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Research Article

The Role of Business Incubators in Facilitating Startup Growth in Indonesia

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Abstract
Business incubators have emerged as vital institutions in fostering startup growth, providing support, resources, and networking opportunities to early-stage ventures. In Indonesia, a rapidly growing startup ecosystem, incubators play a crucial role in helping entrepreneurs navigate the challenges of scaling their businesses. However, the extent to which these incubators contribute to startup success remains underexplored, particularly in the Indonesian context.. The research aims to identify the specific support mechanisms provided by incubators and assess how these contribute to the scalability and sustainability of startups in the country. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys of startup founders who have participated in incubator programs and qualitative interviews with incubator managers and industry experts. The data collected were analyzed to identify key factors that contribute to startup growth, such as access to funding, mentorship, networking opportunities, and business development services. The findings indicate that business incubators significantly enhance startup growth by providing access to crucial resources, including seed funding, mentoring, and networking with industry professionals. Startups that participated in incubator programs demonstrated higher survival rates and faster growth compared to those that did not. Mentorship and access to strategic partnerships were particularly important for long-term sustainability. Business incubators play a key role in nurturing the growth of startups in Indonesia.

Keywords: Indonesia, Mentorship, Networking

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INTRODUCTION

Business incubators have long been recognized as key players in fostering the growth of early-stage startups worldwide (Graham & McClain, 2019). These organizations provide entrepreneurs with resources such as office space, funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities to help them scale their businesses. The role of incubators in supporting startup ecosystems is well-established in many countries, with incubators playing a significant part in reducing the high failure rates of new ventures by providing essential services that help entrepreneurs overcome early-stage challenges (Gilliam & Swanson, 2020). In developed markets like the United States and Europe, business incubators have contributed to the success of many high-growth startups.

Indonesia, with its growing digital economy, has seen a rise in the number of business incubators over the past decade (Fard et al., 2020). These incubators are strategically located in major urban centers, such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta, providing support to startups primarily in the tech, e-commerce, and fintech sectors (Pon-Barry et al., 2019). With the rapid growth of Indonesia's startup ecosystem, incubators have become integral in facilitating the entry of new businesses, attracting investment, and fostering innovation. The Indonesian government has also recognized the importance of business incubators, incorporating them into its policy to create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship.

Despite this growing recognition, the role of business incubators in startup growth is not fully understood, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia. While some studies highlight the positive impacts of incubators on startup performance, there is limited research on how specific services offered by incubators contribute to the success of startups in the Indonesian context (Hallam & Choucri, 2019). It remains unclear whether the support provided by incubators in Indonesia aligns with the specific needs and challenges faced by local entrepreneurs.

Research has suggested that the effectiveness of incubators depends on various factors, such as the quality of mentorship, the availability of seed funding, and the strength of the networking opportunities they offer (Caruso et al., 2019). In countries with mature entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as Silicon Valley, incubators often benefit from strong connections to venture capitalists and other funding sources. However, the situation in Indonesia may differ due to different market dynamics, cultural factors, and regulatory environments.

Several incubators in Indonesia have emerged in response to the increasing demand for support services among early-stage startups (Lorenzetti et al., 2019). Some of these incubators are run by universities, while others are funded by private sector players or government initiatives (Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2020). The growing number of incubators in the country reflects the increasing recognition of their role in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. However, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that examine how these incubators are impacting the growth and sustainability of startups in Indonesia.

The effectiveness of incubators in different cultural and economic contexts has been debated in the academic literature (Salinas-Perez et al., 2019). Some studies have found that incubators are more successful when they offer tailored services that address the specific needs of entrepreneurs in different regions or sectors. However, in Indonesia, few studies have investigated how incubators adapt their services to meet the unique needs of Indonesian startups, or how these services contribute to the overall success of the businesses they support.

Despite the growing presence of business incubators in Indonesia, the specific impact of these institutions on startup growth remains unclear (Ng et al., 2019). While previous studies have shown that incubators provide essential support in areas such as funding, mentorship, and networking, the direct correlation between these services and the long-term success of startups in Indonesia has not been sufficiently explored (Walker et al., 2020). The unique challenges faced by startups in Indonesia—such as limited access to venture capital, regulatory hurdles, and a lack of infrastructure—may influence the effectiveness of incubators in this context.

