
**STUDENT PRACTICAL TRAINING AS PART OF LAW
FACULTIES
THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SECTOR IN MACEDONIA**

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Abstract

The student practical training during their first cycle of studies has been catching the attention of the experts and the scientific community. The greatest significance attributed to the student practical training, arises from the established perception among the professional and scientific community, that a quality practical training and an internship availability for students, is the most convenient form of professional development.

Guided by this factual situation, at the same time bearing in mind the actual European and global trends, we analyzed the concept of implementation of student practical training, the scope and the quality of the internships, the reflections in the varied and numerous areas of activity, and the influence on the socio-economic development in a broader context.

Special attention in this article was given on the scope and content of the student practical training in the Republic of Macedonia, expressed through the prism of quality training, students' perceptions of practical training, the availability of organizations to engage them, the engagement of universities in the creation of practical training opportunities, and finally, on the

current issues in this field, analyzed through the research conducted at private and public universities across the country.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the actual situation in the field of student practical training. Yet, the main purpose is to use these results for the needs of the economic sector, as well as the universities. We perceive these sectors (*private sectors and universities*) as two components that are mutually conditioned, with shared interests in the policy propositions, basically aimed at future societal advancement. Hence, by using appropriate methodology, we embarked on surveying the situation regarding student practical training in public and private universities across Macedonia. The achieved results should give us answers as to where to intervene, and also about the position of the students while there are in practical training during their bachelor studies.

Key words: business sector, student practice, higher education, private universities, state universities.

Introduction

During the last decade of the 21st century the issue of student practical training and the level and scope of its implementation, has been more and more often discussed at conferences, scientific discussions, workshops and at other venues. Macedonia was no exception in terms of this trend in higher education. Therefore, having in mind the international and European experiences,¹ we posed several questions in the survey that are in relation to the previously set hypothetical framework of the research. In the field of higher education, and in the light of existing regulations, Macedonia has proposed several new policies aimed at improving the student practice as a concept in function of the economy, the growth and economic development and an overall societal advancement. The practical training offered to students is in direct connection with labor legal relations and policy in the field of employment in the public and private sector.

The significance of the quality of student practice for the development of the economy and for the general development in a wider context is undeniable.² However, there are numerous

¹ While studying this issue, we analyzed also the European experiences, trends and prospects, as seen through the prism of EU activities in the field of student practice in Europe. See more: http://europa.eu/about-eu/working-eu-institutions/students/index_en.htm, [last access on 15.06.2016].

² Katajavuori N., Lindblom-Ylänne S., Hirvonen J., The Significance of Practical Training in Linking Theoretical Studies with Practice, Volume 51, Issue 3, 2006, pp 439–464.

factors that affect both the level and quality of the practical education students receive during their studies. Therefore, during our research we analyzed both the theoretical and the practical aspects in the interest of locating the problems in this area and understanding the factors that can contribute to growth and development.

When we first set the hypothetical framework of the research, we wanted to see the real, factual situation in our country, regarding the quality and the level of practical experience that students receive. Therefore we set an appropriate methodological framework with a focus on students and their perception of the quality of the practical training, offered to them during their bachelor studies at private and public universities.

For this purpose, besides the theory of labor law, analysis and presentation will be made on the data obtained from applicative research conducted with relevant target groups in mind-Faculties of Law at several public and private universities in the country. The ultimate goal and the main idea behind the research is to observe the developments, prospects and trends in order to improve this crucial area as a key to creating a promising future, growth and development. Also, our main objective is to contribute to strengthening the cooperation between the business sector of the country and the universities, so they can recognize the merits and prospects of mutual cooperation.

Literature Review

Tusevska B., Miseva K., and Kosevaliska O., [The Personnel Capacities and Needs of Small and Medium Trade Companies Seen Through the Traineeship in Republic of Macedonia.](#) International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research, 2015.

Methodology

In order to realize the main objective of the research, we chose the methods by phases of analysis and elaboration of issues. Parallel to the research methodology, we used several techniques for collecting and processing data generally based on data collected through questionnaires, while responses were tabulated in appropriate research tools³. In the interest of

³ The data presented in the paper are the result of responses collected through questionnaires and processed in spss analysis system. This applies to all data tables and charts in the paper. In order not to burden the labor market, in the text we use only signs that we felt would provide a qualitative analysis, i.e. through quantity presented in the

achieving the main aim, we also used the views expressed by the students, which we collected by including several questions in the questionnaire.

In determining the object of the research we were careful in selecting the appropriate questions, answers and processing using correct methods in the summarizing each issue that is analyzed in the paper. Therefore we used multiple methods including: historical method, descriptive-analytical method, the method of induction and deduction, quantitative analysis method of statistics, comparative method, etc.

For the research we surveyed students from private and public universities. By approaching it this way we believe we will receive a more thorough and factual picture regarding the quality of student practical training and engagement of individual universities concerned with organizing these practical trainings.

In summarizing the findings regarding the specific questions we also used our previous research, “Openness and availability of the economic sector in the reception and education of students and the quality of students practice”⁴. Precisely, because these students were conducted using identical methodologies, we are more that certain that on this question we can draw realistic conclusions based on researching this issue in the terms of the openness of the business sector and the second aspect- of current interest –in terms of the views of the students and their perception regarding the content level and quality of the student practice.

table above, will summarize the qualitative conclusions relating to practical teaching from the perspective of the students of law faculties in the country.

⁴ The research conducted on “openness and availability of the economic sector in the reception and education of students and the quality of Student practice” and research in the field of economic development and student practice in the country, were conducted under the project titled “*Personnel capacities, needs and development potentials of small and medium businesses in the Easter part of Macedonia, based on knowledge*,” a project of the University “Goce Delchev”- Stip implemented by participants from the Faculty of Law within the UGD- Stip.

