

The Main Drivers of the Entrepreneurial Decision in the Social and Solidarity Economy: The Case of Moroccan Cooperatives and Associations

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the main determinants of the decision to launch a new venture in the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) in the Moroccan context. Its ultimate objective is to examine the key factors that may orient SSE project holders towards this form of entrepreneurship.

A quantitative study was conducted during the first semester of 2021 with 97 entrepreneurs-managers of cooperatives and associations from the two Moroccan regions: 'Fez-Meknes' and 'l'Orientale'.

The obtained results show that the decision to establish an SSE venture is mainly influenced by the following factors: the education and experience of the entrepreneur, his geographical territory where he has spent his personal or professional life, his desire to be independent, as well as his motivation to seize the opportunities he encounters in his environment.

Thus, prospecting and identifying the different factors that drive SSE ventures' founders to undertake in this field could help public authorities to implement relevant policies and to develop this sector by adapting their incentive measures to social entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, Decision to undertake, Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), Cooperatives, Associations, Morocco.

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INTRODUCTION

Social and solidarity economy structures, particularly cooperatives and associations, are the essential components of the Moroccan productive fabric, and entrepreneurship in this sector brings benefits to both entrepreneurs and stakeholders.

The development of this sector in Morocco is particularly relevant today, especially in view of the socio-economic context that the country is experiencing and the current changes that the whole world is undergoing. Indeed, such numerous changes reflected in the negative repercussions resulting from the effects induced by the COVID 19 pandemic, are affecting both the lives of people and organizations.

In is in this perspective that the SSE should provide answers to problems in terms of environmental protection, fight against poverty and exclusion, improvement of health care, creation of equal opportunities, etc. All those problems could be resolved via social innovation, solidarity savings, fair trade, microcredit, and the development of socially responsible enterprises taking into account the societal dimension. Public authorities might also support such enterprises through the establishment of convenient mechanisms and measures to promote the growth of the SSE in terms of value creation.

In the Moroccan context, SSE-related entrepreneurship is closely associated with the concept of social entrepreneurship. Although these two concepts are confused (Layadi, Rouggani, & Bouayad, 2019) due to the absence of a legal status defining the social enterprise, the conceptual ambiguity related to the concept of social entrepreneurship, and the existence of similar characteristics for both concepts, especially those associated to social vocation. Besides, several initiatives taken by the government are qualified as measures ensured to promote social entrepreneurship such as those made to develop the fabric of cooperatives and launch the INDH for the social and solidarity economy.

Moreover, the subject of social entrepreneurship is attracting a growing interest. Such interest among researchers and decision-makers and their enthusiasm for the subject could be explained by the importance of this sector and its contribution to inclusive and sustainable development (OCDE, 2001). In other terms, this form of entrepreneurship is

expected to bring up new solutions by tackling subjects such as micro-finance, humanitarian, social and/or environmental problems (Injaz Al Maghrib, 2016).

Addressing the subject of social entrepreneurship in Morocco through the lens of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) sector (Layadi et al., 2019), which has settled in the Moroccan economic and social landscape over the centuries, it has gone through the political and social changes of the Kingdom. It has also experienced a remarkable development in recent years in Morocco.

The SSE includes several key structures such as cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, companies and foundations (Mtf-groupe le matin, 2018) which contribute significantly to the economic and social development of countries. In this regard, we have chosen to explore the main factors that may influence the decision of entrepreneurs regarding the choice of this form of entrepreneurship. The focus was made on cooperatives and associations funded under the Human Development Initiative (INDH) in two Moroccan regions, namely the Eastern region and Fez-Meknes.

To this end, this article is structured in three parts. First, the theoretical framework of the study and the research hypotheses will be presented, before outlining the methodological framework, and finally the main obtained results will be analyzed and discussed before concluding.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

In what follows, the attention will be drawn on determining the essential factors that might guide the decision of entrepreneurs towards entrepreneurial activities in the SSE sector. For this purpose, the essential concepts of this research will be highlighted before identifying the main determinants of SSE entrepreneurs addressed by the entrepreneurial literature.

1.1. Social Entrepreneurship and SSE: Conceptual Clarification

Since this research focuses on studying the factors that may explain the decision to undertake among Moroccan entrepreneurs in the social and solidarity economy (SSE)

sector, it is therefore useful to clarify the concept of social entrepreneurship and to highlight its relationship with that of the SSE.

This concept of social entrepreneurship is currently present around the world, but its interpretation and implementation varies across countries and cultures (Layadi et al., 2019). Clarifying this concept is therefore fundamental to be able to address our research topic. In this perspective, Brouard (2007) confirms that defining a concept is the first step to understanding what it is. Indeed, the entrepreneurial literature on the subject of social entrepreneurship is rich in definitions, and although there is no unanimous and universal definition of this concept (Hemingway, 2005, Cited in Anne-Claire & Thierry, 2011; Khassal, 2018; Ocde, 2001; Peredo & McLean, 2006). We do not cite all the definitions of this concept; we are interested in citing some that we believe are relevant to our research question, namely, the analysis of the factors that drive entrepreneurs to undertake SSE in the Moroccan context.

