

Development of a conceptual model to understand international social entrepreneurship and its application in the Ugandan context

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Abstract While the concept of social entrepreneurship is relatively new, initiatives that employ entrepreneurial capacities to solve social problems have existed throughout history. In this paper, the factors explaining international social entrepreneurial behavior are investigated. The key argument is that behavioral potential, which is at the cognitive level, is influenced by an individual's perceptions toward social enterprise venturing. These perceptions could be related to feasibility, desirability, or propensity to act, among others. Personal, sociological, and environmental variables are linked to decision making through these perceptions. This research is based on literature review and case studies. The analysis indicates that individuals' perceptions or attitudes can explain aspects of their international social entrepreneurial potential. Areas for future research are discussed.

Keywords International social entrepreneurship · Social enterprise · Perceived feasibility · Perceived desirability · Propensity to act · Uganda

Introduction

In recent years, social entrepreneurship as an innovative tool in the market, harnessing its wealth-generating powers to serve disadvantaged social groups and

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achieve social transformation, has attracted attention of non-profit-making organizations, philanthropists, and academics. Various scholars argue that social entrepreneurship helps disadvantaged persons in society break away from their unprivileged positions (Alvord et al. 2004; Brown and Covey 1987; Kortzen 1980), serves as a potential device for poverty alleviation (Bornstein 2004; Krishna et al. 1997; Taub 1988), is a solution to unemployment or discrimination in the labor market (Fairlie 2005; Glazer and Moynihan 1970) or a tool for the social inclusion of minority groups (Anderson et al. 2006a, b; Fairlie and Meyer 1996; Maher 1999; Mata and Pendakur 1999; Pavey 2006).

However, despite the growth and role of social entrepreneurship, vast researches in this area have tended to concentrate on the native country perspective, thus giving little attention to the international perspective. The importance of international entrepreneurship in general has increased (Butler et al. 2010). There is growing evidence that the global world empowers every individual, corporation, organization, and government entity to make an international impact. Markets, nation states, and technologies are deeply entangled and let everyone reach out to others in a faster, farther, and deeper manner. Through friendships, businesses, and socio-civic pursuits, significant changes are doable in far corners of the world. In recent years, the business world has witnessed the emergence of international social entrepreneurs who are busy transforming the global community. For instance, Muhammad Yunus's Grameen Bank led to the expansion of micro-lending that helped millions of struggling poor people in emerging nations. Bill Drayton's Ashoka Foundation supported thousands of entrepreneurs in international locations and consequently improved many communities.

While there has been a steady growth in research in international entrepreneurship, little is known about the underlying motivations for individual social entrepreneurs to opt for going international as compared to operating domestically. Thus, there remains a knowledge gap on the factors that explain international social entrepreneurial behavior, and this is partly addressed in this paper.

The main purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical model that may provide a plausible explanation as to why some individuals are able to seize opportunities in international environments and take action on these international opportunities while others do not. Through extant review of literature, this paper makes a contribution by examining international social entrepreneurial behavior through social psychological factors such as perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, propensity to act, and intentions. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: we begin with conceptualization of international social entrepreneurship, followed by a theoretical framework. The discussions then follow; we conclude and suggest areas for further research.

Conceptualization of international social entrepreneurship

In relation to the “international” aspect, Zahra and George (2002) define international entrepreneurship as the “process of creatively discovering and exploiting (entrepreneurial) opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic

markets...” (p. 261). This definition stresses the process aspect of international entrepreneurship, but largely neglects the central issue of why some individuals exploit international opportunities while others equally well placed do not act on them (Zahra and George 2002). Zahra et al. (2005) insist that only a cognitive perspective can enlighten how entrepreneurs recognize and exploit opportunities in international markets. Another issue to be addressed is whether an international entrepreneur should essentially have a “firm” that operates in his or “domestic market”: for instance, an individual who is a native of country “A” might not find entrepreneurial avenues in his own country but might find the same in country “B” and launch the enterprise there. This scenario is more common in social entrepreneurship.

