

Contribution to the analysis of employability development factors

Bassoul Fatima Zohra, Faridi Mohamed, and Rafiq Souad

Strategy and Management of Organisations Laboratory (LASMO), National School of Business and Management (ENCG),
Hassan 1st University, Settat, Morocco

Copyright © 2020 ISSR Journals. This is an open access article distributed under the *Creative Commons Attribution License*, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ABSTRACT: In a context of increasing globalisation, the working life cycle of individuals is changing, so companies are required to seek measures to deal with the effects that can be caused by the instability of their environment.

If the company manages to master the dimensions of technological, organizational or financial flexibility, it is less true of its social flexibility. The latter is closely linked to the adaptability, personal self-questioning and learning capacities that its employees can develop.

Employability is a new variable in HRM that allows companies to provide jobs for their employees. It is a great opportunity for both staff and companies. By developing HR skills, companies will at all times have the skills they need to meet market demands and strengthen their performance.

KEYWORDS: employability, employability development, employability dimensions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Changes in the nature of work and its organization have never stopped widening and becoming more complex (Arthur 1996), because of the globalization of trade, the intensity of competition and the speed of change at all levels. . In effect, during the years of the thirty glorious individuals can have jobs for life, but unfortunately this model of wage-earning is no longer suitable for businesses following the changes and flexibilities required by their environment. Therefore, individuals must take responsibility for their work and put in place a strategic vision of their professional life. To maintain its competitive advantage, the company must be able to develop its internal agility by redeploying its resources without wasting time, learning faster and better than its competitors to always make as good, if not better, to offer the expected services, to shorten deadlines etc ... The company must demonstrate inventiveness and innovation by responding to external expectations that constantly evolve by adapting to qualitatively new situations, by mobilizing as a whole, by changing the business, by guaranteeing and improving ensuring the flexibility of its staff. In this changing context, companies are required to have competent, flexible and adaptable staff in such circumstances. These processes give rise to new types of employment. It is in this context that employability finds its emergence (LEMONNIER J. 2002). It is considered an alternative to employment models, (Maguire, 2002) states that it constitutes "a new psychological contract". It therefore seems useful for companies seeking to ensure the development of their staff to be interested in the factors that are likely to promote the development of their employability. In our study, we will analyze the results of a qualitative study aimed at knowing how the issues that can promote the development of employability in individuals and companies are presented ?

2 EMPLOYABILITY: HISTORY AND DEFINITION

2.1 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYABILITY

The concept of employability has emerged in English-speaking countries. Its first uses were to distinguish the poor who claimed to be integrated into industrial society as opposed to those who were charitable. Historically, researchers have distinguished three essential phases that mark the emergence of this term (Finot 2000). In 1930, this notion appeared in Great

Britain during the Industrial Revolution, particularly following the 1929 stock market crash, the American government was obliged to seek an employment policy to combat unemployment, and to better target the programme to be put in place, it tried to make a distinction between those who can get a job and those who will be eligible for social assistance. Then, during the period 1950-1960, the term is used in the context of medical diagnoses by specialists in education and rehabilitation. The objective is to identify the most disadvantaged social groups. Individuals are classified according to a medico-social approach through tests that are a little close to the medical check-up, to be able to measure an individual's ability to be employed. Subsequently, during the 1960s and 1980s, the emphasis was placed on an individual's ability to have a job, at this stage, the assessment of ability is no longer sufficient because we are in a period of full employment in the United States. The idea is always to measure the attractiveness of employers to individuals, which is why the American approach focuses on the skills and behaviour of individuals, whereas in France, and during the same period in which the term has emerged in this country, it is used as a statistical tool. The purpose is to make a cross between different characteristics such as diploma, age... It was not until the late 1980s that a concept was developed that focused on an individual's ability to compete in the labour market. The writings on employability show us on the one hand an English-speaking approach based on individual aspects and on the other hand a French-speaking approach based on skills. We will explain this term further in the following section.

2.2 DEFINITION

The notion of employability is characterized by a semantic vagueness. It has been the subject of several debates, both at the level of research and at the level of the professional world in all its fields, paving the way for several definitions. Nevertheless, we can distinguish, in the literature, between two perspectives of employability analysis: the individual-centred approach and the global approach, or what should be called employability initiative, which is part of French thinking, and interactive employability, which is part of American thinking.

