



Evaluation of The Performance of Incubation Business Services in Morocco

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to make an empirical assessment of the services offered by the incubation structures in Morocco. To do this, we will focus on the identification of the incubation actors and the services offered by these structures. Within this framework, two studies are envisaged: the first one aims at exploring entrepreneurial incubation as it is conceived and seen by its practitioners, and a confirmatory method that will focus on the perception of this practice on the part of "incubated or clients of incubators". The results are complementary and indicate a gap between the image of incubation and its reality. This has helped us to formulate recommendations to bring our judgment on this practice.

Keywords *Incubation, Business, Entrepreneurial Process, Coaching, Project Developer*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is considered a process of revitalization of the economy. The act of undertaking is no longer reduced to the simple creation of a new entity, but it is still necessary to ensure the sustainability of the newly created structures. Previous research (Zizi et al., 2020; Livratto, 2009) and public authorities recognize, on an international scale, that enterprises, especially the Very Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), energize the economic environment through job creation, resource exploitation the use of talents and creativity of the people, the emulation of the population, especially the young people, and also by the diversification and the complementarity of the companies, small and large, thus ensuring certain stability and a better perennality of the local and regional economies (Gasse, 2003). Concretely in Morocco, the SME has significant importance in the economic fabric in which it represents 93% according to the last statistics of the High Commission for the Plan (HCP) (HCP, 2019).

Although the SME is a real lever for development, its situation is poorly understood. Indeed, Moroccan SMEs remain little innovative and do not have conquering strategies, which affects their potential for internal and external competitiveness (General Confederation of Moroccan Companies /Conjoncture N° 930 - October 2011 - 19). This situation forces many SMEs to take ways to survive instead of flourishing. Statistics reflect these words and clearly demonstrate that a non-negligible number dies before the age of 5 years (Achour F.Z.,2014); the year 2019 ended with the bankruptcy of 8439 companies (Euler Hermes, 2019; Inforisk, 2019). Explicitly, business failure

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is determined by three key dimensions, each of which draws on a set of theoretical approaches. The first set of approaches gives a prominent role to context; the second set focuses on the primacy of resources; and the third set privileges the motivation of the entrepreneur (Khelil et al., 2012).

If we consider that Morocco needs an entrepreneurial elite capable of taking up the economic and social challenge, it seems clear that the robustness of entrepreneurship must depend on "framework conditions" (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2015) as well as on the specific actions of entrepreneurs. In this context, Morocco has invested huge efforts in adjusting the institutional framework for business creation, both by consolidating support structures and by renewing the support mechanisms for creation. Subsequently, we note, among other things, the dynamics of the Regional Investment Centers (CRI) in the different regions of the kingdom, the development of the networks of entrepreneurial accompaniment, and the safeguarding of the partnerships between the actors of the private sector, public and associative.

In Morocco, the interest in business incubators is based on the recommendations of the White Paper on Small and Medium Enterprises, which called for a National Business Incubator Program (PNPE, 1999). At the same time, a special allocation account entitled "Fonds pour la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes" (Fund for the promotion of youth employment) was set up with the aim of creating 4,000 small businesses out of 32 incubators initially intended to promote youth employment and subsequently reduce the failure rate of small businesses (Agence pour la promotion et le développement du Nord, 2014).

Subsequently, the institutionalization of business incubation was explicitly announced in Law 00-01 on the organization of higher education, which involves the university in the promotion of entrepreneurship. According to the text of this law, article 7 stipulates: "universities may provide services for a fee by agreement, create incubators for innovative companies, exploit patents and licenses and market the products of their activities (Dahir n° 1.00.199 of 15 Safar 1421 (19 May 2000) promulgating law n° 01.00 on the organization of higher education).

Officially, the Moroccan Incubation and Spin-off Network (RMIE) was created in 2002 by an interministerial committee of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Executive Training (MESRSFC) and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies (MICNT) in collaboration with the National Center for Scientific and Technical Research (CNRST). Since then, we have witnessed a sustained emergence of incubation structures. Outside the RMIE framework, other incubator structures have emerged, such as (AFEM, Espace BIDAYA, Moroccan CESE, etc.). The operating framework is different, but the support of the company remains its goal.

The analysis of the above-mentioned elements puts us in front of a real dilemma. On the one hand, we note the existence of entrepreneurial support services dedicated to supporting businesses in the early stages of creation, and on the other hand, we note the increase in the rates of stillborn businesses (the year 2019 ended with the bankruptcy of 8439 businesses before the age of 5 years (Euler Hermes, 2019; Inforisk, 2019). This raises the question of how to evaluate this support: either these services are very little known among nascent and new entrepreneurs, awareness is insufficient to meet potential needs, or these services only partially meet the real needs of the accompanied companies. In this case, one can clearly ask to what extent do incubation structures in Morocco promote the success of the entrepreneurial act? This question can be approached from two angles of analysis:

- From an external point of view: What types of incubation structures operate in a Moroccan context?
- From an internal point of view: what are the services offered by these structures? Do they respond to the expectations of the supported entrepreneurs?

