
Social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction: The moderating role of social entrepreneurial real factors in selected states of Nigeria

Przedsiębiorczość społeczna i redukcja ubóstwa: moderująca rola rzeczywistych czynników przedsiębiorczości społecznej w wybranych stanach Nigerii

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Abstract:

Research objectives and hypothesis/research questions

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to look into social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction: the moderating role of social entrepreneurial real factors in selected states of Nigeria. Specifically, it examined: the effect of social innovation, social mission, social capital, and social change on poverty reduction.

Research methods

A cross-sectional research design was adopted with a population of 14,700, the total population of farmers across the three NGOs. 374 participants were administered a structured questionnaire. PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the collected data.

Main results

The study's inferences suggest that the genuine determinants of social entrepreneurship operate as a moderately favourable moderator of the link between social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation. Therefore, the study found that the variable effect of social entrepreneurship measures on poverty reduction was mitigated by the moderating effect of genuine characteristics related to social entrepreneurship. The standard of living improved, access to education increased, household income increased, and access to healthcare services improve.

Implications for theory and practice

NGOs and other stakeholders need to improve the problem identification process by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and engaging with stakeholders in order to increase the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship initiatives through its real factors in reducing poverty among farmers in farm NGOs. The effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in fighting poverty can be amplified by collaboration with government and other organizations. Creating a sustainable company plan and looking into other sources of funding is also crucial. Providing training, mentoring, and technical assistance to social entrepreneurs is also crucial for bolstering support structures.

Keywords:

social entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, social innovation, social mission, social capital, social change

Abstrakt:***Cel badań i hipotezy/pytania badawcze***

Celem artykułu jest przyjrzenie się przedsiębiorczości społecznej i redukcji ubóstwa, a w szczególności moderującej roli realnych czynników przedsiębiorczości społecznej w wybranych stanach Nigerii. Analizowany jest wpływ innowacji społecznych, misji społecznej, kapitału społecznego oraz zmian społecznych na redukcję ubóstwa.

Metody badawcze

Zastosowano przekrojowe badanie z populacją 14 700, tj. całkowitą populacją rolników w trzech organizacjach pozarządowych. 374 uczestnikom przedstawiono ustrukturyzowany kwestionariusz. Do oceny zebranych danych zastosowano metodę PLS-SEM.

Główne wyniki

Wnioski z badania sugerują, że rzeczywiste determinanty przedsiębiorczości społecznej działają jako umiarkowanie korzystny czynnik łączący przedsiębiorczość społeczną z łagodzeniem ubóstwa. Badanie wykazało, że zmienny wpływ działań w zakresie przedsiębiorczości społecznej na redukcję ubóstwa został złagodzony przez moderujący efekt autentycznych cech związanych z przedsiębiorczością społeczną. Poprawił się standard życia, wzrósł dostęp do edukacji, zwiększyły się dochody gospodarstw domowych i polepszył się dostęp do opieki zdrowotnej.

Implikacje dla teorii i praktyki

Organizacje pozarządowe i inni interesariusze muszą usprawnić proces identyfikacji problemów przez przeprowadzenie kompleksowej oceny potrzeb i zaangażowanie interesariuszy, żeby zwiększyć skuteczność inicjatyw przedsiębiorczości społecznej, a przez wdrożenie rzeczywistych działań zmniejszyć ubóstwo wśród rolników w organizacjach rolniczych. Skuteczność przedsiębiorczości społecznej w walce z ubóstwem może zostać wzmocniona dzięki współpracy z rządem oraz innymi organizacjami. Stworzenie zrównoważonego planu firmy oraz poszukiwanie innych źródeł finansowania są również kluczowe. Zapewnienie szkoleń, mentoringu i wsparcia technicznego przedsiębiorcom społecznym jest także ważne dla wzmocnienia struktur wsparcia.

Słowa kluczowe:

przedsiębiorczość społeczna, redukcja ubóstwa, innowacja społeczna, misja społeczna, kapitał społeczny, zmiana społeczna

Introduction

The country of Nigeria has witnessed permanent economic imbalances in some of its states like Lagos, Oyo and Kano states, thereby escalating the need to introduce generated solutions to community development. Socially purposeful ventures have become essential processes of inclusive development, especially by creating employment and skills training within vulnerable communities (Arejiogbe, Moses, Salau et al., 2023). The focus of these initiatives is often on empowerment of households

to come out of subsistence to formal livelihoods of urban and rural interfaces based on empirical evaluation. In addition, these endeavors combine local resources to overcome barriers that may come in the form of lack of access to the markets and hence resilience in the face of erratic market shocks. Research indicates that community-based models in the states were associated with visible increases in the level of household income during the last decade (Ogbari, Folorunso, Simon-Ilogho et al., 2024; Otokiti, Igwe, Ewim et al., 2024).

Empirical studies within the Nigerian context indicate that specific initiatives in the agricultural industry and micro-finance are made in states like Enugu and Kaduna, which have made quite a considerable contribution in enhancing the accessibility of the necessary services. Focusing on collective networks among the local actors, these models develop the conditions within which innovation addresses the needs in practice (Ogundele, Akingbade, Akinlabi, 2023). There has been a significant decrease in the vulnerability indices according to longitudinal survey data on beneficiaries, which has been due to the increase in financial literacy as well as mobilisation of resources. Particularly, profit-purpose hybrid operations have been shown to be effective in increasing the access to outreach communities in distant locations. Therefore, the consideration of adaptive strategies becomes helpful in its continuation of the energy toward sustainable development in various geopolitical areas (Ugoani, 2019; Eguruze, Kumari, 2021).

