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Market Orientation for a Contextualized Professionalization of Higher Education in Africa: State of Art

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Abstract

Market Orientation is a managerial philosophy governing the behavior of all actors in an organization to create greater value for the benefit of all stakeholders. Considered in the field of education, this managerial culture presupposes questioning and involvement of the various stakeholders (students, companies, university competitors, etc.) allowing consideration of educational actions for the benefit of all these actors. The professionalization of teaching has been one of the major challenges of African educational systems for several decades. To meet this need, African governments have imported several education systems, the latest of which is the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate (BMD) system. We aim in our paper to posit that Africa was not ready for a world uniformization of diploma as BMD subsystem implemented. In this review of the literature, we compare publications to present the concept of Market Orientation, its conception in higher education and how it can be used to achieve goals of contextualized professionalization, using the Thirty Glorious Years and that of China's period of industrialization to support understanding. This review finds that implementation of a market-oriented culture can allow higher education to offer a response adapted to the expectations of society through five points summarized as 1) Orientation toward Policy-Makers; 2) Enterprises Orientation; 3) Competition Orientation; 4) Teachers and Students orientation; 5) Inter-functional coordination.

Keywords: *Market orientation, Professionalization of teaching*

Introduction

The professionalization of higher education is a need for Africa's governments independence. It could help to link education to economic needs and reduce poverty. For education systems, professionalization will help to enhance external effectiveness of higher education. Professionalization of programs can improve the graduates' outlook in the job market. To achieve the goal of professionalization, higher education has imported several educational systems, the latest and currently used being the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system. This system aims to professionalize higher education and its effectiveness remains mixed, as demonstrated by many authors. Indeed, the reforms have taken place, but do not achieve the expected results in terms of improving employability (Bouba, 2014), enhancing personal and professional qualities (Bomda, Fozing and Mgbwa, 2022) or even the overall situation of unemployment and underemployment (Avom & Nguekeng, 2019). Criticisms against this system have been made in other countries on the continent, notably in Algeria (Ghouati, 2022) and Senegal where its cancellation is being considered. This inadequacy is seen in an increasing underemployment rate. Indeed, according to economists, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region of the world most dependent on its agricultural sector, but the low competitiveness of traditional agriculture and struggle for access to natural resources have contributed to accelerating the massive continuous migration of peasants towards the cities (Nkuitchou, 2022). This is why African cities have seen their population multiply by more than ten times during the 20th century (Banque Africaine de Développement [BAD], 2020). This strong mismatch between the need for skills and the quality/level of education has harmful effects on employment conditions (BAD, 2020) and consequently on economic growth.

The objective of this article is to propose some axes for building and implementing a higher education

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system that meets the contextual needs of the economies of African countries. To achieve this, the author's research group has developed a documentary analysis that allows them to specify the definition of the concept of professionalization adapted to higher education, return to the conceptualization of the concept of market orientation and subsequently detail the axes of structuring and implementing a system of professionalization of higher education in a market-oriented logic. Without the pretension of completeness, at different stages, they enlighten their objectives by using two examples: the Thirty Glorious Years and the China experience.

Conceptual Framework

The meanings taken by the word "professionalization" closely depend on the conditions of its appearance and its use (Wittorski, 2008; Boussard, 2014; Ghouati, 2022). The authors retain three specific meanings. Firstly, it concerns the professionalization of an activity understood as "the process by which an activity becomes a liberal profession driven by an ideal of service" (Wittorski, 2014, p. 16). Secondly, comes the professionalization of training or employment, which consists of promoting the development of knowledge and skills through processes of learning, acquisition and development of skills that transform a learner into a professional (Wittorski, 2012; Boussard, 2014). Finally, comes professionalization understood as the evolution of an organization or a function (functional service) of the organization towards the production of organized and efficient work through the development of the flexibility of people at work (Wittorski, 2012). This last typology is based on current developments within organizations which are: work planning; the transition to a logic of results; as well as the transition from a centrally controlled system to a certain decentralization of responsibilities.

