Entrepreneurial university in the perception of Romanian students and master degree students of public higher education institutions located in South Muntenia Euroregion

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Abstract: The present paper summarizes a pilot research conducted in „Valahia” University of Târgoviște, one of the most performing public higher education institutions in South Muntenia Euroregion. The aim of research was the perception of students and master degree students concerning the characteristics of an entrepreneurial university and their appreciation on achieving this role by the university where they are studying. We had three hypotheses: (1) the concept is known by the subjects, (2) the entrepreneurial characteristic of the university is considered the key to the absorption of graduates into the labor market, (3) „Valahia” University of Târgoviște is, in their opinion, an entrepreneurial institution. The research used the survey based on a questionnaire and the results have validated the whole first two assumptions, and only partially the third. The proposals concern the improvement of product strategies in order to adapt the offer to the size and structure of the labor market.

Key-Words: entrepreneurial university, jobs, perception, strategies, educational portfolio, performance

1 Introduction
Nowadays, there is a general agreement on the need for higher education to contribute to a substantial extent to the development of entrepreneurial skills of university graduates in their preparation for a society of increasingly uncertain and complex in the same time, that involves frequent changes of occupation, international mobility, adapting to different cultures, working in a world of fluid organizational structures, greater individual responsibility.

The pilot research making the subject of this communication is part of a wider investigation having as objective the knowledge of the perception of students, master degree students, teachers of the Romanian universities on the entrepreneurial nature of the institution in which they operate. This perception will be analyzed in comparison with that of the Romanian employers. The survey was designed in the context of the alarming growth of unemployment among university graduates in the age group 22-30 years (7,8% in late 2009 in South Muntenia) and their reduced ability to create and manage their own business. The expected results of the pilot research is building on how the subjects think about the entrepreneurial nature of a university, their option for those specialties that encourage private initiative for a later stage to achieve even the mapping of higher education institutions in South Muntenia Euroregion according to business performance of graduates.

The student is the most important for a university. Student structures have come to represent an important aspect in the universities, mostly in the decision making process. Students are partners in the training of competitive specialists and their view expressed by the individual or their representative, is an important way of self-control, evaluation and improvement of academic activities.

For any university, international relations are becoming a priority in promoting the European dimensions of education and academic research. In an entrepreneurial university, academic management is based on university autonomy, which implies decentralization of activities and responsibilities, including in the management of financial resources for the faculties.

The principles of academic management are: -the principle of using the resources correctly and effective.
Entrepreneurial university is a university where the academic and administrative staff forms a united team whose purpose is to develop the institution, ensuring resources for a normal and quality operation. Entrepreneurial university is the university adopting a management based on the following principles:
- the university’s executive management is professionalized, based on a strategic plan and periodically reviewed, at the output level, the bodies of chosen academic and non-academic staff;
- it is a university able to apply new produced knowledge in the economic and social environment and exploit the conjunctures for itself;
- entrepreneurial university is a place to make money, this is one of the missions of the university. Both training specialists and research are focused on the market. This is a place where students become “customers” and are treated as such;
- entrepreneurial university always tries to change the competitive balance in his favor and adopt quality standards and assessment procedures to ensure the educational processes quality meant to achieve this objective;
- it consists of units (faculties, departments) mindset oriented and with real financial autonomy, teaching and research initiative;
- it is a university where academic and administrative staff are increasingly similar in terms of preparedness, competence and prestige of a university that relies on initiative, innovative conduct, risk.

2 Research methodology

2.1 Research theme
The theme of our research deals with entrepreneurial university in vision of Romanian students and master degree students of public higher education institutions located in South Muntenia Euroregion.

2.2 Motivation for choosing the theme
We have proposed through this pilot research to find out whether students and master degree students of „Valahia” University of Târgoviște acquire skills and develop the specific skills of an entrepreneur as a result of finishing the years of study.

2.3 Research hypothesis
The present survey started from three assumptions: (1) the concept of entrepreneurial university is known by the subjects, (2) the entrepreneurial characteristic of the university is considered the key to the absorption of graduates into the labor market and (3) „Valahia” University of Târgoviște is, in their opinion, an entrepreneurial institution.

2.4 Research objectives
The objectives of the present research are: (1) to identify the attitudes of students and master degree students regarding the faculty followed and their capacity to establish their own business, (2) to identify the qualities required to an entrepreneur that the university must develop to the students and master degree students, (3) to identify the extent to which knowledge acquired during years of study will be recovered in practice and (4) to make recommendations on the possibilities of „Valahia” University of Târgoviște to develop students’ ability to become entrepreneurs after graduation.

2.5 Research method
The research method used has been the pilot survey based on a questionnaire.

2.6 Collectivity under analysis
The collectivity under analysis is made up of students in the final years (third and fourth) and master degree students of „Valahia” University of Târgoviște (4954 subjects). We have chosen to focus our research on the third and fourth year considering that at this stage of students training we will be able to highlight best the problem that constitute the subject of our research.

2.7 Sampling method
In this research, the sampling method we used was the non-random sampling.

2.8 Sample under analysis
The sample under analysis was made up of 518 subjects, students and master degree students of „Valahia” University of Târgoviște.

2.9 Research limits
Considering the pilot research, the results of our research cannot be generalized to all universities of South Muntenia Euroregion. Research was conducted during 15-22 January 2010.
3 Analysis and interpretation of research results

Item: Do you think the university you follow will help you integrate into the labor market?

