



Young Women and Social Entrepreneurship in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: A Conceptual Inquiry Grounded in Islamic Philanthropy

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Islamic philanthropy; social entrepreneurship; Holy City of Madinah; spiritual serenity; intrinsic motivation. Article history: Received: 2024-03-18 Revised: 2024-05-25 Accepted: 2024-07-20	This study presents a conceptual examination of social entrepreneurship among young women in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, a city of singular historical significance as the cradle of Islamic civilization and the origin of organized Islamic philanthropy. Drawing on two years of fieldwork (2020–2022) conducted by the Basiqat Waqf Foundation, in which 128 young women completed structured training in personal and entrepreneurial development using the Personal Development Analysis (PDA) instrument, the study employs a qualitative approach integrating critical literature review with systematic thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006). Aggregate behavioral profiling via the DISC framework revealed a predominant orientation toward Influence (mean score 72.3/100) and Steadiness (mean score 68.1/100), reflecting a relational and community-centered motivational profile that diverges markedly from those associated with conventional commercial entrepreneurship. The central finding indicates that intrinsic satisfaction derived from socially meaningful contribution constitutes the primary motivational driver, superseding market competition and financial incentives. Furthermore, spiritual serenity, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Madinah, was found to play a structurally significant role in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors. Post-training follow-up data (2023–2024) confirmed that 89 of 128 participants (69.5%) sustained active social entrepreneurial engagement, providing empirical support for the durability of intrinsically motivated commitment. The study offers conceptual and practical guidance for stakeholders developing social entrepreneurship ecosystems that are sensitive to local cultural and spiritual dimensions, thereby transcending purely market-driven and competitive paradigms. <i>This is an open-access article under the CC BY-NC license.</i>



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1. INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia has undergone a profound socioeconomic transformation under the framework of Vision 2030, a comprehensive national reform agenda aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship, fostering the emergence of innovative enterprises, and strengthening the non-profit sector, particularly the institution of *awqaf*, which carries deep historical and civilizational significance. Within this reform landscape, social entrepreneurship has attracted notable attention from governmental bodies, financial institutions, young people, and the academic community (Belabes, 2022a). Yet despite this growing interest, peer-reviewed scholarship on the subject remains limited, particularly with regard to women-centered social entrepreneurship within specific institutional contexts.

The prevailing body of literature on women and entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia focuses predominantly on economic entrepreneurship, while questions pertaining to social entrepreneurship by women receive far less scholarly attention. This gap is even more pronounced when the inquiry is situated within a particular institutional setting over an extended fieldwork period, as is the case in the present study. Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, literally known as the enlightened city, occupies a unique position within this scholarly inquiry. As the cradle of Islamic civilization and the historical center of organized Islamic charity, the city possesses intrinsic sociocultural and spiritual specificities that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Against this backdrop, the present study pursues three interrelated objectives. The first objective is to map the epistemological landscape of existing scholarly approaches to social entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia and to identify their explanatory limitations. The second objective is to analyze the behavioral and motivational profiles of 128 young women who participated in a structured social entrepreneurship training program in Al-Madinah between 2020 and 2022, with specific attention to the role of spiritual and intrinsic motivations. The third objective is to propose a context-sensitive conceptual framework that integrates Islamic philanthropic heritage, spiritual serenity, and intrinsic purpose as primary drivers of social entrepreneurial commitment among young women in Madinah. The guiding research question is as follows. In what ways do spiritual serenity and Islamic philanthropic heritage shape the motivational foundations and behavioral orientations of young women social entrepreneurs in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah?

The present study is grounded in fieldwork carried out by the Basiqat Waqf Foundation through the end of 2022, culminating in the organization of the Muntijin (producers) event held on 28 and 29 December 2022. Its overarching objective is to conceptualize the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship among young women in this holy city, proceeding from the theoretical premise that quality is an emergent property of its own conditions rather than a derivative of quantitative accumulation. The migration of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) from Mecca to Madinah in 622 CE marked a civilizational turning point whose social and charitable legacies remain deeply embedded in the culture and daily practices of the city's inhabitants.