In higher education, the authors mostly retain two conceptions of the professionalization concept. Firstly, the professionalization of the teaching activity consists of giving the teaching activity the character of a profession. Secondly, the professionalization of training consists of creating a link between training and the labor market (Abdourhaman, 2018, Ghouati, 2022).

Professionalization of Teaching Activity

The professionalization of teaching activity is inspired by the work of sociologists who were first functionalists, then interactionists and finally conflictualists on the dynamics of professions (Abdourhaman, 2018). According to the latter, "professions" present a certain number of criteria such as autonomy, peer control, the ideal of service and a higher degree of university education. The contemporary issue of teacher professionalization arises from a manifest desire to recognize the long-scorned teaching body. But does the tribute to teaching activity really comes with the temporary professionalization revolution?

The tribute to the teaching profession is very old. It goes back almost to the depths of human civilization. Historically justified initially in the satire of Khety's Satire of the Trades written around 1940–1900 BCE. The teacher is described as an official and high dignitary of the Egyptian kingdom (Marshall, 2016). The aim of education was to train "scribes" who could subsequently specialize in various fields such as medicine, veterinary science, architecture, mathematics, astronomy, theology, law, painting, diplomacy, or translation (Mounier-Kuhn, 2020).

However, the authors demonstrate that this profession subsequently deteriorated when it reappeared in Greece between the 16th and 18th centuries as part of Protestant reforms and Catholic counter-reforms. Mainly carried out by women, the teaching activity is then linked to a certain vocation, a subjective impulse through which we feel called to fulfill an essential mission: that of teaching. The lack of training for these candidates was justified by the promotion of feminine virtues such as love of children, devotion, obedience, and the spirit of service and sacrifice. The working conditions of a profession were not there either. Women teachers were required to fulfill their mission regardless of their material condition, even in the most miserable conditions. Developments in teaching activity in Western history will also be initially marked by the rise of the first public and secular school networks and the integration of teachers into the public service. normal schools are created and gradually become compulsory (Tardif, 2013).

The "Age of the Profession" corresponds to the constitution of a professional identity of the teaching body, perceptible by external signs such as the training, swearing-in, solemn presentations of diplomas, special outfits, etc. (Maingari, 1997; Abdourhaman, 2018); but also perceptible by internal methodological rigor such as the definition of a pedagogical profile of the teacher as well as the definition of a knowledge base for the teaching profession (Tardif, 2013). Thus, the meaning of the professionalization concept in the logic of the

professionalization of teachers is mainly inspired by the definition of a professional group. It is indeed a question of changing the status of teaching from a trade to a profession as in the Anglo-Saxon sense. This evolution implies a university education of high intellectual level, the definition of a scientific and specific knowledge base allowing teachers to be considered as pedagogical specialists (Tardif 2022), as well as professional autonomy, or at least recognition, both legal and social, that the professional is best positioned to decide on the actions one must take in any professional situation (Wittorski, 2014).

Professionalization of Training

The conception of professionalism of training in higher education comes to complete the conception seen before. Indeed, among the criticisms made of higher education to demand its professionalization, its external effectiveness figures prominently. The current variation of professionalization suggests aligning traing training with employment. In a narrow vision, this conception would reflect the idea of "professional training" (Boussard, 2014; Wittorski, 2014) and in this logic, professionalization would use teaching as it would have used other organizations involved in training. However, in a more globalizing vision, and especially in connection with the problem of external inefficiency of higher education, it is rather a system for promoting employment responding to the social quest of states to fight against unemployment, underemployment and, by extension, poverty (Abdourhaman, 2018) supposed to link training to a specific need of the labor market.

In other words, professionalization conceived as a particular system for promoting employment, can be conceived on the one hand as the implementation and acquisition of a base of skills (knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills) by learners (vocational training) or elsewhere in a more global way as a mechanism for regularizing education in order to produce graduates in quantities and numbers useful to the economy of a given region.

