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Designing a Social Entrepreneurship Education Model for High School Students in Iraq

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Abstract

Introduction: The main goal of this research was to design a social entrepreneurship education model for high school students in Iraq.

Methodology: This research was a qualitative data collection method using content analysis. The participants in the qualitative section included secondary school teachers in Baghdad, Iraq, and faculty members and experts in the field of social entrepreneurship and educational sciences, totaling 21 people, who were selected based on the theoretical saturation rule. The research tool was a semi-structured interview. The coding model for content analysis was the Attridge and Stirling model.

Findings: The results showed that the model consisted of six overarching themes and 15 organizing themes, including goal setting (strategic goals and operational goals), content foundations (psychological foundations, legal foundations, technological foundations, economic foundations, health foundations), democratic approach (inclusive respect, open education strategies), culture building (awareness raising, role model building), evaluation (program evaluation, learner evaluation), and ecosystem building (identity building, ecosystem promotion).

Conclusion: This model generally covers not only the technical and skill dimensions of social entrepreneurship, but also pays special attention to the human and cultural dimensions. Here, social entrepreneurship is seen as a comprehensive activity that includes both economic and social and environmental dimensions. The innovations of this model, compared to similar research, allow it to go beyond traditional frameworks and respond to the current and future needs of the local and, most likely, global community.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, high school.

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Introduction

Social entrepreneurship is a dynamic and innovative field that plays a critical role in preparing individuals to create positive social change. By integrating entrepreneurial principles with a commitment to addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges, this form of education enables individuals to transform innovative ideas into sustainable investments that create meaningful social value. At its core, social entrepreneurship focuses on using business strategies to achieve social goals. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, which primarily aims to maximize profits, social entrepreneurship emphasizes creating social value and improving the quality of life in communities. This dual focus on economic sustainability and social impact requires a unique set of skills and knowledge that social entrepreneurship aims to foster.

Social entrepreneurship can help solve societal problems, especially poverty and inequality (Nowroozi Ajirloo et al, 2023). Given the spread of social problems on the one hand and the lack of motivation of the private sector to solve these problems due to the lack of financial benefits of these businesses, the need for innovation in entrepreneurship to solve these problems is felt more than ever. The existence of these social problems has been identified as the main obstacles to the development of societies. According to the researcher, social entrepreneurship can improve the social and cultural situation of society by economic development and creating job opportunities. Many experts have concluded in recent years that achieving sustainable development for societies is impossible without paying attention to solving social problems and issues (Drikvand and Shahriari, 2017). A social entrepreneur sees a problem in society (an unfair balance), and takes advantage of this opportunity to solve that problem innovatively and create a new and more sustainable balance (Manyaka, 2015, p. 7). Social entrepreneurship is a growing field of research. Here are some of the studies conducted in this field:

Scrocaro (2024) conducted a study on “Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability: A Challenge-Based Course at the University of Trento.” The results include some recommendations for designing a challenge-based course and identifying potential future explorations in this area.

Nouchian et al. (2024) conducted a study titled “A Review of Social Impact Performance Evaluation of Social Enterprises: Identifying an Ideal Social Entrepreneurship Model.” The findings show that selected social investments have created significant social value that clearly leads to economic empowerment, community improvement, job growth, and political empowerment of their intended beneficiaries.

Zulkifli and Aziz (2023) examined “Determinants of Social Entrepreneurship Intention: A Longitudinal Study Among Youth in Higher Education Institutions.” Findings indicate that social awareness, self-efficacy, prior entrepreneurial experience, and cosmopolitanism are consistently significant determinants of social entrepreneurship intention before and after the pandemic.

In a study titled “The Profound Impact of Social Entrepreneurship on the Advancement of Sustainable Development: A Systematic Review,” Onilowo et

al. (2023) examined the impact of social entrepreneurship on the advancement of sustainable development. The results show that social entrepreneurs promote sustainable development by solving social problems, creating new service delivery models, and strengthening the economy.

Developing countries, including Iraq, need to pay significant attention to the category of social entrepreneurship in order to pave the way for sustainable development processes based on the participation of people, especially entrepreneurs. On the other hand, there is not much research evidence on the existence of educational models based on social entrepreneurship in Iraq, and there is a deep research gap in this field.

