Contribution to the Study of Social Entrepreneurial Intent among African University Students: Case of Seven Moroccan Universities

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Abstract

The phenomenon of social entrepreneurship is receiving increased attention from policy makers, opinion leaders and academic researchers. The purpose of this article is to identify the factors influencing social entrepreneurial intent among a sample of 476 students studying in seven Moroccan universities. To achieve this objective, a quantitative study is conducted by questionnaire distributed via the Internet based on the technique of the snowball. At the end of this research, twelve factors contributing to the development of this intention. It should also be noted that women have a higher level of social entrepreneurial intent than men who participated in this research.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurial intent - Social Entrepreneur- Social Entrepreneurship - Moroccan Universities.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has become a growing phenomenon in emerging economies, Social entrepreneurship is no longer limited to social activities, it has become a global phenomenon. At present, it plays an important role in creating growth and employment opportunities for vulnerable segments of society through sustainable business solutions. As a result, the opportunity to revolutionize business practices and integrate them into the social impact is gaining ground.

Social entrepreneurship has gained momentum as an academic subject. Over the past decade, many schools have launched new courses, programs, centers or research initiatives incorporating variants of this theme.

The term "social entrepreneurship" has emerged from the work of many practitioners in recent decades. The combination of these two terms reflects a break in the boundaries between business and the non-profit sector in seeking new approaches to social problems and needs. It is a development that is potentially promising, but also risky. If we want to have a chance to guide or shape the practice in the future, we need to ensure and evaluate the social entrepreneurial intent of university students. Which prompted us to ask the following question:

What are the factors influencing the social entrepreneurial intent of Moroccan university students?

In this context, this research attempts to identify the factors influencing the social entrepreneurial intent of Moroccan university students.

1. Review of the literature

1.1. Conceptual framework of the social entrepreneur

Thompson (2002) defines social entrepreneurs as "those who possess the qualities and behaviors that we associate with the entrepreneur, but who work in the community and are more concerned with helping than with" making money "(P.413).

Generally, a social entrepreneur is an individual, group, network, organization, or alliance of organizations that seeks long-lasting, broad-based change through innovative ideas in what governments, organizations, and organizations nonprofit and businesses do to solve important social problems. Holmstrom, David (1999).

It follows from this definition that social entrepreneurs do not necessarily have to be a single individual, they can also be a group or network involving innovative ideas on how to proceed to solve important social problems and they operate in all sectors.

Despite the general interest in the characteristics of social entrepreneurs, the available definitions and examples operate from several starting points. In this framework, See William et al (2004) described characteristics that could support a more in-depth analysis:

1. Social entrepreneurs are almost always defined as individuals or organizations more committed to social change.
2. Social entrepreneurs are almost always resident in the non-profit sector.
3. Social entrepreneurs are almost always defined as the starting point of the change process.
4. Social entrepreneurs are almost always defined as using high performance management practices such as continuous improvement, quality management, rigorous financial controls and a general emphasis on accountability.
5. Social entrepreneurs are generally seen as building programs and organizations from scratch, not as individuals who can refine an existing program or redesign an existing program.
6. Social entrepreneurs focus on people who may accelerate and slow down their entrepreneurial activities over time.

In addition, according to Young, there are at least seven types of nonprofit entrepreneurs, each with a slightly different motivation of action:

1. Self-employed looking for small organizations where a new entry is relatively easy.
2. Researchers who want to free themselves from cumbersome organizations and inflexible rules.
3. Power seekers who appreciate the advancement opportunities offered by large organizations.
4. Conservatives who focus on large stable and mature organizations to ensure their security.
5. Professionals looking for organizations with the resources to continue their efforts.
6. Artists who are looking for organizations large enough to support their work, but small enough to give them a chance to be recognized.
7. Income seekers who have no other goal than to increase their income potential, whether in a large or small organization.

