

ДЕМОГРАФІЯ, ЕКОНОМІКА ПРАЦІ, СОЦІАЛЬНА ЕКОНОМІКА І ПОЛІТИКА

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ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF “UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS” COOPERATION ON YOUTH COMPETITIVENESS

Economic development of a country depends to a large extent on availability of competitive specialists capable of effective legislation, management, production and improvement of innovation and technology. The current situation in the labor market indicates the imperfection of the existing mechanism of interaction of stakeholders (state, higher education, business and society, the impossibility of self-adjustment and harmonization of relations between them, which highlights the need for improvement. The article presents the results of the empirical study “Youth Competitiveness in the Labor Market”. By interviewing employers, current and promising areas of cooperation between higher education institutions and business structures have been identified. The directions of synchronization of stakeholders’ cooperation in the Quadruple Helix (the state, business, higher education, and the public) to increase youth competitiveness in the labor market have been offered.

Key words: competitiveness, higher education, the youth, labor market, employers, business.

JEL classification: I23, I24, J24

Formulation of the problem. Currently, youth employment according to the specialty is one of the most acute social and economic problems. The need to improve the performance of the national labor market in today’s conditions leads to the implementation of new qualitative changes, among which an important place belongs to youth employment. Regulation of employment of the population, in particular of young professionals, occupies an important place in the social and economic development of any state, especially in those conditions when the objective is to achieve a sustainable, long-term rise in all spheres of public life. The tendency of increasing number of unemployed young people who have graduated from a higher education institution (hereinafter – HEI) with an unemployment period of more than a year does not look promising.

The outflow of young professionals leads to the loss of a significant share of intellectual potential, which threatens the national security of the country. As a result, there is a loss of money spent on training specialists, decrease in labor productivity and a general weakening of the country’s competitiveness [5].

The situation related to employment of graduates of higher education institutions requires an immediate solution. The issue of an effective employment of graduates in the specialty can be addressed in the process of close cooperation between employers, higher education institutions and directly graduates.

Analysis of recent research and published works. Researchers address the issue of youth employment, its position in the labor market in various focuses representing a wide range of scientific areas. The works of Lehan I. [11] and Batiuk A. [1] should be noted among the latest comprehensive research on the mechanisms of

public administration of youth employment. The study is based on the previous work of a team of domestic authors (Honta S., Detsiuk T., Dubyna M., Lysenko I., Revko A., Kholiavko N., Shestakovska T.) in the research project “Integrated model of competitive higher education on the Quadruple Helix concept” [6-10; 12-145]. In the context of youth unemployment and university-business cooperation, the publications of Caliendo M., Schmidl R., Davey T., Plewa C., Galán Muros V., Davey T. [2-4] are important.

The purpose of the article is to determine the impact of university-business cooperation on youth competitiveness. The article is aimed at identifying current and promising areas of cooperation between higher education institutions and business structures; factors influencing the competitiveness of young people in the labor market from the standpoint of employers; studying professional orientations of future specialists.

Presentation of the main material. Modern globalized economic space places new, more stringent requirements on the quality of the workforce in general, and youth as a separate social-demographic category in particular. Today, highly qualified, professionally mobile, motivated youth is becoming a major factor in production and a determining driver of social-economic progress at all levels. The definition of youth competitiveness in the labor market through the lens of factors influencing its formation becomes especially relevant in modern conditions. The employer is one of the key stakeholders in higher education. In the context of the new paradigm of quality of study programs, employers must be active partners and participants in the educational process. The issue of cooperation between HEIs and employers is not new; in most HEIs of Ukraine, there are certain mechanisms of interac-

tion with representatives of employers, which can be quite effective or more formalized.

In order to determine impact of university-business cooperation on youth competitiveness, a three-component study "Youth Competitiveness in the Labor Market" was conducted. Two target groups consisting of employers and students of HEI were interviewed. A total of 98 employers and 200 higher education students took part in the study. The first component of the study included determining the ways of university-business cooperation in Chernihiv region. For this purpose, a focus group survey of employers was conducted during business forums and vacancy fairs in Chernihiv region (October-November, 2019).

Among the most common areas of cooperation with universities, employers noted: participation in the development of educational programs (noted by 11% of surveyed employers), counseling (noted by 24% of respondents), student internships (noted by 31% of surveyed employers), trainings (noted by 31% of surveyed employers), traineeships (noted by 73% of surveyed employers) and employment of students / graduates (noted by 100% of respondents). Thus, we see that, currently, employers treat the university only as a "supplier" of the labor resources, and therefore there are wide prospects for expanding areas of university-business cooperation.

Among the criteria influencing the cooperation between employers and HEIs, the participants noted: support for research and development (18% of respondents indicated this criterion), strengthening entrepreneurial spirit (29% of respondents indicated this criterion), improvement of teaching methods (27% of respondents indicated this criterion), increasing competitiveness (100% of respondents indicated this criterion), an improved approach to management (91% of respondents indicated this criterion), compliance of graduates' skills with the needs of the labor market (100% of respondents indicated this criterion).

