

# A conceptual model of social entrepreneurial intention based on the social cognitive career theory

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Entrepreneurial intention plays a major role in entrepreneurship academia and practice. However, little is known about the intentions of entrepreneurs in the social area of venture creation. This paper aims to formulate a well-organized model of social entrepreneurial intention.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper draws on intention models in entrepreneurship literature in general and social entrepreneurship in particular to identify gaps. Based on these findings, a new conceptual model is formulated.

**Findings** – There is no research to be found which uses the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) to explain about an individual's intention to become a social entrepreneur, although this theory is recently suggested as an inclusive framework for entrepreneurial intention (Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011). It is also supportive by the empirical research of Segal *et al.* (2002). Therefore, a conceptual model of entrepreneurial intention in the field of social entrepreneurship is formulated based on adapting and extending the SCCT.

**Originality/value** – The paper contributes to the social entrepreneurship literature by providing new insights about social entrepreneurial intention. The result has important implications for theory and practice. In theory, it is the first model offering the SCCT as the background of formation for social entrepreneurial intention, with a distinct perspective of social entrepreneurship as a career. It raises a future direction for researchers to test this model. In practice, this framework provides a broad view of factors that could contribute to the success of the would-be a social entrepreneur.

**Keywords** Social entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial intention, Social cognitive career theory, Social entrepreneurial intention

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The world today is plagued by more problems than any time in history. We face a lot of challenges like never before. Every day from media articles, we can learn about a vast number of threats of global issues, such as climate change, environmental pollution, natural disasters, diseases, poverty, crime, corruption, economic crises and so on. It



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raises a question for the whole community about what we should do and how we should deal with all of those confronted hazards. Fortunately, social entrepreneurship (SE) can be the best healer for our society, as it “is the first and foremost a practical response to unmet individual and societal needs”, as well as it is “the simultaneous pursuit of economic, social, and environmental goals by enterprising ventures” (Haugh, 2007, p. 734). SE “creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and mobilizes the ideas, capacities, resources, and social arrangements required for sustainable social transformations” (Alvord *et al.*, 2004, p. 262):

And with its emphasis on problem-solving and social innovation, socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sector, and emphasize hybrid models of for-profit and non-profit activities (Johnson, 2003, p. 1f).

SE borrowing methods from the world of business (hybrid) is becoming more and more common. Social entrepreneurs will “use the principles of enterprise – business principles and even capitalism itself – to create social change by establishing and managing a venture” (Durieux and Stebbins, 2010, p. 10). However, one remarkable thing should be noted here is that SE aims at creating social value or addressing social issues by innovative solutions. It is the explicit and central point of SE and it is the distinction from SE to other forms of entrepreneurship (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Zahra *et al.*, 2008; Austin *et al.*, 2006; Peredo and McLean, 2006; Alvord *et al.*, 2004; MacMillan, 2003; Fowler, 2000).

SE has clearly been the topic related to business, society and politics, as it pursues “the double (or triple) bottom line (social, financial & environmental)” (Robinson, 2006). It is also the topic which has been dramatically increasing the interest of communities day by day. This interest can be exemplified by the growth of search results with the keyword “social entrepreneurship” on Google. In 2005, the result was 158,000 hits (Seelos and Mair, 2005); in 2011, it resulted in over 2.5 million (Ernst, 2011); in 2015, it was over 3.5 million (search conducted on 31.07.15 at 11:17 a.m.); and in 2016, it is over 4.8 million (search conducted on 09.05.16 at 11:03 a.m.).

According to Krueger (Acs and Audretsch, 2003), the growth of entrepreneurship depends on the quality and the quantity of entrepreneurs. The more entrepreneurial thinking increases, the more entrepreneurs we have in a country. This issue relates closely to one of the classical questions for many decades that “why some people become entrepreneurs while others do not” and “whether entrepreneurs are made or born” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Moreover, intentions may still be the single best predictor of behavior, including entrepreneurial behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Davidsson, 1995; Krueger, 2000; Shephred and Krueger 2002; Linan *et al.*, 2011). Entrepreneurial intention is also considered as a mental process that orients and directs individuals’ planning as well as implementing business plans (Boyz and Vozikis, 1994; Gupta and Bhawe, 2007). Therefore, the approach of identifying a model which can explain the formation of individual’s intention to become an entrepreneur may be reasonable and meaningful in the case of SE so far.

