Social Networks, Job Satisfaction and Job Searching Behavior in the Chinese Labor Market

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Abstract: This study first investigates determinants of job searching strategies and then examines if social networks are connected with better job outcomes. Unlike previous studies that focus solely on income, this paper pays more heed to job satisfaction. Based on data drawn from China General Social Survey, we find that disadvantaged job seekers rely primarily on informal channels; whereas experienced and better-educated job seekers tend to search for jobs through formal channels. However, those reaping the largest benefit from using networks are the job seekers who are able to use formal and informal channels jointly. By disaggregating the whole sample, we further find that the promoting effect of network use is contingent on factors such as gender and types of jobs. Network use brings about larger benefits to female and job seekers target to prestigious occupations. Finally, it appears that whether a job seeker can receive influential help depends primarily on the social status of the contacts rather than their tie strength. The results of our paper thus urge us to examine the combination of different searching strategies rather than studying them separately.

Keywords: social networks, job satisfaction, job search, social status

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