



Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship in ... Okhawere, P. Y. O. (2026)

Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship in Low-Income Contexts: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (SOE) has emerged as a critical pathway for addressing intertwined social, environmental, and economic challenges in low-income contexts characterised by institutional fragility, resource scarcity, and persistent developmental deficits. Despite its growing relevance, existing literature remains fragmented, conceptually ambiguous, and largely skewed towards high-income environments, thereby limiting a comprehensive understanding of how SOE manifests and generates impact under conditions of constraint. This study synthesises interdisciplinary insights to conceptualise sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship within low-income contexts, examine the mechanisms through which it operates across individual, institutional, and environmental levels, and identify key barriers and pathways for enhancing its effectiveness and scalability. Adopting a conceptual review methodology, the study integrates perspectives from entrepreneurship, sustainability, and development scholarship to advance a multi-level framework linking entrepreneurial agency, innovation strategies, institutional dynamics, and socio-environmental outcomes. The analysis reveals that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in low-income settings employ adaptive strategies such as frugal innovation, bricolage, and collaborative arrangements to navigate resource limitations and institutional voids, while contributing to inclusive development, environmental stewardship, and local value creation. However, their transformative potential is constrained by persistent challenges, including limited access to finance, weak market structures, regulatory inconsistencies, and socio-cultural inequalities. The study further concludes that while SOE offers a viable and contextually embedded mechanism for addressing complex development challenges, its long-term impact depends on supportive institutional frameworks, coherent policy alignment, and scalable innovation pathways among others.

Keywords: Inclusive entrepreneurship; Low-income contexts; Sustainable development; Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship; Sustainable innovation

Introduction

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (SOE) refers to entrepreneurial activity that intentionally integrates environmental integrity, social inclusion, and economic viability into the creation and exploitation of opportunities. Unlike conventional entrepreneurship, which often prioritises financial returns as the dominant objective, SOE embeds sustainability concerns within core business models, value propositions, and growth strategies. This orientation positions entrepreneurs not merely as economic actors but as agents of socio-ecological transformation, particularly in contexts characterised by systemic vulnerabilities. In recent years, SOE has gained scholarly traction as a response to global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, persistent poverty, and widening inequality, challenges that are especially pronounced in low-income contexts (Schaltegger et al., 2016; Dean & McMullen, 2007). The relevance of SOE in low-income contexts is heightened by the coexistence of acute developmental needs and fragile institutional environments. Many low-income economies face chronic deficits in infrastructure, energy access, healthcare, sanitation, and employment, alongside weak regulatory systems and limited public-sector capacity. In such settings, sustainability-oriented ventures often emerge to fill institutional voids by delivering



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socially and environmentally valuable goods and services through market-based mechanisms (Mair & Marti, 2009). For example, enterprises focused on renewable energy, waste recycling, sustainable agriculture, and inclusive financial services frequently target underserved populations while simultaneously addressing environmental externalities. This dual pursuit of impact and viability underscores the strategic importance of SOE as a complementary pathway to traditional development interventions (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2023). Studying SOE in low-income environments is critical for advancing understanding across social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. Economically, sustainability-oriented ventures can stimulate local value creation, employment, and livelihood diversification, particularly where formal labour markets are weak. Socially, such enterprises often promote inclusion by integrating marginalised groups, such as women, youth, and rural populations, into production and consumption networks. Environmentally, SOE contributes to resource efficiency, ecosystem preservation, and climate adaptation in regions that are disproportionately exposed to environmental risks (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2022). Despite these contributions, much entrepreneurship research continues to privilege growth-centric outcomes, thereby under-theorising the developmental significance of sustainability-driven entrepreneurial activity in low-income settings.

Notwithstanding the expanding literature on sustainable and social entrepreneurship, important gaps persist. Existing studies are heavily skewed towards high-income economies and formal institutional contexts, limiting their explanatory power in environments characterised by informality, necessity-driven entrepreneurship, and institutional fragility (Pacheco et al., 2018). Moreover, there is insufficient integration of multi-level perspectives that link individual entrepreneurial agency with meso-level institutions and macro-level development challenges. This conceptual review addresses these gaps by synthesising fragmented insights and advancing a context-sensitive understanding of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in low-income contexts.

