

The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Fostering Sustainable Community Development in Rivers State

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Abstract—The study examined the role of social entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable community development. This research adopted descriptive research design. Six hundred and thirty (630) indigens from 3 distinct senatorial districts (Rivers East, Rivers South, and Rivers West) in Rivers State were used for the study. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the field of study. The instrument was titled: Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development (SESD). In the study, 0.79 reliability coefficient was derived using Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The 5 points Likert Scale rating was used for the study as follows: Strongly Agree (5 points); Agree (4 points); Neutral (3 points); Disagree (2 points); Strongly Disagree (1 point). After data collection, the respondents' responses were subjected to data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis. The primary data collected was analyzed using Mean and Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Mean was used to answer the research questions while Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to test the null hypotheses. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. SPSS version 23 was used for the statistical analysis. It was found that social mission, social innovation, economic viability, and socialized governance have a positive significant relationship with sustainable development in Rivers State. It was concluded that social entrepreneurship is important in empowering marginalized populations by creating local jobs, retaining wealth within the community, and addressing specific local market failures whether through accessible clean energy, local sustainable agriculture, or skill acquisitions. However, it was recommended among others that government should render support to social entrepreneurs through favorable policies in order to increase sustainable development in Rivers State.

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by accelerating environmental degradation, economic inequality, and the retreat of

traditional state welfare, conventional approaches to community development are proving insufficient. Historically, the burden of community development fell either on public sectors often constrained by bureaucracy and shifting political agendas or on traditional non-profits reliant on erratic donor funding. Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a disruptive, hybrid paradigm that bridges these gaps. By blending the mission-driven heart of a non-profit with the market-driven, revenue-generating mechanics of a business, social enterprises do not just alleviate social symptoms; they build self-sustaining ecosystems. When applied to localized growth, social entrepreneurship acts as a catalyst for sustainable community development. It achieves this by shifting the focus from short-term charity to long-term capacity building. Instead of fostering dependency, social entrepreneurs empower marginalized populations by creating local jobs, retaining wealth within the community, and addressing specific local market failures whether through accessible clean energy, local sustainable agriculture, or inclusive education. Understanding the precise mechanisms through which these ventures operate, scale, and overcome systemic barriers is crucial. It allows us to fully leverage their potential to foster communities that are economically resilient, socially equitable, and environmentally viable.

Social entrepreneurship provides a significant impact on community development by offering a community with a sense of purpose, provide income for them and answer the call of change in their community. Social entrepreneurs seek to serve the community's interest by creating solutions that address societal needs and by engaging in sustainable livelihoods that benefit themselves and their communities. Obiekezie and Ihejiamazu (2014) emphasized that the society needs people and groups who are sufficiently creative and

innovative to put in place measures and strategies to identify and meet needs or fill gaps that are of social concern. Sustainable solutions to social problems in Nigeria have long been a vital strategy for fostering economic and social progress, especially in rural areas and marginalized urban communities (Hart 2024). In recent times, sustainable community development has emerged as one of the best measures to determine how sustainable solutions are provided to social problems (Kamaludeen, Xavier, & Amin 2024).

It is believed that social entrepreneurial initiatives have the potential to provide sustainable, long-term solutions to community development. However, the concept is one that could be considered as its practice could contribute positively to community development in the areas of impact and sustainability (Onyemaechi et al., 2021). Rural communities in Nigeria are overwhelmed with myriads of braves that impede growth and development. Unemployment and poverty are among the key challenge's communities are faced with (Ngatse-Ipangui & Dassah, 2019). Achieving community development has been arduous despite the various strategies adopted by government, local agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). However, the high levels of unemployment, poverty and the consequent effects they create inhibit social and economic development. Given this situation, there is an urgent need for the design and implementation of innovative projects that can provide sustainable, long-term solutions to social problems. Community development is therefore, concerned with improvement in the quality of life and standard of living of a community. According to Ekong (2010), Nigeria is predominantly rural with over 60 per cent of people living in rural communities. For this reason, community development efforts ought to be geared towards improvement in the standard of living of the people and making the process of their development self-sustaining. This understanding, informed the community development efforts of successive governments in Nigeria targeted in the rural communities. Regrettably, most of the community development efforts have failed to yield the desired results despite various strategies and efforts. Udu and Onwe (2016) has continued to result in a situation where there is visible mismatch between the community structure and the kind of empowerment programmes targeted at them. Importantly, a

promising approach to community development that complements development assistance is social entrepreneurship.

II. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship represents a transformative business approach that blends the resourcefulness and market-driven discipline of traditional business with a primary commitment to solving societal or environmental challenges. Unlike commercial ventures, where social good might be a byproduct of profit, social entrepreneurship flips the script: social value creation is the core mission, and commercial activity is the engine that sustains it. Mair and Martí (2006) define social entrepreneurship as the innovative use and combination of resources to explore and exploit opportunities, that aims at catalyzing social change by catering to basic human needs in a sustainable manner. Conversely, Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006) views social entrepreneurship as innovative, social value-creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, or government sectors. Nicholls and Cho (2006) broke the concept down into three foundational building blocks.

These are widely cited as the pillars that differentiate it from charity or pure capitalism:

- a) The Mission: The ultimate goal of the venture is to generate "social wealth" rather than maximize private shareholder profit (Zahra et al., 2009). Success is measured by social impact (e.g., poverty reduction, carbon sequestration, or educational access) rather than strictly financial return on investment.
- b) Innovation: Social entrepreneurs rarely use status-quo solutions. They disrupt broken systems by introducing new organizational models, novel products/services, or unique supply chains. For example, pioneering the concept of microfinance or utilizing a "buy-one-give-one" business model are classic systemic innovations.
- c) Market Orientation: This is what separates a social enterprise from a traditional non-profit or charity relying entirely on grants and donations. Social enterprises engage in market-driven action, executing earned-income strategies to achieve financial self-sufficiency and scalability

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is an approach to progress that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It achieves this by carefully balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Sustainable development is an approach to development which uses resources in a way that allows them (the resources) to continue to exist for others (Mohieldin, 2024). Sustainable development is the concept of organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend. Considered from this angle, sustainable development aims at achieving social progress, environmental equilibrium and economic growth (Gossling-Goldsmiths, 2018). Ukaga et al. (2011) emphasized the need to move away from harmful socio-economic activities and rather engage in activities with positive environmental, economic and social impacts. According to Kolk (2016), sustainable development is achievable through the integration of economic, environmental, and social concerns in decision-making processes.

Social Mission and Sustainable Development

Social mission acts as a foundational driver, catalyst, and mechanism for achieving sustainable development. Rather than viewing social impact and sustainability as competing priorities, empirical data proves that anchoring an organization's core identity to a social mission structurally reinforces long-term economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Social mission as the catalyst for value creation. When an organization pivots toward a distinct social mission, it transitions from basic profit-maximization to sustainable value creation. Liczmańska-Kopcewicz et al (2019) found a statistically significant positive correlation between a firm's internal orientation toward sustainability assumptions and the successful execution of their corporate strategy. A social mission forces an enterprise to align its goals with its broader environment, creating shared economic and social value that stabilizes the company's long-term market presence. A primary vehicle connecting a social mission to environmental and economic sustainability is stakeholder behavior. When an organization embeds

social values into its operational fabric, it directly alters consumer intent. Du et al (2024) also found that an authentic social mission transforms passive stakeholders into active participants in eco-friendly, sustainable consumption. Social entrepreneurs demonstrated that initiatives explicitly geared toward creating social value are uniquely positioned to solve complex local problems (Sauermann, 2023). Social values such as equity, justice, and inclusion provide the precise vocabulary needed to operationalize sustainable development policies (Leal Filho et al., 2022). Salman et al (2024) demonstrated that institutionalizing a social mission serves as a primary tool to measure and audit sustainability metrics, specifically because governmental regulations and cultural norms positively moderate how effectively corporate social efforts translate into actualized sustainable development.

