Policy-Entrepreneurship Gap: Challenges in the Adoption of Government Startup Support Schemes by New Ventures in Lucknow.

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Abstract

This study examines the Policy–Entrepreneurship Gap: Challenges in the Adoption of Government Startup Support Schemes by New Ventures in Lucknow, exploring barriers to effective utilization of government initiatives. The rationale arises from the persistent mismatch between policies and adoption in urban startup ecosystems, marked by bureaucratic complexity, limited awareness, and implementation inefficiencies. Using a quantitative design, data were collected from 267 startup founders across technology, healthcare, agriculture, education, and e-commerce via a structured questionnaire, with reliability confirmed through high internal consistency. Analyses included descriptive statistics, ANOVA, multiple regression, and Pearson correlation. Results showed sectoral differences, with technology and e-commerce facing fewer barriers. While regression found no direct impact on economic development, correlation revealed a positive link with expectations for policy reforms, highlighting an implementation gap. The study recommends sector-specific policies, simpler procedures, and improved communication to enhance adoption.

Keywords: Policy–Entrepreneurship Gap, Startup Support Schemes, Government Policy Challenges, Scheme Adoption, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Introduction

- **Background of the Study**

This paper investigates the policy-entrepreneurship gap, emphasizing challenges faced by new ventures in Lucknow in accessing government startup support schemes (Singh, 2021). While government initiatives are crucial for building entrepreneurial ecosystems, gaps between policy design and implementation are common (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2024), reflected in low awareness of schemes, bureaucratic complexities, and misalignment with startup needs (Sharma and Rawat, 2023). The study underscores the need for more effective intervention strategies (Correia & Matos, 2021) and highlights how weak theoretical foundations in policy design undermine ecosystem development (Wang et al., 2022). Institutional and situational factors affecting scheme adoption are explored (Innovation in Accounting Education: The Impact of Information Technology on Teaching Methods, 2021). Implementation gaps, poor stakeholder coordination, and insufficient evaluation reduce policy effectiveness (Arshed et al., 2016; Uctu & Al-Silefanee, 2024; Khuong and Nguyen, 2022; Yassin et al., 2024; Ramakrishna et al., 2025).

- **Problem Statement**

Although there are various schemes of government startup assistance, most of the startups in Lucknow fail to reach and make good use of these policies because of the complexity of the bureaucracy, lack of awareness, lapse in implementation and mismatch with the actual business requirements. This leads to ineffectiveness of support mechanisms and low efficacy of the policies of public entrepreneurship.

- **Research Gap**

The current research is mostly dedicated to the International, national or macro-level policy frameworks, and few empirical studies investigate the city-level issues in the scheme adoption. Localized evidence on the influences of policy mixes, institutional considerations, and ecosystem constraints on startups are also missing in Lucknow in particular.

- **Objectives of the Study**

To identify the major challenges faced by startups in availing and implementing government startup policies in Lucknow.

- **Hypotheses**

($H_0$1): Challenges in Government Policies does not vary across industries

($H_0$2): Challenges in Government Policies impact do not economic development

($H_0$3): Challenges in Government Policies and Future Policy Expectation are not correlated

- **Significance of the Study**

The study will assist policymakers to be able to know practical barriers in policy implementation and adoption. It provides knowledge to better startup assistance programmes, growth of the regional economy and improvement of the infrastructural support of the entrepreneurship in Lucknow. The results will also help startups, administrators and researchers to develop more effective, targeted and evidence-based policy interventions.

