Management of University Based Business Incubators as Tools for Entrepreneurship Growth and Development in Kenya

Kevin Wachira Kangethe and Robert King’ori
South Eastern Kenya University. Kitui. Kenya
Email: kwachira@seku.ac.ke

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ABSTRACT
The importance of enterprise growth around the globe has been well recognized and documented by many scholars. Entrepreneurs are widely recognized as the prime movers of economic development; the people who translate ideas into action. However the start-up failure rates, particularly in Kenya, are still very high and the desired growth levels are yet to be achieved and consequently some scholars and policy makers have turned to business incubators and particularly university based business incubators as a possible boost to enterprise growth through nurturing start-ups. This study sought to investigate the managerial skills of university based business incubators managers in Kenya. It was conducted using a descriptive research design. The five active university based business incubators in Kenya were investigated with a specific focus on forty seven (47) graduated incubates and five (5) managers from the said incubators. The study used a semi structured questionnaire and interview as its main data collection tools. A combination of tools was used to analyze the data because whereas some aspects of the study are qualitative others are of a quantitative nature. The study established that the managerial skills (conceptual, interpersonal and technical skills) of managers of university based business incubators have a significant positive correlation to success of the incubators and growth of their incubates. The implications of the study are that the government through the Ministry of Education and management of individual universities set up more university based business incubators given the positive potential effect they have on enterprise growth. The existing university based business incubators also need to be expanded and enhanced given the high demand from potential incubates. This will enable them accommodate more incubates and possibly create an increased number of successful startups. Also, management of university based business incubators needs to be de-linked from the normal university management.

Key Words: Incubators, Start-ups, Managerial Skills, Entrepreneurship