

Factors Affecting Social Entrepreneurs to Lead an Initiative

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Abstract: - One of the interesting questions in education research is how to motivate students to become social entrepreneurs. In this study, we examine five considerations which influence the decision of social entrepreneurs to lead an initiative. a. The extent to which the project is interesting, innovative and will bring about long-term change in the community. b. People's level of cooperation in the community where the initiative will be carried. c. The initiative's level of logistic simplicity. d. The extent to which the entrepreneur is able to invest time in the project, in relation to his current level of activity in the different areas of his life. e. The extent to which the project's vision and the entrepreneur's social vision are compatible. We collected data from 144 potential social entrepreneurs using an experimental design pattern. We found that all these five factors are statistically significant in their impact on willingness to initiate a social innovation. The Standardized Coefficients are given in brackets: e (0.474), a (0.265), b (0.236), d (0.221) and c (0.108). More analyses are conducted in this research.

Key-Words: - Innovation, social entrepreneurship, experimental design

1 Introduction

Drayton [1] indicates several characteristic lines of social entrepreneurs: They bring about strong and intense changes in the system; they are creative; their projects have the potential ability to influence the general public; and they have a strong moral makeup. In other words, entrepreneurs exist in the world in order to shape society in accordance with their personal visions. Social entrepreneurs must have the combined ability to both determine goals and solve problems. They differ from regular professionals, who are content to solve the problem for their clients. Social entrepreneurs try to change the world, and years of difficulties and complexities won't stop them.

Because social entrepreneurs are task-oriented, internal values and motivation are the significant drivers behind their initiatives [2]. For example, [3] emphasizes their passion for providing a solution to the community's needs, as a central driving force among social entrepreneurs. Others stress the charisma of social entrepreneurs [4] or their leadership [5].

The factors and considerations that influence social entrepreneurs to generate social change are critical in understanding the entrepreneur's priorities and their involvement in social entrepreneurship. Until now, this subject has received very little research

attention. In the current study, we focus on the entrepreneur's attitudes and decision-making processes, when trying to lead social change.

Leading a social initiative or project demands a series of decisions from the entrepreneur, who must take into account the parameters of the project itself (for example, how innovative and interesting the project is) as well as personal parameters (the amount of personal time the entrepreneur really has to invest in leading the project, for example). Decision-making regarding leading the initiative is one of the first subjects the entrepreneur will have to relate to: Whether he or she is personally ready and willing to lead the project. This is a central issue, regardless of whether the idea for the project originated with the entrepreneur, himself, or with others.

In this study, we examine the considerations which influence the decision of social entrepreneurs to lead an initiative.

London and Morfopoulos [6] identified 5 major strategies in managing social initiatives:

1. Identifying the needs and creating a vision that provides an answer to these needs
2. Establishing suitable communication with the community, mainly for the development and arrangement of supporting sources from the community

3. Carrying out the initiative
4. Evaluating the results of the initiative
5. Maintaining continuity of the activity

The first two strategies, i.e. the entrepreneur's vision and the level of communication with the community – led us to choosing two out of the five factors which influence the entrepreneur's decision to lead a social initiative: the extent of compatibility between the project's vision and the entrepreneur's personal-social vision; and the community's future level of cooperation in the project.

In the research literature, much importance is placed on the initiative's level of innovation [5],[7], as well as its level of continuity in the community [8], as core dimensions in social initiatives. Another factor in our study is the extent to which the project is interesting, innovative, and will bring about a long-term change within the community.

The logistic complexity or simplicity of the initiative is often discussed in the literature. The creative use of minimal resources as one of the three important dimensions of a social initiative is given in [9]. The initiative's level of simplicity, from a logistic point of view, is another factor we included in this study. This variable expresses, among other things, the absence of a need to raise money for the project, a lack of involvement of public entities in the project, a need for cooperation between a relatively small number of individuals, etc.

