



Employment Generation and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: The Role of Social Entrepreneurship

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship has been acknowledged by scholars as a veritable tool to accelerate the decline in unemployment and poverty. However, the contribution of social entrepreneurship to sustainable economic development in Nigeria has not been felt. This study, therefore, sought to examine the influence of social entrepreneurship on employment generation and poverty alleviation in Nigeria with specific reference to Nigeria Association of Social Workers, Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) Abuja Chapter. A descriptive survey was employed for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 150 members of the Nigeria Association of Social Workers, Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) Abuja Chapter. Data were sourced through a structured closed- ended questionnaire designed by the researcher for the study with the aid of personal interview. Data were analysed with the aid of mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and Linear regression. The results revealed that social entrepreneurship measured by social problem solving, social value, social responsibility and human teamwork has a significant relationship with employment generation and poverty alleviation. The study, therefore, concluded that social entrepreneurship is a driving force of social and environmental goals that have an impact on sustainable economic development. Subsequently, the study recommended that government at all levels, private organizations and non- government organizations should embrace the concept of social entrepreneurship and address the issues such as insecurity, acute

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unemployment, and abject poverty ravaging our society. More also, the concept of social entrepreneurship should be included as a separate branch of management courses in all tertiary institutions of learning.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship; employment generation; poverty alleviation; sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is regarded as the "Gargantuan of Africa", owing to its large population of about 200 million, which makes it the seventh largest country in the world. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2050, the population will have increased to 402 million. The country is enormously endowed with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas, and large untapped solid mineral resources. It is one of the sixth largest oil producers on the continent with oil reserve estimated to be 35 billion barrels (5.6×10⁹ m³) and natural gas reserves with over 100 trillion cubic feet (2,800 km³). Furthermore, Nigeria is also ranked sixth worldwide and first in Africa in farm output such as cocoa, groundnuts, natural rubber, and palm oil. But rather than record remarkable progress in national socio economic development, Nigeria retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of twenty-first century. National Bureau of Statistics revealed that over 20.9 million Nigerians youth are unemployed as at December 2018. It was also revealed in June 2018 that Nigeria had overtaken India as the nation with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty across the world, with an estimated 86.9 million people measured to be living on less than \$1.90 a day. This may be the reason why Nigeria has been bedeviled by the wave of insecurity for lives and properties. The former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Lamido Sanusi, on Wednesday, April 24, 2013, identified insecurity in the country, high unemployment rate as well as improper orientation of the youth as major threats to development in the country.

Social entrepreneurship has been acknowledged by the scholars as a veritable tool to accelerate the decline in unemployment and poverty. According to Mohammed and Ndulue [1], social entrepreneurship involves pursuing highly innovative approaches to addressing social problems and doing so in an opportunistic, persistent, and accountable manner, either for profit or non-profit. Research observed that social entrepreneurship is designed to engage the community with empowering the disadvantaged financially communities to jointly

mobilize their business in order to generate profits, and then the results of operations returns to the community to increase their income [2]. The European Commission [3] also described the social entrepreneurship sector as an approach to make impact on society and economy. This connotes that social entrepreneurship is not only able to generate employment opportunities, but also alleviate poverty and create multiplier effects to drive the economy, and create social welfare.

Social entrepreneurship has received a lot of research attention in developed and developing nations and it has measured and conceptualized in many different ways. However, the construct has not been explored and is still remain challenging construct in Nigeria. This study therefore intends to fill gap in knowledge by examining the influence of social entrepreneurship on employment generation and poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

1.1 Research Questions

These following questions shall guide this study

- i. To what extent does social entrepreneurship influence employment generation in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does social entrepreneurship influence poverty alleviation in Nigeria?

