



SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS PREDICTORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EDO STATE

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Abstract

The need to promote sustainability amidst challenging times in developing countries has informed the need to focus on social and sustainable entrepreneurship. This is the focus of the study. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which sustainable and social entrepreneurship predict sustainable development in Edo State. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population was made up of 382 business education students from the two public universities offering business education in Edo State. The correlational survey design was used in establishing the relationship between the study variables. The Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (SESESDQ) was used in collecting data from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha, which gave the following reliability coefficients (sustainable entrepreneurship = .82, social entrepreneurship = .78 and sustainable development = .80). The simple linear regression analysis was used in analysing the data collected. According to the results, sustainable entrepreneurship significantly predicted sustainable development in Edo State. Social entrepreneurship significantly predicted sustainable development in Edo State. This study fills a gap by addressing sustainable and social entrepreneurship as significant predictors of sustainable development in Edo State. The study establishes sustainable and social entrepreneurship education as essential educational paths for fostering sustainable development outcomes by highlighting their strategic importance within business education programme. The study therefore recommends that the teaching of sustainable and social entrepreneurship should be taken more seriously considering their roles in promoting sustainable development.

Keywords: *sustainable entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, sustainable development and business education*

INTRODUCTION

In literature, economic development and sustainable development (SD) are becoming increasingly popular. Sustainability is another term for sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development first used the term "sustainable development" in its 1987 Brundtland Report. This established the 1992 Rio Conference's agenda, which included sustainable development as a major focus (Mazza, 2021; Ogbu & Awa, 2025). All member countries adopted the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presented by



the UN General Assembly in New York. By 2030, these 17 objectives will set the stage for world peace and prosperity. The term "sustainable development" describes economic, social, and environmental development that is planned and carried out with sustainability and environmental preservation in mind. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987), Sustainable development is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.". This definition places a strong emphasis on installing the tools required to meet the country's current and future demands. Each country has different demands.

The increasing demand on the ecosystem has made it necessary to address the sustainable development pillars. The social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development were initially identified in the 1987 Brundtland Report. Sustainable development is composed of these pillars (Adavbiele, 2025). Social equality is frequently used to characterise the "social" component of sustainable development. In order to lessen social vices, it places a strong emphasis on advancing social justice and well-being in society. The "economic" pillar of sustainable development is defined as economic development, which denotes expansion in the economy accompanied by positive improvements. The "environment," referred to as environmental protection, places a strong emphasis on safeguarding the ecosystem in order to lessen the excesses brought on by needless environmental exploitation or deterioration. Entrepreneurs must make a deliberate effort to assess their business processes to ensure and achieve sustainable development. In other words, social and sustainable entrepreneurship play a major role in determining sustainable development.

Sustainable entrepreneurship, also known as green entrepreneurship, is a novel areas yet to be fully explored. It is the process of developing and implementing solutions to environmental problems while simultaneously promoting social changes that guarantee the environment is not in danger. The goal of sustainable entrepreneurship is to create a company that strikes a balance between the triple bottom line's economic, social, and environmental components. (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Ediagbonya, 2023a, Ediagbonya *et al.*, 2024a; Ediagbonya *et al.*, 2024b). Sustainable entrepreneurship, according to Yin *et al* (2022), is the application of entrepreneurial activity in a business's creation of eco-friendly products, services, and markets in order to earn a living while protecting the environment. The primary goal of sustainable entrepreneurship is to stop entrepreneurs from acting exploitatively by avoiding negative business practices that could negatively affect society and the environment. Given their focus on using these business models to promote sustainable development, social entrepreneurship and sustainable entrepreneurship are closely related.

According to Tiwari *et al.* (2017), social entrepreneurship is a process that starts with a perceived social opportunity, transforms it into an enterprise model, determines and acquires the wealth necessary to start and grow the enterprise, and yield the future upon goal achievement of the enterprise. Tran and Korflesch (2016), and Ruiz-Rosa *et al.* (2020) explained that the best remedy for our society is social entrepreneurship because it is a practical response to unmet individual and societal needs as well as the simultaneous pursuit of economic, social, and environmental goals by enterprising ventures. Using innovation to address social issues is known as social entrepreneurship (Ruiz-Rosa *et al.*, 2020; Hattab, 2022; Ediagbonya *et al.*, 2024c; Ediagbonya *et al.*, 2024d). Making sure that people's needs are satisfied in relation to society's needs is the fundamental goal of social entrepreneurship. In particular, this type of business model puts societal demands ahead of profit-making,



which is the hallmark of the traditional entrepreneurial approach (Ediagbonya, 2022; Ediagbonya, 2023b; Ediagbonya *et al.*, 2023c). Once this model is explored, there is a likelihood of experiencing sustainable development.

