

Social Entrepreneurship Readiness amongst the Malaysian Muslim Youths

Kamarulzaman Ab Aziz¹⁺, Atikah Mohd Zulkifle², MHD Louai Sarhan²

¹ Faculty of Business, Multimedia University, 75450 Bukit Beruang, Melaka

² Faculty of Management, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya 63100, Selangor
kamarulzaman.aziz@mmu.edu.my

Abstract. Prior work had observed poverty among the Muslim community and suggested the possibility of the religion itself as being a conditioning factor. This somewhat contentious suggestion may get traction due to the unfortunate fact that among the neediest nations are from Muslim world. This situation needs to be addressed and many have recognised the importance of entrepreneurialism in improving circumstances especially those at the bottom of the pyramid. Malaysia is not excluded from the situation; with percentage of Muslims below the poverty threshold at all-time high. Selangor, one of the most developed state in the country, reported an alarming rise of asnafs in 2017. The increase in asnafs means more zakat distribution and collection are needed. The global outbreak of Covid-19 is compounding the situation further; many are affected by the economic impacts of the Pandemic. This underlines the importance of finding more effective and targeted initiatives that can empower the asnafs. As one of the leading Muslim countries, Malaysia is often look to for exemplary replicable solutions. It is thus suggested that a key to the situation is to drive social entrepreneurship amongst the Muslim youths in the country. This is because the graduates will have knowledge, skills and exposure that most likely will enable them to come up with impactful innovative solutions. A critical prerequisite is to have good insights of the dynamics that can drive the youth towards SE for community development. Specifically, this study seeks to examine the level of awareness of SE potential for community development, and the determinants of readiness for SE among the Muslim youth in Malaysia. The intended result out of this study is a validated framework that can inform recommendations for better policy interventions and programs to drive social entrepreneurship among Muslim youth in Malaysia.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, community development, community resilience

1. Introduction

Studies have highlighted entrepreneurship as an important solution to fight poverty due to its ability to promote the creation of new job opportunities, and the establishment of engines of economic growth (Baron & Shane, 2008). Furthermore, it is also a popular strategy for youth development agenda due to entrepreneurship ability to combat unemployment either due to graduate skills mismatch or low job opportunities as an effect from economic downturn, etc.

According to Chudik et al (2020) the Covid-19 Pandemic with its wide-ranging impacts had created a significantly challenging time for society. The severity of the damage the Pandemic is causing to the global economy is at such an unprecedented scale as observed by Statista¹; "The economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is largely driven by a fall in demand, meaning that there are no consumers to purchase the goods and services available in the global economy." Locally, it was reported² that the "Malaysian economy contracted 17.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 from a 0.7 per cent growth in the first quarter due to unprecedented impact of the stringent containment measures to control the Covid-19 pandemic globally and domestically." This has led to the report³ predicting that the road to recovery for Malaysia will not be an easy or smooth path.

Furthermore, the negative impacts had been observed⁴ amongst the Muslim community with the significant rise of those within the Asnaf category. The Oxford dictionary defined Asnaf as a "group of people worthy of receiving a Muslim tithe or Zakat (the destitute, the poor, the tithe collectors, the converts, the slaves to whom freedom is promised, the debtors, the distant travellers and the ones who fight in the name of Allah)". Different to Sadaqah (normal charity), as explained in the Quran (Surah Al-Taubah, verse 60), Zakat is "... for the poor and the needy, and amil (those employed to administer the funds), for the muallaf (those who have embraced Islam), for those in bondage and in debt, those who strive in the cause of Allah and for the wayfarer; (thus it is) ordained by Allah and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom."

Richards (2015) in his work investigating the prevalence of poverty amongst the Muslims, he hypothesized that the religion itself, not the people led to the association with poverty. This idea may be fuelled by the fact that many Muslim countries are poor and underdeveloped. Shahidullah & Haque (2016) called for the need for concerted efforts to drive entrepreneurialism in the community. In Malaysia pockets of poverty had been increasing among the Muslim⁵. Echoing the call by Shahidullah

¹ <https://www.statista.com/topics/6139/covid-19-impact-on-the-global-economy/>

² <https://www.nst.com.my/business/2020/08/616534/malaysias-economy-shrinks-171pct-covid-19-impact>

³ <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/what-experts-are-saying-about-road-ahead-malaysias-economic-recovery>

⁴ <https://www.utusan.com.my/rencana/forum/2021/12/golongan-asnaf-semakin-bertambah-era-covid-19/>

⁵ <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/384323>

& Haque (2016), many⁶ highlighted the need for effective solutions to address the increasing asnaf population situation.

