POLICIES AIMED AT ENHANCING FINANCIAL INCLUSION DURING A PANDEMIC: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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SUMMARY

This study examines the financial inclusion policies during pandemics, particularly focusing on their efficacy within emerging economies and areas dominated by informal sectors. The urgency and relevance of the topic are underscored by the heightened economic vulnerabilities these regions face during global health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which starkly amplify the necessity for robust financial inclusion to uphold economic resilience. The primary objectives of this paper are twofold: firstly, to critically assess the array of financial inclusion policies deployed during pandemics, and secondly, to pinpoint potential policy enhancements informed by contemporary research alongside successful international implementations. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research synthesizes quantitative data on policy outcomes with qualitative insights from policy analyses and stakeholder interviews. This methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted impacts of financial inclusion initiatives and their adaptability to crisis conditions. Key findings highlight the pivotal role of digital financial services, effective public-private collaborations, and the establishment of adaptive social support mechanisms in promoting financial inclusivity amidst pandemic-induced economic disruptions. These strategies emerge as crucial levers for advancing financial inclusion, providing valuable lessons for crafting policies that are resilient, targeted, and capable of fostering sustainable economic growth and stability in the face of ongoing and future global challenges. The study's insights offer critical guidance for policymakers and financial institutions seeking to enhance financial inclusion frameworks, thereby contributing to the development of more inclusive, equitable, and resilient financial ecosystems worldwide.

Keywords: *financial inclusion, pandemic, policy innovations*

INTRODUCTION

Financial inclusion is the availability and accessibility of financial services to all individuals and businesses, regardless of socioeconomic status (Demirgüç-Kunt, et al., 2018). It involves providing affordable, convenient, and safe financial products and services that meet the diverse needs of the population, including savings, credit, insurance, and payments. Financial inclusion is essential during a pandemic for several reasons:

- *Pandemics, such as COVID-19, have significant economic consequences, leading to job losses, reduced income, and financial instability (Nicola et al., 2020). Financial inclusion helps cushion the economic impact by providing vulnerable populations access to essential financial services (Beck et al.,2007).*
- *Financially inclusive systems can facilitate the rapid and efficient distribution of emergency funds to those in need, helping mitigate the pandemic's negative effects.*
- *Enhanced financial inclusion can contribute to economic recovery by enabling households and businesses to access credit and other financial resources, thereby supporting investment and growth (Aghion et al., 2005).*

During a pandemic, underserved populations face several challenges in accessing capital:

- *Reduced income and job losses may lead to lower creditworthiness, making it harder for vulnerable individuals and businesses to access loans.*
- *Lending institutions may tighten their credit standards due to increased risk aversion and economic uncertainty, further restricting access to capital for underserved populations (Borio et al., 2017).*
- *Traditional face-to-face banking services may be disrupted or restricted due to lockdowns and social distancing measures, making it more difficult for individuals with limited digital or financial literacy to access financial services.*
- *Inadequate access to financial information and advice can exacerbate the challenges underserved populations face during a pandemic, as they may be less aware of the financial assistance programs and resources available to them (Ramakrishnan, 2012).*

The need for policy transformation to ensure access to capital during a pandemic arises from the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by underserved populations and the broader economy during such crises. Policy transformation is necessary to:

- *Address the heightened financial risks and uncertainties that can exacerbate financial exclusion during a pandemic (Borio et al., 2017).*
- *Facilitate the rapid and efficient distribution of financial assistance to affected individuals and businesses, supporting economic stability and recovery.*
- *Encourage innovation and adoption of digital financial services, which can help overcome the limitations of traditional banking channels in the context of social distancing and lockdown measures (Pindyck, 2020; World Bank, 2022).*
- *Promote resilience and adaptability in the financial system, enabling it to better respond to the evolving needs of underserved populations during a pandemic and beyond (Beck et al., 2007).*

The paper's objectives are:

