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**THE FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION (SEI) AMONG GEN-Z
IN MALAYSIA**

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Abstract:

Social entrepreneurship has garnered heightened attention as a sustainable approach to tackling social and economic issues; yet engagement among youth remains comparatively low, especially in developing economies. This research investigates the factors influencing Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) among Generation Z in Malaysia through an augmented TPB framework. The study

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specifically examines the impact of Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), Social Innovation Orientation (SIO), Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE), and Educational Support (ES) on Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI). A quantitative, cross-sectional approach was utilized, and data were gathered from 310 Malaysian Generation Z participants through a standardized questionnaire. The data were analysed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that Educational Support exerts the most substantial positive and statistically significant influence on SEI ($\beta = 0.624$, $t = 8.085$, $p < 0.001$), succeeded by Perceived Behavioural Control ($\beta = 0.233$, $t = 3.686$, $p < 0.001$) and Subjective Norms ($\beta = 0.165$, $t = 2.678$, $p = 0.007$). Conversely, ATSE ($\beta = 0.040$, $p = 0.524$), KSE ($\beta = -0.012$, $p = 0.848$), and SIO ($\beta = -0.113$, $p = 0.070$) do not demonstrate significant direct associations with SEI. The findings offer partial validation of the expanded Theory of Planned Behaviour paradigm and underscore the significant impact of institutional support, perceived capability, and social influence on the social entrepreneurial intentions of Generation Z. The study provides significant theoretical insights and practical consequences for educators and governments seeking to promote social entrepreneurship among youngsters.

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Keyword:

Social Entrepreneurship Intention, Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control, Social Innovation Orientation, Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship, Educational Support.



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Introduction

Social entrepreneurship (SE) has arisen as a vital approach for tackling intricate and enduring societal issues, such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and social exclusion, via inventive and financially viable solutions. In contrast to traditional entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship emphasises the creation of social value with economic sustainability, establishing a hybrid model that fosters inclusive and sustainable growth (Hockerts, 2021; Zahra et al., 2022). Social entrepreneurial attributes are characterized by inventiveness, proactivity, and a propensity for risk-taking. Entrepreneurs consistently seek to uncover and capitalize on new possibilities, generate novel value, and establish market leadership (Harianto & Zainol, 2022). Social Enterprise (SE) has acquired global significance as governments, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector increasingly acknowledge its capacity to enhance public welfare systems and fulfil Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (OECD, 2022).

In Malaysia, the significance of social entrepreneurship has been officially recognised through policy measures like the Malaysia Social Entrepreneurship Blueprint 2030 (SEMy2030), which seeks to foster a resilient and inclusive social enterprise ecosystem. This strategy corresponds with national development initiatives such as the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, indicating a robust state commitment to fostering socially driven firms (Ariffin et al., 2022; Zulkifli & Aziz, 2023). Notwithstanding these measures, engagement in SE continues to be restricted. Recent estimates reveal that social enterprises represent only one percent of Malaysia's micro, small, and medium companies (MSMEs), indicating structural and motivational obstacles that impede broader participation (Kasim et al., 2024).

Generation Z (Gen-Z), generally characterised as those born between the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, constitutes a crucial group for the future of social entrepreneurship. This generation is defined by elevated digital literacy, receptiveness to innovation, increased social consciousness, and a pronounced preference for purpose-oriented jobs (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Sabri & Rosdi, 2024). Their beliefs closely correspond with the fundamental tenets of social entrepreneurship, especially about social justice, sustainability, and community impact. Consequently, comprehending the determinants that affect Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) among Gen-Z is essential for cultivating a new cohort of social entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) denotes an individual's intentional and purposeful desire to initiate or participate in an enterprise that generates social value. Intention-based models are acknowledged as proficient predictors of intended conduct, especially in entrepreneurial settings where actions follow meticulous consideration (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Thus, SEI has emerged as a pivotal concept in social entrepreneurship research, offering preliminary insights into individuals' propensity to engage in social entrepreneurial endeavours (Kruse et al., 2021; Rahim et al., 2024).

The TPB provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for analysing SEI, suggesting that intention is influenced by attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Within the realm of social entrepreneurship, attitude denotes an individual's assessment of social entrepreneurship as valuable and significant, subjective norms encompass the perceived social pressure from key influencers, and perceived behavioural control signifies one's confidence in the capacity to establish and oversee a social enterprise. Multiple recent research have validated the significance of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in elucidating Social Entrepreneurial Intent (SEI) among youth and university students across various cultural contexts (Hsu & Wang, 2022; Li et al., 2023). Previous research based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour has repeatedly shown that social entrepreneurial intention is predominantly influenced by individuals perceived behavioural control and social influence, rather than attitudes alone, especially among young and student demographics (Hashim et al., 2024).

In addition to the fundamental elements of the TPB, modern social entrepreneurship literature increasingly highlights the significance of contextual and cognitive extensions that augment the model's explanatory capacity. Elements like educational assistance, awareness of social entrepreneurship, and a propensity for social innovation have been demonstrated to affect belief development, perception of capabilities, and motivational dynamics related to entrepreneurial intention (Fayolle & Gailly, 2022; Aziz et al., 2024). Educational institutions significantly influence SEI by offering exposure, experience learning opportunities, mentorship, and

institutional support that enhance attitudes and perceived behavioural control (Rahim et al., 2024).

