

RESEARCH AGENDA ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

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**International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education (IAJSSE) | ISSN
2518-2412**

Received: 29th December 2021

Published: 2nd January 2022

Full Length Research

Available Online at: https://iajournals.org/articles/iajsse_v2_i2_452_468.pdf

Citation: Mwasiaji, E., Kombo, K., Gravenir, F. (2022). Research agenda on social entrepreneurship education, regulatory framework and the global sustainability agenda. *International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 2(2), 452-468.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to review literature using a meta-analysis approach in collecting data to identify gaps in the phenomenon of sustainable development goals, social entrepreneurship education, regulatory framework and its link to sustainability objectives. The study established that progress in vital areas of the global sustainability agenda, including reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, had either stalled or reversed. Activities necessary in the global sustainability agenda amidst coronavirus disease outbreak are non-binding with countries expected to create their own national plans, including the sources and extent of required financing remaining ambiguous, resulting in little global progress towards the desired objectives. There are also social entrepreneurship education related research gaps, in addition to studies proposing varied models on how best to realize the 2030 global sustainability

agenda. This study concluded that young people especially without jobs, children out of school, families without hope, displaced people or those living in fragile or conflict afflicted areas will be left behind especially in the context of COVID-19. This study argues that sustainable development goals can be realized if government, academia and other stakeholders move beyond the current forms of engagement and have social entrepreneurship education cascaded to lower levels of the school curricula. The study has therefore proposed an integrated theoretical model upon which propositions at the abstraction level can be advanced and empirically tested as part of the research agenda.

Key words: Social Entrepreneurship Education, Regulatory Framework, Sustainable Development Goals practices, student outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the environmental, social and economic perspectives have been acknowledged as an important channel towards improvement in overall welfare of the most vulnerable people around the world (Barbier & Burgess, 2017). The SDGs were agreed upon by 193 countries and launched during the United Nations assembly in year 2015 (UN, 2015; UN, 2021). The SDGs have since then become the international benchmark for measuring and tracking improvements in human conditions. According to Pradhan, *et. al.* (2017), the SDGs are sheathed in a set of 17 interdependent goals and 169 targets that are universally applicable, considering circumstantial realities such as national capacities, levels of economic development and specific difficulties in diverse countries around the world. The SDGs based on the concept of partnership, reinforced by a comprehensive approach to mobilization of all means of implementation, are presented as the 2030 agenda for people and planet with a slogan of leaving no one behind to ensure that all people in the world enjoy peace and prosperity (UN, 2015). The seventeen (17) interdependent SDGs have a list of targets and measurement indicators to assess progress towards the realization of the envisaged sustainability objectives.

Even though they are non-binding with each country being expected to create their own national or regional plans, the SDGs in totality present challenges and opportunities for both governmental and non-governmental organizations in more developed and less developed countries. For instance, increase in chronic health conditions including COVID-19 pandemic, global warming, inadequate funding from public sources in the face of competing priorities and ageing populations are some of the major challenges (UN, 2017; UN, 2021). Green innovations to address global challenges while cashing in on the gaps in the market present opportunities to individuals and business enterprises (Mikušová, 2017). To ensure progress and long-term accountability, the SDGs has an embedded review mechanism to enable partners in the implementation process to assess the impact of their accomplishments. There is also the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that is supposed to meet annually at the United Nation's Headquarters to evaluate progress towards the set goals (UN, 2015).

