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A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK ON THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ANTECEDENTS

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is (1) to propose and address a theoretical framework about the relationship between social entrepreneurship antecedents and students social entrepreneurship competencies (SEC) (For example Empathy, Moral obligation, Self-efficacy, Social support), and (2) to establish the moderating effect of experiential learning (EL) on the relationship between SEA and SEC. Social entrepreneurship is the backbone of empowering both society and economy yielding social welfare and reducing poverty, along with levelling up education quality. Literature indicated that developed countries have given superior attention to the topic of social entrepreneurship due to its crucial role in balancing up social issues such as those in education, environment, health, and businesses and economic stability. Drawing upon the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and experiential learning theory (ELT), the study seeking to apply stratified random sampling and cross-sectional research design for data collection. Students pursuing theirs studies at ENACTUS group universities in China would be the respondents. The study is expected to advance TPB by emphasizing new insights into the importance of EL and students' social entrepreneurial mindset to develop existing social entrepreneurial competencies. In addition, the study provides significant insights for educational managers and professionals about the need to develop social entrepreneurship at educational institutions.

Keywords:

Empathy; Moral Obligation; Self-Efficacy; Social Entrepreneurship Competency; Experiential Learning; Theory Planned Behavior; Experiential Learning Theory

Introduction

This study intends to explore and develop an integrated framework focusing on the impact of social entrepreneurship antecedents' education on student's social entrepreneurship competencies covering group of ENACTUS universities in Guangdong province in China. The study also aims to examine the impact of experiential learning on relationship between social entrepreneurship antecedents and social entrepreneurship competencies. The paper consists of research background, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, and theoretical framework.

Research Background

Entrepreneurship is a crucial booster to economic and society development and a solution to many problems around the world for the past several decades (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). As an integral activity of human life (Amini, Arasti, & Bagheri, 2018), entrepreneurship serves as a creator of economic value and a contributor to social justice (Belousova, Hattenberg, & Gailly, 2020). Customers, employees, communities, and countries are involved in stakeholders who benefit from entrepreneurship whereby ventures and value are created by entrepreneurs (Hughes et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs are taking on active roles in economy enhancement, job market expansion, problem solving, technology innovation, and global communication (Ács, Szerb, Autio, & Lloyd, 2017).

However, with the rise of global social problems in the 1990s (Bornstein, 2007) such as poverty, environmental crises in the meanwhile of government inefficiency and market failure, social entrepreneurship became a popular concept. Born out of entrepreneurship but with different social mission pursuit, social entrepreneurship has a long history in the course of social development (Pless, 2012). Its concept occurred between the 1970s and the 1980s (Nicholls, 2006). Social entrepreneurship, defined as a process of catalyzing social changes or addressing social problems by resources synergy (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010), has produced achievement of research and education in a considerable amount (Battilana & Lee, 2014). As a new discipline and a supporting provider of human capital, social entrepreneurship education has aroused great attention among the high education institutions. Its research has become globally widespread (Brock & Kim, 2011).

The growing number of social courses, social enterprise clubs and social venture competitions welcome more students in social entrepreneurship activities (Tracey & Phillips, 2007). Social entrepreneurship programs are accessible in 35 universities across the world till 2008 (75% increase compared with that in 2004) (Brock & Steiner, 2009). In China, such an education is still at an infant stage. Until 2006, Hunan University took the lead in social entrepreneurship education of China. But not the same to the role of a compulsory course like entrepreneurship for all high education students, social entrepreneurship education appears in the form of competition, student club and so on. The most influential student club is Enactus China. Enactus founded in 1975, is the largest global experiential learning platform and non-profit organization aiming at empowering students to cope with global problems by socially oriented

action. Enactus China was set up in 2002, till 2018 with 293 member universities and more than 16000 member students in China. Enactus China is constructing an ecosystem of social entrepreneurship education for universities students through academy, competition, forum and training by the support of universities, government and enterprises.

