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A causal relationship model of social entrepreneurial behavior among social entrepreneurs in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing social entrepreneurial behavior (SEB) and to explore the reasons behind the gap between intention and actual behavior. Employing a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, we utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze data collected from 150 social entrepreneurs in Thailand, employing systematic random sampling methods. Our analysis revealed significant findings, demonstrating a positive association between perceived desirability and perceived feasibility with SEB. This suggests that social entrepreneurs, motivated by a strong desire to address social issues and possessing a confident belief in their ability to enact change, are more likely to translate their intentions into concrete actions. Moreover, the study uncovered innovativeness as a crucial mediator in the relationship between perceived desirability and SEB. This implies that social entrepreneurs demonstrating a higher degree of innovative thinking are better equipped to bridge the gap between aspirations and actual social ventures. These findings carry important implications for policymakers and practitioners interested in promoting social entrepreneurship. In sum, this study contributes to the literature on SEB by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing individuals' decisions to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Introduction

The pursuit of societal welfare and the comprehensive well-being of individuals constitute foundational principles within a functional society. Historically, governmental involvement in furnishing social welfare programs to enhance quality of life has been widely recognized. However, the evolving intricacies and gravity of social challenges in numerous nations indicate that governmental intervention alone may prove inadequate in addressing burgeoning issues. Consequently, a more expansive approach has become imperative, giving rise to the advent of a "third sector" committed to addressing social concerns. Within this sector, social entrepreneurs have emerged as formidable agents of constructive transformation.

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Boschee (1998) defines social entrepreneurs, that is, nonprofit executives who focus on market mechanisms but do not lose sight of the social mission behind them. They can solve social problems and meet their needs using new methods. Social entrepreneurs are, therefore, social change agents who use creative social innovations based on ideas and abilities to achieve tangible results in solving social problems by running enterprises to create social impacts (Perrini & Vurro, 2006; Tiwari et al., 2017).

Given social entrepreneurs' unique characteristics as agents of social change, academics have become increasingly interested in studying social entrepreneurship. Particularly, they studied the factors that lead to social entrepreneurship and those that drive the intention to become social entrepreneurs (Hockerts, 2015; Ip et al., 2017). However, to date, no systematic study has examined the factors that motivate individuals to engage in social entrepreneurial behavior (SEB) (Akter et al., 2020).

Although most previous studies focused on the factors that lead to the intention to engage in social entrepreneurship, intention and behavior are not the same. Ajzen (1985) explained that behavioral intention is simply a person's intention to perform a behavior. However, this does not mean that a behavior will actually be performed. Hockerts (2017) argued that it is challenging to observe SEB. This is due to the unclear process of social entrepreneurship. Although intention can be measured immediately, actual SEB can only be observed later. This explains the research gap in the field of social entrepreneurship. Most studies on the emergence of social entrepreneurship have focused on the intentions of populations, especially those who are not yet social entrepreneurs (Ayob et al., 2013; Forster & Grichnik, 2013; Hockerts, 2017; Hossain et al., 2021; Ip et al., 2017; Kedmenec et al., 2015; Syed et al., 2020; Tiwari et al., 2017). Only two studies, Akter et al. (2020) and Ip et al. (2022), have examined the actual SEB of social entrepreneurs or those associated with social enterprises. This study aims to reduce the gap between behavioral intention and actual behavior and to explore the causal factors that lead to SEB.

In Thailand, there is little knowledge about the SEB of social entrepreneurs. However, we believe that it is important to study this issue. This is because Thai society recognizes that social entrepreneurs can help solve and manage social problems. The Social Enterprise Promotion Act was enacted in 2019. The purpose of this act is to promote businesses that have the primary purpose of social development to receive promotions and increase their competitiveness both domestically and internationally. The Office of Social Enterprise Promotion (OSEP) was also established to drive the law into practice. Efforts have been made to promote and support the growth of social entrepreneurs in Thailand.

This study aims to analyze the causal relationship between the factors that originate from SEB among social entrepreneurs in Thailand. It is hoped that this will lead to a clearer understanding of the causal factors that lead to SEB. This will help relevant organizations design policies or activities that promote the causal factors of individuals who will become social entrepreneurs in the future.

