers). On average, every second student considers a proper level of motivation, possibility of participating in

³ People working and earning a living represent 80% of professionally active people, which indicates that they are motivated by raising the finance for consumption. Another 8-11% are people who regard work as the most fundamental need (highly specialized and most talented employees). 6-7% are unable to work or do not want to work.

courses and training, as well as independence of employee in decision-making. Respondents attach weight to such factors as extra material bonuses for employees (company cars, laptops, phones, etc.), flexible working hours or social activity of a firm.

Chart 3. Answers given by students as to seeking employment in % of answers altogether.



Source: results of the survey.

Table 4. Factors playing a crucial role in professional career according to respondents in % of answers altogether

Item number	Specification	% of answers
1.	Complying with labour legislation	83.0
2.	Possibility of professional development	82.3
3.	Earnings	81.7
4.	Care of employees	80.3
5.	Promotion opportunities	77.3
6.	Sense of security and stability of employment	75.7
7.	Relations among employees/atmosphere at work	70.3
8.	Proper level of motivation	60.3
9.	Possibility of participating in training/courses	54.7
10.	Independence of employee in decision-making	47.0
11.	Extra material bonuses for employees (company cars, phones, laptops, etc.)	40.0
12.	Flexible working hours	34.3
13.	Social activity of a firm	23.7

Source: results of the survey.

Answers provided by respondents are quite similar to results received in all-Poland survey conducted in firms from List of 500 prepared by "Rzeczpospolita" (Błaszczak 2008, B 12). Factors to which applicants pay attention have been given in the following order:

- earnings offered – this factor was considered the most important by 82% of respondents,
- working conditions – 64%,
- possibility of professional development – 60%,
- location of a firm – 42%,
- opinion about a firm as an employer – 36%,
- remuneration bonuses – 35%,
- others – 5% of answers.

Hence, it may be stated that despite their specific character, WNEiZ students (University of Szczecin) have certain expectations about employment that are similar to expectations held by other groups of applicants. Indirectly, this similarity emphasizes the fact that they expect employers to comply with labour legislation, i.e. fair treatment of persons applying for a job (without any discrimination).

Conclusion

Generally speaking, situation of students on labour market is not so easy as it appears. Qualification and skills acquired in the course of studies are not always enough to enter labour market easily. Hence, students must be persevering and plan their professional career. According to specialists, discussions about future career and planning it as soon as during studies help to aspire to professional goals established and thus to achieve success on labour market. The majority of students in economic fields are aware of this fact and take certain actions to develop their professional potential. On the basis of the results of the survey, the following characteristics can be ascribed to these students: need for achieving success, plans for the presence and future, belief in one's own abilities, relatively high (as far as local labour market is concerned) expectations about professional career, realism in assessing a situation on labour market and ability to make concessions during the process of finding the first job. However, taken abilities and skills required by employers into account, it can be observed that students display slighter tendency toward continuing education and developing their skills, are sometimes not so self-confident, not so independent and courageous in taking up jobs requiring greater creativity (but connected with slighter sense of security) than expected by employers.

It should be borne in mind that certain divergences between expectations held by students and expectations held by employers are closely connected with, among other things, situation on voivodship labour market that is not the easiest, flaws in professional and higher education, sometimes even with attitudes taken by students that result from brining up or social standing. Taken such a complexity as well as situation occurring on contemporary labour market and economy into account, it seems necessary to make students aware of the fact that receiving higher education is only the beginning of changes they are going to face. In order to adjust to these changes and requirements imposed by employers, students must be constantly ready to enter continuing education (depending on needs), which will facilitate finding employment. In the 21st century, every employee should strive after being ready to change job many times, and not only the fact if they are employed or not.

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