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Orientation of Armenia's schoolchildren of upper grades towards higher education:

A study of motives and values using the case of Yerevan

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Description of research methodology	5
3. The formation of the decision to enter higher educational institutions among schoolchildren of upper grades	7
4. The role of information in the process of orientation for entering a higher educational institution	12
5. The range of motives for entering higher educational institutions.....	15
6. Values about diploma.....	34
Conclusion and recommendations.....	38
Appendix 1.....	40

Abbreviations

HEI- Higher educational institution

FG - Focus group

Introduction

Proper education of human resources and specialists in various spheres is an important factor for a country's economic growth.

The attitude of Armenian society towards higher education has undergone significant changes as a result of various socioeconomic, moral and political developments in the country. In particular the attitude of youth towards higher education has become ambiguous due to several reasons.

Today our youth lives and develops in new socioeconomic, moral and political reality, facing all difficulties of reconstruction of a collapsed society.

The crisis has also influenced the educational system. On the one hand it is considered as a social institute with a system of interconnected elements, special features of management and dynamic changes of prevailing functions, and on the other hand it is considered as a special value newly interpreted by the society and youth.

Today the orientation of schoolchildren towards higher education is not always formed and appeared in a socially desirable way; it not always follows the direction and the course, which is desirable from the point of view of public interests. This contradiction has its roots both in public relations and in an influence of numerous factors which to some extent participate in the process of the individual's orientation.

Whether senior pupils' needs for higher education are associated with the fact that they really have the purpose to study and realize their desire to acquire knowledge and become highly skilled specialists, or they consider education as a means for achieving certain social positions and material well-being?

In order to investigate this question the sociological survey was conducted among the 10-11th grades of the secondary schools in Yerevan in 2009, the aim of which was to find out the presence of above mentioned alternative, to find out the factors determining the formation and development of those desires, and to show how they are expressed (both quantitatively and qualitatively) in the motives of senior pupils for entering higher schools. This research also helps to reveal the changes in the values about higher education in Armenia which the modern life brought into.

This study is an obligatory step for activities aimed at ensuring the correspondence between the goals of young people to get higher education and the goals of higher educational institution functioning, by which the effectiveness of higher educational system is significantly stipulated.

Description of research methodology

In the framework of this study both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used.

1. FGs were conducted among schoolchildren of higher (10-11th) grades, their teachers and parents to have a better idea on the motivations of schoolchildren to pursue higher education. The results of these FGs also helped to adjust the questionnaire to be used during the survey among schoolchildren.

2. A survey using self-administered questionnaires was conducted among 378 schoolchildren from higher (10-11th) grades of 24 secondary schools in Yerevan to have also the quantitative picture of the problem (See Table 1).

Due to limited resources we have carried out the survey only in the capital (Yerevan), with a highly representative sample (the error of representativeness = 0,025).

Table 1. Distribution of schools

District	Total number of secondary schools	Number of selected schools
Ajapnyak	23	2
Avan	11	1
Arabkir	32	3 (including 1 private school)
Davtashen	6	1
Erebuni	27	2
Kentron	51	4 (including 1 private and 1 advanced school)
Malatia	23	2
Nor Nork	25	2
Nork Marash	6	1
Nubarashen	4	1
Shengavit	32	3 (including 1 advanced school)
Qanaker-Zeytun	20	2
Total	260	24

The survey sample was formed through multistage probability sampling technique.

At the first stage 24 schools were selected from all districts of Yerevan (proportionally to their distribution in general population, See Table 1). Different types of schools were included in the survey – both state and private, ordinary and advanced schools.

At the second stage we identified those schoolchildren from 10th and 11th grades in the selected schools that were planning to enter higher education institutions, and then randomly sampled the schoolchildren to be interviewed.

The survey was conducted using self-administered questionnaires. The interviewer explained and provided instructions on completing the questionnaire and controlled that everyone independently, correctly and completely fills in the questionnaire. The use of self-administered questionnaires guaranteed that there is almost no pressure from the interviewer which was an important factor for receiving sincere answers.

3. The formation of the decision to enter higher educational institutions among schoolchildren of upper grades

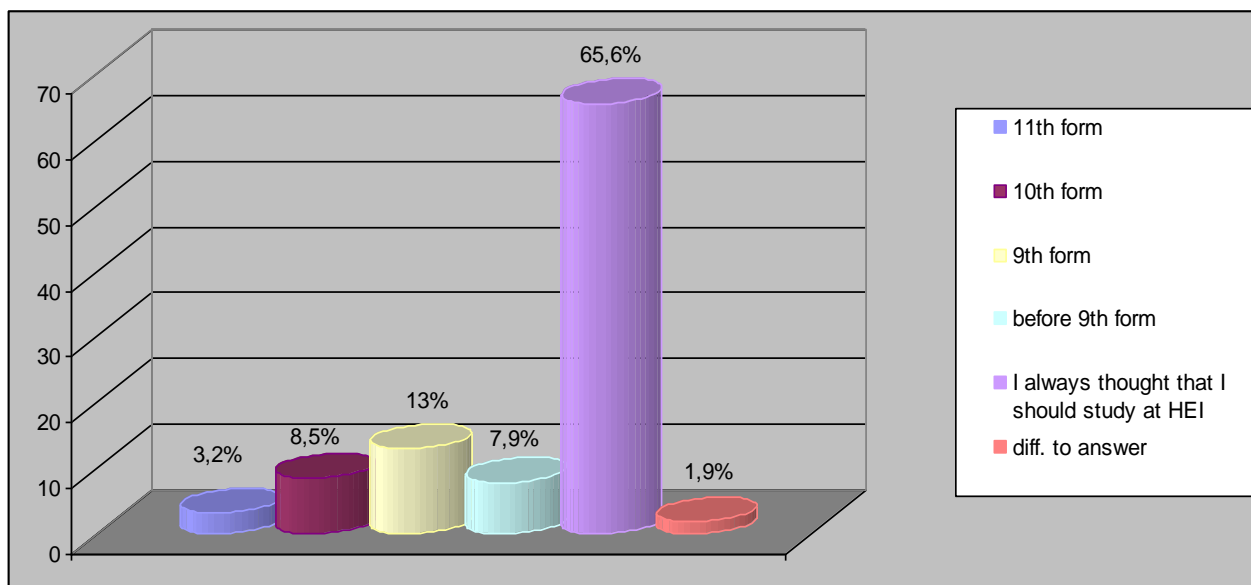
At present getting of higher education is an initial point in the vital plans of most of youth staying on the cusp of leaving the school. The tendency of getting higher education continues to be prevailing value both for the youth and for their parents. As mothers', so fathers' majority (88,6% and 88,9% correspondingly) agree, that after graduating school the next step of their children must be getting higher education, and not work or forming family (though they can be combined) (See Table 2).

Table 2. The attitude of the following persons towards nest steps after leaving the school

%	Continue their studies at HEI %	To work %	To form a family %	They are indifferent in this matter %	Their opinion does not interest me %	Other %	Diff. to answer%
1. Father	88,9	5,6	0,8	0	0,8	0,3	1,6
2. Mother	88,6	4,2	2,6	0	0,8	0,3	2,1
3. Friends	54,5	5,3	4,0	14,8	16,4	0,3	4,8
4. Teachers	51,9	0,8	0,3	13,5	23,8	0,3	9,5

Meanwhile it is interesting, that the youth's decision on continuing education in higher educational institution mainly arises not in the latest grades of school, but much earlier. 65,6% of respondents pointed that they always thought about studying at higher educational institution (See Figure 1). This fact is the reflection of national mentality concerning higher education that exists in our society.

Figure 1. When have you decided to continue your studies at the HEI?



Viewing the results of Table 3 we can see that the main factors highly influence on decision of getting higher education are family (59,3%), then close environment (friends, acquaintances) (11,4%).

As to such factors as teachers and mass-media, according to respondents though their influence is not so great, but they have some influence on this process, too. And these factors must be used correctly in order to form proper and adequate decision on getting higher education among the schoolchildren of upper grades.

Table 3. What is the influence of abovementioned options your decision to enter HEI?

	Great influence%	Some influence%	Slight influence %	Had no influence %
1. Parents	59,3	28,3	5,8	6,6
2. Friends, acquaintances	11,4	38,9	27,5	22
3. Teachers	7,1	22,5	28,3	41,8
4. Information obtained from mass media (including the internet)	6,3	26,5	23,8	43,4

In Table 4 the state higher educational institutions of Yerevan are represented, where are going to enter our schoolchildren of upper grades. The whole distribution by higher educational institutions is the following:

Table 4. Distribution by higher educational institutions

	HEIs	%
1	Yerevan State University	27.8
2	Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsy	6.6
3	Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Bryusov	4.0
4	Armenian State University of Economics	14.3
5	Armenian-Russian /Slovenian/ State University	7.1
6	Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovian	6.4
7	Armenian State Engineering University	11.6
8	Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction	3.4
9	French University in Armenia	2.6
10	Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema	1.9
11	Armenian State Agrarian University	2.1
12	European Education Area Academy	.8
13	Yerevan State Academy of Art	2.6
14	Police Academy of RA	.8
15	Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture	2.1
16	Military Aviation Institute of RA Defense Ministry	.3
17	Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas	.3
98	Any HEI	.3
99	Difficult to answer	5.0

As we can see the main part of youth flow is directed to Yerevan State University (27,8%), Armenian State University of Economics (14,3%) and Armenian State Engineering University (11.6%).

Here it must be mentioned that the choice of certain institution besides some circumstances is conditioned also by the financial situation of the young man and his/her family, by which we have the following picture: for the schoolchildren from lower income families the leading is Armenian State Engineering University, while for schoolchildren from middle and high income families it is the Yerevan State University.

