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A Study Investigating the Factors Influencing Students' Intentions to Engage in Sustained Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Social enterprises are becoming increasingly important because they can effectively address social problems and help alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment, create jobs, solve environmental problems, and promote social and economic development, all of which are important in shaping the sustainability of the entrepreneurial economy. Therefore, it is important to discover how social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) can be enhanced. Previous scholars have studied aspects such as empathy, prior experience, and helping behavior based on psychological research. However, not all empathy individuals see great promise in setting up a social enterprise, and it is not feasible to interpret SEI through the self-orientation of traditional entrepreneurial research. In order to solve these limitations, based on the theory of prosocial motivation and TPB, this paper analyzes the generation mechanism of SEI and proposes to trigger SEI through complementary incentive mechanisms of internal individuals (empathy, self-efficacy) and external environment (entrepreneurial education and perceived social support). A recent study has aimed to identify SEI among undergraduate students in China. The study's findings support the hypotheses and are based on a sample of 411 university students. From the perspective of prosocial motivation, it proposes that SEI is driven by social value and individual motivation of self-efficacy, reveals the public mechanism of SEI of social value, and clarifies the "social" aspect of social entrepreneurship. This research provides valuable insights into social sustainability, guidelines for governments to further invest in developing educational programs, and for policymakers and planners to develop policies that promote social entrepreneurship.

Keywords

Empathy; Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy; Entrepreneurship Education; Perceived Social Support; Social Entrepreneurial Intention; Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Currently, social entrepreneurship has emerged as an important social force alongside government and market in addressing socioeconomic problems such as poverty, unemployment, environmental hazards, and wars. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call on the world to act together to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and futures of all people (United Nations, 2019). Social entrepreneurship is playing an increasingly important role in addressing social issues such as wealth disparity, environmental degradation, and unequal medical resources in a transitional society. Arguably, it raises social awareness, environmental sustainability, and creatively

helps solve social problems through the use of sustainable business models. Its basic ideas are highly consistent with the mainstream concept of sustainable development in the world today (Zeng, 2016), and shape sustainability in the entrepreneurial economy (Abdelwahed, 2022).

Social entrepreneurship attempts to alleviate many of the global challenges we face in many countries (Dacin, 2011). According to GEM's (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019) report, the global penetration rate of social entrepreneurship has increased to 4.0 percent in the last five years. As the cradle of social entrepreneurship, there were more than 100,000 social enterprises in the UK in 2019. First introduced in China since 2006, social entrepreneurship has grown rapidly and has had a substantial impact on both the government and the market. Chinese public undertakings have made great progress since the implementation Chinese Charity Law in 2016. In the last five years, more than half of all social enterprises have been founded (Liu, 2020). In terms of eradicating poverty, resolving employment issues, and enhancing the social environment, social entrepreneurship has had some success (Qin, 2021). For example, 50 special funds set up by the China Siyuan Project Foundation in cooperation with social enterprises have helped more than 1,650 counties and more than 25 million people in need. The China E-commerce Poverty Alleviation Alliance has linked up with more than 30 well-known e-commerce platforms through 7,309 local agricultural products enterprises and sold agricultural products worth 36.7 billion yuan for formerly impoverished counties, helping 1.69 million rural households lift themselves out of poverty or consolidate their achievements.

Social Entrepreneurship, as a new category of social organization, it is playing an increasingly important role in addressing social issues such as wealth gap, environmental degradation and unequal medical resources in transitional social situations (Renko, Kroeck, & Bullough, 2012; Lai, 2020). Social enterprises are critical to achieving sustainable development goals. Therefore, a survey of social enterprise intentions is needed today, and it is important to understand the antecedents of becoming a social entrepreneur. While traditional entrepreneurs may seek to create new products or services to meet market demand, social entrepreneurs are driven by a desire to address issues of poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, access to education and health care (Zhang, 2018; Ashraf, 2020). In order to elucidate the "social" aspect of SEI, scholars have studied aspects such as empathy, prior experience and helping behavior based on psychological research. One of the defining traits of social entrepreneurs is empathy (Hockerts, 2017). The capacity for empathy is to comprehend and share the feelings of another. Indeed, SEI are rooted in feelings of connection and care with others. However, there are two limitations in the current research in elaborating the "social" connotation of SEI. First, not all empathy individuals see great promise in setting up a social enterprise, and not all have intentions to do so. Second, it is not feasible to interpret self-orientation while the "pro-me" nature of traditional entrepreneurial intention focuses on individual motivation. Understanding the "pro-social" nature of SEI is crucial for researchers and practitioners who want to promote social entrepreneurship. It requires a shift in focus from traditional approaches to entrepreneurial research to a more holistic approach that takes into account the social and emotional factors that drive SEI (Miller et al., 2016; Bacq & Alt, 2018). In order to solve the above limitations, based on the theory of prosocial motivation and TPB, this paper analyzes the generation mechanism of SEI and proposes to trigger SEI through complementary incentive mechanisms of internal individuals (empathy, self-efficacy) and external environment (entrepreneurial education and perceived social support).

