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The Effect of Personality Traits On Social Entrepreneurship Intentions: A Field Research

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Abstract

Research conducted on personality, entrepreneurship and the intentions of individuals towards entrepreneurship has been a widely debated topic recently, both within academia and among business circles. The purpose of this study is to examine social entrepreneurship and personality within a theoretical context and to implement a field study about the subject. In the field study; we have tried to reach students of Business Administration in Istanbul that are taking applied entrepreneurship classes in order to assess students' personality traits and of those students that show intention towards social entrepreneurship by studying the relationships between personal characteristics and their intention towards social entrepreneurship. By examining the obtained information from personal characteristics and which aspects of social entrepreneurship they influence; we have tried to identify, students that have certain personal characteristics that are more inclined to be candidates for social entrepreneurship which personal characteristics should be encouraged among students that are candidates of social entrepreneurship in order for them to establish successful social enterprises and to generate suggestions on which aspects of social entrepreneurship these candidate students must focus on.

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1. Introduction

Poverty, lack of clean water, insufficient education opportunities, environmental problems, problems relating to women, child labor, death of employees, problems arising from armed conflicts and wars, plague, insufficient medical treatment, unemployment, increase in crime amongst youth, environmental disasters are common problems suffered not only by undeveloped or developing countries but by almost all countries in the world (Praszkie, Nowak, 2012). Ongoing systems are inefficient to solve these problems. Therefore new and innovative systems and paradigms are highly needed for creating solutions, which social entrepreneurs try to produce.

Personality can be defined as sui generis reflection of factors effecting the emotions, thoughts and behaviors of an individual. Personality is under perpetual influence of inner and outer factors and consists of physical, intellectual, spiritual, generic and learned capabilities, instincts, emotions, desires, habits, way of thinking and any kind of behavior such as perception and attention. In this respect, when personality of a person is evaluated, it can be stated that the personality reflects not only the traits of such individual but also the traits of the society and the group of such individual and all human kind at certain level.

The effects of personality traits on entrepreneurship drive have long been discussed and consensus has not yet been reached on this issue. The effects of personality as a whole on entrepreneurship drive a recent discussion matter. This field research tries to find the effects of personality on social entrepreneurship intentions among the Business Administration students participating on applied entrepreneurship classes in Istanbul.

2. Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship may be defined as an innovative, sustainable hence permanent problem solving process conducted by an entrepreneur who becomes aware of a social problem. In this respect, similar to profit oriented entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are persons who can identify the opportunities, assess such opportunities with innovative methods, take risks and as a result achieve benefits. However, the fundamental difference between profit oriented entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs is that, as indicated in the vision of their companies social entrepreneurs seek to achieve a social value and profit making is a derivative product of their activities (Dees, Elias, 1998).

Leadbeater (1997) defines social entrepreneurship as use of return of the social entrepreneurship activities for social goals rather than monetary profit or use of profit arising from the business activities for the benefit of a social group who has social problems. According to Drayton (2002) social entrepreneurs are change agents who focus on locating, identifying and resolving social problems. According to Tan et al. (2005) social entrepreneurship is sharing the whole or part of the risk taken by an innovative entrepreneurship and the profit obtained as a result of such risk with the social group that is actively participating to the entrepreneurship. Mair and Marti (2006) define social entrepreneurship as a process of identifying the opportunities and in view of such opportunities gathering the resources in an innovative method in order to solve social problems, achieve social change and meet social needs, whereas according to Koe Hwee Nga and Shamuganathan (2010) social entrepreneurs are persons founding and maintaining the entrepreneurship activities which make innovative and self sufficient financial return by structuring social networks in a sustainable manner in view of a social vision. Social entrepreneurship may also be defined as aiming to increase income by using the tools of profit oriented entrepreneurs without disregarding the fundamental social mission of the business. This study is based on the social entrepreneurship definition of Koe Hwee Nga and Shamuganathan (2010).

The studies made in this field reveal that the concept of social entrepreneurship is defined by different dimensions and such dimensions form sub dimensions amongst them (Praszkie, Novak, 2012). The social entrepreneurship definitions introduced by science people and its dimensions vary depending on the types of problems which social entrepreneurs aim to solve.

