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Linking social entrepreneurship to employee commitment and helping behavior: evidence from South Korea

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the internal processes of social enterprises, particularly focusing on human capital. Drawing from social identity theory, the authors propose the relationships among social entrepreneurship (SE), organizational commitment (OC), and helping behavior (HB) and the contextual effect of participatory decision-making (PDM).

Design/methodology/approach – The authors utilized secondary survey data obtained from 1,776 employees of a social enterprise in South Korea. The survey was conducted by the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency.

Findings – The authors confirmed the mediating effect that SE had a positive relationship with HB through OC. In addition, PDM showed a positive moderating effect on the indirect effect.

Originality/value – Social enterprises have emerged as an alternative business model in the non-profit sector, but numerous socio-economic crises have forced them to become self-reliant. This study highlights the value of the employees in the social enterprise, who can realize the double-bottom line.

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Keywords Social entrepreneurship, Organizational commitment, Helping behavior, Participatory decision-making

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

For decades, various socio-economic crises have increased the global demand for alternative models for sustainable economic development. To address the timely challenges, social enterprises emerged as a novel business model, supplementing market and government failures. A social enterprise is an organization that focuses on the internalization of neglected positive externalities (Santos, 2012), while also aiming to improve social welfare and create revenue (Lee, 2015). This definition comprises a double-bottom line: the European social enterprise model focuses on social benefit, while the American model is heavily about revenue generation (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008; Kerlin, 2006). The institutionalization of social enterprises in Korea was promoted in the early 2000s with the aim of creating jobs and expanding social services for the socially underprivileged and began with the enactment and enforcement of the Social Enterprise Promotion Act in 2007.

Social enterprises in Korea mainly benchmarked European models and regarded business integration as an important social mission (Hwang *et al.*, 2017). This means that the goal of social enterprises is to help low-qualified employees (Defourney and Nysens, 2008) and that the government plays an important role in supporting and fostering social enterprises (Lee, 2015). As originally designed, social enterprises have effectively created employment for the socially underprivileged (Bidet *et al.*, 2018), as well as regional economic development (Doh, 2020). However, concerns are raised that the sustainability of social enterprises may be threatened when the government's support for social enterprises is not stable for economic or political reasons (Lee, 2015). Since social enterprises rely heavily on external support, they must increase their independence in order to continue their business, which raises the need for research on effective internal process management of social enterprises.

Several studies examined the characteristics of the founders of social enterprises (Claassen *et al.*, 2024; Ko and Kim, 2020; Marshall, 2011), but little attention was paid to frontline

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workers. In 2024, there were about 3,700 certified social enterprises in South Korea, and more than 60 thousand employees were hired in them. As with majority of social enterprises, employees can play a critical role in both successfully operating the business and fulfilling the social value. That is, employees can be one of the sources to gain competitiveness for the social enterprises, not just recipients of social benefits. In light of those arguments, this study aims to investigate the internal process of the business, particularly focusing on the employees' human capital.

Given the growing prominence and maturity of social enterprise in South Korea, we explore the internal processes of social enterprise based on social identity theory. According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), employees tend to identify with their organization or coworkers by learning norms. As an enabler of social value, employees identified with the organization will endeavor to grow the organization while fulfilling their social roles as well. Thus, understanding what factors motivate employees and how they exhibit their capabilities will provide broader insights into the self-reliance of social enterprises. To this end, this study examines how social entrepreneurship (SE) leads to employee commitment and helping behavior (HB). We also identify a moderating effect of participatory decision-making on the process by which SE enhances HB through organizational commitment (OC).

This study aims to address the lack of insights into the internal processes of social enterprises. The paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews the literature on SE, OC, HB and participatory decision-making. These reviews also reflect a social enterprise context. The third section introduces the data, measures and statistical methods. After interpreting the results, we conclude with a discussion of implications, limitations and future research directions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Social entrepreneurship and organizational commitment

SE is defined as forming a hybrid organization that creates social value through market-based methods (Miller *et al*., 2012) or commercial entrepreneurship in the creation of social value in addition to economic value (Acs *et al*., 2013). It can be divided into three dimensions: (1) identifying unjust equilibrium in society; (2) developing a social value proposition (targeting the underprivileged) and (3) creating a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium (Martin and Osberg, 2007). Another aspect of the SE definition covers both economic mission (whether enterprises operate for beneficiaries or with them) and social mission (whether commercial revenue subsidizes social mission or not) simultaneously (Saebi *et al*., 2019). Due to the multidimensionality of SE, balancing the two missions is important to social entrepreneurs (Dees, 1998).

