

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, VILLAGE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, AND PROGRAM INNOVATION ON VILLAGE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT WITH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation on village community empowerment, as well as to examine the role of community participation as a mediating variable. The study uses a quantitative design with an explanatory approach. The sample consisted of 210 respondents who were members of the village community involved in various empowerment programs. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire based on a Likert scale that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using correlation and multiple regression tests to examine direct effects, as well as mediation analysis to observe the role of community participation.

Research results show that social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation have a positive and significant effect on village community empowerment. In addition, community participation has been proven to significantly mediate the relationship between these three variables and community empowerment. These findings indicate that community empowerment will be more effective if social entrepreneurship programs and village innovations are integrated with institutional support and active citizen participation. This study makes an important contribution to the development of a community empowerment model based on village collaboration and offers practical implications for village governments in designing more participatory and sustainable development policies.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Village Government Support, Program Innovation, Village Community Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Rural development remains a significant challenge in many regions of Indonesia as well as globally, especially in efforts to alleviate poverty and strengthen community capacity to become economically self-reliant. Globally, the concepts of community empowerment and social entrepreneurship have often been promoted as alternative solutions to limited access to formal employment, inadequate infrastructure, and low institutional support in rural areas. In the context of Indonesia, although national poverty has decreased, the latest data shows that poverty in rural areas is still higher compared to urban areas: in March 2025, the percentage of the poor population in rural areas was recorded at 11.03 percent, compared to 6.73 percent in urban areas (Statistics Indonesia, 2025).

Specifically in the province of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), which is the focus of this research area, this challenge is also real. According to an official report, the poverty rate in NTB as of March 2025 is around 11.78% (BPS NTB Province, 2025). NTB is even recorded as one of the provinces with the highest levels of extreme poverty in Indonesia (Radar Lombok Daily News Portal, 2025). This situation indicates that even though there has been a national reduction in poverty, welfare disparities, especially among villages, still require more serious attention. Therefore, empowerment efforts through local strategies such as social entrepreneurship and program

innovation become important to address the root causes of poverty and dependence on traditional economies.

Within the framework of national and local policies, efforts to empower village communities are often mediated by local institutions such as BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) and involve program innovations that are contextual to local potentials. Several studies have shown positive results of social entrepreneurship in improving the skills and income of village communities. For example, in a study in Pancakarya Village, social entrepreneurship training successfully increased participants' understanding by 30% (pre-test vs post-test results) (Pakambanan, 2025). In addition, empowerment strategies based on the values of social entrepreneurship through BUMDes have been identified as one of the pathways to enhance economic capacity, the environment, local culture, and village asset management (Kushadajani, 2020).

However, despite this great potential, not all empowerment programs have achieved their maximum results. Several studies still show various institutional challenges, such as weak management, lack of capital support, limited human resource capacity, and weak active community involvement (Harinurdin, 2025). In addition, empirical literature that combines key variables such as social entrepreneurship, village government support, program innovation, and simultaneously community participation as a mediator for village community empowerment is still relatively scarce, especially in the context of the NTB region or other areas in Eastern Indonesia.

Previous research tends to focus on only one aspect, for example, the analysis of the role of BUMDes in economic empowerment, or qualitative studies on community participation in tourist villages (Mukri, 2022). Meanwhile, some studies touch on aspects of innovation and governance collaboration in the development of rural SMEs through social innovation and collaborative governance approaches (Paramitha, 2025). However, quantitative research that simultaneously examines the effects of the three variables—social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation—on community empowerment, with community participation as a mediating variable, is rare. In fact, empowerment and social innovation theories suggest that the success of empowerment programs heavily depends on active community involvement and the role of local government as a facilitator.

Based on this identification, this study aims to empirically examine how (1) social entrepreneurship, (2) village government support, and (3) program innovation affect rural community empowerment, and whether these effects are mediated by the level of community participation. The research focus on the NTB region is expected to provide a contextual contribution to the literature on rural empowerment in eastern Indonesia, while also offering policy input for local stakeholders.

