

TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORMS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objective of the study is to critically examine the concept of Smart data and its influence in creating Social entrepreneurship involving community engagement.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study involves an in-depth exploratory approach in finding out the technological platform for social entrepreneurship in social engagement.

Findings: Finding the best solution to a problem varies in terms of approach. The term Social Entrepreneurship - sounds vague for some, and the possibilities of its application are virtually limitless, which encompasses a need for boundaries to demarcate its true purpose.

Practical Implications: In today's modern world, attempting to draw out the context of business techniques with the aid of information technology to solve social problems is being regarded as an emerging approach referred to as social entrepreneurship.

Social Implications: The study confirms the idea of social entrepreneurship is being attributed to its underlying function of fostering community engagement in an attempt to draw out solutions to long-standing social problems.

Originality/Value: The vague understanding of social entrepreneurship requires a more in-depth exploration in which this article intends to achieve.

Keywords: *Social entrepreneurship, Smart data, Big data, Community engagement, Smart community, Crowdfunding.*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of technological innovations paved the way for endless opportunities for the society to engage in several aspects of political, social, and economic developments. The promise of data-driven decision-making is now being recognized broadly, and there is growing enthusiasm for the notion of "Big Data" ([Labrinidis and Jagadish](#), 2012). In the context of social advancement, the availability of big data enables every individual in a developing community to engage in economic activities such as social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is commonly defined as 'entrepreneurial activity with an embedded social purpose' ([Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern](#), 2006).

The difference that social entrepreneurship has over the other economic activities is that its outcome encompasses a transformational impact on the community. Also, social entrepreneurship reinforces social value while keeping a clear understanding of the value of revenues, sustainability, and private markets. Over the past decades, the continuous technological developments enabled the average citizens to participate in the social enterprise because of the availability of the various platforms for a self-sustaining business. However, when talking about social enterprise, it reflects a need breed of entrepreneurial strategies that utilize business methodologies to create a relevant impact towards the community.

Social entrepreneurship, on the other hand, demonstrates a function that is synonymous to business entrepreneurship. It also takes advantage of the innovations to create new opportunities derived from the current equilibrium. Innovations are of different types viz.

- a. Capacity increase of the local actors towards solving their problems
- b. Supplying a package of innovations for wide distribution and
- c. Building a movement to encounter the causes of social problems ([Alvord, Brown and Letts](#), 2004).

It is apparent that social problems are imminent within a community, but the advantage of social entrepreneurship encompasses the emergence of creative solutions that seek to disrupt the conventions that fail to address the perceived

social challenges. This paper examines the concept of Smart data and its influence in creating Social Entrepreneurship involving community engagement.

The emerging players and technological platforms in social entrepreneurship have revealed new trends that are worth the conversation about smart growth. People may begin to ask what these latest developments in social entrepreneurship are about and what are the essential innovations, partnership, and public sectors that are in convergence in creating the social engagement. Another important question to tackle in this exploration is the role of smart data in enabling the social engagement through social entrepreneurship.

The term social entrepreneurship encompasses a myriad of activities that were tailored to be directly coinciding with the ultimate goal of enhancing social values. In this context, social entrepreneurship is often perceived to act with little almost no intention of acquiring personal gains, but rather allocates the outcome of its activities towards social change. The idea is to combine the passion for social change with the relative business discipline. As for the concept of smart data, integrating the approach towards social entrepreneurship brings out an initiative in reinforcing social values while using information as its core component. Understanding the concept of social entrepreneurship opens up the discussion to the three dimensions of social entrepreneurship viz. (i) innovativeness, (ii) pro-activeness and (iii) risk management (Weerawardena and Mort, 2006).

1. Achieving social mission through Innovativeness – This means the ability to solve social problems or in effect to create social value.
2. Pro-activeness through retaining the environment – This reflects the tangible and intangible results of breaking patterns, changes in the system, and new discoveries towards process improvement.
3. Sustainability by means of risk management – This encompasses the entrepreneurial behavior by means of taking advantage of the present opportunities while exercising resourcefulness and leverage.