Evidence-based practices of purpose-oriented enterprises reduce multidimensional hardships in various selected states (both north and south). Field investigations provide quantitative data that highlights interferences between the increase in service provision and the reduction in the prevalence of localities in which they were established (Ogbari, Ingomowei, Amaihian, 2024). Besides, integration of technology based solutions has enhanced penetration into the hard-to-reach regions which maximises resource deployment to have a wider coverage. This is not only balancing structural inequalities but also in line with national development agendas of holistic development. This in turn legitimizes the transformational nature of bedrock, impact-driven awakening efforts in the restructuring of social economic realms (Gupta, Srivastava, 2024).

Studies into the workings of operations in states such as Rivers and Anambra bring out the nature of resilient systems that help them adapt to situational realities. The structural models of current investigations indicate that stakeholder engagement has strong connections with increased levels of participation (Hartati, Warsiki, Kusmantini et al., 2022). However, it is worth noting that the injection of mentorship elements has enabled emergent groups to get innovative due to budget limitations as shown by cohort-tracking statistics. The findings in support of such ecosystems propose policy alignments that can foster such ecosystems so that continuity and growth are achieved. Simply put, adaptive factors create the resilience in pathways

to be sustainable communal prosperity (Ogbari, Ingomowe, Amahian, 2024; Rusu, Roman, 2021).

Community solutions initiatives may be hard on low-income families by creating a dead-weight-loss by diverting funds to participate costs like fees, consequently producing debts and lowering nutrition (Garrity, Guerra, Hart et al., 2024). The activities in groups can isolate individuals and create divisions as well as decentralizing wage bargaining. According to the empirical data, the percentage of income decrease of the participants who have been included in more than two years is 15% to 20%. With time, this undermines the belief in group work, which puts off any further activity. The families have trade offs between short run benefits and long flow stability. This kind of treatment continues to deprive them, weakening family strength (Zhong, Li, Fang et al., 2024).

The eligibility barriers that are set up in purpose-based programmes lock children out because of work-related disputes within their families, costing them educational resources (Pilarz, Lin, Magnuson, 2019). The urban-based models leave rural families with a struggle against the costs of transport which increases the rates of drop-outs. Literature indicates that 12% more people will be absent due to logistical problems. This increases discrepancies in the labour market. Girls are an overrepresented group and hinder further prospects. Frames of rigid structures increase immobility regarding generational mobility (Omoredede, 2024).

Dense networks generate the culture of reciprocity, which exploits poorer households by imposing loans, which discourages savings (Dang, Hoang, Nghiem et al., 2023). Wage disparities are captured by exclusionary cliques which bar jobs. According to surveys, the growth in earnings in high-obligation groups is reduced by 25%. Social pressures cause chronic stress to the members. Informal debts increase financial weaknesses. The dynamics lead to income stagnation (Villalonga-Olives, Kawachi, 2017).

Reform forums also give greater power to the elite, privatize clinics, and drive up prices to low-income families (Moise, Popic, 2024). Online enrollment locks out the elderly making the uncured illness more prevalent. It has been measured that the unmet needs increased 18% after the reform. The preventive care reduces, increasing health expenditures in the long term. Service gaps occur the most in rural areas. The changes are discontinuous to the service delivery procedures, which amplify health-related obstacles (Sakellariou, Rotarou, 2017).

So specifically the objectives of the study will include: to determine the effect of social innovation on household standard of living, to investigate the influence of social mission on household access to education, to examine the influence of social capital on household income, and to assess the effect of social change on household access to health facility.

1. Conceptual review

1.1 Concept of social entrepreneurship

The integration of business savvy and social objectives into ventures has now become hybrid where the social value is promoted alongside financial sustainability which has transformed traditional paradigms of nonprofit organizations in new markets. These organizations leverage market forces to address the long-standing issues like unemployment and environmental degradation and advocate scalable alternatives by creating novel allocation of resources (Littlewood, Khan, 2018). Empirical research on the same has highlighted their importance in filling in gaps within the public sector especially within resource constrained settings where conventional aid is impractical. Cross-national studies show that there are patterns of conformity to local needs, which have been noted to be consistent thus strengthening community ownership. This two-partialized approach challenges profit-making views that require quantifiable returns in the society as determinant performance measures (Doherty, Haugh, Lyon, 2019; Saebi, Foss, Linder, 2019).

The theoretical frameworks describe these initiatives, as drivers of a systemic change, where the stakeholder cooperation is incorporated to expand to underserved areas. Studies emphasize the fact that they focus on sustainable revenue collection and do not rely on the charity-dependent models that are prone to fatigue of donors (Bacq, Janssen, 2020). The longitudinal experience with different contexts proves a standing even in economically unstable environments and hybrid organization enables quick changes. These organizations regularly incorporate inclusive governance systems, with strategic decisions being made based on the views of the beneficiaries. Therefore, this opinion takes them as central players on the quest to redefine the value creation beyond financial rewards (Mair, Battilana, Cardenas, 2012; Stephan, Patterson, Kelly et al., 2016).

1.2. Poverty reduction

Development interventions to reduce deprivation include multidimensional interventions to address income, health and educational shortcomings with combined policies bringing greater household stability in developing countries. It has manifested in the reduction of multidimensional poverty indices by means of infusion of resources such as conditional cash transfers into the economy at the macro-level (Robson, Vollmer, Doğan et al., 2024). These initiatives are complemented by the expansion of microfinances, which facilitated the increased improvements in access to credit, but the sustainability of the expansion depended on the repayment

cultures and market connectivity. Sub-Saharan African regional assessments have shown that there are correlated child malnutrition decreases after the livelihood specific programs. Therefore, comprehensive methods alleviate vulnerability since inter-related deprivations are managed at the same time (Habimana, Haughton, Nkurunziza et al., 2021).

