



Micropreneurship Activities and Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success: Do Irresponsible Entrepreneurship Practices and Irresponsible Consumption Patterns Matter?

Dr. Kenneth Chukwujioke Agbim
 Department of Entrepreneurial Studies,
 Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria
Kennethagbim2012@gmail.com

Mwende Teresia Kaluma
 Department of Entrepreneurial Studies,
 Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria
terrykaluma@gmail.com

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Abstract: Factors such as inadequate funds, lack of infrastructural facilities, lack of experience, and multiple taxation have been reported to contribute to the failure of SMEs. More recently, enterprises in the streets of Abuja, Nigeria, have been characterised by unsustainable success and high failure rates. This is amidst the stench and eyesores that the indiscriminately dumped wastes from their entrepreneurial activities and customers' consumption patterns constitute. Consequently, owing to the reiteration of the need for responsible business practices and responsible consumption by the SDGs and the commonplaceness of micropreneurships in Abuja, this study seeks to investigate the mediating effects of irresponsible entrepreneurship practices (IEP) and irresponsible consumption patterns (ICP) on the relationship between micro-preneurship activities (MPA) and unsustainable entrepreneurial success (UES). To test the research hypotheses, a cross-sectional research design, criterion sampling, proportionate stratified random sampling, and simple random sampling techniques were employed to generate data from 1420 micropreneurs and customers. The results of the 2-way parallel mediation analysis show that the direct and total effects of MPA on UES are positive and significant; MPA directly and positively influenced IEP and ICP. In contrast, the direct effects of IEP and ICP on UES are positive and significant. Further, the indirect effect of MPA on UES through IEP and ICP is significant and positive. Thus, based on the MPA, IEP, ICP, and UES insights, the study extends the literature in these areas. Again, the results can influence both the practitioners and policymakers to craft mechanisms that will facilitate the emergence of responsible entrepreneurship and consumption practices and the achievement of the SDGs.

Keywords: Irresponsible consumption patterns, Irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, Micropreneurship activities, Micropreneurship, SDGs, Unsustainable entrepreneurial success

INTRODUCTION

Micropreneurships are commonplace in every part of the world as sources of employment opportunities, livelihood for individuals and families, and economic development of nations. They include roadside mama puts, hawking of wares, barbers' shops, hairdressing shops, fashion designing shops, and petty trading and small grocery retail stores (Agbim *et al.*,

2014b; Ehgartner, 2018a). As inclusive businesses, micropreneurships offer goods and services to both the rich and the poor in all the markets and streets in the highbrow urban areas and the underdeveloped areas (Agbim *et al.*, 2014a&b; Ehgartner, 2018a; United Nations, 2019). These enterprises are supposed to be socially and environmentally responsible to their stakeholders, while their customers ought to consume the goods and services responsibly (Agbim *et al.*,

2013; Jastrzębska, 2017; Rosário et al., 2022; United Nations, 2019). Despite the reiteration of the need for responsible business practices (paragraph 67 of the SDGs) and responsible consumption by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Goal 12 of the SDGs) (Jastrzębska, 2017; Rosário et al., 2022), the rate of irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns has remained high. Hence, researchers refer to entrepreneurship as a major cause of environmental and social challenges and the later the bane of the unsustainability in society today (Rosário et al., 2022).

The response of corporations to the increasing social and environmental challenges is corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Lepoutre & Heene, 2006; Ryan et al., 2010). Concerning small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) and in the field of entrepreneurship, it is referred to as responsible entrepreneurship. Based on the key tenet of the Stakeholder Theory (ST) of balancing business objectives with the expectations of stakeholders, entrepreneurs and their stakeholders are encouraged to act responsibly (Alam, 2006; Brenner & Cochran, 1991; Starcher, 2004; Uzhegova, 2021). However, current business practices and consumption patterns do not always align with this conceptual foundation (Morris et al., 2019). This is evident from the unprecedented irresponsible entrepreneurship practices of business owner-managers who have so much concern for entrepreneurial success, and the challenging and irresponsible consumption lifestyle of some consumers that is increasingly contributing to the environmental and social challenges through behaviours such as improper waste disposal (Davies & Chambers, 2018; Ghisellini et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2017).

Waste in developing countries such as Nigeria is increasing per year at the rate of almost 2% (Soorani & Ahmadvand, 2019). In Nigeria, only 20-30% of the generated waste is properly managed, with entrepreneurs and consumers generally seen as the key agents in the waste problem. Thus, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns are the major factors that are responsible for the generation of unmaintainable waste that is detrimental to the sustainability of the ecosystem and natural resources (Agbim et al., 2013; Gunawan et al., 2024; Kristjánsson, 2020; Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024). Specifically, the dominant form of enterprise in most streets in the capital city of Nigeria, Abuja, is micropreneurship. The streets where these enterprises and their customers are commonplace are characterised by heaps of refuse and blocked drainage systems that are occasioned by the indiscriminate dumping of the wastes from the micropreneurship activities and the customers. The attendant stench most often repels customers away and, by extension, leads to the relocation or closure of the business. This is evident from the unprecedented high failure rate of micropreneurships, with over 70% of them dying before their founders (Agbim et al., 2013; Ifedoro & Kurah, 2020). Hence, the sustainability of these forms of enterprise is not guaranteed (Agbim, 2020; Sachs et al., 2022) amidst the unprecedented social and environmental challenges.

The foregoing notwithstanding, the rarity of studies that have related these irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns to the unsustainable entrepreneurial success of micropreneurships seems to have

persisted. Rather, researchers have focused on the effect of finance, infrastructural facilities, knowledge and skill on the success of SMEs (e.g., Effiom & Edet, 2018; Eltahir, 2018; Meresa, 2018), the role of budgeting and access to finance on financial sustainability of SMEs and the sustainability of food retail business (e.g., Ehgartner, 2028a&b; Msomi & Olarewaju, 2021), and the contribution of responsible entrepreneurship to entrepreneurial performance (e.g., Adomako & Nguyen, 2024; Khan, 2023). Consequently, in this research, we wish to understand whether the irresponsible entrepreneurship practices of micropreneurs and micropreneurships and the irresponsible consumption patterns of customers mediate the relationship between micropreneurship practices and unsustainable entrepreneurial successes with a special focus on the domain of micropreneurships in Abuja.

