

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSONALITY ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN YEMEN: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Submetido 21/10/2020 - Aceito 22/06/2021
DOI: 10.15628/holos.2021.11420

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the need for social entrepreneurship is highly emphasized as a fast and efficient tool to address complex socio-economic and humanitarian crises that today's world is plagued more than ever in history. Despite the general recognition that personality traits are important for social entrepreneurial activity, there is currently no insight into which traits make up the social entrepreneurial personality. Number of authors argued that social entrepreneurs share many personality traits with commercial entrepreneurs besides they are also characterized by distinct social traits. However, there is a lack of studies investigating the combined effect of classical entrepreneurial orientation and prosocial

orientation as elements of social entrepreneurial personality on social entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, this study aims to fulfil this gap by proposing a conceptual framework on the combined effect of both classical entrepreneurial orientation (risk-taking, innovativeness, proactivity) and prosocial orientation (empathy and social responsibility) as elements of social entrepreneurial personality on social entrepreneurial intention among university graduates in Yemen. This framework could be useful for universities and other stakeholders to produce graduates with holistic social entrepreneurship traits that guide them to choose social entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial orientation, prosocial orientation, Yemeni graduates.

O IMPACTO DA PERSONALIDADE SOCIAL EMPREENDEDORA NA INTENÇÃO SOCIAL EMPREENDEDORA ENTRE GRADUADOS UNIVERSITÁRIOS NO IÊMEN: UM ENQUADRAMENTO CONCEITUAL

RESUMO

Hoje em dia, a necessidade de empreendedorismo social é altamente enfatizada como uma ferramenta rápida e eficiente para enfrentar as crises socioeconômicas e humanitárias complexas que o mundo de hoje é mais atormentado do que nunca na história. Apesar do reconhecimento geral de que os traços de personalidade são importantes para a atividade do empreendedorismo social, atualmente não há uma percepção de quais traços constituem a personalidade do empreendedor social. Vários autores argumentaram que os empreendedores sociais compartilham muitos traços de personalidade com os empreendedores comerciais, além de serem caracterizados por traços sociais distintos. No entanto, faltam estudos que investiguem o efeito combinado da orientação empreendedora clássica e da orientação pró-

social como elementos da personalidade empreendedora social na intenção empreendedora social. Portanto, este estudo visa preencher essa lacuna ao propor um quadro conceitual sobre o efeito combinado da orientação empreendedora clássica (assunção de riscos, inovatividade, proatividade) e orientação pró-social (empatia e responsabilidade social) como elementos da personalidade empreendedora social no empreendedorismo social. intenção entre os graduados universitários no Iêmen. Esta estrutura pode ser útil para as universidades e outras partes interessadas produzirem graduados com características de empreendedorismo social holístico que os orientem a escolher o empreendedorismo social como uma carreira viável.

Palavras-chave: Intenção social empreendedora, orientação empreendedora, orientação pró-social, graduados iemenitas.



1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, millions of Yemenis lacking a means of supporting themselves or their households, and find it increasingly difficult to purchase the basic necessities required to survive (World Bank, 2019). The ongoing conflict causing relentless economic deterioration and driving the nation towards widespread famine and aggravating needs in all sectors. It is widely regarded as having converted a poor country into a humanitarian catastrophe that described as "the worst and largest famine in the world at present" (UNOCHA, 2019). What makes this matter worse is the economic and social fallout of COVID-19 crisis that spread recently, which is expected to have enormous negative effects for the long run (Pak et al., 2020).

