

Conclusions of a research work dedicated to the "Entrepreneurial University in Morocco"

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Summary : *This article deals with the conclusions of a research work dedicated to the "Entrepreneurial University in Morocco". This is a proposal for a Moroccan concept inspired by a model that has imposed itself in international literature since the publication by the American sociologist Burton R. Clark of a series of works related to introduction of the spirit of enterprise in the university (Creating Entrepreneurial Universities, 1998; Sustaining Changes in Universities, 2004). This article is an exploratory synthesis of Moroccan public higher education. Presented in the form of a diagnostic, it explains the GAP and the obstacles that exist between the concept and the reality of Moroccan public universities. To assess and quantify the degree of entrepreneurial connection between the concept and the reality of the Moroccan field, an exploratory empirical study in the form of a series of interviews was made with managers and professors in several universities. It allows us to formulate recommendations relating to a transformation process that is in relation with the internal university organization, but also with an ecosystemic relationships that the university must develop with its environment stakeholders. The "governance" and "change management" components would be keys to the massification of the UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISE in Morocco.*

Key Words : *Entrepreneurship, University, Entrepreneurial University, Diagnosis, Développement*

I. INTRODUCTION

Entitled: Entrepreneurial University: Diagnosis, Barriers and Development perspectives in Morocco, the objective of this research project was to understand how the deployment of a concept of "Entrepreneurial University" can influence the university in a way to become more closer to the Moroccan socio-economic environment needs, and to respond more

effectively to the 3rd mission of universities which consist on contributing more effectively to the socioeconomic development.

Around the theoretical approaches explored during the literature review, we retained the concept of the "Entrepreneurial University" proposed by Clark (1998-2001), the triple helix model presented by Etzkowitz (2003), and the fields of the entrepreneurial ecosystem studied by Isenberg (2012) for the proposal of the first outlines of our conceptual model. Starting from a diagnosis of the sector that we established from a documentary study, we were interested in the possible obstacles / reasons that could explain why the public university establishments organization would not be in phase with the concept as presented in the literature, and as included in the conceptual model proposed.

For our present research, we were inspired by the main characteristics of the entrepreneurial university identified in the literature review, to propose the following definition of the Moroccan Entrepreneurial University:
"In addition to its traditional teaching, research and development missions, the entrepreneurial university is involved in the socio-economic development of its environment, region and country.

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This assumes the execution of an entrepreneurial vision at the organizational level in terms of culture and mindset, work structure, and knowledge methodology /content. In addition to that, the university must develop at the ecosystem level cooperation and synergies with potential partners, actors of its environment and its region. A massive and standardized transformation in this direction from what already exists or as part of a profound rupture of the actual vision will allow the Moroccan university to position itself as a key actor creating socio-economic value within its territory, region and counties in particular by offering a range of skills more suited to needs, and by bringing its knowledge, its innovation projects and its research and development results to the commercialization stage.

We have included this research in an interpretive approach since our objective was not to produce universal laws (positivism). Our aim was mainly comprehensive, seeking to understand the phenomenon and the origins of the possible Gap existing between the Moroccan reality and the concept. Our data was not "cold" since our knowledge output also depended on our interpretation and interaction with the object of inquiry and its context. Unlike quantitative methods which aim to test hypotheses, we have chosen to follow a comprehensive logic. The qualitative approach was therefore the most suited to the exploratory nature of our research. The choice of a qualitative exploratory approach aimed to understand reality (visible and hidden) as it is perceived by several actors at the heart of public university establishments. The use of semi-structured interviews served as a basis to guide our discussion according to defined themes while leaving room for the expression and initiative of our interviewees.

The interviews were based on a guide developed from our literature review. This literature review was supplemented by several exploratory interviews with professionals and actors of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Morocco.

The data collected was analyzed primarily using the Thematic Content Analysis (ACT) method and partially relying on NVivo 11 data analysis software.

II. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The empirical study confirmed the existence of a gap between the perception gathered by university actors on the reality in the field, and the concept as presented in the context of the literature review and taken up from the perspective of contextualization. in the Conceptual Model. This gap has been expressed through several obstructions of nature:

- Organizational: Culture and mindset, leadership, pedagogy, etc.
- Ecosystem: Institutional positioning, synergies with stakeholders, etc.
- And contextual: student massification, rigidity of financial and administrative management, governance, etc.

Identified in the context of the empirical study, these barriers seem to hinder entrepreneurial orientation in the sense of the concept of the universities surveyed. In addition to these obstacles, there is a perception of the existence of heterogeneity in the handling of this 3rd mission of contribution to socio-economic development and its deployment within universities.

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This being due a priori to a lack of a clear vision and strategy common to all the actors, and which is in phase with the 3rd mission of the universities. As a reminder, the 3rd mission of universities is included in many international reports and is fully in line with the development orientations of the kingdom mentioned on the occasion of the last speeches of King Mohammed VI, but also the latest recommendations on the new development model.

This reality as it is perceived by the majority of respondents implied several recommendations, such as the need for a transformation process taking into account the existing one which would be part of the current reforms. This change should migrate the gap observed towards the conceptual model in order to find more coherence not only between the skills delivered by the university institutions and the employability needs of the Market, but also in relation to the positioning of the university as an actor supporting regional socio-economic dynamics.