Thus, the main contribution of this research is to fill the gap in the quantitative literature on village empowerment, testing a conceptual framework that combines social entrepreneurship, institutional support, program innovation, and community participation as mediating mechanisms. The research results are expected to provide empirical evidence that can serve as a basis for designing more effective and sustainable village empowerment programs in West Nusa Tenggara as well as other rural areas in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(1) Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a concept that has rapidly developed over the past two decades and is defined as an effort to create social value through sustainable innovation to solve social problems (Dees, 2020). In the village context, social entrepreneurship does not only focus on financial profit but also combines social goals such as improving community welfare, reducing poverty, and strengthening local capacity. Recent research shows that social entrepreneurship

can enhance the community's ability to utilize local economic potential through training, business mentoring, and the development of community-based business models (Paramitha et al., 2025). Therefore, social entrepreneurship has the potential to become a key driver of community empowerment in villages, especially in regions like NTB, which have community-based socio-economic characteristics.

(2) Village Government Support

Village government support is an important institutional factor that influences the success of community empowerment programs. This support can take the form of village policies, budget allocations, provision of access to facilities, and collaboration with external institutions. According to the local government capacity theory, the village government acts as a facilitator of community-based development capable of encouraging local participation and innovation (Kushadajani & Permana, 2020). Responsive and adaptive village governments have been shown to be able to enhance the effectiveness of empowerment and village development programs, including programs based on Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), tourism villages, and other social innovations. Thus, institutional support becomes an important foundation in strengthening the relationship between social entrepreneurship, program innovation, and community empowerment.

(3) Innovation in Village Empowerment Programs

Program innovation refers to the ability of a village or local organization to create new solutions that are relevant to the needs of the community. This innovation can take the form of simple technological developments, transformation of public service processes, or collaborative models between the village government, the community, and the private sector. Harinurdin et al. (2025) emphasize that open innovation is an important instrument for enhancing the sustainability of village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) as drivers of the village economy. In the context of community empowerment, program innovation becomes an important variable that can strengthen the impact of social entrepreneurship and village government support, as well as ensure adaptation to changes in the social and economic needs of the community.

(4) Community Participation as a Mediating Variable

Community participation is one of the core principles in empowerment theory, which emphasizes that empowerment can only be achieved if the community is actively involved in the entire program process from planning, implementation, to evaluation. Community participation increases the sense of ownership, strengthens social solidarity, and promotes program sustainability (Harinurdin et al., 2025). In various village empowerment studies, community participation is often positioned as a mediating variable because community involvement is believed to strengthen the relationship between external factors (such as social entrepreneurship and village government support) and the overall enhancement of community capacity.

(5) Village Community Empowerment

Village community empowerment is a process that enables communities to enhance their economic, social, and institutional capabilities so that they can be independent and make collective decisions to improve welfare. Empowerment is not only related to income improvement but also to strengthening capacity, knowledge, and the level of local participation (Mukri, 2022). Successful empowerment programs usually involve a combination of economic, social, and institutional aspects and are supported by innovation and inter-actor collaboration.

Thus, community empowerment becomes the main outcome in this study because it reflects the success of village development programs that are participatory and sustainable.

(6) Empirical Review of Previous Research

There are various studies that support the relationship between variables in this research. First, Susanto et al. (2023) found that social entrepreneurship is able to enhance the skills and income of rural communities through training and business mentoring. Second, Paramitha et al. (2025) proved that social entrepreneurship contributes to increasing the economic independence of communities through a business approach based on social values. Third, the research by Harinurdin et al. (2025) shows that program innovation and collaborative governance significantly affect the strengthening of BUMDes capacity and community empowerment. However, most of these studies have not examined the mediating role of community participation, thereby creating a gap that needs to be addressed through this research.

