

Comparison of the Employment Situation of Returned Students from the UK and the US with that of Their Parents' Generation and Analysis of Influencing Factors

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Abstract: With the development of globalization, the number of returnees from studying in the UK and the US is increasing day by day, and their employment situation has become the focus of social attention. This article compares the employment status of returned overseas students from the UK and the US with that of their parents' generation, conducts an analysis from multiple dimensions such as the employment environment, employment concepts, and employment competitiveness, and deeply dissects the factors influencing the employment differences between the two, aiming to provide a reference basis for returned overseas students to better adapt to the domestic employment market and the formulation of relevant policies.

Keywords: Returnees from Studying in the UK and the US; Employment of the Previous Generation; Comparison of Employment Status; Influencing Factors

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of Chinese students studying in the UK and the US has continued to increase, and the number of returned students has also risen year by year [1]. These returnees from studying abroad come back to China for employment with their overseas learning experiences and advanced knowledge and concepts. However, they face environments and challenges that are completely different from those of their parents during the employment process [2]. Most of our parents grew up under the domestic education system, and the social and economic environment they were in when they were employed was also quite different from that of today. By comparing the employment status of returned overseas students from the UK and the US with that of their parents' generation and analyzing the influencing

factors, it is helpful to understand the changes in employment in different eras and can also provide useful inspirations for returned overseas students and the job market.

2. Comparison of the Employment Situation of Returned Students from the UK and the US with that of Their Parents' Generation

2.1 Employment Environment

When the previous generation was employed, China's economy was in the early stage of the transformation from a planned economy to a market economy, and the economic structure was relatively simple, dominated by state-owned enterprises and collective enterprises. Employment opportunities are mainly concentrated in these traditional enterprises. The employment market is relatively stable, but the competitive pressure is relatively small. However, the employment options are also relatively limited [3]. At present, China's economy is in a stage of rapid development and transformation and upgrading. The economic structure is diversified, and emerging industries such as the Internet, fintech and artificial intelligence are booming. The job market has become more open and competitive. All kinds of enterprises, including foreign-funded enterprises, private enterprises, state-owned enterprises, etc., are vying for talents, providing more employment options for returned overseas students. However, at the same time, it has also brought greater competitive pressure[4].

During the employment period of the previous generation, the employment policies were mainly arranged uniformly by the state, and a "unified package and unified allocation" employment system was implemented. Graduates were assigned to corresponding job positions according to the national plan, and individuals had relatively limited space to choose their careers independently[5]. During

the employment period for returned overseas students, the state has introduced a series of policies to encourage them to return to China for employment and entrepreneurship, such as providing start-up support funds, tax incentives, and facilitating household registration. Meanwhile, the job market has become more market-oriented, and the flow of talents has become freer. Overseas returnees can choose their employers and positions based on their own will and ability. [6]

2.2 Employment Concept

Parents tend to prefer stable jobs in their career choices, such as civil servants, teachers, doctors, and employees of state-owned enterprises. These occupations were regarded as "iron rice bowls" at that time, with relatively high social status and welfare benefits, and the jobs were relatively stable with low risks [7]. The career choices of returned overseas students have become more diverse. Besides the traditional stable jobs, they are more inclined to choose challenging and promising industries, such as finance, the Internet, and technology. Meanwhile, some emerging occupations such as self-media operation, data analysts, and artificial intelligence engineers are also favored by them. They pay more attention to the matching degree between personal interests and career development, and pursue the realization of self-worth [8].

When the previous generation was seeking employment, their geographical choices were relatively limited. Many of them chose to work in their place of household registration or nearby cities in order to take care of their families and adapt to the familiar living environment. Meanwhile, due to the relatively backward transportation and communication conditions at that time, the high cost of cross-regional employment also limited people's choice of employment regions. Returned overseas students have a wider range of choices for employment locations. They are more inclined to choose cities with developed economies, abundant job opportunities and a rich cultural atmosphere, such as first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, as well as new first-tier cities like Hangzhou and Chengdu. These cities have better development platforms and resources, which can meet their demands for career development. However, with the development of second - and third-tier cities and

the implementation of talent introduction policies, some returned overseas students have chosen to work and start businesses in these cities[9].

2.3 Employment Competitiveness

The educational background of the previous generation was relatively simple. Most of them received traditional education in China, and their knowledge structure was relatively fixed. In the job market at that time, although academic qualifications were important, professional relevance and work experience were often more crucial. Returned overseas students have an international educational background and have received advanced educational concepts and curriculum systems from developed countries such as the UK and the US. They have a broader knowledge base and a more open vision. They not only master professional knowledge and skills, but also possess cross-cultural communication abilities and innovative thinking, thus having strong competitiveness in the job market. However, with the increase in the number of returned overseas students, their educational advantages are gradually weakening, and enterprises are paying more attention to practical abilities and work experience.

