

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE LABOR MARKET FOR THE GRADUATES OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CRETE

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Abstract: The Career Office of the Technological Educational Institute of Crete, since its establishment in 1997, has been monitoring the interest of the labor market to employ graduates of higher education of technological direction. In the rapidly evolving labor environment of our days it is interesting to investigate how the demand for graduates of our Institute is shaped as well as what additional skills, beyond the basic degree, the job market requires from them. In this paper we examine the characteristics of this demand and the current trends, for all the majors of the T.E.I. of Crete, as this is recorded by the Career Office through the applications received by enterprises seeking such personnel, mainly from Crete but also from the remainder of Greece.

Keywords: *Career Office, Labor Market, Employment*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN GREECE IN 2006.

During the 2nd quarter of the year 2006, according to a research concerning the workforce in Greece conducted by the National Workers' Union of Greece (IN.E. G.S.E.E. – ADEDY, 2007), the percentage of unemployment was shaped in the 8,8% of the workforce of the country, therefore the unemployed were more than 427.000 individuals. Among the unemployed, 190.800 individuals, 44,6% of the total, were under 30 years old. On the other hand, according to the same research, 86% of the individuals who entered the labour market in the year 2006 were at least high school graduates. Moreover, regarding the type of employment they were offered: 36.546 individuals were part-time employed, 127.170 individuals were absorbed in the private sector, while a total of 157.149 individuals directed themselves to salaried work (public and private sector) and 72.354 individuals found only temporary placements.

1.2. MAJORS OF PEAK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to the results of another research, conducted by the Federation of Greek Industry (S.E.B, 2004) concerning the anticipated demand for personnel during the three year period 2005-2007, the two most wanted specialties were the degree of higher education (AEI, TEI) of Engineering - Mechanical Engineering and the degree of Economics. Namely, 30% of the enterprises that participated in the research forecast demand for Mechanical Engineers, while 29% forecast demand for graduates of Economics. Following in the preferences of the

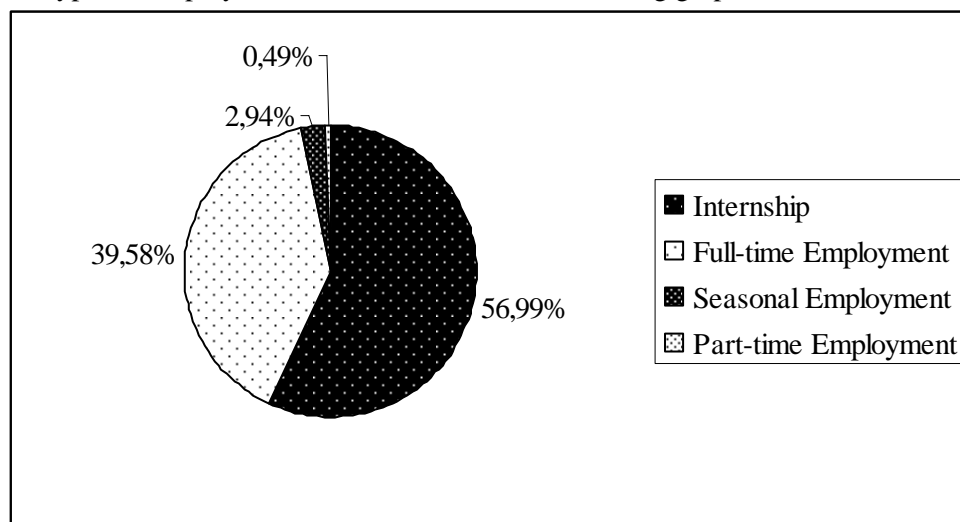
enterprises were: Sales Executives (15%), Marketing Executives (15%), while 15 to 20% of the enterprises forecast demand for graduates of Information Technology, Telecommunications, Electrical Engineering, Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Physics and, MBA Executives. Lower demand (5-10%) was forecasted for the majors of Electronics, Civil Engineering, Architecture, Decoration, Design, Food Technology, Agricultural Technology and executives of Quality Management. Additionally, limited demand was reported for executives of Communication, Public Relations and Media, reporters, writers, lawyers and secretaries while a demand for personnel that speak foreign languages was also reported with a lower percentage.