The Yemen's worsening economic and humanitarian crises wake-up a call for mustering all available energies that can deal with all of such hazards. In particular, it creates a pressing need for innovative business models that address corresponding social and financial emergencies in efficient way. Among various business models, social entrepreneurship has become more relevant than ever before, especially in the societies struck by conflict, crisis or natural disaster where such these issues are more prominent (Chandra & Paras, 2020; Sserwanga, Kiconco, Nystrand, & Mindra, 2014). Social entrepreneurship places an explicit focus on practical response to unmet individual and societal needs, as well as pursuit of economic and environmental objectives simultaneously (Haugh, 2007). It is a distinct form of entrepreneurial endeavor that provide innovative and sustainable solutions for pressing social and environmental issues, such as poverty, inequity, poor medical care and education, youth unemployment and so forth (Shaker A Zahra, Newey, & Li, 2014).

Despite scholarly works have shown that social entrepreneurship is a powerful tool to reduce social issues, Yemeni youths have not embraced social entrepreneurship widely (Al-Khalqi, 2017). In fact, individuals' participation in social entrepreneurship activities hinges heavily on their spirit of voluntarism (Ernst, 2011, Radin et al., 2017). In this relation, the level of voluntary participation among young Yemenis are low, in which their willingness to engage in social entrepreneurship activities is less likely to do so compared to Arab countries (Silatech Index Rankings, 2013). Thus, more efforts to develop social entrepreneurial mind-set and generate entrepreneurial behaviour in students is needed (Alshebami, Al-Jubari, Alyoussef, & Raza, 2020). "It is imperative to develop the youth and young people's capacities and potentials and to make them better able to pave their own paths, depend on themselves, help their families and build their country" (IBP, 2013, p.201). Government and other stakeholders should consider new initiatives that encourage the development of new social business as a viable career choice. Students and graduates should be papered well to involve in the field of entrepreneurship and become self-employed instead of going for a conventional job based on salary (Al-Jubari, 2015). This is particularly important in Yemen because the employment and income opportunities have significantly diminished, as well as the most salaries of current employees at public sector have been suspended by Central Bank of Yemen in August 2016 onwards (Nasser, 2018).



Considering the above, some important questions have been rising; how the levels of social entrepreneurship activities can be increased? “why some people become entrepreneurs while others do not”, how far the graduates can change their goal setting from maximizing profits solely to social orientation in starting a business? To figure out the answer, researchers study about intentions of individuals to become entrepreneurs (T. P. A. Tran, 2018). As the current literatures have revealed that personality traits are important for social entrepreneurial activity (Stephan & Drencheva, 2017), there is strategic imperative to understand better the personality traits that influence social entrepreneurship intentions. In literature, number of authors argued that social entrepreneurs share many personality traits with commercial entrepreneurs (risk-taking, innovativeness, proactivity) besides they are also characterized by distinct social traits, such as empathy and social responsibility (Ernst, 2012; Rahman & Pihie, 2014). However, there is a lack of studies investigating such traits on social entrepreneurial intention, especially in least developing countries like Yemen. In addition, there are several calls for more research to be conducted among university students and graduates in order mobilize them to become change agents in their communities (Mandyoli, Iwu, & Nxopo, 2017; Leon C Prieto, Phipps, & Friedrich, 2012; Waghid & Oliver, 2017).

Therefore, based on the theory of planed behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), this study aims to fulfil this gap by proposing a conceptual framework on how both classical entrepreneurial orientation and prosocial orientation as elements of social entrepreneurial personality effect social entrepreneurial intention among university graduates in Yemen. This will be done using quantitative research approach with survey questionnaire in gathering data from respondents. By doing so, graduates will have high potential in transforming from job seekers to job opportunities generators, thereby bridging the existing gab in social needs. Pursuing a career in businesses with social aim will not only provide financial independence for graduates, but also makes a significant contribution to improve the standard of living, economy, welfare, education and health.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Entrepreneurial personality