Community-based systems enhance results to degree that localization of interventions is employed therefore the community is empowered to co-design interventions that are sensitive to culture. With the Latin American case studies, it is shown that, in the case of sustained gains, participatory monitoring is institutionalized (Deaton, 2018). Skill-improvement programs also contribute to enhancing employability, moving informal employees into the formal sectors with failed wage enticements. Longitudinal tracking will show that- there is continued effect on asset accumulation and this will disrupt the intergenerational cycles. As a result, stratified strategies strengthen shock resistance and lead to equal development (Alderman, Yemtsov, 2012).

1.3. Effect of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction

Impact-linked businesses provide a direct contribution to livelihood improvements since they create jobs in marginalized societies, and empirical connections to inequality metrics in pilot states are reduced. The models provide accrual of savings and investments in family welfare by building assets through micro-ventures to encourage the participants (Acs, Desai, Hessels, 2018). Experiments in Asia record that there are 20-30% income elevations of beneficiaries integrated in value chains. Putting emphasis on local sourcing therefore, they boost the peripheral economies with multiplier effects. This nexus highlights their strength when it comes to transforming social missions into market-based economic benefits (Roundy, 2017).

Scalable hybrids go global through technology and this democratizes household access to a market and services they could not reach before. The quantitative analysis is associated with program participation and positive nutrition and schooling indicators (Wossen, Abdoulaye, Alene et al., 2017). The sharing of knowledge in the informal sectors enhances productivity because of collaborative ecosystems. Moderate to strong effects on poverty headcounts despite the situations are attested by meta-analyses. Simply put, such ventures loosen the process of flow of resources, creating self-sustaining societies (Santos, 2012).

1.4. Effect of moderating role of social entrepreneurship real factors on social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction

The interaction between environmental factors enhances or suppresses the effectiveness of impact ventures in reduction of deprivation, and institutional support has been found to be an important facilitator in unstable setting. Strong legal systems contribute to operation legitimacy that is associated with the increased survival and beneficiary coverage (Estrin, Mickiewicz, Stephan, 2013). The density of the network moderates the outcomes of the network as it allows pooling of resources although in fragmented environments it is prone to dilution. The transitional economy surveys are characterized by enhanced poverty effects in benign policy environments. In such manner, they are the dynamics that bring the intention to translate entrepreneurial intent into quantifiable outputs (Kerlin, 2010).

Pathways have also been further moderated by cultural alignment, after which normative acceptance boosts the rate of adoption and intensifies buy-in within the community to maintain long-term interventions. Ethnographic questions infuse greater efficacy when business ventures appeal to the values of the indigenous people (Dharmasiri, Galappaththi, Baird et al., 2025). Availability of infrastructure makes it scaleable over urbanborder-rural borders relating to service distribution. Conditional analyses of panel data prove that there are conditional effects on income trajectories that trigger as a result of taking enabling ecosystems. All in all, these interactions purify the cause and effect path, maximizing the possibilities of poverty alleviation (Roundy, 2017).

1.5. Effect of social innovation on household standard of living

Communities led developments in resource use and service provision has been found to improve material well-being through the maximization of access to low-cost utilities and healthy food choices in underprivileged locations. Such developments are typically represented by the localized production regimes, which make the households less reliant on imported products, thus keeping household spending consistent in the conditions of inflationary pressure (Bardazzi, Gastaldi, Iafrate et al., 2024). An example is that the participatory design in housing renovation is associated with the enhancement of thermal comfort and lowering of energy expenses, which is a supplement to the discretionary income on other necessities. In South Asian experiences, empirical assessments show that there is an increase in the consumption indexes by 1015% by adopting these kinds of integrated models. Besides, the propagation of online platforms to connect markets has an increase in bargaining power of smallholder producers to promote continuous revenue.

Follow-up survey of the household confirms continued increases in ownership of assets, which supports the hypothesis of transformative potential of adaptive and inclusive mechanisms in strengthening the living standards (Nicholls, Ziegler, 2019).

Thus, we propose the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: Social innovation has a positive influence on household standard of living.

1.6. Effect of social mission on household access to education

Impact of Social Mission on the Household Access to Education. Educational equity programs, often implemented in purposely directed efforts, often use scholarship programs and investments in infrastructure to reduce barriers to enrollment by the children of economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The main thrust of these is in remote area outreach whereby due to the transportation subsidies and leeways on scheduling, the family demands of labour are met hence facilitating high attendance rates (Doherty, Kittipanya-Ngam, 2021). Sub-Saharan program records point at a significant growth of secondary completion among girls, which is said to have been met by virtue of the mentorship elements within larger community goals. Also, the joint venture with the local government helps to adjust the changes to the cultural contexts through curriculum modifications that please the learners. The cross-sectional analyses reveal decreased opportunity costs to the parents with the use of additional income-generating activities associated with a school involvement. Simply put, these mission-focused structures foster learning environments that would support lifelong learning, reduce the inequality in attainment gap on a gradual approach (Kickul, Lyons, 2020).

Thus, we propose the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: Social mission has a positive influence on household access to education.

1.7. Effect of social capital on household income

Trust based relationships and interpersonal networks serve as channels to economic opportunities, through which knowledge sharing takes place and gain access to referrals to jobs that accrue higher earnings. Strong ties within the community often serve as an insurance system, reducing the income volatility in case of a crisis like crop failures or ill health (Claridge, 2018). There is quantitative research of Latin America which proves that households which are incorporated into reciprocal associations enjoy a 1825% more rapid wage growth compared to their single counterparts. Moreover, the establishment of links to the external markets manage to foster the adoption of the technologies, hence, increasing the productivity of the agrarian or artisan sectors. Product tracking with a panel data focuses on the

compounded returns over time, a point at which initial comparative investment in relational assets returns exponentially. As a result, the intangible resources are key multiplier incomes-generation channels (Lee, Tuselmann, Jayawarna et al., 2018).

Thus, we propose the third hypothesis as follows:

H3: Social innovation has a positive influence on household income.

