Entrepreneurship Development: A Study of Government Initiatives in Rupandehi

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ARTICLE INFO

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction. The Government of Nepal has introduced policies, financial schemes, training programs, infrastructure development, and market promotion to support it. This study evaluates the status and effectiveness of these initiatives in fostering entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi district. Guided by a positivist philosophy with a deductive approach, a cross-sectional time frame, and a descriptive research design, the study assessed 17,823 registered cottage and small entrepreneurs, from which 410 valid responses were obtained through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring five dimensions of government support, and reliability was confirmed through a pilot test. Analysis employed descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, and PLS-SEM. Results reveal that policies, legal frameworks, and business infrastructure have significant positive effects on entrepreneurship development. Contrary to this, financial support, education and skill development, and market access and promotional programs show weaker and insignificant influence. These findings highlight that clarity in regulatory provisions and infrastructure facilities remains an effective driver of entrepreneurship. At the same time other initiatives require substantial improvement in design and implementation. Strengthening financial access, ensuring continuity and relevance of training programs, and expanding promotional efforts are necessary to enhance inclusiveness and sustainability of entrepreneurship growth in Rupandehi. The study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of government initiatives in a local context. Further, the study offers insights for policymakers to refine existing programs and design the initiatives that better align with the needs of entrepreneurs in Rupandehi, Nepal.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, government initiatives, Rupandehi, policies, infrastructure, financial support, entrepreneurship education

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is very important for the growth of the economy, the creation of jobs, and bringing new ideas to the market. Many countries depend on entrepreneurs to build new businesses that improve the living standards of the people and boost economic activity (GEM, 2022). Around the world, entrepreneurship is recognized as a key driver for industrial growth, productivity, and poverty reduction (World Economic Forum, 2025). However, different countries have different levels of entrepreneurship success, which depends on many factors. Developed countries usually have strong institutions, good infrastructure, and easy access to finance, which makes entrepreneurs easier to start and grow businesses (Apostolov, 2017). However, in many developing countries, especially in South Asia, entrepreneurs face many problems like weak governance, poor infrastructure, limited finance, and a lack of skills (Chowdhury, 2025).

South Asian countries like Nepal have huge potential for entrepreneurship to solve economic and social problems like unemployment and poverty (Nxazonke & Wyk, 2019). But the chances for entrepreneurs to succeed are limited because many people still have poor access to finance, education, business support, and markets (Flaminiano & Francisco, 2021; Khan, 2022; Ahmed & Ahmed, 2021). These barriers make entrepreneurship risky and discourage many talented people from starting businesses (Rahman, 2024). Thus, in Nepal, it is needed to carefully understand what supports and constraints

shape entrepreneurship (Bhatta & Baijal, 2024).

Nepal is a country with a rural population where many people depend on farming (Chaudhary, 2018). The Government of Nepal, with UNDP, launched the Micro-Enterprise Development Program, later institutionalized as MEDPA, to support poor and marginalized groups, and also created the Youth and Small Entrepreneur Self-Employment Fund to provide loans for unemployed youth (UNDP, 2018; Khabarhub English, 2025). However, many entrepreneurs still face problems such as difficulties in getting loans, lack of proper skills, bad roads and electricity, and weak market connections (Panthi & Chalise, 2022; Bhandari et al., 2024). Further, law enforcement and government support systems are sometimes slow and complicated, creating more challenges (Rahman, 2024).

This research studies five constructs, i.e., policies and legal framework, financial support, entrepreneurship education and skill development, business infrastructure, and market access and promotional support, which affect entrepreneurship in Rupandehi. By studying these five factors, the study aims to find the current status of government initiatives and how the government initiative helps to develop entrepreneurship in Rupandehi.

Most research focuses on entrepreneurship at the national or global level Welter (2011) and Chowdhury, (2025) however, local surroundings like Rupandehi have unique challenges. So, this study fills

the gap by looking closely at how these five factors work in this district. There are not many detailed studies in Nepal that combine education, finance, infrastructure, markets, and policies to understand entrepreneurship well (Thapa & Chowdhary, 2022; Kharal & Rana, 2023). This makes the study important for policymakers and practitioners who want to make programs better and support small businesses in a way that fits local needs (Chaudhary, 2018). This study explores how education and skills, financial help, infrastructure, market opportunities, and supportive laws work together to help entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi, Nepal. Understanding this can help design better interventions to empower entrepreneurs and build a stronger local economy (World Economic Forum, 2025). This approach also provides lessons for other similar developing regions with resource constraints and governance challenges (Apostolov, 2017).

Literature Review

To understand how government support affects entrepreneurship in Rupandehi, this study uses four related theories, showing how rules, resources, ecosystems, and policies help entrepreneurship development. Institutional Theory North (1990) and Scott (2001) highlight that entrepreneurship is shaped by formal rules, policies, and informal social norms. These institutions can enable or constrain entrepreneurial activity depending on the clarity, effectiveness, and enforcement of governance. In the context of Rupandehi, government initiatives such as policy frameworks, legal reforms, and regulatory measures act as institutional mechanisms that influence the ease of starting and operating businesses.

