Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Entrepreneurial Intentions in the Badulla District in Sri Lanka: A Moderation Analysis

Siromiya Sanmugam[1]

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[1] Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka.
ies.shiromiya@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose – The social enterprise is a process of forming value by utilizing resources in new ways to explore new opportunities for society. The current study adopted the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The theory demonstrates that a person's intention to perform a behavior is shaped by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In addition to that, this research evaluates the impact of TPB on social entrepreneurial intention (SEI), focusing on social support as a moderator among selected aspiring social entrepreneurs in the Badulla district.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative research design was adopted, and the purposive sampling technique was utilized to select the sample of 105 social entrepreneurs from an unknown population. The structured questionnaire was distributed as a Google Form via email to the respondents. The gathered data were subjected to descriptive, regression, and hierarchical regression analysis in SPSS.

Findings and Conclusion - According to the results, all the independent variables – entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control – have a positive impact on social entrepreneurial intention. However, in the context of the moderating effect of social support, it partially moderates these relationships. It positively moderates only the effect of perceived behavioral control on SEI but does not moderate entrepreneurial attitude and subjective norms. As a conclusion, TPB effectively decides social entrepreneurial intention in this context. Therefore, social support did not directly strengthen these relationships.

Originality/value – The study contributes by extending TPB with social support in Sri Lankan culture. It provides fresh insights into how family and friends shape entrepreneurial behavior and presents the significance of collaborative impacts in fostering entrepreneurship.

Keywords - Entrepreneurial attitude, Perceived planned behavior, Perceived social support, Social entrepreneurial intention, Subjective norms

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1. Introduction

The issue of social responsibility in the business world requires special attention from various parties. Day-by-day the business industry incurs negative consequences, which lead to uncountable social issues in the environment. Due to this, the business industry is forced to provide alternative solutions for a sustainable life to minimize negative consequences. Therefore, the business industry currently started to focus on people (social) as a responsibility along with earning profit (economic) as well as people (social) (Elkington & Fennell, 1998; Chaudhary et al, 2024). The people (social) play a significant role in business management. This leads to the importance of fulfilling the social mission being significant. Due to this scenario, social entrepreneurs are trying to fulfil a social mission (Dacin et al., 2010). There are differences between social entrepreneurs and businessmen. The social entrepreneurs focus on social goals and values, while businessmen focus on profits and the satisfaction of customers (Mair et al., 2006). Further, social entrepreneurs mainly focus on social issues, and they do not mainly focus on profit goals. But in this context, the profit is optimized for doing social activities (Hibbert et al. 2005). Both value creation and social mission are key main elements of social entrepreneurship. Social value is created through the collaboration with other people and organizations involved in social innovation activities (Hulgard, 2010). It offers numerous solutions for addressing social and economic imbalances, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Therefore, social entrepreneurship is the main component of growth when addressing social issues at the center of economic activities (Chowdhury et al., 2019). However, social enterprise is less developed in developing countries than in developed countries. For example, the United Kingdom has 471,000 social enterprises (0.7% of the population), whereas Sri Lanka has only around 6,000, or 0.02% of the population (British Council, 2018). This significant gap demonstrates that developing countries like Sri Lanka require action to empower social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. This demonstrates the implementation of effective policies and support systems that motivate each and every individual to achieve social ventures in developing countries to decline low levels of social entrepreneurship. For instance, it will empower women and the youth, increase employment, and add value to rural markets. By creating enterprises that balance social goals with economic sustainability, social entrepreneurs can generate employment, empower women and youth, add value to agricultural products, and build stronger rural markets.

However, creating more social entrepreneurs among the people is not an easy task. Because it will be impacted by various factors beyond a person's individual decision to become an entrepreneur. The intention of a person to become a social entrepreneur also plays a major role in the entrepreneurial context. Furthermore, proper social support has to be provided to social entrepreneurs. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) has been extensively used to investigate the intention of social entrepreneurs. Intention is the most immediate predictor of behavior, which is influenced by three key factors: attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). It is also a reliable model for explaining why a person selects to become a social entrepreneur or not (Ajzen, 1991; Urban et al., 2017). It helps to investigate the psychological factors that guide the motivation to solve social issues via innovative and sustainable approaches. The researchers could clearly understand the cognitive procedures that occur for individuals to engage in social entrepreneurship through applying this theory. Moreover, social support has become a bigger factor in social entrepreneurial intention. Social support is defined as the help on emotional, informational, and instrumental aspects offered by a social circle, including family, friends, mentors, and the community (Liñán & Chen, 2009). It is an important thing to reduce pressure from psychological factors, such bullying, and even enrich the people lives who work for the company (Pokhrel et al., 2022).

