Les compétences transversales pour accroître l’employabilité « durable » à l’épreuve des défis globaux et des mutations du travail

Cross-Cutting Skills to Enhance 'Sustainable'
Employability in the Face of Global Challenges and Labor Market Changes

Par

Mohamed Akram NASSIJ
Doctorant
Université Mohammed V de Rabat
Maroc
Résumé

La revue de littérature a mis l’accent sur de nombreuses conceptualisations de l’employabilité, extraites de son histoire et de sa maturation progressive. Cet article vise à décrire les enjeux des compétences transversales pour le développement de l’employabilité, et comment le concept d’employabilité peut concilier la nécessité pour les organisations d’adopter un management flexible de leurs ressources humaines. Il appert qu’il existe une forte articulation entre employabilité et compétences transversales. De plus, la gestion prévisionnelle des ressources humaines est un processus visant à prévoir et à réduire les écarts entre les ressources humaines actuelles et les besoins, tant sur le plan quantitatif (efficacité) que qualitatif (compétences).

Mots-clés : Employabilité, Compétences transversales, Organisation, Management

Abstract

The literature review emphasizes various conceptualizations of employability drawn from its history and progressive maturation. This article aims to describe the challenges of cross-cutting skills for employability development and how the employability concept can reconcile the need for organizations to adopt flexible human resource management. It appears that there is a strong connection between employability and cross-cutting skills
Furthermore, human resource forecasting is a process aimed at predicting and reducing the gaps between current human resources and the needs, both quantitatively (efficiency) and qualitatively (competences)

Keywords : Employability, Transversal skills, Organization, Management
Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Morocco has been engaging with international developments in the field of human rights, education, scientific research, innovation, and technological advancements. These practices are centered around competencies, including knowledge, skills, the ability to learn, and working as part of a team.

Human capital represents a significant impediment to the country's economic growth. This weakness is manifested through the mismatch between education and the job market, as well as deficiencies in the knowledge and skills of graduates from educational institutions. Job applicants often lack the fundamental skills, resulting in a shortage of suitable profiles with the necessary competencies for the job openings.

The primary objective of our research is to demonstrate the significance of key competencies in enhancing employability and how the concept of employability can reconcile the need for organizations to adopt flexible human resource management in response to unforeseen events and changes in employment patterns. This aligns with the process of institutionalizing social responsibility, placing the interests of non-shareholding stakeholders (employees) on an equal footing with those of shareholders (Yedder and Slimane 2010).

Problem statement

While numerous studies consistently emphasize the importance of degrees and qualification levels as central factors for professional integration, research on the link between initial education and employment reveals that the alignment of education with employment is far from being systematic.

Nearly one in four graduates from vocational training institutions is unemployed, just like university graduates. Nevertheless, they account for over 70% of business needs, and they don't necessarily work in a field directly related to their areas of specialization. It is possible to hypothesize that some of the skills these young individuals possess, which are valued in the job market, are of a cross-cutting nature, meaning they promote mobility across various professions.

Faced with a rapidly changing environment, how do the connections between cross-cutting skills and employability interact?

The following diagram summarizes the various interactions:
Conceptual framework

The adoption of a theoretical framework emphasizes two complementary functional concepts:

- The concept of competencies primarily highlights not only the nature of education and the content of academic courses leading to diplomas or specializations but also the significance of resources that young graduates can mobilize. These resources include the capacity to learn, the ability to grasp information systems, responsiveness to uncertainties and tensions, and a propensity to adapt to variable contexts and master contingencies and situations of uncertainty. Other aspects, such as language proficiency and computer skills, tend to shape the desired profiles, implicitly or explicitly, in the job market.

- Simultaneously, the concept of employability, used here in a sense different from its strict Anglo-Saxon definition, pertains to the conditions of young individuals entering the workforce, especially young graduates. These conditions are assessed through criteria related to the duration of job searching, reflecting the job market's response to the "value" of degrees as validated by the labor market and the perceptions of companies.
However, due to a lack of sufficient data concerning graduates' employment outcomes based on specialization, the development of a conjunctural employability profile will be based on available data provided by the Department of Employment. A deep integration of the two concepts of competencies and employability necessitates expanding the investigation into a field defined by the biographical paths of young graduates. This approach allows for a focus on the tensions associated with job searching, not only in terms of economic and social positions or situations, which are ultimately decisive, but also in terms of dispositions or skills linked to the educational environment, rooted in the cultural context.

The factual richness of the narratives has the potential to help fill the analytical gaps in this report, which are attributed to the limitations of available statistics at both the national and regional levels.

**Employability : A Key Concept in Human Resource Management**

Employability resides in the "ability of a person to be assigned to a new job" (Larousse), a probability of finding employment for someone who is seeking work (The grand dictionnaire).

