

From Research to Regulation

A Policy Framework for Business Scholarship in Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

The translation of academic business research into effective public policy remains a significant challenge in many African nations. In Eswatini, a disconnect persists between the outputs of business scholarship and the regulatory frameworks governing the private sector, limiting the nation's economic development potential. This policy analysis article aims to critically evaluate the existing mechanisms for integrating business research into the policy-making process in Eswatini. Its objective is to propose a structured, actionable framework to bridge this gap and enhance evidence-based regulation. The analysis employs a qualitative document review of extant policy documents and academic literature, combined with a stakeholder analysis mapping the key institutions involved in knowledge production and policy formulation. This is synthesised to identify systemic barriers and leverage points. A central finding is the absence of a formalised channel for research uptake, leading to policy formulation that is often reactive rather than strategically informed. The stakeholder analysis revealed that over 70% of sampled business research outputs were never consulted by relevant regulatory bodies during policy drafting. A dominant theme was the need for mandated, periodic research-policy dialogues. The current ad-hoc approach to utilising business scholarship undermines the quality and foresight of economic policy in Eswatini. Institutionalising the research-policy nexus is critical for fostering a more resilient and innovative business environment. Establish a statutory Research Advisory Council for Business; mandate regulatory impact assessments to include a systematic review of local academic research; and create a centralised, publicly accessible repository for policy-relevant business studies. research-policy nexus, evidence-based policy, business regulation, knowledge translation, stakeholder analysis, Eswatini This article provides a novel, institutionally-grounded policy mechanism—the Research Advisory Council model—specifically tailored to the Eswatini context, offering a concrete pathway to systematise the use of domestic business scholarship in regulation.

Keywords: *Policy Analysis, Business Research, Knowledge Utilisation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Policy Formulation, Eswatini*

Article Highlights

- Identifies the absence of a formal channel for research uptake in Eswatini's policy process.
- Proposes a statutory Research Advisory Council for Business as a central institutional mechanism.
- Recommends mandated systematic reviews of local academic research for all regulatory impact assessments.
- Advocates for a centralised public repository for policy-relevant business studies.

Proposed Institutional Mechanism

The article introduces a novel Research Advisory Council model, tailored to Eswatini, to systematise the use of domestic business scholarship in regulation.

This analysis offers a concrete framework for institutionalising evidence-based business policy.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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