1.2. Theoretical framework mobilized:

The theory of reasoned action was introduced for the first time by Fishbein (1967) and developed by (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). This theory, which seeks to determine the relationship between the intent of an individual's behavior and the actual achievement of that behavior, is widely used by many researchers in several fields, (Yousafzai et al., 2010, Beiginia et al., 2011; Abdelghani and Oladokun 2012, Razak et al 2016).

The theory of reasoned action makes it possible to apprehend the voluntary behavior of an individual and states that the best way to predict voluntary behavior is intention, which is the cognitive representation of a person's disposition to perform a behavior. given. It is considered the immediate antecedent of behavioral realization. Fishbein (1967). Indeed, Behavioral intent is based on attitudes and subjective norms to this behavior.

Attitude to behavior is the positive or negative attitude of the individual as to the performance of the desired behavior. It is determined by an assessment of one's beliefs about the consequences and opportunities of behavioral achievement.

The subjective norm refers to the perception of a person that most reference persons think they should or should not perform the behavior. According to this theory, the more a person perceives that other people important to him think that he should or should not perform a behavior, the more he intends to do it or not to do it. Nevertheless, the tendency of individuals to perform a behavior does not lead to the realization or concretization of their intention in reality. This prompts to question the need to introduce the degree of behavioral control.

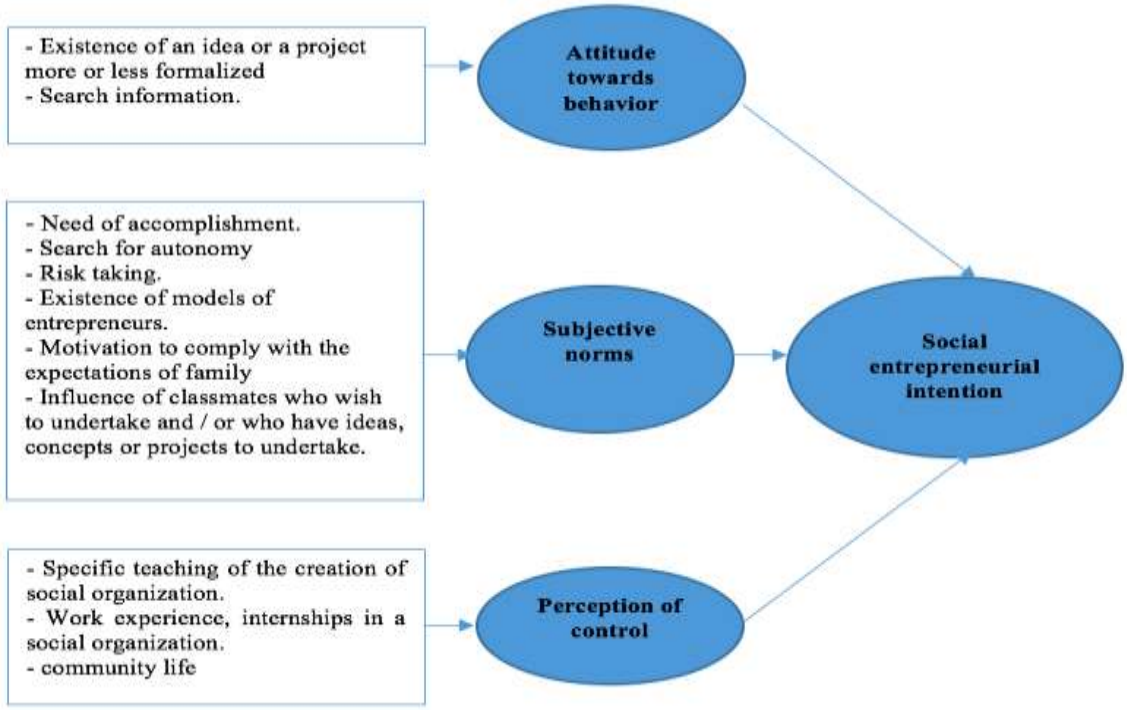
Indeed, Ajzen has extended the theory of reasoned action to the theory of planned action by including the perceived behavioral control that defines it as the presence or absence of factors that may facilitate or hinder the achievement of behavior. In other words, beliefs about behavioral control refer to an individual's perceptions of his ability to perform a given behavior as an additional determinant of behavioral intent.

