

ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) among university students, particularly examining the role of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurship competence. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this research investigates how each of these factors contributes to shaping the desire to engage in social entrepreneurship. By focusing on students exposed to social entrepreneurship incubators, the study highlights how a supportive ecosystem can cultivate the necessary competencies and motivations to initiate socially driven ventures. Attitudes toward social vision, sustainability, social networks, and financial return are considered, reflecting the multifaceted motivations that drive social entrepreneurs.

The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from students registered with Syarikat Siswa Universiti (SSU) at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. Findings suggest that entrepreneurship competence significantly enhances SEI, mediated by positive attitudes toward social goals. Additionally, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are shown to strengthen the intention to pursue social entrepreneurship, underscoring the influence of social support and self-efficacy in this field. This study offers insights for policymakers and educational institutions aiming to foster youth social entrepreneurship, providing guidance on how targeted programs can develop the skills and motivations needed for students to address societal challenges through innovative business models.

1.0 Introduction

This study explores the increasing significance of social entrepreneurship among youth in emerging economies, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z. Social entrepreneurs aim to provide innovative solutions to social and economic problems, improving the standard and quality of life of marginalized communities. However,

research on social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) in Southeast Asia has predominantly focused on developed nations, leaving a significant gap in understanding.

The study aims to address this gap by integrating the concept of entrepreneurship competence with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore how various factors influence SEI among university students exposed to social entrepreneurship incubators. The research reveals that attitudes towards social innovation significantly affect SEI, with subjective norms and perceived behavioral control playing crucial roles. This study contributes to theoretical discourse and provides practical insights for policymakers and educational institutions aiming to foster a supportive ecosystem for social entrepreneurship. By understanding the interplay between entrepreneurship competence and SEI, stakeholders can develop targeted initiatives that equip young individuals with the necessary skills and resources to thrive as social entrepreneurs, ultimately benefiting society. The problem statement addresses the need to understand how entrepreneurial competencies can effectively motivate and equip the younger generation at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) to become successful social entrepreneurs. The study aims to identify which specific competencies are crucial and how they can be integrated into existing educational frameworks to maximize the social impact of young entrepreneurs.

This research investigates the influence of subjective norms, attitudes towards social entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship competence on the intentions of UMK students to pursue social entrepreneurship. The study aims to understand how societal and peer expectations influence students' motivation, how perceived behavioral control affects their intentions, and how specific entrepreneurial skills like innovation, leadership, and problem-solving influence their decisions. The study also evaluates the mediating effect of attitude toward social entrepreneurship on the relationship between entrepreneurship competence and social entrepreneurial intention. The research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the factors driving social entrepreneurial intentions among UMK students and offer practical recommendations to strengthen social entrepreneurship education. The study also explores challenges faced by students in pursuing social entrepreneurship and suggests solutions. This study aims to find out which specific business skills are most important for motivating and preparing UMK students to become social entrepreneurs. It will not only add to knowledge about social business in the academic world but also give schools ideas on raising young leaders committed to making a difference in the world.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who pursue innovative ideas to solve community problems and may emerge in response to economic crises. They may also be motivated by subjective norms, which refer to the belief that influential people will approve or support a particular behavior. Perceived behavioral control refers to the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior, which varies across situations and actions.

2.1 Literature Review

In chapter 2, the researcher will present the literature review in more detail. The literature review contains the underpinning theory and previous studies that are related to the research variables.

This study will use the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine the influence of entrepreneurship competence in stimulating UMK students to become social entrepreneurs. Based on TPB, the researcher will categorize the variables into two which are independent variables and dependent variables. Three independent variables will be analyzed in this study: Perceived behavioral control, Subjective Norm (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). The dependent variable for this study is social entrepreneurial intention. The analysis phase will explore the relationship between independent and dependent variables, culminating in the development of a conceptual framework and a set of hypotheses. Contributing to a deeper understanding of social entrepreneurial intentions among UMK students.

