

GRADUATE CHOICES IN POST-EDUCATION JOBS OF SOCIOLOGICAL STUDENTS IN CAN THO UNIVERSITY

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Abstract. The study was aimed to analyze the situation of job choices after graduation of sociological students in Can Tho University mainly through the descriptive statistical method. Research data were collected from 225 sociological students who have been studying and graduated at Can Tho University. The research results showed that students having the needs for a job in the media and journalism field accounted for 77.8% of the total survey, followed by doing research related social issues at the Institutes of States and non-governmental organizations (76.4%), Human resource management and consultants (68%), Public administration (57.8%), and psychology (42.2%). Based on the research findings, the study identified several causes that affect students' job choices as well as propose some solutions to help students determine the right job position which is suitable for their own capacity.

Keywords: Can Tho University, Graduate, Post-education jobs; Sociological students.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Employment is an urgent need of many countries, especially developing countries - where there are abundant human resources while the economy is not highly developed, leading to an inadequate situation in needs and demands. In recent years, science and technology make great progress, the economics knowledge is forming and developing, the mission of training human resources of the university, the exploitation and use of education products in Vietnam are the topics that attract special attention of the whole society. In one study, with a sample size of 3,000 graduates, 73% of the students got employment, but among them, 58.2% of students did not know where to apply for a job, 42% of students did not meet the requirements of recruitments, 27% of students could

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not get a job because the majors were not suitable for the labor market or even 18% of students could not find a job because the employers did not know about the training major like Sociology [1]. In recent years, students studying this major have been working in another major, which is sadly a common practice in the market economy, wasting young knowledge. In Vietnam, Sociological major appeared since the 1990s [2], through 30 formations and development, has contributed many great achievements to the society. It was considered as a multi-disciplinary science, recognizing all problems from many aspects to the general direction. The contribution of sociological students in the society is identified: (1) helping each person to understand the society from many different perspectives; (2) assisting in evaluating policy results effectively; (3) doing self-enlightenment and increased understanding; (4) being seen as industrial consultants, urban planners, and human resource managers. Nowadays, the need for research and investigation is becoming more and more essential not only in the academic field but all fields. This is a new scientific sector contributing to the renovation of the country [2].

At Can Tho University, this major is considered as a fledgling science. It is founded in 2015 and affiliated with the school of Social Sciences and Humanities, up to now, the sociology sector has been training five bachelor courses, in which two courses have graduated, course 41 and 42. The new school year 2020-2021 will continue to welcome the 6th course of new students. For that reason, there are many questions about what sociology will do and how sociology do help society. Those are common questions not only of students but also with friends, parents and many others (including many people working in management and leadership at different levels and disciplines). During the period of integration and development, many scientific disciplines were born on the platform to serve and satisfy more requests from society. Higher education has a strong impact on the socio-economic development of the education system. At present, there are still many questions posed to bachelors of sociology about what they will do when they graduate, what they can contribute to society, and so on. Therefore, helping students identify their needs and understand the role of this academic major under the speed of social development is extremely essential. Students will orient specific goals and plan for the future to have a better result following the requirements and social practices when they know the major clearly.

1.2 The domestic and foreign research situations

1.2.1 The foreign research situations

It can be seen that not only in Vietnam but also in other countries around the world that human resource is a key area for economic development. Therefore, research in the field of employment to find solutions to improve the quality of human resources is a topic that attracts a lot of attention to scientists around the world. To meet the trend of global development, human resources need to cultivate certain knowledge as well as converge many skills. There are five skills that employers require graduated students: language communication skills, teamwork skills, listening-understanding skills, problem-solving skills, and building relationship skills [3].

Besides, it is indispensable to express ideas skills, ability to recognize and evaluate trade, ability to analyze and do research, ability to give self-initiative ideas and solutions, establish a stable operation, communicate through written format, do planning

