



Do Proactive Personality and Self-Efficacy Really Matter in Shaping Social Entrepreneurial Intention?

PARISA MOHAMMADI^{a*}, SUZILAWATI KAMARUDIN^a
AND SANAZ SAGHATI JALALI^a

^a*Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this paper is to provide insights into the determinants of social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) among students in Malaysia. For data collection, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed among students in public and private universities. The structural equation modelling-partial least square (SEM-PLS) technique was employed to test the research hypotheses. The data was analysed using the SmartPLS software. Research findings indicated that attitude toward social entrepreneurship (ATSE) is the most significant factor in shaping the intention to become a social entrepreneur, followed by social entrepreneurial self-efficacy (SE-SE) and proactive personality (PP). Additionally, proactive personality contributes to shaping favourable ATSE. Understanding the factors that impact SEI could help us to identify the people who are more likely to establish a social venture in order to equip them with the necessary resources. Nevertheless, lack of awareness and “social entrepreneurial mindset” among students was found an obvious obstacle to SEI, which requires further attention of policymakers and the ministry of higher education. To date, an abundant body of literature confirms that attitude is one of the most significant determinants of intention and consequent behaviour; however, the antecedents of attitude are yet to be discovered. The original contribution of this study is extending the theory of planned behaviour by examining the factors that affect SEI.

JEL Classification: M13, M21

Keywords: Social entrepreneurial intention; Proactive personality; Attitude toward social entrepreneurship; Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy

Article history:

Received: 8 June 2022

Accepted: 6 December 2022

* Corresponding author: Email: parisa.mohamadi68@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.47836/ijeam.16.3.03>

© International Journal of Economics and Management. ISSN 1823-836X. e-ISSN 2600-9390.

INTRODUCTION

There may not be a unique interpretation of the ideal world, but it is widely acknowledged that it is too far to reach (Dees, 2007). An ideal world must create an “enabling environment” that lets human beings to unleash their potential and energy (Yunus, 2007). Unfortunately, in such a world that going to school is still an unreachable dream of 260 million children (World Bank, 2017), not only the “enabling environment” is not available, but also countless people are deprived of basic human rights.

The increase of social, environmental, and human crises has led societies toward new models of creating social value (Nicholls, 2006). Scholars and practitioners believe that social entrepreneurship can help to solve persistent social and environmental problems (Tran and Korfflesch, 2016; Pathak and Muralidharan, 2017; Mohammadi et al., 2020). Social entrepreneurship has been presented as a means that creates social and economic benefits simultaneously (Mair and Martí, 2006; Weaver, 2018; Lim and Omar, 2019). Social entrepreneurs combine a variety of techniques and skills to create value. They constantly attempt to bring sustainable solutions for existing problems by mixing business techniques with charity and social movement models (Nicholls, 2006).

Even though social entrepreneurs are potential change agents who can deliver systematic and sustainable solutions to persistent problems in society, statistics show a very low level of social entrepreneurial activities in emerging economies (Bosma et al., 2015). For instance, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor’s (GEM) statistics highlighted that Malaysia has a very low level of entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, Malaysia is one of the countries that suffer from a lack of entrepreneurial intention; it only accounts for approximately five per cent (GEM Global Report, 2017). Similarly, the social entrepreneurial activity rate is less than two per cent (Bosma et al., 2015), and it is unfortunate that Malaysia has a very limited number of entrepreneurs involved in social activities.

This low level of social entrepreneurial activities implies the scarcity of social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) that is the best predictor of the entrepreneurial behaviour. In other words, people in developing countries, particularly Malaysia, tend to exhibit less social entrepreneurial behaviour, which specifies the deficiency of SEI. Therefore, a new venue of research is created to understand the process of social entrepreneurship and the personality trait of social entrepreneurs. To increase the intention of people to pursue social entrepreneurship, it is crucial to know what kinds of people have the intention to become social entrepreneurs in order to equip them, especially the young generation, with the necessary skills, knowledge, and other resources (Prieto, 2010). However, there is a current paucity of research seeking to identify the predictors of SEI (Kruse, 2018).

Although various personal, demographic, and situational factors impact SEI (Ebrashi, 2013), to date, adequate attention has not been given to individual-level factors and characteristics of social entrepreneurs (Krstic et al., 2017). For instance, in spite of evidence that shows proactive personality has an important role in decision making to become a social entrepreneur (Kedmenec et al., 2015), little clear evidence exists in the literature (Dell and Amadu, 2015; Steiner and Teasdale, 2016).