2.3 Previous Studies

2.3.1 Social Entrepreneurial Intention (Dependent Variable)

Social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) reflects an individual's internalized motivation and commitment to establishing ventures that focus primarily on addressing social challenges rather than maximizing profit. As a construct, SEI captures the drive of socially conscious individuals who aim to implement innovative solutions for poverty, environmental degradation, and inequality, demonstrating a distinctive approach prioritizing societal well-being over personal financial gain (Hendriana et al., 2024). SEI is increasingly recognized as an essential factor in entrepreneurial studies, particularly within emerging economies, where young entrepreneurs face complex socio-economic problems and traditional market solutions often fail to address these issues effectively (Yang et al., 2023). This intent toward social entrepreneurship represents a meaningful alternative career path, aligning individual aspirations for positive change with the structural demands of sustainable, financially responsible ventures.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a theoretical basis for SEI, positing that intention toward any behavior, including social entrepreneurship, arises from a combination of individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). For social entrepreneurs, attitudes toward social issues, support from significant others, and confidence in their success are vital in shaping SEI. Research validates this model's relevance

for SEI, noting that exposure to entrepreneurial education and social entrepreneurship incubators strengthens competencies in leadership, innovation, and problem-solving, fostering an increased intention toward social impact ventures (Hendriana et al., 2024). Studies by Kruse et al. (2023) further support this, showing that targeted education and hands-on experience in social ventures deepen SEI by helping individuals develop the confidence and skills necessary to pursue and sustain social enterprises.

2.3.2 Entrepreneurship Competence and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

According to Hendriana et al. (2024), entrepreneurship competence is fundamental in fostering social entrepreneurial intention (SEI), equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to pursue ventures that address social challenges. These competencies encompass a range of skills, including opportunity recognition, problem-solving, leadership, and risk management, all of which enhance an individual's ability to conceive, launch, and sustain social enterprise. In emerging markets, where socio-economic issues often demand innovative solutions, entrepreneurial competence has been identified as a strong predictor of SEI, with studies showing that individuals with higher competencies are more likely to intend to create ventures focused on societal benefits over profit (Yang et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship competence is also supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), as it relates directly to perceived behavioral control—individuals' belief in their ability to execute entrepreneurial tasks. According to Kruse et al. (2023) emphasize that young people who acquire entrepreneurial skills through education and hands-on experience feel more empowered to pursue social ventures. Educational programs focusing on entrepreneurial competence build skills and foster a pro-social mindset, enhancing attitudes toward social entrepreneurship and increasing SEI (Yang et al., 2023). By fostering confidence and reducing the perceived risk of failure, these competencies make social entrepreneurship a more accessible and viable path, especially for young people in regions with high social and economic needs (Ajzen, 1991; Hendriana et al., 2024)

2.3.3 Subjective Norms and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Subjective norms, a central component in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), significantly influence social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) by shaping the perceived social pressure or approval from essential individuals or groups—such as family, friends, or mentors—to engage in social entrepreneurship. Subjective norms reflect how social influences impact one's decision to pursue socially driven ventures, often enhancing motivation to conform to socially valued behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). This effect is particularly strong in collectivist cultures, where social and communal expectations often dictate individual choices more significantly than in individualist societies (Yang et al., 2023). In Southeast Asia, for instance, young people may feel encouraged to enter social entrepreneurship when they perceive that essential others support or value this path, making subjective norms a powerful factor in SEI (Hendriana et al., 2024; Kruse et al., 2023).

Studies confirm that subjective norms can motivate individuals to align their career goals with societal needs, especially when they perceive social entrepreneurship as a respected and viable means to address community issues (Yang et al., 2023). Support from influential figures strengthens SEI and can help young people feel more capable and motivated, reinforcing other factors like perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial competence (Kruse et al., 2023). Hendriana et al. (2024) observe that subjective norms substantially impact regions where social entrepreneurship is gaining momentum, as they provide encouragement and validation that the entrepreneurial path is worthwhile.