Achieving the set SDG objectives requires worldwide collaboration and multilateral action from the economic, social, political and environment segments in addressing global challenges while simultaneously taking advantage of the attendant opportunities (UN, 2015; UN, 2021). For this reason, impact entrepreneurship and SDG agendas have been agreed to be complimentary in that social entrepreneurs can pursue economic opportunities through green innovations while at the same time contributing to the achievement of SDGs by reducing inequalities, enhancing social cohesion and taking care of the environment (Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; UN, 2017). For this reason, social entrepreneurship especially in the context of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) is seen as a means towards healthier communities and improved overall welfare of the most vulnerable people around the world (Neck & Corbett, 2018; Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; UN, 2017). This is because SMEs have been shown to make significant contribution towards delivering substantial increase in global wealth and improved standards of living through innovation, job creation, income generation and poverty alleviation (Banjoko, *et.al*, 2012; Haltiwanger, *et al.*, 2010). According to Ayyagari, *et. al.*, (2012), SMEs also facilitate balanced economic development since they can easily be undertaken in rural and semi-urban areas, which in turn prevents rural to urban migration of people. The resultant positive impact of this is reduction of social ills connected with idle youths and inadequate infrastructure had the rural urban migration of people taken place in greater quantities (Haltiwanger, *et. al.*, 2010). Moreover, establishment of SMEs sets in motion the process of industrialization because of the chain reaction. However, the positive impact that entrepreneurship may have towards the realization of the sustainable development objectives may be hampered by lack of supportive legal frame, entrepreneurship education and skill training to the populace.

To enhance successful implementation of the actions needed to realize SDG objectives, there has been call to revisit institutional architecture at the international level, including amending national policies to be in tandem with the changing global landscape (Munjeyi, 2017; Pradhan, *et. al.* 2017; Seelos, C. & Mair, J., 2017). Discussions have therefore been ongoing at the global arena on necessary legal mechanisms to support the sustainability agenda so as to enable the current generation meet resource needs of the present without compromising the

ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Horback & Rennings, 2012; Hasan & Ali, 2015; UN, 2021). Conversations have also been on how to support impact entrepreneurship that meet customer preferences and enterprise profitability, while at the same time addressing environmental concerns (Tariyan, 2016; Munjeyi, 2017; Seelos, C. & Mair, J., 2017). Relevant studies on how best to mobilize resources needed in the process of operationalizing SDGs, including design of sustainability policies and programs to build consensus towards addressing environmental concerns, is an agenda item for the research community (Mwasiaji, 2020; Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018).

Problem Statement

The role of Social Entrepreneurship especially in the context of the contribution by the SME sector has been acknowledged as important towards the realization of the 2030 global sustainability agenda for the purpose of environmental care and improving the social and economic welfare of the most vulnerable people around the world (Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; UN, 2017). The basis of this acknowledgement is the conclusion of different studies based on their constructs, operationalization and methods employed that have examined the link between social entrepreneurship and the various dimensions of 2030 global sustainability agenda (Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018). Some studies have for instance argued that social entrepreneurship can be the engine for transforming our world and overcoming the diverse nature of these global challenges (Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018; Rahdari, Sepasi, & Moradi, 2016). Within the context of sustainable development, it is clear that social entrepreneurship can lead to a reduction in poverty through an increase in financial performance (Kaijage, Wheeler & Newbery, 2013). Many other studies on social entrepreneurship and the multiple dimensions of sustainable development have however returned varied results (Seelos & Mair, 2017; Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018; King & Lenox, 2002). For instance, Woo, *et. al.*, (2014) revealed that businesses prefer to implement sustainability agenda related activities only if it is convenient and not detrimental to their financial interests. Other streams of research revealed that some entrepreneurs are confused by poorly defined sustainability demands (Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; Parker, *et. al.*, 2009); other studies established lack of clear leadership on sustainability practices (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010); while others have observed that uncertainty over government policy framework makes it difficult to plan strategies for business sustainability (Munjeyi, 2017; Mwasiaji, 2020).

Though many studies have reported a correlation between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development, this area of research remains nascent because there is need not only for ongoing evidence to inform this debate drawn from differing global contexts, but also capture and reflect on best practice (Saebi, Foss & Linder S, 2018). Moreover, the positive contribution that social entrepreneurship might have towards the realization of the 2030 global sustainability objectives may be hampered by the absence of entrepreneurship education and appropriate entrepreneurial skill training outside of university lecture halls (Mwasiaji, 2020). Developing entrepreneurial mind-set, skill set, and practice necessary for starting new ventures would have positive impact in supporting the life skills necessary to live productive lives even if one does not start a business, hence the call for models for embedding entrepreneurship education in the curriculum (Neck & Corbett, 2018). In addition,

