

ORIGINAL RESEARCH**Designing and elucidation of a social entrepreneurship model in the field of health**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to design and explain a social entrepreneurship model in the field of health. In the present descriptive-correlational study, the statistical population of the qualitative section of the health and health sector experts consisted of all the employees of the health area. The qualitative sampling was purposeful judgments. The sampling of a small, simple random sample with Morgan's table consisted of 290 health workers. In order to collect data, Delphi method was used in qualitative section and a questionnaire was used in the quantitative section. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages) and inferential methods (Pearson's correlation coefficient and factor analysis) were used to analyse data. SPSS 16.0 and Amos 8.5 software programs were used. The results of this research indicated that different aspects of financing, promoting entrepreneurship level awareness and identifying entrepreneurship opportunities have a positive and significant effect on social entrepreneurship in the field of health. In conclusion, by enhancing and appropriate financing arrangements, one can promote the level of entrepreneurial consciousness and identify entrepreneurial opportunities that are in fact the gate to enter entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Social entrepreneurship, Health

Introduction

The behavior of each individual is unique depending on his or her individual values and beliefs, personality traits and assets (human, social and financial). Such a background shapes an individual's interests and capabilities and is referred to as "entrepreneurial alertness" (Tang, 2009). In addition, opportunity recognition has been considered the first step in the entrepreneurial process (Meigounpoory et al, 2011), which necessitates attention to opportunities, prerequisites and the factors affecting it. Unfortunately, entrepreneurial alertness is limited in the field of health and treatment and is almost confined to a limited number of studies such as that by Meigounpoory et al. (2013), who evaluated the process of supply and demand for the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of nutritional counselling.

In relation to opportunity recognition, Ardichvili et al. (2003) reported that the main process of opportunity recognition occurs when the entrepreneur has a high entrepreneurial alertness threshold. Based on the opinion of researchers in the field of entrepreneurship, opportunity recognition has a basic role in social entrepreneurship activities (Alonso et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2013).

Alonso et al. (2011) believe that entrepreneurship is the thought and action based on opportunity. Entrepreneurship results in the creation and re-creation of values for owners and stakeholders and opportunity is the core of this process (Mohammadi Elyasi et al., 2009).

Shrader & Hills (2015) believe that opportunity is the gap between the current status and the potential future and such a gap is filled by entrepreneurs. Although recognition of opportunities is considered the principal characteristic of entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship activity does not take place without it (Wang et al., 2014). Not all the individuals are able to recognize opportunities (Maine et al, 2016); therefore, all the individuals cannot engage in entrepreneurship activities.

Considering the importance of recognition of opportunities in the entrepreneurship process (Wang et al, 2013; Shrader et al., 2015), several studies have been undertaken to

identify factors affecting recognition of opportunities to pave the way for entrepreneurship opportunity recognition. Some researchers have concluded from their studies that factors affecting opportunity recognition are related to the individual factors of the entrepreneur such as self-efficacy (Baghbani & Fouladi; 2014; Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2016). Based on Scott's opinion (2016), opportunity recognition means the ability to identify a good idea and convert it into a business concept, which is valuable and has an economic yield. Jawahar & Nigma (2012) introduced opportunity recognition as the identification of an idea for creation of a new business. Since in the field of opportunity recognition both aspects of opportunity creation and opportunity identification have a special position (Rotami and Feizbakhsh, 2013) and since the definition presented by Baron & Ensley (2006) has covered both the aspects above, in the present study their definition of opportunity recognition will be used. Therefore, in the present study, opportunity recognition means the possibility of creating a new business or a significant improvement in the status of an existing business, both of which create new profiles for the entrepreneur. In the present study, entrepreneurial alertness in itself is affected by several factors, including personality traits, social networks and previous knowledge (Solesvik et al., 2013).

