

# Comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action: the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to examine the relationship between comprehensive social competence, entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action and (2) to test the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action among social ventures in Uganda.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study is cross-sectional and quantitative. Data were analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences and analysis of moment structures.

**Findings** – Results show that both comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity are significantly associated with social entrepreneurial action. Results further indicate that entrepreneurial tenacity partially mediates the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action.

**Originality/value** – To the authors' knowledge, this study provides initial empirical evidence on the relationship between comprehensive social competence, entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action using evidence from a developing African country – Uganda. Mostly, this provides an initial evidence of the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity on the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action.

**Keywords** Comprehensive social competence, Entrepreneurial tenacity, Social entrepreneurial action, Uganda

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Evidence has been accumulated about the importance of social entrepreneurial actions. Social entrepreneurial actions play a vital economic and social role in the communities in which they are initiated. Governments across the world recognize social entrepreneurial actions for their contribution to the economic wellbeing in terms of social innovations, job creation and economic growth and development. Individuals pursue social goals in addition to economic objectives by engaging into activities for creation of social entrepreneurial ventures. Arguably, these social ventures have the potential to address the persistent social problems like poverty, illiteracy, poor sanitation, inadequate clean water, crime, environmental degradation and drug abuse that governments fail to adequately address. This then calls for individuals with brilliant creative and innovative ideals that enable social venture establishment. Given their potentially complimentary roles of both social value creation and economic benefits in communities, it is important to study and understand social entrepreneurial personal traits that help in creation of social ventures.

Although the traits of individuals who create social entrepreneurial ventures have been explored quite widely, by focusing on personal initiative (Nsereko *et al.*, 2018) and social ties



(Pruthi and Wright, 2019), I argue that gaps still exist in the literature. For example, I know of no studies that have used action regulation theory (ART) to explain social entrepreneurial action among community based organizations (CBOs) in Uganda. Also, the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action has been ignored. Further, to the author's knowledge, no evidence of the direct associations between comprehensive social competence, entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action exists in the literature based on evidence from Uganda. Because of the gaps in existing literature, scholars such as Rauch and Frese (2007) and Lurtz and Kreutzer (2017) call for further studies. In this study, I attempt to respond to a call for more literature by Rauch and Frese (2007) on comprehensive social competence and Lurtz and Kreutzer (2017) on entrepreneurial tenacity as a personality trait related to entrepreneurship outcomes. Further, this study contributes to current literature by demonstrating aspects like entrepreneurial tenacity and comprehensive social competence as salient predictors of social entrepreneurial action among CBOs in a developing country.

The purpose of this paper was achieved through a questionnaire survey of 243 CBO owner managers in Uganda. Results suggest that both comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action are positively and significantly associated. Results further indicate that entrepreneurial tenacity mediates the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action. This study results are important to the academic community, managers and policy makers as well as society. This study adds on the existing literature by documenting that comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity are significantly associated with social entrepreneurial action. This study also provides initial evidence on the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action. Managers and policy makers may use this study results to further their competences in order to achieve their objectives. Society may also wish to support social entrepreneurial ventures to their advantages. Policies that encourage social entrepreneurial ventures need to be put in place as guided by this study results.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows; the next section is literature review. Under the literature review, we discuss the appropriate theory and develop hypotheses. Next is methodology and this is followed by results. Discussion comes next and last is the conclusion and limitations of the study.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical review

2.1.2 Action regulation theory. ART (Hacker, 1994; Zacher *et al.*, 2016) assumes that action is goal-oriented behavior that needs to be regulated (Zacher and Frese, 2018). All actions that are carried out have a degree of intentionality to perform a behavior that is starting a business (social venture) (Gielnik *et al.*, 2014). More so, human behavior is mere reactions to environmental stimuli. This theory assumes that humans approximate their imaginary ideas to reality by acting upon that reality and it connects action to purpose (Gielnik *et al.*, 2015). Action regulation theory explains how individuals regulate their behavior through cognitive processes such as goal development, planning and feedback processing. The theory also postulates that individuals who actively develop, select, revise and set more challenging goals are more likely to develop themselves and become more effective in terms of changing their business and work environment. The theory assumes humans as active agents who look at actions evolving, they interact with, and change (social) reality by taking actions ontologically as primary for the development of the human psychological system and conceptualizing (faulty) actions as learning devices and as enablers of developing a concept of reality (Frese *et al.*, 2016; Zacher *et al.*, 2016). All actions that are carried out have a degree of intentionality to

perform a task (Gielnik *et al.*, 2014). In this study, we note that individual actions like proactive actions, alertness and being knowledgeable is driven by goal directed behavior. The theory helps to examine the effects of comprehensive social competence, entrepreneurial tenacity which can help people get started (Gielnik *et al.*, 2014). Entrepreneurs need to be proactive by actions to effectively create new social ventures. This theory further indicates that tenacity in terms of alertness and being knowledgeable enhances social venture creation.

