Combination of SCCT and TPB in explaining

the social entrepreneurial intention

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| **ARTICLE INFO** | **ABSTRACT** |
| **DOI:**10.46223/HCMCOUJS. econ.en.12.2.2140.2022Received: January 06th, 2022Revised: January 17th, 2022Accepted: February 16th, 2022*Keywords:* behavioral intention; social cognitive career theory; social entrepreneurship; theory of planned behavior | Social enterprises are an emerging field in the world. Social enterprises are expected to help solve social problems that the government and commercial enterprises do not want or do not plan to deal with in the near future. This article uses social cognitive career theory and theory of planned behavior to help explain the social entrepreneurial intention of Vietnamese students. The study was conducted from August 2020 to February 2021 with the participation of 587 students. The results after being analyzed by PLS-SEM have shown the important role of the two above theories in the desire to become a social entrepreneur, Specific factors such as perceived behavior control and self-efficacy have the strongest impact on social entrepreneurial intention. This finding will help policymakers have appropriate solutions to promote the formation of social entrepreneurs in Vietnam. |

# 1. Introduction

Besides the advances in science, technology, and economy, the world is also suffering from unpredictable fluctuations in the natural environment, epidemics, and natural disasters that negatively affect lives, especially among vulnerable people (Zahra & Wright, 2016). Social issues related to poverty, climate change, unemployment, etc. are becoming more diverse and complex (Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2019). These are the big challenges for governments for ensuring sustainable development. These issues have pushed the birth of social entrepreneurship, a business activity conducted with social dynamics (Huda et al., 2019). Unlike commercial enterprises and non-profit organizations, social entrepreneurship focuses on social goals by adopting profit-oriented business models (Baglioni, Chabanet, & Persson, 2018).

Due to the social and economic benefits of social entrepreneurship, policymakers and the academic community are trying to find ways to promote this phenomenon (Brieger & De Clercq, 2019; Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017a). Therefore, many countries have been supporting to development of the social entrepreneur generations. However, for proposing effective solutions for the development of social entrepreneurs, it is necessary to discover the factors that promote the potential of this force. Many previous studies have agreed that understanding how an individual form an entrepreneurial intention becomes an important research objective, explaining why a person decides to become a social entrepreneur (Hockerts, 2017; Liñán & Chen, 2009).

Behavioral intention, in the context of social entrepreneurship, relates to any type of activity, organization, or initiative with specific social, environmental, or community goals (Bosma, Schøtt, Terjesen, & Kew, 2016). Many researchers have used existing intention theories to conduct empirical studies describing the premises for the formation of Social Entrepreneurial Intentions (SEI). Research is often based on two main theories: Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (1991) (Barton, Schaefer, & Canavati, 2018; Ernst, 2011; Tiwari et al., 2017a) and Shapero and Sokol’s (1982) model of the entrepreneurial event (SEE) (Aure, 2018; Hockerts, 2017; Ip, Liang, Wu, Law, & Liu, 2018; Lacap, Mulyaningsih, & Ramadani, 2018). In essence, the researchers show that these two models are similar (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). Even so, Zaremohzzabieh et al. (2019) think that TPB dominates and continues to be a well-suited theoretical framework for explaining an individual’s specific behavioral intention. However, TPB also has limitations because it ignores individual processes and perceptions such as environment and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1986; Miles, 2012). In that context, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) can provide an additional perspective to explain SEI from the prism of career choice, through two important premises that are self-efficacy as well as the outcome expectations of social entrepreneurship (Tran & Von Korflesch, 2016).

Therefore, this article integrates two theories SCCT and TPB to reduce the limitations of TPB (Ayob, Yap, Sapuan, & Rashid, 2013; Mair & Noboa, 2006). In an emerging economy like Vietnam, the motivation of social enterprises comes from their experiences with disadvantaged people and aims to help shape a better society (Truong, Trung tâm Khởi nghiệp và Sáng tạo Xã hội (CSIE), Chương trình Phát triển Liên hiệp Quốc tại Việt Nam (UNDB), & Trường Đại học Kinh tế Quốc dân, 2018). Thus, SEI is not merely a result of the external environment affecting the individual, but may also be a desire to improve an individual’s external environment. SEI can be formed from a person’s perception of support from others as well as a desire to make a greater contribution to society. Thus, SCCT is a necessary complement to TPB for a better understanding of SEI.

