ACTA DIDACTICA NAPOCENSIA
Volume 14, Number 1, 2021 – DOI: 10.24193/adn.14.1.16

# FEATURES OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT IN THE HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN CROSS BORDER AREA[1]

**Zsófia KOCSIS**

**Abstract:** The aim of the research is to examine student employment, which plays an important role in the lives of university students. According to previous research results, paid work is characterized by an increasing tendency, with occasional and holiday work being characteristic of students, as well as regular work during the semester too. Current research focuses on the characteristics of gainful employment in the Hungarian-Romanian border region. The database PERSIST 2019 (N = 2199) was used, the research took place in higher education institutions in the eastern region of Hungary and in higher education institutions bordering the country. We investigate the differences between the demographic, social and institutional backgrounds of working students. We also analyze the relationships between effectiveness, engagement and student employment. According to our results there are differences between the institutions both in the frequency of employment and in the horizontal fit of work. Hungarian students take up work more often than Romanian students, but study-related work is more typical for Romanian students. However, paid work does not hinder the academic performance of the students and the building of relationships within the institution, it even has a positive impact on the students' university career.

**Key words:** student employment, part-time job, dropout, commitment, Hungary, Romania

## 1. Trends in student employment

A few decades ago, the presence on the labor market was mainly characterized by young people leaving the education system and taking up work at the age of 16-18. Nowadays, work during studies plays an increasingly important role in the lives of young people, and the combination of studies and work is characterized by a growing trend. Secondary school and university students are becoming more actively involved in labor market processes (Loughlin & Barling, 1998; Perna 2010; Riggert et. al, 2006; Singh 1998). Students have more and more opportunities in the world of work, as flexible working hours, part-time employment, work in the physical sector and in the service sector enable them to work alongside their studies (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005).

Previous international and national results have confirmed that the demographic, social and institutional characteristics of students are related to the frequency, motivation and type of work (Kovács et al., 2019; Masevičiūtė et al., 2018; Pusztai & Kocsis, 2019, Saveanu & Ştefănescu, 2019). A general finding is that when the educational level of parents declines, students are more likely to work during their studies and students from disadvantaged socio-cultural backgrounds are more likely to work (Darmody & Smyth, 2008; Flowers, 2010; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Warren et al., 2000). Some research points out that paid work increases social inequalities and social marginalization is even more threatening when students work in occupations that require unskilled work and low pay (Richardson, Evans & Gbadamosi, 2009).

The social situation of students influences their motivation to accept a job. Students who come from a more qualified and financially better-off family are all the more likely to be motivated by professional ambitions rather than forced labor (Bocsi et al., 2018; Masevičiūtė et al., 2018). The decision to take

[1] **This paper was presented at the TDID Doctoral Students' Conference, 14-16 May 2020.**

*Received Augustus 2020. Published online 10 July 2021.*

**Cite as:** Kocsis, Zs. (2021): Features of Student Employment in the Hungarian-Romanian Cross Border Area, *Acta Didactica Napocensia,* 14(1), 188-200, https://doi.org/10.24193/adn.14.1.16

up employment, the horizontal fit between work and study, has a considerable influence on the performance and commitment of students to study (Kocsis & Pusztai, 2020).

Student employment can have both negative and positive consequences. On the one hand, paid work can increase the chances of dropping out of university by reducing the time spent on studying and preventing students from becoming embedded in the university culture (Curtis & Shani 2002; Darmody & Smyth, 2008; Kovács et al.,2019; McCoy & Smyth, 2004). According to Tinto (1975), the academic performance and success of students depends to a large extent on the experience they gain and the relationships they build within the university. The energy and time invested in employment distracts students from the university and learning activities (Brooks, 2018; Neyt et al., 2017).

Despite the fact that work reduces course participation, it does not, according to Hall (2010), worsen students' "perception of the university experience". According to some research, the workplace is actually a place of learning where students can acquire skills and abilities that they would not have at university (Perna, 2010). If the number of working hours does not exceed the critical 20 hours per week, the positive effects of work (self-confidence, good time management, communication skills) become dominant (Kosi, Nastav & Šušteršič, 2013). However, a positive correlation between employment and commitment to study was found (Pike, Kuh & Massa-McKinley, 2008). Indeed, work experience can have a positive effect on students' professional development and job search after graduation (Joensen, 2009; Ryan, 2001).

Earlier studies have shown that it is not only the intensity of work that is decisive, but also its fit to studies. According to various studies, the effect of work is influenced much more by the relationship between work and study than by the number of hours worked. The results show that study-related work has a positive effect on student performance regardless of the number of hours worked. While non-study-related but low-intensity work has a negative impact on university careers (Di Paolo & Matano, 2016; Geel et al., 2012; Yanbarisova, 2014). According to Astin (1993), the influence of work on academic performance is also influenced by whether it is on or off campus. According to a longitudinal study by Pascarella & Terenzini (1998), modest, contradictory evidence suggested that any kind of work would seriously hinder or promote academic progress. However, working on campus does make students more involved in university life (McCormick et al. 2010; Perna, 2010; Pollard et al. 2013).