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to address the aforementioned gaps and contribute to the body of the knowledge by providing empirical evidence about factors that influence SEI through surveying students in Malaysia. Specifically, anchoring the theory of planned behaviour, this paper offers a new conceptual model that investigates the influence of attitude toward social entrepreneurship (ATSE), social entrepreneurial self-efficacy (SE-SE), and proactive personality on SEI. The main sections covered in this paper include theoretical underpinning, hypotheses development, research methodology, and data analysis. Then, the paper ends with discussing the findings and explaining the research contributions and limitations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of planned behaviour is a well-established theory that has been applied to the context of entrepreneurship in numerous studies (Gorgievski et al., 2018; Munir et al., 2019; Shah and Soomro, 2017; Usaci, 2015; Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2019). According to Politis et al. (2016), the theory of planned behaviour has potential to predict not only entrepreneurial intention, but also SEI. This theory stipulates that intention to do a particular task is best predictable by attitude. Attitude is formed by the extent to which individuals feel

positive or negative about the outcomes of an activity (Ajzen, 1991). If outcomes are perceived positive, favourable, or attractive, the intention toward that action will be stronger. In the context of entrepreneurship, people who perceive the outcome of being an entrepreneur attractive are more likely to have the intention to become an entrepreneur (Kibler, 2013).

The other important component of the theory of planned behaviour is perceived behavioural control or self-efficacy that refers to the perception of individuals about the ability to act (Ajzen, 2005). People who believe they have resources or opportunities to perform behaviour are more likely to have the intention to do so (Ajzen, 2005). SE-SE, a newly-emerged concept, refers to one's dynamic set of beliefs about his/her own capacity to start a new social venture and succeed in carrying it out (Tran and Korflesch, 2016).

Although it is quite important to know the intention is a key predictor of behaviour, it does not provide adequate information about reasons behind the behaviour. Therefore, to understand human behaviour, it is crucial to identify the determinants of intention. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2005), the theory of planned behaviour is extendable, and other influential factors can be incorporated into the model. To this end, they suggested background factors such as personality traits, age, gender, education, emotion, and past experience to be tested empirically.

Anchoring on Ajzen's (2005) suggestion to empirically test the background factors that may shape intention, the current research extends the theory of planned behaviour by introducing a new variable that determines ATSE. A comprehensive literature review in the field of social entrepreneurship revealed that proactive personality is a background factor that influences ATSE and SEI. In addition, SE-SE will be tested in the domain of social entrepreneurship.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MALAYSIA

Entrepreneurship is a well-known concept in Malaysia as it is evident by numerous supporting policies, funds, loans, strategies, physical infrastructure, and consulting services (Sandhu et al., 2011). In Malaysia, entrepreneurship is used as the main tool to achieve the goal of becoming a high-income economy by 2020. Therefore, through introducing entrepreneurial programs, the government encourages Malaysians to get involved in entrepreneurial activities (Keat, 2012).

Concerning social entrepreneurship, the Malaysian Ministry of Education initiated a project in collaboration with Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) and UiTM in 2010, entitled Women in Social Enterprise (WISE). The purpose of this project is to enhance students' experience by letting them stay with social entrepreneurs and learn through helping them. This program benefits both students and social entrepreneurs. That is, students find the opportunity to learn how to manage a social venture and entrepreneurs improve marketing strategies with the help of students (Abdullah et al., 2015). Additionally, Social Enterprise Academy, established in 2018, is another center that teaches social entrepreneurship via conducting short courses, workshops, etc. The aim of this academy is to train, educate, and assist those who want to become a social entrepreneur.

Though delivering social value to public and vulnerable people has existed since decades ago in Malaysia, the concept of social entrepreneurship has captured government's attention within only last few years (Abdullah et al., 2015; Shahverdi et al., 2018). Learning lessons from other countries, Malaysia is still struggling to find the right approach to social entrepreneurship (Triponel and Agapitova, 2016). The government of Malaysia is committed to reducing poverty and ensuring justice in society (Shahimi et al., 2013). However, Malaysia has shown a high-income disparity compared to other countries in East Asia (WorldBank Group, 2018). Additionally, human activities have affected the environment and, consequently, people's health. Contaminated food and water, for instance, have caused cholera, typhoid, dysentery, viral hepatitis A, food poisoning, etc. Still, seven percent of the rural population does not have access to piped water (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). The government is struggling to improve the well-being of the poorest 40 percent of the population as they are suffering from economic shocks and unaffordable living costs. Putting all together, it can be concluded that the rising number of social entrepreneurs in Malaysia will help the government to face problems more efficiently.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Proactive Personality, ATSE, and SEI

People with proactive personality tend to affect and change surrounding environment by identifying the opportunities and taking necessary actions (Bateman and Crant, 1993). Such people are usually volunteer and willing to take new challenges and responsibilities. Proactive individuals actively seek information and opportunities to improve things. They do not passively wait for information and opportunities to appear (Crant, 2000); rather, they are able to proactively impact the context of their living and environment (Morossanova, 2010).

