UKR Journal of Economics, Business and Management (UKRJEBM)
Homepage: https://ukrpublisher.com/ukrjebm/
Email: submit.ukrpublisher@gmail.com
Volume 2, Issue 1, 2026
ISSN: 3049-429X (Online)

The entrepreneurial process in the social sector: interactions between opportunities, resources, and actions

Ibenchekroun Salma[1*], El Hissi Youmna[2], Melliani Hamza[3]

[1]Chouaïb Doukkali University, National School of Business and Management, Laboratory for Studies and Research in Economics and Management sciences, Corner of Ahmed Chaouki Avenue and Fez Street, P.O. Box 122, 24000 El Jadida, Morocco.
[2]Management Department, National School of Business and Management, Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco.
[3]Management, Law and Communication Department, Higher School of Technology, Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco.

***Corresponding Author**: Ibenchekroun Salma
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23479016*

Article History
Original Research Article
Received: 05-11-2025
Accepted: 10-12-2025
Published: 01-01-2026
Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution **4.0 International License (CC BY-NC)** which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.
Citation: Ibenchekroun Salma, El Hissi Youmna, Melliani Hamza. (2026). The entrepreneurial process in the social sector: interactions between opportunities, resources, and actions. UKR Journal of Economics, Business and Management (UKRJEBM), Volume 2(1), 10-15.

Abstract

Social entrepreneurship remains one of the main drivers of economic and social activity, particularly in developing countries. This study aims to better understand the entrepreneurial process in the social sector by analyzing the impact of opportunities, resources, and actions on the performance of entrepreneurial projects. Using a mixed method of primarily quantitative data collection, we developed a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions. It was administered online to a sample of 50 Moroccan social entrepreneurs from different sectors: health, education, and social inclusion. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and linear regressions. The results show a significant correlation between a positive perception of opportunities and the effective mobilization of human, financial, and social resources influencing entrepreneurial actions and project performance. This research will further expand the literature on the social entrepreneurial process and motivate entrepreneurs and their supporters to take it into account.

Keywords: *Social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial process, opportunities, resources, entrepreneurial actions.*

Introduction

Today more than ever, social entrepreneurship is a strategic tool for economic and social development, particularly in developing countries characterized by high social costs and limited resources. According to Dees (1998) and Mair and Martí (2006), social entrepreneurship differs from commercial entrepreneurship in terms of its purpose: while commercial entrepreneurship aims to maximize profit, social entrepreneurship combines economic objectives with social impacts, seeking to act in Sunday markets and perfect markets where shares are not covered: education, health, social inclusion, etc. maximizing profit, social enterprises combine economic objectives with social impacts, seeking and acting in markets and perfect markets where shares are not covered: education, health, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and other types of common good production.

In doing so, understanding the entrepreneurial process aims to improve social affairs, as all businesses should be enterprises in this sense. Offering meaning can only succeed when it forms an existing business model. Doing business is not simply a matter of creating commercial machines. It is based on a dynamic interaction of three fundamental dimensions: opportunities, resources, and entrepreneurial actions. First, opportunities include a proactive identification of unmet social needs and initiatives to address the deficit. Opportunity priorities can be determined by analyzing the social market, public, community, or anticipatory needs. Second, resources are a source or asset that can be mobilized for benefit. Resources may include financial resources: venture capital, grants, consumer loans; human resources: managerial/functional skills and talents, volunteerism; material resources: infrastructure, equipment; social resources: social networks, mentoring, institutionalized partnerships. Third, entrepreneurial actions include planning

and developing social awareness campaigns; creating services or products; recruiting beneficiaries or partners; and evaluating performance.