Social Innovation and Sustainable Development

Social innovation is the development and implementation of new solutions to social and environmental needs which is a core driver of sustainable development. Rather than treating sustainability purely as a technological or regulatory challenge, sustainable development requires a shifting of social practices, relationships, and community frameworks. Social innovations heavily prioritize immediate human welfare as a baseline for wider sustainability (Eichler & Schwarz, 2019). Global survey data collected from sustainability and innovation experts confirms that social innovations are actively used as practical vehicles to put the abstract principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into daily practice, moving sustainability from policy to community-level application (Leal Filho et al., 2021).

Social innovations specifically focus on intersections of poverty, social inequality, and a lack of access to basic services in direct response to climate change and environmental degradation (Jareh, 2025). Collaborative innovation and social trust are the primary mechanisms that allow these initiatives to successfully scale, making communities resilient enough to withstand long-term environmental and economic shocks (Jareh, 2025). The relationship between social innovation and sustainable development relies on an ecosystem of diverse actors rather than a single sector.

Content analysis of empirical literature identifies five core types of innovators driving these sustainable outcomes (Eichler & Schwarz, 2019):

- Social entrepreneurs and social enterprises
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profits
- Civil society and community groups
- Public institutions and local governments
- Commercial firms adopting social goals

Economic Viability and Sustainable Development

The relationship between economic viability (the ability of an economy, industry, or business to sustain itself financially over time) and sustainable development (meeting present needs without compromising future generations across economic, social, and environmental pillars) is complex. Empirical research proves that economic viability provides the capital and technological means required to implement sustainable development. Conversely, sustainable practices protect the resource base and boost the productivity necessary to maintain long-term economic viability. Research investigating institutional competitiveness found that both the social and environmental pillars of sustainability directly improve economic results, serving as a distinct competitive advantage (Pop et al., 2018). Economic viability strongly correlates with higher Sustainable Society Index (SSI) scores by protecting property rights and encouraging clean innovation (Sofrankova et al., 2021). Financial sector stability directs capital and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into green energy and technology transfers, stabilizing macro growth (Batrancea et al., 2020).

Socialized Governance and Sustainable Development

Socialized governance is the process of expanding governance beyond traditional state authorities to actively involve civil society, local communities, and the private sector. Social governance is a critical catalyst for sustainable development. Rather than relying purely on top-down regulation, socialized governance works by embedding collective public values into institutional, community, and corporate frameworks. When businesses integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles directly into their core strategies driven by public and stakeholder pressure, they align corporate

culture with broader public values, resulting in long-term social welfare and more sustainable environmental footprints (Liu, 2024). Empirical case studies examining community-based sustainability projects demonstrate that top-down environmental policy often fails if it does not address localized social behavior. Research indicates that sustainable development is heavily dependent on community governance frameworks that foster values of inclusion, equity, and mutual support (Leal Filho et al., 2022). When local populations are socialized into pre-existing, malleable conceptions of community responsibility, their collective action directly strengthens local resilience against climate impacts and resource depletion, serving as the "social leg" of sustainability (Leal Filho et al., 2022). Research into political and corporate strategies suggests a co-evolutionary model where socialized governance establishes systems of regulated self-regulation (Bleischwitz, 2004). By giving markets and civil groups a participatory role in setting sustainability guidelines, governance structures stimulate continuous institutional learning and innovation, which stabilizes long-term sustainability transitions.