According to McDougall (1989), international enterprises should, from their very inception stage, engage in international business and draw their operating domain as international. The only truly internationally entrepreneurial firms are those that are “born global,” notes Fletcher (2004). While this definition is well aligned with the ideas of novelty and innovation, it will cause to exclude a large number of initiatives just because the firms that go international have had prolonged presence in their domestic territories. Brush (1995) suggests that firm age itself is an important predictor of internationalization. The prior international exposure of the key decision makers of an enterprise is known to have a positive effect upon that enterprise's internationalization efforts (Schwens and Kabst 2009). The cognition and risk perception of CEOs, which also vary according to experience, can influence their decision making, observe (Acedo and Florin 2006).

Any definition of international entrepreneurship will remain imperfect if it does not include in its ambit forces such as culture, technology, competition, knowledge, resources, and networks (Oviatt and McDougall 2005). It is equally important to know how these forces are perceived by the potential entrepreneur. International entrepreneurial culture is probably the most decisive among the forces listed above: a culture that facilitates and accommodates entrepreneurial activities is of paramount importance for an internationalizing firm (Dimitratos and Plakoyiannaki 2003). Again, institutions that facilitate and hinder internationalization play a key role in international entrepreneurship and hence cannot be left out of its realm (Dimitratos and Jones 2005). Traditionally, lower-sized firms faced notable disadvantages in internationalizing their operations (Lamb and Liesch 2002); however, with the proliferation of the internet, an increasingly large number of enterprises are born global, irrespective of size (Berry and Brock 2004). Moreover, young, small-sized enterprises these days do not have the burden of a status-quo-seeking culture that prevents their expansion abroad.

International entrepreneurship is a complex domain wherein theories of internationalization and business are interspersed (Young et al. 2003). Etemad (2004) observes that most extant theories of internationalization focus on multinational corporations, and thus, these theories fail to offer satisfactory explanation for the internationalization of small-scale enterprises. These theories treat the firm as the unit of analysis and consequently cannot explain international entrepreneurship, which has the individual entrepreneur as the unit of analysis. This author addresses such a fragmentation by means of a three-layer integrative framework comprising the entrepreneur, the firm, and the market.

The question remaining now is how to integrate “social” with international entrepreneurship. This is an important question since the social dimension might significantly alter the meaning of the term. For one thing, social entrepreneurship is often more “emotion driven” whereas economic entrepreneurship is generally more “brain driven.” International social entrepreneurship, thus, is about the trans-border movement of the “heart,” driven by the motive of social upliftment. In other words, if entrepreneurial behavior is purposive behavior directed toward a specific entrepreneurial event (Mair and Noboa 2003), social entrepreneurial behavior is pursuing a social mission using an entrepreneurial approach.

It must be noted that the term social entrepreneurship has appeared in the literature in different contexts such as “social economy” (Peredo and McLean 2006), “activist movements” (Gawell 2007), “environmental movements” (Taylor and Walley 2003), or “sustainable economy” (Seelos and Mair 2007). Just like the conventional entrepreneurship, there is a lack of consensus concerning the conceptualization of the social entrepreneurship construct; it remains an elusive concept, and much of the literature continues to search for a unifying definition (Mair and Marti 2006; Shaw and Carter 2007). We define social entrepreneurship as the process of applying businesslike, innovative approaches to social problems to make a difference. This definition draws from the works of Alvord et al. (2004), Dees (1998), Gawell (2007), Mair and Marti (2006), Peredo and McLean (2006), Shaw and Carter (2007), and Weerawardena and Mort (2006).

Seelos and Mair (2005) state that understanding social entrepreneurship lies in defining what is meant by “social.” The term “social” in social entrepreneurship means helping others in social need. This is supported by Alvord et al. (2004), who argued that one of the crucial factors leading to emergence of social entrepreneurship is the unmet social needs by the market and the government. This is especially true in the area of social welfare where the government involvement is rather limited, perhaps due to limited resources. The following cases have been frequently used to illustrate social entrepreneurship.

Grameen Bank was established in 1976 by Mohammad Yunus to address social problems in India through provision of financial services in the form of small loans to the very poor borrowers. In addition, he created 12 other businesses (e.g., fisheries, hand loom, renewable energy) to serve the poor. This move catalyzed fundamental changes for poor women's role in income generation as well as changes in micro-credit theory and practice around the world.