Indeed, researchers have dedicated a greater interest to the intention. This attention on the part of academicians can be explained by the fact that the role of this behavioral intention as an immediate determinant of the realization of this behavior is confirmed by several works.

Therefore, according to the theory of planned action, entrepreneurial behavior becomes a reality when individuals perceive that they control the decision of its realization.

In this framework, the model of Shapero and Sokol (1982) taken up and presented by Tounès (2006) is the model (Diagram 1) most used in the literature to explain the factors influencing the entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 1 : Theoretical modeling of entrepreneurial intent, source: adapted from Tounès (2006)



The theoretical framework being justified; we state the hypotheses of research:

H1: Attitudes towards behavior positively influence the social entrepreneurial intent of Moroccan university students.

H2: Subjective norms positively influence the social entrepreneurial intent of Moroccan university students.

H3: Perception of control positively influences the social entrepreneurial intent of Moroccan university students.

To measure the explained variable (entrepreneurial intent of social character), we resorted to the three items created by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980): (1) the probability that you create your social project is very strong, (2) the probability that If you have to choose between creating your social project and being an employee, you would certainly prefer to create your social project.

To measure the explanatory variables, we used 2 items that set out attitudes associated with behavior, 6 items measure subjective norms, and 4 items measure perceptions of behavioral control.

The student had to answer based on his perception of these items on 5-point Likert scales.

2. Methodology

The adoption of an epistemological positioning is crucial for research in management sciences. It helps to guide the researcher during the process of apprehension and understanding of the phenomenon studied. The choice of an epistemological anchorage is also contingent on the problem, the context and the research methods selected. In the context of this research, we opted for the positivist paradigm, following a hypothetico-deductive approach.

The quantitative study is chosen to test the validity of our research model formulated from the literature review. In order to test this model and the research hypotheses. Indeed, data collection was carried out on a convenience sample of 476 Moroccan university students on social networks. Participants were invited to complete the online questionnaire on Google Forms, the link sent gives direct access to the address containing the questionnaire. Once the person contacted connects to the address, they can fill in the online questionnaire and their answers are automatically indexed in our electronic database. We also used the knowledge network of each participant who was asked to invite their colleagues to complete our online questionnaire.

After administering the questionnaire, a series of steps are triggered, starting with the coding of each question in our questionnaire, then going through the recording of each coded variable and its relevant questions in the SPSS database version 21.0, and ending up with the answers of each participant.

Subsequently, to study the dimensionality of the constructs, we carried out analyzes in principal components ACP because this technique makes it possible to release the factorial structure of the mobilized constructs and to summarize a large number of variable in a small number of factors. (Gatignon-Turnau, 2005).

Before starting the principal component analysis, it must be ensured that the data used forming groups of variables with a strong correlation between them, while the variables belonging to different groups have a low correlation between them. We are talking about the factoring of data Evrard et al., 2003. Indeed, two tests make it possible to verify this condition:

Bartlett's sphericity test: it makes it possible to check that the correlations between the variables are not zero. Otherwise, the implementation of a principal component analysis is impossible.

The KMO: Kaiser, Meyer and Olkin invented this test which makes it possible to compare "the amplitude of the correlation coefficients with the amplitude of the partial correlation coefficients" (Jolibert & Jourdan, 2011: 299). According to Kaiser 1974, the data are "factorizable" on the condition that the KMO index is greater than 0.5, the KMO index greater than 0.5 is acceptable, between 0.8 and 0.9 is meritorious, and an index greater than 0.9 is wonderful.

Once the two tests allowed the factorization of the data, we judged the dimensionality of the scales of measurement and the number of factorial axes to be retained by the following rules:
The Kaiser criterion: factorization is carried on the correlation matrix, we have indeed retain as many axes as eigenvalues higher than 1.

