

# Current State of Youth Employment in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

## Situación actual del empleo juvenil en la República de Sakha (Yakutia)

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## Summary

The relevance of this research is evident as the problems of the modern market economy and the financial system of the global world economy are highly pertinent to economic science. In the modern world, on its way to globalization, the ability to promptly adapt to the conditions of international competition is becoming instrumental for ensuring successful and sustainable development. The primary competitive advantage held by a highly developed country is related to the possibility of updating its human development index, which is largely determined by the state of its education system. Thus, this area is connected to the country's sustainable economic growth over the medium and long terms; the employment of fresh graduates is a complex, relevant and multifaceted problem, since it affects almost all segments of society. Currently, in view of the rapidly evolving situation in the labor market, the threat of unemployment for recent graduates is becoming extremely acute. Today's graduates replenish vulnerable social groups that are suffering from difficult life situations. The purpose of this study is to analyze the state of employment of university graduates, as exemplified by the employment of recent graduates, and to provide recommendations to assist in their recruitment. A combination of theoretical (analysis, generalization while establishing principles and patterns), organizational (comparison, longitudinal method) and empirical (sociological methods, observational methods, quantitative method of statistical processing of the collected data and interpretation method) methods was used in the research. As part of the study, knowledge regarding the primary factors affecting high school graduates' employment is defined and systematized. The practical and theoretical significance of the study lies in the recommendations developed for promoting university graduates' employment in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) [RS (Y)] based on the results obtained.

**Keywords:** Employment; Youth Employment; Higher Education; High School Graduate; Career Guidance.

## Resumen

La pertinencia de esta investigación es evidente, ya que los problemas de la economía de mercado moderna y el sistema financiero de la economía mundial global son muy pertinentes para la ciencia económica. En el mundo moderno, en su camino hacia la globalización, la capacidad de adaptarse rápidamente a las condiciones de la competencia internacional se está convirtiendo en un instrumento para asegurar un desarrollo exitoso y sostenible. La principal ventaja competitiva de un país altamente desarrollado está relacionada con la posibilidad de actualizar su índice de desarrollo humano, que viene determinado en gran medida por el estado de su sistema educativo. Así pues, esta esfera está relacionada con el crecimiento económico sostenible del país a mediano y largo plazo; el empleo de los recién graduados es un problema complejo, pertinente y polifacético, ya que afecta a casi todos los segmentos de la sociedad. Actualmente, en vista de la rápida evolución de la situación del mercado laboral, la amenaza del desempleo para los recién graduados se está agudizando enormemente. Los graduados de hoy en día reponen los grupos sociales vulnerables que están sufriendo situaciones de vida difíciles. El propósito de este estudio es analizar la situación de empleo de los graduados universitarios, como lo ejemplifica el empleo de los recién graduados, y proporcionar recomendaciones para ayudar en su contratación. En la investigación se utilizó una combinación de métodos teóricos (análisis, generalización al tiempo que se establecen principios y pautas), organizativos (comparación, método longitudinal) y empíricos (métodos sociológicos, métodos de observación, método cuantitativo de procesamiento estadístico de los datos reunidos y método de interpretación). Como parte del estudio, se definen y sistematizan los conocimientos relativos a los principales factores que afectan al empleo de los graduados de la enseñanza secundaria. La importancia práctica y teórica del estudio radica en las recomendaciones elaboradas para promover el empleo de los graduados universitarios en la República de Saja (Yakutia) [RS (Y)] sobre la base de los resultados obtenidos.

**Palabras Clave:** Empleo; Empleo juvenil; Educación superior; Graduado de la escuela secundaria; Orientación profesional.

## Introduction

The ongoing crisis in the global economy is affecting the employment of Russian citizens. Under these conditions, high school graduates are turning out to be particularly vulnerable. The employment problems of university graduates in Russia still exist for various reasons, which entail difficulties for the recent graduate in getting the desired job. Examples include the lack of proper professional experience, low work discipline, the insufficient engagement of a graduate, and the wrong career choice, and consequently, getting a not-in-demand or the most in-demand specialty, which, in turn, may not correspond to the real picture of demand in the labor market (Popov, 2014; Gerasimov, Sizikin, Spiridonov & Gerasimova, 2014; Volchik & Maslyukova, 2019). The main problem is the persistent reluctance of the employer to hire employees without any work experience (Pakeyeva, 2015; Turarova, 2016; Kumar, Haque & Venugopal, 2019). The state, which used to be involved in graduate employment, is now unable to fully assume this obligation. The functions of city employment services do not include the employment of graduates until they become unemployed.

