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The Significance of Motivations and Selected Effects of Student Employment in the Course of Studies: A Case of an Economics Study Program in Poland

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Abstract: The article addresses the problem of gainful employment undertaken during full-time studies. It analyzes the importance of students' motivations to work and the selected effects of combining studies and work. It refers to areas that have not yet been investigated by other researchers. The data used in the article come from the survey conducted by the author at the Faculty of Economics, at the University of Economics in Katowice through 2014-2017. The study revealed a strong relationship between the motivations to start work during studies and the following factors: the alignment of a chosen job to the field of study, the opportunity to develop new skills and competencies valued on the labor market, the willingness to continue working for the same employer after graduation, and an employer's intention to employ a student after graduation. Another connection was identified between the character of the work performed by students and their readiness to change if given another opportunity. The relationship, albeit relatively weak, was also confirmed between the character of the work performed and difficulties experienced by students with combining work with studies and the ability to maintain a balance between time assigned to studying, work and leisure.

Keywords: Student employment, higher education, full-time studies, Poland.

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Introduction

The phenomenon of combining studies with work is not a new problem. Labor market researchers had observed it as early as in the 1970's and 1980's. A detailed review and criticism of the results of early research on the effects of combining studies and work was conducted by Ruhm (1997). Over the recent years, a growing percentage of working students has been observed (Callender, 2008; Neill, 2015; Riggert, Boyle, Petrosco, Ash & Rude-Parkins, 2006). Until today, however, there has been no agreement on whether the issue should be treated as a modern phenomenon that needs to be described or a problem that needs to be solved (Yanbarisova, 2015). In order to answer this question in a comprehensive manner, it would be necessary to examine students' opinions on the subject. The issue of combining studies and work is now intensively researched in several major directions. The most common approach examines the effects of combining studies with work and concerns the relationship between the intensity of student gainful employment, measured mainly in the number of work hours per week, and student academic performance, which is measured in a variety of ways (Callender, 2008; Hovdhaugen, 2015; Triventi, 2014; Yanbarisova, 2015; Body, Bonnal & Giret, 2014; Tur-Sinai, Romanov & Zussman, 2017). Another strand of research concentrates on the impact of work undertaken during studies on remuneration obtained after graduation, as salary tends to be higher in this group. The studies identify the sources of benefits, which constitutes research on human capital developed during studies combined with work (Ormiston, 2016; Trolan, Jach & Snyder, 2018). Certainly, research into the effects of combining studies with work, both positive and negative, requires in-depth analysis. Some surveys show that a field of study may have a significant impact on the development of human capital related to work during studies and future earnings, hence the need to undertake in-depth research in this area. Still other authors investigate the reasons and motivations behind the growing involvement of students in gainful employment (Scott-Clayton, 2012; Beerkens, Magi & Lill, 2011).

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The problem of combining studies with work is researched in many countries, mainly in the USA and the UK, but also in Italy, Estonia, Czechia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Spain, Israel, Russia, Canada and China. These countries vary in terms of per capita income and growth rate, as well as other cultural determinants. In the case of the countries that underwent economic transformation along with their higher education systems, mainly in terms of tuition fees, this is of paramount importance. Therefore, despite numerous studies, their comparability may be limited and the results should be linked to the higher education system of a given country. So far, few studies have been carried out in Poland (e.g. Jarecki, 2010), although combining studies with work is increasingly popular in Poland. Moreover, they did not include specific aspects of motivation behind and the effects of combining work with studies, but rather motivation to work in a specific industry after graduation (Grobelna, 2017), so they had a completely different context.

Another limitation is the fact that the results of some studies are already several decades old. Over these years, both the nature of work and teaching methodology have evolved significantly, which is why the 20-30-year-old research results should be taken with a grain of salt. This also justifies the need to conduct more research into the issue now.

The article aims to present a multi-faceted analysis of the importance of motivations behind combining full-time studies with gainful employment and its effects. Accordingly, an attempt was made to fill the research gap that comprises specific relationships linking motivations behind seeking a job during studies with the determinants affecting the level of human capital (in particular, conditions for gaining on-the-job experience) and the possibility of continuing work with the same employer after graduation. Research into the effects of combining work with studies should embrace the impact of the character of work (regular or occasional) on the actual possibility of combining full-time studies with work (which involves a time deficit and studying-related problems) and on students' willingness to change this situation. These relationships have not been studied before.

The survey was conducted based on literature and the data obtained from the author's survey, in which the analysis was limited to the unpaid master's degree study program in economics at a Polish university. Empirical research was carried out at the Faculty of Economics, the University of Economics in Katowice, through 2014-2017. The article consists of four parts. The first presents a review of literature on motivations behind and effects of combining studies with gainful employment and discusses doubts and issues justifying a slightly different research direction from the studies undertaken so far, the second characterizes higher education in Poland, while the third discusses the survey and the gathered data, whereas the final part presents the research methodology and results of the calculations. The article closes with the discussion of the results and the conclusions from the study.

Literature Review

This part of the article briefly presents the prevailing research into combining studies with work, especially the growing scale of the phenomenon, motivations behind students' choices to seek work and the effects of such choices, both positive and negative. Most research has so far been conducted in the US, but the article also refers to the results of research from other countries.

