

Labor Market Insertion Strategies in the Public Sector: A Study of Untrm Accounting Graduates (2021-2023)

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Abstract

This study analyzes the strategies that favor the labor market insertion of Accounting graduates of the Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza (UNTRM) in public entities during the period 2021-2023. A quantitative methodology was used, with a descriptive and correlational design, applying surveys to 81 graduates. The data were processed using SPSS and inferential statistical techniques such as Pearson's correlation coefficient were used. The results revealed that the main obstacles are lack of work experience and insufficient dissemination of opportunities. The most effective strategies were agreements between the university and public entities, although the need to implement internship and mentoring programs is highlighted. The conclusion is that it is essential to strengthen the preparation of graduates in soft and technological skills to improve their insertion in the public sector.

Keywords: *Labor Market Insertion, Accounting Graduates, Employability, Public Sector, Professional Competencies.*

Introduction

The employability of university graduates is a key indicator of the success of higher education institutions in preparing professionals capable of effectively integrating into the labor market. In this context, the Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas (UNTRM) plays a crucial role in training highly qualified graduates in accounting and finance. However, the transition between completion of studies and integration into the labor market can present significant challenges, especially for young people seeking access to jobs in the public sector.

The period 2021-2023 has witnessed major changes in the labor market, with the environment experiencing significant alterations due to factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, public entities have adjusted their selection processes, generating new opportunities, but also imposing additional barriers for young professionals. In this scenario, it is essential to analyze the strategies that facilitate the labor market insertion of UNTRM Accounting graduates, as well as the obstacles they face in their search for employment in public entities.

Previous research has highlighted the relevance of professional competencies and academic training in the employability of young people. According to Crisóstomo Lapa & Chávez Díaz (2022), professional skills are closely related to employability in accounting and auditing, while Malpica Céceres (2022) points out the importance of generic competencies for accessing positions in the public and private sector. Likewise,

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Yanza et al. (2020) identify that, in Ecuador, a significant percentage of accounting graduates are inserted mainly in private companies, which reflects a similar challenge in Peru with respect to public entities.

The problem that motivates this research is posed in the following question: What are the most effective strategies to facilitate the labor market insertion of graduates of the UNTRM Accounting program in public entities during the period 2021-2023? This study focuses on evaluating the academic preparation of graduates, the barriers they face and the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the university to improve their employability. The general objective is to identify the strategies that favor the employability of UNTRM Accounting graduates in the public sector during the aforementioned period. The specific objectives include: to evaluate the level of preparation and professional competencies of graduates to access jobs in public entities; to identify the main obstacles they face when trying to enter the labor market; to analyze the strategies implemented by the university to improve their employability; and to determine the perception of obstacles and graduates on the effectiveness of these strategies. The hypotheses proposed are: H1, the orientation and support strategies implemented by the UNTRM significantly improve the employability of graduates in public entities; and H2, the lack of previous work experience is one of the main obstacles for the labor insertion of graduates.

International studies, such as that of Mufidah (2021), reveal that there is a positive and significant ranking between the professional skills of graduates and their employability in the global labor market. This is particularly evident in the field of accounting, where technical skills and specialized knowledge are valued. However, as pointed out by Yanza et al. (2020), in Ecuador, most accounting graduates enter the private sector, suggesting that this phenomenon is not exclusive to one region, but reflects a common trend in Latin America. In these economies, the private sector tends to be more flexible and receptive to the incorporation of new talent, while the public sector imposes more complex bureaucratic barriers, limiting opportunities for recent graduates. This is in line with the results obtained in the present research, where UNTRM graduates identify the lack of previous work experience as one of the main obstacles to access the public sector, as also highlighted by Pérez et al. (2009) in studies on youth employability in similar contexts.

