

Analysis on the Employment Dilemma of female college students in China

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Keywords: female college students; employment dilemma; gender equality

Abstract: Abstract. On June 10, 2019, the employment report for Chinese college students was released. Overall, the employment rate of college students in the 2018 session was 91.5 %. However, the employment of female college students in China is not optimistic. The main reasons are professional gender division, weak diplomas, gender discrimination in the workplace, and being tied to traditional gender concepts. It is necessary to require schools, the society, and the China government in particular to make active efforts to adhere to the principle of differential treatment. Focus on or prioritize the disadvantage of women, and adjust policies or actions to best benefit women and best reflect the equality between men and women. In addition, female college students should also change the concept of employment, actively go to the grassroots employment, entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

The “Chinese University Student Employment Report in 2019” shows that the employment rate of university graduates is 91.5 % in 2018, the number of undergraduates to be employed is 4.2 %, and the number of higher vocational colleges to be employed is 7.5 %. With 8.6 million college graduates in 2019, this means that the number of college graduates in China has increased year by year, and the competition for employment has grown. Employment in China has become more and more difficult(see Fig. 1).

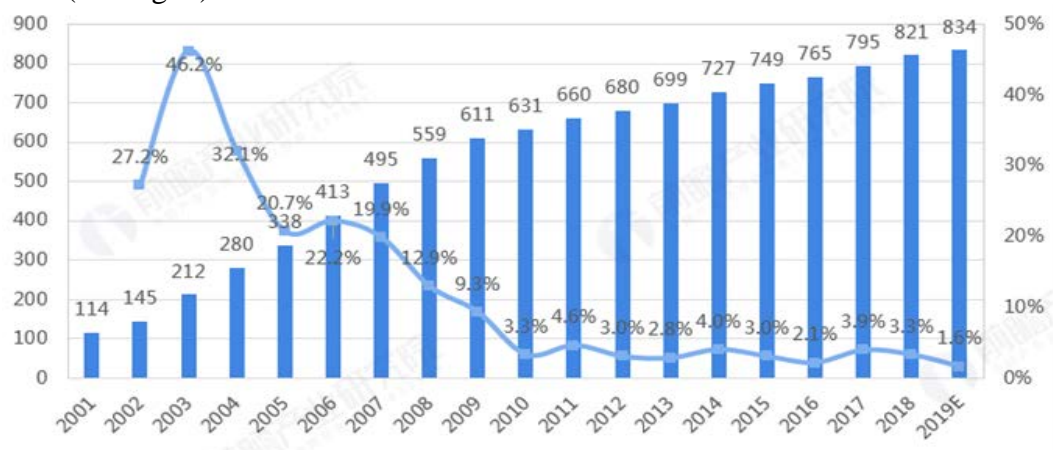


Fig. 1 Number and growth rate of graduates from ordinary universities in China from 2001 to 2018

2. Literature Review

Employment choices are influenced by multiple factors, including individual differences, institution attended, the job market, and the macro socioeconomic environment. There is a significant difference in the employment of each country because of factors of national conditions, historical traditions, and economic development. Gender differences in employment are common in the domestic and foreign labor markets. The ILO report shows that the labor participation rate of men is generally higher than that of women even if they receive the same education.

In China, the employment of female college students shows extremely unfavorable conditions. First, their chances of getting jobs are not equal. The employment of married women in China has

dropped significantly. The gender factor has increased the number of female college students' employment searches and they have been negatively affected by gender in the job search process. (Zhang kangkang, Ban xiaona, Jia shuaishuai, 2015) Second, Unequal pay for equal work. As China's economy has improved, the wage gap between men and women has continued to expand. The gender wage differential in the non-state sector is higher than that in the state-owned sector. The public sector wages are higher than those in the non-public sector. Some scholars in China have confirmed that discrimination is the main cause of gender wage differences. (Wang Meiyang, 2005; Guo Fengming & Zhang Shiwei, 2010) Third, Employment segmentation is very obvious. The division of occupational gender is very clear in the urban labor market. In 2000, the occupational gender segregation index was 0.407. (Wu yuxiao & Wu xiaogang, 2009) Market discrimination and gender preference make female college students more informal than men.

