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The Role of Incubators in the Development of Startup in Algeria

Cezayir'de Start-Up'ların Gelişiminde Inkübatörlerin Rolü

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Cezayir'deki çeşitli özel ve üniversite bünyesindeki kuluçka merkezlerinde yer alan 16 girişimi kapsamakta olup, kuluçka merkezlerinin yenilikçi girişimciliğin gelişiminde ne ölçüde etkili bir kaldıraç işlevi görebileceğini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bulgular, girişimcilerin kuluçka merkezlerine yönelmesindeki temel nedenlerin, çalışma alanı ihtiyacı ile koçluk ve mentorluk gibi destek hizmetlerine erişim olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Hem fiziksel mekân hem de profesyonel rehberlik hizmetlerinden yararlanan girişimciler, sunulan destekten genel olarak yüksek memnuniyet bildirmiştir. Bununla birlikte, finansmana erişim, kuluçka sürecinin en az tatmin edici yönü olarak öne çıkarken, ofis alanlarının mevcudiyeti ve erişilebilir fiyatları oldukça beğenilmiştir. Kuluçka merkezlerinin sunduğu hizmetler projelerin niteliğine ve girişimlerin özel ihtiyaçlarına göre değişiklik gösterse de, elde edilen sonuçlar, Cezayir'deki kuluçka merkezlerinin özellikle kullanıcılar ve hizmetler arasında bağlantı kurmaya yönelik, düşük finansman gerektiren "eşleştirme" temelli girişimleri desteklemede etkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna karşın, prototipleme veya mekanik üretim gerektiren fiziksel ürün geliştirmeye yönelik girişimler, mevcut kuluçka merkezlerinin gerekli teknik altyapı ve kaynaklara sahip olmaması nedeniyle ciddi yapısal zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Start-Up,

Konaklama,

Destek,

Inkübatör,

ABSTRACT

This study, conducted on a sample of 16 startups incubated within various private and university-based incubators in Algeria, seeks to assess the extent to which incubators can serve as effective levers for the development of innovative entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that the primary motivations for entrepreneurs to engage with incubators are the need for dedicated workspaces and access to support services such as coaching and mentoring. Overall, entrepreneurs who benefited from both physical accommodation and professional guidance reported a high level of satisfaction with the support provided. However, access to financing was identified as the least satisfactory aspect of the incubation experience, whereas the availability and affordability of office spaces were highly appreciated. Although the services offered by incubators vary according to the nature of the projects and the specific needs of startups, the results suggest that Algerian incubators are particularly effective in supporting matchmaking-oriented startups — those that facilitate connections between users and services and typically require minimal financial investment. Conversely, startups involved in the development of physical products that require prototyping or machining often face structural challenges, as most incubators lack the necessary technical infrastructure and resources to adequately support such ventures.

Keywords:

Start-Up,

Accommodation,

Support,

Incubator,

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the challenges posed by the knowledge-based economy and the critical role of the innovation–entrepreneurship nexus in generating wealth and fostering economic growth, the Algerian government has implemented a series of regulatory measures aimed at structuring and supporting the micro-enterprise ecosystem. These measures are intended to create an enabling environment for the emergence and development of start-ups and innovative entrepreneurial ventures. This ongoing transformation necessitates high-quality entrepreneurial support systems and effective learning methodologies to assist innovative enterprises in scaling up, thereby contributing to wealth creation and job generation.

The objective of the Algerian authorities is to integrate into this global trend known as the "*knowledge economy*", which is based on the appropriation of knowledge and the continuous generation of innovation, through the development of start-ups. These start-ups lie at the core of knowledge production and are central to the structure of cognitive capitalism. Incubators are increasingly being establised to ensure the long-term survival of start-ups and encourage their growth by providing them with a conductive environment and essential resources.

Today, incubation has become a recognized profession. In the United States, it is considered an industry with its own methods, tools, standards and professional structures. Nevertheless, it remains a relatively young and continuously evolving field. In Algeria, business incubators have only emerged recently and are not yet widely established. Incubation is a support process carried out by "*an organization that helps fledgling businesses by providing various support services such as assistance in preparing the business plan and marketing plan, building the management team, obtaining capital and access to other ranges of more specialized professional services. In addition, it provides flexible space, shared facilities and common administrative services*" (NBIA)[1].

The emergence of start-up incubators in Algeria is a recent phenomenon and forms part of government policy adopted in the 2020s to support start-up creation and development. The limited number of case studies conducted on start-up incubators in Algeria indicate that, despite their recent emergence, these institutions play an active role in supporting start-ups through a range of services.