It is noteworthy to mention in this perspective that since the early 1980s, many definitions of social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs have emerged (Chauffaut, Lensing, & Antonella Noya, 2013). However, to date, there is no unified vocabulary used to refer to this concept (OECD/European Union, 2013). Moreover, several similar terms such as social entrepreneur, social entrepreneurial organization, or even social enterprise, have often been used interchangeably in the literature to express the same idea (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Brouard & Larivet, 2010; Janssen, Bacq, & Brouard, 2012). The proliferation of definitions related to this notion can be explained by the absence of a unifying paradigm (Janssen et al., 2012). Some authors use the term to refer exclusively to the use of market logics for social purposes, while others, such as the international association *Ashoka*ⁱ, employ it to qualify social initiatives/ goals taken and sought by emblematic entrepreneurs, enactors of systemic change, while others highlight the innovative nature of projects carried out by those entrepreneurs.

According to Drayton (2002), social entrepreneurship is a major engine of change, whose fundamental values revolve around identifying, treating and tackling social problems.

According to Peredo and McLean (2006), social entrepreneurship occurs when an individual or group of persons objective(s) search to create social value ... demonstrate an ability to recognize and take advantage of opportunities ..., is innovative, ... accepts an above-average degree of risk ... and is particularly resourceful ... in the pursuit of social projects.

For some other scholars, social entrepreneurship is co-dependent on "any private activity of general interest organized on the basis of an entrepreneurial approach and having as its main reason the satisfaction of certain economic and social objectives, as well as the capacity to put in place innovative solutions to the problems of exclusion and unemployment." (Ocde, 2001).

Finally, according to Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, and Shulman (2009), social entrepreneurship

p encompasses activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities to increase social wealth by creating new businesses or managing existing organizations in innovative ways.

By analyzing these above definitions, it appears that the main purpose of social entrepreneurship is to find out solutions to social problems. A second central element in the definition of social entrepreneurship revolves around its social perspective and mission. Moreover, social entrepreneurship relies on social innovation and opportunities' seizing as integral parts of various definitions cited in the entrepreneurship field.

The whole question is therefore whether the structures emanating from the SSE can be qualified as social enterprises.

It would be hasty to assimilate social entrepreneurship to the creation of organizations in the social and solidarity economy sector. Although it can be applied to other areas, the term "social entrepreneurship" is much younger than the notion of "social economy": it is only in the 1990s that it began to have a significant resonance on both sides of the Atlantic. It seems to refer to a new impetus, a new dynamic, going beyond considerations related to the legal status of organizations or the political project (Brossard, 2009).

The Collective for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship (Codèsⁱⁱ) details that “social entrepreneurship does not replace, compete with or threaten the concept of social and solidarity economy”. It is rather “an opportunity for development for the sector”. It implies that social entrepreneurship on the one hand and SSE on the other hand constitute two distinct, but complementary levels of observation. In other words, “The SSE embodies a more historical, political and institutional vision; whereas social entrepreneurship favors an empirical, pragmatic and project-based reading” (Codes, 2007).

Consequently, social entrepreneurship can be defined as a set of innovative entrepreneurial actions, implemented by an individual or a group of persons, who identified market opportunities to tackle social, environmental and humanitarian problems of the community. Such individuals, who emanate from either the public or the private sector, could also target to change the mentality and behavior of social groups (Talbi & Sadiqi, 2020; Talbi, Sadiqi, & Ouarsafi, 2020).

1.2. The social and solidarity economy: the sector in which social entrepreneurship is deployed

After clarifying the notion of social entrepreneurship, it would be better to enlighten the evolution of this concept in the Moroccan landscape as well as to distinguish it from social enterprises and from social and solidarity economy (SSE). This will allow us to better define our research focus.

Historically, the SSE was first evoked in Rabat (Morocco) in 1987 during the organization by the department in charge of session planning in the international cooperative university (Adrdour, Oudada, & El Ouardi, 2016). In fact, the context of emergence of this concept coincides with the adoption of the structural adjustment program as early as 1990, which was necessary to restore the overall macroeconomic equilibrium (Adrdour et al., 2016). During this period, there was a gradual disengagement of the State in several economic or social areas, as well as a reduction in the availability of employment and public services. Moreover, the economic and social development

plans put in place over the period 1988-1992 made the SSE an alternative in terms of job creation and resource mobilization.

In the same perspective, since cooperatives were considered key structures of the SSE, they contributed significantly to the economic and social development of countries. Thus, since the Moroccan independence of 1956, the cooperative economic model has been a strategic choice for Morocco, seeking to ensure a national mobilization for the modernization and development of traditional sectors, particularly the agricultural one (Achour, 2018). For these reasons, these structures have attracted the attention of researchers in social entrepreneurship studies.

Similarly, Morocco recognized the importance of cooperatives and associations in 1958, and laws on associations and mutual societies were promulgated as a framework for national provident societies, mutual aid and solidarity in 1963 (Cese, 2015; Mtf-groupe le matin, 2018). These mutual insurance companies have been particularly present in the areas of social coverage, provident insurance and solidarity. They began to take a structured and organized form in the early 2000s (Cese, 2015). The historical field of intervention of the associative sector has mainly concerned the reduction of inequalities of income and access to basic needs (literacy, microcredit, integration of the handicapped and street children, integration of women, etc.). Meanwhile, it has been extended to the socio-economic sphere as well as the local development, the reduction of infrastructure deficits (electrification, drinking water supply, opening up of access by building roads, tracks, bridges, etc.), and in a whole all the activities that until then had been managed by the governmentⁱⁱⁱ.

In the same period, precisely in 1963, an administrative structure responsible for supporting cooperatives in the areas of training, information and legal support was set up under the name of the "Office of Development of Cooperation" (ODCO^{iv}) (Ahrouch, 2011). This office was restructured in 1975 to become a public enterprise with a legal personality and financial/ administrative autonomy (Ahrouch, 2011; Ait Haddout & Jaouad, 2003).

