Business Incubators and Entrepreneurial Training: Leveraging Technological Innovations and Digital Marketing

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Abstract:
The existing literature on university business incubators has noted the transferability of resources, availability of talented managers, proactive leadership, internal and external stakeholders' involvement, strong collaborations, and networking management as key factors that can increase these incubators' effectiveness. However, none of the studies have examined how alignment with relevant sustainable development goals (SDGs) and leveraging technological innovations such as digital marketing can enhance the contribution of university business incubators and entrepreneurial training imparted at HEIs to encourage sustainable entrepreneurship. Since the entire world is focused on systematically pursuing SDGs to achieve the 2030 agenda envisioned by the United Nations, the present study posited that incubators and entrepreneurial training at HEI, which are aligned with pertinent SDGs and the latest technological innovations, would be more relevant in grooming future entrepreneurs skilled to contribute to the sustainability agenda. Thereby, it examined the key aspects of the entrepreneurship-SDGs-technology union in the higher education setting. Toward this end, open-ended essays were used to collect data from 38 start-up owners/partners/employees who have been associated with university business incubators recently or received entrepreneurial training at HEIs in the recent past. Content analysis of the qualitative data revealed the extent to which the existing incubators and entrepreneurial training at HEIs were aligned with SDGs 4, 9, 11, and 12. It also uncovered the perceptions of entrepreneurs about how HEIs were leveraging technological innovations such as digital marketing to create awareness about SDGs among the relevant stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem and to make entrepreneurial training and businesses more sustainability-oriented.

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