

RESEARCH ON THE EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS AND YOUNG EMPLOYEES

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Abstract: *The world is changing at a fast pace and companies must keep up or step aside. Thus, the importance of work motivation and innovation is undeniable. Companies have to direct their attention to "ordinary" employees, who, provided the suitable motivational framework, can become "exceptional". But what do employers expect from their young employees? What does the young generation want in a job? Is there a gap between employers and employees? In order to answer these questions, we conducted two studies. The first is a qualitative research, using content analysis as research method, in which we analyzed 100 online recruitment advertisements for entry-level positions. Only jobs that require higher education were taken into consideration. The employer requirements collected from the ads were divided into technical and personal characteristics and then analyzed. The second study aims at identifying the young generations' expectations. It uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The studied population consists of 3rd year students. Questionnaires were sent out to universities from different geographical areas and two focus groups were conducted in order to identify the expectations of the young generation of employees. The results of the two studies are discussed. One of the main research findings is that there is an inconsistency between what employers and young employees want. The main discontent of students refers to the significant importance given by employers to work experience, even for jobs where it would not be necessary.*

Keywords: young generation, employers, skills, expectations, Romania.

JEL classification: M12, J24, M51

1. Introduction

To grant importance to employees has become a modern discourse. Identifying employees needs and designing motivation schemes to answer to these needs is a main concern of researchers in the field of human resources management and of some (not many) companies. But the importance of work motivation and innovation is undeniable. Companies cannot afford “ordinary” employees, and must find the way to transform employees in “talents”. But what do employers expect from their young employees? What does the young generation want in a job? Is there a gap between employers and employees? In order to answer these questions, we conducted two studies.

2. Romanian employers' expectations research

2.1. Research methodology

To identify what Romanian employers expect from young employees, we conducted a qualitative research, using content analysis as research method. The purpose of this research was to identify characteristics that were desired by the employers when recruiting young employees. The research has been conducted in January-April 2016. 100 recruitment advertisements for entry-level positions have been selected, from two of the most important specialized sites: www.ejobs.com and www.bestjobs.com. Only jobs that require higher education were taken into consideration. The employer requirements collected from the ads were divided into technical and personal characteristics and then analyzed.

2.2 Results analysis

In total, the advertisements we analysed gathered 717 requirements, so that each advertisement had an average of 7 requirements. For a better image on the requirements, we have structured the mentioned characteristics in two categories: technical characteristics and personal characteristics. Thus, we have included requirements related to studies, experience, technical abilities, age, etc. in the technical characteristics category, while characteristics dealing with the person (communication, entrepreneurial spirit, negotiation, analytical thinking, etc.) have been included in the second category. In total, 6 technical and 24 personal characteristics have been analysed in the 100 advertisements. The two categories are displayed in Table no. 1.

Table 1: Structuring qualities, characteristics and attitudes the employer looks after

Technical characteristics	Personal characteristics
B type driver's license	Ability to assimilate information quickly
Business attire	Analytical and quick in decision making
Computer operating skills	Articulate and eloquent speaker
English language knowledge	Attention to details
Knowing a foreign language, other than English	Available to travel

Previous experience

Client oriented
Coordination abilities
Dynamic and performance oriented
Enthusiasm and willingness to learn
Flexibility
Focus on results
Initiative, imagination,
entrepreneurial spirit, innovation
Logical thinking, good memory
Loyalty
Multi-tasking
Negotiation skills, persuasion
Planning and organizing skills
Pleasant person, dynamic,
spontaneous
Positive attitude
Professionalism, reliability,
punctuality, responsible person
Self-motivated and proactive
Strong communication abilities
Teamwork
Working under pressure, time
management

Source: author research

Table no. 2 shows the hierarchy of qualities, characteristics or behaviours employers are looking for in young employees, as well as the frequency with which these appear in the analysed advertisements. Out of the first ten in the hierarchy, three are technical characteristics, and seven mentioning personal characteristics. *Computer operating skills* is the most sought after employee characteristic; this was mentioned in 87 of the 100 advertisements analysed. *Communication skills* seem to be also very important for Romanian employees because 67 advertisements contained this requirement for entry-level positions. *Prior work experience*, even though we focus our research on entry-level position ads, is third in our hierarchy. 56 advertisements contained a requirement of previous work experience varying between 1 to 5 years.

