
A LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL REALIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN 19 - 30 YEARS WITH SENSORY DISORDERS IN BULGARIA

Maria Valyavicharska

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” Sofia, Bulgaria, mvalyavicharska@fppse.uni-sofia.bg

Abstract: The problem of hiring people with disabilities is a topical issue that concerns two sides - employers and people with disabilities. The quality of life of each person is directly related to the state of his employment in the labor market. For his socialization in society, the level of self-confidence they builds, and for the sense of completeness, the same criteria apply as for the quality of life, namely the presence of professional realization. The term "normalization", first used by Bengt Nirje (1982), is based on the idea of providing living conditions accessible to all people. These conditions are related to the equal participation in the life of society of all its members - with and without disabilities. Normalization requires certain economic conditions that allow any society to provide an accessible environment for people with special needs. Part of this process is providing jobs for people with disabilities, as well as creating new jobs that they could perform.

The publication presents the results of a survey for the level of professional realization of young people between 19-30 years with sensory impairments, made in connection with the National Research Program "Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Students" of the Ministry of Education and Science. The prepared questionnaire contains 14 questions, through which it aims to reveal the level of professional realization of young people with impaired vision and hearing impairment and the barriers they face when finding a employment.

Keywords: professional realization, sensory disorders, barriers, work

1. INTRODUCTION

People with special needs face many difficulties and barriers in their life - school, people's judgments, difficulties in education, at university, if they study higher education, and then in their realization in society. The lack of professional realization becomes a major barrier to full socialization and integration. In Bulgaria, there are many legal frameworks related to the rights of people with disabilities, their right to education and employment, but in practice the state is not prepared to ensure their implementation in the labor market.

No matter what age the individual is and how serious the disorder is, the need for advice, guidance and support in the profession and workplace is inevitable. That is why the role of career guidance specialists is leading in the process.

We are familiar with the provisions that impose equal rights for all people, regardless of their religion, health, etc. Among people with disabilities, however, equality is often confused with the need for excessive tolerance. According to Radulov (2019), "equality sometimes means the waiver of certain privileges in the interest of full and equal participation and inclusion in society." The issue of the rights of people with disabilities has always been addressed in both extremes - on the one hand, there is often talk of very intolerant employers, and on the other - of unfair employees who claim mostly their rights but neglect their obligations. In this way, prejudices about people with disabilities and the fear of the employer regarding their future professional relationships are born.

2. RESEARCH

The study, which results are presented in this report, was designed for people with sensory impairments (people with hearing impairments and people with visual impairments). The created survey aims to examine the level of their professional realization and the barriers they face when finding a job, what are the most common delays on the part of employers and other issues that directly affect their realization on the labor market.

The percentage distribution of the participants in the study is as follows - 40% of persons with visual impairments and 60% with hearing impairments. Of the total number of respondents, 46.7% are unemployed and 53.3% are employed in the labor market. The data shown by the survey show that the percentage of unemployed people among young people is too high, given the active policies of the Employment Agency, which are directed in this direction.

According to the educational level, the data show that there are no persons who have remained at the stage of primary education, the persons with secondary education are 30%, with higher (bachelor) 63.3% and higher education (master) - 6.7%. The high number of people with higher education gives reason to believe that when reading the annual statistics of the Employment Agency on the percentage of unemployed, people with disabilities will be sought only in the column "unemployed people with disabilities" and will increasingly fall into "Unemployed without qualifications". The availability of higher education increases the opportunities for

professional realization and reduces the probability for the increasingly common practice of employing people with disabilities in low-skilled positions.