## 2. Characteristics of student employment in the Hungarian-Romanian border region

According to previous research in the region, paid work during studies also shows an increasing trend among Hungarian and Romanian students (Hvozdetska & et al. 2020; Kocsis & Karászi, 2018; Kocsis, 2020; Saveanu & Ştefănescu, 2019). Higher Education Research and Development Center the University of Debrecen (CHERD-Hungary) has been conducting quantitative research in the eastern part of the European Higher Education Area for a decade.

Saveanu & Ştefănescu (2019) carried out a secondary analysis of HERD (Higher Education Collaborative Research and Development Activities on Social Cohesion in Cross-Border Regions), which examined full-time students from Romanian and Hungarian universities in the border region. There are significant differences between Romania and Hungary in the dimension and structure of student employment. According to their findings, students who are studying for a Master's degree, who have also worked during their secondary education, who have to pay tuition fees or who are financially disadvantaged, work during their studies. According to the results of the 2012 HERD survey, students in Romania are more likely to work than students in Hungary. Moreover, students in Romania are motivated by gaining experience, while students in Hungary are motivated by financial reasons. The survey of student engagement found that working students have a higher level of academic engagement (Saveanu & Ştefănescu 2019).

According to IESA research results from CHERD Hungary in 2015, the proportion of working students is similarly high in Hungary and Romania. In both countries, casual employment is more common both during semesters and holidays. An analysis of the relationship between work and study shows that the work of Romanian students is much more closely linked to study than that of

Hungarian students. According to previous research, financing the cost of living was the main motivating factor (Saveanu & Ştefănescu, 2019), but according to the results of the 2015 survey, independence from parents and gaining experience were the main motives for work among Hungarian and Romanian students. Hungarian students were motivated to cover recreational programs, while Romanian students were motivated to acquire new knowledge (Kocsis, 2020).Based on the results on the employment of students from Oradea and Debrecen, Karászi & Kocsis (2017) found that the majority of Hungarian students get jobs through student job centers that offer students typical student jobs (hostess, waiter, cashier, etc.), while Romanian students do not explicitly help in finding jobs, the student job centers set up for this purpose. Romanian students look for work through university websites and acquaintances, and in several cases employers themselves look for students. In this case, the work is largely related to the university courses. For example, students of banking and finance (BA) are placed in internships at the OTP Bank, students of economics, commerce, tourism and Service Units (BA) in hotel reception areas and restaurants. In addition, the internship (work abroad in the organization of the university) also helps the students with work, where they can work during the holidays according to their field of study, but in some cases the students return to these jobs (Karászi & Kocsis, 2017).

According to the results of Eurostudent VI. there is no significant difference between the two countries we studied: In Hungary, 39% of university students work regularly during their university studies, while 34% of Romanian students work regularly. Casual work is more common among Hungarian students, with 14% of them having this type of work. The share of occasional work students in Romania is 6%. The work intensity is similar in both countries, with students working more than 35 hours per week. The main motivation for employment in the Balkans is that students could not afford to study at university without paid work. In Romania and Hungary more than half of the students work to cover their daily expenses. However, students in Romania are more motivated to gain experience than students in Hungary.

Student employment in Hungary is particularly common among master students, while in Romania paid work is also typical for bachelor and master students (Masevičiūtė et al., 2018). The results of Eurostudent VI. also showed that paid work plays a significant role in student dropout rates. In Hungary an average of 7% of students dropped out of university, in Romania 5% of students. 29% of Hungarian and 21% of Romanian students gave work-related reasons when interrupting their studies (Masevičiūtė et al., 2018). Qualitative research also shows that work had a negative impact on both their time use and productivity. In interviews, it was emphasized that combining learning and work is not an impossible task, but a burdensome one. In some cases, university degrees were considered non-marketable, so that working students chose to enter the labor market immediately and work rather than learn (Kocsis, 2018, Kocsis & Pusztai 2020).

## 3. Research goal and hypotheses

The aim of the study is to compare the social, demographic and institutional characteristics of working students in Hungary and Romania. We also investigate how employment affects the "academic performance and engagement" of students. On the basis of previous research in this area (Karászi & Kocsis, 2017, Saveanu & Ştefănescu, 2019), we assume that Hungarian students work more often, but that their work is less related to their studies, which is mainly influenced by the fact that in Hungary various student job centres help young people to find work. Furthermore, based on preliminary research results (Kovács et al., 2019, Pusztai 2011), we hypothesise that employment has a negative impact on students' academic performance and hinders the development of relationships and interactions within the institution.

## 4. Methodology

In the research conducted by The Center for Higher Educational Resesearch and Development (CHERD-Hungary) in the academic year 2018/2019, 2199 university students participated in the research (PERSIST 2019, N = 2199). The quantitative research took place in the eastern region of the European Higher Education Area, the surveyed students study in higher education institutions in the

eastern region of Hungary and in higher education institutions in Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine and Serbia. In the case of the Hungarian sample (n = 1045), a quota sample was used that is representative of the faculties, the educational sector and the form of funding. In cross-border institutions a probability sample was used (n = 1154). The survey included full-time, second-/BSc-students BA and undivided full-time second- or third-year students.

