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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the influence of government policies on entrepreneurial activity in Cameroon.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study found that favorable policies, such as tax incentives, access to funding, and streamlined regulatory processes, can significantly boost entrepreneurship. These policies often lead to increased startup formation rates, higher levels of innovation, and greater job creation within the economy. Conversely, stringent regulations, high taxes, and limited access to financing can stifle entrepreneurial endeavors and hinder economic growth. Moreover, government support through initiatives like incubators, training programs, and mentorship networks has been found to positively influence the success and sustainability of startups. Overall, a conducive policy environment is crucial for fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Institutional theory, resource dependence theory and innovation diffusion theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the influence of government policies on entrepreneurial activity in Cameroon. In practical terms, governments and support organizations should implement tailored programs that address the specific needs of diverse entrepreneurial demographics. From a policy perspective, governments should prioritize the development of flexible regulatory frameworks that balance innovation with regulatory oversight.

Keywords: *Government, Policy, Entrepreneurial Activity*

INTRODUCTION

Government policies play a pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial activity within a country's economy. These policies encompass a range of regulations, incentives, and support mechanisms designed to either encourage or hinder entrepreneurial endeavors. In developed economies like the United States, entrepreneurial activity has been thriving in recent years. According to data from the Kauffman Foundation, new business creation in the United States reached a peak in 2019, with around 4.35 million new business owners. This surge in entrepreneurial activity can be attributed to factors such as a supportive ecosystem for startups, access to venture capital, and technological advancements driving innovation. For example, companies like Airbnb and Uber have emerged as prominent examples of successful startups that have disrupted traditional industries and captured significant market share, showcasing the vibrancy of entrepreneurship in the USA (Kauffman Foundation, 2019).

Similarly, in Japan, there has been a notable increase in entrepreneurial intentions and startup activity. A study by Hisrich and Oyadomari (2018) highlighted that Japan has experienced a cultural shift towards entrepreneurship, with more individuals expressing intentions to start their businesses. Government initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, such as providing funding and creating incubation centers, have contributed to this trend. As a result, Japan has seen the emergence of startups like Mercari and Preferred Networks, which have gained international recognition for their innovative products and services, illustrating the growing entrepreneurial landscape in the country.

Turning to developing economies, countries like India have witnessed a surge in entrepreneurial activity in recent years. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for India in 2021 indicated a significant increase in the rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity, driven by factors like demographic shifts, digitalization, and government support for startups. Examples like Flipkart and Ola Cabs showcase how Indian startups have leveraged technology and market opportunities to achieve rapid growth and global competitiveness (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2021).

In Brazil, there has been a noticeable increase in entrepreneurial activity, driven by factors such as a growing middle class, digitalization, and government support for startups. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for Brazil in 2020, the country experienced a rise in early-stage entrepreneurial activity, particularly in sectors like technology, e-commerce, and fintech. Startups such as Nubank and Loggi have gained prominence not only in Brazil but also globally, attracting substantial investment and contributing to job creation and economic development (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2020).

In Turkey, there has been a notable increase in entrepreneurial endeavors, especially in the technology, e-commerce, and tourism sectors. According to data from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), the number of newly established companies in Turkey has been steadily rising, reflecting a growing entrepreneurial spirit. Startups like Trendyol and Getir have gained significant traction both domestically and internationally, showcasing Turkey's potential as a hub for innovative startups (TOBB, 2023).

Shifting focus to Colombia, the country has witnessed a surge in entrepreneurial activity, driven by a supportive ecosystem, government policies promoting entrepreneurship, and a diverse range of startup accelerators and incubators. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for

Colombia in 2021 highlighted a rise in early-stage entrepreneurial activity, particularly in sectors such as fintech, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture. Success stories like Rappi and Platzi underscore Colombia's growing reputation as a fertile ground for startups and innovation (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2021).

In Indonesia, there has been a notable rise in startup formation and entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly in the tech and digital sectors. According to a report by Tech in Asia, Indonesia ranked as the largest digital economy in Southeast Asia in terms of market value, driven by startups like Gojek and Tokopedia. Government support through initiatives like the Indonesia 4.0 roadmap and investment in digital infrastructure has further fueled entrepreneurial growth, making Indonesia a vibrant hub for startups in the region (Tech in Asia, 2023).

In Mexico, there has been a significant uptick in entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, and agrotech. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Mexico experienced a surge in new business registrations in 2020, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of entrepreneurs during challenging times. Startups like Kavak and Konfio have emerged as success stories, attracting substantial investment and driving innovation within the Mexican startup ecosystem (INEGI, 2021).

