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**COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Institutional Hurdles**

*A Comparative Analysis of Business Research in Senegal (2000–2026)*

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**ABSTRACT**

The development of robust entrepreneurial ecosystems in West Africa is critical for economic transformation, yet they are often constrained by institutional frameworks. Existing literature frequently analyses these ecosystems in isolation, lacking comparative depth on how institutional hurdles specifically shape business research, a key component of ecosystem vitality. This study aims to comparatively analyse the evolution of business research within Senegal's entrepreneurial ecosystem, identifying key institutional hurdles and assessing their impact on research quality and relevance over a defined period. It seeks to contrast the stated objectives of national policy with the operational realities faced by research institutions. A comparative case study design was employed, analysing policy documents, institutional reports, and a corpus of published business research outputs. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring institutional barriers, while a structured framework compared policy intentions against documented research practices and outcomes. A significant misalignment was found between national policy goals and ground-level research capacity. A predominant theme was that excessive bureaucratic procedures consume over 40% of project lead time, severely limiting fieldwork and data collection. Comparative analysis revealed that research focusing on informal sectors is systematically underfunded compared to formal sector studies. Institutional hurdles, particularly bureaucratic inefficiency and funding misallocation, significantly distort the focus and diminish the practical impact of business research in Senegal, thereby weakening a foundational pillar of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Policymakers should implement streamlined grant administration processes and establish a dedicated research fund targeting the informal economy. Universities must strengthen partnerships with local enterprises to co-create research agendas. entrepreneurial ecosystems, institutional theory, business research, Senegal, comparative case study, research policy This paper provides a novel comparative framework linking macro-level institutional analysis with micro-level research practices, introducing a validated metric for assessing policy-research alignment in developing economies.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial ecosystems, Institutional voids, Francophone Africa, Comparative business research, Business environment, West Africa, Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)*

**Article Highlights**

- Identifies a critical misalignment between national research

**Policy Implication**

The study recommends streamlined grant administration and

<p>policy goals and ground-level institutional capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reveals systematic underfunding of research focused on the informal sector compared to formal sector studies.</li><li>• Introduces a novel framework for assessing policy-research alignment in developing economies.</li></ul>	<p>a dedicated research fund targeting the informal economy to correct systemic distortions.</p> <p><i>This analysis bridges macro-institutional theory with micro-level research practices.</i></p>
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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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