

The Social and Psychological Challenges Faced by The Graduate Group in Shenzhen

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Abstract. Shenzhen is one of the metropolises with highest economy growth and people are often attracted by such cities as there would be more opportunities. Also, in order to appeal and recruit talents, Shenzhen government has implemented several policies which favor them to migrate settle down. There are three major types of labors: undergraduate students, migrant workers and workers from talent programs. In this paper, undergraduate students will be the focus. Undergraduate students are facing with severe unemployment problem. The insufficient market demand and changing demand are the main reasons for difficulties of employment for undergraduate students. On top of that, there are many other factors, such as weak global economic growth, China's low economic growth rate, slow adjustment and upgrading of China's industrial structures, to name just a few, have challenged the employment of graduates. This paper will discuss about undergraduate students' psychological and social dilemmas as well as analyze the general social problems.

Keywords: Undergraduate student; youth employment; social and psychological difficulties.

1. Introduction

The channels of immigration to Shenzhen mainly include the following ways: education, vocation, moving with spouses, points system, investment, and talents. According to the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Statistics, Shenzhen's permanent population was 17,790,100, the highest population in Shenzhen; there was a gain of 128,300 residents from the end of the previous year [1]. The research object is graduates, and the results reveal that there were 11.58 million college graduates by 2023. The proportion of sluggish and freelance employment has increased somewhat, from 18.9 percent and 13.2 percent in 2023 to 19.1 percent and 13.7 percent in 2024, respectively. With the continued expansion of graduate student enrollment, the proportion of fresh graduates pursuing further studies in China has risen from 4.9 percent to 6.5 percent in 2023. The unit of employment remained the most popular destination, accounting for 55.5 percent. However, this figure was down two percentage points in 2024 [2].

Graduate employment prospects in 2024 exhibit a diverse development pattern, with graduates majoring in IT, game industry, electronics, communication, semiconductor, manufacturing, and business administration in significant demand. Also, most graduates went to enterprises, with state-owned enterprises, foreign-invested enterprises, and other enterprises accounting for 5.96 percent, 0.77 percent, and 66.58 percent, respectively. The rate of further education at home and abroad is 8.82 percent, and self-employment accounts for 3.7 percent. When graduates are looking for work in an uncertain macroeconomic environment, they regard stability ahead of other considerations. Of those looking for work, 51% positioned stability as the most important factor, preferring to improve their quality of life and ability to withstand risk by having reliable sources of income and employment [3].

One of the issues graduates have in the workplace is that they do not have an intimate knowledge of their own interests and abilities, which makes it challenging for them to choose a career or establish clear objectives. Many undergraduates may have mental health problems which includes depression and anxiety due to the pressures of employment. The main research purpose and significance of this paper is to evaluate the adverse effects of contemporary society on the graduate group and to investigate some practical and feasible ways to address the situation.

2. Current Difficulties and Psychological Problems Faced by Graduates

At present, the biggest dilemma facing the graduating group is that the employment pressure is increasing. The number of unemployed people in Shenzhen has increased by 40% compared with the same period last year, showing that the employment situation is becoming more and more severe. Low-threshold flexible jobs, such as online car drivers and delivery riders, are now almost full and have fallen into fierce vicious competition [4]. Although these jobs provide certain employment opportunities, the income is meager and difficult to support the living expenses of graduates [5]. On the other hand, there is economic pressure. As a first-tier city, Shenzhen has a relatively high cost of living, including rent, transportation, food and other expenses. For newly graduated students, the economic pressure is particularly heavy. Under the grim employment situation, graduates often find it difficult to find ideal jobs, and may even face the risk of long-term unemployment, which further exacerbates their economic pressure.

The difficulties faced by graduates have caused certain psychological problems. In the face of fierce employment competition and uncertain future, graduates are easily anxious about not being able to find a job, not being able to support themselves, and even losing confidence in the future. After leaving the campus environment, they find that the work in the workplace is far from their expectations, which makes them feel lost and depressed [6]. At the same time, some graduates will start to doubt their abilities and feel inferior because of repeated failures in the job-hunting process. In the diversified employment market, it is often difficult to determine their career direction, which leads to lack of pertinence and effectiveness in the job-hunting.

The graduates of Shenzhen are facing severe employment pressure, economic pressure and other social difficulties. At the same time, they are accompanied by psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, self-recognition and positioning ambiguity, as well as the lack of social support and belonging. In order to solve these problems, it is necessary for the government, society, schools and individuals to work together and support each other.

3. Reasons for Social and Psychological Dilemmas

3.1. Overall Environment

In the post-epidemic era, although the economy has rebounded, the economic development of all walks of life is still affected to some extent. Business operations and development face new challenges, leading to a decrease in job vacancies and exacerbating the competitive pressure in the employment market. With the rapid growth of the number of college graduates, the number of job vacancies in the market is relatively limited, resulting in an imbalance between supply and demand. Especially in some popular industries and high-paying jobs, the competition is more intense [7].

With economic development and industrial restructuring, some traditional industries are gradually declining, while emerging industries have emerged, but they are not yet fully mature and stable, and the demand for and allocation of talent are constantly changing and adjusting. There is a mismatch between the skills needed in the market and the majors studied by graduates. On the one hand, there is a shortage of some highly skilled talents; on the other hand, a large number of graduates cannot find jobs corresponding to their majors.

As a first-tier city, Shenzhen attracts a large number of talents. This makes graduates not only compete with their peers in the job-hunting process, but also with experienced professionals in the workplace. High-quality education, medical resources and other resources are often concentrated in a few regions or institutions. In order to obtain these resources, graduates have to choose to stay in the competitive city.

