Full Length Research

# Impact of Social Entrepreneurship Education on Social Startup Creation:  A Study of Selected Public Universities

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**Abstract:**  This study intends to motivate students from various universities to be creative and innovative in trying to identify the various needs of the communities, in order to create social ventures that will benefits the individuals of that community. This study examines how social entrepreneurship education affects aspiring sstudents to pursue social entrepreneurship in the startup ecosystem. The objective of this study is to ensure that private university adds social entrepreneurship in the academic curriculum so as to make students beware of the different problems facing communities so that they can create social venture tor ideas to solve these problems identified. The qualitative research method was employed in this study, however,  secondary sources of data was used in this research paper by reviewing archival literature of past studies such as journal and conferences proceedings, magazines, books, internet sources and so on. This study, which draws on prior research, investigates the relationship between social entrepreneurship education and students intentions to develop social ventures in Nigeria. It investigates how social entrepreneurship education might influence how individuals view social issues, improve their knowledge of cutting-edge business concepts, and foster their social and environmental consciousness. In addition, the study explores the mediating effects of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social support in the connection between social entrepreneurship education and social startups. The results of this study will add to the body of knowledge by giving an in-depth knowledge of how social entrepreneurship education influences the students to engage in social entrepreneurship in startup ecosystems. The findings will emphasize the significance of integrating social entrepreneurship education within entrepreneurial curriculum and initiatives and have practical consequences for policymakers, educators, and aspiring entrepreneurs.

**Keyword**: Social Entrepreneurship Education, Social Startups, Economic Development, Nigeria.

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## 1.0 Background of the Study

In societies and communities today, we have seen how problems keeps occurring on  a regular basis,  from juvenile crimes, unemployment, lack of proper financial management practice of public funds, lack of healthcare services, lack of electricity, insecurity, lack of agricultural equipment for farmers and so on (Egounleti, 2022; Shu'ara & Amin, 2022). Education is one major institutions that has the power to create awareness towards this problems faced in societies today. The educational systems are the most functional system in place now in any country (Faure, 1972). Education has been proven to encourage students or individual to take up an active role in building the societies (Tinto, 1998). An education is relevant in the training and development of human Capital growth at any country by impacting appropriate skills, expertise, capacity building, behaviors and quality redirection to improve individuals, societies and nations as a whole (Geo-JaJa et al., 2003).

According to Swanson et al. (2012), social entrepreneurship is an emerging field that combines business principles with social impact. Many universities have recognized the importance of social entrepreneurship and have started to offer courses, programs, and degrees in this field (Nandan et al., 2015). This has created awareness for students to understand that there are a lot of problems facing communities and societies. With their various projects and contributions they could make the society a better one. Some of the major social enterprises are the **JOBBERMAN**, this firm saw the social problem of unemployment and how people could not get job only by reading of newspapers. They decided to connect the potential employer to his employee without needing to carry files from one location to the other. **ENATUS** is another social startup company initiated by students in universities to solve social problems in small communities (Egounleti, 2022; Shu'ara & Amin, 2022). They go to communities and find out the problems of these villages and create effective solutions to these problems. The problems could be lack of housing, roads, lack of proper educational systems, and lack of proper drinking water and so on. Also, the **Wecyclers,** they are recycling social startup that collects recyclable waste materials from households in Lagos and recycles them into reusable products. Waste materials in societies add up to pollution is the country; this firm tries to reduce air pollution, water pollutions

and others (Baldin, 2023). These are all social ventures that are in Nigeria in order to solve social problems and promote sustainable development in the country.

According to Hockerts (2015) the curriculum of social entrepreneurship education typically includes courses in business management, marketing, finance, social innovation, and ethics. Students are encouraged to apply their knowledge to real-world problems and to work collaboratively with community organizations, businesses, and government agencies to create positive change. Social entrepreneurs must work hand in hand with Government in order to achieve sustainable economic development in the country. The social problems of the society must be seen by the social entrepreneur (Santos, 2012). However, despite the increasing interest in social entrepreneurship, there are still several problems of social entrepreneurship education in universities (Chandna, 2022). Many universities have limited resources and faculty members with expertise in social entrepreneurship, which can limit the scope and depth of social entrepreneurship education (Zahra et al., 2008). Some social entrepreneurship programs focus too much on theoretical concepts and not enough on practical application, leaving students ill-prepared to actually launch and scale social ventures (Nandan et al., 2019). The challenges of the Nigerian institutional framework is that its theoretical methods and trends concentrate on university education, that bring about producing graduates who are, best case suit fit and talented for cubicle employments with practically no essential experience and enterprising expertise.