The concept of employability, although not new, has never been easy to define and has seen many definitions since its emergence. It was only in the late 1990s that it gained recognition for characterizing and addressing employment and training issues from the perspective of public authorities and businesses (Dietrich, 2010). Its full legitimacy was realized with the rise of unemployment and the emergence of the idea of the importance of stabilizing career paths in a constantly changing labor market that demands increased flexibility (Gazier, 2003; Van Burren 2003; Brown et al., 2003; Mac Quaid et al., 2005).

In the face of changes in the labor market, employability is considered the new essential condition for developing a sustainable competitive advantage for the company and individual career success (Van der Heijde et al., 2006).

The concept of employability was initially developed by practitioners in the field of economics and later integrated into management sciences in the late 1990s. It continued to evolve and expand into various literature fields, including psychology and sociology (Van der Heijde et al., 2006; Fugate et al., 2008).

Given this diversity the task of defining employability has not been the simplest and has sparked several debates in the literature. According to Dupont, Bourassa, and Tardif (1993), employability is "the set of skills, attitudes, and general and specific knowledge required to enter and adapt to the labor market, job search, and job retention, to the work context (punctuality, good interpersonal relationships, knowledge of organizational rules), to basic training (e.g., reading, writing, counting...), and to physical, perceptual, and motor requirements (e.g., muscle strength, endurance, shape perception, digital and manual dexterity)."
Therefore, employability is a concept that refers to an individual's capacity to function within a work environment (Dunn, 1974; Dupont and Bourassa, 1994). It encompasses their ability to secure, retain, or change employment (Selz, 1980; Dupont and Bourassa, 1994). In this regard, employability can be seen as an advantageous tool facilitating a student's smooth transition into the job market, enabling easy professional insertion and translation.

Hence, the following distinctions are made:

- **Initial employability**: Refers to a student's abilities to secure their first job upon exiting the educational system.
- **Internal employability**: Involves an employee's capacity to maintain their current job or advance within an organization.
- **External employability**: Encompasses an individual's abilities to find another job if necessary (Hillage et al., 1999).

According to Müller et al. (2011), these three capacities revolve around three dimensions and are interpreted in terms of an employee's training, mobility, and career orientation. This perspective allows us to explore management practices conducive to employability. Ledru R. (1966) defines employability as "an objective hope or more or less high probability that a person searching for employment will find one," establishing a direct link between employability and the duration of unemployment. Indeed, the employability of an unemployed individual, defined by their capacity to secure employment, varies and depends on the general conditions that determine what can be termed an average employability. The probability of the duration of unemployment, measured in days or weeks, determines employability itself, allowing us to grasp differential employability compared to other probabilities (Ledrut, 1988: 103).

Based on the work of major authors on employability (Hillage et al., 1999; Finot, 2000; Gazier, 2003; De Grip et al., 2004), we can conclude that employability is "a general and dynamic capacity of individuals for employment, both current and potential, in both internal and external labor markets.”

This comprehensive definition highlights the significance of considering employability as an ongoing process, relying on the complex interaction of individual, organizational, and socio-economic factors. The literature has emphasized various conceptualizations of employability, extracted from its history and progressive development. Let's take, for example, the work of Gazier (2003), who attempted to trace the evolution of employability until the late 1990s, discovering two main versions that coexist:
1. "Initiative Employability" refers to an employee's individual capacity to showcase their skills. It focuses on an individual's abilities to market evolving and cumulative qualifications in the job market.
2. "Interactive Employability" explicitly articulates dynamic individual capacities in interaction with the environment.

These two perspectives represent different dimensions of employability, with one highlighting the individual's proactive role in shaping their career, and the other emphasizing the interactive aspect of employability within a broader context.

Two perspectives that structure research on employability correspond to these two conceptualizations (De Grip et al., 2004; Fugate et al., 2008): the labor supply perspective and the labor demand perspective. Gazier emphasizes the interaction between the individual and the labor market in his definition of employability: "Employability is an individual's ability to access meaningful employment based on the interaction between their personal characteristics and the labor market" (Barrett et al., 2001). Both of these perspectives recognize the importance of personal characteristics and how they interact with the labor market to determine an individual's ability to secure meaningful employment. They provide a comprehensive framework for understanding employability.

The labour supply focuses on individual attributes and behaviors and develops what are known as "absolute" conceptualizations because they are centered on individual factors alone. According to Bricler (2009, p. 100), an employable person is capable of "retaining, finding, or regaining employment within reasonable timeframes throughout their professional life, taking into account the economic situation.

"Van Dam (2003) proposes, on the one hand, a concept of employability from an organizational perspective based on activities that contribute to improving the employability of employees within the organization. On the other hand, this concept highlights the notion of individual employability, encompassing individual characteristics such as personality traits and the individual resources of the employee.