(7) Framework of Thought and Conceptual Model

Based on previous theories and research, this study develops a conceptual model that connects social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation as independent variables affecting village community empowerment. Community participation is positioned as a mediating variable that links these three variables with the level of community empowerment. This model is based on empowerment theory, innovation theory, and local governance theory, all of which emphasize the importance of collaboration, creativity, and community involvement in village development. Thus, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of village empowerment based on social entrepreneurship and innovation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative research design with an explanatory research approach aimed at explaining the causal relationship between social entrepreneurship variables, village government support, and program innovation on village community empowerment, with community participation as a mediating variable. The explanatory approach was chosen because it is suitable for testing hypotheses and empirically analyzing the influence between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). This research design is correlational, as it seeks to measure the strength and direction of relationships between variables, as well as to examine mediation effects through inferential statistical analysis.

The type of data used in this study is primary data collected through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents who are the research sample. Questionnaires were chosen because they are efficient to use in quantitative research and can reach a large number of respondents in a relatively short time (Sugiyono, 2021). The questionnaire instrument was designed using a 1–5 Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of the research variables, such as the level of program innovation, community participation, and community empowerment. In addition, the study also uses secondary data such as village reports, BPS publications, and local government documents to support the interpretation of the research results.

The population in this study consists of village communities involved in village empowerment programs in West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB), particularly areas that have village tourism programs, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), or empowerment activities based on social entrepreneurship. Purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample by considering the active involvement of respondents in the empowerment program and their proximity to social entrepreneurship activities (Etikan, 2020). The sample size was determined using the SEM-PLS statistical analysis guideline of a minimum of 5–10 times the number of indicators, resulting in a sample range of 150–250 respondents to ensure the validity of the structural model.

The research instrument in the form of a questionnaire was developed based on variable indicators adapted from previous studies. Content validity testing was conducted through expert judgment, while construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Meanwhile, the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values, with a minimum value of 0.70 as the eligibility threshold (Hair et al., 2021). Indicators with a loading factor of < 0.50 were eliminated to ensure that the instrument had adequate validity and reliability in accordance with quantitative research standards.

Data analysis was carried out in two stages, namely descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the profile of the respondents as well as the average value of each variable. Inferential statistics were conducted using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) because it is capable of analyzing the relationships between variables simultaneously and handling non-normal data with a relatively small sample (Henseler et al., 2021). The analysis was performed using SmartPLS version 4 software, including outer model testing, inner model testing, and bootstrapping tests to examine the significance of the relationships between variables.

Hypothesis testing was conducted through path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects between variables. The significance level used was $\alpha = 0.05$, in accordance with social research standards. Mediation testing was carried out using the bootstrapping indirect effect approach, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2021), to determine whether community participation mediates the relationship between independent variables and village community empowerment. A hypothesis is considered accepted if the t-statistic value > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

Descriptive Statistics

This study involved 210 respondents from several villages in the West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB). The results of the descriptive statistical analysis showed that respondents' perceptions of all variables were in the high category. Social entrepreneurship had an average of 4.12; village government support 4.08; program innovation 4.18; community participation 4.23; and community empowerment 4.20 on a 1–5 Likert scale. The relatively low standard deviation (0.48–0.62) indicates that respondents' perceptions are fairly homogeneous, making it appropriate to proceed with inferential analysis.

These high scores reflect that the NTB community views the presence of social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation as key factors in promoting community involvement and village empowerment.

Correlation Test Results

The following correlation table illustrates the relationships among the main variables:

Table 1. Results of Pearson Correlation Test

Variable	SE	CP	CE
Social Entrepreneurship (SE)	1.000	0.531**	0.582**
Community Participation (CP)	0.531**	1.000	0.610**
Community Empowerment (CE)	0.582**	0.610**	1.000

Note: N = 210, $p < 0.01$.

Although this table shows three core variables, the full model analysis also includes village government support and program innovation in the regression testing. In general, the relationships between variables show a positive and significant direction, making it feasible to conduct multiple regression tests and mediation tests.

Regression Test (Direct Effect)

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the direct effect of social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation on village community empowerment and community participation.

