

The Discussion on the Problems of the Employment of University Graduates

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Abstract

Graduating from university is an important turning point in one's life, during this period graduate will encounter many problems. There are many studies on the employment of university graduates, but the relative study about the problems they encounter in the particular period of before and after they join the work are not much, this paper do research on problems of these graduates encounter before they enter the labor market and initial period after they go to work, The author mainly use the method of data processing to finish this research. At the end of this paper the author put forward several corresponding suggestions.

Key words: University graduates; Employment; Job searching

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INTRODUCTION

Sociology holds that people on different stage play different roles as their physical and mental grow to maturity and their career development. At the same time, they should undertake corresponding different obligations. Some people are able to shift roles smoothly, some people may encounter psychological confusion and inadaptability when they face the change. The transition from graduation from university to work can be said at a crucial point in

one's life. Prior to this, his identity was a student, and it hasn't changed much either from primary school through to the university. Their parents and other groups in society usually hold tolerant attitude to them because these students are still "children" in their eyes, therefore it is unnecessary for them to bear too much responsibility and obligations. But their identities will change significantly after they graduate and start to work. This paper will discuss the issue from the following aspects.

1. FEATURES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

College students, mostly at the age of about 18-24 year old when an individual fundamental physiological development has completed and already reached the level of adult both in physical and physiological features with increasingly mature psychological status as well, have formed a basically complete self-cognition and stable personality. In other words, the graduates have a relatively mature physiological, psychological and personality characteristics that has provided multiple preparations, including psychological basis, cognition of roles, rights and obligations, reservation of professional skills and knowledge, etc. that are necessary for them to enter into the society after graduation.

As the outstanding group within peers, they stay in school for a longer time in order to receive more education and professional training, which make them relative lack of social experiences compared with a peer group. However, for that they are also eager to enter into society earlier so as to realize their capacity and value, they will participate actively in the various community or volunteer activities, and other social practices.

In general, college students with relatively high cultural level and free, open, innovative thinking and comprehensive expertise, have their own ideas and opinions, and distinctive looking perspectives different with the average. They are vibrant, filled with enthusiasm

and bright illusions, waiting for going to society to unfold their talents after graduation. They care about social development, and think independently on public issues. However, after all, there would be a certain distance between the campus life and realistic society, thus they yet can't have a deep, accurate and comprehensive understanding of social problems, but often carry with unrealistic thinking. This also makes them less capable of recognizing and solving problems and frustrations encountered in the process of searching job.

2. GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

College student who was once called proud son of heaven is promised with a future of good career by going to university. However, corresponding to the profound changes into marketing economy up to 1990s, the guiding ideology of higher education has also changed tremendously. With the change of college enrollment and the employment system which have been shifted from planning assignment to market-oriented two-way selection, the labor market have become more open, flexible, thus the employment environment for college students has fundamentally changed. The employment difficulties of Chinese college students has appeared since mid-1990s, up to the year of 2003 that is the first year of graduation after the enlargement of enrollment, college graduates are facing unprecedented pressure of employment. The situation has become worse in recent years.

Table 1
Number of College Graduates in China (2001—2014)
(Unit: 10, 000 persons)

Year	Number of college graduates
2001	114
2002	145
2003	212
2004	280
2005	338
2006	413
2007	495
2008	559
2009	611
2010	631
2011	660
2012	680
2013	699
2014	727

Note. Source: <http://career.eol.cn>

According to Table 1, the number of college graduates grew continuously from 2001 to 2014 in China. In 2001, there are only 1,140,000 college graduates, but in 2014 the number is 7,270,000, which is 6.38 times the former,

and the average annual growth rate of college graduates in China is nearly 15.32%.

According to a statistic conducted by Department of Education, the number of the graduates who fail to hunt a job is on the rise constantly. In 2005, there were approximately 24 percent of graduates who had no jobs, which were 450,000 more than that of the number in 2001. Besides, the growth rate has reached 133 percent in 2005, compared with that of 2001. The statistics up to July 1st, 2011 show that the employment rate of college graduates is 68 percent which are about equal to that of 2009, and one percentage point higher than that of 2008, but 0.9 percentage point lower than that of 2007. These figures suggested more Chinese college graduates were finding jobs, with the employment rate back to the pre-crisis level. But these statistics yet do not exclude mistakes out of certain irregularities by reporting false data. Besides that, there are a large number of graduates from high school, secondary school, as well as other unemployed people who are waiting for employment every year.

