

The Recruitment of Freshmen Students and the Motivation of Choosing Specification

Abstract

In our study we compare the motivation of choosing specification and profession of freshmen at two higher institutions. The differences of the students' recruitment of the two institutions (The Faculty of Law at the University of Debrecen, the Faculty of Business Administration and Social Sciences at the College of Nyiregyhaza) are appropriate to reveal the possible similarities and differences. In the frame of the freshmen research we study the students' social background, ways of their school life, the motives of choosing specification and profession, furthermore their plans and expectations for the future. In the recruitment of the students in the two higher institutions real differences are observed among the BSc students and those students who take part in undivided trainings. The earlier way of school life was influenced by the social background and higher education was influenced by the earlier way of school life. In choosing specification and profession the social capital differences are prevailed by hidden way. The results of the research show that there are important differences between the way of school life and the motives of choosing specification and profession of the full-time students and the correspondence students.

1. Introduction, objectives

In our study we compare the motivation of choosing specification and profession of freshmen at the higher institutions. This enables us to point to the main differences between the institutions. We can also compare the potential differences of choosing specification of full-time, correspondence, BSc and traditional, undivided (5-year) training students.

The motivation of choosing profession in case of freshmen was studied for the first time in 2006 at the Faculty of Law in the University of Debrecen (UD) (Fónai, 2008). Other researches focusing mainly on the new graduates were launched at the beginning of 2000. The Faculty of Law in the University of Debrecen was among the first which questioned the new graduates from different faculties. It marked the beginning of creating the system of graduate tracking connected to the task of Quality insurance (Fónai, 2005).

Based on freshmen survey of the faculty of law, the Scientific Faculties of University of Debrecen launched in 2008 those surveys which took into consideration the other faculties as well in 2009 they used evasys questionnaires. In this study, we took partly into consideration the results of these

measurements. In 2009, they measured the motivation of profession choosing at the College of Nyiregyhaza (CNY) in the Institute of Applied Communication in the Faculty of Business Administration and Social Sciences. Among the previous findings, it has to be mentioned those surveys concerning the expectations which were conducted among the students of the University of Debrecen. They show similar expectations in several fields (Fónai – Mohácsi, 2009, Fónai, 2009b.).

What do we measure during the different surveys?

- the socio-demographic variables of the freshmen,
- school life track,
- profession and specification motives,
- the motives of choosing institutions,
- the expectation and plans of students

The aim of our research was to learn more about - in the marked dimensions - the recruitment, motivations, expectations and aims of students in order to take them into consideration when recruiting students and forming professional socialization.

We can compare the recruitment of the students of the two institutions with the national results of the “Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft.”. Concerning the profession choice, its motivation, those factors and actors which influence the decision, we point to the following facts. The choice is formally formed by the school research, since chances of learning is secondary and higher education are influenced by school results.

The inequality reproducing and/or capitals explanations mean the school result influencing factors. Seemingly these explain differently the school efficiency, they come to similar consequences concerning the school efficiency between different social classes: there are significant differences between the marks of students belonging to different social groups (see e.g.: Andor – Liskó, 2000, Bernstein, 1971, Bourdieu, 1986, 1978, 1997). Whereas we do not examine the relation between efficiency and further learning, we expected significant differences between the qualifications of parents and type of secondary school. Based on theories and empirical findings we expected to find a decrease of the effect of families especially the schools on the further learning decisions.

Based on other researches we saw, that the school and profession choice and potential occupation are determined mainly by the qualification of parents, fathers. Robert’s research shows that the education level of the surveys are mainly influenced by the qualification and occupation of fathers, so the father’s

status appointing and determining effect is justifiable. It is a different question if we examined the parental effect on school mobility – secondary the parental effects on qualification choice – based on American surveys those students who had worse background mentioned the mothers instead of fathers among the important persons. Based on Hungarian surveys, the school progress of a child and the care of their results usually fall to the mothers. If the mother's qualification is higher than the father's, than the child's will be higher compared to the father except for the boys (this complies with the result of other researches) so the mothers' effect is on the girls' school progress is higher.

