

LOOKING FOR A JOB

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Abstract: *The paper aims a better knowledge of the process of searching and access a job in order to identify efficient manners to increase the occupancy rate and optimal capitalization of the working potential. For this we have carried out a quantitative research between people present at the Job Fair, event organized by Bihor County Agency of Employment, on 22nd October, 2016. The research was carried out based on sample of 322 people who were looking for a job, and the biggest percentage, of 75,09% was represented by the unemployed. The research method was the sociological survey, and the used research instrument was the questionnaire. It contained questions that regarded the methods used to find a job, the characteristics of the searched job, the availability of the subjects to accept jobs in other localities than the one they reside in, as well as the jobs aimed by the subjects. The conclusions resulted following the study show that the most used job searching method of those over 25 years old is contacting acquaintances, respectively accessing specialized networks in the case oh young people under 25. The most searched characteristic of the job remains the salary, and the most searched jobs are those that need superior level of education. Referring to the social relationships Granovetter (1995) emphasizes their role and that of their structure in supporting those who are looking for a job and explains the employability's success in the case of people included in big social networks, but for a shorter time, so that these persons can demonstrate their competences, without deteriorating their relationships. The idea concerning the role of information networks and influence on the labour market is also strengthened by other studies (Corcoran, Datcher and Duncan, 1980) that look at the difference between different groups of workers according to the access to these networks and the effects on the level of salaries.*

Keywords: *job; demand; offer; labour market.*

JEL Classification: *J23; J24.*

1. Introduction. About looking for a job versus looking work labour force

On the labour market the heterogeneity is very high, the possibility to superpose the demand and the offer being reduced due to the educational and occupational structure of each of them. In these conditions, only a very good informing and full transparency of this market, doubled by a real interest in long for a job and adequate counselling of those who are in this situation would allow a superior exploitation of the working resources. Just establishing some indicators regarding the increase of the labour force occupancy, such as those included in the document UE 2020 (see UE 2020), is not enough if it is not doubled by the identification of ways to make labour market more transparent, to bring closer those who have the demand and

those who offer labour force, to make the activity of the institutions that act on the labour market efficient and to increase trust in them.

On the labour market there is permanently a big number of employers and a big number of persons who are looking for a job and this fact makes impossible for those who look for a job to know all the conditions offered by each employer, respectively the employers to know the working potential of each person looking for a job. If we add to these the fact that both the working conditions, as well as the potential of the workers are in a continuous change, their permanent update being necessary, we have a clearer image over the difficulties met in the "fitting" process of the demand and offer of labour force. The solution, in Stigler's opinion, could be represented by the private agencies that should specialize in "the occupations in which information is most difficult for the employer or worker to obtain" (Stigler, 1962:102)

The meeting between demand and offer is mediated, as on any other market, by the price. The price of the labour force has determined, especially in the last decades, meaningful relocations of the production towards areas with low cost of the labour force. Another tendency registered nowadays is the availability of the employers to offer very big salaries to some valuable persons given their competences, creativity, fact that generates a real "head hunting", a real challenge for the human resources specialists.

Nevertheless, between the demand and offer of labour force, technology interposes frequently, technology that tends to replace labour force in more and more domains. Although advanced technology is more expensive, sometimes, the cost-benefit analysis shows that acquisition of technology is more relevant, which, after amortization, presupposes low costs, is not tired, does not claim rights, facilities, does not go on strike, does not generate fluctuations at the working place, does not need professional training, in other words, is much less unpredictable in comparison with the labour force. Nevertheless, an economical-social activity where human is absolutely absent is unconceivable. Even if only in the domains where technology is conceived, realized, maintained and perfected, there is a need for people. Further people with education and different competences will continue to look for the most suitable job, and Stănescu (2010) suggests three important parts in the searching process: self-evaluation, studying the labour market and the effective search of a job, using specific techniques.

