

Towards an Understanding of Incubators' Training Needs: a South-Eastern European Perspective

Ms Dialehti Fotopoulou
Dr. Leslie Szamosi
Dr. Alexandros Psychogios

Importance of Incubators in Europe

- High survival rates of incubator tenants compared to other SMEs
- Incubators are promoted through the Lisbon agenda to support high knowledge intensive start-ups

The Successful Incubation Model

- Selection/Screening of tenants
 - Accession of potential tenants based on managerial, financial, market, and personal criteria
- Mediator role of the incubator
 - Interactions with entities of the financial sector, the civil society (universities, associations, trade unions) and firms of different sectors

The Successful Incubation Model

- Business support role of the incubator
 - Tenants do not value business management support higher than other services (e.g. the provision of facilities)
 - Tenants utilize only a small percentage (24%) of all their business support and training services from their incubators



Enhancing Incubators' Business Support Role

- There is a need for emphasizing training solutions and disseminating knowledge about business management and other related issues in a more efficient way

The Study

- Identification of specific training needs of incubators (Leonardo da Vinci- SUMMIT II project)
- Questionnaire survey
- Partners:



The Sample

Country of Organization

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Turkey	12	24.5	24.5	24.5
Greece	11	22.4	22.4	46.9
France	5	10.2	10.2	57.1
The Netherlands	5	10.2	10.2	67.3
Cyprus	4	8.2	8.2	75.5
Spain	4	8.2	8.2	83.7
Italy	2	4.1	4.1	87.8
Lebanon	1	2.0	2.0	89.8
Belgium	1	2.0	2.0	91.8
Germany	1	2.0	2.0	93.9
Switzerland	1	2.0	2.0	95.9
UK	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
Bulgaria	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

Overview of Sample

	Ovrl
Year of operations	1998
Years involved with business incubators/intermediaries	9.1
Years involved in the current business incubator/intermediary	6.9
Full-time employees	7.0
Part-time employees	3.8

Type of Sample Organizations

	Ovrl
Incubator	43.5%
Business Innovation Centre	19.6%
Science / Technology Park	17.4%
Innovation Relay Centre	6.5%
Other Innovation Support Intermediary	13.0%

Ownership

	Ovrl
University	30.4%
Public Authority	17.4%
Research Organization	6.5%
Technology Park	6.5%
Corporation	6.5%
No affiliation	6.5%
Regional Development Agency	6.5%
Non Governmental Organization	4.3%
Chamber of Commerce	4.3%
Venture Capital	0.0
Other	10.9%

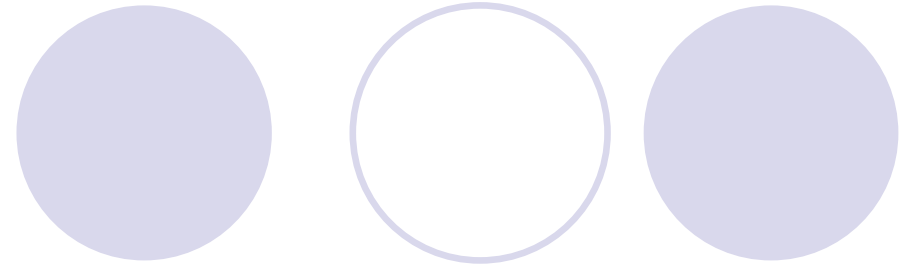
Links and Affiliations

	Ovrl
University	79.6%
Research Organization	53.1%
Technology Park	51.0%
Corporation	30.6%
Non Governmental Organization	28.6%
Venture Capital	28.6%
Other	12.2%
No affiliation	0.0

Incubation Model

	Ovrl
Not For Profit	70.2%
Profit	29.8%

Training Budget



- Yes, there is a training budget **48.9%**
- Budgeted Amount **11563,00€**

Effectiveness of Various Activities

	Ovrl
Supporting the start, survival, and success of innovation-based enterprises	4.14
Developing linkages with universities	4.11
Developing cultures of innovation	4.02
Developing cultures of entrepreneurship	4.02
Developing linkages with businesses	3.98
Developing cultures of cooperation	3.86
Promoting regional development	3.79
Generating employment	3.66
Enhancing competitiveness	3.63
Commercializing technology	3.53

Enhancing Personal Skills

	Ovrl
Negotiation and Persuasion	3.47
Time and project management	3.46
Creative Thinking	3.43
Problem-Solving	3.38
Communication and Presentation	3.32
Selling	3.30
Leadership	3.30
Social Networking	3.17
Decision-making	3.13
Team Working	3.11

