

Examining the impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development in South West Nigeria

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Abstract

Sustainable community development (SCD) is an innovative paradigm of development that aims to establish communities characterized by economic viability, social inclusivity, and environmental stewardship. This study examined the social entrepreneurship impact on sustainable community development in South West Nigeria using survey Research method. The study gathered data from 507 respondents comprising of Community Development Service (CDS) leaders, beneficiary of social activities and individuals using stratified sampling method. The study adopted multiple linear regression and descriptive statistic in analyzing data. The study's finding showed that strong correlation exists between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development ($R = 0.842$; $R\text{-square} = 0.709$; $\text{Adjusted } R\text{-square} = 0.707$). The findings further depict that social entrepreneurship is an imperative and key factors in the development of the communities in areas such as improving the wellbeing of the people, increasing their chances of gaining tangible employment and providing educational empowerment to less privilege members of the community. To increase social entrepreneurship influence and support sustainable community development, the study recommends that social enterprises should include successful social entrepreneurship practices into their organizational model should place a special emphasis on their commercial activities and inclusive governance.

Keywords: Commercial activities, inclusive governance, social entrepreneurship, South West Nigeria, sustainable community development

1. Introduction

Globally, sustainable community development (SCD) is viewed as a critical strategy for achieving long-term, balanced growth that benefits all segments of society while protecting the planet (Hariram et al., 2023). It builds on the principles of sustainability, community participation, and inclusivity, with a focus on creating resilient, prosperous, and environmentally responsible communities. As global challenges intensify, the importance of sustainable community development continues to grow, making it a cornerstone of global development efforts (Nordén and Avery, 2021).

The roots of sustainable community development dated back to the ecological movements of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly as concerns about the degradation of natural ecosystems and the negative impacts of industrialization gained prominence. Influential works like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* of 1962 upsurge human actions on the environment's awareness, helping to lay the groundwork for a broader environmental consciousness (Sen, 2020).

In Nigeria, community development has typically been driven by the government through various policies, programs, and institutional frameworks. Over the years, both state and federal governments have sought to implement community-based development initiatives that align with national development goals. For instance, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), launched in the early 2000s, emphasized poverty alleviation, wealth creation, and human capital development through community-based approaches (Kolawole, 2021).

In recent years, the focus of community development in Nigeria has shifted toward more sustainable practices, emphasizing more on ecological conservation, renewable energy, and

economic empowerment through agriculture, entrepreneurship, and education. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have influenced Nigeria's development agenda, encouraging the integration of sustainability into community development practices. Unemployment, Poverty and the necessity for accelerated economic growth persist as principal obstacles for societal progress and community development in Nigeria (Aderounmu et al., 2021; Prince et al., 2023). The recent pronouncement by the government focused on generating more social welfare and employment opportunities through substantial economic reformation and inclusive expansion, is indeed encouraging, particularly with its emphasis on fostering entrepreneurship in order to enhancing youth employment and community development (Oyedokun, et al., 2024).

Despite these efforts, community development in Nigeria has often been hampered by poor policy implementation, weak governance, corruption, and inadequate funding (Nwogbo and Ighodalo, 2021). For community development in Nigeria to be truly sustainable, there is a need for more integrated and participatory approaches that involve all stakeholders—governments, communities, NGOs, and the private sector. The empowerment of indigenous communities in taking greater control of their own growth, improving governance structures, and tackling the core causes of inequality and poverty will be indispensable to attaining long-term success.