In this respect, a case study of the INTTIC Oran incubatordemonstrated its significant role in supporting young project holders, through its development activities in training, management, business creation, entrepreneurship and marketing (Djelti and Bouchama, 2016). Another case study of the Tlemcen incubator emphasized that its role as a bridge between the university, via its teaching and research laboratories, and the project holder on the one hand, and the Algerian entrepreneurial ecosystem on the other, by identifying potential socio-economic partners. It facilitates the transfer of innovation and technology and supports project leaders through training, prototyping and networking with the socio-economic world (Bekkal Brikci and Khedim, 2022). A recent study of the ABP incubator in Bejaia found that support period lasts for one year, during which entrepreneurs receive training, coaching and support from national experts within the incubator. Projects are selected on the basis of their level of innovation, practical utility, profitability, and overall feasibility (Bagdi and Allilat, 2022).

It is within this context that our research is positioned, with a dual objective. First, it seeks to examine the incubation process as a component of entrepreneurial development, emphasizing the incubator's role as a space for experiential learning and project maturation. Second, it aims to explore the practices and resources mobilized by incubators to support start-ups throughout their growth trajectories. In essence, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: To what extent can an incubator serve as a lever for entrepreneurial development? What role does the incubator play in the growth and sustainability of start-ups? To address these questions, we propose the following two research hypotheses;

- ***H1*:** Given the technological and economic development in the context of globalization and modernization, the incubator offers a necessary and conductive space during the start-up phase.
- ***H2*:** The creation and development of start-ups are characterized by very specific needs. We assume that joining an incubator structure will facilitate access to resources and enable them to mature their project and their ability to enter the market.

1 Created in the United States in 1985, it is the world's leading organisation in the field of business incubation and, in September 2015, became the INBIA (*International Business Innovation Association*) with members in over 60 countries.

This study contributes to enrich the field of research on incubators in Algeria, by examining the way they operate and their contribution to the development of innovative entrepreneurship. To do this, we first conducted a literature review, and then carried out a survey of start-ups incubated in private and university incubators.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF KEY CONCEPTS

Incubators play a crucial role in are supporting and launching innovative projects, andhave become a widespread component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This section presents a literature review on start-up incubators to outline the key concepts and theoretical notions associated with them.

2.1. General Information on Start-Ups

Startups are newly established companies that aim to develop inovative activities and leverage significant growth potential. A start-up may build upon to capitalize on an existing idea, but in the hope of conceiving a new, unique and original offering, this will be done in a way that differs from the practiced standards. Steve Blank, entrepreneur and writer on the subject, has describes a start-up as a temporary organization seeking an industrialized, profitable, and scalable business model.

The term "*start-up*" originated in the United States. It began to be widely used in the 1990s, during the internet bubble. Indeed, numerous definitions can be found in the literature on start-ups and without claiming to be exhaustive, we cite the following definitions. According to Blank and Dorf (2013), "*a temporary organization designed to seek a replicable and scalable business model*". According to Vernimmen (2022);

> "*A company that has just been launched by its managers and shareholders. It has no history, probably no significant tangible assets, and often operates in a fast-changing technological environment. Finally, its free cash flow will be negative for some time: its specific level of risk is therefore very high, which explains why it has no choice but to finance itself with equity*"

Startups are characterized by a number of unique features that set them apart from other types of business; in the following table we have cited the distinctive features of startups (Dabah and Benbraika, 2021).

Table 1. Distinctive Characteristics of Startups

Product Development	Shorter development times. Coding as knowledge is popular and easy to learn, making applications and websites easy to implement.
Customer Testing	Easier access to potential customers. It's much easier to share a new web/application with friends/family for testing and feedback.
Financial Commitment	Leveraging technical prowess, marketing and awareness to attract users, with a focus on assets.
Distribution Channels	Social networks and mobile platforms are the main basis for accessing Internet platforms, making it much easier to reach customers.

Source: Tadros et all., 2018:23.

While there are those who distinguish startups with another set of characteristics, which can be summarized as follow;

- ***Temporary*:** A startup doesn't have to stay that way for the rest of its life. Being a startup is not a goal in itself. A startup is a particular phase, and the main objective is to get out of it. As Silicon Valley entrepreneur Peter Thiel puts it, it's about going from 0 to 1, transforming an idea into a business, finding a new way of providing a service, creating value.
- ***Finding a Business Model*:** Being a startup means bringing value to customers with a product or service that is novel or previously unavailable in the market. The challenge for startups is to find and build a business model that doesn't rely on an existing structure, and that is often unclear when setting up the structure.
- ***Industrializable - Reproducible*:** This means that a startup is looking for a model that, once it works, you make money from it, can be done on a larger scale, in other places, or be done by other people. Notable

examples include companies such as Airbnb and Uber, which have successfully scaled their models globally.

- ***Scalable (For Exponential Growth)*:** Start-up scalability means having a model where the more customers you have, the higher your margins. The first customers cost more than the next, and so on. It's this scalability, and the fact that the model is reproducible, that enables startups to grow so fast and so far, in such a short space of time, compared to a more conventional business (Djekidel et al., 2021).