This study seeks to investigate the determinants of Social Entrepreneurial Intention among Gen-Z in Malaysia by including the TPB alongside significant contextual expansions. The study specifically examines the impact of Attitude Towards Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), Social Innovation Orientation (SIO), Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE), and Educational Support (ES) on Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI). This study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to deliver a thorough and empirically substantiated comprehension of the motivational and contextual factors influencing SEI, thus contributing significantly to theory, policy, and practice.

Study Issues

Despite the increasing regulatory support for social entrepreneurship in Malaysia, participation among Generation Z remains significantly low, indicating that current initiatives may inadequately tackle the motivational and capability-related variables influencing Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI). Social entrepreneurship is commonly touted as a remedy for social and economic issues; nevertheless, the enthusiasm of young individuals to participate in such initiatives is still lacking. Previous research based on the TPB presents contradictory results concerning the impact of attitude, Subjective Norms, and perceived behavioural control on SEI, suggesting that positive perceptions and awareness do not invariably lead to robust entrepreneurial intentions and may depend on supplementary contextual factors. Moreover, the influence of educational support and institutional factors on Malaysian Generation Z is insufficiently examined, despite higher education institutions being regarded as pivotal facilitators of social entrepreneurship, and the impact of social innovation orientation and Subjective Norms remains ambiguous. Given these deficiencies, a thorough examination that combines the (TPB) with contextual factors such as educational support, awareness of social entrepreneurship, and a focus on social innovation is crucial for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing Social Entrepreneurial Intention among Generation Z in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) denotes an individual's intentional and purposeful desire to commence or participate in entrepreneurial endeavours that provide social value. SEI has emerged as a crucial concept in social entrepreneurship research, as intention is acknowledged as the most dependable predictor of planned behaviour, especially in entrepreneurial settings where action necessitates meticulous deliberation and commitment (Kruse et al., 2021; Hockerts, 2021). Comprehending SEI is crucial for recognising the motivational elements that drive individuals to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Recent studies underscore the increasing significance of SEI among younger generations, especially Generation Z, who are typically defined by heightened social consciousness, ethical principles, and a preference for purpose-oriented jobs. Empirical research indicates that adolescents exhibiting elevated social concern, empathy, and awareness of social issues are more inclined to demonstrate robust social and emotional intelligence (Zahra et al., 2022;

Kasim et al., 2024). Nonetheless, despite heightened knowledge of social issues, not all persons with robust social values convert this awareness into entrepreneurial ambition, suggesting the existence of supplementary contributing elements.

The literature reveals that SEI is affected by individual and environmental factors, such as perceived feasibility, resource accessibility, and institutional support. Although awareness and favourable views of social entrepreneurship are significant, various research indicate that the formation of intention is contingent upon individuals' trust in their capacity to effectively launch and maintain a social company (Fayolle & Gailly, 2022; Li et al., 2023). This underscores the intricacy of SEI and the necessity for a robust theoretical framework to elucidate the interactions among numerous factors in creating intention.

The TPB offers a solid theoretical framework for elucidating Social Entrepreneurial Intention, asserting that intention is influenced by three primary determinants: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). In the realm of social entrepreneurship, the Theory of Planned Behaviour elucidates how individuals' assessments of social entrepreneurship, perceived societal expectations, and views regarding their abilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities collectively impact Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI). Consequently, the TPB has been extensively utilised in recent studies to investigate Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) and continues to serve as a pertinent framework for comprehending intention development in social entrepreneurship research.

Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship

Attitude Towards Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE) denotes an individual's comprehensive favourable or negative assessment of participation in social entrepreneurial endeavours. In the realm of social entrepreneurship, attitude denotes the degree to which individuals regard social entrepreneurship as desirable, significant, and personally fulfilling. Previous research indicates that individuals who perceive social entrepreneurship as an effective approach to resolving social issues are more inclined to cultivate robust social entrepreneurial intents (Hockerts, 2021; Kruse et al., 2021).

For Generation Z, a group that cares about making a difference, having a purpose, and being involved in ethical activities, views towards social entrepreneurship are very important. A recent study in Malaysia discovered that attitudes towards social awareness and social innovation significantly affect the social entrepreneurial intentions of Gen-Z university students, suggesting that when this generation views social entrepreneurship as beneficial for societal transformation, their intention to participate markedly increases (Sabri & Rosdi, 2024). Related research examining Generation Z's behavioural intentions for social entrepreneurship has identified social entrepreneurial mindset as a fundamental element influencing Gen Z's intention to engage in social entrepreneurial activities. These findings indicate that social vision, innovativeness, and risk-taking reasons, which partially embody overarching entrepreneurial attitudes, are associated with heightened inclinations to engage in social entrepreneurship (Jasin et al., 2024).

