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#### **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN THE LABOR MARKET DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

##### **REVIEW of**

**“WYBRANE ASPEKTY FUNKCJONOWANIA RYNKU PRACY W CZASIE PANDEMII COVID-19”**. Inspiracje dla pedagogiki. Redakcja naukowa: Katarzyna Białożył-Wielonek. Kraków, 2022.

**[“CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE LABOR MARKET FUNCTIONING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”**. Suggestions for pedagogy. Edited by Katarzyna Białozhit-Wielonek. Krakow, 2022]

The collection of scientific papers highlights the results of the research into certain aspects of the Polish labor market functioning during the global COVID-19 pandemic. It became a challenge for the whole world and significantly affected all spheres of social life, including the labor market. The new reality faced by the labor market requires effective and well-thought-out actions that would allow to perform professional tasks and duties, carry out new searches, and significantly change the established work routine. Now a new post-pandemic reality has emerged. With the relaxation of restrictions, the realities of life have changed and they will never be the same as before the pandemic. The stable production environment has also changed, and the level of employees' and employers' welfare has decreased. Everyone has to overcome new difficulties.

The purpose of this publication is to highlight a number of multifaceted problems and challenges that have arisen in the labor market during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, we are talking about the need to develop a system of actions in crises, as well as appropriate skills and competences of employees. In addition to problems and difficulties, the authors also draw attention to the possibilities of using opportunities, related to professional activities, in the labor market and updating the educational market.

The famous Polish scientist Stefan T. Kwiatkowski analyzes the issue of professional stress of teachers during the pandemic. The author raises the topical issue of teachers' ability to cope with stress. Given the key role of teachers in achieving the goals of the modern education system, it is advisable to take measures aimed at creating working conditions for teachers that will help reduce stress and, as far as possible, prevent its occurrence. It is also important to provide the welfare of teachers so that they can respond appropriately to the challenges they face on a daily basis and effectively carry out their functions and duties.



Communication plays an important role in teachers' professional activity. The correct setting of the voice, as the main working tool, is a necessary condition for meeting one of the main needs – communication. With this in mind, Kamil Jaros presented the results of the study on the risks and consequences of voice disorders occurring after the COVID-19 disease and their impact on the work of teachers. COVID-19 causes negative changes in the vocal apparatus of almost 30 % of patients. Teachers' voice disorders often lead to their inability to engage in pedagogical activities as they have to limit vocal activity. There is a risk that teachers have to leave their jobs due to problems with the respiratory system and voice. Therefore, these disorders cause not only feedback problems, but also a socio-economic one. Therapists prove that the correct rehabilitation of voice disorders is an effective method that allows to restore the activity and functioning of the larynx and healthy voice.

Worthy of attention is the study of the teacher-therapist's image, which takes into account the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Joanna Ludwika Pękala emphasizes the importance of pedagogical therapy. Although teachers' core activity is teaching the subject, they take on a therapeutic role when the situation becomes difficult, e.g. at the time preceding the first school failure, or when children lose faith in their own abilities. The author analyzes online resources in order to find out what the media image of the teacher-therapist is and whether it has changed under the influence of the pandemic. Since March 2020, there have also been changes in this area. They are primarily caused by the difficulties of remote work with students with special educational needs. In addition, not all institutions regularly supplement information on the websites regarding the organization of pedagogical therapy in the conditions of the pandemic, which does not provide an opportunity to monitor the positive impact on the teacher-therapist's image.

During the coronavirus pandemic, young people entering the labor market find themselves in a more difficult situation than people with many years of experience. Anna Oleszczuk, summarizing the results of the debate organized by Wrocław University of Economics on May 22, 2020, in the article "Prospects of young people in the current labor market", notes that the pandemic has changed the labor market and negatively affected the professional development of young people. They are less likely to find a high-paying job. Most probably, they will have less attractive jobs and it will take them longer to move up the career ladder. At the same time, the author notes that modern youth, called generation Y and generation X, keeps pace with the development of technology. Thanks to this, they have a better chance of finding a remote job and working effectively there.