Whatever its definition, a startup is a company under construction that has not yet been launched on the market (or only on an experimental basis). It is in a more or less lengthy phase of developing a product, an idea, a market study and a search for professional and technical partners. The aim is to develop innovative activities or exploit a growing or mature market. As a result, this type of structure has no predefined business model.

2.2. Incubator Definition

The majority of definitions highlight the objectives and services that incubators offer to incubated companies. Anglo-Saxon authors such as Aernoudt (2004), Hackett and Dilts (2004), Peters et al. (2004), Lalkaka and Shaffer (1998), Markley and McNamarl (1995), define an incubator as an organization that supports the creation and growth of businesses by offering office space, shared services, and entrepreneurial assistance. According to Allen and McCluskey (1990), a business incubator is a facility that provides workspace, shared services, and business development support within an environment conducive to the creation, survival, and growth of new ventures.

According to NBIA, business incubation is a business support process that accelerates the successful development of start-ups and emerging businesses, by providing entrepreneurs with a set of targeted resources and services. These services are generally developed or orchestrated by incubator management and offered both within the incubator and through its network of contacts. Based on the above definitions, we can say that an incubator is a support and assistance structure for innovative and technological projects. Some incubators are aimed at start-ups, while others are designed for companies seeking growth or even development.

2.3. Theoretical Foundations of Incubation

Business incubators are based on a number of theoretical foundations drawn from various fields, such as economics, entrepreneurship, management, sociology. Here are some of the theoretical underpinnings that underpin the creation and operation of incubators;

- *Theory of entrepreneurship* that focuses on business creation and the role of incubators in providing a favorable environment for business creation and growth.
- *Social capital theory*, which suggests that networks and interpersonal relationships are important assets for entrepreneurs. Incubators foster the creation of social capital by connecting entrepreneurs with mentors, investors, other entrepreneurs and industry experts.
- *Resources and Skills Theory*: Incubators offer startups access to material resources (office space, equipment) and immaterial resources (mentoring, training, financing) essential to their growth.
- *Organizational Learning Theory*: Incubators are designed to create a learning environment where entrepreneurs can test ideas, learn from failures and successes and adapt their strategy accordingly.
- *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*: Incubators can accelerate the diffusion of innovation by helping startups move more quickly from the development phase to commercialization.

These theoretical foundations clarify the central role of incubators in supporting start-ups and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. They offer a conceptual basis for understanding the establishment and functioning of such support structures.

2.4. Incubator Models

Incubators have become identifiable and their impact can easily be measured according to a few basic processes, including: their location (*rural, urban*), vocation, objectives (*job creation, profit*), configuration (*residential,*

visible), model activity (*cooperative, NPO*), main sponsors, facilitators (*community, corporate, university*), core business, target clientele (*mixed, industrial, technological, Internet*) and, of course, a combination of all these methods. In fact, it boils down to adding a multitude of characteristics to the classic typology (*public, private, university*) (Albert et al., 2002). Based primarily on work by Albert et al. (2002), we'll look at a few variations of the models;

- Local economic development incubator
- University incubator
- Firm-owned incubator
- Venture capital incubator
- The virtual incubator

To facilitate understanding, the following table illustrates the segmentation of the different models.

Table 2. Characteristics of Different Incubator Models

	Local Business Incubator	**University or Scientific Incubator**	**Business Incubator Firm Ownership**	**Venture Capital Investment Incubator**	**Virtual Incubator**
Purpose	Not for profit	Not for profit	Profit	Profit	Not for profit
Dominant activities	Generalist	High-tech	High-tech	High-tech	Generalist
Objectives	*Job creation *Redevelopment/revitalization *Economic development *Support for depopulation or specific industries *Development of SMEs and networks	*Technology enhancement *Development of the entrepreneurial spirit *Citizenship *Images *Financial resources	*Develop an entrepreneurial spirit among employees *Retaining talent *Monitoring *Access to new technologies and markets	*Profit from the resale of shares in a portfolio company to spread risk *Cooperation between portfolio companies	*Complete business support (financing, marketing, management...) both digitally and remotely *Draw up a business plan to convince the relevant parties
Target	*Small commercial or service companies *In some cases high-tech companies	*Internal projects prior to creation *External projects	*Internal and external projects, generally related to the company's business lines	*Technology start-ups	*Project leaders

Source: Albert et al., 2002.

The table shows that the different incubation models have significantly different characteristics. Indeed, we note a differentiation in the content of the service offering according to the incubator model. The aim is to provide project leaders with more specialized skills, depending on the needs and nature of the project.

