

The Sociological Researcher in the LMD System: Role and Challenge of Research Practice

الباحث السوسيولوجي في ظل نظام ل م د :
الدور واشكالية الممارسة البحثية

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Received: 04/09/2024

Accepted: 08/12/2024

Abstract:

The study of sociology is considered one of the important topics that requires careful scrutiny to understand the lived reality and to identify the main challenges in a world characterized by high dynamism and change regarding subjects and issues. These challenges necessitate that researchers, in general, and social scientists in particular, diagnose and examine underlying causes. The ultimate goal of social research is to rationalize and improve human behaviour in accordance with the value system of society. Given that the university researcher is capable of creating successful opportunities for the university and seeking solutions to societal issues, amidst escalating regional and international transformations, they encounter several obstacles both within and outside the university system. These obstacles have impacted the progress and effectiveness of scientific research, leading us to inquire in this research paper about the new roles of university professors in Algeria under the L-M-D system. What are the main problems hindering them from engaging in sociological practice that effectively understands and diagnoses social issues?

Keywords: sociology, sociological researcher, LMD system, roles of the teacher, challenges faced by the teacher.

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ملخص:

تعتبر دراسة السوسيولوجيا من المواضيع المهمة التي تحتاج وقفة تمحيصية لمعرفة الواقع المعاش، والوقوف على أهم التحديات في عالم يعرف الكثير من الديناميكية والتغير في الموضوعات والمشكلات، هذه الأخيرة تستوجب من الباحثين عموما والاجتماعي خصوصا التشخيص والتمحيص ومعرفة الأسباب والمسببات، لأن الهدف الأسمى للبحوث الاجتماعية هي ترشيد السلوك الإنساني وتقويمه بما يراعي المنظومة القيمية للمجتمع، وعلى اعتبار الأستاذ الباحث في الحقل الجامعي قادرا على تهيئة فرص النجاح للجامعة والبحث عن الحلول الكفيلة لحل المشكلات المجتمعية؛ في خضم تزايد التحولات والتغيرات الإقليمية والدولية، إلا أنه تعترضه العديد من العراقيل سواء داخل نسق الجامعة أو خارجها، عراقيل أثرت على سيرورة البحوث العلمية وعلى فعاليتها ما جعلنا من خلال هذه الورقة البحثية التساؤل عن أهم الأدوار الجديدة للأستاذ الجامعي بالجزائر في ظل نظام ل-م-د؟ وما أهم المشكلات التي تعيقه؛ من أجل ممارسة سوسيولوجية قادرة على فهم وتشخيص المشكلات الاجتماعية؟

الكلمات المفتاحية: السوسيولوجيا، الباحث السوسيولوجي، نظام ل-م-د، ادوار الاستاذ، مشكلات الاستاذ.

Introduction

Sociology is a discipline closely connected to social reality, aimed at diagnosing problems and exploring social systems and structures. It seeks effective concepts as solutions to various societal issues, especially given that social problems have become increasingly diverse and complex. This necessitates that researchers engage deeply in sociological scientific inquiry, linking their studies and research to social and economic life, in hopes of finding viable solutions to different problems. However, researchers in general, and those working specifically in the sociological field, often face numerous challenges that render their research disconnected from lived reality. This situation raises doubts about the credibility and effectiveness of these studies in serving society and its individuals. The ultimate goal of sociology is to provide robust, purposeful research that contributes to accurately diagnosing the issues faced by members of society and finding effective

solutions to overcome them, thereby contributing to the development and advancement of that society.

The questions that this scientific paper raises are: what are the most important emerging roles of the research professor within the LMD system? What are the main challenges that hinder accurate and in-depth assessments of various societal issues? Is the problem due to a lack of resources and means, or is it linked to the competence of the researcher and their reluctance to fulfill their research mission? Or are there other ways that require careful consideration and thorough analysis?

First - Sociology and Its Societal Importance :

According to the French philosopher Auguste Comte, sociology is the truth and the approach that should be followed in the study of society. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun presented a set of concepts in his famous introduction, defining sociology as the science of human civilization, as it examines various aspects of social life(Shroukh ,p9) Sociology is primarily concerned with the study of social life and human groups, with its main focus being human behavior of social beings (Giddens, 2005,p 47).