The literature shows that entrepreneurial success stems from the interaction between these three dimensions, and not from one or the other in the absence of the others. In other words, opportunities must be correctly perceived and evaluated, resources mobilized effectively, and actions planned and carried out. These interactions can be complex in the social sector, especially since projects must juggle innovation, sustainability, and the achievement of societal impact. Consequently, this requires not only specific skills, but also easy and effective access to support networks. Problem: Despite the importance of opportunity-resource-action interactions, few quantitative studies have examined these dynamics in the context of the social sector, particularly in Morocco and other LDC contexts. Currently, research in this field relies mainly on case studies and qualitative research methods, which leave the underlying mechanisms unseen. As a result, policymakers, social enterprise incubators, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders have no active methods for making informed, evidence- based decisions. Objective of the study: * Identify the types and categories of opportunities perceived by social entrepreneurs. * Determine the sources and types of resources mobilized and their contribution to the success of projects. * Analyze the relationship between opportunities, resources, actions, and the extent of the social project's success.

Research questions:

1. What social opportunities are identified and exploited by entrepreneurs in the social sector?
2. What resources are mobilized to transform these opportunities into concrete projects?
3. How do interactions between opportunities, resources, and actions influence the results and sustainability of social projects?

By answering these questions, this study seeks to contribute, both empirically and theoretically, to a better understanding of the entrepreneurial process within the social sector.

In addition, this study aims to offer recommendations for entrepreneurs, incubators, funders, and public authorities. In this regard, this study is part of an effort to optimize the effectiveness and impact of social initiatives by focusing on the optimal allocation of opportunities, resources, and entrepreneurial actions.

Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial process models

Bygrave & Hofer 1991 illustrated entrepreneurship as a dynamic and non-linear process marked by the role of the entrepreneur in an uncertain and constantly changing environment. Indeed, the model identifies three key components of the entrepreneur: Opportunity, Resources, and Actions. Opportunity: the first step for the entrepreneur is to discover or assess unmet needs or gaps in the market or society. More specifically, in the social sector, opportunity is generated by service gaps in the areas of health, education, poverty, or social inclusion. In fact, the ability to identify an opportunity depends on knowledge of the social market, forecasting future social needs, and innovation in designing appropriate solutions. Resources: Once the opportunity has been identified, the entrepreneur must gather the resources needed to implement it. These include various financial, human, material, and social resources. According to Bygrave & Hofer, the effectiveness of resource collection and allocation are crucial factors for the success of the enterprise. Action: This is the set of concrete and planned initiatives that turn the opportunity into achievements. These actions include strategy planning, operation, and theoretical evaluation.

Contemporary models, such as those of Shane & Venkataraman, share this perspective and emphasize the importance of the interaction between opportunities and resources; specifically, they counterbalance the resource view by emphasizing an opportunity-based approach. According to Carey, De Clercq, & Rahman, entrepreneurial performance is not solely driven by access to and distribution of resources; performance is also rooted in the entrepreneur's ability to recognize and innovatively combine opportunities for themselves through their resources. For the social sector, this means that entrepreneurs convert demands for social goods into social innovation, effectively using their scarce resources.

2.2 Social entrepreneurship and innovation

If we compare social entrepreneurship to traditional entrepreneurship, we can see that the latter stems from the pursuit of economic profit, while social entrepreneurship has two objectives. It injects social value creation but emphasizes economic viability. Indeed, social innovation plays an important role because it enables new and effective solutions to be found to solve collective problems and new systems of interaction to be implemented that work in social communities. Some examples of social innovation in the social sector: 1) microcredit is necessarily accessible to finance profitable activities that benefit the following population and the poor 2) digital platform for education – arrival of Extra Scolareston for poor children or those who have dropped out. Plus: mobile healthcare system—medicine and digital or phone, app, or basement that assists doctors driving, etc. In addition, social innovation towards technology would consist of deep, new, and major innovation; the model in which the organization is at the

origin.

