

School-to-work transition to employed and unemployed students of the second year of Master of Science Degree in the Department of Labor and Social Policies

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Abstract

Switching from education to employment for youth is often associated with a long and difficult phase of transition. This study addresses precisely the problems of school-to-work transition between students of the Master of Science in the Department of Labor and Social Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana. It aims to describe the transition situation in which are currently employed and unemployed students of this department and to identify the differences and similarities in the characteristics of this transition between the two groups. This study is a quantitative study and the research strategy used is a descriptive and comparative study. The entire scope of the study is covered by a comparative dimension that analyzes two groups: employed and unemployed students of this Department. The study shows that most of the students, even those who are employed, are still in a situation of transition. Only 14.3% of students had transitioned to a stable job, 73.5% were in transition and 12.2% had not started their transition. Over 72% of students have worked or continue to work while studying. Most of them worked / still work in a private company. The main motive that drives students to work during their studies is to provide income. As the ideal job, most of them (employed and unemployed) consider opening a personal business. Regarding long-term unemployment, only 17.4% of students are looking for a job for more than a year. The minimum wage under which they would refuse a job is on average 26016.39 lekë. It is interesting that employed students have lower claims on the minimum wage than the unemployed. Among the employed students, most of them work in jobs that fit their level of education. They generally work on a temporary employment contract, have an average working hour per week of 34.95 hours and the average income earned is 37437.5 lek. They are mostly satisfied with their current job but still hope to change it in the future.

Keywords: *school-to-work transition; youth in-transition; transitioned youth; youth who have not yet started the transition.*

1. Introduction

Youth is a crucial period of life where young people begin to realize their aspirations and think about economic independence and how to provide a place in society. The global labor crisis has exacerbated the vulnerability of young people in

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terms of: i) higher unemployment; (ii) lower job quality for job seekers; (iii) greater inequality in the labor market among different youth groups iv) increased labor market detachment, v) longer and more insecure school-to-work transition (Work4Youth 2014). The last issue (school-to-work transition) is the main focus of this study. Young people aged 15-29 are distributed into three stages of transition: pre-transition, transition and post-transition - and in different statuses within these phases. For Albania, LFS (Labor Force Survey in Albania) 2011 (INSTAT 2015) shows a youth unemployment rate of 21.9 percent, suggesting that about 86 thousand people aged 15-29 - 52 thousand young men and 34,000 young women - could not find a job. The percentage for young people is twice as high as that of the remaining adult population (11.1 percent), which is a common finding for many countries. The reduction in the employed percentage between 2011 and 2014 is reflected in a significant increase in unemployment over the same period. This growth is particularly experienced by young people for whom the unemployment rate has risen from 21.9 percent in 2011 to 32.5 percent in 2014 (49 percent increase). For an older age group of 30-64 year-olds, the corresponding increase was lower: from 11.1 to 13.3 percent (an increase of 20 percent). Also LFS shows that only a small percentage (around 9 percent) of the total youth population are employed under decent working conditions. The percentage of employed but in transition to better jobs in 2011 was 34 percent and included people who did not want to work with shorter working hours (temporary employment) or work temporarily, people who work in unprotected employment (independent employees and employees contributing to the family) and employees whose working conditions do not meet their standards or standards of decent work. Also, people in transition for decent work include unemployed people in situations similar to unemployment, for example, job-seekers students and non-encouraged employees (people who are ready for work but do not require work actively because they think they will not find a job), make up about 15 percent of 15-29 year olds. In conclusion, the percentage that was not included (yet) in the transition to work consists of students who are not seeking (yet) jobs and persons who are left inactive for other reasons. In 2011, the percentage of youth not-in-transition was approximately 42 percent. It rose to about 52 percent in 2014, mainly due to the largest percentage in schools. Continuing school or returning to education is a common strategy for young people when job opportunities become little. Regarding the duration of youth unemployment, figures are also worrying. The long-term unemployment rate in the total number of unemployed youth was 63.1 percent in 2011. This percentage is higher than any other EU country in the same year and deserves special attention from policy makers. The percentage of long-term unemployed is higher among young people with secondary education (70.8 percent) and lower - but still very high - in those with higher education.

