



Original Article

Technology as a Catalyst for Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship is crucial for addressing issues within communities, yet many youths, particularly students, do not have organized ways to use their abilities for positive social impact. This study examines how technology can spur social entrepreneurship by developing digital platforms that link students with the needs of their communities. A survey involving 55 students from BBA, BCA, and other programs was carried out to identify their skills, driving factors, and obstacles to getting involved in social activities. The findings reveal that students are eager to participate when the opportunities are adaptable, well-explained, and offer some form of acknowledgement, such as certificates or portfolio enhancements. Simultaneously, a shortage of time and uncertainty regarding responsibilities were identified as prevalent challenges. In light of these results, this paper suggests a novel approach—the SkillShare for Social Change Platform—designed to allow students to apply their skills in areas like technology, design, marketing, and teaching to NGOs and social enterprises through brief, verified, and significant tasks. This approach not only gives students recognition and experience but also boosts community economies by connecting skill availability with social needs. The research emphasizes the promise of technology in establishing youth-led social entrepreneurship, providing valuable insights for academics, teachers, and decision-makers.

Keywords: Technology, Social Entrepreneurship, SkillShare Platform, Student Involvement, Community-Based Economies.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has become an important way to solve social problems that blends business ideas with social goals. Social enterprises create social benefit. So, unlike conventional businesses that work for profit, they work for better consumer education, health care, or environment. Presently, technology is a great resource that can aid and extend the impact of these initiatives. Using mobile apps, websites, and digital networks, people can easily share resources, connect with communities, and advocate for social causes. This development is important for young people and students. Many students have important skills in computer science, design, communication, management, and more. Unfortunately, those untapped talents more often than not lie dormant, due to the absence of organized platforms to utilize them for social good. On the other hand, many NGOs and community organizations find it difficult to source skilled people at an affordable cost for their projects. The difference between the two brings certain challenges and opportunities. If technology can connect students to NGOs and social entrepreneurs, it can benefit both.

The purpose of this research is to explore how technology can be a trafficker of social entrepreneurship, focusing specifically on students. Researchers surveyed 55 students to better understand their interest and motivation, skills and ability and obstacles while engaging in social initiatives. According to the findings, the paper proposes the SkillShare for Social Change Platform to connect student volunteers with NGOs and social enterprises using technology. The model shows that recognition, adaptability, and skill-based contributions can lead to even more youth engagement in community led economies.

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This study adds to the growing body of understanding around social entrepreneurship but also proposes a useful application for universities and communities that both empowers students and creates social value.

Literature Review:

Over the past twenty years, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a way to solve issues in communities using innovative and sustainable approaches. Social entrepreneurship combines business strategies and social purposes to create lasting change for communities, in contrast to acting solely in a charitable way. Bornstein and Davis (2010) characterize social entrepreneurs as people who identify open social issues and create innovative solutions that can be extended to support wider populations. This exemplifies the role of creativity and community systems focused on providing resilience in communities. As digital innovations have grown, researchers have begun to explore the ways technology supports a social enterprise. Marti and Schmitz (2022) suggest that digital interfaces support a participative social innovation process that convenes actors into a system. Adeyemi (2019) indicates that technology can support productivity and sustainability, while Lall and Park (2021) keep finding more evidence of technology's ever-increasing importance to studies of social entrepreneurship.

A secondary development is platform thinking. Rather than intervene to solve a problem directly, social entrepreneurs build platforms where others can interact to solve problems. Wei-Skillern and Silver (2022) explain that a platform can provide trust-supporting resources to help change actors engage with tools and environments for the co-construction of problems. This is pertinent to students who believe they have the skills to help the community but lack the context to do them. Some studies have investigated students' readiness to engage the social entrepreneurship. Afolabi et al (2024) found that digital literacy was a major factor that influenced changes in students' willingness to participate. A complementary study by Khan and Singh (2025) identified that creativity and digital awareness indicated high degrees of readiness for social entrepreneurship. In each case, these students are an important yet neglected resource.