1.3 THE NEEDS OF ENTERPRISES IN ADDITIONAL SKILLS

According to the same research, the majority of enterprises of the sample consider very important that their executives have very good knowledge of their field of study along with the ability to renew this knowledge, so that they can correspond to the rapid changes that take place in the technology and in the organisation of the production. Accent is given in the skills of communication, team work, decision-making and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the ability of using and exploiting the new technologies of information and communications, but also the good handling of foreign languages especially of the English language (but also the German, Italian, French and Spanish language) were considered essential.

2. DEMAND FOR GRADUATES OF THE T.E.I. OF CRETE

The Career Office of the T.E.I. of Crete was established in the mid of 1997 within the framework of the Operational Program for Education and Initial Vocational Training (EPEAEK) funded by the Ministry of National Education under, initially the 2nd and then the 3rd. European Community Support Framework. As a result of the services it offers to the senior students and the graduates of the Institute (Simantiraki, Papadourakis and Georgilas, 2005) the Career Office monitors the interest of the labor market to employ graduates of higher education of technological direction. During the last eight years of operation 3000 job openings were announced at the Career Office of the T.E.I. of Crete by collaborating companies in Crete and the mainland. According to our records, almost 57% of the job openings announced to the office concerned internship placements (note that a six month internship is mandatory for the students of the TEI) while the remaining 43% concerned all the other types of employment. This is shown in the following graph.



Graph 1: Job Vacancies Announced

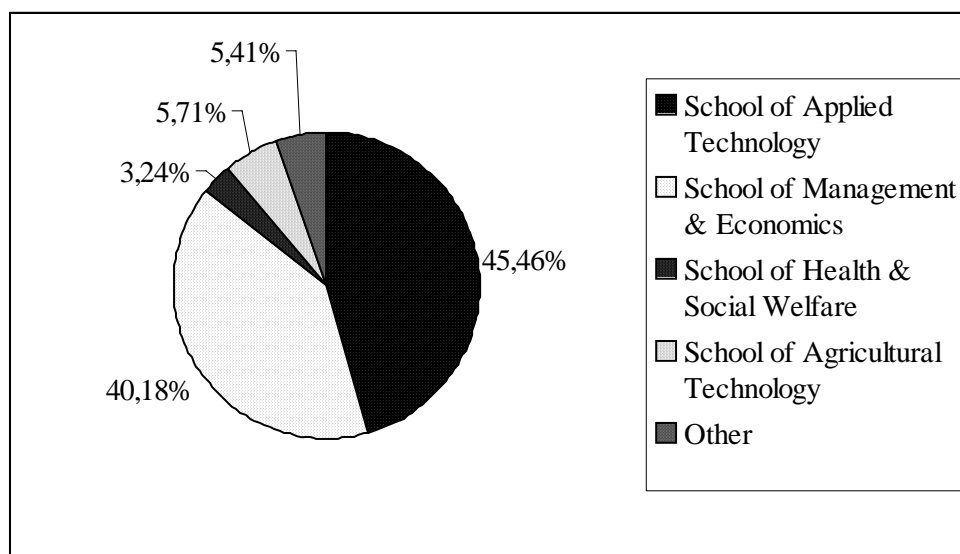
2.1 DEMAND FOR THE DIFFERENT MAJORS OF THE T.E.I. OF CRETE.

Regardless the type of the vacancy announced, the demand varied among the different majors of the Institute as it appears in the following table.

