

MODERATING EFFECTS OF UTILITARIAN IDENTITY AND OTHER-REGARDING VALUES ON INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract

This paper intends to test the relationship between institutional pressure (regulatory, cognitive, and normative) and social entrepreneurship orientation in the presence of level of utilitarian identity, level of other-regarding values. The data collection was through a survey-based method from 270 social enterprises were participated. The comprehensive integrated model was designed to test the impact of institutional pressure (regulatory, cognitive, and normative) on social entrepreneurship orientation with moderating role of the level of utilitarian identity, level of other-regarding values. The findings of the study reveal that institutional pressure, level of utilitarian identity, and level of other-regarding values positively and significantly influences social entrepreneurship orientation. Furthermore, the level of utilitarian identity positively and significantly moderates the relationship between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation while, level of other-regarding values negatively and significantly moderates the relationship. In addition, the implications of the study and future directions are also discussed.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship orientation, Institutional and regulatory and cognitive and normative pressure, Level of utilitarian identity, Level of other-regarding values.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24818/beman/2024.14.1-05>

1. INTRODUCTION

Addressing pressing social issues and inequalities has become a focal point in recent studies, advocating for social entrepreneurship orientation as an effective solution (Halberstadt & Kraus, 2016; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Social enterprises, dedicated to societal challenges, highlight the importance of aligning

individuals and institutions with the mission of addressing social problems (Shaw & Carter, 2007). The dynamic relationship between institutional pressures and social entrepreneurship orientation remains a subject of ongoing debate, characterized by inconsistency and unclear variations (Shaw & de Bruin, 2013). This study aims to untangle these complexities, exploring the interconnection between social entrepreneurship orientation and institutional pressures, while identifying factors contributing to their variations. Using a modified Entrepreneurial Orientation scale, the research delves into the performance impact of social enterprises and individual tendencies towards social entrepreneurship (Kraus, Niemand, Halberstadt, Shaw, & Syrjä, 2017). As social entrepreneurship gains momentum in addressing challenges like the growing wealth gap (Shaw & de Bruin, 2013), the study sheds light on critical factors influencing social entrepreneurship orientation. Examining the interplay between formal and informal institutions, this research contributes novel insights to both Social Entrepreneurship Orientation (SEO) and institutional theory.

The study introduces "the level of utilitarian identity" and "the level of other-regarding values" as structures closely associated with SEO, prompting an exploration of their impact on the orientation of social enterprises in China. Unlike previous studies predominantly focused on entrepreneurship, this research uniquely emphasizes the orientation of social enterprises in China towards social entrepreneurship, offering a nuanced analysis of influencing factors.

Applying institutional theory, this study advances the understanding of Social Entrepreneurship Orientation (SEO) and resolves inconsistencies in the impact of institutional pressures. By proposing a model that examines their interaction and integrating moderating effects, the research bridges gaps in prior studies. Focusing on Chinese firms and youth, the study outlines comprehensive objectives, emphasizing the significance of utilitarian identity and other-regarding values in shaping societal impact. Concept of SEO: SEO, a decision-making mindset influencing strategy and management philosophy, plays a crucial role in social enterprises (Hughes et al., 2015; Kraus et al., 2017). It adapts entrepreneurial orientation and reflects diverse perspectives in social entrepreneurship research (Dees, 1998; Kanter & Purrington, 1998; Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Dacin et al., 2010). Regulative Pressures: Normative, cognitive, and regulatory pressures shape public responses within organizations, influencing social enterprises' performance (Black, 2008; Foreman & Whiteman, 2002; Greenwood et al., 2017; Bitektine, 2011). Normative pressures involve emulating social actions, while utilitarian systems focus on economic rationality (Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Short et al., 2009). Utilitarian Identity and Other-Regarding Values: Utilitarian identity, emphasizing economic profit, influences organizations pursuing social causes (Venkataraman, 1997; Luke & Verreynne, 2006; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Other-regarding values, emphasizing altruistic behavior, impact economic and social undertakings (Agle et al., 1999; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Doherty et al., 2014).

Research methodology: quantitative research methods were employed using a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire, developed based on existing literature, served as the primary tool for data collection. Complete responses from social enterprises in China were utilized to extract research findings.

Importance of the study: this research holds significance in addressing the orientation of social enterprises in China towards societal challenges. It contributes to the literature by enhancing understanding, resolving inconsistencies, and integrating moderating effects. The study provides valuable insights for individuals and firms seeking to enhance their orientation towards social entrepreneurship.