1.8. Effect of social change on household access to health facility

The healthcare environment is being transformed through the use of transformational changes in policy and societal expectations, whereby facility chains are being developed, and the issue of prevention is being introduced into the day-to-day interactions of communities. The changes in governance that are based on equitable distribution frequently lead to the mobile clinics filling the geographical gap between rural communities (Yu, Hill, Ricks et al., 2017). At least implementation records in Southeast Asia record the shrinkage in travel-related barriers by 20% after the decentralization reforms, which is directly related to the increased utilization rates. Campaigns that support culture that opposes stigma on particular treatments provides further support on timely consultations especially in chronic illnesses. The integrated health information systems make the process of making referrals easier and hence reduce wastage of time to specialised care. All in all, such evolutionary processes enhance systemic responsiveness that is guaranteed to cover a wide area and achieve improved health results (Solar, Irwin, 2010).

2. Theoretical review

The main theory to employ when examining social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction is the Institutional Theory, which was proposed by W. Richard Scott in 1995, and especially its use in the moderating role of social entrepreneurial real factors in the chosen states in Nigeria. The theory highlights the influences of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional pillars upon organizational legitimacy and behaviour of what can be perceived to be more than economic rationality. It assumes that conformity occurs due to interdependent pillars, which are driven by rules, values, and shared schemas, and that multi-level interactions create stability and also permit incremental change (Scott, 1995; DiMaggio, Powell, 1983). According to critics, the theory concentrates on determinism too much, underscores agency, and is not precise or culturally sensitive (Munir, 2015). In Nigeria, the theory describes social entrepreneurship as a response to institutional voids (e.g. weak regulations or normative barriers) where actual things like local networks intercede poverty-reduction effectiveness across states (e.g. Lagos and

Kano) (Arejiogbe, Moses, Salau et al., 2023; Ogbari, Folorunso, Simon-Ilogho et al., 2024). The use is confirmed in similar studies in Nigeria and Africa, which can stimulate the expansion of the impact of institutional configurations and restrain it at the same time, which increases the explanatory power (Olaniyan, 2022; Stephan, Uhlaner, Stride, 2015). This explains why it has been chosen to capture the institutional heterogeneity in Nigeria and gives practical and context-specific findings compared to limited economic models.

3. Empirical review

Among the interesting reviews, Nagdev, Ahtesham, Paliwal et al. (2025) published an article titled as Navigating impact: a systematic review of the journey of social entrepreneurship toward sustainable development, in which the PRISMA 2020 checklist and bibliometric analysis were used to filter the existing literature published since 2018 (Nagdev, Ahtesham, Paliwal et al., 2025). The researchers found that social entrepreneurship was proactive in the process of pursuing economic, social and environmental wellbeing, to an extent of stitching in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sharing of a clear aim by the authors was that social entrepreneurship is an effective and a modern form of dealing with issues affecting the societal level and therefore predicts its ability to spearhead sustainable development and desirable societal transformation by resonating with certain SDGs. Moreover, the review found out that there was a need to conduct further research on how social entrepreneurship promotes sustainable development and alleviation of poverty.

In their article, entitled *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Capital: A Review of Impact Research*, Daskalopoulou, Karakitsiou, and Thomakis (2023) performed a mixed-methods review in order to examine the moderating and mediating effect of social capital on the impact of social entrepreneurship on the reduction of poverty. They included two stages in their methodology: the review of 55 systematic reviews and a targeted literature that was required to deal with the connection between social entrepreneurship and social capital. The results presented three major pathways, which are the productivity, community resilience, and institutional development, where social entrepreneurship, in moderation with social capital, creates social value and has an influence on poverty. The authors found that social capital is a significant moderator, which strengthens the usefulness of social entrepreneurship in reducing poverty and had recommended the necessity of integrative frameworks in future studies.

Yu, Zhang, and Huang (2023), in their article, name it *Entrepreneurship at the Bottom of the Pyramid: A Systematic Literature Review* and it focuses on the topic of entrepreneurship among the poor (the bottom of the pyramid or BoP).

They searched 56 studies with the help of PRISMA guidelines and used them to analyze the nature, actions, and performance of BoP entrepreneurs. The review conducted was able to determine four forms of entrepreneurs; survival, community, professional and full and it results in a heterogeneous effect on reducing poverty. The authors found that harnessing capacity to empower BoP individuals to shift off survival into professional or complete entrepreneurship will be a beneficial way to alleviate poverty, and that policy intervention, as well as training, are important real contingency factors that mediate such results.

4. Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was employed in this research to obtain the information they needed from their subjects. The study targeted farmers under poverty reduction agricultural programs in Lagos and Abuja, but their operational offices are in Adamawa, Kano, and Oyo States. The population comprised 4,000 Kickstart Agro farmers, 6,000 Technoserve farmers, and 4,700 Alliance for Green Revolution (AGRA) farmers as of 2021. In addition, focus group discussions were held with nine NGO representatives (three from each organization) to complement farmers' responses. This was used to support the response from the farmers.

Proportionate stratified random sampling was followed to attain a proportional representation of representatives of all the NGOs. The summative fertarther population in the three NGOs is 14,700, here a sample size of 374 was calculated according to the formula provided by Krejic and Morgan. Hence, Kickstart Agro (27.2%) was chosen because it had a higher ratio of farmers than Alliance for Green Revolution (32%), and Technoserve (40.8%) because of the onward representative proportion of the farmers in each house. The sampling method was a multistage based approach where the respondents were stratified at level 1 based on the NGO and then sampled at level 2 (randomly and proportionally) given that all respondents would stand an equal opportunity of being sampled and this also contributed to representativeness, fairness and reliability of the responses.

A questionnaire was used to obtain data. The construct validity measured convergent and discriminant techniques at the same time as internal consistency of the measure measured the instrument through Cramachs alpha coefficient. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was the efficacious inferential statistical methodology to demonstrate how much the dependent variable has changed in reaction to the change in the independent variable under consideration.