Conceptualising Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is conceptually grounded in the integration of sustainability principles into the entrepreneurial process of opportunity identification, evaluation, and exploitation. At its core, SOE involves recognising opportunities that arise from environmental and social challenges and transforming them into viable ventures that generate shared value. This distinguishes SOE from traditional entrepreneurship, where sustainability outcomes are often incidental or addressed through peripheral corporate social responsibility initiatives rather than embedded within the venture's strategic logic, as noted by Schaltegger et al. (2016).

The conceptual foundations of SOE are closely aligned with the triple-bottom-line framework, which emphasises the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental protection. In low-income contexts, these dimensions are deeply interconnected. Economic viability is frequently contingent upon social legitimacy and environmental stewardship, particularly where communities rely directly on natural resources for survival. Consequently, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in such contexts often adopt hybrid business models that blend commercial and social logics to balance competing demands (Battilana & Lee, 2014). From an environmental perspective, SOE focuses on reducing negative externalities and promoting regenerative practices. Entrepreneurs may exploit opportunities linked to renewable energy, waste valorisation, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy models, especially in contexts where environmental degradation directly



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threatens livelihoods. Socially, SOE prioritises inclusive value creation by addressing unmet needs, empowering marginalised groups, and fostering community resilience. These social objectives are not secondary outcomes but are integral to the opportunity itself (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). Economically, SOE seeks long-term viability rather than short-term profit maximisation, often favouring patient capital, incremental growth, and locally embedded innovation strategies. Importantly, the manifestation of SOE in low-income contexts differs from that in high-income economies. Resource constraints, institutional voids, and pervasive informality shape how sustainability-oriented opportunities are perceived and enacted. Entrepreneurs frequently rely on bricolage, frugal innovation, and locally sourced knowledge to overcome financial and technological limitations, as demonstrated in the work of Senyard et al. (2014). These adaptive strategies challenge dominant assumptions in entrepreneurship theory that equate sustainability with advanced technology or strong regulatory enforcement. Instead, they highlight the role of contextual creativity and social embeddedness in sustaining entrepreneurial activity under conditions of scarcity. Despite conceptual advances, the literature lacks consensus on definitional boundaries, particularly in distinguishing SOE from social entrepreneurship, green entrepreneurship, and inclusive business models. While overlaps exist, Pacheco et al. (2018) argue that SOE is best understood as an umbrella concept that captures ventures explicitly oriented towards sustainability outcomes across all three dimensions, regardless of sector or organisational form. Greater conceptual clarity is therefore required to enable cumulative theory building and comparative research, especially in low-income contexts where sustainability challenges are most pronounced.

Characteristics and Drivers of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurs in Low-Income Contexts

Entrepreneurial activity in low-income contexts is shaped by deeply embedded socio-economic constraints, cultural norms, and institutional fragilities, necessitating a rethinking of dominant entrepreneurship theories that are largely grounded in opportunity-driven behaviour within stable market systems. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs (SOEs) in these environments often operate at the intersection of necessity and opportunity, challenging the traditional dichotomy that separates the two. While early scholarship tends to frame necessity entrepreneurship as low-growth and survivalist, emerging perspectives suggest that, in low-income contexts, necessity can act as a catalyst for socially and environmentally embedded opportunity recognition (Mair et al., 2012; Sutter et al., 2019). This reconceptualisation positions SOEs not merely as reactive agents but as proactive actors who transform structural constraints into sustainability-driven opportunities. A defining feature of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in these settings is their deep contextual embeddedness, which shapes both cognition and action. Unlike decontextualised models of entrepreneurial alertness, these actors draw on locally situated knowledge, informal institutions, and lived experiences to identify opportunities that are often invisible to external actors. As Kistruck et al. (2015) argue, embeddedness within social networks enables access to non-market resources such as trust, legitimacy, and reciprocal exchange, which substitute for formal institutional support. However, this reliance on informal structures also introduces tensions, as it may constrain scalability and reinforce existing power asymmetries within communities (Webb et al., 2015). Thus, while embeddedness is a source of resilience, it simultaneously constitutes a structural limitation, highlighting the need for more nuanced theorisation of its dual role.

