

SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AS AN ELEMENT WHICH GIVES ADVANTAGE WITH EMPLOYMENT IN ORGANISATIONS OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF SPORT AND RECREATION

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Abstract: This article will present reflections on the importance of professional experience acquired during the work of a volunteer in search of jobs in sports and recreational organisations. The study that has been carried out with the method of a diagnostic survey using the technique of a survey form, will be to indicate whether this kind of experience is taken into account during recruitment and employee assessment by the management staff of entities operating in the field of sport and recreation. The hypothesis of the article assumes that people with experience acquired while working as a volunteer are assessed better during the recruitment process, and that this experience translates into better results of their work.

Key words: volunteering, unemployment, labour market, sports and leisure operators, employment

Introduction

From the point of view of national economy, the unemployment rate is statistics which shows what percentage of people who are able to work and willing to work is not employed at the moment. The purpose of national authorities is to maintain the unemployment rate at the lowest possible level, so as to limit the negative effects of this phenomenon to the maximum. However, from the point of view of the basic unit of society which is the family, as well as from the perspective of every person who is willing to work, the lack of such an opportunity is a significant problem, which in some drastic cases may lead to social exclusion and poverty. That is why work that gives financial stability is one of the most important values for the majority of the society, also including young people who want to start their independent lives. As illustrated by the data published by the Central Statistical Office (Polish: *Główny Urząd Statystyczny; GUS*), which relates to unemployment in Poland in 2012 – and which was used while developing this article – it is the group of young people (aged from 25 to 34) that was the most numerous group of unemployed, who were 627.5 thousand in 2012. The second largest group of unemployed in Poland (424.2 thousand) was people under the age of 25. In total, in the two above-mentioned age groups there were as many as 49.2% unemployed Poles in 2012. Among the many reasons for this phenomenon one

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should mention the lack of professional experience of the young and their maladjustment to the needs of the labour market in terms of qualifications and skills.

In this context, attention should be paid to the importance which education has for young people in terms of finding themselves on the labour market. Figure 1 shows the total number of unemployed in Poland with the division into the level of their education. Obviously, it should be noted that none of the levels of education guarantees employment to those who have reached it, however, as follows from Figure 1, there are levels with lower probability of remaining unemployed. These are education at the secondary and higher (i.e. tertiary/postsecondary) level, since in those groups in 2012, the lowest number of the unemployed was recorded.

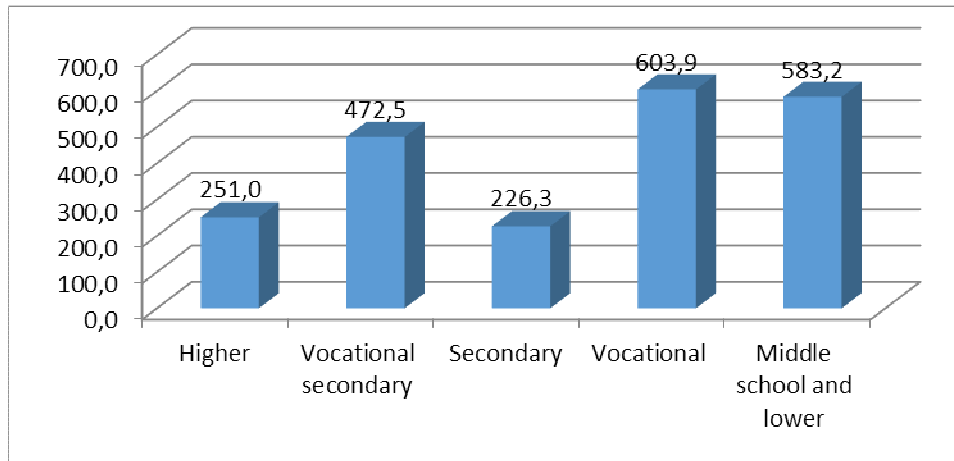


Figure 1. Comparison of the total number of the unemployed in Poland in 2012 with the division into the level of education (in thousands)

Source: Own study based on the data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Regions - Poland, Central Statistical Office, 2014

From the perspective of reducing the level of unemployment, the information on how many people in a given year took their first jobs is of crucial importance. This data, divided into the level of education, is included in Figure 2. It indicates that in the year 2012 employers most willingly hired college and university graduates into their first work.