Peredo and Mclean (2006) states that social entrepreneurs should only seek to achieve social value. Scholars believe that social entrepreneurs should see the opportunities take risks by creating new resources to use these opportunities and continue the social entrepreneurship process in an innovative manner. In view of this definition, Peredo and Mc Lean emphasize the following dimensions of social entrepreneurship: identification of a social problem, being innovative and capability of taking risks.

Ashoka organization defines social entrepreneurs as persons conducting high quality and large scale activities with ethical values and use of an innovative perspective to solve fundamental social problems (Güler 2010). This definition puts forward the identification of social problems, innovation, ethical, working in broad scale dimensions of social entrepreneurship.

Social vision is deemed as the principal and fundamental matter differentiating social entrepreneurship from other types of entrepreneurships (Güler, 2010). The identifying the problems and targeting to solve such problems when the public and private sector fails to achieve social balance constitutes the social mission dimension of social entrepreneurship. The experiences which the social entrepreneurs had been though in their past constitutes the reason why social entrepreneurs aim to solve social problems or why social entrepreneurs realize the social problems easily compared to other people. Especially people who confronted problems in their childhood or youth have the tendency to prefer solving the social imbalance over financial income (Hwee Nga, Shamuganathan, 2010). However, the main factor differentiating the vision of social entrepreneurs and charity activities is the fact that social entrepreneurs aim to get to the bottom of the problem and target to create a long lasting process for resolution thereof (Güler, 2010).

Natural resources are one of the main production factors of enterprises. These resources are rapidly exhausting due to increase of population and consumption of energy in daily life and in industry (Arıkboğa, 2013). Accepting the nature and society as the main factors of development process is one of the methods used by social entrepreneurs to increase the benefits of its shareholders. One of the characteristics which differs social entrepreneurs from profit oriented entrepreneurs and government is making added value for the benefit of greater part of the society and being environmentally sensitive. Social entrepreneurs aiming to protect the quality of life and nature may create new social values by prioritizing the conscious innovations (Hwee Nga, Shamuganathan, 2010).

Social networks are crucial to entrepreneurs since they provide valuable information, work source, innovation, financial and personal support. Today, the importance of social networks for social entrepreneurs clearly becomes evident as they provide access to larger part of society. When the communication channels between the social entrepreneurs are open, the trust amongst themselves increases, the social needs can be openly and easily stated and resolutions can be found out. The social entrepreneur collaborating and conjoining its resources with other entrepreneurs in its environment will accelerate the share of information which in turn will enhance its reputation in the society and will contribute to its own organization and others partaking in its social network (Hwee Nga, Shamuganathan, 2010).

It has been discussed that social entrepreneurs may only meet the need they have identified in the society by following an innovative approach. The rationale behind this statement lies in the fact that implementing minor enhancements does not serve the purpose of resolving the problems at their source. As per many of the scholars one of the crucial and leading factors of social entrepreneurship is innovation (Praszkie, Novak 2012). It is also stated innovative approach is important for social entrepreneurship as the targeted market is different compared to other entrepreneurships. The targeted market of social entrepreneurs is those considered as insufficient for profit making by other entrepreneurs (thus those which do not attract such entrepreneurs) generally consisting of lower class income groups. Therefore, implementing innovative approaches is indispensable for social entrepreneurs for entry into and sustainment of activities in such markets (Hwee Nga, Shamuganathan, 2010).

The enterprises need monetary income to continue their activities. If the monetary income is not sufficient the enterprises cannot survive and conduct business in the long term. Social entrepreneurs also include profit making goal to their entrepreneurship activities to meet the social needs in an innovative manner. However, distinctive from other entrepreneurs, profit making goal of social entrepreneurs is not for their own benefit. For a social entrepreneur profit, is a tool which is required for realizing their goals and subsist (Marangoz, 2012). Today, the wish for conducting income generating activities to maintain sustainability of creating social benefit is considered as an important factor in the evolution of conventional non-profit organizations to social entrepreneurship (Güler, 2010).