One of the aims of the study was to uncover the mechanism most commonly used by people with sensory impairments to find work. Since both types of disorders - visual and auditory - are known for the vicious practice of the closed community, one of the assumptions was that they find it easiest to work among their friends with the same disorder who are already in the labor market. The data confirmed the assumption. The highest percentage of employees with disabilities found work through relatives and friends with the same violation (57.1%). Those who sought and found a job by interviewing for a job advertisement they found themselves were 38.1%, and those who used the services of the Labor Office were only 4.8%. The results obtained here lead to several conclusions:

- ✓ Closed communities of people with disabilities are still a fact. There is nothing wrong with that, as in such an environment, discriminated people often find help, support and friendship. The problem in closed communities still shows the negative attitude of society towards people with disabilities, and consequently their insecurity and inability to integrate independently into society;
- ✓ Positive progress can be seen in the responses of those 38.1% who found a job on their own through a published advertisement, as a result of which they appeared for an interview and were hired.
- ✓ A negative trend is indicated by the work of the Labor Office, which has benefited so few people with disabilities.

A frequently asked question regarding the appointment of a person with a violation is whether employers do not abuse them in any way or the preferences provided by the state. That is why the survey included a question whose data show that 90.5% of employees with disabilities are employed under an employment contract, which indicates a serious and responsible attitude towards the employee, as well as a vision for long-term cooperation in the workplace. Employees on a civil contract (which does not give the employee rights, social security or leave) are only 9.5%.

Regarding the issue of adaptation of the workplace, which is leading in the field of professional realization of people with disabilities. There were two questions in this area - did they themselves need to adapt and of what nature and who adapted the workplace for their needs. Most often adaptation was required with regard to:

- ✓ The physical environment;
- ✓ Technical equipment - Braille keyboards, readers, etc .;
- ✓ Trainings for learning sign language by the team and management

On the other hand, the second question concerns who implements the adaptation in the workplace. This activity requires competencies in the field of technology, the accessible physical environment and the strictly specific needs of each category of persons with special needs. The data taken from the study show that:

- ✓ 55.6% of the adaptation of the working environment is realized by order of the employer;
- ✓ 38.9% claim to be actively involved in this process, as their employers have personally consulted them about their needs;
- ✓ 5.6% indicate that the adaptation was made by a specialist consultant from the labor office.

With these results we again observe the low activity of the specialized service of the Labor Office, as well as the progress in the understandings and the attitude of the employers towards their employees with disabilities. Perhaps this is due to the preferences enjoyed by employers who hire a person with a disability. They are related to various programs of the Employment Agency or the Agency for People with Disabilities. "Experience has shown that hiring people with disabilities brings benefits to business and is a factor in increasing the efficiency, productivity and success of the organization as a whole" (Handbook for Employers, 2015: 22)

After researching the situation with the already employed, we paid special attention to the problems and barriers that others face when finding a job. Respondents indicate that they encounter serious difficulties in finding work, which are most often related to:

- ✓ finding advertisements, lack of a person - mediator or consultant,
- ✓ serious prejudices regarding the infringement. "Despite the preferences that employers could enjoy when hiring a person with a disability, their concerns are mainly related to employment relationships. One of the most common questions of employers is related to their rights and obligations in relation to the person with a disability and the possibility of his legal removal, in case the person does not perform his duties correctly at work. "(Valyavicharska, 2021)
- ✓ Lack of support and adequate policy on the part of the Labor Office;
- ✓ Lack of opportunity for employers to communicate with deaf people - ignorance of sign language, for example.

Last but not least is the issue of vocational training of people with disabilities. In order to be realized on the labor market, they must have basic skills. These skills were acquired in the recent past thanks to the special subjects of

labor training, which were realized in the special schools. Since today we are talking about inclusive education, deinstitutionalization, and such training is not offered in general education schools, the question remains how people with special needs acquire these skills and what are their attitudes towards developing opportunities in this area. Subjects related to career education should be included in the modern school, as its essence “is dictated by a number of socio-economic changes. There is accelerated technical progress, requiring a new quality of the workforce” (Iskrev, 2000). The future workforce is currently in school. It, in turn, must create individuals who meet the requirements of society. The issue is of particular importance for students with special needs, as their development opportunities are strongly linked to practical skills and basic literacy.

