2020 Report
on Graduates Employment Status in Italy

Survey related to Covid-19 – first months of 2020

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1. Introduction

AlmaLaurea Interuniversity Consortium (AlmaLaurea) was founded in 1994 and comprises 78 out of the 98 Italian universities. AlmaLaurea carries out every year two surveys on graduate profile and graduate employment status at one, three and five years from graduation. AlmaLaurea dataset, as main research tool, results from the merge of different kinds of data acquired at different stages and processed for survey run: administrative data officially provided by the graduate's university, data provided by the student close to graduation in the framework of the annual profile survey carried out; data provided by the graduates following their academic career. High-quality data on the pathways of graduates after they finish their studies enable policy-makers and educational institutions to improve future teaching and learning outcomes, the employability of graduates, tackle skills gaps and mismatches.

Coping with the Covid-19 pandemic has been a very difficult and challenging endeavour worldwide. This situation particularly affected global labour markets as well as graduates employment status, as many of them were (and to some extent continue to be) affected by restrictive measures to protect public health. The worldwide employers and employees entities had to adapt to this new and difficult situation. Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (W.H.O) on March 11, 2020[1]. Since then it has spread beyond borders and affected the lifestyle behaviour of people. This pandemic not only adversely affected the physical health of individuals, but also brought forth significant changes in their lifestyle.

For this reason, AlmaLaurea, as a national reference point in tracking graduates carried out an ad-hoc national survey in order to understand how Covid-19 affected the employment status of graduates and their future prospective.

The survey implemented from March to June 2020, involved more than 100.000 graduates who concluded their academic career between January-June 2019 (T+1) and around 50.000 graduates who concluded their academic career between January-June 2015 (T+5). The present essay presents the results of more than 46.000 interviews at one year form graduation and about 19.000 interviews at five years from graduation. From the survey

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[1] https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019.

are excluded the graduates of medicine degree, due to emergency situation in act in that period.

Among first level degree graduates interviewed at one year from graduation, 60,8% of them are enrolled at a second degree course; the analysis will focuses on those who chose not to follow the academic career (38,4%).

The results of data analysis underlined that the new graduates (at one year from graduation) are those more negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The graduates at five years from graduation, for the fact that they are in the labour market for a longer time, they did not reported that their employment status suffered particularly.

In particular, despite the fact that there are differences among first and second degree graduates employability status, the negative impact is more visible in South of Italy and especially among females.

2. Employment rate

During the first months of 2020, the employment rate at one year after graduation is 65,0% of first level degree graduates and 70,1% of second level graduates. Comparing with the previous survey carried out in 2019, both indicators dropped, respectively -9,0% and -1,6%. Regarding gender gaps in labour market, 62,4% of women first level degree graduates are in employment, whereas men's employment stands at 69,1% (in 2019 the rates were 72,2% and 77,2 respectively). The second level degree graduates employment rate is 66,2% for women and 75,5% for men (in 2019 the employment rate after one year from graduation were 68,2 and 76,5% respectively).

In terms of geographical distribution, we face an increase of the North-South gap: in 2020, the employment rate of first level graduates who declared their residence in North is 71,4% while those from South face an employment rate of 56,5% (in 2019 the employment rates were respectively 80,6% and 64,8%). Among the second level graduates, their employment rate in North was 79,0% while in South was 61,2% (in 2019, the employment rates were respectively 81,0% and 62,3%).

At five years after graduation, the situation remain positive: the second degree level graduates face a small increase in the employment rate during the first months of 2020, comparing with 2019 (+2,0%) and is at 88.8%.

3. Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate analysis confirms the above mentioned considerations. The indicators related to the first months of 2021 shows, at one year after graduation, an unemployment rate of 18,7% for the first level graduates and 15,4% for the second level graduates. Comparing to the previous 2019 survey we noticed a significant increase of unemployment rate, respectively, by +4,5% and +1,6%.

At five years after graduation, the unemployment rate during the first months of 2020 was 5,5% for the second level graduates, in slight decrease compared to 2019 and is confirmed regarding the distinctions related to gender and geographic distribution.

4. Type of job

The first indicators of 2020 show that one year after graduation, the self-employment represents 10,5% of first level graduates and 9,6% of second level graduates. The first level graduates with a contract for an indefinite period are 29,1% while second level graduates with such contract are 24,6%. Graduates with agency staff of temporary employment contract are 35,8%, first level graduates and 35,9%, second level graduates. Comparing to 2019 we notices a decrease of self-employment for both categories of graduates, first and second level (-3,3% and -2,9% respectively).

