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The driving forces behind tourism social entrepreneurship: a case study of social entrepreneurs in Thailand

Narula, Anishka

THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND

TOURISM SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN

THAILAND

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TOURISM SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
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THAILAND

ANISHKA NARULA

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand the development of social entrepreneurship from Thai tourism social entrepreneurs' perspectives. Social enterprises in tourism prioritise social goals over financial ones, promoting positive impacts and sustainable practices. Thailand, as a country heavily reliant on tourism, has seen a rise in social entrepreneurship. It is evident that there is a lack of studies that focus on tourism social enterprises and what does exist are generally from the Western world and developed country contexts. This study contributes to the gap that exists and adds to the knowledge of tourism social entrepreneurship from a context that has been minimally explored, a Southeast Asian, developing country perspective. A qualitative research design was utilised, which included semi-structured discussions. By conducting thirty-one in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs in the nation, the study aims to understand their motivations, roles, and operations in the sector. The research delves into the experiences and perspectives of social entrepreneurs, uncovering key events and motivations driving their journeys. The study explores the factors influencing Thai tourism entrepreneurs' engagement in social entrepreneurship, revealing the interplay between religion, culture, and values in shaping their pursuit of socially impactful initiatives and how these aspects have developed over time. The results indicate that engagement in tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand links back to acknowledgement and appreciation for the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his sufficiency economy philosophy (SEP) as a critical underpinning of 'doing good' in the country. This mindset originates from Thai traditions, is a deeply rooted attitude of Thai society and is considered a cultural mindset that the practice of giving is an end in itself, without needing anything in return. Social entrepreneurship can act as an ally for the government's efforts in alleviating issues and having this knowledge of what shaped tourism social entrepreneurship in the country allow for an understanding of the impact that social entrepreneurs and their goals have on the local community and the destination itself. The implications of the study go beyond academia and provide suggestions for policies, managing government relationships, and networking. The study also explores the most effective way to position the SE model in Thailand to increase awareness, appreciation, and appeal among Thai entrepreneurs.

Keywords

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Thank you all.

Anishka Narula

Declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

In this study, I conducted thorough research and data analysis through extensive literature reviews, primary data collection, and use of appropriate research methodologies. I have ensured that all sources and contributions utilised have been properly acknowledged and referenced. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other institution before.

Anishka Narula

Feb 6th, 2024

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Thailand's economy has greatly benefited from tourism, which provides for the livelihoods of a significant portion of its population. The tourism sector employed approximately 11.6% of Thailand's workforce in 2020 (Statista, 2022), with international tourism playing a vital role in the country's GDP, accounting for around 11.5% in 2019 (Biswas, 2023). Nevertheless, the benefits may not be shared equally throughout the country. Developing tourism at the community level is necessary for tourism revenue to extend to local communities. Adopting a more holistic approach towards responsible and sustainable tourism can ensure that local communities reap the benefits of increased tourism. Tourism social entrepreneurship focuses on placing local communities at the forefront of the development agenda as an alternative to capitalist tourism development (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Aquino, 2022).

The Thai government has supported the formation of social enterprises (SEs), hoping to increase SE presence and promote social entrepreneurs' growth in the country. This is part of the government's efforts to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged citizens and tackle various issues in the country. Despite Thailand's transformation into an upper-middle-income country, inequality and deprivation persist (Win, 2017). The country's failure to break out of the middle-income trap exacerbates this situation (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network, 2017). Social entrepreneurship is a viable solution to address these challenges and fulfil unmet social needs. Thailand saw a surge in establishing mission-driven businesses during the 1990s but most social enterprises operating today were founded after 2008 (Joffre, 2021). Although social entrepreneurship has been present in Thailand for several decades, there has been a recent surge in the development of social entrepreneurship initiatives. However, the number of identified SEs still remain relatively small. Inequality in Thailand is hindering national development; the government views SEs as being able to address this issue (Pothipala, Keerasuntonpong and Cordery, 2020).

The study of social entrepreneurship is a topic that spans various fields of knowledge, with ongoing debates regarding whether it should be considered as a distinct area or as a sub-field of conventional entrepreneurship theory (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011). According to research, social entrepreneurship in the tourism industry can generate positive outcomes for society, the economy and the environment and is also seen as a means to promote positive change in communities and encourage social transformation (Sheldon et al., 2017; Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018; Jørgensen et al., 2021). Tourism social entrepreneurship can play a pivotal role as it combines the principles of sustainable tourism with the goal of social change (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017; Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018; Dahles et al., 2019; Kummitha et al., 2021). Tourism is a socioeconomic development strategy, so the industry is an appropriate and fruitful approach for social entrepreneurs (Aquino, 2018).

Social entrepreneurship can potentially support the government's efforts to address important issues in Thailand. That said, most research on social entrepreneurship comes from Western and developed countries, and there is a lack of research on tourism social enterprises in less developed countries like Thailand. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the experiences and perceptions of social entrepreneurs in Thailand and identifying how to best utilise the social entrepreneurship model to increase awareness and appeal for Thai entrepreneurs. The findings of this study demonstrate the important role that social entrepreneurship can play in the development of Thailand's tourism industry and provide valuable insights for stakeholders.

This chapter comprises a short background review of social entrepreneurship and the rationale behind the study. The following sections address the research gap, contribution, aims and objectives and research questions. Lastly, the researcher briefly outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Research background

Tourism's global growth has made it a noteworthy commercial sector. The sector is vital to many nations, given its sizeable involvement in creating employment opportunities, improving household income, formulating cultural understanding and stimulating regional development by constructing infrastructure and facilities (UNWTO, 2017). The industry's spread and success have been because of the efficient application of a production-consumption operating model that has now seen signs of stress confirmed by the overuse of physical resources and congestion (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017; Franzidis, 2018; UNWTO, 2017).

Before the pandemic, travel and tourism were among the world's largest sectors, responsible for 25% of new jobs, employing 333 million people (10.3% of global jobs) and contributing 10.3% to global GDP (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022). However, the industry has been criticised for its obvious effects on the environment and society. A global code of ethics for tourism was designed by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 1999 (recognised in 2001 by the United Nations) to minimise the adverse effects of tourism activity on destinations and local communities (Leadlay, 2011). A challenge for businesses, therefore, is how to ethically manage their tourism business operations while bearing in mind these consequences. Hybrid organisational forms like social enterprises offer a 'fourth sector' that works towards social and financial value (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001; Jørgensen et al., 2021). Social enterprises offer a new means of bridging profits and people in tourism.

Social entrepreneurship research is a field that connects different spheres, including entrepreneurial studies, social innovation and non-profit management (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011). There has been an increase in publications on social entrepreneurship from different disciplines and heightened awareness of the phenomenon globally. There has yet to be an agreement on the definition of an SE, as many countries and organisations have established their own definitions. The

common understanding is that hybridity characterises SEs. Hybridity refers to organisational forms that go beyond the logic of the private, public and third sectors. There is also a broad consensus that SEs are 'mission first' organisations, i.e., placing impact before revenues, profits and commercial viability (Dalberg Global Development, 2017).

Social entrepreneurship can address modern-day challenges and issues in tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Sheldon et al., 2017). Social entrepreneurs, individuals who initiate social entrepreneurship, are crucial to this approach (Dees, 1998). They identify social issues and market opportunities that can be addressed through their initiatives (Austin et al., 2006). Social entrepreneurs exist worldwide in different industries, including tourism. Tourism social entrepreneurs are significant as they use their unique skills to identify opportunities for responsible tourism initiatives that promote positive social and environmental change. Tourism social entrepreneurs use tourism-related activities and initiatives to address various local challenges. They can focus their efforts on addressing a wide range of issues, including environmental degradation, poverty and inequality.

The concept of social entrepreneurship exhibits how business principles can achieve social goals (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). It involves favouring social goals above profit accumulation and is considered a path toward potentially overcoming several societal problems and advancing social change in a nation (Nicholls, 2006). Consequently, there are similarities between the goals of being more responsible in tourism, social entrepreneurship and views regarding the benefits of sustainable tourism development for communities and destinations (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). Sustainability discussions in tourism highlight opportunities for SEs and social entrepreneurs' roles (Mottiar, Boluk and Kline, 2018). For businesses to become successful today, they must have a competitive advantage. In researching tourism social enterprises, it is important to ask questions such as whether the business model can be a source of competitive advantage. It is worth exploring whether the SE model and concept can create value for business and tourism stakeholders, providing a competitive edge against competitors.

1.2 Rationale

A limited number of studies specifically focus on exploring tourism social entrepreneurs' motives. Noting the government's ambitions and considering tourism as one of the most critical industries in Thailand, this study aims to understand social entrepreneurs' motivations and intentions of pursuing SEs in Thailand, specifically those SEs within the tourism and hospitality industries. This understanding facilitates knowledge about whether the objectives of social entrepreneurs align with tourism stakeholders' aims (for instance, central government, local authorities and local communities) and how they interact with one another. Social entrepreneurship can be valuable in addressing national challenges and issues, working alongside government efforts. Understanding the nature of social entrepreneurship in a particular country can shed light on the impact of social entrepreneurs and their goals in the local community and the wider arena. This knowledge can inform policy decisions, education and training initiatives and awareness-raising efforts to support social entrepreneurship. The study also increases knowledge on the subject within a broader Asian context.

Tourism is an important economic sector for Thailand, accounting for a sizeable portion of the nation's GDP. Tourism accounted for approximately 12% of GDP in Thailand in 2022 (Sathyan, 2022). This data comes from the steady recovery in tourism in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, in pre-pandemic 2019, travel and tourism's total contribution to Thailand's GDP was 20.3%, and travel and tourism contributed to 21.8% of total jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022). Tourism can take different forms; for example, community-based tourism involves local residents (or the host community, often rural and economically marginalised) allowing visitors into their communities and participating in tourism development. Tourism's revenue backs the lives of a large number of both rural and urban populations in Thailand. As a result, tourism in the nation could be developed at the community level to ensure the flow of revenue fully extends to local communities.

Tourism social entrepreneurship can positively support community development through job creation and increased income (Franzidis, 2019; Von der Weppen and Cochrane, 2012; Sloan, Legrand and Simons-Kaufmann, 2014) as well as non-monetary contributions such as improved community pride, social cohesion and improved livelihoods and skills development (Laeis and Lemke, 2015; Peredo and Wurzelmann, 2015). In the literature, however, there are no studies focusing specifically on what tourism social entrepreneurs intend to achieve for communities or why they are motivated to do what they do.

It appears that Thailand is still in the early stages of implementing social entrepreneurship. Currently, there is no official list or comprehensive database of social enterprises in Thailand maintained by the government, private organizations, or the third sector. As a result, data and figures on the existing social enterprises are limited.This is likely because of the country's different definitions and criteria for SEs. Consequently, there is limited awareness of the social entrepreneurship concept. According to the Department of Business Development at the Ministry of Commerce, Thailand has approximately 361 SEs (Napathorn, 2018). These are mostly small and are in industries ranging from food and beverage, hotels and restaurants to printing and publishing (Napathorn, 2018). Panyaarvudh (2018) similarly reports around 300 SEs in Thailand. The Thai government expects over 10,000 to be established over the next decade (The Nation, 2023). Even though the government has driven legislation to support social enterprises through tax incentives to push the nation's economic and social progress, there seem to be gaps between entrepreneurs' positions and the government's agenda (Joffre, 2021). There is no precise data on how the government plans to achieve the 10,000 SEs target and how realistic this goal is.

Thailand is a suitable research context for SEs because these initiatives have developed rapidly over the past few years. This study aims to expand the knowledge of motivation and intentions in social entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality industry from another perspective: the perspective of a

context that has been minimally explored. There is limited knowledge of the driving forces as to why social entrepreneurs pursue social entrepreneurship within the industry, specifically in a developing country like Thailand. Moreover, The Thai government has recognised concerns, including social inequalities and environmental issues, which have developed while focusing on national economic growth. The Thai government expects more SEs to form and has been trying to address various issues in the country by developing a plan to encourage Thai entrepreneurs to become social entrepreneurs and support the emergence of SEs (Department of Business Development, 2016; Napathorn, 2018b). As a result of this research, we will be able to better understand how the social enterprise model could be positioned in Thailand in order to increase awareness of social enterprises and appeal to Thai entrepreneurs. Similar studies would provide the foundation for the continued development of social entrepreneurship and contribute to the theoretical discussion in social entrepreneurship literature in less developed contexts that are different from the Western world.

1.3 Research gap and contribution

This study will provide a deeper understanding of social entrepreneurship development through the perspectives and experiences of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs. It utilises life story-inspired interviews to explore this topic. The life story research approach offers a novel perspective through which to examine individual narratives and represents an innovative lens for exploring the intricacies of human experience. Although not entirely a novel research approach, the application of life-story-type interviews to understand tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand has not yet been conducted. The potential of this approach for providing a deeper understanding of human experience underscores the importance of exploring this approach further. Life-story narratives provide a flow and series of events that give the story its identity, meaning and purpose (Atkinson, 1998). While exploring entrepreneurs' stories in depth, the study identified key life chapters and elements showing how these aspects have

developed and evolved to trigger engagement in tourism SEs. These elements include understanding the background characteristics and contextual factors that first led to their decision to establish SEs.

Social entrepreneurs are the heart of SEs and the most important part of the social entrepreneurship concept. Both formal and informal institutions shape social entrepreneurs' behaviour and can enable or restrict their actions. This investigation delves into the motivations of social entrepreneurs in Thailand, specifically in the hospitality and tourism industry. This study contributes to the gap that exists in the literature considering there has not been a study that examined Thai social entrepreneurs' motivation and intention to engage in SEs in the hospitality and tourism industries focusing on elements such as culture and values. This study examines how their personal values, cultural background and other characteristics shape their drive to pursue social entrepreneurship. By understanding what motivates these entrepreneurs, we can better understand their impact on local communities and destinations. How do tourism social entrepreneurs in a context like Thailand identify social problems that they wish to solve? What has driven or influenced them to want to engage in tourism social entrepreneurship? Traditional entrepreneurs are usually driven by money and the desire to make profits, unlike social entrepreneurs, who are typically motivated by altruism (Martin and Osberg, 2007). While both types of entrepreneurs create important value for the economy and society, their incentives differ.

Social entrepreneurship is characterised by a lack of theoretical boundaries, faced with conflicting definitions and frameworks, and challenged by gaps in the literature and inadequate empirical data (Borzaga and Becchetti, 2010; Doherty et al., 2009; Le, 2019; Saebi, Foss and Linder, 2019). Although there may not be a universally agreed-upon definition, researchers acknowledge that social entrepreneurship involves using innovation to generate social value (Mair and Martí, 2006). This sets it apart from traditional entrepreneurship, which focuses primarily on generating profit. Consequently, social entrepreneurship can be a powerful force for driving social change, and social entrepreneurs are the individuals best equipped to tackle

unaddressed social needs (Mair and Martí, 2006). There are generally calls for more studies concerning sustainability, ethics, responsibility, social benefit and social value creation (Jørgensen et al., 2021).

Interestingly, there is a shortage of literature on SEs within the tourism industry, although tourism has been linked to social and economic growth for a long time (Biddulph, 2018). Most studies on tourism social enterprises have focused on sustainability, corporate responsibility (environmental and ethical) and community roles have been conducted largely in the context of Western developed countries (Dzisi and Otsyina, 2014; Narangajavana et al., 2016; Castellani et al., 2020). There is little knowledge of tourism SEs in less developed countries, highlighting the need for more research to further our understanding of social entrepreneurship and the intentions of hospitality/tourism entities when engaging in SE.

Social entrepreneurs are involved in a wide range of industries, including tourism. In addition to tourism's role in stimulating economic growth, some experts have highlighted social entrepreneurs' role in advancing social change and promoting sustainable development (Boluk et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). There is a need for research on SEs in the tourism industry, and it is evident that tourism social entrepreneurship is an under-researched area (Minnaert, Maitland and Miller, 2006; Sloan et al., 2014; Alegre and Berbegal-mirabent, 2016; Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). Few studies have explored the connection between social entrepreneurship and tourism. Although the hospitality and tourism industries are known for being pioneers in adopting sustainable practices, there is a shortage of research on the impact of social entrepreneurship on the hospitality industry. There is growing demand for the industry to become more socially responsible and successful in contributing to social good (Sloan et al., 2014; Sheldon and Daniele, 2017).

Research that looks more deeply into the actions and motivations of tourism social entrepreneurs and enterprises is lacking, particularly in less developed countries. Existing analyses do not thoroughly examine the factors that may hinder the growth of social entrepreneurship in different contexts, nor do they fully explore the

motivations and intentions behind this type of entrepreneurship. Intentions are seen as the best predictor of behaviour, as they lead to the execution of an action, and various motivational aspects shape them (Ajzen, 2011; Van Gelderen et al., 2018). Social entrepreneurial intentions involve creating a business to address social issues, but there is limited research on how and why social entrepreneurs emerge. Values also act as guiding principles that affect decisions (Schwartz, 1992; Sastre-Castillo, Peris-Ortiz and Valle, 2015).

Previous work on social entrepreneurship has not given enough importance to demographics and attitudinal factors commonly affecting general entrepreneurial intentions. This includes gender, culture and attitudes toward sustainability (Dickel and Eckardt, 2021). National culture, for example, is recognised as a factor that plays a vital role in entrepreneurial behaviour (Gurel, Altinay and Daniele, 2010). Moreover, research on the personal values of social entrepreneurs is limited, and the existing literature mainly comes from Western perspectives. An individual's values and life goals are vital elements that can contribute to engagement in social enterprises (Conger, 2012). In-depth studies on the role of values and the connection between values and the motivation of social entrepreneurs are lacking (Conger, 2012). It remains unclear how values contribute to the development of social entrepreneurs and if they can help distinguish different social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs' values may impact why they want to establish social enterprises (Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou and Maroudas, 2021). Understanding the motivational grounds can lead to better awareness of why certain individuals are more inclined to engage in the social enterprise sector and businesses that aim to create social value (Hemingway, 2005; Conger, 2012; Sastre-Castillo, Peris-Ortiz and Valle, 2015; Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou and Maroudas, 2021).

Through the entrepreneurs' life stories, the study identifies key factors influencing their motivations and intentions to pursue social entrepreneurship in tourism and how these factors have evolved. The study also sheds light on how tourism social entrepreneurs interact with each other and industry stakeholders and how their goals align. The findings provide insights into how tourism social enterprises in Thailand can be a tool for social change and how to create a more positive and

mutually beneficial environment for social entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality industries. This insight can foster the growth of tourism social enterprises across Thailand and in other industries. In theory, though there seems to be only a small number of SEs in Thailand, the social entrepreneurship concept should align with the country's heritage and tradition as it integrates economic and social value creation. Thailand, as a whole, is a country that holds its culture and tradition in high regard. Hence, the concept should align with the tradition and values the Thai people hold, and the model should fit the Thai context quite well.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to understand the development of social entrepreneurship from Thai tourism social entrepreneurs' perspective and to explore the role in which individual-level factors, i.e. background characteristics and personal values and national-level factors such as culture and traditions, play behind engagement in social entrepreneurship. The research aims and objectives were developed based on the research background, rationale and research gap found.

In order to achieve this aim, the objectives are:

- To examine the development of social entrepreneurship through the lens of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs
- To determine the motivations and intentions that lie behind pursuing tourism social enterprises in Thailand
- To assess the roles tourism social entrepreneurs play and how they operate across the tourism system in Thailand

1.5 Research questions

The research questions are connected to the objectives. In order to achieve the aims and objectives, the research questions are:

- What elements influence Thai social entrepreneurs to pursue social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry?
- How can the development and effectiveness of tourism social enterprises be fostered to encourage more SEs to be formed and enhance success opportunities for social entrepreneurs?

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 thoroughly reviews the context of Thailand and its link with social entrepreneurship. The context of study chapter is an important component as it establishes the broader setting and background against which the research takes place. This chapter provides an overview of the specific environment, conditions, or circumstances in which the study is conducted. By presenting this information, the chapter sets the stage for understanding the unique context in which the social enterprises and entrepreneurs are located, thereby providing a solid foundation for the subsequent chapters and analysis.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide a comprehensive review of the research on social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs. The literature review chapters aim to establish a solid foundation of knowledge by examining existing research and scholarly works related to the topic. It identifies gaps or inconsistencies in the current state of knowledge. The literature review builds the knowledge foundation underpinning this study.

After this, in Chapter 5, the methodology chapter outlines the specific approach and procedures used to gather and analyse data. This chapter elaborates on the

rationale behind the method chosen, discusses the philosophy behind it, the research design used and its appropriateness in relation to the research. It includes details on the data collection procedure, method of data analysis and limitations to the study.

Findings are presented in Chapter 6. This chapter presents the key discoveries of the study, which centre on the factors that impact social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry in Thailand. The chapter highlights the significance of religion, culture, and personal values in shaping the beliefs and goals of social entrepreneurs in the sector, as per the participants' responses. Additionally, the research emphasises the significance of responsible and sustainable practices within the industry.

Chapter 7 presents the discussion chapter, which evaluates the findings and discusses the factors that drive social entrepreneurs in Thailand. These factors include the influence of religion and culture, collectivist values, and deep respect for King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. In addition, the chapter analyses how Thailand's cultural background affects the progress of social enterprises within the nation. The discussion unveils that the social entrepreneurship model suits the context well and reveals the potential of social entrepreneurship to positively impact the development of the tourism industry and bring meaningful change to local communities and Thai society as a whole.

Chapter 8 concludes the study with insights into the impact of social entrepreneurship on Thailand's tourism and hospitality industry. It also highlights the contribution that this study has made to the field. Recommendations and suggestions for future studies are also presented here. The study highlights the transformative nature of social entrepreneurship, which has the potential to create inclusive solutions for social issues the country faces.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF THE THAI CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

Thailand has a strong background of social entrepreneurship compared with other countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as it was the first to witness its emergence (British Council, 2012; Le, 2019; Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2018). This is influenced by the country's exposure to American capitalism and individualism in the 1970s. This introduced non-profit organisations, which social enterprises (SEs) stem from, and lead to subsequent SEs.

This chapter plays an important role in laying the groundwork for the entire study by thoroughly examining the context of Thailand and its relationship with social entrepreneurship. This chapter is a vital part of the research as it explores the particular environment, conditions, and circumstances in which the study takes place. By providing a comprehensive overview of the backdrop against which Thai social enterprises and entrepreneurs operate, the chapter offers valuable insights into the unique setting in which they operate. Having a comprehensive understanding of the context serves as a solid foundation for the subsequent chapters and analysis. This enables a deeper exploration of the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of social entrepreneurship in Thailand.

2.2 Research setting

During the 1970s, Thailand faced numerous societal challenges, such as a lack of employment opportunities, poverty, restricted access to social services and a rapidly increasing population (Le, 2019), marking a shift in the role of the state in addressing social issues and granting more autonomy to non-state players. During this decade, Thailand also became a part of the globalisation process. As a result of the swift pace of modernisation and economic growth in contemporary Thai

society, individuals have experienced a decrease in environmental conditions and social standards (Sathirathai and Piboolsravut, 2004; Srisaracam, 2015). This, however, has also given Thailand extensive exposure to Western concepts, entrepreneurial activities and values (Le, 2019), which has been significant for the country in paving the way for entrepreneurship and, subsequently, social entrepreneurship in Thailand. Thailand is a suitable research context for SEs because these initiatives have developed quite rapidly in the country over the past couple of years. Social entrepreneurship has been flourishing in Thailand for almost five decades (Le, 2019). More studies could offer a foundation for the continued development of social entrepreneurship and contribute to the theoretical discussion in social entrepreneurship literature regarding less developed contexts and the wider Asian context, which is dissimilar to the Western world.

In Thailand, there is an increasing awareness and emphasis on environmental consciousness (Srisaracam, 2015), which links to social entrepreneurship and sustainable development goals. This has led to a rise in areas such as ethical consumerism and the green market due to growing environmental concerns, as noted by Srisaracam (2015). However, despite these efforts, the concept of social entrepreneurship is not well known among the Thai business community and the general public, as noted by Le (2019). This lack of awareness has two consequences. First, there is limited understanding of the sector due to a lack of academic literature and research. Second, there are marketing and communication barriers for SEs, as people mistakenly believe their products are of low quality, leading to decreased demand (British Council, 2020). To overcome these challenges, promoting the fair trade nature of these products and highlighting their social impact is essential (Le, 2019).

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial ecosystem

In terms of social entrepreneurship, the Thai government has played an important and active position in establishing a social enterprise ecosystem to address social needs across Thailand (Margiono and Feranita, 2023). It has played various roles,

both as a supporter and an actor in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Government initiatives, particularly under the leadership of former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and the Democratic government, facilitated the rapid institutionalisation of the social entrepreneurship sector in the nation (Doherty and Kittipanya-Ngam, 2021).

Thailand has consistently maintained high rates of entrepreneurship since 2002 and boasts the highest proportion of opportunity motives in the region, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2018 report (Bosma and Kelley, 2018; Yanya, Abdul-Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013). GEM has a broad definition for social entrepreneurship, describing a social entrepreneur as one who has started or is currently leading any kind of initiative, activity or company with a social, environmental or community objective (Bosma et al., 2016; Guelich, 2020). Thailand is reported as having notably high entrepreneurial activity in the GEM 2007 report, even in comparison with nations like the United States and Japan (Yanya, Abdul-Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013). In 2022 for instance, Thailand registered 76.5 thousand new businesses, a significant increase from the 63.3 thousand formed in 2020 (The World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)'s most up-to-date report highlighted some key concerns on the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Thailand (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2020):

- The lack of government support and outdated, inconsistent, short-term oriented regulations are hinder entrepreneurial development in Thailand. Stable government policies and collaboration among various agencies are crucial for entrepreneurship to thrive. The inflexible tax system and difficulty in accessing services and information are noted as some of the most significant constraints for entrepreneurship in Thailand.

- Access to funding sources for entrepreneurs is limited and there is a lack of information and support regarding funding opportunities. Entrepreneurs find it difficult to find guidelines related to financial support systems that are

available to them. They are often unaware of funding opportunities offered by government programs such as interest-free loans for innovation projects.

- Capacity for entrepreneurship is considered one of the major constraints for entrepreneurship in Thailand. The country is limited by the lack of entrepreneurial spirit, low participation in entrepreneurship, and insufficient skills. Entrepreneurs in Thailand often lack basic knowledge about business administration and struggle with adapting to changing markets. Soft skills such as hard work, efficiency, and commitment are also frequently missing.Moreover, they often fail to bring essential soft skills like hard work, efficiency, and commitment into their enterprises.

- Thai small and medium-sized enterprises need to prioritise innovation and of information and communication technology (ICT) and new technologies to achieve success. Thai entrepreneurs should focus on transforming from being industry-driven to innovation or technology-driven and prioritise creating a value-based economy driven by innovation, technology, and creativity. Additionally, environmental protection should also be a focus for these enterprises.

Recent data demonstrates that Thailand ranks 5th among upper-middle-income group economies and 9th among economies in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania in innovation capabilities (The World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023). Relative to GDP, Thailand is performing above expectations for its level of development (The World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023). Entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic growth and the development of a nation. This is because entrepreneurs generally encompass forward-thinking attitudes, including risk taking, creativity and authoritativeness, and this drives technological change and innovative advancements in the economy (Yanya, Abdul-Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013). The top three factors fostering entrepreneurship in Thailand are government policies, entrepreneurship skill sets and internal market openness (Guelich, 2020). However, entrepreneurship is also linked with higher

inequality because of the risk involved and its potential income generation (Yanya, Abdul-Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013).

2.3 Tourism in the nation

Tourism in Thailand experienced significant growth in the mid-1980s due to tourism policies that prioritised quantity over quality (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2014). However, this remarkable growth in tourism came with a price, including social costs in areas associated with sex tourism (Martin and Jones, 2012), exacerbated income inequality (Leksakundilok and Hirsch, 2008) and the failure of tourist host communities to create substantial backward linkages with local economies (Lacher and Nepal, 2010). Studies on tourism in Thailand have continued to emphasise the damage that mainstream tourism causes to individuals and communities (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2014). Despite this, tourism is a highly significant economic sector for Thailand, accounting for a sizeable portion of the nation's gross domestic product. In 2016, the revenue from international markets was THB 2.5 trillion, while revenue from the domestic market was THB 870 billion (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). In 2019, Thailand received 39 million international tourists, breaking its annual tourism record of approximately 38 million in 2018 (Trading Economics, 2020; Worrachaddejchai, 2019) and making it the leading tourism economy in Southeast Asia. The government has been working to expand the industry by increasing its competitive advantage against other countries in Asia.

Having the perception of a preferred destination is the goal for Thailand so that it attracts quality tourists, as indicated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017). The country's aim is to increase tourism while promoting sustainability and transitioning to a value-based economy. Businesses would also improve their value through the acquisition of knowledge, innovation, creativity and technology (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). The Tourism Authority of Thailand has taken steps to promote sustainable tourism, such as hosting the Pacific Asia Travel Association Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference, which focuses on community-based and volunteer tourism (the Aspen Network of Developed Entrepreneurs [ANDE],

2020). A key initiative to boost tourism over the next five years is the Ministry of Tourism and Sports Tourism's initiative 4.0, which focuses on developing a long-term, sustainable tourism industry capable of competing with regional developing rivals in the medium and long term (ANDE, 2020). This initiative is built around five pillars: a) the creation of a Tourism Intelligence Centre, b) the promotion of digital tourism, c) improvements to e-document systems, d) enhancements to the organisation structure of the industry and e) support of advanced research and development methods in the tourism industry.

2.4 Overview of SEs in Thailand

According to Kerlin's (2010) analysis of the social origins theory, the establishment of SEs in Southeast Asia was induced by weak market performance, international aid, state capability and civil society. After the financial crisis of the 1990s, interest in SEs in Southeast Asia grew due to their contributions to employment and sustainable development (Kerlin, 2010). However, SEs in the region were newly emerging and relied on isolated social entrepreneurs, which may have been working without necessary support networks. Guelich (2020) expressed concern about the low rate of operational activity related to start-up activity in Asia Pacific SEs, which could indicate limited financial sustainability of SEs in general. Social entrepreneurship activity rates are also reportedly higher among entrepreneurs with tertiary education (Guelich, 2020). This implies that higher education helps foster opportunities and develop perspectives on pursuing social or environmental goals. Kerlin (2010) notes that in relation to SEs, the SEA region is seen as lacking legal frameworks, focus and a strategic development foundation that involves international aid, the market and the state.

SEs have gained prominence and attention in Thailand in recent times, although they have existed in the country for quite a long time. The majority of social businesses currently in operation were established in 2008, which aligns with the Thai government's efforts to promote the sector at that time (Guelich, 2020). However, SEs have a rich history in Thailand dating back to the earliest

cooperatives formed by low-income farming communities to combat rural poverty. The first social businesses were established in the 1970s, some of which also received royal sponsorship. The 1990s saw a second wave of mission-driven business development.

The establishment of Cabbages and Condoms in 1974 was what truly advanced social entrepreneurship in Thailand with the aim of promoting family planning and primary health care (Cabbages and Condoms, n.d.). Today, the organisation still exists and has expanded its reach. Cabbages and Condoms now operates restaurants, hotels and inns throughout Thailand, branding itself as a business for social progress. All of its profits support the non-governmental organisation known as the Population and Community Development Association and its programmes, which cover a wide range of areas, including primary health education, HIV/AIDS, occupational training, rural development, environmental conservation and water resource development (Cabbages and Condoms, n.d.). Another notable SE in Thailand is DoiTung, which the Royal Mae Fah Luang Foundation established in 1989. DoiTung operates guesthouses and sells coffee, textiles and handicrafts, using the proceeds to create employment and promote development for hill-tribe communities in the Doi Tung region of northern Thailand. To further explore the timeline of SEs in Thailand, see the following:

- **1974:** The first SE movement in Thailand was the establishment of Cabbages and Condoms, a restaurant that uses its proceeds to fund sexual health education programmes.
- **1989:** The Royal Mae Fah Luang Foundation established DoiTung, which operates guesthouses and sells coffee, textiles and handicrafts, using its proceeds to create jobs and develop hill-tribe communities in the Doi Tung region in northern Thailand.
- **2010:** The Thai SE Office (TSEO) is a national sector body that encourages SEs. A key driver of this is the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), which offers incentives for companies to shift their corporate social responsibility (CSR) approaches towards SEs.
- **2019 (Jan):** SE Thailand was established for the unofficial network of SEs that had formed since 2016 to connect members and share knowledge.
- **2019 (Feb):** The SE Promotion Act passed (tax relief for those who set up SEs and incentives for social investments). Businesses can register if they generate half their revenue and reinvest 70% of their profits to help farmers or those who are underprivileged, disabled or involved in other specific schemes approved by the finance minister.

In 2010, the SET supported the establishment of the TSEO national sector body to encourage SEs (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.). The TSEO offers incentives for companies to shift their CSR approaches towards social entrepreneurship, and its purpose is to build a direct and indirect supportive environment to encourage the formation of SEs in Thailand. The TSEO defines SEs as businesses with a clear community development objective of solving a social or environmental issue (Tepthong, 2014). The Master Plan for SE Promotion 2010–2014 (or the SE Master Plan) also emerged during this time to further promote SE development. The plan placed SEs in Thailand into five different categories based on their establishment (British Council, 2020). These included community organisations/enterprises and cooperatives, which were the first known establishments predominantly owned and managed predominantly by low-income communities in rural areas. Other types include non-profit organisations, establishments run by governments or state

enterprises, businesses that young entrepreneurs established and subsidiaries of corporates that have turned their CSR projects into SEs.

In January 2019, the SE Thailand Association (SE Thailand) was established following the creation of an unofficial network of SEs in 2016 (SE Thailand, n.d.). The association's primary goals are to connect its members and other organisations and share knowledge about social entrepreneurship within the community and with the public. Its aim is to enable Thai SEs to grow their businesses successfully and strengthen the SE business model through collaboration and networking to address challenges to social development (SE Thailand, n.d.). These efforts are supportive measures. The Thai government recently recognised certain concerns, such as social inequalities and environmental issues, that developed while it was focused on national economic growth. It is now addressing these issues by supporting the emergence of SEs along with a plan to develop Thai entrepreneurs and inspire them to become social entrepreneurs (Department of Business Development, 2016; Napathorn, 2018b).

2.4.1 Legal context

Thailand is a friendly legal environment for SEs to operate in. Although qualifying as an SE is not easy, consecutive Thai governments have been in favour of them (or enterprises like them) for over a decade, and the environment is supportive (Chandran, 2019; Pybus, 2019). The government is urging businesses to co-create SEs through public–private partnerships. The 2016 approval of the Royal Decree on Tax Exemption (No. 621) further highlights the Thai government's commitment to promoting SEs (Tilleke and Gibbins, 2017).

The SE Promotion Act, passed in 2019, offers tax relief for those who desire to set up SEs and provides incentives for social investments (Chandran, 2019; Pybus, 2019). According to the Act, SEs are a juristic person under Thai law when registered with the Office of SE Promotion, with the registration criteria being a) having a social purpose, b) having no less than 50% of revenue from selling products or services, c) reinvesting no less than 70% of profit for social purposes

and d) having good governance. In contrast, from the general estimated number of SEs in the country mentioned earlier, as of February 2021, there are 148 registered SEs (SE UK, n.d.). Similar to the registration criteria of the Office of SE Promotion, companies should meet three standards, according to the Royal Decree's definition of an SE (Tilleke and Gibbins, 2017):

- Be established under Thai law with the objective of operating a business for the sale of goods or provision of services.
- Aim to promote employment at the location of the SE, solve societal issues, develop local communities or address environmental issues.
- Rather than focusing on maximising profits for shareholders/partners, invest at least 70% of profits back into the business or for the benefit of those approved by the Minister of Finance (i.e. farmers or those who are underprivileged, disabled or part of other specific approved schemes).

Apart from these criteria, there are no clear categories or well-defined details of the legal forms of SEs in Thailand, as seen in the Western world. Despite the existence of a registration system for SEs, it does not grant them legal entity status. Therefore, both registered and non-registered SEs can use different legal forms, with most being registered as limited companies (62.3%). The rest are registered as cooperatives (8.2%), foundations/associations (5.5%), partnerships (4.1%) and community enterprises (3.4%), and over 10% do not have legal status (British Council, 2020). Those involved in SEs regard the legal definition as a standard for earning benefits from the government rather than a strict guideline in terms of classifying SEs and who is deserving of general support from those in the SE ecosystem.

2.4.2 The concept of CSR

According to Carroll's (1991) model, CSR comprises philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic obligations. It is helpful to look at CSR in Thailand, as its

fundamentals are linked with the concept behind SEs. The core belief of giving and respect in Buddhism establishes an ethical foundation for CSR practices, concepts, and activities in Thailand. Although both social entrepreneurship activities and broader CSR initiatives in Thailand aim to promote social and environmental responsibility, they differ in their approach, scale of impact and value creation. In comparison to CSR initiatives, SEs integrate their mission into their core business model. CSR often involves philanthropic efforts, community investment, and other projects that are not directly related to the core business. CSR is the concept that a business has an obligation to the society in which it operates and is viewed as a social obligation (Udomkit, 2013). Firms driven by philanthropic responsibility often donate a portion of their earnings, similar to social entrepreneurship. Although some firms donate to charities and non-profits that align with their missions, others donate to causes that aren't directly related to their business. Some companies also establish their own charitable trust or organisation to make a positive impact on society.

In Thailand, SEs are understudied in research, and CSR is more widely accepted and understood. Nevertheless, CSR practices in Thailand are also at an early stage, with only a few large organisations focusing on them. The hospitality and tourism industry has placed some emphasis on the concept of CSR (though with criticism), in which firms aim to protect the well-being of their employees, the community and the environment. Nonetheless, the industry must also consider that the prevailing cultural context of the country may support or hinder its efforts. Research points out key problematic areas in CSR development in Thailand (Udomkit, 2013).

Similar to the literature on social entrepreneurship and interpretations of SEs in Thailand, there is no consensus on the scope of CSR, and there are different interpretations and priorities on CSR in comparison with those of the Western world. Business leaders in Thailand do not have a common agreement on the definition, focus or scope of CSR (Prayukvong and Olsen, 2009). In addition, there is also a lack of clarity about the reason for the growth of CSR in Thailand, and

therefore limited theoretical understanding of CSR in the country (Sthapitanonda and Watson, 2015). From a Western perspective, this may imply that Thai firms have less commitment to the implementation of the concept (Swierczek and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2006). The driving forces behind CSR vary from introverted to extroverted orientations, with corporate image being the most defining extrovert motivation (Swierczek and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2006). CSR has been defined in various ways, leading to different understandings of its objectives and priorities. As a result, CSR in Thailand can be anything ranging from simple charitable donations to regulatory adherence or corporate governance.

As an exporting country, Thailand is under pressure from international firms in Western countries where CSR is already widely adopted. Over the past decade, CSR has also had strong backing from the royal family and leading business organisations. Multinational companies operating in Thailand have influenced knowledge of CSR, leading to a growing awareness of the need for socially responsible behaviour. Some believe that CSR is not so different from the voluntariness and philanthropic nature already widely seen in Thailand and, therefore, is not exactly a new concept for Thai society (Udomkit, 2013; Pimpa, 2014).

Organisations that adopt CSR are generally structured in a way that allows them to act socially responsibly, with the goal of having a positive impact. This self-regulation can take the form of various initiatives or strategies, depending on the organisation's objectives. However, different firms have their own interpretations of what constitutes "socially responsible" behaviour. They often adhere to the "triple bottom line" principle, which entails a commitment to measuring their social and environmental impact, sustainability efforts, and profits (Stobierski, 2021). The "three P's" - profit, people, and planet - are often used to encapsulate the idea behind this principle. It is worth noting that large Thai companies often publicise their efforts and philanthropic donations to both external and internal stakeholders through corporate social responsibility reports (Sthapitanonda and Watson, 2015). It is suggested that giving should not hold any commercial interests and should be

purely based on the idea of giving (Prayukvong and Olsen, 2009). According to Buddhist principles, CSR therefore can be perceived as a way of bargaining, which contradicts Buddhist beliefs.

Different organisations have identified various ethical and philanthropic responsibilities related to environmental and social affairs and argue that CSR practices in Thailand differ from those in the Western world (Swierczek and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2006). In the UK and United States, social responsibility is subject to business interest but does not involve spirituality. In Thailand, however, CSR is linked to Buddhism, where social, moral, economic, spiritual and political elements are intertwined. Thus, at times, instead of corporations working towards the attainment of their business goals, they consider the interests of society to stimulate a sense of community. As a result, there is promotion of key values, such as equality, accountability, good governance, respect for human rights and transparency.

Corporate image is a big motivation for pursuing CSR-related activities, and community engagement initiatives play a large role within Thailand's leading companies (Swierczek and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2006). Chou, Chang and Han (2016) similarly note that small family businesses' philosophies are motivated by the concept of Karma in Buddhism, and this has been a driving force of businesses' external and internal stakeholder CSR initiatives. Karma implies that by doing good, good will come back to you. This links with King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) principles. For this reason, a lack of consideration for the Thai people's way of life and value system could prevent firms from reaching optimal levels in the hospitality and tourism industry. Consideration of the culture and value system could promote business development and sustainability.

2.5 Issues seen in the Thai context

The Thai government is attempting to tackle social and environmental issues, such as growing inequality in the country, by supporting the development of SEs (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d; Napathorn, 2018a). In a recent study, Pothipala, Keerasuntonpong and Cordery (2020) explored how the Thai government encouraged the formation of SEs to improve disadvantaged citizens' quality of life and viewed SEs as capable of addressing inequality in Thailand, which is hindering national development. The study found that in addition to increasing policy support from the government as well as donor and investor support, the Thai government must also reduce the political patronage that caused this economic disparity (Pothipala, Keerasuntonpong and Cordery, 2020). Although SEs are experiencing growth, it has been quite slow due to delays in promised government support and regulation. Today, there is a rising demand for innovative solutions to address issues such as growing inequality (Doherty and Kittipanya-Ngam, 2020).

Some of the most important social challenges in Thailand are economic disparity (Inter-American Development Bank, 2016) and high regional income inequality. The Bangkok Metropolitan Region's average monthly household income is over 200% higher than that of the rural regions in the northeast (Inter-American Development Bank, 2016). As the capital focused on building physical infrastructures and creating jobs, there was a gradual increase in income and wealth disparities among different regions. This issue, therefore, will be a key focus for some SEs. Despite the country's transformation to an upper-middle-income nation in less than a generation, which has lifted millions out of poverty, millions still experience inequality and deprivation (Win, 2017), and Thailand is stuck in the middle-income trap (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network, 2017). This middle-income trap refers to low economic and productivity growth, investment in research and development and innovation rates (Napathorn, 2018b).

As Thailand's economy grew, social disparities between the urban and rural populations and environmental issues increased (Napathorn, 2018b). According to a report from the World Bank in 2005, the most effective method for Thailand to

address poverty is through greater involvement and participation from communities and improved social policies (Pimpa, 2012). Similar to other developing countries with rapid national development, the gap between the rich and poor has increased, and SEs can be a tool to help lessen that gap (British Council, 2020). The Lien Centre for Social Innovation (2014, cited in Doherty and Kittipanya-Ngam, 2020) finds that Thailand has large-scale persistent and emerging social problems that would benefit from SE solutions. Between 2015 and 2018, the poverty rate in Thailand increased from 7.2% to 9.8%. This has particularly affected farmers, who are often the poorest members of society, due to droughts that have impacted their livelihoods (The World Bank, 2020). The World Bank reports that over 80% of Thailand's 7.1 million underprivileged people live in rural areas, with an additional 6.7 million just above the poverty line (Win, 2017). The poverty challenge is also indirectly associated with other social problems, such as health and unemployment. This increase in poverty also coincides with emerging economic and environmental challenges (The World Bank, 2020).

Thailand's growth rate has been lower than that of other large economies in the developing East Asia Pacific region. According to Hansl, the World Bank Thailand Country manager, Thai people are vulnerable to weak economic conditions and need better protection from income shocks; therefore, it is important to support the creation of more productive and higher-paying jobs (The World Bank, 2020). Thailand has also experienced political instability for over a decade. This is a key reason for the country's reduced economic and social progress and it is having one of the slowest growth rates in Southeast Asia in recent years (ChangeFusion, 2019).

The nation is also experiencing environmental issues, which urgently require sustainable solutions and innovation (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network, 2017; ChangeFusion, 2019). According to a study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Thai government in recent years, SEs can contribute to fulfilling this need (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network, 2017).

Although Thailand has made progress in increasing access to education, some statistics still fall behind The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Vandeweyer et al., 2021). Unfortunately, a large number of students from the poorest families do not attend school, particularly in rural areas and ethnic communities. Education is, therefore, another critical issue in the Thai context. Human capital development has a direct effect on productivity and economic growth and an indirect impact on different areas, including health outcomes, human rights, political stability, inequality, environmental sustainability, homicide and property crime rates (Mcmahon, 2000, cited in Vandeweyer et al., 2021). All of these factors ultimately have an indirect effect on economic growth.

2.6 Social entrepreneurship in Thailand today

SEs in Thailand can act as a helping hand to reduce gaps and create sustainability in the economy (Tepthong, 2014). Social and small business entrepreneurs in developing countries increasingly play a vital role in supporting the government (intentionally or not) in alleviating poverty and creating sustainability in rural communities (Bornstein, 2007; Dees, 2007; Natsuda et al., 2012). Although the SE model may be relatively new, various forms of SEs have existed in Thailand for some time, including co-operatives, public enterprises, foundations and charities. Even though their legal position may be complex and they may serve as foundations or public limited companies, these SEs have helped shape a good level of cooperation between local firms, philanthropic organisations and the government sector. Social entrepreneurship can be a strategy for social development (Natsuda et al., 2012).

In a similar vein, community-based enterprises (CBEs) serve a local community's entrepreneurial goals and activities through the use of social resources, structures and networks (Torri, 2009). According to Peredo and Chrisman (2006), CBEs are communities that act as entrepreneurs and businesses while pursuing common goals. They are created by local communities to support local, economic and social

development. In Thailand, more than 7,000 tambons (or subdistricts) have organised their own CBEs, employing approximately 1.5 million people in rural communities (Natsuda et al., 2012; Srikaew and Baron, 2009). Regardless, the core is the same – the business's key revenue must come from a product or service sale that corresponds with its social mission.

SEs in Thailand are young and growing, with most established between 2008 and 2017 (British Council, 2020). This coincides with the government's promotion of social entrepreneurship. SEs in Thailand focus on improving specific communities, protecting the environment, promoting education and literacy, improving health and well-being and supporting other SEs/organisations (British Council, 2020). The top beneficiaries of SE operations are those with low income, the elderly, children and youths, NGOs and women (British Council, 2020). The top industry containing SEs is agriculture, followed by fisheries, livestock, education and health (British Council, 2020). Different regions of Thailand have unique characteristics when it comes to SEs (Changefusion, 2019). In the North, the focus is on preserving local culture and providing job opportunities to minority groups through the promotion of products that embody the community's cultural and religious values. In the South, SE prioritise environmental issues due to the negative impact of activities such as fishing, coastal tourism, and waste disposal. Meanwhile, in the Northeast, agricultural concerns take centre stage, with efforts to address poverty among farmers and to enhance productivity and variety of agricultural products to adapt to the rapidly changing market conditions.

Analysing the SEs found through online searches reveals that Thai nationals have established most of them, and they are mainly in Bangkok and northern Thailand. Although they focus on different issues, a number of them are part of the hospitality and tourism industry (Grassroots Volunteering, 2019). Bangkok is a cosmopolitan city and a popular tourist destination. It serves as the centre of Thailand's economy, with over a third of the country's banks, accelerator programmes, coworking spaces and universities situated there, making it a thriving hub for start-

ups (ANDE, 2020). Therefore, it is not unusual to find many Bangkok-based SEs. The research also identified notable SEs in Thailand, mostly founded by Thai nationals. However, it is unclear whether the employees and management of these enterprises or those involved in the SE ecosystem are Thai nationals, have been educated abroad, have lived abroad or have any other factors influencing their perceptions and ways of thinking.

An increasing number of young Thai entrepreneurs are getting involved in activities that were traditionally the responsibilities of the government and development groups, from providing water in remote communities to aiding coffee farmers in earning a fair income (Social Enterprise UK, n.d.; Win, 2017). This may be a result of the government's policy to encourage SEs as a main tool for driving an inclusive economy as well as the growing ecosystem (i.e. intermediaries, academics and international actors), which has supported the growth of SEs (Social Enterprise UK, n.d.). This may also be because of the increasing distrust in the government and its efforts, which is vital to consider when addressing the development of SEs in the nation. Social entrepreneurs are those who, owing to their drive, create value without concern for making profits. These individuals have the desire to help, which motivates their behaviour and the outcome of the activities they strive for. Nonetheless, with regard to why individuals actually start SEs, two elements surface: local conditions and intentional mindset. In terms of the business model, SEs in Thailand have the potential to be viable businesses, with 42% making a profit, 19% breaking even and 36% not making a profit (British Council, 2020). Chantrapat, director of TESO, proposes that the nation provide supporting mechanisms to encourage more small entrepreneurs to become social entrepreneurs. This would increase awareness and education of the social entrepreneurship field as a viable career path and improve capabilities and networks in general (Tepthong, 2014).

At present, there is no definitive list or government, private agency or third sector with a complete database or directory of the different SEs in Thailand (Thiemboonkit, 2013). This is because SEs take many different forms in Thailand

and do not all register as SEs; therefore, the exact number operating in Thailand is unknown. According to the Department of Business Development at the Ministry of Commerce, Thailand has approximately 361 SEs. Most are small in size and in different industries, such as food and beverage, hotels, restaurants and printing and publishing (Napathorn, 2018). However, a report from the National SE Office in 2014 estimated that there were 116,298 SEs, with 1,915 operating in Bangkok alone (British Council, 2020). The Asia Foundation had a similar estimation at 120,000 SEs in 2015 (British Council, 2020).

Panyaarvudh (2018) reports that the government anticipates the establishment of over 10,000 SEs over the next decade. It remains to be seen whether this is feasible and whether the necessary support mechanisms are in place. As such an important sector for the country that a large number of people depend on, to what extent can the alignment of social and tourism objectives in Thailand take place? Are the different tourism stakeholders working towards the same goals? Considering the government's aims, the study helps in understanding whether the objectives of the social entrepreneurs align with the other key tourism stakeholders' aims. It also highlights the kinds of approaches that would incentivise individuals to pursue social entrepreneurship in tourism, register themselves as SEs and benefit from the support networks available. The study adds to the understanding of how the social enterprise model in Thailand can best increase awareness and appreciation of SEs and appeal to Thai entrepreneurs.

2.6.1 Interpretation of SEs

Although social entrepreneurial activities have existed in Thailand for a while, the concept is still unfamiliar to the Thai business ecosystem and public. Before the passing of the SE Promotion Act, inconsistencies in what constitutes social entrepreneurship in the Thai context emerged (Thiemboonkit, 2013). There is a lack of understanding among the Thai public about SEs due to their social and cultural perceptions of what a typical business should be, specifically regarding its intentions to generate profit. Consequently, there is a lack of awareness and trust

in the quality of SE products and services, which makes promoting them effectively a challenge. Limited literature and research efforts exacerbate this obstacle in the marketing and communicating of SE product offerings and the social impact of businesses (Le, 2019).

SE products and services are often misunderstood as being low quality, which further decreases demand (British Council, 2020; Le, 2019). Asians primarily consider philanthropic efforts through donations as 'doing good', so the concept of a hybrid company might not feel right, which could be a reason for suspicion around the concept of social entrepreneurship in the Thai context. To change this, there is a need to educate the public on the differences between CSR activities, for-profit firms and SEs. Nevertheless, SEs have slowly gained some recognition, as a growing number of them are starting to register with the TSEO (Napathorn, 2018). Thanks to the support of organisations like TSEO and the passing of the Act, a number of businesses have now been set up as SEs, whereas before, social activities in the nation were typically implemented by non-profit organisations and NGOs. However, actions still need to be taken to promote the fair trade aspect of these products and services and emphasise the social impact these businesses would create.

2.7 Cultural context

A national culture denotes attitudes and perspectives that those from a particular nation share and that shape their behaviours and how they view the world. Having an overview of cultural patterns in a nation can provide a valuable viewpoint. Although not every person in Thailand shares the same culture, the prevailing culture is followed by most people and shapes their attitudes and perspectives. It is important to note that Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country that has not been colonised by a Western nation and has undergone little cultural change since transforming into a constitutional monarchy in 1932 (Vatanasakdakul, D'Ambra and Ramburuth, 2010). Although it has become internationalised and cosmopolitan, Thai culture and traditions remain deeply rooted and influential in the way of life and thinking of its people. The Thai culture remains largely consistent in terms of

values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that its people adhere to (Jirapornkul and Yolles, 2010). This coherence can be attributed to the social identity and self-categorisation theories, which suggest that individuals categorise themselves and have a sense of belonging to certain groups that could include culture and nationality (Trepte, 2017). How closely tied they feel to those groups could explain their behaviours. Despite this, there are signs of change in cultural dynamics in Thailand, which will be discussed further in section 2.10.

According to Hofstede's typology, Thailand is known for having a collectivist society in which the focus is on group interests rather than individual interests. Komin (1991), a leading researcher on Thai culture, suggests that Thai society is oriented towards interdependency, which is a consequence of a strong distinction between the in-group and out-group. A key aspect of this culture is Bhun Khun, which represents a sense of indebted goodness, and the return of such goodness is Sadang Bhun Khun. Bhun Khun defines meaningful personal relationships and underpins social connections in Thai culture, in which in-groups are successfully built and reinforced (Vatanasakdakul, D'Ambra and Ramburuth, 2010). However, it is important to note that Komin's findings may not reflect modern Thai values because the study is over 25 years old and exposure to Western ideals may have altered Thai values. For instance, Kongchan (2002, cited in Punyapiroje and Morrison, 2007) argues that the importance of achievement has increased, especially as Thai people move from rural to urban areas. Despite these changes, the formation and reinforcement of in-groups remains a crucial aspect of Thai society.

Thailand's population is predominantly Thai-speaking and culturally homogeneous, with over 85% of the population speaking a Thai dialect (Today Translations, n.d.). Buddhism plays a crucial role in shaping business practices in Thailand, whether for commercial enterprises or SEs. Buddhism is the dominant religion, with approximately 95% of the population practising it (Lawler and Atmiyanandana, 2003). Additionally, the state has taken on the duty of safeguarding Buddhism by

regulating public speech and has granted state agencies the power to ensure the correct teachings of the religion since 2016 (Kurzydlowski, 2022). This includes strict penalties imposed of up to one year in prison and fines of up to 20,000 baht ($670) for those who defame and insult Buddhism. Buddhism has been closely linked with nationhood and the Thai identity, commonly referred to as 'Thainess' (khwam pen thai) (Kurzydlowski, 2022).

As per Buddhist philosophies, Thai people habitually try to avoid conflicts with others (Napathorn, 2018b). This aligns with Hofstede's studies on culture and the values that Thai people possess, such as Mai Pen Rai (meaning 'never mind, it's okay'), Jai Yen (meaning 'take it easy, be calm'), Kreng Jai (being respectful, humble and considerate towards others) and BhunKhun (reciprocity), which has already been mentioned (Napathorn, 2018b). These reflect the Buddhist culture of coping with life in a contemplative, peaceful manner. Relatedly, Srisaracam (2015) notes that religion has a strong influence on the morals of Thai people, and they usually follow important Buddhist philosophies of 'non-harming' and the 'middle path', which supports ethical consumption behaviours.

The country has a population of 69.7 million, which mainly comprises ethnic Thai people and people of Chinese descent (Napathorn, 2018b; Worldometer, 2020). It is, therefore, not surprising that Chinese culture has played a significant role in conducting business and in daily life in Thailand. Thai–Thai and Chinese–Thai values are likely to play a role in entrepreneurial practices in the country (Napathorn, 2018). Thai–Thai values have influences in Buddhism and are similar to Chinese–Thai values, which have influences from Confucianism. Both sets of values highlight conflict avoidance, saving face, personal connections, patron–client relationships and harmonious relationships in both the workplace and society in general (Lawler and Atmiyanandana, 2003; Siengthai, Tanlamai and Rowley, 2008; Sorndee, Siengthai and Swierczek, 2017). Eastern cultures, including Thailand, generally value and rely on the networks of personal relationships in both social and business settings (Vatanasakdakul, D'Ambra and Ramburuth, 2010). This is relevant to the networks of personal relationships in Thailand, which is

indicated to work in a similar way with the word 'guanxi' in the Chinese culture (Vatanasakdakul, D'Ambra and Ramburuth, 2010). Guanxi refers to the practice of building and upholding networks of formal and informal relationships between individuals. The term also involves the exchange of favours (Lu and Heng, 2009).