- Individual-centred approach: at this level, the focus is on the individual to define this term (Gazier 2003). Individuals must invest in their work and acquire skills and even a trade in order to be able to sell them on the labour market. The following table presents the main definitions of this approach.

Authors	Definitions
Pelosse and al. (1996)	The ability of an individual to remain in employment, whether in or out of the trade.
Kluytmans and Ott (1999)	Distinguishes three dimensions of employability: knowledge and skills, willingness to be mobile and knowledge of the labour market.
Barkatoolah (2000)	The ability of an individual to meet the conditions necessary to maintain or find employment.
Fugate and al. (2004)	An adaptation to work that gives individuals an opportunity to realize a career opportunity.
Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2005)	acquire and perform employment through the use of the individual's skills.

- Global approach to employability: at this level the definition of employability integrates other factors and becomes broader. The following table summarizes the main definitions proposed by the proponents of this approach:

Authors	Definitions
Outin (1990)	Employability is the combination of: individual qualities, professional skills, labour market conditions and training policies.
Hillage et Pollard (1998)	Ability to move around the labour market to achieve one's own potential through sustainable employment.
Finot (2000) and Hategekimana (2002)	individual skills and HRM conditions that allow them to access employment either within or outside the company.necessary to maintain or find employment.
McQuaid et Lindsay (2005)	Employability depends on individual factors, personal circumstances and external factors.

Source: author's personal construction

It seems to us that in the individual-centred approach, employability is considered as the conceptualized individual ability as a dynamic of the individual's adaptation to the demands of the labour market. While in the global approach, the authors add organizational and contextual factors to individual capacities.

Our objective is not to enter into the philosophy of the term but simply to clarify what employability means. In our research, we will adopt the following synthetic definition: "employability is the ability of an individual to find, keep, develop and enrich his or her professional career within the company.

3 INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYABILITY: WHAT DIMENSIONS?

We have previously highlighted two main approaches to the term and the definitions proposed by each of them. We noted the multiplicity of definitions and the inconsistency in the nature and variables that constitute it. Nevertheless, despite this plurality of definitions, they are complementary in nature.

In order to highlight the dimensions of individual employability, the authors propose two methods to do so: either by taking into consideration the dimensions shared by each of the definitions, or by retaining all the factors identified. As a result, the authors identify the following main dimensions:

3.1 JOB SEARCH

Job search is the starting point for employability and is considered a basic dimension. It corresponds to the ability to position oneself in the labour market and to enhance the skills and knowledge held in order to obtain a job (McQuaid et al. 2005). We note that it requires skills and attitudes and begins with a knowledge of the job market and its requirements and ends with an identification of the job seeker's career plan. However, the prerequisites change over time and according to the situation. At this stage, it is essential to draw up an assessment of the job seeker's expectations and market expectations, as well as to identify his knowledge, know-how and professional project (Patricia Levanti and Joselyne Studer-Laurens 2002). The best strategy is the one that best matches the targets and expectations and the professional profile (Hervé Bommelaer et al. 2016).

3.2 THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Having a social network has become an obligation given the role it plays in accessing information. It can be personal or virtual. Indeed, the social partners, whatever their type, are better placed to give an analysis of the economic reality (lungu, vergil 2015). Almost all definitions focus on the interest of this social capital held by individuals. We can talk about social resources in the sense of Lin, or access to information. The idea of this theory (Lin's theory) is not new, it is developed by Weber (1971), in his studies on social inequalities, then by Hanifan (1290) in his book "community", but it is Bordieu who is the first to propose a theory based on this concept of social capital. His idea is that individuals use not only material or technical resources but also their available social relationships. Theorists of this trend point out that the use of social ties is more of a structural phenomenon. It can be defined as the set of potential resources based on a network of relationships that provide access to employment to the extent that social interactions contribute to the achievement of goals.

Social capital is also analyzed under dimensions: relational, structural and cognitive, for reasons of clarity and simplicity we will suffice by the analysis according to which social capital refers to the social relations, as a whole, that the individual holds.

3.3 PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

They are known by different names, namely professional expertise (Van der Heijden, 2005). They characterize the skills and knowledge of individuals who allow them to access a job or even change positions or positions, and are important in that they enable them to have a skilled job. Professional qualities include the knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the job in order to control work situations and requirements.

