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PERCEIVED DESIRABILITY AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ADOPTION BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN KITUI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effects of perceived desirability on social entrepreneurship adoption by non-profit organizations for sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya. This research was guided by Entrepreneurial Event Model by Albert Shapero and Lisa Sokol (1982). The study employed a mixed methods research design: convergent parallel design which combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. Conducted in Kitui County, the research focused on 35 non-profit organizations (NPOs), targeting a population of 560 participants. Stratified random sampling was adopted to select 100 respondents for the quantitative approach, while purposive sampling was used to select 128 beneficiaries for the qualitative component. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide. Instrument validity was ensured through pre-testing and reliability assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics specifically correlation coefficients and regression analysis, while qualitative data were examined through content analysis. The findings were presented using charts, graphs, output tables, and narratives. The results showed that there is a positive and statistically significant effect of perceived desirability on sustainable community development. These findings highlight the importance of motivational, contextual, and cultural dimensions in shaping social entrepreneurship practices, underscoring the need for context-specific, culturally responsive interventions to enhance SE adoption in rural settings. The study recommended targeted policy interventions and financial support mechanisms to enhance social entrepreneurship adoption among non-profit organizations, ultimately fostering sustainable community development. Future research should replicate this study across diverse Kenyan regions, incorporate government policies, external collaborations, and risk-taking propensity.

Key Words: *Motivation, Emotional Readiness, Personal Benefit, Perceived Ease, Prior Knowledge Trust*

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable community development refers to efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of life and overall well-being of all members within a community (Thomas, 2004). It involves a range of strategies, including infrastructure development, environmental and resource management, poverty alleviation, provision of social and economic services, and environmental conservation. These approaches collectively hold significant potential for addressing socio-economic challenges and fostering societal well-being (Peerapun, 2012). In this context, social entrepreneurship (SE) has become increasingly relevant, particularly in response to persistent issues such as poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and the inadequacies of public and private sector service delivery. Non-profit organizations (NPOs) play a crucial role in promoting SE, as they are well-positioned to leverage local knowledge, encourage community engagement, and foster social innovation. By adopting SE models, NPOs can transition from traditional, aid-dependent practices to more sustainable, impact-driven approaches that empower communities both economically and socially (Ngatse-Ipangui & Dassah, 2019).

Despite extraordinary efforts by public and private sectors to close the growing gap between community demands and performance, they have been unable to do so due to a variety of constraints (Onyemaechi et al., 2021). Governments and non-profit organizations (NPOs) face resource shortages as a result of economic constraints and a lack of political will. Similarly, the private sector falls short of its claim to serve all members of society due to its excessive focus on profit maximization. This trend has resulted in an increase in community problems.

In understanding the adoption of social entrepreneurship (SE) and its contribution to sustainable community development, it is essential to clearly define and categorize the psychological and cultural antecedents that influence individual and organizational decision-making. Perceived desirability refers to the degree to which an individual or organization finds the idea of engaging in SE personally appealing or socially valuable. It reflects motivation and alignment with personal or collective values. Perceived feasibility, on the other hand, relates to the belief in one’s ability and the availability of resources to successfully implement SE initiatives, encompassing both individual capacity and environmental support. Self-efficacy is a more specific construct within perceived feasibility, denoting the confidence in one’s own skills and competencies to perform the tasks necessary for initiating and sustaining SE activities. Attitude toward the behaviour captures the overall evaluative judgement whether positive or negative, toward engaging in SE, influenced by personal beliefs, past experiences, and perceived outcomes (Ajzen, 1991). These antecedents serve as key predictors in the adoption of SE models by NPOs, ultimately shaping the extent to which SE can contribute to sustainable community development through poverty reduction, social inclusion, and long-term socio-economic empowerment.

Nair (2019) suggests that SE is influenced by a combination of desirability and feasibility in decision-making processes, human capital, social capital, social-environmental factors, and institutional-environmental factors. The author posits that entrepreneurs are motivated by two elements: perceived desirability, which is driven by emotional and cognitive attitudes such as empathy and moral judgement, and perceived feasibility, which is impacted by factors such as self-efficacy and social support. Moreover, Nair (2019) suggests that personal experiences, including unemployment, education level, rural poverty, and start-up site difficulties, may also influence the desire to start a social enterprise. Finally, it is noted that an increase in social status can have a more positive effect on an entrepreneur's social entrepreneurial activity. Ernst (2011) used the theory of planned behaviour to design survey items to assess the antecedents of social entrepreneurial behaviour. However, few empirical studies have been undertaken to determine the effect of antecedents on behaviour prediction.

When compared to regions such as Europe or the USA, the Middle East’s social entrepreneurship (SE) landscape has emerged more recently, largely due to socio-political transformations, economic diversification efforts, and a growing recognition of the role social enterprises can play in addressing youth unemployment, inequality, and sustainable development challenges (Jamali & Lanteri, 2015). There are two significant social enterprises in the Middle East that serve various states in the region. One is the Al Jisr Enterprise, founded in Morocco in the year 1999 to improve public school performance. Two, the INJAZ al-Arab was established in 2004 in Jordan, which focuses on creating entrepreneurial intentions among the youth and serves different countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Lebanon, among others. Statistics in the region depict that seventy-three (73) out of the seventy-eight (78) globally recognized social entrepreneurs in the Middle East region emanate from only five states in the entire region; that is, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon and Gaza (Schwab Foundation, 2011).

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Africa persistently face challenges including limited funding, resource constraints, dependency on external donors, and growing community needs that outpace traditional aid models (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Onyemaechi et al., 2021). These constraints threaten the sustainability and long-term impact of NPO-led development efforts. As a result, many NPOs have turned to SE as a strategic approach to overcome these challenges by generating sustainable income streams, fostering innovation, and promoting community empowerment (Mair & Marti, 2006). SE enables NPOs to reduce reliance on unpredictable donor funding by integrating entrepreneurial principles such as business acumen, market orientation, and self-sufficiency into their operations (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006). This shift not only enhances financial sustainability but also aligns with the broader goal of sustainable community development by creating scalable, locally driven solutions to social, economic and environmental issues (Bornstein & Davis, 2010).

Social entrepreneurship in Kenya dates back to the 1980s, when the country underwent economic reformation, which reduced government spending and thereby increased private business entities and NGOs offering the same services, such as creating employment, providing adequate clean water, education, and adequate healthcare (Smith & Darko, 2014). During that period, Kenya experienced the emergence of Micro-Financing Institutions (MFIs) with the goal of providing financial services to those at the lower end of the income spectrum who had no access to the mainstream financial market. Mayoux (2005) argued that MFIs would combine their business goals with their social mission of providing loans to those in need by incorporating social capital and social innovation. For example, MFI would use existing grassroots networks, values, and norms instead of financial collateral to decide who should receive the loans and then disperse them accordingly among the poorer members of the community.