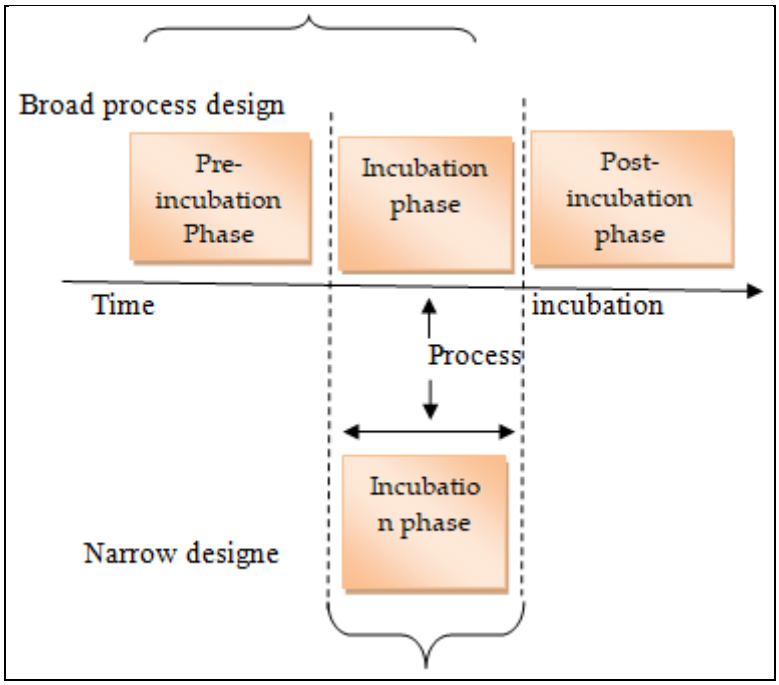
2.5. Incubation Processes

Understanding the incubation process is essential for grasping its mechanisms and inherent complexity. According to Masmoudi (2007:119), there is no universal incubation process. Each incubation structure recognizes its own interventions and incubation processes, add Violette and Lou (2006:18): The incubation process goes beyond the whole learning process in which an individual or group combines resources and develops additional skills. Throughout the process, each team member develops different entrepreneurial skills. Whatever the outcome of improved employment, entrepreneurs emerge from the incubator system with new or expanded skills and a better job: "*The ability to reuse their skills in another context*" (Bizandavyi, 2014). However, we have been able to distinguish two conceptions of the incubation process: a broad conception and a narrow conception.

- In its broad conception, incubation is a continuous process (Brooks, 1986) lasting from several months to several years. It can be summarized in three phases: the pre-incubation phase, the incubation phase and the post-incubation phase (Masmoudi, 2007).

- The narrow conception of the incubation process only affects the incubation phase itself. Processing time therefore largely depends on the maturity of incubated business projects. The narrow conception of the incubation process corresponds to the incubation phase in the broader concept of the incubation process.

Figure 1. The Two Concepts of Incubation Process

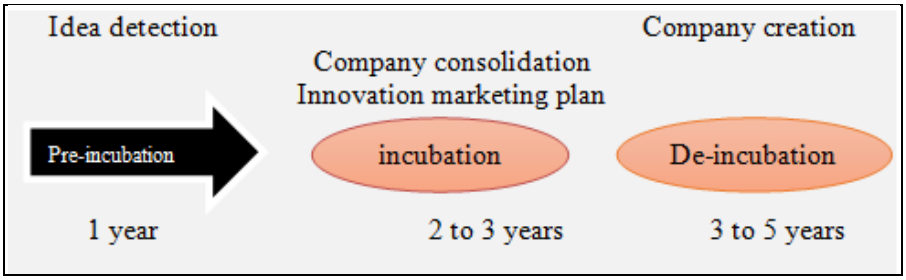


Source: Masmoudi, 2007.

Bizzotto (2003) describes the incubation process in five phases;

1. The prospecting and attraction phase
2. Project selection phase
3. Guidance, support and evaluation of incubated companies
4. Exit phase
5. Incubator evaluation phase

Figure 2. Phases of the Incubation Process



Source: Hulett and Perez, 2002.