Within social entrepreneurship literature, it has been founded that personality traits bear a significant influence on practicing social entrepreneurship activities (Valle et al., 2018). According to (Stephan & Drencheva, 2017), the selection of social entrepreneurial activity as career in some individuals can be linked to their personality traits, where individuals are drawn towards such type of business if they see their personalities, impetuses, and expertise align with the necessities of that occupational decision. Thus, there is a need to take insight into which traits make up social entrepreneurs’ personality which may influence their desire toward pursuing social entrepreneurship as a career path. The majority of scholars suggest that social entrepreneur has a mixture personality of business orientation and socially orientation (Ernst, 2011; Simms &



Robinson, 2006). This implies that social entrepreneur uses the same commercial techniques and strategies utilized by the traditional entrepreneur, but they are different in their deep commitment to a social cause (Guclu, Dees, & Anderson, 2002; Pomerantz, 2003). This is backed also by several authors who contended that social entrepreneurs share several persona qualities with commercial businesspersons such as innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactivity (Satar & Natasha, 2019; Sulphey & Salim, 2020), plus they are distinguished by discrete social traits, like empathy and social obligation (Rahman & Pihie, 2014; Stephan & Drencheva, 2017). In this sense, entry in social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs are not enough to have classical entrepreneurial orientation character only, they should characterize by pro-social orientation as well which is primarily. This view is a central of this study.

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is a major, extensively deployed theoretic concept in business entrepreneurial studies, especially those related to the performance at firm level. It is defined as “the strategy-making processes that provide organisations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions” (Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, & Frese, 2009, p.762). According to Abdulrab et al. (2021) entrepreneurial orientation is a crucial factor in organizational success. According to Abdulrab et al. (2020) entrepreneurial orientation is a critical factor that develops the competitive advantages of an organization. According to Al-Mamary et al. (2020a) entrepreneurial orientation is a tendency of businesses to act autonomously and innovative, take risks and is taking proactive initiatives to potential market conditions. In general, scholars have been hesitant to use entrepreneurial orientation in social entrepreneurship context. Most of what is known about the topic is based on organisations level, which ascertains a business entity’s performance e.g (Abaho, Begumisa, Aikiriza, & Turyasingura, 2017; Alarifi, Robson, & Kromidha, 2019; Ma, Kim, Heo, & Jang, 2012). However, its link to the individual level has been given a little attention, despite its constructs have been demonstrated to be applicable to the individual level (Langkamp Bolton & Lane, 2012). This suggestion created new spaces for scholars to investigate the entrepreneurial orientation from a new level and viewpoint (Koe, 2016). Specifically, further studies on the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on individual’s intention to start-up a new social enterprise is critically required in order to clarify this relationship. From the social perspective, entrepreneurial orientation is best signified by three elements namely, proactive, risk-taking and innovation as they were essential for the majority of the works (Ernst, 2012; Rahman & Pihie, 2014; Satar & Natasha, 2019; Sulphey & Salim, 2020).

- Proactiveness

Proactive behaviour is related to actions taken in anticipation of opportunities or problems in advance of others (Morris, Webb, & Franklin, 2011). A proactive persona aids people in tackling anticipated or unanticipated events and transformations as well as empowers them to impact and change their environment, especially when the environment is taxing or hostile, such as the one



which the majority of entrepreneurs encounter (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). It also espouses a forward looking outlook which pursues and ascertains possibly grave societal concerns and essentially invests in programmes which aid in controlling the damage to society (Kiruki, 2016). Hence, this triggers remarkable repercussions as it associates with social entrepreneurship since the main function of social entrepreneurs is to tackle social and ecological concerns. This is corroborated through relevant studies that hints at the necessity of existence of this trait in social entrepreneurs to recognize opportunity around and to take advantage of it to create meaningful change in their communities (Bargsted, Picon, Salazar, & Rojas, 2013; Light, 2005; Mair & Marti, 2006). In addition, the majority of empirical findings points out that there exists a statistically significant positive relationship between social entrepreneurial intentions and proactive personality (Chipeta, 2019; Ernst, 2011; Leon Christopher Prieto, 2010).

