
Higher qualifications are no guarantee of job security

An economist was reported as attributing the situation of layoffs to companies replacing lower-wage workers through restructuring and automation (“43-year-old manager yet to find work, 4 months on”; last Friday).

The idea that workers lower in the hierarchy are more likely to be fired is an odd one, as the figures on the people who were made redundant in the second quarter of this year showed that 64.5 per cent have a diploma, degree or professional qualifications, and nearly 69 per cent were professionals, managers, executives or technicians (PMETs).

The article also noted that Ms Shabnam Manan believed her lack of a university degree contributed to her inability to get a new job.

However, the numbers suggest that a degree may not actually help.

Returning to the job market has become more difficult. We have to confront the facts.

The numbers suggest that older Singapore residents may be over-qualified, or that their higher qualifications have become less relevant.

Their longer work experience may justify higher wages, but employers may think older workers are over-priced, compared to less experienced ones.

It is time to dispel the myth that higher educational qualifications and being a PMET provide better job security. The numbers have spoken.

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