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BUILDING RESILIENT FUTURES: DESIGNING A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM AND POLICY FRAMEWORK IN THE POST-PANDEMIC LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges. Social enterprises, businesses balancing profit with social impact, hold immense potential in building resilient and inclusive communities. This study explores the key challenges faced by social enterprises in the post-pandemic era, including limited reach, inadequate funding, and difficulty adapting to changing environments. A comprehensive Program and Policy Framework designed to empower social enterprises is proposed. It includes program components such as building customer relationships, diversifying revenue streams, enhancing resource management, fostering innovation with partners, and optimizing cost structures. These components equip social enterprises with practical tools and strategies to overcome significant challenges. Complementing the program is a robust policy framework encompassing tax incentives, streamlined regulations, public procurement opportunities, capacity-building support, and impact measurement mechanisms. These policies aim to create a supportive ecosystem by reducing administrative burdens, unlocking funding opportunities, and ensuring transparency and accountability. The comprehensive framework contributes to a more resilient social enterprise ecosystem by enabling organizations to expand their reach, secure sustainable funding, and adapt to evolving environments - fundamentally fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

KEYWORDS: Social Entrepreneurship; Social Enterprise Resilience; Post-pandemic Recovery; Business Model Innovation; Policy Support Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

The global landscape has experienced a significant transformation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, challenging existing paradigms and demanding innovative approaches to social and economic recovery. As societies navigate the complexities of the post-pandemic environment, there is a growing need to develop solutions that not only address immediate socio-economic issues but also promote long-term resilience and sustainability. Communities may be able to resolve these on their own, but they frequently need outside assistance, such as funding from governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or soliciting the help of various enterprises. Businesses, particularly social enterprises, play a critical role in addressing these challenges. A social enterprise is an organizational model that prioritizes social impact while maintaining financial sustainability (Ashraf et al., 2019). Despite their social orientation, these enterprises operate similarly to traditional businesses, balancing value creation with financial viability (Yunus et al., 2010).

Despite their potential to significantly boost the economy and act as agents of societal change, social enterprises confront challenges such as expanding their operations and receiving inadequate funding or support. A well-known factor for the success of social enterprise activities is social networks or social environment factors, which include elements like support, funding, education for the acquisition of social entrepreneurial skills, and other regional aspects that can boost the formation of a social enterprise from the local reality (Jiao, 2011).

This study utilizes the Business Model Canvas as its analytical framework, examining nine key dimensions: customer segments, value proposition, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partners, and cost structure (Osterwalder et al., 2010).

The main objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive program and policy framework that strengthens the resilience and growth of social enterprises in the post-pandemic era. Specifically, it aims to describe the operational dimensions of social enterprises, identify challenges and adaptive strategies, examine the role of innovation in resilience-building, and propose structured programmatic and policy interventions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the operations of social enterprises. Data were collected through semi-

structured interviews, observations and document analysis, allowing for rich and contextual insights into post-pandemic experiences. A case study approach was applied, focusing on social enterprises located in GK Enchanted Farm, Angat, Bulacan. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of organizational practices and innovation strategies.

Qualitative Research has allowed the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of how innovation contributes to each dimension of social enterprise and why each dimension is crucial to its success. This method captured a wide range of human perspectives in a rapidly evolving global setting, making it especially beneficial when attempting to understand the subtle elements affecting the design of a program and policy framework. Additionally, the application of qualitative research allowed for enormous opportunities to generate new ideas and provided strength to unfold the concepts of social entrepreneurship and its aspects.

2.1. Locale of the Study

The social enterprises at GK Enchanted Farm in Angat Bulacan, were selected by the researcher as the study's locale in order to provide more precise findings and recommendations that will benefit the local community and its people, and the various organizations, which may be adapted by other communities as well.

2.2. Data Collection

Purposive sampling was used to select informants based on their expertise and relevance to the research objectives. Participants included one (1) management representative, five (5) social entrepreneurs, and six (6) community members employed within the enterprises. Three different sets of semi-structured key informants interview guide questions were utilized.

