

## EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR APPROACHES TO FIND A JOB

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### **Abstract:**

Recruitment is one of the most important business functions, and it is part of Human Resource Management. From the recruitment field, we have focused on young job seekers who just entered the labour market, where they have to point out their competencies to convince potential employers. We highlighted the problem of working experience and the lack of it and described the competencies, knowledge and skills of young job seekers. The biggest obstacle they are facing is the lack of work experiences, lack of practical knowledge and work experiences they have from other fields but are unable to highlight them. However, their competitive advantages are fresh knowledge, usage of technology, foreign languages and the other skills. Based on different authors' opinions we described several methods on how young people seek for the employment and their approaches. Through the research, we wanted to verify authors' claims, which we mentioned in the theoretical part especially about the methods of the job search. Also, we wanted to know which competencies young job seekers mostly point out and which are their biggest motivators.

*Keywords: young people, employment, job search, competences, motives for employment.*

## 1. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Young people are in transition from childhood to adulthood for which period is typical to experiment their social world. We can say that this is a very sensitive period, place of development of social roles and statuses of the meanings of life, valuable evaluations of actions and achievements. Although this is a period full of fantasies, young people outline the image of their adulthood (Ule, 2008, p. 49). Youth is a group that create their world between childhood and adulthood, and it consists of young people from 14 to 30 years, which is further on divided by periods (Ule, 2008, p. 131).

We can divide youth into three periods (Ule, 2008, p. 126):

- classic youth, where young people have the status of high school and apprentice (14-18 years),
- extended youth, where they are in a period of higher education (19-24 years) and
- pre-adult period, which is a period of transition to financial and social independence: employment, career and own family (25-29 years).

From employer's perspective, youth is important due to freshly gained knowledge, characteristics that are the result of socialisation or personal traits and lastly working experiences, which are more of a weakness than strength (Trbanc & Verša, 2002, p. 339-340). From young people, employers expect flexibility, innovativeness, chances and sensitivity. Younger people are not demanding when it comes to very first employment since they are willing to accept jobs that are not connected to their education, with unregulated conditions and environment (Trbanc & Verša, 2002, p. 342-343).

When it comes to employment of young people, their lack of working experience represents a big problem. We are aware that work experiences add additional value to knowledge as with the employment a person gains certain characteristics such as continuity, affiliation and qualification for specific tasks. We know that good percentage of young people is working as a student through Student services office or as part of the internship program during the education. The problem occurs when this work is not from their profession, or they are unable to present it to the employer (Trbanc & Verša, 2002, p. 341).

Work experiences obtained during the education result in shorter period needed to find a job. As already mentioned, these experiences are not connected with their education and consequently do not add any value. Time of education is perceived as security from unemployment. It is important to note that majority of students do not have any working experiences but to overcome the problem, they can take advantage of internships and in this way gain some competencies, working experiences, working habits and additional knowledge (Podmernik, 2013, p. 113-114).

When a company recruits candidates without any work experience, it cannot conclude much based on the working history. In this case, the company should give more importance to internships and candidates that were working there as interns and students. From the data about these candidates, the company can find out about their innovativeness, motivation, hard work, persistence and ambition (Kragelj, 1998, p. 49).

Employers perceive young people as working force that is lacking work experience and qualification especially since they do not have any prior employments that would show their characteristics and working habits. Consequently, it is risky to give employment to a younger candidate, and for that reasons, companies use temporary and flexible types of employment (Trbanc & Verša, 2002, p. 341).

## 2. ENTRY OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE LABOUR MARKET AND THEIR COMPETENCES

»Youth labour market« stands for a market of young people, and therefore we can talk about the special segment of the workforce. Regarding selection in the recruitment process, we firstly encounter the criteria of education and work experiences and only after the other characteristics that are assessed by employers. All over again we encounter the problem of young people who are lacking working experience. Youth labour market is very flexible. However, it has bigger issues with recruitment than labour market of older candidates. Frequently we see that the transition from education to employment is a long, difficult and groundbreaking process. Young people take a lot temporary and part-time jobs. As young people do not have work experiences, they should involve into various working and training programs: youth workshops, public works and the creation of new work positions (Trbanc, 1992, p. 125-

143).