Literature Review

The rapid expansion of startups in urban centers like Lucknow has created a dynamic environment for innovation and economic development. In response, governments have launched a range of support schemes designed to nurture new ventures. Yet, despite the availability of these initiatives, many startups struggle to fully leverage them. This discrepancy between policy design and practical adoption—commonly referred to as the policy-entrepreneurship gap—has become a pressing concern (Sharma & Rawat, 2023; Pardo-del-Val et al., 2024). Understanding this gap is crucial, as it reveals systemic barriers that limit the effectiveness of public support and reduce the potential for sustained entrepreneurial growth (Anji Ben Hamed & Albastaki, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical perspectives from multiple disciplines provide insight into these dynamics. Institutional theory explains how formal regulations and informal norms shape entrepreneurial decision-making (Pinto, 2017), while the resource-based view emphasizes the role of access to government-provided resources in fostering venture growth and sustainability (Kshetri, 2008). Stakeholder theory complements these insights by highlighting how interactions among government agencies, startups, and ecosystem actors are influenced by socio-economic conditions, affecting the reach and impact of support programs (Mahajan et al., 2023; Kumar, 2024). Dynamic capabilities theory further underscores that startups' internal adaptability and skills determine how effectively they can engage with public policies and translate them into innovation (Teece, 2010; Buarque et al., 2023). Collectively, these perspectives suggest that the policy-entrepreneurship gap is not a simple misalignment, but the product of complex interactions between systemic structures and firm-level capacities (Wang et al., 2022).

Defining Policy-Entrepreneurship Gap

This gap often arises when well-intentioned policies fail to reflect entrepreneurial realities, including the practical constraints, knowledge, and priorities of startups (Buarque et al., 2023; Azcárate, 2012). The result is low adoption of government schemes, limited impact on the ecosystem, and missed opportunities for innovation-driven economic growth (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurial ecosystems provide a useful lens for understanding these challenges. These ecosystems consist of interdependent actors, institutional frameworks, and cultural norms that collectively shape entrepreneurial activity (Bakry et al., 2022). Government policies are most effective when they integrate seamlessly into these ecosystems, and when they account for how innovations spread through social and organizational networks—a process explained by innovation diffusion theory, which emphasizes perceived advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Candeias & Sarkar, 2022; Kumar et al., 2024). Institutional theory further highlights that alignment with formal rules and societal norms is critical to encourage participation (Robertson et al., 2020; AlOmari, 2023; Bernardus et al., 2024). Together, these insights suggest that closing the policy-entrepreneurship gap requires policies that are contextually grounded, practically implementable, and responsive to both ecosystem-level and firm-level needs

Theories of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Entrepreneurial ecosystems provide a comprehensive lens to understand the complex web of interdependent actors, institutions, and cultural factors that collectively shape innovation and entrepreneurial activity in a region (Bakry et al., 2022). These ecosystems encompass government agencies, financial institutions, incubators, universities, and informal networks, all of which interact in dynamic ways to either facilitate or constrain startup growth. The success of government support schemes within such ecosystems largely depends on their integration with existing components, necessitating analytical frameworks that consider interactions at macro, meso, and micro levels (Chatzinikolaou & Vlados, 2024).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach has increasingly been recognized as a valuable framework for both research and policymaking. It allows for a two-way exchange: theory can guide policy design, while empirical evidence from ecosystems can inform and refine theoretical models (Wang et al., 2022). This perspective underscores the importance of a "bottom-up-top-down" governance model, in which governments adapt their roles dynamically to address ecosystem bottlenecks, allocate resources effectively, and encourage multi-level stakeholder interactions (Wang et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there remains limited understanding of the precise mechanisms through which ecosystem structures shape individual startups' engagement with public policies, highlighting an important gap for further investigation (Roundy & Fayard, 2018).

Innovation Diffusion Theory and Policy Adoption

Innovation diffusion theory offers a complementary lens for examining how government policies and support schemes are perceived and adopted by startups. The theory emphasizes that adoption is influenced by factors such as relative advantage, compatibility with existing practices, perceived complexity, trialability, and observability (Candeias & Sarkar, 2022; Kumar et al., 2024). Government programs that fail to communicate clear advantages or allow for experimentation often experience slow or selective adoption, regardless of their potential benefits (Onileowo, 2024). Designing policies that account for these diffusion characteristics is critical to ensuring that initiatives are perceived as accessible, beneficial, and operationally compatible with startup workflows (Khương & Nguyen, 2022).

Institutional Theory and Government Support

Institutional theory further highlights the critical role of formal and informal structures in shaping entrepreneurial behavior (Robertson et al., 2020). Formal regulations, legal frameworks, and bureaucratic processes interact with informal norms and cultural expectations to influence whether startups engage with government programs. When institutional frameworks are transparent, predictable, and aligned with organizational routines, startups are more likely to participate actively (AlOmari, 2023). Conversely, misaligned or opaque practices can erode trust, reduce participation, and hinder the broader objectives of policy initiatives (Bernardus et al., 2024). These insights reinforce the importance of establishing institutional credibility alongside policy design to foster meaningful engagement.

