

The Chinese Graduate Unemployment Crisis 2023. A Comprehensive Geo-Educational Study

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Abstract

Firstly, graduation marks the end of one era and the beginning of a new one.” (Lemire, S. 2023). As for Graduates of the People’s Republic of China, the new means a future employment struggle. As this is one of the most discussed topics in Asia, this comprehensive research study investigates the trials and tribulations involved in the pursuit of work for graduating students in one of the most competitive job markets in the world. Secondly, unearthed within this body of work, the team of researchers discovered that a bachelor’s degree is insufficient to obtain a first company position. Many company recruiters in 2023 now seek postgraduate students instead, due to the intense competition of the recently graduated pool of alumni to apply for first-tier office-oriented positions. Thirdly, an additional factor to this burdensome or arduous out look, is to find gainful employment. i.e., These graduates have requested higher salaries in the major cities to be proportional to the rising standard of living costs, as recruiters usually offer a standardized low erwage for newcomers at job fairs. Finally, the resulting psychological effects and ramifications for the new generation in China, have both been delineated and discussed in this paper.

Keywords: China, Postgraduate, Unemployment, Education, Urban.

List of abbreviations:

| | |
|------|---|
| CIER | – China Institute for Employment Research |
| GU | – Graduate Unemployed |
| NBS | – National Bureau of Statistics. |
| GDP | – Gross Domestic Product |
| PRC | – People’s Republic of China |

1. Introduction

It is said that knowledge can rewrite your destiny, however, for the new wave of graduates in the People’s Republic of China, it is defined as deep uncertainty.

Secondly, the post-pandemic recovery in

China has shown a comparatively sluggish pace in relation to other nations within the region and worldwide. This may be attributed to the implementation of stringent lockdown measures, characterized by a zero-tolerance approach, which have had a notable impact on several sectors, particularly manufacturing.

Third, the recent university confirmation season for the graduating class of 2023 was characterized by a mixture of emotions. In actuality, the number of individuals who successfully attained postsecondary education in 2023 amounted to 11.6 million. Additionally, the rate of unemployment among urban young has reached an unprecedented high of 21.3%, reflecting a growth of eleven percentage points compared to the figures seen in 2019.

Penultimately, the outcome of the aforementioned will illustrate that this situation has had a profoundly negative impact on the recruiting market for these recent graduates. The labour market is now experiencing a phenomenon known as "Degree Inflation," which is characterized by a significant increase in the number of applicants for each available position. Hence, the acquisition of a bachelor's degree is not an obligatory prerequisite for entry into the workforce. Furthermore, there has been a lack of upward movement in compensation, with a prevailing trend of stasis seen in the employment practices of companies.

Finally, this study examines the consequences associated with the changes in China's social economic strata and the psychological effects experienced by the large number of graduates and postgraduates joining the urban workplace, including the recurring challenges faced yearly. The present conundrum of urban-youth unemployment, in conjunction with a declining population, prompts an inquiry into the potential amalgamation of these two significant concerns for the purpose of devising effective solutions.

2. Methodology

2.1 In this paper, methods used to find out factors that lead to Chinese Graduate Unemployment, business and management concerns, and failure in corporations in the construction enterprises are as

follows: (i) Conduct literature reviews of recruitment practices in 2023, and management failure of construction enterprises. (ii) Develop the attributions and solutions to this new generational unemployment anomaly. (iii) Collect business and management cases of current practices in Chinese Recruitment in the major cities. (iv) Conduct analysis of the survey results and the case studies. (v) Factors that lead to difficulties experienced by today's generation within degree inflation, vacancy competition, and social media are distinguished from a great deal of datum and cases. In succession, these factors or variables are divided using classification method and sequenced in terms of their respective importance.

2.2 (Data was collated from academic resources and reputable Chinese repositories within political, economic, and social sciences which are commensurate to the Asia geographic quantitatively. The data was then correlated to be the most pertinent to defend the original hypothesis attributed to graduate unemployment statistics. (vii) Datasets were compiled accordingly within Chaos Mathematics sequencing were used in correlations methods to calculate subset variables in line with empirical practice discerned for scientific conclusions and discussion.

3. 2023 University Undergraduate Crisis Experienced to-date.

3.1 Formerly, China and its the implementation of stringent Covid-19 containment measures by the government, including extensive lockdowns, has exacerbated the issue of young unemployment. According to the NBS - World Bank, [Figure 1.] the reported figure for graduate unemployment in 2023 is at 21.3%. This percentage may be contrasted with the respective rates of 10% in the United Kingdom, 7% in the United States, and 6% in Japan.

3.2 Moreover, the implementation of the Zero Covid Policy in China had a significant impact on the retail and consumer service sectors, leading to their prompt closure. According to Beddor (2023),

3.3 Within ambiguity, to satisfy the eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits in China, people must actively participate in job search endeavours for a minimum period of three months. From a statistical standpoint, the existing labour force consists of around 32 million persons. Out of the total population, 6 million individuals are

identified as unemployed, while [64m] individuals are classed as being in a state of joblessness. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a significant population of 16 million of the populous remain unenrolled in educational institutions. The lack of clarity shown by the aforementioned system suggests that the population of sixteen million persons who are not currently enrolled in educational institutions are facing a pressing demand for work options. Hence, these individuals may be categorized as those who are actively engaged in the pursuit of work yet are now unemployed. The statistical model is distorted, and this ambiguity is amplified by the migration of employed individuals from rural areas to urban regions in search of employment opportunities. However, if these individuals are unable to gain employment, they tend to return to their rural hometowns. Consequently, this phenomenon adds extra complexity to China's labour records from a statistical perspective.