and organization, flexibility to suit the circumstances, and finally time management skills. In addition, this article also gives other important skills such as leadership skills, negotiation and persuasion skills, computer skills, self-awareness, self-study, independence, and decision making [4]. In addition, in order to enhance their own abilities and experiences, students can do jobs related to their majors to reinforce and improve their knowledge and practical ability, or students can even do many other jobs as long as they can afford and meet the requirements of the period of stay. Students need to go through the interview process and will be admitted to the job if they meet the requirements from the employers. This is also an opportunity for each student to challenge and get acquainted with the examination/recruitment process in the agency/company/organization in the future. With a diploma in sociology, we can do almost any job. The degree in sociology provides strong preparation for entry-level positions in all education, consulting, legal, business, social services, the criminal justice system, and non-government organizations. Sociology offers functional skills that move from setting to setting and can adapt to an innovative economy. With diverse job features, the study has given some examples of employment in the new era related to sociology such as social science research/Demographic research, Criminology, Community relations, Human resource education for education, Business, and Management. Especially, for each group of jobs in the new era, they include related fields such as Social Science Research team, outstanding jobs such as research and validation, social surveys, private research companies, non-profit organizations, and communication. Criminals sector can act as lawyers, judicial agencies, court systems, law enforcement agencies, or with an education group that can do jobs such as working as a teacher at public and private schools, colleges and universities, a researcher at schools, offices, administration, and so on. Business groups include many jobs such as management, sales, marketing, public relations, Insurance, real estate and advertising. Thus, sociological academic can be seen as a diversified and multi-field job training industry which is suitable for future social trends [5].

Sociology is a major oriented to an academic career, but only a few sociological students graduated will become scholars in higher education institutions. Graduated students do not feel confident enough to apply their specialized skills as ethical issues in research, and a few students think they have strong statistical training that they can cite in their job application. Only 40% of graduate students have joined sociological clubs, internships, service-learning and mentoring clubs, which can help them enter applied careers related to sociology consistently with their degree. Among full-time employees, 26% of students are in social services and consulting roles, mainly of whom work for non-profits. They have reported to work on issues closely related to their qualifications, such as supporting abuse survivors, working in child services, youth justice advocacy, providing services for disadvantaged families and supporting disaster victims. About 16% of students have been working in administrative and clerical support. Their roles involve operating information systems and computers, undertaking to account, paying taxes, and training staff. 14% have been working in management field. They tend to work in the human resources sector, especially in recruitment and training companies. Other roles include financial analysis, workforce planning, quality assurance, and employee evaluation. There are about 8% of the students working as teacher s and

librarians. They mainly work in educational institutions, businesses, and other criminal justice organizations. Others work in services (8%), as well as sales and marketing (10%). In the recent years, they mainly work for technology companies and their duties included doing research and marketing plans and writing for advertisements. Less than 6% of students work as scientists and social researchers. The researchers argued that there was a big gap in the sociological level, students who are trained do not hold enough professionals to take on such roles. Especially, students do not receive sufficient training in research methodology, computer application and statistics as part of a university major to gain positions in the scientific workforce as well as internship. Of those, about half of the students have worked as consultants. Part-time workers (less than 35 hours of paid work) are employed in the same fields as full-time workers, but half of those studying are doing social science research. About half of the graduated students are very satisfied with their current job and 42% of them are somewhat satisfied. At the same time, the majority of them are employed in roles that are not closely related to their sociology qualifications. People said that the stronger the connection between their work and their study, the more likely they feel satisfied with their careers. A lower connection with sociology leads to greater career dissatisfaction. When participants first graduated, most were satisfied with their choice of a sociology major (70%), but two years later, this enthusiasm waned (60%). This is annoying not only for those individuals but also to universities, as it reduces discord in the way of teaching and training. Respondents noted that very few jobs are labeled as Islamic sociologists and they have not been helped by career counselors at their schools to know which sociological occupations qualify and what skills they should emphasize in a job search [6].

1.2.2 The domestic research situations

The employment policies for Vietnamese youth are remarkably considerable by many researchers and scientists. They believed that Vietnam's labor market is not synchronous, lacks management manpower, low quality, and mainly unskilled labor. In particular, the unemployment rate is high, and the unemployment rate increased by more than 7% with over 200,000 unemployed graduates in 2017. The State has considered the employment issue because it has a great influence on socio-economic development. In order to solve the employment problem in the integration phase, it is necessary to find out the cause of the increase in the unemployment rate, to find out the reasons why our country has a large workforce that cannot meet the requirements of the business, thereby proposing solutions to improve and reduce the number of unemployment-related [7].