1.2 Concept of Social Entrepreneurship

The concept of social entrepreneurship has been widely used in different forms. The establishment of Grameen Bank by Muhammad Yunus, Ashoka: The Innovators for the Public by Bill Drayton, Youth United by Jyotindra Nath, Rand De by Ramakrishna and Smita Ram, SKS Microfinance by Vikram Akula and Roozi.com by Nick Reder, Brent Freeman and Norma La Rosa has popularized the term. Social entrepreneurship looks to be new concept but it is old as a phenomenon. Many scholars have referred social entrepreneurship differently as it is evolving and popular in different parts of the world [4]. According to Martin and Osberg [5], a

definition of social entrepreneurship should start with entrepreneurship, the term social is only marking the kind of entrepreneurship. Dees [6] supported this view. Theory building of social entrepreneurship is based on entrepreneurship research. Bornstein and Davis [7] defined social entrepreneurship as a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses and corruption, in order to make life better for many. Harding [8] also defined social entrepreneurship as an attempt by a social entrepreneur to use a microeconomic solution for a macroeconomic problem that is structural transformation of an economy. Robinson [9] saw social entrepreneurship as a process, which includes phases like, identification of a particular social problem and a solution to address it, the evaluation of the social impact realized, the sustainable model of the business that generate social-objective directed for-profit or a business-directed nonprofit entity that addresses the double (social & economic) or triple bottom line (social, economic & environmental). The European Commission [3] argued that social entrepreneurship is a broad tendency charge of social needs on the part of all of these different actors across the public and private sectors usually goes under the term social entrepreneurship.

1.3 Concept of Poverty

Oladunni [10] simplifies the concept of poverty to mean a situation of not having enough to eat, poor drinking water, poor sanitation, poor nutrition, unfit shelter, high infant mortality rate, poor environmental condition, low educational opportunities, lack of productive health care, lack of active participation in the decision making process as it affects the individual or society. Aliyu [11] defined poverty as the condition in which a person is unable to meet minimum basic requirements of food, health, housing, education and clothing. World Bank [12] also defined poverty as the inability of an individual or a sector of a society to unable to meet basic needs requirements'- (physical: food, healthcare, education, shelter e.t.c and non physical: participation, identity e.t.c) for a meaningful life. Alagbe [13] further states that the incidence of poverty is highly concentrated among people with the following characteristics: Poor material possession, low education, unstable employment/unemployment low status jobs, low unsuitable income, poor housing conditions,

large families, and absence of savings. According to Chen and Ravallion [14], poverty also relates, however, to other deprivations such as poor health, lack of education, vulnerability, exposure to risk and powerlessness. Poverty alleviation therefore, refers to efforts aimed at reducing the magnitude of poverty defined in terms of the proportion of the population living below the poverty line [15]. According to Bornstein and Davis [7], poverty reduction is often used as a short-hand for promoting economic growth that will permanently lift as many people as possible over a poverty line.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF NIGERIA ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Nigeria Association of Social workers (NASOW) was established in 1975 and is properly registered as a corporate body with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria,. The National body is an affiliate of the International Federation of social Workers (IFSW). Social Work is a profession that is change and action oriented. It is a skilled and paid job that has the objective of assisting individuals, groups, families, communities and societies to solve their problems. In doing this, social workers work as enablers, counsellors, advocates and resource mobilizers. They are also multi disciplinary team players as they work with, teachers, other Health Professionals, Law enforcement professionals and lawyers to help a service user from a state of disfunctionality to functionality.

The main objectives of the association is to provide a forum where professionals working with government and non-governmental organizations working in areas directly concerned with social welfare issues come together to device means of promoting the quality of social welfare service delivery. There service users are, children in need of care and protection, the physically and mentally challenges, youths, the aged, families, communities, refugees and internationally displaced persons, traumatised individual, the socially and economically excluded, etc. Members can be found in, Social Welfare offices in all the six Area Councils and Social Development Secretariat, NGOs and international aid agencies; others are Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF), FCT Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Social Development Secretariat, National Human Right Commission, Orphanages, National Agency for the Prohibition of Human Trafficking (NAPTIP),

All General Hospitals and Community Health Centre.