By examining the key factors that contribute to successful social entrepreneurship ventures, this study provides valuable insights for researchers and practitioners. The research value of this paper is embodied in two aspects: First, this study has expanded the already study on social entrepreneurship, from the perspective of prosocial motivation, it proposes that SEI is driven by social value and individual motivation of self-efficacy, reveals the public mechanism of social value and clarifies the "social" aspect. Secondly, social entrepreneurs are able to develop sustainable business models that generate revenue while creating positive social impact. It is promoted through individual pro-social actions such as entrepreneurship education, which is beneficial for stimulating social innovation and entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is not only about creating economic value, but also social value, promoting sustainable economic development and helping solve social problems. Overall, this research represents an important contribution to the growing field of social entrepreneurship. By expanding our knowledge of the field and highlighting the critical role of internal individuals and external circumstances, this research has the potential to catalyze new innovations and drive positive social change.

2. Theory background

2.1 Theorizing Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurship is a complex process involving various factors such as personal traits, environmental factors and

available resources. Intention models help to explain the complex nature of entrepreneurship by examining the motivations behind starting a business (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). The cognitive focus of intention is crucial in determining the success of an entrepreneurial venture. Intention refers to the set of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are essential for success in entrepreneurship. A person who has a strong belief in their ability to start and run a business is more likely to take risks, persevere through challenges to their goals. This cognitive focus also helps entrepreneurs stay motivated and focused on their objectives (Tiwari et al., 2017; Younis et al., 2020). However, having entrepreneurial intention is not enough- it requires personal knowledge and understanding (Do & Dadvari, 2017; Hassan, Igel, & Shamsuddoha, 2022). When someone has strong entrepreneurial intentions, it means they have a clear and focused intention to start their own business (Obschonka, Silbereisen, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2010). Mair and Noboa (2006) 'SEI model explained a process from emotional perception to feasibility judgment, which is believed to be influenced by cognitive feelings (including empathy and moral judgment). It means that social entrepreneurs must not only see the value in their idea but also believe that they have the ability and resources to make it happen. What sets this model apart from traditional entrepreneurial models is the inclusion of empathy and moral judgment. Social entrepreneurs are driven not only by financial gain but also by a desire to make a positive impact on society. Empathy and moral judgment are important factors in determining whether a social entrepreneur's ideas are not only feasible but also ethical and socially responsible.

2.2 The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The theory of Planned behavior (TPB) is highly adaptable and widely applied, so it is used in many fields (Iakovleva & Kolvereid, 2009). Ajzen (1998) emphasizes the extension of the classical model by adding precedents of attitude (ATB), perceived behavior control (PBC), and subjective norms (SN) to provide more insight (Ajzen, 1991). It is essential to modify the standard TPB model according to the nature and scope of the study, as each study has its own specific content and particularity (Kolvereid, 1996). Research conducted by Iakovleva and Kolvereid in 2009 shows how a model can be used to modify existing factors, add complementary factors, and tailor causality to suit the scope and nature of a study. These corrections are important to ensure that a study is accurate and reliable. Researchers should consider using a model when conducting research to ensure they are able to draw meaningful conclusions. As the researchers point out, these precedents affect intent only indirectly (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Preeti & Bhat, 2017; Ruiz et al., 2020). Therefore, this study has taken a theory-driven approach to understand how external factors (entrepreneurial education and perceived support) can influence attitudes, intentions, and behaviors within the realm of entrepreneurship.

