

**MSC 2020**  
**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»**

**SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS  
DURING STUDY**

Vyacheslav Matveev (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Yaroslav the Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russian Federation,  
Vyacheslav.matveev@novsu.ru

**Abstract**

The article is based on data obtained from a 2018 survey conducted by the sociology laboratory of Yaroslav the Wise Novgorod State University. The article contains a comparative analysis of empirical data on spreading of students' employment during the study period. In modern social science, the issue of extracurricular employment of university students continues to be topical. This is due to many reasons, among which are: a) the increase, due to the growth of mass higher education, in the number of students combining study and work; b) the change of students' motives for entering labor markets in the current economic situation; c) the growth of objective structural changes in the labor markets and in higher education institutions, and much more. Therefore, universities, being the "producers" of highly qualified personnel, analyze the processes associated with working students; identify the factors affecting the work and study combination. The article also provides the data characterizing such an acute problem for universities as the effect of secondary employment of students on performance indicators (academic success). Gender and age differences affecting the scale of student employment are considered separately. And since this process, depending on the specifics of vocational education systems and labor markets, can be manifested in certain groups of countries differently, an analysis of its features as a whole will lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon of a working student.

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*Keywords:* Labor market, professional socialization, secondary employment of students



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## 1. Introduction

The issue of extracurricular employment of university students continues to be topical, as it is largely stimulated by processes that are gaining increasing momentum in modern societies, namely:

- firstly, the preservation of a significant amount of the share of paid education (including higher professional education) and the constant rise in living costs, which constantly motivates a significant portion of students to temporary employment;
- secondly, the formation of new employment trends in the modern labor market and the increase of the opportunities for most students to combine study and work (for example, freelance, outsourcing, etc.);
- thirdly, a change in students' motivation to acquire practical skills while studying (for example, in the Russian Federation this is due to the abolition of the practice of distributing university graduates and, in part, to increased competition in the labor market among young professionals).

It is these large-scale processes that actualize the interest of researchers and practitioners in the field of education in different countries to analyze the process of combining study and work by university students.

## 2. Problem Statement

An analysis of the reasons that force university students to enter into relations with employers in the labor market during the study period allows modern researchers to divide this phenomenon into several groups. For example, some researchers, when analyzing the secondary employment of university students, focus on the reasons associated with financial difficulties and students' desire to receive additional income during the study period (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2010; King, 2002; Roshchin & Rudakov, 2014). In the works of these researchers, the process of the parents' influence on the students' desire to enter the labor market is analyzed in sufficient detail, the differentiation of families on the scale of financial income and the characteristics of their social statuses is studied, different groups of students are examined (for example, the generation of the "stability era").

Another group of researchers to a lesser extent connects the combination of studies between students and work with a lack of financial resources for students and focuses more on the students' desire to expand their practical experience within the chosen profession. In many ways, this formulation of the problem is associated with the transition of most countries of the world from elite to mass professional education and with such a problem of higher professional education as the failure in acquiring practical skills at a university (Apokin & Yudkevich, 2008; Beerkens et al., 2011; Travkin, 2019). Researchers who share the basic principles of this approach focus on the fact that a certain deficit of practice-oriented education at the university, overlapping with the existing understanding of students of their potential vulnerability in the labor market, is increasingly starting to fulfill its signaling function for students, namely, their stirring up in terms of job search. It follows that a certain part of students in a situation of choosing between spending effort on a theoretical study of disciplines and early entry into the labor market to gain practical skills makes a decision in favor of secondary employment (Triventi, 2014). In general, the researchers conclude that the

presence of practice-oriented experiences allows students to better prepare for their future career and to adapt more flexibly to the changing requirements of the labor market (Gorbushova & Kuchigina, 2014; Passaretta & Triventi, 2015).

Another hypothesis, which was tested by Russian and foreign researchers, is the impact of work on the academic performance of students (Triventi, 2014; Vorona, 2008; Yanbarisova, 2014). The initial idea of the researchers that the performance of working students may be lower than that of non-working students was generally correct; however, surveys of different years showed that this relationship did not work equally for all groups of part-time working students. Factors that did not allow proving the hypothesis for all part-time working students were: 1) the content of the work; 2) the amount of time spent on it; 3) the connection of work with the student' major. Based on these results, the researchers concluded that the inclusion of these factors in the final analysis increasingly allows considering the employment of students in the field of their major as one of the forms of education. At the same time, these researchers make another conclusion that the question of how the labor activity really influenced the formation of professional competencies of students and what was obtained in the course of academic training remains outside the authors' field of vision.

In general, despite the large number of works on secondary employment of students during the study period, it is necessary to state the idea of a certain fragmentation of the knowledge gained. A number of hypotheses require their empirical confirmation, and the identified factors can be enriched by the data of additional studies on the problems of study and work combination by students.