Even at a global level (ILO 2015), youth face the same transition problems. The youth workforce and labor force participation rate continues to decline, due to higher enrollments in higher education. Between 1991 and 2014, the distribution of active youth (employed and unemployed) to the youth population decreased by 11.6% (from 59% to 47.3%) compared with 1% decrease in the participation rate of the adult workforce. After a period of rapid growth from the 2007-2010 crisis, the global youth unemployment rate stood at 13% for a period of 2012-2014. This rate has not yet reached the 11.7% rate as it was before the crisis in 2007. Globally, the ratio of unemployment rate among young people and adults has hardly changed by staying at 2.9 in 2014. The youth unemployment rate has been consistently about three times

greater than that of adults since 1995 (at a rate between 2.7 and 2.9). Also young people in developing countries continue to be overwhelmed by poverty resulting from irregular work and lack of formal employment and social protection. In 2013, more than 1/3 (37.8%) of young people employed in the developing world lived with less than \$ 2 per day. In most low-income countries, at least three out of four young people fall into the category of irregular employment, engaged in work or work on their own, contributing to family work, irregularly paid employment or temporary work. Nine out of ten young people stay in informal employment.

In all countries young people aspire to formal and productive employment opportunities that provide them with an adequate salary, safety and good working conditions. Unfortunately, very few young people have the chance to turn their aspirations into reality, which means that opportunities to benefit from demographic advantages in countries of great potential, such as Africa or Albania, are not being used or are moving away swiftly.

2. The study

2.1. The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to describe the situation of school-to-work transition for employed and unemployed master of science students in the Department of Labor and Social Policy (DLSP) and to identify the differences and similarities in the characteristics of this transition between the two groups. The entire scope of the study is covered by a comparative dimension that takes into account two different populations: employed students and unemployed students of DLSP. The descriptive dimension of the study offers a simultaneous picture of the situation of the two groups in terms of their school-work combination, their perceptions and aspirations regarding their employment, as well as job search features. In this part of the study is also presented a presentation of the situation of employed students, to see in what jobs are generally placed and what conditions offer these jobs for them. While the comparative dimension of the study helps to measure and assess whether in all the above issues there are significant differences between the two groups (employed and unemployed students).

2.2. Research questions

1. Do young people work while studying master degree in the Department of Labor and Social Policy (DLSP)? What are their work experiences?
2. What are the perceptions and aspirations of DLSP employed and unemployed students regarding their employment?
3. What are the job search features for DLSP employed and unemployed students?

2.3. Definition and operationalization of terms

Transited – A young person who has “transited” is one who is currently employed in: a decent and satisfactory job; a decent but non-satisfactory job; or a satisfactory but non-decent job. Even in this study, transited will be called those students who work in a sustainable job. Taking into consideration the economic situation of our country, and the high unemployment rate, having a stable job (whether satisfactory or not) can be considered a sufficient criterion to determine a young person as transited or not.

In transition – A young person is still “in transition” if s/he has one of the following statuses: currently unemployed; currently employed in a non-decent and non-

satisfactory job; or currently inactive and not in school, with an aim to look for work later. In this study, in transition will be considered those students who are unemployed or on a temporary paid job.

Transition not yet started – A young person who has “not yet transitioned” is one who is either of the following: still in school or currently inactive and not in school, with no intention of looking for work. In this study, not yet transitioned will be considered those young people who are still in school and inactive (inactive students) (Work4Youth 2013).

2.4. Methodology

The purpose of the study: This is a descriptive and comparative study aimed at presenting a general picture of the situation of school-to-work transition in which are currently employed and unemployed students who have just completed the second cycle of studies in the DLSP and to identify the differences and similarities in the characteristics of this transition between the two groups. To achieve this goal was used the quantitative research method using structured interview research instrument. The study model followed is a representative study, as it aims to give us a clear picture of all the chosen population to be studied at a certain point in time.

The main research instrument for quantitative data collection is a structured interview. Concerning the preparation of the questionnaire for this study: firstly, it is worth mentioning that this is an internationally standardized questionnaire prepared by the ILO for the school-to-work transition of young people. The original questionnaire was very voluminous and its drafters made it clear that different researchers could use certain sessions of this questionnaire and could adapt it based on their study purpose and research questions. So the researchers of this study, based on this standardized questionnaire, have compiled two questionnaires, one for employed and one for unemployed participants.