In regard with social entrepreneurship, pro-activeness has been identified as one of the main drivers of social entrepreneurial behavior (Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006). Social needs are considered an opportunity and entrepreneurs feel responsible to take upcoming opportunities to solve social problems. While we believe some other characteristics lead to exhibiting social entrepreneurial behavior, it is necessary to have a proactive characteristic to establish a social venture (Bargsted et al., 2013; Chengalvala and Rentala, 2017). Jain (2009) interviewed nine social entrepreneurs and found evidence of proactive personality among all the interviewees. Recently, Munir et al. (2019) found out that proactive personality affects attitude of students in the Chinese context. That is, proactive personality can be considered as the origin of attitude, and a person who possesses a proactive personality finds social entrepreneurship a desirable choice. Indeed, those who are willing to proactively change other peoples' lives have a more favourable ATSE and, consequently, SEI. Thus, the following hypotheses are formed:

H1: Proactive personality is positively associated with ATSE.

H2: Proactive personality is positively associated with SEI.

Attitude Toward Social Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

People evaluate outcomes and consequences of a certain behaviour (Ajzen, 2005) and if they find it desirable, they will have a positive attitude, and vice versa (Ajzen, 1991). Generally, the attitude has been discussed widely in the field of entrepreneurship, referring to the degree to which individuals have a positive or negative perception about self-employment and entrepreneurial behaviour (Liñán and Chen, 2009). In a seminal study, Ernst (2011) defined ATSE as “the degree to which an individual holds a positive or negative personal evaluation about becoming a social entrepreneur”. According to the findings of her study, ATSE has the most significant positive relationship with SEI among other antecedents. Likewise, Chengalvala and Rentala (2017) conducted a quantitative research among 150 students and they found attitude as one of the key factors that influence SEI.

To date, scholars paid considerable attention to understand the influence of attitude on ‘entrepreneurial intention’. What is not yet well-understood, however, is the relationship between peoples' attitudes toward “social entrepreneurship” and SEI, which is an emerging concept. It seems individuals who perceive social entrepreneurship as a desirable career choice, their evaluation will be positive toward the consequences of being a social entrepreneur. This positive attitude will lead to forming the intention to establish a social venture. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formed:

H3: ATSE is positively associated with SEI.

Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Since 1970s, the concept of self-efficacy was discussed by numerous researchers. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' perception and belief about their own skills and capabilities (Wood and Bandura, 1989) to achieve goals and desired outcomes (Kruse et al., 2018; Nowiński and Haddoud, 2019). In other words, self-efficacy refers to an “individual's appreciation of his or her own ability to successfully carry out an intended behaviour” (Bandura, 1990). People with high self-efficacy focus on the goal, determine the required level of time and effort, overcome barriers, and accomplish required activities (Miles, 2012). According to Wood and Bandura (1989), people's judgment about themselves is more important than actual skills. Two people with

the same skills and abilities may have different performance if each of them holds a different level of self-efficacy.

Regarding entrepreneurship, in confrontation with an opportunity, if an entrepreneur believes that it is beyond his/her ability to exploit the opportunity, the intention will not be formed to exhibit entrepreneurial behaviour (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994). Similarly, social entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to “the dynamic set of beliefs about one’s capacity to start a new social venture and succeed in carrying it out” (Tran and Korflesch, 2016). The extant literature suggests that people with a high level of perceived self-efficacy believe in their own capacities to establish and run a social business successfully, and this positive belief will form their intention to become a social entrepreneur. As empirical evidence, Tiwari et al. (2017), who carried out research in the context of India, found that the intention of doing social entrepreneurial activities is higher in students with higher self-efficacy. Some other scholars found a positive significant relationship between self-efficacy and SEI (Aure, 2018; Kruse et al., 2018; Lacap et al., 2018; Politis et al., 2016; Hockerts, 2017).

Despite empirical evidence that emphasizes SE-SE to be a key predictor of SEI, the literature faces a scarcity of research in this area, especially in the context of Malaysia. For instance, in the study that Ayob et al. (2013) conducted to investigate SEI among undergraduate students in Malaysia, the influence of self-efficacy was not examined. Therefore, referring to the overall critical role of SE-SE in the formation of SEI and the paucity of research in the context of Malaysia, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4: SE-SE is positively associated with SEI.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The proposed research framework in this study is presented in Figure 1. Four hypotheses were established to test the relationships between proactive personality, attitude toward social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social entrepreneurial intention.

