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According to the Regulation of three transparent requirements of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, universities and colleges must announce their graduate employment rate. This is an informative channel for students to refer to when applying to majors in universities. All university students want to find a job that matches their desires, degree or ability or strength after graduation, etc. However, not every student, after graduation, can immediately find a job as desired.

Therefore, it is necessary to survey the graduate employment to provide an overview of the current employment status of the Sociology and Social Work programmes at the Faculty of Sociology.

These findings are based on an online survey, distributed via email and social networks to 225/299 alumni of the Faculty of Sociology who graduated from the cohort 31 to the cohort 34.

1. Post-graduation employment of the Faculty of Sociology graduates

The survey findings show that 75.3% of graduates responded to the survey (225 respondents in 299 contacted alumni), the recent graduates have higher percentage of respondents every year. This is due to the change in the graduates' phone numbers, contact addresses, and email addresses. Many graduates have not been able to connect with their classmates, so contacting them is difficult. The proportion of graduates majoring in social work responding to the survey is higher than that of those majoring in sociology at 80.5% and 69.9%, respectively.

There are 223 among 225 graduates, who responded about the time they got the first job after graduation. The findings show that only 7.6% of the Faculty of Sociology

graduates (17/223 students) had no job after graduation, and the rate of being employed is 92.4% with 60.1% of the graduates found a job during and... months after graduation (42.2% found jobs right after graduation, the rest got their first jobs during university and continued to do that after graduation).

Graduates in social work and sociology have the same basic rate of finding jobs after graduation; the difference among them is not much. In terms of graduation years, recent years' graduates were also more active than those of previous cohorts. This is reflected in the fact that the number of the graduates of the most recent classes looking for jobs during their university time was more than that of their seniors.

Regarding the graduates' first jobs, the research findings show the diversity in graduates' working positions: from university lecturers, office staff, to researchers; from communication officers, project officers, community developers to reporters, editors, MC, from sales to other freelance jobs. Among them, the number of alumni working as clerk/office workers are the highest with 76 people (36.7%). 13.5% of the first jobs after graduation are communication officers, project staff, community development staff, researchers and lecturers.

The percentage of sociology graduates working in research area is higher than that of social work graduates. The respective rates are 16.4% and 8.2% for graduates of sociology and social work (among them, there is no alumni of sociology working as a community development officer while the number of alumni of social work major is 2 respondents). This has partly confirmed that the Faculty's training goals are in the right direction. The rate of alumni participating in communication work as MC/reporters/editors is also 3.4% higher among the alumni of sociology than those of social work (12.7% of the alumni of the sociology and 9.3% of social work answering that the above jobs were their first jobs after graduation).

The survey findings also show that the years of graduation also affect the respondents' first jobs. The graduates whose graduation time is farther away from the survey time have higher percentage of responses with respect to the group of jobs as researchers, communication officers, and lecturers (with 25%) and the percentage decreases with graduation years nearer to the survey time. Regarding the first

workplace, the graduates have had many places of work, mainly in private enterprises (101 graduates, accounting for 48.8% of the respondents), followed by the jobs in media/marketing companies, with 19.3% of the respondents. State agencies such as ministries, departments, branches, political organizations, universities, and research institutes are also places where graduates found jobs after graduation with the rate of 11.6%.

Regarding the major, there are more social work graduates working in state agencies and private enterprises than sociology alumni. In contrast, sociology graduates are more prominent in research institutes, NGOs, and media companies.

Of the 206 graduates answering about their own work history after graduation, 113 alumni, account for 53.9% switched jobs with an average of more than 2 times (2.12 times), and the highest number of transition is 5 times. The types of jobs that saw the most transitions was researchers and project staff, with 17 out of 28 graduates changing their jobs regularly while the job switch rate in reporting/ editing even reached nearly 50%, seeing the least job switch rate. This is because jobs in project management only have a certain term, so after the end of the projects, the alumni found other jobs or switched to another research project. Besides, the most important reasons of job changes confirmed by many alumni are the monthly income rather than the need (21.2%), unsuitable working environment (24, 8%). Other reasons like the jobs did not bring out their full potential 9.7% or did not suit their degrees (6.2%) have a certain rate of selection. The reason for not being able to meet the job requirements has the lowest selection rate. This is a good sign in the sense that the Faculty's study programmes have efficiently prepared students for their future work.