The labor demand perspective is solely dedicated to contextual factors external to the individual. It is based on generalized definitions that adopt a relative vision, combining individual and contextual factors (Brown et al., 2003, integrating aspects of supply and demand, individual and collective factors)."
In this generalized perspective, employability is considered as the capacity and willingness of workers to remain attractive to the labor market (supply factors), while also reacting to and anticipating changes in job content and the work environment (demand factors), facilitated by the human resource development tools available to them (institutions) (De Grip et al., 2004). It thus integrates individual characteristics that determine one's current and future position in the labor market, as well as the enabling or constraining factors of the environment, in a dynamic and process-oriented approach.

Therefore, it can be observed that employability is centered on the individual, involving conditions and human resource management practices conducive to the development of an individual career plan (Baruel-Bencherqui et al., 2011).

Indeed, "developing employability means maintaining and enhancing employees' skills and the human resource management conditions that enable them to access employment, either within or outside the company, under favorable conditions" (Burgat et al., 2005, p. 8, referencing Finot, 2000). These generalized and interactive conceptualizations facilitate alignment with CI (Collective Intelligence) whose analysis is linked to the context and work situation. Although many debates persist, particularly regarding its definition and the factors to be considered, the concept has shifted from the quality of an individual's employment to the quality of accessible employment, both today and in the future, within a generalized and dynamic perspective (Saint-Germes, 2010).

A human resource management (HRM) approach focused on employability is based on competency management and several key levers of action: continuous training, active mobility, a learning-oriented work organization, as well as a culture of employability (SaintGermes, 2004). Management styles, evaluation processes, relative salary levels, and other statutory elements also complement the HRM conditions necessary for employability development (Finot, 2000).

There are indeed numerous HR levers to be activated, with Burgat et al. (2005) identifying ten of them. We can consider, as Raoult et al. (2011) suggest, that it's the entire management approach of the company that is involved. The employability practices of companies can then be grouped into three categories: professional openness, HR management, and organization (Burgat et al., 2005). These families of action levers and practices are deployed according to a common specific logic.
To enhance employability, these practices should be repositioned with a broader time horizon, shifting towards the medium and long term, and directed towards the external needs of the employee. This aims to avoid the detrimental effects of certain organizational, management, and leadership methods that lead companies to create unemployability (Dietrich, 2010). In fact, employability "is built within and by the company, through a qualifying organization, skills management involving multiple stakeholders (management, employees, employee representatives), ongoing anticipation of job and profession developments (GPEC), and a corresponding training strategy. It develops through a mobility policy" (ibid., p. 32). The goal is to create and foster a dynamic approach to development and training that serves the adaptability and "job competence" of employees.

Considering employability as a management object involves questioning the quality of jobs and HRM, as well as the managers’ adoption of HR levers. Furthermore, if the competency approach is the foundation for employability development, its effectiveness requires a repositioning and an openness both to the professional aspirations of employees and the demands of the job market (Saint-Germes, 2004; Dietrich, 2010).

To conclude this section, and since there are numerous definitions of employability, we have attempted to summarize the various definitions mentioned in the literature in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Employability refers to the objective hope or the more or less high probability that a person seeking employment has of finding a job.&quot;</td>
<td>(R. Ledrut, 1966, p.68)</td>
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<td>&quot;The establishment of a maximum congruence relationship between supply and demand to meet the requirements of a job.&quot;</td>
<td>(Tremblay 1998, p.34)</td>
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<td>&quot;The ability to move independently within the labor market to realize one's potential through sustainable employment. For individuals, employability depends on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they possess, how they use these assets, and how they present them to employers, as well as the context (for example, personal situation and the labor market environment) in which they seek employment.&quot;</td>
<td>(Hillage et Pollard, 1998)</td>
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<td>&quot;The fact that every asset possesses dynamic and up-to-date skills and exhibits market-oriented behavior. According to Gazier, there are three waves of development and debate on the concept. The first, originating in England and then in the United States, is dichotomous employability. Its first usage dates back from the early 20th century to the early 1940s, and it involves dividing individuals in the labor market into two categories: the 'employable' and the 'unemployable.' The employable are adults without significant</td>
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family responsibilities to whom public works can be assigned in exchange for financial assistance.

"The second wave began in the early 1950s in the United States, giving rise to three typologies of employability: 'sociomedical employability,' 'workforce policy employability,' and 'flow employability.'

"The third wave emerged in the late 1980s, and it, in turn, introduces three new definitions: 'expected performance employability in the labor market,' the ability to extract income from the labor market; 'initiative employability,' which focuses on individual abilities to sell evolving and cumulative qualifications in the labor market, and 'interactive employability,' the latter focuses on dynamic individual abilities to interact with the environment with which they are in contact."

