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**DETERMINANT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTENTION**  
**AMONG MALAYSIAN YOUTH**

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***Abstract***

Entrepreneurship was seen as a possible solution in developing countries to tackle poverty. It can contribute greatly to the economic development of the countries as a whole and able to raise the poor out of the poverty trap. Because of this, most of the developing countries are encouraging their citizens to pursue entrepreneurship. Policymakers also has realized the importance of social entrepreneurship; given its potential to not only meet the economic goals but also social ones as well. Researchers found that students of higher education institutions showed only moderate levels of entrepreneurial intention but they showed higher intention levels for social entrepreneurship activities. Moreover, researchers found that social entrepreneurial activities are higher in the public universities. The purpose of this research study is to investigate determinants of social entrepreneurship intention among the youth in Malaysia in order to gauge the viability of realizing the national goals. This will allow for better policy interventions and programs to encourage the Malaysian youth to become social entrepreneur.

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**Keywords:** Malaysian youth, social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship intention.



## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship was seen as a possible solution in developing countries to tackle poverty. It is a way to cope with problems of unemployment by creating opportunities for new job and it is also seen as a driving force for economic growth. It has been proven to make great contributions to economic development of developing countries. In Baron and Shane (2008) study, it explains that most of the developing countries are encouraging their citizens to pursue entrepreneurship. As it is similar with self-employment, it's believed to be the powerful plan in managing issues such as unemployment, especially among the youth; low-employability of new graduates; lack of job opportunities during challenging economic climates; and more.

Comprehension of the factors that influence entrepreneurial intention which then inform behavior had been the research interest of significant importance. Numerous studies had been done over the past decade or two but the question of their relevance in the local setting still remains. To date, goal of the younger generation, particularly the millennials in our nation to set out on business enterprise is still not yet fully explored and understood. Malaysia is a developing country that encourage students towards entrepreneurship as a career choice. The emphasis for this can be seen as great importance as can be seen in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) where 10 "Shifts" had been outlined as the key factors that will lead to excellence for the Malaysian higher education system; "Holistic, Entrepreneurial and Balanced Graduates" is defined as the first shift. It is generally known that in the future, students are the backbone of entrepreneurship. Part of the government plan to impart entrepreneurial spirit among undergraduate students is by making entrepreneurship subject as a mandatory component for all programs at all levels irrespective to the field of study.

Entrepreneurship is essential to financial advancement, employment and innovation. Many studies of analysis of entrepreneurial intention among Malaysian students had been done, among the limitation or gaps found in reviewing the studies is that no study has been done relating to social entrepreneurship and the intention among the youth towards it, in addition the main underlying theory used for such studies is Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

This study sets out to investigate the determinants for social entrepreneurship intention among Malaysian youth by proposing a research framework that extends Mair and Noboa's (2006). Specifically, the study is designed around the following objectives which are to investigate the extend of social entrepreneurship intention among the Malaysian youth and to recognize the elements that affect the social entrepreneurship intention among the Malaysian youth.

The expected outcome will be a set of recommendations for better policy interventions and programs to encourage the Malaysian youth to become social entrepreneur. This study specifically will discuss the results from the pilot study.

### 1.1. Social entrepreneurship intention in Malaysia

Based on Bosma et al. (2016) research, the interest of practitioners, politicians and academics in social entrepreneurship has been booming over the past decade. A study determining the level of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship among Malaysian university students by Radin A Rahman et al. (2016) pointed that the students with higher education institutions indicated only moderate levels of

entrepreneurial intention but they showed higher levels toward social entrepreneurship activities. This suggest that the youth in Malaysian universities have higher interest or passion towards social issues and activities.

Nga and Shamuganathan (2010) discussed that social entrepreneurs should have specific divergent characteristics of their personalities because their actual behaviors or actions are similar to those of their personalities. The characteristics of personality could be explained as having a high movement towards the intentions and the way social entrepreneurs acted. Because of that, social entrepreneurial decision making is influenced majorly by personality traits. According to Nga and Shamuganathan (2010), there is effect on social entrepreneurship dimension by some of personality traits like agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness. The result of this research should be able to activate a model shift towards better implementation of social entrepreneurship through education by promoting the values of sustainable development in the future businesses of the graduates.

