

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Asta Fominiene

**TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS INCUBATORS:
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation
Social Sciences, Management and Administration (03 S)

Vilnius, 2010

The dissertation was prepared during the period of 2002 - 2010 at Vilnius University
The dissertation is defended as an external work

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September at the Council of Management and Administration in 403 auditorium of
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The summary of dissertation was sent-out on 10th of August 2010.

The doctoral dissertation is available at the library of Vilnius University.

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

Asta Fominiėnė

**VERSLO INKUBATORIŲ VEIKLOS TRANSFORMACIJA:
ANALIZĖ IR VERTINIMAS**

Daktaro disertacijos santrauka
Socialiniai mokslai, vadyba ir administravimas (03 S)

Vilnius, 2010

Disertacija rengta 2002 - 2010 metais Vilniaus universitete
Disertacija ginama eksternu

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Disertacija bus ginama viešame Vadybos ir administravimo mokslo krypties
tarybos posėdyje 2010 m. rugsėjo 10 d. 14 val. Vilniaus universiteto Ekonomikos
fakulteto 403 auditorijoje.

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Disertacijos santrauka išsiuntinėta 2010 m. rugpjūčio mėn. 10 d.
Disertaciją galima peržiūrėti Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekoje.

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of research

Small and medium business (SMB) is distinct in the ability to flexibly adapt to business user's needs. Providing wider range of differentiated services and products, operating in small specific markets, promoting good practice it might become basis for social and economic stability. Perceiving the resulting benefits of SMB's on the country's economical and social development it should be noted that opinions and views of various authors on business start and active involvement into economical and social development are found in both theoretical and "good business practice" levels. Starting a business today requires considerable financial resources as well as human resources applying new strategic management techniques, effective ways of putting purposes into practice and thus creating new job positions instead of only overcoming "self-employment" issue.

The lack of preparation to engage into country's and international economic space of starting entrepreneurs is appearing to be an important problem while analyzing and evaluating the employment opportunities in a certain given period in high demand businesses. Consequently, entrance to business market, while the competition is increasing becomes a complex and more knowledge demanding process. Emerging SMB companies have little knowledge and information on the markets, potential partners, business development opportunities in the integrated market. Quite often companies are faced with the lack of funds to implement new idea, buy premises or even hold deposit for a bank loan. Starting entrepreneur often lacks skills in business management; however, access possibilities to highly paid consultants are relatively low. These are the reasons why novice entrepreneurs fail during first years of their existence. Moreover, low activity in using favourable opportunities in economic and social development services is noted. Business incubator activities are one of the possible forms of support to newly formed SMB's and start-up companies. It is as crucial to explore peculiarities of business incubators and business incubation processes and the influence of business incubators on successful SMB companies' development, evaluate transformation capabilities and assumptions as well as to estimate SMB support from the point of perspective.

Solving these problems, the attention of scientists and practitioners should be concentrated towards exploring business development possibilities, evaluating changes in business environment, identifying tendencies and seeking effective improvements of SMB companies' performance in the process of incubation. Therefore, there is a demand not only to assess business incubators and incubation process qualities and their benefits to SMB companies' development but also to national economic growth promotion.

One of the SMB support forms worldwide is business incubators that are extensively studied both by academics and practitioners. Advanced experience and benefits developing SMB sector of foreign countries show that business incubators are the potential for promoting business, giving rise to and implementing innovations, creating new jobs and enhancing value-added.

Business incubator activities have been researched for decades. Most often business incubator researchers concentrate their studies on the concept of business incubator and incubation, their types, objectives and provided services. Business incubation and incubator concepts have been analyzed by many authors in the past century (Plosima,

Allen, 1984; Duff, 1994, Lalkaka, 1997, Hisrich, 1988, et al.), as well as this century (Geenhuizen, Soetanto, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Hannon, 2005; Bøllingtoft, Ulhøi, 2005; Voisey, Gornall, 2006 Hamdani, 2006; Dickes, Hughes, 2007; Ndabeni, 2008; Eshun, 2009; Davies, 2009; et al). Their works highlight different aspects of business incubation and incubator processes. Analysis of scientific material revealed that the concepts of business incubator and incubation processes are interpreted too freely. Without clear and exact definition it becomes problematic to identify business incubators prevalence and their benefits.

Authors who researched *business incubator objectives and provided services* (Oyeyemi, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Albert, Bernasconi, Gaynor, 2002; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Abetti, 2004; Aernoudt, 2004; Bachan, 2006; Hamdani, 2006; Dickes Hughes, 2007; Chandra, 2007; Abduh, D'Souza, Quazi *et.*, 2007; Ndabeni, 2008; Davies, 2009) presented various classifications depending on the researched aspect of business incubator activity. However, no systemic classification of business incubator objectives and incubation services were produced. Authors (Chinsomboon, 2000; Woodward, 2001; Lazarowich, Wojciechowski, 2002; Harman, Lauren, Read, 2003; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Bhabra-Remedios, Sten, Ronstadt, 2005; Bachan, 2006; Gassmann, Becker, 2006; Szabó, 2007; Zablocki, 2008) in their scientific papers, trying to identify business incubation process and different types of business incubators services, commonly gave prominence to one or some their activity aspects that allowed to distinguish the striking features and to classify business incubators according: 1) founders; 2) commitment (commercialisation) degree; 3) specialization; 4) objectives; 5) incubatee size and age; 6) proposed infrastructure; 7) operating area; 8) degree of transformation. Hitherto no common business incubator classifications were presented, except for Allen, McCluskey's (1990), Hackett, Dilts (2004) ir Bøllingtoft, Ulhøi (2005) that compiled continuum of business incubator types and objectives. Further transformation of business incubator activities is analyzed distinguishing business incubator generations (Lalkaka, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Hackett, Dilts, 2004; Aerts, Matthyssens, Vandenbernt, 2006; Szabó, 2007; El-Midany, Shalaby, 2009).

Business incubation and its processes were insufficiently analyzed in Lithuania. Despite some individual scientific papers and practical studies, analyzing SMB support forms, problems of various aspects of incubation and its processes are reflected in the works of Lithuanian authors P. Milius (2008), T. Tamošiūnas (2009), B. Melnikas (2002), M. Kučinskienė (2007), V. Vengrauskas (2008), S. Lukošius (2009), G. Jatuliavičienė (2007), N. Pačėsa (2007), E. Chlivickas (2008), N. Petrauskaitė (2008), R. Galvelė (2009), L. Mažylyis (2006), L. Smagurauskienė (2009) and others.

Scientific problem

The benefit of business incubation and business incubators for the incubatees and for the country's economy is unquestioned: this form of support is widely used both in the developed and developing countries. The activity of business incubators, providing positive results for SMB companies and for the country's economy generally, provides background further to go deep into business incubation processes, highlighting not only their positive aspects but also trying to define their constituents that determine successful process and development of this phenomenon. Comparison of business incubators activity in separate countries shows up differences because of their applicability and appliance, especially as compared with practice and experience of developed and

developing countries. This notwithstanding, phenomenon of incubation and business incubators remains adequately new both in the developed and developing countries (by now there is not only generally applied definitions of these concepts but also as often as not their definitions embrace institutions or organizations providing similar services). Therefore it is necessary to explore and provide business incubation and incubators definitions, to research their activity processes, aims, types and provided services. Transformation of business incubation processes contributes to the formation of new business incubation conditions, involvement of business subjects into the SMB support process hereby promoting SMB companies to use services provided by business incubators thus creating competitive advantage in the integrated market.

So far Lithuanian and foreign business incubator practice has not been analyzed sufficiently, as well as incubator advantages to SMB companies' development have not been emphasized. Influence of the transformations of business incubation processes on successful business development is not estimated and transformation model is not created. Lack of incubation process awareness becomes a barrier to evaluate its development and perspectives. Studies of these problems are important and necessary.

The object of the research of dissertation:

Business incubators activity and its transformation under conditions of the modern integrated market

The main aim of the research

To create business incubator transformation model after carrying out business incubator activity analysis and evaluation.

In order to achieve the aim of the research detailed ***objectives are formulated:***

1. to provide business incubating and business incubation definitions after examining scientific and practical works of foreign authors'.
2. to reveal the essence of business incubation and its importance to SMB development after analyzing business incubation process system comprising of pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation stages.
3. to explore business incubation services necessary for the successful business incubation process and to propose the holistic mechanism of the provided services and support.
4. to present business incubators classification allowing to evaluate their provided services subject to the types of different business incubators.
5. to develop business incubation process transformation model after assessing essential incubator activity development.
6. to assess current business incubator activity transformation level after carrying out foreign incubator activity analysis
7. after empirical study to evaluate Lithuanian business incubator activity, its transformation and predict incubator activity trends, opportunities and challenges.

Methodology and methods of research

The basis of the methods of research is a complex and aggregate approach to the subject matter and its components. Overall and specific set of research like scientific literature analysis and structuring, statistical data analysis and comparison, survey, classification, specification, generalization, graphical simulation were obtained for

theoretical and practical result analysis of the problem. SPSS (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) program was used summarising analyzed data.

Structure and the scope of the research

The scheme of logical structure of dissertation is provided in the figure 1.

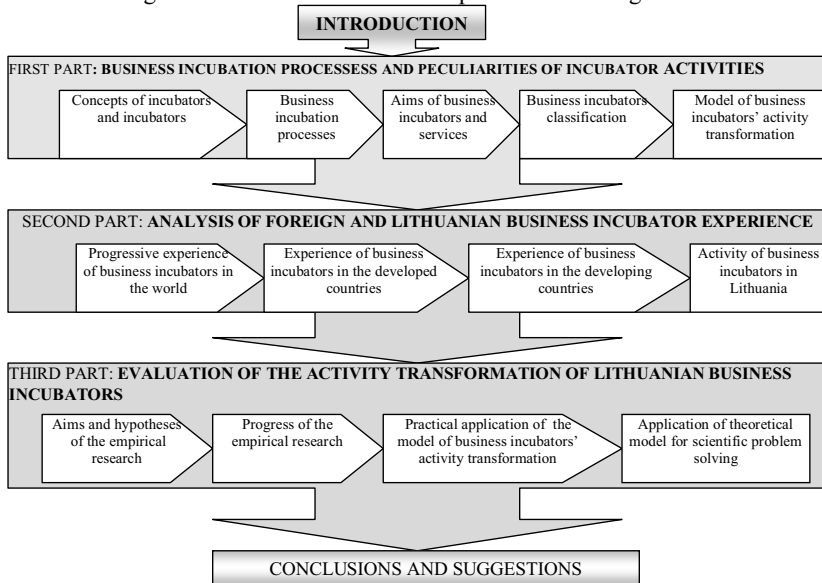


Figure 1. Logical scheme of the dissertation

The first theoretical part “Business incubation processes and peculiarities of incubator activity” reveals business incubation and incubator concepts concentrating on business incubation processes and their compounds. Business incubator purposes and services are analysed, incubator types and their connections are singled out as well as incubator activity transformation model is presented.

The second part of this dissertation ‘Analysis of foreign and Lithuanian business incubator experience’ examines the application of progressive business incubator experience. The experiences of both developed and developing countries worldwide are explored and the activities of Lithuanian business incubators are summarized in this part of dissertation.

The third part of the dissertation ‘Evaluation of the activity transformation of Lithuanian business incubators’ displays logical and empirical research data analysis, its classification and business incubation process transformation assumptions and directions that are based on this classification. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in the final dissertation part.

Used sources in dissertation

Comprehensive analysis of scientific, statistical and methodological literature was carried out for this dissertation. The main sources used were: scientific works of business incubation and incubator researchers, articles and researches, official results of the

empirical researches, business incubation network information (NBIA, SPICA, EBN, and Global Business Incubator Network), legal documents of the Lithuanian Republic, data of the Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Economy the Republic of Lithuania reports and electronic information resources.

Recent surveys on business incubation processes were carried out by (Al-Mubarak, Michael Busler, 2010) worldwide, (Adkinson, 2010, Monkman, 2010) in USA, (Goddard, Chouk, 2006) in Europe and other individual regional business incubation / incubator networks.

Scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation

Scientific novelty of the dissertation is reflected in the main scientific research results that are presented for public defence. This dissertation is of theoretical-applied nature and business incubator activities and processes are analyzed in the context of incubator activity transformation.

Theoretical significance:

- Systematic analysis of foreign scientific and practical business incubation and business incubator literature was carried out, thus, allowing to present more precise business incubation and incubator definitions and to highlight the importance of this phenomenon to the successful development of SMB companies;
- The main business incubator activity aims are formulated allowing evaluating specifics of provided services; created holistic mechanism of provided services and support allowing to define business incubation services necessary for safeguard against successful business incubation process and to evaluate necessity for providing these services and benefit for incubatees.
- Prepared by the author business incubators classification allows not only to define the business incubators types and relation between them but also what kind of support could expect incubatees from the activity of particular incubator and enables to deeper research of business incubator peculiarities and to foresee their activity transformation directions.
- The system of business incubation processes was prepared. It allows identifying business incubation processes, determining business incubation services necessary for successful business incubation process and servicing application depending on different types of business incubators.
- The first time created the model of business incubators activity transformation enriches management and administration science in relation with business incubation processes, kinds of services and their transformation. In this model the main components, determining transformation of business incubators are the level of development of business incubator and the life cycle of business incubator.