The succeeding sections outline the literature review and hypothesis development, research methods, results, test of hypothesis, discussion, theoretical implications, managerial implications, limitations and future research, and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholder Theory

The Stakeholder Theory (ST), as propounded by R. E. Freeman in 1984, posits that several individuals or groups benefit or are affected by the activities of an enterprise or a company (Crane et al., 2008; Crowther, 2004; Freeman, 2010; Hossain, 2017). As such, the interests of these individuals or groups who constitute stakeholders have to be taken care of by the enterprise. These stakeholders include shareholders, debtors, creditors, consumers, suppliers, employees, the government, the media, special interest groups (e.g., human rights groups and environmentalists), and the whole community (Alam, 2006). Thus, the ST proposes that the objectives of the enterprise or company can only be achieved by protecting and balancing the interests of the stakeholders and the enterprise objectives (Brenner & Cochran, 1991). Entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, and consumers should be more proactively responsible for the interests of society as a whole. However, the responsible behavior of entrepreneurs is more often noticed toward their businesses and, by extension, their sustainable successes and not their stakeholders (Hayes & Walker, 2005; Khan, 2023; Marsden, 2001). Additionally, the power of stakeholders (that can be expressed via consumption) like responsible entrepreneurship is vital to the survival and sustainable success of entrepreneurship (Agbim et al., 2013; Freeman, 2010; Khan, 2023). However, the consumption patterns of stakeholders in Nigeria are associated with so much irresponsibility. Consequently, by introducing irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns as mediators, we propose that the consumption patterns of the customers of micropreneurships and the irresponsible practices of micropreneurships are tangential to the unsustainable entrepreneurial successes of micropreneurships.

Micropreneurship Activities and Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success

The Nigerian National Council of Industry in its 2001 council meeting established that a microenterprise is an enterprise with a labor size of not more than ten (10) workers or a total cost of not more than N1.5 million, including working capital but excluding the cost of land (Agbim *et al.*, 2014a). Although considered insignificant, given their large proportion in the society (particularly in the developing economies like Nigeria), their contributions and impacts on the economy is always huge. Thus, micropreneurships represent businesses employing a maximum of 9 employees (Mbah & Igbokwe, 2015; Ukanwa, 2021). To Ukanwa (2021), micropreneurships are business setups with fewer than 10 employees. Chaudhry and Paquibut (2021) view micropreneurship as a form of entrepreneurship that is started with a small amount of money, either by a micropreneur working alone or together with the employee(s). Micropreneurships are established to add value and meet the needs of people. They are prevalent in developing countries, owing to the persistence of poverty in these nations (Bango *et al.*, 2018; Ukanwa, 2021). Micropreneurs are often motivated by economic needs with a desire for self-realization in the face of near or total absence of support and/or resources (e.g., infrastructure, affordable credit, and entrepreneurial training) from governmental and/or non-governmental institutions (Mair & Marti, 2006; Sherif *et al.*, 2019). For this study, a micro-entrepreneurship represents a business enterprise that was started and/or operated by a micropreneur and not more than 10 employees working together with a maximum total asset of N1.5 million.

Therefore, micropreneurship activities represent entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and exploitation/exploration, retailing, maintenance, and repairs activities. These micropreneurships are mostly located in marketplaces and along major streets, particularly at street junctions (Campbell-Arvai *et al.*, 2014; Khan, 2023). Owing to their strategic location, they are often seen as “lead actors” for consumer practices and “gatekeepers” between producers and consumers (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Ehgartner, 2018a; Oosterveer, 2012). Thus, their activities can influence long-term sustainable outcomes (Khan, 2023), such as sustainable entrepreneurial success. This happens when the activities of the micropreneurships facilitate the building of positive ties with their customers. Otherwise, the result may be unsustainable entrepreneurial success (Braun, 2010; Burešová & Dvořáková, 2016; de la Rosa & Bikfalvi, 2012; Googins, 2013; Khan, 2023). Therefore, unsustainable entrepreneurial success denotes a short-term success; success that does not last beyond the generation of the founder and cannot be transferred to future generations. Based on the foregoing, we argue that if micropreneurship activities can result in sustainable entrepreneurial success, they may as well engender unsustainable entrepreneurial success. As such, we propose that:

H1: Micropreneurship activities have a significant effect on unsustainable entrepreneurial success

Micropreneurship Activities and Irresponsible Entrepreneurship Practices

The situation in the business environment is increasingly deteriorating, and the environmental problems are deepening the concerns of customers, communities, and governments (Chion *et al.*, 2011; Esmaeilpour & Bahmiary, 2017; Howard-Grenville *et al.*, 2014; Potocan *et al.*, 2016). As such, businesses adopt responsible entrepreneurship models in dealing with their employees, suppliers, and customers (Sachs *et al.*, 2006). Responsible entrepreneurship is a process that represents enterprises integrating social and environmental concerns in their business operations and their interactions with their stakeholders (Starcher, 2004). It is sometimes used interchangeably with sustainability entrepreneurship. However, responsible entrepreneurship is a strategy for achieving the latter. Rosário and Figueiredo (2024) add that entrepreneurship that conducts ethical and sustainable businesses that address the interests of stakeholders, such as communities, employees, customers, and the environment, is responsible. Hence, responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship can be a strategic outcome of the operations or activities of a business (Khan, 2023).