It is also impossible to unequivocally say that the university is able to fulfill this function – rather, the university assumes a significant part of the responsibility for graduate employment, making efforts to ensure that the quality of training graduates meets the needs of the labor market (Eremin, Shumakov & Zharikov, 2015; Myreev, Popov & Fedorova, 2015; Novikova & Vorobiev, 2016).

As a result, a contradiction arises: the state and the university are engaged in the employment of graduates, but they are working to solve this problem independently of each other and, as a result, unemployment among recent graduates is constantly increasing.

The research hypothesis is that the employment of high school graduates will be most effective in case:

- the existing experience is consolidated, the kernel of the processes of employment and job placement is determined in order to attempt to systematize scientific knowledge;
- the problems of employment of recent university graduates are theoretically substantiated and identified and factors affecting the efficiency of the employment process are revealed;
- monitoring and analysis of university graduates' employment is carried out;
- recommendations were developed and proposed to facilitate the employment of high school graduates.

The research purpose is to analyze the state of university graduates' employment, as exemplified by employment of graduates and develop recommendations for promoting the employment of fresh graduates.

## Literature review

The main customer of the recent graduates' vocational training are secondary schools represented by regional educational authorities. Therefore, the schools themselves in the process of training would-be teachers often carry out observation and targeted training of students to admit them to the teaching staff after graduation. Tretyakova, Ignatiev, Barakhsanova & Varlamova (2017), Razumova (2016) have stressed the need for universities and leaders of educational programs to understand the importance of close connection with the labor market and a flexible response to its changes.

It should be noted that the development of educational program content should take into account not only the demands of employers, but also the development trends of pedagogical science. In this aspect, we agree with Valitova y Esimova (2015) and Lisov (2016), that it is the unity of education, science and production that can lead to innovative breakthroughs in various fields, including the education system.

Regarding the development of teaching staff competencies, one cannot but touch upon the issue of elaborating and implementing professional standards that were initiated abroad and must now be applied to the Russian education system, the understanding of which is still to be done by the pedagogical community. In this regard, we have studied the views of Schools (2007), who analyzes the professional standards for US educators, including the requirements for different teacher positions, from the perspective of social partners and founders, as well as customers. From the perspective of modern standards, a search is also being made for tools for assessing the professional activities of teachers. In this vein, Darling-Hammond (2010) assumes that teachers' effectiveness should be evaluated not merely by their test results, but primarily by the results of their success in practical work in the classroom, and these indicators should be included in the performance evaluation system. In their recent work, Bergsmann, Schultes, Winter, Schober y Spiel (2015) discuss the transition from a theoretical model of assessing professional knowledge to an activity-based assessment in a modern competence-based manner, which suggests that issues of updating the practical training of specialists, including teachers, still remain relevant (Ivars, Fernandez-Verdu, Llinares & Choy, 2018).

The current studies are also aimed at discussing the importance of practice, not only in terms of obtaining professional skills, but also competencies in line with new professional standards, which today include the so-called soft skills and personal attributes. Thus, Malaysian scholars Ngang, Yunus & Hashim (2015) rightly raise the issue of developing soft skills, which are basic for getting a job after graduation, in practical terms. These skills such as sociability, problem solving, team work, continuous acquisition and management of information, entrepreneurial spirit, ethics, morality, and leadership, are most desirable in the recent graduate seeking employment.

One issue discussed in a number of articles, and which is dealt with in this one, is the employment of pedagogical institute graduates in the new context of market competition (Girdzijauskaitė, Radzevičienė & Jakubavičius, 2019). We noted similar processes and problems in the analysis of the situation presented by Tynjälä & Heikkinen (2011), which suggests that young beginning teachers are constantly facing risks, such as the threat of unemployment, the attitude of the professional community to beginners, sometimes inadequate and outdated knowledge about the current situation, high stress at the beginning of work, and fatigue due to work load. We agree with the authors that an understanding that professional development is an ongoing combination of formal, non-formal and informal self-education and self-reliance can help young teachers stay in the teaching profession. But vocational training at a secondary or higher educational institution does not guarantee the quality of the graduates' educational work; much depends on their own personality. The works by Penttilä & Hokkanen (2015) and Runkel (1976) present a certain interest in this aspect, as they tried to expose myths about the importance of student training in the current situation and identify the main correlations between the quality of training and the quality of work by studying student activities.