Membership of an individual in social networks in the form of real or virtual internet networks results in new and more relationships and interactions, facilitating access to new and sometimes more important data. In addition, some studies have shown that aging and interactions of entrepreneurs result in an increase in the relationship between their initial or previous knowledge and opportunity recognition (Karsound et al., 2012; Schan et al., 2014). Since data paves the way for the formation of awareness, different sets of data affect the individual's ability to promote entrepreneurial alertness and identify proper and profitable opportunities, including his/her chance to recognize opportunities (Burns, 2009).

Shine (2000) believes that three sets of previous knowledge can help an individual recognize new opportunities arising from a new technology, which include previous

knowledge about the market, previous knowledge about customer needs and previous knowledge about serving in the market; of course it should be kept in mind that different individuals have different databases in their minds because they have lived in different environments and have acquired different knowledge. Therefore, their attitudes toward the environment and their mechanism of converting data received from the environment into opportunities in their minds are different (Pilot et al., 2010). This explains how an individual recognizes an opportunity, which another individual does not (Ravanipour et al., 2014). In other words, an individual's previous knowledge allows him/her to only recognize special kinds of opportunities (Solsevik et al., 2014).

Considering the undeniable effect of an individual's mental storage and knowledge skilfulness on the level of entrepreneurial alertness, in the present study the effect of an individual's previous knowledge on promoting the level of entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of proper entrepreneurial opportunities were evaluated. In addition, considering the necessity of classification of variables so that their relationships can be determined, the variables were classified in distinct sets and four aspects of personal experience, knowledge of the market, knowledge of customer's needs and the educational level (mentioned in Ardichvilis model, 2003, in relation to previous knowledge) were evaluated in the form of eight variables as follows: the relevant job experience, the skill to use technology, awareness about the supply and need process in the market, the ability to identify the proper market, education relevant to the subject, entrepreneurial education and familiarity with the principles of business, awareness about the provision of proper services for the customers and awareness about the customers' latent needs and its effect on entrepreneurial alertness, and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities (Eddy and Stollefson, 2009).

Practical and theoretical evaluations have shown that no study has been undertaken to comprehensively evaluate how entrepreneurs use financial supports. Social entrepreneurs and social business stakeholders do not know what methods are available for financial

support and which of these techniques are necessary to find methods that can accelerate the development of social entrepreneurship, resulting in social development. In addition, some innate characteristics of the financial support system have compromised the provision of financial support for the capabilities of social entrepreneurs. Provision of the necessary funds has been a challenge for social entrepreneurs, which is one of the most important issues for them because they will not succeed without sustained funding. On the other hand, there are only a limited number of studies on the opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial alertness in the field of health. Therefore, there is an information gap in this field. As a result, the main question is what are the factors affecting the design and elucidation of a social entrepreneurial model in the field of health?

Theoretical principles

The results of a study by Azizi and Mallayjerdi (2017) showed that financial support, earnings, investment and state funding, respectively, have the greatest roles in providing financial sources and income for social entrepreneurs.

The results of a study by Ahmadi et al. (2018) showed that cultural capital and entrepreneurial spirit significantly affect the utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities with 0.54 and 0.36 coefficients, respectively. However, economic capital did not have a significant effect. In addition, the multiple correlation coefficient of the structural equation model showed that independent variables could explain almost a third (0.33) of the changes in utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities. The results showed that in order to create job and employment backgrounds in social sciences, first different opportunities for job and entrepreneurship should be identified; then the cultural capital and the entrepreneurial spirit of the students should be promoted.

The results of a study by Berdario & Santouz (2018) showed that of all the five important personality traits only conscientiousness can explain the utilization of crowd funding sources in social businesses.

The results of a study by Wange Marit et al. (2018) showed that the most important financial sources of social entrepreneurs are

earnings, state supports, investment and donations.

The research framework

A social entrepreneur is an individual who exhibits an entrepreneurial behavior and instead of gathering personal wealth is in pursuit of social or general benefits (Rahimian et al., 2013). Social entrepreneurship is motivated by a new type of pragmatic, innate and farsighted action and its networks and is inspired by a combination of business models, beneficence and social movements to find solutions for social problems and to present new and sustained social values (Nicholes, 2006).

