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The Role of Affective Commitment and Work Engagement to the Performance of Greek Social Entrepreneurs and the Moderating Effect of Personal Values

Aikaterini Sotiropoulou, Dimitra Papadimitriou and Charitomeni Tsordia

Department of Business Administration, University of Patras, Patras, Greece

ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurs' behaviour and performance are critical for social enterprises' success, along with the actors' affective commitment, work engagement and personal values, as conceptualised by Schwartz's value theory. This study is set to explore the interrelationships among these variables collecting quantitative data from 226 Greek social entrepreneurs. Seven research hypotheses are tested offering evidence in support of the influence of affective commitment and work engagement on entrepreneurs' performance, while considering affective commitment as precursor of work engagement. Further, evidence is placed for the effect of the higher-order values of Self-Transcendence, Openness to Change, and Conservation on the above variable relationships.

KEYWORDS

Social entrepreneur; personal values; affective commitment; engagement; performance

Introduction

The importance of affective commitment, work engagement and individual performance has been highlighted extensively in the broad organisational behaviour research. Affective commitment refers to the individual's emotional connection with and involvement in the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991). Work engagement refers to the individual's positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by focus, energy and absorption (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Both, affective commitment and work engagement, have been acknowledged as critical success factors towards the achievement of high individual work performance in profit-oriented organisations (Bailey et al. 2017; Cesário and Chambel 2017; Nazir and Islam 2017). Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that individual personal values drive affective commitment, work engagement and performance of employees, mainly in profit-making organisations (Cohen 2010; Goh and Patrickson 2012; Ismail, Karkouljian, and Kertechian 2019). Yet, there is limited empirically evidence on the affective commitment, engagement, and

individual performance of social entrepreneurs, as well as how personal values may influence the interrelationship of the above variables.

So far, few studies have explored the behaviour of people involved in social economy organisations and particularly the behaviour and role of social entrepreneurs who constitute a critical factor for the performance of social enterprises and their sustainability (Graikioti, Sdrali, and Klimi Kaminari 2022). The further exploration of social entrepreneurs' behaviour and performance is extremely important following the lens of organisational behaviour. Even though research has indicated that organisational behaviour factors such as commitment and engagement can lead to higher levels of performance, in the social enterprise context few studies have examined these variables (Mastrangelo, Benitez, and Cruz-Ros 2017; Zhang et al. 2018; Ohana and Meyer 2010; Choi, Lee, and Hur 2020) and none of these studies has explored the nexus among affective commitment, work engagement and individual performance of social entrepreneurs and how these relationships are moderated by the personal values. As Tan Luc et al. (2020) have stressed the mechanism with which motivation affects the behaviour within the organisation remains an unexplored challenge in social enterprises.

The present study addresses these gaps in the literature by empirically exploring the important behavioural mechanism which refers to the interplay among affective commitment, work engagement and performance and the moderating role of personal values in the context of SEs. Specifically, the study is set to measure: (a) the influence of affective commitment and work engagement on the performance of Greek social entrepreneurs, considering affective commitment as a precursor of work engagement (Kim et al. 2017), and (b) whether the social entrepreneurs' personal values moderate the variables' relationships. This research is contextualised into the social identity approach by giving light to the organisational-level identity dynamics of SEs. This is because the variables of affective commitment, engagement reflect the entrepreneurs' emotional involvement with the social enterprise, and values clearly denote internalised motives and associated salient identities, and also some cognitive awareness of various interdependences related to the workplace (Ellemers, de Gilder, and Haslam 2004).

Over the last two decades, the interest of the researchers in the personality, traits and values of social entrepreneurs has grown significantly, offering some conclusive findings on who these individuals are and why they choose to take part in entrepreneurial activity (Stephan and Drencheva 2017). However, the systematic literature review of the social entrepreneurial personality research by Stephan and Drencheva, (2017, 11) points out that we are still missing studies which (a) associate motives to personal outcomes (e.g. commitment, engagement), (b) 'contextualize the effect of values' for social entrepreneurs, and (c) are theory-driven, large-scale and follow a quantitative approach. Thus, filling the gap on the organisational commitment and engagement of the social entrepreneurs and their impact on their individual performance is important not only to academic knowledge, but also to the actual practice of social ventures. Academically, the idiosyncratic characteristics of social enterprises present a unique environment to contextualise and explore the relationships for which knowledge is yet inconclusive (Kim et al. 2017) or scarce (Stephan and

Drencheva 2017). Social enterprises are usually small organisations with limited resources trying to maximise the outcomes produced utilising the available resources in order to achieve their mission and goals (Zhang and Swanson 2014). They rely heavily on human resources which are primarily motivated with prosocial motives and values and may or may not co-exist with extrinsic motives (i.e. financial, reputation) (Chen 2014). In addition, the hybrid nature of SEs – profit and social benefit-seeking organisations – along with their exposure to markets place extra strain not only on entrepreneurs' values but also on human resource management strategies and practices (Doherty, Haugh, and Lyon 2014). For example, Liu and Ko (2012) have placed evidence showing that SEs, engaging in commercial activities to become self-sustained, may struggle to maintain the balance between social mission and the social business aspect. Thus, the steps to enhance organisational legitimacy may affect the operational efficiency of the SEs and impacts the staff strategy model adopted, which usually involves a mixture of volunteer and paid workforce (Liu and Ko 2012).

Considering the unique characteristics of social enterprises and drawing on from Abebe, Kimakwa, and Redd (2020), it is the interplay of social entrepreneurs' prosocial motivation and expertise that may lead to successful social venture formation and growth. Therefore, the motivation, emotional attachment, and the ability of social entrepreneurs to meet the role expectations and sustain pro-social work-related behaviour are all critical factors across the stages of social enterprise development. Furthermore, social entrepreneurs are visionaries who solve unmet social problem, detect new opportunities and adopt innovative approaches (Dees 2001). Research has recognised that social entrepreneurs share specific characteristics such as personal values, attributes and motives (Stephan and Drencheva 2017) which affect their behaviour and decision making (Doherty, Haugh, and Lyon 2014; Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou, and Maroudas 2021). Therefore, studying the psychological mechanism by which affective commitment drives social entrepreneurs to engage in activities and to improve individual performance, moderated by their values, has major practical implications for understanding how to build positive attitudes and behaviours within the context of contemporary social enterprises.

The present study makes a contribution to the literature in many ways, firstly by exploring the relationship of affective commitment and work engagement as well as their effect on individual performance by adopting widely cited methodological instruments. The proposed model clearly highlights that Greek social entrepreneurs with higher affective commitment will possess higher work engagement which leads to higher individual performance. Secondly, the tested model provides empirical support on the theoretical perspectives which is also in line with the rationale of the social identity approach (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Social entrepreneurs are individuals who perceive a shared destiny with social enterprises, are strongly committed to them (Ashforth and Mael 1989), become more engaged in their tasks and display high performance in order to ensure their success (Barnes and Collier 2013). Thirdly, the study further tests the additional effects of personal values on the intensity of organisational behaviour variables, broadening the knowledge regarding the association between personal values and organisational behaviour, adding more insight in the recent literature which has raised questions regarding the consequences of personal values on

organisational behaviour (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020). Finally, the study introduces new insights on how the performance of social entrepreneurs can be reinforced within social enterprises, by taking also into account their personal values priorities. In addition, the evidence highlights the need of introducing specific managerial strategies in social enterprises that strengthen the commitment, involvement and performance of social entrepreneurs.