In a study [10] examining the factors that lead to successful social ventures in Israel, found 8 factors that support success:

1. The entrepreneur's social network
2. Complete dedication to the initiative's success
3. The basis of the funding in the establishment stage
4. Acceptance of the entrepreneur's idea in a public forum
5. The initiative's staff
6. Creating long-term cooperation in the public and third sectors
7. The service's ability to withstand the market test
8. The entrepreneur's prior managerial experience

The entrepreneur's complete dedication to the initiative's success factor stems, to a large extent, from the fifth factor, which will be examined in this study: "The extent to which the entrepreneur is available and has time to deal with the initiative", in relation to his current level of activity in the different areas of his life (work, studies, family, hobbies).

To conclude, the five factors that influence the social entrepreneur's level of willingness to lead a

project, which we examine in this study, are as follows:

- a. The extent to which the project is interesting, innovative and will bring about long-term change in the community ("innovation and influence")
- b. People's level of cooperation in the community where the initiative will be carried out (the willingness of key individuals in the community to undertake the initiative, the community members' response to take an active part in the initiative. ("Cooperation"))
- c. The initiative's level of logistic simplicity. Logistic simplicity, among other things, relates to the lack of a need to raise funds for the project, the lack of involvement of public entities in the initiative, the need for cooperation between a relatively small numbers of people, and so forth. ("Logistic simplicity")
- d. The extent to which the entrepreneur is able to invest time in the project, in relation to his current level of activity in the different areas of his life ("entrepreneur availability")
- e. The extent to which the project's vision and the entrepreneur's social vision are compatible ("compatibility with personal vision")

2 Methods

A total of 144 subjects, students from the Seminar HaKibbutzim College, participated in the study:

The research tools were as follows:

1. **A personal details questionnaire**
2. **A profile questionnaire**, which examined the respondents' considerations about the decision to lead an educational initiative. In the profile questionnaire, we presented the respondents with a series of various different profiles of social initiatives, with the five parameters mentioned above.

Based on the **personal details questionnaire** we found:

A. A total of 144 students participated in the study; 27 men and 121 women; 37% were single, 57% were married; the majority (75%) had 2-3 children.

B. As regards Age: 8% of the participants were between the ages of 18-22; 23% were between the ages of 23-29; 25% were between the ages of 30-39; 29% were between the ages of 40-49; 10% were between the ages of 50-59 and 4% were over the age of 60.

C. Participants' average income was according to the following distribution: 10% reported a "far below average" income; 13% "below average"; 23% average; 40% above average; and 13% "far above average".

D. A total of 74% of the participants said they were currently involved in social projects; 36% reported involvement in at least 3 or more projects; and 20% indicated involvement in 5 social projects.

E. A total of 32% of the participants invest up to two hours a week in social projects; 40% invest between 2-4 hours a week; and 28% invest more than 4 hours a week on social projects.

F. A total of 67% of the participants are involved in these projects on a managerial level; 13% deal with managerial activities; and 15% are involved in activities related to training & education.

G. Only 12% of the participants said they are not involved in social projects. A total of 32% reported involvement in social activities for 1-2 years; 22% indicated 3-5 years; and 34% reported involvement in social activities for over a period of 5 years.

In the **profile questionnaire** we asked the respondents to assume they have been presented with an initiative that deals with social or educational activity for the good of the community, while the “project itself is interesting, and significantly contributes to a community that is important to the respondent, and that he/she is thinking about leading the project”.

The respondents were then presented with various different possible project profiles, regarding the above-mentioned parameters, where each parameter receives one of two values – high or low. For example, a profile may describe the project as “low” on innovation, interest and the change it will bring to the community; “high” as regards the community’s level of cooperation in the project; “low” in relation to its logistic simplicity (that is, the project is complex from a logistic point of view); “low” in regard to the entrepreneur’s current ability to invest time in the project; and “high” on compatibility between the project’s vision and the entrepreneur’s social vision.

A total of 32 profiles were proposed. For each of the situations, the respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of 0 to 10, the chance they would take to lead a project with the same profile.

In order to make the ranking easier for the respondents, the 32 profiles were divided into two series of 16 profiles; each series was passed out to half of the respondents, in each of the populations. It is important to note that a series of 16 profiles is considered a full factorial experiment for 5 main effects and second-order interactions [11]. These

factorial experiments allowed us to examine all of the possible interactions for all profile types [12].