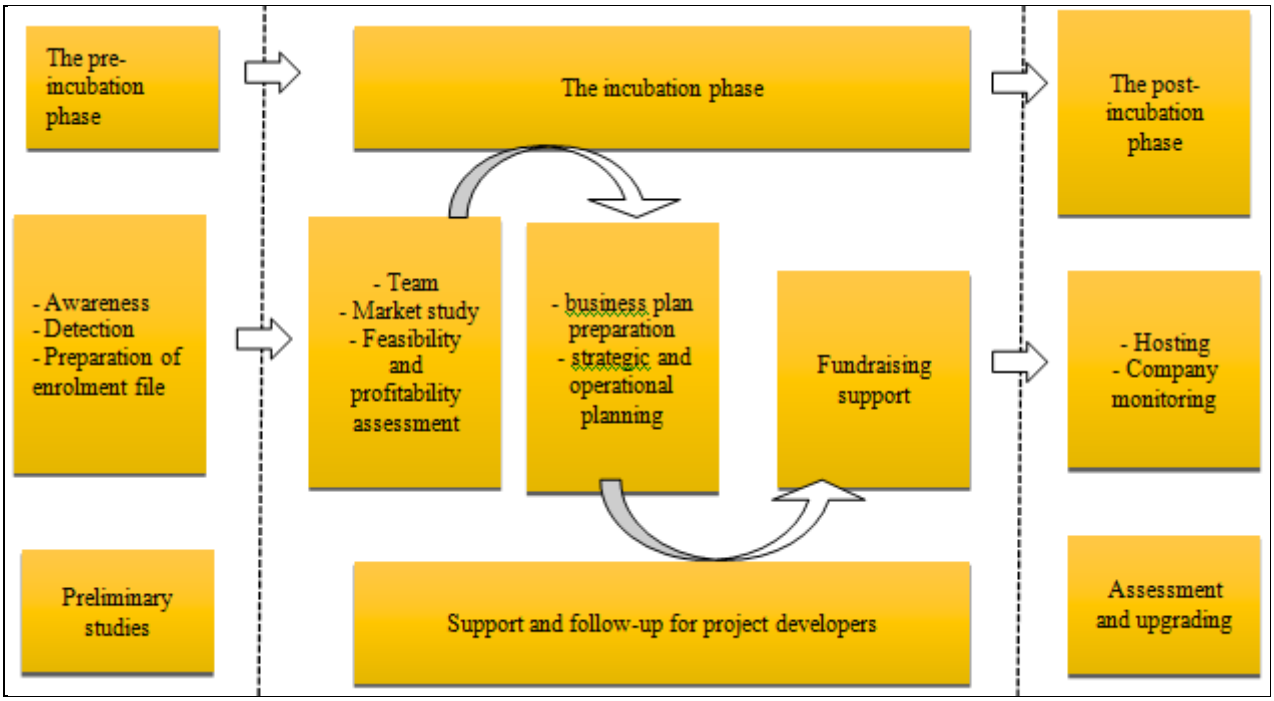
For our part, we have adopted the incubation process developed by (Masmoudi, 2007), which comprises three phases: A pre-incubation phase, an incubation phase and a post-incubation phase. We consider this process to be the most relevant to the context of our study and trace the different phases of incubator intervention in our context. Figure.3 shows the incubation process.

Pre-incubation is a period of conception and preparation that should enable the future entrepreneur to think about his or her project, consider an opportunity or an idea, reflect on this career choice, assess the reaction of those close to him or her, obtain information, get advice, take courses, draw up a business plan, get help, work things out with the family... in short, prepare well before moving on to the creation process (Gasse, 2002).

The incubation phase is one of the most important processes associated with business start-up support systems. At this stage, the incubator's main objective is to support the project owner through the entire process of building his or her business, right up to incorporation. Verstraet (2000) shows that support goes hand in hand with monitoring the ongoing creation process, by providing a variety of resources (tangible and intangible) and increasing the company's chances of future success.

In the post-incubation phase, the company must be strong enough to survive in a competitive market without an incubator. This is one of the most important stages in the company's life. The incubator usually has a monitoring tool to determine the "*health*" of companies in the incubation phase and their willingness to exit the system.

Figure 3. The Incubation Process Selection and Entry into Incubation Selection for Post-Incubation End of Incubation Phase an Incubation Structure



Sourca: Masmoudi, 2007.

Development unit, network, support organizations (business incobators) and incubation networks hosting and support hosting and support organisations for new incubator, competition, businesses university, school (Masmoudi, 2007).

2.6. The State of Incubators in Algeria

Within the framework of the Algerian government's strategy to develop a non-hydrocarbon economic model grounded in the information and knowledge economy, the concept of startups has gained increasing prominence in Algeria. In recent years, several measures have been taken by the Algerian authorities to define institutional, organizational and regulatory frameworks to encourage the creation and development of start-ups.

In this context, a Delegate Ministry responsible for the Knowledge Economy and Start-ups was established in early 2020 by Executive Decree No. 20-54, dated Aouel Rajab 1441 (February 25, 2020). Since then, a number of measures have been taken to set the tone for the new strategy in terms of entrepreneurship and start-up creation, including the introduction of the start-up label, the creation of institutions to support and finance start-ups, headed by the Algerian Start-up Fund (ASF), and a number of other mechanisms to cover the costs inherent in patents and intellectual property.

In addition, to support young project leaders in their efforts to create start-ups, the public authorities have promoted the establishment of incubators.To this end, we have seen the introduction of the incubator labeling system described in; which included a project to set up a committee, national Algerian labels and the conditions required for the award of the incubator label. Any public or private structure or private partnership with the community is eligible to receive the incubator label in Algeria, providing initial support and designing the project owners, in terms of accommodation, training, advice and support.