Also, to the three dimensions of social entrepreneurship are the key principles that foster social engagement which can be framed as follows:

Principle 1 – Understanding motivations, dreams, and the aspirations of the members of the community.

Principle 2 – Understanding the needs of the community and being able to point out the ones that require immediate attention. Based on those identified priorities, the entrepreneur would be able to determine the social problems that need an immediate response.

Principle 3 – Moving beyond the needs of the community by advocating asset-based development.

In a needs-based community, the steps for community development do not encourage the community members to be self-reliant. Instead, each member of the community contributes their capacities to harness the potentials to create a powerful community.

This is being narrated by the bounded multi-dimensional model of social entrepreneurship (Weerawardena and Mort, 2006). Figuratively,

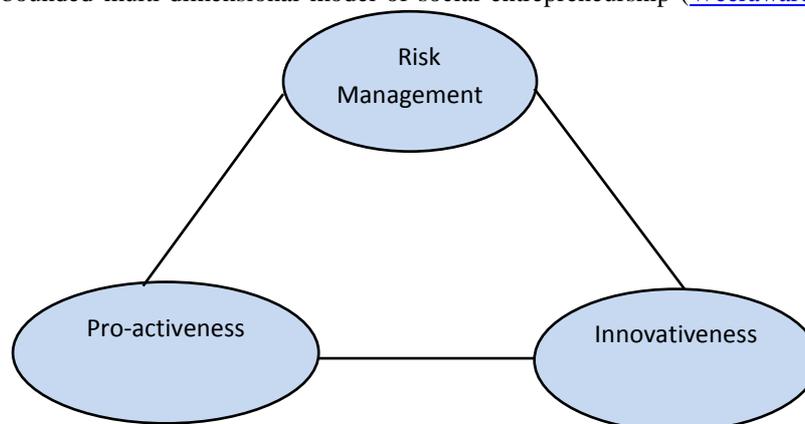


Fig. 1 Bounded Multi-Dimensional Model

Applying the described principles in understanding the role of smart data for social entrepreneurship to create social engagement will help this discussion to present the relevant concepts that will interest community builders. Social

entrepreneurship defines the collaboration between innovation, social responsibility, and business discipline, which is relevant in building smart communities. Sustainability is another term to describe the objectives of social entrepreneurship as it ascertains the formation of stronger social values that will serve as the foundation of communities of tomorrow. Thus, the identification of the key components that bring together social engagement in entrepreneurial settings, identify boundaries, and suggest approaches to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing social values, is becoming essential as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies in the professional field of business and entrepreneurship suggest definitions of the concept that is consistent with the basic understanding of the characteristics of various market orientations. According to the basic principles of entrepreneurship, as most management literature implies, entrepreneurship can be defined as a set of exceptional activities orchestrated by exceptionally capable individuals with an objective to maximize resources in exchange for higher profits ([Abu-Saifan](#), 2012). Given the basic definition of entrepreneurship, it is safe to assume that it is closely related to the concept of organizational success much like what large corporations are also aiming. In the context of social entrepreneurship, the concept may come in many forms.

Although the characteristics of entrepreneurship were highly attributed to the social entrepreneurship, the outcome of the latter is what differentiates it from the former. Entrepreneurship in its usual form encompasses the benefits of profit while social entrepreneurship encompasses a goal of making a difference by addressing a social dilemma. [Bornstein and Davis](#) (2012) also gave his definition of social entrepreneurship as a positive disruption of the status quo through the utilization of available technologies.

When talking about unacceptable status quo, the term refers to the current situation where the state of affairs doesn't conform to the conditions that promote the well-being of the people. Social entrepreneurs not only create social benefits but also have the capability to create shared values, ability to grow and turn out to be self-sustaining ([Silaparasetti, Srinivasarao, and Khan](#), 2017). There are several social challenges that entrepreneurship is aiming to address, be it environmental, education, and/or health problems, the innovations that can be drawn from smart data are limitless ([Peredo and McLean](#), 2006). However, according to [Mutua](#) (2014), for a social entrepreneur to succeed, it must determine the underlying opportunities based on status quo.