In Kitui County, there is variation of SE adoption across its six Economic Investment Zones, each having its unique challenges and opportunities based on economic, geographic and infrastructural characteristics. For example, areas such as Kyuso–Tseikuru–Mumoni benefit from natural resources and proximity to the LAPSSET corridor, supporting eco-tourism and agricultural SE initiatives. Contrary, the Mui Basin focuses on sustainable mining-related enterprises due to its rich coal reserves. Mwingi and Kitui Town zones offer opportunities in agribusiness and financial services, while Kanyangi–Kwa Vonza thrives on education-based social ventures owing to the presence of higher learning institutions. The southern Mutomo–Ikutha zone emphasizes grassroots community development projects, including micro-enterprise and health-related initiatives. These regional differences point the need for localized strategies that align SE efforts with the specific socio-economic contexts of each zone to foster inclusive and sustainable community development (Kitui County Government Report, 2023).

Kitui County is situated 160 km east of Nairobi City and is the 6th biggest county in Kenya, spanning an area of 30,496.4 km^2 with a population of 1,136,187 and a growth rate of 3.8% (KNBS, 2019). In the county, 48.8% of its residents consist of children aged between (0-14) years while 27.5% comprise youths aged between (15-29) years as indicated by Kitui Annual Development Plan (KADP) (Kitui County Government, 2018). Thus, the county government and other developmental partners are obliged to invest more resources in programs that sufficiently serve the needs and expectations of the youth and children. The programs include capacity development and income-generating activities that provide opportunities for self-growth across all age groups and genders. Notably, the female population slightly exceeds the male population, with a ratio of 100:108 (Kitui County Government Report, 2018). The predicted population of special age groups indicates that close to half (52.6%) of the population in the county falls under the active labour force age group (15 to 64 years) (KNBS, 2019). In the county, the labour force is tasked with supporting the old and aged population: 65+ years, who comprise a minority group of 3.6% of the total population. On the other hand, the dependency ratio is 100:110, assuming that the active labour force is fully engaged in productive activities, including the care of children over the age of 14. The population of PLWDs comprises individuals with seeing difficulties (0.9%), hearing difficulties (0.5%), mobility difficulties (1.2%), cognition difficulties (0.6%), self-care difficulties (0.4%), and communication difficulties (0.4%) (KNBS, 2019).

Problem Statement

Kitui County, located in eastern Kenya, faces numerous socio-economic and environmental challenges that impede sustainable community development. These challenges include high poverty rates, unemployment, education, environmental degradation, and food insecurity. Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) have traditionally played a pivotal role in addressing these issues by providing relief, education, and community development programs. Although NPOs have traditionally addressed socio-economic challenges in Kitui County, many of their interventions have been short-term and limited in impact. Social entrepreneurship, which integrates business concepts, innovation and sustainability to achieve social and financial value, has emerged as a potential solution to these challenges. However, there is insufficient understanding of the factors that hinder or promote the adoption of social entrepreneurship by NPOs in the region. Despite the potential of social entrepreneurship to foster long-term socio-economic development, its adoption by NPOs in Kitui County remains limited. The limitation is largely due to various factors, including inadequate financial resources, insufficient entrepreneurial capacity, ambiguous policy frameworks, and socio-cultural constraints. These challenges undermine the ability of NPOs to effectively implement and scale social enterprise models that could improve livelihoods, promote environmental sustainability, and foster economic inclusion.

Previous studies tend to emphasize structural and institutional factors such as organizational resources, financial access, capacity building, and leadership succession that influence social entrepreneurship adoption among NPOs in Kitui County (Kioko et al., 2023; Mutua, 2022; Kisilu and Nasieku, 2022; Mbandi and Mwenda, 2021) rather than individual-level determinants. This macro-level focus often overlooks how personal beliefs, values, and cognitive orientations shape entrepreneurial behaviour within NPOs. Furthermore, SE is still an emerging concept in many parts of Kenya, meaning that the theoretical frameworks needed to explore psychological and cultural drivers are not yet widely adopted or localized. As a result, the internal, cognitive dimensions of why and how NPO actors engage in SE remain poorly understood, representing a critical gap in the literature.

This research explored the factors driving or hindering the adoption of social entrepreneurship by NPOs in Kitui County. The study examined the underlying factors influencing the adoption of social entrepreneurship (SE) to gain insight into how these factors jointly affect the readiness and capacity of non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Kitui County to embrace SE practices. Moreover, it sought to determine the extent to which social entrepreneurship contributes to sustainable community development, fostering long-term social, economic, and environmental outcomes. The research also assessed how limited knowledge and awareness of social entrepreneurship hinder its adoption. Furthermore, it explored ways to enhance understanding and build capacity within NPOs.

By examining psychological and cultural antecedents of social entrepreneurship adoption, the research provides valuable insights for NPO leaders, policymakers, and development practitioners who are seeking to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of community development efforts in Kitui County. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on social entrepreneurship in developing contexts, offering practical recommendations for NPOs in Kitui County and regions facing similar challenges. Understanding the conditions under which social entrepreneurship can thrive will enable NPOs to create more impactful and sustainable interventions, thereby improving the livelihoods and well-being of communities in Kitui County.

Objective of the Study

This study assessed the effect of perceived desirability on social entrepreneurship adoption for sustainable community development. The study was guided by the following research hypothesis;

- There is no significant effect of perceived desirability on SE adoption for sustainable community development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Entrepreneurial Event Model

In 1982, Albert Shapero and Lisa Sokol developed the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) as the first intentions model. This model focused on two steps: intention and decision making for launching a new venture. It proposes that the desire to start a business is determined by an individual's perceived feasibility and desirability. Perceived desirability is the appeal of launching a venture, while perceived feasibility is the ability to do so. Propensity to act, which is the predisposition to act on decisions, is also considered (Krueger et al., 2000). On the second step, the decision to start a venture requires the intention to do so and a triggering event that will prompt the individual to take action. This model is based on how events happen unexpectedly in a person’s life. The event can be negative or positive, which affects behaviour in the long run (Krueger et al., 2000). This model hypothesizes that people remain passive and apathetic until something disrupts their inertia reveals behaviours. According to Shapero and Sokol (1982), these displacements can be negative, in-between or positive. The negative displacements range from anger, loss of jobs, boredom and divorce while the in-between displacements range from being employed, graduating from universities or getting married; and the positive range from mentors, consumers or partners. In addition, desirability is also affected by personal values, feelings and attitudes that emanate from an individual’s social environment such as family, colleagues and friends.