Empirical Review

Global Perspectives on Startup Support Schemes

Global research consistently shows that government-led initiatives offering financial incentives, mentorship, and access to incubation resources can positively shape entrepreneurial ecosystems (Stefenon & Gimenez, 2023; Sharma & Rawat,

2023). Yet, the impact of these schemes is often tempered by bureaucratic hurdles, limited awareness among startups, and misalignment between policy design and local entrepreneurial needs (Sharma & Rawat, 2023). While targeted interventions can drive firm growth, they may also give rise to unintended outcomes such as rent-seeking behavior or inefficient resource allocation (Howoldt, 2021). Empirical evidence also suggests that entrepreneurs often engage selectively with government schemes, responding strategically to perceived benefits rather than following a linear or predictable adoption path (Worakantak et al., 2024). Such findings underscore the importance of designing policies that are sensitive to how entrepreneurs make decisions in practice.

Challenges in Policy Adoption: A National Context

In India, the adoption of government startup support schemes faces significant structural and operational challenges. Bureaucratic complexity, limited reach to remote regions, and insufficient adaptation to local ecosystems impede program effectiveness (Wasnik & Jain, 2023). A lack of comprehensive understanding of SME conditions further undermines policy credibility, highlighting the need for improved data collection and evidence-based design (Shukla et al., 2024). Despite initiatives like the Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme and increased SME funding, many programs continue to experience low uptake, reflecting a disconnect between policy formulation and practical implementation (Ramakrishna et al., 2025; Arshed et al., 2016). Operational barriers, or "sludge," embedded in application processes often discourage small and medium-sized enterprises from participating, reinforcing perceptions that entrepreneurial success occurs "despite the government" rather than because of its support (Grieder et al., 2024; Pachouri & Sharma, 2016).

The Startup Landscape in Lucknow: An Overview

Lucknow, a tier-2 city, presents a particularly interesting case for studying these dynamics. The city's entrepreneurial ecosystem is characterized by rapid growth alongside structural and institutional barriers that influence how startups perceive and adopt government support (Krishnan, 2025; Nagaraj et al., 2025). Programs such as Start-up India aim to address common challenges—access to capital, regulatory compliance, and market entry—but their effectiveness is contingent upon local ecosystem conditions and cultural contexts (Sharma & Rawat, 2023; Wang et al., 2022; Subrahmanya, 2022). This context highlights the need for empirical studies that examine how policy mixes interact with local entrepreneurial dynamics and the competitive pressures faced by high-tech startups.

Existing Research on New Ventures and Government Schemes

Existing studies reveal that startups' engagement with government programs is influenced by firm-level characteristics, perceived benefits, administrative burdens, and broader institutional factors (Alaassar et al., 2021). Trust in formal institutions plays a critical role; skepticism regarding political favoritism or bureaucratic inefficiency can discourage proactive participation (González-Tamayo et al., 2024; Khlystova et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs often weigh the cost of navigating complex administrative processes against uncertain benefits, resulting in selective engagement that further reinforces the policy-entrepreneurship gap. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing policies that are both accessible and effective, particularly in emerging ecosystems like Lucknow's.

Conceptual Model or Hypothesis Development

Based on literature in policy analysis, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, three null hypotheses (H0) examine the relationships between government policy challenges, industry variations, economic development, and future policy expectations (Onileowo & Muharam, 2023). H01 posits no significant differences in policy challenges across industrial sectors. H02 suggests that these policy challenges do not meaningfully impact economic development. H03 proposes no correlation between current policy obstacles and future policy directions. These hypotheses offer a structured framework to empirically test assumptions about policy effectiveness and its socioeconomic implications, particularly in dynamic contexts such as Nigeria (Onileowo & Muharam, 2023).