2. Theoretical considerations regarding the search for a job

The analysis of the search for a job also regards the demand and offer of labour force. On one hand the employers are more or less transparent in informing with regard to the vacant jobs according to the situation of the labour market at a certain point, on the other hand, those who are looking for a job are only interested in the personal benefits that a job could offer. This is why "Job search is a complex and daunting endeavor. Besides the substantial economic losses that unemployment typically entails, job seekers face a variety of non-trivial informational problems when looking for new employment opportunities. They need to inform themselves, for instance, about which firms or industries value their qualifications most and whether these are currently hiring new employees. Moreover, they have to decide how much search effort to exert, which search channels to use, and what kinds of jobs to target, e.g., in terms of occupations or geographical location" (Altmann, Jager, and Zimmermann, 2015)."

In the well-known paper "Getting a job: A Study of Contacts and Careers", Granovetter highlights the role of the social networks and their structure in supporting the persons who were or not looking for a job and explains the employability's success also in the case of people involved in large social networks, but without deteriorating their relationships. In the same manner Granovetter explains the reduced success on the labour market of the housewives or of the Afro-Americans whose social networks are limited to relatives, neighbours, in the first case, respectively members of the group in the second case (Granovetter, 1995).

The idea concerning the role of information networks and influence on the labour market is also strengthened by other studies (Corcoran, Datcher and Duncan, 1980) that look at the difference between different groups of workers according to the access to these networks and the effects on the level of salaries. Ioannides and Datcher Loury on the other hand, sustain that "access to information is heavily influenced by social structure and individuals use connections with others, such as friends and social and professional acquaintances, to build and maintain information networks" (Ioannides and Datcher Loury, 2004:1056).

We can notice a higher and higher need of competences even in the case of jobs that do not need superior qualification or even without qualification: communication abilities, including in a foreign language, problem solving abilities, correct understanding and solving of tasks, adequate behaviour at the working place, etc. in these conditions, the persons with lower competences will find it more difficult to find a job, and the jobs that involve activities with lower qualification will be more difficult to fill in.

Another barrier in making the demand and the offer meet on the labour market is the fact that the person looking for a job limits – lacking adequate counselling – his searches to jobs that are identical or very similar to the previous one, fact that reduces significantly their employment possibilities. A series of studies (Ashenfelter et al. 2005, Belot, Kircher and Muller, 2015, Bennemarker et al. 2009, Crepon et al, 2013, Krug and Stephan 2013, Behaghel et al., 2014) emphasize the effect of counselling when looking for a job including in outlying domains or of looking for alternative jobs. To these there are added the studies that approach the importance of active occupancy policies promoted in the institutions with duties in this domain, respectively the efficiency of the legislation that forces one to look for a job and punishes not doing so (Card et al., 2010). A possibility to identify a suitable job, with reduced costs, is the one that uses the information from the virtual space (Kuhn and Mansour, 2014) to jobs.

But the most used method for accessing a job seems to be the turn to social networks, acquaintances, some researches saying that "Most workers find jobs through word of mouth" (Corcoran, Datcher and Duncan, 1980). The explanation for this option is in the capital of bigger trust in known persons, that can offer supplementary information referring to the working conditions, the working relationships, career development possibilities, salary, job stability, information that completes the image over the job and makes it more convincing compared to that obtained officially.

Moreover, on the labour market often appear pseudo-jobs (non-existing jobs, but which appear in opportunity conditions: nepotism, a person that is professionally very valuable, the intention to expand the activity, etc), respectively the pseudo-searchers (those that only inform themselves, without having the intention to get employed or have another source of income and rather look for a manner to spend their time, or

to socialize, etc). We subscribe in this context to the affirmation of Granovetter: "Job finding is more than a rational process. it is heavily embedded in other social processes that closely constrain and determine its course and results." (Granovetter, 1995:39).

Looking for a job means a certain motivation and determination that can concretise lacking a source of income or the need for professional accomplishment. Another reason that urges to looking for a job is the discontentment, dissatisfaction felt by a person towards his job at a certain point. In any of these cases, the persons confront themselves, on one hand, with the need to get employed, and on the other hand wish to identify the most suitable job, which means time, effort and money, so that we can speak about a veritable economy of searching for a job. Stigler (1962) and Pissarides (2001) theorize these situations by associating the search for a job with the access to information regarding available jobs and with the conditions of occupying a job. To all these it is added a multitude of negative feelings associated to the job searching process, such as: disappointment, frustration, discouragement, dissatisfaction, unhappiness (Clark and Oswald, 1994, Krueger et al 2011, Krueger and Mueller, 2012).