When entering the labour market, young people face with the system of employment, uncertainty, higher risks and lower material security. If young people want to remain in the labour market, they have to constantly prove themselves as original and creative candidates for the employment. Otherwise, they fall out of the competitive fight for creative jobs and achieving a good standard of living (Ule, 2000, p. 31).

Youth labour market is the fastest and the most exposed to fluctuations, where the pressures regarding flexibility and adaptability are the strongest. Many times young people are the least protected part of the workforce (Črnjak Meglič, 2005, p. 163). They have to accept flexibility of employment (work for fixed and part-time work, student work, honorary and casual work), which affects the transition from employment and unemployment (Forum 21, 2009).

On the position of young people in the labour market influence several factors, which depends on demand and supply of the workforce. The transition from studying to working has changed over time. Also, there is an increase of uncertainty of employment, which results in prolonging and accepting other roles during the transition to adulthood (Svetlik, Glazer, Kajzer & Trbanc, 2002, p. 243).

The availability of young working force on the labour market primarily depends on the educational system. Regarding this, we can ask the following questions (Črnjak Meglič, 2005, p. 167-168):

- How long young people remain in the regular educational system?
- At what age they finish with studies and enter the labour market?
- How modern are the contents and methods of learning?
- How much are they qualified for work?
- Do young people perform any types of work during education?
- Do they network with potential employers during education?

*Competencies include the ability to organise and use the knowledge someone gained to win advantage in concrete and demanding circumstances. It consists of three components of intangible capital: knowledge, organisation and use of innovations. It does not refer only to the human capital, but also on social and cultural capital (Svetlik & Lorenčič, 2002, p. 266).*

Competencies include knowledge, skills, abilities, personal and behavioural traits, beliefs, values and self-esteem. All this is a guarantee for success in the company. Hence it is important to establish a system of competences. With the system of competencies, the company links all the elements of human resource functions such as the selection, development, training, rewarding, measurement and management of performance. Competencies are connected with the strategy, mission, vision and values of the organisation. They are also important for knowledge and skills development of employees in the organisation. Moreover, they help to format clearer leadership priorities and to create the appropriate development of the human resources in the organisation. That include quick responsiveness to technological development, rewarding criteria and selection criteria of candidates (Ivanuša-Bezjak, 2006, p. 143-144)

Employers are looking for younger personnel due to the freshest professional knowledge and because they need someone who will represent the younger generation in the company since young are more flexible, ready for new challenges and they have different knowledge and skills the companies need. We have to emphasise that especially for young personnel the major of completed studies is a crucial importance as well as participation in various activities during education. Among all the competencies the most wanted are generic and transferable. That gives the young possibility to quick development of new skills and become efficient at work. Employers give more and more importance to social competencies that enable collaboration, leadership, mediation and responsibility. They also looking for organisational and presentation skills, independence, ability to use internet and foreign language knowledge. Employers are searching for values like reliability, loyalty, responsibility, honesty, flexibility, commitment, hard work, professionalism, positive orientation towards work and willingness to learn (Študent, 2016).

### 3. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF YOUNG JOBSEEKERS

*Knowledge is the ability that enables a person to solve a specific problem. Regardless where and how this knowledge person gain, it helps a person to resolve a problem with known solutions (Ivanuša-Bezjak, 2006, p. 52).*

Young people with higher education have a competitive advantage in the labour market as they possess more complex and up to date knowledge. On the other hand, poorly educated people have difficulties with finding a job. Thus they perform random jobs with low salaries and have periods of unemployment in between jobs (Pečar, 2002, p. 21).

The benefits of younger people are computer literacy. Their internet and communicational skills, are good and they are also good in team and project work, and they know foreign languages. All these competencies they gain throughout education and socialisation. We have to highlight that employers more and more appreciate knowledge especially due to the importance of research and development. However, knowledge obtained during education has to be constantly enhanced, and students have to be aware of that (Pečar, 2002, p. 21).

Employment is of crucial importance for young people as it brings social and financial independence. Moreover, it represents the transition from childhood to adulthood. We need to be aware that they are a sensitive group in the labour market. As already mentioned, knowledge and education are essential for employment. However, the number of young unemployed people in Slovenia keeps increasing. Hence, higher education nowadays does not ensure employment, whereas previous working experiences have more impact on potential employers (Kralj, Mihajlovič, Tepeh & Orešnik, 2014, p. 259).