From the foregoing, and highlighting the main initiatives and strategies taken by the Moroccan state, it can be argued that the SSE has occupied since the 1990s, a considerable place in economic and social development programs. Those programs were reinforced in 2005 by the advent of the National Initiative for Human Development (henceforth INDH), based on a participatory approach that considers SSE enterprises at the center of the human development process. Therefore, the main objective of this mechanism was to contribute to human development by addressing the issues of cooperatives, associations and mutuals (Achour, 2018; De Miras, 2007). Moreover, the implementation of this initiative opened up the construction of a huge site and was a great opportunity for the development of the country through the establishment of support structures that were adapted to the SSE (Khatibi, 1998, cited in Achour, 2018).

In addition to those structures, Morocco has set up a multitude of other programs whose vocation was to accompany initiatives in this field. For instance, we can cite the Office for the Development of Cooperation, which is an agency responsible for implementing the government policy in the field of cooperatives. The Social Development Agency is also another institution dedicated to reducing poverty and promoting social development in Morocco. Furthermore, mention can be made, for example, of The National Mutual Aid, which is a support mutual whose mission is to provide all forms of aid and assistance to the population and to contribute to family and social promotion. A further example is The National Promotion, whose purpose is to coordinate and implement the achievement of full employment of the rural population in order to promote the development of the national territory (Cese, 2015)

More recent, other initiatives have emerged, such as the national program adopted to support youth entrepreneurship or the launch of a fund for entrepreneurship “INTELAQA” in January 2020, which aims to boost the creation of small and medium structures such as traders, artisans, SMEs, cooperatives in the country. It is based on financing solutions at low interest rates capped at 1.75% for beneficiaries in rural areas and 2% in urban areas. Such revolutionary rates were never applied earlier in the country.

To sum up, it appears that the concept of social entrepreneurship, which is currently marked by an important evolution in Morocco, remains at its embryonic stage, even if it is closely associated with that of the SSE. Thus, various studies^v carried out on this subject pointed out that the absence of regulations defining the constituent elements of social enterprises and specifying its rights and obligations (with a formal statute) make this type of structures little known and not well developed^{vi} in Morocco. Hence, it is recommended to develop a legal framework to recognize and promote social enterprises, whose social role is important for the country as a whole. In this vein, it should be indicated that cooperatives, associations or enterprises, might be listed as part of a social and not an economic logic. This is why the present study will focus on pinpointing the determinants of social entrepreneurship among the target group of cooperatives and associations created by Moroccan social entrepreneurs.

1.3. Determinants of entrepreneurship in the SSE and research hypotheses' development

The review of the entrepreneurial literature highlights several determinants of this concept and makes it possible to identify some factors that are likely to have a significant influence on the entrepreneurial decision of SSE entrepreneurs.

1.3.1. The family environment

Many previous investigations has shown that one of the most important environments for the transmission of a promising entrepreneurial culture is the family environment. Indeed, this first institution is instrumental in shaping the convenient attitudes and behaviors of its members, and ensuring in turn their positive well-being. Most often, entrepreneurs come from families where parents or other family members are themselves businesspersons. Young people who grow up in such a family or environment see their parents or relatives as role models (Gasse, 2003). Similarly, Ajzen (2011) pointed out that social norms stressing the characteristics of the entrepreneur's family and social environment, influence his decision to start a business.

In the same orientation, the results of Nacéra and Matouk (2012) showed that the family environment is a determining factor in the business involvement. Thus, the following hypothesis could be proposed:

H1. The family environment positively influences the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.

1.3.2. Education and previous experience

Education appears to be a decisive element in promoting entrepreneurship, which conditions both the degree of success of the project and its consolidation in the medium and long term (CESE et al., 2018). In fact, many scholars have stressed its importance for the development of the entrepreneurial spirit and culture among entrepreneurs. For instance, Kabir et al. (2017) revealed that entrepreneurship education and training provide skills and knowledge that could help young entrepreneurs to change their typical mindset from job search to job creation. Besides, training equips the entrepreneur with competencies and information that are useful, and even decisive for the realization of his project.

Other researchers have also argued that education, training and experience play key roles in the development of entrepreneurs' knowledge and skills (Omrane, 2014). As an illustrative example, Fayolle (2003) stated that "teaching, through internships and the promotion of the dynamic and responsible image of entrepreneurs, can generate vocations and raise awareness among a wide public".

When it comes to social entrepreneurship, the literature provides evidence of a positive relationship between education and the likelihood of being a social entrepreneur (Kachlami, 2014; Van Ryzin, 2009). More especially, the investigation carried out by Van Ryzin et al. (2009), by using data from an online survey in the United States, confirms that individuals with higher education are more likely to be social entrepreneurs. Moreover, Faruk et al (2016) underlined that, in Bangladesh for instance, among the main factors that contribute to the success of social entrepreneurship, knowledge gained through education and experience is an impactful determinant.

From another perspective, Coster (2009) emphasized that experiences foster the acquisition of functional and operational skills that are necessary to strengthen the entrepreneurial ability to analyze the environment, to capture and exploit potential opportunities. Those capabilities might help the individual to adapt to several professions, or to modify his professional trajectories due to the different frustrations encountered during his development process.

In the same vein, the results of the research conducted by Talebi et al. (2014) revealed that prior experience is one of the main factors influencing the decision-making bias among entrepreneurs.