Western economists analyze employment gender differences mainly from the perspectives of human capital, human productivity, and corporate cost burden. They put forward the theory of human capital (Blaug, 1976, Ronald G. Elanberg, Robert S. Smith, 1999) and the theory of labor market discrimination (Ros, 1990) and statistical discrimination theory.

Chinese Economists mainly explain the difference in employment between men and women from the perspective of maximizing rational utility. First, Men have the advantage of market work, so the male labor participation rate is high; while women have the comparative advantage of housework, they are more involved in family production. Second, Employment costs are an important factor for employers to consider. Female college students is high employment costs in the labor market. Female graduates face fertility problems when they leave school, and their units have to pay direct and indirect costs. (Ye wenzhen, 2002) Third, Men's human capital investment risk is smaller and returns are higher. Men or women adopt different ways of allocating their time and income is because they not only consider the present employment, but also earn more compensation in the future. (Ronald G. Elanberg & Robert S. Smith, 1999) The depreciation rate of female human capital is also higher than that of men. (Pedro N. 2007)

Sociologists believe that the employment of female college students has strong social attributes with historical and cultural traditions, social customs and education. In recent years, research perspectives on gender differences have continued to emerge, including behavioral economics, interaction theories and Institutional theories, etc. They have studied the employment inequalities of men and women from the aspects of traditional culture and social systems. The cowardice of women's and the discrimination are not physical, but the result of long-term intervention in the patriarchal culture. (Meng X. 1998) Some scholars have denied that there is an inevitable link between "difficult employment for female college students" and "sex discrimination." The difference from income between male and female college students is mainly caused in professional and occupational skills. (Wen Dong mao, 2005)

3. Theoretical Perspectives Analysis

3.1 Professional gender division

Professional gender division is one of the main areas of gender segregation and it is also the main cause of gender inequality in higher education of china. (Xiao bing, 2012) According to the latest analysis of China's professional school recruitment platform, More boys than girls exist in Engineering, military science, philosophy, and agronomy, and the highest proportion of job-seekers in the engineering category is 2.30. More girls than boys exist in Education, Economics, Art, Literature, History. The proportion of the sexes was less than 1, and the lowest proportion of job-seekers in the education category is only 0.61 (see Fig. 2).

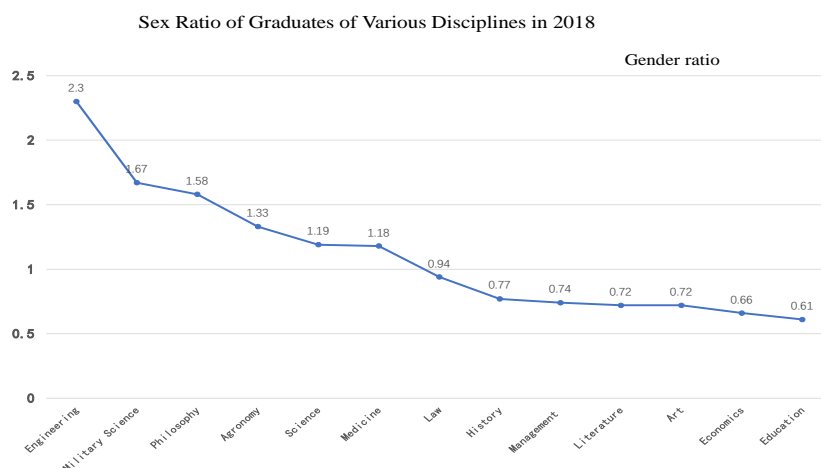


Fig.2 Sex Ratio of Graduates of Various Disciplines in 2018

Foreign researchers have found that the expansion of higher education has played a minor role in reducing gender segregation in the professional field. Women are still concentrated in the humanities and social sciences, while men are concentrated in natural sciences, engineering and technology.(Karen Bradley,2000)In China, the situation is roughly the same.such as Tsinghua University , where science and engineering are dominant, the proportion of girls in all levels of education is very low, and a large proportion are distributed in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Academy of Fine Arts, School of Communication in this very low percentage of girls. In recent years, the McKeith Institute's survey on the employment situation of Chinese university graduates has verified this view.

