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OVER-QUALIFICATION AT THE HIGHER EDUCATION LABOR MARKET OF ISRAEL

SUPRA-ÎNCĂRCAREA CU SPECIALIȘTI CU STUDII SUPERIOARE PE PIAȚA FORȚELOR DE MUNCĂ DIN ISRAEL

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Annotation: *Israel is the third one of the OECD countries in the field of education. However, the labor productivity and salary levels in Israel are not so high. There is a serious problem of over-qualification. Too many graduates with academic degrees do not find suitable job positions, too many lecturers at the higher education institutions are outsourced, do not have a regular position.*

Adnotare: *Israelul este pe al treilea loc dintre țările OECD în domeniul educației. Cu toate acestea, productivitatea muncii și nivelul salariilor din Israel nu sunt atât de mari. Există o problemă serioasă de supra-calificare. Mulți absolvenți cu diplome academice nu-și găsesc locuri de muncă potrivite, mulți profesori din instituțiile de învățământ superior sunt pe poziție de cumul extern, nu au o funcție conformă pregătirii.*

Keywords: *higher education, professional education, labor effectivity, external teachers, outsourcing, over-qualification.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *învățământ superior, educație profesională, eficiența muncii, cadre didactice pe poziție de cumul extern, externalizare, calificarea redundantă.*

Introduction

Israel is one of the most educated countries in the world today. According to OECD data, percent of Israeli citizens aged 25-64 with a higher degree was about 49% in 2016, which makes Israel the third country (after Canada and Japan) [5]. On the other hand, percentage of Israeli citizens aged 25-64 who acquired a professional higher education is about 8% only, which is very low in comparison to other countries. Figure 1 presents the percentage of higher education graduates and the one of professional education graduates, in OECD countries available.

Generally, we can see a negative correlation by the two axis of the graph (Figure 1). Especially if we take out of the sample less developed countries like Turkey, Portugal and Chili, the negative correlation will be even stronger. If we do not consider a population without any education or with a school education only, we can see that there is a competition between a higher education and a professional education, and countries with a higher percentage of the first have usually a low percent of the second. So it is possible to conclude that expansion of the higher education system was made on the expense of the professional education system, at least at some level.

OECD organization also checked the labor productivity in different countries, and Israel was not at the third place.

So, higher education is not an answer for a productivity and economic growth.

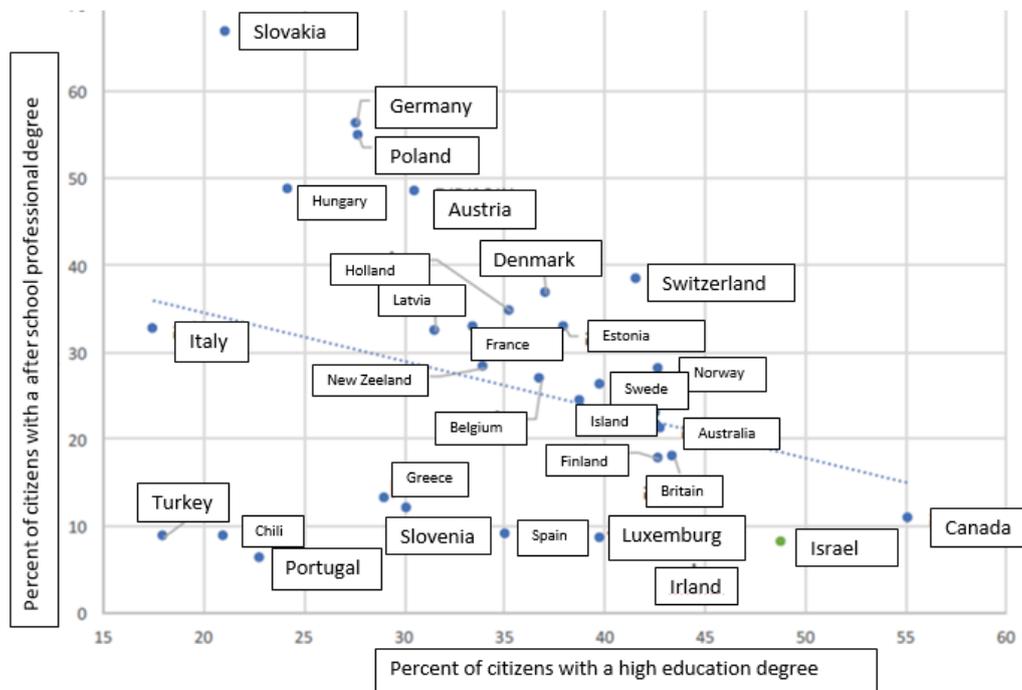


Figure 1. The percentage of higher education graduates and the one of professional education graduates, in OECD countries available

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Materials and methods of research

In this paper, the authors review a higher education of Israel and its contemporary problems, using scientific journals in the field and newspapers.

Results and considerations

One of the biggest problems of high education in Israel today is outsourcing of the academic staff. As for today, there are too many external teachers and lecturers who are not sure about the future employment and conditions.

External teacher is a lecturer, usually having a PhD, degree, who does not belong to the permanent faculty staff of the institution. The position of the external teacher includes teaching only, without research and without guidance for postgraduate students. The outside teachers are called junior members of the faculty [7].