Empirical data from extensive study on entrepreneurial intention underscores attitude as a vital influence. Meta-analytic assessments of current research on entrepreneurial intentions demonstrate that attitude consistently exerts a favourable influence on intention across many

situations and populations, hence affirming its status as a fundamental antecedent in intention models (Soria-Barreto & Novoa-Hernández, 2025).

Moreover, a study on the intention of social entrepreneurship among Malaysian university students indicates that attitude, along with associated factors such as subjective norms and social entrepreneurial awareness, significantly influences students' perceptions of themselves as prospective social entrepreneurs. These results correspond with the overarching trend indicating that younger demographics with favourable perceptions of social entrepreneurship are more inclined to pursue such avenues (Saufi & Hong, 2024).

The connection between attitude towards social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial intention can be theoretically established through the TPB. The Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that attitude is a key predictor of behavioural intention, alongside subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. In this context, a favourable disposition towards social entrepreneurship elevates the probability that Gen-Z individuals will want to participate, as positive assessments bolster motivational preparedness to act. Recent empirical studies utilising the TPB in entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial situations indicate that attitude regularly serves as a substantial precursor to intention, highlighting its importance in comprehending Generation Z's social entrepreneurial aspirations (Soria-Barreto & Novoa-Hernández, 2025).

H₁: Attitude toward social entrepreneurship has a significant influence on the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

Subjective Norms

Subjective Norms, frequently conceptualized as subjective norms in social science research, denote perceived social pressures from influential individuals such as family, friends, classmates, or society regarding the appropriateness of engaging in specific behaviours. In entrepreneurial intention research, subjective norms denote the extent to which individuals perceive that significant others endorse or encourage entrepreneurial endeavours. Research indicates that these norms significantly influence intentions by conveying societal expectations and normative endorsement for the activity. Research based on entrepreneurial intention frameworks often considers subjective norms as a determinant of entrepreneurial intention, albeit their influence may differ between contexts and cultures (Saufi & Hong, 2024).

Recent empirical research illustrates the significance of subjective norms in forecasting entrepreneurial ambitions, including social entrepreneurship, particularly among the youth. A recent study in Systems reveals that social systems and proximity, encompassing normative factors, substantially affect social entrepreneurial intentions among younger demographics, specifically Millennials and Generation Z. This underscores the significance of social legitimacy and normative endorsement in inspiring youth to engage in socially driven enterprises. A separate study within the Malaysian setting indicates that subjective norms may significantly influence social entrepreneurship intentions among university students, surpassing other factors such as attitude and awareness in certain models (Marjerison et al., 2025).

Nonetheless, data indicates diversity in the extent to which subjective norms affect intention. Research on entrepreneurial ambition among Generation Z suggests that norms may influence indirectly through cognitive variables such as attitude and perceived behavioural control, rather than exerting a direct effect. Research utilizing the (TPB) in the context of Generation Z entrepreneurship has demonstrated that societal norms significantly impact entrepreneurial intention, frequently mediated by attitudes, hence highlighting the interaction between normative perceptions and internal belief systems (Pham et al., 2023).

Cultural and societal factors also influence the role of Subjective Norms. Comparative study across various socio-cultural contexts indicates that the influence of subjective norms on entrepreneurial inclinations might vary markedly. In collectivist society, normative expectations from family and community exert greater influence, but in individualistic situations, youth tend to depend more on personal attitudes and self-beliefs. These nuances indicate that although Subjective Norms are significant, their predictive power may be influenced by various psychosocial factors and cultural circumstances (Pham et al., 2023).

Research on social entrepreneurship intention (SEI) frequently links Subjective Norms with social support and social proximity, highlighting how peer behaviour, community expectations, and perceived social approval increase the probability that individuals will intend to participate in social ventures. These findings correspond with the overarching trend that normative factors are crucial not only for economic entrepreneurship but also for the intents of social entrepreneurship among younger generations (Marjerison et al., 2025).

The relationship between Subjective Norms and SEI can be philosophically contextualized within the (TPB). The TPB asserts that subjective norms, in conjunction with attitude toward the behaviour and perceived behavioural control, are fundamental predictors of behavioural intention. Within this perspective, when Generation Z experiences substantial normative support from significant others concerning social entrepreneurship, this endorsement enhances their intention to participate in social entrepreneurial endeavours. Subsequent research on the TPB confirms that subjective norms can directly affect intention or function through mediators such as self-efficacy and attitude, highlighting their essential involvement in the cognitive process of intention creation (Saufi & Hong, 2024).

H₂: Subjective Norms significantly affect the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) refers to an individual's perception of their ability, resources, and opportunities to perform a particular behaviour. In the context of social entrepreneurship, PBC reflects the extent to which individuals believe they possess the necessary skills, knowledge, confidence, and access to support systems to initiate and manage social ventures. Recent studies consistently identify PBC as a critical determinant of social entrepreneurial intention, as individuals are more likely to intend to engage in social entrepreneurship when they feel capable of overcoming potential challenges (Kruse et al., 2021; Hockerts, 2022).