### *2.2 Comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity*

Comprehensive social competence implies that one can maneuver the social world to achieve one's goals through good skills, social strategies, alertness and perseverance (Zhao *et al.*, 2010). Achieving social goals and objectives is one of the main aims of social entrepreneurs in the world. This is attained through using social networks, personal initiative, having prior knowledge about social enterprise creation and being alert to any social opportunities that arise. The goals can be achieved when social entrepreneurs have appropriate startup skills, suitable management and proper layout of strategies and always wanting to persist when carrying out social entrepreneurial related activities. Scholars have established relationships between comprehensive social competence and business networks (Zhao *et al.*, 2010). They indicated that comprehensive social competence is composed of social skills, proactiveness and perseverance which enhance business venture creation and growth. Psychologists argue that behavior aspects like social skills create interconnects, proactive behaviors broaden the social networks to take initiative to start social business and perseverance helps to overcome social business barriers so as to achieve set goals (creating social entrepreneurial ventures).

Entrepreneurs with comprehensive social competence put in a lot of effort to seize new opportunities (Cui *et al.*, 2016). Therefore being proactive is about making things happen, anticipating and preventing problems and seizing opportunities. It involves self-initiated efforts to bring about change in the work environment and as an individual (self) oneself to achieve certain goals. (Parris and McInnis-Bowers, 2014). A proactive individual has the ability, willingness and foresight to seize opportunities, they do this by using their prior knowledge and ability to be observant. Social entrepreneurs can be proactive by: shaping the environment; introducing new products and brands in the community. Comprehensive social competence helps firms to immediately seek for prior information and resources to meet anticipated demand especially by being vigilant and alert to any social opportunities that arise.

I therefore hypothesize that:

*H1.* Comprehensive social competence is positively related to entrepreneurial tenacity.

### *2.3 Comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action*

Comprehensive social competence is an opportunity seeking, forward-looking perspective involving use of skills, being vibrant when introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand to create change and shape the social environment. It involves recognizing changes and willingness to act on those insights ahead of the competition with others. This enhances social entrepreneurial activities like launching the business, having a social business model canvas, using a business plan and initiating the business. Comprehensive social competence is also related to proactiveness in this study. Suddaby *et al.* (2015) suggested that individuals with comprehensive social competence personality identify opportunities and act on them using good skills, initiative, actions, and perseverance until meaningful social change occurs. Comprehensive social competence which is associated with social skills, proactive and relational grit helps create social ventures. (Al-Tabbaa, 2017). These Individuals use their feelings and impressions to persuade others to create social value in the community by creating and maintaining social

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business ventures. Social entrepreneurs use their brains and skills, determination and networks to create social opportunities. People with social competence use prior knowledge and skills, to deal with choices, challenges and opportunities as they keep alert to any social business ideas. I therefore hypothesize that:

*H2.* Comprehensive social competence is positively related to social entrepreneurial action.

#### *2.4 Entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action*

Entrepreneurial tenacity (ET) is a behavioral personal characteristic that explains entrepreneurship and has not been sufficiently studied in the entrepreneurship literature (Rauch and Frese, 2007). According to Baum and Locke (2004), tenacity is a trait that helps solve persistent social activities by carryout sustainable goal-directed action and energy even when faced with social problems. ET is one of the first studies attempting to link entrepreneurs' personal characteristics with launching a new venture (Chandler and Jansen, 1992). Tang *et al.* (2014) noted that tenacity is a behavioral commitment to an entrepreneurial venture. As social entrepreneurs take initiative they become confident which increases their diligence in terms of using prior knowledge of markets, social innovations, social enterprise start up experience and alertness to opportunities. They persist in starting, maintaining, adhering to and seeking something valued in the communities.

The Literature indicates that a positive significant association exists between entrepreneurial tenacity and venture creation and growth. Markman *et al.* (2005) notes that entrepreneurial tenacity is defined as one's tendency to persist and endure in the face of adversity. Social entrepreneurs overcome setbacks and barriers that are related to social needs as they create social ventures. Social entrepreneurs who create ventures have often demonstrated great determination by setting up and launching their social enterprises easily despite all the environmental challenges. They further use their knowledge and alertness to launch social ventures.