The distribution by speciality is presented in the Appendix 1. As we can see from the Appendix today among the youth it is in a great demand the list of the following specialities: economics (15,1%), foreign languages (12%), information technology (9,8%), law (7,7%) and finances

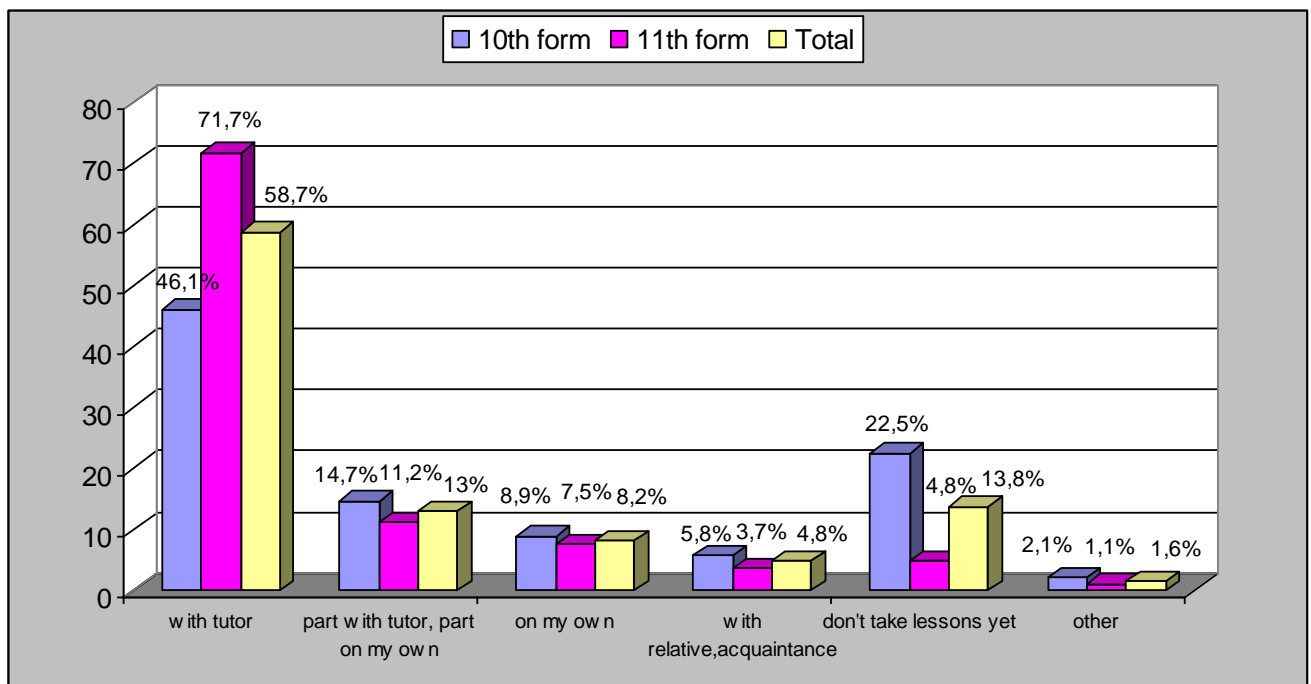
(4%). Anyway such distribution can not be considered as the reflection of current demand in the job market.

Discussing these results we must pay attention on the factors which influence on the process of selection of certain speciality. According to survey findings the main factors are the following:

- the interest in the speciality (52,9%) (Here it should be mentioned that during the focus groups it was cleared up, that this interest is based on the existing social stereotypes about a number of professions regardless the fact whether the young man has appropriate abilities and capacity for that profession or no)
- perspective speciality (30,2%)
- corresponds to the abilities and faculties (17,7%)
- the speciality is a vocation (17,7%)
- in a great demand in Armenia (13,8%).

It is not a secret, that in order to enter a higher educational institution the schoolchildren of upper grades have additional private lessons. From the Figure 2 we can see that almost the half of our pupils began to train with tutors from 10th grade, and in 11th grade the number of such students is 71,7%. And the share of pupils who train by their own is too small (8,9% in the 10th grade and 7,5% in 11th). These are mainly the pupils from low income families.

Figure 2. *With whom do you train the subjects for entering HEI?*



In this regard it must be mentioned that the main part of the youth who has intension to enter a higher educational institution is from middle and high income families (See Table 5). And this is

clear because of the fact that the process of entering a higher educational institution is connected with big financial expenses: studies, training payment and so on.

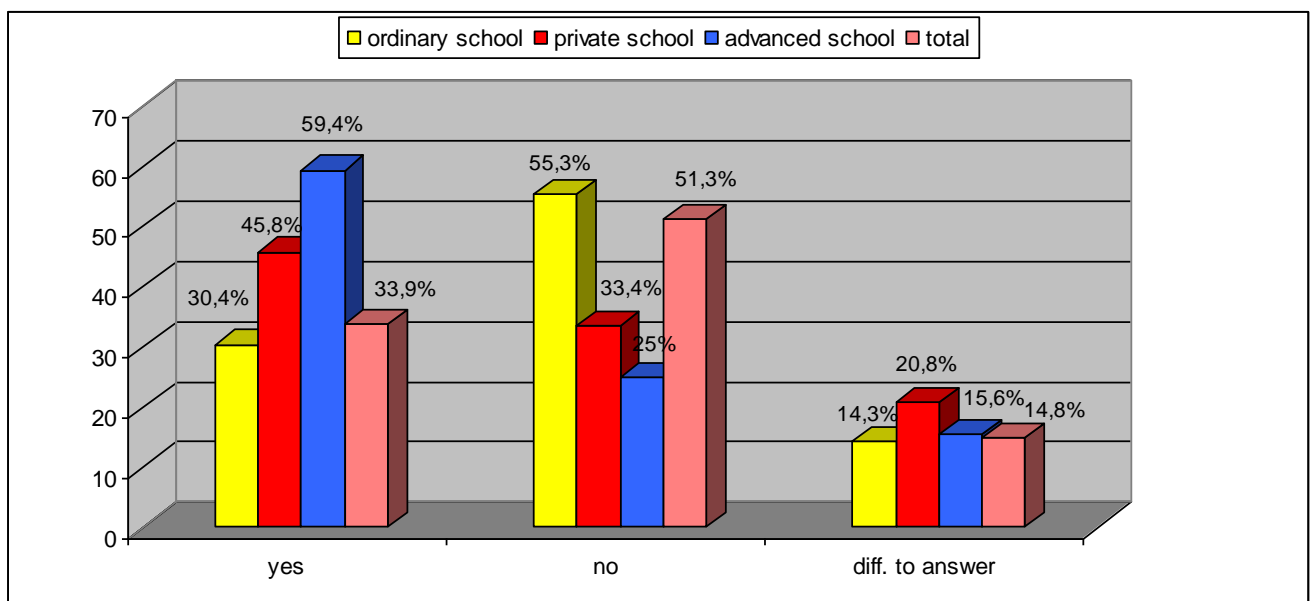
Table 5. Financial conditions of family

Financial conditions of family	%
1. It is not enough even for the most essential purchases	1.9%
2. It is enough for the most essential purchases	10.8%
3. It is enough to purchase food and clothes	36.2%
4. We live normally, even make some savings	34.7%
5. We do not deprive us of anything	16.4%

4. The role of information in the process of orientation for entering a higher educational institution

The results of the survey confirm that today in the majority of schools there are no any professional orientation activities carried out by teachers or other relevant authorities - 66,1% (51,3+14,8) (See Figure 3). It can be considered as one of the serious omissions of current educational system, which needs to be reviewed and improved.

Figure 3. Are there any professional orientation activities carried out by teachers or other relevant authorities in your school?



Comparing the ordinary, advanced and private schools we can see that in advanced schools the professional orientation activities are done a little more (59,4%), than in other two types of school (30,4% in ordinary schools and 45,8% in private schools). However the schoolchildren of all types of school need additional information about higher educational institutions and various specialities.

The study shows that during the choice of HEI and/or speciality only 34,1% of schoolchildren had enough information about HEIs, specialities, their supply and demand in the job market and other relevant issues; 58,7% had some information and 2,1% hadn't any information at all. However it is interesting that even the part of the pupils who have mentioned that during the choice of HEI and/or speciality they had enough information, anyway marked the need of additional and much more detailed information.

As we can see from the Table 6 nowadays 85,2% of school-leavers (7,9%+10,6%+66,7%) have/had a need of more detailed information about HEIs and specialities to make a proper

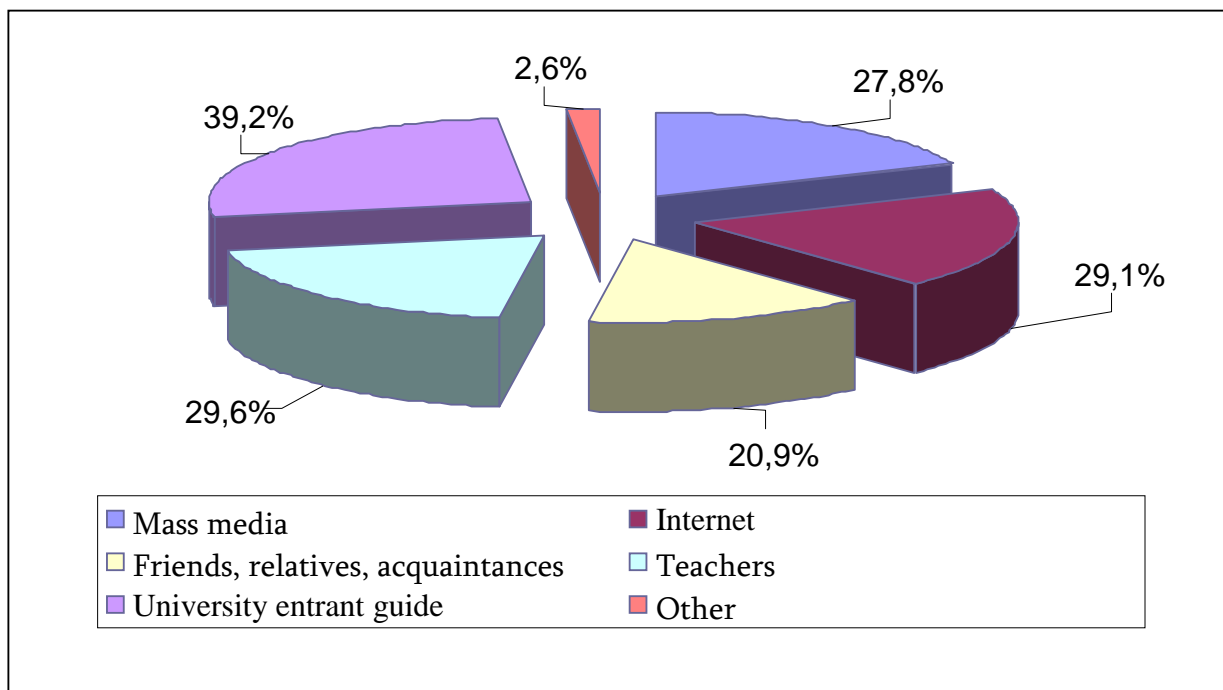
decision on HEI and the future speciality and only for 14,8% of respondents the information they have/had is/was enough for abovementioned purpose.