This includes formulating solutions to problems that average individuals do not normally perceive. While a social entrepreneur addresses the social challenges by working in private markets, it creates a distinction from the rest of the traditional entrepreneurs in terms of goals as social entrepreneur aims to achieve social benefits instead of profits. [Mair and Marti](#) (2006) viewed social entrepreneurship as a process that activates a social change to bring out social needs with least financial benefits to the entrepreneurs. In a study by [Dacin, Dacin and Matear](#) (2010), the idea of doing well for the benefit of the community using the tenets of entrepreneurial discipline is analogous to philanthropic ventures. For example, if society was highly divided as a result of social challenges, for instance, hunger, social entrepreneurship comes in play as a suitable alternative in addressing the problem.

The way researchers see it is that social entrepreneurship and social engagement will help to empower the community ([Friedman and Desivilya](#), 2010) by either teaching the members of the community with new skills for livelihood or help the people develop its untapped resources to cover the deficits in the food supply. This example is just the tip of the iceberg as the context of social entrepreneurship is still being defined out of the basics of these core principles. Putting this example into a smart data perspective, the possibilities of alleviating a social dilemma is even greater with the aid of the modern age approach. [Pascaud](#) (2015) viewed the concept of smart data as an exponential part of creating a pro-social brand. The article discussed the opposite characteristics of doing social good and big data because both recognize the important aspects of contemporary markets. On the one hand, the social enterprise seeks to create a sustainable business strategy that will encourage the formation of social values while big data encompasses growth expectations attributed to private markets.

However, the power of big data or others referred to as smart data have evolved to become a primary tool in creating patterns, modeling, and recognizing predictive patterns, which in effect offers valuable insights for social entrepreneurship to create life-changing opportunities ([Pascaud](#), 2015). Although the trend is highly encouraging for most enterprises, there are still only a few ventures that are engaged in data-driven social innovation. On the other hand, the companies engaged in social entrepreneurship were able to shed light on the three opportunities that compliment social engagement.

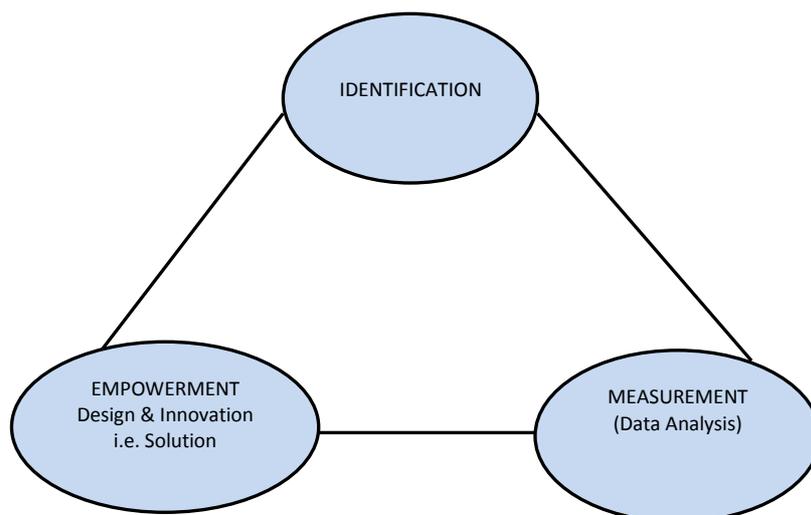


Fig. 2 Leverage Model

The above figure 2 shows the Leverage model for smart data integration to social entrepreneurship and social engagement laid down by Pascaud from which it is very much apparent that the three complimentary opportunities are the key components in fostering the emergence of social entrepreneurship while ensuring social involvement. Also, the successful integration of the three opportunities encompasses the roadmap in establishing the five key factors that influence social ventures viz.