3. Personality

Personality is a concept that many disciplines are interested in evaluating. According to Burger (2006) personality is an interpersonal process and consistent behavior patterns inherent to the individual himself. Another personality definition is introduced by Gordon Allport. Allport defines personality as “dynamic organization inherent in an individual who possesses psychological systems determining original patterns whilst adopting to its environment (Robbins, Judge, 2012). Mount et al. (2005) define personality as integrated traits determining the reasons of emotional, cognitive and behavioral patterns, bearing traces of psychological characteristics and revealing who person is.

One of the most common methods, used to define personality traits is the Big Five Personality Model. The model was introduced by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae in 1985 and then continued by the studies of different researchers focused on different nationalities and different personality traits. Surprisingly, throughout these researches evidence were found supporting the statement that personality has five dimensions. Therefore five factors revealed almost invariably in all researches led to naming this study as “Five Factor Model” or “Big Five Personality Model”. The names of five factors are known as neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness (Burger, 2006; Costa, McCrae, 1992). Evaluation of these factors is important to understand the personality traits of “Social Entrepreneurs” which is discussed below.

Neuroticism is a factor showing a person’s balance in terms of their emotions (Burger, 2006; Llewellyn, Wilson, 2003). There are many negative emotions such as anger, sadness and anxiety etc. The researches reveal that people who have the tendency of feeling such emotions are also inclined to have sudden emotional swings, and suffer from depression and lack of self-confidence. Social entrepreneurship in its nature focuses on resolving people’s problems. Throughout this process, similar to profit oriented entrepreneurs the pressure of establishing a new business is confronted by social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs are expected to be less neurotic whilst confronting such pressure.

Extroverted persons are warm, positive and sociable in their relationships. However, introverted people who do not possess these traits should not be seen antisocial and not energetic. According to Costa and McCrea introverted people are not cold but timid, not observer but independent and not lazy but cautious (Costa, McCrea 1992; Lewellyn, Wilson, 2003). In addition, it is claimed that people whose extraverted traits are dominant approach to incidents from a positive angle, energetic, dominant, assertive and more interested in others whereas introverted people are timid, calm and they prefer solitude (Basım et al., 2009).

It can be concluded that entrepreneurs are more extroverted compared to managers (Nordvik, Brovold, 1998). As a result, being outgoing has positive impact on success of entrepreneurships (Caliendo, Kritikos, 2008). However, it is also determined that extroverted have high expectations for reward (Zhao, Seibert, 2006). This issue explains the fact that extraversion personality trait have unclear impact on organizational citizenship and entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs attend to problems they aim to solve in a determined mind. Therefore, it can be stated that social entrepreneurs’ extraversion personality trait should be at high level (Hwee Nga, Shamuganathan, 2010). People may not disclose their problems to others if they do establish a mutual trust relationship. Moreover, it is important for social entrepreneurs to be involved in activities which require high level of social skills such as

establishing teams who believe in problem solving and sponsors. It may be expected from extroverted people to be more interested in and successful at the following matters of social entrepreneurship activities: social networks, sustainability, creating financial income through activities which require good personal relationships such as sales and marketing, creating new sources etc.

The traits which constitute openness trait are imagination, will to accept new ideas, versatile thinking and curiosity. People who get higher scores at openness dimension are untraditional and independent thinkers. The innovative and extraordinary way of thinking of such people make them bored of current situation and others blame them to be selfish (Burger, 2006). Costa and McCrae (1997), state that openness is the broadest concept which comprises of experience and art. Traditional and conservative people are claimed to have low level of openness personality trait (Çivitçi, Arıoğlu, 2012).

Openness is usually considered together with the ability to take risks. The ability to take risks is considered to be one of the fundamental traits of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur is defined as a person gathering and organizing production factors and aiming to get profit in return for the risk he/she has taken. However social entrepreneurship is social oriented process rather than profit oriented process. Financial income should be considered as one of tools used for achieving the target of resolving a social problem.

