

The challenges of higher education in Morocco

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Abstract: Higher education in Morocco is not performing well, this statement is approved by national and international organization. This situation is due to different problems like the incoherent of public policy, the linguistic dualism, the massification, and the lack of human and financial resources. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main causes of low performance in Moroccan higher education research paper title.

Index Terms: Higher education - Performance - Massification- Financing-Reform- Morocco – the language of teaching - Quality

1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a key sector for growth in Morocco, it allows the national economy to dispose of qualified persons. As the traditional economics theory said, human resources are the second resources of wealth beside the capital. But can the actual higher education system provide really to the economy a well-qualified person?

According to specialized national instances like “The Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research”, the answer is negative. The quality of teaching and research in Moroccan universities has a low performance; the international ranking of Moroccan universities can give an image about this reality. The actual situation of higher education in Morocco is a result of a multifactorial causes. The current situation of Higher education can be explained by multiple factors like the lack of human resources, the quality of governance, the funding system, the teaching and pedagogic system.

The purpose of this article is to analyze some of the structural problems of higher education in Morocco. In this article we will analyze four principal issues of Morocco higher education particularly, the linguistic dualism, the incoherence of public policy, the massification, and financial dependency on the state.

2 STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOROCCO.

2.1 the language dualism

Students come in higher education with a background of knowledge and also with some lack of competencies. But the most important challenge that they face is the language of learning. In Morocco, there is two national language, Arabic and Amazigh, the “Amazigh” was established as an official language recently to answer to the pressor of Amazigh Ethnic that exist in Morocco from on old age.

After the independency, the Arabic language is considered as the official language of the state and learning. French is taught

as a foreign language, in all cycle of learning except in higher education.

In the majority of higher education fields of study, learning is in French[1], courses are in French, exams, and also research report and thesis are in French. Students find a lot of difficulties to cope with this situation, especially those from poor and middle class, who has learned in the public schools with Arabic. The dualism linguistic is a source of inequity in Higher education, students who passed their primary and secondary education in private schools can easily adapted with new environment of learning, because in private schools, almost all teaching materials are in French.

Aware of this problem, the government decided in 2016, that the technical subjects in high schools will be taught in French [2], and from 2020, the Bachelor will replace the license, thus, the first semester will be devoted to soft skills and languages. The question of language is analyzed as an ideological and political issue, because it is related to the Moroccan identity; after independence, we spoke about “Arabization”, now we speak more and more about “Moroccanization”, because the Amazigh language has also become an official language in Morocco, and then, Morocco cannot limit define herself by Arabic only.

Far from the ideological and political debates, language remains an instrument of teaching, learning, and transmission of knowledge, it must be chosen with the ultimate objective of making education profitable in order to achieve growth and development. in the long term, any duality at this level goes in the direction of compromising this objective

2.2 A discontinuity of reforms

The different reforms of higher education in Morocco are characterized by a discontinuity and incoherency, it means that the majority of reforms has a cyclical character not a structural one.

the study of the various reforms elaborated since the end of the 90s until now, shows an absent of a long-term strategy. The various reforms are subject to political changes; as a result, higher education system is dependent on electoral and political objectives, nor the future of the country and his development. the different reforms are adapted to please the different ideology of the successful government and their political views. This situation leads to the incoherence of reforms, and amplifies their limit.

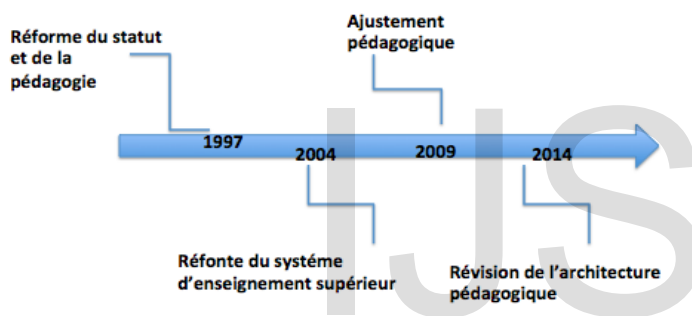


Figure 1 : chronology of higher education reforms in Morocco

Source : L'enseignement supérieur au Maroc : efficacité, efficience et défis du système à accès ouvert, conseil supérieur de l'éducation, de la formation et de la recherche scientifique, 2018

This incoherent of public action cannot promote the capitalization and consolidation of reforms and vision [2]. So, we can say that there is an absent of long-term vision and strategy, higher education is dependent on changes of the governments that succeed to power in Morocco.

Due to the important of this sector, only a strategic long-term vision can help to improve the performance of this sector

2.3 The problem of massification

In order to improve human development index and reduce the rate of illiteracy, Morocco has carried out various strategies to encourage citizens, and especially young people to learn.