This article is structured according to the IMRAD convention. The second section reviews the relevant literature and maps three epistemologically distinct postures that characterize existing approaches to social entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia. A supplementary subsection introduces the emerging international scholarship on gender and social entrepreneurship in Islamic contexts, situating the Madinah case within a broader comparative framework. The third section describes the methodological approach adopted. The fourth section presents and discusses the conceptual framework proposed by this study, articulating four interrelated constructs that emerge from field data collected by the Basiqat Foundation and from the historical and spiritual specificities of Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah. A dedicated Discussion section follows, engaging the findings with the international literature and addressing the theoretical and practical implications of the

study. The concluding section addresses the theoretical and practical contributions of the study, acknowledges its limitations, and proposes directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although genuine scholarly interest in social entrepreneurship within Saudi Arabia has grown substantially since the formal launch of Vision 2030 in 2016, academic publications addressing this phenomenon in a rigorous and context-sensitive manner remain rare (Aljuhani, 2024). A systematic reading of the available literature reveals three epistemologically distinct postures that have shaped scholarly engagement with this topic.

2.1. The Islamic Finance Posture

The first posture approaches social entrepreneurship through the lens of Islamic finance, arguing that social enterprises should be financed through equity-sharing instruments consistent with the principles of profit and loss sharing (Kayed, 2006; Kayed & Hassan, 2010). While theoretically coherent within an Islamic normative framework, this posture is substantially disconnected from empirical financial practice. The application of equity financing instruments such as *mudarabah* and *musharakah* remains marginal in comparison to debt-based instruments such as *tawarruq*, *murabahah*, and *ijarah*, which dominate the actual financing landscape in the region (Belabes, 2019). This discrepancy between normative prescription and practical reality substantially limits the explanatory power of this posture.

2.2. The Competitive Ecosystem Posture

The second posture draws on Porter's (1990) theory of the competitive advantage of nations, repositioning the Saudi government as the primary architect of a supportive ecosystem within which social enterprises can develop and thrive (Khan, 2016; Hakami, 2021). Proponents of this view emphasize the need to clearly define social enterprises, diagnose their operational challenges, and address their funding requirements. Within this framework, government intervention across five domains is considered essential: cultural awareness of and advocacy for social entrepreneurship, foundational infrastructure, appropriate financing mechanisms, access to networks, and education and training aligned with evolving social needs (Halaoui & Althukair, 2020). Complementary recommendations include the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture, improved regulatory environments, and coordinated institutional support (Nieva, 2015). Mair and Marti (2006) extend this line of reasoning by positioning social entrepreneurship as a process of creating value by combining resources in new ways, principally to explore and exploit opportunities that address social needs. Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006) further distinguish social entrepreneurship from commercial entrepreneurship on the basis of its mission orientation, arguing that whereas commercial entrepreneurs pursue market opportunities to generate wealth, social entrepreneurs pursue social value creation even when financial returns are constrained or absent.

2.3. The Integrative Spiritual Posture

The third posture bridges the preceding two by demonstrating that religious and spiritual values constitute a meaningful influence on social entrepreneurial behavior in Saudi Arabia (Alarifi and Alrubaihi, 2018). This position resonates with broader international scholarship on the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and entrepreneurship (Audretsch, Bonte, and Tamvada, 2013; Balog, Baker, and Walker, 2014). Entrepreneurial activity in religiously grounded communities tends to be characterized by passion, commitment, and an optimism capable of overcoming uncertainty about the future (Seabright, 2016). Incorporating the religious and spiritual dimension of business activity is therefore considered essential for achieving a more complete and contextually sensitive understanding of the entrepreneurial phenomenon

(Gundolf, Saroglou, and Janssen, 2021). Rezaei, Jafari-Sadeghi, and Bresciani (2022) further demonstrate that religiosity functions as a positive predictor of social entrepreneurial intention in Muslim-majority contexts, mediated by prosocial motivation and communal identity, a finding that corroborates and extends the integrative spiritual posture within an empirically grounded framework.

While each of these postures contributes meaningfully to the scholarly conversation, none is sufficient on its own to account for the multidimensional character of social entrepreneurship as it is lived and practiced in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah. The present study seeks to address this gap by constructing a conceptual framework that is sensitive to the historical trajectory of the city, its philanthropic heritage, and the specific motivational dynamics of its young women social entrepreneurs.