The criterion of the minimum refund: (Igalens and Roussel 1998) sets the minimum threshold of variance to be explained around 50% because in the field of human resources management, the concepts studied are difficult to measure. It is necessary to retain as many axes as necessary to reach this threshold.

The Cattell Elbow Criterion: The Cattell Elbow is a graph with the number of factorial axes on the x-axis and the percentage of variance for each axis on the y-axis.

Evrard et al. (2003, p.383) describe that "the variance restored by each factor is decreasing. The stopping rule is to look for what is - in a marginal analysis - the first of the factors whose elimination leads to a minimum loss of information.

Analysis of the reliability and internal consistency of the measurement scale: the internal consistency analysis of the measurement scales makes it possible to test homogeneity and the validity of the scale used.

To do this, we have opted for Cronbach's alpha calculus, which is used to test inter-item correlations. If its value is greater than 0.7 then the items used measuring the same phenomenon so the reliability is good. As part of our research, we conducted all of these tests and obtained refined measurement scales.

Researchers are now making more use of confirmatory factor analyzes using structural equation (MES) methods (Roussel et al., 2002). Gavard-Perret et al., (2008) define structural equations as a theoretical model modeling technique. The MES approach is to "specify how concepts are measured and how these concepts are related, and then evaluate the extent to which these concepts correspond to an observed reality. This makes it possible to judge the relevance or not of the theoretical model, at least in the context where it is studied ".

indeed, to implement this MES, we chose the method Partially Least Squares (PLS), under the software SmartPLS 3.0. Because it offers several advantages over other methods of structural equations. In this respect, (Tenenhaus et al, 2004). Advance that this method is characterized by simplicity, the use of few probabilistic hypotheses. Thus Roussel et al. (2002) add flexibility in terms of sample size. As mentioned previously, the MES according to the PLS method is carried out via the SmartPLS 3.0 software. According to two main steps:

Step 1: Estimation of the measurement model:

For the estimation of the measurement model, three evaluation criteria were carried out: the reliability, the convergent validity and the discriminant validity:

Reliability: is studied by checking the saturation loadings of items that must be greater than the threshold of 0.70. According to (Chin, 1998) the general reliability of the dimensions was analyzed by two indices: cronbach's alpha and the concordance index composite reliability.

The convergent validity: average variance extracted AVE measures the value of the variance captured by the construct and its indicators in relation to measurement errors (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The construct must share more than 50% of its variance with the measurement statements.

Discriminant validity: According to (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), the variance extracted by each concept must be greater than the variance shared between the concepts.

Develop standards: it is possible to establish descriptive statistics by individual and by conceptual variables.

Step 2: Estimation of the structural model:

Finally, to test the model of our research, we evaluated on the one hand, the percentage of variance explain R2 for each of the endogenous latent variables and, on the other hand, the value of the coefficients of the paths. The stabilization of these estimates was analyzed on the basis of the statistics obtained by the procedure of resampling with boostrap under the PLS software. To test the research hypotheses, in order to validate or reject them.

3. Results:

The sample of this research is made up of 65% of women and 35% of men. 31% have an age between 19 and 22, 54% between 23 years-26 years old and 15% above 26 years old. Participants are enrolled at Ibn Tofail University (39%), Hasan University 2 (20%), Ibn Zohr University (15%), Abdelmalek Essadi University (12%), Sidi Mohammed University Ben Abdellah (7%), Cadi Ayyad University (4%) and Mohamed 5 University (3%).
The value of KMO indicates very large correlations between the items on the scale. Bartlett's test is significant ($p < 0.0005$). So from these results the conditions are met to perform a factor analysis.

According to the table of the quality of representation no variable to be eliminated because they have a better quality of representation: the set ones largely explain the variance.

With regard to the criterion of kaiser and the criterion of the minimum restitution and the criterion of the elbow indicate that only one axis must be retained.

The factorial contributions with the selected axis are much greater than 0.70. The statements are indeed strongly correlated with the selected component.