Table 2: Hierarchy of requirements sought after by employers and the frequency of appearance in the 100 analysed advertisements

No.	Searched quality, characteristic or behaviour	Number of ads in which it has been found (out of 100 ads)
1	Computer operating skills	87
2	Strong communication skills	67
3	<i>Previous experience</i>	56
4	Professionalism, reliability, punctuality, responsible person	51
5	English language knowledge	42
6	Planning and organizing skills	41
7	Teamwork	40
8	Attention to details/observant	39
9	Negotiation skills, persuasion	32
10	Pleasant person, dynamic, spontaneous	26
11	Initiative, imagination, entrepreneurial spirit, innovation	24
12	Working under pressure, time management	24
13	B type driver's license	19
14	Analytical and quick in decision making	16
15	Flexibility	15
16	Client oriented	15
17	Business attire	14
18	Coordination abilities	13
19	Available to travel	12
20	Multi-tasking	12
21	Self-motivated and proactive	11
22	Logical thinking, good memory	10
23	Ability to assimilate information quickly	9
24	Focus on results	9
25	Enthusiasm and willingness to learn	8
26	Articulate and eloquent speaker	7
27	Dynamic and performance oriented	7
28	Knowing a foreign language, other than English	4
29	Positive attitude	4
30	Loyalty	3

Source: author research

In the hierarchy of the top 5 most frequent requirements there are three technical and two personal characteristics (see figure 1), but the frequency of the technical characteristics is much greater than that of personal characteristics. „Computer operating skills” is the most sought after characteristic, while „previous experience” ranks third. „Strong communications skills” is the most important personal characteristic required by Romanian employers when recruiting young „new-entry” employees.

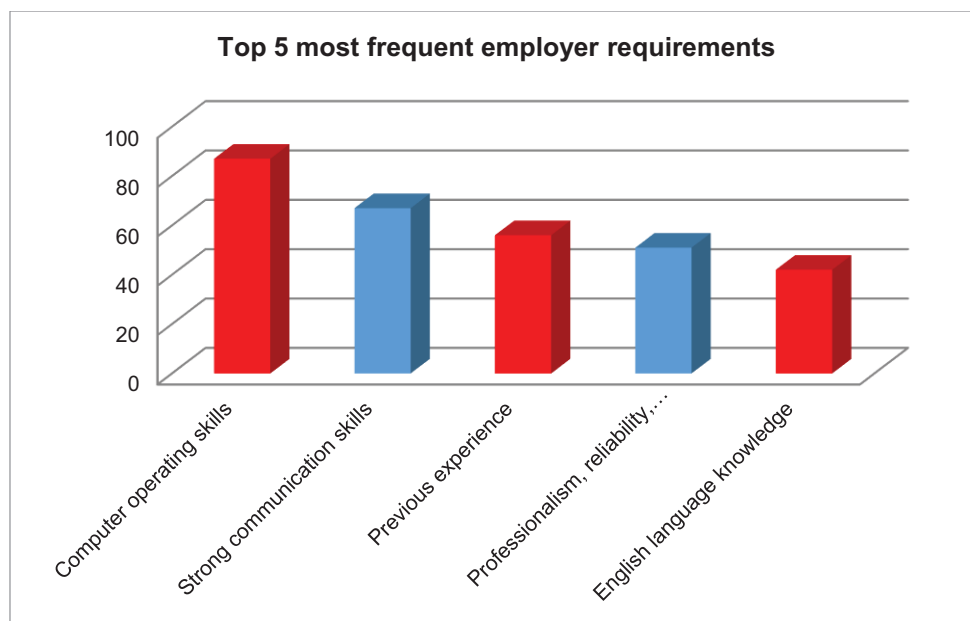


Figure 1: Top 5 most frequent employer requirements

Source: made by author

3. Expectations of young employees

While the first study is meant to identify the expectations of Romanian employers when recruiting young, fresh out of school employees, the second study aims at identifying the young generations' expectations. What do young employees look for in a job? What are their desires or dissatisfactions when it comes to applying for a job? The second research uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The studied population consists of 3rd year students. Questionnaires were sent out to universities from different geographical areas and two focus groups were conducted in order to identify the expectations of the young generation of employees.

Research methodology and results analysis

A. To identify what young employees would need to better engage in the workplace, we conducted a qualitative research using *focus group* as research tool. There were two focus groups conducted in two Romanian universities. This research is a continuation of other research whose main findings were published in

For each focus group there were 10 3rd year students selected. Men women ratio was equal in each focus-group. The students were asked to enunciate the conditions that would make them „give their best” in a job. The participants listed 49 job aspects that would make them more engaged in the workplace. To facilitate the analysis, we coded the conditions listed by the participants by labelling them. Table 4 contains the aspects enunciated by the participants and the label assigned.

Table 4: Conditions for working at full potential

Category	No of mentions (n=49)
Salary and assimilates	15
Effort-pay correlation	9
Efficient organization of work	7
Working hours	6
Actual work	6
Working conditions	3
Professional development	3
Interpersonal relations	2

Source: author research

The most frequent conditions listed relate to salary and other similar income categories. Some participants want higher wages or bonuses, while others are content with their payment on time. Also regarding the financial aspect is the category which is ranked second by number of appearances, the effort-remuneration correlation. This is somewhat expected given that the basis of effective pay system is to ensure fairness, equity and sufficiency of pay (Taylor and Taylor, 2011; Pink, 2009).

Work itself and working hours are not essential job aspects for the younger generation. These were mentioned only six times by participants, while working conditions and interpersonal relations are even less important.