The following hypothesis can then be suggested:

H2. Education and prior experience positively influences the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.

1.3.3. The entrepreneurial territory

It is noteworthy to indicate that the territory in which the entrepreneur spends his personal or professional life plays a considerable role in his professional choice. In addition, the environment in which the business activity takes place is decisive for the consolidation of the entrepreneurial fabric and for fostering the implementation of new entrepreneurial initiatives (CESE et al., 2018)

In fact, the territory constitutes a pole of attraction that offers social entrepreneurs multiple opportunities in terms of investment and sustainable development (Omrane, 2013, 2015). The numerous resources it might provide to entrepreneurs through the different organizations and support structures it involves can explain its attractiveness (Omrane, 2013). Those resources could be either material (land, infrastructure, availability of water, technology...), human (skilled labor, taskforce), or financial ones (possibility of project financing, subsidies and financial aid ...).

We can then elaborate the following hypothesis as follows:

H 3. The territory positively influences the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.

1.3.4. The Need for Independence

Being independent means freeing oneself from the salary obligation, authority and subordination of the employer, just as the desire to be one's own boss is the psychological motive that encourages the individual to embark on an entrepreneurial adventure (Blais & Toulouse, 2012; Collins, Moore and Unwalla, 1955).

Many entrepreneurial researches have shown that the desire to be independent and self-reliant is the most common reason for starting a new business. Entrepreneurs perceive the need to be independent and autonomous as a real motivation. In this sense, Tremblay and Gasse (2007) pointed out that the need for independence and autonomy is a motivation for a person to be entrepreneurial.

Richman (1982) refers to the same logical assumption: the main motivation of the entrepreneur is to have the opportunity to exercise free choices about his lifestyle and to be independent and self-reliant. He stated that entrepreneurial characteristics very often emerge at the age of adolescence or young adulthood.

The investigation of Grieco (2007) on "*the entrepreneurial decision: theories, determinants and constraints*", whose objective is to provide an integrated classification of internal and contextual determinants of the entrepreneurial decision, emphasizes the link between each characterization of the entrepreneurial decision and the context in which it occurs. According to this researcher, among the most relevant internal aspects that shape the entrepreneurial decision is the desire for independence.

Based on these contributions, the following hypothesis can be suggested as follows:

H 4. The need to be independent guides the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.

1.3.5. Social innovation

As pointed out by CESE et al. (2018), new entrepreneurial initiatives are taken to develop competitive strategies in a context of greater globalization of markets and technological shifts. In a medium term, new ventures' founders are appealed to bet for their survival on strategies of growth and value creation through innovation and international orientation.

Social innovation which focuses on providing innovative solutions to unresolved social problems, places social value creation at the heart of their mission to improve the lives and well-being of individuals and communities. In addition, it constitutes a favorable dimension for the development of new activities that create added-value and employment (Ces, 2011).

According to Bouchard (2006), social innovation in the SSE makes it possible to "*report on initiatives taken to respond to social expectations*", to needs that are poorly or inadequately met, without necessarily being the subject of new ideas, but rather of a different conception.

In this orientation, several writings stressed the importance of innovation as a factor contributing to the development of social entrepreneurship (Faruk et al., 2016; UK Essays, 2018). For example, Faruk et al. (2016) pinpointed the factors that may affect the development of social entrepreneurship in Bangladesh, and highlighted that among them, innovative ideas might be considered as essential for the success of social entrepreneurship.

According to Richez-Battesti (2008), even if the development of social innovation relies on partnerships with the State, the local authorities, or with lucrative private companies, this phenomenon remains impactful in the way that encourages entrepreneurs to set up their own businesses. The following hypothesis can then be proposed:

H 5. Social innovation positively influences the decision to undertake Among Owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations

1.3.6. Seizing the environmental opportunities

For Peter Drucker, an entrepreneur should be able to identify opportunities and to exploit them in order to generate change in all its forms without excluding its social components. Nevertheless, opportunities existing in the for-profit sector are very different from their conception in the social sphere. This distinction is important because social entrepreneurship relies on it; whereas classical entrepreneurship tends to serve a market under the reign of capitalism. It aims, through a complete process of value creation, to ensure its sustainability through the accumulation of pecuniary wealth.

In addition, some researchers have pointed out that the seizure of attractive opportunities can be both the consequence and the cause of the initiation of the business creation process (Bourguiba, 2007, p.38). This factor therefore represents a triggering driver for the act of entrepreneurship. In this same perspective, Hernandez and Marco (2006) added that the decision to undertake a social project could be perceived as a process of detection and exploitation of opportunities.

For Grieco (2007), the "contextual determinants" of any entrepreneurial decision, include among others, "opportunities offered by the market to make profits". Thus, it appears that the search and seizure of opportunities that arise in the market could be the main factors that may influence the entrepreneurial decision.

The following hypothesis could therefore be suggested as follows:

H 6. Seizing environmental opportunities orients entrepreneurs towards the SSE.

1.3.7. Public aids

One of the main constraints to the launch of entrepreneurial activities is access to finance, i.e. the availability of sufficient and appropriate financial resources. This not only allows access to the necessary funds for the implementation of any new project, but also offers the guarantee that during the stages of the new venture development and expansion- the entrepreneur do not become financially stifled (CESE et al., 2018).