Building on this, the Resource-Based View (RBV) Barney (1991) focuses on the resources that entrepreneurs need for entrepreneurship development. According to RBV, firms gain a competitive advantage through access to valuable and rare resources, including finance, skills, infrastructure, and networks. Government programs in Rupandehi, such as the Youth Self-Employment Fund and skill development initiatives, provide essential resources that enhance the capabilities of local entrepreneurs. RBV thus matches Institutional Theory by emphasizing the tangible and intangible inputs that enable entrepreneurial success.

Next, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory Isenberg (2010) and Stam (2015) focus on multiple elements such as policy, finance, education, infrastructure, culture, and markets, which collectively influence entrepreneurship. This theory provides a holistic view of entrepreneurship development, showing that isolated interventions may be insufficient unless it is integrated with other elements of the ecosystem. In Rupandehi, for instance, government-led infrastructure development, training programs, and market access initiatives must interact synergistically to create a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Finally, Public Policy and Entrepreneurship Development Theory Kreft and Sobel (2007) and Lerner (2009) emphasize the role of government in shaping entrepreneurial activity such as

subsidies, training, incubation, and simplified regulatory processes. Effective policies reduce entry barriers, lower risks, and encourage innovation. In Rupandehi, this theory provides the basis for evaluating whether government initiatives are well-designed and effectively implemented to promote entrepreneurial development.

Entrepreneurship has been recognized as a driving force for economic development and structural transformation. Rangaswamy et al. (2024) and Chung et al. (2023) considered entrepreneurs as innovators who create new products, develop new markets, and establish firms that contribute to growth and industrial change. Legal and social rules that shape human behavior are vital for entrepreneurship development because they can either encourage or restrict entrepreneurial activities (Singh & Kumar, 2023). Studies show that strong legal support encourages entrepreneurship by clarifying property rights, reducing corruption, and raising productive business activities (Chambers & Munemo, 2017; Abegaz et al., 2023).

Among the many determinants of entrepreneurship, the policy and legal framework provide the foundation for entrepreneurial activity. In a recent study, Onileowo (2024) observed that clear and supportive regulations encourage firms' creativity, while Sautet (2020) stressed that supportive institutional rules reduce uncertainty. In Nepal, the Government of Nepal has introduced policies such as the Industrial Enterprises Act and Startup Loan Policy, but Rahman (2024) identified enforcement gaps

and bureaucratic inefficiencies as obstacles. Likewise, Mishra (2024) argued that a supportive regulatory environment is crucial for promoting entrepreneurship. Further, Wadhwani (2025) recommended that a transparent and efficient policy is required for fostering start-up ecosystems.

In addition, financial support represents another pillar of entrepreneurship development. Hwang et al. (2019) argue that financial access reduces entry barriers for entrepreneurs, while Robb and Robinson (2014) showed that access to external finance enables firms' expansion. Similarly, government-backed loan schemes play a crucial role in entrepreneurial growth (Gazaniol & Lê, 2021). In Nepal, programs such as the Youth Self-Employment Fund have provided capital support. However, Rahman (2024) argues that bureaucratic hurdles limit the inclusiveness of these initiatives, particularly for women and rural entrepreneurs.

Moreover, education and skill development remain critical. Fayolle and Gailly (2015) demonstrated that entrepreneurial training enhances opportunity recognition, business planning, and financial management skills. Similarly, Martin et al. (2013) found a positive effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial outcomes. In the Nepalese context, the Micro-Enterprise Development Program (MEDEP) successfully improved entrepreneurial capacity, though long-term mentoring was necessary for sustainability (Neupane & Luitel, 2023). Likewise, Yadav et al. (2022) emphasized that training programs require consistent follow-up to ensure

business survival.

Likewise, infrastructure development has also been closely linked to entrepreneurship growth. Kosimov (2023) explained that infrastructure reduces transaction costs and enhances firm competitiveness. Similarly, road connectivity ADB (2023) and energy supply Shrestha et al. (2023) directly influence entrepreneurial activity in Nepal. Further, Yang et al. (2023) emphasized that digital infrastructure and internet access are vital for sustaining enterprises. World Bank (2019) and Maharja (2019) described that infrastructure gaps remain one of the key constraints for entrepreneurship outside urban areas in Nepal.

Lastly, Market access and promotional support play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial success (Squalli et al., 2010). Lack of markets and low support significantly hamper entrepreneurial ventures Karki (2019); while promotional initiatives such as trade fairs and producer-buyer linkages promotes entrepreneurial growth (Sarmento & Simões, 2018; Measson & Campbell-Hunt, 2015). In Nepal, the One District One Product program has created new opportunities for rural producers The Himalayan Times (2023), but Gudeta and Tulu (2022) found that inadequate marketing knowledge constrained its full potential.

