

The Problem of Employment of College Graduates in the Labour Market of Kazakhstan in the Context of Regional Differences

Valentina V. Fursova, Makpal B. Syzdykova, Talant D. Bimakhanov

Abstract: *In modern conditions in Kazakhstan and other countries of the post-Soviet space, the problems of employment of university graduates and the fullest realization of their professional and personal potential are becoming increasingly relevant. At the same time, graduated youth faces a complex of institutional problems in the labour market:*

- *A small number of free jobs,*
- *Bureaucratization, and bribe requests by employers,*
- *Mismatch of acquired knowledge with vacant jobs,*
- *Low degree of compliance of educational programs in higher education institutions with market conditions,*
- *Lack of infrastructure in universities to interact with the labour market, etc.*

All this leads to dissatisfaction of young people with their professional and social status, to their choice of a profession which not corresponding to their specialty, to the use of personal ties of their family to the detriment of their own desires and qualifications, and therefore to the reproduction of imbalances in the economic system as a whole.

Based on the author's empirical research, the paper describes the development of the market economy of Kazakhstan, and identifies regional problems of its development. It is shown that the transition of the economy from planned and centralized to the market one has led to significant changes in the management of the economy. The authors characterize the modern economy of Kazakhstan, indicating that the uneven distribution of inhabitants in rural districts, the low level of development of rural areas and specialization of production creates an uneven distribution of labour resources, which gives rise to particular problems at labour markets.

Youth labour strategies are associated with the economic well-being of areas, that is, the regions. It is shown that the regions are classified not according to the territorial principle adopted in the political-geographical respect, but according to the peculiarities of the labour market. Universities and their graduates are the main source of personnel for the economy of any region, but the demand for specialists depends on the structure of the labour market, the level of development of the national economy in the region, production relations, and socio-demographic characteristics.

The paper presents the results of an empirical study of the authors (1.5 thousand respondents were interviewed), showing the problems of young specialists and the imbalances in the modern labour market in Kazakhstan. Recommendations are given on improving the youth employment system.

Keywords: *labour force, youth unemployment, young specialists, employment, arrangement of labour, economy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the conditions of the modern economy developing at a tremendous pace, when knowledge is updated, new branches of the economy and new directions in science appear, new specialties are born accordingly, therefore it is practically impossible to immediately provide them with personnel trained in universities. Therefore, study of problems on optimization of process of mastering these new specialties by workers of traditional trades becomes particularly relevant.

Regional features of employment are studied in the context of the demographic characteristics of the economically active population, which are divided by geographical, economic and political characteristics of large territorial associations. The problems associated with the employment of graduates are explained by the small number of jobs on the labour market, the mismatch of professional and personal qualities of young specialists with the requirements of the modern labour market, and the poor functioning of mechanisms for ordering specialties [7, 12].

Great importance in solving problems and contradictions in the relationship between the labour market and educational services, and youth employment is reflected in the writings of such Kazakhstani scientists as T.A. Ashimbaev, M.B. Kenzheguzin, N.K. Mamyrov, S.Kh. Bereshev, K.S. Mukhtarova, H.N. Sansyzbaeva, S.K. Dzhumambaev, T. Mukhambetov, T.M. Rogacheva, B.L. Tatibekov [6, 13], and others.

II. METHODS

In the study, the authors relied on a conflictological paradigm, structural-functional analysis, and employment theory. The studies were conducted in 2017-2018 in Kyzylorda and South Kazakhstan regions by efforts of the information-analytical centre in Kyzylorda State University named after Korkyt Ata under the leadership of Makhambetova M.A. Only 1,500 specialists with higher education were interviewed. The study used the questionnaire method. The research objective: the studying of the problems on employment of graduates in the labour market in Kazakhstan. During the study, the following results were obtained:

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today, Kazakhstan is carrying out reforms in various fields, developing numerous programs and projects aimed at development. Some of them are



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being implemented, and some are not. Many scientists and experts see the root of the problem in the reasons related to labour values, such as lack of staff, corruption, neglect of duties, low level of professionalism, poor desire for innovation, slowness in entrepreneurship [5]. Statistical data indicate that if in 2009 Kazakhstani universities graduated 88.3 thousand young people, then in 2017 their number reached twice as much (176.1 thousand people). Analyzing them by specialties, it was found that most of them were: teachers, specialists in economics and law. According to the department, it turned out that with every year the demand for qualified personnel in technical specialties in the field of mining, chemical industry, construction, energy, etc. is growing. [2].