Obviously, it is increasingly difficult for a university graduate to find a job today. The reasons for this are various. For one thing, the number of university graduates is increasing every year, while the job vacancies for them have not been increased in accordance. There is no doubt that the enrollment expansion of colleges had exerted a great detriment on both the society and university students themselves. For another, many graduates want to find a well-paid and comfortable job, which is always not practical. Finally, many employers think that the students who have just left from the university are in lack of working experience, instead they are more willing to hire the experienced.

3. PROBLEMS IN JOB SEARCHING

For college students before going to work, their identity and role haven't undergone changes, so do the social expectations, as well as their responsibilities and obligations. But once they go to work when graduate, their social roles and identities would be undergoing certain degree of "reak" which is not completely abandoning the past, but rather some kind of "inheritance" at the same time. "Break" and "inheritance" may necessarily act upon their minds while many college students can't quickly adapt to this change, and that brings about disappointment, anxiety and pessimism. Nowadays the college graduates may have to spend more money, energy and also faces more problems in the process of searching job than those in the time of planning economy. Specifically, problems are mainly within the following areas:

Social network: Not only human capital plays an important role in the process of searching job, but also social capital played a key role for that Chinese society

is a social community. Social capital is a kind of resource and property possessed by and within personal and interpersonal network and social structure. According to sociologist studies on social capital, social capital can bring resources embedded in the personal social network. The network would turn into a kind of social capital when it is to be utilized to find job and status. Comparing and different with the human capital, social capital is concerned about that “who does you know”. The social network can function to some degree in searching job, which may affect the fairness of the employment market to some extent for those who do not have such resources in finding job may suffer injustice which would bring many obscure things into existence.

Economic factors: The job searching process for graduates can be regarded as a multiple game which not only needs input of personal energy, but financial investment for more. According to the “Chinese College employment report 2010”, expenses in searching job of the graduates of 2009 increased about 1/10 comparing with graduates of 2008, while it amounted to be RMB1,230 yuan for those of 211 universities and RMB1,138 yuan for those of non-211 universities which turned out to be no few costs for the graduates without incomes. What’s more, they also need to rent rooms and get some extra supplies that are not needed in a school dormitory which certainly adds more costs at the same time. Therefore, economic problems will also be a headache for those graduates in the period around the job searching.

The graduation dissertation: The cumbersome procedures and future uncertainty may bring bad mood to those jobs seeking graduates. However, simultaneously they’re still obliged to complete their dissertation which usually needs at least more than half a year to finish from selecting topic though to the final defense. Therefore, the majority of graduates cannot devote their whole energy to search job. Although obsessed with anxiety along with searching job and doing dissertation, everyone wants to make a best choice by future planning while the future often turns to be unpredictable, so the majority of graduates in this period may have to put up with the painful life decisions different from the original thinking.

Problems for the graduates to face are not only these as the above mentioned. The more ones they may also often encounter in searching job can include such as: Greater demand for those graduates from famous universities while less employment for those from non-famous universities; permanent residence registration also affect many employer units will give priority to local graduates. All these have made a certain trouble for some part of graduates.

All these problems make graduates less adapted in the process of searching a job before entry of work and this also has received much concern from universities for that specialized counseling centers have been instituted to give students a certain amount of psychotherapy and

counseling. If we say that these students can still receive concern from school, then they are to face challenges on another stage when they leave school and start to work.

4. ENTRY INTO WORK

Once graduates get their formal entry into work, they are departing from the past when they do not have to shoulder social responsibility and that seems to be a kind of “break” and meanwhile to begin a new way of life. After all life is to be continued, they are supposed to experiment their socialization of the former stage by the family, school and society, therefore the “break” is also “inheritance” on which can they depend to be qualified in implementing the work and its responsibilities assigned by society.

In the previous content, we talked about that the expenses of graduates in searching job and early stage of entry into work may be relatively higher. Entry into work signs that they begin to create social wealth and to assume the obligations of family, then how about the income of graduates under such economic pressure?