When social entrepreneurship is used as a mediator, social support is added between the cognitive intention of a person and their decision to engage in entrepreneurial activity (Yusof et al., 2022). As a result, people who are socially and emotionally smart tend to receive social support from their social network and achieve their individual and entrepreneurial goals, despite facing challenges (Chaudhary et al., 2024). According to (Younis et al., 2019), perceived social support was found to motivate a person to become a social entrepreneur. Furthermore, it was discovered that people are motivated to process a social enterprise because of the support they receive. Based on this circumstance, this current study focuses on examining the role of perceived social support (moderation) on the relationship between the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and social entrepreneurial intention (SEI), with special attention to the rural development context. It is vital to understand these relationships in the context of rural areas, where the social networks motivate entrepreneurial intentions. By exploring how perceived social support moderates the link between intention and entrepreneurial action, this study aims to provide detailed insights on effective ways to support social entrepreneurship to policymakers and practitioners. The finding of the study is expected to provide strategies that enhance sustainable and socially impactful enterprise in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka.

Badulla is considered one of the rural districts in Sri Lanka and has faced multiple challenges, including high unemployment rates, increased poverty, and low literacy levels. These limitations act as barriers to community development and economic and social growth (Mijar & Giri, 2025). Evidence shows that Badulla district was among the districts with the highest poverty level (performance report & accounts, 2013). Further, that report also noted that high levels of dependency and low per capita income have impacted the rural economy. According to the Sri Lanka Force Survey Annual Report of 2023, the unemployment rate in Badulla district is 8%, the highest among all districts in Sri Lanka. Further, the district's literacy is 86.9%, lower than the national average. This circumstance highlights the need for innovative solutions to create employment opportunities and stimulate economic development in Badulla, highlighting the needs of social entrepreneurship in the region. There are numerous studies on social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka; however, there are few empirical studies on social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, there are studies that adopted the TPB to discuss entrepreneurial intention in different areas; however, its application to rural settings in Sri Lanka, especially Badulla, remains underexplored. Furthermore, the impact of social support, including emotional and informational support, as well as support from family, friends, and mentors, is particularly strong in a collectivist culture such as Sri Lanka, where society, family, and community have a major role in the behavior and decision-making of an individual. It also impacts SEI and has not been examined in the Badulla district. Yet, the relationship between social support and TPB in Sri Lanka needs detailed investigation, resulting in a research gap. To address this gap, the present study adopts the TPB to evaluate the behavioral drivers of social enterprise intention among established social entrepreneurs in the Badulla District of Sri Lanka, with a focus on the moderating role of social support. Based on this gap, this study attempts to identify the moderating impact of social support between entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and social entrepreneurial intention.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is defined as an entrepreneur's initiative to solve a social problem through innovative and sustainable solutions while remaining aware of the social problem (İrengün & Arıkboğa, 2015). Social entrepreneurship focuses on generating profits and providing

benefits to society by creating businesses. It generates economic value through addressing social issues that government initiatives and the private sector have not addressed (Akhter et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship is important to the growth of economy especially those countries that are underdeveloped and experiencing moderate growth (Tiwart et al., 2018).

Social entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial intention refers to a person's strong interest in beginning their own business in the future (Akhter et al., 2020). Understanding entrepreneurial intention can help an individual to become an entrepreneur (Krueger et al., 2000). Social entrepreneurial intention occurs when an individual wants to become a social entrepreneur by finding out creative approaches to fix social issues (Mair & Noboa, 2006). It demonstrates a person's desire to make money while helping society via smart and innovative ideas, which leads to the creation of social businesses (Hossain et al., 2021).

Theory of planned behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) describes entrepreneurial intentions on how human behavior is formed using three elements: subjective norm, attitude towards behavior, and perceived behavior control. TPB provides a model on human behavior direction. The first element is attitude towards behavior. That refers to how an individual feel about the good or bad aspects of doing something. The second element is subjective norm, which refers to how much a person is influenced by others, including friends or family, to do something, even when they are pushed not to (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). Perceived behavioral control refers to how easy or difficult a person believes it will be to do something (Ajzen, 1991). This model demonstrates that the intention of an individual is the most important thing that drives the behavior. When the person has a stronger intention, they are more likely to follow through (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitude toward entrepreneurship

Attitude is defined as the tendency of an individual to act positively or negatively in certain circumstances (Tiwari et al., 2017). It consists of a person's thoughts and beliefs and how they are judged (Gloss et al., 2017; Tiwari et al., 2017). The behavior of an individual is shaped by their attitudes and beliefs, which impact how they act (Schierjott et al., 2018; Tiwari et al., 2017). According to (Ajzen, 2020), a person's attitude toward a behavior refers to how much an individual considers the behavior as good or bad. As a result, the attitude is commonly defined as a judgment of something. In the context of Entrepreneurial Attitude (ATE), which defines people's experiences and feelings towards entrepreneurship (Maydiantoro et al., 2021; Saleh et al., 2021). This includes characteristics such as determination, honesty, a strong work ethic, willpower, confidence, awareness, rationalism, adaptability, and passion (Ewa & Luczka, 2020; Saleh et al., 2021).

