

# The Divergence Between Education Outputs and the Labor Market Causes and Solutions (a Case Study Iraq)

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**Abstract:** The issue of the mismatch between educational outcomes and the labor market in most Arab economies, including the Iraqi economy, is considered a significant matter with social and economic implications for these countries. The primary reasons attributed to this issue include the decline in the quality efficiency of educational institutions, indicated by factors such as (low specialized qualifications, reduced innovation and knowledge acquisition, and weak analytical abilities). Additionally, there is a decline in quality accompanied by an increase in quantity, leading to a surge of graduates in fields that are not needed by the Iraqi labor market, while there is a shortage in other essential specialties. Therefore, this research draws its importance from the fact that graduate unemployment is one of the critical and dangerous factors affecting economic and social stability in Iraq, especially during the period in which this research was conducted. The study sample included (120) professionals in the field of employment from both the public and private sectors in Baghdad Governorate, comprising 58 human resources managers, 49 labor market analysts, and 13 employment experts. The study found that 72.8% of the sample believe that educational outcomes do not align with the labor market, and 72% agreed on the possible solutions proposed to address the mismatch between educational outcomes and the labor market.

**Keywords:** Education outputs, labor market, causes and solutions.

## INTRODUCTION

The divergence between the outputs of education and the labor market and its requirements is one of the things that increased after the year 2003, especially with the increase in the number of graduates, and the unorganized planning and the nature of the economic philosophy after the year 2003, which was not clear features, had a great impact on the exacerbation of the numbers of unemployment, and the abnormal conditions, whether internal or external in Iraq, contributed to the increase in economic problems, which made the workforce far and isolated from contributions to economic activity, Graduates from the higher education sector face the problem of unemployment that may face them in the future.

Of course, most graduates do not know their specialization because the graduate's only concern is to get a job opportunity and therefore he works within a scope that has nothing to do with his studies.

From this standpoint, the current conditions and changes require a radical and comprehensive review of the components of all economic sectors to develop performance and increase competitiveness, thus qualifying higher education outputs in line with the needs of the labor market and ensuring the graduate's ability to compete for a job opportunity.

**Research problem:**

The increase in the number of graduates without access to employment opportunities has led to an oversupply in the labor market. If economic activities cannot absorb this energy, the depth of the imbalance in the structure of economic output will continue to deepen.

**Objective of the study:**

This study aims to diagnose the relationship between the labor market and educational institutions and thus determine the nature of the problems and challenges facing the interaction between them and what are the possibilities that can achieve compatibility between the outputs of educational institutions and the needs of the labor market.

**Methodology:**

The population of study includes the private and government sector in Bagdad province (human resources management, recruitment consultant, labor market analyst), the sample study is selected randomly by simple sampling method, it consists 120 persons. The information was collected during May and June 2024. The informed consent for participation in the study the of Stakeholders involved in employment except in the government or private sector. The procedure of the collecting data may have certain limitations, taking into account that the questionnaires have been administered in type of Stakeholders of employment. The questionnaire distributed to members of sample study. The information was analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics 27 to perform the frequency and percent of demographic factors, descriptive data mining, based on mean and standard deviation, minimum and maximum value.

**The first topic:****The reality of the Iraqi labor market (demand and supply)**

The interaction between labor supply and demand determines the quantity of labor supply and demand, which provides employment opportunities for the labor force. However, the real job market is not perfect. Many graduates are looking for jobs, but there are few vacancies. This explains the imbalance between labor supply and labor demand.

**First: - Labor Market**

The labor market is different from the labor market. Although they are close in language and have the same meaning, they are different.

The labor market is considered a market like all markets because it provides all the social and economic components that the basic components of the market should provide.