Companies applying for the "*incubator*" label benefit from exemptions from TAP, IRG and IBS for 2 years from the date of acquisition of the label, so they are not subject to VAT on receivables to carry out their investment projects (Article 87 of the 2021 Finance Law). So, after the incubators in technology parks such as the Cyber Park in Sidi Abdellah. Algeria's first public gas pedal, "*Algeria venture*", was created by Executive Decree no. 20-356 of November 30, 2020, with the mission of supporting startups through coaching and training programs.

In addition, several university incubators have been set up across the country. These include INTILAK at the National Agency for the Valorization of Research and Technological Development Results (ANVREDET), the Fikra-Tech incubator at the Advanced Technologies Development Center "*CDTA*" created in partnership with ANVREDET, and the incubator at INTTIC (*National Institute of Telecommunications and ICT*) in Oran, created in 2013 as part of the "*e-Algérie*" strategy, in collaboration with ANPT (*National Agency for the Promotion and Development of Technological Parks*).

Among the best-known private incubators in Algeria are IncubMe, created in 2019 and winner of the Best Incubator 2022 award; WomWork by The Annex Dz, the first incubator dedicated to female entrepreneurship in Algeria, created in 2019 by The Annex Dz coworking space; CapCowork, created in 2019; and Leancubateur, created in 2020.

That said, in Algeria; the network of public incubation structures is very limited. It is made up of a limited number of players who provide support to project leaders. As a result, it is the least dynamic link in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The statistics shown in the table below illustrate the very timid evolution of the activity of operational incubators, either in terms of accommodation or business creation during the period from (2017 to 2021).

Table 3. Number of Projects Hosted (2017 to 2021)

Years	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Number of Companies Hosted	139	127	85	79	135	565
Number Companies Created	94	50	61	41	72	318

Source: Drawn up on the basis of the Ministry of Industry and Mines' statistical information bulletins for SMEs, nos. 31, 32, 36, 38 and 40.

The data show that the number of projects managed reached 565, when 318 companies were created, representing an average of 56.28%. This remains largely insufficient. The same applies to technology and university incubators. A case in point is the Sidi Abdallah incubator, which registered just 23 young ICT companies in 2015, despite the high level of infrastructure it has provided since its launch in May 2010.Incubated companies have encountered numerous obstacles to their growth, for example, the problem of working with telecoms technology companies such as (*Ooredoo, Mobilis, Djezzy and Algérie Télécom*) due to the remoteness of their headquarters and the associated problem of accessibility. As for university incubators, this concept is relatively new to Algerian universities and has not really been used since its inception. However, the Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research recognizes the need to encourage the development of these structures within universities.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

In order to analyze the role played by incubators in supporting and developing startups, we conducted a survey of project leaders hosted in various private and university incubators. Specifically, a questionnaire-based survey was carried out with 16 project holders. Some questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews, while the remainder were distributed via Google Forms and disseminated by email and social media platforms.

The limited number of startups surveyed does not allow for the generalization of the findings. Aware of this limitation, we made several attempts to increase the number of responses by relaunching the survey. However, our efforts were hindered by the reluctance of many project leaders to participate, a reluctance that may be attributed to the relative novelty of the startup and incubator phenomenon in Algeria.

The start-ups surveyed all held the Start-up Label and were established between 2020 and 2023. They operate in a number of fields: services, leisure, retail, online services, agri-food, animal feed and packaging. This diversity indicates a range of fields in which Algerian entrepreneurs are venturing, in order to explore different business

opportunities and meet market needs. The number of employees ranges from 05 and 10, due to the innovative nature of their business, which does not require a large workforce.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Our sample consists of 16 startups. The project owners are 5 women and 11 men. Their ages range from 18 to 40, with a university education as shown in the following table.

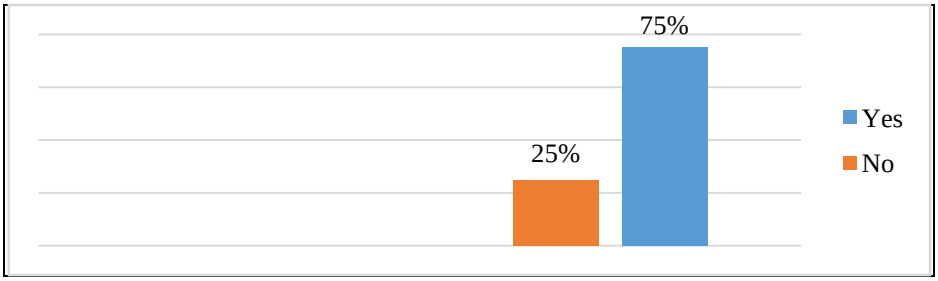
Table 4. Professional Status and Level of Education of Creators