Such attitudes are crucial for the social enterprise and the development of a social economy. However, entrepreneurship is not merely a characteristic of executives but can be fostered throughout the organization. According to the social identity theory, employees define themselves with various social categories (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and identify with their organization by learning the policies, expectations, norms, etc. When the organization differentiates its values from other organizations, it allows employees to distinguish themselves from members of other organizations (Weisman *et al*., 2023). Likewise, when social enterprise diffuses social value, employees are more likely to align their goals with the organization or go the extra mile for the organization (Edwards, 2005). In other words, employees identified with SE can play both roles of creating social value and promoting the sustainability of the enterprise itself, which is essential for achieving the double bottom line.

For the identification process of members, the leadership of executives (or founders) is also important (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Edwards, 2005; Weisman *et al*., 2023). This means that employees in social enterprises can identify with SE as much as the leadership of the executive is strong. As SE does not guarantee the philanthropic activities of the enterprise on its own, the leadership must emphasize the enterprise's social purposes by mobilizing powerful symbols to resonate with employees. By representing a strong social identity of the executives, employees

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can develop an entrepreneurial mindset (Ko and Kim, 2020), and enterprises can engage in social activities.

Empirical studies regarding SE have largely focused on the macrofoundation (Alvord *et al.*, 2004; Doh, 2020; Shaw and Carter, 2007); however, SE can also affect internal mechanisms. OC is an individual's identification with and involvement in their organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). In a social enterprise, employees would be more committed, as the enterprises create social value with integrity. Related to this argument, several studies reported the positive effects of social orientation and executives' leadership on employees' OC in a social enterprise context (Choi *et al.*, 2020; Newman *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, Caringal-Go and Hechanova (2018) found that intrinsic need satisfaction, such as a sense of meaning and social impact, was positively associated with employee intention to stay, which implies that employees can be more attached to their organization.

Furthermore, as a result of organizational identification, employees can be social entrepreneurs themselves, affected by strong entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is possible to assume that employees in social enterprises with high SE are more likely to commit to and align with organizational goals (Choi *et al.*, 2020). These are consistent with the identification process as we previously discussed (Edwards, 2005). Those mechanisms put social enterprises on a different path in employee identification than most companies. Based on this discussion, we propose hypothesis 1 as below.

H1. *Social entrepreneurship will be positively related to employee organizational commitment.*

2.2 Social entrepreneurship, organizational commitment and helping behavior

Once executives express and share SE, members strive to create social value. However, the nature of social enterprises imposes economic values, which are integral to the survival of these organizations. Therefore, to achieve the double-bottom line, it is crucial to improve and elicit employees' competencies, which in turn helps build organizational capabilities. In this context, helping behaviors among employees are beneficial. Helping is a cooperative behavior that emphasizes interpersonal harmony (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). By assisting coworkers in solving work-related problems (Deckop *et al.*, 2003), helping behaviors can improve organizational information processes and effectiveness. The connection between HB and performance has been observed across various levels of analysis (Bachrach *et al.*, 2006; Ehrhart *et al.*, 2006; Ng and Van Dyne, 2005).

In the social enterprise, it is not sufficient to argue that employees help each other simply because they are social entrepreneurs. Along with entrepreneurship, some additional mechanisms that tie the members together are necessary. This study contended that employees have to be motivated, and OC can make that linkage. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) said that extra-role behaviors, such as helping, require a psychological attachment, above and beyond compliance. Also in the empirical settings, OC affected employees to help each other (Choi, 2006; Deckop *et al.*, 2003; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Shore and Wayne, 1993). Based on this discussion, we propose hypothesis 2 as below.

H2. *Organizational commitment will be positively related to helping behavior.*

Again, in the social enterprise, SE lays the foundation for binding members in a sense of social purpose, and through the organizational identification, they perceive their groups as connected and exhibit pro-social behavior for the collective good (Tidwell, 2005). Because of the connectedness and trust, employees are easy to engage in HB, which leads to the benefit of the organization (Organ, 1988). Likewise, employees' identification allows social enterprises to achieve dual goals simultaneously: to realize social value and increase revenue.