Riggert et al. (2006) identified the need for in-depth research into the subject and the growing scale of student gainful employment while investigating the issue in the USA. They found that over period of about 40 years the proportion of those who sought work while still at college rose to such an extent that more than 50% of students under the age of 24 worked during the academic year. The ability to combine studies with work may be perceived as an American ideal, but the authors point out that it is rather a necessity. It has become obvious that students are no longer able to immerse themselves fully into their academic studies. Meanwhile, ongoing economic changes and the pace of technological progress contribute to a growing need for quality education that can respond in kind, hence the need to examine the relationship between student employment and career success. An increase in the number of working students was also observed in Great Britain (Callender, 2008) and Canada (Neill, 2015). In the surveys conducted in Estonia, on the other hand, a higher percentage of working students was reported, but mainly in master's degree programs (Beerrens et al., 2011).

The reasons for the growing involvement of students in gainful employment are discussed by Scott-Clayton (2012) and Beerrens et al. (2011). While investigating the problem in the US for the years 1970-2009, Scott-Clayton proved that the following factors had an impact on the increase in the number of working students: remuneration, a rate of return on work experience, a rate of return on academic knowledge, student ability, growing tuition fees and a necessity to take out a loan, changing economic conditions, in particular changes in remuneration, changes in the demographic structure of students and the implementation of the Federal Work Study Program (Baum, 2010; Scott-Clayton & Minaya, 2014). She emphasized that the importance of these factors had changed over time. Sanchez-Gelabert et al. (2017) who conducted researches in Spain proved, that the share of students working whilst studying increases during economic crisis.

Beerrens et al. (2011), studying the reasons for taking up employment in Estonia, took into account the following reasons behind the decision to seek work while still at college, grouped in four categories: 1) material, resulting from the need to cover the costs of studies and a changing lifestyle oriented towards consumption, 2) favorable conditions on the labor demand side – structural changes occurring in emerging economies, resulting in a large number of part-time

jobs, low-paid and requiring considerable flexibility and the ability to learn quickly, 3) a change in the nature of studies, which became more available for representatives of different social groups, including those less affluent, combined with more flexible studying conditions, e.g. fewer hours spent at university, 4) the need to gain professional experience and build social networks that would help find a good job after graduation. The authors perceive the phenomenon as important for two reasons requiring a solution: an increase in the number of working students may be a manifestation of the deteriorating financial conditions of students – difficult access to scholarships, limited family assistance, etc., and it may pose a threat to academic performance due to less time dedicated to learning and contacting teachers. The two attitudes discussed above also show differences in the approach to the problem between countries depending on the level of their development and country-specific conditions related to the demographics and payment for studies.

One of the interesting research directions is the identification of the links between students' decisions to seek work with their social background. A valuable contribution to this area is the book by Perna (2010). The study shows that student employment can be related to their parents' education. Students whose parents had a university degree worked fewer hours per week than others, hence the suggestion that student employment depends on social class. In addition, students from more affluent families earned higher wages. Therefore, the students' decisions to work and their social background are argued to be linked (Perna, 2010) – how they develop their human capital depends on the social class they come from and how they can use their human capital to achieve financial goals. On the other hand, Pinto (2010) in her research conducted in France proved that student employment can contribute to a reproduction of social inequalities, depending on the type of activities performed and the impact of a paid job on academic performance. Jacob, Gerth & Weiss (2018) conducted similar research in Germany.

Some research results point to the assumption that higher transfers from parents (usually depending on the parents' income) to studying children result in lower student involvement in gainful employment and the opportunity to dedicate time to investing in human capital, although there are also research results that have not confirmed this relation. Therefore, studies on student time allocation were initiated. Bachmann & Boes (2014) argued that higher transfers in Switzerland led to a significant increase in study time and reduced time spent on paid work, but they had no effect on academic performance – the risk of failing the exam (expressed on a scale of 0-10) was higher in the case of students receiving higher transfers. The authors offered two explanations: 1) the possible occurrence of moral hazard, 2) possible stress and greater pressure felt by students who were dependent on their parents and who wanted to meet their expectations. They also showed that the intensity of student work was uneven at different times throughout the year. In turn, the study of Estonian scientists Beerkens et al. (2011) did not confirm the relationship between the intensity of student work and the level of affluence of their parents; students from wealthier families worked even more than students from poorer families and they were more likely to undertake full-time work. This can confirm the hypothesis that in Eastern European countries students work to communicate their ability and ambition to employers, due to the relatively low level of academic standards and the decreasing importance of degrees caused by the massification of higher education (Yanbarisova, 2015). It also highlights differences between countries.

In addition to the reasons for taking up work by students, some research concerns an equally important problem – the effects of combining studies and work. As mentioned above, the leading research direction for the last decade has concerned the impact of work during studies on academic performance. Callender (2008) conducted a survey among 1,000 students from 6 British universities and proved that work during studies had a negative impact on student achievement, both on an annual and final basis, regardless of the type of university. A larger number of working hours resulted in poorer academic performance. Students working an average number of hours per week had an average of 1/3 lower chance of getting a good score than their non-working counterparts. This was evident for the students who obtained the lowest qualifications and had the lowest income. According to Callender (2008), work during studies changes the image of higher education.

Triventi (2014), who conducted research in Italy on the impact of student employment on academic achievement, came to similar but more detailed conclusions. He observed that only high-intensity work had a negative impact on learning performance, while low-intensity work had a negative impact on academic progression only for some communities. The negative impact of student employment on learning outcomes at more than 16 working hours a week was also demonstrated by a study conducted in France by Body et al. (2014); however, they did not identify any impact in the case of students working less than 8 hours per week. The authors also demonstrated the importance of a sector of the economy – employment in the public sector caused fewer negative effects compared to the private sector, which, according to the researchers, might be associated with more flexible working hours.