At the national level, research by Malpica Cécere (2022) points out that generic competencies, such as interpersonal skills, leadership and adaptability, are crucial for labor market insertion in Peru, both in the public and private sectors. These soft skills, often overlooked in traditional academic training, are in high demand in a labor market facing continuous change, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Peruvian public sector, these competencies are critical for navigating bureaucratic environments and collaborating in multidisciplinary teams. However, the results of this study suggest that UNTRM graduates lack comprehensive training in these areas, which diminishes their competitiveness vis-à-vis other applicants. This reinforces the need for universities, including the UNTRM, to adapt their curricula to include training in soft skills, as proposed in studies by Rodríguez (2004) on the modernization of academic training in public environments.

In the regional context of Chachapoyas, UNTRM accounting graduates face similar challenges to those identified at the national level, but with some additional particularities. Lack of work experience and intense competition with other applicants are recurrent barriers that hinder their access to jobs in public entities, where selection processes tend to be more demanding in terms of previous experience and specific skills. This is reflected in the results of the research, where 100% of the respondents mentioned lack of experience as the main obstacle. This situation is particularly worrisome in regions farther away from economic centers such as Chachapoyas, where job opportunities in the private sector are limited and access to the public sector becomes one of the few viable alternatives for graduates.

At the local level, the UNTRM plays a key role in the preparation of its graduates, but the results suggest that current strategies are not sufficient to overcome the barriers faced by young professionals. Contributing from my professional experience, I believe it is imperative that the university not only strengthen its partnerships with public entities, but also implement pre-professional internship and internship programs that allow students to acquire the necessary work experience before graduating. In addition, the creation of soft skills workshops would be a critical component to improve the employability of graduates, helping them adapt to the requirements of the public labor market, which demands increasingly complex

interpersonal and leadership competencies, as highlighted by authors such as Martínez. (2018) and Mora Ramírez (2022)

In conclusion, the trends observed at the international, national and local levels reflect that the employability of accounting graduates in the public sector is closely linked to their ability to acquire both technical competencies and soft skills. However, the results of this study indicate that the current academic preparation is not sufficient to face the barriers imposed by the lack of work experience and the demands of the public sector. Therefore, the UNTRM must take proactive measures to adapt its programs and improve the employability of its graduates, taking advantage of successful strategies that have been implemented in other countries and regions.

The approach used in this research was quantitative, with a descriptive and correlational design. Surveys were applied to a representative sample of accounting graduates from the periods 2021-2023, using descriptive and inferential statistics techniques for data analysis. SPSS software was used to process the information, which made it possible to identify the main trends and barriers in the labor market insertion of the graduates.

Material and Methods

Type and Design of Research

This is a basic research with a quantitative approach, since it seeks to broaden scientific knowledge about labor market insertion strategies without pretending an immediate direct application in the context of accounting graduates of the Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas (UNTRM). The research design is descriptive-correlational, since it seeks to describe the phenomenon of labor market insertion in a natural context, as well as to establish correlations between the variables studied (professional competencies and orientation strategies) and the level of employability.

The quantitative approach makes it possible to analyze the relationship between the strategies implemented by the university and the capacity of graduates to enter the labor market in public entities. According to Creswell (2014), this type of research is characterized by the use of numerical data to establish patterns and correlations between variables, providing a solid empirical basis for decision-making and practical recommendations.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of the graduates of the professional career of accounting at UNTRM during the periods 2021-2023. The sample was selected in a stratified manner and consisted of 81 graduates who completed their studies during these periods. The sample selection process was carried out randomly within the final academic cycles, ensuring an equitable representation of the graduates of each year.

Period	Cycle	Number of graduates
2021-I	X	25
	Cycle	
2022-I	X	28
	Cycle	
2023-I	X	28
	Cycle	
Total		81

The sample was sufficient to guarantee the statistical representativeness of the results obtained, allowing inferences to be made about the general population of UNTRM accounting graduates.

Study Variables

Independent variable: Job placement strategies, which refers to the policies and programs implemented by the university to improve the employability of its graduates in public entities (Rodríguez, 2004).