A similar case is the *Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)* that was established in 1972 by Fazel Abed. BRAC has focused on breaking the cycle of poverty in Bangladesh through starting as a relief and resettlement organization. The project pioneered the development of comprehensive, locally organized approaches to rural development and poverty alleviation. It has provided a range of services—rural capacity building, education, health services, and micro-credit, with special emphasis on women and oppressed groups.

The Highlander Research and Education Center founded by Myles Horton in 1932 in a rural Appalachian mountain community in the Southern USA is yet

another example. The Center is dedicated to eliminating poverty and promoting genuine democratic participation for all people. Highlander provides education and research support to grassroots individuals and organizations working to address the inequities rooted in the political, cultural, and economic structures of communities.

The emerging theme from the above is that the “social” element in social entrepreneurship refers to a range of social services such as provision of education, health, water and sanitation, shelter, and social inclusion. As such, social enterprises are change agents with a problem-solving mission. The social mission aspect is the core of what distinguishes social entrepreneurs from business entrepreneurs (Dees 1998). Shaw and Carter (2007) echoed this sentiment noting that social entrepreneurs are like the business entrepreneurs only in their entrepreneurial zeal: What drives them is social improvement and not profits. Alvord et al. (2004) add that making profits is a means to a social end and not to the end in itself. However, the conservative definition of social entrepreneurship becomes unacceptably narrow when it excludes profit making of every kind from its definitional scope. While the social mission is explicit and central for social entrepreneurs, profits generated out of the entrepreneurial activity can help sustain the mission (Dees and Anderson 2003). Probably, social and business enterprises should not be defined dichotomously as opposites: it is only that the relative percentages of social and economic objectives vary for different enterprises.

Building upon the discussion thus far, we define international social entrepreneurship as the process of creatively discovering and exploiting social entrepreneurial opportunities overseas with the application of business expertise and market-based skills, with innovative social goods and services, either with or without profit orientation, but with the pivotal objective of creating societal value rather than shareholder wealth in the overseas territories where the enterprise functions.

Motivations to go beyond borders

To answer why social entrepreneurs should go internationally, we need to examine their socio-psychographics. It could be the craving for universalism, equity, altruism, sympathy, ego enhancement, or, even pure economic considerations in the guise of attaining social objectives. National cultural factors such as uncertainty avoidance may moderate cross-border entrepreneurial behavior (McMullen and Shepherd 2006). Many social entrepreneurs are known to have pan-national views on critical issues affecting humanity (Austin et al. 2006). A social entrepreneur might plan to enter into a foreign country when there is a market failure for certain social goods and services in that country and the domestic social enterprises in that country do not rise to the occasion. Sometimes, a scenario like this might lead to domestic–international joint ventures, too.

Internationalization might be the answer to survival when the scope of operation in the domestic territory diminishes, probably when the social goods or services which the enterprise produces in the domestic market are no longer in demand, when

competing social enterprises can deliver them more efficiently and effectively, or as a result of the very success of the domestic social initiative of the enterprise. Synergy that could come out of internationalization could be another motive: operation in a foreign market might bring in synergy and resultantly help the domestic operations grow faster. However, taking the social psychology perspective, we contend that the motivation of international social entrepreneurship can be explained by the intention–behavior link. Numerous researchers have investigated the intention–behavior link and found that behavioral intention is a powerful motivational predictor of entrepreneurial behavior.

Theoretical framework

In view of the fact that social entrepreneurship represents planned and intentional behavior, we review behavioral theories that have been applied in the entrepreneurship literature. Specifically, the theory of entrepreneurial event (Shapero 1982) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991) are reviewed. These theories are then employed to conceptualize the factors that could probably explain motivating factors of international social entrepreneurship.

The theory of the entrepreneurial event (Shapero 1982)

According to the theory of the entrepreneurial event, the personal choice to start a new venture depends on three elements: (a) the perception of the desirability, (b) the propensity to act, and (c) the perception of feasibility (see Fig. 1).