Summary of the data presented in Figures 1 and 2 indicates that in 2012, college and university graduates did best on the labour market. The largest number of them found their first job and in total they were the second least numerous group in terms of the number of unemployed. And it is precisely this group to which further deliberations will be devoted. First, the presented data will be supplemented by the number of people who completed their education at the college or university level, becoming graduates of undergraduate or graduate studies or of uniform master degree studies in 2012. A total of over 485 thousand people became graduates. In Figure 3, this number has been compiled with the total number of the unemployed

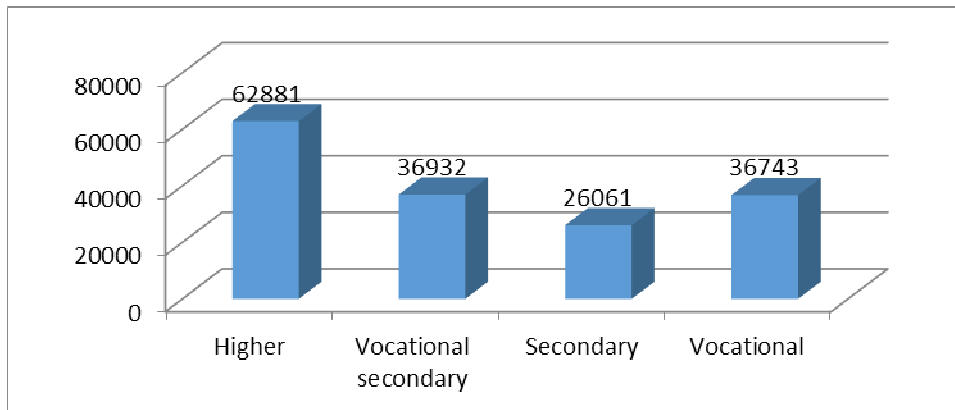


Figure 2. Comparison of the total number of graduates of colleges and universities, secondary schools and vocational schools, who took their first job in the year 2012
Source: Own study based on the data provided by the Statistical Yearbook of the Regions - Poland, Central Statistical Office, 2014

with higher education in 2012 and with the number of people with higher education who found their first job in the year 2012. This data (although it cannot be compared in the presented form as it does not include college and university graduates who were already working during their studies and continued work or those who started another job after graduation) shows clearly that tertiary education does not guarantee finding a job.

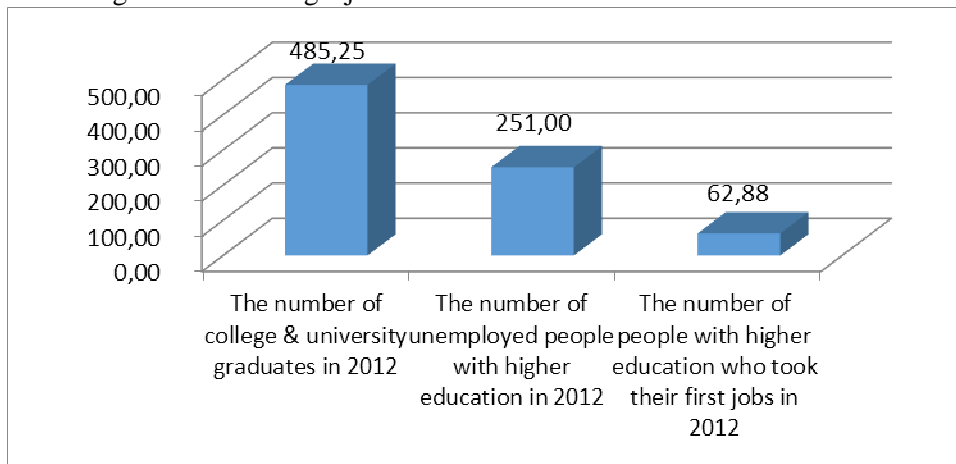


Figure 3. Juxtaposition of the selected data concerning college and university graduates in 2012 (in thousands)

Source: Own study based on the data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Regions - Poland, Central Statistical Office, 2014

Young people after secondary school-leaving examinations, deciding to take up studies, should be aware of the fact that different fields of study give different chances of finding a job, and that just writing in the CV that they have

a postsecondary education diploma without information about the already acquired experience and additional qualifications and skills may turn out to be insufficient for work. Another very important issue in terms of taking up work by graduates is whether they manage to take a job in the profession to which they had been preparing during the period of their studies. Data from the Central Statistical Office does not mention anything on the matter, but it can be assumed that among the employed college or university graduates, a vast minority works in their learned profession [1].