### 4. APPROACHES FOR JOB SEARCHING

Among job seekers are many young people who recently finished their education. They are a well educated working force, but they have a lack of working experiences. It is beneficial to know multiple approaches for getting a job (Smonkar, 1994, p. 87). Young people mostly use the following approaches:

- Research - firstly they call their acquaintances, family and friends, explain they are seeking for job and ask if anyone knows for job openings. Through phone calls and conversations, they gather information where they have to personally deal with their contacts without intermediaries (Goreya, 2006, p. 13).
- Research directly with the employers - it is the most effective approach to finding a job. When a job seeker introduces himself as a person that takes initiatives, who is confident and full of new ideas, he makes a good impression on the employer (Palčič, 2008, p. 28). They can also perform this method over the phone, and it is more personal than written communication (Zaletel & Šket, 2006, p. 25).
- Searching via employment ads and media - it is the fastest and the cheapest way of gathering information about job openings (Kranjc, 2011, p. 12). People often register themselves in job portals where they can avoid reading completely inappropriate ads (Mojazaposlitev.si, 2016). The Internet is the best tool for quick and efficient search of work and labour as it enables fast and broad distribution of information about adds. Moreover, the method is transparent, efficient, economical, comprehensive, available always and everywhere and enables good communication between the company and job seeker (Skr, 2003).
- Searching through Employment Institute - this method is less popular among young job seekers despite its program where unemployed can gain knowledge, skills and experiences (Goreya, 2006, p. 17-24).
- Employment agencies - they offer their services to find new employees for all the positions from production to leadership departments (Palčič, 2008, p. 29). They possess a database of resumes, and everyone has an option of registering in their database via the internet or personal visit (Palčič, 2008, str. 22). The benefit is that employment agencies are also in touch with the companies that do not publicly announce their openings (Zaletel & Palčič, 2008, p. 30). When a profile of a job searcher matches the job requirements, the agency invites the candidates to attend the interview, and there is no need of prior application (Zaposlitev1a, 2016).
- Employment clubs for young people - they organise intensive programmes for unemployed people to train them for effective and efficient job search (Zaletel & Palčič, 2008, p. 35). People learn how to prepare good resumes, practice job interviews and phone calls with potential employers. There are less lecturing and more practical work done in groups and pairs (Goreya,

2006, p. 17). By collaborating with employment clubs, young job seekers gain new skills and broaden their social network (Talentiran.si, 2016).

- Searching through networking - it is a process of building social connections where we seek for employment with the help of our acquaintances who update us about the job openings and the trends in their area of expertise (Palčič, 2008, p. 26). This method of search is effective especially since many companies do not publically announce their openings. It is popular when a company is searching for specific resources and experts, as they usually already know their future colleagues (Trbanc, 1992, p. 54). Almost all young people use social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn where they have to be careful and create profiles that apply to professionals and potential employers (Saop, 2016).

To get a job people firstly gather information from family, friends and other acquaintances. This type of research mainly uses youngest of unemployed people whose education is less or equal to high school degree. Some are braver and seek directly with the potential employers, but this method is diminishing with age. For older group of young job seekers with high education is typical to explore the employment ads in different media intensively. Approximately half of the young people is searching through employment institutes and only a quarter via employment agencies (Trbanc, 2007, p. 44-50).

## 5. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

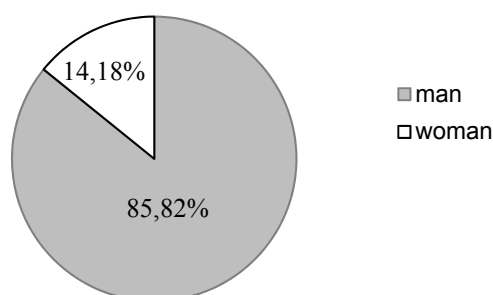
### 5.1. Methods of the research

In the empirical part, we presented the data gained throughout the research, where we conducted a survey and based on the research results we accepted or rejected the hypothesis. We conduct the survey among young job seekers up to 29 years, and the research was further on based only on young male respondents with mechanical, electro and mechatronics education, who come from the area of Savinjska region. We wanted to find out how and where they search for jobs, which competencies they usually highlight and which are their motivators for the employment.

