



An In-Depth Analysis of the Role and Prospects of Entrepreneurship Development in Myanmar: A Strategic Ecosystem Approach

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author LTK designed the study, conducted data collection, and performed the initial analysis. Authors SSM and HWWK contributed to refining the research methodology and assisted in the data analysis. Author RD provided critical revisions and guidance throughout the manuscript preparation process. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role and future prospects of entrepreneurship development in Myanmar by examining the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The research focuses on six key pillars of the ecosystem: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment. Data were collected from 260 entrepreneurs across various regions of Myanmar through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings

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reveal that entrepreneurs in Myanmar face significant challenges, particularly in infrastructure and finance. Access to adequate electricity, transportation, and financial resources were identified as the most pressing issues. Additionally, human capital, including the availability of skilled workers and managers, was found to be a major constraint for entrepreneurial growth. Despite these obstacles, the majority of entrepreneurs exhibit resilience, with a strong motivation for success and a willingness to take calculated risks. This study suggests that improvements in infrastructure, financial support mechanisms, and targeted human capital development are essential for fostering a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar. The research provides practical recommendations for policymakers to address these challenges and support the long-term growth of entrepreneurship in the country.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship development; entrepreneurial ecosystem; human capital; access to finance; myanmar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth and development, particularly in developing countries like Myanmar. Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in transforming economies by fostering innovation, creating jobs, and generating wealth [1,2]. In emerging markets, entrepreneurship contributes to industrialization and regional growth by enabling the creation of new business ventures and improving national well-being [3]. The entrepreneurial ecosystem, which comprises the interconnected factors that support entrepreneurial activity, is essential for the development of successful ventures [4]. This ecosystem includes elements such as access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and a supportive business environment.

In the context of Myanmar, entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a solution to overcoming decades of political and economic stagnation. Entrepreneurs have the potential to drive inclusive growth and contribute to Myanmar's transition toward a more diversified and competitive economy [5]. However, despite this potential, Myanmar's entrepreneurial ecosystem remains underdeveloped. Entrepreneurs in the country face significant barriers, including limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of skilled human capital, which hinders their ability to grow and sustain their businesses [6].

1.1 Problem Statement

While entrepreneurship holds significant promise for Myanmar's economic future, there is a lack of comprehensive research that examines the specific factors influencing entrepreneurial

success and the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the country. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar is characterized by several weaknesses, including an underdeveloped financial sector, unreliable infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled labor [7]. Although these challenges are well-known, there has been limited empirical research focused on understanding how these barriers affect entrepreneurs on the ground. This gap in the literature leaves policymakers without the necessary insights to address the specific needs of Myanmar's entrepreneurial community.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role and prospects of entrepreneurship development in Myanmar by focusing on the six pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment. Specifically, this study aims to:

- 1) Examine the mindset, motivations, and success factors of entrepreneurs in Myanmar.
- 2) Assess the key obstacles within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including challenges related to finance, infrastructure, and human capital.
- 3) Provide actionable recommendations for improving the entrepreneurial ecosystem to foster sustainable business growth.

1.3 Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the key factors that influence the success and growth of entrepreneurs in Myanmar?

- 2) How do challenges related to the entrepreneurial ecosystem—particularly access to finance, infrastructure, and human capital—affect entrepreneurial growth?
- 3) What are the most critical areas for policy intervention to support the development of entrepreneurship in Myanmar?

1.4 Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured as follows: The next section presents a review of the relevant literature on entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a focus on both global and Myanmar-specific studies. The third section outlines the research methodology, including the data collection process, sample description, and analysis methods. The fourth section provides the results of the study, detailing the findings on each of the six pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar. The fifth section discusses these findings in relation to the existing literature and offers recommendations for policymakers. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the key findings and suggests areas for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study of entrepreneurship has evolved significantly over the past few decades, with various theoretical frameworks being developed to understand the factors that drive entrepreneurial activity. One of the most widely recognized frameworks is the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory. This theory emphasizes that entrepreneurship does not occur in isolation but is shaped by a set of interdependent factors, including access to finance, government policies, infrastructure, human capital, and market opportunities [4]. These factors create an ecosystem that can either support or inhibit entrepreneurial activity. According to Acs and Szerb [1], a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem is critical for fostering innovation, creating jobs, and driving economic development.

