


The Impact of Sustainable Social Entrepreneurship on Economic Inclusivity in Rural Areas in Indonesia

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received February, 2025 Revised February, 2025 Accepted February, 2025</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Economic Inclusivity, Rural Development, Access to Resources</p> <p>Social</p>	<p>This study investigates the impact of sustainable social entrepreneurship on economic inclusivity in rural areas of Indonesia, using a quantitative analysis with 125 respondents and data processed through Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that sustainable social entrepreneurship significantly influences economic inclusivity through key factors, including access to resources, equitable opportunities, participation in economic activities, and income distribution. The model explains 68% of the variance in economic inclusivity, indicating strong predictive power. These results emphasize the transformative potential of social entrepreneurship in addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering equitable growth in rural Indonesia. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of inclusive development and provides actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to promote sustainable rural economies.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> 

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable social entrepreneurship in rural Indonesia is a promising approach to addressing socio-economic challenges by integrating entrepreneurial strategies with social and environmental objectives. This approach is particularly relevant in rural areas where disparities in access to resources and opportunities are pronounced. By fostering inclusive economic growth, sustainable social entrepreneurship can help alleviate poverty, improve infrastructure, and enhance access to education and employment. Financial inclusion is crucial for inclusive growth in rural Indonesia, as it facilitates access to financial services and resources necessary for entrepreneurship [1].

Technology acts as an intermediary, enhancing the impact of financial inclusion by providing platforms for financial transactions and business operations [1]. Initiatives in Lubuk Beringin, Jambi, demonstrate the effectiveness of financial literacy training and microcredit access in empowering rural micro-entrepreneurs [2]. Participants in these programs experienced a 20% increase in average monthly income and a 15% rise in business savings, highlighting the potential for sustainable economic growth through targeted support [2]. Rural women face unique challenges, including limited access to financial resources and societal norms that restrict entrepreneurial activities [3]. Addressing these barriers through

sustainable development and digital platforms can open new markets and opportunities for rural women, contributing to inclusive economic development [3]. Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Sikka Regency illustrate the role of participatory governance in improving agricultural productivity and community welfare [4]. Despite challenges like transportation barriers and limited technology, BUMDes governance has led to significant improvements in crop yields and community engagement [4].

Sustainable social entrepreneurship in rural Indonesia empowers local communities by addressing systemic inequalities and fostering economic resilience. By integrating financial viability with social impact, this model creates job opportunities, improves access to essential services, and promotes long-term sustainability. Social entrepreneurship enhances economic inclusion through capacity-building, financial literacy, and microfinance initiatives, enabling self-sufficiency and improving livelihoods [2], [5]. Innovation plays a key role in sustaining social enterprises by mitigating risks and adapting to uncertainties [6]. By prioritizing social value over profit, social entrepreneurship bridges service gaps in education, healthcare, and sustainability, supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals [7]. However, challenges such as funding limitations, regulatory barriers, and scalability constraints necessitate multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government policies, private partnerships, and social innovation ecosystems [5]. Developing skills in empathy, creativity, and sustainability is crucial, while proactive strategies like securing additional funding and advocating policy reforms help overcome common obstacles [8].

The concept of economic inclusivity involves ensuring that all members of society, particularly those in disadvantaged groups, have access to opportunities that enable them to participate meaningfully in economic activities. It encompasses equitable access to resources, fair income distribution, and the

elimination of barriers that perpetuate inequality. In rural areas, economic inclusivity is vital for reducing poverty and promoting community development. However, achieving this requires targeted interventions that address the structural and systemic factors limiting economic participation.

Despite the growing interest in sustainable social entrepreneurship, empirical research exploring its impact on economic inclusivity in rural Indonesia remains limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating how sustainable social entrepreneurship contributes to economic inclusivity in rural communities. By employing a quantitative research approach, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights into the relationship between these two critical variables.