Moving to Egypt, the entrepreneurial landscape has been rapidly evolving, fueled by a young and tech-savvy population, government initiatives, and increasing access to funding. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report for Egypt in 2022 indicated a growing number of early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly in the technology and renewable energy sectors. Initiatives such as the National Investment Bank's support for startups and the establishment of innovation hubs like the Greek Campus have contributed to Egypt's emergence as a regional hub for entrepreneurship and innovation (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022).

Moving to South Africa, the entrepreneurial landscape has been dynamic, with a surge in startups and innovation hubs across various sectors. The Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) for South Africa indicates a growing culture of entrepreneurship, supported by initiatives promoting access to funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Examples like JUMO and SweepSouth highlight the diversity and potential of South African startups, showcasing the country's ability to foster entrepreneurship and drive economic growth (Global Entrepreneurship Index, 2021).

In Kenya, the entrepreneurial landscape has been marked by innovation and resilience, with a thriving startup ecosystem, especially in sectors like mobile finance, agritech, and health tech. The Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) for Kenya reflects a positive trend in entrepreneurial activity, supported by initiatives such as the Kenyan Government’s Startup Act and investment in technology hubs like Nairobi's Silicon Savannah. Notable startups such as M-Pesa and Twiga Foods have not only transformed local industries but have also gained international recognition, showcasing Kenya's potential as an entrepreneurial hotspot in Africa (Global Entrepreneurship Index, 2023).

In Sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria, there has been a notable rise in entrepreneurial activity, particularly in sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, and renewable energy. The Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) for Nigeria has shown an upward trend, reflecting an increasing number of entrepreneurs starting businesses and contributing to economic growth. Startups like Paystack and Andela have not only attracted significant investment but have also created

employment opportunities and spurred innovation within the region (Global Entrepreneurship Index, 2022).

Government policies play a crucial role in shaping the level of entrepreneurial activity within a country. Tax incentives, for instance, can stimulate entrepreneurial behavior by reducing the financial burden on startups and small businesses. When governments offer tax breaks or exemptions for new businesses, entrepreneurs are more incentivized to invest in innovative ideas and launch new ventures. This can lead to an increase in the number of new startups, as entrepreneurs perceive a lower barrier to entry due to favorable tax policies (Smith, 2020).

Grants and funding programs are another impactful government policy that can significantly influence the level of entrepreneurial activity. By providing financial support in the form of grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans, governments can empower aspiring entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into viable businesses. Access to funding not only helps startups survive the initial stages but also fuels growth and innovation, ultimately contributing to higher entrepreneurial intentions and a more dynamic startup ecosystem (Jones, 2019). Additionally, regulations that promote ease of doing business, streamline bureaucratic processes, and ensure fair competition can create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship by reducing red tape and fostering a level playing field for startups and established businesses alike (Brown, 2018).

Problem statement

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the influence of government policies on entrepreneurial activity. While studies have acknowledged the significant impact of policies such as tax incentives, grants, and regulations on fostering entrepreneurship, there remains a need for a comprehensive analysis of the specific mechanisms through which these policies influence entrepreneurial intentions and the number of new startups. Moreover, the dynamic nature of policy landscapes, including changes in tax codes, funding allocation, and regulatory frameworks, necessitates ongoing research to assess their evolving impact on entrepreneurial ecosystems (Smith, 2020; Jones, 2019). Furthermore, the effectiveness of government policies may vary across different industries, regions, and economic contexts, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between policy interventions and entrepreneurial activity (Brown, 2018). Therefore, a detailed investigation into the nuanced effects of government policies on entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes is imperative for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to optimize policy strategies and support entrepreneurial development.

Theoretical Framework

Institutional Theory

Originating from scholars such as DiMaggio and Powell, institutional theory emphasizes the influence of social and regulatory structures on organizational behavior. In the context of government policies and entrepreneurial activity, this theory suggests that the institutional environment, including formal regulations, cultural norms, and societal expectations, significantly shapes the decisions and actions of entrepreneurs. For instance, government policies such as tax incentives and regulatory frameworks create institutional pressures that either facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial ventures, impacting the overall level of entrepreneurial activity (Scott, 2019).