In summary, the literature identifies policies, finance, education, infrastructure, and markets as the primary determinants of entrepreneurship development. While Nepal has introduced several initiatives, challenges in enforcement, bureaucratic complexity, and the sustainability of support programs remain barriers to realizing the full potential of entrepreneurship.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows the link between government support and entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi. Government support is studied through five dimensions: policies and legal frameworks, financial support, entrepreneurship education and skill development, infrastructure, and market access with promotional support.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model for the Study
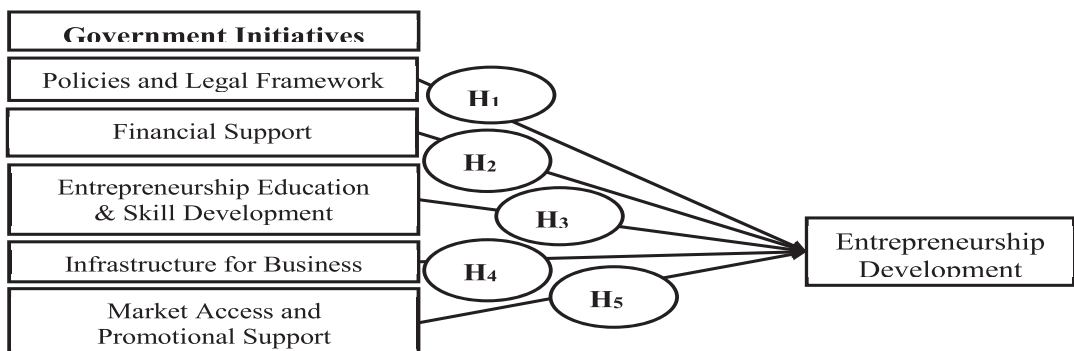
Based on empirical studies and the conceptual model, the following hypotheses are developed to examine the role of government support in entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi.

H$_1$: **The current government policies and legal frameworks are effectively contributing to the development of entrepreneurship in Rupandehi.**

Policies and legal rules shape how easy it is to start and run a business (PardodelVal et al., 2024; Sendra-Pons et al., 2022). Research shows that a strong legal framework encourages people to invest and reduce uncertainty (Efendic et al., 2014). Research confirms that supportive laws promote entrepreneurship in many countries (Bianchi et al., 2015; Yingwei & Gang, 2016). In Nepal, the government has made many policies, like the Industrial Enterprises Act and Startup Loan Policy, but weak execution remains a problem (Poudel et al., 2025; Bhatta & Nepal, 2022). Contrary to this, Onileowo (2024) notes that transparent policy, rules, and legal framework improve entrepreneurial growth.

H$_2$: **The financial support provided by the government is currently adequate and effective in fostering entrepreneurship in Rupandehi.**

Finance is one of the main requirements for an enterprise to grow (Hwang et al., 2019). Loans and microcredit give capital for investment and expansion (Thapa & Chowdhary, 2022). Studies show that financial support increases innovation and growth of business (Robb & Robinson, 2014; Lu et al., 2025). In Nepal, government programs like the Youth Self Employment Fund provide some help Gautam and Paudel (2020) but, many entrepreneurs face problems due to ambiguities in funding rules (Rahman, 2024). However, simple and fair financial access improves entrepreneurial development (Chalise et al., 2023).

H$_3$: **Government-run entrepreneurial education and skill development programs are effectively enhancing the entrepreneurial capabilities in Rupandehi.**

Education and training are important to improve the capacity of entrepreneurs (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Education and training build skills like planning, risk handling, and improve the confidence of entrepreneurs and their performance (Martin et al., 2013). In Nepal, projects like MEDEP improve the skills of many small entrepreneurs, but long-term support related to entrepreneurship education is still weak (Neupane & Luitel, 2023). However, continuous training helps new firms to survive and grow (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015).

H$_4$: **The infrastructure for business provided by the government is currently sufficient and effective in supporting entrepreneurship in Rupandehi.**

Infrastructure is the factor that reduces cost and makes the market more reachable for small firms (Kosimov, 2023). Road, electricity, and internet improve the competitiveness and survival of businesses. Studies show that weak infrastructure remains one of the major limits for entrepreneurs in Nepal (World Bank, 2019; Maharjan, 2019). Rural entrepreneurs are more

affected by poor facilities (Tuli & Sorot, 2024). However, good infrastructure increases the chance of business growth and development (Bado & Dunakhir, 2024).

H$_5$: Market access and promotional support provided by the government are currently effective in facilitating growth of entrepreneurship in Rupandehi.

Market access decides if a business can sell and survive in the long run (Squalli et al., 2010). Promotion like trade fairs and producer-buyer link helps to reach customers. Prabowo et al. (2024) argue that such support improves the competitiveness and growth of businesses. In Nepal, the One District One Product program gives access to rural producers, but weak branding and promotion are problems in product marketing (The Himalayan Times, 2023).