In addition, the internal consistency of the measurement scale is corroborated by a very satisfactory Cronbach alpha. The scale can be kept as twenty-three items.

All items have a loading greater than 0.7 which varies between 0.74 and 0.976, indicating a very high level of item reliability. In addition, the composite reliability (CR) coefficients for each variable range from 0.85 to 0.87, which is well above the 0.7 threshold and indicates a very high level of internal consistency. These results reveal a very good reliability of the scales of measurement.

In a second step, the convergent validity expressed by the average extracted variance (AVE) of each variable (constructed) presented in the table measuring the part of the variance explained by the items of the construct, varies between (0.83 and 0.90). This means that the AVE for each variable is greater than 0.5.

It is also important to ensure the discriminating validity of the research variables. Based on the table results and the diagonal bold numbers that represent the EVA values for each of the variables studied in this research, each variable must be greater than all other values that are in the same range. column (square root of correlations). In other words, the proportion of variance extracted for each construct with its measures should be greater than the square of its correlation coefficients with other constructs of the same model (Fornell et al., 1990).

Indeed, the convergent validity reveals that the items of a construct contribute strongly to the construct in question and less to the neighboring constructs. So the items listed under the same variable do constitute an operationalization of it.

The basic model seems to correspond very satisfactorily to the data of this research. Indeed, the structural model has an acceptable and significant explanatory power, the $R2 = 0.72$. This means that explanatory variables predict about 72% of the explained variance of the entrepreneurial intent variable of social character.

After having checked the predictive quality of the structural model, the analysis of the validity of the assumptions made. In this perspective, a simulation of the bootstrap simulation under the Smart Pls software is carried out following the recommendations of Ringle (2012) in order to test the statistical significance of each correlation coefficient of the latent variables.

In this framework, the correlation coefficients of the structural equation model and the p-value values confirm that the three causal links between the latent variables are significant. Assumptions H1, H2, H3 are validated:

Attitudes towards behavior have a positive and significant effect on the social entrepreneurial intent of the university students surveyed ($B1 = 0.71$, $p = 0.000$). As a result, hypothesis H1 is validated.

The effect of the Subjective Norms on the social entrepreneurial intent of the university students surveyed is confirmed. ($B2 = 0.19$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the hypothesis H2 is validated.

Similarly, perceived control has a negative and significant effect on the social entrepreneurial intent of the university students surveyed (B3 = 0.14, p = 0.000). Hypothesis H3 is validated.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The level of entrepreneurial intent of a social nature is highly developed among the university students surveyed, based on the results of the quantitative sample survey, we deduced an average of participants' responses on the three items associated with the study. entrepreneurial intent of social character ranging from 3.68 to 4.32, with a standard deviation value ranging from 1.364 to 1.675. This indicates a good level of agreement that participants have a strong entrepreneurial intent of a social nature. It should be noted that women have a higher social entrepreneurial intent than men who participated in this research.

Our results suggest that attitudes to behavior, subjective norms, and perceived control exert a positive and significant influence on the social entrepreneurial intent of the university students surveyed. This means that the higher the perception of university students surveyed, the more their social entrepreneurial intentions increase.

This research highlights the importance of the factors influencing attitudes towards behavior (the existence of a more or less formalized idea or project and the search for information.), Subjective norms (the need to accomplishment, the search for autonomy, risk-taking, the existence of entrepreneurial models, the motivation to comply with the expectations of family and friends, the influence of classmates who wish to undertake and / or who have ideas, concepts or projects to undertake) and the perception of control (the specific lessons of social organization creation and work experiences, internships in a social organization). These factors contribute to the development of social entrepreneurial intent. Indeed, these results are consistent with several studies (Shapero and Sokol, 1982, Aldrich et al., 1994, Mezhoudi, 2001, Gasse et al, 2006, Shivani et al., 2006).

In conclusion, we propose that universities and researchers invest considerable resources to explore in depth a new model involving social development solutions. In the same perspective, Moroccan universities must invest more in training aimed at developing social entrepreneurial intent.

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