

What students today see lying ahead

The world of work is becoming more uncertain and volatile for young people. The Straits Times speaks to tertiary students about their hopes, dreams and worries for the future.



ST PHOTO: YEO KAI WEN

DOMINIC CHOA, 22

Studying in a liberal arts programme at Yale-NUS College

Q What factors are most important to you when considering a potential job?

A Alignment with personal values and goals is one. Flexibility, and the shifting of the work culture towards more of a freelance, ad hoc basis, instead of a traditional nine-to-five job. Also, career progression and personal development.

I think this is typical of most in my generation. We grew up with the Internet at our fingertips, with a lot more global exposure to different cultures and lifestyle, so the thought of being deskbound, with fixed hours and a corporate culture, can be quite terrifying.

Q How do you think your working life will differ from that in your parents' generation?

A I believe that our working life will be far less silo-ed, more mobile and more erratic than what our parents knew.

Technology is a big game-changer. Outsourcing or automation trends mean that job security is even harder to find, and also means that our generation does not need to work the same way that our parents did. I see a huge shift towards freelancing and job-hopping.

As a whole, I believe all these trends mean that the way we educate younger generations will need to change.

A big part of education is to prepare the workforce for the economy. It used to be for sectors in the local or even regional economy. Now, with the global citizen, it has to prepare for the global economy.



PHOTO: NUR AFIQAH MOHAMMAD RIZAL

NUR AFIQAH MOHAMMAD RIZAL, 17

Studying molecular biotechno-

logy at Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Q What are some of your biggest concerns about your future career?

A I dream of being in the scientific field, although I have not yet decided whether I want to be a marine biologist or perhaps a doctor or a surgeon.

I am most concerned that I might not be able to secure the career that I aspire to have.

Although I believe that competitiveness in Singapore is good because we are pushed to do our best, realistically, it might lower my chances of achieving my dreams.

I am worried that there might not be enough openings for the job that I want.

Also, I am concerned about salaries, and whether what I earn will be enough to sustain my life in Singapore, as it is one of the most expensive countries in the world to stay in.

I have no intention of emigrating, but I also do not want to struggle to maintain a comfortable life in Singapore.

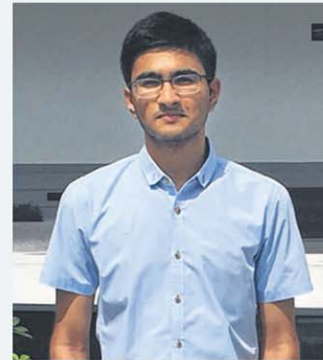


PHOTO: COURTESY OF VAMSI KRISHNA

VAMSI KRISHNA, 17

Studying mechanical engineering at Singapore Polytechnic

Q What factors are most important to you when considering a potential job?

A The job scope would be the first crucial factor when considering a potential job.

I do not want to get involved in something I do not enjoy on a day-to-day basis. Other factors include the salary and the working hours.

Q What are some of your biggest concerns about your future career?

A Whether I will even be able to get a job, with increasing competition from both foreigners as well as Singaporeans.

My parents are of Indian origin – fortunately, my father has very commendable qualifications. Even so, he had to work long hours for very little pay at the beginning of his career.

In time, my father was able to gain experience, and he also armed himself by obtaining many new qualifications.

I think I will take a longer time to reach the position (my father) is now at, because everything around me will just get more expensive.

Also, I will face tougher competition from foreigners, who are not coming to Singapore just for a brief period to earn some money, but to make Singapore their home.

Chia Yan Min