# 2. Literature review

## 2.1. Social entrepreneurial intention

The intention is a state of mind that motivates individuals to pursue a goal in the future and is considered an immediate predictor of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Intention can indirectly explain why entrepreneurs intend to establish a business or organization before they look for an opportunity (Wang, Chang, Yao, & Liang, 2016). SEI can be considered as the psychological behavior of people that persuades them to gather knowledge, realize ideas, and implement business plans to become social entrepreneurs (Mair & Noboa, 2006).

## 2.2. Theory of planned behavior

Similarly, in the field of traditional entrepreneurship, TPB serves as one of the most reliable and widely used theories in explaining SEI (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2019). The flexibility in adding different constructs makes TPB a powerful theory to explain behaviors in a certain context (Ajzen, 2011). In the field of social entrepreneurship, TPB is tested and expanded with various prefixes such as personality (Ernst, 2011), human and social capital (Jemari et al., 2017), the ability of financial accessibility (Phan, 2018), emotional intelligence (Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017b).

TPB describes entrepreneurship based on attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Attitude (ATB) is a perception or evaluation of performing a particular behavior. Subjective Norms (SN) refer to perceived pressures from the social environment to perform the target behavior (especially from those who have a significant influence on the individual, such as family or close friends). Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is considered the ease or difficulty of executing a behavior.

In TPB, these three factors play an essential role in SEI formation (Ernst, 2011). Therefore, Ajzen (1991) suggested that the higher any of the three determinants, the stronger the individual’s intentions, and the relative importance of each factor is different across situations. In addition, external factors will indirectly affect entrepreneurial intention through their influence on one of these three premises (Ajzen, 1991). Based on TPB, the first three hypotheses are considered:

*H1: ATB has a positive effect on SEI*

*H2: SN has a positive effect on SEI*

*H3: PBC has a positive impact on SEI*

## 2.3. Social cognitive career theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994) was developed based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986). It became a widely used psychological theory to explain decision-making behavior related to career choice (Liguori, Winkler, Vanevenhoven, Winkel, & James, 2020; Schoenfeld, Segal, & Borgia, 2017). SCCT argues that the determination or intention to act depends on self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy is the ability to assess one’s ability to do an action that achieves a goal (“I know I can do it”). Outcome expectation is a personal belief in the outcome that action will bring (“What will this behavior do for me”).

Social entrepreneurship requires different levels of motivation, unique goals, the commitment of resources and support that most traditional ones do not have (Baglioni et al., 2018). Therefore, SCCT constructs are of great use in predicting entrepreneurial intention. Previous studies have shown that self-efficacy and outcome expectations together explain more than half of the difference in students’ entrepreneurial intention (Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2002). Thus, SCCT is a necessary addition to TPB to increase the explanation of SEI. The integration of self-efficacy and outcome expectations makes TPB more capable of explaining the process of self-efficacy of potential social entrepreneur candidates and the desire to contribute to their society.

### 2.3.1. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is described as an individual’s judgment about the ability to organize and take the necessary actions to achieve the desired goal (Bandura, 1986), or strong personal beliefs to start a task and pursue it to succeed (Bandura, 1997). In studies of business intention, self-efficacy, and PBC is still debated whether they are distinct as both measures the ability to perform a particular activity (Tiwari et al., 2017a). However, PBC is seen as a broader concept than self-efficacy (Ajzen, 2002). However, Bandura (1986) argues that self-efficacy has a specific nature, and is therefore relevant to specific research contexts (such as SEI).

PBC is the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior, so it includes the various activities required to perform that task (Ajzen, 2002). Meanwhile, Hockerts (2017) defines self-efficacy in the context of social entrepreneurship as an individual’s perception of their ability to contribute to social change in finding solutions for social problems. Hockerts (2015) argues that the self-efficacy of social entrepreneurship has a particularly pronounced function because social problems tend to be perceived as too big, and people may question their ability to influence them. Therefore, in the context of SEI, self-efficacy, and PBC are two different concepts.