In Bihor county, the people looking for a job show some characteristics deriving from the specific of the labour market from the county. The investment boom from the last 10 years renders the labour force demand to be higher and higher, as well as the demand for competences which find correspondence mainly in the graduates of the four universities from Oradea. The medium wage of the people from Bihor, among the lowest in the country, has started to grow based on the increasing need of skilled labour force. The employers turn to a wide range of the personnel's recruitment manners, both from the urban and the rural space.

3. Quantitative research regarding

3.1. Description of the research

In order to outline an image regarding a job search in Bihor county we have used the opportunity offered by Bihor County Agency of Employment on the occasion of the Job Fair from the 22 October 2016, in order to contact 322 persons that have accepted to collaborate with our team in order to carry out a questionnaire on the theme of the expectations regarding a future job.

The aims of the study have resided in: the identification of the main characteristics of the new job in the solicitors' opinion, gathering information regarding the methods used by the subjects in order to find an adequate job, but also obtaining information regarding the solicitors' expectations concerning the attitude of the employers towards the workers;

The method used was, as we have already mentioned, the sociological survey carried out based on the questionnaire, in which we have introduced questions in concordance with the aims of the study. *The questionnaire* thus included a set of questions concerning: the methods used in order to find a job; data regarding the main employers and opinions concerning their attitude; the subjects' opinion regarding professional training; the expectations regarding the characteristics of the aimed job.

The research's universe was represented by the people looking for a job, no matter if they have or not a job in the present, young graduates that didn't have a job and the unemployed from any category.

We mention that all the participants in the job fair from 20 October 2016 were interviewed, who have accepted the proposed collaboration. From this point of view, we mention, as *a limit of the research*, the fact that the sample is relatively small and is not representative for the people looking for a job. The conclusions could be generalized, with great prudence nevertheless, to the population that takes part in the job fair. The sample used in the study has thus included 322 subjects, which was structured as it follows.

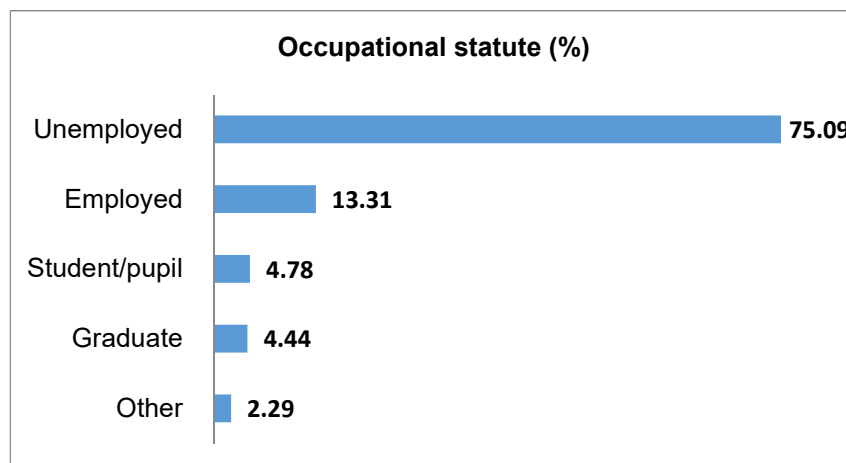


Figure 1: The structure of the sample from the occupational category's point of view

The highest percentage in the population included in the sample is represented by the unemployed, respectively 75,09%, that is over three quarters from the sample, which is normal both under the aspect of the unemployed persons but also under opportunistic level, taking into consideration the fact that the County Agency of Employment is mainly focused on the unemployed. In these conditions it was expected that the most significant percentage of those looking for a job offered through the activities carried out through the County Agency of Employment are unemployed. On the second place in the sample's structure, with a percentage of 13,31% are employed people, but who with the highest possibility, are not satisfied, for different reasons, of they present job, aiming an other job in concordance with their expectations. Interesting is the fact that are available for employment also a relatively small percentage, of approximately 5%, that is approximately 16 subjects (pupils and students) who wish to work and study in the same time, probably in order to obtain necessary resources to maintain themselves during studies. We consider that the relatively low percentage of the graduates looking for a job, is of only 4,44 % does not mean that only they are looking for a job, the other being already employed. It is possible that many of the high school and higher studies graduates to find themselves in the category of the unemployed. It is to be retained from the present analysis the fact that at the job fair those who especially take part are the unemployed.

