

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC ASPECTS REGARDING EMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PETROȘANI AND AT NATIONAL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT: *The paper presents the problems met by the graduates of the bachelor program in Petroșani University and at national level, promotion 2009, in looking for employment and finding a job.* The correlation/lack of correlation between the academic offer of professionals and demand on the market is also observed. The demand is much under the offer, the employment market absorbing in the respective professional education only 15% of the graduates at institutional level and 27% at national level.*

KEY WORDS: *workplace; competency; work contract; profession; salary; property.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *I23*

The aspects analyzed in this paper are comparatively shown between the appreciations of the graduates of the University of Petroșani and those at national level.

The situation after graduation is different between the two batches of graduates, regarding employment in a corresponding field of education, those at national level are more apt to be employed in places where they might have an activity corresponding to their education in the bachelor study period (Figure 1). A little more

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than a quarter managed to find a corresponding job, while only 15% of those at institutional level managed to put to good use the accumulated competencies.

Meanwhile, the share of those employed in the field is rather small, the graduates being forced to continue their former activity or to look for a new field of employment.

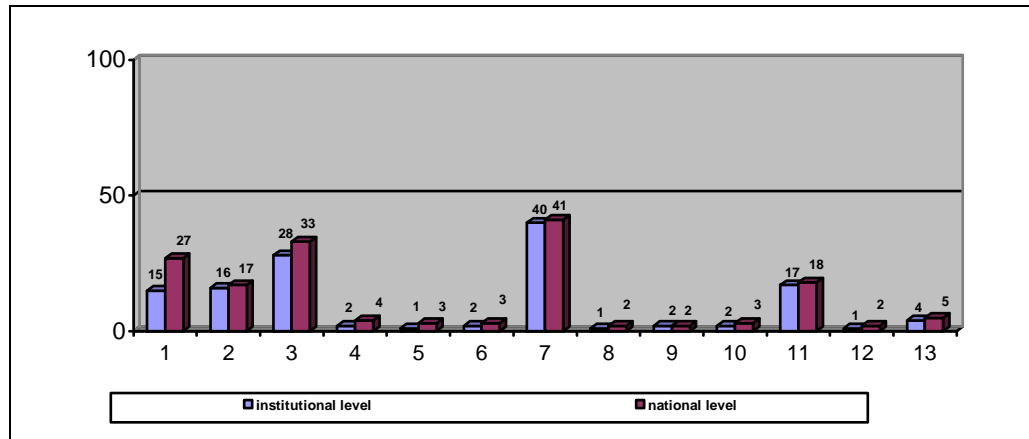


Figure 1. Situation after graduation (%) (multiple answers)

- 1 – my job corresponds to my licence program
- 2 – I am employed in a different job
- 3 – I continued my former activity
- 4 – I started my own business
- 5 – I performed a stage of practical activities out
- 6 – I started to work as volunteer
- 7 – I attended master or other post-graduate courses
- 8 – I am PhD student
- 9 – I am on maternal leave
- 10 – I used to be a housewife
- 11 – I looked for a job but I couldn't find any
- 12 – I went on along journey
- 13 – other

A significant share of the respondents are either employed in the field, or did not succeed in getting a job, or continued their master or other post-graduate studies .

Table 1 shows the situation per fields of study.

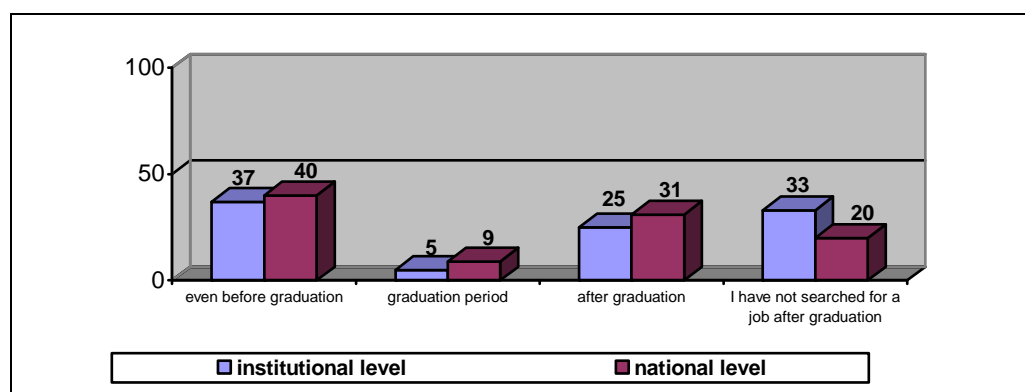
Table 1. Estimation of development of competencies after graduation, per fields of study (%)

