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Research paper

Entrepreneurship and Higher Education: An Analysis in Moroccan Universities

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Abstract

Although the Moroccan university has become aware of the importance of teaching entrepreneurship and has integrated it in the different university pedagogical curricula, it has, on the other hand, marginalized the support, supervision and accompaniment of students interested in an entrepreneurial career. The teaching of entrepreneurship at the university is certainly a pedagogical instrument, but it should also be a tool for promoting the principles of developing entrepreneurship in students, particularly creativity, innovation, risk taking, self-confidence, autonomy and seizing the opportunity. This article proposes to examine the scope of university entrepreneurship in the Moroccan context through an evaluation of the reality and the status of the diffusion of entrepreneurial culture in students.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial career; entrepreneurial culture; higher education; Morocco.*

1. Introduction

In the last few years, the role of entrepreneurship has been recognized as a crucial element in innovation, the stimulation of economic growth, the employability of graduates and their professional integration, as well as in the fight against unemployment. Thus, a company that wants to ensure its long-term survival and growth must first develop an entrepreneurial culture that brings together all the shared principles, values and beliefs that appear to be favorable factors for business start-ups.
In this sense, the role of the university is essential for the development of a national strategy for the diffusion of the entrepreneurial culture. University curricula would benefit from being informed not only by business management techniques, but also by entrepreneurial values and practices for the development of a true entrepreneurial university, dynamic and innovative, which experiments with new ideas and processes.
The present study aims to present an inventory and to measure the scope of university entrepreneurship in a Moroccan context, particularly within the framework of the public university and engineering schools.
At the heart of the reflection proposed in this article, the questions are: to what extent could Moroccan higher education promote entrepreneurship among students? What are the realities and the exact overview of the situation of the diffusion of a true entrepreneurial culture in universities?

This article is structured according to a two-part plan: first, a terminology essay is presented on the concept of entrepreneurship and education, then, an analysis of their report, and their possible contribution to the development of entrepreneurship, is presented. Secondly, our analysis will focus on an important aspect which relates to the reality the field and the exact overview of the situation concerning entrepreneurship in Moroccan universities and the diffusion of true entrepreneurial values.

2. Conceptual insights into research and approaches to entrepreneurial careers

Entrepreneurship is now seen as one of the main driving forces behind innovation, competitiveness and growth. The stakes are tremendous for the university and engineering schools. The study of these issues naturally implies firstly clarifying what is meant by the notion of "entrepreneurship", before determining the relationship between the university and this concept of entrepreneurship and its contribution to the development of entrepreneurial culture.

2.1. The concept of entrepreneurship

The field of entrepreneurship is fragmented and its multiple components are observed and analyzed by economists, sociologists, historians, psychologists, behavioural and management scientists [1]. That's why the debate on entrepreneurship is seen as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. This area of research in entrepreneurship has developed dramatically over the last two decades. Reference [2] describes this growth as "the world's most important economic force in recent years".