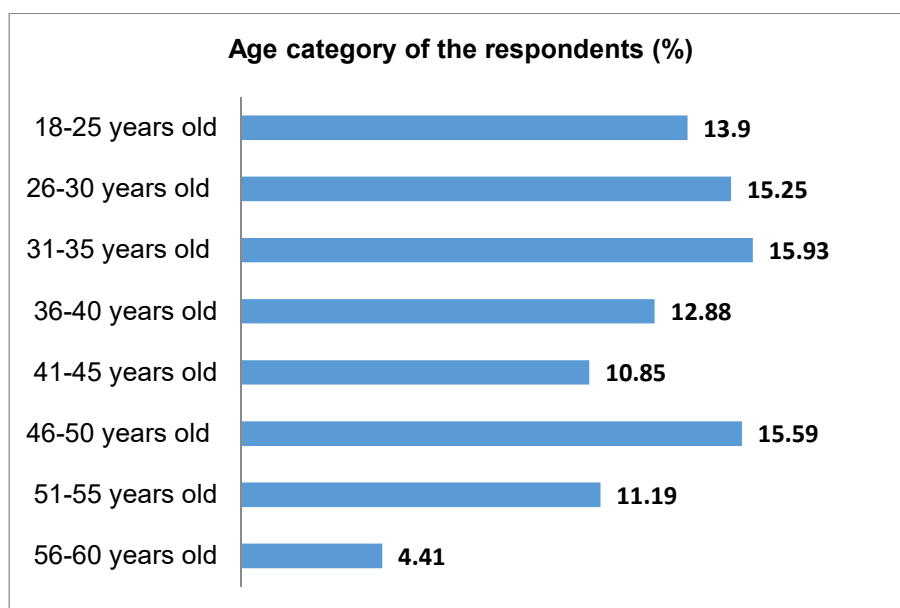


Figure 2: The structure of the sample from the age category's point of view

The data presented in graph 2 suggest that a high percentage in the structure of people looking for a job are those in the youngsters' category, that is people up to 35 years old, which represent approximately 45% from the total. We consider that the phenomenon is a significant one especially if we take into consideration the fact that this is the category of people in their period of maximum physical and psychical force, whose working capacity should be used in their own benefit but also that of the society.

On the other hand, although the percentage of people looking for a job, from the category of those over 50 years old is more reduced (approximately 25%), the phenomenon cannot be neglected, taking into consideration the high risk to be placed in the risk groups' category, their employment not being attractive for the employer.

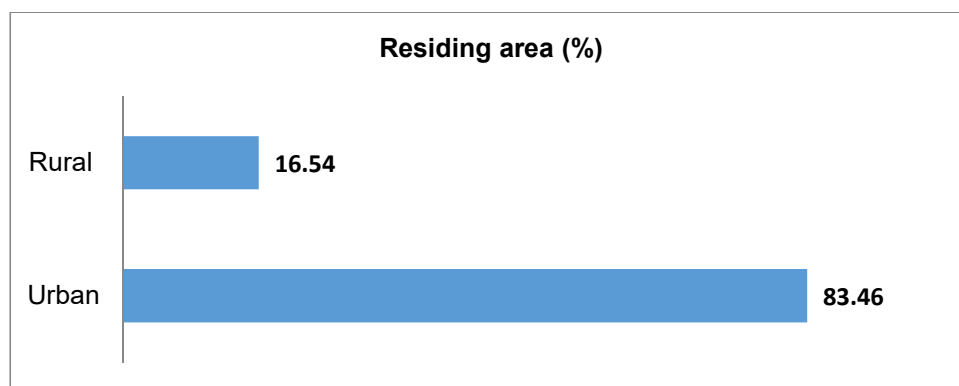


Figure 3. The structure of the sample according to the residing area of the subjects

In concordance with the unemployment's structure under the aspect of the residing environment, the highest percentage from the sample's total is represented by the people resident in the urban area (83.46%). On the other hand, the low percentage at the job fairs of the unemployed from the rural area can be also associated with the difficulty related to the travelling expenses.