Jabar and Asung (2016) mentioned the issues of citizens with social marginalization or disadvantages could be addressed by improving the practice of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia, particularly among higher institution students as they are the future social entrepreneurs of Malaysia. Theory of Planned Behavior was applied in this research as suggested by Ajzen (1991) that covered the three factors which are attitude towards behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, that could influence the creation of the intention of the individuals. A research studied by Jabar and Asung (2016) overview the awareness level (attitude towards social entrepreneurship), influence from peer (subjective norm) and program related to social entrepreneurship (perceived behavioural control) moderately influenced the students' intentions to build up a creative social enterprise approach. Hence, universities should put some effort in order to promote the benefit of social entrepreneurship towards the nation and help the students to realize that social entrepreneurship was not solely focused on the profit but it also involved the creation of a business that aimed for both, profit as well as social need (Jabar & Asung, 2016).

Ayob et al. (2014) applied the entrepreneurial version of Shapero and Sokol (1982) and Krueger and Brazeal (1994) to identify the social entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates from the view of an emerging economy. This study could be claimed as one of the earliest studies investigating exposure and empathy as the antecedents to the perceived desirability to initiate projects related to social entrepreneurship and perceived feasibility of social enterprises' establishment, which shaped intention to establish social enterprises. This study would eventually have practical and empirical significance which might be usable for both researchers and universities in order to discover the social entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates who would become the leaders of the country. This study also was expected to contribute effectively and efficiently towards more sustainable and equitable economic and social development (Ayob et al., 2014).

In general, majority of the scholars concluded that social entrepreneurship exemplified elements of recognition of social responsibility, sustainability and development of character in order to assist social entrepreneurs in realizing the impact of the communities they served (Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010). In fact, the youth, especially students, who were having similar characteristics as potential social entrepreneurs would focus more on social entrepreneurship as a career option when once they graduate (Radin A Rahman

et al., 2016). Thus, it was important to understand and investigate the aspects that motivated individuals to develop social entrepreneurship intention which in turn would lead towards social entrepreneurship behaviour.

## **1.2. Social entrepreneurship**

For decades, the efforts of solving social issues have been existed (Alvord et al., 2004; Barendsen & Gardner, 2004; Dees, 1998a; Okpara & Halkias, 2011). According to Alvord et al (2004), the lives of thousand people around have been transformed due to the efforts that mainly prioritize on the issue of marginalized as well as poor people. Recently, social entrepreneurship has become an important topic that been discussed and it has captured the attention among policymakers, corporations, civil society groups, university academics and financial institutions are becoming more and more (Nicholls & Young, 2008). Social objective (Austin et al., 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Roberts & Woods, 2005) is resolved by social entrepreneurship came into picture in 1980s from the effort of Ashoka Foundation person namely Bill Drayton, who gives support in term of the new income producer is exploring the financing of global social innovators and Ed Skloot of New Ventures to benefit non-profits (Dees, 2001, 2007; Fulton & Dees, 2006; Noya, 2006; Sen, 2007; Okpara & Halkias, 2011; Schlee et al., 2008). According to Weerawardena and Sullivan-Mort (2001) social entrepreneurship contributes to the organizations to strive a long-lasting advantage that is competitive that allows to fulfil the mission of social. Social entrepreneurs in social enterprises offering creative or excellent leadership (Dees, 1998b) that solve the social problems which are complicated (Johnson, 2000) while at the same time has the ability to create community wealth (Wallace, 1999).

