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## The Influence of Key Social Entrepreneurship Factors on Operational Sustainability in Social Enterprises: Insights from May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited

<sup>1</sup>Olaitan Daniel Alabi (Ph.D.), <sup>2</sup>Olumuyiwa Olayanju, <sup>3</sup>Taiwo Timothy Ajayi, <sup>4</sup>Oluyemi Mary Kolapo, <sup>5</sup>Oluseyi Abraham Olayinka (Ph.D.)

<sup>1,5</sup>Faculty of Arts, Social and Management Sciences, Department of Management Sciences, Dominion University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Department of Management and Accounting, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup>Soteria Business School (monotechnic) Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

<sup>4</sup>Federal University of Technology, FUTA, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Department of Statistics

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explores the impact of key social entrepreneurship factors—social innovation, business models, and entrepreneurial motivation—on the operational sustainability of social enterprises, using May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, as a case study. Employing a descriptive research design, data were collected through structured questionnaires from 165 staff across management levels (response rate: 87.88%), with analysis through correlation and multiple regression on a sample drawn from a population of 280 using stratified random sampling and Yamane's formula. Results revealed strong positive correlations (social innovation  $r=0.770$ ; business models  $r=0.758$ ; entrepreneurial motivation  $r=0.875$ ; all  $p<0.001$ ) and significant regression effects ( $\beta=0.629$  for social innovation,  $\beta=0.481$  for business models,  $\beta=0.317$  for entrepreneurial motivation; model  $F=114.753$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $R^2$  indicating good fit), confirming these factors improve sustainability. The findings emphasize the need for Nigerian social enterprises to prioritize innovation, hybrid models, and motivation to achieve long-term viability amid economic challenges, offering implications for managers, policymakers, and future research on context-specific interventions.

**KEYWORDS:** Social entrepreneurship, Operational sustainability, Social innovation, Business models, Entrepreneurial motivation.

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### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship oils national economic growth through innovation, job creation, and wealth generation. Entrepreneurs deliver disruptive technologies, products, and services that fulfill needs while reforming markets, fostering resilience, problem-solving, risk-taking, and aspiration pursuit. Its vibrancy ensures prosperity, competitiveness, and sustainability (Barua, 2020). Social entrepreneurship centers on tackling societal challenges for positive impact (Schoneveld, 2020), harmonizing financial viability with social/environmental goals—unlike profit-maximizing traditional models. Social entrepreneurs deploy innovative business models, strategies, and tech to address poverty, inequality, degradation, education/healthcare gaps, and beyond (Comin, Aguiar & Julkovski, 2020). This approach blends entrepreneurial agility with unwavering social change commitment (Nosratabadi, Mosavi & Chau, 2019), catalyzing community empowerment, resource linking, and sustainable development amid global complexities. Leveraging creativity and resourcefulness, they combat systemic issues, promote inclusivity, and build equitable societies—generating jobs for marginalized groups, essential services, and eco-practices via hybrid models merging market strategies with mission integrity for social-economic value. Yet challenges persist: balancing impact-financial sustainability, revenue amid misaligned markets (Eunice & Eptimehin, 2020), funding shortages curbing scale (Akinnifesi & Adeniyi, 2023), plus regulatory hurdles, partnerships, and acceptance. Still, social enterprises innovate resiliently for enduring societal change. Diab (2019) noted Lebanon's social enterprises struggle with performance due to economic instability, political unrest, currency fluctuations, inflation, financing shortages, unsupportive regulations, and low socio-cultural awareness hindering market uptake.

Gedajlovic and Shulman (2019) found Pakistan's social entrepreneurship shaped by community engagement, innovation, and funding access, enabling unique social solutions for competitive sustainability. Mair and Marti (2020) highlighted India's supportive policies, incentives, networks, and cultural focus on impact bolstering enterprise resilience. Bacq and Janssen (2021) emphasized

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Canada's educational and tech support for long-term viability—underscoring localized resources regionally. South Africa actively promotes social enterprises via policies, funding, and networks to combat poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Chipeta, Kruse & Surujlal, 2020), yet faces bureaucracy, apartheid legacies, and job crises. In Nigeria, David-West, Iheanachor, and Umukoro (2020) identified weak innovative business models in hubs as key barriers to performance, value capture, scalability, and adaptation (Oni, 2023).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Social enterprise sustainability is vital for delivering enduring societal benefits by tackling social/environmental issues alongside economic viability, sustaining missions, stakeholder engagement, and resilient communities. Yet Nigerian ventures like May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited face ongoing viability struggles, mirrored by Kenyan firms' market share battles against incumbents (Charles, 2021). Global research links social entrepreneurship factors to enterprise sustainability: Wang and Sheikh (2021) found South Korean social missions/innovation positively drive development; Diab (2019) confirmed Lebanon's social entrepreneurship boosts poverty alleviation and jobs.