The data analysis found that 61% of the subjects believe that the faculty they follow will help them integrate the labor market, result which highlights the usefulness of higher education. However, a significant percentage of respondents is not convinced of the higher education ability to offer opportunities in the workplace. A positive aspect noted is that a small percentage of students deemed useless higher education.

The sex respondents taken as benchmark indicates that there are no significant differences of opinion on the usefulness of the faculty. However, students from rural areas have an increased resistance to the ability of higher education to increase their employability than those in urban areas.

Analyzing the responses considering the home faculty we found that those who attend the economic, social, political and electrical engineering are more advantaged. Minimum areas of interest are humanities, sciences and arts, theology, material engineering and environmental engineering.

Item: How do you consider the information gained during university so you can open your own business?

The score obtained by processing the responses was 1.58 indicating that overall, students and master degree students of „Valahia” University of Târgoviște receive insufficient information helping in developing their own business. But there are faculties which provide sufficient information for this purpose, namely Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Social and Political Sciences.

Item: Following the practice you made, do you think you used the knowledge acquired during the years of study?

A significant proportion of students and master degree students (59%) have used the practical knowledge gained in years of study. With reference to the environment from which they come, the results showed that those from the urban have more opportunities to apply knowledge learned versus rural.

Except of Faculty of Humanities and Environmental Engineering and Biotechnology, all other departments provide highly specific information.

Item: What entrepreneurial qualities do you consider that university should develop you?

The qualities considered most important for an entrepreneur are organizational ones, followed by communication skills and intelligence. A small percentage of respondents consider important moral qualities.

There were no significant differences in response for representatives of urban and rural areas, but there were differences of opinion of male respondents who considered less important communication skills and moral qualities, compared with female subjects.
Organizational skills, communication skills and intelligence prevail for students and master degree students of Faculty of Economics, Electrical Engineering, Materials Engineering, Mechatronics and Robotics, Environmental Engineering and Biotechnology. For representatives of other departments are important moral qualities and responsibility.

Item: What are the ways that „Valahia” University of Târgovişte can develop your entrepreneur skills?

There is clearly a desire of students and master degree students of „Valahia” University of Târgovişte to enhance the practical part of disciplines, comprising both reducing the theoretical information and the involvement of local companies in the academic activity.

It is also considered important the adaptation of the educational offer in the current requirements of the labor market.

European exchanges are not considered important, one of the possible reasons being that there is a small number of students who can benefit from them.

There no significant differences of opinion between faculty students, their practicality is important in all areas.

4 Conclusion

Universities need to acquire the entrepreneurial evolution role to realize its task in an economy that needs to generate wealth and create jobs. It is not enough to provide those highly qualified graduates, if they, or at least most of them have not the skills needed to succeed as true entrepreneurs (in the professional/career).

The three assumptions on which the present research began were partially confirmed following the analysis of data collected

The first one, "the concept of entrepreneurial university is known by the subjects, was totally confirmed total. The second one, according to which, entrepreneurial character of the university is considered key to the absorption of graduates into the labor market, was also confirmed in full. Last hypothesis, "Valahia Universitz of Targoviste is, according to the students, an entrepreneurial institution, was only partially confirmed because there are a significant number of faculty with students who do not receive enough information useful in entrepreneurial activity and who have difficulties entering the labor market.

It is encouraging that current students of „Valahia” University of Târgovişte believe that graduating a faculty is useful to fit relatively easily on the labor market. However, the results obtained in our study also noted the uncertainty of a significant proportion of students on faculty and therefore useful steps have to be taken in this regard. University owes to develop among students, some entrepreneurial skills, with emphasis on management of their independence, ability to solve problems, to initiate and develop business. Default assumptions that are imperative:

- entrepreneurship is the determinant of economic growth and competitiveness;
- higher education can influence entrepreneurship;
- institutional policies and educational programs can be designed so as to stimulate entrepreneurial action and success.

Also, the university should strive to stimulate interest of students to become entrepreneurs, providing them substantial and qualitative information and not in an abundant way.

Following research showed that the students, overall, do not receive sufficient information useful in the event of opening your own business But individual situations differ for each faculty separately, there are faculties where students and master students receive the necessary information (Economic Sciences Faculty and Social and Political Sciences Faculty)

It is recommended to highlight the importance of practice in the university curriculum. As research shows, students relies more on skills gained from carrying out practice. The practice encourages them in a large measure to fend on their own after their studies.

The current reality in Romanian higher education institutions show that these focus more on the theoretical and not practical part of disciplines as a significant part of students and master degree students questioned would prefer.
Some graduates are likely to fail in their attempt to become entrepreneurs, not because their lack of resources (financial, material), but because they have no knowledge (and information) needed to identify the appropriate opportunities. Situation answers on the degree to which information received during the years of study were useful in practice shows that students and master students used a significant amount of this information, but there are different situations in each faculty separately, depending on specialization and the theoretical amount of information it offers, but also the degree to which information is related to economic reality. Entrepreneurial university must develop specific qualities of students and master students, some of the qualities they consider necessary are organizational qualities, communication skills and intelligence. Valahia University of Targoviste should adopt a series of measures to develop the entrepreneurial skills of the students and master students. They consider as the most suitable of the methods the increased the practicality of disciplines. Making partnerships with various companies in the local environment can significantly help to redesign traineeship practice. European exchanges are an important aspect in an entrepreneurial university. So, a method to improve the current state can be increased communication between the university and students, on their ability to benefit from a European exchange. Entrepreneurial university has a vision oriented to quality, individual responsibility, supporting and developing teaching – research activity connection, realistic system of rewards, interdisciplinary departments and strategic alliances with the industry.

References: