

A Review on Emotional Intelligence as A Mediator Between Curiosity, Community and Entrepreneurial Intention in Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

This narrative review is a study of the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in social entrepreneurship as the psychological key connector between entrepreneurial desire, sense of community and inquisitiveness. We explore the way EI transforms personal motivation and affiliation to the community into the support of real entrepreneurship by fusing the views of the whole world and especially every part of India. According to studies conducted in different global locations, EI enhances the adapting abilities and overcoming the challenges of entrepreneurs and working with other people, whereas curiosity sparks creativity and the ability to identify opportunities. Good relationships in the community promote confidence and trust, which also enhances entrepreneurial ecosystems. Self-help groups (SHGs) and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also important in promoting the development of emotional intelligence (EI) competence and community service, particularly in places such as Rajasthan, where social and cultural factors significantly influence entrepreneurial initiatives. The analysis reveals that there are important gaps in the research that require filling, including in particular the lack of research examining the mediating role of EI and no emphasis on demographic variations. This underlines the urgency behind future research towards being both social and psychological and also considers a range of demographic perspectives. Our concentration on EI-based training curricula, policy development based on psychological understanding and individualized mentoring methodologies offer valuable recommendations to NGOs, lawmakers and corporate accelerators. This study provides a fresh perspective within the societal entrepreneurship literature by reframing EI as a mediator and not another predictor. We offer a comprehensive conceptual framework that expounds the notion of curiosity, community and emotional intelligence in arriving at entrepreneurial purpose. The framework pushes theory forward and provides useful recommendations on how to help to cultivate long-term social activities.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has taken root as a powerful driver towards solving socioeconomic challenges in places such as Rajasthan, where structural challenges are coupled with pressing community necessities. Its focus on creating social value, empowering community and sustainable development makes it a critical field of study not only across the world but also within India as applied to traditional corporate activities [1]. In Rajasthan, social entrepreneurs typically do business in resource-constrained conditions and are largely dependent on psychological resilience and support of the community to sustain them [2]. To assist business people in communicating with stakeholders, managing their emotions and turning their curiosity into meaningful breakthroughs, emotional intelligence (EI) is critical [3]. According to research done on [4], one of the major motivators of possibilities is discovery and experimentation on new ideas in addition to contributing members of a community to earn trust and take action collectively. Nonetheless, in the Indian context, at least we do not fully understand how EI controls the interaction between curiosity and community in facilitating the entrepreneurial intention. This regional and international outlook narrative synthesizes structural supports and psychological factors that work in harmony to generate business growth [5].

In terms of the global community, the research conducted in Africa, Europe and Asia has shown that highly emotionally intelligent (EI) entrepreneurs are more likely to sustain their businesses

under uncomfortable circumstances since EI makes them resilient and flexible to change [6]. NGOs and self-help organizations have been a significant support to women's entrepreneurship in India and community support is a significant factor that triggers entrepreneurial ambition [7]. Interestingly, as males are inclined toward exploratory inquiry, women entrepreneurs often make use of ties in the community more [8]. This highlights the importance of EI as a moderator that strikes a balance between these contrasting means. This review presents the novelty of setting EI as the psychological mediator of curiosity, community and entrepreneurial ambition through the synthesis of information in various contexts. Our introduction of psychological and relationship elements to the research on social entrepreneurship facilitates the debate by delivering a conceptual framework that contributes to the theoretical background and provides valuable tips to develop interventions for NGOs, legislators and incubators.



Figure 1: Conceptual Map of Key Constructs [Source: Author]

Theoretical Foundations

Four interdependent concepts are four pillars of the psychological and social assumptions of social entrepreneurship: emotional intelligence (EI), curiosity, sense of community and entrepreneurial intention. Emotional intelligence can be likened to your inner guide. Its capacity is the ability to be able to recognize, comprehend and handle either your or others' feelings in a positive manner. The empathy, flexibility and leading capacity improve with the help of this emotional intelligence, which are necessary to an entrepreneur who needs to navigate his way through the labyrinth of stakeholder relationships and problems facing the society [9]. EI can serve as a crucial mediator in the context of social entrepreneurship that assists in conceptualizing the uncontrolled curiosity and attachment to the community as the act of conscious choice and sustainability of imagination [10]. A high-EI entrepreneur is constantly able to deal with diverse stakeholders, resolve conflicts and get back on his/her feet—all of which strengthen his/her determination to keep working on an effort that has such an important impact on society.

