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THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS OF SCHUMPETERIAN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS – A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract. This empirical research focuses on social entrepreneurs who challenge the equilibrium by providing new services to beneficiaries in multiple locations. We have termed these entrepreneurs “Schumpeterian social entrepreneurs”, echoing Joseph Schumpeter’s definition of a commercial entrepreneur. This research aimed to understand the entrepreneurial process followed by Schumpeterian social entrepreneurs, emphasizing their objectives, points of entry into the process, connections to the fields of their endeavors, and strategies deployed to change the equilibrium. Ten Israeli social entrepreneurs were interviewed using the life story method. The key findings were as follows. The research highlighted two types of entrepreneurs according to their objectives and way of entry. These first comprised entrepreneurs who sought to capture social value and were opportunity-focused. In contrast, the second category comprised those who focused on solving social problems having responded to “a call to action”. There were many “outsiders” among the entrepreneurs. There is a possible correlation between a personal history of volunteering and a willingness to become a social entrepreneur. There is a predominance of two factors that enhanced the scaling up of the organizations’ services: the mobilization of large numbers of committed volunteers and the use of platforms to operate the organization’s services.

Keywords: entrepreneurial process; social entrepreneurship; social value; entrepreneurship theories; innovations; opportunities

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1. Introduction

Among social entrepreneurs, it is possible to differentiate between two types. The first type comprises multiple social entrepreneurs who incrementally create social value locally. In contrast, the second type includes a small group of social entrepreneurs whose endeavors challenge the equilibrium and create social value for society. Examples of this second type are Mohammed Unis, who developed the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh; Michael Young, who founded the British Open University; Erzsébet Szekeres, who instituted assisted living support for people with disabilities in Hungary; and Jeroo Billimoria, who established Childline in India.

Within social entrepreneurship theory, there is a significant focus on the first type with little focus on the second. Perhaps a rationale for focusing on the first is its widespread phenomenon. However, given the social impact of the second, the development of theories of this type also merits attention.

In Israel, social entrepreneurs of this second type have initiated first aid medical treatment aided by paramedics who can arrive via motorcycles that carry medical equipment, free assistance for drivers who experience breakdowns on the road, free budget and financial tutoring for households who struggle to live within their means and drug addiction rehabilitation for teens.

This research focuses on this second type of social entrepreneur to understand the entrepreneurial processes these entrepreneurs follow in establishing their entrepreneurial endeavours. The study emphasizes their initial objectives, points of entry into the process, connections to the fields of their endeavors, and the strategies deployed in their quest to create large-scale value. Ten Israeli social entrepreneurs who have impacted society were selected for this qualitative research, including those who initiated the endeavors above. They were interviewed using the life story research method.

This research is novel in its focus on social entrepreneurs who challenge the equilibrium and impact society at large. The findings provide insights for theory development and social entrepreneurship education in this area.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship” is a commercial concept. According to Kao (1993, pp. 69-70), entrepreneurship “is a process of making changes; doing something different, thus creating wealth for the individual and adding value to society”. The concept was introduced by 17th-century French economist Richard Cantillon (Van Praag, 1999), and its source is the French verb, “entreprendre” (Sobel, 2015), meaning “to undertake.” (Dees, 2001).

There are multiple approaches related to the process of making changes.

Say argued that entrepreneurs create value by shifting economic resources from an area of lower productivity to an area of higher productivity (Dees, 2001). Knight stressed that entrepreneurs can make sound financial decisions and guide the firm amid uncertainty (Van Praag, 1999).

Joseph Schumpeter and Israel Kirzner articulated two dominant and contrasting approaches. Schumpeter maintains that the entrepreneur challenges the current status quo, which he calls the “circular flow” (Schumpeter, 2000, p. 52). The entrepreneur innovates, making new combinations. He is actively involved in creative destruction, destroying and supplanting the old equilibrium with the new (Van Praag, 1999). Schumpeter distinguishes between five types of innovation: new production processes, new products, new materials or resources, new markets, as well as new forms of organizations (Ziemnowicz, 1942, p. 1172).

Kirzner maintains that an entrepreneur displays entrepreneurial alertness and plays a central role in the “equilibrating process” of stabilizing markets (Kirzner, 1997). Entrepreneurial alertness comprises the ability to discover and identify profitable opportunities, particularly in buying and selling transactions; as such, it is central to entrepreneurship. In an arbitrage transaction, an alert buyer entrepreneur discovers opportunities to purchase goods or services at below-market prices. In contrast, an alert seller identifies buyers willing to pay above-market prices.