## 5. Characteristics of working students in Hungary and Romania

### 5. 1. Features of student employment

1045 Hungarian and 739 Romanian students participated in the research. We investigated the correlations between the social and institutional characteristics of students and employment. Similar to previous research results, Hungarian students are more likely to work during their higher education years than Romanian students. The proportion of Hungarian students is over-represented in weekly, monthly (this will later appear as regular employment) and annual employment, while students in Romania are over-represented among those who have never worked (68.4%). 20.7% of Hungarian students and 9.9% of Romanian students work weekly. 12.7% of Hungarian students work monthly, compared to 6% of Romanian students (Chi-square test, p = 0.000). Although a smaller proportion of Romanian students work, they are more likely to be characterised by a horizontal correspondence between work and study. In Romania 8% of students always have a study-related job. 20.5% of them have a job that is only partially related to their studies. In Hungary only 4.4% of students always had a study-related job (Chi-square test, p = 0.005). In Hungary, the majority of young people have been looking for work since the establishment of student employment services, and these jobs are not related to studies (Kocsis, 2017). In Romania, on the other hand, job opportunities are linked for a certain period of time to the education offered by the universities in the region, and they look for work with the help of the university and friends (Karászi & Kocsis, 2017; Saveanu & Ştefănescu, 2019).

According to research by Pusztai & Márkus (2019), students from different regions have different work values related to their economic and cultural situation. We found a significant correlation between work motivations and countries. According to Saveanu & Ştefănescu (2019), the most striking difference between the Western countries and the Eastern countries we studied is that parents are more actively involved in their children's life and studies, which makes students less worried about their financial situation as it is a parental responsibility. Nevertheless, we can state that in the countries that were included in our research, half of the students are motivated by independence from their parents. Covering everyday costs motivates almost a third of students, while gaining work experience is important for the majority of the students surveyed. It is the most motivating factor for students in Romania, and their proportion is overrepresented in this respect (adj. Res. 4.3, p = 0.000). The proportion of Hungarian students is overrepresented in terms of financing leisure activities (adj. Res. = 3.5) and they are the least motivated to make new acquaintances while at work.

### 5. 2. Socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of working students

The socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of the students were analyzed on the basis of gender, age and family structure, as well as the parents' education, labor market status, their own and family financial situation and the type of settlement. Preliminary studies show that the more unfavorable the socio-cultural situation of students is, the more likely they are to work during their studies (Kovács et al., 2019; Pusztai & Szigeti, 2018).

When examining the quasi-educational performance of parents, we found that parents of regularly working students have a lower educational level than parents of less frequently or never working students. In the case of Hungarian students, we found a significant correlation between regular employment and parents' education (p = 0,000). The proportion of employed persons whose mothers have secondary and primary education is overrepresented, 43.4% have secondary education and 23.3% have primary education (adj.res. = 3.1 and 2.6). Regarding the education of fathers, the proportion of those whose father has primary education is significant (adj.res. = 2.6).

When examining the labor market status of parents, we found a difference between students from the two countries. Parents of at least 80% of the Hungarian students have a permanent job, and there is no difference between working and non-working students. In Romania, the parents of almost one fifth of students do not work and the same percentage of parents public service (for example they do community service for the sanitation department).

The family or the student's own financial situation can also influence whether the student accepts a job or not. We first examined the family's financial situation based on the consumer goods they own (own apartment, own car, TV, laptop, internet connection on the phone internet, sink, air conditioning, smartphone). Although we did not find a significant correlation between the family's financial situation and the frequency of employment, we found that the averages of the Index of regularly working students in Hungary are slightly lower than those of their less frequent or non-working colleagues. In Romania, on the other hand, the families of regularly working students are in a better financial situation. This is evidenced by the fact that in Romania the proportion of regularly working students who have experienced a positive change in family life during their time at university is over-represented (adj.res. = 2.3). Looking at the relative and subjective financial situation of students, it can be seen that in both countries the majority of students believe that the financial situation of their family is roughly average compared to the family of their fellow students. Moreover, they have everything, but we cannot afford higher expenses. One tenth of regular students in Hungary and Romania are not able to cover their daily expenses and in this case the proportion of students in Hungary is overrepresented (adj.res. = 3.6, p = 0.000).

In addition to the family and financial situation of the students, some studies found that the type of residence was decisive, but a significant relationship between the type of residence and employment was only found in Romania (p = 0.006). In Romania, working students come mainly from a smaller town (adj.res. = 2.9), a village, and one-fifth live in the county seat. In Hungary the majority of working students live in a smaller town or county seat.

### 5.3. Academic background of working students

The survey was carried out at four higher education institutions in Hungary and five in Romania, the names of the institutions and the number of respondents are given in the table below. The study included full-time, second-/BSc-students BA and full-time second- or third-year students.

**Table 1.** *Proportion of students surveyed by institution*

| Country | Institutions | Persons | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Hungary** | University of Debrecen | 803 | 40,1 |
| | Debrecen Reformed Theological University | 30 | 1,5 |
| | Univeristy of Nyíregyháza | 112 | 5,7 |
| | St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University | 27 | 1,3 |
| **Romania** | The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca | 163 | 8,1 |
| | Emanuel University in Oradea | 112 | 5,6 |
| | University of Oradea | 173 | 8,6 |
| | Partium Christian University | 64 | 3,2 |
| | Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania | 135 | 6,7 |
| **Other countries** | Other universities (UA, SK, SB) | 580 | 19,2 |
| **Total** | | 2199 | 100 |

Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author

We first examined how the proportion of student employment develops in each institution of higher education, and found a significant correlation between the frequency of employment and the institutions (p = 0,000).

