

**EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR ADAPTATION OF RUSSIAN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES WITH DISABILITIES**

***EMPREGO E ADAPTAÇÃO DE TRABALHO DE GRADUADOS DA UNIVERSIDADE
RUSSA COM DEFICIÊNCIA***

***EMPLEO Y ADAPTACIÓN LABORAL DE GRADUADOS UNIVERSITARIOS RUSOS
CON DISCAPACIDAD***

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ABSTRACT: The article is devoted to the analysis of the problem of social and labor adaptation and employment of university graduates with disabilities, which is relevant in modern socioeconomic conditions. As a result of the sociological research conducted by the authors, the main difficulties that arise for this category of graduates when searching and choosing a job and further employment have been identified. The analysis allows proposing, as an activation of the implementation of the principles of inclusion, an adaptation of social space for effective socialization of the increasing number of people with disabilities in recent decades and their integration into the *big* society, introducing promising foreign practices of the so-called *supported employment* of persons with disabilities.

KEYWORDS: Employment. Social and labor adaptation. Job satisfaction.

RESUMO: *O artigo se dedica à análise da problemática, relevante nas condições socioeconômicas modernas, da adaptação social e laboral e do emprego de graduados universitários com deficiência. Como resultado da investigação sociológica realizada pelos autores, foram identificadas as principais dificuldades que surgem para essa categoria de licenciados na procura e na escolha de um emprego e de continuação do emprego. A análise permite propor, como uma ativação da implementação dos princípios da inclusão, uma adaptação do espaço social para a efetiva socialização do crescente número de pessoas com deficiência nas últimas décadas e sua inserção na grande sociedade, introduzindo práticas estrangeiras promissoras. do chamado emprego apoiado de pessoas com deficiência.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Emprego. Adaptação social e trabalhista. Satisfação no trabalho.*

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RESUMEN: *El artículo está dedicado al análisis de la problemática de la adaptación sociolaboral y el empleo de los egresados universitarios con discapacidad, que es relevante en las condiciones socioeconómicas modernas. Como resultado de la investigación sociológica realizada por los autores, se han identificado las principales dificultades que surgen para esta categoría de egresados a la hora de buscar y elegir un trabajo y un empleo posterior. El análisis permite proponer, como activación de la implementación de los principios de inclusión, una adecuación del espacio social para la socialización efectiva del creciente número de personas con discapacidad en las últimas décadas y su integración en la "gran" sociedad, introduciendo prometedoras prácticas extranjeras. del denominado "empleo con apoyo" de las personas con discapacidad.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Empleo. Adaptación sociolaboral. Satisfacción laboral.*

Introduction

The problem of inclusion of persons with disabilities has been actualized in recent decades in modern Russian society, due to several objective factors. According to official statistics, there is a constant increase in the number of children with disabilities: the number of disabled children registered in the pension fund system of the Russian Federation in 2011 was 541,000 people, and by the beginning of 2020 it had grown to 670,000 people. There is a significant dynamic: for several years, the number of minors recognized as disabled as a result of the initial examination has increased by 1.24 times (in 2013, this figure was 70,734 people; by the beginning of 2020, 88,002 people); and by 1.13 times the number of children re-recognized as disabled as a result of re-examination (253,198 and 285,307 people, respectively) (FEDERAL STATE STATISTICS SERVICE, n.d.).

The growing trend in the number of people with disabilities makes it necessary to adapt the social space for the effective socialization of this category of citizens and their integration into the *big* society. Education as one of the most important institutions of socialization in the current conditions implements an inclusive educational model, which is a long-term strategy, a systematic approach to the organization of the educational space as a whole, concerning all levels of the educational system, its structures, and subjects.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, there is a constant increase in the number of students with disabilities studying in educational organizations that carry out educational activities under the programs of training middle-level specialists, bachelor's, specialist and master's degrees. In the 2013–2014 academic year, 10,969 students with disabilities studied at colleges and technical schools of the country, 13,631 students studied at



universities, and in the 2018–2019 academic year, the number of students in this category was 24,402 and 18,979 students, respectively (FEDERAL STATE STATISTICS SERVICE, 2019, p. 184). The problem of forming an inclusive education system is becoming more and more relevant in such conditions.

However, according to several researchers, the policy in this area around the world is increasingly shifting towards highlighting the reporting requirements and considering educational institutions as business organizations operated by managers (the managerial model). According to the researchers, politicians are increasingly positioning education as a business organization, with statements about responsibility and management that distract the attention of society from the socially significant problem of inclusive education and undermine it. Therewith, the authors call for the formation of *educational inclusive communities*, which implies a positive perception of individual diversity and the development of the activity of children and youth with WHO in a wider social environment (CURCIC; GABEL; ZEITLIN; CRIBARO-DIFATTA; GLARNER, 2011). One of the goals of the formation of such communities is the future employment of graduates with disabilities.