Comparing the Two Types of Entrepreneur

Schumpeter’s entrepreneur is a bold leader, unlike Kirzner, whose entrepreneur could be anyone seeking to profit from a commercial exchange. As such, Kirzner’s definition is far more inclusive. Citing his mentor Ludwig von Mises, Kirzner claimed that “in any real and living economy, every actor is always an entrepreneur and speculator.” (Kirzner, 1997, p. 16). Schumpeter’s entrepreneurs create opportunities through innovation (Estrin et al., 2020; Ebner, 2024).

Kirzner’s entrepreneurs discover opportunities through entrepreneurial alertness. Schumpeter’s entrepreneur destroys the old equilibrium and creates a new one, while Kirzner’s entrepreneur is a catalyst for maintaining the current equilibrium.

Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is the application of entrepreneurship to enhance social value (Mair & Marti, 2006). The practice of social entrepreneurship has been in practice for centuries, with the founding of the first public library by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1731 (Payne & Newman, 2005) and Florence Nightingale’s

establishment of the first Nursing School in London in 1860 (Bornstein, 2004) being primary examples; the theoretical field has commenced far more recently. Joseph Banks coined the term “social entrepreneurship” in 1972 (Nicholls, 2006), and Waddock and Post (1991) analyzed and applied the concept nearly 20 years later. The first graduate course in this area was offered by Dees in 1995 at Harvard Business School (Worsham, 2012)

From its earliest days, multiple definitions of social entrepreneurship have been offered (Dacin et al., 2010), but a clear consensus has yet to be reached regarding its meaning (Saebi et al., 2018).

Among the different definitions, two issues of significance for this research are as follows:

1. Parameters of the field;
2. What constitutes an entrepreneurial activity?

Two schools of thought define the field’s parameters. The first is the “social enterprise” (Dees & Anderson, 2006) or “earned income” (Tracey & Phillips, 2007) school. From this perspective, social entrepreneurship is a subcategory of commercial entrepreneurship (Mirvis, 2022), to capture social and financial value. This “double bottom line” approach focuses on establishing commercial enterprises that aspire to be catalysts for social change without relying on philanthropic or government support. Theoreticians who adopt this perspective include Boschee and McClurg (2003), Cho (2006), Harding (2004), and Robinson (2006).

The second is the “social innovation school“, focusing on social innovation and social impact regardless of income sources. Dees and Anderson (2006) explain this perspective: “From this perspective, we propose that “social entrepreneurship is not about generating income, or even about incremental innovations in the social sector. It is about innovations that can potentially have a major societal impact by, for instance, addressing the root causes of a social problem, reducing particular social needs, and preventing undesirable outcomes” (Dees and Anderson, 2006, p. 46). This perspective views social entrepreneurship as a parallel type of entrepreneurship (Mirvis, 2022), marking the use of entrepreneurial strategies to solve social problems regardless of income sources. Therefore, it has been termed a “cousin“ of commercial entrepreneurship (Martin & Osberg, 2007). This perspective was adopted by Austin et al. (2006), Kramer (2005), and Light (2006).

Kirzner influences some theoreticians and views opportunity recognition and exploitation as central (Thompson et al., 2000; Seelos & Mair, 2005; Zahra et al., 2009). Others, influenced by Schumpeter, stressed the importance of innovation (Perrini & Vurro, 2006).

Schumpeterian Social Entrepreneurship

The Schumpeterian approach to social entrepreneurship highlights two essential characteristics: the social entrepreneur is innovative and challenges the equilibrium. The first is reflected in the definition proposed by Nandan et al. (2015, p. 39), echoing Dees and Anderson (2006): “Social entrepreneurship is the establishment of initiatives to implement social innovations. Social entrepreneurs use innovation to create social value and change through a new venture (in any organizational form) in the public, private, citizen, or nonprofit sector”. The second is reflected in Martin and Osberg’s (2007) opinion that social entrepreneurship has the following three components: (1) identify a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalization, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own; (2) identify an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state’s hegemony and (3) set a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium, ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large (Martin and Osberg, 2007, p. 35). From the perspective of Martin and Osberg (2007), social entrepreneurs are thus involved in a three-stage process: they identify an unsatisfactory equilibrium, challenge the current status quo through inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, and forge a new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and society at large. Martin and Osberg (2007, p. 36) exclude those establishing small organizations serving a local population. They call these individuals “service providers” because these organizations are not replicated, and their influence is limited to the local population; they do not

challenge the equilibrium. From this perspective, social entrepreneurship is practiced by a small band of courageous leaders, excluding Kirznerian entrepreneurs who institute change within the current equilibrium.