1. Innovation – the ability to both creatively diagnose a problem and form solutions
2. Sustainable revenue – the challenge of working in private markets for social entrepreneurs is to secure a sustainable revenue to support the purpose of the enterprise for example donations or government grants
3. Persistence and capacity to adept – having the tolerance to criticism, failures, and the ability to overcome risks
4. Impact – being able to reach the goal and creating new equilibrium
5. Scalability – being able to grow beyond expectations measured by a number of targets reached and surpassed

The factors above are evident in several ventures in private markets that are also acting as social enterprises. In 2011, Forbes magazine published a list of top social entrepreneurs and among the list of successful ventures is the platform called “Crowd funding” (Coster, 2011). The term refers to an approach similar to microlending where a member of the community introduces a breakthrough idea but does not have the financial means for start-up. The pilot work is being published through social media and online market connectors to find individuals or groups that are willing to fund the project. What makes crowdfunding unique is that the avenue for market activities and capital were obtained through social involvement coursed through a technology-based medium enabled by smart data. Another example of social entrepreneurship that involves social engagement drawn from effective utilization of smart data is the Water for Everyone Project (Schuringa, 2014).

The idea was drawn from a cross-compensation business model where a simple home water filtration system was developed from environment-friendly materials. The filtration system is being sold to first-world countries, and the proceeds are being allocated to create deep wells and develop water resources in areas of the world where the sustainable source of potable water is a major concern. In a more popular example, social entrepreneurship and social engagement can be observed on simple activities performed by non-profit organizations such as conducting fund-raising activities for the benefit of a specifically problematic sector of the society. Campaigns for such activity are no longer confined within the four corners of the printed poster, but the initiative of the activity is also being channeled conveniently using technology-based platforms.

The impact of social entrepreneurship is also dependent on the amount of participation given by any community at any given time. For instance, if a social enterprise introduced a new technology that promises to integrate distant learning program into mobile devices in Kickstarter, which is an online crowdfunding platform, but was not able to gain enough support from the crowdfunding community. As noble as the objective may seem, but it may not be able to achieve its initiative to bring learning closer to its target market because of the lack of social engagement.

REDISCOVERING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

The discussion on smart growth demonstrates the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in fostering social change. While most of the social ventures have emerged in addressing the issues of health, environment, or economic challenges, it is important to consider the impact of the social ventures in terms of creating social engagement. Crowdfunding was mentioned earlier, which is a process of acquiring funds for a life-changing project that aims to benefit the general public. Although the concept of crowdfunding had existed long before ago in the form of public investment through stocks, the advent of smart and big data enabled an alternative form of funding through online platforms.

The concept was taken in another environment where a host of the community of users can participate by sharing an amount to fulfill the financial requirements of the social venture. There are several non-profit organizations that were able to successfully initiate their project such as building path walks, community gardens, and conservation programs through the online crowdfunding platform. This encompasses a good example of social entrepreneurship that involves social engagement through the innovative use of smart data.

When it comes to enhancing social engagement, online platforms were also created to foster a feedback interchange between the public and the government by developing websites, smartphone apps, and other communications networks to submit queries or to address the Government regarding a specific local problem. This platform ensures a real-time exchange of ideas that will help the decision-makers in creating solutions to any perceived social issues. An example of this platform is Open Plans, which publishes planning-related initiatives of the local government for the public to decipher and comment. Also, the social engagement platform also performs another function, which is to engage a broad base of individuals to take part in planning evaluations and not limit such opportunity to few individuals that are eager to attend a town’s meeting.

The ultimate goal of the platform is to utilize available technology to keep the people informed and to participate in the decision-making process. As opposed to the common myth that social entrepreneurship is 50% profit and 50% social values, the availability of various platforms constructed from big and smart data demonstrates how social involvement can greatly affect the outcome of social ventures. However, what matters most is the ability of the social enterprises in meeting social expectations.