Globally, social entrepreneurship has recently been recognized as invaluable to the delivery and improvement of innovative approaches in solving social challenges and persistent needs of people, in spite of the efforts of communities and traditional public (Kickul and Lyons, 2020; Patetta and Enciso-Santocildes, 2024). Social entrepreneurship refers to businesses that seek to create social value, in addition to financial value (Kamaludin, 2022; Hidalgo et al., 2024). Recently in Nigeria, social challenges including poverty, broadening gap amongst the rich and the poor, rise in unemployment rate, and worsening of environment through pollution are becoming increased, the global societies are gradually more engrossed with the social entrepreneurship sector's role in tackling social challenges (Lyons, 2015; Talmage, 2021). Hence, the notion of "social entrepreneurship" has emerged as a novel term to delineate the activities of community, public and voluntary organisations, alongside private enterprises that operate with social objectives rather than profit-driven goals. In light of these aforementioned gaps, this study intends to examine the impact of social change intention, commercial activities and inclusive governance of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development in South West Nigeria. This study help to provide how innovative approaches can be applied to address the problems that communities are facing. This study is structured into five sections. The first section is this introduction, the second section examined extant literatures to demystify the concepts, section three discussed the research methodology, section four shows the results and discussions emanating from the analysis of data while section five presents the study conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Social change intention and SCD

To ascertain the connection between social change intention and SCD, Osulale and Monday (2023) examined the relationship that exist between social entrepreneurship and community development in Southwest Nigeria. The study utilized a survey research approach and descriptive statistics in the analysis of data. While hinging on theory of entrepreneurship supply, the results of this survey unveiled that significant challenges such as government policies/legislation, cultural factors, religious influences, financial constraints, lack of

awareness, absence of mutual understanding, distrust among community members, financial misconduct, low literacy rates, aversion to change, dominant development approaches, and demographic dynamics impede the progress of social entrepreneurs in community development efforts in Southwest, Nigeria. The theory as propounded by Thomas Cochran in the study further demonstrated that, the core problems of a nations' economic development are themselves non-economical. The study recommendations include advocating for changes in governmental policies and regulations, educating community leaders and stakeholders on prioritizing the welfare of their constituents, and enhancing visibility through events and social media campaigns. Nevertheless, it can be inferred that the challenges mentioned in the study hinder the capacity of social entrepreneurs to bring about positive changes in communities within South Western Nigeria, social change intention as a variable of social entrepreneurship used in the study to tackle these challenges are insufficient. Focusing the study on only descriptive statistics arouse a good suggestion for further study. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There is no significant relationship between social change intention and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

2.2 Commercial activities and SCD

Mosotoane (2022) in a research conducted to investigate the effect of social entrepreneurship on community development in Makwane Village, Qwaqwa, Free State using qualitative research design and semi structured interview and focus group for data collection. The study employed thematic analysis in data analysis. The study leans on social capital theory, which emphasise that social structure should be built on trust, network and shared value. The study revealed that despite the various strategies and initiatives implemented by governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, as well as local and international entities, achieving community development has proven to be quite challenging. Social entrepreneurs, whether individuals or entities, utilize commercial principles and methodologies to tackle societal dilemmas in a manner that is sustainable and influential. The notable levels of unemployment and poverty have significantly hindered both social and economic advancements. The study suggested that social entrepreneurship should be used as a promising approach for community development that surpasses conventional development aid. Although, the study submit that social entrepreneurship endeavors are believed to possess the potential to deliver enduring solutions for community advancement through their innovativeness, there is need to empirically shows the impact in Nigeria context. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: There is no significant relationship between commercial activities and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

2.3 Inclusive governance and SCD

Pringle (2022) investigates the relationship between social entrepreneurship and community development in Bloemfontein. The study's foundation was a qualitative case study of Centre of Faith University, Bloemfontein. Individual interviews were used to gather data from volunteers in the organisation, which was then interpreted using theme analysis. The study revealed that interrelationships exist among these three dimensions: volunteering, community service, and social entrepreneurship and their respective roles within the South African context. There needs to be a relationship or ties made between development projects and the community. While using social capital theory as the study theoretical framework, the study suggested that sharing information and materials is crucial to ensuring employment generation and community development. The concept of sustainable community development is perceived as a social

endeavor which allows communities to collaborate, strategize, and implement plans to achieve development objectives and enhance human competences. Through the social capital theory, the study emphasize the existence of varied approaches and traditions to sustainable development of communities, while still adhering to fundamental principles such as collective action, engagement, empowerment, raising awareness among stakeholders, and forming partnerships. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: There is no significant relationship between inclusive governance and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