Social Innovation

Given the centrality of social innovation, it is essential to clarify what we mean by this concept. The concept of “social innovation” has multiple and diffuse definitions (Rüede & Lurtz, 2012; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017), and analysis of these definitions goes beyond the scope of this work. We will use Phills et al.’s (2008) definition that defines “social innovation” as “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Phills et al., 2008 p. 36)

From this perspective, a social innovation is a “solution” without specifying the provider. Providers could be government, second- or third-party organizations. In this article, we discuss social innovations initiated by social entrepreneurs.

The Social Entrepreneurial Process

More empirical research and theory building are needed in social entrepreneurship processes in general (Korsgaard, 2011) and Schumpeterian social entrepreneurship processes, in particular. As such, social entrepreneurship process theory draws on a prevalent theory in commercial entrepreneurship.

Opportunity Discovery and Exploitation

Opportunity Discovery and Exploitation play a crucial role in commercial entrepreneurship. Shane and Venkataraman (2000, p. 217-218) developed a conceptual framework for the field, building on the earlier work of Kirzner (1997). They described why entrepreneurial opportunities exist and why some people, and not others, discover and exploit those opportunities. In addition, they considered the different modes of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. They stated that the purpose of this framework was to “advance the quality of empirical and theoretical work in the field.

Several theorists have accepted this conceptual framework that focused on opportunity discovery and exploitation into social entrepreneurship with adaptation to the social context. Thompson et al. (2000), Seelos and Mair (2005), Austin et al. (2000), and Shaw and Carter (2007) contributed to the development of a social entrepreneurial process theory. It has been used as a focus in empirical studies of the social entrepreneurship process (Corner & Ho, 2010; Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016; Nouman & Cnaan, 2022).

In commercial entrepreneurship, theoreticians Barney (2007) and Baker and Nelson (2005) dispute opportunity discovery and exploitation theory, claiming that entrepreneurship theory should rest on opportunity creation rather than opportunity discovery in certain situations. Another approach Dimov (2007) adopted focuses on the evolving nature of entrepreneurial opportunities. Similarly, in social entrepreneurship, Roberts and Woods (2005, p. 49) argue that “opportunities for social change are not discovered like Everest; rather, they are part of a construction process that involves the working and reworking of ideas and possibilities”. Finally, some theorists go outside the nexus framework and suggest alternative entrepreneurship theories that are not based on the centrality of opportunities (Davidsson, 2015).

3. Research Objective

The paper aims to understand the entrepreneurial process followed by Schumpeterian social entrepreneurs, emphasizing their objectives, points of entry into the process, connections to the fields of their endeavours, and strategies deployed to change the equilibrium.

This research is important for theory building in social entrepreneurship, with implications for social entrepreneurship encouragement, support, and education.

4. Methodology

In this study, we used the life story method. This qualitative research method (Macías & Contreras, 2019) comprises a narrative analysis interview approach (Bertaux & Kohli, 1984). The participants were invited to share their life stories in open-ended interviews (Harold et al., 1985). These interviews were analyzed to create a sequence of events in each entrepreneurial process and to identify common and divergent patterns among the different entrepreneurial processes.

This methodology was chosen to understand the entrepreneurial process of social entrepreneurs. In addition to outlining the different processes followed, the method provides insights into past experiences that may have inspired and provided an impetus for social entrepreneurial activities.

The life story method has been widely used in social work research (Veroff et al., 1993; Harold et al., 1995). Subsequently, Steyaert (1997), in his call for the development of entrepreneurship theory, advocated its use in the research of commercial entrepreneurship processes, with Gartner (2010) and Hulsinka and Rauch (2021) recommending its use as well. In the realm of social entrepreneurship research, Cohen and Katz (2016), Yitshaki and Kropp (2016), and Mirvis (2024) all used the life story research method.

5. The Research Process

The researcher interviewed ten Israeli social entrepreneurs, two women and eight men, who had created organizations that met the following criteria:

1. They were social innovators who derived their income from multiple sources, including philanthropy.
2. They could be defined as “Schumpeterian entrepreneurs”, reflecting Nandan et al. (2015) and Martin and Osberg’ (2007) definitions of social entrepreneurship since they established new and innovative organizations that have either changed the equilibrium or challenged it.

