

Social Enterprise, Sustainable Community Development and Triple Helix Collaboration in Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to propose a new research framework on how social enterprise can assist the accomplishment of sustainable community development with the collaboration from triple helix models.

Design/methodology/approach: Analysis of previous literatures is used in the study.

Findings: This paper proposed a research framework on the role of university, industry and government as moderator variables on the relationship between social enterprise and sustainable community development.

Research limitations/implications: This paper presents a conceptual idea on how social enterprise can assist the achievement of sustainable community development with the collaboration from triple helix models in Malaysia. Further empirical research is required to gain more in-depth insights. Since this study is focusing on Malaysians, further study should be conducted in other countries as well.

Practical implications: Social enterprises can use the findings to support their objectives in achieving sustainable community development in Malaysia by integrating the role of university, industry and government. The conceptual framework can be used for future research to introduce sustainable community development through social enterprise and triple helix models.

Originality/value: This study proposes a new research framework on how social enterprise can assist the achievement of sustainable community development with the collaboration from triple helix models in Malaysia.

Paper type: Conceptual paper

Keywords: Sustainable community development, Social enterprise, Triple Helix Models, Government, university and industry

Introduction

The social issues that emerging nations face necessitate the creation of novel ways to address them. Since the 1980s, the social business movement has arisen and flourished as a component

of social innovation aimed at eradicating or decreasing societal issues (Lumpkin, Bacq, & Pidduck, 2018). Malaysia's government has implemented a number of measures aimed at fostering an enabling environment for social entrepreneurs to thrive. Creating a sustainable community entail utilising renewable energy sources without endangering the environment or having a negative influence in the future. For community growth to be sustainable, new forms of cooperation are necessary. The actions performed under the specific strategy of sustainable community development might be regarded as just symbolic concessions made in the sake of soothing or adopting an unhappy community. To avoid falling into these traps, sustainability concepts must be coupled with community development initiatives (Bridger & Luloff, 1999). Once a community is sustainable, economic benefits accrue, social equality is achieved, and the environment is protected. Numerous social enterprises have also said that their primary objective is to generate jobs in their communities, to assist underprivileged populations, or to promote the well-being of existing communities. Given that social enterprise seeks financial returns while also having a good influence on society and the environment, proactive measures must be implemented prior to the firm entering the sector. Otherwise, this gives comparable chances across the course of a local social enterprise's life.

The Triple Helix is used as a model for interaction between the university, industry and government (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). The triple helix serves as a springboard for the establishment of institutions and the development of novel organisational structures that foster creativity. The university, industry, and government are the three participants in this interaction, and they form collaborations to develop policies and initiatives that give creative answers to societal problems. People have an incorrect notion that social businesses exist solely to generate revenue, and this attitude has to be rectified immediately. There is an immediate need to increase interest in social entrepreneurship at all levels of education through research and advancement. Significantly, it is critical to raise knowledge of social entrepreneurship at all levels in the society in order to inspire individuals to pursue social initiatives that will ultimately contribute to the country's economic and social growth through good social effect. Clearly, interest in social enterprise and social entrepreneurship has increased tremendously in Malaysia, not just among new entrepreneurs, but also among civil society groups, policymakers, investors, and academics (Council, 2019). Malaysia, despite this, continues to face societal issues such as urban poverty, uneven access to public health and education, and the imperative for environmental sustainability. This study therefore aims to identify how social enterprise can assist the achievement of sustainable community development with the collaboration from triple helix models.

Literature Review

Sustainable Community Development

Sustainable community development is a critical component of attaining sustainable development on a local-global scale that has been implemented and supported in a variety of ways. Beyond fundamental necessities, the idea of needs encompasses values, relationships, and the freedom to think, act, and participate, all of which are moral and spiritual components of sustainable existence (Shah, 2008). Due to the connections between community members and the environment, mutual benefit is a necessary component of sustainable community development. This involves economic activity that satisfies a community's basic needs (Maser, 1997). Sustainable community development is like sustainable development, except it focuses solely on issues that affect the community (Ahmad, 2016). To achieve sustainable community development, it is necessary to strike a balance between environmental preservation, achieving acceptable development goals, and meeting the economic requirements of the community (Ahmad, 2016; Bridger & Luloff, 1999). The concept of sustainable community development

is a new goal desired for the communities (Ahmad, 2016). In order to achieve sustainability, communities in the developed countries face different challenges than those in developing countries (Van Schalkwyk, Schoeman, & Cilliers, 2013).

Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is described as one that uses the selling of products and/or services to strive to accomplish a specific social objective or set of goals (Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010). The development of social value is a top priority for social enterprises, however their focus on generating economic value varies (Dorado, 2006; Schuler & Cording, 2006). Despite its significant goal, a social enterprise's mission can be communicated in a number of different ways. Social enterprises must have a business-like character and adhere to financial and commercial objectives in their plans (Cheah, 2018; Jones, Regan, & Mitra, 2011). A social enterprise is a business entity registered under any Malaysian law that proactively creates a positive social or environmental impact in a financially sustainable way (MaGIC, 2015). As an added benefit, social enterprises aim to improve the community by solving its social and environmental problems (Md Ladin, Abdullah, & Abdulsomad, 2017).

The Triple Helix Models

A theory about the Triple Helix models was originally popularised by Etzkowitz and Leydersdorff (2000) as a method of innovation based policy development (Herliana, 2015). According to Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) distinguish three types of Triple Helix models in Figure 1. Three versions of the triple helix model encompass these transformations: Triple Helix I as “statist model” with government controlling academia and industry; Triple Helix II as “laissez-faire model” with industry, academic and government separate and apart from each other and Triple Helix III as “balanced helix model” with overlapping spheres and hybrid organizations (Etzkowitz, 2008; Etzkowitz, de Mello, & Almeida, 2005).

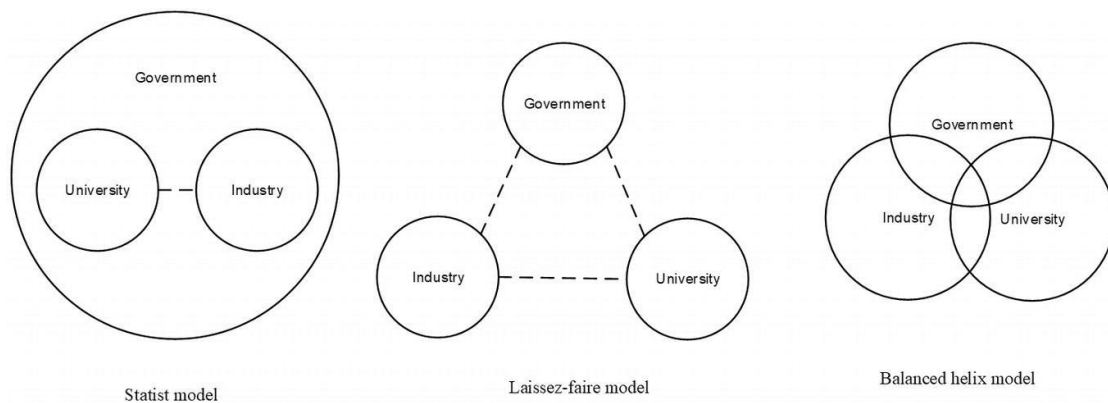


Figure 1: Three Triple Helix Models

To simulate university-industry-government relationships, a Triple Helix model is necessary. According to the Triple Helix concept, which highlights the university's expanding role as society moves from an industrial to a knowledge-based one, innovation and entrepreneurship programmes have grown increasingly popular (Cai & Etzkowitz, 2020). Industry is a hub for production, while universities provide new information and technology, while governments provide contractual relationships that keep the economy moving. By looking at connections between three different institutional sectors, such as academia, industry, and the government,

the Triple Helix theory attempts to promote regional economic growth while also encouraging entrepreneurship (Cai & Etzkowitz, 2020). The transition of the university, business, and government into a Triple Helix model entails both internal changes within each sector and the development of new linkages between them. Each of the following elements is discussed in detail:

i. University

Universities are now undergoing a second transformation in which economic development is added to research and teaching as a legitimate function (Etzkowitz, 2002). A university's central role as a centre of scientific research is drawing industry and governments closer together as scientific research increasingly acts as a basis for new enterprises and jobs. Universities are becoming increasingly important in an advanced industrial society, and as such, they are on the approach of becoming core institutions, institutions on which other institutions rely to carry out their objectives. The traditional functions of universities, such as teaching and research, are being carried out, but universities are now making investments in the monetisation of knowledge through patents and start-up enterprises. Increasingly universities have created an incredibly advanced innovation system, starting with technology transfer offices and incubators and scientific parks. This system has now expanded to include translational research and entrepreneurship courses across the campus. These activities are often in the guise of design thinking or into an ecosystem that comprises a penumbra that encompasses and illuminates traditional academia (Rice 2019) through a bi-directional flow, instantiated in faculty members who carry out varying proportions of their in academia and other institutional spheres (Dzisah & Etzkowitz, 2008).

ii. Industry

As in academics, the business world is undergoing a similar transformation. Even in today's fiercely competitive global economy, a science-based company cannot afford to remain an island unto itself. Businesses, for example, continue to provide goods and services while also conducting research and providing top-tier training in their fields of expertise (e.g. through the corporate university). It's no secret that businesses are increasingly turning to academic institutions, as well as other private sector companies and government laboratories, for essential information and technology. In the academic and industrial sectors, cooperative projects begin, and governments at regional and national levels, together with international corporations usually support them (Etzkowitz, 2011).

iii. Government

The role of the national government in supporting the underpinnings of the technological enterprise was salient as an important element of a triple as a normative policy as well as an analytical model in under such conditions (Etzkowitz, 2011). The government is responsible for addressing market failures, changing public policies, and defining market regulations, but it also makes venture capital accessible to launch new businesses, particularly high-risk enterprises (Cai & Etzkowitz, 2020). Furthermore, the government takes a significantly more entrepreneurial approach, aggressively intervening at all phases of the product creation cycle, including fundamental research, applied research, product development, and marketing. As knowledge becomes more important as a factor of production, the conventional elements of land, labour, and capital lose importance, resulting in a range of political ramifications, including a greater role for knowledge-producing institutions such as universities in economic development (Etzkowitz, 2011).

Method

This study was conducted by studying the secondary data from websites, journals, or articles that were applied by a social enterprise. Literature analysis was conducted to discuss the research gap in the relationship between social enterprises in achieving sustainable community development with the moderating role of university, industry and government in Malaysia. Literature analysis was done by referring to Scopus list journals which are listed in <https://www.scopus.com>. A keyword of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and sustainable community were used in the literature search.

Findings

Research Gap

The number of studies on social enterprise is growing, and the expansion of knowledge has drawn a huge number of academics from various fields. Previous study on social entrepreneurship, on the other hand, has tended to focus on specific difficulties within the sector. For example 1) the rigour and quality of empirical social enterprise research (Kanter, 2010), 2) the definitional variety of the social enterprise concept (Bacq & Janssen, 2011), 3) how social enterprises relates to social innovation (Phillips, Lee, Ghobadian, O'regan, & James, 2015), 4) the notion of social enterprises as hybrid organisations (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014), 5) the measurement of the social enterprise concept (Rawhouser, Cummings, & Newbert, 2019), and 6) the field's level of scientific maturity (Sassmannshausen & Volkmann, 2018). There are also few empirical research on social enterprise and sustainable communities (Chell, Nicolopoulou, & Karataş-Özkan, 2010; Mair, 2010; Md Ladin et al., 2017; Sarif, Sarwar, & Ismail, 2013). As a result, the first research gap is to perform a literature analysis on the impact of social enterprises on long-term sustainable community development.

As for sustainable community development, according to Taylor (2016), the three main issues of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental protection, and social equality. Previous study on sustainable community development is not focusing on three main issues all together as they are separate study base on the three main issues. For instance, Awan (2013) performed a research on community, but it focused only on environmental concerns, such as the relationship between community activities and pollution. Fu and Ma (2020) place a premium on social concerns, including self-governance and community engagement in urban development. On the other side, study by Kautzman (2018), focused on economic variables, namely the connection between economic and community growth. As a result, this study will focus on social, economic, and environmental aspects in order to promote sustainable community development.