Results

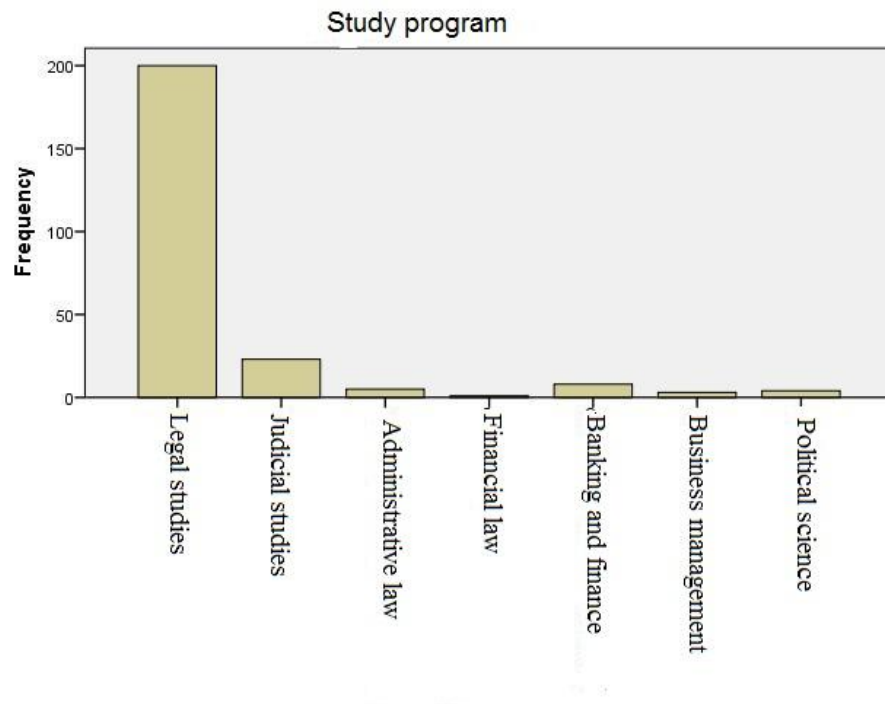


Fig. 1: Study program

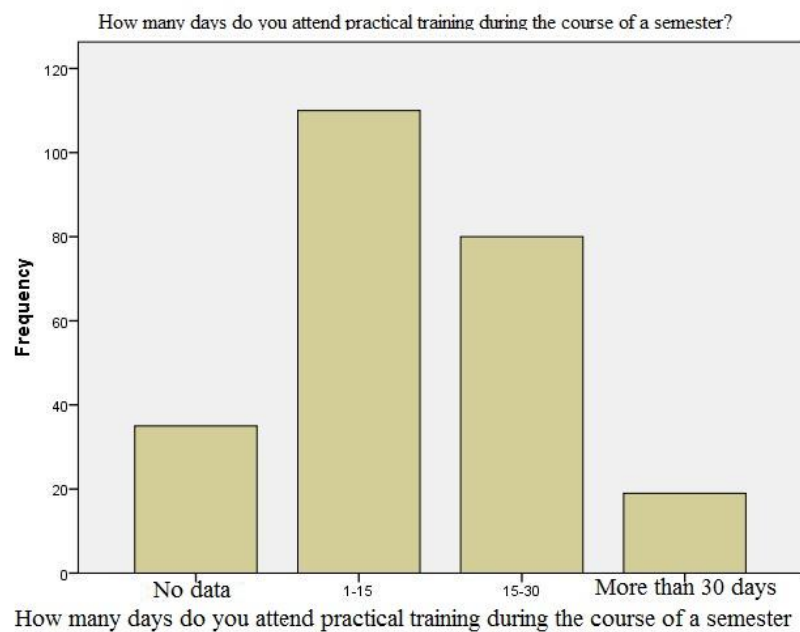


Fig.2 Practical Training

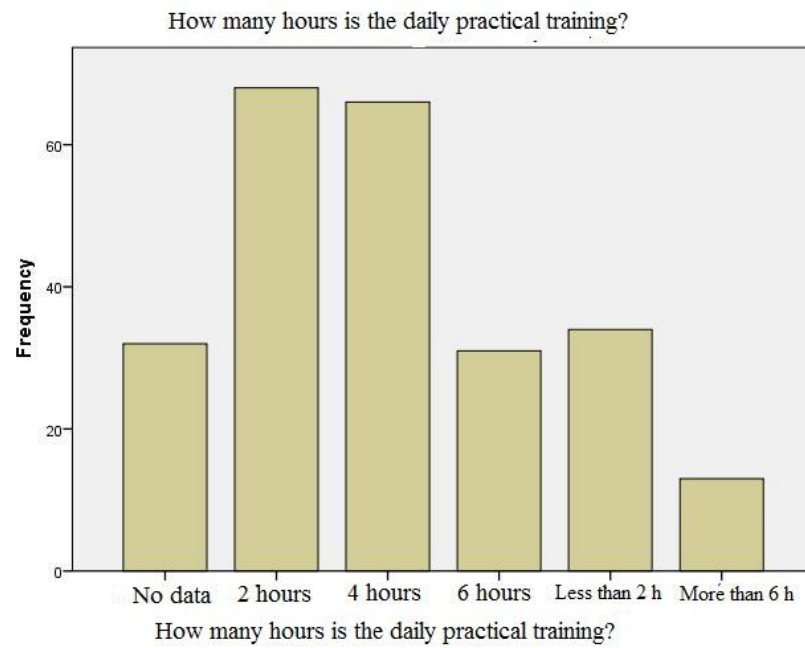


Fig.3: Daily practical training

Does your university provide you with practical training options ahead of time?