We drew from the articles describing the experience of organizing recent graduates' employment, the problem of studying and trying to determine guidelines for the life plans of higher education graduates in terms of employment and preferences for the future residence of the youth of the RS (Y) (Mikhailova, 2014; Yakovleva, 2015, 2016; Bortnik, Zakharova, Romanova, Stepanova, Romanov & Pavlova, 2019; Kozhurov, Pavlova, Neustroeva, Kornilov, & Nikolaev, 2017; Neustroeva, Yudina, Kozhurova, Neustroeva & Nikolaev, 2018a; Neustroev, Kozhurova, Pavlova, Neustroeva, Shadrina, & Borisova, 2016; Neustroeva, Pavlova, Borisova, Okoneshnikova, & Sidorova, 2018b).

The challenge of quality education, especially in the field of teacher training, is relevant for any country. It adapts to changing complex social and cultural processes, the dynamics of which are due to the reorientation of society to the sphere of its theoretical and practical activities. To solve the problem, society focuses on the educational process, believing that this is a way to change the situation and protect people who face difficulties in a qualitative way (Barakhsanova, Varlamova, Vlasova, Nikitina, Prokopyev, & Myreeva, 2018).

## Method

The study sample focused on graduates of the Pedagogical Institute, experiencing a strategically important stage of employment and self-determination. Thus, subjects in the study were drawn from those who graduated between 2011 and 2019 from the departments at the Pedagogical Institute (PI) of the NEFU named after M.K. Ammosov. The total sample included 1739 full-time graduates.

In the process of material analysis, the following research methods were used:

- theoretical: analysis of psychological and pedagogical, as well as special literature on the problem under study;
- organizational: a comparative method for the correlation of data related to graduates on an annual basis; a longitudinal method for multiple surveys of the same graduates over a long period of time in order to track professional growth and career;
- empirical: observational methods (observation, interviewing); methods of analysis, synthesis and comparison of experimental results; analysis of the results of graduates' employment in specialties, quantitative and qualitative analysis of employers' demands for temporary and permanent employment; analysis of data on graduates' employment; statistical analysis of the research results obtained;
- methods according to the data processing technique: a quantitative method of statistical processing of the data obtained; interpretation method (a method of qualitative description); structural method (classification and typologization).

Description of the experimental framework:

1. Data collection. Drawing up auxiliary frameworks: a) goals, objectives, hypotheses – their implementation forecast; b) data on the initial, intermediate and final states of objects; c) planned processing programs (availability of materials for them); d) additional data (on impacts and conditions). Assessment of the available material as compared to the goals and objectives, and preparation for subsequent processing. Data collection is carried out by methods of observation and interviewing.

2. Processing of primary information on given programs, data processing: classification, grouping, turning qualitative data into quantitative data, obtaining secondary data by calculating the statistical characteristics of objects. Data processing is carried out by methods of analysis, comparison, and synthesis.

3. Presentation of the obtained secondary data in various forms (tables, charts and graphs). Discussion about their possible interpretation.

4. Systematization, explanation of facts, obtaining new information. Establishing causal relationships between available data. Determining the reliability of detected similarities and differences in results.

5. Determining the validity of hypotheses. Establishing conclusions, highlighting among them particular and general, new in relation to the existing conclusions in science and practice, and those that only clarify and complement the existing ones. Analysis of the implementation of

the experiment goals and objectives (unresolved issues are highlighted separately and problems are formulated for further research).

6. Presentation of results: statistical analysis of the results, experiment report preparation, development of recommendations, substantiation of conclusions on the research topic.

## Results

In modern conditions of updating the higher education system, graduates' employment and adaptation in the labor market are the most important indicators of the success of the university activity and the educational units of the university and graduate chairs. In order to facilitate the employment of graduates, graduate chairs at the pedagogical institute traditionally interact with the Ministry of Education of the RS (Y), educational institutions and other stakeholders. Thus, systematic work is being carried out with graduates, personnel services at the ministry and involves all stakeholders in the career guidance process. The chairmen and members of the State Certification Commissions involved in the defense of bachelor's theses are experts in the field of education, leading educators of the Republic. Representatives of employers participate in a comprehensive assessment of the department activities.

