

## INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON STUDENTS' SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

Social entrepreneurs are characterized by a high level of moral responsibility and entrepreneurial intentions, which encourage them to create entrepreneurial ventures that alleviate social problems. This paper aims to examine whether personality traits: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (according to the Big five model) influence social entrepreneurial intentions (SEI). The data was collected among students of economics at the University of Niš during the Covid-19 pandemic that makes the context of the research and the obtained data untypical. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to assess the influence of personality traits on SEI, whereas socio-demographic characteristics were observed also as predictors of SEI. The results indicate that extroversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism have a positive and statistically significant influence on SEI, while agreeableness and openness do not have statistically significant influence on SEI. Therefore, the research has twofold contributions: theoretical contribution is reflected in filling the gap in the literature on drives of SEI in extraordinary circumstances; and practical implications of the paper direct career counsellors and educators toward identification and guidance of students with specific personality traits for a social entrepreneur to acquire entrepreneurial competencies necessary for business management and consequently solving social problems.

**Key words:** personality traits, Big Five, social entrepreneurial intentions, students, Covid-19 pandemic.

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## УТИЦАЈ ОСОБИНА ЛИЧНОСТИ НА СОЦИЈАЛНЕ ПРЕДУЗЕТНИЧКЕ НАМЕРЕ СТУДЕНАТА У УСЛОВИМА ПАНДЕМИЈЕ КОВИД-19

### Апстракт

Социјалне предузетнике карактерише висок ниво моралне одговорности и предузетничких намера, који их подстиче да покрећу предузетничке подухвате који ублажавају социјалне проблеме. Овај рад има за циљ да испита да ли особине личности: екстрвертност, пријатност, савесност, неуротичност и отвореност (према моделу Великих пет) имају утицај на социјалне предузетничке намере (СПН). Подаци су прикупљени међу студентима економије Универзитета у Нишу током пандемије Ковид-19, што контекст истраживања и прикупљене податке чини нетипичним. Вишеструка линеарна регресиона анализа коришћена је за процену утицаја особина личности на СПН, док су социо-демографске карактеристике посматране су такође посматране као предиктор СПН. Резултати указују на то да екстрвертност, савесност и неуротизам имају позитиван и статистички значајан утицај на СПН, док пријатност и отвореност немају статистички значајан утицај на СПН. Самим тим, истраживање има двоструки допринос: теоријски допринос се огледа у попуњавању празнина у литератури о факторима СПН у ванредним околностима; и практичне импликације рада представљају смернице за каријерне саветнике и едукаторе у циљу идентификације и усмеравања студената са специфичним личним особинама за социјалног предузетника како би стекли предузетничке компетенције за управљање пословањем и сходно томе за решавање друштвених проблема.

**Кључне речи:** особине личности, Великих пет, социјалне предузетничке намере, студенти, пандемија Ковид-19.

### INTRODUCTION

The role of social enterprises is very important since social entrepreneurs can perceive social problems to which not enough attention has been paid by other members of the society (Ivanović Đukić, Petrović Ranđelović, & Talić, 2020). Social enterprises help to solve the problems of social inclusion and poverty reduction, assist vulnerable social groups, participate in solving environmental problems, contribute to the preservation of old crafts and the like (Hjorth, 2013). However, the establishment and development of companies, especially those with a social mission, is not at all easy and requires the fulfilment of certain conditions. Prioritizing the creation of social value over economic value is often considered a key difference between social enterprises and traditional business ventures.

It is assumed that social entrepreneurs often possess certain personality traits that define their behaviour. Personality traits are partially developed through a person's growing up, socialization and education. Many researchers suggest that formed values and beliefs play an important role in establishing a social enterprise (Zhao, Seibert, & Lumpkin, 2009; Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010). Thus, personality traits can affect the intentions and the way individual acts.