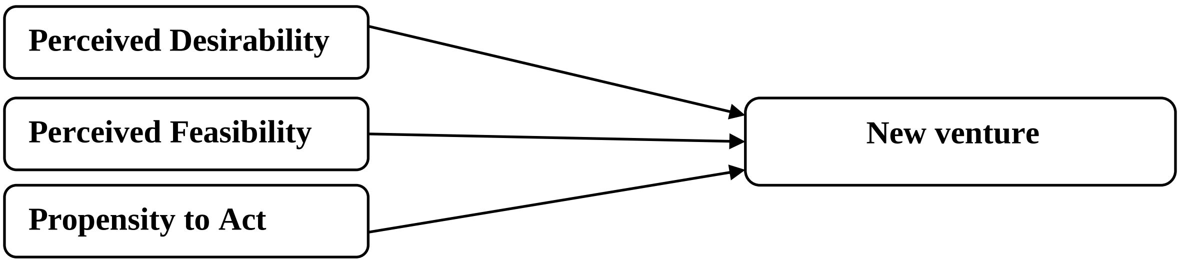

Figure 1: *Shapero Entrepreneurial Event Model (Audet, 2004)*

The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) is a prominent concept in the literature of entrepreneurship, comparable to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Teise and Urban (2015) highlighted that the EEM emphasizes perceived feasibility on an individual's intention to act and the influence of perceived desirability, probability of acting. Krueger et al. (2000) point out this model is specifically applicable to entrepreneurship activities, with intentions to create new ventures arising from an individual's perceived desirability and feasibility, as well as their willingness to pursue chances.

The concept of entrepreneurial behaviour relies heavily on the presence of a suitable opportunity and two important precursors: perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. This model was created prior to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and has been supported by separate academics working in diverse fields. It is thought that intentions to pursue a business are formed by displacement and the assessments of feasibility and desirability (Molloy & Shepherd, 2017; Ayob et al., 2013; Krueger, 2003).

It is believed by Shapero and Sokol (1982) that displacement is the foundation of behaviour change, which can be seen as either favourable or unfavourable. People normally make decisions based on their assessment of the desirability and feasibility of behaviour, plus their willingness to act, thus creating an intention (Ayob et al., 2013). Krueger (1993) explains that the principle of desirability stated by Shapero and Sokol (1982) is classified as the degree of charm of beginning a fresh endeavour. This outlook can vary from person to person contingent on their values, opinions, social backgrounds, educational attainment, and experiences. Shapero and Sokol (1982) suggest that the component of feasibility reflects an individual's confidence in their ability to establish a startup. Furthermore, desirability and feasibility are thought to be associated, with the model necessitating that entrepreneurship is seen as a realistic career option. However, this relies on how the person perceives it. Ayob et al. (2013) determined that an individual's opinion of self-employment can be a strong indication of whether or not they will take that route. By measuring perceived desirability and the tendency to act, Krueger et al. (2000) revealed that these variables can account for more than half of the variance in intentions towards entrepreneurship. Additionally, Shapero and Sokol (1982) noted how certain life events, such as losing one's job, can have a significant effect on an individual's outlook and thus can be a source of drive to engage in entrepreneurial activity (Berkowitz & He, 2019; Krueger et al., 2000).

According to Shapero and Sokol (1982), three factors - perceived feasibility (or perceived credibility), perceived desirability, and proclivity to act may influence an individual's decision to start a new venture. Shapero described perceived feasibility as an individual's belief that they are capable of successfully initiating a business, while perceived desirability was seen as the degree to which the concept of starting a business is attractive. Proclivity to act was identified as an individual's personal disposition to act on their decisions. Research by Krueger (1993) found that these three factors combined could explain more than half of the variance in self-employment intentions, with perceived feasibility being the most influential. Furthermore, Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) discovered a positive correlation between entrepreneurial intentions and perceived feasibility and desirability. They went on to investigate the possibility of a negative interaction effect between an individual's perception of feasibility and desirability in relation to their intentions to be self-employed, finding evidence to support this theory based on the regulatory focus theory.

Brockner et al. (2004) have proposed a theory that puts an emphasis on two different orientations of focus at different stages of the entrepreneurial journey. During the idea generation stage, a promotion outlook is suggested to be more beneficial as it encourages the production of solutions. Conversely, when evaluating the idea or forming entrepreneurial intentions, people are more likely to have a prevention mindset as they are conscious of the potential risks of entrepreneurship and act with more caution. Moreover, Brockner et al. (2004) proposed two alternative types of entrepreneurs depending on their levels of perceived feasibility and desirability: accidental entrepreneurs, who have a high perceived feasibility but low perceived desirability, and inevitable entrepreneurs, who have a combination of low perceived feasibility and high perceived desirability. The former may not necessarily have an initial intention to become an entrepreneur but recognise a business opportunity and gain a favourable outlook, while the latter may have strong motivation and desire but lack the self-efficacy to believe that they possess the skills for a successful venture. Therefore, it is not necessary for entrepreneurial intentions to have a high level of perceived feasibility and desirability.

Segal et al. (2005) conducted a study to evaluate if perceived desirability, risk tolerance, and perceived feasibility could predict entrepreneurial intentions in a group of business students. Their results suggested that these variables do, in fact, have an influence on entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, they determined that a combination of the three variables produces a more accurate prognosis. This conclusion confirms Shapero's hypothesis that individuals create new ventures when they perceive possible desirable outcomes and the likelihood of those outcomes becoming a reality.

According to Guerrero et al. (2014), the EEM proposes that human behaviour is governed by inertia and an individual will only be swayed from a course of action if an outside force acts upon them. This force can be either positive or negative, pushing the decision maker to select the most suitable alternative. The EEM argues that factors that determine intentions include perceived desirability, perceived feasibility and the inclination to act, and external factors do not particularly influence a person's intentions. The notion of startup intentions is rooted in perceived feasibility and perceived desirability.

Fayolle et al. (2006) raised important criticism of EEM, noting that the model is intended to explain the development of entrepreneurial ideas and their implementation, yet it is possible to have intent without ideas. The authors also highlighted the need for further empirical validation to determine the effectiveness of the model. They also stressed the importance of the model in identifying contextual, political, social and economic contexts, as well as personal factors, such as personal history, personality and abilities, and the correlation between these factors and the development of entrepreneurial intent. Moreover, the authors argued that EEM can provide useful input to policy makers in order to create an environment conducive to the development of entrepreneurial ideas. Ultimately, the model is foundational to the research, as it informs all of the independent variables, such as perceived desirability, self-efficacy, perceived feasibility and attitude towards behaviour.