One of the characteristic phenomena accompanying the pandemic is the transfer of many spheres of production activity to virtual reality, which negatively affects the transfer of knowledge, maintenance of interpersonal relationships and communication among employees. These issues are raised by David Wieczorek (Dawid Wieczorek) in the article "Social isolation as a post-pandemic challenge for the labor market." The author analyzes the consequences of the pandemic impact on the labor market. The economic crisis and increasing isolation are causing unemployment to rise, excluding a large number of people from the labor market, especially young people. This is accompanied by the emergence of social pathologies and deterioration of people's psychophysical well-being. The author emphasizes the risk of the next pandemics caused by the coronavirus, such as loneliness, social isolation and self-estrangement, which gradually turn into global problems. The new labor market that is being formed after the pandemic needs comprehensive and large-scale approaches and measures aimed at supporting business education, professional retraining



courses, as well as changing the understanding of work itself, its meaning, methods of organization and control. In the author's opinion, it is also important to invest in mental health prevention and social initiatives that would help maintain labor market activity and act as a buffer against growing market shocks.

Challenges related to the life activities of the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic require special attention. Katarzyna Białożył-Wielonek writes about this. Employees of day care centers for the elderly had to reorganize their work schedule considering the fact that they cannot rely only on remote mode. This is due to the lack of tools for effective communication with older people who are not capable of using digital technologies well enough. The category of elderly people is particularly vulnerable to diseases, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were generally deprived of the opportunity to fully participate in public life. The workers of the day care centers took numerous measures to achieve the statutory goals, but they often did not have adequate support and appropriate work conditions.

Józefa Matejek studied changes in the work of coordinators of family foster care. Undoubtedly, work with foster families requires constant improvement and the introduction of new forms of problem solving. With the beginning of the pandemic, the forms of contact between foster family coordinators and families have changed. Foster families could contact coordinators only by phone if needed. Nevertheless, a phone call of a coordinator does not provide the same support as a visit and does not solve many problems of the foster family. As a result, a feeling of hopelessness appears in families. Therefore, finding new ways to establish mutual contact, trust and proper cooperation during the pandemic is not only social work for family foster care coordinators, but also responsibility of the family and children regardless of the situation and circumstances.

In the Republic of Poland, there are commissions for solving alcohol problems. Andrew Kobialka (Andrzej Kobialka) provides statistical data that in 2020, 16,026 people worked with such problem groups. Analyzing the work of these commissions during the pandemic, the author cites the PARPA Recommendations dated April 9, 2023, which contain information on the carrying out statutory tasks related to the pandemic in Poland. They include:

- paying special attention to the issues of increasing demand for the help with alcohol and violence related problems (demand that comes from family members);
- indirect customer support via electronic means of communication;
- the possibility of purchasing equipment, multimedia software and information services for remote activities within the framework of the communal program of preventing and solving alcohol-related problems;
- purchase of disinfectants and personal protective equipment;
- organization of preventive measures and educational campaigns (brochures, leaflets, posters, etc.).

Agnieszka Tajak-Bobek reports the results of the study of the crime level during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the statistics of various countries of the world show a general trend of reduction in some types of crimes compared to the last 5-year period by an average of 41 %. The number of crimes related to property ownership has significantly decreased, as well as the number of shopliftings. Instead, the level of crime in the World Wide Web has increased. The pandemic necessitated increased attention to criminological research.



Therefore, it can be concluded that the coronavirus pandemic affected all spheres of social life, causing changes in the functioning of various social groups: families who had to change their lives due to the need to adapt to their children's distance education; organizations, institutions, and enterprises, which had to change the mode of operation to remote or hybrid. This deepened feelings of uncertainty about new phenomena and situations associated with various cognitive or emotional limitations. The only thing that is certain here, as Agnieszka Tajak-Bobek points out, is that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant losses at the personal, family, national and global levels.