

## Practices of Entrepreneurial Orientation Among Students in Universities: The Role of the New Entrepreneurs Program

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### Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as a vital tool for equipping students with the skills to create ventures that deliver both economic and social value. This study aims to examine how the New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP), grounded in Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET), influences the Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) of university students in Taiwan. A qualitative multiple-case study was conducted using in-depth interviews with students from Chang Jung Christian University and the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology who participated in the NEP. The findings reveal that NEP participation enhances key EO dimensions— innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—through academic learning, mentorship, experiential activities, and an emphasis on social value creation. SET helps explain how students develop the capacity to align entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with social mission orientation, leading to ventures that are both economically viable and socially responsible. The study suggests that universities and policymakers should expand programs like the NEP to foster socially aware entrepreneurial capabilities, while future research could investigate the long-term effects of such initiatives across diverse cultural and educational contexts.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO); New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP); Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET); Entrepreneurial Skills; Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship*

### **Abstrak**

*Pendidikan keusahawanan kini semakin diiktiraf sebagai alat penting dalam membekalkan pelajar dengan kemahiran untuk membangunkan perusahaan yang memberi nilai ekonomi dan sosial. Kajian ini bertujuan meneliti bagaimana New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP), yang berasaskan Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET), mempengaruhi Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) dalam kalangan pelajar universiti di Taiwan. Kajian kualitatif pelbagai kes telah dijalankan melalui temu bual mendalam dengan pelajar dari Chang Jung Christian University dan National Pingtung University of Science and Technology yang menyertai NEP.*

*Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penyertaan dalam NEP meningkatkan dimensi utama EO, iaitu inovatif, proaktif, dan keberanian mengambil risiko, melalui pembelajaran akademik, bimbingan, aktiviti berasaskan pengalaman, serta penekanan terhadap penciptaan nilai sosial. SET membantu menjelaskan bagaimana pelajar membina keupayaan untuk menyelaraskan pengenalpastian peluang keusahawanan dengan orientasi misi sosial, sekali gus mewujudkan perusahaan yang berdaya ekonomi dan bertanggungjawab sosial.*

*Ajian ini mencadangkan agar universiti dan pembuat dasar memperluas pelaksanaan program seperti NEP bagi memupuk keupayaan keusahawanan yang peka terhadap isu sosial. Penyelidikan masa hadapan disarankan untuk meneliti kesan jangka panjang inisiatif sebegini dalam konteks budaya dan sistem pendidikan yang pelbaga*

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is a central construct in entrepreneurship research, representing a strategic posture characterized by innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Covin & Wales, 2019; Miller, 2011; Miller & Friesen, 1982; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022). EO enables individuals and organizations to identify opportunities, navigate uncertainties, and implement innovative initiatives, thereby enhancing

entrepreneurial outcomes (Al-Mamary et al., 2020; Linton, 2019). Despite its importance, many university students perceive themselves primarily as job seekers rather than prospective entrepreneurs (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; Wilson et al., 2007; De

Carolis & Litzky, 2019), highlighting the need for educational programs that cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets, develop essential skills, and enable students to contribute meaningfully to both economic

and social development (Bae et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2013; Bonfanti et al., 2024).

To address this educational gap, the New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP), initiated by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, was initially implemented for the children of Grameen Bank borrowers in Bangladesh (Khashru, 2016; Khashru, 2021). NEP represents a structured, socially driven business initiative that integrates practical entrepreneurship education with social value creation (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2025; Khashru & Lin, 2019). The program combines mentorship, experiential learning, and financial support to strengthen EO while promoting socially responsible practices. In its original context, participants were encouraged to establish ventures that were economically sustainable and socially beneficial, demonstrating a practical application of social business principles (Khashru, 2016; Ahmed et al., 2021; Yunus, 2017; Santos, 2012; Do Adro et al., 2021; Khashru & Han, 2023).

In this study, the NEP model is examined within a university context, specifically at Chang Jung Christian University (CJCU) and the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST) in Taiwan. By applying NEP principles—mentorship, experiential learning, and financial

facilitation—this research investigates how the program fosters EO, skill development, and career aspirations among university students, thereby adapting a social business-oriented entrepreneurship model to a new population (Khashru, 2016; Khashru & Lin, 2019; Do Adro et al., 2021).

Guided by Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET) (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Santos, 2012), the study examines how NEP encourages students to align entrepreneurial activities with social impact. SET provides a theoretical lens for understanding entrepreneurship that explicitly integrates social objectives with economic value creation, making it particularly relevant for programs like NEP that are structured around social business principles (Mair & Martí, 2006; Santos, 2012; Yunus, 2010; Khashru, 2016). The conceptual framework links the program's core components to the development of EO dimensions innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking while fostering socially responsible practices (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Santos, 2012; Do Adro et al., 2021).

To address the research question—How does participation in the New Entrepreneurs Program influence university students' entrepreneurial orientation, skill development, and career aspirations while fostering socially responsible

entrepreneurship? qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with NEP participants and program mentors, providing rich insights into entrepreneurial skill development and socially responsible business practices (Austin & Sutton, 2014; Gale et al., 2013; Hamed, 2021; McMullin, 2023; Yin, 2018; Khashru et al., 2025).

This study is novel in applying NEP, initially designed for the children of Grameen Bank borrowers, to a university setting (Khashru, 2021; Khashru & Han, 2023). By integrating SET with qualitative insights, the research provides a unique understanding of how socially driven entrepreneurship programs can simultaneously foster EO, skill development, and career aspirations. Consequently, the study contributes both theoretically and practically by demonstrating how social business principles can be operationalized within higher education to generate economic and social value (Santos, 2012; Yunus, 2010; Bonfanti et al., 2024; Khashru et al., 2025; Yunus, 2017; Khashru & Lin, 2019; Bahaw et al., 2024).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature and presents the conceptual framework; Section 3 outlines the methodology; Section 4 reports the findings; Section 5 discusses

the implications; and Section 6 concludes the study.

## Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is a foundational concept in entrepreneurship research, encompassing innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Covin & Wales, 2019; Miller, 2011; Shuangfa et al., 2023; Naeimah et al., 2024). These dimensions enable individuals to identify opportunities, navigate uncertainties, and pursue innovative ideas, thereby contributing to entrepreneurial success (Mitchell et al., 2002; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Schlichte & Junge, 2024). Despite its importance, many university students primarily see themselves as job seekers rather than job creators, highlighting the need for educational interventions that cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets and enhance relevant competencies (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; De Carolis & Litzky, 2019; Zmiyak et al., 2020; Bahaw et al., 2024; Bonfanti et al., 2024).

The New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP), developed under the guidance of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, represents an innovative social business initiative addressing this gap. Unlike conventional entrepreneurship programs, NEP explicitly integrates social

business principles with practical entrepreneurship education to foster EO among students (Yunus, 2010; Khashru, 2016; Khashru & Lin, 2019; Do Adro et al., 2021). It combines mentorship, experiential learning, workshops, and financial support, enabling participants—often the second generation of Grameen Bank borrowers—to launch ventures that balance economic sustainability with social impact (Ahmed et al., 2021; Yunus, 2017; Santos, 2012; Shuangfa et al., 2023; Khashru & Han, 2023). By embedding EO traits such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking into socially responsible practices, NEP equips students to develop ventures that generate both financial and social value.

Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET) provides a theoretical lens for understanding how NEP aligns economic and social objectives (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019). SET emphasizes that entrepreneurial activity can simultaneously create economic value and address societal challenges. NEP operationalizes these principles by enabling students to apply EO traits in ventures that deliver measurable social impact alongside financial outcomes (Santos, 2012; Do Adro et al., 2021; D'Souza et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

Empirical studies indicate that entrepreneurship education enhances EO

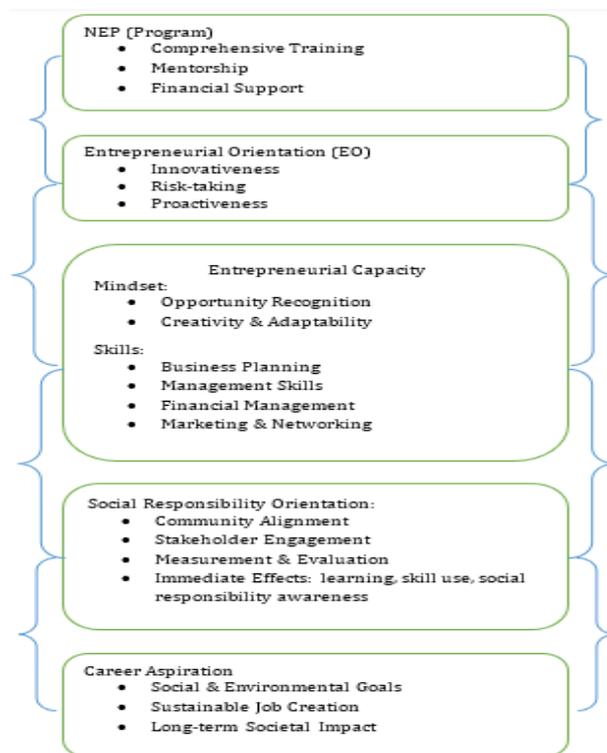
through experiential learning, mentorship, and engagement with real-world problems (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Cho & Lee, 2018; Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022; Bahaw et al., 2024). Programs like NEP extend this impact by embedding SET principles into practical contexts, equipping students to design ventures that address both economic and social needs (El Ebrashi, 2013; Bonfanti et al., 2024). Participation in NEP fosters EO traits that translate into entrepreneurial capacity encompassing both mindset—opportunity recognition, creativity, adaptability and practical business skills, including planning, management, financial oversight, marketing, and networking (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; El Ebrashi, 2013; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

This enhanced capacity enables students to engage in socially responsible ventures aligned with community needs and stakeholder expectations (Mair & Martí, 2006; Slaper & Hall, 2011; Pless, 2012). These processes also shape career aspirations, motivating students to pursue ventures that generate economic, social, and environmental value (Yunus et al., 2010; Khashru & Han, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2021).