Economic disparities remain a persistent challenge in Indonesia's rural areas, where limited access to resources, infrastructure, and employment opportunities exacerbate poverty and social inequality. Traditional development approaches often fail to address the unique and multifaceted needs of rural communities, leading to an uneven distribution of economic benefits. While entrepreneurship has been widely recognized as a driver of economic growth, conventional entrepreneurial models often prioritize profit over social and environmental considerations, leaving marginalized groups further behind.

Sustainable social entrepreneurship, which integrates economic, social, and environmental objectives, presents a promising alternative for fostering economic inclusivity in these underserved regions. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives in achieving economic inclusivity in rural Indonesia remains underexplored. There is a lack of empirical evidence on how sustainable social entrepreneurship impacts critical aspects of economic inclusivity, such as equitable resource distribution, community empowerment, and participation in economic activities. This knowledge gap hinders the

development of targeted strategies and policies to promote inclusive growth.

This study aims to address the above challenges by:

- 1) Analyzing the impact of sustainable social entrepreneurship on economic inclusivity in rural areas of Indonesia.
- 2) Examining the key mechanisms and factors through which sustainable social entrepreneurship fosters equitable resource access, community empowerment, and economic participation.
- 3) Providing evidence-based insights and recommendations for policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and stakeholders to enhance inclusive economic development through sustainable social entrepreneurship practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Social Entrepreneurship

Sustainable social entrepreneurship integrates innovation with social and environmental objectives to address societal challenges while ensuring long-term viability. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, it prioritizes value creation for underserved populations, fostering economic self-reliance and reducing inequalities. Social entrepreneurship leverages social and intellectual capital, including networks, knowledge, and trust, to navigate uncertainties and build sustainable business models [9]. Integrating social responsibility into business processes balances economic, social, and environmental interests, with strategies like eco-friendly technologies and resource efficiency supporting sustainable growth [10]. Enterprises are adapting business models to incorporate environmental and social needs, especially in crisis contexts, by adopting renewable energy and enhancing social responsibility [11]. By prioritizing social value over profit, social entrepreneurship bridges service gaps in underserved areas and contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) [7]. Despite challenges such as funding barriers and scalability, social entrepreneurs employ innovative models, cross-sector collaborations, and adaptability to advance sustainability and create lasting social and environmental impact [12]. In rural settings, this dual focus on social impact and sustainability is particularly relevant, as these areas often face challenges such as resource scarcity, limited access to education, and inadequate infrastructure.

2.2 Economic Inclusivity

Economic inclusivity in rural areas requires addressing structural barriers such as limited market access, financial services, and technological infrastructure. Social entrepreneurship fosters inclusivity by creating opportunities for marginalized groups and ensuring equitable resource distribution. Integrating technology and innovative financial models is crucial for overcoming these barriers and promoting sustainable development. The digital divide remains a major obstacle, as limited internet access hinders participation in education, healthcare, and employment [13]. Bridging this gap enables rural communities to engage in economic activities and access essential services [13]. Technological innovations and social protection programs enhance productivity, education, and social mobility, helping to reduce inequality [14]. Expanding these initiatives supports long-term economic sustainability [14]. Indigenous communities face financial inclusion challenges, requiring customized financial products and policy adjustments [15], while social capital and enterprise models provide alternative pathways for sustainable economic development [16]. Lastly, economic inclusion plays a key role in reducing inequality by integrating marginalized groups into mainstream economic systems and ensuring their active participation [17].

