

# Employment Status and Capability Analysis of College Students Majoring in Design

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*Abstract*

**Abstract:** As universities and colleges have expanded the enrollment of design, the numbers of graduates majoring in design are on the rise year by year. In this study, the employment status of graduates of design from universities and the influence factors on their employment were analyzed. Then the solutions to the employment problems faced by graduates of design were summarized, which will improve their career ability and help them to rapidly adapt to the complex social environment.

## 1. Introduction

China has entered a key age of fully building an affluent society, deepening the reforms in an all-round way and largely promoting the management of affairs according to laws. In face of such a social situation, universities in China have to cultivate more interdisciplinary talents. The number of college graduates rose from 1.07 million in 2009 by 6.1million to 8.6 million in 2019 (Chart 1). Thus, graduate students are facing increasingly severe employment pressure, especially those majoring in design. Compared with other college graduate students, those majoring in design have rich emotions, publicized personality, strong egoism and low collectivism. As college assistants, we should further understand the current employment market and the employment status of students majoring in design, which will help to enhance their employment capability.



Chart 1 Data of College Graduates in China from 2009 to 2019

## 2. Employment Status of College Graduates Majoring in Design

Students majoring in design have publicized personality and strong professional practicality, and perform in employment differently from non-design graduates.

### 2.1. Strong Employment Flexibility

College graduates of design are often considered as a special group, as they advocate freedom and personality and are reluctant to be bound to various rules and regulations. In terms of career selection,

they pay attention to the consistency between the job and major, but neglect the stability of the job. Many graduates of design, upon their first employment, only treasure the accumulation of work experience and plan to hop after one or two years. Thus, they ignore whether they have to sign any agreement with the affiliation. Consequently, the employment rates of graduates of design are high and the contract signing rates are low upon graduation. Their jobs are less stable than graduates from other majors.

### **2.2. Strong Employment Regionalism**

The major of design is highly professional and practical. Large-size design companies are concentrated in coastal or large- and medium-sized cities, but rarely in marginal zones, which affect the employment destination of design graduates to some extent. Thus, the employment market is relatively narrow for graduates of design. Graduates of design think economically flourishing cities harbor more opportunity for personal promotion than other distant cities, and allow them to obtain more practical skills. Thus, they prefer developed regions when finding jobs. Such phenomenon is increasingly evident in recent years. According to incomplete statistics, more than 70% of graduates of design tend to settle down in economically rich cities, where the employment market is gradually saturated and the competition is increasingly intense.

### **2.3. Low Employment Conception**

Graduates of design are not enthusiastic about employment and have low conception of employment, which are mainly manifested in three aspects. Firstly, graduates of design do not have definite career plans in the future, or know the current severity of employment. They usually only drift along. Secondly, graduates of design usually come from economically rich families and do not have to undertake the heavy pressure in life. Finally, because of overly strong personality, they often think their major is competitive, and finding a job is only a matter of time. These three aspects affect the employment ability of graduates of design.

### **2.4. Contradictory Mind-set of Employment**

Graduates of design are under a more complex mood and are more confused during job selection. There are three major reasons. Firstly, college students of design think they have selected a popular major during their application for colleges, but overestimate the predominance of design. Because of their blind confidence, they wholeheartedly want to find a job of interest, but the recurrent failure in job application makes them dare not to face the harsh reality. Secondly, the tuition fees of design students are overly high, and the total fees of four years in college are more than twice higher than those of non-design students. Thus, they expect to find higher-salary jobs during job selection. However, the salaries of average college graduates are usually below their expectation, so many design graduates rather go without than have something shoddy and are chronically unemployed. Thirdly, graduates of design mostly grow up in economically wealthy families, and the post-90s generation mostly are 'single child'. Though they look forward to display their abilities in their jobs, they are not prepared for enduring hardship. When faced with the intense market competition, they find themselves in the mire and lack courage and willpower. The repeated setbacks during job pursuit have caused adverse mental impacts to graduates of design.

## **3. Influence Factors on the Employment of College Graduates of Design**

The above analysis shows that college graduates of design are faced with an unoptimistic status of employment and suffer excessive social pressure. Though they want very much to enter the society, they fear to face competition. To help graduates of design to solve the problems of employment, we mainly analyzed the four influence factors on their employment, including governments, schools, family and individuals.

### **3.1. Impact of Governments on the Employment of Graduates of Design**

Governments give inadequate support to graduates of design during employment. Firstly, the allocation policy in China has transited from "guaranteed job assignment" to "independent job selection". College graduates have to seek jobs self-dependently, which is more challenging to

graduates of design. The employment mode of independent job selection relies not only on the favorable opportunity in the employment market, but also on relevant supporting measures from governments. For instance, governments can issue policies that encourage graduates of design to work in middle- and small-sized cities and offer them subsidies and favorable conditions. Governments also can strongly support the economic development of such cities and guide more graduates of design to go to West China and grass-root areas.