Development of competencies	Exact sciences		Social and political sciences		Economic sciences		Engineering sciences	
	I	N	I	N	I	N	I	N
In very small degree	--	2	--	1	--	1	--	1
In small degree	--	5	4	4	7	4	5	4
In adequate degree	9	19	13	18	28	20	25	22
In great degree	27	36	38	33	28	33	37	35
In very great degree	64	38	45	44	37	42	33	38
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

I – institutional level

N – national level

Most of the subjects - at both levels - expressed their desire to find a job, already before graduation and then afterwards, this preoccupation being almost abandoned in the period of their studies. One third of those at institutional level and one fifth of those at national level resigned from one reason or other, to keep looking for a job (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Beginning of looking for a job at institutional and national level (%)**

The range of methods used in looking for a job after graduation was very wide, but the frequency of approach was very different (Figure 3). Between the institutional and national level there are no special discrepancies regarding the method used, the greatest being 9% in favor of national level in using online job portals. As a matter of fact, this method is on the first place at national level (38%), followed by family, friends or connections assistance (37%), and submitting applications for a vacant position (36%).

At institutional level, the most frequently used methods were:

- application for a vacant position 37%;

- assistance from family, friends, connections 37%;
- online portals for jobs 29%.

A significant share was contacting employers, used by one quarter of the graduates at both levels

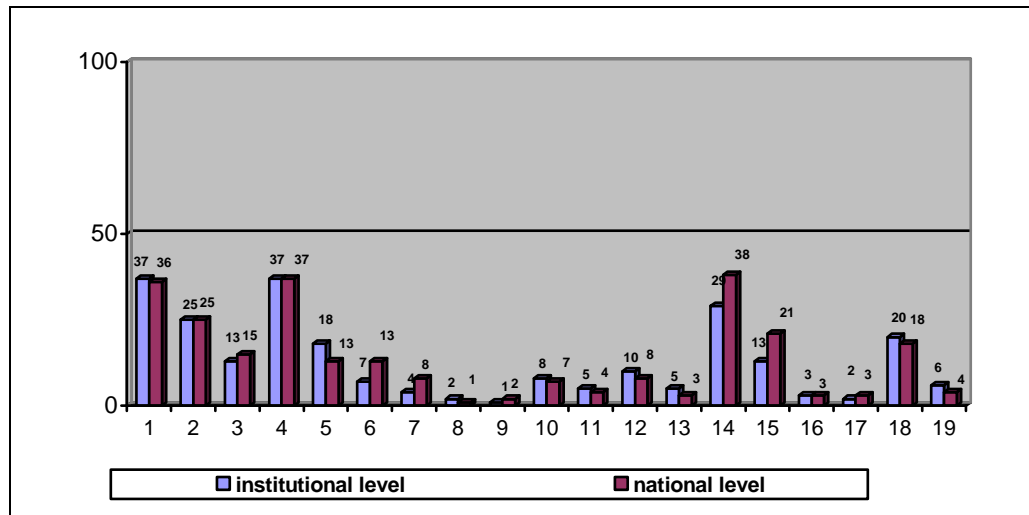


Figure 3. Modalities used to find a job after graduation, at institutional and national level (% , multiple answers)

1 – I submitted an application for a vacant job.
2 – I contacted employers from my own initiative, without knowing of any available