2.3 Interaction between resources and opportunities

Social entrepreneurs depend on the synergy between opportunities and resources available to them. Various types of resources are involved: financial resources, such as initial investment, grants, donations, and pooled funds; intellectual and human resources, such as technical and managerial skills, volunteer assistance, and sector expertise; and material resources, including infrastructure, specific spaces, and technological tools that provide concrete support. Social resources such as professional networks, mentoring, partnerships with institutions, and community support create further opportunities and strengthen the entrepreneur's social playing field. The link lies in the entrepreneur's ability to mobilize their resources to facilitate their ability to identify, evaluate, and capitalize on opportunities. For example, an entrepreneur may identify the opportunity to offer vocational training programs for disadvantaged youth, but without funding or mentoring, the idea will not come to fruition. Similarly, a network of activism and community mobilization could transform ideas into concrete actions and ensure promotion and social impact.

2.4 Gaps in the literature

While much work has been devoted to the study of social entrepreneurship, there is little quantitative research: a gap in quantitative analysis of the interrelationships between opportunities, resources, and actions. This creates an information vacuum concerning the case in Morocco and more generally in challenging countries, where social, economic, and cultural factors impact entrepreneurial practice. To date, there is very little empirical research proposing quantitative measures for collecting data to assess the relative impact of resources on opportunities and both on entrepreneurial action and the results of social projects. In other words, there is a need for contextual quantitative studies that could: Measure the interactions between opportunities, resources, and actions. Determine the impact of these interactions on performance and social impact. Formulate recommendations for entrepreneurs, incubators, and decision-makers.

Methodology

3.1 Research type The present study utilizes a quantitative research method seeking to assess the various concepts such as the effect of opportunities, resources on the social project entrepreneur actions and their performance.

3.2 Population and Sample Population: Moroccan social entrepreneurs – Health, education, inclusion Sample: 50 entrepreneurs determined through a mixed method for random (50% to reflect the population) and purposive for innovative project selection.

3.3 Data Collection Structured 20 item questionnaire using a 1-5 Likert scale: Variable = number of items = example of the question: Opportunities = 5 = I frequently identify new social opportunities Resources = 5 = I can efficiently mobilize financial and human resources Entrepreneurial actions = 5 = I have consistently reached the set goals Performance = 5 = My social project has measurably affected the community. 3.4 Analytical techniques Descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation Pearson correlations: between the variables Linear regressions: effect of opportunities and resources on actions and performance.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Identifying opportunities

Entrepreneurs see opportunities mainly in the following areas: education (35%), health (40%), and social inclusion (25%).

4.2 Resources mobilized

Resource type	Average	Standard deviation
Financial	3.7	0.6
Human	4.1	0.5
Hardware	3.6	0.7
Social	4.0	0.6

Analysis: Human and social resources are perceived as the most critical factors for project success.

4.3 Actions concrètes et impact

Action implemented	percentage
Training of beneficiaries	60%
Implementation of innovative services	55%
Institutional partnerships	50%
Impact assessment	40%

4.4 Correlations

Variable	Actions	Performance
Opportunities	0.54**	0.48*
Resources	0.62**	0.55**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

4.5 Regressions

- Opportunities and resources account for 58% of the variance in stocks.
- Opportunities and resources account for 45% of the variance in performance.

Figure 1 – Model of the social entrepreneurial process

Opportunities⟶Entrepreneurial actions⟶ Performance



Resources

5- Discussion

5.1 Relative importance of resources

Quantitative analysis allows me to understand that the success of social projects is determined more by the mobilization of human and social resources than by financial resources. In particular, mentoring, professional networks, and collaborative work between institutions are the source of strategic and operational support that encourages access to new opportunities, streamlining of problems, and respect for the needs of beneficiaries. This information confirms that the social environment makes relationships and skills more necessary than the initial funding that is currently required to carry out projects but is not sufficient on its own.

5.2 Active exploitation of opportunities

Finally, none of the opportunities identified by entrepreneurs are active on their own. Our results indicate that it is necessary to actively exploit these opportunities: simply perceiving them is not enough; on the contrary, only coordinated and planned action can create the desired social impact. In other words, a proactive and strategic approach to social entrepreneurship is needed.