Literature Review

Theoretical Conceptualisation

The main constructs of this study are grounded in the Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT posits that individuals identify themselves and others in social categories in an effort of placing themselves in a selected environment (Tajfel and Turner 1985). More specifically, organisational commitment is rooted in SIT, as according to Meyer and Allen (1991) reflects the identification of individuals with organisations and their willingness to offer time and energy to various activities at the workplace. In this study the affective dimension of commitment is conceptualised as an attitude which reflects the degree of affective attachment and identification (Morrow 1993) of the social entrepreneurs with their organisations. Unlike typical employees, social entrepreneurs are approached as actors into social networks, that is social enterprises constantly creating opportunities for interactions, which also serve as the basis for forming commitment (Burke and Reitzes 1991). Since social enterprises are in constant formation of identity-related meanings, the conceptualisation of commitment refers to how entrepreneurs and other groups manage congruity between their personal identity standards and meanings accruing from these organisational settings.

Interestingly, Deaux (1992) establishes links between personal and social identity by arguing that individuals use features of their personal identity, such as personal values and feelings, to build their social identity. Thus, personal values have been incorporated as a key moderating variable because affect the way individuals perceive and make sense of structural characteristics like social enterprises (Schwartz, Sagiv, and Boehnke 2000), and exert impact on attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, in this study, the utility of SIT is to explore how commitment shapes the levels of engagement in social enterprises and individual performance in the context of social entrepreneurs, and to what extent values moderate these relationships.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is a component of organisational commitment, which has received considerable attention in management research (Stephens, Dawley, and Stephens 2004). The particular component has been conceptualised as the individual's emotional attachment, identification and involvement in a particular organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991), and embeds: (a) the strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's values and goals, (b) the willingness to exercise significant efforts on behalf of the organisation, and (c) the strong desire to continue as a member of the organisation (Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1979). Individuals tend to belong to

organisations and are emotionally attached to them, if they receive positive experiences and share the same values, needs and interests (Glazer, Daniel, and Short 2004; Meyer et al. 2002). These positive feelings mobilise them to exert effort on behalf of the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991). Therefore, in the case of SEs, it is expected that entrepreneurs who are emotionally connected to the SEs, are more likely to demonstrate a sincere desire to continue as members of these organisations. In the case of Greece, social entrepreneurs as being volunteer members in SEs, differentiate from employees and employers, because their behaviour depends less on organisational rewards and more on their emotional state (Pearce 1993 as quoted in Stephens, Dawley, and Stephens 2004). Thus, in this study, the focus is placed on the affective component of organisational commitment.

So far affective commitment has been widely studied in paid employees and employers (Meyer et al. 2002) and to a lesser extent in volunteers of non-profit organisations (Vecina et al. 2012), whereas there is limited research on the affective commitment in SEs context (Choi, Lee, and Hur 2020; Ohana and Meyer 2010). Affective commitment has been found to be positively related to the employees' performance in the for profit sector (Meyer et al. 2002). Similar results have been also recorded for volunteers in non-profit organisations and chambers (Stephens, Dawley, and Stephens 2004).

Work Engagement

As an organisational behaviour concept, work engagement, has gained considerable attention among researchers because of its links to organisational outcomes such as performance, productivity, turnover intention etc. (Bailey et al. 2017; Cesário and Chambel 2017). There are different conceptions for work engagement in the literature. Kahn (1990, 700) highlights the psychological perspective of the concept by referring to *'the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive and emotional), and active, full performance'*. Schaufeli et al. (2002, 74–75) facilitate the need for concept operationalisation by defining work engagement as *'the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption'* where *vigour* reflects high levels of employees' resilience, energy and persistence at the workplace; *dedication* refers to feelings of pride and enthusiasm, and *absorption* describes high levels of endorsement and concentration at work.

Work engagement has been widely used in research to explain desired results and outcomes for profit organisations, and in a lesser extent in non-profit organisations (Ortiz-Gomez, Ariza-Montes, and Molina-Sanchez 2020), in the field of volunteering (Vecina et al. 2012), and in SEs (Roman-Calderon, Battistelli and Odoardi 2013; Zhang et al. 2018). So far, the social entrepreneurs' work engagement is associated to different types of involvement and to motives and HR practices (Roman-Calderon, Battistelli, and Odoardi 2013; Zhang et al. 2018). However, there is dearth research in thematically exploring the antecedents and outcomes of social entrepreneurs' work engagement.

Individual Performance at the Workplace

Performance is critical for understanding the contribution of individuals to the organisations, because it captures the individuals' behaviour that creates value and outcomes for the organisation. This explains why the particular concept dominates the organisational behaviour literature. Traditionally, performance at work has been assessed as the proficiency with which individuals implement tasks included in their job descriptions (Griffin, Neal, and Parker 2007). Many frameworks, taxonomies and constructs have been developed so far for performance; however, there is lack of a comprehensive theory to bridge or differentiate all these conceptualisations (Griffin, Neal, and Parker 2007).

In this study, a two-dimensional approach is adopted to measure the performance of social entrepreneurs, incorporating the dimensions of individual task proficiency and team member proficiency. This is because SEs are characterised by shared decision making, inclusion of multiple stakeholders in business processes and collaborative work (Choi, Lee, and Hur 2020). Individual task proficiency describes the degree to which a person fulfils the role requirements and expectations and is strongly related to task performance (Griffin, Neal, and Parker 2007). Team member proficiency reflects behaviours that are formed, structured and embedded into a group context and thus reports the degree to which an individual fulfil the requirements and expectations of his/her role as member of a team (Griffin, Neal, and Parker 2007). Interestingly, the literature on social entrepreneurship lacks empirical findings on the individual performance of social entrepreneurs and this warranted the present investigation.

The Relationship between Affective Commitment, Work Engagement and Performance

While work engagement and affective commitment are closely related, the literature reports them as separate constructs. As mentioned again, affective commitment focuses on the relationship between the individual and the organisation, while work engagement emphasises on the relationship between the individual and the work role (Barnes and Collier 2013; Kim et al. 2017). There are divergent views between scholars about the relationship between organisational commitment and work engagement. Some studies demonstrate that work engagement is an antecedent of organisational commitment while others position work engagement as an outcome of organisational commitment (Kim et al. 2017). This relationship has been initially conceptualised long ago by Kahn (1990) who argued that the emotions of commitment to an organisation precede to engagement. This is because affective commitment focuses on the emotional connection of the individual with the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991; Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1979). Emotions at the organisational level act as stimulators so that individuals to engage in behaviours leading to desired organisational outcomes, which in turn strengthen their emotional fulfilment (Shuck, Reio, and Rocco 2011).

As a motivational variable, work engagement reflects the willingness of an individual to dedicate cognitive, emotional and physical resources to work, as such, high levels of work engagement should lead to high levels of performance. Drawing on from

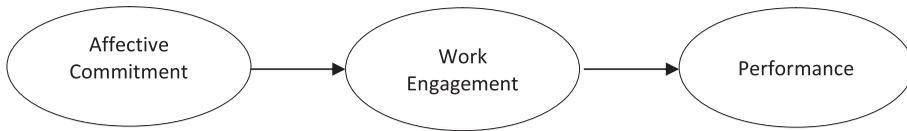


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Kahn (1990), an engaged person approaches work tasks with a sense of self-investment, passion, and energy, which is translated into higher levels of performance. Engaged individuals should exhibit higher performance as usually work with greater intensity on tasks, pay more attention to responsibilities and are more emotionally connected with their tasks and roles (Rich, Lepine, and Crawford 2010). The positive relationship between work engagement and performance has been confirmed in several previous studies (Cesário and Chambel 2017; Nazir and Islam 2017; Rich, Lepine, and Crawford 2010) and has been reflected repeatedly in meta-analysis of studies (Bailey et al. 2017). This evidence justifies the theoretical connection from work engagement to individual performance in SEs. Grounded on this theoretical foundation and findings from previous studies, the following hypotheses are formed. The conceptual model of the study is presented in Figure 1.