Building on these insights, this study develops a conceptual framework (Figure 1) integrating NEP activities, EO dimensions, entrepreneurial capacity, social responsibility orientation, and career

aspirations, guided by SET. The framework provides a theoretical and practical lens for assessing how NEP participation fosters sustainable and socially responsible entrepreneurship, offering implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners (Santos, 2012; Yunus, 2017; Bonfanti et al., 2024; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

**Figure 1.** Proposed Conceptual Framework



*This proposed framework illustrates how the New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP)—through training, mentorship, and financial support—shapes students’ Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) traits (innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking) within the Social Entrepreneurship*

*Theory (SET) perspective (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; El Ebrashi, 2013).*

### New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP)

The NEP is central to this study, providing university students with structured opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills while addressing social and environmental challenges (Khashru et al., 2023; De Carolis & Litzky, 2019; Anderson et al., 2014). Guided by SET, NEP strengthens EO through comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support (El Ebrashi, 2013; Santos, 2012; Yunus, 2010). Together, these components foster innovativeness, proactiveness, and strategic risk-taking while embedding social responsibility in students’ entrepreneurial practice (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022).

Despite its recognized value, limited research has explored how NEP operationalizes SET principles and the long-term effects of participation on students’ EO, skill acquisition, career aspirations, and socially responsible behaviors (Khashru et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2021; Shahzada et al., 2023; Bonfanti et al., 2024; Khashru & Han, 2023). This study addresses this gap by examining how NEP participation influences students’ entrepreneurial mindset, capabilities, and socially responsible practices, thereby assessing its effectiveness

in promoting sustainable and impactful entrepreneurship.

### ***Comprehensive Training***

Training forms the foundation of NEP, enhancing EO by fostering opportunity recognition, creativity, adaptability, and risk management (Santos, 2012; Asare-Kyire et al., 2023; Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In line with SET, training emphasizes the integration of social value creation into entrepreneurial ventures (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010).

Experiential and problem-based learning approaches encourage students to translate EO traits into practice while maintaining social responsibility and sustainability as guiding principles (Martin et al., 2013; De Carolis & Litzky, 2019; Chenavaz et al., 2023). Through mentoring, simulations, and collaborative projects, NEP develops both the cognitive and affective dimensions of entrepreneurial learning, enabling students to navigate uncertainty and implement innovative solutions (Mitchell et al., 2002; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Gumel, 2018).

While training clearly supports EO and social impact orientation, little research has assessed its enduring influence on students' careers, venture creation, and sustained socially responsible behavior (Bae et al., 2014; Oosterbeek et al., 2010;

Shahzada et al., 2023). This study contributes by examining how NEP training shapes long-term entrepreneurial capacity and the ability to translate learned skills into student-led ventures that address societal challenges (Khashru, 2016; Khashru & Lin, 2019; D'Souza et al., 2022).

### ***Mentorship***

Mentorship provides essential guidance for applying SET principles in practice (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010). Within NEP, mentors—often experienced practitioners or alums—help students assess the social and environmental implications of business decisions. This guidance ensures ventures remain innovative, proactive, and socially responsible (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Covin & Wales, 2019).

Mentorship reinforces EO dimensions while promoting a responsibility orientation (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2021). It also develops skills in management, networking, and stakeholder engagement (Jeffery, 2009; D'Souza et al., 2022). By complementing experiential learning, mentorship supports the practical application of NEP training in real-world contexts (Shane, 2000; Martin et al., 2013).

Although mentorship has clear short-term benefits, its long-term role in shaping sustained entrepreneurial behaviors and

socially impactful ventures is underexplored (Carolis & Litzky, 2019; Oosterbeek et al., 2010). This study extends prior research by analyzing how mentor–student interactions contribute to enduring EO development and career aspirations among students engaged in socially responsible entrepreneurship.

### ***Financial Support***

Financial support enables students to transform entrepreneurial learning into actionable ventures that integrate profitability with social impact. Grounded in SET (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010), funding encourages innovation, opportunity pursuit, and strategic risk-taking, reinforcing EO development (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Khashru et al., 2025).

By providing seed resources and sustainable financing mechanisms, NEP equips students to experiment with ideas, develop viable business models, and create measurable social outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

Although recognized as essential, few studies have examined the long-term influence of financial support on students' EO, skill application, and socially responsible career trajectories (Shinnar et al., 2018; Oosterbeek et al., 2010). This study investigates how NEP's financial mechanisms contribute to entrepreneurial resilience and the capacity to maintain social

commitments while pursuing sustainable ventures.

### **Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)**

#### **Dimensions**

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is a foundational concept in entrepreneurship research, representing university students' strategic posture toward entrepreneurial behavior through the dimensions of innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Covin & Wales, 2019; Miller, 2011; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022). Within the framework of SET, EO emphasizes the pursuit of ventures that generate both social and economic value, highlighting the importance of aligning entrepreneurial behavior with societal needs (Ebrashi, 2013). Aligned with SET, EO enables students to identify opportunities, navigate uncertainty, and engage in ventures that address social challenges while ensuring sustainable economic returns (Mitchell et al., 2002; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Schlichte & Junge, 2024).

Despite its recognized importance, many university students continue to perceive themselves primarily as job seekers rather than job creators, underscoring the need for educational interventions that cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets, competencies, and a commitment to social

impact (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003; De Carolis & Litzky, 2019; Zmiyak et al., 2020; Bahaw et al., 2024; Bonfanti et al., 2024).

The NEP serves as a structured mechanism to operationalize SET principles by fostering EO among university students. Through comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support, NEP enables students to translate entrepreneurial orientation into socially responsible ventures, embedding social value creation into their entrepreneurial behaviors across all EO dimensions. By providing experiential opportunities, NEP cultivates students' capacity to pursue ventures that create measurable social impact alongside economic outcomes, highlighting the program's dual objective of education and societal contribution.

### ***Innovativeness***

Within the EO framework, innovativeness reflects students' tendency to pursue novel ideas, creative solutions, and unconventional approaches (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Covin & Wales, 2019). From a SET perspective, innovativeness enables students to design solutions that simultaneously address social challenges and generate sustainable economic outcomes (Ebrashi, 2013). NEP enhances this EO dimension through training that emphasizes opportunity recognition,

creative problem-solving, and design thinking in social business contexts (Santos, 2012; Asare-Kyire et al., 2023; Al-Mamary & Al-Shallaqi, 2022). Experiential learning, case studies, and collaborative ventures enable students to develop solutions that generate both social impact and economic value (Martin et al., 2013; Chenavaz et al., 2023). Mentorship supports students in prototyping ideas, testing assumptions, and iterating solutions, embedding social responsibility into their innovative practices (Mitchell et al., 2002; Gumel, 2018). This study examines how NEP fosters sustained innovative capacity, illustrating the long-term impact of this EO dimension on socially responsible ventures (Khashru, 2016; Khashru & Lin, 2019; D'Souza et al., 2022).

### ***Risk-taking***

Risk-taking, as a core EO dimension, represents students' willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities under uncertainty, balancing potential rewards and challenges (Miller, 2011; Covin & Wales, 2019). Within SET, risk-taking is essential for launching ventures that pursue social impact alongside economic objectives, encouraging students to experiment with solutions that address societal challenges despite inherent uncertainties (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010). NEP cultivates this EO trait by providing opportunities for practical venture

development, resource allocation, and problem-solving in uncertain environments. Workshops, simulations, and mentorship enable students to assess, manage, and mitigate risks while integrating social responsibility into their decisions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). By combining economic and social objectives, NEP encourages students to take calculated risks that maximize societal impact (Santos, 2012; D'Souza et al., 2022). This study investigates how NEP shapes enduring risk-taking behaviors, demonstrating the importance of this EO dimension for socially responsible entrepreneurship.

### ***Proactiveness***

Proactiveness constitutes a key EO dimension, capturing students' ability to anticipate opportunities, act ahead of peers, and initiate ventures that influence markets or social outcomes (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Covin & Wales, 2019). Within the context of SET, proactiveness enables students to identify socially relevant opportunities and take early initiative to create ventures that deliver societal benefits while achieving economic sustainability (Ebrashi, 2013). NEP fosters this EO dimension by motivating students to identify unmet social needs, design appropriate solutions, and act decisively in venture creation (Yunus, 2017; Khashru & Lin, 2019). Mentorship, field projects, and collaborative learning cultivate

anticipatory skills, enabling students to implement socially responsible ideas effectively in uncertain environments (Do Adro et al., 2021; D'Souza et al., 2022). This study evaluates how NEP nurtures long-term proactive tendencies, highlighting the significance of this EO dimension in guiding students toward socially responsible entrepreneurial ventures.

### **Entrepreneurial Capacity**

Entrepreneurial capacity encompasses the mindset and skills required to identify opportunities, innovate, take calculated risks, and manage ventures effectively (Mitchell et al., 2002; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). For university students, building this capacity is essential for translating EO traits into actionable ventures that also address social and environmental challenges (Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022; Shuangfa et al., 2023; Naeimah et al., 2024).

The NEP cultivates entrepreneurial capacity through structured interventions—comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support—that foster both entrepreneurial mindset traits and essential skills in line with SET (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010, 2017). Experiential and problem-based learning embedded in NEP enables students to integrate social value creation into their ventures while reinforcing

EO traits (Santos, 2012; Asare-Kyire et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2021).

Although the importance of NEP is well recognized, little empirical research examines its long-term impact on integrating EO dimensions with socially responsible practices (Shinnar et al., 2018; Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Bae et al., 2014). This study investigates how NEP participation strengthens students' entrepreneurial mindset, skill acquisition, and sustained socially responsible behaviors, offering evidence of its effectiveness in fostering socially impactful entrepreneurship (Khashru et al., 2023; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

### **Entrepreneurial Mindset**

The entrepreneurial mindset encompasses traits such as opportunity recognition, creativity, adaptability, and strategic risk-taking (Kuratko, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2002; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Gumel, 2018). It aligns closely with EO—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Covin & Wales, 2019; Shuangfa et al., 2023)—and with SET, which promotes ventures achieving both economic and social goals (Ebrashi, 2013; Santos, 2012; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus, 2017).