3. Hypothesis

3.1 Empathy, Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy, and Social Entrepreneurship Intention

Empathy refers to understanding the mental state of others and generating emotional responses with similar feelings (Li, 2018; Ashraf, 2020). It is regarded as an important predisposing factor of personality traits and SEI (Dees, 2015). According to Mair and Noboa (2014), empathy is a critical factor in developing SEI.empathy is a crucial factor in developing SEI. Empathetic individuals are more likely to act altruistically and to understand the needs of others. This insight is based on psychological research and links empathy with helping behavior, suggesting that empathetic individuals take voluntary actions in order to benefit others or groups (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Hockerts, 2017; Lukman et al., 2020). Highly empathetic individuals may develop SEI to help others overcome social problems (Mair & Noboa, 2014), which has been confirmed in the studies of Forster and Grichnik (2013) and Hockert (2017). When we empathize with others, we are able to understand their emotions and perspectives, which can lead to more thoughtful decisions. In addition, empathy can lead to better communication and understanding in relationships by understanding other people's emotions and perspectives, and individuals are better equipped to.

Navigate their relationships and communicate effectively (Ip et al., 2018; Zulfiqar et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is also essential for success in the field of social entrepreneurship. This concept plays a major role in promoting self-confidence among individuals and empowering them to initiate social change. When challenging situations arise, individuals with strong empathy care will generate stronger entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Bandura, 2014). When faced with difficult challenges, individuals with strong empathy are more likely to believe that they can overcome them and make a positive impact in challenging situations (Davis et al., 2009). Therefore, empathy is a key trait for success in social entrepreneurship. Individuals with strong empathy are able to understand and connect

with others, leading to stronger self-efficacy (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Younis et al., 2020).

The study by Boyd and Vozikis (1994) sheds light on the important role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in influencing entrepreneurial intentions. This finding is supported by other studies, such as Gruhn et al. (2014), Rambe and Ndofirepi (2019).

The ultimate goal of social entrepreneurship is not just to make a profit but to create social value, which, more importantly to benefit the vulnerable and even society as a whole. It will be more difficult to achieve this goal. Thus, we can infer the self-efficacy and entrepreneurship of social entrepreneurs. Intention is positively correlated. The work of Denoble et al. (1999) not only empirically demonstrates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is significantly higher in entrepreneurs than in non-entrepreneurs, but also varies across students in different disciplines. Students majoring in entrepreneurship score much higher on most dimensions of entrepreneurial self-efficacy than students majoring in non-entrepreneurship (Davis et al., 2009; Igwe, 2020). Moreover, research conducted by Wrzesniewski, Dutton, and Debeg (2017) provides valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to start a social enterprise.

Based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Empathy is positively correlated with SEI;

H2: Empathy is positively correlated with self-efficacy in social entrepreneurship;

H3: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a significant positive impact on SEI.

3.2 Entrepreneurship Education, Self-efficacy, and Social Entrepreneurship Intention

From the perspective of entrepreneurial education factors, there is no general consensus among scholars on the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions. The research by Fayolle (2005) and Coduras (2008) reveals that entrepreneurship education equips students with the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to take on the business world. This is because entrepreneurship education can help students understand the benefits of entrepreneurship and the potential opportunities that exist in the marketplace. Wang (2012) found that entrepreneurship education and training have become increasingly important. It can improve entrepreneurial intention and help students develop the mindset and attitude they need to succeed. Xiang and Lei (2013) conducted a survey and research of 25 universities and colleges nationwide, and obtained a ternary model of entrepreneurial intention by analyzing 5,784 samples.

Krueger (1994) conducted a study aimed at determining whether there was a relationship between the two factors and how they affected the development of entrepreneurial skills. In his research, Krueger recognized the significant role that self-efficacy plays in such relationships. Fiet (2001), Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) believed that entrepreneurship education would change students' attitude and motivation towards entrepreneurship, thus affecting their entrepreneurial intention and behavior. Wang (2012) found that the benefits of entrepreneurship education are multifaceted, with one of the most significant being its ability to increase students' sense of self-efficacy. Through empirical research, Chen and Yin (2015) found that receiving entrepreneurship courses and training would significantly affect students' sense of self-efficacy, thus playing a role in students' entrepreneurial intention. Ge and Ning (2017) found that the impact of such education on an individual's intention to become an entrepreneur is partially mediated by their level of self-efficacy. The study also found that the key characteristics of social entrepreneurs are similar to those found in mainstream literature (Hockerts, 2018; Kamrul Hassan, 2020). On this basis, this study puts forward the following hypothesis:

H4: Entrepreneurship education is significantly related to SEI;

H5: There is a positive correlation between Entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy.

