A new study in the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* looks at how university-based accelerators contribute to the development and growth of start-up companies and to the viability of a start-up ecosystem. The research adds to the burgeoning literature of the last decade or so that has investigated the growing phenomenon of start-ups from numerous perspectives.

Fabio Greco and Marco Tregua of the Department of Economics, Management, Institutions at the University of Naples Federico II in Naples, Italy, considered "actors," geographical contexts, and resources and see these as the three main driving forces shaping start-up ecosystems and the impact of university-based accelerators on those start-ups. They have undertaken a preliminary analysis of several start-up ecosystems across the globe and have also carried out two in-field studies.

The researchers found that university-based accelerators provide methodological, theoretical, and practical advances that are a hard-to-replicate combination. The conditions accelerators offer start-ups bring prestige in the business context, operational models and methods, and allow the sowing of commercial seeds in fertile ground.

The team points out that from a practical perspective, accelerators provided contextual understanding for start-ups based partially on earlier successes and failures. However, given that finding, it is quite surprising that the heritage seems to be lost with the growth of each generation of
new companies. The relationships and the learning process may well be embedded within the accelerator, but the established companies that benefit from the accelerator do not tend to be present in a supportive role for the newcomers, which is surprising.

University-based accelerators are, by definition, in the university-based context, and should, the researchers suggest, perform the role of alumni in facilitating the role of newcomers and in helping to increase the prestige of the accelerator itself. This would benefit all actors, just as an alumni association might benefit former and new students alike as well as one's alma mater.


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