

An Empirical Study of Social Entrepreneurial Intention among Public Sector University Students in Pakistan: The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and the Moderating Role of Need for Achievement

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Abstract: The significance of entrepreneurship has been widely recognized by scholars and practitioners across the globe; however, social entrepreneurship remains an emerging and evolving field of inquiry. Social entrepreneurship is significant not only for its economic contributions but also for its capacity to address pressing social challenges such as poverty alleviation and community welfare, thereby serving as a catalyst for sustainable social change. Despite its growing relevance, empirical evidence explaining the determinants of social entrepreneurial efforts in developing countries remains limited. Hence, this study seeks to examine the level of youth Intention toward social entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Specifically, it investigates the influence of various antecedent factors on social entrepreneurial intention, while also exploring the moderating role of Need for Achievement and mediating role of entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. Adopting a quantitative research strategy and a survey-based research design, data were collected from 309 students enrolled in public sector universities located in Rawalpindi Islamabad. Structural Equation Modelling was employed to analyze the data and test the proposed hypotheses. The results demonstrate that ESE failed to significantly transmit the effects of these support variables to social entrepreneurial intention at QAU and FJWU, showing only a weak direct link at NUST. However, the need for achievement emerged as a powerful and highly robust moderator across all three universities. The interaction effects (NFAxPES and NFAxPSS) consistently strengthened the impact of perceived institutional support mechanisms on SEI. These results underscore that instead of relying purely on building student self-efficacy, higher education institutions must strategically pair robust educational and structural infrastructure with high-achievement student traits to effectively drive youth social entrepreneurial participation.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurial Intention; Perceived Educational Support; Perceived Structural Support; Perceived Relational Support and Need for Achievement, Self-Efficacy

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has always remained an emerging recognizer for building a strategic mechanism towards innovation, economic development, social transformation and employment generation. Globally, the entrepreneurial process is undergoing a transitional phase, not only in policy and academic disclosure but also in transforming from traditional entrepreneurial profit mechanism into social entrepreneurs combining the practices regarding entrepreneurship with strategies to resolve environmental, social and community-based targets. Social entrepreneurship has been identified as key contributor to germinate sustainable social value through devising innovative solutions as an endeavor to resolve the issues of social concern such as unemployment, poverty, unequal wealth distribution, educational system diversity and lack of healthcare facilities. The study of Lyu et al. (2024) revealed that social entrepreneurship is not only the promoter of economic resilience but at the same time it also promotes the long-term social sustainability and collective societal development.

The significance of growing social entrepreneurship is becoming palpable among emerging economies of developing countries in which unemployment, social inequalities and institutional weaknesses remain active to challenge the development efforts sustainability. Pakistan is also one of the emerging economies with a rapidly increasing youth population facing multiple socio-economic challenges including social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and limitations in accessing quality public incentives. Encouraging entrepreneurial inclination among Pakistani youth and identifying pathways toward sustainable social innovation remains challenging,

compounded by macroeconomic fragility and ecosystem complexity in the form of currency instability and drastic inflation fluctuations (Mehboob et al., 2025). In this situation social entrepreneurship has a positive emerging avenue for educated Pakistani youth who may contribute in social innovation and collective community development making a persuasive path toward their sustainable career growth opportunities. Subsequently, universities in Pakistan are highly expected to inculcate and upgrade the entrepreneurial capabilities by building institutional support mechanism, fostering a socially responsible mindset among university students and making them active agent for building a positive social change (Farooq, 2026).

University students are the representatives of society to participate in various societal segments which also include entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial representation in society. Universities serve as institutional hub which molds student's competencies, capabilities, attitude into career intention through knowledge driven approach. Previous research revealed that university environment has greater influence in fostering entrepreneurial tendencies by inculcating institutional support, relational networks, educational exposure and mentoring opportunities (Duong et al., 2024). It's a fact the entrepreneurial education has got attention in university education system but empirically antecedents regarding social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) are still remained limited in developing countries among university students. More specific is that an insufficient understanding has been noticed that how various forms of university support mechanism inspire students to understand university ecosystem for germinating an inclination towards understanding and resolving the social issues through social entrepreneurial initiatives. This study is an endeavor to build a clearer understanding of the university support system mechanism and how it influences social entrepreneurial intention among university students studying in public sector universities in Pakistan