Nevertheless, bahavioural theory of social entrepreneurship serves as the background for this study's theoretical framework. The bahavioural theory of social entrepreneurship articulated superior performance in community development to instinct bahaviour and distinctive quantities of social entrepreneurs. This further delves into the factors impelling the social enterprises' formation, the fundamental organisational processes and frameworks, and the ways in which these classifications evaluate social influence, mobilize capital, and lead to enduring social transformation (Osabohien et al., 2023).

3. Methodology

This study makes use of quantitative research design with the aid of survey research method. The population of the study consist of 9,773,484 regular household population in South West Nigeria (NBS, 2023- projected increase in population). The South Western Nigeria comprising Osun state, Ekiti state, Ogun state, Oyo state, Lagos state and Ondo state were used as the research study area. In calculating the study's sample, Yamani (1967) formula was employed. Thus,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where n = The sample size sought; N= The research population; e = Level of precision (95% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{9,773,484}{1 + 9,773,484 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{9,773,484}{24,434.71}$$

$$n = 400$$

Consequently, 400 is the study's sample size. However, a 30% buffer (120 household), was added to create 520 samples in order to account for the non-response rate, which has been found to be typical in social science research in Nigeria (Asikhia and Naidoo, 2020). This is further supported by the fact that the study aimed for increased precision, confidence, robustness, and adequate group representation across regions. A proportionate sampling was employed to select 520 regular household comprising of community development service (CDS) leaders and individuals in South West Nigeria. Table 1 presents the sample size of respondents used for the study.

Table 1. Sample size of respondents

S/N	State	Numbers of regular household	Sample size	Percentage
1	Osun	1,130,817	60	11.54
2	Ogun	1,364,094	73	14.04
3	Lagos	3,400,042	180	34.62
4	Ondo	1,181,460	63	12.11
5	Ekiti	764,505	41	7.88
6	Oyo	1,932,566	103	19.81
	Total	9,773,484 (100%)	520	100%

Source: Authors' computation from NBS (2023) projected increase in Population

In collection of data, the study adopted structured questionnaires. The questionnaire consist of only structured questions on the concept of social entrepreneurship used in achieving sustainable community development. The data collection process was supported by a team of carefully selected and trained research assistant in each state in South Western Nigeria.

This study make use of multiple linear regression and descriptive statistics in the analysis of data. In analyzing the impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development, multiple linear regression with smartPLS4 was adopted while descriptive statistics was employed in describing the characteristics of the study’s variables.

For this study, social entrepreneurship is the independent variable. Social entrepreneurship was measured using three constructs: commercial activities, social change intention and inclusive governance. Sustainable community development was used as the dependent variable and is measured using community wellbeing, employment generation and educational empowerment. Table 3 present the summary of the variable measurement.

Table 3. Variable measurement summary

S/N	Variable	Type	Definition and measurement	Number(s) of item	Source
1	Sustainable community development	Dependent	Community wellbeing, employment generation and educational empowerment	6	Talmage (2021), Pringle (2022), Ogbari <i>et al.</i> (2024), Mudi <i>et al.</i> (2024), Kim <i>et al.</i> (2023).
2	Commercial activity	Independent	Wealth generation and innovation	7	Kannampuzha and Hockerts (2019), Defourny and Nyssens (2010),
3	Social change intention	Independent	Social mission and change making	8	Thorpe (2015), Tafel (2011), Kannampuzha and Hockerts (2019)
4	Inclusive governance	Independent	Stakeholder participation and democratic decision-making	7	von Hippel, (2001), Urban and von Hippel, (1988), Kannampuzha and Hockerts (2019)

Source: Authors’ compilation

3.1 Model specification of the study

In testing the multiple impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable competitive advantage, a multiple regression analysis was employed. The regression model for the study is presented as follows:

$$SCA = \beta_0 + \beta_1SCI + \beta_2CA + \beta_3IG + E \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: SCD = Dependent variable representing Sustainable Community Development

SCI = Social Change Intention

CA = Commercial Activities

IG = Inclusive Governance

E = Error term, (0, 1) normally distributed with mean 0 and variance 1.