The professional skills mastered by the previous generation were mainly in line with the production and job demands at that time, such as those in traditional industries like mechanical manufacturing, chemical engineering, and textiles. These skills were somewhat practical at that time, but with the advancement of technology and the development of industries, some of them were gradually phased out or updated. During their studies in countries like the UK and the US, returned overseas students were exposed to advanced science and technology as well as professional knowledge, and mastered some cutting-edge professional skills, such as artificial intelligence, big data analysis, and financial engineering. These skills have a high demand in the domestic job market and can bring innovation and development impetus to enterprises [10].

2.4 Employment Outcomes

The salary level of the previous generation was relatively low when they were employed, and the growth was rather slow. Salary is mainly linked to factors such as years of service and professional title. The salary gap between

different industries and regions is relatively small. The initial salary level for returned overseas students is relatively high, especially in industries such as finance, the Internet, and technology. However, there are also significant differences in salary levels, which are closely related to factors such as personal ability, professional background, and the employer. With the accumulation of work experience and the advancement of career development, there will be considerable room for salary increase.

The career development of the previous generation was relatively stable, and the promotion channels were relatively fixed, mainly relying on years of work experience and accumulated achievements. In traditional enterprises such as state-owned enterprises, the phenomenon of seniority-based promotion is quite common, and the speed of career advancement is relatively slow. Returned overseas students, due to their high academic qualifications and professional skills, as well as strong innovation and adaptability, have more opportunities and possibilities in career development. They are more likely to get promoted and advanced in a short period of time, but at the same time they also face greater competitive pressure and career uncertainty.

3. Analysis of Factors Influencing the Employment Gap between Returned Students from the UK and the US and Their Parents' Generation

3.1 Socio-Economic Development Factors

China's economy has achieved rapid development over the past few decades, and its industrial structure has also undergone profound changes and upgrades. Nowadays, emerging industries are springing up like mushrooms after rain. Fields such as artificial intelligence, big data, new energy and biomedicine are becoming new engines driving economic growth. The demand for high-quality talents in these emerging industries has shown an explosive growth. And the returnees from studying in the UK and the US, with their professional knowledge and advanced skills acquired overseas, are highly consistent with the development needs of these emerging industries. For instance, in the field of artificial intelligence, returned overseas students may have come into contact with the world's cutting-edge algorithms and models, which can bring innovative

technical ideas and solutions to domestic related enterprises, thereby gaining a greater advantage in the job market.

In contrast, during the era when our parents were employed, the industrial structure was relatively simple, mainly concentrated in traditional manufacturing, agriculture, and basic service industries. The demand for talents in these industries is relatively traditional, with a greater emphasis on proficient skill operation and experience accumulation. The space for employment choices and career development is relatively limited. Parents' generation often work in one organization or industry for their entire lives, and their career advancement paths are relatively fixed, lacking diversified development opportunities like those in emerging industries.

The acceleration of the globalization process has made international exchanges and cooperation increasingly frequent. Developed countries such as Britain and the United States have long been in the leading position in fields such as education and science and technology. Through their studies in countries like the UK and the US, returned overseas students not only came into contact with advanced international knowledge and technology, but also deeply integrated into the local academic atmosphere and cultural environment, and developed cross-cultural communication skills and an international perspective. They are proficient in using English for international communication and understand the rules and dynamics of the international market, which makes them more competitive in the job market under the background of globalization. For instance, in the recruitment of foreign-funded enterprises or multinational companies, returned overseas students are often more favored because they can better adapt to the internationalization development strategy of the enterprises.

In the era when our parents lived, the degree of globalization was relatively low, the channels for information dissemination and exchange were limited, and employment was mainly confined to the domestic market. They have relatively little knowledge of the outside world and lack the experience and ability of cross-cultural communication. When facing the international employment competition, they may be at a disadvantage.

3.2 Educational Factors

Developed countries such as the United

Kingdom and the United States possess world-class educational resources and advanced educational concepts, emphasizing the cultivation of students' innovative ability, practical ability and comprehensive quality. In terms of curriculum design, it emphasizes the combination of theory and practice, encourages students to actively participate in scientific research projects, internships and social practice activities, and cultivates students' independent thinking and problem-solving abilities. The education received by returnees from studying abroad has endowed them with strong learning and adaptability abilities, enabling them to quickly master new knowledge and skills and better adapt to the complex and ever-changing working environment. For example, in team cooperation projects, they can give full play to their own advantages, cooperate with people from different backgrounds and complete tasks together.

