



In pursuit of goodwill? The cross-level effects of social enterprise consumer behaviours

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ABSTRACT

Social innovation and social enterprises have not only changed the concept of operating nonprofit organisations but have also blurred the line between society and business. The current social purpose environment is dynamic and continuously evolving, with firms needing to balance dual social-business goals. This paper employs the decomposed theory of planned behaviour to deconstruct goodwill and commerce factors and analyses the behavioural intentions of consumers when they are purchasing social enterprise products and services. Additionally, this study uses a cross-level perspective to examine the role of reference groups and adopts a hierarchical linear model for verification. The results suggest that consumer behavioural intention increases with the level of perceived behavioural control. Attitude is the main factor influencing consumer purchases of social enterprise products and services. Furthermore, consumers consider the opinions of members of their reference groups when purchasing social enterprise products. This study suggests that social enterprises can communicate service concepts and strengthen product links by highlighting their goodwill-related nature. They should also increase the transparency of organisational operations to enhance consumer confidence in social enterprise products and positive goodwill connectivity.

1. Introduction

The emergence of social purpose organisations has made a significant contribution to the economy and societal well-being (Bhattarai, Kwong, & Tasavori, 2019; Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). Social innovation and social enterprises have not only changed the concept of operating nonprofit organisations (NPOs), but also blurred the line between society and business, so far as to change public governmental policies (McMullen, 2018). Social enterprises are organisations that use business models to tackle social concerns such as promoting environmental conservation, creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, and purchasing products or services from disadvantaged groups (Crutchfield & Peterson, 2016). Social enterprises exist as for-profit companies and NPOs, the surplus of which they primarily re-invest in themselves to continually solve social problems. The main difference between social enterprises and traditional NPOs is that a social enterprise has the external appearance of a business, is autonomous, does not get involved in national governmental affairs, and provides innovative services in response to failures of the state and market. The concept of social enterprises is a critical direction for solving current social and economic problems (Kim & Moon, 2017).

A review of social-enterprise-related studies revealed that most have focused on solving social problems from an organisational perspective or have emphasised innovative service models or operational and management factors (Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2011; Kerlin, 2013; Kim & Moon, 2017; Pelchat, 2012). However, consumer-related issues remain poorly understood (Gras & Mendoza-Abarca, 2014; Thompson, Purdy, & Ventresca, 2018). Specifically, the public largely does not understand social enterprises and often oversimplifies them. Some people even consider social enterprises as merely performing good deeds. Furthermore, studies have shown that although the public generally has a positive attitude towards social enterprises, their acceptance of goods and services provided by such enterprises is not always as high as expected (Magnusson, 2013; Moody, Littlepage, & Paydar, 2015). Therefore, from a consumer perspective, the question of whether consumers support social enterprises because they agree with their concepts or simply because the goods and services they provide meet market needs warrants further investigation (Rahaman & Khan, 2017; Singh, 2016). This study investigates the purchase intentions of consumers towards social enterprise products from the consumer perspective and how such intentions influence social enterprise decisions. Understanding this phenomenon could help social enterprise managers

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make informed decisions regarding how their resources could be best directed. This guidance is also crucial because the current political and economic climate is encouraging social enterprises not only to generate income from the market but also to solve the increasing complex social issues (Bhattarai et al., 2019; Kerlin, 2013).

Interest in social enterprises that seeks to balance social and economic value is rising (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2015). This study not only considers the product factor but also integrates the goodwill factors from the perspective of consumers' benevolence. Various theories have been adopted to investigate consumer behaviours, such as the theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985), and the technology acceptance model proposed by Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989). Scholars have asserted that a multidimensional belief framework can better illustrate the factors that influence behavioural attitudes (Bagozzi, 1981, 1982, 1983; Chen & Hung, 2010; Harrison, 1995; Taylor & Todd, 1995a). Taylor and Todd (1995b) stated that decomposing belief into the multidimensional form enhances the explanatory power of a model and facilitates understanding of the interactive relationship between belief and behavioural intention. The decomposed TBP (DTPB) can adjust the prefactors of various research scenarios and has been used to analyse consumer behaviours in various fields (Arvola et al., 2011; Hansen, Risborg, & Steen, 2012; Kim, Njite, & Hancer, 2013). In particular, under the trend of social innovation, the goods and services provided by social enterprises are multifarious, rendering public purchase decisions more complicated. Therefore, to examine consumer behaviours towards social enterprise products and services, this study employs DTPB, taking into consideration the influencing factors of public-welfare- and product-related nature, and deconstructs the prefactors of consumer purchases of such products and services into perceived benefit (Drennan, Previtte, & Sullivan-Mort, 2006), perceived risk (Dowling & Staelin, 1994; Drennan, Brown, & Sullivan-Mort, 2011), perceived contribution (Robinson, Irmak, & Jayachandran, 2012), ethical self-identity (Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Shaw, Shiu, & Clarke, 2000; Singh, 2016), familiarity (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Gefen & Straub, 2014), and product knowledge (Beatty & Smith, 1987; Meeds, 2004; Stabler, 2009).

Individual behaviours are influenced not by personal traits but also by organisational scenario factors; personal traits, and individual- and group-level data have nested structural characteristics. Therefore, numerous scholars have emphasised the significance of cross-level research (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). During the consumer purchase decision-making process, others' opinions and experiences are often considered. Notably, the consumption of products of a social-welfare-related nature is more easily driven by a group atmosphere. Therefore, reference groups often play a critical role in consumer purchase decisions. To explore consumer and group cross-level behavioural intentions, this study integrates the influencing factors of reference groups based on Childers and Rao (1992) and divides the reference group into two main subgroups, normative referents and comparative referents, to discuss their influences on purchase intention towards social enterprise products under group-level influence. Using DTPB, this study analyses the behavioural intentions behind consumer purchases of social enterprise products and services.

This study makes the following contributions. First, it provides empirical and theoretical interpretations for the extension and cross-level functions of social enterprises, customer behaviours, DTPB, and other theories. Second, the establishment of customer behaviours is helpful for co-creating value between consumer values and social enterprise. Finally, this study collates the effects of the reference group from a cross-level perspective and uses a hierarchical linear model (HLM) for verification. The results could provide specific project recommendations for social enterprises and NPOs and could serve as a critical reference for creating value through consumer interaction.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Social enterprises

The term "social enterprise" originated from the concept of social charity in Europe in the 19th century. In the 1970s, economic recession and a rise in unemployment across Europe caused the welfare system to slowly collapse. Government revenue dropped substantially, and public expenditure increased rapidly. This crisis heavily affected countries that habitually provided unemployment benefits and pensions (Borzaga & Defourny, 2001; OECD, 1999). Faced with this crisis, many NPOs entered the profit market to gain financial autonomy (Dees & Elias, 1998), thereby initiating the rise of social enterprises, which became a new trend among European NPOs (Borzaga & Santuari, 2013; Crutchfield & Peterson, 2016; Salamon & Anheier, 2012). Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) asserted that social enterprises played a key role in the developmental transition from welfare state to welfare society. The Social Enterprise Alliance argued that a social enterprise was a new type of NPO that generates capital to realise its mission and is based on sustainability and entrepreneurship.