Yanbarisova (2015), conducting research in Russia, showed that full-time work unrelated to the student's field of study had an unequivocally negative impact on academic achievement, while in other situations she did not establish a statistically significant relationship between work and academic performance. This led to the conclusion that the optimal combination is part-time work aligned with the field of study, which allows a student to gain valuable work experience, strongly attesting to his skills and competencies. The results of research conducted in Slovenia were similar. Kosi, Nastav & Susteric (2013) showed that only work of significant intensity of about 18 hours a week had a negative impact on students' academic performance.

In turn, research carried out in Estonia by Beerkens et al. (2011) did not reveal a negative impact of work on students' learning outcomes measured by the ability to complete their study program on schedule. Completing studies on time seems, however, a poor measure of student progress assessment. Similar research was conducted in Israel by Tur-Sinai et al. (2017), who proved that the impact of work on the course of studies was weak and depended on the age of students, e.g. in the group of 22-26 year-olds it had no impact on the length of studies.

Earlier publications demonstrated a positive impact of employment during studies on the level of pay after graduation (Ruhm, 1997). This approach was dominated by the belief that moderate work positively influenced the level of human capital (knowledge, skills, experience, routines) even if working students spent less time studying and work was associated with higher earnings after graduation. In other approaches, the impact of student work on selected elements of a student's human capital was examined. Stephenson (1982) and Davies (1999) pointed out that work during studies led to students becoming independent and helped them develop social competencies related to work. Detailed studies on the sources of higher wages of graduates who had combined studies and work, many years later conducted in the US by Ormiston (2016), who attempted to prove that students working while studying develop human capital elements specific to particular positions and are highly valued on the labor market. He failed, however, to prove unequivocally that specific skills developed on-the-job were correlated with pay earned after graduation. Ultimately, his research results pointed to the development of general human capital at work during studies. Ormiston's research, however, showed one more important property – profession dependence, because specific skills were taught in the case of students employed in construction. Therefore, it is worth taking into account the distinction based on the field of study and the character of paid work performed during studies. Another survey conducted in the USA (Trolian et al., 2018) confirmed the potential impact of the type of professional experience (on-campus work, off-campus work, the completion of an internship or a practicum), as well as the number of hours of employment while at college, on students' career progression within four years after graduation. It is also notable that Kosi et al. (2013) showed that students seeking work chose positions that did not require specialized knowledge (non-demanding work or physical work), which rather contradicts the possibility of developing profession-specific human capital. They did, however, conduct their study in a different country.

As shown above, research on combining studies and work was conducted in different countries, at different periods of time, for different cycles of study. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that differences and contradictions emerge in such results. These conclusions justify the need for further in-depth research on student choices to seek employment while still at college and on the effects of such decisions.

The results of studies carried out so far on the causes and effects of combining studies with work, regardless of the valuable conclusions, give rise to many doubts. First of all, it seems that motivations of students are not necessarily driven by the need to secure day-to-day income. In some countries, such as Russia (Yanbarisova, 2015), Estonia (Beerkens et al., 2011), and Poland, the situation on the labor market and, in particular, the expectations of employers cause that the diploma itself, even with good grades or graduation on time, is not sufficient as an indicator of knowledge and skills. This is explained by the concept of job market signaling (Spence, 1973). Employers in these countries value professional experience more than higher education, so the lack of it is one of the main reasons for high unemployment among graduates. One of the contributing factors is the filter approach as a basic model in human resource management (Dobbs, Sun & Roberts, 2008) and the relative reluctance of employers to invest in employees, especially new recruits. Therefore, the motivations of students to seek work should be investigated in detail, particularly their pursuit of professional experience.

The concentration of research into the impact of undertaking work on learning outcomes raises doubts as well. The assessment of student achievements (grades) is subjective, it can vary from university to university, or even between groups at the same university and faculty. Sometimes students study a lot and have low grades or even fail to pass exams. Therefore, it seems to be more significant if students themselves indicate that they have problems with combining studies with work and they need to catch up at university, which is not necessarily reflected in assessment. It is of particular importance if they would like to change their situation but aren't able, which would involve a certain degree of frustration. Unfortunately, this type of information is missing from the existent research. Another issue that may cause some concern is the way student performance is assessed at university. Bachmann & Boes (2014) attempted to introduce a subjective assessment of possible learning problems experienced by working students. They proposed a subjectively expressed measure of the risk of an exam failure on a 0-10 scale as a learning progress evaluation, but the authors themselves had doubts whether this was the right way. It seems that it would only be relatively reliable to compare the results achieved by the same students before and after starting work, yet it is difficult to obtain such data. This shows how difficult it is to express the impact of work during studies on learning outcomes. The university lecturers' attitude towards combining studies and work is an important factor, especially their optimism for combining studies with work, as a favorable attitude may be seen by students as an incentive to seek work during studies. Another aspect that may be of importance is the development of distance learning (Ballesteros-Regana, Siles-Rojas, Hervás-Gomez & Diaz-Noguera, 2019).

