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Sandwich- Course in Higher Education and Entrepreneurship Awareness: Case of the Graduates from University Apprenticeship Training Centre, Corsica

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Abstract- Long limited to level V and VI courses, often intended for students who failed academically, sandwich courses radically tarnish this typical image and gradually gain ground in higher education. Increasing the average graduation rate, ensuring a better vocational integration, this training system has proven to be a path to excellence and a pathway to employment. Sandwich courses in higher education seems to stay the course in a gloomy social and economic context, especially among young graduates. Such a situation is first due to learning reasons (graduation rate, promotion majors...), but ultimately, sandwich courses pull out of the game in the workforce market by potentiating concurrently occupational integration, graduates' employability and entrepreneurship awareness. CFA Univ Corsica, a regional leader in sandwich courses after completion of secondary studies (60% of students in Corsica), is the structuring player in the island economy insofar as almost 8000 island companies will have to be sold within the next 10 years.

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Sandwich- Course in Higher Education and Entrepreneurship Awareness: Case of the Graduates from University Apprenticeship Training Centre, Corsica

Christophe Storaï [α] & Laetitia Rinieri [σ]

Abstect- Long limited to level V and VI courses, often intended for students who failed academically, sandwich courses radically tarnish this typical image and gradually gain ground in higher education. Increasing the average graduation rate, ensuring a better vocational integration, this training system has proven to be a path to excellence and a pathway to employment. Sandwich courses in higher education seems to stay the course in a gloomy social and economic context, especially among young graduates. Such a situation is first due to learning reasons (graduation rate, promotion majors...), but ultimately, sandwich courses pull out of the game in the workforce market by potentiating concurrently occupational integration, graduates' employability and entrepreneurship awareness. CFA Univ Corsica, a regional leader in sandwich courses after completion of secondary studies (60% of students in Corsica), is the structuring player in the island economy insofar as almost 8000 island companies will have to be sold within the next 10 years. This contribution strives to highlight this reality by recounting the case of graduates of the CFA Univ Corsica.

Keywords: higher education-sandwich course-occupational integration - entrepreneurship awareness - business creation and takeover.

I. Introduction

Corsica is exemplary of a region characterised by an ageing workforce requiring a necessary medium-term adjustment of regional training strategies in response to this reality. A major lever to region development and social regulation, the island training system should adapt its offer focusing on adapting the sandwich placement-training relationship. This observation implies the need to boost a permanent strategy to develop partnerships with the stakeholders of the island socio-economic world (companies, associations, local communities and fund collecting and distributing agencies) likely to fundamentally contribute to the valorisation of the fundamental parameters specific to a developing region (concurrent increase of the employability capacity and the quality of the professional integration of its human resources, massive changes in the level of skills directly relating to the needs expressed by the region in this area, smooth and controlled transfer of knowledge with sandwich course, sustainable entrepreneurship awareness...).

In times where unemployment is skyrocketing, in particular in young graduates, it is now obvious that sandwich placement training agreements with a view to obtaining a tertiary diploma is gaining a foothold. Outstanding graduation rates, proven gains in maturity, significant employability recognition, occupational integration immediately secured as well as entrepreneurship awareness, are the actual findings and promotional determinants of the sandwich placement training system in higher education in general, and at the University of Corsica in particular.

This contribution will focus on analysing the lessons learned from the last 6 surveys on apprenticeship students from the University of Corsica, including in terms of entrepreneurship (business creation or takeover)[1]. This reality can also be understood through the prism of business transfer and takeover in Corsica, which is an essential challenge in terms of the region economic development and planning.

a) Sandwich course as a path to excellence develops entrepreneurship awareness: a tangible reality at the University of Corsica

The sandwich course system characteristics at Uni tend to improve the anticipated results around an assessment trio: graduation/ termination of agreements / apprentice- student employability. Based on the mix of audiences (*classic* student */ apprentice-student, active* student[2]), it gives students *the opportunity* to study

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[1] See Storai & Rinieri (2016) for more details on this point The CFA UNIV annually conducts ministerial surveys on sandwich placement training system students (follow-up on employability in March N+1, of outgoing students (graduates or not) through the sandwich course system).

[2] Known as *employee on training*. The *continuous vocational trainee* (job seeker) may also join the workforce category.

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under a specific process, but it is not, under any circumstances, an *obligation*. This reality shows that only students, motivated by their professional project and/or gaining a better employability through on-the-job training, choose the sandwich course curriculum.