Population and Sample: The population of this study is all full-time students of the Department of Labor and Social Policy who are at the end of the master of science degree for the academic years 2014-2016 and belonging to the age group 22-29 years. The total population is 148, of whom only 10% (15 people) are males. Another characteristic of this population is that all students were part of the target group of young people (under 29 years of age), unlike professional master students where a significant percentage of them are over 29 years old. Since the total number of the population was relatively small, in order to collect more comprehensive data, the researchers decided that the sample would be the entire population of the study. In this case the sample selection procedure was very simple and there was no need for formulas and mathematical calculations. However, taking into account the voluntary nature of study attendance and student absences during class hours, it was expected that data from 100% of the population would not be collected. Due to both of the above reasons (especially the second reason - the absence of students during class hours), the researchers managed to collect data from 66.2% of the population (concretely 98 individuals).

Data Analysis: To analyze the data of this study, researchers used the SPSS software, version 23. For statistical data analysis, various statistical tests are used. Also in this study have been used a set of indicators, techniques, and statistical tests to describe, evaluate and interpret the available data, as well as the links between different variables. For the numeric variables were reported frequencies, percentages, arithmetic

averages and standard deviations. For the categorical variables, the respective frequencies and ratios were reported. For the evaluation of links between different variables, statistical tests were used in accordance with the nature of the variables participating in a particular link. In the case of numerical variables that had a normal distribution of the population, was used the **t test** to compare the average values of this variable between the two groups in the study (employed and unemployed students). While in the case of numerical variables that did not have a normal distribution, the statistical test **Mann Whitney U** was used. The numerical variables of this study were used to see whether or not a normal population distribution was made through the relevant SPSS command. For assessing the relationship between the two categorical variables was used the **chi square test**.

2.5. Data Analysis and Discussion

Student transition situation

Youth is a crucial period of life when young people begin to realize their aspirations by thinking of economic independence and identifying their place in society. Transition in adulthood and in the world of work often occur at the same time and this is a difficult time for many young people. For young people in developing countries, school-to-work transition has proven to be a much more difficult process. In a study conducted by the ILO (2010) on the school-to-work transition for young people in eight different developing countries, this situation is presented: Azerbaijan had the largest share of young people in transition, concretely 36.8%, 36.7 % in transition not yet started and 26.5 % transited. China's majority of young people (38%) were in transition not yet started, 34.7% in transition and 27.4% transited. Also in Iran, 51.9% in transition not yet started, 30% in transition and 18.1% transited. Kosovo, most of young people (59.2%) are in transition, 24.6% in transition not yet started and 16.2% transited. In Mongolia 45.1% are in transition not yet started, 44.1% in transition and 10.7% transited. Even in Nepal 51.5% in transition not yet started, 36.3% in transition and 12.3% transited. Also Syria 53.7% in transition not yet started, 34.8% in transition and 11.5% transited. Regarding the situation in Albania, INSTAT (the Institute of Statistics) reports that: 9.2% of young people are transited to decent work, 39.1% are in transition and most of them, 51.7% are still in transition not yet started. While in this study it turned out that: 14.3% of participants had transited to a stable job, 73.5 % were in transition and 12.2% were in transition not yet started. This large difference in the 'transition' rate among young people of this study and young people in Albania or young people in the eight above mentioned countries can be explained by the fact that in this study young people were all students (aged 22-29) while the other two studies included young people aged 15-29 years. However, with these figures we can understand that the status of transition is even more evident among young people who are graduating from university. For example, in Europe, are in transition most of the young people between the ages of 20-24. This may possibly come, first because in this period young people aspire to start a good job that matches their level of qualification (the school for which they graduated) and secondly because of the pressure that society can exercise, which generally conceives that when they finish school, young people can not continue to be 'economic burden' for their parents, but they must work and cover their own expenses.

School-work combination

Combining school with work is considered a very important element that ensures a faster and more successful entry of young people into the labor market. In the survey of Shtetiweb.org / CDI (2015), about a quarter of surveyed enterprises claim to hire individuals who work and study at the same time. This number goes up to 55% for the largest employers in the manufacturing sector (for the Finance and Insurance sector is 22%). While in this study it turned out that, in total, 72.4% of students have worked or continue to work while continuing the school. This figure shows that most of the currently unemployed (53.4% of them) are not without any job experience. However, a considerable part of them (46.6% of the unemployed) have never worked during school. For the latter, the transition to sustainable and enjoyable work is expected to be more difficult and slower than for their colleagues who already have a job experience. Of all the students who have at least one job experience during the school attendance, most of them, over 56% have worked or continue to work in a private company, and none of them worked in agriculture sector which, according to INSTAT (2015), remains so far the most important sector of economic activity in Albania in terms of employment. For young people, especially for young women, the agricultural sector is even more important for employment opportunities (by 51.1%), in many cases for contributing family workers. From this data we clearly understand that, for the youth of this study, unlike most young people in Albania, employment in the agricultural sector is not considered as employment opportunity. This can be explained by the fact that these students are highly qualified and the work in the agricultural sector is generally a job done by young people who have not yet completed upper secondary education.