2.3.4 Perceived Behavioral Control and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is a vital predictor of social entrepreneurial intention (SEI), as it reflects an individual's self-confidence and perceived ease or difficulty in performing entrepreneurial tasks, especially in the social domain. In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) context, PBC is defined as the perceived level of control over behavior, encompassing factors like skills, knowledge, and access to resources contributing to the feasibility of pursuing social entrepreneurship (Ajzen, 1991). Higher levels of perceived behavioral control generally correlate with stronger SEI, as individuals feel more capable and less deterred by potential obstacles (Kruse et al., 2023). For social entrepreneurs, PBC is particularly significant because social enterprises often face unique challenges, including limited resources, longer timelines for social impact, and the need to balance financial sustainability with social mission (Hendriana et al., 2024).

Research suggests that entrepreneurial education and training, hands-on experience, and mentorship all enhance perceived behavioral control, thus increasing SEI. Hendriana et al. (2024) emphasize that students exposed to social entrepreneurship incubators and similar programs demonstrate higher PBC as they gain practical skills and the confidence to navigate the complexities of social ventures. According to Yang et al. (2023) further support this, showing that young people with greater perceived control over their entrepreneurial pursuits are more likely to act on their intentions, especially when they feel supported by a robust social network and have access to resources. These findings highlight that both personal efficacy and external support are essential in fostering SEI, particularly in emerging economies where such support can significantly enhance individuals' belief in their ability to enact positive change through entrepreneurship.

2.3.5 Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship Orientation

Attitude toward social entrepreneurship orientation represents an individual's evaluative disposition toward pursuing a venture aimed at achieving social impact. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude is a key component that influences social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) by shaping one's perception of the value and importance of social entrepreneurship (Ajzen, 1991). This attitude is shaped by various orientations, including a commitment to social vision, sustainability, and social innovation, all of which are unique to social entrepreneurship compared to traditional business ventures (Hendriana et al., 2024). Studies indicate that a positive attitude toward social entrepreneurship strengthens SEI by fostering a personal commitment to social goals, which enhances motivation to create impact-driven ventures (Kruse et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2023).

Hendriana et al. (2024) validate the significance of social entrepreneurship orientation, finding that students with strong attitudes toward social causes are likelier to develop intentions to engage in socially beneficial ventures. These attitudes are often cultivated through educational programs and exposure to real-world social entrepreneurship projects, which provide insights into the challenges and rewards of social entrepreneurship. Yang et al. (2023) further notes that attitudes toward social innovation—such as creatively addressing environmental or social issues—correlate strongly with SEI, as individuals with this orientation view social entrepreneurship as a meaningful way to contribute to societal progress. This orientation aligns closely with the broader goal of developing sustainable solutions to benefit society and address systemic issues meaningfully.

2.4 Hypotheses Statement

Social entrepreneurship has become increasingly vital as individuals seek to address social and environmental issues through innovative business models that prioritize both impact and sustainability. Unlike traditional business ventures, social entrepreneurship focuses on creating positive societal change alongside financial returns. This study aims to understand the factors that drive individuals toward social entrepreneurship by exploring the roles of attitudes toward social impact, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurship competence. These elements are hypothesized to shape social entrepreneurial intentions, helping to reveal what motivates individuals to engage in ventures that balance profit with purpose. The following hypotheses outline the anticipated relationships among these key factors.

H1: Attitude toward (a) social vision, (b) sustainability, (c) social networks, (d) social innovation, and (e) financial return has a positive influence on social entrepreneurial intention.

H2: Subjective norms have a positive influence on social entrepreneurial intention.

H3: Subjective norms have a positive influence on attitude toward (a) social vision, (b) sustainability, (c) social networks, (d) social innovation, and (e) financial return.

H4: Perceived behavioral control has a positive effect on social entrepreneurship intention.

H5: Perceived behavioral control has a positive influence on attitude toward (a) social vision, (b) sustainability, (c) social networks, (d) social innovation, and (e) financial return.

H6: Entrepreneurship competence has a positive effect on the attitude toward (a) social vision, (b) sustainability, (c) social network, (d) social innovation, and (e) financial return.