The following highlights credibility and legibility of sandwich placement training course at the University of Corsica.

i. *Graduation in the diploma studied for, repetition and termination of contract* [3]

Tabel 1

Apprentice-Students (academic year/ number of students)	Graduation rate (%)	Repetition (%)	Contract Termination (%)
(2015/2016) 316 (2014/2015) 298 (2013/2014) 312 (2012/2013) 275	93.4 92.6 91.7 94.7	4.1 4.4 5.1 1.7	2.5 3.0 3.2 3.6
(2011/12) 248 (2010/11) 235	93.4 92.4	1.8 1.7	4.8 5,9
(2009/10) 165	88.5	6.7	4.8
(2008/09) 120	88.33	5.8	5.8

The above data clearly show the performance of the sandwich placement training system at the University of Corsica in the light of the *canonical* parameters of the Apprenticeship Training Centre (CFA) in higher education.

Graduation in the diploma prepared is driven by the academic supervisor / apprentice-student / apprentice-ship company manager trio. Double coaching around the apprentice-student is found to be an effective tool against education failure (or training drop out) leading to the contract termination.[4]

In higher education in general and at the CFA UNIV Corsica in particular, a referent teacher or an academic supervisor is appointed to supervise the progress of the apprenticeship-student throughout the course. His contractual relationship with the training center comprises several tasks:

- ✓ establishing a structural connection with the host company of the trainee through at least 3 annual visits to the workplace;
- ✓ setting, in collaboration with the on-the-job tutor, the task(s) assigned to the apprenticeship-student in connection with his learning progress and skills gained during the on-the-job training by integrating the needs expressed by its host company;
- ✓ ensuring the course is understood throughout the period and helping match the expectations of the on-the-job tutor of the company.

In the sandwich course system, the manager, the supervisor remains in most of the cases, the on-the-job company tutor (apprenticeship manager) of the student. Tutoring is directly related to the sandwich course (Lockwood, 2005) originating in the companion-ship and the apprentice / master relationship. Therefore, all efforts to boost the transfer of skills through tutoring implicitly requires a de facto development of sandwich course.

Originally, all masters are committed to passing on what they learned. Tutoring is therefore an inductive teaching approach, based on an accompanied work situation (Fredy-Planchot, 2007).

A coordination principle links the student to the supervisor based of an apprenticeship agreement, approved by the CFA and the academic supervisor. For an apprenticeship student[5], the supervisor is the counterpart of the in-job company supervisor, at the training centre Tutoring is a set of resources, especially human resources mobilised by a company to integrate and train from the work situation (Clénet, 2000). Originally an improvised, spontaneous, approximate practice (Pennaforte A. and Pougnet S., 2012), tutoring tends to become a shared sense, where the supervisor/beginner relationship would be a dynamic,

[3] These calculations were presented at various meetings of the Development Council of the CFA UNIV Corsica.

[4] In the 35 tertiary courses available in sandwich courses at the University of Corsica selecting the candidates, repetition is not necessarily appropriate.

[5] In 95% of cases an apprentice-student.

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learning and interactive relationship, unlike disorganised or academic transfers (Astier P., Conjard P., Devin B., Olry P., 2006).

Teaching programmes from CFA Corsica last 6 years of business, clearly show a positive relation between the quality of coordination of concerted actions led by both the in-company supervisor / academic supervisor and determining the criteria to a successful sandwich contract (graduation, integration of the apprentice-student in their host company, hiring him at the expiry of the agreement...).

In this context, the desire to become *a real manager* (Drucker 2016) appears as a trend showing a real *entrepreneurship awareness* in the realisation of the apprentice-student business projects.

ii. *Entrepreneurship awareness or real management awareness through sandwich courses?*

The table[6] below lists all entrepreneurs graduated from the University through sandwich course programmes in the 6 months following completion of the course. 31 *gross* entrepreneurs, family business takeover excluded, (6.1% students have graduated through the sandwich course system since 2010) have proven this fact.

To date, none of these entrepreneurial projects has been abandoned; this shows, at least intrinsically, a real managerial capacity of apprentice-students.