4. China's Companies and their Revised Recruitment Policies.

Degree Inflation

4.1 To define this additional burden of degree inflation placed upon recent graduates, basically means that the employment opportunities that were previously suitable for those with a high school education now need the attainment of a university degree, and occupations that were previously accessible to university graduates now mandate the acquisition of a master's degree. (Hongfei, X. 2023). consequently, these recruitment search companies require master's degrees and internship experience, for prospective candidates to be on a company's short list.

4.2 According to recent data, an increasing number of students from mainland China are choosing to pursue their studies in Asian countries rather than in Western nations. The tendency is influenced, to some extent, by the comparatively lower expenses involved. However, analysts argue that a significant contributing element is the substantial failure rates seen among those taking admission tests for advanced degrees at Chinese colleges.

4.3 Qiang Zha, an associate professor of education at York University in Canada, asserts that the primary impetus behind Chinese students' inclination to pursue higher education in Asian

universities is the opportunity to obtain a postgraduate degree at a reasonable cost. Additionally, Zha identifies the intense competition associated with gaining admission to graduate programs in China as a secondary factor contributing to this trend. (Sharma, Y. 2023).

4.4 According to private education consultant polls conducted in China, the percentage of individuals who do not pass the postgraduate test and then seek admission to institutions in Asia ranges from around 40% (as reported by the agency Yangyang Study Abroad) to as high as 66% (as indicated by other less prominent agencies).

4.5 As we can see in Figure 2, the job market has become much more competitive in nature. Statistically, in 2021 there were over two vacancies per graduate, last year in the fourth quarter there was 0.56 of a job for each university graduate applicant. This has forced the recruiters to apply more stringent qualifications' policies. For example, job applicants with only a bachelor's degree with no internship background, will have little chance of being submitted for a company's prospective candidate list. Today, according to the main recruitment houses, a minimum of a master's degree plus an acceptable service of internships within blue-chip companies would only suffice. Consequently, the task of securing an initial job placement on the career trajectory poses more challenges for recent graduates with advanced educational backgrounds. Currently, it seems to be commonplace for individuals who have obtained a bachelor's degree in China to get employment as delivery drivers. (CIER, 2022).

China - Companies and Industries in General 2023

4.6 Firstly, it has also been discovered in this study that Campus Recruitment in 2023 has also shown immense decline. In fact, less than half of the recruiters engage with on-campus interviews and headhunting activities. Moreover, it was reported on CNBC that there were 7.7 applicants for 200k government or civil service positions available. (Cheng., *et al.* 2023).

4.7 Secondly, the construction industry has taken a huge hit over the past three years. According to financial reporter Laura He, the enduring fragility in the property sector was impeding the economic resurgence of China. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the gross domestic

product (GDP) of the nation had a growth rate of 4.9% in the third quarter, surpassing initial expectations. The primary driver of this expansion was mostly attributed to a substantial rise in consumer expenditure. It is generally believed that the housing sector would continue to provide significant challenges. The data has revealed a notable decline of 9.1% in property investments over the first three quarters of 2023, suggesting a deteriorating investor mood. (He, L. 2023).

4.8 Thirdly, the housing crisis was anticipated as early as 2006, as shown by the CRIOCM 2006 International Symposium on "Advancement of Construction Management and Real Estate." The study reached various conclusions on the failure considerations in business and management within the construction company. i) The primary issue identified as crucial in this regard is the failure of building projects, which often results in direct failure. ii) The failure of a construction project typically encompasses some key aspects: project decision-making deficiencies, inadequate project financing, flawed project surveying, faulty project design, inadequate time management, insufficient investment control, compromised quality control, inadequate risk management, and technical shortcomings. iii) One of the primary issues that was stated and noted is the presence of faults in project choices - The decision-making process plays a crucial role in the overall success of a building project. If an operator or management were to make an erroneous judgment from the outset, it would inevitably lead to catastrophic consequences that beyond one's imagination. iv) The lack of success in a building project - In the context of China, the primary cause contributing to the failure of business and management in construction enterprises is often the failure of construction projects, which often results in direct failure. v) Deficiency in project funding - The occurrence of project finance failures in the construction industry, which is a widespread phenomenon in China, may also lead to the collapse of construction businesses and management. Based on some correlational studies, it has been observed that in China, the funding for a project is occasionally allocated into many components. Specifically, the central government contributes a portion, the district government gives another portion, and the remaining portion is covered by the provincial government. vi) The Deficiency in Project Surveying - Conducting a

survey is an essential prerequisite for the effective completion of a building project. vii) The presence of design flaws in building construction - this process of designing buildings has significant importance in the context of construction projects. In the realm of building design, three fundamental areas are often considered: formwork design, structural design, and ornamentation design. viii) The loss of control over the project's delivery timing - The timely completion of a building project is of utmost significance. Even a modest improvement of one day in delivery time has the potential to generate significant revenue. However, it has been noted that the delay in delivery time might sometimes result in significant losses (Cong, 2003).