In Vietnam, there are about 80 - 90 thousand people graduating from colleges and over 150 thousand people graduating from universities every year. This is a potential labor force for the development of the country. However, our country is still facing increasing difficulties in creating suitable jobs for highly skilled workers. Young unemployed and underemployed are a great waste to Vietnamese society both economics, politics, and social capital. There are many previous research findings mentioned: (1) Vietnamese students do not fully benefit from the education system, many young people drop out of school before completing the course; (2) Social inequality continues to affect youth attendance in schools. There is still a large gap in access to education between men and women, regions, urban and rural areas, especially

the poverty gap among regions; (3) The youth's professional skills and qualifications have not met the requirements of businesses [4]. Referring to the problem of the unemployment after graduation of university students, it can be seen that there are many causes for this problem: (1) The training program of the schools may not follow closely with the job requirements and occupational skills of employers. It may be due to the training goals of different schools. Practical training programs will closely follow practical skills and professions when graduates can work and manipulate their skills immediately. Research-oriented training programs will have immediate practical skills that will not be used at first, but they are well-equipped with the background of career knowledge, and after a few years, students can undertake that job autonomously. (2) The training programs of some schools do not follow the reality, especially the training program is designed not to be assessed from the needs of enterprises and employers, but they rely on the available experience and capacity of those schools. With such programs, it is very easy for graduate students to find it very difficult to adapt to the actual requirements of employment [8].

From the difficulties in finding job opportunities, meeting the employers' needs of newly graduated students is a barrier. Therefore, clarifying the influencing factors and proposing a number of measures for the recruitment and employment of students after graduation is the basis to create motivation, and a convenient environment to uphold into play the role of young human resources after the training process. Factors affecting student employment are determined by previous studies, including the appropriateness of the training program, Good working knowledge and skills, Work environment, Recruitment agencies, including human resource managers in companies. Many students took the entrance exam to college, not out of passion, love, or aptitude, but just to go to school. There are also students who are capable of their majors but during the course of study, they did not bother to study, practice their skills, have non-define the goals or learn from experience in the learning process, so they cannot avoid embarrassment when approaching work. While the society increasingly requires people who are really capable of effective and qualified work, those who are not capable will inevitably be eliminated by society [9].

In an economy with many both opportunities and challenges, students need to study and identify goals to easily have the right job with the right major, passion, and capacity. Preparing for a future career is always a long process, one should not wait until graduation to begin. Some solutions proposed are based on the actual requirements of the society such as practicing certain professional skills, improving soft skills, actively fostering English as well as foreign languages [10]. Thus, it can be seen that most of the studies have argued with the general development of the whole society, the requirement for human resources to converge many factors both in terms of qualifications and personality is an inevitable trend for that development in general. To achieve that objective, the curriculum with content aims to build a certain foundation, multidimensional, combine many fields and provide learners with a vast source of knowledge that will create a satisfying job in society in the integration period.

From the above previous studies, compared to Vietnam, sociological academic in countries around the world has had a more remarkable development. Foreign authors

referred to the areas in which Sociological students can work after graduation. This means that they are aware of the position and not ambiguous about the role of sociological academic in social life. With Vietnam's social situation, the specific socio-economic situations have been developing and changing constantly, the career issue becomes even more important. When researching on career issues and career orientation, the object is often focused on young workers, who are in accumulating skills and knowledge to participate in the social system [13]. The fact that students working in different fields with their major are a fairly common practice in today's market economy. The situation of graduated students working in wrong careers has wasted young knowledge sources which are a worry of the whole society and on the one hand, a waste of time, effort and material of students; on the other hand, it is a waste of knowledgeable labor force in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization. Imbalances in the market supply and demand affect the career orientations of students. According to the surveyed results, students believed that about 45.6% of graduated students could apply for a job, the rest part cannot get a job for many reasons, but it is the most important reason including imbalance in the labor market of supply – demand [14; 15]. In the training disciplines where the number of students working in the wrong field includes a new science such as sociology. For this science, this is also a problem that students are interested in because, after graduation, many students have to attend another major to find a job; available knowledge from the universities is hardly used.

According to the employment program statistics of Nguoi Lao Dong Newspaper (2008), on average, for every 100 employees who graduated from university to register for a job, about 80% of employees could not find a job in the first 3 months after graduation, 50% of students were unemployed during the first 6 months, and 30% of students were unemployed after 1 year. In the latest survey in 2014 by the University of Economics of Ho Chi Minh City, only 40% of the university's students found jobs within 6 months after graduation and after 1 year this number increasing to about 70% [1; 16; 17]. At Can Tho University as well as Mekong Delta, the term of Sociology is still a relatively new term, which has not received the attention of most students, and most students have the same question, "what kind of jobs will the students do after graduating in sociology". Therefore, the determination of job needs for students is essential.