Subjective norms

The subjective norm is defined as the social pressure that pushes a person to act or the social pressure that prevents them from acting in certain behavior (Kashif et al., 2018; Taufique & Vaithianathan, 2018). It is also related to how a person believes others will perceive them when they choose to take certain behavior or action (Nisson & Earl, 2020; Sun et al., 2020). This kind of pressure generally comes from close circles, including family, friends, or important people in society, which impacts a person to act in a specific way (Mensah et al., 2023). The country, like Sri Lanka, which is known for its strong community-based culture, has a major impact on social relations with each other. Therefore, an individual's decisions are impacted by his or her family and friends leading to positive influence so that people engage in particular course of action

(Shilpakar et al., 2024). According to the findings of (Attahiru et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2021), there is a relationship between subjective norms and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

Perceived behavioral control

According to (Ajzen, 2020), perceived behavioral control (PBC) is defined as the extent to which a person believes in their capability to do a specific action. This is vital in situations where the individual does not have the needed resources or full control to do a specific action (Ajzen, 2020; Elie-Dit-Cosaque et al., 2011). This data was added to detail the limits that exist in all categories of human behavior. This idea was added to the TPB (Luan & Lin, 2020; Nayanajith & Damunupola, 2019). Perceived Behavioral Control could impact how strongly a person starts a business (Rachbini, 2018; Vamvaka et al., 2020). When an individual feel like he or she has more control, most of the time they try harder and are consistently committed to the action (Ajzen, 2020; Yuriev et al., 2020). It also helps us to detail how much control a person believes they have, which makes it easier to predict their behavior (Vamvaka et al., 2020). As per the studies done by ((Adhikusuma & Genoveva, 2020; Yusof et al., 2022), there is a positive relationship between PBC and the intention to become involved in entrepreneurship.

Perceived Social Support and Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is considered one of the main components of TPB, which impacts a person's intention and actual behavior. Researcher Ajzen (1991) defined it as "the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles." It is highlighting that PBC is being impacted by self-efficacy, resources, and social support. For example, when a person intends to begin a small enterprise, if they have enough experience and are able to access needed resources, including finances and materials, they perceive this task as manageable. Whereas if they have limited knowledge, inadequate materials, and poor finances, it leads to a perception of difficulty. A person's previous experiences also impact PBC, as previous success can improve confidence, whereas if the person faced failures in the past, it will diminish it. Moreover, unpredictable challenges and limited market success will impact a person's perceived control over the behavior. Therefore, the PBC shows that the person's confidence in executing the intended action, as well as the presence of social support, needed resources, and guidance, can empower this perceived control. Perceived social support plays an important external factor that can empower PBC. As evidence, Thoits (2011) confirmed that "social support is essential for fostering psychological resilience and overall well-being in a variety of life domains." This demonstrates and highlights that social support can reduce psychological and practical barriers due to the fact that it will enhance a person's perceived control over behavior. Thoits (2011) showed that "social support is essential for fostering psychological resilience and overall well-being in a variety of life domains." It indicates that obtaining support from family, friends, and mentors will help the person to face challenges, overcome stress, and keep maintaining mental and emotional health. Furthermore, Song et al. (2011) noted that "social support is consistently associated with higher levels of participation in personal and collective behaviors." It means when people get proper support from their family, friends, and colleagues, they will actively engage in personal and group activities (Giri & Adhikari, 2023). This shows that people who perceive higher social support will be more confident to perform intended actions, resulting in stronger PBC. As a conclusion, perceived social support (PSS) offers emotional and motivational as well as practical resources, which enable persons to overcome barriers as well as empower their engagement in the intended behavior.

Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship (ATE) and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)

People can get happiness and satisfaction from their own built business in which ATE can be grown (Baluku et al., 2021; Maydiantoro et al., 2021). The people who have strong entrepreneurial attitudes are very interested in developing business (Lingappa et al., 2020; Maydiantoro et al., 2021). Rahman et al. (2022) noted that ATE is closely connected to the intention of beginning business activities. In many studies, such as the studies of Krueger and Brazatel (1994), ATE is proved to be the second strongest predictor, followed by perceived behavioral control to determine the entrepreneurial intention. Measuring entrepreneurial attitude consists of looking at their perception of positive results in entrepreneurship (Esfandiar et al., 2019). Based on this circumstance, the present study depends on evaluating entrepreneurial attitude in social entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, it is hypothesized that;

Hypothesis (H1): Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship positively influences Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Subjective Norm (SN) and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI)

Social entrepreneurs depend on social network connections to attain their social mission, which drives them to play a significant role in their thoughts and behavior. For example, countries like Ghana, which have collectivist cultures, have a major tendency to create social entrepreneurial intention among potential social entrepreneurs more than that of USA (Yanag, 2013). As per the same result found in India, which also has a collectivist culture, Tiwari et al. (1999) highlighted that there is a positive impact of subjective norms in terms of the social entrepreneurial intention of the students. Further, the study by Yang et al. (2024) found that when it comes to the entrepreneurial intention of students, the subjective norms are a significant determinant of intention in China, and the study analyzed the hypothesis of the study based on Chinese students. However, the study of (Ernst, 2011) found that there is an insignificant relationship between subjective norms and the antecedents that were used in the study regarding social entrepreneurial intention. But, in her study, she found that there is a direct connection between SN and social entrepreneurial intentions. Sri Lanka is a country that has a collectivist nature, which means it gives importance to social frameworks. It matters to the family's and friends' impact on a person's individual decision-making process (Giri & Adhikari, 2023). Therefore, it is vital to evaluate and analyze whether the subjective norms will impact social entrepreneurial intention or not. Based on this, the hypothesis H1 was developed as;