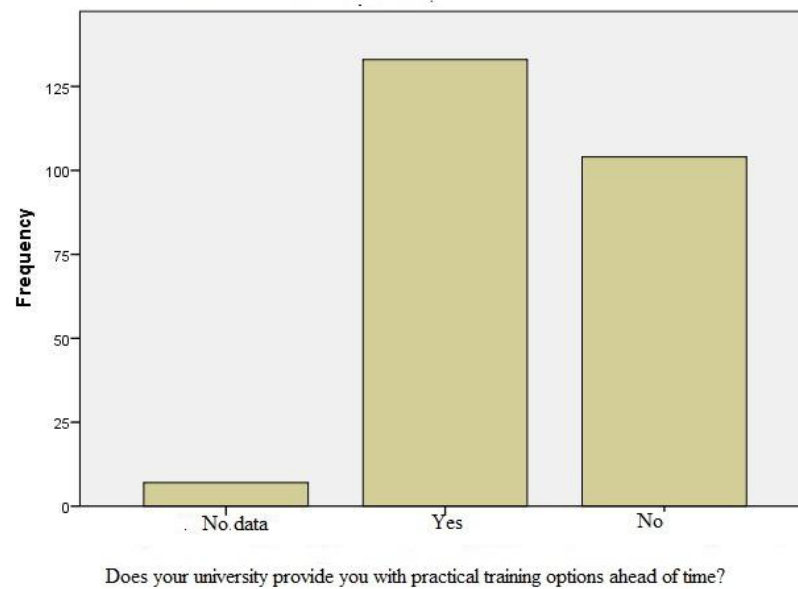


Fig. 4

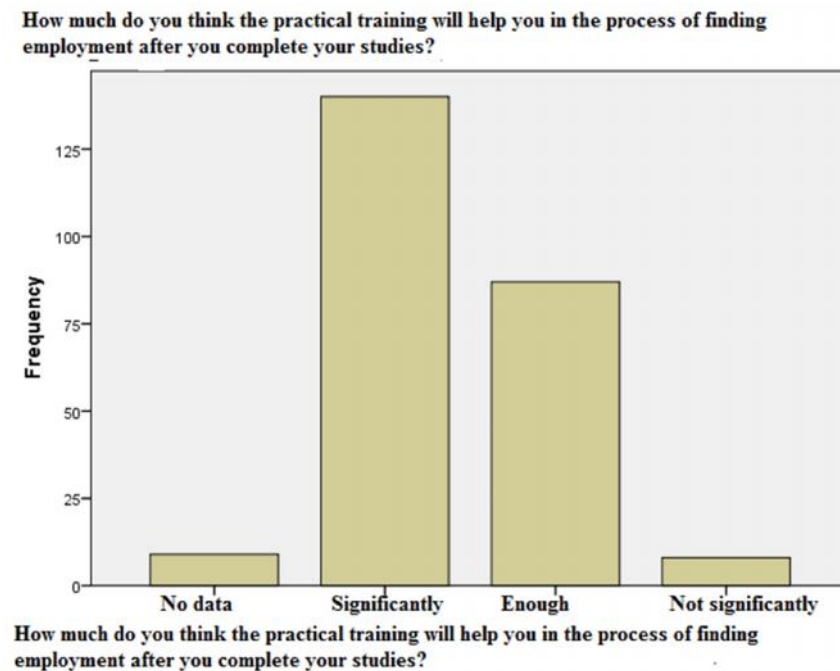


Fig.5

Discussion

1. The role and the importance of practical training for students in the development of the economy of the Republic of Macedonia

2.1. Student practical training is increasingly becoming a hot topic for discussion, and it is more in the center of attention in higher education. This conclusion does not only come from the numerous studies, but also by the attitude of students attending private and public universities who continuously manifest a desire, a need and ambition to intern during their bachelor studies.

Most of the students who were surveyed are students of law, specializing in legal studies, judicial studies, finance and banking.⁵ The remaining respondents are students of the following study programs: administrative law, financial law, business management and political science, which are also part of these law faculties.

⁵ The number of students by student programs can be determined from the tables presented below. In determining the content of the questions we were guided by the student programs. Specifically, by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) that is implemented in Republic of Macedonia. More precisely, If the judicial curriculum carries 300 credits according to ECTS, part of these issues were adapted on the on the structure, content and concept of this program. Further more, if the programe refers to curriculums of 180 and 240 ECTS, then the questions have been adapted on this program.

The study programs that we have determined as relevant for our research are closely related to the implementation of student practical training in both, the private and public sector. We believe that legal studies, judicial studies, banking and finance management are programs that attract the highest number of students, therefore are of most interest to the **business sector**.

The economy is mainly dependent on small and medium sized companies⁶. The previous research in the field of student practical training and the economy clearly showed that the availability of the economic sector in terms of implementing student practical experience is relatively good.⁷ However, this was based on the views of the business sector that were highlighted in the survey as majority of respondents⁸. In a narrower sense, this fact was based on the perception of the private sector in terms of their commitment and attitude towards practitioners who have the status of students studying for a bachelor degree.

With an identical purpose, the focus in this paper is on students in order to establish their perceptions and attitudes towards the availability of the private sector, the quality of the practical education they receive and the logistical support provided by state and private universities in the process of learning the practical aspects of the law. In this way, with a far greater reliability and comprehensiveness, we can analyze this question and draw a more relevant conclusion,⁹ and will have a more comprehensive picture of the situation, and would also see the need for intervention to improve this issue in the interest of the economy on one hand and universities on the other.

The legal framework with regard to implementation of student practice relates to students from state and private Universities. In this sense, every Law and regulation regarding to higher education in Republic of Macedonia, concerns the state as well as the private

⁶ For the term and types of companies in the country see: Company Law ("Official Gazette" no. 28/2004; 84/2004; 25/2007; 87/2008; 42/2010; 48/2010; 24/2011, 166/2012, 70/2013, 119/2013, 120/2013, 187/2013, 38/2014, 41/2014, 138/2014, 88/2015, 192/2015, 6/2016; 30 / 2016 and 61/2016).

⁷ See more: Tusevska B., Miseva K., and Kosevaliska O., [The Personnel Capacities and Needs of Small and Medium Trade Companies Seen Through the Traineeship in Republic of Macedonia](#). International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research, 2015, p. 12. Available from: <http://gssrr.org/index.php?journal=journalofbasicandapplied>, [accessed 12 June, 2016].

⁸ In order to get a full, clear and comprehensive picture with regard to this issue and in order to get a realistic perception, in this paper we have put the focus on students and their views on the implementation of student practice. In this way, by analyzing the data from the survey in terms of economy and in terms of students we will be able to locate the problems, prospects, trends and the need for intervention in order to have mutual benefit at the universities and the economy too.

⁹ Relevance of data that we have highlight is basically from the comprehensiveness and availability of data collected and processed by the respondents with the status of students and respondents from the private sector. This is especially case in the formulation of the conclusions, where beside the results from this research, we'll use already obtained knowledge and analyzed data, by the perspective of the economy and its role in the practical process of education.

universities. The importance of the role of the practical training and the attention paid to issues like this points to numerous laws and regulations governing this issue. In addition to this, there are numerous projects of the Economic Chamber of Macedonia and universities, i.e. legal and economic faculties with the purpose to improve the cooperation and increase the positive effects for mutual benefit¹⁰. That is why the main target group are students of legal studies, judicial studies, administrative and financial law, banking and finance and business management and political science. Most of the respondents were from the Legal Studies program. (see Fig.1)

2. Introduction of student practical training under Macedonian Law

Student practical training represents a phase of learning the practical aspects of the subject matter laid down in the study curricula. Although the Law on Higher Education (*hereinafter: LHE*)¹¹ specifically does not define the term, from the general concept contained in this code and from the provisions of the bylaws that apply in the Republic of Macedonia on this matter it is clear that it is the practice that students receive during their studies, and represents a concepts of practical training of undergraduate students according to applicable regulations. We highlighted this in the context of the need to distinguish the status of student-interns while studying i.e. internships from the concept of volunteer that is an intern protected under the law on Labor Relations¹², the law for volunteering, operational plans and strategies of the Government and the Ministry of Labor Relations and Social Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia¹³.

Student practice basically represents a process of learning the practical aspects of the subject while studying. Through practical training during their studies students acquire the necessary experience to carry out the tasks that come within the scope of their future

¹⁰ [http://www.mchamber.org.mk/\(S\(wd3bkknjcjgk5u3hnmii55\)\)/default.aspx?IIId=1](http://www.mchamber.org.mk/(S(wd3bkknjcjgk5u3hnmii55))/default.aspx?IIId=1), [June 28, 2016].