**The labor market has two aspects.**

1- Market aspect of the labor market: We refer to the labor market, i.e., supply and demand, which is determined by prices, which in turn are determined by a series of factors, such as the size of the offer, the demand and the efficiency factors available to job seekers, and all this is achieved through intense competition, especially in cases of labor shortage, high ceilings of employment conditions in institutions, and a large number of job seekers due to increased unemployment. Market mechanisms and the size of the economy determine the labor market. (1 Saqr, 2004-295)

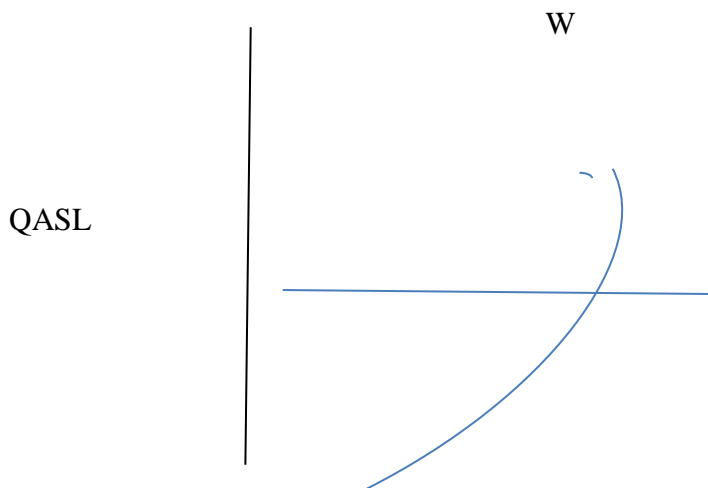
2- non-market aspect: It follows the market mechanism and represents labor legislation and social dialogue between social councils and production partners, and the public authorities play this role through coordination with social parties.

The labor market has many different characteristics. (Al-Osta 2009-24).

- A- The demand for labor is the result of the demand for various services and goods.
- B- The performance of the job is linked to the employee, which means that the employee cannot be fired, which means that the performance is not tracked and not hired.
- C- Unable to save this article.
- D- There are differences in the bargaining power between bidders and bidders.
- E- The results of labor market activities are determined by a variety of factors, namely (wages, unemployment, employment, and population growth).

**Second: Job offer:** This refers to the number of workers, i.e., paid labor ready to work at any period: it refers to the part of the total population between the ages of 15 and 65 years, excluding the labor force, which is called the labor force or effective population. The helpless among them are unable to perform the work entrusted to them due to injuries and disabilities. Finally, the most important factor affecting job opportunities must be mentioned. (Al-Quraishi 2007-32)

- A. Demographic factors are reflected in the population growth rate, population size, and population pyramid type.
- B. Economic factors: Economic theory believes that under normal circumstances, there is a positive correlation between the supply of a certain service or commodity and its price, and the stability of the remaining influencing factors is shown in the following figure:



(As can be seen from the above figure, the two wage levels are directly related to the number of employees)

- **The state of the economic cycle:** This is the state of the economy. If it is in the recovery phase, it means that wages are rising, leading to an increase in labor supply, and vice versa.
- **The general level of prices:** Because it affects the supply of labor and the overall price level, while also causing a decline in living standards due to a reduction in real income, workers try to increase their working hours or bring some family members into the family. This will lead to an increase in the labor supply.
- **Other variables:** For example, overall investment rates, levels of consumer agreement, and levels of direct or indirect government spending or taxation.