Hypothesis (H2): Subjective Norm positively influences Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) and Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI)

(Boyd & Vozikis , 1994) found that PBC is playing an important role in impacting an individual to become an entrepreneur as well as their actual entrepreneurial behavior. Most of the international studies demonstrate that there is a strong positive connection between PBC and entrepreneurial intention (Krueger & Carsrud , 1993). This study was conducted in India, where it focused on factors such as government support, family backing, entrepreneurship programs, and education quality that may impact the relationship between PBC and EI differently. The study of Tiwari et al. (2017) revealed that perceived behavioral control is an important factor that positively impacts social entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, based on the circumstances, the following hypothesis was developed;

Hypothesis (H3): Perceived Behavioral Control positively influences Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Moderating Role of Social Support

Perceived social support refers to when someone feels valued, cared for, and supported by other people within their social circle (Farooq et al., 2018; Sahban et al., 2015; Shiri et al., 2012). Shiri et al. (2012) demonstrate that a culture of entrepreneurship can be built when an individual gets supported or motivated by their social circle. The social network is important to new businesses since it helps to collect resources, identify opportunities, and receive knowledge (Farooq et al., 2016; Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2016; Younis et al., 2019). Proper social support can motivate people to become entrepreneurs (Farooq et al., 2016). Whereas the individuals who have small social networks seem to be less likely to pursue entrepreneurship (Halbusi et al., 2023). The studies of (Pelaez et al., 2019) show social support can push a person to take business initiatives by providing emotional help, technical help, and motivational help. Most of the new entrepreneurs depend on the help from family, friends, and peers (Semrau & Werner, 2014; Sullivan & Ford, 2014; Webb, Khoury, & Hitt, 2020). The social support efforts depend on the conditions of culture and society, which are specifically important while in the early stages of business (Ip et al., 2018). Based on the arguments above, the hypotheses 4(H4), 5(H5), 6(H6) were suggested;

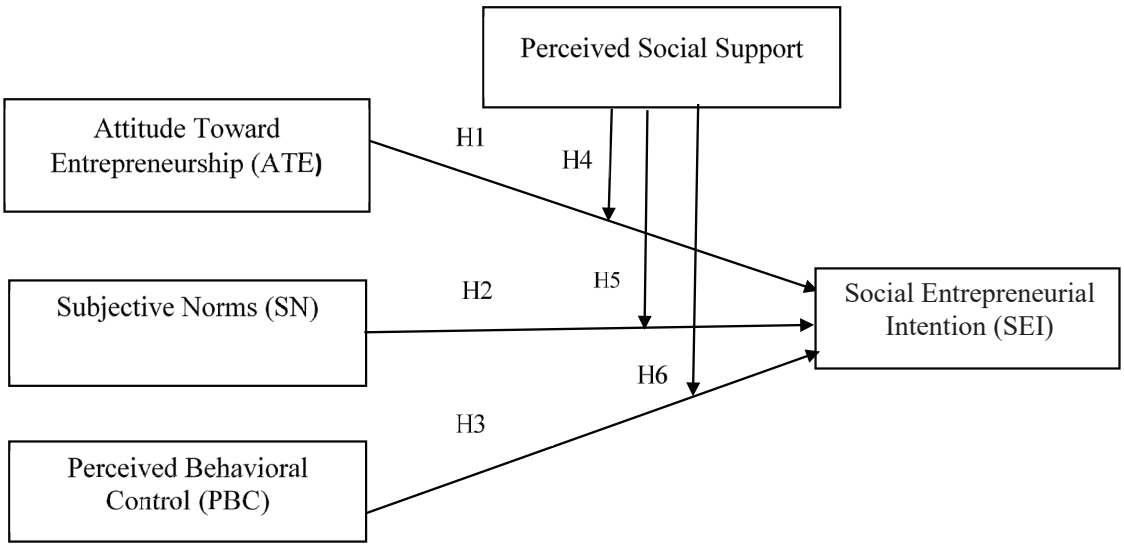
Hypothesis (H4): The perceived social support moderates the relationship between Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Hypothesis (H5): The perceived social support moderates the relationship between subjective norms and Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Hypothesis (H6): The perceived social support moderates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and social entrepreneurial intention.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the researcher

3. Research Method

The quantitative research approach was adopted with causal research design to evaluate the social entrepreneurial intention through following the theory of planned behavior along with social support as a moderating variable. This connection allows to statically measure data and examine the established relationship between variables which enables to identify causal connection and generalizable patters (Creswell, 2014). The unit of analysis included the individuals who have intended to begin a social enterprise. Moreover, the study is explanatory in nature, focusing on examining the relationship between key constructs such as entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control and their impact on SEI among the social entrepreneurs in Badulla district of Sri Lanka.