Methodology

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, rooted in realist ontology and objective epistemology, emphasizing empirical observation and quantitative analysis to ensure reliability and validity (Bryman, 2012). The study follows a cross-sectional study approach to examine the status of government initiatives on entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi. A deductive approach was employed based on established theories, such as Institutional, Resource-Based View, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, and Public Policy and Entrepreneurship Development Theory. A quantitative methodology with a descriptive research design was used to examine relationships between government initiatives

and entrepreneurship growth.

The study was conducted in Rupandehi district, Nepal. This area was selected because it has a diverse entrepreneurial environment, including cottage and small-scale industries. It is also one of the districts where the government has actively implemented programs to promote entrepreneurship. The study population included 17,823 registered cottage and small entrepreneurs in Rupandehi. They were chosen because they are directly affected by government initiatives and are the most suitable group to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. The required sample size was determined using the item-based approach (40 items × 10 = 400 respondents) (Nunnally, 1978; Gorsuch, 1983; Comrey & Lee, 2013). Data were initially collected from 428 respondents, and after excluding invalid responses, the final sample included 410 cottage and small entrepreneurs.

Respondents were selected through convenience sampling, it was considered appropriate due to practical constraints such as the wide geographical distribution of small entrepreneurs and limited access to a complete sampling frame (Saunders et al., 2015). While this approach allowed efficient data collection, it may introduce selection bias, which could limit the generalizability of the findings to the entire population of small entrepreneurs in Rupandehi.

Data were collected using a structured survey instrument comprising demographic items and government initiative items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. A pilot study with 30 respondents confirmed the reliability

of the survey tool (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70) (Hair et al., 2017, 2020). Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, and structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate measurement and structural models. Socio-ethical compliance was ensured through informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Despite the limitations of convenience sampling, this methodology provides strong and replicable insights into the role of government initiatives in fostering entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi, Nepal.

Results and Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, including the profile of respondents, descriptive statistics of government initiatives, measurement model assessment, and results of hypothesis testing. It discusses how various dimensions of government initiatives, such as policies, infrastructure, financial aid, education, and market access contribute to entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi.

Respondents' Profile

The demographic and business characteristics of entrepreneurs were collected to understand the composition of the study sample and its implications for entrepreneurship development. The profile includes gender, education, business sector, and size, which are key indicators in identifying participation trends and structural features in Rupandehi, Nepal.

Table 1

Respondents Profile

Category	Sub-Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	358	87.32
	Female	52	12.68
Total		410	100.00
Qualification	Bachelors	155	37.80
	Masters	99	24.15
	High School	94	22.93
	Literate	62	15.12
Total		410	100.00

Category	Sub-Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Sector	Manufacturing	123	30.00
	Restaurant	78	19.02
	Other	77	18.78
	Services	55	13.41
	Agriculture	47	11.46
	Trading	30	7.32
Total		410	100.00
Business Size	Small	300	73.17
	Cottage	110	26.83
Total		410	100.00

Table 1 shows the demographic and business characteristics of the respondents. Out of the total 410 entrepreneurs, a large majority are male (87.32%), while only 12.68% are female, indicating limited female participation in entrepreneurial activities. In terms of educational background, most respondents are relatively well educated, with 37.80% holding a bachelor's degree and 24.15% a master's degree. Additionally, 22.93% have completed high school and 15.12% are literate without higher education, reflecting that a substantial portion of entrepreneurs possess formal academic qualifications. The sectoral distribution highlights that 30% of entrepreneurs are engaged in manufacturing, followed by 19.02% in restaurants and 18.78% in other sectors. Meanwhile, smaller proportions are involved in services (13.41%), agriculture (11.46%), and trading (7.32%), suggesting that manufacturing and food-related businesses are the dominant areas of entrepreneurial activity. Regarding business size, the majority of respondents (73.17%) operate small businesses, while 26.83% run cottage-sized enterprises, indicating that small-scale enterprises form the backbone of entrepreneurial ventures in the study area. Overall, the data shows that entrepreneurship is predominantly male-driven, supported by relatively educated individuals, concentrated in manufacturing and restaurant sectors, and largely represented by small-scale enterprise.

Descriptive Statistics of Government Support Items

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the central tendency of items measuring government initiatives for entrepreneurship development. The analysis provides mean values of various indicators to assess how respondents perceive different government support (five different initiatives) as drivers of entrepreneurship in the study area.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Government Support Items

Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean	Item	Mean
PLF1	3.490	FS3	2.750	IB2	3.580	MAPS4	3.600
PLF2	3.450	FS4	2.810	IB3	3.530	MAPS5	3.540
PLF3	3.460	FS5	2.750	IB4	3.560	MAPS6	3.540
PLF4	3.500	EESD1	3.050	IB5	3.660	ED1	3.440
PLF5	3.440	EESD5	3.200	IB6	3.480	ED2	3.520
PLF6	3.440	EESD6	3.150	IB7	3.540	ED3	3.470
PLF7	3.460	EESD7	3.170	MAPS2	3.490	ED4	3.490
FS1	2.790	IB1	3.540	MAPS3	3.630	ED5	3.460

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the items measuring government initiatives for entrepreneurship development. The mean values range from 2.75 to 3.66, suggesting that respondents' perceptions lie between 'disagree' and 'moderately agree.' This indicates that respondents hold a slightly unfavorable view of government support for entrepreneurship. The lowest mean score of 2.75 reflects weaker agreement on some support, while the mean score of 3.66 suggests relatively better acceptance of other aspects of government initiatives.