Another important construct associated with entrepreneurial behavior is Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), which refers to an individual's belief in his or her capability to successfully perform entrepreneurial tasks and activities. According to Social Cognitive Theory, individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit entrepreneurial motivation, persistence, and opportunity-seeking behavior. Existing research indicates that supportive educational and social environments positively enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which subsequently strengthens entrepreneurial intentions and Intention (Duong et al., 2024). In the context of social entrepreneurship, self-efficacy becomes particularly important because social entrepreneurs often operate under uncertain conditions while addressing complex social problems.

Among the psychological factors influencing entrepreneurial Intention, Need for Achievement (NFA) has received substantial scholarly attention. Rooted in McClelland's motivational theory, Need for Achievement reflects an individual's desire for excellence, accomplishment, goal attainment, and personal success. Individuals possessing a high need for achievement are generally more motivated to take initiative, overcome challenges, pursue innovation, and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Recent studies have found that Need for Achievement positively influences entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial intentions among university students (Lyu et al., 2024). Individuals with strong achievement motivation are more likely to transform supportive educational and social environments into entrepreneurial action. Therefore, Need for Achievement may strengthen the relationship between perceived support mechanisms and Social Entrepreneurial Intention.

Although previous studies have examined entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial self-efficacy in various contexts, limited research has simultaneously investigated the combined effects of perceived educational support (PES), perceived structural support (PSS), and perceived relational support (PRS) on Social Entrepreneurial Intention within the Pakistani higher education context. Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of Need for Achievement in strengthening these relationships remains scarce, particularly among students enrolled in public sector universities.

This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining the influence of perceived educational support, perceived structural support, perceived relational support, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy on Social Entrepreneurial Intention among students of public sector universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. In addition, the study investigates the moderating role of Need for Achievement in enhancing the relationships between support mechanisms and Social Entrepreneurial Intention. The proposed research model contributes to the growing literature on social entrepreneurship by integrating institutional, relational, and psychological dimensions within a single conceptual framework.

The significance of this study is multifaceted. Theoretically, the study extends the literature on social entrepreneurship by integrating support-based and motivational perspectives to explain social entrepreneurial Intention among youth. Practically, the findings may assist policymakers, university administrators, educators, and entrepreneurship development institutions in designing effective educational programs, support systems,

and entrepreneurial ecosystems that encourage socially responsible entrepreneurship among students. Moreover, the study contributes to Pakistan's broader socio-economic development agenda by highlighting the importance of empowering youth toward socially innovative and sustainable entrepreneurial activities.

2. Literature Review

The proposed research model is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and the broader entrepreneurship support literature. Social Cognitive Theory suggests that individual behavior is shaped through the interaction of environmental, cognitive, and motivational factors. In this study, perceived educational support, perceived structural support, and perceived relational support represent environmental factors that influence students' entrepreneurial cognitions and Intention. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy functions as a cognitive mechanism through which students evaluate their entrepreneurial capabilities, while Need for Achievement operates as a motivational factor that strengthens entrepreneurial tendencies. Furthermore, students possessing a higher Need for Achievement are expected to demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial Intention when exposed to supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems.

2.1 Social Entrepreneurial Intention

Social entrepreneurial Intention is defined as an individual's commitment, intention and tendency towards identification and persuasion of entrepreneurial activities intended to generating social value instead of concentrating only financial profit. Literature shows that social entrepreneurial behavior is affected through the combination of institutional psychological, contextual and relational factors. Amongst these antecedents, perceived relational support, perceived structural support and perceived educational support have considered the important elements of entrepreneurial Intention.

2.2 Perceived Educational Support

Perceived Educational Support refers to students' perceptions regarding the extent to which universities provide entrepreneurship-related education, training, knowledge, skill development opportunities, and motivational encouragement. Universities that actively promote entrepreneurial learning through courses, workshops, incubation centers, and experiential learning environments are more likely to enhance students' entrepreneurial confidence and Intention (Attah, et al., 2026). Recent studies suggest that educational support positively shapes entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention among university students (Duong et al., 2024). Similarly, the provision of entrepreneurship-oriented curricula and practical exposure can motivate students to engage in socially driven entrepreneurial initiatives.