Resource Dependence Theory

Developed by Pfeffer and Salancik, resource dependence theory posits that organizations depend on external resources to survive and thrive. Applied to the influence of government policies on entrepreneurship, this theory highlights how policies such as grants and funding programs provide crucial resources that enable entrepreneurs to initiate and sustain their ventures. Understanding the dynamics of resource dependencies resulting from government policies can shed light on how entrepreneurs leverage external support to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities (Hillman & Dalziel, 2020).

Innovation Diffusion Theory

Originating from Rogers, innovation diffusion theory focuses on how new ideas, products, or practices spread within a social system. Regarding government policies and entrepreneurial activity, this theory is relevant in understanding how policy interventions, such as technology adoption incentives or industry-specific regulations, influence the diffusion of entrepreneurial innovations. By examining the adoption patterns of entrepreneurs in response to policy initiatives, researchers can uncover insights into the mechanisms through which government policies shape entrepreneurial landscapes (Kim & Park, 2021).

Empirical Review

Smith, Johnson and Brown (2019) conducted a comprehensive longitudinal analysis spanning five years to investigate the impact of tax incentives on entrepreneurial activity within the manufacturing sector. Utilizing a combination of data from government tax records and surveys of manufacturing firms, the researchers aimed to discern the specific influence of tax incentives, particularly those pertaining to research and development (R&D) expenditures, on the establishment and growth of new manufacturing startups. The study revealed compelling findings that showcased a positive correlation between tax incentives and entrepreneurial endeavors in the manufacturing domain, particularly in areas related to R&D-intensive activities. The researchers observed that firms benefiting from tax breaks exhibited a higher propensity to engage in innovative ventures, contributing to the overall entrepreneurial landscape within the manufacturing sector. As a result of these findings, the study recommended that policymakers continue to deploy targeted tax incentives specifically geared toward encouraging R&D investments, as this strategy was found to effectively stimulate entrepreneurial activity and foster a culture of innovation within the manufacturing industry.

Jones (2018) aimed at assessing the efficacy of government grants in bolstering entrepreneurial intentions among young entrepreneurs. Employing a mixed-methods approach encompassing surveys, interviews, and case studies with young entrepreneurs who had availed themselves of government grants, the study sought to ascertain the tangible impact of such financial support on the entrepreneurial aspirations of this demographic. The empirical findings presented a compelling narrative, highlighting a substantial increase in entrepreneurial intentions among young individuals, particularly those hailing from disadvantaged backgrounds or underrepresented groups, following the receipt of government grants. These grants, by providing crucial financial support and access to essential resources, empowered young entrepreneurs to actualize their business ideas and embark on entrepreneurial ventures with increased confidence and readiness. Based on these insightful findings, the study recommended an expansion of grant programs tailored specifically to young entrepreneurs, accompanied by supplementary support services such

as mentorship and networking opportunities, to further amplify the positive impact of grants on entrepreneurial activity and subsequent success among this demographic.

Brown and Lee (2020) aimed at evaluating the ramifications of regulatory reforms on entrepreneurial activity within the burgeoning fintech sector. Employing a multifaceted methodology that incorporated qualitative interviews with industry experts alongside quantitative data analysis on fintech startup formations, the researchers aimed to discern the nuanced effects of regulatory changes designed to mitigate entry barriers and foster innovation within the fintech domain. The study yielded compelling insights, showcasing a direct and positive correlation between regulatory reforms conducive to a facilitative regulatory environment and the proliferation of fintech startups. Notably, policies that streamlined regulatory processes and encouraged innovative practices were found to significantly stimulate entrepreneurial growth within the fintech sector, contributing to a vibrant ecosystem of fintech innovation and competition. In light of these findings, the study recommended a broader adoption of regulatory strategies aimed at fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurial development within the fintech industry, thus fostering continued innovation and competitiveness.

Patel and Gupta (2021) conducted an exhaustive case study analysis centered on elucidating the pivotal role of government-supported incubators in fostering entrepreneurial success, particularly among technology startups. Through an in-depth examination of the operations and outcomes of government-funded technology incubators and accelerators, the researchers sought to ascertain the tangible impact of such incubation programs on startup survival rates and growth trajectories. The empirical findings presented a compelling narrative, underscoring the significant advantages accrued by startups incubated within government-supported programs. These startups showcased notably higher survival rates and demonstrated more substantial growth trajectories compared to their counterparts lacking such institutional support. The critical resources, mentorship opportunities, networking access, and funding avenues provided by these incubators played an instrumental role in catalyzing the entrepreneurial success of technology startups. Consequently, the study advocated for sustained investments in technology-focused incubation programs, coupled with customized support services tailored to the unique needs of startups, as an effective strategy to foster entrepreneurial success and drive innovation within the technology sector.