Bearing in mind the foregoing, this study is based on answering the research question of what the determining personality traits that may have an impact on the intentions of starting a social enterprise in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic are. Under the phenomenon of the pandemic, the study aims to identify the main personality traits from the Big Five group (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness) which have a significant impact on the social entrepreneurial intentions (SEI) of a faculty students' population and to fill the existing gap in the literature and educational process.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of social entrepreneurship in mitigating social needs which occurred in extraordinary circumstances is emphasized. Providing those social enterprises could encourage socially acceptable actions and reconcile the needs of different sectors during the pandemic, Bacq and Lumpkin (2020) encourage researches on the drivers of starting a social enterprise. Most recent researches have shown that personal feelings such as fear and anxiety due to Covid-19 proved to be negative determinants of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions to start a business (Loan et al, 2021). Additionally, environmental factors appeared to be unmotivating to start their own business during the Covid-19 pandemic (Gomes, Sousa, Santos, Oliveira, Oliveira, & Lopes, 2021). On the other hand, there are researches in the contemporary literature on personal characteristics investigating their relationship with stress during pandemics (Liu, Lithopoulos, Zhang, Garcia-Barrera, & Rhodes, 2021), compliance with measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Carvalho, Pianowski, & Gonçalves, 2020) and coping behaviour (Volk, Brazil, Franklin-Luther, Dane, & Vaillancourt, 2021), but there is still a gap in the literature that connects the concept of personality traits and social entrepreneurship while Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing.

The paper consists of five parts. After the introduction, the second part provides a literature review on Big Five personality traits and SEI as concepts, and gives an overview of the research hypothesis. The third section shows the sample structure, method and measures used in the research and the study results. The fourth section comprises a discussion of the results and implications of the study for both theory and practice. The fifth part gives concluding remarks of the paper.

## *LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT*

### *Personality traits of a social entrepreneur*

The social entrepreneur is quite similar to a traditional entrepreneur. The difference is expressed by a higher level of empathy, emotions, courage and collective thinking of a social entrepreneur. In addition, while the traditional entrepreneur is expected to generate a certain finan-

cial profit, the social entrepreneur strives to create value for a certain segment of society or society as a whole. This does not mean that social entrepreneurs do not make a profit (Martin & Osberg, 2007). On contrary, they gain profit while targeting certain social issues.

The entrepreneurial orientation of a potential social entrepreneur has a great influence on starting a business in the social sphere, especially the ability to create a vision, risk-taking, perseverance, commitment, etc. (Ivanović Đukić et al., 2020). Although social entrepreneurs and volunteers have certain characteristics in common, they cannot be equated. A characteristic that distinguishes a social entrepreneur from a volunteer or humanitarian worker is the entrepreneurial spirit. In addition, social entrepreneurs deal with systemic and long-term solutions to social problems, unlike volunteers, who are mainly guided by short-term goals and one-time project activities (Ivanović-Đukić & Radosavljević, 2018; Petković, 2021).

In order to start a social enterprise, it is necessary to have a clear vision, great enthusiasm and moral responsibility (Zahra et al., 2009). The ability to create a vision helps the social entrepreneur to imagine what the world would look like if a certain social problem were solved (Best, 2018). Another important characteristic, not only for individuals who intend to engage in social entrepreneurship, but for all entrepreneurs, is the propensity to take risks. This trait plays an important role in an entrepreneur's determination of whether to engage in entrepreneurship or not (Zahra et al., 2009). However, this does not mean that both groups of entrepreneurs face the same types of risks.

Based on the review of the existing literature, it can be noticed that there is a big difference between the personal characteristics of social entrepreneurs in different researches, which can be related to the level of development of the country where the research was done. For example, in underdeveloped countries, there is a tendency to meet basic needs, while in developed countries there is a demand for other types of needs in addition to the basic ones (Caldera, Ortega, & Sanchez, 2016).

Furthermore, differences in the actions of individuals who are in the same situations (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) can be explained precisely by their personality traits. During the Covid-19 pandemic, students' motivation to start a business did not vary compared to the period before the pandemic (Gomes et al., 2021). From the perspective of coping behaviour while living during the pandemic, people who are emotional, extrovert and conscientiousness appeared to be more successful in such actions (Volk et al., 2021). Furthermore, Carvalho et al. (2020) revealed that extrovert persons are not keen on following containment measures for stopping the spread of the Covid-19 virus, while conscientious persons were marked as ones who obey the rules. Lastly, Liu et al. (2021) discovered that higher levels of stress among people during the pandemic is connected with their trait neuroticism and extroversion.