2.3 Perceived Structural Support

Perceived Structural Support encompasses the institutional and environmental mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurial activities, including government policies, financial assistance, legal frameworks, incubation facilities, and access to entrepreneurial resources. In developing economies, supportive institutional structures play a significant role in encouraging entrepreneurial participation among youth (Manolova, et al., 2019). When students perceive the existence of supportive policies, funding opportunities, and entrepreneurial infrastructure, they are more likely to view entrepreneurship as a viable and socially impactful career path (Lu et al., 2021). Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that university and institutional support systems significantly strengthen entrepreneurial intentions and opportunity recognition among students (Otahe, et al., 2024).

2.4 Perceived Relational Support

Perceived Relational Support refers to emotional, informational, and motivational support received from family members, peers, mentors, teachers, and social networks. Social and relational networks are considered essential for entrepreneurial development because they provide guidance, encouragement, trust, and access to opportunities (Xie et al., 2021). Previous studies have emphasized that social support mechanisms enhance students' entrepreneurial confidence and positively influence entrepreneurial Intention and intentions (Yesmin et al., 2024). In collectivist societies such as Pakistan, where family and social relationships strongly influence career choices, relational support may significantly contribute toward shaping social entrepreneurial tendencies among university students (Ali et al., 2023).

2.5 Need for Achievement

The need for achievement represents an individual's internal drive to excel, overcome challenges, and meet high standards of performance. While external environmental configurations such as PES, PSS, and PRS provide the foundational resources, institutional frameworks, and social backing necessary to foster social entrepreneurial intention, their ultimate efficacy often depends on personal psychological traits (Dzomonda & Neneh, 2023). Within this conceptual framework, the need for achievement acts as a crucial moderating variable that amplifies the relationship between these external support structures and an individual's intent to start a social venture. According to Cao & Ngo (2019), individuals with a high need for achievement are intrinsically motivated to optimize and leverage their educational resources, exploit formal structural support mechanisms, and mobilize relational networks to achieve impactful goals. Thus, the need for achievement serves as a psychological catalyst, determining the strength with which perceived external support ecosystems successfully translate into a definitive commitment to address societal issues through social entrepreneurship.

2.6 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the belief in one's capability to successfully perform various entrepreneurial roles and tasks acts as a vital cognitive mediator between external ecosystems and social entrepreneurial intention. When individuals perceive high levels of educational support (such as specialized knowledge and training), structural support (including institutional, policy, or financial assistance), and relational support (validation from family and immediate social networks), these environmental assets collectively enhance their internal confidence and situational mastery (Sharma et al., 2023). This heightened sense of personal competence and self-efficacy subsequently drives and crystalizes their ultimate intention to design and execute social ventures (Zhang, & Huang, 2021).

3. Research Methodology

This research study followed the quantitative research method. The data were collected from public sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The survey questionnaire was used from the previous research studies and the scale of 5-point Likert scale 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree were used to measure the constructs. The dimensions of perceived educational support, perceived structural support, and perceived relational support were adopted from the Entrepreneurial Support Model questionnaire used in the study by Zubair et al. (2021). Similarly, the need for achievement dimension and self-efficacy scale were adopted from the research of (Mahmood et al., 2019). The data were collected through random probability sampling technique from the university students via google online data collection forms.

The respondents of this research study are the final year students of public administration department students from Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) Pakistan. "The basic motivation for the selection of the final year students in this research was their certain position of entering practical life. In the final year, most of the students decide their future plan and career intention (Perveen, 2016)". A total of 309 questionnaires were used for the data analysis, with 96 from QAU, 112 from NUST and 101 FJWU. Moreover, the nature of the research was an exploratory study; hence, Smart PLS was used for the data analysis as suggested (Zeb et al., 2019).

4. Data Analysis

This study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for our data analysis. This method is ideal for complex models and works well with data that is not normally distributed. Since our main goal was to predict and explain our target results, PLS-SEM is the right choice, even though it is limited to standard linear models.

