I: Abstract

This thesis explores the role of cultural and socioeconomic factors in shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems, with a specific focus on accelerators in East Africa. The study addresses the significant research gap concerning accelerator programs in non-Western contexts, aiming to understand the challenges these programs face and how they adapt to local demands. Utilizing the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Framework (EEF) by Spigel (2017), this research investigates cultural, social, and material attributes influencing the entrepreneurial landscape in Mombasa and Nairobi, Kenya, as well as Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Through 14 semi-structured interviews with key personnel from accelerator programs in these cities, data were analyzed using NVIVO software and the Gioia Method. The findings highlight the unique challenges posed by local cultural norms, mindset, and resource limitations. The study reveals adaptive strategies employed by accelerators to enhance program quality, including tailored mentorship, comprehensive recruitment processes, and ecosystem collaboration. This research contributes to the broader understanding of global entrepreneurial ecosystems, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners aiming to foster entrepreneurship in diverse cultural and socioeconomic settings. (OpenAI, 2024b)[17].