By summarizing, two complementary concepts emerge from what precedes the professionalization of teaching activity as a process of revalorization the profession of teaching and the training professionalization as a mechanism for improving the external efficiency of the higher education system. We use these conceptual bases to analyze articles and works relating to the implementation of the concept of market orientation in higher education. Our basic hypothesis is that the implementation of Market Orientation would indeed provide better operationality to the professionalization process.

Methodology

The context described above led us to undertake qualitative review of the literature based on the analysis of a series of articles and books. The authors suggest that Africa was not ready for a world uniformity of diploma as a BMD subsystem implemented. In professionalization of higher education, many African countries need to link higher training to political and economic needs. The authors also aim to support the professionalization goals of African countries. As a profession, educators need to construct a higher education subsystem that is Market Oriented. To verify this claim, the authors use a data collection and analysis strategy which is explained in this section.

Data Gathering

The authors have previously constituted a corpus of text to study relating to the synthesis of the concept of market orientation to provide a synthetic presentation. The authors then deepened the research by bringing together as many documents as possible relating to the adoption of market orientation in higher education. This research has mainly extended over the past ten years, providing the most updated information on the subject. But also, this choice is dictated by the relative recency of the use of the concept in higher education even if the literature reveals however that the implementation of the related techniques was introduced to higher education much earlier. As readers need to have more information about the educational subsystem for economic growth, the authors end chose some documents relating to the economic growing in some other regions in the world especially during "the Thirty Glorious Years" and the China experience.

Data Analysis

We submitted all the documents to a content analysis by proceeding to a complete reading of each document beforehand to determine the objectives and results obtained when it was a scientific study (article), but also, to determine the quintessence of the conceptual evolutions on the subject through the book chapters. The researchers share their interpretation of the patterns in the literature as they relate to implementation of Market Orientation in higher education.

Market Orientation and its Implementation into Higher Education

The concept of Market Orientation finds its foundations in the work of Kohli and Jaworsky (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990). It is then considered as "the implementation of the marketing concept" (Kohli & Jaworsky, 1990, p. 5). The latter designates "a philosophy which postulates that the long-term profitability of a company is better ensured by focusing its activities on satisfying the needs of the consumers who make up one or more target segments" (p. 5). Thus, its initial conceptualization is based on three essential dimensions: customer orientation, competition orientation and inter-functional coordination (Narver and Slater, 1990).

However, the concept of Market Orientation differs from that of Traditional Marketing in the sense that the concept of Traditional Marketing is solely customer-oriented and is generally confined to the marketing department, while the concept of Market Orientation is oriented towards the key players in the market and is seen as a cross-cutting culture that challenges all company functions at all hierarchical levels (Khan, Khan & Rafique, 2023). Initially made up of the components of customer orientation and competition orientation in its founding definitions, reflections on Market Orientation will be based on fundamental theories of organizations such as stakeholder theory and agency theory in order to evolve towards the birth of two new theoretical propositions.

Firstly, the question of the consideration of dimensions of market orientation was reconsidered by the progressive integration of all the stakeholders of the organization (Bugandwa, 2013), secondly, the Market Orientation has been understood from its foundation as an organizational culture solely guided by a principle of defensive management (Ngatno, 2019). This translates into a reaction to the non-completely satisfied needs of customers. However, organizational performance strategies will also translate into anticipating competitive decisions and forecasting markets (Schulze, Townsend & Talay, 2022). The integration of a proactive logic and by extension of an offensive management, thus makes it possible to define the concept of Market Orientation in a more complete and more structured way. This is why the concept of Market Orientation will be defined more globally like a managerial philosophy governing the behavior of all actors in an organization for the creation of greater value for the benefit of all stakeholders (Khan, Khan & Rafique, 2023).

A pure transposition of the Market Orientation model from the for-profit field (customer orientation, competition orientation, inter-functional coordination) to higher education raises great controversy. However, several studies have simply limited themselves to it (Hammond, Webster, & Hammond, 2020), while others have still made a real adjustment to take into consideration the specificities of the education markets in general and especially in the higher education field. The authors will first proceed with a presentation of the criticisms brought to a pure transposition of Market Orientation in higher education to better support the concept, before succinctly presenting the implementation model they support for Market Orientation adapted to higher education.

