

EDUCATION AS THE FACTOR OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AND JOB MOBILITY¹

MARTA MATULČÍKOVÁ² – DANIELA BREVENÍKOVÁ³

Vzdelávanie ako faktor sociálnej mobility a profesijnej mobility

***Abstract:** The present paper examines the importance of education as the factor that determines one's job mobility and social mobility. Basic concepts (social mobility and job mobility) are explained in the first chapter. The second chapter describes methods of research and results acquired by means of research data analysis. The research sample consisted from 267 respondents; the data were collected by means of the questionnaire method and the method of interview. Family background and inclusion of parents in a particular societal stratum was considered as the basic and essential starting-point of developing and shaping the attitudes of children to work, as well as influencing their choice of formal education activities. This assumption was corroborated also by the correlation dependence of job position and respondents' completed education, and their parents' education. The examination of the compliance between respondents' completed education and their first job position indicates the differences between the graduates from secondary schools and those from higher education institutions. Another aspect of the research is the analysis of respondents' further professional education with regard to completed education before the commencement of the first employment. In the conclusion, there are summarised results and findings related to the relationship between job mobility and social mobility.*

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² doc. Ing. Marta Matulčíková, CSc, Department of Management, Faculty of Corporate Management, University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, e-mail: durdovic@euba.sk

³ doc. PhDr. Daniela Breveníková, CSc., Department of Linguistics and Translatology, Faculty of Applied Languages, University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, e-mail: daniela130@post.sk

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1 Introduction

Numerous graduates from some types of school in the Slovak Republic considerably exceed the possibilities of the labour market. While on the one hand, there are a lot of graduates in various fields of study, there are also those who are unable to find employment in the field in which they graduated. The consequence is ineffective social costs spent on their education. In the better case, these graduates could be employed in a different field; however, there are also graduates who proceed in their study at another type of higher education institution (HEI), or become clients of the employment office. Unemployment of graduates can be considered a serious economic as well as societal and psychological problem in Slovakia.

The concept of social mobility is based on the cognition of natural character of social inequality. Another assumption of the social mobility theory is that gaining a higher position is a matter of individual effort: any collective action decreases the chances of individuals to achieve higher social positions. Social mobility, as a rule, is based on persons' motivation and possibilities available in a particular socio-cultural environment. Job mobility is viewed in the paper as part of social mobility, while considering the importance of various occupations or professions. The focus of the paper is on the evaluation of the principal moments that affect an individual's next working development and also significantly influence their social status. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the relationship between job position and levels of completed education of respondents and their parents; monitor the levels of completed education before the inception of the first employment and the respondents' job position in the Slovak Republic labour market.

2 Social Mobility and Job Mobility

Social mobility is defined in dictionaries of sociology as a movement (or ability to move) of people, individuals and groups within a social structure,

while this movement is explored from various dimensions of the social structure, while this social structure is understood as a set of statuses and roles [5].

The first authors who studied social mobility were V. Pareto, author of the theory of elite cycle, and P. A. Sorokin (1927). P. A. Sorokin was also the first one to have defined social mobility and described it as the movement of individuals from one social group into another one, the extinction of some and the rise of other social groups, and the extinction of an entire set of groups of simple and cumulative nature. Sorokin distinguished between horizontal and vertical social mobility; he referred to the former as the movement of an individual within the same societal stratum or class and to the latter as the movement from one societal stratum or class into the other one(s), while differentiating between the upward type and downward type of mobility. According to the type of stratification, we can speak about employment mobility, class mobility, income mobility, political mobility, or educational mobility. P. A. Sorokin (1927) is also well-known for having introduced other related concepts, namely inter-generational mobility (man's movement from their parents' social group into another social group); intra-generational mobility (an individual's advancement or decline during their lifetime); intensity or rate of social mobility (which differentiates between the open society and the closed one); and the length of mobility (indicating by how many levels or strata a person has advanced in the stratification system). Social mobility was also studied by e. g. M. Weber and K. Marx. [8, 9]