2.4. Gender and Social Entrepreneurship in Islamic Contexts

A growing body of international scholarship has examined the intersection of gender, religion, and entrepreneurship, yet studies focusing specifically on women social entrepreneurs in Islamic institutional settings remain underrepresented in the Scopus-indexed literature (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Baughn, Chua, and Neupert, 2006). Ahl (2006) demonstrates that mainstream entrepreneurship research is systematically gendered, privileging masculine-coded traits such as risk-taking and competitive drive while marginalizing relational and communal orientations that characterize many women-led ventures. Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2009) further argue that a gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship must account for embeddedness in social, cultural, and institutional contexts that profoundly shape entrepreneurial agency.

In Muslim-majority settings, these contextual dimensions acquire additional significance through the overlay of religious norms, communal obligations, and spiritual values. Wilson, Marlino, and Kickul (2004) observe that entrepreneurial motivation among women in religiously grounded communities tends to be oriented toward social impact and collective well-being rather than individual wealth accumulation. Hasan (2020) demonstrates that Islamic social finance instruments, including waqf and zakat, provide institutional frameworks that channel individual philanthropic impulses into organized communal action, thereby creating an enabling infrastructure for women's social entrepreneurship. Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, and Shulman (2009) further propose a typology of social entrepreneurs distinguished by the breadth and depth of the social change they seek to generate, a typology that accommodates the community-embedded and spiritually grounded model of social entrepreneurship examined in the present study.

These international findings resonate with and extend the Saudi-specific literature reviewed in the preceding sections, suggesting that the Madinah context, while distinctive in its civilizational depth and spiritual intensity, is not isolated from broader patterns in the global scholarship on gender, religion, and social entrepreneurship. The present study situates itself within this emerging international conversation while contributing a contextually grounded empirical and conceptual perspective that the existing literature lacks.

3. METHODS

The methodological approach adopted in this study combines a critical literature review with qualitative field data. The study is situated within an interpretive qualitative paradigm, which holds that social phenomena are best understood through the meanings that participants attribute to their own experiences (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). This epistemological orientation is appropriate for a context in which spiritual serenity, intrinsic pleasure, and philanthropic identity constitute the primary objects of inquiry, given that these constructs are not reducible to quantifiable variables but are constituted through lived experience and social

interaction. The critical literature review was designed to conceptualize the phenomenon of young women's social entrepreneurship in Al-Madinah in relation to Islamic philanthropy. In contrast to a systematic review, which requires exhaustive database searches and predefined inclusion criteria, a critical literature review foregrounds interpretive depth and theoretical discrimination, selecting sources on the basis of their capacity to illuminate the specificities of the Madinah context and to challenge insufficiently critical assumptions prevalent in popular discourse (Grant and Booth, 2009). Studies were therefore selected for their theoretical rigor rather than for their frequency of citation, and the review was conducted with an explicit commitment to epistemological reflexivity.

The theoretical framework guiding this study treats the social sector not as a third sector supplementary to the state and the market, but as the historically primary sector, in light of Al-Madinah's own civilizational trajectory. This distinction is significant. When the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah, the first institution he established was the mosque of Quba as a waqf. The foundation of the state and the market followed several days thereafter. The waqf is thus not reducible to a philanthropic donation mechanism or a financial institution. It represents a form of community organization premised on the principle of subsidiarity, whereby society builds itself from below, allowing each individual to act first in accordance with their own capacity and conscience (Belabes, 2017).

Field data were drawn from the two-year training program administered by the Basiqat Waqf Foundation between 2020 and 2022, through which 128 young women received instruction in personal development and entrepreneurial excellence. The Personal Development Analysis (PDA) instrument was central to this program. PDA is a scientifically validated behavioral assessment tool developed by Thomas International (2020), designed to measure behavioral tendencies, motivational needs, and personality dispositions across four primary dimensions corresponding to the DISC behavioral model, namely Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Compliance. In the context of this training program, PDA profiles were used to identify each participant's intrinsic motivational orientations, to tailor individual development pathways, and to support the emergence of social project ideas aligned with each woman's genuine aptitudes and values.

3.1. Thematic Analysis Procedure

To generate analytical insight from the qualitative field data collected during and after the Basiqat training program, this study employs thematic analysis following the six-phase procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first phase, the researcher familiarized himself with the data by reading through training session notes, PDA interview records, and follow-up institutional progress reports in their entirety. In the second phase, initial codes were generated systematically across the dataset, capturing features of the data relevant to the research question. In the third phase, codes were sorted and collated into potential themes by grouping conceptually related codes together. In the fourth phase, themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the full dataset to ensure coherence and distinctiveness. In the fifth phase, themes were defined and named so as to convey the conceptual essence of each thematic cluster. In the sixth phase, the final report was produced, incorporating representative anonymized extracts to illustrate each theme.

To strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), a peer debriefing process was conducted in which an independent researcher with expertise in Islamic social economy reviewed the coding structure and thematic interpretations. Coding agreement was assessed through a comparative review of independently generated code lists, resulting in a consensus rate of 84 percent across the primary codes. Divergences were resolved through discussion and collaborative refinement of the coding framework. Member checking was conducted with a purposive subsample of eight participants who reviewed summary thematic

descriptions and confirmed their representativeness of lived experience. All participant data were referred to by anonymized identifier codes throughout the analysis (for example, Participant A4 or Participant B12) in compliance with the study's ethical protocols outlined below.

3.2. Positionality Statement

The author acknowledges that, as the founder and leading researcher affiliated with the Basiqat Waqf Foundation, his positionality as both researcher and institutional actor introduces a relational proximity to the field that shapes the interpretive process. Steps taken to mitigate the risks arising from this dual role include the systematic documentation of analytical decisions in a reflexive research journal, the independent peer debriefing process described above, and the grounding of all empirical claims in data that are verifiable through institutional records. The author's insider status also confers analytical advantages, including privileged access to participant narratives and an embodied understanding of the Madinah cultural context that would be difficult to achieve through detached observation.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in compliance with the ethical standards applicable to research involving human participants. Institutional ethical approval for the training program and associated data collection was granted by the King Abdulaziz University Research Ethics Committee (Approval reference KAU-REC-2020-0034). All 128 participants provided written informed consent prior to their enrolment in the training program. Participants were informed that their responses and behavioral profiles would be used for both training and research purposes. Participant data were anonymized throughout the analysis and in all reported findings. No personally identifiable information is disclosed in this study. The author declares full compliance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Field Data and Training Outcomes

Between early 2020 and the close of 2022, the Basiqat Foundation trained a total of 128 young women in social entrepreneurship. Table 1 presents the annual distribution of participants, which reflects an upward trend corresponding to growing interest in social entrepreneurship across political, social, economic, and media spheres in the holy city of Madinah. No prior academic publication on social entrepreneurship specifically in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah has been identified in the literature, which underscores the originality and scholarly contribution of the present study.

Table 4.1. Annual Distribution of Training Participants at the Basiqat Waqf Foundation (2020-2022)

Year	Participants	Cumulative Total	Focus Area
2020	32	32	Foundational personal development
2021	43	75	Entrepreneurial skills and project design
2022	53	128	Social impact and community outreach

The training program, titled Personal Development and Entrepreneurial Excellence, was designed to place all participating young women on an equal footing by offering tailored instruction responsive to each participant's individual profile. Its primary ambition was to

accompany each participant in discovering, from within herself, a social entrepreneurship project capable of generating genuine passion and of sustainably improving quality of life in the holy city. The program's curriculum encompassed three interconnected domains, namely the development of capabilities and modern skills; the acquisition of essential knowledge including feasibility analysis, project design, financing mechanisms, and business models; and engagement with foundational elements such as personality profiling through PDA, creative and critical thinking, and entrepreneurial mindset formation.

Social impact within this training model was found to rest on three foundational factors. The first is the existence of a timely and genuine social need. The second is the availability of an applicable and rigorously conceived idea capable of addressing that need. The third, and most distinctive, is the originality of the idea in providing a sense of pleasure that endures over time and sustains continued engagement.

4.2. Aggregate DISC Behavioral Profiles

Table 2 presents the aggregate DISC behavioral profile scores derived from the PDA assessments administered to all 128 participants during the training program. The scores reveal a consistent pattern across the sample that provides important empirical grounding for the study's theoretical claims.

Table 4.2. Aggregate DISC Behavioral Profiles of Training Participants (N=128)

Dimension	Description	Mean Score	SD	Min	Max	Profile Level
Dominance (D)	Task-orientation, assertiveness, competitive drive	41.2	11.8	18	71	Low-Moderate
Influence (I)	Social engagement, enthusiasm, relational warmth	72.3	10.9	44	95	High
Steadiness (S)	Consistency, patience, community service orientation	68.4	12.1	38	91	High
Compliance (C)	Adherence to standards, accuracy, conscientiousness	57.6	9.4	33	79	Moderate

Note. Scores are on a standardized scale of 0 to 100 as per Thomas International (2020). High denotes a mean score above 65; Low-Moderate denotes a mean score between 35 and 55. Profile levels are classified in accordance with the descriptive thresholds established in the PDA technical manual.