Thus, it proposed that a viable option to address the situation is to drive social entrepreneurship (SE) in the community. SEs will not only increase the entrepreneurship levels but also offer social innovations that can alleviate the various problems within the community. Next, the key to the success of this agenda is to have healthy uptake amongst the youth of the country especially graduates. This is because the graduates will have knowledge, skills and exposure that most likely will enable them to come up with impactful innovative solutions. Thus, there is a need to understand the dynamics that can drive the youth towards SE in general and amongst the Muslim youths specifically. Based on the adapted research framework, this paper aims to study the readiness for SE amongst the Muslim youths in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Malaysian landscape

There had been an increasing interest in social entrepreneurship lately (Bosma et. al., 2016). Jabar & Asung (2016) studied social entrepreneurship among university students in Malaysia grounded by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and found that the level of awareness (their indicator for attitude), peer pressure (the indicator for subjective norm) and social entrepreneurship program (the adopted indicator for perceived behavioural control) to have some explanatory effect for the respondents' (university students) intention to produce novel SE solutions. Therefore, institutions were recommended to drive the SE agenda to benefit the nation and as a fulfilling vocation for the students. Furthermore, they recognized the potential of SE for addressing the needs of the often excluded or marginalized groups in Malaysia especially by their target respondents as they have the knowledge and exposure that can lead to innovative sloutions.

Another insightful work was by Ayob et al (2014) which built upon earlier works (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994), that explored social entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates within the context of an emergent economy. Their work underlined the roles of empathy and exposure as precursors to the perceived desirability to initiate SE projects and feasibility for establishing social enterprises. According to Koe Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan (2010), social entrepreneurs tend to be characteristically to have a propensity in displaying personality traits like agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness. Radin A Rahman et al (2016) found that students in Malaysian institutions of higher learnings have higher intention for SE than general entrepreneurship. Arguably, this can be seen as suggesting that Malaysian youths, especially those in higher learning institutions, have good levels of interest in social issues in their communities and

⁶ <https://selangorkini.my/2019/10/lzs-perlucari-kaedah-bantu-asnaf-keluar-daripada-kemiskinan/>

towards social activism. This is well in line with global trend where youths often become highly engaged and champions for social actions (Jason, 2018). It can be concluded that there is a good potential for SE from among the Malaysian student population.

Previously, there was a specific policy framework on social entrepreneurship; the Malaysian Social Enterprise Blueprint 2015-2018. It was championed by the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre or MaGIC⁷. However, in November 2021, the government announced⁸ that MaGIC was to merge with another entity – Technology Park Malaysia – to become Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (MRANTI). Thus, the championing agency for the SE agenda in the country is now the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC).

2.2. Theoretical framework

The earliest work to propose a specific model for SE intention was by Mair and Noboa (2016). The model was proposed based on earlier works explaining entrepreneurial intention (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Krueger, 1993; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Krueger et. al., 2000) all of which can be seen to be supported by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Specifically, Mair and Noboa (2006) proposed the following four determinants for SE intention; Empathy, Moral Obligation, Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Social Support. Next, based on the model by Mair and Noboa (2006), Hockerts (2017) offered his model by including “Prior Experience with Social Organizations” as a new determinant for SE intention.

Specifically, Hockerts (2017) proposed experience with the types of issues that social entrepreneurs strive to solve as a catalyst for behavioural intention. Additionally, the variables suggested by Mair and Noboa (2006) were adapted as mediators to the relationship between experience and intention. His model also suggested that having access to and participation in social organizations also promotes the formation of social entrepreneurship intention.

2.3. Hypotheses development

Hass (1984) explained empathy as the ability to adapt to other people's perspectives or perceptions and see it as a fundamental component of all social behaviour. The ability to recognize and express other people's emotions or feelings intellectually. Based on Mair and Noboa (2006) model, empathy is the suggested antecedent for the attitude toward social entrepreneurial behaviour. Batson et al. (1997), experimental studies on the effect of empathy have shown that individuals who read situations with high empathy adjectives such as pitiful and touching are more likely to acquire voluntary intention than those who read explanations that use factual terminology.