2. Content

2.1. Research methodology

Exploratory research: The qualitative research methods are used in the study aiming to do field surveys, do in-depth interviews, refer the people's ideas and collect theoretical bases to design questionnaires and scale models.

Analytical research: The convenient sampling method was used in the study to collect data of sociological students from course 41 to 45. The study ensures reliability if the number of samples is greater than or equal to 225 observations according to the formula: $n \geq 50 + 5k$ (k: number of observed variables; n: number of samples). The

research data were collected 225 students who have graduated and been studying at Can Tho University through questionnaires and online-surveys.

Table 1 showed that students of course 41 had 33 students (accounting for 12.9%), course 42 had 95 students (accounting for 21.8%), course 43 had 66 students (accounting for 24%) and 46 students of course 44 (accounting for 25.3%). The proportion of students among courses is not equal. Especially, students of course 41 had the lowest rate because they graduated and already have jobs. For course 42, many students have completed their studies, only a few are still working on their dissertations. Although the study identified, the two groups of students of course 41 and 42 have a lot of potentials to do a survey, but they rarely went to school, the interviewing is difficult and takes a lot of time. Therefore, the higher rate of student groups doing this survey is from course 43, 44 and 45. The process of gathering information is convenient, based on their needs, it is possible to propose many solutions to improve the employment situation of students who are studying Sociology in the future, as well as bringing high efficiency and helping the research have more practical value.

Table 1. The number of samples surveyed

Number of Courses	Rate (%)
41	12,9
42	21,8
43	24
44	25,3
45	16

(Source: Research group, 2020)

2.2 Research findings and discussions

2.2.1 The situation of sociological student jobs

Table 2 showed that there were 52 students graduated (accounted for 23.1%) and 173 students are still studying (76.9%). Graduated courses are course 41, a number of course 42 students are doing dissertations and courses 43, 44, 45. Out of 52 graduated students, 39 students have found jobs, 10 students have not found a job and 3 students are studying graduate school (mainly students of course 41). The main jobs of students in sociology are office workers, civil servants, counselors, union workers, and salespeople. The time students have spent to have a stable job which is less than 6 months after graduation are 32 students, there are 7 students over 6 months.

Table 2. The educational situation of sociological students at Can Tho University

Status position	Number (Students)	Rate (%)
<i>Graduated</i>	52	23,1
<i>Studying</i>	173	76,9

(Source: Research group, 2020)

2.2.2 Job choices of sociological students at Can Tho University

Sociological students at CTU have graduated two courses over 160 students, who has been working as an officer (35%); consultants (25%); media and television fields (15%); salesperson (18%) and others (7%). After doing a survey on the employment status of students in sociology, the study was conducted to find out the needs and desires of students to access job positions in society, the research results showed that there are 175 students who are having to work in the fields of journalism and media, television stations. In recent years, under the strong support of technology and modern equipment, television has gradually reaffirmed its position in the hearts of the audience, entertainment products, advertising, and movies affecting on the lives of people remarkably. Therefore, the fact that sociological students love jobs related to media is not difficult to explain. This was followed by 172 options for students wishing to work in careers related to social research. Most of the students have the right interest in the major that sociological training is to study social development rules, the issues happing in daily life every day. In addition, a number of other fields also attract the attention of sociological students such as consultants and human resources management (153 options), public administration (130 options) and jobs related to psychology with 95 options. The research results showed that sociological students at CTU have different choices with their employment, in which fieds of journalism and media, television stations are accounting the highest choices.

