

Discussion on the Methods and Experiences for Improving Employability of University Graduates in China

LES METHODES ET LES EXPERIENCES D'AMELIORATION DES ETUDIANTS ET DES EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

With the expansion of enrollment of universities, the number of graduates in China has grown year by year. The employment market has faced serious challenges as well. The key element in improving the employability of university graduates is to help them possess the employability and development capacity, meet the need of the rapidly development of the economic society and finally realize their personal career dream. On the basis of investigation and research and also combined with the actual situation of Changchun University of Science and Technology in enhancing employability of graduates, this article proposes some ideas and methods to improve employability of university graduates.

Key words: University graduates employment market; Employability; Career Guidance; Career Planning

Résumé

Avec l'expansion de la population des collèges, le nombre annuel de diplômés universitaires augmente, dans le même temps, le marché de l'emploi pour les étudiants face à rude épreuve. Comment résoudre les étudiants d'université pour obtenir la clé employée difficile de résider dans la capacité aiguisée l'emploi étudiant à l'université de cesse de lui permettre d'avoir l'emploi et la capacité de développement, et adapter le développement économique rapide de la société, de sorte que réaliser leurs idéaux professionnels. Cet article sur la base des enquêtes et recherches, combinés à la situation réelle de Changchun Université de technologie pour améliorer les élèves de l'employabilité, a soulevé plusieurs points de réflexion sur

la façon d'améliorer les élèves de l'employabilité.

Mots-clés: Le marché de l'emploi pour les diplômés des collèges; Employabilité; Orientation de carrière; Planification de carrière

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1. UNIVERSITY GRADUATES EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN CHINA

Since the university enrollment expansion in 1998, the number of university graduates has been increasing on a large scale yearly. There were 2.8 million university graduates in 2004 and 3.38 million in 2005, 4.13 million in 2006, 4.95 million in 2007, 5.59 million in 2009, 6.3 million in 2010 and in 2011 the number went to 6.6 million. Among those graduates, nearly 1 million are in the status of job-waiting and they have of course been accumulated in the next year.

According to international standard, China has gone into the stage that higher education popularized and graduates got taught by mass education instead of elite education. With the slowing down of the increasing rate of urban job positions in recent years plus returned students and the previous unemployed graduates, the university graduate employment issue will continuously challenge Chinese employment market.

2. MAIN PROBLEMS IN EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

There are both objective and subjective reasons in causing the difficult situation of university graduates employment.

In the objective aspect, the need of the employment market increases in a rather slow rate while the amount of university graduates has been increasing rapidly. Majors in some universities are unreasonable and market positioning of the training mode is inaccurate. With the expansion of enrollment of the universities, they have failed in connecting their majors with the need of labor market. In the subjective aspect, one of the most important one is that the employability of university graduates needs to be improved.

What is employability? The origin of employability is employment. Therefore, employability means that university graduates achieve their personal career objectives, meet the needs of the society and show their own values in the society after gaining knowledge and developing comprehensive qualities in the university. The content it should include professional abilities, research abilities, innovation and practice abilities, adaption abilities and information processing abilities, etc.

Current problems existed in employment of university graduates are:

a. Unclear about their job positioning.

Without knowing what they want, what they can do, interest in choosing a job, potential of their careers, unclear about their job positioning, have no idea about their competitive advantages to make the suitable companies chose them, all are problems in the current situation. In addition, lack of proper career planning and not sure about the future and objectives of their career also exist.

b. Lop-sided ideas in choosing jobs.

There are some mistaken ideas in most university graduates when they choose their jobs. They have paid more attention to the reality, aimed at the developed coastal areas to start their career and have taken great notice on salary. In the recruitment meeting, it can be found out the before the desks of companies from developed areas, people are crowded while it is the opposite situation for companies from less developed areas or companies with lower salary. Therefore, the contradictory phenomenon has appeared that university graduates either do not take vacant positions or have no jobs at all. This has led to the unbalanced circumstance that "university graduates would rather hold an unsatisfied job in developed areas instead of a better choice for their career in less developed areas."

c. Core competitiveness is not obvious.

