

Social Class and Potential Entrepreneurs' Social Entrepreneurial Intention: Underlying Mechanisms of Communal Narcissism and Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration*

Kawon Kim (Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Seoul National University)**
Kristina Sooyoun Zong (Master's Student, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago)***
Hee Chan Yoon (Master's Student, Department of Psychology, Seoul National University)****

Abstract

Incubating future social entrepreneurs is of increasing importance for governments and industries that aim to create positive social changes through innovative, market-based solutions. Considering the distinct and challenging nature of a social entrepreneurial career, prior research has explored various antecedents of the formation of social entrepreneurial intention. The current research aims to contribute to the literature by examining social class as a potential precursor of individuals' social entrepreneurial intention formation, with a specific focus on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration as the underlying psychological mechanism and communal narcissism as the contingent factor.

Using a two-wave survey data collected among 144 potential entrepreneurs from South Korea, we tested a moderated mediation model to validate the research propositions. The findings can be summarized as follows. First, lower social class was associated with higher social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. Second, when communal narcissism was high(low), the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration was stronger(weaker). Third, communal narcissism moderated the negative impact of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via its effect on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration.

This study has significant implications on several fronts. First, we explore the motivations that drive individuals from lower-class backgrounds to participate in social entrepreneurship, going beyond the previous notion that a higher-class context promotes entrepreneurial pursuits. Second, we delve into the underlying mechanism and condition that influence the formation of social entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting the pivotal roles played by social entrepreneurial identity aspiration and communal narcissism. Our findings provide practical insights for institutions seeking to foster the involvement of prospective social entrepreneurs from lower-class backgrounds, thereby generating positive outcomes for marginalized communities.

Keywords: Social Class, Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration, Social Entrepreneurial Intention, Communal Narcissism, Potential Entrepreneurs

1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurs are individuals pursuing venture creation that focuses on social and economic value(Austin et al., 2006; Dees, 2007; Mair & Marti, 2006). The dual-goal orientation makes pursuing a social entrepreneurial career challenging, as social entrepreneurs must identify novel and financially viable solutions to pressing social problems(Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

Given that a successful social venture substantially improves the lives of vulnerable segments of the population(Saebi et al., 2019), fostering the development of the next generation of social entrepreneurs has been a priority in many countries aiming to promote the inclusion of and equity for marginalized members. In this sense, social entrepreneurship can be viewed as an effort to help, nurture, and empower the group of individuals socioeconomically disadvantaged in society through market-based activities.

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** First and corresponding author, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Seoul National University, kawon@snu.ac.kr

*** Coauthor, Master's Student, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago, krstnna@gmail.com

**** Coauthor, Master's Student, Department of Psychology, Seoul National University, jack5yoon@snu.ac.kr

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Due to the challenging nature of a social entrepreneurial career, both research and practice have delineated social entrepreneurs as unique individuals (Light, 2006; Mair & Noboa, 2006). Several studies have identified individual-level traits that characterize social entrepreneurs and function as precursors of the formation of social entrepreneurial intention (Bacq et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2020; Zaremohzabbieh et al., 2019).

Social entrepreneurial intention refers to a state of mind that directs individuals to pursue a career as social entrepreneurs by engaging in social entrepreneurial activities, such as acquiring knowledge, instigating novel ideas, and implementing social entrepreneurial plans (Hockerts, 2017; Mair et al., 2006). Since Mair & Noboa's (2006) initial conceptualization of social entrepreneurial intention, a number of empirical studies, particularly from the 2010s onward, have examined various individual-level antecedents to social entrepreneurial intention formation (Tan et al., 2020). For example, personality factors such as the big five traits (Hossain et al., 2021; Luc, 2022), proactivity (Prieto, 2011; Tu et al., 2021), prosocial personality (Cheah et al., 2023), and creativity as well as innovativeness (Politis et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2021) were examined as predictors of social entrepreneurial intention. Self-efficacy in the dimension of social entrepreneurship (i.e., "social entrepreneurial self-efficacy"), as well as moral emotions like empathy and compassion, also emerged as potent antecedents (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Hockerts, 2017; Lee & Oh, 2017). Moreover, educational backgrounds, such as the type of university students attend (Radin et al., 2017) and entrepreneurial educational experience (Hassan et al., 2022; Rakicevic et al., 2023; Shahverdi et al., 2018), were found to correlate with social entrepreneurial intention.

Despite the previous attention, no theoretical or empirical works have yet investigated the influence of individuals' social class as a precursor to social entrepreneurial intention formation. This gap is surprising because social class has been extensively discussed across disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and education for its profound impact on individuals' pursuit of prosocial goals and values (Fisher et al., 2017; Kish-Gephart et al., 2023). For educators, policymakers, and business institutions keen on incubating impactful social ventures, understanding and empirically explicating the effect of social class on potential entrepreneurs' social entrepreneurial intention formation is vital for designing and implementing effective recruitment and education programs that would widely support incipient social entrepreneurs.

In the current research, we pursue two research objectives. First, we explore whether and how social class influences potential entrepreneurs' social entrepreneurial intention formation by focusing on their social identity aspiration as a underlying

mechanism. Drawing on psychology literature regarding possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the identity perspective on entrepreneurship (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021), social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is defined as individuals' desired self-image as social entrepreneurs (Farmer et al., 2011). We argue that lower-class individuals are more likely to view a social entrepreneurial career as desirable future-oriented identity, thus developing a higher level of social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. Second, we elucidate when the effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention formation through social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is pronounced by identifying communal narcissism as an important moderator. Communal narcissism, characterized by the pursuit of self-grandiosity through prosocial means, may precipitate lower-class individuals' attraction to exert power through a social entrepreneurial career. Thus, we propose that the effect of social class on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is stronger for lower-class individuals high in communal narcissism. Taken together, our research model and findings illuminate that lower-class potential entrepreneurs, particularly those with high levels of communal narcissism, aspire to envision themselves as future social entrepreneurs, ultimately resulting in their behavioral intention to create a new social venture.