H1: Affective commitment of social entrepreneurs positively affects their work engagement

H2: Work engagement of social entrepreneurs positively affects their individual performance

Personal Values and Their Impact on Affective Commitment, Work Engagement and Performance and on Their Relationships

Personal values have been defined as the beliefs and the desirable goals that serve as guiding principles in people's lives influencing actions, choices and behaviour (Schwartz 1992). They form the basic motivational goals of individuals, and are hierarchically ordered according to the importance that individuals attribute to them (Schwartz 1992). In other words, individuals are motivated to behave expressing the important values to them (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020).

Schwartz's theory of personal values is the dominant framework as many studies use it to explore the effects of values in various organisational settings (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020). Schwartz' theory of personal values suggests ten values in order to frame distinct motivations, namely: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security (Schwartz 1992). The ten values form a continuous circular structure and are grouped into four higher-order values that are related in a compatible or a conflicting way forming different patterns; the adjacent value groups reflect congruent motivations while the opposing reflect contradictory motivations (Schwartz 1992). The conflicting contrasts are between *self-transcendence* with *self-enhancement* and *openness to change* with

conservation (Schwartz 1992). The first contrast reflects the conflict between the acceptance of others as equals and concerns for the others' welfare and interests versus the pursuit of personal interests, success and dominance over others (Schwartz 1992). The second contrast reflects the conflict between values related to the independence of thought and action and favouring for change versus preservation of the past, self-restriction and protection of stability (Schwartz 1992). The value of hedonism shares both elements of *self-enhancement* and *openness to change* (Schwartz 1992). The four higher-order values tend to be stable across different cultures; even if they mislay some accuracy, preserve their meaningfulness when used for comparisons (Schwartz 1994).

The role of personal values to act as critical motivators and shape attitudes and behaviour has been widely acknowledged in the organisational behaviour literature (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020; Ismail, Karkoulian, and Kertechian 2019). Each job has certain functions and tasks that may fit to particular personal values and reflects on performance (Ismail, Karkoulian, and Kertechian 2019). Moreover, personal values are critical in understanding behaviours at the workplace because exert direct influence on perceptions regarding decisions, power, interpersonal relationships, conflicts, individual and organisational performance, and ethical behaviour (England 1967). Surprisingly, the relationship between personal values and behaviour has received less attention in the field of management (Ismail, Karkoulian, and Kertechian 2019) and particularly in the SEs context. Also, far limited are the studies on the effects of personal values on commitment, performance (Cohen 2009) and engagement (Goh and Patrickson 2012).

Most researchers study personal values as an isolated theme, so as to neglect the different patterns behind the formation of value profiles and their effect on organisational behaviour (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020). According to Schwartz (1996) behaviour and attitudes are guided by the trade-offs among competing values rather than the dominance of a single value. Furthermore, values that are correlated with each other in a positive or negative way are expected to have more or less similar correlations with other behavioural variables (Schwartz 1996). Therefore, values combinations may offer a better understanding of the various aspects of organisational behaviour. A comprehensive embedment of the dimensions of personal values is still lacking in SE context (Kruse et al. 2019).

Values and Affective Commitment

Schwartz (1996, 2003) has already delineated the possible processes that link values to attitudes and behaviours, by arguing that human actions lead to social effects, not only at individual but also at organisational level. In the same vein, affective commitment reflects the outcome of the matching of individual values with the organisational objectives (Meyer and Allen 1991). Since affective commitment reflects the emotional attachment and involvement in the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991), implies long-term association and identification with the organisation (Glazer, Daniel, and Short 2004). Thus commitment is expected to relate to values of conservation rather than openness to change, as well as to values of self-transcendence rather than

self-enhancement. This means that individuals who emphasise more on stability, smooth interaction and group functioning, and accept common belief (conservation), will be more committed than those who are in favour of challenges, independent thoughts and actions (openness to change) (Schwartz 1992). Similarly, people who emphasise more on the pursuit of personal success and dominance over others (self-enhancement) (Schwartz 1992), invest less in helping others within the organisation, a tendency suggesting low affective commitment.

So far, very few studies have applied the Schwartz' theory of personal values to examine their relationship with affective commitment (Cohen 2009, 2010). Cohen (2010) found a positive effect of values representing conservation and self-transcendence on affective commitment in a sample of 369 Israel teachers. Yet, an earlier study by Cohen (2009) on Israel bank employees, reported that affective commitment was positively related to benevolence and achievement and negatively to stimulation. These results indicate that the relationship between affective commitment and personal values varies and may be moderated by culture, profession, and other variables (Glazer, Daniel, and Short 2004). In the context of SEs, entrepreneurs often seek the optimisation of values of conservation and self-transcendence. These values promote social bonding, and thus social entrepreneurs are expected to demonstrate higher affective commitment (Glazer, Daniel, and Short 2004). In line with the above theoretical foundation and findings, the following hypotheses are formed:

H3a-b: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of self-transcendence and conservation will show greater affective commitment than those with lower levels

H3c-d: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of openness to change and self-enhancement will show lower affective commitment than those with lower levels

Values and Work Engagement

Very few studies have explored the direct relationship between personal values and work engagement (Goh and Patrickson 2012; Ortiz-Gomez, Ariza-Montes, and Molina-Sanchez 2020). According to Salanova and Schaufeli (2008), work engagement is a conscious discretionary behaviour that can be activated, among other factors, by personal values opening up the interrelationship between personal values and work engagement (Goh and Patrickson 2012). Generally, engaged individuals are commonly described as active, optimistic, energetic and connected with their work activities (Schaufeli et al. 2002), which are characteristics reflecting also values endorsed by openness to change (Cristo-Andrade, Felix, and Mainardes 2019) rather than conservation, and to self-transcendence rather than self-enhancement. Social entrepreneurs, due to their collectivism and natural commitment to the welfare of others are more likely to highly engage in their tasks within SEs. Interestingly, one study by Ortiz-Gomez, Ariza-Montes, and Molina-Sanchez (2020) have confirmed a direct and positive relationship between work engagement and the values of openness to change and of conservation, in a Spanish sample of catholic organisation workers. In line with the theoretical foundation and previous findings the following hypotheses are articulated.

