



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

QUALIFICATION: BACHELOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT HONOURS	
QUALIFICATION CODE: 08HBBM	LEVEL: 8
COURSE CODE: SES821S	COURSE NAME: SME SUPPORT
SESSION: JUNE 2025	PAPER: THEORY
DURATION: 3 HOURS	MARKS: 100

FIRST OPPORTUNITY EXAMINATION	
EXAMINER(S)	Ms. B. NDUNGAUA
MODERATOR:	Ms. A. TJIUEZA

INSTRUCTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This is an open book examination.2. Answer ALL the questions in an essay format.3. Read all the questions carefully before answering.4. Number the answers clearly

PERMISSIBLE MATERIAL

1. Study notes

THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF _4_ PAGES (Including this front page)

QUESTION 1**[37 Marks]**

- a) With practical examples, discuss the various support dimensions a business incubator can provide to its clients.

(16 Marks)

- b) As a hired consultant, what business incubators' performance measurement matrices would you recommend should be used when evaluating incubator performance.

(21 Marks)

QUESTION 2**[35 Marks]**

Having first identified the under-represented communities in O'Brien et al (2019), as part of its third mission, how could the Namibia University of Science and Technology's entrepreneurial ecosystem contribute to eliminating the barriers that prevent under-represented communities from participating in the Namibian economy?

QUESTION 2**[28 Marks]**

Read the following case study and answer the questions that follows:

Case Study: Overcoming Social Networking Barriers in a Business Incubator

Namibia Startup Hub (NSH) is a university-affiliated business incubator designed to foster entrepreneurship by providing startups with infrastructure, mentorship, and access to networking opportunities. The incubator was established to support early-stage businesses, offering them a platform to develop innovative and sustainable enterprises. However, despite these advantages, startups at NSH face considerable challenges in building and maintaining meaningful social and business networks. Networking is widely recognised as a crucial factor in the success of startups. It provides access to resources, knowledge, and credibility, ultimately enhancing business viability. However, as highlighted in *Understanding Incubator Value – A Network Approach to University Incubators* (Roseira et al., 2014), networking within

incubators does not always function effectively. Entrepreneurs often hold high expectations regarding networking opportunities but encounter significant barriers that impede the realisation of these benefits. The challenges identified in the study of UPTEC, a university-linked incubator, provide valuable insights into the difficulties experienced at NSH.

Startups face the liability of smallness, which restricts their ability to engage in networking effectively. Limited financial and human resources often prevent entrepreneurs from attending networking events, investing in relationship-building activities, or participating in collaborative projects. This challenge aligns with findings from Roseira et al. (2014), who highlight that incubators should act as resource-pooling platforms to mitigate the resource constraints faced by startups. However, if an incubator fails to facilitate access to necessary resources, startups may struggle to overcome these inherent limitations. Furthermore, the networking environment at NSH is characterized by low network density and intensity. While startups are physically located within the same incubator, their interactions are often superficial, with little substantive business engagement. This mirrors the findings in the UPTEC study, where networking within the incubator was found to be infrequent and dominated by social rather than strategic business interactions. Many entrepreneurs at NSH acknowledge the potential benefits of networking but struggle to translate casual connections into meaningful partnerships or business collaborations.

Another significant barrier is the lack of structured networking events within NSH. While informal meetups and incidental interactions occur, there is no formalized system that ensures startups connect with relevant stakeholders. The study of UPTEC highlights that structured and targeted networking activities are essential for fostering collaboration and ensuring that entrepreneurs gain access to valuable contacts. Without a systematic approach to networking, startups at NSH often miss opportunities to establish mutually beneficial relationships.

Additionally, NSH faces challenges related to geographical and industry segmentation. The incubator hosts startups from various industries, sometimes in separate locations, which creates barriers to interaction and collaboration. Entrepreneurs often lack knowledge about the expertise and capabilities of their fellow incubatees, leading to missed opportunities for

synergy. Physical and industry-based segmentation hinders the development of cross-sectoral partnerships. Addressing these barriers is critical to maximizing the incubator's networking potential.

Another prevalent issue at NSH is the unequal access to networking opportunities. Some startups, particularly those with strong pre-existing connections or proactive networking approaches, benefit significantly from incubator resources. Meanwhile, others, especially those with limited prior networks, struggle to access mentorship, funding, and strategic partnerships. Disparities in access to networking opportunities, emphasizing the need for incubator management to play a proactive role in bridging these gaps.

QUESTION: Assume you are a consultant hired by NSH to improve social networking among the startups.

- a) Evaluate the main networking challenges faced by NSH. (20 marks)
- b) Provide two actionable recommendations to address any two of these challenges. These should be supported by evidence from the study. Provide a rationale behind each recommendation. (8 marks)