PI at the NEFU is one of the oldest divisions of the university with a rich history, culture and pedagogical traditions.

The sector of labor market analysis and monitoring the employment of graduates of the Student Development Department at the NEFU is engaged in the accounting and analysis of the employment of NEFU graduates. It is noteworthy that the data on the distribution by the channels of employment of the PI NEFU full-time graduates in 2011–2019 demonstrates that 100% of the graduates were employed by all channels of job placement. An important element of university employment is the conclusion of employment contracts for graduates enrolled and educated as part of the targeted recruitment and self-employed in their specialty. Employment according to the other channels includes these three items: “the right to self-employment” (for child care, maternity leave, for family reasons, for health reasons), “continue their education” (for SVE/HVE, Master's program, postgraduate study) and “drafted into the ranks of the RF Armed Forces (see table 1).

**Table 1.**

*Data on the Distribution via the Channels of Employment of the PI NEFU Full-Time Graduates in 2011-2019 (Bachelor's and Master's programs), Employed by the Specialty*

Pedagogical Institute, years	Full-Time Graduates					Employed			
	Total	State-Funded Education		On a Tuition-Paying Basis	Total (employed) (from gr.2; from gr. 1), %	Total (employed) (from gr.2; from gr. 1), %	By specialty (from gr. 5)		
		Total	Incl. Targeted Enrollment				Number	%	
A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
2011	183	161	8	22	132	82.0%	118	89.4%	
2012	158	142	6	16	124	87.3%	114	91.9%	
2013	138	122	10	16	104	75.4%	101	97.1%	
2014	142	135	6	7	92	64.8%	92	100.0%	
2015	197	197	23	0	137	69.54%	136	99%	
2016	320	319	10	1	207	64.69%	206	99.52%	

2017	152	139	1	13	78	51.32%	77	98.72%
2018	212	160	3/2	52	142	66.98%	141	99.30%
2019	237	182	9	48	182	76.80%	174	95.60%

In the Table 2 shows the indicators of the employment of graduates via other channels, which is compiled, including socially important items and on average 29.02% of graduates enjoyed these civil rights in 2011–2019. The data presented in the Table can demonstrate the main feature – the gender ratio related to students who are not graduates and those who are graduates. Within the total number of graduates employed through other channels, the category of “childcare” dominates on average for the period from 2011 to 2019 and accounts for 14.84% of graduates for the reporting period. Since 2013, there has been a tendency among Bachelor graduates to continue their studies in the Magistracy, which indicates their meaningful decision-making on further professional growth and well-established work on university career guidance. From the data in the table, one can single out the item “drafted into the ranks of the RF Armed Forces”.

**Table 2.**

*Data on the Distribution via Other Channels of Employment of the PI NEFU Full-Time Graduates in 2011-2019*

Pedagogical Institute, years	Employed via the Other Channels										
	Total		Having the right to self-employment				Continue their education			Drafted into the ranks of the RF	
	Number	%	Child care	Maternity leave	For family reasons	For medical reasons	SVE / HVE	Master's program	Postgraduate studies		
A	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
2011	183	29	18.0%	14	10	0	1	0	0	0	4
2012	158	18	12.7%	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	6
2013	138	34	24.6%	23	4	0	0	0	0	1	6
2014	142	50	35.2%	25	6	0	0	0	8	0	11
2015	197	60	30.46%	34	11	0	0	0	4	0	11
2016	320	113	35.31%	56	19	0	0	0	29	1	8
2017	152	74	48.68%	31	0	0	0	0	38	0	5
2018	212	70	33.02%	37	0	0	0	1	21	0	11
2018	237	55	23.21%	29	0	0	0	0	21	0	3

During the period under analysis, PI graduates are fully employed at the end of their studies at university and a greater number are in the specialty obtained. Such indicators were achieved by organizing a comprehensive vocational guidance at university, including individual work with students, carried out by each teacher at the NEFU educational unit.