1.1 Literature review

Amidst global concerns about social inequalities and environmental sustainability, social enterprises (SEs) are acknowledged as pivotal players in addressing these challenges. Influenced by neoliberal policies and reduced public expenditure on social issues, SEs have gained prominence globally. The entrepreneurial orientation (EO) framework, focusing on decision-making approaches and strategic practices, proves crucial for understanding SEs' capabilities and value creation.

Miller's seminal work (1983, 2011) introduced EO, comprising innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness. Later, scholars added dimensions like competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. In parallel, social entrepreneurship (SE) research experienced diverse definitions, reflecting the evolving landscape. SE encompasses various organizational forms, such as entrepreneurial non-profits, public sector SEs, social cooperatives, and socially-driven business models.

While EO studies have demonstrated positive associations with firm performance, scant attention has been given to developing a scale for measuring social entrepreneurship orientation (SEO). Lumpkin et al. (2013) highlighted SE's unique features, including social mission, stakeholder engagement, and capital access. Miles et al. (2013) and Coombes et al. (2011) explored EO's impact on social performance. Despite the promising potential of SEO research, a critical gap exists in validated measurement scales. This study aims to address this gap by proposing an initial SEO scale derived from expert input in entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship communities. This scale endeavors to contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements in understanding and enhancing the performance of SEs. Institutional theory emphasizes the influence of external forces on organizations, encompassing professional norms and state regulations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Critics argue that institutional theorists tend to focus on structural conformity, overlooking dynamic agency and confrontation in organizational adaptation (Covaleski & Dirsmith, 1988; Powell, 1991).

Organizational scholars debate strategic choices in response to environmental conditions, with two perspectives emerging: external control and strategic choice (Child, 1972; Hitt & Tyler, 1991). Both

perspectives are deemed crucial for understanding organizational adaptation and strategic decisions (Hillman et al., 2009). In navigating environmental constraints, organizations face not only technical and task constraints but also diverse institutional pressures from various sources, including the state, professions, and interest groups (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1987). Institutional pressures can manifest through legal coercion or voluntary diffusion, with organizational conformity likely when norms are intentionally embraced and diffused within a specific field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1987; Oliver, 1991). The organizational response to institutional pressures is shaped by the environmental context, particularly the degree of ambiguity and interconnection. High environmental ambiguity prompts organizations to reduce ambiguity by conforming to institutional pressures or aligning with key constituent groups (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Benner & Tushman, 2003).

1.1.1 Regulatory pressures and environmental innovation

Regulatory pressures, often exerted by governments, hold significant sway over organizations' existence and operations, with noncompliance bearing substantial costs (Deephouse, 1996; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Greater compliance not only mitigates political and legal risks but also aligns with societal expectations, especially concerning environmentally aggressive behaviors (Markman et al., 2004; Berrone et al., 2013). Regulators, typically managers or supervisors, emphasize environmental improvements, with innovation serving as a proactive approach to align with external demands (Deephouse, 1996). Environmental innovation differs from other environmental practices by offering a longer-term, impactful solution to pollution issues (Markman et al., 2004). While environmental innovation may entail costs without clear financial benefits, it enhances a firm's acceptability and helps avoid penalties for regulatory noncompliance (Markman et al., 2004; Lo, 2013). Statutory regulations, though essential, become more potent through their enforcement. Companies are incentivized to comply when there's a higher likelihood of detection (monitoring) and when stricter sanctions are imposed (Deephouse, 1996). Recent global changes in chemical perspectives and regulations, influenced by organizations like the OECD and the UN, reflect a growing awareness of environmental issues (Markman et al., 2004). Regulatory demands for data on pesticide formulations, observed in Europe and the United States, exemplify the increasing focus on environmental concerns (Markman et al., 2004).

In the context of China, regulatory pressures are noted for their irregularity and variability across regions, impacting enterprises differently based on ownership types (Stalley & Yang, 2006; Zhan et al., 2014). Understanding how regulatory pressures, motivations, and perceptions of firms and individuals influence social entrepreneurship is a key area for research (Wei et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018).