Methodology (Methods)

Drawing from extensive research in policy analysis, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, this study formulates three null hypotheses (H0) to explore the complex interactions between government policy challenges, industry-specific variations, economic development, and expectations for future policy (Onileowo & Muharam, 2023). The first null hypothesis (H01) proposes that challenges posed by government policies do not significantly vary across different industrial sectors, implying that businesses experience policy-related obstacles in a broadly uniform manner regardless of industry characteristics. The second hypothesis (H02) suggests that these policy challenges have no measurable effect on economic development, indicating a potential disconnect between policy impediments and broader national economic progress. Finally, the third hypothesis (H03) posits that current policy challenges are not correlated with expectations for future policy directions, suggesting that present obstacles do not meaningfully influence the design or perception of forthcoming policy initiatives (Onileowo & Muharam, 2023).

Together, these hypotheses provide a structured empirical framework to test prevailing assumptions about the effectiveness of government policies and their broader socioeconomic implications. They are particularly relevant in dynamic economic contexts such as Nigeria, where industry-specific differences, regulatory complexities, and evolving policy landscapes necessitate careful examination to inform both practice and future policymaking (Onileowo & Muharam, 2023).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted to test the study hypotheses using inferential statistical techniques. One-way ANOVA was employed to examine mean differences across sectors, while regression analysis was used to assess the predictive influence of government policy challenges on startup outcomes. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to determine the strength and direction of relationships among variables. The five-item "Challenges in Government Policies" scale and Future Policy Expectation scale , measured on a 5-point Likert scale, demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89, 0.85$). Normality of the data was confirmed through the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test ($p = .200$, $p > .05$; $p=.187$, $p>.05$), indicating that parametric test assumptions were met.

($H_0$1): Challenges in Government Policies does not vary across industries

Anova test was conducted to test to test the difference in Challenges in Government Policies across industries

Statement	Sector (N)	M (SD)	Min–Max	Levene's *p*	ANOVA *F*	*p*	Post Hoc (Tukey/Brown–Forsythe Summary)
The bureaucratic process for availing startup benefits is smooth and hassle-free.	Technology (47)	4.23 (0.81)	2–5	.543	15.76	< .001	Technology, E-commerce, and Other > Healthcare and Agriculture; Education > Agriculture
	Healthcare (44)	3.05 (0.99)	1–5				
	Education (39)	3.82 (1.02)	1–5				
	Agriculture (51)	2.90 (1.10)	1–5				
	E-commerce (57)	4.12 (0.91)	2–5				

	Other (29)	3.76 (1.02)	1–5				
	Total (267)	3.65 (1.10)	1–5				
Government policies are flexible and adaptive to changing startup needs.	Technology (47)	3.94 (0.94)	2–5	.839	12.91	< .001	Technology, E-commerce, and Other > Healthcare and Agriculture; Education > Agriculture
	Healthcare (44)	3.05 (0.99)	1–5				
	Education (39)	3.92 (1.06)	2–5				
	Agriculture (51)	2.88 (0.95)	1–5				
	E-commerce (57)	3.96 (0.98)	1–5				
	Other (29)	4.03 (0.98)	2–5				
	Total (267)	3.60 (1.09)	1–5				
Corruption and red tape hinder the effective implementation of startup policies.	Technology (47)	3.74 (0.99)	1–5	.803	12.43	< .001	E-commerce and Other > Healthcare and Agriculture; Technology and Education > Agriculture
	Healthcare (44)	2.91 (1.05)	1–5				
	Education (39)	3.79 (0.92)	2–5				
	Agriculture (51)	3.02 (1.05)	1–5				
	E-commerce (57)	4.09 (0.87)	1–5				
	Other (29)	4.00 (0.93)	2–5				
	Total (267)	3.58 (1.07)	1–5				

Government schemes are equally accessible to all types of startups, regardless of sector.	Technology (47)	3.98 (0.94)	2–5	.672	10.21	< .001	Technology, E-commerce, and Other > Healthcare and Agriculture; Education > Agriculture
	Healthcare (44)	3.18 (0.84)	1–5				
	Education (39)	3.74 (0.82)	2–5				
	Agriculture (51)	3.00 (0.82)	2–5				
	E-commerce (57)	3.82 (0.78)	2–5				
	Other (29)	3.83 (1.00)	2–5				
	Total (267)	3.58 (0.93)	1–5				
The long application process discourages startups from applying for government benefits.	Technology (47)	3.85 (0.93)	2–5	.380	12.08	< .001	Education and E-commerce > Healthcare and Agriculture; Technology > Healthcare and Agriculture
	Healthcare (44)	3.00 (0.94)	1–5				
	Education (39)	4.13 (0.80)	2–5				
	Agriculture (51)	3.18 (0.99)	1–5				
	E-commerce (57)	4.07 (0.82)	2–5				
	Other (29)	3.66 (1.04)	1–5				
	Total (267)	3.65 (1.01)	1–5				