With the equalization of men and women in education in China, there are differences between academic interests or future professional development on the surface of professional divisions. As long as we combine discipline and social power, it is not difficult to discover that there is a parallel between “marginal subject and marginalized students”. (Carrie Paechter, 1998) In fact, this division is closely related to the distribution of resources such as power and status.(Kathleen N. Smith, Joy Gaston Gayles 2017)At the recruitment conference held at Xi'an Jiaotong University in March 2018, the annual salary of the more popular AI undergraduates was over 350,000, the annual salary of women was only around 30,000 in the fields of pedagogy, a difference of 10 times. The difference between the two is ten times. “male disciplines” are often more directly and closely related to material wealth and economic benefits in the modern science and technology society. “male disciplines” not only can enjoy higher academic treatment, but also has a broader employment market and a higher Career income. On the contrary, female college students who are concentrated in humanities and social sciences have a small professional market and low professional value. This imbalance makes female college students less likely than men college students in terms of employment opportunities, salary, and occupational status. (Zhou xiaoli, 2011)Therefore, breaking gender segregation in various disciplines has become an international consensus, and it is also an educational measure we should take to improve the rate and quality of the employment of women graduates in universities.

3.2 Diploma disadvantage

In recent years, the number of female college students has rapidly increased in China. However, It does not equate to an increase in their quality and strength. With increasing in the number of university diplomas, the value of diplomas also showed diversities. In China, the weight of the “985” and “211” undergraduate diplomas is far greater than that of regular undergraduate colleges and private universities. This means that diplomas obtained by “985” and “211” universities can often bring more employment opportunities, more substantial economic income, and higher social status.

Compared with male college students, obtaining the same diploma for female college students does not mean an advantage, which is a disadvantage for the development of female college students.

In addition, the level of academic qualifications differs significantly between male college students and female college students, which also restricts the development of female college students. From the sex ratio of graduates at various levels of education in 2018, it can be seen that it is only 0.93, which is the smallest the gender ratio of job seekers with undergraduate degrees. Master's Degree of Sex is 0.97, which is higher academic credentials. The level of job seekers are less than men and women, and the gender ratio is 1.80; the gender ratio of college education is 1.33 (see Fig. 3). This shows more men than women.

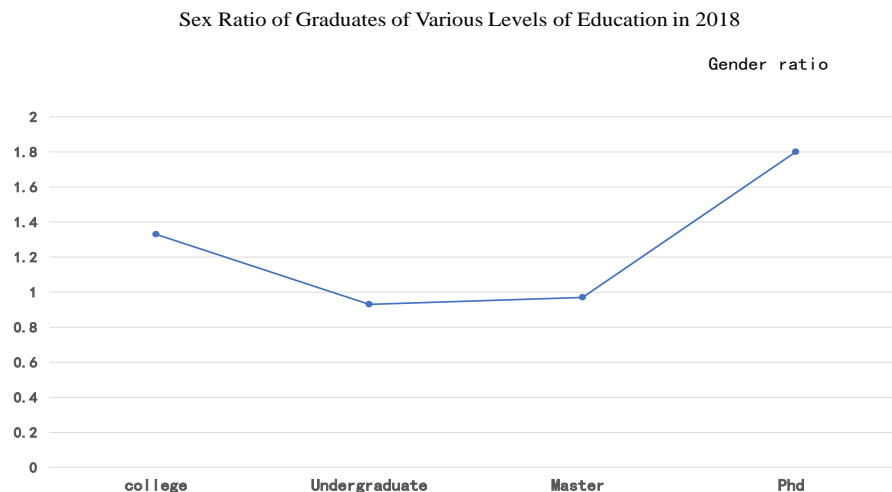


Fig. 3 Sex Ratio of Graduates of Various Levels of Education in 2018

Current higher education system in China, Female college students are faced with the difficult predicament of high diploma. This means that, as a kind of cultural capital, the role of social power in low-level diplomas is far less than that of high-level diplomas. A disadvantaged diploma not only indicates employment difficulties, but also predicts disadvantageous situations in a variety of social engagement activities in a time when a diploma is viewed as a passport. (Zhou xiaoli, 2013)

3.3 Workplace gender discrimination

Sex discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of one gender member to another. Especially women's unfair treatment. In the 20 century, the word feminism was created and many women fought for the respect. Now most women have grown into the new generation, they are confident and independent. But in some aspects, women are still struggling for the equality with men. Such as the pay in job and the chances to work.