### **3. Research Questions**

**3.1.** What is the scale of the phenomenon of secondary employment of students at present and in the recent past?

**3.2.** What is the connection of work outside the classroom with the student's major at the university?

**3.3.** What is the degree of influence of students' secondary employment on their academic performance?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is to describe the process of combination of study and work by students and analyze social factors that influence the secondary employment process. The answers of respondents regarding the indicated range of questions will be considered in this article.

### **5. Research Methods**

**5.1.** The article is based on data of the empirical study, which was conducted in March – June, 2018 at the Yaroslav the Wise Novgorod State University. 400 students of 1-4 years of study (116 1st year students, 109 2nd year, students, 92 3rd year students, and 83 4th year students) were interviewed.

**5.2.** Students were selected based on random selection of groups by mechanical sampling. All the main stratum-forming quotas (gender, course, percentage of groups within the institutes) were observed in

the survey, due to which the average deviation of the samples from the general populations by the above parameters was no more than 3%.

5.3. The main sampling parameters were:

- proportion of the student body in the university as a whole and in separate departments (institutes);
- proportion of student body by gender in the university as a whole and in separate departments (institutes).

5.4. The study was conducted with the method of group questionnaire distributed by employees of the university’s sociology laboratory at the time the students were present in classes. Answers to the questionnaire were received in the self-filling mode. Inside the collected arrays, questionnaires were subsequently rejected to approximate the given quantitative proportions of the sample. Survey data were processed in the NovSU sociology laboratory. .

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. The combination of work and study**

The empirical data obtained from a survey of university students in 2019 shows that the proportion of working students is 31%, of which one third “works constantly” and two thirds “from time to time”. If we compare the shares of working students for different periods of time, then we can see that since the beginning of the 21st century, the group of students combining work with studies at Novgorod State University in Veliky Novgorod has decreased in percentage terms. If in 2003, 49% of students worked part time, i.e. almost half, then in 2009 the proportion of part-time students fell to 43%, and in 2014 to 38%. Undoubtedly, one of the important factors that influenced the decrease in secondary employment of students is the economic crisis of 2008-2009.

According to the comparative analysis data, such factors as the year of studies and gender of the respondents influence the number of working students. The number of working students is growing from study year to study year (data in Table 01), which is quite objective and is recorded in research at other universities. In addition, in senior years, the proportion of students who choose the answer option “work constantly” begins to increase.

**Table 1.** Comparative data of part-time working students in extracurricular time by years of study, %

Frequency of Part Time Work	Study years of Bachelor degree program			
	1	2	3	4
Work (constantly and/or from time to time)	30.2	21.1	39.1	48.1

A significant characteristic of student employment is not only the year of study, but also the gender of the respondent. Among male students there are more part-time workers than among female studnets (Table 02).

**Table 2.** Comparative data of part-time working students in extracurricular time by gender, %

Frequency of Part Time Work	Gender	
	Female	Male
Work (constantly and/or from time to time)	28.1	42.2

Another factor that has a significant impact on students looking for work while studying is the level of material support from students' parents. The revealed general trend is that with an increase in the well-being of parental families, a decrease in the proportion of part-time working students is recorded. While among students who indicated a low level of material support from parents 47.6% work part-time, among students from materially well-off families, 30 to 35% work part-time.

It should be noted that the influence of the parameter of material well-being of parental families on students' search for work during their studies was recorded in studies of other Russian researchers. For example, a similar correlation was observed in 2003 by researchers from the Center for Sociology of Education of the Russian Academy of Education during a survey of students at Moscow universities (Sobkin et al., 2005), as well as in studies from 2006-2016 among students from different universities of Russia (Filonenko et al., 2018).

In terms of the material support factor, it is also interesting that the financial side of student education is not a significant factor in their search for work while studying. The survey data show that while among students studying on a paid basis, the percentage of students with part-time jobs was 34%, among students on a budgetary basis, it turned out to be almost the same, namely 33%. In confirmation of this trend, but already at the national level, it is interesting to note the fact that the weak influence of the education at the expense of budgetary funds or on a paid basis factor on students' search for work was noted in Rosstat studies in 2016 among graduates of secondary and higher professional education (Varshavskaya, 2019).

## 6.2. The connection of work with the major

Let us now dwell on the connection of work outside the classroom with the major studied at the university. Certain features of the modern labor market (for example, competition for jobs), to an even greater extent than before, require the reinforcement of theoretical knowledge gained by practical work experience, which cannot be fully obtained only in the classroom or during short-term training and production practices. Therefore, respondents who chose the answer that they combine studies with work were asked about the connection of work with the major at the university. 44% of the Novgorod students surveyed answered this question positively. The data of the sociology laboratory at Novgorod State University allow answering also the question: have the numbers changed, and if so, how they have changed over the past 10-15 years? A comparative analysis shows that the proportion of students who noted the connection between work and the major at the university changed as follows: in 2005 it was 48%; in 2009 - 25%; in 2010 - 28%; in 2014 - 47%. Thus, we can see that:

- over a long period of time, a certain part of the student youth retains a desire not only to earn extra money while studying at the university, but to combine the major studied at the university with part-time jobs;
- the above data show high volatility of secondary employment of students and thereby confirm its dependence on external factors that are weakly managed at the level of an individual;

- once again, the role of the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, the influence of which has been active for at least almost five years, is sharply negative in the aspect we are studying..

