

Challenges Related to the Integration of Young Graduates in Morocco

Défis liés à l'intégration des jeunes diplômés au Maroc

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Date submitted: 28/10/2023

Date of acceptance: 20/12/2023

To cite this article:

BENNAGHMOUCH. H. & al. (2023) « Challenges Related to the Integration of Young Graduates in Morocco », Revue Internationale du chercheur « Volume 4: Numéro 4 » pp : 1357-1367

Abstract

In this article, we tried to explore the crucial challenge of integrating young graduates into the labor market in Morocco. Recognizing the potential of educated youth as a driving force for socio-economic development, the country seeks their contribution to various professional sectors and innovation. Despite their skills and determination, young Moroccan graduates encounter challenges ranging from intense job market competition to the alignment of academic skills with employer needs.

The analysis delves into the skills acquired during university training, emphasizing the role of Moroccan higher education in providing versatile training, developing transversal skills, and promoting practical experience through internships. The Moroccan labor market, pivotal for integration, offers opportunities but also poses challenges such as fierce competition and the necessity to adapt academic skills to market demands.

The article underscores the paramount link between academic and professional skills, stressing the need for alignment to ensure successful integration. Challenges faced by young graduates include high unemployment rates, fierce job market competition, and the prevalence of temporary contracts.

Keywords: young graduates; job market; challenges; academic and professional skills; training.

Résumé :

Dans cet article, nous avons tenté d'explorer le défi crucial de l'intégration des jeunes diplômés sur le marché du travail au Maroc. Reconnaisant le potentiel des jeunes instruits en tant que moteur du développement socio-économique, le pays recherche leur contribution à divers secteurs professionnels et à l'innovation. Malgré leurs compétences et leur détermination, les jeunes diplômés marocains rencontrent des défis allant de la concurrence intense sur le marché du travail à l'alignement des compétences académiques sur les besoins des employeurs.

L'analyse se penche sur les compétences acquises au cours de la formation universitaire, en insistant sur le rôle de l'enseignement supérieur marocain dans l'offre de formations polyvalentes, le développement de compétences transversales et la promotion de l'expérience pratique à travers des stages. Le marché du travail marocain, pivot de l'intégration, offre des opportunités mais pose également des défis tels qu'une concurrence féroce et la nécessité d'adapter les compétences académiques aux demandes du marché.

L'article souligne le lien primordial entre les compétences académiques et professionnelles, soulignant la nécessité d'un alignement pour assurer une intégration réussie. Les défis auxquels sont confrontés les jeunes diplômés comprennent des taux de chômage élevés, une concurrence féroce sur le marché du travail et la prévalence des contrats temporaires.

Mots clés : jeunes diplômés ; marché de travail ; défis ; compétences académiques et professionnelles ; formations.

Introduction

The integration of young graduates into the labor market is a crucial challenge that remains of paramount importance for the socio-economic development of Morocco. As a country in search of growth and prosperity, Morocco is increasingly turning to its educated and qualified youth to contribute to the development of various professional sectors and innovation. These young talents, photos of freshly acquired skills, academic knowledge and the ardent desire to advance the country, embody the future of the nation.

However, despite their skills and determination, young Moroccan graduates often face a series of complex challenges when trying to fully integrate into the professional world. These obstacles, which range from fierce competition in the labor market to the adequacy between academic skills and the needs of employers, can make it difficult to transition from formal education to a fulfilling career. That is why it is essential to understand these challenges and to highlight the opportunities that are emerging for these young graduates.

This article aims to address the following problematic: How to overcome the complex challenges related to the integration of young graduates into the labor market in Morocco and how to ensure an effective link between the academic and professional skills of students in order to guarantee a successful integration into the labor market in Morocco?

The methodology adopted in this article is rather based on a literature review, to explore and synthesize existing research on the integration of young graduates into the labor market in Morocco, by examining the skills acquired during their university training, the influence of the Moroccan job market on their professional future and the fundamental link between academic and professional skills.

To answer this problem we will start with a literature revue to have a brief presentation of the academic knowledge and the Moroccan labor market to then address the challenges and the current situation of the integration of young graduates, while laying the foundations for a constructive dialogue on how to overcome obstacles and fully exploit the potential of this talented youth

1. Literature review :

1.1. Academic knowledge and acquired competence:

When it comes to approaching the integration of young graduates into the labor market in Morocco, it is essential to start with, an in-depth reflection on the knowledge and skills they

have acquired throughout their academic career, the Moroccan university is today questioned as to its role within society (Mounir, 2019). Universities and higher education institutions play a central role in preparing the next generation of professionals.

However, it is necessary to understand that the relevance and quality of this academic knowledge are determining factors for the success of young graduates.