4.9.1 Fourth, failing construction enterprises has contributed to the vast numbers of graduate civil engineers. It has been notated in several surveys in the main cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen that there were 200,000 layoffs prior to this new graduate cycle entering the workforce or job market. Many of these individuals, therefore, are changing their careers entirely and returning to higher education. (Yi, H.M., *et al.* 2006).

4.9.2 Fifth, the cost-of-living factor has also entered the recruitment equation. Salaries that are being offered at recruitment fairs are simply too low, according to the demands from newcomers to the workplace. If the perfect candidate were to be offered a first career position from a prominent recruiter relating to a blue-chip company, they would only receive a monthly remuneration of CNY 4,000 equivalent to \$550.00. Due to the increased rise in urbanised living, fresh graduates state an initial salary from CNY 6,000 to 8,000 (\$840-1100) equivalency. So nearly a three hundred dollar increase to what is being offered by employers in 2023. In Shanghai for example, it was calculated that a new employee in two-year timeframe, would only save enough funds to acquire one square metre of housing in this major city. (Hoffman, B. 2023).

5. Temporary Employment and the social media

5.1 As life has become untenable for most embarking on the first stage of the career path, many jobseekers have resorted to the assistance from social media, and this has being applied in several ways. Many have turned to the web as

influencing online for ladies' products, cooking commentators with other blogged videos and further instances, cover romance and financial issues within their generation. This modus of acquiring extra income is also competitive as they compete with social media stars who have already gained a huge following online.

5.2 Secondly, the Chinese online shopping portal "Taobao" is a very useful outlet for jobseekers on a low controllable budget, to procure food and other essentials at a very affordable price.

6. Graduate's Parental Pressure.

6.1 The undergraduate unemployment crisis in China has placed the burden onto parents. Their offspring's inability to find gainful employment has resulted in extra household expenditure. Many small businesses in the restaurant industry and many other service sectors, were deeply affected by the Covid-19 stringent government lockdowns. The testing and advancing Chinese surveillance control systems illustrated notable similarities between the manner in which China used societal security as a rationale for establishing a surveillance system in Xinjiang and its utilization of physical safety for its justification for implementing extensive measures to contain both the epidemic and its citizens. According to a recent report published last year, in previous times, the notion of being influenced by terrorist ideologies was often described metaphorically as a virus. In the region of Xinjiang, prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, the internal government papers used the phrase "virus" to characterize what the state saw as "Islamic radicalism." According to the speaker, during the COVID-19 pandemic, China effectively used its state surveillance infrastructure to monitor its whole population in response to a highly infectious and imperceptible virus. (Yang, Z. 2022).

6.2 The result of the aforementioned measures were the closures for service industry business completely. As there has been an innumerable amount of former students return from campuses to continue residing with their parents, there will be a time that these mothers and fathers would force their children to find any form of employment to assist the family; considering China is a documented growing aging population. Finally, there has also been a sharp decrease of students venturing to foreign lands for both

undergraduate and postgraduate study and has also been attributed to the policies adopted by the Chinese government during covid – in short, there seems to be a lack of liquidity for parents in China since 2021 until now. Even the after-school tuition companies are now failing due to the lack of demand as a result of lack of residual funds possessed by the parents. Case-in-point, the New Oriental Educational Group (A New York listed company) has recently laid off 16,000 employees in light of dwindling business for its after-school tutoring operation. (Yifan, Z. 2023).

7. The Psychological Effects Experienced?

7.1 The ramifications of unemployment include several aspects, including but not limited to, uncertainty, reduced levels of consumption, elevated crime rates, increased prevalence of poverty, and drug and alcohol dependency.

7.2 Uncertainty is a notable outcome of unemployment's impact on the economy. Is it necessary for us to possess knowledge of all the potential questions you may pose? If individuals engage in the aforementioned behaviour, it will have adverse effects on the economy. When the overall stability of the economy is compromised, the heightened level of uncertainty significantly, it impacts the economic choices individuals make on a daily basis.

7.3 Employees begin to reduce their levels of consumption due to apprehensions of potential impending layoffs. What is the rationale for their concern? In a robust economic environment, individuals would be less susceptible to involuntary job loss and would have a positive outlook on their prospects for securing other employment in the event of a layoff. Nevertheless, in a volatile economic climate, the task of securing employment becomes very challenging. As individuals adopt a more frugal approach to consumption, there is a resultant decline in the overall demand for goods and services, hence exacerbating the already elevated levels of unemployment. (Study Smarter, UK. 2022).

7.4 As for crime, Sun Qian, the deputy procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said that the proportion of individuals punished for extreme violent offenses has decreased from 25 percent in 1999 to 3.9 percent. Among the criminal cases that underwent prosecution, a

substantial majority of 85.5 percent pertained to minor offenses that were associated with penalties of less than three years. The measure measuring individuals' perception of security has seen a notable improvement, rising from 87.5 percent in 2012 to 98.6 percent in 2021.

7.5 According to Sun Qian's statement, Chinese procuratorates have initiated legal proceedings for a total of 42,000 instances related to organized crimes over the course of the previous five years. Additionally, they have successfully punished over 3,600 individuals involved in providing protection or support to these criminal activities, sometimes referred to as "protective umbrellas," with a particular emphasis on officials. (Global Times, 2023).

7.6 Additional psychological effect on stress that in the West young people living in their parental homes sometimes bear a portion of their financial obligations, such as paying "rent," engaging in household chores, or making contributions towards the overall running of the family unit. On the other hand, young individuals who are without employment are unable to promptly match the financial support provided by their parents. (Mortimer, J., *et al.* 2016).