5. Model specification

Poverty reduction is the dependent variable in this study report, whereas social entrepreneurship is the independent variable, and social entrepreneurship real factors is the moderating variable. Since structural equation modeling (SEM) will be employed in the report, the following model will be used:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PR} = & f(\text{Social Innovation [NSP+ NPT+ NPC]} + \\ & + \text{Social Mission [CE+ CB+ DR]} + \text{Social Capital [CSS+ IT+ SP]} + \\ & + \text{Social Change [PN+ SC+ TC]}), \end{aligned}$$

where: PR = Poverty Reduction;
 NSP = New Services/Products;
 NPT = New Practices;
 NPC = New Process;
 CE = Community Engagement;
 CB = Cost/Value Balance;
 DR = Disparities Reduction;
 CSS = Cohesion/Social Support;
 IT = Individual Trust;
 SP = Social Participation;
 PN = People's Needs;
 SC = Social Contact;
 TC = Technological Change.

6. Results

6.1. Response rate

In this study, questionnaire was used to obtain the needed data from the staff of the selected farm NGOs in Nigeria. The total of 14,700 farmers in the selected farm NGOs for the study represent the population of the study. From this population, sample size of 374 was drawn through the use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formular. Questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher. At the end, 19 of the filled and returned questionnaire were discarded due to incomplete response, failure to meet the criteria set by researcher. Finally, 355 questionnaire responses were used for the analysis as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of response rate of the respondents

S/N	Name of NGOs	Total distribution	Total respondents	Total usable	Response rate
1.	Kick Started Agro	4,000	102	97	27.3
2.	Alliance for a Green Revolution Farmers (AGRA)	4,700	120	117	33.0
3.	Technoserve	6,000	152	141	39.7
Total		14,700	374	355	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2. Issues related to social entrepreneurship (real factor)

S/N	Social entrepreneurship real factor		SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	Problem identification, opportunity in adversity, social inclusion and revitalization	F	33	56	112	103	51
		%	9.3	15.8	31.5	29.0	14.4
2.	Partnerships, alignment, collaboration, mentorship	F	23	64	118	82	68
		%	6.5	18.0	33.2	23.1	19.2
3.	Financial sustainability, impact investing, crowdsourcing, price points	F	17	52	105	101	80
		%	4.8	14.6	29.6	28.5	22.5
4.	Support system, incubators, accelerators, and challengers	F	23	64	118	82	68
		%	6.5	18.0	33.2	23.1	19.2

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Social entrepreneurship requires the NGO to identify problems, evaluate the adversities related to potential opportunities at all levels to achieve success, especially through social inclusion and revitalization of the Farm NGOs to improve their services to the farmers and the community at large. 43.4% of the sampled respondents supported this assertion.

However, NGO partnership is vital for expansion and accessibility to most relevant activities needed to make the program successful while the provision of alignment processes and ensuring collaboration among registered farmers with quality mentorship are germane to successful NGOs into social entrepreneurship. 42.3% of the sampled respondents supported partnering and aligning to enhanced poverty reduction.

Financial sustainability must be central to yield the expected results. NGOs must create avenue for impact investing and other sources like crowdsourcing and make use of price points too to enhance the successful implementation of the training and empowerment program. 51.0% of the total respondents agreed with this assertion.

Provision of support system for farmers and incubating some farmers to aid their growth level, while the use of accelerators and challengers is needed for improving the state of the NGO program. 42.3% of the sampled respondents agreed to human capital development in the sampled firms.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity test

	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Moderating effect 1	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Poverty reduction	0.854	0.855	0.901	0.695
Real factors	0.762	0.772	0.850	0.588
Social innovation	0.768	0.769	0.866	0.683
Social capital	0.754	0.755	0.859	0.670
Social change	0.865	0.873	0.917	0.786
Social mission	0.799	0.820	0.881	0.713

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

In assessing reliability, composite reliability was performed to test the internal consistency of the data. Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al. (2019) state that, unlike composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, which are also another measure of composite reliability produces lower values. Cronbach alpha is seen as a less accurate assessment for reliability since the values are unweighted (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al., 2019). Also, following the recommendation by Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al. (2019), outer loadings higher than 0.95 may be as a result of undesirable response patterns that must be deleted. Composite reliability between 0.70 and 0.95 was maintained for further analysis. The next step was to ensure convergent validity was met. In a reflective measurement model assessment, the constructs are assessed to ensure their validity. Unlike the reliability test that takes a look at the indicators, a validity analysis focuses on the extent to which a construct converges to explain the variance of its items (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al., 2019). According to Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al. (2019), the metric that measures convergent validity is Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE is the square of the outer loading of the indicators on a construct. The acceptable level of the AVE is 0.50 or higher (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt et al., 2019). The analysis performed in the study proved that all the constructs included in this study met convergent validity.

6.2. Multicollinearity

Variance inflation factor (VIF) is the most common techniques of testing multicollinearity. However, the VIF that is greater than 4 implies the presence of multicollinearity which required further investigation. On the extreme, VIF >10 implies the existence of multicollinearity which must be corrected.

Table 4. VIF test

	Moderating effect 1	Poverty reduction	Real factors	Social innovation	Social capital	Social change	Social mission
Moderating effect 1		1.003					
Poverty reduction							
Real factors		4.361					
Social innovation		2.491	2.411				
Social capital		3.810	2.493				
Social change		1.688	1.603				
Social mission		2.377	2.224				

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

Based on the results, the VIF values ranges from 1.003 to 4.361 indicates that the value obtained from the results were <10 which implies that there is no multicollinearity in the data set. Therefore, since the VIF values obtained from the analysis were less than 10, it is an indication that the exogenous variables data set used in the study have no multicollinearity.