Criticisms of Pure Transpositions of Market Orientation to Higher Education

The criticisms made of the transposition of Market Orientation into an educational context are of two complementary orders and stipulate that teaching has no commercial scope; therefore, the student cannot be considered a customer.

The first criticisms of the importation of techniques and tools from commercial companies to educational institutions consist of the consideration that educational institutions would be considered more as non-profit institutions and therefore non-market (Dwyer, 2022). A non-profit organization can be defined as an organization established for altruistic, moral, social, educational, religious, philanthropic, health, etc. purposes and whose activities must not provide any economic advantage to its members and donors. It can be safely said that HEIs falls under the non-profit sector since educational institutions in general and especially higher education institutions (HEIs) serve the public good.

The second criticism arises from the fact that in Market Orientation considerations, the students are generally assimilated to the customer. This consideration is recurrent in Anglo-Saxon works due to the high tuition fees that completely cover the cost of education (e.g.: Webster, Hammond and Rothwell, 2017). However, most students and practitioners in French-speaking countries reject this consideration for two reasons. The first is conceptual and clearly poses the question: "Is the 'customer' concept semantically the right one to design students?" (Bugandwa, 2013, p. 70).

Drawing on stakeholder theory, supporters of Market Orientation in higher education will conceptualize a more digestible model adapted to higher education.

This managerial culture presupposes the questioning and involvement of various stakeholders (students, companies, universities competitors, public policy etc.) (Dwyer, 2022), allowing planners to think about educational actions for the benefit of all these actors (Bugwanda, 2013; Hammond, Webster, & Hammond, 2020). Actions can follow by cross-functional coordination which ensures the dissemination of resolutions and the creation of synergies within educational institutions (Mokoena, 2019). These practices are described by the expressions such as student-driven, competition orientation, enterprises and investors orientation, Orientation towards policymakers, cross-functional coordination and responsiveness (Bugwanda, 2013; Dollinger & Vanderlelie, 2020). Thus, a good implementation of a market-oriented culture makes it possible to generate an educational system that meets the envisaged contextual need. In this part we briefly present what each of the approaches to market orientation refers to according to the current literature and for each we have taken care to verify its application in the two economic growth models chosen as examples. Namely in particular the period of the Thirty Glorious Years and the Chinese growth experience.

Orientation Towards Policymakers

Orientation towards policymakers is supposed a perfect correlation between the needs of economic growth plans and educational goals (Dwyer, 2022). Firstly, the literature generally gives fundamental importance to the donors of non-profit organizations such as the government and government agencies, volunteers, etc. The public authorities, as the main financial provider of HEIs, it is important presumably to consider their interests which are generally of a societal nature.

In the medium term, the objective of higher education must be centered on the production in number and quality of graduate profiles corresponding to the planned needs of the economy. Indeed, according to the authors of the theory of human capital, we must invest more in education to stimulate and converge toward long-term growth (Moulin, 2022). In addition, public investment in education is accompanied by other positive effects since more educated people are healthier and have a longer life expectancy.

The French and Canadian experience of the Thirty Glorious Years Period (1945-1975) shows an "economization of higher education." A "welfare state" was quickly formed in both countries (Doret & Manifet, 2017; Bongrand, 2021). Indeed, according to the authors, it is a matter of "promoting education as a lever for economic policy." In France, we are witnessing vast transformations in higher education, marked first by the democratization of higher education, which was once elitist. This "democratization" is thus inseparable from the economization of the educational institution. In fact, the reform attempts to adjust the structures and operating methods of the public education service to the anticipated evolution of needs for qualified personnel. It is in this perspective that the Berthoin decree of January 6, 1959, the official kick-off of the reform, urges "investment to full benefit" in school, presented as an instrument capable of converting "human expansion" of the baby boom in "economic expansion 21" (Bongrand, 2021). This movement led at the end of the 1960s to the equating of training with employment in administrative nomenclatures.