7.7 It is considered by academics that a further study is required on this subject matter. The conclusions drawn in this research were all notated from a study published on a singular group of young individuals who were in St. Paul, Minnesota. In order to establish more generalizability, it was recommended that further research be conducted with a sample that is typical of the whole country. Significantly, it was worth noting that the timeframe of the research did not include the Great Recession, therefore potentially limiting the understanding of the unique implications of unemployment during a period characterized by a substantial increase in the number of jobless youth.

7.8 This study published in the Harvard Business Review in 2016, examined unemployment situations, such as the reasons for young unemployment (e.g., voluntary resignation or employer termination), was also outside the scope of this body of research. It was concluded that further study be conducted to examine the impact of an individual's self-efficacy on various work-

related behaviours, including but not limited to goal-setting, job seeking, and pursuing further education to enhance qualifications and competencies. China, however, could heed the recommendations of such research studies and the intention of more to come.

7.8.1 Notwithstanding the limits of the study's observations, and the remaining tasks that need to be undertaken, this research had a marked significance. The potential adverse psychological effects of youth unemployment and parental financial assistance are evident in the near term, as they might diminish an individual's feeling of self-efficacy. Furthermore, it is possible that these measures might have had adverse and lasting consequences on the job market. (Mortimer, J., *et al.* 2016).

7.8.2 Although labour market "scarring," which refers to the enduring decrease in wages experienced by individuals who enter the workforce during periods of high unemployment, has been examined by both sociologists and economists, there has been relatively less focus on individuals in their twenties and early thirties. This age group is considered to have surpassed the school-to-work transition phase but is still young enough to avoid age-related discrimination. The absence of meaningful employment among young people, hinders their ability to attain objective indicators of maturity and may result in missed opportunities for beneficial job experiences, such as skill enhancement and the establishment of professional relationships and social connections within overall youth activity.

7.9 It is believed from these societal cases that unemployment has the capacity to diminish the self-assurance of young adults through two distinct mechanisms. (i) it could impede or obstruct their successful transition into adulthood, thereby delaying or preventing the attainment of economic self-sufficiency, marriage, parenthood, and other related milestones. (ii) it could create circumstances where parental financial support becomes necessary, thereby compromising the autonomy and independence of the youth. This study aimed to explore interventions that might effectively mitigate the hazards associated with young unemployment and facilitate successful reintegration into the workforce.

7.9.1 Conversely, Chinese poor public policy decisions pertaining social issues, is a further cause for consideration and concern. It is quite evident that long-term unemployment leads to drug and alcohol dependencies culminating in societal disengagement. Therefore, more motivational tools from the Chinese leadership is required via more stimulus packages as the graduate population is increasing year-on-year.

8. China's Previous and Current Policies with increasing Concerns.

8.1 Due to concerns from the Chinese government since the end of Covid and the resulting ongoing unemployment shortfalls, city governors are providing all forms of government incentives to private companies to accelerate or hasten the hiring of graduates within a certain timeframe. In two separate provinces Sichuan and Hunan, there has been stimulus directives from the governors. In Hunan, there was a 100-day campaign on its nbd.com.cn website, stating a zero-unemployment policy was its goal. In Sichuan province, however, the governor ordered companies in the Summer of 2023, to hire as many as possible, as early as possible. Subsidies were additionally allocated to many private companies. These events occurred between May and July respectively. The results of this incentivisation have not been published at the time of this paper's submission.

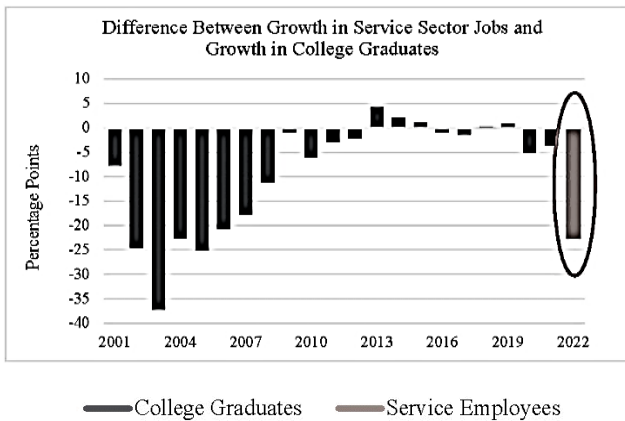
8.2 Regrettably, the Chinese social structure has adequately equipped the present cohort for technical progress and has elevated quality of life, hence fostering an expectation of further improvement. However, the economic environment was not adequately prepared in a synchronized manner. According to Hofman (2023). The government, therefore, is deeply concerned regarding the earlier planning and societal effect.

8.3 From the standpoint of business and graduates, the revitalization of a declining economy holds significant political significance for the Chinese Communist Party. This is particularly crucial due to the potential consequences of the younger generation questioning the legitimacy of a system that fails to fulfil their fundamental aspirations for meaningful youth-citizen employment - as there are indications contrary to China's leadership that graduate and non-graduate prospects will persistently decline. (Steil, B., Harding, E. 2023).

8.3.1 In June 2023, the jobless rate among those aged 16 to 24, [often referred to as young unemployment], reached an unprecedented level of 21.3 percent. Subsequently, the government made the decision to discontinue the publication of this particular figure. In order to stimulate economic growth and provide employment opportunities, the Chinese government is using its familiar strategies, namely offering incentives for house purchases, and making substantial investments in infrastructure. The projected budget allocated for infrastructure investment this year, is estimated to reach just below two trillion US dollars.