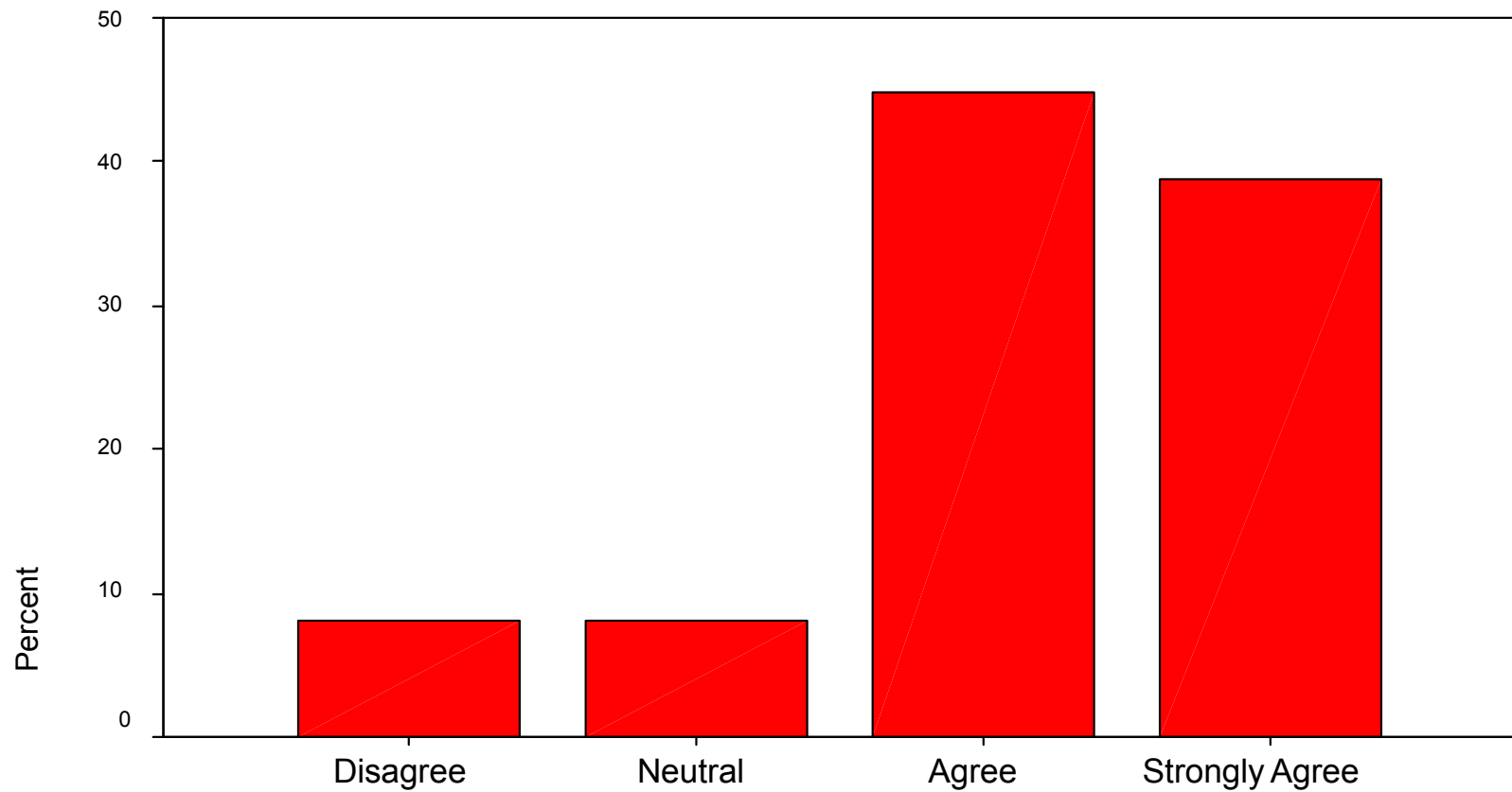
Need to Further Enhance Understanding of:

	Ovrl
Market and Marketing Issues	3.45
Financial Management Issues	3.39
Legal Issues	3.36
Business Planning	3.23
Performance Evaluation and Support Issues	3.23
Networking Issues	3.17
Operational Issues	3.09
Human Resources and Employment Issues	3.04