- Risk-taking propensity

The risk taking tendency attribute pertains to a conduct which ascertains the inclination and readiness of a person to assume risk when venturing into a business (Begley, 1995). According to Al-Mamary et al. (2020b) Risk-taking was historically a major feature linked with entrepreneurship. Chipeta and Surujlal (2017) presume that each individual may have a different risk assuming tendency; some might be high risk takers whereas some might be averse to it. Individuals with high level of risk taking are have a high potential to do something new even if they have no guarantee (Mwiya, 2014). In social entrepreneurship literature, early scholars ascribe this trait to social entrepreneurs, as they take actions boldly in spite of any kinds of challenges and there is less chance that fear might stop them from kicking off enterprises (Dees, 1998; Leadbeater, 1997). Contemporary scholars continue to view proclivity to take risks as crucial trait of social entrepreneurs seeking to bring a positive change in society as there are higher and more wide-ranging barriers and risks than commercial sector (Choi, Kim, & Kim, 2019; Ghalwash, Tolba, & Ismail, 2017; Nicolás, Rubio, & Fernández-Laviada, 2018; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). In addition, empirical findings points out that risk taking is positively related to social entrepreneurial intention (Chipeta, 2015; Chipeta & Surujlal, 2017).

- Innovativeness

According to Miller (2011), innovativeness pertains to the readiness to spawn something new through ingenuity and experimentation, thus providing original or upgraded products, services, or practices. According to some researchers, innovation is integral in the function of entrepreneurship (Caird, 1991; Rauch & Frese, 2007). Likewise, innovativeness is said to possess the same function in social entrepreneurship in spite of the fact that the attention is on creating new products/services or adding new value for the existing one with the aim of overpowering intricate social issues in community (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Portales, 2019). To do so, social entrepreneurs have to be more resourceful and innovative when it comes to addressing social



issues in a financially sustainable way (Shaker A. Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009), especially, in environments characterised as uncertain and ambiguous. They described as “scarce breed” or revolutionaries who continuously find creative and innovative ways to materialize their social value effort (Dees, 1998). Other studies also established that innovativeness has a considerable influence on the intention of individuals to get involved in social entrepreneurship activity (Cavazos-Arroyo, Puente-Díaz, & Agarwal, 2017; Elliott, 2019; W. L. Tan, 2010).

Consistent with the aforementioned views, we formulate the following proposition;

H1: Entrepreneurial Orientation is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

H1a: Proactiveness is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

H1b: Risk taking is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

H1c: Innovativeness is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

2.1.2 Prosocial orientation

Prosocial orientation is defined as “voluntary behavior intended to benefit another” (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006, p. 646). This concept covers an assortment of fundamental approaches and emotional states like altruism, empathy, sympathy, compassion, ethical judgement, social responsibility, concern and so on. Such attributes drive an individual to act when the suffering of others stimulates them (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Miller, Grimes, McMullen, and Vogus (2012) demonstrated that this pro-social orientation is actually the essential differentiator between commercial and social entrepreneurs. Other indicated that prosocial orientation is an essential condition for the involvement in social entrepreneurship activities as an individual sans a pro-social behaviour would not seek to espouse social entrepreneurship (Douglas & Prentice, 2019). In other words, entrepreneurs who are prosocially motivated better positioned to see social entrepreneurship as desirable (Asante, Affum-Osei, & Danquah, 2020). In study context, a blend of risk-taking, proactiveness, and innovation is not enough in the absence of a pro-social personality characterised by empathy and social responsibility to be social entrepreneur.