			Study level			Total
			Bachelor's degree	**Master**	**Other**	
Professional Status	Students	Workforce% of total	6	-	-	6
			37.5%	-	-	37.5%
	Employees	Workforce% of total	-	10	-	10
				62.5%	-	62.5%
Total		Workforce% of total	6	10		16
			37.5%	62.5%		100%

Source: Own Design Based On Survey Data

The incubator offers a complete chain from idea creation to entrepreneurship, and also functions as an incubator for young companies under 5 years of age, enabling both the project owner and the start-up to be housed within the incubator. The figure below shows that 75% of startups surveyed had been hosted by an incubator, compared with 25% who had not. Despite the novelty of the incubator concept in Algeria, our study shows that project owners have become aware of the need to seek help and support from incubators to ensure the survival and development of their start-up. According to a 2015 SES center study, startups that have passed through an incubator have a survival rate 1.5 times higher than other startups. In addition, these startups have sales 1.2 times higher than other startups.

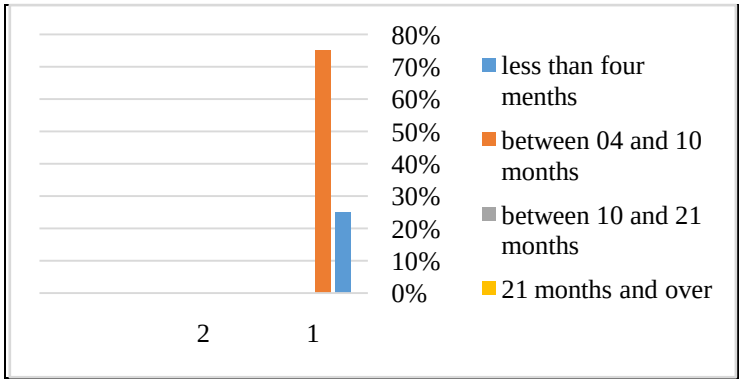
Figure 4. Startup Accommodation in Different Incubators



Source: Own Design Based on Survey Data

The figure below shows their distribution according to time spent in the incubator. 75% of respondents have been in the incubator between 4 and 10 months, and 25% are startups hosted for less than 4 months. The length of time spent in the incubator differs from one start-up to another, depending on the nature of the project, the maturation phase and the steps required to go from idea to project.

Figure 5. Time Spent in the Incubator



Source: Own Design Based On Survey Data

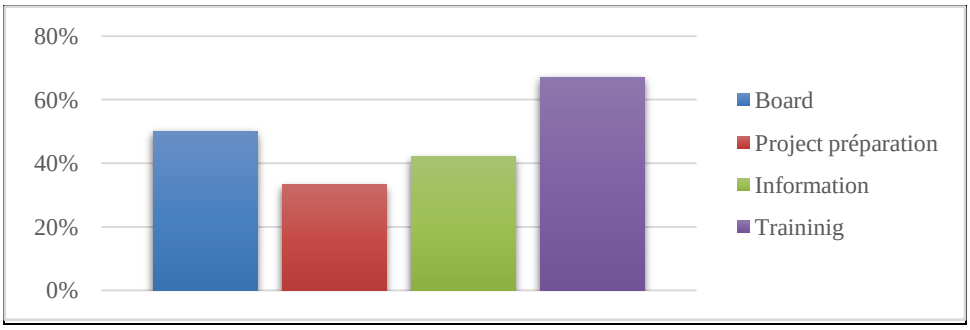
Incubators can offer various types of support to startups. As illustrated in the figure below, 41.7% of the surveyed start-ups reported receiving strategic support to define their strategy and develop their business model; 33.3% benefited from marketing support to bring their product to market; 16.7% received legal support; and only 8.3% reported access to financial support for securing initial funding. Incubators help start-ups with key aspects of their project's launch. Start-ups are supported in strategy development, product prototyping, marketing, finding their first customer, as well as legal and accounting advice.

Figure 6. Type of Support

Source: Own Design Based on Survey Data

The project owners surveyed confirmed that their incubators provided them with a wide range of services. Indeed, the figure below shows that 67% benefited from training courses that enabled them to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Followed by 50% who benefited from expert advice and guidance on their project and field of activity. A further 42% said that their incubators had provided them with information on all aspects of markets and their ideas, and 33.3% had received support in preparing and launching their project.

Figure 7. Type of Services Provided by Incubators



Source: Own Design Based On Survey Data

Our survey of project owners revealed that the first obstacle to start-up development was raising funds. The absence of venture capital and specialized banks capable of financing innovative projects is a serious obstacle to any possibility of developing and conquering market share. This difficulty is even more acute for startups whose products require prototyping and machining. This phase requires very costly equipment, which is out of the reach of young entrepreneurs.

According to our survey, the second difficulty lies in securing the first order. The innovative nature of the product or service is often a psychological obstacle for potential customers, who often prefer products that have already been tried and tested. So, despite the coaching efforts of the incubator's coaches, the start-ups housed there are still unable to find their successors and get off the ground.