It should be emphasized then that financing constitute one of the factors that condition the decision to undertake a new project. These financing needs can take the form of the entrepreneur's own capital, the contribution of a partner, a bank loan granted by a financial institution, a supplier's credit granted by a supplier to finance the operating cycle, a subsidy or incentive offered by the public authorities to encourage young people to build up businesses, etc.

Support structures are important drivers of the promotion of entrepreneurship and the development of the entrepreneurial culture of a community. The government intervenes in this respect by stimulating the creation of new businesses through the implementation of different types of aid and support programs for venture creation (Firlas, 2019). More particularly in Morocco, support structures for entrepreneurship are valued as a central part of the state's strategic orientations^{vii}.

On another perspective, the entrepreneurial decision is often influenced by environmental factors, notably the various aids offered to the entrepreneur, whether financial, material or psychological ones (Nacéra and Matouk, 2012).

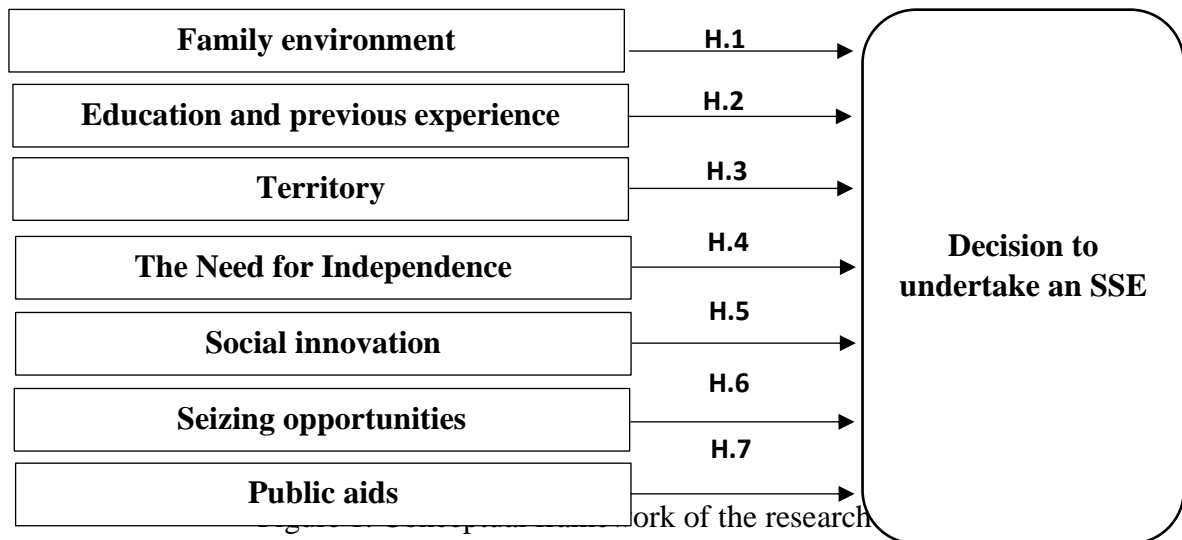
For Siegel (2006, p. 41), financial support corresponds to the “*first levers used to promote the development of business creation*”. For this same scholar, financial aid sources are numerous and diversified and their allocation depend on two criteria: the geographical orientation of the aid, and the specific characteristics of the project itself.

Based on the observations above, the following hypothesis can then be formulated as follows:

H 7. The aid provided by public authorities orient the decision of entrepreneurs to undertake in the SSE.

1.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework on which the present research is based is represented in the Figure below.



Source: the authors

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In what follows, will be presented the research method adopted, the choice of sample, and the data analysis' tools employed to this end.

2.1. The research strategy

We have chosen a positivist approach. This approach seems relevant because it allows us to empirically test our proposed hypotheses with the results obtained in the field. Similarly, a qualitative method was chosen, which seems appropriate for this research since all the variables chosen in the conceptual model are qualitative in nature.

Moreover, for the present hypothetical-deductive approach, the measurement instrument employed for achieving the objectives set by the current research is the questionnaire, which was administered to collect relevant data from the structures of the SSE.

This questionnaire was designed via *GoogleForms* tool, resulting in a large number of useful responses for statistical analysis. It was written in two main parts, one part devoted

to the collection of general information on the structures, while the second one is reserved for questions that are supposed to check the relationships between the variables chosen in the model and measured according to a Likert scale ranging from 01 to 05.

2.2. Sample of the study

The study was carried out during January and February 2021, through a survey on Moroccan cooperatives and associations located in two main regions of Morocco, namely the Eastern region and Fez-Meknes.

More precisely, the first lists of cooperatives and associations were obtained from the prefectures of Bouloumane and Taourirt. The focus was then made on those that are financed by “the National Initiative for Human Development” (INDH). The random sampling method was used (without discount). Thus, on the basis of a list of 160 SSE structures, only 88 SSE founders agreed to participate in our survey with complete answers.

In a second step, the owners of the other structures were contacted via online sources. In this regard, the choice was made on the groups of Moroccan cooperatives and associations that have the most visibility on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Thus, 09 structures’ founders were successfully contacted and invited to fill in the questionnaire.

2.3. Tools used for data analysis

Two main tools were applied for the statistical analyses and the presentation of the various results: The graphical presentations of the various survey results were made using “*Tableau software*”, while data processing and various statistical analyses were carried out using “*RStudio software*”.

2.4. Data descriptive analyses’ presentation

To test the proposed hypotheses aiming at highlighting the essential factors that strongly influence the entrepreneurial decision of owners of cooperatives and associations, the results obtained from our survey were analyzed and interpreted.