Empirical Review

The allure of establishing a business has been referred to as perceived desirability by Shapero and Sokol (1982). According to Bandura's (1986) perspective, the decision to become an entrepreneur requires evaluating the desirability of the endeavour. This appeal is influenced by an individual's beliefs, way of thinking, and personal attitudes, all of which are influenced by their social environment, specifically their family, education, career influences, and peers. Hoogendoorn et al. (2016) suggested that individuals who have positive outlooks on entrepreneurship are more likely to select it as a career. Furthermore, an interest in social entrepreneurship and a drive to create a successful social enterprise can have a positive effect on job creation and contribute to community development.

Paunescu et al. (2018) carried out research on the factors that influence entrepreneurial desirability in Romania. The study analyzed data from the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Survey, as published in the Global Entrepreneurship Report. 1023 responses were received from entrepreneurs located throughout Romania. Noting that numerous studies had insinuated the desirability of entrepreneurship and its effect on one's desire to become an entrepreneur, Paupescu et al. (2018) took into account feasibility, social stability, the ease of acquiring customers, and demographic factors such as income level, age, education, gender, and employment status. The authors defined desirability in their study as the expectation of business success, risk assessment, and perceived self-control, skills, and training. Paupescu et al. (2018) discovered that all variables had a linear relationship and were highly correlated, with the exception of gender, which was not significant. This exemplifies the critical nature of desirability in social enterprise. However, Paupescu et al.’s research did not distinguish between social and traditional entrepreneurship nor explore psychological and cultural antecedents within a non-profit or community development context. A strong desirability of social entrepreneurship leads one to start social enterprises which make a significant contribution to community growth through providing fresh job openings, promoting higher wages, providing increased access to services, offering educational courses and classes, increasing the amount of money kept in the local economy, and enabling locals to be involved in development efforts (Midgley, 2004).

Koe et al. (2014) conducted a review of the factors influencing SMEs practitioners' proclivity for sustainable entrepreneurship. The study examined favourable attitudes toward behaviour, social norms, perceived desirability, and perceived feasibility. The study found out that both variables had a positive and significant influence on sustainable entrepreneurship. Paupescu et al. (2018) confirmed the findings of Koe et al. (2014) regarding the effect of perceived desirability on social entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, the study has some gaps since social entrepreneurs**,** particularly those operating within non-profit model may have different motivational, psychological, and value-based antecedents not captured in this study. Additionally, the absence of cultural and contextual factors further limits the applicability of their findings to rural regions such as Kitui County, Kenya, where entrepreneurship is often driven by social missions and community sustainability goals.

Shumate et al. (2019) analysed the antecedents of social entrepreneurship with the goal of developing new concepts for use in Malaysia. The study established that family legacy, prior experiences, and education were the most important determinants of social entrepreneurship, with entrepreneurs pursuing active or business entrepreneurial paths. Eleven of the participants were social entrepreneurs, while nine were business entrepreneurs (Shumate et al., 2019). These findings imply that family legacy and posterity do have an effect on social entrepreneurship. This implies that in order to succeed in social entrepreneurial endeavours, one must have a favourable desirability score. However, this study primarily emphasized background and contextual factors while overlooking the psychological and cultural antecedents that play a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions and resilience.

Moghavvemi et al. (2017) explored the effect of perceived feasibility, perceived desirability and performance expectancy on the adoption and utilization of IT innovation. They employed Krueger and Brazeal's Entrepreneurial Potential Model from 1994 to analyze the data. The independent variables of the study were perceived feasibility and perceived desirability, while the moderating variables consisted of inclination to act and occasioning events. The findings of the study showed that perceived desirability had a significant influence on intentions. It was also observed that the moderating variables had a stronger effect on intention to use IT among individuals who experienced a large amount of precipitating events than those who experienced fewer events. Individuals who had few precipitating events had a higher level of perceived desirability than those who had many precipitating events. On the other hand, proclivity to act had no discernible effect on performance expectations or intentions to utilize IT innovation. The research established that those with a greater tendency to act had a strong correlation between the perceived usefulness of IT innovation and the intention to use it than those with a lesser tendency to act. This demonstrates the critical role of perceived desirability in behaviour. Accordingly, it is conclusively possible that perceived desirability played a role in entrepreneurial ventures.

Additionally, perceived desirability was a factor in both male and female entrepreneurs' adoption of IT but had a greater impact on female entrepreneurs than on male entrepreneurs (Moghavvemi et al., 2017). In terms of age, younger entrepreneurs had a stronger correlation between perceived desirability and intention than older entrepreneurs. Similarly, Venkatesh and Morris (2002) demonstrated a significant effect of age on performance expectancy. The research indicates that male entrepreneurs had greater performance expectancy than females. This could be due to internal factors like the perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of adopting new technology. Nevertheless, the influence these factors have on the intention to begin utilizing new technology differs for entrepreneurs of different ages and genders. Further exploration is necessary to ascertain if there is a relationship between perceived desirability and the intention to use new technology. To authenticate the outcomes of the study, it is also essential to employ the research model to various contexts or cultures. Moghavvemi et al. (2017) findings corroborated previous research indicating that high levels of perceived desirability resulted in increased intentions to act (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011; Krueger & Kickul, 2006).

Masrury (2016) conducted a study in Indonesia on the impact of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability on the realization of social entrepreneurship among undergraduate students at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The EEM was used in the study. While the study contributes to understanding SE intention within an academic environment, it remains limited by its focus on a student sample, which may not reflect the complex realities faced by social entrepreneurs in non-profit or community-based contexts. Linan and Rodriguez (2011) examined the impact of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability on SE formation using only three model variables. With reference to the study by Moghavvemi et al. (2017), it is worth noting that, while the models used in these two studies are distinct, the independent variables measured are identical. Similar to Moghavvemi et al. (2017), Masrury (2016) established a significant positive effect of perceived desirability on SE formation. This is despite the fact that the study is conducted in a different context by concentrating on final year university students. Masrury (2016) concluded that the study's findings are consistent with those of Linan and Rodriguez (2011), who discovered that perceived desirability has a significant effect on SE formation. Furthermore Bader (2019) and Kha and Cordeiro (2018) reported similar findings. Interestingly, Masrury (2016) discovered that students rated perceived desirability higher than perceived feasibility, while students were fascinated by the entrepreneurial profession; they lacked confidence in their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. This is in contrast to the findings of Moghavvemi et al. (2017), who discovered that young people had a higher level of perceived desirability to be entrepreneurs.