All organizations established by interviewed entrepreneurs operate in multiple locales. All have operated for at least eight years, are sustainable, and have annual budgets that top 1 million Israeli Shekels. All organizations are currently operating, but one was forced to close after 16 years of operating for reasons unrelated to its quality of service. All entrepreneurs were interviewed for this research over 12 months, from September 2023 to August 2024. One interview occurred face to face; others occurred via Zoom. The interviews lasted between one and 3 hours. All interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewee, as the researcher is proficient in both Hebrew and English. Three interviews were conducted in English, and seven were conducted in Hebrew. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. An analysis of the interviews followed with a focus on sequences of events for each entrepreneur and a search for common and divergent patterns. Following is Table 1 providing a list of the entrepreneurs’ innovations.

Table 1. A list of the entrepreneurs’ innovations

	Innovation	Beneficiaries	Pre-innovation equilibrium	The post-innovation equilibrium
Education	Online school for teaching colloquial Arabic	Non-Arabic speakers	Lack of accessible colloquial Arabic courses	Online engaging and accessible modules are offered to all who are interested in becoming conversant in Arabic
	Supportive work-centered environments that teach life skills and manufacture decorative candles	High school dropouts	No comprehensive non-educational frameworks	Teens are offered employment in supportive, productive environments that teach them life skills that enable them to become productive members of society
	Supportive agricultural work environments that teach life skills in a	High school dropouts	No comprehensive noneducational	Teens are offered employment in supportive multi-generational agricultural environments that

	multi-age environment		frameworks	teach them life skills and enable them to become productive members of society
	Series of single-gender campuses where universities offer courses	The ultra-orthodox population who will not study in co-ed environments	University education is taboo for this population	Ultra-orthodox students enrol in university degree programs
Health care and support	Implementation of a proven unique approach to the rehabilitation of children with hearing loss and deafness	Children with deafness and severe hearing loss	Hearing limitations for life; severe personal, social, and educational implications	Children can hear, communicate verbally with their environment, attend a regular school, and become contributing members of society, thereby realizing their full potential
	Provision of friendship and support to hospitalized children	Children hospitalized for long periods	Isolation from peers; onus of support on parents	Children offered support and social interaction with young volunteers
	Treatment and prevention of addiction among teens	Populations with addiction problems with a focus on teens	No institutional framework for addiction treatment	Individuals suffering from addiction can receive comprehensive treatment. Furthermore, there are organized campaigns to prevent teen addiction
	Provision of immediate emergency medical care	The general population who requires immediate emergency medical care	Emergency care based on timely ambulance arrival	Immediate emergency care provided by paramedics on motorcycles who can successfully negotiate traffic congestion
Miscellaneous	Provision of timely non-medical support to vehicle drivers	Drivers who experience roadside vehicle problems	Aid depends on available commercial emergency providers	Timely gratis roadside assistance provided by volunteers
	Provision of household budget tutoring and mentoring	Families incapable of living within their means	Families in debt drift into poverty	Families can access free family budget tutoring and mentoring

All interviewees were fully informed of the research objectives and provided written consent for their participation.

6. Findings

6.1 The Entrepreneurial Objectives and Points of Entry.

In analyzing the entrepreneurial processes of entrepreneurs, it is possible to differentiate between two different types of entrepreneurs in terms of their objectives and points of entry—the first comprising entrepreneurs who sought to capture social value and were opportunity-focused. The second type comprised those who focused on solving social problems after responding to “a call to action”.

Social Value Capture through Opportunity Focus. Three entrepreneurs followed the opportunity focus pattern. The first focuses on opportunity discovery and exploitation, the second on opportunity pursuit, and the third on opportunity creation.

Opportunity Discovery and Exploitation

Teaching Colloquial Arabic. The entrepreneur had the skills to teach colloquial Arabic. His friends encouraged him to gather a team to design “colloquial Arabic modules for beginners” and to post them on YouTube. He received positive responses to these episodes and requests for additional modules. He and his team realized that there was a market for these modules, and two years later, they decided to raise funds through crowdfunding to grow the venture. The entrepreneur discovered the social value of teaching colloquial Arabic to large audiences. In his own words, he “realized that this project was not about teaching friends Arabic and taking them to the Old City (of Jerusalem); in teaching hundreds and thousands of people to speak, we were influencing social norms” (translation). This project enables course graduates to communicate with Israel’s Arab population in their native tongue, providing a communication bridge in a region where populations live in conflict. As such, a great emphasis was placed on growing the market, with the modules being highly engaging and offered gratis.