One may wonder about the importance of this science, especially since it occupies a prestigious position in developed countries. The answer lies in its significance and societal function, as it strives to understand and interpret reality while addressing problems (Shroukh ,p 10). This is the primary goal of social research, which aims to diagnose the lived reality to guide human behavior and outline plans that safeguard society through the findings and recommendations established by researchers.

Additionally, sociological knowledge seeks to frame society within a system of relationships, interactions, and representations, aiming to contribute to the development of thinking methods and the transformation of existing social relationships to adapt to the socio-cultural changes occurring in society (<https://jilrc.com>) . Of course, achieving the objectives of sociology can only be realized through rigorous and purposeful research conducted by scholars in the sociological field.

From the above, it is clear that the importance of sociology is reflected in the results of its studies, as it serves as an influential science in the journey of societal change. According to Giddens, social research has contributed to some of these changes, either directly or through the legal, legislative, and regulatory modifications that some of these studies have produced (Giddens, 2005, 695). Additionally, sociology has a clear impact on economic, social, and cultural life, which is evident in the prevailing patterns of thinking and behavior among

individuals that are, in one way or another, influenced by the sociological knowledge prevalent in society .

In general, social sciences broadly and sociology specifically focus on diagnosing and deeply understanding societal reality, which today is marked by significant transformations due to global and regional changes and the conflicts that expand among nations. Various scientific studies examine the reasons behind the processes of change in the lives of individuals within communities and in their modes of thinking and practices.

Secondly - The Researcher Professor and the University

The professor is the central pivot in the higher education system within the university; he is the backbone of its advancement, the key to all reforms, and the foundation of all development. The success of the university in achieving its cognitive, social, and economic objectives depends on his competence and scientific and pedagogical output. His ultimate goal is to elevate all scientific and humanistic disciplines. There is a collective agreement on the nature of the university, as it represents a scientific community that is concerned with education, knowledge production, and serving society in its various developmental avenues (Lahrach, 2006,p150). Like other institutions in society, the university has faced numerous changes and developments, introducing new values and concepts that reflect the progress occurring today. Once isolated and detached from societal issues, particularly during the Middle Ages when the professor represented only the prestigious and elevated social class, this position was exclusive to the elite of society, which rendered the university an ivory tower, excessively idealistic and far removed from the struggles and realities faced by the general populace.

Today, a new paradigm for modern universities has emerged, especially after World War II. Countries have competed to establish universities in various regions, facilitating access for underprivileged classes to the field of education. Universities have supported their structures with modern electronic devices and established scientific laboratories, which has allowed for communication between universities around the world. However, despite the advancements in university structures and the evolution of their concepts and values, the outcomes of these institutions are marred by numerous failures; these include the decline in students' academic performance and the lack of effective research and studies that serve the diverse needs of society.

The university system faces many challenges and obstacles, leading us to earnestly seek the true underlying causes of the failure of the Algerian university to achieve its objectives.

Secondly - The pedagogical role of the university professor

The professor represents intellectual and human capital that surpasses the importance of material capital. He is a pivotal figure and a key link in achieving the university's objectives, as he implements its policies and plays a role in correcting its course while maximizing the benefits of its experiences and efforts. Additionally, he has a vital role in educating members of society.

Within the university community framework, the professor undertakes several roles that range from pedagogical to research-oriented tasks. He is responsible for innovation and forming future technical visions regarding how to prepare and train students for research, assisting them in coping with change and understanding technology. The professor acts as a teacher, supervisor, mentor, guide, expert, and consultant, performing these roles either individually or collectively, ensuring that investment in university institutions meets its intended goals.

Researchers have classified the tasks of the professor into three main functions: teaching, scientific research, and community service. Although there are differences in the significance and priority of each function, recent studies (Falia, 1997, 54) indicate that the university professor spends a considerable amount of time teaching, accounting for 64% of his time, while 14% is devoted to research and approximately 4% to community service. The remaining 18% is designated for administrative duties within the university, with these percentages varying across different institutions.

1 -Teaching:

Newman (1959) in his book "The Idea of the University" argued that teaching is one of the most important functions of a professor. He affirmed that the university is merely a place for imparting comprehensive knowledge (Bin Huyshel and Khateiba, 2002, 09). In this context, the success of the teaching process depends on several indicators, the most important of which are a good training of the professor, the ability to organize experiences and scientific activities, and the ability to guide students. The professor must possess cognitive and performance teaching skills that enable them to carry out the teaching process efficiently (Maamria, 2009, 140-141).