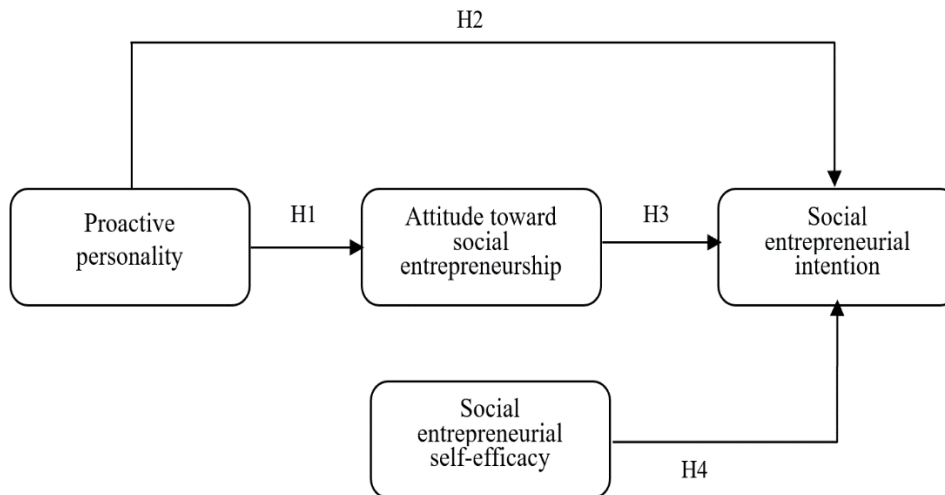


Figure 1 Research framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection and Sampling

In this study, a self-administered questionnaire was employed to collect data from students in Malaysia. The link of the questionnaire was shared with the students via email and WhatsApp depending on the availability of the students’ information. A non-probability, judgemental sampling method was used, which is suitable to both quantitative and qualitative research (Tongco, 2007). The reason for the selection of judgemental sampling technique was to ensure that the sample can truly represent the entire target population (Reddy and Kannamani, 2016). Hence, the researcher was responsible to monitor and make sure that there is an equal

representation from both public and private universities, undergraduate and postgraduate students, and lastly business and non-business students.

According to Israel (1992), one of the ways to determine sample size is to rely on published tables that provide the sample size for a given set of criteria. Consequently, the minimum sample size of this study is obtained through a table proposed by Cohen (1992). As we have four arrows in the research framework, the suggested sample with 1% significance and to achieve a minimum of 80% of statistical power is 191. However, 300 questionnaires were distributed to compensate for nonresponses or persons whom the researcher was unable to contact (Israel, 1992). Eventually, 260 usable questionnaires were collected. For data analysis, the structural equation modelling - partial least square was employed, using SmartPLS. However, data was first entered in SPSS for screening and finding potential errors. Details are explained in the following sections.

Participants

The participants of this study are students with both business and non-business backgrounds, who are studying in public and private universities in Malaysia. University students were selected for two reasons. First, Fayolle and Liñán (2013) recommended focusing on potential entrepreneurs to investigate intention. From this point of view, students are considered potential entrepreneurs because they face career choice after graduation (Krueger, 1993; Krueger et al., 2000), which is either self-employment or paid-employment. Second, according to the special report of the global entrepreneurship monitor, social entrepreneurs come from young generations who look forward to bring positive movements to society (Bosma et al., 2015).

As presented in Table 1, in this study, the majority of respondents (54.2%) were female (n=141), and the dominant age range was 18-24, with 46.9% (n=122). In case of the educational levels of the respondents, 50.8% (n=132) were found undergraduate and 50.2% (n=128) postgraduate students. Concerning the field of study, business students accounted for 48.5% and other fields accounted for 51.5% of the overall sample.

Table 1 The participants' details

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	119	45.8
	Female	141	54.2
	Total	260	100
Age	18-24 years	122	46.9
	25-34 years	72	27.7
	35 or above	66	25.4
	Total	260	100
Education level	Undergraduate	132	50.8
	Postgraduate	128	50.2
	Total	260	100
Field of study	Business	134	48.5
	Non-business	126	51.5
	Total	260	100

Measures

The research variables were measured by pre-existing scales. The five items used to measure ATSE were taken from Liñán and Chen (2009), for instance, "Being a social entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me". The scale for the measurement of proactive personality was adopted from Crant (1999), involving 10 items, for instance, "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve other peoples' lives". To measure SE-SE, we used a scale developed by Bacq and Alt (2018), comprising 10 items, for instance, "Identifying new business opportunities for social change". Lastly, the SEI was measured by nine questions developed by Urban and Kujinga (2017), for instance, "I have very serious thought of starting a social venture in the future". In this study, a five-point Likert scale was employed.

RESULTS

Common Method Variance

Common method bias is a potential problem that affects the relationship between variables; therefore, it is important to be aware of this problem and avoid it in data analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this study, “Harman’s single-factor test” was used to measure the effect. This method accumulates all the items into a factor analysis to determine whether the majority of the variance can be accounted for by one general factor. The results revealed only 38.608% of the total variance. This states that there is no common method variance in this study.

Measurement Model

SEM has two components that complete each other, i.e., Measurement Model and Structural Model (Hair et al., 2011). To assess the measurement model, the validity and reliability of the scales are examined. In regard to indicator reliability, outer loadings lower than 0.6 are dropped to attain satisfactory indicator reliability of the constructs, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). For the internal consistency reliability, Cronbach alpha and CR showed values greater than 0.80, which were acceptable according to Henseler et al. (2009). Therefore, reliability for all the items was established.