In general, there are three reasons that led to the social entrepreneurship emergence. First, interest in solving social problems has been growing and it led to the continual of sustainable and innovative ideas to counter social issues which are complicated (Alvord et al., 2004; Johnson, 2000; Santos, 2009) and also set free the communities from their challenges (Thompson et al., 2000) such as unemployment, access to health and social care which is not equality (Catford, 1998), excluding the social, crime and poverty (Blackburn & Ram, 2006). Other than that, the problem raised by the public sector is not discussed, but at the same time it does not attract the attention of the private sector (Darby & Jenkins, 2006). Next, due to the current situation neither the private sector nor government has that real initiative to give the services to solve the problem (Bach & Stark, 2002; Shleifer, 1998). So, Cornelius et al. (2008) the options are required to improvise the services by sub-contract to public services without has to increase the government's intervention. Third, commercial entrepreneurs have contributed in the sector of social with the intention to increase the wealth of the social globally (Shaker et al., 2008) and as an initiative to create community wealth (Wallace, 1999). Due to that, there is overlapping of the private, public as well as the voluntary social enterprise programs (Perrini & Vurro, 2006). Those causes have resulted the problems in a sector of social solved by the NGOs. At the moment, there are two demands facing by the non-profit organizations. First, the public dissatisfaction with the foundations, charities, and government in managing social services leading to the need of improving the effectiveness and business activities (Shleifer, 1998; Okpara & Halkias, 2011). Second, the urgency to continue the way the conventional funding services are adjusted and the demands for these insufficient resources are increased (Johnson, 2000; Okpara & Halkias, 2011). As a consequence, social entrepreneurship is conducted with a common social and community aims (Harding,

2004) is considered important included for complex issues of the social (Nicholls & Cho, 2006) as well to uniquely enhance the effectiveness of NGOs (Reis & Clohesy, 1999; Jiao, 2011)

Witnessing the social entrepreneurship now becoming a global phenomenon is not a new thing. Nicholls and Cho (2006) illustrates that social entrepreneurship has been set diversely globally. Those dissimilarity based to Kerlin (2006) originate against the difference group modelling and strengthening the territory of all the region. Referring to Poon (2011), social entrepreneurship exposure and development vary in distinct world of the geographical regions but they could be grouped based on two criteria which are the social enterprise in a market-based model and social enterprise in a hybrid form. Africa and North America are arised with the market-build structure while in Europe and Latin America (Poon, 2011) are hybrid-based which combines the social value creation and economic (Alter, 2007). Nonetheless, social enterprises in many emerging economies in Asian countries are still largely unaware of the market's position and the connection between civil society and the state makes socially entrepreneurial practice more successful (Nicholls & Cho, 2006).

Consequently, it is important to come up with a programe for social enterprises to seek an increase in figure and value (Dees, 1998b; Christie & Honig, 2006; Rangan et al., 2008) as the growth of most of the world's social needs and social problems, followed by the government's potential to lay out the necessary finance to address the problems of social has been limited.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Social entrepreneurship has recently become one of the significant agendas in enhancing socio-economic well-being of Malaysian. Social enterprises have the capacity to help the government, public and private sectors by creating a positive impact on society by offering innovative business solutions to social challenges. Moreover, social entrepreneurship is the new model for reducing world poverty and increase the economy growth. Hence, the most sustainable approach for this is by getting more youth to take up the challenge and it would help to reduce the youth unemployment especially among the graduates. Therefore, it is vital to identify determinants of social entrepreneurship intention among Malaysian youth to come out with policy and practical recommendations to encourage social entrepreneurship in Malaysia.

## **3. Research Questions**

This study will examine the social entrepreneurship intention among Malaysian youth in order for the policy makers and government to layout the plan to attract and support the youth to be social entrepreneur that able to change the future and generate income for the country.