By doing so, the current research makes three major contributions. First, we examine the effect of social class on social entrepreneurial engagement and shed light on the possibility that lower-class individuals are attracted to and contribute to social venture creation. Psychology theory on social class (Kraus et al., 2012) and research on entrepreneurship (Adebusuyi & Adebusuyi, 2020; Audretsch et al., 2013) suggest that higher-class individuals are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship due to greater levels of agency and self-efficacy. However, considering the unique concern that social entrepreneurs hold for marginalized members of society, we find that lower-class individuals perceive a social entrepreneurial career as highly desirable and worth pursuing compared to their higher-class counterparts. Second, identifying an underlying identity process and a trait-level moderator, we propose a micro-level theoretical model of how social class, defined as one's subjective position in the social hierarchy, influences individuals' behavioral intention to create social ventures. Based on the agency-communion model of narcissism that depicts how agentic and communal narcissists deploy different means to meet self-motives (Gebauer et al., 2012; Nehrlich et al., 2019), we demonstrate that an aspiration for a desired future-oriented self-image interacts with a personality trait, translating an unfavorable condition of lower class context into a social entrepreneurial engagement. We contribute to a growing body of

entrepreneurship literature that proposes entrepreneurial identity aspiration as a critical psychological foundation of venture initiation (Farmer et al., 2011; Seibert et al., 2021). Third, we provide the government, industries, and educators practical insights into guiding would-be entrepreneurs towards social entrepreneurial efforts that make changes for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Inclusion of entrepreneurs from lower-class backgrounds in the social entrepreneurship community is critical, presuming their capability to identify the root cause of many social problems and devise down-to-earth approaches to building business models for target communities. The current research suggests that lower-class individuals can be motivated to partake in social entrepreneurship under the saliency of its dual benefits: exerting social influence and promoting the well-being of the underrepresented groups.

II. Research Model and Hypothesis

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Social entrepreneurial intention

Social entrepreneurial intention represents a state of mind that directs individuals to pursue a career as social entrepreneurs through engagement in social entrepreneurial activities, such as acquiring knowledge, instigate novel ideas, and implementing social entrepreneurial plans (Hockerts, 2017; Mair et al., 2006). The concept of social entrepreneurial intention stems from literature on entrepreneurial intention (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002; Thompson, 2009), which emphasizes the conscious and convictional intentions that precede actual entrepreneurial actions. Thompson (2009) states that “many individuals may abstractly have a whimsical desire, and, indeed, the personality to become entrepreneurs in theory, yet in practice, never go beyond merely flirting casually with the notion of in fact starting a new venture” (p. 671). Also, Thompson (2009) implicitly distinguishes between potential entrepreneurs’ desire to become entrepreneurs and their “entrepreneurial intention”, which refers to a self-acknowledged conviction that one will intentionally and consciously set up a venture at some point in the future. Building on this approach, our conceptualization of social entrepreneurial intention highlights potential entrepreneurs’ purposeful and conscious intention to start a new social venture as a social entrepreneur. In choosing the measurement scale of social entrepreneurial intention, we focused on the intentionality and utilized items that explicitly capture potential entrepreneurs’ plan to launch a social venture in the future (Hockerts, 2017).

While the conceptualization of social entrepreneurial intention is rooted in studies on entrepreneurial intention, differentiating the two and identifying unique antecedents of social entrepreneurial

intention formation have been an important research area in the literature of social entrepreneurship. Mair & Noboa (2006) first proposed a theoretical framework that guides future studies on individuals’ social entrepreneurial intention formation, drawing on Shapero & Sokol’s (1982) entrepreneurial event model and Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior (Tan et al., 2020). In the Mair & Noboa’s (2006) seminal model of social entrepreneurial intention formation, perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are proposed as two determinants of social entrepreneurial intention. Perceived desirability is regarded as individuals’ felt worthiness of social entrepreneurial career, and posited to be shaped by empathy and moral judgment. Perceived feasibility reflects individuals’ beliefs in attainability, and is suggested to be affected by self efficacy and social support. Especially by suggesting perceived desirability and associated moral emotions and values as antecedents of social entrepreneurial intention formation, Mair & Noboa’s (2006) model highlights the distinct nature of social entrepreneurial career.

Therefore, the current study develops a research model based on Mair & Noboa’s (2006) proposition that perceived desirability shapes social entrepreneurial intention formation. Given that developing social entrepreneurial intention involves pursuing a distinct career of social entrepreneurship, we focus on potential entrepreneurs’ desire for future-oriented identity, social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, as a critical mechanism that facilitates social entrepreneurial intention as influenced by their social class.

2.1.2. Social entrepreneurial identity aspiration

Drawing on the identity perspective of entrepreneurship (Baker & Powell, 2020; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021) and the psychology literature on possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), we conceptualize social entrepreneurial identity aspiration as an individual’s desired self-image as a social entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial identity has been examined as a core cognitive mechanism in shaping individuals’ engagement in entrepreneurial activities (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021; Murnieks et al., 2014).

While entrepreneurship research mostly examines the function of current identities of entrepreneurs (e.g., now I see myself as an entrepreneur), the concept of entrepreneurial identity aspiration highlights the self-aspect that is future-oriented and reflects who one hopes to become (e.g., “I desire to see myself as an entrepreneur,” Farmer et al., 2011). According to the micro-level explanations from psychology literature of possible selves, individuals form cognitive self-schemata related to their enduring goals and aspirations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Likewise, entrepreneurial identity aspiration reflects the desired but not yet

realized identities separated from the current selves, and motivates goal-oriented behaviors to fulfill those desires (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). Empirical findings support the positive impact of entrepreneurial identity aspiration on potential entrepreneurs' decision to engage in nascent entrepreneurial behaviors (Farmer et al., 2011; Seibert et al., 2021).

Social entrepreneurship is a distinct career choice, as it aims to solve social problems through market-based and innovative means (Bacq et al., 2016). Recognizing the distinctiveness of a social entrepreneurship career, qualitative studies have suggested that social entrepreneurs develop a unique identity to differentiate themselves from non-social entrepreneurs (Jones et al., 2008; Žur, 2021). Social entrepreneurship education proposes that developing the identity of potential entrepreneurs into social ones is a powerful way to facilitate social entrepreneurial career choices (Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Considering these facts, we investigate social entrepreneurial identity aspiration of potential entrepreneurs as a critical psychological mechanism that explains the effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention formation.