¹¹ Law of Higher Education ("Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia" No. 35/2008; 103/2008; 26/2009; 83/2009; 99/2009; 115/2010; 17/2011; 51/2011; 123/2012; 15/2013; 24/2013; 41/2014; 116/2014; 130/2014; 10/2015; 20/2015; 98/2015; 145/2015; 154/2015 30/2016).

¹² Law on Labor Relations ("Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia" No. 62/2005; 106/2008; 161/2008; 114/2009; 130/2009; 149/2009; 50/2010; 52/2010; 124/2010; 47/2011; 11/2012; 39/2012; 13/2013; 25/2013; 170/2013; 187/2013; 113/2014; 20/2015; 33/2015; 72/2015; 129/2015 27/2016).

¹³ Decree for promulgation of the Law on Volunteering Official Gazette no. 85 of 09.07.2007, amendments of WA, Official Gazette 161/08 and amendments number 147 of 08.27.2015 year. See more about delimitation of the status of these entities in terms of positive law in Macedonian: Tusevska B., Misevska K., Kosevaliska O., op, cit., p. 6th.

profession.¹⁴ Although there are some claims that the students attend legal practice for different motives, in Macedonia the practical training is a legal obligation. To this end, students receive the practical training in order to gain more experience, to work on their CVs, as well as to earn basic monetary awards, etc.¹⁵

Student practical training in our country is on non-profit basis. Basic incomes in the comparative systems are based on established practices in the private sector in different segments depending of the legal entity where the student is practicing.¹⁶ The main purpose and idea behind the concept of student practice is not basic incomes, but learning certain practical aspects which will help them in the beginnings of their future profession engagement. In order to thoroughly analyze the legal and theoretical concept we approached the analysis from the standpoint of regulations of this field. In this context is the decision or the decree of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which sets forth the concept of student placements in state bodies. Namely, according to the decision under Article 2 regarding the notion of student placements provided that the student practice is a practical work of students, *free of charge*, due to the acquisition of practical knowledge and application of knowledge gained from practical experience. According to this decree, the student practices in the state bodies is reserved for students who are studying at higher education institutions where the practical experience is a compulsory part of the curriculum and programming in accordance with the Regulation¹⁷.

2.1. Student practical training according to the Macedonian legislation

2.1.1. Higher Education Law of the Republic of Macedonia

The Higher Education Law of the Republic of Macedonia contains the basics concept of student practical training in terms of acquiring practical knowledge and simple training for acquiring practical knowledge and understanding of the tasks that fall within the responsibilities

¹⁴ Devitt E.J., Roland H.P., Why don't Law School Teach Law Students How to Try Lawsuits? William Mitchell Law Review, Volume 13, Issue 3, 1987, pp. 445-459. available from: <http://open.mitchellhamline.edu/wmlr/vol13/iss3/1>, [accessed on 12 September 2016].

¹⁵ Savic M., Zivic M., Z. Gavrilovic, Students and Practice, Activating social resources in the fight for the modernization and improvement of the quality of higher education in Serbia, Centre of Monitoring and Evaluation, Belgrade, 2006, p. 17th.

¹⁶ See more about the student's practice in USA: Hoffman P.T., teaching theory versus practice: are we training lawyers or plumbers? 2012 MICH. ST. L. REV. 625, 2012, pp. 626-645.

¹⁷ See: Regulation on conditions and manner of performing student practice in the civil service of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Official Gazette of BiH", no. 1/94, 8/95, 58/02, 19/03, 2/06 and 8/06), the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at 152. Session held on 19.02.2015, available at: <http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba/bosanski/zakoni/2015/7.html>, [accessed in June 28, 2016]

of their future professions. In the context of applied activities at the universities, the Higher Education Law Article 45, paragraph 3, stipulates that the university, under the conditions determined by the law and statute, in addition to the units within its composition, may have other internal organizational units that are associated to the practice, knowledge, art and higher education and in the operation of which students may participate (engineering bureaus, workshops, centers for legal and business consulting, centers for social services and other services for the citizens, production test centers, galleries, radio and TV stations and alike), and technology parks. In light of this decision it is provided in Article 45, paragraph 7 and 8, that the university shall establish at least one career center. The career center shall keep a separate records of former students (alumni) and shall organize career fairs at each faculty/university where a career center exists. Career centers shall be established for the purpose of organizing practical work for the students aimed at creating a qualified staff which is to apply modern innovative techniques and technologies in the teaching process. The career centers shall consist of advisers who have knowledge in the field of education. Furthermore, the career centers shall be obliged to establish working groups (consisting of representatives from the faculties of technical sciences and the chambers of commerce) and to organize monthly meetings attended also by representatives from the Agency *for the labor force demands at the labor market and reduction of the gap between the labor force demand and supply*. (LHE, Article 45, paragraph 9)¹⁸.

In addition, aside to the general provisions is the decision we have the “content of the study curricula.” In this part, the LHE provides a solution to the imperative nature, i.e. an obligation placed upon the students that they must attend practical classes. According to the legal formulation, *the student in each academic year must attend practical lessons that cannot be shorter than 30 days as a condition for enrollment in the next academic year*. The manner and conditions of organizing the practical training is prescribed by the Minister (LHE, Article 99, paragraph 16)¹⁹. Since according to this legislation each academic year the student has the obligation to complete a practical training of at least 30 days, which is a condition for

¹⁸ The content of the decision under paragraph 9 of Article 45 of the Higher Education Act clearly shows the tendency through legislation contained in several articles of the LHE to contribute to the improvement of cooperation between the economy and universities in the country, as a mode that will positively reflect on the results in two sectors: education and economy.

¹⁹ Conditions and methods of organizing practical training are provided in the Rules on terms and conditions of organizing practical training for students, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 120 of 13.09.2010, by which they prescribe the manner and conditions under which the practical training should be organized.

enrollment the next academic year. This decision is contained in several regulations of the universities; therefore, it is an indisputable theoretical coverage and ambition in favor of student practical training.²⁰

However, several questions remain: what is the practical implementation of this legislation, i.e. is the goal regarding the envisioned concept of the student practical training in line with the practical education achieved; what is the responsibility of the universities (both state and private), what is the social responsibility of the private sector in the process of practical education established by the special legislation, etc. These questions reveal the need for research regarding the various aspects of this issue. The essence of this research will be focused on figuring out the shortcomings in the practical implementation of the by-law that assign the concept for student practical training analyzed from the perspective of the students, and the logistics provided by the universities (both public and private) in the implementation of the practical training.