Key Success Factors

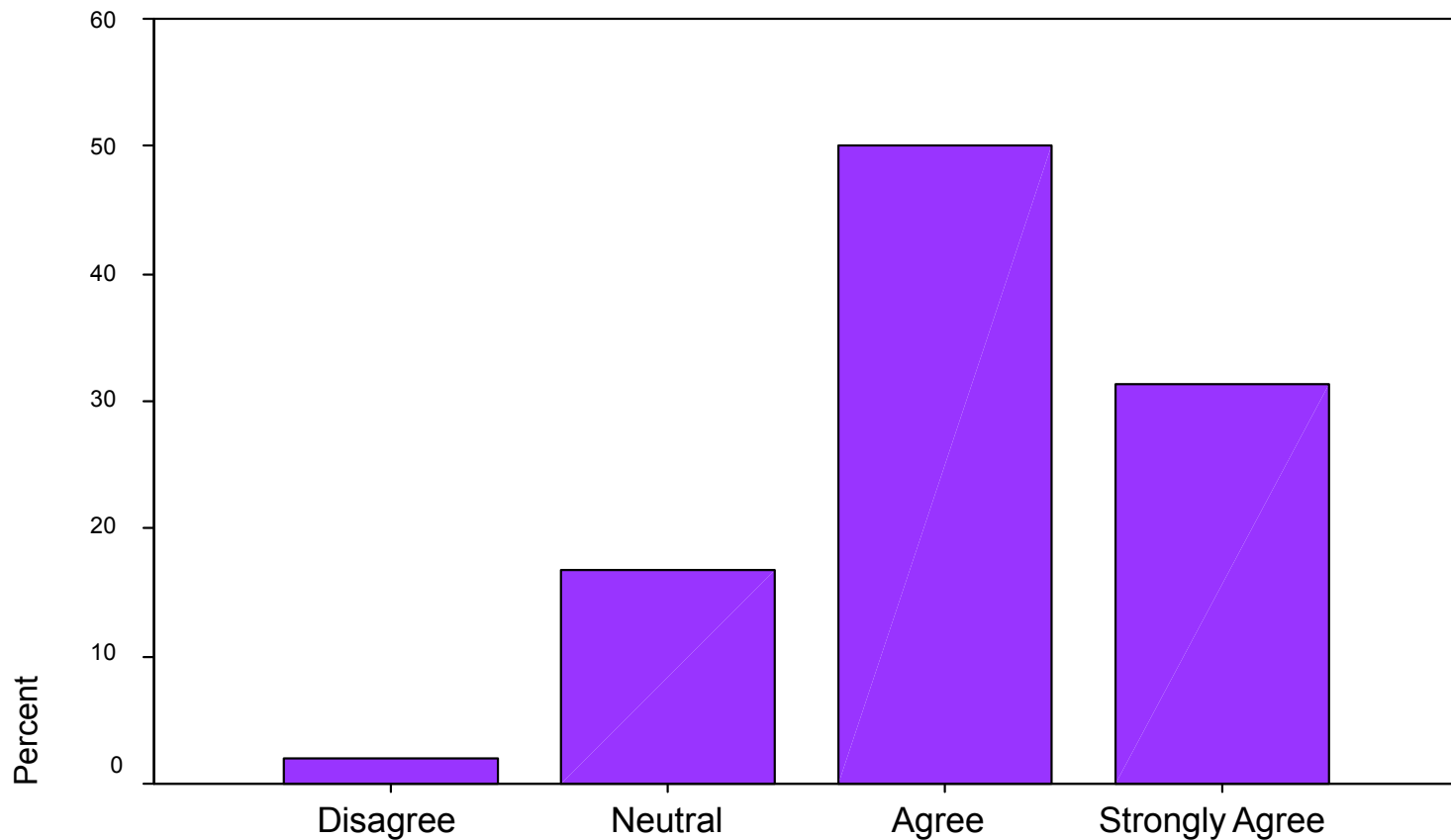
	Ovrl
The ability to have internationalization links and networks	4.13
The links of our organization with research institutions	4.07
The ability to act as consultants to clients	4.07
The credibility in the wider business community	4.07
The supportive interaction between our organization and universities	4.04
The ability to be involved in relevant international/EU programmes and projects	4.04
Our previous experience (training and educational background)	4.02
The supportive interaction between our organization and professional associations	3.98
The roadmap definition	3.96
The supportive interaction between our organization and the national government (e.g. ministries, local entities, agencies)	3.87