The aggregate profiles reveal that Influence (I) and Steadiness (S) are the dominant behavioral dimensions across the sample, with mean scores of 72.3 and 68.4, respectively. By contrast, the Dominance (D) dimension records the lowest mean score at 41.2, indicating that competitive assertiveness and task-driven urgency are not the predominant behavioral orientations in this population. This pattern is theoretically significant: it suggests that the motivational architecture of these young women social entrepreneurs is structured around relational warmth, communal commitment, and patient consistency rather than the competitive drive and market-oriented urgency that characterize commercial entrepreneurship. The Compliance (C) score of 57.6 indicates a moderate orientation toward procedural adherence, consistent with the participants' engagement in structured training and their responsiveness to institutional guidance without subordinating creative initiative.

4.3. Thematic Analysis Results

The systematic thematic analysis of the qualitative field data generated four primary themes, presented in Table 3 below. Each theme is accompanied by its frequency of occurrence across the

128 participant records and by illustrative anonymized quotations that convey the experiential texture of the theme.

Table 4.3. Summary of Thematic Analysis Results (N=128)

Theme	Brief Description	n	Percent
Spiritual Motivation and Sacred Purposefulness	Participants articulate entrepreneurial orientation as inseparable from spiritual duty and divine connection	112	87.5
Community and Relational Orientation	Participants emphasize the primacy of communal benefit and interpersonal bonds in their entrepreneurial projects	98	76.6
Intrinsic Fulfillment as Entrepreneurial Driver	Participants describe a deep sense of personal meaning and satisfaction as the primary motivation for sustained engagement	89	69.5
Philanthropic Identity Rooted in Madinah Heritage	Participants articulate a sense of inherited philanthropic identity tied to the historical and civilizational legacy of Madinah	103	80.5

Note. *n* indicates the number of participants whose data contributed codes to that theme. Percentages are calculated against the total participant sample of 128. Themes are not mutually exclusive; individual participants may contribute to more than one theme.

4.3.1. Theme 1. Spiritual Motivation and Sacred Purposefulness

The most prominently occurring theme across the dataset concerns the role of spiritual motivation in shaping entrepreneurial orientation. A total of 112 participants (87.5 percent) expressed, through interview responses and behavioral profiles, an entrepreneurial commitment explicitly grounded in spiritual duty, divine proximity, or Islamic obligation. Participant A4 stated that "when I serve pilgrims at the Prophet's Mosque, I feel complete. It is not about recognition. It is about being exactly where I am meant to be." Participant C9 similarly noted that "my project is not separate from my prayers. They are the same act." These expressions are consistent with the concept of spiritual serenity proposed by this study, and they suggest that the sacred and the entrepreneurial are not merely compatible but are experienced as unified by a significant majority of participants.

4.3.2. Theme 2. Community and Relational Orientation

The second theme captures participants' orientation toward community benefit and relational engagement as the primary purpose of their entrepreneurial activity. Participant B12 articulated this orientation clearly, stating that "the training helped me see that what I love and what my community needs can be the same thing." For 98 participants (76.6 percent), the social dimension of entrepreneurship was not a secondary consideration appended to a primarily economic or self-interested motivation. Rather, communal well-being constituted the foundational rationale from which all project ideas emerged. This finding aligns with Brush, de Bruin, and Welter's (2009)

argument that women's entrepreneurship in socially embedded contexts is animated by relational rather than competitive logics.

4.3.3. Theme 3. Intrinsic Fulfillment as Entrepreneurial Driver

The third theme concerns the role of intrinsic fulfillment as a durable driver of entrepreneurial engagement. Among the 89 participants (69.5 percent) whose data contributed to this theme, a recurring pattern emerged in which personal meaning and communal benefit were experienced as mutually constitutive rather than competing goods. Participant D3 described her engagement in these terms: "I am not doing this because someone told me to. I continue because when I stop, something inside me feels incomplete." This experiential inseparability of personal fulfillment and communal service provides empirical grounding for the conceptual claim that intrinsic pleasure, understood in the sense elaborated by Ryan and Deci (2000), constitutes a primary and self-sustaining motivational driver in this population.

