What Comes After Graduation

Mei Yi Choo

State University of New York at Geneseo

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Graduation is a huge milestone for students and helps them ease into their transition into adulthood. Graduated students are able to come out with new ideas that they can use to improve the world. This transition into working life can be an open-ended experience for recent graduates. Two confidential data studies were conducted in 2012 and 2015 about the experience recent graduates had to go through in order to nail their first job, giving scholarly insight into the whole process from graduation to working life. Life after college is not a walk in a park; therefore, graduates should not underestimate the responsibility that comes with it. With proper planning, college students can get a better sense of work life and be better prepared for it.

Interestingly, some participants in the 2015 study stated that they were excited and confident about being financially independent with their newly found jobs, but they did not take into account how it would affect their personal life. Besides work, they did not include the responsibility as an independent adult and the duties of owning an apartment. They were overwhelmed by those additional factors. According to Eisenberg, Goodall, and Trethewey (2014), students were not prepare for their first "real" job and would later desire balance between life and work over all else (p. 4). When an individual achieves balance of those factors, it gives them a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Before they entered the corporation, the participants were unsure about what their work life was going to be like. All of their assumptions were based on their own instincts and judgments from the media. The same result was found in the 2012 study; participants felt that work would be a better experience than college life. However, they were not prepared for the bills and taxes they would have to pay. They could not balance their work and their personal lives. But after a while, participants were able to find harmony with those two aspects and became realistic about what their work life would require

In fact, participants with internship experience had a better idea of how their work life would be compared to participants who did not have internships during their college life. Internships are seen as stepping-stones for these participants to get a glimpse of work life. For example, one participant with a summer internship had the experience of role-playing as a financial advisor. He was an intern during his sophomore year, and by the time he became a senior, he was able to secure a work position and arrange his living arrangements in another city. This participant got to experience the culture of an organization more intimately and had a better knowledge of the transition to the work force. This is an example of organizational assimilation, where participants use their internship as a learning tool to understand the culture of an organization and the life of a working adult. Individuals that experience organizational assimilation will get to understand the organizational culture once they step into the organization office as one of the employees (Eisenberg et al., 2014, p. 143). Participants from the old and new data showed a consistent trend of having a better understanding of their work life because of their internship experience.

The 2015 participants initial vision was that their relationship with their managers and co-workers would be hierarchical. Participants viewed the age gap between their senior co-workers as a negative factor. They imagined they would have to follow all their commands and would be bullied in work. Also, due to the fact that these participants are new to the company, there was a fear that they would be seen as a burden to their co-workers, and that the older co-workers would feel responsible for guiding them around the corporation. But as seen in the 2012 and 2015 participants' responses, their corporation welcomed them with open arms and helped them transition into the work force. One participant even mentions that the corporation not only helped him in every possible way, but also wanted to see him succeed in his career. The

participant's experience is a clear example of the human resource approach. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, employees wish to see participants achieve self-actualization in their career. In human resource, organization gives opportunity for their employees to achieve their highest potential, and thus benefit the organization itself with a successful employee (Eisenberg et al., 2014, p. 183).

Many of the participants in the old and new data suggested that networking is an important aspect of job searching. Their network consist of friends, family, past employees and internship supervisors. This form of connection helps the participants to ease their job search and allows them to connect with important personnel in the organization. During the networking process, participants mentioned that the LinkedIn website was a major tool when meeting professional individuals and as well as gathering information on their future colleagues. Since networking is highly recommended to expand connections with the work society, college students should take every opportunity to meet new people in successful organizations.

As college students move into another chapter of their lives, internships play a major role in preparing them for their career. Self-actualization is encouraged in organizations and students should start networking early on in their college career. After graduation, individuals should not be afraid to venture out into the world and enjoy the fruit of their hard work in college. Recent graduates must be confident in their skills obtained in their college life and enjoy the process of job searching. It can be also seen as a rite of passage for these young adults to celebrate many years of hard work.

References

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