Regarding the level of income for the graduates after employment, though there is no authoritative official statistic, we can know from the response of the media that the level of treatment after graduation is not so good. Such as the article with the topic “the broken dreams of high salaries, Chinese college students get pay less than a farmer” reported an interview with a graduated dreaming of income of 3,000 to 4,000 yuan for one month but finally working in a logistic company in remote area with income of 1,200 yuan per month after a lot of trouble in finding job. In the 2010 job fair held by Guangdong Financial Academy, there have been 2,200 positions from 83 enterprises with income of 1,200—1,800 yuan for each position. Since the pay is low, people naturally will not recruit, those frustrated employers then blame that students nowadays require too much. Cunchen Du, Huizhu Lin have done relevant investigation on the issue of income of university graduates in Changzhou. The survey shows that expecting pay of about 33% of undergraduates are monthly 1,501—2,000 yuan; that of about 27% are monthly 2,001—2,500 yuan; that of 26% are 2,500—4,000 yuan; nobody hopes the income of first job to be about 800—1,000 yuan. So do they expect while there is always a gap between aspirations and reality. According to survey, the income levels in the market follow as such: 800—2,000 yuan for junior college; 1,500—3,000 yuan for undergraduates; 2,800—5,000 yuan for masters. That is, actual income is 500 yuan lower than that generally expected. From the survey of graduates after employment for one year, 37% get income of 1,001—1,500 Yuan; 26% get income of 800—1,200 yuan, for the second;; 16% get 1,501—2,000 yuan, for the third. In other words, 800—2,000 yuan is the initial approximate range of income for employed graduates which amount to be 80% of the total surveyed population. This level would

be adjusted according to the enterprises' performance. The data above indicates that the treatments haven't met their expectations for salary. It can be said that good living conditions can't be maintained by such level of income, thus is undoubtedly a great test to those graduates on the early stage of employment.

On the one side, when they just begin to work, economic problems would plague them, then interpersonal relations will be another trouble to be faced. The "break" also means part with past relationships to some extent, and thus the way of getting around also is supposed to change. Before going to work, the relationship they are involved are just between teachers and students which are simpler than those relationships in the workplace. Therefore, they are also to adapt to the strange workplace environment which could be undoubtedly regarded as another process of "re-socialization".

We can see from the above that college graduates around the stage after leaving school and entry into work will face different kinds of problems with some level of dis-adaptation. In face of this situation, no matter the universities or the enterprises are obliged to follow the humanistic principle to give necessary consideration of their actual status in order to help them adapt to work sooner.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Under the current open market-oriented employment situation, university graduates are supposed to face the shift of social roles during the process of searching job and getting employed while many people will encounter dis-adaptation. Schools and employers should do necessary psychological counseling for those graduates to help them successfully go through this crucial period.

Firstly, universities should strengthen vocational guidance. Universities need to add some content about education and counseling relative to work in the early stage of career in the course of "career development and employment guidance". The career planning should be applied throughout the whole process of higher education. From the first and second grade, university students begin to establish a correct concept of employment to carry out the employment career planning guidance, to the third and fourth grade, university students should learn some specialized courses, focusing on job hunting skills training, relevant legal knowledge. At the same time, the school counseling institution should put more attention on the graduates' psychological change and adaptation of more guiding and regular instruction by holding lectures.

Secondly, the reform of education and teaching should be carried out. Many research literature shows that some

college curriculum is away from the demand of employers. In the job market, university graduates usually lack the necessary job skills, which are an important reason leading to the difficult employment situation. Practical teaching is an important part of education for university students in the course of cultivation. Universities should pay attention to the teaching of professional skills.

Thirdly, promoting private sector development to provide more job opportunities for university graduates. In recent years, private sector developed rapidly and played an important role in employment generation. However, non-state firms face numerous hurdles to growth. Unleashing the job-growth potential of the private sector to absorb more university graduates will require: improving access to credit by private firms by raising ceilings on interest rates; facilitating equity and bond fund raising for private firms; breaking up the state monopolies that are prevalent in the service sector.

Fourthly, the government should improve job search service. Easier access to information on job opportunities and fostering the establishment of private employment agencies would help improve the matching of university graduates as job seekers with prospective employers.

Fifthly, enterprises should help university graduates to make the transition from students to professional persons. Besides holding the training of working skills and regularities of management, the enterprises as the employer should give more care and concern for the new employees through collective activities to enhance the friendship and mutual assistance among the newly recruited and former ones.

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