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Social entrepreneurship can be in a variety of form; it could also be a non-profit organization, or an individual striving to create social change by engaging the community to participate in programs and other initiatives that aim to benefit the society.

| Name | Sector | Social Problem (Stuck System) | Innovation |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|
| Khan Academy (Non-Profit) | Education | Poor Education outcomes, lack of access to quality education | By offering free, web-based instructional videos on a variety of subjects, ‘Khan Academy’ seeks to provide “a free world-class education for anyone, anywhere.” Khan Academy is currently supported by foundations, but with more than 10 million users, it has a number of options for diversifying revenue streams if needed. |
| Tom’s Shoes (Business with non-profit affiliate) | International Development | Shortage of shoes in developing countries | Pioneered the “one for one” funding model, in which the purchase of one item (shoes, in this case) at market price pays for the donation of another item to an individual in need. |
| Grameen Bank | Finance | Lack of access to capital in low-income communities | Through ‘Grameen Bank,’ Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus developed a new model for smaller-dollar lending focused on peer accountability. Grameen Bank served over 8 |

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|---|---------|---|--|
| | | | million borrowers and launched the field of micro-finance. Since 1980, microfinance has spread to dozens of countries and more than 100 million borrowers worldwide. |
| Enterprise Community Partners (for profit and non-profit) | Housing | Lack of sustainable, affordable housing | Having built over 300,000 homes in the past three decades, ‘Enterprise Community Partners’(ECP) has been a leader in the affordable housing movement. Like many social ventures, ECP has established a broad base of revenue, including public and private grants as well as revenue from loans. |

Table. 1 Social Enterprises leveraging on Social Engagement (Schuringa, 2014)

As indicated in the above Table 1, social ventures vary according to the social issues it targets to address. Social engagement was created in these examples, by allowing members of the community to take part in the activities such as volunteering or availing services offered by the social enterprise. However, the effectiveness of the social engagement can be realized by integrating innovative approaches such as social media marketing. This approach further increases social engagement through various platforms by encouraging the members of the community to contribute both tangible and intangible values into an initiative to take shape. The principle of simple solutions to simple problems no longer applies in this modern society because as society grows, so are the problems that it encounters as a result of the consequences of its growth. Therefore, addressing social issues no longer resides on select individuals or group, but instead calls for greater involvement of the society at large. On the other hand, the assuring the effectiveness of any given solution should also take advantage of the current innovations to ascertain long-term sustainability. The concepts of smart data, social entrepreneurship, and social engagement converge in an intersection where social challenges are being alleviated by determining priorities, setting expectations, connecting with the right network of the support mechanism, investing, evaluating, and evolving consistently.

CONCLUSION

[Short, Moss and Lumpkin](#) (2009) viewed social entrepreneurship as a common area of interest to management scholars. Social entrepreneurship and social engagement foster the creation of opportunities that were aimed to promote social values. The terminologies might sound broad and may encompass different interpretations of its fundamentals. However, it is easy to understand that to address social issues there should be a first-hand understanding of what is needed to change and how the changes should happen. [Dacin, Dacin and Tracey](#) (2011) has propounded social entrepreneurship as a domain of inquiries. In the context of smart data, its availability, and convenience in accessibility open up a world of possibilities including the structuring of innovative platforms where the components of social engagement and entrepreneurial approach can be integrated.

Creating an impactful change in the society may sound too far-fetched, but with the existence of information technology to aid the implementation of social engagement in a business-like environment, the barriers to social change easily blur in the background. The three components above, identification (through innovation), empowerment (through engagement) and measurement (through social venture) embody a limitless possibility in reinforcing social values. Furthermore, the innovations in information technology fostered by the availability of smart data enabled a community of more engaged citizens that are contributing to alleviating the persistence of social dilemmas by participating in various social entrepreneurial activities. It is no longer difficult in today’s modern world to predict the outcome of future initiatives in building better communities with strong social values because innovation has already paved the way for a better future.

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