Thus, we observe that employers are interested in strengthening their competitive position and obtaining the "final product". At the same time, universities should make efforts to attract business to invest in research and development, startups and more. Key spheres of university-business cooperation that employers are planning to pay attention to include graduates' employment, trainings, consultations, students' traineeships, joint projects, student internships programs.

During the focus group, we studied the main problems in cooperation between employers and HEIs. Thus, according to the employers of Chernihiv region, the main challenges that exist in the field of university-business cooperation encompass an insufficient integration of theoretical knowledge into practical skills of students, insignificant interest of young people in technical sciences, education lagging behind industry development, outflow of young people abroad, irresponsibility of students in relation to work, insufficient compliance of training of young specialists with market needs. At the same time, it is essential to identify the main factors that contribute to the fruitful and long-term university-business cooperation. In the view of employers' representatives, these factors are as follows: understanding of the importance of a new approach in the training of young professionals; communicating with students and keeping them informed about industry trends; holding joint conferences, round-table discussions, organi-

zation of internships for students; loyal attitude of teachers to working students; transparency of university-business cooperation; practical orientation of educational programs; development of soft skills together with professional competencies; student internships.

Since youth employment depends on employers, the second component of the study analyzed their opinion on the factors that affect the competitiveness of modern youth by conducting a survey. The sample of respondents is identical to the first component of the study. Employers outlined a portrait of a competitive HEI graduate. Absolutely all respondents (100% of respondents) mentioned ambitiousness of young professionals. It should be noted here that this feature of modern graduates causes the strongest and not always positive emotions of employers. The reason for this attitude is probably that the self-esteem of graduates is inflated. As a result, the graduate is insufficiently motivated to study at the workplace, to gain work experience at the starting position. Their campaign and salary expectations are inflated. The second most common characteristic of a modern graduate, according to employers, is uncertainty (77% of respondents noted this feature). Employers understand uncertainty as the lack of graduates' vision of their own future, a clear understanding of the purpose, professional goals and ways to achieve them, which is expressed in the inability to set priorities.

The rapidly growing pace of life and the level of competition in the labor market are adjusting the requirements for today's youth. During focus groups, the majority of employers (83% of respondents) pay significant attention to the life and professional orientations of an employee, their strategy and desire to succeed. Thus, the purpose of the third part of the empirical study is to determine the professional and value orientations of young people, their educational and professional resources and relevant attitudes, analysis of the situation of young people in the labor market by self-assessment, identification of obstacles to professional intentions.

The survey was conducted on the basis of Chernihiv National University of Technology (hereinafter – CNUT) and Chernihiv Institute of Business and Law (hereinafter – CIBL). Two hundred respondents participated in the study including 150 people from CNUT and 50 people from CIBL, who were students in the last year of study. The surveyed higher education students of CNUT included 100 students who studied for a Master's degree and 50 senior students who did not express a desire to take up Master's degree program. The surveyed higher education students of CIBL included 25 students who studied for a Master's degree and 25 senior students who did not express a desire to take up Master's degree program.

Studying the professional plans of the respondents suggests that most of them intend to work in a specialty acquired in an educational institution after graduation (65% of respondents); some are not sure about the possibility of finding a suitable job in the specialty (25%). At the same time, 10% of respondents do not intend to work in the specialty.

Young people surveyed assess their ability to get a suitable job after graduation differently. 30% of respondents believe that they will be able to find a job quickly, 38% realize that they will face some difficulties when

finding a job, but all of them are optimistic about their ability to find it, 32% of respondents believe that finding a suitable job after graduation will be very difficult or sometimes impossible.

Young people are quite unanimous in their employment strategies after graduation. Almost half of the surveyed students (48%) admitted that they rely primarily on the help of parents or other relatives in resolving their employment issues. At the same time, 30% of respondents state that they rely only on themselves to resolve this issue. Among the respondents, 15% rely on the help of friends or acquaintances. It is noteworthy that only 5% rely on the assistance of HEI in employment, and only 2% rely on employment services.

Therefore, we observe that despite the priority of the direction of employment of graduates, which has been stated by employers, students do not expect the support of the university in finding a job.

Regarding the reasons that may negatively affect employment in the specialty, respondents noted the following: low financial income if working in the specialty (45%); change of professional plans due to personal preferences (35%) and shortage of jobs in the specialty (20%).