6.3. Moderating effect of social entrepreneurship with real factors on poverty reduction

In solving a real-life situation, the interaction of variables can be affected by some other factors not capture in model operationalization. These factors at times can improve or affect the output of statistical results. Social entrepreneurship are not new to some of the sampled NGOs but yet the output and results obtained might not be favourable because of some factors that can weaken or strength the expected results. The influence of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction was moderated by real factor to determine the cause and effect to check if any noticeable changes can result from the statistical manipulation. The moderated path model of the variables is shown below (see Fig. 1).

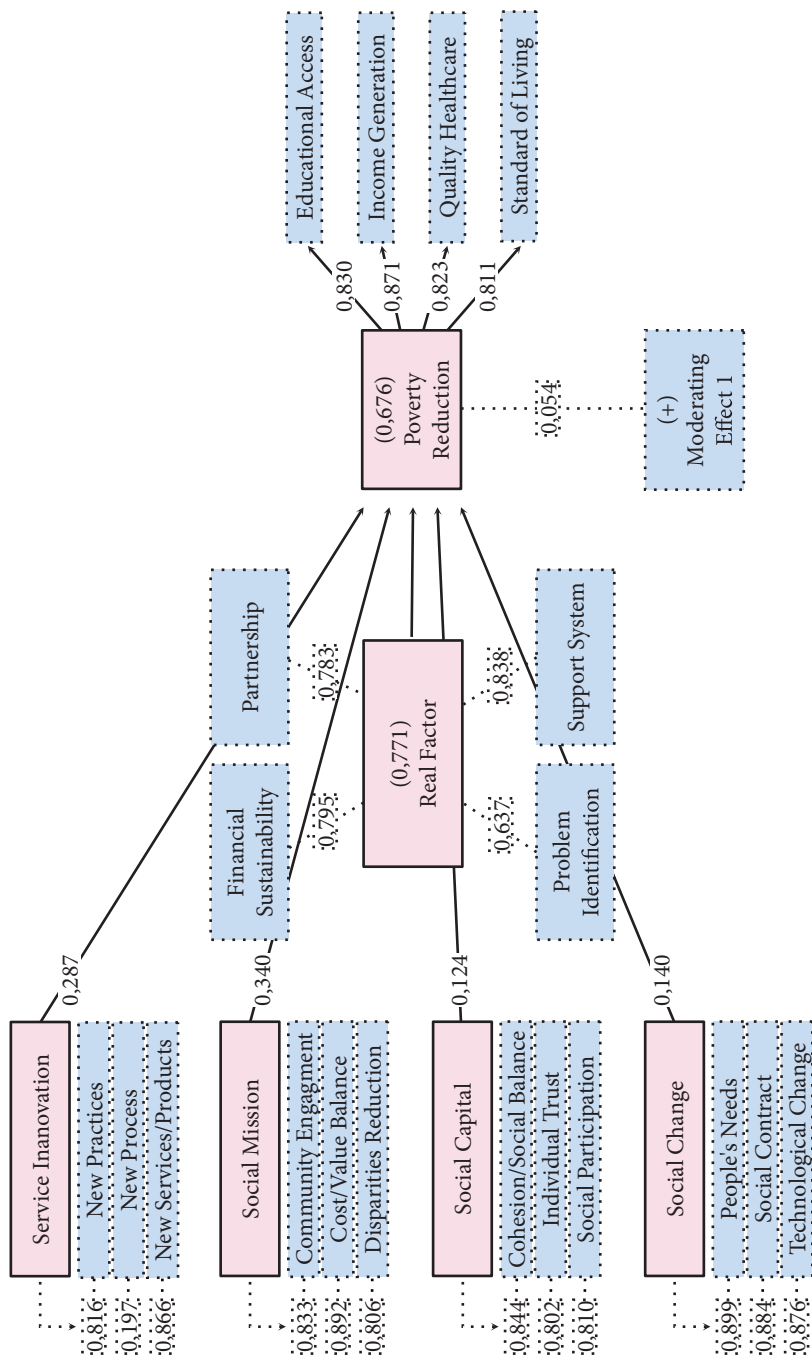


Fig. 1. Social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction moderated by social entrepreneurship real factors path model

Source: Researcher's Path Model, 2025

Figure 1 shows the path model analysis of the social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction moderated by real factors in social entrepreneurship. social entrepreneurship measured in the study are social innovation – proxies by new services/products, new practices, new process; Social mission – proxies by community engagement, cost/value balance, disparities reduction; Social capital – proxies by individual trust, cohesion/social support, social participation; Social change proxies by social contract, people's needs, and technological change. These variables were measured on poverty reduction proxies by improved standard of living, educational access, increase in income generation and access to quality health. The effect was moderated by the social entrepreneurship real factors proxies by problem identification, partnerships, financial stability and support system to check if the moderating variables effect will be significant. The figure presents interaction effects where more than single variables contribute to the latent variables. The outer weight model varies from zero to an absolute maximum lower than 1, it has been established that the more the indicators for a latent variable, the lower the maximum and the lower the average outer model weight. The results of outer model weights justify why the weak loading could not be dropped as all the loading weights were greater than or close to 0.50 except for the moderator. Also, these variables were major constituents of the latent variables from the literature.

Table 5. Path coefficients

	Moderat- ing effect 1	Poverty reduction	Real factors	Social innovation	Social capital	Social change	Social mission
Moderating effect 1		0.054					
Poverty reduction							
Real factors		0.301					
Social innovation		0.287	0.136				
Social capital		-0.124	0.549				
Social change		0.140	0.140				
Social mission		0.340	0.185				

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

The findings from the path coefficients table show a given standardization of weight ranging from -1 to +1 and the closeness of the weight to absolute 1 shows the strongest paths. On the other way round, weights close to zero reflect the weakest paths (Hair, Hult, Ringle et al., 2021). Social innovation, social change and social mission show a positive contribution to the poverty reduction while others show a negative contribution and all the social entrepreneurship variables is positive to moderating variable (real factors). The absolute magnitude of social innovation, social capital for real factor and social mission gives a better coefficient.