Table1. ANOVA Test

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$6) is thus Rejected and ($H_1$6) Alternate Hypothesis Challenges in Government Policies does not vary across industries is Accepted This means that, indeed, issues caused by the government policies can significantly differ among different industries and the example of technology startups can be illustrated as having fewer hurdles than agricultural and healthcare ones.

($H_0$2): Challenges in Government Policies do not impact economic development

By testing the mentioned hypotheses, we will be able to see whether government-related issues play a meaningful role in determining economic outcomes or not. Multiple Regression test was conducted on economic development (Dependent variable) and Challenges in Government Policies (independent variable)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	Regression	2.656	5	.531	1.168	.148[a]	.022	.003	.67447	.325[b]
	Residual	118.733	261	.455						
	Total	121.389	266							

Table 2.1 ANOVA and Model Summary

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.970	.253		11.741	.000
	The bureaucratic process for availing startup benefits is smooth and hassle-free.	.036	.041	.059	.884	.378
	Government policies are flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of startups.	.011	.040	.018	.276	.782
	Corruption and red tape hinder the effective implementation of startup policies.	.021	.041	.034	.525	.600
	Government schemes are equally accessible to all types of startups, regardless of sector.	.069	.046	.095	1.492	.137
	The long application process discourages many startups from applying for government benefits.	.018	.043	.027	.421	.674

Table 2.2 Coefficients

The null hypothesis (H08) indicates that the challenges they encounter towards the current government policies are not related to what the entrepreneurs expect out of the future policies thus**. Null hypothesis (H08) was Accepted.**

($H_0$3): Challenges in Government Policies and Future Policy Expectation are not correlated

Pearson correlation was conducted between Challenges in Government Policies and Future Policy Expectation.

		The government should increase funding opportunities for early-stage startups.	There should be more industry-academia collaboration to support startup innovation.	More focus should be given to supporting rural and women entrepreneurs.	Government policies should prioritize sustainability and green startups.	Simplifying tax regulations and reducing compliance burdens will help startup growth.
The bureaucratic process for availing startup benefits is not smooth and hassle-free.	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.198**	.187**	.164**	.257**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.002	.007	.000
Government policies are not flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of startups.	Pearson Correlation	.161**	.186**	.177**	.198**	.190**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.002	.004	.001	.002
Corruption and red tape hinder the effective implementation of startup policies.	Pearson Correlation	.181**	.258**	.221**	.193**	.226**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.000	.002	.000
Government schemes are not equally accessible to all types of startups, regardless of sector.	Pearson Correlation	.158**	.156*	.143*	.117	.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.011	.019	.056	.066
The long application process discourages many startups from applying for government benefits.	Pearson Correlation	.168**	.131*	.172**	.189**	.145*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.033	.005	.002	.018

Table 3 Perason Correlation table

The null hypothesis (H08) indicates that the challenges they encounter towards the current government policies are not related to what the entrepreneurs expect out of the future policies thus, **null hypothesis (H08) was rejected.**

Results

H01: Challenges in Government Policies Do Not Vary Across Industries

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine sector-wise differences in perceptions of challenges in government policies. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met for all items ($p > .05$). The ANOVA results showed statistically significant differences across industries for all five statements: bureaucratic process, $F = 15.76$, $p < .001$; policy flexibility, $F = 12.91$, $p < .001$; corruption and red tape, $F = 12.43$, $p < .001$; accessibility of schemes, $F = 10.21$, $p < .001$; and application process, $F = 12.08$, $p < .001$. Post hoc (Tukey/Brown–Forsythe) comparisons indicated that Technology and E-commerce sectors reported significantly fewer challenges than Healthcare and Agriculture sectors. Therefore, H01 was rejected, indicating that challenges in government policies significantly vary across industries.