SE also arouses HB through increased commitment. Dedication and relatedness facilitate employees' HB, and scholars have tested OC as a key antecedent in HB (Choi, 2006; O'Reilly

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and Chatman, 1986). Additionally, employees in social enterprises tend to be more committed to relationships with their leader than to monetary incentives (Ohana and Meyer, 2010), so strong entrepreneurship inherent in a good relationship is essential for employee commitment, subsequently HB. Empirical findings also suggest that organizational identification, affective commitment, and HB were positively intercorrelated (Tidwell, 2005), while identification precedes OC (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015). Based on this discussion, we propose hypothesis 3 as below.

H3. Organizational commitment will mediate the relationship between social entrepreneurship and helping behavior.

2.3 The moderating effect of participatory decision-making

Although SE can stimulate the employees' social motive, one doubt pertains to whether the process of employees' dedication translates into a social value, it is unclear if they are likely to either be committed or show HB. The point is that enterprises should make employees believe their value can be realized. Social enterprises are no different from most businesses because they also need to develop and earn profits. Managers of social enterprises, to this end, can search for private funding or invest in commercial activities and also utilize human capital inside the enterprises by implementing participatory decision-making practices (Ohana *et al.*, 2013).

Employees who participate in decision-making perceive themselves as valued by the organization (Thompson *et al.*, 2017). This perception can strengthen their emotional attachment, thereby enhancing OC. A supportive decision-making process also encourages HB by facilitating communication and reducing workplace conflict, which in turn fosters teamwork (Scott-Ladd *et al.*, 2006). However, even committed employees may question whether their efforts truly contribute to social value. When given ample opportunities to participate and when their input is genuinely considered, they are more likely to invest effort in the organization.

Additionally, when committed employees put in additional efforts, they would expect to grow with their enterprises. Since social enterprises are the products of the collective expectations of a range of stakeholders (Newth, 2016), the enterprises should undergo perpetual development, and participatory decision-making could be helpful in this. Once an enterprise supports employees involved in decision-making, employees link their skills or information with others (Scully *et al.*, 1995). As employees might have broader and more diversified competencies than just achieving social values, practices that extract those capabilities can serve as essential capital to solve various problems. Based on this discussion, we propose hypothesis 4 as below.

H4. Participatory decision-making will moderate the mediating effect of social entrepreneurship on helping behavior via organizational commitment.

The hypothesized model of this study is presented in Figure 1 below.

3. Method

3.1 Data source

Our hypotheses were tested with secondary data, collected by the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency. Every five years, these institutions conduct a comprehensive survey of social enterprises in South Korea, including the enterprises, entrepreneurs, employees, etc. In 2022, 1,776 employees responded to the survey. Because the dataset provided only the respondent's ID code and company name, the respondent's anonymity made it impossible to identify the specific respondents. There was no missing data regarding the hypothesized variables; therefore, the sample size was 1,776.

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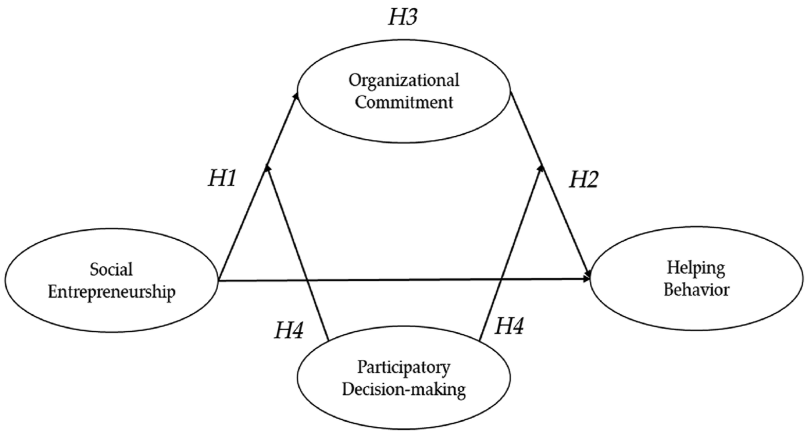


Figure 1. Research model. **Source:** Authors' own work

64.4% of the participants were female, and around 19% of the participants worked in Seoul. The ages varied from 20s = 15.3%, 30s = 23.9%, 40s = 24.2%, 50s = 21.2% and over 60s = 15.4%. Over 70% of the respondents were employed in the enterprise type of work integration.