2.1.3. Social class

In the current study, social class is defined and operationalized as an individual's perceived relative position vis-a-vis others in society (Kraus et al., 2009; Kraus et al., 2010). Social class has been one of the most frequently studied and inconsistently defined constructs within the social sciences (Côté, 2011, Loignon & Woehr, 2018). Despite the varied definitions, scholars generally agree on the importance of two aspects of social class: objective and subjective (Côté, 2011, Loignon & Woehr, 2018).

When the objective aspect is highlighted, social class is regarded as an individual's access to resources and is typically measured by income, education, and occupational prestige (Adler & Snibbe, 2003; Twenge & Campbell, 2002). According to this approach, individuals with higher social class possess more money, advanced education, and prestigious employment than others. In contrast, subjective definitions focus on individuals' perceived rank relative to others in society (Kraus et al., 2009; Storck, 1997). While acknowledging that material resources underpin social class, this perspective emphasizes that individuals construct their perceptions of social class or rank, based on comparisons with others in society. The perceived ranks are typically measured by asking individuals to indicate their position within a visualized social hierarchy (Kraus et al., 2012).

In this study, we adopt the second definition and measurement because the subjective perception of social class is a critical component of self that guides individuals' action tendencies and

goal setting (Côté, 2011; Kish-Gephart et al., 2023; Stephens et al., 2015). The sociocultural self model of social class proposes that, like other sources of the self, such as ethnicity and gender, subjective perceptions of rank in society play a significant role in self-definition and resultant views about what constitutes desirable and normative actions in multiple dimensions, including academic achievement and career choice (Stephens et al., 2012). Studies in organizational behavior provide empirical support, demonstrating that lower versus higher social class differentially shapes job search and task-related behaviors (Berg et al., 2010; Sharps & Anderson, 2021).

Importantly, previous studies suggest that social class could impact individuals' motivation to pursue an entrepreneurial career. A higher-class background correlates with individuals' sense of efficacy and control over various personal and societal outcomes (Adler et al., 2000; Johnson & Krueger, 2005). Since individuals from higher social classes experience fewer external limitations on their choices or opportunities (Griskevicius et al., 2011), they are generally more comfortable and ambitious in establishing and pursuing goals aligned with their interests (Kraus et al., 2012). As self-efficacy and self-initiation are associated with the intention to choose and pursue an entrepreneurial career (Newman et al., 2019; Speier & Frese, 1997; Swain & Patoju, 2022), one might expect higher-class individuals to exhibit a higher level of entrepreneurial intention. While there is scant research on the effect of social class on entrepreneurial intention formation, some empirical studies indicate that higher-class individuals report higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Adebusuyi & Adebusuyi, 2020) and are more likely to be self-employed (Audretsch et al., 2013).

Conversely, another line of evidence suggests that individuals from lower social classes may feel greater attraction to a social entrepreneurship career. Studies consistently depict how the interplay between developmental histories and childhood socioeconomic environments serves to differentiate individuals' cognitive and affective tendencies. Notably, people from lower-class backgrounds tend to value supportive bonds, display strong positive other-oriented emotions such as compassion and love, and pay more attention to others' situations, while those from higher-class backgrounds value autonomy, experience more self-oriented emotions like pride, and focus on their own preferences (Kraus et al., 2012; Piff & Moskowitz, 2018). Social entrepreneurs aim to solve significant social problems through their business models, creating value for marginalized members of society (Bacq & Janssen, 2011). Researchers have suggested that certain moral and prosocial values might underlie social entrepreneurs' engagement in social value creation (Bacq & Alt, 2018). To address this unique motive for a social entrepreneurial

career, we empirically examine whether lower-class individuals are more inclined to pursue the aforementioned aspects as part of their identity.

2.1.4. Communal narcissism

Narcissism is an individual characteristic that reflects the pursuit of self-grandiosity and unrealistic positive self-views (Campbell & Foster, 2007). Narcissists are oriented towards validating their sense of entitlement and legitimizing themselves as superior in comparison to, and in the eyes of, others (Campbell & Baumeister, 2006; Rose, 2002). Contrary to traditional views that depicted it as pathological, narcissism is nowadays considered a personality trait that also predicts adaptive self-evaluations and behaviors (Grijalva et al., 2015; Paulhus et al., 2013).

The agency-communion model of narcissism posits two distinct and independent types of narcissists, depending on the means they use to inflate their self-views (Gebauer et al., 2012). Agentic narcissists use self-oriented means, such as competence and influence, whereas communal narcissists use other-oriented means, such as helpfulness and trustworthiness. In other words, communal narcissism can be considered an agency-communion trait, where individuals strive to achieve self-oriented goals through other-oriented means (Gebauer et al., 2012).

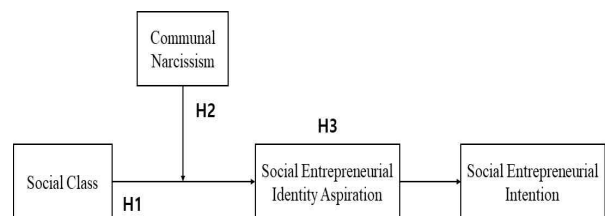
Initiating a venture requires identifying and exploiting a new opportunity and persistently taking various entrepreneurial actions, even in the face of extreme uncertainty, resource shortage, and rapid environmental changes (Baum & Locke, 2004; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Therefore, agentic narcissism, which is associated with the motivation to perceive oneself as competent and in control, can facilitate the development of entrepreneurial intentions (Liu et al., 2021). Empirical studies have confirmed a significant positive correlation between agentic narcissism and entrepreneurial intention among potential and actual entrepreneurs (Gao & Huang, 2022; Mathieu & St-Jean, 2013).

As stated earlier, a social entrepreneurial career entails the unique challenge of aiming for dual-goal achievement. It requires finding a new, specific way to create and sustain social value while simultaneously achieving financial viability (Robinson, 2006). A social entrepreneurial career represents the enactment of self-oriented motives in social entrepreneurship, which centers around individuals' need to complete challenging tasks, control new environments and resources, and prove their competence (Dees, 2012). Furthermore, social entrepreneurial careers involve the enactment of other-oriented motives by providing nurturance and promoting equity for unknown others (Dees, 2012; Ruskin et al., 2016). This prosocial aspect of

a social entrepreneurial career implies that communal narcissism, an agency-communion trait, may amplify the effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention among potential entrepreneurs. Therefore, the current study examines the moderating role of communal narcissism in the impact of social class on social entrepreneurial intention through the mediating effect of social entrepreneurial identity aspiration.