Practical significance:

- Business incubator transformation model was created. With the help of it operational performance of business incubators and their level of development can be assessed.
- The experience of business incubators activity in foreign developed and developing countries was conducted. This analysis enables to define and evaluate business incubators activity transformation and to use the progressive experience of developed and developing countries to Lithuanian business incubator activities.

- Empirical research of the Lithuanian business incubators (2005-2010) and transformation model created by the dissertation author allows objectively assess Lithuanian business incubator activity, its transformation level and predict business incubator activity transformation trends, problems and challenges.

The dissertation consists of introduction, three chapters, conclusions and suggestions. The volume of the dissertation is 186 Pages, including 27 Tables, 60 Pictures and 37 Appendices.

REVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF DISSERTATION

Theoretical interpretations of business incubation - incubators concepts and their evaluation

Special attention of scientists and practitioners towards exploration of business development processes, ongoing assessment of business environment changes, identifying of tendencies and search for effective SMB business performance improvements is attracted due to the growing importance of small and medium business (SMB) and its benefits to national economic and social development. Above mentioned reasons determine the demand for concentrated SMB development and support process which can be implemented through business incubation processes. Business incubation processes that ensure successful SMB companies business development are most common in business incubators. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine business **incubation-incubator concepts** in order to clearly define them.

Despite the recently increased interest in the business incubation phenomenon it is observed that there is no consensus neither on concept of business incubation nor the novelty of it.

Based on the analysis of various author opinions on business incubation concept business incubation can be defined as follows: *business incubation is the innovative, heterogeneous (multiple) and able to transform the business development of SMB's process, during which the support is provided for newly formed and start-up SMB companies thus contributing towards establishment of new, independent and successfully operating in the market companies.*

Researchers of business support process pay special attention to the definition of the business incubator. Identifying business incubation concept boundaries also implies the concept of the business incubator itself. It is relevant to stick to the policy that incubation and incubators must be considered and valued as integral and coherent process which is based on two dimensions. These dimensions are: highlighting public SMB support policy and business acceleration. However, business support remains the key factor in promoting successful SMB operation. Upon examining different sources for business incubator definition the following definition is proposed. *Business incubator is an organization providing comprehensive business support to newly-formed and start-up SMB companies to facilitate their successful development and integration into the competitive market.*

Business incubation includes the process of companies' establishment to their growth up the point when independent activities can be performed and the level of failure risk is minimal. Business incubation consists of pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation stages. There are distinctive operational aspects to these stages. Potential companies are

selected in the pre-incubation stage. These companies are consulted, advised, supervised and paid in the incubation stage. Independently operating companies are successfully guided into the market in the final post-incubation stage.

Rewarding incubation process is largely determined by the services provided during incubation process. These services vary depending on the objectives of business incubator processes. Defining business incubator concept emphasis should be put on national SMB promotion policy and business acceleration. It is applicable to allocate business incubator targets and aims into national (macro) and company (micro) levels. Business incubator objectives in macro level are targeted towards development of the country's economic growth. The targets are concentrated onto increasing employment, economic mobility, regional competitiveness and entrepreneurial culture.

Micro-level incubator activities are aimed at supporting newly formed and start-up SMB companies. Providing value added support system it is targeted to develop competitiveness of new company establishment, support companies with growing potential, stimulate business skills and entrepreneurial qualities and strengthen connections between universities, research institutions and business communities.

Business incubator services make up *holistic business support mechanism* ((Abduh, D'Souza, Quazi and *et.*, 2007). This mechanism assesses the needs of start-ups to solve their business incubation problems.

Different business incubator support identifications and classifications are provided in scientific literature and practice. Three main business incubator service and support groups can be determined. The groups are as follows: tangible services, intangible services and financial support (see Figure 2).

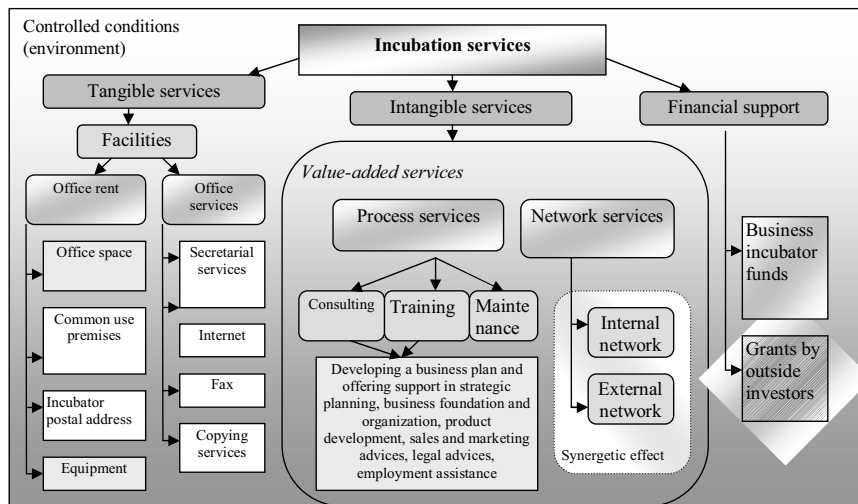


Figure 2. Holistic business support mechanism: incubation services and assistance
Source: created by thesis author

Tangible services include preferential premises rental and provided office services. *Intangible services* are process services (consulting, training, maintenance) and network

services. This service group is also known as value-added services since it helps to develop companies successfully performing in the market. *Financial support* is important regardless to the company development level. This kind of support can be provided either as a business incubator funds or granted by outside investors.

Business incubator services and support vary depending on a certain business incubator lifecycle. There are 3 distinct incubator development phases. Firstly, establishment phase. Business incubators in this phase are concerned with their own business development aspects. Second is a growing or business development phase. The increasing attention and support to the incubatees is noted in this phase. Final maturity phase enables business incubators to provide complete packet of services to the incubatees. Only upon reaching maturity phase can business incubators provide comprehensive support and services to the incubatees. Only then expected results can be achieved.

Business incubator objectives as well as their provided services are directly dependant on the business incubator type. It is convenient to establish common business incubator classification. This helps to determine business incubator type, its interface with other business incubators and services incubatees might expect. The analysis of scientific literature identifies different types of business incubators. Based on the analysis of numerous sources the author proposes classification of all business incubators according to the following features: 1) Business incubator founders: academic (founded by educational institutions and research laboratories), public (founded by public institutions or various organisations) and private (founded by individuals or private companies); 2) Business incubator commitment (commercialization) level: not - for-profit seeking (the activities based on business development to achieve regional economic growth), for-profit (mostly established by individuals and seeking both business development and self benefit); 3) Business incubator specialisation: technology (developing technological activities of the company and in most cases these are academic business incubators), manufacturing (concentrated on the development of industrial companies), mixed (no strict specialization); 4) Business incubator objectives: economic development (promoting national, regional or district economy. Often established in economically disrupted areas.), social (inducing employment of socially disrupts groups), specific (distinct orientation); 5) incubatees size and age: very small, small and medium companies, start-ups, newly formed and growing businesses. Depending on the age and size of the incubatees company their service demand offered by incubator varies); 6) Business incubator proposed infrastructure: with wall / physical (offer material, immaterial services. Might also offer financial support), without wall / virtual (offer immaterial services and can offer financial support. These are companies incubated in cyberspace), e-incubators (both physical and virtual business incubators); 7) Business incubator operating area: local, foreign owned and international, business incubator networks; 8) New business incubators: Econet and Metacompanies (horizontal and vertical networks of the incubated), Dot.com (internet - based business accelerators); 9) Business incubator transformation degree. first, second, third, fourth and fifth generations of business incubators are distinct (see Figure 3).

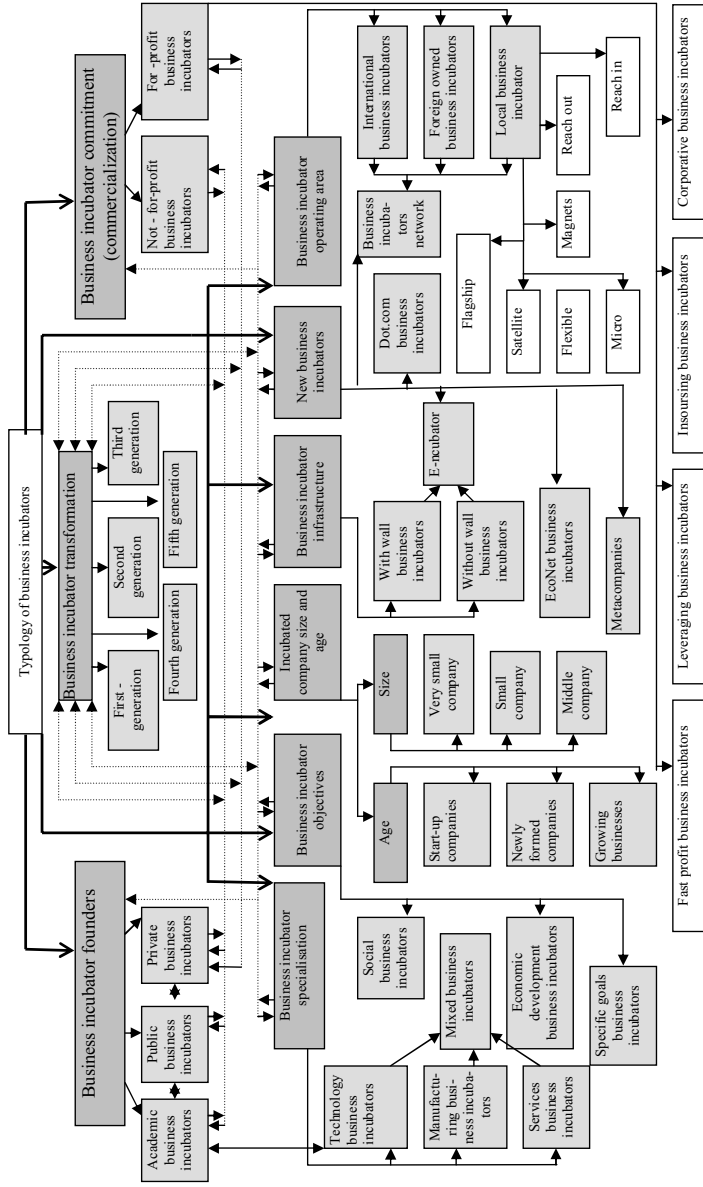


Figure 3. Types of business incubators
Source: created by thesis author

Such classification enables to examine characteristics of business incubator activities more precisely and also predict their transformation trends.

Review of scientific literature and the development of business incubators in different countries presuppose the demand to evaluate the possibility of business incubator activity transformation and trends, also determine the influence these changes bring upon the incubatee. Model of business incubation activity transformation is presented in Figure 4. This transformation model brings together the degree of business incubator development, business incubator types and their development, business incubation processes and its elements, business incubator services. Main components that determine business incubators activity transformation in this model are *the degree of business incubator development and business incubator lifecycle*.

According to the theory of the organizations' life-cycles, the characteristics of the organization's activity vary depending on its life-cycle phase. The life-cycle of the business incubator not only allows to identify the life-cycle phase of the business incubator's activity, but also, with reference to this phase, gives an opportunity to evaluate the particularity, objectives and services of the business incubator's activity. The higher is the stage of the business incubator life-cycle's development, the better services creating extra-values for the business incubation it can offer the incubatees, at the same time, increasing the success of the incubatees' activity's development.

The focus of the business incubators, being in the establishment phase, is concentrated not on the incubatees, but on the organization of the business incubator's activity: on the staff's training and formation, the composition of the services' package, the equipment of the premises, the search of the companies, etc. The activity of business incubators belonging to the phase under discussion is coincident with the *first-generation business incubators*. Key parameters allowing evaluating business incubators belonging to the establishment phase (*first-generation business incubators*) are the following: 1) the activity is limited to the provision of tangible services (the stress is on the rent of premises focused on preferential terms); 2) intangible services are minimal or do not exist at all; 3) no provision of the financial support.

Business incubators, belonging to the growing phase, have already developed their - as the organization's activity and, therefore, can pay more attention to incubatees. The activity's particularity of the business incubators, belonging to this phase, is coincident with the second-generation business incubators which provide incubatees with not only the work-necessary-facilities, but also develop entrepreneurial qualities, give advice or provide training. Key parameters allowing evaluating business incubators belonging to the growing phase (second-generation business incubators) are the following:

- 1) provision of tangible services (premises rent at preferential terms, office equipment and services);
- 2) provision of intangible services (process services, network services are still in the formation);
- 3) financial support is not provided.