We argue that there are still entrepreneurs who indulge in business practices that are socially and environmentally harmful to their stakeholders. These irresponsible entrepreneurship practices include indiscriminate dumping of wastes generated by their entrepreneurship in unapproved areas like drainages and at street junctions. Thus, constitute eyesores and stench that may consequently lead to the relocation of the business, loss of customers and even failure of the business. It follows that irresponsible entrepreneurship practices depict unethical actions or behaviours of entrepreneurs that are socially and environmentally harmful to the stakeholders of their entrepreneurship. We further argue that if business activities can trigger responsible entrepreneurship, they may as well evoke irresponsible entrepreneurship. Consequently, we hypothesise that:

H2a: Micropreneurship activities have a significant effect on irresponsible entrepreneurship practices.

Micropreneurship Activities and Irresponsible Consumption Patterns

As entrepreneurs carry on their business activities, their responsibility to the environment includes waste and water pollution reduction (Sweeney, 2009). As a reminder to entrepreneurs and to encourage responsible consumption, one of the 17 SDGs focuses on responsible consumption (Jastrzębska, 2017). Hence, some entrepreneurs do not leave the decision to consume responsibly to consumers' rational decisions. Rather, they contribute by prompting their customers to consume responsibly (Campbell-Arvai *et al.*, 2014; Khan, 2023) through socially responsible marketing and by offering environment-friendly products/services (Musova *et al.*, 2018). As such, some consumers are increasingly preferring products/services that are socially and environmentally friendly to those that have negative social and environmental impacts (Hasprova, 2017). However, there are still consumers who are irresponsible in their consumption patterns. They make environmentally harmful choices because the personal consequences favoring them are directly felt, whereas the harmful societal consequences are delayed

(Gärling *et al.*, 2015). This explains why, to these consumers, it is more convenient to drop litter on the ground than to search for a waste bin. It is more convenient to throw all household waste into a single garbage bin than to sort it (Thøgersen, 2008). Thus, irresponsible consumption patterns refer to the regular and continuous utilisation of products and/or services in such a way that the benefits and/or the generated wastes from the products/services that are improperly disposed of cause social and/or environmental harm to the society. We argue that the micropreneurship activities that can encourage responsible consumption may as well give rise to irresponsible consumption patterns. Accordingly, we hypothesise that:

H2b: Micropreneurship activities have a significant effect on irresponsible consumption patterns.

Irresponsible Entrepreneurship Practices and Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success

Responsible entrepreneurship emphasizes the well-being of society, the environment, all stakeholders involved, and the pursuit of profit (Adomako & Nguyen, 2024; Azmat & Samaratunge, 2009; Fuller & Tian, 2006). Responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship requires entrepreneurs to balance social and environmental impact with profitability (Luo *et al.*, 2022; Mason, 2019). This practice, as noted by Fotiadis and Polemis (2018), may increase costs and reduce profitability. Conversely, the offering of products that reduces waste and preserves resources by responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship can facilitate the building of stronger stakeholder relationships that may in the long run enable business expansion into new markets and assure long-term profitability, survival and business success (e.g., Braun, 2010; Burešová & Dvořáková, 2016; de la Rosa & Bikfalvi, 2012; Googins, 2013). In support of the foregoing, Demartini (2014) affirms that responsible entrepreneurship positively impacts performance. More recently, researchers have viewed responsible entrepreneurship as a correlate of entrepreneurial success (e.g., Bals & Tate, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2023; Khan, 2023; Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024), while Adomako and Nguyen (2024) establish that responsible entrepreneurship influences entrepreneurial performance through social innovation. Hence, we argue that since responsible entrepreneurship can influence sustainable entrepreneurial success, irresponsible entrepreneurship may as well affect unsustainable entrepreneurial success. As such, we propose that:

H3a: Irresponsible entrepreneurship practices have a significant effect on unsustainable entrepreneurial success

Irresponsible Consumption Patterns and Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success

Owing to the increasing level of literacy, unhindered access to information, and high level of awareness on the global issues affecting communities and the environment today, modern consumers (Villalobos Araya, 2020) are increasingly looking for socially and environmentally responsible products and services. This portends demands that entrepreneurs can leverage (Shrivastava *et al.*, 2018) to achieve sustainable outcomes such as sustainable entrepreneurial success.

However, transitioning from irresponsible consumption to responsible consumption and from unsustainable entrepreneurial success to sustainable entrepreneurial success requires the collective actions and collaborations of the various concerned stakeholders (Murray *et al.*, 2017; Veleva, 2021). Collaboration between an enterprise and its customers could positively affect the financial performance of the enterprise (Laari *et al.*, 2016; Zhu *et al.*, 2013). Gölgeci *et al.* (2019) add that collaborating with customers can trigger responsible consumption and production and eventually improve business performance. Similarly, business performance can be improved through environmental collaboration and responsible consumption and production practices (Mishra *et al.*, 2022). Responsible consumers may contribute to the sustainability of the entrepreneurial success of an enterprise by demanding and consuming socially and environmentally friendly products/services (Karaosmanoglu *et al.*, 2016; Khan, 2023; Minarova, 2014). We argue that irresponsible consumption patterns may contribute to unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H3b: Irresponsible consumption patterns have a significant effect on unsustainable entrepreneurial success

Influence of Irresponsible Entrepreneurship Patterns on the Micropreneurship Activities and Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success Nexus

Responsible entrepreneurship conducts its business activities sustainably and ethically (Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024) to facilitate the achievement of long-term sustainable outcomes (Khan, 2023) like profitability, survivability, performance, and success (Adomako & Nguyen, 2024; Azmat & Samaratunge, 2009; Burešová & Dvořáková, 2016). Entrepreneurships enhance their entrepreneurial success by conducting their business activities responsibly (Bals & Tate, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2023; Khan, 2023; Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024). We argue that if business activities can influence sustainable success, micropreneurship activities may as well influence unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Responsible entrepreneurship emerged as a parallel concept to CSR. However, the former is mostly employed about SMEs (Chapple & Moon, 2007; Ryan *et al.*, 2010). As such, responsible entrepreneurship is no longer an optional entrepreneurship practice for SMEs but a key facilitator of success (Khan, 2023). Maali *et al.* (2021) affirm that CSR fully mediates the association between corporate governance and sustainability performance, while the positive relationship between corporate governance and firm performance is partially mediated by CSR (Akhter & Hassan, 2023; Xu *et al.*, 2022). Again, we argue that if CSR can mediate the association between corporate governance (which is a business activity) and sustainability performance, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices may equally mediate the nexus between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success.