3.1.2. National framework decree on higher education qualifications issued by the government of the Republic of Macedonia

The bylaws which pertain to higher education and policy contain, directly and indirectly, decisions that demonstrate the tendency to favor student practical training; in other words the tendency to perceive it as the most appropriate model for advancement of both the higher education and the economy. In a sense, these decisions more or less manifest the European tendencies when it comes to student practical training.²¹

Although generally this tendency is manifested through the regulations on higher education qualifications issued by the government of the Republic of Macedonia, as well.²² Namely, by defining the meaning of the content of the specific descriptors of the qualifications and skills that students will acquire by completing their first cycle of study, the meaning of the practical implementation of knowledge and the understanding of the necessity of practical training is reflected. Specifically, Article 6 of the Regulation expressly provides that students who have completed their first cycle of studies must acquire knowledge and understanding of

²⁰ See more about this issue: Kiggundu E., Nayimuli S., Teaching practice: a make or break phase for student teachers, South African Journal Education, EASA, Vol. 29:345-358, 2009, p. 1-14.

²¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/index_en.htm, [accessed June 15, 2016].

²² A decree for the National framework for higher education qualifications. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia number 154. 2010.

the practical implementation of the theoretical knowledge. According to the legal formulation, it is the following maxim, "the practical application of knowledge and understanding."

Comparatively, in certain jurisdictions there are special provisions solely focused on student practical training, organizational set up and the terms according to which the practical training is to be organized. According to the resolutions contained in the Decree of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina the student practice falls under the auspices of higher education institutions, which have an obligation to apply to the relevant organizations and demand logistical support for implementing student practice during the following academic year, no later than December 31 of the previous year. Although the decision concerns the practical training of state authorities, the concept it reflects the attitudes and decisions of the government of BiH regarding the logistical set up of the universities in the process ensuring access to practical knowledge for students.

In the same context we have the decision under Article 11 of the Regulation which stresses **the ability for practical and professional application of the knowledge and understanding**. This decision points to the conditionality of the implementation of practical training during the first cycle; that it would guarantee the provision of acquired knowledge in practice. Therefore, it outlines on one side the responsibility of universities to ensure the availability of practical training, as well as the involvement of the economic sector in the process on the other.²³ Specifically, under Article 11 the successful completion of the first cycle involves the manifestation of knowledge and understanding in the field of study that builds upon previous education and training, **including knowledge in the domain of theoretical, practical, conceptual, comparative and critical perspectives according to the appropriate methodology required by the field of study**. Furthermore, Article 11, paragraph 4 specifies the ability to evaluate theoretical and practical issues, to explain the reasons and to choose the appropriate solutions. By analyzing the provisions contained in the ordinance it becomes clear that the resulting theoretical and practical training is given (in our opinion, quite justified), an important place in the teaching curriculum, and in the entire educational process.

2.1.2. The acts establishing the universities; Regulations of the program studies in the first cycle, and procedures pertaining to student training

²³ Article 11 of the Regulation on the National Framework for higher education qualifications, adopted by the Government of Macedonia. November 11, 2010.

The bylaws governing the higher education, the articles guiding the establishment of universities in the country, the regulations of study and the implementation procedures for student practical training basically contain more detailed regulations for student practical training. To this end, the solution contained in the Statute of the University "St. Cyril and Methodius," Article 247, paragraph 9 which prescribes the statutory provision relating to the students' obligation to complete a practical training as a condition for completion of the semester, i.e. a condition that has to be met in order to enroll in the next academic year. This decision under the statute requires that each academic year a student must attend practical classes for at least 30 days as a condition for enrollment in the next academic year. The manner and conditions of organizing the practical training are prescribed by the Minister of higher education.²⁴

The significance of the practical training stems from numerous projects and activities of the units within the universities where some administrative procedures are published on the websites of the faculties regarding the rules and procedure for application and implementation of student practical training.²⁵ Comparatively, the organization and establishment of student practical training is also mediated by the universities, which are involved in the logistical set up.²⁶ The ministries of education also adopt guidelines which detail the procedures for the implementation of the practical training. Macedonia is no exception regarding this decision. In 2010 the Ministry of Education published a Rulebook on the manner and conditions for organizing practical training for students, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 120 of 13.09.2010*, by which the manner and conditions for the organization of practical training of students shall be prescribed.

In the category of rules for the implementation of practical training for students, we also have specific regulations adopted across universities and faculties as separate units or as units within the university to which they belong. In this context is the Rulebook for the manner of organizing practical classes for students in Southeast Europe,²⁷ as well as the Regulation on the manner of organizing practical training for students, Faculty of Economics in Skopje,

²⁴ http://www.ukim.edu.mk/mk_content.php?meni=139&glavno=32, [accessed June 29, 2016].

²⁵ <http://www.finki.ukim.mk/mk/studies/studentska-praksa>, [accessed June 26, 2016].

²⁶ <http://hls.harvard.edu/dept/clinical/student-practice-organizations-spos/>, [accessed June 26, 2016].

²⁷ Pursuant to Article 99, paragraph 15 of the Higher Education Law (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia no. 35/08, 103/08, 26/09, 83/09, 99/09, 115/10 and 17/11). Rules on the manner of organizing practical training for students (Official Gazette of RM no. 120/10) and based on Article 56 of the Statute of South East Europe (SEE University) and the University Senate meeting held on April 12, 2011 at which the Rulebook on the manner of organizing practical training for students was adopted.

University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje.²⁸ These rules include the students' obligations with regard to the implementation of practical training, the application processes and verification of semesters with a confirmation that the practical training has been completed. Apart from the obligations contained in the regulations of the universities and units within the universities, these institutions have the obligation to logistically support the process of implementing the practical training, and at the same time to take into account the quality and scope of the practice. Such obligations for state and private universities derive primarily from the Rulebook on the manner of organizing practical training for students published in 2010. The subject of this regulation is the conditions under which the practical trainings should be organized.²⁹

According to Article 2 of the Rules of MES, the practical training should take at least an hour and no more than eight hours during the day. Essential for ensuring the required educational level and quality of the practical education is the solution in Article 3 of the Regulation under which the higher education institutions in collaboration with relevant stakeholders are to carry out and ensure the proper content and implementation of the practical training lessons.

According to the legal wording in Article 3 of the Regulation, *it is the higher education institution in cooperation with relevant stakeholders that is responsible for implementing the practical teaching*. We believe that this decision is essential to providing quality and relevant practical training for students. Based on Article 3, the universities are obliged to provide proper conditions for practical teaching. It is in this segment we set the most relevant questions for the research, aimed at improving those segments where there are weaknesses in the system for quality practical education.

Besides the obligations on the side of the universities, the Regulation in Article 4 expressly emphasizes the requirement that students be supervised by a mentor at the higher education institution during the process. More precisely and according to the legal formulation

²⁸According to Article 99 of the Higher Education Law (Official Gazette of RM 35/08, 103/08, 26/09, 83/09, 99/09, 115/10, 17/11 and 15/11) and the rules on the manner of organizing practical training for students, Faculty of Economics in Skopje, University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje adopted Guidelines for realizing practical teaching [accessed June 20, 2016]. The guidelines concerning student practice is for the students at the Faculty of Economic, but within this research we cite it as a concept, although our research deals exclusively with the faculty of law.