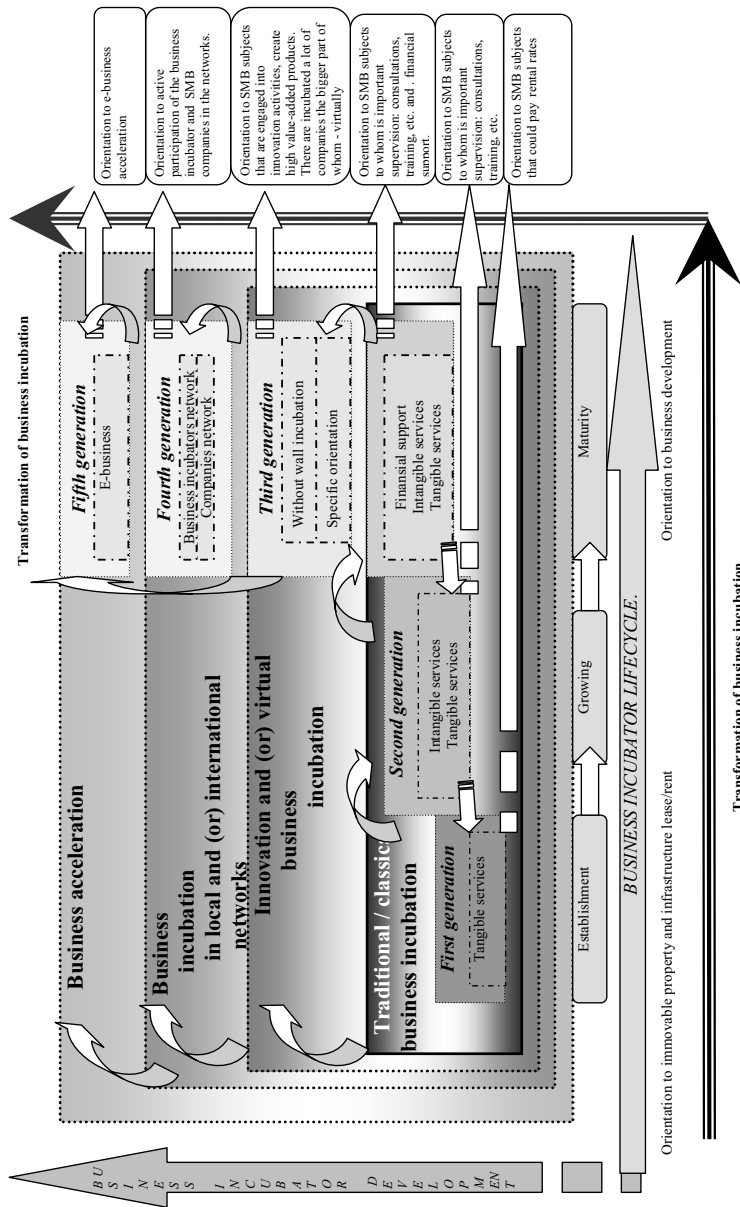


Figure 4. Model of business incubators' activity transformation
 Source: created by thesis author

Business incubators, referred to the maturity phase have not only developed their as the organization's activities, but also provide full support for incubated businesses, including the financial support. Business incubators, belonging to the maturity phase, can be attributed to the third-generation business incubators or their activity can be transformed into the fourth- or (and) the fifth-generation business incubators. Key parameters allowing evaluating business incubators belonging to the maturity phase are the following: 1) provision of tangible services (premises rent at preferential terms, office equipment and services); 2) provision of intangible services (process services, network services); 3) provision of the financial support. *Third-generation business incubators* are directing their activity to SME operators who are engaged in the innovative activity, create high extra-value products and incubate many companies, a great part of which - virtually. *Fourth-generation business incubators* are oriented to incubators of the business itself and to an active participation of SME operators in collaboration networks. The origin of the *fifth-generation business incubators* has been influenced by the rapid development of an e-business, so their activity is directed to the acceleration of the Internet business. This Internet-based business incubation is characterized by the rapid business acceleration, as the Internet-based business is characterized by rapid growth that is why the support must be also fast and concentrated.

The transformation of business incubators' activity is consistently proceeding until the maturity of business incubators' activity is being reached. From this moment, business incubators can transform their activity, depending on its particularity and jumping through certain levels of business incubators' activity, or connecting specific elements, typical to various levels of transformation belonging to business incubators' activity.

The Good Practice of Business Incubation – Incubators in the World

The development of business incubators in the world at the end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI centuries shows that practitioners of business incubation-incubators foresee the significance of this SME support form to companies. Moreover, a growing scientific interest in this event suggests that the activity of business incubations, issuing in positive results for SME companies and for the overall national economy, is likely to create a further look into the business incubation processes, highlighting not only their positive aspects, but also trying to identify components which determine the successful development and evolution of this phenomenon.

Comparing the activity of business incubators in different countries, the differences concerning their application and use are emerging, especially while comparing the practice of this area in well-developed and still developing countries.

To carry out the analysis of the experience of business incubation-incubators in developed countries, the experience of the USA (the first country applying business incubation practice) and the advanced business incubation experience of the European countries have been chosen. To sum up the advanced business incubation-incubators experience of the developed countries, it is found out that, in the beginning, the USA considered the business incubation as providing tangible support services (especially the rental rates offered at preferential terms). However, it was quickly noticed that the success of business incubation in particular, is associated with intangible services (particularly process services), and, gradually, the business incubation process has been transformed to provide adequate support for incubatees. It is already the 6th decade in

the USA since business incubators remain a part of the economy development. However, it has been emphasized recently that they must organize their activity in the same way as any other business so that not only survive financially independent from the founders, but also be able to independently and profitably grow their business. It is observed in the USA the stronger transformation of business incubators' activity, which takes different forms of business incubators (from the first- to the fifth-generation business incubators), while the transformation of business incubators in Europe occurs concentrating the processes of business incubation to innovative, high-tech needs of companies, for instance, the European business and innovation centres' network combines the new generation business incubators - innovative business incubators. In Europe, business support and support for companies incubating in particular intangible services - are essential functions of business incubators' activity. For this reason, most business incubators can be attributed to the third /the fourth-generation business incubators.

In developing countries, operating business incubators are brought together by the Global business incubators' network, set up by the World Bank intending to increase the competitiveness of developing countries. The Global business incubators' network includes five regional networks in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and northern Africa. Business incubators operating in developing countries and belonging to the Global network of business incubators are set up relatively recently, and it is noticed that the particularity of business incubators' activity is typical exactly to these countries. Despite the fact, that these business incubators generally incubate more than 21 companies, often employing more than 61 employees, however, small business incubators, the area most of which is less than 1,000 square meters, are dominant.

Unlike the practice of business incubation in developed countries, the majority of these business incubators are owned by private individuals, their work often refers to specific groups such as youth and women's integration into the business, another part - to support the poor urban and rural areas. The objectives of business incubators' activity in separate regions of this network are similar: the key objectives are identified as the creation of workplaces and the development of profitable companies. In order to achieve these goals, the most developed are tangible services (infrastructures), process services (consulting and enterprise supervision) and financial support; the least developed are collaboration (international business development) and specific (technological/innovative business development) services - despite the fact, that these business incubators are targeted at companies that specialize in information and telecommunications technologies, even though there are enough mixed and production business incubators as well. The specificity of business incubation in developing countries is also evident as it is often met the textile business incubators. Business incubators operating in this network can be attributed to those reached the maturity phase. i.e. providing a classical/traditional business incubation. Besides, the germs of third-generation business incubators in the transformation of these business incubators' activity are being observed. This is so, as these incubators' activity focuses on technological and innovative companies.

The Operation of Business Incubators in Lithuania

In Lithuania business incubators are being operating for more than a decade, but in reality their activity is still being formed. Despite the controversially assessed meaning

of business incubators to the country's economy, a consistent government policy is being exercised to consolidate their operation successfully. Business incubators have been and are given attention and emphasis on their importance for the successful development of the SME operators. The first business incubators in Lithuania were established in 1998 and in 2008 there were already 7 business incubators in Vilnius, Kaunas, Siauliai, Ignalina, Telsiai, Kazlu Ruda and Alytus. In 2010, actually, four business incubators operate in Vilnius, Siauliai, Telsiai and Ignalina (Kaunas Business Incubator transformed into Science and Technology Park, the business incubator in Alytus is closed, the business incubator in Kazlu Ruda no longer offers business incubation services). In Lithuania, as well as in developed countries, there are dominated non-profit-making business incubators, as opposed to developing countries, where most business incubators are set up by private individuals.

After the examination of business incubators operating in Lithuania, it was found that one business incubator took on the average 23.7 of the incubatees (in the developed countries – 25, in the developing countries - 21), which results in 1.51 workplaces in every company per year. While checking the activity of business incubators and their incubatees, it is important to emphasize that the number of companies incubated in business incubators is constantly changing. However, it is noticed recently that there has been a downward trend of incubatees, which indicates the loss of business incubators' operating volume, because there are not accepted such a number of companies as a business incubator leaves. Business incubators employ on the average 4.8 employees, while other developed countries - 6 people. The numbers of employees as well as their skills are important providing process services - the most important services in the business incubation process. In Lithuania, one employee of the business incubator has on the average 5.92 of the incubatee, 8.96 workplaces created in the incubatees, 4.35- events developing an enterprise and a business culture, 24.3 hours of training, 137.7 responses to inquiries, consultations of 26 persons, 2.15 business plans, 8.7 start-ups.

On the average, one business incubator's space - 2211.6 sq. m. (in developed countries 3000 sq. m., in developing countries - 1000 sq. m.). According to the overseas research, the space of the business incubators', which can "self-maintain", premises must not be less than 2000 sq. m. While determining the degree of the business incubators activity's development, an important indicator is the employment of rental accommodation. The less developed is business incubator's activity, the higher must be the space filling factor. When the incubator reaches the stage of development, it must be closer or equal to 1. Meanwhile, the average employment of rental accommodation in the business incubators is 81.2 percent. There are no recorded recent data of the space filling in other developed countries, because their activity was developed and transformed into a higher level, but even in 2002, the space filling factor was 85 percent.

The survival of incubatees in developed countries is about 80-90 percent, while in Lithuania - 78.6 percent. State subsidies granted to create one new workplace in the USA vary from 1,100 to 10,000 U.S. dollars, in Europe it is a needed 10,384 EUR to create one workplace, in Lithuania - 590 Lt. In 2009, incubatees paid business incubators 608.6 thousand Lt. profit, incomes and social security taxes.

The evaluation of the Transformation of Lithuanian Business Incubators' Activity

Research Problem

Business incubators, operating in Lithuania, have been developing their activity for the second decade already. For this reason, their activity should be fully developed, i.e. it should have passed all the life-cycles' phases of business incubators and reached a phase of maturity. However, the operation of business incubators in Lithuania is being developed quite slowly and not so successfully, and it is proved by the fact that in the last years two Lithuanian business incubators stopped and terminated their work. In order to clarify the causes, preventing a successful growth of business incubators, first of all, it is needed to identify the level of the transformation of Lithuanian business incubators' operation.

Research Object

Target Group - business incubators, operating in Lithuania.

Research Hypotheses

H.1. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the establishment phase.

H.2. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the growing phase.

H.3. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the maturity phase.

Research Aim and Goals:

The aim of the research – with reference to the author's created model of the transformation of Lithuanian business incubators' operation, presented in the theoretical part of the dissertation, to identify the level of the transformation of Lithuanian business incubators' activity and business incubators' opportunities of transformation in the future.

Research Goals:

- 1) to determine whether business incubators, operating in Lithuania, are in the establishment phase, i. e. are using the first-generation business incubators' model;
- 2) to identify if business incubators, operating in Lithuania, are in the growing phase, i. e. are using the second-generation business incubators' model;
- 3) to define whether business incubators, operating in Lithuania, are in the maturity phase, i. e. whether their activity can be transformed into the third-generation or (and) the fourth-generation or (and) the fifth-generation business incubators.

Reasoning of Data Collection Principles

While assessing the level of the transformation of Lithuanian business incubators' activity, the author's created model of the transformation of Lithuanian business incubators' operation was used (see 4 Figure), and the system of the basic parameters giving an opportunity to identify the level of the transformation of business incubators, was created (see 1 table).

1 Table. The System of the Basic Parameters Giving an Opportunity to Identify the Level of the Transformation of Business Incubators' Activity

<i>Level of Transformation</i>	<i>Basic Parameters</i>
the establishment phase (<i>first-generation business incubators</i>)	1) the activity is limited to the provision of tangible services (the stress is on the rent of premises focused on preferential terms); 2) intangible services are minimal or do not exist at all; 3) no provision of the financial support.
the growing phase (<i>second-generation business incubators</i>)	1) provision of tangible services (premises rent at preferential terms, office equipment and services); 2) provision of intangible services (process services, network services are still in the formation); 3) financial support is not provided
the maturity phase	1) provision of tangible services (premises rent at preferential terms, office equipment and services); 2) provision of intangible services (process services, network services); 3) provision of the financial support.

Source: created by the author

The empirical research consists of three studies, conducted by a questionnaire survey method in 2005 and in 2010.

Study (1). The exploratory study, seeking to check a structured questionnaire and the results obtained, was carried out in 2005 July – August, interviewing 76 incubatees of seven business incubators (at that time all operating and providing business incubation services: the counties of Vilnija, Siauliai, Telsiai, Kazlu Ruda, Alytus, Kaunas and Ignalina).

Study (2). During the survey, carried at 2010 March – April, 42 incubatees of four business incubators (at that time all providing business incubation services: the counties of Vilnija, Siauliai, Telsiai and Ignalina) were investigated.

Study (3). The study of experts, during which in April 2010, participated the directors of five business incubators (at that time all operating, however, not necessary providing business incubation services: the counties of Vilnija, Siauliai, Telsiai, Kazlu Ruda¹ and Ignalina).