Perceived behavioural control is particularly significant for Generation Z, given their constrained work experience and financial means. Empirical evidence indicates that individuals from Generation Z frequently assess their entrepreneurial goals based on perceived

feasibility rather than only on desire. Research conducted from 2021 to 2024 indicates that Gen-Z students that exhibit elevated self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and control over entrepreneurial processes are more inclined to engage in social entrepreneurship (Do & Dadvari, 2021; Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2022). This shows that having faith in one's own abilities is a big psychological driver for this age.

Recent studies in underdeveloped and emerging economies, such as Malaysia and other ASEAN nations, underscore the significance of PBC in influencing social entrepreneurial intentions. Research indicates that access to entrepreneurial education, training, mentorship, and institutional support markedly improves individuals' perceived control, hence reinforcing SEI (Rahman et al., 2023; Abdullah et al., 2024). Provide training and resources to assist impoverished entrepreneurs in recognizing and pursuing viable business opportunities, while also addressing the different challenges they encounter (Zolkifly et al., 2024). Gen-Z, systematic engagement with tangible social issues and entrepreneurial remedies enhances their confidence in effectively managing social companies.

Moreover, PBC has been identified as interacting with many cognitive and environmental elements. Certain research indicates that PBC not only directly affects social entrepreneurial intention but also mediates the relationship between education, social support, and intention (Hossain et al., 2022; Mahfuz et al., 2023). This suggests that even when Generation Z possesses favourable attitudes or receives social reinforcement, their intention to act may remain minimal unless they perceive themselves as competent to do the behaviour. Consequently, PBC functions as an essential process that converts motivation into intention.

The (TPB) robustly endorses the significance of perceived behavioural control (PBC) as one of the three primary determinants of behavioural intention, in conjunction with attitude and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991). Within the TPB paradigm, PBC denotes the perceived ease or difficulty of doing the activity and is most impactful when individuals encounter ambiguity or limitations. Recent studies utilizing the (TPB) indicate that perceived behavioural control (PBC) is frequently the most significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intention among Generation Z, highlighting the critical role of empowerment, skill enhancement, and resource availability in cultivating future social entrepreneurs (Hockerts, 2022; Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2022).

H₃: Perceived behavioural control has a significant effect on the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

Social Innovation Orientation

Social Innovation Orientation (SIO) denotes an individual's propensity to pursue, create, and execute new ideas for addressing social issues in original and successful manners. In the realm of social entrepreneurship, SIO embodies inventiveness, proactivity, and adaptability, with the objective of producing social value rather than solely commercial gains. Recent research emphasize SIO as a significant precursor to social entrepreneurial intention, indicating that innovation-oriented individuals are more likely to perceive social issues as possibilities for entrepreneurial engagement (Dwivedi & Weerawardena, 2022; Rao-Nicholson et al., 2023).

Social innovation orientation is particularly pronounced among Generation Z, owing to their exposure to digital technology, global social challenges, and sustainability discourses. Generation Z is frequently characterized as a cohort that values innovation, social accountability, and a problem-solving orientation. Empirical research from 2021 to 2024 reveals that Gen-Z individuals with a pronounced inclination towards social innovation exhibit greater intentions to pursue social entrepreneurship, driven by their desire to implement innovative solutions to societal issues such as inequality, environmental degradation, and community development (Santos et al., 2021; Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2023).

Educational settings and experiential learning significantly influence the social innovation attitude of Generation Z. Research indicates that engagement in innovation-centric activities, including design thinking workshops, social innovation laboratories, and community-oriented initiatives, fosters students' inventive attitude and social consciousness. These experiences enable Gen-Z individuals to cultivate confidence in formulating meaningful solutions, hence reinforcing their commitment to engage in social entrepreneurship endeavours (Cinar et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2024). This indicates that SIO is both an intrinsic characteristic and a cultivable tendency shaped by institutional backing.

Recent empirical evidence reveals that SIO interacts with several psychological and environmental elements. Research indicates that social innovation orientation indirectly affects social entrepreneurial intention via attitudes and perceived feasibility, implying that innovation-oriented individuals are more inclined to view social entrepreneurship favourably and consider it attainable (Hockerts, 2022; Mahfuz et al., 2023). This relationship is essential for Gen-Z, as new thought must be paired with positive attitudes and confidence in execution to transfer into intention.

The impact of social innovation orientation on SEI can be elucidated through the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). SIO, although not an original construct of TPB, enhances the framework by reinforcing attitudes toward the behaviour and perceived behavioural control. Individuals possessing a robust orientation towards social innovation are more inclined to develop favourable assessments of social entrepreneurship and to trust in their ability to effect change, thereby enhancing their desire to participate in social entrepreneurial endeavours. Recent research utilizing the TPB endorse the incorporation of innovation-oriented factors as additional precursors to social entrepreneurial intention, especially among younger cohorts like Generation Z (Ajzen, 1991; Hockerts, 2022).

H₄: Social Innovation Orientation has a significant impact on the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship

Knowledge of social entrepreneurship refer to an individual's comprehension of social enterprise principles, business frameworks, social value generation, funding strategies, and the methodologies for initiating and maintaining social initiatives. Recent studies highlight that knowledge is an essential cognitive resource that influences individuals' perceptions of social entrepreneurship as a feasible and meaningful career choice. Individuals possessing extensive knowledge are more inclined to identify social issues as business prospects and to comprehend the application of entrepreneurial instruments for generating social impact (Hockerts, 2022; Ndou et al., 2021).