The third difficulty encountered is that of carrying out serious market research. The lack of reliable data and the difficulty of accessing existing data mean that market research is often incomplete or even botched. This makes it difficult to conduct proper market research that is sufficiently reliable to implement a competitive strategy.

In addition, our research has enabled us to analyze the interaction between the incubator structure and innovative entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs surveyed are fairly young, mostly between 18 and 40. They have acquired sufficient experience and knowledge, which can be seen from their high level of education. There are many reasons why they use the services of the incubator, but the search for a workspace where they can develop their project, especially at a reasonable cost, and access to coaching and mentoring services are the reasons most cited by the entrepreneurs surveyed.

Through our study, these entrepreneurs and creators were able to assess the quality of the services provided by the incubator on their behalf. The results show that, while on the one hand, the least appreciated service is that linked to access to financing resources, on the other hand, the offices and workspaces as well as the price of access to these resources is very well appreciated.

5. CONCLUSION

Algeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem is still in its nascent stage, with most of its key actors having emerged during the 1990s. This evolution has been largely driven by the implementation of economic liberalization policies and various incentives aimed at fostering private investment. Among the ecosystem's most critical components are the support and guidance structures dedicated to business creation. These structures, dispersed across the country, provide entrepreneurs and project promoters with specialized training, assistance in developing business plans, and personalized coaching. Nevertheless, despite the efforts and support offered by these institutions, Algeria continues to exhibit limited entrepreneurial dynamism and faces a significant shortfall in the rate of new business creation.

This research seeks to demonstrate that business incubators provide project holders aspiring to establish innovative enterprises with the necessary support to refine their ideas, evaluate the feasibility and relevance of their projects, and effectively mobilize their own resources. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of business incubators and to adequately address our research problem, a field study was conducted involving startups hosted in various private and university-based incubators. The primary objective of this study was to analyze the support mechanisms deployed by incubators, as well as their core missions and objectives, which shape the engagement of project holders and startups within these incubation structures.

As far as the results are concerned, we were able to conclude that incubators provide support for project initiators from the maturation of the idea right through to the actual creation of the company, while also ensuring post-creation follow-up. Incubators also act as incubators, housing and supporting young companies. They are equipped with all the resources and services needed to get a young innovative company off the ground. All these elements support our first hypothesis.

According to our findings, the primary motivations for utilizing incubator services include access to workspace and coaching or mentoring support. However, in addition to these services, creators have access to other services such as training, access to the incubator's professional network, opportunities to meet other companies and other events organized by the incubator or co-organized with its partners or even hosted startups. We have observed that entrepreneurs who benefit or have benefited from hosting and support were quite satisfied with the services provided by their incubators, which made it easier for them to launch and follow up their projects. This confirms our second hypothesis.

Despite the diversity of services offered by incubators, depending on the nature of the project and the needs of the start-ups, it has to be said that incubators in Algeria are only able to provide real help for start-ups specializing in matchmaking, which are projects that don't require a great deal of funding. As for start-ups focusing on products that require machining and prototyping, existing incubators don't have the resources to really support project leaders.

Finally, it's important to mention the need to improve the quality of service provision, assistance and training for hosted entrepreneurs. These shortcomings are certainly due to the youth of the incubators, and even to the reality of incubation in Algeria, which is still in a start-up phase. It is also important to stress the need to create a bank specialized in financing startups, to fill the gap in risk capital.

YAZAR BEYANI / AUTHORS' DECLARATION:

Bu makale Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine uygundur. Beyan edilecek herhangi bir çıkar çatışması yoktur. Araştırmanın ortaya konulmasında herhangi bir mali destek alınmamıştır. Makale yazım ve intihal/benzerlik açısından kontrol edilmiştir. Makale, "*en az iki dış hakem*" ve "*çift taraflı körleme*" yöntemi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Makalede kullanılan ölçek için yazar(lar) tarafından ölçeğin orjinal sahibinden izin alındığı beyan edilmiştir. Yazar(lar), dergiye imzalı "*Telif Devir Formu*" belgesi göndermişlerdir. Mevcut çalışma için mevzuat gereği etik izni alınmaya ihtiyaç yoktur. Bu konuda yazarlar tarafından dergiye "*Etik İznine Gerek Olmadığına Dair Beyan Formu*" gönderilmiştir. / This paper complies with Research and Publication Ethics, has no conflict of interest to declare, and has received no financial support. The article has been checked for spelling and plagiarism/similarity. The article was evaluated by "*at least two external referees*" and "*double blinding*" method. For the scale used in the article, it is declared by the authors that permission was obtained from the original owner of the scale. The author(s) sent a signed "*Copyright Transfer Form*" to the journal. There is no need to obtain ethical permission for the current study as per the legislation. The "*Declaration Form Regarding No Ethics Permission Required*" was sent to the journal by the authors on this subject.

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