2.2. Research Model

In the current research, we first hypothesize that potential entrepreneurs' social class is negatively associated with their social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. We additionally hypothesize that communal narcissism of potential entrepreneurs moderates the relationship, such that the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is stronger for potential entrepreneurs high in communal narcissism. Since we predict social entrepreneurial intention as a result of social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, we finally propose the following first-stage moderated mediation model (Figure 1), which suggests that the negative indirect effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention through social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is stronger for potential entrepreneurs high in communal narcissism.



<Figure 1> Illustration of the Research Model

2.3. Hypothesis Development

2.3.1. Social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration

Social entrepreneurial identity aspiration refers to an individual's desired self-image as a social entrepreneur. In similar terms, individuals high in social entrepreneurial identity aspiration desire to see themselves as social entrepreneurs. According to the perspective of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), becoming a social entrepreneur is an integral part of the future selves for individuals with high social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. We propose that lower-class individuals are more likely to possess a higher level of social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, meaning they find the idea of becoming a social entrepreneur desirable for their future selves.

As mentioned above, Mair & Noboa's(2006) model of social entrepreneurial intention formation indicates an individual's perceived desirability or attractiveness of a social entrepreneur career is a critical determinant of social entrepreneurial engagement. Specifically, Mair & Noboa(2006) point to two factors-empathy and moral judgment-that shape perceived desirability. A social entrepreneurial career focuses on creating value for vulnerable segments of the population who cannot change their situations(Saebi et al., 2019). Empathetic individuals, who take a perspective of others and share their feelings, are likely to value a social entrepreneurial career, which inherently involves identifying and solving others' problems(Bacq & Alt, 2018). Moral judgment, reflecting a felt obligation to help others achieve a common goal, attracts people to a social entrepreneurial career that strives for social value creation(Hockerts, 2017). Scholarly discourse on social entrepreneurial education also suggests that exposing potential entrepreneurs to pressing social problems and assisting them in understanding the problems and the target community eventually foster their desired identity as 'social entrepreneurs'(Smith & Woodworth, 2012).

Expanding Mair & Noboa's(2006) model, Hockerts(2017) suggested and found that individuals' previous experiences that facilitate the feelings of empathy and moral judgement substantially enhance their perceived desirability of a social entrepreneurial career. Based on this proposition, we identify a lower-class background as a critical antecedent of social entrepreneurial identity aspiration due to its association with the emotional and moral characteristics.

Psychology studies on social class have consistently found that lower-class individuals pay more attention to social situations, manifesting in empathetic abilities and feelings. Living amid material poverty and social barriers, lower-class people focus heavily on environmental factors, including people around them, and form social bonds through compassionate emotions and sympathetic reactions(Shiota et al., 2006; Stellar et al., 2012).

Additionally, lower-class individuals tend to be more vigilant about injustice(Bondü & Esser, 2015) and pursue achievements that have collective value(Mittal et al., 2015; Snibbe & Markus, 2005). These tendencies may make lower-class individuals feel more interested in and obligated to solve social issues, thus raising their moral judgment. Higher empathy and moral judgment can prompt lower-class individuals to direct their attention to social problems and aspire to see themselves as potential social entrepreneurs.

One might argue that lower-class individuals would view a career in social entrepreneurship as highly challenging and unappealing, given the association of a lower-class background with decreased self efficacy. However, previous studies have

shown that lower-class individuals desire positions of power when acquiring such positions can benefit others(Belmi & Laurin, 2016). Considering this potential effect of lower social class on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, we hypothesize the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration.

Hypothesis 1: Social class is negatively related to social entrepreneurial identity aspiration.

2.3.2. Moderating role of communal narcissism

Although social class exerts significant influence, not all lower-class individuals would uniformly respond to their social class context. People from the lowest social class still exhibit diverse cognitive-behavioral propensities, depending on their personalities(Lachman & Weaver, 1998). Similarly, we presume that personality traits, in this case, communal narcissism, moderate the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration.

Social entrepreneurship is linked to both other- and self-oriented motivations(Dees, 2012; Ruskin et al., 2016). A social entrepreneurial career involves other-orientation as it seeks to identify unknown others' difficult situations, provide helping and nurturing, and promote equity for them. However, its nature of dual-goal pursuit concurrently requires self-orientation, such as solving social problems in a novel and financially viable way. Thus, engagement in a challenging career necessitates an innovative, market-based solution to entrenched social problems, demanding power over a range of stakeholders, including the target community(Dees, 2012). Given these characteristics, we expect that lower-class individuals' identity aspiration for a social entrepreneurial career would vary contingent upon an individual trait homologous with the dual orientation.

Communal narcissism is an individual characteristic that is defined by the pursuit of self-grandiosity and superiority through other-oriented means such as helpfulness and trustworthiness(Gebauer et al., 2012). Communal narcissists display markedly higher prosociality compared to their agentic or non-narcissistic counterparts, but this display is driven by self-enhancement to achieve promotional means such as demonstrating capabilities and gaining influence. Hence, when lower-class individuals are high in communal narcissism, their aspiration for a social entrepreneurial career would become notably pronounced, as the career automatically satisfies their motive to achieve grandiose self-status through other-orientated behaviors. Consistent with our argument, research on social class shows that lower-class individuals seek to occupy higher-power leadership positions,

particularly when they can do so through prosocial means (Belmi & Laurin, 2016). Based on this logic and previous works, we propose that the negative effect of social class on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration would be stronger when potential entrepreneurs are high in communal narcissism.

Hypothesis 2: Communal narcissism moderates the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, such that the relationship is stronger when communal narcissism is higher.