A descriptive analysis of data from our survey reveals the following:

2.4.1. Characteristics of the sample

The questionnaire was administered only to cooperatives and associations' founders, considered as the main SSE structures' representatives. From the figure 2 appearing below, it can be deduced that cooperatives represent more than two thirds of the structures targeted in our survey.

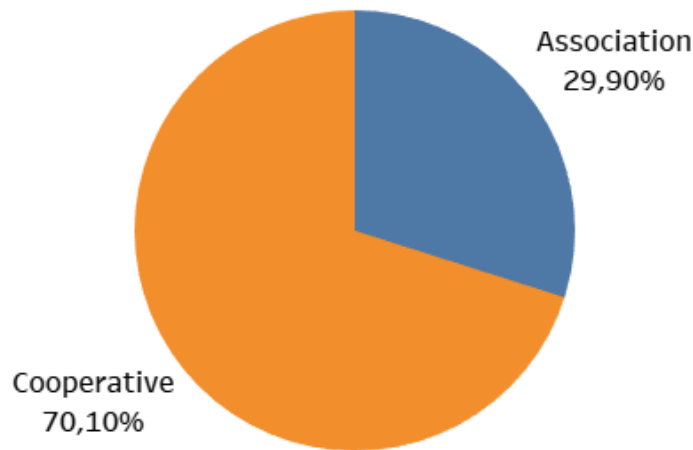


Figure 2. The surveyed cooperatives and associations

Source : the authors

2.4.2. The sample structured by region

The dataset studied here is composed of 97 cooperatives and associations emanating from the SSE sector. These structures are located mainly in the Eastern region and Fez-Meknes.

As shown in the figure 3 presented below, it appears that two thirds of the structures surveyed are located in the eastern region.

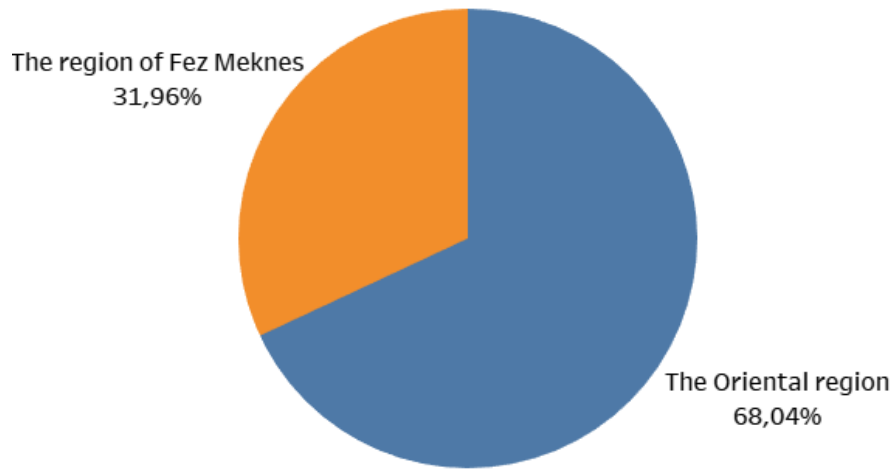


Figure 3. The Moroccan surveyed regions

Source: the authors

2.4.3. The sample structured by sector

The distribution of the structures of our sample remains varied, mixing among others Agriculture, Handicraft or services. However, it is noteworthy to mention, as presented in the figure 4 hereafter most of the structures constituted are cooperatives founded in the agriculture and the industrial sectors.

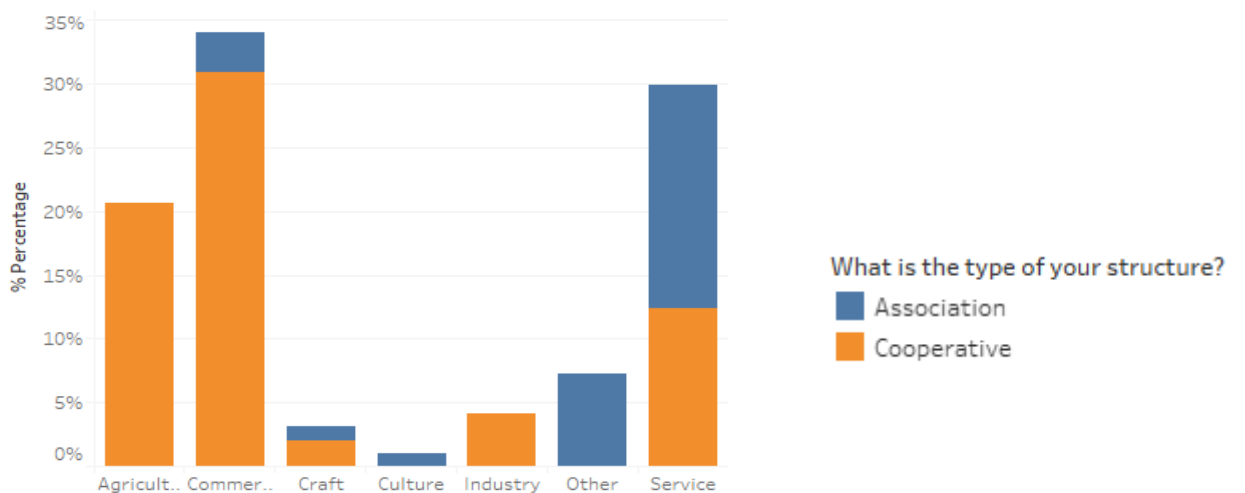


Figure 4: Distribution of SSE structures by their sector of activities Source: the authors

3. HYPOTHESES TESTING AND PRESENTATION OF RELATED RESULTS

Seven indicators of appreciation were selected to explore the key determinants of the decision to undertake an SSE structure. An analysis of the answers' distribution was made after carrying out a flat sorting for all the collected answers and validating them via a Chi-Square χ^2 test.