To examine the validity, both convergent and discriminant validity were assessed. The average variance extracted (AVE) was performed in order to determine the convergent validity. A sufficient degree of AVE is considered to be higher than 0.50 (Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010). In this study, the AVE value for each item ranged between 0.531 and 0.684, which is considered sufficient. The results of the measurement model are illustrated in Table 2. In addition, the hypothetical research model and measurement items are depicted in Figure 2.

Table 2 Assessment of the measurement model

Construct	Indicators	Outer loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE				
ATSE	ATSE1	0.685	0.864	0.903	0.651				
	ATSE2	0.849							
	ATSE3	0.799							
	ATSE4	0.844							
	ATSE5	0.845							
PP	PP1	0.702	0.854	0.888	0.531				
	PP2	0.690							
	PP5	0.704							
	PP7	0.740							
	PP8	0.741							
	PP9	0.700							
	PP10	0.735							
	SE-SE	SE-SE1				0.739	0.913	0.927	0.561
		SE-SE2				0.743			
		SE-SE3				0.794			
SE-SE4		0.774							
SE-SE5		0.805							
SE-SE6		0.757							
SE-SE7		0.680							
SE-SE8		0.799							
SE-SE9		0.667							
SE-SE10		0.722							
SEI	SEI1	0.715	0.942	0.951	0.684				
	SEI2	0.842							
	SEI3	0.879							
	SEI4	0.845							
	SEI5	0.868							
	SEI6	0.805							
	SEI7	0.783							
	SEI8	0.839							
	SEI9	0.856							

Note: PP: Proactive personality; SE-SE: Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy; ATSE: Attitude toward social entrepreneurship; SEI: Social entrepreneurial intention.

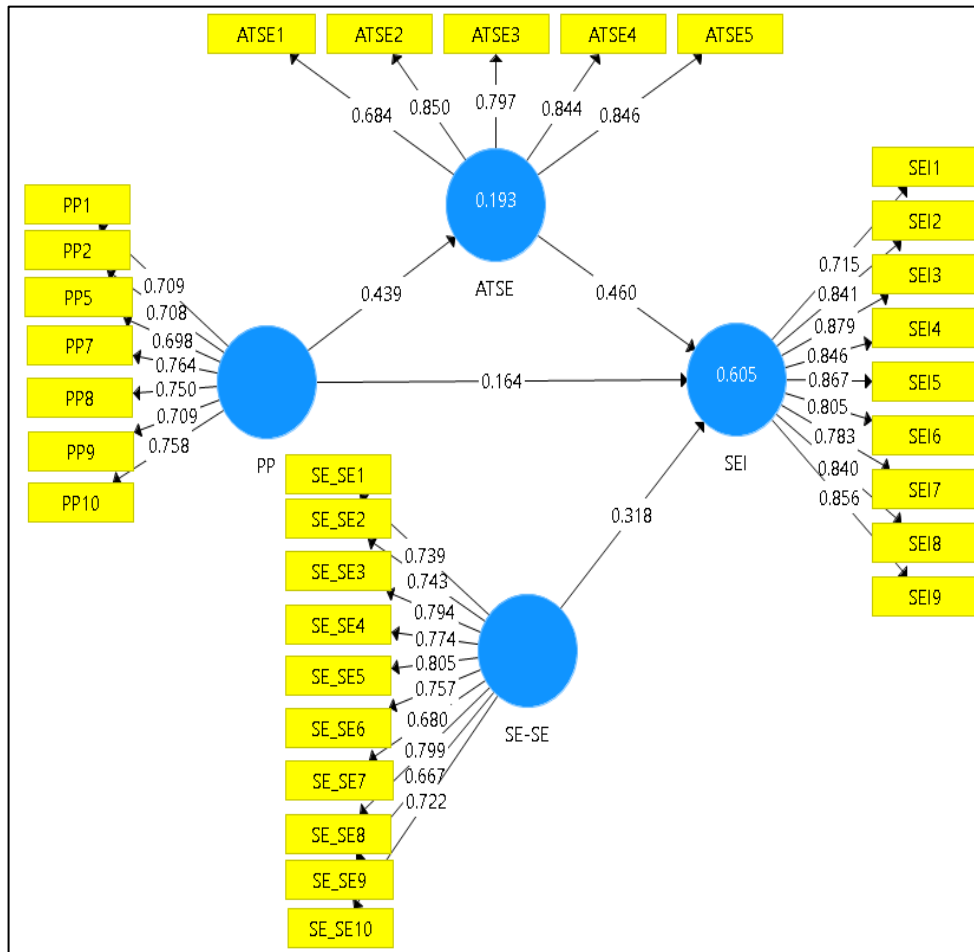


Figure 2 Hypothetical research model and measurement items

This study assessed discriminant validity by monitoring cross-loadings and Fornell–Larcker criterion (Hair et al., 2011). For cross-loadings, an indicator’s outer loading on the associated construct should be greater than the cross-loadings of the other constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The results of this study revealed that the items had the highest loading on their respective constructs. Hence, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was confirmed. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is the second method to assess discriminant validity. It compares the square root of the AVE values with the latent variable correlations. The obtained values are greater than the inter-construct correlations in their respective rows. This proves that discriminant validity in the measurement model was monitored and established, as it is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Fornell-Larcker validity