²⁹ The High education law uses the term "practical training". The literature uses the term internship. Although the terminology varies and may lead the reader astray, we point out that it is the concept of practical training that students have a legal obligation to acquire during their studies in the absence of payment from the entity that has decided to hire them, i.e. accept them as interns.

of this provision, *in the course of the practical training, the student should be supervised by a mentor who is a member of the facility; the mentor is responsible for the success of the practical training* (Regulation, Article 4). Highlighting the importance of these regulations is the decision which requires amendments to programs provided for in Article 7 of the Regulations; the amending in the process is also obligatory.³⁰ Specifically, the regulations impose an obligation for amending the existing study programs, which will specify the duration of the practical training that can not be shorter than 30 days. This obligation is one more confirmation that the role universities play is important in the implementation of practical studies for students during the first cycle of studies. Specifically, these requirements aim to create appropriate teaching programs, which are not only to provide compatible programs, but also an appropriate number of practical training hours in tune with the curriculum content.

A superficial analysis of the decisions contained in the applicable regulations in the Republic of Macedonia is enough to conclude that there is an obligation imposed on the universities and the faculties within the universities to establish an appropriate, both in scope and content, practical training for students during the first cycle of studies. In terms of quality, the obligation of the universities lies in the requirement to strengthen the cooperation with both the private and public sector so that students have the opportunity to attend quality practical training, in other words they will acquire quality practical education. On the other hand, there is the social responsibility of private and public sector organizations to contribute with quality practical education that will be positively reflected in more societal segments.

4. The current situation in the sphere of practical training for students of law during their first cycle of studies

4.1. The practical training of students of law - timeframe for implementation

In theory, and in accordance with the applicable regulations the university units (faculties) within the universities play a key role in providing quality practical instruction. In lieu of this conclusion³¹, we believe that it is the responsibility of the universities in the country

³⁰ According to Article 6 of the Guidelines paragraphs 1 and 2, before the start of the practical training the student shall be notified by the higher education institution and shall be issued a document - a certificate referencing him or her to the organization where the internship will be held, signed by the Dean / Director . After completion of the practical training the student is obliged to return the certificate to the higher education institution certified by the organization at which the internship took place.

³¹ Križani T.P., urovi A., Vele B., Stru ne prakse i stru no osposobljavanje u Republici Srbije, Beogradska otvorena škola, 2015, str. 20.

to ensure a proper practical training in terms of both scope and structure of instruction. Considering the scope of operation of the universities, the character and nature of their activity, the universities could not be directly responsible for the quality of the practical training.

The quality and usefulness of the practical training for students is conditioned by several other factors, including the involvement of the private and public sector in the process of implementing practical training.³² However, we can not ignore the indirect influence universities have on the quality of the practical training programs, which is established through establishing networks, memorandums for cooperation with relevant and socially responsible institutions that who have a real / genuine willingness to contribute to the academic education process and view it as an investment in the future economic prosperity.³³

However, these beliefs are based on theoretical analysis of sources available to us. Our opinion is that the real, rather complete picture of the role of universities, the private and public sector and the quality of the practical training is determined by several factors. For this purpose the research focus is placed on the state and private sector, on devising the appropriate questions in the questionnaires that could identify general problems, weaknesses and strengths; and on the actual situation and the actual implementation of the solutions provided in the applicable regulations in the country.

The number of students who were the target group for the research was determined by the total number of students at each of the faculties that were analyzed. Hence the number of surveyed students from public universities is higher.

Table 1. Are you a student at a public or private university?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public	196	80,3	80,3	80,3
Valid Private	48	19,7	19,7	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

For this research, the students answered the question of whether they attend practical training while studying. Despite the legal obligation to attend practical training during the first

³² Savi M., Živi M., Gavrilovi Z., op. cit., str.23.

³³ See: http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/academics/clarke_business_law_institute/, [accessed June 18, 2016].

cycle of studies 22,1 percent of students report that they are not attending practical classes.³⁴

Table 2. Do you attend practical training during your studies?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	1	,4	,4	,4
Valid Yes	189	77,5	77,5	77,9
No	54	22,1	22,1	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

Considering the legal provision in Article 99, paragraph 16 of the Higher Education Act which stipulates that students must attend practical classes for at least 30 days in each academic year we posed the following question: how many days do you attend practical training during the course of a semester?

From the summarized results of the research it appears that out of 244 respondents, 35 did not answer the question, 110 students responded that they go to practice 1 to 15 days, 80 students answered that they go to the practice 15 to 30 days and 19 students said they attend practical training for more than 30 days during the academic year. Percentage wise, 45, 1 percent of students did not go to practical training prescribed by the law, or 32, 8 percent attend practice anywhere between 15-30 days, which means that they do not meet the legal obligation of a minimum of 30 days. From this data it appears that of the students who answered the question (total of 209 respondents, 35 did not answer), the majority fall short of the statutory minimum of 30 days per year as a condition for enrollment in the next academic year. (See Fig. 2)

In correlation with the question about the number of days of practical training, we also included in the questionnaire a question aimed to reveal students' perceptions, needs and opinions in terms of the number of practical training days that are required of them. In fact, on this question, only 2 percent of the students did not answer, i.e. only 5 students out of 244 did not answer the question.

³⁴ Of the total 244 respondents, 54 said they did not attend practical training, 189 students they did, which leaves us with 22,1 percent of students who do not attend practical training.

Of the total number of 244, 188 students or 77 percent believe that the practical training should last longer, while only 20 percent believe that the training required is appropriate in length.

Table 3. Do you think that the practical training during your studies should last longer?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	5	2,0	2,0	2,0
Valid Yes	188	77,0	77,0	79,1
No	51	20,9	20,9	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

Taking into account that the Rulebook on the manner of organizing practical training for the students of 2010 expressly provides that the practice should not be implemented in daily time frame shorter than 1 hour and be no longer than 8 hours, the questionnaire asked the question: how many hours is the daily practical training? The aim of this question is to determine the actual time frame in which students have a practical education that meets the needs of the educational curriculum set by the teaching staff.

From the summary analysis based on the answers students provided to the question: *how many hours per day do you attend practical education training in the institution where you have been placed*, it appears that most students attend a practical training for two hours. Specifically, data shows that 27,9 percent of respondents attended practical training in a timeframe of 2 hours, 27 percent for 4 hours, 12,7 percent for 6 hours. Less than 2 hours daily practice was completed by 13,9 percent of the total number of respondents, and only 5,3 percent attended for more than 6 hours a day.