Measurement Model

The structural relationships among government support dimensions and entrepreneurship development were tested through a measurement model. The model illustrates how different policy initiatives contribute to entrepreneurship, highlighting both significant and weaker influences. This provides an overview of the effectiveness of government Support for entrepreneurship.
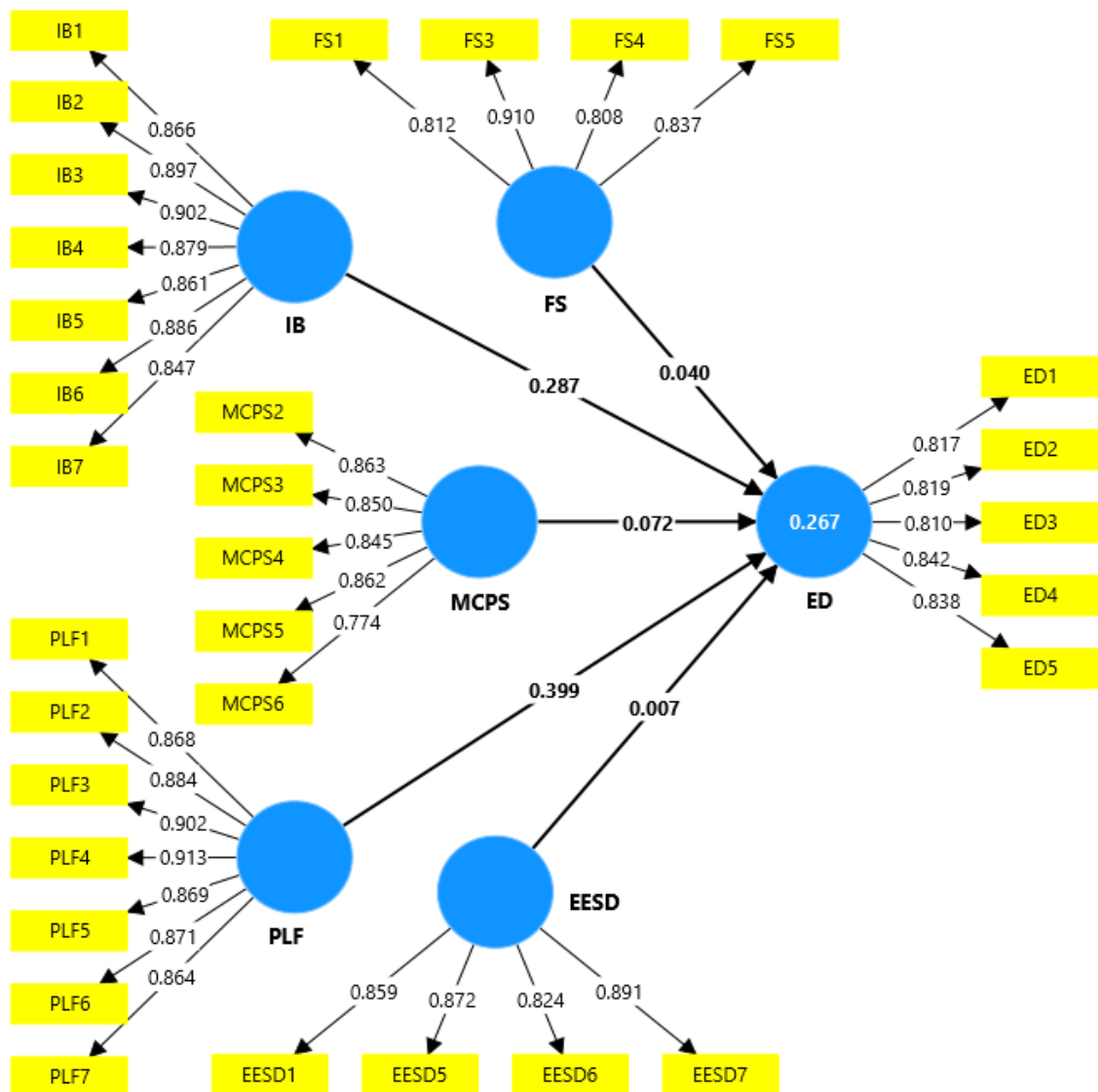
Figure 1

Measurement Model

Figure 1 explains 26.7% of the variance in entrepreneurship development, reflecting the perceived status of government support. Respondents rated Policies and Legal Framework (β = 0.399) and Infrastructure for Business (β = 0.287) as the most influential dimensions, suggesting that entrepreneurs view clear regulations, supportive policies, and infrastructure as relatively strong areas of government intervention. In contrast,

Financial Support ($\beta = 0.040$), Market Access and Promotional Support ($\beta = 0.072$), and Entrepreneurship Education and Skill Development ($\beta = 0.007$) were perceived as weakly contributing to entrepreneurship growth. These results indicate that while entrepreneurs acknowledge progress in policy and infrastructure, they perceive financial, market, and educational supports as weak or less effective in practice.