Dissanayake (2013) set out to investigate the relationship between perceived desirability and SE and examined the effect of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Sri Lanka. The study incorporated the TPB and the EEM into Krueger and Brazeal's Entrepreneurial Potential Model, which examines the concepts of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. This is the model that Moghavvemi et al. (2017) preferred in a subsequent study in Malaysia. Dissanayake (2013) may have been influenced to use this model by Singh et al. (2012), who asserted that the Entrepreneurial Potential Model is one of the most robust measures of SE. According to Dissanayake (2013), there are three factors that influence SE: deemed desirable, deemed feasible, and deemed credible. The three studies by Moghavvemi et al. (2017) and Masrury (2016) demonstrate that each researcher examined a completely different set of moderating/dependent variables. This could be due to the fact that the studies were conducted in a variety of environments. Despite this, perceived desirability, like credibility and perceived feasibility, was found to have a significant effect on SE. Dissanayake (2013) also discovered that local universities in Sri Lanka produce less than 5% of Sri Lankan entrepreneurs. This is consistent with Masrury (2016), who found that Indonesian students were interested in entrepreneurship but lacked confidence in their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. Both studies contradict the findings of Moghavvemi et al. (2017), who established that the majority of entrepreneurs in Malaysia were young individuals.

Sajjad et al. (2012) sampled established entrepreneurs in a fourth study on the impact of culture on SE in Pakistan and used established entrepreneurs, whereas Moghavvemi et al. (2017) used young and not established entrepreneurs. Sajjad et al. (2012) examined perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, entrepreneurial experience, and culture using an extension model of social cognitive theory. The study established that culture significantly influences perceived desirability and feasibility. Additionally, perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are influenced by prior entrepreneurial experiences. Thus, culture and prior entrepreneurial experience had an indirect effect on SE by affecting perceived desirability and feasibility. Sajjad et al. (2012) discuss previous studies that corroborate the indirect relationship between these two variables and SE. Devonish et al. (2010) discovered that culture should act as a moderating variable for perceived desirability in a study on entrepreneurship in the Caribbean. According to Devonish et al. (2010), there is a direct correlation between entrepreneurial experience and the perceived feasibility and desirability of the venture. This is further supported by Shapero and Sokol's (1982) research which showed that prior experience in the industry had a positive influence on the individual's opinion of the venture. Shafi et al. (2012) also conducted a study which revealed that regardless of the model used to measure the effect of desirability on entrepreneurial intentions, the outcome was always the same: a positive and significant impact.

Additionally, Subhan et al. (2019) used the TPB to examine the perceived feasibility and desirability of developing SE for young digital talent in business among Indonesian students. Moghavvemi et al. (2017) examined two variables that are similar to those examined by Subhan et al. (2019): perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Nonetheless Moghavvemi et al. (2017) used a different model – the Entrepreneurial Potential model. Masrury (2016) conducted a similar study to Subhan et al. (2019) used the Entrepreneurial Intention Model, which they borrowed from Linan and Rodriguez (2011). Dissanayake's (2013) study combined the TPB and the EEM. Regardless of the models and theories used, all researchers concluded that perceived desirability had a significant effect on SE formation. According to Achchuthan and Nimalathasan (2012), perceived desirability played a significant role in the formation of SE and motivations. On the other hand, Barret et al. (2015) assert that the primary criterion for SE classification is perceived feasibility. The study's findings indicated a significant relationship between young entrepreneurs' perceived desirability and intentions, which was consistent with Moghavvemi et al. (2017), Masrury (2016), Dissanayake (2013), Sajjad et al. (2012), Sarri et al. (2019), and Weerakoon and Gunatissa (2019). Thus, perceived desirability greatly influences SE formation, which can a have profound impact on community development. This is so as social entrepreneurs are involved in activities that generate economic chances for people in poverty-stricken areas and also improve the overall wellness of disadvantaged communities in terms of healthcare, education and nutrition. (Ulleberg, 2009).

Sarri et al. (2019) conducted a study on the drivers and barriers to SE formation during economic disasters, focusing on the gender dimension, among three universities in Greece: the University of Crete, the Technical University of Crete, and the University of Macedonia, as well as one NGO focused on women entrepreneurship and mentoring. The TPB was used because it is the most frequently used model in entrepreneurial research and has been shown to be a strong predictor of SE formation. The variables examined were demographic (gender), personality (risk-taking, desire for achievement, and locus of control), and personal (perceived barriers and perceived skills). While respondents' intentions to start their own businesses were low, their perceived desirability and personal attitudes toward entrepreneurship were significantly higher. These findings corroborated the Greek data from the 2013 GUESS study, which revealed similar low levels of entrepreneurial intentions. In a similar vein, Subhan et al. (2019) discovered a significant effect between perceived desirability and SE formation. On a gender level, both males and females demonstrated comparable potential in their pursuit of entrepreneurship. In contrast, Moghavvemi et al. (2017) discovered that male respondents had a greater effect on performance expectancy than female respondents. Except for perceived behavioural control, Sarri et al. (2019) found no statistically significant differences in any of the other variables. The study attributed these findings to the country's severe economic state, which influenced personality, attitudes, and personal factors.

Gunatisa and Weerakoon (2014) used the TPB to examine the antecedents of SE: perceived feasibility, perceived desirability, and social norms, in final year undergraduates at Uva Wellasa University in Sri Lanka and discovered that SE and SE formation were significantly influenced by perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Dissanayake (2013) and Gunatia and Weerakoon (2014) used two comparable variables: perceived desirability and perceived feasibility, although Dissanayake (2013) followed Moghavvemi by integrating the TPB and the EEM. Gunatisa and Weerakoon (2014); Dissanayake (2013); Giagtzi, Reader, and Darnihamedani (2013); Linan et al. (2011); and Wang et al. (2010) all found a positive significant effect of perceived desirability on SE formation. These findings indicate that additional research is necessary to determine the factors that contribute to an individual's perception of perceived desirability. Gunatisa and Weerakoon (2014) established that social norms had no significant effect on SE corroborated those of Autio et al. (2001) and Armitage and Connor (2001). Thus, as Autio et al. (2001) note, the majority of young individuals choose to pursue an entrepreneurial venture based on their own self-belief and attitude rather than what is socially accepted. Additionally, Gunatisa and Weerakoon (2014) learnt that gender had a significant effect on the development of SE, with a greater effect on males than females. Similarly, Moghavvemi et al.