3 Findings

Table 1 presents the number of questionnaires, averages, and standard deviations for all 32 profiles.

1. Profile rankings reflect almost the entire range of the scale, starting from a ranking of 1.31 for Profile 12, in which all of the parameters are “low” and up till a 9.53 ranking in Profile 28, in which all of the parameters are “high”.

2. The average ranking for all profiles is 5.40, and the average standard deviation for all profile rankings is 2.22.

Table 2 presents the profiles ranked above 7 (on a scale from 0 to 10), in descending order.

1. As expected, the highest ranking was for Profile 28, in which all of the five parameters were “high” (9.53).

2. In Profile 7, where only the Logistic Simplicity parameter was “low” and the rest of the parameters were “high”, the respondents’ willingness to lead the project was relatively high (8.9).

3. The rankings decreased when the Innovation and Influence parameter was “low” (Profile 13), and the rest of the parameters were “high” (8.05); when the Cooperation parameter was “low” (Profile 1) and the rest of the parameters were “high” (7.46); and when the Entrepreneur Availability parameter was “low” (Profile 16) and the rest of the parameters were “high” (7.40).

4. The two last profiles whose rankings were still above 7 were Profile 19, in which Cooperation and Logistic Simplicity were “low” and the rest of the parameters were “high” (7.34); and Profile 24, in which Logistic Simplicity and Entrepreneur Availability were “low” and the rest of the parameters were “high” (7.22).

Table 3 presents the profiles ranked below 4 (on a scale of 0-10), in ascending order.

1. The lowest ranking, as expected, was given to Profile 12, in which the five parameters were “low” (1.31).

Table 1: Averages and Standard Deviations for all 32 social project profiles

S.D	Mean	Entrepreneur's vision	Entrepreneur availability	Logistic simplicity	Cooperation	Innovation & influence	n	Profile no.
2.05	7.46	high	high	high	low	high	135	1
2.33	4.51	low	high	low	high	low	134	2
2.30	4.22	low	low	high	high	low	134	3
2.30	5.95	high	low	low	high	low	134	4
2.55	5.43	high	high	low	low	low	136	5
2.45	5.65	high	low	low	low	high	136	6
1.41	8.90	high	high	low	high	high	136	7
2.21	3.83	low	high	high	low	low	111	8
2.25	5.18	high	low	high	low	low	111	9
2.31	4.80	low	low	low	high	high	111	10
2.30	4.90	low	high	low	low	high	136	11
1.92	1.31	low	low	low	low	low	135	12
1.77	8.05	high	high	high	high	low	136	13
2.45	6.06	low	high	high	high	high	102	14
2.23	4.20	low	low	high	low	high	102	15
1.95	7.40	high	low	high	high	high	102	16
2.64	3.28	low	low	low	high	low	146	17
2.16	6.44	high	low	high	low	high	149	18
2.03	7.34	high	high	low	low	high	149	19
2.37	4.99	low	high	high	low	high	147	20
2.56	4.92	low	low	high	high	high	147	21
2.63	4.29	low	high	high	high	low	147	22
2.40	2.01	low	low	high	low	low	149	23
2.00	7.22	high	low	low	high	high	147	24
2.31	5.63	low	high	low	high	high	148	25
2.39	6.10	high	high	high	low	low	148	26
2.15	6.33	high	low	high	high	low	148	27
0.91	9.53	high	high	high	high	high	149	28
2.66	3.04	low	low	low	low	high	149	29
2.68	4.36	high	low	low	low	low	149	30
1.90	6.84	high	high	low	high	low	149	31
2.52	2.52	low	high	low	low	low	149	32

2. The second lowest ranking was given to Profile 23, in which four of the parameters were “low” and only the Logistic Parameter was “high” (2.01).

3. The next three rankings, in ascending order, were given to Profile 32, in which only the Entrepreneur Availability parameter was “high” and the rest of the parameters were “low” (2.52); Profile 29, in which only the Innovation and Influence parameter was “high” and the rest of the parameters were “low” (3.04); and Profile 17, in which only the Cooperation parameter was “high” and the rest of the parameters were “low” (3.28).