*H3.* Entrepreneurial tenacity is positively related to social entrepreneurial action.

I am not aware of any study that has empirically tested the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity on the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action. Mediating effect of tenacity is important because opportunities are created by individuals who are knowledgeable and are alert to social opportunity recognition and creation (Kucel and Vilalta-Bufi, 2016). Social entrepreneurs will be proactive to create social ventures only if they persist, are confident with their skills and are watchful to carry out social entrepreneurial activities. In light of the above, I hypothesize that:

*H4.* Entrepreneurial tenacity mediates the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Design, population and sample*

The study followed a cross-sectional design and quantitative research approach. A total sample of 291 owners of CBOs was drawn from Kampala district-Uganda which is the most commercial. Participants were selected using simple random sampling technique after which, data were collected using a questionnaire. Useable questionnaires were received from 243 CBOs representing a response rate of 83%. Table 1, shows the demographic statistics and going by exception, majority were female were (154) than males (89), with the majority belonging to the 25–31 age bracket. This is a youthful age that can run social ventures

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Variable	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	89	36.6
Female	154	63.4
	243	100
<i>Age of respondents</i>		
19–25	30	12.3
25–31	130	53.4
32–38	70	28.8
Above 39	13	5.5
	243	100
<i>Education level</i>		
A level	12	4.9
Certificate	16	6.8
Diploma	30	12.4
Bachelors	135	55.3
Master plus	50	20.6
	243	100
<i>Year in business</i>		
5 and below	45.3	18.7
5–10	112.7	46.4
11 and above	82	34.9
	243	100
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	200	82.6
Divorced	3	1.0
Single	20	8.2
Widowed	20	8.2
	243	100

**Table 1.**  
Respondents profile

**Source(s):** Primary data

successfully. Majority were in operation for more than 5 years (46.4%) and 55.3% had bachelor's qualification hence being knowledgeable. Finally, majority of the respondents (82.6%) were married hence having social responsibility.

### 3.2 Measurement of variables

The study variables were measured as follows;

- (1) Social entrepreneurial action was conceptualized as social business startup activities carried out by individuals (Gartner *et al.*, 2010). It was measured using pre-start up and actual startup activities of creating social entrepreneurial ventures (Bosma *et al.*, 2011; Gielnik *et al.*, 2015). The six-point Likert scale was ranging from 1 = Not at all effort to six = Very much effort. The study utilized statements such as: *How much effort have you already put into...* checking whether there is demand for your product/service in the market? ...seeking a partner, a start-up team? ...carrying out market research? ...getting startup capital for your venture?
- (2) ET was measured drawing from Baum and Locke (2004) and Tang *et al.* (2014). Example of items are "I can think of many times when I persisted with work when

others quit” and “I continue to work hard on tasks even when others oppose me”  
“Before starting a social venture I was good at recognizing shifts in the market”.

- (3) Comprehensive social competence is when individuals are able and willing to foresight and seize new social opportunities using their skills. It was measured using [Bateman and Crant’s \(1993\)](#) and [Michael Frese et al. \(1997\)](#) selected-items. Responses were indicated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with such items as “I excel at identifying opportunities,” “No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen,” “I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others’ opposition,” “I am always looking for better ways to do things”.

### 3.3 Common methods bias

Biases are common sources of measurement errors that may lead to type I and type II. If not dealt with it affects the results. I used procedural remedies to avoid common method bias. I made the items simple, used different anchors, avoided “double-barrelled” questions, adapted measures from previous refereed scholarly works to suit the study context and used a six-point Likert scale for all the variables.

### 3.4 Validity and reliability

This study used content validity index (CVI) to validate the measurement items for the study variables and the question items were modified based on the expert comments. For comprehensive social competence, the CVI was 0.91, and entrepreneurial tenacity was 0.87 while for social entrepreneurial venture creation, it was 0.85, which according to [Nunnally \(1978\)](#) was above the recommended 0.70 hence the instrument was appropriate for the study. Convergent validity was considered by examining factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). As seen in [Table 3](#), the factor loadings and AVE for the study constructs were all above 0.5, which indicates that the scales had good convergent validity ([Fornell and Larcker, 1981](#)). The study Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (CR) tests were performed in order to confirm the internal consistency among the selected scales. Cronbach’s alpha values for social comprehensive competence, ET and social entrepreneurial action range from 0.76, 0.710 and 0.79, respectively. While composite reliability for social comprehensive competence, ET and social entrepreneurial action were 0.90, 0.91 and 0.94, respectively. These are above the threshold of 0.70 as recommended by [Nunnally \(1978\)](#). This means the results were reliable as shown in [Table 2](#).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

[Table 4](#) presents descriptive statistics of the study variables. Comprehensive social competence has a minimum value of 3.50, maximum 6.00, mean of 5.35 and SD of 0.71.