At the individual level, SOEs exhibit characteristics such as resilience, adaptability, and a strong pro-social orientation. Yet, framing these traits as purely individual attributes risks obscuring the structural conditions that necessitate them. From a critical perspective, resilience in low-income contexts is less a discretionary capability and more a survival requirement imposed by institutional



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voids and environmental uncertainty. This aligns with the argument by Shepherd and Patzelt (2011) that prosocial motivation in sustainable entrepreneurship is often intertwined with exposure to adverse conditions rather than purely normative commitments. Consequently, sustainability-oriented behaviour should be understood as both value-driven and contextually induced, requiring a shift from trait-based explanations to more integrative, context-sensitive models. The drivers of SOE extend beyond individual agency to encompass structural and institutional dynamics that both enable and constrain entrepreneurial action. Market failures, such as unmet basic needs, environmental degradation, and credit constraints, have long been recognised as sources of entrepreneurial opportunity (Dean & McMullen, 2007). However, in low-income contexts, these failures are not episodic but systemic, creating persistent conditions for sustainability-oriented innovation. In this regard, SOE can be interpreted as a form of institutional entrepreneurship, where actors simultaneously respond to and reshape dysfunctional systems (Pacheco et al., 2010). This perspective shifts the analytical focus from opportunity exploitation to institutional transformation, thereby enriching existing theoretical frameworks.

External actors, including development agencies and international organisations, also play a significant role in shaping the SOE landscape. While institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023) provide critical resources and legitimacy, their interventions are not without critique. Some scholars argue that donor-driven agendas may impose externally defined sustainability priorities that are misaligned with local needs, thereby undermining indigenous entrepreneurial agency (Easterly, 2006). This raises important questions about power dynamics and epistemic dominance in the construction of sustainability narratives within low-income contexts. Furthermore, gender and social identity introduce additional layers of complexity into the analysis of SOE. Although women and marginalised groups are disproportionately engaged in sustainability-oriented ventures, particularly in sectors such as energy, agriculture, and waste management, they face systemic barriers that limit their growth potential (OECD, 2022). Brush et al. (2009) contend that these constraints are not merely resource-based but are embedded in broader institutional and cultural systems that shape access to opportunities and networks. This suggests that any meaningful theorisation of SOE must incorporate intersectional perspectives that account for power, inequality, and social stratification. In all, the characteristics and drivers of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in low-income contexts problematise dominant individual-centric conceptions of entrepreneurship. Rather than being solely the outcome of personal traits or isolated decision-making, entrepreneurial behaviour is better understood as relational and deeply embedded within specific socio-institutional contexts, arising from the continuous interaction between individual agency, structural conditions, and institutional dynamics. This perspective necessitates a shift toward multi-level theorisation that systematically integrates micro-level motivations with meso- and macro-level influences, thereby enabling a more holistic, context-sensitive, and analytically robust understanding of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

Institutional and Policy Influences on Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Institutional and policy environments play a decisive role in shaping the emergence, orientation, and survival of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (SOE) in low-income contexts, yet prevailing theoretical perspectives often understate the dynamic and co-evolutionary nature of these relationships. Traditional institutional theory tends to portray weak formal institutions, such as fragile regulatory systems, poorly defined property rights, and limited enforcement capacity, as constraints on entrepreneurial activity. However, as Mair and Marti (2009) suggest, such institutional voids can simultaneously function as opportunity spaces, enabling sustainability-



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oriented entrepreneurs to address unmet social and environmental needs through market-based solutions. This duality challenges deficit-based views of institutional environments and suggests that SOE in low-income contexts frequently emerges not merely despite institutional weaknesses, but as a direct response to them. From a policy standpoint, governments across developing economies have increasingly introduced initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and sustainability, including renewable energy incentives, green industrial policies, and SME development programmes. Yet, as Acs et al. (2018) observe, the effectiveness of these policies is often undermined by implementation gaps, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and regulatory instability. While such policies signal formal commitment to sustainability, their inconsistent execution generates uncertainty and raises transaction costs for entrepreneurs. In this regard, policy environments in low-income contexts may be better understood as “institutionally ambiguous” rather than simply weak, creating both enabling and constraining conditions for SOE. Moreover, the continued prioritisation of GDP growth and short-term economic metrics within policy frameworks marginalises sustainability-oriented ventures, reinforcing what Banerjee (2008) critiques as the dominance of market-centric development paradigms that inadequately capture social and environmental value creation.