- Empathy

Empathy outlines the capability of an individual to put oneself in other person’s shoes (Ernst, 2012). It appears precisely in reaction to another individual’s pain and can drive someone to turn into a social entrepreneur (Rashid et al., 2018). Meaning that person who can intellectually recognise and emotionally share emotions and feelings of another person will likely develop a desire to help as well as do whatever is important to mitigate the suffering of this person (Mair & Noboa, 2003). This is confirmed by the results of meta-analysis on the significant relationship between empathy and helping others (Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001). Various social

entrepreneurship scholars regard empathy as a key important characteristic pertaining to social entrepreneurs that allows them to identify opportunities in social sector, which could result in generating action for the sake of others as well as cast a real impact on the community (Dees, 2012; Mair & Marti, 2006; Wood, 2012). Additionally, other empirical studies shown that empathy has a positive effect on social entrepreneurial intention (Forster & Grichnik, 2013; Hockerts, 2017; Medyanik & Al-Jawni, 2017; Teise & Urban, 2015).

- Social responsibility

Social responsibility can be defined as an individual's obligation toward society, wherein the individual realises the social impact cast by his or her decisions or actions towards others, or society as a whole (Secchi, 2009). It is a trait that leads to a sense of responsibility to help those individuals who are in distress (Bierhoff, 2002). Scholars have proposed the social responsibility is closely linked with social entrepreneurship activities (Besley & Ghatak, 2017; Hemingway, 2005). In such a manner, specific works pertaining to social entrepreneurship signify that sensitivity towards the feelings of others results in motivation of social entrepreneurs in order to create social enterprises (Ernst, 2011; Kim, Moon, Kim, Koh, & Shin, 2019; Luc, 2020). This is supported by other recent study that has shown that social responsibility is positively associated with social entrepreneurial intention (Bazan et al., 2020). As social entrepreneurs bear social needs as a personal responsibility, there is a dire need for those kind of entrepreneurs for fulfilling the societal needs especially those unmet by public and business sector.

As a large stream of literature found positive and significant relationship between the pro-social personality acclimatisation of social responsibility and empathy with Social Entrepreneurial Intention, this suggests the following proposition;

H2: Prosocial Orientation is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

H2a: Empathy is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

H2b: Social responsibility is positively associated with Social Entrepreneurial Intention

2.2 Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Recently, governments, practitioners and researchers have been increasing their interests and efforts to understand the complex process of social enterprise creation (Chell, Spence, Perrini, & Harris, 2016). In this regards, researchers study about intentions of individuals to create a new enterprise because without it, their actual behavioural activities cannot be understood. Studying entrepreneurial intention is considered as the first step in understanding why someone chooses a career in salaried job, self-employment or establish a new business (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014). Individuals with high intention are more likely to launch their own venture than those with low intention (Krueger, 2007). Therefore, identifying the factors that shaping individual's intention to create an enterprise with social aims is reasonable and meaningful (A. T. Tran & Von Korfflesch, 2016).



In social entrepreneurship literature, despite many factors have been found to influence social entrepreneurial intention (L. P. Tan, Le, & Xuan, 2019; Wahid, Ayob, Hussain, & Ismail, 2018), there is still a lack such studies, especially in least developing countries like Yemen. Therefore, this study will fulfil this gap by solidifying the applicability and use of classical entrepreneurial orientation and prosocial orientation as combined elements of social entrepreneurial traits of individual seeking to become social entrepreneur as suggested by (Ernst, 2012). These traits are proactiveness, innovation, risk taking propensity, empathy, and social responsibility.

3. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that identifies the relationship between social entrepreneurial personality and social entrepreneurial intention among university graduate or students in Yemen. The framework has linked the direct relationship of social entrepreneurial personality with social entrepreneurial intention. The original relationship shows two main variables; 1) entrepreneurial orientation, which is conceived to have three underlying dimensions; proactiveness, risk taking and innovativeness, and 2) prosocial orientation, which is conceived to have two underlying dimensions; empathy, and social responsibility. As stated above, the existing literature revealed these variable influence social entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the research conceptual framework is constructed as shown in Figure.