- 3 – I was contacted by an employer.
4 – with the help of the family, friends and connections.
5 – by public employment agencies(ANOFM).
6 – by private recruitment and placing agencies.
7 – by County School Inspectorate.
8 – by employment during academic studies.
9 – with the help of the university.
10 – by means of online professional social networks.
11 – by means of online social networks.
12 – by means of discussion groups and e-mail lit on the internet.
13 – by means of blogs.
14 – by means of portals for online jobs.
15 – by means of work fairs.
16 – I work for family business.
17 – I started my own business.
18 – I work for the same employer as before graduation.
19 – other

Per field of study, at institutional level, the situation is the following (Table 2):
Exact sciences:

- submitting application form 56%;
- online job portals 33%.

Political and social sciences:

- application for employment 40%;
- with the help of the family, friends or connections 37%.

Economic sciences:

- with the help of the family, friends or connections 48%;
- application for employment 35%.

Engineering sciences:

- application for employment 36%;
- online job portals 33%.

The situation at national level is almost identical.

Table 2. Modalities used to find a job after graduation at institutional level, per fields of study (% , multiple answers)

Modalitie used to find a job	Exact sciences	Social and political sciences	Economic sciences	Engineering sciences
I submitted application form for a vacant job	56	40	35	36
I contacted employers of my own initiative, without knowing if there were vacant jobs	22	11	24	30
I was contacted by an employer	0	11	10	17
With the help of family, friends, connections	22	37	48	32
By public employment agencies(ANOFM)	22	9	15	22
By private recruitment and placement agencies	0	3	6	9
By County School Inspectorate	22	6	4	1
By employment during academic studies	0	0	3	2
With the help of the university	0	0	0	2
By professional social networks (ex. LinkedIn)	11	3	10	8
By online social networks(ex. Facebook)	22	3	6	4
By internet discussion groups and e-mail lists	0	11	6	13
By blogs	0	3	7	4
By online job portals	33	26	25	33
By job fairs	11	6	15	13
I work for family business	0	0	4	4
I started my own business	0	0	0	4
I work for the same employer as before graduation	11	14	24	20
Other	0	11	6	6

The most efficient method was, for both levels, the “relational capital” (family, friends, connections), credited by one fifth of the respondents, followed by “application for a vacant job” (Figure 4).

That is, not only at the level of perception, but in term of efficiency as well, the “relational capital” is still on the first place in finding a job, in detriment of competency. It is true, that mentalities change slowly, but in regard to the aspect

referred to, one can say that one cannot notice at least a slight attenuation. In Romania, democracy is written in theory, but in practice it is proscribed.

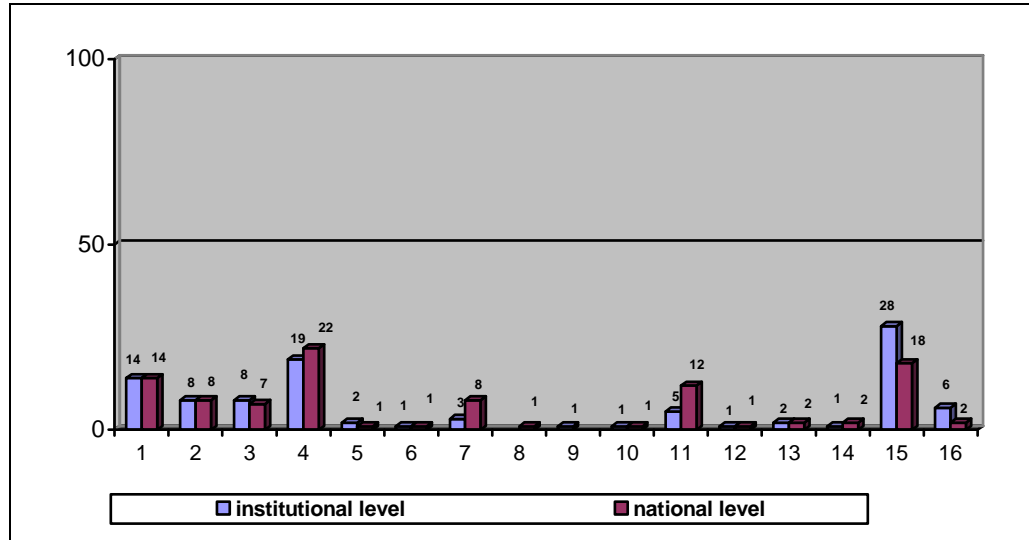


Figure 4. The most efficient method of getting a first job after graduation, at institutional and national level (%)