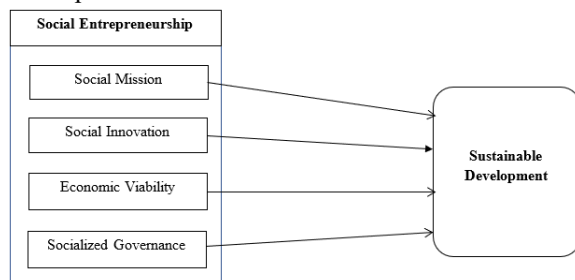
IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growing global emphasis on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), traditional development models primarily led by state governments and grant-dependent non-profit organizations frequently struggle with systemic inefficiencies, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and chronic financial instability. Consequently, interventions aimed at poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, and social inequity often yield short-term, unsustainable results that collapse once external funding cycles end. In response to these institutional voids, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a promising hybrid model that leverages market-driven mechanisms to pursue public interest goals. Theorists suggest that by combining a social mission, social innovation, economic viability, and socialized governance, social enterprises can foster genuine, resilient sustainable development. However, a critical gap remains between theoretical optimism and empirical reality. First, many organizations face a severe "mission drift" paradox, where the pressure to maintain economic viability compromises their core

social mission, potentially harming local equity. Second, while social innovations are celebrated in isolation, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding whether these novel models can scale sufficiently to drive macro-level environmental and economic stewardship.

Finally, the assumption that socialized, democratic governance inherently leads to community resilience is often hindered by internal operational inefficiencies and stakeholder conflicts. Without a rigorous empirical investigation into how these four distinct organizational dimensions interact and influence the triple bottom line, policymakers, impact investors, and practitioners lack an objective framework to distinguish scalable, truly sustainable enterprises from superficial, short-lived ventures. Left unaddressed, this knowledge gap risks misallocating scarce capital, stalling progress toward regional development targets, and leaving vulnerable communities vulnerable to fractured, unsustainable interventions.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, 2026

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following are the research objectives for the study:

1. To identify the relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. To find out the relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State.
3. To identify the relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State.
4. To find out the relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for the study:

1. What is the relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State?
4. What is the relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State?

Research hypotheses

The following are the research hypotheses for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted descriptive research design. Six hundred and thirty (630) indigens from 3 distinct senatorial districts (Rivers East, Rivers South, and Rivers West) in Rivers State were used for the study. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the field of study. The instrument was titled: Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development (SESD). In the study, 0.79 reliability coefficient was derived using Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The 5 points Likert Scale rating was used for the study as follows: Strongly Agree (5 points); Agree (4 points); Neutral (3 points); Disagree (2 points); Strongly Disagree (1 point). After data collection, the respondents' responses were subjected to data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis. The primary data collected was analyzed using Mean and Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Mean was used to

answer the research questions while Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to test the null hypotheses. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. SPSS version 23 was used for the statistical analysis.

VII. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research question 1

What is the relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State?

Table 1: Relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Social mission of organizations operating in our area is fully integrated into our community long-term sustainable development goals.	630	3.78	1.14	Agreed
2	Organizations operating in our area prioritize investing resources into initiatives that benefit both society and the environment.	630	3.90	0.96	Agreed
3	The success of social mission of organizations operating in our area should be measured by the positive long-term impact they leave on local communities.	630	4.19	0.79	Agreed
4	Organizations operating in our area designed their operations to meet current operational needs without compromising future environmental standards.	630	3.79	0.90	Agreed

Criterion Mean = 3

Grand Mean = 3.91

The Table 1 shows the 4 items used to answer research question one which showed the grand mean of 3.91 which is greater than criterion mean of 3. The mean score for item 3 (The success of social mission of organizations operating in our area should be measured by the positive long-term impact they leave on local communities) is 4.19 which is the highest mean score in Table 1. The item 1 (Social mission of organizations operating in our area is fully integrated

into our community long-term sustainable development goals.) has a mean score of 3.78 which is lower than every other mean scores in Table 1. All the item in Table 1 has mean score greater than the criterion mean of 3. This indicates that social mission promotes sustainable community development in Rivers State.

Research question 2

What is the relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State?