H4a: Irresponsible entrepreneurship practices mediate the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success

Influence of Micropreneurship Activities on Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success through Irresponsible Consumption Patterns

Business activities can be associated with sustainable outcomes like sustainable entrepreneurial success (Burešová & Dvořáková, 2016; Googins, 2013; Khan, 2023; Michaelis, 2003). Business enterprises respond to the consumption patterns of consumers with products/services to achieve a sustainable environment and business success (Bocken *et al.*, 2021; Gundova, 2019; Karaosmanoglu *et al.*, 2016; Khan, 2023). Responsible consumption can influence sustainability, particularly the sustainability of resources (Jain & Verma, 2022) and the business enterprises producing the products/services. However, today, irresponsible consumption patterns have become one of the major contributory factors to waste generation and unsustainability (Hoekstra & Wiedmann, 2014; Kristjánsson, 2020; Michaelis, 2003). Hence, we argue that if business activities can influence sustainable entrepreneurial success and responsible consumption, the same effect may be observed with irresponsible consumption and unsustainable entrepreneurial success.

Further, research has shown that a sustainable consumption attitude can partially mediate the relationship between the perception of a sustainable lifestyle and sustainable consumption practice (Zakaria *et al.*, 2019). Again, responsible consumption and production can fully mediate the environmental collaboration and business performance relationship. Thus, entrepreneurs can improve their business performance by being actively involved in environmental collaboration and through responsible consumption advocacy (Mishra *et al.*, 2022). Gunawan *et al.* (2024) reveal that responsible consumption can mediate the relationship between consequence awareness and waste-sorting behavior. We, therefore, argue that irresponsible consumption may mediate the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Accordingly, we propose that:

H4b: Irresponsible consumption patterns mediate the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success.

Based on the conceptualisations, the proposed conceptual framework showing the hypothesised relationships is presented in **Figure 1**.

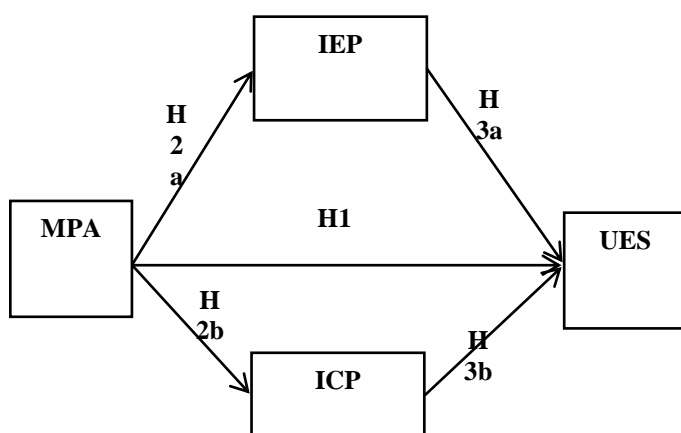


Figure 1: Summarised conceptual framework of the relationships among micropreneurship activities (MPA), unsustainable entrepreneurial success (UES), irresponsible entrepreneurship practices (IEP), and irresponsible consumption patterns (ICP).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a cross-sectional research design because it is fast and not expensive to utilise, and it accommodates multiple variables and opens new vistas for further studies. The population of the study is made up of all the registered micropreneurships along streets in the six area councils in Abuja [Abaji, Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC), Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, and Kwali]. Micropreneurships in the organised markets were not included because the study focuses on micropreneurships that are contributing to the indiscriminate dumping of wastes in street junctions and drainage channels. Thus, the target population of micropreneurships that conduct their business activities along streets was collected from the Federal Capital Territory Authority and the respective area councils. However, the collected list was screened to ensure that only micropreneurships were surveyed. This screening process lasted for about three (3) months, beginning from November 2023 to January 2024. The target population of micropreneurships after the screening was 4873. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size formula for finite population was employed to compute the sample size of 1149 micropreneurships. The study employed criterion sampling, proportionate stratified random sampling, and simple random sampling methods.

The criterion sampling technique was utilised to select the customers of the micropreneurships that participated in the study. The 271 [i.e., Abaji (38), Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC) (25), Bwari (57), Gwagwalada (52), Kuje (50) and Kwali (49)] customers were screened based on the following criteria: he/she (i) is a very loyal customer; (ii) patronises more than one micropreneurship along the street where he/she resides; and (iii) is willing to participate in the survey. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to allocate to each of the area councils a representative proportion of the sample size of 1149 micropreneurships. This was done using the Bowley (1937) proportional allocation formula [i.e., Abaji (186), Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC) (154), Bwari (213), Gwagwalada (204), Kuje (195) and Kwali (197)]. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used because it guarantees a better approximation of population characteristics and reduces sampling errors (Emaikwu, 2015). Thus, the total number of respondents (micropreneurs and customers) for the study is 1420.

A simple random sampling method was used to select from each area council the micropreneurships that were studied. A simple random sampling technique was used because it gives each element an equal and independent chance of being included in the sampling (Emaikwu, 2015). The main survey was conducted between March 4 and May 31, 2024. The

questionnaire was administered during business hours by eighteen (18) research assistants; three (3) research assistants per area council. Each of the three (3) assistants was fluent in Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa. Explanations were given to each respondent to aid the completion of the questionnaire. The average questionnaire completion time was 15 minutes, with a response rate of 96.4%. The respondents comprise 823 (58.0%) females, 597 (42.0%) males, 1012 (71.3%) singles, 408 (28.7%) married, and with ages ranging from 18 to 65 years. Further, 521 (36.7%) had no formal education, 355 (25.0%) had primary education, 225 (15.8%) had secondary education, and 319 (22.5%) had tertiary education.

