

# **THE DOMINANT AREAS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A SURVEY STUDY OF PREFERENCES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

There is a growing trend of an enterprise in the domain of entrepreneurship which is attracting a considerable attention from the academics, business professionals, movies stars, and politicians. The new kid on the block is called social entrepreneurship (SE) who has a big heart and a bright future for midwifering of essentials needed by the have-nots of society [5] [6] [7]. In order to encourage students, our future executives, to engage in SE after graduation from college, emerging SE centers on campuses would want to know in which areas students prefer to get involved, should conditions permit. Equipped with this knowledge, campus centers would be able to gather and disseminate information to its stakeholders accordingly.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of social entrepreneurship centers on the “win-win” strategy of doing well financially while doing “good” for society [2]. As the practice of SE proliferated, it has branched out into a couple of dozens of challenging areas where society needed much assistance such as in filling the gap in the digital divide, providing affordable housing, finding alternative energy sources, discovering efficient water purification methods, etc. [4] [2]. Altogether there are twenty mutually exclusive major areas of SE specialization opportunities. Therefore, a survey study will be conducted to determine for the first time the dominant areas of preference as reported by a sample of 666 college students.

Throughout the ages, empires have risen and empires have fallen, only one thing has remained constant, namely lack of adequate social services. In modern times, the British Empire has been so vast and so rich that people used to say “The sun will never set on the British Empire.” Even the richest empires of them all could not muster up enough resources to go around to the segments of the population stricken with poverty.

In the olden days, it was “noblesse oblige;” the burden was on nobility to take care of the poor to some extent. The rest was picked up by the church, which used social services to maintain or attract new members and converts. Charitable actions or disposition toward those classes perceived as low or lacking necessities of life were not well organized. Although entrepreneurs existed for centuries, social entrepreneurs are the recent breeds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, the United States is the richest country in the world and yet it has to depend on not-for-profit organizations, charities, churches, and social entrepreneurs to meet the growing demand for social services in an environment where the divide between the haves and have-nots seems never possible to bridge. These are the times of challenge and change. Our business students will define the destiny of social entrepreneurship in our society.

### **Significance of the Research**

A thorough search of the literature failed to disclose of any previous studies on determining the SE areas of interest or preference to college students [3]. Differences in gender preferences of SE areas will also

be needed to be studied. To avoid information overload and to tailor their efforts to the needs of students and the community members, it is imperative for the SE centers across the nation to obtain empirical data on students' preferences of SE areas.

The present study is the first of its kind and it will contribute immensely to the objective of the Briarcliff College Team and others in helping them by guiding the efforts of scholars in doing research in the direction of college students' preferred areas of SE and also in assisting them establish a data base on SE preferred areas for dissemination of information.

## METHODOLOGY

### The Sample Design

To determine the dominant areas of social entrepreneurship preferred by students to engage in after graduation as a community service, a sample of six hundred sixty six (666) business students at a large university was used. In terms of gender, the sample was almost evenly distributed between male and female students to measure gender based preferences.

### Research Instrument

For research instrument, based on an extensive review of the literature, twenty areas of specialization in social entrepreneurship were identified as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The Areas of Social Entrepreneurship as Categorized into Sciences and Humanities Type of Endeavors

<i>Sciences</i>	<i>Humanities</i>
1. Digital Divide	1. Affordable Housing
2. Alternative Energy	2. Health
3. Environmental Industry	3. Bioethics
4. Agriculture	4. Education
5. Water	5. Literacy
6. Forestry	6. Diversity
7. Nutrition	7. Multiculturalism
8. Medical	8. Entrepreneurial Opportunities for the Disabled
9. Funding for the Socially Entrepreneurial Venture	9. Human Rights
	10. Social Services
	11. Corporate Social Responsibility/ Performance

## RESULTS

Chi-square technique of analysis was applied to the data. Of the 11 SE areas, "Education" was rated the highest and "Entrepreneurial Opportunities for the Disabled" was rated the least preferred area without making any gender distinction..

It should be noted that "Health" was second in preference to "Education" and "Nutrition" held the third place. Without belaboring the obvious, "Health" and "Nutrition" are allied topics in general of physical fitness and wellbeing.

As for the analysis of the data categorized based on the gender of the respondents, again Chi-square analysis was applied to the frequency of responses. Of the nine statistically significant areas, “Health,” “Literacy,” and “Education” areas were preferred more by female respondents than by their male counterparts. Nurturing nature of females could perhaps explain the difference in the magnitude of preference.

## CONCLUSION

As it has been indicated earlier, “Education” was selected as the most preferred area in SE irrespective of the gender of the respondents. However, taking gender into consideration, the most dominant area preferred by both male and female students based on the analysis of the data to be “Health” .

Finally, the comparative preference of SE dominant areas showed consistent results. In all nine areas that were statistically significant, females showed greater preference than their male counterparts. Again, the disparity in the strength of preference could plausibly be explained that females are more caring and nurturing by nature. This observation is consonant with the courts usual practice of assigning children to the mother in custody matters because of their natural tendencies to nurse children.

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