The spectrum of models related to intention formation ranges from the earliest “Entrepreneurial Event” model – SEE (Shapiro and Soko, 1982); then the theory of planned behavior – TPB (Ajzen, 1991), the theory of planned behavior entrepreneurial model – TPBEM (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993) and the social cognitive career theory – SCCT (Lent *et al.*, 1994); to some typical empirical studies with diverse results (for

overviews, Boyd and Volzikis's, 1994; Kolvereid, 1996; Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Autio *et al.*, 2010; Segal *et al.*, 2002; Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011; Solesvik, 2003; Liñán and Santos, 2007; Liñán *et al.*, 2011; Liñán, 2008; Liñán and Chen, 2009; Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014; Tshikovhi and Shambare, 2015). However, little is known about the intention of entrepreneurs in the social area of venture creation. Just recently in 2006, Mair and Noboa suggested a first intention model based on TPB and SEE theories for SE (Mair and Noboa, 2006). In 2011, Ernst did his PhD thesis with a desire to formulate a well-organized social entrepreneurial intention (Int-SE) model by adapting and extending the classical TPB model as well (Ernst, 2011). Surprisingly, no research which uses SCCT as a theoretical background has been conducted, even though SCCT is recently suggested as a relevant perspective for understanding the entrepreneurial intentions (Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011). Especially, the usefulness of the SCCT model in predicting individual's intention to become an entrepreneur was supported by the empirical research of Segal *et al.* (2002). In fact, SCCT also shares similarities with the primary existing intention-based models, TPB and SEE. For instance, the variable "self-efficacy" in the SCCT model is conceptually identified as similar to the variable "perceived feasibility" in SEE and TPB theories. Furthermore, the decision to establish a new social venture is not for entertainment. It rather is a career-related decision in accordance with the magnitude of problems faced by the whole nations which need sympathetic and realistic solutions (Ghosh, 2012). In that case, SCCT is seen as a promising theoretical background for Int-SE formation.

Pursuing to filling the mentioned gaps in the Int-SE literature, the SCCT is adapted and extended in this paper.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Definition of key terms

**2.1.1 Entrepreneurship.** It is mostly discussed as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich *et al.*, 2010). Entrepreneurship, according to Onuoha (2007), "is the practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations, particularly new businesses generally in response to identified opportunities". It also can be understood simply as "the process of creating new venture and new organization" coming up from the ground with an idea to taking action and turning it into a real business (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

**2.1.2 Entrepreneur.** One of the earliest statements by Adam Smith in 1776 is that an entrepreneur is an economic agent who transforms demand to supply. Schumpeter (1965) defined "entrepreneurs as individuals who exploit market opportunity through technical and/or organizational innovation". For Knight (1921) and Ducker (1985), "entrepreneurship is about taking risk". Hisrich (1990) defined that an entrepreneur is characterized as "someone who demonstrates initiative and creative thinking, is able to organize social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account, and accepts risk and failure". Bolton and Thompson (2004) have defined an entrepreneur as "a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities".

*2.1.3 Social entrepreneurship.* It is considered as a sub-discipline of the entrepreneurship field (Steyaert, 2006). In consequence, the crucial key for understanding SE is to put it under entrepreneurship research (Chell, 2007). However, Anderson and Dees argue that “SE is about finding new and better ways to create and sustain social value” (Anderson and Dees, 2002, p. 192; cited by Peredo and McLean, 2005). Robinson adds that SE is:

[...] a process, that includes: the identification of a specific social problem and a specific solution (or a set of solutions) to address it; the evaluation of the social impact, the business model and the sustainability of the venture; and the creation of a social mission-oriented for profit or a business-oriented nonprofit entity that pursues the double (or triple) bottom line (Mair *et al.*, 2006).

Thus, target of creating social value or addressing social issues by innovative solutions is the explicit and central point of SE and it is the distinction from SE to other forms of entrepreneurship (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Zahra *et al.*, 2008; Faltin, 2009; Austin and Wei Skillern, 2006; Peredo and McLean, 2006; Alvord *et al.*, 2004; MacMillan, 2003; Fowler, 2000).

*2.1.4 Social entrepreneurial intention.* According to Bird (1988), entrepreneurial intent is the state of mind that directs and guides the actions of the entrepreneur toward the development and the implementation of new business concepts. Entrepreneurial intention of a person is a mental orientation such as desire, wish and hope influencing his/her choice of entrepreneurship (Peng *et al.*, 2012). Thompson refers to entrepreneurial intention as “a self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future” (Thompson, 2009, p. 676). More simply, entrepreneurial intention is stated as an individual’s desire and determination to engage in new venture creation (Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, in the context of SE, Int-SE can be understood as a belief, desire and determination of a person to set up a new social enterprise.

*2.1.5 Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy.* Bandura defined self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to attain designated types of performance” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Additionally, self-efficacy is not a passive, static trait, but rather is seen as a dynamic set of convictions as in social cognitive view (Bandura, 1989, 2001; Lent *et al.*, 1994, 2000). More specifically, Campo states that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the degree to which one believes that he (she) is able to successfully start a new business venture (Campo, 2010). Following these ideas and applying them in the context of SE, we define social entrepreneurial self-efficacy (SE-SE) as the dynamic set of beliefs about one’s capacity to start a new social venture and succeed in carrying it out.

*2.1.6 Social entrepreneurial outcome expectations.* According to Bandura, outcome expectations involve the imagined consequences of performing particular behaviors (If I do this, what will happen?) (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, in the field of SE, we can understand that social entrepreneurial outcome expectation (OE-SE) is one’s belief about the consequences or effects if they are social entrepreneurs.

## *2.2 Intention models in entrepreneurship*

Looking at the literature of intention in entrepreneurship, there is a booming number of studies. However, the following subsections list some dominant models of entrepreneurial intention.