8.4 A further unforeseen variable is within the property and building industries, which are progressively controlled by the state, and are well recognized for their lack of productivity and limited relevance to the aspirations of the younger and more educated population. A significant majority of young individuals in China exhibit a strong inclination towards seeking employment opportunities within the service sector, which now accounts for around 50% of the total national workforce. Graduates in disciplines in majors of literature and computer science, exhibit a lack of interest in emerging stimulus-driven prospects inside vocational trades as carpentry and bricklaying.

8.5 Referring to the graphic [overleaf], over the course of many decades, the Chinese government has actively promoted the participation of individuals in higher education, resulting in a substantial increase in the student population from 22 million in 1990 to (383m) in 2021. Amidst and following the epidemic, there has been a heightened emphasis on extending the capacity of graduate schools. The number of individuals pursuing a master's degree had a significant increase of 25% in the year 2021. According to the Ministry of Education in China, it has been projected that the number of college graduates in 2022 would reach around 10.76 million, indicating a notable increase of 1.67m compared to the previous year. Furthermore, it is anticipated that there will be a substantial additional growth in the number of graduates in 2023.



Source: Council on Foreign Relations (Steil & Harding 2023).

8.6 In 2020, the service industry saw a significant decline as a result of policies influenced by party ideologies, which sought to regulate the operations and expansion of private-sector enterprises across several sectors, including technology and education. Following a minor improvement in the first quarter of the current year, there has been a notable decline in a comprehensive indicator of services activity, reaching its lowest point in eight months during the month of August.

9. The Booming Elderly Care Industry.

9.1 The elderly care industry is currently a booming concern, graduates from tertiary education with this major diploma could easily find a position in a care home the next day. As many commentators and academic studies, have shown that China has a very aging population and growing at a rapid pace. Therefore, the demand for care home staff is also increasing. Unfortunately, unlike other developed nations, this sector of employment is poorly paid, and the working hours are long – on occasion, being on 24-hour standby. So many graduates in possession of this qualification, do not prefer to enter this field of employment.

10. The Rural Option for Today's Chinese Graduates.

10.1 Other graduate incentives have been applied by the working in countryside enterprises. Graduates are now being enticed into working in rural areas. That being said, we must recall a little Chinese history. The Cultural Revolution, also known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, transpired throughout the periods of 1966 to 1976. The seemingly innocuous name

conceals the devastating impact it had on the nation's populace. The initiative was initiated under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with the aim of revitalizing the ideals of the communist revolution and eliminating individuals whom he perceived as "bourgeois" infiltrators.

10.2 This reference partly pertains to certain CCP members who were advocating for an economic recovery strategy that deviated from Mao's envisioned path. Nevertheless, the revolution resulted in a significant loss of human lives, with estimates varying between 500,000 and 2,000,000 casualties. Additionally, the unrest caused the displacement of a substantial number of individuals, impacting millions of people. Furthermore, the revolution had a profound and far-reaching impact on the country's economy, causing utter disruption. Despite Mao's initial intention to bolster communism via his revolution, it paradoxically resulted in China's adoption of capitalism.

10.3 In the present day, unemployed graduates are - with the aid of government subsidies, are being encouraged to invest into raising of livestock projects: Chickens, ducks, and crop agricultural pursuits. President Xi once said that his experiences of the culture revolution were the building of his character.

11. China's Situational Comparisons to the Arab Spring in Tunisia in 2012.

11.1 Despite the economic recovery seen during this period, there was a notable disparity in the unemployment statistics, as the percentage of joblessness increased from 13 percent before the uprising to 18 % notated in Figure 5.

11.2 According to official figures, there was a notable disparity in unemployment rates among graduates, with a much higher rate of around 35 percent (Fig. 5). Moreover, these statistics indicated that as Tunisians attain higher levels of education, their likelihood of being unemployed increased. This trend may be also attributed to the limited availability of highly qualified work opportunities in the country.

11.3 While the capital city of Tunis and the coastal areas observed an average unemployment rate of little over 13 percent, the border region exhibited a higher rate of 20 percent. The

central provinces, where the revolution originated and where instances of riots persistently occurred, had an unemployment rate of 28 percent.

11.4 Although the North African nation had successfully undergone a relatively seamless transition to democracy and had largely managed to evade the turmoil and conflicts that have plagued neighbouring Egypt and Libya, experts argued that the primary obstacle for the then Islamist-led administration may arise from the marginalized young individuals who initiated the initial uprising.

11.5 China on the other hand, as the unemployed are staying at home has increased and parental incomes reduce, what will become of this new generation especially in its further and future people protests?

12. Generational Change within Educational Achievement.

12.1 According to the data shown in Figure 7, [p.17], individuals who are now exiting the workforce due to retirement in the PRC, possess a lower number of years of formal education in comparison to the incoming new generation. From a statistical perspective, it is evident that the recent cohort of individuals entering the workforce has had a comprehensive educational journey spanning a duration of 12 years. In contrast, their retiring counterparts, who belong to a previous generation, have completed just seven years of formal schooling.

13. What has China been Achieved to Alleviate this Spectre of Graduate Unemployment on its youth?

13.1 This study has already discussed some of the government incentives offered to accelerate the hiring process leading to more acceptable unemployment statistics.