Another important theoretical perspective is Human Capital Theory, which suggests that the skills, knowledge, and experiences of entrepreneurs are crucial for the success of their ventures. Human capital influences the ability of entrepreneurs to identify opportunities, innovate, and adapt to market changes [8]. In developing

countries, the availability of skilled labor and access to training opportunities are often key constraints that limit entrepreneurial growth.

In the context of Myanmar, Institutional Theory also provides a useful lens for understanding the barriers to entrepreneurship. This theory posits that formal and informal institutions—such as government regulations, cultural norms, and social networks—play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial behavior [9]. Entrepreneurs in Myanmar must navigate a complex and often restrictive institutional environment that includes outdated policies, bureaucratic obstacles, and limited support from government agencies [7].

These theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for understanding the dynamics of entrepreneurship in Myanmar, particularly the challenges posed by an underdeveloped entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2.2 Previous Studies

Numerous studies have examined the role of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth, particularly in emerging markets. For instance, Naude [7] highlights the importance of entrepreneurship in promoting economic development in low- and middle-income countries. His study found that countries with stronger entrepreneurial ecosystems tend to experience higher levels of innovation, job creation, and poverty reduction.

In Myanmar, Wai Phyo [5] emphasizes the critical role of entrepreneurs in the country's economic transition. The study points out that entrepreneurs have been key drivers of innovation in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Despite the important role that entrepreneurs play, the study highlights significant challenges, including limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory hurdles that stifle business growth.

Another study by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs [6] introduced the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Diagnostic Toolkit, which identifies six key pillars—finance, policy, infrastructure, human capital, markets, and business environment—that are essential for the development of a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem. This toolkit has been widely used to assess entrepreneurial ecosystems in various countries, including Myanmar, and has become a

valuable resource for policymakers aiming to create supportive environments for entrepreneurs.

Research conducted by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) provides additional insights into the state of entrepreneurship in developing countries. The 2019 GEM report found that entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, often struggle with access to finance, market information, and skilled labor. The report also noted that women entrepreneurs face additional barriers, such as social and cultural norms that limit their participation in entrepreneurial activities [10].

2.3 Gaps in the Literature

While previous studies have provided valuable insights into the role of entrepreneurship in economic development, there are several gaps in the literature, particularly concerning Myanmar. First, most existing studies on entrepreneurship in Myanmar are focused on specific industries or regions, leaving a gap in comprehensive research that covers the national entrepreneurial ecosystem. For example, Wai Phyo [5] focused primarily on the agricultural sector, while other studies have concentrated on urban areas like Yangon, leaving rural entrepreneurs and other sectors underexplored.

Second, there is limited research on the interplay between different pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar. While studies such as the Aspen Network's toolkit [6] identify key components of the ecosystem, they do not examine how these components interact with each other in the specific context of Myanmar. Understanding these interactions is crucial for developing effective policies that address the unique challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the country.

Third, the literature has not adequately explored the role of human capital in shaping entrepreneurial success in Myanmar. While Human Capital Theory suggests that education and skills are essential for entrepreneurship, there is little empirical research that examines how Myanmar's education system and training programs impact the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Additionally, there is a lack of research on how informal networks, such as family and community support, contribute to entrepreneurial success, particularly in rural areas.

Finally, much of the existing literature has focused on identifying the challenges faced by entrepreneurs without offering practical solutions. While the obstacles are well-documented—such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to finance—there is little research that provides actionable recommendations for improving the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar and offering policy recommendations based on empirical data.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar. The research design is descriptive in nature, focusing on understanding the challenges and success factors faced by entrepreneurs across the country. By utilizing both structured questionnaires and interviews, the study aims to capture the experiences of entrepreneurs in different regions and sectors. The primary focus of this study is on the six key pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment.