*2.2.1 The entrepreneurial event model.* It is the first model in the field of entrepreneurial intent, which was proposed by Shapero and Sokol in 1982. In this model, entrepreneurial intention is derived from perceptions of desirability, feasibility to become an entrepreneur and a propensity to act upon opportunities. There is a note in SEE that a specific “entrepreneurial event” triggers one to act, directs an individual’s behavior instead of his/her inertia or habit.

*2.2.2 The theory of planned behavior entrepreneurial model.* It was derived from the more general TPB (Ajzen, 1991) by Krueger and Carsrud (1993). Originally, TPB is based on the premise that any behavior requires a certain amount of planning. Hence, intentions are shaped by three elements, such as the subject’s attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms and the subject’s perception of behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Distinctively, in TPBEM, Krueger and Carsrud suggested that starting a new business is an intentional process that can be influenced by three key antecedents. These antecedents are the attitude to venture creation, which is developed from perceived desirability; the perceived social norms for engagement in venture creation; and the perceived control for entrepreneurial behaviors.

*2.2.3 The entrepreneurial intention model.* It is a product of Boyd and Vozikis (1994). The entrepreneurial intention model (EIM) is an extension of Bird’s (1988) model of deploying entrepreneurial ideas. In Bird’s original model, entrepreneurial intentions are shaped by a combination of one’s rational and intuitive thinking about venture creation, each of which is first influenced by numerous personal and environmental contextual factors (cited by Shook *et al.*, 2003). For the EIM, Boy and Vozikis followed the ideas that factors such as the politic or economic climate and individual’s abilities and personalities can affect one’s thought for venture creation, which in turn creates entrepreneurial intention. However, they added the concept of self-efficacy taken from the social learning theory as a person’s belief in his or her capability to perform a task. The distinct point of EIM is that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the most important construct and is theorized as an intermediary between thoughts concerning venture creation and entrepreneurial intention.

*2.2.4 The social cognitive career theory.* It (Lent *et al.*, 1994, 2000) is based on the general social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986). The SCCT is a vocational psychology theory which has been used extensively to explain decision-making behavior related to career issues. The theory emphasizes that career development is influenced by cognitive-individual-related factors (e.g. self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals/intent). Here, goals are specified in terms of one’s determination to engage in a specific behavior. Self-efficacy is “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to attain designated types of performance” (“I know I can do it”) (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). And, outcome expectation is one’s belief about the consequences or effects of performing particular behaviors (“If I do it, what will happen”). So, the SCCT argues that individuals’ determination or intention to take an action in a given domain is based on their judgments of capabilities *per se* to organize and execute courses of these actions (self-efficacy) as well as their probable and imagined consequences of performing particular behaviors (outcome expectation) (Bandura, 1986; Let *et al.*, 1994). Furthermore, the theory also suggests that the decision-making process related to a career is influenced by both person and environmental/contextual elements.

### 2.3 Intention models in social entrepreneurship

Because of its infancy in the SE field, studies of Int-SE have not yet been fully undertaken. The following are some typical studies in SE intentions:

- Mair and Noboa (2003): It is the first intention model for SE. Based on the *TPB* (Ajzen, 1991) and *the SEE* (Shapero and Sokol, 1982), Mair and Noboa also agree that Int-SE is shaped by the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of forming a social enterprise. However, they extend the classical models by proposing antecedents for these two main dependent constructs. They suggest that perceived feasibility is influenced by self-efficacy and social support. Similarly, empathy and moral judgment positively influence perceived desirability. Mair and Noboa seem to provide initiatives for the approach of building a Int-SE model based on previously tested models taken from business entrepreneurship research.
- Nga and Shamuganathan (2010): This study aims to explore the relationship between the Big Five personalities (agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness) (Costa and McCrae, 1988 cited in McCrae and John, 1995) and Int-SE. Nevertheless, in the end, they refer to other aspects such as social vision, sustainability, social networks innovation and financial returns instead of intentions. So, it can be said that this work does not prove any specific effects on Int-SE.
- Ernst (2011): It is a PhD thesis with a desire to formulate a well-organized Int-SE model. He again adopts the classical TPBEM (Ajzen, 1991), with a belief that three variables including attitude toward a behavior, perceived control and subjective norms in case of becoming a social entrepreneur are positively significant with Int-SE. In addition, he extends the model with suggesting antecedents, which are listed as: social entrepreneurial personality (e.g. the traits of risk-taking propensity, innovativeness, need for achievement, need for independence, pro-activeness and the pro-social personality including the dimensions of empathy and social responsibility); social entrepreneurial human capital (e.g. perceived social entrepreneurial knowledge/experience and perceived social entrepreneurial skills); and social entrepreneurial social capital (e.g. perceived knowledge of institutions, perceived network and perceived support).
- İrengün and Arıkboğa (2015): This study pursues testing the research proposed by Nga and Shamuganathan (2010) with data collected from students of business administration in Istanbul (Turkey). It has the same problem as Nga and Shamuganathan (2010), i.e. it does not really provide any contributions to the research field of Int-SE.