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Although entrepreneurship has existed since the 16th century, which was the time of the dominance of mercantilism, it was only at the beginning of the 18th century that the notions of entrepreneur and corporate became theoretical concepts. We owe the first theory of the entrepreneur to Contillon (1755 in [3], p7) for whom the term entrepreneur refers to any person who takes the risk of conducting a commercial business where the exchanges are for profit.
Reference ([1], p. 156) defines entrepreneurship as "the field that studies the practice of entrepreneurs: their activities, their characteristics, the economic and social effects of their behaviour, and the ways in which they are supported to facilitate the expression of entrepreneurial activities". According to [4],"Entrepreneurship is firstly a creation of collective values, recognized by the various actors who share the challenges and risks of innovation accepted by the nearby market, by the community and finally by the outside world. Entrepreneurship being the process of emergence of new opportunities for the creation or development of a creative activity of economic or social value but Entrepreneurship is not limited to individual action. It can be part of a team project by pooling transversal competences." ([5], p.58).
Reference [6] points out in his selective review of the entrepreneurship literature that "entrepreneurship necessarily involves individuals with unique personal characteristics and abilities, particularly with respect to risk-taking, internal personal control, the need for autonomy, perseverance, commitment, vision and creativity". This entrepreneurial culture is therefore linked to certain characteristics such as creativity, ambition, risk-taking, innovation, autonomy, self-confidence, etc.
In the final analysis, the economic literature, as a whole, reflects the value of entrepreneurship in economic development by attributing to it the characteristics of uncertainty and risk, while at the same time, emphasizing innovation and proactivity.
Risk taking is considered as a determining element of entrepreneurial behaviour. References [7] and [8] defined risk in a context of uncertainty. This notion of uncertainty refers to a will to venture into the unknown without full knowledge of probable results.
As for innovation, it is presented in the literature as a fundamental element of entrepreneurship. Indeed, innovation is considered as essential to maintaining a company's viability because it is a source of new ideas that lead to product introductions and/or improvements, services and management practices that promote and support a thriving company [9].
Finally, regarding proactivity, reference [10] defines proactivity as companies' overall efforts to seize new opportunities, anticipate future market demands and actively shape the external environment. Reference [9] believes that the proactive attitude of firms requires long-term orientation to be efficient. And so, it suggests that firms with a stronger long-term orientation are susceptible to be more proactive.
In addition to theoretical approaches, several researchers are interested in the contribution of entrepreneurship and its added value in the economic and social fabric. Entrepreneurship means creating jobs and in order to be sustainable, it must focus on innovation and accompanying structural change [11]. Therefore, to be able to innovate and to accompany structural changes, it requires recourse to scientific research, to formation and to the development of knowledge and know-how.

2.2. University - Entrepreneurship relationship: report on, and input to entrepreneurship development

In qualitative terms, higher education in Morocco is organized around diversity. Thus, public higher education is insured both by universities open to all and by higher education institutions that select the best students and combine quality and free education (ENCG, ISCAE, ENSAM, EMI, HASSANIA Schools, etc.) which, since the academic year 2003-2004, are part of a pedagogical architecture based on the LMD system (Licence-Master-Doctorate) and organized in cycles, courses and modules. These institutions are mainly concerned with the development and dissemination of knowledge, culture and preparation of young people for integration into active life.
Similarly, the Moroccan university has been changing since the approval of Law 01/00 of May 2000 on the reform of higher education and scientific research in Morocco [12]. Article 7 of this law, which came into effect in September 2003, stipulates that "within the scope of the missions assigned to them by this law, universities can provide by convention, by agreement, supply of services for valuable consideration, create incubators for innovative companies, exploit patents and licenses and commercialize the products of their activities". At the same time, universities can take participation in public and private companies, create subsidiary companies and constitute public interest groups.
More concretely, the establishment of incubation structures is "a practice whereby a university encourages and helps its employees and students to set up their own businesses, through any form of support and accompaniment for the commercial exploitation of a university idea or invention" ([13], 191). This will reinforce, on the one hand, their entrepreneurial activities, particularly the teaching of entrepreneurship in universities and, on the other hand, the development of innovation and knowledge.
The aim of entrepreneurship education is to educate young people about entrepreneurship and encourage them to act independently and actively, through innovative initiatives, in the organizations in which they intend to become involved [14]. As a result, the role of the university by broadening its missions will make it possible to disseminate an entrepreneurial culture through awareness-raising, training, research and accompaniment.
The aim of awareness-raising is to stimulate, encourage and awaken entrepreneurial attitudes among students, in particular through the organization of events by the university. It focuses in particular on aspects relating to the organization of work, decision making, risk taking, the spirit of commitment and autonomy. According to reference ([15], p. 30), awareness-raising aims to present entrepreneurship as a broadening of choices and as a career option beyond the binary system official/employee. Awareness-raising is not only about creating entrepreneurial "vocations", but the "sensitized" may be tempted to reach another level, for example, training ([16], p. 4).
Entrepreneurship training consists of equipping students with the knowledge necessary for the development of entrepreneurial spirit, know-how and skills necessary to train entrepreneurs' applicants and holders a creative project. The objective is to promote innovation, creativity, originality, initiative, self-confidence, autonomy and leadership. Indeed, an entrepreneur who lacks training will find it difficult to succeed in this act of creation and, consequently, to put his company on solid pillars, particularly in terms of strategies necessary to develop his business. Admittedly, he will have many opportunities to develop his abilities over time, but a minimum of these must be acquired a priori according to the Schumpeterian spirit [17].
The dissemination of entrepreneurial culture through research is manifested in particular by exploiting new opportunities, value creation and the transfer of research results to the market and industry. The purpose of the entrepreneurial university "is not to push the commercialization of the university's services for profit only; but to offer researchers the opportunity to gain recognition and influence of their work through practical social, economic and industrial applications" [18].
Valuing research is becoming a major issue for the university in terms of employment, innovation and business creation ([19], p. 135). The renewed interest in entrepreneurship in Moroccan universities has also manifested itself in the setting up of continuing education courses and masters in entrepreneurship, in partnership with foreign universities. Obviously, generalizing the teaching of these modules