The book *Social Enterprises* (OECD, 1999) states that social enterprises are those that achieve social objectives through nongovernmental organisations and market-oriented approaches. Borzaga and Solari (2001) stated that social enterprises are organisations that are dedicated to producing social goods and sustainable development through the pursuit of profit. In addition to traditional NPO funding sources, social enterprise funding sources include commercial profit-making revenue and commercial activities. Wallace (2005) indicated that a social enterprise has the primary mission of solving social problems. The UK Social Enterprise Coalition proposed three characteristics of social enterprises that were similar to those proposed by Alter (2004): (1) social purpose, which creates holistic social effects and change by solving social problems and rebuilding after-market failures; (2) enterprise-oriented, using innovation, entrepreneurship, marketing approaches, and strategy-oriented approaches to make decisions, maintain discipline, and enable the organisation to directly participate in producing market goods and providing services and then profiting from them; and (3) social ownership, which enables an independent organisation to focus on public welfare with high autonomy and governance and a social ownership structure.

Because social enterprises combine attributes from the private, nonprofit, and public sectors and seek dual objectives of social mission and economic aims, they represent a type of hybrid organisation (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Defourny & Nyssens, 2017). The primary purpose of establishing a social enterprise is to meet specific social needs. This is also the most fundamental difference between social enterprises and market-oriented enterprises (Agarwal, Chakrabarti, Brem, & Bocken, 2018; Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). In other words, the original intention of social enterprises to solve social issues is likely to be based on the nature of people's goodwill (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017).

Recent discussions on social enterprises follow several research directions. Skloot and Turpin (2010) discussed the optimal route of professional development for NPOs. Dees et al. (2011) observed that because of legal and political restrictions, specific laws and regulations are required for social enterprises to implement strategies through cooperation with businesses. However, the development of social enterprise initiatives within NPOs is a complex activity, and the disruptive challenges of accommodating commercial processes within social organisations are often underestimated (Fitzgerald & Shepherd, 2018). Regarding performance and economic issues, Pelchat (2012), Kerlin (2013), and Kim and Moon (2017) discussed Asian, American, and European social enterprise models and used them to analyse the effects of social enterprises on the economies of various countries. Bhattarai et al. (2019) showed that market orientation improves social performance and economic performance simultaneously, whereas market disruptiveness capability improves only the economic performance, not

the social performance, of social enterprises in the UK. In terms of organisation and innovation, Cornelius, Todres, Janjuha-Jivraj, Woods, and Wallace (2008) and Crutchfield and Peterson (2016) found that innovative activities have positive catalytic and strengthening effects of social enterprise organisational behaviours and activities in terms of social transformation. This concept originated from the impetus of social entrepreneurship. Most of these social-enterprise-related studies have been limited to organisational-level exploration; very few have considered the consumer perspective. Therefore, this study investigates the purchase intentions of consumers towards social enterprise products and services from the consumer perspective and how such intentions influence social enterprise decisions.

2.2. Decomposed theory of planned behaviour

DTPB originated from TPB and TRA. TRA asserts that human behaviours and actions are rational and behaviours are enacted or not based on individuals' behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Behavioural intention is affected by two factors: attitude and subjective norms. Ajzen (1985) extended the original TRA by incorporating perceived behavioural control to form the TBP and explain the behaviours of people in situations in which they lack complete volitional control. The enactment of many behaviours is restricted by the lack of appropriate opportunities, skill, and resources; perceived behavioural control in TPB can measure an individual's degree of control in terms of behavioural performance (Ajzen, 2002). TPB has been used extensively in explanations and predictions of human behaviour. Mannetti, Pierro, and Livi (2004) used the TPB model to study household recycling. The results showed that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control were significant factors. Yousafzai, Foxall, and Pallister (2010) used the TPB model to study consumer behaviours towards internet banking. The results showed that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influenced behavioural intention. TPB has been used extensively in social psychology, environmental and ecological protection, health care, and sports and leisure (Fielding, Terry, Masser, Bordia, & Hogg, 2012; Gabriel & Greve, 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Primmer & Karppinen, 2010; Spash et al., 2009). Compared with TRA, TPB is superior for explaining nonvolitional factors that are not included in TRA to better explain individual behaviours. However, in TPB, although attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control constructs are decided based on the belief construct, their interrelationships are not necessarily significant. Ajzen (1991) indicated that this was because they are unidimensional constructs. Because the belief frameworks of TRA and TPB are unidimensional constructs, Taylor and Todd (1995a) asserted that a unidimensional belief construct cannot form or obtain a comprehensive understanding or explanation regarding the formation of a belief. Bagozzi (1981, 1982, 1983) asserted that a multidimensional belief framework better illustrates the factors that influence behavioural attitudes. Harrison (1995) argued that the belief structure and interactive relationships of behavioural volition cannot be verified in depth by using a unidimensional belief construct to discuss the TPB model. Therefore, Taylor and Todd (1995b) collated the arguments of various scholars to prove that decomposing beliefs into multidimensional constructs could enhance the explanatory power of a model and facilitate understanding of the interactive relationship between belief and behavioural volition.

To predict behaviour more effectively, the TPB model was decomposed, and the results showed better explanatory power than pure TPB and TRA. Various types of DTPB have been developed to study users' behaviour with different degrees of success. Horng, Lee, and Wu (2016) adopted the DTPB to study users' behaviour of paying subscriptions for a social network site. Furthermore, Garay, Font, and Corrons (2019) explored the sustainability beliefs, attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural controls, and behavioural intentions of accommodation managers and considered how they relate to the uptake of water-related innovations in Spain. DTPB can elastically adjust the prefactors of

various research scenarios, and thus its scope of application is very wide, including tourism model consumption choices (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Sahli & Legoh el, 2016), purchase intentions towards organic foods (Arvola et al., 2011), cosmetic consumption choices (Hansen et al., 2012), consumption choices regarding environmentally friendly restaurants (Kim et al., 2013), web learning (Lai, 2017), and acceptance of household insurance (Aziz, Husin, & Hussin, 2017). However, regarding social enterprise consumption, very few studies have discussed whether the prefactors of consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence purchase intention towards social enterprise products. Nevertheless, because of the trend of social innovation, products and services provided by social enterprises are diverse. Goodwill is also a critical factor that is considered by social enterprises. Therefore, this study uses DTPB to decompose various aspects and classifies relevant factors into goodwill antecedent factors, including perceived benefit, perceived risk, perceived contribution, and ethical self-identity, as well as product antecedent factors, including product familiarity, to analyse purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