The self-developed measurement items of the independent variable, micropreneurship activities (MPA) are: “This enterprise is always searching for new business opportunities”, “This enterprise explores and exploits discovered opportunities within its resources”, “This enterprise generates value through its business activities”, “This enterprise retails food items and products”, “This enterprise undertakes repair services” and “This enterprise specialises in maintenance services”. The measurement items of the dependent variable, unsustainable entrepreneurial success (UES) which were adapted from Agbim *et al.* (2013), Al-dalameh *et al.* (2018), and Meshram and Rawani (2019) are: “This enterprise has recorded growth in the number of its employees”, “The profit of this enterprise has not recorded steady improvement in recent time”, “The sales volume of the enterprise is decreasing”, “The recent performances of the enterprise does not guarantee generational transfer”, “This enterprise has not offered its customers any new product in recent time”, “This enterprise has never carried out any social welfare project that will be of benefit to its stakeholders”, “This enterprise has no concerns for the environment where it is located”, “This enterprise does not conduct its business activities in such a way as to build a good reputation” and “This enterprise has no concern for creating a balance between work and life”.

The measurement items of the first mediating variable, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices (IEP) which were adapted from Adomako and Nguyen (2024), and Xie and Wu (2022) are: “This enterprise makes short-term decisions that guarantee immediate return”, “When compared with similar enterprises, the pay, benefits and working conditions this enterprise offers its workers is not the best”, “This enterprise provides good products/services at prices that adds value to the enterprise and not basically to the customers' wellbeing”, “This enterprise is not actively engaged in any social welfare activities” and “This enterprise is not involved in any resource conservation and environmental protection activity”. The measurement items of the second mediating variable, irresponsible consumption pattern (ICP) which were adapted from Jain *et al.* (2024) and Rasool *et al.* (2022) are: “I consume unnecessary products and services”, “I buy things I can produce myself”, “I seek for and pay for services I can carry out myself”, “I consume products/services that has no social benefit to other people”, “I consume products/services that can have adverse effects on the environment”, “I consume products that generate so much wastes that cannot be recycled”, “I consume products that are more beneficial to me

and more harmful to other people”, “I consume products and services that violate known ethical standards” and “I consume more of exotic products/services and less of local products/services”.

All the measurement items were rated on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The research instrument was validated by 3 academics in the Department of Entrepreneurial Studies, Veritas University, Abuja. Thereafter, the instrument was modified in line with their suggestions. Before the main study was conducted, the quality of the instrument was assessed through a pre-test that was conducted using 30 (i.e., 15 micropreneurs and 15 consumers) randomly selected respondents along Sabon Gari Street, Bwari, on February 7, 2024. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed by Cronbach's α scores: MPA = 0.83; IEP = 0.84; ICP = 0.81; UES = 0.86. With the aid of AMOS 24.0, the overall goodness-of-fit is adequate ($\chi^2 = 239.602$; $df = 164$; $\chi^2/df=1.606$; GFI=0.82, CFI =0.85; AGFI=0.81, TLI=0.82; RMR=0.07; RMSEA=0.07). The convergent validity (CV) (AVE is ≥ 0.50) and discriminant validity (DV) (square root of AVE is greater than the correlation of the latent variables in the CFA) were confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 1).

SEE Appendix A for Table 1

RESULTS

Table 2 shows that micropreneurship activities relate positively with irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, irresponsible consumption patterns, and unsustainable entrepreneurial success.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Bivariate Correlations of the Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
MPA	7.46	0.522	1				
IEP	9.42	0.607	0.414**	1			
ICP	11.81	0.654	0.388**	0.381**	1		
UES	10.44	0.583	0.442**	0.385**	0.371**	-0.321**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Test of hypotheses

The results of the analysis of the direct effect and total effects, as presented in Figure 2, and the analysis of the indirect effect, which is shown in Table 3, were tested using Hayes PROCESS Macro 3.5 with bias-corrected 5,000 resample bootstraps. The regression model in Figure 2 reveals that the direct effect of micropreneurship activities on unsustainable entrepreneurial success is significant ($\beta = 0.107$, $p < 0.000$), while the total effect shows that they are significantly and positively related ($\beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is

supported. On the direct effects of micropreneurship activities on each of the mediating variables (i.e., irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns), **Figure 2** shows that micropreneurship activities significantly and positively predict the mediators ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.218$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H2a and H2b are supported. The results of the direct effects of the mediating variables [i.e., irresponsible entrepreneurship practices (IEP) and irresponsible consumption pattern (ICP)] on unsustainable entrepreneurial success (UES) which depicts H3a and H3b shows that IEP and ICP are significantly and positively related to UES ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.262$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, H3a and H3b are supported. The results of the influence of MPA on UES through IEP and ICP which represent H4a and H4b, and the indirect effects as shown in Table 3 reveals that MPA significantly and positively influences UES through IEP and ICP ($\beta = 0.0221$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.0378$, $p < 0.001$) at 95% bias-corrected confidence interval. As such, H4a and Hb are supported.