NEP nurtures this mindset through experiential learning, mentorship, and

entrepreneurial exercises, including ideation workshops, pilot ventures, and community projects. These interventions prepare students to navigate uncertainty and translate opportunities into ventures addressing societal and environmental challenges (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru & Han, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2013; De Carolis & Litzky, 2019). This study examines how NEP fosters enduring entrepreneurial mindset traits, linking EO with socially responsible entrepreneurship and providing evidence on long-term skill retention and career development (Khashru et al., 2023; Shahzada et al., 2023; Bae et al., 2014; Yi & Duval-Couetil, 2021).

### ***Opportunity Recognition***

Opportunity recognition, the ability to identify and leverage potential business opportunities—is a core dimension of EO (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) and a key aspect of the entrepreneurial mindset. Consistent with SET, it enables students to develop ventures that create both economic and social value (Ardichvili et al., 2003).

Within NEP, opportunity recognition is developed through targeted training, guided exercises, and real-world problem-solving activities that help students align opportunities with social needs and market demands (Khashru & Han, 2023; Khashru et al., 2025). Despite its recognized

importance, limited evidence exists on the long-term effects of entrepreneurship education interventions on opportunity recognition (Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Bae et al., 2014). This study examines how participation in NEP enhances students' ability to identify, evaluate, and act on opportunities, thereby advancing socially responsible entrepreneurship.

### ***Creativity and Adaptability***

Creativity and adaptability are essential for entrepreneurial success, enabling students to generate innovative solutions and adjust strategies in dynamic environments. Creativity supports the generation of novel ideas, while adaptability ensures resilience to evolving social and market conditions (Kuratko, 2007; Schlichte & Junge, 2024). From an SET perspective, these traits are critical for ventures that pursue both economic viability and social impact (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2017).

NEP cultivates creativity and adaptability through problem-based learning, scenario analysis, and experiential exercises that encourage flexible thinking and problem-solving (Khashru, 2021; Khashru & Han, 2023). These interventions help students translate EO traits into practical action, designing ventures that respond effectively to uncertainty while prioritizing social responsibility. However, research on the

long-term effects of such interventions remains limited (Oosterbeek et al., 2010; Shahzada et al., 2023). This study investigates how NEP fosters enduring creative and adaptive behaviors that reinforce EO and support socially impactful entrepreneurship.

### **Skills**

Skills constitute a critical dimension of entrepreneurial capacity, encompassing competencies such as business planning, management, financial management, marketing, and networking (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Kotler et al., 2016). These skills provide the operational foundation for translating EO traits into viable ventures that balance economic sustainability with social responsibility (Mair & Martí, 2006).

The NEP fosters these skills through structured training modules, one-on-one mentorship, and experiential learning exercises that integrate SET principles (Khashru, 2021; Yunus, 2017). By emphasizing both technical and soft skills, the program prepares students to manage uncertainty, mobilize resources, and build networks that support financial success and social impact. Research examining the long-term role of NEP-driven skill development in sustaining ventures and reinforcing social outcomes remains limited (Oosterbeek et al.,

2010; Shahzada et al., 2023). This study examines how participation in NEP enhances students' entrepreneurial competencies and their application in socially responsible ventures.

### ***Business Planning***

Business planning equips students to design structured, actionable, and socially responsible ventures, aligning EO dimensions with SET principles (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Khashru, 2016; Khashru, 2017). The NEP enhances business planning skills through targeted training, mentorship, and practical exercises that emphasize the integration of social and economic objectives (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru et al., 2025).

This approach enables students to translate EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and strategic risk-taking—into actionable plans that achieve both economic viability and social impact (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2021; D'Souza et al., 2022). NEP training further supports implementation in real-world contexts, fostering ventures with measurable social outcomes. Research on the long-term effectiveness of NEP-specific business planning interventions is limited; this study explores how participation develops students' capacity to formulate, execute, and

sustain effective business strategies (Khashru, 2021; Yunus, 2017).

### ***Management Skills***

Management skills are vital for coordinating resources, leading teams, and implementing strategic plans, closely linked to EO dimensions such as proactiveness, innovativeness, and strategic risk-taking (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Zahra et al., 2009; Khashru et al., 2025). NEP develops these skills through mentorship, experiential exercises, and team-based projects, enabling students to manage socially oriented ventures effectively and address both economic and social objectives in line with SET (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2017).

Empirical evidence on the long-term development of management skills through NEP remains scarce. This study examines how NEP participation contributes to enduring management capabilities that enhance entrepreneurial success and socially responsible practices.

### ***Financial Management***

Financial management is a critical entrepreneurial skill that supports key EO dimensions, particularly risk-taking and proactiveness, by enabling students to make informed decisions under uncertainty (Mitchell et al., 2002; Miller & Friesen, 1982). Within the SET framework, financial

competencies are crucial for striking a balance between economic sustainability and social impact, ensuring that ventures are both viable and socially responsible (Ebrashi, 2013). The NEP equips students with these competencies through targeted training, mentorship, and practical guidance, emphasizing the integration of profitability with social objectives (Khashru & Han, 2023; Khashru et al., 2025). This training enables students to allocate resources effectively, forecast outcomes, and manage budgets to support ventures addressing societal needs. Despite its importance, long-term evidence on NEP-specific financial management training remains limited (Al-Mamary et al., 2020; Bae et al., 2014). This study examines how participation in NEP enhances financial skills and contributes to ventures achieving both economic and social outcomes.

### ***Marketing and Networking***

Marketing and networking are essential entrepreneurial skills that underpin EO dimensions such as innovativeness and proactiveness, allowing students to identify opportunities, engage stakeholders, and expand venture reach (Kotler et al., 2016; Khashru et al., 2023). Within SET, these skills facilitate the creation of ventures that generate social value while maintaining economic sustainability (Ebrashi, 2013). NEP develops marketing and networking

competencies through experiential exercises, mentorship, and scenario-based learning, emphasizing strategies that balance economic objectives with social impact (Khashru, 2021). Students acquire the ability to design effective marketing campaigns, establish strategic partnerships, and build networks that enhance both venture viability and social relevance. Although research on the long-term outcomes of NEP marketing and networking training is limited (Al-Mamary et al., 2020; Bae et al., 2014), this study investigates how NEP participation strengthens these skills, supporting the development of ventures that achieve both economic success and measurable social impact.

### **Social Responsibility Orientation**

Social responsibility orientation encompasses social mission alignment, stakeholder engagement, measurement and evaluation, and proximal outcomes (immediate effects), ensuring that ventures pursue societal goals while maintaining economic viability (Ebrashi, 2013; Jeffery, 2009; Yunus, 2010). Within the SET framework, this orientation integrates social objectives into entrepreneurial processes, complementing EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—that operationalize these objectives (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Mair & Marti, 2006; Santos, 2012). For students, cultivating

social responsibility during entrepreneurial training shapes the values, mindset, and behaviors necessary for launching ventures that are both economically sustainable and socially impactful.

The NEP facilitates the development of social responsibility orientation through targeted training, mentorship, and resource provision, strengthening students' ability to align social missions, engage stakeholders, and implement evaluation mechanisms (Ahmed et al., 2021; Jeffery, 2009; Khashru et al., 2025). Experiential learning components allow students to observe immediate effects on awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to socially responsible entrepreneurship. Despite its recognized importance, empirical evidence on the long-term impact of NEP on social responsibility orientation remains limited. This study examines how participation in NEP supports students in integrating social responsibility into their entrepreneurial practice.

### ***Social Mission Alignment***

Social mission alignment refers to the extent to which entrepreneurial ventures simultaneously address societal challenges while maintaining financial sustainability. SET emphasizes embedding social objectives into business strategies to achieve meaningful and lasting impact (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus, 2010). EO traits, particularly

proactiveness and innovativeness, support this alignment by motivating students to integrate social value creation within their ventures (Mair & Marti, 2006; Santos, 2012).

Through the NEP, students receive targeted training and mentorship that enables them to design ventures that combine profitability with a strong social purpose (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2025). This process reinforces the interplay between EO traits and SET principles, equipping students to operationalize social objectives alongside entrepreneurial goals. Limited research exists on the long-term effectiveness of such training in enhancing students' ability to align profit motives with social missions. This study examines how participation in NEP develops students' capacity to create and sustain socially oriented ventures.

### ***Stakeholder Engagement***

Stakeholder engagement is essential for achieving social impact, involving collaborative relationships with beneficiaries, partners, and investors (Hartigan & Elkington, 2008; Jeffery, 2009). SET emphasizes co-creation and responsiveness to stakeholders as critical for attaining social objectives (Ebrashi, 2013), while EO traits, such as innovativeness and adaptability, enable students to respond

effectively and creatively to stakeholder needs (Mair & Marti, 2006; Santos, 2012).

NEP provides students with practical skills in relationship building, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving, fostering ventures that are socially responsive and strategically innovative (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2025). Evidence on the long-term outcomes of structured programs, such as NEP, for stakeholder engagement is limited. This study investigates how NEP-facilitated stakeholder engagement shapes students' entrepreneurial practices toward socially responsible outcomes.

### ***Measurement and Evaluation***

Measurement and evaluation mechanisms enable ventures to assess both social and financial objectives, linking EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—with social impact (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022). Within NEP, students learn qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018) to monitor venture effectiveness. These practices reinforce EO-SET integration, ensuring that projects are assessed for both

economic sustainability and social contributions (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2023). Empirical evidence on the long-term effectiveness of NEP's evaluation

practices remains limited. This study examines how these processes foster students' ability to balance economic viability with measurable social impact.

### ***Proximal Outcomes (Immediate Effects)***

Proximal outcomes refer to short-term, observable effects of NEP participation, such as heightened awareness of social responsibility, enhanced application of entrepreneurial skills, and demonstration of socially responsible attitudes (Ebrashi, 2013; Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2023). Within SET, these outcomes indicate immediate integration of social objectives into entrepreneurial actions.

For students, these effects often manifest in the design of socially conscious business plans, responsible stakeholder engagement, and critical reflection on societal implications. While promising, the sustainability and translation of these outcomes into long-term entrepreneurial behavior remain underexplored (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This study investigates how NEP's immediate outcomes provide a foundation for pursuing ventures that are both economically viable and socially responsible, reinforcing and students' development.