Ajzen (1991) asserted that subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and attitude had high levels of accuracy for predicting intentions. In the DTPB proposed by Taylor and Todd (1995b), behavioural intention was also predicted based on individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control towards behaviour. All three factors had positive and significant relationships with behavioural intention. In addition, previous purchase behaviour studies have verified that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control have significant and positive relationships with intention (Garay et al., 2019; Mannetti et al., 2004; Ramayah, Lee, & Lim, 2012). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: Perceived behavioural control positively influences consumer purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

H2: Attitude positively influences consumer purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

H3: Subjective norms positively influence consumer purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

2.3. Goodwill factors

2.3.1. Antecedents of perceived behavioural control

According to TPB, perceived behavioural control denotes whether an individual has the resources and opportunities to enact certain behaviours. Perceived behavioural control comprises the sum of the products of control beliefs and the perceived facilitation. Control belief is an individual's cognition of the resources, opportunities, and obstruction level that he or she possesses to perform certain actions. Previous studies have decomposed control belief into internal and external factors (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Bandura, 1977; Triandis, 1979). Taylor and Todd (1995b) decomposed perceived behavioural control into internal self-efficacy and external compatibility and resource-facilitating conditions. The social enterprise is an organisation that applies commercial strategies to maximise improvements in financial and social well-being. Therefore, we integrate the goodwill factors from the perspective of consumers' benevolence. This study uses perceived risk and benefit and contribution to analyse consumer behaviours towards social enterprises.

The perceived risk is consumers' perceptions of uncertainty or potentially unfavourable and harmful results of purchasing social enterprise products (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). This study adopts perceived risk as the cost concept. Perceived benefit is consumers' expectations of possible benefits when purchasing social enterprise products (Drennan et al., 2011). This study adopts perceived benefit as the benefit concept. The main objective of adopting perceived risk and perceived benefit is to highlight the main difference between social enterprise products and general commercial products.

Take, for instance, the general needs of people's livelihoods such as refuelling. In a highly competitive metropolitan area, gas stations often offer gifts or free car washes to make consumers feel they are receiving "value for money". Consumers want to consume when their benefit is greater than their cost; the lower the consumer's perceived risk, the higher is their willingness to buy (Wood & Scheer, 1996). However, when we go to a gas station operated by a social enterprise, we will find that the service personnel are mainly disabled people. In addition to few gifts, the service speed is often slow, but consumers still want to spend at these place to help them. The consumer's benefit is less than the cost, but he or she still wants to help the enterprise and thus is willing to contribute to social welfare. In other words, people may act this way because of the nature of goodness. Based on this example, we can infer that perceived value, which is the measurement of perceived benefit versus perceived risk, positively influences the perceived behavioural control of consumers. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H4a: Perceived benefit positively influences the perceived behavioural control of consumers towards purchasing social enterprise products.

H4b: Perceived risk negatively influences the perceived behavioural control of consumers towards purchasing social enterprise products.

The perceived contribution represent the individual perceptions regarding social enterprises' contributions towards public welfare (Robinson et al., 2012). Choi and Winterich (2013) introduced the concept of moral identity and determined that people possessing a moral identity were easily converted into brand supporters and consumers. Based on this discussion, perceived contribution occurs when an individual's moral identity is triggered, at which point he or she feels compelled to help others out of concern and thus becomes more likely to purchase social enterprise products to contribute to social welfare. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H5: Perceived contribution positively influences the perceived behavioural control of consumers towards purchasing social enterprise products.

2.3.2. Antecedents of attitude

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed that behavioural beliefs and the strength of these beliefs are the prefactor variables for the formation of attitudes. An attitude is a feeling of fondness towards a certain behaviour. Attitudes also constitute the sum of an individual's behavioural beliefs, which are the possible outcome of an individual enacting a specific behaviour. In a study of consumer and moral considerations, Singhapakdi, Vitell, and Kraft (1996) developed a scale for analysing moral strength. The results revealed that when consumers are faced with various moral issues, moral strength influences their purchase attitudes, particularly in relationship to environmental protection and social scenarios involving morality. The purchase attitudes exhibited by consumers almost entirely positively correlate with moral strength. The concept of ethical self-identity originated from consumer ethics and further clarified the concept and perceptions of the self. Shaw et al. (2000) asserted that individuals with consistent ethical behaviours and self-identity tend to engage in ethical consumption. In studies of social-welfare-related product purchase behaviours, Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, and Malpass (2005) and Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006) found that when ethical self-identity is sufficiently high to engender stronger ethical intentions, consumers have higher consumption intentions to engage in social welfare. In a study of corporate social responsibility and brand consumption, Singh (2016) found that ethical self-identity factors influence consumer attitudes and intentions. Other studies have shown that ethical self-identity has a mostly positive influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Barnett et al., 2005; Ellen et al., 2006; Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Singh, 2016). Thus, this study inferred that consumer levels of ethical self-identity in

relationship to social enterprises influence consumer purchase attitudes. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H6: Ethical self-identity of consumers in relationship to social enterprises has a positive influence on attitude.

Alba and Hutchinson (1987) defined familiarity as a consumer having accumulated a large amount of experience of a specific object or subject. Gefen and Straub (2014) indicated that consumer familiarity positively influences attitude and perceived value and enhances consumers' intentions to purchase products online. They also showed that an individual's level of familiarity with a website significantly influences his or her level of trust and purchase intention towards that website. Thus, this study inferred that a consumer's level of familiarity with a social enterprise product influences his or her purchase attitude. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H7: Familiarity of consumers in relationship to social enterprises has a positive influence on attitude.

Beatty and Smith (1987) proposed that product knowledge is cognitive knowledge of and cognitive understanding towards a product based on personal perceptions, including previous experience with that product. Meeds (2004) indicated that a consumer with greater product knowledge has a more positive attitude towards purchasing the product in question. Johnson, Soutar, and Sweeney (2000) and Stabler (2009) proposed that product knowledge influences factors such as price, quality, brand, and attitude. Other studies (Fraj-Andrés & Martínez-Salinas, 2007; Smith & Paladino, 2010) have also shown that product knowledge has a mostly positive influence on consumer purchase attitudes and intentions and that most product knowledge measurements result from the subjective cognition of the consumer in question. Therefore, product knowledge involves subjective cognition. In addition, consumers' subjective norms regarding levels of product knowledge may influence their purchase attitudes. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H8: Product knowledge of social enterprise products positively influences consumers' attitude.