The issue practically unexplored in the previous studies is the physical and mental health of students who work and study, except for psychological journals (Park & Sprung 2013). It is the impact of conflict between work and studies that

was recognized as the reason for the deterioration of students' mental health, but a similar negative influence of combining work and studies on students' physical condition was not demonstrated. Hence the conclusion about the need to support working students and minimize the contradictions associated with combining studies with work. It would be particularly worrying if students reported a lack of time to learn, which might lead to potentially lower capital of knowledge and skills acquired during studies. This issue also needs to be examined.

The evaluation of material reasons for taking up work by students mainly takes into account their parents' wealth and whether the students live away from home. However, young adults of 23-24 years of age may seek independence or more financial freedom, regardless of the assistance provided by their parents. Researchers do not always account for the issue of payment for studies, whereas such regulations vary significantly from country to country, both in terms of whether students are obliged to cover tuition fees (not the case in all countries) and how much they have to pay (Bayram, 2019). The scholarship and student loan system is of great importance.

An issue that is seriously under-researched is the possibility of continuing work started during studies, i.e. a student job as a point of contact with an employer, so it is worth examining whether student work can be a bridge for further employment. This is particularly important in the countries where the unemployment rate is high among graduates, as it helps prevent unemployment after graduation. As previously mentioned, there is no agreement on whether combining studies and work is a problem that needs to be addressed, or a phenomenon that should be treated as part of socio-economic reality. This is difficult to verify, because it is not possible to analyze human capital in its entirety, but the opinion of students may be a certain measure of the problem, an answer to the question of whether they are satisfied with their situation and would prefer to change it.

The research results presented in the article aim to contribute to the results obtained so far and to clarify these previously unexplored topics. In particular, those referring to a country at a medium level of development (Poland), with students combining unpaid studies with work during their master's degree study program, about 1.5 years before entering the labor market. The survey can be treated as experimental. Prior to the presentation of the survey, higher education in Poland is briefly characterized.

Higher education in Poland

Higher education in Poland is organized under the Bologna process (Khelifi, 2019). Students can pursue education at public and private universities. They can study in full-time programs (weekdays) or part-time programs (weekends or evenings). In Poland, full-time programs offered by public universities are free of charge. The payment for studies applies to all students in non-public higher education institutions and in part-time programs at public universities. Part-time programs are by definition programs for working people. According to the data from Statistics Poland (2019), in the 2018/2019 academic year there were 392 higher education institutions in Poland. The gross enrollment rate for HEIs calculated in relation to the population aged 19 to 24 was 46.2% in this period. 18.5% of students received various types of scholarships, including scholarships for the best students – and social grants. At economics universities, 13.6% of students received scholarships and grants. Sixty-six percent studied in full-time programs, which is the majority, but the proportion of students in part-time programs – over 1/3 – was relatively high (compared to other countries, Hauschildt Vogtle & Gwosc, 2018). In the 2018/2019 academic year, 73% of students studied at public universities, while 58% of all students studied at public higher education institutions (full-time programs, i.e. unpaid studies) (Statistics Poland, 2019), so it can be concluded that the majority of students in Poland are in unpaid studies and access to them is not difficult. Admissions are based on the results of a matriculation examination. Over 14% of all students studied at economics HEIs (excluding students studying economics at general universities). Women constitute nearly 58% of all students studying in Poland, while in social and behavioral sciences they represent almost 67%. The possibility of combining studies and work also depends on how time-consuming study programs are. In this article, we focus on economics studies, which are relatively less time-consuming and with a small proportion of laboratory classes. HEIs often organize classes so as to reduce costs and time allocated for commuting and, as a result, they schedule them 3-4 days a week.

The weakness of Polish higher education is a low share of internships in study programs. For example, a full-time student in an economics HEI has a compulsory internship only during a bachelor's degree program, of at least 120 hours, which is completed in the class-free time during inter-semester breaks. The solution to the problem of a practical skills shortage was the introduction of practically oriented study programs, characterized by a large share of classes with business practitioners contributing to the curricula of such study programs. In the case of practically oriented study programs, a master's degree program also includes an obligatory 360-hour internship. In Poland, there is the possibility of pursuing dual studies. However, they are run only by a few universities, especially technical ones, and the main barrier to their development is the difficulty in obtaining cooperation with appropriate enterprises that are willing to accept students for internships. Dual degree programs are supported by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Research Hypotheses and Data

Research hypotheses

The survey was prepared based on the literature review and observation. The research hypotheses that were adopted are presented below.

H1: Motivations behind starting work during studies affect the character of a job chosen by a student.

H2: Students' motivations to seek work during studies are important; students motivated financially do not pay attention to the alignment with the field of study, because they do not attach importance to their own development; alignment with the field of study should concern students who are motivated by the desire to gain professional experience or by both reasons (income and professional experience), which will be conducive to building human capital in line with education.

H3: Motivations behind starting work are important for the potential development of new skills and competencies; students who actually develop such skills or competencies are motivated by the need to gain on-the-job experience or – jointly – by the need to gain experience and earn income.

H4: Working students may, after studies, continue to work for the same employer, which is a source of positive employment effects. Students who are mainly financially motivated will not be inclined to continue working for the same employer; this is more likely for those motivated by the desire to gain professional experience.

H5: The willingness of employers to continue the employment of students after graduation will lean toward those students motivated by the need to gain professional experience or those combining financial motivation with experience-related motivation.

H6: The manifestation of a positive human capital balance between work and studies is the fact that a student does not experience problems in combining work with studies and is able to maintain a balance between studies, work and leisure; these variables are related to the character of work (regular or occasional work).