In order to evaluate the extent of the influence of each of the five parameters on the entrepreneur’s decision to lead an initiative, we conducted regression analyses for all of the study’s data. This includes both the questionnaires completed at the beginning of the workshop as well as those completed at the end. Table 4 presents the conclusive findings of these analyses.

1. The five parameters explain 42% of the variance, which indicates that these are very relevant parameters in the decision-making process of social

Table 2: Profiles ranked above 7 (on a scale of 0-10)

S.D	Mean	Entrepreneur's vision	Entrepreneur availability	Logistic simplicity	Cooperation	Innovation & influence	n	Profile no.
0.91	9.53	high	high	high	high	high	149	28
1.41	8.90	high	high	low	high	high	136	7
1.77	8.05	high	high	high	high	low	136	13
2.05	7.46	high	high	high	low	high	135	1
1.95	7.40	high	Low	high	high	high	102	16
2.03	7.34	high	High	low	low	high	149	19
2.00	7.22	high	Low	low	high	high	147	24

Table 3: Profiles Ranked below 4 (on a scale of 0-10), in ascending order

S.D	Mean	Entrepreneur's vision	Entrepreneur availability	Logistic simplicity	Cooperation	Innovation & influence	n	Profile no.
1.92	1.31	low	low	low	low	low	135	12
2.40	2.01	low	low	high	low	low	149	23
2.52	2.52	low	high	low	low	low	149	32
2.66	3.04	low	low	low	low	high	149	29
2.64	3.28	low	low	low	low	low	146	17

Table 4: The Five Parameters: Results of the Regression Analyses

Variable	coefficient	p-value
(Constant)	5.475	0.0
Innovation and Influence	0.775	0.0
Level of Cooperation	0.687	0.0
Level of Logistic Simplicity	0.316	0.0
Entrepreneur's Availability to Lead the Initiative	0.644	0.0
Level of Compatibility between the Initiative's Vision and the Entrepreneur's Personal Vision	1.382	0.0

entrepreneurs when deciding on their level of willingness to lead an initiative. All of the parameters' regression coefficients were statistically significant.

2. The most influential parameter is the level of compatibility between the initiative's vision and the personal vision of the entrepreneur.

3. From among the initiative's parameters, the level of innovation and influence and the level of cooperation were of greatest importance.

4. The importance of the initiative's logistic simplicity was low compared to the rest of the parameters.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

The study examined students' attitudes about social entrepreneurship and, specifically, the importance of different factors in the decisions made by entrepreneurs when considering whether or not to lead a social initiative or project. The parameters we examined are related to the nature of the social initiative (its level of innovation and influence, logistic simplicity, the extent of cooperation it will achieve), as well as the personal characteristics of the entrepreneur (the entrepreneur's level of availability to dedicate himself to the project, and the level of compatibility between the project's vision and the entrepreneur's personal vision).

One of the main findings is that the above five parameters explain 42% of the variance among the profile rankings of the various projects presented to the study's subjects, some of whom were MA students and some of whom were teaching assistants. In other words, these parameters are

apparently significant as regards their influence on the considerations of the subjects-students about leading social initiatives.

Without a doubt, additional studies are necessary, using different populations and different contexts in order to further establish the "status" of these five factors as determining the considerations of social entrepreneurs when deciding upon their level of willingness to lead a specific social project.

The subjects were presented with a series of Project Profiles; each profile was different in regard to the five parameters mentioned above, in accordance with the study's methodology. This allowed us to examine the extent of the influence of each one of the parameters, in relation to the existence or absence of the other parameters in the project.

Regression analyses of the profile rankings, presented in Table 7, show the relative influence of each of the five parameters on the rankings. As expressed in the previous tables as well, the factor that most influences students' willingness to lead a social project is level of compatibility between the project's vision and their personal vision. Although the regression coefficients of the other four parameters – the project's level of innovation and influence; the community's willingness to cooperate with the project; the project's level of logistic simplicity; and the extent to which the entrepreneur is available to deal with the project – are statistically significant, they all reflect only a minor influence, when compared with the compatibility parameter. When the project's vision is compatible with the entrepreneur's personal vision, he is willing "to compromise" on the absence or weakness of other parameters and still be willing to lead the initiative.

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