3.2. Presentation of the research's results

The data collected through the sociological survey based on a questionnaire was processed with the help of the SPSS program, especially based on the frequency analysis. We have synthesised the information on some significant dimensions according to the aims of the research, as it follows:

3.2.1. The methods used by the subjects in order to find an adequate job

From the qualitative analysis realised based on a focus group with the representatives of the companies from the country, it was retained the idea that these give big importance to the personnel's recruitment, showing preoccupations for knowing the recruitment and selection methods of their own personnel, and applying them differently according to the specific of the job. On the other hand, it was acknowledged the idea that, regardless of the methods by which people who want to get employed are contacted, the employing companies are preoccupied by the selection from the persons available for employment, of those who correspond the most to the specific of the job in that unit.

On the occasion of the present research, we wanted to investigate the way through which the job solicitors address themselves to the employer, more exactly we wanted to get to know the accessing by the subjects of the main job searching methods.

The answers to this question in the questionnaire have offered interesting attitudes. Firstly, in what concerns the direct interest of the CAE, appears to be significant the attitude of the subjects, who place on the last but one place turning to job fairs in order to find a job, this method being mentioned by only 9.58% of the subjects, which elicits some explanations that we have also tried to identify through a question.

Instead it seems that the most used method for finding a job is the use by the subjects of social networks (21.66%), made of known persons who work in certain companies and who offer them information about available jobs, and who, on the other hand, are willing to recommend them and guarantee for them when facing the employer, fact acknowledged by Granovetter in his study. Moreover, as it resulted from the discussions with the employers, it seems that it is a method to which they also turn to with the most trust in assuring labour force.

If we take into consideration the fact that 19.62% from the subjects declare that they turn to CAE in order to find a job and we add the 9.58 percent that participate at the fairs organized by CAE, we obtain a percentage of 29.2% of the subjects that access the CAE services in order to identify jobs, aspect that places it on the first place among the preferences for the methods used for employment.

Thus the research data suggest that CAE remains, in the subjects' opinion, one of the main institutions to which people turn to during the integration process on the labour market.

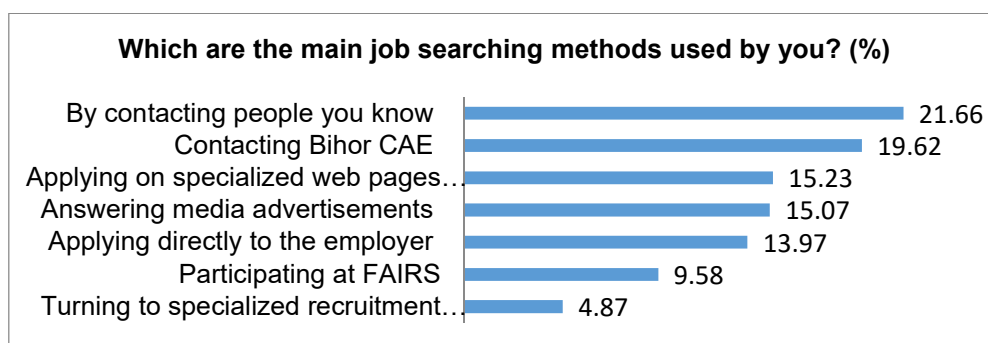


Figure 4: Methods used by subjects in order to find job

Taking into consideration the age of the subjects (the majority are young) as well as the impact of internet and of other mass media means, the use by a great percentage of subjects (over 30%) of methods that presuppose accessing virtual communication means but also of the written press, with this aim is explainable. Thus, applying on profile web pages is a method preferred by 15,23 % of subjects, and reading and answering press advertisements have the interest of approximately the same intensity, being turned to by 15,07% of subjects. 13,97 of the subjects turn directly to the employer and only 4,87% turn to specialized companies.