On the other side, regarding first level graduates, we remarked an increase of contracts for an indefinite period (+3,5%) and a decrease of agency staff of temporary contract (-2,9%); for the second level graduates the trend was opposite: a decrease of contracts for indefinite period (-1,2%) and an increase of other types of contracts - agency staff of temporary contract (+2,4%).

If we focus on second level graduates, five years after graduation, the first 2020 data show us a decrease of self-employment from 19,6% in 2019 to 18,15 in 2020. A slight decrease was registered as well for those with contracts for an indefinite period and other typology of contracts.

5. Earnings

Regarding the earnings, the partial data of 2020 show us that the net monthly earning at one year after graduation was an average of 1.177€ for first level graduates, and 1.261€

for second level graduates. Comparing to 2019 the net earnings show a decrease: -2,8% for first level graduates and -1,9% for second level graduates.

During the first months of 2020, one year after graduation, men earn more than women: for first level graduates man's monthly earnings after tax is 1.297€ while women's monthly earnings is 1.090€, respectively +19,1%; for the second level graduates the amounts are 1..379€ for men and 1.166€ for women. Comparing to 2019 survey, the earnings are decreasing for both men (-2,8% for first level graduates; -2,6 for second level graduates) and women (-3,7% and -1,4%, respectively).

One year after graduation, the graduates net earnings are higher in North, 1.227€ for first level graduates comparing with 1.041€ net earnings of those working in South; for second level graduates the earnings are 1.311€, respectively 1.065€. Comparing to 2019 survey, the earnings are lower both in North (-1,8% for first level graduates, -1,0% for second level graduates) and in South (-1,3% and respectively -2,0%).

At five years after graduation, the first data of 2020 shows a net monthly earning of 1.502€; comparing to 2019 there is not a significant difference (1.499€).

6. Degree efficacy and labour market

The first results of 2020 show that 50,5% of first level graduates and 61,9% of second level graduates who are working at one year after graduates declared that the degree title is efficacy or very efficacy for their enter in labour market. Compared to 2019, the efficacy level of degree result lower for first level graduates, -7,8% and just a little bit higher for second level graduates, +0,4%.

At five years after graduation, the degree is declared very efficacy or efficacy by 65,3% of second level graduates, same as in 2019.

7. Graduates labour market some consideration based on AlmaLaurea database

The analysis of CV's AlmaLaurea databank[2] represent an important and interesting observatory for graduates demand for labour in this particular period. The indicators

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[2] Started in 1994, the databank has now about 3.1 million graduates CVs, graduates belonging to the 76 universities that are part of Almalaurea Interuniversity Consortium. In 2019 were acquired by companies

related to research and CVs acquisition by companies, allow us to have in real time the demand for graduates by companies. In 2019 and 2020 about 16.000 companies access to the AlmaLaurea platform and services and cannot be considered as aggregate data at national level. Are less representative the very small companies(less than 10 employees) and are more representative the companies active in industrial sectors. In services sector, more representative are those active in IT sector.

In January 2020 were acquired from AlmaLaurea database more than 100.000 CVs, 15,1% more than the previous month. 2020 started in best way, but first decrease in companies demand for graduates was noticed in February 2020 (-17,3% less that same month of previous year), than dropped in March (-45,1%), April (-56,1%) and May (-55,8%). It was noticed a small increase soon after the end of lockdown.

In January 2020 were published 5.920 jobs offers on AlmaLaurea bulletin board, 6.5% more than same month of previous year.

Fig. 1 shows us the Job offers flows in the two reference years (2019 and 2020). Following the Covid-19 outbreak, in March were published -31,0% less than in 2019, in April -53,2% while tin May the variation was – 64,2%.