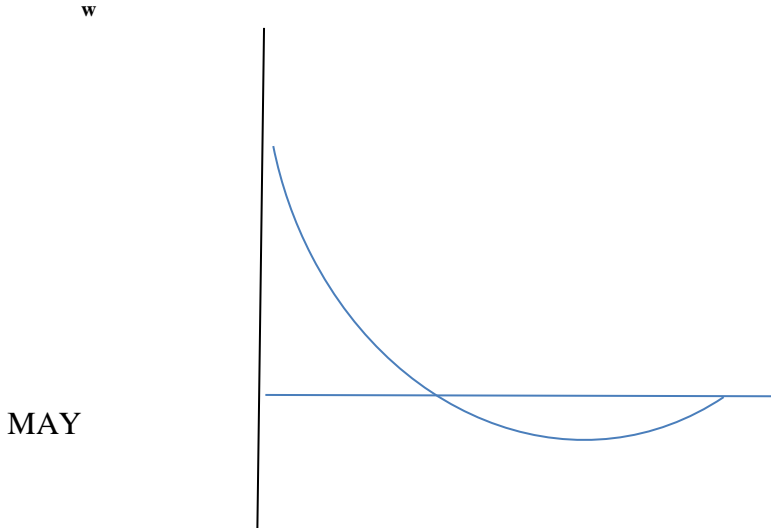
**D- Social factors:** Literacy and effectiveness of social security, the status of social work and its views on women's work and religious beliefs.

- A. **Political factors:** It is limited to internal political factors, such as the control that unions exert on the government to increase wages and reduce the labor supply.
- B. **Legal factors:** It is legislation that regulates the working of the labor market in terms of setting working hours, setting wages, and allowing immigration in and out of cities.

**Third: Demand for work:** In economic theory, labor is called "derived demand," which means that the demand for such a service or commodity has nothing to do with the service or commodity itself but arises from the demand for the production of the commodity or commodity. The production of these commodities is called "labor".

The demand for labor is affected by many factors, the most important of which are: (Salman 200-35)

**A- Wage level:** The inverse relationship between these two variables (wage level and labor demand) can be illustrated by the following figure:



(We find an inverse relationship between wage levels and the number of workers required).

**B- Population size:** It affects the job offer in two respects:

**First**, an increase in population leads to an increase in the supply of services and goods.

**Second**, an increase in population means an increase in effective demand, which in turn means an increase in the demand for labor to increase production to meet the growing demand.

**C- Marginal product of labor:** The demand for labor increases as marginal output increases.

**D- Total or individual income level:** Increased demand for jobs due to higher overall demand (investment, consumption).

**The second topic:**

**The relationship between educational outcomes and the Iraqi labor market**

**First: The reality of the Iraqi graduate job market after 2003**

After 2003, the Iraqi market experienced unusual events in economic and political terms, in which all economic, cultural, and social institutions and key infrastructure of the Iraqi economy were destroyed, and the overall production of goods, social, educational, and health sectors, and services was disrupted. This led to the closure of industrial enterprises and the decline of their contribution to GDP. "Investment transactions were weak", and the ability to create jobs and absorb new immigrants into the labor market was also weak (Jabr 2018-74). As a result, the imbalance of the Iraqi market led to a clear and significant emergence of unemployment among educated youth and university graduates, as well as an increase in the employment of uneducated youth, which led to an increase in the proportion of unskilled workers. Due to the accelerated rate of migration of the rural population to the cities, the proportion of unemployed people in the towns increased. The new situation in Iraq caused all these events, as we will see from the unemployment of Iraqi graduates.

**A- Indicator of the size of the working graduates:** Economists (Schultz) confirm that the level of education leads to better access to jobs, and indeed, this statement does not hold in Iraq, so Iraqi graduates face employment problems when they complete general or private education, which leads to high unemployment rates due to the mismatch between educational results and the needs of the labor market. In addition, the education system is unable to manage the needs of the labor market, and the

changing processes caused by these demands are managed in the context of increasing educational needs and inflated educational results. (Mohamed 2018-235)

Through the data in the table below, we illustrate this:

**Table 1. Total Of Employees and Total Employees with University Degrees**

Years	Total Number of Employees	Number of employees with university degrees	Percentage of university degree holders to total employees %
2003/2004	1241897	408801	32.9
2004/2005	1220798	439631	36.0
2005/2006	1222831	603421	49.3
2006/2007	1201035	641046	53.3
2007/2008	1181273	726975	61.5
2008/2009	1017920	778485	76.4
2009/2010	1344627	752119	42.5
2010/2011	1469044	816420	55.5
2011/2012	1512231	825696	56.1
2012/2013	1512231	865264	57.2
2013/2014	1566070	904149	57.7
2014/2015	1670512	982689	58.8
2015/2016	1688014	990994	58.7
2016/2017	1661094	989267	59.5
2017/2018	1534100	733099	47.7

Source: Republic of Iraq: Ministry of Planning: Ministry of Human Development: Multi-year Employment and Energy Policy.