Literature Review

Although this study aims to examine SEB, the limitation of the current study is that it mostly focuses on behavioral intention only. Therefore, this study applies the causal factors of behavioral intention to examine SEBs.

The theoretical framework, as previously elucidated by Ajzen (1991), posits that intention to perform a behavior can accurately predict behavior through attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These three factors can manifest clear intentions and behaviors, as evidenced by attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control beliefs. These factors indicate individuals' genuine control over behavior. This framework, termed the Theory of Planned Behavior, is highly effective in explaining human social behavior intricacies.

Scholars interested in studying SEB have further advanced the conceptual framework for explaining the behavior of social entrepreneurs. This development has evolved from the TPB. The model developed by Mair and Noboa (2006) can help us understand social entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors. The model divides the causal factors into four categories: empathy, moral judgment, self-efficacy, and social support. Empathy refers to understanding the feelings of disadvantaged groups. Moral judgment refers to possessing ethical standards that help others. These two factors can be grouped together as the perceived desirability of SEB. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief in one's ability to achieve something. Social support refers to the perception of available resources. These two factors can be grouped according to the perceived feasibility of SEB.

The study of intention is predictive of goal-directed behavior because intention is influenced by underlying factors that shape behavior. Intention serves as a key differentiator between entrepreneurial intention and actions. Additionally, the determinants of intention include perceived feasibility, perceived desirability, social norms, and precipitating events, which are crucial antecedents of intention (Mair & Noboa, 2006). Therefore, individual characteristics and situational factors may not directly impact intention and behavior, but they exert indirect effects through perceived desirability and perceived feasibility.

The relationship between intention and actual behavior among social entrepreneurs is often deemed logical. Nonetheless, there remains a gap between the study of intention and the observed behaviors. Hockerts (2017) points out that observing the behavior of social entrepreneurs presents significant challenges due to the unclear processes involved. While intention can be immediately measured, the actual behaviors of social entrepreneurs are only observable afterward. He suggests that a pathway to understanding and verifying behaviors stemming from genuine entrepreneurial intention is to enroll in courses related to social entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, Akter et al. (2020) explain that while there have been attempts to identify the impact of intention on behavior, much of the research has been conducted among students. Additionally, there is a distinction between the intention and observed behavior, particularly among social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs' behaviors typically involve engaging in activities related to social ventures, whereas studies among students merely predict behavioral tendencies. Hence, this study continues to utilize the framework proposed by Mair and Noboa (2006) to investigate social entrepreneurial behavior (SEB) and to comprehend the underlying causes of SEB. It also aims to review previous studies to determine which factors influence the occurrence of SEB.

Bergner et al. (2022) found that the current study on the intention to engage in social entrepreneurship can be classified into three levels of factors that are the origin of intention: personality, cognition, and entrepreneurial exposition. However, in the study of SEB, more attention should be paid to the psychological perspective. This is because personality traits cannot clearly predict SEB (Akter et al., 2020). In essence, personality is just one piece of the puzzle. A more comprehensive psychological perspective that considers these limitations is needed to understand SEB.

From a review of relevant international research, it is evident that knowledge regarding the intention of social entrepreneurs has been extensively developed and advanced. New frameworks have been applied and proposed, offering significant utility. Components or variables studied include personal characteristics, personal values, personality traits, previous experiences related to social issues, religious beliefs, perception of barriers, perception of group capabilities, and crisis situations (Ayob et al., 2013; Forster & Grichnik, 2013; Himel et al., 2016; Hockerts, 2017; Hossain et al., 2021; Ip et al., 2017; Kedmenec et al., 2015; Tiwari et al., 2017).

Although previous studies have identified several causal factors that can predict the behavior of social entrepreneurial ventures (SEB), this study aims to build upon existing knowledge. Specifically, it seeks to advance the understanding within the academic community by further developing from the behavioral model framework of social entrepreneurs. The model was applied in the studies of Forster and Grichnik (2013) and Hockerts (2017), which helped clarify the causal factors of social entrepreneurial intention. Additionally, the study of Akter et al. (2020) further enhanced our understanding of SEB by adding the factor of individual innovativeness as one of the causal factors. Ip et al. (2022) argued that SEB is causally influenced by empathy and prior experience. These factors were transmitted through self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and perceived social support.