Data Processing Methods

The data of the questionnaire were processed and analyzed using the statistical data analysis package SPSS 17.0. Hypotheses about the independence of two features were tested using the chi-square test. The descriptive statistics, which is based on statistical frequencies, for example, the calculation of percentage, the representation of graphical data, techniques of the regression analysis (correlation), was used for the quantitative data analysis. The hypothesis of more than two independent samples was tested using the criteria of Kruskal Wallis' test. In order to investigate the strength of the connection between two variables, the correlation coefficient of Spearman (rank) was used.

H.1. Business Incubators in Lithuania are in the Establishment Phase

The basic parameters characterizing business incubators being in the establishment phase (first-generation), are described by the following indicators: 1) small business

incubator's space filling; 2) there are no criteria of selection for a business incubator or they are poor enough; 3) the activity of a business incubator is oriented towards tangible services (the reasons when choosing a business incubator; the need of incubatees for the services suggested by a business incubator; the assessment of the services offered by a business incubator); 4) incubatees that are in the developing or maturity phases are dominated.

According to these indicators, the data of the author's created three studies are being analyzed.

Small Business Incubator's Space Filling

The average employment of rental premises in the business incubators is 81.2 percent

No Criteria of Selection for a Business Incubator or They are Poor Enough

After examining the selection criteria for business incubators, presented on Lithuanian business incubators' websites, it has been noticed that all business incubators, with the exception of Siauliai, indicate what criteria are must for the incubatees. During the study of experts, which investigated the directors of business incubators, it has been found out that they consider the selection criteria for business incubators being neither too high nor too low. However, the experts do not agree that there are no selection criteria for a business incubator at all. According to the data of 2010 survey, 47.6 percent of the investigated companies have said that they do not agree at all or disagree about the absence of any selection criteria for a business incubator. The results of the exploratory study, carried in 2005, are quite similar: more than half of the surveyed companies have indicated that the selection criteria for a business incubator have been normal.

Activity of a Business Incubator is Oriented Towards Tangible Services (Especially Towards Premises Rent)

Reasons When Choosing a Business Incubator

During the study of experts, the directors of business incubators named all the listed reasons (support for SMBs, the premises rent for incubatees at preferential terms, training and advice to companies, encouraging cooperation between companies, help companies to achieve their business growth, encouragement of workplaces, support of innovative companies), as equally important for the creation of a business incubator.

However, in 2010, 42 interviewed incubatees of business incubators indicated that the most important factor that determined their choice to operate in the business incubator has been the suggested cheaper premises rents (95,3 percent), in 2005 it was also referred to as the primary reason (68,4 percent). An unimportant at all or an unimportant factor, influencing to choose a business incubator has been the factor of financial support and enterprise maintenance services provided during the incubation period (about 50 percent). In 2005 financial support for incubatees was the least important reason (31,6 percent). There are almost no reasons of correlation (correlation coefficient of Sperman) among the main reasons listed by incubatees explaining their decision to choose a business incubator, as provided cheaper premises rents correlates only with the support for business start-motif (0,307), and this is a weak link. The reason of providing the address correlates only the opportunity to collaborate with other

companies situated not in a business incubator for (0,422). Since $p < 0.05$, the results are statistically reliable.

Taking everything into account, the main arguments, taken into consideration when choosing a business incubator, are tangible services (particularly premises rent on concessional terms). The motive of intangible services is lower, with the exception of some process services. The least significant factor for incubatees is financial support, and it is observed that this trend has only been growing during the last 5 years.

Need of Incubatees for the Services Suggested by a Business Incubator

The directors of business incubators (according to the data of experts study) believe that the most significant factors for incubatees are tangible support (subsidized premises rent), process services and an opportunity for collaboration with the companies being inside and outside of the incubator. At the same time, tangible support (office services) and financial support are less important, and the possibility of cooperation with other companies operating in another business incubator is the low-key at all.

During the empirical study carried out in 2010 interviewing incubatees, more than half of the incubatees indicated that all the services provided by a business incubator are important or very important for their business. However, the most important named services of a business incubator are tangible services – premises rent on preferential terms (92,9 percent) and intangible services – advice, consultations (81,4 percent). The least significant factors for the operating of a company are financial support (28,6 percent) and intangible services – provision of general information (26,1 percent of respondents indicated this factor as unimportant or very unimportant).

A weak positive correlation (Spearman coefficient of 0.334 ranks) of the incubatees' need for the services provided by a business incubator is recorded between the need for professional information and training as well as staff development. However, a weak negative correlation (Spearman coefficient of -0.333 ranks) is recorded among the premises rent on preferential terms and need for professional information. This means, that those companies interested in the business incubation support by premises rent on preferential terms are completely irrelevant to the services of professional information support. Since $p < 0.05$, the results are statistically reliable.

Considering the fact that the need for a support on preferential terms was among the most important, it can be assumed that for most companies during the incubation period not intangible services are important (process: consulting, training) or financial support, enabling the companies to continue to successfully growth of their business, but tangible services (premises rent on preferential terms) that are reducing operational costs.

The Evaluation of Services and Support Provided by a Business Incubator

The study of experts showed that the directors of business incubators had given their priority to intangible services, particularly the process services (the quality of consulting and workshops, the maintenance of companies, the qualification of incubator's staff) and to tangible services (office services and the quality of rented premises). The lowest evaluation had been given to financial support.

The 2010 study showed that the lowest evaluation, according to incubatees, had been given to financial support provided by business incubators (even 40,5 percent of incubatees indicated that they were not satisfied at all /dissatisfied with this service) as well as to the cost of rented premises (28,5 percent of incubatees indicated that they were

not satisfied at all/dissatisfied with this service). In 2005 a very low or low evaluation had been given to the quality of rental premises for incubatees in business incubators (even 86,8 percent of respondents). At the same time, a very high or high evaluation had been given to the quality of the overall premises (94,7 percent). The main focus both in 2005 and in 2010 lies on tangible services. In 2010 the dissatisfaction of financial support is noticed. In fact, these are very interesting results, as one of business incubators' activities and characteristics is to offer premises at the lower price, comparing to the market price. A particularly high assessment of incubatees is shown towards the business incubators' staff, its number and qualifications (more than 90 percent of incubatees have indicated that they are satisfied/completely satisfied with this service).

The results of 2010 study, surveying incubatees, while assessing the process services - advisory services, provided by business incubators, show that more than half of surveyed incubatees have evaluated all the advisory services as good or very good. According to the incubatees, the highest evaluation is given to consultations on company's establishment and bookkeeping, and the lowest evaluation – to consultations on sales/export and the support of EU Structural Funds. A similar tendency was also in 2005.

Predominate Incubatees That are in the Development or Maturity Phase

The age of incubatees (at the moment of coming into the business incubator) is an important aspect of the assessment, since the more there are recently established or still establishing companies in business incubators, the more the business incubator has developed its activity and moved to the phase of its activity's development. The study of experts show that usually business incubators welcome start-ups (companies, created in a business incubator), just established companies (up to 3 months), recently-established companies (3-12 months) and companies that already carry their business (1-3 years) – companies that expect a rapid business growth.

There were surveyed incubatees (in 2005 and in 2010) of different business incubators - not according to the age of incubatees (in this case, just companies of different business incubators) (according to Chi Pearson square $p < 0,05$, there are not statistical differences of the studied population). In 2005, half of the surveyed incubatees came to the business incubator being recently-established (up to 1 year), 25 percent of the companies had been already operating in the market for up to 3 years. In 2010, there is noticed a decrease of companies that have emerged recently, however, an increase of the number of companies that have been established in a business incubator.

Over the last 5 years the number of companies, which have been established in a business incubator, has increased, however, the number of companies that have been established recently (up to 1 year) has decreased. Although a positive tendency is noticed, however, the negative aspect is that business incubators attract fewer companies started operating recently. While the business incubator is at the foundation stage – it is being tried to attract more companies, which operate independently in the market, as, in this case, business incubators find it relevant to develop their own activity and expect only collecting taxes of rental premises from incubatees.

H.1.: proved partially. As it is seen from 2 table, business incubators, operating in Lithuania, correspond to the part of indicators which determine the activity of business incubators being at the establishment phase. Especially important is the aspect of the

need for and assessment of tangible services, as companies have indicated that financial support (especially premises rent on easy terms) is very important for them – this is typical of business incubators being at the establishment phase. Besides, both the directors of business incubators and incubatees stated that the financial assistance was the least satisfied factor.

2 Table. Evaluative Table for the Business Incubators Being at the Establishment Phase

		Indicators	General	VVI	ŠVI	TAVI	IVI	
Lify-cycle of business incubator <i>Establishment phase</i>	Level of development of business incubator <i>First-generation business incubator</i>	1) <i>small business incubator's space filling,</i>	-/+ (81,2)	-/+ (80)	+ (72)	-/+ (82)	- (92)	
		2) <i>no criteria of selection for a business incubator or they are poor enough,</i>	<i>Officially announced</i>					
			-	-	+	-	-	
			<i>Pointed out by business incubators' directors</i>					
			-	-	-	-	-	
			<i>Pointed out by incubatees</i>					
			-	-	-	-/+	-	
		3) <i>activity of a business incubator is oriented towards tangible services</i>	<i>Tangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>					
			-	-	-	-	-	
			<i>Tangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of incubatees)</i>					
			+	+	+	+	+	
			<i>The greater need of incubatees for tangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>					
			+/-					
			<i>The greater need of incubatees for tangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>					
			+	+	+	+	+	
			<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for tangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>					
			-	-	-	-	-	
			<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for tangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>					
			+	+	+	+	+	
		4) <i>no/not important financial support</i>	<i>Assessment of business incubators' directors</i>					
			+	+	+	+	+	
			<i>Assessment of incubatees</i>					
			+	+	+	+	+	
		5) <i>incubatees at the phase of development or maturity are dominant</i>	-	-	-	-	-	

Source: created by the author, according to the data of 2005 and 2010 studies (The first four conditions are essential for determining the level of activity of this business incubator).

H.2. Business Incubators in Lithuania are in the Development Phase

The key parameters characterizing business incubators being in the development phase (second-generation), are described by the following indicators: 1) premises filling factor is close to 1; 2) there are defined clear criteria of selection for a business incubator, however, they may be not high; 3) the activity of a business incubator is oriented

towards intangible services (the reasons when choosing a business incubator; the need of incubatees for the services suggested by a business incubator; the assessment of the services offered by a business incubator); 4) financial support is not provided; 5) the networks of business incubators begin to develop; 6) incubatees that are at the development or maturity phases are dominant. The premises' filling factor, the orientation towards the intangible services (especially the process services), financial support as well as the age of incubatees – all these aspects has been examined above.

Defined Clear Criteria of Selection for a Business Incubator, However, They May Be Not High

During the study of experts, the age and the size of a company have been defined as the most important criteria of selection. The majorities of the companies accepted, adopts the innovative activity or are engaged in high technologies and, thus, create a high extra-value. According to all the directors of business incubators, companies operating in the market for more than 3 years are not usually accepted into the business incubators.

In 2010 the interviewed companies pointed out, that the most important criteria of selection for a business incubator were the age and the field of activity of an incubatee. The least important criteria were the size of the companies and an extra-value created by a company. There were no differences of the assessment of selection criteria in separate groups of incubatees. (test of Kruskal - Wallis, $p > 0,05$).

Networks of Business Incubators' Collaboration Begin to Develop

During the study of experts, it was defined that, according to the directors of business incubators, the greatest part of collaboration was made with other non-business incubator located companies and with other business incubators in Lithuania. The smallest part of collaboration was made with other business incubators in foreign countries and there was practically no cooperation with other companies located in business incubators.

The results of the study carried out in 2010 show that more than 90 percent of incubatees have indicated that they have been cooperating with other non-business incubators' located companies; 66,7 percent have indicated that they have been cooperating with the companies located in the same business incubator and only 28,5 percent of the surveyed companies have indicated that they have been cooperating with companies located in other business incubators. This suggests that there are not business incubators' networks, because even 64,3 percent of the incubatees have pointed out that they have been cooperating with companies located in other business incubators.

There are no distribution of the assessment of collaboration possibilities in separate business incubators and in separate groups of incubatees (test of Kruskal-Wallis $p > 0,05$) with the exception of the time planned to spend in a business incubator (test of Kruskal - Wallis $p < 0,05$). The least collaboration with other companies located in non-business incubators is typical to those companies that are planning to stay in a business incubator for up to 2 years (K-W; 5,25), the most collaboration - up to 1 year (K-W; 26,0). The results of the business incubators directors' survey greatly differ from the results of the survey of incubatees.

