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STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY AND THEIR PERSPECTIVES OF EMPLOYABILITY AFTER GRADUATION

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Abstract
Success at university requires achieving a high degree; however, after university, it is perceived through the achievement of financial satisfaction. This investigative work examines the students' perspectives of their professional careers after graduation from university. Our objective is to see the extent to which students are prepared to insert in the professional life. In this prospect, a questionnaire is administered, as a research method, to fifty five students at the University of Ibn Khaldoun- Tiaret. The results reveal the students' deficiency of the workplace skills, and their fear from unemployment which is associated to the lack of job opportunities. In this regard, reviewing the admission of students at university and selecting competent learners are mandatory steps.

Keywords: University, graduation, financial satisfaction, workplace skills, unemployment.

Introduction
The perception of success at university entails obtaining a degree, and achieving better until graduation. By contrast, success after university is perceived as accomplishing one's goals throughout reaching financial satisfaction. This empirical inquiry examines the perspectives of students of their professional careers after graduating from university. In this perspective, our objective is to detect the extent to which students are prepared to insert in the professional life. Our research questions are: Is the graduate concerned about his/her life after graduation? Is he/she ready to be part in the workplace? To answer these questions, we hypothesize that, students have fear from not finding an appropriate job and probably they are not equipped with the work skills that should be learned before graduating. The research tool used in this study is a questionnaire; it is used as an instrument to a sample of 55 students which is randomly selected at the University of Ibn Khaldoun- Tiaret. The findings elucidate that learners are not fully qualified to take part in the state service, besides they fear unemployment due to the lack of job opportunities. Furthermore, a number of factors are highlighted in this work which might reduce the chances of graduates to find a suitable job. For this, reviewing the admission of students at university and taking into consideration students' suggestions are compulsory steps to minimize students' failure at university and after graduation.

Within the 21st century world of technology and advancement, it becomes a necessity to be equipped with the appropriate skills to fit the needs of the labour market. No matter which field a student is studying, he/she is required to acquire the career skills and competencies to function well in the workplace. Actually, the transition from university to the workplace represents an overwhelming experience for some and unknown future for others. Studies have shed light on the important role of university/college to be successful after graduation, but does this always provide a match between what is taught and what is found in the workplace?

First, Arcelo & Sanyal (1987) claim that university is an enriching phase in the lives of learners as they stress its significant role, it is basically seen as "a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge in a spirit of perceptive intellectual inquiry and that of nurturing desirable values to promote a civilized society characterized by people of a sharpened intellect and inquisitive mind" (p. 01) As a matter of fact, universities seek to fulfil the task of preserving, exploring and most importantly transmitting knowledge and social values to learners. In the words of Dr. Perkins, President of Cornell University, as qtd in Arcelo and Sanyal (1987) "Knowledge acquired must be transmitted, or it dies. Knowledge acquired and transmitted must be used, or it becomes sterile and inert... The acquisition of knowledge is the mission of research; the transmission of knowledge is the mission of teaching; and the application of knowledge is the mission of public service" (p. 01) he summed up the role of each sector before, during, and after graduation insisting on the transmission of information and values to learners in order to fit well in the workplace, not only teachers are responsible but learners, policy makers and even employers are responsible for knowledge, its adequacy and its successful transmission; knowledge which could not be provided at home (Young, 2011; McCowan, 2015; Rashidi & Safari, 2015). Many scholars state that universities are internationally seen as a crucial resource of knowledge, innovation and creative thinking (Fry et al, 2009; Veugelers and Rey, 2014) they are recognized as "providers of skilled personnel and credible credentials, as contributors to innovation, as attractors of international talent and business investment into a region, as agents of social justice and mobility, and as contributors to social and cultural vitality." (Boulton & Lucas, 2008, p. 04). In fact, learning at university enables students to create outcomes which change the identity of the learner, promote citizenship and social justice, and this can be characterized as steps towards professional growth (Harkavy, 2006).

Second, teaching/learning is a whole process, right from the start, the 21st century learner should be enabled to solve real life problems and apply his/her knowledge in the workplace. However, many students know that they face difficulties in acquiring the workforce skills. Thus, at university they need help, direction and guidance to be engaged in the workplace where they should be (Junior Achievement, 2013) it is necessary to make use of what is taught at university in the appropriate domain in order to be enhanced and engraved in students' schemata and become experienced and professionals.

Third, Caya Thimm, Sabine Koch and Sabine Sche (nd), as cited in the edited work of Holmes & Meyerhoff (2003), claim that "it is necessary to consider the role of gender stereotypes in the development of attitudes to communication when

examining workplace communication and interpersonal verbal interaction" (p. 530) They believe that verbal communication in the workplace has an impact on the professional performance of males and females, and that the communication of social categories plays an important part in the construction of gendered professional worlds.