3.1. Chi-Square χ^2 testing related results

The analysis of results obtained through the answers collected via the questionnaire was based on a frequency table carried out for each question, with a Chi-Square χ^2 test. For each statistical value of Chi-Square χ^2 test is given a Degrees of Freedom (DF) = 4 and a tolerance of 5%. All the various findings are outlined in Table 1&2 below.

The tables below present the various results obtained:

Table 1.
Survey Answers' Results

RESPONSES	FAMILY ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE	THE TERRITORY	THE NEED TO BE INDEPENDENT	SOCIAL INNOVATION	EXPLOITING AN OPPORTUNITY	PUBLIC AIDS
DISAGREE AT ALL	49%	10%	4%	24%	33%	28%	31%
NOT AGREED	2%	6%	3%	4%	4%	4%	13%
NEITHER AGREE NOT DISAGREE	9%	18%	18%	6%	17%	13%	19%
AGREE	8%	11%	15%	7%	6%	9%	9%
TOTALY AGREE	32%	55%	60%	59%	40%	46%	28%

Source: the authors

Table 2.
Chi-Square χ^2 test results

Questions	Value of the Chi-Square χ^2 statistic	P-value of the test	Dominant reply
How much do you agree with the following statement: My family background influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	70.778	$1,55 * 10^{-14}$	Disagree at all
How much do you agree with the following statement: Did my knowledge gained from past training and experience influence my decision to undertake SSE?	71.843	$9.26* 10^{-15}$	Totally agree
How much do you agree with the following statement: My geographic location influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	94.09	$< 2.2* 10^{-16}$	Totally agree
How much do you agree with the following statement: The need to be independent influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	97.22	$< 2.2* 10^{-16}$	Totally agree
How much do you agree with the following statement: The presence of an unmet need in my area influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	46	$2.43* 10^{-9}$	Agree
How much do you agree with the following statement: Exploiting an opportunity influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	50.556	$2.764* 10^{-10}$	Totally agree
How much do you agree with the following statement: Public aid has influenced my decision to undertake SSE?	15.889	0.003172	Disagree at all
(*): Low significance (**): Moderate significance (***): Strong significance			

Source: the authors

First of all, it should be noted that the Chi2 test used in this study a conformity test because in our case, a comparison should be made between the observed frequencies (in the responses obtained from the sample of 97 entrepreneurs surveyed in the SSE associations and cooperatives) and the theoretical frequencies, which are considered to be equal for each response modality. This involves, among other factors, the issue related to confirming or invalidating the basic hypothesis stipulating that the distribution obtained (through the responses) conforms to the theoretical distribution using the p-value of the Chi2 test.

Second, from the tables above, it seems that almost half of the respondents reported that their family environment has not influenced their decisions to undertake an SSE organization, compared to just over a third who revealed the opposite. The Chi-square χ^2 test is equal to 70,778 for a Degree of Freedom (DF) =4 and with a p-value of $1.55 * 10^{-14}$. Thus, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant^{viii}.

It is also noteworthy that 55.06% believed that the knowledge and information they acquired through training and work experience were crucial in their choice to start a business against only 10.11% who stated the opposite. The gap between the two groups shows up the importance of having the knowledge required in the launch of a structure in the SSE sector. The Chi-square χ^2 test is equal to 71.843 for a DF = 4 and with a p-value of $9.26 * 10^{-15}$. Then, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant.

Besides, it appears that the territory in which entrepreneurs built up their structures is very important with regard to the decision to undertake their SSE structures. Only 4.5% of them considered that the location is independent with their decision to undertake their social projects. The Chi-square χ^2 test is equal to 94.09 for a DF = 4 and with a p-value $< 2.2 * 10^{-16}$. Therefore, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant.

Regarding the need for independence, we see that, More than 50% of the entrepreneurs surveyed claim to have founded their structures in search of independence, as opposed to only a quarter who said the opposite. This factor is therefore crucial for the decision making among SSE owners. The Chi-square χ^2 is equal to 97.22 for a DF = 4 and with a p-value $< 2.2 * 10^{-16}$. Then, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant.

Moreover, it appears that social innovation moderately influences the entrepreneurial decision among owners of SSE structures. Indeed, 45% of the interviewed entrepreneurs declared that the feeling of an unsatisfied need pushed them to start their activity against 32% who answered differently. The Chi-square χ^2 is equal to 46 for a DF = 4 and with a p-value of $2.43 * 10^{-9}$. Thus, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant.

For the question related to the exploitation of attractive opportunities, a significant number of respondents indicated that they started their business to exploit an opportunity that emanated from the environment, compared to only one-third who started their business independently of this factor. The Chi-square χ^2 is equal to 50,556 for a DF= 4 and with a p-value $< 2,764 * 10^{-10}$. Then, the difference with the reference distribution is very significant.

Finally, the question concerning public aids reveals that a significant number of entrepreneurs mentioned that public aid is not the major factor influencing their decision to invest in the SSE. The Chi-square χ^2 is equal to 15.889 for a DF = 4 and with a p-value of 0.003172. Therefore, the difference with the reference distribution is significant.