University programs in Morocco play a fundamental role in preparing students by offering them a set of essential skills for their professional future. The knowledge acquired by students during their university training course is no longer only interested in the knowledge or know-how developed, but is also interested in what they will be able to do with it later, once their studies have been completed (Ouhejjou, & al. 2015), these skills aim to make graduates competitive on the job market and help them contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Here are a few ways university programs accomplish this:

- **Versatile Training:** university programs in Morocco provide a versatile training that allows students to develop a diverse range of skills, whether they are studying engineering, science, arts or other fields. This versatility prepares students to adapt to a wide range of professions and sectors. Improving the quality of education and reducing school failure (MENESFCRS, 2004) aims to provide an environment conducive to learning and research (Bennaghmouch & al. 2023).
- **Development of Transversal Skills:** in addition to technical skills, university programs are increasingly emphasizing the development of transversal skills such as problem solving, communication, critical thinking and collaboration. These skills are relevant for all graduates, regardless of their field of study.
- **Practical Experience:** universities in Morocco also encourage the acquisition of practical experience through internships especially in open access fields to strengthen the partnership with the business world (Ouhejjou, 2015), research projects, and other opportunities. This experience helps students to apply their academic knowledge in the real world, which strengthens their preparation for their future career.

University programs in Morocco play a vital role in preparing students to face the challenges of the professional world. They are designed to provide a solid foundation of skills that encompasses both general and field-specific skills. These skills are essential to help recent graduates succeed in an ever-changing professional environment.

Among the skills acquired during their university course, we find transversal skills such as problem solving, effective communication, critical thinking and the ability to work in a team since disciplinary competence remains the main hiring criterion until now (Mounir, 2019). These skills are essential in almost all professional fields, as they allow graduates to collaborate productively, make informed decisions and adapt to constant changes.

In addition, students acquire specific technical skills related to their field of study, be it engineering, computer science, medicine or other fields. These technical skills are crucial for success in specific professions and are developed through specialized courses and research projects.

Research, time management and professional ethics are also at the heart of the university experience. Students learn to conduct independent research, manage their time effectively to meet deadlines and act ethically in their academic work.

In addition, adaptability is a key skill that students develop. In an ever-changing world, young graduates are prepared to adapt quickly to new challenges and to learn new skills as their careers progress.

Overall, the skills acquired at university in Morocco are a valuable asset for young graduates, preparing them to succeed in their future jobs and to contribute significantly to society.

1.2.Moroccan labor market :

The Moroccan job market is a key player in the integration of young graduates in the country. It shapes their transition from education to the professional world and plays a decisive role in their future success. Understanding the dynamics, opportunities and challenges of the Moroccan job market is essential for graduates who aspire to a rewarding career in their field of study.

The Moroccan labor market, which has become more open since 1996 (Vultur, 2006), plays a central role in the integration of young graduates into the professional world. It serves as a platform where graduates have the opportunity to put their academic skills into practice and gain professional experience.

The labor market offers employment opportunities in a variety of sectors and industries. It allows graduates to find positions corresponding to their qualifications and their professional aspirations, now there is a better match between job seekers and the job offer, thanks to information on the labor market acquired through the various public integration assistance schemes (Vultur, 2006).

Thus, these young graduates can evolve in their professional careers by gaining experience, developing specific skills and climbing the ranks within an organization.

The labor market promotes the integration of young people into society by offering them the opportunity to contribute to the country's economy, to provide for their needs and to flourish on a personal level, and stimulates the adaptation of the academic skills of graduates to the needs of the economy. It encourages the acquisition of practical skills and the development of interpersonal skills.

Young graduates often bring new perspectives and innovative ideas to the job market. Their participation contributes to economic growth and innovation in various sectors.

The labor market plays a major role in reducing unemployment by offering job opportunities to graduates. The successful integration of the latter into the world of work contributes to stabilizing the economy. As well as the development of professional skills where employers offer training and professional development programs to graduates, which helps them to hone their skills and expand their knowledge.

1.3.Link between academic and professional skills:

The correlation between academic and professional skills is of paramount importance in the context of the integration of young graduates in Morocco. The country's higher education institutions have a responsibility to train students, not only by providing them with theoretical knowledge, but also by equipping them with the practical and professional skills necessary to succeed in the world of work.

Indeed, during their academic career, Moroccan students acquire technical, analytical and problem-solving skills specific to their field of study. They also develop transversal skills such as critical thinking, effective communication and the ability to work in a team. All these skills are undoubtedly essential to succeed in a future job.

However, to guarantee a successful integration into the Moroccan labor market, it is imperative that these academic skills are aligned with the needs of employers and the realities of the professional world. It is precisely at this point that the link between academic and professional skills is of crucial importance. A graduate who has acquired exceptional theoretical skills, but who cannot put them into practice in a professional environment, could find himself at a disadvantage. Therefore, it is essential that the content of academic programs, teaching

methods, and internship and experiential learning opportunities are designed to foster this vital link.

In addition, the ability of graduates to transfer their academic skills to the professional world depends on their ability to adapt quickly to changing market needs. This implies the willingness to constantly learn, to keep abreast of the latest advances in their field, and to commit to continuous professional development.