**Table 2.** *Proportion of students having a paid work by institution*

| Country | Institutions | regularly (weekly and monthly) | annually | never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **HU** | University of Debrecen | 38,2 | 27,6 | 39,5 | 100% |
| | Debrecen Reformed Theological University | 24,1 | 27,6 | 48,3 | |
| | Univeristy of Nyíregyháza | 39,4 | 31,2 | 29,4 | |
| | St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University | 7,4 | 22,2 | 70,4 | |
| **RO** | The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca | 14,8 | 20,6 | 64,5 | |
| | Emanuel University in Oradea | 25 | 5,4 | 69,6 | |
| | University of Oradea | 6,7 | 4,8 | 88,5 | |
| | Partium Christian University | 15,9 | 20,6 | 63,5 | |
| | Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania | 22,6 | 24,1 | 53,4 | |

Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author
*Underlined values indicate that this cell has a much larger value than it could be expected in a random layout.

According to our results, the proportion of students who work regularly or occasionally during the semester is overrepresented in the two Hungarian institutions, the University of Debrecen and the University of Nyíregyháza. One quarter of the students of Debrecen Reformed Theological University of Debrecen are regularly employed. Among Romanian institutions, at Babes-Bolyai University and Emánuel University the percentage of students who have never worked during their studies is overrepresented. Among Romanian universities, regular employment is more typical for the students of Emánuel University and Sapientia University, however, their proportion is not overrepresented. While in the other institutions only 15% of the students work weekly.

**Table 3.** Working in the field of the studying specialization

| Country | Institutions | always | most of the time | never | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **HU** | University of Debrecen | 4,3 | 16,9 | 78,8 | 100% |
| | Debrecen Reformed Theological University | 3,4 | 20,7 | 75,9 | |
| | University of Nyíregyháza | 3,9 | 17,6 | 78,4 | |
| | St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University | 12,5 | 20,8 | 66,7 | |
| **RO** | The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca | 6,4 | 24 | 69,6 | |
| | Emanuel University in Oradea | 15,2 | 18,8 | 66,1 | |
| | University of Oradea | 7,8 | 20,5 | 71,7 | |
| | Partium Christian University | 5,2 | 22,4 | 72,4 | |
| | Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania | 8,5 | 15,4 | 76,1 | |

Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author
*Underlined values indicate that this cell has a much larger value than it could be expected in a random layout.

If we examine the horizontal correspondence between work and study, we can see that the least characteristic feature of working students in Hungary is that they have study-related work. Just under 4% of Hungarian students work in jobs that fit their education. Although students in Romania are less likely to be employed, their work is much more closely related to their studies. Among Romanian institutions, Emánuel University stands out, where the proportion of working students whose work is always related to their studies is over-represented. This result is in line with previous research, which found that Hungarian students have less often study-related job. There are 10 different student job centres at the headquarters of Hungarian higher education institutions, in which students offer jobs that can be flexibly adapted to their schedules. These are typical part-time jobs for students that are not related to their studies.

Preliminary studies show that significant differences can be found between different disciplines. Students of social sciences and arts mainly work in addition to their university studies, while a smaller

percentage of students of natural sciences, medicine and law work during their studies. The curriculum in these specializations is inflexible, it means that less time can be spent on work, and the demands of the training also make it difficult to combine work and learning (Masevičiūtė et al., 2018; Roshchin & Rudakov, 2015; Titus, 2010).

We found differences not only in the field of science, but also in the level of education. According to earlier studies, Master's students are more likely to take up work alongside their studies, as students spend their first years at university integrating into higher education and taking basic exams. On the other hand, master students are closer to entering the labour market, so it may be important for them to gain work experience (Roschchin & Rudakov, 2015; Titus, 2010). According to recent research, undergraduate students in Hungary prefer to work, 25.5% work weekly (adj.res. = 5.4), while 9.7% of Master's students (p = 0.000) work. Similar to previous results, Romania has a similar proportion of students in primary and secondary education. We did not find a significant difference between the employment rates of public and fee-paying students in Hungary, but in Romania fee-paying students work more.

Using logistic regression, we have investigated which factors influence paid work most. The most important socio cultural, demographic and institutional variables were included in the analysis.

