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Modeling Stakeholders Relationships to Strengthen the Entrepreneurial Behavior of Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Higher Education Institutions, especially the technical ones, are required to provide highly skilled human capital to strengthen the knowledge triangle between education, research and business, to contribute to the Europe societal advancement.

The paper aims to investigate different views of the concept of entrepreneurial university and models the processes needed for engaging the stakeholders in the higher education settlement. The authors capitalize on the well-known modeling tool – SIPOC diagram (Supplier-Inputs-Process-Output-Customer) that maps out the flows of work.

The results represent an attempt to deliver a structured and coherent way of action needed for defining, implementing, monitoring and controlling the relationships with stakeholders in order to maximize the knowledge exchange potential for the benefit of the students, teachers, and business community.

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1. Introduction

The growing competition on the labor market asks for high efficiency in managing the higher education processes since this sector plays a crucial role in achieving the European Union endeavors for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth [1].

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According to *"Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernization of Europe's higher education systems"* approximately 35% of all jobs in the Europeans Union will require high-level qualifications by 2020, and only 26% of the workforce currently has a higher education qualification [2].

These changes toward open innovation require enhancing the quality and relevance of human capital development in higher education to internationalize the higher education by providing international mobility of students, researchers and staff, as well as in-depth scientific knowledge, entrepreneurial skills, creative and innovative attitudes and intensive interaction between stakeholders to disseminate and exploit knowledge generated.

Thereby, the scope of the research is covering the attempts to facilitate the communication between higher education side and business and also to improve the understanding and collaboration for knowledge exchanges.

2. Research problem

The internationalization and openness of higher education institutions require a joint approach from a wide range of stakeholders, to attract the best students, staff and researchers, to increase international outreach and visibility, and to foster international networks for excellence.

In order to fulfill their role in the society, the higher education institutions need to be flexible and responsive by adopting an entrepreneurial behavior so as to successfully deal with the many changing demands of the internal and external environment. This requires changing the mind-set toward embracing good leadership, not just at the top of the institution, but also throughout the institution, pioneering the changes needed in order to be the future evidence.

Thereby, leaders needs to encourage entrepreneurial behavior and adopting a process-centric work as a proven way for organizing and delivering educational offers, effectively and efficiency.

At the EU level, the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework establishes ambitious target for the employments rate and social progress: by 2020, the employment rate of recent graduates should be at least 82% [3].

The Education and Training Monitor 2015 outlines that the employment rates among tertiary graduates at EU level, ISCED 5-8, decreased from 82.5 % in 2011 to 80.5% in 2014, although the average rate in the EU is still over 80%. To further diminish the gap by overcoming the bottlenecks arisen from the lack of innovation and low employability of recent graduates, the "New priorities for European cooperation in education and training-ET2020" defines relevant priorities areas for higher education as referred as building partnership between education, business and civil society, promoting entrepreneurship education and employability, through engaging business and civil society in educations [4].

Under these contexts, the research attempts to address the recommendations of the "2015 University Business Forum" (http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/university-business-forum-brussels_en.pdf) related to creating new organizational models to support entrepreneurial and innovative potential of higher education institutions through meaningful attention to the involvement of external stakeholders in knowledge production, entrepreneurship and innovation.

The central point of latest development is seen in the entrepreneurial university concept that has an enhanced capacity to generate technology by combining its research and teaching capabilities in new formats to become a source of new firm formation, changing the role from a traditional source of human resources and knowledge to a new source of technology generation and transfer [5].

Also, the entrepreneurial mission of higher education institution enhances the capacity to provide students with new ideas, skills and entrepreneurial talent. The new generations of professionals in different scientific disciplines and businesses should be trained and encouraged to become entrepreneurs and firm founders, contributing to economic growth and job creation in a society. Beside this, entrepreneurial behavior enables universities to extend the capabilities of educating individuals to educating organizations, through entrepreneurship and incubation programmes and new training modules such as inter-disciplinary centers, science parks, academic spin-offs, incubators and venture capital firms [6, 7].

Due to the complexity of the entrepreneurial university concept, the research problem is limited to the conceptual analysis of the relevant EU documents and does not take into consideration any other country-specific initiative related to entrepreneurial university and/or responsible higher education.

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