(2017) found that performance expectancy had a greater effect on male than female respondents. On the other hand, Sarri et al. (2019) established that both males and females exhibited similar potential when it came to their motivation to become entrepreneurs. Gunatisa and Weerakoon (2014) found that the majority of undergraduates lacked prior experience in their parents' businesses or in the businesses of their closest friends, resulting in low SE levels. Similarly, Sajjad et al. (2012) concluded that prior entrepreneurial experience influences perceived desirability.

Numerous studies conducted in Asia on the effect of perceived desirability on entrepreneurial intentions can be interpreted in a variety of ways; researchers in Asia are interested in contributing to the region's low level of entrepreneurial intentions. Asian economies are highly dependent on entrepreneurship. While it is prudent to conduct research among students to ensure that SE is nurtured early, additional research among young entrepreneurs is necessary to assist them in maintaining and profiting from the businesses they have established. Additionally, research in the African context is necessary to identify additional dependent variables that can affect perceived desirability, which in turn affects SE formation. Regardless of the dependent variables, the consistent finding across all previous studies is that perceived desirability has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intentions. In all of the studies reviewed, the independent variables remained constant. Perceived desirability has been examined as an independent variable in each study, confirming its critical role in SE formation.

Sustainable Community Development

Bridger and Luloff (2013) emphasized the significance of advocating a sustainable development strategy based on sustainable community development. The authors further explained that while sustainability operates on a larger scale, sustainable community development is focused on the micro and local levels. In this context, economic sustainability plays a crucial role as it directly contributes to social sustainability. Sustainable community development underscores the need to strike a balance between cultural considerations, community development, and societal progress. Lal (2018) suggested that the rural sector can achieve economic sustainability by adopting a cooperative banking system. Krstic et al. (2018) highlighted the key components of sustainability, including perceived feasibility, self-efficacy, perceived desirability, and attitude toward behaviour. They also emphasized that sustainability encompasses the domains of environment, economy, and society.

Rosairo (2016), based on a study examining the entrepreneurial skills of Sri Lankan farmers, asserted that maintaining high productivity and profitability is essential for ensuring sustainability. Sandika and Hirimuthugoda (2011) argued that innovation and risk-taking are critical from a rural business perspective, particularly due to the limited asset base of small-scale rural businesses.

Communities striving for a sustainable future can pursue innovative initiatives. For instance, the Karen ethnic village in Baan Huay Hee, located in the northwestern Thai province of Mae Hong Son, established a "community-based sustainable tourism" project (Eryilmaz, 2011). Initially, the project aimed to enhance the quality of life for the local community and promote the significance of Karen culture. However, it also enabled the community to set goals for the village and preserve the region's natural and physical resources. Through collaboration, the local community transformed community-based tourism into an economic and environmental advantage. Eryilmaz (2011) reported that the Karen village improved their quality of life, protected natural resources, and shared their culture with tourists. They established a local economy by selling village products and allocated funds towards the development of the Karen village, highlighting the importance of local agriculture.

Conceptual Framework

Perceived Desirability
- Motivation
- Emotional readiness
- Personal benefit
- Perceived ease
- Prior knowledge
- Trust

Sustainable Community Development
- Economic Development
- Social Development
- Environmental Development
- Health Development
- Infrastructure Development

Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**

Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework*
Source: Author, (2025)

METHODOLOGY

The research used a mixed-approach design which comprised qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed method approach enables the researcher to measure constructs precisely and to answer questions linked to how much and who (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). The study adopted Pragmatism paradigm since it upholds both subjective (qualitative) and objective (quantitative) data to attain research objectives. The study took place in Kitui County, because of low adoption of SE by NPOs, despite the fact that SE has been as the most viable approach to tackle a community's social, economic, and environmental challenges. The data from Business Licensing Office of Kitui County (2019) shows low registration of business enterprises but majority of the registered businesses are owned by people in their early 50's and mid 60's with very few businesses owned by the youths. There were thirty-five (35) NPOs in Kitui County (KNBS, 2019). The population in this study were the main stakeholders of the NPOs in Kitui County. The unit of analysis comprised three (3) categories: project managers, technical employees, and beneficiaries of NPOs. The Pagano and Gauvreau (2006) formula was adopted to calculate 100 respondents, the sample size of this study from a target population of 560 respondents. Stratified random sampling was employed to select a representative sample of 100 respondents for quantitative sample from the target population.

The focus group discussion guide was used to conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the beneficiaries to obtain qualitative data. Questionnaire was adopted to collect quantitative data since its efficient and affordable to collect large data from a diverse population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire was designed and developed guided by the study research objectives.

The study adopted mixed analysis by using quantitative and qualitative data techniques to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Mixed data analysis involves data reduction, data display, data transformation, data consolidation, data comparison and data integration (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Clark 2010). First, the study checked the collected data for completeness, wrong responses, and removed unusable data so as to ensure data quality.

RESULTS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The response rate for different study participants was as follows: project managers 78.57%, finance administrators 64.28%, implementation officers 88.37%, community mobilizer 79.310%, and beneficiaries 56.25%. In total, the study targeted 228 respondents, whereby 153 responses were successfully received for analysis, making a response rate of 67.10%. This reasonable response rate was achieved after the researcher made frequent physical visits and follow-ups of the respondents. Babbie and Earl (2009) state that a 50% response rate is deemed adequate, and the researcher can proceed with data analysis. The overall non-response rate in the study was 32.89%, with notable variations across stakeholder groups. The highest non-response was recorded among beneficiaries (43.75%), caused by access barriers such as limited literacy, time constraints particularly for women, and a lack of familiarity with the purpose or benefits of participating in surveys.