current literature on sustainable development have mostly pursued discussions on the construct of SDGs and social entrepreneurship education separately from that of regulatory framework, in spite of the inferred indications that the three can be integrated to register impact on the objectives of the 2030 global sustainability agenda (Mwasiaji, 2020). Moreover, UN (2021) reported that little progress has been made since the adoption of the SDGs during a UN assembly meeting in 2015 due to many factors including COVID-19 pandemic. Vital areas of the global sustainability agenda, including reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, progress had either stalled or reversed (UN, 2021). Activities necessary in the global sustainability agenda amidst coronavirus disease outbreak are non-binding with countries expected to create their own national plans, including the sources and extent of required financing remaining ambiguous, resulting in little global progress towards the desired objectives. There are also social entrepreneurship education related research gaps, in addition to studies proposing varied models on how best to realize the 2030 global sustainability agenda (Mwasiaji, 2020). Hence the current study for the purpose of proposing an integrated theoretical model upon which hypothesis at the abstraction level can be advanced and empirically tested as part of the research agenda.

Review of Relevant Literature

Theoretical Foundation

This study considered the postulates and contributions of relevant theories in the context of entrepreneurship education, regulatory framework and the sustainability agenda. **Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation is one such proposition which argues that** businesses can generate prospect for new returns with their innovations to meet the unmet needs in the market place. Innovation within an enterprise also referred to as intrapreneurship, forms the basis for enhanced investments and business fluctuations (Sweezy, 1943). **By innovation, Schumpeter (1934) meant** commercialization of new technological applications, new processes or materials as opposed to invention which is related to creativity necessary in coming up with a new idea. The relevancy of this theory to the current study is its linkage to the concept of sustainable development since it addresses crucial questions about impact entrepreneurship education and how firms can take advantage of green product innovation to gain sustainable competitive advantage in a globalized business environment.

The theory of Entrepreneurial Competence is also relevant to this study in that it anchors the argument on acquisition of entrepreneurship education including entrepreneurial mind set and skill set as a core competence necessary to live productive lives even if one does not start a business (Neck & Corbett, 2018). This theory in its stage one referred to as Formulation, proposes that resources and opportunities can be combined, boosted by entrepreneurial intention, culminating in entrepreneurial competence as a key source of value creation (Neck & Corbett, 2018). A core competence is therefore a combination of multiple resources and skills that distinguish a firm in the marketplace, thus the foundation of a companies' competitiveness (Hamel & Prahalad, 2005). The internal process with Stage 1 may repeat as many times as necessary to enable the entrepreneur to move ahead into Stage 2: Monetization. Natarajan and Wyrick (2011) argues that competences are a function of technological and market knowledge in the same way that innovation is the use of new technological and market knowledge that allows a firm to offer new products in line with

unmet needs in the market. This implies that an entrepreneur should identify competencies necessary in taking advantage of opportunities through innovation so as to attain sustainability.

Another proposition that relevant to this study is Scylla (1982) regulation innovation theory. It is linked to the construct of government regulatory framework since it addresses key aspects of the organization's ecosystem in the context of the regulatory framework put in place to control the industry. The regulation innovation theory proposes that financial innovations are hampered in the market place by stern government control resulting in numerous types of financial innovation aiming at circumventing or getting rid of government controls. This culminates in a spiral development process, whereby the government puts in control mechanisms and the market innovates, controls again followed by more innovations. From Scylla (1982) proposition, the following can be extrapolated: innovations in green products for environmental sustainability and social regulations can serve as operational indicators of the construct of governmental regulatory framework since it addresses crucial questions about how enterprises may choose to conduct themselves with reference to the set curriculum design and environmental regulations for competitiveness.