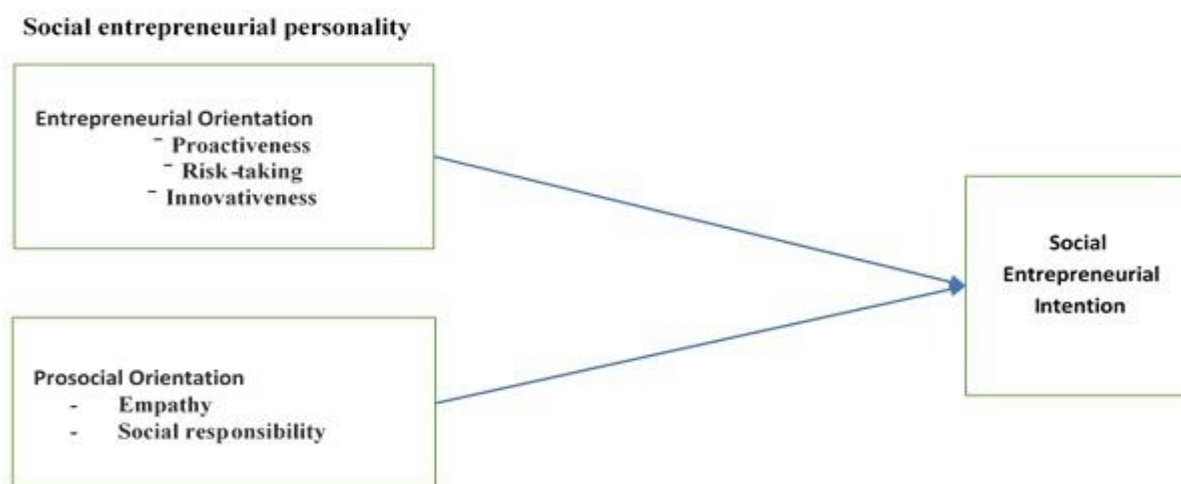


Figure 1: The Proposed Model

The study will use quantitative approach with questionnaire survey in collecting the data from university graduates in Yemen. Particularly, the target respondents consist of final year students in Yemeni universities as the proxy of university graduates because there is no database of contact details for graduates. Final year students were selected because they are near to complete their studies and are face imminent professional choices, thereby launching an own social venture can be a realistic option for some. In addition, “this population is considered one of the most sensitive to the development of social entrepreneurship projects” (Capella-Peris, Gil-Gómez, Martí-Puig, & Ruíz-Bernardo, 2020).

The study responds to the need for more social entrepreneurs as catalysts for developing the

country's economy and addressing Yemen's worsening economic and humanitarian crises. What makes this study of importance is that Yemen is a country where a large proportion of population aged between 15 and 30 years, thus, young people have more chances to involve in social entrepreneurial activities. In addition, Yemen is experiencing a problem of high youth unemployment and therefore there is need to explore determinants of social entrepreneurship in order to understand how to promote them to engage in social entrepreneurship activities. Such effort would benefit the society and indirectly succeed in minimizing unemployment problems amongst graduates. This further provides the impetus for the type of research being proposed.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study has reviewed current literature associated with the role of social entrepreneurial personality on individual's intention to be a social entrepreneur. As indicated above, prior literatures have stressed upon the significance of social personality traits to better understand social entrepreneurship process. In fact, an individual is crucial to the new venture formation procedure, and selection of entrepreneurial activity as career in some individuals can be linked to their personality types. Thus, the complex social, economic and environment problems in Yemen imperative policy makers, universities and other stakeholder to produce graduates with holistic social entrepreneurship traits to consider social entrepreneurship as an opportunity for their career paths. Pursuing a career in social entrepreneurship results in reducing unemployment rate, empowering youth besides contributing to greater social justice and minimizing or mitigating social issues. In this sense, this research will provide insights into how social entrepreneurial intention can be formulated among university graduates or students. A proposed framework and hypotheses were devolved, and will be empirically tested among Yemeni graduates.

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Editor(a) Responsável: Francinaide de Lima Silva Nascimento

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