Table 6. Do/did you have a need of more detailed information about HEIs and specialities, their supply and demand in the labor market and other relevant issues before making decision on HEI/speciality?

1. Yes, only about HEI	7,9%
2. Yes, only about speciality	10,6%
3. Both in respect of the HEI and the speciality	66,7%
4. I have/had enough information	14,8%

The most part of information (74,1%) is got from friends, relatives and acquaintances which considered to be informal sources of information and so their influence on the youth may have negative consequences; then comes “university entrant guides” (39,4%), teachers (23%) and Internet (18,5%). However the respondents mention that they would like to get such kind of information first of all from the formal sources, such as “university entrant guides” (39,2%), teachers (29,6%) and then from Internet (29,1%) (See Figure 4). 2,6% of respondents suggested “From the certain HEI” alternative.

Figure 4. From which sources you want to get information on HEIs and specialities?



Thus the young man standing before the choice of entering higher educational institution makes his/her decision based on non-full and non-adequate information.

Ensuring the provision of adequate and detailed information to schoolchildren of upper grades going to enter HEI by abovementioned sources one can contribute to reduction of the discrepancy between supply and demand of some professions in job market.

5. The range of motives for entering higher educational institution

The decision of youth to enter a higher educational institution may have many purposes and have different motives. The main issue is to determine which of them are prevailing ones, as those in some way condition the behavior of the students during the study at HEI.

The main objectives of entering the higher educational institution are presented in Table 7 according to their priority.

Table 7. Objectives of entering the HEI

Objectives	Main objective %	Also for this %	Rather not for this %	Not for this %
1. To acquire relevant knowledge and skills to become a good specialist	33,3	61.4	4	1.3
2. To continue living as a student	3,4	49	25.9	21.4
3. To receive a diploma	41	42.3	8.2	8.5
4. To be able to enjoy collegiate life	11,4	62	15.3	11.3
5. To acquire relevant prestige in the society	9,3	51.3	21.7	17.7
6. To get a prestigious profession	19	56.1	16.9	7.7
7. To acquire respect of friends and acquaintances	3,2	39.2	28	29.6
8. To rise intellectual level and to expand the outlook	13	71.7	10.3	5
9. Keep up with others	0,8	25.9	28.3	45
11. To get desirable profession	33,1	57.7	6	3.2
12. Higher education will help to obtain high prosperity	24,1	63.5	7.4	5
13. I have nowhere to go after leaving the school	1,3	8.2	12.2	78.3
14. To avoid the military	4,8	18.8	7.4	69

service				
15. To continue family traditions	1,6	14.3	18.3	65.8
16. To expand opportunities of getting the job	7,4	73	13.8	5.8
17. The higher education gives large opportunities for career and promotion	29,6	61.6	5.6	2.4
18. To satisfy parent's wish	3,4	42.9	26.5	27.2
19. To get an opportunity for working in a good position	21,4	60.8	13.5	4.2
20. Successful marriage	5	23.8	25.4	45.8
21. To be an educated person	16,4	70.6	9.5	2.9

It is clear from the Table that 41% of respondents have mentioned "to receive a diploma" as a main purpose or one of the main purposes for entering HEI, and the 33,3% have mentioned "to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to become a good specialist". Here it is important to mark that 9% from 41% combine both "to receive a diploma" and "to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to become a good specialist" options.

Now let's try to find out if there is a correlation between the motives of "to receive a diploma" (A) and "to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to become a good specialist" (B) (See Table 8).

For this purpose we will count coefficient Φ , which is used to determine the correlation between the variables and is counted by the following formula:

$$\Phi = \frac{ad - bc}{\sqrt{(a+b)(a+c)(b+d)(c+d)}}$$

where

$\Phi = 0$, if the variables are independent

$\Phi = 1$ in case of full interdependency

The significance of Φ can be checked by means of X^2 (freedom level is 1) - $X^2 = n \Phi^2$

Table 8

	A	Not A	
B	9 (a)	24 (b)	33 (a+b)

Not B	32 (c)	35 (d)	67 (c+d)
	41 (a+c)	59 (b+d)	100% (n)

$$\Phi = \frac{9 \times 35 - 24 \times 32}{\sqrt{33 \times 41 \times 59 \times 67}} = \frac{315 - 768}{2313} = \frac{453}{2313} = -0,2$$

$$X^2 = 100 \times (-0,2^2) = 4$$

$$X^2_{\text{critical}} = 3,841 (\alpha = 0,05).$$

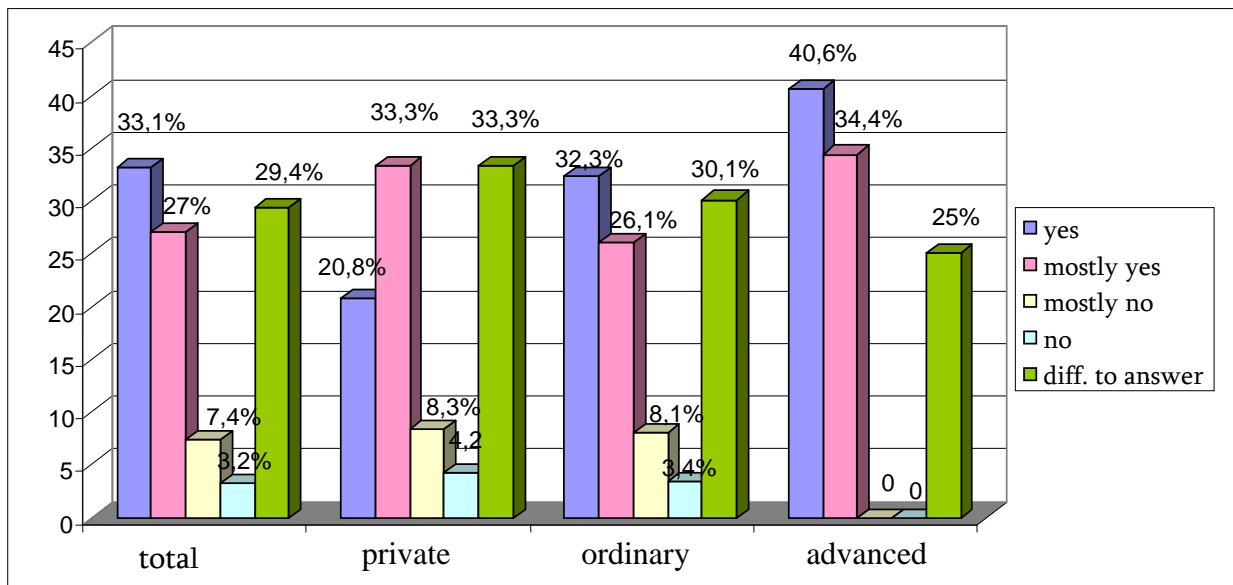
As $X^2 > X^2_{\text{critical}}$ we can say that with 95% probability there is a significant negative correlation between A and B.

From all these we can conclude that for upper grades' schoolchildren the main motive of entering the higher educational institution is receiving diploma regardless of acquired professional knowledge and skills.

In this regard we will consider one more point.

In Figure 5 we can see the findings on whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired at HEI will increase the possibility of getting the job. According to the types of schools the highest indicator on this issue is among the advanced school pupils (40,6%), and the lowest indicator is among pupils from private schools (20,8%). One of the reasons of such a difference is that in advanced schools the entrance is organized by means of exams and those are entered who have already oriented in their future profession. Besides, among advanced school pupils nobody gave "no" or "mostly no" answers to this question.

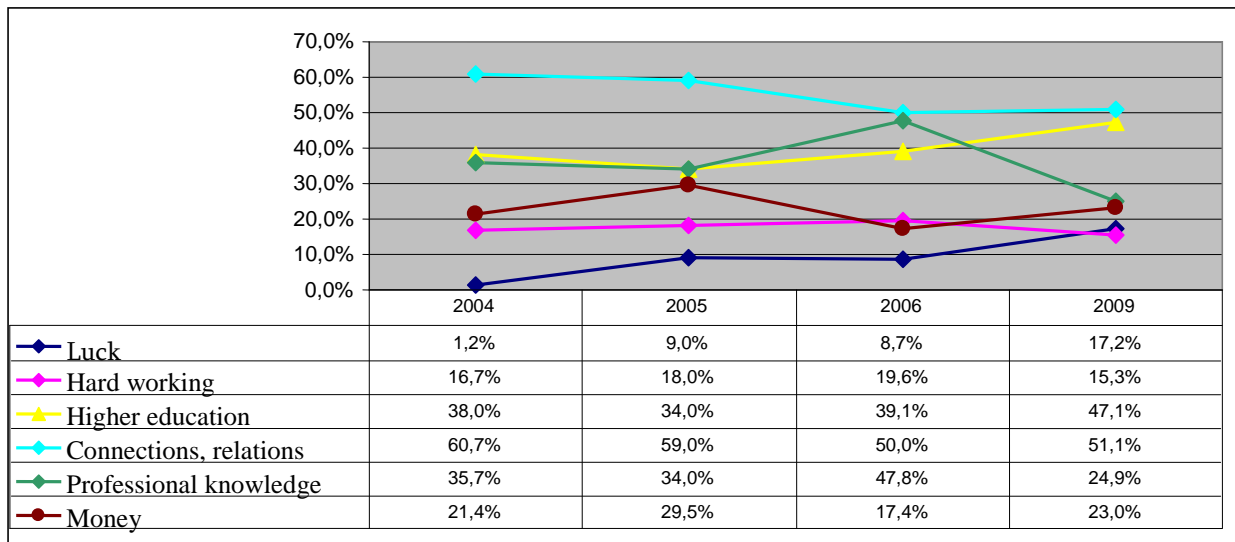
Figure 5. *Whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired at the HEI will increase the possibility of getting a job?*



In general only 33,1% of respondents are strictly sure that the professional knowledge they will have to acquire in the HEI will increase the possibility of getting job, while 27% of respondents have a little doubt, 7,4% and 3,2% are skeptic on this matter, and for 29,4% it is difficult to answer to this question. The explanation of this phenomenon we can see in the answers given to the question about what are the main factors of finding job in Armenia.