2.3.3. Moderated mediation model of social class and social entrepreneurial intention

We contend that social entrepreneurial identity aspiration emerging from a lower-class context directly influences social entrepreneurial intention. Social entrepreneurial intention represents a conscious and deeply convictional state of mind that propels individuals to pursue a career as a social entrepreneur through engaging in activities like acquiring knowledge, instigating novel ideas, and implementing social entrepreneurial plans (Hockerts, 2017; Mair et al., 2006). Having a social entrepreneurial intention is essential for potential social entrepreneurs to take tangible actions in establishing a social venture.

While previous discussion on entrepreneurial intention imply that the intention to plan and prepare for the creation of a social venture can be distinguished from a comparably volatile desire (Thompson, 2009), aspiring to embody the desired self-image of a social entrepreneur can still cultivate the intention to initiate a social venture. As mentioned earlier, Mair & Noboa (2006) suggest that when individuals perceive a social entrepreneurial career as appealing, the perceived desirability evolves into their behavioral intention to start a social venture. Moreover, empirical studies have shown the importance of an entrepreneurial identity within the current and possible selves (Farmer et al., 2011; Murnieks et al., 2014; Seibert et al., 2021) in predicting an individual's engagement in various entrepreneurial development activities, such as intentional searching for business ideas and acting upon those ideas. Likewise, we argue that potential entrepreneurs who envision themselves as future social entrepreneurs are more likely to report a strong behavioral intention to conceive and launch a new social venture, confirming the positive relationship between social entrepreneurial identity aspiration and social entrepreneurial intention.

Considering the moderating role of communal narcissism in the

relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, as we hypothesized above, we propose a conditional indirect effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. Specifically, we suggest that the negative effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via social entrepreneurial identity aspiration will be more pronounced for potential entrepreneurs with high levels of communal narcissism. This represents a first-stage moderated mediation model suggested by Hayes (2015).

Hypothesis 3: Communal narcissism moderates the indirect effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via decreased social entrepreneurial identity aspiration such that the negative indirect effect is stronger when communal narcissism is higher.

III. Method

3.1. Participant and Procedure

Two-wave online survey data were collected from potential entrepreneurs in South Korea. Participants were recruited from various entrepreneurship-related organizations and classes in South Korea, including region-level start-up education programs, university-affiliated incubators, entrepreneurship classes in undergraduate and MBA programs, and online communities for potential entrepreneurs. We obtained approval for recruiting members and students for the study by contacting the organization directors, class lecturers, and community managers. Subsequently, they posted an advertisement on their intranet, messenger groups, and websites, providing information about the study procedure and compensation for participation. Interested individuals were asked to provide the research team with their email addresses. According to entrepreneurship literature, potential entrepreneurs are defined by two criteria: 1) individuals need to have the intention to create a new enterprise (González-López et al., 2021; Van Gelderen et al., 2015) and 2) see themselves as prospective entrepreneurs (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994). A total of 316 potential entrepreneurs who satisfied the criteria above expressed their interest in participating in the study.

To reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we collected survey data across two time periods. Time 1 survey was sent to the 316 participants via email, and included items on social class and communal narcissism. We received 190 responses at Time 1. Time 2 survey was sent to the 190 respondents, approximately two months after the Time 1 survey,

and measured social entrepreneurial identity aspiration and social entrepreneurial intention. At Time 2, 161 responses were collected. Following previous research, we excluded seventeen participants who failed to follow instructions on an unexpected attention check question(i.e., “For this item, please indicate ‘strongly disagree.’) to increase the validity of the online data(Oppenheimer et al., 2009). This resulted in a final sample of 144(response rate=76.8%).

<Table 1> presents the demographic characteristics of our final sample. Their ages ranged from 19 to 56, with about 75.0% of the participants falling within the 20 to 29 years category. As for sex, 53.5% were female. 4.9% graduated from junior college, 47.2% had a bachelor’s degree, and 11.8% completed graduate school. 26.4% of the participants were full-time employees, 47.2% were university students, and 4.9% were unemployed.

<Table 1> Participant Characteristics

Categories		Frequency	Percent
Age	19 and below	5	3.5
	20 to 29	108	75.0
	30 to 39	23	16.0
	40 and over	8	5.5
Sex	Male	67	46.5
	Female	77	53.5
Education	High School	52	36.1
	Junior College	7	4.9
	Undergraduate	68	47.2
	Graduate	17	11.8
Current Employment Status	Full-time Employment	38	26.4
	Unemployed	7	4.9
	Student	69	47.9
	Other	30	20.8
Previous Start-up Experience	Yes	35	24.3
	No	109	75.7

Furthermore, 24.3% of the participants stated they had previous start-ups or entrepreneurship experience.

3.2. Measure

All variables were measured using existing items that were previously employed in published international studies. We translated the original items from English to Korean using back-translation procedures(Brislin, 1986). All items were rated on a 7-point scale(1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree), except social class.

Social class was measured at Time 1 using the MacArthur

Scale of Subjective Socioeconomic Status, with ten rungs representing the society(Adler et al., 2000). This scale reflects individuals’ perception of their class, which predicts psychological and physiological functioning more consistently and strongly than objective indices(Adler et al., 2000; Yu & Blader, 2020). In this measure, the highest rung(10) of the ladder refers to people at the top of the social class hierarchy-those with the most income, the highest level of education, and prestigious jobs, whereas the lowest rung(1) of the ladder refers to the bottom of the social class hierarchy-those with the least income, the least education, and low-prestige jobs or no job. Participants were asked to manually indicate which rung they would belong to on this ladder.

Communal narcissism was measured at Time 1 using the Communal Narcissism Inventory, developed with North American and European samples by Gebauer et al.(2012). The original 16-item inventory is comparatively lengthy, and has rarely been validated with East Asian samples, consisting of items that may have differential psychological importance across cultures(e.g., I am going to be the best parent on this planet). Therefore, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis(CFA) with an independent sample of 132 South Korean participants to identify a subset of items that best represents the construct. In particular, based on the CFA performed with the open-source R package “lavaan”(Rosseel, 2012), the four items with the highest factor loadings were selected. The four items are “I am the most helpful person I know,” “I am the most caring person in my social surrounding,” “I greatly enrich others’ lives,” and “I have a very positive influence on others.” Their factor loadings with the independent-sample CFA were .77, .74, .77, and .72, respectively. Participants were asked to indicate how well each of the four statements describes themselves.