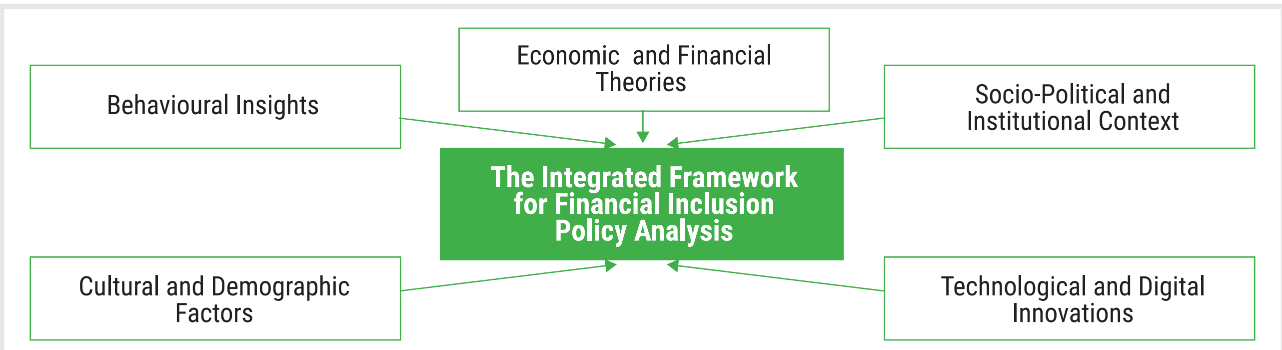
- *Based on existing research and practice, assess the effectiveness of policies enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic. This involves examining the outcomes and impacts of various policies in terms of improving access to capital and mitigating the adverse economic effects of the pandemic.*
- *Suggest improvements and potential policy transformations to better address the financial needs of underserved populations during a pandemic. This includes identifying best practices and lessons learned from other countries and evaluating innovative approaches to financial inclusion that can be adapted to the specific context of a pandemic.*

In this analysis, we delve into the intricate dynamics of financial inclusion policies during pandemics, with a particular emphasis on emerging economies and regions characterized by significant informal economies. These areas, often marked by disparities in access to formal financial services and digital infrastructure, present unique challenges and opportunities for policy interventions. The pandemic's disproportionate impact on these vulnerable economies underscores the urgent need for tailored financial inclusion strategies. By focusing on these regions, our study aims to shed light on effective policy measures that can enhance financial resilience, reduce economic inequalities, and promote sustainable development in contexts where it is most needed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In response to the pandemic's economic disruptions, a myriad of financial inclusion policies were deployed globally. To critically assess their multifaceted impacts, we introduce the Integrated Framework for Financial Inclusion Policy Analysis (Fig. 1). This framework blends insights from economics, behavioral sciences, public policy, and technology studies, offering a comprehensive lens through which to examine policy effectiveness and challenges (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 1.
The Integrated Framework for Financial Inclusion Policy Analysis



Source: Elaborated by the author

At the core of financial inclusion dynamics are market imperfections and information asymmetries, which significantly hinder equitable access to financial services. The framework considers how central banks' monetary policies, such as interest rate adjustments, influence the financial inclusion landscape, addressing foundational market inefficiencies.

Behavioral economics provides critical insights into how individuals and businesses navigate financial decisions amidst uncertainty, highlighting psychological barriers like trust and risk aversion that impact financial service uptake (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). This perspective is essential for understanding the human factors influencing policy success.

The regulatory environment plays a pivotal role in shaping financial inclusion. Policies such as loan guarantees and digital finance regulations must navigate governance structures to be effective (Katz et al., 2020). Additionally, social protection programs are crucial for extending financial inclusion to vulnerable groups, necessitating a nuanced understanding of policy interplay within institutional context.

Digital financial services (DFS) have emerged as a cornerstone of financial inclusion strategies, especially during the pandemic. This segment of the framework evaluates the adoption and impact of DFS, considering the challenges posed by the digital divide and infrastructure limitations (Sha'ban et al., 2021). The success of DFS hinges on robust digital ecosystems and regulatory frameworks conducive to innovation (Kabengele & Hahn, 2021).

Cultural attitudes towards finance and demographic characteristics significantly influence financial inclusion efforts. The framework acknowledges the diversity in financial behaviors and needs across different population segments, underlining the importance of culturally and demographically informed policy design (Carlsson et al, 2017).

The Integrated Framework for Financial Inclusion Policy Analysis equips policymakers and researchers with a multidimensional tool for examining the nuanced impacts of financial inclusion initiatives. By integrating economic theories with behavioral insights, institutional contexts, technological advancements, and cultural considerations, this framework facilitates a deeper understanding of the pathways to and barriers against effective financial inclusion, especially critical in times of global crises (Ruggeri, 2018).