β_1 = Co-efficient of social change intention

β_2 = Co-efficient of commercial activities

β_3 = Co-efficient of inclusive governance

β_0 = is the intercept on the Y- axis

3.2 Research instrument reliability and validity

In testing the level of validity and reliability of the instrument used for the study, psychometric properties were conducted. The reliability statistics of the study's instrument revealed a Chronbach's Alpha value that is very high above 70% as shown in Table 2, indicating an excellent reliable level of internal consistency.

Additionally, discriminant validity was evaluated using the composite reliability, and the cross loading. Thus, all items under all constructs used in gathering data from the respondents have factor loadings greater than the 0.6 minimum threshold value, proving that the instrument passes the indication reliability test as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability and convergence validity

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Organizational Capability	OC1	0.706	0.886	0.912	0.596
	OC2	0.788			
	OC3	0.814			
	OC4	0.802			
	OC5	0.814			
	OC6	0.785			
	OC7	0.686			
Sustainable Community Development	SCD1	0.847	0.897	0.921	0.660
	SCD2	0.826			
	SCD3	0.802			
	SCD4	0.829			
	SCD5	0.797			
	SCD6	0.772			
Commercial Activities	CA1	0.762	0.892	0.916	0.608
	CA2	0.756			
	CA3	0.746			
	CA4	0.800			
	CA5	0.772			
	CA6	0.829			
	CA7	0.791			
Social Change Intention	SCI1	0.847	0.931	0.943	0.673
	SCI2	0.819			
	SCI3	0.829			
	SCI4	0.796			
	SCI5	0.852			
	SCI6	0.825			
	SCI7	0.810			
	SCI8	0.785			
Inclusive Governance	IG1	0.836	0.909	0.928	0.647
	IG2	0.809			
	IG3	0.813			
	IG4	0.761			
	IG5	0.762			
	IG6	0.817			
	IG7	0.831			

Source: Authors' computation

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive statistics of the variables

This section shows the descriptive statistics for the variables under study. Each variable was measured on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing the lowest and 5 the highest score. The analysis comprises measures of central tendency, dispersion, and shape of distribution as revealed in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Sustainable Community Development	507	4.039	0.806	1.00	5.00	-1.817	3.373
Commercial Activities	507	3.959	0.796	1.00	5.00	-1.847	3.631
Social Change Intention	507	4.090	0.825	1.00	5.00	-2.201	4.861
Inclusive Governance	507	4.013	0.804	1.00	5.00	-2.068	4.326

Source: Authors' computation

Table 4. revealed the number of observations across the 507 respondents. The mean scores for all variables fall between 3.959 and 4.090, indicating that respondents generally had positive perceptions across all dimensions. The highest mean score was observed for Social Change Intention (4.0895), suggesting a strong inclination among participants toward initiating or supporting social change.

For the dispersion of the distribution, the standard deviations across variables are similar, ranging from 0.79610 to 0.82507. This consistency implies a comparable level of variability in responses. Such narrow variability indicates respondents' ratings were relatively close to the mean, reflecting a general consensus among participants. In the distribution shape of the variables, all variables exhibit negative skewness, with values ranging from -1.806 to -2.201. This suggests that the majority of participants provided ratings on the higher end of the scale, further supporting the overall positive trends observed in the mean values. In addition, the kurtosis values are all positive, ranging from 3.373 to 4.861, indicating that the distributions are leptokurtic. These peaked distributions suggest that most responses cluster tightly around the mean, with fewer extreme values compared to a normal distribution.