Collinearity Statistics (VIF) of Outer Model

To ensure the absence of multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were computed for each indicator of the outer model. This assessment is critical for confirming that the constructs are distinct and remain unbiased and reliable for further analysis.

Table 3

Collinearity Statistics (VIF) Outer Model List

Item	VIF	Item	VIF	Item	VIF	Item	VIF
PLF1	3.313	FS3	2.096	IB2	3.805	MAPS4	2.884
PLF2	3.453	FS4	2.170	IB3	3.458	MAPS5	2.543
PLF3	3.881	FS5	2.319	IB4	3.828	MAPS6	1.914
PLF4	4.028	EESD1	2.979	IB5	3.335	ED1	2.037
PLF5	3.356	EESD5	2.613	IB6	3.578	ED2	2.026
PLF6	3.590	EESD6	2.013	IB7	2.992	ED3	1.992
PLF7	3.162	EESD7	2.378	MAPS2	2.386	ED4	2.214
FS1	1.954	IB1	3.102	MAPS3	2.292	ED5	2.228

Table 3 presents the collinearity statistics of the outer model, with VIF values ranging from 1.914 to 4.028. Since all values are well below the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2017, 2020), multicollinearity is not a serious concern in the measurement model. The lowest VIF value is observed for MAPS6 which is 1.914, while the highest is for PLF4 which is 4.028; however, both remain within acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2017, 2020). These results confirm that the items are sufficiently distinct, and the estimation of the outer model parameters is not affected by collinearity.

Construct Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of constructs were examined through Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). These tests are essential to verify the internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement model, ensuring that the constructs reliably capture the underlying concepts.

Table 4

Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	CA	CR$_a$	CR$_c$	AVE
Policies and Legal Framework	PLF1	0.868				
	PLF2	0.884				
	PLF3	0.902				
	PLF4	0.913	0.952	0.961	0.961	0.777
	PLF5	0.869				
	PLF6	0.871				
	PLF7	0.864				
Financial Support	FS1	0.812				
	FS3	0.910				
	FS4	0.808	0.872	1.032	0.907	0.710
	FS5	0.837				
Infrastructure for Business	IB1	0.866				
	IB2	0.897				
	IB3	0.902				
	IB4	0.879	0.951	0.983	0.959	0.769
	IB5	0.861				
	IB6	0.886				
	IB7	0.847				
Entrepreneurship Education & Skill Development	EESD1	0.859				
	EESD5	0.872				
	EESD6	0.824	0.887	0.933	0.920	0.743
	EESD7	0.891				
Market Access and Promotional Support	MAPS2	0.863				
	MAPS3	0.850				
	MAPS4	0.845	0.897	0.930	0.922	0.704
	MAPS5	0.862				
	MAPS6	0.774				

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	CA	CR$_a$	CR$_c$	AVE
Entrepreneurship Development	ED1	0.817	0.883	0.884	0.914	0.681
	ED2	0.819				
	ED3	0.810				
	ED4	0.842				
	ED5	0.838				

Table 4 presents the construct reliability and validity results for the core constructs, assessed through Cronbach's alpha (α), rho_A (CR$_a$), composite reliability (CRc), and average variance extracted (AVE). The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.872 to 0.952, all exceeding the threshold of 0.70, confirming strong internal consistency among the items. Similarly, rho_A values (0.884–1.032) and composite reliability values (0.907–0.961) are above the recommended cut-off of 0.70, indicating reliable constructs. The AVE values, ranging from 0.681 to 0.777, surpass the minimum threshold of 0.50, confirming convergent validity across all constructs.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the measurement model possesses adequate reliability and validity, ensuring robustness for further structural analysis (Hair et al., 2017, 2020; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant Validity Using Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity was assessed to confirm that each construct measures a unique concept distinct from others. The Fornell–Larcker criterion compares the square root of AVE values against inter-construct correlations, ensuring that constructs do not overlap and are distinct.

Table 5

Discriminant Validity Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	ED	EESD	FS	IB	MAPS	PLF
ED	0.825					
EESD	0.045	0.862				
FS	0.073	-0.034	0.843			
IB	0.320	0.046	0.004	0.877		
MAPS	0.065	0.753	0.014	0.028	0.839	
PLF	0.419	-0.071	0.077	0.076	-0.053	0.882

Table 5 presents the discriminant validity results using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Results indicate that all constructs show discriminant validity. As the square root of Average Variance Extracted for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs, this confirms sufficient differentiation between the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant Validity Using (HTMT)

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the (HTMT) to ensure that each construct measures a concept distinct from the other. HTMT examines the ratio between-construct correlations to within-construct correlations, confirming that constructs are separate and do not overlap.