- 1 – I applied for a vacant job
- 2 – I contacted employers of my own initiative without knowing of an available job
- 3 – I was contacted by an employer
- 4 – With the help of family, friend, connections
- 5 – by public employment agencies(ANOFM)
- 6 – by private recruitment and placement agencies.
- 7 – by County School Inspectorate
- 8 – with the help of the university
- 9 – by online social networks
- 10 – by internet discussion groups and e-mail lists
- 11 – by online job portals
- 12 – by job fairs
- 13 – I work for the family business
- 14 – I started my own job
- 15 – I work for the same employer as before graduation
- 16 – other

At institutional level, by fields of study (Table 3), the graduates of exact sciences did not benefit from relational assistance, this being major for engineers and economists. The university assistance at institutional level is non-existent, so is at national level (1%). If beginning with this study, the universities seem to be interested in the situation of the graduates, they may find a way to help with their insertion in the job market.

More than half of the graduates (who found jobs) were employed in the first year after graduation (2009) at both levels (54% at institutional level and 58% at national level, respectively), the others in the following year.

Table 3. The most efficient method of getting the first job after graduation, at institutional level by study field (%)

The most efficient method of getting a first job	Exact sciences	Social and political studies	Economic sciences	Engineering sciences
I applied for a vacant job	40	26	11	11
I contacted employers of my own initiative, without knowing of an available job	0	9	5	10
I was contacted by an employer	0	9	7	9
With the help of family, friends, connections	0	9	20	22
By public placement agencies(ANOFM)	0	0	5	0
By private recruitment and placement agencies	0	0	2	1
By County School Inspectorate	40	4	2	1
By online social networks(ex. Facebook)	0	0	2	0
By internet group discussions and e-mail lists	0	4	0	0
By online job portals	0	4	2	8
By job fairs	0	4	0	1
I work for family business	0	0	5	1
I started my own business	0	0	2	1
I work for the same employer as before graduation	20	22	35	25
Other	0	9	2	9
Total	100	100	100	100

The motives/criteria on which they were employed are shown in Figure 4, where it is seen that the graduates assume the main role, by their personality, in getting a job, besides other criteria as well, among which the field of study and the program/specialization, which tend as value towards “in a great degree”. Previous work experience was also important, as well as the reputation of the university. If the personality of the graduates is on the first place in their personal success, the role played by the program of study in the structuring of the personality should also be taken into consideration.

It is interesting to notice that the most efficient method in getting a job after graduation, for both batches of subjects, was “with the help of family, friends, connections”, which we converted into “relational capital”, as a paradox, as success criterion in obtaining a job is less important.

What is difficult to understand, and has to give food for thought, is that some basic aspects such as the theme of the projects developed during the study period, the theme of the bachelor graduation paper, and more surprisingly, the grades obtained along the period of the study, mattered less in getting a job. This evaluation - in fact under-evaluation – can lead to a certain demobilization in obtaining good results during the studies.

As it is seen from the data in Figure 5, there are no significant differences between the two levels - institutional and national - regarding the evaluation of criteria that led to obtaining a job.