Finally, the Triple Helix model was employed in this research because it functions as a network of links in areas where collaboration between universities, business, and government is required. However, previous research on Triple Helix models concentrated on the helix's collaboration in generating knowledge-based innovation and did not include Sustainable Community Development from the study. While several studies included the community, they concentrated on niches such as coastal marine (Masud, Aldakhil, Nassani, & Azam, 2017), rural tourism (Amir, Abd Ghapar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015), aborigines (Abas, Amin, Wei, & Hassin, 2020), and etc. This suggests that previous research focused only on the helix's engagement with society. As a result, to address the research gap, this study will concentrate on Triple Helix models in partnership with social enterprises in order to promote sustainable community development.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the literature reviewed above, this research examined how social enterprise fosters sustainable community development through partnership between academia, business, and government. All factors will aid in comprehending the link between relationship between social enterprise and sustainable community development moderate by university, industry and government as illustrated in Figure 2.

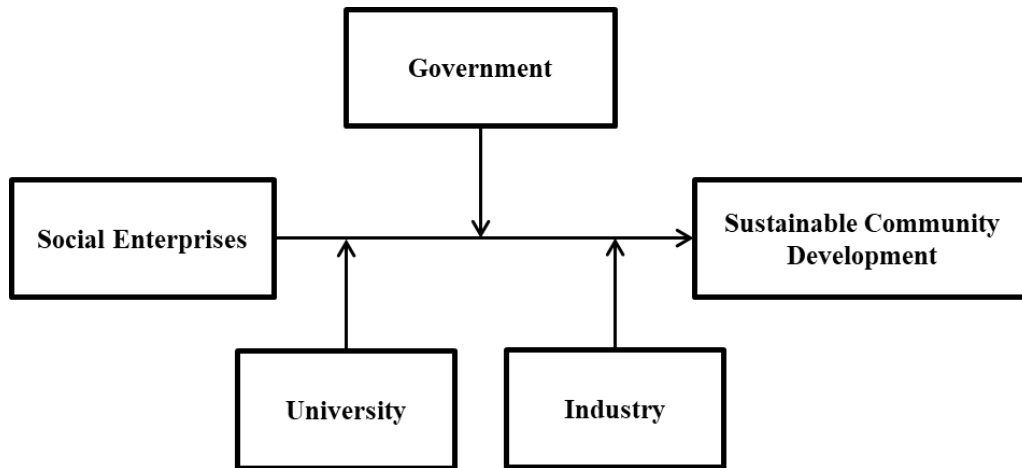


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

As with every business, social enterprise operate in commercial marketplaces in order to earn a profit. Globally, social enterprise pursue a variety of objectives in order to represent the diverse needs and interests of their communities. In Malaysia, social enterprise have enormous potential, since entrepreneurs are increasingly interested in sustaining social impact missions through company revenue. To educate the public and society about the value and potential of social business in achieving national socioeconomic sustainability, coordinated efforts by many agencies are required.

The university's essential function as a repository and transmitter of knowledge remains unchanged. Universities retain their primary purpose of youth socialisation and information dissemination while assuming some commercial and governance roles. Enhancing an academic emphasis at a local institution that is relevant to local economic growth now resembles traditional infrastructure development.

Similarly, while the government is the final arbiter of social laws, industry is the major source of productive activity. The industry continues to manufacture things and provide services, as well as conduct research. Additionally, the sector is increasingly providing advanced training, as evidenced by the fact that many firms now operate their own "universities," at least in their particular field of specialisation. The government is responsible for establishing the game's rules. Simultaneously, the government makes venture capital accessible to assist in the establishment of new enterprise. Thus, it is critical that research on the triple helix focuses on studies that examine policies that promote collaboration between universities and business, as well as their impact on the community and economy.

To summarise, scholarly interest in social enterprise, sustainable community development, and the triple helix is growing. A helicopter view of the expanding and rich field of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community research is beneficial for researchers interested in entering the area as well as those already working in it.

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