Self-efficacy is also considered one of the factors that best explain SEI (Lacap et al., 2018). Mair and Noboa (2006) suggest that a high level of self-efficacy allows individuals to feel it is possible to create a social business, which positively influences the formation of SEI. There is still much debate about the role of self-efficacy in TPB. Ernst (2011) stated that self-efficacy did not show any significance with SN but it still had a positive relationship for both ATB and PBC. However, the study of Tiwari et al. (2017a) shows that self-efficacy is related to all three components of TPB. The above arguments lead to the following hypotheses:

*H4: Self-efficacy has a positive effect on ATB*

*H5: Self-efficacy has a positive impact on SN*

*H6: Self-efficacy has a positive impact on PBC*

### 2.3.2. Outcome expectation

Outcome expectation is beliefs about the consequences of behavior (Lent & Brown, 2008). Outcome expectations depend on experience, and beliefs about one’s abilities (Liguori, Bendickson, & McDowell, 2018). Outcome expectation is an important determinant of career-related intentions through their significant influence on decision-making about starting a new business (Tran & Von Korflesch, 2016).

Like ordinary entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs also have goals such as personal achievement, and profit (Christopoulos & Vogl, 2015). However, social entrepreneurs are more specific because while pursuing both social and economic goals at the same time, it is the social goal that motivates them most strongly (Saebi et al., 2019; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). According to SCCT, an individual will have an increased desire and intention to perform a behavior when they envision the outcome as positive and vice versa (Liguori et al., 2018). Therefore, outcome expectation guides an individual’s behavior, directing them to the positive side when performing the behavior, or in other words, the outcome expectation will increase the positive attitude of the individual and those around him.

Outcome expectation also raises others’ awareness of specific behaviors from which an individual will receive social support to pursue and perform that behavior. According to expectations theory (Ajzen, 1991; Vroom, 1995), the expectation of achieving certain results will determine the formation of positive attitudes when those achievements are appreciated. Based on the above arguments, this article examines the effect of outcome expectation on the three antecedent factors of TPB. So the three proposed hypotheses are:

*H7: Outcome expectation has a positive effect on ATB*

*H8: Outcome expectation has a positive effect on SN*

*H9: Outcome expectation has a positive effect on PBC*

## 2.4. Perceived social support

Social entrepreneurship is a complex field that requires a strong commitment and social support that is different from traditional commercial startups. Social support is defined as those social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with real assistance or those embedded individuals in a social system that is supposed to provide care or a sense of belonging to a valued social group (Hobfoll, 1988). Social support theory explains that the support received from interpersonal relationships has a positive effect on how a person responds to stress or life changes.

In the context of SEI, individuals are influenced by the extent to which they will receive support and assistance from those in their network. The support of a close environment (relatives, trustworthy and influential people) makes people believe that they are more likely to be suitable and viable for a business career (Liñán & Chen, 2009). As such, the role of Perceived Social Support (PSS) is particularly relevant when considering social entrepreneurship in resource-constrained environments, as is often the case in developing countries (Tiwari et al., 2017a). The final research hypotheses are proposed:

*H10: PSS has a positive effect on ATB*

*H11: PSS has a positive effect on SN*

*H12: PSS has a positive effect on PBC*



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework

# 3. Methodology

This study was conducted using the convenience sampling method. The survey audience targeted students who had attended various programs organized by the Society of Social Enterprise Communities (SSEC). SSEC is one of the prominent non-profit organizations promoting social entrepreneurship in Vietnam. Students are the right subjects when they have to choose a career after graduation and many studies have proven that social entrepreneurship is associated with youth (Bosma et al., 2016; Hockerts, 2017; Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010; Tiwari et al., 2017a).

The survey was sent to participants between August 2020 and February 2021. The collected data primarily used an electronic survey method distributed through Google Forms. Of the 587 participants, 72.1% were male (423). The vast majority are 4th-year students and above (299 - 51%), followed by 3rd, 2nd, and 1st-year students with percentages of 26.9%, 12.8%, and 9.3% respectively.

Data were analyzed by Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3 software. Theo Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019), the PLS-SEM analysis process includes two stages: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The first stage is constructed validity test through Cronbach’s Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Fornell - Larcker criterion, and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The latter stage performs a multicollinearity test using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), model explanatory power with the coefficient of determination (R2), and the statistical significance and model comparisons.

# 4. Discussion

## 4.1. Measurement model assessment

In this stage, the scale reliability is assessed first. The reliability is evaluated through CA and CR coefficients. According to Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017), these two indices need to be greater than 0.7. The results in Table 1 show that the values of CA and CR satisfy the above requirements, which means that the scales have internal consistency. The convergent validity has also been shown to be satisfactory. AVE values range from 0.525 to 0.713 which is over 0.5 “cut-off” value (Hair et al., 2017) and outer loading values range from [0.704; 0.873] meet the condition greater than 0.7 (Götz, Liehr-Gobbers, & Krafft, 2010).