Perceived Desirability of Social Entrepreneurship Adoption

The study requested the participants to indicate their extent of agreement with statements regarding the perceived desirability of adoption of social entrepreneurship by NPOs in Kitui County, Kenya. Perceived desirability explains the extent at which NPOs are attracted to adoption of social entrepreneurship. The study participants were asked to give their opinion based on a 5-point liker scale where 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- undecided, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree. The analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: ***Perceived Desirability for SE Adoption***

Perceived Desirability	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std. Dev.
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
I see social entrepreneurship as a desirable career opportunity	29	35.8	52	64.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.35	.48
I find social enterprises good because of the high expected rewards such as independence, self-fulfilment, wealth and other desirable outcomes	11	13.6	70	86.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.13	.34
I have good experience on social enterprises	30	37.0	44	54.3	3	3.7	4	4.9	0	0	4.23	.74
I prefer social enterprises because they bring social stability	45	55.6	36	44.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.55	.50
I believe there are many benefit that i will gain from successfully running social enterprises	45	55.6	36	44.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.55	.50
I prefer social enterprises as they have less barriers when starting	0	0	44	54.3	24	29.6	13	16.0	0	0	3.38	.75
I find social enterprises to be attractive as they solve society problems	55	67.9	26	32.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.67	.46
Aggregate											**4.27**	**0.54**

Source : Author(2025)

The participants strongly agreed with the statements (validated with mean scores) that they "find social enterprises to be attractive as they solve society problems" (4.68); they prefer social enterprises because they bring social stability (4.56), and they believe there are many benefits that they will gain from successfully running social enterprises (4.56). The study participants agreed with the statements that they see social entrepreneurship as a desirable career opportunity (4.36); they have good experience on social enterprises (4.23); they find social enterprises good because of the high expected rewards such as independence, self-fulfilment, wealth and other desirable outcomes (4.14). The study participants were undecided with the statements that they prefer social enterprises as they have fewer barriers when starting (3.38) and they prefer social enterprises because it is easy to get customers (2.81). The study results infer that the perceived desirability of social entrepreneurship plays a significant role in influencing organizations' adoption of social entrepreneurship initiatives. The positive attitudes expressed by respondents indicate a favourable environment for the growth and establishment of NPOs that adopt SE.

The respondents perceived social entrepreneurship as a desirable career opportunity and recognize various positive aspects of social enterprises. They see social enterprises as a way to bring about positive societal change, address challenges, and achieve personal fulfilment which is agreed with earlier studies such as Hoogendoorn et al. (2016); Masrury (2016); Paunescu et al. (2018) and Moghavvemi et al. (2017) among others.

The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship Adoption by NPOS on Sustainable Community Development

The study appealed to the participants to indicate their extent of agreement with statements regarding the effect of social entrepreneurship adoption by NPOs on sustainable community development by NPOs in Kitui County, Kenya. The study participants were asked to give their opinion based on a 5-point liker scale where 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- undecided, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree. Analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Impact of SE Adoption on Sustainable Community Development*

Sustainable Community Development	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Social enterprise have created employment opportunities of many people	14	17.3	67	82.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.17	.38
Social enterprise as have improved agriculture production in this area	5	6.2	65	80.2	11	13.6	0	0	0	0	3.92	.44
Social enterprises have improved skills and knowledge of many people in this area	12	14.8	64	79.0	5	6.2	0	0	0	0	4.08	.45
Social enterprises have improved infrastructure in the community	0	0	48	59.3	28	34.6	5	6.2	0	0	3.53	.61
Social enterprises have improved security in the community	0	0	30	37.0	28	34.6	23	28.4	0	0	3.08	.80
Social enterprises have improved empowered people to participate or contest in elections	0	0	6	7.4	5	6.2	39	48.1	31	38.3	1.82	.84
Social enterprises have improved knowledge and awareness of human rights in the community	10	12.3	50	61.7	7	8.6	14	17.3	0	0	3.69	.90
Aggregate											**3.47**	**0.63**

Source: Author(2025)

The respondents Agreed on the following statements: Social enterprises have improved food security in the community (4.18); Social enterprises have improved skills and knowledge of many people in this area (4.08). Social enterprises as have protected the environment in this area (3.92); Social enterprises have improved knowledge and awareness of human rights in the community Social enterprises have improved infrastructure in the community (3.69) and Social enterprises have improved infrastructure in the community (3.53). The study participants were Undecided on whether social enterprises have improved security in the community which had a mean score of 3.08. The study participants Disagreed that social enterprises have improved empowered people to participate or contest in elections which had a mean score of 1.82. The study results infers that the adoption of social entrepreneurship by NPOs have a significant and positive effect on sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya.

NPOs beneficiaries during the FDG indicated that have heard and encountered different social enterprises in their area. Notably, Afya Halisi, Marie Stopes, United States Aid (USAID) and Afya Ugavi have played a crucial role in promoting health and well-being, while Women Empowerment Link (WEL) has championed gender equality and empowerment, Caritas Kitui was noted because of providing financial services. Additionally on matters related to agriculture and community development projects most of beneficiaries noted the contribution of the following NPOs namely Kitui Development Centre (KDC), Dryland for Development Organization, United States Aid (USAID), UM3-4, and Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) in sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya. These organizations exemplify the transformative power of social entrepreneurship, addressing diverse challenges from health, unemployment, agriculture gender empowerment among others issues for overall community well-being. Their initiatives showcase a commitment to fostering positive change and creating lasting impacts on the social fabric of Kitui County, Kenya.

The beneficiaries were in agreement with other study participants who expressed a compelling interest in social entrepreneurship due to its multifaceted impact on their lives and community. Majority of the beneficiaries revealed that they were particularly drawn to social entrepreneurship initiatives because of their positive contributions to poverty alleviation, consistent income generation, employment opportunities, and enhanced agricultural production. Additionally, the perceived benefits extended to skill development, environmental conservation, and food security, essential elements for sustainable community development.

The beneficiaries reported engagement in initiatives focused on poverty alleviation, regular income generation, employment opportunities, and agricultural improvement. Additionally, beneficiaries expressed involvement in skill development, environmental protection, and contributing to food security, emphasizing the comprehensive role of non-profit organizations in fostering sustainable community development. Regarding prior experience with social entrepreneurship among NPOs, participants exhibited varied levels of familiarity however the experiences of working for a social cause were generally positive, aligning with the perceived effectiveness of social enterprises in addressing community needs in Kitui County, Kenya. The beneficiaries strongly affirmed the role of social enterprises in addressing poverty, providing consistent income, creating employment, empowerment, infrastructure development, environmental protection, enhancing agricultural production and food security among others initiatives for improving local livelihoods.

These findings suggest that social enterprises have been effective in addressing economic challenges and enhancing the livelihoods of the local population. Moreover, respondents believe that social enterprises have contributed to skill development, environmental protection, and food security, which are essential components of sustainable community development. These results underscore the potential of non-profit organizations to make a substantial and holistic impact on the well-being of the community in Kitui County.

However, it's important to note some areas where respondents expressed lower levels of agreement. For instance, there is a more divided opinion regarding the improvement of infrastructure, security, and political empowerment through social enterprises. This suggests that there might be room for improvement in these areas, and non-profit organizations may need to reassess their strategies to address these concerns effectively.

Correlations Analysis

Table 3: ***Correlation Analysis***

Variable	Perceived Desirability	Sustainable Community Development
Perceived Desirability	1	
Sustainable Community Development	0.34**	1

Note: *p* < .05, **p** < .01.