1. What are the factors affecting the youth to be a social entrepreneur?
2. What is the level of social entrepreneurship intention amongst Malaysian youth?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Malaysian government has announced The Malaysian Social Enterprise Blueprint 2015-2018 is a three-year plan aimed at developing a human-centric, equitable and self-sustaining social enterprise area by 2018, lots of initiatives and programs are organized by Magic in order to kick-start and boost the future

social entrepreneurs within 6 week accelerator program. The model in this research would be tested so that for the next stage, researcher can develop Social Entrepreneurship Intention Quotient as a significant tool in assessing a person's trait who wants to be a social entrepreneurs. The measurement is useful for social enterprise to recruit the team members based on their measurement and expertise needed in the team. Lots of programmes and funding provided to boost the future social entrepreneur to start a business and actual start-up of a new venture. The outline of support programs should be taken into account the wide range of program recipients' requirements. Support programs can be designed to change the mindset, attitudes, and intention of people who have not regarded social entrepreneurship as a suitable job.

Higher education institutions act a significant position in the evolution of social entrepreneurship intention among students. The institutions can encourage the students by giving training and talk regarding the importance of social entrepreneurship. Exposing students and their businesses to entrepreneurial role models and realistic learning experiences would contribute to increasing the idea of a desirable and feasible entrepreneurial career.

As the career preference among the students are varied and unconfirmed, the higher education institutions need to follow-up with the graduate students of what job profession have they chosen after graduation. From here, the institutions can collect data of how many graduates end up being a job creator instead of job seeker and the reasons. From the data, the institution can analyse and develop a programme to encourage the students to be social entrepreneurs after they graduate.

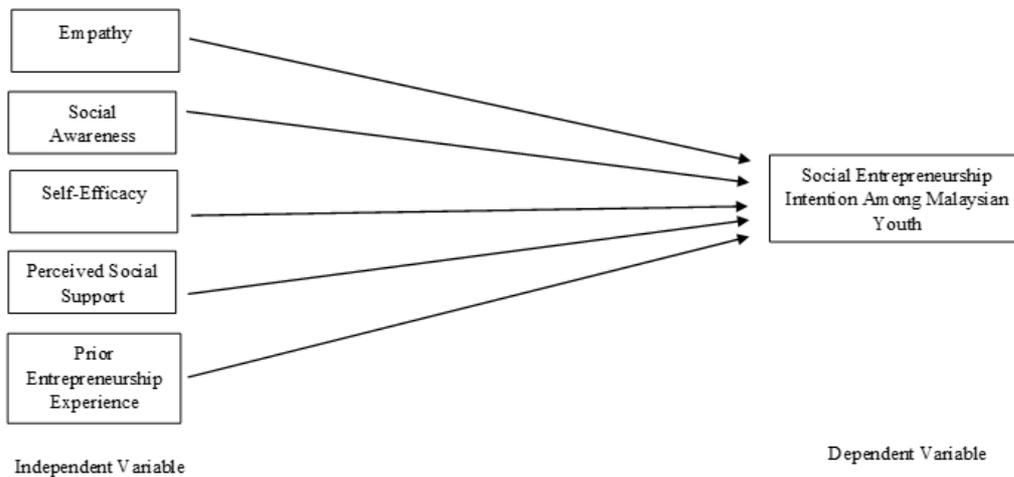
## 5. Research Methods

Mair and Noboa (2006) lay out the framework of social entrepreneurship intention by combining model which is Theory Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Entrepreneurial Event Formation (Shapero & Sokol, 1982) with perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. Empathy and moral judgement are categorized under perceived desirability while self-efficacy and perceived social support are categorized under perceived feasibility. The combination model resulted as the antecedent of intention. According to Krueger (1993), attitude and social norms are categorized under perceived desirability while perceived behavioral control (internal & external) are categorized under perceived feasibility. The following framework below is adapted from Hockerts (2017) who extended the model by Mair and Noboa (2006). The first one to bring forward a conceptual idea of the context of social entrepreneurial intentions were Mair and Noboa (2006). Their framework, drew from the theory of intention of entrepreneurial by (Krueger, 1993; Krueger et al., 2000) and, specifically, Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB), that sets the goal to be dependable and constructive indicators of real behavior. It is concluded which many special characteristics of social entrepreneurship involve the adaptation of traditional TPB measures and models of entrepreneurial intentions (Mair & Noboa, 2006). The precedents of social entrepreneurship intentions proposed as first empathy is the proxy for attitudes toward behavior, second moral obligation is a proxy for social norms, third self-efficacy is a proxy for internal behavioral control, and lastly perceived of social support is a proxy for external behavioral control.