H7: The lack of motivation to change is an expression of student satisfaction with the character of their work/study balance.

Survey description

An inquiry into the scale of the phenomenon of those combining full-time studies with paid work, observed in Polish reality, became the inspiration to carry out a survey among the students of the University of Economics in Katowice. The survey was designed and carried out by the author of the article. It did not have any financial support. It can be treated as a novel and experimental study in the field and a presentation of the most significant results of the study is the purpose of this article. The study was an attempt to determine the importance of motivations behind undertaking work during studies as compared to the field of study, opportunities to acquire skills valued in the labor market and the possibility of continuing work after graduation from the point of view of students and employers alike. The author also examined the relationship between the character of work (regular or occasional) and the students' assessment of the possibility of combining studies with work in terms of coping with their responsibilities, as well as a possible willingness to change the existing situation.

The survey covered all first-year students of a full-time master's degree program in economics (about 100%) at the Faculty of Economics, the University of Economics in Katowice. Thus, they were students who had already obtained a bachelor's or engineer's degree and continued their education in a master's program and who were about 1.5 years before graduation and entering the labor market. The selection of the respondent population was not incidental, because students at this stage of education should already have thought about how to successfully enter the labor market. The survey was conducted through four consecutive years in January and March 2014, in January 2015, in January and February 2016 and in 2017. The survey was conducted in the form of a paper questionnaire and anonymously. Due to the applied technique, a 100% return rate was obtained. The questionnaire included 17 questions, but in light of the issue addressed in the article, only the selected results concerning working students are discussed, including 2 multiple-choice questions targeting all respondents and 10 multiple-choice questions addressed only to working students. The complete results of the survey are presented, because they are compelling and may be interesting for other researchers.

Respondent population characteristics

A total of 129 respondents participated in the survey in 2014, with 124 questionnaires filled in correctly, in 2015 – 194 respondents, 192 questionnaires completed correctly, in 2016 – 116 respondents, 115 of whom completed the questionnaire correctly, in 2017 – 69 respondents, of whom 68 completed the questionnaires correctly. Thus, within 4 years, questionnaires were completed by 499 students. The survey covered all respondents present on the day of the survey, but the day was chosen so as to ensure maximum attendance. In Poland, full-time studies at public universities

are free, so all students received free tuition. The population sample was uniform according to age – approx. 23 years of age, but differentiated by gender. In 2014, 89 women (71%) and 35 men (29%) were among those who correctly completed the questionnaires, in 2015 – 129 women (67%) and 63 men (33%), in 2016 – 86 women (75%) and 29 men (25%), in 2017 – 47 women (69%) and 21 men (31%), so in each year female respondents were dominant, which is common for economics study programs in Poland.

The most important goal of the survey was to identify a group of students who worked during the researched period. In the researched period, 52% of students worked in 2014, 49% in 2015, 54% in 2016, and 72% of students worked or ran a business in 2017. The percentage of working students in the early years of the study was similar to the figures obtained in a survey conducted in 2008/2009 at the Faculty of Economics and Management, the University of Szczecin. It revealed that 48% of economics students earned income during the academic year (Jarecki, 2010), which was higher than the figures in the survey of university graduates conducted in 2012 by the IPISS, according to which 44% of respondents already worked during their studies (IPISS & e-Dialog, 2012). It also exceeded the PARP nationwide survey relating to, among others, students of economics and administration in 2013, of which the percentage of working students amounted to 45% (Jelonek, Antosz & Balcerzak-Raczynska, 2014). According to the 2016-2018 Eurostudent VI survey (Hauschildt et al., 2018) the share of all students in Poland with paid jobs during the lecture and lecture free period was 44%, while for students aged 25-29 – approx. 70%, but the figure also included part-time students, so the data were not comparable.

Data

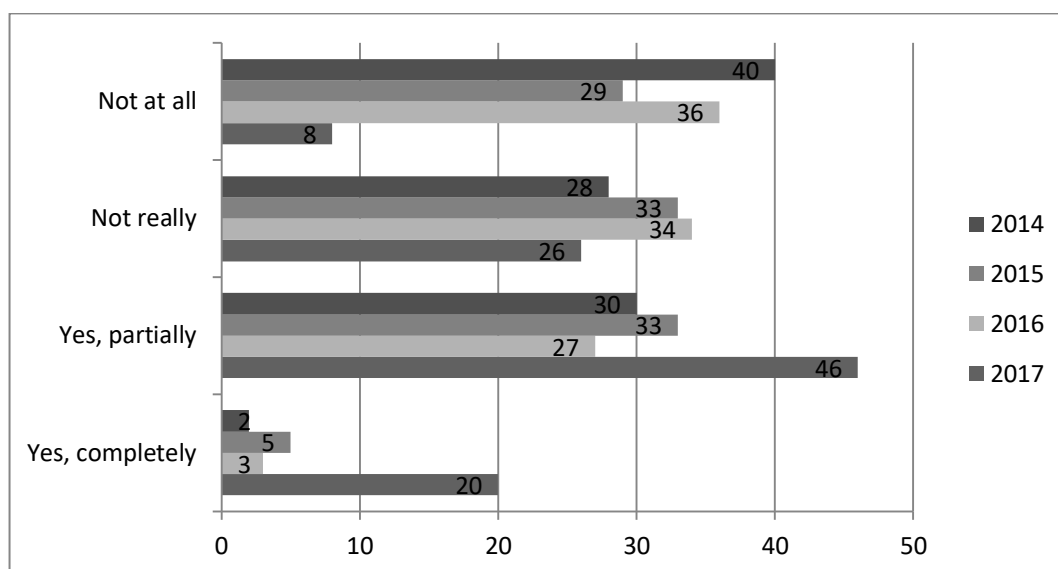
In light of the focus of the article, the results concerning only the working part of students are presented in more detail below. This group was asked about their motivations to seek work. In their answers, they referred to their own preferences, not to observation or beliefs. Respondents had the opportunity to choose not only financial motivation or professional experience related motivation, but motivation combining the two reasons. The first choice, financially related, was indicated by 48% of respondents in 2014 and 2015, by 52% in 2016, and by 33% in 2017. Financial motivation combined with the desire to gain professional experience was indicated by 45% of respondents in 2014, by 35% in 2015, by 32% in 2016, and by 40% in 2017. In the last year this type of motivation prevailed over financial motivation for the first time. On the other hand, the highest percentage of indications involving the desire to gain professional experience was reported in 2016 and accounted for 13% (7% in 2017, 11% in 2015, 5% in 2014), (data do not add up to 100% due to the opportunity to indicate other motives, which, however, were of marginal significance). Students in paid jobs were asked to specify precisely the character of work performed in terms of its regularity, which was briefly described in Table 1.