Based on Robert's result, the explaining role of the mother's qualification is not different from the father's, in case of disadvantageous background the mother's effect is stronger, if the mother is more educated, the child's qualification, if girl, depends on the mother (Róbert, 1986: 199). During this research they involved the effect of external factors on learning. According to this, the own intention is ranked the first, it is followed by effect of the family and relations – school and teachers not really affected the decisions (Róbert, 1986: 200).

It is important to note that those who had the best background faced higher, while those who had worse background faced smaller effect family effect on studying.

Based on our previous experience and literature, we expected the following as far as the specification and profession motivations at two institutions are concerned:

- Higher proportion of women in the observed group – higher proportion of men in case of engineer students.
- Different life track and family background of BSc students and those students who took part in undivided training.
- In case of choosing specification we did not expect differences between the different student groups.
- Similarly we supposed that there were no differences in the aspects of choosing institution.

2. Composition of the sample

In the sample, in case of UD law students attending undivided training 56,9 per cent is full-time while 43,1 per cent is correspondent. The management organiser students of UD is in 55,2 per cent full-time, 44,8 per cent correspondent. 61,7 per cent of the CNY students is full-time, 38,2 per cent correspondent. The law students of UD are mainly women (69,0%) and the same can be told about the management organiser students (75,0%). It is not surprising because the

dominance of women can be seen from the seventies. The composition of CNY students by gender is different which can be explained with the higher proportion of engineer students: the proportion of men is 85% compared to women 15% (*Table 1*).

Table 1.: The composition of the sample by higher institution and specification

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------|--------------|
| University of Debrecen, law student | 412 | 47,9 |
| University of Debrecen, management organiser | 328 | 38,1 |
| University of Debrecen total | 740 | 86,1 |
| College of Nyiregyhaza, management of business administration | 19 | 2,2 |
| College of Nyiregyhaza, transportation engineer | 40 | 4,7 |
| College of Nyiregyhaza, mechanical engineer | 61 | 7,1 |
| College of Nyiregyhaza, total | 120 | 13,9 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>860</i> | <i>100,0</i> |

Source: Own survey

3. The recruitment of students: school life track and qualification of students

We described the school life track with three things: type of secondary school, maintainer of school and qualification of parents. As we have already referred, we expected difference in the life track of students with different specialisation (*Table 2*).

Table 2: Qualification of secondary school students by school type, %

| | UD undivided | UD BSc | CNY BSc |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------|---------|
| Secondary grammar school | 81,3 | 63,4 | 34,2 |
| Vocational secondary school | 18,0 | 36,0 | 63,3 |
| Adult education | 0,7 | 0,6 | 2,5 |

Source: Own survey

Based on the type of secondary school there is a significant difference between the institutions and undivided – BSc trainings. The law students of UD, especially the would-be lawyers come from secondary grammar schools and the proportion of six or eight-class secondary grammar schools is high. This can be explained by the make-up of the parental background (Fónai, 2009). However, the differences between BSc students are significant at the observed faculties of

the institutions; the proportion of vocational school graduates is higher in case of BSc students. At national level, one fourth of the freshmen came from secondary technical school, the others from secondary grammar school, so the make-up of those students who study in the undivided training can be best compared to the national indicators (Source: “Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft” – “Graduate Career Tracking”, 2009 sample of active students). Similar, but significantly lower differences are there in case of the maintainers of the secondary schools (*Table 3.*)

Table 3.: Proportion of maintainers of secondary school, %

| | UD undivided | UD BSc | CNY BSc |
|------------|--------------|--------|---------|
| Municipal | 87,6 | 91,2 | 91,7 |
| Church | 8,8 | 7,9 | 7,5 |
| Foundation | 2,4 | 0,9 | 0,8 |

Source: Own survey

Based on the data of the table, it can be seen in case of those students who attend undivided training, the proportion of church, foundation financed students is higher. Other important field of recruitment is the family background, where we can also suspect a difference between the institutions and the undivided-BSc students (*Table 4.*)