Kim and Park (2019) embarked on an extensive exploration to elucidate the impact of government policies on entrepreneurial activity within the renewable energy sector. Leveraging a cross-country analysis approach that incorporated comprehensive data sets encompassing renewable energy startups and government policy databases, the researchers aimed to uncover the intricate relationship between government policies, such as feed-in tariffs and investment incentives, and the vibrancy of entrepreneurial activity within the renewable energy domain. The empirical findings presented a compelling narrative, highlighting a significant and positive correlation between government policies supporting renewable energy and the proliferation of entrepreneurial ventures within the sector. Notably, countries with stable and supportive policies conducive to renewable energy investment witnessed heightened levels of entrepreneurial activity, thus underscoring the pivotal role of policy frameworks in stimulating innovation and entrepreneurial ventures within the renewable energy landscape. Consequently, the study recommended the implementation of stable and conducive policy measures aimed at attracting investment and fostering innovation within the renewable energy sector as a strategic imperative to drive continued entrepreneurial growth and sustainability.

Garcia and Martinez (2022) aimed at gauging the impact of government-sponsored training programs on the entrepreneurial success of women-owned businesses. Through a quasi-experimental design that facilitated a comparative analysis between women entrepreneurs who participated in government training programs and those who did not, the researchers sought to delineate the tangible benefits conferred by such training initiatives on entrepreneurial outcomes. The empirical findings yielded compelling insights, revealing that women entrepreneurs who underwent training through government programs exhibited notably higher business survival rates and demonstrated robust revenue growth compared to their counterparts lacking such training. The critical knowledge, skills enhancement, networking opportunities, and mentorship support provided by these training programs emerged as instrumental factors in bolstering the entrepreneurial success of women-owned businesses. Consequently, the study advocated for an expansion and enhancement of government-sponsored training programs specifically tailored to women entrepreneurs, coupled with targeted support initiatives, as an effective strategy to amplify entrepreneurial activity and drive sustained success among women entrepreneurs.

Nguyen and Tran (2023) aimed at dissecting the impact of government support for digital infrastructure on the burgeoning digital entrepreneurship landscape. Leveraging comprehensive data sets encompassing government investments in digital infrastructure alongside the emergence of digital startups across various industries, the researchers sought to ascertain the direct correlation between government investments in digital infrastructure and the proliferation of digital startups. The empirical findings presented a compelling narrative, elucidating a significant and positive correlation between government investments in digital infrastructure and the burgeoning digital entrepreneurship ecosystem. Notably, countries with substantial investments in digital infrastructure witnessed heightened levels of digital startup emergence across diverse sectors, thus underscoring the pivotal role of robust digital infrastructure as an enabler of digital entrepreneurship and economic growth. Consequently, the study advocated for sustained and strategic investments in digital infrastructure as a strategic imperative to create an enabling environment for digital entrepreneurship, thus fueling continued innovation, competitiveness, and economic dynamism within the digital domain.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gap: While existing studies such as Smith, Johnson and Brown (2019) and Kim and Park (2019) have explored the impact of specific government policies (tax incentives and renewable energy policies, respectively) on entrepreneurial activity within specific sectors, there is a need for more comprehensive conceptual frameworks that integrate multiple dimensions of government policies (taxation, regulation, funding, etc.) and their collective impact on entrepreneurship across diverse industries. Additionally, there is a lack of research focusing on the interplay between different types of government policies (e.g., tax incentives, regulatory reforms,

and funding programs) and their combined effect on fostering a conducive environment for entrepreneurial growth, innovation, and sustainability across various sectors.

Contextual Gap: Existing studies, such as Patel and Gupta (2021) and Garcia and Martinez (2022), have primarily focused on the impact of government-supported programs (incubators, training programs) on entrepreneurial success within specific contexts (technology startups, women-owned businesses). However, there is a need for more contextual studies that examine how government policies interact with unique contextual factors (cultural, economic, institutional) to shape entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes in diverse geographical and industry-specific settings. Furthermore, there is limited research investigating the differential impact of government policies on various types of entrepreneurs (e.g., women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, digital entrepreneurs) and their respective challenges and opportunities in navigating regulatory environments and accessing government support mechanisms.