**Table 4.** *Factors influencing paid work: logistic regression results*[2]

| | **Beta** | **S.E.** | **Sig.** | **Exp.(B)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **mother has completed primary education** | ,502 | ,199 | **,012** | **1,653** |
| **mother has completed secondary education** | ,614 | ,167 | **,000** | **1,849** |
| **father has completed primary education** | ,466 | ,197 | **,018** | **1,593** |
| father has completed secondary education | ,275 | ,186 | ,138 | 1,317 |
| **mother is working** | ,486 | ,238 | **,042** | **1,625** |
| father is working | ,340 | ,208 | ,103 | 1,404 |
| family's financial situation | ,191 | ,133 | ,151 | 1,210 |
| gender | ,062 | ,140 | ,659 | 1,064 |
| place of residence | -,156 | ,148 | ,292 | ,855 |
| **under the age of 20** | -,231 | ,616 | **,046** | **,292** |
| between the age of 21-25 | ,810 | ,592 | ,171 | ,445 |
| over the age of 25 | -,756 | ,638 | ,236 | ,469 |
| country-Hungary | -1,550 | 1,115 | ,164 | ,212 |
| country-Romania | -,491 | ,306 | ,108 | ,612 |
| The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca | -,471 | ,361 | ,193 | ,624 |
| **University of Debrecen** | 1,954 | 1,103 | **,076** | **7,057** |
| Debrecen Reformed Theological University | ,166 | 1,527 | ,913 | 1,181 |
| Emanuel University in Oradea | -,386 | ,438 | ,378 | ,680 |
| **University of Oradea** | -1,714 | ,527 | **,001** | **,180** |
| **University of Nyíregyháza** | 2,209 | 1,122 | **,049** | **9,102** |
| Partium Christian University | -,271 | ,459 | ,554 | ,762 |
| funding of studies | -,197 | ,173 | ,257 | ,822 |
| **stage of studies** | ,700 | ,177 | **,000** | **2,013** |

Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author

According to our results, students whose mothers have a lower level of education and whose fathers have a basic education are much more likely to work. This result is in line with previous research, according to which the higher the parents' qualifications, the less likely student works during their studies. Furthermore, we found that the labor market status of the mother influences student

[2] The coding of the variables: mother/ father is working=1; the family's financial situation – above average=1; gender – male=1; place of residence – small town/village=1; funding of studies – state-funded=1; stage of studies – bachelor=1

employment. Among demographic characteristics, age showed a significant influence on paid work. In the case of the youngest age group, paid work is less typical, which can probably be explained by the fact that young people start their university studies at the age of 18-20 and focus more on learning about integration, responsibilities and campus life. In terms of institutional factors, bachelor students more often take jobs, but the majority of the students surveyed on average go into the second or third semester of their education. So they also have a kind of routine for their studies which enables them to combine learning and work. From our results we can also see that students from two Hungarian institutions, the University of Debrecen and the University of Nyíregyháza, are significantly more likely to take up employment. Previous research has shown that students in Hungary work more often than students in Romania or other cross-border institutions. We can see that students from the University of Oradea prefer not to work.

### 5.4 Academic performance and commint of working students

There is ambivalent research on the effects of employment on productivity and engagement, with some research suggesting that work has a positive impact on acedamic performance, skills development and student engagement (Perna, 2010; Rothstein, 2007). While some research suggests that paid work increases the likelihood of dropping out of university by reducing students' study time, something is preventing them from developing strong relationships within the university (Darmody-Smyth, 2008; Kovács et al., 2019; Perna, 2010; Pusztai, 2010; Riggert et al., 2006; Stiburek et al., 2017). According to Pusztai (2011), the more students are integrated into the university world, the more effective and engaged they will be.

In order to investigate the effectiveness of the students, we built an index and compared its average values among working and non-working students in Romania and Hungary. We were the first to find a significant correlation between the frequency of employment and the average values of the index (p = 0,000).

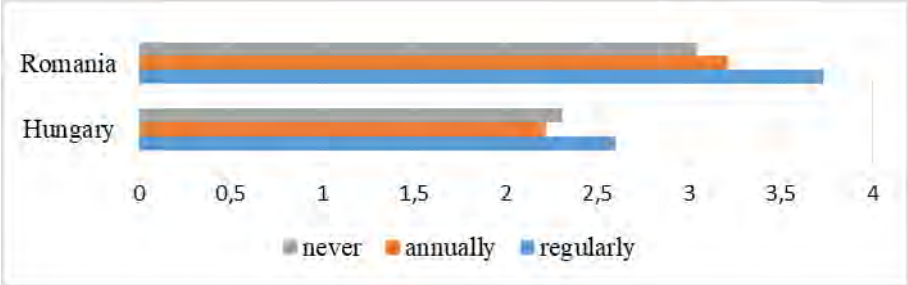


**Figure 1.** *The mean of the academic performance index (0-19) in the student groups by country*
Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author

In the case of Romania, we can see that the averages of the index of regularly working students are higher than those of the other two groups of students. Also in Hungary, students who work regularly have the highest average value, followed by students who never work. If we examine more closely in which factors working students are overrepresented, we find that they are more often involved in various research activities (adj.res. = 2.7) and in university talent management programs (adj.res. = 3 p = 0.000). Moreover, they are over-represented with respect to an examination in an intermediate or professional language (adj.res. = 2.8, p = 0.000), a Hungarian language (adj.res. = 2.3, p = 0.003) and a foreign CV language (adj.res. = 3.7, p = 0.000). Students who have never worked before tend to be over-represented in activities that require participation in doctoral training (adj.res. = 2.6, p = 0.002) or have already participated in National Scientific Student Conference (OTDK) (adj.res. = 5.4, p = 0.000).

When examining the engagement, we found slight differences between the students. We examined the students' commitment to study with the following statements: My studies will be useful to me throughout my professional career; I am very determined to complete my studies; I want to achieve the best possible learning outcomes; I do my best to attend lectures, seminars, practical courses. In both countries we found that the engagement index of students who worked regularly was lower than that

of their peers who rarely or never worked. The average engagement index rate of regularly workers is 3.34, while it is 3.56 for students who rarely and never work.