**Table 1**

Construct validity

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CA** | **CR** | **AVE** | **Loadings** | **ATB** | **OE** | **SEF** | **PBC** | **SEI** | **PSS** | **SN** |
| ATB | 0.865 | 0.903 | 0.650 | 0.741-0.873 | ***0.806*** | **0.510** | **0.524** | **0.544** | **0.488** | **0.494** | **0.468** |
| OE | 0.774 | 0.847 | 0.525 | 0.704-0.739 | *0.417* | ***0.724*** | **0.446** | **0.478** | **0.454** | **0.483** | **0.561** |
| SEF | 0.865 | 0.899 | 0.598 | 0.721-0.816 | *0.460* | *0.368* | ***0.773*** | **0.603** | **0.524** | **0.535** | **0.547** |
| PBC | 0.817 | 0.872 | 0.577 | 0.709-0.806 | *0.465* | *0.387* | *0.520* | ***0.759*** | **0.563** | **0.607** | **0.587** |
| SEI | 0.893 | 0.913 | 0.540 | 0.705-0.768 | *0.442* | *0.378* | *0.469* | *0.494* | ***0.735*** | **0.615** | **0.562** |
| PSS | 0.798 | 0.881 | 0.713 | 0.825-0.854 | *0.415* | *0.381* | *0.452* | *0.500* | *0.524* | ***0.844*** | **0.572** |
| SN | 0.772 | 0.868 | 0.686 | 0.806-0.844 | *0.389* | *0.435* | *0.452* | *0.475* | *0.471* | *0.450* | ***0.828*** |

(ATB: Attitude; OE: Outcome Expectation; SEF: Self-efficacy; PBC: Perceived Behavior Control; SEI: Social Entrepreneurial Intention; PSS: Perceived Social Support; SN: Subjective Norm

Construct inter-correlation: number in italics; HTMT: number in bold; Square root of AVE: number in bold and italics)

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

 According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), concepts are evaluated as distinguished by each other when the inter-correlation between these concepts is less than the square root of the AVE of each concept. However, evaluation by the Fornell-Larcker criterion is not sufficient (Hair et al., 2019). Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) suggested that if the HTMT ratio is less than 0.85, the discriminant validity is accepted. The results in Table 1 prove that the above conditions are fulfilled. Therefore, the construct validity is satisfied and the model can be evaluated in the next stage.

## 4.2. Structural model assessment

Multicollinearity is the phenomenon of the degree to which one concept in a model can be predicted linearly from other concepts. It evaluates relationships in the model that become inaccurate. Therefore, it is necessary to remove this phenomenon from the research model. The VIF indices are all not greater than 5 (see Table 2), so multicollinearity will not affect the relationships in the structural model much (Sarstedt, Hair, Ringle, Thiele, & Gudergan, 2016).

**Table 2**

Explanatory power and multicollinearity

| **Variables** | **R2** | **VIF** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attitudes | 0.311 | 1.717-2.690 |
| Perceived behavior control | 0.378 | 1.383-1.924 |
| Social entrepreneurial intention | 0.351 | 1.702-2.683 |
| Subjective Norm | 0.331 | 1.522-1.658 |
| Outcome expectation |  | 1.385-1.488 |
| Self-efficacy |  | 1.562-2.166 |
| Perceived social support |  | 1.639-1.788 |

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

The evaluation of the model explanatory power is an important part of the PLS-SEM method. The R2 value was used to consider the explanatory level of endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2019). According to Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), R2 values of 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25 are assessed as substantial, moderate, and weak. In Table 2, the R2 values are in the range [0.25; 0.5], so the model is evaluated as having the ability to explain the variance of endogenous constructs.

**Table 3**

The statistical significance and hypothesis testing

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Hypotheses | **Path coefficient** | **T Statistics** | **P-Values** |
| Attitudes -> Social entrepreneurial intention | 0.215 | 3.902 | 0.000 |
| Outcome expectation -> Attitudes | 0.237 | 4.352 | 0.000 |
| Outcome expectation -> Perceived behavior control | 0.154 | 3.236 | 0.001 |
| Outcome expectation -> Subjective Norm | 0.251 | 4.347 | 0.000 |
| Self-efficacy -> Attitudes | 0.285 | 5.930 | 0.000 |
| Self-efficacy -> Perceived behavior control | 0.332 | 7.207 | 0.000 |
| Self-efficacy -> Subjective Norm | 0.250 | 4.815 | 0.000 |
| Perceived behavior control -> Social entrepreneurial intention | 0.271 | 4.472 | 0.000 |
| Perceived social support -> Attitudes | 0.196 | 4.050 | 0.000 |
| Perceived social support -> Perceived behavior control | 0.291 | 5.882 | 0.000 |
| Perceived social support -> Subjective Norm | 0.241 | 4.985 | 0.000 |
| Subjective Norm -> Social entrepreneurial intention | 0.259 | 5.096 | 0.000 |