CSR Legitimacy and Stakeholder Pressures: Achieving CSR legitimacy is challenging due to non-observable policies, leading firms to opt for symbolic CSR (King & Lenox, 2000). Stakeholder pressures

influence the choice between symbolic and functional CSR, with customer preferences playing a pivotal role (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

1.1.2 Normative pressures and social entrepreneurship

Normative pressures, emanating from institutional norms, significantly impact social entrepreneurship orientation in China (Wei et al., 2017). This study explores firms' willingness and ability to respond to normative pressures, contributing to understanding response heterogeneity.

Organizational identity and other-regarding values: organizational identity, a shared understanding of an entity's features, contributes to reputation. This study delves into the depth of organizational identity development and introduces utilitarian identity and other-regarding values as essential factors shaping organizational behavior.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Institutional theory guides the exploration of how perceptions shape organizational behaviors, integrating normative and utilitarian identity as moderating variables. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on social entrepreneurship orientation, considering the complexity of institutional pressures.

2.1 Regulatory pressures and social entrepreneurship orientation

Regulatory pressures, synonymous with government interference and regulations, significantly influence organizational behavior. While prior research has focused on regulatory pressures in terms of risk management and accountability, this study shifts the focus to their impact on social entrepreneurship orientation, viewing them as a source of organizational performance.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Regulatory pressure positively and significantly influences social entrepreneurship orientation.

This study aims to unravel the intricate relationship between institutional pressures, organizational identity, and social entrepreneurship orientation, introducing moderating variables for a nuanced understanding of contemporary organizational dynamics.

2.2 Cognitive pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation

Cognitive pressure, stemming from internal and external stakeholders, prompts internal stakeholders to adapt their actions. Research indicates its efficacy in short-term performance, especially in social entities with religious themes. This study posits:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Cognitive pressure positively and significantly influences social entrepreneurship orientation.

2.3 Normative pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation

Normative pressure, deeply rooted in institutionalization, shapes social thought and actions. Social entities benefit from aligning their organizational systems with prevalent attitudes and behaviors. Normative pressure predicts the performance of social enterprises, especially in capturing new opportunities. This study proposes:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Normative pressure positively and significantly influences social entrepreneurship orientation.

Organizational identity

Foreman and Whetten (2002) categorize organizations with multiple identities as normative systems, shaped by ideology, vision, and charismatic leadership. This study explores the interplay between institutional pressures and social entrepreneurship orientation in the presence of utilitarian identity and other-regarding values.

2.4 Moderating role of utilitarian identity

Utilizing concepts from Foreman and Whetten (2002), this study measures devotion to utilitarian identity through indicators like cost minimization and revenue maximization. Hypotheses suggest that high utilitarian identity strengthens the relationship between regulatory, cognitive, and normative pressures and social entrepreneurship orientation.

Hypotheses:

H4a: Regulatory Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Utilitarian Identity.

H4b: Cognitive Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Utilitarian Identity.

H4c: Normative Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Utilitarian Identity.

2.5 Moderating role of other-regarding values

Drawing from Agle et al. (1999), the study measures other-regarding values as an alignment toward the welfare of others. Hypotheses propose that high other-regarding values enhance the impact of regulatory, cognitive, and normative pressures on social entrepreneurship orientation.

H5a: Regulatory Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Other-Regarding Values.

H5b: Cognitive Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Other-Regarding Values.

H5c: Normative Pressures' influence on Social Entrepreneurship Orientation is positively moderated by Level of Other-Regarding Values.

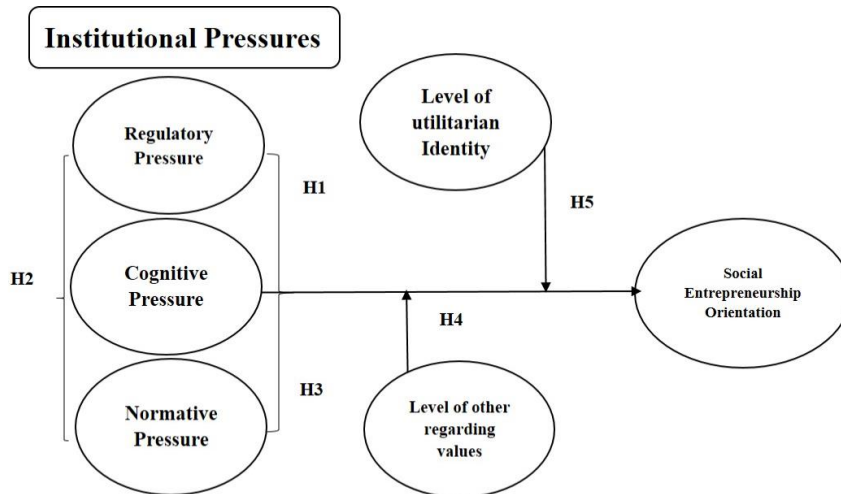


FIGURE 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Source: Authors' research

