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PERSPECTIVE

Navigating the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

A Diagnostic Framework for Business Research in The Gambia

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ABSTRACT

Business research in The Gambia is hindered by a fragmented understanding of its unique entrepreneurial ecosystem, which blends formal and extensive informal sectors, familial financial networks, and distinct socio-cultural norms. This perspective piece aims to develop and propose a novel diagnostic framework to systematically analyse the nation's entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby guiding more effective and contextually relevant business research. The framework is synthesised from a critical review of existing ecosystem models and tailored through an analysis of the specific institutional, cultural, and economic contours characteristic of the Gambian context. A central theme is the critical, yet under-researched, role of informal 'Susu' savings circles and family-based capital, which are estimated to fund a significant proportion of initial venture capital, operating parallel to nascent formal financial institutions. The proposed diagnostic framework offers a structured lens to dissect the complex interdependencies within the ecosystem, moving beyond generic models that fail to capture local realities. Researchers should apply the framework to map ecosystem actors and capital flows systematically, and policymakers should use it to identify and bolster underdeveloped support pillars, particularly in rural areas. entrepreneurial ecosystem, diagnostic framework, informal finance, business research, The Gambia This paper provides a novel, context-specific diagnostic framework for ecosystem analysis, offering a concrete tool to generate more nuanced and actionable research insights for The Gambia.

Keywords: *entrepreneurial ecosystem, informal economy, Sub-Saharan Africa, diagnostic framework, business research, The Gambia, mixed-methods research*

Article Highlights

- Proposes a novel diagnostic framework tailored to The Gambia's unique entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Highlights the critical, under-researched role of informal 'Susu' savings circles and family-based capital.
- Aims to guide more effective and contextually relevant business research in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Provides a structured tool to map ecosystem actors, capital flows, and institutional interdependencies.

Framework Application

Researchers should apply the framework to systematically map ecosystem actors and capital flows. Policymakers can use it to identify and bolster underdeveloped support pillars, particularly in rural areas.

This perspective piece synthesizes a context-specific tool for analysing blended formal and informal economies.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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