The relevance of the tasks of social and labor adaptation of students with disabilities, the choice of a profession, and their further employment is defined in a fairly large number of laws and regulations at the federal and local levels. The most important of them are Federal Law No. 273-FL of December 29, 2012 “On Education in the Russian Federation” (RUSSIA, 2012), Federal Law No. 181-FL of November 24, 1995 “On Social Protection of Disabled People in the Russian Federation” (RUSSIA, 1995), Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan of August 17, 2009, No. 1012-r “On measures to implement the rights of disabled children to receive primary and secondary vocational education” (TATARSTAN, 2009). However, despite the legislative regulation, in real life, graduates of universities and colleges with disabilities face serious problems when finding employment, which actualizes the appeal of social researchers to this problem.

Therewith, according to the conclusions of British scholars formulated based on the analysis of monitoring studies, disabled university graduates are almost as successful in the labor market as their classmates without health disorders. The results of their employment are generally assessed as positive (RIDDELL; WEEDON, 2014).

The relevance of the topic is also since the employment of graduates and, in particular, graduates with disabilities is one of the important factors in modern conditions that directly affect the economic well-being of the country and its development in the future. The



employment of university graduates determines the efficiency of an educational institution, and this indicator becomes especially relevant in the context of the transition of the higher education system to the model of *third-generation universities* (MAXIMOVA; BELYAEV; LAUKART-GORBACHEVA; NAGMATULLINA; HAMZINA, 2016). The change of the educational paradigm associated with the advent of the era of *academic capitalism* causes the activation of market or market-like activities of universities (SLAUGHTER; LESLIE, 1997), strengthening the requirements of consumers of educational services not only to the quality of education received but also to the functionality of universities for the employment of their graduates.

Methods

The urgency of the problem led to the formulation of the purpose of the sociological research—to identify the features of employment and social and labor adaptation of university graduates with disabilities and disabilities.

The object of the study was graduates with disabilities of the Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N. Tupolev (KNRTU-KAI), who completed their studies in the period from 2010 to 2019.

According to the annual monitoring conducted by the university during the study period, the average number of graduates with disabilities averaged 17 people per year. Characteristics of graduates by type of disease: 74% belong to the category of hearing impaired, 22% have a somatic disease and 4% have disorders of the musculoskeletal system and visual disability. Characteristics of graduates by gender: 64% are men, 36% are women. The sample population was determined based on the use of a quota sample according to the existing ratio of groups of graduates according to these characteristics and amounted to 138 people.

The subject of the study is the assessment by graduates with disabilities and disabilities of the KNRTU-KAI of the features of their social and labor adaptation and problems when applying for a job.

A questionnaire survey was used as the main method of collecting primary social information. The survey was conducted in May–October 2020.



Results and discussion

In modern socioeconomic conditions, an important factor in the competitiveness of graduates in employment is the availability of higher education. However, a diploma of higher education by itself does not provide a guarantee of employment, in particular, in the specialty obtained at the university, both for graduates in general and, in particular, for graduates with disabilities. This category is vulnerable due to existing health restrictions, and has lower competitiveness in employment compared to graduates who do not have restrictions in their work. According to experts of the regional public organization of people with disabilities (PERSPEKTIVA, n.d.), no more than 15% can find a job independently, the rest of graduates with disabilities and disabilities require individual job search routes, special programs that take into account the characteristics of each applicant, and personal support.

According to the data obtained during the sociological research conducted by the authors, it can be concluded that according to the estimates of the vast majority of graduates of KNRTU-KAI with disabilities, their health status generally allows them to work: slightly less than half of the respondents noted that they have health-related restrictions in the exercise of labor activity (46%), but representatives of the second half of respondents are convinced that they can work without any restrictions on an equal basis with recognized healthy employees of the organization (53%).

The majority of the surveyed graduates noted the need for their financial support as the main incentive for finding a job (89%). Self-realization is also an important motive for employment for respondents (67%). Therewith, professional promotion (23%), communication (21%), and the need to provide for other family members (20%) are less popular motives for finding a job for the surveyed graduates.

The most important factors in the search and selection of a potential job for the surveyed graduates are a decent salary (71%), the compliance of the future work with the specialty obtained at the university (53%), transport accessibility of the place of intended work (48%), as well as guarantees of fulfilling the obligations of the employer (42%).