Tabel 2

Creation	years	graduates/number of students	Areas	employment	%
8	2010	Vocational Bachelor's Degree Digital Design /4 University Diploma in Technology [DUT] Marketing /2 Master in Risks /1 Master Water /1	Web Design Clothing store Risk prevention Service provision Engineering	71	11.3
5	2011	Vocational Bachelor's Degree Digital Design /2 Professional Bachelor's Degree Entrepreneurship /2 Professional Bachelor's Degree /1	Web Design Construction, real estate Risk prevention	57	8.7
6	2012	Vocational Bachelor's Degree Civil Engineering /1 Master in Computer science /3 Vocational Bachelor's Degree Commerce /1 Vocational Bachelor's Degree Electricity Electronics /1	Construction Multimedia, audio-visual Computer Science Personal Care Services Home Automation	51	11.8
3	2013	Vocational Bachelor's Degree Digital Design /3	Communication Web Design	61	4.9
4	2014	Master in Computer science /2 Master in Renewable Energies /2	Mobile applications Engineering	110	3.6
2	2015	Prof Bach. ATC /2	Web Design Communication	95	2.1
3	2016	Master in Management /1 Master in Renewable Energies /1 Master in Computer science /1	Personal Care services Engineering Mobile applications	65	4,6

[6] Whose data are taken from the annual ministerial survey (see s*upra* note 1*)*

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If we look at the perception of entrepreneurship according to Julien and Marchesnay (1996).

"*Entrepreneurship can be defined as the ability of an individual, of a social group, of a community to take risks to commit capital (or even commit to get involved) in a sort of adventure ('company'), to bring something new (innovation), creative, using and combining in the most efficient way of various resources*" (*ibid* 1996).

According to the Entrepreneurship syncretic approach proposed by Paturel (2007), the entrepreneurial spirit is fundamental to the project approach. An entrepreneur is characterised by a specific state of mind of tenacity and initiative. Skills that, strictly speaking, cannot be taught at any school. However, starting a business is a difficult process and the entrepreneur must seek help with his approach. In that sense, programmes taught through a sandwich course have proven very useful for the future entrepreneur.

However, any student enrolled in a sandwich course may not have necessarily the entrepreneur skills, but he may be able to *manage someone else's initiative*. Sandwich courses and pathways are likely to provide the market with candidates who have developed skills and qualifications that help them manage initiatives.

b) From Entrepreneurship Awareness to building a regional knowledge economy: a reality in progress

Even if there is a significant number of managers in the employment market, the characteristics of a new or a small business [6]driven by development opportunities (hence job creations) require the integration of individuals who know how to assess both general policy and strategy in its different dimensions (and not only an operational strategy), in terms of wording or variation. Without a firmly entrepreneurial behaviour or nature, the student's skills and knowledge on the initiative may however help start a business.

Finally, the benefits of the sandwich course policy based on entrepreneurship, may be grouped into two interlinked categories

- ✓ *Knowledge on Entrepreneurship and 'Intrapreneurship':* apprentice-students work with company managers during their apprenticeship period, these people are therefore trained to support a leader in expressing and implementing initiatives and in managing of multiple (and interdisciplinary) involvements within the company. Gaining the second category of skills, these people become potential entrepreneurs.
- ✓ *initiative management*: apprenticeship boosts entrepreneurial abilities referring to anticipating (prospective logic), developing a strategic vision, to creativity, as well as developing and specifying the strategy in the daily management (strategic management). By training independent human resources and giving them empirical knowledge of the business world, apprenticeship develops cognitive capacities that help take initiatives and create a business.

Such observation that should perpetuate, logically boosts the path to building a *knowledge economy* adapted to the needs of the island territory. With the concurrent increase of qualification and employability of students generated by the development of the sandwich placement training system in higher education in general and at the University of Corsica, structuring, creating and taking over entrepreneurial businesses in Corsica, are thoroughly consolidated. This trend, now well established in Corsica, is vital to the development of an ever-changing region.

II. Conclusion

The objective of this contribution lies in the analysis of the positive properties of the sandwich course system in higher education in terms of entrepreneurship awareness through the prism of the CFA activity in Corsica and its impact on the social and economic structure in Corsica. Conservative values highlighted by the combined roles of the in-company supervisor / academic supervisor help transfer know-ledge, technical skills and know-how, essential to the corporate world. As for the created added value, it is visible both on the intrapreneurial side with level a 1, 2 and 3 hiring, particularly boosting micro-businesses and SMEs on the island, and on the emergence of an entrepreneurial spirit with a significant rate of entrepreneurs and businesses taken over by former apprentice-students. Qualities such as versatility, independence and flexibility are potentiated in students enrolled in sandwich course in higher education.

Finally, besides the transfer of skills and intellectual boost from that specific training system, its purpose is to meet economic challenges with business development opportunities (business creation and takeover, internal development), but above all, to meet HR challenges by strengthening organisations. To this end, the empirical framework introduced by Corsica, a small island economy, is most exemplary.

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[7] features on 95% of entrepreneurial structures in Corsica.

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