As a result, the outcome of the activities conducted in social entrepreneurship is obtained after a longer period of time compared to normal entrepreneurship. In this respect the social entrepreneurs are expected to be patient. Since open people are seen as people also seeking for adventure and innovation they may be considered are successful at identifying a social problem, may aim to serve the purpose with existing sources (such as conducting charity activities) and who are inclined to work in short term social help projects. It may be foreseen that people whose openness personality trait is dominant are unlikely to participate in long term social entrepreneurship activities that require effort and result of which would likely take relatively a longer period of time.

Conscientiousness dimension reveal how a person has control and discipline. People who score higher in this dimension are organized, determined, and act as planned. Therefore they are highly rule-bound and perfectionist in their works (Burger, 2006:254). The principal traits of conscientiousness dimension are considered as leadership, goal-orientation, productiveness and determination (Çivitçi, Arıoğlu, 2012). Higher levels of conscientiousness should play a central role in the entrepreneur's ability to lead his/her enterprise to long-term survival (Ciaverella et al., 2004). In working environment there people are considered as people who obey the procedures and instructions and who timely perform their works. As regards the Turkish culture where people have the tendency to obtain monetary income and avoid uncertainties (Hisrich, 2013), people who have high level of conscientiousness would be expected to have less drive for social entrepreneurship.

People who score high at agreeableness dimension are helpful, trustworthy and affectionate agreeable people prefer cooperation over competition. Agreeable people try to avoid fights and create stress-free environments to work (Burger, 2006). Being a good listener, ability to show empathy are the traits of an agreeable person (Caliendo, Kritikos, 2008). It is also possible to conclude that agreeable people act in a devoted and modest manner. In addition, agreeableness is stated to be in contrast relationship with confrontation and competition and in parallel relationship with cooperation and mediation and agreeable people try to resolve conflicts in a constructive way (Basım et al., 2009).

Stakeholders of social entrepreneurs should empathize especially with the people suffering from problems that entrepreneurs aim to resolve. In this regard, agreeableness may be considered as the most important personality trait for social entrepreneurship drive, sustainment of social entrepreneurship and efficient use of the human resources.

4. Research

4.1. Methodology

The study was conducted on Business Administration students who are taking applied entrepreneurship classes at various universities in Istanbul. The main reason for determining the study group in this way, is the assumption that, applied entrepreneurship, as an elective subject, would be selected by students who have tendency for entrepreneurship, and these students would be more familiar with business management concepts compared to students who study in other departments. With this aim, KOSGEB which supports applied entrepreneurship training in universities in Istanbul was contacted however the exact number of students who study applied entrepreneurship couldn't be attained. As a result of the research, depending on the assumption that the number of students studying the subject in Istanbul is 1000, with 99% reliability and 0.10% error margin, the sampling is made up of 88 students. As a result of the study, 197 students were reached.

Due to timing, finance and restrictions, convenience sampling method was preferred. Another restriction in the study is the fact that results of personality evaluation vary greatly from case to case. However, this problem is considered as common feature of all personality evaluation tests.

In the empirical analysis, the relationship between Personality Traits and Social Entrepreneurship Intentions is examined. And the hypothesis of the study is constructed on this relationship. In this case, the dependent variable is "social entrepreneurship intentions" and the independent variable is "personality traits".

H₁: There exists a relationship between personality traits and social entrepreneurship intentions.

The Scales used in the study are originally from the research proposed by Hwee Nga and Shamuganathan (2010). Five scale Likert is used in the survey analysis to obtain the data.

4.2. Empirical Results

The data obtained from the surveys is used in the analyses of factor analysis, correlation and regression.

The principal component method and varimax rotation is employed to determine the significant variables using factor analysis in addition to this the Cronbach Alpha Values are obtained using reliability analysis. Then the correlation analysis is utilized to determine the relationship among the factors and also the multiple regression analysis is used to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

According to the results of reliability analysis, the value of Cronbach Alpha is found as 0.91 for the scale of personality and found as for the scale of social entrepreneurship 0.94 which made both scales reliable (Altunışık et al., 2007).

