

# Social Enterprise: Personality Traits, Prosocial Behaviour and Creation of Social Value

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**Abstract:** Social enterprises (SE) aim at improving social issues. The root for its success is the willingness to help those in needs. The SE objectives which place a less emphasis on an absolute profit orientation have become a challenge for some. Therefore, in understanding SE, the main purpose of the paper is to seek what drives people as a community and potential social entrepreneurs to engage in prosocial behaviour. Building from the big five personality traits and the positivism research approach, a survey was conducted. The results of structural model provide the evidences of agreeableness, consciousness and extraversion as significant determinants to prosocial behaviour. Understanding the psychological and emotional characteristics of potential social entrepreneurs is important as humans are the main actor that determines the SE success for the creation of social value.

**Keywords:** Social enterprise; prosocial behaviour; big five personality traits; social enterprise value

## 1. Introduction

Social enterprises (SE) are initiated with the aim to build a stronger community well-being (Farmer et al., 2016). It is a quite challenging work as social entrepreneurs do not only require skills and creative approaches (Durkin & Gunn, 2016), but having the desire and being want to help those in needs is equally important (Farmer et al., 2016). Research in psychological community defines the act of helping others as prosocial behaviour (PB). PB is a voluntary action to benefit other people or society such as sharing, assisting and co-operating to solve any difficulties of others or in the other words risking one's life to save others (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Wentzel (1993)

agrees that prosocial behaviour is important and evidences show positive forms of behaviour are positively related to some emotional and psychological processes, for other authoritative social outcomes and for intellectual achievements.

Prosocial behaviour has long been a challenge for social scientists who want to understand why people engage in helping others with the behaviour that is beneficial to others, but costly to individuals who take that action. Psychology suggests there are several reasons why people are involved in prosocial behaviour. In many cases, such behaviour is nurtured during childhood and adolescence as adults encourage children to share, act well, and help others. Therefore,

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prosocial behavior and social enterprise are tied together. However, past research on SE place less emphasise on the psychological aspects of the willingness to help. Therefore, it is the main goal of the study to explore what factors drive prosocial behaviour among potential social entrepreneurs. Past prosocial behaviours have investigated altruism and empathy as significant determinants. However, how the big five personality traits play the role in explaining prosocial behaviour requires further understanding. The research is significant as predefining the traits and characteristics of social entrepreneurs will help to sustain the creation of the social value.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Social Enterprise

Social enterprise has been a topic of academic enquiry for the past 20 years. The OECD describes social enterprises as private activities that are conducted in and with public interest (Xolani, 2012) which seek to serve the community's interest rather than profit maximization (Umberto, Lisa & Gerard, 2015). The main objectives are to create a sustained social change and to use commercial activities. The social value that social enterprises create is of different kinds, whether it is in health, environment, food, education, housing, or in the generation of stable and quality employability. Social enterprise finds its origins in a social economy context; an option that organized civil society to implement as a strategy to increase their income and thereby contribute to social and community development (Caroline & Antonio, 2011). Social enterprise as a tool for achieving mission has come to the fore. It is more than a revenue strategy and people are beginning to look at it as a tool of economic empowerment for the communities they serve. For most developing countries, and in particular for South Africa, social entrepreneurship and innovation are pivotal to unlocking growth and economic inclusion (Xolani, 2012). Social entrepreneurship based on (Seelos, Stephanie & Jai, 2015) is categorised as non-profit organisations, the initiatives of social entrepreneurs directed at certain social problems, and the socially responsible practices of commercial business engaged in cross-sector partnerships.

Social entrepreneurs have roles in leveraging social values of social networks, assembling resources and bridging institutional voids (Sudheer, Stephanie & Jai,

2015). According to (Mark et al., 2009), social enterprise organizations have their roots in the non-profit sector and are concerned with more than profit-making. Furthermore, social enterprise focuses on "commercial activities, earned income, and for-profit ventures that give financial and operational support to traditional social service programs" (Phills, Deiglmeier & Miller, 2008).

### 2.2 Prosocial Behavior

There is a recognition on the importance of prosocial behaviour in life. Prosocial behaviour is a helping behaviours; they are done to help others (Krebs, 1982). Hence, the outcomes demonstrate that individuals with a solid need to accomplish execution are ready to help other people. In addition, volunteerism as an act of prosocial behaviour is embraced as a non-compulsory, arranged helping movement, supported after some time and inside an authoritative setting, is not generally connected with beneficial outcomes as far as prosperity. These constructive outcomes are identified with joy based on prosocial inspiration (Vecina & Fernando, 2013). A few studies have revealed a determination impact that describes prior conditions to volunteerism, which prompts a specific methodical overestimation of the level of relationship amongst volunteerism and prosperity. Prosocial behaviour does not only benefit oneself and others, but it also promotes for greater social coordination and cohesiveness (Dovidio & Halabi, 2017).

