



SOCIAL INNOVATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The social innovation has gained traction as a means to tackle complex issues like poverty through its focus on empowerment, collaboration, and community-driven solutions. In the Nigerian context, social innovation holds potential for transforming traditional approaches to poverty alleviation. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of social innovation using (crowdfunding, telehealth and volunteering of social innovation model) on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The survey was conducted on three hundred and eighty-three (383) respondents who were contacted on google form through the link of rotary club of Nigeria. The data were analysed using SPSS. The findings revealed that there is a moderate relationship between poverty alleviation and crowdfunding which implies that as crowdfunding increases, the poverty alleviation increases. The T-value ($t_c=4.339$, $p=.000$) shows that crowdfunding is statistically significant in explaining poverty alleviation. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Telehealth result reveals that there is a moderate relationship between poverty alleviation and telehealth which also implies that as telehealth increases, the poverty alleviation increases as the T-value ($t_c=9.674$, $p=.000$) shows that telehealth is statistically significant in explaining poverty alleviation. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Lastly, the result on volunteering reveals that there is an inverse effect between volunteering and poverty alleviation and this implies that as volunteering increases, the poverty alleviation reduces. The T-value ($t_c=-.954$, $p=.341$). Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Keywords: Crowdfunding, Telehealth, Volunteering, Social innovation, Poverty alleviation.

Introduction

The eradication of extreme poverty remains an intractable challenge and this is because one technique cannot be used to tackle the level of poverty around the globe. Therefore, several scholars have investigated the issue of poverty alleviation in and around the globe with differs techniques and the new or most trending model out of the techniques is social innovation. Social innovation includes the social processes of innovation such as open source methods and techniques and also innovations which have a social purpose like activism, crowdfunding, time-based currency, telehealth, cohousing, volunteering, microcredit and distance learning. A large number of initiatives for poverty reduction around the world have been conducted using social innovation, although most of them are not labelled as social innovation (Millard, 2016). According to Karnani (2017), poverty reduction initiatives should focus on creating a large scale of jobs suited to the poor.

Social innovation is a process that yields advantageous social results for individuals and various stakeholders, typically at the local level. This process is characterised by active participation from civil society, emphasising a grassroots approach. Furthermore, social innovation harnesses its effectiveness through collaboration among different actors, sectors, disciplines, and areas of focus (Jeremy & Vincenzo, 2023). The primary objective of social innovation is to provide empowerment to those facing social challenges, particularly those who possess limited or no resources at their disposal. The primary objective is to enhance the autonomy and capacity of the beneficiaries, rather than solely depending on external actors to advocate on their behalf. This is achieved through the transformation of social interactions and the establishment of novel collaborative procedures, such as telemedicine, crowdfunding, and cohousing. The topic of poverty alleviation through social innovation encompasses efforts aimed at addressing both economic and humanitarian dimensions, with the ultimate goal of permanently uplifting individuals out of poverty. This is achieved through the use of social purpose initiatives facilitated by internet-based platforms. According to the United Nations (2020), poverty encompasses more than a mere absence of income and productive resources that are necessary for sustaining a livelihood. Several manifestations of this phenomenon encompass substandard educational attainment, unfavourable health and nutritional consequences, restricted availability of crucial services, societal bias and exclusion, limited involvement in decision-making processes, and an insecure residential milieu (United Nations, 2020; World Bank, 2018).



It's important to note that the specific regulations or policies and practices related to social innovation may vary depending on the country or region. As technology continues to advance, social innovation model is expected to play an increasingly significant role in helping individual with social need challenge. There are policies used in implementing the equitable distribution of income that social innovation has not been looked into and this is the reason why this study looked at the effect of social innovation on poverty alleviation as the main objective of the study and the specific objectives of the study are as follows;

- 1) To know the influence of crowdfunding on poverty alleviation
- 2) To examine the effect of the telehealth on poverty alleviation
- 3) To determine the impact of volunteering on poverty alleviation

Literature Review

The concept of poverty has been delineated through many definitions within the existing body of scholarly literature (Bray, de Laat, Godinot, Ugarte & Walker 2020; Oosterlynck, Kazepov, & Novy, 2020). The several definitions presented in the literature are associated with the multifaceted nature of poverty (Leal, Lovren, Will, Salvia, & Frankenberger, 2021; Oduwole, 2015). There is an increasing recognition that the elimination of poverty necessitates the implementation of a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy (Feliciano, 2019; Schleicher et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the prevailing approach in poverty alleviation interventions is the income/consumption strategy, which serves as the foundation for single-sector policy measures and general techniques aimed at reducing poverty (Alia, 2017; Cantone et al., 2021; Pira et al., 2021). Until now, strategies aimed at reducing poverty have predominantly depended on two approaches: fostering economic growth and implementing targeted social protection measures, such as conditional cash transfers, school feeding programmes, and public work projects (Borga & D'Ambrosio, 2021).