Regarding working conditions, over 89% of subjects in this study have been / are in paid work and almost 11% in unpaid work. As for working hours, over 45% of them work / have worked more than 20 hours a week, and the rest (more than half) work / work under 20 hours a week. These figures show clearly for the part-time character of the jobs that students generally do, not only in Albania, but also in Europe and the world. In Europe, the part-time employment rate of young people aged 15-24 has grown almost everywhere during 2011-2014. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Lusburg and Slovakia the growth was more than 30%. The latest Eurostat data for 2014 confirm the growing trend in recent years to the proportion of 15-24 year olds working part-time. In 2014, one in three 15-24 year-old employees worked part-time. However, huge differences exist between countries. Denmark, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, England, Norway and Iceland have a higher percentage than the EU-28 countries (31.9%) of young people employed in part-time work. Conversely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Hungary have the lowest part-time employment rate for this group. While for young people aged 25-29, Denmark and the Netherlands record the highest rate of part-time employment, and Bulgaria and Slovakia have the lowest rate. The average part-time employment rate for the 25-29 age group in the EU is two to three times lower than for young people aged 15-24 (respectively 17% and 31.9%). While globally, 1/5 (20.7%) of young people employed in OECD countries worked less than 30 hours a week (part-time) in 2000 compared to 30.1% in 2013, so there is a noticeable increase over time of part-time employment of young people (ILO, 2015). A characteristic of part-time contracts is that they allow young people to combine school with work. This is thought to be the main reason most young people choose to work part-time during school attendance. However, in many cases this is not a free choice of them. Many young people work

part-time because they can not find a full-time job. In Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus and Romania, at least one in two young people work part-time because they have no choice. In these countries, part-time involuntary work has increased by at least 13% between 2011 and 2014 (European Commission, 2015).

The main motive that pushed students to work during the school was 'to provide income', over 59% responded in this form. Both for the employed and the currently unemployed students this was the predominant motive. After this reason, second place (with over 28%) took the motive of 'gaining work experience' and about 10% of students chose the motive 'creating contacts that could lead to future employment'. If we rely again on the INSTAT study (2015), regarding the choice of a particular profession, the most important factor for young people is the income and then the job stability. These data can be explained by the difficult economic situation in which young people and, in particular, Albanian students are found. Being a student nowadays is associated with great expenses (school expenses, daily expenses, etc.), so perhaps many young people are forced to work even during school so they can withstand these spending. Also, globally, in 2013, more than 1/3 (37.8%) of young people employed in the developing world were poor (17.7% in extreme poverty and 20.1% in moderate poverty). In 2015, about 169 million young people were living with less than \$ 2 a day. The number went to 286 million if they included young people who worked and lived less than \$ 4 a day (ILO, 2015).

Student perceptions and aspirations regarding their employment

Based on a recent FES (2015) study on Albanian youth perceptions, backed by some other national studies, public administration continues to be very attractive to young people, as half of them claim that they would choose to be employed in the public sector. Compared to 2011 data, there is a slight increase from 25 to 33 percent of young people who want to be employed in the private sector. Young people have different preferences for their future professions but still like traditional ones as teachers, economists, physicians and architects / engineers. While in this study it turned out that the ideal job for young people, based on their preferences was opening a personal business (34.7%). And for this, the two groups (both employed and unemployed students) were in the same opinion. Work in the public sector resulted second preference for the participants of this study, with 28.6%. The third preference, which also involved a significant percentage of participants (21.4%), was work in an international corporation. International corporations generally offer very good salary and working conditions, so selecting it from a part of students as an ideal job is not a coincidence. While work in a private company and work in a nonprofit organization has not been very popular among participants of this study, each is selected by 4.1% of the participants. Selecting free entrepreneurship as the ideal work for these young people can be considered an interesting finding in this study. We say this based on previous national studies in Albania, in which young people have always expressed that they prefer to work in the public administration. Even if we refer to international studies, free enterprise is a job that is generally not preferred by young people. A recent Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2016) study showed that for many young Europeans, more than half of the respondents (52%) said they did not want to start their own business. Only one in five young people (22%) would like to start a new business but consider it very difficult. Only a quarter of European young people are more proactive in launching a business (5% have a business, 17% intend to open one in the future, and 3% have tried to start a business but were delivered because it was very