Justification for the subject of the study

Bearing in mind the presented data and knowing the specificity of the labour market within the field of sport and recreation, a survey was conducted among the senior executives of organisations which operate on the market of sport and recreation. The aim of the study was to verify the hypothesis which claims that the experience gained by young people due to working as a volunteer at various types of events and sports events, brings benefits at the stage of looking for work and while doing it. The idea of conducting this sort of study arises from the fact that its authors are employees of the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice and they prepare students to work in sports and recreational organisations as part of their work. Just like students and graduates of other universities and fields of study, also students and graduates of management (no matter if the specialisation is related to management in sport, tourism or physiotherapy), face difficulties in finding a job in the profession [2]. In order to face the situation of the students and graduates, the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice has decided to give the first-year students at the faculty of Management an opportunity to choose the subject which aims at encouraging students to look for experience and shows how to acquire this experience. This subject is called Social Aspects of Volunteering and in order to pass it, the students are obliged to (among other things) work as a volunteer in an organisation which they choose on their own or during events that are guaranteed as part of the subject. Within two years of the occurrence in the offer of subjects to choose, the classes in Social Aspects of Volunteering attracted wide interest among students. Confirmation of this is illustrated in Figure 4, which juxtaposes the total number of first-year students at the Faculty of Management with the division into full-time and extramural studies in the academic years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 with the number of students who have decided to implement the above-mentioned subject [3].

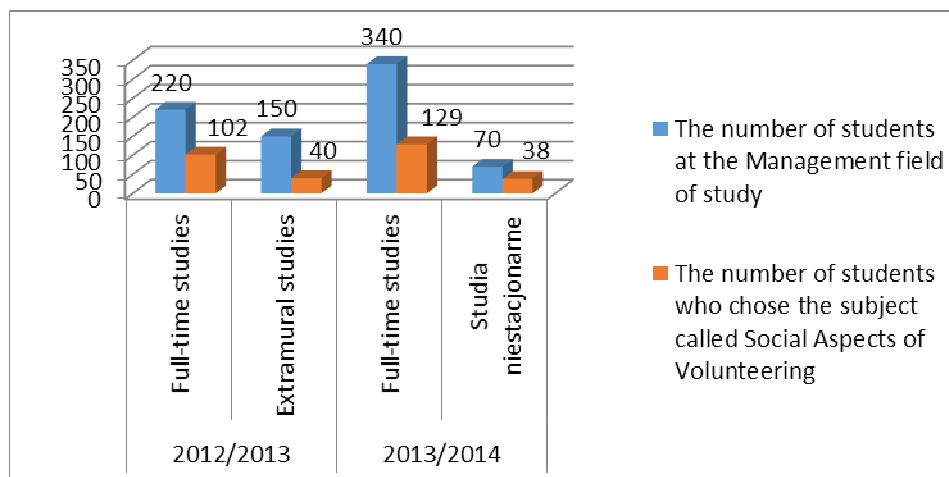


Figure 4. Comparison of the total number of first-year students at AWF Katowice in the Faculty of Management with the number of students who have chosen the subject Social Aspects of Volunteering