Table 6

Discriminant Validity Using Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	ED	EESD	FS	IB	MAPS	PLF
ED						
EESD	0.056					
FS	0.079	0.041				
IB	0.322	0.049	0.035			
MAPS	0.076	0.872	0.048	0.050		
PLF	0.451	0.086	0.080	0.087	0.074	

Table 6 presents the discriminant validity results using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio for constructs in the model. The results indicate that all constructs demonstrate discriminant validity, as all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming sufficient differentiation between the variables (Gold et al., 2001; Teo et al., 2008).

Coefficient of Determination (R² Value)

The explanatory power of the model was tested using the coefficient of determination (R²). This represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by independent variable.

Table 7

R2 Value

	R-square	R-square adj.
ED	0.267	0.258

In table 7, the R² value of 0.267 indicates that 26.7% of the variation in entrepreneurship development is explained by the independent variables. This demonstrates a moderate level of explanatory power of the independent variable, suggesting that government initiatives significantly contribute to entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi, other unobserved factors may also influence entrepreneurial outcomes in Rupandehi.

Model Fit Assessment

The overall adequacy of the structural model was examined through multiple fit indices, including SRMR, Chi-square, and NFI. These indices provide whether the proposed model fits observed data, ensuring the strength of the structural relationships for hypothesis testing.

Table 8

Model Fit Assessment

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.045	0.045
d_ULS	1.079	1.079
d_G	0.488	0.488
Chi-square	1127.316	1127.316
NFI	0.891	0.891

Table 8 presents the model fit indices for both the saturated and estimated structural models, including SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI. The SRMR value of 0.045 is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a strong fit between the observed and predicted correlations. Both d_ULS (1.079) and d_G (0.488) show low distances between the empirical and model-implied matrices, suggesting minimal discrepancy. The Chi-square value of 1127.316 indicates overall fit, and the NFI of 0.891 is close to the acceptable threshold of 0.90, reflecting a satisfactory model fit (Hair et al., 2017, 2020). Saturated and estimated models have identical values, confirming consistent estimation.

F^2 Value (Effect Size)

This section evaluated the effect size (F^2) to determine the contribution of each independent variable in explaining the variance of the dependent variables. The analysis used F^2 values to measure how much each independent variable added to the R^2 value of the dependent variable when included in the model.

Table 9

F^2 Value (Effect Size)

Construct	f^2	Effect
Policies and Legal Framework to Entrepreneurship Development	0.213	Medium effect
Financial Support to Entrepreneurship Development	0.002	Very small effect

Construct	f^2	Effect
Entrepreneurship Education & Skill Development to Entrepreneurship Development	0.000	No meaningful effect
Infrastructure for Business to Entrepreneurship Development	0.112	Small to medium effect
Market Access and Promotional Support to Entrepreneurship Development	0.003	No meaningful effect

Table 9 presents the F^2 values (effect size), which indicate the relative contribution of different forms of government support to entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi, following Cohen's (1988) benchmarks for interpreting effect size. The table shows that entrepreneurship education and skill development (0.000) and market access and promotional support (0.003) made no meaningful contribution. This shows that these government efforts are weak or insufficient. Financial support (0.002) also shows a negligible role. Infrastructure for business (0.112) contributed at a small to medium level, highlighting moderate support in this area. Policies and legal framework (0.213) showed the highest and medium-sized effect, demonstrating that the policy and regulatory environment is the strongest condition of government support influencing entrepreneurship development.

Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

The causal relationships between government initiatives and entrepreneurship development were tested using path coefficients and significance values. This analysis identifies which dimensions, such as policies, infrastructure, financial support, education, and market access, significantly influence entrepreneurship, thus validating or rejecting the proposed hypotheses of the study.

Table 10

Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypo-thesis	Path	β	S.D.	T Value	P Value	Decision
H_1	Policies and Legal Framework to Entrepreneurship Development	0.399	0.041	9.828	0.000	Supported
H_2	Financial Support to Entrepreneurship Development	0.040	0.054	0.751	0.351	Rejected
H_3	Entrepreneurship Education & Skill Development to Entrepreneurship Development	0.007	0.066	0.108	0.140	Rejected

Hypo-thesis	Path	β	S.D.	T Value	P Value	Decision
H_4	Infrastructure for Business to Entrepreneurship Development	0.287	0.036	8.025	0.000	Supported
H_5	Market Access and Promotional Support to Entrepreneurship Development	0.072	0.073	0.992	0.321	Rejected

Hypothesis Results Interpretation

The current government policies and legal frameworks are effectively contributing to the development of entrepreneurship in Rupandehi (H_1): This hypothesis tests the role of policies and legal frameworks in entrepreneurship development. The path coefficient is 0.399, with a t-value of 9.828 and a p-value of 0.000, showing strong significance. Therefore, H_1 is supported; thus, it can be concluded that government policies and legal frameworks are effectively contributing to entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi.

