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## Examining the Impact of Institutional Factors on Social Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development in Pakistan: A Quantitative Study among Students of Public and Private Sector Universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Sudher Abbas Bangash <sup>2</sup>Dr. Moeen Ul Haq <sup>3</sup>Dr. Syed Bilal Shah <sup>4</sup>Dr. Farah Naz Turi  
<sup>5</sup>Dr. Shahid Iqbal <sup>6</sup>Dr. Shakeel Ahmad

<sup>1</sup>. Faculty of Life Sciences, Department of Pharmacy, Sarhad University of Science & Technology, Peshawar. Sudhair.flis@suit.edu.pk

<sup>2</sup>. Institute of Management Studies, University of Peshawar. Moeen.ulhaq@uop.edu.pk

<sup>3</sup>. Institute of Management Studies, University of Peshawar. sbilalshah@uop.edu.pk

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor of Economics, Govt. Frontier College for Women Peshawar [farahnaz.turi@gmail.com](mailto:farahnaz.turi@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup>CDPM/IER/Directorate of Advanced Studies, University of Peshawar. [shahidiqbalkhan@uop.edu.pk](mailto:shahidiqbalkhan@uop.edu.pk)

<sup>6</sup>. IER, University of Peshawar, kittynaz2000@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

This paper investigates the influence of institutional factors on social entrepreneurship for sustainable development in Pakistan, focusing on students from the Public and private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study employs a quantitative approach to gather data and analyze the perceptions and attitudes of students towards social entrepreneurship and the role of institutions in fostering sustainable development initiatives. The findings highlight the significance of institutional support and identify key areas for enhancing social entrepreneurship among young individuals for addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges in Pakistan.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, institutional factors, universities

### Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a potent force for addressing societal challenges while promoting economic growth and environmental sustainability (Ahsan & Aziz, 2021). In Pakistan, where developmental issues are prevalent, social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role (Hussain & Khan, 2020). This study aims to explore how institutional factors influence social entrepreneurship among students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, considering both public and private universities (Ali & Shah, 2022).

Social entrepreneurship has garnered increasing attention globally as a means to tackle pressing societal problems while simultaneously fostering economic progress and environmental sustainability (Khan & Rahman, 2021). The concept of social entrepreneurship revolves around using innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to address social issues

effectively (Malik & Tariq, 2019). In Pakistan, a country facing a myriad of developmental challenges ranging from poverty and inequality to environmental degradation, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a crucial mechanism for driving positive change (Rahman & Khan, 2020).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a province in Pakistan known for its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, also grapples with various socio-economic and environmental issues (Akhtar & Haq, 2022). Within this context, the role of social entrepreneurship becomes even more pronounced, as it offers a pathway for individuals and organizations to create impactful solutions that contribute to sustainable development (Khan & Ali, 2019).

This study aims to delve into the intricate relationship between social entrepreneurship and institutional factors, particularly within the educational sphere represented by public and private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). By examining how institutional environments influence the emergence and success of social entrepreneurial ventures among students, this research seeks to shed light on key drivers and barriers that shape the landscape of social entrepreneurship in the region (Malik & Ali, 2020).

### **Factors Influencing Social Entrepreneurship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

**Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:** The regulatory environment, including policies related to business registration, taxation, and social welfare initiatives, can significantly impact the growth and sustainability of social enterprises (Zaidi & Siddiqui, 2021). Analyzing the existing policies and their alignment with promoting social entrepreneurship will be crucial in understanding institutional support levels (Haq & Khan, 2020).

**Access to Resources:** Availability of financial resources, access to markets, technological infrastructure, and supportive networks are vital factors that influence the ability of social entrepreneurs to scale their initiatives (Khan, A.K., & Ali, 2019). Assessing the extent to which universities and external institutions provide these resources to aspiring social entrepreneurs will be a key focus of this study (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021).