The mixed-methods approach was selected to provide both numerical data, which can quantify the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, and qualitative insights that offer a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial mindset in Myanmar. This approach allows for triangulation, where the quantitative findings are supported and enriched by the qualitative data collected through interviews.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected from a sample of 260 entrepreneurs from various regions of Myanmar between 2022 and 2024. The sample was drawn from established businesses in different sectors, including services, manufacturing, and trading, with participants being selected based on convenience and availability. The participants were members of entrepreneurial associations such as the Myanmar Women Entrepreneur Association (MWEA) and the Myanmar Young Entrepreneur Association (MYEA), as well as the

Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

- 1) personal and business profiles of the entrepreneurs,
- 2) mindset, motivations, and challenges, and
- 3) the six pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture quantitative data on challenges and qualitative insights into entrepreneurial experiences. In addition, follow-up interviews were conducted with a subset of the participants to gather deeper insights into the obstacles they faced and the strategies they employed to overcome these challenges.

The survey was distributed both in-person and via email using Google Forms, allowing for broader geographical coverage. Given the diversity of languages spoken in Myanmar, the questionnaire was made available in both English and Myanmar to ensure that all participants could provide informed responses. The data were collected over a 12-month period and were carefully monitored to ensure completeness and accuracy.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the aid of SPSS software (version 23). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the entrepreneurs, as well as the challenges they face in each of the six pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to provide a detailed understanding of the severity of obstacles in areas such as finance, infrastructure, and human capital.

For qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring themes and insights from the open-ended responses and interviews. The thematic analysis involved coding the responses and grouping them into categories that align with the six pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This approach allowed the study to capture not only the

quantifiable challenges faced by entrepreneurs but also the underlying factors that contribute to these challenges.

The Entrepreneurial Diagnostic Toolkit developed by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs [6] was used to evaluate the six pillars, with a weighted average method applied to rank the obstacles from most to least significant. This method provided a clear picture of the critical areas that need improvement within Myanmar's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

3.4 Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights into the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 260 entrepreneurs, while sufficient for descriptive analysis, may not fully capture the diversity of entrepreneurial experiences across Myanmar's various regions and industries. Future studies could expand the sample to include a broader range of participants, particularly from rural areas and underserved sectors.

Second, the study relies heavily on self-reported data from entrepreneurs, which may introduce bias. Respondents may overestimate their success or underestimate the challenges they face, particularly in sensitive areas such as access to finance or market competition. To mitigate this, follow-up interviews were conducted to cross-verify some of the data, but the potential for bias remains.

Third, the study's focus on established businesses may exclude insights from smaller, informal entrepreneurs who operate outside of formal networks and associations. These informal entrepreneurs often face unique challenges that differ from those experienced by more established firms. Future research could address this limitation by specifically targeting informal entrepreneurs.

Lastly, the study was conducted during a period of significant political and economic instability in Myanmar. This context may have influenced the responses, particularly with regard to infrastructure and market access. While the study provides a snapshot of the current entrepreneurial landscape, future research should consider longitudinal studies to capture the dynamic changes in the entrepreneurial ecosystem over time.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey conducted with 260 entrepreneurs across various regions of Myanmar revealed a diverse demographic profile. Of the respondents, 52% were female and 48% were male, indicating a near-equal gender distribution in the entrepreneurial community. The majority of the respondents (33%) fell within the 36-45 age range, followed by the 26-35 age group (28%) and the 46-55 age group (24%). The youngest entrepreneur surveyed was 19 years old, and the oldest was 73 years old, reflecting the wide age range among Myanmar's entrepreneurs.

In terms of marital status, 52% of the respondents were married, while 40% were single. A smaller proportion of the respondents were divorced or separated (5%) or widowed (3%). The educational background of the entrepreneurs indicated that the majority had attained higher education, with 54% holding a bachelor's degree and 41% having earned a master's or doctoral degree. Only 5% had completed only high school. This data suggests that higher educational attainment is common among Myanmar's entrepreneurs, potentially contributing to their business success.