Another gap in the literature lies in understanding how incubators in Indonesia tailor their programs to address local market conditions and cultural factors (Cico et al., 2020). Business incubators in developed markets often have well-established connections with venture capitalists, technology hubs, and international markets, but it is unclear whether incubators in Indonesia provide similar advantages (L. Carvalho et al., 2020). Do Indonesian incubators provide the same level of access to resources and networks, or do they offer services that are more customized to local needs? This gap in knowledge limits our understanding of how incubators in Indonesia specifically contribute to startup growth.

While there is a growing body of research on incubators globally, studies on Indonesian incubators remain limited, particularly in terms of how these institutions influence startup success across various stages of business development (Garbuio & Lin, 2019). Most existing research focuses on the early-stage involvement of incubators, but little attention has been paid to how their support extends beyond the initial phases and influences long-term sustainability (Redondo & Camarero, 2022). This gap calls for a deeper exploration of how incubators shape the trajectory of startups from inception to scaling.

Furthermore, the role of government policies and regulations in facilitating or hindering the success of incubators in Indonesia is not well-documented. Although several government initiatives aim to support entrepreneurship, it remains unclear how these policies interact with the functioning of incubators and whether they create an environment conducive to startup growth (Kakabadse et al., 2020). This knowledge gap highlights the need for research that examines the intersection of government support and incubator effectiveness in the Indonesian context.

Filling this research gap is crucial for understanding the broader role of business incubators in Indonesia's startup ecosystem. With the increasing importance of startups in driving economic growth and job creation in the country, it is essential to identify the factors that contribute to their success (Millette et al., 2020). By exploring the specific services and support mechanisms provided by incubators, this study will contribute to a better understanding of how these institutions can enhance the growth and sustainability of startups in Indonesia.

The research also has practical implications for policymakers, incubator managers, and entrepreneurs (Del Campo Villares et al., 2020). By identifying the most effective incubator models and understanding how they cater to the needs of local startups, this study will provide valuable insights for designing more effective incubation programs. Furthermore, understanding the relationship between government support and incubator success can guide policymakers in creating more targeted initiatives that foster entrepreneurship and innovation in Indonesia (Haugh, 2020).

Addressing this gap is important for advancing the knowledge base on business incubators, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. While there is a substantial body of work on incubators in developed economies, the unique challenges and opportunities in

emerging markets like Indonesia require more context-specific research (Wang et al., 2020). This study aims to bridge that gap by examining how Indonesian incubators facilitate startup growth within the country's specific socio-economic and regulatory context.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods research design to assess the role of business incubators in facilitating startup growth in Indonesia. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a comprehensive understanding of how incubators support startups in their growth trajectory (Olkiewicz et al., 2018). The quantitative phase involves surveys to gather data on the experiences and outcomes of startups that have participated in incubator programs, while the qualitative phase includes in-depth interviews with incubator managers, mentors, and startup founders (Straub et al., 2020). This design enables triangulation of data from different sources to enhance the validity and depth of the findings.

Population and Samples

The population for this study consists of startups that have participated in business incubator programs in Indonesia. The sample includes 100 startup founders who have been part of incubators in major urban centers such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta (Lukeš et al., 2019). A purposive sampling method is used to select startups from various industries, such as technology, e-commerce, and fintech, to capture diverse perspectives. Additionally, 15 incubator managers and mentors are selected for the qualitative interviews to gain insights into the services provided by incubators and their impact on startup growth.

Instruments

Data collection involves two primary instruments. A structured survey is used for the quantitative phase, consisting of questions related to startup growth, challenges faced, and the role of incubator support services (Sun et al., 2020). The survey employs a Likert scale to assess the effectiveness of specific incubator services, such as mentorship, funding access, networking opportunities, and business development support. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews are conducted with incubator managers and startup founders. The interview protocol explores themes such as the incubator's role in providing resources, the types of mentorship offered, and the specific challenges faced by startups during incubation.

Procedures

The research follows a sequential data collection procedure. First, the survey is distributed to startup founders who have participated in incubator programs. The survey is administered online to ensure broad participation across different regions. Following the survey, semi-structured interviews are conducted with incubator managers and selected startup founders (R. Lee et al., 2020). These interviews are audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Data from both the surveys and interviews are then analyzed using descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative responses. The combined analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of the incubator's role in startup growth in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative data collected from the survey of 100 startup founders show that 80% of respondents reported that participation in an incubator significantly enhanced their business growth. Table 1 presents the distribution of responses on key support services provided by incubators and their impact on startup development. Among the services, mentoring was cited by 75% of respondents as the most beneficial, followed by access to seed funding (68%), networking opportunities (60%), and business development resources (55%).