Source: Own study based on the data provided by AWF Katowice

Volunteering

So what is volunteering and why can it contribute to the success of people who gather experience as a volunteer in professional life? The essence of volunteering is hidden to a large extent in its very name, which derives from Latin and means - *voluntary* [4]. According to Polish legislation, volunteering is understood as providing services corresponding to the performance of work in a voluntary way and free of charge [5]. Polish law also specifies unambiguously which institutions may use the assistance of volunteers. These are: non-governmental institutions including foundations and associations, local government units, social cooperatives, entities associated with churches and religious organisations, partnerships, including sports clubs operating on a non-profit basis, public administration authorities and their subordinate units, schools, medical care facilities, social welfare centres and cultural institutions [6]. The listed entities exhaust the list of entities where one can serve as a volunteer, which is defined by the Polish Centre of Volunteering, possessing a nationwide network of branches, as a natural person who freely, voluntarily and without remuneration provides services for an organisation, institution or individual persons, beyond collegial and family ties [7]. Voluntariness and lack of remuneration for the implementation of services are the basis for the idea of volunteering. It is extremely important for people who are preparing to work in the area of sport and recreation, as well as for organisations that operate in this field. This results from the fact that running a sports or recreational activity is associated with the necessity to organise regular events. For example, one can mention sports clubs which, depending on the sports discipline and the level of tournament, are required to organise a few up to several

tens of sporting events in the season. And although one can imagine that a group of only a few people is planning in advance and preparing an event, for which hundreds or tens of thousands tickets are being sold, on the very day of the event it is not possible that a few people manage to watch the efficient course of this event. A similar situation exists in the case of urban sport and recreation centres, which are able to plan and prepare e.g. a marathon using their own human resources, but are not able to carry it out, because the presence of many people on the entire length of the route, as well as in the area of start and finish line, is required. In such situations, it is necessary to use the help of people who are not related to the organisation on a daily basis. Considering the limited financial capacity of event organisers, it is important that this help is free of charge, which is possible due to the use of institutions of voluntary service. As it is thus easy to notice, this is an opportunity for mutual benefits, since thanks to volunteers, organisations operating in the field of sport and recreation can complete their tasks, and for people who serve as a volunteer, this type of situation gives an opportunity to cooperate with the organisation, to learn the principles of its operation and to participate in the implementation of its objectives. In this way, volunteers can complement the theoretical knowledge acquired at university in sports and recreational organisations, where they can also gain the essential experience required in the labour market. Most benefits for the volunteer should be expected from the cooperation with organisations which approach the management and coordination of volunteering in a professional manner. In this type of organisations, using the assistance of volunteers should be regarded as a process within which the following actions occur:

1. determining the quantitative needs of the organisation and qualification requirements for individuals who would serve as a volunteer, as well as the designation of responsibilities they would carry out;
2. establishing the position of the coordinator of voluntary work;
3. recruitment of volunteers;
4. preparation of volunteers for the realisation of the assigned tasks;
5. introduction to the organisation;
6. probation of the volunteer; supervising, rewarding and dismissing the volunteer [8].

As can be seen, the stages of the presented process are consistent with the stages of managing the paid staff, thanks to which a person without any experience acquires it by going through such steps which he/she will go through when looking for a job in a similar organisation. Acting as a volunteer, a person receives their rights and obligations, whose mutual obedience – both by the volunteer and by the organisation for which he/she provides service correspondent with the performance of work – is extremely essential for the final results of this cooperation [9].

One can become a volunteer for a day, or for a single event, but one can also opt for a long-term cooperation[10]. Similarly to an employee, a volunteer is entitled to the confirmation of the terms of cooperation in the form of a written agreement and confirmation of performing the function of a volunteer in the form of a certificate

and assessment by the representative of the organisation that benefited from his/her assistance. Sports and recreation organisations have different demand for assistance, which translates into a diverse number of volunteers. For instance, on the occasion of a volleyball match, assistance of a few to a dozen volunteers is needed, while organising a marathon – over one hundred people are needed, and as part of the Olympic Games, the demand for volunteers is counted in thousands (e.g. during the Olympic Games in Sochi, as many as 25 thousand of them were needed) [11].

The research process

The objective of the conducted study was to obtain the opinion of the management staff, working in the course of the study or having previous work experience in managerial positions in sports and recreation organisations. This opinion relates to the perception of experience gained in the form of voluntary service by employees or candidates for employees. Another objective was to obtain data on the formal consideration of this type of experience while creating job offers and on the assessment of candidates by organisations in which the subjects occupy managerial positions.