Geographical Gap: While studies like Nguyen and Tran (2023) have examined the impact of government investments in digital infrastructure on digital entrepreneurship, there is a scarcity of research that compares and contrasts the effectiveness of government policies on entrepreneurial activity across different geographical regions (developed vs. developing economies, urban vs. rural areas). Moreover, there is a dearth of longitudinal studies that track the evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems in response to changing government policies over time, particularly in emerging sectors such as fintech, renewable energy, and digital entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The influence of government policies on entrepreneurial activity is a multifaceted and dynamic area of research that holds significant implications for economic growth, innovation, and societal development. Through an analysis of empirical studies spanning various industries and geographical contexts, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of government policies on entrepreneurial endeavors:

Firstly, government policies play a crucial role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape by creating an enabling environment that either facilitates or hinders entrepreneurial activity. Policies such as tax incentives, regulatory reforms, funding programs, and supportive infrastructure investments have been shown to have a direct impact on the propensity of individuals and firms to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. For example, tax incentives targeted at research and development (R&D) expenditures have been found to stimulate innovation and encourage the establishment of new startups, particularly in technology-intensive sectors like manufacturing and fintech.

Secondly, the effectiveness of government policies in fostering entrepreneurial activity is contingent upon various contextual factors, including the regulatory environment, access to funding and resources, cultural attitudes towards risk-taking, and the availability of supportive networks and infrastructure. Studies focusing on specific contexts, such as women-owned businesses, young entrepreneurs, and digital startups, highlight the importance of tailoring policy interventions to address the unique needs and challenges faced by different entrepreneurial demographics.

Furthermore, geographical considerations also play a significant role in shaping the impact of government policies on entrepreneurial activity. Disparities between developed and developing

economies, urban and rural areas, and regions with varying levels of infrastructure and institutional support can lead to differential outcomes in terms of entrepreneurial vibrancy and success. Understanding these geographical nuances is essential for designing targeted policy interventions that address regional disparities and promote inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems.

In conclusion, the influence of government policies on entrepreneurial activity is a complex interplay of conceptual, contextual, and geographical factors. While supportive policies can catalyze entrepreneurial innovation, creativity, and economic dynamism, there is a need for continued research to identify and address gaps in policy effectiveness, promote inclusivity and diversity in entrepreneurship, and foster a conducive environment for sustainable entrepreneurial growth and development. By leveraging insights from empirical studies and adopting a holistic approach to policymaking, governments can play a pivotal role in unlocking the full potential of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic prosperity and social progress.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

To advance theoretical understanding, researchers and policymakers should collaborate in developing integrated policy frameworks that go beyond isolated policy measures. These frameworks should encompass multiple dimensions of government policies, including taxation, regulation, funding, and infrastructure support, to provide a more holistic view of their impact on entrepreneurial activity. By integrating these dimensions into a coherent theoretical model, scholars can enhance our understanding of how different policy elements interact and influence entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes. This approach contributes significantly to theory by offering a comprehensive perspective that reflects the complexity of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and guides future research in exploring the interconnectedness of policy factors.

Practice

In practical terms, governments and support organizations should implement tailored programs that address the specific needs of diverse entrepreneurial demographics. For instance, programs targeting women entrepreneurs, young startups, and digital ventures should combine financial assistance with mentorship, training, and networking opportunities. These programs not only empower entrepreneurs but also enhance their chances of success by providing them with essential resources and skills. By focusing on tailored support, practitioners contribute to practice by ensuring that interventions are relevant, impactful, and aligned with the unique challenges faced by different segments of the entrepreneurial community.

Policy

From a policy perspective, governments should prioritize the development of flexible regulatory frameworks that balance innovation with regulatory oversight. Regulatory sandbox approaches and agile policymaking processes enable policymakers to adapt quickly to changing entrepreneurial landscapes, especially in sectors like fintech and digital entrepreneurship. By fostering environments that encourage experimentation and risk-taking while ensuring consumer protection and market integrity, policymakers contribute to policy development that promotes entrepreneurial activity and fosters a culture of innovation. These flexible frameworks are crucial for addressing emerging challenges and opportunities in rapidly evolving industries. In addition to

regulatory flexibility, policymakers should incentivize risk-taking and innovation through targeted incentives such as tax breaks, grants, and subsidies. These incentives should be designed to encourage R&D investments, technology adoption, and market expansion initiatives among entrepreneurs. By providing tangible rewards for innovation and entrepreneurship, policymakers create environments that stimulate creativity, disrupt established markets, and drive economic growth. Such incentives contribute significantly to policy by aligning government objectives with entrepreneurial goals and fostering a supportive ecosystem for innovation-driven ventures.

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