## Career Aspirations

Career aspirations are a critical dimension of entrepreneurial development, encompassing the pursuit of social and environmental goals, sustainable job creation, and long-term impact orientation. They guide students in envisioning future roles as innovators, job creators, and agents of social change (Ajzen, 1991; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Within SET, career goals focus on addressing societal and environmental challenges through innovative and socially responsible solutions (Yunus & Moingeon, 2010; Mair & Marti, 2006; Ebrashi, 2013).

For university students, career aspirations translate entrepreneurial training into future action. NEP fosters these aspirations by embedding social and environmental considerations into career goals, motivating students to pursue ventures that generate both economic and social value (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru et al., 2023). Despite its recognized significance, empirical research on how NEP shapes long-term career trajectories aligned with EO and SET principles remains limited. This study investigates NEP's influence on students' socially oriented entrepreneurial aspirations.

## *Pursuit of Social and Environmental Goals*

Integrating social and environmental objectives into career aspirations ensures entrepreneurial ventures pursue sustainability alongside profitability. From an EO perspective, such aspirations reflect proactiveness and innovativeness, while SET emphasizes embedding social missions into entrepreneurial strategies to generate lasting societal impact (Yunus, 2010; Ardichvili et al., 2003).

Through NEP, students receive structured guidance, mentorship, and exercises that align personal ambitions with social and environmental missions. They are encouraged to design ventures that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable, translating EO traits into actionable plans that fulfill SET principles (Neumann, 2021; Pless, 2012). Empirical evidence on the translation of these aspirations into enduring entrepreneurial practices is limited. This study examines how participation in NEP shapes students' commitment to ventures that integrate social and environmental objectives.

## *Sustainable Job Creation*

Aspiring to become a job creator represents a core EO dimension, encompassing initiative, opportunity recognition, and risk-taking (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Covin & Wales, 2019).

Within SET, job creation extends beyond profit motives to address unemployment and promote community development (Mair & Marti, 2006; Yunus, 2010; Ahmed et al., 2021).

NEP strengthens students' aspirations for sustainable job creation through mentorship, practical training, and financial support to launch ventures generating employment (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru et al., 2025). These interventions position students as drivers of economic growth and social progress. However, limited research examines how NEP-specific interventions influence students' long-term job-creation ambitions or community-level impact (Khashru & Han, 2023; Khashru et al., 2025). This study explores how NEP participation fosters sustainable job creation goals.

### ***Long-term societal impact***

Long-term societal impact reflects students' commitment to generating sustained social and economic value beyond immediate outcomes. This entails developing ventures with scalability, resilience, and enduring benefits, which aligns with the EO dimensions of innovativeness and proactiveness, as well as SET principles emphasizing lasting social transformation (Shane & Venkataraman,

2000; Mair & Marti, 2006; Ahmed et al., 2021).

The NEP equips students with tools and frameworks for strategic vision, sustainability planning, and impact-focused ventures (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru et al., 2025). Through experiential exercises, mentorship, and workshops, students learn to translate short-term entrepreneurial activities into long-term commitments to social good.

Despite these programmatic efforts, empirical evidence on NEP's influence in fostering sustained social and economic impact remains limited. This study, therefore, examines how participation in NEP encourages students to develop an enduring orientation toward societal impact.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative multiple embedded case study approach to investigate entrepreneurial orientation (EO) practices among participants of the New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP) at Chang Jung Christian University (CJCU) and National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPSTU) in Taiwan. This design facilitates an in-depth exploration of how NEP influences entrepreneurial intentions, skill development, and socially responsible business practices within real-

life contexts (Yin, 2014; Feagin et al., 1994). By analyzing multiple cases and embedded units, the study captures the complex interactions between student behaviors, program interventions, and social impact outcomes (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Ridder, 2017).

The theoretical framework is grounded in Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET), which integrates social, environmental, and economic objectives to guide the creation of sustainable social value (Ebrashi, 2013; Slaper & Hall, 2011). SET provides a lens to understand how NEP cultivates social entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviors, promoting ventures that generate meaningful social impact and sustainable development (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus et al., 2010; Pless, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2021).

NEP presents a distinctive context as it targets students from the second generation of Grameen Bank borrowers, encouraging them to become job creators rather than job seekers. Its structured combination of training, mentorship, and financial support offers an ideal setting to examine the practical application of SET in fostering socially responsible entrepreneurial behaviors (Khashru & Han, 2023; Khashru et al., 2025; Ebrashi, 2013).

## Case Selection and Rationale

An embedded case study approach was employed, focusing on two universities that offer the NEP: CJCUC and NPSTU. These universities were purposefully selected because they:

- Actively implement NEP with measurable student outcomes (Khashru & Han, 2023)
- Exhibit diversity in student demographics, academic backgrounds, and venture types (Patton, 2015; Ahmed et al., 2021)
- Demonstrate willingness to collaborate with researchers and provide access to program documents and participant data (Yin, 2014; Feagin et al., 1994)

A purposive sampling strategy selected 55 students actively participating in NEP (Patton, 2015), representing diverse levels of engagement, academic majors, and venture types. These students served as embedded sub-units within the cases, enabling comparative insights into how NEP interventions influence entrepreneurial orientation and social business mindset across institutional contexts (Lin et al., 2018; Khashru, 2021; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

University	Number of Participants	Gender (M/F)	Academic Year	Type of NEP Venture
CJCU	28	15/13	2nd-4th Year	Food, Technology, Services
University	Number of Participants	Gender (M/F)	Academic Year	Type of NEP Venture
NPSTU	27	14/13	2nd-4th Year	Agriculture, Technology, Retail
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29/26</b>	<b>2nd-4th Year</b>	<b>Multiple venture types</b>

This strategy ensures comprehensive exploration of how NEP fosters social entrepreneurial behaviors, skill development, and long-term impact orientation, consistent with SET and EO principles (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Khashru & Han, 2023).

### Data Collection

#### *Strategy and Rationale*

A longitudinal, multi-method qualitative design was employed from July 2022 to September 2023 to capture the evolution of students' entrepreneurial orientation over time (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Hamed, 2021). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis, providing multiple perspectives on the NEP's influence (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Triangulation across these sources enhanced the credibility, validity, and depth of analysis, ensuring a holistic

understanding of how the NEP fosters EO traits and aligns with SET

#### *Data Sources and Methods*

Data for this study were collected from multiple sources to ensure methodological triangulation and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the NEP and its influence on students' EO, skill development, and socially responsible practices (Ebrashi, 2013; Khashru et al., 2025). Stakeholders included NEP participants, mentors, program coordinators, faculty, and university authorities, offering complementary perspectives on program processes, outcomes, and institutional contexts. This multi-source approach enhances the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings by capturing both individual and organizational insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Birt et al., 2016).

The data sources, methods, participants, quantities, timeframes, and contributions to trustworthiness are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Data Collection Overview

Data Source	Method	Participants/Materials	Quantity	Timeframe	Contribution to Trustworthiness
Interviews	Semi-structured	NEP participants, Mentors, Program Coordinators, Faculty members, University authorities	NEP Participants: 55; Mentors: 2; Program Coordinators: 4; Faculty & University administrative	Jul 2022 - Sep 2023	Captures detailed personal experiences and perspectives across multiple stakeholders; supports thematic saturation (Patton, 2015;

Data Source	Method	Participants /Materials	Quantity	Timeframe	Contribution to Trustworthiness
			staff: 8; NEP Academic Scholars: 6		Yin, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998)
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Group interviews	NEP participants	6 FGDs (8-10 participants per group)	Jul 2022 - Sep 2023	Captures collective perspectives, validates individual accounts, and highlights group-level insights (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Patton, 2015)
Documents	Archival analysis	NEP reports, business plans, policy documents	NEP reports: 10; Business plans: 15; Policy documents: 5	Jul 2022 - Sep 2023	Provides contextual depth, cross-verifies program claims, and supports triangulation (Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007)

Data collection from these multiple sources enabled a rich and nuanced understanding of NEP's impact on students. The combination of interviews, FGDs, and document analysis, as summarized in Table 2, allowed for verification of findings across sources, strengthening the study's methodological rigor and supporting the trustworthiness of results.

### *Alignment with Research Questions*

The data collection methods were purposefully selected to address the study's research questions, ensuring that both individual experiences and program-level insights were captured. The alignment between research questions and data sources is summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Alignment with Research Questions

Research Question	Data Source/Method	Rationale
RQ1: How does NEP influence students' entrepreneurial mindset?	Interviews, FGDs	Individual interviews capture personal reflections and mindset changes, while FGDs provide group-level perspectives on entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors.
RQ2: How does NEP enhance skills acquisition and venture capabilities?	Interviews, FGDs, Document Analysis	Combining participant accounts with program documents and business plans enables triangulation to assess the development of practical skills and venture competencies.
RQ3: How does NEP promote socially responsible entrepreneurial practices?	Interviews, FGDs, Document Analysis	Integrating multiple sources allows evaluation of both perceived and documented evidence of social responsibility in entrepreneurial actions.

This alignment ensures that the data collection comprehensively addresses each research question while maintaining methodological rigor. Using multiple sources enhances the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings by triangulating participants' perspectives with program documentation (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Birt et al., 2016).

### *Temporal Structure*

Data collection occurred in three waves to track changes over time:

- Wave 1 (Jul–Sep 2022): Exploration of students' prior experience and entrepreneurial intentions
- Wave 2 (Jan–Jun 2023): Observation and interviews capturing skill acquisition and application of NEP learnings.

- Wave 3 (Jul–Sep 2023): Assessment of NEP's impact on entrepreneurial orientation, skills, and social business mindset

This design captures both the continuity and evolution of entrepreneurial practices, enabling rich temporal insights (Saldana, 2016).

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Ethical approval was obtained from institutional review boards. Informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were strictly maintained (Orb et al., 2001; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any stage.