13.2 Despite obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree from prestigious colleges in China, as this study has illustrated, graduates are encountering significant challenges in the current employment landscape. While several individuals choose to stay jobless with the expectation of securing improved prospects, others are diligently exploring various paths to sustain themselves, such as undertaking the civil service test or engaging in activities that involve dedicating

substantial time and effort to childcare and elderly care responsibilities.

13.3 The issue of unemployment among those with high levels of education is a significant aspect of China's young unemployment challenge. According to a macroeconomic report published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in July, it was found that 42% of urban young who were jobless in 2021 have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. (Kang, L. *et al.* 2023).

13.4 The circumstance of recent graduates encountering difficulties in securing immediate job is not exclusive to China. The comparison of China's youth unemployment rate with international statistics is not directly feasible due to methodological differences. International statistics typically consider individuals who have been unemployed and actively seeking employment within the past four weeks from the survey. In contrast, a previously mentioned in this paper, China's statistics encompass individuals who have been unemployed and actively seeking employment within the past few years.

13.5 In reference to parental support, Loo (2023) suggests that if the per capita income of these parents were around \$12,000, they would possess the financial means to sustain their jobless children for a certain duration. Nevertheless, China has significant fiscal limitations when considering this matter from a broad perspective. Inflationary pressures and ongoing challenges may potentially lead to a decrease in parental wages in the future, thus, necessitating that these graduates would eventually be encouraged to seek career opportunities outside their homes.

14. Delimitations

The parameters within this research were to merely use the data, which has already been defined, in the public sphere, and still within the framework of international debate, however:

a) Data which has not been included, are citations pertaining to in rhetorical nature that is still been litigated within both national and international jurisprudence guidelines. Thus, this aforementioned literature will not be included in any statistical nature of this draft.

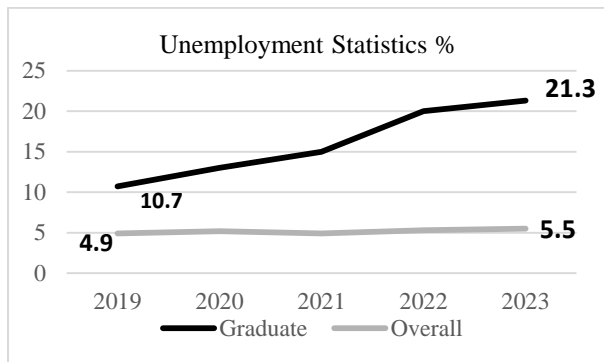
c) The procedures and methods that have not been undertaken are elements such as statistical questionnaires and direct scholastic/journalistic

inquiry via face-to-face interviews (Direct Engagement). This is attributed to both the political and legal sensitivities of the issues portrayed in this study inclusive of the authors' geographical residency.

15. Scientific Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

Fig 1. Graduate Youth Unemployment Rates Compared to the Overall Rates China (2019-2023).

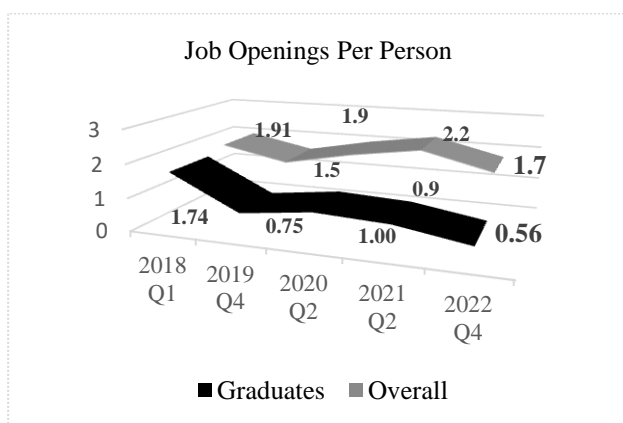


Source: NBS (World Bank 2023)

Figure 1. depicts the discrepancy in the rate of unemployment among those with graduate degrees in comparison to the total unemployment data of the nation. Indeed, a disparity of 15.8 percent has been seen between these two indices. Furthermore, when examining the global context, it becomes evident that the data on graduate unemployment consistently surpasses general/overall trends. This pattern is reported to be the prevailing standard in the recent statistics on unemployment among graduates.

In addition, in 2019, the disparity between graduates and the overall indices was 5.8 in percentage terms, however, these data subsets had increased by a further 10% deviation in 2023 relative to the data recorded four years previously.

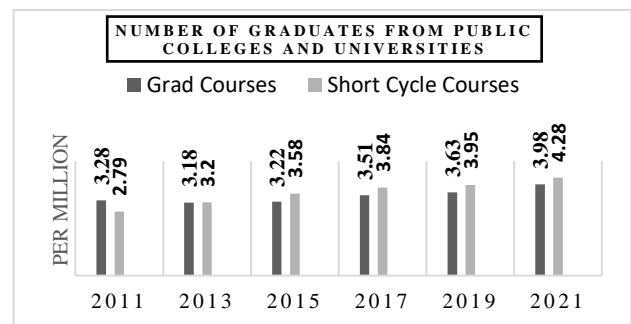
Fig 2. Job Openings per Applicant. China 2018-2022.