H7: Entrepreneurship competence has a positive effect on perceived behavioral control

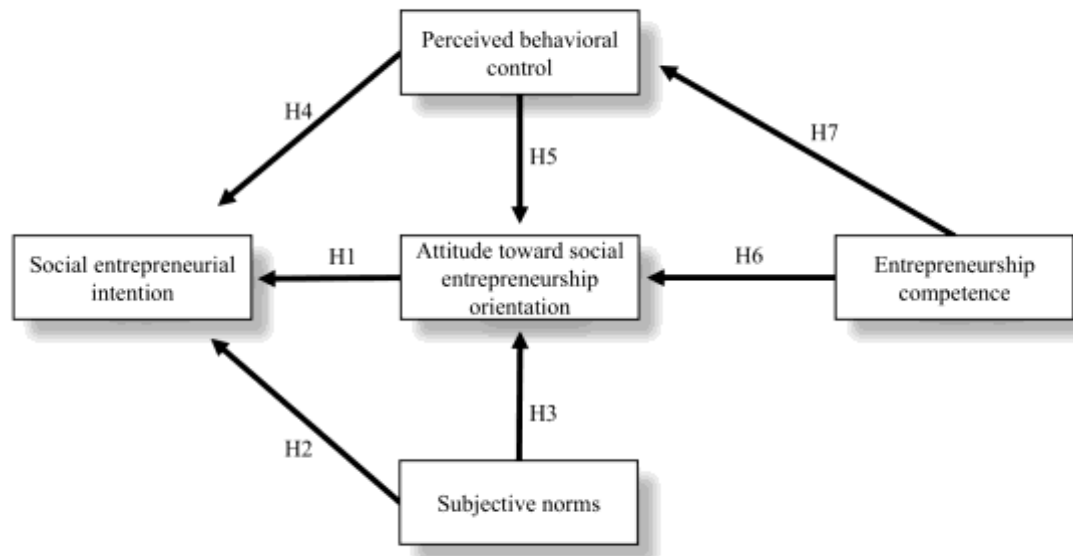


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Design

One of the most crucial components of the approach is the research design. According to I. Akhtar (2016), research design activities are usually based on research methodology. This research uses quantitative methods for research studies. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurement and statistical, mathematical and numerical evaluation of data collected through questionnaires and surveys. This method was chosen because it can ensure that the data collected from the fieldwork is suitable for problem solving. Next, the target respondents of this study are Malaysian University of Kelantan students who registered their business or company with SSU '(Syarikat Siswa Universiti)'. To collect data from the target respondents, we created a questionnaire that was divided into four parts. For part A, it has a demographic background and for part B, it is a dependent variable, For part C an independent variable which has 3 sections and the last part shows a mediating variable. This questionnaire will be given to students whose companies are registered with SSU University Malaysia Kelantan. Secondary data is taken from previous research, journals related to the issue to supplement the original data collected through online surveys, i.e. questionnaires. Meanwhile, the main source of data in our study is a questionnaire.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The study uses a quantitative research approach, using a survey-based method. A structured questionnaire is used for data collection, systematically designed to elicit specific responses for statistical analysis. The questionnaire is distributed via email, ensuring consistency and standardized responses. The survey covers various constructs, including demographic background, independent variable, dependent variable, and mediating variable. Demographic information allows for subgroup analysis. To avoid bias, survey goals should be clearly outlined, guiding the design process and minimizing the risk of introducing biased elements.

3.4 Study Population

This research examines student entrepreneurs from Syarikat Siswa Universiti (SSU), a network of student-run enterprises, to understand how entrepreneurial competencies are developed in an educational setting. The study aims to understand how practical experience in a structured learning environment influences students' readiness to become social entrepreneurs, particularly in emerging economies like Malaysia.

3.5 Sample size

The sample size for this study was determined by first identifying the total population of student entrepreneurs within *Syarikat Siswa Universiti (SSU)*, estimated to be 2868. The Krejcie and Morgan table was used to determine the appropriate sample size for a population of this magnitude to ensure statistical validity and representativeness. According to the table, a population of this size requires a sample of approximately 338 respondents to achieve a confidence level of 95% and an acceptable margin of error. This approach allows for a balanced representation of the student entrepreneurs within SSU, ensuring that the findings are generalizable to similar populations in other educational and entrepreneurial settings.