KoeHwee et al. (2010) states that there is a need for more rigorous evaluation of social entrepreneurship education programs to assess their impact on students and society, and to identify best practices for designing and delivering effective education. Many social entrepreneurship programs focus on individual or community-level solutions to social problems, but do not adequately address the systemic issues that underlie those problems (Seelos et al., 2011). Social entrepreneurship is driven by a desire to create positive social and environmental impact. However, many social entrepreneurship education programs may focus too much on the business side of entrepreneurship and not enough on the impact aspect, which is critical for the success of social startups. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the role that social entrepreneurship plays in addressing societal challenges and promoting sustainable development. As a result, social entrepreneurship education has emerged as a powerful tool to equip individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to create impactful and sustainable ventures (Chiengkul et al., 2023). The purpose of this research study is to examine how social entrepreneurship education has impacts students towards opening of social ventures in Nigeria. Overall, this research aims to shed light on the potential of social entrepreneurship education to inspire and empower individuals to pursue ventures that create positive social impact, thereby fostering a more sustainable and inclusive future.

## 2.0 Literature Review of the Study
### 2.1 Social Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria
Social entrepreneurship education in universities is important because it helps students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and manage sustainable social enterprises (Rakicevic et al., 2023). It also helps them to understand the complexities of social problems and how to develop innovative solutions that have a positive impact on society. According to Adewumi et al. (2022), universities are encouraged to offer experiential learning opportunities such as internships, service learning projects, and incubators that allow students to work with social entrepreneurs and gain hands-on experience (Chui et al., 2023). Social entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on individuals, communities, and society as a whole (Harding, 2007). However, Ndou (2021) argues that social entrepreneurship education helps students develop

leadership and problem-solving skills. Students should learn how to identify social problems and develop solutions that are both effective and sustainable. These skills can be applied in various contexts, including business, government, and non-profit organizations.

Seelos et al. (2005) in his research studies stated that Social entrepreneurship education on social startup development helps to cultivate a new generation of socially responsible entrepreneurs who are committed to creating sustainable solutions to social problems. By providing students with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to launch and scale social startups (Montgomery et al., 2012). Universities are contributing to the growth of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and driving positive social change. Bornstein (2007) points in his study that universities will actually provide students with a wonderful opportunities to discover and learn about their thoughts and concerns about social entrepreneurial career by way of ventures creation (Martin et al., 2007). Social ventures are calculated by their social value predicted (Perrinni et al., 2006). Social entrepreneurship is not about regional ideas that cannot be replicated. Emphasis is on the needs and concerns of society as a whole, how social change can be maximised and social conditions strengthened (Terzieva et al., 2023). Social entrepreneurship education  main aim  is to provide adequate social entrepreneurial skills for students in order to improve employment prospects in the labour market not only that, but help them to identify problems that the rural areas are facing and developing business models to tackle these issues (Kim et al., 2020). The basic aim of social entrepreneurship education is to concentrate on wider societal needs and issues, as well as how to enhance social work to improve Nigeria's social condition.

Social entrepreneurial curriculum is a purposefully action that should stimulate social ideation of students (Zabenah, 2017).  Statistics have shown that students do not really stimulate social ideas that would help in developing the society. Students are not able to bring up suitable social ideas that would solve the society's problems. This is not because they cannot think, but because these students are not being taught the appropriate things in school, which will make them to be aware of the issues that the country is facing. However the curriculum aspect of the educational system has been ignored by the Nigerian federal ministry of education, also in other countries. This is the basic area where social entrepreneurship education could be added to promote students social ideation. Because when an individual is not thought about a particular subject area, he/she won't have an idea that such area exits (Ajake et al., 2014).

