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Sustained Social Entrepreneurship: The Moderating Roles of Prior Experience and Networking Ability

Happiness Ozioma Obi-Anike [1], Chikodili Nkiruka Okafor [1], Cross Ogohi Daniel [2], Ifeoma Joanes Onodugo [1], Wilfred I. Ukpere [3,*] and Ben Etim Udoh [1]

[1] Department of Management, Faculty of Business Administration, Enugu Campus, University of Nigeria, Nsukka 410001, Nigeria
[2] Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja 900001, Nigeria
[3] Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, School of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg 2006, South Africa
* Correspondence: wiukpere@uj.ac.za

Abstract: The intention to set up social ventures remains an unpopular choice for intending entrepreneurs due to its obvious limitations of resource constraints. Yet it remains a vital means of making social goods available to disadvantaged people, especially in developing countries. Our study aims to investigate how prior experience and networking ability interacts with empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support to induce social entrepreneurial intentions in budding entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Using simultaneous linear regression, we analyzed data from a collection of 315 respondents enrolled in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)—a one-year mandatory national service scheme for graduates of higher institutions who are on the verge of making critical career choices. Our findings show that the main effects were statistically significant, while networking ability, more than prior experience, moderated the main effects. Conclusively, budding entrepreneurs need to hone their networking skills in order to exploit their social networks and complement the benefits of prior experiences as they contemplate social entrepreneurship. Future investigations can focus on determining how other environmental factors such as government/institutional support, technological adoption, and infrastructure would affect social entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: networking ability; prior experience; social entrepreneurship intentions; moral obligation; self-efficacy; NYSC

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1. Introduction

Various nations of the world still grapple with socioeconomic problems such as pollution, poverty, high mortality, low GDP, unemployment, child labor, environmental hazards, plagues, wars, and so on. These problems are not just peculiar to low-income countries and developing economies; even developed nations and high-income economies still face these challenges [1–3]. Attempts have been made to solve these problems by setting up formal institutions aimed at providing solutions and empowering the populace to pursue solutions and innovate at different levels of engagement [4–7], but despite these attempts, there seems to be so much more left undone, such that these formal institutional frameworks charged with the responsibility of improving the standards of living of citizens and engendering opportunities for economic advancements are becoming overburdened [1,8]. At the individual level, African governments have initiated various financial empowerment programs aimed at incentivizing its citizenry to pursue self-sufficiency and actualization by providing solutions to these endemic problems in terms of goods and services for commercial purposes. Such programs, especially in Nigeria, thrive on capitalist ideals, which makes the goods and services emanating from those entrepreneurial ventures quite irksome for socially disadvantaged and marginalized individuals in the society to access or

afford [9,10]. Socially disadvantaged and marginalized persons are those who are unable to access basic goods and services due to their high prices as offered by purely commercial business outlets.

There is therefore the need to socially innovate in order to cater for these excluded members of the society at little or no cost. Unfortunately, the returns on social entrepreneurship are not enough to stimulate the desire to create solutions for the sole purpose meeting people's needs. It goes to say that the desire to venture into social entrepreneurship may stem from other psychosocial factors other than economic incentives [11]. We therefore suggest, in line with the literature, that empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support are possible determinants of social entrepreneurial intentions where commercial and formal institutions are incapable of providing for society's needs at affordable cost [12,13]. While other determinants of SEI abound, our choice of these subjective norms stem from the fact that beyond the availability of financial, structural, and environmental resources, entrepreneurs are likely to seek personal affirmation and the approval of others in their quest to pursue entrepreneurial intentions [12].

While commercial entrepreneurship intention has received extensive attention and the antecedents thereof investigated in extant literature [14–17], not very much has been done empirically to ascertain subjective norms that could predicate the social entrepreneurship intentions. Although the determinants of SEIs have been examined among students [18], nonprofit agencies [19], universities [20], pre-service teachers [6], members of incubator programs [1], and budding entrepreneurs [21], there remains a need to examine these determinants of SEI in a developing context as suggested by Igwe et al. [21], since most of these studies were done in developed contexts. This is necessary because environmental conditions for entrepreneurial proclivities have been found to play a crucial role in determining the choices of individuals intending to venture into entrepreneurship [22]. Moreover, whereas the moderating influences of empathy [21,23], self-efficacy [12], sample composition and national economic stage [11], moral obligation [24], education [25], and perceived social support [20] have been studied, networking ability has not been investigated as a moderator although it was examined as a predictor [21]. We suggest that both prior experience of the entrepreneur and networking ability with other actors in one's social network can provide inimitable resources that would spur the individual into honing social entrepreneurial ambitions. Hockerts [13] shows that experiences garnered from working with similar social firms as well as participating in community service would provide the technical skills and acumen needed to facilitate prosocial behaviors such as social entrepreneurship; while Ernst [26] also revealed that prior knowledge about the nature, causes, and solutions to social problems would positively impact social entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions. Networking ability enables the budding social entrepreneur to take advantage of the financial and social resources embedded in his/her social network in order to develop new products and services that perhaps would solve social problems in the society [27,28]. Based on these theoretical allusions, we aim to determine which of prior experience or networking affects social entrepreneurship intentions more in a developing context.

We move away from the already extensively used Theory of Planned Behavior by Icek Adjen and adopt the Social Impact Theory by Bibb Latané to validate our studies. According to Latané and Wolf [29], an individual's level of social impact depends on how the psychosocial forces unique to the individual are employed for the service of others. The theory also suggests that behavioral intentions and actions are products of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences created from continuous interactions with the environment and with members of one's social circle. It therefore implies that one's social network is as important as the individual is willing to engage it; and the level of engagements may interact with the individual's intentions to determine the entrepreneurial choices that would be made in the future. Therefore, the essence of this work is to determine the moderating influence of prior experience and networking ability on their effects of empathy,

moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support on social entrepreneurial intentions of budding entrepreneurs in the southeast of Nigeria.

The degree to which social entrepreneurship would thrive depends on the contextual characteristics within which it is honed. For Nigeria and the southeast in particular, social entrepreneurship has faced many challenges which has limited its pervasiveness. First, there is a lack of entrepreneurship education for budding entrepreneurs. Although education remains the most effective means of encouraging social entrepreneurship within the economy, there is little or no effort to incorporate practical and contemporary entrepreneurship education in schools. It seems that in-depth entrepreneurship education is limited to management institutions and business schools. Second, the lack of financial aid has always been an impeding factor to the honing of SEIs in Nigeria. Lenders are tardy about providing loan services for non-capitalist or non-mercantilist business venturing. As a result, budding social entrepreneurs are left to bear the complete burden of raising financial capital to start their business. Other challenges include shortage of volunteers and the absence of government support [30]. We believe that by looking beyond the availability of capital and government support, budding social entrepreneurs can facilitate social entrepreneurship through other personal and subjective characteristics or factors such as personal experience and networking ability.

The subsequent sections in this work examine the conceptual underpinnings of the variables under study, the hypotheses development, methods and analysis, results and discussions, the theoretical and managerial implications, and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to know and understand how other people feel, how they think, their state of mind, and the reason why they think and act the way that they do. It is that ability not just to feel what they feel, but also to feel with them and show a deep sense of care and concern for their plight or condition [31,32]. There are three components of empathy: cognitive empathy—the ability to create an imagination of what another person feels or thinks; affective empathy—a response to the display of emotions of another person through the body movements, facial expressions, vocal prosodies, general body language, and a response to any other stimuli generated by these emotions, and motor empathy—also known as the chameleon effect, typically known as unconscious mimicry, where individuals instantly but abstractedly copy the expressions of other people [33,34].