## **Study Purpose**

This study aimed to assess how social entrepreneurship factors influence sustainability in social enterprises at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited.

## **Inquiry Questions**

1. How does social innovation affect social enterprise sustainability?
2. How do business models affect social enterprise sustainability?
3. How does entrepreneurial motivation affect social enterprise sustainability?

## **Significance of the Study**

This study provides actionable insights for bolstering social enterprise sustainability, such as at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited, supporting mission-driven businesses' longevity. By pinpointing key factors influencing viability, it equips practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders to advance social entrepreneurship growth and impact.

## **May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited**

This study equips May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited's management with insights on social enterprise factors influencing sustainability. Armed with this knowledge, leaders can make strategic decisions—reallocating resources, refining practices, or launching initiatives—to boost sustainability and secure long-term success. It also strengthens stakeholder engagement with employees, customers, investors, and communities.

## **Scope of the Study**

The study surveyed social enterprise factors—social innovation, business models, and entrepreneurial motivation—impacting sustainability in Nigerian firms. Conducted at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited in Ibadan, Oyo State, it targeted all 280 staff across top-, middle-, and lower-level management.

## **EXAMINATION OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

### **Social Innovation and Sustainability of Social Enterprises**

Social enterprise sustainability involves maintaining operations, fulfilling missions, and securing long-term viability by balancing economic, social, and environmental priorities (Ciambotti & Pedrini, 2021). It demands effective resource, financial, and relationship management via revenue-generating models aligned with social goals, transparent governance, market adaptability, and eco-stewardship, minimizing environmental harm (Kamaludin & Amin, 2024). Maksun and Kusumawardhani (2020) found Indonesia's social enterprise model boosts SME empowerment and credibility, drawing ethical investors despite funding, governance, and collaboration hurdles. Amid resource scarcity and inequality, such sustainability fosters resilient, inclusive societies. Charles (2021) analyzed Tanzanian waste-recycling social enterprises from five cases, revealing their entrepreneurial emergence to fill government gaps. Despite social impact, they confront resource scarcity, poor perceptions, competition, weak policies, supply issues, staff integrity problems, and harsh conditions—yet sustain via skilled teams, waste-picker support, marketing/networking, training, and tech adoption. Oteki (2022) linked socio-cultural factors to sustainability in Kenyan church-based enterprises (Brothers CMM Projects), surveying 92 managers. Findings noted annual planning, donor reliance, minor losses (<Kshs. 2M), with top management skills, finances, planning culture, and technology driving viability. Chandra, Shang, and Mair (2021) analyzed success drivers in China's open social innovation contests for poverty alleviation (150/871 entries), using evaluator data. Corporate networks and commercial orientations boosted wins, mediated by solution usefulness and innovativeness—offering early insights into the field's dynamics. Oni (2023) reviewed Nigeria's barriers to sustainable social innovation via normative analysis, citing insurgency, deforestation, poverty, food insecurity, and healthcare gaps impacting 200M+ people. Limited-scale