3. DATA AND METHODS

This section provides a detailed insight into the research methodology, encompassing the tools, techniques, and processes used to conduct this study. Given the study's focus on social entrepreneurship orientation and its multifaceted impact, a quantitative research approach was deemed most fitting. The chapter unfolds the steps involved in the methodology, offering clarity on each stage of the research process.

3.1 Research design

To lay the foundation, an extensive review of literature related to social entrepreneurship orientation, enterprises, institutional theory, and institutional pressures was conducted. This comprehensive exploration helped identify gaps and formulate research questions. Quantitative research methodology was chosen for its suitability in dealing with a larger dataset. Randomly selected social enterprises formed the basis for data collection, executed through a research questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale.

3.2 Data collection

The conceptual framework, derived from extensive literature review, guided the collection of data. The survey questionnaire, comprising 37 items, included basic demographic questions and scales adopted from prior studies. These scales measured institutional pressures (regulatory, cognitive, and normative), social entrepreneurship orientation, level of utilitarian identity, and level of other-regarding values.

3.3 Measurements

The survey questionnaire employed scales to measure various constructs:

- Social entrepreneurship orientation (SEO): A 12-item scale encompassing four factors - social innovativeness, social risk-taking, social proactiveness, and socialness.
- Regulatory pressures: Utilized a 5-item scale to assess the influence of government regulations on social enterprises.
- Cognitive pressures: Employed a 4-item scale to measure the cognitive pressures faced by social enterprises.
- Normative pressures: Utilized a 4-item scale to assess societal norms and cultural influences on social enterprises.
- Level of utilitarian identity: Adopted a 4-item scale to evaluate the extent to which social enterprises focus on profitability and competitive positioning.
- Level of other-regarding values: Utilized a 4-item scale to measure the importance social enterprises place on values like helpfulness, equality, and accountability.

In adopting a quantitative research methodology, the researchers collected data from social enterprises in China. The measurement scales from previous studies facilitated the assessment of institutional pressure, social entrepreneurship orientation, level of utilitarian identity, and level of other-regarding values. The findings revealed positive associations between regulatory, cognitive, and normative pressures with social entrepreneurship orientation. Additionally, the study identified that the level of utilitarian identity moderated the relationship between regulatory pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation. However, no moderation effect was observed for the level of other-regarding values in any relationship.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In alignment with prior research advocating for survey-based methods in correlational-descriptive studies, this research adopts a survey methodology to thoroughly investigate the intricate relations between institutional pressure (regulatory, cognitive, and normative) and social entrepreneurship orientation, considering the moderating impact of utilitarian identity and other-regarding values.

Survey instrument and data collection: the meticulously developed questionnaire, drawing from established scales in previous studies, underwent rigorous translation and expert testing for clarity and validity. The 37-item survey, measured on a 5-point Likert scale, encompassed constructs such as institutional pressures, social entrepreneurship orientation, utilitarian identity, and other-regarding values. Demographic questions, especially those related to ownership structure, were included.

Sampling approach: given the challenges in accessing information from Chinese social enterprises, a non-probability judgmental sampling method was employed. A total of 270 actively engaged firms in social initiatives constituted the study sample measurement.

Model assessment: the validity and reliability of the measurement model underwent rigorous scrutiny through various assessments confirmatory.

Factor analysis (CFA): employed to validate the measurement model, with a minimum threshold of 0.50 for each construct (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009).

Face, convergent validity, and reliability: rigorous checks were conducted to ensure clarity, convergent validity, and reliability of the measurement model.

Discriminant validity: structural model tests were used to establish discriminant validity, confirming the model's validity and rationality.

