



Study of Graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Autonomous University of Chiapas, Mexico

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Abstract: This work presents the Study of Graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH), Mexico, elaborated in 2020, which allows institutional feedback through the opinions of its graduates on the quality of their professional training and its relevance to their job performance. The study was based on the survey provided by the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES), which was adapted to the specific context of Chiapas by the Institutional Graduate Monitoring Program (PISE) of UNACH and applied to the graduates of the 2019 generation through the Institutional Graduate Monitoring System (SISE). The research accounts for the low degree of graduates, the low proportion that obtained employment attached to their professional profile and the need to expand professional training skills in undergraduate study plans.

Keywords: University, graduates, professional training, job performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Located in a globalized context, characterized by constant technological innovations, social changes and a trend towards labor flexibility expressed in labor relations, the use of technology and work organization, it has also influenced the educational policy oriented towards internationalization that emphasizes the linking universities with market requirements and requires strengthening the educational quality offered in higher level institutions, through a flexible curriculum and competency-based training (Bologna Declaration and World Declaration on Higher Education in The 21st century). In this context, universities have the need to fulfill various functions such as economic, social, cultural and pedagogical, since it is expected of them the generation of professionals that requires the demand of the changing labor market, influencing economic growth and well-being social (Ayala, 2009; UAEM, 2009; Guzmán *et al*, 2008; Escalona & Fernández, 2007; Fresan, 1998).

The higher education system and its intrinsic relationship with the labor market, inevitably refers to considering the aspect of "quality", linked to the development of continuous and systematic evaluation processes to innovate, design and implement new teaching-learning methods, generation of new knowledge, optimization of resources, among other aspects and to which the studies and follow-up of graduates contribute. This trend is strengthening at the international level (Red Gradua2 and Asociación Columbus, 2006; cited by Aldana *et al*, 2008). Higher education institutions in Social Sciences, Puga (2009) tells us, they face:

an urgent need to renew theoretical instruments, to respond to the demands of a complex reality full of new challenges and to prepare the new generations of social scientists so that they are in the best capacity to apply their knowledge with creativity and responsibility (Puga, 2009, pp.105-106).

In Mexico, ANUIES (1998) states that studies of graduates allow knowing the impact that the university educational offer has on the labor market, establish the quality of teaching at the university, to know the professional location of graduates, as well as counting with information that supports decision-making to adapt the university educational offer to the existing demand.

In this sense, the study of Graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Autonomous University of Chiapas, in Mexico, aims to recover the updated and reliable opinion of its graduates on their training and professional performance, which allows generating strategies that feed back the update the study programs and improve their planning, updating and consolidation processes, to ensure their quality and relevance.

2. SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE EDUCATION-WORK RELATIONSHIP

The social sciences refer to a set of diverse disciplines that have been interested in the study, analysis, explanation and interpretation of different social realities, on which they have generated theories and analytical schemes, through social investigations based on hypotheses, in various field research methods and data interpretation, which has led to the proposal of new explanations, scenario design and conceptual frameworks integrated into everyday life (Puga, 2009, p. 106).

In this contemporary era, the social sciences are located "in a new moment", since they have greater experience in research, new explanatory theoretical apparatuses, eclectic and based mainly on a broad sociological tradition, in a dynamic tending to internationalization in a context of globalization (Puga, 2009, p.105).

The enormous and complex changes in contemporary societies have challenged and therefore modified the work of the social sciences, in order to understand, explain and intervene in a participatory manner on specific problems that require solutions, such as those related to transformations in the production system and innovations in technologies, especially in information and communication technologies; as well as with the changes in the relationship State and society oriented towards consensus; new organizational forms of societies at a local and international level; the problems of the cities; poverty and marginalization; violence, migratory phenomena at the international level; new identities and social movements, a global economy that places us in the face of international competitiveness that demands a better scientific and professional qualification of the workforce (Puga, 2009; Raya, 2003).