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impacts, measurement issues, and poor monitoring persist despite efforts. Otendo, Muriithi, and Kadengye (2022) tested social innovation workshops against poverty in Kenya/Uganda via pretest-posttest mixed methods on master's students (social sciences/STEM). Immediate gains in awareness, transdisciplinary approaches, and confidence endured, with many integrating poverty solutions into these six months later. Dafuleya (2024) reviewed Sub-Saharan social innovation amid ethnic/indigenous poverty without formal policies, spotlighting Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe initiatives. Enterprises harness local knowledge/networks for poverty/healthcare/environmental fixes via sustainable models, overcoming funding/infrastructure hurdles through rising recognition. Harsanto, Mulyana, and Shandy (2022) studied open innovation's (OI) impact on sustainability in four West Java education-sector social enterprises via multiple cases. Findings showed sustainability innovations delivering social benefits (e.g., student cost coverage, community services) and ecological gains (waste reduction, land use), achieved through varied external collaborations. Cavazos-Arroyo (2020) assessed social innovation capability's effects in 106 Mexican social enterprises using cross-sectional surveys and PLS-SEM on five hypotheses. It directly boosted social value creation, marketing success, and performance—with capability exerting the strongest influence. Nieuwenhuizen (2022) analyzed 142 Ashoka-identified Female Social Entrepreneurs across 20 African countries. Most held post-school/degree qualifications; top categories were education/learning, prosperity/development, and health/fitness. They favored Schumpeterian innovations (new markets/products/services) and Hamel-Breen product/service types. Darko and Koranteng (2022) probed social innovation's role in Ghanaian enterprise sustainability via 25 founder/manager interviews. Innovation proved essential for resilience/impact, via local resources, learning/adaptation, and partnerships—calling for supportive environments fostering experimentation.

### **Business Models and Sustainability of Social Enterprises**

Pizzi, Corbo, and Caputo (2021) linked Fintech to sustainable business models in SMEs via case studies, showing Industry 4.0-driven applications enable circular economy integration for operational sustainability—offering tech insights for academia and industry. Schoneveld (2020) identified four social business model drivers (responsible efficiency, impact complementarities, shared values, integration novelties) from 17 firm interviews using grounded theory: prioritizing operations, impacts, values, and hybrid innovations. Comin, Aguiar, and Julkovski (2020) reviewed sustainable models, stressing stakeholder (user) involvement, tech/clean energy, material efficiency, repair/reuse, renewables, waste recycling, stewardship, and product-tech transformation. Owusu-Manu and Ghansah (2021) explored Ghanaian construction green models via manager interviews, uncovering six definitions, circularity needs for carbon reduction, and awareness drivers like conferences/workshops. Kolade, Murith, and Mwila (2021) assessed Nigeria/Kenya tech hubs' models using triple-layered (economic/social/environmental) frameworks from two cases, revealing innovation gaps limiting value capture/market expansion—advocating integrated approaches. Tykkyläinen and Ritala (2021) analyzed business model innovation in seven Finnish social enterprises using an activity system lens, uncovering hybrid logics (sequential/parallel social-financial value), gradual/discontinuous shifts, and goal-driven strategic framing. Effective, adaptable models boost sustainability by balancing objectives, curbing mission drift, and tackling commercial hurdles. Verhagen, de Reuver, and Bouwman (2021) surveyed European SMEs, confirming business model experimentation enhances performance—mediated by operational/enterprise architecture integration—urging holistic views beyond strategy/marketing. Latifi, Nikou, and Bouwman (2021) used SEM on 563 SMEs to show business model innovation indirectly drives performance via efficiency, capabilities, and revenue growth.

David-West, Iheanachor, and Umukoro (2020) deemed Nigeria's mobile money models unsustainable, urging focus on value propositions, segments, and scalability for market fit. Mutta, Mahamane, and Wekesa (2021) found Kenya's informal charcoal models complex, SDG-positive (poverty reduction) yet forest-degrading, via multi-method stakeholder data. Mfaume and Leonard (2020) studied 10 Tanzanian social enterprises, revealing mission-revenue hybrids with NGO/government partnerships and tech leverage best support scalability/impact.