Table 1. Character of work performed (%)

Character of work performed	2014 n=65	2015 n=93	2016 n=62	2017 n=49
Regular work (at least 3 days a week, done for at least 2 months)	34	45	42	61
Occasional work, performed on days off university, at weekends and on holidays (less than 3 days a week)	62	52	56	39
Other (freelancing, assistance in a family business, etc.)	4	3	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: *The author's survey*

The data show that occasional work was more popular and the percentage of students who worked on a regular basis was higher only in 2017. If students, despite the predominance of financial motivation, were able to gain professional experience in their job, then the alignment of work and the field of study was of importance. It can be assumed that they acquired specific competencies when they performed work in line with the field of study, and general competencies, at least to a minimum extent, when work was not consistent with the field of study. Graph 1 presents the breakdown of working students by the alignment of their work with the field of study.



Graph 1. Breakdown of working students by the alignment of work and the field of study

The results reveal that, apart from 2017, most students did not work in line with the field of study and the percentage of those who declared full alignment was especially low. The percentage of those who declared partial alignment of their professional duties with the field of study was higher. It can be concluded that they gained a small amount of experience in the profession, combining studies with work, while they acquired general competencies useful in the labor market.

In the next part, students were asked if work performed allowed them to acquire skills and competencies valued in the labor market. This part of the results is more optimistic, as: “yes, to a major extent” was the response indicated by 20% in 2014, 25% in 2015, 24% in 2016, 42% in 2017; “yes, but to a minor extent” was chosen by 38% in 2014, 49% in 2015, 50% in 2016 and 49% in 2017. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of students developed their general competencies, although the “not really” response choice rate was also significant, as it amounted to 34% in 2014, 23% in 2015, 21% in 2016, but the situation in this respect improved, because this rate was only 6% in 2017.

If establishing contact with an employer who could continue to provide employment after graduation was not an important motivation to start work, it could ultimately lead to such a relationship. Accordingly, it was important to investigate whether students would like to continue employment with the same employer after graduation. The answer rate for this question was as follows: “Yes” was indicated by only 8% of respondents in 2014, 12% in 2015, 10% in 2016 and 12.2% in 2017; “Rather yes” was indicated by respectively 14%, 15%, 16%, 20%. Thus, students wishing to continue employment after graduation constituted a significant minority. Interestingly, the question “Is the employer interested in employing you after graduation?” was predominantly answered by 38% as “definitely yes” or “rather yes” in 2014, 50% in 2015, 53% in 2016, 79% in 2017. Thus, a discrepancy was detected between students’ preferences and employers’ attitudes. This can be explained in at least two ways. First, students who want to combine studies with work may accept worse working conditions, but after graduation they intend to look for a better job. On the other hand, the attitude of employers reveals the impact of the improved situation on the labor market in Poland (a registered unemployment rate fell from 11.4% at the end of 2014 to 6.5% in November 2017) and problems experienced by employers with finding appropriate employees.

In order to better recognize the effects of taking up work by students, they were asked how effectively they managed to combine studies with work. The results of this part of the study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. How effectively do you manage to combine work and full-time studies? (%)

Response	2014 n = 65	2015 n = 93	2016 n = 62	2017 n = 49
I struggle and often fall behind	6.0	13.0	8.0	10.5
I experience occasional setbacks	52.5	39.0	44.0	50.0
I do not have any major problems	29.0	39.0	38.5	31.0
I do not have any problems	12.5	9.0	9.5	8.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data reveal that at least occasional problems were experienced by more than half of the respondents, while 6% to 13% had serious difficulties. Slightly less than half did not have major problems or did not experience them at all. The results of this part of the study are not therefore explicit, although a negative impact on academic performance is very

likely. Therefore, in the further part of the survey students were asked whether they managed to maintain a relative balance between studying, work and leisure. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3. Do you manage to maintain a relative balance between the time for studying, work and leisure? (%)

Response	2014 n = 65	2015 n = 93	2016 n = 62	2017 n = 49
No, I am always short of free time	23.0	28.0	19.5	35.0
No, I do not have time to study	17.0	15.0	24.0	12.0
I maintain a relative balance	48.0	43.0	37.0	41.0
I do not find it difficult to maintain a balance	12.0	14.0	19.5	12.0
Total	100	100	100	100

About 20% to 35% of respondents complained about the shortage of free time, depending on the year of the survey. This is a significant percentage of students whose mental or physical condition may be at risk in the long term. What is also disturbing is the lack of time to study, reported by up to 25% of the respondents. This group of respondents may have the problem related to the insufficient quality of human capital in terms of knowledge and skills acquired at the university. Most respondents, however, maintain at least a relative balance or have no difficulty in maintaining it. The results show that most respondents managed to combine studies with work, but the percentage of students experiencing related problems was also considerable.