"Dynamic job readiness, meaning the ability to be in employment, to stay there, to adapt, and to rebound when necessary."

"The set of skills, human resource management conditions, and organizational and societal modalities that are necessary and sufficient to enable an employee to maintain their employment situation, within reasonable timeframes and conditions, in a dynamic and challenging context of professional mobility."

"Employability is defined as having a set of skills, knowledge, and personal qualities that make a person more likely to enter a profession and succeed in that profession."

"Employability is the ability to keep a job or the ability to do the work one desires."

"Taking into account the previous elements and the various definitions of employability found in the literature, we can conclude that:"

• Employability can be defined as the chance of finding and retaining a decent and evolving job.

• Developing employability means maintaining and enhancing the skills of workers and also managing and creating human resource conditions capable of providing them with the opportunity to access employment, both within and outside the organization, in favorable conditions and timeframes.

1.1 The role of employability in studies on transferable skills

In Dietrich's work (2010), we find that: "Employability emphasizes the necessary maintenance of knowledge and skills, questioning their 'sustainability,' even their transferability to another job" (ibid., p. 33).

The concept of employability highlights the potential for transferring skills to another work and employment situation. However, this significant aspect of competence makes it challenging to conduct
an in-depth study, as this dimension of competence is complex to conceptualize and analyze, and it opens up a large number of poorly defined potential situations.

The research on employability primarily revolves around an approach to skills that is determined by the question of transferability, making it prospective and dynamic. As a result, there is a difficulty in interpreting and operationalizing the link between competence and employability (LOUFRANI-OIRY, 2014). In employability models, we can observe that skills are dimensions of perceived employability, which, in turn, is a determining factor of both objective and subjective career success. However, a distinction is made between job-related and employment-related skills and generic skills, which are combined to assess employability (Van Der Heijde et al., 2006). Therefore, the employability perceived by the employee is contingent on the development of their skills, which encompasses all activities that maintain or enhance functional, learning, and career-related skills, implemented by the individual and/or the organization (De Vos et al., 2011). The employee's engagement and participation in these activities, as well as the organizational support perceived in skill development initiatives, become key factors in employability (LOUFRANI-OIRY, 2014). These conditions can be related to the concept of an "empowering environment," which "facilitates access to formative resources (whatever they may be), their identification, their activation, and teaches how to use them" (Fernagu-Oudet, 2012, p. 24).

The conditions of the environment, therefore, determine the ability to act necessary for skill development and employability. It is about supporting employees, facilitating the mobilization of their resources, and not just making resources available to them.

Even though the approaches and perspectives on the skills that constitute employability are varied and divergent, there is a clear rejection in the specialized literature of viewing skills as transferable human capital. Specifically, Van Der Heijde et al. (2006) propose a skills-focused approach to employability, emphasizing an interpretive approach to competence as opposed to a rationalist view based on attributes. In this approach, it is conceptions, mental frameworks, and analytical frameworks that are highlighted as determinants of competence. Valuation and assessment are thus centered on the use of knowledge and skills in the workplace, with the practice in a real-life context being more important than the stock of attributes.

According to a different logic, some employability approaches that focus on individuals' attributes are justified as opposed to a traditional approach to the skills required for a job, which is considered non-relevant (LOUFRANI-OIRY, 2014).
According to them, reasoning in terms of required skills is considered too narrow an approach and does not represent the current characteristics of employment (Fugate et al., 2008). When the employability approach is skill-focused (Van Der Heijde et al., 2006), the skills that constitute employability are clearly contextualized and articulated within the work situation. On the other hand, approaches centered on individual attributes break free from the reference to work situations, acknowledging that there are transversal determinants of employability to be identified in a person's personality traits. Furthermore, as noted by Hallier (2009), one of the significant weaknesses in discussions about employability is the difficulty in precisely describing and predicting the skills that employees need to develop.

Many employers express unrealistic expectations, and even requirements, regarding the skills of their employees, while often failing to contribute to the cost of developing such abilities (Clarke, 2009). Additionally, they struggle to communicate and establish their complex aspirations with their current or prospective collaborators and to develop relevant tools for evaluating these expected skills. This leads to a continuation of human capital management practices that raise questions about the widespread promotion of employability among all workers (Hallier, 2009).

Here, we encounter the difficulty in conceptualizing and operationalizing the transferability of skills beyond the reference work situation, which poses a barrier to the connection between communicative competence and employability. This observation leads us to consider and propose the emergence of a new component of competence that contributes to employability : "the ability to adapt." This allows for a fresh and necessary framework for the integration of these two concepts (LOUFRANI-OIRY 2014).