on entrepreneurship to all students and researchers from all disciplines could indeed develop active pedagogies promoting entrepreneurial behaviors and achieve the objectives of an entrepreneurial university.
Finally, as for the coaching process, it is defined as a practice of assistance in setting up a business. It is a process of accompaniment from idea to project and from project to company. It is through a structure of valorization, incubation and evaluation mechanisms that students who have projects (whether or not they have created their own companies) will be able to develop the skills necessary for the realization of their projects and the efficient development of their business plans. According to reference [20], the accompanying person's mission must allow the development of sufficient skills to reveal the creator's talent. Accompaniment therefore refers to all the services offered to a project leader by an accompaniment structure, whether it's an incubator, a nursery, etc.
Today, numerous cooperation with national and international institutions has been developed with our Moroccan universities to encourage the exchange of experiences and the sharing of good practices. As an example, the university's partnership with the National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC: created in 1999). This agency has launched several programs IDMAJ, TAEHIL and MOUKAWALATI. The aim is to support young graduates either to fill a decent job or to develop an entrepreneurial activity. It's an example of the university's openness to its socio-economic environment.

3. Entrepreneurial Career and University: Realities and Inventories

The exploited literature review on entrepreneurship and the university has provided us with enough information to identify the determinants of the development of a true entrepreneurial university. In this second part, the above idea will be clarified, by first presenting our methodological approach, which we have carried out through a field survey of a sample of students, students holders projects and teacher-researchers. In a second step, the analysis of the collected data allowed us to draw up results that we will then interpret.