Under the serious situation of employment and competition getting more and more fierce, university graduates who wish to remain invincible in the employment market not only have to obtain comprehensive quality but also stronger core competitiveness. In fact, most university graduates are lack of basic professional knowledge and their professional quality is not enough and they fail in connecting theory and the practice. Besides, most graduates do not have the ability to adapt

the society and their innovation ability and capacity are still insufficient.

d. Weak employment skills

Weak employment skills mainly show that one cannot represent his own talent to the employer. In addition, poor psychological quality, weak endurance of things and discrepancy in bearing difficulties are also the reflection of weak employment skills.

3. METHODS AND EXPERIENCES FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN CHINA

3.1 Making Career Plan in the First Year of the University to Forward the Starting Line of Career.

It is an important part for training students' employability that the university gives guidance on students' career planning. However, career guidance in Chinese universities is not widely taken. Many universities are lack of career consulting not to say guidance on university students' career guidance. A survey of 205 students taken in one of Beijing's key comprehensive humanistic and economic universities shows that most students do not have plans for their life. There are 62.2% of them do not have future planning about how they get better and improvement, 32.8% of them have a plan and only 4.9% have clear plans. The lack of career planning has increased blindness and frustration in job hunting.

Under this circumstance, the author thinks that university students should make career plan as early as possible. Reasonable career plan is the first step for students to become success and also an important element for students to get employability.

The most significant part for making career plan of university students is to set up the direction and objectives of the future career. To say that university graduates have difficulty in getting employed rather than saying that they are lost in employment and have no idea about the jobs they should do. Many students have the attitude that relaxing in the first year, working hard in the next and in the third year of the university it will still not be too late when they first step their feet on the ground of the university campus. Finally, in the last year of university, they lose their head when trying to find a job. As the old saying: get prepared or you will fail. Set a career plan will help students find clear life goal and then encourage students to fight for it and hold opportunities.

There is a very famous experiment which lasts 25 years made by Harvard University. The theme of the experiment is "the influence of target on life". The object of the experiment is a group of young people who have almost the same intelligence, education and environment background. Before the experiment, they have investigated the group of young people and have found

that 27% of them do not have personal target, 60% are unclear about their objectives, 10% have clear but short-term target and 3% have clear and long-term target. After 25 years, it has shown that the 3% persons have been working hard on their objectives and almost every one of them is successful in society and many of them are leaders or elites. The 10% persons have achieved their short-term target continuously and finally turned into professionals in many industries and most of them are live in the upper side of the society. The 60% people have steady lives and jobs but without too much achievements and most of them lived in the lower side of the society. The rest 27% live without objectives and are not happy. They usually compliant about others and the society which they thought “did not give them opportunities”.

From the data above, it can be concluded that the possibility of being successful depends on whether one has a specified, clear career target and career planning.

When doing career planning, university students can give a comprehensive understanding and analysis on themselves by interest test, personality test, skill test, value test and study style test. Students should base on their own background and social circumstance and then make sure the direction of their careers. Make a complete career plan and then make an overall objective for the university time, after that, take action to achieve those objectives.

3.2 Career Guidance Goes Through the Whole Period of Students' University Time.

Career guidance is only taken in the last year of the university, and now we need to change it into a thorough process which starts from the first year of the university and lasts until graduation. It is also necessary to change the career guidance from only providing employment information to guidance of adaptability and growth which have to include guidance on career planning, quality and ability, value on employment, career ideas, job choosing, adaption of the social position and the ideas of graduates. This means career guidance must go through the four year study life of students. The university needs to set up independent content for each university year and all these contents have to be connected as a whole system.

a. The freshman year. The university should mainly help students to get some understanding about the situation of their majors, the development trend and the situation of employment as well as carry out career plan design to help students to know themselves and therefore make plans for their future employment and finally fulfill the plan.

b. The second year. The university should help students to know the requirements and needs of the society and all industries. To help them understand what are useful skills and qualities for the employment market and guide them to find ways for improving themselves. In addition, the university need to encourage students to take part in

all kinds of beneficial social activities to improve their personal quality besides leading them studying for a good result.