2.8 The Thai mindset

While the social entrepreneurship concept is still fairly new to the nation, it aligns with the country's mindset, heritage and tradition, as it integrates economic and social value creation and is linked with the culture of giving. Thiemboonkit (2013) conveys that although studying successful SEs in a different context (i.e. the Western world) would offer beneficial knowledge, it may not be easily modified to suit the Thai context. Hence, it would be useful to look specifically at SEs in the Thai context. Even though not necessarily everyone in the country shares Thai culture, it is the most prevalent, and it forms most behaviours and perceptions (Phaholyothin, 2017).

Thai society's culture of giving is rooted in its people's mindsets and attitudes. This can be thought of as a national culture, as it describes the attitudes and perspectives shared by people from a country that shapes their behaviours (Phaholyothin, 2017). According to the Charities Aid Foundation's World Giving Index 2015, Thailand is one of the top 20 countries for generosity based on three factors: helping strangers, donating money and volunteering time (Phaholyothin, 2017). When understanding charitable giving or 'doing good' in Thailand, one cannot forget the local belief system influenced by Theravada Buddhism, which comprises sociocultural dimensions of giving. A large amount of charitable giving in the country goes to religious causes, firms, projects under royal patronage and recognised charities (Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, 2001; Phaholyothin, 2017). Many religions involve charitable giving, such as the Christian tithe that involves donating ten percent of one's income, and Islam's zakat, which is an "alms-tax" on approximately 2.5 percent of an individual's wealth, and is one of the faith's five pillars (Lincoln, Morrissey and Mundey, 2008). Therefore, it is argued

that religion and the act of giving time and treasure are intertwined. In contrast to other religions or belief systems, Buddhism does not impose the practice of making merit on its followers. However, it highly recommends this practice as a way to accumulate good karma and cultivate positive qualities such as generosity, kindness, and compassion.

Relatedly, it appears that being religious can encourage people to be more generous and giving (Monsma, 2007; Lincoln, Morrissey and Mundey, 2008). A consistently reported finding when it comes to charitable giving is that individuals who are religious are more likely to give money to charitable organisations (Monsma, 2007). People who are affiliated with a religion are more likely to donate money to charitable organisations, volunteer their time, and engage in other forms of charitable activities.

An explanation for why religious people give more than those who are not religious is the social network theory (Berger, 2006; Monsma, 2007). This is explained by the fact that being involved in a religious community provides individuals with a social network that extends beyond their immediate family and friends. This wider network of social connections can create a sense of responsibility and obligation to give back to the community and support its members. Philanthropic behaviour can be influenced by an individual's social network and their associated norms and obligations (Berger, 2006). Additionally, religious teachings and beliefs often emphasise the importance of charity and giving to those in need, which can further motivate individuals to donate their time, money, and resources to their religious community and beyond.

The Thai philanthropic sector is an amalgamation of diverse firms, including NGOs, corporate giving programmes, public funds, hospitals, faith-based organisations, well-established foundations and SEs. The public generally understands these as firms that work in the charitable sector, but there is limited understanding of what

makes them different from one another or from a CSR strategy. In fact, there is no direct translation for the word 'philanthropy' in Thai (Phaholyothin, 2017). Today, the concept of making merit is still linked with charity. The most popular forms of giving are presenting monetary contributions to temples and giving alms to monks in the mornings. Many people donate to charity as a one-time action to ease their conscience or improve their company's public image. However, this type of giving may not be effective in solving long-term social issues, such as poverty (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). Dees (2007) notes, however, that with this, recipients may become complacent and fail to take responsibility for their own progress and improvement (Dees, 2007). In a study on social investment in ASEAN countries, three key characteristics of charitable giving were identified in Thailand: giving is part of the culture and linked to religious beliefs in merit-making; charitable giving is done in an ad hoc way and driven by personal connections or affiliations; a large part of charitable giving to religious causes, projects, renowned foundations, charities and organisations (Chhina et al., 2014).

2.9 The SEP

Thailand's late King Bhumibol Adulyadej's SEP is a significant underpinning of 'doing good' in Thailand and therefore is important to mention when considering the philosophies behind social entrepreneurship in Thailand. Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the SEP has been a guiding principle of Thailand's sustainable development efforts. The focus of the SEP is sustainability, and it has even become the core principle of Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Plan since 2002 (Open Development Thailand, 2018). Today, the SEP is Thailand's own development framework for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Open Development Thailand, 2018; United Nations, n.d.).

The SEP is based on three interrelated and dependent principles: moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity (Kantabutra, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

2017; Mongsawad, 2010; Open Development Thailand, 2018; Pechpakdee, 2007). Moderation refers to the middle path – relying on oneself and living in a balanced way without going to extremes or overindulging. This way of living derives from reasonableness, the second principle. Reasonableness comes from knowledge and experience, self-awareness, empathy and considering the consequences of one's actions. Deforestation, for instance, is an example of unreasonableness and immoderation in environmental consumption (Mongsawad, 2010). Last, self-immunity refers to resilience, the ability to protect oneself from external unrest and risk and cope with unpredictable events based on self-reliance and self-discipline. Additionally, knowledge and morality are essential for the SEP (Kantabutra, 2014; Mongsawad, 2010). Knowledge involves understanding information and using it wisely, while morality encompasses integrity, trustworthiness, ethical behaviour, honesty, perseverance and hard work.

The word for sufficiency in Thai translates to 'not too little, not too much' (Noy, 2011). The aim of the SEP is to restore balance in the economy, society, environment and culture of a nation, aligning with the three bottom lines of sustainability, and it is relevant to the SE business model. The SEP plays an important role in enhancing human well-being. It highlights the significance of self-reliance for individuals and communities along with the importance of education. By promoting self-sufficiency, the SEP can aid in reducing poverty (Mongsawad, 2010). It enables people to decrease their vulnerability, develop the capacity to control their lives and have access to more opportunities.

The SEP emphasises the sustainable growth of businesses by promoting Buddhism's middle path as the prevailing standard for the Thai people's way of life. This applies to people of all levels and at the individual, family, community and national levels. At the individual and family level, it means living a simple life within one's means and refraining from taking advantage of others (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.). At the community level, it involves group decision making, developing mutually beneficial knowledge and using natural resources available

locally (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.). At the national level, it proposes a holistic approach with a focus on competitive advantage, low risk, avoiding over-investment, reducing imports and not being dependent on other countries (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.).

2.9.1 SEP and sustainability

The SEP provides a comprehensive framework for tackling sustainability in Thailand while also promoting economic progress. The concept of sustainable development, as per Brundtland's in 1987, highlights the importance of responsible consumption by the current generation without jeopardising future generations. This aligns with the principles of SEP, which emphasise the importance of reasonable and moderate behaviour towards the environment and natural resources to achieve sustainability (Mongsawad, 2010). The SEP corresponds with the main principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and can act as an approach for reaching SDGs in the global context.

The SEP also emphasises ethical behaviours towards others. In a business environment, this means being accountable for anyone or anything that its operation could directly or indirectly affect in the short and long term (Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra, 2019). This is coherent with corporate governance in terms of adding value for all stakeholders. The SEP offers an alternative way of thinking for small business owners looking for sustainable business growth in the long run and during critical times as a risk mitigation procedure (Suntrayuth, 2018). The approach includes two important aspects. First, the philosophy allows for planning and executing business strategies with a sustainable profit and social benefits as its key objectives. Second, the SEP approach would create a corporate culture based on these principles, generating strategies later on that are conducive to sustainable and long-term corporate success.

SEP principles correspond with the ideas behind sustainability and sustainable tourism and can link with the concept of SEs. For instance, as focusing on long-term profitability and not short-term gains is a key emphasis of the SEP, placing long-standing social needs at the core is also key for SEs (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). To link back to a more global framework like the SDGs, moderation is an important principle for reaching SDG target 12 of less wasteful consumption and production patterns. Reasonableness is important for achieving SDG 10 of equality, SDG 13 of climate change and SDG 16 of peace and inclusiveness. Self-immunity is important to reach most SDGs, especially SDG 7 of energy security, SDG 6 of water and SDG 2 of food (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.; Open Development Thailand, 2018). The SEP involves reconsidering a spiritual model of community development with a close interconnection of economic, social and spiritual issues (Suntrayuth, 2018). It is important to note, however, that the SEP is a decision-making framework that acts as a guide to living sustainably but is not any sort of legal framework for the nation, and therefore, the extent to which it is followed today is not quantifiable. There is a bond between the SDGs, the SEP, SEs, sustainable tourism, sustainability and ethics. Therefore, in theory, the SE concept should align with the traditions and values held by Thai people, and the model should fit into the Thai context, considering the nation's collectivistic culture. Nonetheless, Thiemboonkit (2013) finds that SEs are mostly studied in the context of the Western world and may not be easily adjusted to suit the Thai context.

2.10 Shifting cultural dynamics

Social movements have existed since the 18th century, but in Thailand, they became more widespread in the late 20th century. These movements are associated with the deepening of democratisation processes (Ankersen, 2020). Thailand has experienced significant changes in its society and culture, including rapid urbanisation and the growth of major cities, increased levels of education, a wider range of career opportunities, a shift away from traditional agricultural practices, a significant decrease in birth rates, and a substantial increase in tourism

(McKenzie, 2020). Thailand still faces inequality in various dimensions such as wealth, land ownership, social status, and political access.

Thailand was considered as one of the most democratic nations in Southeast Asia until the 2006 Military Coup. However, this perception overlooks the internal divisions within the Thai political system that existed before and after the period of greater democratic openness. There has been a trend of wealthy Thai nationals receiving education abroad since the late 1900s. These individuals have either returned to Thailand or relocated to Western countries including North America and Europe. As a result, there exists a longstanding tradition of elitist Thai-Western international networks spanning multiple generations (Kumjim, 2010). The period of democracy between 1997 and 2006 was therefore essentially a transfer of power in favour of the new socially mobile elite and the provinces in comparison to the palace and the capital (Feigenblatt, 2009). The Thai political situation since the September 2006 coup has remained fairly volatile.

When discussing the contemporary Thai identity, it is impossible to ignore the topic of the Thai monarchy (Kumjim, 2010). The Thai monarchy plays a crucial role in Thailand's cultural identity and history. During his reign, the late King Bhumibol Adulyedej brought significant changes to the country and became a symbol of continuity and tradition in difficult times. The late King's philanthropic activities and dedication to public service are highly regarded. He worked tirelessly for the people's welfare, especially through the Royal Projects, which have had a transformative effect on communities all over the country. King Bhumibol's commitment to philanthropy and public service is an example of social responsibility. Younger generations, who are likely to prioritise social and environmental issues, may be inspired by his dedication to improving the well-being of the Thai people. Nonetheless, Thailand is one of the few countries that harshly prosecutes the Lèse majesté law, also called lese-majesty. This law makes it a crime to violate the dignity of the monarchy, and the current Thai law stipulates

a maximum sentence of fifteen years imprisonment for committing this crime, which is enforced by the government.

Thailand's cultural values are being examined by social science researchers, which shows how these values are slowly evolving with modern globalisation. For example, as is the case with several Asian countries, filial piety is a significant cultural value in Thailand (Kanchanachitra, 2014). This value emphasises that children have a responsibility to care for their parents in their old age and revolves around age-based hierarchy. Traditionally, this value is reflected in the practice of intergenerational living and children caring for elder family members. However, with a decrease in birth rates and a significant rise in urbanisation, elders are increasingly without this traditional form of care (McKenzie, 2020)

According to Kanchanachitra (2014), the giving behaviour and mindset in the country is also likely to change as Thai families transform and undergo demographic changes. Donating to monks for instance, is viewed by urban Thai youth as a means of contributing to internal satisfaction and benefiting their present and future lives. However, rural Thai youth perceive donating to monks as a way to benefit the community and enhance their family's karma (Kanchanachitra, 2014). This suggests that young people's attitudes towards giving may vary depending on the influence of globalisation (McKenzie, 2020). But it is also possible that some cultural values may change more slowly or be resistant to change due to localisation.

2.10.1 The Pro-democracy movement

Thailand has a lengthy history of political turmoil and demonstrations. In 2020, the pro-democracy movement gained momentum and demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha - a former army chief who seized power in a 2014 coup and later became premier after controversial elections. Like any social or political movement, pro-democratic movements in Thailand can induce changes in behaviour at individual, societal, and governmental levels.

After years of being under military rule, a group of protesters, primarily composed of high school and university students, have been advocating for significant democratic reforms in Thailand (BBC, 2020; Rebecca Ratcliffe, 2020). They demanded changes to the constitution, a new election, and an end to the harassment of human rights activists and critics of the state. Moreover, they also called for limitations on the King's powers, which has prompted unprecedented public discourse about an institution that has long been protected from criticism by law (BBC, 2020; Rebecca Ratcliffe, 2020). The lese-majeste law in Thailand is regarded as one of the strictest in the world (BBC, 2020). Those who violate this law may be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. It is argued that the law is being used to limit people's freedom of speech.

The younger generation have expressed their frustration towards the monarchy, as they feel that their democratic rights and the country's progress have been undermined. They issued ten demands for monarchy reform (Rebecca Ratcliffe, 2020). These demands include a call for the king's budget to be cut and for a separation of his private funds from the crown assets. The protesters have made it clear that they are not seeking to abolish the monarchy but rather to modernise it. However, their demands have received backlash from royalists.

In certain cases, pro-democracy movements can challenge traditional authoritarian norms and prompt a re-evaluation of cultural values that may have previously supported authoritarianism. As a result of these movements, individuals may feel more comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns about the monarchy without fear of retaliation. This could lead to further discussions about the role and future of the monarchy. Over time, pro-democracy movements may contribute to a cultural shift in how the monarchy is perceived. This could involve a more critical examination of the institution. Given that pro-democracy movements often attract younger demographics, the youth may bring different perspectives on the monarchy. There could be a change in attitudes among younger generations, with some advocating for a more modern and open approach to the monarchy.

The ongoing pro-democracy movement in Thailand may have been initially sparked by politics, but as they continue to evolve, they are also impacting the core values of Thai society (The Nation, 2014). During the time when the government was backed by the military, they introduced 12 core values that aimed to instruct Thai citizens to follow the rule of authority, uphold traditional institutions, and adhere to what is considered Thai culture. However, some critics have labelled these values as a tool to brainwash people or an attempt to take Thai society back to the past (The Nation, 2014). Nowadays, even school children are questioning school discipline regarding hairstyles and opposing traditional values, such as the need to respect teachers. University students are also raising questions on how the country is run, challenging the value of showing respect to traditional institutions.

The young protestors have been advocating for equality as one of their key values (The Nation, 2014; Rebecca Ratcliffe, 2020). They blame the existing political system and hierarchical social structure for the growing disparity between the rich and the poor. Thailand is one of the countries with the highest wealth inequality globally. The traditional Buddhist values justify the wealth gap by referring to past-life merit-making or Karma (The Nation, 2014). However, the younger generation sees the current economic, political, and social situation differently and describes it as corrupt and unjust.

It is clear that the pro-democracy movement in Thailand, which was primarily driven by political concerns is beginning to influence the fundamental values that underpin Thai society. Successful pro-democracy movements can contribute to a more tolerant and open society. This could translate into improvements in freedom of expression. By fostering a sense of solidarity and unity among citizens who share democratic values, these movements may contribute to increased social cohesion, which can lead to a more stable and resilient society. As the movement continues to evolve, it is stirring up a broad range of social, cultural, and economic issues that are challenging the status quo and may force people to reassess their beliefs and priorities. This has created a complex and rapidly changing landscape

in which the struggle for political reform is intertwined with deeper questions about the nature of Thai identity, culture, and tradition.

2.11 Challenges with running SEs in the Thai context

Certain factors may impede the growth of social entrepreneurship in Thailand, as observed in general entrepreneurship. According to research, the top three constraining factors for entrepreneurship in Thailand were found to be government policies, financial support and the capacity for entrepreneurship (Guelich, 2020). These factors need improvement and advancement to foster the growth of the entrepreneurial landscape in Thailand (Guelich, 2020). There remains a lack of support and no well-defined legal framework from the government with regard to establishing and operating SEs in Thailand.

The most critical challenges that social entrepreneurs identify are access to finances, awareness of SEs in the country, constraints to financing, access to investors, an unrefined business model and the inability to meet requirements for bank loans (British Council, 2020). This aligns with Thiemboonkit's (2013) study in which social entrepreneurs faced issues regarding sourcing financing, and they ended up depending on their own capital or on aid from family and friends. Similarly, in the case study of Cabbages and Condoms Restaurant in Thailand, Nakudom (2019) identified access to finances and a lack of funds as critical issues for SEs. It is evident that these businesses are risky, with high operating costs, causing investors to be hesitant to invest in them. Paulson and Townsend (2004) also found that, in general, financial constraints significantly influence which households establish businesses in rural and semi-urban Thailand.

Additionally, even though approximately 40% of all adults in Thailand are involved in entrepreneurship in some manner (including micro or informal establishments), SE founders often do not have business backgrounds and therefore lack the business acumen and management skills to run enterprises

viably and sustainably (UNDP, 2020). Therefore, they may face challenges when trying to balance business processes with social activism. Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra's (2019) study indicates that organisational leadership and culture play a vital role in sustaining enterprises in Thailand. Likewise, Alter and Dawans (2006) establish that leadership, culture and financial viability are essential for SEs to attain sustainability. A holistic approach could achieve sustained social value (Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra, 2019).

A lack of support from the government is another important obstacle to SE progression in the country (Thiemboonkit, 2013). Other challenges of operating SEs in Thailand are limited public awareness and trust in the quality of SE products and services, as well as marketing and staffing challenges and difficulty accessing funding (Doherty and Chirapaisarnkul, n.d.; Pillsbury, 2016). Challenges for policymakers in developing economies in Asia include a lack of entrepreneurial role models, a risk-averse society, issues in gaining full cooperation and support from the government and market suspicion of the concept of mixing social good with trade (Pillsbury, 2016). Additionally, research by ChangeFusion suggests that the lack of conglomerates of SEs, interactions among them and experts in the field are also key challenges in Thailand (Dhiravegin, 2018). Despite having some support networks in place for SEs, it would be helpful to better understand what roles these networks actually play and if their activities make an impact.

2.11.1 COVID–19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 outbreak, small-to-medium enterprises in Thailand, including SEs, struggled with limited financing (Thomson Reuters, 2020). A survey by the SE of Thailand Association found that, at that time, its members were only financially prepared to survive for three to four months (Thomson Reuters, 2020). Despite the challenges, SEs showed resilience during the pandemic, with the majority reporting that they did not need to lay off staff, according to a study conducted in the early stages of the pandemic (British Council, 2020). Nevertheless, the effects of

COVID-19 led some SEs to freeze part of their operations or stop them altogether, and some went back into the communities to work on and support areas such as local product development (Social Enterprise UK, n.d.).

Despite not having policy assistance from the government, SEs in Thailand have proven to be flexible, quick to adapt and able to move their operations online during the pandemic. A number of SEs reported not having access to any governmental support during this time (British Council, 2020). Wongsamuth (2020) reported that during these difficult times, Thai tourism SEs helped local businesses that were hit hard. LocalAlike, for example, which promotes sustainable tourism in 200 villages, started refining the packaging and design of villages' products and selling them via social media. This generated $84,000 for locals in 20 communities (Wongsamuth, 2020). This shows adaptability while helping communities. Wilaiwan, which sells Thai desserts (usually to group tours by LocalAlike) in a Bangkok district that is considered one of the city's oldest slum areas, mentioned how partnering with LocalAlike helped change the public's perception of the district and added value to its business. Similarly, HiveSters recognised that as a cultural tour operator, it struggles to return 70% of the company's revenues to communities. It added food delivery services to its offerings and incorporated local products from the communities into its long-term business plan.

This provides hope that the COVID-19 outbreak will lead to a better awareness and interpretation of SEs in Thailand given its altruistic nature, which has been positively accepted during challenging times. This also offers an opportunity to think more about areas such as community-based tourism and responsible tourism rather than going about business as usual. There appears to be room for SEs to enter the tourism sphere, do things differently and potentially help solve social issues arising from situations like the pandemic.

2.12 Concluding remarks

Tourism in Thailand is a significant contributor to the country's economy, although it has faced challenges related to social costs, income inequality and limited backward linkages with local economies (Kontogeorgopoulos , Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2014). Despite these issues, Thailand has become the leading tourism economy in Southeast Asia, attracting a large number of international tourists (Trading Economics, 2020; Worrachaddejchai, 2019). The government aims to position Thailand as a preferred destination (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017) with the aim of increasing tourism while promoting sustainability and transitioning to a value-based economy. Thailand heavily relies on tourism as a key sector. Therefore, sustainable tourism is a pressing concern in Thailand, given its diverse ecosystems, fragile environment and susceptibility to environmental degradation. Social entrepreneurship in tourism offers solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

Social entrepreneurship in Thailand has a solid foundation and has been implemented for several decades (British Council, 2012; Le, 2019; Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2018), although the concept gained recognition only recently. Pioneering efforts by some organisations demonstrate the potential of social entrepreneurship to address various social and environmental issues in the country. While the exact number of SEs in Thailand remains uncertain due to the diverse forms they take and the lack of a comprehensive database, their potential as viable businesses is evident. By encouraging SEs in tourism, the country has the potential to create a more equitable, sustainable and inclusive tourism industry. Social entrepreneurship in tourism would help nurture the economic, social and environmental well-being of local communities while preserving the country's natural and cultural assets.

Thai culture has a strong influence on the lives of its people, despite the country's modernisation. The cultural context of Thailand is a significant factor shaping the

attitudes, behaviours and perspectives of its people. Thailand is a collectivist society, in which group interests often take priority over individual interests. The late King Bhumibol Adulyadej developed the SEP, which promotes sustainability, moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity as guiding principles for Thailand's development (Open Development Thailand, 2018; United Nations, n.d.). The philosophy aligns with the concept of social entrepreneurship by emphasising self-reliance, knowledge and morality, as well as balanced economic, social, environmental and cultural development. The country's cultural coherence (Jirapornkul and Yolles, 2010), influenced by factors such as its history, religion and social identity, contributes to a prevailing culture that most Thai individuals adopt. Overall, understanding Thailand's cultural context, including its collectivist society, the influence of Buddhism, the significance of personal relationships and the principles of the SEP, provides valuable insights into the behaviours, values and perspectives of Thai individuals. These cultural patterns shape the way business is conducted, how social connections are formed and the way that 'doing good' is approached in the country.

The assessment on social entrepreneurship within the Thai context has uncovered promising initiatives and potential for positive change. To deepen our understanding of this field, it is important to review existing research and theories that have laid the groundwork for social entrepreneurship in different contexts. Hence, the literature review chapter that follows builds upon existing knowledge and identifies gaps that enhance our understanding of social entrepreneurship's impact on tourism and potential in driving sustainable social change within Thailand and beyond.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW – SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM

In the literature review chapters, I investigate the connection between social entrepreneurship and the tourism industry. In this first section of the Literature Review, I delve into the literature on social entrepreneurship by defining and discussing its evolution. I also explore the concept of social entrepreneurship in tourism and its significance in the tourism industry. Overall, this section provides valuable insights into the intersection of social entrepreneurship and the tourism industry through a comprehensive literature review. In the next section, I detail the characteristics of social entrepreneurs and analyse the different factors that influence them.

3.1 What is social entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is undeniably critical in terms of economic growth and employment. Its potential to address social and environmental issues such as poverty and global warming (Dean and McMullen, 2007) through sustainable, environmental and social entrepreneurship is widely recognised. Some individuals may be more inclined to pursue specific forms of entrepreneurship than others. Therefore, it is essential to consider entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) and motivation to understand entrepreneurship (Vuorio, Puumalainen and Fellnhofer, 2018).

Social entrepreneurship connects different spheres, including entrepreneurial studies, social innovation and non-profit management (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011). The most common objectives of social enterprises (SEs) worldwide include providing employment opportunities and income, improving health conditions, protecting the environment and promoting education (British Council, 2022). The origin of entrepreneurial activity in the social sector dates back to cooperatives in the mid-1800s (Alter, 2007). The term 'social entrepreneurship' first appeared in the 1980s to refer to private initiatives established voluntarily in Italy that delivered social services to help integrate the disadvantaged (Borgaza, Depredi and Galera,

2012). In the 1960s–1970s, American and European non-profits began establishing enterprises to help disadvantaged populations (Alter, 2007). In the UK, the term found usage in 1978 to refer to worker and community cooperatives.

There is still no universal definition for 'social enterprise', so related literature is still being constructed (Borzaga and Becchetti, 2010; Doherty et al., 2009; Le, 2019; Saebi, Foss and Linder, 2019). Definitions range from simple to complex, but most agree that an SE is a business with a distinct social goal (Bargsted et al., 2013). Various authors also emphasise the importance of social value creation in SEs (Mair and Martí, 2006; Tan, Williams and Tan, 2005). Similarly, it has been stated that an SE cannot simply be a socially responsible business but must strive to create a positive social change as part of its objectives (Buzinde et al., 2017; Dees and Anderson, 2003). Therefore, SEs positively impact specific beneficiary groups or society as a whole, leading to improved quality of life.

Although various organisations have proposed different definitions of social entrepreneurship, the ultimate goal remains to create social value by addressing global issues such as poverty, social integration, education and health (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). In its 2013 publication, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines SEs as non-public sector business firms that aim to enhance public interest and the social welfare of communities. On the other hand, the UK's Department of Trade and Industry (2002) defines SEs as entities that generate most of their income through trade activities and pledge a large amount of their profits to social missions. Conversely, the European Commission simply defines SEs as organisations that focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives (Singh, 2016). Though social entrepreneurship has continued to gain recognition, it is imperative to understand that it means different things to different people. There is no single accepted definition or a globally accepted framework for the concept, making it problematic to understand the level of social entrepreneurship in different countries. As a result, the concept remains unclear, and the advancement of our understanding of the

concept is blocked, as well as the validity of the field itself (Saebi, Foss and Linder, 2019).

The current definitions of SEs focus on different aspects, and today, these firms exist throughout the world in various forms. As a result, many SEs operate in grey areas, fearing that commercial activities will jeopardise their non-profit status. For instance, an estimated 11 million businesses worldwide could be considered SEs, even if they do not identify as such (British Council, 2022). This uncertainty forces them to remain small and consequently unable to maximise their profits. A lack of identification can hinder their success. Additionally, it is unclear whether prevalent forms of SEs are used in specific industries and sectors, including the tourism industry. Therefore, further country-by-country and case-by-case research is necessary to identify and understand this.

Social entrepreneurship is more multifaceted than just involving a response to a social or ideological cause. The term essentially considers the people, enterprises and activities that innovate for social good, and the concept involves prioritising social goals over financial ones. The outcomes of social entrepreneurship are widely recognised to embrace social contribution and social value (Stirzaker et al., 2021). Essentially, SEs are hybrid organisations expected to perform in the market like small businesses do whilst preserving the ethos and values of charitable organisations (Martin and Thompson, 2010). The concept generally enhances the efforts of firms, governments and public figures as it relates to potentially tackling social issues innovatively and sustainably. Social entrepreneurship encompasses social venture capitalists, social purpose organisations and SEs (Robinson, 2006). Some even consider social entrepreneurship 'the best healer' for society (Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016).

3.1.1 Social businesses and community enterprises

Social businesses are a well-established subset of social entrepreneurship, recognised as a profit-maximising business model focusing on self-sustainability and empowerment (Akter et al., 2020; Beckmann, Zeyen and Krzeminska, 2014). The growing prominence of social issues worldwide has led to a surge in the popularity of such models (Akter et al., 2020). Like commercial or profit-driven businesses, social businesses operate with a managerial mindset to achieve economic success. Although their primary drive is the cause they support and not profit, they generate revenue through market-based offerings such as product and service sales, ensuring self-sustainability by covering their costs and reinvesting profits for long-term growth. Social businesses are unique in balancing social impact and financial success. However, what sets social businesses apart from social entrepreneurship? Professor Yunus rationalised that:

> Social entrepreneurship relates to a person. It describes an initiative of social consequences created by an entrepreneur with a social vision. This initiative may be a non-economic initiative, a charity initiative, or a business initiative with or without personal profit. In contrast with social entrepreneurship, Social Business is a very specific type of business—a non-loss, non-dividend company with a social objective. A Social Business may pursue goals similar to those sought by social entrepreneurs, but the specific business structure of Social Business makes it distinctive and unique (Kickul et al., 2012, p454)

Like any other business model, a social business model defines how a company creates and delivers value to the consumer (Kavadias, Ladas and Loch, 2016). It includes elements such as the target market, pricing strategies, value chain and resources. The components of a social business model work together to ensure business success. According to Yunus (2011, 2017), the foundations of social businesses are as follows: a) they are based on business goals to address issues such as poverty, health, education and environment; b) the business model focuses on financial and economic sustainability; c) there are no dividends, and

investors may only recover their initial investment; d) once the initial investment is returned, profits are leveraged for further expansion, innovation, research and development; e) they adhere to environmental sustainability and gender equality; f) they offer fair wages and maintain decent working conditions; g) operating social businesses should involve freedom and satisfaction.

Similarly, community enterprises (CEs) or community-based enterprises are considered a tool to support sustainable community development (Wongadisai, Chanchalor and Murphy, 2020). CEs are based on 'mutual dependence, symbiotic relationships, mutual goals, and social networks' (Ratten and Welpe, 2011). In Thailand, for instance, CEs function as traditional, formal organisations with an administrative head, committees, regulations and rights (Teerakul et al., 2012) and were officially recognised by the government's Community Enterprise Promotion Act in 2005.

Community-based enterprises are powerful grassroots initiatives and economic development tools that effectively address poverty and enable rural communities to achieve sustainable economic benefits (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). They involve a polycentric approach and rely on community members' participation, typically in rural areas lacking education, knowledge, capabilities and skills. Community members usually manage, produce and market products or services that involve food or handicrafts (Teerakul et al., 2012; Wongadisai, Chanchalor and Murphy, 2020). The CE bottom-up management approach allows for active community participation, creating a sense of belonging, ownership and empowerment. However, CEs may be vulnerable to a lack of participation as, in some cases, only a small portion of the community participates (Ratten and Welpe, 2011). This is also because CEs typically operate in rural areas where there is a lack of education and skills. They are established based on equality and active member participation, so a lack of participation could threaten their sustainability (Boyce, 2002).

Community-based enterprises may emerge in developing nations due to economic, political, environmental or social problems or as a response to perceived threats to community sustainability (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). Rural CEs are highly effective in stimulating economic growth, promoting equity, fostering sustainable natural resource management and serving a geographical community with a long-term commitment to creating employment or providing community services (Suindramedhi, 2016). Marohabutr (2016) reasoned that CEs are a subset of SEs because they too prioritise social/community benefits and financial sustainability over profit maximisation. Moreover, CEs are considered SEs due to creating value beyond financial gains (Somerville and McElwee, 2011).

3.2 How SEs emerged

The SE organisational form gained attention in the early 1990s (Tepthong, 2014). The social entrepreneurship concept originated in different contexts for different reasons. In developed countries, it emerged due to the decline of the welfare state. In contrast, distrust in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), a lack of interest from the private sector and government inefficiency in providing adequate services to people led to its emergence in less developed, developing and emerging economies (Robinson, 2006). Cultural and contextual factors significantly shape social entrepreneurship, as pointed out by Defourny and Nyssens in a 2010 study. For instance, social entrepreneurship takes on different forms in the US and European countries. In the US, it is typically spearheaded by individuals who create innovative businesses that balance economic and social goals (Lee and Kelly, 2019). In Europe, however, social entrepreneurship is driven by a collective effort involving many individuals, governments and private sectors. Cooperative and mutual social entrepreneurship models are often required for European social projects.

Social enterprises have gained popularity largely due to incorporating both for-profit and non-profit elements and their alignment with the growing importance of social awareness. This shift results from the scepticism that socially aware

individuals have towards the ability of governments and businesses to address global social problems (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011). In East Asia, for example, SE-like initiatives emerged within civil society organisations in response to structural changes, including the dislocation of the manufacturing industry, the deindustrialisation of accelerated globalisation, high unemployment and growing social inequality problems (Borgaza, Depredi and Galera, 2012). Previously, social and environmental initiatives were usually undertaken by the public sector, but there is an increased marketisation and privatisation of the social service sector today, as well as reduced funding from traditional sources, such as governments (Mody and Day, 2014). Considering the free market ideology, governments have been reducing their funding and increasing reliance on self-organisation and the private sector (Hoogendoorn, 2016). Social enterprises play a vital role in filling the gap when there is market failure in the private sector or when it faces resource constraints.

Institutional voids pose a challenge worldwide but are particularly problematic in less developed countries, where they can impede the development of inclusive markets for private goods and services and restrict the provision of public goods solutions (McMullen and Bergman, 2017). For example, when governments cannot provide public goods, businesses stimulate the market and act as a 'compensatory social structure' (Mair, Marti and Ventresca, 2012; McMullen and Bergman, 2017). Social enterprises challenge the dominant welfare system model, which is based on the action of the state and market. They also challenge the conventional economic theory that accepts that enterprises generally only promote the interests of their owners and aim to minimise costs (Borgaza, Depredi and Galera, 2012; Thomas and Augustyn, 2007). This is especially important in developing economies, often characterised by uncertainty, informality and many people in lower socioeconomic groups (Goyal and Sergi, 2015).

Initially, SEs were created to address the social needs of local communities neglected by the market and the state. Today, SEs are recognised as innovators

and key players in both the private and public sectors and serve as delivery agents for the state. However, they also compete with various entities in the private, public and third sectors. Compared to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), SEs are more likely to be involved in community development. In fact, several tourism NGOs utilise social entrepreneurship-related activities to promote community development (Kummitha et al., 2021). Generally, SEs offer local communities knowledge, skills and networking opportunities, whilst tourism SEs in rural areas address socioeconomic, political and environmental issues (Kummitha et al., 2021). Although SEs are less involved in international development and faith-based activities (Tepthong, 2014), they have more flexibility in raising money through commercial revenues and business activities. Unlike non-profits, SEs are self-financed based on their growth and are not dependent on donations/grants.

Furthermore, SE typology is dominated by details on the different types of SEs in the Western world, mainly in the US and UK, with some in Europe. The typology is less transparent and detailed in the Eastern world. For instance, Alter (2007) detailed the law's general lack of clarity about the legality and tax treatment of non-profits involved in economic and commercial activities in less developed countries. Asia can learn from Europe in terms of SE know-how, and Europe can learn from Asia in terms of community resilience and support in solving the problems of community members (Mills, 2013). As different contexts have different forms, acceptance and understanding of social entrepreneurship, it would be interesting to learn how the concept plays out in specific contexts, especially involving institutional gaps, i.e. less developed contexts. Does the social entrepreneurship model fit some contexts better than others? And are more SEs developed in specific contexts because of how people feel about government and authorities?

3.3 The SE business model

The SE business model uses business techniques to offer products or services that generate income. SEs are not just organisations simply operating in the social

sector. Social enterprises have diverse forms and are defined differently in various national contexts. However, they are generally understood as organisations that engage in trading activities to support a social or environmental mission. Hence the word "social enterprise" largely refers to the objective of the business, rather than the legal structure it is set up in.

In the UK for example, a business is considered an SE if it meets the following criteria: a) it must reinvest or donate at least half of its profits towards its mission; b) it must be independent of state or government control, and c) it must earn more than half of its income through trading (Social Enterprise UK, 2023). Whereas, a socially oriented enterprise, for example, is one that has a social mission but does not reinvest over 50 percent of its profits into the social mission (Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, 2021). There are over 131,000 SEs in the UK that contribute approximately £60 billion to the economy. These enterprises employ around 2.3 million people, and many outperform other businesses in terms of growth and product innovation. They play a key role in reducing inequality, creating job opportunities, and promoting a more inclusive economy (Social Enterprise UK, 2023). The percentage of newly established SEs in the UK within the last three years has increased from 25% in 2017 to approximately 30%. Around 34% of these businesses have been trading for 6 to 20 years, while 24% have been operating for 21 years or more (Social Enterprise UK, 2023). This suggests that the social enterprise sector is growing, with more younger social enterprises emerging.

Despite the various definitions, the key theme is that social entrepreneurship meets social needs through problem-solving techniques and social goals. However, differences lie in the characteristics of the undertaken activities – innovative vs traditional – and their consequences, which include social and economic value (Canestrino et al., 2020). The innovative attribute of SEs adds to the social value of their objectives. Social innovation is, therefore, at the core of the SE business model. Typically, SEs involve creative ideas and establishing something new to achieve social good or solve social problems. The word 'social' in 'social

innovation' may be understood and defined in many different ways, and social innovations include new products, services, organisational forms (e.g. social franchising), processes of social production such as co-creation (e.g. crowdfunding), marketing-related innovations (e.g. social sponsorship) and organisational innovations (e.g. micro-financing) (Sanzo-Perez, Álvarez-González and Rey-García, 2015).

The concepts of social entrepreneurship and social innovation are closely related. This is because a social entrepreneur can be part of an SE and, at the same time, contribute to the promotion of social innovation (Cunha, Benneworth and Oliveira, 2017). A social innovation occurs when a new idea introduces a fresh perspective to old problems, resulting in institutional changes to existing standards (Alegre and Berbegal-mirabent, 2016). When social innovation is considered, the value created is typically for society as a whole or specific groups of people, rather than private individuals. However, there is limited literature available on the mechanisms through which social innovation is carried out in these enterprises (Alegre and Berbegal-mirabent, 2016). All SEs address social needs however, it does not necessarily imply social innovation (Cunha, Benneworth and Oliveira, 2017) and not all social entrepreneurs end up creating new models that can be scaled up. In fact, only a small percentage of them do as scaling up often requires the involvement of governments and larger businesses (Cunha, Benneworth and Oliveira, 2017). This implies that the concept of social innovation is broader than that of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise.

Conventional enterprise models are not well suited to explain SEs because of their distinctive business model. Businesses usually have a primary focus – as hybrid organisations, SEs prioritise social value, whilst traditional enterprises primarily focus on economic values (Dees, 1998; Mair and Martí, 2006). For instance, even though some tourism businesses also emphasise corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder governance, their key focus is economic values. On the other hand, SEs maximise social values and capture the minimum economic

values necessary to safeguard the sustainability of their operations. Hence, compared to traditional tourism businesses, it can be said that this makes them more genuine in their efforts to distribute benefits to local communities, earning them reciprocal support from the local community (Wang, Rasoolimanesh and Kunasekaran, 2022).

The emergence of a collective perspective on social entrepreneurship is notable. It is rooted in the idea that the SE business model is intrinsically based on collective values, as it heavily relies on collaboration and relationship building (Jørgensen et al., 2021). It is a collective-oriented and collective-driven model. The collective perspective emphasises the importance of stakeholder groups, seen as vital in the governance of SEs, and collaborative action and practices in solving societal issues. Collective social entrepreneurship is defined as 'collaboration amongst similar as well as diverse actors for the purpose of applying business principles to solving social problems' (Montgomery, Dacin and Dacin, 2012). It involves diverse actors collaborating to apply business principles to solving social problems. This approach relies on framing techniques to gain a shared understanding and mission, collaboration amongst different groups and diversity in culture, opinions, views and social aspects.

Although the medium for delivery is a business entity, the underlying motive is social benefit, typically emanating from the vision of the founding social entrepreneur. However, this hybrid model can obfuscate business processes and outcomes, resulting in ambiguous practices within the SE field (Diochon and Anderson, 2011). The hybrid model and dual aims of social entrepreneurs have been identified as potential sources of tension, possibly leading to mission drift or a strategic paradox (Florin and Schmidt, 2011; Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2018). Doherty, Haugh and Lyon (2014) similarly stated that hybrid models encompass contradiction and conflict. Nevertheless, social missions can indeed provide a strategic advantage and competitive edge, as discussed in existing literature (Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2018). However, it remains unclear whether strong social and

economic missions can coexist harmoniously when the strategic value of the firm is its social mission (Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2018; Teasdale, 2010).

The conflicting goals of social and economic missions can make their simultaneous operation challenging. Based on the literature, a social entrepreneur's focus on a social mission is expected to inherently conflict with their economic objectives; however, when considering the strategic and competitive value of social missions, the understanding remains unclear. To address this, ethical theory can be used to reframe the hybrid business model as an outcome of both entrepreneurial and ethical intentions (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). Here, the prevailing conceptualisation of SEs as a hybrid mix of mission and market is revised by looking at hybridity in terms of the moral choice of the economic system (redistribution, reciprocity and market) and social value orientation (personal, mutual or public benefit) (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019).

When it comes to scaling a business, conventional enterprises aim to maximise profits and expand their markets, whilst SEs focus on expanding their social impact and creating value for people, communities and society. SEs can achieve this by a) widely scaling the social impact (quantitative method) through strategies to reach a large number of beneficiaries; or b) deeply scaling the social impact (qualitative method) by diversifying activities to address emerging needs at the local level or implementing multiple strategies to tackle the same needs or issues (OECD, 2016). A study on SE scaling in Europe showed that different SEs use different scaling strategies, either separately or combined; therefore, policymakers should not advocate specific strategies for SEs to pursue (OECD, 2016). Generally, SEs are small-scale, local entities aiming to grow (Lyon and Fernandez, 2012). However, many SEs expand too quickly before they are well established, leaving them unable to handle the increased challenges; as a result, they fail to meet the expectations of the community and other stakeholders (Malunga, Mugobo and Iwu, 2014).

Lastly, though SEs are seen as sustainable solutions, not all are. Social ends and profit motives can have complementary outcomes, implying that profit generation for social purposes is a key feature of the sustainability of these ventures. Social enterprises strive to be independent and not rely on financial donations or government assistance (Davies, Haugh and Chambers, 2018; Thiemboonkit, 2013), which is a positive approach because these sources of income are rarely long term and can create challenges in the future. However, it is worth mentioning that some young SEs may initially require financial support from donations or government aid as their trading activities may not generate enough (Le, 2019). Nevertheless, the majority of income for SEs must come from trading activities (SE UK, n.d.).

Social entrepreneurship involves intentionally and strategically redistributing profits to further the organisation's social or environmental mission and, therefore, can be considered a form of philanthropy. However, while they are related concepts, their approaches and goals differ. Social entrepreneurship aims to create sustainable solutions to social problems through innovative and entrepreneurial approaches, whereas philanthropy involves the act of donating money, resources, or time to promote the well-being of others, typically through charitable organisations or causes. Philanthropy is traditionally associated with non-profit activities, and the primary goal is to redistribute resources for the benefit of society. The motivation behind philanthropy is often rooted in a sense of social responsibility or compassion, and it is driven by a desire to make a positive impact on society without seeking financial returns (Stecker, 2014). While some philanthropic projects may be sustainable, many rely on ongoing contributions and donations from generous donors or benefactors.

Charities can be SEs, but the charity model is not seen as sustainable as it lacks diversity, adaptability, and flexibility compared to SEs (Social Enterprise UK, 2021). While non-profit organisations are essential for serving the community, their reliance on philanthropic and government funding is considered unsustainable (Stecker, 2014). In contrast, social enterprises can be financially viable and

independent, and they do not rely on grants and donations that distinguish them from charitable non-profit organisations. Additionally, Alter and Dawans (2006) highlighted that factors such as leadership, culture and financial viability are necessary for SEs to acquire sustainability, which aligns with findings from other corporate sustainability studies. Similarly, Ketprapakorn and Kantabutra (2019) found that organisational leadership and culture play a critical role in sustaining enterprises in Thailand.

3.4 Social entrepreneurship in the tourism industry

Tourism relies on different sectors and interconnected products and services working together to deliver a complete experience. As such, it has the potential to foster community-level development (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018). However, traditional tourism development often follows a top-down capitalist approach, resulting in fewer benefits for host communities (Mahato, Phi and Prats, 2021). In developing nations, the tourism system is largely based on interventions by government groups and large tourism organisations. This means that foreign capital often rules, marginalising local communities and their people (Fujimoto, 2021; Liu and Wall, 2006). Nevertheless, research shows that SEs have rapidly grown in low- and middle-income nations where tourism is a key economic sector (Dahles et al., 2020; Von der Weppen and Cochrane, 2012). Tourism businesses, like any other business, typically aim to maximise profits. However, with changing customer values, trends and stakeholder pressure, alongside apparent environmental, social and economic global issues, there is now an increasing expectation that tourism businesses should pledge to meet social responsibilities in some form or another (Sharifi-Tehrani, Seyfi and Zaman, 2022).

Tourism scholars agree that social entrepreneurship can play an important role in adopting financially sustainable strategies to attain social aims and the responsible development of tourism (Dahles et al., 2020). Sustainability advocates have been pushing for increased local participation in tourism development to conserve the

environment and improve the livelihoods of locals. Tourism SEs are usually micro, small or medium-sized businesses in different sectors of the tourism and hospitality industries. They aim to support economic, social and cultural benefits (Kummitha et al., 2021), promote social harmony, offer skill development opportunities and assist communities in starting enterprises. Some studies have identified the primary objective of tourism SEs as the conservation of natural and cultural resources (Sloan, Legrand and Simons-Kaufmann, 2014) and the development of cultural activities (Korstanje, 2012).

Creative and innovative entrepreneurs drive tourism, which has experienced growth and diversification of offerings. Generally, tourism social entrepreneurs consider preserving local cultures and heritage by developing tourism destinations (Kummitha et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurs believe that strengthening local community relationships through tourism-related activities leads to social development and harmony within the community. For example, Aquino, Sigala and Waligo (2018) developed a conceptual model that shows tourism social entrepreneurship (TSE) as a sustainable community development tool and a process steered by tourism social entrepreneurs. The process involves tourism social entrepreneurs engaging with local communities, stakeholders, institutions, government bodies and decision makers. This is propelled by social entrepreneurs' social innovation capabilities but also depends on the context and settings.

As we seek more sustainable and innovative tourism practices, TSE is emerging as a viable alternative to traditional entrepreneurship. It plays a crucial role in enhancing the social and economic development of local communities whilst also boosting the growth of the tourism industry (Kummitha et al., 2021). TSE is defined as:

> A process that uses tourism to create innovative solutions to immediate social, environmental and economic problems in destinations by mobilising the ideas, capacities, resources and social agreements, from within or

outside the destination, required for its sustainable social transformation. (Sheldon, Pollock and Daniele, 2017, p7)

Tourism SEs aim to alleviate complex social issues to help disadvantaged stakeholders whilst attaining financial sustainability and enhancing the benefits of tourism. The literature on tourism, hospitality and economic development primarily focuses on two themes: 1) tourism as a driver of economic development; and 2) tourism creating some economic cost-benefits (Shaw, Williams and Thomas, 2004). Tourism SEs have three key elements: social value creation, social innovation and sustainable social transformation (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018). These elements are closely linked to economic, psychological, social and political empowerment (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018).

Tourism SEs serve as an alternative to non-profit, government and private sectors. Whilst non-profits have community interests at their core, they may lack business skills to cultivate commercially viable tourism products. Conversely, private sector initiatives often do not encourage community participation (Dahles et al., 2020; Fujimoto, 2021). The TSE framework utilises social value creation, social innovation and sustainability. It indicates that it can be achieved by lessening undesirable costs, creating profit for society and minimising the impact of negative externalities (Aji, 2020). Tourism activities in TSE are based on seven community capitals: human, natural, built, financial, social, political and cultural (Aji, 2020).

In developing countries, tourism planning often relies on top-down approaches and is dominated by government agencies and multinational tourism firms (Reindrawati, 2018). Tourism SEs would therefore be important in developing countries where government institutions do not adequately support entrepreneurial activity in the tourism sector (Altinay, Sigala and Waligo, 2016; Kwaramba et al., 2012; Roxas and Chadee, 2013; Sloan, Legrand and Simons-Kaufmann, 2014). Tourism social entrepreneurship can be crucial in filling the gap left by inadequate government support for entrepreneurial activity in the tourism sector. As a tool for promoting sustainable livelihoods, community empowerment and environmental

sustainability, TSE has received increasing attention from scholars and policymakers alike (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017; Wang, Duan and Yu, 2016). Discussions on policies that address social outcomes have received attention, as seen in the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) global appeal for tourism enterprises to start contributing to social change (Mottiar and Boluk, 2017a). Ultimately, TSE offers a promising path forward for the tourism industry that prioritises social and environmental well-being alongside economic growth.

Extensive research has been conducted on sustainable aspects, corporate responsibility and community roles in the tourism industry, primarily within Western, developed country contexts (Castellani et al., 2020; Dzisi and Otsyina, 2014; Narangajavana et al., 2016). However, few studies have focused on the development of tourism SEs, with only one study examining the Chinese tourism industry (Wang, Duan and Yu, 2016). Further research is needed to understand how tourism SEs relate to other tourism stakeholders in a destination and how different tourism SEs interact. Stakeholder involvement is essential for the tourism industry's growth and development of local areas. Tourism social entrepreneurship works as a market-based strategy for sustainable tourism development and requires the involvement of key stakeholders, government, tourists and local residents, communities and non-profits. These stakeholders should have the opportunity to contribute to the tourism development process. Community perceptions, whether positive or negative, are important factors that could either support or obstruct tourism SEs.

As the industry contains different enterprises across the tourism value chain, tourism SEs' prospects to create economic and social benefits will increase if they emphasise creating social value (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018). Linking TSE with sustainability, Lange and Dodds (2017) explored their relationship, finding that the adoption of social entrepreneurship in tourism would: a) pressure existing traditional tourism enterprises to follow more responsible practices; b) serve as a basis for other entrepreneurial activities in terms of local development; c) enable

the establishment of policies that can encourage positive environmental and social outcomes; and d) promote the development of local economies and attract global interest. This highlights the importance of social entrepreneurship in tourism, especially since governments use tourism as a tool for economic development.

Social entrepreneurship in tourism can make a sustainable impact by helping solve global issues, such as poverty and environmental conservation, and devising strategies to help create social value, inspire social innovation and ensure sustainability. Therefore, the tourism industry provides a rich environment for social entrepreneurs. The rising demand for more authentic experiences among tourists has made the industry an ideal platform for social entrepreneurs (Sheldon et al., 2017). Tourism SEs are significant as there is potential to build social value whilst making a profit, to implement social innovation activities that help boost active participation in societies and to support sustainable development outcomes. By promoting sustainable lifestyles, tourism SEs can empower local communities, support regional development and enhance the quality of life (Kline, Shah and Rubright, 2014). Understanding social entrepreneurship in tourism is critical to advancing the field and inspiring social innovation. However, it is equally essential to determine how social entrepreneurs collaborate and operate alongside other stakeholders, the policies that influence their operations and whether tourism and social goals align, particularly in less developed regions with limited knowledge.

3.4.1 Related tourism business models

With tourism's rapid growth, there is now a demand for alternative types of tourism, such as nature-related, rural experiences and ecotourism initiatives (Rattanapipat et al., 2021). For example, whilst rural tourism is a small segment, it is gaining importance and awareness as government bodies and local authorities recognise its potential for local development (Lordkipanidze, Brezet and Backman, 2005; Rattanapipat et al., 2021). Ecotourism is an alternative approach to rural development through its role in environmental conservation and offering economic benefits to the rural population (Kummitha et al., 2021). Two goals are achieved

through ecotourism initiatives: creating employment in rural communities and conserving social and environmental sustainability.

Pro-poor tourism (PPT) (Ashley and Roe, 2001) is another alternative tourism approach and strategy designed to benefit impoverished rural areas and poorer regions of society. It is particularly prominent in developing and less developed countries (Zeng, 2018) and was initially defined as tourism development efforts that contribute to poverty reduction through pro-poor policies. Pro-poor tourism was established based on the belief that the conventional tourism development model fails to offer substantial benefits for the poorest people (Zeng and Ryan, 2012). It also assumes that the traditional model increases the gap between the rich and the poor within communities, leading to social problems. Some of its efforts include facilitating the participation of impoverished people and a holistic livelihood approach. Whilst clear, targeted support from government bodies and stakeholders is vital for the PPT model to be efficient, SEs could work to ensure the model continues to head towards sustainable development based on the core mission of SEs (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Zeng, 2018). The UNWTO introduced another concept called Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) (WTO, 2002). As PPT has some negative undertones, ST-EP is a more suitable term. Similarly, ST-EP offers a framework supporting sustainable tourism that works explicitly towards alleviating poverty by creating jobs and income for locals whilst upholding the local culture and reducing negative environmental impacts. Stakeholder involvement and the role of the people remain critical for the concept. Tourism has the potential to drive growth, making it an especially valuable tool in underserved communities.

Communities frequently see tourism initiatives as a way to fuse economic growth and community building. This highlights the connection between tourism, social entrepreneurship and community building (Jørgensen et al., 2021). Community-based tourism (CBT) is considered a form of tourism that fosters sustainability (Sommit and Sitikarn, 2018). The ASEAN Secretariat (2016) defined CBT as 'a

tourism activity, community owned and operated, and managed or coordinated at the community level that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued sociocultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources'. In Thailand, for example, CBT is recognised by law as a form of SE. Community-based tourism emerged in the 1970s as a response to the negative impacts of the traditional mass tourism development model (Rattanapipat et al., 2021).

While CBT initially focused on small rural communities and nature conservation, it has now extended globally to various tourism products and services, including gastronomy and traditional handicrafts (Sommit and Sitikarn, 2018). Community-based tourism is seen as a means of development to meet local communities' social, economic and environmental needs through tourism products (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). The definition of CBT and what it entails demonstrate its core focus on sustainable development. Regarding economic, social and environmental impact and general contribution, CBT engages the underlying principle of social entrepreneurship by rehabilitating the local community's natural environment and socioculture and improving the quality of life (Sommit and Sitikarn, 2018). However, communities in less developed and developing countries face numerous challenges, such as CBT programmes generating relatively small revenues and projects failing due to poor management and limited market access (Dodds, Ali and Galaski, 2018). Social entrepreneurship shares similar objectives with CBT projects and is based on comparable core principles.

Whilst bottom-up approaches such as CBT help tourism function as a means to better communities, certain obstacles hinder economic sustainability (Wongadisai, Chanchalor and Murphy, 2020), such as the knowledge gap between local communities and external agents like private firms and local elites (Fujimoto, 2021). Local communities may not easily understand ethical or sustainable tourism, including the implications and potential benefits. It is also likely that local communities are unaware of tourism's environmental impacts. Wearing and

McDonald (2002) proposed a new type of 'agent' to help bridge this knowledge gap in CBT in developing nations. In line with this is the 'provider-capacity building' model, in which social entrepreneurs engage the community, distinguish its needs and cultivate the local capacity to address needs through human resource development and tourism training (Rattanapipat et al., 2021). By utilising local resources and the environment in more sustainable ways and improving the livelihoods of communities in developing countries, SEs have the potential to drive traditional systems towards sustainable development (Sheldon, Pollock and Daniele, 2017). These alternative tourism approaches intend to build a sustainable tourism industry, improve local living conditions, create long-term impacts and eventually bring sustainable community development (Dodds, Ali and Galaski, 2018).

3.4.2 Industry characteristics

The tourism sector is characterised by a traditionally low degree of entrepreneurial behaviour, and some tourism businesses are not very entrepreneurial or innovative (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). Despite some innovative entrepreneurial activity, such as the development of online booking agencies, internationally, the tourism industry is generally seen as lacking entrepreneurial dynamism compared to other sectors (Morrison, 2006). The complexity of the tourism product is due to the combination of tangible goods and intangible services, involving a wide range of interdependent industries and enterprises. The tourism system deals with multiple stakeholders and their interactions, which adds to its complexity. The industry has a unique service product offering that differs from conventionally manufactured products or physical goods (Rahmiati et al., 2019). Service features are based on inseparability, heterogeneity, intangibility and perishability. Because of the interdependent nature of the industry, all tourism stakeholders must work together to add value and deliver products or services (Manrai and Manrai, 2011; Rahmiati et al., 2019). In terms of tourism SEs, they would hold and be exposed to typical service characteristics, but as SEs must also sell goods to make a profit, they

would have to keep in mind the application of traditional business models. Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) expressed that whilst tourism has the characteristics of an industry, its social significance goes beyond traditional limits.

The tourism industry is an ideal platform for entrepreneurship due to its low barriers to entry (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2018). Because it engages many different skills, it promotes entrepreneurship directly and indirectly. However, Biddulph's (2018) study underlined that tourism is a highly volatile industry, and the social benefits of these enterprises would depend on the success of the businesses, which are dependent on the overall success of the sector. Most tourism businesses are small or family-run organisations, generally not known for showing high degrees of entrepreneurial behaviour, which may limit their ability to grow and scale. Knowledge sharing, for instance, would lead to empowerment for small businesses and is encouraged as a key aspect that supports entrepreneurship; several firms have also started to independently support social entrepreneurs as change agents (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2018). Furthermore, many of these businesses may lack the necessary marketing and management skills, which are key resources required to work well with other actors and lead to small business success (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2018). Tourism offers the potential for different business opportunities, job creation and income generation for locals, and SEs could play an important role.