3.1. Methodological aspects

About our methodological approach, a field survey has been conducted. The empirical work developed is thus largely the result of a survey conducted by means of an electronically administered questionnaire among a target sample of university researchers in entrepreneurship, students from different disciplines and students projects holders. We chose the simple random method to define our sample. Our field was restricted to Mohamed-V University of Rabat and Hassan II University of Casablanca.
This research is part of an exploratory, explanatory and inductive logic. It's exploratory, because it describes and provides a rich and solidly based explanation of the services offered to students with regard to training, awareness and promotion of entrepreneurship in a university context, the perception of entrepreneurship by respondents, and the general and specific aspects of their intention to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. It is explanatory, since it consists in describing and characterizing these different aspects, based on interviews and questionnaires. Finally, this research is inductive, because the nature of the desired work necessarily pushes us towards induction because we don't start from any work hypotheses that have already been developed.
After development of the questionnaire, the most important phase is to test its validity. As a result, a pre-test has been conducted in the field with 10 sampled students. This test was essential before starting the survey to complete and formulate well the survey questionnaire, correct any imperfections and better adjust it. At the end of the data collection phase, which lasted in May 2017, 62 questionnaires have been selected among the 80 treated, thus an approximate response rate of 80%. The questionnaire included open and closed questions. Open questions to allow free expression of the respondent and closed questions to facilitate counting and statistical analysis.
When the collection of data by questionnaire was completed, the essential of our following work was essentially summarized in the codification of closed and open questions. The aim is to arrive at numerical data that are as homogeneous as possible and which can facilitate their analytical manipulation. We have processed our database with the SPSS software as computer support.
Closed questions are the most suitable for statistical analysis and evaluation because they require two or more "dichotomous questions" or "multiple-choice questions", so the answer is one of the possible choices, which facilitates coding. We used two types of semantic scales (perfect, perfect fit, weakly perfect, imperfect) and binary (yes, no, partially). While the analysis of open questions proves to be cumbersome despite the existence of software. In our case, the grouping and coding was done on the basis of converging views and ideas among the different responses to facilitate data capture and analysis. During the data entry, an inventory of the answers given was compiled, giving each mobilized response a code, provided that each mobilized response was clearly different from the others. If not, when there are answers that convey the same meaning or idea, they were considered identical and given the same code.
It should be mentioned that 60% of the respondents are students from all disciplines, the rest are holders project and university researchers. It should also be noted that the majority of the interviewees had a very positive attitude and adopted very cooperative behaviour with great interest in our survey.

3.2. Analysis and discussion of research results

After counting the questionnaires, the data analysis consists of three components: 1) descriptions and explanations of the services offered to students with respect to training, awareness and coaching in university entrepreneurship; 2) respondents' perception of entrepreneurship; and 3) the general and specific aspects of their intentions to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.
The first component, which is based on the description and precision of the services offered to students in terms of training, awareness raising and support for entrepreneurship in the university environment, 94% of those surveyed called for a lack of university training in generalized entrepreneurship for all students. Certainly, from the years 2000-2002, we assist a growing awareness for the teaching of the entrepreneurship module in the various engineering schools and universities. However, the reality is that the few modules offered concern only economics and management courses and some engineering students. It should also be noted that all the students questioned, either in economics and management or in other fields of study, express their real need in this discipline, not only in helping them to create their own businesses, but also in developing a skill of creativity at home and self-confidence.
Another important point to note is that 85% of the modules taught in entrepreneurship are taught by permanent professors and not by experts and professionals responsible for animating this type of training in conjunction with the business environment. This situation could have a negative impact on students, particularly on the incubation of entrepreneurial reflexes and the supply of concrete cases. To this end, 92% of respondents say that the entrepreneurship training offered wouldn't be effective in developing entrepreneurial culture among students and their practical and exploitable knowledge, compared to only 8% who are in favour.

Moreover, 78% of respondents report a lack of support from university incubators, particularly in terms of guiding their projects and the effective development of their business plans. The chances of success for entrepreneurial projects are therefore rather low due to the lack of this support. At the same time, are these incubations reserved only for innovative projects and scientific research (87% of responses), to the detriment of law or literary students, for example, who feel aggrieved because they don't benefit from this accompanying device. Admittedly, the university incubator is an entity that exists and to which all students with projects submit the file of their entrepreneurial projects. However, it must be recognized that all these students claim that these incubators lack efficiency and effectiveness. This inefficiency is due to the lack of human and financial resources, a futuristic strategic vision, and synergistic collaboration with other actors in university entrepreneurship, which complicates the implementation of structuring actions in this context.