Financial support

Financial support is defined by the technical encyclopedia of investopedia as the act of providing credits for business activities, procurement or investment. The business of financial organizations and banks is to provide financial support so that the necessary capital for businesses, consumers and investors is provided to achieve their goals. It is necessary to utilize financial support in each economic system because it makes it possible for bossiness and companies to accelerate their activities and facilitate their mechanism of action. Each social organization needs financial support, and evaluation of the financial sources necessary for each organization requires four important steps. Entrepreneurs rely on the definition of the capabilities necessary for the social organization, provision of the overall scheme for the human resources in order to achieve the capabilities required, development of a program for resources and financial plans, and access to the sources for new businesses. The extent of the capital and human resources are the most important supports for entrepreneurs. Selection of financial resources and justification of the best choice for the best structure and organization of the capital under different business conditions have paved the way for the evaluation of the attitudes of management toward the selection and proper allocation of financial resources in the financial literature (Etemadi et al., 2014).

Funding is the art and science of cash management. The aim of funding is investment, profitability, lowering of the risks

and meeting the economic and social needs of the bossiness (Paramasivan & Sabermenian, 2009).

Opportunity recognition

There are two common views in relation to the opportunity recognition. The first view is the recognition of the opportunities in the environment and the second view is the creation of opportunities through a change in a phenomenon. The first view in the entrepreneurship literature is known as the opportunity recognition view and the second one is known as the opportunity creation view (Rostami & Feizbakhsh, 2013). DeJong & Marcelli (2005) believe that the opportunity arises from the external environment and out of the entrepreneur or the company, in which the entrepreneur and his or her colleagues carry out entrepreneurial activities in nature.

Entrepreneurial alertness

Entrepreneurial alertness is defined as an individual ability to collect, transfer and select data that lead to potential business opportunities and profit-making. More simply, entrepreneurial alertness is in fact the ability to understand and see opportunities that others are not able to see. In fact, creation of a new business is not an exclusively economic process; rather, it has a close relationship with the environment surrounding the business (Anderson, 2007) and individuals in different environments make different entrepreneurial decisions (Shell, 2000), and recognize a special situation as an opportunity during their interaction with the environment. On the other hand, individuals' behaviors depend on individual values and beliefs, personality traits and their unique assets (human, social and financial). Such a background forms each individual's interests and capabilities, which are known as 'entrepreneurial alertness' (Tang, 2009).

Table 1. The domains of social entrepreneurship in the field of health

| Concept | Domains | References |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Funding | State supports | Chavez (2004), Diorex & Stiben (2010) |
| | Private sector supports | Diorex & Stiben (2010) |
| Opportunity recognition | The source of opportunity | DeJong & Marsaley (20015) |
| | The nature of opportunity | Forsgren (2016), Toma et al. (2013) |
| Entrepreneurial alertness | Market knowledge | Magnipour et al. (2011) |
| | The individual's personal experience | Shine (2000) |
| | The individual's educational level and knowledge | Barron (2006) |

Materials and Methods

In the present descriptive/correlational study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used. The statistical population of the qualitative section consisted of the experts in the field of health, who formed a panel of experts to collect qualitative data. The statistical population of the qualitative section consisted of all the staff in the field of health. The samples size of the qualitative section consisted of 20 experts in the field of health. The sample size in the qualitative section was estimated at 290 staff members of the field of health using the Morgan table. In the qualitative section, purposeful judgmental sampling technique was used. In the quantitative section, random sampling techniques were used to collect samples from the health field staff. In relation to completing the questionnaire, random sampling technique was used.

Delphi technique was used to collect and classify parameters in the present study. After carrying out a study on the subject, a number of parameters were identified. Delphi technique was used in one session to collect further parameters and then classify them. In the subsequent sessions (three sessions) a consensus was reached for each parameter and after three sessions a number of parameters were eliminated and the researchers in the present study confirmed 26 parameters.

