Strengthening Innovation Hubs in Higher Education: Exploring Marketing and Financial Models in Uganda's Public Universities

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Abstract

Public universities in Uganda are increasingly recognised as drivers of innovation and student entrepreneurship, aligned with Vision 2040, NDP IV, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Innovation hubs within these institutions are established to incubate student-led start-ups. However, access to finance, weak marketing strategies, and fragmented institutional support continue to hinder their performance. This study investigates how integrated marketing and financial models can enhance the effectiveness of innovation ecosystems in Uganda's public higher institutions of education (HEIs). It explores three research questions: (i) What financing strategies are employed by university-based innovation hubs? (ii) What marketing approaches do student-led start-ups utilise? (iii) Which institutional or policy-level enablers and constraints affect start-up success? A mixed-