Perceived desirability is defined as the degree to which one finds the prospect of starting a business to be compelling and attractive; in essence, it reflects one's affect toward entrepreneurship (Shapero 1982). The theorists add that perception of desirability affects the entrepreneurial event through individual value systems and is dependent on the social system the individual is part of (family, peer groups, ethnic groups, educational and professional contexts). For instance, Shapero (1982) examines the concept of desirability using data on the family, peer groups,

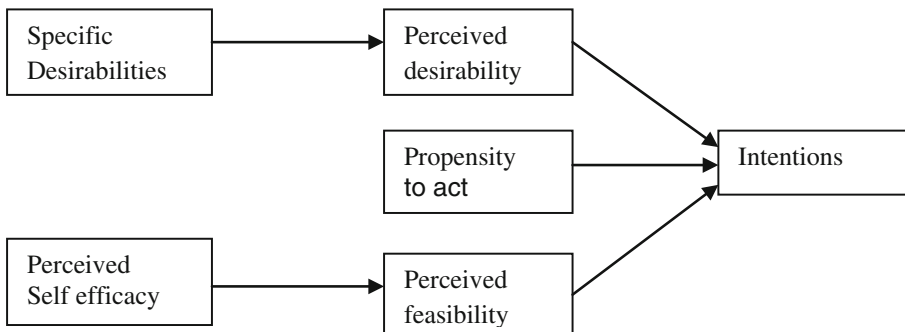


Fig. 1 A diagrammatic presentation of the theory of entrepreneurial event (Shapero 1982)

ethnic groups, and educational and professional contexts of potential entrepreneurs. In the case of the family, he states that particularly the father or mother plays the most powerful role in establishing the desirability and credibility of the entrepreneurial action for an individual. Theory further indicates specific desirability as an antecedent of perceived desirability.

Perceived feasibility refers to the degree to which people consider themselves personally able to carry out a certain behavior. It is derived from the belief in one's own competence (self-efficacy) and from the belief that the situation will permit one to exercise that capability (Bandura and Wood 1989). It simply means a belief in oneself that an ideal opportunity is achievable, and also, there are backup resources to make it work (Shapiro 1981, 1982). It is the entrepreneur's belief in his/her ability to put together the required human, social, financial, and other physical resources for the new venture (Shapiro and Sokol 1982). Particularly, Shapiro and Sokol refer to availability of financial support and to would-be partners as factors that would enact an entrepreneurial behavior. Would-be partners may pull a nascent entrepreneur into the act by providing funding, moral support, labor, a necessary skill, and perhaps shared risk. The presence of role models, mentors, or partners would be a decisive element in establishing the individual's feasibility level.

Propensity to act is defined as the personal disposition to act on one's decisions, thus reflecting volitional aspects of intentions ("I will do it"). It is hard to envision well-formed intentions without some propensity to act (Shapiro 1982). Intentions direct attention, experience, and behavior toward the accomplishment of a specific action (Bird 1992). Therefore, the stronger a person's desire to take action, the stronger the intentions (Krueger 1993). Shapiro (1982) theorized that a person's propensity to act is grounded in desire to gain control of a situation by taking action (Krueger 1993). While new ventures are not forced into existence, they also are not the stagnant result of environmental conditions (Bird 1992). New ventures are a result of planned attempts to take actions that will influence or create the environment in such a way as to allow the formation of the venture. Therefore, entrepreneurial intentions are determined by an individual's desire to take actions that will influence the environment (Crant 1996).

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991)

The decision to start a business and the actions taken to implement such a decision undoubtedly qualify as planned behavior. According to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB), an individual's intention to perform a given behavior is an accurate predictor of the actual performance of such behavior. In the context of new venture creation, this means that an individual's intention to start a business should be a good indicator that this individual will indeed start his own firm. The TPB postulates that human action is guided by three attitudinal antecedents of intention: personal attitude toward outcomes of the behavior, perceived social norms, and perceived behavior control (see Fig. 2). The TPB further specifies antecedents to each of these three attitudes. Notably, TPB is a theory that may be applied to nearly all voluntary behaviors and has been applied in various settings in an effort to