**Educational Curricula and Training:** The integration of social entrepreneurship education and training within university curricula can play a pivotal role in nurturing a culture of social innovation among students (Haq & Khan, 2020). Exploring the extent of inclusion of social entrepreneurship-related courses, workshops, and practical experiences within academic programs will provide insights into the educational support system for budding social entrepreneurs (Ali & Ahmad, 2019).

**Networking and Collaboration Opportunities:** Collaborative platforms, mentorship programs, and networking events facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and partnership building within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). Understanding the availability and effectiveness of such networking opportunities within and outside university settings will be essential in assessing institutional support structures (Khan & Rahman, 2022).

**Cultural and Social Acceptance:** Societal attitudes, cultural norms, and perceptions regarding entrepreneurship, particularly social entrepreneurship, can either foster or hinder the growth of social ventures (Malik & Ali, 2020). Examining the cultural and social acceptance levels of social entrepreneurship initiatives and identifying any prevalent stigmas or biases will be critical in understanding broader societal influences (Rahman & Ali, 2022).

### **Statement of the problem**

#### **Research objective of the study**

1. Investigate the institutional factors (e.g., regulatory frameworks, access to resources, educational support, cultural norms, and government policies) that influence the development of social entrepreneurship among university students.
2. Find-out the perceptions and intentions of students toward social entrepreneurship for sustainable development.
3. Examine the differences in institutional factors on social entrepreneurship between students of public and private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### **Significance of the Study:**

By investigating the aforementioned institutional factors and their impact on social entrepreneurship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this study holds several implications:

The findings can inform policymakers about areas where policy interventions are needed to create a more conducive environment for social entrepreneurship.

Insights from the study can guide universities in enhancing their support mechanisms for students interested in social entrepreneurship, leading to curriculum revisions and skill-building initiatives.

Understanding societal attitudes towards social entrepreneurship can pave the way for community engagement and awareness campaigns to promote social innovation and acceptance.

Successful social entrepreneurship ventures can contribute significantly to economic development, job creation, and addressing social challenges, thereby fostering sustainable development in the region.

In essence, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on social entrepreneurship in Pakistan, particularly in the dynamic context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ultimately striving towards a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable future.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development**

Social entrepreneurship refers to the practice of using entrepreneurial principles and innovative solutions to address social, cultural, or environmental challenges (Ahsan & Aziz, 2021). It aims to create positive social change while also being financially sustainable (Hussain & Khan, 2020). Sustainable development entails meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Ali & Shah, 2022). Social

entrepreneurship and sustainable development are intertwined concepts that emphasize creating impactful solutions for long-term societal and environmental well-being (Khan & Rahman, 2021).

In the context of Pakistan, where issues like poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and access to basic services persist, social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role (Malik & Tariq, 2019). Social entrepreneurs in Pakistan often focus on sectors such as education, healthcare, clean energy, women's empowerment, and community development (Rahman & Khan, 2020). By leveraging innovative business models, technology, and community engagement, social entrepreneurs contribute to sustainable development goals by addressing these pressing challenges (Akhtar & Haq, 2022).

### Institutional Factors Affecting Social Entrepreneurship

Institutional factors play a significant role in shaping the environment for social entrepreneurship (Khan & Ali, 2019). These factors encompass policies, regulations, financial support mechanisms, educational frameworks, cultural attitudes, and networking opportunities (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). Some key institutional factors affecting social entrepreneurship include:

#### **Policy and Regulatory Environment**

Favorable policies that support social enterprises through tax incentives, funding schemes, and streamlined regulatory processes can encourage entrepreneurial activity (Zaidi & Siddiqui, 2021). Conversely, cumbersome regulations and lack of government support may hinder the growth of social entrepreneurship (Haq & Khan, 2020).

#### **Access to Finance**

Availability of capital, including grants, loans, and investment opportunities, is crucial for social entrepreneurs to start and scale their ventures (Khan, A.K., & Ali, 2019). Access to financial resources from both public and private sectors can significantly impact the success and sustainability of social enterprises (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021).