*Big Five personality traits and social entrepreneurial intentions*

A large number of authors have studied antecedents of SEI. Following Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour which proposes that persons' entrepreneurial behaviour is predicted by its intentions, while intentions are under the influence of persons' attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, Mair and Noboa (2006) developed their concept of SEI. They assert that the person's empathy, moral obligations, self-efficacy and perceived social support are predictors of SEI. Furthermore, Hockerts (2017) expanded their model by adding one more predictor of SEI – previous experience with social problems.

Additionally, personality traits appear to be SEI's predictors (Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010; İrengün & Arıkboğa, 2015; Bernardino, Santos, & Ribeiro, 2018). Personality traits are enduring, predictable characteristics of an individual's behaviour, which can be influenced by the individual's unique, subjective personal knowledge, values, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences (Kor, Mahoney, & Micheal, 2007). One of the most common methods used to define personality traits is the model of Big Five personality traits (Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five model is a systematic framework used to analyse personality traits that include extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness.

Extroversion is a personality trait associated with ambition, sociability, and individuality (Ciavarella, Buchholtz, Riordan, Gatewood, & Stokes, 2004). Extroverted individuals are often described as sociable, friendly, assertive, proactive (Zhao et al., 2009). These characteristics are desirable for both traditional and social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs are expected to possess this trait, due to the large number of stakeholders with whom they communicate. Therefore, we believe that:

*H1. Extroversion positively influences the social entrepreneurial intentions of students in the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Agreeableness is a trait that implies community focus, cooperation, caring for others, altruism, trust (Brandstätter, 2011). Social entrepreneurs operate in a specific environment in which they create relationships with many actors (e.g., NGOs, local authorities, commercial enterprises). Therefore, they must possess this trait to properly manage relationships with other actors from the environment. Thus, we expect that:

*H2. Agreeableness positively influences the social entrepreneurial intentions of students in the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Individuals characterized by a high level of conscientiousness can be described as diligent, responsible, hardworking, persistent individuals who adhere to rules and regulations. This personality trait is often positively associated with the entrepreneurial intentions of commercial entrepreneurs, as well as with the long-term survival of a business venture (Ciavarella et al., 2004). We believe that the situation is similar to social entrepreneurs. Therefore, the third hypothesis is stated as follows:

*H3. Conscientiousness positively influences the social entrepreneurial intentions of students in the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Neuroticism shows the emotional balance of the individual. Emotional instability is associated with sudden mood swings, impulsivity, low self-esteem (Brandstätter, 2011), anxiety, lack of control over the situation. As entrepreneurs face numerous challenges and different risks during their business, a high level of emotional intelligence and self-control are necessary. Social entrepreneurs in particular face many challenges (lack of finances, support, etc.). In this sense, there is often a negative link between neuroticism and the intention to establish a social enterprise (Zhao et al., 2009). Thus, the next hypothesis is proposed:

*H4. Neuroticism negatively influences the social entrepreneurial intentions of students in the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Openness refers to the tendency to accept new experiences, innovative ideas and creativity (Zhao et al., 2009). As it is necessary to find innovative ideas for solving social problems to start a social enterprise, the possession of this feature can be one of the indicators of the intention to start such endeavours. Individuals characterized by openness are more willing to explore new business models that include social innovation (Wood, 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H5. Openness positively influences the social entrepreneurial intentions of students in the Covid-19 pandemic.*

Based on the previous review of the literature and the research of Awwad and Al-Aseer (2021), Figure 1 presents the design of the conceptual model. In this model, Big Five personality traits and socio-demographic variables appear as independent variables, while SEI is the dependent variable.

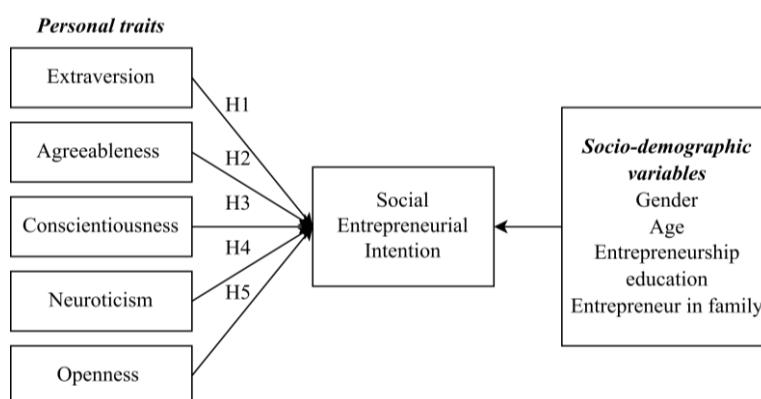


Figure 1. The conceptual model

Source: Authors

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct quantitative empirical research, the survey data were collected among students of the University of Niš enrolled in the studies of economics. The main reason for focusing the research only on students with a major in economics is based on the assumption that these students will acquire essential knowledge through the formal educational process to start their own business. The data was collected during the spring semester of 2021 in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. During the data collection process, students had already been engaged in distance learning with minimum contact with their peers and teachers for almost a year.