3.3 The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a key factor in determining an individual's intention to pursue new business opportunities with the goal of creating social change. While empathy is important, it is not enough on its own. Building entrepreneurial self-efficacy through education, training and mentoring can help individuals overcome barriers to social entrepreneurship and create meaningful social impact (Bacq & Alt, 2018). Self-efficacy can help individuals communicate the role of empathy in their entrepreneurial intentions by enhancing their confidence in completing related work. By increasing social entrepreneurship self-efficacy, empathy enhances the sense of social entrepreneurship (Younis et al., 2022). This information has important implications for those seeking to promote social entrepreneurship. It suggests that building self-efficacy among individuals with a strong sense of caring empathy could be a

way to encourage them to pursue social entrepreneurship ventures. Without such a process, empathy individuals have no intention of becoming social entrepreneurs. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between empathy and SEI.

Individuals who develop a willingness to socialize are not necessarily those with strong empathy concerns, but those who channel their empathy tendencies into gain. Entrepreneurial learning is a requirement for the aim in order to support the improvement of individual SEI and increase entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Wood & Bandura, 1989; Zheng, Wang, & Yuan, 2015).

In learning about social entrepreneurship, individuals first acquire a wealth of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, forming a good mental state while improving entrepreneurial self-efficacy. As the social and entrepreneurial environment continues to improve, members of society will view entrepreneurship more rationally and form good entrepreneurial attitudes, which will also lead to SEI. This can be stimulated and consolidated. The formation and cultivation of individual self-efficacy requires a gradual process. First, it is affected by past experience. Second, individuals can acquire a variety of cognition and skills in their complex social lives, and thus become self-aware. The sense of efficacy can be cultivated and promoted (Bandura, 1982). It is possible to have this intention early in a person's career, but the process of the individual's confidence at that time. The degree is not enough to effectively predict entrepreneurial success when individuals have skilled experience and confidence level to be promoted, specific entrepreneurial behaviors will be adopted (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Pham et al., 2022). Only through the individual efforts and perseverance to overcome the difficulties encountered in the process of entrepreneurship, and gain direct experience in this aspect, individual innovation industry self-efficacy can be enhanced (Bandura, 1989). Through direct and indirect experience, strong individual self-efficacy can be increased. Thus, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H7: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and SEI.

3.4 Perceived Social Support and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Perceived social support (PSS) is a vital concept that has been introduced into social psychology to help understand the role of social interactions and relationships in providing care and creating a sense of belonging. This concept refers to the support an individual receives from a system that is supposed to provide care or from a valued community group. It is a measure of the extent to which individuals perceive that they are cared for, valued, and supported by others (Hobfoll, 1988). According to Ajzen's (2002) model, the perception of external control is a key determinant of intention. In other words, our beliefs about the extent to which our actions are influenced by external factors can shape our intentions to act or not act in a certain way. The support and assistance of one's personal network can also play a role in shaping intentions (Mair & Noboa, 2006; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Lai & Tong, 2022). Social support, which refers to a variety of sources, such as family members, friends, colleagues, and even strangers can offer encouragement and practical assistance, like providing feedback on business plans or connecting entrepreneurs with potential customers or investors (Hockerts, 2015). TPB framework has been shown to be effective is in understanding entrepreneurial intentions. Because the framework is well-suited to examine the psychological factors like PSS that influence an individual's decision to start their own business. This study proposes the following hypotheses:

H8: Perceived social support positively influences SEI.

4. Methodology

A quantitative approach with a survey was used in the study to gather data from participants. To ensure the accuracy of the collected data, reliable and valid measurement tools were employed. To make the study more comprehensive and comparable to previous studies, scales from previous studies were used. The scales used in the study were tested and proved to be consistent and accurate in measuring the variables under investigation. A total of 28 questions were adopted as survey questions for measuring all the variables. In addition, The measurement of empathy adopted 4 items of (Hockerts, 2015). The measurement of entrepreneurship education which contain 4 items developed by Hassan (2020) Adopted from Fayolle and Liñán (2014). Wang et al. (2012)'s 9 items were used in the measurement of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The Ernst (2001) based scale for measuring felt social support consists of 5 items. Based on the study of Wang et al., (2014), the measurement of SEI which contains 6 items, developed by Zhang (2020) with reference to Bacq and Alt (2018) et al., When conducting research, it is important to have a clear and concise way of measuring the attitudes and beliefs of participants. Likert scale measures the level of agreement or

disagreement among respondents on a given statement, ranging from one to five, with one indicating strong disagreement and five strong agreement. A total numbers of 411 respondents' details were analyzed on a group basis. SmartPLS3 also performs path analysis and associated indicators. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used in study that aim to identify the causal relationships between variables, and to test the validity of theoretical model.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

In this paper, SPSS27.0 was used to make statistics on valid questionnaires. The characteristics of entrepreneurs are described by the gender, major, grade, Family entrepreneurial experience (FEE) and part-time job experience (PTE) of university students.