A questionnaire was used to collect data in the quantitative section. The questionnaire resulting from the Delphi technique consisted of 26 questions in the three aspects of funding, opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial alertness. The environment aspect consisted of 10 questions; state decisions and political leaders section had 6 questions; entrepreneurial structure aspect had 5 questions; and entrepreneurial performance section consisted of 5 questions. According to 5-point Likert scale, the choice “Strongly agree” was given a score of 5 and the choice “Strongly disagree” was given a score of 1. Before distributing the questionnaire, it was confirmed by 5 professors. Confirmatory factor analysis was used for construct validation of the questionnaire. Since KMO was estimated at 0.83 and Bartlett’s test for sphericity was significant, the construct validity of the survey tool was confirmed.

Factor analysis

Since factor loading values <0.3 are unacceptable and are ignored and since values 0.3–0.6 are acceptable (Ghiasvand, 2011:90), factor loading values <0.3 were eliminated and values >0.3 were reported in the graphs.

| Concept | Domain | Index | Factor load | Chi-square | P-value |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|---------|
| Funding | State support | State funding | 0.51 | 41.49 | 0.001 |
| | | Orientation of the economy toward social entrepreneurship | 0.48 | 48.86 | 0.001 |
| | | Support from the private sector to change and improve social entrepreneurship | 0.43 | 112.29 | 0.001 |
| | | Implementation of fundamental changes in the economic prospects of the existing concepts in social entrepreneurship field in association with challenging this art and industry | 0.39 | 51.30 | 0.001 |
| | Private sector support | Private sector funding | 0.51 | 31.68 | 0.001 |
| | | Orientation of investment toward social entrepreneurship | 0.48 | 117.95 | 0.001 |
| Opportunity recognition | Origin of opportunity | Identification of social entrepreneurship opportunities | 0.54 | 178.17 | 0.001 |
| | | Identification of social entrepreneurship ideas | 0.43 | 112.29 | 0.001 |
| | Nature of opportunity | Determination of profit-making capacity of entrepreneurs' products compared to the previous year | 0.52 | 40.01 | 0.001 |
| | | Identification of social entrepreneurship ideas | 0.48 | 15.69 | 0.001 |
| Entrepreneurial alertness | Knowledge of market | Awareness of the supply and need process in the market | 0.55 | 47.89 | 0.001 |
| | | Identification of the appropriate market | 0.58 | 53.38 | 0.001 |
| | | Awareness of the proper way of providing services for the customers | 0.59 | 62.51 | 0.001 |
| | | Awareness of the customers' latent needs | 0.47 | 57.44 | 0.001 |
| | Individual's personal experience | The skill to use technology | 0.46 | 54.04 | 0.001 |
| | | The relevant work experience | 0.36 | 34.68 | 0.001 |
| | Individual's education and knowledge | The relevant education | 0.62 | 47.32 | 0.001 |
| Entrepreneurship education | | 0.67 | 78.21 | 0.001 | |

Data were collected and summarized and subjected to statistical analyses with the use of SPSS 16.0 and Amos 8.5. Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the study’s reliability; Spearman’s correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the relationship between the variables before evaluation of the causal relationship between the variables. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the construct and the research mode with the use of Amos software program; and fit indices were used for research hypotheses and to determine the type and strength of the relationship of independent variables with dependent variables.

Results

A total of 73 respondents (52.2%) were female and 217 (74.8%) were male. A total of 29 subjects (10%) had associate degrees; 122 (42%) had bachelor’s degrees; 52 (18%) had master’s degrees; 18 (6.2%) had doctorate

degrees; and 69 (23.8%) had not answered this question. The mean age of the subjects was 37.78%. In addition, the mean ages of the female and male respondents were 33.04 and 34.51 years, respectively. The overall mean work experience of the subjects was 8.02 years, with means of 8.06 and 9.900 years for female respondents and 8.02 years for male respondents.