Opportunity Pursuit

Provide Joy and Support for Hospitalized Children. A second entrepreneur, whose profession was in the realm of commerce, embarked on a search for opportunities to create social value. A fundraiser approached him with experience raising funds for a healthcare-related organization to develop a project in this area. The entrepreneur interviewed hospital personnel to create a project to address sick children's unmet needs. As he noted, he “started talking to the doctors, nurses, social workers, parents, and the kids about what the needs were, and soon it became obvious that there were kids with chronic illnesses with long-term rehab or treatment that were not being dealt with by any organization. No organization was there for them, helping them what they needed”. While the hospitals provided excellent medical care, no organization responded to the negative ramifications of long periods of isolation for young patients. This research prompted him to establish a “Big Brother”, “Big Sister” type organization that would recruit volunteers to “adopt” the children undergoing treatment and support them throughout their hospitalization. The project was piloted in two hospitals and was thereafter offered nationally.

Opportunity Creation

Developing a Multi-Age Supportive Agricultural Farm for School Dropouts. A third entrepreneur took a year-long “timeout” after an intensive decade as an educator in the formal system. During this year, he desired to work with his hands and embarked on some carpentry projects. He was deliberating what to do next when a former student reminded him of his dream to develop a farm and provide a multi-age working environment for high school dropouts. He recalled the idea and his enthusiasm, inviting his friends to join him on this venture: “I invited them to join me in a week to work with me on this project. However, I had no farm and had no land” (translation). Within a week, he created the opportunity. He secured unused wasteland plots in the area of an agricultural village in which he lived, and within a few months, he was able to run a pilot program for high school dropouts. Teens who refused to “get out of bed” for school flocked to work, with many ultimately studying for the matriculation examinations. This model has been replicated in two other regions as well as overseas.

Response to a Call to Action

Seven entrepreneurs began their entrepreneurial process with an aspiration to solve a social problem as a response to what they perceived to be a call to action. This perception was triggered by a highly significant and unexpected adverse event that prompted six out of seven interviewees to change their career paths and embark on their entrepreneurial journeys. The seminal events that provoked responses were personal, social, and national.

Personal Event

These events affected the entrepreneurs personally. The reaction of the first was to solve the problem for herself and others, while the response of the second entrepreneur was to ensure that others did not experience the same event.

Two-year-old twin daughters were diagnosed with deafness. The entrepreneur was a young educator when her 2-year-old twins were diagnosed with deafness. In her words: “I was at the supermarket with one of my twins. This was rare since we usually took the two together wherever we went. She ran ahead, and I called her to wait. She did not respond. I switched to Hebrew and even called her by her and her sister's name, thinking that perhaps she did not know which of the twins she was, but still, there was no response. We took the twins to a hearing test, and both were diagnosed with deafness. I was distraught. A social worker recommended we enrol our twins in a kindergarten for children with deafness, and after visiting the school, I was even more distraught. I shared my woes with my sister in Canada, who told me about a treatment for child deafness that combined the use of technology and intensive exposure to spoken language through speech therapy. I jumped on the opportunity to provide my children with normative speech and language. When the FDA approved cochlear implants for children, my girls were among the first to receive this new technology that would enable them to hear. At the beginning of our personal family journey, I became the head of the Israeli branch of the organization. Now, 30 years hence, my daughters are combining technology and intensive exposure to spoken language through speech therapy. I jumped on the opportunity to provide my children with normative speech and language. When the FDA approved cochlear implants for children, my girls were among the first to receive this new technology that would enable them to hear. Although at the beginning of our personal family journey, I became the head of the Israeli branch of the organization, and now 30 years hence, my daughters are communicative, integrated citizens, as well as hundreds of other children who were born with the same disability.”

There were streams of passing cars, and no one pulled over to help. The entrepreneur was a manager of a men's fashion chain. He began his day at 5 am and, one winter morning, failed to start his car. He realized that he needed to jump-start the battery, which in those days would require the help of a second vehicle. He opened the car bonnet, connected the jump leads, and waited for passing vehicles to come to his aid. He recalls: “I waited an hour and a half in the rain and cold, yet despite the passing car streams, nobody stopped to help me. I was angry and disappointed, but ultimately, I was thankful because this motivated me to start this project. I wondered how there could be so many people in need of help and so many willing to help, yet there is no connection. Immediately after that, I created a WhatsApp group to provide mutual help in such situations” (translation). The entrepreneur grew this group, and within five years, the volunteer organization he founded could offer roadside first aid across the country to all in need.