We have considered useful to calculate some correlations between the age of the subjects, their occupational statute or the living area and the method accessed by them in order to find a job. In this sense, the correlation between the used method and the subjects' age category has proven significant ($X^2 = 28.09$ at a significance limit $dep=0.0053$). As it emerges from Table 2, the correlation is significant especially in what concerns methods: contacting CAE (exclusively participating at job fairs), which is used by all age categories in similar proportions (percentages that vary between 21 and 23, with an average 22,1%), the use of the subjects' social networks, especially by the persons in the age category of over 46 years old (50%), followed closely by the other category (25-46 years old – 42,6%), tendency that can be explained, in our opinion, through the higher relational experience of these people in comparison with the young that in a much lower percentage turn to this method (only 17,6%).

Table 1: The correlation between the subjects' age category and the method used in order to find a job

Which are the main 3 methods that you use in order to find a job? (first option)				
	18-24 years old	25-45 years old	46-60 years old	Total
By contacting people you know	17.6%	42.6%	50.0%	40.9%
Answering media advertisements	8.8%	5.7%	9.4%	7.3%
Contacting Bihor CAE	23.5%	21.3%	23.4%	22.3%
Applying directly to the employer	11.8%	11.5%	4.7%	9.5%
Applying on specialized web pages (Ejobs, Bestjobs etc.)	26.5%	17.2%	3.1%	14.5%

Turning to specialized recruitment companies	0%	0%	1.6%	0.5%
Participating at FAIRS	11.8%	1.6%	7.8%	5.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nevertheless, the most significant correlation appears when we talk about “Applying on specialized web pages (Ejobs, Bestjobs etc.)”, which is especially used by the young, more intensely by those from the category 18-24 years old – 26,5%, followed by the next category 24-45 years old – 17,2%

Table 2: The correlation between the subjects’ occupational statute and the method used in order to find a job

Which are the main 3 methods that you use in order to find a job? (first option)						
	Employed	Unemployed	Graduate	Student/pupil	Other	Total
By contacting people you know	21.9%	49.4%	11.1%	27.3%	0%	41.9%
Answering media advertisements	6.2%	8.4%	11.1%	0%	0%	7.7%
Contacting Bihor CAE	37.5%	19.3%	11.1%	18.2%	50.0%	22.1%
Applying directly to the employer	9.4%	9.6%	0%	9.1%	0%	9.0%
Applying on specialized web pages (Ejobs, Bestjobs etc.)	12.5%	10.2%	66.7%	27.3%	0%	13.5%
Turning to specialized recruitment companies	3.1%		0%	0%	0%	0.5%
Participating at FAIRS	9.4%	3.0%	0%	18.2%	50.0%	5.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

An even more significant correlation ($X^2 = 67,72$ $p = 0.000$) was identified between the subject’s occupational statute and method accessed in order to find a job (see Table 3). Firstly, it appears as a paradoxical fact, respectively the unemployed who have permanent contact with CAE and concerning whom it would be expectable to contact the specialized institution in order to integrate or reintegrate on the labour market, turn in the highest percentage (49,4%) to acquaintances in order to get employed. The same method is being accessed, by students /pupils (27,3%) and those who work but want another job (21,9%). Nevertheless, the graduates turn in a big percentage (66,7%) to accessing specialized web pages, followed by students and pupils (27,3%), tendency which is in concordance with what we have previously presented referring to the age category and used method.

We mention that from the realized calculations, there hasn’t been identified a significant relation between the living area of the subjects and the method accessed in order to get employed ($X^2 = 1,51$ $p = 0,958$)

3.2.2. Characteristics of the searched job

We have tried to investigate the subjects' preference for some of the characteristics of the job by introducing in the questionnaire a question through which we wanted to understand to what extent factors such as salary, working climate and obtaining facilities are important when accepting a job.