Thus, the objective of this article is to be able to carry out for the first time a typological

analysis of the structures of incubation in the Moroccan context. In the second step, to identify the appreciation of the incubatees -vis-à-vis the offered services- by calling upon a list composed of 26 different services. Although this kind of study has been done in several countries (Ganamotse et al., 2017; Barbero et al., 2012; Madaleno et al., 2021; Wann et al., 2017), it is relevant that each one has a particular context which affects the way to build a structure of business incubation and model the progress of their practicing. In Morocco, so far, no study has been conducted to draw up a typology of incubators and to assess the importance and performance of their services. It is within this framework that we argue the originality and contribution of the present study to the advancement of research on incubator activities in the Moroccan context.

The rest of the article deals with the methodological approach adopted (2), the results of the research (3), the discussion (4), and the conclusion (5).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial support by an incubator aims to create a favorable environment in which the company and the entrepreneur will have the opportunity to blossom through a diversified basket of services. Consequently, nurturing new businesses needs institutions specialized in advising, launching, and monitoring the progress of new companies. So, business incubation refers to a system that brings together heterogeneous practices (Kizaba G., 2008) carried out by various actors (hives, incubators, nurseries, and gas pedals) that can be grouped under the generic term: incubators.

Incubator services for enterprises are a type of business support program that provides early-stage companies with the resources and expertise they need to grow and succeed. Incubators typically offer a variety of services such as Co-working space, Mentorship, Training, Networking, and Access to capital. Incubator services can be a valuable resource for early-stage companies that are looking for help getting their business off the ground (Wu et al., 2020).

There are a variety of different incubator structures, but some of the most common include vertical and horizontal incubators. Vertical incubators focus on a specific industry or sector, such as healthcare, technology, or cleantech. This type of incubator can provide early-stage companies with access to a network of experts and resources within their industry. Horizontal incubators do not focus on a specific industry or sector. Instead, it provides early-stage companies with access to a broad range of resources and expertise. This type of incubator can be a good option for early-stage companies that are not sure what industry they want to focus on or that want to collaborate with companies from different industries. This can be helpful for networking, collaboration, and finding potential customers or partners (Bøllingtoft, 2012).

The first publication focusing on the phenomenon of incubation dates back to 1984 with the national survey of incubator profiles developed by Temali and Campbell (1984); since that date, a multitude of suggestions have continued. Thus, we can start with the definition advanced by Allen and Rahman (1985) according to which: "A small business incubator is a facility that aids the early-stage growth of companies by providing rental space, shared office services, and business services assistance". Later, Brooks (1986) adopts another angle of analysis and specifies that an incubator refers to a multi-tenant facility that provides entrepreneurs with (1) flexible leases on small amounts of inexpensive space; (2) a pool of shared support services to reduce overhead costs; (3) some form of professional and managerial assistance; and (4) access to or assistance in acquiring seed capital. Smilor and Gill Jr. (1986), for their part, explain that the incubator seeks to link effectively talent, technology, capital, and know-how to leverage entrepreneurial talent, accelerate the development of new companies, and thus speed the commercialization of technology.

As we can see, this entrepreneurial support is distinguished from other forms of support by the variety of missions that are recognized (Bakkali et al., 2010); it includes providing business

training, giving advice on how to develop business and marketing plans, building management teams, and offering general business services such as accounting, advertising, and legal and financial assistance (Albort-Morant & Oghazi, 2016; Arlotto et al., 2011). Another definition that seems to summarize all these elements is given by National Business Incubation Association (NBIA, 2005); business incubation is a business support process that accelerates the successful development of start-up and fledgling companies by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services. These services are usually developed or orchestrated by incubator management and offered both in the business incubator and through its network of contacts. A business incubator's main goal is to produce successful firms that have the potential to create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, commercialize new technologies, and strengthen local and national economies. All in all, an incubator is assimilated into a catalyst that directs the business activity toward the creation of personal and professional values by sketching a spirit of autonomy and inspiring confidence in strategic decision-making.

Although some studies have recognized the different nature of incubators (Barbero et al., 2012;2014), the evolution of company requirements and needs prompted incubators to diversify their offer of services (Grimaldi & Grandi A.,2011). But it is still relevant that there are many variations in the way in which incubators are organized and what goals they have (Aaboen, 2009)

Allen and McCluskey (1990) are among the first to opt for a typological description of incubators. They already admit the existence of a relationship between incubator type and public policy. In order to lead to improved public policy decisions, traits of a specific incubator category should be considered. This first classification is two-dimensional. It is based on the criterion of profitability and the objective of the incubator. In addition to public and private incubators, two other types of structures are identified: economic development incubators and academic incubators.

Based on the same criteria, Albert et al. (2002; 2003) identify four types of incubators: local development incubators, academic and scientific incubators, business incubators, and private investor incubators. Thus, regardless of its character, we assume that What is called an incubator in Europe differs from country to country (Aaboen, 2009).

RESEARCH METHOD

In the Moroccan context, business incubation is an emerging field of research. This character necessarily influences the choice of our methodological approach, which is mainly exploratory in nature. To achieve this, a multi-method scheme will help establish an approximate representation of "reality".

