

Measuring student attitudes towards social business

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Abstract. There is a focus on awareness and general perceptions held by Australian university students regarding social business and social entrepreneurship. The research objectives address awareness levels, what attracts young Australians to social business, and what motivates students to think about how social business can alleviate social problems. It was found that there is an agreed definition of social business. Ethical issues arise when using new business models that affect others in society. The methods used in this study incorporated exploratory and descriptive research to gain a snapshot of information for use by our clients. Conclusions drawn from this report are that sampling error occurred, as can be seen in age and discipline data distribution. Additionally, most statistically significant relationships were found to be very weak, and therefore not appropriate measures for decision making without further research. The high rate of neutral responses might be due to non-sampling error, such as poor survey comprehension. There is an implication of education in social business playing a large role in motivation and attraction to social entrepreneurship. It is recommended that promotional activities be undertaken to build awareness, as well as more educational opportunities provided to better understanding of social business, and attract more social entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Education; Social business; Social entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

In recent years, it has been proposed that the world's social problems would be more successfully combatted through the employment of business approaches (Grove & Berg, 2014) [1]. This idea stimulated the surfacing of different methods of business, such as not-for-profit organizations and social businesses.

Social business is an emerging model of business structure that does not focus on profit, as many typical business' do, the focus lies with achieving positive social change (Grove & Berg, 2014) [1]. Another primary difference between the social business model and more standard business models is that the investors in social businesses are not paid dividends (Grove & Berg, 2014) [1]. After investors are paid back their contribution, any profit is reinvested into the business in order to expand and increase the positive impact of the business' operations (Grove & Berg, 2014) [1]. While a social business does not pay dividends, it still is concerned with economic growth, in order for the business to continue to operate and expand. This is necessary for the social business to achieve the social change that is the primary focus of the business (Mair & Marti, 2006) [2].

2. Literature review

This literature review considers the definition of social business, how it is perceived compared to traditional business, and the associated ethical considerations. According to Mair and Marti (2006) [2], social entrepreneurship has two areas of focus. An economic focus needed for that organization to stay in business, and a social focus in order to achieve whatever social change or trend that entrepreneur is trying to shape. This definition is generally agreed upon by scholars, however, as Peredo and McLean (2006) [3] contend, the degree to which a social entrepreneur does either the 'social' or the 'business' aspect blurs the definition. Yunus (2006) [4] explains how the world and society as a whole perceive a social entrepreneur as a one-dimensional person with the primary goal of achieving high profit margins. That is when an individual focus on social change they would be an activist and not an entrepreneur. In actual fact, a successful entrepreneur can have both the goals to

have a successfully running business as well as have that business achieve change within its environment and society (Martin & Osberg 2007) [5].

The literature also touches on the ethical issues a social entrepreneur might face. These entrepreneurs have a responsibility to those living within the societal bounds, to make ethically sound and highly informed decisions because those decisions effect multiple people. Zahra et al. (2009) [6] say the most problematic ethical issues arise from the entrepreneur's motives and ambitions. Applying a new business model could mean less accountability, and social entrepreneurs may "cut ethical corners" (Zahra et al. 2009) [6]. Hemingway (2005) [7] notes that personal values are what drives morality in social entrepreneurs, and this all depends on the "sense of duty to society that is valued by the individual" (Hemingway, 2005) [7].

This research was conducted to achieve the following objectives;

- 1). To develop a better understanding of awareness of the Social Business concept.
- 2). To attract more Social Business entrepreneurs (mostly young people) in Australia.
- 3). To motivate students to think about how Social Business can help them to alleviate or remove problems from the society through a social business model.

3. Data collection and sampling process

The data collected for this study is using a campus intercept survey method (Burns & Bush, 2010) [8]. The 280 students have collected 5 or more responses each, leaving us with 1173 sample units. Data collect by the survey. An interviewer was present, giving all the advantages of a person-administered survey, such as ability to give feedback, rapport, quality control, and adaptability (Burns & Bush, 2014) [9]. In addition, as the data was collected without an interviewing device, such as a computer or tablet, and so there were no costs associated with program design (Burn & Bush, 2010) [8].

A sample of 1173 respondents was collected, giving a sample size large enough to be accurate, while maintaining a suitable cost and time to benefit relationship. According to the relationship between the margin of sample error and sample size, gains in accuracy diminish as the sample size exceeds 1000 respondents (Burns & Bush, 2014) [9].

This study has been drawn from a convenience sample taken from the Bundoora Campus at La Trobe University, during April 2016. As a non-probability sampling method, the selection process has taken place in high traffic areas of the university (Burns & Bush, 2014) [9]. Limitations of this selection process did not allow for a truly random representation of the population (Burns & Bush, 2014) [9], however time and cost considerations made this the most viable option.

3.1. Hypothesis testing

Based on the research objectives of this paper, this part will test four hypotheses. The first and the second hypothesis is designed to test the awareness level of students towards social business. The third hypothesis tests the relationship between education and willing to become social business entrepreneurs. Hypothesis 4 explains the belief of social business and its relationship to areas of study.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between a respondent's study area, and having heard of social business.