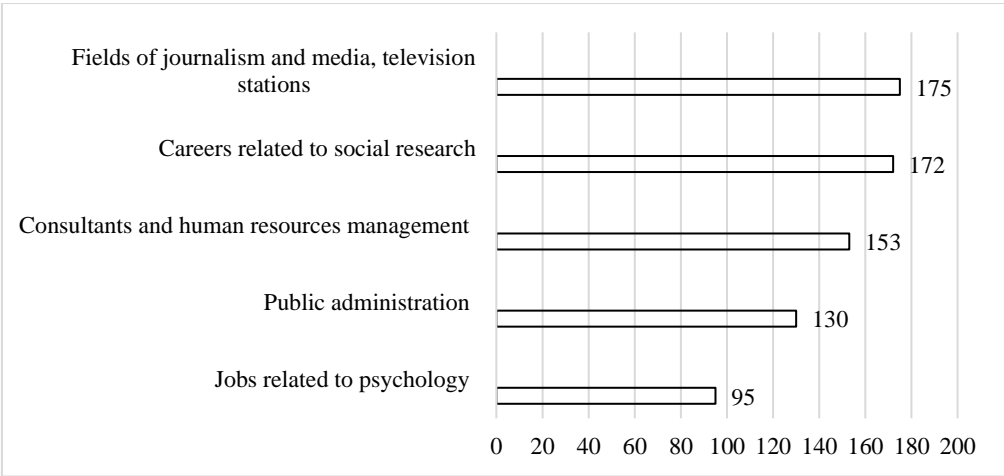


Figure 1. Job choices of sociological students

(Source: Research group, 2020)

2.2.3. Causes of sociological student unemployment

Figure 2. showed that there are still many students who are unemployed, and some students still lack confidence when applying for jobs due to not being able to meet practical requirements. The research study showed that factors leading to the unemployment status as foreign language skills, soft skills, professional knowledge, individual experiences, and start-up motivations. Among of factors, it can be seen that the factor of limited foreign languages is a main cause leading to unemployment, accounted for the highest choices (186 students in 225 students); the lack of soft skills is the second choice of the cause that makes it difficult for them to get a job after

graduation (176 students). The next cause is that students do not master specialized knowledge with 134 options. Personal experiences are limited with 130 options and ultimately students are not motivated to start a business with 79 options. In addition, one in 225 students chose another answer and gave the reason of the psychological fear of failure that this student dare not do the work that they love. Thereby, it was concluded some reasons that make it difficult for students in sociology to find jobs as follows:

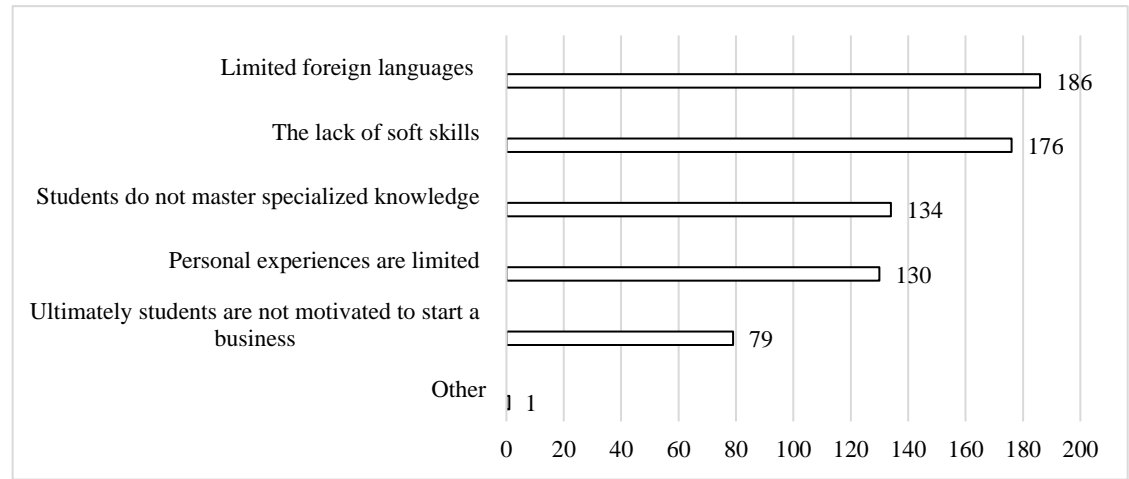


Figure 2. Factors affecting the unemployment of sociological students
(Source: Research group, 2020)

Firstly, most of CTU students themselves have not paid much attention to equipping soft skills. Sociological students are still not aware of the importance of soft skills in life, work, and study. Most students also focus on hard skills, interested in theories, stereotypes, and have not fully developed their own potential. This showed that the CTU environment has not really conveyed inspiration to students and has not yet effectively taught soft skills modules. The school still has a few programs and events to help students practice soft skills, promote, and find their own strengths.

Secondly, students are still limited to foreign language education. According to students' self-assessment, their language proficiency is still at an average level. Many students said that their own language is still limited. Some reasons are given such as losing of basic knowledge, lacking passion to learn English or other languages, not spending a lot of time studying and practicing. Each student himself is still passive in the learning process, not giving any constructive ideas or presenting what they do not understand. They just follow what the teacher teaches in class. After school, students themselves are not aware of the importance of learning foreign languages, so they have thought of coping with the subject. That is the reason why many students lack communication, listening and writing skills. In addition, a number of other objective factors such as facilities (lacking modern visual equipment, few reference sources, practicing environment and so on). Those also have a significant impact on students' learning and training of foreign languages of sociological students. In addition, some students said that the content in the curriculum was unattractive, did not create excitement which led to easily bored.