By conducting this research, it is expected that a social entrepreneurship education model will be presented for the secondary education in Iraq, in order to attract the attention of all education agents in Iraq to consider the components of this model and to provide the basis for creating opportunities based on the collective intellectual capacity of adolescents. In addition, conducting this research can challenge the theoretical and traditional approaches governing secondary education in Iraq and provide the basis for paying attention to the intellectual potentials for social entrepreneurship.

Methodology

This research was conducted qualitatively and the Atride-Stirling (2001) thematic analysis method was used. This method involves identifying and extracting codes and key points from the text. Initially, the researcher, by reading the text carefully and completely, identifies minor codes and primary concepts and selects them as basic themes. These basic themes represent the basic and important points in the data.

In the next step, the basic themes are combined and summarized into organizing themes. In this process, the researcher reviews the basic codes and puts similar and related concepts together to create organizing themes. These organizing themes help to categorize the data and create a logical framework for analysis. Finally, overarching themes are obtained from combining the organizing themes. These overarching themes are identified as the main and general themes of the text and have the ability to cover the entire research topic. According to his/her ability to recognize and master, the researcher selects appropriate names for each category of codes and themes, which reflect the main and central concept of each category. This systematic process allows the researcher to analyze qualitative data in a deeper and more coherent way and to present the results in a meaningful and relevant way to the research objectives.

Participants in this section are divided into two main groups:

Group 1: High school teachers in Baghdad, Iraq

Group 2: Faculty members and experts in the field of social entrepreneurship and educational sciences.

Sampling was conducted based on a purposive and criterion-based method, and the samples were selected based on the criteria of having at least one publication or article in the field of entrepreneurship and having at least 10 years of teaching experience in the specialized field of entrepreneurship, and teachers and administrators having a master's degree or higher in educational management and having more than 10 years of experience. The number of samples was determined based on the theoretical saturation level.

The sample size was determined according to the theoretical saturation rule. Accordingly, the researcher reaches a point during the research where the new data he collects are repeated repeatedly. For example, when the researcher continuously encounters similar opinions and views in the interviews conducted, he can conclude that data saturation has been achieved. With the purposive sampling method and the criterion of having more information in the area of competence and based on the level of theoretical saturation during the interviews, the researcher reached data saturation with 21 interviews. Of these, 6 were women and 15 were men.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The questions for this interview were designed using research literature and qualitative research results.

To ensure the validity and robustness of the research, the Guba and Lincoln (1994) indices were used. These two researchers believe that four main criteria are necessary to assess the scientific validity of qualitative studies: validity (acceptability, believability), trustworthiness and reliability, confirmability, and transferability. In this study, the emphasis was on the two indices of credibility and transferability, which were used as criteria for evaluating the information presented in the research.

Research Findings

This study analyzed the data using thematic analysis method based on the Atride and Stirling model. In this method, key (core) concepts are first identified and then these concepts are organized into axial (organizing) categories. Finally, overarching concepts are extracted and a network of themes is designed that links all these concepts together

In this stage of the research, using the content analysis method, an attempt was made to extract and categorize the content and themes of the studied pattern. The results can be seen in Tables ٢ and ٣

Table ١: Examples of speech fragments and basic themes

Basic theme	Fragment of speech
Promoting a culture of innovation and creativity. Emphasis on social responsibility and ethics. Empowering students in management and leadership	The role of strategic objectives is crucial in this context. Strategic objectives act as a roadmap that sets the course for social entrepreneurship education. These objectives can determine the overall direction of educational programs and ensure that students acquire the skills and values necessary to actively participate in the social and economic development of their country. First, it is very important to promote a culture of innovation and creativity among students. Iraq is facing many challenges and needs people who can think creatively and innovatively to solve these problems. The second goal should be to emphasize social responsibility and ethics so that entrepreneurship is not limited to economic gain but also leads to improving the social situation and contributing to society. Also, developing management and leadership skills, and empowering students to create sustainable businesses are other important goals