For Generation Z, understanding social entrepreneurship is crucial due to their nascent professional growth and restricted exposure to practical business experiences. Empirical research conducted from 2021 to 2024 indicates that Gen-Z students possessing greater knowledge of social entrepreneurship exhibit enhanced social entrepreneurial intents. Knowledge improves awareness of social concerns, elucidates the processes of social value creation, and mitigates the uncertainty linked to initiating social enterprises (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2022; Mahfuz et al., 2023). Consequently, knowledgeable persons exhibit greater confidence in perceiving social entrepreneurship as a viable option.

Educational institutions serve as a primary source of social entrepreneurship expertise for Generation Z. Research demonstrates that formal education, workshops, case studies, and practical learning activities substantially enhance students' comprehension of social entrepreneurship concepts and practices. Exposure to effective social enterprise models and community-based initiatives has demonstrated an enhancement in students' cognitive preparedness and their intention to participate in social entrepreneurship endeavours (Sánchez-García et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2023). This underscores the significance of organized learning settings in the acquisition of knowledge and the formulation of intentions.

Recent evidence indicates that knowledge of social entrepreneurship interacts with various psychological aspects, including attitude and perceived behavioural control. Certain research indicate that knowledge indirectly affects social entrepreneurial intention by cultivating favourable attitudes toward social entrepreneurship and augmenting individuals' confidence in their capacity to implement social initiatives (Hossain et al., 2022; Abdullah et al., 2024). For Gen-Z, knowing sufficient information mitigates perceived risks and uncertainty, so reinforcing their conviction that social entrepreneurship is both desired and attainable.

Theoretically, the impact of information on social entrepreneurial intention can be elucidated by the (TPB). Although knowledge is not an explicit component of the TPB, it functions as a significant precursor that influences attitude towards the behaviour and perceived behavioural control. Individuals possessing extensive knowledge of social entrepreneurship are more inclined to assess it favourably and view themselves as competent to participate, hence enhancing their intention to act. Recent research utilizing the (TPB) advocate for the incorporation of knowledge-related variables into augmented TPB models, especially in the context of analysing social entrepreneurial intentions within Generation Z cohorts (Ajzen, 1991; Hockerts, 2022).

H₅: Knowledge of social entrepreneurship has a significant impact on the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

Educational Support

Educational and institutional support denotes the official and informal frameworks established by universities, governmental entities, and support organizations to promote entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial endeavours. This support encompasses entrepreneurship education, training initiatives, mentorship, incubator services, financial mechanisms, and governmental incentives. Recent literature underscores that a conducive institutional framework is essential for diminishing entrance barriers and augmenting the appeal of social entrepreneurship as a viable career choice, especially for youth (Urban & Kujinga, 2023; Akhter & Sumi, 2022).

For Generation Z, educational and institutional support is particularly crucial due to their restricted entrepreneurial experience and reliance on structured learning environments. Empirical research from 2021 to 2024 indicates that Gen-Z students who recognize substantial university and institutional support exhibit elevated social entrepreneurship intentions. Participation in entrepreneurship courses, social enterprise contests, and institutional support has demonstrated an enhancement in knowledge of social challenges and self-assurance in tackling them via entrepreneurial solutions (Hernández-Sánchez et al., 2022; Ndofirepi et al., 2021).

Higher education institutions serve as crucial incubators for social entrepreneurial mindsets by integrating entrepreneurship and social innovation into academic curricula. Research indicates that experiential learning methodologies—such as service learning, project-based learning, and engagement with social enterprises—substantially augment students' motivation and intention to engage in social entrepreneurship. These initiatives assist students in converting academic knowledge into actual problem-solving abilities, therefore enhancing their entrepreneurial preparedness (Bignotti & le Roux, 2023; Fayolle & Liñán, 2022).

In addition to educational institutions, governmental and policy-level support also influences social entrepreneurial intentions. Research demonstrates that perceived governmental support, legal acknowledgment of social companies, and availability to public finance favourably affect young individuals' intentions to pursue social entrepreneurship. In emerging economies, institutional legitimacy and policy clarity are crucial in indicating that social entrepreneurship is socially esteemed and institutionally endorsed, hence facilitating intention formation among Generation Z (Shi et al., 2022; Urban & Kujinga, 2023).

The impact of educational and institutional support can be elucidated using the (TPB). While the (TPB) does not explicitly incorporate institutional elements, educational and institutional support serve as external antecedents that influence attitudes toward social entrepreneurship and perceived behavioural control. Supportive circumstances enhance favourable assessments of social entrepreneurship and reinforce individuals' confidence in their capacity to execute the behaviour. Recent advancements of the TPB in entrepreneurship research indicate that institutional support indirectly bolsters social entrepreneurial intention by augmenting essential cognitive components, especially within Generation Z demographics (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2023).

H₆: Educational support significantly affects the social entrepreneurial intention of Gen-Z in Malaysia.