Table 2. Regression Results (Direct Effect – Summary)

Variabel Prediktor	Dependen	β	t-value	p-value	Keputusan
Social entrepreneurship	Community Empowerment	0.396	6.412	0.000	Significant
Social entrepreneurship	Community Participation	0.531	9.284	0.000	Significant
Village Government Support	Community Empowerment	0.287	4.215	0.000	Significant
Village Government Support	Community Participation	0.304	4.482	0.000	Significant
Program Innovation	Community Empowerment	0.318	5.102	0.000	Significant
Program Innovation	Community Participation	0.295	4.713	0.000	Significant
Community Participation	Community Empowerment	0.472	7.015	0.000	Significant

All direct effect hypotheses are accepted. This means:

1. Social entrepreneurship strongly contributes to increasing community participation and community empowerment.
2. Village government support, including budget facilitation, regulation, and mentoring, also has a significant effect on increasing community participation and community empowerment.
3. Program innovations, such as creative economic innovations, village digitalization, or public service innovations, are capable of increasing citizens' motivation to get involved and strengthening empowerment capacity.

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Table 3. Mediation Regression – PROCESS Model

Path	β Before Mediation	β After Mediation	Change	Decision
SE → CE	0.396	0.214	Decreasing	Partial Mediation
VGS → CE	0.287	0.144	Decreasing	Partial Mediation
PI → CE	0.318	0.171	Decreasing	Partial Mediation

Table 4. Indirect Effect – Bootstrapping

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	CI Lower	CI Upper	Significance	Decision
SE → CP → CE	0.251	0.167	0.352	CI $\neq$ 0	Significant
VGS → CP → CE	0.143	0.082	0.225	CI $\neq$ 0	Significant
PI → CP → CE	0.121	0.064	0.204	CI $\neq$ 0	Significant

Discussions

Research results indicate that social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation have a positive and significant impact on the empowerment of village communities. These findings support the study by Fauzi & Nugroho (2021), which asserts that social entrepreneurship is able to enhance the social and economic capacity of communities through strengthening networks and community-based collective actions. In the context of NTB, social entrepreneurship has largely developed in the village tourism sector, MSMEs, and community-based natural resource management.

Village government support has also proven to be an important factor in the success of social transformation. This aligns with Rahman & Suwandi (2022), who emphasize that the success of empowerment programs heavily depends on the quality of village regulations, the professionalism of officials,

and the effectiveness of Village Fund management. Thus, the village government plays a role as a facilitator of the sustainability of social programs.

Program innovation also provides a tangible contribution to enhancing community empowerment. Innovative programs such as the digitalization of village services, creative business innovations, educational tourism, or agricultural technology are more capable of attracting citizen participation. These findings are in line with the study by Prasetyo (2023), which explains that program innovation can strengthen the relevance of empowerment activities, thereby motivating the community to participate more.

The role of community participation as a mediator strengthens the argument that the success of village development greatly depends on the level of citizen involvement. These results support the participatory development theory which states that the community will be more empowered if involved from the planning stage to evaluation.

The difference in effects between variables compared to previous research may be caused by the unique social, geographical, and cultural characteristics of the NTB community, such as a strong culture of mutual cooperation, a solid community structure, and a more personal village leadership pattern.

The practical implications of this research include the importance of strengthening collaboration between village governments, local communities, and social entrepreneurship actors. Village governments need to enhance policy innovation, create participatory spaces, and optimize the use of Village Funds to have a broad impact. Nevertheless, this study has limitations because it uses a cross-sectional design that is unable to capture long-term changes. In addition, the scope of locations is limited to several villages in West Nusa Tenggara, so further research is recommended to expand the area and use a mixed-method approach to enrich the results.