⁷ <https://www.mymagic.my/>

⁸ <https://www.digitalnewsasia.com/digital-economy/magic-tpm-now-mranti>

Therefore, researchers such as Dees (2012), Miller et al (2012), and Wood (2012) described empathy as an intrinsic indicator of the intention of social entrepreneurship. Based on these views, the following hypothesis is proposed;

Empathy has a significant positive effect on Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Prasolova-Førland (2004) explains that social awareness is awareness of a community's social situation in a shared environment that can be physical, virtual or both. The groups of skills included in social awareness, namely assessing other peoples' differences, understanding and taking their viewpoints, taking care of them, showing compassion and consideration, sympathy and empathy with the experiences with the emotion of other people (Beamish & Bryer 2015). Meanwhile, individuals' flexibility, behavioural change, and adaptation are elements of social awareness that vary depending on the situation (Davidson, 2011). Furthermore, social awareness has a critical aspect; the ability to comprehend the issues around the world and the feelings of other individuals under different circumstances (Bruce, 2010). It can be seen as an alternative to Moral Obligation used in Hockerts (2017). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Social Awareness has a significant positive effect on Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Mair and Noboa (2006) suggested that the perceived feasibility of establishing a social enterprise is determined by an individual's perceived capability to do a specific behaviour, known as self-efficacy beliefs. Wood and Bandura (1989) study explained that self-efficacy is defined as people's belief in one's ability to prepare the encouragement, cognitive resources, and behaviour required to manage things in their lives broadly. Meanwhile, according to Hockerts (2017) self-efficacy suggests a self-directed enabling process, and social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a person's belief that individuals can help solve societal problems. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Self-Efficacy has a significant positive effect on Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

An individual's social capital influences the social support that individuals derive from their social network, and social support refers to a process that is others-directed (Mair and Noboa, 2006). Shore (1999) declared that governments, corporations or religious institutions alone could not accomplish ambitious civic projects because they need all the civil societies. Entrepreneurs' need for social support depends in terms of their social capital, a concept usually linked with trust, civic pride, and unity. Therefore, Backman and Smith (2000) concluded that social networks' trust and cooperation are characterized as forms of social support. The following hypothesis is thus proposed:

Perceived Social Support has a significant positive effect on Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

It was presented that the prior experience of individuals will influence intention (Ardichvili et al, 2003). Davidsson and Honig (2003) also concluded that entrepreneurial intention could be influenced by another type of prior entrepreneurship experience. Prior entrepreneurship experience such as knowledge of markets, customer issues and customer service knowledge would affect the exploration of opportunities by individuals, thus influencing their entrepreneurial intention (Shane, 2013). So, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Prior Entrepreneurship Experience has a significant positive effect on Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

It was found that Asian female university students viewed being an entrepreneur as unacceptable compared to male students, which may represent the masculine norms and goals related to entrepreneurship (Yukongdi & Lopa, 2017). According to Watson and Robinson (2003), there is a distinction between men and women when it comes to risks taking behaviour. Kolvereid (1996) and Mazzarol et al (1999) pointed that men have higher entrepreneurial intentions than women. This view was echoed by Schiller et al (1997) when it was discovered in terms of entrepreneurial spirit, there is a substantial gap between males and females. Given these observations from the earlier studies, it is important to investigate this phenomenon in the context of Muslim youths in Malaysia. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Social Entrepreneurship Awareness moderates the relationship between Empathy and Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Social Entrepreneurship Awareness moderates the relationship between Social Awareness and Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Social Entrepreneurship Awareness moderates the relationship between Self-Efficacy and Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Social Entrepreneurship Awareness moderates the relationship between Perceived Social Support and Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

Social Entrepreneurship Awareness moderates the relationship between Prior Entrepreneurship Experience and Social Entrepreneurship Intention amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research framework

Building upon the tradition of adaptations by the earlier works, this study adopted Hockerts' model as the theoretical framework and then adapted the framework further, namely;