2.3.3. Antecedents of subjective norms

In a group-level analysis, Kelley (1952) classified the characteristics of a reference group into two types, normative and comparative, and verified that consumers are influenced by these two characteristics when making purchase decisions. Therefore, this study adopted the more specific classification system proposed by Childers and Rao (1992): normative referents and comparative referents. Normative referents provide guidance regarding norms, attitudes, and value through direct interaction with an individual; they are often parents, teachers, and peers. Comparative referents provide personal achievement standards, but greater distance usually exists between such characters and the individual in question, who can learn or copy their behaviours only through observation. Comparative referents are often famous sports and film personalities.

Subjective norms are an individual's concern regarding a reference group's perceptions of his or her behaviour, which he or she may change to meet a reference group's expectations (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999). Ajzen (1991) and Venkatesh and Davis (2000) proposed that a reference group to which a specific individual belongs significantly influences that individual; most people choose to follow norms and maintain a positive image within their reference group. Singer and Singer (2010) asserted that a reference group generated an influence over an individual during self-evaluation or social evaluation. Previous studies have shown that reference groups have mostly positive influences on the subjective norms of consumers (Salazar, Oerlemans, & van Stroe-Biezen, 2013; Tsarenko, Ferraro, Sands, & Colin McLeod, 2013; Welsch & Kühling, 2009). Furthermore,

consumer purchases of social enterprise products may be influenced by social pressure. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

H9a: Normative referents positively influence the subjective norms of purchasing social enterprise products.

H9b: Comparative referents positively influence the subjective norms of purchasing social enterprise products.

Childers and Rao (1992) stated that when co-orientation is high between an individual and his or her reference group, the reference group has a greater influence. Thus, reference groups positively influence individual consumer behaviours. In addition, because most people's understanding of social enterprises is limited, reference groups also influence purchase intention. Thompson and Hickey (2005) indicated that when an individual lacks direct experience in developing attitudes, the normative influence is more critical. Joshi and Rahman (2015) collated the findings of previous studies (Kaushik & Rahman, 2014; Liu, Wang, Shishime, & Fujitsuka, 2012; Welsch & Kühling, 2009) and found that consumers obtain product evaluations through interaction and exchanging opinions with individuals in their reference groups, thereby affecting the consumer purchase intention. Therefore, this study asserted that normative beliefs towards purchasing social enterprise products exert positive influences and thus inferred that reference groups positively and directly influence individual behaviours. The following hypotheses are proposed.

H10a: Normative referents positively influence purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

H10b: Comparative referents positively influence purchase intention towards social enterprise products.

3. Research design

3.1. Research framework

Fig. 1 shows the research model, which was based on the decomposed theory of planned behaviour (Taylor & Todd, 1995a). Moreover, all antecedents were examined based on social norms, perceived behavioural control, and attitudes before determining their influence on the intention to purchase social enterprise products.

3.2. Data collection and sampling

This study conducted online surveys and gathered and analysed the resulting data. The Yunus Social Business Center, established by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus, has promoted social enterprises in Asia, so many social enterprises have been established. Therefore, the samples of social enterprises in this study are mainly based on the partners of the Yunus Social Business Center in Asia such as Hair O'right International Corporation, LeeZen Company Ltd., and Aurora Social Enterprise. The survey was posted on various social networking sites, including social enterprises' Facebook pages, fan pages or official websites, and bulletin board systems of social enterprises. The questions were based on relevant previous studies (see Table 3), and definitions were composed to determine the intention to purchase social enterprise products. This study was conducted from March 2, 2015 to May 5, 2015. A 5-point Likert scale and convenience sampling were used for the measurements. Consumers with the intention to purchase social enterprise products were selected for the analysis. Each respondent must first select one of the 70 social enterprises in the questionnaire and then answer the questions in order. In all, 496 samples were collected. After 57 incomplete questionnaires were excluded, 439 valid samples (response rate of 88.5%) were analysed. We explored the degree to which group factors and individual attitudes were nested and mutually influenced one another. This study utilised

social enterprise as the basis for classification and collected 70 social enterprises business groups.

3.3. Definitions of variables

The questionnaire design and conceptual definitions of variables were based on previous studies. Table 1 describes each construct, the definitions of decomposed factors, and the literature used.

3.4. Statistical methods

This study employed hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) to empirically verify the hypotheses. A more detailed description of HLM can be found in Raudenbush and Bryk (2002) study. HLM employs statistical regression to model parameters that vary at more than one level (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The model can be considered linear (in particular, a linear regression method) but can also extend to nonlinear models. Variables at different levels were analysed individually. Assuming a linear effect, the regression model for group j at group member i can be expressed as

$$\text{Level1: } Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}X_{ij} + r_{ij} \quad (1)$$

where Y_{ij} is the evaluation of group j at group member i (X_{ij}), and β_{0j} and β_{1j} are regression coefficients, with β_{1j} representing the group-buying attitude or intentions of each group and r_{ij} representing the random residual term for that evaluation. In addition, r_{ij} represents the particular circumstances of a group when it is being evaluated, including evaluations by individuals outside group j and variations in consumer perceptions. Notably, the context effect is subsumed in r_{ij} .

$$\text{Level2: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j} \quad (3)$$

In Eq. (2), γ_{00} refers to the attitudes or intentions of group members, and u_{0j} represents the randomness (or random effect) of the Level-1 intercept after factoring in all group members. Similarly, Eq. (3) describes the slope β_{1j} in Eq. (1) as a function of the grand mean slope of all group members (γ_{10}) and adjusts for the average independent variables of the group. Finally, u_{1j} represents the randomness in slopes that cannot be explained by independent variables. This study employed three software packages, SPSS 21, Amos 21, and HLM 7, to conduct the statistical analyses.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Data analysis

In this study, 439 valid responses were collected, 214 of which were completed by men (48.75%) and 225 by women (51.25%). The largest age group was 20–30 years old (188 samples). Table 2 shows the sampling distribution statistics. The reliability of the survey items ranged from 0.67 to 0.93, thereby exceeding the acceptable value of 0.50 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). All composite reliabilities ranged from 0.83 to 0.94, thereby exceeding the threshold value of 0.6. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs ranged from 0.50 to 0.85, thereby exceeding the benchmark of 0.5 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Because the three reliability values all exceeded the recommended values, the scales for measuring these constructs demonstrated satisfactory convergence reliability. Table 3 provides the relevant details.