It should be noted that according to the all-Russian survey conducted by WCIOM in 2020, the most important criteria for choosing a potential job are for Russians aged 18–55 years are the following:

- full and timely fulfillment by the employer of its obligations to the employee (4.76 points);
- good salary (4.62 points);





- compliance with safety standards in the organization of the working process (4.56 points);
- the possibility of applying professional skills and knowledge (4.55 points);
- favorable sociopsychological climate in the team (4.44 points) (WCIOM, 2020).

Thus, the graduates with disabilities surveyed by us indicate mainly similar factors to graduates without health restrictions that determine the search for a job. It is natural to have specific factors that affect the choice of work since the deviations in the state of health of the respondents impose certain restrictions and determine the importance of the factors associated with them (opportunities for movement and the need for additional special equipment of the workplace).

In higher educational institutions that have special educational programs for training people with disabilities, there are often special functional structures that assist in finding a job. KNRTU-KAI also has a department, of which purpose is to provide information and advisory support to students and graduates with disabilities, including on employment issues during and after training, registration of all necessary documents, and social adaptation in the workforce. The result of this work is a fairly high percentage of employed graduates with disabilities. During the study period, according to the monitoring data of KNRTU-KAI, the average number of employed graduates with disabilities is 80% of the total number of students with disabilities who have completed their studies.

During the survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) noted that the work carried out by the university to promote their employment and social adaptation has provided significant assistance in the practice of finding and selecting a job.

According to the results of the study, the most frequently carried out measures to promote employment and social and labor adaptation of students with disabilities are:

- Consulting on legal issues, job search strategies and sources of information about vacancies available on the labor market, registration of documentation necessary for search and employment, effective communication with the employer and colleagues, and other psychological and social aspects of labor adaptation (58%);
- Holding job fairs for students and graduates with disabilities and disabilities (46%);
- Organization and holding of various pieces of training and seminars on social and labor adaptation and employment (34%).

The vast majority of respondents (92%) are employed, only 8% of respondents at the time of the survey indicated that they had never worked. It should be noted that graduates



with disabilities quickly find a job, and every fifth respondent started working before finishing their studies at the university.

According to the data provided, 43% of respondents found a job within less than three months after graduation, 18%—from 3 to 6 months; within a year after graduation, 8% of respondents found a job and only 3% of respondents spent more than one year looking for a job.

The most common ways of finding a job among the respondents are applying for job seekers to advertisements on the Internet (43%), directly contacting the employer's company (31%), seeking help from relatives, friends, acquaintances (18%). State employment centers are not in demand among respondents (3%); 5% of respondents managed to find a job through public organizations working with disabled people.

According to the Russian monitoring of the economic situation and public health (RLMS-HSE), among the methods of job search leading place belongs to such factors as the help of friends, acquaintances (76.5%), advertising on the Internet (62.6%), appeal directly to the employer (49.4%), relatives (44.6%) and job search via traditional print ads (39.3%). Such methods of job search as applying to state (24.3%) and nonstate (11.2%) employment services are unpopular among job seekers (KOZYREV, 2020, p. 81-82).

Comparing these data, we can see some features of the priority ways of finding a job among the surveyed graduates and Russians in general. In particular, the level of appeal of graduates with disabilities to family and friendly ties is significantly lower. However, in our opinion, the identified features can be attributed more to the age factor that influences (the entire adult population was examined in the framework of the RLMS HSE study), rather than to the specifics of the state of health and the opportunities for graduates with disabilities due to it.

The study of job satisfaction of graduates with disabilities in the author's study was structured in such a way that the data obtained could be compared with the data of the all-Russian comprehensive survey of living conditions of the population conducted by the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation in 2018.

According to the author's research, two out of five graduates surveyed are quite satisfied with the salary level (41%), about half noted that they are not completely satisfied (47%) and only one out of ten respondents is not at all satisfied with the salary level (12%). Comparing the data of our study and the all-Russian comprehensive survey, we can see that there are no fundamental differences in the respondents' estimates for this indicator.

Moreover, the respondents' estimates of satisfaction with the level of wages received are similar both for the general population and for working respondents with disabilities (Table 1).