Thomas and Augustyn (2007) explained that tourism SEs often perform well entrepreneurially because of the nature of the market. Meanwhile, Dickerson and Hassanien (2018) studied the application of the business model to SEs, finding that the typical business model is indeed applicable to them, as they also require the same key features (e.g. customer segments, partners, suppliers, value propositions, key resources, revenue streams and allocation, cost structure and management). Relatedly, according to Weppen and Cochrane (2012), Alter's (2006) framework of SE models shows that tourism enterprises are generally similar to other social ventures. However, the operational models often adopted by tourism enterprises tend to include the market intermediary model that focuses on

assisting producers with access to markets; the employment model, which centres on providing employment opportunities; or the organisation support model, which deals with unrelated business activities geared towards supporting the social programme. Another consideration is the social challenges of hybrid hospitality and tourism firms rooted within the geographic context in which they operate. Understanding how the model works in the tourism industry in specific locations can help us learn whether it varies by context.

The global scale of tourism SEs operating is currently not well documented despite the abundance of entrepreneurial activities in various sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry, including food and beverage, accommodations, attractions and events. The industry's natural attributes complement social entrepreneurship, such as many SMEs offering services that can prove advantageous for social entrepreneurial projects (Dzisi and Otsyina, 2014). Research shows a link between hospitality and tourism entrepreneurial activities and SME theory (Altinay et al., 2012), indicating that social entrepreneurship can significantly impact destinations. Although tourism SEs are usually micro, small or medium-sized organisations and are often seen as industry outliers, social entrepreneurs still have opportunities to make a difference in the sector and impact the destination.

3.4.3 The relationship between SEs and the tourism industry

There are similarities between the goals of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, sustainable development and views regarding the benefits of sustainable tourism development for communities and destinations (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). Social entrepreneurship in tourism typically follows a responsible development approach, which is especially important in developing countries with resource constraints and inadequate governmental support for tourism entrepreneurial activity (Altinay, Sigala and Waligo, 2016; Sigala, 2016). Mottiar (2016) argues that tourism social entrepreneurs can spearhead social change and have a long-term impact on the development of the destination, tourism products

and experiences whilst driving social value creation, thus impacting the industry itself. Social entrepreneurs are viewed in terms of their role in leveraging positive impact for local communities, especially in developing countries (Laeis and Lemke, 2015).

The tourism and hospitality industry possesses integral and natural features that positively link it with social entrepreneurship (Dzisi and Otsyina, 2014). The industry is naturally suited to social entrepreneurship, given its large number of SMEs and highly valued services such as accommodation and food and beverage, which can be harnessed for social entrepreneurship projects. Nevertheless, despite the acknowledged applicability of SEs in the development of local communities globally, the matter has received little attention in the tourism field (Narangajavana et al., 2016).

Sustainability discussions in tourism highlight opportunities to consider the role SEs could play in supporting sustainable development in hospitality and tourism (Ergul and Johnson, 2011; Mottiar, Boluk and Kline, 2018; Naderi et al., 2019; Sloan, Legrand and Simons-Kaufmann, 2014). Destinations are not just physical sites but sociocultural constructions, as McCarthy (2012) points out, which means social entrepreneurs can play a role in shaping the new institutional structure to achieve both business and sociocultural goals. Based on the model of institutional change (Seo and Creed, 2002), constant communication and collaboration between social entrepreneurs, decision makers, academics, practitioners and policymakers can shape the creation of cultural tourism, as reasoned by McCarthy (2012).

Lange and Dodds (2017) defended the linkage between social entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism by explaining how the former can serve as a tool to improve the state of the latter through innovative approaches. Clearly, the tourism industry has become more sustainable over the years for reasons relating to

environmental, social and economic issues. Establishing SEs is a fitting solution to focus on these specific matters. Social enterprises sell products or services for a social purpose; within the hospitality and tourism context, this ensures higher local benefit rather than the leakage of resources to multinational companies, frequently highlighted in the literature (Lange and Dodds, 2017; Narangajavana et al., 2016; Reinke, 2018; UNWTO, 2017). Where possible, sustainable tourism aims for the industry's benefits to remain within the local communities and reach residents. The establishment of new sustainable tourism start-ups by social entrepreneurs means growth for the tourism industry itself. To create social value, tourism enterprises need natural capital (or the tourism potential of the destination), political capital, institutional capital and human capital (Altinay, Sigala and Waligo, 2016). These resources facilitate the creation of social value at three different levels through interdependent processes of value creation: individual stakeholder level, meso level, and macro-level (Altinay, Sigala and Waligo, 2016).

3.5 Destination and community development

The hospitality and tourism industry was amongst the first to embrace sustainable principles. A common theme widely seen in the literature on social sustainability in tourism is the importance of community and local development (Johnson, 2002, cited in Sloan et al., 2015). Many studies have highlighted the role of tourism and hospitality SEs in advancing sustainability, community support, engagement and development (Dickerson and Hassanien, 2018; Iorgulescu and Răvar, 2015; Kravva, 2014; Lynch, Elliott and Brock, 2008; Sigala, 2016). Tourism entrepreneurship and innovation play a crucial role in enhancing tourists' experiences and satisfaction and contributing to the development of the destination and the community. Correspondingly, Aquino, Lück and Schänzel (2018) propose TSE as a market-based strategy to address social problems whilst maximising the benefits and minimising the negative consequences of tourism on host communities. However, there is a lack of adequate evidence and knowledge on how tourism SEs act as stimulators and effectively contribute to sustainable community development. Therefore, it is essential to gain a deeper understanding

of the role of social entrepreneurs in sustainable development and their relationship with the communities they serve.

Destination development should focus on local participation, representation and empowerment, promoting local interests and preserving local landscapes, cultures and heritage (Sloan et al., 2014). Unfortunately, in many developing countries, local communities do not benefit much from tourism as they have little control and power over the tourism development process. Communities are important in tourism as visitors often travel to experience the unique way of life of different communities. These communities also shape the "natural" landscapes that many tourists enjoy. Therefore, sustaining these communities has become a crucial aspect of sustainable tourism. A holistic approach to sustainability integrates the social, cultural, and economic well-being of human communities (Richards and Hall, 2003). Without community sustainability, tourism development cannot be considered sustainable (Richards and Hall, 2003). The topic of empowering communities is linked to this discussion. Empowerment refers to the ability of individuals or groups to take action and can be a valuable tool for improving the assets and abilities of local communities (Khalid et al., 2019). Empowerment involves giving power and voice to marginalised groups and local communities. However, this requires collective action rather than individual efforts. This is especially important in tourism development, where community empowerment is essential for implementing sustainable tourism practices (Richards and Hall, 2003; Khalid et al., 2019). The social exchange theory explains how social power determines residents' ability to benefit from tourism outcomes. The more social power the community has, the better its decision-making and capacity-building opportunities.

Weppen and Cochrane (2012) similarly suggested that tourism can generate revenue for low- and middle-income countries; however, more efforts are needed to ensure that the poorest segments of the community benefit from it. Hospitality roles and TSE are identified as potential solutions to this issue (Weppen and

Cochrane, 2012). Integrating tourism SEs into tourism planning can make them assets to local populations and contribute significantly to their well-being, especially when locals are involved in decision making (Rebutin, 2009). To accomplish this, it is imperative to establish relationships with social entrepreneurs in destinations, empowering them to have more influence in the decision-making process. However, this can be challenging as their goals, aspirations and intentions may differ from those of hospitality/tourism providers (Mottiar, 2016). Nevertheless, involving social entrepreneurs in community development is crucial as they can raise awareness of community problems and create networks allowing more people to participate (Malunga, Mugobo and Iwu, 2014).

3.6 Value creation

Regarding SEs, some authors highlight the importance of social value creation/ generation and positively impacting society or a group (Cohen, Smith and Mitchell, 2008; Mair and Martí, 2006; Tan, Williams and Tan, 2005). Many consider this a defining characteristic of SEs (Bornstein, 2007; Dees and Anderson, 2003; Diochon and Anderson, 2009). This includes positive changes in personal and community life and improving the quality of life (Guzman Vasquez and Trujillo Davila, 2008). Social enterprises create two main types of value: economic and social (Dacanay, 2019). Economic value pertains to ensuring economic sustainability, whilst social value refers to enhancing the welfare of individuals and communities. According to Diochon and Anderson (2001), SEs must balance creating social and economic value to remain financially viable. Their commitment to creating value for marginalised groups and society is evident in how income is reinvested and allocated. The way income is reinvested and allocated shows SEs' commitment and drive to create value for marginalised groups and society.

Social enterprises strive to provide social value to marginalised individuals not adequately served by the market or political systems (Kickul et al., 2012). This includes most of the world's impoverished people, often peasant farmers and small

producers involved in agriculture (Bornstein, 2007). Social enterprises can generate significant social value by helping alleviate poverty amongst these individuals. Social value, often associated with enhancing the well-being of individuals, communities and societies, can be generated for various beneficiary groups including producers, workers, owners and purchasers (Srivetbodee, Igel and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2017). For example, Guzman Vasquez and Trujillo Davila (2008) highlighted ways to create social value through SEs. These include overcoming barriers to quality education and healthcare, enhancing job and social security, amplifying the voices of minority groups and facilitating their access to better opportunities.

Social value creation can be defined in various ways, but a commonly accepted understanding is that it solves or improves a social problem (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Social entrepreneurs view social value creation as simply resolving and fulfilling society's basic needs, such as food, shelter, basic health and hygiene (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018). Social entrepreneurs are attentive to social opportunities and link different values to the opportunities they discover (Mair and Noboa, 2003). The value of an opportunity in social entrepreneurship includes the social benefits that would result from it. For example, in socially inspired opportunities, the person creating value (the social entrepreneur) is not the same as the one receiving it (i.e. a social group). Sigala (2016) emphasised the insufficient attention given to social value creation in tourism literature. Considering the multidimensional context of the tourism industry – including economic, sociocultural and environmental aspects – an in-depth understanding of TSE can significantly contribute to understanding how social entrepreneurs create social value and bring about transformative change (Sigala, 2016).

Experts have compared social entrepreneurship and CSR and noted that both prioritise social value. However, the priority of social value concerning a company's objectives may differ (Puumalainen et al., 2015). The main focus of CSR is on doing good beyond the company's interests and is often a legal requirement. On

the other hand, social entrepreneurship prioritises social value (Mair and Martí, 2006) and directly relates to entrepreneurial action and innovation. Corporate social responsibility is not directly connected to entrepreneurial action and innovation (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011). Sigala (2016) emphasises that social value creation is at the core of social entrepreneurship.

To be considered a social entrepreneurial venture, rather than aiming simply to mitigate negative social consequences, tourism enterprises must go beyond the norm and create social value (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). However, Roundy (2017) noted that studies on social entrepreneurship are moving away from definitions behind social value creation because these definitions are criticised for being superfluous. Instead, there should be a focus on creating positive externalities (Roundy, 2017; Santos, 2012). Santos' (2012) definition suggests that whilst other entrepreneurs may also create positive externalities, social entrepreneurs do so as their primary motivation for establishing their enterprises. In contrast, positive externalities created by other entrepreneurs may be unintentional 'spillover' effects resulting from some of their activities. Social and environmental impact have been treated as externalities in traditional economic models, factors not considered in the pursuit of profit. In social entrepreneurship, creating social value is a key component of the business model itself. This challenges the conventional view of externalities and traditional economic models. Social entrepreneurs purposefully integrate social impact into the heart of their business, which in turn redefines success by taking into account both financial and social outcomes. Therefore, it can be argued that social entrepreneurs naturally create. They integrate social impact into the heart of their business, which in turn redefines success by taking into account both financial and social outcomes. Profits are intentionally reinvested in the community or used to scale up initiatives that address social issues. This sets SEs apart from traditional profit-driven business models.

Another viewpoint from Narangajavana et al. (2016) is that monitoring social value promoted by social entrepreneurship remains challenging for practitioners and researchers. This is because most social value elements cannot be measured or quantified. This is likely because people perceive social value differently, and concerns with the typology, definitional issues, understanding and awareness of Ses need to be considered. Regarding the tourism industry, does social value creation mean the same thing to the local community, tourism social entrepreneurs and government authorities? Most likely not. Narangajavana et al. (2016) suggested that due to the difficulties in its monitoring, one way to measure the social value created by hospitality and tourism SEs is by examining the level of leakage of the destinations, whilst Altinay, Sigala and Waligo (2016) found the level of relationship development and local community empowerment to be good measures of social value generation. Sustainability in tourism and hospitality depends on various factors, including ties of industries to host economies and societies and the responsibility of individuals and corporations to create social value (Narangajavana et al., 2016). Social entrepreneurs see social value creation as bringing social change or creating social impact (long term) or outcomes (immediate or short term) whilst addressing social problems (Singh, 2016).

3.7 Impact created by TSE

Tourism social entrepreneurship is proposed as a market-based strategy to address social problems whilst maximising the benefits and minimising the negative consequences that tourism may provide to host communities (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018). Therefore, tourism businesses are crucial in achieving desired community development outcomes. Altinay, Sigala and Waligo (2016) highlighted that Ses in tourism empower local communities and support sustainable regional development. The most common positive impacts of tourism SEs for local communities are job creation, increased income, support for local suppliers and generating funds for educational programmes (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2016). Tourism SEs can also contribute to local tourism development by promoting lesser-known areas.

However, there is a risk that the objectives of an SE may result in negative consequences for the destination, such as causing division in the community. Sheldon and Daniele (2017) illustrated that a homeless shelter, for instance, could result in disapproval from the locals, with those with opposing views voicing their opinions. On the other hand, positive examples showing how social entrepreneurship is applied in tourism include a) social festivals that help with responsible social identity construction; b) restaurants that aim to provide a social way of food production; c) accommodations supporting community development; and d) social sports tourism that aims to foster lifestyle values and well-being (Sigala, 2016). Additionally, tourism NGOs, as part of the social economy sector, have generally managed to positively impact local communities (Iorgulescu and Răvar, 2015). Some remarkable examples of Ses in tourism are:

- The Eden Project focuses on biospheres to lead to a sustainable future by helping people learn about the vital relationship between plants, people and resources. It mainly uses regional and local suppliers and has approximately 400 full-time employees. Since its opening in 2001, it has attracted more than 18 million visitors and contributed over £1.7 billion to the local economy in Cornwall (Eden Project, n.d.).

- Good Hotels is a concept introduced by the Good Group, with the first Good Hotel established in Antigua. Through the Good Training programme, the hotels offer unemployed locals access to hospitality training and a chance to reintegrate into the economy. After completing the programme, they receive on-the-job training and a full-time salary at the Good Hotel and are helped towards getting a permanent job in the local economy (The Good Group, n.d.).

- Unseen Tours is an SE that works with homeless, ex-homeless and vulnerably housed Londoners by providing paid work as tour guides, allowing them to use their creativity. The aim is to show London's historical and cultural features through a unique experience whilst addressing the issues of homelessness and social injustice (Unseen Tours, n.d.).

Tourism SEs have the potential to drive local tourism development by addressing collective needs that have not yet been met. There are some prominent studies, with Ergul and Johnson (2011) investigating how tourism SEs operate and von der Weppen and Cochrane (2012) and Sloan, Legrand and Simons-Kaufmann (2014) exploring TSE characteristics and success factors. Tourism SEs can create social value and contribute to societal transformation, countering negative externalities. Despite their potential for socioeconomic development and continuous growth, limited research has focused on tourism SEs (Castellani et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Additionally, there is a lack of understanding regarding whether and how tourism SEs provide satisfying experiences to customers (Castellani et al., 2020), which is crucial as experience is a key factor in the tourism industry and is considered the fourth economic offering following commodities, goods and services (Castellani et al., 2020; Kim and Ritchie, 2014; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

3.8 Tourism entrepreneurs

Different scholars have examined the characteristics and motivations of entrepreneurs. For example, Tomassini, Font and Thomas (2021, p13) found that value-based entrepreneurs in tourism see themselves as committed to ethical principles whilst pursuing profit and business opportunities. However, other researchers, like Chernbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood (2021), have identified gaps in our understanding of tourism entrepreneurs. One of the challenges is that tourism entrepreneurs are often classified as lifestyle- or growth-oriented entrepreneurs (Getz and Petersen, 2005; Ioannides and Petersen, 2003). Lifestyle entrepreneurs launch businesses to support their personal goals and preferences. Tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs may be wholly pushed by lifestyle orientation, such as the desire to live in a specific place, interact with particular people or be their own boss (Banki and Ismail, 2015; Williams, Shaw and Greenwood, 1989). Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs may have moved to the destination seeking a specific lifestyle (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). Other entrepreneurs may prioritise profits more because their main focus is to enhance their quality of life and live in a better environment (Carlsen, Morrison and Weber,

2008). In contrast, growth-oriented entrepreneurs are traditional entrepreneurs who focus on innovation, competition and taking risks to achieve business success (Fu et al., 2019).

Literature has thoroughly investigated ecopreneurs, entrepreneurs who prioritise environmental concerns ((Bansal, Garg and Sharma, 2019). Ecopreneurs strive to promote eco-friendly concepts, products, technologies, or innovations, either through market or non-market channels. While they undoubtedly contribute to sustainable development, their sole focus is on the environmental aspect. Social entrepreneurs, on the other hand, prioritise integrating economic and social value alongside environmental considerations. This approach, also known as triple bottom line performance, is increasingly recognised as a sustainable solution (Bansal, Garg and Sharma, 2019).

In the past, lifestyle entrepreneurs were seen as a threat to tourism development because they were not always interested in growing or scaling their businesses (Ioannides and Petersen, 2003). However, some lifestyle entrepreneurs can also be value-driven and socially responsible, as motivations may centre on environmental values (Lynch, 2005), similar to social entrepreneurs. Despite continued interest in entrepreneurial motivation, much remains unknown about the dynamics between tourism entrepreneurs and their destinations (Fu et al., 2019). Chermbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood (2021) detail that this gap in the literature is striking because a large number of studies insinuate that social context (i.e. family and friends) or economic condition (i.e. unemployment levels) can act as an important influence on entrepreneurial activity.

Tourism entrepreneurship has seen an increase in studies exploring the motivations of entrepreneurs (Chernbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood, 2021; Thomas, Shaw and Page, 2011). However, Skokic, Lynch and Morrison (2016) identified certain limitations within this area of research. These limitations include a

lack of focus on mediating factors such as an entrepreneur's socioeconomic environment, a heavy reliance on knowledge from Western and/or developed economies and a dependence on surveys that may not fully capture the complexities of the institutional environment.

Entrepreneurial motivation has evolved to become more multifaceted than just a lifestyle/growth orientation, as lifestyle aspects can drive entrepreneurs without completely disregarding the growth/economic aspects, as seen in other sectors, such as clothing retail. Today, lifestyle entrepreneurs are highly successful in creating innovative products, services and niche markets and supporting a well-diversified destination (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011; Shaw, Williams and Thomas, 2004). However, recent studies have shown that the traditional dichotomy between lifestyle- and growth-oriented entrepreneurs does not fully explain the behaviour of those in the tourism and hospitality industry (Skokic, Lynch and Morrison, 2016; Tomassini, Font and Thomas, 2021). Consequently, research on how the destination environment may influence tourism and hospitality entrepreneurial motivation would be beneficial. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate how the destination environment can influence entrepreneurial motivation in this field, which I explore in detail in the following section, where I thoroughly review the literature on social entrepreneurs.

3.9 Concluding remarks

Social entrepreneurship involves enterprises that innovate for social good, prioritising social over financial goals. Globally, SEs take on different definitions (Borzaga and Becchetti, 2010; Doherty et al., 2009; Le, 2019; Saebi, Foss and Linder, 2019) and forms whilst focusing on different goals, such as employment, health, environment and education (British Council, 2022). The lack of clarity and identification can hinder the success of SEs. Despite lacking a universally accepted definition, social entrepreneurship is recognised for its potential to tackle global

challenges and create social value. Creating social value is a fundamental aspect of social entrepreneurship (Mair and Martí, 2006; Tan, Williams and Tan, 2005), focusing on innovative approaches to create positive outcomes and capture value. Further research is necessary to understand the prevalence of social entrepreneurship in different industries and countries.

The tourism industry can potentially contribute to community-level development (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel, 2018), but traditional approaches often prioritise profit over the well-being of local communities. Tourism social entrepreneurship has emerged as a promising alternative. Through innovative solutions and community engagement, TSE aims to tackle destinations' social, environmental, and economic challenges (Sheldon, Pollock and Daniele, 2017). It fills the gaps left by inadequate government support and contributes to responsible tourism development. Tourism SEs, typically micro, small or medium-sized businesses, work towards economic, social and cultural benefits, such as preserving local heritage and empowering communities. Social entrepreneurs in tourism focus on responsible development approaches, especially in developing countries where resources and governmental support may be limited. Research on tourism SEs is still limited, particularly in developing countries, and further exploration of stakeholder involvement and collaboration is needed.

Building upon entrepreneurial motivation in the tourism and hospitality industry, the focus now shifts to social entrepreneurs. These individuals solve social problems (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009) and are driven by a strong sense of social responsibility to create positive social and environmental impact through their ventures. By leveraging their entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking (Dees, 2007), social entrepreneurs take on global social issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and access to education and healthcare. Understanding the motivations, characteristics and strategies that social entrepreneurs employ in tourism and hospitality is vital for furthering sustainable and responsible practices within the industry.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW – THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

At the heart of the social entrepreneurship movement are social entrepreneurs with a unique blend of passion, vision and determination to address pressing societal issues through an innovative and sustainable business model. By examining their experiences and stories, we can gain insights into how social entrepreneurs navigate challenges, collaborate with stakeholders and create positive changes in their destinations. This literature review section delves into social entrepreneurs as individuals to help comprehend their behaviour, what makes them different and what they represent. Understanding the individuals behind social entrepreneurship is essential for unravelling the intricacies of this dynamic field and exploring the motivations, characteristics, culture and values that drive their actions. By gaining a deeper understanding of social entrepreneurs' potential impact, we can better appreciate their contribution to the responsible development of destinations.

4.1 Who are social entrepreneurs?

Social entrepreneurs are at the heart of SEs and the most important part of the social entrepreneurship concept. However, like the concept of social entrepreneurship, there are various interpretations of the term 'social entrepreneur' due to this field's complex and multidimensional nature (Canestrino et al., 2020; Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Mair and Martí, 2006). These definitions vary across regions and perspectives, making it difficult to provide a clear-cut definition. For example, there are parallels between a community leader and a social entrepreneur, as they can have the same objective of solving a societal issue. Whilst an individual may be both a community leader and a social entrepreneur, their actions and perspectives distinguish them as such (Mottiar, 2016).

Due to their focus on social development, social entrepreneurs play a meaningful role in society and the economy. A simple conceptualisation of the term is that

social entrepreneurs solve social problems (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurs have always existed as those motivated to improve the world (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017a). Research has shown they possess strong prosocial motives, including a deep desire to help society and a strong sense of social responsibility (Canestrino et al., 2020). They are naturally sensitive to social issues, likely stemming from their values (Chandra and Shang, 2017). Other studies have proposed that social entrepreneurs are motivated by values related to justice and liberal political values (Bargsted et al., 2013; Braga, Proença and Ferreira, 2014; Van Ryzin et al., 2009).

Social entrepreneurs are categorised based on how they discover opportunities, the scale of their social value or impact and how they use the market to acquire resources. Zahra et al. (2009, p519) define social entrepreneurs as those who use 'business models to offer creative solutions to complex and persistent social problems'. Three types of social entrepreneurs have been identified: social bricoleurs, social constructionists and social engineers. Social bricoleurs address local social needs, whilst social constructionists focus on large-scale innovations and improvements to existing social systems. Social engineers introduce significant, revolutionary changes for social issues they feel cannot be fixed within existing systems. It is further detailed that social entrepreneurs contribute to their societies by utilising conventional business models. By utilising conventional business models, social entrepreneurs can bring about social change with their skills and capacity.

Further, in their study, Yitshaki and Kropp (2011) found that social bricoleurs from different countries and cultures are motivated by comparable push and pull factors. Social entrepreneurs are typically driven by their experiences of social injustice and unmet social needs, whilst push factors include job dissatisfaction or other external causes. Understanding the mindset and motivations of social entrepreneurs in various contexts, such as tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand, would provide valuable insight into their development. By categorising social entrepreneurs based

on how they discover opportunities and the scale of their social value or impact, we can better understand their societal contributions.

Social entrepreneurs are competent individuals who can create new opportunities through exploration, innovation, experimentation and resource mobilisation (Dees, 2007). In contrast to governments, social entrepreneurs have greater access to private resources and a wider range of options and flexibility to explore. They are not constrained by governmental guidelines, political considerations, legislation or a fixed budget (Dees, 2007). This is supported by the positive theory of social entrepreneurship (PTSE), which highlights that social entrepreneurs address issues that governments do not have the resources to tackle and that profit-driven businesses have no interest in (Kline, Shah and Rubright, 2014). The PTSE emphasises that social entrepreneurs address 'neglected positive externalities', which are positive impacts that could be created by a business beyond profit but are ignored because governments have multiple roles and limited resources (Santos, 2009). This concept can be applied to developing countries. However, Santos (2009) stressed the need to understand the motivation behind a firm's focus and whether or not the envisioned objective is more value creation (i.e. creating a strong general societal impact) or value capture (i.e. setting aside a good portion of the created value to make a profit). Understanding the applicability and extent of the PTSE to the emergence of social entrepreneurs in different contexts would be valuable.

Social entrepreneurs have a powerful vision that leads to the creation of innovative firms and supports new entrepreneurial activity. Their efforts can influence people's livelihoods globally, as seen in the successful method established by Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which is now used in over 50 countries, including the US, France and Norway, to name a few (Jain, 2009). Social entrepreneurs act as 'building blocks' towards their community's progress. However, many social entrepreneurs and tourism enterprises are often already

active in a destination but not recognised as such, instead being seen as community leaders, ambassadors or volunteers (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017).

Demarco (2005, p48) similarly points out that 'social entrepreneur' is 'just a new term for those generous individuals who have always existed and who are motivated to make the world better'. This is particularly relevant to tourism because many destination stakeholders exhibit socially entrepreneurial traits. These individuals, however, may not have been classified as social entrepreneurs or may not even wish to classify themselves as such. They may identify as primarily socially motivated and may not like the term 'entrepreneur', which implies a more business-focused approach. However, this results in them working in isolation. Consequently, this would mean they are not aware of and cannot access all the support networks and mechanisms in the domain of social entrepreneurship that could be valuable to their development and success.

Entrepreneurs need both the desire to differentiate themselves from other members of society and the basic psychological need to belong to a group (Brändle et al., 2018; Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). They are regarded as agents of change who can transform societies and the issues within them, target unjust and unsustainable systems and convert them into entirely new sustainable ones (Rahdari, Sepasi and Moradi, 2016). Social entrepreneurs must have an entrepreneurial mindset and balance SEs' dual mission. In addition, they possess innovative capabilities to combine existing resources or construct new ones creatively. To achieve resource sustainability, social entrepreneurs must acquire both non-financial and financial resources (Tepthong, 2014). Non-financial resources such as volunteers, knowledge and networks are essential for creating value and building local credibility, support and awareness of their objectives. Meanwhile, financial resources are acquired from individuals, governments, foundations and the sale of products or services. Mainly, however, it is crucial for social entrepreneurs to prioritise the sales of products and services and not rely solely on donations or grants, as non-profit organisations do.

4.1.1 Distinction between social entrepreneurs and commercial entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs pursue unique opportunities as they are influenced by social and institutional structures rooted in the market of the social sector. Whilst they share many entrepreneurial attributes with commercial entrepreneurs (Canestrino et al., 2020), social entrepreneurs prioritise collective interests over economic gain and exhibit high levels of empathy and sound moral judgment. Although they may have similar motives, the aspects that drive them to act socially differ. Social entrepreneurial behaviour involves identifying, evaluating and taking advantage of opportunities to address society's basic needs (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018).

Becoming a social entrepreneur is a process that revolves around motivations and life experiences. Dionisio (2018) found key motivations in starting SEs based on personal experiences, the relationship of social entrepreneurs with their community and social networks and the existence of social problems that need solving. These problems can stem from institutional gaps or a personal desire to improve social conditions. However, it is important to consider that motivations change throughout one's life (Mottiar, 2016). A primary concern is how social entrepreneurs identify problems. Zahra et al. (2009) and Levie and Hart (2011) found that problem identification often takes place in individuals' local areas, whilst Mottiar (2016) discovered that problem identification can also occur at the government level. Identifying the problem is followed by developing a response to address the issue locally. It would be intriguing to understand if social entrepreneurs intend to address issues in their local area or at a national level and how their intent changes over time.

Researchers have long debated the differences between commercial and social entrepreneurs' motivations, opportunities and outcomes (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Academics (Ghalwash, Tolba and Ismail, 2016; Grassl, 2012; Jackson, Nicoll and Roy, 2018; Jilinskaya-Pandey and Wade, 2019; Martin and Thompson, 2010;

Omorede, 2014; Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015) have looked into motivating factors behind commercial and social entrepreneurship. Commercial entrepreneurs are generally motivated by economic factors and areas, such as the need for achievement, lifestyle and financial independence (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019). In contrast, social entrepreneurs are driven by ideological motivations and view their income as a means to achieve a social goal, often receiving limited compensation. Social entrepreneurs usually work with restricted compensation, promoting self-transcendence and openness to change values (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019; Stephan and Drencheva, 2017). The ideological drive behind social entrepreneurship is a defining characteristic (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010), and it is often viewed as a more meaningful alternative to traditional careers. This aligns with the existential theory in occupational psychology (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019; Malach-Pines and Yafe-Yanai, 2001), which suggests that a search for meaning pushes career choice. Barendsen and Gardner (2004) also found that the desire to perform meaningful acts and heal and resolve challenging life experiences motivates social entrepreneurs more than it does traditional entrepreneurs.

Ridley-Duff and Bull (2015) note that social and traditional entrepreneurs share traits such as risk taking, innovation, opportunity recognition and resource management, despite their differences. Jackson, Nicoll and Roy (2018) also found that social entrepreneurs exhibit high risk-taking and achievement-oriented behaviours similar to traditional entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, the paths they take to achieve their goals are different. Social entrepreneurs score higher than traditional entrepreneurs in entrepreneurial characteristics (such as seeking a challenge and being creative and optimistic) and lower in managerial characteristics (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019). In a dynamic and ambiguous environment, social entrepreneurs confront numerous challenges whilst inspiring individuals to invest in their SE. Therefore, holding entrepreneurial characteristics such as energy, optimism, creativity and imagination is beneficial for social entrepreneurs.

Murphy and Coombes (2009, cited in Ghalwash et al., 2016) found that whilst social entrepreneurs highlight their value to society, traditional entrepreneurs' prime objective is maximising their stakeholders' economic value. Agreeableness is a prosocial tendency towards others, including traits such as compassion, trust and humility. Furthermore, agreeableness was found to have a positive correlation with all five components of social entrepreneurship in Nga and Shamuganathan's (2010) study and a negative correlation with achievement and business innovation aspects (Leutner et al., 2014). Considering social entrepreneurs' prosocial personalities, as Saebi, Foss and Linder (2019) put forward, this could indicate a difference in values they hold compared to commercial entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurship contradicts the traditional business values and model that businesses should bring profits and maximise stakeholders' economic value as their primary goal.

Social entrepreneurs prioritise altruism over commercial gain and emphasise self-transcendence rather than self-enhancement goals (Jackson, Nicoll and Roy, 2018). Benevolence values and ethical motives are what guide social entrepreneurs (Bacq, Hartog and Hoogendoorn, 2014; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2011). Research by Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz (2019) also reveals that social entrepreneurs are more committed to their careers than business entrepreneurs. This corresponds with Sharir and Lerner's (2006) discovery that dedication is key to an SE's success. Social entrepreneurs must be adept at developing innovative hybrid social-business strategies and products. This double challenge would demand being bold and willing to experiment with new approaches and strategies and the extraversion to build the social capital and trust that act as a foundation for social organisations (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019).

4.2 Individual-level factors

4.2.1 Intention

Academics have studied the entrepreneurial process for years to understand why some individuals become entrepreneurs whilst others don't (Hueso, Jaén and Liñán, 2021; Zahra, Wright and Abdelgawad, 2014). Like any other business creation process, the SE process involves discovering, evaluating and exploiting new opportunities (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). The process begins with a perceived social opportunity, and whether or not the business is established depends on how appealing the opportunity is (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria, 2017). Shepherd and Haynie (2009) further explain that opportunity evaluation is a future-oriented cognitive process considering the potential outcomes of exploiting an opportunity. For example, Le, Nguyen and Tran (2020) suggested that given the same level of prosocial behaviour, an increase or decrease in opportunity evaluation leads to an increased or decreased effect of prosocial behaviour on social EI.

Entrepreneurial intention is an important driver in foreseeing new venture creation behaviours (Kautonen, Van Gelderen and Fink, 2015). It is well established that intention is the primary predictor of behaviour, including entrepreneurial behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Davidsson, 1995; Krueger, 2000; Linan et al., 2011; Shepherd and Krueger, 2002; Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016). Entrepreneurial intentions generally refer to the desire to establish a business (Krueger, 2017). Although social entrepreneurs, like commercial entrepreneurs, are driven by social intentions, they are pushed by different motives. Are entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs made, or are they born? Intentions and the intention formation process have been studied in entrepreneurship literature, and the link between intentions and behaviour is well established in social psychology. Intentions reflect motivational factors that ultimately shape behaviour, making them a dominant predictor, especially in planned and goal-oriented behaviour (Mair and Noboa, 2003).

The EI theory was developed by Krueger Jr, Reilly and Carsrud (2000), and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is the most recognised framework in studying EI. The TPB predicts a person's intention to act in a specific way (Ajzen, 2011). According to Yang et al. (2015), it is still one of the key models used when looking at antecedents behind SE intention. Intent-based theories, such as the TPB (Ajzen, 2011) and the entrepreneurial event model (Shapero and Sokol, 1982), have previously been used to explain the formation of EIs and behaviours (Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud, 2000). These theories have also been applied in the context of social entrepreneurship (Mair and Noboa, 2006). Intentions motivate individuals to pursue a specific path and are considered a direct predictor of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 2011; Dickel and Eckardt, 2021).

Whilst the TPB helps explain deliberate actions like SE intention, it overlooks aspects such as Schwartz's openness to change and self-enhancement values that could play a role in social entrepreneurship (Gorgievski et al., 2018). Schwartz's values relate to core personality tendencies, whilst the TPB is based on cognitive processes (Gorgievski et al., 2018; Schwartz, 2003). Environmental factors such as social and cultural influences also affect individuals' business entrepreneurship intentions (Begley, Tan and Schoch, 2005). However, to what extent these specific influences apply to social entrepreneurship is less known.

Intentions are regarded as the best predictor of behaviour as it refers to an individual's efforts to execute something (Ajzen, 2011; Van Gelderen et al., 2018). They are shaped by various motivational aspects (Ajzen, 2011). In general, life decisions are guided by one's values, which serve as guiding principles (Schwartz, 1992). Sastre-Castillo, Peris-Ortiz and Valle (2015) also propose that an individual's values can contribute to their social entrepreneurship intentions. Personal values play a crucial role in the entrepreneurial decision-making process. Moral recognition, for example, refers to being aware of moral and/or ethical implications (Pizarro, 2000). This is driven by the ethical decision-making process (Mencl and May, 2009). Thus, to understand EI formation, elements considered

include entrepreneurial identity and personal values (Hueso, Jaén and Liñán, 2021). Relatedly, Gorgievski, Ascalon and Stephan (2011) suggested that the criteria for defining success in entrepreneurial endeavours are connected to prioritised personal values. Therefore, it is suggested that by examining which personal values relate to the formation of SE intention, the SE's tenacity could be improved (Holland and Shepherd, 2013; Kruse, Wach and Wegge, 2021).

4.2.1.1 Social entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial career choices are influenced by personal and situational factors (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019). Like EIs, social EIs relate to the intent to establish a business but with an added desire to alleviate social issues through entrepreneurial methods. Motives specific to social entrepreneurs were outlined as a) personal rehabilitation; b) a search for solutions to individual distress; and c) the fulfilment of obligations to the community by addressing social issues (Sharir and Lerner, 2006).

Individuals' perceptions of what is feasible and desirable vary (Begley and Tan, 2001; Krueger Jr, Reilly and Carsrud, 2000; Mair and Noboa, 2003). Mair and Noboa (2006) applied intent-based models to social entrepreneurship and proposed that SE intentions are based on the perceived desirability and feasibility of starting a social venture. This is further influenced by empathy, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social support (Mair and Noboa, 2006). The attractiveness of starting a business is referred to as perceived desirability, whilst one's belief in their ability to start a business is called perceived feasibility. Perceived feasibility is measured by the chance of success, whilst perceived desirability is measured by the perceived social impact. Cultural and social surroundings have a significant impact on an individual's perceptions. Moreover, Mair and Noboa's (2003) model of social entrepreneurship intentions showed that social entrepreneurs' empathy, which consists of emotional and cognitive qualities, is the key feature that positively influences their perceived desirability of social entrepreneurship. These

perceptions of feasibility and desirability are the key factors that affect social EIs and lead to the creation of new business ventures (Mair and Noboa, 2003).

Another perspective is that the SE concept, which emphasises efficient and profitable business models, can conflict with its social purpose (Zahra et al., 2009). Therefore, by trying to conduct a business as a business (which SEs are, partially), the SE concept is at risk of the social entrepreneur shifting focus from their original intention or mission towards making a profit – or mission drift. Nonetheless, SEs must be financially self-sufficient while actively contributing to society. This means that the enterprise's financial success is connected to its ability to create positive social change. This potentially helps minimise the risk of mission drift, particularly when profits need to be redistributed to the social or environmental cause. There is potential for studies to explore SE behaviour and intentions that examine the links between situational antecedents and stable individual traits with the other, softer variables (Mair and Noboa, 2003). This includes examining how social entrepreneurs exploit social opportunities, whether they rely on intuition and the connections between opportunity recognition and intentions. Understanding these processes in the social sector can provide richer insights into entrepreneurship.

4.2.2 Motivation

Entrepreneurial motivation has been examined from psychological, sociological and economic perspectives (Chernbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood, 2021). It is widely understood that individual traits and characteristics are fundamental in one's decision to engage in entrepreneurship (Shane et al., 2003). However, it is important to note that these traits alone do not fully explain entrepreneurial motivation. Other crucial factors contributing to motivation include emotions, intentions and past experiences. Batson and Shaw (1991) identified emotions as a key factor, whilst Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud (2000) found that intentions also play a role in motivation. Furthermore, Delmar and Wiklund (2008) emphasised that past experiences can significantly shape one's motivation.

Each individual's reasons for being an entrepreneur can differ. However, generally, they will be a blend of economic goals (such as making money or increasing personal income), social goals (like building relationships and contributing to society) and self-development goals (such as gaining intellectual and spiritual fulfilment) (Bacq, Hartog and Hoogendoorn, 2014). In economics, it is proposed that entrepreneurs are rational individuals who pursue entrepreneurship solely for economic intentions, i.e. to make a profit (Gilad and Levine, 1986; Kirzner, 1997). Whilst commercial/traditional entrepreneurship, as previously mentioned, is primarily driven by economic motivations, it can also stem from a need for personal achievement, independence or desired lifestyle, to name a few. Like other entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are driven by challenges and new opportunities (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019; Dacin, Dacin and Matear, 2010; Dees, 1998). Within sociology, it has been recognised that aspects such as cultural context, family, background and social status play a key part in entrepreneurial motivation (Chernbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood, 2021). Because of these differences in perspectives, there is no clear consensus on what motivates entrepreneurs to pursue their ventures.

The motivation behind starting a new business is often studied using the push–pull approach. Similar to the drive and incentive theories, the push–pull theory was proposed by Gilad and Levine (1986, cited in Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld, 2005) and offers a good explanation of entrepreneurship motivation. Drive theories fall under the push approach, whilst incentive theories fall under the pull approach (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011). The push factor for entrepreneurship includes economic reasons, such as a lack of employment, and non-economic reasons, such as dissatisfaction with a previous job. This type of entrepreneurship is often called necessity entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2002). Conversely, the pull factor comprises an economic motive, such as a business opportunity that could lead to higher earnings, and a non-economic motive, such as the desire for independence (Reynolds et al., 2002). The creation of businesses driven by pull factors is associated with opportunity-driven entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs are mission-driven individuals whose motivations also fall under push and pull factors. Both push and pull factors are associated with Martin and Osberg's (2007) vision of SEs: identifying injustice and an opportunity to correct it and acting upon it to improve the well-being of society. Nevertheless, Yitshaki and Kropp (2011) mentioned that the path towards these factors differs for each individual. Pull factors are associated with individuals who desire to correct an injustice and seek self-fulfilment. On the other hand, push factors are associated with those who experience job dissatisfaction and feel demotivated by what they are doing. In other words, they are pushed towards entrepreneurship by negative external factors. Nevertheless, research suggests that pull factors are more significant for entrepreneurial motivation (Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld, 2005).

Engaging with SEs might lead to self-fulfilment, as they usually involve long-term visionary projects with a deep meaning instead of breakthrough projects. Yet, some empirical evidence shows that social entrepreneurs may also be motivated by traditional entrepreneurship opportunities such as autonomy, personal enjoyment, fame and recognition (Stirzaker et al., 2021). This insinuates that social entrepreneurship can also be pushed by traditional entrepreneurship opportunism and perhaps that the entrepreneurial intent behind it may not necessarily come from altruistic feelings and drivers. It's worth mentioning that a social entrepreneur's emotional connection to a social issue or community they're trying to help can sometimes hinder their ability to make strategic decisions for their venture (Ruskin, Seymour and Webster, 2016). However, emotions can also increase their engagement and commitment to the work (Renko, 2012).

Traditional rational and self-oriented justifications regarding business founders' motivations are insufficient in explaining engagement in SEs as these are likely to come with high uncertainty, risk and challenges (Carsrud and Brännback, 2011; Miller et al., 2012). Social entrepreneurs have a clear social motive, such as collectivism and altruism, to improve others' well-being (Bargsted et al., 2013).

Social entrepreneurs are more conscious of opportunities to create change due to their traditions and beliefs. Witnessing differences in growth between their society and others and the deficiency in the social context contributes to their desire to start an SE (Omorede, 2014). They are stimulated by different factors and approach opportunities differently than traditional entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs may have actively searched for opportunities or stumbled upon them by chance. It's important to recognise that social entrepreneurs' definition of 'opportunity' may vary. Regardless, they are motivated by a desire to change society, discontent with the status quo, exposure to triggering events, altruistic feelings and an ambition to be socially responsible (Mair and Noboa, 2003).

Socially driven motivations are an important part of social value creation. Social value creation is a crucial element of social entrepreneurship, driven by a strong desire to accomplish long-term, meaningful projects and actions. Social entrepreneurs aspire to live purposefully and invest their time in tackling challenges (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004; Levie and Hart, 2011). It was also found that the aspiration towards meaningful action motivates social entrepreneurs more than traditional entrepreneurs (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004; Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019). This is because of social entrepreneurs' desire to resolve challenging life experiences they may have been exposed to. This personal connection to their work translates into heightened dedication and perseverance, rendering them less inclined to switch career paths in the future (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019; Malach-Pines and Yafe-Yanai, 2001). According to existential theory, social entrepreneurs perceive their work as significant and affirming to their existence (Malach-Pines and Yafe-Yanai, 2001), making it a highly rewarding career option.

4.2.3 Identity

Insights from social identity and role identity theories can help understand entrepreneurial behaviour. Social identity theory, originating from social psychology

literature, offers extended insights associated with major phenomena in entrepreneurship, including social, sustainable and cultural entrepreneurship (Gruber and Macmillan, 2017). Identity perspectives offer prospects of moving beyond traditional views of economic rationality when trying to understand entrepreneurial behaviour. An individual's identity is undoubtedly linked to their values, feelings and beliefs, and they typically act in ways consistent with the meanings inherent in their identity. Entrepreneurial behaviours are contemplated as identity-relevant (Gruber and Macmillan, 2017). By examining an individual's identity, including their values, feelings and beliefs, we can better understand entrepreneurial behaviours and the actions they take when creating new firms.

Individuals engage in entrepreneurial activity for various reasons, leading to different entrepreneurial identities (Alsos et al., 2016; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013). Social identity is indeed significant in understanding individuals' beliefs and actions (Hogg and Terry, 2014; Sieger et al., 2016; Terry, Hogg and McKimmie, 2000). Additionally, studies on social identity show that differences in self-categorisation cause entrepreneurs to have varying levels of 'other-orientation', meaning their willingness and desire to act for the benefit of others (Pan, Gruber and Binder, 2019).

Moreover, Alsos et al. (2016) expanded on Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) three primary types of entrepreneurial social identities: Darwinian, communitarian and missionary. This typology is based on three identity dimensions: basic social motivation, the basis of self-evaluation and the frame of reference. The study focused on the social identities of entrepreneurs and the ways in which these identities influence the establishment of new firms. Similarly, Brändle et al. (2018) indicated that understanding the social identities of followers is crucial, given that start-ups are highly shaped by the founders' characteristics and visions.

Identity perspectives offer prospects of moving beyond traditional views of economic rationality when trying to understand entrepreneurial behaviour. The three types of identities (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011) reflect the social relationships of the founders in terms of personal and symbolic interaction with others, as well as the level of social inclusiveness. An individual's identity acts as a cognitive frame for understanding experiences and behaviour; therefore, identity explains entrepreneurial behaviours (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). By leveraging insights from social identity and role identity theories, we can better understand entrepreneurial behaviour and its underlying motivations. Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) identities are as follows:

a) The Darwinian identity defines the 'classic entrepreneur', whose main goal is to create a successful business. For them, their industry, the markets they serve and the greater social cause mean little or nothing. Therefore, to Darwinians, when greater profits and better chances of success are seen, they are likely to engage in new ventures – even wholly new business areas.

b) The communitarian identity defines those highly motivated by a hobby or an interest that drives them to establish a business to support like-minded people. Communitarians must create an authentic identity to be fully part of the social group. For them, changing industries or starting new businesses does not make sense; they prefer to innovate new ways to serve the same group.

c) The missionary identity defines those motivated to start a firm to advance a greater cause. Acting responsibly is one of their main focuses, and success is achieved by advancing the social cause. In this sense, their motivation links well with that of social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial identity (Bacq and Janssen, 2011). Those with a social entrepreneurial identity desire to differentiate themselves from profit-motivated identities, such as Darwinians. Consequently, the missionary identity focuses on not only defining who they are but also who they are not. The Darwinians and

missionaries are similar in terms of aims and pre-defined objectives, even though their objectives are completely different.

In relation to Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) work, Darwinians have the smallest degree of self-categorisation and lean towards helping themselves; communitarians have a larger degree of self-categorisation and are likely to lean towards helping those they personally know / the community; and missionaries have the largest degree of self-categorisation and lean towards helping unknown others (Pan, Gruber and Binder, 2019). Longitudinal studies can investigate potential changes in the founder's identity when engaging in multiple ventures over time or how founders may change their identities once they achieve their aspirations (e.g. Darwinian founders who become wealthy through entrepreneurship and then search for new meaning in life, such as helping others by creating a charity). This however, relates to mission drift, which was spoken about earlier.

4.2.4 Background characteristics

Mair and Noboa (2003) highlighted how background can help explain social entrepreneurs' loyalty to their values and beliefs, which is linked to enhanced moral judgement – a key factor in the decision-making process to become a social entrepreneur. Research on the background of social entrepreneurs is limited (Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019; Van Ryzin et al., 2009), but specific backgrounds and exposure to some experiences may push individuals to want to address others' needs. Research has shown that people's backgrounds, including their social, moral and educational experiences, can trigger them to pursue social entrepreneurship (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Additionally, studies have demonstrated that individuals tend to feel more connected and empathetic towards those who share similar traits, such as the same hometown or community as themselves (Tucker and Croom, 2021). This particularly relates to social entrepreneurs who establish SEs in their neighbourhoods or for their own communities. Often, social

entrepreneurs have been involved with social issues from an early age, either through family or volunteering. Cohen and Katz (2016) establish that leadership training and experiences from youth acts can empower individuals to view social entrepreneurship as a self-healing journey to address past issues. Previous experience in entrepreneurship can also influence the decision to establish SEs.

Research shows that people from minority ethnic, religious or cultural groups, and those with low to medium socioeconomic status, are more likely to become social entrepreneurs (Bornstein, 2007; Cohen, Kaspi-Baruch and Katz, 2019). In the US, the social entrepreneur is typically a young urban women of colour, highly educated and from low/medium socioeconomic status (Van Ryzin et al., 2009). For example, Levie and Hart (2011) looked at background characteristics in the UK and found social entrepreneurs to be younger and more highly educated than their commercial entrepreneurs. In terms of competencies, social identity and ideological education are essential for social entrepreneurs (Smith and Woodworth, 2012). These factors considerably influence their commitment to personal beliefs and values, promoting moral judgement, which is a key determinant in the decision-making process of becoming a social entrepreneur.

4.2.5 Empathy and compassion

The concept of empathy is complex and consists of various interconnected constructs (Kim and Kou, 2014). It is defined by Hockerts (2017, p108) as 'an individual's ability to imagine what feelings another person has [cognitive empathy or perspective taking] or a tendency to respond to another being's mental state emotionally or compassionately (emotional empathy or empathic concern)'. Studies (Hockerts, 2017; Mair and Noboa, 2006; Short, Moss and Lumpkin, 2009) have attempted to examine empathy's role in social entrepreneurship. Empathy is recognised as one of the three factors that contribute to intention, as per Ajzen's (1985) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Hence, aligning with this, researchers

have explored the causal relationship between empathy and social EI (Hockerts, 2017).

Empathy is a psychological concept studied in many disciplines, particularly in social psychology (Sharifi-Tehrani, Seyfi and Zaman, 2022). It refers to the ability to understand and respond to the emotions, values and behaviours of others (Pearce, 2012). Toledano (2020, p117) thinks of empathy as a natural characteristic of social entrepreneurs and reasons how social entrepreneurs are 'ethical individuals in terms of their integrity, compassion, empathy and honesty'. Definitions of empathy vary, but most notably, it has been divided into two primary dimensions: affective and cognitive (Kim and Kou, 2014). The cognitive aspect refers to perspectives and the ability to sense people's emotions and behaviours (Le, Nguyen and Tran, 2020).

Conversely, empathic concern, associated with affective empathy, is aligned with the context of social entrepreneurship (Niezink et al., 2012). It is defined as 'an emotional response of compassion and concern caused by witnessing someone else in need' (Niezink et al., 2012, p544). Empathic concern stimulates altruistically motivated behaviour as people who feel this emotion are likely to act to help reduce the distress of others. Hence, empathic concern involves 'other-oriented' feelings and leads to prosocial moral actions being taken. Empathic concern is most studied in relation to volunteering or charitable giving (Kim and Kou, 2014). These other-oriented emotions may involve pity, sadness, compassion, warmth, soft-heartedness and sympathy (Padilla-Walker, Nielson and Day, 2016). Both cognitive and emotional empathy have been shown to motivate prosocial behaviour (Mestre et al., 2019). Cognitive empathy (perspective taking) aids in understanding others' needs, whilst emotional empathy (empathic concern) allows them to react to their concern for the prosperity of others, both resulting in altruistic actions (Nguyen, Tran and Chylinski, 2020).

Compassion is another powerful other-oriented emotion that can drive prosocial behaviour. Some scholars believe compassion is a key motivator for social entrepreneurship (Dees, 2007; Miller et al., 2012). So how can compassion be accountable for motivating social entrepreneurship? Compassion is considered other-oriented because this emotion allows individuals to shift their focus from self-interest to concern for others and their pain, creating a desire to help those in need. This is similar to prosocial motivation, described as the desire to want to put effort into helping others (Grant, Dutton and Rosso, 2008).

Compassion is guided by an emotional connection that connects a person to a distressed community (Goetz, Keltner and Simon-Thomas, 2010). Being compassionate brings intrinsic satisfaction and can be a source of personal utility, helping reinforce the individuals' compassionate efforts, actions and activities (Miller et al., 2012). By being compassionate, individuals may receive positive feelings in return. Through taking action to help others, social entrepreneurs can create a positive shared identity with the communities they serve, receiving positive feedback, emotional energy and enthusiasm. Therefore, compassion is a prosocial and emotional motivator of social entrepreneurship (Dees, 1998; De Dreu, Weingart and Kwon, 2000). Overall, empathic concern and compassion are powerful motivators for prosocial behaviour, creating sensitivity to the needs and discomfort of others, which can inspire individuals to take action (Decety and Jackson, 2006; Miller et al., 2012).

4.2.6 Prosocial tendencies

The individualism–collectivism scale is a prominent approach to analysing societies, as it represents cultural patterns, including values, norms, behaviours and attitudes (Singelis et al., 1995). These aspects express the social relationships amongst people in a specific culture. For the past 50 years, researchers have been trying to understand the factors that motivate people to act prosocially (Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2019). Prosocial actions can be motivated by both expected altruism and selfishness (Dovidio et al., 2017; Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2015).

Prosocial behaviours can result from empathy, compassion, the desire to help others, personal fulfilment or religious, moral or civic duties (Vieweg, 2018). Prosocial actions require generalised trust (or trust in strangers), which can be lacking in collectivist societies (Irwin, 2009). In individualistic cultures, individuals may act prosocially for self-serving purposes that align with their personal goals, whilst in collectivist cultures, the behaviour is more group oriented. Prosocial behaviour can be seen as individualistic because individuals can choose when, where and how much to give.

However, it is reasoned that prosocial behaviours encourage collectivism in organisations, and collectivism further stimulates additional prosocial behaviours (Clarkson, 2014). In collectivist societies, strangers also exhibit prosocial behaviours, manifesting as voluntary actions such as donating, volunteering and helping strangers. Certain behaviours and actions are considered prosocial; however, Luria, Cnaan and Boehm (2015) relayed that they are individual voluntary actions based on three main dimensions: donating, volunteering and helping strangers. Religious beliefs have been found to enhance prosocial behaviours, with religious individuals being more likely to engage in voluntary work within and beyond their places of worship, donate more and help those in need compared to non-believers and non-attenders (Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2019). Prosocial behaviour can also be seen as actions that benefit others (Kjeldsen and Andersen, 2013; Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers, 2016) exhibited in day-to-day behaviours and activities, including charitable donations and community service (Meier, 2007).

Social entrepreneurship is a unique form of prosocial behaviour (Bargsted et al., 2013). Social entrepreneurs exhibit prosocial behaviour as they have a career that prioritises making positive changes to society and the world based on people's needs. Studies suggest that altruistic values, such as universalism and empathy, play a significant role in driving behaviour towards solving societal issues (Dees, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009) and influencing different areas of sustainable entrepreneurship (Vuorio, Puumalainen and Fellnhofer, 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurship involves integrating three types of values: social, environmental and economic (Dean and McMullen, 2007). These altruistic values are linked with a

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more favourable outlook towards the environment (Hockerts, 2015). Additionally, possessing altruistic values can increase the probability of recognising opportunities in sustainable development (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011) and having EIs through the development of altruistic motivations in social entrepreneurship (Mair and Noboa, 2006). Similarly, it has been suggested that prosocial motivation plays a part in identifying and assessing entrepreneurial opportunities linked to societal and environmental problems (Shepherd, 2015).

4.2.7 Leadership characteristics

As a hybrid business model, SEs often face tasks requiring them to negotiate tensions between the social and commercial worlds. Effective leadership is crucial in managing these tensions (Jackson, Nicoll and Roy, 2018), and successful SEs require a specific type of leader (Bacq and Eddleston, 2018; Dees, 2007). The leadership capabilities of social entrepreneurs are critical, given the complexity of establishing an SE and the risks associated with a new hybrid venture. Effective leaders would be better able to handle the risks associated with social ventures and enhance the performance of their firms (Kimakwa, Gonzalez and Kaynak, 2021). Social entrepreneurs must be skilled social leaders who can communicate effectively with stakeholders, including policymakers, volunteers and the target population (Leadbeater, 2001; Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). Leadership is crucial in connecting socially responsible actions with outcomes (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018) yet is often overlooked as a success factor in the literature. In reality, the quality of local leadership is a key determinant of local development success (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng, 2014). Social entrepreneurship has been regarded as catalytic leadership that can influence social change (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018).