In response to these institutional deficiencies, non-state actors increasingly assume quasi-institutional roles. Development agencies, non-governmental organisations, and impact investors act as intermediaries by providing capital, technical support, and legitimacy to sustainability-oriented ventures. As reflected in UNDP (2023) initiatives, such actors often facilitate experimentation with hybrid business models and support market creation in underserved sectors. However, this growing reliance on external actors is not without contestation. Scholars such as Easterly (2006) caution that donor-driven interventions may impose externally defined priorities that do not fully align with local needs, potentially undermining indigenous entrepreneurial agency and long-term sustainability. This tension highlights the need to critically interrogate the power dynamics embedded within global development architectures that shape SOE trajectories in low-income contexts.

Beyond formal structures, informal institutions, including social norms, cultural expectations, and community governance mechanisms, play a pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour and outcomes. In many low-income settings, these informal systems substitute for formal regulatory mechanisms, enabling trust-based exchanges and facilitating access to resources. Webb et al. (2015) emphasise that such informal institutional arrangements can enhance legitimacy and resilience for entrepreneurs operating under conditions of institutional fragility. However, they may also reproduce exclusionary practices and reinforce existing inequalities, particularly where social hierarchies limit access to networks and opportunities. This dual role of informal institutions underscores the need for more nuanced theorisation that moves beyond romanticised views of community embeddedness.

Importantly, the relationship between institutions and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is not static but co-evolutionary. Entrepreneurs do not merely respond to institutional environments; they actively shape and transform them through their practices. Drawing on institutional entrepreneurship theory, Pacheco et al. (2010) argue that entrepreneurial actors can influence the emergence of new norms, rules, and market structures, particularly in contexts characterised by institutional fluidity. This perspective repositions SOE as both a product and a driver of institutional change, thereby extending existing frameworks that treat institutions as exogenous constraints. Despite these advances, the literature remains fragmented, often analysing formal policies, informal institutions, and entrepreneurial agency in isolation. There is limited integration of how these



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elements interact over time to influence sustainability outcomes in low-income contexts. A more robust theoretical approach would adopt a multi-level, process-oriented perspective that captures the recursive interplay between institutions and entrepreneurship. Such an approach is essential for designing policy and institutional arrangements that not only enable sustainability-oriented ventures but also harness their transformative potential to reshape development trajectories.