Curiosity brings about exploration, resourcefulness and being able to see the possibilities that others would not see. It is what makes entrepreneurs circumvent the norm and find new means of solving old issues in the society [11]. Sense of community, in its turn, is the totality of social and emotional relationships that individuals have to the surrounding world; it is that feeling of collective purpose, trust and belonging that holds the groups together. With social entrepreneurship, these ties to the community are put in a blender, creating a powerful engine of cooperation and resource acquisition, developing an environment where businesses can prosper and succeed [12]. Entrepreneurial intention is the mental commitment preceding actual entrepreneurial action and is a bridge between the intention to start a business and the actual business start. It is an outcome of the external social influences (like community support) as well as internal psychological influences (including EI and curiosity). These elements combined make up an interactive theoretical framework, where emotional intelligence plays the psychological role between entrepreneurial intention and curiosity and community, which would ultimately increase our understanding of the role of social and emotional skills in sustaining social entrepreneurship in the long term.

Table 1: Summary of Core Constructs and Definitions [13]

Construct	Key Dimensions	Relevance to Entrepreneurship
Emotional Intelligence	Self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, motivation	Enhances adaptability, conflict resolution and leadership; mediates psychological and social factors in venture creation.

Curiosity	Cognitive exploration, intrinsic motivation, openness to experience	Drives innovation, opportunity recognition and creative problem-solving in uncertain environments.
Sense of Community	Belonging, mutual trust, shared purpose, collective efficacy	Provides social capital, fosters collaboration and sustains entrepreneurial ecosystems.
Entrepreneurial Intention	Cognitive commitment, goal orientation, behavioral readiness	Represents the precursor to entrepreneurial action; influenced by psychological and community factors.

Global Perspectives

Although the geographical disparities that are present in the role played by curiosity and community participation in the development of the venture have so much to grasp, research studies carried out across the world have shown that the role played by emotional intelligence (EI) in the creation of business purpose is universally significant. One of them is the study of Nigerian university students that revealed EI to be a powerful predictor of entrepreneurial ambition; service learning is one of the primary mediators and self-confidence [14]. It means that most prosperous ones are the ones who are capable of understanding and putting their emotions under control, which means that they can translate interest into real entrepreneurial activity, but particularly in difficult times when adapting in time and facing the adaptation becomes the primary priority. We can continually witness how community support networks lead to the amplification of the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) in African entrepreneurial settings and assist entrepreneurs in coping with the austerity of socio-economic reality and limits on resources [15].

It is compared to European studies that portray that although curiosity-based exploration has had a significant impact on entrepreneurial learning and creativity, it can only perform optimally once highly emotional intelligence is upheld [16]. Corporate ties in the mature business environment of Europe present access to useful social networks and emotional intelligence (EI) is the instrument that enables successful teamwork, proficient negotiation and discerning understanding of possibilities. The interconnectedness between social networks and mental capacity plays a key role in enhancing business momentum.

EI is ranked among the pillars that can enable entrepreneurship success in the Asian context, especially the emerging economies [17]. Fascinatingly, some studies in Southeast Asia and India show that something seems to be echoing, in particular, much more interestingly, which is the importance of community ties, rather than curiosity, to determine entrepreneurial intention, in that naturally, the aspects of orientations in those cultures are geared towards groups, not individuals. In such situations, EI becomes a balancing act that helps the entrepreneur to respect their own curiosity as well as their expectation of society in order to encourage entrepreneurship in a way that is beneficial to the entire society. The form of these global trends creates a distinct theme as we think globally: they are pillars of inquisitiveness and neighborhood, but emotional intelligence (EI) must never become abstract jargon so these components can become genuine entrepreneurial ambition.

Indian Perspectives

The role of self-help groups (SHGs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are so dominant in terms of influencing the community-driven activities, is one of the key factors that have led to great change in the field of social entrepreneurship in India. NGOs might be more likely to pursue a wide range of services such as training, money literacy and emotional counseling and thereby enable aspiring business owners to develop in terms of their emotional intelligence (EI) [18]. This holistic support may assist the people to meet stress better, establish healthy relations with the stakeholders, as well as to continue with their activities when they lack resources. SHGs, particularly in the rural areas of Rajasthan, can demonstrate how strongly bound communities and instances of collaboration can stir up the entrepreneurial spirit [19] through the formation of networks of trust and shared accountability. Not just by making

available such organizations, they make money in the form of microcredit, but they also instill a sense of self-confidence in their members to venture out in their own businesses. The most crucial thing that comes during this process is emotional intelligence that enables people to balance the inquisitiveness of an individual and the requirements and demands of the society where they can make their endeavors viable both economically and socially.