As the name implies, multi-method research combines fields or phases of intervention with different properties or multiple tools and/or sources of information in areas that could have been analyzed in a single way. The process allows for the consolidation and guarantee of the results obtained (Hladyrispal, 2002). In the same vein, Thietart (1998; 2003; 2014) believes that the complementarity between the two approaches must be reflected in a sense to facilitate access to data and also to keep an objective eye. This involves the sequential use of qualitative and quantitative analysis. This choice represents "a modus operandi" of obtaining data by multiplying the sources and methods of collection. It is particularly useful when the aim is to obtain factual information concerning reality and not only constructed representations of one or the other actor (Albarello et al., 1995). Specifically, two types of analysis are envisaged:

First analysis

The first exploratory analysis will aim to identify the different perceptions of business incubation. The aim is to identify the characteristics of incubators in Morocco. Thus, three themes

are identified: the typological analysis of the structures, the description of the incubation process, and the identification of the incubator network. To this end, interviews were conducted with incubator managers using interview guides covering the above themes.

The objective of the exploratory analysis is mainly the list of RMIE member incubators. However, with a very low response rate (4 incubators out of 13 that responded, i.e., 30%) and a considerable degree of reluctance, we opted for the "snowball" method, which consists of having at least one source of information that will guide us to the others. This is how we proceeded to complete our list of respondents; this is how we proceeded to complete our list of respondents, which allowed us to discover another research niche, that of "incubation programs", that is to say, 18 managers of incubation structures were interviewed, and five incubation programs were identified (MIN AJLIKI), technological development (PACEIM), a program of insertion of young students into the world of entrepreneurship (INJAZ AL MAGHRIB, ENACTUS, SALEEM).

Second analysis

A second confirmatory type of analysis will focus on a questionnaire developed based on the determinants of incubation practice developed in the literature (Bakkali et al., 2013; Al-Mubarak & Schröl, 2011, Messeghem, 2013) and also in the exploratory approach. The objective is to assess the level of satisfaction of the incubators (incubation beneficiaries) based on their experience and the importance they attach to the services offered by the incubator. These elements have been noted as important to the business incubation process, but the extent to which each element is practiced is questionable (Khalid et al., 2014).

To qualify the degree of satisfaction and by the same way of analyzing the degree of interest of the incubatees to each item, we used a 5 points scale (With modalities of the type: Completely satisfied = 2- rather satisfied = 1 - indifferent = 0 - rather not satisfied = -1 - Not at all satisfied = -2). The score is calculated by weighting each service to the answers designated by the incubators, and the sum is divided by the sum of the coefficients.

Importance/Performance Analysis (IPA) is a technique applied in many satisfaction studies, and it will be used to assess the satisfaction of the respondents. It is based on the importance and performance that respondents attribute to the variable (the service). The services whose variables are in the importance/high-performance quadrant confirm that the structure correctly meets the incubates's needs. Conversely, variables that fall in the importance/low-performance quadrant are problem areas.

This confirmatory study will take the form of a quantitative study using a questionnaire aimed at the incubators of the Moroccan Incubation and Spin-off Network (MISN). Our target population is not determined by strict sampling rules but rather consists of a group of 70 "captive" individuals incubated in the various Moroccan Incubation and Spin-off Network structures. This choice seemed advantageous for several reasons. First of all, this group seems to be aware of the incubation phenomenon and affected by its consequences. This grouping will also allow us to reduce the selection bias, which favors the relevance of the information to be retained.

The list of email respondents is provided by the incubators responsible. Therefore, we used the attached questionnaire method, which consists of attaching the form to an e-mail either as an attached file or inside the message itself.

Via the Google Form platform, we administered the questionnaire in September 2017. It consisted of a descriptive message about the topic and a form URL for online completion, led by a "mail track" for acknowledgments. We re-launched in January 2018 with advance notice from the leaders which partially boosted the response rate. A final re-launch was conducted in June 2018, with a 24% response rate (30 of 70).