Faced with this multitude of descriptions of the key employability skills of employees, several authors note a shift from know-how to soft skills (Bellier, 1998), from the ability to perform a specific task to attitudes, values, and personal dispositions related to employment (Fugate et al., 2008; Clarke, 2009, Sadik, 2018).

1.1. The role of cross-cutting skills in employability research

The purpose of this focus is to synthesize the literature on skills in human capital management and to comprehend the role played by employability in these studies.

The management of cross-cutting skills initially emerged in the field of linguistics. However, the concept of communicative competence has seen a growing popularity since the late 1980s in various
disciplines, including psychology, ergonomics, education and training sciences, work sociology, and, of course, the increased interest it receives from human capital management.

Indeed, in recent years, in the face of evolving information and communication technologies (ICT), globalization of competition, and the emergence of new organizational configurations, communicative competence has become one of the key terms in human capital management. For many authors, the concept of competence is seen as a new logic for Human Capital Management (HCM), and even as the "linchpin of human resources management" (Pichault et al., 2000, p. 128). As for Zarifian (1988), he views competence as the emergence of a new model for organizing and managing the workforce.

In the 1990s, the majority of research focused on the task of defining the concept of competence, which was referred to as a "strange attractor" at that time (Le Boterf, 1994). Part of its success was attributed to "the polysemy of the word and the difficulty of providing rigorous definitions" (Laroche et al., 1998, p. 15). For our part, drawing on the work of major authors in competence management (Gilbert et al., 1992; Le Boterf, 1994; Defélix, 2003; Retour, 2005; Retour et al., 2009; Dietrich et al., 2010), we understand the notion of competence as the ability of an individual to mobilize and combine resources (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) in order to carry out a specific activity or action process.

This definition has the advantage of describing both the nature and consequences of competence. The definition of competence as the ability to mobilize "knowledge," "skills," and "attitudes" has been the subject of numerous debates and critiques. However, its primary advantage is its didactic, simple, understandable, and easy-to-remember nature. Furthermore, concerning the consequences of competence, definitions proposed by authors such as Meignant (1990), Gilbert et al. (1992), and Le Boterf (1994) indicate that competence is strongly contingent on a specific professional situation and, therefore, is context-dependent. An individual is not competent in and of themselves but rather in relation to something.

Indeed, individuals who possess knowledge or abilities may not know how to mobilize them effectively in a work situation (LOUFRANI-OIRY 2014). Consequently, it is the situation that brings forth the actual skills held by the individual. This is why the definition of competence was originally conceived in a highly contextualized manner. Furthermore, Retour (2005) suggests going further in characterizing competence by considering four levels:

1. **The skills required** for a job or profession: These are the competencies that a particular job or profession demands.

2. **The skills mobilized** by an individual in the performance of their role
3. The skills possessed (available) by an individual at a given moment

4. Potential skills of an individual (not yet implemented)

When considering the first three levels of competence (required, mobilized, and possessed), we clearly see the influence of "contextualization" (job, role performance, and the given moment). However, concerning the fourth level of competence, it's observed that potential skills have been contemplated but may not have been adequately defined or articulated. This level of competence, representing untapped potential, may require further development and clarification to better understand and harness these skills for future use.

They are often considered to be cross-functional, transferable, and forward-looking because, as emphasized by (Retour 2005), potential skills are associated with the specialized field of potential and career management. These skills are seen as having the potential to be applied in various contexts and contribute to an individual's growth and advancement in their career. As such, they are valued assets that extend beyond specific job roles and have the ability to influence an individual's career path.

Both researchers and practitioners in Human Capital Management (HCM) have struggled to conceptualize competencies that are cross-functional, transferable, or potential, meaning they are less tied to a specific work situation. Starting in the early 2000s, researchers and practitioners have examined how to manage competencies, leading to the development of competency management and then competency-based management. In this context, the goal of HCM is to optimize the competencies of employees for each job or role, with an emphasis on ensuring that the right skills are in place for specific positions.

As pointed out by (Loufrani-Fedida 2008), competency management encompasses all managerial actions undertaken by one or more organizations to handle and develop competencies. Therefore, managing competencies means both managing them, which involves creating and implementing management rules (Dietrich et al., 2010), and developing them through one of the two learning modes: exploitation and exploration (March, 1991). Indeed, without stimulation, maintenance, and protection, competencies may diminish over time (Prahalad et al., 1990).

The HR levers that should be activated primarily rely on human resource practices, including workforce planning, recruitment, evaluation, training, compensation, mobility, and career management, all of which contribute collectively to effectively implement competency management (Defélix, 2003; Retour, 2005; Dietrich et al., 2010). In this context, the individual is regarded as a
capital, a "portfolio of competencies" that can be maintained, developed, and optimized through appropriate HR management and practices (Dietrich et al., 2010).