The academic community has shown an increasing interest in studying sustainable development in recent years. A number of studies have been carried out to determine the relationships between sustainable development, social and sustainable entrepreneurship. Sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable development are significantly correlated, according to research by Dhahri and Omri (2018), Urbano *et al.* (2019), Urbano *et al.* (2020), Neumann (2021), and Neumann (2022). Similarly, social entrepreneurship and sustainable development were found to be significantly correlated by Al-Qudah *et al.* (2022), Forouharfar *et al.* (2019), and Turyakira *et al.* (2025). There is still a gap despite the empirical investigations that have been done thus far. There are few empirical studies in this field, and the majority of research in this new discipline was carried out outside the nation. From the reviewed studies, no single study has looked at the predictive roles of sustainable and social entrepreneurship in relation to sustainable development. This study fully addressed the gap regarding the degree to which sustainable and social entrepreneurship predicts sustainable development.

Research Questions

1. Is sustainable entrepreneurship a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State?
2. Is social entrepreneurship a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State?

Hypotheses

The 0.05 threshold of significance was used to design and test the following hypotheses.

1. Sustainable Entrepreneurship is not a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.
2. Social Entrepreneurship is not a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.

Theoretical Framework

Triple Bottom Line Theory

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL or 3BL) theory, which was first presented by John Elkington in 1994, serves as the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. According to Walker *et al.* (2020), this theory is a framework for sustainability that centres on the three Ps: people, planet, and profit. The way that businesses approach sustainable development has been significantly changed by this theory. TBL encourages organizations to take into account the wider influence on society and the environment by incorporating three interconnected dimensions: social (people), environmental (planet), and economic (profit), going beyond the conventional focus on profit (Farooq *et al.*, 2021; Shim *et al.* 2021).



In the context of the current study, sustainable entrepreneurship is related to the "Planet" in the theory. Sustainable entrepreneurship, as previously established, focuses on engaging in environmentally friendly businesses; that is, entrepreneurs should consider the environment in their business dealings with a view to reducing unnecessary exploitation of the environment (ecosystem). Once the environment is well taken care of, there is a tendency to experience sustainable development. In the same study, social entrepreneurship is related to the "people" in the TBL theory, emphasizes that entrepreneurs should support businesses that have a propensity to address societal issues and challenges. Sustainable development is likely to occur once these societal challenges are incorporated into their business model. Sustainable development, the dependent variable, is the result of successfully balancing the three Ps (People, Planet, and Profit). Based on the aforementioned, this theoretical framework highlights how social entrepreneurship (people) and sustainable entrepreneurship (planet) contribute to sustainable development.

Method

In order to ascertain the degree to which sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship predict sustainable development in Edo State, this study used a correlational survey approach. All 382 business education students from the University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma participated. The entire population was used because of its manageable size, and as such, there was no sampling. The Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (SESESDQ) was the structured questionnaire used to gather data. This instrument was divided into two sections: Section B concentrated on the two independent variables (sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship) and one dependent variable (sustainable development), while Section A addressed the demographic variables of the respondents. Eight items were adapted from existing scales for this study, utilising a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The sustainable entrepreneurship component included three items adapted from Lotfi *et al.* (2018), the social entrepreneurship component consisted of two items from Hockerts (2018). The sustainable development component was made up of three items adapted from Lotfi *et al.* (2018),

Experts in business education evaluated the face and content validity of the tool, and their recommendations were integrated into the completed questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability. After being given to fifteen business education students at Delta State University in Abraka, Delta State, the following coefficients were obtained (sustainable entrepreneurship = .82, social entrepreneurship = .78 and sustainable development = .80). An online Google Form was utilized in administering the instruments to the respondents and a total of 285 instruments were retrieved, representing 74.6% of the total population. The data were analysed using simple linear regression analysis and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.0.