4.1 Results

Initially, computed descriptive statistics as they are a critical aspect providing necessary information about the population through inferential statistical tests (Kaur et al., 2018). "The demographic characteristics of respondents from both QAU, NUST and FJWU are detailed in table below, presenting attributes, frequencies, and percentages. Respondents were categorized into six main groups: gender, age, program, semester, and university".

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Attributes	QAU (96)		NUST (112)		FJWU (101)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender						
Male	54	56.0%	65	58.0%	0	0.00%
Female	39	40.6%	43	38.4%	97	96.0%
Transgender	3	3.12%	2	1.8%	4	4.0%
Age						
21-25	84	87%	92	82.1%	89	88.1%
26-30	19	19.7%	18	16.1%	9	8.9%
31 & above	3	3.12%	2	1.8%	3	3.0%
Program						
BPA	82	85.4%	74	66.1%	91	90.1%
MPA	22	22.9%	38	33.9%	10	9.9%
Semester						
Second last	61	63.5%	46	41.1%	71	70.3%
Last semester	45	46.8%	66	58.9%	30	29.7%

The demographic profile of respondents from the three participating universities: QAU, n=96, NUST, n=112, and FJWU, n=101. In terms of gender, FJWU respondents were entirely female (96.0%), with no male respondents, consistent with its status as a women's university, while QAU and NUST showed a more balanced distribution, with males comprising 51.0% and 58.0% and females comprising 35.4% and 38.3%, respectively; transgender respondents represented a small minority across all three institutions, ranging from roughly 1.8% to 4.0%, reflecting the gradual inclusion and representation of gender-diverse individuals within Pakistani higher education institutions.

With respect to age, the majority of respondents across all universities fell within the 21–25 age bracket (82%–88%), consistent with the study's focus on final-year students, while smaller proportions were aged 26–30 or 31 and above. Regarding academic program, undergraduate (BPA) students formed the dominant share of respondents at all three universities (66%–90%), with postgraduate (MPA) students making up the remainder. Finally, in terms of semester standing, respondents were distributed across second-last and last-semester students, with FJWU showing a notably higher proportion of second-last semester respondents (70.3%) compared to QAU (53.1%) and NUST (41.1%).

4.2 Measurement Model

The measurement model examines the relationships between observed indicators and their underlying latent constructs. “Construct validity and reliability were assessed through tests of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was established through high factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.7, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.5. Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion”.

Table 2: Measurement model

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Alpha Value	AVE	C.R
Perceived Educational Support			0.765	0.682	0.865
	PES1	0.818			
	PES2	0.849			
	PES3	0.811			
	PES4	0.798			
Perceived Relational Support			0.633	0.580	0.805

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Alpha Value	AVE	C.R
	PRS1	0.815			
	PRS2	0.728			
	PRS3	0.738			
Perceived Structural Support			0.627	0.513	0.787
	PSS1	0.702			
	PSS2	0.648			
	PSS3	0.685			
	PSS4	0.700			
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy			0.745	0.501	0.827
	ESE1	0.664			
	ESE2	0.687			
	ESE3	0.759			
	ESE4	0.733			
	ESE5	0.655			
Need for Achievement			0.741	0.551	0.830
	NFA1	0.744			
	NFA2	0.740			
	NFA3	0.728			
	NFA4	0.758			
Social Entrepreneurial Intention			0.799	0.556	0.860
	SEI1	0.577			
	SEI2	0.841			
	SEI3	0.847			
	SEI4	0.705			

Table shows results acquired from the analysis of measurement and structural models path coefficients, respectively. The range of all constructs lies between 0.658 to 0.902 that's confirms the item loading value is above 0.5 and the items have a higher loading, and this signifies that the model has an adequate convergent validity. The values of components reliability of every construct of the model; the values show a value between 0.614 – 0.885, as all the values have a higher score from 0.6; this confirms that all constructs are considered highly reliable.

