Fresh graduates can’t afford to wait for the ‘perfect’ job

NATION

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PETALING JAYA: The high cost of living in the city means many university and college graduates have no time to be picky about jobs.

After finishing his studies in June, manufacturing engineering graduate Amir Zainudin, 23, did not wait long before settling for a job at a restaurant.

While waiting for his convocation from a public university in December, Amir decided to work because life in the city was expensive and he did not want to rely on his parents.

“My parents and I live in the city and the cost of living is very high, so I started working here in August.

“It’s hard to find a job that matches our field of study nowadays, but it’s my own responsibility because I have my own needs.

“Although the food and beverage industry is very different from what I studied, this job still comes with learning experience,” said Amir. He has started applying for jobs in the engineering field but said that should he fail to secure a job after his convocation, he would still continue to work at the restaurant while applying for engineering jobs.

“It doesn’t matter what job it is, I don’t mind it. I will work first while waiting for a job that matches my field of study,” said Amir.

He also lauded the Malaysians@Work initiative in Budget 2020, whereby graduates who secure a job after having been unemployed for more than a year will receive RM500 per month from the government for a duration of two years.

Employers will also receive a hiring incentive of up to RM300 per month for each new hire over two years.

“It’s good. For those who were unemployed, they won’t come up ‘empty’ and would have a helpful initiative,” said Amir.

Customer service representative N. Shobana, 24, however, thought the initiative was unfair for graduates like herself and Amir.

“The initiative will benefit graduates from well-to-do families who can afford to remain unemployed for a year because their parents have money.

“Graduates like myself who take on jobs that do not commensurate with our qualifications because we can't afford to not work do not get anything from the government,” said Shobana, a biotechnology graduate who currently works at a bookstore.

Shobana, however, believed graduates no longer have time to nitpick about jobs considering the rising cost of living.

“It's impossible for me to lie around at home while waiting for job offers in my field.

“I have three younger siblings in school and I need to lessen my parents' burden. So I work here while applying for jobs in my field,” she said.

Bakery worker and graphic design graduate Melissa Chan, 23, wished that the government would deliver more jobs that match graduates' qualifications.

“So many of my friends are unemployed after graduation, even those who have foreign degrees. If they get job offers, then the salary is too low and not enough to support themselves and pay student loans,” said Chan.

She, however, did not believe in being too choosy about working lower-end jobs while waiting for more suitable jobs.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan also advised fresh graduates not to be too picky when it comes to getting a job.

He said that in light of the current economic climate, graduates may find it difficult to gain employment related to their field of studies.

“They must be more flexible in accepting jobs that may come their way. What is important is for them to pick up skills and experience while working,” he said.

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