As mentioned above, there are just four typical studies focusing on finding which factors have an influence on intention to be a social entrepreneur (Mair and Noboa, 2003; Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010; Ernst, 2011; İrengün and Arıkboğa, 2015). Nonetheless, the work of neither Nga and Shamuganathan nor İrengün and Arıkboğa contributes to entrepreneurial intention literature because in the end, these authors mentioned about relationships between the Big Five personalities and social vision, sustainability, social networks innovation and financial returns, instead of intentions. The other two (Mair and Noboa, 2003; Ernst, 2011) formulate their models based on the TPB (Ajzen, 1991)

originally. According to this theory, the intention to become a social entrepreneur is decided by an individual's perceived feasibility (or perceived control) and desirability (or attitude toward behaviors and subject norms). It means that research about intention in the context of SE is still in its infancy. In other words, it calls for more research in this field.

#### 2.4 Social cognitive career theory

According to the review of studies about Int-SE, surprisingly, there is no research to be found which uses *the SCCT* with the idea that "People act on their judgments of what they can do" (i.e. self-efficacy) as well as "on their beliefs about the likely effects of various action" (i.e. outcome expectation) (Bandura, 1986, p.231). It is absent in SE literature, as SCCT is recently suggested as an inclusive framework of factors affecting entrepreneurial intention (Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011). Especially, the usefulness of the SCCT model in predicting individual's intention to become an entrepreneur was supported by the empirical research of Segal *et al.* (2002).

Compared to the primary existing intention-based models (i.e. TPBEM, SEE and EIM), SCCT shares a lot of similarities. First, the variable of self-efficacy in the SCCT model shares the same position in EIM that it is a strong determinant and predictor of the level of accomplishment (mastery) which individuals finally attain (Bandura, 1986). It is the most important construct as well as a theoretical intermediary between thoughts concerning venture creation and entrepreneurship intention (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994). This variable is also conceptually identified as similar to the variables of perceived feasibility and perceived control in SEE and TPBEM, respectively, as they are all about perception of capability to start a social venture. Second, there is also a resemblance in terms of outcome expectation. Precisely, outcome expectation in SCCT, perceived desirability in SEE, attitude toward new venture creation and social norms in TPBEM share some level of conceptual overlap. Ajzen describes attitude toward behavior as "the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the particular behavior of interest" and social norms as "[...] the person's perception of social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior under consideration" (Ajzen, 1988, p. 117). Ajzen also envisions attitude toward behavior as concluding the evaluation of each potential outcome of the target behavior and the perceived probability of each outcome occurring (Ajzen, 2001). Somehow, a definition for outcome expectation in SCCT which contains both imagined and probable outcomes is likely. Shapero defines perceived desirability to be interpreted into how attractive the idea of starting up a business is (Shapero and Sokol, 1982), which is equal to the recent concept of attitude toward behavior as the personally perceived attractiveness of the target behavior (Autio *et al.*, 2010). To sum up, it can be said that SCCT shows itself as serving an organizing framework by which conceptual overlap present in the entrepreneurial intent literature may be diminished.

Besides the similarities, it is important to note that SCCT argues some distinctions. First, compared to EIM – the main theory with focusing on the specific context of entrepreneurship, SCCT can avoid the problematic absence of the construct outcome expectation (Boyd and Vozilos, 1994). This is really problematic in entrepreneurship intention literature, as there are some empirical studies which give support for the relationship between perceived desirability, attitude toward new venture creation and outcome expectation with entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, there is an inconsistent understanding of perceived desirability and attitude toward new venture

creation (Guerrero *et al.*, 2008; Kolvereid, 1996). Concretely, the function of the construct perceived desirability is broader than only judgments concerning whether a behavior is good or bad and whether someone is in favor for or against enacting a given behavior which is a function of the variable attitude toward new venture creation. Nevertheless, in general, perceived desirability is conceptualized commonly as narrower than attitude toward behavior (Ajzen, 1991), so that the alternative construct of outcome expectation can handle this inconsistency between the theories of TPB and SEE, as well as can avoid the problematic absence of the construct itself in the EIM theory.

More important is the fact that the decision establishing a new social venture is not for entertainment. It rather is a career-related decision in accordance with the magnitude of problems faced around the globe which need sympathetic and realistic solutions (Ghosh, 2012). Thus, together with this unique context, understanding the individual, socio-cognitive and environment characteristics influencing on such a challenging career decision is really critical. The extension of SCCT concerning with personal and contextual factors is seen as a promising comprehensive theoretical background for Int-SE formation.

### 3. The conceptual model and propositions

#### 3.1 *The classical social cognitive career theory*

As argued above, the classical SCCT (Lent *et al.*, 1994) is used as a theoretical background for this paper. It means that formation of an intention model in SE will mainly rely on SCCT. Expressly, the idea is that self-efficacy and outcome expectation will be predictors of individual's intention to become an entrepreneur. Therefore, by applying it to SE, we propose:

- P1. SE-SE will be positively related to Int-SE.
- P2. OE-SE will be positively related to Int-SE.