The mission for high education is to render global graduates with flexible mindset to tackle the international issues. The proactive outcome from high-quality teaching and approaches will lead to the competency acquisition of learners (Brock & Kim, 2011). For example, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes gained in the education system have a life-long impact on career and living value of individuals (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Hence for entrepreneurial education, there is more than financial success and employment creation. Its more viable trigger to students could be greater extent of interest, enjoyment, involvement and innovation (Johannisson, 2010). Instead of being attitudes-skills and employment-driven orientation, European Commission generalized entrepreneurship education into a lifelong learning process whereby skills and mind-set of learners are developed to transform creative ideas or spirit into entrepreneurial behavior.

Much impetus into social entrepreneurship is how to define it, how to identify, explore and expand potential venturing and how to measure their social impact (Hockerts, 2010). In high education, social entrepreneurship concerns entrepreneurship intention more because its effectiveness depends on abilities and skills of learners as well as their disposition (Byun, Sung, Park, & Choi, 2018). Based on this, such actual actions can be anticipated by the ability to understand and to share the feelings of another (empathy), moral judgment from the public, self-efficacy, and the ability to gain social support (Mair & Marti, 2006).

The education of social entrepreneurship is a crucial tool by China government to enhance the moral and social responsibility in high education. Right after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the China government has highly concerned about the growth and development of contemporary post-secondary students with social responsibility. On the Congress, "the comprehensive implementation of quality education, education reform, as well as social responsibility, innovation, and pragmatic of students" were highlighted, which is the first time for social responsibility of college students inscribed into the party's documents. Since then, the 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee has also confirmed the "enhancement of students' sense of social responsibility" in the holistic reform of education. It is the call of the times for high-quality talents with a strong sense of social responsibility. A large number of leaders and change-makers are needed to innovate social context, living standards and life quality. Hence, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any relationship between experiential learning and students' social entrepreneurship competencies?
2. Is there any relationship between social entrepreneurial antecedents (empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support) and social entrepreneurship competencies?
3. Does experiential learning moderate the relationship between social entrepreneurial antecedents (empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support) and social entrepreneurship competencies?

Problem Statement

Regardless of academic research or social practice, social entrepreneurship education still undertakes a novelty role in China (Liu et al., 2020). Effectiveness, the goal of entrepreneurship education, can be achieved through cultivating awareness, mindset and competencies of educators (Lindner, 2018). Social entrepreneurship education has a correlation with antecedents of social entrepreneurs behaviour (Hockerts, 2015), procedure of social entrepreneurship education (Ramsgaard, 2018), evaluation of social entrepreneurship educational outcome (Schelfhout, Bruggeman, & De Maeyer, 2016), such as the participants performance. How to exalt the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education in universities is one of the biggest issues in the research.

Firstly, limited research focus on the correlation between entrepreneurs' core competencies and social entrepreneurship education (Sánchez, 2011). As for higher education institutions, the major undertaking is educating individuals as social entrepreneur to adopt financial ways to address social problems (Păunescu et al., 2013). Much examination into social enterprises has taken a gander at issues of the acknowledgment, exploration and development of potential social junctures together with the estimation of their social effect (Hockerts, 2010). But research neglect the effect of entrepreneurship educational interventions on the students' entrepreneurship competencies cultivating (Baum & Locke, 2004). Although some scholars focus on the intention (Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017), motivation or competencies (Capella-Peris et al., 2020; Garcia-Gonzalez et al., 2020; Orhei et al., 2015) of participants in social entrepreneurship education respectively, limited research focus on the relationship between intention or motivation and core competencies of university students in social entrepreneurship education procedure.

Secondly, one-sided understanding of entrepreneurship education deeply impacts the effectiveness of it. China government and high education institutions (HEIs) started entrepreneurship education in the late 1990s and set the goal is to promote student development in entrepreneurial awareness, social responsibility, entrepreneurial ability and creation, self-employment and all-round development (Zhong, 2021). But the concept of entrepreneurship education was narrow defined as equivalent to "start venture education" or "make money education" by some stakeholder just like the policymaker, educator and students even their parents for a long time (X. Liu, 2015). In UK, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) claimed that entrepreneurship education and its capacity development is not just for employment but for individual competencies advancement with a self-decision making, reciprocal career, for significant value socially, culturally and economically by entrepreneurship involvement (QAA, 2018). In line with economic transformation and society development, this education ought to be a social, dynamic and lifelong procedure where people as units or in cooperation, identify innovation opportunities and converse imaginations into practices and actual events, in a socio-cultural or financial context (European Commission, 2006).