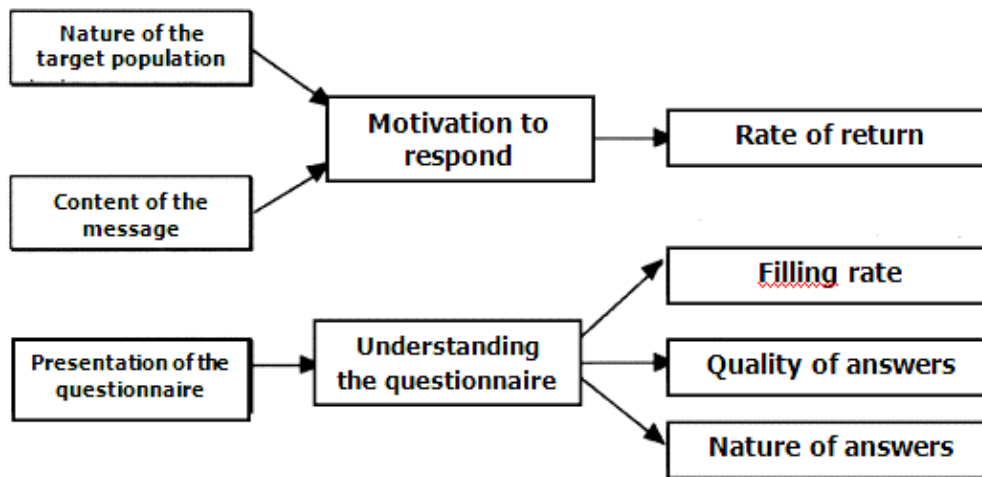


Figure 1. The survey protocol and effectiveness: the analysis model

Source: Ganassali and Moscarola (2004).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the survey results is divided into three main sections. In the first section, we will present the results of the exploratory analysis, which aims to identify the typology of incubation structures. The second and third sections are concerned with the confirmatory analysis in which we will draw up the needs in terms of support expressed by the incubatees and then evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the latter.

Typological analysis of incubation structures

We note that the structures, the subjects of this article, have organizational forms that vary according to the objective of the structure (profit or non-profit), the type of sponsorship (public, private, semi-public, or association) on the one hand, and on the other hand the vocation of the structure. In most cases, they are "associations" with various fields of expertise: social entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship, and innovative entrepreneurship, according to the structure's vocation. We distinguish between incubator, gas pedal, research center, or other (see graph n°1). This second classification allowed us to discover a new way of incubating entrepreneurs within the framework of "*incubation programs*".

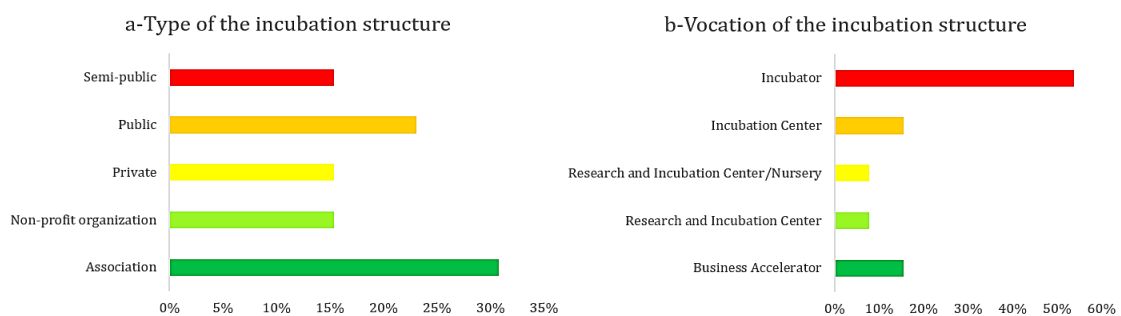


Figure 2. Analysis of the characteristics of the incubators studied

Source: Authors' results in Sphinx

In addition to this characterization of the incubators, another classification was identified based on the type of projects promoted, which are mainly related to the objectives of the structure:

- **Basic research incubators:** especially semi-public or public structures allowing the promotion of technologies and research (which research). The incubator constitutes, in this case, a promoter of innovation. (*MASCIR Foundation and R&D of Morocco*);
- **University incubators:** Public structures are mainly part of the RMIE affiliated with universities. The projects that are incubated there are not necessarily technological but rather "innovative". (*IBDA3, MAROBTIKAR, Cité de l'innovation de Fès, Centre universitaire de l'entrepreneuriat*);
- **Social incubators:** These are essentially public structures whose objective is the creation of economic activities to solve social problems. This means that the incubators are mainly individuals in situations of social difficulties or precariousness. This type of incubator focuses on physical services rather than intangible ones (as in the case of the *Mohamed V incubation center for VSEs*).
- **Mixed incubators:** Generally of a private or associative nature. The goal is to adopt a professional approach in support of incubated companies, regardless of their field of specialization. However, it should be mentioned that most of them require an acceptable degree of innovation for the project leader to be incubated.
- **Incubation programs:** In this category, we identify devices that are made for "incubators," and that offer support opportunities to candidates. Specifically, we have identified programs for economic and social development (*MIN AJLIKI*), technological development (*PACEIM*), and programs for the integration of young students into the world of entrepreneurship (*INJAZ AL MAGHRIB, ENACTUS, SALEEM*).

Identification of the needs of the incubatees

The objective now is to address the services offered by the RMIE incubators according to the incubation process, prioritizing them according to the experience of the incubatees. From this perspective, the incubation process lasts more than 12 months for the majority of the incubators, which allowed us to conclude that pre-incubation and incubation are included in this process (Figure 3.). Thus, we have preferred a division in terms of project realization phases, namely: preparation, realization, and launch, for which we have proposed services to be approved by the incubators and to be classified as far as possible.