Lent and his co-authors found an average weighted correlation of 0.49 between self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent *et al.*, 1994). A few years later, some empirical research supported this interrelation that with higher self-efficacy, there is an enhancement of outcome expectations (Fouad and Smith, 1996; Lent *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, Landry (2003) also confirms the positive and significant correlation between self-efficacy and outcome expectation. Thus, in the context of SE, we propose:

- P3. SE-SE will be positively related to OE-SE.

#### 3.2 *The extended social cognitive career theory*

In the original SCCT, Lent *et al.* referred that "sources of self-efficacy and outcome expectations" are one part of the model. Another way of saying that is self-efficacy and outcome expectations are influenced by environment factors. The concept of environmental variables includes two basic categories named as objective and subjective environment. Examples of objective environment are economic conditions, parental behaviors, peer influences and "how individuals make sense of, and respond to, what their environment provides" (Lent *et al.*, 1994, p. 37). Subjective environmental factor is something subjected to an individual's interpretation, for instance, opportunities, resources, barriers or affordances (Lent *et al.*, 1994). Following the idea of contextual variables in the model of career development, Huuskonen (1997) again confirms that goals and plans do not arise from empty nothingness. Otherwise, they

are shaped by interacting with the environment and persons themselves. Additionally, there are numerous meta-analysis studies which also provide support for that argument (Sesen, 2012; Zhao *et al.*, 2005, Linan, 2008). Yet, these works more specifically focus on testing the interdependence of some narrower and more concrete variables like individuals' personalities, education, role models, perceived supports and entrepreneurship intention. Thus, this paper will limit itself to paying attention on such antecedents.

*3.2.1 Personality traits.* It has recently seen a reemergence of the interest in the role of personality in entrepreneurship after a hiatus of almost 20 years (Baum and Locke, 2004; Baum *et al.*, 2004; Ciavarella *et al.*, 2004). This phenomenon can be easily understood because entrepreneurs are individuals who possess a specific set of personality traits which differentiate from non-entrepreneurs (Gartner, 1988), and personality plays a significant role when situations are complex and uncertain like entrepreneurship, especially in its initial stages (Frank *et al.*, 2007; Gatewood *et al.*, 1995).

Personality is identified as an interpersonal process and consistent behavior patterns immanent in the individual himself (Burger, 2011). It is also defined as integrated traits determining emotional, cognitive and behavioral patterns, bearing traces of psychological characteristics and disclosing who he/she is (Mount *et al.*, 2005). One of the most common and useful methods used to clarify personality traits is the so-called Big Five Personality Model or Five-Factor Model, as this model provides a meaningful and parsimonious framework with a comprehensive set of broad personality constructs instead of a vast and often confusing variety of personalities variables (Costa and McCrae, 1988 cited in McCrae and John, 1995). The names of those five factors are agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness (Burger, 2011; Costa and McCrae, 1995).

*Agreeableness* describes someone who has the tendency to be sympathetic and cooperative rather than suspicious of others. Someone with a low level of agreeableness can be characterized as manipulative, self-centered, doubtful and ruthless. On the contrary, individuals who are high on agreeableness possess all such things like being trusting, forgiving, caring, altruistic and gullible (Digman, 1990; Costa and McCrae, 1995). They often show sympathy and concern for others, which are typical characteristics for social entrepreneurs who care much more for people in their society, especially weaker or poorer persons or persons in need of help from others. Barrick and Mount (2003) reported that highly agreeable people are most likely to have career interests in social occupations where they can work for the benefit of others and not for themselves, such as social work or teaching, rather than business. Besides that, agreeableness concerns the ability to strengthen social consensus while upholding mutual understanding and mutual trust (Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003 cited in Farrington, 2012). Agreeableness in interpersonal relationships contains the ability to be a good listener and to be a patient, compassionate and good-promoting harmonious person in social interactions (Caliendo and Kritikos, 2010). All these traits may facilitate a social entrepreneur to delve deeply into social problems together with setting up a business and a social network, which is really necessary for creating a new social venture. As a consequence, it is expected that highly agreeable people are likely to be more attracted to SE.

*Conscientiousness* represents a person's level of achievement, work motivation, organization and planning, self-control and acceptance of traditional norms and virtue

and responsibility to others (Costa and McCrae, 1995; Roberts *et al.*, 2005). Conscientious people are driven by a strong sense of responsibility, laboriousness and need for achievement which promotes their reliability at work (Ciavarella *et al.*, 2004). According to McClelland's (1961) early work on achievement motivation, individuals who have a high score on need for achievement are attracted to work situations in which they can have personal control over outcomes, face moderate risk of failure and experience direct and timely feedback on their performance (cited in Moore *et al.*, 2010). McClelland concluded that high-need-for-achievement individuals would be attracted to entrepreneurship because it offers more of these conditions than most traditional forms of employment. Likewise, certain other traits under the conscientiousness dimension, for instance, work goal orientation, hard work and perseverance in the face of horrible obstacles to achieve goals, are also closely associated with entrepreneurship in the popular imagination (Locke, 2000). Working in the SE field is even much more challenging than business entrepreneurship. Hence, people usually must be even more responsible for others and more hard-working as well as driven by achievement. We suppose that high conscientious people engage more into SE.