Thirdly, students themselves do not pay much attention to learning, passive learning, learning to deal with the subject. Meanwhile, in the social context, there is a rapid development of science and technology, especially the development of the industrial revolution 4.0, it has affected many fields and many changes. Students must learn to master the specialized knowledge, understand to apply in real life, not just to chase scores. Therefore, this is also a problem that many universities are facing when many students are coping only, not interested in learning rather than learning to understand nature and apply their knowledge for problem-solving.

2.3. Some solutions for improving seeking job capacity of sociological students

The survey results showed that the majority of students only focus on disciplines related to the field of public administration, while in other countries around the world, a BA in sociology can hold many different job positions depending on the students' qualifications and skills. Facing the situation of overloading a number of occupations, CTU in Vietnam needs to reorient employment for students in sociology to get jobs what they can do after graduation. In recent years, other freelance professions, also known as freelancers, are popular, but they are not fully utilized. Graduated students in sociology can take up positions related to the media and multimedia fields based on the rapid development of technology. New industries such as writing content for websites, e-commerce sites or non-governmental organizations are also jobs that sociological students can earn a high income. The job of a freelancer can work at the same time for many different clients. Usually, trading activities between freelancers and customers would take place on the internet, either through a freelancer website, or an intermediary dedicated to providing freelance services [15].

In addition, the sociological department at CTU needs to establish a number of clubs for students to participate in activities to learn and improve their own skills, encourage students' initiative in participating in social activities. There is more linkage of relevant organizations, agencies, businesses and non-governmental organizations and University so that students have the opportunity to meet and exchange with many units creating more opportunities to approach units and businesses. The combination and application of the soft skills modules in the enterprise approaching model can be applied. At the same time, constantly raising awareness helps students understand the importance of teamwork, communication, and time management. Along with that, the enthusiasm of teachers affects the way of learning as well as interactive relationship; The teachers need to encourage students to work independently, creates an environment of trust and feedback on learning outcomes, which has an impact on students' awareness and confidence leading to deep learning [16].

Parents play a very important role in deciding to send their children to school. Therefore, they need to be focused on raising their awareness of the long-term benefits of education [17]. Parents often care and orient jobs for their children. They play the role of people who follow your children from childhood to adulthood, who understand their thoughts and aspirations. This is the time when the roles of parents and grandparents in the direction of educating their children are most clearly demonstrated. Parents must orient what their children should learn, what are their strengths, and what to do to maximize those strengths. When students have a decision about a job, need to

work in any field with their experience, parents will be the people who advise their children to have the correct choice. In addition, parents should encourage them. Among the factors that improve the employment situation, the individual factor plays an extremely important role because only students can understand what they are facing difficulties and advantages. Therefore, students need to actively equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and soft skills, try to strive and perfect the elements that they themselves lack. Each student should actively participate in activities, programs, clubs with the purpose of exchange, learning and self-training, and students have to try your best in many different fields and activities to promote many different abilities. Students should adjust attitudes and build appropriate learning methods to practice their communication skills effectively, comfortably and openly with those around them. Moreover, they should limit the time using technology equipment for entertainment. Instead, they need learning and exploring more social issues.

Students should regularly reflect on themselves, at the same time detecting flaws and correcting, setting multiple goals and trying to fulfill their own plans within a certain amount of time. Students must master their knowledge in each learning period from their existing backgrounds and continue to promote more to be able to assert their own position in the labor market. In addition, to enhance the ability to learn foreign languages (mainly English). Today, English is a tool to help create many job opportunities because it is considered a global language helping countries connect with each other. When students are good at English, each student will have more opportunities to approach big businesses, foreign companies and so on.

3. Conclusions

In recent years, regardless of doing any jobs, meeting social requirements is the top priority. The study has pointed out the actual status of employment, needs, and several limitations from reality, and proposed some solutions to orient the needs, goals and improve the weaknesses of sociological students. Students need to be aware that jobs are not only found through the background knowledge learned in the classroom, but they are also the necessary skills, the use of information technology proficiently. Also, a good language is also one of the factors that makes it easier to find a good job.

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