

FACTORS AFFECTING JOBS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES HAVE UNIVERSITY OR HIGHER DEGREES IN NORTHWEST REGION*

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Human resource development is an important requirement to meet the socio-economic development needs of Northwest Vietnam. Recently, thanks to the active training policies of the Party and State, high quality human resources in the Northwest have increased. However, the proportion of university graduates who cannot find jobs today is relatively high in the Northwest. To solve this problem, first of all, it is necessary to identify factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees. This study analyzes objective and subjective factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees in the Northwest region.

Keywords: Northwest; Ethnic minorities; University or higher degrees; Jobs; Factors affecting job.

1. Introduction

In the last period of socio-economic development, the Northwest region lacked high quality human resources. The majority of human resources in the Northwest region are ethnic minorities, so in order to solve the above problem, the Party and the State have implemented a series of development policies that prioritize training for ethnic minority children, scholarships, social subsidies, direct offer policies, education credit policies, policies on exemption and reduction of public service fees for students... Those efforts have brought today results, as the number of people with university or higher degrees in the Northwest region increased greatly.

However, the Northwest is facing a new challenge that thousands of engineers and bachelors in the area cannot find jobs after graduating from university. This situation means a waste of the State's training efforts as well as the money of the people. The consequence is that many families, especially poor households, ethnic minorities, fall into debt after sending their children to school. Obviously, creating jobs for highly qualified ethnic

minorities in the Northwest is a pressing problem at the moment. This article attempts to find out the factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities who have graduated from university or higher degrees in the Northwest region as a basis for finding employment solutions for them.

2. Literature review

There are quite a few works researching the employment issue of Vietnamese ethnic minorities, including some outstanding works: Research of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development under the World Bank (2019) shows that salaried employment opportunities are opening up for ethnic minorities, but mainly are low-income, non-skilled jobs; The study of Hall & Patrinos (2012) shows that the job creation policy for ethnic minorities in 03 Asian countries is China, Laos and Vietnam and 03 African countries, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon are still very weak; The research of Bob Baulch and Vu Hoang Dat (2012) confirms that the employment of ethnic minority region workers, especially ethnic minorities, has not yet generated

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high income, the number of employees with labor contracts is low; Research by Nguyen Phung Quan shows that the structure of the training sector for ethnic minorities is not suitable for the labor market, and the quality of training does not meet practical requirements. Many people who have received vocational training still find it difficult to find a job, many people have to work inappropriately with their specialization, the profession is trained, the underemployment rate is still quite high. However, there is still no research on the factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees in the Northwest region.

3. Research methods

The basic methodology is dialectical materialism and historical materialism. The research is based on the Party's system of views, lines, resolutions, policies, and the State legal system on training and employment for ethnic minorities. The approach to research problem is the systematic approach and the ethnology approach. The documents on employment status and employment settlement policies of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees are collected and gathered, then processed by the following methods: document classification, comparison, historical analysis, theory analysis and synthesis to reach research results.

4. Research results

4.1. Objective factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with a university or higher degrees

4.1.1. Few payrolls work in state agencies

With the aim of "Continue to innovate, arrange the apparatus of the political system to operate efficiently, effectively and in line with the socialist-oriented market economy institution, in order to strengthen the role of Party leadership; improve the State's management effectiveness and efficiency... To streamline payrolls associated with restructuring, improve quality, and efficiently use the contingent of cadres, civil servants and public employees; reducing recurrent expenditures and contributing to wage policy reform", the XII Central Committee of the Party issued two resolutions on reducing payrolls. That is the Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW dated October 25th, 2017 on "Some issues on continuing to innovate, arranging the organizational structure of the lean political system which operating efficiently and effectively" and Resolution No. 19-NQ/TW dated October 25th, 2017 on "Continue to renovate the organizational and management system, improve the quality and performance of public non-business units".