The competencies that an employee possesses (or claims to possess) determine their employability, provided that they are in alignment and consistency with the competencies defined in the job description. Employability is assessed and evaluated based on a competency assessment, an appraisal interview, and a competency rating scale that positions the employee within it. These processes are crucial for gauging how well an employee's skills and qualifications match the requirements of their role and contribute to their overall employability within the organization.

The organization enhances its employees' competencies by offering appropriate training after diagnosing the prerequisites. It motivates its employees with fair compensation and satisfies their need for recognition through promotions, while mobility further develops their skills. Lastly, the company fosters employee loyalty and performance through effective management, continually modernizing the terms and methods, as described by Dietrich et al. (2010)

1.1. The Relationship Between Cross-Cutting Competencies and Employability

Hirt, in his work (2009, p. 2), emphasizes the importance of "key competencies" that are essential for both long-term learning and effective integration into society and employability. This underscores the significance of incorporating these competencies early in the educational curriculum, whether it be in secondary or higher education. Similarly, Meerler (2006) stresses the importance of bridging the gap between teaching practices and those of the professional world by utilizing a competency-based approach, which is not only a strength but also becomes a necessity.

Training should play a role in helping individuals acquire the specific professional competencies required for the workplace and enhancing employability, with a strong emphasis on learning and development.

Finot (2000, p. 9) reminds us of the factors that come into play to ensure sustainability and effectiveness in labor market integration. This includes the individual's profile, both quantitatively, such as age and gender, and qualitatively, which involves being aware of one's competencies, motivations, and how they influence the progression of their work.

The competency-based approach is an asset for navigating the professional world and ensuring long-term employability.
Fiot (2003, p. 3) emphasizes the importance of cross-cutting competencies, as they are applicable across various professions rather than being specific to a limited number of fields. These competencies provide a better chance of being employed, given their relevance to multiple jobs.

Gonzalez and Waagenaar (2007, p. 17) assert the necessity and paramount importance of cross-cutting competencies in the education of students. These competencies are vital for preparing students for their future integration into society in terms of employability and active participation.

Perrenoud (1995, p. 23) draws attention to the fact that any high-level competency is cross-cutting because it triggers multidisciplinary knowledge and methods. Baillargeron (2006) describes cross-cutting competencies as "super-competencies" since they mobilize knowledge capable of fostering creativity and problem-solving abilities.

La liberté (1995, p. 139) identifies certain cross-cutting competencies that one should possess:
- The ability to communicate and solve problems.
- The capacity for analysis and interacting with others.
- The ability to make independent decisions and resolve conflicts.
- A sense of commitment and responsibility towards one’s environment.
- Understanding the contemporary world with its social and economic challenge.
- Strong skills in perception, analysis, and evaluation.

Chauvignet and Caulet (2010, p. 18) also highlight the importance of organizational and planning skills, mastery of both oral and written communication, as well as interpersonal abilities.

1. **Employability and the Management of Cross-Cutting Competencies**

In the literature on competency management, based on foundational research, employability is primarily seen as a managerial objective to be achieved. Indeed, we often observe that employability plays a "secondary" role as a goal. It is commonly stated that the aim of competency management is to enhance the employability of an organization's employees. The focus is on the competencies of individuals; which effective management can optimize.

In particular, and as we will delve into further, the question of employee employability holds a paramount place in agreements and work related to GPEC (Anticipatory Management of Employment and Skills, or Workforce Planning), where one of the stated objectives is precisely to maintain the employability of employees. The sociologist Reynaud (2001) analyzes the texts produced by the Medef
(Mouvement des entreprises de France) on the competence logic during the National Training Days in Deauville in 1998. He views this as an expression of a doctrine, a strategy of the employer to "offer employees and employee representatives common acceptable rules of life" (Reynaud, 2001, p. 8).

For the author, what is at stake is the employment relationship between the employer and the employee, as well as the challenges arising from the constant changes in the world of work. In other words, competency management seeks to establish a new "deal" between the employer and the employee.

The employee must strive for personal development while contributing to the organization's benefit. According to Reynaud (2001), the issue of employment is at the heart of the evolution of the wage exchange, as formulated by the Medef: it's not just a salary in exchange for employment, but rather performance in exchange for employability. This reflects a shift in the nature of the employment relationship, emphasizing the importance of performance and continuous self-improvement for both employees and employers.

Employability defines the company's commitment to the worker (conceptualized in the form of a psychological contract). In situations where the organization can no longer guarantee employment, it exchanges a promise of employability for a certain outcome. However, most of the research on competency management tends to overlook these questions. It is in studies of new career forms that this reconfiguration of the employment relationship is integrated and analyzed. These investigations delve into how employability becomes a crucial element of the modern employment landscape, especially in a rapidly changing work environment where job security is less assured.