Source: Author (2025)

The study conducted correlation analysis to establish whether there was a linear correlation between dependent and independent variables (perceived desirability and sustainability community development) as indicated in Table 3. Perceived desirability was positively correlated with sustainable community development ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). Since the correlation between perceived desirability was above 0.7, VIF and tolerance values were used to confirm whether multicollinearity existed among the two independent variables.

Relationship between Perceived Desirability and Sustainable Community Development in Kitui County, Kenya

To identify the statistical relationship between perceived desirability and sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya, simple linear regression was adopted:

$Y = \beta_1 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ ………………………… …………………………Model I

Table 4: ***Relationship between Perceived Desirability and Sustainable Community Development***

Sustainable Community Development	B	SE	T	P
Constant	1.724	0.544	3.170	0.002
Perceived Desirability	0.410	0.127	3.226	0.002
R^2	0.116			
Adj. R^2	0.105			
F (1, 79)	10.409			
Prob > F	0.002			
N	80			

Source: Author (2025)

The results in Table 4 indicated that adjusted R^2 was 0.105 implying that 10.5% of the variance in sustainable community development can be explained by the perceived desirability. The model significance was presented using the ANOVA test. The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, this is so as it had a high F-statistic ($F = 10.409$) and the low p-value ($0.002<0.05$). This implies that perceived desirability has a positive and significant effect on the adoption of SE by NPOs for sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya.

The results also showed regression coefficient to be $\beta=0.410$, and $p=0.002< 0.05$. This infers that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived desirability and sustainable community development. The study results imply that perceived desirability impacted the sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya by up to 41.0% holding all other factors constant. Therefore, as perceived desirability of NPOs increases, sustainable community development is expected to rise.

The new model now becomes;

$$Y = 1.724 + 0.410 * Perceived\ Desirability$$

This factor play pivotal role in influencing NPOs' decisions to engage in social entrepreneurial activities. Perceived desirability emerges as a significant factor influencing adoption, with participants expressing enthusiasm for social enterprises as avenues for societal change and personal fulfilment. This aligns with previous research by Hoogendoorn et al. (2016) and Masrury (2016), highlighting the attractiveness of social entrepreneurship in addressing societal challenges. However, while there is recognition of the benefits of social entrepreneurship, there are hesitations among participants regarding their own intent to start such ventures, indicating a nuanced perspective. This underscores the importance of understanding individual motivations and barriers in the adoption process, echoing insights from earlier studies such as Paunescu et al. (2018) and Moghavvemi et al. (2017).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that perceived desirability has a positive and significant influence on the adoption of SE by NPOs for sustainable community development in Kitui County, Kenya. The results indicated that participants hold a highly favourable view of SE, considering it a desirable career option with potential for substantial rewards and social impact. The positive attitudes toward addressing societal challenges, and the belief in personal benefits from running social enterprises are noteworthy. This positive sentiment could potentially influence organizations' adoption of SE by encouraging more entities to explore this avenue as a way to achieve their goals while also making a positive difference in society.

The study results in Kitui County paint a largely positive picture of the impact of NPOs on sustainable community development. NPOs have had a significant positive effect on various aspects of the community, with a majority of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that social enterprises have bailed many people out of poverty, led to regular and steady income for many, created employment opportunities, and improved agriculture production. Additionally, they are credited with enhancing access to affordable products and services, improving skills and knowledge, protecting the environment, and improving food security. These findings reflect a multifaceted approach to community development by social enterprises, addressing economic, environmental, and social challenges. However, it's worth noting that there are areas where the impact seems less pronounced. For instance, social enterprises have not made as significant improvements in infrastructure and security in the community, as indicated by the lower agreement percentages. Moreover, in the context of political participation, social enterprises have had a limited impact , with a significant portion of respondents indicating that they have not empowered people to participate or contest in elections. Nevertheless, the overall positive perceptions of the impact of social enterprises on sustainable community development suggest that these organizations play a crucial role in improving the quality of life in Kitui County, particularly in terms of poverty alleviation, income generation, and environmental protection.

The findings of this study revealed that perceived desirability has a positive and statistically significant influence on the adoption of social entrepreneurship (SE) by non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Kitui County, Kenya, as a means of fostering sustainable community development. High levels of perceived desirability are primarily driven by the attractiveness of SE, particularly in relation to career advancement opportunities, personal fulfilment, and its potential to generate positive social outcomes. These perceived benefits contribute to the establishment of a favourable environment that encourages the integration of SE practices within NPO operations.

Based on the findings, the study recommended that management of NPOs should provide educational/mentorship programmes to society to address the concerns or barriers that potential entrepreneurs perceive, especially those related to starting and managing a social enterprise. The NPOs should offer training programs, workshops or seminars to enhance specific skills required for SE. The initiative could boost their self-efficacy, attitude behaviours, adaptability, and understanding of local dynamics and their general perception of SE. Consequently, this could help increase their readiness for adopting SE.

Governments (both national and county) should design and implement policies that provide financial incentives for social entrepreneurs in Kenya. This could include tax breaks, grants, or low-interest loans specifically tailored for socially impactful ventures. By creating a supportive financial environment, policymakers can encourage the growth of social enterprises, making it more attractive for individuals and organizations to invest their time and resources in initiatives that address pressing social issues.

Contribution of the Study Knowledge

The findings of this study have a theoretical importance as it provides knowledge on the key antecedents of SE adoption by NPOs on sustainable community development in Kitui County Government. The study forms a conceptual framework which aligns major antecedents of SE adoption that influence the sustainability of NPOs in Kitui County. The findings affirm the role of Theory of Planned Behaviour Model,Entrepreneurial Event Model and Hofstede's cultural theory in describing the relationship between antecedents of SE adoption by NPOs and sustainable community development.

The study also revealed the importance of the antecedents of SE adoption (perceived desirability) on sustainable community development. Among the hypothesis tested, three of the hypotheses were rejected resulting to adoption of the alternative hypotheses. Therefore, the hypotheses can be applied for further studies on the relationship between antecedents of SE adoption and sustainable community development in other counties, regions, and other organizations. Further, this study contributes to the knowledge by testing the moderating effect of culture on the relationship between SE adoption and sustainable community development.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The study recommends replicating of similar or related research across other geographic regions in Kenya to compare, contrast, and enrich the results. Such as areas with high poverty levels such as Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, West Pokot, and marginalized communities such as people with disabilities, ethnicity, among other factors since the findings cannot be generalized for areas that has regional disparities, wealth disparities and so on.

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