Table 1 – Satisfaction with the work of respondents of the All-Russian, a comprehensive survey and author's sociological research (in %)

	Quite satisfied	Not quite satisfied	Not satisfied at all
with the level of wages			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	39	50	11
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	36	50	14
Respondents of the author's research	41	47	12
with the reliability of job			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	70	26	4
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	71	25	4
Respondents of the author's research	73	24	3
with performed duties			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	76	22	2
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	79	18	3
Respondents of the author's research	78	20	2
with work schedule			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	82	16	2
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	87	11	3
Respondents of the author's research	90	9	1

with working conditions			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	74	24	2
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	78	19	3
Respondents of the author's research	87	12	1
with the distance to work			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	71	25	4
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	76	20	4
Respondents of the author's research	81	16	3
professional satisfaction			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	65	29	6
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	63	28	9
Respondents of the author's research	64	30	6
moral satisfaction			
Respondents of the comprehensive survey	71	24	5
Respondents with disabilities of a comprehensive survey	71	22	7
Respondents of the author's research	74	24	2

Source: Federal State Statistics Service (2019, p. 189)

The indicator of satisfaction of respondents of the analyzed studies with the reliability of work also shows almost identical data. The majority of respondents are quite satisfied with the reliability of the available work: the respondents of the comprehensive survey were 70%, the respondents of the comprehensive survey with disabilities were 71%, and graduates with disabilities of KNRTU-KAI were 73% (Table 1).

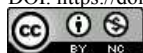


The majority of respondents in both studies also demonstrate satisfaction with the duties performed at work. Only one in five respondents noted that they are not completely satisfied with the duties that need to be performed in the course of their work: the respondents of the comprehensive survey were 22%, the respondents of the comprehensive survey with disabilities were 18%, and graduates with disabilities of KNRTU-KAI were 20% (Table 1).

The research data on the indicator of satisfaction with the work regime indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction of respondents with their work regime and similarity in the respondents' estimates of this indicator. Moreover, among the respondents with disabilities, a higher percentage of those who are completely satisfied with their work regime was recorded: 87% of the respondents of the comprehensive survey with disabilities and 90% of the respondents of the author's study compared to 82% of the respondents of the comprehensive survey who do not have health restrictions. It can be assumed that applicants with disabilities pay more attention to the mode of labor activity when searching and choosing a job, more often get a job with a more flexible schedule and homework.

Three out of four respondents to the comprehensive survey noted that they are quite satisfied with their working conditions (74%), and the majority of respondents to the comprehensive survey with disabilities are quite satisfied with working conditions (78%). The data on the indicator of satisfaction with working conditions is even higher among the surveyed graduates with disabilities (87%) (Table 1). This fact, in our opinion, may be since persons with disabilities have certain preferences related to the employer's obligation to equip the workplace of an employee with disabilities following the specifics of the opportunities and limitations of their health status. Also, a high percentage of graduates of KNRTU-KAI who are satisfied with the working conditions is associated with the presence of higher education in this category of respondents and, due to this fact, the content and nature of the professional activity.

The data obtained in the course of the analyzed studies also demonstrate a high proportion of respondents who are satisfied with the indicator of the remoteness of work from home. Thus, only one in four respondents of the comprehensive survey from the healthy group (25%) and one in five respondents with disabilities (20%) noted that they were not completely satisfied with the distance from home to their work. Graduates with disabilities, interviewed during the author's research, most often expressed the opinion that they are quite satisfied with the distance from home to their work (81%). It can be assumed that applicants with disabilities pay more attention to the factor of the remoteness of work when searching for



and choosing it, as well as the dependence of the results of this indicator on the type of locality in which the respondent lives. Thus, the graduates of KNRTU-KAI interviewed in the course of the author's study live in a large urban agglomeration with a developed public transport infrastructure, which causes a faster and more convenient opportunity to get to work.

The analysis of data on the indicator of professional satisfaction with the work of respondents showed that almost every third respondent in both studies is not completely satisfied with the content of their work from the point of view of the professional component (Table 1). Every tenth respondent with disabilities in the framework of a comprehensive survey (9%) noted that they were not at all satisfied with this aspect of their work. A lower percentage was recorded in the course of the author's research: 6% of the surveyed graduates are not at all satisfied with the content of their work in terms of professional expectations. The higher percentage of dissatisfaction with this indicator among respondents with disabilities can be explained by the fact that people with disabilities have a narrower choice of options for the professional field of activity due to health restrictions.

It should be noted that according to such an indicator as moral satisfaction with their work, the respondents showed a greater degree of satisfaction. On average, only one in four respondents of the analyzed studies noted that they were not completely morally satisfied with the existing work: 24% of healthy respondents of the comprehensive survey, the same indicator for the respondents of the author's study and 22%—respondents with disabilities of the comprehensive survey.

In general, it can be noted that, despite the rather high level of dissatisfaction of respondents of the all-Russian comprehensive survey and the author's study with the level of wages, according to other main indicators, the respondents showed a fairly high level of satisfaction.