This would translate into a new continuing education offer for executives of major contractors, small and medium-sized enterprises now mostly supported by consulting firms, or even by a role of catalyst that creates social and economic value through the promotion of Research & Development results, or business projects that can be implemented with regional players (Companies, communities, regions, etc.), and also the achievements which could lead to new business creations, employment, wealth, and therefore socio-economic development. Based on the analysis of the interviews, we presented an operational summary of the results of this research work. We were thus able to formulate a deliverable as the first step in a project to transform Moroccan public higher institutions into a model that we can qualify as a Moroccan entrepreneurial university.

This presupposes the introduction of the entrepreneurial dimension into the university organization in a massive manner. The determinants of this vision are standardized in KPIs, coordinated and managed in an efficient and synchronized manner. This is what will allow the model to claim a real socio-economic impact driven by measurable internal and external synergies.

As a result, and as a public institution, the Moroccan entrepreneurial university should act as a company that creates value and employment that contributes, beyond the rise in skills of the laureates, to regenerating the entrepreneurial fabric of its environment and densify it to be in phase with the new development model as a unifying course.

Starting from the vision of Burton Clark and Etzkowitz as the basis of our conceptual model, enriched with contextual elements and the results of the empirical study (Obstacles observed, GAP identified, recommendations, etc.), the proposed project portfolio is presented in the form of recommendations relating to organizational and ecosystem transformations, a framework integrating the main changes to be made from an internal, mainly organizational point of view, but also from an external point of view in relation to the ecosystem synergies to be developed by the university institution within its environment.

The integrated vision of the proposed model can be materialized by a massive and synchronized deployment of the various proposed projects, supported by a common strategic vision, and governed by a central body whose effectiveness of action is framed by measurable KPIs, and of which governance practices are inspired by the New Public Management trend.

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The success of the deployment of the proposed model will depend on the degree of commitment and involvement of the institutions framing the sector and the mainly intangible investments to modify the characteristics that make up the identity of the public university organization today. We plan to offer decision-makers through this inventory a decision-support tool allowing them to establish diagnoses for:

- Assessing the degree of conformity between the practices of entrepreneurial universities and their practices
- Identifying areas in which changes are required with identification of GAPs to be addressed ;
- And assessing the relevance of the practices to be carried out during the crucial phases of change management and sustainability

In this sense, we have gone beyond the diagnostic phase to evoke concrete proposals and recommendations relating to multiple transformations, a framework integrating the main changes to be made from an internal, mainly organizational point of view, aimed at reviewing management reforms for universities in order to provide them with a certain autonomy, flexibility and standardization in the realization of the proposed vision, but also from an external angle in relation to the ecosystem synergies to be developed by the university institution within its environment.

Inspired by the current of the New Public Management, the toolbox that we have proposed is a multidimensional transformation program driven by a structured and standardized strategic vision that revolves around an entrepreneurial approach of the university, while taking into account existing, ongoing reforms, and national specificities. Supported by a central body whose effectiveness of action is framed and aligned by measurable KPIs and governance practices at all

levels, its massive and synchronized deployment aims for a paradigm shift at the level of National Public University Management.

Focused on three pillars, the proposed project portfolio targets a reconciliation of reality to the model at several levels of transformation:

- Internal "Organizational" transformation.
- "Ecosystem" transformation with external actors.
- Upstream "Change Management & Control" system during deployment, and downstream "Governance and Assessment" as a sustainability mattress guaranteeing the standardization and massification of the proposed approach.

Our proposal is not part of a process of importing international models, but in a direction of change that takes into account the progress made by the sector, the ongoing reforms, and the national context in order to harmonize management practices, and to support the evolution of the Moroccan entrepreneurial university "through quality". It is of course important to align and interconnect the operational deployment of this vision with the national development model at all decision-making levels through a coordination mechanism and synchronized change management. The challenges are to match the accumulated knowledge offered by Moroccan public universities to the new needs of the economy and their environment, whether in the skills of immediately productive laureates, or in increasing the skills of employees / operational executives within the productive investments of principals (Local or FDI), and/or in innovations that can be appropriated to support the emergence of pools of entrepreneurs capable of supporting the needs of economic and regional developments.

III. CONCLUSION

Our research work opens the way to new research perspectives. Several extensions are possible:

Perspective 1: A confirmatory study

As explained above, the main limitation of our research lies in its exploratory nature. Wishing to understand a phenomenon, the qualitative approach was most suited to the exploratory nature of our research. In order to confirm the results of our research, it is necessary to test our conclusions more extensively on a more representative, larger and more diverse sample. We suggest complementing our research with a confirmatory quantitative study of all university deans at the national level, but also on a larger sample of the student population or of companies and/or

other regional actors. This study would be the opportunity to evaluate the weight of the different variables stated in our theoretical model.

Perspective 2: A comparative study

The Moroccan context has its own peculiarities. It seems wise to study how, in other countries, the development of entrepreneurial universities is envisaged. This future research path would make it possible to supplement, confirm or invalidate the conclusions of our research and to test the external validity of our results.

Perspective 3 : A strategic study

A more structured strategic study integrating the theoretical contributions of the phenomenon of organizational transformation (Theories of planned transformational action or those of organizational transition) carried out by a firm or a national or international body would allow a better framing of the entrepreneurial vision of the Moroccan public university, in particular through

a better knowledge of the processes of initiation of transformations, or that of their measures. More practical aspects can contribute to this phase such as focus groups or coconstruction workshops. A study of this type can be concerned first with the orientations, but especially with the process of deployment over all of its phases. The conclusions of this work are therefore only the first milestones for reflection on a national strategy for the modernization of the public university institution.

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