### ***Data Saturation and Trustworthiness***

Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hennink et al., 2017). Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, reflexivity, and prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Birt et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Data Analysis and Coding**

#### ***Phase 1: Initial Coding***

All interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and program documents were imported into NVivo 12 and independently

coded by two researchers to ensure inter-coder reliability (Campbell et al., 2013). Coding focused on key constructs related to EO and skills development within the context of the NEP. Specifically, codes captured:

- Entrepreneurial orientation: Opportunity recognition, creativity, proactiveness, risk-taking, and social impact orientation.
- Skills acquisition: Business planning, financial management, marketing, operational strategies, and stakeholder engagement.

Preliminary codes were iteratively refined to identify patterns across participants, venture types, and institutional contexts. This phase ensured that both individual perspectives and organizational factors were captured, reflecting how students operationalize EO traits in socially responsible entrepreneurial practices.

#### ***Phase 2: Deepening and Validation***

In the second phase, themes were refined through memoing, team discussions, and alignment with SET principles (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006). The analysis distinguished between cognitive aspects of EO, including mindset and opportunity recognition, and behavioral elements, such as practical application of entrepreneurial skills and socially responsible actions.

To enhance credibility, dependability, and confirmability, member checking, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement with participants and program documents were employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Birt et al., 2016). This process ensured that the coding captured both the development of EO traits among students and their integration with NEP's training and SET-aligned social entrepreneurship practices.

### *Thematic Synthesis and SET Alignment*

In the final phase, data were synthesized and mapped onto SET principles to examine how NEP fosters social entrepreneurship and aligns students' EO with social responsibility. Analytical focus included:

- Economic outcomes: Financial viability, business planning, and venture sustainability.
- Social outcomes: Social value creation, empowerment, and community impact.
- Ethical and environmental outcomes: Responsible practices and sustainability awareness.

**Table 4.** Themes, Sub-Themes, SET Alignment, and Examples

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	SET Alignment	Example from Data
Entrepreneurial Mindset	Opportunity Recognition	Students identify business opportunities	Economic & Social	"I noticed a gap in local food delivery services and planned a tech-based solution."
Skill Development	Business Planning	Creation of operational and financial plans	Economic	"Developing the budget helped me understand profit margins."
Social Responsibility	Community Impact	Ventures create value for the community	Social & Environmental	"Our eco-friendly packaging benefits both business and environment."
Ethical Practices	Sustainability Awareness	Students consider long-term impact	Environmental & Social	"I ensure the farm uses minimal pesticides and recycles waste."

This synthesis demonstrates that NEP participation cultivates EO traits innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking while embedding SET principles in entrepreneurial practice. Students develop technical, managerial, and strategic competencies while internalizing social and ethical considerations, reflecting integration of economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

### *Theoretical Integration*

The integration of EO, NEP, and SET reveals a dynamic interplay between program components and student development. NEP's comprehensive training, mentorship, and resource support enable students to operationalize EO traits in socially responsible ventures, consistent with SET principles.

For example, innovative thinking allows students to identify unmet social

needs; proactiveness drives early venture initiation; and calculated risk-taking supports decision-making under uncertainty, all while balancing economic sustainability and social impact. This integration highlights that NEP not only strengthens EO traits but aligns them with socially responsible entrepreneurship, ensuring that student ventures contribute meaningfully to society.

### *Linking Themes to Research Questions*

The thematic analysis demonstrates direct alignment between the identified themes and the study's research questions:

- **RQ1:** Themes related to entrepreneurial mindset provide insights into how NEP influences students' EO and cognitive frameworks.
- **RQ2:** Themes on skill development capture the acquisition of practical competencies, enhancement of venture capabilities, and application of entrepreneurial skills.
- **RQ3:** Themes encompassing social responsibility and ethical practices reveal how NEP fosters socially responsible behaviors, integrates SET principles, and promotes ventures generating economic and social value.

This linkage illustrates the coherence between NEP activities, EO dimensions, SET principles, and student development, reinforcing methodological rigor and ensuring that findings are directly connected to the research objectives.

This study employed a rigorous, theory-driven qualitative multiple-embedded case design to examine how NEP—an innovative social business initiative—shapes university students' EO and socially responsible business practices. Data were collected longitudinally through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, with methodological triangulation ensuring credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Coding and thematic analysis were systematically aligned with SET to capture both cognitive (mindset) and behavioral (practical) aspects of EO. This approach demonstrates how NEP cultivates EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—within a social business context, providing a robust foundation for understanding students' entrepreneurial mindset, skill development, and socially responsible practices. The empirical results in Section 5.1 illustrate these effects in detail.

## New Entrepreneurs (Ne) Program

The New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP) is an innovative social business initiative launched by Grameen Bank under the leadership of Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus to address socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment by promoting entrepreneurship (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Yunus, 2010). Initially launched in 2001 as the “Nobin Uddokta” (New Entrepreneurs) Program, it targeted Grameen Bank members and their families, offering entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional employment.

Since 2013, the program has been supported by the Yunus Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Grameen Social Business Fund (GSBF). NEP provides participants, including university students, with structured training, mentorship, business incubation, and access to funding, enabling the development of ventures that are both economically viable and socially responsible (Khashru et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2010). Guided by Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET), the program fosters key Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) traits, innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking while embedding social responsibility into entrepreneurial practice (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Through experiential learning and

support, students acquire essential skills, including business planning, management, financial management, and marketing, equipping them to launch ventures that create both economic and social value (Khashru & Lin, 2019).

Despite its success, empirical research on NEP’s impact on university students’ EO, skill development, and career aspirations remains limited. In particular, how participation integrates EO traits with socially responsible practices is underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining NEP’s influence on students’ entrepreneurial mindset, capabilities, and social impact orientation. Future enhancements, such as sector diversification and strengthened support systems, are essential to scale the program sustainably while maintaining its focus on socially responsible entrepreneurship (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Yunus et al., 2010).

## Empirical Results And Discussion

Qualitative interviews with NEP participants at CJCU and NPSTU indicate that the program effectively cultivates key EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—among university students (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Khashru & Han, 2023). These traits enable participants to design ventures that are financially viable while generating meaningful social impact,

consistent with SET (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006).

The NEP's combination of structured mentorship, business incubation, and access to funding bridges academic learning with practical entrepreneurship (Khashru et al., 2025; Khashru & Lin, 2019). This integrated approach equips students to identify opportunities, develop innovative solutions, take calculated risks, and embed social objectives within their ventures. Findings demonstrate that EO traits and SET principles mutually reinforce each other, fostering outcomes that are both economically sustainable and socially transformative (Pless, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2021).

These results underscore the importance of university-led programs in fostering socially responsible entrepreneurs (Khashru et al., 2021; Ridder, 2017). By integrating EO and SET frameworks into entrepreneurship education, NEP equips students with the mindset, skills, and ethical orientation necessary to pursue ventures that are sustainable, socially conscious, and capable of long-term impact (Yunus, 2010; Slaper & Hall, 2011).

### **New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP)**

The New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP) is designed to cultivate university students' entrepreneurial mindset, skills, and

career aspirations through a combination of comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support. Longitudinal, multi-method data collected from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and program documents (July–September 2022; January–June 2023; July–September 2023) indicate that participation in NEP consistently strengthens students' Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) traits while operationalizing Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET) principles. The program promotes ventures that integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives. The following subsections detail how NEP fosters each EO dimension in practice.

### ***Comprehensive Training***

The NEP provides comprehensive training that equips university students with the mindset, skills, and strategies needed to develop socially responsible and economically viable ventures. This component operationalizes EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—while reflecting SET principles of creating sustainable social value.

#### **Theme 1: Clarifying Entrepreneurial Intentions and Career Goals**

Training helped students clarify their entrepreneurial goals and transform intentions into actionable business plans:

“Entrepreneurial intentions are central to starting a business. The NEP helps us clarify our goals and turn our ideas into viable business plans.” — C-5; C-25; C-27; C-31; C- 52; C-55

Mentors reinforced this process by linking mindset development with practical, career- oriented skills:

“Supporting participants in defining and pursuing their entrepreneurial intentions is key. NEP provides the mentorship and tools needed to crystallize these intentions into successful ventures.” — Mentor

This approach enables university students to translate entrepreneurial intentions into concrete plans, fostering EO proactiveness and supporting SET’s goal of creating social impact.

#### Theme 2: Translating EO Traits into Practical Skills

Experiential exercises and problem-based learning enabled students to apply EO traits in real-world contexts, aligning ventures with market demands and social needs:

“Having a clear entrepreneurial intention is the first step. NEP focuses on helping us set specific goals and develop plans that align with our business aspirations.” — C-31

This approach operationalizes EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and

risk- taking—into practical skills while encouraging ventures that generate social value, consistent with SET.

#### Theme 3: Fostering Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship

Students were motivated to design ventures that balance financial viability with social and environmental benefits: “NEP encourages us to think beyond profits and design ventures that benefit our community while remaining sustainable.” — C-52

This approach develops students’ awareness of social and environmental responsibility, fostering sustainable entrepreneurship aligned with EO and supporting SET principles of long-term social value creation.

#### *Mentorship*

The NEP provides mentorship to university students, offering personalized guidance and support that strengthens entrepreneurial skills, aligns career goals with venture strategies, and fosters socially responsible entrepreneurship. This component operationalizes EO traits—proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness—while reflecting SET principles of sustainable social impact.

#### Theme 1: Personalized Guidance and Skill Development

Mentors provided tailored advice that refined students' strategies and helped develop essential entrepreneurial skills:

“Mentorship is crucial for guiding new entrepreneurs. NEP provides us with the journey.” — C-14; C-17; C-37

This approach enhances university students' strategic thinking and practical skill development, supporting EO proactiveness and risk-taking while fostering SET-aligned social value creation.

Theme 2: Aligning Mentorship with Career Goals

Mentorship guided students in aligning entrepreneurial intentions with actionable strategies:

“Coordinating mentorship involves understanding participants' needs and matching them with mentors who can provide relevant support. NEP excels in this by aligning mentorship with individual entrepreneurial goals.” — Program Coordinator.

This approach ensures that students' ventures are goal-oriented and strategically planned, reflecting EO-informed decision-making and SET-based social impact objectives.