3.2 Measures

All variables of this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

3.2.1 Social entrepreneurship. Four items were used to measure the independent variable. Those were composed of perceptions regarding the executives (two items) and colleagues (two items). SE had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

3.2.2 Organizational commitment. Five items were used to measure the mediating variable, OC. Questions captured employees' general attachment to the organization, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.86.

3.2.3 Helping behavior. Two items measuring the dependent variable captured knowledge sharing in the workplace and altruistic HB. HB had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87.

3.2.4 Participatory decision-making. Two items measuring the moderating variable consisted of the opportunity to participate and the amount of decision actually being reflected. Participatory decision-making had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91.

3.2.5 Control variables. We additionally controlled employee's gender (0 = female and 1 = male); age (1 = 20s, 2 = 30s, 3 = 40s, 4 = 50s and 5 = over 60s); marital status (0 = single and 1 = married); family size and head of household (0 = no and 1 = yes); basic income recipient (0 = no and 1 = yes); education (1 = middle school or less, 2 = high school graduate, 3 = college degree, 4 = bachelor's degree, 5 = master's degree and above); employment type (0 = part-time, 1 = full-time) and administrator status (0 = no, 1 = yes). All demographic variables were initially designed to respond to dichotomous or Likert-type questions.

4. Results

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

As the variables were not validated scales, we assessed the reliability and validity of the items. The results of CFA (performed in R 4.3.3) are presented in Table 1. We generated the three alternative models and compared them with our hypothesized model. The four-factor model,

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Table 1. Result of confirmatory factor analysis

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1 (hypothesized four-factor model)	1118.08***	59	–	0.937	0.917	0.101	0.051
2 (three-factor model: combines SE and PDM)	2259.26***	62	1141.18***	0.870	0.836	0.141	0.060
3 (three-factor model: combines OC and HB)	3265.27***	62	2147.19***	0.810	0.761	0.171	0.113
4 (one-factor model)	5101.01***	65	3982.93***	0.701	0.642	0.209	0.099

Note(s): SE: social entrepreneurship; PDM: participatory decision-making; OC: organizational commitment; HB: helping behavior; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual and ***$p < 0.001$

Source(s): Authors' own work

in which SE, OC, HB and participatory decision-making were loaded, respectively, had values of $\chi^2 = 1118.08$, df = 59, comparative fit index = 0.937, Tucker–Lewis index = 0.917, root mean square error of approximation = 0.101 and standardized root mean square residual = 0.051. All the chi-square differences with alternative models were significant, indicating that the hypothesized model was acceptable and distinctive within the study variables.

Hence, in Table 1, Model 4 (one-factor model) showed poor fit indices, indicating that the data do not support the presence of a single common factor. All variables loaded in one factor accounted for 30.0% of the total variance, not exceeding the generally recommended threshold of 50%. Therefore, we figured that common method variance may not be serious. Factor loadings of all study variables were higher than 0.7, satisfying the threshold value of 0.6 (Chin, 2010).

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients are presented in Table 2. We also indicated average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) in Table 2. All the scores of AVE were higher than 0.5, and CR was higher than 0.7, which exceeded the recommended value (Ahmad *et al.*, 2016), supporting the convergent validity of the study variables. Regarding discriminant validity, we compared the AVE of each variable with the squared correlations among study variables. In Table 2, the AVE coefficients of all constructs were higher than the squared correlation values. Thus, the discriminant validity was also supported.

Correlation coefficients were calculated using Spearman's rho method as the ordinal characteristic of the Likert scale. Correlations of Spearman's rho were almost the same as the Pearson method. Relationships among unhypothesized variables showed correlations under 0.8, the criterion for judging multicollinearity (Kalnins, 2018), indicating no serious multicollinearity.

4.3 Hypothesis testing

Based on the result of CFA, we adapted Model 1 and ran hierarchical regression analyses (Process Macro model 58 in R 4.3.3). The results are presented in Table 3.

Hypothesis 1 assumes that SE is positively related to OC. In Model 2, SE significantly affected OC ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

In the relations of HB in Model 6, the effect of OC on HB was significant ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 2. Meanwhile, the positive effect of SE on HB was also significant ($\beta = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$).