Now let's dwell on our main object of study - university graduates. For example, according to the World Values Survey, 75.2% of Kazakhstan's young specialists are worried that they will not be able to find work. Also, 66.5% of respondents chose the option "the government should be more responsible for the well-being of all citizens", 33.5% of the respondents answered with the option "people should be more responsible for their self-sufficiency" [3]. And in the studies conducted by the Zhastar Research Centre, pecuniary burdens, employment, and the acquisition of higher education were named as the main problems of youth. At the same time, the question "How do you look at the possibility of doing business?" had the following answer from 46% of young people "I don't have the ability to do business, and I don't know how to do it" [1].

There are several reasons why young professionals can be mobile in the labour market.

First is their family status. Free youth are more mobile than family-burden or married people. J. Ballueg and L. Lee found that graduates who have just graduated from high school tend to work outside their native region [8, 11].

Second is socio-economic status. The processes of youth mobility also depend on various socio-economic factors. Choosing a school from another city depends on family income.

Third reason is employment. Highly paid young people are less mobile than fully or half-unemployed youth. In addition, graduates of small cities are more mobile than graduates of large cities.

In his research, R. Gibbs found that 75% of young people go to higher education in another city, one third of them return to their hometown, and two-thirds live in other places up to 25 years old. There are types of production such as agriculture and mining, and, therefore, jobs typical of rural areas. They often do not require highly qualified specialists. And for urban jobs, usually highly qualified specialists are required. As a result, this leads to a "leak of intelligentsia" from rural areas [10,14].

In modern Kazakhstan, internal migration has the following characteristics:

1. The main migration flow is directed to Astana, Almaty, Shymkent and the western regions;
2. In areas with a high level of prosperity there is a steady influx of migrants;
3. The main part of migration flows are young people;
4. The main factor in the migration flow is the availability of higher education and high salaries.

By territorial affiliation, of the total number of the registered, 43.3% or 4 thousand people are rural residents, 56.7% or 5.2 thousand people are urban residents. Among oblasts (regions), the largest part of unemployed youth aged 16 to 28 of the total number of registered people is in Atyrau oblast - 76.7%, in Almaty oblast - 73.7%, Zhambyl oblast - 70.4%, in Kyzylorda oblast 64.6%. Among them, the smallest component is in the Mangistau, Aktobe, Pavlodar and North Kazakhstan regions from 32 to 39.7%. Among urban residents, the number of registered unemployed prevails in the Mangistau region - 68%, Aktobe region - 67%, Pavlodar region - 61.5%, North Kazakhstan - 60.3%, West Kazakhstan - 59.3%. Of those, a smaller number is in Atyrau, Almaty, Zhambyl regions, they are from 23.3 to 29.6% [4]. All this characterizes the uneven distribution of labour resources in the territorial labour markets.

Also, the own symptoms of the regional labour market are determined by several factors. The conjuncture of jobs in the regional labour market is limited due to the low population density and narrow specialization. As a result, the discrepancy between supply and demand for labour is becoming more complicated, the coverage of the use of labour resources and its efficiency are significantly reduced, and the constitutional rights to labour of rural residents are limited. The structure of the regional sphere of employment in comparison with other areas of employment in the formation depends on the climatic and seasonal circumstances.

To analyse the problems of employment, we turn to the analysis of regional markets in Kazakhstan.

First, in a market economic situation, many rural workers themselves are both enterprise owners and the main labour force; the change in the meaning of the activities of agricultural workers is determined by the ability to engage in agriculture in a market situation.

Secondly, the crisis in the financial and economic situation of agricultural production and construction industry makes it impossible to finance the non-productive sectors of the region and increase production volumes. As a result, the demand for labour in production and non-production sectors is reduced.

Third, the lost balance between cutting jobs in regions and increasing the labour supply. The increase in labour supply was due to a decline in production and a decrease in the introduction of new jobs.