Social entrepreneurs exhibit transformational leadership qualities (Choudhary, Akhtar and Zaheer, 2013) and focus on social and economic value creation, best explained by servant leadership (Kimakwa, Gonzalez and Kaynak, 2021). Servant

leadership is based on moral and ethical values (Hoch et al., 2018), aligning with the objectives of social ventures. It emphasises prosocial motivation and psychological capital, essential for achieving successful outcomes. Additionally, this leadership style prioritises stakeholder concerns and empowers leaders to consider the interests of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, there is a link with social entrepreneurship regarding focus and conceptualisation, compassion and morality and change management (Kimakwa, Gonzalez and Kaynak, 2021). Social entrepreneurs often establish their businesses with a sense of obligation towards others, whilst servant leaders are known for their selflessness and moral character. Servant leaders are typically characterised by compassion, altruism, self-sacrifice and morals (Barbuto Jr and Wheeler, 2006; Yoshida et al., 2014). Hence, social entrepreneurs can also be considered servant leaders.

Generally, social entrepreneurs have a transformative approach to leadership, and there is potential alignment between the leader's values and those of the team in an SE, facilitating values-based leadership. A firm that considers aligning values within its culture could foster business development and sustainability (Nedelko and Brzozowski, 2017). Understanding leadership in SEs helps determine their capabilities to carry out important tasks they set out to do, such as filling institutional voids, and what they should do regarding leadership development to achieve their goals. In Europe, SEs are largely driven by collective leadership; in the US, they are led by individual efforts (Lee and Kelly, 2019). A culture's preferred leadership ideals may also influence an individual's decision to pursue social entrepreneurship (Lee and Kelly, 2019). Social entrepreneurship is viewed as prosocial leadership behaviour, which is when a social entrepreneur consistently prioritises social and humane goals over profitability or creates an innovative way towards 'blended value' (Emerson, Spitzer and Mulhair, 2006). In other words, social entrepreneurship may be influenced by leadership ideals that impact prosocial behaviour (Lee and Kelly, 2019).

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study proposed the six dimensions of leadership characteristics, according to the culturally endorsed leadership theory (CLT): a) charisma, b) team orientation, c) self-protection, d) participation, e) humane orientation and f) autonomy (House et al., 2002; Ute and Saurav, 2016; Lee and Kelly, 2019). These dimensions are considered suitable to describe leadership characteristics that could affect an individual's interest in social entrepreneurship (Coker, Flight and Valle, 2017). Culturally endorsed transformational leadership, categorised as being charismatic, team oriented and humane (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018), is relevant to social entrepreneurship, with charismatic leaders inspiring followers through their sense of mission, inspirational vision and value-based relationships. The CLT element most closely related to SEs is humane orientation, an altruistic element of CLT based on compassion (Lee and Kelly, 2019).

There are two facets to altruistic action (or action motivated by a deliberate intent to help others and not oneself) (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). On the one hand, there is self-directed entrepreneurial action, i.e. 'I'll direct my efforts towards helping others', and on the other hand, there is working under the direction of an institution with aims to create a public benefit, i.e. 'I'll help you to benefit others' (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). Another relevant element of CLT is the self-protective dimension that focuses on individual and group safety and security. Where the emphasis on self-protection in a nation is low, individuals may put others' interests over their own, which could translate to a drive towards social entrepreneurship. Humane-oriented and self-protective CLTs are considered country-level drivers of social entrepreneurship, whilst less self-protective leadership ideal offers a supportive culture for social entrepreneurship to flourish (Lee and Kelly, 2019). Similar to previous research on entrepreneurship that indicates a universal leadership model leads to entrepreneurship (Gupta, MacMillan and Surie, 2004), Lee and Kelly (2019) suggest that the implicit leadership context supports social entrepreneurs in engaging in prosocial leadership when launching an SE.

Cultural value creates expectations of cultural leadership ideals, and leaders adapt their behaviours accordingly (Lee and Kelly, 2019). This could also be viewed from a social entrepreneurship perspective regarding the fit and link between cultural leadership ideals and how they influence the likelihood of individuals engaging in social entrepreneurship (Lee and Kelly, 2019). It is suggested that individuals are more likely to become social entrepreneurs in societies where CLT dimensions align with social entrepreneurs' characteristics and support social entrepreneurship aims (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018). Culturally endorsed leadership traits (as informal institutions) greatly influence the development of social entrepreneurial activities in a society (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018). Muralidharan and Pathak's (2018) findings show strong effects of transformational CLT and sustainability on social entrepreneurship and low-sustainability societies, requiring strong transformational leadership for individuals to engage in social entrepreneurship.

4.3 Environmental-level factors

4.3.1 The role of institutional forces

The likelihood of pursuing social entrepreneurship is influenced by individual factors and contextual factors, such as institutional frameworks and socioeconomic development levels (Jilinskaya-Pandey and Wade, 2019). Contextual factors are particularly important because social entrepreneurship can take on different meanings depending on the context. Robinson (2006) expressed how SE opportunities are unique because social and institutional structures in a market/ community highly influence them. Institutional theory suggests that institutions are key determinants of economic behaviour (North, 1990, cited in Coker, Flight and Valle, 2017). Institutional theory can be applied to explain entrepreneurs' behaviours in forming new institutions or altering existing ones to overcome institutional voids in developing countries (Ebrashi and Darrag, 2017). Economists trust in the role of the institutional theory, which proposes that individuals' decision-making processes are greatly influenced by their social environment (Kruse et al., 2019). Although the decision to become a social entrepreneur is personal, it is still

rooted in the social context and can be influenced by social factors (Kruse, Wach and Wegge, 2021; Welter, 2011).

Institutions are social structures that enable or restrict human behaviour (Scott, 2005). Formal institutions refer to rules and incentives from government regulation, whilst informal institutions are more implicit and based on social and cultural understanding (Stephan, Uhlaner and Stride, 2015). Informal institutions impact how society cooperates and collaborates by shaping collective meanings and beliefs. The institutional theory has also suggested that religion, for example, is one of the most influential informal institutions (Friedland and Alford, 1991). Social entrepreneurs view voids in formal or informal market institutions as opportunities to restore or transform existing structures (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Mair and Martí, 2006). They are interested in addressing these voids as they could be the underlying causes of societal issues that require solutions (Mair and Martí, 2006; Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018). This contrasts with conventional entrepreneurs, who often see these voids as obstacles to their businesses. Therefore, the absence of institutions or institutional voids can trigger social entrepreneurs to take action and create positive change (Robinson, 2006).

In developed countries, the desire for wealth creation and autonomy are the principal pull factors that drive entrepreneurship, whilst in developing countries, push factors such as unemployment may push individuals towards entrepreneurship. An example of a push factor is the possibility of unemployment (Hessels, Van Gelderen and Thurik, 2008). Good economic conditions allow for opportunities (or pull entrepreneurship) rather than necessity-driven entrepreneurship (or push entrepreneurship). This creates opportunities for social entrepreneurship, allowing individuals to pursue careers that align with their values. Research suggests that individual-level factors are strongly associated with social entrepreneurship intentions in advanced economies (Kruse, Wach and Wegge, 2021). In contrast, social-level factors have a stronger influence in developing economies, which tend to be fairly collectivist (Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman, 2002).

Here, the opinions and decisions of others may play a larger role in personal decision-making processes compared to more individualistic economies (Hofstede, 1984).

Zahra et al.'s (2009) typology of social entrepreneurs (social bricoleurs, constructionists and engineers) emphasises their process of social problem identification. This problem identification is based on local challenges, market failures and/or systemic deficiencies the social entrepreneurs identify. Similarly, according to Baumol (1990, cited in Ostapenko, 2015), entrepreneurial activity can be productive, unproductive or destructive, depending on the institutional environment of the economy in question. Regional, national and local contexts form social and environmental challenges that are important for social entrepreneurs establishing their ventures (Jilinskaya-Pandey and Wade, 2019).

Kerlin (2010) identified that the different products and services that SEs offer differ by nation and region. There is an extensive range of non-profit activities in the US, whereas, in Zimbabwe and Zambia, there seems to be a narrower, niche effort, for example, on employment. Formal and informal institutions stimulate entrepreneurial potential and shape their actions. Additionally, the absence or presence of policies, rules and regulations directly influence entry barriers into social entrepreneurship (Jilinskaya-Pandey and Wade, 2019). These policies influence the risk and rewards of pursuing social entrepreneurship.

It was found that the average level of nascent SE activity is inversely related to the level of the economic development of a nation (Bosma et al., 2016). On the other hand, Wennekers et al. (2005) find that a nation's economic stage affects the degree to which people purposely choose an entrepreneurial career because they are attracted to independence and autonomy. The inability to find rewarding work could also push them into it. Strong welfare and social security policies seem to negatively impact the supply of entrepreneurs (Thurik, Wennekers and Uhlaner,

2002). Hence, suitable institutional environments push entrepreneurs' efforts to yield productive results.

Although the impact differs depending on the industry, Dacin, Dacin and Tracey (2011) have classified institutional barriers to growth as formal institutions (laws, regulations and taxes), informal barriers (corruption and competition), environmental context (insufficient finances) and skills barriers (personnel). Correspondingly, the social origins approach (Salamon et al., 2000; Salamon and Anheier, 1996) proposes that existing institutions influence the development of non-profit sectors in different countries (Gidron and Hasenfeld, 2012; Kerlin, 2013). The development of SEs is comparable to that of non-profit organisations, and SEs seem to utilise socioeconomic factors that offer the most strength based on the location (Puumalainen et al., 2015). The social origins theory is suited to explain social entrepreneurial activity in a nation (Altinay et al., 2012; Kerlin, 2013), which aligns with research linking national trends in entrepreneurship with government and society (Gidron and Hasenfeld, 2012; Kerlin, 2013). Given that, we can assume that institutions could shape or restrain SE structures and that the context in which social entrepreneurs operate clearly impacts their ability to exist and grow their businesses.

Lastly, Stephan and Uhlaner (2010) found that national-level predecessors that socially support cultural norms encourage cooperation, friendliness, supportiveness and helpfulness. They found that informal institutions can serve as a model of cooperative behaviour that can influence individuals to pursue social entrepreneurship, affecting new social entrepreneurs' supply and motivation. Social institutions and the culture they arose from offer an understanding of the area's economic activity in a context that directly and indirectly affects the supply and demand of the market social entrepreneurs would enter (Coker, Flight and Valle, 2017). Therefore, the level of economic development and institutional context can significantly affect the dynamics of entrepreneurship, which varies between nations in terms of entrepreneurial activity level.

4.3.2 Challenges faced by SEs

Understanding the challenges that social entrepreneurs face requires acknowledging the barriers to entry they encounter when establishing SEs. Despite recent attention, social entrepreneurship remains a rare phenomenon with distinct challenges that can hinder progress (Chell, 2007; Elkington and Hartigan, 2008; Leadbeater, 2001; Miller et al., 2012).

First, according to Tracey, Phillips and Jarvis (2011, p60), social entrepreneurship is quite complicated as it 'demands that entrepreneurs fuse together key elements of different logics that may have little in common and may even be in conflict'. This involves combining market-based organising, which focuses on creating economic value and promising direct monetary returns, with charity-based organising, which focuses on creating social value and promising indirect social returns to donors (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). Hence, social entrepreneurs face the typical risks of creating a new business with added risks associated with building new institutions to support it (Dacin, Dacin and Matear, 2010). Social entrepreneurship is considered by many as complex and challenging because it involves combining two conflicting organisational goals in contexts where even simple institutional infrastructures may not be non-existent (Miller et al., 2012).

Second, social entrepreneurship can be challenging due to the unique markets and contexts in which it operates (Mair and Martí, 2006). These ventures are often established in settings where institutional voids exist or where markets have failed, leading to barriers such as legal and regulatory frameworks, financial resources, market access and business support and development structures (Austin, Stevenson and Wei–Skillern, 2006; Dart, 2004; Davies, Haugh and Chambers, 2018; Mair and Martí, 2006). The OECD (2013) confirms that SEs are shaped by their locations' institutional and cultural contexts, each with unique social problems (Robinson, 2006). For example, some nations may face hygiene, water and

sanitation issues, whilst others may deal with sexism, violence and hunger. Social entrepreneurs may also face barriers to entry in the form of economic, social, institutional and cultural factors. According to Robinson (2016), barriers that may prevent SEs from fully benefiting from market opportunities include the economic (i.e. cost advantages for competition already in the market), social (i.e. poor access to existing networks), institutional (i.e. inability to adapt to existing norms) and cultural (i.e. inability to align with market attitudes and beliefs). Even in contexts where the infrastructure may not be as poor as others, social entrepreneurs still need to build institutions with appropriate stakeholders (i.e. educating the community involved, potential consumers and governmental agencies) (Kerlin, 2006; Miller et al., 2012).

Considering their dual mission, growth is expected to be more challenging for SEs than other businesses, as they focus on both societal impacts and raising commercial performance to sustain themselves financially and support the societal impact they aim to achieve (Hynes, 2009). Limited access to funding and being able to self-finance are recognised as the main obstacles for SEs in becoming sustainable (Tien et al., 2019). Social enterprises are usually financed by a blend of market resources (i.e. sales of goods and services), non-market resources (i.e. government grants and private contributions) and non-monetary resources (i.e. volunteer work) (OECD, 2013). To sustain their businesses, SEs may need to form partnerships and collaborations with public actors and state-supported networks to gain access to critical resources to sustain their businesses. This requires gradually gaining the community's trust and establishing credibility, which might take time for a new actor entering the market. In addition, collaborating and relying on public actors may be challenging or even ineffective depending on the context. Therefore, effective leadership skills are highly significant to this hybrid organisational form (Jackson, Nicoll and Roy, 2018).

Another important issue is the difficulty of measuring social entrepreneurship, especially in making international comparisons (OECD, 2013). Non-profits have long struggled to measure the social impact of their work, as it is not always easy

to quantify the contributions of a venture with a social purpose like SEs (Malunga, Mugobo and Iwu, 2014). Unlike commercial entrepreneurs, who can easily assess their success through tangible and quantifiable measures, social entrepreneurs often rely on more subjective measures. An appropriate social impact measurement method would bring transparency and credibility to the sector, demonstrate achieving the social mission, justify the business model and provide more support and financial access (Malunga, Mugobo and Iwu, 2014; Shahnaz and Ming, 2009). However, this would require stakeholder engagement and research and development. Nonetheless, Sawhill and Williamson (2001) emphasise that performance measures would not replace a good mission, uplifting vision, clear goals and innovative strategies. An integrated system of measures with strong strategic alignment is necessary for SEs to thrive.

4.3.3 The role of culture

A country's informal institutions are reflected through its culture, making it an essential aspect to consider. People are inevitably influenced by their specific culture (Hofstede and Peterson, 2000), which can explain why some individuals feel a stronger attachment to their society and surroundings than others. An important consideration is sustainability empathy or the extent to which people feel disconnected or connected to a specific set of culturally bound social norms (Font, Garay and Jones, 2016). Whilst past studies have explored the role of formal institutions' influence on sustainability frameworks, according to Song (2020), they have not sufficiently explored the role of informal institutions. Song (2020) suggests that informal institutions, including locally driven institutions, can be instrumental in creating sustainability frameworks. Informal institutions refer to unwritten social rules shared, communicated and enforced outside official channels. On the other hand, formal institutions refer to regulations and processes that are established, shared and implemented through commonly recognised official channels (Helmke and Levitsky, 2012).

As noted in previous research by Lee and Kelly (2019), cultural factors have been found to influence entrepreneurship worldwide. Many disciplines have previously examined the relationship between culture and entrepreneurship. Research has indicated the importance of cultural factors and background in shaping EIs (Baron and Henry, 2010; Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016). Comparably, studies have also shown the direct impact of culture on entrepreneurial orientation and behaviour amongst members of specific cultural communities (Hechavarría, 2015; Méndez-Picazo, Galindo-Martín and Castaño-Martínez, 2021).

Cultural values play a significant role in differentiating groups and influencing their responses to different environments (Kedmenec and Strašek, 2017). There are several well-known theories at the national cultural level (Hofstede, 2011; Singelis et al., 1995; Schwartz, 2011). In examining societal culture, researchers typically look at dimensions of individualism (IND), power distance (PD), uncertainty avoidance (UA), masculinity vs femininity and future orientation (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). These dimensions signify a scale on which society or organisations are situated. For instance, Hofstede found that IND and PD were the main dimensions that differentiated Thai and UK cultures. Hierarchical work patterns are common in societies with high PD and significant social power differences (Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2015). On the other hand, decentralised systems are more prevalent in low PD societies. Cultures with high PD, such as the Thai culture, tend to have low IND, whilst low PD cultures, such as the UK, tend to have high IND (Srikes, Louvieris and Collins, 2009).

The issue of self-conception in relation to others and authority is prevalent across all societies, and IND vs collectivism and high vs low PD are the most important aspects that can respond to it (White, 2005). Srikes, Louvieris and Collins (2009) find that Hofstede's PD and IND dimensions are valid across several studies. Studies generally agree that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and Hofstede's IND cultural dimensions; therefore, cultures that score high in IND tend to encourage entrepreneurship (Canestrino et al., 2020). Similarly, Puumalainen et al. (2015) found that earlier research on aggregate

psychological trait explanation and social legitimation theory shows entrepreneurship is facilitated in cultures high in IND and masculinity and low in UA and PD. However, the relationship between culture and entrepreneurship is indirect, and research on this topic has yielded mixed results (Frese, 2015).

Cultural differences are expected to influence individuals' entrepreneurial attitudes due to the recognised impact of national culture and economic environments on entrepreneurship (Fitzsimmons and Douglas, 2005). For instance, countries with lower income levels may have an attitude emphasising income when making career choices (Fitzsimmons and Douglas, 2005). Hence, the attitude to income would be positively and significantly associated with lower levels of prosperity. Moreover, national culture may affect rates of innovation, with high levels of IND and low PD being associated with high levels of innovation (Shane, 1993). The level of PD can also impact social entrepreneurship, including the acceptance of social inequality and willingness to embrace innovation (Kedmenec and Strašek, 2017).

Hofstede's work, however, has faced several criticisms, including a) inappropriate sampling, where the participants might inaccurately represent their societies and hold values different from those of the broader population (Maude, 2011); b) relying solely on four (later expanded to five) dimensions whilst neglecting other more significant ones; c) not accounting for gender and occupational differences amongst individuals; d) being out of date, as dimensions measured in the 1960s might have evolved significantly by now (Harada, 2017; Venaik and Brewer, 2008). Though it may be considered outdated, Hofstede highlighted that these dimensions mirror stable national differences as cultures evolve; however, they tend to move together in the same cultural direction (Kedmenec and Strašek, 2017). Therefore, cultural dimensions can be used to understand entrepreneurship and, potentially, social entrepreneurship.

The GLOBE study intended to expand Hofstede's study and test various hypotheses on leadership topics (Venaik and Brewer, 2008). Like Hofstede,

GLOBE researchers also categorised countries into clusters with similar cultural characteristics. With nine cultural dimensions, including performance orientation, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, PD, UA and humane orientation, GLOBE researchers categorised countries into clusters with similar cultural characteristics across both actual society practice ('as is') and values ('should be') in different cultural settings (Venaik and Brewer, 2008). GLOBE's leadership dimensions considered six leadership profiles that differentiate desirable leadership qualities, addressing the extent to which specific leader attributes and behaviours are universally endorsed as contributing to effective leadership, which is important in establishing and running an SE. These leadership qualities can be linked and cross-examined with entrepreneurs' or social entrepreneurs' characteristics and attributes. Although Hofstede's work is considered simpler, more intuitive and more widely known than the GLOBE study, both can be used as tools to understand culture's impact on entrepreneurship.

The link between cultural values and entrepreneurial activity is a complicated subject. An encouraging national culture will allow entrepreneurs to feel more socially valued and create good institutional settings (Jaén et al., 2017), driving more people to establish firms irrespective of their beliefs. Additionally, a national culture that exhibits pro-entrepreneurial values will not only lead to more individuals showing psychological traits and attitudes aligning with entrepreneurial activity (Fernández, Liñán and Santos, 2009; Gupta and Fernandez, 2009; Krueger, 2003; Krueger, Liñán and Nabi, 2013) but also encourage people to aim to become entrepreneurs. A good perception of entrepreneurship in a nation or society would ultimately lead to higher EIs (Fernández, Liñán and Santos, 2009).

4.3.3.1 Culture and social entrepreneurship

Research suggests that cultures encouraging entrepreneurship also positively impact the development of SEs (Elkington and Hartigan, 2008). Indeed, SEs are more likely to be established in countries with a more entrepreneurial culture. Two

key cultural aspects that most significantly influence SEs are the levels of in-group collectivism and UA (Kerlin, 2012). Collectivism, for instance, would support leveraging resources internally and externally through the creation of ties. Whilst collectivism is not necessarily motivated by altruistic intent, altruism may be its outcome (Bull and Ridley-Duff, 2019). Uncertainty avoidance reflects the extent to which people feel vulnerable and uncomfortable when put in ambiguous situations (Caputo, Evangelista and Russo, 2018). Low UA is likely associated with people being more prepared to take risks and face challenges, promoting entrepreneurial behaviours (Canestrino et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that low UA is positively associated with qualities commonly seen in entrepreneurship, such as locus of control and innovativeness (Hayton, George and Zahra, 2002; Mueller and Thomas, 2001).

It is proposed that nations with low PD have better access to various resources and entrepreneurial opportunities, resulting in more entrepreneurial initiatives and behaviours (Radziszewska, 2014). Conversely, PD and UA are negatively linked to entrepreneurial orientation (Canestrino et al., 2020). Power distance relates to how willing people are to accept unequal distribution of power within their society; therefore, cultures that score high in PD are likely to have a firm hierarchy at the social level, even without any enforcement, and low concern about society (Katz, Swanson and Nelson, 2001). In contrast, societies with low PD believe in equality.

It can be assumed that cultural values significantly impact the actions and behaviour of social entrepreneurs, and certain cultural values may promote social entrepreneurship. An example is Parboteeah, Cullen and Lim's (2004) study providing a link between IND/collectivism and volunteering in an organisation and charitable giving – which can be considered as holding similar values to those of social entrepreneurship (i.e. prosocial, altruism). Kemmelmeier, Jambor and Letner (2006) similarly found that IND positively relates to charitable giving and volunteerism. It might be expected that some societies with high IND score low on prosocial behaviours, considering that IND is based on self-interest. However,

there are some societies, such as the US, that score high in both IND and prosocial issues (Luria, Cnaan and Boehm, 2015).

Levie and Hart (2011) observed differences in how social entrepreneurs are perceived in different national contexts. Culture plays an important role in how societies understand social behaviour and can be particularly helpful in understanding the behaviour of social entrepreneurs in specific contexts, such as Thailand. Individual actions are largely influenced by cultural factors, and behaviour patterns tend to be in line with cultural norms (Jaén et al., 2017). Culturally different social entrepreneurs, for instance, will have different views on the future of social entrepreneurship and different strategies set in place (Ayoun and Moreo, 2008; Kedmenec and Strašek, 2017).

The culture of an entrepreneurial ecosystem includes the values, norms and knowledge shared amongst its participants (Roundy, 2017). When such an ecosystem promotes philanthropy, prosocial actions and altruistic behaviours, it can significantly increase the likelihood of individuals becoming social entrepreneurs or integrating social missions into their businesses. These core values underpin social entrepreneurship (Miller et al., 2012; Roundy, 2017). Furthermore, a culture that encourages entrepreneurial action and innovation and stresses social value creation will push social entrepreneurship activity, as it aligns with the motivations of social entrepreneurs (Roundy, 2017; Zahra et al., 2009). However, the cultural fabric of an entrepreneurial ecosystem can either support or impede social entrepreneurship, as it reflects on and influences entrepreneurs (Roundy, 2017).

4.3.4 The role of values

Values are studied in business ethics, executive decision making and corporate culture (Conger, 2012) and are described as 'standards that guide our behaviour and lead us to take a particular position on social issues and influence

others' (García-Álvarez and López-Sintas, 2001). Values are complex belief systems that are developed in early life, relatively stable and shaped by a person's life experiences (Conger, 2012; Meglino and Ravlin, 1998). As such, they are not easily controlled and go beyond temporary desires and attitudes that can be changed or denied when needed (Hemingway, 2005).

Personal values serve as guiding principles for what is right, wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, significantly impacting our beliefs, intentions, desires and self-concepts. They are connected to various aspects of our identity and dimensions of the self. For entrepreneurs, values are critical in shaping their motivational goals and behaviours (Conger, 2012). People generally act in ways that are coherent with their values, which shape attitudes and behaviours (Homer and Kahle, 1988; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). Personal values are important because individuals make decisions and develop their ambitions based on them (Hueso, Jaén and Liñán, 2021). Hence, personalities can also be explained as a system based on values.

Values are cognitive and deliberate determinants of goals, and their importance involves their power to influence goal setting and work as decision criteria in ambiguous situations (Gorgievski et al., 2018). They are powerful justifications behind human actions (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003). By understanding values, we can better comprehend motivations since values are a construct based on subjective beliefs tied to specific actions (Schwartz, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2009; Schwartz, 2011; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016). Personal values stay reasonably unchanged across individuals' lifespans and the situations they face (Schwartz, 1992). They are ranked by the relative importance that individuals place on them, and some values are more influential than others, guiding our daily decisions by steering intentions, choices, actions and behaviours (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003). Individuals act according to their values because they need consistency between their beliefs and actions. Hence, PVs are considered fundamental factors in the decision-making process (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003).

Schwartz's (1992) theory of basic human values is one of the most renowned frameworks in explaining PVs. Schwartz (2011) details that individual values stem from psychological and biological needs based on survival and social adaptation, whilst cultural values (which are at the societal level) originate from the functional imperatives that societies deal with for survival (Morales et al., 2019). Schwartz identifies ten basic human values dominant in all individuals, which can be clustered into four value dimensions: self-enhancement (power and achievement values); openness to change (stimulation and self-direction values); self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence); conservation (tradition, conformity and security); and hedonism, which belongs to both stimulation and achievement dimensions. These values are based on motivation and are considered universal and implicitly present in all cultures because they are grounded in one or more of the universal requirements of human existence. The values are connected, with some values sharing aspects of others. For instance, hedonism cannot simply be hedonism, as it shares commonalities with openness, self-enhancement, achievement and stimulation. Other opposing value dimensions include self-enhancement vs self-transcendence and openness to change vs conservation.

4.3.4.1 Values and social entrepreneurship

Whilst the social entrepreneurship literature acknowledges the importance of values to social entrepreneurs, there is a significant lack of in-depth discussion regarding how these values drive and motivate them (Conger, 2012). There are uncertainties in the values attributed to SEs, and how social entrepreneurs are motivated by values is less touched upon (Conger, 2012; Diochon and Anderson, 2011). Additionally, existing literature and data on social entrepreneurs' PVs are mostly limited to European and South American contexts (Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou and Maroudas, 2021).

Conger (2012) stated that values offer a way to recognise who will become a social entrepreneur and that individual PVs may influence opportunity recognition. They also play a crucial role in understanding how social entrepreneurs engage with and

maintain relationships with their networks. It is clear that deep personal purposes drive social entrepreneurship, and PVs act as a key influence that causes social entrepreneurs to prioritise specific goals (Mody et al., 2016). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the values of social entrepreneurs and their stakeholders to ensure the success of the SE.

Whilst entrepreneurs are typically seen as highly individualistic and independent, the culture and ethos of SEs are based on principles of voluntarism, ethical behaviour and a mission with a social cause (Diochon and Anderson, 2011). This creates a potential contradiction, as entrepreneurs may prioritise their self-interest over society's. However, studies suggest that commercial and social entrepreneurs are fundamentally different, yet both are still entrepreneurs. An important aspect to consider in an SE is the values that the social entrepreneur or leader employs. These values and motivations fundamentally shape practices and act as guiding principles that form the enterprise's identity and operation methods (Diochon and Anderson, 2011).

Schwartz finds that altruistic behaviour, for example, starts with social norms represented by attitudes and values that exist at a society's cultural or structural level (White, 2005). Individuals then adopt these social norms personally, which is then reflected in behaviour. Regarding Schwartz's theory, egalitarian values would positively influence social entrepreneurship (Jaén et al., 2017). This is explained by how most people take on a passive role in more hierarchical countries and accept the social order and economic state. Therefore, social entrepreneurship will be more acceptable in egalitarian societies. Where social inequality is assumed as almost expected and acceptable, the scope for social entrepreneurship is limited (Datta and Gailey, 2012). Relatedly, it has been found that liberal economies are favourable when establishing social businesses (Lepoutre et al., 2013).

The self-enhancement value dimension involves the drive to attain personal goals or gain power (Schwartz, 1992). Social entrepreneurs, for instance, have the dual

mission of generating revenue and accomplishing a social objective and are not bothered by receiving lower revenues if it means being able to create social value (Phillips and Tracey, 2007). This does not fit the core of the self-enhancement value dimension (Kruse et al., 2019). Moreover, those with high self-enhancement values would likely prefer to establish ventures with clear and quantifiable objectives, which SEs are not.

The openness to change value dimension, on the other hand, includes self-direction and stimulation. It involves being open and ready for new experiences and innovative actions. These are relevant to SE intention, as social entrepreneurs are considered innovative in creating solutions for change (Kruse et al., 2019). Individualistic PVs, such as self-direction and achievement, are regarded as being more consistent with entrepreneurship (Gorgievski et al., 2018). This impact also depends on the prevailing cultural values in the society and is, therefore, influenced by the context (Liñán, Moriano and Jaén, 2016; Morales et al., 2019). Moreover, those who typically pursue achievement values would not usually also pursue benevolence values, as they conflict with each other since working towards individual success would hinder working towards the welfare of others.

Individuals high on self-transcendence values typically enjoy being altruistic and helping others. As a result, they may be more willing to accept things like lower revenues if it means being able to create social value (Austin, Stevenson and Wei–Skillern, 2006). Social entrepreneur characteristics, for example, would align with self-transcendence values; at the heart of self-transcendence values lies altruism, which serves as a prime motivating factor of social entrepreneurs (Phillips and Tracey, 2007). Studies have shown a positive relationship between self-transcendence and SE intention (Kruse et al., 2019; Sastre-Castillo, Peris-Ortiz and Valle, 2015).

4.4 Concluding remarks

Social entrepreneurs use innovative business models to address and solve complex social problems (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Zahra et al., 2009), motivated by their strong prosocial motives (Canestrino et al., 2020). However, it is worth noting that many individuals who exhibit socially entrepreneurial traits may not identify as social entrepreneurs or be recognised as such (Sheldon and Daniele, 2017). These individuals may be working in isolation and missing valuable support networks and available tools. Moreover, there is a risk of mission drift, where the focus on profitability may overshadow the original social mission of an SE. The success of social entrepreneurs relies on their entrepreneurial mindset, the ability to balance the dual mission of their SE and the acquisition of both non-financial and financial resources (Tepthong, 2014).

Entrepreneurial motivation is a complex topic studied from various perspectives, including psychology, sociology and economics (Chernbumroong, Skokic and Lockwood, 2021). The formation of EIs and motivation, particularly in social entrepreneurship, is influenced by various factors. The reasons for becoming an entrepreneur vary but often involve a combination of economic, social and self-development goals (Bacq, Hartog and Hoogendoorn, 2014). Social entrepreneurs are driven by a desire to change society, altruism, discontent with the status quo and a sense of social responsibility.

Besides individual factors, contextual factors such as institutional frameworks and socioeconomic development levels influence social entrepreneurship (Jilinskaya-Pandey and Wade, 2019). Both formal and informal institutions shape social entrepreneurs' behaviour and can enable or restrict their actions. Social entrepreneurs identify voids in formal or informal institutions as opportunities for positive change, unlike traditional entrepreneurs, who may see them as obstacles (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Mair and Martí, 2006).

Culture and values play an important role in shaping social entrepreneurship as they influence individuals' attitudes and behaviours related to establishing businesses. Personal values are important because individuals make decisions and develop their ambitions based on them (Hueso, Jaén and Liñán, 2021). It is also suggested that cultures that encourage entrepreneurship also positively impact the development of SEs (Elkington and Hartigan, 2008). Culture and values provide valuable insights into social entrepreneurs' motivations, strategies and perceptions in different contexts.

This study explores the development of social entrepreneurship in Thai tourism, focusing on the perspectives of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs. The research questions were formulated based on the objectives, research background, rationale and gap noticed in the existing literature: 1) What factors influence Thai social entrepreneurs to engage in social entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality industry? 2) How can the development and effectiveness of tourism SEs be encouraged to foster the formation of more SEs and increase success opportunities for social entrepreneurs? By addressing these research questions and achieving the stated objectives, this study aimed to contribute to understanding social entrepreneurship development in Thai tourism. In the following chapter, I delve into the methodology employed for this research. A qualitative research design inspired by the life-story approach provides a deep understanding of motivations, culture and values and how these drive Thai tourism entrepreneurial endeavours.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

In qualitative research, the methodology chapter is critical in providing a comprehensive account of the research methods and techniques used to understand complex phenomena. This study aimed to understand Thai tourism social entrepreneurs' perspectives on social entrepreneurship development and determine the role of individual and national-level factors in their engagement. Two key questions were examined: 1) What factors motivate Thai social entrepreneurs to pursue social entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality industry? 2) What can be done to support the growth and success of tourism social enterprises and encourage the formation of more SEs for social entrepreneurs?

The methodology was chosen to address the research questions, objectives and key concepts and obtain the best possible results. This chapter focuses on in-depth life-story-inspired interviews as the primary data collection method. It establishes a foundation for generating meaningful insights into the lives of social entrepreneurs in Thailand by explaining the research philosophy, design, sampling strategy, data collection procedures and analysis techniques. The approach ensures interpretive depth while considering rigour and ethics. This research provides valuable insights into the perspectives of these individuals, thereby contributing to the existing knowledge base.

5.1 Rationale behind the methodology

In the management discipline, key contributions to theory building usually require the participation of those who have directly experienced the studied phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Doz, 2011). To comprehensively understand actions, problems and processes within their social contexts, qualitative research is the preferred method for collecting data about activities, occurrences and behaviours (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Qualitative research is iterative by nature and allows for discovering new and sometimes unexpected findings (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). This approach differs from the hypothetico-deductive method in

its exploratory nature. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not generate quantified outcomes or use hypothesis testing as a key part of the research process. Instead, it produces an in-depth understanding and awareness of the topic under discussion (Ruyter and Scholl, 1998; Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

Since the 1970s, qualitative approaches have been widely used in studying tourism and tourists (Dann, Nash and Pearce, 1988; Decrop, 1999). Anthropologists, sociologists and geographers have paid attention to these approaches, and it can be argued that qualitative social scientists have conducted a significant number of the most-cited tourism studies (Riley and Love, 2000; Wilson *et al.*, 2020). These approaches hold great potential in increasing understanding of the cultural and social implications of tourism and the human dimensions of society (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). In the past, qualitative research has helped uncover the political dimensions and tensions of tourism (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

There were not many culturally specific theoretical grounds to base this research on since Thailand's tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship is under-researched, especially tourism social entrepreneurship. Consequently, there is currently no robust theory on SE as literature is still emerging. Fu *et al.* (2019) and Li (2008) suggested that because so few hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship articles exist, hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship may be rich in practice but poor in theoretical development. As a result, research in this area requires a flexible design to handle the new findings and complexities (Bryman, 2004; Skokic and Morrison, 2011) that will arise from the real experiences of social entrepreneurs as the key actors in social entrepreneurship.

Qualitative methodology is the most suitable approach, as it entails communication between the researcher and the researched (Flick, 1998). It is appropriate for complex phenomena involving various stakeholders, especially when focusing on underserved groups of individuals (Majumdar and Ganesh, 2020). This study

involved life-story-inspired interviews to explore individual life stories of Thai social entrepreneurs. The approach does not intend to seek the truth but to understand meanings (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). Through this method, I gained access to the subjective interpretations, motivations and beliefs that underpin each individual's actions and decisions. The life-story research method aims to comprehend a social context and the social processes that occur within it (Macías and Contreras, 2019). It involves gathering an individual's experiential knowledge to gain qualitative insights. Many factors shape a person's identity, including family background, cultural context, social relationships and personal aspirations.

Researchers can gain a deep understanding of a person's development and experiences by analysing their life story and the various influences that have shaped them. The life-story-inspired research design allowed an in-depth exploration of the social entrepreneurs' life experiences over time. The strength of the qualitative method lies in its usefulness in theory elaboration and generation and the expansion of new concepts in evolving disciplines. This contrasts theory testing by quantitative methods (Ruyter and Scholl, 1998; Doz, 2011; Reinecke, Arnold and Palazzo, 2016). It involves more of a 'conscious search for meaning and understanding' (Gummesson, 2005, p311), which is especially valuable when examining emergent topics where little theory exists, and not much is known to allow for the construction of hypotheses (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Reinecke, Arnold and Palazzo, 2016). Hence, qualitative research was the most suitable approach for this study. As the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship in tourism, particularly in Thailand, has not been investigated, a qualitative approach provided the opportunity to contribute new insights.

5.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy supports the study's approach, nature and questions, guiding what evidence is valuable and the conclusions that can be drawn (Denscombe, 2002). Qualitative research helps comprehend human experiences

and meaning within a given context, using words to decode them and foster understanding (Petty and Thomson, 2012). This type of research is based on the premise that individuals construct their subjective realities, an idea grounded in subjectivist ontology and epistemology (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). The close and interdependent relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is recognised, and the researcher's role in constructing knowledge is acknowledged, as there is an interconnected relationship between 'the knower and the known' (the researcher and the research subject, or what the researcher is researching) (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). While the quantitative approach separates the knower from the known, the qualitative approach recognises they are inseparable (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). For this research, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to enhance, supplement or rectify existing theories within the field (Bitsch, 2005).

There are four commonly used research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, criticism and interpretivism (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Each paradigm offers flexible parameters that link the theory with the method and support the structure of any inquiry (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). This study employed an interpretive approach to thoroughly investigate the under-researched field of tourism social entrepreneurship. Mason (2014) discussed 'interpretivists', 'constructivists' and 'phenomenologists' as terms used interchangeably because they largely share the same principle of reality being created by how individuals think, behave and interact. Hence, this means that the world is socially constructed and exists in a subjective state.

Qualitative research typically follows an interpretive and naturalistic approach, progressing from data to theory in an inductive manner (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This approach can investigate areas that quantitative research may struggle with, such as creating hypotheses or finding sufficient data (Reinecke, Arnold and Palazzo, 2016; Bitsch, 2005). The interpretivism paradigm acknowledges that people continuously seek to understand the world and that meaning is not

necessarily inherent in objects or social situations but must be constructed by individuals (Dyson and Brown, 2006). Petty, Thomson and Stew (2012) expressed a similar idea, stating that social reality is the product of different processes where social actors negotiate meanings for different actions and situations, resulting in multifaceted socially constructed meanings. In the interpretivism paradigm, meanings usually emerge towards the end of the research process, which was the case in this study.

Mason (2014) discussed three main areas: ontology (what is real), epistemology (how we can know what we know) and methodology (which methods should be used to conduct the research). Ontology speaks of the nature of social phenomena and the researcher's views on social reality (Denscombe, 2002). The discussions of ontology focus on two main perspectives: realism and constructivism. This study held the constructionist perspective, which views the social world as a construct of human minds (Denscombe, 2002). Social reality is continuously shaped and generated through human actions, words and beliefs, with individuals' perceptions and interactions with others constructing their reality. Therefore, the social world may differ between contexts, cultures and group settings (Denscombe, 2002), and multiple realities are considered present rather than the objective social reality proposed by realists.

Epistemology considers how humans gather knowledge of the social world and the logic behind the ability to accumulate knowledge. Denscombe (2002) finds two main epistemological positions, which tie in with the realist and constructionist positions in ontology. Discussion of epistemology centres on two main perspectives: positivism and interpretivism (Denscombe, 2002). This study adopted an interpretivist approach because it relies on human beings to understand reality since an understanding of the world is based on its interpretation. Hence, interpretivism links well with constructionist ontology and qualitative research. Conversely, positivism focuses on using scientific methods to gain knowledge and uses observations and measurements to understand social reality. Hence, it is more closely aligned with a realist ontology, where social reality can be objectively

measured, making it suitable for quantitative research. The researcher's views on ontology and epistemology influence their research methodology, with quantitative researchers generally following deductive approaches and qualitative researchers adopting inductive approaches. Unlike quantitative researchers who view reality as concrete and tangible, as a qualitative researcher, I view reality as subjective and complex. However, the research still needed to be well planned, executed and precisely documented.

5.3 Research approach

The qualitative approach focuses on interpreting phenomena by considering the meanings people bring to them and gaining an emic, or insider's, perspective on experiences (Riley and Love, 2000; Wicks and Whiteford, 2006). According to Fu *et al.* (2019), emic insights and qualitative approaches are necessary to capture the richness of entrepreneurial behaviours. Emic and insider perspectives are important in understanding how and why individuals, groups or communities construct meanings in specific situations (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). The emic school of thought acknowledges that researchers should use all available evidence and not disregard any subject matter from the study simply because they cannot research it according to conventional scientific guidelines (Walle, 1987).

Insider status is often beneficial in overcoming cultural barriers during interviews. Therefore, the researcher's insider perspective of Thailand is relevant to this study, as I, the researcher, am a native of the country. Interviewers with an insider status within a specific culture are believed to have certain advantages over outsiders (Sands, Bourjolly and Roer-Strier, 2007). Insiders can connect more easily with participants and create a comfortable environment encouraging open and honest communication.

Researchers use qualitative approaches for the following reasons: 1) interpretation of new or under-researched issues; 2) theory generation, development,

qualification and correction; 3) evaluation, policy advice and action research; and 4) research aimed at future issues (Bitsch, 2005). Given the topic's emerging nature and lack of data, this study adopted an inductive approach to collect and analyse data as a foundation for potentially expanding or developing one or more theories (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This approach allowed for flexibility in discovering new themes that may arise from the data. Conversely, if a deductive approach were followed, there would be less flexibility as it would involve a predetermined theory (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Positivist and measurement-oriented methods are unsuitable for investigating human social behaviour (Avis, 2003). This is because positivist science relies heavily on hypothetico-deductive logic, which assumes only one social reality, and an objectivist epistemology (Creswell, 1998). Inductive research, on the other hand, does not start with a predefined theory and often involves investigating a new topic, as was the case in this study (Mason, 2014). The inductive approach is more flexible and allows the researcher to explore relationships between data and existing theories or develop a new theory. In this particular case, the inductive approach was more appropriate since there is limited literature on the topic and no clear theory to rely on.

Researchers commonly use inductive methods, such as interviews, to seek detailed participant explanations and obtain 'thick', comprehensive data (Mason, 2014). These approaches aim to allow findings to emerge organically from the raw data based on recurrent themes (Thomas, 2003), as opposed to the deductive approach, which seeks to verify pre-selected theories. In the inductive style, a theory is deliberated alternatingly following data collection. It is a set of interrelated concepts crucial to explaining phenomena, interpreting present occurrences and predicting future outcomes (Brotherton, 1999; Bell, 2011).

As entrepreneurship is a complex and socially constructed phenomenon, it is important to understand the researcher's philosophical and methodological position

and assumptions of the world supporting the chosen methods. The qualitative data from this study aimed to uncover a social construct or multiple constructs of reality, different perceptions or subjective statements on the topic (Mason, 2014). Nonetheless, since methods such as interviews are highly time-consuming compared to other methods such as surveys, the sample size in inductive research is generally small. Qualitative approaches have also been criticised as soft and non-scientific – an inferior approach to social research (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Nevertheless, in recent times, these approaches have been referred to not only as a set of methods but as a distinct strategy for studying social life (Bryman, 2001). As a strategy, qualitative approaches use exchanges and interpretations to support theory generation and highlight how social life is understood by those living in the world (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

5.4 Qualitative research design

The research design of qualitative methods must aim to rigorously contribute to theory building by providing detailed descriptions to stimulate a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Doz, 2011). Compared with quantitative studies, research designs for qualitative studies are not necessarily as detailed and meticulously mapped out (Denscombe, 2002). This is because qualitative designs are more associated with exploratory studies where robust flexibility is necessary. A qualitative researcher's objective is to understand from a different perspective the meanings individuals give to phenomena. Hence, Denscombe (2002) indicated that these researchers' agendas link with Max Weber's notion of 'verstehen', as they are captivated by motives, reasoning, social interaction, perceptions of particular things and situations and life experiences.

Qualitative methods significantly contribute to theory generation because of these rich and thick descriptions (Doz, 2011). The study, therefore, was inspired by the life-story method of qualitative research to collect comprehensive details of the individual's entire life, revealing how these aspects have evolved. As the most

effective research approach, it allowed me as the researcher to gain a subjective narrative on the topic in its context (Atkinson, 1998; Davies *et al.*, 2018), offering an insider's perspective.

5.4.1 The life-story research method

One of the initial issues concerning this method is the varying usage of terms such as life history, oral history, personal narrative, biography and life story (Ojermark, 2007; Söderström, 2020), which all fall within the umbrella term of 'life writing' (Ladkin, 1999; Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Over the years, various methods have been employed to comprehend life stories, with in-depth interviewing being one of the most commonly used approaches. All these techniques share a common thread of collecting information over time, focusing on the timeline of birth and death, and what occurs between these two significant events (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

As this study is 'inspired' by the approach, I have used the term 'life story' when referring to this study. As Harrison (2009) stated, narrative research involves studying how individuals experience the world, and narrative researchers collect personal stories and document them as narratives of experiences. A common distinction is between the 'life story' and 'life history'. The two terms have been taken from Denzin's (1989) and Roberts' (2002) insightful discussions on the subject:

> Life history: This is an account of someone's life, gathered through interviews and conversations. A researcher requests a written or transcribed oral account, which is then edited, interpreted, and presented in various ways. It is sometimes presented with other sources to supplement the information. Life histories may focus on a specific topic or cover the complete details of a person's life as they remember it.

> Life story: This is an account of someone's life story, either in full or a specific part of it, as narrated to another person. It may cover the entire length of their life or focus on a particular period or aspect of their

experience. When told through an interview with a researcher, it is a product of an interactive relationship.

Roberts (2002), however, indicated that these terms are very often used interchangeably(Roberts, 2002)(Roberts, 2002)(Roberts, 2002)(Roberts, 2002), and the story refers to the story told by the 'teller', while the life history is the interpretive and presentational work of the researcher done later. Nonetheless, it can be challenging to maintain the distinction between the terms as the interviewer influences the process from the very beginning.

The life-story approach has gained increasing attention in social sciences, as noted by Roberts (2002); however, this interview type is not new (Söderström, 2020). The approach is frequently used in psychology, anthropology and health sciences, but its strongest roots lie in sociology (Ojermark, 2007). Therefore, there is potential for this method in interdisciplinary research like this one considering this research involves theories of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and tourism. Its use is fairly scarce in entrepreneurship research, uncommon in hospitality and tourism research (Ladkin, 1999) and rare in social entrepreneurship research. Some view life-story research as a shift from objectivity and a rejection of positivism in favour of subjectivity and positionality (Ojermark, 2007; Roberts, 2002). For others, life histories offer a valuable data source for investigating the life course and analysing the connections between cause and effect. The method is appropriate for exploratory purposes in research areas that are still in their infancy, where not much is yet known (Ladkin, 1999). However, it is also valuable for more extensive studies as it can offer specifics and support conclusions drawn from other research methods (Ojermark, 2007; Ladkin, 1999).

Through life-story-inspired interviews, this study utilised a qualitative research design to investigate the experiences of social entrepreneurs in Thailand. The method was appropriate for this study due to its in-depth examination of particular individuals (tourism social entrepreneurs) and exploration of their individual experiences to understand how their actions, attitudes and behaviours have been

shaped by their life stories and influenced by different aspects of their lives. Actions are steered by stories and guided by experiences, motivations, values and beliefs (Abubakar, Bakar and Abdullah, 2008). By analysing the entrepreneurs' stories, the study identified key trigger experiences and unique perspectives that led the social entrepreneurs towards the SE path in the first place. Understanding the contextual and background factors behind the entrepreneurs' decisions to establish their SEs is essential as motivations develop and change over time. Moreover, people's life stories are incredibly individual and can reveal unique and personal insights and perspectives. Researchers can acquire a more comprehensive understanding of human experiences and behaviour by conducting life-story interviews. This knowledge can be especially appropriate when looking at motivations, culture and values. The life story, also known as the narrative research method, is defined as:

> The story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another (Atkinson, 1998, p.8)

Similarly, according to Roberts (2002), this method is used for the purpose of understanding:

> The changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future (Roberts 2002: 1)

It is widely accepted in narrative analysis that understanding personal life stories depends largely on individual perspectives and is subjective by nature (Atkinson, 1998). As with qualitative research, the life-history method is appealing because it offers in-depth and personal insights (Ladkin, 1999). The method allows a subjective approach to understanding how individuals connect with broader societal events. The life-story research method is based on interpretivism, which emphasises the subjective nature of human experiences and the significance of

comprehending individual perspectives and the meanings attributed to events and experiences.

Life-story research aims to comprehend unique life experiences by focusing on personal narratives and the meanings attached to lived experiences. It acknowledges that individuals' stories are multifaceted and complex, shaped by social, cultural and historical contexts. Stories support an individual's experiences, and individuals are shaped according to the norms of society. The life-story narrative is the most effective way to understand how the individual has evolved over time and the aspects that have shaped their decisions (Atkinson, 1998). By engaging in in-depth interviews or analysing life stories, researchers can gain insights into the complex meanings that individuals attach to their life events. Interpretivists aim to capture the essence of individuals' experiences and explore the underlying themes and patterns that emerge from their narratives.

Life-story interviews typically follow a chronological path, starting from the participant's childhood and progressing through different stages of their life up to the present day (Atkinson, 1998). This allows the participant to share significant life events, experiences, lessons learned, and conflicts resolved. These narratives are akin to actual stories, comprising a series of events and a plot that gives the life story its identity, meaning and purpose. Atkinson (1998) found that life themes, such as purpose and commitment, and larger issues, such as class and culture, could reveal hidden stories within life stories and help explain the developmental paths the individuals' lives have followed that have led them to where they are, highlighting major influences and relationships.

Although in-depth interviews share many features across various forms of life-story research, there are also differences. One of the main differences lies in the extent to which the researcher guides the interview or storytelling towards specific topics of interest or allows the narration to be unguided (Harrison, 2009). The one-on-

one, in-depth interviews in this study involved discussions where participants could tell their stories in their own words. This allowed the storyteller to be free in their thoughts and voice their own stories in their own way, allowing deeper thoughts to flourish. Atkinson (1998) emphasised that the less structured a life-story interview is, the more effectively it can capture the storyteller's narrative in the form and style they wish to convey. The interviews in this research were, however, still guided by the researcher.

As in semi-structured interviews, there was a certain degree of flexibility for both the researcher and the participant, and the stories were less likely to stray too far from the topic, thus allowing for comparisons. I had an interview guide with open-ended, probing topics based on themes from the different chapters of an individual's life. This allowed for some structure, if needed, considering the length and depth of life-story interviews, but avoided interrupting the natural flow of the interview. Some previous studies on social entrepreneurial motivation and life-story aspects proved to be valuable and aided in creating the interview guide and forming the categories (Atkinson, 1998; Braga, Proença and Ferreira, 2014; Omorede, 2014; Shumate *et al.*, 2014; Tigu *et al.*, 2015; Yitshaki and Kropp, 2016).

5.4.1.1 Introspection in life-story studies

The notion that individuals construct their identities by narrating stories about their lives has become a widely accepted concept in the social sciences and humanities over the last two decades (McAdams, 2001). Life-story narratives are a valuable experience for both researchers and storytellers, as they require deep reflection and offer a chance for introspection. Introspection is a valuable tool in life story research as it helps to explore the subjective dimensions of individuals' stories. It has its roots in psychological, narrative, and qualitative research traditions and provides a unique perspective that enriches the overall life story approach. The added value of introspection lies in the depth of insights it offers, participant

empowerment, its ability to uncover unconscious processes, and the enhanced reflexivity that it brings to the study (McAdams, 2001).

As I engaged in introspection throughout this study, it enriched my research approach. I delved into my own beliefs, biases, and preconceptions, becoming aware of the potential influence these factors could have on my interpretation of social entrepreneurs' narratives. By recognising and acknowledging these aspects, I was able to approach the study with a more open mind, fostering a greater receptivity to the diverse perspectives and contexts that shape the lives of these individuals. The value of introspection is even more evident in its contribution to reflexivity (more on reflexivity in section 5.9.1 Rigour in life-story research). As I reflected on my own subjective positionality and biases, I became aware of the inherent subjectivity involved in interpreting life stories. Such reflexivity is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the research process and ensuring a nuanced and balanced representation of the social entrepreneurs' narratives.

Moreover, the process of introspection also facilitated a profound empathetic connection with the social entrepreneurs. Having a common cultural background with social entrepreneurs fostered a sense of connection and identification, which allowed me to understand their experiences more intimately. By exploring my own emotional responses to their life stories, I gained a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs they faced. Shared cultural elements, such as language, traditions, or societal norms, created a shared frame of reference that facilitated a deeper empathetic connection. However, it was also important to be aware of potential biases that may arise due to this shared cultural background. The connection shared with the participants, grounded in a mutual understanding of cultural nuances, likely influenced the way I interpret and relate to their life stories (discussed further in 5.6.1 Conducting the interviews and 5.7 Data analysis).

5.5 Participant identification

Participant selection ensured that participants' experiences were relevant, represented the research questions and contributed valuable insights to the research, providing rich data for analysis. Life-story studies rely heavily on the participants, as their personal life stories are the primary data source (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). The sample was purposefully chosen, and data collection involved focused interviews with the sample group of Thai social entrepreneurs. The data produced by life-story interviews are not intended to be representative of the population (Davies *et al.*, 2018), as purposive sampling does not involve selecting individuals based on their representation of the population but rather on their wealth of information related to the research topic (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006a). Thus, interviewees are not randomly or systematically chosen. Therefore, having a smaller sample of around 30 participants is fitting as this research did not aim to generalise to a larger population.

This research is specific to social entrepreneurs within the tourism industry in Thailand, and there is no comprehensive database of tourism SEs in Thailand. Therefore, a purposive sample was chosen based on availability and suitability to the criteria of interest. First, to find SEs in Thailand and create the list of potential participants, the following steps were taken: a) conducting an online search of SEs in the country through Google searches; b) identifying members of the Social Enterprise Thailand association; and c) searching for those mentioned in articles and by the press. I then narrowed the selection down based on the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are as follows:

- The SE must be operating in Thailand.
- The participant must be the founder or key leader of the SE.
- The participant must be Thai or have been raised in Thailand
- The SE must have been active and considered an enterprise part of the tourism industry for at least three years.
- The SE must have a clear social purpose(s).
- The SE must be generating income/trading revenue.

Considering these criteria, I then thoroughly examined each SE's website. Descriptions on their websites were used to determine the type of SE they are, gain insights about the businesses and their goals and gather key information about the founders. Once I understood the SE's dedication to its social purposes, I contacted the identified participants via email or phone. The email described the research, its purpose, objectives and reasons for selection. Participants were also assured that the interview time would be flexible to their availability and that an information sheet was available should they desire to learn more about the study.

5.6 Life stories as a data collection method

The inspiration behind the life-story data collection approach is not novel; it has been in use for some time, and numerous qualitative researchers have employed this method across various topics. Although this methodology can cause some issues (discussed further in section 5.8 Research Challenges), it was considered a good choice for this study. Moreover, the most prevalent method researchers use to conduct life-story research is in-depth, qualitative interviews (Harrison, 2009). As life-story interviews have been used to collect data in different domains and explore individual aspirations, values and community roles, to name a few (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984), they are suitable for gaining deep insights into specific individuals. These stories were articulated by social entrepreneurs based on their memories.

Memories require narrating and, therefore, align with a narrative method (Allett, Keightley and Pickering, 2011). Bertaux and Kohli (1984) expressed that life stories are a data collection method involving a narrative approach. The narrative interview is categorised as a qualitative research method (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995; Flick, 1998). It is the most effective way to comprehend how individuals have developed and the factors that have influenced their decisions (Atkinson, 1998; Davies *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, interviewers must have excellent listening skills for life-story interviews and allow participants to express their thoughts as much as possible. Unlike ethnography, where rapport gradually develops, these in-depth discussions require the researcher to develop a positive relationship quickly and early (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). This is especially true for life stories due to their intimate nature. Here, rapport would involve establishing a good level of trust and respect for the participant and the information they share and providing them with a safe and comfortable space in which to be listened to (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019).

This study collected primary data through one-on-one interviews with social entrepreneurs in Thailand, as there was minimal secondary data on the topic. The interviews were mostly conducted virtually, with some entirely in-person interviews and some revisited interviews conducted in Thailand after COVID-19 restrictions ended. The chosen sample consisted of social entrepreneurs in Thailand's hospitality and tourism industry, and the semi-structured interviews were inspired by the life-story research method.