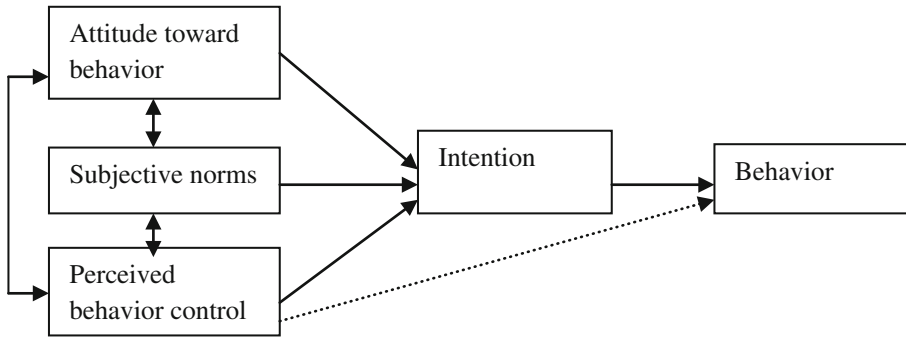


Fig. 2 Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991)

understand a number of different behaviors in which people engage (Ajzen 2001). The three attitudinal factors are further explained.

Attitude toward the behavior refers to people's perceptions of the personal desirability of performing the behavior. Attitude about any behavior is determined by the individual's beliefs about performing the behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Individuals will either like (have a favorable attitude) or dislike (have an unfavorable attitude) performing the behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Individuals with favorable attitude toward a behavior will be more likely to form strong entrepreneurial intentions and thus perform the behavior than individuals with unfavorable attitudes (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

Subjective norms derives from the person's perceptions of what relevant others, such as family, friends, or co-workers, are likely to think about the behavior, as well as the extent to which the person wishes to comply with those relevant others. These perceptions are influenced by normative beliefs and are relevant to individuals with a strong internal locus of control (Ajzen 1987) and those with a strong action orientation (Bagozzi et al. 1992) which suggests that societal beliefs that influence attitudes should predict an individual's intention. Social norm is an aspect of social capital. Social capital can be defined as resources or social support one acquires from kinship networks, peers, members of one's own family or community, business entities, or other groups that provide various types of help to business owners. In a community setting, the potential entrepreneur may have a large diffuse reference group that includes family and friends, which they can utilize to establish themselves further into business. In the social entrepreneurial behavior context, it is expected then that individuals who perceive to have support from important others are likely to engage in the behavior.

Perceived behavioral control is defined as the perception of the easiness or difficulty in the fulfillment of the behavior of interest (e.g., becoming a social entrepreneur). Perceived behavioral control overlaps Bandura's (1986) view of perceived self-efficacy, the perceived ability to execute a target behavior (Ajzen 1987). According to the TPB, the resources and opportunities available to a person must to some extent dictate the likelihood of behavioral achievement. Self-efficacy is concerned with one's judgment of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses not with the actual skills one has (Markham et al. 2002). Hence, taking action requires consideration of not just outcome expectancies (i.e., desirability) but also perceived self-efficacy (i.e., feasibility).

Proposed model to explain international social entrepreneurship

Notably, Shapero's (1982) entrepreneurial event model explains entrepreneurial intention on the basis of perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and the propensity to act, whereas Ajzen's theory of planned behavior explains intentions by means of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. A significant study was conducted by Krueger et al. (2000) which compared and contrasted Shapero's theory of entrepreneurial event and Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. Their study demonstrated that these two models are interrelated when employed within entrepreneurial research. Shapero's perceived feasibility corresponds quite well to Ajzen's perceived behavioral control. On the other hand, perceived desirability could be understood as composed of the personal attitude and perceived social norms. However, one can have great potential for entrepreneurial activity without corresponding intentions. Thus, it would appear that appropriate attitudes may not be enough. In order to consider the many nascent entrepreneurs who never launch their intended businesses, the theory of entrepreneurial event adds a volitional element to intentions: the propensity to act. Overall, in both models, intentions are explained by willingness and capability.

Whereas the theory of entrepreneurial event has been popularly applied in previous mainstream entrepreneurship studies, there is still insufficient knowledge in the case of social entrepreneurship. Mair and Noboa (2003) applied the theory in their study on social entrepreneurial intention formation and made some modifications to suit the international social entrepreneurship context. Basing on their study, we propose a model to explain the motivating factors of international social entrepreneurship in the following section.

Mair and Noboa (2003) propose empathy and moral judgment as antecedents of perceived desirability. They support this by stating that identifying and solving large-scale social problems requires individuals who are empathetic. In international social entrepreneurship, helping behavior may be initiated when we feel empathy for the person beyond our native border, that is, identifying with another person and feeling and understanding what that person is experiencing, for instance, identifying with the orphans or rural poor as in the case of BeadforLife in Uganda.