## 2.2 Social Startup in Nigeria

Social startups are organizational entities that create both economic and social values by solving social problems through business mechanisms (Dees, 2007). Social startups development has been noteworthy as a key solution to a variety of social problems within current market economy systems (Lancastre et al., 2023). Although, Zahra et al. (2016) pointed that enterprises create economic and social value in the market economy system, they also raise various social problems, such as inequality and environmental pollution. In response, discussions of corporate social responsibility have been widely held among management scholars, and social enterprises that seek solutions to address such problems have attracted considerable interest among policymakers, academics, and practitioner. Unlike traditional business organizations that create social value by participating in social projects to complement the core objective of economic value generation, social startups focus first on their social mission to create positive social impact and measure the impact to communicate and collaborate with various stakeholders (Onakpa & Alfred, 2022; Ohanyelu, 2022).

Nigeria has seen a significant increase in the development of social startups over the past decade (Afolabi, 2015). Social startups are businesses that aim to solve social problems while also making a profit (Groot et al., 2014). These startups typically focus on addressing issues such as poverty, healthcare, education, and access to technology. Apeh et al. (2023) said one of the factors driving the growth of social startups in Nigeria is the large population of young people who are interested in entrepreneurship and have access to technology. Nigeria is home to over 200 million people, and more than 60% of the population is under the age of 25. This has created a large pool of potential entrepreneurs who are eager to use their skills and knowledge to make a positive impact in their communities. According to Fund (2015) the Nigerian government and international organizations such as the World Bank have created programs to support entrepreneurship and innovation.

Ohanyelu (2022) opines that there are also several private sector organizations that provide funding and mentorship to social startups. The author states further that in recent years, there has been a particular focus on using technology to address social problems. Nigeria has a rapidly growing tech industry, and many social startups are leveraging technology to create innovative solutions (Akomolafe et al., 2022). For example, some startups are using mobile technology to provide healthcare services in rural areas, while others are using e-learning platforms to improve access to education (Onakpa & Alfred, 2022; Ohanyelu, 2022). Overall, the evolution of social startups development in Nigeria has been positive, and there is a growing recognition of the important role that these businesses can play in addressing social problems and driving economic growth. While there are still challenges to be addressed, such as access to funding and regulatory barriers, the future looks bright for social entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

**2.3 Social Entrepreneurship Education and Social Startups Development**

Based on reviewed literatures, social entrepreneurship education will give students or an intention for creating social venture for societal benefits (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2023). The relevance of social entrepreneurship education will not only help the society but the individual who is trying to create a social ventures for the society by giving them an edge in the society (Valenzuela-García, 2023). According to Wale-Oshinowo et al., (2019) social entrepreneurship education is very relevant, most especially in Nigeria context. We lack lots of social ventures in the country. If social entrepreneurship education is implemented, more social ventures will be created (Ghalwash et al., 2017). Nigeria is a nation that imports goods from different countries, we do not have anything that we produce of our own. Universities should focus on how to teach students the various means so that the nation importation rate will reduce in order to increase nation's economy, so that we can become a developed nation.

The technological equipment's that are needed to produce the products in order to add value for the society are not even present in the nation. This is a major reason why Nigeria is still in its present situation. Attentions should be placed on the students, to develop machines in producing the necessary products needed (Amusat et al., 2022; Amaihian et al., 2022). Instead of providing students with internet facilities in schools that would not benefits them in anyway, universities should bring expatriate from other countries on how to use the internet to proffer social solutions all around the world (Gagliardone, 2019). Students should not limit themselves to what is said in the classroom. Social entrepreneurship education places a strong emphasis on creating long-term business plans for new social ventures (Lall & Park, 2022). In order to assure both financial sustainability and social effect, it aids entrepreneurs in understanding the various revenue generating options, such as earned income, cross-subsidization, and impact investment. Social entrepreneurs may develop long-term solutions that

depend less on contributions and outside funding by adopting these concepts into their business strategies (Weaver, 2022).