Table 4.: Qualification of the parents of the students, %

| | UD undivided | | UD BSc | | CNY BSc | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Father | Mother | Father | Mother | Father | Mother |
| Primary school | 7,7 | 6,1 | 7,0 | 10,1 | 4,3 | 8,5 |
| Industrial school | 18,6 | 10,1 | 33,4 | 15,0 | 37,9 | 18,6 |
| Vocational secondary school | 17,8 | 12,3 | 17,5 | 13,1 | 19,0 | 13,3 |
| Secondary grammar school | 20,6 | 30,0 | 27,3 | 35,5 | 16,4 | 31,4 |
| College | 11,9 | 23,9 | 8,9 | 18,3 | 13,8 | 21,9 |
| University | 23,8 | 17,2 | 5,8 | 8,0 | 8,6 | 12,2 |

Source: Own survey

Analysing the parents' qualification the marriage pattern of the sixties still exists: secondary school graduate woman and vocational school graduate man, college graduate woman and university graduate man. The mothers' qualification in this age group is still lower than those of fathers'. The differences are not significant between institutions but significant between the

types of training. The law students' parents have significantly higher qualification than the management organisers' and engineer students' so the differences are connected to the levels of higher education: those students who come from lower social status mainly go the BSc trainings. It is still a question whether the survey could show differences in case of MSc students. At national level, 1,9 per cent of fathers and 3,3 per cent of mothers had primary school degree, 18,7 and 11 per cent had vocational degree. 27,2 per cent of the fathers and 21,2 per cent of the mothers had secondary technical school degree, 10,4 and 19,2 per cent had secondary grammar school degree. 17,4 of fathers and 26,7 per cent of fathers had college degree. 23,5 per cent of fathers and 18,5 per cent of mothers had university degree (Source: "Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft "Graduate Career Tracking ", 2009 sample of the active students). The effect of marriage patterns can be detected at national level as well. Comparing the appropriate data of the freshmen at the two institutions with the national data, we can see that the education level of those parents whose students are in undivided training is higher, while this is lower and in case of BSc training.

4. Similarities and differences of choosing training, profession and institution

In case of choosing training we did not expect differences between the institution and types of training and our expectation was met (*Table 5*).

Table 5.: How much were you influenced when choosing specification (*four-grade scale*)

| | UD undivided | UD BSc | CNY BSc |
|---|--------------|--------|---------|
| individual decision | 3,56 | 3,60 | 3,47 |
| decision with both parents | 2,17 | 2,05 | 2,42 |
| decision with mother | 2,01 | 2,14 | 2,14 |
| decision with father | 1,82 | 1,61 | 1,99 |
| decision with life compation, spouse | 1,56 | 1,64 | 1,61 |
| decision influenced by friend, acquaintance | 1,40 | 1,35 | 1,71 |
| decision with other person | 1,26 | 1,36 | 1,46 |
| because of preserving workplace | 1,24 | 1,59 | 1,44 |
| decision with a friend/girlfriend | 1,23 | 1,39 | 1,58 |
| parents made the decision | 1,13 | 1,08 | 1,32 |
| decision with the involvement of a teacher | 1,08 | 1,10 | 1,22 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| decision with the boss | 1,06 | 1,23 | 1,24 |
| father's decision | 1,05 | 1,03 | 1,29 |
| mother's decision | 1,04 | 1,88 | 1,21 |
| boss's decision | 1,04 | 1,14 | 1,26 |
| one of the teacher's decision | 1,03 | 1,04 | 1,17 |

Source: Own survey

The students regard their choice as their own. The decision was partly reached with parents but no student accepted the decision of others. In case of BSc students the common decision with mother is more frequent. The students of the College of Nyiregyhaza were more affected by personal relationships than those of University of Debrecen.

What is surprising, the significant drop in the effect of schools and teacher on the decisions. The institutions have to take into consideration these tendencies and have to gain information on the students' information resources when choosing specifications (*Table 6*).