Results

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section with respect to the correlation matrix and hypothesis testing of the study variables.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix showing the relationship among sustainable entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and sustainable development (N=285)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3
Sustainable Entrepreneurship	4.08	0.73	1		
Social Entrepreneurship	4.04	0.75	.488**	1	
Sustainable Development	4.02	0.79	.615**	.293**	1

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

Table 1 displays the correlations between sustainable entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The variables have correlation coefficients ranging from 293 to 615. There was a moderately favourable association ($r=.488$, $n=285$) between sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. There was a moderate association ($r=.488$, $n=285$) between sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable development. There was a low correlation ($r=.293$, $n=285$) between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

Hypothesis One: Sustainable entrepreneurship is not a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.

Table 2: Sustainable Entrepreneurship Predicting Sustainable Development

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.677	.645			5.699	.000
	Sustainable Entrepreneurship	.685	.052	.615		13.117	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Development

Note: $R^2 = .378$, $Df = 1, 283$, $SE = .052$, $F = 172.060$, $P < .05$, $t = 13.117$, $\beta = .615$, 95% LLCI = .581, 95%ULCI = .789

Source: Authors' Work (2025)

Table 2 reveals that sustainable entrepreneurship ($F(1, 283) = 172.060$, $SE = .052$, $\beta = .615$, $t = 13.117$, 95% LLCI = .581 – ULCI = .789) had a significant positive influence on sustainable development. The R-square (.378) reveals that 37.8% of the variance in



sustainable development is influenced by sustainable entrepreneurship. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for sustainable entrepreneurship influencing sustainable development (bias = .001, $p = .000$) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the authors. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected in the study. That is, sustainable entrepreneurship is a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.

Hypothesis Two: Social entrepreneurship is not a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.

Table 3: Social Entrepreneurship Predicting Sustainable Development

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	8.430	.713		11.828	.000
	Social Entrepreneurship	.449	.087	.293	5.153	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Development

Note: $R^2 = .086$, $Df = 1, 283$, $SE = .093$, $F = 26.555$, $P < .05$, $t = 5.153$, $\beta = .293$, 95% LLCI = .259, 95%ULCI = .629

Source: Authors' Work (2025)

Table 3 reveals that social entrepreneurship ($F(1, 283) = 26.555$, $SE = .093$, $\beta = .293$, $t = 5.153$, 95% LLCI = .259 – ULCI = .629) had a significant positive influence on sustainable development. The R-square (.086) reveals that 8.6% of the variance in sustainable development is influenced by social entrepreneurship. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for social entrepreneurship influencing sustainable development (bias = -.001, $p = .000$) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the authors. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected in the study. That is, social entrepreneurship is a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis of the study shows that sustainable entrepreneurship is a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State. This implies that when investors launch businesses that promote environmental protection, there is a likelihood of experiencing sustainable development in the State. This finding corroborates the findings of researchers such as Lotfi et al. (2018), Dhahri and Omri (2018), Urbano *et al.* (2019), Urbano *et al.* (2020), Neumann (2021) and Neumann (2022), who in their separate studies found that sustainable entrepreneurship significantly influences sustainable development.

According to the second hypothesis of the study, it was found that social entrepreneurship is a significant predictor of sustainable development in Edo State. This implies that entrepreneurs with a social mindset are more propelled to establish businesses that facilitate social development, which in turn promotes sustainability in the state. This finding corroborates the



findings of researchers such as Forouharfar *et al.* (2019), Al-Qudah *et al.* (2022), Savermann (2023) and Turyakira *et al.* (2025), who in their separate studies established that social entrepreneurship significantly influences sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that sustainable development is significantly influenced by both sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. The results suggest that improving social and sustainable entrepreneurship can be a useful tactic for promoting sustainable development in Edo State. The findings also imply that investments in entrepreneurial education can assist sustainable development objectives at the institutional and policy levels by producing wider socioeconomic and environmental benefits. Additionally, this finding makes a novel contribution to the literature in entrepreneurship and sustainable development, which will further promote research interest in the field.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Curriculum framework should be emphasised in view of the need to promote sustainable development;
- ii. The teaching of sustainable and social entrepreneurship should be taken more seriously, considering their roles in promoting sustainable development; and
- iii. Researchers, particularly in developing countries, should focus on advancing research in this emerging field.

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