In this regard we have analyzed the results of our research and have compared them with the data on main factors of finding a job in Armenia from the CRRIC Data Initiative surveys for 2004-2006. The results are presented in the Figure 6. We can see that in 2004-2006 as in 2009 in the first place was the option “connections, relations”. As to “higher education” and “professional knowledge and skills” in 2005 they kept the second place together, and in 2006 in the second place was option “professional knowledge and skills” and in the third place was “higher education”. In 2009 in the second place was “higher education” (47,1%) and in the third place “professional knowledge and skills“ (24,9%). The Figure shows that the higher education as an important factor for getting a job has the tendency to increase, while the factor of professional knowledge and skills decreased in 2009 (the CRRIC data for 2007 was not analyzed as it was technically impossible to separate data for those who were currently studying only at HEIs).

Figure 6. *The main factors of finding a job in Armenia*



It should be mentioned that the CRRC data for 2004-2006 is not on potential students, but on those who were currently studying in state or non-state HEIs, which should be taken into consideration during comparison. So the above mentioned differences are partly determined by the fact that the views of our future students are changing during the study at higher educational institution.

Here we must mark that the higher education as one of the main factors of getting a job is considered to be a formal procedure and a means of getting a diploma, which together with connections and relations give the youth an opportunity to get a job regardless their real professional knowledge and abilities.

Table 9 shows that the pupils who consider the professional knowledge and skills as a main factor for getting a job are mostly sure that acquiring those at the HEI will help them to do find a job (72 pupils). But such kind of pupils presents a very little part of our future students (only 19%).

Table 9. Cross tab

Will the professional knowledge and skills acquired in HEI help to find a job	Yes	Mostly yes	Mostly no	No	Diff. to answer
Important factors for finding a job					
1. Luck	12	21	6	4	22
2. Hard-working	25	15	3	1	14
3. Higher education	49	53	11	3	62
4. Connections, relations	50	51	19	6	67
5. Talent	13	16	3	1	12

6. Money	18	21	11	7	30
7. Professional knowledge and skills		16	0	1	5
8. Other	1	0	0	0	1
99. Diff. to answer	1	3	1	0	2

So planning to enter a higher educational institution most of our young people think that the knowledge they have to acquire at these institutions is not important factor to find a job in the future, and it may be concluded, that while becoming a student they will not pursue the aim to get professional knowledge and skills. And this fact of course will have a negative influence on the functioning of the whole higher educational system.

As to attitudes towards future work, from the Table 10 we can see that today for both girls and boys first of all the following three factors are important in their future job: high payment (salary), interesting work and coincidence with the profession obtained at HEI. And in spite of the fact, that these factors are ranged in a similar way for both sexes, however we can see that the factor of “high payment” among the boys is much more expressed. It is conditioned by the fact, that the issue of providing a family is much more actual for the boys.

Table 10. *The main features of future job*

The work should...	Male %	Female %
1. coincide with the profession obtained at the HEI	32	36
2. be interesting	39	38
3. be useful for society	17	20
4. be highly paid	67	46
5. be prestigious	9	9
6. contain creative element	5	10
7. correspond to abilities and capacities	9	26

It is interesting that the coinciding of future work with the profession obtained at HEI is mainly applicable for the following specialities:

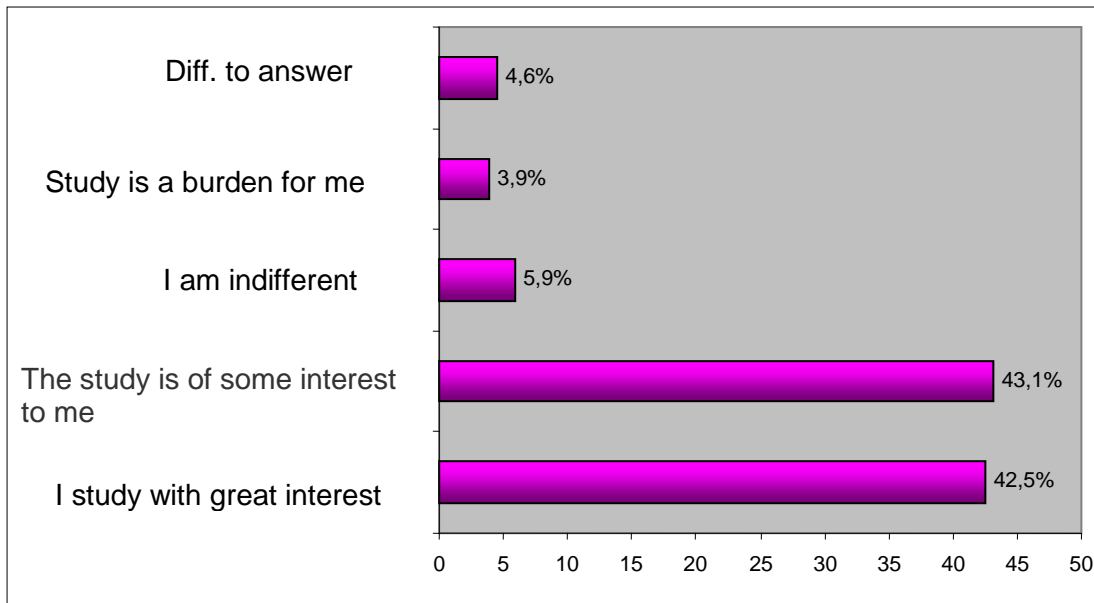
1. Foreign languages –17,7%
2. Economics –16,9%
3. Information technology –10%,
4. Law –6,9%.

As it was already mentioned 33,3% of our respondents are going to enter a higher educational institution in order to acquire relevant professional knowledge and skills to become a good specialist and 13% of respondents going to that in order to rise their intellectual level and to

expand the outlook (See Table 7). 60,8% of pupils having such objectives are females. By school results they are mainly the pupils with GPA 4 (64,7%) and GPA 5 (25,5%).

As we can see on the Figure 7 for the most part of the representatives of this type the process of studying is rather interesting.

Figure 7. Attitude towards the process of study



Their attitude towards diploma is the following: 79,1% of them think that it will give them a bigger chance to get a job, 32% find it as a necessary condition for getting a high position, also 19,6% think that it will important for getting a degree and 17% think that it will give them an opportunity to be a scientist (See Table 11).

Table 11. What the diploma of HEI will give you?

	%
1. Having prestige in society and among friends	18.3
2. More opportunity of getting a job	79.1
3. It's a necessary condition for taking a high position	32
4. Gives an opportunity to be engaged in scientific work	17
5. It's a necessary condition for getting scientific degree	19.6
6. Nothing	3.3
99. Difficult answer	0.7

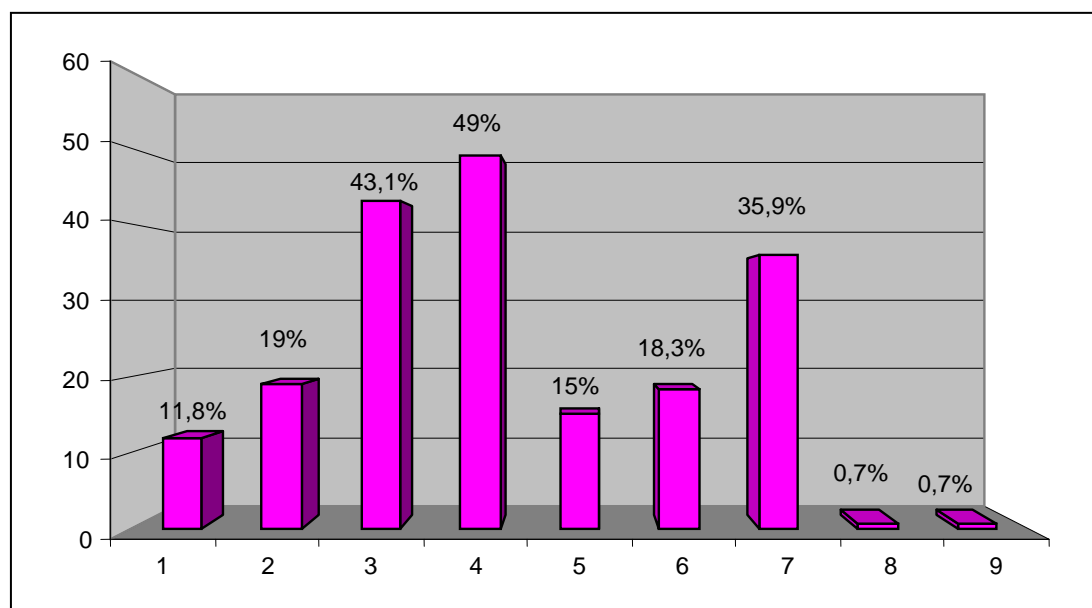
As to the question of whether the professional knowledge acquired during study at HEI will help them to get a job, 80,4% (49%+31.4%) of the representatives of this type gave mainly the positive answers (See Table 12).