### 2.2 Personality Traits and Prosocial Behavior

Studies on personality traits varies. However, many recent researches on psychology and human traits use the Big Five or the five-factor model that evaluates the personality traits as neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness to experience. However, in many studies, openness to experience is used interchangeably as intellect (DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007).

First, neuroticism is the tendency to be psychologically stressed and it can be traced as negative emotions of anxiety, anger and depression (Friedman & Schustack, 1999). Previous literature suggests a negative link between neuroticism and prosocial behaviour for example from the work of Guo, Sun and Li (2018). Research does not explain exactly how the nature of this character leads to negative social outcomes.

However, while Chaparro and Grusec (2016) claimed neuroticism simplifies the relationship between empathy and prosocial behaviour, with empathy and prosocial behaviour positively related to adolescence with high neuroticism, Shiner and Caspi (2003) concluded prosocial behaviour and concern for others have been associated with low scores on negative emotions or neurotics. Based on the discussion, the hypothesis is developed:

*H1: There is a negative relationship between neuroticism and prosocial behaviour.*

Second, agreeableness is the personality in which the individuals value getting along with others. They also considerate, kind, generous, trusting and trustworthy, helpful and willing to compromise their interests with others (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). A person with high agreeableness will demonstrate the form of prosocial behaviour (Caprara et al., 2011) where the agreeableness has been highly attributed to prosocial behaviour. The tendency to prosocial behaviour can lead the agreeableness people to be seen as warm, friendly and 'well-liked among his friends'. They are friendly to others, tolerant to others and show more patience than those who are less pleasant. A person with this trait is someone who agrees more in their intentions to do good to others. Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is offered:

*H2: There is a positive relationship between agreeableness and prosocial behaviour.*

Third, conscientiousness refers as self-discipline which is related to how people control, regulate and direct their impulses. It is attributed to behaviours such as sense of responsibility, reliability and diligence while working toward goals (McCrae & Costa, 1995). Conscientiousness has been shown to predict diverse prosocial behaviours such as blood donation (Ferguson & Chandler, 2005). In addition, a study by Ashton and Lee (2007) reported those who are high on conscientiousness are more willing to help. They are also diligent and reliable (Denissen & Penke, 2008). Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is offered:

*H3: There is a positive relationship between conscientiousness and prosocial behaviour.*

Forth, extraversion is normally associated with

engagement with external world, and it links to hospitality, excitement, firmness, positive emotion and warmth (McCrae & Costa, 1995). It was found extraversion relates to positive behaviour as volunteers and promotes for prosocial behaviour (Carlo et al., 2005). Therefore, it is believed individuals who are warmth, enjoy to interact with others, and often perceived as full of energy tend to be positively related with prosocial behaviour. Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is offered:

*H4: There is a positive relationship between extraversion and prosocial behaviour*

Fifth, intellects which is also referred as openness to experience (DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007), are individuals who are curious, intellectual and open to emotion. However, findings on intellect and prosocial behaviour seem to be in mixed. Some studies have found moderate to moderate positive correlations, while others have not found any significant relationship. There was a finding that smarter people tend to have a higher level in prosocial behaviour as compared to average people (Han et al., 2012). Similarly, Bartal, Decety and Mason (2011) also found higher intelligence is associated with a better quality of higher quantitative prosocial behaviour. Based on the discussion, the following hypothesis is offered:

*H5: There is a positive relationship between intellects and prosocial behaviour*

### **3. Research Design**

#### *3.1 Population, Sample Size and Instrument Development*

The population of the study was people who were identified as potential social entrepreneurs. A purposive sampling technique was selected to recruit the respondents. In determining the sample size, G\*power calculator was used. G\*Power is a tool for calculating statistical power analysis for multiple t test, F test,  $\chi^2$  test, z test and some exact tests. G\*Power can also be used to calculate the size of the effect and graph graphical power output. Based on the effect size set at 0.15, alpha level of 0.05, and 5 predictors, a sample of 138 was considered appropriate. However, taking the suggestions of [29] that larger sample improves precision and reliability of PLS-SEM results, the questionnaires were distributed to more than 200 respondents.