In the sixties of the twentieth century, sociologists focused on three factors in their explorations of social mobility, which influence individuals' chances for upward mobility. Blau and Duncan (1961) studied how the social origin influenced one's position gained at work. They found out that an individual's status achieved was influenced by their father's education [1, 2]. They also arrived at the conclusion that the stability of the American society was accompanied with exceptional chances for upward mobility in the country, with the standard of living achieved as well as with a low level of social status distance. Hartmut Kaelble (2007) defined six factors that influence social mobility, namely: access to capital as the tool for the admission in higher strata of society, the possibility of coping with critical life situations, demographic factors, readiness to migrate or subordinate to the migration pressure, mental

factors, and government interventions [4]. Outputs from researches in social mobility have been elaborated into theories of social mobility, often referred to as the theory of industrialisation [8], or the theory of modernisation [1]. Based on the findings of these theories, social mobility is increasing because of technological and economic development of modern society.

Job mobility is a narrower category, which belongs to that of social mobility. It is a mobility of individuals within a geographically limited area or in employment. According to its manifestation, we can differentiate two types of job mobility, namely external job mobility and internal job mobility. External job mobility is reflected in fluctuation or in that part of the total job mobility that is connected with the change of one's employer and with re-distribution of human resources between organisations that are legal entities. Internal mobility of employees means the deployment of employees in the organisation. The most frequent manifestations of this type of mobility are promotion, relocation to another, more advantageous job, but it may also result in demotion and failure. Job mobility is closely connected with lifelong education processes.

3 Methods of Empirical Research and Analysis of Research Results

Family background and the parents' place in a particular societal stratum is the basic and substantial starting-point in the development of ideas related to one's future job and the selection of formal education activities.

The present paper is a partial output of an originally more extensive research; it deals with some aspects of evaluating the relationships between job position and levels of education of the respondents and their parents, and monitoring the levels of completed education before the commencement of the first job and the role in the work process in the Slovak Republic. Respondents were employees who achieved a complete secondary education concluded with *maturita* (equivalent to GCSE) and tertiary education of all the three levels, who perform technical (professional) or managerial tasks in selected divisions of C section – Industrial Production. For the purpose of research there were selected human resources from all the three types of businesses in terms of size (small business up to 49 employees, medium-sized business

up to 249 employees, and large business over 250 employees). The research was conducted by means of the interview and questionnaire methods.

Human needs, ambitions and aims are significantly influenced by their family background. The starting point of research analysis was investigation into correlation dependencies between the respondents' job position, those of their parents and the levels of the education completed by both the respondents and their parents. Another area of our exploration into correlation dependencies was the level of respondent's, his/her mother and father education classified into basic education, apprentice education without GCSE, secondary education completed with GCSE; tertiary education: bachelor, Master's, and PhD education. The lowest level of respondents' education was secondary education completed with *maturita* (GCSE).

Based on empirical research it can be concluded that (Table 3) there is a significant correlation between job positions of both parents (0.51). Their job positions depend from their education, this is true of mother (-0.52) as well as father (-0.51). Moreover, father's education influences also mother's job position (-0.35); but mother's education does not influence father's job position to such a degree, although, there is some dependency (correlation) (-0.29). There is also a high correlation (0.42) between father's and mother's education (see Table 3). The level of father's completed education influences also the respondent's level of completed education (0,34) (see Table 1).

Based on the calculated correlation coefficient, the correlation dependence between mother's education and that of the respondent is low. The respondent's job position correlates with father's job position (0.31); in the case of mother the dependence is low (0.23). Although the respondent's job position is in some correlation dependence of education (-0.28), this dependence is substantially lower than that of their parents.

This indicates education is no longer such a significant factor of one's job position as in the past; instead, a significant role is played by other factors, e.g. material security of the family, possibility of starting one's own business (while the respondent may be either as an employer or a one-man business). However, starting one's own business is not directly linked to the level of highest education completed.

Table 1

Correlation dependence of job position and completed education of respondent and respondent's father

Correlations		Respondent's job position	Father's job position	Respondent's education (the highest level completed)	Father's highest education completed
Respondent's job position	Pearson Correlation	1	0,31	-0,28	- 0,19
Father's job position	Pearson Correlation	0,31	1	-0,23	-0,51
Respondent's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,28	-0,23	1	0,34
Father's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,19	-0,51	0,34	1

Source: results of research processed by the GNU PSPP Statistical Analysis Software Release 0.8.2-gad9374.