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Table 2. Results of descriptive and correlations analysis

Variables	Mean	SD	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Gender	0.36	0.48	–													
2. Age	2.98	1.30	–	−0.02												
3. Marital	0.56	0.50	–	−0.00	0.40**											
4. Family size	2.14	1.25	–	−0.04	−0.04*	0.21**										
5. Household head	0.53	0.50	–	0.30**	0.25**	−0.02	−0.24**									
6. Basic livelihood recipients	0.03	0.16	–	0.00	−0.00	−0.12**	−0.00	−0.02								
7. Education	3.21	1.03	–	0.13**	−0.31**	−0.03	0.03	0.03	−0.10**							
8. Employment type	0.94	0.24	–	0.00	−0.02	0.01	−0.00	0.01	0.02	0.03						
9. Administrator Status	0.32	0.47	–	0.12**	0.06**	0.13**	0.07**	0.14**	−0.05*	0.21**	0.12**					
10. Social entrepreneurship	4.04	0.67	0.67	0.05*	−0.04	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.11**	0.04*	0.12**	(0.88)			
11. Organizational commitment	3.49	0.66	0.58	0.08**	0.15**	0.08**	−0.01	0.09**	0.02	−0.00	0.01	0.13**	0.55**	(0.87)		
12. Helping behavior	4.04	0.72	0.77	0.03	−0.10**	−0.01	0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.14**	0.05*	0.08**	0.73**	0.44**	(0.87)	
13. Participatory decision-making	3.87	0.80	0.83	0.09**	−0.03	0.02	0.01	0.05*	0.00	0.12**	0.05*	0.15**	0.64**	0.52**	0.57**	(0.91)

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$ and **$p < 0.01$

Source(s): Authors' own work

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Table 3. Result of hierarchical regression analysis

Independent variables	Organizational commitment Model 1 β (S.E.)	Model 2 β (S.E.)	Model 3 β (S.E.)	Helping behavior Model 4 β (S.E.)	Model 5 β (S.E.)	Model 6 β (S.E.)	Model 7 β (S.E.)
Intercept	3.60***	1.27***	1.43***	4.04***	0.78***	0.66***	1.47***
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.30)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.25)
Gender	0.10**	0.08**	0.06*	0.01	−0.02	−0.03	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age	0.08***	0.09***	0.09***	−0.05**	−0.03**	−0.04***	−0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Marital	0.03	−0.00	−0.00	0.02	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Family size	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Household head	0.01	−0.01	−0.01	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Basic livelihood recipients	0.16	0.07	0.08	0.02	−0.11	−0.11	−0.12
	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Education	−0.00	−0.03*	−0.03*	0.06***	0.02	0.02	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Employment type	0.02	−0.04	−0.04	0.14	0.06	0.06	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Administrator Status	−0.15***	−0.08***	−0.06	−0.08**	0.02	0.03	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Social entrepreneurship (A)		0.56***	0.28***		0.79***	0.74***	0.67***
		(0.02)	(0.07)		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Organizational commitment (B)						0.09***	−0.22**
						(0.02)	(0.07)
Participatory decision-making (C)			0.14				−0.11
			(0.08)				(0.06)
A × C			0.03				
			(0.02)				
B × C							0.07***
							(0.02)
adjR^2	0.05	0.36	0.41	0.02	0.56	0.57	0.58
ΔR^2	–	0.31	0.05	–	0.54	0.01	0.01
F	11.76***	102.4***	103.5***	5.90***	23.4***	213.1***	191***

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ and ***$p < 0.001$

Source(s): Authors' own work

Hypothesis 3 suggests a mediating effect. Using the bootstrap method, we confirmed the significance of the indirect path (as shown in Table 4). The result shows that SE leads to HB both directly ($\beta = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$) and through OC ($\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a partial mediating effect.

Regarding the moderated mediation (hypothesis 4), the effect was not significant when participatory decision-making interacted with SE (A). However, the mediating effect of participatory decision-making interacting with OC (B) was significant. Especially, the effect was not significant when the level of participatory decision-making was −1SD mean; then, the coefficient turned significant when it was mean and +1SD (also see Table 4). These results imply that the indirect path is valid only when the level of participative decision-making is high. With this evidence, hypothesis 3 was fully supported, and hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Figure 2 displays the visualized conditional effect of participatory decision-making. It shows that participatory decision-making has an interaction effect only on (B), the path that

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Table 4. Result of moderated mediating effects analysis (bootstrap = 5,000)