Table 12. *Whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired in HEI will increase the possibility of getting a job?*

	%
1. Yes	49,0
2. Mostly yes	31,4
3. Mostly no	1,3
4. No	2,0
99. Diff. to answer	16,3

However, the representatives of this type as the representatives of the others first of all mentioned the following main factors of getting a job in Armenia: “connections and relations” (49%), higher education (43,1%) and only then “professional knowledge and skills” (35,9%) (See Figure 8). The explanation of this phenomenon is that these youths understand, that at the first stage of getting a job they need corresponding connections and relations together with the fact of having diploma, while at the second stage the professional knowledge and skills obtained at HEI will help them to perform their professional duties at work properly.

Figure 8. *Main factors for finding a job*



1. Luck

2. **Hard-working**
3. **Higher education**
4. **Connections, relations**
5. **Talent**
6. **Money**
7. **Professional knowledge and skills**
8. **Other**
9. **Diff. to answer**

It is notable that among the representatives of this type the students from advanced schools have the biggest proportion.

It was mentioned, that the process of getting higher education can be considered as a life activity, so in such case the motivation of entering a higher educational institution is the aim of the young people to save and continue their style of life. And of course it would be considered as socially undesirable if the pupils mark it as one of the main objectives for entering HEI.

We fix this motive by means of the following empiric indicators: “to continue to live as a student” (3,4%) and “I have nowhere to go after leaving the school” (1,3%) (See the Table 7).

Let’s try to give the main characteristics of this type. It consists mainly of girls (66,7%), and it can be explained by the fact, that under such circumstances the boys would prefer to work. From the point of view of school results in this type the most part of pupils (55, 6%) have GPA 3 (GPA 4 have 38,9% and GPA 5 have 5,5% of pupils of these type). As to the attitude towards the study, for majority of pupils it is of some interest (55,6%). But it should be mentioned that the main part of this interest is conditioned by the fact that the process of studying includes the element of communication among pupils and school friends. The rest 16,7% are indifferent to their study, 16,7% have difficulty to answer this question, and only 11,1% of respondents of this type study at school with big interest.

The representatives of this type are mostly children from the middle and upper income families (See the Table 13), and by this we can explain the fact that these families are ready to spend rather big amounts in order to help their children to study at HEI without having any certain aim.

Table 13. *Financial conditions of family*

Financial conditions of family	%
1. It is not enough even for the most essential purchases	0
2. It is enough for the most essential purchases	0

3. It is enough to purchase food and clothes	61.1
4. We live normally, even make some savings	16.7
5. We do not deprive us of anything	22.2

In this regard it is very interesting that no one from this type marked “successful marriage” as one of the main objectives of entering HEI. It can be explained by the fact that these young people haven’t developed life plans yet and don’t imagine well what they’ll do after leaving the school: will work, marry, or continue to study? Also the “to receive a diploma” as one of the main objectives of entering HEI was marked by 61,1% of these respondents.

As to the question about the professional knowledge and skills obtained at the HEI and whether they enlarge the possibility of finding the job, the most part of representatives of this type (55,6%) couldn’t answer to this question, 22,2% think that sooner will enlarge, 11,1% think that strictly will enlarge and 11,1% think that will not enlarge at all. And 72,2% of them consider the existence of corresponding connections and relations as the main factors of finding a job.

The results of the survey show that the representatives of this type during a year spent enough time first of all on communication with friends (77,8%), for listening to the music and watching TV programs (44,4%) and only in the third place there is studying (33,3%).

Thus we can conclude that among our future students we have a type, the representatives of which don’t imagine well what they must do after leaving the school. And for them entering a higher educational institution is the best solution of this problem, as they seem to continue to live as a student through inertia. And though there are only a few representatives of this type, however, the presence of such kind of students in the higher educational institutions will decrease the efficiency of higher educational system.

Higher educational institution is the hearth of youth and it is natural that the results of the survey show, that the collegiate life is very interesting and pleasant for a large number of respondents. But from the Table 7 we can see that for some schoolchildren the possibility to enjoy the collegiate life and to have a good time (11,4%) and also the possibility to have successful marriage perspective (5%) are the main objectives for entering a higher educational institutions, which is socially undesirable.

The distribution of the answers by gender shows that such aim is expressed stronger among the girls than the boys (71% versus 28,3%).

The representatives of this type besides the abovementioned objectives for entering HEI have also marked “to receive a diploma” (55%) and “to get desirable profession” options (15%). On a question “what the diploma will give you?” 65% of them answered “more opportunity of getting

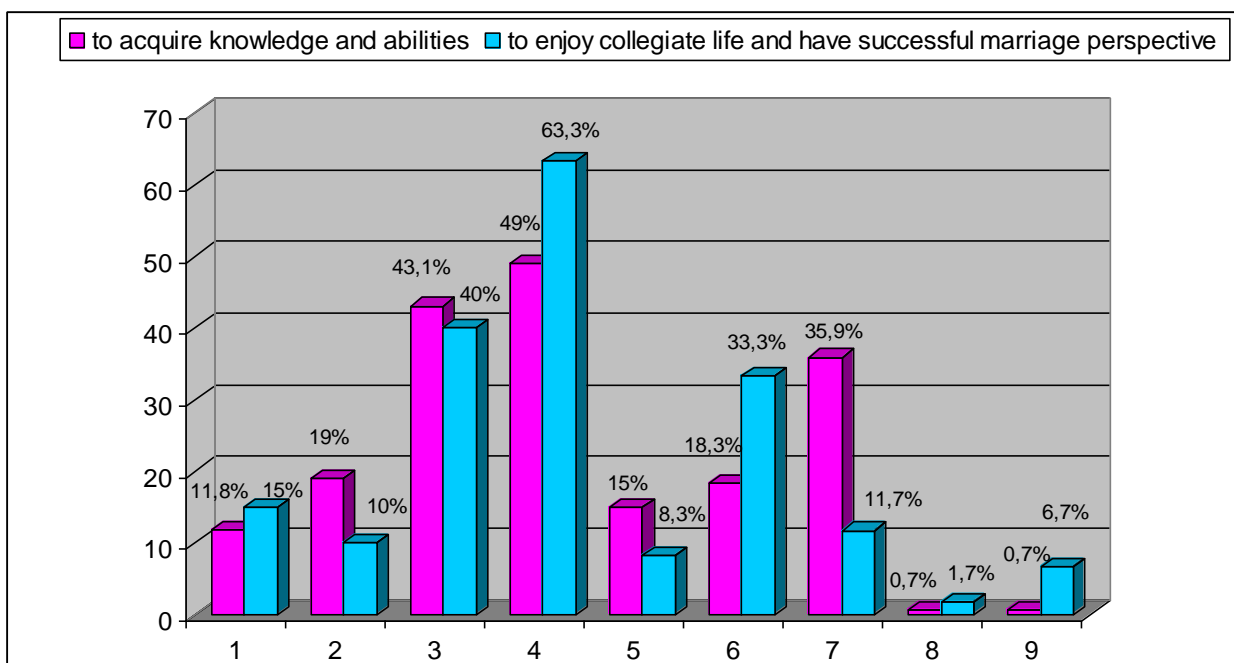
a job”, and 43,3% marked “having prestige in society and among friends”. Also it should be mentioned that 43,3% of the representatives of this type find it difficult to answer the question on whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired at the HEI will help them to find job (See Table 14).

Table 14. *Whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired in HEI will increase the possibility of getting a job?*

	%
Yes	15
Mostly yes	21,7
Mostly no	15
No	5
Diff. to answer	43,3

Figure 9 presents the differences on main factors of finding a job between those young men who are going to enter HEI to enjoy collegiate life and to have a successful marriage perspective and those who are going to acquire professional knowledge and skills. As we can see such factors as “hard working” and “professional knowledge and skills” are prevailing in the second type of the young people, while the factors of “corresponding connections, relations” and “money” predominate among the first type of youth.

Figure 9. *Main factors for finding a job*



1. Luck
2. Hard work
3. Higher education
4. Connections, relations
5. Talent
6. Money
7. Professional knowledge and abilities
8. Other
9. Diff. to answer

The main difference between the above mentioned two types is that for those who want to continue studying by inertia entering a higher educational institution is the aim itself, meanwhile the representatives of the second type strictly imagine for what they want to enter a higher educational institution, that is to have opportunity to enjoy collegiate life and to have a successful marriage perspective.

Let's see the study-leisure ratio among our respondents. Analyzing the answers of the respondents about what kind of activities do they like most of all, it becomes clear that today the schoolchildren of upper grades prefer such forms of activities as communication with friends (88,4%), listening to the music and watching TV programs (60,6%) and etc., while study is in the last position and makes 39,2% (See Table 15). For 55% of respondents the school is a place where they attend with pleasure, for 26,5% it is the place where they rather attend with pleasure. But the main reason of this is not being thirsty for learning but the fact that for pupils the school is a place where they communicate with their friends (89%).

Table 15. Attitude towards different forms of activity

Forms of activity	Attitude			
	Very like %	Like to a certain extent %	Not really like %	Not like at all %
1. Attending theaters, concerts, cinema, exhibitions	57.4	32.5	7.9	2.1
2. Listening to the music, watching TV	60.6	32.8	3.7	2.9
3. Attending parties, restaurants, discos, cafes	47.6	34.4	14.3	3.7
4. Studies	39.2	47.6	8.5	4.8
5. Communication with friends	88.4	9	1.9	1.1

But looking at the same issue from the point of time spent on different forms of activity we can notice the perceptible difference regarding studies. From the Table 16 we can see that by the

time spent on a certain form of activity in the first place is the communication with friends (75,7%), for which they spent the most of time during the year. And in the second there are studies (63,2%) (though it exceeds listening to music and watching TV programs only by 0,2%). So by the spent time studies are in the higher place. This fact is conditioned by the circumstance, that as it was mentioned earlier, the schoolchildren who wanted to enter a higher educational institutions starting from the 10-11th grades spend part of their time (much or less) on preparing for entrance exams and private lessons.