Social categories like people's age or gender are linked to social attitudes that lead towards social stereotypes. This latter might affect identity processes, self-esteem and academic success. In comparison to males, females are offered more opportunities in different domains, and they contend in a second shift (Hochschild and Machung, 2012) or a dual career at home and at work to impose their character and self-efficacy to be autonomous socially (Naidoo & Jano, 2002 ; Anonuevo, 1995). In this perspective, in comparison to males, females are recognized to be more active at school, at university and after graduation.

Additionally, financial satisfaction is all what learners are concerned about; the more the degree is high the more the earnings are high (Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005; Walker, 2013). If a school diploma will offer the opportunity to have a job, its value could not be as high as a university diploma, and hence the educational degree is important to have a secure job with a satisfactory salary. It is noteworthy to mention that the term employability, by convention, varies from acquiring knowledge, possessing a degree, getting a satisfactory job, possessing skills and experience, to earning money, yet students should be aware of the proper application of what they have learned in the respective field in real life contexts. (Kneale as cited in Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 2009)

Hill (2014) and Beam (2013), in a published provost report series (2014), agree on the fact that undergraduate students generally complain about group work and group projects. In fact, a well-structured group work can enhance learners' engagement in the classroom and help them build essential competencies for their professional careers. Accordingly, workplaces are highly collaborative as they emphasize team works (Ruiters, 2013). Employers, whether in companies, administration or even teaching, search for candidates who are qualified and have the adequate skills to work in diverse teams. Thus, teamwork skills aid graduates to be successful leaders and collaborators in their communities. In this regard, educators should always be available for their students' enquiries. They should encourage them to work well together and solve problems that might be encountered, and learners, at the end of each course, are asked to reflect on and evaluate the efficiency of their team work, detect the foibles and work to improve them (Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014; McEwan et al., 2017). Although students are often asked to work in groups, but Hill et al (2014) believe that few have been taught how to do this group work in an effective way.

Similarly, Price (2012), in her work, state that the major objective of college is learning to think critically, give learners a room to be creative, and provide them with explicit expectations. Critical thinking is another compulsory skill that should be the quality of students, nothing is taken for granted, thus instructors at university should help learners how to analyze and evaluate information or an issue in order to be able to make an effective judgment, and then construct the ability to be successful at work.

"The 21st century workplace is unique and only people with adequate skills can serve" (Oviawe et al, 2017, p.08) not every graduate is self equipped with skills of recruitment and self-reliance in order to succeed in the workforce. Yorke and Knight (2004) as cited in Bennett (2016) argue that there is a clash between the graduate skills and the skills which is required in the workplace and this is because university does not transmit work-related skills until they graduate. Likewise, Mishkind (2014) states that a career ready person submits a strong character, work competencies, ethics, integrity and responsibility; in this prospect, students with these qualities are qualified to be in the workplace and ready for their lives. It is noteworthy to mention that a mismatch may occur between university and the workplace especially if university/college does not prepare students appropriately to function as talented workers; for this reason, higher education is required to contribute to the national economy throughout the production of skilled and responsible workers. (Kőnig et al 2016; Lourens and Fourie-Malherbe 2017)

Method

In this research work we opted for a questionnaire as a research instrument, it is comprised of open ended questions and close ended questions. The variables are between numeral and ordinal variables. The questionnaire guidelines include questions associated to the learners' educational experiences and backgrounds. Close ended questions aim to detect personal information with limited choices; as for open ended questions, the aim is to allow our selected sample to express his/her ideas freely concerning their perspectives of the workplace after graduation.

Population

In order to undertake this work, we chose fifty five students from the University of Tiaret, English department- Algeria. The sample age is ranged from 18 to 30 years in which 22 % of them are males whereas 78 % are females. The participants come from a variety of educational levels, from BA degree to Master degree. All of them are bound to the LMD educational system (Licence, Master, and Doctorate). Most of them live in the University campus due to the long distance between their houses and university.

Findings and Discussion

Results

First of all, the majority of students choose teaching because it is their personal will, they favour teaching English over any other job, whereas some prefer other different jobs. The majority are studying to become teachers whether in middle school, high school or university. Teaching is, for them, the most suitable career especially for females, where they can be secure socially and financially. As for the rest, they claim that they would rather work in companies that require using English, join the military service or become police officers, the majority were males.

Second of all, as clarified in figure 1.2 below, 91% of students are studying English because it is their personal choice while 9% is not theirs. English, for these learners, is an international language which might increase their chances to find adequate jobs in schools or companies. They are aware of the fact that the more

their level is high in the English language subject, the more their career is satisfactory.