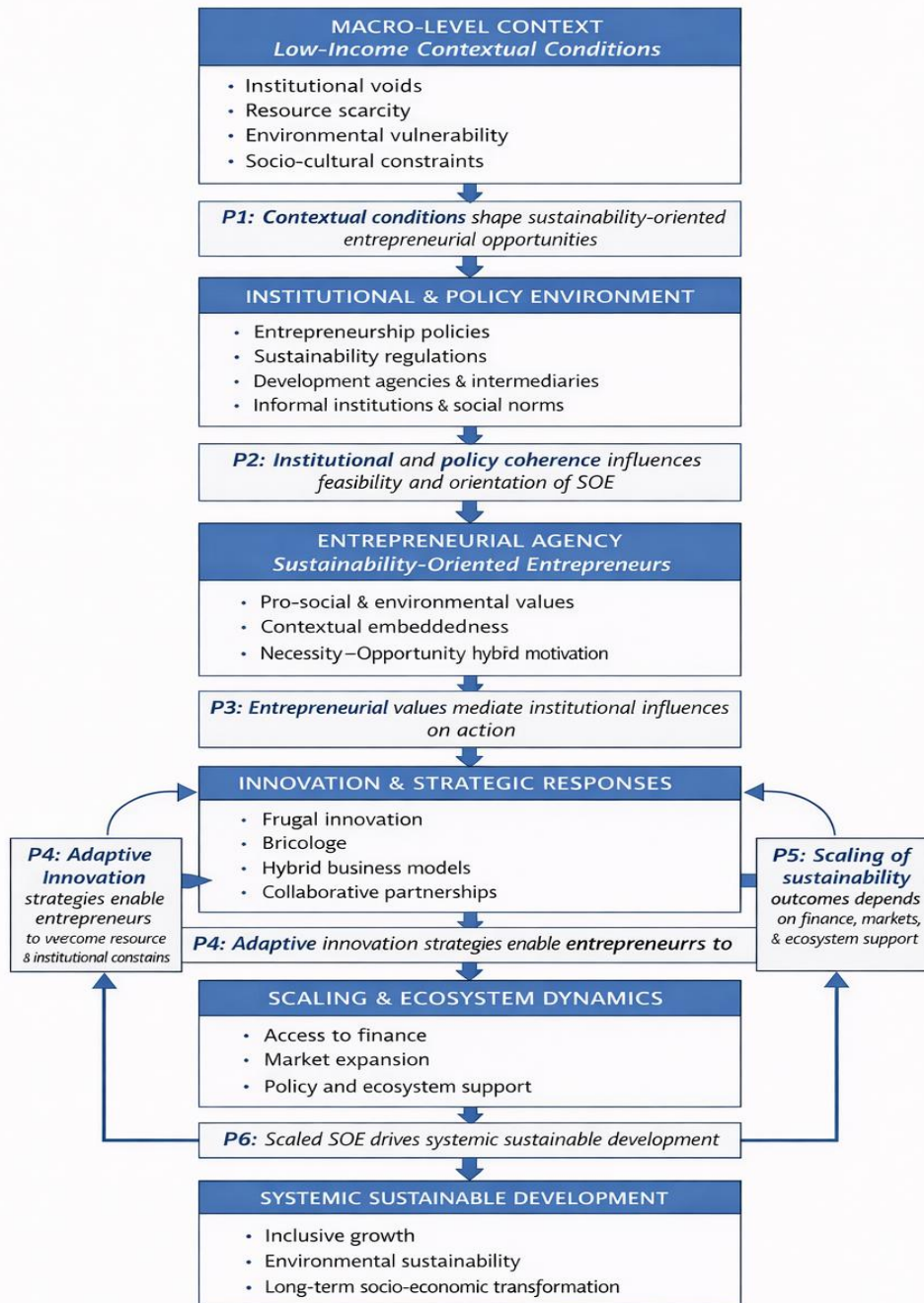
Resource Constraints and Innovation Strategies in Sustainability-Oriented Ventures

Resource constraints constitute one of the defining features of low-income contexts and significantly shape the nature of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Financial capital scarcity, limited access to technology, weak infrastructure, and shortages of skilled labour impose severe limitations on venture creation and growth. Yet, rather than merely inhibiting entrepreneurial activity, these constraints often stimulate distinctive forms of innovation that align closely with sustainability principles (George et al., 2016). Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in resource-constrained environments frequently adopt frugal innovation strategies that emphasise affordability, functionality, and contextual adaptability. Such innovations are designed to deliver essential goods and services at low cost while minimising resource use and environmental impact. Examples include off-grid renewable energy solutions, low-cost water purification systems, and circular waste-to-value models. These innovations challenge dominant assumptions that sustainability requires capital-intensive technologies, demonstrating instead that resource efficiency and sustainability can be mutually reinforcing (Bhatti et al., 2018).

Bricolage represents another critical innovation strategy employed by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in low-income contexts. Bricolage involves making creative use of available resources, often discarded, underutilised, or informally acquired, to develop solutions to pressing social and environmental problems (Senyard et al., 2014). Through bricolage, entrepreneurs recombine local knowledge, social networks, and physical materials to create value in ways that are both contextually grounded and environmentally conscious. This approach not only reduces dependence on external inputs but also enhances local ownership and resilience. Innovation strategies in SOE are also shaped by collective action and collaborative arrangements. Partnerships with community groups, cooperatives, NGOs, and local governments enable entrepreneurs to pool resources, share risks, and access complementary capabilities. Such collaborative innovation is particularly important in addressing complex sustainability challenges that exceed the capacity of individual actors (Bansal et al., 2021). However, managing these partnerships requires relational skills and governance mechanisms that are often under-theorised in entrepreneurship research.