Progress towards SDGs amidst Coronavirus pandemic

The United Nations (UN) member states unanimously adopted the millennium declaration to reduce extreme poverty by year 2015, during the Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000 (UN, 2015). This position including additional commitments towards environmental care was reaffirmed during a subsequent world summit on sustainable development held in South Africa in year 2002. This was then followed by the Rio de Janeiro UN conference on sustainable development in June 2012 that commenced the process of developing the SDGs to build upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This process resulted in the adoption of the 2030 global sustainability agenda during the UN general assembly in September 2015 (UN, 2015). The SDGs define global development priorities up to the year 2030, and therefore are essential in addressing the economic, social and environmental difficulties faced by global communities. The SDGs promote a wide range of actions in public and private sectors, hence offers a comprehensive and multidimensional development framework with the attendant targets to be achieved by all countries by 2030 for people and the planet. The SDG framework recognizes that ending poverty and other deprivations should simultaneously track climate change and work to preserve oceans and forests (UN, 2015). Achievement of the seventeen (17) SDGs by ensuring improvement in the human condition is not only an end in itself, but also has intertwined security implications for all countries if the incessant migrations of people from fragile and conflict afflicted regions to western countries is anything to go by. According to (UN, 2019) Implementation of the SGDs not only underscores the global nature of human development challenges, but also shows the need for collective action through partnerships in dealing with issues that were hitherto considered strictly in the ambit of individual national governments from which to rally specific knowledge and other resources.

Taken together, though the SDGs seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, do present challenges and opportunities for governments, for profit and nonprofit entities around the world. For this reason, and in order to track progress and ensure progress and long-term accountability, the 2030 global sustainability

Agenda includes a follow-up and review mechanism designed to allow all partners in the sustainable development process to evaluate the impact of their accomplishments. Based on United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division's report, some progress towards the sustainable development goals had been made in poverty reduction, maternal and child health, access to electricity and gender equality, but not enough to achieve the Goals by 2030. Regrettably, vital areas of the global sustainability agenda, including reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, progress had either stalled or reversed (UN, 2021).

Social Entrepreneurship Education and the Sustainability Agenda

The 2030 global sustainability agenda identifies education as a critical component towards the achievement of all the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This position is anchored on conclusions by epistemic communities who have documented correlations between education in general and various dimensions of sustainable development except SDG 14 on oceans. According to Vladimirovaa and David (2015), there are numerous UN flagship reports showing a link from education to other SDG areas and vice-versa. For instance, some UN reports have documented the importance of education for employment and growth in general (SDG 8), poverty reduction by increasing people's income (SDG 1), reduction in malnutrition and hunger (SDG 2), expansion in opportunities for girls and young women (SGD 5), and improvement in peoples' health since educated people are better informed about diseases, take preventative measures, recognize signs of illness early and tend to use healthcare services more often (SDG 3). Correlation between education and energy (SDG7), water (SDG 6), cities (SDG 11), sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate change (SDG 13) have also received attention in the sum of UN flagship publications (Vladimirovaa & David, 2015). Hence, the centrality of education in acquiring knowledge and building resilience continues to be highlighted based on numerous studies as an enabler for the current and future generations to contribute positively to the social, environmental and economic development of communities (UN, 2015). For this reason, SDG 4 on education is designed in such a way that it cuts across the entire sustainability agenda by reinforcing the need for inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning.

Though many studies have reported the centrality of education in the achievement of the sustainable development goals, countries have been left to conceptualize, review and further develop their national curricula and ensure that education is fundamental to any strategy to create a resilient generation that advocates for action and attainment of the SDGs in a holistic and integrated manner (Kaijage, Wheeler & Newbery, 2013). However, because countries have been left on their own to design the curricula, not much has been done globally in integrating entrepreneurship education in the curriculum outside of university lecture halls, despite its potential in supporting the sustainability agenda (Rahdari, Sepasi & Moradi, 2016). This implies that the positive contribution that social entrepreneurship might have towards the realization of the 2030 global sustainability objectives may be hampered by the absence of social entrepreneurship education and appropriate entrepreneurial skill training, yet social entrepreneurship education has been reported to have a positive impact upon the development of student's creative problem solving and communication skills (Nasrudin & Othman, 2012; Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010). Moreover, Urbano, Aparicio & Audretsch (2018) observed that entrepreneurship education and skill training is not only meant to