From a major perspective, sociology graduates have a higher job change rate than that of social work graduates. Specifically, 62 out of 110 sociology alumni have changed jobs, accounting for 56.4% while this rate among social work alumni is 49/96 (accounting for 51%).

Income, working environment, promotion chance, and failure in self- development are the main reasons why sociology alumni change their jobs. Meanwhile, social work alumni have other reasons such as unrelated jobs to their degrees, high work pressure, or boring jobs. In other reasons such as high work pressure or personal

reasons, there is little difference.

2. Current employment of alumni of the Faculty of Sociology

Out of a total of 192 respondents about their current employment, nearly half of them are currently working in private enterprises, accounting for 45.8%, and nearly one-fifth of them in communication research or market research companies. If a comparison is made about the workplace group immediately after graduation and current jobs, it also shows a relatively similar picture of the “color” of the respondents’ workplaces.

If a comparison is made between the two majors of sociology and social work, it shows that the major of sociology sees higher rate of working in the following agencies than the major of social work: private enterprises, media/communication companies, non-governmental organizations, and research institutes. Meanwhile, alumni of social work have higher employment rate in state departments, ministries, as well as self-employment.

The survey found that 44.3% of the respondents whose jobs were related to their major, of which 10.8% of the alumni answered that they work exactly in their trained major, and the remaining percentage did the work partially related to their degree. More than half of the respondents are currently working in unrelated areas of their studies. If a comparison is made between the two training majors in the Faculty of Sociology, social work graduates have a higher rate of working in their field than the sociology graduates (15.6% vs. 6.5%). In contrast, concerning jobs partially matching their majors, the rate for sociology alumni was 10% higher than that of social work alumni (38.3% for sociology major vs. 28.1% for social work major).

There are three main basic reasons for not doing the jobs related to their degrees: first, they have hobbies, interests in other jobs (24.1%), second, they do not find the matching jobs (23.4%), and third, the location of current workplace is suitable for them (22.6%). There are other reasons, such as temporary employment while waiting to the right jobs.

Regarding the income: graduates’ income persists from less than 2 million VND to 10 million VND, of which the highest percentage is for the range from 4 million VND to

less than 10 million VND, accounting for 74.6%. The survey shows that, compared to the average life expenditure today, the graduates' income relatively meets their basic needs of life.

It can be said that alumni of the Faculty of Sociology are fairly active in finding jobs. A large percentage of the jobs found are actively sought after by the alumni. The main source of job search information is job advertisements on the mass media, job placement centers, and job fairs with a rate of 39.5%. In addition, relationships from friends, teachers, and acquaintances also account for the same proportion (39%) as sources through mass media. A small percentage of alumni got jobs thanks to their parents' relationship because their parents helped them to find it.

The alumni mainly found jobs through the media (social networks, employment sites, and websites of organizations, Buy and Sell newspaper...) or through the recommendations of friends, acquaintances and parents. Other social networks from schools, teachers, or job fairs have not yet been leveraged and promoted.

The sociology major sees a significantly higher rate of job searches through the mass media and introduction by friends and acquaintances than social work major, at 42.5% and 31.9%, and 34.9% and 29.8% respectively. More than a third of the alumni do not feel comfortable and stable in their current jobs, so they plan to switch jobs.

The further the alumni graduated from the survey time, the more satisfied they are with their current jobs. Specifically, 53.6% of the cohort 34 alumni intend to change job, and this percentage decreased in the cohorts 33 to 31 alumni at 31.1%, 30.6% and 25%, respectively. The reasons for looking for another job are various, from income issues to geographical location or working environment problems. The reasons also include their internal desires such as finding jobs related to their studies, their professional passion or their desire to try different working environments, to experience many fields to gain lessons or aspirations for promotion opportunities or seeking a job with long-term stability. Some others are currently doing seasonal works such as processing data, conducting surveys, so that they will be able to find jobs with better long-term stability.