Population and sample

The present study targets aspiring social entrepreneurs in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka. Aspiring social entrepreneurs were those who had a clearer mission to begin a social enterprise. The sample was selected through purposive sampling technique. The potential respondents were chosen from local NGOs and community organizations and the universities and higher education institutes. The respondents were selected based on the criteria as the respondents should be residents of Badulla who have the intention to start a social enterprise, as well as have engaged with social initiatives. Finally, 105 aspiring social entrepreneurs were chosen. This allows the study to investigate the relationship between variables of the study efficiently. The study mainly consists of primary data that was gathered from a structured questionnaire, and it was derived from previous studies regarding TPB and social support. The questionnaires were prepared as closed questions, and they were measured by using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from "Almost Not Accepted = 1" to "Almost Accepted = 5") to measure respondents' perceptions across the key variables. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents as a Google form through email for data collection.

Measurement Instrument

The structured questionnaire was utilized to collect the data and evaluate the current study. The questionnaire has 5 sections, such as Sections A, B, C, D, and E. Section A includes demographic details such as age and gender. Section B includes the questions regarding the theory of planned entrepreneurial behavior. Section C includes PCB, and Section D is Entrepreneurial Intention. Finally, section E consists of the question of social support as moderator. The questionnaire was measured by using a five-point Liker scale. The present study adopted the questionnaire from the study of (Liñán & Chen, 2009) to measure ATE, SN, PBC, and EI. Moreover, the perceived social support (PSS) was evaluated on 6 items, which were adopted from (Sarason et al., 1987). Finally, the social entrepreneurial intention consisted of 5 items from the study of (Hockerts, 2015). The gathered data were evaluated through SPSS 25 version. The descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data. Hierarchical regression analysis was adopted to evaluate and test the hypotheses based on the TPB model, and moderation analysis.

4. Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	48	41.74
	Female	67	58.26
	Total	115	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percent	
Valid	20-30	68	59.1
	31-40	33	28.7
	Above 41	14	12.2
	Total	115	100.0
Education	Frequency	Percent	
Valid	Ordinary level & Advance level	108	36.5
	Bachelor's Degree	188	63.5
	Total	296	100.0

The demographic information consists of age, gender, and level of education. The sample consists of approximately 58% female and 42% males. Further, among the sample, around 59% were in the 20-30 age category. In the context of education, most of the entrepreneurs had a basic degree.

Reliability Test (Cronbach's alpha)

Table 2

Reliability Test

Variables	Source of the Measurement Scale	No. of Items in the Scale
ATE	.795	5
SN	.665	3
PCB	.774	6
SEI	.685	3
PSS	.879	6

Nunnally (1978) highlights that the reliability is considered poor when it is lower than 0.6. If the Cronbach's alpha score is 0.7, it is acceptable. Based on the values on the Table 2, the instruments of the study are at an acceptable level Nunnally (1978).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entrepreneurial attitude	105	4.6038	.46242
Subjective norms	105	4.3302	.74032
Perceived behavioral control	105	4.2984	.66815
Perceived social support	105	4.4556	.48330
SEI	105	4.4381	.47805
Valid N (listwise)	105		

Table 3 demonstrates the mean value of the variables. The dimensions, such as entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived social support, and SEI have mean values of 4.60, 4.33, 4.29, 4.4, and 4.4, respectively, highlighting a high level. According to Allen & Seaman (2007), the established criteria are: ($1 \leq X < 2.5$) for "Almost Not Accepted", ($1 \leq X < 3.5$) for "Average", and $3.5 \leq X \leq 5$ for "Almost Accepted". This included in the descriptive analysis to show that the average values for all variables fall within the category of "Almost Accepted". This demonstrates that the respondents exhibit social entrepreneurial intention on average at an above-average level.

Regression Analysis

Attitude toward entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.666a	.443	.438	.35846

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial attitude

The model summary explains the details on how well the independent variable changes the dependent variable, especially in the context of SEI. In model 1, entrepreneurial attitude is one of the predictors. The R-squared value is .443, and the adjusted R-squared is .438, indicating that around 43% of the variance in SEI can be explained by entrepreneurial attitude.

Table 5

ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.533	1	10.533	81.973	.000b
	Residual	13.235	103	.128		
	Total	23.768	104			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude toward entrepreneurship

The regression model was statistically significant, with F= (81,973), $p < .005$ in model 1. This demonstrates that entrepreneurial attitude significantly predicts social entrepreneurial intention.