Variables	Average variance extracted	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability (CR)
Social comprehensive competency	0.751	0.763	0.901
Entrepreneurial tenacity	0.732	0.710	0.916
Social entrepreneurial action	0.808	0.792	0.944

**Source(s):** Primary data

**Table 2.**  
Validity and reliability

Item code	Item label	Standardized regression estimates	CR (t)
<i>Comprehensive social competency</i>			
Proac5	No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen	0.866	
Proac6	I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition	0.863	17.586
Proac7	I excel at identifying business opportunities	0.875	17.894
<i>Entrepreneurial tenacity</i>			
Ea1	I have frequently interacted with other People to acquire new information	0.812	15.902
Pk8	I can identify business opportunities from the new market knowledge that is available to me	0.841	
Pk9	I have the ability to combine existing market knowledge with the newly acquired	0.749	16.050
Pk10	I constantly consider how to better exploit the business knowledge	0.861	17.445
<i>Social entrepreneurial action</i>			
<i>How much effort have you already put in to . . .</i>			
Sea 3	gathering information about suppliers, customers or your industry?	0.886	
Sea 8	getting startup capital for your venture?	0.962	25.888
Sea 9	getting the equipment, raw materials, or other facilities for your social venture?	0.908	18.946

**Table 3.**  
Confirmatory factor analysis

(continued)

Item code	Item label	Standardized regression estimates						CR ( <i>t</i> )
Sevc10	registering a business	0.861						
<i>Achieved fit indices</i>								
CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	IFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	
1.599	0.048	0.957	0.931	0.990	0.975	0.987	0.990	
(65.542/41)								

**Source(s):** Primary data

**Table 3.**

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Comprehensive social competency	3.50	6.00	5.35	0.716
Entrepreneurial tenacity	3.00	6.00	5.19	0.977
Entrepreneurial alertness	3.67	6.00	5.49	0.879
Prior knowledge	3.00	6.00	4.98	0.743
Social entrepreneurial action	3.67	6.00	5.51	0.795

**Source(s):** Primary data

**Table 4.**  
Descriptive statistics

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Comprehensive social competency (1)	1.000				
Entrepreneurial tenacity (2)	0.254**	1.000			
Entrepreneurial alertness (3)	0.296**	0.887**	1.000		
Prior knowledge (4)	0.211**	0.971**	0.752**	1.000	
Social entrepreneurial action (5)	0.282**	0.656**	0.605**	0.626**	1.000

**Note(s):** \*, \*\*Correlations are significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively (two-tailed)

**Source(s):** Primary data

**Table 5.**  
Correlation analysis results

Entrepreneurial tenacity has a minimum value of 3.00 and a maximum value of 6.00, mean of 5.19 and SD of 0.97 while social entrepreneurial action has a minimum value of 3.67 and a maximum value of 6.00, mean of 5.51 and SD of 0.79. The SD describes the spread or variability of the sample distribution. If the SD values are small and thus close to the mean, this implies that the statistical mean provide a good fit of the observed data. From the results, the maximum SD was 0.97, which is less than 1 implying that the respondents were very consistent in their opinions as recommended by [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#). The results are presented in [Table 4](#).

#### 4.2 Correlation analysis

The results in [Table 5](#) show that comprehensive social competence and ET are positively correlated ( $r = 0.254, p < 0.05$ ). The results also show that comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action are positively correlated ( $r = 0.282, p < 0.05$ ), which implies that changes in comprehensive social competence are associated with changes in social entrepreneurial action. Similarly, entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action

are positively correlated ( $r = 0.656, p < 0.05$ ). Implying that changes in entrepreneurial tenacity are associated with changes in social entrepreneurial action.