1. Substituting "Moral Obligation" with "Social Awareness". Hockerts (2017) (p. 108) defined "moral obligation" as "being positioned between the act of moral judgment and the formation of moral intent." "Moral Obligation" was the proxy for TPB's social norms since it is defined as the variable measuring the feeling of being obligated to act. This study propose "Social Awareness" as a new proxy because it will measure the knowledge and understanding of one's communal situation or ecosystem that can compel towards action (Kwong et al., 2012).
2. "Prior Experience with Social Organizations" is substituted with "Prior Entrepreneurship Experience". The proposition for this is that entrepreneurship experience provides the individuals with insights that can be more conducive for forming entrepreneurial ideas for social needs i.e. SE ideas and leading to intent, as seen in (Zappe, 2012).
3. Thirdly, "Intention" is substituted with "Readiness" as it is believed that readiness would be a closer precursor to behaviour as suggested in (Salman et al., 2019).
4. Finally, familiarity or awareness with the SE concept or "Social Entrepreneurship Awareness" is suggested as a moderating factor in the earlier relationships. This is in line with Shahverdi et al. (2018).

The resulting research framework (see Figure 1) consists of the following independent variables – Empathy (Emp), Self-Efficacy (SEF), Perceived Social Support (PSS), Social Awareness (SA) and Prior Entrepreneurship Experience (PEE). The dependent variable for this study is; Social Entrepreneurship Readiness (SER). Plus, Social Entrepreneurship Awareness (SEA) is a moderator.

Based on the proposed research framework, the following are the finalised hypotheses tested in this study;

H1: Emp has a significant positive effect on SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H2: SA has a significant positive effect on SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H3: SEF has a significant positive effect on SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H4: PSS has a significant positive effect on SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H5: PEE has a significant positive effect on SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H6: SEA moderates the relationship between Emp and SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H7: SEA moderates the relationship between SA and SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H8: SEA moderates the relationship between SEF and SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H9: SEA moderates the relationship between PSS and SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

H10: SEA moderates the relationship between PEE and SER amongst Muslim youths in Malaysia.

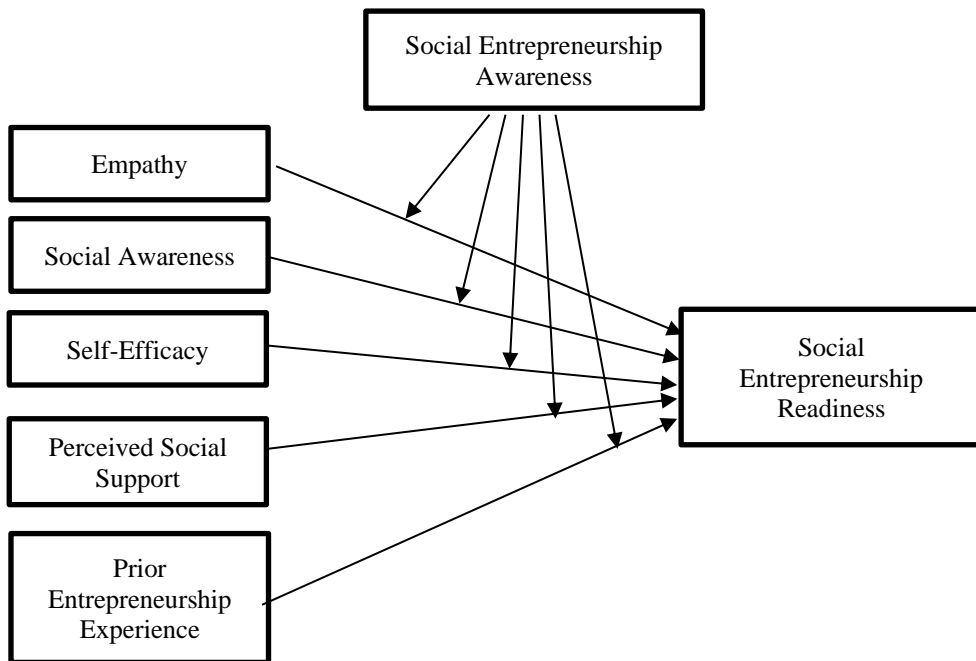


Fig. 1: Research framework.