difficult). The highest percentage of respondents who expressed their desire to become entrepreneurs were recorded in Lithuania (32%) and Romania (33%), while Germany (11%) and Greece (11%) were the lowest. The country with the lowest percentage of young people who started a business is Ireland (only 2%). Eurostat data for self-employed youth identify similar patterns. The lowest percentage of self-employed youth of the age group 20-24 is occupied by Germany (1.8%) and Ireland (1.7%). On the other hand, Italy (11.8%) and Romania (11.6%) have the highest percentage of self-employment of young people. Therefore, considering these youth trends in Albania and in the world, and comparing with the findings of this study, we can say that the fact that the students of this study (the Master of Science students of the Department of Labor and Social Policy) prefer more working in their own business, may be an indication of the entrepreneurial spirit of these students and this is certainly a positive indicator. Also positive is the fact that these students, unlike the majority of Albanian youth, do not regard public administration as the ideal work. So they are aware that the public sector is not necessarily the best possible option for them, there are many other jobs that can provide much better working conditions than the public administration (in profit, in career development opportunities etc).

Job Search Characteristics

According to ILO (2013), for a person to be called an active job seeker, he must have taken specific steps during job search. These steps are divided into: formal methods and informal methods. Formal methods include: enrollment at work offices; application to future employers; control of work sites, markets, factories, farms etc; placing or responding to advertisements in newspapers; being in search of a land, building, machinery or equipment to open a free enterprise; engages to provide financial resources; apply for for permission or license etc. Informal methods include asking for help to find work from friends and relatives.

Based on the ILO, generally students are a category that even though they may be looking for a job during school, do not seek it with the same intensity as an adult who is not in school relations. This ILO conclusion was also confirmed by our study, which identified some interesting details about the job search process of these students: the majority of young people in this study had 1-2 months looking for work and only 17.7% of them were/had been long-term jobseekers. However, it was noticed that the employed students of this study were generally unemployed for only a short period of time, while unemployed students are mostly long-term unemployed. But this difference is not statistically significant. On average, students have made 3.49 total job applications and 2.47 interviews. Employed students have a lower average than the unemployed in applications (respectively 3.17 and 3.76), but have a higher average of the given interviews (2.6 and 2.35 respectively). But neither these differences are statistically significant. Regarding job enrollment, the majority of young people (66%), both the employed and the unemployed, have never been registered with the employment offices. However, the unemployed have a higher percentage of those enrolled, although this difference is not statistically significant. This figure is also supported by the NES (National Employment Service), which for 2015 reports that, at the country level, only 24% of the total jobseekers in the labor offices were young. This is a very small percentage which also indicates the inactivity of job search by young people in our country. Various studies in the world also indicate the inactivity of young people in job search. Youth workforce and labor force participation rates continue to decline, as enrollment in higher education has increased. Between 1991 and 2014, the

distribution of active young people (employed or unemployed) to the young population decreased by 11.6% (from 59% to 47.3%) compared with a 1% decrease in the participation rate of the adult workforce. The youth employment ratio with the global population - the distribution of the working age population that is employed - has decreased by 2.7% from 2007 to 2014 (from 43.9% to 41.2%). The trends of the fall of this report are closely related to the growth rates of participation in education (ILO, 2015). However, it is also noticed that long-term unemployment (European Commission, 2015) has also been steadily rising among young people. For youth of the age group 20-24, the unemployment rate (EU-28 average) increased from 6.5% in 2011 to 7.7% in 2014 (+18.5%). For the age group 25-29, the increase was from 4.9% in 2011 to 5.9% in 2014 (+20.4). Regarding rejected jobs, 60.5% of respondents reported having rejected previous jobs and 39.5% did not. Among them, it is noted that the employees have rejected more than the unemployed (67.5% and 54.3% respectively), however this difference is not statistically significant. These figures clearly indicate the lack of readiness of young people in this study to accept any type of job. Regarding the readiness of these young people to accept a job, most of them (39.5%) would be willing to accept a job only if it was stable, well-paid and appropriate for their level of qualification, over 31% would accept any kind of job provided it was appropriate for their level of qualification, over 17% provided it was well paid and only 7% were willing to accept any type of job regardless of the conditions. So young people in this study generally have high aspirations and expectations regarding their employment. However, a finding of this study is the fact that although they expressed high expectations for their employment, the minimum wage under which they would not accept a job is a relatively small salary, on average 26016.39 lek. We say a small salary, given the fact that the minimum wage in our country for 2015 was 22000 lek, which is a salary slightly lower than the minimum wage expressed by the participants of this study. From this we realize that although the young people of this study say they have high expectations for their job, these expectations are not so high. Between the two groups of this study (employed and unemployed students), another interesting finding is found, where employed students have defined as a minimum wage a lower wage than unemployed students, respectively, the average of the minimum wage for the employed students was 23344.83 lek while for unemployed 28437.50 lek. So employed youth, although they currently have a job, have lower claims on the minimum wage than unemployed young people. And this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Taking the trigger from this finding, further studies could be interesting to assess the existence or not of a causal link between the level of youth employment claims and their working status.