Participants were contacted based on the inclusion criteria, which included tourism SEs addressing diverse issues and belonging to various segments of the tourism chain. The participants spanned travel and tourism agencies, food and beverage-related firms, food production firms, accommodation service providers and environmental, cultural and community-based tourism firms. They were primarily based in Bangkok, with some hailing from the Northern and Southern regions of the country. Forty-six participants were initially contacted; six asked to be

contacted later to check in again, and nine indicated not being available for this study or did not respond after two follow-ups. Participants who asked to be contacted again were contacted in January 2022, at which point 21 online interviews had already been conducted.

By June 2022, the data collection process had concluded, with 31 participants taking part in the study. Of these, 22 interviews were conducted online via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Skype, depending on the participants' preferences. Meanwhile, nine interviews were conducted in person, including four that were revisited (March 2022) after initially being conducted online. Interviews that were revisited were originally cut short (lasting approximately two hours) or included specific elements, themes or phases of the history warranting further discussion. It was anticipated that some interviews would be cut short, which was unsurprising considering that three-hour-long online interviews feel exhaustive for the participants. In some interviews, it could be seen that the participants felt fatigued. Additionally, some participants requested shorter interviews due to other commitments. While it was initially hoped that at least half of the interviews would be conducted in person in Thailand, this was impossible due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some participants cancelled their in-person meetings due to these restrictions while the researcher was already in Thailand.

5.6.1 Conducting the interviews

Life-story interviews are generally deep and detailed, each interview session was anticipated to last around three hours, although it was expected that some participants might request less time. Fortunately, as hoped, it was possible to conduct some follow-up interviews in person in Thailand after COVID-19 restrictions and have further discussions where relevant and based on availability.

Prior to all interviews, participants received five questions via email that encouraged them to reflect on different experiences and chapters of their lives,

aligning with some of the questions from the interview guide used during the interviews. Additionally, they were asked to pick three photographs that best defined them as tourism social entrepreneurs. During online video calls, participants would display these photos on screen. If the meeting was held in-person, they would bring the photos with them. Using the questions and photographs was an elicitation method for them to revive their memories and shape their thoughts before the interview. Visual elicitation also allowed the participant more control over the interview process. This participatory visual method helps balance the power dynamic between researcher and participant, stimulates the interviews and enhances what we obtain from the stories (Harrison, 2009).

At the start of the interview, participants were briefed on the interview process and were given the participant information sheet and a consent form (refer to Appendix 1 and 2 for the forms used) to sign. Their rights of confidentiality and anonymity were also restated. After the participants gave their permission, the interviews recorded video and audio for virtual interviews and only audio for in-person sessions. The semi-structured interviews aligned with the research questions and were inspired by the life-story research method. While unstructured interviews were recommended by Yitshaki and Kropp (2015), semi-structured interviews were deemed more suitable for this study as they allowed for better comparison and contrast of data collected. This also allowed more flexibility in altering questions from the interview guide (refer to Appendix 3 for the interview guide and Appendix 4 for the extended interview guide where my thought process leading to the interview guide derived from) as needed depending on the progress and flow of the interviews. A risk with unstructured interviews would have been that the participants may talk too freely, and key subjects I originally hoped to acquire knowledge about might be missed. This approach minimised the risk.

To conduct this study, the interview guide (established before the interviews) was used to provide a rough structure to the discussion in line with chronological life

chapters. The guide was inspired by Atkinsons' (1998) life-story interview method. Hence, the discussions were expected to follow a chronological path based on key life events and experiences from childhood to the present (Atkinson, 1998). When telling life stories, Wicks and Whiteford (2006) also agree with starting from the beginning of the journey and trying to narrate events chronologically. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed for open-ended discussion, steered by the interview guide's different life themes, including birth and origin, cultural heritage and values, social factors, education, family, personality, leadership and vision of the future. Questions did not have a strict order, and care was taken not to interfere with the natural flow of the interviewee's stories, allowing them to tell their stories in their own way. The focus was on understanding their life stories, how and why they became tourism social entrepreneurs and the factors that shaped their lives and personalities.

A substantial amount of data was collected while ensuring a relaxed participant environment. As a rough estimate, I anticipated that Section A, the photograph discussion, would last approximately 25 minutes; Section B, relating to the life story, would take around 70 minutes; and Section C, focusing on social entrepreneurship, would also require about 70 minutes. This allowed for gathering wide-ranging data and provided the opportunity to gain a more thorough understanding by collecting detailed responses and observations through open-ended face-to-face interviews. Some notes were taken during the interviews, but care was taken to ensure that this did not obstruct the flow of the conversation. Summary notes were written immediately after each interview based on the three sections of the interview guide. The summary notes also aided in writing up the short biographical sketch of each participant later on. These notes and the interview transcripts made later comparisons possible and convenient.

As a researcher, I found having the same language and cultural background as the participants incredibly helpful. Being an insider allowed me to better connect with them and better understand their perspectives. However, I also acknowledge that

my own cultural background may have impacted my analysis of the data, as well as influenced the participants in their responses. Since I, as the researcher, am from Thailand, know the Thai context and speak Thai, interviews could be conducted in Thai or English based on the participant's preference. I made sure ensured that interviews were carried out in the language preferred by the participants to promote effective communication. As a Thai researcher, using the mother tongue in interviews helps establish a sense of comfort and cultural connection with participants. Conducting interviews in Thai helped participants express themselves more authentically, especially when discussing culturally sensitive topics. This is particularly useful for those who were more proficient in Thai than English. Allowing participants to switch between the languages whenever needed was also helpful when no equivalent translations were available. On the other hand, using English as a global language enables the research findings to reach a wider audience and facilitates international collaboration and understanding.

It's worth noting that most of the participants had quite international backgrounds and spoke English therefore most interviews involved speaking both languages because of the participants' language skills and educational backgrounds. A few interviews were conducted fully in Thai and had to be translated. I translated the interviews from Thai to English; since I have the same non-English native language (Thai), this was not a challenge. Therefore, any translation and interpretation issues were limited. Because of this, I could understand and interpret, for instance, language- and culture-specific metaphors, sayings, and expressions.

Nonetheless, I do recognise that there were certain words and phrases that were unique to Thai culture and was difficult to translate directly into English or may not have had direct equivalents between Thai and English. When I encountered words that didn't have a clear equivalent in English, I followed a clarification process. I asked for other words that were as close as possible to the meaning of the original term. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, I requested participants to provide further details about the meaning, context, or emotions associated with the

specific term. When direct translations of phrases were not possible, I tried to capture the essence of the term through paraphrasing. By doing so, I ensured that we reached a mutual understanding and avoided any misinterpretations. This approach helped us better understand each other and communicate more effectively. It was crucial to preserve the meaning of the unique words, phrases, concepts, and cultural nuances and ensure that no context was lost because they contribute to the richness of the data and offer insights into the intricacies of the participants' experiences.

5.7 Data analysis

In this study, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in English to ensure that no significant words, comments or statements were lost. Data collection and analysis are connected processes and can be conducted in alternation (Bitsch, 2005). This was the case in this study, as interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after each interview. Hence, data collection (interviews) and transcription occurred simultaneously. My main focus was to be flexible during the interviews and afterwards, pulling together the different elements, integrating them and interpreting reasons why some influences may be stronger than others. The participants' experiences and construction of the different life elements and events were combined to construct a deeper analysis (Atkinson, 1998). The end transcript allowed examining the interaction with the participant and offered a collaborative piece based on the participants' perspectives.

Data analysis in qualitative methods generally involves searching for patterns, which are then coded, categorised, organised and theorised (Reinecke, Arnold and Palazzo, 2016). The data were evaluated using an inductive approach, analysing post-interview summaries, transcripts (raw data) and memos. Inductive coding starts with detailed readings of the raw data and deliberation on the meanings inherent in the text (Thomas, 2003; Forman and Damschroder, 2007). Qualitative data analysis (QDA) involves interpreting, identifying and examining patterns and themes in textual data to better understand an issue or phenomenon and answer

research questions (Islam and Aldaihani, 2022). The emphasis of qualitative analysis is on understanding a phenomenon rather than prediction.

It is detailed that both inductive and deductive modes of reasoning are simultaneously used in QDA. This refers to how the researcher or analyst's mind is not wholly blank at the beginning of the study, as there are set research questions, aims, themes and/or assumptions that direct the analysis (Armat *et al.*, 2018). This would be a case of deduction, but new categories will appear inductively (i.e. derived from the data) as the analysis advances. The inductive approach to data analysis helped lessen potential participant–observer bias due to the researcher's Thai background and preconceived notions of the Thai context. A theory is said to link well with data when key aspects can be conveniently compared, when it offers a valuable framework to represent the data and when it does not misrepresent the meaning of the data (Sandelowski, 1993).

Thematic analysis is a widely used QDA method among qualitative researchers who collect data through methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. In this study, I worked with thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves examining a set of data to identify, study and report on recurring or common patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2012). This process describes the data and interprets the selection of codes or categories used to develop themes. Researchers use thematic analysis to understand a collection of thoughts, experiences or behaviours across a given data set, and it is most useful when seeking to identify shared or common themes within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

As qualitative data are text-based, the coding process is the core part of their analysis (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). Coding involves naming and categorising the phenomena by closely examining the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Theory generation is not based on the raw data collected but on the concepts and categories developed from single codes. Codes lead to categories, which lead to

themes or broader, overarching ideas. There are three coding techniques: open, axial and selective (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Open coding involves identifying and developing categories and subcategories and is relevant in the early parts of the study and data collection. Axial coding examines the relationships and interactions between the categories and subcategories. Selective coding assimilates all categories and subcategories with key concepts (Bitsch, 2005). In line with these definitions, after conducting open and axial coding, I moved to selective coding to identify cohesive themes that answer the research questions and potentially lead to theory development.

In this study, once all interviews were complete and transcribed, coding was used to look for emerging patterns, including coherences and interferences. My coding process began with initial codes that captured different aspects of the data relevant to the research questions. These codes were short labels that emerged from the data (inductive). As codes were sorted and organised, patterns and recurring ideas, such as themes, became apparent.

Coding was done with the help of NVivo, a QDA computer software package. While using this kind of software is sometimes deemed to restrain creativity, some argue that they support the process of coding and analysing textual data (Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri, 2008). The software can store large amounts of data and improves analysis transparency and thoroughness, enhancing the research quality (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). This is because the software eases the process by managing different types of data and ideas while visualising data collection. Additionally, aspects that may not seem relevant at first are kept as part of the storage as they may be relevant later and increase the comparability of data in some way (Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri, 2008).

To facilitate analysis and theme generation, I created a basic table by hand based on the initial codes. Evidently, some codes became more prevalent than others.

This table lists the most important codes and categories (refer to Appendix 5 for a simplified version of the codes and categories that lead to different themes found). These themes were relevant to the research question, which I then analysed to identify the relationships between the various codes and how they fit within larger themes. Reviewing and refining the identified themes ensured they accurately represented the data and aligned with the research objectives. The themes needed to be coherent, meaningful and clearly defined. I carefully reviewed the themes identified to ensure they accurately reflected the data and were aligned with the research objectives. It was important that the themes identified were coherent, meaningful and clearly defined to ensure their relevance to the study.

Boddy (2016) indicated that even a single case study with one research participant could provide significant value and yield valuable insights. Therefore, in qualitative research, a sample size of one is considered the smallest acceptable sample size (Boddy, 2016). I held in mind the concept of saturation as the study progressed; if the data collected did not lead to new information or themes and became repetitive, the data were considered saturated (Mason, 2010; Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). This was particularly important during the analysis and coding of the findings, as I identified instances where additional data did not yield new codes or emergent themes that addressed the research questions and objectives.

5.8 Research challenges

As this study used a qualitative research design with life-story-inspired interviews to explore the stories of social entrepreneurs in Thailand, some challenges were related specifically to life-story interviews, and some were related to semi-structured in-depth interviews in general. One of the main practical issues when conducting qualitative studies is gaining access to the research participants and organisations (Kapoulas and Mitic, 2012). Indeed, one of the main challenges in this study was also gaining access to and getting a response from the social entrepreneurs. Some participants were slow to respond or did not respond at all,

possibly due to personal attitudes or hesitation towards taking part in interviews and discussing their life stories. But this could also be due to the participants' availability, especially as they were most likely involved in crisis management with the country's political and COVID-19 situation during that time.

It was also important to consider the cultural differences between conducting research in Asian and Western societies, as attitudes towards trust and communication styles can be different. An assessment and understanding of the cultural and power dimensions before the interviews was valuable as people have different expectations of interview situations, and some may view the situation as invasive or uncomfortable. To be successful, participants' openness to in-depth discussions and eloquence in self-expression are also required (Gummesson, 2005; Hogg and Maclaran, 2008). However, most of the social entrepreneurs seemed to be quite reserved and took some time to open up, which affected the data collection in some ways.

The life-story approach should be more about the participants freely speaking about their stories without little interruption from the researcher's side. Inspired by Atkinson (1998), this was what was initially aimed for. It was intended that the interviews would end up as a flowing narrative, completely in the words of the social entrepreneurs and transcribed to be a flowing, connected life story piece almost completely without my interruptions. However, in this study, I found that for all the interviews, this was not possible. I needed to speak, probe, ask many more questions than expected and steer the discussions to get the participants to speak. This is likely related to building trust and rapport. Establishing rapport is a crucial element of the qualitative interview approach; however, there was a challenge regarding the lack of time available to build trust and rapport before the interviews (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The participants were provided with information that clearly articulated what the research was about before the interviews to make them feel comfortable as they would have an idea of what to

expect. However, it was still especially challenging when most of the interviews had to be done virtually with a few email exchanges or calls prior to the interviews.

Every personal experience or story is influenced by the historical, political and sociocultural contexts surrounding it (Chan, 2017). Chan (2017) notes that when researchers and participants come from different cultural backgrounds, the intended meanings may be lost in translation. 'Insider researchers', who have the same cultural identity as the participants, can provide a unique perspective by viewing things from the participant's point of view (Chan, 2017). This is especially true when a strong and trusting relationship has been established. Hence, despite the challenges, and even though more time would have improved the relationship, I believe I utilised my communication and intercultural skills to establish a comfortable atmosphere for the participants. Having a similar language and cultural background as the participants was certainly advantageous for me and helped me fulfil my role as an insider researcher in this project. This was crucial in enabling the participants to share their stories and perspectives, ultimately leading to valuable insights for this research on social entrepreneurship in Thailand.

5.8.1 Methodological issues

When it comes to narrative analysis, one area of agreement and disagreement is that the interpretation of life stories is highly subjective (Atkinson, 1998). The technique of collecting life-story data raises concerns about its validity. Similar to the criticisms of qualitative research, issues such as bias, credibility, and doubts surrounding scientific validity are of main concern (Ladkin, 1999).

This approach relies heavily on the storyteller's memory when recounting their experiences. The participant may select some memories and choose not to mention others, or they simply may not recall some memories. The method is subjective as it is based on personal emotions and experiences, which can change over time and may result in lost or altered meanings (Ladkin, 1999). Despite this, researchers can still focus their interpretation on what the storyteller knows,

experiences and believes (Atkinson, 1998). Stories offer raw experiences that can be analysed through narrative analysis, which requires researchers to exert effort in understanding the stories and provide their subjective perspective to some degree. As a result, both the researcher and the participant are involved in the analysis and findings processes. As McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl (2019) indicated, the researcher should be viewed as a co-creator of data rather than as individuals who may bias the data with their previous knowledge (especially myself having a Thai background in this case), which may help better understand the context and experiences of the participants.

Another significant methodological challenge involves the substantial time required to complete the research, transcribe and analyse the collected data. The life-story approach is incredibly detailed and in-depth, making the interviews last approximately three hours. This exhaustive process may lead to respondent fatigue, causing participants to feel tired, lose interest and attention and provide subpar-quality data. To mitigate this, the participants in this study were offered a 10-minute break after 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the situation, to unwind and refresh before continuing.

5.9 Research governance

5.9.1 Rigour in life-story research

Decrop (1999) identified a criterion of trustworthiness in qualitative research. In qualitative research, there is often criticism from positivists about its lack of generalizability and objectivity. There is scepticism towards both its reliability and validity, but Decrop (1999) stated that the concern is not over the value of qualitative data but the criteria by which the trustworthiness of the qualitative study can be judged. Academics have tried to reconsider terms such as validity, generalisability and reliability in qualitative research paradigms (Denzin, 1997; Hammersley, 2007; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011). However, Lincoln and Guba's

(1985) typology is the most prevalent. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for qualitative studies correspond with quantitative terminology to combat scepticism. The criteria for qualitative research developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are useful when considering quality in qualitative studies. They defined the four criteria as:

- Credibility or internal validity and how truthful the findings are
- Transferability or external validity and how applicable the findings are in other settings
- Dependability or reliability, and if the results of the study are consistent and reproducible
- Confirmability or objectivity and how neutral/free from researcher's biases the findings are

The validity of research findings refers to the extent to which the findings accurately represent the intended phenomena. In this case, a purposeful, accurate sample was selected to help address the research questions. Moreover, because data collection and transcription occurred simultaneously (which was a result of timing), I was also able to constantly compare transcripts, which helped me treat the data as a whole and identify emerging/unanticipated themes within the research. According to Atkinson (1998), determining the validity of a personal narrative is a subjective process since there are no formal procedures to follow. However, some helpful measures or standards can be used. One of the most important controls is internal consistency to ensure that how the individual recounts their story should not contradict what they have previously said (Atkinson, 1998). Although inconsistencies are common, the narrative should be consistent within itself. Internal consistency is a quality check that both the interviewer and storyteller can use to clarify comments and insights. On the other hand, external consistency – where what is said conforms to what is already known about the individual or topic being discussed – is not always valid in life stories since the focus is on the storyteller's experience or perspective rather than historical truth (Atkinson, 1998). The narrative approach to studying lives emphasises internal

coherence as experienced by the person rather than external criteria of truth or validity.

Various techniques can be implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative findings. For example, rechecking is a good way to enhance the credibility of analyses and interpretations. One method to ensure the accuracy of a life-story interview is subjective corroboration (Atkinson, 1998). In this case, as mentioned, the participants were sent summaries after the interviews, which covered some key points from the interviews. They were encouraged to read and offer any comments, inputs or issues they might have, which can be considered member checking (Decrop Alain, 1999). This allowed them to confirm or support the original narrative, ensuring it reflected their intended story. Any remarks or disagreements would have been added to and used to enhance the analytical process. The visual elicitation method, which involved photographs chosen by the participants, also helped in understanding some of their thoughts but can also be considered a triangulation method. Transferability was enabled through purposive sampling and by writing up the findings extensively and systematically with thick and deep descriptions. Dependability was facilitated by having a clear research plan that had some flexibility (interview channel, location, date and duration) while still being able to record changes in the plan clearly.

It is important for researchers to continuously reflect on their relationship with participants and how it may impact the validity of the data collected due to the subjective nature of the method (Harrison, 2009). This reflection, known as reflexivity, serves as a corrective measure. It is also important to acknowledge that researchers will be affected by what they observe and hear. Regarding reflexivity, when conducting interviews and interpreting transcripts, I ensured that I reflected on my identity, background, education, motives, cultural expectations and biases (Chan, 2017). One effective strategy to block biases is to reflect on personal assumptions and predispositions continuously. As suggested by Chan (2017) researchers conducting narrative interviews should reflect on their identities and subjectivities throughout the process of interpreting transcripts. By actively

questioning my own beliefs and cultural expectations, I did my best to identify potential influences that could skew my interpretation of the social entrepreneurs' life stories (Chan, 2017; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). This self-awareness proved to be a powerful tool in mitigating biases, allowing me to approach the research process with a more neutral perspective.

The post-interview summaries written immediately after each interview helped me with reflexivity, as well as transcribing the interviews as soon as possible after each interview. Notetaking during and directly after every interview or observation was another method for triangulating the data (Decrop Alain, 1999). It was essential to recognise the values and intentions I brought to the study, as it shapes how I report my findings or highlight certain results over others. This was also important in positionality, as positionalities can affect power dynamics during the interview process (Sands, Bourjolly and Roer-Strier, 2007), and I needed the participants to be very comfortable to share their intimate and personal stories with me.

Throughout my interviews with the social entrepreneurs, I also made a conscious effort to separate my own experiences and perspectives from theirs. Even though we shared a cultural background, I always kept in mind that their individual experiences are still diverse and unique. This was important to ensure that I didn't impose my own narrative onto their stories and that my analysis remained true to their lived realities. Overall, I believe the shared cultural background enhanced the authenticity and accuracy of my interpretation, allowing me to grasp the subtleties embedded in cultural contexts. This provided insights that might be overlooked by someone without a similar background. The shared cultural lens became a tool for uncovering layers of meaning and understanding that might not be immediately apparent in a more objective analysis.

5.9.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are crucial to consider when conducting research, regardless of whether it is qualitative or quantitative. However, ethical considerations play an

even more critical role in qualitative research, as this approach often involves delving into participants' thoughts and life stories (Khan, 2014). For qualitative researchers, the most important aspect is to respect the participants and follow basic ethical principles of doing no harm and protecting the rights and well-being of research participants (Wood, 2009). This study was approved as Class 1: research with no or minimal ethical implications. Nonetheless, throughout the research process, careful thought was given to ethical considerations to ensure that the participants and their data were treated with care.

The research participants were contacted via email and provided with a clear description of the study's purpose and objectives, as well as why they were chosen. They were assured that the interview date/time/duration would be flexible based on their availability and that an information sheet would be ready for them should they want to learn more about the study. Following the interviews, participants received summaries covering some key points from the interviews, and they were encouraged to review these summaries and provide any feedback, suggestions or raise any concerns they might have. No issues came to light after interview summaries were sent, except for three participants that asked/reminded me to use pseudonyms instead of their names. It was also communicated to the participants that they would receive the completed research paper after the study was completed.

5.9.3 Participation

Participants were assured that participation was entirely voluntary and that they were not obligated to take part. Even if they chose to participate, they were free to withdraw from the interviews at any point. It was emphasised that they had the right to withdraw without providing a reason.

5.9.4 Harm and risks

Participating in the study posed no risks. However, since personal matters, experiences and memories were expected to be discussed, sensitive topics were covered, which could potentially cause emotional distress. I expected this when discussing the photographs and life chapters regarding family and background. Pauses and disruptions are almost unavoidable when drawing out memories. Sometimes, certain memories cannot be instantly recalled, and as some memories associated with photographs may be distressing, the participants were given time and space to respond. Hence, if the topics became too overwhelming at any point, participants were free to ask for a pause and take some time to think and reflect or to end the interview and reconvene later. They were also free to refuse to answer any questions. Additionally, if a participant exhibited any distressing behaviour during the interview, the discussion would be paused, and they would be asked if they felt able to continue. Fortunately, there were no instances where the interviews had to be stopped due to participant distress.

5.9.5 Confidentiality and informed consent

Without confidentiality, narrative research would be difficult (Sabar and Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2017). Without the assurance of anonymity, participants may be hesitant to share personal, deep, detailed information about themselves. The interviews were recorded (audio and video), and some notes were taken during and after the interviews, subject to the participants' permission. All information shared during the interviews was considered strictly confidential and anonymous. All transcripts, recordings and other data have been held securely until the research is completed, then destroyed.

The participants were ensured that all data would be anonymised, their personal or organisational names would not be used, and it would not be possible to identify them from this work or any related publications. Even though the research will be available online through WestminsterResearch (the university's storage of research

records) and EThOS (the British Library's storage that provides access to UK doctoral theses online), confidentiality and anonymity has been preserved by using pseudonyms (e.g. 'Mary'). The participants were ensured that no data would be accessed by anyone other than myself, the researcher. The study made sure that no data would link back to any individual or organisation participating in the interviews.

Participants were sent information sheets and consent forms in both English and Thai, outlining the nature and scope of the research, its purpose and objectives, and why the participant was chosen. It also detailed the voluntary nature of participation and that confidentiality and anonymity would always be preserved. The consent form stated that the research involves recordings and notetaking, and it needed to be signed by the participant to confirm their consent. At the beginning of each interview, I also discussed these documents again – focusing on the rights of participation, confidentiality and anonymity – and briefed the participant on the interview process.

5.9.6 Copyright

Extracts from publications owned by another person or body would only be included after gaining permission from the rights holder and would include the right to publish this thesis electronically on both WestminsterResearch and EThOS.

5.10 Concluding remarks

This study delved into Thailand's relatively unexplored area of tourism social entrepreneurship using qualitative research methodology. The choice of qualitative methodology was driven by the need to understand the complex phenomena and social contexts surrounding the experiences of social entrepreneurs in this domain. Qualitative research was deemed appropriate due to its iterative nature, allowing for discovering new and unexpected findings. Unlike quantitative research,

qualitative methods focus on in-depth understanding and analysis, subjective interpretations and awareness of the topic at hand.

The life-story-inspired research design in this study facilitated a deep exploration of the individual experiences and perspectives of 31 social entrepreneurs in Thailand. By analysing their life stories and considering the factors that have influenced their identities and decisions, the study gained valuable insights into the different dimensions of tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand. This approach enabled the researcher to access subjective interpretations, motivations and beliefs underlying the actions and decisions of social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the research philosophy underpinning this study supported the approach. Acknowledging the interdependent relationship between the researcher and the researched, the interpretive paradigm aligned with the belief that reality is socially constructed. This perspective recognises that individuals construct subjective realities and that meaning is not inherent in objects or social situations but is actively created through human interactions.

This interpretivist approach aimed to expand theoretical knowledge, generate a comprehensive understanding of tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand, and contribute new insights. Social entrepreneurs' subjective experiences and perspectives provided unique insights that could inform future practices and policies in this emerging field. The subsequent chapters will present and interpret the findings, leading to conclusions and recommendations for further research, theory development and practice.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This study examined the evolution of social entrepreneurship from the perspectives of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs. The life-story-inspired interviews investigated the role of background characteristics, personal values and culture in motivating engagement in social entrepreneurship and influencing its growth. This study's findings demonstrated that cultural values, particularly Thai cultural values and religious elements, strongly promote engagement in social entrepreneurship in Thailand. It was revealed that engagement in tourism social entrepreneurship (TSE) in Thailand primarily stems from the acknowledgement of and appreciation for the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) as a critical foundation and ideological driver of 'doing good' or '*Tham bun tham than*' in the country.

This chapter presents the research findings and discussions based on the responses provided by the participants. The findings are organised chronologically based on the participants' life stories. Furthermore, the findings offer in-depth insights into TSE in Thailand based on the entrepreneurs' viewpoints. The stages of life relevant to this study are early childhood and family, adolescence and education, relationships, adulthood, career and aspirations. Moreover, analysing the participants' stories through coding and categorisation simplified reviewing common themes in their comments. The findings revealed explanations based on the research objectives and questions: *1) What elements influenced Thai social entrepreneurs to pursue social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry? 2) How can the development and effectiveness of tourism social enterprises (SEs) be fostered to increase opportunities for social entrepreneurs?* By exploring the entrepreneurs' stories, the study identified elements that motivated them to pursue TSE, the development of these aspects over time and the roles these social entrepreneurs play within the tourism industry in Thailand.

6.1.1 Pre-interview reflections

Individuals recount their life stories by reflecting on their own experiences, choices, and personal development. This does not only involve recounting specific events but also exploring the emotional dimensions. The process of introspection, in this case, involves deep self-reflection and examination of one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions over time. Introspection also empowers the participants to actively shape and contribute to the process of constructing a narrative. The study goes beyond a simple gathering of life stories by encouraging the tourism social entrepreneurs, or the storytellers in this study, to engage in introspection. This means that it becomes a journey into the participants' inner worlds, adding an extra layer of depth that enriches the qualitative analysis. As a result, their perspectives are interpreted in a more comprehensive and empathetic way.

During the interviews, the participants had the opportunity to share their life stories, experiences, triumphs, and challenges. As a result, some of them mentioned feeling grateful and thankful for the opportunity to reflect on their journey and gain new insights. Moreover, the process of recounting their life stories allowed them to think deeply about their experiences and consider aspects that they had previously overlooked or considered as seemingly minor events. This reflection helped them to appreciate the different phases of their journey and the lessons they had learned along the way. Overall, the participants found the interviews rewarding and enlightening.

Prior the interviews, participants were sent five questions that allowed them to reflect on various life experiences and stages (which aligned with some of the probe topics). These questions were based on social factors such as origin, cultural heritage, values, education, family, personality and ambitions. The questions were: a) What did you want to be when you were a child? / What were you like as a child? b) What are some key principles you grew up with/ were exposed to? c) What activities were you involved with in school? In college? d) Which relationships shaped and influenced your life the most?

e) What vision do you have for your country and its tourism industry? The participants were also asked to select three photographs that best defined them as social entrepreneurs. Discussing the photographs shaped their thoughts and enabled the participants to refresh their memories. This allowed the participants to warm up to me, as the interviewer slowly, speak about the selected photographs freely and ease into discussing life stories. The pictures revealed a basic understanding of why the participants may have been driven to pursue TSE in Thailand. Based on the photographs discussion, no specific or critical events that directly led the participants towards social entrepreneurship stand out. However, the photographs display the cumulative effect of their backgrounds, experiences and values on their drive to pursue social entrepreneurship.

The life-story method often focuses on critical incidents that significantly shape an individual's life. However, in this study, a holistic view of participants' life stories was taken, considering that no other studies have explored tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand before. Instead of pinpointing specific critical incidents, the study captured a broad spectrum of experiences and events across participants' lives. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of their life journeys, including the interplay of various factors and influences.

6.1.2 Participant details

Thirty-one participants from a group of social entrepreneurs who are part of the tourism industry in Thailand were selected and interviewed on a one-on-one basis. Of the 31 social entrepreneurs, 12 were female, and 19 were male. Among them, 26 were born in Thailand, whilst five were not. Two were born in India, one in Denmark, one in Australia, and one in Malaysia. In addition, among the 31 participants, 20 were between the ages of 26–34, 8 were between 35–43 years old, four were over 40, and only one was under 26 years old. The participants were from different hospitality and tourism social enterprises, including travel and tour agencies, accommodation service providers, food and beverage-related businesses, food production and environmental and cultural tourism businesses. Furthermore, 21 SEs were based in Bangkok, seven in Northern Thailand and

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three in Southern Thailand. Figure 1 below sketches the SEs in the study, their location, and their beneficiary.

Figure 1. Tourism SEs in this study

Pseudonym	SE area	Beneficiary/ cause
Karn	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – cultural tourism
Decha	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – responsible tourism experiences
Chai	Northern Thailand	Profits go towards elephant conservation organisations and projects
Mary	Southern Thailand	Reinvested into the business – marine conservation, training in the protection and restoration of coral reefs
Nat	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – wildlife and nature tourism
Krit	Northern Thailand	Profits go towards parks and forest conservation efforts
Tap	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – employment of disadvantaged youth
John	Southern Thailand	Profits go towards helping with violence issues in the region
Mew	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business and helping those from slums
Ploy	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – community-based tourism
Boat	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – environmental issues and waste management

Mark	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping sex workers get out of the industry
Tae	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping street animals
Poom	Northern Thailand	Profits go towards helping at risk youths and disadvantaged children
Pla	Southern Thailand	Reinvested into running the business- environmental sustainability awareness
Nop	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping blind children
Jane	Northern Thailand	Reinvested into running the business- cultural tourism
Pong	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping marginalised children
Term	Northern Thailand	Reinvested into running the business – community-based tourism
Tor	Northern Thailand	Reinvested into running the business – employment; farmers, those from neighbouring countries
Pat	Northern Thailand	Profits go towards helping women – employment, those from border regions
Sutep	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping environmental conservation, protection of green spaces in the South
Geng	Bangkok	Profits go towards care homes for the elderly
Den	Bangkok	Profits go towards education and housing for disadvantaged children from migrant groups
Nut	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping marine conservation

Boon	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping those with disabilities; employment, training, education
My	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – helping farmers with training and education
Tep	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business – employment for vulnerable individuals/young adults and culinary education
Guy	Bangkok	Profits go towards helping women and young girls who are refugees
Orm	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business- organic food, farmers, local businesses
Kate	Bangkok	Reinvested into running the business- community-based tourism

Appendix 5 lists the three photographs each social entrepreneur selected to speak about as part of the photograph discussion at the beginning of each interview. A majority of the photographs were related to the late king (45%), depicted disadvantaged communities and individuals (29%), their families (29%) and various forms of merit-making (26%).

While some participants' biographical sketches are within this chapter in the following sections, refer to the appendices for short biographical sketches for all participants mentioned here.

6.2 Early childhood and family

This phase of the social entrepreneurs' lives is based on discussions around their origin, upbringing and elements that have influenced them since their early childhood. It also concerns their close family ties and discussions around their

childhood dreams. The circumstances into which they were born, their family of origin and what their parents instilled in them differentiate them and influence whom they may want to become later in life (Atkinson, 1998). This study's findings revealed that religion, King Bhumibol and cultural influences are the most significant elements in the Thai context.

The concepts of benevolence or self-transcendence may have been instilled in the entrepreneurs since they were young. In addition, Buddhism, the late King and Thai cultural values were observed to represent the decision-making and actions leading to the pursuit of TSE. According to Schwartz's theory of fundamental values, benevolence is essential for individuals who seek to help others or pursue their life goals without a hierarchically organised system of personal values (Schwartz, 2012). Thai people have a mindset rooted in the attitude and practice of giving, and it is argued that this behaviour should be considered a national culture because it describes the attitudes and perspectives shared by people in the country that shape their behaviours (Phaholyothin, 2017).

6.2.1 Religious influences

Conducting the interviews revealed that the practice of making merit, rooted in Buddhism, influences social entrepreneurs to pursue the path of 'doing good'. It is worth noting that all 26 of the 31 native Thai participants identify as Buddhist, including Jane (Female, 42, involved in cultural tourism in Northern Thailand – Appendix 7) with Indian heritage.

Jane's family relocated to Bangkok when she was four years old and eventually settled in Northern Thailand, where she currently resides. Jane is the founder of her tourism SE, categorised as cultural tourism. Through the sales of various tours, Jane's tourism SE promotes experiences in Northern Thailand to help preserve its cultural heritage. Her SE falls under the cultural tourism category and her aspirations go beyond merely showcasing tourist attractions. She aims to create meaningful and immersive experiences that allow travellers to appreciate the rich culture of Northern Thai communities. By curating traditional Khantok style dinners,

hill tribes trek with local residents, and unique homestays and meals with local families, Jane enables visitors to delve into the core of Northern Thai culture. She feels that the Northern region has become quite cosmopolitan, and traditional Thai culture is at risk of disappearing. She expresses a deep passion and appreciation for Thai culture, traditions and Buddhist practices, which she considers integral to her identity. Despite not being born in Thailand, Thai culture and values remained a significant part of her upbringing. Jane's goal is to help alleviate poverty in the Northern local hill tribe villages, ensure the locals make a profit and reinvest her earnings into this cause. This includes the Karen Hilltribes communities. Through her tourism SE, she aims to empower local leaders and small businesses, helping them increase their income by promoting Northern Thai culture through storytelling and service. In addition, Jane expressed her admiration for Thailand, calling it the 'land of smiles' and applauding its distinctive Thai-style service. She hopes to highlight these qualities to others. She also holds regular English lessons for the locals involved in her SE.

Jane explained Buddhism. She shared:

> 'Though I wasn't exactly raised strictly Buddhist, in fact, my parents are basically strict Hindus; I still regularly visit Thai temples with my friends to pray when there are things we hope for. And also on birthdays, every birthday in the early morning, my family and I would go give alms to monks and donate money to the temple'.

Religion would have been introduced to the social entrepreneurs early during their childhood and upbringing. Several participants (13 out of 31) specifically stated Thai Buddhist concepts such as '*Bun*' (merit) and '*Khwaam dee*' (merit or doing good) were introduced to them at a young age. Typical Thais make merit by giving in different ways. For example, one way to *'tham bun'*, or to make merit and collect good deeds, is sharing one's resources with those in need, such as giving money to a street beggar or donating to charities. According to Jane's explanation, the most popular and traditional methods include monetary contributions to temples and giving alms to monks (Phaholyothin, 2017).

Similarly, photographs that the participants (both native Thai participants and non-native Thai participants) selected included merit making at temples, offering alms to monks on the streets and inside temples, offering donations at schools and local charities and releasing animals at temples. The participants mentioned activities such as going to the temple on special occasions, particularly on birthdays, to give alms to the monks and release animals from a very young age with their parents. Thai people regard *tham bun* as a concept referring to any act that helps others. In this sense, social entrepreneurship can also be viewed as a form of *tham bun*.

Benevolence is an important aspect of Thai culture, influenced by the practice of making merit in Buddhism. With 95% of the population being Theravada Buddhists, it is unsurprising that Buddhism influences Thai people's mindsets, values and actions. The influence of Theravada Buddhism on the daily lives of most Thai people is significant and is considered to be at the core of their national identity. Also, Theravada Buddhism is a key influencing factor in Thai people's giving attitude since it comprises the sociocultural dimensions of giving (Yablo and Field, 2007; Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, 2001). While not everyone in the country shares this cultural background, it is the most prevalent culture, influencing many behaviours and perceptions and influencing social norms in the country. In addition, all participants mentioned Buddhism at least once during their interviews. Boon (Male, 32, runs a coffee shop and is based in Bangkok – Appendix 8) and Guy (Male, 36, involved with art and runs a café in Bangkok – Appendix 9) asserted that pursuing social entrepreneurship is a way of 'doing good' influenced by Buddhism. Therefore, Buddhism serves as an informal institution that encourages social entrepreneurship.

For instance, Boon owns a small coffee shop, and his tourism SE is classified in the tourism and education category. With a strong desire to have a positive impact, Boon's SE is operated by a group of individuals who have disabilities, focusing on hearing disabilities. The profits generated by the café are utilised to fulfil these individuals' basic needs, including providing access to healthcare and education. Boon's vision extends beyond providing employment; he is committed to

enhancing the lives of his team members through skills development, training and education tailored to their specific needs or disabilities. He was motivated to help this demographic after discovering the high unemployment rate among working-age disabled individuals in the country. Boon wanted to impact the lives of individuals who generally receive fewer career opportunities. His commitment to creating a positive impact on the lives of those with disabilities provides employment and empowers them with the tools and resources they need to succeed. He aims to break barriers and create a more inclusive society by focusing on their well-being, education and skills development. Boon mentioned:

> 'I was eager to find something to do in terms of work. I was looking for a long time and working different "office jobs" that made me money but did not give me happiness. I also didn't just want to create a business to make money; I wanted to do something fulfilling personally for me and also something that is good for society and people who are having a hard time'.

Notably, the drivers of performing good and charitable actions relate to the principle of reincarnation, a fundamental belief in Theravada Buddhism. For example, the concept of selfless giving or '*Dana*', '*Dana*', for example, is one of the core principles in Buddhism and teaches people to conquer attachment to successfully go through the path towards the goal of Nibbana or enlightenment (Chaisinthop, 2014). Practising *Dana* is considered to be meritorious and enables accumulating merit. Also, the concept of '*Karma*' proposes that each action leads to merit or demerit, resulting in consequences in current or future lives. As a result, *Dana* is important to Buddhists as they attempt to perform meritorious actions instead of conducting themselves in demeritorious ways in order to accumulate merit and improve their current or future lives. By practising *Dana*, an individual's *'chit'* or soul is believed to be elevated (Chaisinthop, 2014).

Furthermore, *Karma* determines reincarnation and influences people to do good (Kanchanachitra, 2014; Yablo and Field, 2007). Good intentions drive good *Karma*, and making merit leads to accumulating good *Karma*. This accumulated *Karma* determines the kind of reincarnation that will occur in an individuals' future life

(Phaholyothin, 2017). This belief is Thailand's main principle motivating charitable actions (Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, 2001).

Nonetheless, Krit (Male, 41, involved in travel and tours in Northern Thailand – Appendix 10) shared a different perspective:

> 'Personally, I actually don't really like to *tham bun* by giving money to temples, as I get older, I just feel that it is something so many people already do anyway... so I prefer to *tham bun* by offering donations to charities, orphanages, and poor children more... I don't believe in making merit to like go to heaven. It's fine if I don't get merit, but at least I'm helping another human being who is actually in trouble'.

While social entrepreneurship does not necessarily involve religious activities, Buddhism is the underlying motive. Based on the interview findings, it is evident that the Thai worldview on giving is influenced by Buddhist doctrines, which may also be true for other social aspects. Thailand places considerable value on Buddhism, significantly impacting how individuals approach their lives and careers. Generally, the findings demonstrated that religious elements influenced the entrepreneurs early in their childhood and upbringing, leading them to pursue TSE in Thailand. Therefore, Buddhist values offer insights into Thai social entrepreneurs' dedication to fostering responsible tourism practices.

6.2.2 King Bhumibol as an ideological driver

King Bhumibol Adulyadej is one of the world's longest-serving monarchs and the longest-serving in Thai history. The Thai people highly respect and value the late king's quotes and speeches (Sachayansrisakul, 2009). This is because he was adored and showed a clear commitment to continuous learning and development for the Thai people. Sachayansrisakul (2009) stated that to understand the country's economic growth, it is first essential to bear in mind the Thai people's unique relationship with their former monarch. Every Thai participant, including Jane and Kate, with Indian backgrounds, indicated that the knowledge of the late king was introduced at a young age through school or their parents. Karn, Mew,

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Tep, Pong and Boon mentioned how their parents had and still have photographs of the late king framed around their homes. It is common to see pictures of the late king in public spaces and homes throughout the country. Some individuals even mentioned having framed photos of the late king. However, participants who were not of Thai origin did not express having such photos.

As part of the photographs discussion, many participants selected photographs related to the late king, including Jane, who is not a native Thai. The most common photographs selected by the participants were related to King Bhumibol Adulyadej (14 participants), disadvantaged communities or children (12 participants) and merit-making (9 participants). However, the five non-native social entrepreneurs selected similar pictures of marginalised communities and children, ocean litter and clean-up efforts, their past volunteer work and offering donations as a form of merit-making. This may be because respect and admiration for the late king are instilled in individuals at a young age. Therefore, the late king's influence may be weakened in those not born in Thailand or who did not grow up in a traditional Thai family.

The selected photographs mainly depicted the late king in simple settings, such as working on green fields with others or fulfilling his duties on various royal projects, such as the Doi Tung Development Project. For instance, the Doi Tung Development Project commenced in 1990 with reforestation. Later, the project offered vocational training to the residents, educating them about sewing, weaving and producing paper from mulberries. This enabled the locals to care for themselves without resorting to opium cultivation or forest logging. Moreover, the Doi Tung project is highly sustainable, operating as a social enterprise and linking local producers and small farmers to urban consumers in Bangkok and other cities.

It is surprising to observe many pictures related to the late king being selected by the participants, considering that the social entrepreneurs' age range is relatively low, with 65% being between the ages of 26–34 and only 13% being 40 and above. Nonetheless, only one selected a picture related to the late king among the five non-native social entrepreneurs. However, they selected similar photographs of

disadvantaged communities and children, ocean litter and clean-up campaigns, their volunteering work in the past and merit-making or offering donations. When participants selected photographs of the late king, it was observed that his philosophies and projects had some influence on individuals becoming social entrepreneurs in Thailand.

Karn (Female, 39, involved in cultural tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 12) was born in Bangkok, was raised in a traditional Thai Buddhist family and studied at a Thai school in her youth. Karn detailed, 'What he (the late king) has done is very inspiring to me, and I can only aspire to do the same. I believe he really saw the world in a different way and saw a different future for Thailand'.

Karn founded a tourism SE classified under the cultural tourism category, offering a wide range of activities such as temple tours and Thai cooking and dancing classes hosted by the locals and their small businesses. Her SE promotes Thai culture and tradition by offering authentic Thai experiences (usually full- or half-day experiences). The profits are used to support and help these local business owners with any training and operational needs. She expressed that she wants to help locals create a stable source of income and does not expect rewards for her work. Moreover, her motivation stems from a genuine desire to improve the livelihoods of small business owners in the community, enabling them to thrive and benefit from cultural tourism activities. Karn believes tourism is a tool for showcasing and preserving the country's rich culture and tradition. By offering authentic experiences led by knowledgeable locals, her SE ensures that travellers gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Thai culture and traditions. This promotes cultural exchange and mutual respect between the tourists and the communities they visit. Her responses indicate that pursuing social entrepreneurship 'feels right' and resonates with her as she strives to help those in society. Notably, Karn mentions King Bhumibol's work as a source of inspiration and appreciation for Cabbages and Condoms as a restaurant and the work the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) group has done, their

success, their scale and their plough-back-profit model where the company retains all profits.

In contrast, Mew (Female, 32, provides tours and excursions in Bangkok – Appendix 13) mentioned that:

'...even though I don't stand for the whole monarchy concept, I still have pictures of King Bhumibol in my house, like my parents did since I was a child because I appreciate his work and he inspired me to be a good person'.

Similarly, Pong stated (Male, 30, runs a small hotel in Bangkok – Appendix 15):

'I wanted to be involved in a business that does positive things for the society, similar to the king's projects… he showed real love for the Thai people… and a symbol of hope for a good future for our country'.

Projects carried out under the Royal Foundation are a well-known part of the country's philanthropic sector. This is due to their extended existence and systematic and professional management (Phaholyothin, 2017). These projects have reached a scale and sustainability level with tangible societal impact. Also, there is an adequate awareness level regarding these projects. The social entrepreneurs expressed admiration for the late king. During the interviews, it was revealed that impactful projects like these inspired the participants. 'Father of the Kingdom' is a common expression in Thailand and used by some entrepreneurs (Geng, Tae, Pong) to describe the late king. 'Father of the Kingdom has done a lot for our country, and I stand by his values and appreciate his doings' (Karn, Female, 39, involved in cultural tourism in Bangkok).

Tep (Male, 29, runs a restaurant in Bangkok – Appendix 14) shared comparable views:

"Since youth, I have always heard my parents saying "Father of the Kingdom", and that is something that's stuck with me... I think the Thai

people have a love and bond with the King... which was also seen clearly when he passed'.

Likewise, Chai (Male, 44, runs a guesthouse and café in Northern Thailand – Appendix 18) expressed similar opinions. Chai founded his tourism SE in the accommodation category. His passion for animals is at the core of his mission, driving him to impact wildlife conservation and protection positively. At his guesthouse and café, Chai goes above and beyond to support elephant conservation organisations and projects. His profits are dedicated to various elephant conservation initiatives. These contributions are vital in supporting the efforts to protect these animals and their natural habitats. Chai's dedication to animal welfare extends beyond elephant conservation efforts. During his spare time, he visits and donates to different stray dog (soi dog) and wildlife conservation centres across the country. At his guesthouse, Chai ensures guests are introduced to responsible and ethical tourism experiences involving elephant sanctuaries operated by local groups, guides, and other social enterprises. By promoting these experiences, Chai educates travellers about the importance of responsible wildlife tourism, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the well-being and preservation of the animals. As a result, his dedication to responsible tourism benefits the local communities and contributes to the sustainability of wildlife conservation efforts. Chai mentioned:

'I am inspired by the king's legacy of kindness and vision to grow Thailand sustainably… so I try to align my work with the king's compassion towards the environment, animals, and the well-being of Thai people'.

Pla (Female, 28, involved in environmental tourism in Southern Thailand – Appendix 19) and Guy (Male, 36, runs a store and café in Bangkok – Appendix 9) shared similar perspectives regarding King Bhumibol:

'His Majesty's commitment to the welfare and education of the Thai people serves as a shining light for me to follow'. – Pla

'Through my work, I think I honour King Bhumibol's memory and commitment to helping people who are less fortunate and have a hard life… it is everyone's responsibility to help those who need help'. – Guy

There were no significant remarks made about the current king. The former king earned great respect from the people through his caring leadership as he envisioned a more balanced approach to development (Sachayansrisakul, 2009; Piboolsravut, 2004). For instance, Geng (Female, 45, runs an organic food restaurant in Bangkok – Appendix 16) specifically mentioned drawing inspiration from the late king's SEP, emphasising efforts to enhance Thai people's quality of life. She noted that the philosophy has contributed to helping people understand that they can live modest, sustainable lifestyles, especially in rural areas. Additionally, she mentioned that she thinks people should try to 'go back to the fundamentals and basics needs in life and make sure that everyone has the essentials in a world that is getting more and more consumer-driven and in this country where inequality is very high, and people in the rural areas suffer'. Furthermore, many social entrepreneurs appear to be dedicated to positively improving the welfare of Thai society, which is consistent with the monarchy's focus on bettering the lives and well-being of the Thai people.

6.2.3 Cultural influences

Participants were probed about the cultural elements and traditions instilled in them from a young age and the cultural influences and values they perceived as still important today. From a young age, Thais learn that respect involves behaving in a manner that shows consideration for others' feelings, politeness, obedience and humility (Tungtakanpoung, 2016). Most participants mentioned having pride in Thai culture and heritage. The non-native participants indicated fondness and appreciation for Thai culture and traditions, highlighting essential cultural principles and values that are true to the present day. Participants mentioned several principles that were passed on to them, including 'sufficient is enough', 'family first', 'generosity', 'peace', 'calm', 'honesty' and 'smile to fight on'. The desire to repay favours and feel indebted to others, or feeling and having '*Bhun Khun*', is also a

Thai norm. Moreover, most Thais are taught to create and reciprocate *Bhun Khun*. Also, they are taught to have '*Namjai*' or kindness and generosity and to volunteer help. Almost all the participants mentioned *Bhun Khun*, *Namjai* or both.

As indicated by Tor (Male, 32, runs a strawberry farm and restaurant in Northern Thailand – Appendix 20),

> 'Oh, where do I start? Kindness and *tham bun* have been the most important qualities instilled in me. I was raised by my parents to be hospitable, friendly and caring. Even today, I continue to uphold these principles. Oh, I recall going out of my way, even though I was running very late to a very important meeting, to help a group of tourists a couple of years ago before COVID who had communication difficulties… they didn't speak English at all, or Thai, and were completely lost in the middle of nowhere. Regardless of the difficult situations, I always attempt to be welcoming and kind… it is about *Namjai*'.

Certain Thai proverbs were also mentioned in relation to owning an SE. The proverbs mentioned several times were '*dai yang sia yang*' and '*tham dee dai dee tum chua dai chua*'. '*Dai yang sia yang*' is a Thai proverb and a common saying. Boon and Tae mentioned it, and it means losing something to gain something or win something else (further discussed in Discussion section 7.5.2 Influential values and cultural elements). This was mentioned during the discussions about mission drift and having a non-traditional business where the individuals do not retain profits and reinvest them back into the business. The meaning behind this relates to the fact that they are gaining or winning in achieving their goals of creating value; however, they are losing the opportunity to make money as a commercial business. Boon (Male, 32, runs a coffee shop in Bangkok) mentioned:

> 'I could have just continued office jobs and make "okay money' or I could even just run a normal coffee shop and make good money because my location is good... but honestly, I don't think it would satisfy me... sometimes in life, it is just about "*dai yang sia yang*"'.

Tae (Male, 38, runs a café in Bangkok – Appendix 17) had similar sentiments about how busy he is and how hard he works to run his tourism SE. In Thailand, many SEs encounter challenges regarding official registration. Thus, Tae, whose SE is dedicated to assisting stray animals, has raised awareness about the issue. He detailed receiving criticism of his SE, claiming that it should not be considered an SE because it is not directly related to human beings. Nonetheless, Tae is committed to tackling the issue of stray dogs and cats, which he perceives as a major social responsibility and public health concern in Thailand. He considers it a social issue because stray animals can spread diseases among themselves and to the broader community through leftover garbage and food they obtain on the streets, especially in disadvantaged communities. SEs similar to Tae's exist in other contexts (e.g. Cambodia). However, these entrepreneurs struggle to register their enterprise as an SE due to authorities taking time to evaluate whether they meet the criteria for SEs in Thailand.

Tae runs a café and is passionate about helping the country's stray animals (mainly cats and dogs). He grew up in an area in Bangkok surrounded by numerous stray dogs, and he always wanted to help these vulnerable animals. He wishes that these animals would not have to suffer. Recognising the ongoing problem and growing population of stray animals, Tae firmly believes that the root cause lies in the lack of attention and care from the general public and the government. Determined to address this issue, he channelled his passion for animal welfare through his café and is dedicated to supporting various initiatives to improve street animals' lives through the profits he makes from his café. His efforts include medical treatment, vaccination and sterilisation programs, which are crucial in controlling the population of stray cats and dogs. As a result, this helps prevent their suffering and reduces the number of strays on the streets. To raise awareness, Tae also works with schools and occasionally visits as a speaker to discuss this issue and the general improvement of animal welfare in the country. He details:

'I could have it the easy way and be less stressed with work and just work for my family's business, but it wasn't for me, and this is really what I wanted to do... you know it is "*dai yang sia yang*"... somebody needed to do it, and here I am'.

In contrast, the '*tham dee dai dee tum chua dai chua*' proverb means doing good will bring good things, and doing bad will bring bad things. This proverb is said to be influenced by Buddhist ideologies and encourages kindness. It was also mentioned in relation to owning an SE but as a general form of doing good. Kate and Guy explained these cultural values and traditions in different but complementing ways:

'I was raised to be extremely proud of Thailand's culture, monarchy, tradition and history and to always work to maintain these cultural characteristics as part of me. My parents made an effort to make sure I learned the history of this country. I'm grateful to have learned these lessons'. – Kate (Female, 38, involved in community-based tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 11)

'My parents always emphasised respect in all interactions. At the very least, I was taught to greet people with respect with the "*Wai*" (placing two palms together) no matter what. I would, for example, also bow when passing other people, especially elders. I think that respect for others is respect for yourself. My parents taught me that respect for one another creates a society that is more tolerant, understanding and peaceful. I believe it and try to teach my children the same'. – Guy (Male, 36, runs a store and café in Bangkok)

While a few entrepreneurs have had direct experiences (i.e. their families (grandparents) being from specific areas along the borders and their parents having been deprived of proper education), many of them were based on observing the underprivileged and having a passion for assisting. For example, Tor (Male, 32, owns a strawberry farm and restaurant in Northern Thailand – Appendix 20) details:

'Because my father was poor and had a difficult time up for a long time right until I was growing up. Even though I don't remember much, I have heard so many stories about the struggles he faced having no food some days, and I want to help other farmers'.

Tor's strawberry farm and restaurant SE aim to generate employment opportunities and support local farmers. Tor was motivated by his father's struggles as a farmer during his childhood. His vision is deeply rooted in his family's history and his desire to positively impact others' lives. He prioritises hiring underprivileged individuals from the local area or nearby villages. Moreover, Tor's dedication to supporting his staff goes beyond providing employment. At the farm, he ensures that each team member receives the necessary training and guidance to excel. By empowering them with new skills and knowledge, he equips them with the tools they need for personal and professional growth. Additionally, Tor tries to recruit individuals from neighbouring countries, such as Laos and assists them with obtaining the documentation and language skills required to settle in Thailand. He desires the improvement of the farmers' livelihoods and skills in the region.

Therefore, these social entrepreneurs aspire to help communities, those not directly related to them and support their '*Tambons'* (Thai word for sub-district; the smallest unit or region officially recognised at the local administration level). To achieve this, the concepts of benevolence or self-transcendence are essential for decision-making and the actions leading to the pursuit of social entrepreneurship. Thus, this study's findings reveal that the social entrepreneurs' key ambition is to contribute positively to the communities and environments in which they operate. Furthermore, many entrepreneurs displayed benevolent traits, including having a strong sense of responsibility towards addressing social issues, such as employment, cultural preservation and environmental conservation, through their ventures.

6.3 Adolescence and education

The discussions on this phase of the social entrepreneurs' lives are based on what they learned in school about the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) and the late king. The SEP was the most important element discovered in this stage of their lives. The social entrepreneurs' efforts to support local communities showcase their commitment to the SEP's principles and their roles as responsible leaders in the tourism sector. The discussions in this phase are also based on what they learned during school field trips, volunteering experiences, other social projects and travel experiences.

6.3.1 The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

The late king was the SEP's founder. The SEP was formed from the knowledge and practical experiences he gained from developmental projects. While the SEP does not necessarily involve religious actions, Buddhism seems to drive the SEP indirectly. The late king's SEP is an essential foundation for doing good or '*tum dee*' in Thailand, which are also strong Buddhist values. While not a formal institution, the foundations of the SEP, such as trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, sharing and altruism, can be considered norms and a form of social conduct rooted in Thai society. SEP is an informal institution of shared values and ideologies that connects people and helps influence formal social capital. Most participants appear to be motivated by altruistic values, which are also significant in Buddhism. Therefore, there are links between the SEP philosophies and concept behind social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The SEP stems from Buddhist principles because it adapts Buddhist teachings into a more contemporary context. Therefore, understanding basic Buddhist views and how Thai society interprets them is vital to understanding the holistic SEP approach. Theravada Buddhism is considered central to the national identity of Thailand, and its principles influence the lives of most Thai people (von Feigenblatt, Cooper and Pardo, 2022; Joll, 2010).