Social Encounter

These events occurred through interactions with others, with four entrepreneurs responding to calls of this nature. In two situations, the entrepreneurs were challenged to solve the problems of individuals they knew under stress. Subsequently, they created organizations to solve the issues of wider circles in similar predicaments. In the other two situations, the responses were evoked by the tragic deaths of others and the resolve of the entrepreneurs to ensure there would not be a recurrence of these events.

An Unexpected Call for Help from a Former Mentee. The entrepreneur was a psychology student when he mentored a 10th-grade student as part of a year-long university volunteer project. Two years later, he received an unexpected call. He recalled, “I was sitting in a coffee shop with my wife when he called. Can you please come and fetch me from the beach? I live here in a tent. Astonished and confused, I fetched and took him home” (translation). The entrepreneur took him under his wing and arranged a work schedule, paying attention to the work's power in rehabilitating at-risk youth. Through this former mentee, he discovered the phenomenon of school dropouts who become “transparent” to the official authorities without any authority to address their needs. Cognizant of this vacuum, he felt compelled to create a supportive work environment that would enable these dropouts to realize their potential and contribute positively to society.

Realizing the Need for Household Budgeting Instruction. The entrepreneur was a yeshiva student and invested time in helping people experiencing poverty. A young divorcee with young children experienced severe

financial difficulties. In his efforts to help her, he came to a settlement with a bank that threatened to close her account. He secured a loan on her behalf and ensured she had the resources to repay it. The entrepreneur describes the events that occurred. “The woman did not fulfill her commitments to the bank, and the bank called me claiming that my loan had defaulted. Filled with anger, I went over and started screaming at her. She burst out crying, claiming that she did not understand the situation. Suddenly, I realized that she had no understanding of simple budgeting. She did not realize that all expenses should be covered by income” (translation). The entrepreneur sat with her and taught her how to budget. Word spread that he had the skill of teaching people to live within their budgets, and many turned to him for help. Given this growing interest, the entrepreneur founded an organization that recruited volunteers to teach the public, at large, the mechanics of household budgeting.

The Trauma of Being Unable to Save a Child's Life. As a volunteer paramedic, an entrepreneur witnessed the death of a child who choked while eating. A doctor in the area arrived too late to save the child. In the entrepreneur's words, this was his call to action. “A mother called for help when her seven-year-old son choked on lunch. It took us 21 min to arrive. Upon arrival, we saw the mother on the floor next to her son, crying and begging for our help to save his life. I was only 16. I was crying with her. While I was performing CPR, a man, a doctor who lived around the corner, ran into the house. After helping us, he apologized that the child was not alive. That was the worst moment in my life. I realized that the doctor lived a block away, but he did not know about the emergency until we arrived. That is when I said, “ambulances don't save lives; people save lives”. This incident inspired the entrepreneur to create a real-time system to offer emergency medical care. He began by purchasing scanners to pick up calls to the ambulance service and dispatch paramedics to the scene. As he built the organization, he recruited and trained multiple volunteer paramedics and instituted a motorbike heavily equipped with emergency medical supplies that enabled paramedics to administer timely emergency care even when the streets were congested.

Personal Request from a Wealthy Fatal Victim of Drug Addiction. The entrepreneur was a young Israeli rabbi ministering to a community in Central America. Through his community service, he was surprised to learn that drug addiction was not only a problem among the poor but also among the rich. As the entrepreneur explained, “A wealthy member of the community approached me about his cocaine addiction. I began to contemplate what I could do. Sadly, he passed away from an overdose a few days later. At the funeral, his daughter brought me a letter from her father in which he described his suffering. He requested that I do everything in my power to ensure that others would not suffer and die because of this terrible white powder. I interpreted this as his will and testimony, which became my life mission.” (translation). The wealthy individual left him a small sum to start an organization, and the entrepreneur began to teach himself how to treat addiction. A few years later, the rabbi returned to Israel and built a center for the treatment and prevention of addiction.

National Event.