3.4 THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

At this level we call for the adaptation and openness of individuals to their professional environment. Frequent changes in the business environment require flexible human capital that is able to adapt to change. These are the attitudes, commitment and responsibility of individuals within their organizations. We are talking here about any kind of flexibility.

3.5 CAREER IDENTITY

It is a definition of self. It serves as a motivation for individuals to achieve and achieve their aspirations (Fugate et al., 2003, McQuaid and Lindsay, 2003). It includes the ability to adapt, market control... In addition, given the changes in the business environment, individuals are required to have a global vision of their career and develop strategies for its development. By introducing the concept of "new careers", we look at career from the perspective of how individuals perceive it within the organization. From this perspective, the individual then becomes an actor in his or her career according to his or her own values and motivations. We can therefore retain that the career is no longer considered only as the vertical progression over time, but as the sum of the individual's perceptions of his own attitudes and behaviours. Thus, there is a career known as objective, relating to behaviour and observable by others and a career known as subjective, relating to the attitudes of individuals.

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

4.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

At the end of the literature review, our objective is to know how the challenges of developing employability for individuals and companies are presented? In order to answer this question, we conducted a qualitative study based on semi-directive interviews. The advantage of this technique lies in the fact that the collection of information is centred on the discourse of the interviewees (Romelaer, 2005) around the themes defined in advance according to a uniform interview guide despite the heterogeneity of the actors. The expected purpose of our qualitative study is essentially to ensure the relevance of our model.

We have endeavoured to respect certain criteria of qualitative research as presented by Hlady-Rispal (2002, p. 38-39): "to see with the eyes of...", "to take the perspective of the observed subject", to be accompanied by an interpretation of the actors' perceptions in the context of exploratory research.

According to François & Pellemans (1979), "qualitative analysis requires qualities of imagination, creativity, competence, experience and above all intellectual probity. It is essential that the researcher face abstraction from his a priori to put himself in a state of objective listening to let the data speak. Qualitative data must be placed in the context of their collection. Three factors must be taken into consideration: the technique used to obtain information, the characteristics of the interviewees, the characteristics of the researcher who may introduce certain biases.

Thus, the method of collection that appeared to us to be the most appropriate for our exploratory study is semi-directive interviewing.

Quivy and Van Campenhoudt (1995) consider that the interviews aim to highlight aspects of the phenomenon studied that the researcher would not have thought of spontaneously himself and thus to complete the avenues of work that his readings have highlighted.

4.2 PROCEEDINGS OF THE STUDY

The interview guide was distributed, in advance, to a sample of 38 people working in different sectors of activity. 30 people who finally agreed to participate in this study. In addition, the saturation threshold was reached at the 20th interview, the other 6 did not provide any further information. The interview guide on which we based ourselves was developed based on the literature review developed previously and constructed in a uniform way so that the questions were understood by the different actors who participated in the study. The interviews took place in the premises of the interviewees, they lasted between 1h and 1h30. At the end of their transcription, we obtained a corpus of 26 testimonies.

4.3 THE SAMPLE

In order to know our sample, we specified, during the interviews, their gender, position within the company, age, family situation, and diploma. We tried to interview a diversity of actors to have more internal validity of the study and also to have a representativeness of the study. The following table presents the characteristics of our sample.

Characteristics of the sample

Interviewees	Age	Gender	Family situation	Diploma
Officers	43-year-old - 50 years old	Men	Married	Master degree
HDR	38years-42years	Men-Women	Married- 3 children	Master degree- ingeneer
Manager senior	24years-34years	Men-Women	Single-Marriend children	2 Master degree- ingeneer
Employees	22years- 26years	Men-Women	Single	bachelor's degree

Description of the sample siz

Profession	Number
Officers	4
HDR	3
Manager senior	13
Employees	6
Total	26

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the interview results is carried out using the techniques grouped in the following table:

Type of analysis	Indicators
Thematic	Thematic breakdown, frequency of appearance
Glossary of terms	Content and richness of the vocabulary used....
Syntax	Verbs and tenses used

This method allowed us to group the themes mentioned and classify them. It gave us the opportunity to see how the interviewee addresses the questions in the interview guide, and to see how each element of the guide was addressed by all the actors interviewed.

