

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY: TESTING AN EMPIRICAL MODEL WITH EVIDENCE FROM A MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship is an emerging field at the cross roads of government, non-profit and entrepreneurship, with very few studies providing insights into the factors affecting social entrepreneurs. The present study, wherein data was collected from four different countries, aims at bridging this gap in the literature. The study proposes and tests an empirical model which not only provides insights into four factors affecting social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) (perseverance, altruism; attitude towards government and political skills) but also tests the mechanism by which social entrepreneurial self-efficacy (SESE) affects the relationship between these four factors and SEI.

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship is an emerging field at the cross roads of government, non-profit and entrepreneurship (Ashoka, 2001; Leadbeater & Goss, 1998; Nicholls, 2008; Thompson, Alvy, & Lees, 2000). There is little consensus among researchers as to the exact definition of a social entrepreneur given that it is a multi-faceted construct and the field is cross-disciplinary in nature (Brooks, 2008; Campbell, 1997; Kickul & Lyon, 2012). Consequently it has been defined in various ways by researchers from varied fields (Taylor, et al, 2000; Wei-Skillern, et al, 2007). Blair (1997; p. 35) broadly defined a social entrepreneur as, "those people who bring to social problems the same enterprise and imagination that business entrepreneurs bring to wealth creation". The important aspects of a social entrepreneur were that these individuals initiated social innovation and change; were passionate about solving a social issue and motivated by opportunities which allowed them to implement innovative solutions which were scalable and sustainable and also allowed creative use of resources (Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson *et al.*, 2000). As mentioned above there is no definitional consensus, however several researchers have suggested that future research should sought to provide some insights into the antecedents of social entrepreneurship and identify characteristics common to social entrepreneurs (Leadbeater, 1997; Leadbeater & Goss, 1998; Thake & Zadek, 1997).

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past decade, researchers, government, academia and the general public have seen a burgeoning interest in social entrepreneurs—who are perceived as transformational leaders and entrepreneurs who are passionate about solving social issues and serve as catalysts for social change (Sullivan Mort, G., Weerawardena, J., & Carnegie, K. (2003); Renko, 2012). The emerging field of social entrepreneurship utilizes entrepreneurial skills to provide creative, sustainable, scalable solutions to our most imperative social challenges (Bornstein, 2004; Bornstein & Davis, 2010; Kickul & Lyon, 2012; Wei- Skillern, Austin, Leonard, & Stevenson, 2007). It is an interdisciplinary field at the cross roads of business, nonprofit, and government, to solve social, political and ecological problems (Wallace, 1999; Yunus

2007; 2010). As entrepreneurs change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society, identifying and seizing opportunities for improving the social fabric by inventing new approaches, and creating solutions to change society for the better (Birley, Cromie, & Myers, 1990; Henton, Melville, & Walesh, 1997; Shane, & Venkataraman, 2000; Shaw, E., Shaw, J., & Wilson, 2002; Soh-Wee, 1996). Some of the historical and contemporary examples of leading social entrepreneurs provide further insight into the passion of these entrepreneurs who are both visionaries and ultimate realists, concerned with the practical implementation of their vision above all else: Susan B. Anthony (U.S.) fought for Women's Rights in the United States, including the right to control property and helped spearhead adoption of the 19th amendment; Vinoba Bhave (India) was the founder and leader of the Land Gift Movement, and caused the redistribution of more than 7,000,000 acres of land to aid India's untouchables and landless; Florence Nightingale (U.K.) was the founder of modern nursing who established the first school for nurses and fought to improve hospital conditions (Shaw & Carter, 2007; Thompson 2002;).

Contemporary social entrepreneurship inspired by previous generations is now changing the world through social engaged business practices (Hibbert, Hogg, & Quinn, 2001; Wallace, 1999; Waddock & Post, 1991; Weerawardena, & Sullivan, 2001; Wolk & Kreitz, 2008). The relentless work of these social entrepreneurs clearly illustrates that social innovation and entrepreneurship is of paramount importance to solving global issues, especially, in today's borderless world. The increasing number of articles, books, university courses, centers, foundations, and other organizations explicitly dedicated to it since the 1990s further supports this observation.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The sample will comprise of undergraduate students of business administration from China, Philippines, Russia, and the United States. University students were selected as the sample because the focus of our study is to understand the factors leading to social entrepreneurial *intention* rather than behavior and its impact on higher education. Additionally through education potential entrepreneurs are better equipped to realize their dreams (Foley & Griffith, 1998). It should also be noted that although the sample will include business administration students, entrepreneurial and managerial domains are not mutually exclusive but overlap to a certain extent with the former being more opportunity-driven, and the latter is more resource driven (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003).

Data Analysis

To test the empirical model we used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) implemented in AMOS. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a flexible multivariate analytic technique that allows researchers to test global hypotheses about competing theories as well as simultaneous testing multiple specific hypotheses such as those usually tested with ANOVA and regression. Two important strengths of SEM are that the effects of measurement error are disattenuated and it tests indirect and total effects in addition to simple direct effects. These strengths represent important advances over traditional general linear model approaches and have important implications in testing hypotheses involving mediation and moderation. Maximum-likelihood estimation method will be used, and for the input for each analysis the covariance matrix of the items was used. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) and Judd and Kenny (1981), when a mediational model involves latent constructs, SEM provides the basic data analyses strategy and I will be using the procedure mentioned by Hoyle and Smith (1994). Multiple regression or SEM can be used to test moderation, as the rationale of the analyses is the same in both methods (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004).

REFERENCES

References upon request.