

## Abstract

Purpose of the study: This paper examined how entrepreneurial leadership within select Kenyan universities influences the commercialization of research outputs.

Problem Statement: Under the pressure of reduced government funding and major changes in the higher education funding model, universities in Kenya are finding themselves in a position where they must innovate and commercialize their research output to earn much-needed revenue.

Method: Fourteen universities supported by the Kenya National Innovation Agency in 2023/2024 to strengthen their institutional capacity for research commercialization under the Institutional Support Program were selected for this study. Through a qualitative research approach, the study gathered the stories of individual institution leaders and Institutional Working Group (IWG) members and looked for patterns within those. Data was analyzed through descriptive content analysis to determine the direction of the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and research commercialization success.

Findings: The main finding was that the institutional leadership supported research commercialization activities with deliberate decisions and progressive actions, as evidenced herein. However, there were still bottlenecks to the process including human resource motivation issues, inadequate/and or conflicting institutional policy framework for research commercialization, and resource deficiencies.

Conclusion: Entrepreneurial leadership plays a catalytic role in driving research commercialization in Kenyan universities, but persistent structural and policy-related barriers must be addressed for sustainable impact.

Recommendation: Universities should institutionalize entrepreneurial leadership practices by streamlining decision-making structures, incentivizing innovation, and enhancing commercialization-supportive policies.