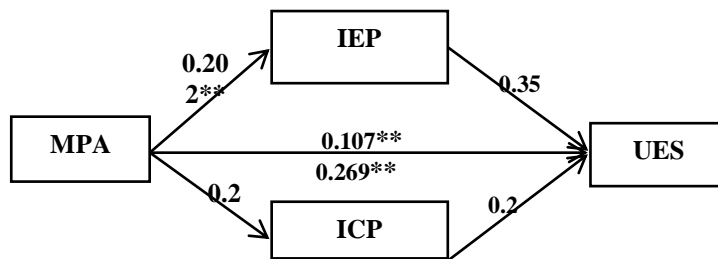


Figure 2: Results of the causal model of the direct relationships among micropreneurship activities, unsustainable entrepreneurial success, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, and irresponsible consumption patterns

Table 3: Mediation Analysis

Path	Indirect Effect	Bias-correlated 95% CI	
		Lower	Upper
MPA → IEP → UES	0.0221	0.0019	0.0243
MPA → ICP → UES	0.0378	0.000	0.0176

DISCUSSION

Organisations such as corporations respond to the increasing social and environmental challenges in the world today through CSR. CSR, as conceptualised in the context of large corporations, is often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to replicate in SMEs and micropreneurships. Again, CSR does not mean that owner-managers of SMEs and micropreneurships are responsible to their stakeholders and the environment. Even though CSR is an initiative that

encourages corporations to be more socially and environmentally responsible, the requirements of CSR have remained difficult for SMEs and micropreneurships to practice and manage (Jenkins, 2006; Khan, 2023; Lepoutre & Heene, 2006; Ryan *et al.*, 2010). Further, CSR cannot be applied in SMEs because of the inherent differences between large-scale enterprises and SMEs and the heterogeneity that is in existence within SMEs (Ryan *et al.*, 2010). The hallmarks of SMEs and micropreneurships that make them unique from larger corporations (i.e., conducting their business activities despite resource constraints and close ties with their stakeholders) only makes them more suited to be described as responsible entrepreneurship (Blankson & Cheng, 2005; Khan, 2023; Russo & Tencati, 2009). Thus, what CSR is to business managers and in business management is what responsible entrepreneurship is to entrepreneurs and in entrepreneurship.

Despite resisting the standards and formal codes associated with CSR, owner-managers of SMEs and micropreneurships are still required to act in line with the key tenet of the Stakeholder Theory (ST) of balancing the objectives of their enterprises with the interests or expectations of their stakeholders (Alam, 2006; Brenner & Cochran, 1991). These views have been re-emphasised in the SDGs as the imperatives of responsible entrepreneurship and responsible consumption in the achievement of other SDGs (Jastrzębska, 2017) and entrepreneurial success for the enterprises (Bals & Tate, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2023; Khan, 2023; Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024). Thus, this study was conducted to address the gap in understanding the influence of micropreneurship activities on unsustainable entrepreneurial success with irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns as mediators. Owing to the commonplaceness of micropreneurships in Abuja and their high failure rate, and the blocked drainages and heaps of refuse that dots the city street junctions that are occasioned by the irresponsible practices of entrepreneurship and the irresponsible consumption patterns of consumers, we hypothesised that micropreneurship activities influences unsustainable entrepreneurial success through irresponsible entrepreneurship and irresponsible consumption pattern.

First, our results reveal that micropreneurship activities positively and significantly relate to unsustainable entrepreneurial success. This implies that when micropreneurship activities are continuously conducted in line with ethical standards and social and environmental requirements, sustainable entrepreneurial success will be achieved. Otherwise, unsustainable entrepreneurial success will be the outcome. This result is somewhat consistent with previous studies (e.g., Fang & Zhang, 2018; Feng *et al.*, 2020; Gölgeci *et al.*, 2019) that suggest that close collaborative business activities with suppliers and customers contribute to improved business performance. Conversely, discordant or irresponsible activities with business stakeholders will result in abysmal or dwindling business performance. Corroborating the current finding, Khan (2023) asserts that business enterprises that fail to plan ethically beforehand and thus act reactively are irresponsible entrepreneurship and are

characterised by unethical managerial behaviour (Jones *et al.*, 2009; Popa & Salantá, 2014) that can influence the sustainability of their entrepreneurial success (Agbim *et al.*, 2013).

Second, we found that micropreneurship activities influence the two mediating variables (i.e., irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns) positively and significantly. This suggests that the nature of business activities and the manner of conduct of the business contribute in making the micropreneurship to adopt irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and in making the customers to develop irresponsible consumption patterns. In support of these results, Agbim *et al.* (2013) note that business enterprises derive benefits such as patronage, usage of enabling facilities, security, and profit from the communities where they are situated. In return, they may act responsibly or irresponsibly to their stakeholders and the environment. Further, these findings are somewhat in tandem with the outcome of prior studies (e.g., Cohen, 2021; Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020; Frick *et al.*, 2021; Tunn *et al.*, 2019) that businesses through their activities can encourage their customers to practice sustainable or responsible consumption, while the irresponsible entrepreneurs may as well trigger irresponsible consumption patterns in their customers. We argue that this can take the form of unconsciously influencing their customers to consume more or to consume in such a way that there will not be enough for future generations (Alexander, 2012; Bocken & Short, 2016). These entrepreneurs are often driven to act (ir)responsibly by their values; the need to save cost; supply chain engagement and the customers' requirements; the potential to increase revenue; and the need to attract, retain, and motivate employees (Starcher, 2004). These (ir) responsible entrepreneurship practices help entrepreneurs create resources and visibility and extend their reputation to diverse constituencies (Khan, 2023; Manning, 2013).