Moral judgment, on the other hand, is demonstrated by a need to be loyal to individual entrepreneurs' own principles and being socially responsible. In relation to perceived feasibility, Mair and Noboa (2003) propose enablers as the antecedents. They assert that perceived feasibility is affected by the person's perceived ability to perform a specific behavior and the person's social capital. By the nature of international social entrepreneurship, we find these aspects very critical for social entrepreneurship. Thus, building on the arguments advanced this far, we propose a working model (Fig. 3) that could provide a plausible explanation of international social entrepreneurial behavior. The proposed model is drawn from the works of Mair and Noboa (2003). We begin by discussing the components of the model.

Intention to venture in international social entrepreneurial behavior

Intention refers to the degree of commitment toward some future target behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Intention to venture creation therefore means that an

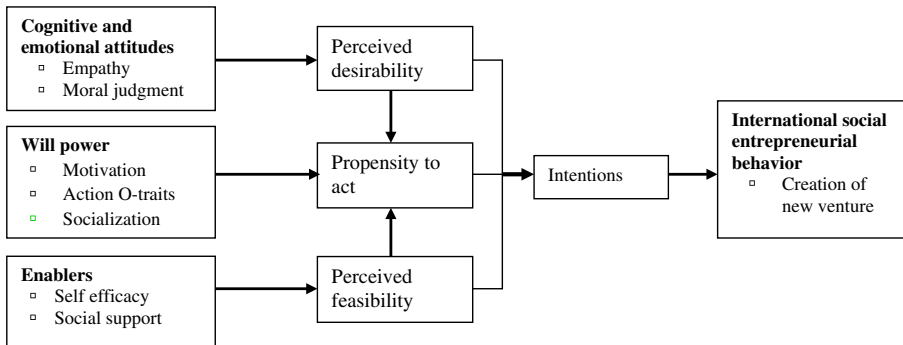


Fig. 3 Proposed conceptual framework for international social entrepreneurial behavior

individual commits oneself to found a business. This demonstrates that for one to create a social venture across borders, the individual must have the intentions to do so. According to the theory of planned behaviors, intentions are a function of salient beliefs and/or information about the likelihood that performing a particular behavior will lead to a specific outcome. We propose three determinants of intention, perceived desirability, propensity to act, and perceived feasibility. It is believed that the stronger a person's intention to perform a particular behavior, the more successful they are expected to be (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Thus:

Proposition 1 Intentions are positively related to creating an international social enterprise.

Perceived desirability and international social entrepreneurial behavior

Social entrepreneurs are people who realize where there is an opportunity to satisfy some unmet need that the state welfare system will not or cannot meet and who gather together the necessary resources and use these to “make a difference.” This means that the issue of perceived desirability is very much in the eye of the beholder. We also note that socially embedded initiatives (whether entrepreneurial or not) may catalyze social change or enhance stability in a given society. Both change effected and/or stability preserved may, in turn, be judged “desirable” or “undesirable,” by different observers, contingent on their attitude. Perceived desirability corresponds to attitude toward a behavior and subjective norms. Several studies have established positive relationships between these two variables and consequent entrepreneurial behavior.

In the international context, the motivating factors to pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities beyond domestic borders are critical. Social entrepreneurs are driven by social and cultural motives embedded in their mental attitude (Shapiro and Sokol 1982). We contend that this is only possible if the individual has feelings for others in a disadvantaged position (empathy) and wishes to pull them out in such state. There is an agreement in literature that, generally, decisions to internalize are motivated by spreading risk by not depending on a domestic market (Butler et al. 2010; Crick 2007). The domestic market is often not enough and attaches low value

on some of the products being promoted because of poverty and attitudes held toward particular products (Etemad et al. 2010; Sommer 2010).

Another critical motivation for entrepreneurs to take an international stance is the craving for social justice. This was well articulated by Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum and Shulman's (2009) paper on a typology of social entrepreneurs: motives, search processes, and ethical challenges. They content that social entrepreneurs make diverse contributions to communities by adopting models that offer solutions to complex and persistent social problems like poverty amidst abundance. Thus, we propose:

Proposition 2 Perceived desirability is positively related to intentions to create an international social enterprise.