5.3 Theoretical implications

These results validate the model proposed by Bygrave and Hofer (1991), according to which the entrepreneurial phenomenon is characterized by a dynamic interaction between opportunities, resources, and actions. However, this study extends this model by focusing on the Moroccan case and highlighting the relative importance of human and social resources compared to financial resources for successful performance. As a result, this article adds significant heterogeneity to the theory that the nature and value of resources equally determine and limit the desired performance.

5.4 Practical implications

The concrete implications for social entrepreneurs, incubators, and policymakers are as follows. Make mentoring more effective by providing personalized assistance and strategic advice to fully exploit opportunities. Promote the development of professional networking by facilitating collaboration, sharing best practices, and providing access to numerous complementary resources. Provide more targeted institutional support by simplifying administrative procedures, offering special funding, and providing training programs to strengthen entrepreneurial skills. In conclusion, this study shows that the success of social projects does not depend solely on the financial resources mobilized in this context. It also depends on the ability of entrepreneurs to mobilize their human and social resources to fully exploit perceived opportunities and transform them into concrete actions. At the same time, these results can guide the design of support programs for entrepreneurship in Morocco and other developing countries.

6. Limitations and perspectives

6.1 Limitations of the study

Despite the significant findings, however, a number of limitations were identified in the methodology, suggesting that the conclusions reported here should be interpreted with caution: Sample size limitation. The sample size was relatively small, n = 50, thus limiting the ability to generalize the trends and correlations identified. Although factorial variance analysis distinguishes a number of significant conclusions regarding the relationship between opportunities, resources, and entrepreneurial action, it is possible that other results could be produced using larger samples or other social contexts. In addition, a larger sample size would also have allowed for more robust statistical analyses, considering mediation or interaction. The study is cross-sectional. As such, it is difficult to track the development of social entrepreneurship projects over time. Consequently, it cannot be determined whether or not the opportunity-resource-action interaction influences the performance and sustainability of a social entrepreneurship initiative. A longitudinal approach would provide a more accurate understanding of the dynamics of time, including how resources and actions can influence the success of a project at each stage of development. Limitation of geographical scope to Morocco. The study is limited to subjects in Morocco, which means that these results cannot be extrapolated to other countries or cultures. Comparative studies in other developing countries or in general cultural contexts are suggested to validate the extrapolation of the results.

6.2 Future perspectives

To overcome these limitations and deepen our understanding of the entrepreneurial process in the social sector, future research could consider different avenues: longer studies: follow social entrepreneurs over several years to analyze changes in perceived opportunities, the combination of resources and actions, and their ultimate impact on project performance and sustainability; Comparative cross-cultural surveys: including several countries or regions to analyze how institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts can condition the entrepreneurial process, and discuss common and contextual factors. Larger and more diverse samples:

increasing the sample size and diversity of its components, including the different structural typologies involved in social entrepreneurship and the varying degrees of maturity achieved by projects. Integrated approaches: combine quantitative analyses with more qualitative performances that can contribute to a better interpretation of the data or offer explanations based on the field and verifiable on a case-by-case basis. Taken together, these recommendations could provide more universal evidence, demonstrating the effectiveness of numerous strategies in favor of social entrepreneurship and public policies appropriate to each context.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study highlights the crucial importance of interactions between opportunities, resources, and actions in the social entrepreneurial process. It shows that the success of social initiatives depends not only on the level of access to resources, but above all on how these resources are mobilized to actively exploit identified opportunities. The analyses show that neither opportunity nor resources alone are sufficient to generate significant social impact. By opportunity, we mean vision, commitment, personnel, and business idea, while resources include social, financial, and human capital. These two pillars are worthless without actions. This balance confirms and extends the model proposed by

Bygrave & Hofer, which suggests that three dimensions—opportunities, resources, and actions—govern the entrepreneurial process. It also highlights the importance of capital and social competence. The results indicate that human and social resources play a fundamental role in successful action. They also suggest that the perception of opportunities and the mobilization of resources are directly related to the performance of the action. In short, this means that it is possible to ensure maximum social impact if a proactive and strategic approach to the relationship between opportunity and social action and human and social resources is adopted.