Employment Migration: Most young people in this study (41.9%) have not considered migrating to find a job. However, a large percentage of them (around 34%) thought of moving to another country for employment. None of the young people have considered moving to a town or rural area to find a job, although their employment opportunities in the profession may be greater in these areas than in the capital. Interesting in these data is the high percentage of young people currently in work (35%) and again seek to migrate abroad to find a job. This can be explained by the fact that most of employed youth in this study currently work on a temporary job, and do not feel very confident about keeping the job after the end of the contract. Also, another explanation may be the desire expressed by these young employees to change their workplace in the future in order to grow in career. And perhaps they consider hiring

abroad a better opportunity to achieve this career growth. However, this interpretation leads to another problem, even greater in this case, which is related to the limping of our labor market. If Albanian youth do not see our job market as a good opportunity to grow in the career, and aim for overseas departure as a better option, the country's labor force and economically active population risks shrinking. This will bring even greater problems for the Albanian country and society. Therefore, taking this fact into consideration by policy-makers is of great importance.

The benefit of the education obtained in finding a job: 50% of students consider their education to be very useful in finding a job, 46.5% as somewhat useful, 1.4% as useless and 2.8% stated that they did not know if the education received is or not useful in finding a job. So most of the participants consider the education as very important in their employment. Employed students value more the education obtained than unemployed students. Among the employees, 62.5% of them consider it very useful in finding a job, while among the unemployed, 54.3% consider it somewhat useful. However, this difference is not statistically significant. Also, when students were asked if they would continue their schooling in the future, 40.7% of them said they intend to continue school at a later stage, and 40.7% still do not know whether to continue or not. Only 18.6% do not intend to return to school again. The interesting fact here lies in the difference (statistically significant, $p < 0.001$) between employed and unemployed youth. Unlike what could be expected, in the first 40.7%, the employed youth predominate, while in the second the unemployed youth. Respectively, among the employed 62.5% stated that they intend to continue school at a later stage and among the unemployed 54.3% do not know yet what they will do. It seems, therefore, that employed students consider more than unemployed students to continue their education and appreciate more its usefulness in their work. This probably relates to the fact that unemployed students have not yet managed to use their diploma and apply the knowledge learned during school because they do not have a job. While employed students may have understood the value of this diploma during the various work processes. The value of education in youth employment has also been identified in other national and international studies. The latest INSTAT (2015) survey for youth identifies that the category of managers, professionals and technicians (highly qualified professions) is the only group of professions that has grown in absolute and relative terms between 2011 and 2014, while the group of profession involving workers in agriculture has lost most of the employed persons in relative and absolute terms during this period, and this is explained by the increase in the percentage of highly educated young people. Also, global studies show that a young person with higher education has the potential to complete the school-to-work transition to 1/3 of the time it takes for a teenager with only basic education (ILO 2015).

Employed students: the characteristics of their jobs

During the lifecycle, young people usually complete education, but many of them at the same time go to work and create a professional career. However, young people are particularly hit by the consequences of the economic and financial crisis. The 2011 census, and especially the Labor Force Surveys (LFS), repeatedly provide a lot of information to assess the situation of young people in the labor market. Employment of young people in Albania is generally associated with some, unfortunately, not very positive features for them: unprotected employment; part-time employment; work with lower wages than adults, work at work that does not fit their level of education (this especially for young people with higher education) (INSTAT, 2015) etc. However,