In contrast, the education received by the previous generation relatively emphasized the imparting of knowledge and the cultivation of test-taking abilities. The educational approach is relatively traditional, with teachers mainly lecturing and students passively accepting knowledge. There is a lack of practical links and the cultivation of innovative thinking. This makes them feel powerless when facing problems in actual work, and they are relatively weak in terms of innovation ability and practical ability.

Universities in countries such as the UK and the US have more flexible professional settings and can adjust professional directions and course contents in a timely manner according to market demands. The school will maintain close cooperation with enterprises to understand the development trends of the industry and the demand for talents, thereby providing students with professional education that better meets market demands. The majors studied by returned overseas students are often closely related to market demands and have strong employment competitiveness. For instance, with the development of the Internet industry, some universities have promptly set up Internet-related majors, such as digital marketing and user experience design. During the study of these majors, returned overseas students can master the latest industry knowledge and skills and find ideal jobs more easily.

When the previous generation was employed,

the professional settings in domestic universities were relatively lagging behind, and some majors were out of touch with market demands. The curriculum settings of some majors are too outdated and fail to meet the needs of social development, resulting in difficulties for graduates when seeking employment. For instance, in some traditional engineering disciplines, due to the rapid technological updates and replacements, while the teaching content in colleges and universities fails to keep up in a timely manner, graduates lack competitiveness in the job market.

3.3 Personal Factors

Under different historical backgrounds, there are significant differences in people's employment concepts and values. My parents grew up in an era when material resources were relatively scarce and paid more attention to job stability and welfare benefits. They believe that a stable job can provide reliable financial security and meet the basic living needs of the family. Therefore, when choosing a career, they are more inclined to opt for "iron rice bowl" occupations such as civil servants, teachers, and doctors, or to work in large enterprises like state-owned enterprises.

Overseas returnees grew up in an era of information explosion, were exposed to more cultures and ideas, paid more attention to the match between personal interests and career development, and pursued the realization of self-worth. They hope to be engaged in the work they love, give full play to their strengths and potential in the work, and achieve personal growth and career goals. Therefore, they are more diversified in their career choices and are willing to try emerging industries and occupations, such as self-media operation, data analysts, artificial intelligence engineers, etc.

During their study abroad, returned overseas students need to independently face various challenges and problems, which exercises their independent thinking ability, communication skills and teamwork ability. They have learned how to cooperate with others in different cultural backgrounds, how to express their opinions and ideas effectively, and how to solve complex problems. These abilities and qualities make them more competitive in the job market and better able to adapt to the demands of enterprises.

However, due to the limitations of educational

background and growth environment, the previous generation was relatively weak in terms of personal ability and quality. They may be more accustomed to following the arrangements of their superiors and lack the ability to innovate proactively and think independently. In teamwork, there may also be a lack of effective communication and collaboration skills, which to some extent affects their career development.

3.4 Policy Factors

The adjustment of the national employment policy has had an important impact on employment in different eras. When the previous generation was employed, they implemented a "unified responsibility and allocation" employment system. Graduates were uniformly assigned jobs by the state, and individuals had limited space to choose their own careers independently. Although this employment system guarantees the employment of graduates to a certain extent, it also restricts the flow and optimal allocation of talents, which greatly limits individuals' career choices.

During the employment period for returned overseas students, the employment policies are more market-oriented and the flow of talents is more free. The state encourages talents to choose their own careers and start their own businesses, providing more employment opportunities and development space for returned overseas students. They can choose their employers and positions according to their own will and ability to maximize their personal value.

To attract overseas students to return to China for employment and entrepreneurship, the state has introduced a series of talent introduction policies, such as providing start-up support funds, tax incentives, and convenient household registration. These policies have provided a favorable development environment and policy support for returned overseas students, reduced their start-up and employment costs, and promoted their employment and career development. For instance, some local governments have established entrepreneurship parks for overseas students, providing services such as office space, financial support and technical guidance for those who have returned from studying abroad, to help them realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

When their parents were employed, they lacked similar talent introduction policies. In the process of employment and career development,

they mainly relied on their own efforts and opportunities. Opportunity.

4. Countermeasures and Suggestions

4.1 Suggestions for Returned Overseas Students

Returned overseas students often have beautiful expectations for their future careers. However, the job market is not always smooth sailing. They should establish a correct employment concept. While paying attention to personal interests and career development, they should also have a clear understanding of market demands and the employment situation. One should not merely focus on high salaries and quality positions, but be mentally prepared to start from the grassroots level. Although grassroots work may seem ordinary, it is a valuable opportunity to accumulate work experience and understand the operation of the industry. Through grassroots training, returned overseas students can better combine the knowledge they have learned with their actual work, enhance their practical abilities, and lay a solid foundation for their future career development. For instance, a finance student who has returned from studying abroad, if they can start from a grassroots position such as a bank teller, will not only become familiar with the operation process of financial business but also accumulate customer resources, thus gaining experience for future higher-level financial work.