Table 4 presents the discriminant validity measurements. Such data reveal evidence of discriminant validity if the AVE is higher than the square of the construct's correlations with the other factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), in other words, the value on the diagonals. The data revealed that the constructs were empirically distinct. Measurements including convergent and discriminant validity measures were

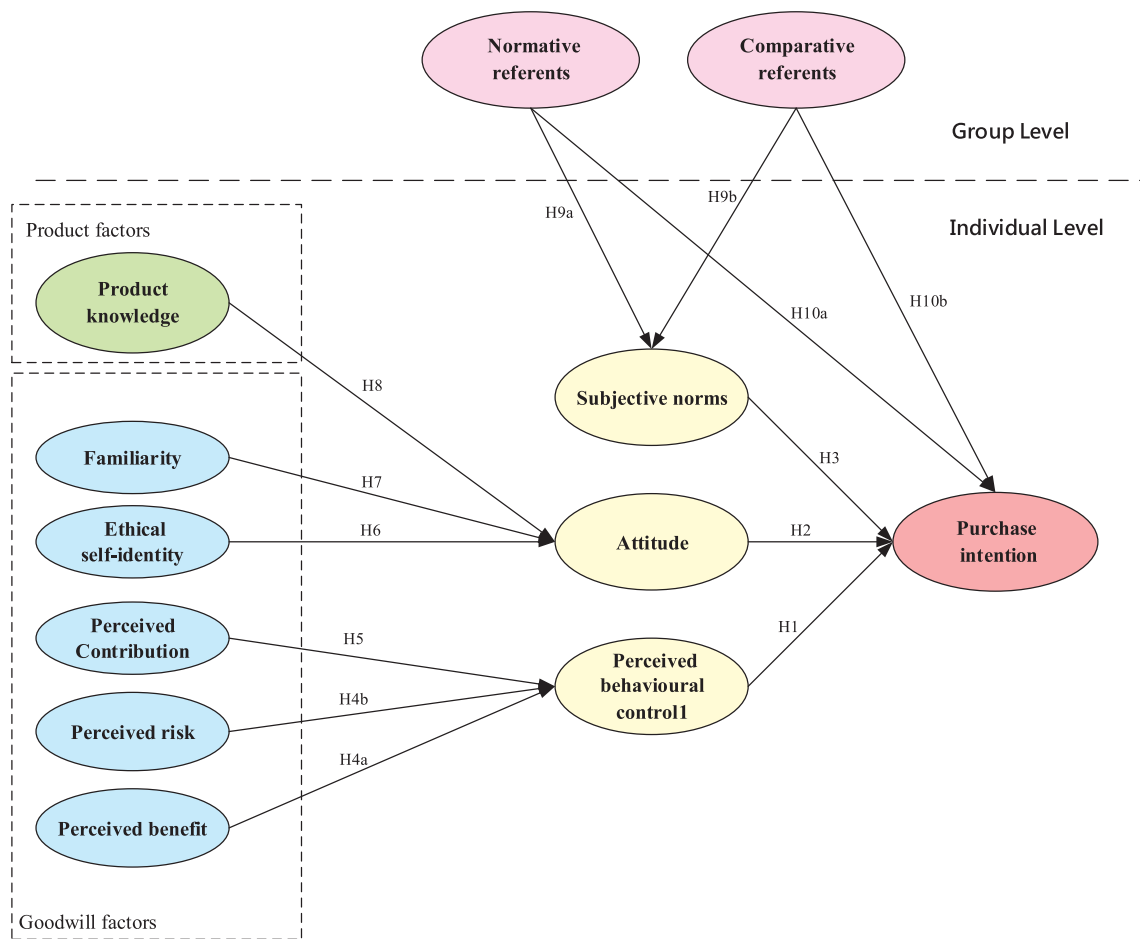


Fig. 1. Research model.

Table 1
Operational definitions.

Variables	Operational definition	References
Purchase intention	Possible behaviour of a consumer willing to purchase social enterprise products.	Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)
Subjective norms	An individual purchases a social enterprise product under the influence of social pressure.	
Attitude	Positive and negative feelings or evaluation regarding the purchase of a social enterprise product.	
Perceived behavioural control	Personal perception of the level of ease or difficulty of purchasing social enterprise products.	
Normative referents	A group that provides guidance in terms of subjective norms, attitudes, and value through direct interaction with the individual in question; often parents, teachers, and peers.	Childers and Rao (1992)
Comparative referents	A group that provides personal achievement standards, generally from a relatively long distance; often famous sports and film personalities.	
Familiarity	An individual's accumulated experience of social enterprises.	Alba and Hutchinson (1987), Gefen and Straub (2014)
Ethical self-identity	Personal perception of one's own relevance to social welfare.	Shaw et al. (2000)
Product knowledge	Cognitive knowledge and cognitive understanding of social enterprise products based on personal perceptions, including usage-related experiences.	Beatty and Smith (1987), Meeds (2004)
Perceived benefit	A customer purchases a product not only for its function to satisfy his or her needs but also for the additional product features and services, which constitute the substantive benefits pursued by the customer.	Drennan et al. (2006)
Perceived risk	During the purchase of a social enterprise product, the customer perceives uncertainty or potential unfavourable or harmful outcomes.	Dowling and Staelin (1994)
Perceived Contribution	Personal perception of a social enterprise and its level of public welfare contribution.	Robinson et al. (2012)

satisfactory. Moreover, the norm belief was observed at the group level and individual level because group members completed the questionnaires. The aggregation rationality of normative referents and comparative referents of norm beliefs had to be pretested using indicators before being aggregated from the individual to the group level. This study tested for consensus or the consistency of normative referents and comparative referents of norm beliefs. The average R_{wg} values of the two influences for each group were all above the decision

value of 0.7 (normative referents- $R_{wg} = 0.93$, comparative referents- $R_{wg} = 0.87$) (Kozłowski & Klein, 2000). The values of ICC1 were normative referents-ICC1 = 0.11, comparative referents-ICC1 = 0.026, representing a low association as suggested by Cohen (1988), but the chi-square test showed that the variation between groups was not significantly zero, indicating that the differences between groups were not negligible. The ICC2 of the canonical community was 0.86, and the ICC2 of the comparison group was 0.74. Therefore, this study analysed

Table 2
The statistics of the sampling distribution.

Type		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Type		Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	214	48.75	Monthly income	Under 10,000	72	16.40	
	Female	225	51.25		10,000–19,999	105	23.92	
Age	Under 20	12	2.73		20,000–29,999	73	16.63	
	21–30	188	42.82		23,000–39,999	84	19.13	
	31–40	117	26.65		40,000–49,999	32	7.29	
	41–50	78	17.77		50,000–59,999	27	6.15	
	51–60	35	7.97		60,000–69,999	29	6.61	
	Over 60	9	2.05		Over 70,000	17	3.87	
Education	Junior high school	26	5.92		Purchase experience	Yes	398	90.66
	High school	98	22.32			No	41	9.34
	College	198	45.10	Monthly consumption amount (hundred)	Under \$100	83	18.91	
	Master/Doctoral degree	117	26.65		\$100–\$199	105	23.92	
Occupation	Student	112	25.51		\$200–\$299	93	21.18	
	Manufacturing	85	19.36		\$300–\$399	74	16.86	
	Civil servant	82	18.68		\$400–\$499	58	13.21	
	Service industry	53	12.07	Over \$500	26	5.92		
	Technology industry	48	10.93					
	Financial industry	37	8.43					
	Self Employed	15	3.42					
Agriculture	7	1.59						

these variables by aggregating them from the individual level to the group level.