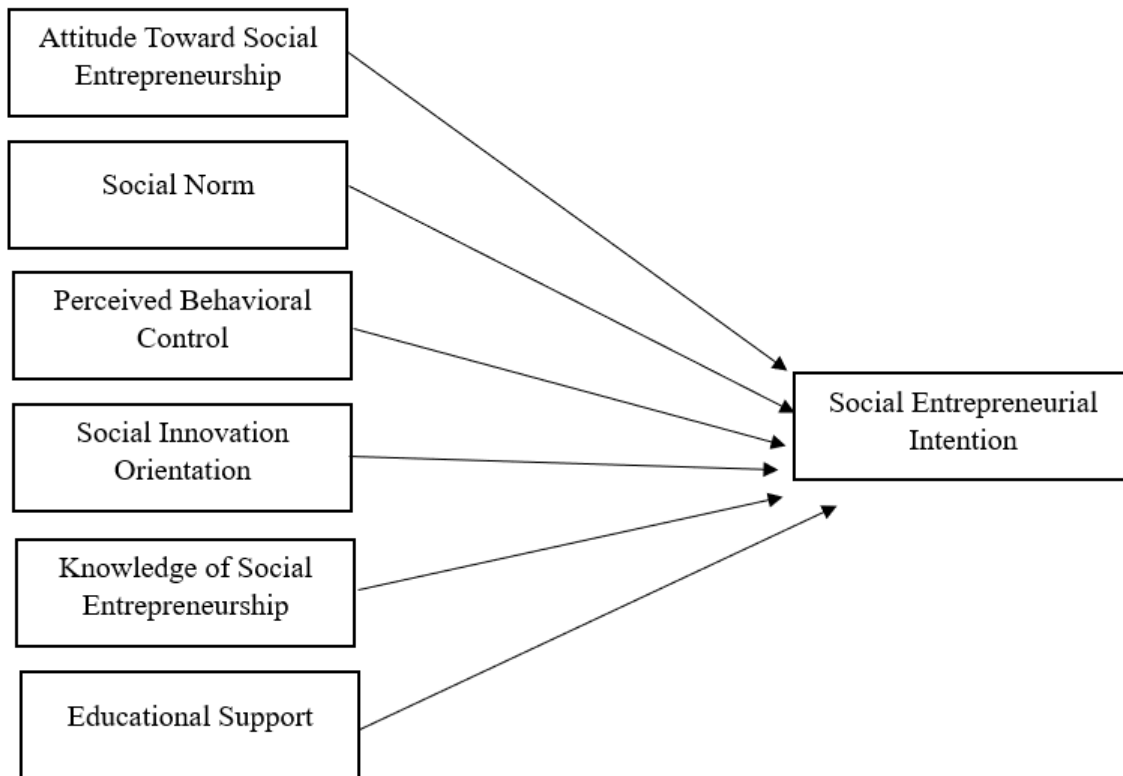


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) determinants. The paradigm, based on the (TPB), states that Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural Control directly affect social entrepreneurship intentions. In addition to TPB, Social Innovation Orientation, Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship, and Educational Support boost SEI contextually and capability-wise.

Methodology

This quantitative, cross-sectional study examined Generation Z's Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) in Malaysia using the TPB. The intended audience was Malaysian Generation Z, particularly university students and new graduates, who are increasingly interested in entrepreneurship and social issues. Data were collected via a digitally distributed online structured questionnaire and non-probability convenience sampling. Two sections of the questionnaire contained demographic data and measurement items for Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), Social Innovation Orientation (SIO), Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE), Educational Support (ES), and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI), all of which were validated in previous research. A five-point Likert scale was used to quantify responses, with 1 meaning 'strongly disagree' and 5 meaning 'strongly agree.' Data analysis used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software to test potential associations using measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation.

The minimum sample size requirement was assessed using the “10-times rule” in PLS-SEM, which suggests that the sample should be at least ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at a particular construct. Since six paths were directed toward SEI, the minimum

required sample was 60. Therefore, the sample size of 310 exceeds the recommended threshold, ensuring adequate statistical power.

Findings

Respondent Profile

The study's respondents' demographics include gender, age, education, current position, and work experience. A full examination of the target population was possible with 310 participants. The gender distribution showed that 207 women (67%), and 103 men (33%), responded. This indicates higher survey participation by women. Most responders, 304 (98%), were aged 20–25, while 6 (2%), were 26–30. This distribution shows the study's focus on Generation Z around this age. Over half of respondents (163 (53%)), have a diploma certificate, followed by bachelor's degrees 140 (45%). Master's degree holders made up 1% (5 respondents) and PhD holders 1% (2 respondents). This suggests that the sample is mostly young academics and professionals. Most responders (303, 97%) had less than four years of professional experience. A small percentage of responders had 5–8 years, 9–13 years, or over 14 years of experience. This conclusion supports the sample's representation of young, new workers. The bulk of responders, 305 (97%), held lower managerial positions. Four respondents (2%) held intermediate management positions, and one (1%) held senior management positions. This study examines Generation Z's Social Entrepreneurial Intention in Malaysia, and the demographic profile shows that most respondents are young, early-career professionals.