The instrument was developed by adapting item measurements of prosocial behaviour (Caprara et al., 2011) and the five personality traits (DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007). These items were measured as 5-point Likert scale with “1” represents strongly disagree and “5” for strongly agree. Item modification was made to meet the context of the study, and validated by the field experts. Prior to the actual data

collection, a pilot test was conducted and the results of the internal consistency score provide the evidences of the reliable concept measurement. In total, 208 responses were obtained. However, considering for the normality distribution, only 187 data was used for the analysis by using the SmartPLS 3. The demographic analysis of the respondents is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	33.2
	Female	125	66.8
Age	< 25 years old	81	43.3
	26 – 30 years old	58	31
	31- 35 years old	26	13.9
	36 – 40 years old	14	7.5
	41 and above	8	4.3
Education Level	Secondary School	17	9.1
	Diploma	32	17.1
	Bachelor or Bachelor's Degree	115	61.5
	Masters	18	9.6
	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	1	0.5
	Others	4	2.1

### 3.2 Assessment of Measurement Model

The internal consistency score of Cronbach’s alpha and the convergent validity that includes composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for the constructs are shown in Table 2. All of the item loadings exceed the minimum recommendation value

of 0.6, which is required for an exploratory study (Ramayah et al., 2018). All constructs meet the minimum value of the threshold requirement of composite reliability (CR) > 0.7 and average variance extraction (AVE) are greater than the minimum value 0.500 as suggested by Hair et al., (2014).

Table 2. Internal consistency score and convergent validity

	Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<b>Agreeableness</b>		<b>0.876</b>	<b>0.909</b>	<b>0.670</b>
<i>feel others' emotions.</i>	0.866			
<i>Inquire about others' well-being.</i>	0.898			
<i>Sympathize with others' feelings.</i>	0.902			
<i>Take an interest in other people's lives.</i>	0.682			
<i>Like to do things for others</i>	0.717			
<b>Conscientiousness</b>		<b>0.874</b>	<b>0.909</b>	<b>0.666</b>

	Loadings	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<i>Carry out my plans.</i>	0.748			
<i>Don't waste time.</i>	0.853			
<i>Find it easy to go to work.</i>	0.826			
<i>Don't mess things up.</i>	0.84			
<i>Finish what was start.</i>	0.809			
<b>Extraversion</b>		<b>0.919</b>	<b>0.939</b>	<b>0.756</b>
<i>Make friends easily.</i>	0.893			
<i>Easy to get to know.</i>	0.895			
<i>Keep others closer.</i>	0.851			
<i>Warm up quickly to others.</i>	0.883			
<i>Have a lot of fun</i>	0.823			
<b>Intellect</b>		<b>0.917</b>	<b>0.938</b>	<b>0.751</b>
<i>Quick to understand things.</i>	0.864			
<i>Easily understand abstract ideas.</i>	0.808			
<i>Can handle a lot of information.</i>	0.893			
<i>Can think quickly.</i>	0.877			
<i>Formulate ideas clearly</i>	0.887			
<b>Neuroticism</b>		<b>0.895</b>	<b>0.911</b>	<b>0.673</b>
<i>filled with doubts about things</i>	0.918			
<i>feel threatened easily.</i>	0.873			
<i>worry about things.</i>	0.773			
<i>Easily discouraged.</i>	0.743			
<i>Become overwhelmed by events</i>	0.781			
<b>Prosocial Behaviour</b>		<b>0.841</b>	<b>0.887</b>	<b>0.611</b>
<i>Please to help friends/colleagues in their activities</i>	0.788			
<i>Try to help others</i>	0.805			
<i>Help immediately those who are in need</i>	0.784			
<i>Willing to make my knowledge and abilities available to others</i>	0.736			
<i>Try to console those who are sad</i>	0.792			

Next, a discriminant validity procedure was conducted to observe how the constructs are truly distinct from one another. The results are in Table 3. This is achieved by assessing the cross-loading criterion and Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. Based on the results of Fornell and Lacker's criterion shown in Table 3, there is a clear evidence of the discriminant validity

establishment following the suggestions of Kline (2015) and Gold et al., (2001). The square-root of the AVEs of all latent variables which are shown in bold are higher than the correlations on other variables. Therefore, it is confirmed every construct is truly distinct from one another.