Table 6

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.270	.352		3.610	.000
	ATE	.688	.076	.666	9.054	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

Table 6 shows that the entrepreneurial attitude had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention (β=.688, p<.005). This demonstrates that an increase in entrepreneurial attitude is associated with a corresponding increase in social entrepreneurial intention. In other words, people with a stronger entrepreneurial attitude are more likely to develop plans to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Subjective Norms and Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 7

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.629a	.395	.390	.37350

a. Predictors: (Constant), subjective norms

The Table 7 explains the details on how well the subjective norms impact SEI. The R-squared value of subjective norms is .395, and the adjusted R-squared is .390, indicating that around 39% of the variance in social entrepreneurial intention can be explained by subjective norms.

Table 8

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.399	1	9.399	67.377	.000b
	Residual	14.369	103	.140		
	Total	23.768	104			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

Predictors: (Constant), subjective norms

The regression model was statistically significant, with F (67.377), p < .005. This demonstrates that subjective norms significantly predict social entrepreneurial intention.

Table 9

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.680	.217		12.332	.000
	Subjective norms	.406	.049	.629	8.208	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

The Table 9 shows that the subjective norms had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention (B = .406, p < .005). This demonstrates that an increase in subjective norms is associated with a corresponding increase in social entrepreneurial intention. In other words, people with stronger subjective norms are more likely to develop plans to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Perceived Behavioral Control and Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Table 10

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.684a	.467	.462	.35062

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control

The model summary explains the details on how well the PBC influence SEI. The R-squared value is 0.467, and the adjusted R-squared is 0.462, indicating that around 46% of the variance in social entrepreneurial intention can be explained by PBC.

Table 11

ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.105	1	11.105	90.330	.000b
	Residual	12.663	103	.123		
	Total	23.768	104			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Behavioral Control

The regression model was statistically significant, with F (90.330), p < .005. This demonstrates that PBC significantly predicts social entrepreneurial intention.

Table 12

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.336	.224		10.436	.000
	Perceived Behavioral Control	.489	.051	.684	9.504	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

The Table 12 shows that the perceived behavioral control had a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial intention (B = .489, p < .005). This demonstrates that an increase in PBC is associated with a corresponding increase in social entrepreneurial intention. In other words, people with a stronger PBC are more likely to develop plans to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Moderating Effect (H4, H5, and H6)

Table 13

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.890a	.791	.790	.34245
2	.890b	.793	.791	.34180

a. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Entrepreneurial Attitude

b. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Entrepreneurial Attitude, C_Perceived Social Support*C_Entrepreneurial Attitude

The model summary explains how well the independent and moderating variables predict changes in the dependent variable, especially in the context of social entrepreneurial intention. In the model 1, entrepreneurial attitude (EA) and perceived social support are included as predictors. The R-squared value of .791 indicates that 79% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is explained by the combined effects of EA and PSS. Further, in model 2, the interaction term (EA × PSS) was added to examine the moderating impact of PSS. The R-squared value was .793. However, the adjusted R^2 in model 1 and model 2 are very close, which suggests that the interaction term did not significantly enhance the predictive strength of the model.

Table 14

ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	142.319	2	71.160	606.800	.000b
	Residual	37.527	320	.117		
	Total	179.846	322			
2	Regression	142.579	3	47.526	406.813	.000c
	Residual	37.267	319	.117		
	Total	179.846	322			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Entrepreneurial Attitude

c. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Entrepreneurial Attitude, C_Perceived Social Support*C_Entrepreneurial Attitude

The regression model was statistically significant, with F=606.800, $p < .005$ in model 1, indicating social entrepreneurial intention was significantly predicted by the combined effects of PSS and ATE. After including the interaction term (ATE × PSS), the model remained significant with $F = 406.813$, $p < .005$, demonstrating that the interaction also contributed to predicting social entrepreneurial intention in model 2.

Table 15

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.909	.055		70.944	.000
	C_Entrepreneurial Attitude	.491	.091	.299	5.387	.000
	C_Perceived Social Support	.467	.042	.613	11.045	.000
2	(Constant)	3.875	.060		65.097	.000
	C_Entrepreneurial Attitude	.474	.092	.289	5.167	.000
	C_Perceived Social Support	.517	.054	.679	9.601	.000
	C_Perceived Social Support*C_Entrepreneurial Attitude	.068	.046	.068	1.489	.137

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

The table 15 demonstrates the regression coefficients to predict SEI based on ATE, perceived social support (PSS), and their interaction. According to model 1, ATE exhibited a positive impact on SEI (B=0.491, p<.005). PSS also demonstrated a significant impact (B=0.467, p<.005). Furthermore, in model 2, to evaluate the moderating effect of social support, the interaction term between ATE and PSS was introduced. ATE had a positive impact on SEI (B=0.474, p<.005). PSS had a positive impact (B=0.517, p<.005). Further, the interaction term (B=0.068, p>.005) was not statistically significant, which indicates there is no moderating effect.