2.2. Moral Obligation

Moral obligation (MO) refers to the degree to which individuals feel that the society owes a duty to socially disadvantaged groups in the society to provide basic social amenities that could improve their lives. MO is "the subjective sense of responsibility one holds to act morally when encountering an ethical situation" [35]. MO can be classified as absolute MO or significant moral reason [36,37]. Absolute MO occurs when there is no reason whatsoever not to fulfill a MO. Failure to fulfill an absolute MO may be very fatal for both the individual and other persons who the action would affect. In significant moral reason, people are obligated to do "not what people invariably must do, but what they have significant moral reason to do" [36]. This means that actions are expedited based on a minimum moral requirement which is identified as a reasonable justification for decisions to be made.

2.3. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy (SE) refers to the belief that people have in their ability to influence or regulate the events that impact their lives in one way or another [24]. There are four main sources of SE which are: mastery experiences, social modeling or vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional arousal [38]. Mastery experience is SE based on a track record of successes over a period of time which generates the resilience, character, gumption,

and endurance needed to solve future problems [39]. Social modeling refers to SE inspired by models or leaders. Role models can shape the behaviors, relationships, and attitudes of people that model their lives after them [40]. Social persuasion is the process of assessing the requirements needed to achieve a task. Emotional arousal connotes the physical sensation or feelings that one may experience during the performance of tasks [38,41].

2.4. Social Support

Social support (SS) is "the process by which individuals manage the psychological and material resources available through their social networks to enhance their coping with stressful events, meet their social needs, and achieve their goals" [42]. SS is the notion and reality that one is catered for, has available help and assistance from other persons, and is an integral part of a supportive social system [13]. Two main types of SS exist in literature: structural support and functional support. Structural support refers to the extent to which one's relationships are interconnected and interdependent on each other [43]. They include marriage relationships, relationships with family and kin, workplace relationships, and social connections with cultural, religious, and social organizations. Functional support is the actual practical assistance which people receive from their social networks especially in time of need, such as financial help, sense of belonging, emotional connection, words of encouragement, sense of community, transcendence, care giving, and so on [44].

2.5. Prior Experience

Prior experience (PE) refers to the knowledge, abilities, and skills that one garners as a result of previously working or partnering with a social organization [15]. It also implies one's previous work history occupying diverse job positions as a paid or volunteer staff in one or many social firms. Donaldson et al. [45] suggest that prior experiences can be authentic, simulated, or inauthentic. Authentic experiences are those experiences gotten from working in real organizations as employees who solve real life problems in order to achieve organizational objectives. Simulated experiences are those experiences gotten from actively participating in clubs and groups in colleges or universities that simulate and solve real life business problems. Inauthentic experiences are those experiences gotten from formal education or schooling. Individuals with prior experience in an industry are likely to have a thoroughgoing understanding of the customers, industry realities, and the opportunities for entrepreneurship yet unharnessed in the industry [17,46].

2.6. Networking Ability

Networking ability (NA) is the capacity and aptitude for consistently interacting and interfacing with people in order to exchange vital information, enhance growth and development in one's endeavor, and sustain relationships that may become very vital for the future [47]. It is the ability to develop long-term trusting relationships, interact with others effectively, negotiate well, communicate effectively, and maintain a personal network of close contacts [12]. NA is not necessarily an innate trait or characteristic; rather, it is an asset that enables people to receive what they need from others and also give to others that which they require. In fact, the need for NA lies in the fact that social networks are multifaceted developments that link and filter information, conferring a good sense of identity, distribute resources, as well as shape the behavior of those that pay attention to them [48].

2.7. Social Entrepreneurship Intentions

Social entrepreneurship has in fact been defined as the "creation of viable socioeconomic structures, relations, institutions, organizations and practices that yield and sustain social benefits" [49]. Social entrepreneurs are those who innovatively create and deliver products and services to socially disadvantaged and marginalized members of the society. Social entrepreneurs possess the same characteristics of commercial entrepreneurs, except for the profit motive. Rather than set up businesses majorly for making profits, social

entrepreneurs venture into business mainly for philanthropy [50]. Social entrepreneurship intention (SEI) is the ability of individuals to identify, assess, and take advantage of opportunities in the environment for the purpose of adding value to the people by solving glaring long-term needs of the society and not primarily for the purpose of making profits. Such social needs include the provision of food, clothing, shelter, water, health, and education [51]. SEI is the likelihood of people engaging in the launching of organizations that are set up to solve social problems through the generation of preliminary ideas which they plan on expediting in the future. Such intentions can be carried out by setting up different kinds of organizations which may vary in terms of vision, beliefs, size, and goals [52].

2.8. Empathy and SEIs

According to Decety and Yoder [32], the quest for social justice is accounted for by empathy. Surprisingly, however, their findings showed that emotional empathy alone had no correlation to having sensitivity to the plight of other people. Instead, sensitivity towards the enforcement of justice for other people was predicated by the variegated levels of cognitive empathy and empathic concern. This implies that merely feeling concerned for the socially disadvantaged and marginalized people is not enough to engender ambitious plans to help them. Moreover, extreme cases of emotional empathy may lead to prejudices, thereby threatening the principles of justice administration [53], while extreme cases of cognitive empathy may lay undue emphasis on the rationalization of social goods at the expense of equity. However, a balanced mix of cognitive and emotional empathy would stimulate the required ingenuity accompanied by compassion, which are needed to preempt successful social actions and behaviors. In fact, sensitivity for justice should be accompanied by affective responses which propel one to action [31,32]. Therefore, our study suggests that the extent to which social entrepreneurship would be considered could be determined by the extent that individuals feel for and feel as others feel. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed as shown in Figure 1:

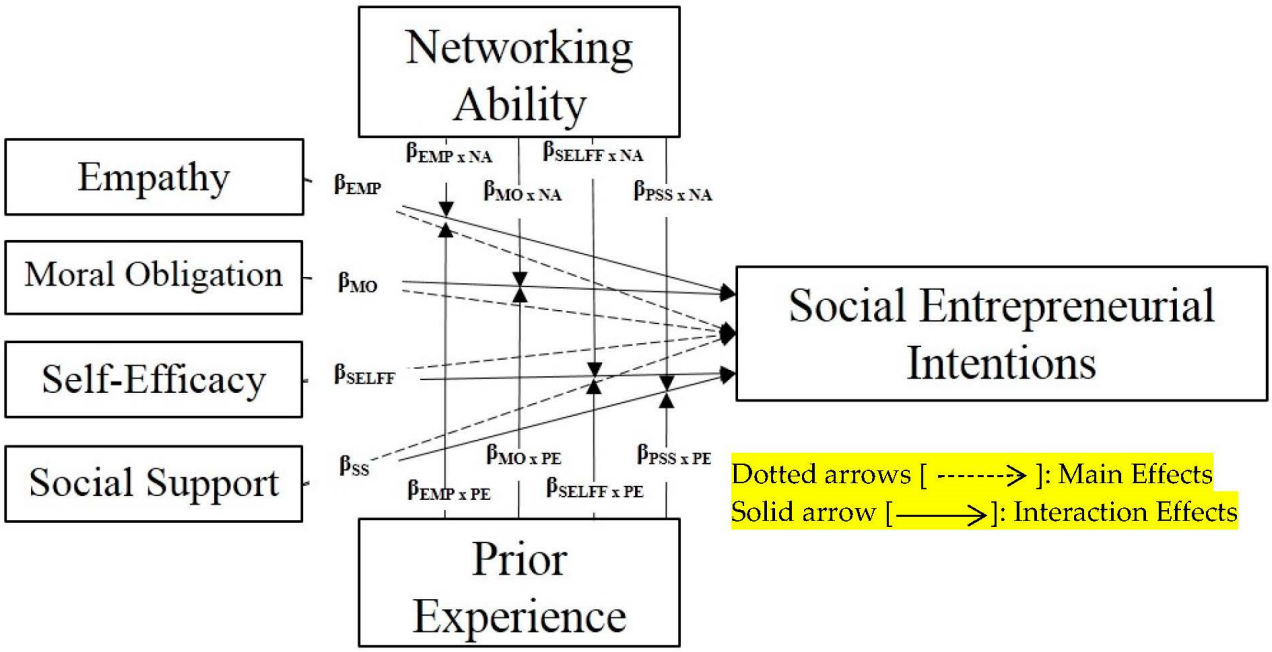

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

H_1: *High levels of empathy will lead to SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