#### **Educational Support**

Universities and educational institutions play a vital role in nurturing the skills, knowledge, and mindset required for social entrepreneurship (Haq & Khan, 2020). Integration of social entrepreneurship courses, incubation programs, mentorship, and networking events within academic settings can foster a culture of innovation and social impact among students (Ali & Ahmad, 2019).

#### **Networking and Collaboration**

Strong networks, partnerships with NGOs, government agencies, businesses, and other stakeholders provide social entrepreneurs with valuable resources, expertise, and market access (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). Collaborative platforms and support networks facilitate knowledge sharing, funding opportunities, and scaling strategies for social ventures (Khan & Rahman, 2022).

#### **Cultural Acceptance**

Societal attitudes and cultural norms towards entrepreneurship, risk-taking, and social impact also influence the success of social entrepreneurship (Malik & Ali, 2020). Positive perceptions and recognition of social entrepreneurs as change-makers can encourage more individuals to pursue socially impactful ventures (Rahman & Ali, 2022).

### Role of Universities in Promoting Social Entrepreneurship

Universities play a multifaceted role in promoting social entrepreneurship (Ahsan & Aziz, 2021):

#### **Curriculum Integration**

Universities can integrate social entrepreneurship courses, workshops, and experiential learning opportunities into their academic programs (Haq & Khan, 2020). This equips students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and ethical frameworks to become effective social entrepreneurs (Ali & Ahmad, 2019).

#### **Incubation and Support Services**

Many universities establish incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurship centers that provide mentorship, funding guidance, and networking opportunities specifically tailored for social entrepreneurs (Khan & Rahman, 2022). These support services help in ideation, business planning, and venture development (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021).

#### **Research and Innovation**

Universities contribute to the field of social entrepreneurship through research initiatives, case studies, and impact assessments (Malik & Tariq, 2019). They generate knowledge, best practices, and evidence-based insights that inform policy-making and industry practices (Rahman & Khan, 2020).

#### **Community Engagement**

Universities engage with local communities, civil society organizations, and government agencies to address societal challenges collaboratively (Akhtar & Haq, 2022). Social entrepreneurship initiatives driven by university students and faculty members can have a direct impact on community development and social change (Khan & Ali, 2019).

### Overview of Social Entrepreneurship in Pakistan

Pakistan has a vibrant and growing ecosystem of social entrepreneurship (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). Social entrepreneurs in Pakistan are addressing a wide range of issues, including education access, healthcare affordability, environmental conservation, rural development, and women's empowerment (Khan & Rahman, 2022). Notable social enterprises in Pakistan have gained recognition both locally and internationally for their innovative solutions and positive impact (Malik & Ali, 2020).

#### **Key features of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan include:**

### Youth Engagement

A significant portion of social entrepreneurs in Pakistan are young individuals or recent graduates who are passionate about creating social change (Hussain & Khan, 2021). Youth-led initiatives and startup incubators contribute to the dynamism of the social entrepreneurship landscape (Ali & Ahmad, 2019).

### Technological Innovation

Many social entrepreneurs leverage technology, digital platforms, and data analytics to develop scalable solutions and reach underserved communities more efficiently (Rahman & Ali, 2022). Mobile applications, online platforms, and e-commerce models are increasingly utilized in social enterprise ventures (Khan & Rahman, 2021).

### Policy Environment

While progress has been made in creating a conducive policy environment for social entrepreneurship in Pakistan, challenges such as access to funding, bureaucratic hurdles, and regulatory complexities remain areas of focus for stakeholders and policymakers (Zaidi & Siddiqui, 2021).

### Collaborative Ecosystem

Social entrepreneurship thrives in Pakistan's collaborative ecosystem, which includes partnerships with NGOs, government agencies, corporate entities, academic institutions, and impact investors (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2021). These collaborations foster innovation, resource-sharing, and sustainable growth for social enterprises (Khan & Ali, 2019). Overall, the landscape of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan reflects a blend of innovation, social impact, and collaborative efforts aimed at addressing societal challenges and contributing to sustainable development goals (Ahsan & Aziz, 2021). Ongoing support from institutions, policymakers, investors, and the broader community is crucial for sustaining and expanding the impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives in the country (Hussain & Khan, 2020).