### **Entrepreneurial Motivation and Sustainability of Social Enterprises**

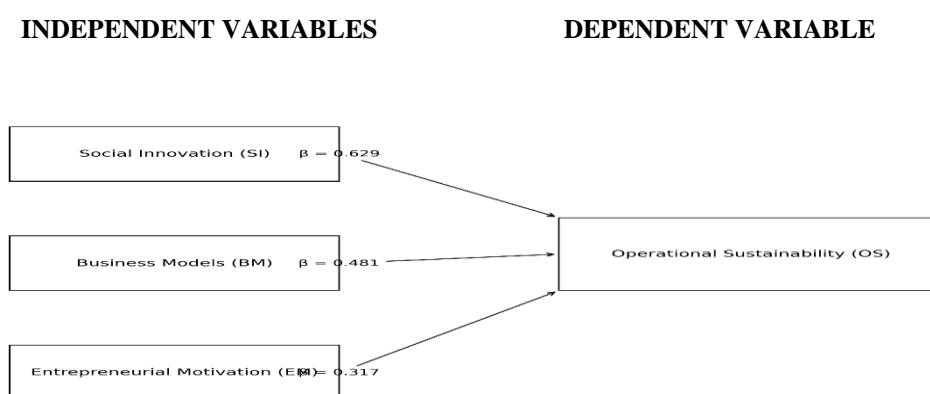
Timmons Model outlines entrepreneurship in three stages: opportunity identification/evaluation via market trends (Hammad, 2018); resource acquisition (capital/talent); and management (planning/marketing/operations/finance) for sustainable growth (Wakkee, 2021)—emphasizing iterative adaptation. Isabirye and Hewitt (2022) identified six African female enterprise motivators (early business exposure, livelihoods, passion/vision/ambition, role models) via interviews with three Kenyan/Ugandan/Tanzanian entrepreneurs. Eunice and Epetimehin (2020) surveyed 100 Lagos women entrepreneurs, linking competence/affiliation/incentives/power to engagement. Makina (2022) found Kinshasa youth (336 respondents) driven by poverty relief, self-employment against unemployment, and autonomy. Abdallah, Masurel, and Eijdenberg (2022) surveyed 170 Tanzanian informal entrepreneurs, revealing blended business-personal drives beyond opportunity/necessity—focusing on self-reliance, livelihoods, and market gaps. Eijdenberg and Masurel (2021) used mixed methods (lit review, focus groups, 168 Morogoro small business surveys) to cluster Tanzanian owners by motivations, showing shifts from necessity to opportunity as firms mature—tied to needs fulfillment, socio-economics, and education levels. Miriti (2021) correlated attitudes, self-efficacy, and experience with entrepreneurial intent among 120 Chuka University final-year students, emphasizing real-world exposure's role. Chirchir (2020)

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surveyed Kenyan microfinance-affiliated women entrepreneurs via stratified sampling, stratified regression, finding income growth, autonomy, problem-solving, land ownership, decision control, and networks as key drivers. Muindi and Montfort (2020) surveyed 301 Uasin Gishu female-led micro/small enterprises, identifying competences (achievement need, locus of control, ambiguity tolerance, innovativeness, risk-taking, self-efficacy, passion, goal-setting, resilience, trust, stability, patience)—present but weakly linked to performance (firm, wealth, social).

## Entrepreneurial Motivation and Sustainability of Social Enterprises

Kamaludin (2022) linked social entrepreneurial motivation to sustainability via exploratory qualitative case studies from Malaysia and the US, showing it sustains commitment, innovation, resource mobilization, resilience, and adaptation for long-term impact. Akinnifesi and Adeniyi (2023) surveyed Yaba College students, confirming that motivation drives Nigerian social enterprise sustainability through founder dedication, innovative social solutions, stakeholder engagement, and socio-economic adaptability. Ijeoma, Eketu, and Amah (2020) found that entrepreneurial motives boost SME adaptability/resilience in Nigeria's Rivers State via descriptive design, fueling proactive market responses, innovation, and growth amid uncertainties. Wanyoike and Maseno (2021) qualitatively identified East African social entrepreneurs' drives—community empowerment, poverty/healthcare/education fixes—via innovation/collaboration for resilient, impactful ventures uplifting marginalized groups.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**  
 Source: Authors' conceptualization, 2025.

## ANALYTICAL METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design, providing a solid framework to explore social entrepreneurship dynamics and strategies for bolstering sustainability in enterprises like May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited. Independent variables included social innovation, business models, and entrepreneurial motivation; the dependent variable was social enterprise sustainability in Nigeria. The population comprised 280 staff across top-, middle-, and lower-level management at the firm in Oyo State (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Population Distribution**

Category	Target Population	Percentage
Top level management	25	8.93%
Middle level management	58	20.71%
Lower level management	197	70.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: May Coutures Recycling Club Limited (2025)

This study used all staff across top-, middle-, and lower-level management at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State, Nigeria) as the sampling frame. Stratified random sampling selected the sample, with management levels as strata and simple random sampling within each. Sample size was calculated via Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967).