Finally, students were asked whether, given the opportunity to do a paid internship in line with the field of study and offering an opportunity to continue work after graduation to the best interns, they would change their current job. The definite positive response was given by 57% in 2014, 55 % in 2015, 52% in 2016, 49% in 2017. Most students were therefore not satisfied with their situation and would opt to change when the opportunity arose.

Research Methodology and Results

The study assumed that student motivations are important for: – the character of work undertaken, – the alignment of work with the field of study, – opportunities to acquire competencies valued in the labor market and developed in the course of work, – willingness to continue work with an employer of choice after graduation, and also – a employer's willingness to employ a student after graduation. It was also assumed that the character of work performed is related to difficulties declared by students in combining work with studies and the ability to maintain a balance between time for studying, work and leisure. The assumption was also adopted that the character of work performed might be related to eagerness to change the current situation, given the possibility of an internship in an attractive company in line with the field of study and the opportunity to continue employment offered to the best interns.

Data from the four years of the survey were aggregated. The analysis was preceded by statistical tests ensuring that data aggregation is allowable and assume that the samples collected in 4 consecutive years as belonging to the same population (Kruskal-Wallis (H) test as the generalization of Mann-Whitney test and Wilcoxon test for more than 2 independent samples). At 5% level of significance based on the H test statistic there is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the subpopulations belong to the same population.

The Cramer's V coefficient was used to determine the strength of association between the variables.

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{n(m-1)}}$$

n – sample size

$$m = \min(k, l)$$

k – number of classes for variable X

l – number of classes for variable Y

The coefficient takes values from the interval (0; 1), $V = 0$, when variables X and Y are stochastically independent, while $V = 1$ when variables are functionally dependent. Earlier, the necessary χ^2 statistics were calculated in order to derive Cramer's V coefficient. The results of calculations are presented in the further part of the article. First, an attempt was made to verify the hypothesis (H1-H5) about the importance of motivations to undertake work and an examination was conducted investigating the strength of its association with the character of work (I), the alignment of work with the field of study (II), the ability to acquire skills and competences valued in the labor market (III), the willingness declared

by students to continue working for a given employer after completing their studies (IV), as well as the employer's readiness to employ a student after graduation based on the students' opinions (V). Table 4 presents final calculations.

Table 4. The results of the analysis of the association between the main motivation behind seeking work and variables I, II, III, IV, V

Variable	χ^2	Critical value χ^2 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Null hypothesis	Cramer's V	Type of association
I	12.2201	9.488	rejected	0.22	weak association
II	65.6095	21.026	rejected	0.86	very strong
III	47.5705	21.026	rejected	0.85	very strong
IV	38.9841	26.296	rejected	0.77	strong
V	28.4446	26.296	rejected	0.66	strong

A very strong relationship was discovered between the main motivation behind seeking work and the alignment of work with the field of study (Cramer's V = 0.86). Respondents who were motivated financially usually undertook jobs not aligned with the field of study, only 11% of respondents declared full or partial alignment. Persons motivated by the desire to gain professional experience chose jobs aligned with the field of study more frequently, but they constituted only 9%; in the case of respondents declaring financial motivation combined with the desire to gain professional experience, the alignment with the field of study was more frequent, but the difference was minor. However, it can be concluded that financial motivation alone is not conducive to the alignment of work with the field of study, so it does not contribute to creating human capital in line with education.

A very strong association was also found between the main motivation behind seeking work and the opportunity to acquire new competencies and skills valued in the labor market. This was mainly declared by respondents who took up a job motivated both financially and by the desire to gain work experience, as well as by the predominant majority of respondents motivated by the need to build professional experience. Considering that they often performed work not aligned with the field of study, this was rather general human capital as opposed to specific competencies. Most respondents who did not have the opportunity to acquire new competencies and skills valued in the labor market were among those who were motivated entirely by a financial purpose.

A strong dependence was also identified between motivation to start work and the intention to continue working for the same employer after graduation (Cramer's V = 0.77). Basically, respondents who were motivated financially did not want to continue working for the same company after graduation. Most students wishing to continue work were among those who were motivated by the combination of financial purposes and the desire to gain professional experience; they also prevailed in a group motivated by the desire to gain professional experience. Thus, while the vast majority of students did not intend to continue working for the same employer after graduation, work during studies could be a bridge to continue work for those who were motivated by the need to build professional experience. There was also a strong association between the main motivation behind seeking work and the employer's intention to employ the student after graduation (Cramer's V = 0.66). This mostly concerned respondents who sought employment for a financial purpose combined with the desire to build work experience. Employers were not interested in continuing employment of the respondents motivated financially. A weak association was demonstrated between the main motivation behind seeking work and its character. This may be due to a lack of choice and the need to accept work that was available, which depended on the situation on the labor market.