Geng is the leader of a tourism SE founded by her family. She mentioned being 'inspired by her family's work and having the desire to continue to develop this business to improve the lives of elderly Thai people'. Geng's dedication to her family's tourism business, which focuses on providing specialised care and support for elderly people, showcases her benevolent spirit and dedication to improving the lives of others. She runs an organic restaurant that supports local farmers, which is consistent with her dedication to sustainable practices. The menu items are carefully curated using only locally grown produce, including coffee from a local coffee farm in the North. Through her restaurant, Geng promotes the use of organic and locally sourced ingredients and supports the livelihoods of local farmers and small businesses, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Her responses indicated that she believes in modest and sustainable lifestyles. Moreover, the profits from the tourism SE are donated to a care home, helping to provide specialised care and enhancing the lives of the elderly. This SE's initiatives reflect a holistic understanding of sustainability, encompassing the well-being of the people, the environment and the local community. Geng's restaurant stands out as a model for responsible consumption and environmental consciousness by prioritising organic and sustainable practices.

The SEP encourages self-sufficiency, balance, and responsible decision-making. Therefore, naturally, it is expected that those who hold a SEP mindset and run tourism business are likely to prioritise the well-being of local communities, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. Philosophies of the SEP should inspire moderation and discourages exploitative practices and mass tourism, promoting sustainability and responsibility in the industry.

Geng mentioned:

> 'I support and rely on local suppliers… by empowering local farmers.. I am also helping with resilience and an ethical tourism experience for my customers… Over 80% of my produce is sourced locally…. You know the philosophy [SEP] is a foundation to my decisions… pushes me to pursue business growth in a way that respects the communities'.

In a similar way, Pla (Female, 28, owns a restaurant in Southern Thailand – Appendix 19) detailed:

> 'I believe tourism businesses in Thailand should try to focus on quality of tourist over the amount of tourist number… it has been so been many years that our country focused on quantity that end up creating negative issues for the people who live here.. we should learn not to be greedy'

Knowledge of King at a deeper level came during their time in school during their adolescence. The Thai education system includes government, private and international schools. The system is typically divided into three stages: preschool, primary and secondary education, and further split into different levels. This is similar to kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in Western countries. Individuals who attended Thai schools may know extensively about the late king, his initiatives and Buddhism. However, those who attended international schools also received education on Thai culture, history and language, allowing them to acquire this knowledge. Also, volunteering and school field trips were elements cited as significant points where the social entrepreneurs felt motivated to continue making a difference. These volunteering experiences occurred roughly from middle school onwards and helped the entrepreneurs develop opinions on specific issues and projects they could execute later. This is typically from 12–18 years, also known as '*Matthayom*' 1–6. The school field trips mentioned included visiting temples, the Karen Hill tribe village in the North, the Bangkok School for the Blind (Foundation for the Blind) and nursing homes. Furthermore, the volunteering experiences mentioned in Thai schools included teaching English to vulnerable children and visits to animal shelters. In contrast, the ones mentioned for international schools included visits to elephant conservation parks and Habitat for Humanity.

In relation to education, language and skills, Pat (Female, 33, runs a healthy food café in Northern Thailand - Appendix 21) detailed:

'Through my commitment to being a responsible business, my training programme, which includes English lessons and cooking skills, has benefited over around 200 women. I believe that by investing in different skills for them, I am also nurturing future leaders who will drive change in their communities… and I am making them resilient in the unlikely situation of tough times.. for example, during COVID, it was very tough for them and everyone that lacked skills'.

This study's findings suggest that the social entrepreneurs' activities are consistent with the different elements of the SEP, such as the concept of moderation and self-immunity. For instance, the self-immunity aspect of the SEP encourages people to take care of the environment and preserve it for future generations. According to the SEP, businesses should not prioritise short-term profitability over long-term profitability and other important values, as Kantabutra (2014) stated. Consequently, most participants had long-term ambitions concerning their missions and did not desire rapid expansion, consistent with SE activities requiring time to create value. The participants used words such as 'stability', 'self-reliant', 'slow', 'resilient' and 'sustainable'. The word for sufficiency in Thai translates to 'not too little, not too much' (Noy, 2011). Tae and Geng, who run similar food businesses, also mentioned this concept. Adopting a SEP mindset encourages individuals to be reasonable, moderate and self-immune and reduces the likelihood of harmful exploitation or mistreatment of the environment and natural resources (Mongsawad, 2010).

The SEP may seem vague to the average individual. However, Thai people broadly understand its concepts as part of their cultural environment, and these concepts hold significant meaning in various sociocultural contexts (von Feigenblatt, Cooper and Pardo, 2022).

'I know that Westerners might not understand how much "*por piang*" (or sufficiency) means to us (Thais) and how important it is'. – Pat (Female, 33, runs a healthy food café in Northern Thailand).

In contrast, Pong (Male, 30, owns a small hotel in Bangkok – Appendix 15) mentioned:

'Sometimes even Thai people misunderstand the concept of SEP.. like they think SEP rejects wealth and means not having, not spending money and not trying to become rich... that's not what it is about, it is about making sure to have food on the table then improving the quality of your life slowly... and holding on to the idea of "*por piang*" and not indulging'.

Similar to Pong's views, Pla (Female, 28, owns a restaurant in Southern Thailand) detailed:

'Even though I am from a young generation, I think I resonate with the SEP idea... probably because my parents talk about it a lot because they respect King Bhumibol a lot. I feel it is the right way to live... but I have also heard people say that maybe Thailand is still a poor country because we know about the philosophy... I don't think so; I think if anything, we have problems in this country because a lot of people don't follow or understand the SEP correctly'.

The SEP is infused with local symbolism and supports the traditional Thai social structure, which is centred on the fatherly figure of the late king. The participants regarded the SE business model as one that aligned with their values better than traditional business models based on similar projects.

Likewise, Chai (Male, 44, runs a guesthouse and café in Northern Thailand – Appendix 18) mentioned:

'I feel the SEP matches with the values I grew up with since I was a child. They (the school) taught me about "not-too-little, not-too-much"... the truth is

I actually try to make use of these concepts in my everyday life and my business actions'.

Several other Thai social entrepreneurs similarly stated that the SEP 'matches', 'aligns', 'links' and 'is similar' to their values and beliefs. Even though meeting basic needs is still important in the sufficiency economy, happiness can be achieved by controlling one's desire for material possessions, avoiding excessive greed, practicing ethical behaviour, and engaging in sincere work (Noy, 2011).

6.4 Relationships

This phase of the social entrepreneurs' lives focuses on the social pressures and struggles they have experienced. The discussions in this stage are based on their relationships with others, including extended family ties, friends and social networks and their relationships with and perceptions of their communities. The entrepreneurs were also asked about their role models and businesses from which they have found inspiration.

6.4.1 Collectivism

Thailand is a collectivist society, reflected in a close long-term commitment to member groups, such as families and relationships. Religion, particularly Buddhism, plays a significant role in promoting collectivistic values. Thai culture is deeply rooted and influential in the lifestyles and mindsets of people in the nation, with a significant cultural coherence in their values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, even in the present day (Jirapornkul and Yolles, 2010). Trepte (2017) attributed this coherence to the social identity and self-categorisation theories, which suggest that individuals categorise themselves and have a sense of belonging to certain groups, including culture and nationality. The participants indicated that their collectivist attitudes and intentions derived from Thai culture influenced their social entrepreneurial pursuits. They exhibited a deep connection to their communities that triggered their actions.

Questions were asked regarding the participants' relationships with their families, communities and social networks. This extends to their views on community engagement and the significance of a sense of community in the study context. For example, Jane (Female, 42, involved in cultural tourism in Northern Thailand – Appendix 7) noted that her decision to pursue TSE was influenced by an instinctive desire to preserve the disappearing Thai culture, as observed in Northern Thailand due to the development in the region.

> 'It was troubling seeing the Thai culture being changed by visitors who were coming into the small local communities. I wanted to create long-lasting change and impact and revive our Thai culture by empowering local leaders to promote the culture through entrepreneurship, Thai-style service and storytelling. In the beginning, it was a big challenge because most people were impressed by Western cultures. Somehow, they thought their own culture was inferior. But I kept trying because I think tourism is the best way to preserve and show the Thai culture to others and to enrich our destination. In this way, I started creating my SE that increased locals' income by presenting the Thai way of living'.

Generally, the participants' responses also highlighted the importance of family and drawing inspiration from them. Some participants mentioned that it was common for different generations to live together, usually in a big complex or neighbourhood. Mew and Tap mentioned that Thai people consider and refer to strangers as their 'brothers and sisters'. Brother–sister relationships (not requiring being related) are one of the most well-known Thai social values (Tungtakanpoung, 2016). The system promotes respect and obedience, which is significant in Thai culture. Thus, this indicates a tight-knit culture and a collectivist mindset. Mew (Female, 32, involved with cultural tourism in Bangkok) stated, 'us Thais, we are all '*loog pee loog nong*' and so we should want to do things to help each other'. *Loog pee loog nong* means cousins and siblings and relates to the brother–sister concept in the broader sense. Additionally, some participants reported maintaining close bonds with their extended families and villages if they moved away for work. Decha (Male, 37, runs a travel and tour agency in works in various regions) said, 'It

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is not strange to see children being raised by grandparents or aunts and uncles if parents work far away. This is very common because we (Thais) usually have good relationships with close and extended families'. Moreover, younger family members are expected to assist with caring for the elderly, whether financially or with housekeeping duties.

Family plays an important role in generally establishing a business and SEs. As seen in the childhood chapter, the immediate family instilled values and imparted the principles of being a good person during the participants' childhood. Some participants also mentioned that even though they are now leaders of SEs, which were family businesses, they are fully dedicated and passionate. This is also because they grew up in the business environment. Tap (Male, 28, runs a guesthouse in Bangkok – Appendix 22) mentioned that 'it's not like my family forced me to help run their business, and I complied; I actually am passionate about running this business well because it matches what I value in life and what I grew up with'. Tap and Mew (whose tourism SE was also founded by her family) mentioned a Thai proverb, '*mun yuu nai sai lured*', meaning it runs in the family or the blood. This was mentioned in terms of the family instilling specific values that encouraged them to want to do good in society.

The collected data revealed that Thai social entrepreneurs are driven mainly by pull factors that encourage them to correct injustices and seek self-fulfilment. They are not driven by push factors typically associated with job dissatisfaction. Based on the interviews and observations, Thai social entrepreneurs are not motivated by power, recognition or autonomy. Hence, in the Thai context, pull factors are considered more significant than push factors regarding SE motivation. Participants expressed their desire to be involved in meaningful projects and make a real difference in improving Thai people's well-being, livelihood and capabilities. They aim to become essential contributors towards this goal.

Mary (Female, 37, works in environmental tourism in Southern Thailand – Appendix 23), who has a Danish background, expressed that she saw an

opportunity to 'improve the area's health' through marine conservation and was inspired to create a diving school that offers diving lessons (mainly international tourist clients but also domestic tourists and locals) and protection and restoration of coral reefs training. Her diving schools are predominantly run by local community members who undergo training and obtain the certification to become instructors. They then teach the courses and programmes. By involving the local community in the SE's operations, Mary enhances their stakeholder capacity, promoting local ownership and empowerment. The profits generated by the school are reinvested into the business and contribute towards raising awareness about marine conservation, ensuring the SE's long-term viability and impact. This financial sustainability allows her to continue her environmental conservation and community empowerment mission without compromising her vision. Mary has travelled a lot in the country due to her previous work. She stated, 'I did have a good time travelling around the world, and I could have continued... but I was triggered by some of the things I've seen and wanted to personally do something... to help fix problems I have seen in this country I love'. She mentioned that one of the primary reasons she launched her tourism SE was 'to help fix the social inequities to improve the neighbourhood's well-being for those in the neighbourhood and help the community develop positively'.

Additionally, the participants stated that securing funds to establish an SE is extremely difficult for a young adult in Thailand. For instance, Poom (Male, 27, involved in accommodations in Northern Thailand – Appendix 29), Boat (Male, 28, runs a restaurant in Bangkok – Appendix 24) and Tor (Male, 32, runs a restaurant in Northern Thailand – Appendix 20) mentioned having to heavily rely on support from family members and friends for financial aid and using personal funds to obtain the capital needed to launch the SEs because it is hard for young social entrepreneurs to access funds. Boat detailed that:

> 'I think because my business involves a subject that I think Thai people don't really care about, I really had a hard time getting money to start up… even from the banks and other ways I tried… without my family's investment I could not have started my business because I didn't have the funds either'.

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Boat is the founder of a tourism SE that lies at the intersection between the food and education categories. He combines his two passions, i.e. environmental awareness and food waste management, to create a more sustainable environment. He is deeply committed to educating and raising awareness about environmental issues and food waste management, aiming to create a sustainable environment with a place for everyone. Witnessing the alarming amount of food wasted in his community and the lack of awareness on this critical topic, Boat felt compelled to take action. He saw an opportunity to positively impact the environment by opening his restaurant.

Moreover, Boat's restaurant is dedicated to achieving zero waste. He believes Thailand would benefit from an awareness of food waste management and an understanding of various ways to reduce food waste. Boat educates his customers about these issues at his restaurant and showcases how his food is based on the zero-waste approach. He ensures that different aspects of his restaurant operations, such as sourcing ingredients and waste disposal, follow the principles of minimising waste and promoting responsible practices. Furthermore, Boat extends his educational initiatives outside the restaurant to the general public through workshops and seminars. He conducts regular workshops on food waste challenges, waste sorting and recycling systems, empowering individuals with knowledge and tools to make a difference in their daily lives. He also prioritises continuous education for his staff about these issues and takes pride in having staff who are as committed to the problem as he is. Boat mentioned that his staff's commitment to the cause makes them 'important partners in this route towards a more sustainable environment in Thailand'.

6.4.2 Contextual drivers

During the discussions based on the photographs, it became apparent that the social entrepreneurs had similar concerns about their context. They selected identical photographs related to issues observed in Thailand. These photographs included disadvantaged communities, underprivileged children and ocean litter or clean-up campaigns. Many participants also selected pictures of their past

volunteer work and merit-making offerings and donations. Generally, most participants stated that their motivations for pursuing their tourism SEs in Thailand stemmed from their values and backgrounds. They described several challenges they felt obliged to solve in their communities, such as political instability, which slows the nation's economic and social progress, people's vulnerability to weak economic conditions, high poverty rates and significant inequalities. Similar challenges were identified in the British Council's (2020) study, which affirmed that millions of Thailand's population were still trapped in poverty and deprivation despite the nation's transformation into a middle-income country. Based on the photographs the tourism social entrepreneurs selected, witnessing or knowing about disadvantaged communities and children in the country influenced them to take action.

The selected photographs depicted groups of people sitting in and around poor housing, infrastructure and '*Khlongs*' (the Thai word for canals spawned by the Chao Phraya, Mae Klong and Tha Chin rivers and their tributaries). The photographs also depicted children sitting on the streets and families or groups of people eating on the floor alongside the *Khlongs*. The entrepreneurs have observed or known about these communities, areas or situations for a long time. For instance, The Khlong Toei Slum in Bangkok, depicted in the photographs, was mentioned by five participants who live and run SEs in Bangkok. The Khlong Toei Slum is Bangkok's largest slum, inhabited by approximately 100,000 people and is also one of the largest low-income communities in the capital city (Manatakis, 2018). The inhabitants live crammed together in tin-roofed, dilapidated homes on stilts over the (polluted and swamp-like) water near Bangkok's main port.

Notably, various situational and personal factors influenced the participants' career paths. The participants' intentions reflect their motivations, such as the desire to address people's needs and social challenges. These factors have been revealed to influence behaviour and therefore are dominant predictors, especially in planned and goal-oriented behaviour (Mair and Noboa, 2003). In addition, specific backgrounds and exposure to particular experiences can encourage people to want to meet the needs of others. For instance, My (Female, 28, runs a farm,

restaurant and café in Bangkok and works in Northern Thailand – Appendix 25) stated that her primary driving force was her passion for and desire to empower local farmers economically because agriculture is a critical sector in Thailand. My stated that:

> 'Farmers and their work have always been the backbone to this nation, so we must try to make sure local restaurants produce food and drinks using locally available, fresh and natural ingredients… especially to help local farmers… but also for the numerous tourists who come to our area'.

She assisted so that 'the farmers are educated, supported and survive in a competitive market, and it didn't take long before people started knowing my café and restaurant'. Thus, she purchased goods from local farmers and producers and used them in her café. By providing organic food and drink that is not genetically modified or contaminated by chemicals during production, she believes restaurants can help eradicate food-related health issues. Similarly, a comment made by Tor (Male, 32, runs a strawberry farm and restaurant in Northern Thailand – Appendix 20) also reflected this:

> 'My main priorities were creating opportunities of employment for disadvantaged people, and I want to help eliminate poverty in the agriculture industry and among local farmers. I care about them and have seen the challenges my father encountered when I was younger. I realised farming ventures like his could be improved if someone did something. It is deep and personal, but that was the main motivation for me'.

Several participants stated they were motivated by the social inequality and scarcity they witnessed in their environment. Likewise, some entrepreneurs cited 'One Tambon One Product' or OTOP as a source of inspiration and a good initiative that has helped various communities. The OTOP programme supports unique, locally made products of each Thai *tambon* (sub-district) all over the country, and each is known for different products. OTOP comprises several local products, including handicrafts, cotton and silk, household items and food. It encourages

local businesses to be self-reliant and creates a stable income for the community members. It is also believed to align with tourism promotion policies, and the industry can act as a vital marketer for OTOP products. Tourism social entrepreneurs engage in social entrepreneurship because they believe in their potential to improve and develop communities and their nation. Sharir and Lerner (2006) identified fulfilling obligations to the community by addressing social issues as a leading motive for engaging in TSE. Therefore, the motives reflect the situational issues that influence behaviour and are dominant predictors, especially in planned and goal-oriented behaviour (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Cohen et al. (2019) asserted that an entrepreneur's career choice should be understood as being influenced by personal and situational factors. This assertion relates to the insights provided by the push and pull theory (explained in Literature review section 4.2.2 and in Discussion section 7.3). Thus, it is plausible that most participants in this study engaged in TSE due to pull factors.

6.4.3 Altruism

The participants' responses showed that their altruistic tendencies motivated them to pursue social entrepreneurship. Altruism is linked to collectivist values and philosophies and is one of Buddhism's 10 'Rajadhamma' principles, known as '*Parricaga*' (unselfishness) (Vaughn, 2018). Every participant mentioned having the passion to work for the betterment of society and showed altruistic values when discussing their stories. Altruism is the opposite of selfishness, and altruistic behaviour involves helping others without expecting anything in return and sometimes at a cost to oneself. Again, most Thais already have a deep-rooted psychological urge to be good in society (Jittichanon, 2018).

Similarly, the concept of 'good people will have a better life' was also mentioned by Tae (Male, 38, runs a café in Bangkok) and Boon (Male, 32, owns a coffee shop in Bangkok). This psychological dimension is called '*Bhun Khun*' (Jittichanon, 2018). Based on this concept, it can be inferred that social entrepreneurs believe that doing good leads to a good life whilst causing harm results in negative

consequences. This belief is reminiscent of the concept of *Karma*, in which many entrepreneurs expressed belief. Tae further explained that 'Helping a little, showing some form of kindness is not hard, doesn't cost anything and can only bring you good things back… so why not'.

In addition, Boon said, 'It is about being a good person and being a good person involves having *Namjai* and being thankful.. having *Namjai* means considering the benefits of those around and co-existing in a way that is kind'.

The participants' responses indicated that being concerned about others' well-being and working towards improving their lives is based on the concept of *Karma*. Receiving rewards based on the participants' motivations to do what is right includes feeling good about helping others. However, most participants' perceptions suggested that they do not engage in social entrepreneurship just to feel good about helping others. Instead, they engage in it because of their inclination to 'do what is right' and the desire to enhance the well-being of others in society without expecting a reward for it. Thus, there is a natural inclination to help others without expecting external or intrinsic rewards from the actions.

Karn (Female, 39, involved in cultural tourism in Bangkok) and Mew (Female, 32, involved with tours and excursions in Bangkok) shared similar views, stating that:

'There is not much to it. I think that I always just want to help others. It's in my nature, and even without a business in the tourism industry, I think I would still be helping whenever I can. Some of us are just wired this way in our heads'. – Karn

'I am not concerned about the profits in relation to myself... it is not for me... it is to help the slum community by providing basic needs and skills to help them find work. It is my way of giving back… Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and fairness'. – Mew

Karn and Mew's responses indicate that pursuing social entrepreneurship 'feels right' as she has the drive to help those who are part of society. They do not expect rewards and want to help locals attain a sufficient source of income.

Clearly, for social entrepreneurs, altruism precedes financial success and commercial gain, and they emphasise self-transcendence. The traditional business model in which enterprises seek to maximise the economic worth of their stakeholders while generating profits opposes social entrepreneurship values. This aligns with the findings that social entrepreneurs hold a high level of pro-social, self-transcendent receptivity to changing values (Cohen et al., 2019; Stephan and Drencheva, 2017). As a result, they are typically content to work for minimal pay and already anticipate it. Similarly, Barendsen and Gardner (2004) demonstrated how social entrepreneurs are more motivated by the need to undertake meaningful acts and cope with difficult life situations than regular business owners. Ideological drivers are essential when defining social entrepreneurs and their mission-driven, search-for-meaning personalities. Every participant cited altruistic tendencies and is motivated by some altruistic value. Thus, altruism is essentially a moral principle, and the concept of doing good to have a meaningful life is consistent across all participant responses. Mew (Female, 32, involved in cultural tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 13) stated:

> 'I personally think that we should all push to make the world a better place. Thailand can be better. Nearly everything that I do is because of the moral thoughts in my head of helping others and to give my own life meaning. I believe that it is our duty to lend a helping hand to those that have not been so lucky in life. I generally always think about the well-being of others, and this has pushed my decision to start an SE'.

For instance, Mary, Krit, Term and Kate stated that they were motivated to become social entrepreneurs because of their 'desire to help those in need' and 'in rough situations'. Krit (Male, 41, runs a travel and tour agency in Northern Thailand) mentioned that 'most city visitors would not be able to easily find convenient means of transport from the cities to nearby conservation areas and parks, so they wanted

to step in to help tourists and to alleviate their challenges and at the same time support conservation areas and parks'. He also detailed the visitor's role in the parks' conservation efforts and raising awareness. Chai (Male, 44, runs a guesthouse in Northern Thailand – Appendix 18) also displayed altruistic tendencies. He observed that 'nature degradation was becoming normal with the high number of tourists visiting, but local authorities still seemed most interested in profits from tourism-related activities and visits'. As a result, he was encouraged to take action because of this. Chai believed in addressing these challenges by creating 'a social enterprise that would support the protection of wildlife and green spaces through innovative nature and wildlife conservation initiatives, activities and events because I imagined that tourists could make an impact beyond the financial gains'.

Nonetheless, the desire to eliminate guilt and feel good about the self is another factor that motivates individuals to engage in TSE in Thailand but can still be linked to altruism. Altruism is expressed as being in a state of mind that involves constant consideration towards others (Diacon, 2014). However, a vital debate surrounding altruism concerns the existence of pure altruism versus selfishness. This is also regarded as altruistic guilt and is related to guilt triggers and the desire to engage in social entrepreneurship for personal satisfaction. Therefore, can this be considered pure altruism? Some participants mentioned being moved by guilt and 'feeling bad' when they witnessed communities experiencing various socioeconomic challenges. These sentiments were expressed through the participants' voices and facial expressions during the discussions about discomfort (regarding inequality and knowledge of those who are struggling), guilt (regarding having more), eagerness (regarding wanting to do something to help) and gratitude (for not being in the same situation).

For instance, Mark (Male, 31, runs a travel and tours agency in Bangkok – Appendix 26) selected photographs of his volunteering experience, the Bangkok skyline and a disadvantaged group of people. Mark, who has a Malaysian background, founded a tourism SE classified under the travel and tours category.

His tours focus on showcasing what Bangkok offers by using local guides. By providing them with employment, Mark desires to support and help the underprivileged have a better life and live comfortably within society and the community. Mark supports the locals' livelihoods and ensures tourists experience an authentic and culturally enriching journey through Bangkok by incorporating local guides in his tours. In addition, Mark's tours are thoughtfully designed to showcase the best of Bangkok while promoting ethical and socially responsible practices. For instance, temple visits offer insights into the country's rich cultural heritage, while full-day tuk-tuk and walking tours through hidden communities provide a glimpse into the local lifestyle. The arts and crafts activities with the locals at the floating market foster cultural exchange and contribute to the community's economic empowerment. Also, Mark recognises the challenges faced by sex workers and the importance of providing them with a pathway to a better life. His profits are directed towards supporting these individuals with leaving the industry, equipping them with the tools necessary for starting afresh. Mark empowers the sex workers with education and skills training to break free from exploitation. He considers this a critical issue in the country that still needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, his responses revealed some guilt about having a relatively easy life growing up. Despite having a relaxed upbringing, Mark's understanding of the struggles faced by the underprivileged fuels his determination to create positive change and improve the lives of the less fortunate. Mark stated:

> 'My SE has provided an avenue for me to help the community so I can stop feeling guilty about having more while others are missing the most basic needs. I always feel good after helping the underprivileged, and that is why I have invested in creating value for them and the community'.

He further explained:

'The well-being of the environment and the local communities are linked together… by working with locals, I educate and encourage responsible travel practices among tourists, and I also believe every tourist can be an agent of positive change'.

John (Male, 31, works in travel and tours in Southern Thailand – Appendix 27) shared comparable thoughts:

'I am grateful that I've had a good life that a lot don't get the chance to have… I feel lucky, and I also feel bad and uncomfortable when I see people in this area struggle'.

John has an Australian background, and his journey as a social entrepreneur is motivated by gratitude for his good life, education and travel experiences. His volunteering experiences during his youth played an important role in influencing his desire to impact society positively. He feels a strong sense of responsibility towards contributing to the well-being of others, particularly those in need. With a passion for addressing pressing social issues, John directs his profits towards ending violence in the Southern border region. He recognises the ongoing issue of violence in this region, which violates human rights and affects the lives of many, including children, women and communities. John is committed to promoting peace and social harmony, empowering those affected by violence. Thus, John's tourism SE provides island tour packages with full-day offers, including accommodation, food and beverages, half-day packages and activities, such as jungle trekking, river tours and visits to remote fishing villages and local communities. He focuses on working with local partners and suppliers, such as eco-friendly lodging on remote islands. This enables him to ensure that the income generated from his tours is retained within the region, contributing to the economic well-being of the local communities. Furthermore, he aims to raise awareness about the region's potential and highlight the importance of supporting those affected by violence by showcasing the Southern border's natural beauty and cultural richness.

Mary (Female, 37, runs a diving school in Southern Thailand – Appendix 23) expressed similar views. She stated:

'For me, creating my SE is a personal journey of feeling bad about having a lot compared to others who have none. Guilt is not the only reason for creating this SE, but I believe it played a big role in my final decision. There is a sense of happiness and fulfilment that I get helping people in need'.

Mary's responses highlighted how she was affected by observing inequality in the country. Having travelled around the country as part of her previous marketing career, her tourism SE was created because she felt uncomfortable with having had a good life while seeing others suffering. She feels fulfilled by trying to improve the area's development. Thus, her passion lies in solving environment-related issues.

This study's findings indicated that social obligations influenced the entrepreneurs in the Thai tourism industry to engage in social entrepreneurship. Some participants aim to create value because they believe they are obligated to give back to society due to personal guilt. Without a sense of obligation, they might not engage in social entrepreneurship. Thus, the participants are driven by their conscience to engage in social entrepreneurship to provide solutions to some of the observed challenges. The responses indicated that the entrepreneurs are motivated to engage in TSE by intrinsic reward. In this case, the reward is happiness because creating value for the underprivileged reduces or eliminates the feeling of guilt.

6.5 Adulthood, career and future outlook

The discussions regarding this phase of the entrepreneurs' lives are focused on their vision for the future of tourism in Thailand. It also involves discussions centred on what success means to them.

6.5.1 Outlook on tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand

All participants demonstrated commitment to their work and tourism SE, and most of them indicated that they were in no rush to scale their businesses. The data collected revealed that Thai social entrepreneurs understand the positive social impacts of tourism in creating employment and generating income and are troubled by the negative social issues in the country. Thus, their tourism SEs focus on specific issues in Thailand. Regarding the elements that influenced their decisions to pursue social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry, several participants mentioned feeling compelled to become change agents and 'important actors' within one of Thailand's critical sectors (tourism). Different themes surfaced regarding what the entrepreneurs aimed to achieve from their engagement in social entrepreneurship and the impact scale, differentiating social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The discussions revealed key themes: community development and improvement, environmental protection and inequality elimination.

The participants reflected on Thailand's challenges over the last decade, the impact on social entrepreneurship and how they could be addressed. Some participants cited political instability as being responsible for slowing the nation's progress and increasing inequalities. Studies showed that despite transforming into an upper-middle-income country, millions of Thai people were still trapped in poverty, deprivation and inequality (British Council, 2020). The tourism social entrepreneurs in this study indicated that the underprivileged, youth and disadvantaged communities are the groups most affected by Thailand's issues. Therefore, these are beneficiaries the entrepreneurs tend to invest efforts into supporting alongside environmental issues. This aligns with the British Council's (2020) report that the top five social matters that SEs in Thailand focus on are improving specific communities, protecting the environment, promoting education and literacy, improving health and well-being and supporting other SEs or

organisations (British Council, 2020; Win, 2017; Asian Venture Philanthropy Network, 2017).

6.5.2 Thailand's Tourism value chain

The tourism value chain requires cooperation between various businesses to determine the success of a product or service. It is a network of tourism businesses involved in diverse activities, ranging from providing an entire spectrum of tourism products and services to offering tourism products in tourist regions (Szpilko, 2017). The value chain includes members from the private and public sectors, i.e. the government and various authorities. Individuals and firms within the tourism industry are nodes in the value chain that cooperate to create and deliver sustainable value for tourists and generate profits (Song, Liu and Chen, 2013). Tourism social entrepreneurs and their SEs are also included in this network. Tourism SEs support collaboration and foster sustainable linkages between different value chain elements (Rogerson, 2012). They facilitate the creation of indirect benefits for vulnerable individuals by stimulating positive impacts in the tourism supply chain. Thailand and its communities are linked to agriculture; therefore, creating more responsible connections between agriculture and tourism can be beneficial.

The interviews revealed that the development and effectiveness of TSE in Thailand require more support from different stakeholders in tourism, particularly the government. Despite creating several initiatives and policies in recent years, some participants mentioned a lack of support from authorities. Correspondingly, literature has also identified a lack of governmental support as a hindering factor for SEs in Thailand (Pillsbury, 2016). Additionally, participants mentioned the need to improve public participation and engagement in social entrepreneurship initiatives to raise awareness. Similarly, Boon (Male, 32, runs a café in Bangkok – Appendix 8) notes:

> 'SEs have been in Thailand for a long time, but even today, nobody or very few people understand SEs and actually, the truth is most of the public

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doesn't know what SEs are, and I think SEs are misunderstood and not cared about… because if they actually know what we are, I am sure they would see we believe in same ideas as the SEP'.

This is consistent with previous findings indicating that Thailand's SE products and services are misunderstood and regarded as low quality (British Council, 2020; Le, 2019). Also, Asians primarily consider philanthropic efforts through donations as doing good. Therefore, hybrid companies like SEs might not 'feel right'. This could be one of the reasons there is still suspicion and a lack of interest and awareness about social entrepreneurship in the Thai context.

6.5.3 Future outlooks and sustainability

Social entrepreneurship and business sustainability are naturally connected. Sustainable development addresses global challenges, while SEs outline positive social change (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). For instance, it has been revealed that SEs pursue a group of interrelated SDGs (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). Several social entrepreneurs in this study were encouraged and inspired by the SDGs related to their vision and objectives. A few participants specifically mentioned SDG 1, No Poverty, which is unsurprising as the poverty and inequality in the country are evident. This inequality can also be linked to The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018, which indicated that Thailand has high entrepreneurship rates. However, entrepreneurship is naturally associated with high inequality due to the risk and income it can create (Yanya, Abdul- Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013). Mary (Female, 37, runs a diving school in Southern Thailand) also mentioned SDG 14, Life below Water, related to her marine conservation business. Consequently, interest in sustainable development continues to grow and is being examined in different contexts.

Any SEs' objectives should correspond with sustainable development goals to foster an enhanced quality of life. SEs are drivers of sustainable development because they promote economic growth sustainably and inclusively (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). While discussing what they hoped to achieve by engaging in

social entrepreneurship, Kate (Female, 38, involved in community-based tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 11) stated, 'I think that tourism has a great potential in improving communities'. For this reason, she set out to bring social and economic change through community-based tourism because she 'couldn't just stand by while people were suffering in poverty'. She commented that tourism presented an excellent opportunity for developing communities, especially those in rural areas. Kate stated:

'Our people's economic standing would improve through the right initiatives because the tourist industry is significant to the Thai economy. I was inspired by using tourism as a way to help develop impoverished communities by lowering unemployment and giving the communities income they can count on'.

Ultimately, Kate desires to reduce poverty, enhance the locals' quality of life, conserve Thai culture and eradicate economic inequalities. This objective was also reflected in Jane (Female, 42, involved in cultural tourism in Northern Thailand – Appendix 7) comments. She mentioned engaging in social entrepreneurship to impact local communities in specific regions positively. Term expressed:

'If I can be honest with you, I really wanted to contribute to the livelihoods of the local people in Thai. That's how my venture was established. In this way, tourists would live amongst the people in some of the most remote places, providing resources directly to the locals. For example, a visit to the local fruit vendors would help them improve their income on a regular basis. No matter how little it looked, I wanted to bring hope to mostly poor locals by introducing tourism to their lives. I want them to have money in their own pockets, a good amount of money, even though I know they would be happy with a small amount'.

According to Pla (Female, 28, involved in environmental tourism in Southern Thailand – Appendix 19), the desire to bring change contributed to her decision to start her SE. She stated: 'I desired to implement projects to bring real social change, particularly in the tourism sector as a vital part of the Thai economy'. Pla is the founder of a tourism SE classified under the environmental tourism category.

Being in a tourist 'hot spot' (as stated by Pla), Pla runs a restaurant where profits go to support her goals in promoting education and awareness about environmental sustainability in the South. She works with schools and communities to inform local youth and children about environmental and tourism issues in the Southern tourist hotspots. She believes in empowering future generations to work towards positive change by enhancing local education. In addition, she mentioned witnessing 'numerous cases of employee exploitation, poor working conditions and environmental degradation due to tourism-related activities. Especially in this niche'. Therefore, she 'believed she had a chance to change people's outlook on the world around them by coming up with something new'. Accordingly, she remarked, 'It was time to create something creative, exciting and sustainable. I could not imagine being an enabler of exploitation and environmental degradation. I just had to start something'.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Nut (Male, 29, involved in environmental tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 28), who believes that novel tourism ideas would help solve social problems that have been increasing in recent years. Nut is passionate about conserving the environment, which aligns with his tourism SE, classified under the environmental tourism category. His responses indicated his awareness of how important tourism is for Thailand's economy and its effects on the local's quality of life. Through his diving school profits, he raises awareness and educates the locals about engaging in sustainable tourism and how it helps preserve the ecosystem. Nut offers programs that provide knowledge on coral reef ecosystems and marine conservation and holds workshops and activities in the South and Bangkok to raise awareness.

Furthermore, he expressed concerns about the growth of mass tourism ruining the physical and sociocultural environment. Nut reported that he had noticed that the number of tourists had increased significantly over the years. However, most tourism stakeholders within the jurisdiction, particularly tourism businesses, local governments and communities, have disregarded sustainable tourism development. This is most probably due to a lack of awareness. Nut mentioned that the current tourism stakeholders were 'primarily concentrating on the short-

term economic advantages of tourism, yet I understood that even though tourism is important for the Thai economy, there are long-term effects harmful to our quality of life, especially for those of us who live in tourist areas'. In this regard, he decided it would be beneficial to create a business that would make a difference in the neighbourhood while mitigating the detrimental effects of tourism. He believed it was his responsibility to inform the 'local populations about sustainable forms of tourism like responsible tourism and community-based tourism and how it supports the preservation of the ecosystem'.

Tourism can act as a pathway for achieving social goals through social entrepreneurship. Depending on their mission, SEs can simultaneously secure profits, create valuable social impact, and contribute towards environmental sustainability within the tourism industry. When SEs are integrated into tourism, visitors receive authentic experiences, and money is retained by the local people, communities and the destination, improving the community's resilience. Therefore, tourism enterprises impact all three aspects: financial, social and environmental.

6.5.4 The SEP's relationship with sustainability

The SEP is consistent with sustainable development based on the Brundtland report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This is because they are both founded on responsible consumption by the current generation. While not a formal institution, the SEP's foundations, such as trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, sharing and altruism, are elements rooted in Thai society, and it acts as an informal establishment of shared values and ideologies, connecting people and influencing formal institutions. Having a SEP mentality urges individuals to be moderate, reasonable and self-immune; therefore, they would not exploit the environment and natural resources. The SEP approach supports the financial and productive autonomy of the community while developing an environmentally sustainable economy and including the community members in the production and management process. In this regard, the Buddhist principle of compassion and respect for people and the environment provides an ethical foundation.

Jane's (Female, 42, involved in cultural tourism in Northern Thailand) responses include links to the SEP. Her responses indicated that she acknowledges the SEP's contribution to promoting modest and sustainable lifestyles. Her vision to 'go back to the fundamentals' and ensure that everyone has their essential needs met, despite the increase in consumer-driven tendencies and high inequality in the country, highlights the holistic potential of SEP in advancing sustainability goals. Thus, the SEP's core principle of modest and sustainable living resonates with Jane's approach. Furthermore, Jane's belief in ensuring everyone has access to essentials reflects the SEP's core tenet of prioritising basic needs before pursuing excessive desires. She promotes a reduced ecological footprint and a greater sense of self-sufficiency by encouraging people, especially in rural areas, to adopt simpler and more resource-efficient lifestyles.

Additionally, she showcases the positive impacts of responsible and sustainable practices on local communities and environments through her tourism initiatives. Jane's awareness of the country's inequality and rural suffering aligns with the SEP's emphasis on balanced and equitable development. Furthermore, she uplifts disadvantaged communities, providing employment opportunities, education and support through her tourism SE. This approach bridges the gap between rural and urban areas, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable society. The SEP emphasises empowering local communities to assume responsibility for their development. Jane's SE exemplifies this approach by actively involving locals and encouraging their participation in the tourism industry. Therefore, this empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the sustainability of their cultural heritage and natural resources. Also, Jane mentioned, 'I enjoy how my business helps preserve and promote the Thai culture and allows tourists to immerse themselves in our unique traditions'.

Kate (Female, 38, involved in community-based tourism in Bangkok – Appendix 11) reported that what she hoped to achieve by establishing her SE was to assist other businesses in executing their operations and implementing initiatives to promote the development of Thailand's local villages. She mentioned trying to 'work with

others and serve as a link between tourists who wanted to visit and discover (our) communities responsibly while promoting Thai culture and values and empowering the community'.

Likewise, Tep (Male, 29, owns a restaurant in Bangkok – Appendix 14) reported starting an education program to help vulnerable individuals escape poverty by teaching them how to make wholesome meals and secure future employment. 'Nothing has moved me as much as hearing about families go without food for days due to poverty... in the poor communities I visit to *tham bun*. I have seen many children go through harsh and ill childhoods because of poverty', he detailed. Furthermore, Tep described that he was primarily motivated to launch the SE to create feeding programs for those in need. He felt 'happy when the youth have access to food, safe environments and medical treatment if necessary. I would do this repeatedly for the same motives'.

Regarding other motivations for pursuing tourism SEs, the participants mentioned reasons ranging from protecting the environment and promoting education and literacy to improving well-being. The participants discussed how their experiences impacted their decisions to pursue particular objectives through social entrepreneurship. Boat (Male, 28, runs a restaurant in Bangkok – Appendix 24) stated:

> 'Personally, my goal of social entrepreneurship was to develop a creative food business because of my personal interest in food and cooking. I wanted to use my interest and hobby to make a positive impact and create a sustainable environment. I also want to educate on a subject that is not so common in Thailand... or a topic I think people don't really think about. That is why I wanted to focus on food and waste management'.

In contrast, Poom (Male, 27, runs a boutique hotel in Northern Thailand – Appendix 29) aims to enhance community development by providing food, vocational training and education (including English lessons) to at-risk youth and children from Thailand and the borders of Laos and Myanmar through a socially innovative

strategy. In addition, Poom helps local businesses by purchasing materials to run his small boutique hotel. He noted that this approach 'would lead to a sustainable income and awareness for the small enterprises in the area, a better community and networks and a positive local economy'.

6.6 Concluding remarks

Based on this study's findings, the intention to pursue TSE is influenced by religious elements, collectivistic mindsets and personal views of altruism. The findings also highlight essential aspects that influenced the social entrepreneurs' motivation, including the nation's cultural patterns and specific Thai values. It is also clear that contextual drivers from witnessing and experiencing social inequality in the country triggered the pursuit of social entrepreneurship.

The collectivist culture and strong respect for King Bhumibol Adulyadej profoundly impacted social entrepreneurs in the country. The late king's dedication to the ongoing progress of the Thai people instilled a sense of appreciation and duty in social entrepreneurs to contribute to their community. Several participants shared that their early exposure to the late king's teachings and deeds motivated them to pursue social entrepreneurship to enhance the livelihoods of their fellow citizens. In addition, the SEP greatly influenced many social entrepreneurs in Thailand. It appears that for these entrepreneurs, the SEP has significant meaning, as it guides their actions and influences their business models based on their values. Thus, the SEP's principles, such as modesty, honesty, and integrity, are deeply ingrained in Thai society and align with Buddhist values.

Furthermore, moderation and self-immunity, central to the SEP, are valued by social entrepreneurs prioritising long-term sustainability and positive impact over short-term profits. Their initiatives reflect the SEP's emphasis on sustainable practices, support for local communities and environmental care. Therefore, social entrepreneurs are driven by a genuine desire to make a difference, promote

cultural preservation and address social inequities, which aligns with the late king's vision for a better future for the country.

Social entrepreneurship in Thailand is influenced by collectivist values, which strongly emphasise family, community and cultural coherence. Social entrepreneurs feel a sense of responsibility and gratitude for their privileges, motivating them to give back to society and address pressing issues. They emphasise community involvement, supporting local stakeholders, safeguarding cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. These entrepreneurs, driven by a deep connection to their community and culture, exemplify the potential of social entrepreneurship to create lasting change and foster a more inclusive, sustainable and socially responsible society in Thailand. Therefore, these social entrepreneurs hold a cultural mindset, believing that giving is an end without needing anything in return.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research discussions based on the participants' responses. The discussion is organised based on the various themes found in the findings' life story chapters. Analysing the participants' stories through coding and categorisation made it possible to review common themes in their comments with more ease. The findings revealed the key components that led social entrepreneurs to pursue tourism social entrepreneurship (TSE) in Thailand: religious elements, cultural elements and an other-oriented mindset driven by values of collectivism. The results highlighted important factors that shape the motivations of Thai social entrepreneurs, including the harmonised cultural patterns and values that are specific to Thailand. Guided by these findings, I argue that cultural values, particularly Thai-specific cultural values, trigger the pursuit of social enterprises (SEs) in Thailand. In addition, I suggest that engagement in TSE in Thailand is also driven by a Buddhist outlook. A further motivating factor is appreciation for the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej's work, including his sufficiency economy philosophy (SEP), which serves as an ideological driver and critical underpinning of wanting to 'do good' in the country.

Social entrepreneurship goes beyond charitable giving, as it supports innovative methods and encourages a more inclusive approach in terms of creating solutions for social problems, similar to the practices of responsible and sustainable businesses (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010). Rather than implementing isolated engagements and actions, social entrepreneurs strive to achieve their long-term social goals through empowerment of the beneficiaries, helping them to understand their potential and improve their quality of life (Elkington and Hartigan, 2008). Social entrepreneurs are driven by micro purposes, or personal motivations, as well as macro purposes, or cultural and/or environmental motivations (Castellani et al., 2020). Previously, the majority of social activities in Thailand had not been

carried out by social entrepreneurs but instead by charities, NGOs, foundations and cooperatives (Thiemboonkit, 2013). However, in recent years the number of SEs has increased. While successful SEs in international contexts may offer invaluable insights, there are important elements to consider that may hinder the development of SEs in Thailand.

7.2 Conceptual framework

After analysing the study's results, I have developed a conceptual framework to illustrate factors that influence the pursuit of tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The mindset and motivation of Thai social entrepreneurs are influenced by a variety of factors, including religion, culture, and personal values. The framework encompasses key elements such as Buddhism (religious influence), Cultural patterns in Thailand, Philosophies of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (SEP), Thai personal Values and beliefs, and social entrepreneurial motivation. Throughout this chapter, I will delve deeper into each of these aspects to provide a better understanding of the framework. Below is the conceptual framework:

Figure 2. Tourism social entrepreneurship motivation in Thailand framework
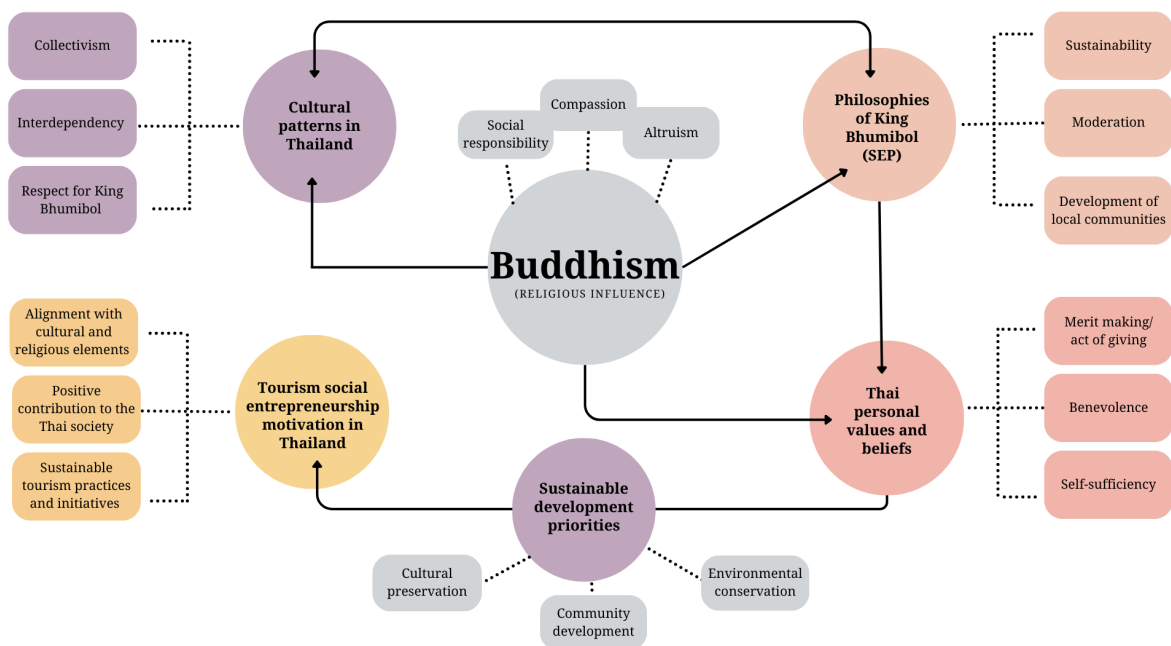
Buddhism (religious influence) is the central component in the framework because it greatly influences the actions of Thai social entrepreneurs. Key principles promoted by Buddhism include compassion, altruism, merit-making and a sense of responsibility towards the community/society, which serve as guiding frameworks for the social entrepreneurs. As a core component, Buddhism instils a sense of purpose, shapes the mindset of social entrepreneurs and influences their actions toward doing good for society. Buddhism influences cultural patterns in the country, philosophies of the King and shapes personal values and beliefs of the Thai entrepreneurs, which has led them to social entrepreneurship.

Thailand's cultural patterns greatly emphasise collectivism, which is rooted in Buddhist philosophies. This means that cooperation and working towards the greater good are valued. Thai cultural patterns emphasise the importance of interdependency, where having an other-oriented mindset and prioritising the community is key. These values help explain why some individuals may feel a stronger connection to their society, environment, and community than others. Altruistic values are also rooted in collectivism. Thai cultural patterns also include a deep respect for King Bhumibol Adulyadej, whose philosophies inspire a sense of duty and appreciation among social entrepreneurs who seek to contribute to their community. Moreover, Thai cultural beliefs align with the ethical principles of Buddhism.

The philosophies of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) prioritise sustainability, long-term goals, moderation and resilience. Protecting and preserving the environment for future generations is advocated by these aspects. The King's teachings also promote the support and growth of local communities, which aligns with the mission of social entrepreneurs to create a positive impact for underprivileged or disadvantaged members of society. Philosophies of the King have an influence on cultural patterns in the country as well as the personal values and beliefs of the social entrepreneurs.

Thai personal values and beliefs align with the principles of Buddhism and the SEP. This circle represents the ethical principles that guide Thai tourism social entrepreneurs in their decision-making and actions.

Sustainable development priorities are the main concerns of social entrepreneurs as they aim to promote sustainable practices through their tourism SEs. These priorities are influenced by and align with their personal values and beliefs. Tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand prioritise long-term impact over short-term profits and are committed to responsible tourism, reflecting the Thai values and beliefs they have been exposed to. This dedication towards creating long-lasting, positive and sustainable change is a common aspect in social entrepreneurship worldwide, but it holds a particular significance in Thailand due to its cultural and spiritual roots.

All of the elements lead to social entrepreneurial motivation in Thailand, which comes from the alignment with cultural and religious values that guide the social entrepreneurs' actions. Additionally, there is a strong drive to make positive contributions to society and the community, which has inspired them to pursue social entrepreneurship. This circle represents the ultimate goal and outcome of the influences from religious elements, cultural factors, personal values, and sustainable development priorities on Thai social entrepreneurs.

The conceptual framework offers a visual representation of how religious influence, cultural values, philosophies of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, personal values, and sustainable development elements intersect and shape the mindset and determination of Thai social entrepreneurs. This inspires them to engage in tourism social entrepreneurship. The various elements effectively portray the complex network of factors that contribute to the pursuit of social entrepreneurship in Thailand, emphasising the importance of religion and culture in this context and resulting in positive community impact and responsible tourism practices.

7.3 The path to social entrepreneurship: Influences and triggers

The results of my analysis suggest that social entrepreneurs in Thailand are passionate about correcting injustices they witness around them. In fact, when I interviewed the entrepreneurs, I observed first-hand that many of them displayed these characteristics. Commercial firms, for example, may incorporate elements such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) into their strategy and operations simply due to stakeholder pressures, which is in accordance with the stakeholder theory (Issarawornrawanich and Wuttichindanon, 2019). SEs are distinct in this aspect, as there is no external pressure to focus on social or environmental impacts. While most people separate their social and work motivations (Bargsted et al., 2013), social entrepreneurs combine these aspects. Therefore, understanding social entrepreneurs' prior life experiences is important to effectively analyse the background and process of forming SEs (Christopolous and Vogl, 2015; Germak and Robinson, 2014). Social entrepreneurs are driven by a social vision that involves a strong sense of obligation towards fulfilling specific social needs (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004).

In Thailand, SE activities are for instance, distinct from broader CSR initiatives. Based on the findings, TSEs in Thailand tend to be more focused on philanthropy, with the primary goal of addressing specific social problems and contributing positively to society. These enterprises are not necessarily innovative but are motivated by a genuine desire to do good and give back. The business structure of SEs in this case places emphasis on profit redistribution. In comparison, CSR activities in Thailand often involve efforts not directly tied to the core business. Additionally, none of the SEs in this study indicated pursuing good image or following market trends to reach customers, whereas CSR activities are often motivated by the corporate image (Swierczek and Kraisornsuthasinee, 2006). Cultural context and philanthropic traditions play a crucial role in shaping both social entrepreneurship and CSR in Thailand. The country's rich history of

philanthropy, rooted in Buddhism, establishes an ethical foundation for CSR practices and SE activities. Both CSR and SE initiatives in Thailand involve community engagement initiatives. There is also a lack of consensus on the definition, focus, and scope of social entrepreneurship in the country, similar to CSR.

The push-pull theory is a well-established concept in the study of entrepreneurial motivation (Stoner and Fri, 1982). It suggests that entrepreneurship can arise out of necessity, such as experiencing job loss, and not solely out of opportunity. Germak and Robinson (2014) propose that social entrepreneurs are motivated by personal fulfilment, achievement orientation and proximity to a social problem. While the desire for autonomy is often cited as a crucial motivator in entrepreneurship (Mohiuddin et al., 2013), this was not the case for the social entrepreneurs I interacted with in Thailand. Rather than being motivated by the desire for power, recognition or autonomy, they were driven by a sense of self-fulfilment. My study revealed that social entrepreneurs in Thailand are not motivated by the push factors commonly associated with job dissatisfaction. Instead, pull factors seem to be more important in the Thai context. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that motivations can change over time (Boluk and Mottiar, 2014), and different factors may become more significant during different life phases.

The responses of the participants made it clear that Thai social entrepreneurs are motivated to pursue social entrepreneurship because of their personal inclination towards altruism. Altruistic values are rooted in collectivism, which resonates with certain Buddhist philosophies and teachings (Vaughn, 2018). All participants mentioned being passionate about working towards the betterment of society and displayed altruistic values when sharing their stories. Altruism involves helping others without expecting anything in return, sometimes even at one's own detriment. As indicated by Jittichanon (2018), in Thailand, most individuals possess a deep-rooted psychological desire to contribute positively to society. Entrepreneurs are shaped by the time and place in which they live (Yitshaki and Kropp, 2011). The cultural values they are exposed to, for example, could either

trigger or obstruct the development of SEs (Short et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial opportunities are essential in all forms of entrepreneurship (Vuorio, Puumalainen and Fellnhofer, 2018).

Depending on the values that resonate with them (Schwartz, 1992), individuals may find certain types of entrepreneurships to be more appealing than others (Baron, 2004). Previous literature has proposed that sustainable forms of entrepreneurship are linked with softer values (Vuorio, Puumalainen and Fellnhofer, 2018) and entrepreneurial intentions in social entrepreneurship are generally associated with values such as altruism and empathy (Dees, 2012; Hockerts, 2015; Mair and Noboa, 2006). Most of the tourism SEs in this study seem to prioritise profit redistribution towards different causes over clearly measuring impact, prioritising innovative solutions, or creating value in a broader sense. This results in them resembling sole traders who donate the majority of their profits to a good cause. The philanthropy-focused approach of these tourism SEs may be influenced by various factors, including cultural context and philanthropic tradition, which are significant factors in Thailand. Thai culture places great importance on community, social harmony, and helping others, which may affect the way social entrepreneurs approach their work, causing them to prioritise philanthropic actions and charitable giving as a means of making positive contributions to society. Social entrepreneurship in Thailand involves generating profits while addressing social issues, however, the primary focus seems to be on distributing profits through philanthropic endeavors rather than prioritising innovative solutions or demonstrating impact. Hence, tourism SEs in this study appear to be rather philanthropy-focused than value-driven.

Additionally, when the profits generated by SEs are intentionally redistributed towards achieving social/environmental goals, it can be considered a form of philanthropy. This redistribution of profits is a deliberate choice made by the enterprise to further its social or environmental goals. By actively engaging in solving issues within society, the social entrepreneur earns merit and recognition. The social value generated by the enterprise is no longer an externality (Roundy,

2017; Santos, 2012), but rather a deliberate outcome of its activities. Maintaining the original mission of an SE can be a major concern when the pursuit of profit takes center stage, which is also referred to as mission drift (Zahra et al., 2009). However, this issue can be addressed if the social enterprise is structured in such a way that necessitates profits to be intentionally reinvested towards social or environmental objectives, which seems to be the case for SEs in this study. This acts as a protective measure against mission drift, and ensures that financial success remains consistent with the organization's overall mission.

The entrepreneurs who participated in this study held a sense of benevolence and self-transcendence that developed at a young age, influenced by Buddhist teachings and Thai cultural values. According to Schwartz's theory on fundamental values, benevolence is crucial for individuals who prioritise helping others or pursuing personal goals without a strict hierarchy of values. The act of giving is deeply ingrained in Thai culture and is highly valued in their society. Reinforcing this, Miller et al. (2012) recognised compassion as the key motivator for social entrepreneurs. All of the social entrepreneurs in this study shared similar concerns regarding the context around them and the issues they have observed. Sustainability empathy refers to the relationship between the individual taking action and the beneficiary of that action (Font, Garay and Jones, 2016). An individual will focus is on the beneficiary due to their personal values (Font, Garay and Jones, 2016), which is an extension of their characteristics (Shaw and Williams, 2004).