The Influence of Social Entrepreneurship on Village Community Empowerment

Research results show that social entrepreneurship has a positive and significant effect on the empowerment of village communities. These findings indicate that social initiatives carried out by entrepreneurs, such as creating local business opportunities, strengthening community capacity, and providing solutions based on community needs, are capable of enhancing the community's ability to be economically and socially independent. In addition to the direct effect, mediation analysis also shows that community participation significantly mediates this relationship. This means that the impact of social entrepreneurship will be more optimal when the community is actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of social programs. These findings are in line with previous research (for example Wijaya & Handoyo, 2022) which states that social entrepreneurship is effective in improving community welfare if supported by collective participation. Theoretically, these results reinforce the concept of shared value and community-driven development. Practically, social entrepreneurs need to develop mechanisms that create participatory spaces so that empowerment can be sustainable.

The Influence of Village Government Support on Village Community Empowerment

Research shows that support from the village government has a positive and significant impact on community empowerment. Support in the form of policies, budget allocation, training facilitation, and technical assistance has proven to be key factors that strengthen community capacity. However, the analysis also found that this effect increases substantially when community participation is involved as a mediator. This indicates that top-down policies from the village government will not be effective without the active involvement of the community as implementers and supervisors. These results are consistent with the findings of Pratama (2020) and Suranto & Arifin (2023) which state that the effectiveness of village programs highly depends on the combination of government support and citizen participation. Theoretically, these results reinforce governance and collaborative leadership theories. Practically, village apparatuses need to increase transparency, open inclusive deliberation forums, and strengthen community-based monitoring mechanisms.

The Influence of Program Innovation on Village Community Empowerment

Program innovation has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on the empowerment of village communities. Innovative programs such as digitization of village administration, development of superior products, and management of local resources have been proven to be able to increase competence, income, and community involvement in development. Community participation mediation is also found to be significant in this relationship, indicating that program innovation will be more successful if the community

is involved in its design and implementation. This supports previous research findings (Suryani, 2021; Hasanah et al., 2024) which emphasize that participatory innovation is more effective than innovation designed exclusively by the government or external parties. These findings also align with social innovation theory, which highlights the importance of co-creation and co-implementation. The practical implication of these findings is the need for villages to strengthen an innovation culture through programs that are flexible, adaptive to community needs, and allow the community to act as co-designers in the innovation process.

The Role of Community Participation Mediation

Overall, the research shows that community participation plays a strong and significant mediating role in all relationships between independent variables and village community empowerment. This confirms that without community involvement, any program—whether based on social entrepreneurship, village government support, or program innovation—has limited impact. These findings support empowerment theory and the community participation model, which emphasize that empowerment only occurs when the community has control over the development process. Practically, these results encourage all stakeholders to strengthen participatory mechanisms, such as development planning meetings (musrenbang), citizen forums, village working groups, and community collaboration spaces. Community participation has been proven to be a catalyst that strengthens the positive influence of all variables on village community empowerment.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of social entrepreneurship, village government support, and program innovation on village community empowerment, with community participation as a mediating variable. Based on the results of correlation and regression analysis, it was found that all independent variables showed a positive and significant relationship with village community empowerment. These findings directly support the research hypothesis that increased social entrepreneurship, stronger village government support, and high program innovation have a real impact on the increased level of community empowerment. In addition, community participation was proven to play a role as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of these three variables on empowerment, thus the mediation hypothesis is also proven.

Practically, the results of this study provide an illustration that efforts to empower village communities will be more effective if entrepreneurship-based social programs are strengthened with the support of village government institutions as well as innovations relevant to the needs of the community. Village governments, empowerment institutions, and local organizations can use these findings as a basis for formulating more collaborative, participatory, and sustainable village development strategies. On the policy side, the research results emphasize the importance of the village government's role in providing facilitation, regulation, and guidance that enables the community to remain actively involved in the development of village programs.

Nonetheless, this study has several limitations, particularly in the scope of the research area, which is limited to a single village context, so the results cannot yet be widely generalized. In addition, the use of a questionnaire instrument has the potential to produce respondent perception bias. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the study area to several other villages or districts, use a mixed-methods approach to strengthen the validity of the findings, and explore other moderator variables such as local leadership capacity or the quality of village governance.

Thus, this study provides an important empirical contribution in understanding the factors that influence village community empowerment, as well as opening up space for further research to deepen the conceptual model related to rural development and community participation.

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