Table 16

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.887a	.788	.786	.34557
2	.888b	.788	.786	.34585

a. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Subjective Norms

b.Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Subjective Norms, C_Subjective Norms*C_Perceived Social Support

The model summary explains how well the independent and moderating variables predict changes in the dependent variable, especially in the context of social entrepreneurial intention. In model 1, subjective norms and perceived social support are included as predictors. The R-squared value of .788 indicates that 78% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is explained by the combined effects of SN and PSS. Further, in model 2, the interaction term (SN × PSS) was added to examine the moderating effect of PSS. The R-squared value was .788. However, the adjusted R^2 in model 1 and model 2 are very close, which suggests that the interaction term did not significantly enhance the predictive strength of the model.

Table 17

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	141.632	2	70.816	593.003	.000b
	Residual	38.214	320	.119		
	Total	179.846	322			
2	Regression	141.690	3	47.230	394.868	.000c
	Residual	38.156	319	.120		
	Total	179.846	322			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Subjective Norms

c. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Subjective Norms, C_Subjective Norms*C_Perceived Social Support

The regression model was statistically significant, with F = 593.003, p<.005 in model 1, indicating social entrepreneurial intention was significantly predicted by the combined effects of PSS and SN. After including the interaction term (SN × PSS), the model remained significant with F = 394.868, p<.005, demonstrating that the interaction also contributed to predicting social entrepreneurial intention in model 2.

Table 18

Coefficients

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.174	.019		214.659	.000
	C_Subjective Norms	.328	.069	.182	4.769	.000
	C_Perceived Social Support	.567	.029	.745	19.542	.000
2	(Constant)	4.153	.036		116.093	.000
	C_Subjective Norms	.312	.072	.173	4.318	.000
	C_Perceived Social Support	.593	.047	.779	12.580	.000
	C_Subjective Norms*C_ Perceived Social Support	.034	.048	.034	.700	.485

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

The table 18 demonstrates the regression coefficients to predict SEI through the interaction of subjective norms (SN), and perceived social support (PSS). According to model 1, SN exhibited a positive effect on SEI (B=0.328, p<.005). PSS also demonstrated a significant impact (B = 0.567, p<.005). These findings demonstrate that the people who have stronger perceived social support from their social networks are more likely to engage in social entrepreneurship. Further, in model 2, to evaluate the moderating effect of social support, the interaction term between SN and PSS was introduced. SN had a positive impact on SEI (B = 0.312, p<.005). PSS had a positive

impact (B = 0.593, p<.005). Further, the interaction term (B = 0.384, p = .485) was not statistically significant, which does not indicate a moderation effect.

Table 19

Model Summary

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.887a	.786	.785	.34650
2	.891b	.794	.792	.34067

a. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Perceived Behavioral Control

b. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, Perceived Behavioral Control, C_ Perceived Behavioral Control*C_Perceived Social Support

In the model 1 of table 19, perceived behavioral control (PBC) and perceived social support (PSS) were included as predictors. The R-squared value of .786 indicates that 78% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is explained by the combined effects of PBC and PSS. Further, in model 2, the interaction term (PCB x PSS) was added to examine the moderating effect of PSS. The R-squared value increased slightly to 0.794, suggesting that the interaction term contributed a little to the explanatory power of the model. However, the adjusted R^2 in model 1 and model 2 are close, which suggests that the interaction term did not significantly enhance the predictive strength of the model.

Table 20

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	141.427	2	70.713	588.981	.000b
	Residual	38.419	320	.120		
	Total	179.846	322			
2	Regression	142.825	3	47.608	410.229	.000c
	Residual	37.021	319	.116		
	Total	179.846	322			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Perceived Behavioral Control

c. Predictors: (Constant), C_Perceived Social Support, C_Perceived Behavioral Control, C_Perceived Behavioral Control*C_Perceived Social Support

The regression model was statistically significant, with F=588.981, p<.005 in model 1, indicating social entrepreneurial intention was significantly predicted by the combined effects of PBC and PSS. After including the interaction term (PBC × PSS), the model remained significant with F = 410.229, p<.005, demonstrating that the interaction also contributed to predicting social entrepreneurial intention in model 2.

Table 21

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	4.176	.019		214.767	.000
	c_perceived behavioral control	.207	.045	.154	4.573	.000
	c_perceived social support	.594	.026	.780	23.197	.000
2	(constant)	4.086	.032		126.286	.000
	c_perceived behavioral control	.140	.048	.104	2.891	.004
	c_perceived social support	.685	.036	.899	18.872	.000
	c_perceived behavioral control*c_perceived social support	.315	.091	.130	3.471	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurial Intention