Table 1.1 students' language choice

Option	Is English your personal choice?	**Percentage %**
Yes	50	**91%**
No	05	**9%**
Total	**55**	**100%**

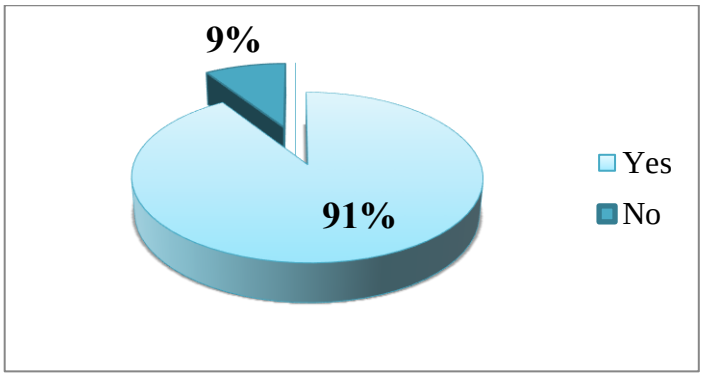


Figure 1.2 the choice of studying English at university

Third of all, as long as success at university is concerned, we might predict a gender gap at university. The IQR of the ordinal answers is '1'; this indicates that there is a consensus in students' responses. In fact, as clarified in table 2.1 below, 35% of students believe that females are more successful than males at university, whereas 16% disagrees with this latter; the majority argues that female students dominate male students in terms of educational achievement. All students are aware of the fact that females' performance is always better, first because they outnumber males in class, besides the absence of motivation among male students to compete females. More importantly, they strongly believe that the chances of male pupils are lower than females in the workplace. This negative stereotypical image might drive students, especially male students, to quit university early, or decrease their educational accomplishment.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**IQR**
Females are more successful than males at university	3 %	16%	20%	35%	26%	**1 (4)**

Table 2.1 students' agreement on the superiority of females at university

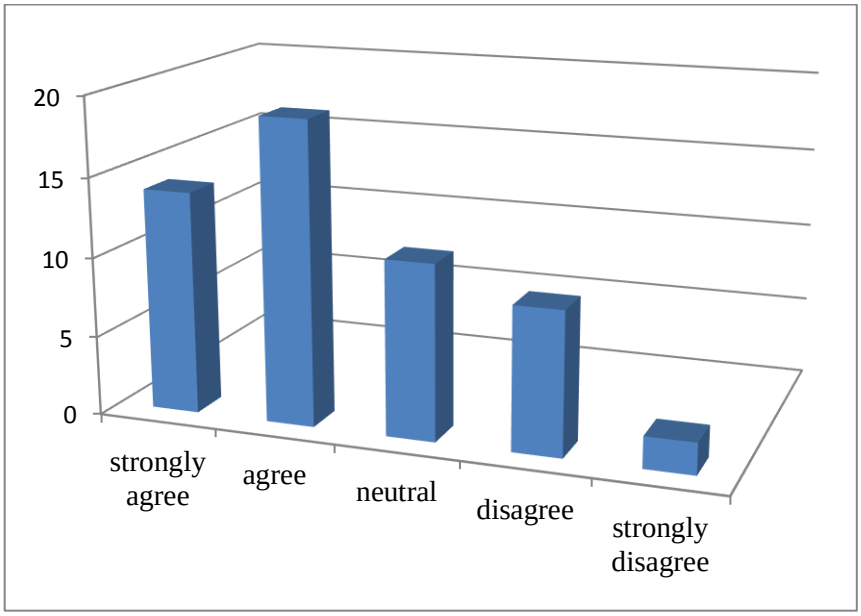


Figure 2.2 students' perception of females' success

It is noteworthy to mention that students' awareness about the extent to which their diplomas are adequate to have a job varies from one category of learners to another. In fact, the majority of students (36%) shows their agreement of the fact that university diplomas are not enough to have a job. 27% Disagrees with this belief whereas 18% is neutral; the IQR of the answers is '2' and this shows that the answers are not polarized but have a consensus. Hence, their claims do not exclude the reliability of diplomas as an academic certificate, but rather, they are conscious that, beyond the qualifications or degree of a learner, being a student is not as being an employee, especially for students who started teaching in middle or high schools, they argue that the more their degrees are high, the more their knowledge of the language is updated. Obtaining a diploma is something and having the potential to be a successful employee is something different and demanding. Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2 below clarify the vision of students towards the diplomas they obtain after graduating.