Fig. 1   Job offers publications on AlmaLaurea platform, January-May 2019 and 2020
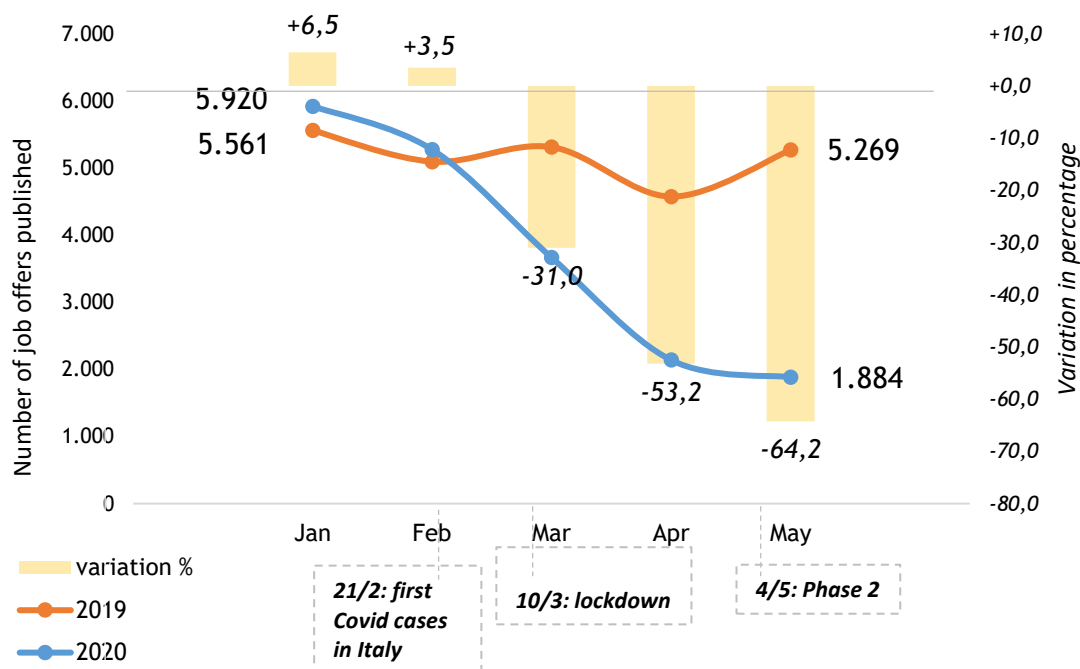
The decrease in job offers publications refers both to AlmaLaurea bulletin board as well as those published through Universities placement offices.
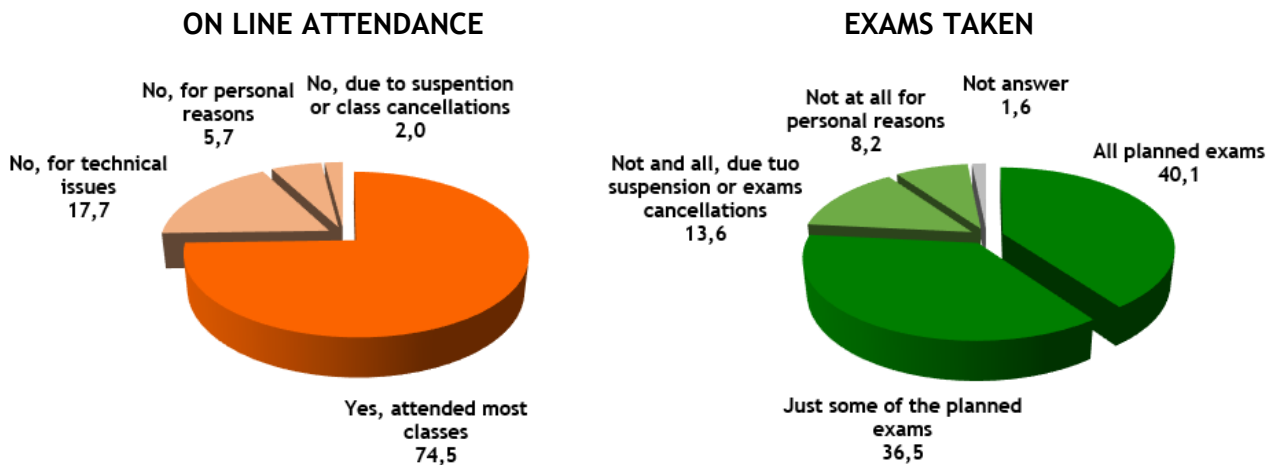
8. Covid-19 survey main results

The cohort covered different variables as gender, territorial distribution of residence, study programme, etc. The survey results collected from May 29th and June 3rd 2020 refers to 810 first level graduates and 1.003 second level graduates at one year after graduation. At five years from graduation, were collected 932 second level graduates respondents.

The majority of students managed to attend the classes and take, at least part of, the planned exams.