Table 3. Discriminant validity and Lateral collinearity assessment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	VIF
Neuroticism	<b>0.820</b>						1.152
Agreeableness	0.358	<b>0.818</b>					1.703
Consciousness	0.096	0.38	<b>0.816</b>				1.491
Extraversion	0.163	0.538	0.34	<b>0.869</b>			1.492
Intellect	0.085	0.37	0.535	0.373	<b>0.866</b>		1.510
Prosocial Behaviour	0.17	0.457	0.394	0.436	0.37	<b>0.781</b>	-

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In order to test for the hypotheses, PLS algorithm was used with a bootstrapping resampling technique of 500 sub-samples for ensuring the accuracy of the PLS estimates as recommended by Hair et al., (2014). The results of one-tailed path coefficients are shown in Table 4. Following Hair et al., (2017) for acceptance of  $t$  value  $> 1.645$  for  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ , it was found agreeableness ( $\beta = 0.227$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), consciousness ( $\beta = 0.174$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and extraversion ( $\beta = 0.208$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) play their roles as determinants to prosocial behaviour. On the other hand, there is no evidence that supports the relationship between neuroticism, intellect and prosocial behaviour. Thus, it could be concluded H2,

H3 and H4 are supported, while H1 and H5 were not.

Next, the values of coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.310 suggests the exogenous constructs explain 31% of variances in prosocial behaviour, which Hair et al., (2017) considered as moderate. Additionally, the  $f^2$  values that represent the effect size of a specific exogenous construct on the endogenous construct were also assessed. There are substantial effect size for agreeableness and extraversion, while small effect size for consciousness. In addition, the predictive relevance was also assessed and the  $Q^2$  value of 0.169 provides the evidence for the predictive relevance of the exogeneous constructs.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Assessment and Determination of Coefficient ( $R^2$ ), Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

Hypothesis	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	P Values	$R^2$	$f^2$	Decision
H1: Negative relationship between neuroticism and PB	0.028	0.087	0.322	0.374	0.310	0.001	NS
H2: Positive relationship between agreeableness and PB	0.227	0.091	2.496	0.006		0.044	**
H3: Positive relationship between consciousness and PB	0.174	0.077	2.256	0.012		0.029	**
H4: Positive relationship between extraversion and PB.	0.208	0.087	2.387	0.009		0.042	**
H5: Positive relationship between intellects and PB	0.113	0.09	1.255	0.105		0.012	NS

Based on the results, it was found among the five personality traits, agreeableness, extraversion and consciousness are significant to prosocial behaviour. The findings are consistent with Caprara et al., (2011), Ashton and Lee (2007) and Carlo et al., (2005). Among the three, agreeableness plays the biggest role in

determining the prosocial behaviour. This shows the importance of the ability to getting along with others and compromising interests as critical for social entrepreneurs. This is because the nature of social enterprise is very challenging, and it requires persons who are dynamic, and take interests in other people's

life to run and manage the complex relationships.

Similarly, extraversion as being warmth and having an excitement in life is also important for individuals who are likely to be social entrepreneurs. As social enterprises are operated from the people for the people, the ability to react to stakeholders' needs is very important. Therefore having a lot of energy and able to enjoy the surroundings will help. In addition, conscientiousness which is associated with self-discipline is also important for driving prosocial behaviour. Ability to control, regulate and direct impulses are aspects that determine how social participation and integration will be governed for social value creation. However, although the findings show neuroticism and intellects are not significant to prosocial behaviour, it offers valuable insights. This is because, past research has supported individuals who suffer from anxiety or depression are not fit for prosocial behaviours.

The study offers several contributions. First, the assessment of personality traits could be adopted in selecting the candidates for social enterprise start-ups. In several countries, like Malaysia, there are schemes that promote for social engagement for value creation via social enterprise. Having screened the candidates' personality will mark their psychological ability to run the challenging operation that requires market tapping, partnership and strategic alliance. Second, past research on personality traits place less emphasise on its relation to social entrepreneurs. Thus, this study bridges the gaps in the field. Third past research on prosocial behaviour were dominated by experiments and lab work as the research design. Although experiments provide some advantages specially for proving the effectiveness of an intervention program, or to provide the comparisons across groups, the findings are limited to certain context. Therefore, the findings from the survey research design offers future studies that could be replicated to other settings.

## 5. Conclusion

The study aims at exploring the personality traits of neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and intellect as determinant to prosocial behaviour of potential social entrepreneurs for value creation. Such attempt is significant as the nature of social enterprise that often is limited with funding and requires complex relationships demand for individuals who are passionate, compromised, trustworthy, excited in life and self-discipline. As the study did not find any significant relationship between intellects and prosocial behaviour, it is interesting to know why. Therefore,

future research is recommended to establish efforts for getting the answers. In addition, as many studies have determined the importance of social environment and surrounding for promoting behaviour, future research could also be conducted to examine the role of social norms and social support in explaining for the personality traits-prosocial behaviour relationship.

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