Despite the prevalence of adaptive innovation strategies, scalability remains a persistent challenge. Many sustainability-oriented ventures achieve local impact but struggle to expand due to financing constraints, weak market linkages, and institutional barriers. Existing literature offers limited guidance on how frugal and bricolage-based innovations can be scaled without compromising sustainability objectives. This represents a significant conceptual gap, particularly in low-income contexts where scaling is essential for achieving systemic impact. The preceding discussion demonstrates that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in low-income contexts emerges from the interaction of structural conditions, institutional dynamics, entrepreneurial agency, and adaptive innovation strategies. To synthesise these interrelated mechanisms, Figure 1 presents an integrated multi-level conceptual framework that illustrates the directional relationships among these constructs and their implications for sustainable development outcomes.

Figure 1. Multi-Level Conceptual Framework of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship in Low-Income Contexts - sen sane





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Figure 1 visually represents sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (SOE) in low-income contexts as a multi-level, vertically structured process. It begins with macro-level contextual conditions (e.g., institutional voids, resource scarcity, environmental vulnerability), which shape entrepreneurial opportunity recognition (P1). Institutional and policy environments influence the feasibility and direction of SOE (P2), while entrepreneurial agency mediates contextual pressures through sustainability-oriented values (P3). These dynamics give rise to adaptive innovation strategies such as bricolage, frugal innovation, and hybrid business models (P4). As ventures mature, scaling and ecosystem support mechanisms determine their broader developmental impact (P5–P6). Ultimately, the framework demonstrates how contextually embedded and strategically adaptive SOE can contribute to systemic sustainable development in low-income environments.

Social and Environmental Impacts of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in low-income contexts generates multidimensional impacts that extend beyond firm-level performance to encompass broader social and environmental outcomes. Socially, SOE contributes to inclusive development by expanding access to essential goods and services, creating employment opportunities, and empowering marginalised populations. Many sustainability-oriented ventures deliberately target base-of-the-pyramid markets, integrating low-income individuals as consumers, producers, or micro-entrepreneurs within value chains (Kistruck et al., 2015). This inclusive orientation enhances income stability and social participation, particularly for women and youth. Environmental impacts are equally significant, especially in regions highly vulnerable to ecological degradation and climate change. Sustainability-oriented ventures promote cleaner production processes, renewable energy adoption, waste reduction, and sustainable resource management. By internalising environmental externalities, these enterprises contribute to ecosystem preservation and climate mitigation while reducing long-term costs associated with environmental damage (Dean & McMullen, 2007). Importantly, environmental benefits in low-income contexts often translate directly into livelihood protection, as communities depend heavily on natural resources for survival.

However, the impacts of SOE are not uniformly positive and may involve trade-offs. For instance, affordability pressures can limit environmental standards, while rapid scaling may strain local ecosystems or social relations. Additionally, the burden of sustainability initiatives may disproportionately fall on entrepreneurs themselves, particularly in the absence of supportive policies or financial incentives. These tensions highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of impact that goes beyond celebratory narratives. Measurement of social and environmental impact remains a persistent challenge. Many sustainability-oriented ventures lack the resources or technical capacity to systematically assess outcomes, leading to reliance on anecdotal evidence or donor-driven metrics. This complicates comparative analysis and limits the integration of SOE into mainstream development evaluation frameworks (OECD, 2022). Conceptual clarity regarding impact pathways is therefore essential for advancing both theory and practice. Thus, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship offers a viable pathway for addressing intertwined social and environmental challenges in low-income contexts. Yet, its transformative potential depends on supportive institutional environments, scalable innovation strategies, and robust mechanisms for impact assessment—areas that remain underexplored in existing research.

Barriers and Challenges to Scaling Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Despite its developmental promise, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (SOE) in low-income contexts faces persistent barriers that constrain venture survival, growth, and systemic impact. One of the most salient challenges is limited access to finance. Sustainability-oriented ventures often