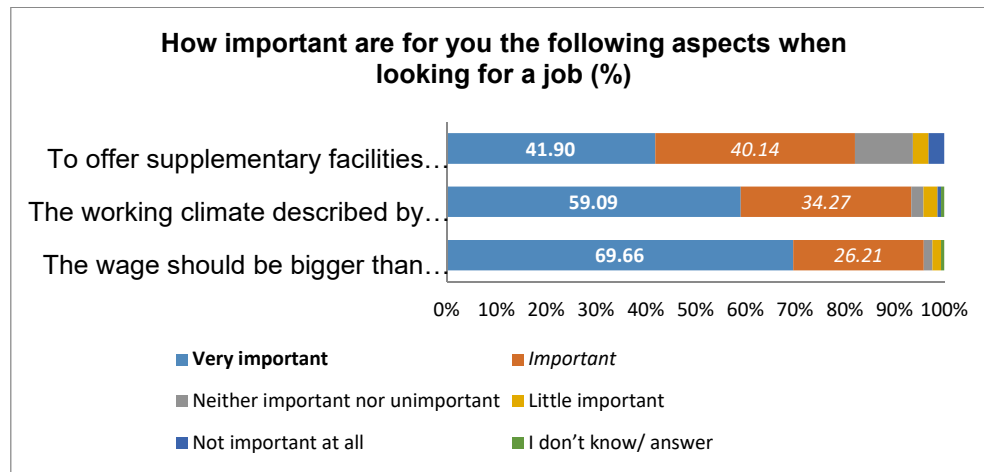


Figure 5: The subjects' preference in relation to certain characteristics of the future job

The data collected suggest that, in the subjects' opinion the element that matters the most (to a large and very large extent) refers to the obtained wage, in the present situation over the minimum wage. On the second place in the subjects' preferences is the working climate (dynamic team, the space and used technology, organisation of events etc) and on the last place, the obtainment of benefits, such as flexible working hours, free subscriptions etc. We consider that it is normal that the level of the wage becomes the most important factor that operates in the option for a job, both in the case of the unemployed and in that of those who already have one, taking into consideration the low level of the wage in Bihor county, which does not offer the possibility of a decent living for persons in question and their families.

Staying within the same dimension that concerns the characteristics of the aimed job, we have considered that it would be relevant to identify the availability of the subjects to accept jobs that are at a big distance from their residence, starting from the facility offered by the government in order to motivate the employment at distances bigger than 50 km from residence.

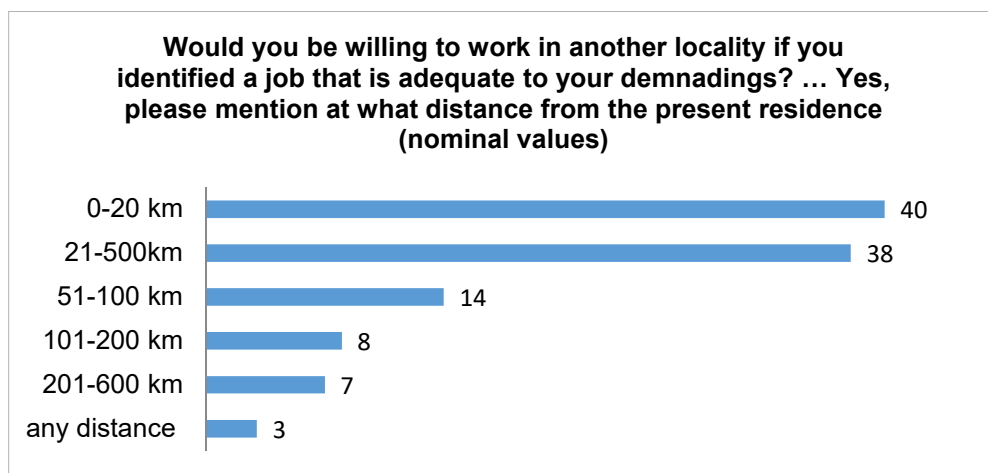


Figure 6: The availability of the subjects to accept jobs that are situated at a distance from their residence

The graph presented suggests that more than half of the subjects (1 out of the 110 subjects that have answered this question) want a job at a distance of under 50 km from their residence, almost 30% are willing to get employed at a bigger distance from their residence, obviously if the job would offer the other conditions (acceptable wage, adequate working climate). The data thus shows that the facility stipulated by the social policies to encourage employment in areas that are at a distance from the residence can be successfully transposed in facts, provided that the promises that were made are punctually respected.