Propensity to act and international social entrepreneurial behavior

Literature reviewed highlights propensity to act as another powerful motivator to create a social venture. Relating to international social entrepreneurship, the will to go beyond the native country is determined by the strong willpower. Different indicators of willpower propose that the zeal to go beyond national borders include motivation, action-oriented traits, and socialization. To suit the international perspective, we modify the model to include willpower as an antecedent of propensity to act.

Willpower has been defined as energetic determination and thus is closely related to propensity to act. Its power is such that it moves an individual to act, despite adversity, low energy levels, or alternative opportunities. This is very critical for social entrepreneurship, given that venturing into a social mission calls for resilience. Ghoshal and Bruch (2003) view willpower as the most powerful force of human behavior. Willpower can be looked at in different dimensions, for instance, in terms of motivation (desire to create social impact, to reach more people, and for social change), action-oriented traits (tendency to do things one's way, adaptation skills, and long-term focus), and socialization (I was raised in the spirit of charity and giving, I grew sensitive to other people's feelings, I feel uneasy about the problem of the poor). However, it should be noted that while an individual who acts with willpower will not necessarily create a social venture, willpower is an important variable in understanding the process by which the intention to create an international social venture develops. We propose:

Proposition 3 Propensity to act is positively related to intentions to create international social enterprise.

If an individual perceives creating and international venture to be an attractive idea, then definitely that person's tendency to act will be high. Similarly, if an individual perceives that he has the necessary capability, say in the form of resources, then his propensity to act is likely to be high. We therefore add that propensity to act can also be influenced by perceived desirability and feasibility. Thus:

Proposition 4 Perceived desirability has a positive effect on propensity to act.

Proposition 5 Perceived feasibility has a positive effect on propensity to act.

Perceived feasibility and international social entrepreneurial behavior

Perceived feasibility is derived from one's belief in one's own competence (self-efficacy) and from the belief that the situation will permit us to exercise that capability (Bandura and Wood 1989). It simply means a belief in oneself that an ideal opportunity is achievable, and also, there are backup resources to make it work (Shapero 1982). It is the entrepreneur's belief in his/her ability to put together the required human, social, financial, and other physical resources for the new venture (Shapero and Sokol 1982). We suggest that going international can be viewed as feasible if the social entrepreneur has the confidence and capability to do so and if the individual is able to readily obtain social support to pursue the social cause in question. Thus:

Proposition 6 Perceived feasibility has a positive effect on intentions to create international social venture.

The proposed model (Fig. 3) depicts that setting up social ventures beyond a country's borders is explained by entrepreneurial intention which in turn is influenced by the combined effect of an individual's perceived desirability (influenced by attitudes), propensity to act (influenced by willpower), and perceived feasibility (influenced by enabling factors). Previous mainstream entrepreneurship studies have tended to examine perceived desirability, propensity to act, and perceived feasibility as separate predictors. There is a need to investigate the combined effect of these factors and their respective antecedents on entrepreneurial behavior.

A Ugandan case—BeadforLife

BeadforLife began with a chance encounter between a Ugandan woman, Millie, who was rolling beads near her mud home, and the founders, Torkin Wakefield, Ginny Jordan, and Devin Hibbard. While admiring the beads, the would-be founders of BeadforLife learned that there was no market for Millie's jewelry and that Millie worked for a dollar a day in a rock quarry crushing stones in the hot sun. They admired her paper beads and bought a few, never realizing that their lives, and the lives of so many impoverished Ugandans, were about to change (BeadforLife 2010).

The samples that were taken back to the USA were admired by the founders' friends, and the three women realized that there might be a market for the paper beads. Torkin returned to Uganda, and Devin and Ginny began to develop a marketing strategy. In Uganda, Torkin held classes to improve the quality of the beads and how to develop several styles of necklaces and bracelets. Soon, women in the USA began to hear the stories of the beaders and started to buy their beautiful jewelry. In September of 2004, the founders launched BeadforLife in the belief that they could build bridges of understanding and commerce. At that time, they did not know that an amazing endeavor was being born.