Table 6.: Where did you gain information about the chosen specification from? (*four-grade scale*)

| | UD undivided | UD BSc | CNY BSc |
|---|--------------|--------|---------|
| from the admittance leaflet | 2,76 | 3,13 | 2,79 |
| an acquaintance attends the specification | 2,60 | 1,96 | 2,58 |
| from the leaflet of the university, college | 2,04 | 2,46 | 2,36 |
| gained much information from many sources | 2,52 | 1,88 | 2,35 |
| participated in the open day | 1,73 | 1,58 | 2,08 |
| from other acquaintance | 2,06 | 1,75 | 2,00 |
| from school, teacher | 1,85 | 1,58 | 1,95 |
| from the media | 1,85 | 1,65 | 1,93 |
| from the parents | 2,07 | 1,73 | 1,90 |
| a family member has already attended | 2,01 | 1,30 | 1,86 |
| informed at workplace | 1,45 | 1,52 | 1,37 |
| from spouse, life companion | 1,24 | 1,11 | 1,24 |

Source: Own survey

There were two types of information sources for the students: the leaflets of universities and colleges, the events of universities and colleges and the personal relationships, relations and acquaintances. If we were to analyze the data of the table the law students of UD and BSc students of CNY are more similar, the BSc students of Debrecen seem to gain information just from the information leaflet. The situation is partly changed by the fact the management organiser

correspondent students take into consideration the promotion at workplace and it is likely that they got information from official sources (Fónai, 2005; 2008). The information possibilities of engineer BSc students are similar to justifying their choice so the personal relations are important. It is surprising that the law students regard the family background important as for the information on the specification which refers to the fact that these kinds of information, the family are behind the students. However, the students do not regard it as important when making decision. Besides, choosing specification the reason for applying for a certain institution is also important.

Those students in the sample are motivated in three ways: the possibility of a professional career, interest in the profession, the attractive student life and finally avoiding unemployment. As for the main motives there are no basic differences between the students. In applying for university, college the similarity is higher in case of BSc students, the students of undivided training attribute a bit lower importance to the above mentioned aspects. They regard the family background as more essential. Besides further training the reason for choosing the institution is also important.

As for choosing institution, mainly the differences between the institutions appear so in this case there is no effect of undivided or BSc training. The law students of UD were more willing to apply because of the reputation and level of education than the CNY students. From the CNY students' aspect the proximity, the necessity of a degree for the job, the easy admittance was important. The students of UD were affected by their parents which underlines the importance of parental background in their case. We have referred to the fact many times, that the correspondence students attribute different significance to their own life situation – in the following the list these fields.

It is natural, that the correspondence students' motivation was influenced by the spouses mainly in case of management organiser students. The preservation of workplace is less important for the correspondent law students than for the management organiser and engineer students which can be explained by the fact that the correspondence law students changes workplace after graduation. We can also some rare exception: police officers. The most surprising result is the intention of avoiding the unemployment: the full-time students regard it as more important. The correspondence students focus on retaining their workplace or it is essentially important for their current job and the promotion at workplace. The latter, in case of correspondence law students does not appear. This means, that the full-time students want to defend themselves with a degree from the unemployment, while the correspondence students want to strengthen their position.

Summary

In our study we examined the recruitment and profession choosing motives of freshmen at two higher education institutions. In case of students' recruitment, there are differences between institutions and trainings. The law students of undivided training came from higher social status families, the parents have higher level of education and the type of secondary schools attended is also different. This complies with the arguments of structural theories – however in our study we did not examine the effect of cultural and social capitals so their differences cannot be answered. To a certain extent we can point to the effect of social capital, since in case of BSc students the mothers and the informal relationship network exercised a bit higher effect – which complies with the theoretical findings. In a bit hidden way, the social capital come to the fore in case of law students, since they are who refer to the effect of family and parents when gaining information and making decision concerning the decision. This refers to the fact that the different types of capital and advantages strengthen each others' effect, those families which are in better position can retain their advantageous social status. An important finding of the research is the different motives of correspondent students which can be explained with the specialities of the Hungarian higher education. The full-time students choose differently stemming from the fact that they have different life situation, cultural and social capitals.

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