Statistical analysis: to discern the impact of institutional pressures and the moderating effect of utilitarian identity and other-regarding values on social entrepreneurship orientation, statistical analyses were conducted. Notably, the examination involved a multivariate approach considering the nuanced relationships. These analyses provide a robust foundation for interpreting the results and drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the intricate dynamics between institutional pressures, social entrepreneurship orientation, and moderating factors.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Firm size	Small (10-49 employees)	108	39.93	39.93
	Medium (50-150 employees)	82	30.30	70.12
	Large (151-250 employees)	81	29.90	100
Age	25-40 Years	80	29.52	29.52
	41-60 Years	106	39.11	68.63
	61-79 Years	84	31.37	100
Education	High School to Graduation	139	51.29	51.29
	Graduation to Masters	80	29.52	80.81
	Masters to onward	51	19.19	100.0
Ownership style	Family-Owned	182	67.16	69.16
	Non-Family Owned	89	32.84	100

Source: Authors' research

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TABLE 2. CORRELATION MATRIX

	Cognitive pressures	Level of utilitarian identity	Level of other regarding values	Normative pressure	Regulatory pressures	Social entrepreneurship orientation
Cognitive pressures	1.000					
Level of utilitarian identity	0.468	1.000				
Level of other regarding values	0.425	0.706	1.000			
Normative pressure	0.679	0.513	0.480	1.000		
Regulatory pressures	0.580	0.547	0.575	0.642	1.000	
Social entrepreneurship orientation	0.613	0.732	0.635	0.755	0.693	1.000

Source: Authors' research

Assessment of the measurement model

For assessing the correlation between the studied constructs, the measurement model is run on the basis of three types of validities. First, face validity, second, convergent validity, and third, the discriminant validity. The first one is confirmed after the translation in addition to the little alteration in the scales with the expert opinion in advance to proceed to gather the data. Just after performing the confirmatory factor analysis, the convergent as well as discriminant validity tests were executed.

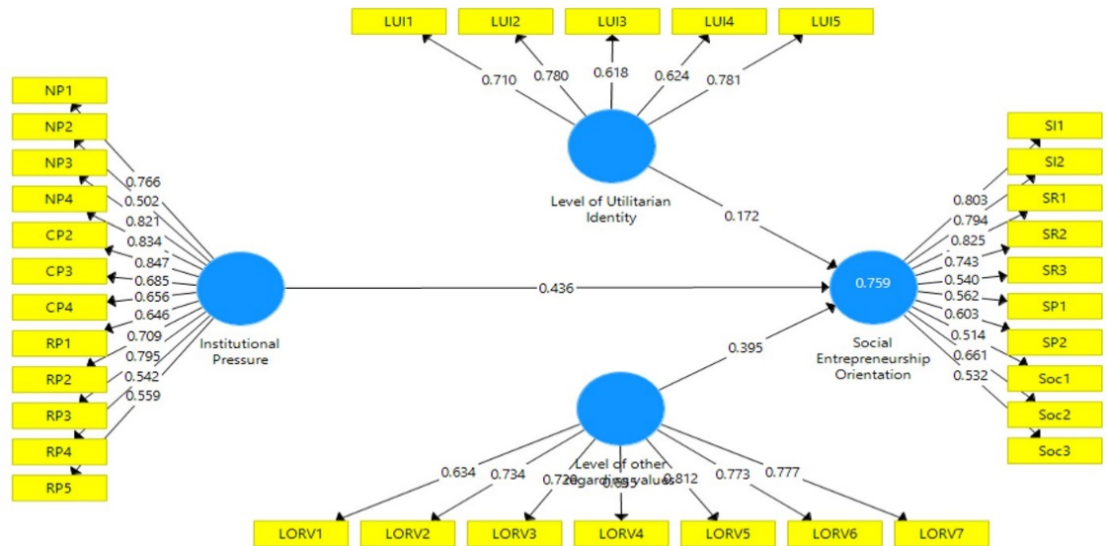


FIGURE 2. MEASUREMENT MODEL

Source: Authors' research

Convergent validity

Convergent validity is recognized on the basis of AVE and composite reliability followed by factor loadings. All the values of loadings were greater than 0.5, likewise composite reliability was found to be greater than 0.7 for all the items and AVE greater than 0.50 (Table 3). The values of Cronbach's alpha for each measured

construct (institutional pressure=0.904, level of utilitarian identity=0.746, level of other regarding values=0.856, and social entrepreneurial orientation=0.856) is higher than threshold value of 0.70 reported in table 4. The value of composite reliability and average variance extract were also higher than threshold values 0.70 and 0.50 (Institutional Pressure= CR=0.921, AVE=0.698, level of utilitarian identity= CR=0.831, AVE=0.598, level of other regarding values= CR=0.889, AVE=0.536, social entrepreneurial orientation= CR=0.886, AVE=0.546).