Employing external teachers began in the 1960s, when the Hebrew University built its branch in Tel Aviv, which later became Tel Aviv University. Lecturers from the Hebrew University who went to teach at the branch were considered "outside teachers." Later, this degree was given to faculty members from each university who were asked to teach in other institutions, and later to experts whose main occupation was not academia (such as judges) who taught elective courses in their fields of specialization. Since the 1980s, universities and academic colleges in Israel have begun to use teachers from abroad as a cheap alternative to employing regular teaching staff [8].

In June of 2017, the junior lecturers in the Braude Academic College of Carmiel launched a strike against the College management, for the bad job conditions and instability and uncertainty about the future employment. Most of the junior external lecturers participated in the struggle, and even the students' organization declared it joins the strike as a sign of understanding the situation at the external lecturers market. In order to avoid harming the students and taking into consideration the fact the semester is almost over, the lecturers' organization decided to shorten the strike to only one day instead of three days it was planned.

The junior lecturers claim that there is no a collective agreement between the organization and the management, so that every one of them is not sure about the future employment, and any semester could lose her job. The junior lecturers are not a part of the College team, so they do not have a stable position and their salary is not connected to their tenure and work experience, there are no proper social conditions. Only the obligatory pension that is insured by the state law. The agreement between the lecturer and the College is renewed every semester. The lecturers are often afraid to complain, and the strike is the result of long-term deterioration.

According to the Israel parliament inspector's report that was published in July of 2013, about two third of the academic college staff in 20 Israeli higher education institutions are external lecturers. Between the 2002 and 2012, the years of college advancement and universities decline, the percent of external lecturers grew up by 112%, more than any other category of academic staff [7]. The reason is obvious- this way of hiring is much cheaper for both the colleges and the state that budgets them. The external lecturers are fired each semester and are hired again by the college needs. Most of them hold only partial positions and their salary is not influenced by the tenure, they are not insured health costs or advanced study fund. Like other outsourced workers, such as cleaning and security staff, the lecturers are not sure about their employment continuation. They are hired directly by the institutions, so the exploitation is very clear [7; 8].

It is worthy to note that Israeli academy did not invent anything new. Similar phenomenon of external teachers exists in another countries as well. There are high proportions of external teachers in United States and in Canada. The hiring of out of the academic institution lecturers changed the total character of the profession, since lots of lecturers got out of the tenure track and since 1993 became teachers without a regular status (AAUP [3]). In 2005 the lecturers' organization published a report saying that "The increasing number of faculty who are employed in contingent positions, whether full or part time, represents probably the single most significant development in higher education in the last two decades. Last year's annual report used data from the U.S. Department of Education to describe the trend toward hiring more contingent faculty during the 1990s. The most recent comprehensive figures from the Department of Education show that in fall 2001, 44.5 percent of all faculty were in part-time positions—nearly all without tenure—and an

additional 19.2 percent of faculty were in full-time non-tenure-track positions. Together, these categories amount to nearly two-thirds of all faculty, and all signs indicate that their numbers are still growing”[1].

Similar problems exist in Canada since the 90-es. Lecturers’ organization in Canada (CAUT) published an announcement about bad employment conditions of this group of teachers and possible outcome for the entire university system (CAUT [4]). Rajagopal [6] mentioned there are two kinds of part-time workers: the “Classics” and the “Contemporaries”. The first group have a full out-of- academy position. The second one does not have a regular position, they are “permanent temps”, without a regular or fixed salary or out of the Higher Education system. Rajagopal [6] calls them “academic underclass” since they are isolated from the research academic activity and their value in the system is quite low, the part-time positions harm their possible promotion in the future.

“More and more academic work is being performed by people hired on a per course or limited term basis. These positions are often poorly paid, have little or no benefits, no job security and no academic freedom. This has serious implications not only for contract academic staff, but for students, their regular academic staff colleagues, and the university system as a whole” [4].

Katz[5] examined the current Israeli policies in the field of education budgeting and concluded that:

1. In the last decades of the 20-th and the beginning of the 21-th century, the Israeli population became much more educated than before, including both years of studies and the number of educated citizens.
2. Although the high education was highly expanded in order to decrease the inequality between different population groups and give more possibilities to the poor ones, it did not happen, the gaps did not narrow.
3. Comparing Israel to other countries reveals that it is one of the most highly educated countries in the world. However, the human capital and labor effectivity are not high according to international tests.
4. In Israel, there are too many academic degree graduates who did not find a job suitable to their education level.
5. Since the 90-s of the 20-th century, the demand to academic positions grew up much less than the increase in supply of the academic degree graduates. Those graduates working out of the academia, get a low salary, especially the young ones.

Conclusions

The direct budgeting of universities and colleges (higher education institutions) in Israel is divided into teaching and research, each one uses a different formula including different parameters (students number, publications number etc.) In order to deal with the excessive education, there is a need to update the budgeting model in the following way:

1. To budget less those faculties and fields of studies that the future salary premium is low – there is a need to gather information and to decrease the teaching component for those fields. The calculation should be simple and clear, so that there will no be a way for manipulations.
2. To re-examine the education component of salary model of the public sector. Since the public sector increases a salary for a higher education, all of the public workers are interested to get more education. It could be not effective and useless in many cases, since the public sector workers do not need that much of education to get a better labor effectivity. If this is really the case, they should better get a salary addition for a better results at work and short but useful professional courses, not for the needless degrees.

3. To present a reliable information about future salary for the young people before they start their higher degree studies. If they know in advance about future prospects of a profession, they could change their plans and get another degree or not study for a degree at all.
4. To allocate budgeting for professional studies, to make them more attractive for potential students, for public sector workers and also for a private sector for more knowledge requiring.

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