#### Sample

Three hundred and fifty students enrolled in the studies of economic filled the questionnaires distributed via the Internet. With the advancement in information technology and due to the Covid-19 pandemic, paper-based questionnaires have been overcome and avoided to decrease physical contact. There was no missing data in the pull of surveys because of the features of the Google form applied for gathering the data. Based on the above, the availability sampling method was used.

The following table illustrates the sample characteristic and implies that all respondent groups are well represented. The sample consists of mostly female students (75.7%), aged between 18 to 24 (71.1%), who already attended courses in entrepreneurship (62.9%) and have no entrepreneur role model among close family members (70%).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

	N	Percentage
Number of participants	350	100%
Gender		
Men	85	24.3%
Women	265	75.7%
Age		
18-24	249	71.1%
≥ 25	101	28.9%
Entrepreneurship education		
Yes	220	62.9%
No	130	37.1%
Entrepreneur in the family		
Yes	105	30%
No	245	70%

Source: Authors' calculation

### *Measurements*

In this study, ten variables are observed, nine independent variables and one dependent variable. The group of independent variables is made up of two subgroups: socio-demographic variables and Big Five personality traits.

*Socio-demographic variables as independent variables.* The first part of the questionnaire comprised questions concerning the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The pool of questions was derived from the literature on SEI, hence the following variables were examined: gender, age, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneur in the family. These variables are included in the research model as dummy variables.

*Big Five personality traits as independent variables.* The questionnaire for personality traits assessment is adopted from John and Srivastava (1999). The Big Five Inventory (BFI)-44 is used as a self-report measurement for five personality types: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Participants are asked to rate how well statements describe one's personality. The respondents were ranging their attitudes on the 5-point Likert scale from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree. BFI used in this research consists of 38 items, while 6 items were excluded to increase the reliability of the measurement scale.

*Dependent variable.* Having in mind that this paper aims to estimate the influence of personality traits on SEI, the dependent variable in this research model is SEI. Therefore, the two-item scale of Hockerts (2017) is used in this study, while one item was excluded due to low reliability. As in previous, the same 5-point Likert scale was applied. Cronbach alpha coefficients are given in the parentheses of the Table 2.

### *Method of analysis*

Except for analysing socio-demographic data, descriptive statistics is applied for assessing minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of the researched variables. Bivariate correlation analysis (two-tailed) is used for analysing the relationship between Big Five personality traits and SEI of respondents. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to test the influence of socio-demographic characteristics and Big Five personality traits (independent variables) on SEI (dependent variable) perceived during the Covid-19 pandemic. The significance level for all data was  $p < 0.05$ .

## *RESULTS*

The following table (Table 2) presents descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients and reliabilities of the researched variables (Cronbach alpha) that are given in the parentheses. The reliability of the studied data is assessed by using the Cronbach alpha coefficient whose values were around the acceptable threshold (George & Mallery, 2003) and presented in the parentheses of Table 2.



Table 2. Mean, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, and correlations between researched variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	E	A	C	N	O	SEI
1. E	3.578	.766	1.286	5.000	(.788)					
2. A	3.909	.578	2.750	5.000	.039	(.679)				
3. C	4.091	.627	2.000	5.000	.162**	.383**	(.758)			
4. N	2.825	.663	1.125	5.000	-.515**	-.280**	-.068	(.712)		
5. O	3.786	.599	2.571	5.000	.470**	.091	.350**	-.309**	(.687)	
6. SEI	2.729	.993	1.000	5.000	.084	-.124*	.117*	.179**	.129*	(.631)

Note: E – Extroversion; A – Agreeableness; C – Conscientiousness; N – Neuroticism; O – Openness; SEI – Social Entrepreneurial Intentions; \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);

Reliabilities are given in parentheses.