Major	%
Tourism & Hotel Management	17,23
Accounting	11,92
Civil Engineering	10,32
Electrical Engineering	10,29
Mechanical Engineering	9,79
Applied Information Technology & Multimedia	7,92
Electronics	6,08
Business Administration	5,71
Crop Science	3,31
Floriculture & Greenhouse Crops	2,40
Marketing & Commerce	2,34
Nursing	1,70
Co Operatives	1,54
Finance & Insurance	1,44
Dietetics and Nutrition	0,94
Telecommunications & Computer Networks	0,90
Social Work	0,60
Natural Resources & Environment	0,17

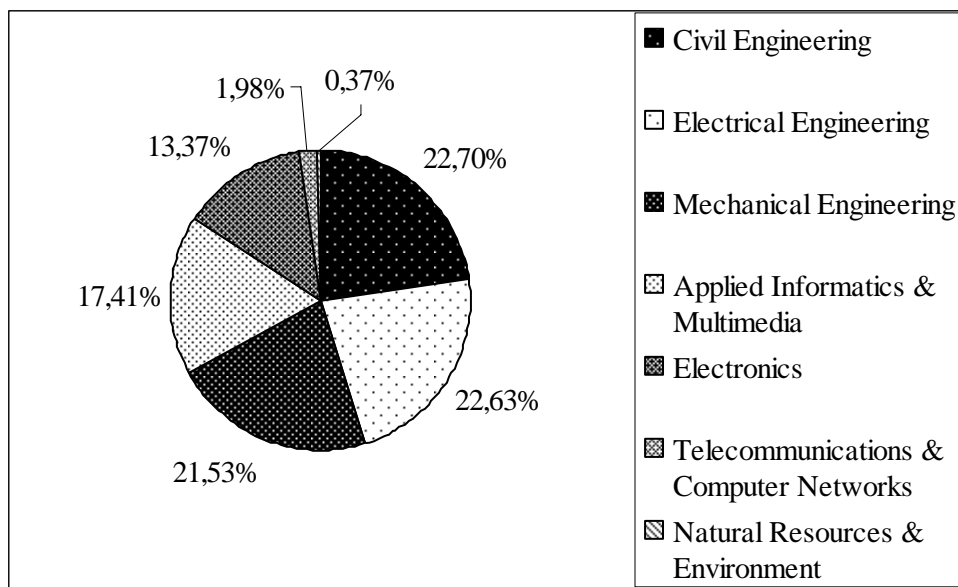
Table 1: Demand for the different Majors

In particular, in the Technological Educational Institute of Crete there are four Schools operating offering seventeen different majors (in addition to four Extended University Programs that are no longer accepting students). The demand for the graduates of these Schools appears in the following graph. Note, that the percentage of 5,41% concerns demand for majors not offered by our Institute.



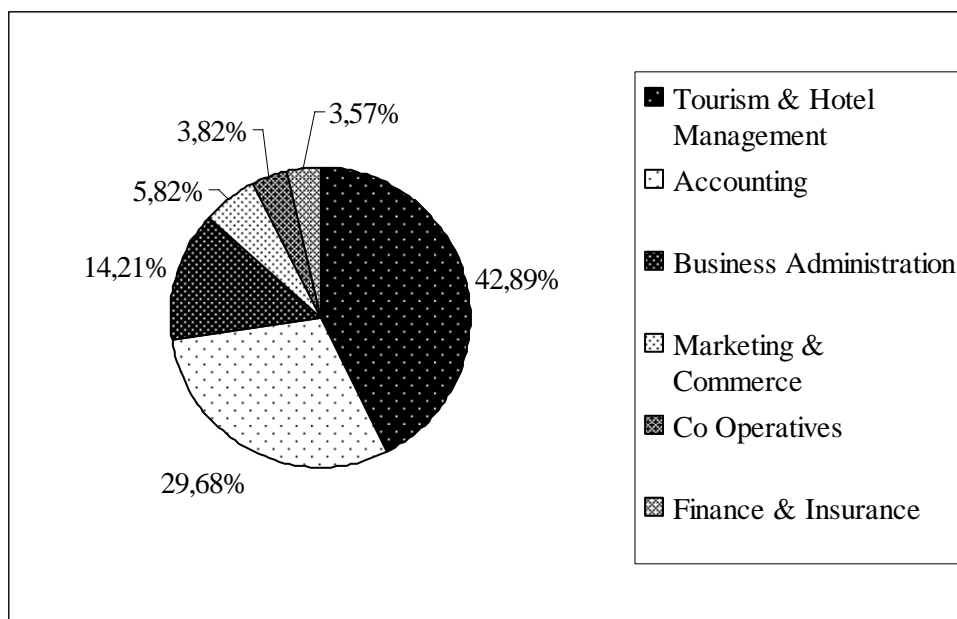
Graph 2: Demand for Graduates according to their School