Among regular students, the proportion of those who feel that they are not determined enough about their studies (adj.res. = 4.6) and do not find the education they offer useful (adj, res. = 4). According to earlier research in the region (Kovács et al. 2019), the chances of dropping out of university as a result of employment may increase if students are disappointed with their higher education and consider the education they have received as non-marketable. This is because working students who gain experience through work and also have negative experiences with education are more likely to interrupt their studies and obtain a degree in order to enter the labor market (Kovács et al., 2019).

The performance and commitment of students can be significantly influenced by their institutional and non-institutional relationships. Among Hungarian students, regularly working students have the greatest friendship outside the university, while the other two groups of students tend to maintain friendship within the university. Non-working students have the lowest average values in terms of friendships. Although students who work regularly have a larger circle of friends outside the institution, they are most likely to have closer contact with lecturers. Among Romanian students who work regularly, the circle of institutional and non-institutional friends is the narrowest, but contact with lecturers they do not lag behind, they are characterized by similar contacts and communication.

**Table 6.** Average values of student contacts, academic performance, and commitment by institution

| | **academic performance** | **student contacts** | **friends off-campus** | **keeping in contact with faculty** | **commitment** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| University of Debrecen | 2,4267 | 8,5034 | 7,7927 | 2,5027 | 3,4291 |
| Debrecen Reformed Theological University | **3,3077** | 8,7667 | 8,0345 | **4,4643** | 2,5517 |
| University of Nyíregyháza | 2,2442 | 8,6700 | 7,7030 | 3,3592 | 3,4206 |
| St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University | 2,0417 | 8,5769 | 7,9167 | **5,9200** | **3,7692** |
| The Babes-Bolyai University | 2,1269 | 8,8344 | 8,5253 | 2,7161 | 3,6879 |
| Emanuel University in Oradea | **4,4118** | 9,6279 | 8,5747 | **7,0568** | 3,6161 |
| University of Oradea | **4,6981** | 8,3675 | 8,9634 | **5,3129** | **3,7024** |
| Partium Christian University | 2,0164 | 7,7778 | 7,2857 | 2,5167 | 3,2540 |
| Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania | 2,6195 | 8,0551 | 7,7165 | 3,2742 | 3,6694 |

Source: (PERSIST 2019), edited by author

In the analysis, we compared what is characteristic of the students in each institution in terms of performance, commitment and their relationships within and outside the institution. Our results show that the average values of the index are highest for students of the University of Oradea in terms of effectiveness, engagement and interactions with the faculty. The contact with the lecturer is characterized by similarly high average values for students at the Reformed Theological University University of Debrecen, St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University and Emanuel University in Oradea. We assume that for the latter institutions both the size of the institution and the educational areas play a role in facilitating communication between students and the faculty. According to the results of Pusztai (2010), the advantage of trust and communication towards educators can be proven in all cases. Research result considers the teacher-student relationship factor to be particularly significant, which makes the student feel it that the teacher is monitoring his or her personal career (Pusztai 2010).

According to Pusztai (2010), in the study of academic performance, not only the characteristics of students are important (demographic, social, cultural and regional), but also the resource consisting of the social experiences and relationships acquired during the university period. Therefore, we used linear regression to study the factors that influence students' performance.

**Table 7**. *Factors influencing student performance*[3]

| | Beta | t | sign. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employment | ,339 | **2,022** | **,043** |
| Job related to the field of study | 1,032 | **6,036** | **,000** |
| Student contacts | -,317 | **-2,030** | **,043** |
| Friends off-campus | -,016 | -,016 | ,916 |
| Keeping in contact with faculty | 1,222 | **7,913** | **,000** |
| The Babes-Bolyai University | -,603 | **-1,874** | **,061** |
| University of Debrecen | -,294 | -1,374 | ,170 |
| Debrecen Reformed Theological University | ,516 | ,944 | ,345 |
| Emanuel University in Oradea | 1,115 | **3,326** | **,001** |
| University of Oradea | 1,609 | **5,748** | **,000** |
| University of Nyíregyháza | -,540 | -1,542 | ,123 |
| Partium Christian University | -,582 | -1,464 | ,143 |
| Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania | -,331 | -1,023 | ,307 |
| St. Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological University | -1,052 | **-1,714** | **,087** |

Source: PERSIST 2019, edited by author

Based on the linear regression and the variables we have included, we can conclude that employment has a positive effect on student performance. Although ambivalent results have been obtained regarding the influence of employment on productivity, the current results show the positive influence of paid work. Student-related work has a particularly positive effect on the "academic performance" of students. Not only study-related work, but also interaction with lecturers has a significant positive effect on student performance. According to Tinto (1975), student completion and effectiveness are influenced by the institutional environment and the interactions taking place there (Tinto 1975; 1993). According to Pusztai (2011), universities support student development and effectiveness through their interactions. The more students are integrated into the university environment, the stronger the commitment of students to their studies. However, lack of integration, outwardly attractive forces such as employment can lead to students dropping out of their studies (Pusztai, 2011). In this case we can see that neither work nor relationships outside the institution negatively influence their effectiveness. In accordance with the research findings of Pusztai (2011), we also concluded that student contacts within the institution do not have a preferential effect on academic performance. Our results show that two institutions, Emanuel University in Oradea and at the University of Oradea, have a significant positive impact on student performance.