The interview guide questions for the management of GK Enchanted Farm focused on the assistance and support they provide to social enterprises in the area while the interview guide questions for top management of social enterprises consisted of three parts: (a) the informants' perception on the different dimensions of the social enterprise; (b) the informants' strategy to adapt to changing circumstances during pandemic; and (c) the impact of innovation on particular dimensions of the strategy employed. On the other hand, the interview guide questions for the members of the GK Enchanted Farm community focused on the impact of social enterprises on their lives.

2.3. Data Analysis

Content analysis was employed to interpret the data. Transcripts were coded and categorized into themes using line-by-line analysis. It is the process of summarizing and interpreting written data; a rigorous and methodical set of procedures for analyzing, examining, and verifying the information contained in written data (Triad 3, 2016). The study ensured rigor through data saturation, thematic validation, and systematic interpretation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *The Dimensions of Social Enterprise*

The findings indicate that social enterprises operate across the nine dimensions of the Business Model Canvas. When it comes to **customer segments**, the majority of social enterprise customers are middle-class to upper-class individuals who prioritize their health and have a tendency to purchase products that reinforce brand loyalty. In terms of **value proposition**, social entrepreneurs differentiate themselves from competitors by utilizing exceptional resources and incorporating healthier and natural alternatives into their product offerings. Social enterprises employ a variety of methods to reach their customers, including websites and social media, but they still keep traditional marketing in mind. Additionally, they choose business-to-business **channels** in order to establish long-term partnerships with their customers. They sell their products on a variety of platforms and use web analytics and cookie tracking to obtain vital client data. In order to guarantee that products will be delivered to customers on time, they also manage their own logistics. However, some would rather work with a logistics company to ship their products to more customers in more places across the country. Establishing and maintaining **customer relationships** for social enterprises requires regular communication with customers via social media. In terms of **revenue stream**, sales of a single product line with multiple variants constitute the main source of income for social enterprises. Additionally, they make revenue by offering their services to another company via a project-based agreement. In terms of **key resources**, they view human, physical, and financial resources as valuable in order to develop innovative and long-lasting products while upholding consistency in their value proposition. Talent management is regarded as one of the **key activities** for social enterprises. Making certain they have the ingredients required to make their products and using a range of production methods are other two key activities. The community is their **key partner** because it frequently provides them with

labor and raw materials. Finally, because social enterprises aim to maximize profit as well as social benefits, their **cost structure** is cost-driven.

3.2. *Strategies On Significant Challenges Encountered*

Social Enterprises, like many businesses, have faced significant challenges during the pandemic. To adapt to changing circumstances during this time, social entrepreneurs employed several strategies such as **diversification of revenue streams** where they explored alternative revenue sources beyond the traditional ones, such as online sales or digital services, to mitigate the impact of disruptions in one sector. They also stayed connected with customers through **agile marketing** strategies and maintained regular communication via social media platforms to keep customers informed about changes in operations and product offerings. **Supply chain flexibility** also allowed social enterprises to build resilience by establishing multiple sourcing options for raw materials and products. They collaborated closely with suppliers to anticipate and address potential disruptions. Changes in consumer behavior and market dynamics were also few of the challenges during pandemic and accelerating their **digital transformation** efforts by investing in e-commerce platforms and digital marketing tools helped them to adapt to these changes. Social Enterprises strengthened partnerships through **community engagement** to leverage support networks, access additional resources, and foster collaboration in addressing emerging challenges. Implementing **flexible talent management** practices, such as remote work arrangements, cross-training employees, and reskilling initiatives enabled social enterprises to adapt to fluctuations in demand and workforce availability. Lastly, social enterprises continuously identify opportunities for efficiency improvements, renegotiating contracts, and prioritizing investments that align with the organization's strategic objectives to **optimize cost structures**. Implementing these strategies thereby enhanced the resilience and adaptability of social enterprises to navigate the uncertainties and challenges posed by the pandemic.

3.3. *Enhancing Resilience Through Innovation*

Innovation was identified as a key driver of resilience, particularly during challenging times like a pandemic. Through innovation, social enterprises were able to adapt swiftly to changing circumstances, developed novel solutions to emerging problems, and optimize processes for efficiency and flexibility.