In Mexico, social science institutions and careers have had considerable growth since the 1970s, despite being located in a limiting context derived from a reduced labor market, budget restrictions and precarious infrastructure conditions (Puga, 2009). Regarding the labor insertion of graduates, this has become complex and difficult since higher education becomes mass in contexts of rapid social, economic and cultural changes (Hernández, 2019); however, the perception of the capacities and abilities of professionals in the social sciences has been changing, little by little favorably modifying the labor market, since they are characterized by their "ease of dealing with different social actors; ability to debate, negotiate and arrange; speed in the analysis of political situations; understanding of organizational structures and design of communication strategies; management of statistical data, knowledge of laws and administrative regulations" (Puga, 2009, p.117).

The field of education has an intrinsic relationship with the labor field and for its analysis and understanding various theoretical-analytical approaches have been generated. An analytical perspective that has predominated is the one that posits a "cause-effect" relationship between education and work, which led us to consider that higher education had the function of training professionals capable of obtaining a good job, which would provide them with a life prosperous and comfortable; hence its great economic and social responsibility with the subject. This cause and effect position is mechanistic and does not consider the complexity of such a relationship (Hernández, 2019).

A relevant approach to explain the relationship between education and work is the Human Capital Theory, which arises from the study by Shultz, in the 1960s, which is based on the principle of conceiving education as a profitable investment of time and economic resources, which will be expressed in the achievement of the development of productive capacities, establishing "a direct correspondence between educational investment and economic results" (Navarro-Cendejas, cited by

Hernández, 2019, p. 193). This approach also supported the countries implementing a policy of educational expansion from the perspective that the increase in educational investment would generate greater economic development (Hernández, 2019).

With regard to the Adequacy Theory, it has influenced the evaluation and accreditation processes of higher education programs and is based on a provider-client model, from where it proposes the higher education system as a provider of professional graduates with certain profiles, subordinated to the requirements of the labor market. However, Hernández (2019) points out that adequacy does not take into account graduates and the constant changes in the economic, technological and production fields: "it moves away from considering the real behaviors of actors and institutions because it represents in a single market, labor, the relationship between education (supply) and work (demand)" (p.196).

Another theoretical perspective for the analysis of the education-work relationship is the Correspondence Theory, from the economics of education, which starts from the assumption that in the labor market there is an ideal exchange between educational training and employment, which which "defines a normative assumption that represents an optimum in exchanges in the labor field" as mentioned by Hernández (2019, p.196).

Likewise, another theoretical approach that allows us to understand the complexity of the education-work relationship is the Competency-based Approach, which according to Hernández (2019) is an approach that considers various agents involved in the insertion of graduates in a certain job, in a context of globalization, such as higher education institutions and employers. From this approach, graduates develop various skills throughout their professional training, such as specific skills related to the discipline studied, as well as transversal skills that are useful both in the workplace and in their daily lives: the ability to learn, to communicate, to solve problems and adapt to dynamic contexts.

Other theoretical models of interpretation of the education-work relationship have been developed with contributions and limitations, however it is necessary to continue analyzing the relationship established between higher education institutions, graduates and employers; considering also that they face complex challenges that place them in the need to reflect critically and purposefully on their social, economic and political functions, in dynamic contexts that demand quality in their programs, in the training of subjects, in the generation of knowledge, influence production processes and be a factor of social change.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The Study of Graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UNACH, was directed by the quantitative methodological design of the cross-sectional type proposed by the SISE (2021). The research considered as participants the graduates in 2019, who studied the curriculum implemented in 2010, in this case the undergraduate programs in Social Anthropology, Economics, History and Sociology. The selection of the sample, at first, adhered to the delimitation elaborated by the SISE, but due to the difficulty in contacting the graduates and their low interest in participating in answering the survey, out of a universe of 131 graduates, the final sample that could be counted on was 32 participating graduates, which is equivalent to 24% of said generation.

The information from the graduates was obtained through a Survey (designed by the Institutional Graduate Monitoring Program (PISE), UNACH) and the questionnaire was applied online. The instrument is made up of six variables: 1) Socioeconomic data of graduates, 2) Characteristics of their undergraduate studies, 3) Continuous training, 4) Experience and location in the labor market, 5) Opinion on institutional services.

The field research process was carried out under the PISE methodological strategy, which consisted of three stages: 1st) Information gathering. This stage was carried out in 2020 and the graduates were located via email and phone call, to achieve their participation. 2nd) Organization of the information of the graduates in an electronic database at the institutional level. 3rd) Analysis of descriptive statistical data for which the Excel Program and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Program were used.