Article 13 of the Chinese Labor Law states, Women enjoy equal employment rights with men. Except for the types of jobs or posts that are not suitable for women as stipulated by the state, Anyone must not refuse to employ women on the grounds of gender or raise the standards for recruitment of women in the recruitment of employees, but workplace sex discrimination exists in a more covert manner in real life. For example, employers give priority to boys and reject female job applicants euphemistically or implicitly in accepting resumes or interviews. The reasons why employers reject female undergraduate job seekers are mainly due to the poorer professional skills and practical ability; no adapting to harsh environments; their creative or innovative ability is inferior to the boys and they will soon be faced with childbearing and family burdens. Although comparing to the past, the number of female undergraduate students have been greatly improved in the higher education system, the academic level, and the ability to work, it is still difficult to escape the embarrassing situation of the "disciplined elite". In a word, gender discrimination is the

result of employers pursuing the maximization of human capital benefits. However, female career encounters are a reflection of gender prejudice or gender discrimination. Audre Lorde once stated, "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic" (1984, 111). The creativity sparked by feminist knowledge production has affected the ways people experience the relations of power that shape our encounters with each other locally, globally, intimately, intra- and inter-personally, socially, and across cultures.(Jeni Hart& Jamie Lester,2008)

4. Constrained by traditional ideas

People's gender awareness is not innate but a gradual process of acquisition. The impact of the feudal system in China for more than 2000 years, The child has seen the initial socialization of gender roles since they were born in the rural family. The parents is more inclined to spend money on the education of boys and attaches importance to boys. From the perspective of the number of Chinese college students in school, the difference between rural girls and urban girls is much higher than the difference between rural boys and urban boys. The difference was 13%: 60.2% and 26%: 52% . The data shows that the gender concept of men and women is the main factor affecting women's access to higher education. Middle-class parents are more extensively involved in the job search of their children by offering social ties, constructing middle-class in the employment. therefore, middle-class female students with wider social network and higher status contacts are more likely to acquire better jobs.

Women are more constrained by traditional ideas than men and the gender awareness of men and women has been further strengthened with age. According to the theory of gender, society has been established a set of corresponding cultural patterns, behavioral norms and evaluation systems for men and women, it forms a gender stereotyping. Chinese scholars have pointed out that gender stereotyping is not an objective difference between the two genders, but is a deep-rooted cultural and psychological structure(Jiang lihua&Tang jirong,2012)It constitutes the psychologically recognized traditional gender value coordinates of female college students.

From the perspective of gender, The Gender awareness that female college students are affiliated with men continues to strengthen, such as the deep imprint of the patriarchal culture, the rigid gender division of labor, and the traditional male patriarchal notion. In 2010, marrying wealthy men has become a value recognized by Chinese female college students and they don't care how rich people get their wealth. In recent years, although this value has changed, it is also common for female college students to seek for successful men with knowledge, status, and economic foundation to marry before they graduate. On the surface, it is understandable that female college students pursue legitimate happiness and guaranteed marriage. However, female college students place their own happiness and self-worth on the successful men. It increases uncertain and risk of happiness. Simone de Beauvoir of Philosopher has warned women that women can escape economic risks because men provide material protection for women, at the same time women give up freedom. It is very dangerous to be directed to a passive, confusion and destruction in case women who give up freedom become a thing. (Simone de Beauvoir, 1972)

5. Conclusion

The employment of Chinese female college students involves many aspects, such as China's education system, cultural concept, and political system. The breakthrough in this dilemma requires schools, the society, and the government in particular to make active efforts to adhere to the principle of differential treatment. Focus on or prioritize the disadvantage of women, and adjust policies or actions to best benefit women and best reflect the equality between men and women. In addition, female college students should also change the concept of employment; actively go to the grassroots employment, entrepreneurship.

Acknowledgement

Gong Minyan is supported by Blue Talent Training Project of Xianyang Normal University (no.XSYQL201607).

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