The financial support provided by the government is currently adequate and effective in fostering entrepreneurship in Rupandehi (H_2): This hypothesis examines the effect of financial support on entrepreneurship development. The path coefficient is 0.040, with a t-value of 0.751 and a p-value of 0.351, indicating no statistical significance. Therefore, H_2 is rejected; thus, it can be concluded that government financial support programs are currently inadequate and not significantly fostering entrepreneurship development.

Government-run entrepreneurship education and skill development programs are effectively enhancing the entrepreneurial capabilities in Rupandehi (H_3): This hypothesis tests whether entrepreneurship education and skill development significantly influence entrepreneurship development. The path coefficient is 0.007, with a t-value of 0.108 and a p-value of 0.140, which is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Therefore, H_3 is rejected; thus, it can be concluded that government-run entrepreneurship education and skill development programs are not effectively enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities in Rupandehi.

The infrastructure for business, as provided by the government, is currently sufficient and effective in supporting entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi (H_4): This hypothesis tests whether infrastructure for business contributes to entrepreneurship development. The path coefficient is 0.287, with a t-value of 8.025 and a p-value of 0.000, which shows strong statistical significance. Therefore, H_4 is supported; thus, it can be concluded that government-provided infrastructure effectively supports entrepreneurship development.

Market access and promotional support provided by the government are

currently effective in facilitating the growth of entrepreneurship in Rupandehi (H_5): This hypothesis examines whether market access and promotional support influence entrepreneurship development. The path coefficient is 0.072, with a t-value of 0.992 and a p-value of 0.321, which is not statistically significant. Therefore, H_5 is rejected; thus, it can be concluded that current initiatives, such as trade fairs or local promotion, lack sufficient effectiveness, especially in branding and digital outreach.

Findings of the study: The study found that government initiatives have an uneven impact on entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi. Government policies and legal frameworks, and business infrastructure, are the most effective in supporting entrepreneurial activities, providing a good regulatory environment and infrastructure for the operation of businesses. Whereas financial support, entrepreneurship education and skill development, and market access and promotional support are less effective. This indicates that regulatory clarity and infrastructure facilitate entrepreneurs; on the other hand, training, financing, and market facilitation are insufficient or inadequately provided. Overall, the findings suggest that government interventions have a positive but partial impact on fostering entrepreneurship, and additional efforts are needed to fully support entrepreneurial growth in Rupandehi.

Discussion

The findings of this study both agree with and differ from previous research, showing important points about entrepreneurship development in Rupandehi. Like earlier studies, infrastructure is a key factor, showing that good roads, electricity, and internet help reduce costs and improve business survival (Kosimov, 2023; Shrestha et al., 2023; World Bank, 2019). Similarly, policies and legal frameworks support Institutional Theory (North, 1990; Scott, 2001) showing that clear and predictable rules make it easier to start and run businesses (Pardo del Val et al., 2024; Onileowo, 2024).

However, financial support shows less effect. Unlike Hwang et al. (2019) and Robb and Robinson (2014) who said access to finance helps businesses grow, this study found that government financial programs in Rupandehi are not very effective. This may be because of bureaucratic problems, unclear rules, and low access for women and rural entrepreneurs (Rahman, 2024; Chalise et al., 2023). Likewise, the effect of entrepreneurship education and skill development is also smaller than expected. Although programs like MEDEP give initial training, the lack of follow-up, practical guidance, and long-term support may limit their impact (Neupane & Luitel, 2023; Yadav et al., 2022). Similarly, market access and promotional support also have a limited effect. Programs like ODOP create new opportunities, but weak branding, poor marketing knowledge, and weak buyer connections reduce their full benefit (Sarmento & Simões, 2018; Measson & Campbell-Hunt, 2015). These results are similar to Kunwar (2018) who noted that rural entrepreneurs often struggle to reach markets.

This study shows that while infrastructure and legal support are working

well, financial help, training programs, and market support need improvement. Better planning, proper follow-up, and stronger integration with local needs can help government programs support entrepreneurs more effectively and help local businesses grow (Stam, 2015; Isenberg, 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, government support plays a selective but crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship in Rupandehi, with policies, legal frameworks, and infrastructure contributing significantly, while financial support, education, and market facilitation remain largely ineffective. To strengthen entrepreneurship in Rupandehi, it is recommended that the government streamline financial access by reducing bureaucratic hurdles, enhancing the practical relevance and continuity of training programs, and expanding market access through digital promotion, trade fairs, and producer-buyer linkages. Additionally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of initiatives should be institutionalized to ensure sustainability and responsiveness to local entrepreneurial needs, thereby empowering small businesses, reducing poverty, and fostering a dynamic and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Rupandehi district.

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