3.2. Research procedure

Quantitative study is the adopted research design for this work. An online survey was designed based on the research framework and used to collect data in order to meet the specified research objectives. The online survey was administered among students in institutions of higher learning in the country. The survey consists of 8 sections, the first section is to collect demographic data of the respondents, meanwhile, the remaining sections cover the constructs as per the framework, Emp, SA, SEF, PSS,

PEE, SEA, and SER. 5-point Likert scale is used for the items in the survey (Kothari, 2008). Since it was not possible to obtain a sampling frame for the target population, Convenience Sampling was used as the sampling strategy. The target respondents were Muslim youths in Malaysia. Specifically, the unit of analysis was individuals that need to satisfy the subsequent inclusion criteria – Muslim; Enrolled as a student in a Malaysian institution of higher learning, and aged 18 to 30 years old⁹(n=129).

The online survey was administered to the targeted respondents using Google form. This helped to ensure ease of access to the survey for the respondents and motivate them to complete it. Using Google form also ensured that the responses were automatically stored digitally and avoided any possible data entry errors common when using printed survey forms. The first 30 collected responses were analysed to verify the reliability of the scales used for the survey. According to Cortina (1993), Cronbach's Alpha above 0.70 is acceptable, 0.80 or greater is preferred and higher is generally better. The results showed all scales to be acceptable and good with values greater than 0.70. Thus, the survey was deemed reliable and good for the study. Since no changes were made to the survey, the first 30 responses used for the pilot test were then included as part of the main data analysis. The SmartPLS software was used for the analysis to test the 10 hypotheses proposed earlier. The following section presents and discusses the findings.

4. Findings

4.1. Profile of respondents

To explore the sample demographic profile, confirm the inclusion criteria and the respondents' SEA a descriptive analysis was conducted. Following Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents.

Among the 129 respondents, there is almost a balanced representation of gender with females being slightly higher (52.7%). All the respondents fall within the youth category with ages not exceeding 35 years old. All of them are students in institutions of higher learning and majoring in various fields. In terms of background, according to the household monthly income, it can be said that there is a good representation of respondents from all levels of the economic pyramid. In terms of SEA, the sample has an almost 50-50 distribution, specifically, 47.3% reporting having an awareness of the SE concept and the rest did not. A higher level of awareness would be more desirable for a much more vibrant SE uptake in the country.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	%
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⁹ Malaysian Youth Policy 2018 defined youth as those in the range of 15-30 years old. However, in Malaysia only at the age of 18, school leavers, will enter tertiary education either in community colleges/polytechnics/colleges/universities. [<https://www.kbs.gov.my/info-terkini/1677-malaysian-youth-policy.html>]

Gender		
Male	61	47.3
Female	68	52.7
Age		
≤19	12	9.3
20-25	102	79.1
26-30	12	9.3
31-35	3	2.3
Muslim	129	100
Student in Institutions of Higher Learning		
Yes	129	100.0
No	0	0.0
Field of Study		
Business & Management	46	35.6
Creative Multimedia	13	10.1
Engineering & Technology	45	34.9
Information Technology	5	3.9
Medicine	1	0.8
Others	19	14.7
Household Monthly Income		
≤ MYR 2500	50	38.8
MYR 2501 - MYR 5000	27	20.9
MYR 5001 - MYR7500	21	16.3
≥ MYR7501	31	24.0
SEA		
Yes	61	47.3
No	68	52.7

4.2. Analysis

The analysis employs the standard PLS analysis reporting format that has been established by prior research (Chin & Dibbern, 2010). PLS-SEM was used to test the research model for this study, and measurement model as well as its structural model were assessed using SmartPLS 3.0. This statistical software computes the parameters of the structural model and evaluates the psychometric qualities of the measuring model.

4.2.1. Measurement model assessment

The first step of the analysis was the internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement model. The internal consistency analysis was used to examine the reliability of the measurement model for this research. The reliability analysis was conducted to reaffirm the internal reliability of the items used to measure the constructs tested in this study. This was done using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability and according to previous studies, the threshold is 0.70, which means 0.70 is acceptable, 0.80 or greater is preferred (Cortina, 1993) and higher is generally better. However, greater than 0.50 is also deemed acceptable (Morera & Stokes, 2016; Streiner, 2003). All the constructs for this study were considered reliable and good as

the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability mostly were above 0.80 and one was above 0.50. Meanwhile, the convergent validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE) which the threshold is 0.50. The analysis shows the AVE values of the reflective constructs are greater than the threshold of 0.5 fulfilling the convergent validity meaning the measurements (indicators) and variables are valid to be used in this model. Table 2 presents the result of the analysis.