2.9. MO and SEIs

The extent to which people are inclined to make ethical decisions is influenced by the extent to which they believe that the decision is morally right [54]. Beck and Ajzen [55] found that the intention to act morally is predicated by MO. Previous research shows that a cardinal implication of MO is that individuals would take responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions and not leave anything to time, probability, or relativism [12,23]. This would enable them to prepare and set everything in place to ensure the smooth implementation of whatever decisions they have made. However, we further opine that once the issue of moral acceptance and the means of implementing the decision are settled, then commonsense morality requires that the right action should be taken which will yield the most advantage not only to the individual, but also to all other parties. Otherwise, the nonperformance of the action may showcase the individual as one who is morally bankrupt and lacks discretion [13]. Moreover, the term 'obligation' may be viewed as bearing an undertone of the combination of sanctions/repudiations meted out by society for nonperformance. If this implies that there is a moral disapproval by the society for nonperformance of MO, then our understanding of obligation is justified [36]. It is not strange for the society to frown at anyone who knows what he/she should do and have the means to do them but refuse to do them, or at least make plans to do them. Hence, the combination of ethical responsibility and social approval may increase the likelihood that individuals would deliberate social entrepreneurship especially where the need and the expectations for such 'gestures' are high. We therefore propose that:

H_2: *High levels of MO will lead to SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

2.10. SE and SEIs

Hechavarria et al. [56] asserted that intentions to start up entrepreneurial ventures are stimulated by motivation especially amongst nascent entrepreneurs. However, self-motivation is predicated on the degree of confidence one has as a result of past successes, the influence of role models, social persuasion, and emotional arousal. Hence, KonaklI [6] found that effort, initiative, and persistence are individual traits that determine the self-confidence characteristic of people with social entrepreneurial acumen. Boyd and Vozikis [57] suggested that the extent to which individuals would consider social entrepreneurship as a career path would depend largely on the degree of self-efficacy during the early phase of their career-development. Shinnar et al. [58] also found an association between entrepreneurial SE and entrepreneurial intentions with the relationship higher for males than for females. We therefore propose that:

H_3: *High levels of self-efficacy will lead to SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

2.11. SS and SEIs

There is no doubt that the contexts within which budding entrepreneurs exist and function may influence their entrepreneurial intentions [59,60]. Stephan et al. [59] found that both formal and informal support systems play active roles in providing the resources with which SEIs are 'forged'. However, informal support (support from family, friends, and acquaintances) could provide inimitable resources that have far reaching effects on entrepreneurial intent than formal (government) support [12,61]. In fact, Greve and Salaff [62] found that an entrepreneur's social network plays different roles at each stage of the entrepreneurial journey, but most especially at the planning stage. Given that social entrepreneurship entails the identification and exploitation of opportunities which have been satisfactorily ignored by conventional entrepreneurs due to lack of profit potential and therefore are unfamiliar terrains, intending entrepreneurs may likely investigate more, hold frequent interactive sessions, and seek validation from their social circle about the social need to be satisfied before commencing the business properly [51]. Klyver et al. [14] suggested that emotional support provided by family, friends, and loved ones was highly

significant when entrepreneurial intent was being deliberated. This means that the more an entrepreneur receives SS, the more likely social entrepreneurial intent would be developed.

H_4: *High levels of social support will lead to SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

2.12. The Moderating Role of NA

The moderating influence of NA on the empathy-SEI relationship can be explained by the difference between sympathy and empathy. While sympathy is based on the premise that one is able to reflect and mirror the feelings and mind conditions of other people; to understand when others communicate their sentiments and dispositions to the individual [63–65], empathy requires more effort, in that the individual may or may not really have had shared experiences of what others are experiencing. Thus, where NA is high, there is a conscious attempt to psychologically position one's self in the shoes of others by interacting with them in order to understand their plight and be better positioned to help them.

H_5: *NA would moderate the influence of empathy on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

MO is simply the proclivity to do what is right for the sake of what is *right* and not just for the sake of what is *good*. Just because something is good may not necessarily mean that it is right. Although MO may be subjective and personal to the individual, its interaction with NA to influence SEIs suggest that society's interpretation of what is good and right could be important factor to consider. Social consensus has been identified as an ethical consideration necessary for MO to predicate the right actions [35,54]. Therefore, when NA is high, budding entrepreneurs are most likely to seek the approval of the society in order to determine which social goods are most direly needed and make tangible efforts to provide them.

H_6: *NA would moderate the influence of MO on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

Drnovsek et al. [66] suggests that the processes of starting an entrepreneurial venture may be influenced by self-efficacy. However, this influence is to the extent that intending entrepreneurs also have control over those other beliefs and goals which are informed by their interaction with other members of the society. High NA evidenced by interactions with members of the society may reinforce people's belief in their ability to achieve great feats by boosting their self-image, social persuasion, and self-evaluation, to the extent that they would consider solving the problems of people in their society [67,68]. As people interact with others, their self-worth is boosted, satisfaction levels are increased, and intentions to purchase are improved [66]. It is therefore suggested that:

H_7: *NA would moderate the influence of SE on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

We also suggest that the potential for SS to facilitate SEIs could be burgeoned by the quality of social actors in a social network and the promptness with which they respond to the individual as a result of his/her NA. Since SS is needed the most at the planning stages of the entrepreneurial journey, it follows that developing long-term trusting relationships with people through high negotiation and interacting abilities would provide veritable resources that would facilitate SEIs [14]. The following hypothesis is formulated as shown in Figure 1:

H_8: *NA would moderate the influence of SS on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

2.13. The Moderating Role of Prior Experience

The PE of intending entrepreneurs may play a prodigious role in determining the intentions to set up a social enterprise [15,69]. More than this, we suggest that prior experience may interact with empathy to impact SEIs. According to Packard and Burnham [16], empathy is "a rational imagination process, intentional and knowledge-based". The implication is that where prior experience is high, empathetic responses of individuals may be

drawn from the knowledge and skills garnered from previous experiences. These resources, howbeit latent, may form the basis upon which empathetic concerns find expression, and may increase the impetus with which SEIs are formulated and pursued in line with the social needs of the society. Thus:

H_9: *PE would moderate the influence of empathy on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

For several reasons, budding entrepreneurs my feel morally obligated to invest into the society by providing social goods at little or no cost [21,70]. People with high MO believe that they are indebted to their society and should utilize the resources at their disposal to improve the lives of others [71]. It follows that where PE is high, the budding entrepreneur may have a more significant moral reason to pursue social entrepreneurship because there is the sense that those knowledge, skills, attitudes, and information acquired from previous experiences should be used to benefit the society.