The second part examines respondents' perception of entrepreneurship, i. e. the respondent's assessment of this university entrepreneurship and their perception of this entrepreneurial career as an alternative of the binary system official/employee. 67% of respondents don't believe in the existence of university entrepreneurship. According to them, the term university entrepreneurship exists in all engineering schools and public universities, but unfortunately it remains confined to a "fashion effect". The various interviews with professors-researchers show that university entrepreneurship today is known as a concept, and that it has not yet reached the mature stage of becoming a fully-fledged mechanism for combating unemployment among university graduates and contributing to the development of the national and local economy. This is in line with the response of 78% of respondents who believe that universities, through the university entrepreneurship device, are unable to meet the needs of the labour market.

Finally, the third component is based on the global and specific aspects of students' perception of entrepreneurship as a career project. Evidently, the answer to this last point remains hypothetical because there is a big difference between intention and effective realization.

The results obtained show that less than half of the respondents (32%) intend to start their own business in the future. The most commonly cited reason for this intention is that they believe they can do better by choosing entrepreneurial careers. The analysis of the results also shows that students and students with projects consider that they can be more independent, that they can concentrate on the activities they enjoy, and that entrepreneurship will enable them to realize their new and innovative ideas.

Moreover, despite this clear intention among those interested in the entrepreneurial career, more than 70% don't count on the assistance, support and supervision of the entrepreneurship department of their university institution. Similarly, they don't rely on the assistance of professional centers in orientation and support for students carrying out projects, notably the "Moroccan incubation and testing network" and the association "Morocco- genius". Respondents expressed some reservations about concrete cooperation with these centers. Some have even argued that they don't know of the real operationality of these centers lack of absence of popularization of this device.

4. Conclusion

The objective of this research was to evaluate the scope of university entrepreneurship in a Moroccan context through an exploration of the role performed by the Moroccan university in dissemination a true entrepreneurial culture. At the end of this work, several observations are to be noted and lessons proposed.

We believe that the various people surveyed, including professors-researchers, agree on the importance of promoting the principles of entrepreneurship among students, enabling them to develop creativity, innovation and a risk-taking spirit favoring value creation. However, this awareness doesn't manifest itself in the same way practically in all faculties, schools, streams or options. Such expectations remain as "part of the ideal world". The generalization of teaching entrepreneurship to all licenses could be efficient within the framework of "cross-cutting" modules. It will increase the capacity of students in all branches to take initiative and their ability to seize self-employment opportunities. Such an approach would help revitalize the economy.

Moreover, the analysis of our research shows the inadequacy and inefficiency of the training courses offered to students in order to make it emerge the entrepreneurial spirit and provide the student carrying his project of tools, knowledge, skills and know-how to implement his idea. This leads to a situation of "lack of entrepreneurial culture", since the central and exclusive concern of decision-makers and managers is the teaching of this module in universities and engineering schools, to the detriment of the effective accompaniment of students in their entrepreneurial careers, through a real structure of valorization, incubation and evaluation.

It should also be noted that the teaching of this entrepreneurship module by permanent professors, who are not very well trained in the business world, is proving to be detrimental to the appropriation of the necessary principles for setting up projects such as creativity, independence, self-confidence and especially knowledge of the real business environment and the study of concrete cases. Universities should invest increasingly in favour in instilling the fundamentals of entrepreneurship among students in a way that is more suited to their real needs, raising awareness of the career prospects that self-employment can offer them and, finally, providing support during the start-up and gestation period of their projects. In this context, the major role of the active participation of companies and professionals in entrepreneurial training is highlighted by the results of this research. This could significantly stimulate a real interest in entrepreneurship and self-employment among students and thus help to reduce the unemployment rate among young graduates.

Some limitations related to the risks of bias inherent in any exploratory and explanatory research, as well as to the limited number of subjects surveyed, should be noted. A methodological triangulation bringing the depth of qualitative research and the rigour of quantitative research could be considered as a future research track on the theme of Moroccan university entrepreneurship. Another interesting way would be, for example, to look more closely at the role of civil society in promoting entrepreneurial culture. This new perspective would make it possible to test the effects of the different actors and assess the contribution of each of them.

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