According to students, most attend practical training for 2 hours per day, which is within the requirements, but if you consider that the regulations give the opportunity for up to 8 hours a day, it is evident that the highest proportion of practical training is attended for the shortest time intervals possible under the MES regulations. (see Fig.3)

4.2. The role of the universities in the implementation of practical training for students at the faculties of law

Theoretically and in compliance with the decisions contained in the legislation relating to higher education regulations and procedures for practical training education, the role of the universities is essential, crucial, and therefore their responsibility for student practical training

is immense.³⁵ However, beyond the theoretical standpoints and decisions prescribed in the relevant regulatory acts of the country, we believe that this issue must be analyzed and elaborated through the views of the students regarding the universities' logistics in the process of providing them with practical education. Thus, in our research we further asked: does your university provide you with practical training options ahead of time? Of the total respondents, 2.9 percent did not respond to the question. The remaining 97,1 did answer, 54,5 reported that the faculty provides them with an institution where they can gain the practical instruction, and 42, 6 percent said that the faculty where they study does not provide an institution where students can acquire the practical education required by the Higher Education Act.

Regarding whether they find the institutions where they can attend the practical training on their own, 157 students or 64,3 percent did not, 77 or 31,6 percent said they themselves found the institution where they attended the practical training and finally, 4,1 percent said that they did not themselves find the institution for practical training, which means that they do not attend practical training given that neither they nor the looked for a place where they can attend practical training.³⁶ (See Fig.4)

For a full account of the actual situation regarding the logistics required of the universities (the units within the universities) in ensuring there are organizations for practical education of students of law, we believe it is relevant to ask: are students offered the opportunity to choose an organization with which the university (law universities) have a memorandum for cooperation at which they will attend practical training required of them by law.

A significant number, 113 out of 244 student respondents, did not answer.³⁷ Eighty one or 33,2 percent said that the university (the faculty of law) provides an opportunity for them to independently choose the institution at which they will attend the practical instruction. Fifty students or 20,5 percent said they have no such opportunity, which implies that the university directs students to some of the organizations with which the faculty cooperates without letting

³⁵ Finkelstein J.G., Practice in the Academy: Creating "Practice Aware" Law Graduates, Journal of legal education, Volume 64, Number 4, 2015, pp. 622-644

³⁶ In this context is the question whether they find the institution in which they take the practical training requirement? The majority of respondents said they themselves or through personal contacts came into contact with the person at a relevant organization, often through e-mail or through direct communication with the person in-charge. Also a number of respondents who attended practice said they made a request at the university and the faculty referred the to the appropriate organization where with the help of money order they identified themselves as students at the university, and in tern received a confirmation for completion of the training.

³⁷ 46.3 percent of the students did not answer whether they had the opportunity to select from a list organizations provided university (Faculty of Law) where they will attend the practical education.

the students choose where they would like to acquire their practical training.³⁸ The data based on the sample considered however shows that each year the universities in the country (the law schools) give students the opportunity to independently select the subject matter they will cover through the practical aspects prism.

Table 4: When the university provides you with an institution for practical training, do you have an opportunity to choose the institution at which you will attend your practical training?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	113	46,3	46,3	46,3
Valid Yes	81	33,2	33,2	79,5
No	50	20,5	20,5	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

4.3. The role of the private and public sector in the practical education provided to students at law schools in the Republic of Macedonia

4.3.1. Scope, content and quality of the practical education at the institutions through the eyes of the students of law

In order to complete the research and in correlation with the previous questions and analyses, the questionnaire focused on the perception, attitudes and experiences of students regarding the impact and the role, i.e. the engagement and the logistics provided by the employees at the organizations where practical education is implemented and with which the universities (law faculties in the Republic of Macedonia) have signed a memorandum for cooperation, or with the institutions at which the students independently, through private contacts and networking obtain the legally required practical instruction.³⁹

With this in mind, the questionnaire included the following question: to what degree does the institution and its staff contribute to learning the practical aspects of the subject matter

³⁸ We would like to point out that it is not a question of respecting or ignoring the desire of students regarding the venue for their practical training, but rather their desire in terms of whether it is an institution in the private sector i.e. the economic sector, the judiciary, public sector, NGOs, state government and so on. More specifically, regarding their desire for practical experience in a particular sector, private or public, of the law. This issue requires special attention and highlights the need for a separate analysis and research paper

³⁹ See more about this issue: Kam-Ming L., Ai-Girl T., Student teachers' perceptions of the importance of the theory and practice, 2001, available from: <http://www.aare.edu.au/publications-database.php/3163/student-teachers-perceptions-of-the-importance-of-theory-and-practice>, [accessed on 06.08.2016].

provided in the educational curricula of law faculties. Regarding this question, only 6,6 percent did not give any answer. A significant 54, 5 percent of respondents say that the practical instruction regarding the subject matter of their studies is enough. Twenty percent of respondents or 49 students stated that the role of the staff, i.e. the role of the educational institution in learning the practical aspects of the matter is negligible. Forty six percent of the respondents or 18, 9 percent of the students said that the contribution of these institutions is large, in other words that the staff contributes significantly to their practical education.

Table 5: How much does the institution and its staff help you in acquiring practical knowledge and experience?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	16	6,6	6,6	6,6
A lot	46	18,9	18,9	25,4
Valid Enough	133	54,5	54,5	79,9
Not significantly	49	20,1	20,1	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

5. Practical training and its impact on future law professionals and their employment in Macedonia

The practical training as a concept in higher education in Macedonia, and as an essential element in the teaching curricula of law faculties in the country, has a multifunctional role. In accordance with the conceptual set up of practical training for students, the basic idea behind the practical education during the first cycle of studies is not only that students acquire concrete practical education specifically tied to their curriculum.

The idea behind this legislation is also in the direction of achieving long-term goals that produce positive effects in a broader context with a long-term impact.⁴⁰ In other words, the practical training for students aims to familiarize students with the work that specific institutions from the private and public sectors do, to understand the functionality, hierarchy, systematization and policy work of each institution at which they attend practical lessons. For

⁴⁰ See more: Vukowich W.T., Comment: The Lack of Practical Training in Law Schools: Criticisms, Causes and Programs for Change, Case Western Reserve Law Review, Volume 23, Issue 1, Cas. W.Res. L. Rev. 140 (1971), available from: <http://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/caselrev/vol23/iss1/6/>, [accessed on 20 August 2016].

this reason, the practical education is provided each year so students could learn about the work of multitude of institutions so they can figure out their affinities and understand more broadly the practical aspects of the material they are learning.