4.2 Business Profile

The respondents' businesses spanned a variety of industries. The largest proportion of businesses (50%) operated in the services sector, which includes tourism, real estate, health, education, and information technology services. Trading businesses accounted for 22% of the sample, while 19% of respondents were engaged in manufacturing, including agriculture and consumer goods production. The construction sector represented 9% of the businesses surveyed.

Most of the businesses were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with 55% of respondents reporting that their firms employed between 11 and 100 people. Additionally, 26% of businesses had fewer than 10 employees, while only 19% had more than 100 employees. The respondents reported varying levels of operational experience, with 33% having been in business for 1-5 years, 24% for 10-20 years, and 13% for over 20 years. A smaller proportion (8%) of businesses were startups, operating for less than one year.

Regarding the motivation for starting a business, 46% of respondents indicated that their primary reason was "to make money," while 35% cited that they were motivated by a desire to work independently. Other reasons included the pursuit of success or fame (12%) and the desire for power (7%).

4.3 Entrepreneurial Characteristics

The entrepreneurs surveyed exhibited several key characteristics that contributed to their success. A majority of respondents (45%) reported working more than 50 hours per week, reflecting a strong work ethic and dedication to their ventures. Additionally, 42% of respondents worked between 31 and 50 hours per week, while 9% worked 11-30 hours, and only 4% worked fewer than 10 hours per week.

Entrepreneurial motivation and mindset were also explored in the survey. The majority of respondents (81%) cited financial independence and the desire to create their own world as their primary motivators for starting a business. Many entrepreneurs demonstrated strong personal characteristics, including perseverance, self-confidence, and a willingness to take calculated risks. Notably, female entrepreneurs were found to be late starters compared to their male counterparts, with a significant proportion of women starting businesses after the age of 40.

The reliability statistics of the study, measured using Cronbach's Alpha, indicated a high level of internal consistency in the data. The alpha value for personal characteristics was 0.8, suggesting that the findings on entrepreneurial traits were reliable and consistent across the sample.

4.4 Six Pillars of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The study evaluated six key pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment. Each of these pillars was analyzed to assess the degree of obstacles faced by entrepreneurs.

1) Access to Finance:

Access to finance was one of the most significant challenges for entrepreneurs in Myanmar. Using a Likert scale, respondents rated their access to debt finance, equity finance, and grants. The

most critical obstacle was access to grants, with a mean score of 2.88, followed by debt finance (2.36) and equity finance (1.86). The weighted score analysis revealed that access to grants represented the highest degree of financial difficulty for entrepreneurs, underscoring the need for improved financial support mechanisms.

2) Policy Environment:

Entrepreneurs also faced substantial challenges in navigating the policy environment. The highest-rated obstacle was customs and trade regulations (mean of 3.62), followed by tax administration (3.42). Labor regulations (3.12), tax rates (3.04), and business licensing and permits (2.38) were also reported as moderate obstacles. The findings indicate that simplifying regulatory procedures and improving tax policies could significantly reduce the burden on entrepreneurs.

3) Infrastructure:

Infrastructure deficiencies were reported as the most significant barrier in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The most critical infrastructure issue was access to electricity, with a mean score of 4.36, followed by challenges related to telecom/internet (3.74), transport (3.49), water (3.06), and gasoline (2.23). These findings highlight the urgent need for infrastructural improvements to support business growth and sustainability in Myanmar.

4) Human Capital:

Human capital emerged as another key challenge for Myanmar's entrepreneurs. The availability of scientists and engineers was rated as the most significant obstacle, with a mean score of 3.12. Respondents also reported challenges in finding adequately educated or trained general workers (3.06) and top managers (3.00). This suggests a need for targeted investments in education and training programs to build a more skilled workforce for entrepreneurial ventures.