On the other hand, the subjects that are not willing to accept jobs that are at a bigger distance from their residence give reasons such as: the fact that they have a family and children that their parents' presence and surveillance; issues related to travelling and home that would mean supplementary time related costs but also financial resources; age, associated with health problems.

Table 3: Reasons for the refusal of accepting a job at a distance over 50 km from the residence

Would you be willing to work in another locality if you identified a job adequate to your demanding? ...No, please mention which is the main reason for which you would not be willing to work in another locality?	
	Nominal values
<i>Children-family</i>	78
<i>distance – means of transport- living</i>	24
Age -health	14
Time spent on the road	3
Faculty	1

3.2.3. Jobs aimed by the subjects

When asked about the aimed job there were only 200 out of 322 subjects that answered, which consolidates the presupposition that a quite significant part of those who take part in job fairs are not willing to get employed at that time, the aim of their participation being of another nature: probably a part of them wants to get informed, other take part just to socialize.

From those who answered the questions, the majority (92) look for jobs that require specialty higher education, explainable fact taking into consideration the big number of graduates from the three universities from Oradea (The University from Oradea, "Agora" University and "Partium" University). We consider that also the structure of the demanded specializations is relevant, in the sense that, on one hand there are specializations that provide the labour market with many graduates, annually, and on the other hand that, on the internal or international labour market there is a significant demand for those specializations. According to the data from Table no. 5, the aimed jobs that need graduation from higher education, in order, are: economist –accountant- manager (24), Engineer (Automation, electronics, environment, topographer) (21); IT (database administrator, programmer, computer technician, web design) (13) medical (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist) (11); Psychology / Human Resources (10); legal counsellor (8); Higher social worker (1); insurance inspector (1); teacher, Laboratory assistant (1); clerk (2).

Solicitations also appear related to jobs that need secondary education, vocational school or just secondary school.

Table 4: Aimed jobs arranged according to the demanded study conditions

No.	Study conditions	Aimed job
1.	Higher education	economist - accountant - manager (24) Engineer (Automation, electronics, environment, topographer) (21) IT (database administrator, programmer, computer technician, web design) (13) medical (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist) (11) Psychology / Human Resources (10) legal counsellor (8) Higher social worker (1) insurance inspector (1) Professor, laboratory assistant (1) clerk (2) Human Resources (5) artistic field (1) Total 98
2.	Secondary education, vocational school	skilled worker (plumber, locksmith, machinery mechanic, fork-lifter, carpenter) (13) administration (10) travel agent - travel worker (7) sales agent (7) computer operator - data entry operator (7)

No.	Study conditions	Aimed job
		Technician master (5) electrician (2) Total 51
3.	Without studies, secondary school or compulsory studies	production operator (31) security agent (4) Call centre - customer care (4) driver (4) carer (3) construction (2) drivers' coordinator (1) abroad (1) volunteer (1) Total 51

Conclusions

- The main limit of the research refers to the fact that the sample involved in the study is relatively small, and the results cannot be generalised to the whole population in the county who is looking for a job. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the fact that the sample's structure is similar to that of the population looking for a job, we consider that the analysed data is relevant and could be generalised to the population of the county, made of people looking for a job and who take part in fairs organised by CAE.
- The CAE remains one of the essential institutions to which it is turned to in order to find a job, but it is more and more obvious the fact that the young especially turn more frequently to profile web sites. Moreover, the data has revealed the fact that turning to social networks remains one of the used methods, but being preferred by the people from the age category of over 40 years old and from the occupational point of view, especially by the unemployed.
- The most searched characteristic of a job remains the offered wage, especially in the conditions of low level of the salary in Bihor county, on the next places being placed the working climate and other benefits, such as discounting transport, flexible working hours etc.
- In the structure of jobs aimed by the people looking for one, the highest percentage is represented by the jobs that need higher training, given the specificity of the county that benefits from three universities that prepare the labour force at a superior level.
- Supplying specific information on the labour market, especially by the institutions with duties in this sense, could facilitate the increase of the occupation degree, respectively finding a job as suitable as possible for the labour force, idea that emerges from the study realized by Altman, Jager and Zimmermann (2015)

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