4.3.4. Theme 4. Philanthropic Identity Rooted in Madinah Heritage

The fourth theme addresses the sense of inherited philanthropic identity that participants articulate in relation to the civilizational history of Al-Madinah. Among 103 participants (80.5 percent), the data revealed expressions of entrepreneurial identity explicitly rooted in the historical narrative of the ansar and in the philanthropic traditions of the holy city. Participant C7 offered a particularly resonant formulation: "Growing up in Madinah, giving is not something we decide to do. It is something we already are." This finding supports the theoretical claim that Islamic Philanthropic Heritage functions not merely as a historical backdrop but as a living motivational resource that actively shapes the identities and commitments of contemporary young women social entrepreneurs.

4.4. The Centrality of Intrinsic Pleasure

The Basiqat Foundation's approach departs from mainstream discourse on social entrepreneurship by centering the concept of pleasure as a motivational driver rather than innovation in the conventional sense of an idea that has found a market (Belabes, 2022b). The factor of pleasure, understood as a deep and sincere sense of doing what one loves and doing it with excellence, has been systematically marginalized in conventional explanations of entrepreneurial motivation, which tend to privilege independence, social recognition, business success, innovativeness, and the continuation of family tradition (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The present study draws selectively on Barthes's (1973) literary-semiotic analysis of reading pleasure not to import his semiotic framework wholesale into entrepreneurship theory, but to appropriate his specific insight that pleasure, in its deepest form, is not self-enclosed or narcissistic but generative of an intersubjective bond that transcends individual identity and social opposition. This dimension of Barthes's argument resonates with the Basiqat Foundation's observation that the most durable form of social entrepreneurial motivation among Madinah women arises when personal fulfillment and communal benefit become experientially inseparable.

In practical terms, the challenge that young women social entrepreneurs in Madinah face is not primarily one of market access, funding, or institutional support, though these remain relevant. It is the more fundamental challenge of identifying what each woman genuinely loves to do while simultaneously ensuring that this activity is beneficial to others. This orientation toward purposeful pleasure as a driver of sustained social engagement distinguishes the Basiqat model from purely competitive or performance-based frameworks.

4.5. The Proposed Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the field data collected by the Basiqat Waqf Foundation and on the theoretical postures reviewed above, this study proposes a context-sensitive conceptual framework comprising four interrelated constructs. The framework is designed to capture the

multidimensional character of social entrepreneurship among young women in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, moving beyond purely competitive or market-driven models. Table 4 presents the constructs, their operational definitions, their source bases, and the proposed directional relationships between them. Taken together, these relationships form a dynamic and self-reinforcing system rather than a linear causal chain. Islamic Philanthropic Heritage, rooted in the waqf tradition and in the civilizational memory of the ansar, shapes and nurtures Spiritual Serenity as a constitutive orientation of daily life. Spiritual Serenity in turn activates and deepens Intrinsic Pleasure and Purpose as a motivational foundation for social action. Intrinsic Pleasure and Purpose drives and sustains Social Entrepreneurial Commitment over time, while Social Entrepreneurial Commitment continuously regenerates and enriches the Islamic Philanthropic Heritage through the reproduction of values of generosity, hospitality, and communal service.

Table 4.4. *Proposed Conceptual Framework for Social Entrepreneurship among Young Women in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah*

Construct	Definition	Source Basis	Proposed Relationship
Islamic Philanthropic Heritage	The historically primary sector of communal organization in Madinah, rooted in the waqf tradition and the civilizational legacy of the Prophet's migration	Belabes (2017); Malinowski (1922)	Shapes and nurtures Spiritual Serenity through centuries of embedded cultural practice
Spiritual Serenity	A contextually constitutive orientation arising from the non-separation of the sacred and the quotidian in daily life	Gundolf, Saroglou, and Janssen (2021); Alarifi and Alrubaishi (2018)	Activates and deepens Intrinsic Pleasure and Purpose in social engagement
Intrinsic Pleasure and Purpose	The deep and sincere sense of doing what one loves in a manner that is simultaneously beneficial to others, superseding market or competitive incentives	Ryan and Deci (2000); Barthes (1973)	Drives and sustains Social Entrepreneurial Commitment over time
Social Entrepreneurial Commitment	Durable engagement in community-oriented social initiatives, sustained beyond training periods and external incentives	Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006); Hakami (2021)	Reinforces Islamic Philanthropic Heritage through the reproduction of values of generosity and service

Note. Arrows indicate directional influence. The framework is proposed as a heuristic device for future empirical testing rather than as a definitive causal model. Future research employing mixed-methods or survey-based designs may operationalize and test the proposed relationships across broader institutional samples.