Rajasthan gives some especially good illustrations of the implications of community affiliations towards business endeavors. In such locations as Udaipur and Jaipur, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) run by women demonstrate that entrepreneurial ambition flourishes when founded on emotional strength and trust by the community [20]. Under these circumstances, EI will be a decisive point of contact between one of the models that are aimed at community-cooperation model versus curiosity-driven model so that entrepreneurs can be innovative and, at the same time, respect the social norms and cultural values. Also, research finds out the influence of EI on the entrepreneurial desire as compared to demographics like gender and the rural-urban divide [21]. Since male entrepreneurs choose to explore out of curiosity, female entrepreneurs are more likely to utilize community support structures and this is where emotional intelligence comes in to offer some sort of balance between the two different approaches. Considering the experience of the Indian in its entirety, it becomes clear that NGOs and SHGs are vital in the construction of successful entrepreneurial ecosystems and EI plays a psychological role in bringing community associations and investigations to a trustworthy entrepreneurial venture.

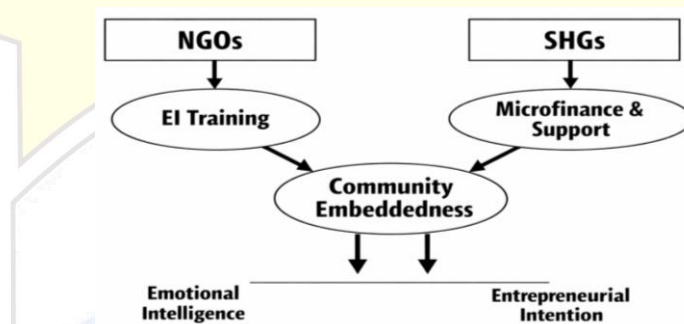


Figure 2: Framework of Indian Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem [18]

Identified Gaps

Lack of Mediation Focused Studies

Although an abundance of studies has been done on emotional intelligence (EI), curiosity and community involvement in entrepreneurship, studies that explicitly take into account the interaction between these two variables using a mediation mechanism as a filter are a part of the puzzle. The majority of existing research lacks the role of EI as a mediating variable connecting psychological and social variables and addresses it as a variable directly affecting entrepreneurial performance [22]. As the mediation analysis brings out the underlying account of how EI successfully transforms curiosity and connection to community to a given entrepreneurial need, the approach restricts our theoretical development. Research on the immediate effect of EI on leadership and creativity has actually been conducted in various parts of the world, although research on its indirect effect, such as how it nurtures community-based collaboration or other areas where curiosity-based inquiry is the genre, is extremely rare [23]. This disparity is particularly evident in the Indian setting, where the social entrepreneurship field is the area of research that one is most inclined to overlook the psychological processes at work in favor of the structural or other economic aspects. This study gap would then help us to gain a better insight into how emotional intelligence (EI) is a dynamic relationship between the social environment and personal motivation to further explain entrepreneurial behavior.

Limited Demographic Analysis

The other imperative research gap is the limited demographic research on the differences of the emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial ambition between the gender, age and socioeconomic status. Research generalises immensely time and again without dealing with

the demographic factors that may be at play with the relationship between curiosity, community and emotional intelligence [24]. Think of this: curiosity and confidence can motivate even younger urban entrepreneurs, community networks can be largely relied on by women entrepreneurs in rural India. Despite such possibilities of variances, scanty empirical literature has examined the various demographic differences. Intersectional methods in which psychological understanding of the entrepreneurial behaviour can be synthesized with demographic questions are slowly turning into the requirement of mainstream academic journals [25]. In addition to all these, enlarging our demographic analysis would only, firstly, enable the expansion of the sample into more heterogeneous groups, which by extension would enable us to shape more effective, geographically and gender-specific interventions, such as EI training programs. This would ultimately make social entrepreneurship research more comprehensive and practical.

Conceptual Positioning

This fictionalized compilation focuses our awareness on emotional intelligence (EI) as the main psychological mechanism that details community affiliation and inquisitiveness to advance entrepreneurial aspiration. Rather than following the strict scientific demands of systematic reviews, our narrative review approach allows us to synthesize a diverse global evidence and especially in India into meaningful themes. What becomes obvious is that despite community embeddedness creating networks of trust and mutual support, curiosity creates the drive to investigate and propels creativity. The point one should keep in mind is that these factors alone do not necessarily lead to the entrepreneurial activity. EI is what plays the pivotal role and people can effectively manage their emotional state, form substantial relationships with the stakeholders and balance their personal drive with the needs and expectations of the community.