The Assassination of Israel's Prime Minister. The assassination of Israel's Prime Minister Rabin in 1995 was a call to action for the entrepreneur who established an academic platform for the ultra-Orthodox. The secular media blamed the ultra-Orthodox, who were among the poorer sections of society, for benefiting from welfare and not making economic contributions to the economy. The entrepreneur, an ultra-Orthodox fashion designer and daughter of an influential rabbi, felt pressed to find a way to improve the financial plight of her community. “I had a terrible conscience”, she recalls, “how could I continue life as normal?” (Translation). This led her to pursue a solution earnestly. In her pursuit, she heard a lecture by an influential economist on the importance of university education for economic mobility. With this insight, she realized the importance of university education for the ultra-Orthodox, yet understood that coeducational campuses were a barrier to enrollment. She thus established single-gender campuses and invited the universities to offer their courses on these campuses.

6.2 Life Commitment

Seven of the enterprises were established more than 25 years ago. Eight entrepreneurs will continue to hold Chairman of the Board or CEO positions. One entrepreneur resigned after 20 years, while a second left office when the enterprise was closed by regulators after 16 years of activity.

6.3 Insiders and Outsiders

The in-depth interviews revealed that only two entrepreneurs were “insiders“. They knew about the fields in which they were engaged and developed their enterprises with a clear sense of direction. These two entrepreneurs were among the “entrepreneurial opportunity” category of entrepreneurs who discovered and created opportunities for social value. Seven of the remaining eight were “outsiders“ with no previous professional experience. One entrepreneur was a trained volunteer with experience in his field, and as such, he was professionally an outsider but a knowledgeable insider.

6.4 Past volunteering

Eight of the ten entrepreneurs mentioned having volunteered in the past, mentioning the satisfaction they had derived and the empathy they had developed for those with whom they had volunteered. Three responses to a call to action directly resulted from these volunteer experiences.

6.5 Equilibrium Change Strategies

There are four key areas where all social entrepreneurs need to succeed in challenging the equilibrium: the product or service, personnel, pennies, and politics (Mirvis, 2024). These areas are also interdependent and essential for success. The ability to develop an excellent product or service and employ excellent personnel may depend on the pennies, i.e., finances. Similarly, the ability to receive support from local councils and government bodies may depend on politics. Finally, support from local councils and the government may rely on the quality of the services offered or the product developed.

Development of Products and Services

Expertise in the Area of the Endeavor. In developing a product or service, those experts in the field build on their experience. One entrepreneur took a course that enabled him to become an expert. The second one consulted with experts in the field and built his endeavors on their wisdom. Three other entrepreneurs decided to learn “by doing“. They had intuitive knowledge regarding how to start the development phase and learned by trial and error how to complete it. Two entrepreneurs teamed up with experts in the field to develop their enterprises. One entrepreneur employed a CEO who had the expertise to create the service.

Product and Service Development. All entrepreneurs developed their products and services through piloting. The responses from the field were fed into further developments that were tested in the field.

Scaling up. The following factors contributed to the ability of the organization to scale its services:

- A. Creation of platforms that can operate in one of the following ways:
 - 1. Digital platforms that allow beneficiaries to access services;
 - 2. Rental of a physical structure that enables an outside provider to offer services;
 - 3. A communication platform would allow people living nearby to receive the service in real-time.
- B. Introduction of new products to meet the needs of a larger group of beneficiaries.
- C. Financial accessibility. Seven organizations offered their services gratis, while three charged highly subsidized fees.

Personnel

All organizations tried to recruit and retain staff dedicated to the organization's ethos. Thus, in most organizations, staff turnover was limited. Staff retention was achieved by creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and fair wages. In addition, four organizations base their services on volunteer work. Their ability to attract dedicated volunteers was due to the following:

- 1. The volunteers received training and were acknowledged for their volunteer work.
- 2. They had meaningful interactions with beneficiaries.

3. They determined their time commitment. As such, those holding demanding professional positions could tailor their volunteer work to match their professional commitments.

Funding (Pennie's)

Seven organizations operated with volunteer work in their first stages. As the organizations grew, they deployed the following sustainability strategies:

1. As mentioned, four organizations were staffed mainly by volunteers. One organization made volunteerism a central ethos, so there are no paid employees. The CEO holds a paid professional position during work hours, and he/she operates as the organization's CEO in the “after hours”.
2. The government almost entirely funded one organization, while two others secured significant government funding for their services. Three secured partial funding, and four operated without government support.
3. Two organizations operated social enterprises that provided most of their required income.
4. One organization that offered its services accessible to the public was able to offer a lucrative “premium service” to corporations.
5. Nine organizations engaged in fundraising, with four raising most of their funds overseas.