The idea of Social Innovation (SI) is characterised by its ambiguity, which arises from the dynamic nature of the subject and the consequent absence of a cohesive theoretical framework (Agostini, Vieira, Tondolo, & Tondolo, 2017; Cuntz, Foray, & Mostovova, 2020). Nevertheless, a consensus regarding its significance has been reached, as evidenced by the identification of common themes in many definitions provided by Lee et al. (2019); Ravazzoli and Valero (2020); The Young Foundation (2012). The inclusion of meeting social needs is inherent the majority of social innovation (SI) definitions. Conversely, Moulaert et al. (2013) contend that SI initiatives and practises emerge when existing public policies and private endeavours fail to provide adequate resolutions to the challenges of poverty and social exclusion. The Young Foundation (2012) also emphasises additional distinctive aspects of social innovation, namely, the development of novel solutions (such as products, services, models, markets, and processes) that effectively address social needs, surpassing existing solutions. This process leads to the creation of new or improved capabilities and relationships, as well as the enhanced utilisation of assets and resources. The aforementioned definition underscores the significance of novelty and effectiveness in meeting social needs, along with the resulting empowerment of beneficiaries, as key characteristics of social innovation. Social innovation refers to the process through which local initiatives are developed to address the social needs of individuals, groups, and communities who are experiencing poverty. These efforts aim to fill the gaps that existing private and public institutions have failed to adequately address (Moulaert et al., 2013; Oosterlynck et al., 2013). Most of the the models used to meet the individual needs are discussed and addressed by Ike and Ezejiofor, (2020). And this study will discuss three out of all while others can be looked into by other potential scholars.

Crowdfunding has emerged as a powerful tool for poverty alleviation by enabling individuals to raise funds from a diverse online community (Matavire et al., 2021). In Nigeria, where access to traditional finance is limited for many, crowdfunding platforms offer an alternative means of capital infusion for micro-entrepreneurs and grassroots initiatives (Ajayi, Atiku, & Akintola, 2019). The success of campaigns such as "Save Baby Musa" demonstrates the potential of crowdfunding to mobilize resources for urgent needs (Okoli et al., 2020).

Telehealth, another facet of social innovation, addresses the challenge of healthcare access in impoverished communities. With its ability to bridge geographical barriers and connect patients with medical professionals remotely, telehealth offers a lifeline for those who lack adequate healthcare facilities (Oyeyemi et al., 2019). In Nigeria, telehealth initiatives like the "Doctor on Demand" service have enabled individuals in remote areas to receive medical advice and consultation (Ilo et al., 2021).

Volunteering serves as a powerful form of social innovation that fosters community engagement and drives local development efforts (Makuwira et al., 2016). In Nigeria, where social bonds and communal ties hold significant



value, volunteering initiatives play a pivotal role in poverty alleviation. The "Clean Nigeria" campaign, driven by volunteers, exemplifies how collective action can lead to tangible improvements in sanitation and hygiene (Ike & Ezejiolor, 2020).

social innovation has emerged as a dynamic force in tackling poverty in Nigeria. Through avenues like crowdfunding, telehealth, and volunteering, innovative solutions are reshaping traditional paradigms of poverty alleviation, offering new hope and opportunities to marginalized communities.

Social innovation involves the development and implementation of novel ideas, strategies, and initiatives that create positive social change (Phills et al., 2008). It has gained traction as a means to tackle complex issues like poverty through its focus on empowerment, collaboration, and community-driven solutions. In the Nigerian context, social innovation holds potential for transforming traditional approaches to poverty alleviation (Adeleye & Owolabi, 2020).

Theoretical Review:

This theoretical review delves into the theoretical foundations that underpin the potential impact of social innovation, represented by crowdfunding, telehealth, and volunteering, on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The theoretical underpinnings of social innovation, as represented by crowdfunding, telehealth, and volunteering, underscore their potential to create meaningful impacts on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. By harnessing collective action, leveraging technology, and fostering community-driven initiatives, these innovative approaches align with established theories and offer promising avenues to address the complex challenge of poverty within the Nigerian context

Theory of social innovation

Social innovation is rooted in the concept of finding novel solutions to address social issues (Murray et al., 2010). Its principles emphasize collaboration, community engagement, and empowerment. The theory of social innovation suggests that by reimagining traditional approaches to poverty alleviation, innovative interventions can create lasting and sustainable impacts (Adeleye & Owolabi, 2020).