support the growth of entrepreneurship as a discipline, but also provide young potential entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and attitudes to start and successfully run a business. Rahdari, Sepasi and Moradi (2016) also posits that entrepreneurship training enables individuals recognize opportunities, improves entrepreneurial skills, competencies and creativity of business owners and as a result impacts growth of businesses. Social entrepreneurship education and skill training also prepares individuals to be accountable and business minded so as to be able to take risks, manage results and outcomes and be able to gain from them (Al-Dajani, *et. al.*, 2015; Bizri, 2017; Seelos & Mair, 2017). In addition, entrepreneurship students and practitioners attending training programmes gain important knowledge on how to manage and deal with business challenges as well how to come up with possible solutions (Nasrudin & Othman, 2012). Moreover, social entrepreneurship training boosts an individual's need for achievement and self-growth along with other entrepreneurial and managerial skills and mind set (Baron, 2006; Mwasiaji, 2021).

Researches have also been carried out on the role of social entrepreneurship education in fragile countries or among displaced communities having run away from conflict areas. Such studies have shown that excluded from mainstream employment, services or social benefits, refugees for instance can establish thriving new ventures within the most unpromising and restrictive conditions as a way of earning their living as a result of entrepreneurship education (Al-Dajani, *et. al.*, 2015; Bizri, 2017). Such entrepreneurial businesses arising from entrepreneurship education and skill training can generate value for communities through the creation of new products, process or markets (Sinha *et. al.*, 2011; Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017). Through social entrepreneurship education and subsequent success of the entrepreneurial businesses, communities can improve their standard of living (Banjoko, *et.al*, 2012), and can enable self-reliance by individuals within those communities (Haltiwanger, *et al.*, 2010). To successfully start and effectively manage a business that could give a livelihood to support self, family *and contribute to local community's economic activity*, entrepreneurs need to develop their *entrepreneurial skills* (Henry, Hill, Leitch, 2004). Through entrepreneurship education and skill training, individuals can have the chance to position themselves in the market place after having designed their startups for profitability and in support of the sustainability agenda. *Some of the required* skills and knowledge by entrepreneurs in order to start and successfully manage a business enterprise include Management Skills to handle enterprise resources such as time, money and employees so as to achieve set goals (Henry, Hill & Leitch, 2004); Problem Solving Skills to facilitate good planning and proper decision making occasionally under pressure (Bizri, 2017), Financial Skills for cash flow and sales forecasting, as well as monitoring profits and losses (Bizri, 2017; Henry, Hill & Leitch, 2004), and Marketing, sales and customer service skills to allow effective promotion of products and good customer service (Henry, Hill, Leitch, 2004).

Social entrepreneurship education and skill training is therefore important in developing the required competencies to enable entrepreneurs bring creativity into the marketplace, create businesses with the potential to hire millions of people and bring new products to the market place to meet customer requirements (Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; Mikušová, Seelos & Mair, 2017; Barbier & Burgess, 2017; Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018). Social entrepreneurs also do mobilize their own and/or borrowed funds, which can lead to capital formation, resulting in creation of wealth that is very essential for economic development

(Kreiser, *et al.*, 2013), hence the achievement of SDG objectives. Such social entrepreneurial businesses especially those designed to pay attention to the economic, social and environmental impact parameters as per SDG objectives, would not only result in improving society and the environment (Gatukui & Gatuse, 2014), but also help alleviate poverty and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (De Clercq & Voronov, 2011; Henry, Hill & Leitch, 2004). The commitment of social entrepreneurs to social goals can lead them to exploit limited resources and act productively within institutional constraints (Desa, 2012; Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010; Bizri, 2017). Entrepreneurship education and skill training may present myriad opportunities including providing green solutions to environmental challenges. It is therefore subject to research across many scientific disciplines, hence the importance of investigating the interplay between SDGs, social entrepreneurship education, Regulatory framework and sustainability objectives. Through such studies, the impact of the SDGs, can be maximized thus creating long-term gains for both society and the environment.