5) Access to Markets:

Access to international markets was rated as a moderate obstacle, with a mean score of 3.38. Entrepreneurs also reported difficulty in obtaining reliable market information (mean of 2.94). Expanding access to international markets and improving the availability of market data could

enhance the competitiveness of Myanmar's businesses on a global scale.

6) Business Environment:

The business environment, particularly the level of support from successful businesspeople, was a major obstacle for 82% of respondents. Political instability and corruption were also cited as significant challenges, with mean scores of 3.74 and 3.49, respectively. Other issues, such as crime, theft, and disorder (2.23), further complicated the business landscape. Improving the overall business environment by addressing corruption and fostering collaboration between businesses and academic institutions could support entrepreneurial development.

Overall, the findings reveal that entrepreneurs in Myanmar face a complex array of challenges across multiple dimensions of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Infrastructure, access to finance, and human capital are the most significant obstacles, while the policy environment and market access also pose substantial barriers. Addressing these issues through targeted policy interventions and investments in infrastructure and education could create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship in Myanmar.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Analysis of Results

The results of this study highlight the significant barriers faced by entrepreneurs in Myanmar across various pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The most critical obstacles identified were related to infrastructure, access to finance, and human capital. Entrepreneurs reported that unreliable electricity, poor internet access, and inadequate transportation networks severely hindered their ability to grow their businesses. This is consistent with the findings of previous research that emphasizes the importance of infrastructure in supporting entrepreneurial development, particularly in developing countries [7].

Access to finance was another significant barrier, with entrepreneurs facing difficulties in securing grants, equity financing, and loans. This suggests that many entrepreneurs lack access to the financial resources necessary for business expansion. Similarly, human capital constraints were evident, as entrepreneurs struggled to find adequately trained workers, engineers, and

managers. These findings suggest that while entrepreneurs in Myanmar exhibit strong motivation and resilience, they are constrained by external factors that are largely beyond their control.

The demographic profile of respondents reveals a relatively balanced gender distribution and a high level of educational attainment among entrepreneurs, with 41% holding advanced degrees. This suggests that education plays a key role in enabling individuals to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, although the lack of skilled workers remains a significant hurdle.

5.2 Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of this study align with much of the existing literature on entrepreneurship in developing economies. Previous studies have highlighted that access to finance is one of the most significant barriers to entrepreneurship, particularly in low- and middle-income countries [1,10]. The results from Myanmar are consistent with this, as entrepreneurs frequently cited difficulties in obtaining financing as a major constraint on their business operations. This is also in line with research by Wai Phyo [5], who identified financial challenges as a critical issue for entrepreneurs in Myanmar.

Similarly, the importance of infrastructure for entrepreneurial success has been well-documented in the literature. Naude [7] emphasizes that infrastructure is a key determinant of entrepreneurial activity, particularly in countries transitioning from agrarian to industrial economies. The results of this study further support this view, as inadequate infrastructure—particularly in terms of electricity and internet access—was the most significant obstacle reported by entrepreneurs.

The issue of human capital also resonates with previous studies. Shane [8] argues that the availability of skilled workers is critical for entrepreneurial success, as human capital influences the ability of businesses to innovate and scale. In Myanmar, the shortage of trained engineers and managers highlights the gap between the educational system and the needs of the entrepreneurial sector. This finding supports the call for increased investment in education and vocational training to address this deficit.

While this study's findings are largely consistent with the broader literature, it also highlights

unique challenges specific to Myanmar. For instance, political instability and corruption were frequently mentioned as key obstacles, an issue that has been less prominent in other studies on entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia [10]. These political and governance-related factors create additional challenges for Myanmar's entrepreneurs, further complicating an already difficult business environment.

5.3 Policy Implications

The results of this study have important implications for policymakers seeking to support entrepreneurship in Myanmar. First, addressing the infrastructure deficit should be a top priority. Investment in reliable electricity, transportation, and internet infrastructure would directly enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Myanmar's entrepreneurs. This could involve public-private partnerships to expand access to basic utilities, particularly in rural and underserved areas, where infrastructure challenges are most acute.