Third, it is evident from our results that irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns made significant and positive effects on unsustainable entrepreneurial success. This connotes that by shying away from social welfare projects and from projects that help to maintain and/or enhance the esthetic beauty of the environment, the entrepreneurship will have more retained profits and thus an increased capital base. However, there is no guarantee that this level will be achieved in the future. This is because the associated customers are often not loyal. Another possible interpretation is that irresponsible entrepreneurship practices reduce running costs; as such, they improve profit margins while encouraging irresponsible consumption patterns that facilitate the retention of more "rich" irresponsible consumers whose patronage portends improved profit and success only in the short run. Previous research has shown that responsible entrepreneurship is a fundamental driver of sustainable entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial success, and sustainable entrepreneurial success (e.g., Khan, 2023; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024; Vallaster *et al.*, 2018; Xie & Wu, 2022). Hazudin *et al.* (2023) found that sustainability

entrepreneurship practices contribute significantly to micropreneurships' superior performance. Adomako and Nguyen (2024) add that sustainable business practices foster enduring success. Nevertheless, the existing evidence from the current study favors the association between irresponsible or unsustainable business practices and unsustainable entrepreneurial success (Agbim *et al.*, 2023; Khan, 2023; Rosário *et al.*, 2022). Further, responsible consumption patterns enhance business performance (Nishitani & Kokubu, 2020) and improve the financial performance of businesses through cost reduction, good reputation, and enhanced competitiveness (Alshehhi *et al.*, 2018). However, based on the result of the current study, the absence of responsible consumption, which connotes irresponsible consumption patterns, will result in unsustainable entrepreneurial success.

Fourth and finally, our results show that micropreneurship activities significantly and positively influence unsustainable entrepreneurial success through irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns. These findings are conversely aligned with the outcome of Vallaster *et al.*'s (2019) study that responsible entrepreneurship activities are characterised by sustainable impact. Ahmad *et al.* (2020) state that sustainable entrepreneurship practices will eventually result in firm sustainability. Hazudin *et al.* (2023) discovered that sustainable entrepreneurship practices can predict the performance of micropreneurships. However, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and bankruptcy (or unsustainable entrepreneurial success) result because entrepreneurs are not willing to adopt and demonstrate the inherent competencies and principles that are associated with sustainable entrepreneurship (Kimuli *et al.*, 2021). Entrepreneurs who develop and maintain socially and environmentally friendly relationships with their stakeholders through the adoption of responsible entrepreneurship practices and encouragement of responsible consumption patterns will achieve sustained operations over time (Attanasio *et al.*, 2021; Kimuli *et al.*, 2021).

Further, the current results are not directly in consonance with that of previous studies that suggest that: sustainable consumption patterns mediate the relationship between environmental collaboration with customers and business performance (Santos *et al.*, 2019); responsible consumption and production mediate the association between environmental collaboration with the logistics department and business performance (de Borba *et al.*, 2021); and responsible consumption and production practices fully mediate the relationship between environmental collaboration with customers and logistics providers, and business performance (Mishra *et al.*, 2022). Roffé and González (2024) add that sustainability is an ethical and environmental imperative and an opportunity to enhance profitability and business competitiveness. However, irresponsibility on the part of entrepreneurs and/or consumers in the form of irresponsible entrepreneurship and/or irresponsible consumption can result in unsustainable entrepreneurial success (Bocken & Short, 2016; Bocken *et al.*, 2021; Gunawan *et al.*, 2024; Khan, 2023; Sokołowska-Durkalec, 2024). As such, concerning the stakeholder theory, responsible entrepreneurship practices are

not yet enshrined into the entrepreneurial activities of micropreneurships in Abuja, while responsible consumption is still not well developed as a pattern among consumers in the capital city of Nigeria.

Theoretical implications

Our study has made six theoretical contributions to the existing literature. First, it has, through the theoretical framework, brought to the fore the novel interactions among micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, irresponsible consumption patterns, and unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Thus, highlights the importance of holistically addressing micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, and irresponsible consumption patterns in the quest to sustain the success of micropreneurships and to manage social and environmental challenges like indiscriminate dumping of refuse.

Second, our results extend the existing literature on micropreneurship by empirically investigating the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success with irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns as mediators.

Third, the linkages among micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, irresponsible consumption patterns, and unsustainable entrepreneurial success have extended the stakeholder theory scope by helping us to understand that in addition to the responsible entrepreneurs and responsible consumers, all the irresponsible entrepreneurs and irresponsible consumers around a focal micropreneurship are also its stakeholders.

Fourth, based on our significant and positive relationships among micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, irresponsible consumption patterns, and unsustainable entrepreneurial success, the stakeholder theory is validated in the micropreneurship domain and the Nigerian context. This is not only in terms of the irresponsible entrepreneurs and irresponsible consumers gaining or losing when the micropreneurships fail, but also concerning the possibility of their irresponsibility contributing to the unsustainability of the success of the micropreneurships.

Fifth, while prior studies have always reported inadequate funding, lack of infrastructural facilities (Babbuli, 2018; Ele et al., 2024; Mugaiga & Tugume, 2020), high employee costs (Ombongi & Long, 2018), lack of experience and multiple taxation (Ali et al., 2020) as the factors contributing to the failure of SMEs, our study specifically focused on micropreneurships to empirically demonstrate that micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns influences unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Thus, a unique departure from previous findings and a potential contribution to the achievement of SDG 12.

Sixth, our results validate the assertion that success in today's business milieu is no longer measured solely based on financial indicators. Rather, a combination of financial and non-financial indicators (Agbim et al., 2023; Khan, 2023). This integrated metric enhances informed decision-making, accountability, social/environmental management, and sustainable success.

Managerial implications

The results of our study offer four practical implications for practitioners and policymakers. First, our study sheds light on the micropreneurship activities (i.e., opportunities recognition and exploitation/exploration, retailing, maintenance, and repair activities) that can engender unsustainable entrepreneurial success. This knowledge can guide practitioners in selecting the activity or activities to engage in and in ensuring that they get prepared adequately before launching their enterprises to minimise or avoid unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Policymakers and the relevant regulatory agencies can further put in place mechanisms for assisting micropreneurs in the selection and implementation processes of their chosen activities.

Second, our results have presented irresponsible entrepreneurial practices as one of the factors that can significantly contribute to the unsustainable entrepreneurial success of micropreneurships. Practitioners can draw insights from this finding that will influence them to avoid practices such as indiscriminate dumping of refuse in unapproved sites and unkempt business premises that are dotted with heaps of refuse and nauseating stench that can repel customers. Policy makers can further drive responsible entrepreneurship through enforceable policies that will encourage micropreneurs and micropreneurships to offer only socially and environmentally friendly products/services to their customers.