Source: CIER 2022

The employment prospects for Chinese graduates have evidently become more challenging during the previous two years. The data shown in Figure 2, illustrates that in Q2 of 2021, there was one vacancy available per graduate. However, in Q4 of 2022, this number significantly dropped to just over half (0.56) in comparison to the national average of 2.2 and 1.7 positions for the same time periods. Therefore, the job market has become untenable for these university graduates, due to their statistics are unfavourable as open vacancies have decreased by 118 points since 2018 in comparison to the overall indices showing a slight downturn of 21 job vacancy points.

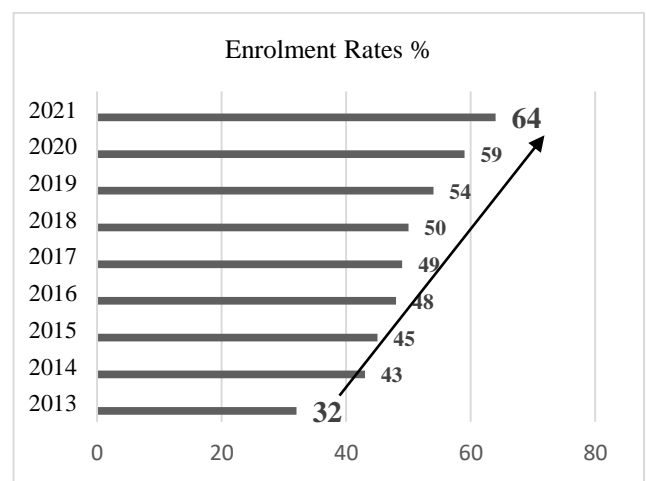
Fig. 3 Chinese University Graduate Figures from 2011-2021.



Source: Number of graduates from public colleges and universities in China between 2011 and 2021 (Statista 2023).

As Figure 3, indicates, there has been an upward trend since 2011, and it is predicted that the number of Chinese graduates is expected to reach 12 million by late 2023 -for both short cycle courses and graduate studies.

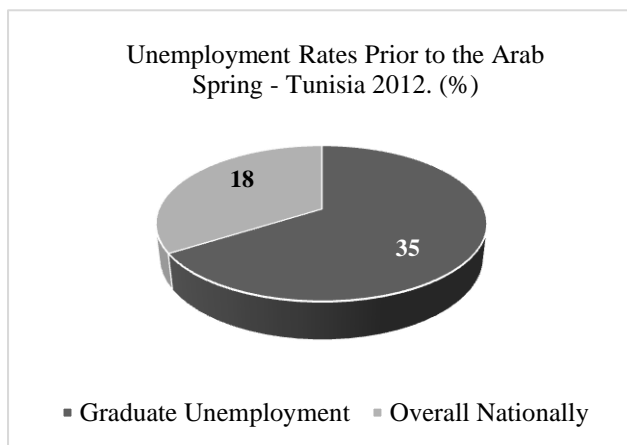
Fig 4. Tertiary School Registration Rates since 2013.



Source: World Bank Group

The tertiary school sector has seen a doubling of enrolments since 2013. The data attributed to Figure 4, portrays the acceleration of new registrations at colleges in China's major urban cities. In the nine years recorded within in this graphic, 2013/14 showed a 74.4% increase in student enrolments alone, then there were [μ] mean average increases over the seven years of ~ 9.3% until 2021. As the data for 2023 is not published and recorded as yet, this study can clearly predict that this upward trend in registrations is continuing in an upward spiral and projected to be ~ 76.4% by 2023.

Fig. 5 The Dangerous Comparisons from China's Graduate Unemployment Crisis to Tunisia prior to the Arab Spring.



Source: Unemployment breeds anger in home of Arab Spring. Reuter News. (Noueihed, L. 2012).

As we view the data from 2012 - Tunisia before the Arab Spring, it can be seen in Figure 5, that there was a 51.4% difference or disparity between graduate and overall unemployment values. When compared to present day China, [Fig. 1] the GU to overall data values, has a disparity of 15.8%.

Consequently, during November 2022, a substantial number of individuals throughout China, encompassing urban centres like Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, and Wuhan, engaged in public demonstrations to express their discontent with the government's stringent Covid-19 protocols, which had resulted in elevated levels of unemployment among the younger population. Moreover, these protests served as a platform for participants to voice

their opposition to the authoritative governance of the Chinese Communist Party. The demonstrators engaged in a kind of protest often referred to as "white paper" demonstrations, where they prominently displayed blank sheets. They vocalized their demands via chants such as "End zero-Covid," "We advocate for the protection of human rights," and "Down with the Communist Party!" (Human Rights Watch. 2023).

One begs this question in academic terms: Is China heading for its own Mandarin Spring if this crisis persists?

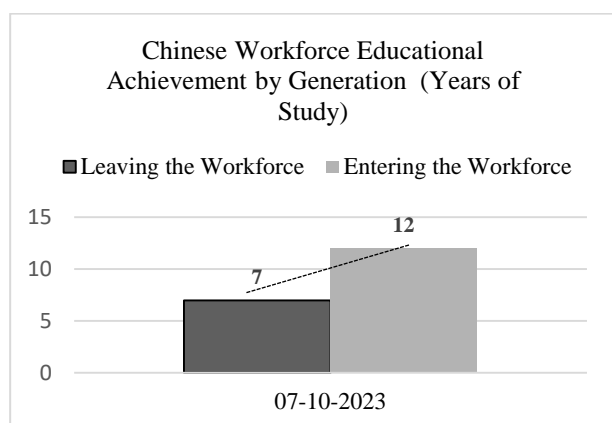
Fig 6. China's Growth in Recent Years.