Theory of collective action

Crowdfunding is grounded in the theory of collective action and democratized funding (Gerber & Hui, 2013). It capitalizes on the "wisdom of the crowd" to mobilize financial resources for initiatives that lack access to traditional funding avenues (Matavire et al., 2021). The theory posits that by pooling small contributions from a large number of individuals, crowdfunding can create a substantial impact, thereby enabling grassroots poverty alleviation efforts.

Theory of geographical accessibility and technology-mediated healthcare

Telehealth draws upon the theory of geographical accessibility and technology-mediated healthcare (Whitten et al., 2000). This theory suggests that technology can bridge geographical gaps and provide access to services that were previously out of reach. Telehealth interventions, by enabling remote consultations and diagnosis, can contribute to reducing health-related poverty in underserved areas (Oyeyemi et al., 2019).

Theory of Social Capital

Volunteering is closely tied to the theory of social capital and community engagement (Putnam, 2000). This theory posits that social networks and relationships within a community contribute to its overall well-being. Volunteering enhances social cohesion, empowers individuals, and builds social capital, all of which are vital for community-driven poverty alleviation efforts (Makuwira et al., 2016).

Empirical Review

In 2023, Ipinnaiye and Olaniyan conducted an exploratory study focused on local social innovation efforts aimed at achieving sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria. The research conducted in this study has found culturally innovative practises that have a positive impact on society, such as traditional rotating saving/credit systems and apprenticeship schemes. These practises play a crucial role in poverty eradication by facilitating better access to financial resources and fostering entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, the findings suggest that the implementation of social impact (SI) programmes in Nigeria is mostly driven by the private sector, with limited growth due to a deficient institutional framework. This study emphasises the necessity of implementing policies that focus on the



identification, enhancement, and expansion of creative local practises, as well as the establishment of optimal framework conditions for social innovation. In another study, Jeremy and Vincenzo (2023) conducted an analysis of different conceptualizations of poverty, encompassing extreme, absolute, and relative metrics, alongside potentially more advantageous methodologies such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index. This paper suggests a recalibration of social innovation to effectively address the growing challenges posed by the contemporary era of turbulence. It argues for the utilisation of the agency-structure dichotomy from a sociological perspective to demonstrate the necessity of increased proactive involvement of the public sector in social innovation. The analysis also explores prevailing misconceptions regarding poverty and vulnerability, investigates the necessity of re-evaluating our comprehension of sustainable development and resilience, and underscores the requirement for a novel nexus approach that integrates SDG1 with other closely interconnected SDGs. The integration of social innovation is evident in the works of Alia (2017), Baier, Kristensen, & Davidsen. (2021), Cuntz, Foray, and Mostovova (2020). Agung (2019) discussed the concepts of social entrepreneurship and frugal innovation, which are forms of social innovation that aim to alleviate poverty. This particular form of social innovation is anticipated to have the capacity to provide employment opportunities through entrepreneurial activities in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while also ensuring the provision of inexpensive essential necessities for individuals living in poverty. The research highlights the hurdles associated with adopting this innovation, and suggests ways for fostering collaboration between the corporate and public sectors to address poverty.

Methodology

This chapter focuses on the systematic approach for solving the research problem in the study and highlights the instruments and techniques used to seek solutions to the research problem. The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of social innovation on poverty alleviation. The survey was conducted on three hundred and eighty-three (383) respondents who were contacted on Google form through the link of rotary club of Nigeria. The data were analysed using SPSS

Results and Discussion

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.868	30.427	30.427	4.868	30.427	30.427
2	3.341	20.879	51.306	3.341	20.879	51.306
3	2.522	15.760	67.066	2.522	15.760	67.066
4	1.886	11.787	78.853	1.886	11.787	78.853
5	.656	4.100	82.953			

This table reveals a cumulative total variance explained of 79%. This implies that the items on the instruments are well loaded and highly valid

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.833	16

The table reveals an alpha value of $\alpha=.833$ which implies that the instrument used for measurement in this study is reliable.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PA	13.8016	2.04844	383
CF	13.7859	1.54212	383
TH	13.8225	1.51427	383
VO	13.9217	1.69666	383

The table shows the summary of the data used in the analysis. The mean score of data relating to poverty alleviation is 13.8016, while standard deviation is 2.04844: crowdfunding mean score of data is 13.7859, while the standard



deviation is 1.54212: The mean score of data relating to telehealth is 13.8225 while the standard deviation is 1.51427 and concerning the volunteering the mean score of data is 13.9217, while the standard deviation is 1.69666