Of the nine aforementioned dimensions, five were found significant for enhancing resilience. Firstly, social enterprises focused on building **customer relationships** by introducing novel marketing strategies and leveraged advanced technologies to create personalized and engaging customer experiences. They switched to a cloud environment where clients' data can be accessible anytime, anywhere, and used chatbots to respond to customer inquiries and provide immediate customer service. Secondly, in their **revenue stream**, social enterprises developed innovative business models and tapped into emerging markets through leveraging data analytics to identify untapped opportunities and also create partnerships with other businesses to offer bundled services. Thirdly, in terms of their **key resources**, social enterprises expanded their network and explored different channels to procure materials. They utilized online platforms, directories, and marketplaces that specialize in connecting buyers and sellers of innovative solutions. They also attended webinars and virtual workshops where they met and interacted with suppliers virtually. Additionally, flexible talent management practices through hybrid work arrangement provided the flexibility for their employees to work in ways that are most effective for them. It also improved their employees' personal wellbeing and productivity at work. Fourthly, encouraging innovation with **key partners** by enlisting the help of the community in the co-creation of solutions, using crowdsourcing sites to generate ideas and putting in place cooperative methods for information exchange. Furthermore, the efficiency of community engagement initiatives was increased by using social media and digital platforms to meaningfully interact with stakeholders and communities. Lastly, incorporating innovative cost-saving strategies in their **cost structure** such as sharing of resources and infrastructure, and using energy-efficient technologies. Moreover, by utilizing predictive modeling and data analytics, procurement procedures and resource allocation were optimized, which eventually resulted in significant cost reductions.

3.4. Support Network

Social entrepreneurs get help and support from GK Enchanted Farm to operate and accelerate their growth and success through business innovations. Business establishment and growth are supported by **infrastructure and business support services**, which encompass a wide range of innovation-related activities and institutions, including R&D and consulting services for start-up entrepreneurs and physical facility access. A **network of social entrepreneurs** might also create more potential for impact because individual social enterprises have limited capacity to scale.

3.5. Raising The Standard of Living

Social enterprises significantly improve community welfare by generating employment, enhancing skills, and increasing access to resources. A worry-free life that exceeds their aspirations replaces a life of struggle over what to put on each plate, how to cope with the sadness of being away from their families to work in other places, the costs of transportation and rent, and how to provide for their children's education. In addition, everyone may now fulfill their everyday necessities without facing the challenges they faced before. They are now more competent in their ability to make products because of the knowledge and skills they have gained through social enterprises.

3.6. The Proposed Program and Policy Framework

Based on the above findings, a **Program and Policy Framework for Thriving Social Enterprise in the Post-Pandemic Era** is introduced (shown on Figure 1). The framework is systematically organized into three (3) interrelated core components: (1) Key Challenges; (2) Program Components; and (3) Policy Framework, all directed toward the central goal of Empowering Socially Driven Innovation.

This integrated structure highlights how targeted interventions and supportive policies collectively strengthen adaptability, resilience, and impact of social enterprises.