H_{10}: *PE would moderate the influence of MO on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

Although self-efficacy provides the required confidence and conviction with which to hone SEIs, there is the likelihood that the ingenuity, mastery, and resourcefulness with which the social entrepreneurship idea would be developed may depend on how high or low PE on such an idea is. In fact, self-efficacy is burgeoned by the quality of the previous mastery experiences that one has from providing solutions to social needs [13,38]. High levels of self-efficacy as a result of interactions with one's PEs are necessary because of the non-mercantilist nature of social enterprises, their high risk of failure, and the high levels of tenacity and doggedness required to run such firms [45]. It follows that:

H_{11}: *PE would moderate the influence of self-efficacy on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

Humans thrive on social interactions and support which could affect their entrepreneurial choices [72,73]. Moreover, there is no doubt that prior experiences also stem from previous social interactions and relationships developed in previous jobs working with social firms [74,75]. It follows that individuals may resort to such relationships for support when contemplating entrepreneurial intentions; and as a result, would be more inclined to pursue social entrepreneurial goals in line with the support received from such previous relationships. The following hypothesis is proposed as shown in Figure 1:

H_{12}: *PE would moderate the influence of SS on SEIs among budding entrepreneurs.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

In this study, questionnaires were administered to corps members who embarked on a National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) program for a period of one year in Nigeria, which spanned between 2019 and 2020. This NYSC program was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to encourage fresh graduates in nation-building and skill development. Corps members are usually encouraged to participate in Community Development Service (CDS) to facilitate utilization of this unique skillset, innovativeness, and creativity by embarking on problem identification within community in which they are posted to and to initiate projects in solving the identified social problems. By studying corps members across the country, we were able to investigate young graduates who in turn are budding entrepreneurs. Previous empirical studies used individuals of school leaving age at the tertiary level [76,77] and students who enrolled in post-graduate programs [13]. However, the justification for the choice of corps members is in line with the suggestion of Boyd and Vozikis [57] who established that such individuals are seen as potential entrepreneurs since they were getting close to making significant career decisions.

Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) is an essential component of the NYSC orientation programs. SAED is positioned as a means of equipping young Nigerian graduates with skills that will make them employable as well as fit to employ others. SAED's functions include, but are not limited to, sensitizing young graduates

to the need of skill acquisition and entrepreneurial development in order to make them self-sufficient rather than relying on the government, and making corps members aware of the importance of obtaining a skill.

This study was conducted in 2019 using those in active service year. The survey was administered to the corps members during a statewide meeting of SAED members in the south-east state of Ebonyi. In order to facilitate quality response, the research members explained the purpose of the study. In this study, a total of 425 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to corps members, of which 315 valid responses representing (74%) of the questionnaire distributed were duly completed; some were not returned due to respondents' unavailability. Table 1 shows the respondent characteristics used for the study with their associated means and standard deviation.

Table 1. Participant profile.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Social entrepreneurship training	None	85	27%	1.726	1.542
	1–3	195	62%		
	4–6	30	9.5%		
	7 and above	5	1.6%		
Gender	Male	170	54.0%	1.556	0.491
	Female	136	43.2%		
Religion	Non-religious	15	4.8%	2.438	0.556
	Islam	123	39.0%		
	Christianity	134	42.5%		
Economic status	Not comfortable at all (Very poor)	8	2.5%	3.2	0.839
	Not comfortable (Poor)	30	9.5%		
	Fair (Average)	192	61.0%		
	Fairly comfortable (Rich)	43	13.7%		
	Very comfortable (Very rich)	32	10.2%		
Age distribution	20.0	1	0.3%	26.87	2.124
	21.0	1	0.3%		
	22.0	5	1.6%		
	23.0	15	4.8%		
	24.0	22	7.0%		
	25.0	25	7.9%		
	26.0	37	11.7%		
	26.9	90	28.6%		
	27.0	26	8.3%		
	28.0	21	6.7%		
	29.0	31	9.8%		
	30.0	32	10.2%		
	31.0	5	1.6%		
	32.0	2	0.6%		
	33.0	2	0.6%		
Higher institution attended	Other higher institutions	15	4.8%	2.687	0.547
	Polytechnic	63	20.0%		
	University	219	69.5%		

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; n = 315.

3.2. Measures

The items used in this current research were drawn from a previous study; 5-point Likert scales format which range from "strongly agree" to strongly disagree" were utilized for all the constructs except the control variables

3.2.1. Empathy

A social entrepreneurial study conducted by Mair and Noboa [51] proposed empathy as a nexus. Within the context of this study, empathy is an emotional response that depicts concern and compassion which is a product of interaction with someone in need [78]. In order to measure empathy, three items scales were applied using a 5-point Likert scale. Two sample items were "When thinking about socially disadvantaged people, I try to put myself in their shoes" and "Seeing socially disadvantaged people triggers an emotional response in me", gleaned from the work of Hockerts [13].

3.2.2. Moral Obligation

Koe, Nga, and Shamuganathan [52] posit that social entrepreneurs are motivated by a strong sense of commitment toward satisfying the fundamental needs of human beings and in most cases possess a high moral consciousness. In the course of measuring moral obligation, four items scales were employed with the aid of 5-point Likert scale. Sample items used include "It is an ethical responsibility to help people less fortunate than ourselves" and "We are morally obliged to help socially disadvantaged people; adopted from the work of Ip, Wu, Liu, and Liang [79].

3.2.3. Self-Efficacy

Several studies considered self-efficacy as a good construct of social entrepreneurial intentions [6,21,23]. Similarly, Bandura [80] proposes a self-efficacy measure linked to social entrepreneurship milieu. For this study, three items scales were applied using a 5-point Likert scale in order to measure self-efficacy. Of the three items scale, two sample items adopted from the study of Bandura were "I am convinced that I personally can make a contribution to address societal challenges if I put my mind to it" and "I could figure out a way to help solve the problems that society faces.

3.2.4. Perceived Social Support

Mair and Noboa [51] in their model of social entrepreneur identified social support as one of the precursors of SEI. Similarly, this study measured perceived social support with three items scales applying a 5-point Likert scale. These include but are not limited to "People would support me if I wanted to start an organization to help socially marginalized people" and "If I planned to address a significant societal problem people would back me up". The items were adopted from the work of Hockerts [12].

3.2.5. Social Entrepreneurial Intentions

Empirical research on entrepreneurial intention has made substantial progress by attempting to enhance understanding of the underlying foundational assumptions [81–83]. Consequently, in order to measure social entrepreneurial intensions, three items scales were applied using a 5-point Likert scale developed in the adaptation of previously used entrepreneurial intentions scales [84]. Two sample items were "I expect that at some point in the future I will be involved in launching an organization that aims to solve social problems" and "I have a preliminary idea for a social enterprise on which I plan to act in the future".

3.3. Moderating Variables

This study also included two moderating variables which are networking ability and prior experience.

3.3.1. Networking Ability

In examining career-related outcomes, networking ability influence predicted career satisfaction. Hence, to measure networking ability, five items scales were applied using a 5-point Likert scale. Two sample items were "I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others" and "I am good at building relationships with influential people at work", adopted from the work of Ferris et al. [85].

3.3.2. Prior Experience

In order to measure prior experience, three items scales were applied using a 5-point Likert Scale. Two sample items were "I have some experience working with social problems" and "I have volunteered or otherwise worked with social organizations", adopted from the work of Hockert [13].