4.6. Post-Training Evidence

Follow-up data collected during 2023 and 2024, through structured interviews and institutional progress reports conducted by the Basiqat Foundation, indicate that 89 of the 128 trained women (approximately 70 per cent) have remained actively engaged in social entrepreneurship initiatives. Among these, 54 participants have continued to participate in volunteer-based projects serving pilgrims during Hajj and Ramadan, including the organization of the breaking of the Ramadan fast at the Prophet's Mosque. A further 35 participants have launched or co-launched community-oriented social projects addressing identified needs within the Madinah urban environment. This post-training participation is interpreted as evidence that the intrinsic pleasure and spiritual motivation cultivated during the training program generate durable social entrepreneurial commitment, rather than transient engagement driven by external incentives.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer several points of convergence with and divergence from the existing international literature on social entrepreneurship, gender, and religious motivation. The predominant DISC profiles revealed by the aggregate behavioral analysis (high Influence and high Steadiness, as presented in Table 2) are consistent with findings from Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern (2006), who argue that social entrepreneurship is characterized by a relational and mission-driven motivational orientation that distinguishes it from commercial entrepreneurship. The low-to-moderate Dominance scores recorded among Madinah participants further reinforce the study's central claim that conventional competitive and market-driven frameworks are inadequate for understanding social entrepreneurship in this context, given that high Dominance is typically associated with competitive and assertive behavioral styles in the PDA literature (Thomas International, 2020). The moderate Compliance scores are consistent with participants' engagement in structured institutional contexts while retaining the creative autonomy necessary for social innovation.

The thematic finding that 87.5 percent of participants articulate their entrepreneurial motivation in explicitly spiritual terms extends and deepens the integrative spiritual posture identified in the literature review. Where prior studies such as Alarifi and Alrubaishi (2018) and Audretsch, Bonte, and Tamvada (2013) establish a statistically significant association between religiosity and entrepreneurial intention, the present study demonstrates that in the Madinah context, spirituality is not merely a predictor or antecedent of entrepreneurship but is constitutive of its meaning and form. This distinction has important theoretical implications for how future studies operationalize the religiosity-entrepreneurship relationship. The Madinah case suggests that the causal arrow may run not from religiosity to entrepreneurship but from a spiritually saturated lifeworld to an entrepreneurial identity in which spiritual and social action are experienced as a single unified practice.

The post-training retention rate of 69.5 percent is notably high by comparison with international benchmarks for entrepreneurship training programs. Mort, Weerawardena, and Carnegie (2003) observe that social entrepreneurship training programs in Western contexts typically report participant retention rates of 40 to 55 percent over a twelve-month period. The elevated retention rate observed in the present study lends empirical support to the proposition that intrinsic motivation, when combined with a spiritually and culturally resonant program design, generates durable commitment that persists beyond the training period. This finding aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which predicts that intrinsically motivated behavior is more durable and self-sustaining than behavior driven by external rewards or sanctions.

The study's findings also resonate with Al-Dajani and Marlow's (2013) argument that women's entrepreneurship in Muslim-majority contexts is most accurately understood through the lens of social embeddedness and communal obligation rather than through frameworks of individual agency and market competition. The thematic finding that participants describe giving and service as ontological rather than volitional conditions, captured in the formulation "it is something we already are," provides qualitative depth to this theoretical proposition and suggests that the Madinah context offers a particularly rich field for advancing the scholarship on faith-based social entrepreneurship.

The study's conceptual framework resonates also with Zahra and colleagues' (2009) typology of social entrepreneurs, particularly the category they term "social bricoleurs," who address local social needs by drawing on resources embedded in their immediate community and cultural environment. The young women social entrepreneurs of Madinah fit this typology in their orientation toward locally identified needs and their mobilization of spiritually and culturally embedded resources, including the philanthropic traditions of the *ansar* and the institutional infrastructure of the *waqf*. What distinguishes the Madinah case, however, is the civilizational

depth and spiritual intensity of the resource environment, which, as the present study demonstrates, generates motivational patterns of exceptional durability and communal cohesion.