Dependent variable: Labor market insertion, understood as the process by which graduates gain access to jobs in public entities. According to Pérez et al. (2009), this concept may also include complementary education and training measures that increase employability.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The survey technique was used for data collection, applied by means of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure variables related to the graduates' perception of their academic preparation, the obstacles faced in the job search and the effectiveness of the job orientation strategies implemented by the university.

The questionnaire was validated through an internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, obtaining a value of 0.85, indicating a high reliability of the instrument (Casas Anguita et al., 2003). The questions of the questionnaire were based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", allowing to capture the variability in the perceptions of the respondents.

Research Methods

Inductive-Deductive Method: it was used to interpret the data, starting from the observation of particular cases (job placement strategies implemented at UNTRM) to then deduce general principles about the effectiveness of these strategies in improving employability (Martínez, 2018).

Synthetic-Analytical Method: This method made it possible to analyze the individual parts of the labor market insertion process (obstacles, competencies, opportunities) and then

synthesize the findings to offer a comprehensive view of the phenomenon (Mora Ramírez, 2022).

Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were processed and analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel statistical software. Descriptive statistical techniques were used to generate frequencies, averages and percentages that allowed a first approach to the analysis of the results. Subsequently, inferential statistical techniques, such as Pearson's correlation coefficient, were used to determine the relationship between the variables studied and to test the hypotheses proposed.

The Chi-Square test was used to verify the significant associations between the variables (Crisóstomo Lapa & Chávez Díaz, 2022). The analysis made it possible to identify the most effective strategies to improve labor market insertion and the most common barriers faced by graduates in their job search.

Ethical Considerations

The research complied with the fundamental ethical principles for data collection, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Informed consent was requested from all the graduates who participated in the survey, guaranteeing that their participation was voluntary and that the data collected would be used only for research purposes.

Results

Perception of Academic Preparation and Professional Competencies

One of the most relevant aspects of this research was the evaluation of the level of preparation and professional competencies of UNTRM accounting graduates for insertion in public entities. The results show a predominantly neutral perception, with 84% of respondents indicating that their academic training adequately prepared them for the labor market, while 16% agreed that their training was sufficient. These results are consistent with the findings of Malpica Cécere (2022), who argues that technical preparation is a relevant factor, but often insufficient without the development of soft and specific competencies for the public sector.

Level of academic preparation	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	68	84.0%
Agreed	13	16.0%

Regarding the additional training offered by the university, 43.2% of the graduates stated that not enough training was offered to prepare them for their job placement in public entities, which reinforces the need for programs more focused on specific professional preparation for the public sector.

Obstacles to Labor Market Insertion

The research identified the main obstacles faced by graduates when trying to find employment in public entities. 100% of the respondents mentioned lack of previous work experience as the biggest obstacle, suggesting a significant barrier for young people seeking their first job. This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as Vilela Sanchez and Chau (2021), which report similar problems in the transition of graduates to the labor market in Peru.

In addition, 56.8% of those surveyed stated that they received information on job opportunities in public entities, but considered it to be insufficient or of low quality. Some 43.2% of the graduates indicated that the information provided was limited or unclear.

Identified obstacles	Frequency	Percentage
Previous work experience requirements	81	100%
Limited information on opportunities	35	43.2%
Adequate but insufficient information	46	56.8%

Labor Market Insertion Strategies Implemented

Guidance and support strategies to improve the labor market insertion of graduates in public entities have had mixed results. A total of 86.4% of the respondents considered that the establishment of agreements between the university and public entities is the most effective strategy to facilitate job placement. However, a smaller percentage (13.6%) suggested that specific training and job orientation programs should be implemented for graduates.

Job placement strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Agreements between universities and public entities	70	86.4%
Specific training programs for graduates	11	13.6%

In addition, 55.6% of respondents recommended that calls for applications and selection processes be adapted to facilitate access by young graduates to jobs in public entities. This highlights the need to adjust selection procedures to make them more accessible to professionals without previous experience.