Path		Estimate	95% CI lower	95% CI upper
Mediating effect	Indirect effect	0.05***	0.02	0.08
SE → OC → HB	Direct effect	0.74***	0.70	0.79
	Total effect	0.79***	0.75	0.83
Moderating effect (A)		0.00	−0.00	0.01
SE*PDM → OC (conditional effect)	−1 SD	0.03***	0.01	0.05
	Mean	0.03***	0.02	0.05
	+1 SD	0.04***	0.02	0.06
Moderated mediating effect (B)		0.04***	0.02	0.07
SE → OC*PDM → HB (conditional effect)	−1 SD	−0.01	−0.06	0.04
	Mean	0.05*	0.00	0.09
	+1 SD	0.10***	0.05	0.15

Note(s): SE = social entrepreneurship, CI = confidence interval; PDM = participatory decision-making, OC = organizational commitment, HB = helping behavior *$p < 0.05$ and ***$p < 0.001$

Source(s): Authors' own work

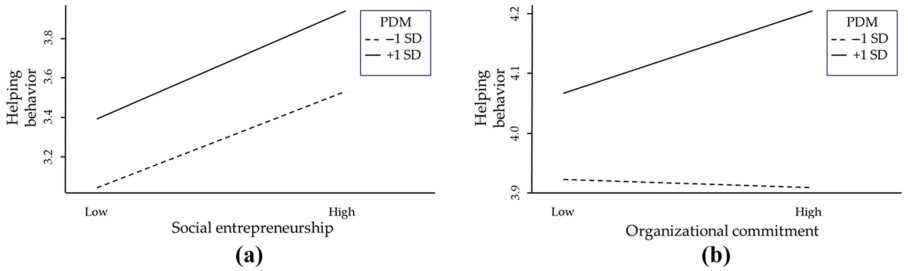


Figure 2. The moderating effects of participatory decision-making. **Source:** Authors' own work

SE leads to HB through OC. We additionally checked the conditional direct effect (process macro model 5), and the model showed that participatory decision-making had a significant interacting effect with SE on HB ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.01$).

5. Discussion

We argue that South Korean social enterprises centered on the European model can and should pursue revenue generation emphasized by the American model, due to the uncertainty of government support for social enterprises (Lee, 2015). Drawn from social identity theory, this study investigated the internal process through which employees in social enterprises are identified, committed and show productive behavior. Although these relationships have already been examined (Choi, 2006; Mastrangelo *et al.*, 2017; Scott-Ladd *et al.*, 2006), little attention has been paid to the social enterprise context. The results show that our hypotheses are also applicable to social enterprises. These findings may be particularly attributed to the interplay between the being social enterprise and SE, whose synergy fostered employee identification (Weisman *et al.*, 2023).

Our research is based on social identity theory because employees' empathy and commitment to SE are essential to achieve the double-bottom line, a feature that sets it apart

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from other theories. For example, social exchange theory emphasizes reciprocal exchange (Blau, 2017), but it is not well-suited to explaining the third sector, which is largely driven by social value. The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model, on the other hand, suggests that people shape organizational culture (Schneider, 1987). However, this model requires a relatively long time frame, limiting its relevance to South Korean social enterprises with a short history. Moreover, the diversity of social enterprises – by religion or business purpose (Doh, 2020) – further complicates their explanation using the ASA model.

Furthermore, the moderated mediating effect of OC and participatory decision-making clarifies how employees in social enterprises exert effort and how that effort is effectively utilized. One interpretation that accounts for a large portion of the direct effect (SE leads to HB directly) can be a social enterprise, as discussed above. For example, if SE is embedded in a set of systems, executives can promote a diverse workplace or create an human resource (HR) system that is unique to the social enterprise, with an ethics of care (Roumpi *et al.*, 2020). In such settings, employees may not need to consciously identify with SE to engage in pro-social behavior.

Participatory decision-making has been shown to facilitate the employees' HB. A key point is that employees perceive autonomy, which can motivate positive behavior. From this perspective, effective participation can enhance overall organizational capabilities. Imperatori and Ruta (2015) found that participative organizational practices are associated with higher performance in Western social enterprises. An unexpected finding is that participatory decision-making did not moderate the relationship between SE and OC. Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) argued that OC reflects a relationship between two independent entities, grounded in exchange. This suggests that in social enterprises, participation may not be viewed as transactional in nature.

However, one thing to note is that our results revealed that older employees tend to be more committed but not quite as active in HB. One of the objectives of social enterprises in South Korea is to solve the employment problems of the elderly (Doh, 2020), and it will become increasingly salient as society ages. Given these trends, an enterprise can stagnate if elders remain callous even in conditions that foster helping behaviors. We've previously discussed the importance of HB in achieving a double-bottom line, so the results deserve to be considered earnestly in terms of enhancing self-reliance.