The paper makes a significant contribution to existing knowledge by providing a timely and comprehensive analysis of financial inclusion policies during a pandemic. It introduces a novel framework that integrates interdisciplinary insights to assess the impact of these policies on vulnerable populations in emerging economies. This approach is crucial for understanding the nuances of financial access and resilience in the face of global economic disruptions caused by the pandemic. Furthermore, the paper offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of financial inclusion strategies in mitigating the economic fallout from health crises. By focusing on the pandemic context, the study not only enriches the academic discourse on financial inclusion but also provides a valuable guide for designing policies that are responsive to the challenges posed by such unprecedented global events.

DATA AND METHODS

The systematic literature review approach involves a comprehensive and structured search for published research, reports, and policy documents relevant to financial inclusion and investment policy transformation during a pandemic (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). This method includes:

- *Identifying relevant databases for the search, such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, EconLit, and SSRN.*
- *Developing search terms and strategies that capture the key concepts related to financial inclusion, investment policies, and pandemics ("financial inclusion," "investment policy," "policy transformation," "access to capital," "underserved populations," "COVID-19," and "pandemic").*
- *Using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) and wildcard symbols to combine and refine search terms, ensuring a comprehensive and focused search.*

The selection criteria for relevant articles, reports, and policy documents include:

- *Publication date: Focus on recent literature (e.g., published within the last 10 years) to ensure the review captures the most up-to-date research and policy developments.*
- *Language: Include only articles published in English due to language limitations.*
- *Relevance: Assess each identified source's title, abstract, and keywords to determine its relevance to financial inclusion and investment policy transformation during a pandemic.*
- *Quality: Evaluate the methodological rigor and credibility of the source, prioritizing peer-reviewed articles, official reports from government agencies or international organizations, and policy documents (Moher et al., 2009).*

The data extraction process involves systematically reviewing and synthesizing the critical information on policies, their implementation, and impacts from the selected sources. This may include:

- *Developing a data extraction template to record relevant information such as the policy name, objective, target population, implementation strategy, and outcomes (e.g., access to capital, financial stability, income inequality) (Higgins & Green, 2011).*
- *Assessing the effectiveness of each policy based on the evidence presented in the literature, taking into account potential biases, limitations, and conflicting findings.*
- *Identifying common themes, trends, and gaps in the literature to inform the paper's discussion and recommendations for policy transformation and improvement (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).*

MAIN RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A summary of policies aimed at enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic includes various monetary, fiscal, and regulatory measures designed to improve access to capital and mitigate the economic impact of the crisis (see Tab. 1).

Central banks may reduce interest rates to lower borrowing costs and encourage lending, which can help businesses and households access to credit more easily during a pandemic (Aiyar et al., 2015; Borio et al., 2017; Çevik & Mutlu, 2022; Ferreroet al., 2021; Mosser, 2020).

While this policy improved credit access by reducing borrowing costs, its effectiveness was limited in environments where interest rates were already low or lenders were averse to risk during heightened uncertainties. The reluctance to lend during such periods posed significant challenges, limiting the policy's impact in stimulating economic activity among underserved populations.

Governments can provide guarantees on loans issued by financial institutions to businesses and individuals, reducing the risk for lenders and increasing credit availability for underserved populations (Aristei & Gallo, 2024; Gentilini, 2022; Jung, 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Preziuso et al., 2023).

Although it succeeded in increasing credit availability, the effectiveness of loan guarantee schemes heavily depended on their design and implementation. Challenges included difficulties in reaching intended beneficiaries and issues related to the schemes' design, which sometimes prevented the policy from achieving its desired impact on financial inclusion.