4.2 Linear regression analysis

The regression analysis between sustainable community development and social entrepreneurship variables is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Model summary

	Sustainable Community Development
R	0.842
R Square	0.709
Adjusted R Square	0.707
P value	0.000
Durbin-Watson test	2.062

The result in the whole model demonstrates that strong correlation exists between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development (R = 0.842; R Square = 0.709; Adjusted R Square =0.707). According to the entire model, the whole variables are related at 84.2% and significant at $p < 0.05$. This suggests that 70.9% of the variances in the sustainable

community development in South West Nigeria may be attributed to social entrepreneurship, indicating a strong influence. However, factors outside the scope of this model accounted for 29.1% of sustainable community development. Furthermore, to reinforce the model result, the Adjusted R2 value remain high, confirming the robustness of the model. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson Test value of 2.062 indicates that no significant autocorrelation exists in the residuals, showing that the model does not suffer from serial correlation issues

4.3 Hypothesis testing

Table 6 presents the summary of regression coefficients that is used in testing the relationship level that exist between social entrepreneurship variables and sustainable community development. The graphical output of the regression coefficients is equally presented in Figure 1.

Table 6. Summary coefficients

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	SE	T value	P value	2.5 %	97.5 %
CA	0.202	0.200	0.053	3.815	0.000	0.098	0.306
IG	0.564	0.562	0.051	11.047	0.000	0.463	0.664
SCI	0.114	0.116	0.047	2.435	0.015	0.022	0.205
Intercept	0.513	0.000	0.104	4.945	0.000	0.309	0.717

Source: Authors' computation

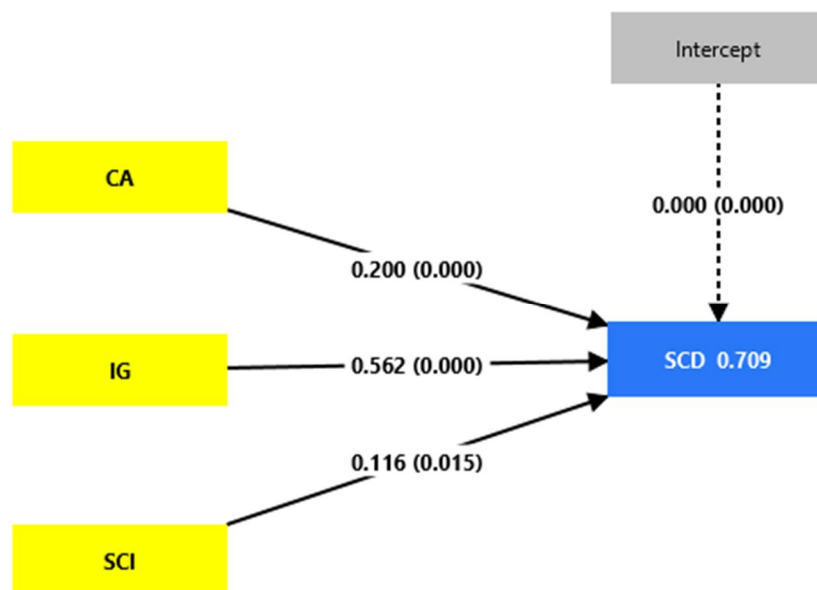


Figure 1. Regression graphical output

H1: There is no significant relationship between social change intention and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

The study revealed coefficient regression of 0.114 and p-value of 0.015 which is positively related and significant at $p < 0.05$ significant level. This result showed that significant relationship exist between social change intention of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. Therefore, the study reject the null hypothesis which state that “There is no significant relationship between social change intention and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria” while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H2: There is no significant relationship between commercial activities and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

The study revealed coefficient regression of 0.202 and p-value of 0.000 which is positively related and significant at $p < 0.05$ significant level. This result showed that significant relationship exist between commercial activities of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. Therefore, the study reject the null hypothesis which state that “There is no significant relationship between commercial activities and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria” while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H3: There is no significant relationship between inclusive governance and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria

The study revealed coefficient regression of 0.564 and p-value of 0.000 which is positively related and significant at $p < 0.05$ significant level. This result showed that significant relationship exist between inclusive governance of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. Therefore, the study reject the null hypothesis which state that “There is no significant relationship between inclusive governance and sustainable community development in South Western Nigeria” while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

4.4 Discussion of Result

The regression result from SmartPLS 4 present a detailed level of correlation that exist between sustainable community development and social entrepreneurship variables. The regression model analysis summary showed that there is significant positive relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development with value of R and R² (R =0.842, R² =0.709). This findings depict that social entrepreneurship is a vital and important factors in the development of the communities in areas such as improving the wellbeing of the people, increasing their chances of gaining tangible employment and providing educational empowerment to less privilege members of the community. This findings make it known that social entrepreneurship is not only important for community development, but it is rather imperative for social wellbeing and sustainable development. Thus, the findings of this study corroborate Iwueke and Nwaiwu (2014) findings which posited that social entrepreneurship has been growing, bringing about changes and stimulating economic development in certain areas in Imo and Abia States of Nigeria.

Furthermore, the findings revealed a regression coefficients with t-values that is significant statistically at $p < 0.05$ significant level for all variables of social entrepreneurship used in the study. This implies that commercial activities, social change intention, and inclusive governance of social entrepreneurship all have positive and significant impact in attaining sustainable community development in South West Nigeria. Social enterprise social missions will positively improve the sustainable development of communities thereby contributing the achievement of the sustainable development goal (SDGs) in Nigeria. Thus, supporting the argument of Olayinka et al. (2015) empirical findings that positive and significant relationship exist between entrepreneurship that is been geared toward social mission and reduction of poverty in Nigeria.

Similarly, the findings of this study has revealed that commercial activities conducted by social enterprise has not only bring about self-sustenance of their social activities, but it has rather contributed to creating employment opportunities and betterment of the communities. This is evidence in how individuals prefer to patronize social business product and services in South

West Nigeria, thereby generating more wealth for social entrepreneurs in carrying out their social activities, particularly in sectors such as sustainable education, agriculture, renewable energy, and micro-enterprises. This findings is in line with Mnguni (2014) study that revealed that social entrepreneurship activities will upsurge the youth economic participation in South Africa.

In addition, the findings of this study have demonstrated that inclusive governance of social entrepreneurship that involve active participation of stakeholder in decision making while carrying out social mission will enhance its impact on sustainable community development. Thus, social entrepreneurs that gives the community members chances to spell out their needs before executive their social missions will positively increase the impacts on the society and the achievement of sustainable development. This findings also correspond to the study conducted by Mandrysz, (2020) that revealed that civic participation and social capital in social entrepreneurship enhances community development, thereby constructing a distinct niche within the ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

This study has investigated the impact of social entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable community development in South West Nigeria. The results of the study showed that achieving sustainable community development is significantly impacted by social entrepreneurship variables, such as commercial activities, social change intention and inclusive governance. Community development signifies a process of transformation, enhancement, and vibrancy; representing a pathway towards augmenting participation, adaptability, and the overall well-being of the populace. Innovative approaches can now be applied to address the problems that communities and regions are facing more successfully. Thus, social entrepreneurship is one of these strategies for promoting the development of communities. Hence, the study suggest that: firstly, the government and policymakers should implement appropriate leadership programs, initiatives, and assistance targeted at improving the operational performance of social enterprise in order to boost social entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria. Secondly, to increase social entrepreneurship social impact and support sustainable community development, social enterprises should include successful social entrepreneurship practices into their organizational model should place a special emphasis on their commercial activities and inclusive governance. Lastly, to give social enterprises a higher degree of performance in fostering the development of the communities they operate, the social entrepreneurship sector should rely on the theory of social entrepreneurship behavior as its fundamental theoretical model.

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