## 6. Conclusion

As part of our research, we undertook to examine and compare the working habits of students at higher education institutions in Hungary and Romania. According to our results, Hungarian students work more often during the semester. In Hungary they are more motivated by leisure activities, financial independence and gaining experience. Romanian students work less frequently and the proportion of those who take up work on the basis of work experience is overrepresented. Similar to previous studies, this part of our hypothesis has been fulfilled since, the work of Romanian students is related to their studies. In order to explore the differences in detail, research specifically focused on paid work would be needed so that we can get a more accurate picture of how people look for a job, the type of position, the intensity of the work and the perception of the work. Our second hypothesis was that employment has a negative impact on academic performance and prevents students from

[3] The coding of the variables: employment - works=1; job related to the field of study=1; student contacts above average=1; off-campus contacts above average=1; faculty contacts above average=1

developing their relationships with the university and their interactions with lecturers. Our bivariate and multivariate results supported that work has a positive effect on performance, especially when it is also related to study. Our results also showed that student effectiveness is highly dependent on the institutional environment, the experiences and relationships developed there. Interactions with lecturers have a positive effect on effectiveness, and contact with the lecturers is more characteristic of working students. Previous interviews with the university lecturers revealed that there are working students who try to compensate for their absences in some way, either through plus activities or more essay/ homework. Communication between the lecturer and the student is essential for this. The qualitative research mentioned above highlighted the fact that the lecturers interviewed often have the opportunity to talk to their students and get to know them better, all of which is due to the type of faculty (Kocsis, 2017). Our results also show that interaction with lecturers is particularly typical of smaller universities, where students probably have more opportunities to develop more direct communication with the lecturers. However, similar to the results of Pusztai (2011), we found that the relationships between students within the institution do not have a good influence on performance. Although our current results suggest that employment does not have a negative impact on student performance, we cannot argue that employment has more advantages or disadvantages. Our findings have also underlined the need to examine student performance in a complex way, not only by looking at student demographics characterics and focusing on attractive forces outside the university such as employment, but also by looking in depth at academic coefficients or experiences that may have a direct or indirect impact on students.

## References

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco Jossey-Bass.

Bocsi, V., Ceglédi, T.; Kocsis, Zs., Kovács, K. E. & et al. (2018).The discovery of the possible reasons for delayed graduation and dropout in the light of a qualitative research study. *Journal Of Adult Learning Knowledge And Innovation,* 3(1), 27-38.

Broadbridge, A., & Swanson, V. (2005). Earning and Learning: How Term-Time Employment Impacts on Students' Adjustment to University Life. *Journal of Education and Work*, 18(2), 235-249. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080500086008

Brooks, R. (2018). Understanding the Higher Education Student in Europe: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(4), 500-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1318047.

Curtis, S., & Shani, N (2002). The effect of taking paid employment during term-time on students' academic studies. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 26(2), 129–38.

Darmody, M. & Smyth, E. (2008). Full-time students? Term-time employment among higher education students in Ireland. *Journal of Education and Work,* 21(4), 349-362.

Di Paolo, A. & Matano, A. (2016). *The Impact of Working while Studying on the Academic and Labour Market Performance of Graduates: the Joint Role of Work Intensity and Job-Field Match*. https://www.aiel.it/cms/cms-files/submission/all20160608164320.pdf.

Flowers, L.A. (2010). Effects of Work on African American College Students' Engagement. In: L.W. Perna (eds.), *Understanding the Working College Student New Research and Its Implications for Policy and Practice.* Sterling: Stylus Publishers.

Geel, R. & Backes-Gellner, U. (2012). Earning While learning. When and How Student Employment is Beneficial. *Labour*,26(3), 313–340.

Joensen, J, S. (2009). *Academic and Labor Market Success: The Impact of Student Employment, Abilities, and Preference*s. University of Chicago: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1352077. Accessed 20 September 2018.

Karászi, Zs. & Kocsis, Zs. (2017). Debreceni és nagyváradi egyetemisták munkavállalási szokásainak összehasonlítása. In: Tóth P., Hanczvikkel A. & Duchon J. (szerk.), *Tanulóközpontú oktatás, módszertani megújulás a szakképzésben és a felsőoktatásban.VII*. Trefort Ágoston Tanárképzési Konferencia Tanulmánykötet (169-187). ISBN 978-963-449-073-9.

Kocsis, Zs. (2017). Diákként a munkaerőpiacon. A hallgatói munkavállalás jellemzői a debreceni egy nyíregyházi egyetemisták körében. In: Szirmai Éva (szerk.), *Diáktudósok* (57-73). Szeged: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó.

Kocsis, Zs. (2019). Középiskolai diákok munkához és továbbtanuláshoz fűződő viszonya. *Educatio*, 28(1), 158-165.