References

1. Aldrich, H. and Zimmer, C. (1986) 'Entrepreneurship through social networks', in Sexton, D.L. and Smilor, R.W. (eds.) *The art and science of entrepreneurship*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, pp. 3–23.
2. Austin, J., Stevenson, H. and Wei-Skillern, J. (2006) 'Social and commercial entrepreneurship: Same, different, or both?', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(1), pp. 1–22.
3. Bacq, S. and Janssen, F. (2011) 'The multiple faces of social entrepreneurship: A review of definitional issues based on geographical and thematic criteria', *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*,23 (5–6), pp. 373–403.
4. Dacin, P.A., Dacin, M.T. and Matear, M. (2010) 'Social entrepreneurship: Why we don't need a new theory and how we move forward from here', *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(3), pp. 37–57.
5. Dees, J.G. (1998) *The meaning of social entrepreneurship*. Durham, NC: Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE), Duke University.
6. Eckhardt, J.T. and Shane, S. (2003) 'Opportunities and entrepreneurship', *Journal of Management*, 29(3), pp. 333–349.
7. Hockerts, K. (2017) 'Determinants of social entrepreneurial intentions', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 32(1), pp. 50–78.
8. Mair, J. and Martí, I. (2006) 'Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight', *Journal of World Business*, 41(1), pp. 36–44.
9. Mair, J., Robinson, J. and Hockerts, K. (eds.) (2006) *Social entrepreneurship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Nahapiet, J. and Ghoshal, S. (1998) 'Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage', *Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), pp. 242–266.
11. Saebi, T. and Foss, N.J. (2018) 'Social entrepreneurship research: Past achievements and future promises', *Journal of Management Studies*, 55(1), pp. 1–34.
12. Schlichte, F. and Junge, S. (2024) 'The concept of entrepreneurial opportunities: A review and future research directions', *Management Review Quarterly*.
13. Shane, S. and Venkataraman, S. (2000) 'The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research', *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), pp. 217–226.
14. Short, J.C., Moss, T.W. and Lumpkin, G.T. (2010) 'Research in social entrepreneurship: Past contributions and future opportunities', *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 4(1), pp. 1–22.

15. Stephan, U. (2018) *Entrepreneurship and well-being*. Cham: Springer.

16. Zahra, S.A., Gedajlovic, E., Neubaum, D.O. and Shulman, J.M. (2009) 'A typology of social entrepreneurs: Motives, search processes and ethical challenges', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 24(5), pp. 519–532.

17. Zahra, S.A., Newey, L.R. and Li, Y. (2014) 'On social entrepreneurship: Toward an entrepreneurial theory of social value creation', *Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), pp. 1–42.

18. Bacq, S. and Emdad, A. (2024) 'Social entrepreneurship and sustainable development: A review and future research agenda', *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*.

19. El Bousserghini, Z. (2024) 'Literature review on social entrepreneurship: An international and Moroccan perspective', *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*.

20. Azqueta, A., Sanz Ponce, R. and Núñez Canal, M. (2023) 'Trends and opportunities in social entrepreneurship education research', *Administrative Sciences*, 13(11), 232.

21. Rahim, N.H., Osman, L.H. and Wel, C.A.C. (2022) 'The role of social entrepreneurship approach in enhancing homepreneur business opportunities', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(1), pp. 604–611.

22. Granovetter, M. (1985) 'Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness', *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), pp. 481–510.

23. Dacin, M.T., Dacin, P.A. and Tracey, P. (2011) 'Social entrepreneurship: A critique and future directions', *Organization Science*, 22(5), pp. 1203–1213.

24. García Jurado, A., Pérez Barea, J.J. and Nova, R.J. (2021) 'A new approach to social entrepreneurship: A systematic review and meta-analysis', *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2754.

25. Jansson, R., Nilsson, B., Modig, F. and Hed Vall, G. (2017) *Entrepreneurship and radical innovation: The importance of context*. Cham: Springer.