Source: National Bureau of Statistics China. (Trading Economics.com)

Figure 6, represents a disconcerting portrayal of China's development figures, particularly in relation to future job prospects. The observed decline in GDP, which amounted to a significant decrease of 13.8 percentage points over a period of two and a half years, from the robust growth rate of 18.7% in Q2 of 2021 until July 2023, has elicited considerable concern. A decline in economic expansion results in a reduced number of prospects for recent graduates seeking employment. According to academic economists, it is widely assumed that this decline occurred due to two distinct factors. Firstly, the implementation of stringent government lockdown measures, resulted in the cessation of manufacturing activities. Secondly, there was a controversy within the building business, involving real estate agents, which led to the collapse of their assets.

Fig 7. Change that has occurred in Educational Achievement throughout the generations.



Source: Hoffman, B. (2023). Workforce Education

As it can be visualised in Figure 7, The generation leaving the workforce has on 7 years of education amongst them, conversely, today’s generation entering the workforce has a total of twelve years of schooling.

Table 1. Graduate Unemployment Rates Prior to the Arab Spring compared to China’s Current Rate.

| Tunisia 2010 | China 2023 |
|--------------|------------|
| 23.4 % | 21.3% |
| + 2.1 | -2.1 |

Source: Yifan, Z. (2023). Chinese University of Hong Kong – Dept. of Economics.

China has already experienced the “White Paper” protests from disgruntled students resulting from increasing unemployment and the higher cost of living standards within China’s large conurbations in major cities.

In reference to Table 1, “The Arab Spring” initiated in Tunisia 2010 is a sober reminder that graduate employment prospects do matter. As seen here, graduate unemployment was at a staggering 23.4% compared to China’s figures today 21.3% [Just over a 2% difference].

Owing to the Chinese hardline stance to criminality, a “Mandarin Spring” has not come to fruition, merely reduced sized so-called “White Paper protests. These were modest in comparison to the globally chronicled “Arab Spring” which reverberated throughout North

Africa and the Middle East – resulting in the toppling of some dynastic governments.

Nonetheless, historical occurrences like these, cannot be ignored by the Chinese government over time.

16. Research Discussion and Conclusion

16.1 From the course of this analysis, it has been evident that China’s stringent enforcement of the lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic is attributed to this graduate unemployment crisis and its future uncertainty. Industry -especially manufacturing and construction were badly handled in which this mismanagement of social, public, and economic policy played a huge part in the 2023 Chinese unemployment chess match.

16.2 This paper has exposed that one in five Chinese are out of work and 20% of PRC’s consumption is attributed to them. Following forty years of economic growth, China’s engine is now slowing dramatically, as a consequence,, its present growth rate is below one percent, as exemplified in the fourth quarter of 2023. (Yifan, Z. 2023). This is exemplified by the depreciation of blue-collar jobs.

16.3 This body of research has also seen that today’s graduates entering the Chinese workforce have five years more formal education than the many now leaving employment due to retirement and/or ill health. According to Oxford Economics, China with its aging population - meaning an aging workforce blended with a graduate unemployment crisis, the hypothesis question ought to be: How could both issues be occurring at the same time? (Loo, L. 2023).

16.4 This case-study, therefore, has both delineated and uncovered the vulnerability of former students entering the career Chinese corporate ladder with many challenges ahead that await them. The psychological effects could potentially be catastrophic. As notated earlier, these out of work graduates could eventually succumb to the temptations of drug and alcohol dependency. In addition, be forced by their parents to take any position to assist the household finances. All in all, this paper has illustrated that a negative future

outlook could prevail.

16.5 As previously denoted, demonstrations have already taken place on Chinese streets by these many students and graduate cohorts of this era of discontent. A comparative was made to the early days of the “Arab Spring” which was initiated by a student suicide in Tunisia in 2010 - which led to the whole Arab world being engulfed in a sea of rage and political turmoil – in some cases, overthrowing governments. As we recall, China’s unemployment statistics for graduates stands just over twenty-one percent compared to Tunisia’s 23.4% in 2010.

16.6 History both re-educates and reminds us of populous values and misgivings, but not repeat societal indiscretions. Give a man the power, and only then, you will see the result - no matter good or bad. China ought to take note as in history once more, experienced the Tiananmen Square protests, referred to as the June the Fourth Incident on the Chinese mainland, were a series of rallies spearheaded by students that took place in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China, spanning from April 15th to June 4th, 1989. Following a series of unproductive negotiations between the student protestors and the Chinese government, the latter proclaimed martial rule on the evening of 3 June and sent military forces to assume control of the protest area, resulting in what has come to be known as the Tiananmen Square incident.

16.7 Finally, as eluded to earlier, regretfully, the government of China has prepared the new generation psychologically for technological advancement with high income expectations within exclusive western standards of living – stimulated more sponsorship by social media practice. As a result, graduates have realised that what they have been told, is a mere illusion. An opulent lifestyle is only afforded to the few, in every nation, hence the youth being of an angered disposition. As the statistical analysis within this paper has explained throughout, more students are enrolling into higher education institutions than ever before, (Continuing the trend) however, this paper asks the thesis question: Will there be a sustainable future for this next generation upon graduation?

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