TABLE 3. CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Construct		Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Institutional pressure	Regulatory pressures	RP1	0.646	0.904	0.916	0.921	0.698
		RP2	0.709				
		RP3	0.795				
		RP5	0.542				
	Cognitive pressures	CP2	0.847				
		CP3	0.685				
		CP4	0.656				
		Normative pressure	NP1				
	NP2		0.502				
	NP3		0.821				
NP4	0.834						
Level of utilitarian identity		LU11	0.710	0.746	0.750	0.831	0.598
		LU12	0.780				
		LU13	0.618				
		LU14	0.624				
		LU15	0.781				
Level of other regarding values		LOR1	0.634	0.856	0.872	0.889	0.536
		LOR2	0.734				
		LOR3	0.720				
		LOR4	0.655				
		LOR5	0.812				
		LOR6	0.773				
		LOR7	0.777				
Social entrepreneurship orientation	Social innovativeness	SI1	0.803	0.856	0.878	0.886	0.546
		SI2	0.794				
	Social risk-taking	SR1	0.825				
		SR2	0.743				
		SR3	0.540				
	Social pro-activeness	SP1	0.562				
		SP2	0.603				
	Socialness	soc1	0.514				
		soc2	0.661				
		soc3	0.532				

Source: Authors' research

Discriminant validity

Just after the statistically verified critics on the explanations by Fornell-Larcker (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), discriminant validity has been considered as the most applicable and suitable measurement witnessed by the current literature by means of heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

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Moreover, two other school of thoughts have also been discussed by which claim regarding the maximum value of the HTMT up to 0.85 whereas claim the up to 0.90. In the cases where the value of HTMT ratio has been found to be above 0.90, it clearly shows the issue in those results. The findings in terms of the values of HTMT ratio show to be less than the recommended threshold as per the criterion. All the findings of HTMT ratio are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY (HTMT RATIO)

	Institutional pressure	Level of utilitarian identity	Level of other regarding values	Social entrepreneurship orientation
Institutional pressure				
Level of utilitarian identity	0.742			
Level of other regarding values	0.625	0.828		
Social entrepreneurship orientation	0.859	0.869	0.854	