2.3 Empirical Evidence in the Context of Rural Indonesia

Research on the impact of sustainable social entrepreneurship in Indonesia is still emerging, but existing studies highlight its potential to drive inclusive economic growth

in rural areas. [18]–[21] emphasize the role of social enterprises in improving livelihoods through skill development and market access, while [22] demonstrate how social entrepreneurship initiatives contribute to poverty reduction, particularly in regions with limited access to conventional development programs. Despite these promising findings, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical studies examining the relationship between sustainable social entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity in rural Indonesia. This gap highlights the need for further research to assess the mechanisms through which social entrepreneurship influences economic inclusivity and to identify best practices that can inform policy and practice.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theory of social innovation, which posits that innovative approaches to social challenges can create systemic change and improve societal well-being (Mulgan et al., 2007). Social innovation theory provides a useful lens for understanding how sustainable social entrepreneurship can address the structural barriers to economic inclusivity. Additionally, the sustainable livelihoods framework (Chambers & Conway, 1992) is employed to analyze how social enterprises contribute to economic inclusivity by enhancing access to resources, capabilities, and opportunities for rural communities.

The research framework is based on the premise that sustainable social entrepreneurship positively influences economic inclusivity in rural areas. The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

H1: Sustainable social entrepreneurship has a positive and significant impact on access to resources in rural areas.

H2: Sustainable social entrepreneurship has a positive and significant impact on equitable opportunities in rural areas.

H3: Sustainable social entrepreneurship has a positive and significant impact on participation in economic activities in rural areas.

H4: Sustainable social entrepreneurship has a positive and significant impact on income distribution in rural areas.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the impact of sustainable social entrepreneurship on economic inclusivity in rural areas of Indonesia. The quantitative approach is suitable for evaluating relationships between variables and testing hypotheses through statistical analysis. The study is descriptive and explanatory, aiming to provide empirical evidence on how sustainable social entrepreneurship influences economic inclusivity by analyzing primary data collected from respondents in rural communities.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises individuals involved in or affected by social entrepreneurship initiatives in rural areas of Indonesia. This includes entrepreneurs, community members, and beneficiaries of social enterprises. Using purposive sampling, 125 respondents were selected to ensure the inclusion of individuals with direct experience or knowledge of sustainable social entrepreneurship initiatives. The sample size is deemed sufficient for statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which performs well with smaller sample sizes compared to other methods.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure respondents' perceptions of sustainable social entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity. Using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the questionnaire was divided into two sections: sustainable social entrepreneurship, which included indicators such as innovation, community empowerment, sustainability practices, and

social impact, and economic inclusivity, which encompassed access to resources, equitable opportunities, participation in economic activities, and income distribution. Prior to data collection, a pilot test was conducted with 20 respondents to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, leading to necessary revisions for improved clarity and relevance.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 3 software, chosen for its ability to model complex relationships and its suitability for exploratory research with smaller sample sizes. The analysis followed three main steps: first, the measurement model assessment, which evaluated the reliability and validity of constructs using indicator loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance

extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity; second, the structural model assessment, which examined the hypothesized relationships between sustainable social entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values; and third, the goodness-of-fit analysis, which assessed the overall model fit through R-squared values for endogenous variables and predictive relevance (Q-squared).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Profile

This study involved 125 respondents from various rural areas in Indonesia. Below is a detailed breakdown of the respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational background, and occupation.

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	54.4%
	Female	57	45.6%
Age	Below 25 years	13	10.4%
	25-40 years	75	60.0%
	Above 40 years	37	29.6%
Educational Level	Secondary education	50	40.0%
	Vocational/Diploma	45	36.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	30	24.0%
Occupation	Agriculture/Small-scale biz	63	50.4%
	Handicrafts/Artisan work	37	29.6%
	Service-based initiatives	25	20.0%

The analysis of respondent demographics revealed that the majority were male (54.4%), while females comprised 45.6% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were between 25–40 years old (60.0%), followed by those above 40 years (29.6%) and those below 25 years (10.4%). Regarding educational background, 40.0% had completed secondary education, 36.0% held vocational or diploma qualifications, and 24.0% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Occupation-wise, 50.4% were engaged in

agriculture or small-scale businesses, 29.6% were artisans or involved in handicrafts, and 20.0% participated in service-based initiatives.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity using factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). The following table summarizes the results for all constructs and their respective indicators.