*Extraversion* illustrates people who are assertive, dominant, energetic, active, positive, emotional and enthusiastic to an extent (Costa and McCrae, 1995). Therefore, extraverted individuals are manifested by sociable, outgoing, positive attitude and assertive characteristics (Ciavarella *et al.*, 2004; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Moon *et al.*, 2008). Extraversion contributes to the proactive personality required in nourishing the instinct and driving the charismatic vision of the social entrepreneur (Crant, 1996). Social entrepreneurs are expected to possess extraversion, as they have to be willing and able to communicate well with a myriad of stakeholders. Additionally, a detailed analysis of extraversion characteristics comprises reward sensitivity, sociability and positive emotions founded to off-set one another (Ciavarella *et al.*, 2004; Moon *et al.*, 2008; Zhao and Seibert, 2006). This may explain that someone with higher extraversion will have higher intention to become a social entrepreneur.

*Neuroticism* refers to the degree of emotional stability of someone (Singh and DeNoble, 2003). People who own a high neuroticism trait are likely to show a number of negative emotions, such as anxiety, hostility and depression (Costa and McCrae, 1995). On the other hand, an emotionally stable person will be able to keep his/her calmness under pressure situations and show high level of self-esteem and be relaxed and self-confident. Moreover, in both the popular thinking and the academic literature, entrepreneurs are typically described as hardy, optimistic and steady in the face of social pressure, stress and uncertainty (Locke, 2000). Entrepreneurs take on a great deal of personal responsibility for the success or failure of their new venture. Therefore, they take on physical and emotional burdens, and they press ahead where others might be discouraged by obstacles, setbacks or self-doubt. These entrepreneurial traits and behaviors describe someone with a high level of emotional stability. In other words, people high on emotional stability are likely to want to take on the personal responsibilities and strains associated with the entrepreneurial role, especially in the context of SE.

*Openness* is a personality trait that describes someone who is intellectually curious, imaginative and creative; someone who seeks out new ideas and alternative values and aesthetic standards (Costa and McCrae, 1995). There is another definition that openness is the tendency to be creative, curious, adventurous and receptive to

new experience (Singh and DeNoble, 2003). These characteristics are important components for entrepreneurship because entrepreneurship is creativity and proclivity to bring about innovative change, or to put it in Schumpeter's (1942, 1967) famous phrase, "creative destruction". Founding a new social venture is likely to require the entrepreneur to explore new ideas and use his or her creativity to solve business and social problems by taking innovative ways (cited in Sledzik, 2013). Consequently, people who are highly open to new experiences tend to more likely be social entrepreneurs.

To sum up, personalities can affect their judgments or beliefs in a given circumstance or even can affect directly one's intentions. For example, proactivity, need for achievement, *locus* of control, conscientiousness, innovation orientation and openness to experiences have a robust direct influence on intentions (Collins *et al.*, 2004; Crant, 1996; Frank *et al.*, 2007; Rauch and Frese, 2007; Zhao *et al.*, 2006). Likewise, someone who is always calm, self-confident and optimistic and communicates well with others will logically believe much more in their capabilities of acting and believe in positive results of their performance, which in turn will increase their intention to do something as well. In this sense, we suggest:

- P4. Personality will be directly related to Int-SE.
- P5. Personality will be directly related to SE-SE.
- P6. Personality will be directly related to OE-SE.
- P7. SE-SE will mediate the relationship between personality and Int-SE.
- P8. OE-SE will mediate the relationship between personality and Int-SE.

**3.2.2 Contextual factors.** Entrepreneurial activities may be explained by the effects of the surrounding business and societal environment. The significantly growing number of research works about contextual factors influencing on entrepreneurial behaviors can confirm that idea. According to Penning *et al.* (2001), there are various contextual factors that might impact on the entrepreneurial intentions, but one of the most important factors is perceived support (as cited in Luthje and Franke, 2003). Furthermore, literature also shows the interest in two other factors, such as education (Kristiansen and Indarti, 2004; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003) and role models in terms of influencing elements on the decision to start a business (Jacobowitz and Vidler, 1982; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Thereupon, this paper will focus on those contextual elements.

**3.2.2.1 Role models.** Literature suggests that role models play an important role in the decision to start a business (Jacobowitz and Vidler, 1982; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Especially, Carsrud and Johnson (1989) presume that role models can change individuals' critical attitudes, such as self-efficacy perceptions, which in turn can promote entrepreneurial thinking. Delmar's work (1996) adds that, the greater the assumed similarities between the role model and the observer, the more persuasive are the role model's successes and failures. Therefore, generally, role models are expected to enhance intentions, as watching others perform a task may gain a positive and confident attitude toward the behavior, especially if there are similarities between the observer and the observed person (Cooper and Park, 2008 cited in Linan, 2011).