Table 2: Internal consistency analysis.

Construct	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Emp	0.574	0.839	0.854
SA	0.587	0.942	0.948
SEF	0.769	0.892	0.914
PSS	0.875	0.881	0.912
PEE	0.514	0.553	0.737
SER	0.851	0.942	0.958

4.2.2. Structural model assessment

The last step of the analysis is the structural model assessment. By using SmartPLS 3.0, the structural model assessment includes collinearity assessment, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), model fit and the regression analysis represented by the path coefficient between Emp, SA, SEF, PSS, and PEE towards SER, also the moderation effects by SEA on these relationships. VIF values larger than 5 in predictor constructs are crucial collinearity thresholds for assessing collinearity (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). When VIF reaches a crucial level, dropping or combining the predictor should be taken into consideration. The result in Table 3 shows the VIF values are lower than 5. Hence, no elimination or merging is required.

Next, coefficient of determination (R^2) is the squared relationship between the actual and predicted numbers of a specific endogenous construct which is a measurement of the predictive power model. The coefficient indicates the amount value of variance in the endogenous constructs. Based on Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2011), the R^2 values are divided into three categories which are 0.75 indicates substantial, 0.50 indicates moderate, and 0.25 indicates weak. Thus, the prediction power of the endogenous variable Social Entrepreneurship Readiness is shown in Table 4 indicating a moderate model of value 0.527.

Table 3: Collinearity assessment.

Predictors	VIF
Emp	2.995

SA	3.064
SEF	2.414
PSS	2.978
PEE	2.559

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R^2	Predictive Power
Social Entrepreneurship Readiness	0.788	Substantial

Moreover, the effect size (f^2) determines the differences between R^2 value changes when each exogenous variable is removed, allowing researchers to examine how exogenous variables affect the endogenous variable. The exogenous latent variable is presented as below 0.02 no effect, 0.02 small, 0.15 medium, and 0.34 large effects (Cohen, 1998). Table 5 presents the analysis.

Table 5: Effect size (f^2).

Hypothesis	(f^2)	Inference
H1	0.000	No effect
H2	0.001	No effect
H3	0.060	Small
H4	0.044	Small
H5	0.009	No effect
H6	0.011	No effect
H7	0.001	No effect
H8	0.008	No effect
H9	0.004	No effect
H10	0.003	No effect

According to the regression analysis results, the relationships of Emp, SA, and PEE towards SER are insignificant based on their P-values that exceeded 0.05. While the relationship between SEF towards SER is significant as P-value is 0.025 with a path coefficient of 0.414, also the relationship between PSS towards SER is significant as P-value is 0.017 with a path coefficient of 0.350. On the other hand, SEA has no moderation effect on any of the relationships between Emp, SA, SEF, PSS, and PEE towards SER as all the P-values are below 0.05 indicating insignificant moderating effects. Table 6 shows the analysis.

Table 6: Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Original	T Statistics	P Values
H1	0.023	0.155	0.438
H2	-0.054	0.250	0.401
H3	0.414	1.965	0.025

H4	0.350	2.125	0.017
H5	0.119	1.099	0.136
H6	-0.383	0.988	0.162
H7	0.124	0.269	0.394
H8	-0.378	0.665	0.253
H9	0.216	0.574	0.283
H10	-0.080	0.695	0.244

Lastly, the final step of the analysis in this research is the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) test. SRMR was used to validate the goodness of model fit. The SRMR of the saturated model is 0.064 which is less than 0.08 as recommended by Henseler (2014) to be considered a good model fit. Thus, the results show that the study has a good model fit and the findings from the sample can be considered representative of the target population.

5. Discussions

The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between SEF and SER ($p < 0.05$). Thus, H3 is supported. This suggests that the higher the youth's belief in his or her capabilities the more likely they will be ready to become a social entrepreneur. This is similar to the earlier study referred to for the research framework development but focuses on intention. The other significant positive relationship is H4; between PSS and SER ($p < 0.05$). This hypothesis is also accepted. Another finding that is in line with the prior study. This means that if the youth perceive their friends, family and others whom they refer to, are supportive both in terms of material and psychological or emotional, the more likely they will be ready for social entrepreneurship.