Source: Authors' calculation

SEI is positively but not significantly correlated with extroversion ( $r = .084$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Negative and statistically significant correlation is identified between SEI and agreeableness ( $r = -.124$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while positive and statistically significant correlation exists between SEI, on the one side, and conscientiousness ( $r = .117$ ,  $p < .05$ ), neuroticism ( $r = .179$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and openness ( $r = .129$ ,  $p < .05$ ), on the other. The five personality traits are in some cases significantly correlated with each other and with SEI, and therefore the problem of multicollinearity will be investigated.

To test the linear relationship between predictors' variables and dependent variable, the multiple linear regression analysis is applied. Following the aim of the research model and the paper, the influence of previously defined sets of independent variables on the SEI was assessed and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of multiple regression analysis

Independent variables	Dependent variable: SEI
<i>Socio-demographic variables</i>	
Gender (0 = male; 1 = female)	-.259*
Age (0 = 18-24; 1 = $\geq 25$ )	-.373**
Entrepreneurship education (0 = yes; 1 = no)	-.115
Entrepreneur in the family (0 = yes; 1 = no)	-.296**
<i>Big Five personality traits as variables</i>	
Extroversion	.231**
Agreeableness	-.194
Conscientiousness	.313**
Neuroticism	.436***
Openness	.142
$R^2$	.155
Adjusted $R^2$	.133
F	6.951***

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' calculation

Table 3 presents the obtained data through analysis and given significance of the model. The assessment of the influence of the independent variables on the SEI indicates that the model is statistically significant ( $F = 6.951$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = .155$ ,  $p < .000$ ) shows that 15.5% of SEI variability as a dependent variable is explained by the variation of independent variables. It should be emphasized that nor autocorrelation nor multicollinearity among researched variables was identified. The results point out that after taking into consideration the socio-demographic variables (gender, age, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneur in the family) and Big Five personality traits in the model, several variables appeared as significant predictors of SEI.

Specifically, Table 3 shows that respondents' gender ( $\beta = -.259$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), age ( $\beta = -.373$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the presence of entrepreneurship behaviour among close family members ( $\beta = -.296$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) have significant influence on SEI meaning that males, students between 18 and 24 years, and those who have entrepreneur in the family will have greater intention to be social entrepreneurs. Additionally, respondents' entrepreneurship education ( $\beta = -.115$ ,  $p > .05$ ) has also influence on presence of SEI but not statistically significant.

Three out of five personality traits from the Big Five pull emerged as significant determinants of the SEI. Precisely, the results lead to the conclusion that student's SEI is significantly and positively influenced by respondents' personal trait extroversion ( $\beta = .231$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), conscientiousness ( $\beta = .313$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and neuroticism ( $\beta = .436$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The level of respondents' agreeableness has negative SEI ( $\beta = -.194$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and openness has positive ( $\beta = .142$ ,  $p > .05$ ) but not significant effect on the dependent variable.

### *DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS*

The basic characteristics of a social entrepreneur can be seen through their demographic characteristics (gender, age), entrepreneurial orientation and skills and knowledge he or she possesses. The authors' research indicates that if students of economics are male, they will have greater intention to be social entrepreneurs than female students. Regarding demographic characteristics, previous research of Hoogendoorn, Van der Zwan, and Thurik (2011) shows that age and gender have a certain influence on the decision to start a social business and perseverance in its development. In addition, most previous researches have proven that women are more inclined to start entrepreneurial ventures with a social mission (Leahy & Villeneuve-Smith, 2009). Such results suggest that the primary goal of companies founded by men is economic benefit, while women pay more attention to the goals of social value, and the situation is the same in the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, the study re-

sults imply that for students aged between 18 and 24, the probability to have SEI is higher than for older students. Similarly, Hoogendoorn et al. (2011) confirmed the U-shape hypothesis that young and old persons are more prone to start a social venture. The research indicates that following an example of an entrepreneur among close family members such as mother, father, brother, sister or grandparents will have a positive impact on their intention to be a social entrepreneur. Similar conclusions were made in the previous researches (Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017).