The more recent Chinese experience (1980 to the present) is not an exception, in fact professional higher education has become "a pragmatic strategic choice which aims to take into account the main national characteristics". The government ensures its management and promotion. To this end, we note the launch of the construction of 100 professional higher education establishments in 2006 following a decision by the state council. Training is therefore oriented by the planning of the economy, and its design with industrial and commercial players as co-actors. (Yang and Lin, 2016). Indeed, professional higher education constitutes an exceptional alternative to higher education. It even tends to replace the latter by displaying an access rate of more than 50% of all national students in 2020 and constantly increasing.

Student-Driven or Student Orientation

Students' orientation will be defined as the degree to which universities try to consider the current and latent needs of their students (current and potential, and in a more extensive sense, their parents). Consistent with the Malcolm Baldridge Criteria for Education and based on the roles stated above, this orientation implies both the learning process and students' satisfaction. Students are the most cited stakeholders in the literature (eg: Bugandwa, 2013; Hammond, Webster, & Hammond, 2020; Dollinger & Vanderlelie, 2020; Muya, & Tundui, 2023). They play a vital and complex role in the existence and functioning of higher education institutions (Hammond, Webster, & Hammond, 2020). First, students constitute the raw material when they are admitted to higher education. Educators should then

use training and practice to produce well-trained and virtuous citizens. At this level, students' satisfaction is not a valid measure, because the end customer is society (public and private companies, educational institutes, hospitals, etc.). Thus, customer orientation applies here is not for the student but to other stakeholders who intend to use the students' skills (Aghajari, & Varij, 2023). Furthermore, students are actors in learning and co-producers of knowledge because they combine their efforts with those of the institution and those of the trainers to produce a particular finished product - themselves (Dollinger & Vanderlelie, 2020). In addition, they participate in the training process through their skills, and through the training previously acquired, and through their diligence.

From the previous analysis, the complexity of the role of students in their relationship with higher education institutions clearly emerges. However, it has the advantage of showing us that student orientation takes on meaning in higher education and can be conceptualized both in terms of students' satisfaction and in terms of improvement of learning (Meia, Stumpf, & Garessus, 2021). Little attention paid to students' requests reflects an asymmetry between training staff and learners (Serres, Escalié and Magendie, 2019).

According to the literature, everything suggests that student orientation was not a priority for higher education systems during the "Thirty Glorious Years" period. One of the justifying reasons can be found in the fact that the revolution in professional training was first carried out by young people, particularly in the departmental circles of young farmers aged 15 to 30 for whom young people must become apostles of knowledge, that is to say, "make training desirable" (Bongrand, 2020, p 40). Knowledge is then considered by the latter as the pivot of tomorrow's agriculture.

Indeed, according to the Chinese vocational training system, a modern vocational training system is not only one aligned with economic development but also one that "prioritizes student-centered development" (Yang and Lin, 2016, p. 148). However, this trend is quite recent, since around 2016, the training system was previously centered on the national strategy for balanced development. It therefore initially relied on the regional growth policy, the industrialization plan as well as small and medium-sized businesses in rural areas or booming activities in third- and fourth-tier cities (Jiang, 2015).

Enterprise Orientation

The role of companies in HEIs is perceived according to the literature in three main points: they are the first users of higher education products (training and research). They can be considered clients of these institutions through research contracts and lifelong training (Aghajari, & Varij, 2023). They are players in training thanks to internships in companies and the growing development of professional sectors which require their expertise. Thus, relations between higher education establishments and businesses go beyond simple financial relations, which means that companies are considered undeniably important stakeholders (Bugwanda, 2013).

For the two examples of development illustrated in this work, business orientation is an important dimension of professionalization in higher education. During the "Thirty Glorious Years," the transformation of the social role of school and the functionalization of the latter resulted firstly from increased investment on the part of industrial and agricultural circles (Bongrand, 2020). For companies in the 1950s, it was then a matter of integrating the "Training Within Industry" principle from the American economy. This principle is the basis of current life-long training. In China, businesses are the second pillar of vocational training after national development policy (Jiang, 2015). In 2014, President Xi Jinping reiterated this again in these terms: "We must continue the integration of production and education, cooperation between enterprises and establishments, the combination of work and study and the unity between knowledge and action, but also lead the community, especially industries and enterprises, to actively support vocational training and strive to build a vocational training system with Chinese characteristics." (Yang and Lin, 2016, p. 149).