All the variables of the study were at a moderate level. Since the kurtosis and skewness of the variables were in the range of -1 to +1, all the variables were distributed normally. Therefore, structural equation model was used for the analysis of data (Table 1). There was a positive and significant relationship between funding and opportunity recognition ($P < 0.001$). There was a positive and significant relationship between opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial alertness ($P < 0.001$). In addition, there was a positive and significant relationship between funding and entrepreneurial alertness ($P < 0.001$) (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the research variables of all the subjects (n=290)

| Indexes | Mean | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis | df | t | P-value |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|----------|----------|-----|--------|---------|
| Funding | 28.703 | 5.112 | 0.662 | 0.135 | 289 | 90.585 | 0.000 |
| Opportunity recognition | 18.386 | 2.843 | 0.599 | 0.178 | 289 | 68.922 | 0.000 |
| Entrepreneurial alertness | 13.703 | 2.142 | 0.316 | 0.179 | 289 | 49.631 | 0.000 |

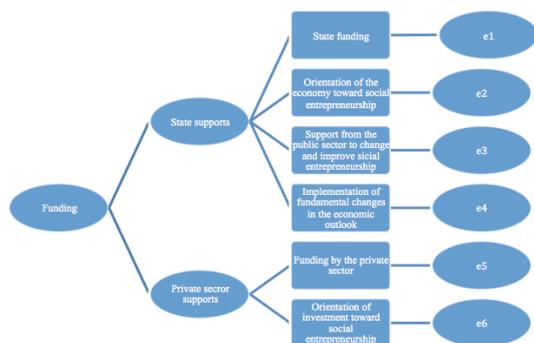


Figure 1. The model used to determine funding in the standardized state

Table 3. The fit indices of the model used to determine funding

| Fit indices | RMSEA | χ^2/df | RMR | GFI | CFI | NNFI |
|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Statistic | 0.050 | 1.56 | 0.053 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.94 |

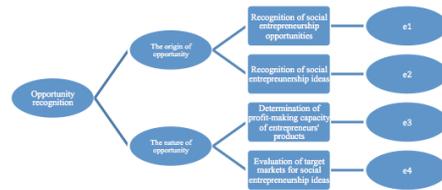


Figure 2. The model used to determine opportunity recognition in the standardized state

Table 4. The fit indices of the model used to determine opportunity recognition

| Fit indices | RMSEA | χ^2/df | RMR | GFI | CFI | NNFI |
|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Statistic | 0.076 | 1.74 | 0.093 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.98 |

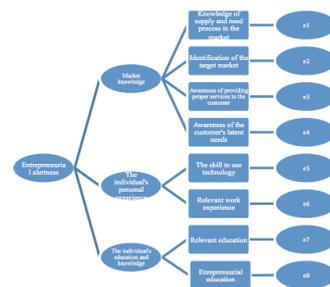


Figure 3. The model used to determine entrepreneurial alertness in the standardized state

Table 5. The fit indices of the model used to determine entrepreneurial alertness

| Fit indices | RMSEA | χ^2/df | RMR | GFI | CFI | NNFI |
|-------------|--------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Statistic | 0.0667 | 1.81 | 0.095 | 0.096 | 0.096 | 0.098 |

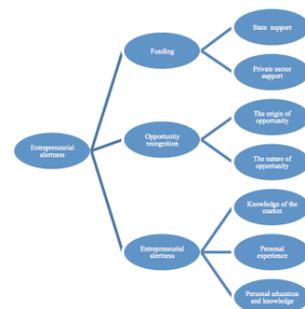


Figure 5. The model for linear structured relationships in the standardized state

Table 6. Fit indices of the measurement model

| Fit indices | RMSEA | χ^2/df | RMR | GFI | CFI | NNFI |
|-------------|--------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Statistic | 0.0661 | 1.91 | 0.095 | 0.098 | 0.098 | 0.098 |

Discussion

Considering rapid changes in national economies and interactions with the global economy and the emergence of some phenomena such as globalization of the economy, some specific areas of research have been introduced in relation to various strategies to accelerate the process of growth, sustained development and economic welfare.