4.2. Hierarchical linear model analysis

Regarding the individual hierarchy, the results in Table 5 show that perceived behavioural control significantly and positively influenced purchase intention towards social enterprise products ($\gamma_{10} = 0.27, p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. This result was consistent with the findings of De Groot and Steg (2007), who found that the higher a consumer’s level of perceived behavioural control, the greater is his or her behavioural intention. These results signify that although consumers were aware that in contrast to general products that are often more worth the money, the costs of social enterprise products were greater than the benefits. Since consumers believed that they could contribute to social welfare by purchasing social enterprise products, they were willing to do so. Furthermore, attitude could significantly and positively influence purchase intention towards enterprise products ($\gamma_{20} = 0.14, p < 0.01$). Therefore, H2 was supported, consistent with the results of Kim et al. (2013). Attitude was the most significant factor influencing consumer purchases of social enterprise products, revealing that the more positive a consumer’s attitude, the stronger was the positive influence over his or her purchase intention. When behavioural intention and subjective norms were adopted as dependent variables, subjective norms significantly and positively influenced purchase intention towards social enterprise products ($\gamma_{30} = 0.28, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H3 was supported. This result is consistent with the findings of Ramayah et al. (2012), who proposed that social pressure plays a critical role in changing people’s behaviours; the more positive consumers’ subjective norms, the greater is the positive influence exerted on consumer purchase intention.

Table 6 shows that when adopted as the dependent variable, perceived behavioural control was significantly and positively influenced by the perceived benefit ($\gamma_{10} = 0.08, p < 0.01$). Therefore, H4a was supported. This result is consistent with the findings of Drennan et al. (2011): consumers agreed that purchasing social enterprise products would yield benefits, similar to the feeling of satisfaction generated by helping disadvantaged people. Perceived risk significantly and negatively influenced perceived behavioural control ($\gamma_{20} = -0.07, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H4b was supported. This finding is consistent with the results of Dowling and Staelin (1994), who identified consumer risks generated during social enterprise product purchases such as concerns regarding product quality and self-image. Perceived

contribution significantly and positively influenced perceived behavioural control ($\gamma_{30} = 0.13, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H5 was supported. This finding is consistent with the results of Robinson et al. (2012): consumers agreed that purchasing social enterprise products could help social enterprises solve problems faced by disadvantaged groups.

While the empirical results supported Hypothesis H6, when adopted as the dependent variable, attitude was significantly and positively influenced by ethical self-identity ($\gamma_{10} = 0.11, p < 0.001$). This finding was consistent with Tan and Teo (2000) results. The higher a consumer’s moral identity, the greater was his or her concern for public welfare and the greater was the positive influence over purchase attitudes towards social enterprise products. Familiarity with an enterprise did not significantly and positively influence attitude ($\gamma_{20} = 0.33, p > 0.1$). Therefore, H7 was not supported. Consumers were not concerned with their levels of familiarity with social enterprise products to the point at which these levels influence consumers’ positive attitudes towards purchasing social enterprise products. Product knowledge did not significantly or positively influence attitude ($\gamma_{30} = 0.16, p > 0.1$). Therefore, H8 was not supported. The positive attitudes of consumers towards purchasing social enterprise products were driven by their sense of morality and intentions to help disadvantaged groups, as well as their intentions to contribute to society by making such purchases. Thus, consumers were not concerned about or had a highly developed understanding of professional knowledge related to social enterprise products.

In the group-level analysis, the results of which are shown in Table 5, normative referents significantly and positively influenced subjective norms ($\gamma_{01} = 0.24, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H9a was supported. In other words, consumers’ purchase intentions towards social enterprise products were influenced by their friends’ and relatives’ opinions and recommendations. Comparative referents significantly and positively influenced subjective norms ($\gamma_{02} = 0.65, p < 0.001$), supporting H9b. Normative referents significantly and positively influenced purchase intention towards enterprise products ($\gamma_{01} = 0.26, p < 0.1$). Therefore, H10a was supported. This finding is consistent with the results of Childers and Rao (1992), who revealed that consumers are deeply influenced by friends and relatives with whom they have frequent contact. The opinions, recommendations, and experiences of such characters about social enterprise products influenced consumers’ purchase intentions. Comparative referents did not significantly or positively influence the intention to purchase enterprise products ($\gamma_{02} = 0.23, p > 0.1$). Therefore, H10b was not supported. Social enterprise products differ from general products because

Table 3
Reliability statistics.