5.1 Practical implications

The study has several practical implications. First, social enterprises must effectively communicate and embody their mission. Employees are more likely to identify with the organization when they connect with its core purpose.

Even if they lack sufficient job resources to demonstrate HB, our findings show that SE can motivate helping by fostering organizational identification. Thus, authentic SE may serve as a job resource that is critical to organizational performance. However, because both direct and indirect effects were significant, it is also important to not only promote SE but also institutionalize it through systems and practices.

One practical way to increase HB is to increase the motivation of elderly workers. Higher commitment among elderly workers suggests that they may also exhibit HB; thus, enterprises should remove barriers to the relationship between commitment and HB. Because the elderly certainly have a lot of accumulated experience and skills, it would be important to design roles that enable them to guide others rather than putting them on the front line (Van Dalen *et al.*, 2010). Enterprise-specific practices such as participation and incentives can also boost motivation among older employees.

Second, people in social enterprises can also demand needs for growth, so they are proactive in acquiring skills or enhancing capabilities (Caringal-Go and Hechanova, 2018). In this study, we examined the role of participatory decision-making in connecting enterprises' objectives and employees' needs. By engaging in various issues, committed employees have the opportunity to express their positive attitudes in behavior, and the enterprises can better utilize their competencies. Similarly, to further achieve both social and economic objectives, employee participation is a crucial precondition (Ohana *et al.*, 2013).

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In practice, Roumpi *et al.* (2020) synthesized effective HR bundles to attract a diverse workforce. They emphasized that social entrepreneurs should deploy human resources in ethics of care by resolving claims of conflicting rights among various types of employees and implementing ethical practices. These approaches follow the enactment of SE inside enterprises (Choi *et al.*, 2020). Participative culture is also vital for social enterprises (Roumpi *et al.*, 2020), so their findings generally stress the reflection of SE in organizational systems. Based on the argument of Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006), introducing transactional elements, such as incentives, to increase the effectiveness of participative decision-making can also have a significant impact on the relationship between SE and OC.

Third, when designing public policy, it would be important for governments to support social enterprises to realize their potential and become self-reliant. There are three main fields of social enterprise in South Korea: work integration, provision of social services and community development (Hwang *et al.*, 2017). When the government supports these fields, it will inevitably require capital, and the amount of capital injected will vary depending on the political-economic conditions. Governments can bring in investors by allowing social enterprises to list on the Korean Securities Dealers Automated Quotation as part of impact investing, and this has been shown to be effective in other countries (Agrawal and Hockerts, 2019; Castellas *et al.*, 2018). However, social enterprises are literally third-sector entities that pursue social value, and their purpose should not be compromised, so, for example, they should continue to support job creation, but with a focus on increasing decent work.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This study also has limitations. First, the measurement items used in this study were not fully validated, especially because of unclear development procedures. To assess their adequacy, we conducted a series of analyses for construct validity. However, future research needs to measure the variables using commonly accepted items and compare the results to this study. In addition, the use of self-reported data may have introduced common method variance. We conducted a one-factor test to assess this issue, but future studies should consider alternative techniques such as the marker variable approach.

Second, this study analyzed individual-level variables in a cross-sectional manner, which can constrain causal inference. For instance, organizational identification can occur over a long period (Wan-Huggins *et al.*, 1998), so capturing the process in one scene might not be appropriate. Moreover, as HB can be influenced by group-level factors such as relationships between members (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2006), considering the variables accounting for the multi-level variance will be desirable. In the case of South Korea, the data regarding social enterprises are collected every five years, so researchers can alleviate the problems of endogeneity by identifying the extent of long-term effects at the organizational level.

Third, it will be necessary to link individual-level variables to the financial performance of the social enterprise. In the case of HB, we have identified it as a potential variable that can enhance performance; however, on its own, it does not guarantee a significant performance improvement in the field. Due to the limitations of secondary data, we were unable to identify firm-level variables, but future research should utilize a wider range of data to further the discussion.

Finally, there are many countries operating social enterprises. Therefore, it is necessary to replicate the results of this study to see if they can be applied in the context of other countries. The context of this study is an alternative social enterprise model in the context of socio-economic uncertainty in South Korea, and it would be desirable to apply it to countries facing similar circumstances. If future research shows that the results of this study are representative, we can expect governments to use social enterprises to create wealth rather than redistribute it.

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