In fact, in line with the idea of 'nomadic careers' (Cadin et al., 1997), transactional psychological contracts are slowly being replaced by relational psychological contracts. The former are rooted in a transactional model and represent a single exchange of services (Arthur et al., 1996). The latter are built around enduring employment relationships and emphasize trust and security. This transformation mirrors the evolving nature of employment relationships, where conventional job security and lifelong employment are being replaced by more adaptable and flexible arrangements.

Employability, in this context, is the commitment made by the employer and serves as a substitute for security in the psychological contract. Dany (2001) also specifies that the levels of commitment are relative to promises of employability. The nature of the new 'deal' between the employer and the employee is as follows: by contributing to the company's performance, the employee develops skills and, in turn, ensures their ability to remain employed. To ensure this employee 'performance,' the company commits to developing their skills and providing them with the means to do so (LOUFRANI-OIRY 2014)
For Reynaud (2001) and Dietrich et al. (2010), this exchange is highly unequal and initially unfavorable to the employee. Coutrot (1999) highlights in this regard the risks of "forced cooperation" of employees within the liberal social employment system: this could lead to workplace suffering or psychological harassment as potential consequences.

Employability is one of the dimensions that structure this emerging social employment model, in which the goal is to provide everyone with an opportunity to compete on equal footing in the pursuit of good jobs. This includes continuous professional training, lifelong learning, skill development, and adaptability (ibid., p. 92).

It is important to specify that the concept of sustainable development is more recent compared to that of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). However, thanks to the media and the global adoption of this approach, sustainable development has become well-known and significant.

Bowen emphasized in his definition of CSR in 1953 that it pertains to the expectations of businesspeople to be involved in politics, make decisions, or adhere to recommendations that serve the interests and principles of society. This also involves every position within the company, whose responsibility is to uphold the company's values and act for its benefit and growth.

From this, we can assume that employees do not have the right to prioritize their interests over those of the company or to reject its values. Among the synonyms for social responsibility is corporate ethics. However, due to its numerous benefits, we have noticed an international expansion since the late 1990s, thanks to the media. As a result, recent definitions from international organizations and researchers have emerged, of which we mention two:

- We can discuss corporate social responsibility through the relationship between three values: legitimacy, public responsibility, and managerial discretion. These are the outcomes of three levels of analysis, namely, institutional, organizational, and individual.

- Social responsibility is an implementation of sustainable development within companies. It is manifested through an agreement among entrepreneurs to take an interest in and align their activities with social and environmental concerns, while maintaining their motivation by avoiding negative impacts.

According to Carroll, CSR is symbolized by a pyramid consisting of economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. To move up to a higher level of responsibility, one must fully embrace the responsibilities of the previous level. (Delchêt, 2006) With the evolution of the concept of CSR, we are witnessing a new, more efficient management concept than CSR.
1.1 Social responsiveness

Social responsiveness, according to Carroll (1999), refers to an organization's ability to find solutions to social issues. On the other hand, Wood (1991) defines it as a management approach that connects the company with its stakeholders.

Social responsiveness represents the interest of decision-makers in meeting the goals of society, and it addresses the ambiguity of social responsibility (Pesqueux 2002). Many companies believe that environmental and social aspects are crucial and indispensable for their competitiveness and sustainability.

Given the global challenges and the growing insecurity that looms, especially in the economies of developing countries, focusing on the future of employees is more important than ever as a priority in any strategy aimed at sustainable development.

Thus, the development of sustainable employability for young people, which is almost non-existent in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives of Moroccan companies, is gradually becoming central to their management strategies.

The circular from the Moroccan Capital Market Authority, No. 03-2019 dated February 20, 2019, regarding financial operations and information for companies making public offerings, now makes it mandatory for all issuers making public offerings, except for small and medium-sized enterprises listed on the alternative market, to publish an Annual Financial Report that includes an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) or CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Report, starting from 2020.

It is, therefore, time to ponder the stakes of what could constitute "socially responsible employability" (SRE) (RICHER, 2018).

The pressing question is: Can we at least count on Moroccan SME management to become more involved in an CSR approach and effectively support the professional development of their employees? First, we will present the concepts of CSR and responsible leadership. Then, we will analyze the challenges of the CSR report, not only as a regulatory requirement but also as an opportunity to ensure the sustainability of the company.

Today, development carries a broad significance due to the influence exerted by international institutions, including both civil society and the media.

It's no longer just about economic development, but rather about long-term sustainable development that integrates ecology, social aspects, and the economy. Social equity ensures human rights and basic needs, eliminates discrimination and child exploitation, reduces injustice, and ensures citizen safety.
The environmental pillar protects natural resources and addresses issues like climate change and pollution.