More ambitious than this goal – but quite realistic and feasible – is the idea that the practical training during their studies could increase students' confidence when it comes to their first employment and the utilization of their qualifications when establishing working relationships. In view of this conclusion stands the perception shared by the majority of students who responded that the practical training during their studies is significant in helping them establishing working relations. A majority, 57,4 percent of student respondents believe that the practical instruction will help them significantly in the process of acquiring employment in Macedonia. More than a third, or 35,7 percent (87 out of the 244 students) believe that practical training will help them enough, while only 3,3 percent or only 8 students consider the practical training as not important when it comes to future employment.

Although the basic idea of the practical training is not to make the hiring process easier, it is evident that the students believe that the practical training has a positive impact on finding employment.⁴¹ (See Fig. 5)

Table 6: How much do you think the practical training will help you in the process of finding employment after you complete your studies?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N/A	9	3,7	3,7	3,7
Valid Significantly	140	57,4	57,4	61,1
Enough	87	35,7	35,7	96,7
Not significantly	8	3,3	3,3	100,0
Total	244	100,0	100,0	

⁴¹ Graduates can acquire practical training under the Law for Practitioners and the Labor Law. However, *in concreto*, this question relates to students' attitudes towards practical training in the process of establishing working experience while they are still students, during their first cycle of studies at the Faculty of Law.

Conclusions:

The results of the theoretical and practical analysis behind this research paper, brought us to conclusions that fully correspond with the set hypothetically framework. The gained results at the same time opened numerous other dilemmas, questions, ambiguities and gaps. However, we perceive the latter as a new challenge and a new field for research, that deserves special attention and a separate scientific research. With a focus on the main subject for analysis in this paper, and at the same time on the purpose of the research and the obtained results, we came to several conclusions related to student practical training at the law faculties in the Republic of Macedonia.

In this paper we did not, in any one segment, and in any matter, make a separate analysis or comparison between the private and state law schools. That was beyond the purpose of our research, although in the process of tabulation we were faced with data that draws some differences. Focusing on the goal of the research, and guided by the acquired theoretical knowledge, as well as the laws and bylaws, we did come up with a wholesome picture about the field of student practical training, which is impacted by the research conducted through questionnaires and the data processed in SPSS analysis tool.

An essential conclusion that we would like to emphasize, is a fact that stands confirmed by the practical research as well, which is that *students have positive aspirations and perceptions of the practical teaching as a concept behind learning for acquiring practical knowledge of the material of study*. From the students' view points, we can conclude that the push for student practical education and instituting it as a requirement for enrollment in the subsequent academic year, is an appropriate educational policy present in several European countries.

Specifically, of all the answers students provided, we can easily confirm that they have a positive attitude towards the concept of practical training and deem it as a compatible tool for acquiring practical knowledge – and understanding – of the subject matter they study. Finally, we can conclude that it is a way through which one can grasp the implementation of laws and regulations, procedures and established practices in the judiciary, the economy etc.

This is based on the fact that 73,4 percent of students believe that the practical instruction will help them a lot, or sufficiently enough, in learning and understanding the practical aspects of the subject matter at hand.

A superficial analysis of the theory and regulations in Macedonia is enough to determine that the problems and weaknesses that are present in this field are not a result of the absence of a legal framework, but a lack in the organization, the willingness, the degree of cooperation and attention that institutions devote, which are more or less in a position to contribute to the improvement of this process.

By analyzing the numerous aspects, we conclude that the responsibility regarding the quality of the practical training lies not only with the universities (law faculties), but it is also conditioned by several factors that can contribute to its improvement. We are of the opinion that practical training for students is a *segment whose positive effects have far-reaching and multifunctional purpose and in the long term contribute to the growth and development of the economy and the public sector.*

The positive effects and the real advantages of practical training can be seen in a shorter term, but only if the economic sector and the universities effectuate this concept and accept it as an investment with an estimated future consequence for the economic prosperity and the health of the business sector and public policies.

A serious approach to the practical training during the educational process by every country in the field will contribute to reducing the weaknesses and gaps in qualified workforce. Although as a segment of labor law policy, labor laws provide for the concept of hiring interns, the practical training reflects the positive effects in several segments by lessening the burdens during the process.

Given that the applicable regulations in Macedonia are compatible with the modern European trends regarding this issue, it is clear that the main role in terms of the concept, scope and content of implementing the practical training is in the hands of universities (faculties). However, as we can see from the regulations and the analysis of the data, it seems we can rightly conclude that the responsibility for quality student practical training is not only with the universities, but in the hands of several stakeholders.

Starting from the fact that students are the future workforce that will be available to the private and public sector to utilize, it is necessary to understand the need to invest in the student practical training, on short and long term basis, so the benefits in a broader economic context can become apparent.

The obligation with respect to the appropriate organization, the structure of classes, the teaching units, etc, is in the hands of the universities. This comes also from Article 7 of the

Rules of MES for the organization of practical training for students, which stipulates the obligation for adapting the programs, i.e. incorporating them into the already accredited programs or planning them for future, new, programs of study at the universities.

The contribution universities can have is in strengthening the cooperation, establishing mutual relations with the economic and the public sectors by providing quality staff for practical training (students with high GPA average and capacity and interest in research) and vice versa, proper attention to students as a mode for their advancement and investment in the creation of adequate human resources in the institution where students intern.

In Macedonia, despite the legal obligations there are still students who do not acquire practical training as part of the planned program. Research shows that universities do not fully take into account the importance of organizing and providing a list of organizations where students can have practical experience, which is contrary to the decisions of the Rules of MES and the need for students to gain practical knowledge in the field of law. Most of the students believe that the institutions and employees in the private and public sector where practical training is available contribute immensely to their success in understanding and learning the subject matter, which proves that the corporate social responsibility and the responsibility of state authorities is quite high. However, this conclusion may come to be questioned by a more thorough analysis and that deserves a separate research.

This is further evidence that students to a large degree face administrative barriers and procedural problems in terms of quality, engagement and logistics, but data shows that students are still satisfied. This is based upon the responses of students that were not cited in this paper in order to avoid overburdening. To this end, students believe that the concept of practical training will greatly contribute to their ability to establish working relationships, i.e. in their realization as future professionals in the field of law.

Lastly, based on everything stated in the applicative and theoretical part of the study, we believe that the institutions (both private and public sector) have the responsibility to have a positive contribution, as well as offer logistical support for student practical training opportunities, although there is no apparent interest in it for them. However, the main role is still played by the universities (law faculties) which have to invest more energy, develop better strategies and make the overall process simpler so that students would not be faced with the current administrative problems.

The law faculties, as part of the universities, have the responsibility to influence the economic sector through establishing sound cooperation and demonstrating the advantages of providing quality student placements. However, it is a matter that directly concerns the students, while the universities have a dominant role, consequently a responsibility to influence the organizations.

It seems to us that only through increased efforts can law schools provide useful and efficient practical training, which translates into content and knowledge and not only a pro forma fulfillment of the legally prescribed requirements.

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