Table 16. Time spent on different forms of activity during year

Forms of activity	Time spent			
	Often	Not very often	Rarely	Never
1. Attending theaters, concerts, cinema, exhibitions	26.2	45.2	23	5.6
2. Listening to the music, watching TV	63	26.7	8.5	1.9
3. Attending parties, restaurants, discos, cafes	23.8	41.8	26.7	7.7
4. Studies	63.2	28.6	7.4	1.1
5. Communication with friends	75.7	20.1	3.4	0.8

Thus we can conclude that among the schoolchildren of 10-11th grades the process of studying moves away to second place, while the first place is kept by such activities as communication with friends, listening to the music and so on. And it is natural to suppose that such attitude towards studies will be kept during the study at the higher educational institution.

The results of the study show that foreign countries attract our youth very much as from the view of studying, so from the view of work. As we can see from the Table 17 after graduating from higher educational institution and in case of having opportunity 55% of them are ready to go abroad for work and 22,5% will rather do so; 51,9% are ready to go abroad for studying. And it makes to think on a fact that 31,5% of the youth (22,8%+8,7%) are ready to stay there forever.

Table 17. Imagine you have graduating from HEI and have opportunity to go abroad. Are you ready to go abroad for...

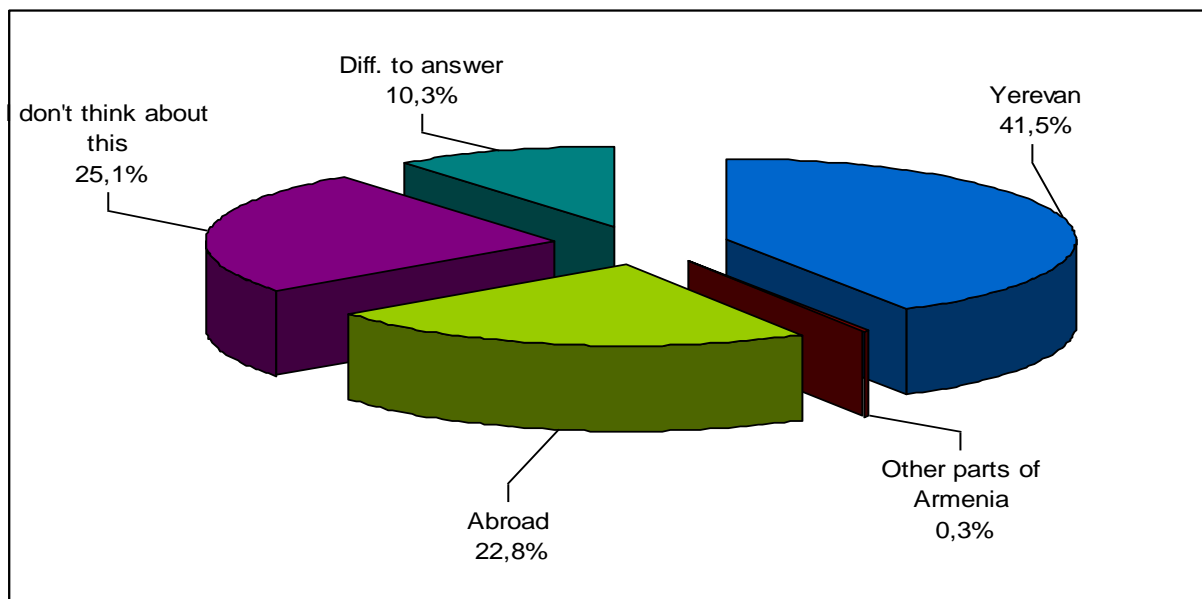
	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No	Diff. to answer
1. Permanent residence	22.8	8.7	23.3	35.2	10.1

2. Studying	51.9	19	7.9	17.2	4
3. Work	55	22.5	7.7	10.8	4

While considering these results we should take into account that these are the answers given to conjectural and conditional question. Meanwhile below we can find the description of the young people who have the real aim to work abroad.

Survey findings show that 22,8% of respondents are going to work abroad after graduating from the HEI (See Figure 10).

Figure10. Where are you going to work after graduating from HEI?



Let's describe the type of schoolchildren who have such aim. It mainly consists of future economists (20,9%), programmers (11,6%) and lawyers (8,1%). As to programmers (90% of whom are boys) 50% of these pupils are sure and 40% them are rather sure that the knowledge which they should acquire during studying at higher educational institution will enlarge the opportunity of finding a job and they think that the main factors for getting a job are their professional knowledge and skills (80% from the programmers).

For the representatives of this type the choice of speciality was conditioned by the following main factors:

1. Interest towards profession (51,2%)
2. Has great demand abroad (37,2%)
3. Promising profession (32,6%)
4. Highly paid abroad (26,7%)

The answers given by the representatives of this type to the question “ Do you think that you'll be able to find a job by your speciality abroad” are presented in Table 18.

Table 17. *Do you think you will be able to find a job by your speciality abroad?*

	%
1. Yes	69.8
2. Rather yes	24.4
3. Rather no	1.2
4. No	1.2
5. Diff. to answer	3.5

As we see from the Table 69,8% of them are sure that they can find a job by their speciality abroad and 24,4% of them think that rather “yes” than “no”.

So it is a type of young men, the representatives of which clearly planned their future: that is to get the profession, which has great demand and highly paid abroad; they are sure, that they will find a job abroad and after graduating from higher educational institution they are going to go there.

The data in Table 19 is one more evidence of it.

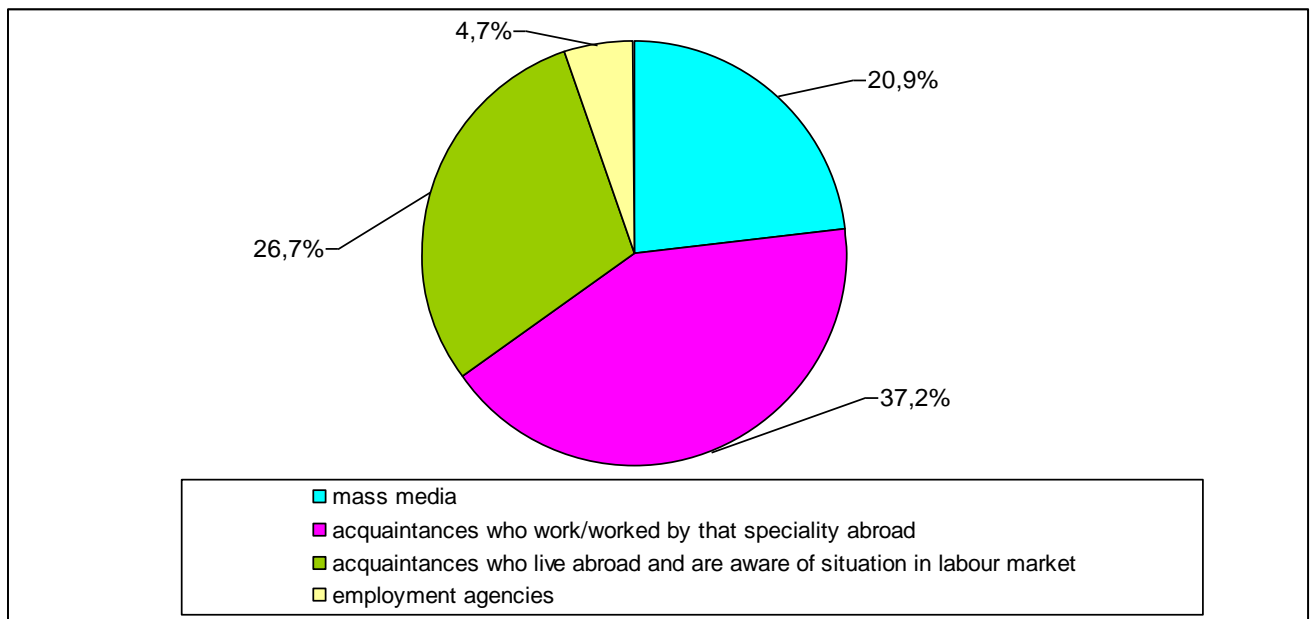
Table 19. Are you ready to go abroad for...

	Yes %	Rather yes %	Rather no %	No %	Diff. to answer %
1. Permanent residence	54.7	12.8	11.6	11.6	9.3
2. Studying	53.5	22.1	4.7	11.6	8.1
3. Work	79.1	20.9	0	0	0

And it is sorrowful that more than half of them (54,7%) are planning to stay there forever, and 12,8% of them will rather do so.

Figure 11 shows the sources of information through which these young men have been informed that the speciality they have chosen is in a great demand and highly paid abroad.

Figure 11. Sources of information



First of all they are informed by acquaintances who work/worked by that speciality abroad (37.2%) and by acquaintances that live abroad and are aware of situation in job market (26.7%), and also by mass media (20.9%).

Among the main objectives of entering HEIs for the representatives of this type the most important are the following:

- to receive diploma (39.5%)
- to acquire professional knowledge and skills to become a good specialist (34.9%)
- to obtain desirable profession (33.7%)
- the higher education gives large opportunities for career and promotion (33.7%)

It is obvious that for the representatives of this type the aim of receiving a diploma is also in the first place like for the others, but in this case it is combined with such objectives as “to acquire professional knowledge and skills to become a good specialist” and “to obtain desirable profession”.

According to academic achievements they are mainly students with GPA 4-5 (See Table 20).

Table 20. Academic achievements

School results	%
1. With GPA 5	24.4
2. With GPA 4	55.8
3. With GPA 3	19.8

As to the education level of their parents the data in Table 20 shows that it is rather high: 81,4% of fathers and 82,6% of mothers have higher education from which 8,1% of fathers and 14% of mothers have scientific degree.