Only 9.3% of the alumni are currently taking and have completed graduate courses and half of these have jobs related to their majors. 46 out of 203 alumni (22.7%) are currently taking training courses and focusing on improving their foreign language proficiency, taking postgraduate courses and studying for second degrees. The rest are taking classes of job skills, soft skills, or computer skills.

Many students, who did not get accepted to their dream major, choose any other majors in the college to get the school "label". There are also many students who initially love the majors but then find a new direction with higher income or because they do not find suitable jobs, they have to temporarily do a job to meet the minimum needs of life. There are many reasons why alumni could not find a job. The survey findings also partly clarify the point above.

The lack of basic skills creates barriers for alumni to convince employers and is also the causes leading to the new graduates' unemployment. Most of the people who have not found a job lack basic skills such as foreign language skills, teamwork skills, communication skills, etc. Besides, the respondents also said that they do not have sufficient relationships. In particular, due to the lack of work experience - practical skills, practical experience, graduates were subject to awkwardness and embarrassments (This seems to contradict the results of the above analysis that there is a high percentage of graduates doing extra work while studying at the university. However, the jobs that graduates did as extra work were mainly manual or paperwork tasks, which were unrelated to the majors).

Therefore, in the section assessing the need for knowledge and skills for current jobs, a survey scale (with 0 for "not necessary", 10 for "very necessary") indicates that communication/persuasion skill and teamwork skill are the two most skills for graduates, with much higher average scores than the rest of the contents, with 7.18 and 6.49, respectively. Meanwhile, the contents related to majors' knowledge such as: presentation of research findings (5.21); information gathering (5.); data processing and analysis (5.12); Research design and project evaluation (4.07) are ranked in the last position of the necessity for the current jobs. Social work alumni rated the need for the knowledge and skills raised in the questionnaires mostly higher than their social work counterparts. Research skills (analyzing, evaluating and

research presenting) are recognized more necessary for sociology alumni's work than for social work alumni. This may take root from the sociology program of the sociology major, the students enjoy the knowledge and skills integrated in their major subjects, while social work students are interested in other skills.

3. Some recommendations to improve the quality of students to meet the work requirements

First, the Academy needs to review, update and rebuild the content of the training programs close to the reality of market needs, to reduce theories, and increase professional practice, to link the study programmes to the needs of the labor market; to give students the opportunities to exchange and work with agencies, organizations, companies and enterprises so that they would gain knowledge, professional experience, to identify their career goals more clearly. In addition, the Academy Youth Union should diversify its communication channels to inform students about job opportunities so that they are better aware and oriented in their learning and training.

Second, in the process of learning, students also need to actively learn to acquire their professional knowledge, take skills training classes, and participate in social activities to improve basic skills such as: confident communication, teamwork, searching skills, computer and foreign language skills for their future jobs. In addition, students need to have a clear career orientation to make efforts to study, to train, and to promote their abilities in the field of their future occupation, to expand relationships with recruitment agencies to have advantages when looking for jobs.(1)

Third, in order to meet the requirements of the employers, the involvement of recruiters in the study programme's development is essential. This process helps recruiters reduce the time they take to retrain new employees. The studies should be connected with practice to provide human resources to the market more proactively.

Fourth, recruiters are a bridge between students and employers, so it is necessary to work closely with them in the recruitment process, to provide recruitment information, to train and foster more knowledge and skills to help students in their job search.

Recruiters can also provide advice and support students and graduates for job placement. Thus, promoting the role of recruiters in the stages of the training process is the key to the matter of creating job opportunities for students after graduation. In addition, many survey respondents said that the programs should focus on the subjects related to management and communication as well as reduce the number of subjects and increase the number of credits.

Tài liệu tham khảo

(1). <http://tadri.org/vi/news/Xa-hoi-hoc/VIEC-LAM-CUA-SINH-VIEN-SAU-KHI-TOT-NGHIEP-MOT-VAN-DE-XA-HOI-NAN-GIAI-215/>