From the data in Table (1), it can be seen that the proportion of employees with higher education qualifications to the total employees has increased since 2003-2004, reaching (32.9) %. It peaked in 2008-2009, reaching (76.4), when the number of employees increased significantly and significantly. In 2018, due to the ISIS incident and the unstable economic and political situation in Iraq, as well as the unstable global economic situation, the indicator fluctuated again. It fell to (56) % in 2018-2019 due to the decline in oil prices and budget deficits. However, despite the increase in the labor force after 2003, this proportion is still small relative to the distribution of the labor force by "education level," increasing the number of unemployed people holding advanced degrees.

### B- Unemployment level indicator for university graduates:

At the university, graduates receive training in many different disciplines. On this basis, their energy is transformed into energy, and they deploy their human capital since their experience qualifies them to work in the right place. Since the employment structure includes many categories of institute and university graduates, who represent a stock of human capital, it is necessary to provide them with suitable jobs so that they have the opportunity to use this stock of capital (Fleh Farouk, 2003).

Graduate unemployment has negative effects at the beginning of their lives, including a sense of failure, the inability to obtain job opportunities that provide a livelihood and a source of income, and thus, the inability to accumulate material for the realization of investment projects. This feeling of graduates makes them think of an invalid factor in society (work social participation) through which they can prove their identity and distinguish themselves from others (Al-Dabbagh, 2013-137).

The increase in the level of education has led to the rise of graduates' aspirations to a level that is difficult to achieve, so this level of aspirations has led to many jobs that do not match their aspirations from the perspective of graduates (Naja 2018-183). The situation after 2003 was different from that before. It worsened, turning the unemployment problem into one that threatens most classes and age groups of Iraqi society due to the paralysis of the national economic movement. Activities. Narration 2009-2018.

**Table 2. Percent of Graduation of Universities in Iraq for Period from 2003-2018.**

Years/Scientific Status	diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	Doctor
2003	9.6	12.4	0.47	....	....
2004	10.6	11.5	0.12	0.29	0.
2005	11.9	12.4	0.08	0.28	0.01
2006	15.4	19.7	6.6	4.8	0.3
2007	9.8	13.8	6.5	3.9	0.1
2008	14.6	16.1	5.3	8.4	2.7
2012	13.0	14.8	7.8	16.2	11.9
2014	10.1	15.9	9.8	15.2	10.6
2016	10.7	16.6	8.4	14.3	10.8
2017	10.9	16.9	8.6	14.5	11.3
2018	12.2	17.1	9.4	15.1	10.9

The uniqueness of graduate unemployment is that it represents a large part of the population. A social group that qualifies them to participate in leading the development transformation process.

Using the data in Table (2), it can be seen that the unemployment rate of university graduates (preparatory and postgraduate) in different years.

Table (2)

Republic of Iraq: Ministry of Planning: Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology: Directorate of Social and Educational Statistics: multiple years.

From the data in the above table, we can see that the unemployment rate of those with a bachelor's degree was the highest in 2006 (19.7%), while the unemployment rate of those with a doctorate degree was lower in 2005. In 2016, the unemployment rate of doctoral degree holders rose to (10.8%), which is considered a high unemployment rate, and the same is true for scientific degree holders.

The reality of the Iraqi labor market is that unemployment is rising, so one of the solutions lies in general education, especially university education. Here, we refer to quantity rather than quality, focusing on developed countries. It is recognized that the use of technology is a double-edged sword because, on the one hand, it is seen as an effective solution to reduce unemployment and increase employment rates, to become a modern building and teacher's curriculum application. On the other hand, the excessive growth of technology leads to layoffs of workers, which in turn leads to rising unemployment rates.