4. RESULTS

The generation of graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences, 2019, is made up of 49% women and 51% men. The vast majority, 91%, are from the state of Chiapas, 8% come from other federal entities in the country, and 1% are from another country. Regarding the degree, 30% of this generation of graduates are graduates: 70% are women and 30% men. Regarding the type of degree they opted for, the professional examination through thesis stands out, with 77%; followed by recognition of academic merit, with 16% and graduation seminar, 7% (SISE, 2021).

4.1. Socioeconomic Data

Regarding the main sources of financing that the graduates had during their undergraduate studies, the majority, 81%, responded that it was the support of their parents; for 41% of the graduates it was the work they performed; for 38% the study scholarships and for 9% the support of relatives.

4.2. Undergraduate

For the majority of graduates, 69%, UNACH was the institution of first choice to carry out their undergraduate studies. It stands out that for 75% of the graduates, the bachelor's degree they studied was their first choice.

The total of the surveyed graduates have social service, carried out mainly in the intra-university modality (56%), the public sector (28%) and to a lesser extent in the "Community" modality (6%). The greatest impact of the social service was in "Responsibility" (75%), as well as in "Sensitivity" regarding social problems and needs, "Recognizing the social commitment" of a public university, considered of great impact by 53% of the graduates. Only 9% of the graduates had a job offer at the institution where they did their social service.

4.3. Continuous Training

Regarding the continuous training activities that the graduates have carried out and that are linked to their professional profile, according to the data obtained we can mention that 67% of the graduates have developed these activities in different topics such as public policies, geopolitical analysis, computing, research methodology, feminism, sexuality:

- Analysis of public policies
- Analysis and understanding of Geopolitics in the Middle East
- Civic competences and the social environment
- Computation
- Graduation seminar
- Community project, statistics, public policies
- Feminism, culture, social structure, economy, emotional health
- Interview, exhibition, workshop, field work, conference
- Development of intervention projects, diagnosis, identification of social problems, possible solutions to social problems, representations of real problems in the social environment.

The types of continuing education activities were mainly course-workshops (31%), workshops (23%), seminars (23%), MOOC courses (15%) and courses (8%). Said activities were carried out mainly in public institutions by 62% of the graduates and 38% developed them in social institutions.

Regarding the modality in which these continuous training activities were carried out, it stands out that the vast majority of graduates, 85%, carried them out in person and 15% remotely.

Regarding the issues of professional and labor updating that the graduates expressed that they would be interested in UNACH offering them, we can mention the following:

- Disciplinary theoretical topics related to your degree:
- Issues related to your work environment:

- Topics related to scientific advances:
- Topics related to research methodology:
- Issues related to the use of information and communication technologies:
- Pedagogical training topics

It should be noted that 33% of the graduates would opt for face-to-face and mixed professional and labor updating activities, respectively; while 9% would opt for online or virtual activities; 25% of graduates did not respond.

Likewise, regarding the period of updating activity that graduates prefer, "during the week" stands out with 33%, in "summer" 25%, "weekends" 17% and 25% did not respond.

4.4. Work Experience

In this regard, 56% of the graduates worked during the development of their undergraduate studies. For 67% of these, their work had no coincidence with their undergraduate studies; for 28% it had a moderate coincidence and for 6% their work had a complete coincidence. At the end of their undergraduate studies, only 6% of the graduates found a job according to their professional profile, 78% have a job not linked to their professional studies, and 16% of the graduates are unemployed.

The most influential factors in obtaining your first job after graduating from your undergraduate degree are, in the first place, personal references and medium influence having additional studies to the undergraduate degree, previous work experience, mastery of a foreign language and having with the professional profile associated with the needs of the company or institution.

Regarding the aspects that affected the delay or difficulties in finding a job, the following stand out: few job offers associated with the professional profile (72%), lack of professional title (44%) and lack of professional experience (34%).

4.5. Valuation of Institutional Services

According to the opinion of the graduates, the vast majority of teachers (76-100%) were evaluated negatively and it stands out that only 9% of the graduates considered that this proportion of their teachers complied with expository clarity, 15% complied with giving attention outside of classes, 19% motivated to access new knowledge, made use of information and communication technologies to promote learning, and punctually attended their academic activities, respectively; 25% had a plurality of theoretical and methodological approaches, and they motivated the participation of students in classes, respectively; 28% met with extensive knowledge of the subject and carried out an objective evaluation of work and exams, respectively.