Politics

In some situations, organizations that operate in the health and education fields are affected by government regulation. Furthermore, regularly fulfilling requirements was often a prerequisite for receiving government funds.

In many situations, existing organizations that received government funding and offered services of lesser quality did all to protect their turf, making it extremely difficult for the new organizations that offered superior services. One organization had to make great efforts to convince the authorities that it was combating a genuine problem, a second commissioned an evaluation despite its exceptional service and a third was closed down by the regulators despite its success.

7. Discussion

The primary finding is the differentiation between the two types of entrepreneurs in terms of their objectives and points of entry—the first comprised entrepreneurs who sought to capture social value and were opportunity-focused. The second type comprised those who focused on solving social problems having responded to “a call to action”.

This finding correlates with Mirvis's findings on Schumpeterian religious education entrepreneurs (Mirvis, 2024). Mirvis's research focused on entrepreneurs with religious commitment; therefore, one could assume that their response to a call to action resulted from their religious beliefs. However, this research shows that this response is also prevalent among general social entrepreneurs.

This finding raises a question regarding a theory source for enhancing social entrepreneurship, whose primary motivation is to solve social problems. Commercial entrepreneurship theory focusing on entrepreneurial opportunities, such as opportunity discovery and recognition, opportunity pursuit (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), or opportunity creation (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Alvarez & Barney, 2007), could serve opportunity-driven social entrepreneurship. However, social entrepreneurship that responds to calls to action with an emphasis on solving social problems may require a different theory.

A second discipline that could be a resource for theory is social innovation. However, while social innovation is a growing field of practice, social innovation theory remains underdeveloped (Mulgan, 2019). Furthermore, the central focus of social innovation enhancement is moving toward a systematic approach that goes beyond “excessive faith in heroic individuals” (Mulgan, 2006, p. 160). Therefore, the discipline of social innovation currently needs to be a source.

A second significant finding is the large group of “outsiders” who established Schumpeterian enterprises. This finding is reflected among other Schumpeterian entrepreneurs, e.g., Mohammad Yunus's establishment of the

Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (Bornstein, 1997) and Erzsébet Szekeres' establishment of assisted living centers for the disabled in Hungary (Bornstein, 2004). An analysis of the interviews with the entrepreneurs revealed a strong critique of the prevailing equilibrium, coupled with a high level of innocence regarding their ability to create change. This finding begs further research

A third significant finding is a correlation between a personal history of volunteering and a willingness to become a social entrepreneur. This finding is vital for social entrepreneurship education. If there is a correlation, meaningful volunteer experience should be a prerequisite for participating in programs that enhance social entrepreneurship.

A fourth significant finding is the predominance of two factors that enhanced the scaling up of organizations' services: the mobilization of large numbers of committed volunteers and the use of platforms to operate the organization's services. This finding is not novel; Pardess (2005) focused on mobilizing volunteers, while Landoni and Trabucchi (2024) analyzed their use in nonprofit organizations. However, it is worth noting, given its importance to social entrepreneurship education.

8. Conclusion

This research aimed to understand the entrepreneurial process followed by Schumpeterian social entrepreneurs, emphasizing their objectives, points of entry into the process, and connections to the fields of their endeavors and strategies deployed to change the equilibrium. Ten Israeli "Schumpeterian" social entrepreneurs were chosen and interviewed using the life story method.

The key findings were as follows:

1. The research highlighted two types of entrepreneurs and their objectives and starting points. The first comprised entrepreneurs who sought to capture social value and were opportunity-focused. The second type comprised those who focused on solving social problems by responding to "a call to action":
2. There was a large majority of "outsiders" among the entrepreneurs.
3. There is a possible correlation between a personal history of volunteering and a willingness to become a social entrepreneur.
4. There is a predominance of two factors that enhanced the scaling up of organizations' services: the mobilization of large numbers of committed volunteers and the use of platforms to operate organizations' services.

In relation to these findings, the limitations of the life story method must be noted. This methodology relies on the memory and self-reflection of the interviewees. In relaying their life stories, the interviewees could have erred regarding the sequences of critical events or may have needed to be more selective in relaying their narratives. Thus, future research should be carried out with this same research objective utilizing a different methodology.

Notwithstanding the above, the findings of this research may contribute to the development of theory in the realm of Schumpeterian social entrepreneurship and make a worthwhile contribution to social entrepreneurship education.

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