Key Success Factors



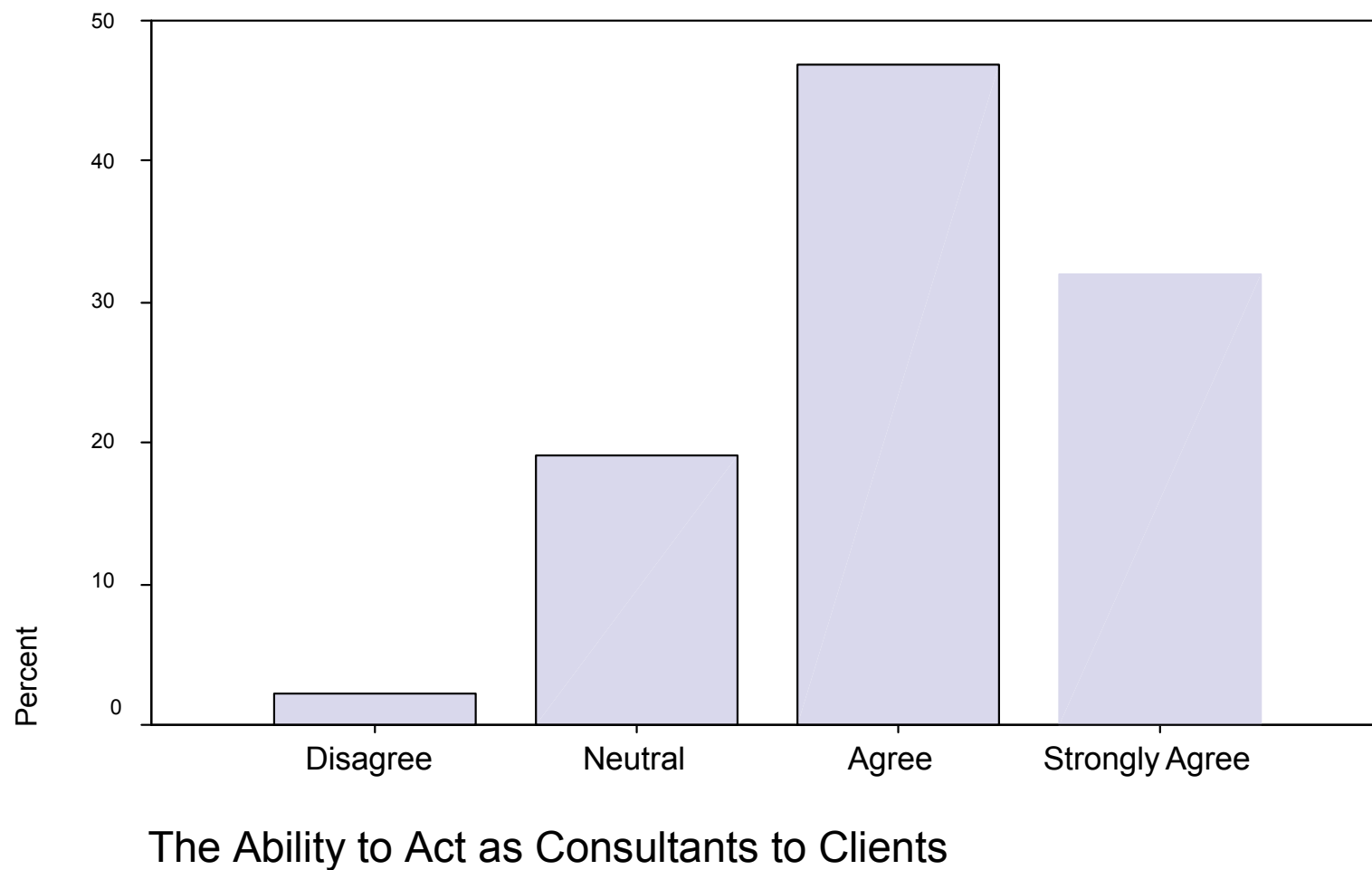
The Ability to Have Internationalization Links and Networks

Key Success Factors



The Credibility in the Wider Business Community

Key Success Factors



Ranking of Main Reasons to Participate in a Seminar Directed to Incubator Managers

	Ovrl
Knowledge on Several Incubation Mgmt Issues	1
Networking Possibilities	2
Personal Skills Development	3
Certification of Attendance	4

Conclusions



- Very experienced managers
- Many links to universities implying ready access to knowledge and information
- Primarily not-for-profit meaning budgets tight (average 11563€ for T&D is very small)
- Linking / networking VERY important to day-to-day activities
- Key areas of interest include the 'softer' business skills (e.g., marketing, launch, start-up, growth)
- Skills requirements based around negotiation / persuasion and time / project management
- Limited / no interest in certified training – critical is gaining knowledge and networking