One of the tasks of the author's research was to identify the opinions of graduates about the main sources of barriers, groups of problems that hinder their successful employment. As a result of a study conducted in the UK, the following sources were identified that make it difficult for job seekers with disabilities to find employment (SAINSBURY, 2018):

- In the field of economics, the insufficient number of vacancies in the labor market for applicants with disabilities and their weak differentiation by the conditions and nature of work, the reduction of jobs in the public sector for people with disabilities due to the economic crisis have been revealed;

- In the field of social policy, its insufficient elaboration, the low level of effectiveness of existing national programs, the declarative nature of several adopted legislative acts and resolutions have been revealed;
- In the technological sphere, there is price inaccessibility of special technologies, rehabilitation facilities, and an insufficiently developed infrastructure;
- In the sphere of attitudes and stereotypes of people, there is discrimination on the part of employers concerning applicants and employees with disabilities, as well as the presence of communication barriers for people with disabilities themselves;
- In the field of educational potential, there is a lack of skills, experience, the necessary level of qualification and knowledge among people with disabilities.

Several open questions were asked to find out the opinions of graduates about the existing problems and barriers that hinder the successful employment of people with disabilities. The analysis of the obtained data showed the similarity of the actual problems of employment of people with disabilities and disabilities for the Russian society and the UK.

The most frequent statements were the following, reflecting current problems in the sphere of economics: *“the necessary conditions are rarely created in organizations”*, *“it is difficult for people with disabilities to find suitable conditions to make it convenient to work”*, *“special conditions are not created at workplaces”*, *“when looking for vacancies there are very few offers for persons with disabilities”*, *“it is very rare to find vacancies for us in the lists”*, *“private traders very rarely have vacancies for persons with disabilities”*, etc.

Insufficient elaboration of the existing social policy and its, in some cases, declarative nature were reflected in the following judgments of the respondents: *“according to the law, people with disabilities have many different benefits, but in reality, they do not always work”*, *“job quotas are mainly existed only on paper”*, *“employers in our market are not interested in hiring people with disabilities”*, *“our state does not spark the interest of employers to hire workers with disabilities, so they perceive us as workers with special needs and difficulties”*.

The respondents noted the following in the block of problems related to the field of technology: *“there are many different devices, but they are very expensive”*, *“there are many new developments that could make life and work easier, but they are not available”*, *“often it happens that the vacancy is good, but there are problems to get to the place”*, *“the workplace is rarely suitable, because of this it is difficult to work”*.

The most expected was a significant share of statements and judgments about the existence of certain negative attitudes and stereotypes on the part of employers concerning



applicants and employees with disabilities. However, the results showed that this problem area is not so relevant for the surveyed graduates. This fact can be explained by the presence of a small applicant's experience and the period of service of the respondents.

Final considerations

The analysis of the results of the study conducted by the authors allows concluding that the problems and difficulties that arise among graduates with disabilities are in many respects characteristic, typical for young professionals who have completed their studies at a university and have the first experience of job search and employment. However, there are a number of factors that complicate the job search and employment of graduates with disabilities: 1) the presence of health restrictions undoubtedly causes a narrower choice of options for the professional field of activity for people with disabilities, limiting opportunities for vocational education and further work; 2) when choosing and searching for a job, applicants with disabilities are forced to focus on such aspects as the ability to get to work relatively quickly, flexible, including remote mode of activity, a specially equipped workplace adapted to the possibilities and limitations of the candidate's health status, the presence of a specially equipped entrance to the building, the convenience of moving within it for low-mobility groups; 3) the effectiveness of the employment of students with disabilities largely depends on the active activities of universities and other interested state and public organizations to promote their social and labor adaptation, search for suitable vacancies and further placement, etc.

It is advisable to introduce promising foreign practices of the so-called *supported employment* of people with disabilities to activate the implementation of the principles of inclusion, an adaptation of social space for effective socialization of the increasing number of people with disabilities in recent decades and their integration into the *big* society. The creation of a model of *supported employment* in Russian society will help to neutralize the urgent problems and difficulties encountered by graduates and young professionals with disabilities in the process of job search, employment and during the period of further adaptation at a new workplace, and emerging needs of job seekers and requests of employers.

In our opinion, a promising integration measure that increases the employment opportunities of graduates with disabilities is the development of a system of less rigid forms of employment and the expansion of the freelance services market (remote employment, homework, self-employment, etc.). The advantages of such types of employment: 1) the



employer will not need to equip a special workplace; 2) the problem of transport and architectural accessibility of the place of work will become irrelevant; 3) the range of groups of people with disabilities and disabilities who have employment opportunities will expand, so, in particular, homework is one of the few options for people with first-degree disability.

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