Subsequently, an attempt was made to verify the hypothesis (H6-H7) about the relationship between the character of work performed and the difficulty declared by students in combining work with studies (VI), the ability to maintain a balance between time for studying, work and leisure (VII), and the willingness to change the current situation (VIII). Table 5 presents final calculations. Differences in the number of observations in the last question result from the fact that in one option of the responses, respondents had a chance to add their own condition to make a decision and when those were isolated cases, they were excluded from the calculations.

Table 5. The results of the analysis of the association between the character of work performed and variables VI, VII and VIII

Variable	χ^2	Critical value χ^2 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Null hypothesis	Cramer's V	Type of association
VI	17.7703	7.815	rejected	0.26	weak
VII	21.3550	7.815	rejected	0.28	weak
VIII	160.6699	9.488	rejected	0.81	very strong

The calculations show a strong association between the character of work performed and the readiness to change the situation if an attractive internship opportunity emerged (Cramer's $V = 0.81$). In particular, respondents who did occasional work were prepared to make such a decision. Among those who were not interested in such a change, respondents with a permanent job prevailed, although the difference was not significant. When the answer required respondents to give a condition under which they would decide to change, remuneration for the internship was predominant, to a greater extent among those who had regular work.

A weak association (Cramer's $V = 0.26$) was revealed between the character of work performed and how respondents evaluated their ability to combine work with full-time studies. The occurrence of frequent or transient problems was reported more frequently by those in regular work. Respondents who performed occasional work did not report such problems. As for the relationship between the character of work performed and the ability to maintain a balance between time for studying, work and leisure, it was relatively weak. Fewer problems were reported by students working occasionally, the shortage of free time and time for studying more significantly affected students in regular work.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the article was to obtain in-depth insight into the importance of motivations and some effects of work done by full-time students during their studies. The survey targeted only full-time students, pursuing free degree courses, so the results were not biased with data concerning part-time studies, which are essentially designed for working people. As a result, motivations to seek employment did not entail the necessity to cover tuition fees, the significance of which Scott-Clayton (2012) and Beerkens et al. (2011) emphasized in their studies.

The survey showed the existence of associations between new, untested variables, describing the motivations and effects of combining full-time studies with work. It does not undermine the results of research conducted so far, but it adds new insights to previous studies. The hypotheses proposed in the study can be considered positively verified. In particular, the point that involved the importance of the motivation to work during full-time studies for building human capital and employability, which are the effects of this process, was strongly confirmed. It was motivations that significantly contributed to the alignment of work with the field of study, the ability to acquire skills and competencies valued in the labor market, a willingness to continue working for the same employer and the employer's interest in continued employment of the student after graduation. Students who were motivated by the financial reason, which was very important in the study, tended to build up their human capital to a small extent and did not express interest in continuing employment with the same employer after graduation. These constitute adverse consequences of combining studies with work. The overall conclusion is that solely financial motivation underlying student employment while at college neither builds students' professional experience, in particular their human capital, nor does it lead to employment with the same employer after graduation. On the other hand, students' motivation to gain experience positively affects the decision to take up work related with their field of study, the development of skills sought after in the labor market, and continued employment with the same employer after graduation. This further develops the research results presented by Ormiston (2016) and Trolian et al. (2018), as it provides an insight into a variety of consequences of combining work with studying for human capital, which, *inter alia*, stem from motivations behind seeking work while at college. In addition, it was demonstrated that students rarely take up work in line with their studies, which is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Kosi et al. (2013).

The existence of strong dependence between the character of work performed during studies and the preference for changing this situation was also confirmed. Respondents performing occasional work expressed a stronger intention to change it. The relationship between the character of work performed by students and the learning problems they experienced in the course of their studies, especially involving the ability to keep the balance between study, work and leisure time, proved to be positive, though weak. Work during studies was a source of difficulties and problems for a significant percentage of students. This is revealed in a deficit of placements, internships and similar programs through which students would be able both to develop practical skills and earn income. The weak relationship between the character of work performed and the difficulties, declared by students, related to combining work with studies is a little surprising. The evaluation of the difficulties involved in combining work with studies was, in this case, expressed by students in their declarations, so it was subjective in nature, as opposed to the attempts at objective measurement (Body et al., 2014; Callender, 2008; Triventi, 2014; Yanbarisova, 2015).

This proves that the problem of combining studies with work requires in-depth research which should embrace new fields, partially identified in the article. These associations were found in Poland in the results of the survey conducted among full-time economics students. Based on these results, it can be argued that combining full-time studies with work is a problem that needs to be solved.

Study Limitations

The study had some limitations that also need to be taken into account. It did not include the income level of the students' households; this, however, was the author's conscious choice because respondents usually refuse to answer this type of questions. On the other hand, the knowledge about the students' financial situation would help to assess to

what extent it was necessary for them to seek a paying job during the studies. It could also account for taking up work inconsistent with the field of study. Another problem that was not covered in the survey was a student's preference for working along her/his qualifications after graduation. The fact that a student wished to change a profession in the future could be one of the reasons for performing a job inconsistent with her/his field of study. The survey was limited to economics study programs, which require a relatively small time commitment. It can be assumed that the problems stemming from combining work and studies might be more acutely perceived by students in more time consuming programs. Another issue that should be considered in more detail is the situation in the labor market, because high unemployment causes that students have little choice when available positions are considered, so they may not have an opportunity to take up work in line with their field of study.

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