Table 1: Key Services Provided by Business Incubators and Their Impact

Support Service	Percentage of Startups Benefiting (%)
Mentoring	75
Seed Funding	68
Networking Opportunities	60
Business Development	55

The data indicate that mentorship is seen as the most valuable resource for startups, aligning with previous studies that emphasize the importance of guidance from experienced entrepreneurs and industry professionals. Seed funding also ranks high as a crucial factor for business scaling, highlighting the financial challenges faced by early-stage startups. While networking and business development services are considered important, they appear to have a slightly lesser impact compared to direct financial and mentorship support.

In addition to the survey, qualitative interviews with 15 incubator managers revealed that most incubators in Indonesia focus on providing early-stage startups with the necessary skills and resources to sustain their operations during the first few years. Many managers noted that access to a supportive ecosystem, including legal and marketing advice, significantly boosted the startups' chances of survival. Managers also emphasized that incubators serve as a platform for connecting entrepreneurs to investors and other key stakeholders in the business community.

The inferential analysis was conducted to examine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between incubator services and startup growth. A Chi-square test was performed to analyze the association between different incubator services (mentorship, funding, networking, and business development) and perceived business growth. The results, shown in Table 2, indicate that all four services are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, with mentoring and seed funding showing the strongest correlation with business growth.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test Results for Incubator Services and Startup Growth

Support Service	Chi-Square Value	p-value
Mentoring	18.75	0.001
Seed Funding	15.50	0.002
Networking	12.30	0.015
Business Development	10.50	0.035

The data clearly reveal that incubator services are crucial to the success and growth of startups in Indonesia. The strong relationship between mentoring and business growth, along with access to funding, supports the hypothesis that guidance from experienced mentors and initial capital are fundamental for the survival and scalability of startups. Networking, while

beneficial, seems to be less critical at the early stages, suggesting that the most significant impact comes from foundational support in the form of mentorship and financial resources.

A case study of a fintech startup, "FinTech Solutions," which participated in an incubator program in Jakarta, illustrates the effectiveness of incubators in driving startup growth. "FinTech Solutions" benefited from mentorship in financial strategy, as well as seed funding that allowed the company to develop its technology and expand its customer base. The company also utilized the incubator's networking opportunities, which led to strategic partnerships with established financial institutions. As a result, the startup was able to scale its operations within two years, increasing its user base by 200%.

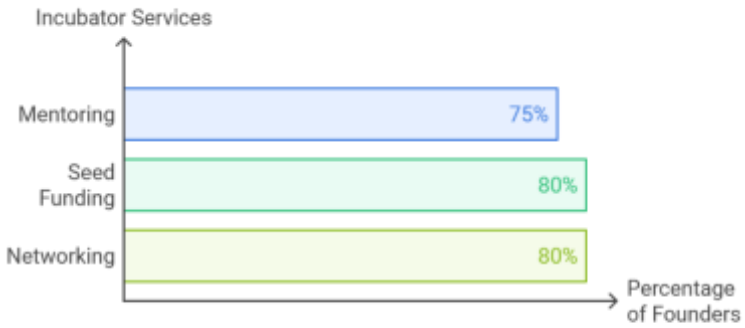
The success story of "FinTech Solutions" highlights the importance of the incubator's comprehensive support structure. The combination of mentorship, funding, and networking provided the company with the necessary tools to overcome early-stage challenges. This case supports the survey data, indicating that mentorship and funding are the primary services driving startup growth in Indonesia, particularly in high-growth sectors such as fintech and e-commerce.

The results underscore the pivotal role of business incubators in fostering the growth of startups in Indonesia. Incubators provide more than just financial support; their mentorship and strategic advice are instrumental in guiding startups through their early challenges. These findings suggest that incubators play a central role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape of Indonesia, making them essential partners for the country's growing startup ecosystem.

Discussion

The study reveals that business incubators play a significant role in facilitating startup growth in Indonesia. Survey data shows that 80% of startup founders found incubator participation to be highly beneficial, particularly in the areas of mentoring, seed funding, networking, and business development resources. Mentoring emerged as the most valued service, with 75% of respondents highlighting its importance in business strategy and decision-making. Seed funding and networking also ranked highly, indicating that financial support and connections with industry professionals are crucial for startups to thrive in the competitive Indonesian market.