Looking at the world, we can say that whereas curiosity helps to open people's eyes to new possibilities and encourage creative thoughts, emotional intelligence (EI) enhances the ability of people to change and surmount difficulties all the time. NGOs and SHGs play the vital role of developing community connectivity in the specific context of India; however, there is a fundamental difference in population distribution of people, which makes the point that EI plays a vital role in helping people to find the balance between their sense of social responsibility and an interest in exploring their world. This is a conceptual step forward in our discipline by redefining EI as the dynamic intermediary that transforms psychological impulses and social pressures into actual entrepreneurial intent as opposed to yet another element in predicting success. Our narrative synthesis, a synthesis of psychology, social life and contextual factors in one coherent framework, presents a new methodology that builds theory and provides practical recommendations on how we can build stronger social entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Table 2: Comparison of Global vs. Indian Studies [26]

Region	Focus	Findings	Gaps
Africa	EI and resilience in entrepreneurial ecosystems	EI enhances adaptability and mediates entrepreneurial success in resource-constrained contexts	Limited mediation analysis linking curiosity and community
Europe	Curiosity and EI in entrepreneurial learning	Curiosity drives innovation; EI strengthens collaboration and opportunity recognition	Few studies integrate community embeddedness
Asia	EI and community in collectivist cultures	EI balances curiosity with communal expectations, fostering socially responsible ventures	Lack of demographic comparisons across age and gender

India	NGOs, SHGs and EI training	Community embeddedness and EI training foster entrepreneurial intention, especially among women	Limited mediation-focused studies and demographic analysis
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Practical Implications

Our findings indicate that NGOs still have a stiff opportunity to reinvent their training programs with the introduction of emotional intelligence (EI) into their standard study program. Even though technical ability and financial literacy are necessities, such crucial skills as empathy, resilience and conflict resolution can be developed when EI-based courses are presented by the entrepreneurs to learners. This is because these attributes are paramount when negotiating the complex social conditions within which their businesses are conducted. This holistic method will see to it that business owners can potentially mold their already-existing passion and links to the community into business practice.

The lesson of this synthesis for the policymakers is not to reduce policy to developmental aspects of entrepreneurship to the traditional structural component but also to include psychological factors as well. Although they do not pay much attention to the psychological capabilities actually driving entrepreneurial behavior, existing policy frameworks tend to pay attention to infrastructure development, sources of funds and regulatory frameworks. To tackle the various issues and populations facing the challenge of social entrepreneurship, governments can create more inclusive ecosystems that can encourage and welcome diverse demographic groups to engage in social entrepreneurship through the incorporation of EI building, curiosity creation and community support in the development of policies.

These events suggest that the business incubators should come up with mentorship programs, which could look into the various personalities and motivational factors of the entrepreneurs. Formal entrepreneurial advice could assist more curiosity-driven entrepreneurs in transforming the discovery aspect into profitable business ventures; although the advice may not advantage those whose success is dominated by relationships to communities, it would rather direct them to effectively mobilize resources and increase their operation on their ventures. As a result, customized mentoring strategies may be more commonplace in incubators, in which case EI is able to be the glue that balances all of those lines on the entrepreneurial journey.

Conclusion

The review is a contribution to the body of knowledge because it redefines emotional intelligence as a most important psychological concept between inquisitiveness and community and entrepreneurial intentions. The synthesis of narratives globally, in which we have integrated global perspectives and that of India as well, has revealed the manner in which the NGOs, SHGs and community organizations have associated with the impacts of psychology, forming the successful entrepreneurial ecosystem. The fact that our new vision of EI in the sense of the mediator can change an individual's motivation and support of an environment into real entrepreneurial conduct as opposed to the role of another factor of success is what makes our research special.

We have also given a way forward in that we have indicated the areas that require further research as well, including gaps in research, lack of research specifically into mediation and lack of demographic analysis. We have also made practical recommendations to NGOs, legislators and incubators to make sure that the future projects will be culturally specific and psychologically legitimate. Ultimately, this work is a contribution to our profession in two dimensions: it strengthens the originality of our conceptual frame and it provides a very descriptive analysis paradigm of how to conceive and build social entrepreneurship and the knowledge repository and actionability to do so.

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