Thirdly, the teaching approach and assessment for social entrepreneurship education remains ineffective (Huang & Huang, 2016). The research to social entrepreneurship is rapidly developing in universities of developed regions such as Europe and the United States, while reflections are relatively lagging behind in China, especially the lack of exploration of basic theories and empirical research, which makes the development of social entrepreneurship activities lack base (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya, 2020; Salamzadeh, Azimi, & Kirby, 2013). Existing social entrepreneurship education programs in China mostly in-former

and out of touch with professional education, lacking effective deep integration in its operation (Huang & Huang, 2016). In the traditional way, educators focus on the start venture skill excessively and neglect students' affective competencies such as tenacity, self-efficacy, innovativeness (Farrington, Venter, & Louw, 2012; Huang & Huang, 2016). Wilson and Beard (2013) argue that encouraged learners engaged in related experiential events is a crucial foundation of effective entrepreneurship education. The pedagogical elements such as experiential learning through social venture competitions also be neglected by social entrepreneurship educators (Ghalwash, Tolba, & Ismail, 2017; Kwong, 2016). So, university courses should have a pedagogical framework as the basis to guide learners closer to the world of social entrepreneurs. In addition, the outcome evaluation and measurement to the high investments of entrepreneurship education also remain deficit (Fretschner, 2014).

Finally, there appears to be some different focus on social entrepreneurship research between the developed and developing countries (Haski et al., 2016; Rivera et al., 2015). Bacq and Janssen (2011) and Diochon, Anderson, and Ghore (2017) propose that understanding the impact of neighbourhood setting is very significant in the field of social business enterprise. Creating nation settings can vary incredibly from created, confronting issues, for example, huge scale destitution, absence of education, low instruction, absence of political will, and debasement. Such investigations that draw results inside the created nation setting on the best way to develop the social pioneering scene might be unseemly and in this manner incapable in the creating nation setting. Though there are increasing studies that explored the developing country background (Katzenstein & Chrispin, 2011; Littlewood & Holt, 2015; Omorede, 2014), the gap for researching social entrepreneurship in developing countries remains broad.

Additionally, as the biggest developing country, China commence social entrepreneurship education still in its infancy with the insufficiency of practical experience, teachers and curriculum and it is mainly limited to relevant competitions and extra-curricular activities (Warnecke, 2018). More empirical assessment and more innovation of theoretical on social entrepreneurship in China needed to be implemented or strengthened by researchers. Undoubtedly, the study of developing economies can provide fresh and distinctive evidence to well-shaped the new model of social entrepreneurship education (Gupta, Chauhan, Paul, & Jaiswal, 2020; Rivera-Santos et al., 2015).

Overall, social entrepreneurship education became a global trend especially in China. For the enhancement of effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education, four questions should be researched: What elements would affect the social entrepreneurship education? Who would be the potential participants in social entrepreneurship activities? What entrepreneurship competencies will be getting from social entrepreneurship education? What type of education intervention will effectively improve social entrepreneurship education for cultivating student's entrepreneurship competencies? That is the focus of this research.

Research Objectives

- 1.To examine the relationship between experiential learning and students' social entrepreneurship competencies.
- 2.To examine the relationship between social entrepreneurial antecedents (empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support) and social entrepreneurship competencies.