Research on skill-sharing platforms also adds more depth. Jeong and Kim (2022) found that users participate in skill-sharing for reasons such as social recognition, professional, or grand opportunity that enable users to participate. The International Association for Volunteer Effort (2020) noted that digital allows for "micro-volunteering," allowing small tasks for people to engage in without large blocks of time. These findings are similar to those aspects described in this study that reflect motivations and barriers to social volunteering. Finally, Bobrova and Soloviev (2022) showed that countries with strong integration of digital technology achieve higher outcomes of social innovation. This study fills that previous gap by reporting survey data from students and encouraging skill sharing on the SkillShare for Social Change Platform to link student skills with local needs.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research methodology to assess students' capacities, motivations, and barriers to social entrepreneurship in a way that ultimately informed the proposed SkillShare for Social Change Platform.

- **Research Instrument:** A questionnaire, facilitated through Google Forms, was developed with four sections: (1) student background, (2) capacities and readiness, (3) motivators and barriers, and (4) open feedback. Items on the questionnaire included multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions.
- **Sample:** The questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate BBA and BCA students, as well as others in allied fields. In August 2024, a total of 55 valid responses were received.
- **Data Analysis:** Responses were analyzed through descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages and frequency counts) and displayed with the use of charts and tables. Qualitative responses were organized by themes, such as flexibility, recognition, and skill development.
- **Limitations:** The study was limited by a small sample (55 students), focus only on student perspectives, and time constraints affecting research depth.



Fig 1: Research Methodology Flow

Results

The survey carried out with 55 students yielded important insights into their skills, readiness to engage in social entrepreneurship, the incentives that drive them, and the obstacles hindering their involvement. The findings, along with interpretations of their relevance, are outlined below.

1. Skills Possessed by Students

The outcomes reveal that students have a diverse set of practical skills beneficial to NGOs and community organizations. Among those surveyed, the skills most commonly noted were:

- Social media management (28 students)
- Basic web and app knowledge (25 students)
- Graphic design (22 students)
- Teaching and mentoring (20 students)
- Data entry and Excel proficiency (18 students)
- Event management (15 students)
- Finance or accounting (10 students)

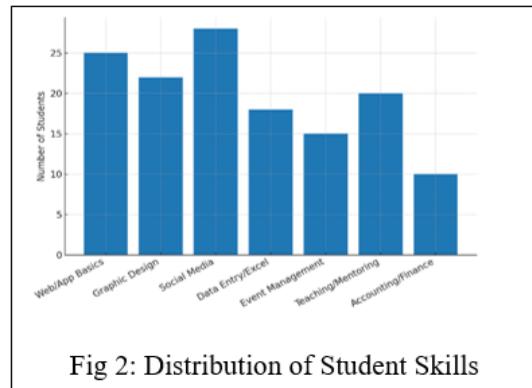


Fig 2: Distribution of Student Skills

2. Readiness to Engage

Approximately 80% of participants indicated they were either "Likely" or "Very Likely" to engage with such a

platform, while only about 7 students expressed hesitation. This shows that students are already inclined to contribute, but lack a cohesive system to facilitate their efforts.

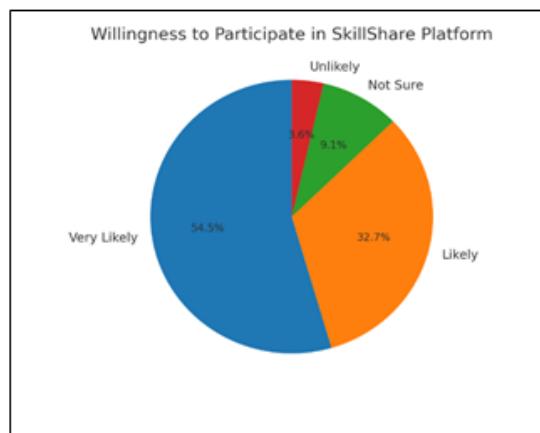


Fig 3: Readiness to Engage

3. Incentives for Participation

Key motivators identified by students were:

- Certificates or badges (40 students)
- Portfolio/placement benefits (35 students)
- Verified hours of volunteer work (30 students)
- Flexibility in tasks (25 students)
- Recommendation letters (20 students)
- Small monetary rewards (15 students)