74,5% of second level graduates managed to attend the majority of classes during the pandemic reference period (Fig.2). 17,7% did not attend the classes due to technical issues, among others lack of connection or PC problems; 5,7% did not attend classes for personal reasons, while the remaining 2% did not attend it due to suspension and class cancellations.

40,1% of second level graduates managed to take all planned exams, while 36,5% managed to take only part of it. The remaining 21,8% did not managed to take any exam (13,6% independent of their own will due to suspensions or exam cancellation; 8,2% of them did not take the any exam due to personal reasons).

Fig. 2 – Second level students enrolled in an Italian university: COVID-19 impact on class attendance and exams taken (in %)

ON LINE ATTENDANCE

No, for personal reasons
5,7

No, due to suspention or class cancellations
2,0

No, for technical issues
17,7

Yes, attended most classes
74,5

EXAMS TAKEN

Not at all for personal reasons
8,2

Not answer
1,6

Not and all, due tuo suspension or exams cancellations
13,6

All planned exams
40,1

Just some of the planned exams
36,5

Half of second level students (50,9%) consider that the emergency situation will have no impact on own academic path; among those, 3,1% consider that could have a positive impact on it. The others instead, consider that the pandemic situation will have a negative impact on their academic path in term s of thesis preparation or a delay of the final exam. In particular, 22,1% consider that the emergency situation will provoke a delay of the final exam without negative impact on thesis preparation, while 9,5% consider that will have a negative impact on preparation even if will be no delay of final exam. 17,4% of students consider that a negative impact will be on both aspects (Fig.3).

In terms of gender differences, men seem to be more optimistic than women. The majority of man declared that the Covid-19 emergency will have no negative impact on academic performance (54,0% men compared to 43,4% of women), while the women are more concerned about the delay on achieving the degree.

Fig. 3 – Second level students enrolled in an Italian University: Covid-19 impact on academic path – thesis preparation and final exam timing (in%)

Negative impact on both, preparation and final exam timing
17,4

No impact
47,8

Negative impact on final exam
22,1

Negative impact on preparation
9,5

Positive impact
3,1
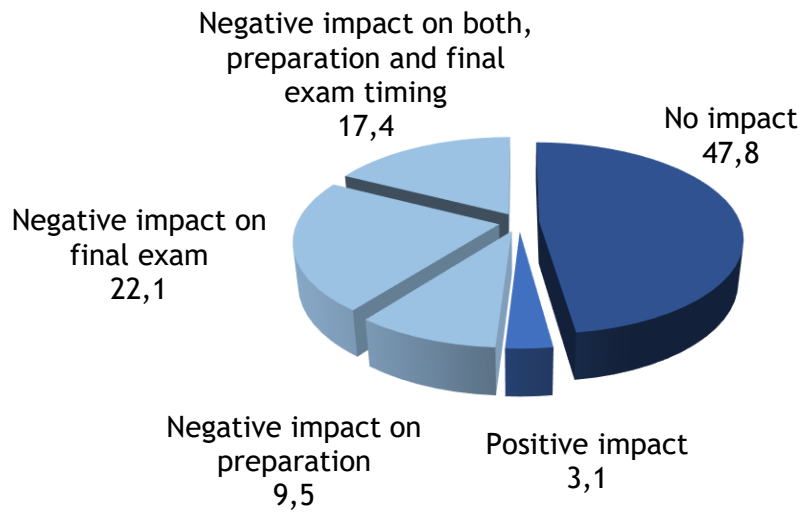
Conclusions

In short, Covid-19 had a noticeable effect in each of us daily life as well as in our work activities. Most of the difficulties reported relate to the change from face-to-face to online communication and job related activities carrying out. Most graduates found it difficult to interact with other people exclusively online as there were communication barriers. The second level graduates demonstrated more optimism in a return to normality, than their colleagues at five years after graduation and both groups consider highly probably the demand of new skills and competences in their professional path, once concluded the pandemic emergency situation.

Related to external environment factors, especially the global epidemic Covid-19, may affect graduates working status and managers must be examined for a sense of risk management. On this basis, the resume of many companies or organizations activities imposed the necessity of preventive risk management measures to tackle threats and challenges brought on by adaptive risks. The continuation of total or partial online working show us that not all employees were equipped with the required technological media or information technology tools.

Despite these drawbacks, there were a number of improvements that should not be overlooked. For example, many Universities became familiar with online communication and it is clear that skills and knowledge can be acquired and achieved also digitally and efforts should be done in order to increase graduates employability.