### Third: The possibility of aligning training outputs with labor market inputs:

Iraq, like other countries, faces the problem of discrepancies between educational outcomes and labor market inputs. This is due to a weak match between outputs and market inputs caused by poor curriculum, declining skill levels, and inflexibility. In addition to this, an unstable economic situation and war have ravaged the country and produced many graduates who are not needed by the job market. In this section, we will propose a series of solutions to help educational outcomes get closer to market inputs.

**First: Improving education outcomes:** The education system must achieve a high degree of coordination between learners and the interdependence of results, considering them as inputs based on their acquisition of skills and knowledge to operate in the labor market. However, in reality, the Iraqi education system lacks an integrated infrastructure of communication and information systems, which determines the ability of universities and schools to integrate knowledge elements into the curriculum and system. The development of the knowledge structure of graduates depends not only on the provision of equipment. The development of the skills of young people requires keeping pace with cognitive and academic development, as university students compete to obtain certain standards and norms through international tests (Knowledge Report 2009-25). The efforts that have been and are being made to raise awareness of education are moving forward in a huge and increasingly sophisticated way to improve and move towards a knowledge economy and develop its tools and mechanisms through the education and training system so that they can strengthen their role in its construction. The Iraqi education system tried to improve the quality of education through the 2009 Education Initiative. However, the results of this effort did not reach the level required by the form designed by experts and our plan to solve this problem. Problems can be overcome.



Chart created by researcher Bayda Razzaq Ahmed: Differences between education and labor market outcomes in the Iraqi economy, 2003-2015: Journal of Administration and Economics: Volume 7, Issue 28: 2018. With some modifications by the researcher.

From the figure, we can see that the root cause of the unemployment problem of college graduates lies in the fact that various types of education have not produced qualitative effects in the development of human resources and the improvement of productivity; that is, we have a quantity. There is no type, and there is a gap between the results of education, vocational training, and technical rehabilitation and the requirements of the labor market.

The experience of Germany and Japan is one of the successful experiences in bringing educational results closer to market inputs.

In Germany, students decide to enter vocational secondary schools at an early stage. They are recommended to potential employers by the Federal Employment Office on this basis for training outside working hours.

In Japan, the responsibility for finding employment opportunities for students lies with the school. Unlike the German training program, Japanese students do not have enough academic experience, so schools try to provide job placement services for students. This is due to the close relationship between schools and the work community. The common point of the two experiences is that schools try to provide students with employment opportunities. The reason why these two systems can improve students' employability and reduce the duration and time of graduates' job hunting is that they try to provide students with employment opportunities. (Fateh and Taher 2011- 4-6).

### **Second: Private Sector Development**

Most countries in the world promote the private sector through small businesses to create jobs, increase income, and eliminate poverty. Of course, this problem does not exist in Iraq. The success of this experience in some South Asian countries relies on the connection between small individual companies and large public or private companies. This is achieved through complementary relationships based on forward and backward linkages within the framework of an integrated and local economy: Iraqi graduates often do not have access to these production opportunities, which is an inevitable result of the dominance of small businesses or individual activities over non-economic activities. On the one hand, there is the economic activity of the state, and on the other hand, the ownership and management of large companies in the industrial, oil, and economic sectors by the public sector.

Most graduates face many obstacles when seeking to enter the private sector, including:

- 1- Fear of entering the market due to fear of breakdown between capital and labor and marketing problems associated with competition from large manufacturers.
- 2- There is no government banking service, and even if there is one, the interest rates are high and difficult for young people to pay.
- 3- The market operates erratically, and there are no regulatory measures to regulate its operation.

