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[Volume 7, Issue 7](#), July 2021, e07538



Research article

# Harnessing the sustainable competitive advantage of social motivation in the informal market: A West African society insight

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## Abstract

The existence of informal entrepreneurship is alleged to curb hardships related to unemployment. This has been the case of Nigerian youths at getting needs met but a dire exists when related to the African cultural heritage of value and goals. The study examines social motivations of informal entrepreneurs and their implications for business performance in selected electronics markets with the engagement of sustainable competitive advantage in southwest of Nigeria. Causal research design was deemed appropriate. The survey design was integrated to describe the present trend in the informal electronic market. The need to obtain subjective opinion of the respondents and draw an accurate assessment of the entire population via the studied sample calls for the adoption of the descriptive survey research design. Using [linear regression](#), it was revealed that social motivation has a statistical significance in predicting sustainable competitive advantage recording the beta value of (beta = 0.389 with t-val (9.822) higher than 1.96, sig.000  $p < .05$ ). The study reflected that social motivation makes a strong contribution to explaining sustainable competitive advantage in the informal market.

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## Keywords

Informal entrepreneurship

Social motivation

Sustainable competitive advantage

## 1. Introduction

The West African Society is perceived to be characterised by materialism, the degree of social acceptance of an individual, being a direct function of the person's economic power. In such a society, people desire to gain social acceptance, respect and recognition by enhancing their economic status through informal entrepreneurship ([Elbahnasawy et al., 2016](#)). In other words, some persons are socially motivated to become entrepreneurs, though informally to express and feel their loved by the same society. This human need was well articulated by [Maslow \(1956\)](#) in his third stage of the hierarchy of needs ([Badenhorst-Weiss et al., 2014](#)).

Therefore, the rise in socially motivated entrepreneurs, either formal or informal, is what gave birth to the branch of entrepreneurship called social entrepreneurship ([Amir et al., 2016](#)). Social entrepreneurship is the use of business models in meeting the social needs (expression of love to a society) of a society ([Aquino et al., 2018](#)). Thus, the existence of informal entrepreneurship is alleged to curb hardships related to unemployment. This has been the case of Nigerian youths at getting needs met but a dire exists when related to the African cultural heritage of value and goals attainment against the witnessed occurrence ([Maina, 2013](#); [Ayeni et al., 2019](#)).

Furthermore, [Block's et al. \(2014\)](#) the attainment of success on the global stage is inclined to correct the irony of age with success as the 21<sup>st</sup>-century notable world revolutionaries have gotten the expected glorified stage at their respective youthful age. This positive attainment has started a drive within the Nigerian system towards a negative attitude of 'get rich syndrome', thereby whitewashing the established values the Nigerian culture portrayed before now towards wealth attainment ([Yagboyaju, 2017](#); [Adebanji et al., 2018](#)).

In line with the above discussion, the study hypothesizes that;

H<sub>0</sub>: Social motivation does not have a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in the informal market.

On this premise, the study examines social motivations of informal entrepreneurs and their implications for business performance in selected electronics markets with the engagement of sustainable competitive advantage in southwest of Nigeria.

### 1.1. Makeup of motivation process

[Roy and Wheeler \(2006\)](#) postulate that motivating process begins when an unsatisfied inner desire or weakness that an individual has is identified or recognized. For example, a person may feel the need for promotion or higher income, food, companionship or development. An internal state is required, which causes friction in someone who goes in a certain direction to seek ways to fulfil that need. After recognizing the unmet need and considering various ways of meeting it, one of the ways of meeting the need is chosen (goal-direction behaviour). Tension vanishes as requirements are met. This cycle is repeated on various platforms with the attainment of the same result of satisfaction. The position of [Ogunrinola \(1991\)](#) posited that for an informal entrepreneur, the perception of continuous engagement in the market as with the established aghast laws again can only come at the birth of a drive. The next session highlights this.

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