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operate in nascent or underserved markets, where risk perceptions are high and returns are uncertain. Conventional financial institutions frequently prioritise short-term profitability and collateral-based lending, disadvantaging enterprises whose value propositions hinge on long-term social and environmental outcomes (Acs et al., 2018). Although impact investors and development finance institutions have expanded their presence, their reach remains uneven and insufficient relative to demand. Market-related constraints further complicate scaling efforts. Low purchasing power among target populations limits revenue potential, while fragmented markets increase transaction costs. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs often struggle to balance affordability with financial viability, particularly when input costs fluctuate or when environmentally responsible practices raise production expenses. These tensions can lead to mission drift or compromise sustainability objectives as ventures attempt to remain solvent (Battilana & Lee, 2014). Institutional and regulatory barriers also impede growth. Policy inconsistency, weak enforcement of environmental standards, and bureaucratic hurdles increase uncertainty and discourage investment in scalable solutions. In many low-income contexts, sustainability-oriented ventures operate alongside informal competitors who face fewer regulatory obligations, creating uneven competitive conditions (Webb et al., 2015). Additionally, limited coordination between entrepreneurship, environmental, and social policy domains results in fragmented support ecosystems that fail to address the multidimensional needs of SOE. Socio-cultural dynamics constitute an additional layer of constraint shaping the trajectory of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Embedded gender norms, entrenched social hierarchies, and unequal access to education and networks disproportionately disadvantage women and marginalised groups, thereby constraining their ability to scale sustainability-oriented ventures (OECD, 2022). These structural limitations are further exacerbated by capability deficits in areas such as managerial competence, impact measurement, and strategic growth planning. Taken together, these interconnected barriers underscore that the challenge of scaling SOE in low-income contexts extends beyond firm-level limitations, reflecting a broader systemic issue that necessitates coordinated institutional, policy, and ecosystem-level interventions.

Conclusion

This conceptual review demonstrates that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship represents a viable and contextually grounded mechanism for advancing inclusive and environmentally responsible development in low-income contexts. By integrating sustainability objectives into entrepreneurial opportunity creation, SOE addresses institutional gaps, resource constraints, and social exclusion that conventional market and policy approaches often fail to resolve. However, its transformative potential remains contingent on supportive institutional frameworks, adaptive innovation strategies, and effective mechanisms for scaling and impact assessment. The study underscores the need for coordinated policy action, ecosystem-level support, and theoretically informed research that reflects contextual realities. Strengthening these dimensions is essential for positioning sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship as a durable pillar of sustainable development in low-income environments.

Implications, Recommendations, and Future Research Directions

This section synthesises insights from the preceding analysis to articulate practical and scholarly pathways for advancing sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in low-income contexts. By integrating policy, practice, and research perspectives, it highlights how coordinated action across multiple levels can enhance the developmental and transformative potential of sustainability-driven ventures.



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Policy and Institutional Implications

1. Policymakers in low-income contexts must move beyond fragmented and growth-centric entrepreneurship policies toward integrated frameworks that explicitly recognise sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship as a strategic development mechanism.
2. Aligning entrepreneurship policy with environmental regulation, social inclusion agendas, and climate strategies can reduce uncertainty and create enabling conditions for sustainability-oriented ventures.
3. Stable regulatory regimes, targeted fiscal incentives, and public procurement policies favouring sustainable solutions can significantly enhance venture viability and scalability.
4. Strengthening intermediary institutions, such as green incubators, impact investment platforms, and development agencies, can further bridge institutional gaps and support market formation, particularly when coordinated with actors such as UNDP.

Recommendations for Practice and Entrepreneurial Support Ecosystems

1. Entrepreneurial support organisations should tailor their interventions to the distinctive needs of sustainability-oriented ventures, emphasising hybrid business models, impact measurement capabilities, and partnership governance skills.
2. Financial institutions are encouraged to expand patient capital, blended finance, and results-based financing instruments that align with the long-term horizons of sustainability outcomes.
3. Equally important is the strengthening of local entrepreneurial networks and collective platforms, which facilitate resource sharing, legitimacy building, and learning in resource-constrained environments. Such ecosystem-level approaches can mitigate isolation and reduce the risk of mission drift.

Directions for Future Research

1. Future scholarship should adopt multi-level and longitudinal approaches to examine how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship evolves over time within fragile institutional environments.
2. Comparative studies across low-income contexts would deepen understanding of how cultural norms, gender dynamics, and policy regimes shape entrepreneurial behaviour and outcomes.
3. There is also a pressing need for more robust conceptual and empirical work on scaling pathways that preserve social and environmental integrity.
4. Advancing standardised yet context-sensitive impact measurement frameworks remains a critical research priority, particularly for informing evidence-based policy and ecosystem design.

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