

## SPECIAL ISSUE PROPOSAL

# Journal of Engineering and Technology Management (JETM)

## “The role of accelerators on start-ups innovation and success”

The purpose of this special issue is to explore the role of accelerators on the current entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. We are especially interested in understanding how different accelerator programs, their internal organization and strategies foster innovation and success in start-ups, which may encompass not only the development of new business models and technological advances, but also innovative approaches for addressing social challenges.

This special issue welcomes contributions that investigate the questions above from a variety of perspectives: business model innovation, open innovation, social innovation, accelerator design, among others. Finally, our aim is to assemble scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds to establish both conceptual and empirical foundations for this rapidly growing and important field of research, incorporating a diverse array of methodological approaches.

### KEY DEADLINES

Submission of extended abstracts: February 14, 2024

Submission of full papers: December 15, 2024

See page 4 for a complete timeline and submission instructions.

### EDITORIAL TEAM

**Elena M. Giménez Fernández.** Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Spain. ([emgimfer@upo.es](mailto:emgimfer@upo.es))

**Antonio Carmona Lavado.** Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Spain. ([acarlav@upo.es](mailto:acarlav@upo.es))

**Carmen Cabello Medina.** Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Spain. ([mcabmed@upo.es](mailto:mcabmed@upo.es))

**Vesna Vlaisavljevic.** Universidad de Barcelona, Spain. ([vesna.savic@ub.edu](mailto:vesna.savic@ub.edu))

## **SPECIAL ISSUE PURPOSE**

This special issue focuses accelerators and their role on the current entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. From the foundation of the first accelerator in 2005, Y Combinator, the phenomenon has exponentially grown, thanks to the actions of policy makers, investors, corporations, universities, research institutes and so on, trying to support and accelerate the creation of successful companies (Pauwels et al., 2016).

Nowadays, accelerators are already considered a research topic in themselves (Crişan et al., 2021). Accelerators emerged boosted by the advances in technology and the rise of the digital economy experienced in the last decade (Del Sarto et al., 2020). The first studies were aimed at proposing a definition, identifying the distinctive characteristics of accelerators compared to incubators (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014). Subsequently, it tends to focus on the design elements of the acceleration program, as well as establishing typologies of accelerators based on their promoters, objectives, services offered, etc. (Pauwels et al., 2016; Shankar & Shepherd, 2019).

However, the effectiveness or impact of acceleration programs on the trajectory of start-ups is one of the topics that has aroused the most interest in the literature (Cohen et al., 2019; Hallen et al., 2020). Research on the phenomenon is still emergent and findings about their impact on start-ups are not consistent (Cohen et al., 2019), with studies reporting a positive impact of acceleration on start-ups, while others found neutral, and even negative, impact (Canovas-Saiz et al., 2021). Despite the increasing interest and efforts on research, there are still many unanswered questions and several research streams emerge.

In this sense, one of the pending questions is to determine how accelerators exercise their intermediation role (Goswami et al., 2018), that is, to specify the mechanisms that influence the start-ups outcomes (Crişan et al., 2021). The specific mechanisms used by accelerators in comparison with other entrepreneurship support programs (incubators, business angels, etc.) can be analyzed, or how they are replaced when not going through an acceleration program. Accelerators provide limited-duration programs, including networking, educational and mentorship services, helping cohorts of ventures in their new venture process (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014). Direct effects of the services provided by the acceleration program such as mentoring, networking, coworking space, monitoring, access to financing and investment, etc. might be analyzed.

Research on accelerators could also consider an open innovation approach (Chesbrough, 2006) as the accelerator appears as a new external source of knowledge (Spender et al., 2017). The context of an accelerator allows founding teams to have access to a great diversity of business knowledge and relevant experiences, which come from mentors,

trainers, consultants, experts, investors, other entrepreneurs and from networking events. Moreover, it relates to the role that acceleration programs can play in the cross-industry innovation of start-ups' business models (Carmona-Lavado et al, 2023). This circumstance means that the participation of a start-up in an acceleration program can provide it with an advantage in terms of innovation and success.

Further work is required to analyse how the support of the different programs of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurship ecosystems in general may influence the new venture growth. Previous literature has evidenced that new ventures require different policies and initiatives that support start-ups as the motor of the economy (Gimenez-Fernandez et al., 2020), but at the same time a better linkage between academics, governments, industry and society is needed. Likewise, Vlasisavljevic et al. (2020) found that the distinctive features of the local texture play a crucial role in shaping the innovation ecosystems. Their study shows how one specific agent of ecosystem, cluster agency, among others, contributes to the development of ecosystem and promotion of open innovation outcomes. Similarly, future research could examine the role of accelerators in innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Consequently, the full potential of the accelerator research is far from realized. We invite to submit both theoretical and empirical papers whose topics or areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- The role of co-working spaces on innovation and success in start-ups
- The internal organization of accelerators and its impact on innovation in start-ups
- Knowledge flows on accelerators from an open innovation perspective
- The performance of acceleration programs and accelerated start-ups
- The analysis of accelerators from the start-up and the accelerator perspectives
- The role of accelerators in the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems
- Social accelerators
- Challenges of corporate accelerators
- Accelerators as facilitators of business model innovation and technological change
- The role of accelerator in facilitating cross-industry innovation of start-ups' business models
- Systematic literature reviews on accelerators