Table 3.1: Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The study "Nurturing Social Entrepreneurs: The Role of Entrepreneurship Competence in Youth Development in UMK" explores how social entrepreneurs shape young people's development in terms of social awareness, problem-solving skills, and leadership. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from *Syarikat Siswa Universiti (SSU)*, UMK students actively involved in student-led entrepreneurship initiatives. However, the method may not generalize the findings to the broader student population, as the data will primarily reflect the perspectives of students engaged in social entrepreneurship.

3.7 Research Instrument Development

For this study, a quantitative research method was employed to develop a structured questionnaire aimed at gathering reliable data on the factors influencing social entrepreneurial intentions among students in *Syarikat Siswa Universiti (SSU)* at UMK. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed online to the target population. The use of an online survey allowed for the efficient collection of data from a larger sample of respondents, offering the necessary insights to explore the relationships between key variables such as subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurship competence, and social entrepreneurial intention. The questionnaire was designed to include demographic information such as gender, age, and academic background, alongside key questions addressing students' entrepreneurial competencies, attitudes toward social entrepreneurship, and their social entrepreneurial intentions.

The questions in the questionnaire were specifically structured to measure the independent variables (subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurship competence), as well as the mediating variable (attitude toward social entrepreneurship orientation). These questions were framed to assess how students' perceptions of social entrepreneurship are influenced by their environment, their confidence in their ability to succeed, and their entrepreneurial skills. To ensure a wide distribution and reach a large sample size, the survey was shared through various online platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media channels, enabling the study to collect responses from a broad cross-section of students involved in SSU. This method of data collection not only facilitated efficient access to participants but also allowed for a diverse range of perspectives, which is essential for understanding the complexities of social entrepreneurial intentions in the context of UMK students.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, N. L., Rahid, M. R., Muhamad, N. S., & Ngah, N. S. (2022, June 9). The role of young social entrepreneurs in Identity Development. *Emerald Insight*.
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S2043-052320220000018010/full/html>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.
- Ajzen, I. (2020). —The theory of planned behavior: frequently asked questions, *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 314-324.
- Deloitte (2023), —Human capital trends 2023, available at:
www2.deloitte.com/nl/nl/pages/humancapital/articles/human-capital-trends.html
- Glen, S. (2023, July 22). Cronbach's alpha: Definition, interpretation, SPSS. *Statistics How To*.
<https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/statistics-definitions/cronbachs-alpha-spss/>
- Hendriana, E., Bhinekawati, R., & Farransahat, M. (2024). Roles of entrepreneurship competence in stimulating young generation to become social entrepreneurs in an emerging country. *Social Enterprise Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/sej-12-2023-0151>
- Hockerts, K. (2017). Determinants of social entrepreneurial intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(1), 105–130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12171>
- Kruse, P., Chipeta, E. M., Surujlal, J., & Wegge, J. (2023a). Development and validation of a new social entrepreneurial intention scale in South Africa and Germany. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2023.2205419>
- Summerfield, R. (2020, May). The impact of social entrepreneurship on Economic Growth. *Financier Worldwide*. <https://www.financierworldwide.com/the-impact-of-social-entrepreneurship-on-economic-growth>

Sus, V. (2023, September 3). *Subjective norms: Definition and examples*. Helpful Professor.
<https://helpfulprofessor.com/subjective-norms/>

Villegas, F. (2024, October 23). Descriptive analysis: What it is + best research tips.
QuestionPro. <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/descriptive-analysis/>

Wang, W. (2022, May 23). Toward economic growth and value creation through social entrepreneurship: Modelling the mediating role of innovation. *Frontiers*.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.914700/full>

Yang, Q., Al Mamun, A., Jingzu, G., Siyu, L., & Masud, M. M. (2023). Social entrepreneurial intention among working adults: An emerging country context. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1123198>

Young, J. (2024, July 25). Frequency distribution: Definition. *Frequency Distribution: Definition*.
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/frequencydistribution.asp>