The result also shows that the path coefficients mediated by real factors shows weak standardized weight compared to the weight under poverty reduction while the real factors give a positive weight coefficient to poverty reduction. This implies that all the variables identified are good model for the prediction of poverty reduction while the interference of the moderating variables is significant. The identified social entrepreneurship metrics contribute significantly to the prediction of poverty reduction.

Table 6. *R* square

	<i>R</i> square	<i>R</i> square adjusted
Poverty reduction	0.676	0.670
Real factors	0.771	0.768

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

The common effect size measure in the path with social entrepreneurship real factors shows the *R* square of 0.771 (i.e., 77.1%). This variation effect is high while direct effect shows *R* square of 0.676 which means that 67.6% of the variance in poverty reduction can be explained by the joint model of social entrepreneurship metrics. This implies that the variation of direct effect is lower than the moderating effect i.e., identified social entrepreneurship real factors is capable of influencing the interaction between social entrepreneurship metrics and poverty reduction. Thus, this is a strong effect as the identified variables affect poverty reduction which implies that the remaining 32.4% is due to other variables not imputed in the model. Though, *R* square greater than 80% suggests a possible multicollinearity problem ($\text{Tolerance} = 1 - R^2$) in this case, there is no multicollinearity problem as tolerance in this data set is greater than 0.10 at the extreme. However, adding predictors to a regression model tends to increase R^2 . The adjusted *R* square of 0.670 and 0.768 for poverty reduction and real factor respectively are not close to the unadjusted *R* square in this model because of the numerous numbers of variables involved in the model. This does not have any effect on the result output as the models were built from the literature. The findings revealed that moderating effect increased the variation effect of the social entrepreneurship metrics on poverty reduction.

Table 7. *f* square

	Moderating effect 1	Poverty reduction	Real factors	Social innovation	Social capital	Social change	Social mission
Moderating effect 1		0.012					
Poverty reduction							
Real factors		0.064					
Social innovation		0.102	0.033				
Social capital		0.013	0.526				
Social change		0.036	0.053				
Social mission		0.150	0.067				

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

The weight of these variables is shown in the *f* square table where the changes in contributions of social entrepreneurship metrics were revealed according to their importance. The *f* square result revealed the strength of the path in the change effect. The contribution change of social entrepreneurship metrics are 0.033, 0.526, 0.053, and 0.067 of the latent variables to the moderating variable. These changes weights are more compared to the change effect on the poverty reduction which gives a value of 0.012, 0.064, 0.102, 0.013, 0.036, and 0.150 respectively for all the social entrepreneurship metrics except for social capital and social change to moderating variables. The moderating effect change of 0.526 is significant.

The implication of this is that, real factors of problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system increase/decrease social entrepreneurship metrics effect on poverty reduction. With this, problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system affect standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare. *F* square change effect shows that social capital metric is stronger to other metrics measured.

The implication of this is that adopting new farming services/products, new practices, new processes; social contract, people's needs, and technological change; of farmers living standard and access to quality healthcare contribute most significantly to the change effect of poverty reduction in terms of living standard, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare. Thus, it is important for the sampled farm NGOs to take these variables seriously in reducing poverty.

Table 8. Latent variable covariance

	Moderating effect 1	Poverty reduction	Real factors	Social innovation	Social capital	Social change	Social mission
Moderating effect 1	1.284	0.038	-0.021	-0.022	0.000	-0.031	-0.044
Poverty reduction	0.038	1.000	0.728	0.708	0.629	0.598	0.726
Real factors	-0.021	0.728	1.000	0.719	0.837	0.571	0.724
Social innovation	-0.022	0.708	0.719	1.000	0.707	0.567	0.630
Social capital	0.000	0.629	0.837	0.707	1.000	0.464	0.690
Social change	-0.031	0.598	0.571	0.567	0.464	1.000	0.539
Social mission	-0.044	0.726	0.724	0.630	0.690	0.539	1.000

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

Social entrepreneurship metrics contributed to the poverty reduction in different ways. Social innovation proxies by new services/products, new practices, new process contributed 70.8% and 71.9% to poverty reduction and social entrepreneurship real factors respectively; social mission proxies by community engagement, cost/value balance, and disparities reduction contributed 72.6% and 72.4% to poverty reduction and social entrepreneurship real factors respectively; social capital proxies by individual trust, cohesion/social support, and social participation contributed 62.9% and 83.7% to poverty reduction and social entrepreneurship real factors respectively; and social change proxies by social contract, people's needs, and technological change contributed 59.8% and 57.1% to poverty reduction and social entrepreneurship real factors respectively. This implies that social entrepreneurship metrics affect the poverty reduction of standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare. With this, the quality of products, the reasonably price products, improvement in new farm services/products, new practices and new processes influence standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation and access to quality healthcare. The moderating effect to latent variables gives positive values except for social innovation, social change and social mission.

Thus, the moderating variable reduces the effect of social entrepreneurship metrics on poverty reduction. The implication of this is that social entrepreneurship real factors such as problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system influence the effect of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction.