3.2. Results' discussion and recommendations

All the results obtained and the hypothesis tests can be summarized as follows:

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H.1	The family environment positively influences the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.	Little influence
H.2	Education and previous experience positively influences the decision to undertake of owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.	Strong influence
H.3	The Territory positively influences the decision to undertake among owners of Moroccan cooperatives and associations.	Strong influence
H.4	The need to be independent guides entrepreneurs to undertake EHS.	Strong influence
H.5	Social Innovation Positively Influences the decision to undertake Among Owners of Moroccan Cooperatives and Associations	Moderate influence
H.6	Seizing the Opportunity Orients Entrepreneurs to Entrepreneurship in SSE	Strong influence
H.7	The aid provided by public authorities orient the decision of entrepreneurs to undertake in SSE.	Weak influence

Table 3: Hypotheses' testing results

Source: the authors

The first results highlight the positive influence of several variables selected in the model on the decision making process regarding the establishment of an SSE organization. Thus, the factors that strongly affect the entrepreneurial decision in cooperatives and associations are, among others, the territory, education and prior experience, the need to be independent, as well as the seizing environmental opportunities. As for social innovation, it moderately influences the entrepreneurial decision of SSE entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the family environment and public support have weak impacts on the entrepreneurial decision regarding launching social projects.

In light of all the obtained findings, it can be deduced that family background is not a key determinant for entrepreneurial decision making among SSE entrepreneurs. Such a result contradicts those of other researchers who have studied the determinants of entrepreneurship (Belattaf & Nasroun, 2013; Nacéra & Matouk, 2012).

On the other hand, results are consistent with the work of Firlas (2019), which indicates that public aids have a relatively small impact on business creation. At this level, the government should sustain efforts to make incentives for business creation and to promote the SSE sector by ensuring broad awareness on these issues and targeting a large proportion of beneficiaries.

Finally, from the findings of the survey, it can be argued that social innovation has a weak impact on SSE entrepreneurial decision to initiate social ventures; which implies that this dimension deserves to be further developed by stakeholders, so that it can provide innovative solutions to unsolved social problems.

CONCLUSION

The primary interest of this work devoted to pinpointing the determinants of entrepreneurship in SSE lies in the fact that it highlights to what extent some significant factors guide the decision to undertake among the owners of structures including cooperatives and associations.

While the SSE remains the sector in which social entrepreneurship is developed, the literature has pointed out that the evolution of this phenomenon in the Moroccan

landscape is dependent on this sector. Nevertheless, undertaking in SSE does not necessarily correspond to the form of social entrepreneurship, because many of these structures are not really recognized as social enterprises.

The exploration of the determinants of entrepreneurship has been the subject of several precedent researches in the field of entrepreneurship (Himrane, 2018; Sabri, 2017). However, those dedicated to identifying the determinants of entrepreneurship in the SSE seem to our knowledge little studied in the literature. Therefore, our contribution represents a reflection of crucial importance to advance knowledge in this area of research.

By considering the findings of this present study, we can better indepth understanding what motivate entrepreneurs to found SSE cooperatives and associations. Indeed, their decision to initiate social projects in the SSE is based on several factors. Those factors encompass: education and experience of the entrepreneur, the geographical area or territory in which he has spent his personal or professional life, his desire to be independent, and his motivation to take advantage of opportunities captured in the environment.

Understanding the factors that might influence the entrepreneurial decision making in the SSE could further help decision makers to implement adequate incentives for social and solidarity entrepreneurship. Based on the results of this study, we have revealed, as an example, that "public support" had a little influence on their decisions. For this reason, public authorities are appealed upon to sustain additional efforts to ensure that programs and support for the creation of SSE structures reach a large part of beneficiaries. A broad awareness on the importance of this issue should be ensured to make any program visible to potential entrepreneurs.

Despite its promising and valuable theoretical and practical implications, this study has several limitations. In fact, only two Moroccan regions were retained for our enquiry, which makes it difficult to generalize the obtained results to the whole country, or even to other populations in other countries. In addition, we have chosen only certain variables

in the research model, those that are more likely to influence the entrepreneurial decision making; whereas such a decision could be affected by a plurality of other factors.

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Notes

ⁱ Ashoka is an international association, founded by the American Bill Drayton, that identifies, supports and networks outstanding social entrepreneurs around the world. For more information: www.ashoka.org

ⁱⁱ CODES: The Collective for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship, is a think tank, created in the spring of 2006, which brings together about twenty people, recognized actors in the development of social entrepreneurship: social entrepreneurs, coaches, institutions, funders ...

ⁱⁱⁱ Source : <http://www.bsi-economics.org/images/articles/a196.pdf>

^{iv} For more information about the organization: www.odco.gov.ma

^v <https://lematin.ma/journal/2015/quelles-voies-pour-l-emergence-de-l-entreprise-sociale/234642.html>

^{vi} <http://www.cmeres.org/news/21-international/59-l-entrepreneuriat-social-au-maroc-specificites-du-cadre-juridique-et-institutionnel>

^{vii} The royal speech on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the legislative year, October 11, 2019 Calls on the private sector to fulfill its role as a stimulator of the national economy and calls "the government and Bank Al-Maghrib, in coordination with the professional association of banks in Morocco, to work to develop a special program to support young graduates, to finan

ce self-employment projects.

^{viii} The Chi-square (X^2) is calculated with equal theoretical numbers for each modality.