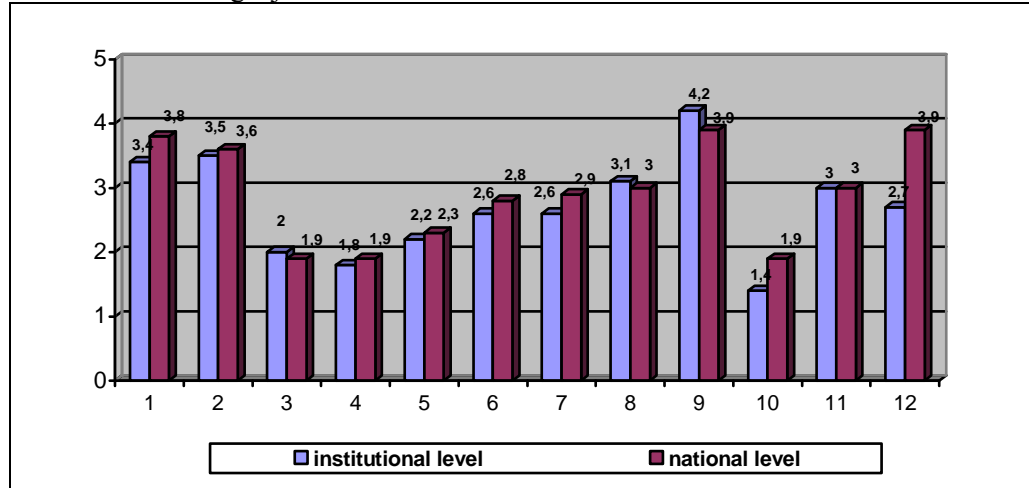


Figure 5. Criteria in obtaining a job at institutional and national level (arithmetical mean)

- 1 – field of study
- 2 – specialization/program of study
- 3 – theme of bachelor graduation paper
- 4 – theme of projects made during the studies
- 5 – grades obtained along the study period
- 6 – university reputation
- 7 – reputation of the faculty/department
- 8 – precious work experience
- 9 – my personality
- 10 - experience abroad
- 11 – my relational capital
- 12 – other

By field of study, we notice the following aspects:

At institutional level:

Exact sciences:

- on the first place is the graduate's personality (5), followed by the relational capital (4);
- not significant:
 - theme of the bachelor graduation paper
 - theme of projects
 - grades obtained along the study period
 - reputation of the university and faculty/department

Social and political sciences:

- on the first place is the graduate's personality (4,2), followed by the specialization/program of study (3,5);

- on the opposite side there are:
 - experience abroad
 - theme of the bachelor graduation paper and projects along the years of study

Economic sciences:

- personality of the graduate is still on the first place (4,5), followed by the specialization/ program of study (3,8);
- not significant are experience abroad, theme of project and grades obtained along the years of study

Engineering sciences:

- personality stays unbeatable as well as in other fields (4), followed by the area of study (3,4) and specialization (3,4);

At national level:

Exact sciences:

- it is the only situation for both levels, and all four domains, where the personality is no longer on the first place, being substituted by the field of study (4,1) and specialization (3,9). Without being judgmental, this is the situation that “should be the right one”;
- As in institutional level, experience abroad and the theme of the bachelor graduation paper and project are almost totally unimportant.

Social and political sciences:

- on the first place is personality (4), followed by study and specialization (3,4);
- the same criteria mentioned for other domains are poorly estimated.

Economic sciences:

- on the first places are personality (4,2), followed by fields (3,6);
- discredited are the theme of the bachelor graduation paper, the theme of the project and experience abroad.

Engineering sciences:

- personality was “heavily weighed” (4), followed by field (3,8) and specialization (3,6);
- appreciated in a “small degree” are experience abroad, the theme of the bachelor graduation paper and projects.

Parallel jobs have only 9% of the graduates at institutional level and 7% at national level.

As far as the type of the work contract is concerned, at the first employment after graduation, for both levels, contracts for undetermined period are the most.

The situation stays the same in the field of study as well, no significant discrepancies being noted at both levels.

The share of the other situations is insignificant (Figure 6).