These obstacles and some other problems prevent most young people from entering the labor market. To promote the reality of the private sector and activate its role in the employment of workers, we have developed a series of proposals:

- 1- Increase the share of bank loans and increase financing for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- 2- Participate in the creation of private companies (bank holding companies) that, on the one hand, diversify banking activities and, on the other hand, obtain direct returns for the state by creating jobs with educational qualifications and qualifications. The investment field can be opened in the "service and productivity" sector through private projects we finance.
- 3- Open the door to partnerships between the private and public sectors to create new jobs for graduates and reduce the pressure on the state budget.



**Third: Economic Sector**

The private sector is the material basis for achieving the results of training in "industrial and engineering professions". Some industries attract such graduates, such as mining and quarrying, which are heavily dependent on the extraction of sulfur, oil, and phosphate. Many industries are considered a paradise for graduates, such as the textile industry, petrochemical industry, and food industry. Most of these factories and plants are currently out of operation, and if they are restarted, they will be absorbed. A large number of graduates in various disciplines contribute to the supply of industrial products and reduce imports from abroad. If we apply the general principles followed when estimating the needs of industrial projects based on educational results, for example, we have in each director and the experts who will work with him (3) technicians, whether graduates from universities or institutes, (5) Administrators (8) skilled workers, graduates of vocational schools, (15) medium-skilled workers, graduates of vocational training centers and (20) unskilled workers (Bayda Razzaq 2018-247).

It can be seen that educational results are important in supporting any industrial development project.

**Fourthly: Agricultural sector:** It is very important to integrate educational qualifications into the labor market, especially agricultural colleges, technical colleges, and veterinary colleges, depending on agricultural sectors such as pesticides, fertilizer production, mechanization, and irrigation systems, as well as various agricultural industries such as milk, mining, agribusiness, tomato paste, etc. In addition to building agricultural facilities for livestock such as cattle, goats, sheep, and chickens, it is also possible to build large agricultural complexes and develop the marshes in southern Iraq to utilize reeds, papyrus, and other natural resources such as fish and crops. Various handicrafts can also benefit from the participation of researchers from the Ministry of Agriculture in the research programs of the Agricultural Research Center and strengthen cooperation between Iraqi universities and the Agricultural Research Center to discuss agricultural projects and research and find solutions. Reflection on the actual problems and obstacles facing the agricultural sector (Ghilan 2007-36).

**Fifth: Tourism sector:** Tourism is one of the most important sectors, an industry that must dominate, namely H. qualified hotel or tourism staff who know how to deal with tourists and provide them with tourist consulting services and other services, all of which can be obtained through graduates of educational institutions and tourism colleges who are employed to work in tourist agencies and hotel agencies can, here we have to distinguish between two categories of occupations and tourist names (Mohamed, 2008, p. 250).

A- **Tourism professions:** Travel planners, tour guides, travel agencies, tourism marketing.

B- **Hotel professions:** Hotel management, accommodation processes and front office, reception and beverages, catering services, food production. The benefits of professional skills and cadres in tourism in Iraq require all hotels, whether they belong to the private, public, or mixed sectors, to cooperate to adapt the results of tourism training (institutions and colleges) to apply and train and provide them with employment opportunities. The labor market increases consultation, interaction, and research on the reasons that reflect its impact on the country's economic activities and scientific aspects, thus identifying the steps that should be taken to improve the multiple relations between the two parties (results training and labor market).

Finally, I would like to mention the National Development Plan of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for 2019-2020, which, if used properly, is considered one of the most effective ways to solve the problem of disconnection between training results. and the labor market.

Since the Ministry of Education relies on future planning, which stems from strategic planning in the service of future generations, contributes to a qualitative leap in the quality of education in terms of the quality and growth of knowledge through the development of learners' self-capacity, and the Ministry's vision is based on meeting the needs of the labor market and achieving excellence in various scientific and educational activities (learning, education, community service, scientific research), we mention here the most important of these steps taken by the Ministry of Higher Education, whose educational and scientific research strategy has been implemented.