Competition Orientation

The opening of education to the private sector as well as the globalization of education have brought with them the birth and growth of the concept of competition within higher education. Educational paths for an increasingly large proportion of students include an experience abroad (Moulin, 2022). These recent and profound transformations in higher education have the effect of fueling increased competition between students, between establishments and between national higher education systems. This competition, according to the authors, can be identified along three axes.

First, competition between higher education institutions in the same geographical area mainly linked to the democratization of higher education (Bongrand, 2021). Second, competition between national higher education systems and between institutions on an international scale. Indeed, with the globalization of higher education and especially the harmonization on an almost planetary scale of educational systems as promoted by the LMD system, educational paths are marked, for an increasingly significant part of students, by an experience abroad. Universities must now demonstrate their performance (university ranking) to attract the best minds or recruit internationally. Competition on an international scale therefore takes the form of rivalry sometimes in terms of performance (best rankings on a regional or international scale), sometimes in terms of marketing tactics to attract new recruits (awareness raising, promotional recruitment policies, etc.) (Bugandwa, 2013). The final form of competition is competition in the virtual market. It takes shape with the evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It mainly targets the continuing education market. Competition orientation therefore requires full awareness of this state of competition between universities and between national higher education systems.

The competition orientation is perceived in terms of competition between national higher education systems. A large part of the literature on the Chinese higher education system reports that Chinese professional higher education constitutes a unique contribution to the global education system (Jiang Dayuan, 2015). This professional education then constitutes an "inimitable source of vitality" for higher education (Yang and Lin, 2016). For the period of Thirty Glorious Years, the question of institutional competition resulted only in the concern for the various governments to keep their workers in regional growth zones (Bongrand, 2021).

Employees Orientation

The importance of employees in creating superior market values has been demonstrated in traditional Market Orientation literature (Khan, Khan & Rafique, 2023). Employee satisfaction is defined as an organization's intention to serve the interests of its employees and meet their needs. (Yau et al., 2007 cited in Bugandwa, 2013). In all organizations, especially service organizations, employees represent the cornerstone of the success of any strategy. To improve the quality of education, universities must encourage staff interactions with students. The satisfaction of the latter may also depend on the way in which non-academic staff organize their services in the different departments. The importance of teaching staff in higher education has been demonstrated along at least two lines.

First, the quality of training depends mainly on the teachers and employees of an establishment. Indeed, several studies on student satisfaction and the qualitative perception of training have shown a correlation between the latter and the well-being of administrative staff and that of professors in an establishment (Serres, Escalié and Magendie, 2019). This result is, however, tempered because other studies affirm that students say they are satisfied with a teacher when the teacher pays attention to their difficulties and makes efforts to help them assimilate the course (Dollinger & Vanderlelie, 2020).

Students' perception of academic performance then depends on the relational climate with the teachers and staff of the establishment. Doctoral research carried out on students from 11 Tunisian universities demonstrates that organizational commitment has a significant impact on perceived quality (Bugandwa, 2013). Indeed, according to these authors, organizational commitment is an antecedent of perceived quality in higher education.

Inter-Functional Coordination

Cross-functional coordination involves a clear understanding and smooth flow of information about key stakeholders' expectations and organizational beliefs, culminated by communicating these expectations through formal and informal means (meetings, brainstorming, etc.) to all members of the organization (Bughanda, 2013). This assumes that the process of creating stakeholder value is not the work of a single function, but rather the entire organization. This consideration is very clearly in line with that of Kohli and Jaworski (1990). Ultimately, it is about improving the way in which the educational organization is supposed to respond to its market. It also refers to the sense of shared values and beliefs and their relationship to achieving organizational goals. Cross-functional coordination involves the degree to which information about stakeholders and the macro environment is shared across the organization.