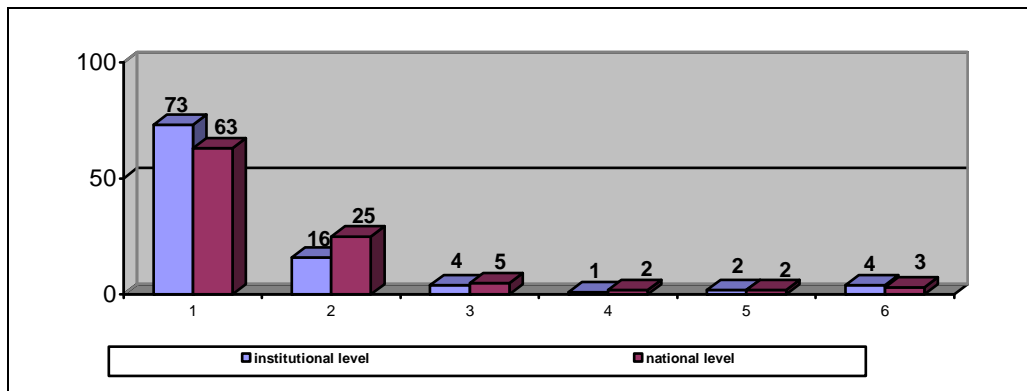


Figure 6. Type of work contract at institutional and national level, after graduation of the study program (%)

- 1 – for undetermined period
- 2 – for determined period
- 3 – without contract
- 4 – free-lancer
- 5 – own business
- 6 – other form of contract

Figure 7 shows that there is a relative balance regarding brute income of employees at the two levels, the most significant being in the range of 1001-1500 lei (in favor of the national level).

Joining the two income ranges, it results that:

- up to and including 1000 lei approximately one third of the graduates are found for each level;
- between 1001-2000 lei, the institutional level has a share of 39%, and the national one 47%;
- up to and including 2000 lei approximately three quarters of the graduates are found.

One can notice a rather low brute, as well as net income. (Figure 8)

Thus :

- almost half of the graduates have up to and including 1000 lei (both batches);
- one third at institutional level and 40% at national level benefit of sums in the range of 1001 and 2000 lei;
- the share of those who gain more than 2000 lei is rather small, with the specification that those at institutional level are 5% more than those at national level.

It is beyond any doubt, that more than half of the graduates employed have financial difficulties, not to mention those who have no jobs whatsoever.

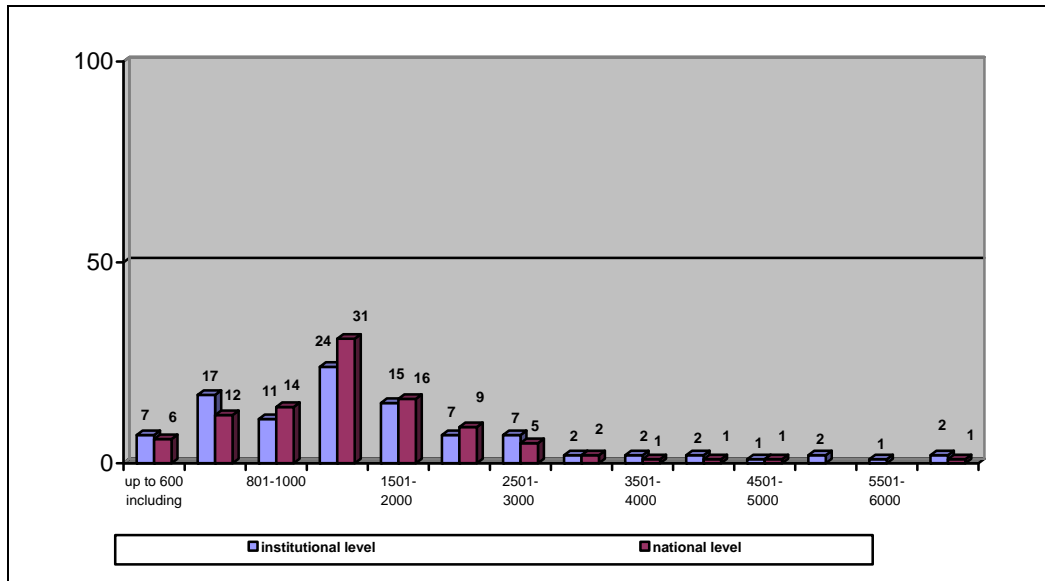


Figure 7. Brute income at the first job after graduation (%)