3.2.2.2 Education. Education and entrepreneurial training are really important in promoting entrepreneurial activities. Education provides knowledge, skills and experiences in entrepreneurship, which are mentioned as a source for entrepreneurship in general, as well as SE in particular (Corner and Ho, 2010; Perrini, 2006; Sharir and Lerner, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Baron and Ensley, 2006; McMullen and Shepherd, 2006; Shane, 2000, 2003; Drayton, 2004). On the one hand, people are less likely to be entrepreneurs if they have limited education (Varghese and Hassan, 2012). On the other hand, they would be more motivated to do something or able to consider a career or self-employment if they know much more about the market they will move into or for which they feel they have relevant skills. As experience in a field increases specific cognitive abilities concerning the field, "What do I know, including what do I know how to do?" (Locke, 2000, p. 409), it leads to enhanced activity such as opportunity recognition (Davidsson and Honig, 2003), and then influences venture creation (Shane, 2003). Additionally, Zhao *et al.* also find out that perceptions of formal learning from entrepreneurship-related courses and practices in entrepreneurship education, such as inviting successful entrepreneurs to give talks or lectures, using simulated exercises or best business idea or start-up competition, have a positive relationship with intentions through a mediation of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Zhao *et al.*, 2005).

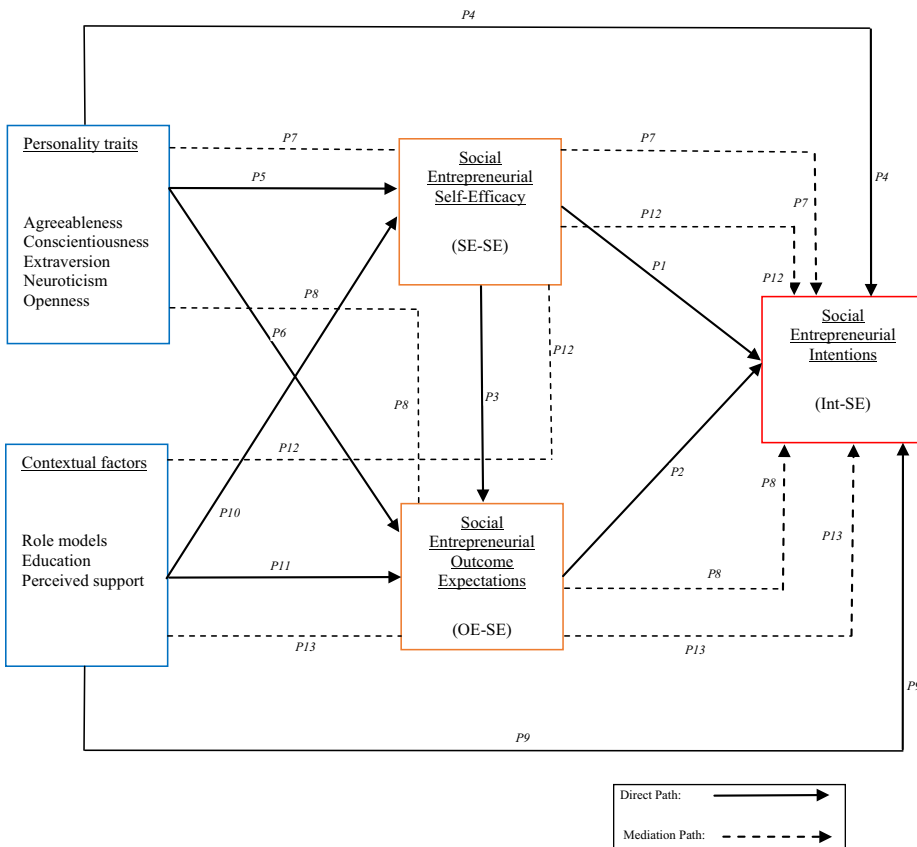
3.2.2.3 Perceived support. Perceived support is understood as the expected encouragement and assistance of individual's close surroundings to become a social entrepreneur. The close environment's support leads people to believe that they have more adequate and more feasible abilities for an entrepreneurial career (Linan, 2008). Generally, entrepreneurship is facilitated when information comes from a wide range of trustworthy personal contacts in a personal network (Johannisson, 1991). Especially, in the beginning of a venture, people use networks to exchange ideas and advices, generate new ideas and pursue visions and collect resources, rather than decrease uncertainty, as in the case of general management (Johannisson, 2000). Therefore, the optimism or pessimism of the social entrepreneur's network often influences the idea development and the solution discussions. Here, important factors are not only direct contacts but also numerous potential linkages to lawyers, bankers, venture capitalists, accountants, technical consultant, academics, customers, suppliers or trade associations (Carsrud and Johnson, 1989). The perceived support from the currently existing business opportunities (e.g. access to capital, availability of business information) is more likely to make the decision to start a new business. To conclude, we suppose that perceived support has a significant impact toward entrepreneurship as a career choice.

All in all, contextual factors including education, role models and perceived support affect SE. These elements may influence directly on someone's intention to be a social entrepreneur (Crant, 1996; Raijman, 2001). Furthermore, the connection between contextual factors and entrepreneurial intention can be mediated by self-efficacy and outcome expectations. For instance, individuals will have higher self-efficacy if they think they have knowledge, skills and experience (Zhao *et al.*, 2005). In the same way, people properly will have more optimistic beliefs in their capacities and positive expected outcomes when they see many similarities between themselves and some role models, or experience a lot of support from the surrounding environment, and then

finally will be more likely to start doing a business (Cooper and Park, 2008; Segal *et al.*, 2002; Linan, 2008). Therefore, we propose:

- P9. Contextual factors will be directly related to Int-SE.
- P10. Contextual factors will be directly related to SE-SE.
- P11. Contextual factors will be directly related to OE-SE.
- P12. SE-SE will mediate the relationship between contextual factors and Int-SE.
- P13. OE-SE will mediate the relationship between contextual factors and entrepreneurial intention.