Table 1.
Summary of Financial Inclusion Policies During the Pandemic

Policy Type	Main Findings	Effectiveness	Challenges	Works
Interest Rate Cuts	Central banks lowered interest rates to reduce borrowing costs, aiming to ease credit access for businesses and households.	Can improve credit access by reducing borrowing costs, but effectiveness may be limited in low-interest environments or due to lender risk aversion.	Limited impact where rates are already low; reluctance to lend during heightened risks.	(Aiyar et al., 2015; C. Borio et al., 2017; Çevik & Mutlu, 2022; Ferrero et al., 2022; Mosser, 2020)
Loan Guarantee Schemes	Governments provided loan guarantees to reduce lender risk and increase credit availability, especially for underserved populations.	Increases credit availability by reducing risk for lenders, but success is highly dependent on scheme design and implementation.	Challenges in reaching intended beneficiaries; design and implementation issues.	(Aristei & Gallo, 2024; Gentilini, 2022; Jung, 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Preziuso et al., 2023)
Direct Cash Transfers	Implementation of direct cash transfer programs to support vulnerable individuals and households, aiming to maintain consumption and alleviate financial strain.	Effective in reducing poverty and income inequality, but limited impact on financial inclusion without access to formal financial services.	May not reach those without bank accounts or digital payment access; limited long-term impact on financial inclusion.	(Dev, 2020; Gentilini, 2022; Kumar et al., 2023; Mazenda, Masiya, & Mandiyanike, 2022; Nicola et al., 2020)
Temporary Suspension of Loan Repayments	Policies allowing temporary suspension of loan repayments to relieve borrowers facing financial difficulties.	Provides short-term relief for borrowers, but long-term effects on financial inclusion and stability are uncertain.	Risk of accumulating non-performing loans; potential future reduction in credit access.	(Aiyar et al., 2020) (Ervo, 2022; Jung, 2020; Leong, 2022; Tsvirko, 2021)
Social Protection Programs	Enhancing or introducing new social protection programs to provide access to essential financial services and resources.	Can improve financial inclusion by providing access to financial services, but effectiveness depends on program design and integration.	Dependence on design, targeting, and integration with other financial inclusion initiatives.	(Abdoul-Azize & El Gamil, 2021; Eichhorst, Marx, & Rinne, 2020; Gentilini, 2022; Jung, 2020; Prates & Barbosa, 2020)
Digital Financial Services	Use of digital financial services to overcome traditional banking limitations during lockdowns and social distancing.	Helps overcome traditional banking limitations and enables easier access to financial services, but success depends on digital infrastructure and literacy.	Digital divide issues; inadequate infrastructure in rural areas; regulatory barriers; financial literacy gaps.	(Jung, 2020; Mansour, 2022; Pindyck, 2020; Pu, Qamruzzaman, Mehta, Naqvi, & Karim, 2021; Rabbani et al., 2021; Tay, Tai, & Tan, 2022)

Source: Elaborated by the author

Governments may implement direct cash transfer programs to provide financial support to vulnerable individuals and households, helping to maintain consumption and reduce the financial strain caused by the pandemic (Dev, 2020; Gentilini, 2022; Kumar et al., 2023; Mazenda et al.,2022; Nicola et al., 2020).

This policy was effective in reducing poverty and income inequality, demonstrating a direct positive impact on the welfare of recipients. However, its influence on broader financial inclusion was limited, particularly when recipients lacked access to formal financial services. Challenges included ensuring that the transfers reached those without bank accounts or digital payment access, highlighting the need for complementary policies to enhance financial inclusion.

Temporary suspension of loan repayments can relieve borrowers facing financial difficulties during a pandemic, allowing them to maintain access to credit and meet their immediate (Ervo, 2022; Jung, 2020; Leong, 2022; Tsvirko, 2021).

While offering immediate relief, the long-term effects of such policies on financial inclusion and stability remained uncertain. A significant risk was the potential accumulation of non-performing loans, which could strain the financial system and reduce future credit access for underserved populations.

Enhancing existing social protection programs or introducing new ones can improve financial inclusion by providing vulnerable populations access to essential financial services and resources during a pandemic (Abdoul-Azize & El Gamil, 2021; Eichhorst et al., 2020; Gentilini, 2022; Jung, 2020; Prates & Barbosa, 2020).

The effectiveness of these programs varied based on their design, targeting, and implementation, as well as their integration with other financial inclusion initiatives. While they played a crucial role in providing immediate support, challenges included ensuring effective program design and integration with broader financial inclusion strategies.

Governments and financial institutions can use digital financial services, such as mobile banking and electronic payments, to overcome the limitations of traditional banking channels during lockdowns and social distancing measures (Jung, 2020; Mansour, 2022; Pindyck, 2020; Pu et al., 2021; Rabbani et al., 2021; Tay et al., 2022).

This policy facilitated easier access to financial services for underserved populations, depending on the availability of digital infrastructure and financial literacy among the target populations. Challenges included addressing the digital divide, ensuring adequate infrastructure in rural areas, overcoming regulatory barriers, and improving financial literacy to maximize the policy's effectiveness.

The effectiveness of these policies in enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic can be evaluated based on existing research in terms of increased access to credit, improved financial stability, and reduced income inequality.

Research suggests that lowering interest rates can help improve access to credit by reducing borrowing costs for businesses and households (Borio et al., 2017). However, the effectiveness of this policy can be limited in situations where interest rates are already low or when lenders are reluctant to extend credit due to heightened risks and uncertainties during a pandemic (Aiyar et al., 2015).