Variables	Loading	Variables	Loading
Subjective norms ($\alpha = 0.87$ CR = 0.92 AVE = 0.73) (Tonglet, Phillips, & Read, 2004)			
The impressions of friends and relatives regarding social enterprise products are highly relevant to me.	0.85	The experiences of friends and relatives of purchasing social enterprise products influence my purchase intention.	0.86
The opinions of friends and relatives regarding social enterprise products influence my purchase intention.	0.87	The frequency of friends and relatives asking for my opinions regarding social enterprise products is higher than that of me asking them.	0.84
Friends and relatives support my social enterprise product purchases.	0.86		
Perceived behavioural control ($\alpha = 0.77$ CR = 0.84 AVE = 0.68) (Taylor & Todd, 1995a,1995b)			
Whether I purchase social enterprise products is entirely my own decision.	0.83	I have sufficient resources to continue to purchase social enterprise products.	0.82
When I want to purchase a social enterprise product, I can quickly obtain relevant information.	0.83		
Attitude ($\alpha = 0.71$ CR = 0.90 AVE = 0.52) (Sidique, Lupi, & Joshi, 2010)			
In my opinion, purchasing social enterprise products is very satisfying.	0.75	In my opinion, purchasing social enterprise products is worthwhile.	0.71
Purchasing social enterprise products makes me happy.	0.68	In my opinion, purchasing social enterprise products is a very attractive prospect.	0.73
Purchasing intention ($\alpha = 0.72$ CR = 0.90 AVE = 0.52) (Taylor & Todd, 1995a,1995b)			
I agree with the benefits of purchasing social enterprise products.	0.67	I am willing to purchase social enterprise products.	0.78
I am willing to frequently purchase social enterprise products.	0.72	I believe that social enterprise products should be included in purchase considerations.	0.73
Normative referents ($\alpha = 0.84$ CR = 0.92 AVE = 0.62) (Mihic & Čulina, 2006)			
The impressions of friends and relatives regarding social enterprise products are highly relevant to me.	0.82	The experiences of friends and relatives of purchasing social enterprise products influence my purchase intention.	0.77
The opinions of friends and relatives regarding social enterprise products influence my purchase intention.	0.80	The frequency of friends and relatives asking for my opinions regarding social enterprise products is higher than that of me asking them.	0.79
Friends and relatives support my social enterprise product purchases.	0.76		
Perceived benefit ($\alpha = 0.89$ CR = 0.94 AVE = 0.72) (Yonggui, Chan & Yang, 2013)			
Purchasing social enterprise products expands and strengthens my social network.	0.85	Purchasing social enterprise products enhances self-satisfaction.	0.83
Purchasing social enterprise products strengthens my sense of belonging among my friends.	0.87	Purchasing social enterprise products represents my concern for social welfare.	0.80
Purchasing social enterprise products enhances my social status	0.87		
Perceived risk ($\alpha = 0.81$ CR = 0.92 AVE = 0.57) (Wang et al., 2013)			
I am concerned that social enterprise products may not be as efficient as general products.	0.73	Purchasing social enterprise products does not fit my external image.	0.80
I am concerned social enterprise products may not be as effective as general products.	0.71	Purchasing social enterprise products does not conform to my inner values.	0.76
I am concerned that others will consider me strange for purchasing social enterprise products.	0.78		
Perceived Contribution ($\alpha = 0.88$ CR = 0.83 AVE = 0.80) (Robinson et al., 2012)			
I believe that purchasing social enterprise products can help social enterprises.	0.89	I believe that purchasing social enterprise products can relieve social problems.	0.90
I believe that purchasing social enterprise products can contribute to social welfare.	0.90		
Comparative referents ($\alpha = 0.89$ CR = 0.92 AVE = 0.85) (Mihic & Čulina, 2006)			
I purchase celebrity-endorsed social enterprise products to express my concern for social welfare.	0.92	Social enterprise product recommendations from celebrities influence my purchase intention.	0.93
I want to purchase celebrity-endorsed social enterprise products.	0.92		
Ethical self-identity ($\alpha = 0.82$ CR = 0.83 AVE = 0.75) (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2009)			
I care about social enterprises and social welfare problems.	0.83	I am willing to adjust my lifestyle to contribute to social welfare.	0.88
I intend to purchase social welfare products.	0.88		
Familiarity ($\alpha = 0.81$ CR = 0.90 AVE = 0.50) (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004)			
I understand that social enterprises contribute a portion of their profits to NPOs.	0.58	I know the meaning of social enterprise.	0.77
I understand that social enterprises give back to their local community.	0.62	I knew what a social enterprise was before I completed the questionnaire.	0.80
I often purchase social enterprise products.	0.76		
Product knowledge ($\alpha = 0.82$ CR = 0.89 AVE = 0.52) (Wang et al., 2013)			
I somewhat understand the products that I purchase.	0.72	I understand product features better than do the people around me.	0.75
I understand the quality of the product that I purchase.	0.71	I understand the prices of the product that I purchase.	0.72
I learn about product types mostly from friends and relatives.	0.75	I understand that certain products can help disadvantaged groups.	0.56
I am willing to share my product purchase experiences.	0.69		

consumers are driven to purchase them because of their moral identities or intentions to help disadvantaged people. Therefore, celebrity endorsement and promotion do not influence consumer intentions to purchase social enterprise products.

5. Conclusions

This study analyses consumer intentions towards purchasing social enterprise products by decomposing consumers' goodwill and product-related factors and proposes a consumption behaviour model for

Table 4
Measurements of discriminant validity.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Familiarity	0.71											
2. Product knowledge	0.14	0.72										
3. Ethical self-identity	-0.13	-0.06	0.87									
4. Normative referents	0.18	0.11	-0.12	0.79								
5. Comparative referents	0.35	0.20	-0.23	0.34	0.92							
6. Perceived Contribution	-0.19	-0.1	0.6	-0.14	-0.33	0.9						
7. Perceived benefit	0.21	0.13	-0.11	0.21	0.42	-0.17	0.85					
8. Perceived risk	0.11	0.06	-0.08	0.11	0.24	-0.13	0.14	0.76				
9. Attitude	0.16	0.09	-0.1	0.15	0.29	-0.14	0.20	0.11	0.72			
10. Subjective norms	0.24	0.14	-0.14	0.24	0.46	-0.20	0.31	0.19	0.24	0.86		
11. Perceived behavioural control	-0.05	-0.02	-0.03	-0.05	-0.12	-0.09	-0.06	-0.04	-0.02	-0.07	0.83	
12. Purchase intention	0.12	0.07	-0.09	0.12	0.22	-0.13	0.16	0.13	0.13	0.19	-0.03	0.72

Note: Diagonal elements are the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). Off-diagonal elements are the correlations among constructs. For discriminant validity, AVE should be larger than the squared correlation between any pair of constructs; hence, diagonal elements should be larger than off-diagonal elements.

consumer behaviours in relationship to social enterprises. The results revealed that attitude was the primary factor influencing consumer purchases of social enterprise products and services; the more positive a consumer’s attitude, the more positive was the attitude’s influence on the consumer’s purchase intention. Furthermore, the higher the level of consumer perceived behavioural control, the greater was the consumer’s consumption intention towards social enterprise products and services. Although these findings are consistent with other empirical evidence using DTPB (Aziz et al., 2017; Hansen et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013; Lai, 2017), very different findings are obtained if the antecedent factors are considered together.

Regarding goodwill antecedent factors, perceived contribution and ethical self-identity were positively significant, whereas perceived risk was negatively significant. These findings are similar to those of Tan and Teo (2000) and Drennan et al. (2011). However, when we compared these significant factors, we found that perceived contribution and ethical self-identity were the most critical considerations in the purchase of social enterprise goods. The higher a consumer’s moral identity, the greater was his or her concern for public welfare and the greater was the positive influence over purchase attitudes towards social enterprise products. Consumers agreed that purchasing social enterprise products would yield benefits, similar to the feeling of satisfaction generated by helping disadvantaged people. Social enterprise familiarity and product knowledge did not significantly influence purchase decisions. These results differ from those of a study on familiarity and product knowledge (Gefen & Straub, 2014; Smith & Paladino, 2010). Additionally, during social enterprise product purchases, perceived risk and benefit were both significant, which indicated that although consumers were aware that social enterprise products themselves were unfavourable, they were still willing to purchase them. The results suggest that the main purchasing goal is not product performance but rather to help disadvantaged groups and facilitate social welfare.