**2.4 Benefits of Social Entrepreneurship Education to Students and the Development of a Nation**

Social entrepreneurship education has benefited so many nations. For example its social entrepreneurship that has made china to become a globalized nation in the world. They teach their citizens how to help one another in the society (Zhu et al., 2016). Social entrepreneurship education will create awareness of youth on how to improve the community that they live in. Learning social entrepreneurship is altogether different from learning anything else in schools, most especially universities (Guclu, Dees & Anderson, 2002). The very idea of the program is to enable students from different disciplines to distinguish their qualities and abilities and to chip away at improving them and also considering the communities needs at the back of their hand. Because for that need and concern for education in social entrepreneurship, most tertiary schools learn social entrepreneurship education to become a social entrepreneur (Brock & Kim, 2011). Many young people often turn their aspirations into realistic goals. Social Entrepreneurship education is very important to every nation most especially the developing nations like Nigeria. social Entrepreneurship education has benefited so many nation, just the small social entrepreneurship that some nations are engaged in, it has helped them in the creation of job opportunities for those who do not have jobs, it has create wealth for people, also provide network for people, this has made the nation income increased drastically (Thorgren & Omorede, 2018). One of the greatest benefit of social entrepreneurship education all around the world is the fact that these students provide solutions to social issues like insecurity, unemployment, healthcare, education, etc.

Nwuneli (2016) argues in his study that one platform that was rooted out through social entrepreneurship education is the ENACTUS they devote themselves to building a better world while cultivating the next generation of entrepreneurs and social innovators. They are non-profit Student group, and business and academic leaders who plan to use entrepreneurship to improve people's lives around the world. But they are solely not a non-profit organisation (Dawit, 2022; James & Jonah, 2022). Students, who are on the ENACTUS (entrepreneurial.act.us) team Travel around the world, go to disadvantaged communities and encourage everyone to be part of their own positive stories by helping them build entrepreneurship and leadership skills. They also try to find out the various issues of people in underdeveloped communities and developing entrepreneurial ideas in solving this problem. This platform does not only benefit one nation, but the world (Aisenberg et al., 2019). Social entrepreneurship education is really going to benefit Nigeria economy. Because we lack social entrepreneurs in this nation (Ghalwash, Tolba & Ismail, 2017). The tendency to act entrepreneurially is not exclusive to some people. Various people will have a multiple combination of skills to show and develop social entrepreneurial attitudes. Such attitude can be formed and learnt; therefore it is very necessary to encourage all students to learn social entrepreneurship education (Bacq, Hartog & Hoogendoorn, 2016)**.**

**3.0 Methodology of the Study**

Social entrepreneurship education has been extensively discussed by numerous authors. However, secondary sources of data was used in this research paper by reviewing archival literature of past studies such as journal and conferences proceedings, magazines, books, internet sources and so on.

## 4.0 Conclusion of the Study

Universities must develop a course to help students know the basis for starting their own business and developing their own business venture, not only that, but also understanding the world where they need to do their business by reflecting on how it will benefits the society.  When students have an intention in starting a business before they graduate, there is a 75% that the student will succeed because he/she has being thought the ways to do business with little resources, and also put the country which they live in, into consideration. Some students naturally have an idea of changing the world but because they don't have anyone to teach them on how to go about it, the idea that they have, just die within them. Let's look at the case of the ENACTUS (entrepreneurial.act.us), these are social entrepreneurs whom were taught in school on how to tackle social issues. ENACTUS today is almost the world largest social enterprise that provides entrepreneurial solutions to different communities in the world. Social Entrepreneurship equips aspiring social entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge, skills, and mindset to address social and environmental challenges while creating sustainable businesses. By providing education on social startup development, individuals are empowered to create innovative solutions that have a positive impact on society. Through social entrepreneurship education, individuals gain a deep understanding of social issues and develop the ability to identify opportunities for positive change. They learn how to apply business principles and strategies to create effective and scalable solutions that tackle pressing social problems. Moreover, education in this field encourages collaboration, networking, and interdisciplinary thinking, fostering an ecosystem where social entrepreneurs can thrive. Social entrepreneurship education also instills key values such as empathy, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making. It emphasizes the importance of measuring social impact and incorporating it into the business model, ensuring that social startups remain focused on their core mission. Furthermore, social entrepreneurship education goes beyond theoretical knowledge by providing practical experiences, mentorship, and access to resources. This hands-on approach enables aspiring social entrepreneurs to refine their ideas, validate their assumptions, and develop a viable business plan. It also helps them navigate challenges, build partnerships, and secure funding to bring their social startups to fruition. The authors find that in a world grappling with complex social and environmental issues, social entrepreneurship education has emerged as a powerful tool for driving meaningful change. By equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to create social startups, it fosters a new generation of change makers who are committed to building a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable future. Therefore, investing in social entrepreneurship education is crucial for nurturing innovation and promoting positive

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