### 5.2. Research data and hypothesis

We conducted a survey with 134 respondents where 85,82 % of them were a man, and 14,18 % were a woman. The average age of the respondents was 24,43 years, and for the majority of them, the highest education was high school degree (48 %). Further on, we only analysed man of age up to 29 with electro and mechatronics educational backgrounds.

**Picture 1:** Participants by the gender



There was 62,6 % of the respondents who were searching for a job for the first time, whereas the rest of them had on average 2,91 years of working experience. We were analysing how they are searching for jobs, and the results showed that 61 % prefer direct contact with the employers. When searching through media, 92 % use the Internet. An insignificant percentage of the respondents utilises services of the employment institute, employment agencies and employment clubs.

According to the survey, the main motivator for the employment is the salary, followed by the opportunity for promotion and gaining working experiences.

Regarding competencies, young job seekers usually point out emotional stability, the ability to lead, ethnicity and clear judgement.

We determined three hypotheses, which were tested based on the survey that we conduct among young job seekers research:

- H1: Young people until the age of 29 mostly search for jobs by gathering information from acquaintances, friends and family.
- H2: Young job seekers usually highlight resourcefulness and the ability to take initiatives as key competencies.
- H3: The biggest motivator for young job seekers is the salary.

### 5.3. Analysis of the research

#### *Testing of hypothesis 1*

According to Trbanc (2007, p. 44-50), young people start to search for a job by gathering information from family, friends and acquaintances. As we wanted to find out if the statement holds, we tested the hypothesis H1: Young people until the age of 29 are mostly searching for a job by gathering information from acquaintances, friends and family.

Based on the research we see that majority of young job seekers until the age of 29 (61 %) start with the job search directly with the companies, followed by the search for acquaintances, friends and family, search via employment ads and media and lastly through the Employment Institute (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Ways how young job seekers find a job (N=115)

Job seeking	minimum	maximum	mean	Std. deviation
Via of acquaintances, friends and of relatives	-3	1	0,08	1,326
Directly to employer	-3	1	0,13	1,341
Job advertisements and media	-3	1	-0,06	1,272
Institute for employment	-3	1	-0,15	1,230
Employment agencies	-3	1	-0,30	1,133
With the help of networking	-3	1	-0,35	1,101
Job clubs	-3	1	-0,40	1,058

We reject Hypothesis H1 as the results of the research show that young people until the age of 29 prefer to search for a job directly with the employers.

#### *Testing of hypothesis 2*

The second hypothesis we tested is H2: Young job seekers usually highlight resourcefulness and ability to take initiatives as key competencies.

The results of the research we can see in Table 2. It show us, that key competency pointed out by young job seekers are emotional stability, leadership skills, ethnicity and good judgement.

**Table 2:** Competences highlighted by the young job seekers (N=115)

Competences	minimum	maximum	mean	Std. deviation
Focus on the objectives and results of the company	-3	3	0,12	2,295
Professionalism	-3	3	0,00	2,236
To cope changes	-3	3	0,1	2,318
Creativity	-3	4	0,09	2,315
Honesty	-3	4	-0,09	2,191
Positive attitude to work	-3	3	-0,14	2,127
Reliability	-3	4	-0,07	2,187
Responsibility	-3	3	-0,15	2,104
Learning ability	-3	4	0,09	2,312

Sound judgment	-3	4	0,21	2,426
Self discipline	-3	3	0,05	2,274
Resourcefulness/ingenuity/inventiveness	-3	3	-0,05	2,196
Determination	-3	4	0,01	2,261
Self - confidence	-3	5	0,05	2,313
Perseverance	-3	5	-0,02	2,248
Logically thinking	-3	4	0,03	2,282
Accuracy	-3	3	-0,08	2,177
Self - initiative	-3	3	0,04	2,288
Ethic	-3	4	0,21	2,437
Communicativeness	-3	3	0,11	2,331
Ability of management	-3	4	0,22	2,438
Teamwork	-3	3	0,01	2,258
Organizational skills	-3	4	-0,02	2,240
A positive attitude towards co - workers	-3	4	-0,10	2,184
Feel for self organization and working environment	-3	3	0,01	2,250
Emotional stability	-3	5	0,29	2,509
Autonomy and independence in the work	-3	5	0,04	2,292
Ability to solve problems	-3	5	0,05	2,297
Stress resistance	-3	4	0,05	2,313
Technical orientation	-3	4	0,12	2,355

We rejected the hypothesis 2 as we can see that young job seeker mostly highlight competencies of emotional stability and the ability to lead.