Social entrepreneurial identity aspiration was measured at Time 2 with the six-item scale of entrepreneurial identity aspiration developed and validated by Farmer et al.(2011). We adapted the items to measure participants’ desire to become “social entrepreneurs” specifically, rather than general entrepreneurs. Example items include statements such as “Becoming a social entrepreneur would be an important part of who I am,” “I would like to see myself as a social entrepreneur.”

Social entrepreneurial intention was measured at Time 2 with the three-item scale developed by Hockerts(2017). Example items include “I expect that at some point in the future I will be involved in launching an organization that aims to solve social problems,” “I have a preliminary idea for a social enterprise on which I plan to act in the future.” Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree with each social entrepreneurial identity aspiration and social entrepreneurial intention statement.

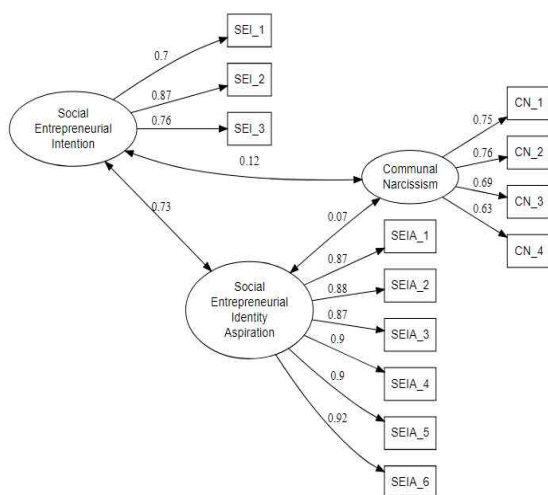
The full list of original and translated items used for measuring communal narcissism, social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, and social entrepreneurial intention are listed in the appendix.

Since demographic characteristics, education level, and work experiences can be associated with social entrepreneurial attitudes (Hockerts, 2017; Tan et al., 2020; Yamini et al., 2022), we controlled for each participant's age, sex (male=0, female=1), education, employment status, and previous start-up experience in our hypothesis testing. Education and current employment status categories were dummy-coded.

IV. Results

4.1. Scale Validity and Reliability

To assess discriminant validity, we conducted CFA with the R package "lavaan" (Rosseel, 2012), on the three constructs: communal narcissism, social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, and social entrepreneurial intention. The hypothesized three-factor measurement model displayed in <Figure 2> demonstrated an overall appropriate fit ($\chi^2=141.04[62]$, RMSEA=.09, CFI=.94; Hu & Bentler, 1999), supporting the construct validity of the study variables. Moreover, as shown in <Figure 2> and <Table 2>, all of the factor loadings exceeded the threshold of 0.6. We also evaluated the reliability of the three scales by calculating Cronbach's α and average variance extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 2, Cronbach's α for each scale was well over .7 and AVE ranged from .51 to .79, surpassing the minimum threshold of .5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). These findings support the reliability of the scales.



<Figure 2> CFA Results of Key Variables

<Table 2> CFA Results and Cronbach's α

Constructs		z-value	Standardized Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's α
Communal Narcissism	1	-	.75	.51	.80
	2	7.59	.76		
	3	7.12	.69		
	4	6.58	.63		
Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration	1	-	.87	.79	.96
	2	14.69	.88		
	3	14.59	.87		
	4	15.34	.90		
	5	15.51	.90		
	6	16.18	.92		
Social Entrepreneurial Intention	1	-	.70	.62	.83
	2	8.77	.87		
	3	8.13	.76		
$\chi^2=141.04$, $df=62$, $p\text{-value}<.001$, RMSEA=.09, CFI=.94					

4.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

<Table 3> presents the descriptive statistics and correlations between the four study variables. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, social class had a significant and negative correlation with social entrepreneurial identity aspiration ($r=-.18$, $p<.05$). Social entrepreneurial identity aspiration and social entrepreneurial intention had a significant and positive association ($r=.65$, $p<.01$). Communal narcissism showed non-significant correlations with all other variables.

<Table 3> Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables

	Mean	SD	Social Class	Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration	Social Entrepreneurial Intention	Communal Narcissism
Social Class	6.46	1.79	1			
Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration	4.11	1.42	-.18*	1		
Social Entrepreneurial Intention	4.57	1.28	-.11	.65**	1	
Communal Narcissism	4.29	1.02	.05	.06	.08	1
$*=p<.05$, $**=p<.01$						

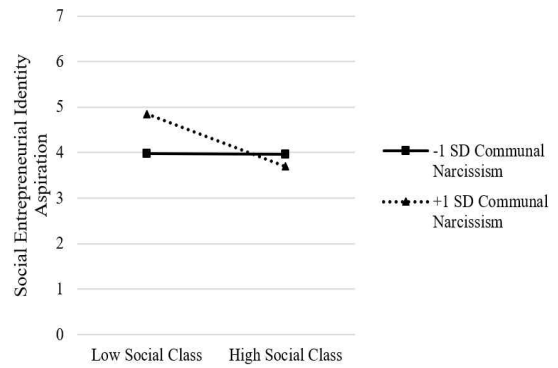
4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 posits that there is a negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. To test the hypothesis, we conducted a multiple regression analysis with control variables. As depicted in <Table 4>, social entrepreneurial identity aspiration did increase as social class decreased, but this finding was marginally statistically significant ($\beta = -.13$, $t = -1.72$, $p < .1$, [LLCI, ULCI; -.27 ~ .02]). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was tentatively supported. This result will be discussed in further detail after examining Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that communal narcissism moderates the relation between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration. To test the hypothesis, we conducted a multiple regression analysis including control variables. As presented in <Table 5>, the interaction term of social class and communal narcissism was significant ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .01$, [LLCI, ULCI; -.36 ~ -.08]). Simple slope analysis (Aiken et al., 1991) indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .01$, [LLCI, ULCI; -.57 ~ -.16]) when communal narcissism was high (+1 SD). However, no such relationship was found ($\beta = .02$, $p = .81$, [LLCI, ULCI; -.15 ~ .19]) when communal narcissism was low (-1 SD). We have illustrated the simple slopes in <Figure 3>.