Table 1 reveals the percentage frequencies in the cross-tabulation table there appears to be a relationship between study area and having heard of social business. For example, 67% of all business students have heard of Social Business, compared to only 34% of non-business students. Over half of all non-business students have never heard of Social Business.

Table 2 means that as the significance level is below 0.05, it means reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between study area, and having heard of social business.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between gender, and level of familiarity of social Business

Table 3 demonstrates familiarity of Social Business is low for both men and women, with a mean response of 2.64 (falling between somewhat familiar and not familiar).

Table 4 illustrates the significance level is above 0.05, it means accept the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between gender and level of familiarity with social business.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between likelihood to join the Social Business Entrepreneurs Club, and believing education in Social Business can attract more young people to become Social Business entrepreneurs.

Table1. Relationship between study area and having heard of social business

			Area of your study		Total	
			Business	Non Business		
Have you heard about Social Business before?	Yes	Count	509	142	651	
		Expected Count	421.8	229.2	651.0	
		% within Have you heard about Social Business before?	78.2%	21.8%	100.0%	
		% within Area of your study	67.0%	34.4%	55.5%	
		No	Count	181	218	399
			Expected Count	258.5	140.5	399.0
	% within Have you heard about Social Business before?		45.4%	54.6%	100.0%	
	% within Area of your study		23.8%	52.8%	34.0%	
	Not sure		Count	70	53	123
			Expected Count	79.7	43.3	123.0
		% within Have you heard about Social Business before?	56.9%	43.1%	100.0%	
		% within Area of your study	9.2%	12.8%	10.5%	
Total		Count	760	413	1173	
		Expected Count	760.0	413.0	1173.0	
	% within Have you heard about Social Business before?	64.8%	35.2%	100.0%		
	% within Area of your study	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Table 2. Hypothesis test result

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	120.578 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	121.136	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	76.683	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1173		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 43.31.

Table 3. Familiarity of Social Business

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please indicate your level of familiarity with Social Business	Male	530	2.64	1.322	.057
	Female	643	2.69	1.308	.052

Table 4. Hypothesis test result

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Please indicate your level of familiarity with Social Business	Equal variances assumed	.951	.357	-.648	1171	.517	-.050	.077	-.201	.101
	Equal variances not assumed			-.648	1124.060	.517	-.050	.077	-.201	.101

Table 5. Hypothesis test result

		How likely are you to join the student union SOCIAL BUSINESS ENTREPREUNERS' CLUB at LTU	SB in education can attract more children to be future social business entrepreneurs (Kidspreneur/Youthpreneur)
How likely are you to join the student union SOCIAL BUSINESS ENTREPREUNERS' CLUB at LTU	Pearson Correlation	1	.188**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1173	1171
SB in education can attract more children to be future social business entrepreneurs (Kidspreneur/Youthpreneur)	Pearson Correlation	.188**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1171	1171

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 states that the significance level is below 0.05, it means reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between likelihood to join the Social Business Entrepreneurs Club, and believing

education in Social Business can attract more young people to become Social Business entrepreneurs. As the correlation coefficient is 0.19, this relationship positive but almost non-existent. This means that 19% of the time as the likelihood of joining the Social Business Entrepreneurs Club increases, belief education attracting more young Social Business entrepreneurs also increases. This is not a causal study of this relationship, and does not external influencers into account (Burns & Bush, 2014) [9].

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between believing social business has the capacity to solve social problems, and area of study.

Table 6. Mean response

	Area of your study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SB has the capability to solve social problems	Business	759	3.69	.951	.035
	Non Business	412	3.43	.864	.043

Table 7. Hypothesis test result

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SB has the capability to solve social problems	Equal variances assumed	2.480	.116	4.715	1169	.000	.266	.056	.155	.376
	Equal variances not assumed			4.851	914.767	.000	.266	.055	.158	.373

Table 6 reveals the mean response for both business and non-business students falls between neutral and agree that social business has the capacity to solve social problems.

Table 7 states that the significance level is above 0.05, it means accept the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between believing Social Business has the capacity to solve social problems, and area of study.

4. Conclusion

The research reveals that students studying business related degrees were more likely to be aware of and familiar with Social Business. Age range was very heavily skewed towards younger respondents, mostly from 18 to 23 years old. It can therefore be concluded that sampling error did affect these results. This indicates that there may have been some non-sampling error involved, possibly in respondent comprehension and survey design. Respondents who study business are more inclined to believe social business has the capacity to solve social problems. Additionally, there is a positive relationship between believing social business has the capacity to solve social problems and area of study. These findings imply that those who understand the social business concept agree it can aid government in alleviating social problems. Likelihood to join the Social Business Entrepreneurs Club is higher amongst those who believe education will attract more social entrepreneurs. It can be concluded that education is social business plays a large role in attracting students to become social entrepreneurs.

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