Construct	ATSE	PP	SE-SE	SEI
ATSE	0.849			
PP	0.421	0.738		
SE-SE	0.506	0.471	0.773	
SEI	0.689	0.530	0.633	0.827

Note: PP: Proactive personality; SE-SE: Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy; ATSE: Attitude toward social entrepreneurship; SEI: Social entrepreneurial intention.

Structural Model

The structural model evaluates the relationship between variables, which is grounded in theories (Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010). In this study, the quality of the structural model was assessed based on four parameters: Coefficient of Determination (R^2), path coefficient, effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) (Hair et al., 2014).

Cohen (1988) argued that the values of R² ranging from 0.02 to 0.12 can be considered weak, while the values from 0.13 to 0.25 are moderate, and 0.26 and above can be considered substantial. The results of this study showed that the R² value was 0.610 for SEI (substantial) and 0.178 for ATSE (moderate). The maximum R² value for SEI suggested that 61% of the variance was explained by the independent variable.

In the structural model, the Path Coefficient value represents the hypothesized relationship between constructs, which range from -1 to +1. The closer number to +1 demonstrates a stronger positive relationship, whereas a closer value to -1 is a sign of a strong negative relationship (Hair et al., 2014). In the current study, four direct relations were hypothesized, and the results indicated that all the hypotheses are supported. As it is presented in Table 4, ATSE has a positive and significant impact on SEI, SE-SE has a positive and significant impact on SEI, and proactive personality significantly and positively impacts both ATSE and SEI.

Table 4 Structural model

Path	Beta	S.D	T-values	P-values	Decision
ATSE -> SEI	0.448	0.047	9.517	0.000	Supported
PP -> ATSE	0.421	0.057	7.454	0.000	Supported
PP -> SEI	0.192	0.049	3.959	0.000	Supported
SE-SE -> SEI	0.315	0.048	6.539	0.000	Supported

Note: PP: Proactive personality; SE-SE: Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy; ATSE: Attitude toward social entrepreneurship; SEI: Social entrepreneurial intention.

Next, the Effect size (f²) refers to the change in R² when a specific construct is removed from the model. The results can help the researcher to realize the fundamental impact of one specific construct (Hair et al., 2014). Based on the obtained f² value; 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large predictive relevance for the omitted construct, respectively (Henseler et al., 2009). Among determinants of SEI, ATSE contributes more to explaining the variance in SEI (0.361), followed by SE-SE and proactive personality. The average effect size was seen for the proactive personality-ATSE link.

Q², as the final assessment of the structural model, is a technique that provides information about the extent to which a model is able to predict indicators associated with an exogenous latent variable (Henseler et al., 2009). Obtaining this value starts with the blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2011). If the obtained value is higher than zero, the IV is considered to have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014). The results of the blindfolding procedure values show that the Q² value is 0.136; therefore, it can be concluded that the structural model has predictive relevance.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to examine the determinants of SEI among university students in Malaysia. To accomplish the objectives of this study, a theoretical framework was proposed and empirically tested with a quantitative approach.

The findings of this study demonstrated support for the link between SE-SE and SEI, which is in line with past studies. Tiwari et al. (2017a) concluded that students with higher SE-SE are more likely to engage in social entrepreneurial activities. Few other recent studies determined SE-SE as a key characteristic that positively impacts SEI (Lacap et al., 2018; Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2019). The existing constant positive impact in the literature proves that, regardless of context, improving SE-SE of students and helping them to believe in their capabilities will positively contribute to increased willingness to be a social entrepreneur in future.

This study also hypothesised that ATSE positively impacts SEI, which was supported by the findings. This means that people who hold positive attitudes about being a social entrepreneur are more likely to establish a social venture. In contrast, if a person believes that social entrepreneurship is not a desirable career choice, SEI will be lacking, even if other necessary conditions exist. The result of this study supports the view of Chengalvala and Rentala (2017) stating attitude is one of the key factors that influence SEI. More recently, Zaremohzzabieh et al. (2019) found evidence for the strong influence of attitudes on the intention to be a social entrepreneur. To sum up, it is apparent from the results that ATSE is the most prominent factor in shaping the student's intention to be (or not to be) a social entrepreneur. This is especially important in Malaysia that is suffering from a low level of social entrepreneurial activities. Although we know that attitude

plays an important role in shaping individuals' intention, there is still a need for further research to explore its antecedents.