Launching of a cottage industry throughout Uganda

To begin their operations, BeadforLife conducted its first unsophisticated market research by going to several stores in Kampala and established that there was not even one vendor selling paper beads. To them, this was a found opportunity, a common characteristic of entrepreneurs (Etemad 2004). Three years later, paper beads are everywhere, and many other non-profit groups and for-profit individuals are now selling paper beads.

Locally, many low-income women started finding small markets for their beads. With the mission to “create sustainable opportunities for women and to lift their families out of extreme poverty by connecting people worldwide in a circle of exchange that enriches everyone,” BeadforLife was registered as a non-profit organization in Colorado with a mission to eradicate extreme poverty by creating bridges of understanding between impoverished Africans and concerned world citizens. The organization now has membership of Ugandan women mainly internally displaced with many orphans and others living with HIV or other serious healthy challenges. They are now turning colorful recycled paper into beautiful beads.

Women in northern Uganda have been empowered to look for more opportunities and now are able to gather shea nuts and press them into shea butter for cosmetics and soaps. This in turn has created a link to people who care and have opened their hearts, homes, and communities to buy and sell both products both domestically and internationally, thus making the beads and shea butter become income, food, medicine, school fees, and hope. In the words of one beneficially, BeadforLife is described as “a small miracle” that has enriched the lives of the poor.

From the case, one would have thought that the domestic market would first be exploited before going international. This was not the case for BeadforLife because of the era of internet, what Etemad et al. (2010) calls “internetization” which enabled quick entry into the international market. However, this alone cannot be the only reason that can motivate social entrepreneurs to extend beyond the domestic borders. Some studies have indicated that empathy and the perceived attractiveness of engaging in international social entrepreneurial behavior are some of the indicators to the reasons for internationalization. Therefore, we contend that in the context of international social entrepreneurial behavior, an individual who views the behavior as favorable is likely to engage in the behavior.

The study sought to examine the factors that may explain international social entrepreneurial behavior. Generally, decisions (such as the decision to attempt to start a new venture) are made through the perception or “cognitive map” of the person. Conceptual models such as Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991), Shapero's model of the entrepreneurial event (Shapero 1981, 1984), and subsequent empirical work utilizing these models (Krueger and Carsrud 1993; Kolvereid 1996; Reitan 1996) argue that there are at least three perceptions critical in the forming of entrepreneurial potential: (a) “Can I make it?”, (b) “Do I want to make it?”, and (c) “Will others approve of it?”. We propose a conceptual model that may provide a plausible explanation as to why some individuals are able to seize opportunities in international environments and take action on these international opportunities while

others do not. Considering the individual perspective, we found it reasonable to integrate entrepreneurial intention knowledge to explain international social entrepreneurial behavior.

Areas for future research

Given that our approach was literature review and case studies, future research efforts could attempt to provide an empirical base testing the suggested model. This kind of study could use a selected number of social enterprises that have been created in a given country for a period of time to determine whether the factors as indicated in the proposed model predict international social entrepreneurial behavior. Whereas Krueger et al. (2000) claim that sampling only successful social entrepreneurs would introduce bias that causes data unpredictability, we contend that samples using students who were nearly graduating may not yield actual behavior which is crucial to advancing knowledge in this area of research. Therefore, research aimed at comparing the results obtained from student sample and actual social entrepreneurs would enrich our understanding of the relationships between the constructs in the proposed model.

Generally, we have been guided by the principle of parsimony in constructing the proposed model. One missing linkage that might enrich the model, however, is the feedback loop that links the outcome back to the predictors and intervening variables. Positive experiences gained out of international social entrepreneurship might reinforce the entrepreneur's beliefs, attitude, intention, and behavior. Success of doing business in one foreign country might inspire the entrepreneur to replicate the same in other countries. Response reinforcement results in attitudinal reinforcement, and response dissonance results in attitudinal moderation (Scott 1989; Suedfeld 2007). Yet, since it is not merely profit making that motivates the social entrepreneur, the above relationship might not be simple and straightforward. The social entrepreneur's aspirations might not be explicable solely by means of economic rationality.

Lastly, developing comprehensive measures of all the constructs in the model instead of single-item measures that have been used in previous studies would add credibility to the model's applications. This could be carried out using exploratory factor analysis and later confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling technique.

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