Therefore, this study focuses on the psychological perspective and applies causal factors to SEB, including perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and innovativeness. The details and research hypotheses are as follows:

Perceived Desirability

Shapero and Sokol (1982) define perceived desirability as the perception of the attractiveness of starting a business and the tendency or inclination to do so. Perceived desirability comprises empathy, which is the ability to cognitively perceive, assess, understand, share, and respond to others' emotions. This characteristic differentiates social entrepreneurs from business entrepreneurs (Mohammadi et al., 2019) and motivates them (Kedmenec et al., 2015). Ethical judgment, however, is a moral standard that defines a person's beliefs about the expected and acceptable behavior. Hockerts (2017) suggested that ethical judgment is related to the moral obligations that social entrepreneurs must fulfill. For social entrepreneurs, moral obligation is the desire to help marginalized groups.

H1: Perceived Desirability has a significant influence on SEB.

Perceived Feasibility

Perceived feasibility is the level at which a person believes that they can start a business (Krueger, 1993). This consists of self-efficacy, which is defined as the belief in one's own ability to perform a task. Self-efficacy can enhance a person's confidence and influence their intention to become an entrepreneur (Himel et al., 2016). Social support, on the other hand, is the provision of resources or potential. Mair (2005) found that support from colleagues, friends, and supervisors as well as access to resources had a significant influence on SEB.

H2: Perceived Feasibility has a significant influence on SEB.

Innovativeness

Social entrepreneurship cannot avoid the need for innovativeness as it can be used to create social change and meet social needs (Mair & Marti, 2006; Perrini & Vurro, 2006; Tiwari et al., 2017). Innovativeness is a key characteristic necessary for a social entrepreneurial mindset, as social entrepreneurs need to do things differently using a variety of approaches and methods (Twum et al., 2021). Individuals who engage in innovative activities are more likely to become entrepreneurs, and it is important to develop their future entrepreneurial intentions (Wathanakom et al., 2020). Therefore, innovativeness correlates with SEB (Akter et al., 2020).

H3: Innovativeness has a significant influence on SEB.

Perceived Desirability and Innovativeness

Previous studies have discussed the relationship between perceived desirability and innovativeness, which supports SEB. Individuals with high innovativeness and the desire to solve social problems are more likely to become social entrepreneurs in the future (Ip et al., 2018; Mueller &Thomas, 2001). Syed et al. (2020) found that passion or desire for entrepreneurship can predict innovativeness. Researchers believe that, in the study of SEB, the perception of desire precedes the search for innovativeness. Social entrepreneurs first recognize the desire to solve social problems or help disadvantaged groups and then seek innovative capabilities to help them achieve their goals.

H4: Perceived Desirability and Innovativeness have a significant influence on SEB.

Based on the literature review, a theoretical framework for the causal relationship model of SEB among social entrepreneurs is presented in Figure 1. We hypothesize that multiple causal factors collectively predict SEB of social entrepreneurs. This study hypothesizes that perceived desirability, feasibility, and innovativeness are positively correlated with SEB. In other words, people who believe that SEB is desirable, possible, and innovative are more likely to become social entrepreneurs.

Methodology

Participants

This cross-sectional study investigated the causal relationships between various factors and SEB. This study's population comprised social entrepreneurs in Thailand who were registered as OSEP members. By 2022, there will be 233 people. We used a list of social entrepreneurs as the sampling frame.

The sample size was determined based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010), who stated that the appropriate sample size for structural equation modeling was at least 20 times the number of observed variables in the theoretical framework. This study had seven observed variables. Therefore, the sample size was estimated to be 105–140 people. To account for non-response or incomplete data, an additional 10 participants were included in the sample. Therefore, the total sample size was 150.

The researchers used a systematic random sampling method to select the samples. First, we obtained a list of social entrepreneurs from the OSEP. Systematic random sampling was used to select the samples. The researchers first divided the list of social entrepreneurs into equal segments, and then randomly selected participants from each segment until the desired sample size was reached.

