

Abstract 40

TO WHAT EXTENT DO MOROCCAN UNIVERSITIES CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Academic paper

Hamdani K.*, Outamha R., Koubaa S.

University Hassan II of Casablanca ~ Casablanca ~ Morocco

Abstract text:

Purpose

The contribution of the university in the social and economic development has made of academia a central subject for studies in several research fields such as entrepreneurship studies. Besides research and education as the main activities, the third mission is what made the university an entrepreneurial entity which has practical implications, a commitment toward social and economic development, and alignment to regional needs and policies (Clark, 1998; Guerrero, Urbano and Kirby, 2006; Etzkowitz, 2008; Kalar and Antoncic, 2015; Rubens et al., 2017).

In developed countries, this phenomenon is a reality where theory meets practice. However, this might not be the case for developing countries where the third mission could not be a priority for the university for many reasons even if the will is there. In Morocco, as well as many developing countries, the role of universities in economic and social development could be heavily showcased and stated in official documents, but the question is; to what extent the universities really contribute? The aim of this paper is to answer this question.

Originality and value

The paper contributes to understand the bridge between theory and practices in entrepreneurial universities and help asking new questions and research tracks.

Design and methodology

We target the case of Moroccan public universities based on available secondary data, mainly previous empirical studies, institutional reports, and legislative texts regarding the Moroccan higher education system, as well as our own observation. The collected data cover the following themes: entrepreneurship education, support and encouragement of new ventures creation, and scientific research.

Results and findings

The higher education sector in Morocco has an institutional background of government policies, strategies, and legislative texts that appeal institutions to contribute to economic development and to which they refer to make decisions, define strategy, vision, and the scope of their initiatives.

Moroccan universities have established several activities to respond to society needs and social and economic issues. As regards, entrepreneurship has been considered by Moroccan universities as a vector for restructuring and developing the productive fabric, innovation, and modernization of structures but also to decrease university graduates unemployment (Charaf-Eddine and Nait Haddou, 2016). Entrepreneurship education ensures the social insertion of the cornerstone of society, young people, promote and encourage self-employment, develops entrepreneurial culture, spirit and skills, and entrepreneurship intention (Zammar and Abdelbaki, 2013; El Ouazzani, Koubaa and Yassine, 2014; ElKharraz, Nassimi and ElKharraz, 2016). But its impact on behavioral skills is low, pedagogy is ineffective and the course has become as one of the basic modules since it follows a training logic and entrepreneurship courses continue to be taught only by university professors, the majority of whom have had no experience in business or business creation (Zammar and Abdelbaki, 2013; Bachiri, 2016; Radi and Alaoui, 2017). Moreover, many universities have established incubators to provide support and encouragement of new ventures creation, entrepreneurship centers, or innovation cities to incubate new businesses and link up with industry;

however, no visibility on their real-time activities, results, and achievement is provided (ESCWA, 2017).

Despite the strengths of Moroccan scientific research, related activities remain weak, i.e. the absence of structures for the promotion of research, very modest research contributions, insufficient valorization of research results, absence of university-business partnerships and interface structures (Zammar and Abdelbaki, 2013; Fakhri, Bahoussa and Ettahir, 2015). Additionally, universities contribution in terms of patent applications remains low (Zammar and Abdelbaki, 2013; Fakhri, Bahoussa and Ettahir, 2015), just three public universities have submitted (29) patent applications in 2017 (OMPIC, 2017).

Hence, the Moroccan higher education sector is characterized by high dependence on public resources, low external efficiency and weak university-business linkages (Zammar and Abdelbaki, 2013; Fakhri, Bahoussa and Ettahir, 2015). The implication and scope of university activities remain low and insufficient so does their contribution to social and economic development. There is a need to develop practical teaching methodologies, institutionalize scientific research contributions, and establish close links with the external environment to achieve better results.

Limitations and implications

Findings have shown how universities contribute to social and economic development, the activities and services established to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, and the constraints and challenges of higher education institutions and sectors. The limitation of this work was mainly the availability of updated data. Therefore, to provide solid interpretation it would be relevant to complete the analysis with an empirical study, with, for example, a focus on one of the mentioned conclusions.

Geographical origin:

Casablanca

References (Harvard style):

Bachiri, M. (2016) 'Les déterminants de l'intention entrepreneuriale des étudiants, quels enseignements pour l'université marocaine?', *Management & Avenir*, 89(7), p. 109. doi: 10.3917/mav.089.0109.

Charaf-Eddine, R. and Nait Haddou, L. (2016) 'L'impact de la formation universitaire en entrepreneuriat sur l'auto-efficacité et les intentions entrepreneuriales des étudiants', *Revue de l'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Innovation (REINNOVA)*, 1(2), p. 12.

Clark, B. R. (1998) *Creating entrepreneurial universities: organizational pathways of transformation*. 1st ed. Oxford; New York: Published for the IAU Press by Pergamon Press (Issues in Higher Education).

El Ouazzani, E. C. K., Koubaa, S. and Yassine, S. (2014) 'L'enseignement de l'entrepreneuriat dans l'université', in: *12ème Congrès International Francophone en Entrepreneuriat et PME*, Agadir, Maroc: Association Internationale de Recherche en Entrepreneuriat et PME, p. 24.

ElKharraz, O., Nassimi, A. and ElKharraz, A. (2016) 'Les intentions entrepreneuriales chez les étudiants : cas de l'université Abdelmalek Essaadi', *Revue Marocaine de Gestion et d'Economie (RMGE)*, 3(7), p. 20.

ESCWA (2017) *National Technology Development and Transfer System in Morocco*. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, p. 168.

Etzkowitz, H. (2008) *The Triple Helix: University-Industry-Government Innovation in Action*. New York: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780203929605.

Fakhri, S., Bahoussa, A. and Ettahir, A. (2015) 'Vers une université entrepreneuriale pour le développement de la recherche Scientifique : Réflexions sur le rôle des incubateurs universitaires en faveur de la recherche Scientifique au Maroc', in: *28ème Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Pédagogie Universitaire AIPU (Pédagogie universitaire : entre recherche et enseignement)*.

Guerrero, M., Urbano, D. and Kirby, D. (2006) 'A literature review on entrepreneurial universities: an institutional approach', *Business Economics Department*, (06/8), p. 37.

Kalar, B. and Antoncic, B. (2015) 'The entrepreneurial university, academic activities and technology and knowledge transfer in four European countries', *Technovation*, 36–37, pp. 1–11. doi: 10.1016/j.technovation.2014.11.002.

OMPIC (2017) *Rapport d'activité*. Maroc: OFFICE MAROCAIN DE LA PROPRIETE INDUSTRIELLE ET COMMERCIALE. Available at: <http://www.ompic.ma/sites/default/files/RapportOMPIC2017FR.pdf>.

Radi, S. and Alaoui, L. L. (2017) 'Le rôle de l'Université dans la promotion de l'esprit d'entreprendre et le développement des compétences entrepreneuriales', in *Éducation entrepreneuriale et incubation. 8th Africa Business and Entrepreneurship & 14th Makerere Leadership and Entrepreneurship Conference*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA, p. 19.

Rubens, A. et al. (2017) 'Universities' third mission and the entrepreneurial university and the challenges they bring to higher education institutions', *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 11(3), pp. 354–372. doi: 10.1108/JEC-01-2017-0006.

Zammar, R. and Abdelbaki, N. (2013) 'L'université marocaine et la problématique de l'entrepreneuriat innovant', in *International Conferences on Economics and Management of Networks - EMNet*, Vienna.