Second, improving access to finance is essential for fostering entrepreneurial growth. Policymakers could consider expanding financial products and services tailored to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including microfinance, low-interest loans, and venture capital programs. Developing alternative financing mechanisms, such as equity crowdfunding, could also provide entrepreneurs with more diverse funding options.

Third, the shortage of skilled human capital necessitates investment in education and vocational training programs that are aligned with the needs of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The government, in collaboration with educational institutions, should implement training programs that equip the workforce with the technical skills required by growing industries. Promoting collaboration between universities and businesses could also help bridge the skills gap and foster innovation.

Finally, efforts to stabilize the political environment and reduce corruption would significantly improve the business climate. Entrepreneurs need a stable and transparent regulatory framework to operate effectively. Reducing bureaucratic red tape, streamlining business registration processes, and enhancing the rule of law would create a more conducive environment for business development.

5.4 Key Challenges

Several key challenges remain for entrepreneurs in Myanmar. The first and most significant challenge is infrastructure. The findings show that unreliable electricity and poor internet access are major hindrances to business operations. This is especially true for businesses in the manufacturing and services sectors, which rely heavily on these utilities to operate efficiently. Without substantial improvements in infrastructure, entrepreneurs will continue to face constraints that limit their capacity to grow and compete in regional and global markets.

The second major challenge is access to finance. Although there are some financial institutions and programs aimed at supporting SMEs, many entrepreneurs reported that they struggle to secure the necessary funding to expand their businesses. High collateral requirements, complex loan procedures, and limited availability of venture capital are significant barriers. Additionally, informal lending practices, characterized by high interest rates, create further difficulties for entrepreneurs seeking affordable financing options.

Another critical challenge is the shortage of skilled labor. Although Myanmar's entrepreneurs are highly educated, they face difficulties in finding adequately trained workers, particularly in technical fields. This shortage of human capital hampers innovation and limits the potential for business expansion. Addressing this challenge will require targeted efforts to improve the quality of education and training, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Finally, the political and regulatory environment presents ongoing challenges. Entrepreneurs cited political instability, corruption, and cumbersome regulations as significant barriers to their success. These factors create uncertainty and increase the cost of doing business, particularly for startups and SMEs. Unless these governance issues are addressed, Myanmar's entrepreneurial ecosystem will continue to lag behind those of neighboring countries.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the role and prospects of entrepreneurship

development in Myanmar by examining six critical pillars of the entrepreneurial ecosystem: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment. The findings reveal several key challenges that entrepreneurs face across these pillars.

First, infrastructure emerged as the most significant barrier, with unreliable electricity, poor internet access, and inadequate transportation networks severely limiting business operations. Second, access to finance remains a critical challenge, with entrepreneurs struggling to secure grants, equity financing, and loans. The third key challenge is the shortage of skilled human capital, with entrepreneurs reporting difficulties in finding adequately trained managers, engineers, and general workers. Lastly, the policy environment and business climate, affected by political instability and corruption, further complicate the entrepreneurial landscape.

Despite these obstacles, Myanmar's entrepreneurs exhibit resilience and a strong motivation to succeed, driven by a desire for financial independence and the freedom to innovate. However, without addressing the structural and systemic challenges identified in this study, the potential for entrepreneurship to drive economic development will remain constrained.

6.2 Recommendations for Policy Makers

Based on the findings of this study, several policy recommendations can be made to support the development of a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar:

1) Invest in Infrastructure Development

Addressing the infrastructure gap is essential for fostering business growth. Policymakers should prioritize investment in reliable electricity, internet access, and transportation networks, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Public-private partnerships could be leveraged to expand infrastructure, ensuring that businesses have the basic utilities they need to operate efficiently.