Source: Authors' research

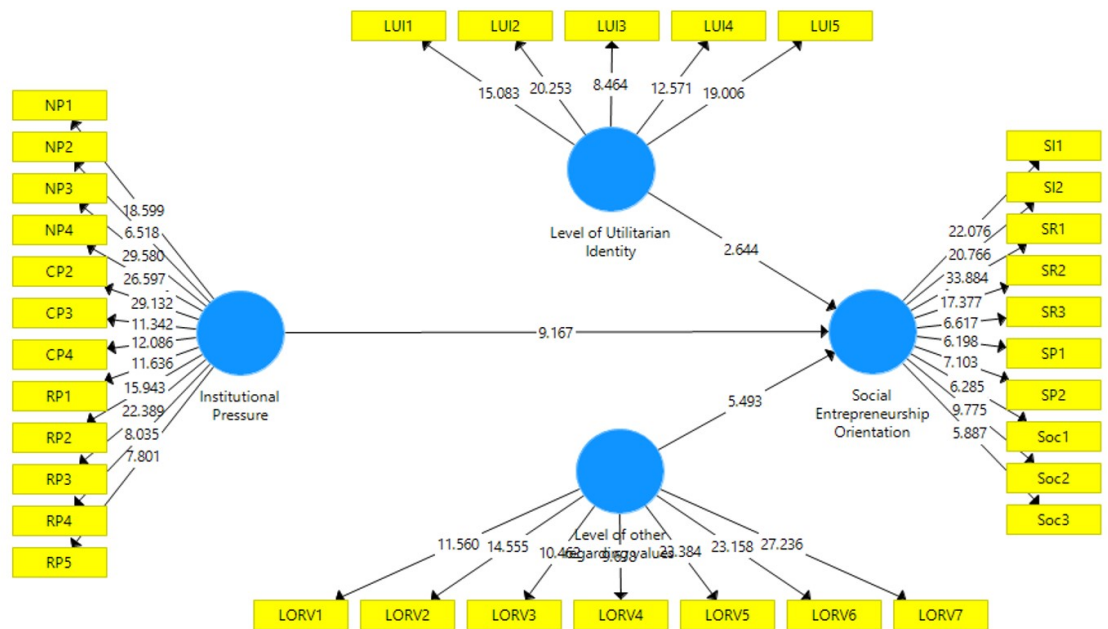


FIGURE 3. STRUCTURAL MODEL WITHOUT MODERATING EFFECT

Source: Authors' research

The structural model underwent robust evaluation through bootstrapping with 5000 resamples. Beyond the conventional scrutiny of R-square, beta, and t-values, a comprehensive assessment included q-square and f-square to elucidate not just the presence or absence of influence (p-values) but also their effect size and numerical importance. The findings, presented in Table 5, highlight positive relationships between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.436$, $t = 9.167$, $p < 0.01$), affirming H1.

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Additionally, H2 ($\beta = 0.172$, $t = 2.644$, $p < 0.01$) and H3 ($\beta = 0.395$, $t = 5.493$, $p < 0.01$) find robust support in the data, establishing positive and substantial relationships between the studied constructs (Table 5).

Level of utilitarian identity and level of other regarding values as moderating variable in the relationship between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation. The results of moderation reveals that both level of utilitarian identity and level of other regarding values have significantly moderating effects in the link among institutional pressure and social entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, the results of figure 4 reveal that level of utilitarian identity have positively moderating effects in the relation between institutional pressure while, level of other regarding values negatively moderate the relationship between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurial orientation.

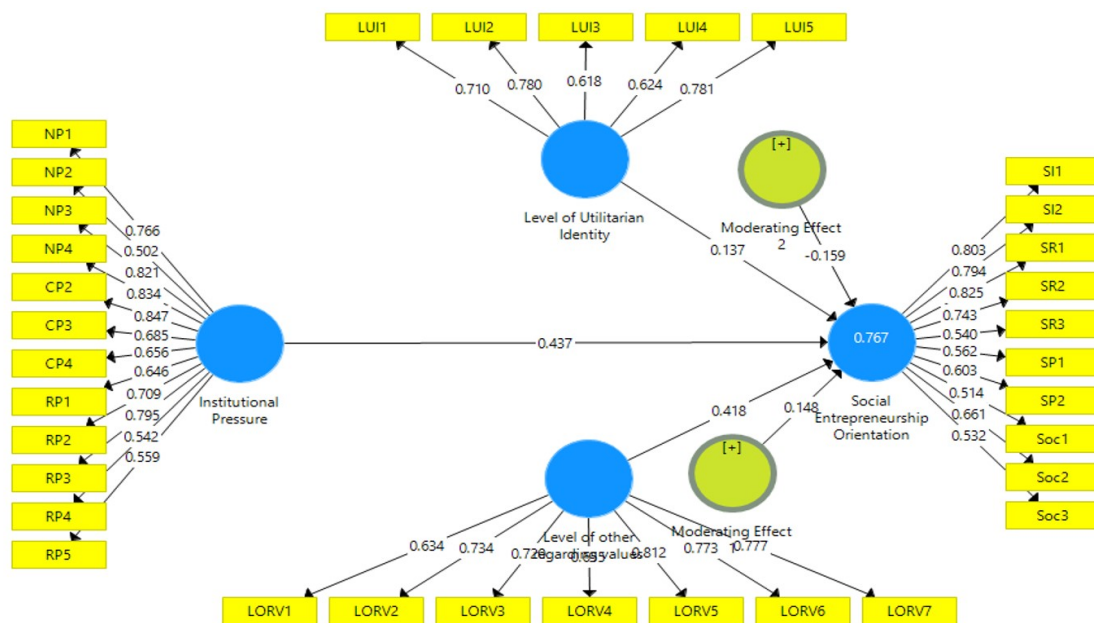


FIGURE 4. STRUCTURAL MODEL WITH MODERATING EFFECT
Source: Authors' research

TABLE 5. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS WITH MODERATING EFFECT

Hypothesis	Constructs	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H1	Institutional Pressure -> Social Entrepreneurship Orientation	0.437	0.049	8.935	0.000	Supported
H2	Level of Utilitarian Identity -> Social Entrepreneurship Orientation	0.137	0.066	2.067	0.039	Supported
H3	Level of other regarding values -> Social Entrepreneurship Orientation	0.418	0.073	5.701	0.000	Supported
H4	Moderating Effect 1 -> Social Entrepreneurship Orientation	0.148	0.058	2.542	0.011	Supported
H5	Moderating Effect 2 -> Social Entrepreneurship Orientation	-0.159	0.061	2.599	0.009	Supported

Source: Authors' research

The study's hypotheses were rigorously tested and the results are summarized below:

H1: Institutional pressure significantly positively influences social entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.437$, $t = 8.935$, $p < 0.01$). Supported.