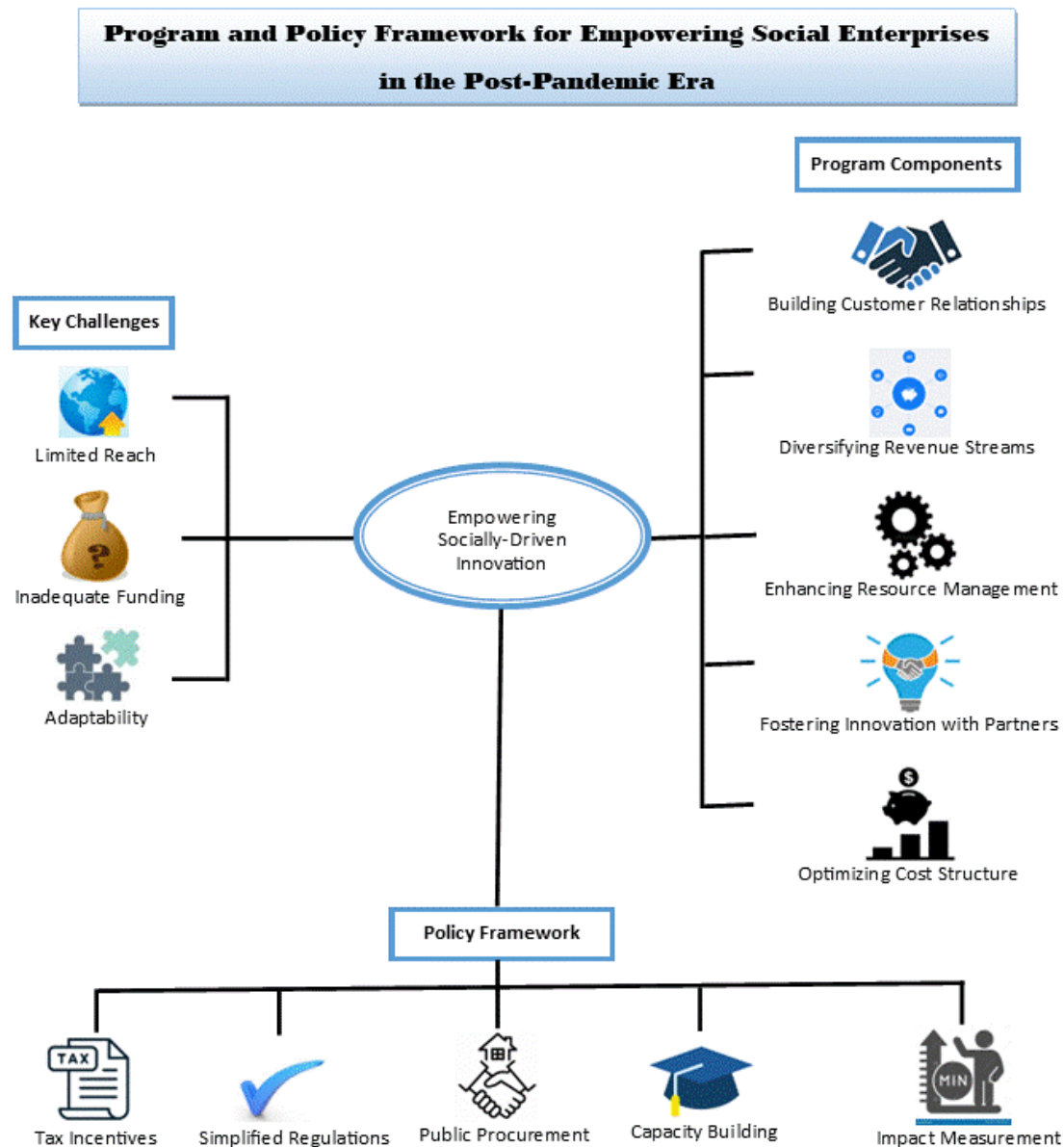


Figure 1: Proposed Program and Policy Framework for Empowering Social Enterprise in the Post-Pandemic Era.

3.7. Key Challenges

The framework begins by identifying the significant challenges that hinder the growth and sustainability of social enterprises. First, **limited reach and scalability**, social enterprises often operate within localized markets and face difficulties expanding due to limited resources, weak brand visibility and constrained distribution channels. Second, **inadequate funding and support**, access to finance remains a critical challenge, as traditional investors prioritize financial returns over social impact. Traditional lenders, on the other hand, might perceive them as risky due to their dual focus on

social impact and profit. Additionally, limited access to mentorship, training, and business development services restricts their growth. Lastly, **adaptability to changing environments**, rapid changes in market conditions, consumer behavior, and external shocks (e.g., pandemic) require agility. However, many social enterprises lack the capacity and resources to adapt effectively.

3.8. Program Components

To address the challenges, the framework proposes five (5) strategic program components. Each component is designed with practical

applications to strengthen specific dimensions of social enterprise operations. First, a program that **Builds Customer Relationships** which focuses on enhancing customer engagement through the adoption of digital tools such as customer relationship management systems, chatbot and cloud computing technology. Training in digital marketing and personalized communication strategies enables social enterprises to expand their reach and build stronger, long-term customer relationships. Second, **Diversifying Revenue Streams** by exploring alternative income sources beyond traditional product-based sales. This includes entering new markets, developing service-based offerings, and forming strategic partnerships for bundled services. Third, **Enhancing Resource Management** that promotes efficient utilization of financial, human and material resources. It includes access to digital-procurement platforms, virtual supplier networks, and training in flexible talent management practices such as remote work, cross-training, and workforce reskilling. Fourth, **Fostering Innovation with Partners** to strengthen co-creation initiatives involving communities, stakeholders, and partner organizations. The use of crowdsourcing platforms, innovation hubs, and digital collaboration tools enables knowledge sharing and the development of context-responsive solutions. Lastly, **Optimizing Cost Structures** through resource-sharing and adoption of energy-efficient technologies. Equipping with tools that analyze expenditure, improve allocation, and sustain operation without compromising social impact also improves cost efficiency.