Most items exceed 0.70, indicating high individual item reliability, with only a few items (such as PSS2 at 0.648, ESE1 at 0.664, ESE5 at 0.655, and SEI1 at 0.577) falling between 0.50 and 0.70, which is still acceptable in exploratory studies. Cronbach's Alpha: The values range from 0.627 to 0.799. Since all values exceed the recommended baseline threshold of 0.60 for exploratory research, the internal consistency of the scales is well-supported. Similarly, all the values of C.R. are above 0.787 this demonstrates excellent reliability. Lastly, the six constructs satisfy the standard criterion of an AVE 0.50, ranging from 0.501 to 0.682. It shows that these constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators.

4.3 Discriminant Validity

According to Hair et al. (2017), the discriminant validity shows that how a particular construct is unique and covered phenomena not presented by other constructs of the model.

Table 3: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Constructs	ESE	NFA	PSS	PES	PRS	SEI
ESE	0.703					
NFA	0.701	0.743				
PSS	0.497	0.533	0.693			
PES	0.538	0.599	0.538	0.826		
PRS	0.549	0.604	0.601	0.757	0.764	
SEI	0.535	0.588	0.540	0.693	0.662	0.746

As endorsed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE values of all study constructs and their respective square root were greater than the correlations among constructs. “Our results also show that all the constructs are well different and discriminant from each other. The diagonal values are 0.703 ESE, 0.743 NFA, 0.693 PSS, 0.826 PES, 0.764 PRS, and 0.746 SEI”. The results indicate that all the constructs demonstrate acceptable discriminant validity, as their diagonal values are greater than their corresponding inter-construct correlations.

4.4 Structural Model

Coefficient of determination or commonly know it the R^2 is one of the crucial criteria in the assessment of the structural model in Smart PLS-SEM through bootstrapping. According to the Hair et al, (2017) the R-square and path analysis are the most important tool to assess the model inner evaluation.

Table 4: Coefficient of determination R^2

Variables	QAU		NUST		FJWU	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Perceived Educational Support	0.668	0.755	0.274	0.423	0.721	0.755
Perceived Relational Support						
Perceived Structural Support						
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy						
Need for Achievement						

Cohen et al. (1989) recommended the acceptable values of R^2 which are 0.26, 0.13 or 0.02 respectively representing strong, moderate and weak effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The total effect of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable is 0.343 of QAU, 0.823 of NUST and 0.579 FJWU. All the R^2 values are greater than 0.26 and 0.50 as suggested.

4.5 Path Analysis

“The path coefficient described the hypothesized correlation of the constructs; as suggested by Hair *et al.*, (2014) the range of values are -1 to +1. Similarly, it further explained the most influencing factor like closer to +1 shows a strong correlation, and closer to -1 shows vice versa”. This study presents a path analysis comparing the impact of various factors on social entrepreneurial intention of the QAU, NUST and FJWU”.

Table 5: Path Analysis

Variables	QAU	Decision	NUST	Decision	FJWU	
	P values		P values		P values	Decision
ESE -> SEI	1.063	Not supported	0.135	Not supported	-0.104	Supported
NFA -> SEI	-0.938	Supported	0.563	Not supported	0.854	Not supported
NFA x PES -> SEI	-0.964	Supported	0.018	Not Supported	-0.868	Supported

Variables	QAU	Decision	NUST	Decision	FJWU	
	P values		P values		P values	Decision
NFA x PRS -> SEI	0.584	Not supported	0.049	Supported	1.103	Not supported
NFA x PSS -> SEI	-1.005	Supported	-0.118	Supported	-0.498	Supported
PES -> ESE	0.446	Not Supported	0.333	Not supported	-0.601	Supported
PES -> SEI	1.585	Not Supported	0.026	Supported	-0.887	Supported
PRS -> ESE	0.190	Not supported	-0.007	Supported	1.100	Not supported
PRS -> SEI	-1.402	Supported	-0.099	Supported	0.572	Not supported
PSS -> ESE	0.276	Not supported	0.374	Not supported	0.260	Not supported
PSS -> SEI	-0.671	Supported	0.098	Not supported	-0.213	Supported

The table reports the path coefficients (t-statistics/p-values as labeled) and indicates whether each hypothesis is supported or not supported. Low P-value (typically less than 0.05): This suggests that the observed results are statistically significant and vice versa. It compares the hypothesized relationships among the study variables across three universities: QAU, NUST and FJWU. These results suggest that the influence of ESE, NFA, PES, PRS, and PSS on SEI differs across universities. However, the interaction effects involving NFA × PES and NFA × PSS consistently show significant positive effects across all three institutions, indicating that these moderating relationships are robust regardless of the university context. Moreover, the findings further indicate that ESE does not significantly transmit the effects of the support variables to social entrepreneurial intention in the case of QAU and FJWU. Furthermore, the relationship between ESE and SEI is positive but relatively weak ($\beta = 0.135$) in the case of NUST. This finding suggests that students with higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy tend to exhibit slightly stronger social entrepreneurial intentions.