In the course of our study, the following questions were posed to the respondents:

When were former graduates of different faculties disappointed in the chosen profession? (Table 1)

Table 1

When disappointed in the chosen profession	Faculty						
	Technical	Humanitarian (nonscience)	Medical	Agrarian	Science	Pedagogical	Financial and economic
Still during learning in higher school	31.7	12.5	22.2	11.1	15.8	23.5	36,4
After graduation	34.9	45.8	44,4	44,4	31.6	29.4	36,4
Never been admired by the acquired specialty	27.0	20.8	22.2	44,4	47.4	35.3	9.1
Don't remember	6.3	20.8	11.1	0,0	5.3	11.8	18.2

As the table shows, representatives of technical (31.7%), financial and economic (36.4%), and pedagogical specialties (23.5%) were disappointed in the chosen profession even at the university. As mentioned above, representatives of agricultural (44.4%), and natural-scientific (47.4%) specialties were never delighted with the acquired specialty (which indicates problems in the agricultural sector). Two main problems of such professional orientations can be distinguished:

- Lack of seriously set career guidance work and low awareness of real professions;
- The inevitable inconsistency of the educational and labour markets, which develop according to different rules - prestige, advances, traditions of a region and the education system, in the first case, and uncertainty, momentary need and lack of reasonable forecasts, in the second.

A question was also asked: "What is the status of the listed companies you like to find a job at?" (Figure 1)

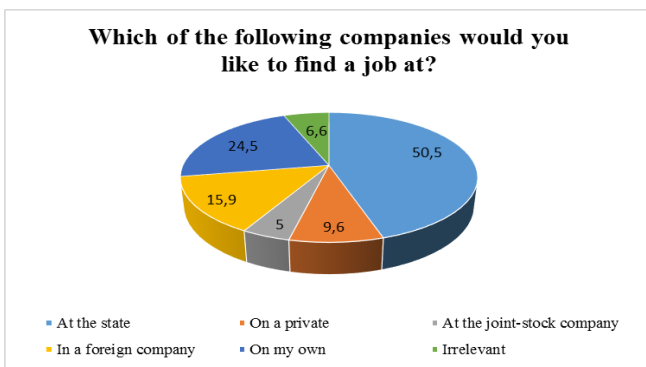


Figure 1.

Most of the respondents (50.5%) said they want to work in government institutions. 15.9% wanted to work in foreign companies, 24.5% said they wanted to do their own business. This diagram shows that young people mainly want to work in state enterprises, since their workers have more social guarantees and stable wages.

IV. SUMMARY

The labour market in Kazakhstan is developing unevenly. The largest number of unemployed youth between the ages of 16 and 28 registered in the employment centres amounted to 1.9 thousand people in South Kazakhstan region, 1 thousand

people in Astana and East Kazakhstan region, 0.9 thousand people in Atyrau region, and 0.8 thousand people in the Mangistau region.

By territorial affiliation, there is approximately equal number of unemployed in the cities and in the countryside (43.3% or 4 thousand people are rural residents, 56.7% or 5.2 thousand people are urban residents.)

Most of the unemployed youth aged 16 to 28 years are registered in the Atyrau region - 76.7% of their total number, 73.7% in the Almaty region. A smaller number is in Atyrau, Almaty, and Zhambyl regions, from 23.3 to 29.6%

Thus, to achieve effective youth employment, it is necessary to regulate the labour market in the following areas:

- examination of legal and social support mechanisms for young professionals;
- further development of the social partnership interaction between universities and employers;
- the curriculum of a higher educational institution should be developed in accordance with the requirements of employers and the whole society, as well as
- special practical courses for students should be introduced.

V. CONCLUSION

At present, the shortage of personnel is deeply felt in the economy of Kazakhstani society. Issues of personnel are relevant for employers who are ready to hire young professionals. The contradiction between the mutual expectations of employers and university graduates predominates; the potential of young specialists, personal and professional qualities do not meet the requirements of employers. Employers are waiting for active, highly educated professional specialists of their profession, confident in their knowledge, fluent in new computer technologies, able to quickly adapt to the modern requirements of society.

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