The gender split among university students was 48.2% women and 51.8% men. In terms of the majors, 61.6% are humanities and social sciences and 38.4 % are engineering. Humanities and social sciences majors are familiar with social factors and have a relative advantage. Among the grades 17.8% of freshmen, 43.1%of sophomores and 36.5 percent of juniors participated. 44.5% of students had an entrepreneurial background, 74.5% had part-time experience, 50.2% had part-time experience once or twice and 24.3% had part-time experience more than three times.

4.2 Reliability and Validity

In conducting research studies, it is essential to ensure that the data collected are valid and reliable. Factor loading and convergence validity are crucial aspects of data validity and reliability in research studies. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), Lai (2020), factor loading higher than 0.60 is considered acceptable to ensure that the item is a good indicator of the construct it represents. Convergent validity can be assessed through various methods, including Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) calculations, to ensure that different measures of the same construct are related to each other. By ensuring these aspects of validity and reliability, researchers can have confidence in the accuracy and consistency of their data.

The results of the composite reliability analysis performed in this study. The obtained CR values range from 0.861 to 0.885, indicating that the measures used in this study are highly reliable. It is worth noting that these values exceed the threshold value of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally (1978), which is commonly used as a benchmark for acceptable reliability. Hinkin (1998) suggests that a benchmark value of 0.70 should be used for this measure. The Cronbach alpha values obtained in this study range from 0.846 to 0.883, further indicating that the measures used are highly reliable. In addition to assessing reliability, it is important to ensure that the measures used are valid. One way to assess the validity of a measure is to calculate its average variance extracted (AVE). Bagozzi and Yi (1988) propose a benchmark value of 0.50 for this measure. The AVE values obtained in this study range from 0.806 to 0.833, indicating that the measures used are highly valid.

4.3 Structural Modeling

Results had shown that empathy is positively associated with entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($t = 5.219$, $\beta = .372$, $p < .001$), which is an individual's belief in their ability to start and run a successful business. Entrepreneurship education has been proven to be positively correlated with entrepreneurial self-efficacy ($t = 6.528$, $\beta = .442$, $p < .001$). As indicated in, individuals with entrepreneurial education have higher levels of social entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Furthermore, entrepreneurial self-efficacy has also been found to be positively associated with SEI ($t = 5.664$, $\beta = .503$, $p < .001$). The results also indicated that empathy was positively associated with SEI ($t = 3.037$, $\beta = .136$, $p < .05$). Finally, perceived social support has been found to be positively associated with SEI ($t = 4.207$, $\beta = .273$, $p < .001$). Moreover, entrepreneurship education was found not to be are not significantly correlated with SEI ($t = 1.968$, $\beta = .075$, $p = .05$).

4.4 Test of The Structural Model and Mediating Effects

An important factor in this relationship is the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a mediator. The subject of two hypotheses had namely hypotheses 6 and 7. For this purpose, bootstrapping sampling techniques were tested procedure for mediating effect with SmartPLS (Hair, 2017). To determine the level of mediation, it made use of the Variance Accounted for (VAF). According to Hair (2014), VAF > 80% denotes complete mediation, 20%< VAF < 80% indicates partial mediation, and VAF 20% shows no mediation. The result has shown that the relationship between

empathy and SEI is partially mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy (VAF=75.6%). Moreover, the results of the study validate this hypothesis, with the variance of VAF accounting for 57.9 percent. Thus, Assumptions 6 and 7 are supported.

5. Discussion, Implication and Limitations

5.1 Discussion

The impact of empathy on the SEI of university students is significant, which further validates that empathy is an antecedent to socially helpful behavior. Empathy, as a combination of feeling and understanding the emotions and cognitive abilities of others. It is the embodiment of a diverse range of emotions, blending compassion, pity and concern. Essentially, it is a social service act with a commercial nature. The empathy effect stimulates the generation of such entrepreneurial behavior. University students with high levels of empathy have a stronger sense of social responsibility, pay more attention to the suffering or misfortunes of people. This strong emotion prompts them to search for information available in their surroundings that can bring benefits to others or promote the solution of social problems.