### *Testing of hypothesis 3*

Lipičnik (1998, p. 155) divided employment motivators into two groups, and according to him, some people work due to financial security and others because of the establishment. We believe young people want financial security and their main motivator is salary. Therefore, we set the hypothesis H3: The main motivator for young job seekers is the salary.

**Table 3:** Young job seekers motivators (N=115)

Motivators at the employment	minimum	maximum	mean	Std. deviation
Pay	-3	1	-0,14	1,701
Autonomy and independence	-3	1	-0,38	1,587
Possibility of promotion	-3	1	-0,23	1,661
To gain work experience and knowledge	-3	1	-0,28	1,641
Become part of a good team	-3	1	-0,40	1,577
Working in a good organization	-3	1	-0,36	1,601
The possibility of continuing education	-3	1	-0,50	1,518
Contribute to the improvement of the company	-3	1	-0,51	1,507

According to the conducted survey where respondents were selecting their motives for employment, their main motive is the salary. The second most common motive is the possibility of promotion, followed by gaining working experiences and knowledge (Table 3). A Smaller part of young people is trying to find a job with the purpose of contributing to the improvement of the company.

We accept hypothesis H3 as the biggest motivator for young job seekers is the salary.

## 6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is to analyse young job seekers. The research shows that they search for jobs directly with the employers, they point out emotional stability and leadership skills as key competencies and are mostly motivated by the salary. We believe the companies should give the opportunity to young candidates to connect with the leadership to present themselves, make the first impression and describe their skills and experiences. The companies should hire interns and students with the purpose of getting to know them, ease the recruitment process and enable young people to get working experiences.

So far, we have been analysing young job seekers. We would continue with the research in the companies regarding knowledge, continuous learning, innovation, research and development where the problem of recruiting young job seekers without prior working experience would be pointed out. We would like to find out what are the strengths and weaknesses that the companies are facing when they are recruiting young candidates and on which personal characteristics the companies pay special attention. The focus of the research would be knowledge, and we would analyse whether knowledge obtained throughout the education is sufficient and how it contributes to the company ability of research, development and innovativeness. As we are highlighting the problem of working experiences and the lack of them, we want to see how companies are dealing with this issue. Young people are gaining working experiences through internships, and we suggest the companies that they enable this opportunity to students. The benefit of the internships is that the companies get to know the interns, their knowledge and skills before the employment.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The paper emphasises the employment of young people. Recruiting is of key importance for business as a selection of right candidates enables the company to retain its market share. The recruitment process and the selection are crucial for attracting the right candidates. The process of the recruitment consists of attracting the candidates, the selection and final decision on selected candidates.

In the labour market, we have a lot of young job seekers with their specifics in the labour market. Those who do not have any working experiences, although they are full of fresh knowledge, ideas and without limitations, they belong to the risky group of job seekers. While searching for a job they are trying to point out the competencies gained throughout the studies. For the employer, people that already have some working experiences represent continuity, affiliation and qualification for job requirements.

We conducted the survey among young job seekers. We were analysing how they are searching for employment, their motives and which of their competencies they emphasise during the process.

Based on the survey we can reject and accept the hypotheses determined by theoretical points. The results show that young job seekers prefer direct search with the employers, their emphasised competencies are emotional stability, ability to lead, ethnicity and clear judgement. The biggest motivator is the salary followed by the opportunity for promotion.

According to the results, we recommend that the companies give the opportunity to young job seekers for them to present their competencies and knowledge that could add value to the business. When there is a job opening, we suggest that the company organises a meeting with young job seekers. By connecting with educational institutions, the company could ensure that only the candidates with adequate education attend the meeting, although the lack of time is an obstacle that quite often occurs during the recruitment process. Since young candidates do not search for jobs through the institute for employment or employment agencies, we recommend that the companies focus on attracting the candidates via media and employment ads.

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