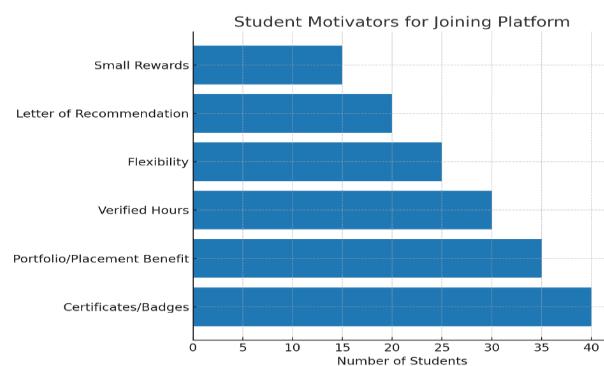


Fig 4: Incentives for Joining the Platform

4. Obstacles to Engagement

The main barriers stopping students from engaging in social projects were:

- Insufficient time (35 students)
- Ambiguous tasks or expectations (25 students)

- Ineffective collaboration with NGOs (20 students)
- Internet or travel difficulties (15 students)
- Lack of acknowledgment (10 students)

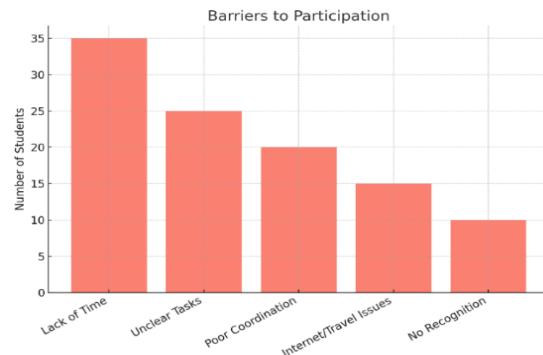


Fig 5: Barriers to Participation

5. Suggestions from Students

Open responses suggested three main expectations:

- Flexibility – short-term volunteering activities
- Recognition – digital certificates, badges, LinkedIn proof
- Skill Development – opportunities to learn while contributing

These align with the proposed SkillShare platform, which emphasizes brief, skill-oriented, verifiable tasks.

6. Summary of Results

In conclusion, the survey verifies that students are an underutilized yet highly enthusiastic resource for social entrepreneurship. They offer a range of skills, show a willingness to get involved, and are driven by acknowledgment and career advantages rather than monetary compensation.

However, challenges like limited time, unclear expectations, and ineffective coordination need to be resolved to fully engage this group.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study suggests that technology can motivate students to participate in social enterprise by actively engaging them in the process. Data collected from a survey of 55 students demonstrated that students possessed a variety of proficiency, were willing to engage with social enterprise, and were motivated to integrate technology in their personal potential through acknowledgement and career potential. At the same time, the findings identified some barriers such as time constraints and the absence of clear roles in volunteering. The basis for motivation and recognition were supported by Jeong and Kim (2022) referenced in the findings, while the willingness to assist with social enterprise activities aligns Afolabi et al. (2024), linking digital literacy and the potential for entrepreneurial spirit. The findings also support Marti and Schmitz (2022) findings that highlighted how digital platforms bring a wide range of stakeholders together to engage with community needs benefited from the range of skills observed in the

student answers. Barriers identified associating with time, and lack of clear expectations of participants aligns with IAVE (2020), reminding us that a clear definition of short tasks were effective in digital volunteering leveraged with skills associated with social enterprise.

The positive finding that 80% of students indicated a willingness to become engaged indicates that a pilot platform is a possibility and highlights the presence of additional motivation contributing to sustainability for social enterprise that draws on social benefit through individual growth over monetary reward. Moreover, this research contributes to the literature as the focus has shifted from what technology provides to NGOs about how students themselves could be leveraged as agents of social transformation. Practical implications for the NGO sector include: (1) inclusion of digital volunteering for students in formal and informal learning, (2) providing empowering opportunities through small and flexible tasks that align with criteria to NGOs, and (3) integrating supportive policies to promote student initiatives. Evidence from students in the study about empowering opportunities have revealed a developing SkillShare for Social Change Platform for agencies, a possibility highlighted with concrete tasks, recognition through digital competency badges, recognized role definitions while supporting skills for growth. The findings included both motivation and barriers when developing a framework for a model where technology connects student capacity with community needs.

Future Scope: In future research, it could be more interesting to expand the sample of students to include other universities or disciplines, include NGO perspectives or even test the model in a campus-based study to demonstrate feasibility. We might also be interested in any future technology, such as AI task matching and blockchain verification to enhance work commitment. Finally, we might see future studies explore longitudinal differences in outcomes to see if engagement changed students' career choices or added challenges to a community-driven economy.



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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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