H4a-b: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of self-transcendence and openness to change will show greater work engagement than those with lower levels

H4c-d: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of conservation and self-enhancement will show lower work engagement than those with lower levels

H5a-b: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of openness to change and self-transcendence will demonstrate stronger relationship between affective commitment and work engagement than those with lower levels

H5c-d: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of conservation and self-enhancement will demonstrate weaker relationship between affective commitment and work engagement

Values and Performance

So far, the research relating personal values to individual performance is scarce and has been conceptualised either, through the person-organisation value fit (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020) or through the impact of personal values on individual goals (Parks and Guay 2012). When organisations place great emphasis on performance, individuals with relevant value systems will carry out their tasks better (Cohen and Liu 2011). Drawing on from Schwartz's theory (Schwartz 1992), it is expected that ambitious and competent individuals scoring high on the achievement values are more likely to deliver high performance (Parks and Guay 2012). Similarly, individuals emphasising more on high openness to change are more likely to adopt new task experiences and contribute to increased performance (Minbashian, Earl, and Bright 2013). These arguments highlight that performance is rooted more in values that represent openness to change and self-enhancement (Cohen and Liu 2011). Current empirical research confirms the positive impact of these two values on individual performance, as Parks and Guay (2012) place results which clearly links the achievement value to the academic performance of US students, and similar results have been reported for salespersons samples (Swenson and Herche 1994). However, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the association between social entrepreneurs' personal values and individual performance. Based on the above justification, the following hypotheses have been set.

H6a-b: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of openness to change and self-enhancement will score higher levels in individual performance than those with lower levels

H6c-d: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of conservation and self-transcendence will score lower levels in individual performance than those with lower levels

H7a-b: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of openness to change and self-enhancement will demonstrate stronger relationship between work engagement and individual performance than those with lower levels

H7c-d: Social entrepreneurs with higher levels of conservation and self-transcendence will demonstrate weaker relationship between work engagement and individual performance than those with lower levels

Methodology

Research Setting and Measures

This study employs survey methodology to address the research objectives. A questionnaire was developed and addressed to active social entrepreneurs, members of Greek SEs. The main body of the questionnaire contains particular scales based on the variables under research and socio-demographics. The items of the scales were adapted where necessary to the context of social entrepreneurs.

Thus, *affective commitment* (AC) was measured using the 4-item scale from Ackfeldt and Coote (2005). The reliability of this scale has also been confirmed in SEs' context (Ohana and Meyer 2010). *Work engagement* (WE) was operationalised using the Utrecht Work Engagement-Scale (UWES-9) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The particular scale consists of three dimensions (i.e. absorption, vigour, dedication), however, in this study the single factor version was adopted, following the argument of Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) in favour of using the UWES-9 as a single composite scale to measure work engagement. The scale's validity, internal consistency and reliability have been confirmed in SEs' context (Roman-Calderon, Battistelli, and Odoardi 2013). *Performance* was self-reported and measured using 6 items from the subscales of individual task proficiency and team member proficiency by Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007). The exploratory factor analysis of the 6 items resulted in one factor with eigen values greater than 1, which accounted for 58.75% of the initial variance, and produced loadings above .70. In all above scales, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with statement characteristics, using a 7-point scale anchored from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree, for the variables of affective commitment and performance, and for 1 – never to 7 – always for the variable of work engagement.

In order to capture the *personal values*, the portrait value questionnaire (PVQ-21) (Schwartz 2003) was used, which is prior validated in the Greek language. Participants were asked to rate descriptions of a person in respect to his/her aspirations and goals by indicating their degree of agreement, using a scale anchored from 1 = not like me at all, to 7 = absolutely like me). An indicative item is: '*It's very important to him/her to help the people around him/her. He/She wants to care for other people*'. The four higher order group of values Openness-to-Change, Conservation, Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement as introduced by Schwartz (1992), were used to record the values of social entrepreneurs. The particular scale has proven reliability and validity (Ciecuch and Davidov 2012). In this study a refined scale captured in the Greek SEs context (Sotiropoulou, Papadimitriou, and Maroudas 2021) was used.

Data Collection and Sample

The data collection process took place between November 2016 and April 2017, using a total population sampling strategy. The sampling method was systematic and based

on the Greek national registry of social cooperatives, to create a homogeneous sample of social entrepreneurs. Although the definition of social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs is yet an open topic for academic discussion, for this study, we adopted a broad conceptualisation for the term 'social entrepreneurs' which defines them '... as individuals who lead and manage organizations emphasizing the goal to create social value' (Stephan and Drencheva 2017, 4). This is consistent with the sample of the study which incorporates commercially oriented social entrepreneurs seeking to provide social change, that is the case of Greek social cooperatives. An online survey was distributed via e-mail to all 575 active social cooperatives out of the 814 registered in the Greek national registry of social economy at that time. The data collection process started with a phone call to all officially registered social cooperatives to identify an active social entrepreneur, and right after an e-mail invitation was forwarded with the attached questionnaire. The process included also electronic reminders and follow-up calls leading to 268 returns of surveys. 42 questionnaires were excluded since failed to provide satisfactory answers to two screening questions set to avoid common-method biases (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The sample of this study are social entrepreneurs who serve as volunteer members of the board and in other working groups of the Greek social cooperatives. These individuals offer skills and expertise in different areas including planning, marketing, fund raising, service delivery and communication, etc., and devote a lot of time and effort in SEs. Greek social cooperatives are led and managed by at least three-member administrative committee as foreseen by the respective legal framework. These committees are made by the owners/entrepreneurs of the social cooperatives (Glaveli and Geormas 2018). So far, very few Greek social enterprises have grown enough to hire paid human resources (Glaveli and Geormas 2018).

The final sample consisted of 226 social entrepreneurs, equally represented by males (50.9%) and females (49.1%). The majority of the respondents were between 31 and 50 years old (62.4%), 31.4% had fulfilled primary, secondary or post-secondary education, 36.7% tertiary education and 31.9% hold a post graduate degree or a PhD. Regarding their occupational status, 34.1% declared that they were currently unemployed, 33.2% employees of other organisations and 26.1% self-employed in private companies. Regarding the intensity of occupation, the majority occupied themselves from 21 to 40 h (34.1%) and more than 41 h (27.9%) per week in the SEs. Most of them (52.7%) are members in the SEs from 1 to 3 years and 20.8% for more than 3 years. They hold the position of the president (53.5%), secretary (15.9%), treasurer (10.6%), vice president (5.8%), and member (13.3%) in SEs. The sampled social entrepreneurs are multitaskers as 80% of them are involved in management and leadership, 72.57% in public relations and networking, 65.49% in the promotion of products and services, 61.95% in production management, 57.96% in the service of customers beneficiaries and stakeholders, 55.75% in accounting and administration, 52.21% in volunteer coordination, 51.77% in new service and product development, and 47.79% offer other supportive activities, etc.

For data analysis, the statistical programs SPSS and AMOS were employing using descriptive statistics and regression analysis followed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and by Structural Equation Models (SEM). Moderation analysis was employed for testing the significance of the differences in the path coefficients between two

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, medians, Spearman’s rho correlations and regression analysis.

	M	Std. dev.	Mdn	WE	AC
Conservation	4.76	1.05	4.80		
Self-Enhancement	3.79	1.12	3.80		
Openness-to-Change	5.59	.83	5.67		
Self-Transcendence	6.32	.49	6.40		
WE	5.44	1.11	5.56	1	
AC	6.28	.75	6.50	.671**	1
Performance	6.23	.60	6.17	.560**	.458**
			β	R^2	
AC → Performance			ns	.30	
WE → Performance			.49***		

M: Mean; std. dev: standard deviation; Mdn: Median; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; β : Beta (standardised coefficients), R^2 = variance explained.

sub-samples (i.e. respondents who evaluated high versus low the personal values). Since normal distribution was not attested in the dataset, the non-parametric Mann–Whitney test for testing significant differences, and Spearman’s rho correlations were employed.