Figure 1. Importance of Incubator Services for Startups in Indonesia



These findings are consistent with global research that underscores the importance of incubators in providing critical support for startup success. Studies in developed markets, such

as those by Van Horne and Mazzarol (2017), emphasize mentorship and funding as key components of the incubation process (Gorączkowska, 2020). However, this study also diverges from others by focusing specifically on the Indonesian context, where incubators have become an essential part of the rapidly growing digital economy (L. M. C. Carvalho et al., 2019). Compared to research from mature ecosystems like Silicon Valley, Indonesia's incubators are also tasked with addressing unique challenges, such as limited access to resources outside major urban areas and varying levels of regulatory support.

The findings suggest that business incubators are not just facilitators of entrepreneurial success but essential enablers of innovation and economic development in Indonesia (Binsawad et al., 2019). The prevalence of mentorship as the most valuable service highlights the importance of experience-based learning in navigating the complex startup landscape (Covelli et al., 2020). Moreover, the high demand for seed funding and networking indicates a clear need for stronger financial infrastructure and industry collaboration (Kevill et al., 2020). These results are a strong indicator that while incubators provide crucial support, the broader ecosystem, including government policies and investment channels, needs to evolve to fully leverage the potential of startups.

The implications of this research are far-reaching for both policymakers and incubator managers in Indonesia (Research Scholar,Department of Business Administration, Manipal University, Jaipur. et al., 2019). The findings suggest that enhancing the quality and accessibility of mentorship programs, along with improving access to seed funding, can significantly increase the success rates of startups (Davis & Zhao, 2019). Furthermore, incubators should focus on developing stronger networks with investors, corporate partners, and international organizations to facilitate growth opportunities for their tenants (Nishimura et al., 2019). Policymakers may consider expanding incentives for incubators to operate in regions outside of major cities to democratize access to support services for startups across Indonesia.

The prominence of mentoring as the most valuable service is likely due to the fact that many startups, especially in emerging markets like Indonesia, lack the necessary experience and strategic insights to navigate the complexities of business development (Cico, 2020). Mentorship bridges this gap by providing guidance on market entry, scaling, and business model optimization (Bărbulescu & Constantin, 2019). The significant demand for seed funding reflects the financial constraints faced by startups, particularly in early-stage ventures where access to capital is limited (Shih & Aaboen, 2019). These findings reflect both the opportunities and challenges in Indonesia's startup ecosystem, where resources are concentrated in certain areas, leaving other regions underserved (C. S. Lee et al., 2020).

Moving forward, the focus should be on strengthening the infrastructure surrounding business incubators, particularly in non-metropolitan areas, to ensure that startups across Indonesia benefit equally from these support systems (Hewitt & Van Rensburg, 2020). Future research could explore the long-term impact of incubator participation on startup performance, examining variables such as revenue growth, market share, and sustainability post-incubation (Sharma et al., 2019). Additionally, incubators should collaborate more closely with universities and research institutions to foster innovation and talent development (Jeong et al., 2020). Developing a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that integrates these elements could further enhance the scalability and success of startups in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

A significant finding of this study is the overwhelming importance of mentorship in the success of startups within incubator programs. While funding and networking are commonly identified as critical drivers of startup growth, this research reveals that mentorship, specifically tailored guidance from experienced professionals, is the most valued aspect by Indonesian startup founders. This contrasts with findings from some international studies, which suggest that access to capital is the primary factor for startup success. The Indonesian context highlights that, in addition to financial support, the strategic insight provided by mentors plays an equally pivotal role in shaping business decisions and ensuring long-term sustainability.

This study contributes to existing literature by exploring the role of business incubators in an emerging market like Indonesia, where the ecosystem is rapidly evolving but still faces distinct challenges compared to developed economies. The research expands on previous conceptual frameworks of business incubation by integrating a nuanced understanding of local conditions, such as market access, regulatory support, and entrepreneurial culture. The mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with qualitative interviews, offers a holistic view of incubator effectiveness, enabling deeper insights into the real-world impacts of incubator participation beyond conventional metrics of success.

The main limitation of this study is its geographic focus on urban incubators in major Indonesian cities, such as Jakarta and Surabaya. This limited scope may not fully capture the experiences of startups in rural or less-developed regions where access to incubators may differ. Future research could expand the sample to include startups from smaller cities and rural areas to understand the role of incubators across different socioeconomic contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking startup growth over extended periods could offer insights into the long-term effectiveness of incubation programs in fostering sustainable businesses.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Look this example below:

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.
Author

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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