Regulatory Framework

Regulatory framework by governmental agencies for governing specific business activities relates to the configuration of all applicable legislative documents and the means used to administer them, usually sanctioned by industry regulators (Munjeyi, 2017). Such regulations are important drivers in shaping and monitoring behaviour by individual and corporates towards the sustainability agenda. For this reason, funds have been expended in the process of implementing global and national policies and in building institutions for the purpose of promoting the sustainability agenda. Unfortunately, the support programmes though seemingly elaborate in some instances, are not universal nor fully implemented, mainly due to structural challenges and ineffectiveness of the institutions concerned with SDG implementation (Hák, *et al.*, 2018).). Therefore, as the impact of individuals and corporates on social, economic and environmental dimensions continue to increase, there is a need for effective regulatory mechanism to provide for the parameters within which to prosecute the 2030 global sustainability agenda (Parker, *et al.*, 2009). This condition would not only allow entities to implement green innovations to meet societal needs, but also achieve environmental sustainability (Natarajan & Wyrick, 2011).

The multilevel interaction by regulatory agencies in formulating and implementing governmental policies in response to the needs of the sustainability agenda requires not only coherency in the laws and working national institutions, but also proper coordination and cooperation in executing especially legislations connected to environmental care (Žabkar, *et al.*, (2013) and design of school curriculum (Waddock, 2008; Block & Stumpf, 1992). According to UN (2017) report, out of the 169 SDGs targets, there are many technical standards, regulatory frameworks, UN agreements and conventions that are currently in use for the purpose of achieving 2030 global sustainability agenda. It is necessary therefore for policy makers in various jurisdictions across the world to understand the existing regulatory frameworks so as to facilitate the design and operationalization of joint action plans by both the private and public entities to better manage the situation in line with SDG 17 on partnership in prosecuting the sustainability agenda. This is the basis upon which this study is proposing investigations to establish the effectiveness of the extant governmental regulations in moderating the relationship between SDGs and objectives of the sustainability agenda with a view to identify possible data gaps.