A strong influence was found for three personality traits: extroversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism. The effect of extroversion and conscientiousness on students' SEI is positive and thus hypotheses H1 and H3 are confirmed. On the other hand, hypotheses H2, H4 and H5 implying that agreeableness and openness have positive and neuroticism has negative and statistically significant influence on SEI were rejected, respectively.

The findings of the research area are in the line with past studies in which extrovert persons (İrengün & Arikboğa, 2015; Bernardino et al., 2018) and conscientious individuals' characteristics (Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010) appeared as strong predictors of SEI. Oppositely to study results, neuroticism as a personal trait in most studies is a positive predictor of SEI (İrengün & Arikboğa, 2015; Awwad & Al-Aseer, 2021). Oppositely, neuroticism was found to have the strongest positive influence on SEI while literature asserts that a low level of neuroticism and/or high level of a person's emotional stability will positively determine their SEI (Bernardino et al., 2018). In any case, this result is not an exception and there are a few supporting results in the literature that a higher level of person's neuroticism contributes to its intention to be a social entrepreneur and to provide resources for that purpose (İrengün & Arikboğa, 2015).

Our findings indicate that SEI is positively influenced by higher levels of students' extroversion as a personality trait, meaning that entrepreneur needs to be ambitious, sociable, ready to take the leading role, friendly, open for a new acquaintance, etc. Secondly, the SEI of the respondents in this study are influenced by persons' conscientiousness suggesting that people who are responsible, industrious, striving to succeed, and with similar characteristics are more likely to manifest SEI. Lastly, if a person manifests emotional instability meaning that they are not peaceful, self-assured or relaxed, this personal trait will lead him or her to become a social entrepreneur. Although extroversion and conscientiousness emerged as influential traits of a social entrepreneur in previous studies, a high level of neuroticism is not one of the common traits for such a person. This phenomenon can be attributed to the context of the research. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the business environment and lives of all inhabitants, created new "normal" living conditions and put millions of lives in imbalance. All people, including students, lost their tranquility,

were put in emotional distress and their resilience was challenged. Moreover, during the major part of 2020 and the first half of 2021, schooling took place in a different environment and because of that, it is not surprising that students' emotional instability showed as the factor that will bring to fore students to establish its social enterprise. In that way, while striving to profit, they will try to resolve some social problems in the community.

The study of personality traits and SEI have both theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, the research results contribute significantly to the contemporary literature on SEI. Secondly, the results shed the light on the new personal trait (namely, neuroticism) that turned out to be significant factors of SEI. Hence, the current study points researchers toward further scientific exploration of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on personal traits and the SEI. Thirdly, the present study broadens the research field from entrepreneurial intentions that are well investigated in the Republic of Serbia (Rajković, Nikolić, Čočalo, Stojanović, & Kovačić, 2020; Djordjevic, Cockalo, Bogetic, & Bakator, 2021) to their category with a social dimension.

The practical implications of the research are focused on career counselling and entrepreneurship education of students. According to students' traits, gender, age and positive examples of entrepreneurial success in the family, career counselling practices could be developed to encourage a person to direct its efforts towards the establishment of a company with a social dimension (Zhao et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial traits are not the most important factor of a future entrepreneur. Zhao et al. (2009) point out that personal characteristics are only a small part of entrepreneurship success and that competencies acquired through education are more important. By accessing students' traits and socio-demographic characteristics, educational institutions could direct students toward learning courses designed for entrepreneurship education. Şahin, Karadağ, and Tuncer (2019) indicate that not only formal educational activities such as lectures and presentations should be used, but also practical exercises in real work situations through an internship.

### *CONCLUSION*

Social entrepreneurship was highlighted as one of the solutions for economic, health and social crises that aroused with the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, after the beginning of the pandemic, the only market-oriented companies recognised the contemporary social issues and shifted their activities to those that contribute by producing public goods. Likewise, in such an emergency prolonged to more than a year, social enterprises were entities that could reconcile the requirements of stakeholders.

Having in mind the importance of social enterprises, and that previous research have presented that entrepreneurial behaviour is mostly driven by entrepreneurial intentions, it is of importance to identify factors influencing SEI. Therefore, this paper aimed to assess the influence of students' personality traits on their preference for social entrepreneurship (SEI) in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants of the study were students of economics at the University of Niš because it was assumed that they will acquire basic knowledge on social entrepreneurship and develop SEI. When it comes to personality traits, the Big Five model of personality traits were adopted, thus investigating the effect of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness on SEI. Lastly, socio-demographic variables were also entered into the model.

Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that male, younger students, and students with the entrepreneur in the close family will probably have well represented SEI. It was hypothesized that except neuroticism which has negative, all other four personality traits have a positive influence on SEI. However, extroversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism have stood out as significant and positive predictors of SEI. Openness and agreeableness did not load significantly in the research model. Generally, all obtained data was in the line with the literature except for the effect of neuroticism. This result could be explained by the effect of the pandemic that has caused many changes in the behaviour of individuals and therefore emotional instability and opportunistic behaviour could significantly propel a person to the solution of the problems such as social issues.

This paper makes contributions to the theory and practice by making suggestions on how to direct career management and education according to the personal character of a student to develop the future competent social entrepreneur or potentially how to take into account personal traits when approving funds for social entrepreneurship ventures. Nonetheless, the study has its shortcomings. Firstly, it is focused only on students with one major. Secondly, it is advisable to assess personality traits and SEI after the end of the pandemic and to compare results. Lastly, the research model could include additional variables in analysis such as ascendants of SEI according to Hockert's (2017) model. Therefore, these shortcomings should encourage researchers to expand the boundaries of ongoing research.

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## УТИЦАЈ ОСОБИНА ЛИЧНОСТИ НА СОЦИЈАЛНЕ ПРЕДУЗЕТНИЧКЕ НАМЕРЕ СТУДЕНАТА У УСЛОВИМА ПАНДЕМИЈЕ КОВИД-19

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### Резиме

Социјални предузетници имају важну улогу у друштву, имајући у виду да се укључују у решавање социјалних проблема и проблема животне средине. Циљ социјалних предузећа је пронаћи начине за решавање социјалних проблема – ублажавање проблема социјалне искључености и сиромаштва, на економски одржив начин. Специфичност ових предузећа лежи у чињеници да је њихова мисија базирана на социјалној и еколошкој димензији, али уз остваривање финансијских циљева. Имајући у виду њихову улогу и циљеве, оваква предузећа су посебно важна у условима криза као што је пандемија Ковид-19 јер доприносе економском опоравку и решавању социјалних проблема.

Претходна истраживања показују да на намеру индивидуе да оснује социјално предузеће могу утицати социо-демографски фактори као што су пол, године старости, образовање, узор у породици, али и особине личности. Особинама личности бавио се велики број аутора и настало је више модела. Један од најцитиранијих који је прихваћен у литератури и у овом раду је модел Великих пет (енгл. Big five model). Реч је о Великих пет особина личности - екстрвертност, пријатност, савесност, неуротичност и отвореност. Екстрвертност карактерише проактивне, асертивне и друштвене људе, док се пријатност односи на људе који имају изражене комуникационе вештине, брину о другима и стварају односе поверења. Савесност је карактеристична за појединце који су одговорни, посвећени радном задатку, упорни и поштују правила и прописе. Неуротичност подразумева емоционалну нестабилност, импулсивно понашање и недостатак самоконтроле, што указује на негативан утицај ове особине личности на социјалне предузетничке намере. На крају, отвореност се односи на спремност прихватања иновативних идеја и нових пословних модела који укључују и социјалне иновације.

У раду је испитан утицај социо-демографских карактеристика и Великих пет особина личности на социјалне предузетничке намере, на примеру 350 студената економије Универзитета у Нишу током пандемије Ковид-19. Статистичком анали-



зом се долази до следећих закључака: 1) студенти припадници мушког пола, старости 18-24 године и студенти који у својој ближој породици имају предузетнике вероватно ће имати израженије социјалне предузетничке намере; 2) екстровертност, савесност и неуротичност имају статистички значајан позитиван утицај на социјалне предузетничке намере студената; 3) пријатност и отвореност немају значајан утицај на социјалне предузетничке намере студената који су обухваћени узорком. Овакви резултати истраживања усклађени су са постојећим студијама овог утицаја, осим ефеката које има неуротичност (емоционална нестабилност) као лична особина на социјалне предузетничке намере. Овај резултат може бити последица услова у којима је спроведена анкета, посебно имајући у виду минимум контаката студената са својим колегама и професорима у условима пандемије Ковид-19 и емоционалну нестабилност изазвану истом.