Table 3.1 the sufficiency of diplomas to obtain a job

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	IQR
the university diplomas are not sufficient to obtain a job	**7.2%**	**27.3%**	**18.2%**	**36.4%**	**10.9%**	**2 (3)**

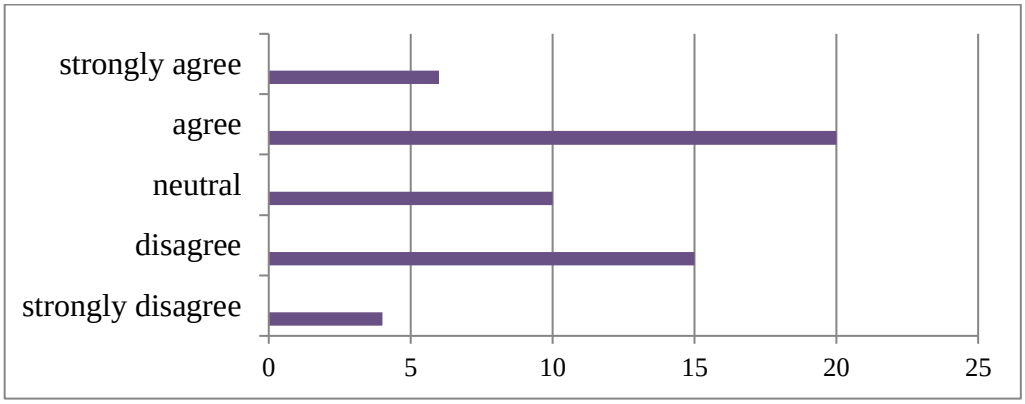


Figure 3.2 students' perception of their diplomas

Discussion

First of all, students are not fully qualified to take part in the state service, according to their answers, the knowledge that is introduced at university, within a short period of time, is not enough to be used in the workplace, especially for those who already start teaching, they argue that there is a difference between what is taught at university and what should be introduced in the workplace, thus an extensive training is required to bridge the gap between university and the demands of the workplace, in terms of knowledge, competencies and skills. Second of all, the majority of students fear unemployment because of the unavailability of job opportunities and this is due to the large number of university graduates each year, it becomes hard to find a job in front of a huge number of previous and recent graduates. Apparently, this latter is not the only reason, but students cited a number of factors as: females' bias, the interest of all graduates in teaching, and the lack of job opportunities in other fields. Actually, students' vision towards the world is quite important, and their suggestions could be straightforward if taken seriously.

First, it is pragmatic to recruit future graduates according to their qualifications which fit the domain of his/her work. Second, coordination should be established by policy makers between the public and private sectors at least to have a chance to get a job in both sectors respectively. Third, one of the previous reforms that was not implemented yet in Algeria is the integration of English in primary schools; in this prospect, students stress the importance of incorporating this reform nowadays at least to enable students with BA degree in English to teach in primary schools, especially with the number of graduates that cannot be recruited in middle and high schools; hence, they believe that it is compulsory to consider the English language subject as a second language instead of French. Forth, it is noticeable that the majority of pupils pass the Baccalaureate examination; in this respect, it is proposed to filter the bachelors before choosing a specialty at university, and this could be done throughout organising a contest in each field of study, and accepting only the most qualified elements. Fifth, male students concern is always females, they believe that recruitment is for women in all sectors, it is adequate to establish equality among them and recruit in accordance to the person qualifications not the gender.

Furthermore, training is required during and after getting the job, at least to diminish the burden for novice teachers. Some students' replies reveal that English

is not really their personal choice, either they were forced by their parents or they do not have another alternative due to the limited choices offered after passing the BAC examination. Thus, it is compulsory to rethink orienting students according to the field that they accomplish well within; as long as the students are concerned, why not considering them as an important part in decision making.

Conclusion

Achievement at university or college is all what students are searching for. There is a difference between life at university and after graduating. The concerns of learners aggravate when they approach graduation. Ideas of not obtaining a job after graduating is what make learners under pressure. In this work, we have attempted to search for the perspective of learners of their professional careers after graduating. The main findings of this inquiry reveal that students' knowledge is not sufficient to take part in the state service; training is needed before and after graduation in order not to be unqualified and fail to accomplish the job; teaching in our context. More than that, the lack of job opportunities is caused not only by the large number of university graduates, but also because of the unavailability of appropriate jobs, especially because the majority of students from different domains are allowed to sit for the same contest of teaching (primary school level), especially for females, thus it seems that the educational sector cannot accept all graduates. In this prospect, reviewing the admission of students at university is compulsory, in other words, minimizing the number of bachelors through a contest which selects only students who are qualified to belong to the respective field and then offering a job opportunity for each graduate with no problem in recruitment or training; more importantly, equity among males and females is a must, at least to reduce the stereotypical image of females' dominance due to their gender not professional or academic qualification. In a nutshell, it is adequate to provide job opportunities other than education to embrace competent graduates and reduce unemployment in the country.

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