According to my findings, social entrepreneurs in Thailand exhibit traits that align with the missionary identity, one of Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) social entrepreneurial identities, as discussed in the literature review. Understanding an individual's social identity is crucial for comprehending their values, beliefs, emotions and actions (Terry, Hogg and McKimmie, 2000; Hogg and Terry, 2014; Sieger et al., 2016). The missionary identity pertains to those who establish a business to serve a greater cause, with social responsibility as one of their primary objectives. Their success is determined by the advancement of their social cause.

In Thailand, social causes, philanthropy, and community involvement are fundamental practices among Thai companies and part of Thai values in general due to the influence of Buddhism and the late king's SEP (Issarawornrawanich and Wuttichindanon, 2019). Therefore, the motivation of Thai social entrepreneurs is in alignment with the concept of social entrepreneurship as well as the classic social entrepreneurial identity. Individuals who hold a social entrepreneurial identity strive to differentiate themselves from profit-motivated identities such as Darwinians. The missionary identity focuses not only on who someone is but also on who they are not, which helps establish this differentiation.

7.4 The influence of Buddhist philosophies

Over the course of my research, I began to question whether the application of Western theories and models was a proper fit for Thai culture. My data revealed that the vision and mission of the Thai entrepreneurs is derived from specific values and certain beliefs that they hold. Although social entrepreneurship is not directly linked to religion, Buddhism serves as an underlying motivation in this context. The Thai denomination of Theravada Buddhism is known for its emphasis on conflict avoidance, social harmony, respect for others, discouragement of aggressive behaviour, interdependence and the moral consequences of one's actions, commonly known as karma (Yablo and Field, 2007). Religion is linked with self-oriented motivations (Idris and Hijrah-Hati, 2013), and the institutional theory proposed religion to be one of the most powerful informal institutions (Friedland and Alford, 1991). It is an informal social system that entails core values that influence individuals' personal and organisational practices in a broader system (Chou, Chang and Han, 2016). While various religions have similar core philosophies, they involve different practices for their followers. Western individuals are understood to be more distanced from religious beliefs in comparison to Thai people (Soontayatron, 2013). This raises the question of whether Western theories and models are well-suited for analysis in the context of Thai culture.

As highlighted by the findings of this research, there is an indirect influence of religious elements starting from early childhood, which contributed to the entrepreneurial pursuit of TSE in Thailand. The majority of the social entrepreneurs who participated are Thai by birth and consider themselves Buddhist, including one individual who was born in India. This is not unusual, considering approximately 95% of the total population in Thailand is Buddhist (Lawler and Atmiyanandana, 2003). Religion can be understood as the broadest cultural expression and organisational framework of attitudes, values and ideologies in a culture (Geertz, 1973). One cannot separate culture from religion (Yablo and Field, 2007). According to Jittichanon (2018), most Thai individuals have a deep-rooted psychological urge to do good for society. The Buddhist concept of Karma has been shown to motivate business owners to integrate social responsibility into their practices (Chou, Chang and Han, 2016). Social entrepreneurship that incorporates a clear social mission can be considered a way to do good for society, leading to a deeper sense of fulfilment. Buddhist principles are based on creating happiness and a moral sense of fulfilment rather than creating wealth, which aligns with the business model of SEs that does not solely seek profit.

The data gathered through interviews made it clear that Buddhist doctrine has a significant influence on the Thai culture of giving. Based on the motivations driving entrepreneurs to establish new businesses, tourism entrepreneurs have largely been classified as being oriented toward growth or lifestyle (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011; Getz and Petersen, 2005). However, this does not seem to be the case for social entrepreneurs in the Thai tourism industry. The data collected in interviews with Thai social entrepreneurs shows that these individuals chose the path of social entrepreneurship as a means of doing good or making merit, rather than being growth or lifestyle oriented. Although not explicitly mentioned by the participants, the concept of making merit stems from Buddhism, as previously mentioned. Buddhism evidently contributes to the social entrepreneurs' benevolent behaviour as well as other social aspects. Furthermore, the findings suggest that religious elements impact individuals from an early age, which led them to pursue

TSE in Thailand. Thai social entrepreneurs are guided by Buddhist values to promote responsible tourism practices.

The responses from Boon (M, Thai) and Guy (M, Thai) indicated that pursuing social entrepreneurship rather than commercial entrepreneurship is a way of doing good. In this case, Buddhism acted as an informal institution that triggered the journey towards doing good: taking the route of social entrepreneurship. This was also demonstrated in the photos both Thai nationals and non-Thai nationals chose to discuss, which included merit-making at temples, offering alms to monks, offering donations to schools and local charities and releasing animals at temples. Krit (M, Thai) similarly detailed preferring to '*tham bun'*, or make merit, by offering donations to charities, orphanages and poor children rather than to temples, as this allowed him to directly help others who are actually in trouble.

Buddhism is the key religion in Thailand and many religious activities are associated with it. As a result, individuals who are connected to Buddhism may be more likely to engage in charitable acts (Lincoln, Morrissey and Mundey, 2008). For example, entrepreneurs who practice Buddhism may be more inclined to donate some of their profits to charitable causes. Overall, religion can play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards charitable giving or social businesses. The sense of community and social responsibility that is often associated with religion can motivate individuals to be more generous and supportive of those in need (Berger, 2006; Monsma, 2007). Regardless, it is important to note that not all entrepreneurial or social entrepreneurial actions are influenced by religious contexts, and not all religious contexts promote ethical or altruistic behaviour. Nonetheless, as a significant majority of the population in Thailand follows Buddhism, this religious belief may be in important factor that encourages and drives charitable and prosocial behaviours in the country.

Religious participation and income are the two variables that are commonly believed to have a positive correlation with an individual's tendency to donate more (Lincoln, Morrissey and Mundey, 2008). Most studies indicate that age is a

significant demographic factor associated with religious giving, with a tendency for older individuals to donate more to religious causes(Lincoln, Morrissey and Mundey, 2008). Interestingly, there are exceptions to this trend in the form of social entrepreneurs, also those in this study, who tend to be younger and demonstrate a strong inclination towards charitable activities despite their age. This highlights the fact that age may not be the determining factor in an individual's willingness to engage in philanthropic activities.

Hence, it can be argued that regions with a higher number of religious individuals may have a greater potential for social entrepreneurship. This is because the presence of religion cultivates a social norm that emphasises prosocial activities. As a result, for example, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist entrepreneurs are then more likely to adopt similar charitable behaviours. Therefore, to promote social entrepreneurship, it is essential to not only rely on traditional institutional pressures like government support but also consider the unique institutional forces related to prosocial values (Xu, Liu and Wu, 2022). An individual's religion can affect and broaden the opportunities they choose to pursue. For instance, they may choose to pursue opportunities that offer the highest economic return or those that have the highest positive impact on humanity (Smith, McMullen and Cardon, 2021). It can also influence the type of information that they pay attention to, such as the suffering of others or the demands of the economic market. Religious beliefs may not have a direct impact on whether entrepreneurship is encouraged or discouraged, but they may contribute to the spread of specific cultural values within a given social context. These values, in turn, may shape people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Henley, 2017; Xu, Liu and Wu, 2022).

All participants mentioned Buddhism at least once during their interviews. However, the role of religion in shaping sustainability frameworks has not been thoroughly explored (Song, 2020). This study supports Soontayatron's (2013) view, which proposed the idea of Buddhism as a dominant force in Thai society. Religious elements help form a broader social system based on core values that

influence Thai behaviours and mentalities. The Buddhist philosophy also corresponds well with the concept of the three elements of sustainability (economy, society and environment) as interconnected systems (Song, 2020). According to Soontayatron (2013), Thai people view Buddhism as a way of life and a set of principles to follow rather than a religion in the conventional sense. Buddhism has historically played an important role in shaping Thai people's behaviour, moral beliefs and everyday philosophies (Song, 2020). The religion is focused on building harmony and peace among one another. Furthermore, the data shows religion to be a crucial aspect of the social entrepreneurs' early childhood and upbringing. Therefore, the findings suggest that the concept of social entrepreneurship is well-suited to the Thai context, as its core philosophies are in harmony with the tenets of Buddhism.

7.5 Ideological drivers

7.5.1 The king's influence

The results demonstrate that while some participants do not fully embrace the concept of a monarchy, the Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej served as a role model and source of inspiration for social entrepreneurs due to his values and work. He was the longest-serving monarch in Thai history, and notably, the Thai people greatly respect and value the king's sayings and speeches (Sachayansrisakul, 2009). This is not only because he is still held in high regard but also because of his unwavering dedication to the continuous education and development of the Thai people. According to Sachayansrisakul (2009), acknowledging the unique relationship between the Thai people and their late monarch is essential for understanding the country's economic growth.

Through my research, I discovered that the social entrepreneurs had knowledge of King Bhumibol and his ideals from a young age, which encouraged high appreciation of the King. When discussing photographs, several social entrepreneurs chose photographs specifically related to King Bhumibol Adulyadej

as part of their discussion, including Jane, who was not born in Thailand. These photographs were the most commonly chosen pictures among the participants (14 out of 31 participants). It is notable that so many of the social entrepreneurs, who are mostly young adults (65% between the ages of 26–34, only 13% aged 40 or older), choose photos related to the king. For instance, Mew, a Thai woman, shared that while she does not necessarily support the monarchy wholeheartedly, she admires King Bhumibol's accomplishments and has pictures of him in her home, as do her parents. Mew even shared that the King inspired her to be a better person.

It was indeed surprising to see many photographs related to the late King Bhumibol being selected by the relatively young participants. The significance of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej still has a deep impact on the younger generation in Thailand today, owing to the enduring influence of his legacy and the cultural importance of the monarchy in Thai society. Despite their age, the influence of King Bhumibol appeared strong in this study with social entrepreneurs. This can be explained by the impact of family influence and teachings. The parents of the social entrepreneurs lived through an era under the King's reign and were influenced and admired him, passing this admiration down to their children.

In Thailand, the cultural norm of demonstrating respect towards the monarchy has been deeply embedded in the society for generations. This tradition is passed down from parents to children, and even in today's modern and globalised world, it still holds at least some significance. Today, the daily news during prime time on all television and radio channels still covers the activities of the royal family. The coverage includes royal ceremonies and public engagements. These events are narrated exclusively in the Royal Thai language, which is reserved only for use in the presence of the Thai royalty. For generations, Thais have grown up watching and listening to the royal family's work in developing Thailand and its people. Nonetheless, it is important to note that perspectives may differ from person to person, and public sentiment can change over time. Over time, pro-democracy movements may contribute to a cultural shift in how the monarchy is perceived,

leading to a more critical examination of the institution. Furthermore, with the passing of the late King, the influence of the monarchy may slowly disappear, which could lead to changes in how the monarchy is viewed.

On the other hand, most of the non-Thai nationals did not choose to discuss photographs of the King. However, they did choose pictures of disadvantaged communities and/or children, trash in the ocean or clean ups, their previous volunteer work and of merit-making or offering donations. Since these individuals have not lived in Thailand their whole lives and did not necessarily have a traditional Thai family, the king's influence on them seems to be lessened. Thus, it can be assumed that the influence of the king is not as strong on individuals who are not Thai-born as it is on Thai-born individuals who had a traditional Thai upbringing. Based on the photographs selected by the tourism social entrepreneurs, it can be concluded that the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, his philosophy and his projects have had some influence on individuals becoming social entrepreneurs in Thailand.

The social entrepreneurs also gained a deeper understanding of the king through their education during their teenage years. Those who attended schools in Thailand had more intricate knowledge of the king, his initiatives and Buddhism, which is not surprising. However, those who went to international schools also took different modules and courses where this knowledge would have been acquired. Volunteer work and school field trips (e.g. to temples and the Foundation for the Blind) were listed as other important elements that encouraged the social entrepreneurs to continue making a difference. The activities social entrepreneurs engaged in during their adolescence are consistent with the generosity aspect of the SEP philosophy, which advises people to live their lives with perseverance, harmlessness and generosity (Kantabutra, 2014).

7.5.1.1 The principles of the sufficiency economy philosophy: Alignment with Thai values

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King Bhumibol developed the SEP based on his practical experiences and the knowledge he acquired in developmental projects. The SEP concept was an endeavour by the king to interpret and implement Buddhist principles in modern-day settings (Noy, 2011). The findings of this research illustrate that the actions of social entrepreneurs align with different aspects of the SEP, such as the ideas of moderation and self-sufficiency. These aspects promote protecting the environment and preserving it for future generations. According to the SEP, businesses should not prioritise short-term profits over long-term profits and other important values (Kantabutra, 2014).

Most of the participants shared their long-term goals related to their mission, which did not include seeking rapid expansion. This is consistent with SE activities, as they require time to create value and impact. Participants used words such as 'stability', 'self-sufficient', 'gradual', 'resilient', and 'sustainable'. A few entrepreneurs, such as Tae (M, 38) and Geng (F, 45), mentioned the Thai word for sufficiency, which means 'not too little, not too much' (Noy, 2011).

A SEP mindset promotes moderation, rationality and self-protection, reducing the chances of harmful exploitation or mistreatment of the environment and natural resources (Mongsawad, 2010). While the SEP does not inherently involve religious actions, Buddhism does indirectly influence it. The late king's SEP is essential to promote doing good in Thailand, which is also a fundamental value of Buddhism. The SEP is built on principles of trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, sharing and altruism, all of which are deeply ingrained norms and codes of social behaviour in Thai society. These values act as an informal construct of shared beliefs and ideas that connect people and shape formal social capital in Thailand. Most participants were motivated by altruistic values, and as these are significant in Buddhism, this demonstrates a connection between the religion and the philosophies behind social entrepreneurship in Thailand. This is consistent with the fact that Theravada Buddhism shapes the lives of most Thai people, making it central to the national identity of Thailand (Joll, 2010; von Feigenblatt, Cooper and Pardo, 2022). Therefore, it is vital to understand the fundamental tenets of Buddhism and how they are perceived in Thai society in order to fully grasp the holistic SEP approach.

The SEP philosophy is itself based on Buddhist principles, as it does not seek to create wealth but rather to create happiness and a moral sense of fulfilment. In fact, O'Sullivan and Pisalyaput (2015) suggested that the speedy diffusion of the philosophy was made possible by the SEP's basis in Buddhist values and beliefs. Recent work by Song (2020) evaluated Buddhism in relation to the three elements of the SEP philosophy, suggesting that Buddhism's role in Thailand is similar to the role that Christianity plays in Western society. Song's (2020) study focused on the influence Buddhism has in the sustainability framework in Thailand, acknowledging the SEP as a Buddhism-based sustainability framework.

With this context, it makes sense that social entrepreneurs in Thailand mentioned that the SEP business model aligns with their values better than traditional business models. In Thailand, being a good person involves giving back to society and showing empathy and respect for others (Pimpa, 2012). The participants mentioned that the work of the king and the SEP philosophy motivated them to work towards making positive changes in society, improving quality of life for Thai people and addressing prevalent issues in Thailand. Following the challenges faced by the country in 1997, the philosophy served as a guiding principle for the country to achieve broader objectives such as better risk management, inclusive decision-making, environmental conservation and the well-being of marginalised groups (PhramahaWattana et al., 2021).

7.5.2 Influential values and cultural elements

The participants in this study demonstrated that their collectivist attitudes and intentions, based on Thai culture, have influenced their social entrepreneurial pursuits. The participants were asked about their views on family, community, and social networks as well as the importance of community engagement in the context of the study. They expressed having a deep connection to their community, a bond that has motivated their actions. Culture is a reflection of a country's informal institutions and shapes the structures that can facilitate or obstruct both socially and commercially oriented formal institutions (Hechavarría, 2016). Culture plays a

significant role in the Thai way of life and way of thinking. Even though all the people of Thailand do not share exactly the same cultural values, almost the entirety of the population are Buddhist. Therefore, the Thai culture displays a notable level of homogeneity across various elements (Yablo and Field, 2007). Further, more than 85% of the population speaks a dialect of Thai, making it a linguistically homogeneous society (Today Translations and Today Advisory, n/d; United States Bureau of Public Affairs, 1988). This culture affects people's attitudes and perspectives and plays a vital role in shaping business practices and relationships in both commercial and social enterprises in Thailand.

The impact of national culture on entrepreneurial behaviour is well recognised (Gurel, Altinay and Daniele, 2010). Cultural patterns that are specific to a nation provide valuable insights into different behaviours and perspectives. Thailand places a strong emphasis on collectivism that is evidenced in part by their commitment to family and relationships. It is important to note that religion, specifically Buddhism in this context, has a significant influence on promoting these collectivistic values. The current findings support Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory, as the social entrepreneurs in this study exhibit collectivistic attitudes. Hofstede's work explains the concepts of individualism versus collectivism, describing how some individuals may feel more closely connected to their community, society and environment than others. Collectivism is the concept of seeing oneself as interdependent with others and as part of a group rather than as an independent individual. This principle exists on both individual and societal levels. Collectivist personal values have considerable influence on people's social entrepreneurial intentions, affecting three important motivation antecedents: personal attitudes, perceived behavioural controls and subjective norms (Agu et al., 2021). According to Hofstede's research on Thai cultural dimensions, Thailand has a low level of individualism and scores high on collectivism, meaning it is a collectivistic society. This collectivism manifests in long-term commitments to social groups (i.e. close family, extended family and relationships). Loyalty in a collectivist culture outweighs many other societal norms, rules and regulations (Pimpa, 2012). Hofstede (2001) noted that Thailand was a collectivist country where 'people from

birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty' (Hofstede, 2001).

Considering Thailand's highly collectivistic nature, this study's results do not fit with previous theories that entrepreneurial behaviour is enabled by cultures that are high in individualism, low in uncertainty avoidance, low in power distance and high in masculinity (Hayton, George and Zahra, 2002). It seems unusual and inconsistent with previous literature that the number of SEs in Thailand are growing, considering that Thai people are also risk-avoidant and do not easily accept change (Hofstede, 2014). They score high on the uncertainty avoidance dimension, which means they do not tolerate uncertainty well. SEs are not easily sustainable in this context because running them involves risk just like any business, and SEs may be even riskier than other enterprises. This is why in Thailand, stringent rules, policies and regulations are implemented at times to minimise the level of uncertainty (Pimpa, 2012).

With SEs, there is also the matter of balancing the social aspects as well as making profit to continue striving to meet the intended goals. In this sense, establishing an SE should be contradictory for a typical Thai persona (i.e. uncertainty avoidant) based on Hofstede's dimensions. In contrast, Barendsen and Gardner (2004) state that social entrepreneurs are more motivated by the need to undertake meaningful acts and cope with difficult life and business situations in comparison to traditional business owners and leaders. Regardless, the values associated with Buddhism align with Hofstede's studies on the culture and values (both in general and specifically in Thailand) that Thai people hold, such as their propensity to avoid conflict with others: *'Mai Pen Rai'* (never mind, it's okay), *'Jai Yen'* (take it easy, be calm), *'Kreng Jai'* (being respectful, humble and considerate towards others) and *'Bhun Khun'* (reciprocity; Napathorn, 2018b). Even though the concept of social entrepreneurship is more prevalent in the Western world, these results highlight that social entrepreneurs in Thailand appreciate that the concept is linked to Thai values and therefore, it is fitting for the Thai context. In addition,

principles associated with Buddhism also provide a strong foundation for social entrepreneurs in Thailand and may contribute to the development of the sector.

Like everyone else, Thai social entrepreneurs were exposed to Thai values, culture and norms in the society from a young age. Many participants expressed pride in Thai culture and heritage, even those who were not born in Thailand. Almost all participants mentioned '*Bhun Khun',* which refers to being grateful towards people. In Thailand, it is customary to feel indebted to others for favours they perform and to repay them in kind. This concept of *'Bhun Khun'* (indebted goodness) and the return of '*Bhun Khun*' (Sadang BhunKhun) define meaningful personal relationships and underpin social connection in Thai culture, in which in-groups are successfully built and reinforced (Vatanasakdakul, D'Ambra and Ramburuth, 2010). Likewise, Thai society is oriented towards interdependency (Komin, 1991), and respect is taught through behaviours such as gratitude, consideration for others' feelings, politeness, obedience and humility (Tungtakanpoung, 2016). Tae (M, 38) and Boon (M, 32) for example, both expressed the sentiment that 'good people will have a better life', which links to the psychological dimension of '*Bhun Khun*' (Jittichanon, 2018). This illustrates that social entrepreneurs believe that doing good leads to a good life while causing harm results in negative consequences. Similarly, many entrepreneurs expressed their belief in the concept of Karma.

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the cultural principles and values that they had been taught from a young age. They brought up concepts such as 'family first', 'generosity', 'peace', 'calmness' and 'honesty', indicating that these principles were not only significant concepts during their upbringing, but that they carried them strongly to the present day. Thai culture is deeply ingrained and influential in its people's way of life and thinking, resulting in a strong cultural coherence in their values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, even in modern times (Jirapornkul and Yolles, 2010). Boon and Tae have expressed the concept of "*Dai yang sia yang*", which means losing something to gain something. They indicate that by investing profits from their traditional business ventures back into their SEs, they are losing out on/ sacrificing money they could keep. However, in reality, by

reinvesting their profits, they are not actually losing anything. Rather, it is similar to donating a portion of their profits to a good cause. By doing so, what they are gaining is a sense of fulfilment and achieving their goal of creating social value. It can be seen as a win-win scenario where they are able to both sustain their business and find personal satisfaction in their work.

Boon mentioned that he could have opted for more profitable office jobs to earn a good income. However, he believes that it would not provide him with satisfaction. This suggests that he considers the achievement of social impact goals as a form of gain, even though it may come at the cost of potential financial gains in a more conventional business. Whereas Tae is facing challenges in registering his enterprise officially due to its non-traditional nature. Despite facing criticism and difficulties, he remains committed to addressing the issue of stray animals. Tae's dedication to his social cause reflects "*Dai yang sia yang*" which in this case means sacrificing certain benefits such as ease of registration and societal approval to pursue a higher social mission. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be argued that, for some of the Thai tourism social entrepreneurs, there is a willingness to "lose something" in the commercial sense in order to "gain something" meaningful in terms of social impact and personal fulfilment. The financial sacrifices made in pursuit of their social missions are perceived as necessary trade-offs for achieving their broader goals of creating positive social change. According to their perspective, sacrificing financial gains was not necessarily what they needed to do, as they could have easily started a regular business. However, they have made a conscious decision, reflecting a different set of values and goals within the realm of social entrepreneurship, in order to bring about meaningful social change and a greater sense of personal achievement.

Trepte's (2017) social identity and self-categorisation theories attribute this coherence to individuals feeling a sense of belonging to certain groups and categorising themselves, including their culture and nationality. Despite being over 25 years old, Komin's (1991) study on Thai society's interdependency still seems to hold true today. Despite increased exposure to Western ideals, the results of this

study demonstrate that Thai people's values have not undergone a complete transformation. A number of studies on Thai culture have suggested common shared traits among Thai people, mostly in relation to promoting smooth relationships with others, which is derived from the concept of face-saving (Boonsathorn, 2007; Gupta et al., 2002; Komin, 1990a; 1990b; 1995; Ledegerwood and Un, 2003; Selvarajah et al., 2013; Taylor, 1996; Yokongdi, 2010).

7.6 Identification of challenges and influence of stakeholder support

Social enterprises primarily focus on fulfilling a social mission (Mort, Weerawardena and Carnegie, 2002). They often aim to achieve this goal by supporting local communities (Chell, 2007; Zahra *et al.*, 2009). However, the social good they seek is closely tied to the local dimension of geographical proximity, which may limit and prevent these firms from expanding internationally or having a broader reach. This may also be the case for Thailand's TSEs. It is important to note that perhaps not all social enterprises are meant to be innovative or global in scope. Nonetheless, the process of social innovation can create social value, which Thai TSEs appear to be. The concept of social capital, which encompasses networks and norms that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, plays a crucial role in this regard. This means that the initial stages of social innovation, in this case the process of establishing TSEs where individuals come together around shared interests, in itself can already be viewed as a positive outcome in itself (Bosworth *et al.*, 2016).

Social innovation occurs when a novel idea brings a fresh perspective to old problems, leading to institutional changes in existing standards (Alegre and Berbegal-mirabent, 2016). For SEs, it is crucial to have a strong potential for innovation. They must be capable of questioning traditional beliefs and creating novel approaches that transform the way their industry operates. However, it appears that the TSEs in Thailand are currently falling behind when it comes to

innovation. Most of them are running hospitality businesses as a means to utilise the profits to support their social and environmental mission. While they are undoubtedly creating value for their beneficiaries and society, they are not necessarily producing groundbreaking innovations.

All of the participants showed dedication to their tourism SE, and the majority expressed that they do not prioritise rapidly expanding their business, indicating a focus on long-term growth and value. This ties to their motivation for pursuing these ventures in Thailand, which stemmed from their values and backgrounds. There is little research on how social entrepreneurs identify issues of concern, apart from Zahra et al. (2009) and Levie and Hart (2011), who proposed that many entrepreneurs identify a problem based on their local area. Mottiar (2016) similarly proposed that at times problem identification takes place at a government level, and social entrepreneurs then develop solutions to address these problems at a local level.

The participants in this study appeared to have identified various challenges in their communities at a local level that they aimed to address through their social enterprises, such as political instability, weak economic conditions, high poverty rates and significant inequalities. The British Council's study (2020) identified corresponding challenges, affirming that millions of people in Thailand still live in poverty and deprivation despite it becoming a middle-income country. During the discussions about the chosen photographs, it was apparent that all social entrepreneurs were concerned about similar issues. For example, they selected photos depicting disadvantaged communities or underprivileged children, trash in the ocean and merit-making activities.

An individual's specific origins and exposure to particular experiences can cause them to be more inclined to meet the needs of others (Mair and Noboa, 2003). Aligning with this, some of the social entrepreneurs in this study had personal or direct experiences that triggered their intention to take the social entrepreneurship route. This includes guilty triggers, as the emotional impact of seeing communities

grapple with socioeconomic challenges can be a powerful catalyst for social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs can form SEs based on family legacy, such as when family members also work with social issues (Shumate et al., 2014). A few social entrepreneurs in this study had family members facing challenges in specific regions or communities, which motivated them to make positive changes and provide opportunities. This drive comes from genuine empathy for their family's struggles and a commitment to compensating for the lack of education or employment opportunities. This emotional bond between personal experiences, family history and the call to address social issues underscores the depth of social entrepreneurs' dedication and their potential to drive meaningful and sustainable impact in the communities they seek to uplift.

The data shows that the intentions of most of the entrepreneurs in this study were simply based on living in Thailand, seeing or knowing about underprivileged people and having a passion for helping others. They were motivated by the deficiencies they witnessed in their environment and experiences of social inequality, even if the experiences were indirect. SEs can be formed because of a transformational experience that occurred during a social entrepreneur's adulthood, such as a visit to a developing country (Shumate et al., 2014). For example, John's (M, Australian) and Mary's (F, Danish) responses indicated some guilty triggers, as they stated they were grateful to have had a good life, education and travel experiences. They expressed feeling fortunate yet conflicted and uneasy after witnessing individuals facing difficulties in that region of Thailand. John's volunteer experience during his youth prompted him to want to give back and help solve an issue that is still prevailing in his local area. Similarly, Mary indicated being affected when she witnessed so much inequality during her experiences travelling around the country as part of her previous career. This shows that the social entrepreneurs have the drive to help based on what they have witnessed and a desire to focus on specific regions. Based on the data presented here, I theorise that most social entrepreneurs in Thailand have a collectivist attitude, as they strive to help communities and those not directly related to them or their personal background experiences.

Participants in this study called on the government to enhance its efforts in promoting social enterprises more generally as well as responsible, sustainable and/or ethical tourism businesses. Destinations involve various stakeholders and can be quite complex, and social entrepreneurs add another layer to the already challenging policy discussions (Mottiar and Boluk, 2017b). Such enterprises can have a positive or negative impact on tourism destinations, whether it is a result of part of their mission or simply a side effect (Mottiar and Boluk, 2017b). The participants emphasised the need for greater support from stakeholders, particularly the government, to develop and enhance the effectiveness of tourism SEs in Thailand. Despite a number of initiatives and policies created by authorities in recent years (e.g. Social Enterprise Promotion Act, a legal framework supporting tourism SEs; tax exemptions, funds and grant programmes), the social entrepreneurs still feel a lack of government support. According to the participants, it appears that social entrepreneurs in the tourism industry have limited influence within Thailand's larger tourism system. When compared to larger tourism businesses and firms, tourism SEs in appear to have considerably less power and fewer resources at their disposal. Unfortunately, this lack of structured support for them means that they are struggling to thrive and grow. Furthermore, there is a absence of public awareness when it comes to the role that tourism SEs play in the tourism industry. Consequently, it is challenging for them to compete with larger entities and navigate the complex tourism industry effectively. This calls for stronger collaboration and targeted measures to enhance the effectiveness of tourism social enterprises.

Recent studies have highlighted a growing interest in social entrepreneurship, as more service companies are committing to corporate social responsibility, environmental conservation and other social principles (Samuelsson and Witell, 2022). Unlike traditional entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs assemble resources in novel ways to address social problems and induce societal change. According to Melo Pimentel and Ramírez Hunter (2021), there is evidence that these actions not only contribute to sustainability and social impact but can also enhance profitability and add value for shareholders. Consequently, supporting social entrepreneurship

in the tourism industry not only aligns with global trends for responsibility but also presents an opportunity for Thailand to foster a more sustainable tourism landscape.

It was also revealed that some SEs in Thailand are still stuck in a grey area in terms of actually registering as SEs. Demarco (2005) stated that the term social entrepreneur is simply a new term for generous individuals striving to make the world better, and such people have always been around. As Mottiar and Boluk (2016) note, this is important to consider in tourism due to the number of tourism stakeholders that exhibit characteristics similar to tourism social entrepreneurs. As mentioned in the literature review section, there are stakeholders that are active in a destination but have not been classified as social entrepreneurs, and they may like to keep it that way (Mottiar and Boluk, 2016). Such people may view themselves as socially conscious individuals, volunteers or leaders and may not want to be associated with the term entrepreneur, as it indicates a business-focused or competitive individual (Mottiar and Boluk, 2016). For instance, one of the social entrepreneurs has an SE that helps street animals, and tackling the issue of stray dogs and cats highlighted this issue. While the social entrepreneur is genuinely passionate about helping street animals, they also believe stray animals in Thailand are a massive issue, a social responsibility and a public health problem that requires a solution. They explained that the street-animal problem comes with a variety of health concerns not only for the animals themselves due to the leftover garbage and food they pick up but also to society and communities (especially disadvantaged communities) due to the diseases they might carry and spread.

While similar SEs exist in other contexts as official SEs, this one has been having difficulties registering as an SE, with the authorities taking time to decide whether his case matches the country's criteria of an SE. It was also noted that some enterprises do not feel an urgent need to register as an SE, which entails involving specific authorities and regulations in their business. This is consistent with the literature review, which indicated that there is general distrust of the government and other authorities in developing, less developed and emerging economies. Thus, in addition to promoting the creation of SEs in Thailand, authorities should

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also prioritise simplifying the registration process. A regulatory environment that acknowledges and accommodates SEs with clear legal structures can provide a foundation for innovation. However, if the legal framework is unclear or imposes restrictive definitions, SEs may face challenges in experimenting with innovative practices. Regulations that simplify the registration and compliance procedures for SEs can encourage more entrepreneurs to enter the sector and pursue innovative solutions. On the other hand, excessive bureaucratic processes and administrative requirements may discourage potential social entrepreneurs, limiting the number of innovative initiatives. Therefore, regulations that promote collaboration between social enterprises, government bodies, and other stakeholders can create an ecosystem that is conducive to innovation.

Also, the participants believe there is still a lack of demand for socially and environmentally responsible businesses in Thailand. In the interviews, the participants emphasised the need to improve public participation and engagement in social entrepreneurship initiatives in order to raise awareness and understanding of the concept among the wider population. In the context of hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship, the socio-cultural environment plays a significant role in either triggering or constraining entrepreneurial activities (Zhao, Ritchie and Echtner, 2011). As hospitality and tourism businesses are closely intertwined with local communities, entrepreneurial opportunities are contingent upon the destination environment and its provision of incentives and support for entrepreneurial endeavours (Fu et al., 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to foster a socio-cultural environment that promotes social and environmental responsibility to support the growth of SEs in the Thai tourism industry. Public awareness and participation initiatives can be pivotal in transforming societal attitudes and nurturing a culture that values and even demands socially responsible and sustainable businesses, thereby driving the shift towards more responsible and impactful entrepreneurial activities.

7.7 The focus on sustainability in Thai Tourism SEs

The Sustainable development goals (SDGs) were mentioned by some of the social entrepreneurs in this study. This is notable because social entrepreneurship and sustainability are closely related. Sustainable development tackles global challenges while social entrepreneurship provides a framework and platform for positive social change (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). Furthermore, social entrepreneurship promotes long-lasting and inclusive economic growth, making it an important driver of sustainable development (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). Social entrepreneurs have a mediating role, using entrepreneurial methods to deliver solutions for social and environmental issues in different contexts while being financially sustainable. The social entrepreneurship model is inherently sustainable as a result of its goals and objectives (Zhang and Swanson, 2014). Sustainability is mostly driven by an engaged state of moral consciousness alongside a belief that human beings and businesses exist as part of an interconnected global ecosystem (Cartwright and Craig, 2006). Social entrepreneurs also emphasise an interdependent ecosystem, and their actions are guided by their principles and long-term commitment to the community and environment (Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010).

A number of the social entrepreneurs had been inspired by the SDGs in relation to their respective SE vision and objectives as social entrepreneurs often pursue multiple interrelated goals and objectives. For instance, Mary's SE focuses on marine conservation (SDG 14) as well as education (SDG 4). Boat's SE focuses on waste management (SDG 12), a topic he is passionate about and regularly provides education on. Furthermore, a few of the participants specifically mentioned SDG 1, which aims to eliminate poverty. This did not come as a surprise due to the evident poverty and inequality issue that exists in the country. This inequality can also be linked back to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018), which indicated that Thailand has continued to have high rates of entrepreneurship; however, entrepreneurship is naturally associated with higher

inequality because of the risk involved and the income it can create (Yanya, Abdul-Hakim and Abdul-Razak, 2013).

The SDGs may resonate with the work of some Thai SEs more than others. SEs have engaged with the SDGs to various degrees, which can be seen in their public communication. However, some of the SEs may contribute significantly to some SDGs without announcing their impact in relation to this, so it would be unknown to the public. It is also possible that some of the SEs mention the SDGs largely for publicity without significantly contributing. Nonetheless, SEs can become linked with any one SDG and/or contribute to multiple SDGs simultaneously as a result of their value chain activities. Because of their potential contribution and link(s) to specific or multiple SDGS, it is clear how closely linked the goals of an SE are to the concept of sustainability (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022; Ketraprakorn and Kantabutra, 2019b).

Several social entrepreneurs also clearly highlight communities and local community development as an important aspect of their work as social entrepreneurs. Providing access to education as a means to empower the Thai society, along with poverty reduction are clearly goals some of the entrepreneurs emphasise. By empowering their beneficiaries with education, new skills, and language knowledge, the social entrepreneurs are giving them power. Empowerment is about giving power and voice to marginalised groups, individuals and communities. But achieving this requires collective efforts. This is particularly crucial in the development of tourism, where community empowerment is vital for implementing sustainable tourism practices (Richards and Hall, 2003; Khalid et al., 2019). Empowerment increases the ability of individuals or groups to take action and can be a valuable tool for improving the assets and abilities of local communities (Khalid *et al.,* 2019).

Thailand and its communities are very linked to agriculture, so creating more responsible links between agriculture and tourism can be beneficial. Like other tourism products and services, the success of tourism social enterprises relies on collaboration among various actors in the tourism value chain. This network can

include both public and private sector actors working together to provide a range of services. Social entrepreneurs and their enterprises also play a crucial role in supporting sustainable linkages between different elements of the tourism value chain. Social enterprises create positive social and environmental impacts through their value chain activities (Littlewood and Holt, 2015). This can include how products are sourced during the input stage, within daily operations by hiring those from marginalised groups or through profits that are distributed to specific beneficiaries (Littlewood and Holt, 2018).

Stimulating positive impacts in tourism supply chains helps create indirect benefits for vulnerable individuals. Rogerson (2012) notes that sourcing local agricultural products is an important benefit that the tourism industry can provide in the developing world. Tourism can help stimulate local agricultural development through backward linkages that allow local farmers to supply food to tourism establishments (Torres and Momsen, 2004; Rogerson, 2012). A better relationship between these actors would benefit local farmers and help alleviate poverty through decreased imports, improved tourism industry food supplies, increased tourist access to local foods and improved tourism sustainability (Torres and Momsen, 2011).

In developing countries such as Thailand, tourism projects have been initiated in regions where vulnerable populations rely on agriculture and food production for their livelihoods. Therefore, we can build upon the existing skills of the disadvantaged without abruptly changing their way of life. Littlewood and Holt (2015) argue that by creating social value within their value chains, SEs can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The aims of SEs are aligned with the SDGs, with the overall aim to enrich quality of life (Kassim et al., 2020). Sustainable development addresses global challenges while SEs support the creation of positive social change on a smaller scale (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022). SEs can help achieve all the SDGs, and they have the potential to contribute simultaneously to multiple SDGs through their value chain activities, either directly or indirectly (Oliński and Mioduszewski, 2022).

This study also shows that the participants' values align with both the SEP philosophy and sustainable development principles. Reasonableness and moderation are aspects of the SEP that also relate to the environment and conservation of natural resources, which should lead to environmental sustainability. Further, the self-immunity element of the SEP urges individuals to care for the environment and conserve it for future generations. SEs strive to ensure economic viability while creating innovative solutions to deal with social problems, making them truly economically and socially – and at times environmentally – sustainable (Zhang and Swanson, 2014). It is clear that SEs can have a double bottom line (financial performance and social impact) or a triple bottom line (financial performance, social impact, environmental impact; Zhang and Swanson, 2014). In addition, the quadruple bottom line has emerged, which refers to businesses measuring success by creating value in the financial, social, environmental and cultural realms (Kabir, 2007).

In addition, a number of the SEs in this study prioritise preserving and celebrating the local Thai culture, traditions and heritage, which attract travellers seeking authentic and meaningful experiences. These SEs offer opportunities for visitors to connect with local communities through cultural activities, performances, workshops and dining experiences. Promoting and conserving culture, traditions, and heritage allows tourism SEs play a crucial role in preserving and reviving traditional practices and customs of the destination. Immersive cultural experiences help tourists appreciate the destination and promote cross-cultural understanding, which is linked to memorable tourism experiences (MTEs). A recent study has identified different dimensions of MTEs such as hedonism, novelty, local culture, and meaningfulness (Castellani et al., 2020). The study also highlights how TSE has the potential to effectively create memorable tourism experiences by focusing on authenticity, building relationships with local communities and generating economic profit.

7.8 Concluding remarks

This research provides valuable insights into the motivations of Thai social entrepreneurs and the factors that shape their pursuit of social entrepreneurship. One significant finding is the strong influence of religious elements, particularly Buddhism, on the social entrepreneurs. Buddhism promotes ethical principles such as compassion and altruism that serve as a guiding framework for Thai social entrepreneurs, instilling a sense of social duty and influencing their actions. This study supports the notion that the social entrepreneurship model is well-suited to the Thai context due to its alignment with Buddhist values and the strong desire among Thai people to contribute positively to their community and society.

This study also highlights the collectivistic mindsets, cultural patterns and distinct values that have shaped the motivation of social entrepreneurs in Thailand. These individuals are deeply influenced by their respect for King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his philosophies, which instilled appreciation and a sense of duty to contribute to their community. Additionally, their personal values and beliefs are influenced by the SEP, which is evident in their personal values and business approaches. The SEP is deeply ingrained in Thai society and aligns with Buddhist values, emphasising long-term sustainability, resilience, environmental care and support for local communities – aspects that resonate with the priorities of social entrepreneurs who aim for lasting positive impact rather than short-term profits.

Overall, this study underscores the multifaceted influence of religion, culture and personal values in shaping the mindset and motivations of Thai social entrepreneurs. By understanding these driving forces, policymakers and stakeholders can better support and promote social entrepreneurship in Thailand, enabling social entrepreneurs to continue meaningfully contributing to their communities and society at large. Moreover, this study highlights the significance of considering cultural and religious elements in this field, recognising that local values and beliefs can impact the success and sustainability of such enterprises.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Overview

Thailand is one of the world's leading tourist destinations, and the hospitality and tourism sector significantly contribute to Thailand's economy. This study sheds light on the complex nature of social entrepreneurship in the Thai tourism and hospitality industry through thirty-one in-depth interviews. The research objectives were achieved by examining the development of social entrepreneurship in Thailand, understanding the social entrepreneurs' motivations and assessing their roles and operations within the Thai tourism industry. To address the objectives, the research questions centred on identifying the elements that influence Thai social entrepreneurs to pursue social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry in the first place, as well as exploring strategies to promote the development and effectiveness of tourism social enterprises to encourage more social entrepreneurs and enhance their success opportunities in Thailand.

Social enterprises (SEs) prioritise people, the planet and positive impacts, making them unique businesses with distinct social goals (Bargsted et al., 2013). By prioritising social goals over financial ones, SEs represent a shift from traditional capitalist business models, making them a positive business approach. Social entrepreneurship in tourism is encouraged, as traditional forms of tourism often overlook the interests of local communities (Aquino, 2022; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Social entrepreneurs are crucial in recognising sustainable tourism opportunities and promoting initiatives that create positive social and environmental change.

As a country heavily reliant on tourism, Thailand has seen the rapid emergence of social entrepreneurship in recent years, addressing a range of social and environmental challenges, promoting inclusive growth and creating a sustainable tourism sector that benefits both local communities and society. Despite this progress, little is known about the motivation behind Thai entrepreneurs'

engagement in these ventures. Therefore, this study explores the factors influencing Thai tourism industry entrepreneurs' engagement in social entrepreneurship. By understanding the motivations of social entrepreneurs operating within this industry, this study offers valuable insights into the factors that drive sustainable and socially responsible business practices in this significant industry. Tourism social entrepreneurs are essential in addressing socioeconomic and environmental challenges within the tourism sector and the broader issues of inequality and poverty that the country has been experiencing. Understanding what drives these entrepreneurs to engage in socially impactful initiatives informs policy and decision-making, leading to developing strategies that encourage and support their endeavours. In addition, as tourism continues to grow in Thailand, ensuring their efforts align with local needs and aspirations is essential, leading to more inclusive and responsible tourism development.

Thailand's religion, deeply ingrained values and rich cultural heritage influence the country's tourism social entrepreneurs, providing a strong foundation focusing on community and environmental well-being. As the dominant religion, Buddhism instils social responsibility, inspiring social entrepreneurs to address societal challenges and create positive changes. Examining personal values and motivations reveals the intricate interplay between individual aspirations, religious practices, cultural elements and social customs and the pursuit of social entrepreneurship.

Life-story-inspired interviews were used to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs. Utilising life-story interviews is unique because it has not been done before. The chronologically structured approach based on different life chapters and relations (early childhood and family; adolescence and education; relationships and social factors; adulthood, career and future outlooks) enabled the social entrepreneurs to freely share major life experiences, lessons and conflicts that led to their pursuing social entrepreneurship in tourism. By utilising this methodology, this study advances the field and provides recommendations and implications for promoting social entrepreneurship in the tourism industry in Thailand.

The study identifies key events, motivations and perceptions shaping the social entrepreneurs' life journey by analysing their life stories. With the help of questions sent before the interviews, and the photographs the participants chose that best defined them as tourism social entrepreneurs (as an elicitation method), they could reflect on their memories and shape their thoughts before the interviews, helping them provide comprehensive responses. Their narratives offered a deeper understanding of their developmental paths, highlighting influencing factors and relationships that led social entrepreneurs to their current position.

The conceptual framework depicts the various factors that impact the pursuit of tourism social entrepreneurship in Thailand. Buddhism lies at the heart of this influence, instilling compassion, altruism, and a sense of responsibility towards the community among Thai social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Thailand's cultural patterns, which are based on collectivism and influenced by the philosophies of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, foster a deep connection to society and a commitment to sustainable practices. Thai personal values align with ethical principles, which guide their decision-making processes. As a result, social entrepreneurs prioritise long-term impact and responsible tourism, driven by their cultural and religious values. Overall, this framework underscores the intricate network of factors that shape the mindset and determination of Thai social entrepreneurs, leading to positive community impact and responsible tourism practices.

This study found that promoting SEs and responsible tourism businesses in Thailand requires governmental efforts, increased awareness among the general public and a supportive destination environment that fosters entrepreneurial activities. These actions can potentially improve the sustainability and profitability of tourism SEs so that they can continue to create positive social impacts. The findings of this study pave the way for additional investigation into developing evidence-based policies and actions, aiming to establish a tourism industry in Thailand that is both sustainable and socially responsible. The implications of this study extend beyond the academic realm. The insights gained from this research

can guide policymakers in Thailand and industry stakeholders in formulating approaches to support and promote social entrepreneurship in the Thai tourism and hospitality industry. As Thailand's tourism industry evolves, driven by the passion and commitment of social entrepreneurs, it raises the question of whether Thai tourism social entrepreneurs can harness the power of religion, culture and values and employ this powerful tool for sustainable development, designing a new tourism paradigm that enriches the lives of communities and preserves the cultural heritage of Thailand as a destination.

8.2 The Role of Religious, Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors in Social Entrepreneurship in Thailand's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Background and contextual factors influence how individuals understand and perceive social entrepreneurship and what motivates entrepreneurs to pursue their ventures. Overall, the study stresses the significance of understanding individual contexts and values in fostering social change and shows that a unique set of motivations and experiences influences social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The findings highlight the role of religion, culture, heritage and monarchy as the drivers of social entrepreneurship in Thailand's tourism industry. Thai social entrepreneurs are motivated by personal values of collectivism, altruism, benevolence and direct and indirect experiences of social inequality. These values and mindset are deeply ingrained in Thai society, which values giving as an end in itself without expecting anything in return.

The study finds Buddhism notably influences social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The findings support Soontayatron's (2013) view, suggesting Buddhism is a dominant force in Thai society. In Thailand, religion, as an informal institution, plays an essential role in shaping the broader social system, including core values, beliefs and social norms that guide Thai people's personal and entrepreneurial intentions and practices. Consequently, Buddhism profoundly impacts the

motivations, practices and outcomes of social entrepreneurship in the country. Buddhism promotes compassion, altruism and concern for the well-being of all creatures, and these principles that can be traced back to their early upbringing are reflected in how social entrepreneurs conduct the tourism industry. Also instilled in them from a young age are concepts of transcendence and benevolence. Most Thais are taught to practice *Bhun Khun* and *Nam jai* – spontaneous acts of kindness and generosity. All these cultural principles (generosity, honesty and promoting peace), which Thais were exposed to since early childhood, are still highly valued by them today. The study finds that the religious teachings of Buddhism have inspired social entrepreneurs to address social and environmental challenges, alleviate suffering and promote the greater good. The concept of social entrepreneurship, emphasising social impact rather than solely pursuing profit, resonates with the Buddhist philosophy of creating happiness and harmony. In this study, Thai social entrepreneurs viewed social entrepreneurship as 'doing good' or making merit.

In addition, this study highlights the strong influence of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), also based on Buddhism, on the motivations and values of social entrepreneurs in Thailand. The late King Bhumibol Adulyadej's SEP emerged as a critical foundation for pursuing social entrepreneurship concerning the 'doing good' or the *Tham bun tham than* principle within the country. The study found the King is an ideological driver and serves as a role model and source of inspiration for social entrepreneurs due to his values and work, even among those who may not fully support the monarchy concept.

Both religion and monarchy contribute to the Thai cultural context, emphasising communal relationships and providing a fertile ground for the emergence of social entrepreneurship in Thailand. The nation's guiding philosophy is the SEP, focusing on inclusive decision-making, environmental care and improving the well-being of marginalised groups. The study shows that the social entrepreneurship concept fits well within Thai culture since its fundamental values align with the key principles of Buddhism. The king's efforts and the SEP ideology encourage social entrepreneurs

to strive towards positively impacting society, improving Thai citizens' quality of life and addressing Thailand's various challenges. Because different elements link back to Buddhism, this study provides new insight into the relationship between religion and social entrepreneurship in Thailand.

Furthermore, other strong national influences, particularly collectivism, affect the social entrepreneurs' motivations. This study finds that Thai social entrepreneurs' attitudes align with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The social entrepreneurs in this study display a strong collectivistic orientation, meaning they see themselves as interdependent and part of a larger group or community. Thai people possess a generous and giving mindset that is deeply rooted and is considered a national culture (Phaholyothin, 2017) as it shapes their attitudes and behaviours. Loyalty, long-term commitments to groups such as family and relationships and indebted goodness are significant aspects of Thai culture.

Social entrepreneurs in Thailand are also driven by socioeconomic and environmental pull factors such as inequality and environmental degradation, sparking a sense of urgency and a commitment to creating positive change. The preservation of Thai traditions and heritage and the desire to contribute to the well-being of local communities are recurrent themes among the social entrepreneurs interviewed. Altruism, a deep desire to address social issues, and a strong sense of social responsibility are commonly recognised motivations. Altruism involves helping others without expecting any personal gain, even if it comes at a personal cost. It is worth noting that many Thais have a strong desire to contribute positively to their community, expressed in their commitment to improving various societal issues, even when based on witnessing injustice indirectly. This study shows that many Thai social entrepreneurs draw upon their own experiences when developing solutions. For example, their direct experiences concerning their families' struggles instilled in them a strong desire to help those less fortunate, and they became social entrepreneurs to make a positive impact.

8.3 Evaluating the Development of Thailand's Tourism Social Enterprises

The study further explores what it means to be in Thailand's TSE domain. The TSE concept is important for Thailand, as it involves those striving to positively impact society and the environment while being part of an industry vital for the country's economy. Collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, local communities and businesses, is vital for creating an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship. Supportive policies from the government, financial assistance, capacity-building programmes and access to networks and resources are key elements in creating opportunities for social entrepreneurs and promoting the growth of tourism SEs.

Although there are some registered tourism SEs in Thailand, there is no clear database or directory on the number of tourism SEs, as many are not registered. For instance, some tourism SEs may not identify themselves as social entrepreneurs. Some operate in a grey zone and hesitate to register to avoid involving specific authorities and regulations in their business. This distrust in the system is common, particularly in less developed and emerging economies. Additionally, registering as a tourism SE in Thailand can be challenging, requiring time, effort and patience.

Therefore, it is necessary to prioritise raising awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship in the country. According to the interviewees, currently, there is little demand for socially and environmentally responsible businesses. The social entrepreneurs in this study reported a lack of awareness, knowledge, understanding and limited interest among the people regarding SEs. This could be attributed to the prevailing cultural preference for philanthropic donations rather than the hybrid social entrepreneurship model.

To address the awareness issue, participants in this study have urged the government to increase its efforts in promoting tourism SEs and other responsible, sustainable and ethical tourism ventures. Based on the findings, tourism SEs in Thailand should be promoted as a method of 'doing good' or making merit. The development and effectiveness of TSE in Thailand require more significant support from stakeholders, especially the government. Despite the existence of initiatives and policies (e.g. Social Enterprise Promotion Act – providing a legal framework for the recognition and support of tourism SEs; tax exemptions, funds and grant programmes), participants in the study still expressed concerns about the lack of support from authorities especially regarding access to funds and business support. This lack of government support has also been identified in the literature as a challenge in developing TSE in Thailand (Thiemboonkit, 2013). Government support can enhance the visibility, credibility and sustainability of tourism SEs. Participants highlighted the need to improve public participation and engagement in social entrepreneurship initiatives to raise awareness and understanding of TSE.

This study also highlights the close relationship between sustainability and social entrepreneurship in Thailand's tourism industry. Social entrepreneurship and sustainable development are intertwined, as social entrepreneurs use entrepreneurial methods to address social and environmental issues while striving for financial sustainability. Social entrepreneurs in Thailand emphasised the interconnectedness of human beings and reported being guided by long-term commitments to the community and the environment. The study recognising the varying degrees of engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among Thai tourism social entrepreneurs acknowledges that the SDGs inspire some entrepreneurs. While social entrepreneurship has the potential to contribute to and be linked with any SDG or multiple SDGs through their value chain activities, SDG one (No Poverty) was mentioned by a few of the Thai social entrepreneurs, emphasising the country's evident poverty and inequality issues. Thai tourism social entrepreneurs and their enterprises foster sustainable linkages between value chain elements. They create positive social and environmental impacts through their value chain activities by sourcing local products and hiring

marginalised individuals. Building strong and responsible linkages between agriculture and tourism, for instance, can be beneficial in this context as agriculture is another important sector, and this helps in supporting local farmers and contributing to poverty alleviation while enhancing sustainability in the tourism industry.

8.4 The Study's Contributions

This study contributes to understanding the development of social entrepreneurship in Thailand through the Thai tourism social entrepreneurs' perspectives and life stories. It provides valuable insights into how the TSE model can be effectively positioned in the country. The existing research on social entrepreneurship lacks an in-depth analysis of the antecedents and intentions of social entrepreneurs, particularly in less developed countries. Despite the potential of SE for social and economic growth in the tourism industry, research is scarce on this topic. This study fills the gap by shedding light on the development of TSE in Thailand by focusing specifically on tourism social entrepreneurs in a context that has been minimally explored.

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the influence of the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej on social entrepreneurs, particularly the younger generation in Thailand. Notably, the study reveals an unexpected and strong connection between the late king's SEP philosophy and the choices made by social entrepreneurs, challenging assumptions about generational shifts in attitudes towards monarchy. The study reveals that, contrary to expectations of generational shifts, the tourism social entrepreneurs from this study actively draw inspiration from the late king's values. Furthermore, the research provides a cross-cultural perspective by examining the impact on non-Thai nationals, highlighting the variability in influence based on cultural backgrounds. The findings emphasise the intergenerational transmission of admiration for the monarchy within families in Thailand and elucidate the role of formal education in shaping individuals'

understanding of the king's legacy. Additionally, the study acknowledges the potential for cultural shifts influenced by pro-democracy movements, adding a forward-looking perspective to the broader discourse on the monarchy's role in shaping societal values in Thailand. Overall, This study provides an unique and all-encompassing understanding of the multifaceted influence of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, resulting in a substantial contribution to the domains of social entrepreneurship, cultural studies, and political science.

The study sheds light on the role that religion, specific Thai philosophies and culture play in shaping social entrepreneurial behaviours and engagement in social entrepreneurship in Thailand. As far as the researcher has been able to ascertain, no other studies have found religion (Buddhism) and Thai cultural elements as key motivational factors in social entrepreneurship. Therefore, this research's significance and contribution is further underscored by its reflection on why religion, particularly the influence of the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the Social Entrepreneurship Philosophy (SEP), continues to resonate strongly among the social entrepreneurs. The study delves into the enduring impact of the king's values and philosophy, offering insights into the interplay between religion, cultural norms, and business practices. The research indicates that the long-standing practice of showing respect to the monarchy, which has been deeply embedded in Thai culture for many years, has played a role in the enduring impact of the late king's teachings a on the relatively young social entrepreneurs. This insight provides opportunities for a wider discussion on the role of religion, particularly in terms of royal influence, in the context of business. It prompts consideration of how religious values, as embodied by the late king's philosophy, continue to shape ethical and socially responsible business practices, potentially contributing to a wider literature on the intersection of religion and business ethics. Overall, The study not only enhances the understanding of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's influence, but also enriches the discourse on the role of religion in shaping ethical business practices in Thailand.

Similar to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) research, most of the existing research has explored social entrepreneurship in developed economies, and little is known about social entrepreneurship (more specifically, TSE) in Asian economies, particularly in the south-eastern region of Asia such as Thailand, where institutional conditions are very different from those in developed countries. Similarly, Short et al. (2009) suggested investigating whether cultural values may facilitate or constrain SEs. National culture, for example, is recognised as an essential factor in entrepreneurial behaviour (Gurel, Altinay and Daniele, 2010). However, past research on SE has undervalued the role of demographics and attitudinal factors such as culture and attitudes towards sustainability that typically affect general entrepreneurial intentions (Dickel and Eckardt, 2021).

This study expands on Mottiar and Boluk's (2016) recommendations for future research to better understand tourism social entrepreneurs' motivations, particularly if they change over time. This study also builds on Bargsted et al.'s (2013) suggestions for future studies that would help describe more deeply and precisely how and why people become social entrepreneurs to support the strategies for developing and maintaining their enterprises. There are calls specifically for research that addresses why social entrepreneurs do what they do (Gabarret, Vedel and Decaillon, 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Haugh, 2005). The present work has responded to these calls in the Thai context. Zahra et al. (2009) developed a profile of entrepreneurs and described social entrepreneurs as proactive individuals who are independent and take risks, while Shaw and Carter (2007) compared for-profit and social entrepreneurs showing major differences between the motivations of social and commercial entrepreneurs. However, few studies explore social entrepreneurial motivation (Ruskin, Seymour and Webster, 2016). Fu et al. (2019) also suggested that future research should focus on specific types of entrepreneurships, such as environmental and social entrepreneurship. They note that entrepreneurial activities in the hospitality and tourism industry differ from other sectors, and an industry-specific focus would be helpful.