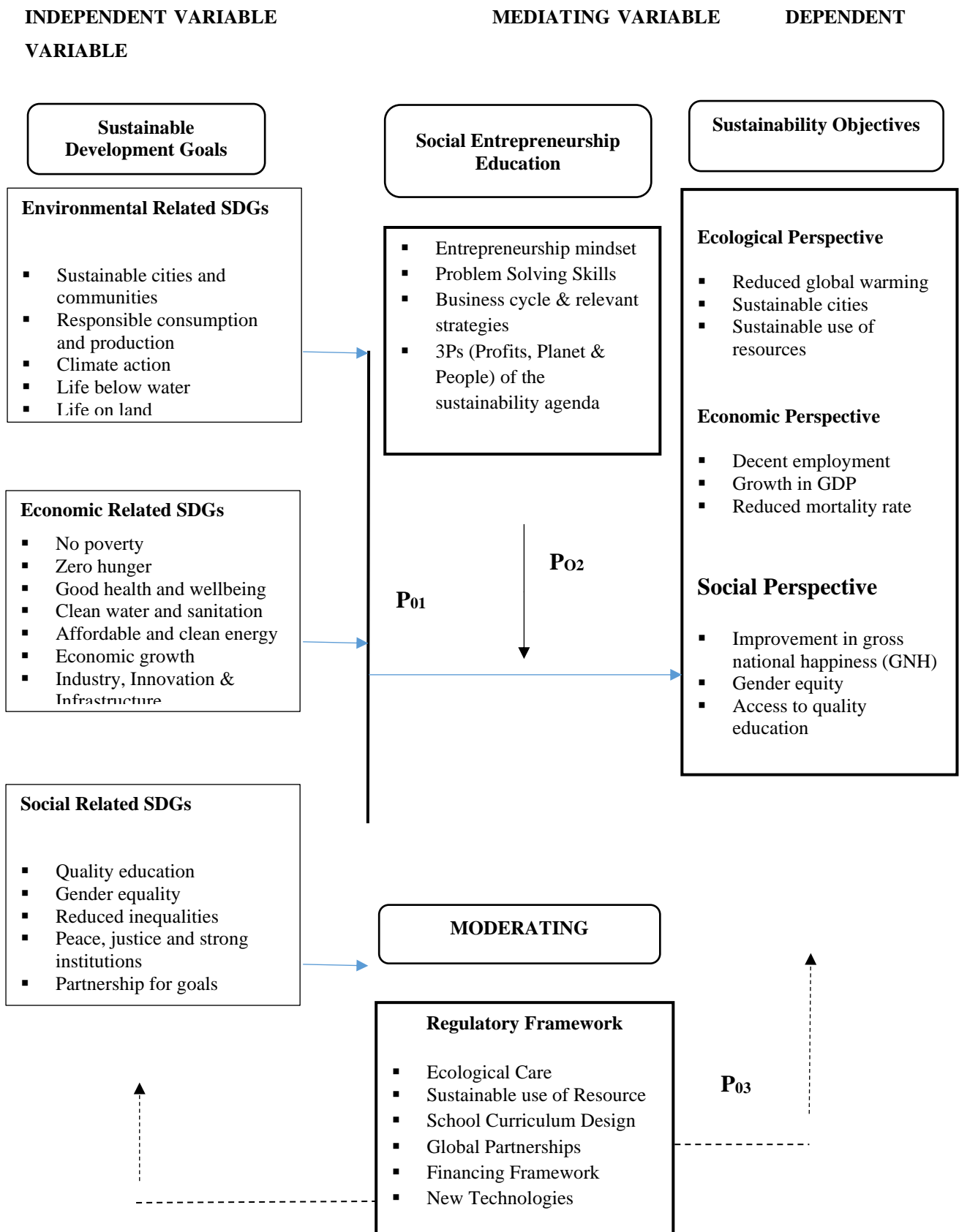
Discussion and Implications

The study has established that since implementation of key activities necessary for the 2030 global sustainability agenda amidst COVID-19 pandemic are non-binding with countries expected to create their own national and regional plans, including the sources and extent of required financing remaining ambiguous, there is therefore little overall progress towards the desired SDG objectives related to environmental care and improvement in overall welfare of the most vulnerable people around the world. There is also inadequate regulatory framework, absence of appropriate social entrepreneurship education and skill training outside University lecture halls. Young people with no jobs, children out of school, families without hope, displaced people or those living in fragile or conflict afflicted areas are therefore being left behind. This is because displacement of people in conflict areas forces them to abandon their assets and means of livelihood as they run to safer areas. Conflict also interferes with value chains required in making supplies available to communities, which in turn increases the rate of acute malnutrition and diseases. Displaced persons also find it difficult to secure meaningful employment due to restrictions imposed by the legal framework, the implication of which is intensification of poverty and inaccessibility to basic needs.

The implications of the study findings are that Sustainable Development Goals might end up like the defunct millennium development goals unless urgent action is taken based on scientific evidence. However, progress towards the realization of the set sustainability objectives is possible if world leaders together with donors, the private sector and not for profit organizations move beyond current forms of engagement and put in place a binding legal framework and have social entrepreneurship education and skill training cascaded to vulnerable communities and at lower levels of the school curricula. This is because social entrepreneurship being a means for empowerment and an enabler of economic development, poverty alleviation and other forms of social value, can be a transformational driver, offering the platform for both attaining and delivering the SDGs whilst driving economic growth led by the principles of sustainable development.

Proposed Integrated Model

This study reviewed extensive empirical and theoretical literature consistent with the role of entrepreneurship in the global 2030 sustainability agenda and the attendant regulatory framework. The study identified data gaps and argues that the positive impact that entrepreneurship may have towards the realization of the sustainability objectives may be hampered by lack of entrepreneurship education and appropriate skill training outside of university halls. This is more so considering that educational system especially in less developed countries have only succeeded in producing unemployable youths mainly because educational policy and existing exam-oriented curriculum have not been able to equip most the school graduates with skills required to become self-employed or employable. Progress is however possible if world leaders together with donors, the private sector and not for profit organizations move beyond the current forms of engagement and have entrepreneurship education cascaded to vulnerable communities and lower levels of the school curricula. This study has therefore proposed the following integrated theoretical model for purposes of progressing knowledge and forming a basis upon which propositions at the abstraction level can be advanced and empirically tested as hypotheses.



Source: Author (2020). The conceptual framework for Sustainable Development Goals, Social Entrepreneurship Education, Regulatory Framework and Sustainability Objectives.