Consequently, in the current study, proactive personality was offered to positively predict students' ATSE. The obtained results provided clear evidence to support this relationship. This means that people who possess a proactive personality are more likely to have a positive ATSE. Such people tend to take action to change the surrounding environment instead of waiting for others to do something. In this circumstance, facing social and environmental problems motivate proactive people to take action for solving those problems. The above finding is consistent with a past study conducted by Lüthje and Franke (2003) indicating that having entrepreneurial traits leads to positive ATSE. Similarly, Munir et al. (2019) proved that proactive personality significantly contributes to predicting entrepreneurial attitudes in developing countries.

Besides the direct impact of proactive personality on ATSE, it was also hypothesised that proactive personality positively and directly impacts SEI, which was confirmed by the findings of this study. This implies that proactive personality not only causes a positive ATSE, but also positively and directly affects students' intention to do social entrepreneurial activities. To simplify, it can be concluded that proactive people are more likely to have the desire to be a social entrepreneur with the end goal of challenging the status quo and changing the environment. Research findings by Prieto (2010) also confirmed the same results specifying a positive relationship between proactive personality and SEI. Likewise, Nsereko et al. (2018) found empirical evidence indicating that proactive personality has a positive and significant impact on individuals' intention of creating social ventures.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study provided support for the direct and positive impacts of ATSE and SE-SE on SEI. Additionally, the results showed that proactive personality positively contributes to ATSE and SEI. The current study has several theoretical contributions. Concerning the overall paucity of research on determinants of social entrepreneurial intention (Kruse, 2018), this study examined the influence of individual-level factors on student's intention to pursue social entrepreneurship. Hence, the findings contributed to the growing body of knowledge by filling the gaps.

Although numerous studies have concluded that attitude has a strong impact on shaping individuals' entrepreneurial intention, they have rarely provided information about causes of attitudes. By identifying the antecedents of attitudes, this study extends the theory of planned behaviour and applied it to the space of social entrepreneurship, which is suffering from a lack of theoretical framework. As suggested by Ajzen (2005), merely knowing that attitudes are important predictors of intention do not provide much information. Thus, this study extends theory of planned behaviour by investigating antecedents of attitude to nurture a generation that possesses prerequisites of social entrepreneurship.

The next implication of this study lies in filling a contextual gap. The findings of the current paper offer new insights into social entrepreneurial intention in Malaysia that is known as a developing country with a low level of social entrepreneurial activities. Social entrepreneurship is a context-specific concept and it differs in various contexts. Furthermore, there is a dearth of research on antecedents of social entrepreneurial intention in the Malaysian context. Therefore, it is necessary to empirically test the factors that influence university student's intention to be involved in social entrepreneurial initiatives.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study potentially provide valuable input to policymakers, government authorities, universities, schools, and other educational institutions. As social entrepreneurship is in its early stages in Malaysia, policies are highly substantial in promoting this phenomenon. Hence, policymakers and government of Malaysia may use the findings of this study to improve public policies or initiate new plans and strategies that can encourage the involvement of young generation in social entrepreneurial activities. New policies and strategies must be designed in a way to influence students' attitudes because it is the most significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intention. Using the findings of this study and understanding the mechanisms through which personality traits impact social entrepreneurial intention will help policymakers to create supportive policies for students and encourage their involvement in social entrepreneurial activities.

Additionally, the government must offer an appropriate support system, suitable environment, training programs, and new funds in collaboration with universities and schools to invest in young generation nurture while they are still studying. Allocating enough funds to promote social entrepreneurship can play a significant role in enhancing the number of social entrepreneurs. This is especially important because of unemployment concerns among university students. In 2018, Malaysia's youth unemployment rate was reported as high as 10.8%. Closer observation of the reports released since 1991 (with 10.9%) showed an almost similar rate every year (World Bank, 2021). This is a proof of the failure of the government to solve the unemployment problem. Therefore, by understanding the factors that impact students' intention to become a social entrepreneur, government can formulate policies that not only reduce unemployment, but also diminish societal problems.

In Malaysia, one of the important pillars of New Economic Model is identified as "human capital development" (MOHE, 2010). It is the right time to work on Malaysia's future potential entrepreneurs and nurture them in a way to leads them to choosing social entrepreneurship as a career. The Ministry of higher education must focus on individual factors that positively impact the intention of students and provide condition and facilities to promote them. If students lack certain personal attributes that are important to develop social entrepreneurial behaviour, then it is necessary to develop plans that can fill this gap. This is particularly important to increase the number of students who decide to become a social entrepreneur after graduation. The Ministry of higher education must constantly offer courses, workshops, conferences, and programs that empower students and create positive attitudes toward social entrepreneurship and SE-SE.