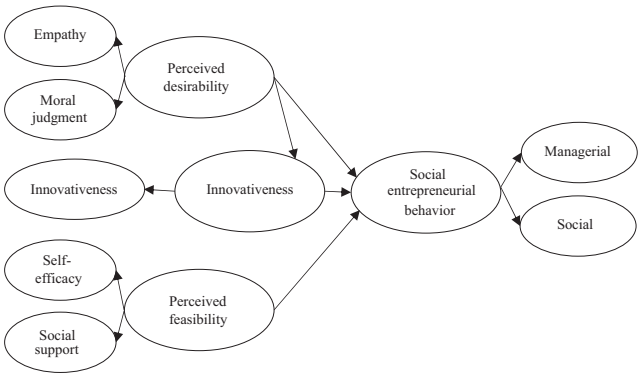

Figure 1 Theoretical framework of causal relationship model of social entrepreneurial behavior among social entrepreneurs in Thailand

Measures

Researchers developed new measurement methods based on their study of concepts, theories, and relevant studies. These measures were developed to suit the social entrepreneurship context in Thailand. This study uses four measures: (1) perceived desirability, (2) perceived feasibility, (3) innovativeness, and (4) SEB.

All measures were Likert-type rating scales with 5 levels, where 1 means "least true" and 5 means "most true." Experts assessed the quality of the measures for content validity using the item objective congruence (IOC) during the development process. In addition, the questionnaire was pretested with 30 social entrepreneurs to determine the reliability of the measures. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate the reliability of the measures, which was found to be in the range of 0.919–0.954, indicating that the measures were reliable and could be used in this study.

The perceived desirability measure has 11 items and the perceived feasibility measure has nine items. The researchers adapted and supplemented the questionnaires from Hockerts (2015), who developed the social entrepreneurial antecedents scale (SEAS) for the components of perceived desirability and feasibility. This scale is based on the concepts and theories of the SEB model (Mair & Noboa, 2006).

The innovativeness measure consists of eight items. This questionnaire was developed based on studies by Wathanakom et al. (2020) and Tu et al. (2021). Example questions include "I often like to try new, innovative, and unusual activities" and "I believe there are always new and better ways of doing things." These items were adapted to suit the context of social entrepreneurs and were tested before implementation.

Data Collection

After the researchers passed the ethical review of the Human Research Ethics Committee, we coordinated with the OSEP to request assistance with data collection. As social entrepreneurs are scattered across every province in Thailand, a variety of data collection methods were used. For example, if social entrepreneurs live in Bangkok and nearby provinces, they will travel to collect data. In cases where social entrepreneurs lived in other provinces, researchers conducted online or telephonic interviews.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure for the structural equation model used structural equation modeling with the support of AMOS version 22.0. The researcher analyzed the distribution characteristics of the variables, including the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. This study has the Unit of Analysis as social enterprise entrepreneurs.

A statistical software program was used to analyze the structural equation model of SEB. We checked the fit between the hypothesized model and empirical data and analyzed the direct and indirect effects of social entrepreneurial behavior. We estimated the parameters using the maximum likelihood (ML) method to analyze the hypothesized model. If the results of the analysis showed that the hypothesized model did not fit the empirical data, the researchers adjusted the model based on theoretical reasons and modification indices to obtain the best-fitting model for the empirical data. We then used statistics to check the goodness of fit of the model.

The researchers used the following indices to check the goodness of fit of the hypothesized model to the empirical data. The chi-square goodness of fit index (χ^2) was not statistically significant or had a probability value greater than 0.05, indicating that the hypothesized model was consistent with the empirical data. The root mean square error of the approximation (RMSEA) was less than or equal to 0.08. The root mean square residue (RMR) was less than or equal to 0.08. The comparative fit index (CFI) was greater than or equal to 0.90. The goodness of fit index (GFI) was greater than or equal to 0.90. The adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) was greater than or equal to 0.90 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000).

Results

Data were collected from 150 social entrepreneurs. When the sample was classified by gender, the majority of social entrepreneurs were male (84 people, 56.00 percent), followed by 66 women (44.00 percent). When the sample was classified by educational level, it was found that the majority of social entrepreneurs had a bachelor's degree or equivalent (81 persons, 54.00 percent), followed by 62 with a degree above bachelor's level (41.30 percent) and 7 with below a bachelor's degree (4.70 percent).