these characteristics of youth work are evident not only among the Albanian youth but also among their peers in Europe and the world. In Europe, a growing percentage of young people in 2014 had only temporary, part-time or some other unrelated forms of employment compared to 2011. The part-time employment rate of young people aged 15-24 has grown almost anywhere in Europe during 2011-2014. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Lusburg and Slovakia the growth was more than 30%. The latest Eurostat data for 2014 confirm the growing trend in recent years in the proportion of 15-24 year olds working part-time. In 2014, one in three 15-24 year old employees worked part-time (European Commission, 2015). Also globally, 20.7% of young people employed in OECD countries worked less than 30 hours a week (part-time) in 2000 compared to 30.1% in 2013, so there is a significant increase over time of recruiting young people at work with reduced time. Also, the distribution of youth to part-time involuntary work grew from 12.2% in 2007 to 17.1% in 2010 before falling again to 14.8% in 2013. Another characteristic of young people employed in the developing world is poverty. In 2013, more than 1/3 (37.8%) of young people employed in the developing world were poor (17.7% in extreme poverty and 20.1% in moderate poverty). In this year, about 169 million young people were living with less than \$ 2 a day. The number went to 286 million if the calculations included young people who worked and lived under \$ 4 a day. In most low-income countries, two to three (66.3%) younger workers were in vulnerable employment, as well as independent employees or contributing family members (unpaid). Another 4.3% was paid on a casual basis and 2.1% on temporary (non-casual) jobs, creating a total of 72.5% in "irregular employment". This compared with an average 34.5% in irregular employment in the seven countries with an average income and 41.2% in the eight countries with moderately low incomes. As regards informal youth employment (ILO, 2014), on average three out of four young employees (75.4%) aged 15-29 work in informal employment. However, there are significant differences between states and regions. Young employees have larger opportunities to work formally in Eastern Europe and, to some extent, the Middle East (Jordan only) and Latin America and the Caribbean (with the exception of El Salvador and Peru). On the other hand, in sub-Saharan Africa, about 8 to 9.5 of ten young employees are in informal employment. Informality seems to be closely related to the country's economic development: The average distribution of young people in informal employment among low-income countries is much higher than the average high-income countries (respectively 90% and 62%).

While in this study, unlike the situation presented above, the employment situation of young people is a bit more optimistic. Most of the employed students (37.5% of them) work in office jobs, 20% in administrative work, 7.5% in managerial jobs (jobs that generally require a high level of education), 25% in marketing, 2.5 % work on handicrafts and crafts. So here it is noticed that most DLSP students are employed at work that fit their level of education, unlike what was presented in the latest INSTAT study, and this is a positive fact for them. However when asked about how they provided this job, most of them (25%) said they provided it through friends and relatives. This proves once again the important role of informal job search methods in Albania (Shtetiweb.org / CDI, 2015). The average of the hours that the subjects of this study work per week is 34.95 hours. So in general, subjects of this study work full-time (over 30 hours a week) and this is also a positive indicator compared to their peers in Albania, Europe and the world. Regarding the employment contract, most of them (57.5%) have a temporary employment contract, 35% have a permanent contract and

7.5% do not have a contract at all. On this contract, most of the participants (32.5%) stated that they are not happy with their contract because they do not give the security they need at work. Also, when young people were asked about job security, 45% of the subjects said they were likely to keep their jobs for the next 12 months, while 55% have stated that: either is likely but is not safe, or is unlikely or they does not know. So most young people are not sure if they will keep their jobs. Here we note that the problem of temporary work is evident even among young people of this study. This lack of security for employment after the end of the contract made them still in transition for a sustainable job.

The average income earned by the subjects of this study per month from their work is 37437.5 lek. If we compare the average wage and the minimum wage in Albania for 2015 (INSTAT, 2016) (respectively 54,000 lek and 22,000 lek), we note that youth wage is significantly lower than the average wage in our country and also significantly higher than the minimum wage. Thus, the salary of young people is an intermediate between the average wage and the minimum wage of the country. However, let us consider this a positive indicator, given the fact that at the moment they were asked, these young people had not yet completed the school and entered the labor market with a salary of about 40,000 lek in a country with an economic situation like Albania, cannot be considered a negative indicator for them.

Regarding the various benefits at work to which subjects have or have not access, generally, most participants have access to the main benefits at work (contribution to social security, annual leave, old-age insurance, sick leave allowance, maternity leave, coverage of medical insurance, termination of all financial obligations by the employer in case of dismissal) and only a very small percentage (7.5%) work in informal jobs (uninsured). Here we see that the situation is again more positive for these young people than the trend of young people globally, where informal work was considered one of their biggest problems. All of the above elements explain the next finding in this study, which states that 85% of the employed subjects of this study are mostly satisfied with their current work and only 15% are mostly dissatisfied. But even though most of them are satisfied with the job, most (80%) hope to change this job in the future, and 20% do not want or are not sure. However, the main reason why they want to change their work is not dissatisfaction with current work, but the desire to have a better career prospect. This is another positive indicator that shows the high aspirations of these students in terms of their career performance.