Nowadays, there is a growing demand for individuals to pursue responsible careers. Multiple approaches can lead to differences in how individuals express their positions on empathy. These variations in approach can be seen in the intentions and choices of individuals pursuing responsible careers. Someone passionate about environmental issues might choose to work for an environmental nonprofit, while someone interested in social justice might choose to work for a government agency that addresses issues like poverty or discrimination. Additionally, the choices made by individuals in these professions can reflect their empathetic stance, such as choosing to work for a company that prioritizes fair trade practices or investing in socially responsible funds (Tams & Marshall, 2011; Ip et al., 2017; Rambe & Ndofirepi, 2019; Liu et al., 2021). They were eager to establish a long-term mechanism for altruistic behavior through creative development and utilization of existing resources, and the idea of social entrepreneurship arose at the right moment. People with more empathy tend to be more motivated to create positive social change through entrepreneurship. The association between perspective taking and empathy concerns highlights the importance of these cognitive processes in promoting SEI. However, it is also important to consider the individual needs and motivations of each individual to effectively channel their empathy into positive social change (Ashraf, 2020; Zulfiqar et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, as a psychological perception of the individual, affects students' understanding of social entrepreneurship and thus their behavioral decisions. Students with higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy are not only able to view the advantages and difficulties of social entrepreneurship more clearly and rationally and have a clearer understanding of the entrepreneurial process, but also have a more positive and optimistic attitude towards social entrepreneurship. (Preeti & Bhat, 2017; Kamrul Hassan, 2020; Igwe, 2020; Trajano et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurs with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident, persistent, and resilient in the face of challenges. They are more likely to take calculated risks and pursue opportunities, creating a tendency towards social entrepreneurship. This confidence and determination can help entrepreneurs overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. Thus, critical psychological factors such as self-efficacy or emotional intelligence act as catalysts for entrepreneurship by helping individuals develop a positive mindset, necessary skills, and the ability to manage stress and uncertainty (Peris-Delcampo, 2023).

One of the other factors that have been found to influence SEI is PSS. PSS refers to the perception of having a supportive social network that can provide assistance, guidance, and encouragement. Ernst's (2011) research on German university students' SEI unveiled an interesting finding, which concluded that PSS plays a crucial role in shaping social intentions. Individuals who perceive higher levels of social support are more likely to have stronger intentions to engage in social entrepreneurship (Jeon, 2018). The positive impact of PSS and self-efficacy on SEI has been supported by various studies (Preeti & Bhat, 2017; Hockerts, 2018; Ip et al., 2020).

Therefore, the government needs to strengthen relevant support for social entrepreneurship among university students, and should formulate policies so as to enhance the confidence of individuals and encourage and persuade them to start their own businesses. Establish an entrepreneurial practice base to help individuals gain direct and alternative entrepreneurial experience and improve individual entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Second, a corresponding governing body or organization for social entrepreneurship activities should be established to provide more targeted guidance and planning, as well as regular grants and other channels to support social entrepreneurship among university

students.

In this sense, our study further validates social entrepreneurs who seek to address social problems through innovative and sustainable solutions. They are known for their commitment to making a positive impact on society and are driven by altruistic motives (Rambe & Ndofirepi, 2019; Trajano et al., 2022). Pro-social behavior refers to actions that benefit others without any expectation of reward and can be seen as the desire to create social impact or to help others, rather than the pursuit of personal gain. Previous studies have focused on the personal characteristics of social entrepreneurs, such as their entrepreneurial skills and risk-taking tendencies. However, this study shows that pro-social behavior is a critical factor in understanding the social value of SEI. Entrepreneurial education is important, but it is not enough to rely solely on it to encourage entrepreneurship among students. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has been found to be crucial in mediating the relationship between entrepreneurial education and SEI, which is important in stimulating social entrepreneurial intent in students through entrepreneurial education. Educators should therefore focus on developing both entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial self-efficacy to effectively promote entrepreneurship among students.

Similarly, entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a significant mediating effect between empathy and SEI. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy thus promotes the generation of SEI by influencing the perceptions and attitudes of university students towards social entrepreneurship. The study also suggests that affective entrepreneurial education can be an important antecedent to self-efficacy (Hockerts, 2018; Pham et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial education can also positively impact an individual's entrepreneurial self-efficacy, outcome expectations, behavioral tendencies, and entrepreneurial values. Entrepreneurial values are beliefs and principles that guide an individual's actions as an entrepreneur. These values include creativity, risk-taking and innovation. Entrepreneurial education can help individuals develop and strengthen these values, thereby increasing their chances of success as entrepreneurs (Hassan, 2020). Therefore, the government should integrate various resources to strengthen the development of entrepreneurship education, strengthen the construction of teachers, and pay attention to the guidance of individual entrepreneurial values and so on. Social entrepreneurship education should integrate teaching, learning, research and practice. It should not only teach students the skills necessary for entrepreneurship, such as marketing, economics and finance, or leadership training, but also reinforce a sense of social responsibility, values and self-value fulfillment, and incorporate professional traits or personal skills to guide and inspire. To increase the intention of participants to be social entrepreneurs.