Table 2: Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Sustainable Social Entrepreneurship	SSE1	0.82	0.88	0.92	0.67
	SSE2	0.84			
	SSE3	0.85			
	SSE4	0.78			
Access to Resources	AR1	0.87	0.89	0.93	0.71
	AR2	0.85			
	AR3	0.82			
	AR4	0.80			
Equitable Opportunities	EO1	0.83	0.87	0.91	0.68
	EO2	0.84			
	EO3	0.81			
	EO4	0.79			
Participation in Economic Activities	PEA1	0.88	0.91	0.94	0.74
	PEA2	0.85			
	PEA3	0.86			
	PEA4	0.89			
Income Distribution	ID1	0.84	0.86	0.90	0.65
	ID2	0.81			
	ID3	0.80			
	ID4	0.79			

The key findings from the analysis indicate strong reliability and validity across all constructs. Factor loadings for all indicators exceeded the threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong item reliability. Cronbach's Alpha values were greater than 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.90 to 0.94, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70, further indicating strong reliability. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values

ranged from 0.65 to 0.74, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.50, thereby confirming convergent validity.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between constructs. Key metrics used for assessment include path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and R² values. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was conducted in SmartPLS to test the significance of the relationships.

Table 3: Structural Model Assessment

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
H1: Sustainable Social	0.621	7.852	< 0.001	Supported

Entrepreneurship → Economic Inclusivity				
H2: Access to Resources → Economic Inclusivity	0.485	6.327	< 0.001	Supported
H3: Equitable Opportunities → Economic Inclusivity	0.542	6.893	< 0.001	Supported
H4: Participation in Economic Activities → Economic Inclusivity	0.498	5.941	< 0.001	Supported
H5: Income Distribution → Economic Inclusivity	0.514	6.108	< 0.001	Supported

The hypothesis testing results provide strong empirical support for the relationship between sustainable social entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity, with all hypotheses showing significant path coefficients (β), high t-statistics, and p-values below 0.001. The strong positive path coefficient for H1 ($\beta = 0.621$, $t = 7.852$) underscores the crucial role of sustainable social entrepreneurship in fostering economic inclusivity and reducing disparities. H2 ($\beta = 0.485$, $t = 6.327$) highlights that improved access to financial services, technology, and education significantly enhances economic participation, suggesting that targeted interventions such as microfinance and digital platforms can strengthen inclusivity. The significant path coefficient for H3 ($\beta = 0.542$, $t = 6.893$) emphasizes the importance of equitable opportunities, with social enterprises promoting gender equality, skills development, and fair employment practices to enhance inclusivity. H4 ($\beta = 0.498$, $t = 5.941$) demonstrates that active participation in economic activities is essential for inclusive growth, reinforcing the need for support mechanisms that enable marginalized groups, including rural women and small-scale entrepreneurs, to engage in business and

trade. Lastly, H5 ($\beta = 0.514$, $t = 6.108$) highlights the importance of income distribution, showing that fair wage policies and profit-sharing mechanisms contribute to economic inclusivity. These findings collectively emphasize the transformative potential of social entrepreneurship in promoting a more inclusive and sustainable economic system.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for Economic Inclusivity was 0.68, indicating that 68% of its variance is explained by the predictors, namely Sustainable Social Entrepreneurship, Access to Resources, Equitable Opportunities, Participation in Economic Activities, and Income Distribution. This substantial R^2 value suggests a strong explanatory power of the model, reinforcing the importance of these constructs in driving economic inclusivity. Additionally, the model demonstrates significant predictive relevance, confirming that the selected variables effectively capture the factors influencing economic inclusivity and highlighting the robustness of the framework in explaining inclusive economic growth.

4.4 Discussion

Sustainable Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Inclusivity

The study found that sustainable social entrepreneurship significantly impacts economic inclusivity. This result underscores the role of social entrepreneurs in addressing socio-economic challenges by promoting sustainable business models that integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives. These findings align with prior studies emphasizing that social entrepreneurship can serve as a catalyst for community-driven development, fostering equitable growth and resource distribution [23], [24].