It is interesting to note, that although Crete is famous for its agricultural establishments, the demand for graduates of the School of Agricultural Technology does not really reflect this, as it represents only the 5,71% of the total demand, 57,89% of which was for graduates of the department of Crop Science and 42,11% for graduates of the department of Floriculture & Greenhouse Crops. Likewise, for the School of Health & Social Welfare consisting of the departments of Social Work, Nursing, and Dietetics & Human Nutrition we do not have sufficient data to present, due to the individuality of the School. Namely, its graduates are placed mainly in the public sector (Hospitals, etc.) and thus do not use the Career Office for this purpose. From our limited data, it appears that the demand for Nursing is the highest (52,58%) followed by Dietetics & Nutrition (28,87%) and Social Work (18,56%). On the other hand, as regards to the School of Applied Technology the most popular majors appear to be Civil Engineering (22,7%), Electrical Engineering (22,63%), Mechanical Engineering (21,53%), Applied Information Technology & Multimedia (17,41%), Electronics (13,37%) followed by Telecommunications & Computer Network Engineering (1,98%) and Natural Resources & Environment Engineering (0,37%).



Graph 3: Demand for Graduates of the School of Applied Technology

Finally, for the School of Management & Economics the demand is shaped as follows: Tourism & Hotel Management (42,89%), Accounting (29,68%), Business Administration (14,21%) followed by Marketing and Commerce (5,82%), Co-Operatives (3,82%) and Finance and Insurance (3,57%). We should point out that the first graduates from the departments of Finance & Insurance and Marketing & Commerce of the branch of the TEI of Crete in Lasithi came out just recently (Spring 2007) which explains why the demand for these majors is relatively low and is actually expected to increase rapidly.



Graph 4: Demand for Graduates of the School of Management and Economics

2.2. ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED BY THE EMPLOYERS

Regarding the additional qualifications required from our graduates by the enterprises that employ them, it is interesting to note that 49,76% of the employers consider as necessary the knowledge of foreign languages, while a percentage of 38,83% require computer skills as well as the knowledge of specific software (design, accounting, etc.), and only a small percentage (0,97%) require the existence of a postgraduate title. This is partly explained by the fact that enterprises address the Career Office when looking mainly for young graduates.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND OTHER RESULTS

Although the findings of the National Workers' Union of Greece (I.N.E. G.S.E.E. – ADEDY, 2007) regarding employment appear disappointing, graduates of technological education seem to be less affected from unemployment. At least, this is suggested by our experience in the Career Office where most of the times demand for graduates is higher than supply, and is also supported by the employability surveys conducted by members of the faculty of certain departments recently.

For example, a research conducted by the department of Electronics in 2003 showed that 83% of their graduates were satisfied with their profession, as 71% of them had fulltime jobs either in the private or in the public sector. According to that research unemployment for graduates of Electronics reaches the percentage of 18%. As for the form of employment 45% have been placed in the private sector, 35% in the public sector and only a very low percentage 2-3% were self-employed. Additionally, a survey conducted by the department of Electrical Engineering in 2004, also revealed that 94,5% of graduates of the sample were satisfied with their degree and 65,8% of them were employed in relevant positions.

On the other hand, according to a research conducted by the department of Accounting in 2003 and involving 79 enterprises, the enterprises that employ graduates of the department find, in a percentage of 81%, that they are very well qualified, and moreover, almost half of them declared that they intend to hire more accounting graduates in the near future. It is worth noting that as it turned out from the same research, although accounting graduates are placed mainly in the accounting departments of firms, it is a recent tendency for them to occupy positions in administration as well as in sales and marketing.

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