3.9. Policy Framework

Complementing the program components is a robust policy framework that creates an enabling ecosystem for social enterprises. This policy framework addresses systematic challenges and facilitates long-term sustainability.

Tax Incentives from government can provide tax relief and fiscal benefits that encourage investment in social enterprises and support their financial growth. **Simplified Regulations** like streamlined business regulations and licensing processes reduce administrative burden, allowing social enterprises to focus on core operations. **Public Procurement Access** that enables social enterprises to participate in government procurement programs provides stable revenue streams and legitimizes their role in delivering public goods and services. Furthermore, **Capacity Building Support** through training, workshops, and mentorship programs strengthens

entrepreneurial competencies and organizational capacity. Lastly, an **Impact Measurement Framework** that measures social and financial performance must be established. It ensures accountability, enhances transparency, and attracts investors and stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the framework lies in the dynamic interaction among its three core components. The identified challenges serve as the foundation for designing targeted program interventions, while policy framework provides the institutional environment necessary for these programs to succeed.

Program components directly enhance the operational capabilities of social enterprises, while policy framework removes systematic constraints and creates opportunities for growth. Together, they form a mutually reinforcing system that enables social enterprises to innovate, scale, and sustain their impact.

Ultimately, this integrated approach leads to the realization of the framework's central goal - empowering socially driven innovation, where social enterprises become adoptive, resilient, and impactful contributors to inclusive and sustainable development.

4. CONCLUSION

Social enterprises play a vital role in addressing socio-economic challenges while promoting sustainable development. Despite facing limitations in funding, scalability, and adaptability, structured programs such as Building Customer Relationships, Diversifying Revenue Streams, Enhancing Resource Management, Fostering Innovation with Partners, and Optimizing Cost Structures, equip social enterprises with the tools and strategies to overcome these challenges and achieve sustainable growth. While policy frameworks such as Tax Incentives, Simplified Regulations, Public Procurement opportunities, Capacity Building support, and Impact Measurement, create a supportive ecosystem that reduces administrative burdens, unlocks funding avenues, and ensures transparency and accountability.

The proposed framework demonstrates that integrating business innovation strategies with supportive public policies can create a thriving ecosystem for social enterprises. This enables them to scale impact, strengthen communities, and contribute to inclusive growth.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Lastly, the following recommendations were

derived based on the findings:**For Social Enterprises:**

1. Invest in e-commerce platforms, digital marketing tools, and cloud-based solutions to improve customer engagement, access data, and streamline operations.
2. Explore new markets using data analytics, build partnerships for bundled services, and consider project-based offerings to complement core product lines.
3. Implement innovative marketing strategies like personalized experiences and social media engagement to build stronger customer loyalty.
4. Utilize online platforms for procurement, explore virtual networking events to find suppliers, and adopt flexible talent management practices (remote work, cross-training) to optimize resource utilization.
5. Encourage co-creation of solutions with communities through crowdsourcing platforms, collaborate with experts for business model development, and leverage

social media for community engagement.

6. Implement resource sharing with other social enterprises, invest in energy-efficient technologies, and utilize data analytics for cost-saving strategies and data-driven resource allocation.

For Policymakers:

1. Enact tax incentives for social enterprises to encourage investment and growth.
2. Simplify regulations and licensing processes to reduce administrative burdens for social enterprises.
3. Increase opportunities for social enterprises to participate in government procurement processes to generate stable revenue streams.
4. Provide funding and resources for training workshops and mentorship programs to enhance social enterprise skills and knowledge.
5. Develop standardized frameworks for measuring social impact alongside financial performance to ensure transparency and attract further support.

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