2.1 Empirical Review

There many studies which have been carried out on this areas and are closely related, relevant and serves as guide to this current study which were reviewed as follows:

Mohammed and Ndulue [1] evaluated the impact of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction, a study of wecyclers social entrepreneurship Ltd (WCSEL), Lagos State. Data was mainly collected from secondary sources and ordinary least square regression through the help of Eview statistical package was used to analyze the data collected. The research findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. Study conducted by Ogundele, [16] also found that social entrepreneurship has a significant effect on poverty alleviation. Chinonye and Maxwell [17] also investigated the role of social entrepreneurship as an effective tool against poverty reduction towards the initialization of sustainable development in an economy. A structured questionnaire was employed to collect data from 300 staff of a social enterprise (ASAFE) in Cameroon. Ordinary least square regression was used to analyze the data collected. The result revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. Jan [18] also examined the relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. The survey design was used in the study. Primary data were sourced via structured questionnaire from 300 respondents. The results revealed that there is positive relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction.

However, Richard [19] evaluated the impact of social entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Istanbul, Turkey. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 7000 social entrepreneurs in Turkey. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that there is no positive significant relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction.

Based on these above conflicting and inconclusive results, it is therefore hypothesized that:

H₀₁: Social entrepreneurship has no influence on employment generation in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Social entrepreneurship has influence on poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

2.2 Conceptual Framework for the Study

After the careful study of literature review, the following conceptual model is formulated to illustrate the influence of social entrepreneurship on employment generation and poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

Fig. 1 presents a summary diagram of the proposed causal model for the prediction of social entrepreneurship from the concept: employment generation and poverty alleviation. The model specifies the role of social entrepreneurship as a predictor of employment generation and poverty alleviation that lead to sustainable economic development. The proposed conceptual framework is presented and the hypothesis regarding the relationships between the variables are specified.

3. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey was employed for the study. A descriptive survey method is a kind of research where participants answer the set of questions. The responses are then studies and explained. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 150 members of the Nigeria Association of Social Workers, Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) Abuja Chapter. The Nigeria Association of Social Workers is presently working for effective social welfare service delivery to its numerous service users resident in the federal capital territory Abuja and its environs. Data were sourced through structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researcher for the study with the aid of personal interview. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's) of social entrepreneurship scale was 0.81, employment generation scale was 0.79 while the poverty alleviation scale yielded reliability alpha of .78. In the present study, to test the validity of the scale, the scale was subjected to face validity. The scale was administered to five experts and got their expertise on the validity of the items in the scales. Data were analysed with the aid of mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation and Linear regression.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 depicts that employment generation ($r = 0.682^{**}$) and poverty alleviation ($r = 0.469^{**}$) have a significant association with social entrepreneurship. This implies that social entrepreneurship measured by social problem solving, social value, social responsibility and human teamwork has a significant relationship with employment generation and poverty alleviation. The study concurred with Chinonye and Maxwell [17] and Mohammed and Ndulue [1] findings, that there is a positive significant relationship between social entrepreneurship, employment generation and poverty reduction. In another study, Jan [18] examined the relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. The results revealed that there is positive relationship between social entrepreneurship and poverty reduction.

4.1 Influence of Social Entrepreneurship on Employment Generation

Table 2 a, b, c, show that social entrepreneurship has a significant impact on employment generation ($F(1, 148) = 128.994; R^2 = 0.466; P < .01$). The predictor variable independently explained 46.6% of the variance of employment generation, indicating that social entrepreneurship contributes 46.6% to

employment generation. The estimated Durbin - Watson value of 1.567 clears any doubts as to the existence of positive first order serial correlation in the estimated model. The model was constructed to test the null hypothesis that social entrepreneurship has no significant influence on employment generation. The F-statistic of 128.994 indicates that the overall regression plane is statistically significant. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected while alternative hypothesis is accepted.

4.2 Influence of Social Entrepreneurship on Poverty Alleviation

Table 3 a, b, c, show that social entrepreneurship has a significant influence on poverty alleviation ($F(1, 148) = 41.730; R^2 = 0.220; P < .01$). The predictor variable independently explained 22% of the variance of poverty alleviation, indicating that social entrepreneurship contributes 22% to poverty alleviation. The estimated Durbin - Watson value of 1.378 clears any doubts as to the existence of positive first order serial correlation in the estimated model. The model was constructed to test the null hypothesis that social entrepreneurship has no significant influence on poverty alleviation. The F-statistic of 41.730 indicates that the overall regression plane is statistically significant. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected while alternative hypothesis is accepted.