5 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

We will present the results of the study in two steps. The first consists in presenting the way in which employability is conceived by the actors surveyed, the second aims to establish the dimensions of employability according to the interpretation of each of the actors.

5.1 DESIGN OF EMPLOYABILITY BY THE ACTORS SURVEYED

The analysis of the speeches showed us that employability is linked to: capacity, competence, adaptability and flexibility. We briefly present the summary of some of the interviewees' testimonies.

- Leaders: An employable person is one with the skills and competencies to get a job at a given time. It focuses on the combination of profile and person. Changes are continuous both internally and externally and those who do not have the ability to adapt are at risk of losing employability.
- HRD: Employability refers to flexibility, flexibility, adaptability and responsibility. It requires visibility and the implementation of a strategic career plan in order to remain attractive both on the job market and within the company.
- Manager senior: being employable means having a good knowledge and know-how that is different and attractive within the labour market. It corresponds to the skills held by the individual. It is always necessary to have

motivation and a long-term vision on the professional career in order not to be overtaken by other individuals present on the job market.

- Employee: the ability to take advantage of one's job in order to benefit others who may be personal or on behalf of companies.

5.2 EMPLOYABILITY DIMENSIONS

5.2.1 JOB SEARCH

According to the results of our study, it corresponds to the ability to identify employment opportunities. The actors of our survey underlined that the motivations and also the behaviour of each person are very important to have a job. This phase corresponds to the ability to sell your skills. You need to be aware of what is happening in the labour market and seek the help of recruitment agencies or participate in resume writing workshops..., to better explore and understand the labour market. They have proven an ability to detect job offers, and respond to different offers and applications by initially using the Internet.

5.2.2 THE SOCIAL NETWORK

All interviewees confirmed the usefulness and interest of having a broad social network. Personal relationships make an important contribution to access to employment. Creating opportunities for interaction with people who are already present in the professional world provides the opportunity to learn from their experiences. We have also found that social capital contributes to the career development of individuals, as is the case for some people who first started working in their family businesses. The share capital at their disposal has given them the opportunity to have information on existing recruitment, incentives in some cases and also stabilisation. Individuals who have a wider network of relationships have had the opportunity to enrich their experiences in a very considerable amount of time and have made rapid progress in their employment.

5.2.3 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The analysis of the interviewees' discourse showed us that human capital theory is gaining ground in our study, we can cite, apart from the factors of this theory: the professional skills that we believe are widely addressed by the actors, they constitute a common element and are often noted when answering the questions in our interview guide. Professional experience is an important element in order to keep or even find a job and is one of the first elements sought during selections insofar as it constitutes the element of distinction between the different applications. The more qualified the actors are, the more likely they are to keep or find a job both internally and externally. The actors have demonstrated that being employable in a given position requires the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out the tasks required by the position in question. On the other hand, all respondents stress that they have objectives to achieve within a given time frame and it is necessary to be able to achieve them before term and without the help of others.

We note that the interest of this dimension is explained by the massive changes in labour relations, the labour market and the requirements of each company.

5.2.4 PERSONAL FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTATION TO THE WORKPLACE

The development of timely adaptation capacities has become a priority for all companies, regardless of their size or sector of activity. It concerns the ability of individuals to adapt quickly and easily to market and company expectations. The results of the interviews confirm what was developed in our literature review regarding this dimension. The majority confirmed that mobility is a crucial element of it, "in the absence of mobility, individuals may not find employment due to lack of mobility or self-determined criteria". To consider oneself employable is to have positive attitudes towards the environment and to overcome obstacles to change and disruption in the company's environment.

Some of the actors interviewed changed their professional identity during their professional careers without any problems and in some cases far from their basic training.

Flexibility is the result of openness and acceptance of change and the development of an attitude towards mobility in order to take advantage of the jobs held. Individuals face several challenges due to the formation of a large number of networks. They must have integrity and solidarity. They must also identify with the expectations of their company.

In general, the interview results show that flexibility and adaptability are a dimension of employability.