At the group level, consumers considered the opinions of their reference groups when purchasing social enterprise products. These

findings are consistent with those of Singer and Singer (2010). However, comparative referents did not directly influence consumer purchase intention towards social enterprise products. When the connection between a celebrity and a social enterprise is not strong, such figures are ineffective in communicating the philosophy and image of the social enterprise. Consumer purchase intention towards social enterprise products was positively influenced by subjective norms, which suggests that celebrity endorsement or product promotion does not directly influence consumer purchase intention; however, when friends and relatives had purchased products endorsed or promoted by celebrities, the product purchase experiences of these characters indirectly influenced consumer purchase intention. Thus, the opinions of friends and relatives play a critical role in consumer purchase intention.

6. Implications and limitations

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study has several implications and makes a number of contributions. A primary contribution is the integration of individual and group concepts to examine users’ feelings about social enterprises. The application of the DTPB in the field of social enterprise has been empirically demonstrated in this study, although it has little precedence in the consumer literature. At the individual level, this study found that subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and attitude have a significant positive impact on the willingness to purchase social enterprise products. This means that consumers are influenced by their relatives and friends in the purchase intention of social enterprise products or have sufficient resources themselves and feel that it is worthwhile to purchase social enterprise products. This result echoes previous findings showing that subjective norms, perceived behavioural controls, and attitudes all have a positive impact on purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991; Ramayah et al., 2012; Taylor & Todd, 1995a). Moreover, perceived contributions positively influence perceived behavioural control, showing that when consumers think the purchase of social

Table 5
Purchase intention and subjective norms as the dependent variable in the model.

Purchase intention	Null model	Random model	Slope model	Subjective norms	Null model	Slope model
Individual level				Individual level		
Average intercepts (γ_{00})	1.98***	1.98***	1.98***	Average intercepts (γ_{00})	1.74***	1.74***
Perceived behavioural control (γ_{10})		0.27***	0.27***	Group level		
Attitude (γ_{20})		0.14*	0.18*	Normative referents (γ_{01})		0.24***
Subjective norms (γ_{30})		0.28***	0.35***	Comparative referents (γ_{02})		0.65***
Group level						
Normative referents (γ_{01})			0.26*			
Comparative referents (γ_{02})			0.23			

Note: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.1$.

Table 6
Attitude and perceived behavioural control as the dependent variable in the model.

Perceived behavioural control	Random model	Attitude	Random model
Individual Level		Individual Level	
Average intercepts (γ_{00})	1.71***	Average intercepts (γ_{00})	0.82***
Perceived benefit (γ_{10})	0.08**	Ethical self-identity (γ_{10})	0.11***
Perceived risk (γ_{20})	-0.07***	Familiarity (γ_{20})	0.33
Perceived contribution (γ_{30})	0.13***	Product knowledge (γ_{30})	0.16

Note: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.1$.

enterprise products or services can contribute to social welfare, they will be more clearly invested in social welfare and will be more motivated to purchase such products. Once the consumer's moral cognition is triggered, it is easy for him or her to become a supporter of a specific social enterprise and then generate purchase behaviour (Choi & Winterich, 2013; Ellen et al., 2006). In addition, ethical self-identity has a positive impact on the attitude of social enterprise products. This means that when consumers are more inclined to purchase products with social welfare, they have a more positive attitude towards social enterprise products (Barnett et al., 2005; Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Singh, 2016).

At the group level, this study demonstrates that consumers will be concerned about the reference group's perception when purchasing social enterprise products, especially through subjective norms, which can positively influence their intentions to purchase social enterprise products. Friends and family play an extremely important role in consumer purchase intentions (Singer & Singer, 2010). In summary, the dual-factor model combines DTPB with critical antecedent factors. This study establishes a multi-level analysis through the systematic consumption view that links the cross-level interaction process between consumer ends and normative referents of social enterprises and shapes the consumption behaviour model of social enterprises. Our work offers researchers a comprehensive model for studying other subjects.

6.2. Practical implications

Based on these results, this study proposes the following practical implications.

- (1) *Highlight the goodwill-related nature of social enterprises and communicate service philosophy and product connectivity.* The verified results revealed that goodwill influencing factors primarily influence consumer behaviours towards social enterprises, including perceived contribution and ethical self-identity (Choi & Winterich, 2013; McMullen, 2018). This phenomenon may result from consumers' sense of identity in relationship to social enterprises. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that entrepreneurs communicate the underlying philosophy and related information regarding social enterprise services to consumers to enable them to better understand how goodwill can be generated through social enterprise product purchases and the benefits that such purchases accrue for disadvantaged groups. Such action could satisfy consumers' goodwill sentiments in relationship to purchasing social enterprise products.
- (2) *Enhance the transparency of organisational operations to increase consumer confidence.* Although consumers are willing to purchase social enterprise products, confidence in product quality seems to be low. Therefore, businesses should increase their organisational transparency, and, through clearer product information disclosure, build stronger customer communication channels to increase the perceived benefit and reduce the perceived risk of purchasing social enterprise products (Gras & Mendoza-Abarca, 2014). Such action could increase consumer confidence in social enterprise products.
- (3) *Strengthen word-of-mouth marketing and exercise caution in the selection of celebrities as brand ambassadors for advertising and marketing.*

Most brand ambassadors of social enterprises are celebrities from the entertainment industry. Although these celebrities do not always have a strong connection to the social enterprises they represent, their images could exert an enormous influence on product promotion. Therefore, businesses should make good use of word-of-mouth marketing. Through the word-of-mouth approach, social enterprise product information and value philosophy can be shared and communicated based on real-life experience (Skard & Thorbjørnsen, 2014). In addition, businesses should carefully employ spokespeople with positive connections to the products and social enterprise service philosophies in question to positively influence consumer intentions towards purchasing their products.

6.3. Limitations and suggestions

Social enterprises have flourished in recent years. The Taiwanese government announced the First Year of Social Enterprises in 2014 and implemented the Social Enterprise Action Plan from 2014 to 2016 to create an ecosystem for the innovation, creation, growth, and development of social enterprises. However, due to the lack of social-enterprise-related norms in Taiwan, no clear definition for social enterprises exists at the legal and regulatory levels. Therefore, this study selected a sample of social enterprises within a broad scope, including businesses that use business approaches to solve social problems and NPOs that provide professional products and services. Understanding of social enterprises was higher in the 20- to 49-year-old age group than in other age groups in 2017. Compared with 2015, the increase in cognition (from 23.2% to 25.2%) was also higher than in other age groups, thus representing the main supporter and actor in social enterprises (Development Bank of Singapore, 2017). Additionally, because of developmental and cultural differences between social enterprises in various parts of the world, such as Europe, the Americas, Japan, and Korea, consumer purchase intention prefactors may vary in relationship to social enterprise products. This study recommends that future studies categorise information by country or region to explore consumer intentions towards purchasing social enterprise products and services. Furthermore, studies could investigate regional cultural development, social innovation, and entrepreneurship to develop cross-level research.

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