Results

Descriptive Statistics, Spearman’s Rho Correlations and Regression Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for presenting the participants’ characteristics and evaluations on all variables of this research. Table 1 shows the Means, Standard Deviations and Medians for each variable. Overall, participants evaluated highly the values of Self-Transcendence (M = 6.32, SD = .49, Mdn = 6.40), Openness-to-Change (M = 5.59, SD = .83, Mdn = 5.67) and Conservation (M = 4.76, SD = 1.05, Mdn = 4.80), while Self-Enhancement was evaluated with a lower score (M = 3.79, SD = 1.12, Mdn = 3.80). The variables of WE (M = 5.44, SD = 1.11, Mdn = 5.56), AC (M = 6.28, SD = .75, Mdn = 6.50) and Performance (M = 6.23, SD = .60, Mdn = 6.17) were evaluated highly by the respondents.

The Spearman’s rho correlations were also computed and showed that all variables were significantly inter-correlated (see Table 1). In addition, a regression analysis was run to explore whether AC and WE contributed independently to the prediction of social entrepreneurs’ individual performance as suggested by the literature (Cesário and Chambel 2017). The multi-regression results showed that only WE contributed significantly to the prediction of social entrepreneurs’ Performance ($\beta = .49, p < .001$) and WE accounted for 30% ($R^2 = .30$) of the performance variance. As a result, the path from AC to Performance was deleted from the conceptual model.

The Measurement Model

CFA was conducted to test the fit of the measurement model. Results indicated goodness of fit for this model based on the literature criteria (Byrne 2010; Hu and Bentler 1999; Kline 2005). All indexes rates are shown in Table 2. The Cronbach’s α coefficient values were above .83 indicating high reliability for all constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). In addition, composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity

Table 2. Measurement Model. CFA, Constructs Reliability and Validity Testing.

	Factor loadings	α	AVE	CR
WE		.95	.67	.95
At my work in the SE, I feel bursting with energy	.81			
I am enthusiastic about my work in the SE	.86			
My work in the SE inspires me	.85			
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work in the SE	.83			
I get carried away when I'm working in the SE	.87			
I feel happy when I am working intensely in the SE	.80			
At my work in the SE, I feel strong and vigorous	.86			
I am proud on the work that I do in the SE	.76			
I am immersed in my work in the SE	.72			
AC		.83	.61	.86
This SE has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.68			
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this SE	.74			
I feel like part of the family at this SE	.88			
I feel emotionally attached to this SE	.82			
Performance		.85	.49	.85
I carry out the parts of my work at the SE well	.75			
I complete my core tasks well using the standard procedures	.78			
I ensure that the tasks are completed properly	.84			
I coordinate my work with my co-workers	.57			
I communicate effectively with my co-workers	.54			
I provide help to co-workers when asked, or needed	.66			

$\chi^2 = 262.186$, $df = 141$, $\chi^2/df = 1.859$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .89$, $AGFI = .86$, $CFI = .96$, $RMSEA = .062$ lower limit .05 and upper limit .07, $SRMR = .06$. $\alpha =$ Cronbach's α coefficient; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; CFA: Constructs Reliability and Validity Testing.

were confirmed. More specifically, composite reliability was measured with the use of the CR rates, which were all above .85 and fulfilled the statistical criteria set by Hair, Gabriel, and Patel (2014). Convergent validity was measured through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where all values were above .49. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) AVE should be higher than .5, but it can be accepted also above .4 when CR is higher than .6. These findings confirm convergent validity. In addition, the squared correlations between each two constructs were lower from the AVE estimates for each construct, providing evidence for discriminant validity (Hair, Gabriel, and Patel 2014). Finally, all factor loadings were above .54.

Initial Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

SEM was run to explore the relationships between the models' variables. Results indicated goodness of fit for the initial structural model as reported in Table 3, and showed that the variables of the model explain 33% of the variance of Performance, while 49% of the variance of WE can be explained by AC. AC was found to influence positively and significantly WE ($\beta = .70$, $p < .001$) and WE influenced positively and significantly Performance ($\beta = .58$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 2), leading to the acceptance of hypotheses H1 and H2.

Mann–Whitney Tests and Hypothesis Testing

Mann–Whitney Tests were conducted for exploring any possible differences on respondents' WE, AC and Performance between those who evaluated the four higher

Table 3. Initial structural model: standardised loadings, variance explained and hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Standardised loadings	Support
H1: AC → WE	.70***	Yes
H2: WE → Performance	.58***	Yes
Variance explained (R^2)		
WE	49%	
Performance	33%	

*** $p < .001$. $\chi^2 = 261.467$, $df = 142$, $\chi^2/df = 1.848$, $p = .000$, GFI = .90, AGFI = .86, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .06 lower limit .05 and upper limit .07, SRMR = .06.

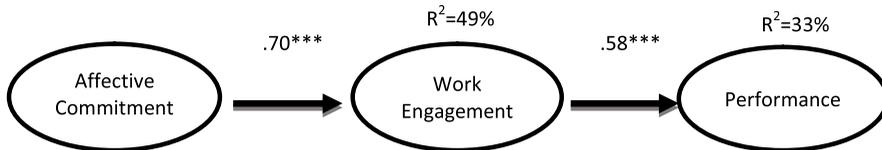


Figure 2. Initial Structural model.

order values with high and low scores. The median of each value was the threshold for dividing the groups in high and low scores.

The Mann–Whitney Tests showed that AC was greater for respondents with high Self-Transcendence (Mdn = 6.75, M=6.55) compared to those with low Self-Transcendence (Mdn = 6.13, M=6.10) ($U = 3,711.5$, $p < .001$), leading to the acceptance of H3a. On the other hand, social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Conservation did not show significantly higher AC compared to those who have lower levels, leading to the rejection of H3b. Similarly, social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Openness-to-Change and Self-Enhancement did not show significantly lower AC compared to those who had lower levels and thus, hypotheses H3c and H3d were rejected. However, an interesting finding is that AC was higher for respondents with high Openness-to-Change (Mdn = 6.75, M=6.38) compared to those with low Openness-to-Change (Mdn = 6.25, M=6.21) ($U = 5,339.5$, $p < .05$).

WE was greater for respondents with higher Openness-to-Change (Mdn = 5.78, M=5.66) than for those with lower score (Mdn = 5.33, M=5.26) ($U = 5,061.0$, $p < .05$). The same held true for Self-Transcendence, as social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Self-Transcendence (Mdn = 5.89, M=5.78) showed higher WE compared to those who had lower levels (Mdn = 5.28, M=5.21) ($U = 4,046.5$, $p < .001$). Consequently, H4a and H4b were supported. WE in addition was greater for respondents with high Conservation (Mdn = 5.72, M=5.62) than for those with low (Mdn = 5.33, M=5.29) ($U = 5,298.5$, $p < .05$), leading to the rejection of H4c. There was no significant difference in the score of WE based on social entrepreneurs’ Self-Enhancement levels, and thus H4d was rejected. Similarly, there was no significant difference in the score of social entrepreneurs’ individual performance based on Openness-to-Change and Self-Enhancement leading to the rejection of H6a and H6b. Another interesting finding was that contrary to what it was expected social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Conservation and Self-Transcendence scored higher in Performance (Conservation: Mdn = 6.50, M=6.34; Self-Transcendence: Mdn = 6.67, M=6.45) compared to those who had lower levels (Conservation: Mdn = 6.00, M=6.12; Self-Transcendence: Mdn = 6.00, M=6.10) (C: $U = 4,916.5$, $p < .01$; ST: $U = 3,785.5$, $p < .001$) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Mann–Whitney Test for comparing sample based on values levels.