- 1- Quality education: based on the realization of scientific intellectual creativity using international advanced practices, the society actively contributes to the production and dissemination of knowledge.
- 2- Access to educational opportunities that are compatible with the civilized labor market.
- 3- Further implementation of electronic management between the Ministry and its agencies and institutions to facilitate administrative and scientific procedures.
- 4- Strengthen the importance of basic knowledge in the use of modern technologies and keep up with the development of science and technology to train graduates who can keep up with the pace of the labor market.
- 5- Restore the requirements for targeted applied scientific research to serve the market and society.
- 6- Build an electronic library to support the trend of providing a modern socio-psychological academic environment and refining talents.
- 7- Pay attention to the partnership of Iraqi universities with international universities and sober research centers.
- 8- Strengthen the role of the public and private sectors in participating in future higher education through participation in the Council of Ministers or representation in the Council of Ministers, motivate them to provide more opportunities for student training, and increase financial support.

### Results

#### Descriptive Statistics

The four demographic factor of sample study shown in Table (3), where the 54.2% of sample is female, 45.8% is male. The level of age factor distributed as less than 30 years, from 30 to 39 are equal 21.7% of respondents, from 40 to 49 year 35.8%, lastly from 50 year and above 20.8%. In the type of sector work, the respondents in government sector 66.7% while in private sector 33.3%. The human resources management 48.3% of sample respondents, labor market analyst 40.8%, finally, recruitment consultant 10.8%.

**Table 3: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Survey Respondents.**

Attribute	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	55	45.8
	Female	65	54.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age in Year</b>	Less than 30	26	21.7
	From 30-39	26	21.7
	From 40-49	43	35.8
	From 50 year and above	25	20.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of Sector Work</b>	Private Sector	40	33.3
	Government Sector	80	66.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Job Name</b>	Human Resources Management	58	48.3
	Recruitment Consultant	13	10.8
	Labor Market Analyst	49	40.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

In Table 4, the descriptive statistic results concerning educational attainment and its compatibility with the labour market in Iraq. In the same way, the data shows that respondents concur with the notion that education system is incapable of catering for the current labor market demands, which has earned a mean

of 3.75 for this statement. Another issue that is also important and raises a concern is whether education outcomes lack skills (mean = 3.61) and trainings (mean = 3.52) that are applied during the study period and thus lacks the implementation of theories. Furthermore, the curricula and the content of the courses offer do not meet the market needs in the way it should (mean = 3.33) and there is area of constraint in the educational environment such as inadequate state of the art laboratory (mean = 3.46). It is also remarkable that institutions have various shortcomings in terms of educational technology (mean = 3.46) and they might hamper students' acquisition of modern skills. In addition, there is a high consensus that there is a lack of integration between public and private universities and employers (mean = 3.68) as a way of organizing the university output in relation to the market needs. All in all, the total mean score was 3.54, and hence a low standard deviation of 0.34, that is 70.8% of respondents see the educational attainment don't compatibility with the labour market.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Educational Outcomes and Labor Market**

Item statement	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Education in Iraq does not meet the current needs of the labor market.	3.75	0.88	1	5
Educational outcomes lack practical skills.	3.61	0.88	1	5
Educational outcomes lack hands-on training during the study period.	3.52	0.92	1	5
Curricula and course content do not align with market requirements.	3.33	0.99	1	5
There is a weakness in the educational environment, including modern laboratories.	3.41	0.9	1	5
Educational technology is outdated in educational institutions.	3.46	0.92	1	5
There is no coordination between public and private universities and employers.	3.68	0.92	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 5 shows the results of descriptive statistics of the different proposed solutions that will help to match the educational outcomes with the labor market. From the result, it is shown that the mean score of the variable has the highest score of 3.95 is linked to the statement of the need for curriculum change in an effort to align with the existing labour market demands. The two following, albeit a little lower, mean scores for the constructs are "Design programs and plans that consider the specialties required by the employment sector" (mean = 3.74) and "Develop linkages between university and private sector" (mean = 3.71) show that program and plan development that responds to the present needs of the employment sector and the collaboration between university and private companies is also important. The respondents also rated "Increase practical training and hands-on applications" with a relatively high mean of 3.63, showing that there is a demand for more practice-oriented education. The mean scores for the items: 'activation of job fairs in universities' and 'identification of the department's capacity based on the needs of the market' were 3.58 and 3.5, respectively, which, although not very high, suggest that there is rather significant agreement on these actions as being effective solutions. At the lower end, we have "Establish career guidance centres" (mean = 3.38) and "Set up mechanisms for monitoring the careers of graduates" (mean = 3.48), which imply that these solutions are relatively less influential but crucial. Both increasing the image of vocational education and stimulating research in applied problems were valued by subjects with a mean of 3.5, reflecting moderate support. In general, the total mean score was 3.6 and Standard Deviation 0.32, 72% of respondents agree about possible solutions to align educational outcomes with the labour market.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Possible Solutions**