The analysis of the graduates' perception of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented shows that 56.8% rated their overall job placement experience as neutral, while 43.2% rated it as positive. Although the results are mostly favorable, an important group of graduates (43.2%) have not obtained employment in public entities related to their degree, which suggests that the job placement strategies, although useful, require improvement to be more effective.

Perception of labor market insertion	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral experience	46	56.8%
Positive experience	35	43.2%

In addition, the results reveal that 42% of the graduates consider that the strategies implemented have had a moderate impact on their adaptation and performance in the work environment of public entities, while 28.4% reported that these strategies greatly facilitated their adaptation and performance.

Discussion of Results

The results obtained in this study reflect the difficulties inherent in the transition between academia and the workplace, particularly in the public sector. Although the strategies implemented by the university have proven to be useful, it is evident that there is significant room for improvement, especially in the provision of training and the adaptation of selection processes.

The findings also corroborate the conclusions of Yanza et al. (2020), who suggest that, in many cases, accounting graduates tend to enter the private sector, where work experience requirements are not as stringent as in the public sector. These results offer a valuable perspective for future interventions, both by the university and public entities, in the promotion of youth employability.

Discussion

The results of this research provide a comprehensive view of the labor market insertion of UNTRM accounting graduates in public entities during the period 2021-2023. A series of strategies, obstacles and perceptions have been identified that allow a better understanding of the challenges faced by young professionals and the opportunities for improvement that educational institutions have to optimize the employability of their graduates.

Academic Preparation and Professional Competencies

The results show that most graduates feel neutral about the academic preparation received, with 84% of respondents not expressing a clear conviction as to whether their training was adequate to enter the public sector. This finding is consistent with Malpica Céceres (2022), who argues that, although universities adequately prepare their students in the competencies of the public sector, they do not have a clear conviction as to whether their training was adequate to enter the public sector.

There are significant gaps in the development of soft skills and other key skills demanded by the public sector, such as leadership, teamwork and adaptability.

Furthermore, the fact that only 16% of graduates consider that their training was adequate highlights the urgent need to reformulate curricular programs to better align them with the demands of the public labor market. Professional competencies are essential, but the lack of integration of specific skills for the public sector hinders the transition of graduates to the labor market, as was also observed in international research (Mufidah, 2021; Yanza et al., 2020).

Obstacles to Labor Market Insertion

The main obstacle identified in this research was the lack of previous work experience, mentioned by 100% of respondents. This result is consistent with previous studies, such as that of Vilela Sánchez and Chau (2021), which identified lack of experience as a determining factor in young people's difficulty in accessing positions in the public sector. This problem is particularly acute in the context of public entities, where hiring procedures tend to be more rigorous and require previous experience as a fundamental selection criterion (Rodríguez, 2004).

Additionally, the perception that information on job opportunities is insufficient or of low quality (43.2%) also stands out as a relevant problem. This finding reinforces the need for both universities and public entities to improve the communication of employment opportunities and to establish more effective information channels so that graduates can access these opportunities in a more equitable manner (Casas Anguita et al., 2003).

Job Placement Strategies

The study reveals that agreements between the university and public entities are seen as the most effective strategy to improve labor market insertion, with 86.4% of respondents supporting this measure. This finding is consistent with research such as that of Yanza et al. (2020), which also identified collaboration between universities and public entities as a key factor in increasing the employability of graduates in Ecuador.

However, the research also shows that other strategies, such as the implementation of specific training and orientation programs for graduates, have not yet been sufficiently explored. A total of 13.6% of the respondents suggested that this type of program would be useful to facilitate labor market insertion, which indicates that the university should consider strengthening these programs to cover the training needs not satisfied during the academic period (Rodríguez, 2004).

In addition, the suggestion to adapt calls for applications and selection processes to make them more accessible to young people with no previous experience, supported by 55.6% of respondents, is a key recommendation for public entities. This aligns with the need to establish job placement programs that not only focus on training, but also facilitate access to first jobs through inclusive selection processes.