Table 9. Bootstrapping path coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/ST-DEV)	P values
Moderating effect 1 -> Poverty reduction	0.054	0.056	0.020	2.698	0.007
Real factors -> Poverty reduction	0.301	0.303	0.070	4.321	0.000
Social innovation -> Poverty reduction	0.287	0.291	0.049	5.890	0.000
Social innovation -> Real factors	0.136	0.136	0.042	3.195	0.001
Social capital -> Poverty reduction	-0.124	-0.124	0.055	2.396	0.017
Social capital -> Real factors	0.549	0.547	0.043	13.063	0.000
Social change -> Poverty reduction	0.140	0.140	0.039	3.647	0.000
Social change -> Real factors	0.140	0.140	0.036	3.613	0.000
Social mission -> Poverty reduction	0.340	0.338	0.050	6.828	0.000
Social mission -> Real factors	0.185	0.185	0.048	3.895	0.000

Source: SMARTPLS Output, 2025

The PLS bootstrapping output showing the t and p value revealed that any t value above 1.96 will be significant at 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level. From the output result, it was observed that social entrepreneurship real factors are significant to poverty reduction. This implies that problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system do affect poverty reduction of sampled NGOs in Nigeria. This is supported by the moderating effect on poverty reduction with t value greater than 1.96 and p value less than 0.05. On the other hand, Social innovation, social capital, social change, and social mission social entrepreneurship metrics were all significant with both real factors and poverty reduction. With this, the social entrepreneurship metrics were all significant in predicting poverty reduction. It is sufficed to say that, poverty reduction of the sampled farm NGOs is influenced by the identified social entrepreneurship metrics while problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system has influence on standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare to enhance poverty reduction.

The output of the analysis revealed that for farm NGO to reduce poverty in terms of standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare, there is need for the sampled farm NGOs to strengthen their new services/products, new practices, new processes, community engagement, cost/value balance, disparities reduction, individual trust, cohesion/social support, social participation, social contract, people's needs and technological change. All these social entrepreneurship metrics are essential to instill improved standard of living, and improve the general life of farmers as it was revealed that all the loading weight gives positive values. This is a great convergence with prior expectation. Thus, when all these social entrepreneurship metrics are effectively implemented, there is high tendency of reducing poverty amongst farmers. However, social entrepreneurship metrics influence poverty reduction of farm NGOs in Nigeria.

7. Discussion of the study

The effect of genuine elements on the connection between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction was uncovered in the study. The correlation between social enterprise and poverty alleviation was studied, but it was found that a number of external circumstances shape this connection. This reflects Nigerian (Arejiogbe, Moses, Salau et al., 2023) and Chinese experiences (Zhang, Sun, Dong, 2022) that indicate that poverty alleviation is achieved by identifying and developing social opportunities, inclusion of the poor into value chains, and innovative, socially oriented business models that cater for economic, social and environmental poverty. The researchers also found that all of the proxies they employed to account for the true impact of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction among the chosen farm NGOs were positive. Suffice it to say that the level of poverty reduction in the sample farm NGO is affected by the identified social entrepreneurship metrics, and that the standard of living, access to education, increase in income generation, and access to quality healthcare are affected by problem identification, partnership, financial sustainability, and support system. This means that the impact of social entrepreneurship metrics on lowering poverty is either increased or decreased depending on the actual problem identification, collaboration, financial sustainability, and support structure. In this way, the quality of life, opportunities for advancement in education and employment, the growth of disposable income, and the availability of health care are all affected by the methods used to diagnose and solve problems. Consequently, the sampled farm NGOs should pay close attention to these factors in order to improve the quality of life for its farmers and aid in the fight against poverty.

8. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that social entrepreneurship significantly contributes to poverty reduction among farmers in selected Nigerian agricultural NGOs (Kickstart Agro, Technoserve, and AGRA), primarily through its core dimensions: social innovation, social mission, and social change, which positively influence household standard of living, access to education, income generation, and health facility access. Social capital exhibited a negative direct path to poverty reduction, suggesting potential trade-offs such as exclusionary networks or over-reliance on informal ties in resource-constrained farming contexts.

The real factors of social entrepreneurship (problem identification, partnerships/collaboration/mentorship, financial sustainability/impact investing, and support systems/incubators/accelerators) exert a positive but relatively weak moderating effect on the overall relationship, enhancing explanatory power and confirming their role in amplifying or constraining outcomes. These findings align with institutional theory, highlighting how regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements in Nigeria's agricultural sector shape the efficacy of social entrepreneurial initiatives.

Therefore, social entrepreneurship emerges as a vital, contextually moderated mechanism for multidimensional poverty alleviation in Nigerian farm communities, supporting sustainable development by fostering resilience, inclusion, and improved livelihoods. However, the moderating influence remains modest, indicating that real factors alone are insufficient without stronger institutional alignment and resource mobilization.

9. Directions for future research

While this cross-sectional PLS-SEM study provides robust evidence from farm-based NGOs in selected states, several avenues remain for deeper inquiry. Longitudinal designs could track the sustained impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives over time, capturing dynamic changes in poverty indicators (e.g., income trajectories, health outcomes, and educational attainment) among beneficiary farmers and assessing whether moderating effects of real factors strengthen or weaken longitudinally. Comparative studies across more diverse Nigerian regions (beyond Lagos, Oyo, Kano, and operational areas like Adamawa) or other sub-Saharan African countries would test the generalizability of findings, particularly in varying institutional voids, cultural contexts, and agricultural sub-sectors (e.g., livestock vs. crop farming). Future models should explore additional moderators (such as government policy support, digital technology adoption in value chains, or climate resilience factors) or mediators (e.g., access to markets, training quality) to better explain the negative path of social capital and refine the role of real factors.

Qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or case studies with farmers, NGO leaders, and stakeholders, could unpack contextual nuances (e.g., why social capital negatively affects outcomes in some networks) and reveal implementation barriers not captured quantitatively. Investigations into youth and women-specific social entrepreneurship in agriculture could address gender and generational dynamics, given the sector's potential for inclusive empowerment and sustainable rural development.

10. Recommendation

NGOs and other stakeholders need to improve the problem identification process by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and engaging with stakeholders in order to increase the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship initiatives through its real factors in reducing poverty among farmers in farm NGOs. The effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in fighting poverty can be amplified by collaboration with government and other organizations. Creating a sustainable company plan and looking into other sources of funding is also crucial. Providing training, mentoring, and technical assistance to social entrepreneurs is also crucial for bolstering support structures.

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