The results of the basic statistical analysis of the observed variables used in the study included mean, standard deviation (*SD*), skewness, and kurtosis. The purpose of this analysis was to examine the distribution of each observed variable. According to the preliminary agreement of structural equation modeling (SEM), it is necessary to check the distribution of the observed variables. The data suitable for analysis using this technique should be normally distributed.

We checked the distribution of the observed variables used in the study and found that the mean values ranged from 3.913 to 4.431. The *SD* range from 0.532 to 0.865. The variable with the smallest distribution was SEB, with a *SD* of 0.532. Social support (SS) had the largest distribution, with a *SD* of 0.865.

The skewness values of the variables were mostly negative and less than 1, which means that the variables were normally distributed with a left skew or the mean was less than the median (Hair et al., 2010). The skewness values ranged from -1.090 to 0.094. The variable with the largest left skew was empathy (EM), with a skewness value of -1.090. The kurtosis values of the variables were mostly negative and less than 3, which means that the variables were normally distributed with less kurtosis than in the normal curve (Hair et al., 2010). The kurtosis values ranged from -0.563 to 2.961. The variable with the smallest kurtosis was innovativeness, with a kurtosis value of -0.563. The variable with the largest kurtosis was empathy (EM), with a value of 2.961.

Overall, the *SD* of the variables used in this study ranged from 0.532 to 0.865, which is less than 1. Therefore, the researchers considered the data suitable for further analysis. This indicated that the data were normally distributed. When considering the skewness and kurtosis values, researchers found that most variables had a skewness of less than 3 and a kurtosis of less than 10, which are acceptable values (Kline, 2010). Therefore, the researchers considered the data suitable and used these variables for further analysis (Table 1).

The results of the correlation coefficient analysis between the seven observed variables used in the structural equation model of SEB showed that the correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the .05 and .01 levels (Table 2).

Table 1 Examine the distribution of the observed variables

(n = 150)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	*SD*	*Sk*	*Ku*
1. Social entrepreneurial behavior (SEB)	4.111	0.532	0.094	-0.454
1.1 Managerial competencies (MC)	4.431	0.558	-0.811	0.560
1.2 Social competencies (SC)	4.179	0.588	-0.416	0.146
2. Perceived desirability (PD)	4.273	0.558	-0.427	-0.304
2.1 Empathy (EM)	4.142	0.718	-1.090	2.961
2.2 Moral judgment (MO)	4.431	0.558	-0.811	0.560
3. Perceived feasibility (PF)	3.960	0.651	-0.280	0.335
3.1 Self-efficacy (SE)	3.997	0.761	-0.535	-0.225
3.2 Social support (SS)	3.913	0.865	-0.646	0.100
4. Innovativeness (IN)	3.933	0.777	-0.282	-0.563

Notes: SEB = Social entrepreneurial behavior, PD = Perceived desirability, PF = Perceived feasibility, MC = Managerial competencies, SC = Social competencies, EM = Empathy, MO = Moral judgment, SE = Self-efficacy, SS = Social support, IN = Innovativeness.

Table 2 Mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient between the observed variables in the model

Variables	MC	SC	EM	MO	SE	SS	IN
MC	1						
SC	.473**	1					
EM	.397**	.422**	1				
MO	.191*	.255**	.297**	1			
SE	.324**	.256**	.769**	.301**	1		
SS	.473**	.847**	.422**	.255**	.256**	1	
IN	.388**	.523**	.648**	.356**	.623**	.523**	1
M	4.14	4.43	3.99	3.91	3.93	4.43	4.18
SD	0.718	0.558	0.761	0.865	0.777	0.558	0.588

Notes: *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

When considering the model fit before adjustment, the model performance index was considered, and no value met the criteria. χ^2/df = 9.009, df = 5, p value = .000, RMSEA = 0.232, RMR = 0.101, CFI = 0.832, GFI = 0.853, and AGFI = 0.588. Therefore, the model did not fit the empirical data. In this case, the researchers adjusted the model by considering theoretical possibilities and using the model modification index (MI) as a guide to adjust the model until it fit the empirical data. Model adjustment pertains to refining the initial model to attain a more suitable alignment between the model and the collected data. A well-fitting model suggests that the theoretical relationships closely correspond with the observed data.