<Table 4> Hypothesis 1 Results: Main Effect of Social Class on Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration

	Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration		
	β	t	Model Summary
Social Class	-.13	-1.72†	R=.33 R ² =.11 F(10,133)=1.59
Age (Control Variable)	.01	.27	
Sex (Control Variable)	.57	2.32*	
Edu_1 (Control Variable)	.62	.79	
Edu_2 (Control Variable)	.19	.58	
Edu_3 (Control Variable)	-.64	-1.03	
Employ_1 (Control Variable)	.57	.94	
Employ_2 (Control Variable)	-.25	-.74	
Employ_3 (Control Variable)	-.37	-.94	
Prev (Control Variable)	.08	.28	
Edu_1=Junior College, Edu_2=Undergraduate, Edu_3=Graduate, Employ_1=Unemployed, Employ_2=Student, Employ_3=Other Prev=Previous Start-up Experience † =p<.1, * =p<.05			



<Figure 3> Interaction of Social Class and Communal Narcissism on Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration

Overall, the results support Hypothesis 2, suggesting the negative relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is significant only when the potential entrepreneur exhibits high communal narcissism. The negative effect of social class was not evident among potential entrepreneurs with low levels of communal narcissism, which can explain the marginally significant main effect of social class on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration found in testing Hypothesis 1.

<Table 5> Hypothesis 2 Results: Moderation Effect of Communal Narcissism

	Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration		
	β	t	Model Summary
Social Class	.79	2.67**	R=.42 R ² =.18 F(12,131)=2.35
Communal Narcissism	1.50	3.34**	
Social Class * Communal Narcissism	-.22	-3.21**	
Age (Control Variable)	.01	.20	
Sex (Control Variable)	.53	2.20*	
Edu_1 (Control Variable)	.59	.78	
Edu_2 (Control Variable)	.15	.48	
Edu_3 (Control Variable)	-.67	-1.12	
Employ_1 (Control Variable)	.50	.84	
Employ_2 (Control Variable)	-.19	-.56	
Employ_3 (Control Variable)	-.38	-.97	
Prev (Control Variable)	.09	.34	
Bootstrapped samples=5,000 * =p<.05, ** =p<.01			

<Table 6> Hypothesis 3 Results: Moderated Mediation

	Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurial Intention		
	β	t	Model Summary
Social Class	.05	.97	R=.68 R ² =.46 F(11,132)=10.27
Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration	.62	10.10***	
Age (Control Variable)	.01	.74	
Sex (Control Variable)	-.20	-1.10	
Edu_1 (Control Variable)	.54	.98	
Edu_2 (Control Variable)	.19	.83	
Edu_3 (Control Variable)	.26	.59	
Employ_1 (Control Variable)	-.17	-.40	
Employ_2 (Control Variable)	.52	2.16*	
Employ_3 (Control Variable)	.51	1.86†	
Prev (Control Variable)	-.23	-1.14	
Moderated Mediation Index			
	β	LLCI	ULCI
Direct Effect (Social Class -> Social Entrepreneurial Intention)	.05	-.05	.16
Conditional Indirect Effect (Social Class -> Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration -> Social Entrepreneurial Intention)	Low Communal Narcissism (3.50)		
	.01	-.13	.12
	High Communal Narcissism (5.25)		
	-.23	-.37	-.10
Moderated Mediation	Index	LLCI	ULCI
	-.14	-.22	-.03
Bootstrapped samples=5,000, † =p<.1, * =p<.05, ***=p<.001 * The findings regarding the estimated effects of social class, communal narcissism, and their interaction on social entrepreneurial identity aspiration are identical to the results in Table 5.			

Hypothesis 3 postulates that the indirect effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via social entrepreneurial identity aspiration is moderated by communal narcissism. We tested Hypothesis 3 by estimating a first-stage moderated mediation model using SPSS PROCESS macro Model 7(Hayes, 2015). As shown in <Table 6>, the 95% confidence interval for the moderated mediation index, using 5,000 bootstrapped samples, did not include 0([LLCI, ULCI;-.22~-.03]), signifying a significant difference between the indirect effects at high(+1 SD) and low(-1 SD) communal narcissism. Specifically, the indirect effect of social class on social entrepreneurial intention via social

entrepreneurial identity aspiration was significant for those with high levels of communal narcissism(β =.23, SE=.07, [LLCI, ULCI;-.37~.10]), whereas it was non-significant for those with low levels(β =.01, SE=.06, [LLCI, ULCI;-.13~.12]). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

V. Discussion

Although social entrepreneurship aims to create social value for marginalized members of society, its relationship with social class has received rarely any scrutiny. Exploring the relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial engagement can introduce a pathway that lower-class individuals can address sympathetic societal issues through commercial means that highlight their competence and influence. In this study, we surveyed potential entrepreneurs to investigate how social class influences their social entrepreneurial intention formation. Our findings reveal that lower-class individuals, particularly those with high levels of communal narcissism, exhibit a stronger aspiration to incorporate social entrepreneurial identity elements into their possible selves, subsequently developing a behavioral intention to create a social venture.

Our findings hold important implications for both theory and practice. First, we present the first empirical examination of the relationship between social class and social entrepreneurial engagement. Prior research on entrepreneurial career choices argued that a higher-class background correlates to increased perceived competence and social capital crucial for venturing into entrepreneurship or self-employment(Adebusuyi & Adebusuyi, 2020; Audretsch et al., 2013). On the contrary, our study demonstrates that lower-class individuals not only find social entrepreneurial careers more desirable but also exhibit a stronger intention to take action than higher-class individuals. This challenges the prevailing notion that lower-class individuals tend to adopt a passive approach in job search or career choice contexts(DeOrtentiis et al., 2022; Sharps & Anderson, 2021), suggesting that, under certain conditions, they can form the intention to pursue change-oriented careers.

Second, we elucidate the mechanism through which lower-class individuals develop social entrepreneurial intention and shed light on the critical and nuanced role of prosociality in choosing a social entrepreneurial career. Drawing from accumulated findings that lower-class individuals place greater value on social bonds and experience more other-oriented emotions(Piff & Moskowitz, 2018), we hypothesized that lower-class individuals are more likely to aspire to become social entrepreneurs. Our study demonstrates the significance of lower-class context in

influencing social entrepreneurial identity aspiration, particularly when individuals possess high levels of communal narcissism—a motivation for self-enhancement through prosocial means. This insinuates that even though prosociality is integral to social entrepreneurial intention (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Bolino & Grant, 2016), it requires a specific condition to evolve into social entrepreneurial engagement. Future research should investigate additional conditions under which prosociality and social class could contribute to social entrepreneurial engagement.