2- Supervision of Theses: The academic thesis represents the culmination of a student's graduate studies and requires significant

effort and time to complete. Nevertheless, the supervising professor plays a crucial role in selecting the topic, guiding the student, and providing numerous scientific references. The professor's experience helps to avoid mistakes and save time, as they offer students all possible assistance to enhance their academic performance.

3-Guiding and Supporting Student: Monitoring and guiding students is one of the pedagogical tasks assigned to the professor. Despite its numerous benefits for new students, this responsibility adds to the professor's workload. New students are welcomed and acquainted with the main available specialties, social interaction among students on campus is encouraged, and assistance is provided in resolving some of their issues, directing them to the specialized departments within the university.

4-Service to the university: This refers to the contributions made by faculty members, either as a duty or voluntarily, in their areas of expertise or based on their experiences. These contributions assist in building and developing the university while enhancing the community to which they belong. It highlights the role of the faculty member within the university community through their participation in various professional or administrative activities at the college or university level (Al-Ghamdi, 2010, pp. 21-22). Faculty members provide proposals and initiatives for the advancement of higher education, participate in academic and professional development programs, undertake consultative, research, or administrative tasks, and engage in editing university journals and evaluating related research among other responsibilities.

In addition to their administrative roles at the department or college level, faculty members are required to complete several administrative tasks, such as attending faculty and university meetings, making decisions connected to academic pedagogy, and participating in committees for organizing conferences and study days, along with other administrative duties.

Fourth - The Bachelor - Master's - Doctorate System and the New Roles of University Professors:

1- The Bachelor - Master's - Doctorate System: (www.univ-ghardaia.dz)

The LMD system, which stands for "Licence-Master-Doctorat," is a new structure for higher education in Algeria that has been implemented since September 2004. This system is based on three educational phases, each culminating in a university degree :

A - First Phase: Baccalaureate + 3 years of training, culminating in a License degree .

B - Second Phase: Baccalaureate + 5 years of training, culminating in a Master's degree .

C - Third Phase: Baccalaureate + 8 years of training, culminating in a Doctorate degree .

The reform of the university system introduced by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research aims to clarify degrees, training requests, and specializations. Additionally, it seeks to create a coherent structure within academic pathways, facilitating the comparison of procedures and training content at both national and international levels. It also aims to enhance the quality of university education and facilitate student mobility and guidance. This reform, primarily based on the LMD system (Licence - Master - Doctorate), will contribute to establishing the fundamental principles of training.

2-The Emerging Roles of the Sociologist in Algeria :

According to Executive Decree No. 08-130 dated May 3, 2008, which includes the special regulations for research professors, particularly Articles 58 to 66, a set of responsibilities has been outlined for pedagogical teams, training teams, field leaders, departments, and specializations as follows :

A) Pedagogical Team: The pedagogical team comprises the professors responsible for lessons and directed activities within a single educational unit. Their tasks include forming a deliberative committee, participating in pedagogical meetings, proposing suggestions for pedagogical organization and teaching methods, and determining student attendance requirements, either mandatory or optional .

B) Training Team: This team consists of heads of pedagogical teams for educational units. A president is elected or appointed from among these professors, who are tasked with duties such as forming a deliberative committee for combined educational units, participating in preparing the examination timetable for the end of the semester, determining supervisors from among the professors for exam rooms and criteria, as well as overseeing the processes of monitoring, gathering, and recording continuous assessment grades, along with tracking student attendance and absences in mandatory classes .

C) Field Coordinator: The field coordinator is responsible for several tasks, including proposing the pedagogical program for training paths, preparing pathways between training routes to allow for students' gradual orientation, developing compatible pedagogical curricula,

participating in creating a schedule to address previous debts, and being considered a member of the arrangement and guidance committee .

D) Department Head: The department head is responsible for proposing a list of specializations that make up the department, suggesting additional specializations, and overseeing the supervision and development of internship processes .

E) Specialization Coordinator: The specialization coordinator ensures the achievement of the training objectives assigned to them, provides suggestions for improving the specialization training program, and coordinates with department heads and field leaders to prepare lists and specific budgets related to the training pathway.