PLS-SEM

Measurement Model

Table 1: Reflective Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Indicator Reliability	Convergent Validity	Internal Consistency Reliability
		Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
		>0.70	>0.50	>0.7
Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI)	SEI1	0.870	0.774	0.932
	SEI2	0.887		
	SEI3	0.885		
	SEI4	0.887		
Attitude Towards Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE)	ATSE1	0.735	0.522	0.896
	ATSE2	0.778		
	ATSE3	0.839		
	ATSE4	0.663		
	ATSE5	0.583		
	ATSE6	0.786		
	ATSE7	0.679		
	ATSE8	0.685		

Construct	Items	Indicator	Indicator Reliability	Convergent Validity	Internal Consistency Reliability
			Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
			>0.70	>0.50	>0.7
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1		0.862	0.666	0.889
	SN2		0.807		
	SN3		0.824		
	SN4		0.770		
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	PBC1		0.899	0.806	0.943
	PBC2		0.915		
	PBC3		0.881		
	PBC4		0.895		
Social Innovation Orientation (SIO)	SIO1		0.820	0.664	0.888
	SIO2		0.793		
	SIO13		0.831		
	SIO14		0.817		
Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE)	KSE1		0.828	0.683	0.896
	KSE2		0.834		
	KSE3		0.845		
	KSE4		0.800		
Educational Support (ES)	ES1		0.685	0.644	0.900
	ES2		0.822		
	ES3		0.834		
	ES4		0.820		

The measurement model was examined to assess indicator reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability for all constructs, namely Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), Social Innovation Orientation (SIO), Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE), Educational Support (ES), and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI). The reliability of indicators was evaluated by outer loadings, with values over 0.70 being satisfactory; yet items with loadings above 0.50 were retained if the overall construct validity was maintained. The idea of Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) demonstrated solid measurement features, with all indicators loading heavily on the construct, resulting in an AVE of 0.774 and a composite reliability of 0.932. Excellent convergent validity and internal consistency are shown in these studies. Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship (ATSE) had moderate to high outer loadings, with several indicators marginally below 0.70, but it had an acceptable Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.522 and a composite dependability of 0.896, justifying its inclusion in the model.

SN also showed good indicator loadings, with an AVE of 0.666 and a composite reliability of 0.889, confirming convergent validity and reliability. Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) had high outer loadings for all indicators, an AVE of 0.806, and a composite reliability of 0.943. This shows that the construct consistently reflects respondents' social entrepreneurship ability.

Social Innovation Orientation (SIO) had suitable outer loadings, an AVE of 0.664, and a composite reliability of 0.888 in the extended TPB constructs, indicating convergent validity. With an AVE of 0.683 and a composite dependability of 0.896, Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship (KSE) had strong indicator reliability. Educational Support (ES) met the standards with an AVE of 0.644 and a composite dependability of 0.900, although one indicator had a loading below 0.70. The measurement model passed structural model analysis requirements.

Structural Model

Table 2: Structural Model Assessment

Endogenous	Path Coefficient (β)	Std Deviation	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis Result
ATSE -> SEI	0.040	0.062	0.638	0.524	Not Supported
ES -> SEI	0.624	0.077	8.085	0.000	Supported
KSE -> SEI	-0.012	0.061	0.191	0.848	Not Supported
PBC -> SEI	0.233	0.063	3.686	0.000	Supported
SIO -> SEI	-0.113	0.062	1.811	0.070	Not Supported
SN -> SEI	0.165	0.061	2.678	0.007	Supported

Table 2 displays the findings of the structural model evaluation, analysing six proposed links (H1–H6) between the independent variables and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI). The importance of each hypothesis was assessed using the path coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values derived from the bootstrapping method in PLS-SEM. Hypotheses with $p < 0.05$ were deemed statistically significant.

The findings demonstrate that ES has the most substantial positive and statistically significant effect on SEI ($\beta = 0.624$, $t = 8.085$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that institutional encouragement, entrepreneurship education, and learning environments are pivotal in influencing social entrepreneurial intention. PBC demonstrates a substantial positive correlation with SEI ($\beta = 0.233$, $t = 3.686$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that persons who possess confidence in their capacity to initiate and oversee a social enterprise are more inclined to cultivate a robust intention. Furthermore, SN exert a substantial impact on SEI ($\beta = 0.165$, $t = 2.678$, $p = 0.007$), underscoring the relevance of social endorsement and backing from family, peers, and significant others.

Conversely, ATSE did not demonstrate a significant impact on SEI ($\beta = 0.040$, $t = 0.638$, $p = 0.524$), indicating that favourable assessments of social entrepreneurship alone may be inadequate to stimulate intention. Likewise, KSE exhibits no significant correlation with SEI ($\beta = -0.012$, $t = 0.191$, $p = 0.848$), suggesting that knowledge devoid of sufficient backing or perceived competence may not directly convert into intention. SIO did not substantially predict SEI ($\beta = -0.113$, $t = 1.811$, $p = 0.070$), while the association nears the significance threshold.