Table 2: Relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
5	Social innovations in my community actively contribute to long-term environmental protection.	630	3.58	1.20	Agreed
6	For a social enterprise to be successful, its business model must prioritize ecological sustainability alongside profit.	630	3.40	1.15	Agreed
7	Cross-sector partnerships (between government, business, and nonprofits) are essential for scaling sustainable social solutions.	630	3.56	1.04	Agreed
8	Local social initiatives effectively address the root causes of economic inequality rather than just treating the symptoms.	630	3.63	1.11	Agreed

Criterion Mean = 3

Grand Mean = 3.54

The Table 2 shows the 4 items used to answer research question two which showed the grand mean of 3.54

which is greater than criterion mean of 3. The mean score for item 8 (Local social initiatives effectively address the root causes of economic inequality rather than just treating the symptoms) is 3.63 which is the

highest mean score in Table 2. The item 6 (For a social enterprise to be successful, its business model must prioritize ecological sustainability alongside profit) has a mean score of 3.40 which is lower than every other mean scores in Table 2. All the item in Table 2 has mean score greater than the criterion mean of 3.

This indicates that social innovation promotes sustainable community development in Rivers State.

Research question 3

What is the relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State?

Table 3: Relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
9	Organizations operating in our area investment in environmentally sustainable practices directly contributes to our community long-term profitability.	630	4.12	0.89	Agreed
10	Organizations operating in our area prioritizes long-term resource efficiency over short-term financial savings.	630	3.71	1.15	Agreed
11	Organizations operating in our area provides the capital and technological means required to implement sustainable development.	630	3.62	0.99	Agreed
12	Organizations operating in our area are willing to accept lower immediate financial returns if it guarantees a reduced environmental impact.	630	3.65	0.95	Agreed

Criterion Mean = 3

Grand Mean = 3.77

As shown in The Table 3, the grand mean of the 4 items used to answer research question three is 3.77 which is greater than criterion mean of 3. The mean score for item 9 (Organizations operating in our area investment in environmentally sustainable practices directly contributes to our community long-term profitability) is 4.12 which is the highest mean score in Table 3. The item 11 (Organizations operating in our area provides the capital and technological means

required to implement sustainable development) has a mean score of 3.62 which is lower than every other mean scores in Table 3. All the item in Table 3 has mean score greater than the criterion mean of 3. This indicates that economic viability promotes sustainable community development in Rivers State.

Research question 4

What is the relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State?

Table 4: Relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
13	Active participation of local community organizations is essential for the long-term success of environmental sustainability projects in my region.	630	3.95	1.03	Agreed
14	When local governments involve citizens and NGOs in urban planning, the resulting policies are more socially equitable and sustainable.	630	4.07	0.96	Agreed
15	Collaborative partnerships between businesses, community groups, and local authorities are the most effective way to manage shared natural resources.	630	3.68	1.05	Agreed
16	Promoting a culture of shared responsibility among citizens rather than relying solely on government regulations is necessary to achieve long-term economic and environmental goals.	630	3.65	1.03	Agreed

Criterion Mean = 3

Grand Mean = 3.84

As shown in The Table 4, the grand mean of the 4 items used to answer research question four is 3.84 which is greater than criterion mean of 3. The mean score for item 14 (When local governments involve citizens and NGOs in urban planning, the resulting policies are more socially equitable and sustainable) is 4.07 which is the highest mean score in Table 4. The item 16 (Promoting a culture of shared responsibility among citizens rather than relying solely on government regulations is necessary to achieve long-term economic and environmental goals) has a mean score of 3.65 which is lower than every other mean scores in Table 4. All the item in Table 4 has mean score greater than the criterion mean of 3. This indicates that socialized governance promotes sustainable community development in Rivers State.

VIII. HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 5: Relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State

		Social Mission	Sustainable Development
Social Mission	Pearson Correlation	1	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	630	630
Sustainable Development	Pearson Correlation	.398**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	630	630
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As shown in Table 5, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted to evaluate the relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State. The test result was statistically significant: $r = .398$, $d = 628$, $p < 0.05$.