Finally, the current research provides guidance for effectively motivating the lower-class would-be entrepreneurs to become part of the social entrepreneurship community. The benefits of having diverse groups of individuals in enhancing cognitive resources and productivity has been emphasized in research on work group diversity (McLeod et al., 1996; Phillips & Loyd, 2006). Thus, embracing members from diverse class backgrounds would help social entrepreneurship communities devise novel and feasible solutions for improving the life quality for marginalized groups.

Our findings reveal that lower-class individuals high in the motivation to self-enhance through other-oriented means are the aspiring would-be social entrepreneurs that may contribute to social value creation. Government, industry, and other institutions can put particular focus on the unique attributes of a social entrepreneur career—garnering influence and power by helping others—in their promotional communications and educational initiatives, thereby creating an inclusive social entrepreneurship community.

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APPENDIX

Variable Name	Item Number	Original Item	Translated Item
Social Entrepreneurial Identity Aspiration	1	I often think about becoming a social entrepreneur.	나는 종종 소셜 벤처 창업가가 되는 것을 생각한다.
	2	I would like to see myself as a social entrepreneur.	나는 내 자신을 소셜 벤처 창업가로 보고 싶다.
	3	Becoming a social entrepreneur would be an important part of who I am.	소셜 벤처 창업가가 되는 것은 내가 누구인지에 있어 중요할 것이다.
	4	When I think about it, the term "social entrepreneur" would fit me pretty well.	생각해 보면, "소셜 벤처 창업가"라는 단어는 나에게 꽤 잘 맞는다.
	5	I am always thinking about becoming a social entrepreneur.	나는 항상 소셜 벤처 창업가가 되는 것을 생각한다.
	6	It is important for me to express my social entrepreneurial aspirations.	소셜 벤처를 하고자 하는 열망을 표출하는 것은 나에게 중요하다.
Social Entrepreneurial Intention	1	I expect that at some point in the future I will be involved in launching an organization that aims to solve social problems.	미래 어느 시점에, 나는 사회 문제 해결에 기여하는 스타트업을 시작하고 싶다.
	2	I have a preliminary idea for a social enterprise on which I plan to act in the future.	나는 미래에 창립하고자 하는 사회적 기업에 대한 초기 아이디어가 있다.
	3	I do not plan to start a social enterprise (reverse coded).	나는 사회적 기업을 시작할 생각이 없다 (역문항).
Communal Narcissism	1	I am the most helpful person I know.	나는 누구보다 도움을 많이 주는 사람이다.
	2	I am the most caring person in my social surrounding.	내 주변인 중에 나는 타인을 가장 잘 보살핀다.
	3	I greatly enrich others' lives.	나는 타인의 삶을 굉장히 풍요롭게 한다.
	4	I have a very positive influence on others.	나는 다른 사람들에게 매우 긍정적인 영향을 미친다.

사회계층과 예비창업자의 사회적 창업 의도: 공동체적 나르시시즘과 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망의 심리적 효과*

김가원 (서울대학교 심리학과 조교수)**
정수연 (시카고 대학교 심리학과 석사과정)***
윤희찬 (서울대학교 심리학과 석사과정)****

국 문 요 약

후속 사회적 창업가 양성은 사회적 문제에 대한 창의적 시장 기반 해결에 공헌할 수 있다. 사회적 창업의 고유성과 도전성을 고려할 때, 사회적 창업 의도 형성에 영향을 미치는 개인특성을 살펴보는 것은 중요한 연구 주제이며, 실제로 사회적 창업 의도의 선행 변수에 대한 실증 연구가 활발히 진행되어 왔다. 본 연구에서는 그동안 조명 받지 않은 개인의 사회계층에 초점을 맞추어 해당 변수가 예비 창업가의 사회적 창업 의도 형성에 미치는 영향과 그 심리적 기제를 실증적으로 탐구하였다. 구체적으로 사회계층과 사회적 창업 의도 간 관계에 있어 개인의 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망과 공동체적 나르시시즘이 각각 매개변인, 조절변인으로 기능할 것임을 제안하였다.

본 연구를 위해 한국에 거주 중인 예비 창업가를 대상으로 2단계 온라인 조사를 시행하였고, 144명의 자료에 대한 조절된 매개 효과 분석을 통해 연구 가설을 검증하였다. 연구 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 낮은 사회계층은 높은 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망을 예측하였다. 둘째, 공동체적 나르시시즘이 높을(낮을) 때 사회계층과 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망 사이의 부적 관계가 더욱 강해졌다(약해졌다). 셋째, 공동체적 나르시시즘은 사회계층이 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망을 통해 사회적 창업 의도에 미치는 부적 간접효과를 유의하게 조절하였다.

본 연구는 다음과 같은 의의가 있다. 첫째, 높은 사회계층이 창업 진로 선택을 촉진한다는 기존 가정에서 벗어나, 낮은 사회계층의 개인이 사회적 창업에 참여하게 되는 가능성과 그 동기를 밝혔다. 둘째, 사회계층이 사회적 창업 의도 형성에 미치는 영향을 설명하는 매개변인과 조절변인으로서 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망과 공동체적 나르시시즘의 중추적 역할을 제시하였다. 마지막으로, 다양한 사회계층 배경을 가진 개인들을 대상으로 한 사회적 창업 촉진 및 지원 프로그램 개발을 위한 중요한 시사점을 제공하였다.

핵심주제어: 사회계층, 사회적 창업가 정체성 열망, 사회적 창업 의도, 공동체적 나르시시즘, 예비 창업가

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** 주저자, 교신저자, 서울대학교 심리학과 조교수, kawon@snu.ac.kr

*** 공동저자, 시카고 대학교 심리학과 석사과정, krstnna@gmail.com

**** 공동저자, 서울대학교 심리학과 석사과정, jack5yoon@snu.ac.kr