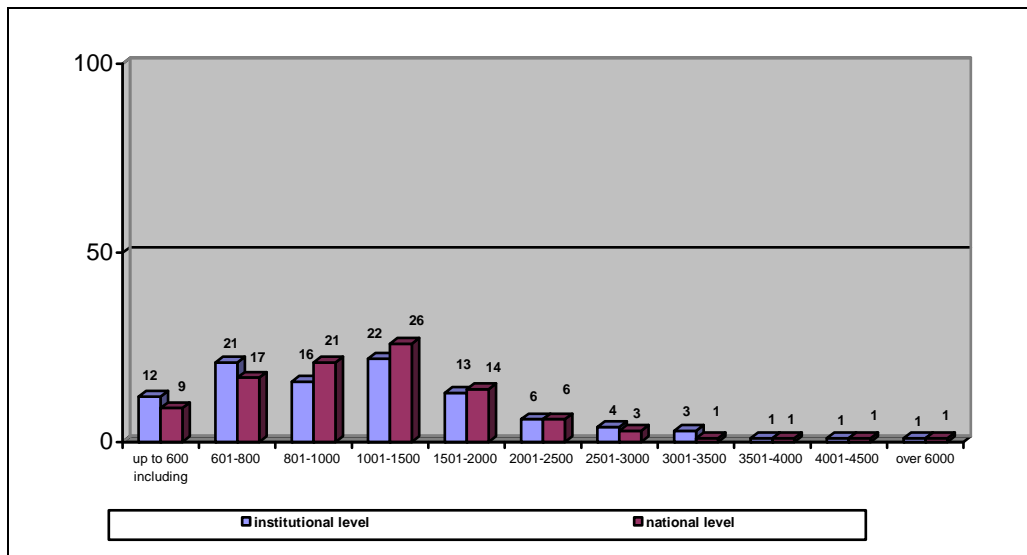


Figure 8. Net income at the first job after graduation (%)

The conclusion is that competencies acquired in the years of study are helpful for the graduates even if they do not work in the domain they were prepared for. (of course not in the same degree as if they worked in the field).

And if we recall self-appreciation (own personality), which played the first part in the criteria of employment, then we should emphasize the role of the study program in the structuring/organizing the personality.

The form of ownership of the company/organization where the present job is found (Fig. 9) is both at institutional and at national level, mostly private, with the specification that the share at national level is 13% higher than the institutional level (56% and 43%). Almost one quarter of the employees work in budgeted public institutions.

At a much lower percentage are the public institutions with mixed funding (budget and other sources) and the forms with mixed capital (state and private), with the specification that these attract graduates two and three times more at institutional and national level, respectively.

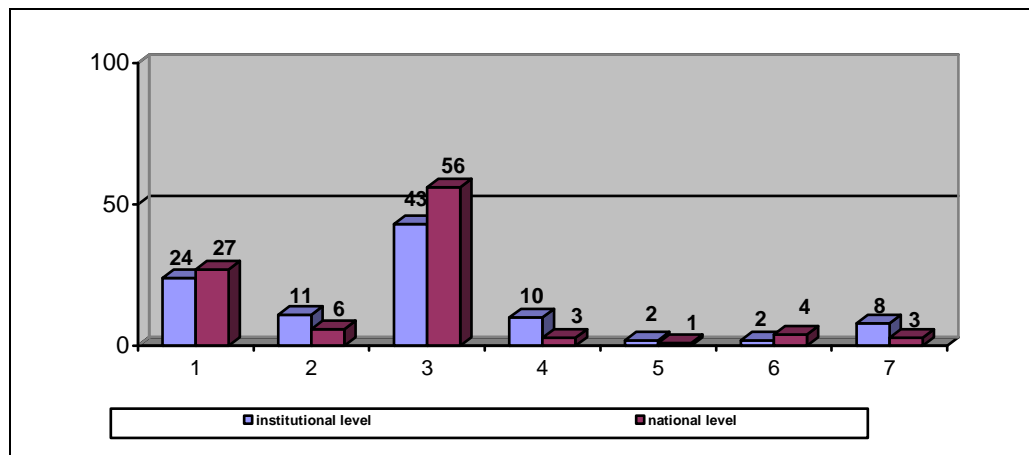


Figure 9. Company/organization form of ownership (%)