Evidence indicates that loan guarantee schemes can increase credit availability for underserved populations by reducing the risk for lenders. However, the success of such schemes depends on their design, targeting, and implementation, with some studies suggesting that they may only sometimes reach the intended beneficiaries or have the desired impact on financial inclusion (Jung, 2020).

Research has found that direct cash transfer programs can provide vital financial support to vulnerable individuals and households during a pandemic, helping to maintain consumption and alleviate financial strain (Nicola et al., 2020). These programs have been shown to be effective in reducing poverty and income inequality. However, their impact on financial inclusion may be limited if they are not accompanied by efforts to promote access to formal financial services.

Studies have shown that temporary suspension of loan repayments can relieve borrowers during a pandemic, but the long-term effects of this policy on financial inclusion and stability remain uncertain (Aiyar et al., 2015). There is a risk that prolonged moratoriums could accumulate non-performing loans, putting pressure on the financial system and potentially reducing access to credit for underserved populations in the future (Jung, 2020).

Research suggests that expanding social protection programs can improve financial inclusion by providing vulnerable populations access to essential financial services and resources during a pandemic (Jung, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these programs depends on their design, targeting, and implementation, as well as their integration with other financial inclusion initiatives.

Studies have demonstrated that using digital financial services can help overcome the limitations of traditional banking channels during a pandemic, enabling underserved populations to access credit, savings, and payment services more easily (Pindyck, 2020). However, the success of this approach depends on factors such as digital infrastructure, financial literacy, and regulatory support, with some research suggesting that digital financial services may only sometimes reach the most vulnerable or marginalized groups (Jung, 2020).

Gaps and *shortcomings* in the current policy landscape related to financial inclusion during a pandemic include:

- ***Poor targeting and outreach:*** *Policies may not effectively reach the most vulnerable and underserved populations, particularly those in the informal sector or without access to formal financial services. For example, direct cash transfers may only benefit those with bank accounts or access to digital payment platforms.*

- ***Inadequate digital infrastructure:*** *Promoting digital financial services as a means to enhance financial inclusion during a pandemic relies on reliable digital infrastructure and internet connectivity, which may be lacking in rural or remote areas. Additionally, issues related to digital literacy and cyber-security can limit the effectiveness of digital financial services in reaching underserved populations.*
- ***Limited financial literacy and awareness:*** *Policies to improve financial inclusion may be less effective if targeted populations lack the financial literacy and awareness to make informed decisions about accessing and using financial products and services (Jung, 2020). This can limit the uptake of available financial resources, such as credit or savings products, during a pandemic.*
- ***Regulatory barriers:*** *Overly restrictive or outdated regulations can hinder the developing and adoption of innovative financial services and products designed to improve financial inclusion during a pandemic. For example, regulations may limit the ability of non-bank financial institutions to provide credit or payment services, restricting access to capital for underserved populations.*
- *Short-term focus: Many policies aimed at enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic focus on providing immediate relief and support without addressing the underlying structural issues contributing to financial exclusion and inequality. This can result in a short-term focus that fails to create sustainable financial inclusion and resilience improvements.*

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the findings highlights a complex relationship between policy effectiveness and financial inclusion during a pandemic. Several factors contribute to the success or failure of policies that enhance financial inclusion, and understanding these factors is crucial for designing more effective policies.

The design and implementation of policies play a significant role in their effectiveness in promoting financial inclusion. Poorly targeted policies or those with weak implementation mechanisms may fail to reach the intended beneficiaries, limiting their impact on financial inclusion. This highlights the need for well-designed, evidence-based policies that consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities of underserved populations.

The effectiveness of individual policies can be enhanced when they are combined with complementary measures designed to address different aspects of financial exclusion. For example, direct cash transfers can be more effective in promoting financial inclusion if they are accompanied by efforts to expand access to formal financial services and improve financial literacy.

The effectiveness of policies to enhance financial inclusion during a pandemic can be influenced by context-specific factors, such as the existing financial infrastructure, digital connectivity, and regulatory environment. This underscores the importance of tailoring policy responses to the specific circumstances and challenges different countries and regions face.

Policies that address the underlying structural issues contributing to financial exclusion and inequality are likely to have a more sustainable impact on financial inclusion. This highlights the need for a long-term focus on improving financial resilience and access to capital beyond the immediate relief provided by short-term measures during a pandemic.

While policies aimed at enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic can have positive effects, they may also entail trade-offs or unintended consequences, such as moral hazard and inflationary pressures.