Item statement	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Curricula need to be updated to meet labor market requirements.	3.95	0.77	1	5
Increase practical training and hands-on applications.	3.63	0.88	1	5
Enhance partnerships between universities and private companies.	3.71	0.88	1	5
Design programs and plans that consider the specialties needed by the labor market.	3.74	0.82	1	5
Activate job fairs in all public and private universities.	3.58	1	1	5
Determine the capacity of all departments in educational institutions based on labor market needs in both the public and private sectors.	3.5	1.01	1	5
Establish career guidance centers for students to provide professional advice to help them choose specializations that match labor market needs.	3.38	1.03		
Create a system to track graduates' career paths and measure their success in the labor market.	3.48	0.99		
Enhance the image of vocational education as valuable specializations.	3.49	1		
Encourage research focused on solving practical problems faced by the labor market.	3.51	0.94	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### Conclusions:

- 1- The private sector is weak and cannot absorb the increasing number of graduates in different disciplines and at different levels. Therefore, most graduates turn to the public sector to find job opportunities.
- 2- There is an imbalance between educational results and labor market needs in Iraq, which leads to rising unemployment.
- 3- The number of educational institutions that are considered labor exporters is increasing in terms of quantity rather than quality.
- 4- Weak educational results, weak school disciplines, and training limited to theoretical aspects have led to many graduates graduating with low levels and not adapting to the needs of the market.
- 5- Although there are strategic plans that include the number of students to be admitted to each university, the Ministry of Education does not respect these plans, which leads to an increase in the absorptive capacity of universities.
- 6- The implementation of the strategic plan has been delayed, which has led to an increase in the unemployment problem and high unemployment rates among graduates and in most disciplines.
- 7- The high of respondents (70.8) see the educational attainment don't compatibility with the labour market.
- 8- The necessity of updating curricula to meet current labor market demands is highest possible solution to educational output to align the labour market.

### Recommendations:

- 1- Work to link educational outcomes with labor market policies by developing curricula and controlling the quality of disciplines by the labor market to provide the market with qualified workers.

- 2- Work to align the outcomes of the education sector with the labor market to ensure that graduates receive appropriate employment opportunities that qualify them to enter the labor market.
- 3- Work to provide low-interest loans to graduates of private and public universities and open small projects, both in the service industry and in the manufacturing industry, which will help reduce unemployment.
- 4- Work to establish the National Employment and Human Resources Allocation Administration, whose mission is to carry out a thorough and comprehensive reform of the employment sector, aimed at establishing a fair approach in this area and achieving dynamic changes in the labor market based on.
- 5- Develop a comprehensive plan to solve the problem of providing employment opportunities for the outcomes of the education sector in various disciplines, both in the private and public sectors.
- 6- Expel foreign workers and stop the restoration and operation of factories and plants.
- 7- Students in the preparatory stage should focus on the majors the labor market requires and make the right choice, avoiding unnecessary majors.
- 8- Supply the wariness about the important of vocational education as valuable specializations.

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