According to the opinion of the graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences on aspects concerning the quality of the academic organization and university services, we can point out those that were evaluated with the most negative evaluation as "Poor quality": Internet service (56%) , cleaning facilities (34%) and access to sporting events (31%).

As for aspects best valued as "Very good quality" of the academic organization and university services, although it refers to a proportion of just over a third, there is the orientation and conduct of terminal works and dissertations (31%) and access to computer services (31%).

Regarding the items of the academic organization and university services that were valued as "Good" quality, the availability of bibliographic and newspaper material (50%), attention of the staff in charge of the library: attention of the personnel in charge of the library (50%), access to cultural events (50%), organization of continuing education activities (47%), attention to requests for documentation and student records (47%), external services (41%), laboratory equipment and workshops (38%).

In another area, the positive assessment that graduates have about the university institution is important, who in their vast majority, 84%, expressed that if they had to take their undergraduate studies again, they would choose to enroll again in the same institution, the UNACH.

Regarding their interest in studying a postgraduate degree at UNACH, the majority of graduates, 78%, answered affirmatively; of which, 84% of graduates are interested in a Master's degree and 16% in a specialty.

4.6. Graduation Profile

The graduates consider that the most important aspects that should be expanded in the study plans of the degrees that are taught in the Faculty of Social Sciences are: skills to identify and explain environmental problems in a systematic and methodological way (78%), personal development activities (78%), skills for the use of information and communication technologies (75%), skills to communicate in a second language (72%), skills to manage learning (72%), skills to reflect, understand and participate actively and purposefully in society (66%), skills to establish and maintain cordial relationships or contact networks (66%), skills to solve problems (66%), theoretical content (63%), content that promote entrepreneurship and self-employment (63%), the implementation of theoretical and practical knowledge in real situations through professional practice (56%) and expand activities on cultural diversity and multiculturalism (56%).

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

A highly demanding globalized world of specialized, flexible professionals with a capacity for innovation and creativity; framed in a "knowledge society" tending to individualization and to hold the subject responsible for the success or failure of their professional life (Enríquez and Rentería, 2007), places higher education institutions in the need and responsibility of constant transformation in order to satisfy the demands of the economic context, but also the social and cultural one, for which the perspective of the graduates is central, particularly on the subject of the curriculum since they provide us with accurate and timely information about their experiences and requirements of the labor market (Guzmán *et al.*, 2008).

The results of this study of graduates show that the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UNACH expresses a tendency towards gender equality in its school enrollment with a slight predominance of male enrollment; however, at the level of the Latin American region, UNESCO registered 57% of women enrolled in the social sciences, business and law (Ordorika, 2015). Gender parity is one of the most relevant challenges faced by higher education institutions in Mexico and in many countries around the world, considering that universities "have historically been unfavorable spaces for women, who for centuries did not even have the right to access this educational level" (Ordorika, 2015, p.7), it is necessary to continue advancing to overcome "the legacy of past discrimination" against women (UNESCO, 2020).

A relevant aspect in the educational results of the graduates is the low proportion of graduates, only one third, and the predominance of women in this indicator, that although enrollment still does not reach gender parity, a "female advantage" is manifested " in the conclusion of higher level studies and obtaining a degree; This reversal of the gender gap or promotion of women is already an increasing trend at the international level (UNESCO, 2021).

The graduates expressed a high dependence on the financing of their parents to survive during their university studies, in such a way that the family constitutes a survival unit (Guevara *et al.*, 2013) and in the case of the university students of the Faculty of Sciences UNACH is the most relevant.

A positive aspect that the study expresses is the fact that for most of the graduates, both the university institution and the degree programs studied were their first option, which can influence the best scholastic achievement, which according to García, Alcaraz, Garaulet and Martínez (1990, cited by Guevara *et al.*, 2013), school performance as part of the educational process is made up of an individual dimension and a social one, to which the pedagogical predictor is added.