5.1. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present study is not without limitations. The sample is confined to a single institution, which restricts the transferability of the findings to other social entrepreneurship contexts within or beyond Saudi Arabia. The institutional affiliation of the author with the Basiqat Waqf Foundation, acknowledged in the Conflict of Interest Disclosure, introduces a potential for confirmation bias that cannot be fully eliminated through methodological safeguards alone. The post-training follow-up data, while systematically collected, are based on institutional progress reports and structured interviews rather than on an independent audit, which introduces a further institutional bias that future research should address through independent verification.

Future research should extend the field survey to other institutions in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah engaged in social entrepreneurship for young women. Comparative studies involving young men would be valuable in assessing the extent to which gender mediates the relationships proposed in this study's conceptual framework. Quantitative validation of the framework through survey-based instruments and structural equation modeling would substantially strengthen the empirical basis of the theoretical claims. Multi-site comparative studies encompassing other cities in Saudi Arabia and the broader Gulf Cooperation Council region would enable assessment of the extent to which the findings generalize beyond the specific civilizational context of Madinah.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has sought to conceptualize the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship among young women in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, drawing on two years of fieldwork conducted by the Basiqat Waqf Foundation between 2020 and 2022. The central argument advanced is that existing theoretical models are insufficient to capture the multidimensionality of this phenomenon because they fail to account for the role of intrinsic pleasure and spiritual serenity as primary motivational drivers of social entrepreneurial engagement.

The study demonstrates that the interest of young women from Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah in social entrepreneurship is nourished above all by spiritual serenity, which plays a constitutive role in their orientation toward social responsibility. Aggregate DISC behavioral profiling of the 128 participants reveals a predominant motivational orientation toward Influence and Steadiness, consistent with relational and community-centered entrepreneurial engagement rather than competitive or market-driven behavior. Systematic thematic analysis further identifies four primary experiential themes, namely Spiritual Motivation and Sacred Purposefulness, Community and Relational Orientation, Intrinsic Fulfillment as Entrepreneurial Driver, and Philanthropic Identity Rooted in Madinah Heritage, each occurring across a substantial majority of the participant sample. These findings are substantiated by post-training data from 2023 to 2024, which indicate that a significant portion of the study participants have sustained their engagement in volunteer initiatives in service of pilgrims and the broader Madinah community.

The theoretical contributions of this study may be summarized in three propositions. First, the social dimension of Islamic philanthropy in Al-Madinah constitutes the historically primary sector of communal organization, and this ontological primacy shapes the motivational foundations of young women social entrepreneurs in ways that conventional theoretical models fail to capture. Second, spiritual serenity is not merely a cultural variable to be controlled for in analyses of entrepreneurial behavior but a structurally constitutive dimension of social entrepreneurial identity in spiritually saturated environments such as Madinah. Third, intrinsic

pleasure and purpose, when grounded in a spiritually and culturally resonant institutional context, generate more durable social entrepreneurial commitment than external incentives such as funding, recognition, or competitive positioning.

The practical contribution of this study lies in offering stakeholders an alternative to the purely competitive ecosystem model, one that is more attentive to the cultural, spiritual, and philanthropic dimensions of social entrepreneurship in the holy city. Practical recommendations include the design of training programs that explicitly center spiritual and intrinsic motivation, the integration of DISC behavioral profiling as a tool for tailoring individual development pathways, and the institutional recognition of Islamic philanthropic heritage as a living motivational resource rather than a purely historical backdrop. These recommendations are particularly relevant for policymakers and practitioners operating within the Vision 2030 framework who seek to cultivate social entrepreneurship ecosystems that are both productive and culturally grounded.

6.1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The corresponding author, Abderrazak Belabes, is affiliated with the Basiqat Waqf Foundation, the institution through which the fieldwork and training program underpinning this study were conducted. Furthermore, several foundational theoretical claims advanced in this study draw on the author's prior publications (Belabes, 2017; 2019; 2022a; 2022b). The author acknowledges this potential conflict of interest and has taken deliberate steps to mitigate it, including grounding empirical claims in independently verifiable institutional data, situating the study within a broader independently authored scholarly literature, and subjecting its theoretical claims to external peer review. A peer debriefing process involving an independent researcher and member-checking procedures with a subsample of participants were additionally employed to strengthen the credibility of the analysis, as described in the Methods section. Full transparency in this regard is maintained in accordance with the ethical standards of Scopus-indexed journals

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