Hence, there is a positive significant relationship between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 6: Relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State

		Social Innovation	Sustainable Development
Social Innovation	Pearson Correlation	1	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	630	630
Sustainable Development	Pearson Correlation	.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	630	630
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From Table 6, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted to evaluate the relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State. The test result was statistically significant: $r = .525$, $d = 628$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, there is a positive significant relationship between social innovation and sustainable development in Rivers State. Therefore, the null hypothesis two was rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 7: Relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State

		Economic Viability	Sustainable Development
Economic Viability	1	.289**	.398**
		.000	.000
	630	630	630
Sustainable Development	.289**	1	1
	.000		
	630	630	630
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As shown in Table 7, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted to evaluate the relationship between economic viability and sustainable

development in Rivers State. The test result was statistically significant: $r = .289$, $d = 628$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, there is a positive significant relationship between economic viability and sustainable development in Rivers State. Therefore, the null hypothesis three was rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Table 8: Relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State

		Socialized Governance	Sustainable Development
Socialized Governance	Pearson Correlation	1	.534**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	630	630
Sustainable Development	Pearson Correlation	.534**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	630	630
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From Table 8, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted to evaluate the relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State. The test result was statistically significant: $r = .534$, $d = 628$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, there is a positive significant relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State. Therefore, the null hypothesis four was rejected.

IX. DISCUSSION

In the study, it was found that social entrepreneurship promotes sustainable community development in Rivers State. In the study, a positive significant relationship was found between social mission and sustainable development in Rivers State. Whenever an organization pivots toward a distinct social mission, it transitions from basic profit-maximization to sustainable value creation. The finding of this study is in agreement with Liczmańska-Kopcewicz et al (2019) found a statistically significant positive correlation between a firm's internal orientation toward sustainability assumptions and the successful execution of their corporate strategy. Also, Du et al

(2024) also found that an authentic social mission transforms passive stakeholders into active participants in eco-friendly, sustainable consumption. It was revealed in the study that social innovation has a positive significant relationship with sustainable development in Rivers State. Similarly, Leal Filho et al (2021) found that social innovations are actively used as practical vehicles to put the abstract principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into daily practice, moving sustainability from policy to community-level application. Social innovations specifically focus on intersections of poverty, social inequality, and a lack of access to basic services in direct response to climate change and environmental degradation (Jareh, 2025).

It was also revealed in the study that there is a positive significant relationship between economic viability and sustainable development. The finding of this study supports the findings of Sofrankova et al (2021) who found that economic viability strongly correlates with higher Sustainable Society Index (SSI) scores by protecting property rights and encouraging clean innovation. Social and environmental pillars of sustainability directly improve economic results, serving as a distinct competitive advantage (Pop et al., 2018).

This study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between socialized governance and sustainable development in Rivers State. The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings of Leal Filho et al (2022) who found that sustainable development is heavily dependent on community governance frameworks that foster values of inclusion, equity, and mutual support. Similarly, Bleischwitz (2004) also found that co-evolutionary model where socialized governance establishes systems of regulated self-regulation promotes sustainable development.

X. CONCLUSION

Social entrepreneurship fosters sustainable community development in Rivers State. It was empirically revealed in the study that social mission, social innovation, economic viability, and socialized governance have a positive significant relationship with sustainable development in Rivers State. Social entrepreneurship is important in empowering marginalized populations by creating local jobs, retaining wealth within the community, and addressing

specific local market failures whether through accessible clean energy, local sustainable agriculture, or skill acquisitions.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should render support to social entrepreneurs through favorable policies in order to increase sustainable development in Rivers State.
2. Community leaders should communicate the importance of social entrepreneurs' activities to their subordinates in order not to jeopardize sustainability development in the area.
3. Organizations involved in social entrepreneurship should run inclusive government to incorporate community members into their social entrepreneurship activities.

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