3.4. Control Variables

The control variables used for this study were social entrepreneurship training, gender, religion, economic status, age distribution, and educational qualifications. These variables were used in similar studies as extraneous variables that affect SEIs when other antecedent variables are held constant [12,13,21,23].

3.5. Validity Check

This study employed confirmatory factor analysis of the construct (EMP, MO, SELFF, PSS, SEI, NA, and PE) and their respective covariances in other to examine construct validity. The result of the validity check showed that the model is fit. The fit of this model estimates the factor loadings of the items on their specific construct which include: (X^2 (CMIN/DF = 1.589)); Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.940; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.977; Tucker-Lewis's index (TLI) = 0.972; Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI) = 0.977; Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR) = 0.016; Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.914; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.888; and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.043. Hence, the measurement model attained the threshold criteria regarding the fitness of models and is therefore acceptable as proposed by Hu and Bentler [72]. To eliminate common method bias, we conducted the Harman's Test, for which the score was 0.29, while the Common Latent Factor indicated a score of 0.16. As can be seen in Table 2, all factor loadings of the retained items vary in strength, but they all exceed 0.5, showing that they are within the required threshold [14].

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, rotated factor matrix, and reliability indicators.

			Factor								
	Mean	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**CR**	**AVE**
1. Empathy										0.90	0.76
EMP1	4.47	0.64	0.86								
EMP2	4.24	0.68	0.91								
EMP3	3.93	0.68	0.83								
2.Moral Obligation										0.91	0.71
MO1	4.26	0.67		0.91							
MO2	4.67	0.61		0.74							
MO3	4.02	0.70		0.89							
MO4	3.60	0.73		0.82							

Table 2. *Cont.*

			Factor								
	Mean	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**CR**	**AVE**
3. Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy										0.90	0.74
SE1	4.02	0.66			0.84						
SE2	4.57	0.61			0.85						
SE3	4.30	0.65			0.90						
4. Perceived Social Support 0										0.92	0.78
SS1	3.79	0.74				0.92					
SS2	3.51	0.73				0.87					
SS3	4.08	0.69				0.86					
5. Social Entrepreneurial Intent										0.90	0.75
SEI1	3.67	0.66					0.84				
SEI2	4.21	0.76					0.89				
SEI3	3.37	0.77					0.87				
6. Networking Ability										0.94	0.75
NA1	4.07	0.79						0.91			
NA2	3.21	0.75						0.90			
NA3	3.43	0.77						0.88			
NA4	4.10	0.88						0.78			
NA5	3.74	0.82						0.83			
7. Prior Experience										0.94	0.84
PE1	3.51	0.74							0.90		
PE2	4.03	0.93							0.93		
PE3	3.25	0.80							0.93		

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

4. Results

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and inter-correlations. A careful examination of the table shows that the correlation among predictors (empathy and moral obligation = 0.251; empathy and self-efficacy = 0.241; empathy and social support = 0.11) is not high, hence, signaling the absence of multicollinearity. The correlation between measures and dimensions are positive and statistically significant. First, the result indicates a positive and significant relationship between social entrepreneurial intention and empathy ($r = 0.164$, $p < 0.001$); Second, the result also shows a positive and significant relationship between social entrepreneurial intention and moral obligation ($r = 0.230$, $p < 0.001$); Third, the result reveals a positive and significant relationship between social entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy ($r = 0.310$, $p < 0.001$). Fourth, the result indicates a positive and significant relationship between social entrepreneurial intention and social support ($r = 0.189$, $p < 0.001$). In the same vein, the relationships between study measures (empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support) and moderating variables (networking ability and prior experiences) are positively and statistically significant.

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation, and inter-item correlation.

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Trainings (1)	1.73	1.54	1												
Gender (2)	1.57	0.49	−0.120 *	1											
Religion (3)	2.44	0.56	0.068	−0.036	1										
EcoStat (4)	3.2	0.84	0.111 *	0.013	−0.141 *	1									
Age (5)	26.87	2.12	0.027	−0.128 *	−0.003	−0.035	1								
InstAttend (6)	2.69	0.55	−0.005	−0.025	−0.049	0.019	−0.047	1							
Empathy (7)	10.44	2.65	0.121 *	−0.013	−0.169 **	−0.034	0.009	0.041	1						
Moral Obligation (8)	12.64	2.35	0.090	−0.008	−0.041	−0.021	0.062	−0.078	0.251 **	1					
Self−Efficacy (9)	16.22	2.68	0.046	−0.009	−0.098	0.059	0.083	−0.031	0.241 **	0.348 **	1				
Perceived Social Support (10)	12.68	2.03	0.136 *	−0.096	−0.024	0.000	0.130 *	−0.062	0.110	0.184 **	0.315 **	1			
PE (11)	11.17	2.22	0.268 **	−0.173 **	−0.024	0.029	0.103	0.047	0.279 **	0.156 **	0.169 **	0.257 **	1		
Networking Ability (12)	10.87	2.41	0.238 **	−0.130 *	0.026	0.058	0.085	−0.086	0.157 **	0.234 **	0.291 **	0.332 **	0.291 **	1	
Social Entrepreneurial Intentions (13)	1.73	1.54	0.043	−0.060	−0.117 *	0.052	0.021	0.025	0.164 **	0.230 **	0.310 **	0.189 **	0.165 **	0.268 **	1

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Stepwise regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study. H_1 stated that there was a positive effect of MO on SEI. Model 2 in Table 4 shows was a statistically positive significant effect of Moral Obligation on SEIs ($\beta_{MO} = 0.227$; p (0.000) < 0.05) after controlling for relevant demographics. The outcome of the tested from Model 3 shows that there was a statistically significant positive effect of Empathy on SEIs ($\beta_{EMP} = 0.146$; p (0.003) < 0.05). Model 4 shows a statistically significant positive effect of Self Efficacy on SEIs was also found ($\beta_{SELFF} = 0.300$; p (0.000) < 0.05). Model 5 shows a statistically significant positive significant effect of perceived social support on SEIs ($\beta_{PSS} = 0.183$; p (0.000) < 0.05). On the two-way interaction effects, Model 8 shows there was a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect of MO on SEIs ($\beta_{MO\times NA} = 0.032$; p (0.044) < 0.05). Model 9 shows a statistically significant moderating influence of PE on the effect of MO on SEIs ($\beta_{MO\times PE}$ =0.046; p (0.014) < 0.05). Model 10 reveals no moderating role of NA on the effect of empathy on SEIs ($\beta_{EMP\times NA} = -0.009$; p (0.320) > 0.05). Model 11 shows no statistically significant positive two−way interaction effect of EMP and PE on SEI ($\beta_{PE\times EMP} = 0.041$; $p > 0.05$). Model 12 shows a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect of self−efficacy on SEIs ($\beta_{SELFF\times NA} = 0.059$; p (0.000) < 0.05). Model 13 shows a statistically significant moderating role on the self−efficacy—SEIs link ($\beta_{SELFF\times PE} = 0.065$; p (0.034) < 0.05). Model 14 reveals no statistically significant positive moderating influence of NA on the effect PSS on SEIs ($\beta_{PSS\times NA} = 0.03$; p (0.002) > 0.05). In Model 15, results show no moderating role of PE on the effect PSS has on SEIs ($\beta_{PSS\times PE} = -0.009$; p (0.836) > 0.05).