Hockerts (2017) then extended the framework by including "prior experience with social organizations" as other precedents of the intention of social entrepreneurial.

This study adapted the model by, first replacing “moral obligation” with “social awareness” as the proxy for social norms. Hockerts (2017) defined moral obligation “positioning itself amidst the act of moral decision and the creation of moral intention” (pp. 108-109) and it was deemed suitable proxy for social norms as the variable measure the feeling of being responsible to help or assist. Thus, it is argued that social awareness is also a suitable proxy for social norms as it measures the presence and awareness in one’s shared environment leading towards helping behavior. Secondly, this study replaced “prior experience with social organizations” with “prior entrepreneurship experience” as it is believed that such experience would be a stronger influence in the formation of the social entrepreneurship idea and thus, intent. Plus, “social awareness” and “prior entrepreneurship experience” together, expected to provide grounds for the formation of ideas for solving societal problems or issues in entrepreneurial manner (Figure 01).

### 5.1. Theoretical framework



**Figure 01.** Theoretical framework

The instrument which in the survey consists of 7 sections which namely as Demographic, Empathy, Social Awareness, Self-Efficacy, Perceived Social Support, Prior Entrepreneurship Experience & Social Entrepreneurship Intention. The first section was given as Multiple-Choice Questions while section 2 to 7 are measured with 5-points Likert scale (Kothari, 2008), the rating is on continuous scales from (1-Unlikely) to (5-Likely) while the middle point is (3-Neutral).

A quantitative research sees relationship regarding social phenomena from a mechanistic view, develops objectives, detaches position with the research participants, studies samples out of population, and studies intention by dividing social reality into variables. The data is collected in a natural setting and lead to higher accuracy in reflecting the phenomena (Sekaran & Bougie, 2014), as it is done in natural environment where respondents conduct their activities normally.

The time horizon for this study will be the Cross-sectional; gathering data and examine the information of the group of respondents at a single point of time. This is suitable for the nature of this study where we have a limited timeframe to complete the project whilst collecting primary data in the natural setting. Sampling technique that will be used is Convenience Sampling with minimum required sample size

of 146 was specified based on the G\*Power analysis. For this study, the analysis unit is individual with number of characteristics which are:

1. Malaysian citizen.
2. Students at institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.
3. Age 18 to 30 years old (Malaysian Youth Policy 2018 defined youth as those in the range of 15-30 years old. However, in Malaysia only at the age of 18, school leavers will enter tertiary education either in community colleges/polytechnics/colleges/universities.)

Using the final data, they will be analyzed using the approach of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine and evaluate the model of Social Entrepreneurship Intention.

## 6. Findings

As the findings for this paper, the result discussion would be from the pilot study as the pilot study was to test the model and variables before the actual final questionnaire survey. In this pilot test, SPSS analysis was used to analyse the data but for the final survey, PLS-SEM would be used to analyse the data. A total of 33 university students has taken part in this pilot study. 19 of them were females while the balance of 14 were males. The total age range is between 19-24 years old. The pilot study was conducted around Cyberjaya area.

**Table 01.** Reliability analysis

Constructs	N	Items Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Empathy (Emp)	33	3.809	6.515	0.729	12
Social Awareness (SA)	33	3.758	6.230	0.797	14
Self-Efficacy (SE)	33	3.657	8.497	0.856	15
Perceived Social Support (PSS)	33	3.630	2.884	0.696	5
Prior Entrepreneurship Experience (PEE)	33	2.740	7.919	0.915	7
Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI)	33	3.129	12.799	0.969	12

The main study constructs were Emp (12 items), SA (14 items), SE (15 items), PSS (5 items), PEE (7 items) and SEI (12 items) were measured using a total of 66 items. The items were measured by a five-scale, itemized rating scale. To assess the internal reliability of the items used to measure the construct tested in this study, reliability analysis was carried out. Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient of reliability that shows the extent to which the items are correlated positively. Hypothetically, the higher the value of the coefficient, the more reliable the instrument will be. In this study, the coefficients were within the range of 0.700 to 1.000 for all constructs (refer Table 01). This indicates high reliability and internal consistency of the survey instruments.