H02: Challenges in Government Policies Do Not Impact Economic Development

Multiple regression analysis was used to test whether challenges in government policies predicted economic development. The overall regression model was not statistically significant, $F(5, 261) = 1.17$, $p = .325$, explaining only 2.2% of the variance ($R = .148$, $R^2 = .022$, Adjusted $R^2 = .003$). None of the policy challenge dimensions significantly predicted economic development (all $p > .05$). Accordingly, H02 was accepted, indicating that challenges in government policies did not have a statistically significant impact on economic development in the sample.

H03: Challenges in Government Policies and Future Policy Expectations Are Not Correlated

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between challenges in government policies and future policy expectations. The results showed significant positive correlations between most dimensions of government policy challenges and expectations for future policy improvements. Correlation coefficients ranged from $r = .113$ to $r = .258$, with the majority being statistically significant at $p < .05$ and $p < .01$. Stronger challenges relating to bureaucratic processes, policy inflexibility, and corruption were associated with stronger expectations for increased funding, industry–academia collaboration, rural and women entrepreneurship support, sustainability-focused policies, and simplified tax regulations. Therefore, H03 was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between challenges in government policies and future policy expectations.

Discussion

This study explored the relationships between challenges in government policies, their impact on economic development, and expectations for future policy improvements across industries.

Challenges in Government Policies Across Industries

The rejection of H01 reveals significant variation across sectors. Technology and E-commerce face fewer obstacles than Healthcare and Agriculture, suggesting traditional sectors are more affected by regulatory complexity, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited access, which hinder growth (Abu-Rmeileh & Iriqat, 2024; Manalo et al., 2025). Sector-specific compliance requirements, subsidy complexities, and market access limitations exacerbate challenges in Healthcare and Agriculture (Farīd et al., 2023; Manalo et al., 2025). In contrast, Technology and E-commerce benefit from greater flexibility and policy agility (Chatzinikolaou & Vlados, 2024). Informal sectors, particularly in Agriculture, continue to struggle with finance and service access, highlighting the need for inclusive, tailored policymaking (Schaer & Kuruppu, 2018; Bandara et al., 2024).

Impact on Economic Development

The acceptance of H02 indicates no statistically significant direct effect of policy challenges on economic development, suggesting that macroeconomic conditions, systemic resilience, or longer-term channels may mediate impacts (Agbenyegah, 2019; Onileowo & Muharam, 2023; Olaore et al., 2021). Sample characteristics and short observation periods may also limit detection (Munir, 2025).

Correlation With Future Policy Expectations

Significant positive correlations reveal that awareness of policy obstacles drives demand for reform (Nomafu et al., 2023; Yaya et al., 2023). Yet, reforms may fail when policies exist only de jure, reinforcing compliance burdens and highlighting the importance of evidence-based, effectively implemented interventions (Hallward-Driemeier et al., 2010; Adegboyegun et al., 2025; Batra et al., 2003).

Theoretical Implications

The findings extend governance and development theory by showing that government policy challenges affect industries differently rather than uniformly across the economy. Sector-specific variations support institutional theory and regulatory heterogeneity perspectives, highlighting that firms' experiences of bureaucratic burdens are shaped by distinct institutional environments. The absence of a direct link between policy challenges and economic development challenges conventional linear governance–growth models, suggesting the need for frameworks that incorporate mediating factors such as institutional capacity, firm resilience, and informal-sector dynamics. Additionally, the positive association between perceived challenges and future policy expectations reinforces feedback-loop models of adaptive governance.

Practical Implications

These results emphasize the importance of sector-specific policy designs, particularly for highly regulated sectors like healthcare and agriculture. Policymakers should streamline bureaucratic processes, enhance transparency, and strengthen institutional capacity to reduce operational barriers. Integrating policy reforms with broader development strategies—including infrastructure, human capital, and access to finance—can enhance effectiveness. The link between current challenges and future expectations also underscores the value of participatory policymaking, incorporating entrepreneurs' experiences into reform processes.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations include the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and potential sample biases, which restrict causal inference and generalizability. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, include informal-sector firms, and examine mediating variables such as institutional quality and innovation capacity to better understand the long-term impact of policy challenges.

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