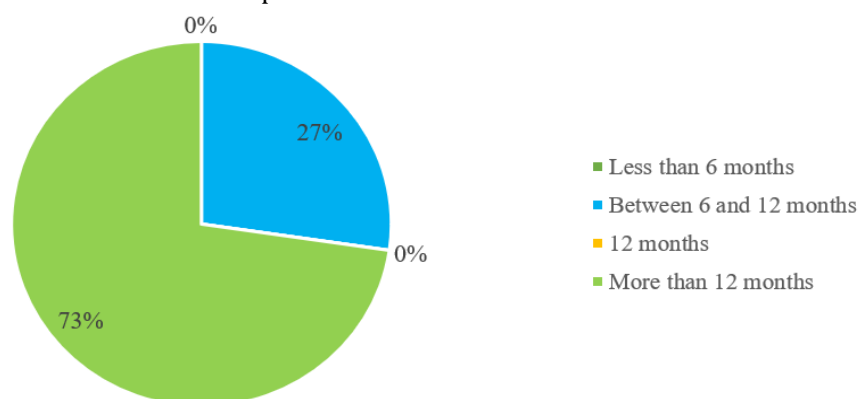


Figure 3. The incubation period of the RMIE incubates

Source: Survey results and authors' calculations

The project preparation phase

In this phase, we have tried to group the services that are primarily related to the development of the business idea. For many project leaders, the idea exists, but the way to project it remains limited to their ignorance of the workings on the one hand. And on the other hand, their enthusiasm must be reasonable. In our opinion, the preparation of the project is crucial because it is the phase where the project holder becomes "realistic" and prepares to seize his business opportunity. We note that the RMIE incubates all *effectively* benefited from the services we suggested for the first phase, with 24.4% of priority given to the definition of the idea, 20% to personal and professional needs, and 15.6% to training.

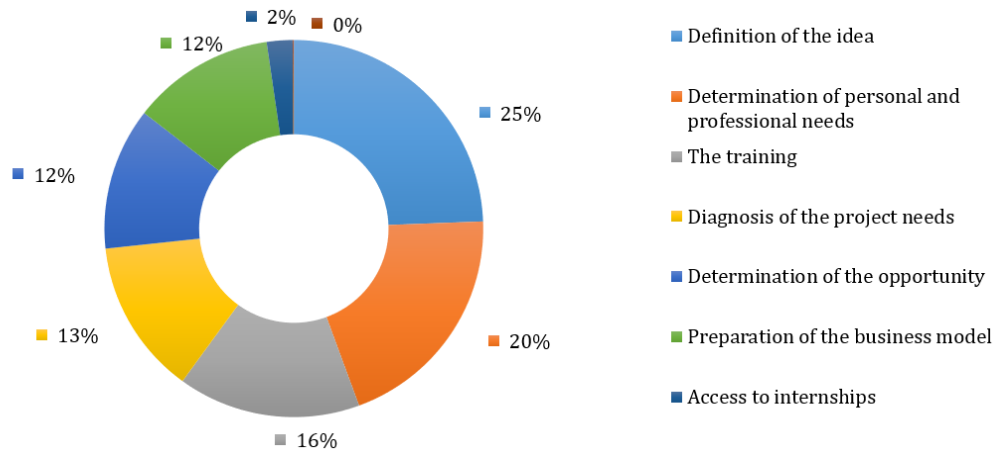


Figure 4. Services offered during the preparation phase

Source: Survey results and authors' calculations

The project implementation phase

After defining the business idea and starting to prepare the business plan, the implementation phase begins. In this phase, the project owner prepares to launch his business and must obtain services that will strengthen his management capacity, create a network of partners and finance his activity. In this sense, we have identified that 24% of the importance is attributed to accommodation during the implementation phase, 22% to technical equipment, 18% to access to finance, 15% to training, 14.5% to networking, and only 4% to legal support.

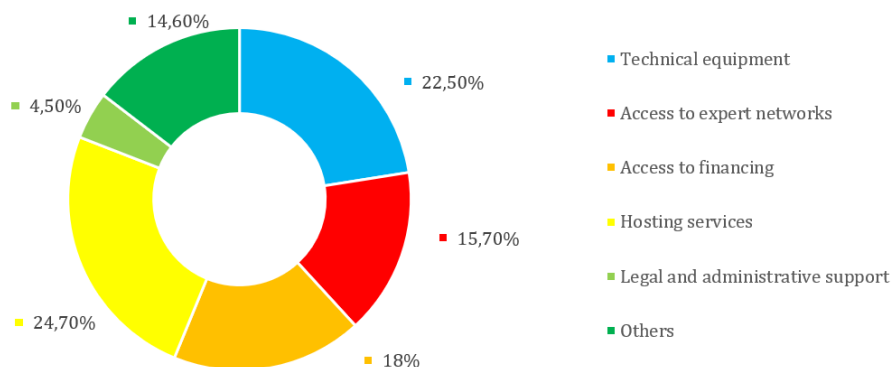


Figure 5. Services offered during the implementation phase

Source: Survey results and authors' calculations

The launch of the activity

Now that the company is created, its needs multiply, which automatically requires more support from the incubators. According to the respondents, 26.7% of the importance is given to accommodation and 2.2% to financial facilities. A result that leads us directly to the coherence between the company's need for financing and the availability of the latter.