After evaluation and receiving comments from supervisors and advisors, as well as collecting feedback from participants, the basic themes were reviewed and refined. These basic themes were then extracted and used to form abstract themes. In this phase of the thematic analysis, the main goal was to organize the primary themes and identify more abstract themes that were closer to the main themes

Table ٢ – Basic, organizing, and overarching themes of the pattern

Main	Comprehensive theme	Organizing themes	Basic themes
	Targeting	<i>Strategic goals</i>	The need for a strong vision for designing educational programs. A clear mission statement to focus on the shared goals of teachers and students. Promoting a culture of innovation and creativity. Emphasis on social responsibility and ethics. Empowering students in management and leadership Improving educational infrastructure for the successful implementation of social entrepreneurship programs Adapting educational models to Iraq's cultural diversity. The need for cooperation between the government and international organizations to improve education. Developing technology-based educational programs
		<i>Operational objectives</i>	Clarify the path of movement in educational programs Assessing the needs of students and the local community Design and implementation of small social entrepreneurship projects Setting specific goals for entrepreneurial projects and participating in training workshops Developing specific skills in students
	Content Basics	<i>Psychological foundations</i>	Strengthening self-esteem and confidence in individual abilities. Motivating to progress and achieve goals. Training in creative and divergent thinking. Strengthening problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Training in risk management and accepting failure. Strengthening cooperation and teamwork skills. Training in communication and social skills. Training in project management and business planning. Promoting self-determination and autonomy. Training in solving social problems and innovation in this field. Training in brainstorming
		<i>Legal basis</i>	Introducing students to laws and citizenship rights. Familiarity with labor laws and workers' rights. Teaching the steps of company registration and business laws. Familiarity with intellectual property rights. Familiarity with consumer protection laws. Strengthening skills in analyzing laws and policies. Communication with legal experts and policymakers

		<i>Technology Basics</i>	Learn how to use tools likeTrello andAsana to plan and track social entrepreneurship projects. Learn how to use tools likeGoogle Analytics andMicrosoft Power BI to analyze data related to social projects. Learn how to use digital marketing tools like Facebook Ads andGoogle Ads for advertising. Learn how to use mocks and platforms like Coursera ,edX and ,Khan Academy to learn new skills in the field of entrepreneurship and technology. Learn how to use tools likeSlack andZoom to facilitate team communication and hold online meetings. Learn how to use tools likeWordPress and Wix to design websites. Learn the basics of cybersecurity and privacy protection in the digital space to protect project information and user data
		<i>Economic fundamentals</i>	Teaching how supply and demand work in the market and their impact on prices and transaction volumes. Teaching how to compare the costs and benefits of projects for optimal decision-making. Teaching how to allocate limited resources optimally in social projects. Teaching macroeconomic concepts such as inflation, unemployment, and economic growth and analyzing their effects on social projects. Teaching the principles of budgeting and financial management in .social entrepreneurship projects
		<i>Health Basics</i>	Teaching various techniques for managing stress and improving mental health. Teaching the importance of regular physical activity and healthy nutrition in improving personal and professional performance. Teaching how to design positive and supportive work environments. Teaching time management techniques to create a balance between work and personal life. Teaching the importance of creating and maintaining social networks and positive professional and personal relationships. Teaching how to identify and manage mental health problems such as anxiety and depression in the .workplace
	Democratic approach	<i>Respect</i>	Creating a supportive and positive environment. Promoting a culture of active listening. Individual support and counseling. Encouraging the expression of creativity and initiative. Responding to individual needs. Appreciating and recognizing efforts and successes. Creating opportunities for social .interaction