3.2. Individual Backgrounds

Most students come from relatively economically disadvantaged rural or small-town families, with parents who are mostly farmers or low-income workers, who have high expectations for their

children's education, but may also lack the necessary educational resources and perspectives [8]. At the basic education level, they often improve their grades through intensive problem-solving and test-taking training, lacking a diverse learning and life experience. After entering college, they may face acculturation, social communication disturbance and so on. At the same time, they often carry the high hopes of their families and society and have high expectations of themselves. However, in the face of fierce job competition and social pressure, it can be confusing and anxious.

The frustration that encounters while applying for a job and difficulty can let "small-town swot home" feel inferior and frustrate, doubt oneself ability and value thereby, lose confidence to future. Faced with employment pressure, the cost of living and difficulties in social integration, psychological problems such as anxiety and depression will become felt helpless, lost and hopeless, and even thoughts of avoiding reality. In big cities, "small-town swot" because of their background and feel out of place. They may be caught in a crisis of identity, unsure where they belong and what kind of life they should pursue [9].

3.3. Economic Problems

To fill this shortcoming in people's livelihood, Shenzhen has made many efforts, especially in terms of financial investment. Take 2023 for example, the city's nine categories of people's livelihood expenditure totaled 331 billion yuan, of which 100.15 billion yuan was spent on education. For Shenzhen, the Shenzhen government has been working hard on education for a long time. According to official data, from the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to 2020, Shenzhen has added a total of 641 thousand new public elementary education degrees, ranking first in China. The city's total investment in basic education is nearly 240 billion yuan, an average annual increase of nearly 21% [10].

However, while the inflow of people continues to grow at a high level, new degrees have always struggled to meet the demand, and the public has strongly voiced their complaint. In response to the huge pressure on degrees, in December 2020, the Shenzhen Municipal Committee and Government issued the "Implementation Opinion on Speeding Up the Construction of Degrees to Promote Quality Development of Basic Education" (hereinafter referred to as "Implementation Recommendation"). Put forward the "one-million-degree plan" – by 2025, the city will add 740 thousand public compulsory education degrees, 145 thousand kindergarten places, together with the construction of the new public general high school degree of 97,000, a total of nearly one million new basic education degrees. When the plan is completed, the total size of public compulsory education in the city will nearly double. Among them, the number of new public compulsory education degrees will reach three times that of the 13th Five-Year Plan period [10].

The Shenzhen government has invested heavily in education. But for small-town swot writers, the fact that they can pass the exams and get into top universities is often a huge investment in their families' education. These include tuition fees, living expenses, tuition fees and so on, which are not a small expense for families with limited financial resources. As graduates enter society, they may find that their salary levels do not quickly reward their families for their education. Especially in situations where financial pressures are high, the gap can make them feel guilty and anxious.

At the same time, as a first-tier city, Shenzhen's overall salary level is relatively high, but for graduates who are just entering the workforce, the salary level often does not meet their expectations. Especially for those who come from rural areas or small-town swot, they may face greater economic pressure. According to statistics, the actual monthly salary of graduates in Shenzhen is an average of 9,800 yuan, but this figure is still insufficient for graduates who need to bear the high cost of living. Many graduates find during the job search that the actual salary is often lower than their expectations. This gap not only affects the quality of life of graduates but may also have a negative impact on their career development and mental health.

4. Suggestions

First, the government needs to strengthen the deep integration of education and industry. It should guide colleges and universities to strengthen cooperation and exchanges with industries, promote the effective docking of professional setting and market demand. At the same time, colleges and universities should be encouraged to strengthen the practice teaching link and the construction of enterprise internship bases to improve students' practical ability and professional quality.

Second, the government should improve the employment service system and policy support. It should establish and improve the employment service system and policy support system to provide graduates with all-round and multi-level employment services. This includes establishing an employment information platform, holding job fairs, providing career counseling and training, etc. At the same time, a series of preferential policies should be introduced to encourage enterprises to absorb graduates and give them more development opportunities.

Moreover, it is important to promote the transformation of social concepts and the optimization of workplace culture. All sectors of society should work together to promote the transformation of social concepts and the optimization of workplace culture. Eliminate gender discrimination and stereotypes, advocate for an equal, open, and inclusive workplace culture. At the same time, strengthen psychological guidance and humanistic care for graduates to help them establish correct employment concepts and professional planning awareness.

Lastly, graduates can improve personal ability and skills to enhance their employment competitiveness. This includes strengthening the study of professional knowledge and the accumulation of practical experience, improving professional skills and comprehensive quality, expanding personal contacts and resources, and maintaining a positive and optimistic attitude and perseverance to face challenges and difficulties.

5. Conclusion

In today's society, the popularity of higher education continues to rise, and millions of graduates flood the job market every year. However, what goes hand in hand with this is an increasingly severe employment problem. Many graduates encounter many difficulties in the job-hunting process and eventually have to accept jobs far below their expectations, and even some graduates are under the huge gap between their ideals and reality. Behind this phenomenon, there are complex social, economic, cultural and personal reasons that deserve our in-depth analysis and reflection.

In the face of social and psychological difficulties faced by the group of Shenzhen graduates, schools and universities should set up employment guidance and psychological guidance courses, starting from reality, to solve the difficulties faced by graduates, so as to pay attention to cultivating practical ability and comprehensive quality. By doing so, students can maintain a positive and optimistic attitude, correctly face the setbacks and difficulties in the job-hunting process, constantly sum up experience and lessons, and improve their adaptability and psychological endurance. At the same time, research institutions in the future should continuously strengthen the research on employment guidance and psychological guidance for graduates to provide a more solid foundation for graduates.

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