As elaborated previously, the model of Int-SE formation is mainly constructed by adapting and extending the SCCT (Figure 1). Remarkably, this model will take over the idea that Int-SE is influenced by two main cognitive constructs, namely, SE-SE and OE-SE. In addition, personalities (i.e. agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness) and contextual factors (i.e. role models, education and perceived support) are also taken into account in this model. Both link



**Figure 1.**  
The conceptual  
model of social  
entrepreneurial  
intention formation

directly to entrepreneurial intention and indirectly through the mediating by SE-SE and OE-SE.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

As social entrepreneurship is still in the beginning, this paper provides new insights into the literature by providing a well-organized conceptual model of social entrepreneurial intention. The result also brings important implications for practice as well as raises a broad future direction for other researchers.

##### 4.1 Theoretical contribution

Although the SCCT is recently suggested as an inclusive framework of factors affecting entrepreneurial intention (Doan Winkel *et al.*, 2011) and is supported by the empirical research of Segal *et al.* (2002), there is no research using this theory as background for predicting intention in the context of social entrepreneurship. Therefore, this paper fills this gap, as it is the first study of formulating a conceptual model of social entrepreneurial intention by adapting and extending SCCT. The main idea of this model is to take consideration of linkages between social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social entrepreneurial outcome expectation and social entrepreneurial intention. In addition, the model also illustrates that personality traits, education, role models and perceived supports will influence intention to become a social entrepreneur in two ways. On the one hand, they can have direct effects on the intention. On the other hand, they influence self-efficacy and outcome expectation, then turn to impact a person's intent of becoming a social entrepreneur.

This paper also draws out a lot of new definitions in the specific context of social entrepreneurship as social entrepreneurial intention, social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social entrepreneurial outcome expectation. It opens a new approach for doing research in this field with these new insights.

The conceptual model itself presents important theoretical contributions as well. First, it is a potentially promising model because it combines a diversity of the supported relationships between antecedents and cognitive constructs found in existing theoretical models of intention entrepreneurship. Second, it reduces the substantial conceptual overlap and avoids the inconsistency in existing models by using SCCT as its ground. Finally, this model illuminates the premise that one's decision to become a social entrepreneur may be perceived as a career-related decision. Consequently, the decision of establishing a new social venture is not for entertainment. It rather is a career-related decision in accordance with the magnitude of problems faced around the global which need sympathetic and realistic solutions (Ghosh, 2012).

##### 4.2 Practical implication

In practice, this framework provides a broad view of factors that could contribute to the success of the would-be a social entrepreneur. It allows researchers to understand the complex interplay of a greater variety of effects on individual's intention to become a social entrepreneur. Based on those suggested links, people (e.g. policy makers, professors, consultants) will have more tools and tips when working with individuals who are pursuing to choose social entrepreneurship as their careers. So that, macro and micro policies, curriculums for teaching and training, consultancy as well as support community services aiming to encourage people to become social entrepreneurs will be more oriented and more effective. For instance, this paper confirms that, the intention to

be a social entrepreneur relies on the idea that, "People act on their judgments of what they can do" (i.e. self-efficacy) as well as "on their beliefs about the likely effects of various action" (i.e. outcome expectation) (Bandura, 1986, p. 231). As a result, the more sufficient and productive entrepreneurship programs are, the higher the capacity and ability in addressing all challenges or uncertainty of society issues people have. In turn, they will believe more in the better consequences of what they do, and then, they are more highly intent on being social entrepreneurs. The same situation can happen if the government can create a convenient and supported environment for social entrepreneurship with advantage policies in finance, tax or administrative procedures as well as programs acknowledging all social entrepreneurs' contributions to the society. Such activities in all can increase significantly individuals' intent of running social businesses.

#### 4.3 Future direction

The result of this paper is expected to provide new knowledge on social entrepreneurial intention; however, it is just a model. As a consequence, its validity and reliability should be tested. Moreover, the model itself brings chances for potential expansion (or even tighten in light of future empirical research). One possibility is that the culture factor should be taken into account in the development of entrepreneurial intentions, as remarked by Baron and Henry (2010). Culture is defined as the underlying system of values peculiar to a specific group or society (Mueller & Thomas, 2001). Individuals are explained as "producers as well as products of social systems" (Bandura, 2002, p. 278). Hence, cultural background can have an impact on individuals' behaviors in general, and on entrepreneurial behavior in particular. For example, Mueller *et al.* (2002) argued that low power distance (one of the characteristics of culture) would favor entrepreneurship. We can expect that this matter also assists social entrepreneurship. Therefore, we call for integrating this construct in future empirical analyses of our conceptual model.

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