Loan guarantee schemes and moratoriums on loan repayments may create moral hazard, as borrowers may engage in riskier behavior, knowing they will not bear the full consequences of their actions. For example, borrowers may take on excessive debt or invest in riskier projects, knowing that the government guarantees a portion of their loans or that they can defer repayments. This can lead to an accumulation of non-performing loans, putting pressure on the financial system and potentially reducing access to credit for underserved populations in the future.

Expansionary monetary policies, such as interest rate cuts or direct cash transfers, can generate inflationary pressures if they result in excessive money supply growth relative to the economy's productive capacity. Inflation can erode the purchasing power of money, disproportionately affecting low-income households that rely on cash savings and fixed incomes. Moreover, high inflation can reduce the effectiveness of other financial inclusion policies by increasing borrowing costs and eroding the actual value of financial assets.

Policy trade-offs and unintended consequences underscore the importance of carefully designing and implementing policies to promote financial inclusion during a pandemic. Policymakers must balance providing immediate relief and support to underserved populations and addressing potential risks and adverse side effects associated with these measures.

Drawing on best practices and lessons learned from other countries, potential improvements to policies aimed at enhancing financial inclusion during a pandemic could include:

- ***Targeted and well-coordinated policy interventions:*** *Ensuring policies are well-targeted and coordinated can help maximize their impact on financial inclusion. For example, combining direct cash transfers with measures to expand access to formal financial services and improve financial literacy can create a more comprehensive approach to addressing financial exclusion.*
- ***Leveraging digital financial services:*** *Expanding access to digital financial services can help overcome physical barriers to accessing capital during a pandemic. Policymakers can promote digital financial inclusion by investing in digital infrastructure, promoting interoperability between different financial service providers, and supporting the development of innovative digital financial products and services.*
- ***Fostering public-private partnerships:*** *Encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors can help facilitate the development and delivery of financial services that cater to the needs of underserved populations. Public-private partnerships can support the growth of financial service providers, such as mobile money operators, microfinance institutions, and fintech companies, well-positioned to expand access to capital during a pandemic.*
- ***Adaptive social protection systems:*** *Building adaptive social protection systems that can respond flexibly to economic shocks can help ensure that vulnerable populations can access financial support during a pandemic. This may involve creating mechanisms to rapidly expand coverage of social protection programs, such as cash transfers or unemployment benefits, during times of crisis.*
- ***Monitoring and evaluation:*** *Regular monitoring and evaluation of financial inclusion policies can help identify areas for improvement and inform the design of more effective interventions. Policymakers should invest in building robust data systems and analytical capacities to track the progress of financial inclusion efforts and assess their impact on targeted populations.*

CONCLUSIONS

This study has undertaken a thorough examination of the effectiveness of various financial inclusion policies during the pandemic, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which these policies have translated into practical outcomes. While our findings underscore the potential of meticulously crafted, precisely targeted, and well-coordinated interventions to significantly advance financial inclusion during times of crisis, they also reveal the complexities and challenges inherent in deploying such policies effectively.

Our analysis delves deeper into the impact of specific policies, offering a more granulated understanding of their influence on financial inclusion. For instance, interest rate cuts, while generally beneficial in reducing borrowing costs, highlighted the limitations of such measures in environments already characterized by low-interest rates or where lender risk aversion remained high. Loan guarantee schemes, on the other hand, underscored the importance of scheme design and implementation, with success varying significantly based on how these aspects were managed. Direct cash transfers emerged as a critical tool for immediate relief to vulnerable populations, yet their impact on broader financial inclusion pointed to the need for complementary strategies to ensure these measures reached those most in need, including those without traditional banking relationships.

The journey towards achieving financial inclusion, both during and after a pandemic, calls for a dynamic evolution of policies and a commitment to innovation. It necessitates that policymakers and financial institutions remain agile, continuously refining their approaches in response to emerging challenges. This study's insights into the specific impacts of financial inclusion policies provide a crucial foundation for such efforts, emphasizing the need for strategies that not only address the immediate financial needs of marginalized groups but also work to mitigate adverse effects and foster long-term resilience.

Further research building on this study's groundwork is essential for exploring the enduring effects of financial inclusion initiatives on economic stability and resilience. By focusing on the specific impacts of these policies, future inquiries can enhance our understanding of how to design financial inclusion measures that are not only effective in the short term but also sustainable in the long term, thereby contributing to a more inclusive, equitable, and robust financial ecosystem worldwide.

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