3 Table. Evaluative Table for the Business Incubators Being at the Development Phase

Lify-cycle of business incubator Development Phase	Level of development of business incubator <i>Second-generation business incubator</i>	Indicators	General	VVI	ŠVI	TAVI	IVI	
		<i>1) premises filling factor is close to 1,</i>	- (81,2)	- (80)	- (72)	- (82)	+(92)	
<i>2) defined clear criteria of selection for a business incubator, however, they may be not high</i>	<i>Officially announced</i>							
		+	+	-	+	+		
	<i>Pointed out by business incubators' directors</i>							
		+	+	+	+	+		
	<i>Pointed out by incubatees</i>							
		+	+	+	+	+		
	<i>3) oriented towards intangible services</i>	<i>Intangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>						
			+	+	+	+	+	
		<i>Intangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of incubatees)</i>						
			-	-	-	-	-	
		<i>The greater need of incubatees for intangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>						
			+	+	+	+	+	
<i>The greater need of incubatees for intangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>								
		-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for intangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>								
		+	+	+	+	+		
<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for tangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>								
	-	-	-	-	-			
<i>4) no financial support</i>	+	+	+	+	+			
<i>5) networks of business incubators begin to develop</i>	<i>assessment of business incubators' directors</i>							
		+/-	+/-	+	+	+		
	<i>assessment of incubatees</i>							
		-	-	-	-	-		
<i>6) incubatees at the phase of establishment and development are dominant</i>	+	+	+	+	+			

Source: created by the author, according to the data of 2005 and 2010 studies (The first four conditions are essential for determining the level of activity of this business incubator).

H.2.: proved partially. As it is seen from 3 table, business incubators, operating in Lithuania, correspond to the part of indicators typical to business incubators being at the development phase: there are set selection criteria, however, they are not high; financial support is not provided; the companies that are at the establishment and development phases are dominant. However, the parameters of premises filling, the provision of intangible services and the development of collaboration networks do not correspond or poorly correspond to the indicators typical to this phase. In this case, business incubators can only be partly attributed to the development phase.

H.3. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the maturity phase

The basic parameters characterizing business incubators being at the maturity phase, are described by the following indicators: 1) premises filling factor is equal 1; 2) there are defined high criteria of selection for a business incubator; 3) the activity of a business incubator is oriented towards intangible services (the reasons when choosing a business incubator; the need of incubatees for the services suggested by a business incubator; the assessment of the services offered by a business incubator); 4) provision of financial support; 5) the networks of business incubators are being developed; 6) incubatees that are at the development or maturity phases are dominant. The premises' filling factor, selection criteria, the orientation towards the intangible services (especially the process services), financial support as well as the age of incubatees – all these aspects have been examined above (see 4 table).

4 Table. Evaluative Table for the Business Incubators Being at the Maturity Phase

Lifey-cycle of business incubator <i>Maturity Phase</i>	Indicators	General	VVI	ŠVI	TAVI	IVI	
	1) premises filling factor is equal 1	- (81,2)	- (80)	- (72)	- (82)	+ (92)	
2) high criteria of selection for a business incubator	<i>Officially announced</i>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	<i>Pointed out by business incubators' directors</i>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	<i>Pointed out by incubatees</i>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3) orientation towards intangible services	<i>Intangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>					
		+	+	+	+	+	+
		<i>Intangible services are the motive of choosing business incubators (assessment of incubatees)</i>					
		-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The greater need of incubatees for intangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>							
+		+	+	+	+	+	
<i>The greater need of incubatees for intangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>							
-		-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for intangible services (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>							
+		+	+	+	+	+	
<i>Incubatees give a better assessment for intangible services (assessment of incubatees)</i>							
-	-	-	-	-	-		
4) provision of financial support	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5) development of the collaboration networks	<i>Assessment of business incubators' directors</i>						
	+/-	+/	+/	+/	+/	+/	
	<i>Assessment of incubatees</i>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6) domination of incubatees being at the development or maturity phases	+	+	+	+	+	+	

Source: created by the author, according to the data of 2005 and 2010 studies (The first four conditions are essential for determining the level of activity of this business incubator).

H.3. did not prove. Business incubators, operating in Lithuania, can not be attributed to the maturity phase because business incubators have not filled all their premises with incubatees, and, therefore, can not determine the high-level-selection criteria for a business incubator; since the business incubator has not fully developed its activity, it can not provide financial support; besides, the need of incubatees is more related to tangible services of a business incubator which are not essential while developing successful companies. The cooperation networks of business incubators are poorly developed and incubatees do not need to collaborate with companies operating in other business incubators.

Trying to determine whether the business incubators in Lithuania can be attributed to the third-, fourth- or fifth-generation business incubators, the following indicators should be evaluated: and (or) the orientation to innovation companies; and (or) the orientation to high-technology companies; and (or) a virtual incubation; and (or) an active participation in local and (or) international networks; and (or) an active participation in horizontal or vertical business networks; acceleration of the internet business.

Business Incubator is Oriented Towards the Innovative and (or) High-Technology-Companies

According to the data of the experts' study, the directors of business incubators agree that the activity of their business incubators is committed to innovation high-technology companies, creating an extra-value. In 2005, there were a similar number of the companies, carrying the innovation operation and those carrying the non-innovation operation. However, in 2010 the number of companies that do not carry the innovation operation has increased and such companies have made 66,7 percent. There are no statistical differences in business incubators according to the innovation operation carried by the incubatees in 2005 and 2010 (Chi Pearson square $p > 0,05$). The distribution of surveyed companies according to the field of activity in 2005 and in 2010 remains roughly the same - most of the incubatees are manufacturing or service companies (in 2005 they made 86,5 percent, in 2010 – 76,2 percent). It was noticed that in 2005 construction companies were mostly incubated, but in 2010 – high-technology and information technologies companies.

Business Incubators Provide Virtual Incubation Services

The directors of business incubators (except for Siauliai business incubator) pointed out that before coming to business incubators companies had been consulted virtually. However, almost 80 percent of all the surveyed companies indicated that they had not been consulted virtually before coming to a business incubator. The companies of Siauliai business incubator had not been consulted virtually at all, and most virtual consultation were referred to Ignalina business incubator (41,7 percent).

According to these results, Lithuanian business incubators can not be assigned to either the third- or fourth- or fifth-generation business incubators (see 5 table).

5 Table. Evaluative Table for the Business Incubators Being at the Third, Fourth and Fifth Generations

Generation	Indicators	Overall	VVI	ŠVI	TAVI	IVI
Third-generation	and (or) orientation towards innovation companies	<i>Assessment of business incubators' directors</i>				
		+	+	-	+	+
		<i>Study results of the incubatees</i>				
		-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Assessment of business incubators' directors</i>				
		+	+	+	+	+
	and (or) orientation towards high-technology companies	<i>Study results of the incubatees</i>				
		-	-	-	-	+
		<i>Assessment of business incubators' directors</i>				
		+	+	+	+	+
		<i>Study results of the incubatees</i>				
		-	-	-	-	+
and (or) virtual incubation	<i>Virtual consulting of incubatees before coming to a business incubator (assessment of business incubators' directors)</i>					
	+	+	-	+	+	
	<i>Virtual consulting of incubatees before coming to a business incubator (assessment of incubatees)</i>					
	-	-	-	-	+/-	
Fourth-generation	and (or) an active participation in local and (or) international networks	-	-	-	-	-
	and (or) an active participation in horizontal or vertical business networks	-	-	-	-	-
Fifth-generation	acceleration of the internet business	-		-	-	-

Source: created by the author, according to the data of 2005 and 2010 studies (The first four conditions are essential for determining the level of activity of this business incubator).

To sum up the results of the research, the conclusion can be made that business incubators in Lithuania are at the phase of the establishment-development and their activity can be attributed to the second-generation business incubators. It is difficult to evaluate the results of the research because of the fact that the results of business incubators directors and those of the incubatees are substantial different. It seems that the directors of business incubators, knowing a rather bad situation of business incubators in Lithuania, still try to paint it in bright colours. Asked to assess the level of transformation of business incubators' activity, business incubators' directors pointed out the stage of development or maturity, and the third- or fourth-generation business incubators.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Rapid changes, taking place in the market, require faster acceleration of companies' operation. For these reasons, the process of concentrated business development and support – the *incubation* process which can be implemented through services provided by a business incubator, is just essential.

1. Business incubation has been investigated for more than one decade, however, there is no consensus defining this phenomenon. Business incubation has one connecting dimension – there is given an emphasis on SMB support at the beginning of its business development. After the examination of the definitions provided by different authors, the author suggests that *business incubation is the innovative, heterogeneous (multiple) and able to transform the business development of SMB's process, during which the support is provided for newly formed and start-up SMB companies thus contributing towards establishment of new, independent and successfully operating in the market companies.*

2. The researchers of the business incubation process pay particular attention to one of the process's component - a business incubator, the studies of which highlight the public policy for the promotion of SMBs and the accent of business acceleration - they are closely intertwined but have one common interface - support for SMBs. According to the author, *a business incubator is an organization that provides comprehensive business support to the newly formed and start-up SMB companies to facilitate their successful development and integration into the competitive market.*

3. Processes happening in the business incubators determine the successful development of incubatees. The processes system of business incubation consists of: 1) the pre-incubation stage; 2) the incubation stage; 3) the post-incubation stage. During the pre-incubation stage potential companies are selected, so selection criteria for incubatees are very important. During the incubation stage services provided by a business incubator become very important. These services depend on the type of a business incubator and raised objectives. During the post-incubation stage the criteria of companies leaving a business incubator, so that to become a successful participant in the market, become very important.

4. The particularity of business incubators' activities and their provided services are determined by the business incubators' objectives. The purpose of business incubators at the macro-level is the increase of employment. The results of this are the growth of economy and national, regional as well as urban competitiveness. At the micro-level, an incubator provides a support system for companies to improve the characteristics of entrepreneurial businesses therefore encouraging business development and expansion.

5. The objectives of business incubators' activity show what kind of support and services can expect the incubatees. The services provided by a business incubator make the holistic mechanism for the business support. This mechanism assesses the needs of start-ups, by solving their emerging problems of business incubation. All the incubation services, distinguished by the authors can be divided into: 1) tangible services; 2) intangible services; 3) financial support. The main services in the business incubation are intangible ones (process and network), which make the greatest influence on the successful business development.

6. The analysis of the scientific literature revealed that different types of business incubators are met in various countries around the world. According to the analysis of various sources, the author suggests to classify all business incubators by the business

incubator: 1) founders; 2) the degree of commitment (commercialization); 3) specialization; 4) goals; 5) the size and age of incubatees; 6) suggested facilities; 7) operating area; 8) the degree of transformation. This classification not only allows to identify the relationship of business incubators' types, but also helps to assess what kind of services can expect incubatees from a business incubator.

7. The services, provided to incubatees, and their quality depend on the operational experience of business incubators in the country and on the particular stage of the development of business incubator: 1) business incubators being in the establishment phase find it important their own establishment and the aspects of operation development; 2) being in the growth or business development stage - business incubators can begin to concentrate their work towards incubatees; 3) being in the stage of maturity – it is important to focus on additional activities, providing higher quality services to incubatees.

8. The model of business incubators' activity transformation allows to assess the level of the transformation of business incubators, to determine what specific support might be expected by incubatees and what results of business incubator's operation the society can expect.

9. In developed (USA, EU) and developing (belonging to the Global Business Incubator Network African, Asian, East European and Central Asian, Latin-American and Caribbean, Central East and Northern African) economies, the policy of support for SMBs is rapidly being developed and it is becoming increasingly relevant to promote these companies, using services of business incubators. In developed and developing countries, business incubators have usually been reached the maturity phase, i. e. providing a classic/traditional business incubation. In developed countries, the third-, the fourth- and the fifth-generation business incubators are often found, however, a majority of business incubators take the third-generation business incubators' model and focus their activity on technological and innovative companies. In developing countries, there can be also found some germs of the third-generation business incubators in the transformation of business incubators' activity, because their operation focuses on technological and innovative companies; however the support for these companies has still been poorly developed.

10. In Lithuania business incubators perform their activity already the two decades; therefore their activity must be passed all business incubator existence phases and reached maturity phase. This notwithstanding the activity of business incubators is developed insufficiently successfully: it could be indicated by the last two years suspension and cancellation of two Lithuanian business incubators' activity. Trying to define reasons, impedimental for the business incubators' successful activity, business incubators transformation level has been strived to evaluate. Some of hypothesis were sought to confirm: H.1. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the establishment phase; H.2. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the growing phase; H.3. Business incubators in Lithuania are in the maturity phase.

11. It was hypothesized that business incubators in Lithuania could be attributed to the establishment phase. During the empirical research, it was proved partially because business incubators met simply certain parameters of business incubators being at the establishment phase. A need of the incubatees for the support is extremely important, as incubatees have stated that tangible support (especially premises rent on easy terms) is

very important for them, which is a typical quality of business incubators belonging to the establishment phase.

12. A hypothesis that business incubators in Lithuania can be attributed to the development phase has also been proved partly during the empirical research, as Lithuanian business incubators meet only certain parameters of business incubators of the development phase: there are selection criteria, but they are not high; financial support is not provided; dominate companies being at the establishment and growing stages. However, the parameters of space filling, provision of intangible services as well as the formation of cooperation networks do not attribute or weakly attribute to the indicators typical of this phase. In this case, Lithuanian business incubators can only be partly be attributed to the development phase.

13. A hypothesis that business incubators in Lithuania can be attributed to the maturity phase has not been proved during the empirical research, because business incubators have not filled all their premises with incubatees, and, therefore cannot determine the high selection criteria for the business incubators; because of the fact, that a business incubator has not fully developed its activity, it cannot provide financial support; besides, the need of incubatees is more concerned with tangible services of a business incubator which are not essential to the development of the successful companies; cooperation networks of business incubators are poorly developed and incubatees do not need to collaborate with companies operating in other business incubators.