	M		Mdn		<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	Support
	Low	High	Low	High			
Conservation							
H3b: AC	6.21	6.36	6.25	6.75	5,606.5	ns	No
H4c: WE	5.29	5.62	5.33	5.72	5,298.5	.029*	No
H6c: Performance	6.12	6.34	6.00	6.50	4,916.5	.003**	No
Self-Enhancement							
H3d: AC	6.31	6.26	6.50	6.50	6,331.5	ns	No
H4d: WE	5.49	5.39	5.56	5.56	6,132.5	ns	No
H6b: Performance	6.25	6.19	6.17	6.17	6,130.0	ns	No
Openness-to-Change							
H3c: AC	6.21	6.38	6.25	6.75	5,339.5	.041*	No
H4b: WE	5.26	5.66	5.33	5.78	5,061.0	.010*	Yes
H6a: Performance	6.16	6.30	6.17	6.25	5,503.0	ns	No
Self-Transcendence							
H3a: AC	6.10	6.55	6.13	6.75	3,711.5	.000***	Yes
H4a: WE	5.21	5.78	5.28	5.89	4,046.5	.000***	Yes
H6d: Performance	6.10	6.45	6.00	6.67	3,785.5	.000***	No

M: Mean; Mdn: Median; *U*: Mann–Whitney *U*, *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Measurement Models for Exploring Significant Differences Based on Values

Four measurement models were run to explore the significance of the differences in the path coefficients between two sub-samples (i.e. respondents who evaluated high versus low the four higher-order values). These results indicated goodness of fit for the measurement model based on the literature criteria (Byrne 2010; Hu and Bentler 1999; Kline 2005). All indexes rates are shown in Table 5. Composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity were confirmed. All factor loadings ranged from .40 to .93.

Structural Models for Exploring Significant Differences Based on Values

Following the above CFAs, four SEM were run using the method of multigroup moderations to explore the models' significance of the differences and the results indicated goodness of fit for all four structural models (Byrne 2010; Hu and Bentler 1999; Kline 2005) (see Table 6). In all models a significant proportion of variance was explained for WE and Performance, while significant effects were found between the variables as shown in Figures 3–6.

In particular, significant differences emerged in the relationships based on the level of values that social entrepreneurs expressed. More specifically, the relationship between AC and WE ($z = 1.963$, $p < .05$) emerged stronger for social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Openness-to-Change ($\beta = .80$, $p < .001$) compared to those with lower levels ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$). The same held true for the value of Self-Transcendence ($z = 3.337$, $p < .001$), where AC affects stronger WE for social entrepreneurs with higher levels ($\beta = .86$, $p < .001$) of Self-Transcendence than those with lower levels ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$). Thus, H5a and H5b were supported. While social entrepreneurs with higher levels of Conservation ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$) demonstrated weaker relationship between AC and WE compared to those with lower levels ($\beta = .72$, $p < .001$), the difference between the path coefficients was not significant leading to the rejection of H5c. In addition, the relationship between AC and WE was not

Table 5. Measurement Models for Comparing Sample based on Values: CFA, Constructs Reliability and Validity Testing.

Measurement model 2.a Conservation		Factor loadings	AVE	CR
Low		.40-.89	AC = .63, WE = .68, p = .42	AC = .87, WE = .95, p = .80
High		.65-.91	AC = .60, WE = .66, p = .58	AC = .86, WE = .95, p = .89
Model fit: $\chi^2 = 440.687$, df = 282, $\chi^2/df = 1.563$, p = .000, GFI = .78, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .050 lower limit .04 and upper limit .06, SRMR = .0984.				
Measurement model 2.b Self-Enhancement		Factor loadings	AVE	CR
Low		.51-.90	AC = .65, WE = .68, p = .51	AC = .88, WE = .95, p = .86
High		.48-.86	AC = .61, WE = .67, p = .49	AC = .86, WE = .95, p = .85
Model fit: $\chi^2 = 438.986$, df = 282, $\chi^2/df = 1.557$, p = .000, GFI = .78, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .050 lower limit .04 and upper limit .06, SRMR = .0578.				
Measurement model 2.c Openness-to-Change		Factor loadings	AVE	CR
Low		.49-.89	AC = .57, WE = .66, p = .49	AC = .84, WE = .94, p = .85
High		.58-.90	AC = .69, WE = .68, p = .47	AC = .90, WE = .95, p = .84
Model fit: $\chi^2 = 471.514$, df = 282, $\chi^2/df = 1.672$, p = .000, GFI = .78, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .055 lower limit .05 and upper limit .06, SRMR = .0778.				
Measurement model 2.d Self-Transcendence		Factor loadings	AVE	CR
Low		.42-.93	AC = .57, WE = .62, p = .43	AC = .84, WE = .94, p = .81
High		.56-.91	AC = .63, WE = .71, p = .52	AC = .87, WE = .96, p = .86
Model fit: $\chi^2 = 478.817$, df = 282, $\chi^2/df = 1.698$, p = .000, GFI = .83, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .056 lower limit .05 and upper limit .06, SRMR = .08.				

CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; AC: Affective commitment; WE: Work engagement; P: Performance

Table 6. Structural models for comparing sample based on values: standardised loadings, variance explained and hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Standardised loadings		z-Score	Support
	Low Conservation	High Conservation		
Structural model 2.a Conservation				
H5c: AC → (-) WE	.72***	.67***	ns	No
H7c: WE → (-) Performance	.50***	.60***	1.72*	No
Variance explained (R ²)				
WE	52%	45%		
Performance	25%	36%		
$\chi^2 = 442.079$, $df = 284$, $\chi^2/df = 1.557$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .84$, $AGFI = .78$, $CFI = .95$, $RMSEA = .05$ lower limit .04 and upper limit .06.				
Structural model 2.b Self-Enhancement	Low Self-Enhancement	High Self-Enhancement		
H5d: AC → (-) WE	.66***	.74***	ns	No
H7b: WE → (+) Performance	.68***	.48***	ns	No
Variance explained (R ²)				
WE	44%	54%		
Performance	47%	23%		
$\chi^2 = 442.375$, $df = 284$, $\chi^2/df = 1.558$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .84$, $AGFI = .78$, $CFI = .95$, $RMSEA = .05$ lower limit .04 and upper limit .06.				
Structural model 2.c Openness-to-Change	Low Openness-to-Change	High Openness-to-Change		
H5a: AC → (+) WE	.62***	.80***	1.963**	Yes
H7a: WE → (+) Performance	.48***	.69***	ns	No
Variance explained (R ²)				
WE	38%	64%		
Performance	23%	48%		
$\chi^2 = 472.079$, $df = 284$, $\chi^2/df = 1.662$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .84$, $AGFI = .78$, $CFI = .94$, $RMSEA = .05$ lower limit .05 and upper limit .06.				
Structural model 2.d Self-Transcendence	Low Self-Transcendence	High Self-Transcendence		
H5b: AC → (+) WE	.57***	.86***	3.337***	Yes
H7d: WE → (-) Performance	.44***	.67***	ns	No
Variance explained (R ²)				
WE	32%	74%		
Performance	19%	44%		
$\chi^2 = 479.645$, $df = 284$, $\chi^2/df = 1.689$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .83$, $AGFI = .77$, $CFI = .93$, $RMSEA = .06$ lower limit .05 and upper limit .06.				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