If we analyze the level of influence of secondary employment of students on their plans to work in their major field after graduation, then the following dependence is visible: if among non-working students up to 53% talk about the possibility of working in their professional field after university, then among part-time students the proportion increases to 73%. The recorded difference between these two numbers is large enough, which does not allow the analysis to refer only to the influence of statistical error. As an intermediate conclusion, the following can be singled out: any types of work create a more realistic vision of students' own competencies and capabilities, allow students not only to test themselves, but also to get acquainted with the requirements associated with various types of work in the modern regional labor market; freelance mode allows getting acquainted with the requirements of employers at the federal and international levels.

### **6.3. Attitude of students to additional work**

When analyzing the topics of combining study and work by students, it is impossible to ignore the following question - when students are missing classes, do they consider it as the factor that can lead to poor academic performance and the risk of expulsion from the university? In general, there is an opinion among researchers that temporary work in the major field has a positive effect on the professional socialization of students, as it contributes to a better understanding of the requirements in the field of a future professional career and reduces the likelihood of inconsistency with the required competencies (Passaretta & Triventi, 2015). Researchers come to the conclusion that for students such a "reconnaissance in battle" of the labor market can result in a gain that is associated with both additional income and the possibility of obtaining practical social and professional skills and competencies.

However, employment can negatively affect academic performance, which is recognized by the students themselves. So to the question "Does your work create additional study difficulties?" more than half of the part-time working students (54.6%) chose the answer options – "Yes, work creates additional difficulties for study". A similar answer to the questionnaire was chosen in 2014 by 59.5%. It is interesting that in the all-Russian survey of university students in 2013 (Roshchin & Rudakov, 2014), the proportion of students who indicated difficulties in combining work and study also amounted to slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) from this group.

## **7. Conclusion**

An analysis of the data allows for several important conclusions.

The research materials show that up to a third of the students surveyed have experience combining work and study. Comparison of data for different time intervals shows that although the part-time work of students is characterized by irregularity and short-term, secondary employment of students does not disappear as a social phenomenon either for long periods of time or during periods of economic crisis. All these can rightfully be explained by the high adaptive abilities of students.

Among the factors most strongly influencing the process of combining study and work by students in modern conditions, financial grounds continue to prevail. However, the study showed that both further analysis and the subsequent possible stimulation of secondary employment of students cannot ignore the influence of other social factors on this process, namely: a) age and gender differences of students; b) features of the social status of the parent families of students; c) the financial basis of student education. Undoubtedly, this list of factors should and can be supplemented depending on the characteristics of regional education systems and the characteristics of labor markets taking shape in the new conditions of socio-economic development of societies. Still poorly studied is the question having, however, important research and practical significance, namely: what is the degree of influence of the effect of forced employment of students on academic performance? Empirical evidence indicates that students are aware of study difficulties that may arise during part-time work. The vast majority of them try to prevent expulsion from the university because of part-time employment, and they manage to successfully combine education and part-time jobs. At the same time, an interesting research hypothesis arises on the extent of the negative impact of secondary employment on the education process being positively offset by the influence on the student's future employment with the presence of various types of labor contacts. Undoubtedly, the formulation of this hypothesis calls for a separate comprehensive study in the near future. The materials of the article show that the secondary employment of students traditionally develops within the framework of two models: within the framework of the model of conjunction of work and the future profession chosen by students for study at the university and within the framework of the model of non-conjunction of part-time jobs with the sphere of the future profession. The extent to which this or that model forms the social and professional identity of students was not included in the subject of the given research. But it should be noted that in the education of highly professional specialists, universities cannot ignore the existence of a large proportion of students who do not connect their studies with their future profession. Therefore, organizing university departments (foundations, centers, laboratories, etc.), the activities of which will be aimed at providing students with competencies related to the profession acquired, objectively becomes an increasingly urgent problem.

During the work over the article, the information appeared that the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation plans to launch a student employment program for universities during the spring-summer of 2020. Pilot projects are already operating in a number of universities in the country, when any student can get a job at the university. In the future, it is planned that this program could become permanent (Nabirkina, 2020).

## **Acknowledgments**

This article was prepared as part of the Russian Science Foundation grant 18-18-00047 "Research on the state of information flows in the Russian education system and the possibilities of their optimization".

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