Social entrepreneurship initiatives in rural Indonesia have provided opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly women and low-income individuals, to participate in economic activities. By leveraging local resources and empowering communities, such initiatives contribute to reducing disparities in income and access to economic opportunities.

Access to Resources

Access to resources was another significant predictor of economic inclusivity. This result highlights that the availability of financial, technological, and informational resources is essential for fostering inclusivity in rural economies. Previous research has similarly emphasized that limited access to resources hinders the growth of micro and small enterprises, perpetuating economic disparities [25], [26].

In rural Indonesia, initiatives providing microfinance, training, and access to markets have demonstrated substantial improvements in economic inclusivity. These findings suggest that further expansion of such programs could bridge existing gaps and enable more equitable participation in the economy.

Equitable Opportunities

The study confirmed a significant relationship between equitable opportunities and economic inclusivity. Equitable opportunities ensure that individuals, regardless of their socio-economic

background, can access education, training, and employment. This is consistent with findings by [27], who argue that inclusivity relies on reducing systemic barriers and enhancing equity in opportunity allocation.

In the Indonesian context, programs that address educational inequalities and provide vocational training have been instrumental in increasing economic participation. Ensuring inclusivity requires targeted efforts to overcome barriers such as gender bias, geographic isolation, and limited infrastructure.

Participation in Economic Activities

Participation in economic activities also demonstrated a strong positive effect on economic inclusivity. This finding supports the notion that active engagement in local economies fosters a sense of empowerment and self-reliance among rural populations. It aligns with studies by [28], which highlight that increased participation promotes community resilience and socio-economic stability.

Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia have initiated programs to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment. Expanding these programs and addressing barriers such as capital constraints and market access could further enhance inclusivity.

Income Distribution

Income distribution was found to be a significant contributor to economic inclusivity. Equitable income distribution reduces economic disparities and ensures that the benefits of development are shared across different socio-economic groups. This finding aligns with studies suggesting that income inequality hinders inclusive growth and exacerbates poverty [26], [28].

In rural Indonesia, efforts to promote fair wages, create job opportunities, and establish cooperative business models have shown promise in addressing income inequality. Policymakers should focus on fostering equitable economic policies to sustain and enhance these efforts.

4.5 Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between social entrepreneurship and economic inclusivity. It validates the conceptual framework that integrates sustainable entrepreneurship practices with inclusive growth models, particularly in the context of rural development.

Practical Implications

The findings offer actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and social entrepreneurs. Enhancing access to resources, creating equitable opportunities, promoting economic participation, and ensuring fair income distribution are critical strategies for fostering inclusivity in rural areas.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The focus on rural Indonesia limits the generalizability of findings to other contexts. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not account for long-term impacts. Future research could explore longitudinal studies and comparative analyses across different regions or countries to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable social entrepreneurship and its effects on economic inclusivity.

5. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the pivotal role of sustainable social entrepreneurship in enhancing economic inclusivity in rural Indonesia by addressing systemic barriers and empowering communities through equitable access to resources, opportunities, and participation in economic activities. Key findings reveal that sustainable social entrepreneurship significantly impacts economic inclusivity, with access to resources, equitable opportunities, economic participation, and fair income distribution being essential for inclusive development. The model explains 68% of the variance in economic inclusivity, reinforcing the relevance of these factors. These insights emphasize the need to support social entrepreneurship initiatives and implement policies that promote inclusivity in rural areas. Expanding resource access, ensuring equitable opportunities, and addressing income disparities are crucial strategies for fostering inclusive growth. Future research could explore the long-term effects of social entrepreneurship and its applicability across diverse socio-economic contexts. This study provides a strong foundation for developing policies and programs that leverage social entrepreneurship as a tool for achieving sustainable and inclusive rural development in Indonesia.

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