2.6. Key Findings, Conclusions

This study points out that most of the students, both unemployed and employed, are currently in a 'transition state'. 73.5% of participants were still in transition, 14.3% had transited into a stable job, and 12.2% were still in transition not yet started. Unemployed students are either part of the 'transition' phase, or in the 'transition not yet started' phase. Over 79% of students who are not employed are really unemployed and looking for a job, so they are considered 'in transition'. The rest of them (about 21%) are inactive students, or non-job-seeking students, so they have not yet entered the transition (not yet transited). While the employees are either 'transiting to a stable job' or 'in transition'. Among the employed, 65% are considered 'in transition' because their work does not provide sustainability (temporary work contract or do not have a

contract at all) and the rest (35%) can be considered 'transited' (with a permanent employment contract)¹.

Regarding the school-to-work combination, in total 72.4% of students have worked or continue to work while continuing the school. Among the students currently unemployed, 53.4% of them have a working experience, while 46.6% have never worked during the school. The main motive that drives students to work during school is "to provide income", over 59% responded in this form. Both for employed and currently unemployed students, this was the predominant motive. The ideal work for young people, based on their preferences, was opening a personal business (34.7%). And for this, the two groups (both employed and unemployed students) have had the same view. Work in the public sector resulted second preference for the participants of this study, with 28.6%. The third preference, which also involved a significant percentage of participants (21.4%), was work in an international corporation.

Job search features: 24.4% of young people have a duration of 1-2 months looking for work, about 20% have 3-6 months and 17.4% over a year. Between the two groups there is a difference, where most of the employed students (30%) have stayed for 1-2 months looking for a job, while the unemployed in most cases (over 26%) are long-term unemployed (over a year looking for work). However, this difference is not statistically significant. On average, students have made 3.49 job applications and 2.47 interviews. Employed students have a lower average than the unemployed ones in applications (respectively 3.17 and 3.76).

Based on the conditions of youth to accept a job, most of them (39.5%) would be willing to accept a job only if it was stable, well-paid and appropriate for their level of qualification, over 31 % would accept any type of job provided it was appropriate for their level of qualification, over 17% provided it was well paid and only 7% were willing to accept any type of job regardless of the conditions. So young people in this study generally have high aspirations and expectations regarding their employment.

Most young people, both the employed and the unemployed, have a minimum wage under which they would refuse a job and this salary is on average 26016.39 lek. Between the two groups there is an interesting finding where the employed students have defined as a minimum wage a lower wage than the unemployed students, respectively 23344.83 lek and 28437.50 lek. So employed youth, although they currently have a job, have lower claims on the minimum wage than unemployed ones. And this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Employment Migration: Most young people in this study (41.9%) have not considered migrating to find a job. However, a large percentage of them (around 34%) thought of moving to another country for employment. Interestingly in the study is the high percentage of young people currently in work (35%) and again seek to migrate abroad to find a job.

Most students (50%) consider education to be very useful in finding a job, 46.5% as being somewhat useful, 1.4% as useless and 2.8% do not know. Employed students value more the education received than unemployed students. Among the employed, 62.5% of them consider it very useful in finding a job, while among the unemployed, 54.3% consider it somewhat useful. Also, 40.7% of students said they intend to continue school at a later stage and other 40.7% do not know if they will continue or not. Only 18.6% do not intend to return to school again. In the first 40.7%, the

¹ See transition phases according to: ILO (2013), Labour market transition of young women and men in Cambodia, ILO, Geneva.

employed youth predominate, while in the second the unemployed youth. So employed students consider further education more than unemployed students (statistically significant difference, $p < 0.001$).

Most of the currently employed students currently work in jobs that fit their level of education (office jobs, administrative work, managerial jobs). Most of them also provided this job through friends and relatives. Generally, students work on a temporary employment contract, have an average working hour per week of 34.95 hours and the average income earned is 37437.5 lek. Most have access to the main benefits at work and only a very small percentage (7.5%) work in informal jobs (uninsured). They are largely satisfied with their current job but still hope to change it in the future. Regarding job security, most of them are not sure if they will keep their jobs for the next year.

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