## **TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

- February 14, 2024: Submission of extended abstracts for the early-stage Paper Development Workshop (PDW) to be held in the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.
- March 31, 2024: Announcement of selected abstracts for the PDW after Initial screening by Guest Editors.
- June 17-19, 2024: PDW Workshop on "The role of accelerators on start-ups innovation and success" to be held in the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden (Participation in person).
- December 15, 2024: Submission of papers to double blind refereeing for the Special Issue (submissions of scholars “participating” and “non-participating” in the PDW are welcome).
- March 15, 2024: Expected decisions on the first submission.
- June 15, 2025: Expected Final Decisions.

## **SUBMISSION DETAILS**

The guest editors will manage the editorial and review process of the JETM Special Issue submissions. All papers will be subject to the standard referee process of the Journal of Engineering and Technology Management, and will undergo a final review by the Editorial Board after conditional acceptance by the guest editors. Submissions must be original, unpublished works that are not concurrently under review for publication elsewhere. All submissions should conform to the JETM manuscript submission guidelines available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-engineering-and-technology-management/publish/guide-for-authors>

The PDW workshop aims to provide an opportunity to meet the guest editors and potential other contributors to the special issue and present initial ideas and research plans. The workshop will provide an opportunity to gain feedback, refine ideas, and strengthen the theoretical framing of the proposed contributions.

Participation in the PDW does not guarantee publication in the special issue. Also, participation in the PDW is not a requirement to submit a paper to the special issue. The Editor-in-Chief of Journal of Engineering and Technology Management will oversee the final set of accepted papers prior to publication.

## REFERENCES

- Canovas-Saiz, L., March-Chordà, I., & Yagüe-Perales, R. M. (2021). A quantitative-based model to assess seed accelerators' performance. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 33(3–4), 332–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2021.1872941>
- Carmona-Lavado, A., Gimenez-Fernandez, E.M. Vlaisavljevic, V. y Cabello-Medina, C. (2023): Cross-industry innovation: A systematic literature review. *Technovation* 124, 102743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102743>
- Chesbrough, H. (2006). Open Innovation: A new paradigm for understanding industrial innovation. In *Chesbrough, H., Vanhaverbeke, W., West, J. (Eds.), Open Innovation: Researching a New Paradigm*. Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, S., Fehder, D. C., Hochberg, Y. V., & Murray, F. (2019). The design of startup accelerators. *Research Policy*, 48(7), 1781–1797. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2019.04.003>
- Cohen, S., & Hochberg, Y. V. (2014). Accelerating Startups: The Seed Accelerator Phenomenon. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2418000>
- Crișan, E. L., Salanță, I. I., Beleiu, I. N., Bordean, O. N., & Bunduchi, R. (2021). A systematic literature review on accelerators. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 46(1), 62–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-019-09754-9>
- Del Sarto, N., Isabelle, D. A., & Di Minin, A. (2020). The role of accelerators in firm survival: An fsQCA analysis of Italian startups. *Technovation*, 90–91, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TECHNOVATION.2019.102102>
- Gimenez-Fernandez, E. M., Sandulli, F., & Bogers, M. (2020). Unpacking liabilities of newness and smallness in innovative start-ups: Investigating the differences in innovation performance between new and older small firms. *Research Policy*, 49(10), 104049. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104049>
- Goswami, K., Mitchell, J. R., & Bhagavatula, S. (2018). Accelerator expertise: Understanding the intermediary role of accelerators in the development of the Bangalore entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 12(1), 117–150. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1281>
- Hausberg, J. P., & Korreck, S. (2020). Business incubators and accelerators: A co-citation analysis-based, systematic literature review. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 45(1), 151–176. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-018-9651-y>
- Morschheuser, B., Hamari, J., Koivisto, J., & Maedche, A. (2017). Gamified crowdsourcing: Conceptualization, literature review, and future agenda. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 106, 26–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2017.04.005>
- Pauwels, C., Clarysse, B., Wright, M., & Hove, J. Van. (2016). Understanding a new generation incubation model: The accelerator. *Technovation*, 50–51, 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2015.09.003>
- Shankar, R. K., & Shepherd, D. A. (2019). Accelerating strategic fit or venture emergence: Different paths adopted by corporate accelerators. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(5), 105886. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2018.06.004>

- Spender, J.-C., Corvello, V., Grimaldi, M., & Rippa, P. (2017). Startups and open innovation: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 20(1), 4–30. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-12-2015-0131>
- Vlaisavljevic, V., Medina, C. C., & Van Looy, B. (2020). The role of policies and the contribution of cluster agency in the development of biotech open innovation ecosystem. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 155, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.119987>.