5.2.5 CAREER MANAGEMENT

The skills required from companies are diverse, numerous and in complex cases. In order to remain attractive, individuals are required to update their profile and not to be satisfied with only the basic training acquired, which in some cases is used only to obtain a diploma. Personal development and continuous training are important elements that allow us to be up to date and have new skills. In this case, it is the individuals who are in control of their situation, and it is they who steer their careers according to their expectations and desires. The management of the professional project is widely discussed by the actors and seems to give it great importance and value. The following testimonies are the main illustration of this: "it is the individual who must adapt himself and his will", "it is always necessary to make assessment assessments and not to remain on the same knowledge and experience, it is necessary to develop a know-how that allows us to distinguish ourselves from others". All of the interviewees seem to have a strategic planning and vision of their careers in their jobs.

From the above, we deduce that career management comes from the willingness and commitment of individuals to have richer, more varied and up-to-date CVs. This can only be achieved by activating professional monitoring to achieve everyone's goals.

5.2.6 INTEREST FOR COMPANIES

The results of our study showed that the main challenge for companies is to involve all the human capital at their disposal. The more individuals are interested in developing their employability, the more they are better involved, and this translates into positive effects on companies in terms of achieving their objective. On the other hand, employability contributes to updating people's skills and avoiding the obsolescence of knowledge and thus companies can face competition, overcome the obstacles in their environment and differentiate themselves from this competition by having a workforce with very different qualifications. On the other hand, the implementation of the different dimensions that we have presented in our study contribute to the added value of each department within the company. It also has the advantage of being a tool for renovating HR practices.

6 CONCLUSION

The realization of this study first helped to delimit the concept of employability and overcome the vagueness surrounding it by adopting a simple and comprehensive definition based on a confrontation of the approaches that address it. We then confirmed the dimensions of employability in our empirical study and noted various factors that can influence these dimensions.

We have found that the development of employability comes from the willingness of individuals with long-term visibility in their professional careers and who wish to enjoy the new skills of today in order to remain attractive in the labour market. Companies are also a partner through the strengthening of human resources policies.

However, our study has some limitations that can be summarized as follows:

- We did not have the opportunity to present the confrontation of the different theories that have dealt with the theme of employability,
- We introduced a limited number of variables into our study and did not extend it to a personal, organizational or even cultural level
- We did not deepen our literature review, is it for reasons of clarity and precision.
- We did not study the individual factors of employability development related to employees at the same time as the factors related to the company, which may limit the explanations we have given

In addition, among the future avenues of research in this study we can mention:

- The study of employability and its role on company performance,
- The effects of employability on organizational involvement,
- The impact of HR practices on employability
- The impact of each of the dimensions we presented on employability.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arthur M.B., «The boundaryless career : A new perspective of organisational inquiry», *Journal of organisational Behavior*, 15, 1994, pp.295-306.
- [2] Bibby A., «Employabilité et adaptabilité des cadres », rapport rédigé pour UNI-Europa, Editeur UNI, 2003
- [3] HILLAGE j. et POLLARD E. (1998), «Employability: developing a framework for policy analysis», *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, Vol. 3, issue 2, p. 138-154.
- [4] KLuytMANS F. et ott M. (1999), «Management of employability in the Netherlands», *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol.8, N°2.
- [5] BARjou b. (1997), *Faites le point sur votre employabilité*, Edition d'organisation, Paris.
- [6] Barkatoolah A., *Valider les acquis et les compétences en entreprises*, INSEP Consulting Editions, Paris, 2000
- [7] Bourdieu P. et Passeron J.C., *Les héritiers*, Les Editions de Minuit, Pris 1964.
- [8] FINN D. (2000), *From full employment to employability: a new deal for britain's unemployed?* *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 21, issue 5.
- [9] Finot A., *Développer L'employabilité*, INSEP Consulting Eds, Paris 2000.
- [10] Hervé Bommelaer, Philippe Douale, Nicolas Pavesi 2016 : *RECHERCHE d'emploi secrets de pros : Trois professionnels incontournables de la recherche d'emploi partagent avec vous leurs secrets les mieux gardés Ed.1*, eyrolles
- [11] Patricia Levanti et Joselyne Studer-Laurens, *Réussir sa recherche d'emploi*, édition Vuibert.
- [12] Raymond-Alin thiétard et coll. 1999, *Méthodologie de recherche en management*.p.p : 48, 101 and 148.