The results also showed that there are no significant positive relationships found for Emp, SA and PEE towards SER amongst the Muslim youths in Malaysia. Thus, H1, H2 and H5 are rejected. This probably can be explained by the difference in empathic responses according to cultural background, where Atkins et al (2016) found that East Asians comparatively have lower empathy. Similarly, another study Yusuf et al (2018) found that multicultural awareness and education in Malaysia were still at a low to medium level, thus the likelihood of the youth having high SA is still relatively low. PEE was also found to have no significant relationship with SER. This is probably due to general entrepreneurship experience may be seen as more for personal gain, whilst SE is seen as more to affecting public goods or benefiting the society not-self.

Furthermore, there is no significant moderating effect by SEA on any of the relationships. Thus, H6, H7, H8, H9 and H10 are rejected. This could be due to less than 50% of the sample being aware of SE. Shahverdi et al (2018) recognised SEA resulting from formal SE education as a significant moderator. However, only general

entrepreneurship is the required course for programmes in Malaysian universities. Meanwhile, SE courses are not yet a requirement. Thus, this could be a contributing factor to the relatively low awareness amongst the target respondents. Interestingly, when tested for a direct relationship between SEA towards SER it was found that it was significant (see Table 7). This suggests for SER amongst Malaysian Muslim youths, SEA is a much more important precursor compared to PEE. The specific knowledge of SE, not just entrepreneurship in general, seems to be key to evoking their readiness for SE.

Table 7: SEA towards SER.

Hypothesis	Original	T Statistics	P Values
SEA - SER	1.029	1.886	0.030

6. Conclusions

Initial findings found two antecedents, namely SEF and PSS to have significant positive relationships toward Malaysian Muslim youths' readiness for social entrepreneurship. Next, the additional test led to the identification of SEA as another antecedent for SER. It can be concluded that it is important for institutions to design into their programmes elements take can contribute towards character building and self-efficacy development for the students. Also important is the inclusion of courses on SE specifically to provide higher levels of awareness (SEA) and knowledge that can lead to their realisation of career potential in SE. Currently, the standard guideline from the Ministry of Higher Education is to include entrepreneurship subject in the programmes offered by the institutions. The subject is on general entrepreneurship, thus, introduction of specific subject on SE would ensure higher level of awareness and knowledge amongst the graduates. Furthermore, most institutions have entrepreneurship centres to drive initiatives design to produce both entrepreneurial graduates and graduate entrepreneurs. Ensuring these centres to implement programmes specifically focusing on SE would also help to generate better SER in the student population.

More importantly, agencies such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or popularly known as JAKIM, adopt the above into their planning and programming for youth development. A quick review of their website¹⁰ show a lack of a "youth-friendly" approach and image. Active collaborations or partnerships with the institutions would be a good bridge to address this need. Institutions mostly will have Islamic welfare and zakat offices, student associations such as Usrah (Ibrahim et al., 2015) and mosques on campuses, which all can be key partners as well as hubs for engagements. Recently, in April 2022, MEDAC unveiled the Malaysian SE

¹⁰ <https://www.islam.gov.my/ms/>

Action Plan 2030¹¹ (SEMy2030). The document is a framework aimed to deliver five main objectives; 1. To establish a holistic and dynamic ecosystem for SE, 2. To generate a critical mass of social entrepreneurs, 3. To strengthen the capacity development and competitiveness of the local social enterprises, 4. To bring SE to become part of the mainstream contributors for nation building, and 5. To enhance and normalise SE as a positive impact towards social as well as environmental development. This clearly indicates the continuation of political will in the country for the development of SE. Thus, it is recommended for JAKIM to refer, adapt, and update the policy framework to strategically drive the SE agenda for the Muslim community. This can affect a paradigm shift where the economic development of the Muslim community is championed by homegrown social enterprises and entrepreneurs. Mosques can be managed as social enterprises that would actively address the local needs more sustainably.

Summarily, this study proposes the importance of driving SER amongst the Muslim youths in the country. The findings provided a validated framework that can be the basis for the development of policy interventions and programs to encourage the Muslim youths to be social entrepreneurs delivering social innovations impacting the Ummah.

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¹¹ https://www.medac.gov.my/admin/files/med/image/portal/PDF/SEMy2030_BahasaMalaysia.pdf

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