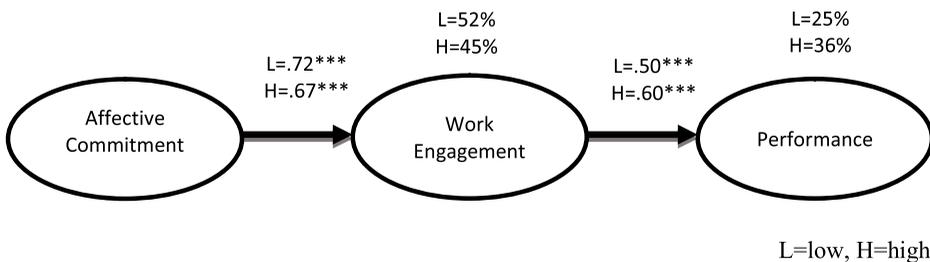


Figure 3. Structural model 2.a Conservation.

significantly different between those with higher ($\beta = .74$, $p < .001$) and lower ($\beta = .66$, $p < .001$) levels of Self-Enhancement, and thus H5d was rejected.

The relationship between WE and Performance did not emerge significantly stronger for those with higher levels ($\beta = .69$, $p < .001$) of Openness-to-Change compared with those with lower levels ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$). Similarly, there was no significant difference in this relationship based on social entrepreneurs' Self-Enhancement higher (β

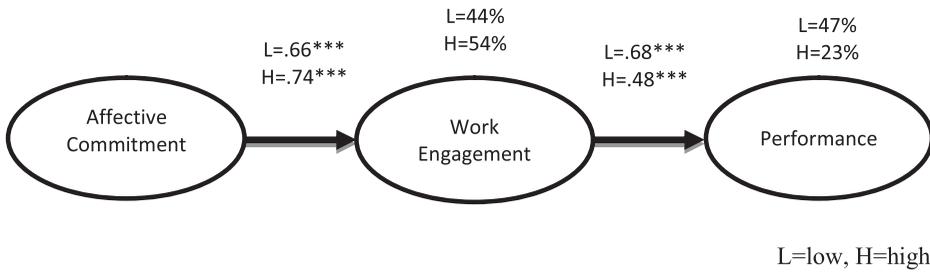


Figure 4. Structural model 2.b Self-Enhancement.

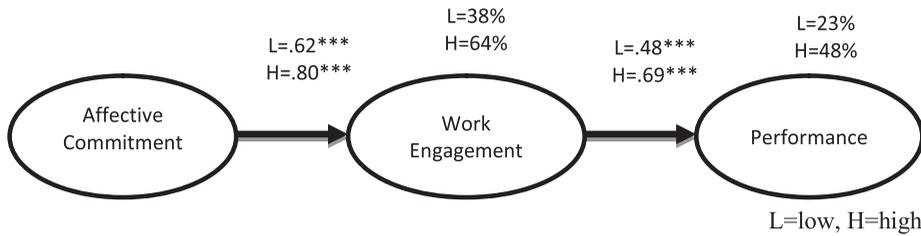


Figure 5. Structural model 2.c Openness-to-Change.

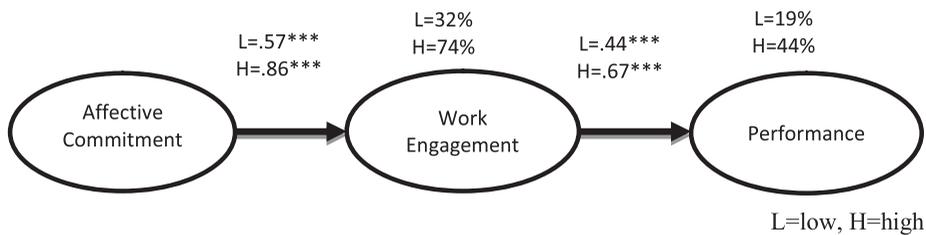


Figure 6. Structural model 2.d Self-Transcendence.

= .48, $p < .001$) and lower ($\beta = .68, p < .001$) levels. Consequently, H7a and H7b were rejected. Social entrepreneurs with higher levels ($\beta = .60, p < .001$) of Conservation demonstrated stronger relationship between WE and Performance that those with lower levels ($\beta = .50, p < .001$), contrary to the expectations. Thus, H7c was rejected. Finally, the difference between the path coefficients in the relationship between WE and Performance was not significant between respondents with higher ($\beta = .67, p < .001$) and lower levels ($\beta = .44, p < .001$) of Self-Transcendence, leading to the rejection of H7d.

Discussion

This study presents a first systematic attempt to explore the effects of personal values, affective commitment and work engagement on the individual performance of social entrepreneurs, considering affective commitment as a precursor of work engagement. The study contributes to the literature, by providing empirical support and more in-depth examination regarding the relationship between affective commitment and work engagement and their effect on individual performance of social entrepreneurs incorporating the concept of personal values.

Regarding the first research objective, this study presents empirical evidence that affective commitment and work engagement are two variables with a strong positive association with performance. Affective commitment is an antecedent of work engagement and work engagement is a predictor of individual performance of social entrepreneurs, while affective commitment has no independent effect on performance. These findings are consistent with previous research (Bailey et al. 2017; Barnes and Collier 2013; Cesário and Chambel 2017). The greater social entrepreneurs are emotionally attached and connected to SEs, the higher manifest concentration on performing tasks with enthusiasm and energy, delivering outstanding individual performance. Thus, together affective commitment and work engagement are two concepts that can explain the individual performance of entrepreneurs in SEs (Cesário and Chambel 2017).

The association among affective commitment, work engagement and individual performance of social entrepreneurs could be further explained through the social identity literature (Tajfel and Turner 1985) and particularly the notion of organisation identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Social entrepreneurs' self-categorization is oriented to help the others, as usually act for the benefit of the community and they see themselves as belonging to a specific social group (Pan, Gruber, and Binder 2019). In the context of SEs, this social identity is often translated to a psychological linkage between the social entrepreneur and the organisation towards the completion of a common social goal. The affective and cognitive bond among the social entrepreneurs explains also their commitment and involvement by performing their tasks (Karanika-Murray et al. 2015). In other words, entrepreneurs who perceive a shared destiny with the SEs are strongly committed to them (Ashforth and Mael 1989) and become more engaged with their tasks in order to ensure SEs' success (Barnes and Collier 2013).

The second goal of the research was to explore whether and to what extent personal values exert influence on social entrepreneurs' individuals' affective commitment, work engagement and performance and their interrelationships. The findings show clearly that personal values drive social entrepreneurs' behaviour within SEs. Higher values of Self Transcendence, which is the most influential composite value for social entrepreneurs, result to greater affective commitment, work engagement and performance and make the relationship between affective commitment and work engagement stronger. The effect of Self-Transcendence values on affective commitment is consistent with the literature (Arciniega and Gonzalez 2006; Cohen 2010), and the same occurs for work engagement (Goh and Patrickson 2012; Ortiz-Gomez, Ariza-Montes, and Molina-Sanchez 2020). This finding demonstrates that the concern of social entrepreneurs for the welfare of the others (Schwartz 1992) drives their emotional attachment and involvement in SEs, and engagement with role activities and proficiency, while implementing tasks. Furthermore, the higher is the interest in the welfare of others, the stronger is the impact that exerts the social entrepreneurs' emotional attachment to the organisation on the engagement with their tasks. This means that social entrepreneurs are more emotionally attached and hardworking because their value priorities are compatible to the goals and values endorsed also by their SEs. This finding confirms that values play a key role in building individual – organisation fit

and in driving motivation and commitment in the organisational context (Berings, Fruyt, and Bouwen 2004).