Table 21. Educational level of parents

Education	Father (%)	Mother (%)
1. Secondary education	8.1	10.5
2. Secondary professional education	8.1	4.7
3. Higher education, higher incomplete education	73.3	68.6
4. Scientificc degree	8.1	14

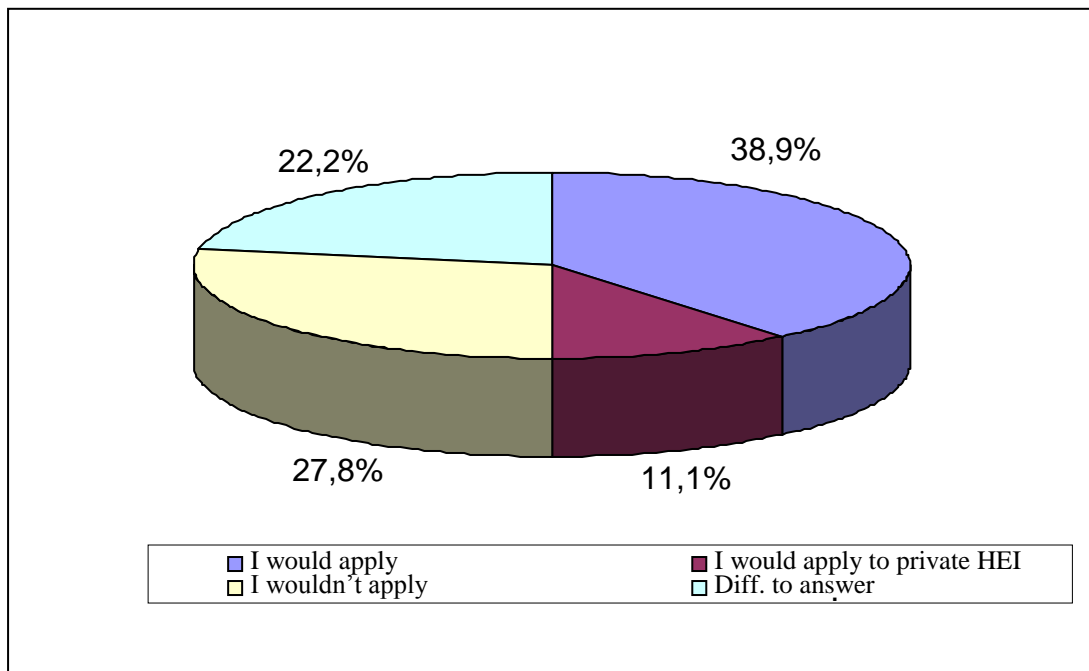
It should be mentioned that the tendency of going abroad in order to work there is also conditioned by the development and popularity of various exchange programs in our country.

The data of the Table 7 show that 4,8% of respondents mentioned the option “to avoid the military service ” as one of the main objectives of entering the HEI. As it refers to boys only, it is necessary to mark that this part of boys forms 11% of all. Besides that together with the option “to avoid the military service” 61,1% of them mentioned the option “receiving diploma”.

By looking at the Figure 12 we can see that only 38,9% of them would still apply to state HEI, if there isn't the issue of army (such situation can be conditioned by the fact that besides avoiding

army it is very important for them to get diploma, too), 11,1% would apply to private HEI, 27,8% would not apply to any HEI at all and 22,2% have difficulties to answer this question.

Figure 12. *Would you apply to HEI if there was no issue of mandatory military service?*

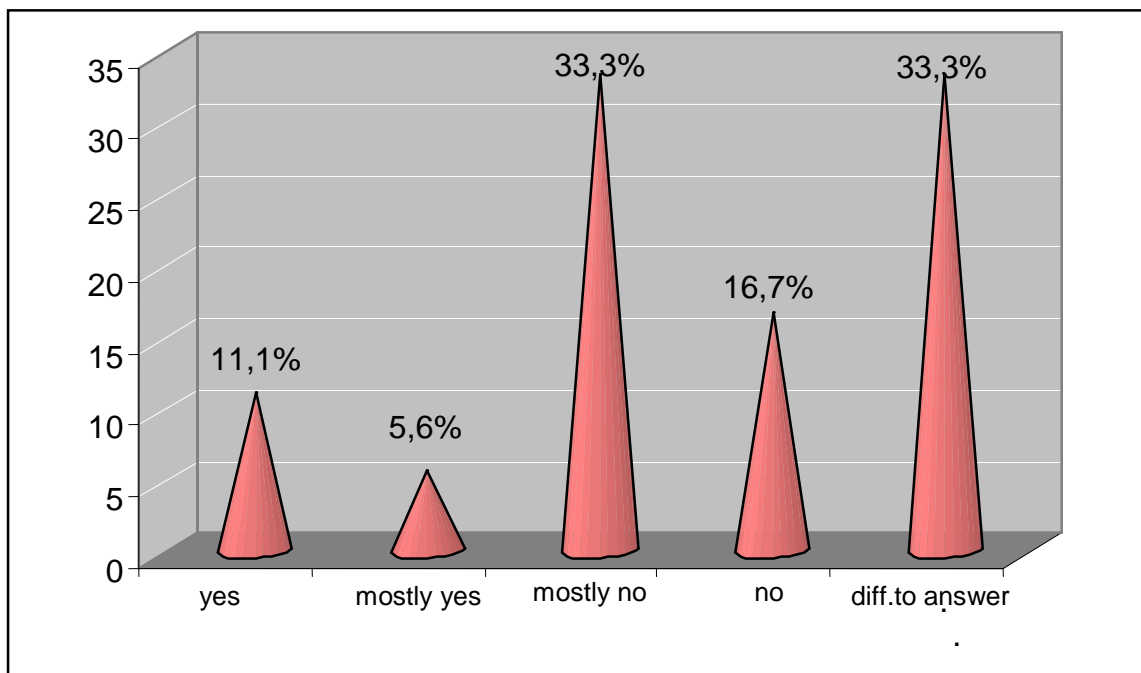


And by this fact we can explain the situation that for 38,9% of the representatives of this type it was difficult to answer the question on what HEI they are going to enter, and 5,6% mentioned the option “to any HEI”.

As to the choice of speciality the picture is the same: 38,9% found it difficult to answer this question and 11,1% marked the option “any speciality”. So for these young people the purpose of entering a higher educational institution is “situational”, which hasn’t any certain reasons but avoiding army.

The Figure 13 shows that only 11,1% of the representatives of this type think that the knowledge and skills acquired at the HEI will increase the possibility of finding a job and also 5,6% agree that they rather will increase, while the rest 83,3% are of opposite opinion or find it difficult to answer.

Figure 13. Whether the professional knowledge and skills acquired at HEI will increase the possibility of getting a job?



As the main factors of getting the job they consider the following three:

- corresponding connections, relations -55,6%
- money - 44,4%
- higher education - 38,9%, (which is considered just as getting diploma)

By academic achievements the representatives of this type have the following structure:

- with GPA 5 - 5,6%
- with GPA 4 - 33,3%
- with GPA 3 - 61,1%

It becomes clear that this type is mostly consists of those who have satisfactory marks, that's why 44,4% of them are indifferent regarding the study, and for 16,7% the study is a "heavy burden". (See Table 22).

Table 22. What is your attitude towards the process of study?

1. I study with great interest	11,1%
2. The study is of some interest to me	27,8%
3. I am indifferent	44,4%
4. Study is a burden for me	16,7%
99. Difficult answer	0

As for the financial conditions of their families, from Table 22 it becomes clear that it mainly consists of the representatives of middle class and higher.

Table 22. *Financial conditions of family*

Financial conditions of family	%
1. It is not enough even for the most essential purchases	0
2. It is enough for the most essential purchases	5.6
3. It is enough to purchase food and clothes	55.6
4. We live normally, even make some savings	27.8
5. We do not deprive us of anything	11.1

And though 55,6% of families of these young people have enough money for food and clothes only, however, some of them are ready to spend rather big sums to give an opportunity to their children to enter a higher educational institution and in that way to avoid army.

So we can conclude that for this type of schoolchildren entering a higher educational institution has two main reasons: to avoid military service and to get diploma as a document, which will be important for finding a job in the future.

5. Values about diploma

Let's try to find out the perception of diploma by our future students. In this regard it is very interesting to analyze the attitude of youth towards the phenomenon that in some cases the presence of a diploma helps to get a certain position even in case of absence of required professional knowledge. And though for 67.7% of respondents this phenomenon is inadmissible, however for 1/3 of the youth it hasn't any negative nuance. And that is why the reforms of a higher educational system should be systemic and include the educational system with all the other systems it is connected with, in order to get considerable results. Not only educational system needs reforms, but also social values and perceptions concerning higher education.

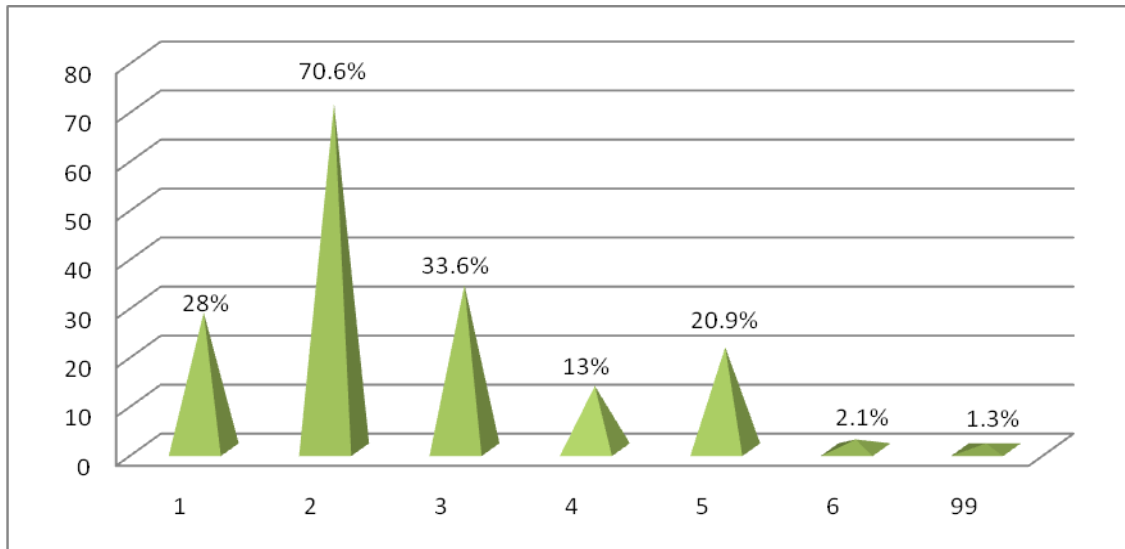
It is by such perception of higher education conditioned the results of the survey showing that 23.3% of respondents would pick up the diploma fallen on the ground and complete their names, because they are sure that it has a great value even without any relevant professional knowledge. And it will help them in the future career. And some part of respondents (14,3%) would take it in order to sell as they are sure that they always could find clients (See Table 24).