H2: Level of utilitarian identity has a significant positive influence on social entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.137$, $t = 2.067$, $p < 0.05$). Supported.

H3: Level of other-regarding values has a significant positive influence on social entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 5.701$, $p < 0.01$). Supported.

H4: Level of utilitarian identity positively moderates the relationship between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation ($\beta = 0.148$, $t = 2.542$, $p < 0.05$). Supported.

H5: Level of other-regarding values negatively moderates the relationship between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation ($\beta = -0.159$, $t = 2.599$, $p < 0.01$). Supported.

5. DISCUSSION

Institutional pressure & social entrepreneurship orientation: the study establishes a significant and positive influence of institutional pressure on social entrepreneurship orientation, offering novel insights into this relationship. Social entrepreneurship orientation: contributes a precise definition and measurement scale, revealing positive associations with institutional pressure, utilitarian identity, and other-regarding values. Utilitarian identity: significantly and positively influences social entrepreneurship orientation, additionally acting as a positive moderator between institutional pressure and social entrepreneurship orientation. Other-regarding values: positively influences social entrepreneurship orientation but introduces a nuanced perspective by negatively moderating the relationship with institutional pressure, deviating from existing literature.

These findings not only contribute to the understanding of social entrepreneurship dynamics but also validate the scales used in this study, paving the way for further exploration in this evolving field. This study advances our understanding of the relationship between institutions, social entrepreneurship orientation, and moderating factors, making several noteworthy contributions. Institutional Pressure (IP): Recognizing IP as a multifaceted variable with regulatory, cognitive, and normative dimensions (Scott, 1995), this research affirms its positive and significant influence on social entrepreneurship orientation (SEO) ($\beta = 0.437$, $t = 8.935$, $p < 0.01$). Notably, IP continues to shape SEO in the presence of utilitarian identity (UI) positively ($\beta = 0.148$, $t = 2.542$, $p < 0.05$) and negatively ($\beta = -0.159$, $t = 2.599$, $p < 0.01$). Social Entrepreneurship Orientation (SEO): Pioneering a clear definition and robust measurement scale, this study establishes positive associations between IP and SEO ($\beta = 0.437$, $t = 8.935$, $p < 0.01$), UI and SEO ($\beta = 0.137$, $t = 2.067$, $p < 0.05$), and other-regarding values (ORV) and SEO ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 5.701$, $p < 0.01$). Utilitarian Identity (UI) relates Highlighting UI's significant positive influence on SEO ($\beta = 0.137$, $t =$

2.067, $p < 0.05$), the study reveals its positive and significant moderating role in the IP-SEO relationship ($\beta = 0.148$, $t = 2.542$, $p < 0.05$). Other-Regarding Values (ORV) Uncovering a positive and significant relationship with SEO ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 5.701$, $p < 0.01$), ORV surprisingly exhibits a negative and significant moderating effect on the IP-SEO relationship ($\beta = -0.159$, $t = 2.599$, $p < 0.01$), challenging existing literature.

In summary, this study not only validates the current SEO scale but introduces nuanced perspectives, enriching our understanding of the intricate interplay between IP, individual identity (UI), values (ORV), and SEO in the context of social entrepreneurship.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Study results align with hypotheses, affirming the Social Entrepreneurship Orientation (SEO) scale in China. SEO positively associates with institutional pressures (regulatory, cognitive, and normative), utilitarian identity, and other-regarding values. The Chinese landscape reveals a gap, emphasizing other-regarding values over utilitarian identity in SEO. Theoretical and practical implications: the study pioneers exploration of SEO in Chinese social enterprises, enriching institutional theory with novel insights. It guides management by validating the SEO scale, aids policymakers in nuanced interventions, and introduces strategic choice perception. The integration of strategic choices emphasizes organizational adaptation to institutional pressures. Limitations and future directions: acknowledging limitations, universal applicability may vary. Future research should explore ownership style impact on SEO using Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) and consider factors like organizational structure. Diverse theories beyond institutionalism could enhance SEO understanding.

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