Theme 3: Promoting Social and Environmental Responsibility

Mentors encouraged students to integrate social and environmental considerations into their ventures:

“Mentors guide us to think beyond profits and design ventures that benefit our *community while remaining sustainable.*” — C-37

This approach cultivates university students' awareness of social and environmental responsibility, supporting sustainable entrepreneurship in line with EO innovativeness and proactiveness and SET principles.

### ***Financial Support***

The NEP encourages universities to provide financial support to graduates who aim to launch ventures in their home countries. This support enables venture initiation, growth, and sustainable operation. Funding is complemented by guidance on financial management and alignment with entrepreneurial goals. This component operationalizes EO traits—risk-taking, proactiveness, and innovativeness—while supporting SET principles of socially responsible and sustainable value creation.

Theme 1: Enabling Venture Launch and Growth

Financial support helps graduates overcome funding barriers and implement their business ideas:

“Access to financial support through NEP has been instrumental in turning our business ideas into reality. It provides the necessary capital to start and grow our ventures.” — C-12; C-15; C-19; C-22; C-24; C-28; C-33; C-35; C-39.

This approach empowers graduates to take calculated risks and operationalize business plans, supporting EO risk-taking and proactiveness and fostering SET-aligned social and economic impact.

#### Theme 2: Guidance in Financial Management

Mentors provide guidance on budgeting, resource allocation, and investment decisions:

“Financial support is more than just funding; it’s about using it wisely. NEP mentors guide us on how to manage and utilize financial resources to maximize our impact.” — NEP Mentor

This approach develops graduates’ financial management skills, enabling responsible resource use while promoting EO-informed decision-making and sustainable outcomes in line with SET principles.

#### Theme 3: Tailoring Support to Entrepreneurial Goals

Financial resources are aligned with graduates’ venture objectives to maximize impact:

“Coordinating financial support involves assessing participants’ needs and aligning financial resources with entrepreneurial goals, maximizing the impact of the investment.” — Program Coordinator.

This approach ensures that funding directly supports strategic and socially responsible entrepreneurship, thereby reinforcing the EO goal orientation and SET-based societal value creation.

#### Theme 4: Promoting Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship

Support enables graduates to design ventures that balance economic viability with social and environmental responsibility:

“Financial resources empower us to not only grow our business but also create ventures that benefit our community and environment.” — C-28

This approach strengthens graduates’ awareness of social responsibility, integrating EO innovativeness and proactiveness with SET’s goal of sustainable social impact.

The findings indicate that comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support work synergistically to

enhance university students' entrepreneurial mindset, practical skills, and career aspirations (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru et al., 2021; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Training clarifies entrepreneurial intentions and translates EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—into actionable skills, enabling students to design ventures that address both market opportunities and social needs (Khashru & Han, 2023; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Patton, 2015). Mentorship provides personalized guidance, aligns strategies with career goals, and reinforces social and environmental responsibility. Financial support facilitates venture launch and growth, complemented by practical guidance in resource management (Ebrashi, 2013; Yunus et al., 2010; Ahmed et al., 2021).

These NEP components operationalize EO and SET principles, equipping university students to develop ventures that integrate economic viability with meaningful social and environmental impact, thereby fostering sustainable and socially responsible entrepreneurship (Mair & Martí, 2006; Slaper & Hall, 2011; Pless, 2012).

### **Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) Dimensions**

The NEP is designed to cultivate university students' entrepreneurial

orientation, with a focus on innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness. Analysis of multi-method data, including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), indicates that NEP equips participants with the mindset and skills necessary to develop ventures that generate both economic and social value. This approach aligns with the dimensions of EO and the principles of SET, supporting ventures that achieve sustained social and economic impact. The following subsections illustrate how NEP fosters each EO dimension in practice.

#### ***Innovativeness***

Innovativeness is a central dimension of EO, reflecting the ability to generate novel ideas and identify opportunities. Within the NEP, university students are encouraged to apply creative problem-solving to address social and economic challenges through comprehensive training, mentorship, and experiential learning. This approach not only strengthens individual entrepreneurial capacity but also aligns with SET, emphasizing ventures that generate sustainable social and economic value. The following themes illustrate how NEP participation fosters innovativeness among students in practice.

## Theme 1: Enhancing Creativity and Opportunity Recognition

Students reported that comprehensive training enhanced their ability to generate novel ideas and recognize entrepreneurial opportunities:

“NEP helped me think creatively about social problems and turn ideas into viable business solutions.” — C-19; C-22.

Mentors and faculty highlighted that experiential learning and collaborative ventures fostered sustained innovativeness:

“Through hands-on projects and mentoring, students learn to prototype and iterate ideas with both economic and social value.” — Mentor.

Academic scholars noted that NEP’s structured integration of social business principles supports long-term innovative capacity:

“NEP uniquely bridges theoretical learning and practical innovation, aligning students’ creative problem-solving with social objectives.” — Academic Scholar.

This approach demonstrates that NEP’s combination of training, mentorship, and collaborative learning effectively enhances university students’ creative problem-solving skills, enabling them to translate innovative ideas into ventures that generate both economic and social value. By

fostering sustained innovativeness, NEP aligns with EO dimensions and SET principles, preparing students to develop ventures with lasting societal impact (Martin et al., 2013; Chenavaz et al., 2023).

### ***Risk-taking***

Risk-taking is a key dimension of EO, reflecting the willingness to engage with uncertainty and make strategic decisions under conditions of ambiguity. The NEP encourages university students to develop calculated risk-taking skills through experiential exercises, simulations, and mentorship. This approach not only strengthens students’ confidence in decision-making but also aligns with SET by promoting ventures that pursue socially responsible outcomes while navigating uncertainty. The following themes illustrate how NEP fosters risk-taking among participants.

#### Theme 1: Calculated Risk Engagement

Participants emphasized that NEP encouraged calculated risk-taking in uncertain situations:

“I learned to assess risks carefully before implementing my ideas, balancing potential rewards with social impact.” — C-10; C-15; C-26; C-36

Mentors and faculty reinforced this observation:

“Workshops and simulations allow students to experience uncertainty safely, fostering their confidence to take entrepreneurial risks.” — Faculty.

Academic scholars noted that combining practical experience with mentoring strengthens students’ ability to make decisions that maximize societal benefit:

*“Experiential approaches in NEP enhance students’ willingness to take informed risks while pursuing socially responsible ventures.”* — Academic Scholar.

This approach demonstrates that NEP’s structured risk management activities enable university students to confront uncertainty in controlled settings, promoting informed decision-making. By integrating experiential exercises and mentoring, NEP operationalizes EO risk-taking while fostering ventures that align with SET principles, supporting both economic viability and social impact (Bae et al., 2014; Oosterbeek et al., 2010).

### ***Proactiveness***

Proactiveness is a critical dimension of EO, reflecting the ability to anticipate opportunities, act early, and initiate ventures ahead of others. The NEP fosters proactiveness among university students through experiential learning, field projects, and mentorship, encouraging them to

identify unmet social needs and implement solutions proactively. This approach aligns with SET, supporting ventures that generate sustained social and economic value. The following themes illustrate how NEP cultivates proactive behaviors in participants.

#### **Theme 1: Anticipating Opportunities and Acting Early**

NEP participants demonstrated proactive behaviors, identifying unmet social needs and initiating ventures ahead of peers:

“NEP motivated me to act early, design solutions, and implement projects that make a real difference.” C-28; C-33; C-35; C-39

Mentors and faculty emphasized that field projects and collaborative learning strengthened anticipatory skills:

“Students learn to anticipate challenges, take early action, and integrate social value into their ventures.” — Mentor.

Academic scholars confirmed that fostering proactiveness aligns with SET principles and positively influences career choices:

“Proactive tendencies nurtured through NEP have long-term effects on students’ entrepreneurial engagement and societal impact.” — Academic Scholar.

This approach demonstrates that NEP’s integration of anticipatory skills into project-based learning enables university students to act decisively and responsibly in uncertain contexts. By fostering proactiveness, NEP operationalizes EO traits while reinforcing SET principles, preparing students to launch ventures that generate both economic and social value (El Ebrashi, 2013; Do Adro et al., 2021).

These findings demonstrate that NEP effectively operationalizes EO and SET principles, equipping university students to develop ventures that integrate economic viability with social and environmental impact. The program fosters sustained innovativeness, calculated risk-taking, and proactive behaviors, supporting long-term socially responsible entrepreneurship and career development. NEP participants not only acquire entrepreneurial skills but also show the potential for these behaviors to persist beyond the program, confirming the efficacy of integrating experiential learning, mentorship, and financial support in higher education entrepreneurship initiatives (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Mair & Martí, 2006; Santos, 2012).

## **Entrepreneurial Capacity**

### **Mindset**

The entrepreneurial mindset is a core dimension of university students’

entrepreneurial capacity and a central focus of the NEP, encompassing opportunity recognition and creativity & adaptability. Longitudinal, multi-method data collected between July and September 2022, January and June 2023, and July and September 2023—including interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis—indicate that NEP participation strengthens EO traits, enhances skill acquisition, and promotes socially responsible practices. This section illustrates how NEP cultivates students’ entrepreneurial mindset, highlighting its influence on EO dimensions, including opportunity recognition and creativity & adaptability. Participants included NEP students, academic scholars, mentors, program coordinators, and university administrative staff.

### ***Opportunity Recognition***

Opportunity recognition enables students to identify and capitalize on market gaps while addressing social needs. NEP participants reported that the program sharpened their ability to perceive challenges as opportunities:

“The NEP has helped me see opportunities where others see problems. It’s about looking beyond the obvious and finding value where others haven’t.” — C-7; C-9; C-10; C-12; C-23.

Mentors and academic scholars emphasized that creativity and strategic thinking are essential for identifying opportunities:

“Identifying opportunities is about being creative and thinking strategically. The NEP gives us the tools to do both.” — C-15; C-27.

This approach demonstrates that NEP strengthens opportunity recognition (EO) while embedding social objectives (SET), equipping university students to develop ventures that balance profit with social impact and supporting their future-oriented entrepreneurial aspirations (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus et al., 2010).