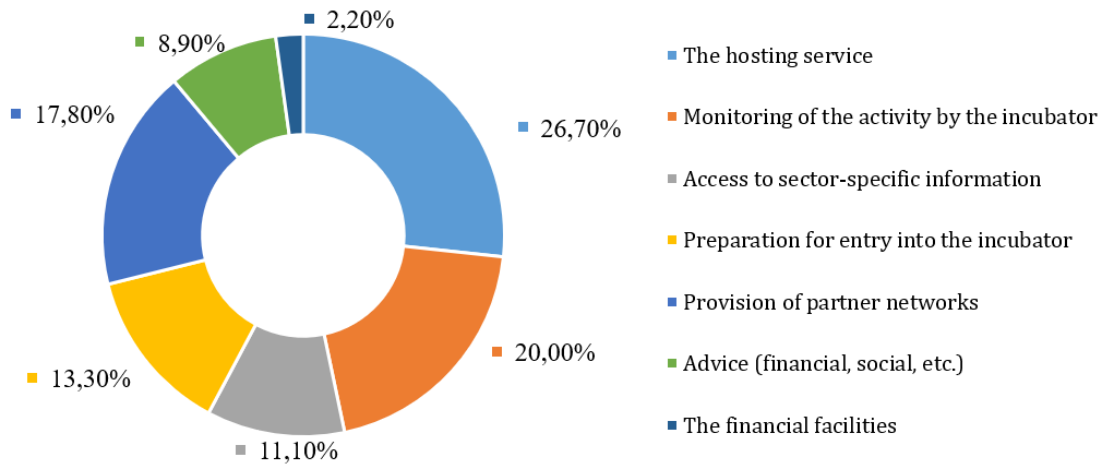


Figure 6. Launch phase services

Source: Survey results and authors' calculations

We can then say that all the proposed services really exist and meet the general needs of the incubatees according to the progression of their project. However, a mix between all these dimensions must exist to meet the global demand. This arbitration remains a function of the incubator's resources, which are sometimes limited and do not take into consideration the specific needs of each type of project, which creates dysfunction and leads us directly to the satisfaction rate of the incubatees. The importance given to the services offered by the incubatees during the incubation cycle can be summarized as follows:

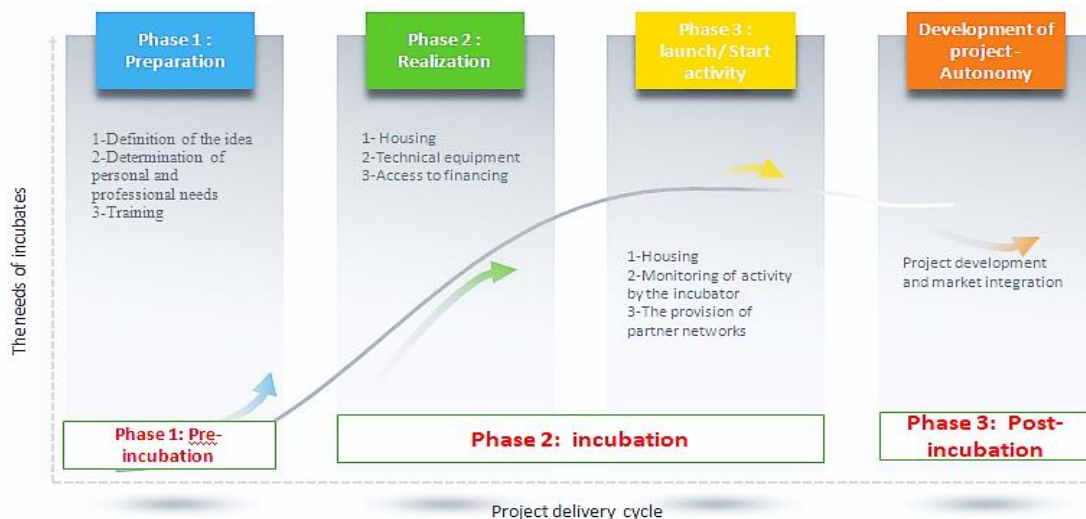


Figure 7. Project delivery cycle

Source: The Authors

According to the project progression cycle, the incubation process also progresses through three phases: pre-incubation, incubation, and post-incubation, during which the incubator will need different services that the incubation structure must be able to offer.

Importance/Performance of incubation services

The analysis of the services offered by the incubation organizations has two main components: the first concerns the assessment of the degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the incubation services, and the second component will focus on the interaction between the importance and the performance of the services offered by the incubators. This part of the study focuses on identifying the incubation services offered by RMIE structures. In our study, we chose a pre-existing list of items, given the unavailability of a guide that traces the main categories of services offered by RMIE incubators. This list is a summary of the services inspired by the literature (Abduh et al. 2007, National Business Incubation Association¹). Ultimately, we selected 26 items:

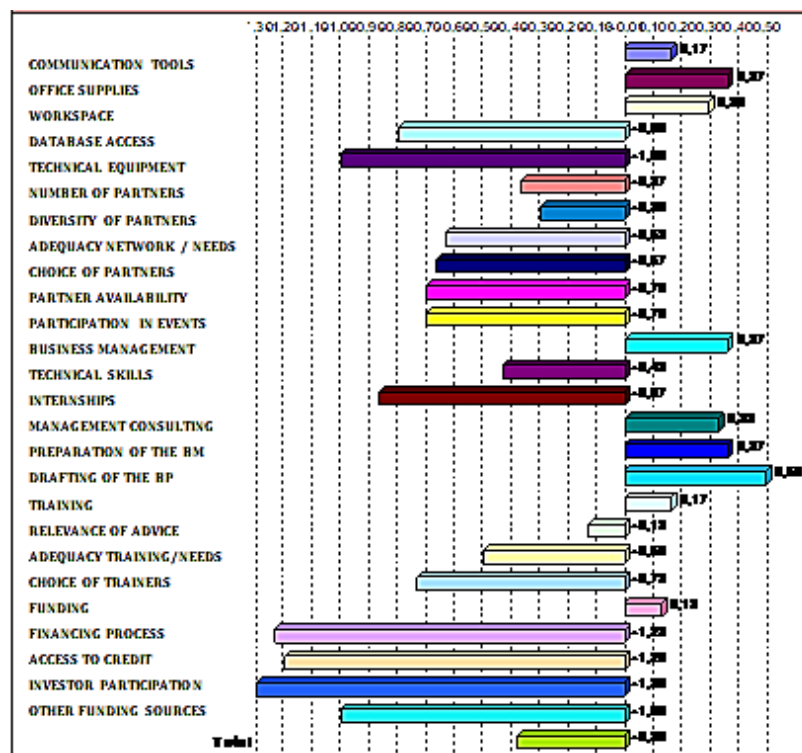


Figure 8. Overall satisfaction of incubates

Source: author's result under Sphinx

In addition, we should note that this analysis reports scores that reflect the average level of satisfaction of incubators, also called "*perceived performance*". However, even with very high levels of satisfaction, these services can only be effective if they meet an actual need expressed by the incubatees. In other words, this need is calculated by "*perceived importance*".

The distribution of points on the top map shows the intersection of the importance and performance perceived by the "incubates" with regard to the list of services. Thus, a relative level of satisfaction is expressed by the importance/performance ratio of each item.

¹<https://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/national-business-incubation-association-nbia.html>

As shown in Figure 8, nine services are in the positive zone with performance and perceived importance above 0. On the other side of the map, 17 items have positively perceived importance with performance levels below the incubates desired performance. These results seem very important to us. On the one hand, they demonstrate the importance that the incubatees feel for the different services that appear in the list of items, and on the other hand, they highlight the level of performance remains low, with only nine services (almost 1/3 of the services) escaping the negative zone.

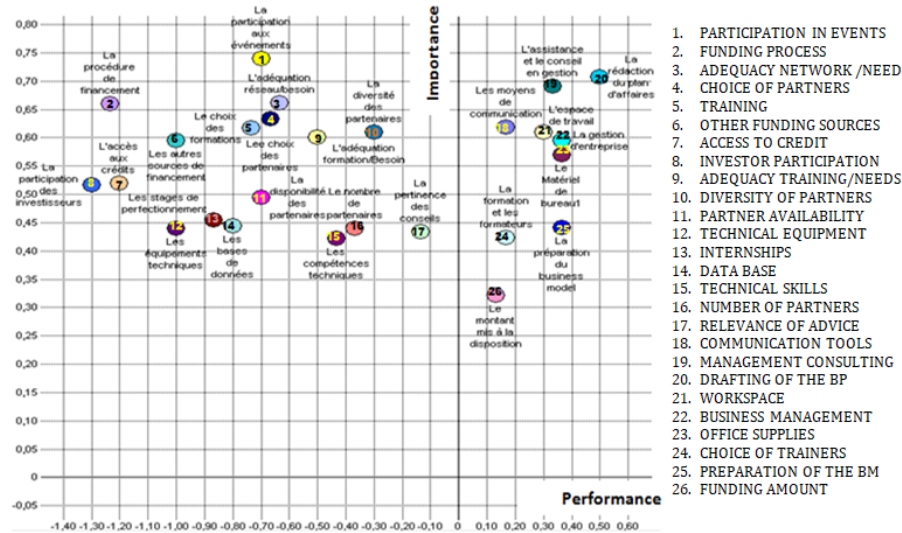


Figure 9. The importance/performance map perceived by the incubates

Source: Authors' results in Sphinx

Discussion

It should be noted that the majority of the incubators surveyed in this study were not created until after 2000. This does not prevent us from finding the existence of several categories of incubators: gas pedals, incubators, nurseries, and incubation programs. Moreover, we underline a particular tendency towards innovative entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, which together constitute an advance in the Moroccan context. Except that the social vocation of the incubator and social entrepreneurship, as an entrepreneurial modality, creates a remarkable terminological confusion for our respondents. For Chandra (2007), a social incubator does not specifically "produce" social entrepreneurs, whereas an incubator that promotes social entrepreneurship seeks to incubate projects that necessarily have a social impact. This is all the more remarkable if we look at the activities of the Mohamed V incubation center for VSEs, which seeks to improve the social situation of its incubates through the creation of entrepreneurial projects.