14. To sum up the results of the empirical research, a conclusion can be made that business incubators in Lithuania are at the creation-development phase and their activity can be attributed to the one of the second-generation business incubators. It is difficult to evaluate the results of the research because of the fact that the results of business incubators directors and those of the incubatees are radically different. It seems that the directors of business incubators, knowing a rather bad situation of business incubators in Lithuania, still try to paint it in bright colours. Asked to assess the level of transformation of business incubators' activity, business incubators' directors pointed out the stage of development or maturity, and the third- or fourth-generation business incubators.

15. Business incubators in Lithuania should use a practice of business incubation-a good business practice of developed and developing countries because, unlike in Lithuania, business incubators play an important role in the countries' economy abroad, at the same time increasing the employment and creating new competitive companies.

16. To enhance the higher performance of business incubators, it is necessary to review their objectives and actual services provided, as the fact, that a majority of the incubatees have named intangible services (especially premises rent on easy terms) of business incubation as the main motive and need show, that the operation of business incubators in Lithuania is still undeveloped. This may be due to several reasons: 1) incubatees do not properly understand the process of business incubation; 2) an improper selection of incubatees (i. e. selected not those companies which have a need for a process of incubation); 3) the process of business incubation in Lithuania is directed exactly towards the provision of intangible services.

17. Business incubators in Lithuania for more than a decade have failed to properly develop their activities and, therefore, are facing financial difficulties. After the reduction of the public sponsorship business incubators cannot develop their activity properly, as they do not pay and (or) cannot attract sources of sponsorship in the country

to organize their activities, not to mention the attraction of sponsorship sources for incubatees.

18. The benefit of business incubator's activity transformation provides possibility conceptually evaluate multifaceted strategic directions of business incubators' transformation. The activity of business incubators and their development depends on the current system and provided mechanisms of support; therefore proposed model of business incubators' activity transformation allows choosing suitable and comprehensive mechanism of incubation processes in view of country's development level and demand for business incubation services.

19. For the successful activity of business incubators it is constructive to apply holistic business support mechanism that would help to evaluate current level of business incubators transformation, to distinguish for SMB priorities, aims and objectives and the mechanisms for their implementation. By using advanced experience of developed and developing countries, transformation of business activities to the higher value-added as well as innovation implementation would create higher potential for the country's economic and social development.

20. The further transformation of incubation processes depends on improvement and coordination of incubators' activity, trying to achieve cooperation with SMB subjects as well as evaluation of support mechanisms effectiveness, digging into competitive market. Responding adequately to environmental changes, development of promotional means and provided recommendations for the business incubators' activity transformation trajectories are suitable for the incubators' activities current phase of development, but they, after economic and social development changes, can shift toward higher or really new activity level of business incubators. Summarizing it is possible to state that looking at the future, further researches should be directed towards wider studies that would reveal and estimate the need and effectiveness for support mechanisms.

Scientific publications of the research results

1. Žižytė A. (2005) Verslo inkubatoriai kaip SVV paramos forma. *Žinių vadyba : Europos regionų patirtis ir problemas*. ISBN 9986930723 p. 52-67.
2. Kučinskienė M., Fominienė A. (2009) Verslo inkubatorių nauda, skatinant smulkaus ir vidutinio verslo plėtrą. *Mokslo darbai: Būhalterinės apskaitos teorija ir praktika*. 4, ISSN 1822 - 8682 p. 102-112
3. Kučinskienė M., Fominienė A. (2010) Viešosios paslaugos verslui – verslo inkubavimas. *Viešasis administravimas*, 1-2 (25-26) ISSN 1648-4541 p. 78-87
4. Kučinskienė M., Fominienė A. (2010) Verslo inkubavimo proceso transformacijos didėjančios konkurencijos sąlygomis. *Verslo ir teisės aktualijos*, t. 5, ISSN 1822-9530, p.110-122

Material of scientific conferences

1. Gineitienė Z., Žižytė A., Verslo inkubatoriai kaip inovacijų smulkaus ir vidutinio verslo realizavimo forma. *Regionų plėtra – 2001 Tarptautinės mokslinės konferencijos pranešimų medžiaga*. Kaunas: Technologija, 2001. – p. 131-136
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5. Žižytė A. Business incubators as a form of support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Catalysts and impediments of economic development in Central and Eastern Europe: international conference in celebration of the 425th anniversary of Vilnius University*, October 14-15, 2004, Vilnius, Lithuania : conference abstracts. Vilnius, 2004, p. 286-288
6. Verslo inkubatorių veiklos ypatumai ir vertinimo procesas. *Teisės ir verslo plėtra ES erdvėje*. Mokslinė konferencija. Vilnius 2005.-p. 118-125

About the author

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Education

2000	Vilnius University, Faculty of Economics (Bachelor of business management and administration)
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Fields of scientific research:

Small and middle business, support for small and middle companies, business incubation – incubators, international business, business economics.

REZIUOME

Temos aktualumas

Smulkus ir vidutinis verslas (SVV) išsiskiria gebėjimu lanksčiai prisitaikyti prie vartotojų poreikių, teikiant įvairesnes - diferencijuotas paslaugas ir produktus, veikti nedidelėse specifinėse rinkose, taikyti gerąją praktiką ir tapti socialinio stabilumo garantu. Suvokiant SVV kuriamą naudą šalies ekonominei ir socialinei plėtrai, tenka pastebėti, kad teoriniame lygmenyje ir „geros verslo patirties“ lygmenyje, sutinkami įvairių autorių požiūriai dėl verslo pradžios ir aktyvaus verslininkų įtraukimo į šalies ekonominę ir socialinę plėtrą. Šiandieninė verslo pradžia reikalauja nemažai ne tik finansinių išteklių, bet ir žmoniškųjų, gebančių taikyti naujus strateginės vadybos metodus, efektyvius būdus užsibrėžtiems ketinimams įgyvendinti, išsprendžiant ne vien tik „savęs įdarbinimo“ problemą, bet ir sukuriant naujas darbo vietas.

Analizuojant ir vertinant galimybes spręsti užimtumo ir naujų darbo vietų kūrimo didelę paklausą turinčiose konkrečiu laikotarpiu ekonominėse veiklose klausimus, svarbia problema tampa – nepakankamas pradedančiųjų verslininkų pasirengimas įsitraukti į šalies ir tarptautinę ekonominę erdvę, todėl augančios konkurencijos sąlygomis įėjimas į rinką tampa sudėtingu ir vis daugiau žinių reikalaujančiu procesu. Besikuriančioms SVV įmonėms trūksta žinių ir informacijos apie rinkas, galimus partnerius ir verslo plėtrą, taip pat gana dažnai jos susiduria su lėšų stoka naujai idėjai įgyvendinti, patalpoms įsigyti ir netgi užstato turėjimu paskolai iš banko gauti. Pradedantis verslininkas dažniausiai neturi reikiamų įgūdžių verslui valdyti, o galimybės naudotis mokamų konsultantų paslaugomis dėl aukštos jų kainos, menkos. Dėl šių priežasčių pradedantieji verslininkai per pirmuosius jų gyvavimo metus patiria nesėkmę, o be to, pastebimas menkas jų aktyvumas pasinaudojant ekonominei ir socialinei plėtrai teikiamomis paslaugų verslui palankiomis galimybėmis. Viena iš galimų verslo paramos formų besikuriančioms ar neseniai susikūrusioms SVV įmonėms yra verslo inkubatorių veikla. Todėl aktualu tampa ne tik įvertinti SVV įmonių teikiamą paramą, bet ir iširti verslo inkubatorių veiklos įtaką sėkmingam SVV įmonių vystymui bei įvertinti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos galimybes ir prielaidas perspektyvos požiūriu.

Šių problemų sprendimui turi būti sutelktas mokslininkų ir praktikų dėmesys verslo plėtros galimybių tyrinėjimui, verslo aplinkoje vykstančių permainų įvertinimui ir tendencijų identifikavimui bei paieškai efektyvių SVV įmonių rezultatyvumo didinimo būdų inkubavimo procese. Todėl atsiranda poreikis įvertinti verslo inkubatorių ir verslo inkubavimo proceso ypatumus bei jų teikiamą naudą SVV įmonių vystymui ir šalies ekonomikos augimui skatinti.

Pasaulyje viena iš SVV paramos formų – verslo inkubatoriai, plačiai tyrinėjami tiek teoretikų, tiek praktikų. Užsienio šalių pažangi patirtis ir teikiama nauja skatinant SVV sektoriaus plėtrą rodo, jog verslo inkubatoriai yra tas potencialas, kuris skatina verslumo ugdymą, naujovių atsiradimą ir jų diegimą, naujų darbo vietų kūrimą ir pridėtinės vertės didinimą.

Temos iširtumo lygis

Verslo inkubatorių veikla tyrinėjama ne vieną dešimtmetį. Dažniausiai verslo inkubatorių tyrėjai savo tyrimus koncentruoja verslo inkubavimo ir verslo inkubatorių sampratos, jų tipų, tikslų, teikiamų paslaugų nagrinėjimui. Verslo inkubavimo - inkubatorių sampratą nagrinėja ir nagrinėja daug autorių tiek praitame amžiuje

(Plosima, Allen, 1984; Duff, 1994, Lalkaka, 1997, Hisrich, 1988ir kiti), tiek ir šiame amžiuje (Geenhuizen, Soetanto, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Hannon, 2005; Bøllingtoft , Ulhøi, 2005; Voisey, Gornall, 2006 Hamdani, 2006; Dickes, Hughes, 2007; Ndabeni, 2008; Eshun, 2009; Davies, 2009 ir kiti). Jų darbuose pabrėžiami skirtingi verslo inkubavimo ir inkubatorių veiklos aspektai. Verslo inkubavimo ir inkubatoriaus sąvokos pernelyg laisvai interpretuojamos, o tai tampa problema, nes nesant aiškaus ir vieningo apibrėžimo, pakankamai sunku identifikuoti verslo inkubatorių paplitimą, juo labiau įvertinti jų teikiamą naudą.

Verslo inkubatorių tikslus ir teikiamas paslaugas tyrinėję autoriai (Oyeyemi, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Albert, Bernasconi, Gaynor, 2002; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Abetti, 2004; Aernoudt, 2004; Bachan, 2006; Hamdani, 2006; Dickes Hughes, 2007; Chandra, 2007; Abduh, D'Souza, Quazi *et.*, 2007; Ndabeni, 2008; Davies, 2009) pateikia įvairias klasifikacijas, priklausomai nuo to, kokį verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos aspektą tyrinėjo, tačiau sisteminės verslo inkubatorių tikslų ir verslo inkubavimo paslaugų klasifikacijos nebuvo pateiktos. Autoriai (Campbell, Temali, Udell, 1990; Chinsomboon, 2000; Woodward, 2001; Lazarowich, Wojciechowski, 2002; Harman, Lauren, Read, 2003; Johnsrud, Theis, Bezerra, 2003; Bhabra-Remedios, Sten, Ronstadt, 2005; Bachan, 2006; Gassmann, Becker, 2006; Szabó, 2007; Zablocki, 2008), moksliniuose darbuose siekiant identifikuoti verslo inkubavimo procesą ir verslo inkubatorių teikiamas paslaugas dažniausiai sureikšmindavo vieną ar keletą jų veiklos aspektų, kurie leidžia išskirti požymius ir verslo inkubatorius sugrupuoti pagal: 1) steigėjus; 2) įsipareigojimo (komercializavimo) laipsnį; 3) specializaciją; 3) tikslus; 4) inkubuojamų įmonių dydį ir amžių; 5) siūlomą infrastruktūrą; 6) veikimo teritoriją; 7) transformacijos laipsnį. Iki šiol nebuvo parengtos bendros verslo inkubatorių klasifikacijos, išskyrus Allen, McCluskey's (1990), Hackett, Dilts (2004) ir Bøllingtoft , Ulhøi (2005) sudarytą verslo inkubatorių tipų bei jų tikslų (sieklių) kontinuumą, Tolimesnė verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacija nagrinėjama išskiriant verslo inkubatorių kartas (Lalkaka, 2001; Scaramuzzi, 2002; Hackett, Dilts, 2004; Aerts, Matthyssens, Vandenberg, 2006; Szabó, 2007; El-Midany, Shalaby, 2009).

Lietuvoje verslo inkubavimas ir jo procesai verslo inkubatoriuose yra mažai nagrinėti. Tačiau kai kuriuose mokslo darbuose, tyrinėjant SVV paramos formas, paliečiami inkubavimo ir jo procesų verslo inkubatoriuose klausimai nagrinėjami P. Miliaus (2008), T. Tamošiūno (2009), B. Melniko (2002), M. Kučinskienės (2007), V. Vengrausko (2008), S. Lukošiaus (2009), G. Jatuliavičienės (2007), N. Pačėso (2007), E. Chlivicko (2008), N. Petrauskaitės (2008), R. Galvelės (2009), L. Mažylio (206), L. Smagauskienės (2009), ir kt. darbuose.