Correlation analysis (refer Table 02) indicated that in general the variables have significant interaction among them. Specifically, Empathy has significant correlation only with Perceived Social

Support. Next, Social Awareness is shown to have significant correlation with Self Efficacy, Perceived Social Support and Prior Entrepreneurship Experience. This give good indication for the adapted model for this study where Social Awareness and Prior Entrepreneurship Experience are introduced to Hockerts’s model. Self-Efficacy has significant correlation with all variables except for Empathy. Whilst Perceived Social Support has significant correlation with all except for Prior Entrepreneurship Experience. Prior Entrepreneurship Experience has significant correlation with Social Awareness, Self-Efficacy and the dependent variable, Social Entrepreneurship Intention. This further justify our introduction of Prior Entrepreneurship Experience to the model in replacement of Prior Experience with Social Organizations. Besides PEE, SEI also has significant correlation with SE and PSS.

**Table 02.** Correlation analysis

		Overall Emp	Overall SA	Overall SE	Overall PSS	Overall PEE	Overall SEI
Overall Emp Correlation	Pearson	1	.232	.258	.604**	.084	.318
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
Overall SA Correlation	Pearson	.232	1	.564**	.581**	.582**	.313
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
Overall SE Correlation	Pearson	.258	.564**	1	.593**	.463**	.569**
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
Overall PSS Correlation	Pearson	.604**	.581**	.593**	1	.316	.485**
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
Overall PEE Correlation	Pearson	.084	.582**	.463**	.316	1	.564**
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
Overall SEI Correlation	Pearson	.318	.313	.569**	.485**	.564**	1
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 03.** Comparing means by gender

Gender	Overall Emp	Overall SA	Overall SE	Overall PSS	Overall PEE	Overall SEI
Male	3.599	3.679	3.724	3.5	2.531	3.035
Female	3.964	3.815	3.607	3.727	2.896	3.198

Table 03 shows the comparison of the means for the variables according to gender. It shows that the female respondents rated higher in all variables except for SE. Male respondents rated higher for self-efficacy, suggesting males have higher belief in their abilities to contribute towards solving or alleviating societal problems. However, given the female respondents higher means for most of the variables, this suggests that the propositions based on the research framework are more likely to be significant for female youths in Malaysia. The pilot study findings definitely show that female youths have more intention to be

social entrepreneur comparing to their male counterparts. This is definitely consistent with the current landscape where Malaysia is ranked among the top 10 countries in the world as the location for female social entrepreneur. Thus, the government can layout initiatives to support and empower the would be female social entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, awareness and enculturation programmes may be more relevant in order to encourage the male youths to have higher intention to become social entrepreneurs.

## 7. Conclusion

Even though there is rapid growth of the economy, but there are still lack of the solutions of youth unemployment, poverty and others. The public sectors are not able to solve social and community problems alone, therefore private sectors had come into the picture so they can lay out some solutions to resolve the issues. In year 2016, Thomson Reuters Foundation has done a survey and the result shown that Malaysia is in the 9th rank out of 10 countries in the world to be a social entrepreneur. Not just that, Malaysia is one of the top countries that is favourable towards female social entrepreneurs. This suggests that social entrepreneurship has good growth potential in Malaysia and able to become a viable strategy to address not only the domestic social and community problems but also given the right supports as well as targeted interventions this may become a key contributor towards economic growth. Therefore, This study is anticipated to help the skills that will enable policymakers and relevant agencies to plan and design targeted interventions that would promote the growth of the local social entrepreneurship sector as well as offer programs focusing on the youth as they are the key group to be acculturated for establishing a sustainable pool of local social entrepreneurs. Plus, governments invest in their younger generations as the youth is the future of a country.

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