The table 21 demonstrates the regression coefficients to predict Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI) based on perceived behavioral control (PBC), perceived social support (PSS), and their interaction. According to model 1, PBC exhibited a positive impact on SEI. ($B = 0.207$, $p < .005$). PSS demonstrated a significant impact also ($B = 0.594$, $p < .005$). These findings demonstrate that the people who have stronger perceived social support from their social networks are more likely to engage in social entrepreneurship. Further, in model 2, to evaluate the moderating impact of social support, the interaction term between PBC and PSS was introduced. PBC had a positive impact on SEI ($B = 0.140$, $p = .004$). PSS had a positive impact ($B = 0.685$, $p<.005$). Further, the interaction term ($B = 0.315$, $p = .001$) was also statistically significant, which indicates a moderation effect.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted to evaluate the behavioral drivers of social entrepreneurial intention by applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and examining the moderating role of perceived social support in Badulla District of Sri Lanka. There are several studies conducted on social entrepreneurial intention by adopting the Planned Behavior Theory model. In one of the studies conducted by (Mohammed et al., 2017) at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria, planned behavior theory was adopted to capture social entrepreneurial intentions among students. The first findings demonstrate that entrepreneurial attitude had a significant positive impact on social entrepreneurial intention. This study demonstrates that when an individual has a favorable perception of starting and running a social business, they tend to take action on it. The current study supports the study of TPB (Ajzen, 1991). That study suggests that to predict the intention, attitude is a core predictor, and it aligns with previous research which signifies the role of positive view and moral commitment in social entrepreneurship (Hockerts, 2017).

Secondly, this study demonstrates subjective norms positively impacted social entrepreneurial intention. When people are motivated in their life by their family, friends, or society, the social entrepreneurship intention increases. In social entrepreneurship, significance is social expectations as well as moral obligation and motivational factors (Forster & Grichnik, 2013). The study by (Mohammed et al., 2017) found the attitudes and subjective norms influenced students

in terms of starting a business in the social field. There was another study by (Jadmiko, 2020) demonstrated that attitude toward becoming a social entrepreneur had a positive impact on social entrepreneurial intention. Thirdly, perceived behavioral control (PBC) had a significant positive impact on social entrepreneurial intention. The individuals who believe that they have the ability, confidence, and resources (Pokhrel et al., 2024) to perform social entrepreneurial tasks are having strong intentions. This result is consistent with the TPB framework and supports prior studies highlighting the importance of self-efficacy in entrepreneurial decision-making (Krueger et al., 2000). Further, there is a positive impact between PBC and SEI, and the findings align with the study of Durac and Moga (2023) as well as Handayani and Rosita (2025). PBC is considered the main, strongest predictor of entrepreneurial intentions and SEI in previous studies.

The findings of the study also demonstrate that perceived social support does not significantly moderate the relationship. Although one individual can be motivated by social encouragement or a sense of obligation, to strengthen the impact of subjective norms on SEI, the presence of support alone was not sufficient. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is rejected. According to the results, hypothesis 6 is rejected by revealing that there is no moderation effect between variables. These findings are similarly consistent with the study of Liñán and Santos (2007), which argues that social support is important where it does not always empower the predictive power of TPB constructs in the entrepreneurial section. This highlights that aspiring entrepreneurs may depend on intrinsic motivations as well as personal beliefs more than on external (Maharjan et al., 2024) supports while forming entrepreneurial intentions.

The hypothesis 6 revealed that there is a moderating effect of social support between perceived behavioral control and SEI. It highlights that perceived social support moderates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and SEI. This reveals that the ones who trust they have the ability to become social entrepreneur which translates this belief to entrepreneurial intention when they perceive major social support.

6. Conclusion

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and social entrepreneurial intention (SEI). In addition to that, the research study examined the moderating effect of perceived social support between entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control among aspiring social entrepreneurs in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka.

The findings of the study provided detailed insights on the relationships between the variables of the study and the implications. The research problem analyzed how perceived social support moderates the relationship between the variables of the TPB and SEI among the social entrepreneurs. The findings of the study proved that there is a positive effect between the TPB and SEI, consistent with the research problem. Further, the moderating role of perceived social support was examined, which confirmed the hypothesis that perceived social support from family and friends impacts the SEI of social entrepreneurs. Moreover, the conclusions of the study were reinforced by previous studies in terms of the TPB and SEI. As a whole, the study highlights the significance of social support and variables of the TPB in molding the aspiring social entrepreneurs' intentions.

7. Implications

This study focuses on the Badulla district on social entrepreneurial intention by applying the TPB. It confirms that the variables of the TPB significantly impact SEI. This again signifies the social and cultural factors that empower the predictive power of TPB. As practical implications, training programmed can help to focus on building positive attitudes and self-confidence among the entrepreneurs. Further, the family and friends could motivate and provide emotional and practical support to encourage social entrepreneurship. It is better to enhance entrepreneurial ecosystems by providing mentorship to universities, NGOs, and peer networks, which foster social entrepreneurship.

8. Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations, including the research adopting self-reported survey technique. This is susceptible to social desirability bias. Under this bias, the participants answered based on what they believe to be acceptable in society. Moreover, the research is mainly focused on the Badulla district among 25 districts in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalizable to other cultural settings in other countries. The TPB on SEI can be clarified by adopting various moderators in various contexts. For example, research can investigate how gender, financial support, or technology helps to encourage the intentions of social entrepreneurship. The research study can further be explored in various sociocultural settings related to entrepreneurship. Targeting a category, such as only students or undergraduates, can be explored to know in detail how the young generation feels towards social entrepreneurial intention.

Conflict of Interest

Author declare no conflict of interest while preparing this article

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