Propositions

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs promote a wide range of actions in public and private sectors, hence offers a comprehensive and multidimensional development scaffold with the attendant targets to be achieved by all countries by 2030 for people and the planet (UN, 2021). The SDGs define global development priorities up to the year 2030, and therefore are essential in addressing the economic, social and environmental difficulties faced by global communities (UN, 2018). Achievement of the seventeen SDGs by ensuring improvement in the human condition is not only an end in itself, but also has intertwined security implications for all countries if the incessant migrations of people from fragile and conflict afflicted regions to western countries is anything to go by. Bornstein and Davis (2010) reported that putting in place strategies for green innovations enhances business competitiveness by attracting aware customers. In line with this observation is Žabkar, *et. al.*, (2013) who argued that sustainable development activities are important in building a competitive advantage and economic growth. Therefore, consistent with various empirical findings some of which have been outlined above, it is important to link SDGs and sustainability objectives (Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017; Mikušová, 2017; Bizri, 2017; Seelos & Mair, 2017; Barbier & Burgess, 2017; Saebi, Foss & Linder, 201). This study therefore proposes that:

Proposition 1 (P1): *Sustainable Development Goals determine sustainability objectives but moderated by regulatory framework.*

The role of Social Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education allows the acquisition of knowledge and skills set needed to develop and lead a business organization. The more developed an entrepreneur's skills, the better able to respond to environmental forces so as to grow the business (Marvel *et al.*, 2016). According to Urbano, Aparicio & Audretsch (2018), Social entrepreneurship education and skill training is not only meant to support the growth of entrepreneurship as a discipline, but also provide young potential entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and attitudes to start and successfully run a business (Seelos & Mair, 2017; Barbier & Burgess, 2017; Saebi, Foss & Linder, 2018). In addition, social entrepreneurship training boosts an individual's need for achievement and self-growth along with other entrepreneurial and managerial skills and mind set (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010; Rawhouser, Cummings & Newbert, 2017). Therefore, it can be summarized that relevant knowledge and skills set is an important predictor of entrepreneurial outcomes (Baron, 2006). Based on this, the study proposes that:

Proposition 2 (P2): *Social Entrepreneurship Education mediates the relationship between Sustainable Development Goals and the Sustainability Objectives*

The role of Regulatory Framework

Regulatory framework by governmental agencies for governing specific business activities relates to the configuration of all applicable legislative documents and the means used to administer them, usually sanctioned by industry regulators (Munjeyi, 2017). Such regulations are important drivers in shaping and monitoring behaviour by individual and corporates towards the sustainability agenda. Out of the 169 targets that have been identified towards the realization of the 17 SDGs, there are several technical standards and national regulatory frameworks that are currently in place to support the sustainability agenda (Munjeyi, 2017). Consistent with both conceptual and empirical literature as outlined above, it is important to link the adopted regulatory framework (contingent construct) and performance of microfinance sector (ultimate variable). This study therefore makes the following proposition:

Proposition 3 (P3): *Regulatory Framework moderates the relationship between Sustainable Development Goals and sustainability objectives.*

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to provide a content analysis of extant literature consistent with the role of social entrepreneurship education in the global sustainability agenda and the attendant regulatory framework, and finally propose an integrated model providing propositions for filling up the identified gaps. The theoretical literature is grounded on the construct of sustainable development goals, entrepreneurship education, regulatory framework and sustainability objectives. The reviewed show that sustainable development goals relate directly to sustainability objectives. However, since activities necessary in the sustainability agenda are non-binding with countries expected to create their own national plans, including the sources and extent of required financing remaining ambiguous, there is little global progress towards the desired objectives. There is also inadequate legal framework amidst coronavirus disease outbreak and absence of appropriate entrepreneurship education outside University lecture halls. While this study contributes to the literature on sustainable development goals, it has also identified nascent knowledge gaps and proposed an integrated theoretical model upon which propositions at the abstraction level can be advanced and empirically tested as hypotheses to generate empirical data. The study may be of great importance to governments and development agencies as it presents the bases for green innovations at the same time help meet the target of sustainable development. This study is also useful in the design of sustainability policies and programs addressing social, economic and environmental challenges.

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