Moreover, research on the personal values of social entrepreneurs is also limited, with the existing literature describing European and South American perspectives (Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou and Maroudas, 2021). Research is missing regarding the role of values in the development of social entrepreneurs in the Eastern context and whether and to what extent values can help distinguish different social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs' personal values, for instance, explain their drive to establish SEs. Though the term and concept do not hold a universally accepted definition, understanding the motivation grounds can lead to better awareness of why some individuals are more drawn to engaging in the social enterprise sector that aims to create social value compared to others (Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou and Maroudas, 2021).

The life story research approach has been recently used to study social entrepreneurship. For instance, Stirzaker et al. (2021) conducted a study on social entrepreneurs in Scotland, while Yitshaki and Kropp (2016) and Cohen and Katz (2016) explored Israeli social entrepreneurs using the same approach. Although this approach is not new, there are no other studies that have employed life-story type interviews to examine TSE in Thailand. Consequently, there is a lack of information on the background and identity of social entrepreneurs in Thailand, as well as their path towards becoming social entrepreneurs. By understanding the entrepreneurs' stories, the study identified the main elements leading to the TSE path, key motivations and perceptions. The critical aspects that have shaped Thai social entrepreneurs' motivation include the nation's values, culture and Buddhism, the country's main religion. Thus, this study contributes to the knowledge base of TSE in Thailand and foregrounds its potential to address key challenges and drive sustainable development in Thailand. Social entrepreneurship can be an ally to the government's efforts to address various issues within the country. This study, therefore, emphasises the importance of recognising tourism social entrepreneurs' impact on local communities and the destination country, Thailand.

8.5 Implications and Recommendations

The implications of this research are far-reaching. By uncovering the motivations and intentions of social entrepreneurs through life chapters and events, this study was able to identify the factors that influence their decision-making and long-term goals. This knowledge can aid in creating supportive environments and targeted interventions that facilitate the growth and success of social entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism sector. Understanding the intentions of these entrepreneurs can also help inform the design of capacity-building programmes, education initiatives and networking opportunities tailored to their specific needs. Overall, investigating the motivations of tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand has provided valuable knowledge that contributes to the well-being of local communities and creates positive impacts on both the environment and society. By understanding and leveraging the motivations and intentions of social entrepreneurs, a more inclusive, ethical and sustainable tourism industry in Thailand can be fostered. This could also serve as a guideline for factors to consider when looking at TSE in other geographical contexts. The study offers several recommendations for policy, sustainability, stakeholder engagement and education initiatives.

8.5.1 Policy and Sustainability

Although there has been some progress, there is still a need for greater awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship among stakeholders, especially legislators and policymakers. They need at least a basic understanding of the models and regulations governing the SE ecosystem.

Government support is critical for the growth and success of SEs in the tourism industry in Thailand, as it can boost their reputation, reliability and long-term viability. While there are already some initiatives and policies, further actions can be taken. This may involve offering additional tax incentives, simplifying bureaucratic procedures to expedite processes with SE registration, enhancing

access to capital and offering specialised training and capacity-building programmes for social entrepreneurs (industry specific or more generally) to help equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to run successful ventures. Governments can also create cause-specific or industry-specific financial incentives, grants and tax benefits contributing to cultural preservation and responsible tourism.

Tourism SEs in Thailand, according to this study, appear prioritise philanthropy over innovation and value creation. The study reveals that these SEs are more focused on giving back to society and making a positive impact on the communities they operate in, rather than bringing about new and innovative business practices. This philanthropy-driven approach can be seen as a reflection of the cultural values of Thailand, which places great importance on social responsibility and community welfare. However, it is worth noting that this focus on philanthropy may come at the expense of innovation and competitiveness in the long run. Therefore, supportive and adaptive regulations can create a favourable environment for SEs to flourish, leading to more innovative practices and perhaps more innovative tourism SEs to be established. But if regulations are excessively restrictive, unclear or burdensome, it can hinder the innovativeness of social entrepreneurship by creating obstacles to enter the market, raise funds, and collaborate. Thus, finding the appropriate balance and continuously adapting regulations to cater to the changing needs of the social entrepreneurship sector is crucial to promote innovation in Thailand.

8.5.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Some networking groups, like the Social Enterprise Thailand Association (SE Thailand), act to connect members and other organisations. Creating additional groups and platforms would enhance collaboration, partnerships, knowledge sharing and resource access. For example, regular webinars and workshops for the public, conferences, networking events or online forums where social entrepreneurs, industry experts, government officials and other stakeholders can share their knowledge and experiences would substantially increase stakeholder

engagement. These different approaches would create a supportive community of like-minded individuals to exchange ideas, learn from each other and leverage their collective expertise to address social challenges more effectively.

Although there is an overarching network, namely SE Thailand, which is instrumental in connecting different entities, the creation of specialised networks (could be in different regions) designed for specific sectors, such as a network dedicated to tourism social enterprises, could introduce a new era of collaboration and empowerment. Such targeted networks can function as dedicated platforms for tourism social entrepreneurs, fostering a conducive environment for collective growth and impact. These do not currently exist In Thailand. The dedicated network could focus on dedicated programmes that offer mentorship, support and resources to aspiring and existing tourism social entrepreneurs. This would help social entrepreneurs cultivate their businesses, enhance skills, connect them with potential industry partners and expose them to new potential markets to scale their SEs if they wished to.

The absence of dedicated networking platforms for tourism social entrepreneurs is a gap that needs filling. Through the establishment of a tourism social enterprise network, individuals can use their shared experiences and insights to create a united community with a common goal. This fosters collaboration and the sharing of resources, which can increase the effectiveness of collective efforts. Having a sense of social identity within the network also helps members work towards a shared purpose with greater dedication. A specialised network for tourism social enterprises can play a crucial role in promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices, which can lead to improvements in the overall destination. By facilitating cooperation and collaboration within the network, innovative solutions for destination management can be found, ensuring that tourism has a positive impact on local communities and the environment. These networks would not only disseminate knowledge and foster collaboration but also encourage innovation, creating an inspiring ecosystem that motivates individuals to engage in social entrepreneurship.

In addition, raising awareness among domestic and international tourists about the concept and effects of TSEs is important. This can be achieved through marketing campaigns, social media platforms, blogs and travel forums, educational materials and online platforms that showcase SEs, their stories, their goals and their positive impact on destinations. This would involve collaborations and partnerships with local tourism boards, travel agencies and hotels to promote SEs in the country. It is important to highlight SEs' values and their role in promoting responsible tourism practices and environmental conservation. This can help raise awareness and appreciation among tourists for sustainable tourism values and encourage responsible consumer choices. Visitors can be encouraged to engage with and support SEs during their travels actively.

8.5.3 Educational

Educational initiatives, such as integrating social entrepreneurship principles and practices into universities' tourism and hospitality curriculum, can also help cultivate a new generation of socially conscious entrepreneurs equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to drive sustainable and socially responsible tourism development. Furthermore, incorporating teachings and philosophies from Buddhism (indirectly or directly) in entrepreneurship education can help instil ethical principles and encourage responsible business practices. Entrepreneurship education can encourage students to consider the social dimensions of entrepreneurship and how their ventures can contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities. Introducing students to the social entrepreneurship model as a concept that prioritises social and environmental impact alongside financial sustainability can help them better appreciate how to create businesses that combine positive social and environmental impact with financial sustainability. Encouraging collaboration among researchers, students and social entrepreneurs can drive innovation and provide valuable practical insights.

8.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

While this study may not fully represent the diversity of social entrepreneurship initiatives across Thailand, the sample offers a deep and detailed look at a select subgroup: social entrepreneurs with SEs in Thailand's hospitality and tourism industry. The study looked at tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand based on set criteria. It involved 31 participants who were carefully chosen and interviewed one-on-one. The participants came from different hospitality tourism SEs, including travel and tour agencies, accommodation service providers, food and beverage-related businesses, food production businesses and environmental and cultural tourism businesses. This relatively focused study tests whether the theory works in this context and prepares the field for more extensive studies. Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample.

The study provides knowledge about the circumstances in Thailand and proposes a unique conceptual model of what TSE looks like in Thailand. Whether this framework would look similar in other contexts or whether differences exist based on cultural and religious values are questions that may be investigated in future research. Although it can be anticipated that the settings in other culturally similar nations may be comparable, it is beyond the scope of this study to conclude so. Therefore, comparative studies can be conducted in similar contexts to explore whether results would be similar and reinforce this study's findings or yield very different results. Future studies should therefore explore other developing contexts in nearby regions or those with similar cultural (e.g. Indonesia scoring high on collectivism), religious (e.g. Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia in relation to Buddhism), or monarchy (e.g. Malaysia, Brunei and Cambodia) features.

Future studies can also focus on the comparative influences of collectivism or monarchy to determine which has a more dominant impact on different forms of entrepreneurship in the country. Additionally, as this study showed the strong influences of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and memories of his reign, questions such

as how long will this last, will future generations feel the same way, will the influence of this monarchy slowly fade and weaken in importance and will future kings be as influential in cultivating a collectivistic, 'doing good' social norm in the country can be investigated to understand the extent of the King's influence on entrepreneurship. Studies can also focus on tourism's socio-cultural and economic aspects relating to the monarchy in Thailand. These studies can include, for instance, the monarchy's role in promoting tourism and preserving cultural heritage, how the monarchy shapes national identity, cultural practices and social cohesion, the economic impact of the monarchy on Thailand's tourism industry and financial contributions from royal tourism. More research is also needed on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy concept. For instance, what key characteristics are required to successfully implement it beyond its Buddhist roots, how well can the concept be applied to other contexts and are certain industries/sectors more receptive to the concept than others.

This study's methodology was qualitative and involved a unique life-story approach. While the life-story approach offers an in-depth understanding, it is subjective (Atkinson, 1998). Like other interview-based studies, life-story interviews are limited by how interviews are transcribed and quoted. There is a potential loss of information. Nonetheless, the researcher collected detailed responses and observations through personal interviews (some virtually, some in person) with 31 participants, each interview lasting approximately two hours. Initially, more potential participants were contacted, and the interviews were expected to last longer. However, considering the situation at the time, some interviews were cancelled by the participants and some were cut short. Future studies may consider larger-scale, multiple-case studies based on a larger sample and compare the motivations of Thai tourism social entrepreneurs with social entrepreneurs in other sectors in the country in order to explore whether the path to social entrepreneurship remains the same. Differences in social entrepreneurship motivation when considering gender can also be explored.

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country had ongoing political issues. In addition, there were certain time and resource limitations, including being a single researcher when it was impossible to travel for in-person interviews. However, my communication and intercultural skills were critical in facilitating the narrative and allowing the participants to feel more comfortable, as someone who is also from Thailand ('insider-researcher'), have knowledge of the Thai context and also speak the Thai language. As there was a lack of time available to build trust and rapport in this case, future research should focus on spending more time establishing rapport before starting the interviews. This could lead to longer discussions and more detailed findings.

8.7 Final Remarks

This study provides new insights and illuminates the profound potential of SE in the Thai tourism and hospitality industry. By exploring Thai social entrepreneurs' motivations, roles and development, valuable information was gathered on the factors that drive SE and approaches that can help foster the growth and effectiveness of tourism SEs. Ultimately, Thailand's unique blend of religion, values and culture provides a strong foundation for the emergence and growth of TSE. The principles of compassion, interconnectedness and social responsibility ingrained in Buddhism, the dominant religion, serve as a driving force for TSEs to address the country's challenges and create positive change. Through responsible linkages between agriculture and tourism, tourism SEs can align with sustainable practices and benefit local communities while promoting a more inclusive and environmentally conscious tourism industry. However, to fully unlock the transformative potential of TSE, greater awareness and support from stakeholders, including government agencies and the public, are essential. By fostering an ecosystem that nurtures cultural values, religious principles and entrepreneurial motivations, Thailand can empower current and future social entrepreneurs to shape a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector that addresses social and environmental challenges, promotes inclusive growth and benefits both local

communities and the country. The power of social entrepreneurship can be harnessed to create a brighter and more sustainable future for Thailand's tourism industry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The driving forces behind tourism social entrepreneurship: a case study of social entrepreneurs in Thailand

Researcher: Anishka Narula
Director of studies: Helen Farrell

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research study on tourism social entrepreneurs in Thailand. The aim of this study is to understand the development of and engagement in tourism social entrepreneurship from your perspective as a Thai tourism social entrepreneur and specifically the role in which factors such as intention, backgrounds, experiences, personality traits, personal values, and culture play. Your particular perspectives, insights and experiences will be highly significant to the research.

This research is being undertaken as part of the researcher's PhD studies in Tourism at the University of Westminster, London. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The study will involve

1) Before the interview, you will a) be sent 5-10 questions that will allow you to think about different experiences based on the different chapters of your life and b) be asked to pick 5 photograph that best defines you as a tourism social entrepreneur.
2) Participating in an interview (online- with audio and video) with myself, the researcher, to speak about your life story, how and why you became the tourism social entrepreneur that you are and the things that shaped you to be the tourism social entrepreneur that you are. This should take about three hours and will be recorded.

Participation

Participation is entirely voluntary and you do not have to take part. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen if you take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. The researcher will discuss the interview procedure and basic information with you and arrange an online interview with you

at a time that suits you best. As the researcher is from Thailand, has knowledge on the Thai context and speaks the Thai language, interviews can be conducted in Thai or English. You will be invited to choose which language you would like the interview to be conducted in. This information sheet along with the consent form will be provided in both English and Thai.

The in-depth interview will take approximately three hours where you will be able to tell your story in your own way. It will be guided by the researcher who will have some questions based on different life themes as an interview guide, but it is designed to be flexible to meet your needs and comfort. The interview will be recorded (audio and video) and notes will be taken, subject to your permission. All recordings of data will be kept confidential and deleted after the research has been completed. Even if you have decided to take part, you are still free to stop your participation at any time during the interview.

What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?

The information gathered from the study would help promote the development and effectiveness of tourism social enterprises SE's. This could potentially improve success for Thai social entrepreneurs and drive others to be more aware of and involved in SE's in Thailand. Although there are a few studies on social entrepreneurship in Asia, studies have generally been from the Western world. To the best of my knowledge there are no studies that have been conducted on the development of tourism SE's in Thailand and especially no studies that specifically detail the extent of utilizing tourism as a tool in social entrepreneurship in Thailand. Your insights would therefore be highly valuable. Additionally, the researcher will provide you with a final report describing the main findings as well as the completed research paper later on.

The main disadvantage of taking part in the study is that you will be donating around three hours of your time to take part, and that is very much appreciated. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. If some topics become too overwhelming, you are free to ask for a pause and take some time to think and reflect, or ask to end the interview and reconvene at a later time. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions.

Confidentiality

What is said in the interview is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. All data will be anonymized, meaning your name will not be used and it will not be possible to identify you in any of my work/ publications. In reporting the findings, the researcher will not reveal the names of any participants or organisations. Even though the research would be available online through WestminsterResearch (the university's storage of research records) and Ethos (the British Library's storage providing access to UK doctoral theses online), confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved by using pseudonyms. No data will be accessed by anyone other than me. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in the interviews.

How is the project being funded?

The researcher is funding the project themselves.

The results of the study

The researcher will produce a final report summarising the main findings, which will be sent to the participant. The completed research paper will also be sent to the participant later on.

Who to contact for further information

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Anishka Narula
School of Architecture and Cities, Centre for Tourism Research
University of Westminster
London NW1 5LS
w1450282@my.westminster.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 20 79115000
Mob: (+44) 7308296006

Who to contact for further questions

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact my director of studies:

Dr. Helen Farrell
School of Architecture and Cities, Centre for Tourism Research
University of Westminster
London NW1 5LS
H.Farrell@westminster.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 20 79115000

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study

APPENDIX 2 – CONSENT FORM

Project title: The driving forces behind tourism social entrepreneurship: a case study of social entrepreneurs in Thailand

Researcher: Anishka Narula (w1450282@my.westminster.ac.uk)

I have read and understood the information in the Participant Information Sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions, which have been answered satisfactorily and I am willing to act as a participant in the above research study. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary, that I do not have to take part and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I acknowledge that the interview will be recorded.

Participant name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This consent form will be stored separately from any data you provide so that your responses remain anonymous.

Please provide your contact details below should you wish to receive a final report summarising the main findings and the completed research paper later on.

Participant contact details: _____

I, Anishka Narula, have provided an appropriate explanation of the study to the participant.

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

_____

APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Participant details: name, gender, age, SE beneficiary

- Other details: appearance, demeanour

Section A – discuss photographs chosen to warm up *(approx. 25 mins)*

Section B – life story related *(approx. 70 mins)*

Period	Aspects
Origin and early childhood	-place of birth influence -culture, values growing up -character as a child
Adolescence	-upbringing -inspiration growing up
Education	-private, public -memories of school, role -activities
Relationships	-impactful relationships -family, partner, children, friends
Social factors and community	-struggles, social pressure -social class influence -relationship with the community -view on their own community, moved around or not
Personality and leadership	-define their personality – strength, weakness -define good leader -qualities helpful/needed in being a social entrepreneur

Cultural heritage, values, traditions	-culture, values, traditions they grew up with youth-present -key Thai philosophies -define family's cultural background -religion -main beliefs today, what do they value
Adulthood and career	-define who they are today, vs youth -career journey -define satisfaction in work -challenges and accomplishments
Vision of the future	-hope -where do they see themselves in the future -vision for their country, community, their SE -issues they are nervous about

Section C – social entrepreneurship related *(approx. 70 mins)*

Aspect	Details
SEs in Thailand	-establishment of SEs in Thailand - why -Thai public- understanding and awareness -Thai values vs align with SE model -SEP encourages SE -Thai philosophies and SEs -responsibility for supporting social sector -what is helping SE ecosystem and hindering it
Motivation	-what lead them -previous social projects, causes, interests -inspiration -culture, values, tradition influence
Tourism	-operating with other tourism stakeholders – challenges -TSE impact, what is their view, what is their hope -tourism sustainability and Thailand – their views -what to know before pursuing TSE- their advice
Skills	-competencies needed to run SE in Thailand -right mindset and motivation vs the right skills in pursuing social entrepreneurship

Other	-how to create appreciation for social entrepreneurship -meaning for social entrepreneurship for them -their SE's competitive advantages in a competitive market -traits or triggers that lead to pursuing SE -education in SEs

APPENDIX 4 – EXTENDED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Life chapters-related questions

Origin and early childhood
- What were you like as a child?
- Place of birth influence on who you are?
- Upbringing since youth
- What did you want to be when you were a child?

Adolescence
- Upbringing growing up
- Who inspired you the most growing up?

Education
- What is your memory of attending school?
- What activities were you involved with in school? In college?
- What is your view on the role of education in a person's life?

Relationships
- Which relationships shaped and influenced your life the most?
- Family, partner, children, friends

Social factors and community
- What were some of your struggles and what did you excel in?
- How did social class influence your life?
- What social pressures have you experienced as an adult?
- Was/is having a sense of community important to you?
- What would you define as your relationship with your community and social networks?
- Does your work aim towards the improvement of your community or another community?
- What do you do to collaborate with other tourism stakeholders in the community?

Personality and leadership
- Define your personality – what aided and hindered you throughout life? Strengths, weaknesses
- What qualities do you find are needed and are useful in being a leader like a social entrepreneur?
- How would you define someone who is a good leader?

Cultural heritage, values and traditions
- What cultural values and traditions were passed on to you as a child
- What are some key Thai philosophies you grew up with/ were exposed to?
- Was religion important in your upbringing- what is your view on religion today?
- How would you define the cultural background of your family?
- What cultural influences and values would you say are still important to you today?
- What primary beliefs guide your life today?

Adulthood and career
- What has been the most important learning experience in your life?

- What are some of the most important decisions you've had to make?
- How did you end up in the type of work you do?
- What are some of the challenges you've had to face with the work you do?
- Has your work been satisfying to you - what could add to your satisfaction?
- What is the most important thing to you in your work?
- What have been your greatest accomplishments so far?
- How would you define success in your career?
- How would you describe yourself at this point in your life?

Vision of the future
- What gives you hope and what do you hope for?
- What vision do you have for your country and its tourism industry?
- What do you see for yourself in the future?
- What is your view on why there are social problems in the world?

Social entrepreneurship-related questions

SEs in Thailand
- Why would you say social enterprises started being established in Thailand?
- What would say describe as the Thai public's understanding of SE's?
- What Thai values do you think align/don't align with the social enterprise model?
- Thai philosophies like the sufficiency economy philosophy encourages social entrepreneurship?
- Who would you say is responsible for supporting the social sector in Thailand?

Motivation
- What lead you to pursue social entrepreneurship?
- In the past, have you worked on things like social projects and social causes that might have influenced your passion in pursuing social entrepreneurship?
- Any social enterprises you have been particularly inspired by – Thai or international?
- How has culture and values influenced you to pursue social entrepreneurship?

Tourism
- Social enterprises operating alongside other tourism stakeholders in Thailand-challenges?
- What do you see as social entrepreneurship's impact on the society and the tourism world?
- What is your view on tourism sustainability when thinking about Thailand?
- What are some of the things and concepts that future social entrepreneurs should know before pursuing tourism social entrepreneurship?

Skills
- Competencies needed in running your social enterprise?
- Would you say entrepreneurs are born as entrepreneurs with specific traits or that they go through things that trigger them to want to become entrepreneurs?

- What are your thoughts on the importance of having the right mindset and motivation vs the right skills in pursuing social entrepreneurship?

Other
- Meaning of social entrepreneurship
- What would you highlight as your enterprise's competitive advantages in this competitive market?
- How can appreciation for social entrepreneurship be created?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you and your enterprise face today?

APPENDIX 5 – PHOTOGRAPHS SELECTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS (HIGHLIGHTED ARE THOSE WHO WERE NOT BORN IN THAILAND ARE HIGHLIGHTED)

Participant	Photographs chosen		
Karn	Merit making	King	Childhood school- kindergarten
Decha	Family	Volunteering	Temple
Chai	King	Temple	Merit making
Mary	Trash in the ocean	Disadvantaged community	Volunteering
Nat	Family	School- middle school	Merit making
Krit	Disadvantaged community	Trees-nature	Trash on land
Tap	Family	Temple	Merit making
John	Volunteering	School- high school	Travelling
Mew	King	Disadvantaged community	Thai cooking class
Ploy	Disadvantaged community	Trash on land	Merit making
Boat	Thai food	Recycling initiative	Volunteering
Mark	Volunteering	Bangkok skyline	Disadvantaged community
Tae	Family	Merit making	King
Poom	Volunteering	Underprivileged children	King
Pla	Trash in the ocean	King	Family
Nop	King	Family	Merit making
Jane	Elephants	King	Disadvantaged community
Pong	Merit making	King	School- middle school
Term	Northern community	Coffee farm	Disadvantaged community
Tor	Farmers on the field	Merit making	Family
Pat	Volunteering	King	Thai food
Sutep	Trash collection on the beach	Trash in the ocean	Volunteering
Geng	King	Family	Growing food
Den	Farming	Food growing on the farm	Merit making
Nut	Tourist long-tail boats	Trash in the ocean	Ocean clean up
Boon	Children in school	King	Temple
My	Farmers on the field	Food growing on the farm	Local food vendor
Tep	Food growing	King	School- high school
Guy	Family	King	Temple
Orm	Organic food	Thai food	Local fruits vendor
Kate	Disadvantaged community	Crafts making	Disadvantaged community

APPENDIX 6 – THEMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS

Research question	Initial codes	Relationship between the codes (categories)	Larger themes
• **What elements influence Thai social entrepreneurs to pursue social entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality industry?**	-doing good -care for others -responsibility -bhun khun -namjai -merit making religion -temple -donation -volunteer -sufficiency -moderation -royal projects -having enough -more than enough	-guilty triggers -Buddhist principles and acts -empathy -ethical practices -personal fulfilment -SEP principles	-Personal passion and sense of purpose -Influence of values, i.e. collectivism, benevolence -Altruistic motivations -Personal fulfilment and social impact -Cultural values and religious effects -King's influence -SEP as a foundation
	-inequality -local people -local products -thai society -local customs -environmental care -nature -marginalised community -group -family background -childhood -future generations	-jobs -skills, training -education -disadvantaged individuals -community -sense of belonging -sense of being part of something positively affecting society -interdependent society -inclusivity -social responsibility -collective well-being	-Cultural preservation -Cultural exchange between tourists and locals -Environmental impact -Poverty alleviation -Responsible tourism -Employment generation -Sustainable development goals and responsible practices -Meaningful work -Empowerment of communities -Community development

Research question	Initial codes	Relationship between the codes (categories)	Larger themes
How can the development and effectiveness of tourism social enterprises be fostered to encourage more SEs to be formed and enhance success opportunities for social entrepreneurs?	-guidance -incentives -authorities	-funding issues -government policies -regulatory hurdles -legal frameworks -financial resources -external support	-Government policies and support for SEs -Further incentives to establish SEs -Financial sustainability and funding opportunities -Enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem
	-sense of responsibility towards the society -merit making -awareness -knowledge -authorities -educating the public -groups to collaborate -networking -tourism industry stakeholders	-knowledge sharing -networks -access to experts -tailored support -partnerships -collaborations -lack of public awareness -support mechanisms -promoting of SEs	-Highlight SEs as a form of doing good -Creating an appreciation for SEs as a way to positively contribute to society -Stakeholder partnerships and collaborations -Industry-specific SE networks -Enhancing tourism social entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge -Raising awareness about SEs among the public -Promoting tourism SEs

APPENDIX 7 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - JANE

Jane, Female, 42, involved in cultural tourism in Northern Thailand, in-person meeting

Photographs Jane chose to discuss (in this order) related to elephants, the King, and a disadvantaged community. Jane was born in India, and her family relocated to Bangkok when she was four years old and eventually settled in Northern Thailand, where she currently resides. Jane is the founder of her tourism SE, categorised as cultural tourism. Through the sales of various tours, Jane's tourism SE promotes experiences in Northern Thailand to help preserve its cultural heritage. Her SE falls under the cultural tourism category, and her aspirations go beyond merely showcasing tourist attractions. She aims to create meaningful and immersive experiences that

allow travellers to appreciate the rich culture of Northern Thai communities. By curating traditional Khantok-style dinners, hill tribes trek with local residents, and unique homestays and meals with local families, Jane enables visitors to delve into the core of Northern Thai culture. She feels that the Northern region has become quite cosmopolitan, and traditional Thai culture is at risk of disappearing. She expresses a deep passion and appreciation for Thai culture, traditions and Buddhist practices, which she considers integral to her identity. Despite not being born in Thailand, Thai culture and values remained a significant part of her upbringing. Jane's goal is to help alleviate poverty in the Northern local hill tribe villages, ensure the locals make a profit and reinvest her earnings into this cause. This includes the Karen Hilltribes communities. Through her tourism SE, she aims to empower local leaders and small businesses, helping them increase their income by promoting Northern Thai culture through storytelling and service. In addition, Jane expressed her admiration for Thailand, calling it the 'land of smiles' and applauding its distinctive Thai-style service. She hopes to highlight these qualities to others. Jane is also a strong advocate of education as a means of empowering individuals and regularly conducts English lessons for the local community. She believes that by offering language skills, she provides locals with improved communication skills that would lead them to employment opportunities in the future.

APPENDIX 8 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - BOON

Boon, Male, 32, runs a coffee shop and is based in Bangkok, in-person meeting

Photographs Boon chose to discuss (in this order) related children studying in school, the King, and a temple visit with his family. Boon owns a small coffee shop, and his tourism SE is classified in the tourism and education category. With a strong desire to have a positive impact, Boon's SE is operated by a group of individuals with disabilities, focusing on hearing disabilities. The profits generated by the café are utilised to fulfil these individuals' basic needs, including providing access to healthcare and education. Boon's vision extends beyond providing employment; he is committed to enhancing the lives of his team members through skills development, training and education tailored to their specific needs or disabilities. Boon believes this 'space' is more than just a café rather, it is a safe and supportive space where people with disabilities can flourish and gain knowledge. He puts effort into creating a warm, inclusive, and caring work atmosphere, ensuring that each team member is recognised and respected for their contributions. He was motivated to help this demographic after discovering the high unemployment rate among working-age disabled individuals in the country. Boon wanted to impact the lives of individuals who generally receive fewer career opportunities. His commitment to creating a positive impact on the lives of those with disabilities provides employment and empowers them with the tools and resources they need to succeed. He aims to break barriers and create a more inclusive society by focusing on their well-being, education and skills development. Boon is also a speaker at

some events offering insights on managing a business run by those who are disabled. At these events, he shares his insights and experiences in managing a business run by individuals with disabilities. His talks are said to be inspiring and help shed light on the potential and capabilities of these individuals. He aims to raise awareness and challenge societal perceptions about the value that individuals with disabilities can bring to the workforce.

APPENDIX 9 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - GUY

Guy, Male, 36, involved with art and runs a café in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Guy chose to discuss (in this order) related to their family, the King, and him at a temple. Guy is the founder of the tourism SE, and his SE falls under the food and beverage category. Guy runs a café and shop supporting women and young girls who are refugees, and his profits are reinvested into this cause. Born into a modest family, he was raised by a single mother who worked tirelessly and made every effort to support their household. Witnessing his mother's determination and perseverance in the face of adversity left a profound impact on him. He developed a strong sense of compassion and understanding for the struggles faced by many women in the country. As Guy matured, he became aware of the difficulties faced by many women and young girls, particularly refugees. He noticed that they lacked access to necessary resources and opportunities to better their lives. This led him to establish a tourism social enterprise in Bangkok. Driven by his desire to assist and empower marginalised women, Guy established a small cafe and shop that not only operates as a food and beverage

establishment but also functions as a vehicle for social change. Through his cafe, he provides employment and assistance to women and young girls from refugee backgrounds, offering them crucial services such as legal aid and valuable training in skills such as becoming a barista or refining their abilities in pottery and ceramics. Guy's story indicated that he believes that offering women income-generating opportunities is essential for their empowerment and breaking the cycle of poverty. He recognises that providing these women with the skills and knowledge they need can lead to financial independence, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose, thereby making a significant impact on their lives and communities. Guy has a vision of slowly expanding the reach of his SE to empower more women. He aims to create a sustainable and inclusive model that can be replicated in other parts of the country.

APPENDIX 10 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - KRIT

Krit, Male, 41, involved in travel and tours in Northern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs Krit chose to discuss (in this order) related to a disadvantaged group of people, trees/nature, and merit-making. Krit is the founder of the tourism SE. He is a passionate and environmentally conscious individual who has dedicated himself to promoting sustainable tourism and conservation efforts in Northern Thailand. He was brought up with a profound respect for nature, which led to him developing a close bond with the environment at a young age. Fueled by his passion for nature and his

aspiration to make a difference, he set out to create positive change. Krit's tourism SE falls under the travel and tours category, specifically focusing on environmental tourism. His goal is to offer travellers unique and memorable experiences that not only connect them with nature but also contribute to the conservation of parks and forests. His profits go into parks and forest conservation in the country. Krit's goal is to preserve Thailand's ecosystems and biodiversity for future generations to enjoy. Krit offers nature and adventure-related tours and excursions, such as visits to rice farms, wildlife hotspots, elephant sanctuaries, and mountain trails with hill tribe visits. Krit strives to make these experiences convenient, informative, and comfortable for travellers. Environmental sustainability is a key principle for Krit, and he ensures that all activities minimise their ecological footprint while promoting responsible and ethical tourism practices. The travel experiences are carefully considered to leave a positive impact on the environment and local communities, including eco-friendly transportation options.

APPENDIX 11 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - KATE

Kate, Female, 38, involved in community-based tourism in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Kate chose to discuss (in this order) related to disadvantaged children, crafts making, and a disadvantaged community. Kate is focused on ensuring the healthy development of tourist spots near Bangkok. Kate is the founder of the tourism SE, and her SE falls under the community-based tourism category. Kate's journey as a social entrepreneur began with a

profound desire to make a positive impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities and preserve the cultural heritage of Thailand. Although she was born in India, she grew up in Bangkok and was exposed to the diverse aspects of Thailand's tourism industry. Kate believes that there are hidden treasures and untapped potential in the communities surrounding Bangkok that are often overlooked by mainstream tourism. Visitors miss out on authentic experiences that not only showcase Thailand's offerings but also support local communities. With a sense of responsibility and appreciation for the country's culture, Kate set out on a mission to create a tourism company that bridges the gap between visitors and lesser-known experiences. She is a dedicated individual with a strong desire to develop her community and a knack for entrepreneurship. She skillfully manages her community-based tourism SE. Kate has formed meaningful connections with several communities near Bangkok through her SE, and she has carefully chosen them based on their unique skills and crafts, as well as their potential for sustainable development The SE and local community members work together to carefully design community experiences that will enhance visitors' knowledge and happiness, while also ensuring the satisfaction of community members. Kate believes that by working closely with these communities, she can create a positive impact that would enrich travellers' experiences and benefit the residents through income. Her goal is to support community development and preserve the culture.   This includes, for example, visiting Thai farmers and getting an insight into rice cultivation at the Buffalo village, an old market community with a focus on Thai dessert making, handicrafts and weaving techniques and a village whose focus is on ceramics, porcelains, and painting of ornaments. Kate reinvests the profits to improve and expand the offerings of her SE continuously. This allows her to enhance the quality of the day visit tours and homestay experiences,

ensuring that the communities have everything they need to provide an exceptional experience. Additionally, language (English) training is also provided for the community members regularly.

APPENDIX 12 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - KARN

Karn, Female, 39, involved in cultural tourism in Bangkok, online meeting and revisited in person in Bangkok

Photographs Karn chose to discuss (in this order) related to merit-making, the King, and their childhood school. Karn founded a tourism SE classified under the cultural tourism category, offering a wide range of activities such as temple tours and Thai cooking and dancing classes hosted by the locals and their small businesses. Driven by a sense of social responsibility, Karn believes that tourism can be a powerful tool to both showcase and safeguard the nation's traditions. Her vision extends beyond typical tourism ventures, as she views her tourism SE as a way to empower local communities and create fair and sustainable income opportunities for them. Her SE promotes Thai culture and tradition by offering authentic Thai experiences (usually full- or half-day experiences). The profits are used to support and help these local business owners with any training and operational needs. She expressed that she wants to help locals create a stable source of income and does not expect rewards for her work. Moreover, her motivation stems from a genuine desire to improve the livelihoods of small business owners in the community, enabling them to thrive and benefit from cultural tourism

activities. Karn believes tourism is a tool for showcasing and preserving the country's rich culture and tradition. By offering authentic experiences led by knowledgeable locals, her SE ensures that travellers gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Thai culture and traditions. This promotes cultural exchange and mutual respect between the tourists and the communities they visit. Her responses indicate that pursuing social entrepreneurship 'feels right' and resonates with her as she strives to help those in society. Notably, Karn mentions King Bhumibol's work as a source of inspiration and appreciation for Cabbages and Condoms as a restaurant and the work the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) group has done, their success, their scale and their plough-back-profit model where the company retains all profits.

APPENDIX 13 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - MEW

Mew, Female, 32, provides tours and excursions in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Mew chose to discuss (in this order) related to the King, a disadvantaged community, and a Thai cooking class. Mew is the leader of the tourism SE which was founded by her family. Her SE falls under the cultural tourism category. Her SE offers unique experiences and excursions in Bangkok, partnering with small businesses to ensure authenticity and meaningful connections with the local community. She works with local food markets in Bangkok for street food excursions, unique Bangkok hidden gems tours, and fruit carving and cookery classes. Mew shared that her family played a significant role in shaping her compassionate and socially

responsible character from an early age. She witnessed their active involvement in charitable endeavours, volunteering their time to aid the underprivileged and displaying kindness and empathy by cooking large Thai meals for them together at home and donating them. This altruistic mindset motivated her to take the reins of her family's business and continue serving the less fortunate. Mew highlights that she generally always thinks about the well-being of others and says she has always been someone who says, 'I want to make the world a better place' since youth. Her responses show that she believes it is everyone's responsibility to lend a helping hand to those who have not had luck in life. Her hope is to alleviate poverty in Bangkok. The profits go towards helping individuals from the slums (mainly Khlong Toey slum). Providing them with their basic needs, including food and clothing, lays a stable foundation for them to improve their lives. In addition, she assists them in acquiring skills that will enable them to secure internships and gain work experience. Through mentorship and vocational training, she encourages individuals to become self-reliant and gain the confidence to improve their current situation.

APPENDIX 14 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - TEP

Tep, Male, 29, runs a restaurant in Bangkok, online meeting and revisited in person in Bangkok

Photographs Tep chose to discuss (in this order) related to a farm, the King, and their high school. Tep is the founder of the tourism SE, and his TSE falls

under the food and beverage. Tep was inspired to make a difference after seeing the challenges that underprivileged people in his country go through. Tep's aim with his restaurant is to help vulnerable individuals, including younger adults, generate fair income by offering them education and training in cooking to work in his small restaurant. He believes in giving marginalised youth from poor communities the opportunity to get out of poverty and the struggles they are in. His profits go into providing them with basic needs (food and accommodation) and food education (basic cooking, health and safety, nutrition). Tep believes in creating this restaurant and institute to give this group of people hands-on experience and the chance to grow their self-esteem. Tep's main goal is to encourage long-term employability to create a positive and lasting impact. His focus is not solely on providing immediate employment opportunities within his restaurant, but rather, he envisions a future where young adults can secure stable, well-paying jobs in the industry or even start their own businesses. Tep provides them with the necessary skills and tools to become self-sufficient, ensuring that the impact of his work extends beyond the walls of his restaurant.

APPENDIX 15 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - PONG

Pong, Male, 30, runs a small hotel in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Pong chose to discuss (in this order) related to merit making, the King, and what equals to his kindergarten. Pong is the founder of the tourism SE. He runs a small hotel in which profits support marginalised children to receive better healthcare and education. Pong acknowledged the

privileges he had enjoyed throughout his life, including access to quality education in hospitality management and good healthcare, which resulted from his fortunate background. This awareness fueled a sense of responsibility to assist those who have not been as fortunate and make use of his abilities and resources to lift up those who are less privileged in society He advocates for creating a nurturing environment for children that guarantees their safety, health, and overall well-being. He is determined to end the cycle of poverty and pave the way for a better future by prioritising healthcare and education. Pong recognises that children who are healthy and well-educated are more inclined to become self-reliant, confident individuals who can overcome the limitations of their circumstances Pong also takes responsible tourism seriously and his hotel reflects this commitment. He supports local businesses by working with artisans, tour operators, and restaurants in the area. This helps strengthen the community and the overall tourism ecosystem.

APPENDIX 16 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - GENG

Geng, Female, 45, runs an organic food restaurant in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Geng chose to discuss (in this order) related to the King, their family, and a farm growing vegetables. Geng is the leader of a tourism SE founded by her family. Geng was inspired by her family's work and wanted to continue to develop this business to improve the lives of elderly Thai people. Geng's dedication to her family's tourism business, which focuses on

providing specialised care and support for elderly people, showcases her benevolent spirit and dedication to improving the lives of others. She runs an organic restaurant that supports local farmers, which is consistent with her dedication to sustainable practices. The menu items are carefully curated using only locally grown produce, including coffee from a local coffee farm in the North. Through her restaurant, Geng promotes the use of organic and locally sourced ingredients and supports the livelihoods of local farmers and small businesses, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Geng's principle is centred on modest, simple, and sustainable lifestyles. She strongly holds the view that sustainable practices are not temporary trends but a lifestyle that values and conserves resources for the upcoming generations. The restaurant's profits are donated to a care home, helping to provide specialised care and enhancing the lives of the elderly. This SE's initiatives reflect a holistic understanding of sustainability, encompassing the well-being of the people, the environment and the local community. Geng's restaurant stands out as a model for responsible consumption and environmental consciousness by prioritising organic and sustainable practices.

APPENDIX 17 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - TAE

Tae, Male, 38, runs a café in Bangkok, in-person meeting

Photographs Tae chose to discuss (in this order) related to their family, merit-making and the King. Tae is the founder of the tourism SE, and his SE falls under the food and beverage category. Tae combines his passion for dogs

and cafés through his SE. He runs a café and is driven to help the country's stray animals (mainly cats and dogs). He grew up in an area in Bangkok surrounded by numerous stray dogs, and he always wanted to help these vulnerable animals. He wishes that these animals would not have to suffer. Recognising the ongoing problem and growing population of stray animals, Tae firmly believes that the root cause lies in the lack of attention and care from the general public and the government. Determined to address this issue, he channelled his passion for animal welfare through his café and is dedicated to supporting various initiatives to improve street animals' lives through the profits he makes from his café. His efforts include medical treatment, vaccination and sterilisation programs, which are crucial in controlling the population of stray cats and dogs. As a result, this helps prevent their suffering and reduces the number of strays on the streets. Tae is a committed advocate for animal welfare issues in the country. To raise awareness, he also works with schools (international schools mainly) and occasionally visits as a speaker to educate young people on the importance of responsible pet ownership, showing compassion towards animals, and the significance of animal welfare. He delivers inspiring speeches and shares personal stories of street animals to engage students and encourage them to become advocates for change. Tae also arranges dog rescue shelter visits with the schools where food, toys, and supplies are brought in for the animals in their care. Tae aims to cultivate empathy and understanding for abandoned and neglected animals, and through such interactions, Tae hopes to instil a sense of responsibility and compassion in the younger generation.

APPENDIX 18 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - CHAI

Chai, Male, 44, runs a guesthouse and café in Northern Thailand, online meeting and revisited in person in Bangkok

Photographs Chai chose to discuss (in this order) related to the King, a temple visit/meditation with friends on his birthday, and merit-making. Chai founded his tourism SE in the accommodation category. His passion for animals is at the core of his mission, driving him to impact nature and wildlife conservation and protection positively. At his guesthouse and café, Chai goes above and beyond to support elephant conservation organisations and projects. His profits are dedicated to various elephant conservation initiatives. These contributions are vital in supporting the efforts to protect these animals and their natural habitats. Chai's dedication to animal welfare extends beyond elephant conservation efforts. During his spare time, he visits and donates to different stray dog (soi dog) and nature andwildlife conservation centres across the country. At his guesthouse, Chai ensures guests are introduced to responsible and ethical tourism experiences involving elephant sanctuaries operated by local groups, guides, and other social enterprises. By promoting these experiences, Chai educates travellers about the importance of responsible nature and wildlife tourism, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the well-being and preservation of the animals. As a result, his dedication to responsible tourism benefits the local communities and contributes to the sustainability of wildlife conservation efforts. Chai hopes that his SE will attract visitors who share his enthusiasm for animal welfare and ethical tourism.

APPENDIX 19 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - PLA

Pla, Female, 28, involved in environmental tourism in Southern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs Pla chose to discuss (in this order) related to trash in the ocean, the King and her family. Pla is the founder of a tourism SE classified under the environmental tourism category. Being in a tourist 'hot spot' (as stated by Pla), Pla runs a restaurant where profits are reinvested to support her goals in promoting education and awareness about environmental sustainability in the South. She works with schools and communities to inform local youth and children about environmental and tourism issues in the Southern tourist hotspots. She believes in empowering future generations to work towards positive change by enhancing local education and that it is important to inform young people about these issues while they are growing up in order for them to understand and work towards these issues as they grow up. Pla was observed first-hand and was affected by the negative impact of tourism activities on the environment and local communities. Witnessing the devastating effects of litter in the ocean, the exploitation of employees, and the poor working conditions left her feeling a sense of responsibility to take action and 'preserve the natural treasures' (as stated by Pla) of the South. With a strong desire to make a positive change, Pla knew that she had to take a longer-term approach to combating these issues. In her opinion, education and awareness are the key long-term solutions to address the lack of understanding among locals about the severity of these issues.

APPENDIX 20 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - TOR

Tor, Male, 32, runs a strawberry farm and restaurant in Northern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs Tor chose to discuss (in this order) related to farmers working on a field, making merit, and his family. Tor is the founder of the tourism SE, and his tourism SE falls under food and beverage production. His strawberry farm and restaurant SE aim to generate employment opportunities and support local farmers. Tor was motivated by his father's struggles as a farmer during his childhood. His vision is deeply rooted in his family's history and his desire to positively impact others' lives. He prioritises hiring underprivileged individuals from the local area or nearby villages. Moreover, Tor's dedication to supporting his staff goes beyond providing employment. At the farm, he ensures that each team member receives the necessary training and guidance to excel. By empowering them with new skills and knowledge, he equips them with the tools they need for personal and professional growth. Additionally, Tor tries to recruit individuals from neighbouring countries, such as Laos and assists them with obtaining the documentation and language skills required to settle in Thailand. He desires the improvement of the farmers' livelihoods and skills in the region Throughout his story, Tor expresses his dedication to various acts of making merit. He is committed to creating opportunities for underprivileged individuals and supporting their personal and professional growth, which embodies the principle of giving back to society.

APPENDIX 21 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - PAT

Pat, Female, 33, runs a healthy food café in Northern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs Pat chose to discuss (in this order) related to their volunteering experience, the King, and Thai cuisine. Pat is the founder of the tourism SE, and her profits are reinvested back into the business. Pat's healthy food café focuses on employability issues faced by women along the Northern border. At the heart of Pat's mission is the belief that knowledge is crucial in enhancing these women's livelihoods and empowering them to reach their full potential. However, many women in this region face language barriers and limited access to education and training. To address this, Pat's SE offers vocational training programs, English language classes, and Thai language lessons. These programs not only equip women with valuable skills but also give them the confidence to navigate daily life in Thailand. After completing the training, the women are eligible for employment at the café. Pat aims to create a safe haven for women in her SE, where they can thrive in an inclusive and supportive environment. The vocational training provided focuses on cooking and hospitality, allowing them to enhance their culinary skills and customer service abilities. Additionally, the language lessons offered provide opportunities for effective communication with customers, fellow team members, and future employers, opening doors to greater opportunities for growth and development. Pat believes that by investing in their education and skills, she aids in breaking down barriers and opens doors to opportunities that would have been unavailable to them. Pat is

determined to slowly expand her successful café to continue to create a positive impact. Her goal is to open more branches in the North and reach out to more marginalised women in the area, providing them with sustainable employment opportunities.

APPENDIX 22 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - TAP

Tap, Male, 28, runs a guesthouse in Bangkok, online meeting and revisited in person

Photographs Tap chose to discuss (in this order) related to their family, temple visit, and merit-making. Tap is the leader of the tourism SE which was founded by his father. His TSE falls under the accommodations category. Tap was inspired by his father's eco-friendly guesthouse. The SE is dedicated to addressing employment challenges and improving the job prospects of underprivileged youth. By collaborating with communities, such as the Khlong Toey slum, Tap's guesthouse provides a lifeline to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The SE offers, for example, those from slums work experience, training, and employment at the guesthouse. He mentions that it is about giving these people the tools they need to feel confident enough to be part of the community. Tap's life has always revolved around his family. He values his immediate and extended family deeply and holds their values, traditions, and shared memories close to his heart. These familial ties have been the driving force behind his path as a social entrepreneur. He frequently goes to temples with his family and has

expressed that the practice of making merit holds great significance for him. Contributing meaningfully to society gives him a sense of purpose.   As a social entrepreneur, Tap places great importance on integrating communities. He believes that providing employment alone is insufficient and that individuals must be empowered to participate actively in society. Through this approach, Tap not only assists them in securing a livelihood but also fosters a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

APPENDIX 23 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - MARY

Mary, Female, 37, works in environmental tourism in Southern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs Mary chose to discuss (in this order) related to trash in the ocean, a disadvantaged community, and her volunteering experience. Mary, who was born in Denmark, expressed that she saw an opportunity to improve the area through marine conservation and was inspired to create a diving school that offers diving lessons (mainly international tourist clients but also domestic tourists and locals) and protection and restoration of coral reefs training. Her diving schools are predominantly run by local community members who undergo training and obtain the certification to become instructors. They then teach the courses and programmes. By involving the local community in the SE's operations, Mary enhances their stakeholder capacity, promoting local ownership and empowerment. The profits generated by the school are reinvested into the business and contribute towards raising awareness about marine conservation, ensuring the SE's

long-term viability and impact. This financial sustainability allows her to continue her environmental conservation and community empowerment mission without compromising her vision. Mary has travelled a lot in the country due to her previous marketing career, and her responses highlighted how she was affected by seeing so much inequality and lack of education in the country. It seems her tourism SE was created as a result of how she felt almost uncomfortable having had a good life while seeing others suffer. Mary specifically mentions SDG14- life below water and the joy of having a business that fulfils her with sustainable profits through eco-tourism.

APPENDIX 24 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - BOAT

Boat, Male, 28, runs a restaurant in Bangkok, in-person meeting

Photographs Boat chose to discuss (in this order) related to Thai cuisine, recycling initiatives, and their volunteering experience. Boat is the founder of a tourism SE that lies at the intersection between the food and education categories. He combines his passions, i.e. cooking, environmental awareness and food waste management, to create a more sustainable environment. He is deeply committed to educating and raising awareness about environmental issues and food waste management, aiming to create a sustainable environment with a place for everyone. Witnessing the alarming amount of food wasted in his community and the lack of awareness on this critical topic, Boat felt compelled to take action. He saw an opportunity to positively impact the environment by opening his restaurant. Boat's restaurant is dedicated to achieving zero waste. He believes Thailand would benefit from an awareness of food waste management and an

understanding of various ways to reduce food waste. Boat educates his customers about these issues at his restaurant and showcases how his food is based on the zero-waste approach. He ensures that different aspects of his restaurant operations, such as sourcing ingredients and waste disposal, follow the principles of minimising waste and promoting responsible practices. Furthermore, Boat's profits allow him to extend his educational initiatives outside the restaurant to the general public through workshops and seminars. He conducts regular workshops on food waste challenges, waste sorting and recycling systems, empowering individuals with knowledge and tools to make a difference in their daily lives. He also prioritises continuous education for his staff about these issues and takes pride in having staff who are as committed to the problem as he is.

APPENDIX 25 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - MY

My, Female, 28, runs a farm, restaurant and café in Bangkok and works with locals in Northern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs My chose to discuss (in this order) related to farmers on the field, growing fruits, and a local food vendor. My is the leader of the tourism SE which was founded by her family. My grew up surrounded by the landscapes of her family's farm and developed a deep connection with the farmers who worked tirelessly in the fields. Her memories of these hardworking individuals inspire her sense of purpose to this day. My understands the challenges faced by farmers and is committed to making a

positive impact in their lives. Coming from a family line that dates back to farmers, My's responses indicate that she has the passion to support and empower local farmers by producing organic foods and drinks with the help of those that are local to the Northern region. My runs a café/restaurant in Bangkok and the majority of the produce is grown on their own farm using organic farming practices that prioritise the environment and consumers' health. In addition, they purchase only from local suppliers, particularly in the North, to support the community and encourage economic sustainability. Through the sales generated from the business, My provides education, training, and support to local farmers. With her SE, she has established a wonderful harmony between organic food production, local suppliers, and supporting farmers. Her enthusiasm for sustainable practices and dedication to social responsibility is clear along with her understanding of the production of organic foods.

APPENDIX 26 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - MARK

Mark, Male, 31, runs a travel and tours agency in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Mark chose to discuss (in this order) related to their volunteering experience, the Bangkok skyline, and a disadvantaged group of people. Mark, who was born in Malaysia, founded a tourism SE classified under the travel and tours category. His tours focus on showcasing what Bangkok offers by using local guides. By providing them with employment, Mark desires to support and help the underprivileged have a better life and

live comfortably within society and the community. Mark supports the locals' livelihoods and ensures tourists experience an authentic and culturally enriching journey through Bangkok by incorporating local guides in his tours. In addition, Mark's tours are thoughtfully designed to showcase the best of Bangkok while promoting ethical and socially responsible practices. For instance, temple visits offer insights into the country's rich cultural heritage, while full-day tuk-tuk and walking tours through hidden communities provide a glimpse into the local lifestyle. The arts and crafts activities with the locals at the floating market or walking tour through hidden communities (Wang Lang) foster cultural exchange and contribute to the community's economic empowerment. Mark recognises the challenges faced by sex workers and the importance of providing them with a pathway to a better life. His profits go into providing sex workers with the necessary tools they need to get out, including education, skills, and literacy, equipping them with the tools necessary for starting afresh. Mark empowers sex workers with education and skills training to break free from exploitation. He considers this a critical issue in the country that still needs to be addressed. His responses indicate some guilt that he's had somewhat of an easy life growing up. Mark's educational background is in tourism, and therefore, he is knowledgeable about the importance of stakeholders in the tourism industry and the need for tourism planning to involve local participation and engagement in order to create a more sustainable environment.

APPENDIX 27 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - JOHN

John, Male, 31, works in travel and tours in Southern Thailand, online meeting

Photographs John chose to discuss (in this order) related to his volunteering experience, his high school and friends, and their travelling experience. John was born in Australia, and his journey as a social entrepreneur is motivated by gratitude for his good life, education and travel experiences. His volunteering experience during his youth and his gratitude were key in shaping his desire to want to give back to the community. Many of his volunteering activities were done with his closest friends, and he also volunteered in Thailand during his teenage years. John feels a strong sense of responsibility towards contributing to the well-being of others, particularly those in need. With a passion for addressing pressing social issues, John directs his profits towards ending violence in the Southern border region. He recognises the ongoing issue of violence in this region, which violates human rights and affects the lives of many, including children, women and communities. John is committed to promoting peace and social harmony, empowering those affected by violence. Thus, John's tourism SE provides island tour packages with full-day offers, including accommodation, food and beverages, half-day packages and activities, such as jungle trekking, river tours and visits to remote fishing villages and local communities. He focuses on working with local partners and suppliers, such as eco-friendly lodging on remote islands. This enables him to ensure that the income generated from his tours is retained within the region, contributing to the economic well-being of the local communities. Furthermore, he aims to raise awareness about the region's potential and highlight the importance of supporting those

affected by violence by showcasing the Southern border's natural beauty and cultural richness.

APPENDIX 28 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - NUT

Nut, Male, 29, involved in environmental tourism in Bangkok, online meeting

Photographs Nut chose to discuss (in this order) related to tourist boats, trash in the sea and trash collection on the beach. Nut has an educational background in tourism, which gives him a deep understanding of how the industry contributes to Thailand's economy and affects the quality of life in local communities. Despite this, he recognises the negative impact that unsustainable tourism practices can have on the environment, which has become more pronounced in recent years and threatens to undermine the very things that attract tourists. Nut believes that new and innovative tourism ideas would help solve social problems that have increased in recent years. Nut is passionate about environmental conservation and believes that innovative tourism ideas can help solve social issues. Through his diving school profits in Bangkok, Nut takes an active role as he raises awareness and educates the locals about engaging in sustainable tourism and how it helps preserve the ecosystem. Nut offers programs that provide knowledge on coral reef ecosystems and marine conservation and holds workshops and activities in Bangkok and also in the South to raise awareness. Nut aims to cultivate a sense of responsibility and appreciation for the ecosystem in the community, empowering them to contribute to its preservation.

APPENDIX 29 – BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - POOM

Poom, Male, 27, runs a boutique hotel in Northern Thailand, in-person meeting

Photographs Poom chose to discuss (in this order) related to his volunteering experience, underprivileged children, and the King. Poom is the founder of his tourism SE, and his SE falls under the accommodations category. The small boutique hotel run by him serves a greater purpose than just providing accommodation for travellers. It reflects his strong dedication towards bringing a positive change in the lives of underprivileged young adults and at-risk youths from neighbouring countries including Laos and Myanmar. Poom's SE is rooted in his strong conviction to provide growth and education opportunities to those who require them the most. The earnings obtained from his boutique hotel are allocated towards providing vocational training and basic education, inclusive of English lessons, underprivileged children and at-risk youths. Poom realizes that access to superior education and skill development can be a transformative force for these individuals, enabling them to construct a brighter future for themselves. Poom is passionate about improving the employability of these groups and empowering them with skills to be able to have a better life in Thailand as they grow up. Poom not only strives to empower underprivileged children, but he also actively supports local businesses through his hotel. He purchases locally and collaborates with small businesses to ensure that the economic benefits of his boutique hotel reach beyond his impact on youths and children. Poom's dedication to community integration and sustainability

is evident in his comprehensive approach to running his business. Poom expressed admiration for the King's emphasis on community development and aid for the underprivileged. This has inspired Poom to pursue similar efforts and advocate for social issues in the country.