### ***Creativity and Adaptability***

Creativity and adaptability are essential dimensions of university students’ entrepreneurial mindset and critical for navigating uncertainty and innovating solutions. Participants highlighted that NEP’s experiential learning was central to developing these traits:

“Entrepreneurship is unpredictable, and you have to be adaptable to navigate uncertainties. The NEP has taught us to embrace change and pivot when necessary.”— C-19; C-28; C-32; C-40

“Creativity allows us to generate new ideas, while adaptability enables us to refine those ideas based on feedback and changing circumstances.” — C-22; C-31

Mentors emphasized applying creativity and adaptability to ventures that generate social and economic value:

“Creativity and adaptability are vital for designing ventures that meet both economic and social objectives. NEP encourages students to integrate these traits with a social mission.” — Mentor

This approach shows that the NEP cultivates creativity and adaptability among university students, reinforcing EO traits and guiding them to address social challenges in line with SET principles. As a result, students are prepared to design ventures that are economically viable, socially responsible, and aligned with their entrepreneurial career aspirations (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

This discussion demonstrates that the NEP cultivates a transformative entrepreneurial mindset by enhancing university students’ opportunity recognition, creativity, and adaptability. These EO traits, embedded within SET principles, enable students to identify challenges as opportunities, develop innovative and sustainable solutions, and remain resilient in

uncertain contexts (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus & Moingeon, 2010). Consequently, NEP equips students not only to create ventures that balance economic viability with social and environmental responsibility but also to envision themselves as future entrepreneurs committed to long-term social change (Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru et al., 2025).

### **Skills**

The NEP develops practical entrepreneurial skills for university students, encompassing business planning, management, financial management, and marketing & networking. These skills translate EO traits—innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness—into actionable competencies while fostering socially responsible practices in alignment with SET principles. By cultivating these skills, NEP equips students to design and manage ventures that generate both economic and social value, supporting long-term entrepreneurial engagement and societal impact.

### ***Business Planning***

The NEP develops practical entrepreneurial skills encompassing business planning, management skills, financial management, and marketing & networking, translating EO traits into

actionable competencies while fostering socially responsible practices. Participants included NEP students, academic scholars, mentors, program coordinators, faculty, and administrative staff. The following subsections illustrate how the NEP cultivates these skills in alignment with EO dimensions and SET principles.

Participants emphasized structured business planning as foundational to venture success:

"Effective business planning is crucial for the success of any venture. The NEP has provided us with a systematic approach to develop detailed plans that guide our business journey." —C-3, C-8, C-18, C-21.

"Business planning is not just about theory; it's about creating a practical and flexible plan that can adapt to changing circumstances." —C-26

Mentors and program coordinators highlighted that guiding students through structured planning strengthens their strategic decision-making:

"Business planning training equips students to design ventures that are both profitable and socially responsible, applying practical skills to real-world challenges." — Mentor.

This approach demonstrates that NEP strengthens business planning skills (EO) while embedding social objectives (SET), enabling students to develop ventures

that are strategically sound, socially impactful, and aligned with long-term entrepreneurial aspirations (Khashru & Lin, 2019).

### ***Management Skills***

Management skills equip students to organize and lead ventures effectively. Participants highlighted hands-on practice as essential:

"Effective management is vital for the success of any business. The NEP provides us with essential tools and techniques to manage our ventures effectively." — Student C- 2, C-4, C-16

"Management skills are not just about theory; they are about applying what we learn to real-life situations. The NEP helps us practice these skills through hands-on experience." —C-20

Academic scholars, mentors, and program coordinators emphasized that management skill development ensures alignment of operational execution with social goals:

"Through NEP mentorship, students learn to manage resources efficiently, lead teams, and integrate social impact into daily operations." — Program Coordinator

This approach develops management skills (EO) that align with SET, enabling

students to lead ventures that achieve both economic success and social impact.

### ***Financial Management***

Financial management enables students to allocate resources effectively, mitigate risk, and ensure venture sustainability:

"Understanding budgeting, investment, and cash flow is critical. NEP provides guidance that helps us use financial resources responsibly and strategically." —C-12, C-22

Mentors reinforced the importance of responsible financial practices:

"Financial management training equips students to make informed decisions, balancing profitability with social objectives." — Mentor

This approach strengthens students' financial management skills (EO) while promoting SET-aligned social responsibility, supporting ventures that are economically viable and socially conscious.

### ***Marketing & Networking***

Marketing and networking skills enable students to identify target markets, build partnerships, and enhance venture visibility:

"NEP taught us how to reach our audience and create meaningful connections that

support business growth and community impact." —C-5, C-28

Faculty and program coordinators highlighted that collaborative learning and networking activities foster strategic relationships that extend social impact:

"Marketing and networking exercises encourage students to engage stakeholders, align ventures with community needs, and scale impact responsibly." — Academic Scholar.

This approach cultivates marketing and networking competencies (EO) while embedding SET principles, helping students build ventures that are both economically and socially sustainable.

The findings indicate that NEP develops university students' entrepreneurial skills by translating EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—into actionable competencies while integrating SET principles. Through structured training, experiential learning, mentorship, and guidance, students acquire practical skills in business planning, management, financial management, and marketing & networking, enabling them to design and operate ventures that are economically viable, socially responsible, and aligned with long-term entrepreneurial aspirations.

## Social Responsibility Orientation

Social responsibility orientation is a central dimension of university students' entrepreneurial capacity, encompassing alignment with community social mission, stakeholder engagement, impact measurement, and immediate outcomes such as learning, skill application, and social responsibility awareness. The NEP emphasizes ventures that achieve both economic success and positive social impact. Longitudinal, multi-method data collected between July and September 2022, January and June 2023, and July and September 2023—through interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis—indicate that NEP participants, mentors, program coordinators, faculty, and academic scholars developed a stronger orientation toward social responsibility. This discussion illustrates how NEP cultivates students' social responsibility orientation, integrating EO traits with SET principles (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

### *Alignment with Community Social Mission*

Aligning ventures with a social mission ensures that entrepreneurial activities contribute to societal well-being while achieving business objectives. NEP emphasizes integrating social missions into business models, guiding students to

develop ventures with broader social objectives:

"Aligning our business with a social mission ensures that our ventures contribute positively to society while achieving business success." — Participants (C-41; C-44; C-45)

Mentors, program coordinators, and faculty reinforced the importance of embedding social objectives within entrepreneurial strategies:

"The NEP helps students ensure that their business practices reflect social objectives, balancing profitability with societal impact." — Mentor.

This approach demonstrates that by embedding SET principles within EO traits—such as strategic planning, proactiveness, and innovativeness—NEP equips students to design ventures that address societal challenges while maintaining economic viability (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006).

### ***Stakeholder Engagement***

Effective stakeholder engagement is vital for sustaining social ventures and ensuring responsiveness to community needs. NEP trains university students to identify, involve, and collaborate with key stakeholders, fostering partnerships that support mutual benefit:

"Stakeholder engagement is crucial for ensuring that our ventures have a lasting impact. NEP teaches us to involve those affected by our business decisions." — Participants (C-8; C-10; C-16)

Mentors, program coordinators, and faculty emphasized co-creation and relationship-building:

"Successful ventures are built on strong relationships with stakeholders. NEP helps students develop strategies for collaboration that enhance both social and economic outcomes." — Mentor

This approach develops EO traits such as opportunity recognition, networking, and strategic decision-making, while embedding SET principles focused on the co-creation of social value (Slaper & Hall, 2011; Pless, 2012). NEP equips students to design ventures that are both economically viable and socially impactful, thereby strengthening long-term entrepreneurial effectiveness and community engagement.

### ***Measurement and Evaluation***

Tracking both social and financial outcomes is crucial for evaluating the impact of a venture. NEP trains university students to implement measurement and evaluation systems, enhancing accountability, strategic decision-making, and continuous learning:

"Evaluating our social impact helps us understand the effectiveness of our work. NEP shows us how to track progress using relevant metrics." — Participants (C-24; C-34; C-45)

Mentors, program coordinators, and faculty supported students in integrating evaluation practices into venture management:

"Good evaluation practices allow entrepreneurs to track progress and make informed decisions. NEP ensures students can measure both financial and social outcomes." — Mentor

This approach strengthens EO traits such as strategic planning, continuous learning, and adaptability, while embedding SET principles by promoting the assessment of social value creation alongside economic performance. NEP equips students to manage ventures that achieve sustained social impact and economic viability (Khashru et al., 2021; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Immediate Effects: Learning, Skill Application, and Social Responsibility Awareness

NEP participation fosters observable learning outcomes in social responsibility orientation. Participants demonstrated the ability to:

- Apply EO traits—creativity, opportunity recognition, and strategic planning— to ventures with social impact.
- Engage stakeholders effectively, ensuring alignment with community needs.
- Implement evaluation systems to monitor both social and financial outcomes.

"Through NEP, we have learned to integrate social objectives into our business planning and engage stakeholders strategically, ensuring our ventures make a meaningful difference." — Participants (C-41; C-44; C-45)

This approach illustrates how NEP operationalizes EO traits while embedding SET principles, enabling university students to translate entrepreneurial skills into socially responsible actions. By combining experiential learning, mentorship, and structured guidance, NEP equips students to create ventures that achieve economic viability, generate positive social impact, and demonstrate long-term sustainability (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru & Han, 2023; Yunus, 2010).

The findings indicate that NEP effectively cultivates students' social responsibility orientation, equipping them to

develop ventures that balance economic viability with positive social impact. By integrating EO traits—such as creativity, opportunity recognition, strategic planning, and proactiveness—with SET principles, NEP enables participants to align their ventures with community social missions, engage stakeholders effectively, and implement robust measurement and evaluation systems. Immediate effects include enhanced learning, skill application, and awareness of social responsibility. Experiential learning, mentorship, and structured guidance collectively support students in applying entrepreneurial skills in socially responsible ways, fostering ventures that are economically sustainable, socially impactful, and positioned for long-term success (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Ahmed et al., 2021; Khashru & Han, 2023; Yunus, 2010).