Mokslinė problema

Verslo inkubatorių nauda inkubuojamoms įmonėms ir šalies ekonomikai neginčytina: ši paramos SVV forma plačiai naudojama tiek išsivysčiusiose tiek besivystančiose šalyse. Verslo inkubatorių veikla, duodanti teigiamų rezultatų SVV įmonėms ir bendrai šalies ekonomikai, sudaro prielaidas toliau gilintis į verslo inkubavimo procesus, išryškinant ne tik jų teigiamus aspektus, bet ir bandant nustatyti dedamąsias, kurios lemia sėkmingą šio reiškinio plėtrą ir raidą. Lyginant verslo inkubatorių veiklą skirtingose šalyse, ryškėja skirtumai dėl jų pritaikomumo ir panaudojimo, ypatingai lyginant išsivysčiusių ir besivystančių šalių praktiką ir patirtį. Tačiau verslo inkubavimo ir inkubatorių reiškinys išlieka pakankamai naujas tiek išsivysčiusiose, tiek besivystančiose šalyse (iki šiol nėra

ne tik bendrai taikomų šių sampratų apibrėžčių, bet neretai jos sampratos apima panašias paslaugas teikiančias institucijas ar organizacijas), todėl būtina nagrinėti ir pateikti verslo inkubavimo ir inkubatorių apibrėžimus, ištirti jų veiklos procesus, tikslus, tipus teikiamas paslaugas. Verslo inkubavimo procesų transformacija prisideda prie naujų verslo inkubavimo sąlygų formavimo, verslo subjektų įtraukimo į paramos SVV procesą, taip skatina SVV įmones pasinaudoti verslo inkubatorių teikiamomis paslaugomis ir sukurti konkurencinį pranašumą integruotoje rinkoje. Iki šiol silpnai išnagrinėta Lietuvos ir užsienio šalių verslo inkubatorių patirtis, nepakankamai akcentuojama verslo inkubatorių nauda SVV įmonių plėtrai, neivertinama verslo inkubavimo procesų transformacijų įtaka sėkmingam įmonių vystymui, nėra sukurtas verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modelis. Nepakankamas inkubavimo procesų suvokimas tampa kliūtimi įvertinant jų raidos ir perspektyvos galimybes. Šių problemų tyrimas yra labai svarbus ir būtinas.

Darbo objektas: *verslo inkubatorių veikla ir jos veiklos transformacija šiuolaikinės integruotos rinkos sąlygomis*

Tyrimo tikslas: *atlikus verslo inkubatorių veiklos analizę ir vertinimą parengti verslo inkubatorių transformacijos modelį.*

Tyrimo uždaviniai:

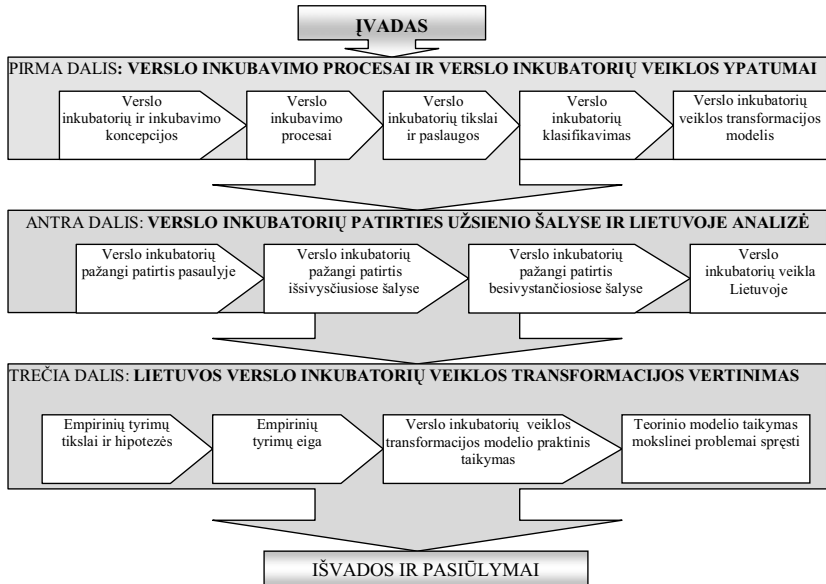
1. Išnagrinėjus užsienio šalių autorių mokslinius ir praktinius darbus, pateikti verslo inkubavimo ir verslo inkubatorių apibrėžimus.
2. Išnagrinėjus verslo inkubavimo procesų sistemą, apimančią priešinkubavimo, inkubavimo ir poinkubavimo stadijas, atskleisti verslo inkubavimo esmę ir jo reikšmę SVV subjektų vystymui.
3. Išnagrinėti verslo inkubavimo paslaugas būtinas sėkmingam verslo inkubavimo procesui ir pateikti verslo inkubatorių teikiamų paslaugų ir paramos holistinį mechanizmą.
4. Pateikti verslo inkubatorių klasifikaciją, leidžiančią įvertinti jų teikiamas paslaugas priklausomai nuo skirtingų verslo inkubatorių tipų.
5. Įvertinus verslo inkubatorių veiklos pagrindinius vystimosi veiksnius sukurti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modelį.
6. Atlikus verslo inkubatorių veiklos užsienio šalyse analizę, nustatyti verslo inkubatorių veiklos dabartinį transformacijos lygį.
7. Atlikus empirinį tyrimą įvertinti Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veiklą, jos transformaciją ir numatyti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos kryptis, galimybes ir problemas.

Tyrimo metodika

Tyrimo metodikos pagrindas – visuminis požiūris į tyrimo objektą ir jo sudedamąsias dalis. Disertacijos iškeltai problemai tirti teoriniams ir praktiniams rezultatams gauti naudota bendramokslinių ir specialių tyrimų visuma: mokslinės literatūros analizė ir sisteminimas, statistikos duomenų analizė ir lyginimas, apklausa, grupavimas, detalizavimas, apibendrinimas, grafinis modeliavimas. Apibendrinat apklausos tyrimo duomenis naudota SPSS (angl. *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) programa.

Disertacijos struktūra

Disertacinį darbą sudaro pateiktų paveikslų, lentelių ir priedų sąrašai, įvadas, trys dalys, išvados ir pasiūlymai, literatūros sąrašas ir priedai. Disertacijos apimtis 186 puslapiai, joje pateikta 27 lentelės, 60 paveikslų, 37 priedai. Disertacijos struktūrą nusako schema, pateikta 1 paveiksle, kurioje išdėstyta disertacijos tyrimo tikslui skirtų uždavinių įgyvendinimo seka.



1 pav. Disertacijos loginė schema

Pirmoje – teorinėje dalyje – „Verslo inkubavimo procesai ir verslo inkubatorių veiklos ypatumai“ atskleidžiamos verslo inkubavimo ir verslo inkubatorių koncepcijos, akcentuojant verslo inkubavimo procesus ir jų dedamąsias, nagrinėjami verslo inkubatorių tikslai ir paslaugos, išskiriami verslo inkubatorių tipai ir jų ryšys bei pateikiamas verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformavimo modelis.

Antroje disertacijos dalyje „Verslo inkubatorių patirties analizė užsienio šalyse ir Lietuvoje“ analizuojama verslo inkubatorių pažangios patirties taikymas. Šioje dalyje nagrinėjama ir apibendrinama pasaulinė išsivysčiusių, besivystančių šalių verslo inkubatorių veiklos patirtis bei Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veikla.

Trečioje disertacijos dalyje „Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformavimo vertinimas“ atliekama loginė ir statistinė empirinė tyrimo rezultatų analizė, jų sisteminimas, kuris leidžia pagrįsti verslo inkubavimo procesų transformacijos prielaidas ir kryptis. Darbo pabaigoje pateikiamos išvados ir pasiūlymai.

Naudoti informacijos šaltiniai

Disertaciniame darbe buvo atlikta išsami įvairios mokslinės, statistinės, metodologinės literatūros analizė. Pagrindiniai naudoti šaltiniai yra: mokslininkų ir verslo inkubavimo ir inkubatorių tyrėjų darbai, straipsniai ir tyrimai; oficialūs empirinių tyrimų rezultatai, verslo inkubatorių tinklų informacija (NBIA, SPICA, EBN, Pasaulinio verslo inkubatorių tinklo) Lietuvos respublikos teisiniai dokumentai, Lietuvos respublikos Statistikos departamento duomenys ir Lietuvos respublikos Ūkio ministerijos ataskaitos, elektroniniai informacijos šaltiniai. Disertacijoje panaudoti atlikti naujausi *verslo inkubatorių veikloje tyrimai* pasauliniu mastu (Al-Mubarak, Michael Busler, 2010), JAV – (Adkins, 2010, Monkman, 2010), taip pat tyrimai Europoje (Goddard, Chouk, 2006) ir tyrimai, atlikti verslo inkubavimo ir / ar inkubatorių regionų tinklų lygįje.

Mokslinis naujumas, teorinė ir praktinė reikšmė

Mokslinį disertacijos naujumą rodo pagrindiniai mokslinio tyrimo rezultatai, teikiami viešai ginti. Darbas yra teorinio – taikomojo pobūdžio, jame verslo inkubatorių veikla ir procesai nagrinėjami verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos kontekste.

Teorinė reikšmė:

- ✓ atlikta sisteminė užsienio šalių mokslinės ir praktinės literatūros verslo inkubavimo ir verslo inkubatorių klausimais studija, leidžianti pateikti išsamesnius verslo inkubavimo ir verslo inkubatorių apibrėžimus bei išryškinti šio reiškinio reikšmę SVV subjektų sėkmingai plėtrai;
- ✓ suformuluoti pagrindiniai verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos tikslai leidžia įvertinti teikiamų paslaugų specifika; sukurtas verslo inkubatoriaus teikiamų paslaugų ir paramos holistinis mechanizmas padeda nustatyti verslo inkubavimo paslaugas būtinas sėkmingam verslo inkubavimo procesui užtikrinti ir įvertinti šių paslaugų teikimo būtinybę bei naudą inkubuojamoms įmonėms;
- ✓ autorės parengta verslo inkubatorių klasifikacija leidžia nustatyti ne tik verslo inkubatorių tipus ir ryšius tarp jų, įvertinti kokios paramos gali tikėtis inkubuojamos įmonės iš konkretaus verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos, bet ir įgalina išsamiau ištirti verslo inkubatorių veiklos ypatybes ir numatyti jų veiklos transformacijos kryptis;
- ✓ parengta verslo inkubavimo procesų sistema leidžia identifikuoti verslo inkubavimo procesus, nustatyti verslo inkubavimo paslaugas, būtinas sėkmingam verslo inkubavimo procesui, ir jų teikimo galimybes esant skirtingiems verslo inkubatorių tipams.
- ✓ pirmą kartą sukurtas verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modelis praturtina vadybos ir verslo administravimo mokslą apie verslo inkubavimo procesus, paslaugas tipus ir jų transformaciją. Šiame modelyje pagrindinės dedamosios, determinuojančios verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos transformaciją, yra *verslo inkubatoriaus išvystymo laipsnis* ir *verslo inkubatoriaus gyvavimo ciklas*.

Praktinė reikšmė:

- ✓ sukurtas verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modelis leidžiantis įvertinti verslo inkubatorių veiklos rezultatyvumą ir jos išsivystymo lygį;

- ✓ atlikta verslo inkubatorių veiklos užsienio šalyse analizė, sudaranti galimybę nustatyti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformaciją bei panaudoti išsivysčiusių ir besivystančių šalių pažangią patirtį Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veikloje;
- ✓ atlikti Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių 2005 m. ir 2010 m. tyrimai leidžiantys, pasinaudojus autorės sukurtu verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modeliu, įvertinti Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veiklą, jos transformaciją lygi ir numatyti galimas verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos kryptis, galimybes ir problemas.

IŠVADOS IR PASIŪLYMAI

Rinkoje vykstantys spartūs pasikeitimai reikalauja greitesnės įmonių veiklos akceleracijos. Dėl šių priežasčių būtinas koncentruotas verslo vystymo ir paramos procesas, kuris gali būti įgyvendinami naudojantis verslo inkubatorių paslaugomis.

1. Verslo inkubavimas tyrinėjamas jau ne vieną dešimtmetį, tačiau nėra konsensuso apibrėžiant šį reiškinį. Verslo inkubavimas turi vieną jungiančią dimensiją – akcentuojama parama SVV verslui jo veiklos vystymo pradžioje. Išnagrinėjus skirtingų autorių pateikiamus apibrėžimus, autorės nuomone, verslo inkubavimas yra inovatyvus, heterogeniškas (daugialypis) ir besitransformuojantis SVV subjektų verslo vystymo procesas, kurio metu naujai susikūrusiems ar tik besikuriantiems SVV subjektams suteikiama parama, ir padedantis kurti naujas, savarankišką bei sėkmingą veiklą rinkoje vykdančias įmones.

2. Verslo inkubavimo proceso tyrėjai ypatingą dėmesį skiria šio proceso dedamajai – verslo inkubatoriui, kurio veiklos tyrimai išryškina valstybės SVV skatinimo politikos akcentą ir įmonių akceleracijos akcentą, jie yra tampriai persipynę, tačiau turi vieną bendrą sąsają – paramą SVV subjektams. Autorės nuomone, verslo inkubatorius yra organizacija, teikianti visapusišką verslo paramą naujai susikūrusiems ar besikūriantiems SVV subjektams, kuri palengvina šių įmonių sėkmingą plėtrą ir integraciją į konkurencinę rinką.