Kocsis, Zs. (2020): A munkavállalás szerepe az egyetemi pályafutás során – határon innen és túl. In: Bordás A. (szerk.), *Életre nevelni*. A II.Oktatás határhelyzetben konferencia tanulmánykötete. Kolozsvári Egyetemi Kiadó, Kolozsvár. ISBN 978-606-37-0778-0. 70-79.

Kocsis, Zs. & Pusztai, G. (2020). Student Employment as a Possible Factor of Dropout. *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica*, 17(4), 183-199.

Kosi, T., Nastav, B., & Šušteršič, J. (2013). Does Student Employment Deteriorate Academic Performance? The Case of Slovenia. *Revija za socijalnu politiku* [Croatian Journal of Social Policy], 20(3), 253-274.

Kovács Klára et al. (2019). *Lemorzsolódott hallgatók*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó.

Loughlin, C. & Barling, J. (1998). Teenagers' Part-Time Employment and Their Work-Related Attitudes and Aspirations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 19(2), 197-207.

Masevičiūtė, k., Šaukeckienė, V., & Ozolinčiūtė, E. (2018). *EUROSTUDENT VI. Combining Studies and Paid Jobs*. URL: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/TR_paid_jobs.pdf

Moreau, P-M., & Leathwood, C. (2006). Balancing Paid Work and Studies: Working (-Class) Students in Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(1), 23– 42. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070500340135.

Neyt, B., Omey, E., Verhaest, D., & Baert, S. (2017). *Does Student Work Really Affect Educational Outcomes? A Review of the Literature*. Maastricht: Global Labor Organization (GLO) Discussion Paper No. 121. https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/169354/1/GLO-DP0121.pdf.

Pascarella, E.T., Edison, M.I., Nora, A., Hagedorn, L.S. & Terenzini, P.T. (1998). Does Work Inhibit Cognitive Development during College? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 20(2),75-93.

Perna, L. (2010). *Understanding the Working College Student New Research and Its Implications for Policy and Practice*. Sterling: Stylus Publishers.

Pike, G.R., Kuh, G.D., & Massa-McKinley, R. (2008). First-Year Students Employment, Engagement, and Academic Achievement: Untangling the Relationship between Work and Grades. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 45(4), 560-582.

Pollard, E., Williams, M., Arthur S. & Mehul Kotecha, M. (2013). *Working while Studying: a Follow-up to the Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2011/12*.

Pusser, B. (2010). Of a mind to labor: Reconceptualizing student work and higher education. In: L.W. Perna (eds.). *Understanding the working college student: New research and its implications for policy and practice*. (134–155). Sterling: Stylus Publisher

Pusztai, G. (2010). Kollegiális kezek a felsőoktatásban. Az értelmező közösség hatása a hallgatói pályafutásra. Akadémiai doktori értekezés. Debrecen.

Pusztai, G. (2011). *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. A hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban*. Budapest: Új Mandátum.

Pusztai, G. Bocsi, V. & Ceglédi T. (2016). *A felsőoktatás (hozzáadott) értéke*. Nagyvárad-Budapest: Partium Press-s.Új mandátum Könyvkiadó

Pusztai, G. & Kocsis, Zs. (2019). Combining and Balancing Work and Study on the Eastern Border of Europe. *Social Sciences*, 8(6).

Pusztai, G. & Márkus, Zs. (2019). Paradox of assimilation among indigenous higher education students in four central European countries. *Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival,* 13(4) 201-216, DOI: 10.1080/15595692.2019.1623193.

Richardson, M., Evans, C., & Gbadamosi, G. (2009). Funding Full-Time Study through Part-Time Work. *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(4), 319-334. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080903277394.

Riggert, S.C., Boyle, M., Petrosko, M.J., Ash, D. & Rude-Parkins, C. (2006). Student Employment and Higher Education: Empiricism and Contradiction. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 63-92.

Rothstein, D. S. (2007). High school employment and youths' academic achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(1), 194–213.

Ryan, P. (2001). The School-to-Work Transition: A Cross-National Perspective. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 39(1), 34-92. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.39.1.34

Saveanu, S.M., & Stefanescu, F. (2019). Working or Learning? Working Students in the Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Area. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 11(4), 248-277. doi:10.18662/rrem/168

Singh, K. (1998). Part-Time Employment in High School and Its Effect on Academic Achievement.*The Journal of Educational Rese*arch, 91(3), 131-139.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research. Review of Educational Research, 45, 89-125. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving College. Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Warren, J. R., LePore P. C. & Mare, R.D (2000). Employment During High School: Consequences for Students' Grades in Academic Courses. *American Educational Research Journal*. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00028312037004943. Utoljára látogatva: 2018. 07.27.

Yanbarisova, Diana Maratovna (2014). *Combining University Studies and Work: Influence on Academic Achievement*. Working Paper of research project "Russian longitudinal Panel Study of Educational and Occupational Trajectories" implemented within NRU HSE's Annual Thematic Plan. https://wp.hse.ru/data/2014/12/09/1105014628/21EDU 2014.pdf

## Authors

**Zsófia Kocsis,** University of Debrecen, Debrecen (Hungary). E-mail: kocsis.zsofia@arts.unideb.hu

## Acknowledgement

The research (project No.123847) has been financed by the K17 grant programme of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund as well as the New National Excellence Programme of the Ministry of Human Resources (code number: ÚNKP-19-3-I-DE-436).