- 1 – budget finance public institution
- 2 – mixed financed public institution (budget and other sources)
- 3 – totally private company
- 4 – company with mixed capital (state and private)
- 5 – NGO or religious foundation
- 6 – own company
- 7 – other

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of data and interpretation of results, from the entire study performed:

- at institutional level, almost half of the graduates have bachelor studies in engineering studies, one third in economic field and much less in social sciences and exact sciences. The results are normal, considering that there are three faculties functioning within the University of Petroșani: two with engineering profile and a faculty of science, where economic studies are dominant;
- the financing form of the study program is distributed in approximately the same way for the two levels – national and institutional –, with the specification that financing from the budget is less significant for the institutional level;

-
- out of the graduates that attended paid studies, both at institutional and at national level, the highest shares – more than two thirds – are found in economic sciences, and less in engineering studies;
 - the 2009 promotion graduates that participated in the study finalized their studies almost entirely in the standard period, only 5% and 6%, respectively, delayed their study, the main reasons being, at both levels, failed exams and their activity at the workplace;
 - as far as teaching-learning method evaluation is concerned, for both levels, the most appreciated method is the professor-student conversation during the course/seminar, with a slight superiority at institutional level, and the least appreciated, also for both levels, the participation in research projects;
 - the situation after graduation is different for the two batches of graduates, regarding employment in an adequate domain of study, those at national level benefiting in a larger degree of having activities according to their specialization during the bachelor studies program, they managing to find adequate jobs a little more than one quarter, while at institutional level, only 15% managed to put to good use the acquired competencies;
 - the desire of finding a job was manifest, for most of the subject – at both levels – already before graduation, and then after graduation, this preoccupation being almost abandoned during the studies. One third of those at institutional level and one fifth of those at national level, from one reason or other, gave up looking for a new job anymore;
 - the duration of looking for the first job after graduation, for the two batches of graduates, is similar, being around 6 months, before and after graduation;
 - the range of modalities used to find a job after graduation was very extended, but the frequency of approach is very different. Between the institutional and national level there are no significant differences regarding the method used, the greatest being 9% in favor of the national level in using online job portals. Other frequently used methods were submitting applications for vacant jobs and help from family, friends, connections;
 - assessment regarding criteria on which they were employed points out that the graduates assume the main part in getting the job, due to their personality, besides other criteria as well, among which the domain of their study and the program/specialization. Previous work experience also played a part, as well as the reputation of the university;
 - the present situation of the job is almost identical for both levels – institutional and national – approximately two thirds of the graduates being employed (including their own employer or in other stages of education), a little more than 40% were attending post-graduate studies (master, PhD), and one fifth were looking for a job.
 - the beginning of the activity at the present job, for those employed at the moment the study was performed, was mostly, for both levels, in the year of graduation and the next (2009 and 2010). In this period they started their activity for a little more than one third at institutional level (30%) and more than half at national level (55%);

- there are no significant differences – for both levels – between the present type of contract and that of the first job after graduation (in most of the cases being a contract for undetermined period); the number of working hours per week for the present job is approximately the same as for the first job after graduation (40 hours);
- this explanation is valid for the brute and net income at the present job compared to the first job after graduation. There is however a slight improvement of the financial situation, in general, in the sense that the share of those with a net income of more than 2000 lei increased by 4% for the institutional level and by 10% at national level;
- the form of property of the company/organization of the present job is mostly, both at institutional and at national level, totally private firm, with the specification that the share at national level is higher by 13% compared to the institutional level (56% and 43%). Approximately one quarter of the employers work in public institutions with budget funding, a much less percentage work in public institutions with mixed funding (budget and other sources) and mixed capital (state and private), with the specification that these attract two times and three times more graduates at institutional and national level, respectively.

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