If we consider that the social service provided by university students and/or career interns is an activity aimed at addressing social problems, where the student or graduate puts into practice and acquires knowledge, experiences, skills, it favors the development of values and facilitates the future labor insertion of university students, as well as allows the consolidation of academic training and professional training, opens new spaces for professional performance, among other aspects (UNAM, 2016); the results of this research refer to the fact that the social service carried out by the university students of the Faculty of Social Sciences is mainly developed within the UNACH but is not necessarily linked to research projects, teaching or community intervention, which inhibits the possibility for graduates that social service is a factor that helps link them to the labor field.

Regarding the work experience of the graduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the data provided by the study shows that a minority of the graduates have a job related to their professional profile and the vast majority are employed and carry out activities not related to their professional training, which places graduates in a precarious economy of temporary, flexible and part-time jobs related or not to their professional profile; these generations of graduates face the prospect of downward mobility and a “downward” job expectation, as Bauman (2017, p.56) points out “Nothing has prepared them for volatile jobs and persistent unemployment, the transience of the perspectives and the durability of the failures”; the college degree no longer holds the promise of attractive work, prosperity, and ever-increasing rewards; it is the first time, Bauman tells us, “that an entire generation of graduates faces a high probability, almost a certainty, of landing jobs that will be ad hoc – temporary, insecure and part-time. Or unpaid pseudo-jobs [...] below the level of their expectations [...] Or they face spells of unemployment, the length of which will be longer than it takes for the new graduating class to add their name” (p.56) to long waiting lists for a job.

In this regard, Márquez (2011) states that it is currently the youngest professionals who face the problem of unemployment to a greater extent and in Mexico, underemployment affects almost a third of professionals. The unemployment problem has a structural nature, which is why it is difficult for it to be solved only by the educational system and requires the participation of various social sectors such as the government and companies.

Among the results of the investigation, the negative evaluation of university professors in capacities and abilities stands out, which implies a serious situation related to the key pedagogical factor in the professional training of graduates and which has a negative impact on this and later on the possibility of to perform professionally effectively (Rodríguez, 1982; cited by Guevara *et al*, 2013).

Among the main causes to which the unemployment situation of professionals or who are employed in non-professional jobs is attributed, is the malfunction of higher education institutions, outdated with the requirements of the labor market. Some aspects of this malfunction are precisely the poor quality of training processes at the professional level, the lack of updating plans and study programs, the lack of training in skills and capacities for the adaptation of professionals to new areas of professional development. and forms of work organization, as well as the absence of measures to reorient the educational offer according to the demands of the labor market (Márquez, 2011).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The Study of UNACH graduates and of the undergraduate educational programs of the Faculty of Social Sciences constitutes a positive, relevant strategy to assess the relevance and quality of educational programs, particularly the evaluation of the performance of graduates in the labor market. It is considered one of the most reliable indicators of the relevance of the educational programs that support their training (Fresán, 1998; Valencia *et al*, 2015).

This study reports a trend towards gender parity in school enrollment. A strong dependence of university students on the support of their parents for their survival is expressed. Likewise, it is relevant to strengthen institutional strategies to increase the degree of graduates and in particular of male graduates, since it constitutes a relevant factor for obtaining employment. It is important to review the implications of the fact that a quarter of the graduates expressed that the bachelor's degrees were not their first option. Regarding the social service carried out by the graduates, the need is expressed to link the spaces for its realization with areas that allow the graduates to reinforce their professional training.

The low proportion of graduates who obtained employment related to their professional profile indicates the tendency to precarious employment among young professionals (UAEM, 2009) and should call for institutional work to update curricula and expand competencies and aspects indicated by them, as well as considering the professional practices in the curricular design since the lack of professional experience of the graduates is one of the most relevant factors that makes it difficult for them to obtain a job and/or apply their disciplinary knowledge in a creative and responsible way in their own professional projects.

It is also relevant to take into account the importance of improving the performance of teachers, of the university services provided to students, as well as the design of institutional policies that help retain students and improve their school performance. Likewise, it is necessary to consider what Puga (2009) proposes to us about the problems that imply in the labor market of professionals in the social sciences, the lack of knowledge of the careers or the distrust generated by professionals who have a critical sense of reality and are reluctant to be conditioned by rigid labor rules.

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