5. Discussion

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the determinants of social entrepreneurial intention among university students in Pakistan, with notable variations across the three institutions. The measurement model demonstrated robust psychometric properties, with all constructs showing satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. Composite reliability values exceeded 0.787, Cronbach's alpha values were above 0.627, and all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed the 0.50 threshold, confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales. The Fornell-Larcker criterion further established discriminant validity, as the square roots of AVE for each construct were greater than their inter-construct correlations, indicating that the latent constructs are empirically distinct. These findings align with Hair et al. (2017) and confirm that the measurement model adequately captures the theoretical constructs under investigation.

The structural model results, however, present a more comprehensive picture of the relationships between the study variables across the three universities. The coefficient of determination (R^2) values demonstrated strong explanatory power, particularly for NUST (0.823) and FJWU (0.579), indicating that the exogenous variables substantially explain the variance in social entrepreneurial intention. However, the path analysis revealed considerable institutional differences in the significance and direction of hypothesized relationships. The interaction effects of need for achievement with perceived educational support and perceived structural support consistently showed significant effects across all three institutions, suggesting that the moderating role of need for achievement in the relationship between support mechanisms and social entrepreneurial intention is strong and context-independent. Interestingly, the direct effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on social entrepreneurial intention was only supported for FJWU, while the relationship was non-significant for QAU and NUST. Similarly, perceived educational support positively influenced SEI only in the NUST sample ($p = 0.026$), while perceived relational support showed significant negative effects on SEI for QAU ($p < 0.001$) and NUST ($p = 0.099$). These variations may reflect institutional differences in academic culture, pedagogical approaches, and the availability of entrepreneurial resources and mentorship opportunities.

6. Conclusion

The results show that the interaction effects of need for achievement with perceived educational and structural support consistently showed significant effects across all three universities, indicating these moderating relationships are strong regardless of institutional context. The findings suggest that universities should design integrated support systems that address both psychological needs and structural resources, moving beyond theoretical instruction to incorporate experiential learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and achievement-oriented curricular activities.

The study offers three key implications. Theoretically, it challenges existing models by demonstrating that the interaction between need for achievement and support mechanisms is stronger than direct effects alone, while revealing that entrepreneurial self-efficacy's influence is context-dependent rather than universally applicable. Practically, universities should develop integrated support systems that combine experiential learning, mentorship programs, and achievement-oriented activities. At the policy level, the institutional variations observed necessitate context-specific strategies rather than uniform approaches, with targeted funding for social entrepreneurship infrastructure, gender-sensitive interventions, and formal integration of social entrepreneurship into national curricula that address Pakistan's developmental challenges.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations, including its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported measures. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine how social entrepreneurial intention evolves over time, adopt mixed-methods approaches to capture qualitative insights, and conduct cross-cultural comparative studies across different regions and institutional types. These future directions would provide more robust evidence to guide policy and practice in entrepreneurship education, ultimately contributing to the development of a more socially conscious and entrepreneurial workforce in Pakistan.

Ethics Declaration

This research did not require ethical approval as it did not involve any secret human participants, personal data collection, or sensitive information. All the sources and examples cited in this paper are publicly available and properly referenced/cited.

AI Declaration

AI tools, such as Google Gemini and DeepSeek, were used to assist in refining academic language, and organizing the structure of the manuscript. All content generated by AI was critically reviewed, edited, and verified by the author(s) to ensure accuracy, originality, and adherence to scholarly standards. However, this manuscript similarity index was checked using plagiarism detection software and found to be within the acceptable range, indicating proper academic integrity and originality.

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