These strategies have helped effectively to reduce the illiteracy rate, and especially to increase the number of enrollments in all levels of education including higher education.

this situation appears to be positive because it is the result of a strategy that has been successful. However, if we try to analysis deeply the consequence of this strategy, especially in higher education, we can reveal a real problem at this level.

As consequence of this strategy, universities have high a registration rate, which has led to what is called massification; Massification consists in having a number of students exceeding the capacity of an establishment, the human and financial means available.

This massification has become a structural phenomenon, especially at open access institutions, and particularly in the faculties of economics and social sciences.

This phenomenon imperatively impacts the quality and the performance of teaching, in fact, the massification induces a rate of supervision which continues to fall. Human resources, financial resources of universities become less with time, this situation impact negatively, professors, administration and staff; the result is a low performance.

students and teachers, and consequently total demotivation [3].

Despite the exiting of massification, according to UNESCO, the enrollment rate index of young people in higher education does not exceed 32%, which tells us about the low capacity of Moroccan universities.

According to official statistics, between 2011 and 2016, the number of students increased by about 108%, while the number of teachers increased only by 12% [3].

This problem is the result of an incoherent and controversial public policy, which aims to increase enrollment in higher education, without increasing human and financial resources in the same way.

2.4 The dependency of state funding

Currently, the financial resources generated by universities remain very limited to some paid courses.

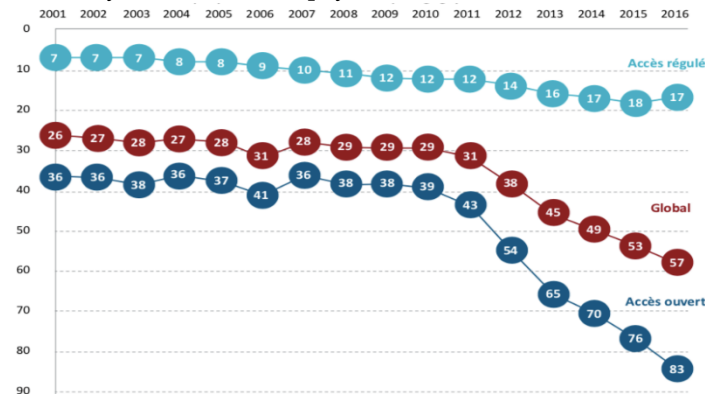


Figure 2 : the index rate of supervision in Moroccan universities
Source: L'enseignement supérieur au Maroc: efficacité, efficacité et défis du système à accès ouvert, conseil supérieur de l'éducation, de la formation et de la recherche scientifique, 2018

In Morocco, most universities and colleges are public, studying in these institutions is free, students don't pay any enrollment fees. The operating costs and investment of universities are financed by the state.

Free education in Morocco, is a right preserved by the national constitution, it is a way to encourage the population to access to education in order to make qualified human capital available for economic needs and also to permit the development of the society.

Free access to education is also a way to achieve equity in Moroccan society, it's a way to guaranty higher education access for middle class and poor population.

beside a limited resource, and a limited number of institution and universities, there is a constant increasing of enrollments rate, this question of free enrollment and dependency in state funding is becoming problematic. As a matter of fact, there is

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that aimed to improve the quality of higher education, but the available human and financial resources is not sufficient to achieve the assigned objectives. In fact, for example, the growth

in the number of students is much greater than the growth of teachers, which has a negative impact on supervision rate.

The overall supervision rate increased from 26 students per teacher during the year 2001, to 57 students per teacher during the year 2016. the supervision rate is low specially in open access institutions, it was 36 in 2001, to be 83 students per teacher in 2016, compared to other countries this rate is very low. In France the supervision rate is about 19, in Spain is 13, and 10 in Tunisia. Also, from 2011 to 2017, the number of students in public universities increased by 71% to reach 766,446 young people. In the other side, the budget has been raised only by 14%, to reach nearly 10 billion DH. The current budget cannot satisfy the needs and challenges of this sector.

The capacity utilization rate in Moroccan universities during

2001 was 100%, it reached 169% in 2016, and it recorded almost 211% in open access institutions.

These statistics show that there is really a serious problem of financial and human resources that needs to be solved and that the current funding module of higher education cannot really persist in a long term.

3 CONCLUSION

Finally, we can say that the current situation of higher education in Morocco does not guarantee a good quality, the working conditions are not good for both students, teachers and even administrators, especially in open access institutions.

Policies and reforms are characterized by incoherence and discontinuity, which prevents the capitalization of different reforms, beside that the linguistic dualism between higher education and qualifying education complicate both the task of teaching for professors and learning for students.

The current funding module for higher education is not sustainable in the long term, the level of funding of higher education, compared to GDP is already high in the MENA countries, including Morocco[4].

Thus, to remedy to this situation of weak financial resources and state dependency, Moroccan universities must exploit the new statute of financial autonomy provided by the law, in order to drain the sufficient resources for ensuring an acceptable level of performance.

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5 References

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