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

Where:

n = sample size,

N = population size (280),

e = Alpha level (0.05) at 95% confidence level.

$$n = \frac{280}{1 + 280 * 0.05^2} = 165$$

**Table2: Sample Size Distribution**

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage
Top level management	25	15	8.93%
Middle level management	58	34	20.71%
Lower level management	197	116	70.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

This study gathered primary data via structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions. Dependent and independent variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha (0-1 range).

**Table 3: Reliability Results**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Innovation	0.82
Business Models	0.79
Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.85
Sustainability of Social Enterprises	0.80

This study applied descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation, regression). Results appear in tables/figures. With multiple independent variables, multivariate regression models relationships.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Whereby: Y = Sustainability of social enterprises;  $\beta_0$  = Constant;  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$  = Coefficients of determination; X1 = Social innovation; X2 = Business models; X3 = Entrepreneurial motivation; and  $\epsilon$  = Error term.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study sampled 165 staff across management levels at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State). Of 165 questionnaires distributed, 145 were completed and returned (87.88% response rate). Babbie (2017) deems 50% good and 70% excellent for analysis/inferences; thus, 87.88% suffices (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Questionnaire's Response Rate**

Category	Sample Size	Responses	Response rate
Top level management	15	13	86.67
Middle level management	34	27	79.41
Lower level management	116	105	90.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>87.88</b>

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**Table 5: Correlation Results**

		Sustainability on Social Enterprises	Social Innovation	Business Models	Entrepreneurial Motivation
Sustainability on Social Enterprises	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	145			
Social Innovation	Pearson Correlation	.770**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	145	145		
Business Models	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.107	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.100		
	N	145	145	145	
Entrepreneurial Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.875**	.023	.075	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.853	.551	
	N	145	145	145	145

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

Table 5 shows strong positive correlations: social innovation with sustainability ( $r=0.770$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); business models with sustainability ( $r=0.758$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); entrepreneurial motivation with sustainability ( $r=0.875$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State). These indicate effective innovation, robust models, and a high motivation boost for enterprise sustainability.

## Regression Analysis

**Table 6: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.842 <sup>a</sup>	.719	.693	.17054

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Motivation, Social Innovation, Business Models

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	107.68	3	35.892	114.753	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	44.101	141	.0313		
	Total	151.78	144			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability on Social Enterprises

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Motivation, Social Innovation, Business Models

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		(Constant)	0.231	0.081		
1	Social Innovation	0.629	0.135	0.548	4.659	0.000
	Business Models	0.481	0.142	0.458	3.387	0.000
	Entrepreneurial Motivation	0.317	0.101	0.294	3.139	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability on Social Enterprises

Table 6 indicates the model fits well: F-calculated (114.753) > F-critical (2.680),  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, it effectively predicts social innovation, business models, and entrepreneurial motivation's effects on sustainability at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State). The regression model changes to:

$$Y = 0.231 + 0.629X_1 + 0.481X_2 + 0.317X_3$$

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Regression results confirm positive, significant effects on sustainability at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State): social innovation ( $\beta=0.629$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), business models ( $\beta=0.481$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and entrepreneurial motivation ( $\beta=0.317$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Each one-unit increase in these factors predicts corresponding sustainability gains (0.629, 0.481, 0.317 units), holding others constant.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

Social innovation boosts sustainability at May Coutures Recycling Club Enterprise Limited (Oyo State) through stakeholder feedback, external partnerships, internal capabilities, leadership-driven idea generation, and workshops enhancing productivity. Business models strengthen it via organizational strengths, innovative social-impact strategies, partnerships, and traditional model lessons fostering growth, harmony, and output. Entrepreneurial motivation advances sustainability by spurring enterprise creation, employee collaboration for better decisions/productivity, and social mission priority over profit for enduring viability.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommendations were as follows:

1. Encourage external collaborations and build capabilities for effective social innovation. Leaders should foster employee innovative thinking, idea generation, and experimentation for better productivity.
2. Improve business model implementation, production, and innovative social solutions. Prioritize social impact over profit; promote partnerships to enhance employee communication. Motivate employees for social-need businesses.
3. Foster collaborations with like-minded groups for better decisions/ideas. Provide continuous learning for balanced social-financial goals.

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