2) Improve Access to Finance

Entrepreneurs need access to affordable and diverse financing options. Policymakers should focus on expanding financial products tailored to

the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This could include the development of microfinance programs, low-interest loan schemes, and alternative financing options such as equity crowdfunding and venture capital initiatives. Simplifying loan application procedures and reducing collateral requirements would also help more entrepreneurs access much-needed capital.

3) Develop Human Capital

Addressing the shortage of skilled workers will require targeted investments in education and training. Vocational training programs should be aligned with the needs of the entrepreneurial sector, focusing on technical skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Policymakers should also encourage collaboration between universities and businesses to foster innovation and equip the workforce with the skills necessary for a competitive entrepreneurial environment.

4) Create a Supportive Policy Environment

To foster entrepreneurship, the government must create a stable and transparent regulatory framework. Simplifying business registration processes, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and ensuring consistency in the enforcement of regulations will reduce the burden on entrepreneurs. Efforts should also be made to combat corruption, improve governance, and ensure political stability, as these factors significantly impact the business environment.

5) Promote Market Access

Expanding access to international markets is essential for entrepreneurs looking to scale their businesses. Policymakers should focus on developing programs that help businesses meet international standards and compete globally. Market information systems should be improved to provide entrepreneurs with real-time data on opportunities in both domestic and international markets.

6) Foster Collaboration Between Entrepreneurs and Established Businesses

Creating opportunities for mentorship and networking between established business leaders and new entrepreneurs can help to build a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem. Initiatives

that promote collaboration, such as business incubators and innovation hubs, should be encouraged to provide support and guidance for emerging entrepreneurs.

6.3 Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Myanmar, there are several areas where further research is needed:

1) Longitudinal Studies

This study captures a snapshot of the current entrepreneurial landscape in Myanmar. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies that track changes in the entrepreneurial ecosystem over time, particularly in response to policy interventions or economic shifts. This would provide a deeper understanding of how the entrepreneurial ecosystem evolves and which interventions are most effective.

2) Sector-Specific Research

While this study provides a broad analysis of entrepreneurship in Myanmar, future research could focus on specific sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, or technology. Sector-specific research would help identify unique challenges and opportunities within each industry, enabling more targeted policy recommendations.

3) Rural vs. Urban Entrepreneurship

Future studies should explore the differences between rural and urban entrepreneurs. This research could examine how the challenges faced by entrepreneurs differ based on location, with particular attention to infrastructure, access to markets, and financial resources. Understanding these differences would help in designing policies that address the specific needs of entrepreneurs in different regions.

4) Role of Informal Entrepreneurs

Much of the existing research, including this study, focuses on formal businesses. However, a significant proportion of Myanmar's entrepreneurial activity occurs in the informal sector. Future research should examine the role of informal entrepreneurs, the challenges they face, and how policy

interventions can support their transition to the formal economy.

5) Impact of Political and Economic Instability

The political and economic context in Myanmar is fluid, and future research could examine the long-term impacts of instability on entrepreneurial activity. Research on how entrepreneurs navigate political risk, adapt to changing regulations, and maintain resilience in the face of economic uncertainty would be valuable for policymakers and business leaders alike.

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Myanmar, focusing on six critical pillars: access to finance, policy environment, infrastructure, human capital, market access, and business environment. The findings reveal that Myanmar's entrepreneurs face significant challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure, access to finance, and skilled labor. Despite these obstacles, entrepreneurs demonstrate resilience and a strong motivation for success. However, the current entrepreneurial ecosystem is insufficient to fully support their efforts. To foster a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship, there is an urgent need for targeted policy interventions that address infrastructure deficiencies, improve access to finance, and develop human capital. Enhancing market access and creating a stable, transparent policy environment will further support the growth and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. Addressing these issues is essential for entrepreneurship to become a key driver of Myanmar's economic growth and development.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

The authors hereby declare that generative AI technology, specifically ChatGPT, was utilized for grammar and language usage review during the preparation of this manuscript.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND CONSENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the International Leadership University Myanmar. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of International Leadership University Myanmar, and informed consent was acquired from all

participants prior to their involvement in the study.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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