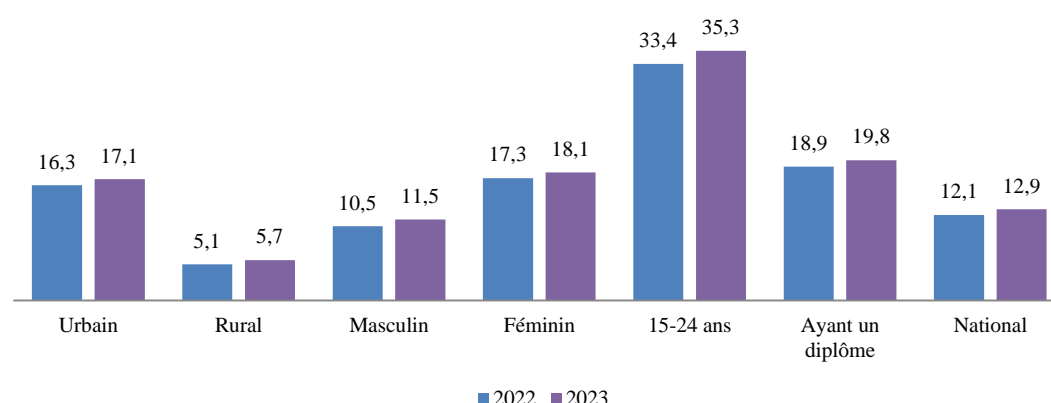
In another context, another theory speaks of the gap between the training received and the demands of the labor market, once graduated, she will have to face a great risk of unemployment (Schonholzer, 2008). According to Ibourk (2004), the high unemployment rate of graduates is due, in part, to the mismatch between training and the requirements of the labor market.

2. Challenges related to the integration of young people in Morocco:

The integration of young graduates into the job market in Morocco is a major issue that is shaping the future of the country. While these young talents bring with them freshly acquired skills and overflowing energy, they are often faced with a complex set of challenges that hinder their transition to the professional world. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that Morocco's human capital is fully exploited, thus contributing to the country's economic and social development.

Among the clues that can explain that students are indeed facing obstacles is youth unemployment, and more particularly that of graduates, which constitutes one of the major problems currently facing economies (Montmarquette, & al. 1996); the unemployment rate of young graduates in Morocco is relatively high, which means that many graduates struggle to find a job after completing their studies. This situation can be discouraging and lead to frustration among young graduates, so we can see that long-term unemployment affects especially the most qualified (El Aoufi and Bensaïd, 2005).

Figure N°1: Evolution of the unemployment rate between the first quarter of 2022 and that of 2023 for certain categories of the population (in %)



Source: HCP, INFORMATION NOTE ON THE LABOR MARKET SITUATION IN THE FIRST SEMESTER OF 2023

According to the figure, we notice an increase in the unemployment rate during the first quarter of 2023 on all levels, compared to that of the previous year.

Competition on the job market is one of the main challenges facing young graduates in Morocco. The competition for vacancies is fierce, especially in certain industries. Young graduates must compete with other candidates, including more experienced graduates or foreign candidates, it is essential to note that this competition is not only due to the quantity of graduates, but also to the quality of the match between their skills and the needs of the market. many young graduates in Morocco are faced with temporary or precarious employment contracts, temporary contracts for new hires are more frequent than permanent positions (Agénor & al. 2003), which can make it difficult to plan for their professional future. These precarious contracts do not guarantee financial stability or access to social benefits.

Employers often look for candidates who have specific skills relevant to their needs, which can make it even more difficult for young graduates to enter the job market, so a private company in a competitive sector cannot keep incompetent employees at its service (Penard & al. 2000) It should also be mentioned that Moroccan employers are looking for candidates with the following characteristics: discipline (81.8%), confidence (91%) and friendliness (76.6%). They are not particularly looking for creativity (19.9%) or training (22.9%) (Aksebi, 1999).

Young people seeking the transition to financial independence may face difficulties in obtaining a loan or financing for personal or entrepreneurial projects. This can hinder their ability to

achieve their professional ambitions. As well as limited access to professional development opportunities: Young graduates may find it difficult to access continuing education opportunities or professional development programs. This limits their ability to stay up to date with the latest trends and technologies in their field.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the integration of young graduates in Morocco is a complex issue that requires in-depth reflection and continuous efforts. The young talents who come out of the country's universities and higher education institutions bring with them skills, knowledge and a burning desire to contribute to the development of Morocco. However, their transition to the professional world is often hampered by various challenges.

One of the cornerstones of the successful integration of young graduates lies in the skills they acquire during their university training. The academic programs in Morocco aim to provide essential technical and transversal skills. These skills are crucial for their future success, as they allow them to adapt to an ever-changing job market.

The Moroccan labor market plays a central role in this integration. It offers young graduates employment and professional development opportunities. However, there are challenges such as fierce competition and the need to adapt academic skills to market needs. However, the labor market is also a place of opportunities where young people can contribute to the national economy, bring new perspectives and contribute to innovation.

Finally, the link between academic and professional skills is essential. Moroccan educational institutions must strive to ensure that the skills acquired during studies are directly applicable in the professional world. This requires close collaboration with employers and constant adaptation of academic programs to meet the changing needs of the market.

Morocco could develop more effective strategies to maximize the employment of young talents, thus promoting the socio-economic progress of the country. The emphasis on continuous research and the proactive implementation of results could constitute essential steps to overcome current challenges and create an environment conducive to the professional development of young Moroccan graduates.

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