### **Career Aspiration**

Career aspiration within the NEP focuses on university students' intentions to pursue ventures that integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives, encompassing the pursuit of social and ecological goals, sustainable job creation, and long-term societal impact. Longitudinal, multi-method data collected between July and September 2022, January and June 2023, and July and September 2023—including interviews, focus groups,

observations, and document analysis—indicate that NEP participation cultivates students' entrepreneurial intentions, professional goals, and commitment to socially responsible ventures. This section illustrates how NEP shapes students' career-oriented thinking and long-term professional objectives, reflecting the integration of EO traits and SET principles (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

### ***Pursuit of Social and Environmental Goals***

NEP encourages students to align their career aspirations with social and environmental objectives, enabling them to design ventures that achieve both economic viability and positive societal impact:

“NEP has inspired me to focus on not just profit, but on how my business can make a positive impact on the community and the environment.” — (C-36; C-39; C-42; C-47; C-49)

Mentors, program coordinators, and academic scholars emphasized embedding social and environmental missions into students' entrepreneurial strategies:

“Entrepreneurship should go hand-in-hand with social responsibility. At NEP, we encourage students to include environmental and social missions in their business plans to make a lasting impact.” — Mentor.

Students reported that integrating social and environmental missions into career planning provides purpose, fulfillment, and long-term societal contribution:

“My goal isn’t just to run a business, but to run a business that makes a difference. NEP showed me how I can integrate social and environmental goals into my work.” — (C-42; C-32; C-36; C-39; C-46; C-48)

This approach demonstrates that NEP operationalizes EO traits—strategic planning, proactiveness, and innovativeness—while embedding SET principles, equipping students to pursue entrepreneurial careers that balance economic success with sustainable social and environmental impact (Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus et al., 2010).

### ***Sustainable Job Creation***

Building on the integration of social and environmental goals, NEP emphasizes sustainable job creation, reflecting students’ commitment to economic growth and community development. Students explicitly promised their mentors and program coordinators that they would start ventures that generate meaningful employment in their communities, demonstrating accountability and social commitment.

University students are motivated to prioritize job creation as a central objective of their ventures:

“Creating jobs is not just about building a business; it’s about making a difference in the community by providing employment opportunities.” — (C-26; C-33; C-36; C-50)

Mentors guide students in scaling ventures effectively to achieve tangible employment outcomes:

“Effective job creation requires strategic planning and execution. The NEP equips participants with the knowledge and tools needed to expand their businesses and create jobs.” — Mentor.

Students recognize that job creation aligns with broader economic objectives, enabling ventures to address unemployment and promote local economic development:

“Focusing on job creation helps align our business goals with broader economic needs. NEP teaches us how to build enterprises that contribute to job growth and economic development.” —(C-36)

This focus reflects the integration of SET principles, emphasizing social ventures that address employment needs, and EO traits, highlighting strategic planning, proactiveness, and innovativeness in creating economic opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Mair & Martí, 2006).

NEP equips students to develop ventures that achieve both business success and meaningful contributions to sustainable job creation in their communities (Khashru & Lin, 2019).

### ***Long-term Societal Impact***

Long-term societal impact is a cornerstone of sustainable entrepreneurship, emphasizing the creation of enduring social value. The NEP encourages students to adopt a forward-looking perspective, integrating sustainability into venture design and execution:

“Entrepreneurship isn't just about immediate success; it's about making a lasting difference. NEP teaches us to plan for long-term impact and sustainability.” — Students (C-21; C-31; C-43; C-45; C-50; C-51; C-55)

Faculty and university administrative staff reinforce the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective:

“Successful entrepreneurs must plan for the long term. The NEP guides participants in setting long-term goals and creating strategies to achieve them.” — University Administrative Staff.

Program coordinators emphasize embedding long-term objectives into venture planning, ensuring sustainability and measurable societal outcomes:

“Focusing on long-term impact is essential for sustainable entrepreneurship. NEP helps us align our business goals with long-term societal benefits.” — Program Coordinator

This approach demonstrates that NEP operationalizes EO traits—strategic planning, proactiveness, and innovativeness—while embedding SET principles, enabling students to develop ventures that generate lasting economic, social, and environmental value. By fostering both mindset and skills for forward-looking entrepreneurship, NEP prepares students to create ventures capable of achieving enduring societal impact (El Ebrashi, 2013; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

The findings indicate that NEP effectively cultivates university students' career aspirations by integrating economic, social, and environmental objectives. Participation in the program inspires students to pursue ventures that balance personal professional goals with meaningful societal impact. Students demonstrate a strong commitment to embedding social and environmental missions into their business plans, reflecting alignment with SET, while employing EO traits such as strategic planning, proactiveness, and innovativeness to achieve these objectives.

NEP students actively prioritize sustainable job creation, recognizing the role

of their ventures in addressing unemployment and promoting local economic development. Mentorship, program guidance, and structured experiential learning enable students to translate EO traits into practical actions that generate economic opportunities while meeting community needs. Furthermore, the program emphasizes long-term societal impact, equipping students with the mindset and skills necessary to develop ventures that deliver enduring economic, social, and environmental benefits.

However, NEP fosters career aspirations that are socially responsible, strategically oriented, and future-focused. By operationalizing EO traits within SET principles, the program prepares students not only to launch successful ventures but also to contribute meaningfully to sustainable social and economic development in their communities (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006; Yunus et al., 2010; Khashru & Lin, 2019).

### **Theoretical Contribution**

This study advances SET by elucidating how university students cultivate EO through participation in the NEP at Chang Jung Christian University and National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006). It provides empirical

evidence of how SET's focus on social value creation can be operationalized within a structured educational program that integrates entrepreneurial skills, socially responsible practices, and career-oriented aspirations.

The findings indicate that NEP reinforces key EO dimensions—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—while embedding social and environmental objectives (Khashru, 2021; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022). Through comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support, students translate EO traits into practical competencies, design ventures that balance economic viability with social impact, and develop a socially responsible mindset (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ahmed et al., 2021).

By highlighting the interplay between EO and SET, this research demonstrates how higher education programs can effectively bridge theoretical learning with applied social business practices. The longitudinal, multi-method design provides robust evidence of students' evolving entrepreneurial capacity, encompassing skill acquisition, opportunity recognition, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with social missions (Patton, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hennink et al., 2017).

Overall, this study extends SET by confirming its relevance in higher education and offering a model for fostering socially responsible entrepreneurial behavior. NEP's mechanisms—training, mentorship, and financial support—illustrate how educational programs can operationalize social entrepreneurship principles, directly addressing the research question regarding the influence of NEP participation on EO, skill development, social responsibility orientation, and career aspirations (Khashru, 2021; Pless, 2012; Slaper & Hall, 2011).

These theoretical contributions provide a foundation for practical and policy implications, guiding universities, educators, and policymakers in designing entrepreneurship programs that promote economic, social, and environmental outcomes, while preparing students to become socially responsible entrepreneurs.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings underscore the value of integrating SET and EO into university-level entrepreneurial education (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006). The NEP at Chang Jung Christian University and National Pingtung University of Science and Technology demonstrates how structured programs can simultaneously cultivate entrepreneurial skills, social responsibility, and career-oriented aspirations among

students (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Khashru, 2021).

For universities, embedding EO traits—such as innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness—into entrepreneurship curricula equips students to navigate the complexities of launching and sustaining ventures (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kamal Hossain et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2021). Programs like NEP provide experiential learning opportunities that enable students to translate EO traits into practical competencies, develop socially responsible business models, and pursue ventures that balance economic viability with social impact (Pless, 2012; Slaper & Hall, 2011).

For policymakers, supporting initiatives like NEP through funding, mentorship, and university-industry partnerships enhances the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (Patton, 2015; Khashru & Han, 2023). Access to resources and structured guidance enables students to create ventures that achieve both economic and social objectives, fostering a generation of socially conscious entrepreneurs capable of addressing pressing community challenges (Yunus, 2010; Ebrashi, 2013).

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This study has several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the

research focused exclusively on two Taiwanese universities implementing the New Entrepreneurs Program (NEP), which may limit the generalizability of findings to other educational or cultural contexts (Patton, 2015; Hennink et al., 2017). Second, although the longitudinal, multi-method design captured the evolving nature of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and Social Entrepreneurship Theory (SET) practices over time, the study primarily relied on qualitative data, which may constrain the ability to quantify program impacts on economic, social, and environmental outcomes (Miles et al., 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Third, participant demographics, including gender, socio-economic background, and prior exposure to entrepreneurship were not experimentally controlled, potentially influencing individual responses and venture outcomes.

Future research could address these limitations by adopting mixed methods approaches that integrate qualitative insights with quantitative measures of social impact, venture performance, and career progression (Ahmed et al., 2021; Slaper & Hall, 2011). Longitudinal studies tracking NEP alumni would provide deeper evidence of sustained skill development, social responsibility orientation, and long-term career trajectories. Comparative studies across diverse countries or cultural contexts could

illuminate factors influencing the effectiveness of EO and SET-based programs, supporting the adaptation of NEP principles to different educational environments.

Additionally, future studies should investigate how demographic factors—including gender, socio-economic status, and prior entrepreneurial experience—affect program outcomes. Such insights would inform the design of inclusive and tailored entrepreneurship programs that maximize both practical skill development and the creation of socially responsible ventures. Addressing these areas will enhance understanding of how structured educational programs like NEP foster entrepreneurial capacities that integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the pivotal role of SET in shaping university-level entrepreneurial education, using the NEP at Chang Jung Christian University and National Pingtung University of Science and Technology as a focal case (El Ebrashi, 2013; Mair & Martí, 2006). NEP operationalizes SET by cultivating EO traits—innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—while embedding social and environmental objectives (Kamal Hossain et al., 2022).

Through comprehensive training, mentorship, and financial support, students translate entrepreneurial knowledge into actionable skills, develop socially responsible mindsets, and design ventures that strike a balance between economic viability and social impact (Khashru & Lin, 2019; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ahmed et al., 2021). The program enhances opportunity recognition, skill acquisition, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with social missions, demonstrating how structured university interventions can foster socially impactful, student-led ventures.

Overall, NEP provides a practical and replicable model for integrating SET principles into higher education. By bridging theory with experiential learning, it equips students to launch ventures that promote both economic and societal well-being, underscoring the potential for similar programs to cultivate socially responsible entrepreneurship across diverse educational contexts (Pless, 2012; Slaper & Hall, 2011).

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