The structural model partially validates the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour in explaining Generation Z's SEI. Of the six predictors, Educational Support, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Subjective Norms positively affect SEI, with Educational Support being the most influential. SEI is not strongly correlated with Attitude, Knowledge, or Social Innovation Orientation. Institutional backing, perceived capacity, and social influence are more

important than individual attitudes, expertise, or innovative orientation in determining social entrepreneurial intention.

Lastly, the model explains 78.8% of the variance in Social Entrepreneurial Intention ($R^2 = 0.788$), indicating substantial explanatory power according to Hair et al. (2022). Apart from that, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were examined to assess multicollinearity. All VIF values were below the threshold of 5.0, indicating no critical collinearity issues. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). All HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 1.00, confirming discriminant validity.

Discussion

This study sought to investigate the factors influencing SEI among Generation Z through an expanded TPB framework. The results offer partial validation of the TPB, indicating that ES, PBC, and SN substantially affect SEI, whereas ATSE, KSE, and SIO do not exhibit significant direct impacts.

The substantial impact of educational support underscores the essential importance of institutional contexts in influencing social entrepreneurial intention. This discovery corresponds with previous research indicating that organised entrepreneurial education, mentorship, and experiential learning bolster students' confidence and enthusiasm to engage in social entrepreneurship. Educational support serves both as a source of knowledge and as a facilitator that enhances perceived feasibility and preparation for action.

Perceived behavioural control was identified as a strong predictor of SEI, reinforcing the fundamental tenet of TPB that individuals are more inclined to form intentions when they perceive they have the requisite abilities and resources. This indicates that confidence in addressing social entrepreneurial concerns is more impactful than simply possessing positive attitudes or knowledge. The substantial influence of subjective standards suggests that social endorsement and support from family, peers, and educators are crucial in forming entrepreneurial goals within Generation Z.

The non-significant impacts of attitude, knowledge, and social innovation orientation indicate that cognitive and motivational elements alone may be inadequate to propel SEI without robust institutional and social reinforcement. These findings indicate that social entrepreneurial intention is influenced more by perceived capacity and support systems than by positive perceptions or inventive inclinations alone.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study theoretically enhances the social entrepreneurship literature by offering empirical evidence for an expanded Theory of Planned Behaviour framework in relation to Generation Z. The results validate the significance of Perceived Behavioural Control and Subjective Norms as primary predictors of SEI, while emphasising the role of Educational Support as a contextual enhancement to the TPB. The negligible influence of attitude undermines the presumption that positive assessments invariably lead to intention in social entrepreneurship, indicating that the linkages within the Theory of Planned Behaviour may differ between situations and generations.

Moreover, the study enhances intention-based research by illustrating that knowledge and innovation orientation do not inherently result in entrepreneurial intention, thereby underscoring the necessity of incorporating institutional and environmental factors into TPB-based models when analysing social entrepreneurship.

The findings emphasise the necessity of enhancing educational and institutional support structures to foster social entrepreneurship among youth. Higher education institutions ought to promote experiential learning methodologies, including social entrepreneurship initiatives, incubator programs, and industry partnerships, to augment students perceived behavioural control. Policymakers and educators must provide supportive environments that promote social entrepreneurship via funding possibilities, mentorship, and acknowledgement.

The considerable impact of subjective norms indicates that awareness efforts targeting families, communities, and role models should enhance favourable social perceptions of social entrepreneurship as a legitimate career option. Highlighting societal validation may motivate more young folks to engage in social entrepreneurship endeavours.

Unlike prior TPB-based studies that primarily emphasize attitudinal factors, this study demonstrates that contextual and institutional variables, particularly Educational Support that play a more dominant role than personal attitudes in shaping SEI among Generation Z. This finding suggests that TPB relationships may vary across generational and socio-economic contexts. By empirically validating an extended TPB framework in a developing country setting, this study contributes to refining intention-based models in social entrepreneurship research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future study should implement longitudinal designs to investigate the evolution of social entrepreneurial intention over time and its correlation with real entrepreneurial behaviour. Broadening the sample to encompass early-stage social entrepreneurs or working professionals, in addition to university students, may improve the generalisability of the findings.

Furthermore, subsequent study may investigate potential mediating or moderating variables, such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, moral obligation, or cultural values, to enhance comprehension of the mechanisms involved in intention creation. Comparative analyses among other nations or age cohorts would yield significant insights into the contextual impact on SEI and the relevance of TPB across diverse environments.

Conclusion

This research investigated the determinants affecting Social Entrepreneurial Intention among Generation Z through an expanded Theory of Planned Behaviour paradigm. The results indicate that Educational Support, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Subjective Norms are substantial predictors of SEI, whereas Attitude Towards Social Entrepreneurship, Knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship, and Social Innovation Orientation do not demonstrate significant direct effects. The results underscore the significance of institutional support, perceived competence, and social influence in determining social entrepreneurial intention.

The study enhances the existing social entrepreneurship literature by presenting actual evidence from a developing country and elucidating the formation of social entrepreneurial intentions among Generation Z. This research integrates the Theory of Planned Behaviour with contextual factors, providing significant theoretical insights and practical assistance for educators, policymakers, and organisations aiming to promote social entrepreneurship among youth.

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