The results of the analysis of the causal model of SEB after model adjustment by checking the accuracy of the structural equation model showed that the SEB structural equation model was in good fit with the empirical data, as evidenced by χ^2 = 4.579, df = 5, χ^2/df = 0.916, p value = 0.469, RMSEA = 0.000, RMR = 0.026, CFI = 1.000, GFI = 0.991, and AGFI = 0.951 all of which meet the specified criteria.

The analysis of the causal relationship of SEB after model adjustment showed that the perceived desirability (PD) variable from the components of empathy (EM) and moral judgment (MO) had values of 0.88 and 0.36, respectively. The perceived feasibility (PF) variable from the components of self-efficacy (SE) and social support (SS) had values of 0.68 and 0.38, respectively. The innovativeness (IN) variable has only one component. PD, PF and innovativeness (IN) can collectively predict SEB by 52.9 percent. Considering the standardized values of the total effects (TE) of each observed variable, the TE of each observed variable were divided into direct effects (DE) and indirect effects (IE), as follows: Figure 2 and Table 3.

The direct effect from PD to innovativeness (IN) had a value of 0.735, which was statistically significant at a 0.01 level. This indicates that PD has a direct effect on SEB. The direct effect from PD to SEB had a direct effect value of 0.250, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that PD has a direct effect on SEB. The direct effect from PF to SEB had a direct effect value of 0.230, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that PF has a direct effect on SEB. The direct effect from innovativeness (IN) to SEB had a direct effect value of 0.255, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that innovativeness has a direct effect on SEB. The indirect effect of PD on SEB had an indirect effect of 0.187, which was statistically significant at the .05 level. This indicates that perceived desire has an indirect effect on SEB.

The results of the analysis of the causal relationship model of SEB with parameter estimates and statistical values in the SEB structural equation model show that the PD variable, PF variable, and innovativeness (IN) variables all have an effect on SEB. In particular, the PD variable had the greatest direct effect on SEB, with an influence coefficient of 0.437. The PD variable, which is transmitted through innovative capacity, has the greatest indirect effect on SEB, with an influence coefficient of 0.735 (Table 4).

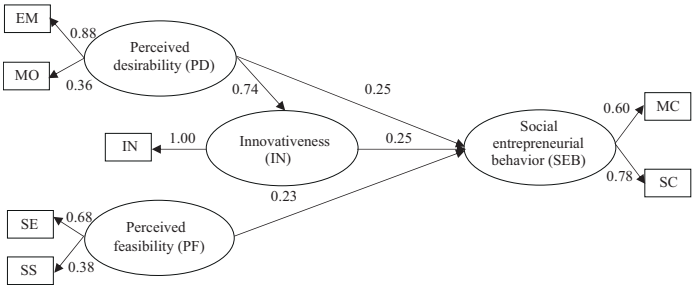

Figure 2 The causal relationship model of social entrepreneurial behavior

Table 3 Direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect of the SEB model

Variables	R^2	Effect	Variables		
			PD	PF	IN
IN	0.541	DE	.735**	-	-
		IE	-	-	-
		TE	.735**	-	-
SEB	0.529	DE	.250*	.230*	.255*
		IE	.187*	-	-
		TE	.437*	.230*	.255*

Notes: DE = Direct Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, TE = Total Effect. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Table 4 Parameter estimates and statistics in the model

Independent → Dependent Variables	Parameter estimates (b/Beta)	*SE* (b)	*t*
PD → SEB	0.437/0.437	0.217	2.014*
PF → SEB	0.230/0.230	0.117	1.966*
IN → SEB	0.255/0.255	0.129	1.976*
PD → IN	0.735/0.735	0.074	9.932**

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01.

Discussion

This study investigated the factors influencing Social Entrepreneurial Behavior (SEB). The findings reveal three key direct influences: Perceived Desirability (PD), Perceived Feasibility (PF), and Innovativeness.

Perceived Desirability (PD), encompassing empathy and moral judgment, significantly impacts SEB. Individuals with strong empathy tend to have a positive attitude towards social entrepreneurship, driven by a desire to help others and a sense of ethical obligation (Akter et al., 2020; Ip et al., 2022; Kedmenec et al., 2015; Mohammadi et al., 2019). This aligns with Kickul and Lyons' (2020) description of social entrepreneurs who believe in justice and equality, aligning with the social mission of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, Hockerts (2017) highlights the role of moral judgment in driving the ethical obligation to assist marginalized groups, further contributing to PD's influence on SEB (Tiwari et al., 2017).