Perception of the Effectiveness of Strategies

The overall perception of the graduates on the effectiveness of the labor market insertion strategies is mostly neutral (56.8%), although a significant percentage (43.2%) rated their experience positively. These results, while showing that the current strategies have had some success, also suggest that there is ample room for improving their effectiveness.

The fact that a significant minority of graduates have not been able to obtain employment in the public sector related to their degree underscores the need for adjustments to existing strategies. Lack of work experience continues to be a barrier that current strategies fail to overcome completely, implying that universities and public entities must work more closely together to design internship and pre-professional internship programs that allow students to acquire the necessary experience during their training (Pérez et al., 2009).

Comparison with Other International Contexts

Comparing the results obtained with studies carried out in other Latin American countries, a common trend is observed: accounting graduates tend to find greater employment in the private sector than in the public sector, as shown by the studies of Yanza et al. (2020) in Ecuador. However, in the case of Peru, the challenges seem to be even more pronounced, due to the lack of integration between the educational system

and the needs of the public sector, as well as the bureaucratic barriers that limit the access of young professionals to jobs in the public sector.

Implications for the University and Public Entities

The findings of this research offer several implications for the labor market insertion policies of the university and public entities. First, it is crucial that the Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas strengthen its job orientation programs, focusing not only on technical competencies, but also on the development of soft skills and the promotion of pre-professional internships that allow students to acquire work experience before graduation.

Second, public entities should reevaluate their selection processes, adapting them to make them accessible to young people without previous experience, and promoting mentoring and accompaniment programs during the first years of work. This will not only help to improve job placement, but also to train professionals with a comprehensive vision of public management, aligned with the demands of today's labor market.

Conclusions

This research has made it possible to identify and analyze the factors that influence the labor market insertion of Accounting graduates from the Universidad Nacional Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza de Amazonas (UNTRM) during the period 2021-2023, with a particular focus on the strategies implemented to improve their employability in public entities.

Job Placement Strategies

It is concluded that orientation and support strategies, such as agreements between the university and public entities, have been identified as the most effective in improving the employability of graduates. However, the study also shows that these strategies, although useful, are still not sufficient to overcome all obstacles, particularly those related to the lack of previous work experience. To address this limitation, it is essential to implement internship and pre-professional internship programs that allow students to acquire the necessary experience before graduating.

Academic Preparation

The academic preparation of the graduates, according to the results, has been perceived as neutral by most of the respondents, which suggests that, although the technical training is adequate, there are gaps in the development of transversal competencies necessary for the public sector. It is necessary for the university to consider a curricular revision that includes the strengthening of soft skills, such as teamwork, leadership and decision making, which are increasingly in demand in the workplace.

Obstacles to Labor Market Insertion

The main obstacle to the labor market insertion of graduates in public entities continues to be the lack of previous work experience, a challenge reported by 100% of the respondents. This finding reinforces the need to adjust public sector hiring policies to allow recent graduates to access job opportunities without making work experience an insurmountable barrier. In addition, it is imperative that communication about available job opportunities be improved, as insufficient and unclear information was another of the problems identified.

Effectiveness of Strategies

Although a significant portion of the graduates rated positively the strategies implemented to improve their labor market insertion, 56.8% of the respondents reported a neutral experience, suggesting that there is still

room for improvement and adaptation of the strategies implemented to improve their labor market insertion.

existing initiatives. More effort is needed on the part of the university and public entities to ensure that strategies respond effectively to the needs and challenges faced by graduates as they enter the labor market.

Recommendations

For the University: It is recommended to strengthen job orientation strategies, not only through agreements with public entities, but also by implementing pre-professional internship programs and updating the curriculum, focusing on soft and technological competencies.

For Public Entities: Entities should review their selection processes to make them more accessible to young graduates without previous work experience. It is also suggested to establish mentoring and coaching programs to facilitate the transition of new professionals to the labor market.

Future Implications

This study provides a solid basis for future research on the labor market insertion of graduates in other areas of training and in different contexts. The results can also be used by universities and public entities to develop more inclusive and effective policies to promote the employability of young professionals.

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