On the three-way interaction effects, results from Model 16 show that both NA and PE have no moderating role on the effect of MO on SEIs ($\beta_{MO\times NA} = -0.023$; p (0.218) > 0.05); ($\beta_{MO\times PE} = 0.030$; p (0.138) > 0.05). Model 17 shows that NA had no moderating role on the effect empathy has on SEIs ($\beta_{EMP\times NA} = -0.002$; p (0.122) > 0.05); and PE had no statistically significant moderating role on the effect of empathy on SEIs ($\beta_{EMP\times PE} = 0.036$; p (0.026) > 0.05). Model 18 reveals a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect Self−Efficacy has on SEIs ($\beta_{SELFF\times NA} = 0.047$; p (0.00) < 0.05); while PE does not moderate the effect of Self-Efficacy on SEIs; ($\beta_{SELFF\times PE} = 0.042$; p (0.264) > 0.05). Finally, results from Model 19 show a statistically positive significant moderating role of NA on the effect PSS has on SEIs ($\beta_{PSS\times NA} = 0.033$; p (0.002) < 0.05), while PE does not moderate the effect of PSS on SEIs ($\beta_{PSS\times PE} = -0.017$; p (0.892) > 0.05).

Table 4. Results of simultaneous regression analysis.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Variables																	Three-way Interaction		
Controls:																			
Trainings	0.040	0.018	0.019	0.026	0.016	−0.020	0.001	−0.047	−0.011	−0.044	−0.012	−0.025	0.001	−0.030	−0.015	−0.062	−0.058	−0.039	−0.054
Gender	−0.058	−0.060	−0.058	−0.059	−0.045	−0.031	−0.038	−0.209	−0.184	−0.156	−0.178	−0.273	−0.248	−0.145	−0.118	−0.161	−0.105	−0.266	−0.093
Religion	−0.117 *	−0.104	−0.089	−0.088	−0.110	−0.119	−0.110	−0.226	−0.209	−0.341	−0.294	−0.277	−0.270	−0.377	−0.381	−0.358	−0.331	−0.258	−0.363
Economic Status	0.032	0.041	0.043	0.019	0.035	0.021	0.033	0.052	0.081	0.09	0.1	0.036	0.039	0.075	0.08	0.048	0.068	0.032	0.073
Age	0.014	0.001	0.013	−0.011	−0.007	−0.004	0.001	−0.012	−0.013	−0.006	−0.010	−0.021	−0.02	−0.019	−0.012	−0.021	−0.018	−0.026	−0.022
Institution	0.018	0.035	0.013	0.028	0.029	0.041	0.011	0.164	−0.051	0.125	−0.011	0.126	0.088	0.176	0.080	0.116	0.081	0.12	0.156
Predictors:																			
Moral Obligation (MO)		0.227 ***						−0.427	−0.302							−0.587 *			
Empathy (EMP)			0.146 *							−0.035	−0.284						−0.23		
Self−Efficacy (SE)				0.300 ***								−0.759 *	−0.378					−1.014 **	
Perceived Social Support (PSS)					0.183 **									−0.432	0.250				−0.330
Moderators:																			
Networking Ability (NA)						0.274 ***		−0.396		0.037		−0.652 **		−0.206		−0.257	0.153	−0.515 *	−0.255
Prior Experience (PE)							0.154 **		−0.654 *		−0.399		−0.749 *		0.202	−0.436	−0.382	−0.48	0.265
Interaction Effects:																			
$IntMO_{1NA}$ (MO ×NA)								0.032 **								−0.023			
$IntMO_{2PE}$ (MO × PE)									0.046 *							0.030			
$IntEMP_{1NA}$ (EMP × NA)										0.009							−0.002		
$IntEMP_{2PE}$ (EMP × PE)											0.041						0.036		
$IntSE_{2NA}$ (SE × NA)												0.059 **						0.047 *	
$IntSE_{2PE}$ (SE × PE)													0.065 *					0.042	
$IntPSS_{2NA}$ (PSS × NA)														0.03					0.033 *
$IntPSS_{2PE}$ (PSS × PE)															−0.009				−0.017

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.1$.

5. Discussion

This study sought to investigate the moderating role of networking ability and prior experience on the effect of empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and perceived social support on SEIs. On the main effects, there was a statistically significant positive effect of moral obligation on SEIs, thereby supporting our H_1. Warner et al. [86] found that high levels of MO improve the extent to which individuals are likely to help other people who are suffering. This means that as people feel increasingly indebted to assist socially disadvantaged individuals, they are likely to seek ingenious ways to proffer solutions to the problems that they face. There was also a statistically significant positive effect of empathy on SEIs. This result supports our H_2. Decety and Yoder [32] found that sensitivity to injustice for other people was affected by differences in the cognitive empathy and empathetic concern of individuals. Younis et al. [20] also found that empathy positively affected SEIs. This means that the differences in SEI levels among budding entrepreneurs would be accounted for by their level of empathy. In line with our H_3, a statistically significant positive effect of self-efficacy on SEIs was also found. This corresponds with the findings of Hockerts [12] who reported that SEIs were more affected by self-efficacy than MO, empathy, or SS. By implication, budding entrepreneurs who believe that they have what it takes to pursue entrepreneurship would be more inclined to garnering the needed resources to do so. Finally, there was also a statistically significant positive effect of perceived social support on SEIs. This result supports our H_4. SS provides the budding entrepreneur with veritable resources with which to pursue SEIs especially in environments where the institutional frameworks that should provide them are inefficient. Ip et al. [79] found that perceived social support was the most significant predictor of SEIs among social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, moral obligation, prior experience, and empathy in Hong Kong.

Regarding the two-way interaction effects, our study revealed that there was a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect of MO on SEIs, thus confirming our H_5. de Janasz and Forret [87] suggested that networking ability is very important for the development of mutually benefitting relationships that can be critical for the identification and securement of employment opportunities, the acquisition of relevant information, capital, and guidance, and the fulfillment of social demands for which one may feel obliged to fulfill. The implication is that when NA is high, the effect of MO on SEIs will improve due to the gratuitous benefits that one's social networks may provide when contemplating social entrepreneurship. In line with our H_6, there was also a statistically significant moderating influence of PE on the effect of MO on SEIs. PE furnishes an intending entrepreneur with the cost and resource implications of setting up social enterprises. Thus, while MO connotes a sense of responsibility for the socially marginalized persons in the society, high levels of PE ensures that the budding entrepreneur fulfills those social obligations using the required amount of resources to avoid wastes that may emanate from supererogatory feelings of MO [71]. Contrary to our H_7, our result reveals no moderating role of NA on the effect of empathy on SEIs. The implication is that where NA is high, the effect of empathy on SEIs remains unchanged. A plausible explanation for this is that empathetic concern is a feeling that usually culminates into a high proclivity to mobilize efforts and resources to help those in need. Thus, even if the intending entrepreneur is unable to network with others, those empathetic feelings are strong enough to stimulate entrepreneurial pursuits (no matter how little) that would ameliorate the sufferings of others. In line with H_8, our results revealed a moderating effect of PE on the effect of empathy on SEIs. This means that where PE is high, empathy will not improve SEIs. Although PE assigns cognitive, intellectual, and rational perspectives to empathy, which facilitates the intuitive and ingenious development of SEIs aimed at responding to those problems identified through empathy, empathy is a more pervading precedent whose interaction with PE would make no difference on SEIs.