Table 2

Correlation dependence of job position and completed education of respondent and respondent's mother

Correlations		Respondent's job position	Mother's job position	Respondent's education (the highest level completed)	Mother's highest education completed
Respondent's job position	Pearson Correlation	1	0,23	-0,28	-0,17
Mother's job position	Pearson Correlation	0,23	1	-0,12	-0,52
Respondent's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,28	-0,12	1	0,21
Mother's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,17	-0,52	0,21	1

Source: results of research processed by the GNU PSPP Statistical Analysis Software Release 0.8.2-gad9374.

Table 3

Correlation dependence of job position and completed education of respondent's parents

Correlations		Mother's job position	Father's job position	Mother's highest mother's education completed	Father's highest education completed
Mother's job position	Pearson Correlation	1	0,51	-0,52	-0,35
Father's job position	Pearson Correlation	0,51	1	-0,29	-0,51
Mother's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,52	-0,29	1	0,42
Father's highest education completed	Pearson Correlation	-0,35	-0,51	0,42	1

Source: results of research processed by the GNU PSPP Statistical Analysis Software Release 0.8.2-gad9374.

Relations between the level of respondents' completed education and their subsequent job position is depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

Evaluation of the compliance between completed education and the first job position in %

Compliance of education and experience Completed education	Job position in compliance with the level and type of school completed	Job position on a higher level	Job position on a lower level	Job position not in compliance with the level and type of school completed
Secondary Vocational school completed with <i>maturita</i>	80.3%	0.0%	15.5%	4.2%
General comprehensive school completed with <i>maturita</i>	78.6%	0.0%	7.1%	14.3%
Follow-up study	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%

Tertiary education – Humanities	50.0%	4.2%	29.2%	16.7%
Tertiary education – Social Sciences	94.1%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%
Tertiary education – Natural Sciences	50.0%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%
Tertiary education – Technology	70.9%	1.2%	9.3%	18.6%

Source: own processing of research data.

The highest compliance between the level of education completed and subsequent experience is achieved in the case of graduates from vocational schools completed with *maturita* (equivalent to GCSE) and in tertiary education in social sciences. Many of those who completed tertiary education in humanities held job positions at one level lower (29.2%) or occupy job positions that generally require a completely different field of study (16.7%). A similar situation has been recorded also in natural sciences, where the percentage of employees in lower positions, or those who held the position of an entirely different professional orientation was higher. As much as 33.3% reported the third mentioned situation, which means that a considerable number of graduates are employed in fields completely different from those in which they graduated. Technical fields of tertiary education achieve a relatively high percentage of compliance (70.9%); there were also some graduates whose first job positions were higher than those usually gained by graduates in general. In the case of follow-up education, there is an obvious relation between the purpose of education and job position, where 37.5% of graduates held job positions one level higher.

Next aspect of our research was the analysis of further professional education with regard to completed education in the initial education path, i.e. education before the commencement of the first employment. Respondents' replies were analysed in terms of completed education; in the case of tertiary education, the focus was on study programmes. Respondents' activities in their further education were monitored in terms of types or aims of education in the following succession:

1. Acquiring knowledge and skills for the advancement in professional career in the field studied before the commencement of the first employment;
2. Acquiring knowledge and skills for the advancement in professional career in a different field of study than the one studied before the commencement of the first employment;
3. Acquiring knowledge and skills for managerial career;
4. Completion of formal higher education university study;
5. A respondent did not complete any further education.