B. To identify what are the desires or dissatisfactions when it comes to applying for a job of fresh out of school employees, we conducted a survey among students from different Romanian universities. The questionnaire consists of open-ended questions that should not hinder the freedom of expression of respondents. All in all 230 questionnaires were filled. Of the 230 3rd year respondents, 137 were female students and 93 were male students.

The most common dissatisfaction of respondents is related to the emphasis that Romanian employers place on *prior experience* of entry-level employees (see Figure 2). 82 percent of respondents complain that employers demand experience

even when not necessary, as well as for entry-level positions. The importance of previous experience was also highlighted in the recruitment advertisements analysed (see Table 2).

One other dissatisfaction refers to the *lack of importance attributed by employers to academic performance*. This aspect was mentioned by 65 percent of respondents.

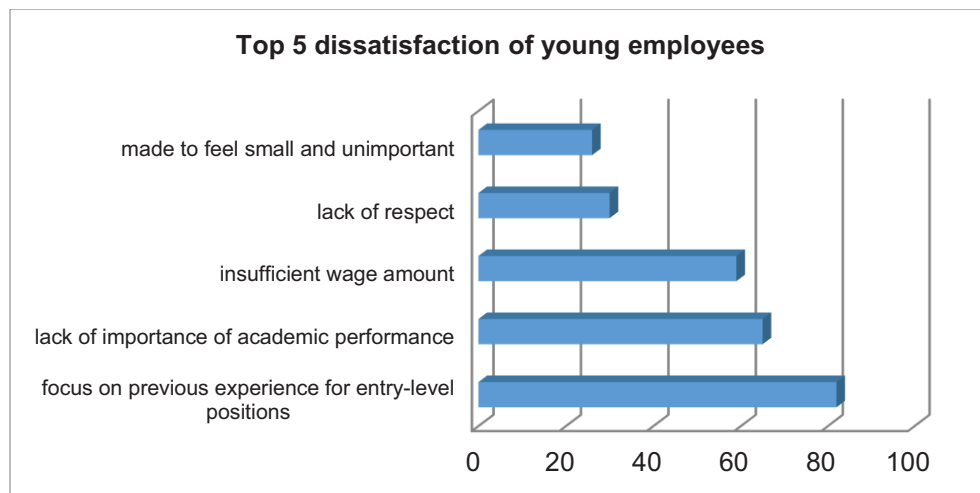


Figure 2: Top 5 dissatisfactions of young employees

Source: made by author

Lack of importance of academic performance correlated with the focus on prior work experience leads to the neglect of academic courses and training. The third most frequent dissatisfaction is the *financial aspect* of a job; 59 percent of respondents consider the wage amount insufficient.

In regards to what young employees want in a job, the *financial aspect* is the most important aspect of a job, being mentioned by 78 percent of respondents (see Figure 3).

As expected, young employees would like *less focus on prior work experience* and *greater importance of academic performance*. These two aspects were mentioned by 67 percent, respectively 59 percent of respondents (see Figure 3).

Mentioned by over 30 percent of respondent, *flexible working hours* and *correlation between performance and pay* are also important aspects of a job for the young generation of employees (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Top 5 desires of young employees
Source: made by author

4. Conclusions

In this paper we conducted two studies. The first is a qualitative research, using content analysis as research method, in which we analyzed 100 online recruitment advertisements for entry-level positions. Only jobs that require higher education were taken into consideration. Each advertisement had an average of 7 requirements. The employer requirements collected from the ads were divided into technical and personal characteristics and then analyzed.

Computer operating skills is the most sought after employee characteristic. Communication skills seem to be also very important for Romanian employees. Prior work experience, even though we focus our research on entry-level position ads, is third in our hierarchy. 56 advertisements contained a requirement of previous work experience varying between 1 to 5 years. In the hierarchy of the top 5 most frequent requirements there are three technical and two personal characteristics.

The second study attempts to answer these questions: What do young employees look for in a job? What are their desires or dissatisfactions when it comes to applying for a job? For this purpose, the second study uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The studied population consists of 3rd year students. Questionnaires were sent out to universities from different geographical areas and two focus groups were conducted in order to identify the expectations and dissatisfactions of the young generation of employees in regards to job and job seeking.

The most common dissatisfaction of respondents is related to the emphasis that Romanian employers place on prior experience of entry-level employees. One other dissatisfaction refers to the lack of importance attributed by employers to academic performance. In regards to what young employees want in a job, the financial aspect is the most important aspect of a job. Also, as expected, young employees would like less focus on prior work experience and greater importance

of academic performance.

One of the main research findings is that there is an inconsistency between what employers and young employees want. The main discontent of students refers to the significant importance given by employers to work experience, even for jobs where it would not be necessary. Also, academic performance seem not to matter on labour market, because employers do not make their hiring decision based on academic performance, but rather on prior work experience and charisma of the job applicant. This already led to neglecting academic tasks, and will lead to further decrease in students' enagement in the academic courses and activities.

5. References

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