The survey also examined the migration tenets of young people to work. The share of those young people who would like to work temporarily abroad was higher – 45% of respondents, respectively – 44% of respondents do not plan to work abroad, 11% of students surveyed have not decided on temporary labor migration yet. At the same time, the share of respondents who would agree to any job abroad (“no matter what specialty is”), among all those wishing to work there (45% of respondents) was higher than the share of those who would agree to work in another country exclusively in the specialty. Thus, a fairly high proportion of young people seeking to go abroad for work, unfortunately, reflects not the tendency of young people to more actively acquire new knowledge, skills and experience, but financial motivation, which is supported by the problems of finding decent work and using educational and professional skills in Ukraine.

Thus, the results of empirical research confirm the importance of active cooperation between enterprises and HEIs. Based on the results of the survey practical measures to improve university-business cooperation have been identified: cooperation of HEIs with organizations, institutions in the context of conducting lectures for students with practical examples, round-table discussions, joint educational activities, participation in the development and adjustment of study plans, trainings; student internships at companies; holding face-to-face meetings of students and employers; keeping students informed about

the state of the labor market. In addition, the role of the state and the public is important. The dialogue between education, government, business and the public (according to the Quadruple Helix approach) should be the basis for the implementation of measures aimed at increasing the level of youth employment. The main areas of cooperation include: improving the regulatory framework in the context of preferential taxation of enterprises that hire young workers under vocational training programs of public employment services as well as partial compensation for their salaries; improving educational programs to form a system of competencies taking into account the needs of employers; participation of students in the implementation of scientific and technical developments and projects commissioned by employers; business investments in youth startups; business, public and state support of youth business ideas (crowdfunding, project pitching, competitions and grants).

Teaching technologies have a significant place in the process of establishing an effective interaction between education and business. They should correspond to the latest changes and innovations in a specific field of study, but also be based on interactive components of studying. It is important for employers to provide relevant information and actively participate in the training of future professionals. Continuous monitoring of professional orientations will promote young people's personal fulfillment in the future.

Conclusions. The empirical research shows that a modern employer seeks a perfectly educated and persistent specialist with a sense of purpose, which a young person will fail to become without ethical and moral qualities of character, self-development and determination and initiative, quality balance of professional and soft skills. The availability of such characteristics is the key to success in the formation of a competitive specialist in the labor market. In order to solve the problem of youth employment, it is necessary to form an effective state policy and form a mechanism for an effective interaction between government, business, education and the public, which is expressed in the coordination of efforts in the Quadruple Helix system and joint activities aimed at improving the labor market and providing young people with jobs.

This study does not exhaust all possible aspects and in the long run the need to study the international practice of increasing the competitiveness of young people in the labor market, which has a large number of methods, the effectiveness of which largely depends on the level of social and economic development. Adaptation of foreign experience is becoming important for Ukraine.

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ОЦІНКА ВПЛИВУ СПІВПРАЦІ «УНІВЕРСИТЕТ-БІЗНЕС» НА КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНІСТЬ МОЛОДІ

Сучасний глобалізований економічний простір ставить нові вимоги до якості кадрового потенціалу в цілому, та молоді, як окремої соціально-демографічної категорії, зокрема. Сьогодні висококваліфікована, професійно мобільна, мотивована молодь стає основним фактором виробництва і визначальним драйвером соціально-економічного прогресу на всіх рівнях. Особливої актуальності у сучасних умовах набуває визначення конкурентоспроможності молоді на ринку праці через призму чинників, що впливають на її формування. Економічний розвиток країни значною мірою залежить від наявності конкурентоспроможних фахівців, здатних до ефективного законотворення, управління, продукування і удосконалення інновацій та технологій. Сучасна ситуація на ринку праці свідчить про недосконалість існуючого механізму взаємодії стейкхолдерів (держави, вищої освіти, бізнесу та громадськості), неможливість самоналаштування та гармонізації відносин між ними, що актуалізує необхідність удосконалення. Мета статті полягає у визначенні впливу співпраці «університет-бізнес» на конкурентоспроможність молоді. Стаття спрямована на визначення актуальних та перспективних напрямів співпраці між закладами вищої освіти та бізнес-структурами; чинників впливу на конкурентоспроможність молоді на ринку праці з позиції роботодавців; дослідження професійних орієнтацій майбутніх фахівців. У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження «Конкурентоспроможність молоді на ринку праці», проведеного шляхом опитування роботодавців та здобувачів вищої освіти у Чернігівській області. Визначено портрет конкурентоспроможного молодого фахівця; актуальні та перспективні напрями, виклики та драйвери співпраці між закладами вищої освіти та бізнес-структурами, на думку роботодавців. Досліджено позиції роботодавців щодо чинників впливу на конкурентоспроможність молоді на ринку праці. Визначено професійні орієнтації майбутніх фахівців. Запропоновано напрями синхронізації співпраці стейкхолдерів у чотирикутнику *Quadruple Helix* (держава, бізнес, вища освіта, громадськість) задля підвищення конкурентоспроможності молоді на ринку праці.

Ключові слова: конкурентоспроможність, вища освіта, молодь, ринок праці, роботодавці, бізнес.