For the purpose of vocational guidance at university, especially for graduate students, meetings are held with teachers, employees of educational institutions that correspond to the specialization implemented at the PI. Students and graduates attend optional courses and seminars, such as Job Search Technology, Modern School Management, etc. Attending these courses gives confidence in choosing a profession, and finding a future job, helps develop communication skills, and enriches a graduate personally (Abd & Behadili, 2019). It is

noteworthy that modern graduates are oriented towards employment with regards to the specialty they receive.

The NEFU is actively concluding agreements with ulus (district), municipal and republican education departments. Students educated under contracts with organizations and enterprises prove a high-quality of teaching in most cases, as evidenced by feedback from their workplace.

## Discussion

This article describes the experience of arranging and conducting career guidance work for students. We proceed from the assumption that career guidance work at a university is one of the key components of vocational training for future teachers. An analysis of the employment status of graduates at the PI of the NEFU named after M.K. Ammosov is presented according to the following indicators: graduates enrolled and educated as part of the targeted recruitment; self-employed in their specialty; and employment through other channels. The analysis showed that 100% of graduates are employed in organizations and educational institutions, of which 96.73% (1159) are employed in the specialty obtained. Based on this, we can assume that the employment of the PI graduates demonstrates stable positive dynamics from year to year in 2011-2019.

The issue of youth employment and graduates' employment in the RS (Y) is dealt with in O.S. Yakovleva's papers (2015, 2016) and in the report "On the mechanisms of interaction between the labor market and the educational services market at the Northeast Federal University" by Uvarova & Ignatieva (n.d.). In particular, Yakovleva (2016) conducted an analysis of the university graduate employment in all fields of study in 2012-2015. According to the author, the overall employment rate for graduates remains stable. Besides, in the article, the author highlights the reasons for the preference of graduates from the city of Yakutsk in favor of rural areas.

## Conclusion

Social stability and economic efficiency of the processes taking place in society, largely depends on the young people's labor behavior, in particular on their employment, job placement and successful adaptation of graduates of vocational colleges and universities.

According to the Program for Social and Economic Development of the RS (Y), The Strategy for the Development of the Youth of the Russian Federation for the Period Until 2025, the Concepts for Rural Development and the Employment Program, one of the important directions has become the organization and implementation of production, which to some extent can help resolve youth employment problems.

The analysis of the theoretical aspects of studying youth employment, PI graduates' employment and the prospects for promoting employment of graduates of the Republic's universities have allowed us to make the main conclusions, suggestions and recommendations arising from the research results. In a generalized form, they are as follows:

1. In the country's current financial and economic conditions, the labor market is characterized by instability, which affects the imbalance between labor and the need for it in the economy and in imbalances in the labor market. Besides, there is some imbalance both at the level of specialist education and in the context of specialties. In this regard, using the example of real-world experience, we propose the development of medium-term and long-term (5-10 years) interconnected forecasts for the development of industries, workers' employment and vocational education systems. Currently, there remains a need for state regulation of interaction processes in the field of assistance in the university graduates' employment, in particular the development of legal support and laws that allow regulating long-term programs of interaction between



universities and employers. On the basis of the Youth Development Strategy of the RF for the period until 2025, it is necessary to develop and implement regional subprograms involving graduates themselves.

2. For the socio-economic development of the RS (Y), it is necessary to take into account the staffing needs of economic sectors for graduates of various levels of vocational training. The lack of a high-quality and timely forecast of staffing needs increases the negative impact of demographic problems on the labor market and reduces the efficiency of interaction between economic entities of the Republic and the educational services market. In this regard, there is a need to strengthen work to improve the activities of the public employment service, the interaction of state bodies, employers and trade unions on the principles of social partnership.

3. The current structure of the system for promoting university graduates' employment is represented today by three main levels: federal, regional and university-based. The main responsibility for the demand for graduates, the creation of conditions for interaction with employers is assigned directly to universities. In this regard, there is a need to organize more work, including systematic work with employers.

4. Getting proper education by modern youth is not always a complete guarantee of their employment and job placement. In this regard, we propose to accept for consideration generalization and rethinking of the experience of the centralized distribution of university graduates with a view to possible implementation, based on the research results.

This research with a scientific and practical orientation deals with a number of aspects of the issue of youth employment, in particular university graduates. In the course of the study and analysis of its results, a number of other problems were outlined that require further consideration: the development of various technologies for improving the assistance in employing university graduates, new forms and methods suitable for the challenges of modern times.

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