On the other hand, the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test are obtained as 0,876 and 0,920 for the scale of the personality and scale of Social entrepreneurship, respectively. Both of the values are greater the 5% so the two scales are appreciate fort the factor analysis.

Five factors are specified for the personality measurement; the first factor explains 38.576%, second factor 7.655%, third factor 6,144%, fourth factor 5.072% and fifth factor 4.542% of personality traits. The five factors explain together 61.89% personality of the whole subjects. After examining the questions, it is detected that the first factor is "consciousness", the second factor is "Agreeableness", third factor is "Extraversion", fourth factor is "Openness" and the fifth factor is "Neuroticism". For the social entrepreneurship intentions three factors are specified. The first factor explains 45.386%, second factor 8.538% and the third factor 5.959% of the subjects, respectively. The three factors explain together 59.883% of the social entrepreneurship intentions of the subjects.

After examining questions, it is detected that the first factor is “Use of Resources”, second factor “Social Vision” and the third factor “Financial Returns”.

The correlation matrix of the factors is presented in Table 1. According to the correlation matrix, all of the variables are statistically significant at the 1% level and positive.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

	Use of Resources	Financial Returns	Social Vision	Neuroticism	Openness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Consciousness
Use of Resources	1							
Financial Returns	0,594	1						
Social Vision	0,716	0,452	1					
Neuroticism	0,561	0,404	0,459	1				
Openness	0,479	0,328	0,521	0,62	1			
Extraversion	0,567	0,475	0,483	0,655	0,584	1		
Agreeableness	0,511	0,409	0,477	0,513	0,513	0,541	1	
Consciousness	0,478	0,375	0,445	0,598	0,571	0,62	0,46	1

All of the correlation coefficients statistically significant at the 1% level

Firstly, the factors of social vision, use of resources and financial returns are handled as a single variable (Y) using arithmetic average and also the factors of neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, extraversion and consciousness are handled as a single variable (X) using arithmetic average. Thus the variables for the regression analysis are obtained as the following form:

$$X = (\text{neuroticism} + \text{openness} + \text{agreeableness} + \text{extraversion} + \text{consciousness}) / 5$$

$$Y = (\text{use of resources} + \text{social vision} + \text{financial returns}) / 3$$

The results of the regression analysis are presented in the Table 2.

As seen Table 2. the independent variable (Personality) is a significant variable at 5% level so personality traits is an efficient factor on the social entrepreneurship intention. Moreover we find out the model is generally significant at the 5% level through F-test.

Table 2. Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficients
Personality	0,675*
Constant	0,857*
F-Statistic	162,890*
R ²	0,455
Adjusted R ²	0,452

*p<0,05

Then we estimate multiple regression models which the dependent variables are “social vision”, “financial returns” and “use of resources” respectively. In these multiple regression models the independent variables are neuroticism, openness, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented at the Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the multiple regression analysis

	Social Entrepreneurship Dimensions					
	Social vision Model 1		Financial Returns Model 2		Use of Resources Model 3	
	Coefficients	Probability	Coefficients	Probability	Coefficients	Probability
Personality Traits						
Neuroticism	0,061	0,509	0,117	0,275	0,241*	0,007*
Openness	0,241*	0,002*	-0,042	0,646	0,057	0,449
Extraversion	0,132	0,132	0,311*	0,003*	0,23*	0,006*
Agreeableness	0,18*	0,005*	0,182*	0,015*	0,185*	0,003*
Conscientiousness	0,096	0,255	0,084	0,39	0,078	0,333
<i>Constant</i>	0,828*	0,005*	1,086*	0,002*	0,642*	0,022*
Adjusted R²	0,359		0,249		0,409	

The empirical results belong to Model 1 display that “openness” and “agreeableness” variables are statistically significant at the 5% level and support that these two variables are efficient and have a positive effect on the “social vision”.

The empirical results belong to Model 2 show that “extraversion” and “agreeableness” variables are statistically significant at the 5% level and support that these two variables are efficient and have a positive effect on the “financial returns”.