Finally, University students are the new blood and the future in social development. Social entrepreneurship among university students is an excellent way to maintain social balance through innovative means, so they also need to be encouraged by the government to participate in the improvement of public services in as innovative a way as possible. At the same time, university students should strengthen their initiative and actively understand the relevant policies. Maximize the use of social resources in ways that give back to society to achieve self-worth. The ability to learn, the pursuit of self-value enhancement and the focus on social issues are the main strengths of university students in social entrepreneurship. However, university students also have problems with idealization, shallow social experience and lack of financial strength. Despite their desire to participate in social entrepreneurship, it is difficult to achieve a balance between the commercial and the social value of social entrepreneurship. Therefore, universities, governments and social organizations should actively participate in providing assistance to university, resources, policies and experience guidance to improve their social entrepreneurship success rate. University students are also using their knowledge and skills to enrich university resources. In the long run, it is expected to form a virtuous cycle between society, universities and students, and promote the continuous and stable growth of the national economy and overall national strength.

5.2 Theoretical Implication

Based on the theory of prosocial motivation and the theory of planned behavior, this paper analyzes the mechanism by which individuals promote the generation of SEI through internal individual (empathy, self-efficacy) and external environment (entrepreneurial education and perceived social support). The results of the project will be of practical significance in promoting social entrepreneurship.

5.2.1 Empathy and SEI

Social entrepreneurs address various social issues in innovative ways and traditional business means to create social value. Therefore, some one who develop their empathy which seeks to reason about the actions of others from their perspective which could pursue a career related to social entrepreneurship. Completely listen to what is being said,

both verbally and non-verbally, and respond appropriately, it is more important to respect the personality and abilities of others and to understand their views and actions than to adopt a casual attitude of exclusion. By developing empathy, social entrepreneurs are more able to experience the inner lives of others. Based on this, social entrepreneurs will focus on the needs of the vulnerable and, in their benefit analysis, consider the potential consequences of decisions on the larger community, resulting in more ethical and sustainable decisions.

5.2.2 Self-oriented Motivation and SEI

SEI can be driven by self-oriented motivation. Individuals who engage in social entrepreneurship differ in the way they exhibit empathy tendencies, which are manifested through "feeling competent." The relationship between empathy care and self-efficacy is "feeling competent", both of which are indispensable in the formation of an individual's SEI. It's important for social entrepreneurs to feel self-efficacy. Thus, individuals who are capable of expressing empathy for others are able to perform social entrepreneurship tasks by judging their own abilities during the entrepreneurial process, which then fosters SEI. Individuals who are able to "put themselves in others' shoes" can judge whether the helping behaviors they offer are valued by the recipients and thus form a stronger intention to social entrepreneurship.

5.2.3 Entrepreneurship Education and SEI

Empathy can encourage entrepreneurs to make more accurate decisions and judgments and to offer better product solutions. In the course of education or training, mentors must pay attention to the motivational mechanisms of individual empathy to enhance SEI. Empathy may affect individuals in society. Emotional empathy (empathy concern) is an important premise of self-efficacy in social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial education must focus on the connection between the individual's empathy tendencies and the continuum of forms of helping others, which can stimulate students' pro-social motivation, community voluntary service in the context of social entrepreneurship.

5.3 Practical Implication

From the results, empathy has been shown to increase the effect of empathy expression on SEI, indicating the possibility of boosting outcomes. Empathy makes them more inclined to interact with others, which makes them compassionate (Scaffidi Abbate et al., 2022). Empathy and concern for social issues can translate into a willingness for social enterprise. Therefore, universities should focus on cultivating the individual emotional capacity and social emotional capacity of college students. By providing information on issues such as vulnerable people and environmental protection, as well as other issues in society, students can become more concerned about and understand society. In addition, a number of educational programs have been proposed, including empathy for others and moral indoctrination to motivate them to help those who are disadvantaged (Zeng, 2017; Qin, 2021).