4.3 Structural equation model and hypothesis testing

Structural equation modeling was used to further test for the direction and significance of the hypothesized paths. The study further used bootstrapping to test for the significance of the mediation as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2019). The results, for hypothesis 1, show that there is a significant and positive association between comprehensive social competence and tenacity ( $\beta = 0.530, t\text{-value} = 8.142, p < 0.05$ ). The results for hypothesis 2, show that there is a significant and positive association between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action ( $\beta = 0.356, t\text{-value} = 5.914, p < 0.05$ ). The results for hypothesis 3, also show that there is a significant and positive relationship between entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action ( $\beta = 0.482, t\text{-value} = 7.77, p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the results for all hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were supported as indicated in Table 6 and Figure 1

5. Testing for mediation

In an attempt to test for the mediation paths (H4) in the model Table 7 and Figure 1, bootstrapping was done using 5,000 sub-samples at 95% confidence level to ensure stability

Hypothesis	Direct paths	S.E.	B	t-value	p	Decision
H1	ET←CSC	0.068	0.530	8.142	***	Supported
H2	SEA←CSC	0.067	0.356	5.914	***	Supported
H3	SEA←ET	0.066	0.482	7.777	***	Supported

Table 6. Results on direct paths Source(s): Primary data

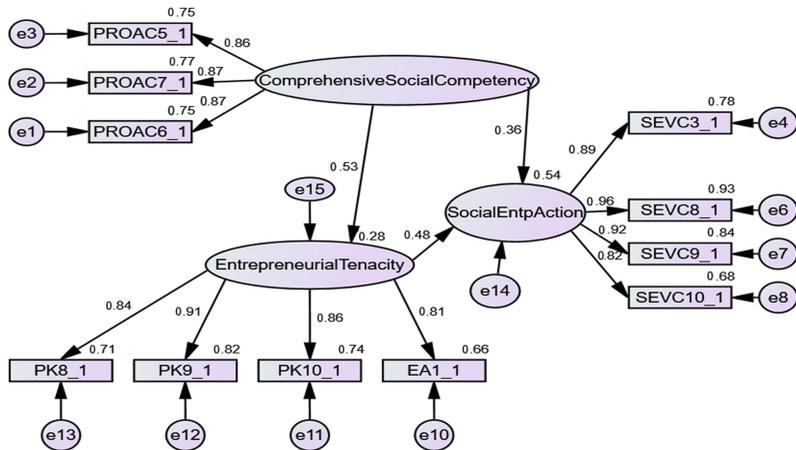


Figure 1. Measurement model for social entrepreneurial action

Chi-square (CMIN) = 65.542; Degree of Freedom (DF) = 41; Probability value (P) = 0.009  
 CMIN/DF = 1.599; Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.957 Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.931; Normed Fit index (NFI) = 0.975 Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.990; Tucker Lewis index (TLI) = 0.987 Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 990; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.48

Standardized total effects	Social comprehensive competency	Entrepreneurial tenacity	Social entrepreneurial action (SEA)
Entrepreneurial tenacity	0.530**	0.000	0.000
SEA	0.612**	0.484**	0.000
<i>Standardized direct effects</i>			
Entrepreneurial tenacity	0.530**	0.000	0.000
SEA	0.356**	0.482**	0.000
<i>Standardized indirect effects</i>			
Entrepreneurial tenacity	0.000	0.000	0.000
SEA	0.256**	0.000	0.000

Bootstrap mediation results

Path	Point estimate	S.E	Lower bounds	Upper bounds	<i>p</i>
Social entrepreneurial action ← Entrepreneurial tenacity	0.256	0.066	0.150	0.381	0.001

**Note(s):** Path diagram – Social comprehensive competency → Entrepreneurial tenacity → Social entrepreneurial action

Type of mediation = Partial ( $\beta = 0.256, p = 0.001$ )

Total effect = 0.612, Direct = 0.356, Indirect = 0.256

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level

**Source(s):** Primary data

**Table 7.**  
Total, direct and indirect effects (beta coefficients)

of the results (Hair et al., 2017). However, bootstrapping was done twice; first without a mediator and secondly in the presence of a mediator construct, which showed better fit indices, better percentage of significant path and better predictive power. According to Hair et al. (2017), if the direct path is initially not significant, there is no mediation effect; but when the direct path is significant, a mediator variable is introduced and bootstrapping is done again to test the significance of the indirect path. In other words, if the indirect path is not significant, there is no mediation; if it is, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) is computed. Notably, when VAF is above 80%, it indicates full mediation, between 20% and 80% indicates partial mediation while a value less than 20% indicates no mediation (Hair et al., 2017). Table 7 reveals that all the direct paths were significant; therefore, testing the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action was meaningful. The results show that entrepreneurial tenacity plays a partial mediation between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action ( $\beta = 0.0256, p = 0.001$ ). This is in line with the suggestions of Hair et al. (2017) and indicates that comprehensive social competence is associated directly to social entrepreneurial action but also through entrepreneurial tenacity. We further wanted to establish whether the mediation was significant using the bootstrap method and results indicated that  $p = 0.01$ , showing that mediation was significant meaning that mediation exists.