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

 Figure 1 shows that the path coefficients are all positive. This means that the concepts in the proposed model have a positive relationship with each other. Not only that, the P-values in Table 3 show that these relationships are statistically significant. Thus, the research hypotheses proposed in the previous section are accepted. The results demonstrate the role of TPB in explaining behavioral intention, even in the case of social entrepreneurship. Like the study by Phan (2020) and Tiwari et al. (2017a), PBC is the factor with the strongest effect on SEI (β = 0.271) compared to other components of TPB such as ATB (β = 0.215) and SN (β = 0.259). Therefore, in order to help future young entrepreneurs, it is necessary to show them the potential of social enterprise development.



**Figure 1.** SEM results

Outcome expectation has the strongest impact on the respondent’s SN (β = 0.251) compared to ATB and PBC with β of 0.237 and 0.154, respectively. This is in contrast to the study of Phan (2020) when the impact of this factor on SN is the lowest (β = 0.903). The survey subjects of this study are students in two big cities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) and have been trained in social entrepreneurship. Therefore, they have a more realistic view of Social Enterprises and are not too delusional about SEI. Therefore, this is proof that education influences SEI formation.

**Table 4**

The indirect effects

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Variables** | **Social entrepreneurial intention** |
| **Outcome expectation** | 0.158 |
| **Self-efficacy** | 0.216 |
| **Perceived social support** | 0.183 |

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

From the perspective of SCCT theory, this study shows the difference in the formation of behavioral intention between traditional and social enterprises. In the study of Liguori et al. (2020), students’ self-efficacy is shown to have a weaker impact on entrepreneurial intention than their outcome expectation. However, the results in Table 4 show that self-efficacy has a stronger impact on SEI (β = 0.216) than outcome expectation (β = 0.158). Thus, TPB also has a role to change the relationship in SCCT when predicting entrepreneurial intention.

Perceived social support also shows its role for SEI through the TPB model. In stark contrast to the study of Liguori et al. (2020), social support has the weakest impact on ATB compared to other components of SCCT (β = 0.196). However, it has a stronger role for SN (β = 0.241) and PBC (β = 0.291). As a result, its impact on SEI ranks second with β = 0.183 (See Table 4). This means that to increase SEI, raising the community’s awareness of the role of Social Enterprises needs to be concerned.

# 5. Conclusions

TPB is a widely used theory to assess behavioral intention (Phan, 2020). Despite this, TPB has been criticized for its behaviorist approach that ignores individual processes and perceptions (Miles, 2012). Furthermore, this theory does not take into account the interaction between individuals and the environment during the formation of their entrepreneurial intentions (Liguori et al., 2018). Therefore, SCCT is a perfect complement to predicting individual behavioral intentions in the context of social entrepreneurship. However, Phan (2020) believes that the research on SCCT is still incomplete, especially in the combination of TPB and SCCT. This study has shown that the combination of these two theories has produced contradictory results to previous studies, more specifically, it helps to explain more accurately the factors affecting the formation of SEI.

Research results show that PBC is the most important factor of TPB affecting the formation of an individual’s SEI. Similarly, self-efficacy, the component of PBC, is also the factor that has the strongest impact on SEI among the components of SCCT. This shows that it is necessary to strengthen the confidence of future entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills in the field of social enterprises. Social support is also an important factor to consider. Support from the government, from investment funds, and even from people around will help individuals have a favorable view of social enterprises, thereby having an attitude and confidence to engage in SEI formation.

Although this study has produced very promising results, it still has certain limitations. Firstly, this article is limited to surveying students only. Therefore, the results of this study are not representative. Further studies need to expand the research subject to be able to give a more complete view of the proposed research model. Second, it is necessary to debate the results of this study with that of Phan (2020). Although the same survey subjects are students, there is no direct comparison between those who are trained in social enterprises and those who have not. Future research needs to evaluate the mediating role of education and training in the formation of SEI.

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