Responsiveness

This last dimension of market orientation in education is not really a dimension. It corresponds to the culmination of the first six dimensions and consists of the response, in terms of training architecture and the higher education training system, to the needs of society represented by the main stakeholders (Dwyer, 2022). As presented in the literature, this last point refers to the dimension of responsiveness as defined by Kohli and Jaworski (1990). Higher education can no longer evade its essential mission of responding to the needs of society (Bughanda, 2013). Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify that, more than any other organization, higher education institutions should not limit their actions to responding to external pressures. Instead of being subjected to such pressures and suffering the consequences, they are encouraged to act proactively in their environment. This is particularly important for higher education institutions, as students and other stakeholders may misunderstand their needs (Aghajari & Varij, 2023). Higher education should strive to change the behaviors of stakeholders, such as explaining to students the quality requirements in higher education, helping them understand their role in the learning process, etc. They can then base their initiatives on the vision of overall national policies in terms of medium-term needs of the national labor market.

In summary, the response to the professionalization of higher education in a logic of adequacy between training and employment is mainly driven by the national vision of the human capital needs of the various economic sectors. The two examples taken for this work confirm this reflection. Conceptually, this first position can be seen as an orientation towards political decision-makers. This initial orientation toward political decision-makers makes it possible to specify the areas of activity to be prioritized in the professionalization strategy as in the case of China (Yang & Lin, 2016). It will be followed by orientations towards the other stakeholders mentioned above (enterprises orientation, educational staff orientation, competition orientation, student orientation) in order to support and improve the content of the programs and use of appropriate pedagogy. Functional coordination will determine the capacity to distill the objectives pursued within all the actors and at all functional levels and to generate an adequate response at all levels of the overall training structure.

Are we ready for global harmonization of higher education?

We have theoretically analyzed what the professionalization of higher education refers to. In short, it is about adapting to one's political and economic environment. For some, it is about the economization and functionalization of higher education (Bongrand, 2021). For others, it is about preparing students by integrating production, teaching and research in the service of development and employment (Yang & Lin, 2016). Nkuitchou (2022, p.518) further demonstrated that we cannot talk about the same human capital in two environments where the stages of economic development and the growth objectives are different. Ultimately, African countries would benefit from working on defining a higher education system representative of its values, culture, and economy.

Conclusion

Since independence, the main mission of higher education for sub-Saharan African countries has been the response to personnel needs as determined by public policy. However, with a view to aligning with international developments, this primary vocation of African universities has been qualified by a certain number of logics which are however not necessary for the economic and social construction of our nations. Throughout this article we have argued that, in fact, in a logic of growth as expressed by most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, higher education has remained a tool for the construction of human capital necessary to achieve societal objectives. The ambition for professionalization, as stated by the educational authorities, finds its full meaning. However, it lacks implementation in the daily experience of higher education institutions. The concept of market orientation as stated above lays some foundations. Overall, the implementation of a market-oriented culture within professionalization objectives, involves:

1. Understanding national development objectives and their translation in terms of human capital needs; this first step is qualified as orientation toward policy makers.
2. Selection and integration into the definition, implementation, and monitoring of training content of companies whose activities are close to national priorities which can be call Enterprises Orientation.

3. The popularization of the quality of training planned or implemented to captivate and retain students name Competitor Orientation.
4. The promotion of the teaching staff as well as the progressive and controlled integration of comments from students and their parents seen as Teacher and Student Orientation.
5. All this is supported at each stage by excellent inter-functional coordination.

The examples used in this work without pretension of exhaustiveness contribute to demonstrating that a synergy of actions as defined above will allow higher education to offer a response adapted to the expectations of society. As economists point out, African economies, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa are mainly made up of informal businesses which create significant obstacles to the continent's development challenges (Nkuitchou, 2020). This dissonance is supported by chronic under-industrialization, a still rudimentary agricultural system. Faced with these economic issues, should the professionalization system adapt to its informal economic environment? or should it be aligned with growth planning which is sometimes limited to the sole description in documents?

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