Third, it can be inferred from our result on the contributory role of irresponsible consumption patterns to unsustainable entrepreneurial success that consumers' choices, demands, and preferences can influence and drive responsible and sustainable practices (Khan, 2023). As such, entrepreneurs and consumers are needed to jointly provide solutions to the challenge of unsustainable entrepreneurial success (Esmaeilpour & Bahmiary, 2017; Potocan et al., 2016). This finding should inspire the practitioners to collaborate among themselves and with their customers in the neighbourhood in the matter of managing social and environmental challenges. The collaboration can take the form of agreeing on days to jointly clean the streets and the drainages, placing waste bins at designated points and emptying the same at dump sites regularly. Policy makers can assist with policies that should encourage the practitioners to educate their customers on the significance of proper waste disposal. The practitioners can do this by crafting such messages on their business sign post, give away stickers, take away bags, and even via word of mouth.

Fourth, based on our findings on the roles of micropreneurship practices and irresponsible entrepreneurship practices in the achievement of unsustainable entrepreneurial success, we suggest that in addition to the practitioners collaborating with the concerned stakeholders to manage social and environmental challenges, the practitioners should make the provision of social welfare and cleaning of the drainages and the entire surroundings of their business premises part of their business activities. This is important because it can further endear their micropreneurships to both existing and would-be customers and, by extension, sustain the success of their micropreneurships.

Limitations and future research

There are inherent limitations in this study that can inhibit the application of the results. First, even though the cross-sectional data utilised in this study facilitated the investigation of the interplay among the study variables, it did not reveal the changes that occurred over time. Future researchers can investigate and understand more accurately the causalities among the variables by adopting longitudinal research design and data.

Second, the geographical scope of the study is micropreneurships that conduct their businesses in streets within Abuja. This implies that the interpretation and application of the results are restricted to the micropreneurship domain and Abuja. To validate the current result, further researchers can widen this scope to cover a geopolitical zone in Nigeria or another part of the world.

Third, this study only considered irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns in the investigation of the mediators of the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success. Since other environmental factors can mediate or even moderate this relationship, future studies can employ factors such as environmental collaboration and family background as either mediators or moderators.

Fourth, with the rising cost of doing business in Nigeria, a critical look at the research model empirically suggests that there is room for another theoretical construct that can be used in place of micropreneurship activities to improve the model's fitness. Future researchers who wish to situate similar studies in Nigeria or other parts of the world should, therefore, consider replacing the construct.

Fifth, the respondents in this study were micropreneurs and loyal customers. Since this can limit the research findings when the scope and population of the study are widened, future researchers should consider former customers as respondents.

Conclusions

The results of this study reveal that the relationships among micropreneurship activities, irresponsible entrepreneurship practices, irresponsible consumption patterns, and unsustainable entrepreneurial success, and the mediating

effects of irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns on the relationship between micropreneurship activities and unsustainable entrepreneurial success are positive. Overall, in addition to factors such as lack of finance and infrastructure, the study empirically demonstrates that micropreneurship activities through irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns significantly contribute to the unsustainable entrepreneurial successes of micropreneurships. This study extends previous literature in the fields of micropreneurship, responsible entrepreneurship, responsible consumption, and entrepreneurial success by integrating the study constructs.

Again, with recourse to the commonplaceness of micropreneurships and their attendant social and environmental irresponsibility in developing economies such as Nigeria, the results of this study present proper management of micropreneurship activities as a strategy for down turning the unsustainable entrepreneurial success in the domain of micropreneurships. Similarly, based on the growing need to achieve the SDGs; specifically, SDG 12 and sustainable business success, the results of this study constitute a case on the importance of addressing irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns so that the responsible entrepreneurship and responsible consumers that will emerge will facilitate the achievement of the SDGs and sustainable entrepreneurial successes. This novel investigation of micropreneurship activities about unsustainable entrepreneurial success with irresponsible entrepreneurship practices and irresponsible consumption patterns as mediators is pioneered by this study. Looking forward, further studies that will employ longitudinal data with the same or new theoretical constructs to determine the causality among the study variables and to enhance the generalisability of the current results are recommended.

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Shared Variance; MPA = Micropreneurship Activities; UES = Unsustainable Entrepreneurial Success; IEP = Irresponsible Entrepreneurship Practices; ICP = Irresponsible Consumption Patterns

Appendix A for Table 1

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
Convergent and Discriminant Validity Check Reliability Test
Variables Indicators Loading AVE DV MSV
MaxR (H) CR Cronbachs' α

MPA	MPA1	0.857						
	MPA2	0.872						
	MPA3	0.831						
	MPA4	0.792	0.736	0.88	0.797	0.762	0.83	0.82
	MPA5	0.883						
	MPA6	0.854						
IEP	IEP10	0.840						
	IEP20	0.861						
	IEP30	0.798	0.722	0.845	0.830	0.805	0.84	0.81
	IEP40	0.941						
	IEP50	0.938						
ICP	ICP1	0.914						
	ICP2	0.863						
	ICP3	0.821	0.772	0.878	0.842	0.910	0.81	0.84
	ICP4	0.765						
	ICP5	0.736						
	ICP6	0.731						
	ICP7	0.722						
	ICP8	0.699						
	ICP9	0.881						
UES	UES1	0.860						
	UES2	0.822						
	UES3	0.842	0.872	0.934	0.832	0.844	0.86	0.88
	UES4	0.891						
	UES5	0.827						
	UES6	0.844						
	UES7	0.867						
	UES8	0.799						
	UES9	0.752						

Note: AVE = Average variance extracted; DV = Discriminant Validity; CR = Composite Reliability; MSV = Maximum