The Algerian university has introduced a "**tutoring**" system, which is one of the main calls of the LMD (LMD) philosophy. This system serves as a dialogue space between students and the supervising professor, providing appropriate answers on various topics. The relevant ministry aims to enhance the quality of student training by informing and guiding them, thus increasing their capabilities and allowing them to participate in shaping their educational paths .

In general, the LMD system has created several roles within the Algerian university community, but it also carries numerous challenges and difficulties. Sometimes these roles overlap or are misunderstood. Despite the implementation of this system starting in 2004, not all the roles established and discussed earlier have been effectively applied. The new responsibilities adopted by the ministry through the LMD system have led many professors to shy away from their required responsibilities, as they find themselves unable to fulfill them due to the burdens of overlapping and sometimes ambiguous roles. This situation is referred to by specialists as role conflict and ambiguity. For example, there is confusion regarding who should lead meetings: is it the head of the department, the field coordinator, or the head of the basic unit?

Fifth: The issue of research practice

Scientific research is considered one of the most important functions of the university and is vital to it. The scientific reputation of the university and its leadership role are measured by the quantity and quality of published research. Accordingly, many Western universities have separated the teaching function from the research function, in order to equally emphasize both roles (Maamria, 2009, p. 98). This separation and focus arise because their outcomes extend beyond the university walls to all areas of social life. Scientific research serves as a means for economic growth and social development. Through

forward-looking studies across various fields—economic, social, political, military, cultural, and religious—governments can adopt appropriate mechanisms and strategies to address the diverse risks and problems that may hinder their growth and threaten their stability.

Based on this foundation, developed countries have prioritized scientific research, allocating substantial amounts of their budgets to fund every idea and initiative from their researchers. Conversely, scientific research in Arab countries has not received the same level of attention from either the public or private sectors. This is evident in the extremely low spending rates, which do not reach the internationally agreed percentage of 1% of gross domestic product (Al-Amaira and Al-Surabi, 2008, 297-298). In many developing nations, the initiatives and creativity of researchers are often undermined or, at times, outright stolen. This situation within our academic environment has encouraged Arab intellectuals and elites, particularly those from Algeria, to consider migration to developed countries where their ambitions can be realized, their projects can be built, and their efforts can receive the recognition absent in their home countries .

Therefore, it becomes clear that there is a pressing need for serious research into the optimal ways to transition from a narrow focus on preserving knowledge to a broader sphere that allows scientific research findings to resolve societal issues and drive development. This perspective has been affirmed by sociologist Moussa Lahrash (Lahrash, p 150)

Despite the importance of scientific research, Algerian researchers in general, and sociologists in particular, face numerous obstacles that hinder their engagement in field sociological research and impede their ability to conduct and complete such work. Consequently, this results in a setback for both the university and society at large. These obstacles have been classified into personal and material categories (Maamria,p 103).

1.Personal obstacles: These are psychological factors related to mood and emotional states, such as fear, anxiety, hesitation, as well as a lack of belief in the importance of scientific research. They also include the psychological and professional pressures faced by academics, frustration, and a lack of inclination to pursue research.

2.Material obstacles: These pertain to the conditions surrounding the researcher. Notable issues include the unavailability of resources and equipment, limited publishing opportunities, the absence of scientific references, the difficulty of field applications, and excessive administrative and pedagogical burdens. Additionally, there is a lack of financial incentives for scientific research, an absence of academic freedom, as well as a deteriorating living standard for faculty members. There is also a lack of clarity on the priorities of scientific research and

a weak relationship between universities and social and economic institutions. A member of the national union of university researchers noted that the scientific research system in our country suffers from several problems (Samati, 2015), including the inability to publish, with an estimated 80% of scientific research confined to university shelves, and yet to penetrate the economic sector. This is attributed to a lack of trust and doubt in national capabilities on one hand, and on the other, the distance of our universities from practical application and their focus on pedagogical work, which is another reason for the absence of a comprehensive integration between higher education and the economic field. Therefore, national economic institutions often turn to foreign expertise and typically adopt Western solutions.

It is important to note that university professors and researchers face numerous professional pressures that range from job-related and organizational pressures to physical and relational challenges (Trad khodja, 2017). In the academic field, professors encounter several issues that hinder their ability to perform effectively, affecting both their mental well-being and their integration with colleagues, and extending to their relationships with students.