Among the essential factors aimed at sustainable development, we find the role of the company. Through proper management methods, a society targets sustainable development on one side and moves towards the common good on the other.

1.1. The relationship between management and sustainable development.

Since the essence of sustainable development is to interconnect three essential pillars: the social pillar targeting justice and equality, the environmental pillar focusing on the protection of nature, and the economic pillar setting the pace for progress, what role does management play in sustainable development?

1.1. The role of organizations in sustainable development.

It's worth noting that the term "sustainable development" was coined in 1981 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and before that, discussions revolved around the "limits to growth" in 1971 and "ecological development" in 1972.

The concept came to prominence with the Brundtland Report in 1987, which emphasized that sustainable development is an economic evolution that aims to meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of future generations. It's important to note that two essential concepts are central to economic development: "need," particularly concerning people who lack resources, and "limitation," which relates to the capacity of the environment to satisfy the needs of both the current generation and future generations.

The three aspects of sustainable development - environmental, social, and economic - are typically represented as three intersecting circles.

L’entreprise joue un grand rôle dans la production de richesse, et puisqu’elle constitue une partie de la société et de l’environnement, elle devient responsable du développement durable.

The company plays a significant role in wealth production, and because it is a part of society and the environment, it bears responsibility for sustainable development.

It is imperative to take into account the benefits and needs of stakeholders so that sustainable development endures over time (Freeman, 1984). This approach focuses on addressing their constraints, allowing future generations to contribute to the creation of various resources. This perspective differs from the classical concept of the business, which was seen as a means to benefit shareholders (Friedman, 1970).
A classification of stakeholders is proposed by Bonnafous-Boucher and Pesqueux (2006) based on the criterion of their direct or indirect connections with the company. According to them:

- Contractual stakeholders: These are individuals or entities with direct contractual relationships with the company, including customers, shareholders, employees, and suppliers.
- Diffuse stakeholders are individuals or entities located around the company who can influence or be influenced by it, even without a direct, tangible relationship with the company. Examples include government authorities, associations, and NGOs.

Within the company, sustainable development is expressed through social responsibility or corporate social responsibility (CSR).

1. **Employability and flexibility of human resources.**

1.1 **Anticipatory management of jobs and skills.**

The term “forecasting management” refers to a "process that allows various stakeholders to anticipate events, set goals, and optimize the use of resources and necessary resources to achieve these goals."

"Anticipatory Skill Management" is defined as "the utilization of an organization's resources to achieve predetermined objectives within a previously established policy framework."

"Competency forecasting management allows for the transition from a collective quantitative phase to an individual qualitative phase, where companies place a greater emphasis on the content of jobs rather than their quantity, in order to adapt to a highly volatile environment and enhance the employability of employees."

1.2 **Definition of Employment and Competency Forecasting Management**

Employment and Competency Forecasting Management (ECFM), often referred to as Anticipatory Management of Jobs and Competencies (GPEC), is a human resources engineering practice that involves developing, implementing, and monitoring policies aimed at reducing disparities among employees in terms of both quality (under or over-staffing) and quantity (under or over-staffing).

The objective is to have resources aligned with the organization's strategic vision. Thierry and Sauret consider GPEC as a proactive, preventive, and ongoing management of human resources, with the aim of detecting and resolving issues related to the evolution of professions, jobs, and competencies.
According to Finot, "Developing employability means maintaining and enhancing the skills of employees, as well as the conditions for human resource management, by enabling them to access employment, either within or outside the company, under favorable conditions."

According to Christian Batal's definition, Employment and Competency Forecasting Management involves anticipating and projecting human resource needs in the medium and long term to analyze potential gaps and implement suitable measures to align resources with future needs.

In one word, Human Resource Forecasting is a process that enables the planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to anticipate and reduce gaps between current human resources and needs, both quantitatively (efficiency) and qualitatively (skills).

**Conclusion**

Faced with unforeseen events and shifts in employment, the skills demanded by the market have also changed (the crisis resulting from the coronavirus has highlighted the limitations of just-in-time management and the fragility of globalization).

Therefore, possessing both specific technical skills and continuously updating broader skills has become a crucial challenge for both individuals and companies. Companies must reconcile the flexibility of their human resources, aimed at ensuring their sustainability, with their commitment to strategic directions related to the prospects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the face of global challenges and change.

To what extent can the imperative of human resource flexibility be reconciled with socially responsible HR practices? What are the possibilities and limitations of integrating these two logics, which have symmetrical opposing foundations (Roulleau-Berger, 2012), into managerial practices? Does "sustainable" employability, through adapting the quality and flow of professional training to change, impact the reconciliation of these two notions in managerial practices? What is the role of organizations, and how should the state oversee them?
Bibliographical References