The empirical results belong to Model 3 display that “neuroticism”, “extraversion” and “agreeableness” variables are statistically significant at the 5% level and support that these two variables are efficient and have a positive effect on the “use of resources”.

5. Conclusion

The relationship between personality and social entrepreneurship tendency is examined on this study. Hence, social entrepreneurship and personality with their various aspects and in relation to each other are dealt with.

According to the answers given on the survey to questions identifying demographic characteristics; of the participants 41.6% (82) were female, 58.4% (115) were male and the average age of the participants was 22.86.

Among the students that participated in the survey, within individuals showing high levels of compatibility, analysis showed that they had positive relations to dimensions of social vision, financial returns and use of resources that were set before them. It can be said that the hypothesis of the relation of having the personal characteristic of compatibility and particularly having empathy is related in developing successful human relations has generated an expected result.

Among the students that participated in the survey, individuals showing high levels of extraversion in their personality traits, a positive relation between the aspects of social entrepreneurs financial returns and use of resources was seen. There was no significant correlation found between another aspect “social vision”, and extraversion.

It is hypothesized that the personality trait of extraversion carries very high importance in economically sustaining a social enterprise, in finding stakeholders such as clients and investors within the aspect of financial returns in order to sustain the activities of social enterprises. It could be said that high levels of extraversion also plays a part, within the aspect of use of resources by; establishing social networks, utilizing existing social networks effectively and efficiently to sustain the activities of an enterprise, finding volunteers to work in such projects and successfully establishing co-operations with other social enterprises. However, it is thought that in individuals showing high levels of extraversion, characteristics such as receiving praise, likeability, and high expectations of rewards that are conceptually related; turn out to have no relation with the social vision aspect of social entrepreneurship which is assumed to require patience when expecting results and is usually disregarded by a large part of society. In this regard, instead of counseling extroverts to become social entrepreneurs on their own, it is thought that encouraging them to actively participate in a social enterprise or encouraging them to join a team in social entrepreneurial activities will be better for extrovert individuals that establish social enterprises and for them to obtain their goals.

The personal trait of openness can be defined as individuals searching for new experiences and can also be described as having a disposition towards activities that are perceived as adventures. In this regard these individuals are thought to be able to identify a social disparity and that they have an inclination to develop ideas for the solution of a problem. However, setting out from the hypothesis that social entrepreneurial activities require long periods of devoted work and time to get results, it can be said that individuals showing high levels of openness can get bored of social entrepreneurial activities. Because of this, it is assumed that directing individuals seeking new experiences towards short term projects rather than long term projects or directing them towards charitable activities will result in more productivity.

In a way, the process of social entrepreneurship can be viewed as a process of “problem solving”. The goal of the enterprise can be seen as finding a solution to a social problem. In this regard, it can be assumed that individuals that can be quickly demoralized when faced with problems, especially when it is considered that society may not support these kinds of activities in some cases, cannot sustain social entrepreneurial activities. Taking this into account, it can be said that people who are emotionally stable can be successful in establishing the social networks of the social enterprise, and can maintain external relationships of the enterprise successfully.

In this study, there was no significant relationship found between the characteristic of consciousness and social entrepreneurship. It is thought that the perception of social entrepreneurship being innovative and hard to relate to when seen from a conservative point of view, individuals that come from the middle class in regards to socio-economic status having high levels of financial concern, fails to relate a meaningful relationship for individuals that have high compatibility and an inclination towards social entrepreneurship. In this regard, it can be said that utilizing individuals showing high levels of consciousness for the more effective promotion of social entrepreneurial processes, for them to explain that within these types of activities, innovative points of view are a part of the process, rather than the goal and in order to attain social balance it is beneficial to create an encompassing participation within society.

As a result of this study it was seen that there could be more studies done concerning; the relationship between leadership-social entrepreneurship, the identification of aspects that influence the intentions towards social

entrepreneurship other than personality, the organizational commitment of social enterprise employees and management strategies of existing social enterprises. It is thought that studying the subject of social entrepreneurship at the university level, educating and encouraging the public on the subject of social entrepreneurship and supporting existing social enterprises will be beneficial to the science of business management.

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