Still on the two-way interaction effect, there was a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect self-efficacy has on SEIs. H_9 is thus validated. Venz and

Gardiner [88] found that NA moderated the effect of core self-evaluations on networking such that the effect was positive when NA was high. The ability to utilize one's social networks would burgeon self-confidence and increase the belief that social entrepreneurship is an achievable feat despite its obvious demerits and risks. The same is applicable with PE, since it was also found to play a statistically significant moderating role in the self-efficacy–SEIs link, in line with H_{10}. There was no statistically significant positive moderating influence of NA on the effect PSS on SEIs, which implies that support from family and friends will not facilitate SEIs if the budding entrepreneur is skilled at interacting and eliciting resources from social networks. H_{11} is thus refuted. Social support from one's networks may be acquired based on the workability of the social enterprise rather than the ability of the budding entrepreneur to network with people. Finally, there was no moderating role of PE on the effect PSS has on SEIs. H_{12} is hereby refuted. PSS is strong enough to enhance SEIs whether or not the budding entrepreneur has PEs working with social organizations because there is the confidence that whatever challenges that may be faced would be ameliorated by the resources from the social network.

On the three-way interaction effects, our findings were mixed. Results show that both NA and PE have no moderating role on the effect of MO on SEIs. Budding entrepreneurs may find that feeling a high sense of MO towards social problems may be powerful and robust enough to facilitate SEIs even when NA and PE are high. Individuals are wont to commit themselves to any course that they believe is morally acceptable even if they have no clue or proof of the veracity of their claims [35]. Moreover, MO is a crucial part of moral involvement, wherein individuals commit to an activity because of the importance attached to that activity. Hence, if social entrepreneurship is considered highly important, it may not really matter how much PE or NA one has. It follows that MO together with perceived importance, rather than PE or NA, would play more significant role in eliciting SEIs in budding entrepreneurs. Indeed, high levels of MO bespeaks one's willingness to do whatever it takes pursue social entrepreneurship whether PE and NA are present or not [35,89].

Our findings also reveal that NA had no moderating role on the effect empathy has on SEIs, and PE had no statistically significant moderating role on the effect of empathy on SEIs. Where both PE and NA are high, the feelings of empathy towards socially marginalized persons would remain unchanged. While NA may be crucial for firm formation especially when competitiveness and innovation are critical for survival [47], its role in enhancing social entrepreneurial intentions is non-existent. Apart from this, individuals with both high PE and NA are unlikely to reach a final decision about which particular social need to meet as a result of their previous experiences or network abilities, but rather because they are already acquainted with the consequences of not having those needs met. Swift decision making on the venture type may be lacking and by so doing affect the tenacity with which preparations are made before the social venture commences.

Our findings also reveal that there was a statistically significant positive moderating role of NA on the effect SELFF has on SEIs, while PE does not moderate the effect of SELFF on SEIs. Where NA and PE are high, NA would improve the self-efficacy levels of the entrepreneur and enhance their chances of contemplating social entrepreneurship more than PE. Research has shown that new product performance was highest when networking ability, networking capability, and entrepreneurial orientation were high [27,90]. Thus, the confidence and ability to create new products and services that meet people's needs at little or no cost would be improved by high levels of NA. Figure 2 also shows that low levels of NA influence the effect of SELFF on SEIs, and as NA increases, SELFF affects SEIs even more. Finally, there was a statistically positive significant moderating role of NA on the effect PSS has on SEIs, while PE does not moderate the effect of PSS on SEIs. Again, NA proves to have more far-reaching effects on the extent that one's social support would improve SEIs even when they have a wealth of PEs to draw from. PE may not facilitate SEIs unless intending entrepreneurs exhibit a high degree of mindfulness in their use of PE as an important resource when contemplating SEIs; hence the non-existent effect [91].

The simple slope shows that low to mid-levels of NA would have a higher moderating influence on the PSS-SEI link than the mid to high levels of NA (See Figure 3).

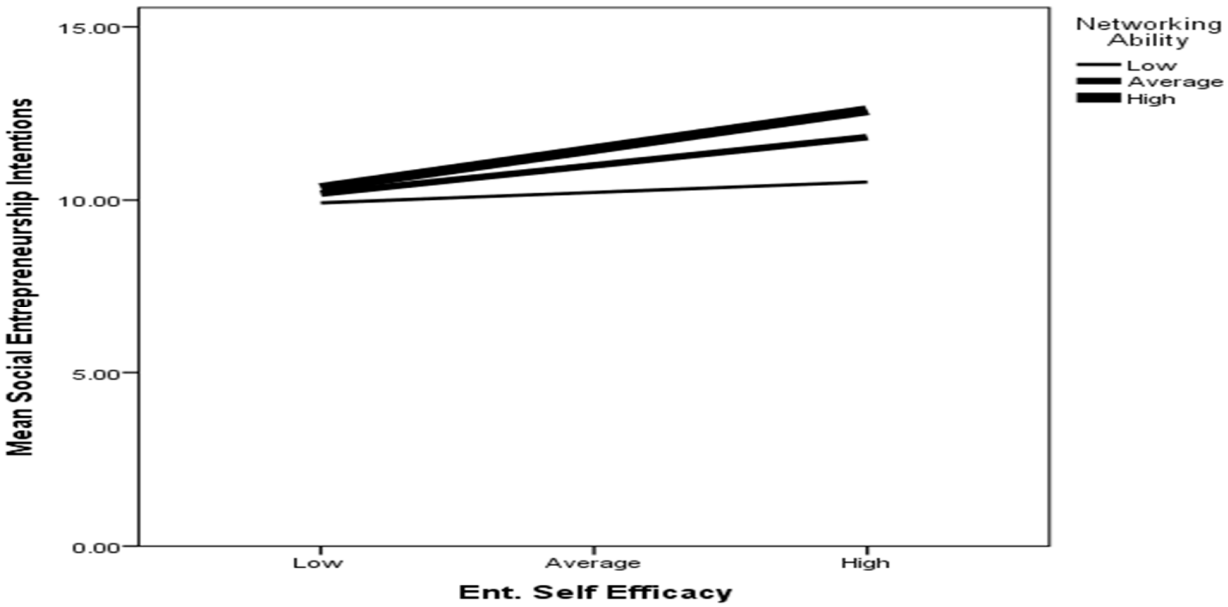

Figure 2. The interaction effect of NA and SE on SEIs.