In the highly competitive job market, in addition to having solid professional knowledge and skills, returned overseas students should also focus on cultivating their comprehensive qualities. Communication skills, teamwork skills and innovation skills are indispensable abilities in today's workplace. Good communication skills can help them communicate effectively with colleagues and clients, avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts. The ability of teamwork enables them to give full play to their advantages in the team and complete the work tasks together. Innovation ability is an important driving force for the development of enterprises and industries. Furthermore, with the rapid development of technology and the continuous transformation of industries, returned overseas students should establish the concept of lifelong learning, constantly learn and update their knowledge to adapt to the demands of market

changes and industry development. One can maintain their competitiveness by participating in training courses, reading professional books and literature, and attending industry seminars, etc.

Returned overseas students should actively expand their employment channels and not be limited to traditional recruitment websites and campus recruitment. Social media, alumni networks, industry associations, etc. are all important ways to obtain employment information. Through social media, they can follow industry trends and enterprise recruitment information, and establish connections with insiders in the industry. The alumni network can provide abundant employment resources and career advice. Industry associations can enable them to understand the development trends and employment demands of the industry. At the same time, one should pay attention to emerging industries and entrepreneurial opportunities, and be courageous to try and innovate. Emerging industries often have huge development potential and can provide broad development space for returned overseas students. For instance, with the development of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data, the demand for talents in related fields is increasing day by day. Overseas returnees can seize these opportunities to realize their career ideals.

4.2 Suggestions for Colleges and Universities

As the cradle of talent cultivation, colleges and universities should adjust their professional settings and course contents in a timely manner according to market demands and industrial development trends. It is necessary to strengthen cooperation with enterprises, understand their employment demands, and integrate the actual needs of enterprises into professional teaching. For instance, by jointly establishing internship bases with well-known enterprises and launching industry-university-research cooperation projects, students can learn through practice, thereby enhancing their practical abilities and employment competitiveness. At the same time, emphasis should be placed on the cross-integration of specialties to cultivate compound talents with interdisciplinary knowledge and abilities, so as to meet the market's demand for diversified talents.

Colleges and universities should strengthen employment guidance for students, help them establish correct employment concepts and

enhance their employment competitiveness. Employment training, career planning lectures, mock interviews and other activities can be carried out to provide students with all-round employment services. Employment training can cover aspects such as resume making, interview skills, and workplace etiquette, helping students enhance their job-hunting abilities. Career planning lectures can invite industry experts and corporate executives to share career experiences and development trends with students, guiding them to formulate reasonable career plans. Mock interviews can allow students to experience the atmosphere of an interview in advance, discover their own shortcomings and make timely improvements.

4.3 Suggestions for the Government

The government should further improve the talent introduction policies and increase support for returned overseas students. Provide more start-up support funds, tax incentives and convenient household registration, etc., to attract more returned overseas students to return to China for employment and entrepreneurship. At the same time, a scientific and reasonable talent evaluation mechanism should be established. Objective evaluations should be made based on the abilities and contributions of returned overseas students, and they should be given corresponding treatment and honors. For instance, a talent reward fund should be established to honor and reward returned overseas students who have made outstanding contributions in scientific and technological innovation, economic development and other fields.

The government should strengthen the supervision of the job market, standardize the recruitment behavior of enterprises, and crack down on illegal acts such as employment discrimination and false recruitment. Establish and improve the supervision mechanism of the employment market, strengthen the review and supervision of recruitment information, and ensure the authenticity and legality of recruitment information. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen law enforcement inspections of enterprises, deal seriously with those that violate employment laws and regulations, and create a fair and just employment environment for returned overseas students.

5. Conclusion

There are significant differences in the employment status between returnees from studying in the UK and the US and their parents' generation. These differences are the result of the combined effect of multiple factors such as social and economic development, education, individuals and policies. Returned overseas students have an international educational background and strong competitiveness, but they also face challenges such as fierce competition in the job market. By comparing and analyzing the employment status and influencing factors of the two, we can provide suggestions for returned overseas students to better adapt to the domestic job market, and also offer reference basis for universities and the government to formulate relevant policies. In the future, with the continuous development of the economy and society and the changes in the job market, the employment situation of returned overseas students will also keep evolving, which requires continuous attention and research. Pay attention and study.

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