		<i>Training strategies</i>	Project-based learning. Use of case studies. Practical and skill-based workshops. Create professional advisory groups with the participation of entrepreneurs and industry experts. Focus on soft skills such as effective communication, teamwork, and time management. Organize field visits to real businesses and social projects. Conduct field research and market needs analysis to identify entrepreneurial opportunities
	Culture building	<i>Awareness raising</i>	Organizing educational workshops and seminars for students, parents, and the local community. Preparing and distributing educational materials such as brochures, booklets, and online content. Holding consultation sessions for students and parents to answer questions and address concerns. Strengthening communication between the school and the local community and garnering support for projects
		<i>Modeling</i>	Inviting successful entrepreneurs to give lectures or workshops in schools. Organizing entrepreneurship competitions and festivals. Preparing and presenting stories and documents from people who have achieved success in the field of social entrepreneurship. Providing practical models for teaching social entrepreneurship to students
	Evaluation	<i>Program evaluation</i>	Assessing student satisfaction and identifying program strengths and weaknesses. Investigating how teachers implement educational programs and identifying existing problems or challenges. Assessing the results and achievements of social projects and obtaining feedback from the local community. Investigating the alignment of the program's initial goals with actual results and identifying opportunities for improvement. Conducting surveys and interviews with local community members who have been impacted by students' social projects. Assessing the effectiveness of teaching resources and educational tools used in the program. Collecting and analyzing statistical data related to student participation, academic outcomes, and project success

Eco-building	<i>Learner assessment</i>	Evaluation of students' skills and knowledge to engage in social entrepreneurship activities. Evaluation of students' projects on innovation and social impact. Evaluation of students' projects on reducing environmental pollution. Evaluation of students based on practical skills such as decision-making ability, problem-solving, leadership and teamwork. Evaluation of students' attitude and motivation towards social entrepreneurship
	<i>Identity</i>	Introducing students to local industries. Familiarizing them with local environmental issues. Using cultural and historical heritage as part of regional identity. Strengthening students' sense of belonging and responsibility towards society through participation in social projects. Holding workshops and training sessions with the participation of local individuals and entrepreneurs
	<i>Improving the ecosystem</i>	Design and implement projects such as cleaning natural environments, waste management, to preserve the environment. Arrange educational programs for community members in areas such as public health, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture. Encourage the use of local resources to support the regional economy and reduce dependence on foreign products. Develop local tourism

As can be seen in Table (2), after reviewing and eliminating the basic recurring themes, they were finally divided into 78 basic themes, 15 organizing themes, and 6 overarching themes. In the next step, the theme network was drawn.



Figure 1: Thematic network of components of the social entrepreneurship education model

Discussion and conclusion

This study designed a model for social entrepreneurship education for high school students in Iraq and considered various components in this model. These components include goal setting (strategic goals and operational goals), content foundations (psychological, legal, technological, economic, and health), democratic approach (inclusive respect and education strategies), culture building (awareness and role model building), evaluation (program evaluation and learner assessment), and ecosystem building (identity building and ecosystem promotion).

According to the model obtained from the research, it can be said that the first stage of the social entrepreneurship education model from the perspective of the participants in the research is goal setting. Therefore, it should be done at the strategic and operational level by managers at the first stage. The next stage is to clarify the content basics. This means that what basics should be paid attention to and put in the spotlight in the social entrepreneurship education model? The content basics from the perspective of the participants in the research include psychological basics - legal basics - technological basics - economic basics - and health and hygiene basics, which should be taught to students. In the next component, these basics should be taught with democratic and liberal approaches. These democratic approaches include respecting students and educational strategies appropriate for the new era, which are taught based on scientific principles and ethics. The next stage in this model is evaluation. It is necessary to evaluate the program and to correctly evaluate the learners using new methods. The component of culture building is prominent in this model because without culture building, it is unlikely that social entrepreneurship will be created in learners. Culture building includes raising awareness among students, their families, and the local community, and another component is role modeling. All efforts by the authorities to implement the social entrepreneurship education model end in improving the ecosystem. Improving the ecosystem is the same as developing the ecosystem, which must first create an identity in students and create interest in the ecosystem, and in line with this identity building and identification, the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the ecosystem includes reducing poverty, reducing environmental pollution, and improving the physical and mental health of learners and the entire local community.

This model generally covers not only the technical and skill dimensions of social entrepreneurship, but also pays special attention to the human and cultural dimensions. Here, social entrepreneurship is seen as a comprehensive activity that includes both economic and social and environmental dimensions. The innovations of this model, compared to similar research, allow it to go beyond traditional frameworks and respond to the current and future needs of the local and, most likely, global community.

It should be noted that no research was found that specifically addressed the above components in the social entrepreneurship education model.

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