The scope of the study covered representatives of various organisations operating in the field of sport and recreation, including the management staff of sports clubs, private companies working in the field of sport and recreation, higher education establishments that specialise in preparing students to work in the area of physical culture, urban sports and recreation centres and others. Not all of the listed types of organisations, according to Polish legislature, can benefit from the help of volunteers within the scope of their activity, however, it is not contrary to the possibility of employing people who have gained experience and established interpersonal contacts in other sports or recreation organisations. The research tool was constructed in such a way that its fulfilment by usually busy and not having much free time managers did not take much time while obtaining exhaustive and reliable answers. Accordingly, the questionnaire took the form of seven closed-ended questions.

Results of the study

Using the phrases: "Absolutely", "Yes", "No" and "Definitely not" (and optionally: "I have no opinion") in the first five questions, the subjects were asked to express opinion concerning the perception of people with experience acquired while serving as a volunteer in comparison with people without such experience, taking into account the following aspects: recruitment for the position, independence of performing employee duties, employee assessment, professional promotions and rewarding. Replies of the subjects indicate that in the eyes of managers of sports and tourist organisations, those who have experience as volunteers are more serious candidates than those without such experience. Those

persons, after admission to work, more quickly begin to fully independently realise the tasks imposed in front of them, in comparison with their colleagues without experience as a volunteer. At the same time, it follows from the replies of managers of sports and tourist organisations that the experience acquired while serving as a volunteer by their subordinate employees is not reflected in their higher assessment, awards gained by them or the speed and possibility of career advancement. In contrast, replies to the last two questions of the questionnaire suggest that in organisations where the subjects work, experience in serving as a volunteer is usually not mentioned in job offers as one of the requirements of admission. However, this kind of experience contributes to obtaining additional points in the evaluation of a given candidacy.

Summary

The results of this study indicate that performing the function of a volunteer positively translates into the perception of an individual with this type of experience by employers within the area of sport and recreation at the recruitment stage and it prepares to fulfil ones duties. This confirms the first part of the research hypothesis which assumes that persons with experience acquired while doing voluntary work are better assessed during the recruitment process, and that it translates into better results of their work. The results, however, do not support the second part of the hypothesis. Assessment of the employee as well as his/her chances for awards and promotions is not dependent on performing the role of a volunteer before one's professional work, but on factors associated with the performance of professional duties.

Students, who intend to link their professional life with sports and recreation organisations, are informed by the presented findings that in order to increase one's chances of starting work in the profession to which they are preparing, they should gain experience as volunteers during various kinds of sports and recreational events.

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WOLONTARIAT SPORTOWY JAKO ELEMENT DAJĄCY PRZEWAGĘ PRZY ZATRUDNIENIU W ORGANIZACJACH DZIAŁAJĄCYCH W OBSZARZE SPORTU I REKREACJI

Streszczenie: W artykule zaprezentowane zostały rozważania dotyczące znaczenia doświadczenia zawodowego zdobywanego podczas pełnienia funkcji wolontariusza, w poszukiwaniu pracy w organizacjach sportowych i rekreacyjnych. Badania przeprowadzone metodą sondażu diagnostycznego przy wykorzystaniu techniki ankietowej, miały na celu wskazanie, czy tego typu doświadczenie brane jest pod uwagę podczas rekrutacji i oceny pracowniczej przez kadrę managerską podmiotów działających w obszarze sportu i rekreacji. Natomiast hipoteza artykułu zakładała, że osoby z doświadczeniem nabytym w ramach prac wykonywanych w charakterze wolontariusza są lepiej oceniane podczas procesu rekrutacji oraz, że doświadczenie to przekłada się na lepsze wyniki ich pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: wolontariat, bezrobocie, rynek pracy, podmioty sportowe i rekreacyjne, zatrudnienie

体育作为元素，给优势与就业志愿服务组织在体育和娱乐领域的经营

摘要: 这篇文章将在寻找在体育和康乐组织工作的一名志愿者的工作期间获得的专业经验的重要性提出几点思考。与使用技术的调查表单中，诊断调查的方法进行的研究将以指示是否这种经验考虑到在招聘和员工评估期间在体育和娱乐领域的经营实体的管理人员。假设的文章假定人们与工作作为一名志愿者更好地评估在招聘过程中，和这一经验将转化为更好的结果，他们的工作时取得的经验。

关键词: 志愿工作，失业、劳动力市场、体育和休闲的营办商、就业。