In addition, another classification was identified according to the type of projects supported by the structure, taking into consideration this component reminds us of the classification of Aernoudt (2004) and Barbero et al. (2012;2014), which allows us to identify five categories of incubators: basic research incubators, mixed incubators, university incubators, and social incubators. In this study, the analysis of services, activities, and working methods shows that the majority of incubators are pre-incubators and incubators. Expressly, all the incubators in our list are interested in the business idea and assess its potential for success but neglect project holders who are already in business and suffering from difficulties, with the exception of Technopark and the Moroccan Network of Entrepreneurship. The question that arises in this regard is: don't Moroccan companies really need incubators and gas pedals more than incubators?

Being a client of an incubator implies "tailor-made" support that meets the priority needs of the projects to be incubated. Certainly, there are global and generic services for all fields of activity; nevertheless, specialized expertise is more solicited by incubates. This can be done externally through advanced training courses or internally in partnership with experts from the incubator's network. Moreover, the incubatees surveyed approve of the existence of incubation services, the main ones being accommodation, training, coaching, and management assistance. The entrepreneurs' satisfaction with the incubator team is positive in general. This result is due to the effort of the program manager and the director, which means that they assume their functions.

However, funding remains limited and is not a priority for the incubator -according to respondents- This can be explained, in part, by the cumbersome funding procedure. Apart from the RMIE funding, the incubators are not able to the means they currently have to suggest other funding alternatives, especially the participation of private investors. Along with other services, financing remains the tricky part of any project, if not its core. The needs of entrepreneurs vis à vis incubators are clearly targeted on functional services and infrastructures and have a strong impact on their incubator satisfaction (Arlotto et al., 2011). Indeed, in many cases, candidates applying for incubation are attracted by the motivating incentives that the incubator claims to be ready to pay if the project is competitive. However, this is not always feasible in the face of complicated funding procedures. On the side of private and associative incubators, this problem does not arise with the same severity; we notice that they diversify their financial partners and sponsors on a national and global scale. In 2018 the Innov'invest fund was adopted by the Compensation and Management Fund for the financing of start-ups and innovative projects; to our surprise, no public incubator is among the structures presented to candidates and selected for the management of this fund.

Finding a professional property is one of the difficulties encountered by project leaders in the first years of activity. Indeed, the high rental charges weigh heavily on the company's expenses. Thus, the hosting of the incubated incubator can be a solution to alleviate the costs incurred and also a means to ensure the credibility of the project with stakeholders. In the case of our study, it should be noted that being "hosted" is simply having a workspace to prepare the project.

CONCLUSIONS

At the first of our manuscript, we've formulated our problem as below: To what extent do incubation structures in Morocco promote the success of the entrepreneurial act? We believe that this question relates to a general issue of the practice of incubation in Morocco, but it can reflect how effective business incubators in supporting entrepreneurs are. So we had to discuss it from two angles of analysis:

- From an external point of view: What types of incubation structures operate in a Moroccan context?

So far, our study has tried to identify a general classification of incubators. Certainly, we have not reached all the structures operating in the context, but we've touched on the principal sides of the phenomenon.

- From an internal point of view: what are the services offered by these structures? Do they respond to the expectations of the companies supported?

The second part of our empirical study treats the impressions of incubates about their experience, especially being supported by an incubator. Of course, satisfaction is a subjective parameter, but it steels the perfect approval of the existence or the lack of services.

In conclusion, we hope that this article will contribute, albeit modestly, to the body of research on business incubation in Morocco. The present study is intended to be an in-depth study through its "panoramic" reading of business incubation. From a practical point of view, we used a multi-method scheme that allowed us to exploit different data sources and foresee their

complementarity. In this way, we were able to get a clear idea of the particularities of business incubation in Morocco based on the vision of both the managers of this industry and the incubatees (beneficiaries of incubation services).

The results of this study show that business incubation does exist. According to the official texts, it began its development in the year 2000. However, we assume that its effective beginning dates back to 2010, and it shows a significant evolution in terms of objectives, orientations, and incubator creation rates. Nevertheless, the incubators of the RMIE, which should be the basis of any initiative in this direction, are experiencing a particular regression, namely by closing or disappearing.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

In spite of the strong points that can characterize this work, there are many limitations. From a methodological point of view, the choice we made is an option that could have been completed by an internship or training within an incubator instead of the visits scheduled or assisted by the incubator director. This shortcoming is accentuated by the limited response rate to our questionnaires. The data analysis could be taking another shape if the number of respondents was more important than the existent. Indeed, the effect of the business incubation can be measured by an econometric analysis which needs a large list of answers. Better yet, case studies can be mobilized in such a study and achieve better results. All of these limitations can be taken into consideration for future research that deals with business incubators and their impact.

Future Research Recommendations

We are convinced that this study can only reflect a small part of the practice of business incubation in Morocco, so we hope that scientific production in this field will multiply and that the field of research will expand. First, developing methods of accompaniment that take into consideration the cultural, social, and economic particularities of the Moroccan entrepreneur. Second, by studying the different profiles of entrepreneurs in order to nurture companies in line with the needs of the market. Finally, by exploring new modes of financing in favor of young companies.

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