With the above two resolutions, according to the roadmap to 2021, public non-business units will strongly reduce the focal points, at least the national average is 10%; Minimize at least 10% of the non-business payroll receiving salary from the state budget

compared to 2015; Basically terminating the number of labor contracts in contravention of regulations in public non-business units (except for those units with financial autonomy). In addition, according to the goals of the Resolution, strive to have 10% financial autonomy units, reduce on average 10% of direct spending from the state budget to public non-business units compared to 2011 - 2015.

It can be said that the Resolution on restructuring and reducing payroll is the biggest obstacle for university graduates wishing to work in public administrative and career units in general and ethnic minority students in particular, who have more disadvantages than other students.

Firstly, from 2017, the public administrative and non-business units have to reduce the payroll. In fact, in the provinces in general and the Northwest provinces in particular, the number of cadres reaching retirement age plus the number of unqualified staff is streamlined, which basically only 10% of the target needs to be reduced. Therefore, most of the public administrative units have almost no staff to recruit. Consequently, there are almost no opportunities for ethnic minority graduates.

Secondly, administrative units, public non-business units decreased strongly, many units merged and dissolved, leading to a surplus of personnel due to the cumbersome apparatus for many years ago in the Northwest. Creating jobs for existing personnel is a big challenge for agency leaders. Therefore, recruitment of new personnel has been almost absent in the past few years. Employment opportunities for ethnic minority graduates are even more difficult.

Thirdly, before resolutions No. 18-NQ/TW and 19-NQ/TW were enacted in 2017, job placement for direct entry graduates - priority students - before 2015 of the Northwest provinces is extremely difficult. In fact, graduate students at Thai Nguyen University are not given job arrangements because job positions are filled. As a result, some ethnic minority students return to the fields after graduation, others have to find jobs that are not in the right major of their training. These students will have to compete with other students when taking entrance exams to private organizations/businesses, with the loss going to the ethnic minority students.

4.1.2. Job position

With the aim of renewing methods of management, use and evaluation of civil servants and public employees in each specific field, arranging human resources to organize the task of ensuring science, efficiency, publicity, transparency, promoting the working capacity and ability of civil servants and public employees in each agency, unit, the Government has issued Decree No. 41/2012/NĐ-CP dated May 8, 2012 "Regulations on position in public non-business units".

Accordingly, the job position project requires organizations to review and arrange a compact apparatus, eliminating overlap in the functions and tasks of the unit as well as the job position. At the commune level, the employment positions are defined as 21-23 positions. This compact arrangement is one of the obstacles for ethnic minority students graduating from university. It is difficult for ethnic minority students to get a job when public agencies are facing with job creation for the redundant number of personnel, streamlining organizational structure, and employment for positions which overlapped in functions and tasks from many years ago.

Job position scheme allows agencies and organizations to recruit human resources to work in a competitive, open manner for all job positions, without limitation in terms of scope and subjects to attract people who is suitable for the recruited position. As a rule, the public recruitment with unlimited recruitment scope makes it more difficult for ethnic minority graduates to compete for job positions in the localities which they are sent to study.

Also according to the scheme, each job position requires employees with certain qualifications and competencies, thereby helping the unit determine the qualifications and capabilities of the human resource suitable for the vacancies. It is the increasing requirements for professional qualifications and competencies of civil servants and public employees that have hindered the employment opportunities of ethnic minority graduates.

The job description and the competency framework to perform the job also specify the job standards of each job position, which clearly states the right major requirement. Therefore, many ethnic minority students, due to lack of good orientation, attend university programs that are not suitable to local needs, also cannot take the entrance exam.

4.1.3. Examination regulations

According to the 2008 Law on Civil Servants and the 2010 Law on Public Employees, the recruitment of civil servants and public employees must be based on the task requirements, the job position and the payroll quota. Recruitment method is done through entrance examination or admission. In fact, the recruitment in the localities today is through the examination on the principles of openness, transparency and objectivity. Therefore, the open examination and recruitment scope is not limited to making it difficult for ethnic minority students to compete with students in the lowlands. In fact, through the exams to recruit communal civil servants in some provinces such as Lai Chau and Dien Bien, most of the people who passed the exams for communal civil servants came from other provinces. Due to the professional qualifications, foreign languages and information technology of

the local ethnic minority students, they cannot meet the recruitment requirements.

Some provinces have a separate examination mechanism for ethnic minority students in remote and extremely difficult areas. This separate entrance examination mechanism gives students a higher chance of recruiting into public units. However, the ability of ethnic minority students to meet the requirements of the competency framework to do their work is another obstacle to their employment. Many students are recruited under a special mechanism, but due to the failure to meet the requirements, after 2 years assessment does not complete the task (or even complete the task) is also disqualified. This is the reality in many places.

4.1.4. Knowledge training programs are not suitable for the actual work

The knowledge accumulated in schools of ethnic minority students is not relevant to the actual work, not meeting the needs of enterprises. In fact, at some universities, the knowledge imparted to students is not updated, far from reality, making it difficult for students to access the reality of changing and increasingly demanding work nowadays.

Some subjects in the training program are no longer suitable for the real labor market. Graduates lack practical and working skills. In particular, for ethnic minority students, their flexibility and dynamism is weaker than other students, so the ability to respond to job requirements becomes more difficult, leading to job opportunities for this group of students even more difficult.

4.2. Subjective factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees

If a university diploma opens up for a new bachelor a promising future, the opportunity to escape poverty or change his life; For ethnic minority students, after graduating with a diploma in hand, many of them are confused about what to do or where to work. The career that they pursue in the university years is almost “out of seats”, many have to find “left-hand jobs”, but not enough skills and qualifications to undertake them. So what is the reason that ethnic minority students fall unemployed when they graduate?

4.2.1. Lack of orientation in learning

In a working environment where the trend of competition is increasingly fierce, without a clear career orientation, it is difficult for students to have job opportunities at recruitment agencies. Agencies will not recruit if they do not see the passionate candidate and career prospects that he have chosen. Therefore, the career orientation of students has a great influence on the acquisition of knowledge in the learning process as well as job opportunities after graduation.

Inappropriate career orientation leads to wrong

choice of study. Many children do not have suitable career orientations from their families, many choose careers according to their friends or follow the “hot” career trends, even though their passion or forte is not there. Many students learn but do not know what they will do, where they will work... All of the above mentioned things have a lot to do with the ability of ethnic minority students to find jobs after graduation.

4.2.2. *Passive learning*

In fact, many ethnic minority students have wrong career orientation, leading to passive learning. They only wait for knowledge from the teacher to provide them, without having the sense of actively learning to expand their knowledge, discovering or applying the learned theory into real life.

Many ethnic minority students in the learning process are not actively learning knowledge and improving working skills according to each study module, not actively with learning content, finding references, and learning from actual production and business activities. Therefore, many graduate students cannot apply for jobs, cannot hold work positions, and have to retrain.

4.2.3. *Lacking foreign languages*

In the current strong international integration trend, the ability to use foreign languages is an important factor contributing to opening up job opportunities. However, for ethnic minority students, the ability to use foreign languages is a major limitation. In addition, the foreign language certificate is one of the required evaluation criteria of any exam, whether it is the exam for civil servants at the communal level in remote areas. However, at the university, ethnic minority students are often afraid to learn a foreign language with the mindset that this subject is difficult and is skeptical of its use. Therefore, many students do not pay attention and do not make efforts to improve their language skills, but only learn to get by.

Although, the Ministry of Education and Training has a 2020 Foreign Language Project which stipulates that graduates must meet A2 language standards according to the Ministry’s foreign language capacity framework. Many students do not work hard to learn a foreign language to pass the exam. Some of them are more fortunate, having a diploma when they are exempt from the standard language exam because they are students from 30a districts. By the time of graduation, some ethnic minority students’ knowledge and ability in foreign languages are only at the elementary level. Only when applying for the entrance examination to the State administrative units, without a foreign language certificate, can they try to take the test, or cannot pass the exam. Therefore, the opportunity to apply for the entrance exam is also not available.

4.2.4. *No emphasis on improving soft skills*

In addition to equipping specialized knowledge and skills, equipping soft skills is a very important factor. There are jobs, soft skills account for 80% of job requirements, professional requirements only account for 20%. The higher the position, the more important soft skills are.

Hard and soft skills are two factors that employers pay great attention to in the recruitment process, especially soft skills. As we all know, soft skills are forged from many activities in learning and life. Continuously learning and practicing soft skills will help graduate students have a solid advantage to come into life. Especially, in today’s fiercely competitive environment, soft skills will be the secret to success for new graduates.

4.2.5. *Financial difficulties*

One of the biggest obstacles for ethnic minority students not being able to attend university programs is finance. If they are lucky, ethnic minority students whose parents work in state agencies or commune officials will have less of an effort to make a living in big cities. As for the students whose parents are pure farmers and live in remote areas, most of them have to study and work part-time to cover their lives and pay the tuition fees. Many families because their children go to university, are not classified as poor or near-poor households to exempt or reduce tuition fees because of the local people’s conception: their income must be good to have enough money for their children to go to university. In fact, many students spend most of their time working part-time but do not have time to study, leading to low academic results, so when exams compete, ethnic minority students often cannot meet the recruitment requirements. They also cannot compete with people with better academic results.

5. Discussion

The employment problem depends very much on the level of economic development because the new economic development creates many jobs. The socio-economic context of the Northwest region is still very difficult, so the local economy’s ability to create jobs is still very inefficient. This is the most general reason leading to the unemployment of ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees in the Northwest region. However, the problem of the ability to create jobs of the economy is a very large field, so this study cannot cover all factors affecting employment. Instead, this study only focuses on some factors related to State policies such as staffing, job position, examination regulations and the suitability of training programs for job requirements and factors belonging to students themselves such as learning orientation, learning passivity, foreign language ability, soft skills, finance... In order to fully assess the factors affecting employment of ethnic minorities with

university or higher degrees in the Northwest region, it is necessary to have more in-depth studies.

6. Conclusion

Creating jobs for ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees has great socio-economic significance for the Northwest region, as this will avoid wasting brain resources, State training efforts and family education expenses for children. In the current period, the situation of creating jobs for ethnic minorities with university or higher degrees in the Northwest region is facing huge

challenges that require removal measures to avoid wasting development resources, ensuring social stability and sustainable development. In particular, it is necessary to focus on solving difficulties and problems regarding payroll, job position, examination regulations, state training programs and on career orientation, study orientation, learning attitude, foreign language ability and soft skills of students. Removing these difficulties and obstacles will significantly contribute to reducing the unemployment rate in high quality human resources of the Northwest region.

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Tóm tắt: Phát triển nguồn nhân lực là yêu cầu quan trọng để đáp ứng nhu cầu phát triển kinh tế - xã hội của vùng Tây Bắc. Thời gian qua, nhờ các chính sách đào tạo tích cực của Đảng và Nhà nước, nguồn nhân lực chất lượng cao của vùng Tây Bắc ngày tăng lên. Tuy nhiên, tỷ lệ sinh viên tốt nghiệp đại học không tìm được việc làm hiện nay ở vùng Tây Bắc tương đối nhiều. Để giải quyết vấn đề này, trước hết cần nhận diện các yếu tố tác động đến việc làm của người dân tộc thiểu số có trình độ đại học trở lên. Nghiên cứu này phân tích các yếu tố khách quan và yếu tố chủ quan tác động đến việc làm của người dân tộc thiểu số có trình độ đại học trở lên tại vùng Tây Bắc.

Từ khóa: Tây Bắc; Dân tộc thiểu số; Trình độ đại học trở lên; Việc làm; Các yếu tố tác động đến việc làm.