The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Type of further professional education in relation to completed education before commencement of the first employment in %

Area of further education	Education until the advancement in professional line within the field of study completed before the commencement of the first employment	Education for advancement in the professional line in another field of study than the one completed before the commencement of the first employment	Education for managerial career	Completion of formal tertiary education	No further education taken
Completed education					
Secondary vocation school completed with <i>maturita</i>	12.7%	5.6%	9.9%	12.7%	25.4%
School of secondary general education completed with <i>maturita</i> (equivalent to GCSE) (equivalent to GCSE)	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	21.4%	14.3%
Follow-up education	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%
Tertiary education in Humanities	29.2%	33.3%	0.0%	16.7%	8.3%
Tertiary education in Social Sciences	32.4%	14.7%	11.8%	0.0%	2.9%
Tertiary education in Natural Sciences	20.0%	40.0%	10.0%	20.0%	3.3%
Tertiary education in Technology	34.9%	29.1%	8.1%	4.7%	0.0%

Source: own processing.

In the case of professional education, the focus of further education was acquiring supplementary knowledge and skills for the performance of a particular work activity connected, e.g. with servicing a new facility, introducing a new technology, etc.; alternatively, further education was not taken.

Graduates from secondary schools of general education completed with *maturita* developed their knowledge and skills in accordance with the requirements of current performance of work activities, or education at a HEI. Those who graduated from follow-up forms of study either pursued education in a field different from their present education field, or studied at higher education institutions.

As many as 33.3% of graduates from tertiary education in humanities pursued other fields of study within further professional education and did not complete education for the performance of managerial profession.

Graduates from tertiary education in social sciences pursued some supplementary course as part of further education (29.4%), managerial education (11.8%) and education in another field (14.7%).

In further education, 40% of graduates from natural sciences study some other field of study than the one they completed, and 20% of graduates in natural sciences complete their studies at another school of higher education or university. A high percentage of graduates from tertiary education in technology study other fields than those they completed; only 4.7% decide to pursue studies at another school of higher education or university; 15.1% of these graduates pursue their further education studies according to the needs and requirements of the performance of a particular work activity.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the results of research, it can be stated that in the Slovak Republic:

- Education is no longer such a significant element influencing one's job mobility as it used to be. Instead, other factors are rising in importance: e.g., material security of the family; possibility of setting up one's own business, while the respondent can be an employer or a business person without employees.
- Type of job mobility influences social mobility. A prestigious job

position “pushes” its holder upwards into higher social strata.

- The level of highest education completed is not so significant for the advancement of an individual to higher social strata; instead it is the job position held and the wealth gained by the individual.
- In order to meet the needs of the labour market and requirements of job performance, not only that the graduates from higher education institutions pursue further education studies in the fields of study different from those in which they graduated, but they often continue in further tertiary education in the field of study different from the one they completed before their first employment. As the results of our empirical research indicate, it is mainly the graduates from Humanities and Natural Sciences fields of study who continue in different fields of study. Many of them do so in order to find better employment or any employment at all. For this reason, it is necessary to re-consider the numbers of graduates from the mentioned fields of study, because enabling one person to study at several higher education institutions or universities cannot be considered to be an effective use of the state budget funds. Numbers of graduates from individual fields of study should reflect the needs of the labour market in the way that after the completion of university study graduates were employable. A short-term further education is an exception, and it could also supplement the knowledge from other fields if it is required due to a demanding character of the job in relation to the job performance. We are fully aware that there are work activities that require interdisciplinary knowledge; however, supplementing the knowledge and skills needed should be secured via further supplementary professional education, rather than by means of a regular complete higher education/ university study, which in this case involves double expenditure.
- Frequently, people who perform highly demanding jobs in terms of expertise and qualifications are included in lower societal strata than those who, owing to their job position, enjoy more power, authority, important role in decision making process, and thus, also the possibility of acquiring economic background and accumulating wealth. Favourable positions include managerial or entrepreneurial positions, for these positions; there are no prescribed requirements concerning the level of completed education.
- Improvement of conditions of technical and technological processes, the development of industrial society and legislative conditions for the development of free business likewise raise chances for social mobility.

Changes in the job mobility influence the social structure and relationships between societal strata [6]. These issues are studied in the context of societal as well as global economic relationships [7]. High mobility leads to decreasing social status and enables to alleviate conflicts or tensions between social strata. The application of the findings from the research described could contribute to better understanding of the relations between education, family background, and interpersonal relationships at workplace.

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