Job-related pressures primarily stem from increased teaching and administrative burdens, which are among the most significant problems in their work environment, particularly with the rising number of students. Professors now carry teaching loads that exceed their capacities, with classes sometimes exceeding 35 students, while the LMD system allows for only 15 to 20 students per class. This, compounded by the demands of preparing lectures, grading exams and practical assignments, correcting theses, and engaging with students inside and outside the university, is further complicated by familial and social responsibilities that they are obligated to fulfill.

Organizational pressures are mainly linked to bureaucratic complexities within administration, where we observe slow and routine procedures in decision-making, leading to a general dissatisfaction with the work environment. This, in turn, directly affects scientific research and specifically the teaching process (Falia, 1997, p70). Recently, our universities have transformed into bureaucratic institutions governed by dictatorial authorities, monopolizing the decision-making process .

Moreover, there is a noticeable lack of encouragement to participate in conferences and scientific seminars (Hassan, 2005, p128). Engaging in various scientific events, whether international or national, significantly impacts the professional and academic development of professors. Therefore, the lack of interest in attending such events is

considered one of the primary obstacles to the progress of research professors in their teaching and research roles.

Relational Pressures: Behavioral scientists agree that strong relationships among members of a work group are a key factor in achieving the health and psychological well-being of individuals. Poor relationships can contribute to high levels of role ambiguity, conflict, a lack of mutual understanding, or low job satisfaction (Morsi and Idris, p530). However, what characterizes our universities is the weakness of communication and the human and social relationships, especially among faculty colleagues, alongside a lack of academic cooperation among them.

Physical Pressures: The poor working conditions surrounding academic researchers significantly contribute to their disinterest in scientific research. Among these conditions are a shortage of scientific laboratories, inadequate living conditions, insufficient university facilities, and a lack of care for university libraries .

In addition to research issues, a study on the responsiveness of sociological research to social problems arising from the Algerian social reality by researchers Ahmed Danaka and Jamal Belbakia highlighted the main challenges facing sociological research: (<https://jilrc.com>).

- A scarcity of sociological research and studies concerning Algerian reality, as research in this field is often marginalized, due to the low regard for both the discipline and its scholars .

- The good sociological studies exist on the shelves but fail to connect with reality .

- Exclusion and marginalization, as sociological studies are subjected to neglect, being overlooked and buried .

- The field of sociology and sociological studies in Algeria remains limited to conferences, seminars, and research labs, where scientific meetings are organized in various universities across the country. However, the recommendations generated from the studies and discussions are forgotten as soon as the conference concludes and do not find their way to practical application in concrete reality at all.

There is often disconnecting between the official programs aimed at students and real-world issues. University education typically does not respond to any specific social necessity, but rather aims to accommodate the vast numbers of students arriving from secondary education by providing educational seats and integrating them into various disciplines, including sociology, without any prior conditions.

In this context, Dr. Moussa Laharsh noted the obstacles that generally hinder researchers from performing their research effectively. The main challenges include (Laharsh, p. 153):

- Lack of a clear and defined strategy for scientific research to guide administrative and academic adherence.

- Insufficient funding for scientific research, which has been previously mentioned.

- Weak relationships between the university and other development sectors.

- Inadequate support for outstanding scientific research within specialized publication channels and printing.

Overall, the research system in our country remains weak and unable to fulfill its intended role, despite the efforts made by the relevant ministry. We believe the solution lies in encouraging and organizing scientific activities, establishing clear objectives within a comprehensive plan, motivating researchers both financially and morally, providing them with adequate training, and aligning their research with societal needs .

CONCLUSION

The sociological researcher is an important human resource in both the university and society at large. They are among the key competencies responsible for elevating the standard of education and ensuring the success of the teaching process. They are capable of creating opportunities for success within the university and the community by seeking appropriate solutions to various societal problems. This human resource requires the activation of development and motivation mechanisms within the university and the provision of a work environment that positively impacts their morale. Additionally, it is essential to understand all their material and moral needs in a manner that aligns with the conditions and changes of modern life. Consequently, the university institution, like other institutions, is in urgent need of studies that highlight the factors influencing the performance of the sociological researcher, as well as the main obstacles encountered. This understanding would enable appropriate adjustments to be made, ensuring the stability of the researcher within the institution and encouraging them to fulfill their duties in a way that transcends official tasks, performing responsibilities in an innovative and effective manner.

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