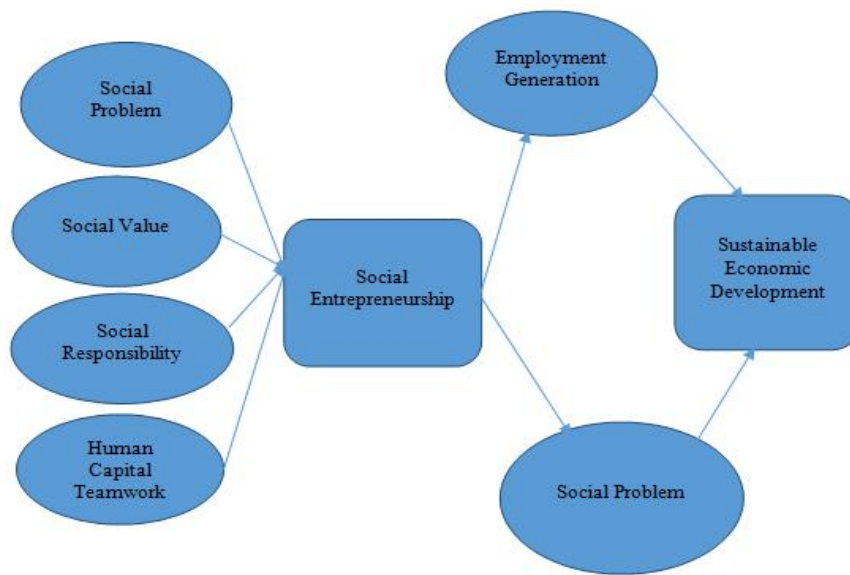


Fig. 1. Conceptual model
Source: Author's Computation

Table 1. Correlations analysis showing the relationship between the variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Social Entrepreneurship	4.4600	.60899	1	-	-
2. Employment Generation	4.4933	.56458	.682**	1	-
3. Poverty Alleviation	4.5000	.59922	.469*	.436*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2(a). Results of regression analysis

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin – Watson
1	.682 ^a	.466	.462	.41408	1.567

a. Predictors: (Constant), social entrepreneurship

Table 2(b). ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	22.117	1	22.117	128.994	.000 ^b
Residual	25.376	148	.171		
Total	47.493	149			

a. Dependent variable: employment generation

b. Predictors: (Constant), social entrepreneurship

Table 2(c). Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.672	.251		6.668	.000
	Social Entrepreneurship	.633	.056	.682	11.358	.000

a. Dependent variable: employment generation

Table 3(a). Results of regression analysis

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin - Watson
1	.469 ^a	.220	.215	.53102	1.378

a. Predictors: (Constant), social entrepreneurship

Table 3(b). ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	11.767	1	11.767	41.730	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.733	148	.282		
	Total	53.500	149			

a. Dependent variable: poverty alleviation

b. Predictors: (Constant), social entrepreneurship

Table 3(c). Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.442	.322		7.595	.000
	Social Entrepreneurship	.461	.071	.469	6.460	.000

a. Dependent variable: poverty alleviation

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the influence of social entrepreneurship on employment generation and poverty alleviation in Nigeria with specific reference to Nigeria Association of Social Workers, Federal Capital Tertiary (FCT) Abuja Chapter. The study established that social entrepreneurship measured by social problem solving, social value, social responsibility and human teamwork has a significant relationship with employment generation and poverty alleviation. The findings concurred with previous studies that significant and positive relationship exist between social entrepreneurship, employment generation and poverty alleviation. The study therefore concluded that social entrepreneurship is driving force of social and environmental goals that have an impact on sustainable economic development.

Subsequently, the study recommended that government at all levels, private organizations and non- government organizations should embrace the concept of social entrepreneurship and address the issues such as insecurity, acute unemployment, and abject poverty ravaging our society. More also, the concept of social entrepreneurship should be included as a separate branch of management courses in all tertiary institutions of learning.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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