Form the results, entrepreneurship education indirectly affects SEI through self-efficacy. It shows Entrepreneurial education helps students learn how to effectively manage their emotions and build strong relationships with others. It also helps students develop a growth mindset, which is essential for entrepreneurial success. The establishment of social enterprises requires not only high-level entrepreneurial education, but also entrepreneurial self-efficacy. On the one hand, universities can promote innovation and sustainability in social enterprises by improving sustainability education. Through social entrepreneurship education, students are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to run social enterprises, and students are also fully aware of the social problems, vulnerable groups and environmental problems in the field of entrepreneurship, as well as the potential of social enterprises to effectively alleviate these problems, and support and help students to grow a viable business model into a sustainable social project (Rakicevic et al., 2023).

Moreover, self-efficacy is the driving factor of SEI, and an in-depth study of this issue can guide the practice of entrepreneurship to a certain extent. Self-efficacy also improves confidence in setting challenging goals and trying ambidextrous activities. Social entrepreneurship requires individuals to think creatively, take risks, adapt quickly to changing circumstances and overcome any obstacles. It is a key factor in motivating individuals to start social entrepreneurship projects and providing them with the confidence and skills they need to succeed (Ma et al., 2023). Universities should not only provide them with theoretical and practical knowledge about social entrepreneurship, but also, more importantly, foster entrepreneurial spirit. Therefore, it is necessary to foster positive mental psychology and healthy personality of social entrepreneurs by fostering and supporting entrepreneurial education. By enhancing students' sense of self-efficacy, positivity and confidence in overcoming difficulties, and improving their confidence in the establishment of social enterprises, the skills acquired from entrepreneurship education will be more

significantly transformed into the development of SEI (El-Gohary et al., 2023). By assessing and improving self-efficacy, educators, counselors and social entrepreneurship programs can help individuals realize their potential and create positive change in their communities.

This research has shown that PSS plays a significant role in helping students succeed in these programs. When students feel supported by peers, mentors and other members of their community, they are more inclined to make a positive impact in their community. Social enterprises can be effective in alleviating social problems. To raise awareness among students about the importance of social enterprises, the program promotes students to familiarize themselves with social issues and show a positive attitude toward SEI's business practices. Governments should foster an enabling climate to encourage social entrepreneurship, offer a range of facilities, vigorously develop and promote business programs and partnerships with universities, increase entrepreneur incentives for students to start new businesses. Students will find it simpler to manage their own firms as a result. The project's findings will offer a theoretical foundation for the significance of entrepreneurship assessment, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship counseling and intervention on social behavior of university students. By understanding the motivations behind entrepreneurship, policymakers and program developers can better support and enable entrepreneurship which are the new generation that will bring about social change (Obi-Anike et al., 2022; Abdelwahed, 2022).

In practice, this study is of great practical importance for refining the SEI of university students and promoting sustainable economic. The results of this study can inspire and guide relevant departments to formulate policies to promote university students to set up sustainable enterprises. Universities and governments should therefore pay close attention to SEI and its capacity to address social issues for those with a desire to start their own social enterprises.

5.4 Limitations and Future Studies

Social entrepreneurship is a growing field that combines business principles with a social mission. It is a way for individuals and organizations to address social and environmental challenges through innovative solutions. As such, it has drawn more attention from academics, professionals, and decision-makers. However, while there has been previous research on this topic, there are still many gaps in our understanding of the factors that influence SEI. One limitation of this study is that it focuses only on SEI from a student perspective. Future studies should also consider the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as educators, policymakers and practitioners. Another limitation of the study is that it uses a specific model to test the factors that influence SEI. Future research should consider other models that may be more appropriate for different survey subjects.

Regardless of these limitations, it offers crucial insights into the elements that affect students' intentions with regard to social entrepreneurship. To acquire a more thorough grasp of the factors affecting SEI, future research should build on these findings and expand the study model tests to other survey subjects. To better understand the impact of demographic factors on entrepreneurship education, comparisons should be made between students in different disciplines. For example, students from engineering or science backgrounds may have different characteristics and learning preferences than students from business or arts backgrounds. Also, comparing those who have been in the entrepreneurial class with those who have not is a valuable exercise that can provide insights into the differences, similarities and potential of the two groups. This can help determine the effectiveness of different teaching approaches, such as experiential learning or traditional lecture-based approaches, in different demographic groups. Moreover, the data were collected in only one country, making the findings unusual. For future research, the generalization of the model test to other countries deserves further investigation. Finally, the study data are cross-sectional data and the following studies can be tracked and compared for more convincing study data.

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