Perceived Feasibility (PF), consisting of self-efficacy and social support, also significantly influences SEB. Individuals who believe in their skills and potential are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions (Mohammadi et al., 2019). High self-efficacy enhances confidence and impacts entrepreneurial progress (Himel et al., 2016), aligning with previous research (Akter et al., 2020; Hockerts, 2017; Hossain et al., 2021; Ip et al., 2022). Social support, another component of PF, is crucial for building trust and credibility (Akter et al., 2020; Hockerts, 2017; Hossain et al., 2021; Ip et al., 2022). Social entrepreneurs rely on social support networks for collaboration and development (Ip et al., 2017; Mair, 2005; Prabhu, 1999). Therefore, PF fosters confidence by recognizing individual abilities, social capital, and support systems, ultimately influencing the decision to pursue a social enterprise.

Innovativeness, the ability to generate new ideas and approaches, also significantly impacts SEB. As highlighted by Akter et al. (2020), innovativeness is essential for tackling social problems through novel solutions. This finding aligns with previous research demonstrating a positive link between innovativeness and social entrepreneurial intentions (Law & Breznik, 2017; Tu et al., 2021; Twum et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurs require creativity and the ability to think outside the box to develop innovative solutions for social good.

Furthermore, the study reveals a significant indirect effect of PD on SEB mediated by innovativeness. Individuals with strong PD, driven by empathy and a desire to make a difference, are likely to leverage their innovativeness to identify opportunities and develop impactful solutions, ultimately leading to SEB. This aligns with research by Ip et al. (2018), and Mueller and Thomas (2001), suggesting that a combination of high innovativeness and a desire to solve social problems increases the likelihood of pursuing social entrepreneurship. Additionally, Syed et al. (2020) found that innovativeness mediates the relationship between passion and entrepreneurial intention. In essence, PD, coupled with innovativeness, motivates individuals to seek opportunities and new ideas, ultimately leading to SEB. Additionally, the examination of the Innovativeness variable introduced herein sheds light on the theoretical development in the behavioral aspect of social entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the key factors influencing SEB in Thailand. The findings highlight the importance of empathy, moral judgment, self-efficacy, social support, and innovativeness for aspiring social entrepreneurs. By fostering these qualities and leveraging Thailand's unique cultural context, the social enterprise movement can continue to play a significant role in addressing social challenges and promoting sustainable development in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Factors related to SEB include PD, PF, and innovativeness. Currently, limited data are available on this topic. However, the results of empirical studies on a group of social entrepreneurs help bridge the gap between the intention to engage in social entrepreneurship and actual behavior. In the case of Thailand, which focuses on growth in the number of social entrepreneurs, promoting the factors that were found to be related in this study would lead to an increase in the number of people interested in becoming social entrepreneurs.

This study leads to the following proposals for the development of SEB in Thailand: To promote the development of social entrepreneurs, organizations involved in social entrepreneurship incubation, such as the OSEP, should organize training programs that focus on creating entrepreneurs with social empathy and moral judgment. This will help entrepreneurs create social goals and missions that can be achieved through the performance of social entrepreneurship roles. OSEP should also promote the access of social entrepreneurs and organizations interested in

developing social enterprises to resources such as capital, networks, and counseling. This increases the possibility of promoting SEB by driving the Social Enterprise Promotion Fund. OSEP should also promote innovation culture at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. This can be achieved by supporting creativity, experimentation with new business models and processes, and projects supported by the public or private sectors. This will help to promote innovation in existing social enterprises and develop new innovations in the future.

Limitations and Suggestions

This study's generalizability may be limited to a broader population because it focused on social entrepreneurs in Thailand who were registered as members of OSEP. If the sample was not representative or if it was limited in size or demographics, it could affect the study's applicability to other populations. Future research could improve by recruiting a more diverse sample across various regions, age groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

While the discussion section briefly addressed Thailand's social enterprise landscape, a more thorough investigation into the cultural and institutional factors unique to Thailand could enhance the study. This could entail employing qualitative research methods such as interviews with social entrepreneurs to gain insight into their motivations and challenges.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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