The results showed also that social entrepreneurs with higher values of Openness to Change tend to report greater affective commitment and work engagement, which also affects the interrelationship of the two concepts. This finding points out that the emphasis of social entrepreneurs on independent thinking, action and readiness for change (Schwartz 1992) leads their emotional attachment in SEs and their positive engagement with their respective tasks. It appears that in the case of social entrepreneurs, affective commitment acts as a trigger for their inherent orientation to improve society by introducing change, and challenging the status quo with innovation (Dees 2001). All the latter are motives and behaviours which stem from the composite value of Openness to Change (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020; Schwartz 1992) and play a role into better understanding the entrepreneurs' emotional attachment and involvement in SEs. The effect of Openness to Change values on work engagement means that social entrepreneurs are motivated by their genuine interest in novelty and mastery (Schwartz 1992), experience high levels of enthusiasm at the workplace and may give up when no longer feel challenged (Schaufeli 2012). This might also explain the high drop off rates recorded by Greek SEs, only a few years after their establishment (Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2020).

Contrary to the expectations, the higher composite value of Conservation was found to cause higher levels of work engagement and performance and to exert stronger effect on the relationship between work engagement and performance. However, similar results have been reported in previous research, both for work engagement (Goh and Patrickson 2012; Ortiz-Gomez, Ariza-Montes, and Molina-Sanchez 2020) and individual performance (Cohen and Liu 2011; Ismail, Karkoulian, and Kertechian 2019). This finding means that social entrepreneurs, who emphasise on stability and harmony, are more likely to be engaged with their roles and achieve higher levels of proficiency in their tasks. It may demonstrate that their moral obligation is to perform their task in SEs, and thus to serve stability, harmonious relations and solidarity among the members of SEs. Furthermore, this motivation might stem from the fact that social entrepreneurs in Greece have been engaged in the SEs to enter into the labour market taking advantage of relevant state benefits (Nasioulas and Mavroeidis 2013). In this case, the prevailing concern is the maintenance of stability of social entrepreneurs' hidden work setting, which mobilise them to perform their task as good as possibly.

The lack of any effect of the Conservation values on social entrepreneurs' affective commitment can be explained by the fact that commitment implies the development of a long-term relationship (Cohen 2010), which is not very feasible in Greek SEs, since rarely these organisations facilitate occupational relationships that reflect stability. The absence of any influence of Self-Enhancement values to the dependent variables might explain the comparatively low organisational outcomes reported in Greek SEs (Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2020). Greek social entrepreneurs tend not to endorse values related to achievement (i.e. Self-Enhancement dimension) which is considered the motivational basis for demonstrating competent individual

performance (Schwartz 1992). This value enhances not only the individual success but also contributes to the generation of resources for SEs to reach their objectives.

Theoretical Contribution

The present study makes a contribution to the literature in many ways, firstly by exploring the interrelationship of affective commitment and work engagement as well as their effect on individual performance by adopting widely cited methodological instruments. The proposed model clearly highlights that Greek social entrepreneurs with higher affective commitment demonstrate higher work engagement which leads to higher levels of individual performance. These findings advance the social economy literature by demonstrating the role of affective commitment and work engagement to the social entrepreneurs' performance. Like the case of profitable organisations, the results reveal that these variables remain also key determinants for individual performance of entrepreneurs in the context of SEs.

Secondly, the tested model provides empirical support which is in line with the tenants of the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Social entrepreneurs are individuals who experience a shared destiny with their SEs, are strongly committed to these organisations (Ashforth and Mael 1989), become more engaged in their tasks and display high performance contributing to sustainability (Barnes and Collier 2013). Thirdly, the study tests the effects of personal values on the intensity of behavioural variables, adding new insights in the literature regarding the role of values in organisational behaviour (Arieli, Savig, and Roccas 2020). Specifically, the study introduces a discussion on how social entrepreneurs' individual performance can be reinforced within SEs, by considering the personal value priorities of entrepreneurs, besides the parameters of commitment, and engagement. These results highlight the existence of a mechanism which underpins the important role of personal values to build the individual performance of social entrepreneurs through affective commitment and work engagement. Thus, the study highlights the nuance dynamic of the personal values on organisational behaviour in SEs' context.

Practical Implications

This study has several practical implications. The main implication is the offer of empirical evidence that the conceptualisation and testing of the key factors driving the performance of social entrepreneurs are of vital importance for the survival and growth of SEs. Our research highlights that SEs need to develop policies and measures to facilitate the continuous monitoring of social entrepreneurs' commitment and engagement as these two parameters directly affect their individual performance and organisational results. The efficacy and survival of SEs are difficult if the attitudes of their members towards their tasks (engagement) and the organisation (commitment) are endangered. Fostering the emotional attachment and engagement among SEs' members may be a valuable strategy to improve performance and sustainability. Thus, strategies that encourage social entrepreneurs to feel emotional connection to their

organisations have important implications for creating human resources able to address issues related to sustainability and growth in SEs.

The present study also offers a thorough understanding of the connection of the motivational basis of SEs' members (i.e. their personal values), on the behavioural mechanism that leads to higher performance. Since values are a key component in the social economy, SEs need to focus more on the development of strategies reinforcing a value system with clear value priorities which are well harmonised with their mission and strategic objectives. This is imperative for effectively motivating their human resources and facilitating organisational performance and growth. Furthermore, SEs could enrich their recruitment and selection efforts, both for board members and other volunteers, seeking to achieve the right fit between their personal values and the value system of the organisation. This is expected to drive positive behaviour and attitudinal outcomes that enforce higher individual performance.

Limitation and Future Research

The present study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. The first limitation refers to the use of self-report data to measure the model variables, thus common method bias may influence research results. Usually, individuals tend to present a better version of their selves (Podsakoff et al. 2003) or judge that their own behaviours meet higher standards than others (Harris and Schaubroeck 1988). Even though self-reported data is a common approach in the literature, future studies might rely more on ratings from third parties (peers, observers) or objective indicators (Schaufeli 2012) to assess affective commitment, engagement and performance.

A second limitation is that the study is based on a sample of social entrepreneurs activated in a specific type of SEs which limits the generalisation of the results to other nonprofits. Future studies could collect data from social entrepreneurs from a wide variety of social economy organisations (i.e. associations, voluntary organisations, etc.) to reach more generalisable results. Further, the scope of the study is limited only to the Greek social economy context. Several research directions could include a cross-cultural approach to test whether the present variations in the research variables occur in other cultural settings.

Lastly, the proposed model examines the effects of affective commitment and engagement on performance. Future research could involve additional variables, such as other types of commitment, flow experiences, volunteer satisfaction (Vecina et al. 2012), personality traits (Parks and Guay 2012) and other job or personal resources (Schaufeli 2012). Also, by introducing control variables in the model, such as individual characteristics (e.g. work experience, involvement), organisational characteristics (e.g. age of organisation) as well as demographics (Nazir and Islam 2017), new insights might be offered into the mechanisms behind social entrepreneurs' performance, through positive emotions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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