

# Strategic marketing and stakeholder orientation in the Spanish public universities: an empirical analysis

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## Abstract

This thesis based on institutional theory, dynamic capabilities and stakeholder theory investigates the relationships among the antecedents of responsive and proactive stakeholder orientation and its consequences in the Spanish public university context. In addition, how university leaderships react when a public university might implement and disseminate a strategic management approach grounded in the responsive and proactive stakeholder orientation raise the question about the existence of heterogeneity among public university managers so, focusing in those reactions we aim to identify different public profiles of Spanish public university managers. To achieve the objective, several research techniques are used to answer the dissertation questions empirically, such as descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation analysis, multi-sample analysis, and latent class segmentation. The results obtained mainly stresses that the mimetic effect on copy successful university actions, university top manager's emphasis on both stakeholder orientations and a better communication and relationship between managers of different university structures have positive effects on responsive and proactive stakeholder orientation. Moreover, the results suggested that those universities that are more responsive or/and proactive stakeholder oriented obtain a better organizational performance in terms of beneficiary satisfaction, acquisition of resources and reputation. Furthermore, our findings show that to achieve some specific goals of university performance, as university reputation, a responsive stakeholder orientation is not sufficient, a proactive stakeholder orientation is also needed. In addition, multi-sample analysis show that there were no significant differences in almost all established paths whereas for those significant differences a set of propositions was raised. Specifically, the results showed that to belong to a certain university size, region, ranking positions and endogamy promotes better performance results from a proactive stakeholder orientation. Furthermore, we test the heterogeneity among the Spanish public university managers. A total of four segments were identified – Conservatives, Practicals, Disbelievers, and Unconventionals –. Mainly, the “Conservatives” show neutral positions in relation to implement responsive and proactive stakeholder orientations, the “Practicals” are interested in copy successful actions of other similar institutions, while the “Disbelievers” do not encourage any change whereas the “Unconventionals” show a totally opposite perspective. Finally, this dissertation offers some contributions to research and practice, to university managers, and to policy makers, which could help to provide new insights into university management. Furthermore, some limitations are highlighted and future research lines are discussed.