c. The third year. This is the period for students to get fully understand about their professional lessons as well as choosing their future development directions (employment, go abroad and preparing for the postgraduate exam). In this period, career guidance should be combined with students' personal development directions, the development of their professions, career development targets, etc.. The university has to lead students to learn their professional lessons, take relative courses, pay attention to the training of professional skills, encourage them to start their own businesses, help them understand the policy of graduate entrepreneurship and grasp basic knowledge and by education practice, social practice to improve the comprehensive ability and career quality of students. At the same time, the guidance about the skills of job interview is also needed. It includes related laws and regulations, how to communicate with the employer, and how to write an excellent cover letter and how to improve interview skills, etc.. In addition, the university should start the education about students' idea on employment to help them set up “an exoteric idea about employment” and help amend or modify the career targets which were set up by students in the first year.

d. The last year. The university needs to give guidance on graduates' employment practice and keep up with the situation of them as well as resolving difficulties in their practice and provide technical help. Career guidance in this period should focus on employment service so as to help students analyze situation of employment, employment policies and properly adjust their own expectations about employment. Meanwhile, the university can provide information about employment for students and help resolve problems they have encountered in job interview. It can also help them rearrange their attitude about employment and give employment psychological guidance to students to cultivate good psychological quality and finally makes them have encourage to face reality, competition and frustration and meet the challenges and competitions of the employment market with good state.

e. The university should investigate the working situation of the employed graduates and summarize the feedbacks from them so as to provide career guidance for the students in the university.

3.3 Improve the “Order-Orientated Cultivation of Talents” Mode for School and Companies Cooperation.

Previously, many school set education standard and schedule according to their own education patterns which is for the purpose to guarantee scientific and systematic training. However, due to the change of the need of society and requirements of employers, this training mode

is usually inconsistent with the reality and sometimes even comes apart. The advantage for using the “order-orientated” training method is that it can successfully overcome the above defect of the previous training mode through setting training plans by the company and the university.

The nature of the order-oriented training is to help students “get employed as soon as they graduate”. In the talent-training aspect, students can learn some knowledge or skills of the position they are going to in advance and after they graduate, they can just get the job as soon as possible.

The order-orientated training mode has made the employer have more and direct rights for speaking. Students are employed when they are at school and there is no interim between graduation and employment. The order-orientated training mode can help students, universities and companies achieve the win-win-win situation.

3.4 Encourage and Train Students to Carry out Research Studies to Improve Practical and Innovation Abilities.

Compared with traditional study, encouraging and training students to carry out research studies can bring more initiative and participation interest of students and also improve operational and innovation abilities of students. It is specified as the following:

a. Encourage students to take part in various kinds of competition and technological events to improve professional practical ability of them.

b. Social practice. Through social practice, students can know better about the society in a perceptual way which includes the knowledge of social relations and interpersonal relation. It has directing function for students to fix their own positions in the society and development. In addition, it is a better way for students to get in touch with various kinds of people especially some leaders in certain industries via social practice. Get in touch with those people could help grasp the latest development of the industry easily and understand the latest and best technologies which will help university students know better about their own career directions and basic requirements of the jobs they can take so that to adapt the market.

In the process of social practice, many universities have built up social practice bases for students. These bases usually built up by cooperation and they are connected with countryside, corporations, communities and corps, etc.. All these bases are connected as a union which is actually unified with the employment market.

In fact, building a new base means opening a new employment market. The employers will get more information about university graduates in advance and at the same time promote connection between employers and the universities in information exchange which has

created a new win-win model for employment.

c. To participate in the scientific research subject. Scientific research subject is a way to gain knowledge and skill through doing some assisting work for the subject leader. It can help improve students’ ability in problem solving in a large scale.

3.5 Professional and Personalized Career Guidance

First of all, teachers who take charge of career guidance must meet the needs of the national standard of career guidance teachers. Then the university needs to build up consulting room for career guidance and provide face to face and one-for-one guidance for students to resolve confused thoughts of them in finding jobs. Building up career consulting website and increase methods for consulting, for example, telephone, email, online consulting, etc. to meet the requirement of students are very helpful for them to get the greatest help in the shortest time.

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the realistic employment of university graduates problem and makes research and investigation on it. By making use of the investigation result and the actual situation of Changchun University of Science and Technology in enhancing employability of graduates, this paper has provided detailed explanation and representation which will definitely help resolve the employability problem of university graduates.

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