One of these new topics is the role of entrepreneurs in this process.

Since entrepreneurship has attracted the attention of policy-makers as one of the main parameters for the development of communities, and by taking into account the new and changing conditions prevailing in countries, it is necessary to consider entrepreneurship as an important requirement to compensate for the deficiencies and remove the existing obstacles to be able to face these special conditions; this has also been considered seriously in different fields of health.

Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of all the aspects and capabilities affecting the initial steps of the formation and establishment of entrepreneurship, consisting of the improvement of entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of proper entrepreneurial opportunities so that the resultant experience can be successfully used in the field of health. On the other hand, it should be remembered that given the various aspects of individuals' previous knowledge, it is very difficult to offer an official and structured definition for it. Since no comprehensive studies have evaluated the effects of different aspects of previous knowledge on opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial alertness, this can be considered one of the innovations of the study and one of its strong points.

During interpretation of the opinions of the participants in the study, attention should be paid to the fact that based on their opinion entrepreneurial alertness strongly affects the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, indicating a positive attitude toward business instructions and attention to the environment. In this context, the results confirmed that one of the techniques that promotes the sensitivity and alertness of individuals is the information asymmetry and the presence of previous knowledge so that the individuals become sensitive to information related to their previous information. Therefore, it might be claimed that identification and promotion of factors affecting entrepreneurial alertness in fact significantly increase the chances of the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, consistent with the results of previous studies by Ardichivili et al. (2003), Kirzner et al (1997) and Meigounpoori et al. (2012).

In addition, testing the other hypotheses of the study showed that some of the various factors of opportunity recognition that were evaluated in the present study consisted of recognition of social entrepreneurial opportunities, identification of social entrepreneurial ideas, determination of the profit-making capacity of the products of entrepreneurs compared to the previous year and identification of social entrepreneurial ideas, consistent with the results of studies by Meigounpoori et al. (2011) and Bosma et al. (2000).

To explain what was discussed above, it might be pointed out that the ever-increasing need of specialists in different industries, including those in the field of health, for entrepreneurial sciences and management of businesses to utilize the proper opportunities related to their field of activity has increased the awareness and attention of these individuals to the conditions prevailing in the markets related to their business, their clients and their needs, paving the way for the recognition and use of better and newer opportunities. This might be very effective in relation to the awareness about the clients' latent needs in businesses related to the health field.

The results of the present study showed that funding affects the social entrepreneurship in the field of health. Funding consists of factors such as state funding, orientation of the economy toward social entrepreneurship, supporting the public sector in order to alter and improve social entrepreneurship, implementation of fundamental changes in the economic prospects of the existing concepts in the field of social entrepreneurship in association with challenging this industry, funding by the private sector and orientation of investment toward social entrepreneurship.

State and public sector supports result in an increase in the power and rate of utilization of rare social opportunities, consistent with the results of studies by Kordnaige et al. (2012) and Phillips et al. (2006).

Considering the results in relation to the undeniable effect and the specific role of funding in entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, it appears it is necessary to include lessons on entrepreneurship and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities in the educational curricula of various active forces

in the community, such as health field practitioners, in order to further develop entrepreneurship in different countries. Therefore, it might be claimed that it is possible to promote entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of proper opportunities in the health field business with the use of experience and knowledge of individuals and by promoting the level of education in relation to entrepreneurship and marketing such as knowledge about the supply and need in the market; the cases discussed above are the components and the basic structures of the entrepreneurship process.

Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that various factors, including funding, promotion of entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities have a positive and significant effect on social entrepreneurship in the field of health. In general, it can be concluded that promotion and provision of proper funding can promote entrepreneurial alertness and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, which are the main gates to enter the field of entrepreneurship.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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