In Bulgaria, the Law on Preschool and School Education enables students with special needs to apply for pre-announced places in the State Admission Plan for vocational high schools, classes for specialized training, etc., with the aim of providing opportunities for young people with disabilities to acquire a profession or part of a profession: “The additional state admission plan determines the number of places where students who have completed the first high school stage of secondary education from the combined schools are admitted to specialized high schools and vocational high schools, to specialized training classes or to vocational training in secondary schools, as well as in the classes for profiled training in vocational high schools and in the classes for vocational training in profiled high schools.” (ZPUO, 2020)

The results obtained in the study showed that the number of people who did not start work after receiving vocational training in any of its variants is 40%. The percentage of those who do not have one is higher. It turns out that those who gave a positive answer received this type of training mainly in school - 82.4%, and the rest in the Labor Office - 17.6%. Given the age category of the respondents, these answers should not come as a surprise. The persons who were included in the study are aged between 19-30 years. We can say that at the time of their education, the situation of receiving education was rather related to the special school. This training is very useful for them, as we could mention as a negative only the low-skilled professions in which they are trained. There is a widespread misconception that visually impaired people could only be musicians or basket makers, and that people with hearing impairments could only be successful in areas such as the clothing industry, for example.

The other questions in the research are related to the topics related to professional qualification, namely whether they would be involved in vocational and career training and whether they would respond to an offer for an internship in an organization that offers its work environment for acquiring a qualification. Both questions demonstrated a positive attitude, namely 93% of them would engage in any training appropriate to their abilities and 96.7% would benefit from an internship offer in a real work environment.

Starting a person with a disability would be facilitated by the presence of a career counselor to be present in the process of finding a job and successful implementation in the work environment, and this is confirmed by 63.3% of respondents with sensory disabilities who declare their need. by an expert in the field.

3. CONCLUSION

The issues related to the professional realization of the persons with disabilities remain relevant. Building a system to provide a link between them and employers is imperative. The issue of career counselors is also relevant. "In Bulgaria, the problem of career guidance and counseling is still unresolved, there is no comprehensive concept at all levels" (Borisova, 2015: 6). In the context of career guidance and career development, the special pedagogue must also find a place, who, thanks to his competencies, can be a good mediator and advisor to both parties in the process, namely the disabled employee and the employer.

"Development trends in the economy have a direct impact on the professional structure of modern society. Many of them are caused by the development of science and technology." (Iskrev, 2000). If we assume that technical progress and accelerated socio-economic development are an indisputable fact, then the society environment is time to find a place for people with disabilities in the labor market. Their rights and opportunities to be recognized, as well as to build a working mechanism for their implementation according to their capabilities and skills.

It is time at 21 to drop the labels and misconceptions that people with sensory impairments can not perform highly skilled work, because thinking about the increasingly modernized education in the digital environment and improving the quality of technology "The right to work in all developed countries in the world is one of the fundamental human rights. However, the right to work should not be understood as any kind of work, but one that corresponds to the abilities and qualifications of the person" (Petrov, 1998)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borisova, M. (2015). Conceptual synergetic model for vocational guidance and counseling of children and youth with specific needs. Survey results. Annual of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of education, Social work, V. 108, p. 5

- Iskrev, D. (2000). Osnovi na profesionalnoto orientirane. Blagoevgard, 200
- Iskrev, D. (2000). Karierno obrazovanie v srednoto uchilishte. Universitetsko izdatelstvo “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad
- Law on pre-school and school education
https://www.mon.bg/upload/23949/zkn_PedUchObrazovanie-izm092020.pdf
- A manual for employers to employ people with intellectual disabilities. Maria's World Foundation, 2015
<http://www.mariasworld.org/bg/info-za-rabotodатели.html#collapseWy7qDH7>
- Valyavicharska, M. (2021). Legislation and social services for employers for the benefit of the career development of persons with disabilities in Bulgaria. International journal, Knowledge. Institute of Knowledge management, Vol.47, N.5, p. 903-908
- Petrov, R. (1998). Profesionalno orientiranje I osobovanie na licata so prechki u razvoiot. Skopije, 1998
- Radulov, Vl. (2019). Socialni problem na slepotata I slaboto zrenie. IK: Fenomen