## 6. Discussion

The primary contribution of this study was to reveal that entrepreneurial tenacity was an important explanatory variable in the relationship between comprehensive social competence

and social entrepreneurial action. The study sought to examine the influence of comprehensive social competence in predicting entrepreneurial tenacity. The findings revealed a positive and significant association between comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity which lends support to **H1**. This means that social entrepreneurs who are the first in maintaining, adhering to, or seeking something valued or desired and new, will use their alertness and prior knowledge to launch social ventures. It also implies that individuals who are self-starters, take initiative and prepare for the future activities for sustainability and must be prepared to create social entrepreneurial venture. A plausible explanation to the study findings could be attributed to fact that social entrepreneurs in Uganda use their alertness and information in addressing social issues. Yunus Social Business Foundation Uganda setup in 2014, to help the disadvantaged, has a meaningful impact in their lives through offering financial and non-financial support for social ventures to become investment ready. The findings are consistent with scholars such as: [Parker et al. \(2010\)](#) who ascertained that individuals take on different actions of starting social enterprises.

This finding validates ART, which assumes that individual who take actions immediately achieve set goals especially of creating a social entrepreneurial venture ([Frese et al., 1996](#)).

Furthermore, **H2** was supported which means that positive changes in comprehensive social competence is associated with social entrepreneurial action. The findings suggest that when social entrepreneurs possess a comprehensive social competence trait, they establish social ventures that create social change. This means that these individuals engage in creation of novelty ideas, experiment with new social innovations ahead of others who may delay. They take initiative since they do not wait for events to take their own course, but take regulated actions like registering, designing a business plan, launch a business before others think of taking any step. In Uganda, an East African country, many people will take the first step to start social ventures in areas of education, health, conservation of the environment, good sanitation and fighting drug abuse to help the disadvantaged groups. Findings are consistent with: [Frese \(2011\)](#) and [Shepherd et al. \(2020\)](#) who documented that proactive people are the first to take on ideas before others do. They can easily identify what will be done in the future and take on opportunities that have been ignored by others. The study also lends support to ART ([Frese et al., 1996](#)) which emphasizes comprehensive social competence as a social entrepreneurial behavioral trait that enables entrepreneurs to take social entrepreneurial actions.

Additionally, the findings established that a positive and significant association exists between the entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action hence providing evidence to support **H3**, implying that social entrepreneurs who are persistent with prior knowledge and being alert to social opportunities will be confident when dealing with prior social needs and problems, systems of new products and service creation. This also means that when they apply new ideas or approaches in their businesses with their formal experience, they solve social problems like poverty, drug abuse and poor health as they create social business. These findings are consistent with [Van Scotter and Garg \(2019\)](#) who established that entrepreneurial tenacity boasts launching businesses (social ventures). An explanation to the study findings is in line with the constant quest by social entrepreneurs in Uganda in search of new and better ways of solving societal problems.

## 7. Summary and conclusion

This study's purpose was twofold: (1) to examine the relationship between comprehensive social competence, entrepreneurial tenacity and social entrepreneurial action and (2) to test the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action among social ventures in Uganda. This study purpose was achieved through a questionnaire survey of 243 CBOs. Results suggest that comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity are significantly

associated with social entrepreneurial action. Results also indicate that entrepreneurial tenacity mediates the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action.

This study has important insinuations for the academia, policy makers and society. This study adds on the existing literature by documenting that comprehensive social competence and entrepreneurial tenacity are significantly associated with social entrepreneurial action. This study also provides initial evidence on the mediating role of entrepreneurial tenacity in the relationship between comprehensive social competence and social entrepreneurial action. Managers and policy makers may use this study results to further their competences in order to achieve their objectives. Society may also wish to support social entrepreneurial ventures to their advantages. Policies that encourage social entrepreneurial ventures need to be put in place as guided by this study results.

This study has some limitations that could be addressed in future research. This study enlists responses from CBOs which are nonprofit social ventures in our sample. These look at solving social problems from the grass root and this limits our study's generalizability to other social entrepreneurial organizations. My study uses evidence from Uganda and this means that this study results may be applicable to Uganda's CBOs. Nonetheless, this study results are applicable in other national settings with similar setting to that of Uganda.

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