Correlations

		PA	CF	TH	VO
Pearson Correlation	PA	1.000	.612	.704	.594
	CF	.612	1.000	.707	.796
	TH	.704	.707	1.000	.790
	VO	.594	.796	.790	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	PA	.	.000	.000	.000
	CF	.000	.	.000	.000
	TH	.000	.000	.	.000
	VO	.000	.000	.000	.
N	PA	383	383	383	383
	CF	383	383	383	383
	TH	383	383	383	383
	VO	383	383	383	383

The table indicates that poverty alleviation (PA) and social innovation (crowdfunding, telehealth and volunteering) correlates at (.612, .704 and .594). This implies that there is a positive correlation between poverty alleviation and social innovation.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.723 ^a	.523	.520	1.41989	.523	138.688	3	379	.000	2.019

a. Predictors: (Constant), VO, TH, CF

b. Dependent Variable: PA

The table reveals that the total effect of social innovation (SI) on poverty alleviation (PA) as $r^2 = .523$; this implies that about 52% variability in poverty alleviation is being accounted for by social innovation

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	838.822	3	279.607	138.688	.000 ^b
	Residual	764.097	379	2.016		
	Total	1602.919	382			

a. Dependent Variable: PA

b. Predictors: (Constant), VO, TH, CF

This table reveals that there exists a positive significant statistical relationship between poverty alleviation and social innovation. This is evident by the value of the t-test ($f(3/379)$; = 138.688; $p < 0.05$). This implies that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will be accepted at 5% confidence level



Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.558	.715		-.781	.435
	CF	.345	.080	.260	4.339	.000
	TH	.775	.080	.573	9.674	.000
	VO	-.080	.084	-.066	-.954	.341

a. Dependent Variable: PA

The table gives the unstandardised coefficients for the regression equation (Beta= .260) and the standard error (S.E=.080). The result reveals that there is a moderate relationship between poverty alleviation and crowdfunding. This implies that as crowdfunding increases, the poverty alleviation increases. The T-value (tc=4.339, p=.000) shows that crowdfunding is statistically significant in explaining poverty alleviation. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The table gives the unstandardised coefficients for the regression equation (Beta= .573) and the standard error (S. E=.080). The result reveals that there is a moderate relationship between poverty alleviation and telehealth. This implies that as telehealth increases, the poverty alleviation increases. The T-value (tc=9.674, p=.000) shows that telehealth is statistically significant in explaining poverty alleviation. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The table gives the unstandardised coefficients for the regression equation (Beta=-.066) and the standard error (S.E=.084). The result reveals that there is an inverse effect between volunteering and poverty alleviation. This implies that as volunteering increases, the poverty alleviation reduces. The T-value (tc=-.954, p=.341) . Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Results

The study examined the effect of social innovation (crowdfunding, telehealth and volunteering) and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The findings revealed that most of the respondents sampled have heard about the social innovation at various points. Hence, the null hypothesis 1 and 2 were rejected while the null hypothesis 3 was accepted. The result corroborates (Okoli et al., 2020: Ajayi et al., 2019 & Oyeyemi et al., 2019) assertions that social innovation is one of the driver of the poverty alleviation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Various programs have been undertaken by both governmental and non-governmental organizations to reduce poverty. Using the concept of social innovation to reduce poverty is explored to create jobs and to provide affordable basic needs for the poor through crowdfunding, telehealth and volunteering social programs. The study investigated the effect of social innovation on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study concludes that many Nigerians are engaging in social innovation which indeed can bring about benefits and on the other hand, it can bring about negative experiences through internet vices. The is an evident same as Mostovova (2020). Agung (2019) suggests ways for fostering collaboration between the corporate and public sectors to address poverty.

In terms of the first objective, which investigates the interaction between crowdfunding and the poverty alleviation, the study establishes and concludes that crowdfunding influences tool for poverty alleviation by enabling individuals to raise funds from a diverse online community and proffering solutions to individual needs.

In terms of the second objective, which examined the effect of telehealth on poverty alleviation, the study concludes that telehealth has bridge the medical gap among privileged and less privileged.

In terms of the third objective, which examined the effect of volunteering on poverty alleviation the study concludes that in the Nigerian context, volunteering holds potential for transforming traditional approaches to poverty alleviation.



Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended to the deposit money banks;

- Policies should be put in place, and their terms must be incorporated in order to monitor individual activities that are into crowdfunding online so as to avoid discrepancies.
- In order to prevent uncertainties, telehealth has to be regulated and controlled by the government through the health centres.
- Government monitoring agency should work against any form of internet vices for effective social innovation in Nigeria.

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