Table 24. *What would you do if you see unfilled diploma of state HEI fallen on the ground ?*

	%
1. I would take and fill in my name	23,3
2. I would take and return to appropriate HEI	28,6
3. I would take in order to sell it	14,3
4. I would continue my way	26,7
99. Difficult to answer	7,1

It is interesting to see the answers of respondents to the question about what the diploma will give them. It is clear from the Figure 14 that the first two places are the options “more opportunity of getting a job” and “it is necessary condition for taking a high position” (70,6% and 33,6% correspondingly).

Figure 14. What the diploma of HEI will give you?



1. **Having prestige in society and among friends**
2. **More opportunity of getting a job**
3. **It is necessary condition for taking a high position**
4. **Gives an opportunity to be engaged in scientific work**
5. **It is necessary condition for getting scientific degree**
6. **Nothing**
7. **Difficult to answer**

All the above mentioned values about diploma indicate that for schoolchildren of upper grades the higher education is seems to be a “social elevator” which automatically creates conditions for getting a high position in society and material wealth for those who have diploma.

By using the data of Table 25 let's find out the correlation between the perception of diploma by girls and by boys. For this purpose we must count the Spearman's coefficient by using the following formula:

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{l(l^2-1)}$$

where $d_i = i - k_i$ - difference between ranges
 l - the number of combined ranges

Table 25.

What the diploma of HEI will give you?	By gender		Range I	Range II	d _i	d _i ²
	male	female				
1. Having prestige in society and among friends	58	48	3	3	0	0
2. More opportunity of getting a job	108	159	1	1	0	0
3. It is necessary condition for taking a high position	61	66	2	2	0	0
4. Gives an opportunity to be engaged in scientific work	14	35	5	4	1	1
5. It is necessary condition for getting scientific degree	45	34	4	5	-1	1
6. Nothing	4	4	6	6.5	-0.5	0.25
99. Difficult to answer	1	4	7	6.5	0.5	0.25

l=7

$$6 \times 2.5$$

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \times 2.5}{7(49-1)} = 0.96$$

This value of r can be considered as the presence of high-level correlation between the boys' and girls' perceptions about the role of diploma.

For the significance to be 0,01⁰, the Spearman's coefficient must be equal or bigger than 0,893 (this number we have find from the table of critical values of Spearman's coefficient). As the empiric value of r is 0,96, so we can conclude that the correlation between the perceptions of respondents of these two groups is significant and only in 1% of cases it may be equal to 0.

But the perceptions of the role of a diploma can be different depending on the attitude of these respondents towards study (See Table 26). It is seen from the table that for those pupils who are indifferent to study or think that it is a heavy burden, a diploma first of all is a means of getting prestige in the society; for those, who study with great interest or who have some interest concerning study, a diploma first of all is a means for finding a job and getting a high position.

Table 26. Crosstab

Attitude towards the process of study	What does the diploma of HEI give? (frequency)						
	Prestige	More opportunity of getting a job	Necessary condition for taking a high position	Opportunity to be engaged in scientific work	Necessary condition for getting scientific degree	Nothing	Diff. to answer
1. I study with great interest	18	105	38	31	24	4	3
2. The study is of some interest to me	49	118	61	17	40	1	1
3. I am indifferent	22	19	11	0	7	2	1
4. Study is a burden for me	13	7	8	0	6	1	0
99. Difficult to answer	4	18	9	1	2	0	0

Here it should be mentioned a very interesting phenomenon. The data in Table 26 shows that diploma as a means for having opportunity to be engaged in scientific work is mainly considered by those students who study with big interest or have some interest towards studying. But as a means of getting scientific degree it is mainly considered by those for whom study is a burden.

Table 27. Crosstab

Attitude towards the process of study	What does a diploma of HEI give?	
	Opportunity to be engaged in scientific work (percentage from the corresponding group of attitude towards study)	Necessary condition for getting scientific degree (percentage from the corresponding group of attitude towards study)
1. I study with great interest	23%	18%
2. the education presents some interest	10%	24%
3. I am indifferent	0	21%
4. Study is a burden for me	0	32%
99. It is difficult to answer	5%	10%

This phenomenon once more proves what a credential power a diploma has in our country.

Conclusions and recommendations

The survey findings showed that upper grades young people's professional determination and formation of the conscious choice of future profession is on a low level nowadays, which is full of negative consequences, both for the young people and for the whole society (including the problem of incomppliance of the supply and demand with regard to different professions). Decision making on entering a higher education institution, as well as the process of the choice of a profession are carried out in an incomplete, incoherent way and, often, based on inadequate and informal information too. In majority of the schools the works on professional orientation are on a very low level, which are limited by mere suggestions put forward by the teachers to some of the pupils on choosing this or that profession which, to their opinion, comply with the abilities of certain pupils. Implementation of the following steps is recommended to lessen the negative consequences of the above-mentioned phenomenon:

1. Organizing of systematic and well-marked professional orientation works in schools (which includes provision of a detailed information on higher education institutions and professions, on their supply and demand in the job market and other related issues, explanation of the strategy grounds for choosing a profession, development of motivation on professional education as a means of increasing employment insurance and other similar activities) and monitoring of the process by bodies specifically established for that purpose
2. Availability of statistical data and intensive dissemination of detailed and formal (official) information on different higher education institutions and professions, information on the supply and demand in the job market and other related issues through different sources of information (Reference materials, TV programs, analytical articles, etc.) among youth.
3. Provision of a detailed information on different higher education institutions and professions, on their supply and demand in the job market and other related issues to the parents of potential students, taking into consideration the parents' impact on the young people's decision to enter the higher education institution

Entering a higher education institution set up in the secondary school upper grades' young people's essential plans pursues various intentions and, the concern is, that those intentions largely comprise such socially undesirable motivations, which are fraught with serious consequences.

The analysis of the survey findings showed that for the majority of the high school pupils professional self-realization does not serve as the main goal in entering the higher education institution. For high school pupils entering the HEI and getting higher education first of all serves as a social status means and not as special professional needs realization.

This allows to absolutely reasonably assume that in such cases the young people will hardly take up the serious process of acquiring knowledge at the HEIs, which means that the presence of potential students having such attitude towards education will intensely decrease the effectiveness of the higher education system.

The survey found out the conditional types of young people more often encountered across the main objectives to enter the higher education establishment, with similarities and differences and what is more important, invariant characteristic feature, that is obtaining of the document named diploma. As we have seen, for the great majority of the young people the diploma is considered as a high value document (and often regardless of the knowledge acquired), which closely relates to the credentialed function of the diploma.

Disclosure of the factors formulating the public opinion towards that function requires serious and comprehensive sociological study which should cover several areas, including the study of the Labor Legislation, study of the regulations of higher education establishments, survey among the employers, etc., as well as comparison of the related topic with the situation in other countries. Disclosure of those factors, as well as the mechanisms of formation of the latter will enable elaborating and introducing a relevant strategy which will decrease the flow of such applicants to the higher education institutions for whom the main goal is to obtain the “diploma” document, regardless of the knowledge to be acquired.

Special attention is required for one more question, which causes serious problems both for the education system and the society. The problem is related to those young people, who, still being at the threshold of entering the higher education institution, have already decided to acquire the necessary professional knowledge being in great demand abroad with the intention to, after graduating from the higher education establishment, leave their motherland for abroad, expecting higher pay there.

Yet, this is only one side of the painful problem. On the other hand an enormous damage is caused also to the country’s economy. This is similar to the state, when one sows the harvest, takes care, grows and the fruits are enjoyed by someone else.

In nowadays situation, ensuring compliance of the youth's motivations on entering the HEIs with the requirements of the education system gains exceptionally significant and pressing importance.

The solution of this problem necessarily requires a systemic approach, since the education system can be viewed as a complex system-a huge network of interrelated sub-systems, which, in turn, is linked to the "external environment" by "a reverse tie".

The "external environment" of the system is the social system in which the education system exists and functions. In all the circles of the education system, both at schools and higher education establishments and elsewhere the reforms have one common goal, as cybernetics would state-one common goal-oriented function, that is increase of the system effectiveness of the education system functioning. Optimization of a complex system necessarily requires a systemic approach.

Perhaps, the absence of the systemic approach is the reason that quite serious reforms do not have extensive systemic impact on any of the sub-systems of the education system.

Application of the systemic approach, to our opinion, will enable to reach effectiveness of the education system to such level, which will enable to solve various problems facing our republic, both related to the present and the future.

Appendix 1.

Distribution by specialities

Speciality	Percent
Law	7.7
Foreign languages	12
General medicine	2.9
Customs service	.5
Information science / technology	9.8
Phsycology	2.1
Economics	15.1
Applied mathematics and physics	.8
History	1.1
Construction	.9
Political science	1.1
Pedagogics	1.1
Geology	.3
Management	1.3
The art of direction	.8
Privity	.3
Philology	1.4
Architecture	2.6
Cadastrre and geodesy	.3
Industrial economics	1.3
Foreign affairs	1.1
Insurance	.3
Sculpture	.3
Design	1.9
Finances	4.0
Police	.8
Journalism	1.9
Stomatology	2.6
Marketing	.8
Fashion designer	.5
Social pedagogics	.3
Cinematography	.6
Physical culture and sport	1.9
Mathematics	.8
Tourism	1.6
Biochemistry	.3
Advertising	.5
Radiotechnology	.5
Energetics	.3
Electronic engineering	.3
Dairy technology	.3

Oriental studies	1.6
Choreography	.3
Acting technique	.5
Photography	.3
Mathematical modeling	.3
Radiophysics	.3
Physics	.3
Animal husbandry	.3
Accounting	.8
Psychiatry	.3
Food industry	.3
Visual arts	.3
Pharmacology	.3
Painting	.3
Singing art	.3
Any speciality	.8
Diff. to answer	9.0