3.To investigate the moderating role of experiential learning on the relationship between social entrepreneurial antecedents (empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support) and social entrepreneurship competencies.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were framed to be tested empirically and validated. In relation to the five constructs in the model, including four independent variables, one moderating variables, and one dependent variable, nine hypotheses had been formulated: five direct relationships, four moderating relationships. Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses of the study

Table1. Summary of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Statement
H1	There is a relationship between experiential learning and social entrepreneurship competencies.
H2	There is a relationship between students' empathy and their social entrepreneurship competencies.
H3	There is a relationship between students' moral obligation and their social entrepreneurship competencies.
H4	There is a relationship between students' self-efficacy and their social entrepreneurship competencies.
H5	There is a relationship between students' social support and their social entrepreneurship competencies.
H6	Experiential learning moderates the relationship between students' empathy and social entrepreneurship competencies.
H7	Experiential learning moderates the relationship between students' moral obligation and social entrepreneurship competencies.
H8	Experiential learning moderates the relationship between students' self-efficacy and social entrepreneurship competencies.
H9	Experiential learning moderates the relationship between students' social support and social entrepreneurship competencies.

Significance of the Study

This study is expected to extend the theory and literature of social entrepreneurship competency development by social entrepreneurship education. Meanwhile, the theory of experiential learning from Kolb's cycled experiential learning (McLeod, 2013) as the underpin in social entrepreneurship education is a new perspective, different from previous studies usually based on Dewey's learning model (Dewey, 1938), Lewin's action research model (Lewin,1946) (Giles et al., 1994; Miettinen, 2000). Previous studies were in the perspective of developed economies, such as America, Europe et al. However, most of the world population and underprivileged people have been distributed in those developing countries. There are problems arising because of economic issues. As such perspective into social entrepreneurship education would be much more meaningful as a reference. In reaction to this expectation, this

research will provide evidence on social entrepreneurship education from developing country especially in China.

The study is expected to advance the methodology of social entrepreneurship competencies development and make sense of the relationship between antecedents and entrepreneurship competencies by employing the Social Entrepreneurial Antecedents Scale (SEAS) and Social Entrepreneurship Competency Assessment (SECA). It aims to examine and validate four antecedents of social entrepreneurial behaviour: empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support. Experiential learning scale (ELS) was employed to examine the impact of intervention by experiential learning to develop entrepreneurship competencies. This study aspires to examine the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education in China by the involvement of Enactus as an educational intervention.

This study is expected to verify the experiential learning as an effective social entrepreneurship education approach to the formation of entrepreneurship competencies among universities students in China. For the cause of Guangdong province's economic aggregate ranks first in China for a long time and its universities have won the Enactus World Cup China championship several times. It can show that students are enthusiastic about social entrepreneurship activities. Through the data collected from 800 students who engaged in Enactus China form 25 university of Guangdong Province in China. We can learn from the model of Enactus and create the curriculum structure in universities of China.

The study also will be beneficial to social entrepreneurship education stakeholders. It can expect to provide a scope for the development of an effective ecosystem of social entrepreneurship education including universities students, government education policymakers, universities entrepreneurship educators, social enterprises and even community.

There are a few restraints for this study which should be considered with relevance to all other studies. In the research, the curbs are those characteristics of scheme or methodology that compressed or inclined the elucidation of the verdicts. Firstly, the study will involve only the Enactus member universities from Guangdong province in China. The other member universities in other province in China and non-member universities will be ignored amongst the list of the universities. This will limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the limitation will study relevant to the cross-sectional study that will be conducted in such a fixed way and no data is collected on a regular basis. In addition, this research method has some limitations because it uses only quantitative data for analysis. Therefore, researchers are unable to gain insight into some of the inspection questions in the study. Moreover, the research method had some limitations as it will use only quantitative method for research. As an empirical case study, qualitative research, and a possible longitudinal study is needed for qualitative method would have given a better idea about students' views in depth. Thus, the researcher does not have access to in depth insights on some of the examined issues in the study.

Research Framework

Based on previous literature reviews, a research framework was proposed by this study. As depict in the below Figure 1, the framework has 6 constructs, which includes one dependent variable, four independent variables and one moderator variable. The dependent variable is entrepreneurship core competencies, while the independent variables are antecedents of social entrepreneurship, involving empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social

support. Experiential learning variable as a moderator impact the relationship between each antecedent of social entrepreneurship and core competencies.