Lastly, higher education institutions are suitable platforms and foundations that can contribute to promoting social entrepreneurship in Malaysia (Said et al., 2015). However, according to the empirical findings of the studies conducted by Cheng et al. (2009) and Mustafa et al. (2016), the higher education institutions of Malaysia are not performing effectively in educating future entrepreneurs and preparing them to envision entrepreneurship as future career. Universities play a critical role in equipping students with necessary knowledge and skills (Chengalvala and Rentala, 2017). Therefore, by knowing the factors that influence students' intention, universities can take important steps to prepare young generations to be social entrepreneurs. Universities are responsible for the improvement of students' self-efficacy and the creation of positive attitudes towards entrepreneurial activities. This will happen if universities invest more time and money in organizing programs that can help students to gain experience and closely touch the concept of social entrepreneurship. As suggested by Bhat and Singh (2018), educating entrepreneurial activities will positively affect the intention of students to become an entrepreneur. For the newly-emerged concept of social entrepreneurship, education will increase awareness of students by clarifying its benefits for society (Sarikaya and Coşkun, 2015). Given the imperative need for universities to monitor and improve the entrepreneurial spirit among business students (So et al., 2017), this study may benefit students to gain a superior understanding regarding the characteristics that they need to maintain in order to establish and run a social venture in the future.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study contributes to theory by focusing on a topic that is less discussed in the literature. In this paper, the theory of planned behaviour was extended and applied to the realm of social entrepreneurship through identifying the antecedents of ATSE and SEI. This study suffered from some obvious limitations, which may provide directions for future research. The primary limitation of this research was the lack of awareness among students about the concept of social entrepreneurship, which causes difficulty in data collection and has a potential negative impact on the quality of the collected data. To deal with this issue, in addition to defining the concept of social entrepreneurship in the introduction of the questionnaire, the researcher provided further relevant information for the students. Additionally, the current study collected data from students in public and private universities in Malaysia; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other people or other countries. Since social entrepreneurial activities are embedded in context and society, conducting the same research in other contexts may gain different results. This study is also limited by the scope of the investigation. Further research may include other personal and environmental factors that

negatively or positively impact students' SEI, e.g., perceived barriers, socio-cultural factors, stereotypes, and rules and regulations.

Lastly, the current study used self-reported data, which may affect the predictive validity of the variables. That is, although the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were established, it may not capture an accurate picture of students' abilities and skills. Therefore, we suggest scholars to investigate friends' or families' opinions about the person, in addition to self-reported data. Comparing the results will boost the researchers' confidence in the reliability of the obtained data. Hence, it might be more suitable to employ a mixed method to monitor the quality of the collected data and also to provide additional evidence for supported or non-supported hypotheses. This is particularly important due to the novelty of this field of research.

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APPENDIX

Measurement items

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following sentences from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Proactive Personality					
I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve other peoples' life	11	22	33	44	45
I try to be a powerful force for constructive change in society	11	22	33	44	45
Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality	11	22	33	44	45
If I see something I don't like, I fix it	11	22	33	44	45
No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen	11	22	33	44	45
I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition	11	22	33	44	45
I excel at identifying opportunities	11	22	33	44	45
I am always looking for better ways to do things	11	22	33	44	45
If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen	11	22	33	44	45
I can spot a good opportunity long before others can	11	22	33	44	45
Attitude toward social entrepreneurship					
Being a social entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantages to me	11	22	33	44	45
A career as a social entrepreneur is attractive for me	11	22	33	44	45
If I had the opportunity and resources, I'd like to start a firm	11	22	33	44	45
Being a social entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me	11	22	33	44	45
Among various options, I would rather be a social entrepreneur	11	22	33	44	45
Social Entrepreneurial Intention					
I had a strong intention to start my own social venture before I started studying	11	22	33	44	45
I have very serious thought of starting a social venture in the future	11	22	33	44	45
I have strong intention to start a social venture in the future	11	22	33	44	45
My professional goal is to be a social entrepreneur	11	22	33	44	45
I will make every effort to start and run my own social venture in the future	11	22	33	44	45
I don't have doubts about ever starting my own social venture in the future	11	22	33	44	45
My qualification has contributed positively towards my interest in starting a social venture	11	22	33	44	45
I am ready to do anything to be social entrepreneur	11	22	33	44	45
I am determined to create a social entrepreneurial venture in the future	11	22	33	44	45
Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy					
How confident are you in successfully carrying out the following tasks?					
Identifying new business opportunities for social change	11	22	33	44	45
Creating new products/services to solve social problems	11	22	33	44	45
Thinking creatively to benefit others	11	22	33	44	45
Commercializing an idea for social enterprise	11	22	33	44	45
Creating a significant social impact	11	22	33	44	45
Building community support	11	22	33	44	45
Challenging traditional ways of thinking	11	22	33	44	45
Committing to a collective purpose	11	22	33	44	45
Committing to helping people	11	22	33	44	45
Identifying social problems	11	22	33	44	45