3. Verslo inkubatoriuose vykstantys procesai apsprendžia sėkminga inkubuojamų įmonių vystymąsi. Verslo inkubavimo procesų sistemą sudaro: 1) priešinkubavimo stadija; 2) inkubavimo stadija; 3) poinkubavimo stadija. Priešinkubavimo stadijoje atrenkamos potencialios įmonės, todėl labai svarbūs inkubuojamų įmonių atrankos kriterijai. Inkubavimo stadijoje svarbūs tampa verslo inkubatoriaus teikiamos paslaugos, kurios priklauso nuo verslo inkubatoriaus tipo ir jam keliamų tikslų. Poinkubavimo stadijoje aktualūs tampa įmonių išėjimo iš verslo inkubatoriaus kriterijai, išėjusios įmonių sėkmingas įsitiivrtinimas rinkoje.

4. Verslo inkubatorių veiklos specifika ir tuo pačiu jų teikiamas paslaugas apsprendžia verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos tikslai. Makro lygmenyje verslo inkubatoriai tikslu tampa užimtumo didinimas, o to pasėkoje užtikrinamas ekonomikos augimas ir šalies, regiono, miesto konkurencingumas. Mikro lygmenyje inkubatorius teikia vertę pridedančią paramos sistemą įmonėms, siekiant didinti verslininkų antrepreneriškas savybes ir skatinti įmonių vystymąsi ir plėtrą.

5. Verslo inkubatorių veiklos tikslai parodo kokios paramos, o tuo pačiu ir kokių paslaugų gali tikėtis inkubuojamos įmonės. Verslo inkubatoriaus teikiamos paslaugos sudaro holistinį paramos verslui mechanizmą, kuris įvertina pradedančiųjų įmonių reikmes, sprendžiant joms iškilusias verslo inkubavimo problemas. Visas autorių išskirtas verslo inkubavimo paslaugas galima suskirstyti į 1) materialines paslaugas; 2) nematerialines paslaugas; 3) finansinę paramą. Svarbiausios verslo inkubavimo procese yra nematerialinės paslaugos (proceso ir bendradarbiavimo), kurios daro didžiausią įtaką sėkmingam įmonių vystymui.

6. Mokslinės literatūros analizė parodė, kad įvairiose pasaulio šalyse sutinkami skirtingi verslo inkubatorių tipai. Remiantis įvairių šaltinių analize, autorė siūlo visus verslo inkubatorius klasifikuoti pagal verslo inkubatorių: 1) steigėjus; 2) išipareigojimo (komercializavimo) laipsnį; 3) specializaciją; 4) tikslus; 5) inkubuojamų įmonių dydį ir

amžių; 6) siūlomą infrastruktūrą; 7) veikimo teritoriją; 8) transformacijos laipsnį. Ši klasifikacija ne tik leidžia nustatyti verslo inkubatorių tipų ryšius, bet ir padeda įvertinti kokių paslaugų iš verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos gali tikėtis inkubuojamos įmonės.

7. Inkubuojamoms įmonėms teikiamos paslaugos ir jų kokybė priklauso nuo verslo inkubatorių veiklos patirties toje šalyje bei nuo konkretaus verslo inkubatoriaus išsivystymo laipsnio: 1) įkūrimo fazėje esantiems verslo inkubatoriams svarbūs yra jų pačių įsikūrimo ir veiklos vystymo aspektai; 2) augimo arba verslo vystymo fazėje – verslo inkubatoriai savo veiklą jau gali pradėti koncentruoti į inkubuojamas įmones; 3) brandos fazėje – reikšminga susitelkti į papildomas veiklos sritis, teikiant aukštesnės kokybės paslaugas inkubuojamoms įmonėms.

8. Verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos modelis leidžia įvertinti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos lygį, nustatyti kokios konkrečios paramos gali tikėtis inkubuojamos įmonės ir kokių verslo inkubatoriaus veiklos rezultatų gali tikėtis visuomenė.

9. Išsivysčiusiose (JAV, Europos) ir besivystančiose (Pasaulinio verslo inkubatorių tinklui priklausančiose Afrikos, Azijos, Rytų Europos ir Centrinės Azijos, Lotynų Amerikos ir Karibų, Vidurio Rytų ir Šiaurinės Afrikos) ekonomikose paramos SVV subjektams politika plačiai plėtojama ir įgyja vis didesnę svarbą. Šiose šalyse verslo inkubatoriai dažniausiai yra pasiekę brandos fazę, t. y. teikiančius klasikinį / tradicinį verslo inkubavimą. Išsivysčiusiose šalyse neretai sutinkama trečios, ketvirtos ir penktos kartos verslo inkubatorių, tačiau dauguma verslo inkubatorių savo veiklai pasirinkę trečios kartos verslo inkubatorių modelį ir veiklą orientuoja į technologines bei inovacines įmones. Besivystančiose šalyse verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijoje taip pat galima išvystyti trečios kartos verslo inkubatorių užuomazgų, nes jų veikla orientuojama ir į technologines ar inovacines įmones, tačiau parama tokioms įmonėms dar menkai išvystyta.

10. Lietuvoje verslo inkubatoriai veiklą vykdo jau antrą dešimtmetį, todėl jų veikla turėtų būti perėjusi visas verslo inkubatoriaus gyvavimo fazes ir pasiekusi brandos fazę. Tačiau verslo inkubatorių veikla Lietuvoje plėtojama nepakankamai sėkmingai: tai parodo ir per pastaruosius metus dviejų Lietuvos verslo inkubatorių veiklos sustabdymas ar nutraukimas. Siekiant nustatyti priežastis, trukdančias verslo inkubatoriams sėkmingai vykdyti savo veiklą, buvo siekiama įvertinti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos lygį. Tam tikslui buvo iškeltos trys tyrimo hipotezės: H.1. Verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje yra įkūrimo fazėje; H.2. Verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje yra vystymo fazėje; H.3. Verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje yra brandos fazėje.

11. Iškelta hipotezė, kad verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje gali būti priskirti įkūrimo fazei pasivirtino iš dalies, nes jie atitinka tam tikrus, įkūrimo fazėje esančių verslo inkubatorių parametrus. Ypatingai svarbus inkubuojamų įmonių paramos poreikio aspektas, nes inkubuojamos įmonės nurodė, kad jiems svarbiausia yra materialinė parama (ypatingai lengvatinė patalpų nuoma), o tai yra būdinga būtent įkūrimo fazėje esantiems verslo inkubatoriams.

12. Iškelta hipotezė, kad verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje gali būti priskirti vystymo fazei pasivirtino iš dalies, nes jie atitinka tam tikrus, vystymo fazėje esančių verslo inkubatorių parametrus: atrankos kriterijai yra, bet jie nėra aukšti; finansinė parama nėra teikiama; vyrauja įkūrimo ir augimo stadijoje esančios įmonės. Tačiau patalpų užpildymo, nematerialinių paslaugų teikimo ir bendradarbiavimo tinklų formavimo

parametrai neatitinka arba silpnai atitinka šiai fazei būdingus indikatorius. Šiuo atveju verslo inkubatorius galima tik iš dalies priskirti vystymo fazei.

13. Iškelta hipotezė, kad verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje gali būti priskirti brandos fazei nepasitvirtino, nes verslo inkubatoriai nėra užpildę visas savo patalpas inkubuojamomis įmonėmis, todėl negali nustatyti aukštų atrankos į verslo inkubatorius kriterijų; kadangi verslo inkubatorius nėra pilnai išvystęs savo veiklos, negali teikti finansinės paramos; be to inkubuojamų įmonių poreikis daugiau susijęs su materialiomis verslo inkubatoriaus paslaugomis, kurios nėra esminės vystant sėkmingas įmones; verslo inkubatorių bendradarbiavimo tinklai silpnai išvystyti ir inkubuojamos įmonės neturi poreikio bendradarbiauti su kituose verslo inkubatoriuose veikiančiomis įmonėmis.

14. Apibendrinant empirinių tyrimų rezultatus galima daryti išvadą, kad verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje yra įkūrimo - vystymo fazėje ir jų veiklą galima priskirti antros kartos verslo inkubatoriams. Tyrimo rezultatus apunkina tai, kad verslo inkubatorių vadovų ir inkubuojamų įmonių tyrimų rezultatai iš esmės skiriasi. Susidaro įspūdis, kad verslo inkubatorių vadovai, žinodami pakankamai prastą verslo inkubatorių poziciją Lietuvoje, stengiasi pagražinti esamą situaciją. Paprašyti įvertinti verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos lygį, verslo inkubatorių vadovai nurodydavo vystymo arba brandos stadiją ir trečią arba ketvirtą verslo inkubatorių kartą.

15. Verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje turėtų panaudoti išsivysčiusių ir besivystančių šalių verslo inkubavimo ir verslo gerąją praktiką, nes skirtingai nei Lietuvoje, ten verslo inkubatoriai užima svarbią vietą šalies ekonomikoje, didinant užimtumą, kuriant naujas, konkurencingas įmones.

16. Siekiant geresnių verslo inkubatorių veiklos rezultatų būtina peržiūrėti verslo inkubatorių veiklos tikslus ir realiai jų teikiamas paslaugas inkubuojamoms įmonėms, nes tai, kad dauguma inkubuojamų įmonių pagrindiniu motyvu ir poreikiu įvardina nematerialines verslo inkubavimo paslaugas (ypatingai patalpų nuomą lengvatinėmis sąlygomis) parodo verslo inkubavimo veiklos neišvystymą. Tai gali būti dėl kelių priežasčių: 1) inkubuojamos įmonės netinkamai supranta verslo inkubavimo procesą; 2) netinkamai atrenkamos inkubuojamos įmonės (t. y. atrenkamos ne tos įmonės, kurioms yra būtinas inkubavimo procesas); 3) verslo inkubavimo procesas Lietuvoje yra nukreiptas būtent į nematerialinių paslaugų teikimą.

17. Verslo inkubatoriai Lietuvoje per daugiau nei dešimtmetį nesugebėjo tinkamai išvystyti savo veiklos todėl susiduria su finansiniais sunkumais. Sumažėjęs valstybiniam finansavimui verslo inkubatoriai negali tinkamai vystyti savo veiklos, nes nemoka ir (ar) negali pritraukti finansavimo šaltinių iš šalies savo veiklai organizuoti, nekalbant apie finansavimo šaltinių pritraukimą inkubuojamoms įmonėms

18. Verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos nauda teikia galimybę konceptualiai pažvelgti į daugiaaspektes verslo inkubatorių transformacijos strategines kryptis didėjančios konkurencijos sąlygomis. Verslo inkubatorių veikla ir jų plėtra priklauso nuo esamos sistemos ir taikomų paramos priemonių, todėl siūlomas verslo inkubatorių veikos transformacijos modelis leidžia pasirinkti tinkamą ir visaapimančią inkubavimo procesų mechanizmą, atsižvelgiant į šalies išsivystymo laipsnį ir poreikį verslo inkubavimo paslaugoms.

19. Inkubuojamų įmonių sėkmingai veiklai naudinga taikyti holistinę paramos verslui mechanizmą, kuris įvertintų dabartinį verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos lygį ir rezultatyvumą, išskirtų paramos SVV subjektams prioritetus, tikslus, uždavinius ir jų įgyvendinimui naudotinas paramos priemones. Pasinaudojant išsivysčiusių bei

besivystančių šalių pažangia patirtimi, verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacija į aukštesnės pridėtinės vertės struktūrą ir inovacijų diegimą, sukurtų didesnę potencialą šalies ekonominei ir socialinei plėtrai.

20. Tolesnė inkubavimo procesų transformacija priklauso nuo verslo inkubatorių veiklos gerinimo, jų veiklos koordinavimo siekiant bendradarbiavimo su SVV subjektais ir paramos priemonių naudingumo išvirtiniant konkurencingoje rinkoje. Adekvaciai reaguojant į aplinkos pokyčius, paramos priemonių plėtra ir pateikiamos rekomendacijos verslo inkubatorių veiklos transformacijos trajektorijoms yra tinkamos esamame inkubatorių gyvenimo ciklo etape, tačiau jos, pasikeitus ekonominei ir socialinei situacijai, gali kisti ir transformuotis į aukštesnę ar visai naują verslo inkubatorių veiklos lygį. Apibendrinant galima teigti, jog, žvelgiant į ateitį, tolimesni tyrimai turėtų būti susiję su platesnėmis studijomis, kurios atskleistų ir išmatuotų atskirų verslo inkubatorių paramos priemonių taikymo poreikį ir rezultatyvumą.

Mokslinio tyrimo rezultatų apibavimas ir sklaida

Mokslinio tyrimo rezultatai paskelbti 4 straipsniuose, kurie publikuoti daktaro disertacijai pripažįstamuose mokslo leidiniuose, 6 straipsniuose, publikuotose mokslinių konferencijų medžiagoje.

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Mokslinių interesų sritys

Smulkus ir vidutinis verslas, parama smulkiam ir vidutiniam verslui, verslo inkubavimas – verslo inkubatoriai, tarptautinis verslas, verslo ekonomika.