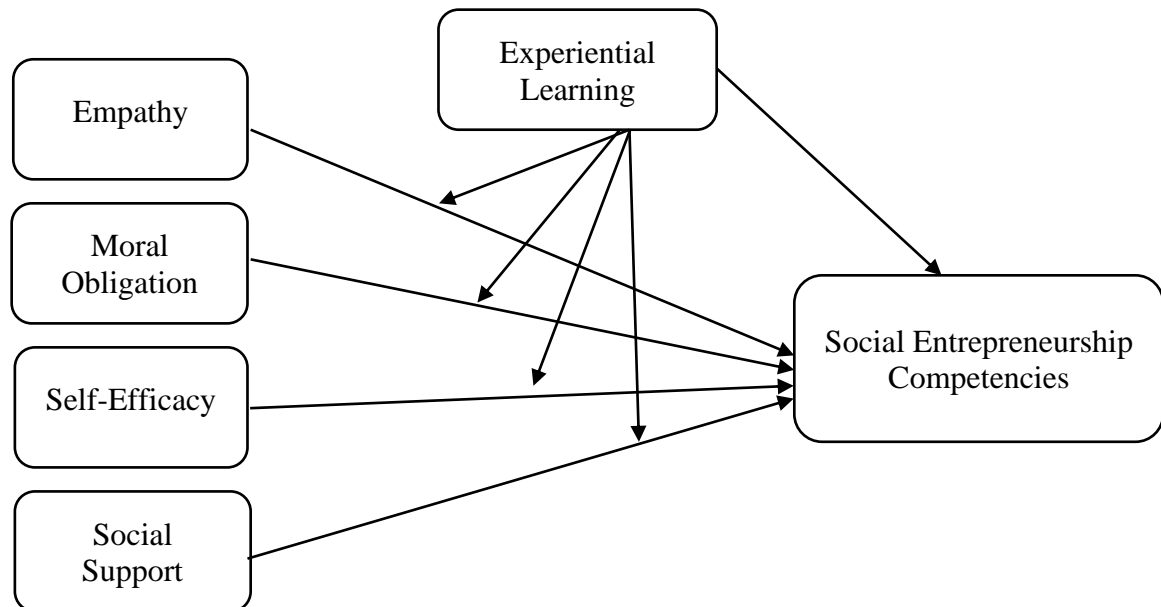


Figure 1. Research Framework

Scope of the Study

This study spotlights the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship core competencies development among university students in China. Quantitative method is employed based on the Social Entrepreneurial Antecedents Scale (SEAS) (Hockerts, 2015), Social Entrepreneurship Competency Assessment (SECA) by Capella-peris et al (2019) and Experiential Learning Scale (ELS) by (Young, Caudill, & Murphy, 2008). SEAS is used to validate the connexion between social entrepreneurial intention and its precursors: empathy with marginalized people, moral commitment, self-efficacy and alleged availability of social backup. SECA is in the assessment of core competencies of university students developed by social entrepreneurship education. ELS as an instrument to evaluate the effective of experiential learning method to the anticipants. To validate the model, 260 university students who engage in Enactus China will be respondents by sampling from 25 universities of Guangdong Province, China.

Conclusion

In this regard, this study pioneers the attempt to examine the strategic effect of the missing link between the social entrepreneurship antecedents and social entrepreneurship competencies in a single model to address the significant issue that emerged in social entrepreneurship which is still overlooked especially in entrepreneurship education.

On the other hand, this study provides theoretical and empirical evidence for the effect of social entrepreneurship antecedents (e.g., empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and social support), and social entrepreneurship competencies (e.g., personnel features, innovative features, and social features), and experiential learning.

Hence, the developed framework of this study has a significant contribution to the theories of experiential learning and TPB which indicated that the understanding of SEC is a severe issue that faces educator managers, students, and entrepreneurs across the globe. Social entrepreneurship scholars are in need to combine these theories in a single model to understand and extend the body of social entrepreneurship knowledge.

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