### **3.2. Impact of Colleges/Universities on the Employment of Graduates of Design**

Colleges and universities are where students of design learn and live, and are the cradle of talent cultivation. The instructional objectives formulated by schools affect the employment status of graduates. The majority of colleges and universities affect the employment of design graduates from three aspects. Firstly, the curriculum is inconsistent with the positions needed by the market, so the graduates cultivated in schools cannot find the suitable job in the competitive employment market. Secondly, colleges and universities do not possess any complete system of career planning, since many schools only set the career plan as a compulsory course, rather than placing it throughout the four years of campus life for students of design. As a result, students of design feel vacant about their career planning in the future. Thirdly, colleges and universities do not strongly guide the career of graduates of design, and most graduates do not have any correct view about employment.

### **3.3. Impact of Family on the Employment of Graduates of Design**

Since "parents are the first teachers of children", parents of Chinese families and the growing environment severely affect children. On the one hand, students of design mostly grow up in economically rich families and face low pressures in life. These graduates do not expect much from jobs when they seek jobs. They think employment only means to find a job, but neglect the opportunity of self-promotion brought by jobs. On the other hand, the post-90s graduates of design have low independence and high dependence. They were overprotected by their parents when they were young, and were taken care of by their parents in all aspects. When they are finding a job in the highly competitive market, they feel hopeless.

## **4. Solutions to Employment-related Problems Faced by College Graduates of Design**

Since colleges and universities have increased the enrollment of students year by year, the employment market becomes saturated and increasingly competitive. Graduates of design going to the employment market have to face more pressure, and should be provided with more employment opportunities.

### **4.1. Governments Should Establish a Perfect Supporting System**

Governments should give more employment support to graduates of design, thereby creating a favorable employment environment for them, strengthen the macro-control and offer more protection policies to them. Firstly, governments should cancel regional protectionism and introduce more talents majoring in design. Secondly, governments should encourage graduates of design to go to Middle and West China where they are mostly needed, and provide corresponding preferential policies, ensuring such experience will make them more competitive in finding a new job. Finally, governments should strengthen the supervision and management of affiliations, improve the social security mechanism, and defend the personal interests of graduates.

### **4.2. Universities/Colleges Should Set up an Employment Cultivation Mechanism**

The social requirements over graduates of design are increasingly higher, so the students of design cultivated currently should be not only professionals, but also elites in the workplace. Colleges and universities should set up an employment cultivation mechanism and enhance their employment capabilities from three aspects.

Firstly, schools should promote educational reforms of design courses. As emerging courses, design courses are faced with more challenges. The design courses set in colleges and universities mostly are inconsistent with the employment positions. Moreover, the courses are less extensible, so schools should broaden the professional knowledge of students and strengthen the practicality of

course learning. In terms of the educational mode, themed lectures and scenario simulation should be supplemented, so the courses will be diversified and more consistent with the employment market.

Secondly, colleges and universities should strengthen faculty construction. Teachers are the guiders of students of design on their road of studying, so the teaching levels of teachers directly affect the learning outcomes of students. On the one hand, colleges and universities should offer teachers more chances of further instruction abroad or participation in academic communication, which will promote their professional accomplishments. On the other hand, colleges and universities should fully play their role of academic pacemakers and establish a perfect education communication system.

Thirdly, colleges and universities should improve career planning. As mentioned above, the career plan courses set in some colleges and universities of China are inappropriate. Thus, in the academic cultivation of students of design in the future, career planning should be placed throughout the four campus years. Also career courses should be expanded timely according to the characteristics of different grades. For instance, freshmen can be informed about what is career, so they can preliminarily locate their future. Sophomores can be guided to establish their own career plans according to their understanding about the major. Juniors can be further guided to formulate or modify their career planning. Seniors can select jobs according to their career planning, and be taught with job-seeking skills. In this way, career planning will not be big words, but will be practical courses that truly help students of design to plan life.

#### **4.3. Students Should Play the Subjective Role**

The post-90s students have open thoughts and strong self-awareness, which are more obvious among students of design. The post-90s graduates majoring in design often have grandiose aims but puny ability, and as the leading role in market competition, they cannot immediately adapt to the complex social environment. Upon job selection, graduates of design firstly have to set up a correct view of employment, put themselves in the appropriate position, overcome the throwbacks during job seeking, and promptly summarize and learn from experience. Secondly, they should play the subjective role. They should be in the mind-set of "I am finding the job, rather than the job is finding me", try to acclimate, and treasure any chance of job. They should treat any job with the attitude of perseverance. Finally, students of design should keep on learning both on campus and in the working affiliation. Graduates of design should learn modestly and improve their comprehensive capability.

## **5. Conclusions**

The employment problems faced by graduates of design have attracted extensive attention from the society. The level of employment rate reflects the achievement of a college/university in cultivating students of design. While stimulating students to take the subjective initiative, we should also continually improve the education systems in universities/colleges and cultivate better artistic talents for the society.

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