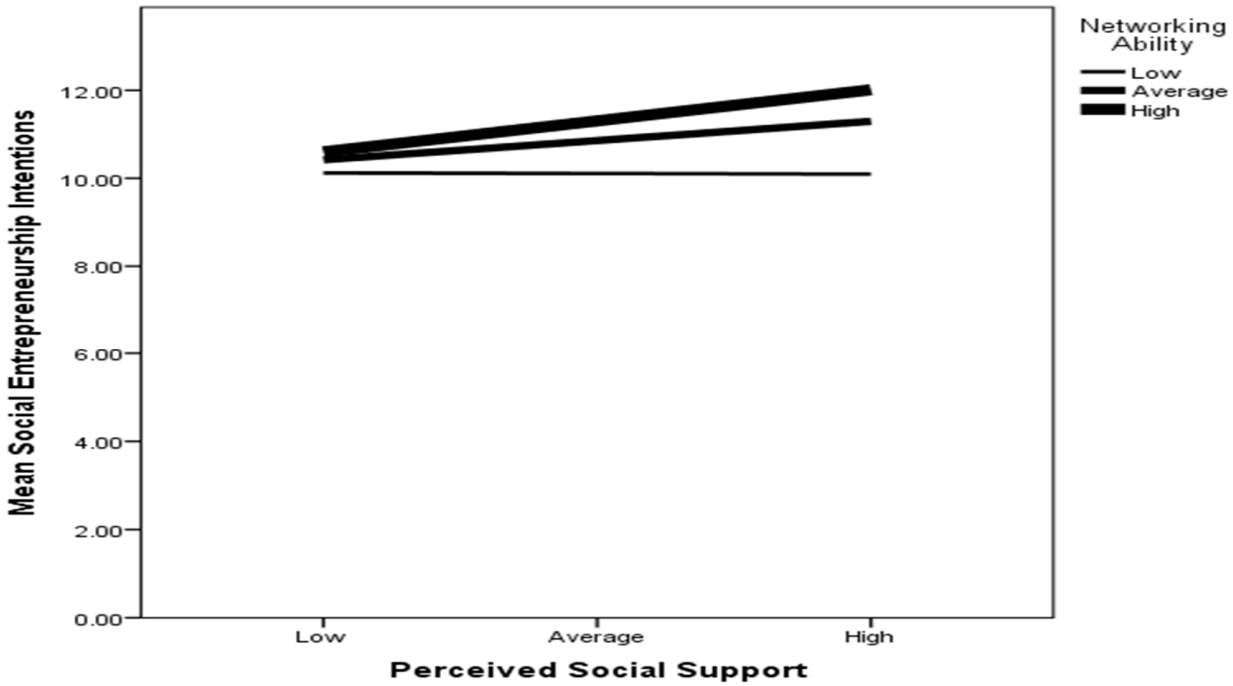

Figure 3. The interaction effect of NA and PSS on SEIs.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

Theories used to explain entrepreneurial intentions such as Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have assumed that there are expected entrepreneurial outcomes when intending entrepreneurs exhibit certain behaviors during the planning stages of the entrepreneurial venturing [92,93]. It presupposes that individual intentions can be predicted by the behaviors they exhibit at a particular place and time, and that such behaviors are usually accompanied by high levels of self-control. These characteristics bespeak a

high measure of confidence, superintendence, and sureness associated with honing entrepreneurial intentions [74,94]. However, this is mostly true for commercial entrepreneurship where the entrepreneur's intentions are based on the expectations that there would be rewards and profits emanating from investments made. Hence, while contemplating commercial entrepreneurship may follow a linear process with anticipated results and outcomes, the processes and behaviors involved in contemplating social entrepreneurship are usually nonlinear, chaotic, and unsystematic. The reasons are not farfetched. Social entrepreneurship is unwonted, with very few people daring to thread such entrepreneurial path due to its high risk of failure and sometimes unlimited liability. Because of this, there are few veterans from whom budding entrepreneurs can learn from as they consider social entrepreneurship. While TPB and other entrepreneurial theories have explained how commercial entrepreneurial intentions are considered, not much may have been done to determine how social entrepreneurial intentions can be predicted by individual behavior. This study contributes to theory by suggesting that the behaviors that predict SEIs for budding entrepreneurs may be more nuanced, intricate, and sinuous than that of commercial entrepreneurship, as highlighted heretofore.

This study adopted the social impact theory, which suggests that the extent to which budding entrepreneurs would positively affect their society through entrepreneurship would depend on how well they network with actors in the environment [29]. Our findings contribute to theory by implying that because of the precariousness of social entrepreneurship, one's social networks may not be enough to improve one's capacity to positively affect the society through social goods and services. The intrinsic measures of MO, self-efficacy, empathy, and PSS may provide more substantial support for one's social entrepreneurial choices. Furthermore, prior exposure or experiences working with similar social firms may provide more indubitable resources—knowledge, skills, and abilities—that would not only improve the planning stages of the social entrepreneurship process, but also guarantee its survival.

5.2. Practical Implications

Since all direct effects were positive and statistically significant, this means that empathy, MO, self-efficacy, and PSS are imperative for facilitating SEIs. The implications for budding entrepreneurs are perspicuous. Budding entrepreneurs should pursue SEIs in those businesses where they have strong affinity and passion in. Such drive would likely sustain them when the going gets tough and other resources and capabilities are depleted. The consciousness that there are socially disadvantaged persons whose needs may not be met by the government is enough to keep the budding entrepreneur motivated and inspired to consider social entrepreneurship. While high levels of MO are required to increase responsibility and accountability in SEIs, budding entrepreneurs should be careful not to become too onerous or extravagant with their intentions. Just because one feels morally obligated towards the society does not mean that human and financial resources beyond what one can bear should be employed just to pacify those obligatory feelings. Care should be taken to plan within one's means so as to avoid incurring huge debts that may further reduce the chances of survival of the social venture. Budding entrepreneurs should also be careful not to exaggerate their levels of self-efficacy. Social entrepreneurship is too risky to venture in based on an over-bloated sense of confidence and phlegm. Thus, assessments of self-efficacy should be realistic, measurable, and relatable to the particular social venture being considered. Likewise, PSS should be based on previous evidence of the functionality and value of one's social capital, and not on hope or optimism. In other words, budding entrepreneurs should measure the social support they would receive based on verity and facts—the assurance that those who are perceived to support the social venture would most certainly do so without coercion or tardiness.

Although PE is a less important moderator than NA, it remains a poignant dimension of contemplating social entrepreneurship. The precariousness and perils associated with setting up social ventures require much more than just high levels of MO, empathy, PSS, and

self-efficacy. While these are necessary, it is equally important for budding entrepreneurs to garner as much experiences as possible in the areas they intend to venture by volunteering to work with similar organizations. Moreover, while an intending entrepreneur may have high levels of social networks, it is likely that the benefits associated with such networks may not be enjoyed if the budding entrepreneur lacks the ability to interact effectively with actors within their social network. Hence, budding entrepreneurs can improve their NA by learning to communicate, share knowledge, participate in group programs, and jointly solve problems with others.

5.3. Study Limitations

The limitations identified mainly relate to the respondents. First, there is the likelihood that some of the respondents used for this study would seek paid employment. More so, with the high unemployment and poverty rate in the country, most of them would also likely opt for commercial entrepreneurship as a means of self-actualization rather than social entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, the socioeconomic environment of Nigeria does not provide enough incentives for budding entrepreneurs to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. We believe that our results may have been different if there were more incentives to venture into social entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, the rigorous efforts to purposefully and conveniently sample our respondents reveal that those who were studied were those who showed a high tendency towards entrepreneurial venturing [13,23,62,95]. Second, still on the respondents, there is the likelihood that most of the members of our population lacked previous experiences working with firms specifically committed to social entrepreneurship because they are recent school leavers. However, we also recognize that our respondents are most likely to have volunteered for community service in their higher institutions as well as during the NYSC program. These exposures must have given them an inkling of what to expect should they contemplate social entrepreneurship.

5.4. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Studies

The aim of this study was to tease out the moderating roles of NA and PE on the effect of empathy, MO, SE, and SS on SEIs. In line with the works of Hockerts [12,13], we conclude that these four variables are veritable antecedents of SEIs, which implies that budding entrepreneurs with any or all of these qualities would be able to facilitate social entrepreneurship even in the most difficult terrains. Nonetheless, our results show that SE was the most important predictor of SEIs. We also conclude that NA is a more important factor than PE in facilitating SEIs where these antecedents are present, and that neither PE nor NA would most likely facilitate SEIs when isolated from each other. While this study can be replicated in other developing contexts, future investigations can focus on determining how other environmental factors such as government/institutional support, technological adoption, and infrastructure would affect SEIs. It may also be pertinent to assess the impact of social needs assessment on the entrepreneur's choice of business.

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