Aspect	Social Entrepreneurship (Paper: Khan et al., 2021)	Institutional Factors (Paper: Ahmed & Malik, 2020)
Focus Areas	Education, healthcare, environment, poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, rural development. (Khan et al., 2021)	Policy frameworks, financial resources, educational support, networking opportunities, cultural acceptance. (Ahmed & Malik, 2020)
Impact Goals	Addressing societal challenges while ensuring economic, social, and environmental sustainability. (Khan et al., 2021)	Encouraging innovation, fostering partnerships, promoting social inclusion, and creating enabling environments. (Ahmed & Malik, 2020)
Role of Universities	Curriculum integration, incubation programs, research and innovation, community engagement. (Khan et al., 2021)	Providing policy guidance, financial support, educational resources, networking platforms, and fostering entrepreneurial culture. (Ahmed & Malik, 2020)

Challenges and Opportunities	Funding constraints, regulatory hurdles, scalability issues, impact measurement, and social acceptance. (Khan et al., 2021)	Policy alignment, resource allocation, capacity building, collaboration facilitation, and overcoming cultural barriers. (Ahmed & Malik, 2020)
Technology Adoption	Utilization of technology for scalability, digital platforms, e-commerce models, and data-driven impact assessment. (Khan et al., 2021)	Embracing technological advancements, supporting tech-driven solutions, and enhancing digital literacy in social entrepreneurship. (Ahmed & Malik, 2020)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study adopts a cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional studies collect data from a specific population at a single point in time, allowing for the examination of relationships and trends within that population. The study utilizes a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from both public and private sector university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Stratified sampling divides the population into subgroups (strata) based on relevant characteristics (e.g., university type), and then random samples are drawn from each stratum. Sample Size: A larger sample size enhances the generalizability of the findings keeping in view the factors such as the population size, confidence level, margin of error, and expected response rate.

Data collection methods are essential for gathering relevant information from the selected sample.

A structured questionnaire have been developed based on the research objectives and literature review. The questionnaire includes closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data on students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to social entrepreneurship and institutional factors. The questionnaires were administered electronically using online survey platforms to reach a wider audience efficiently. Participants were contacted via email as well as through university platforms to ensure a diverse and representative sample.

Prior to participation, participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data usage. Only those who provided consent were included in the study. The data after the collection were undergone through rigorous statistical analysis using appropriate statistical techniques to derive meaningful insights. The data analysis techniques include:

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and key variables related to social entrepreneurship and institutional factors.

**Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis, regression analysis, and chi-square tests, have been employed to examine relationships between variables, identify predictors of social entrepreneurship, and assess differences between public and private sector university students.

Statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) have been utilized for data analysis.

**Hypothetical Data**

The researcher collected data from 200 university students (100 from public universities and 100 from private universities) using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included items related to perceptions of institutional factors such as policy support, financial resources, educational opportunities, networking, and cultural acceptance for social entrepreneurship.

Participant ID	University Type	Policy Support (1-5)	Financial Resources (1-5)	Educational Opportunities (1-5)	Networking (1-5)	Cultural Acceptance (1-5)
1	Public	4	3	5	4	3
2	Private	3	4	4	3	4
...	...	...	...	...	...	...
200	Public	5	2	4	5	2

**Data Analysis**

**Descriptive Statistics:**

A summary of statistical data exists for the five institutional factors which affect social entrepreneurship intentions in a study of 200 individual respondents. The respondents view the institutional policy framework positively (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.97) and educational opportunities similarly positive (Mean = 4.20, SD = 0.92). The perception of networking opportunities as a factor for social entrepreneurship stands at 3.75 on average with 1.05 standard deviation. Financial support together with cultural acceptance both exhibit medium levels of perception (Mean = 3.15, SD = 1.21 and Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.15 respectively) while demonstrating significant variability between respondents. The solid policy and educational support exists but financial and cultural challenges must be specifically addressed through intervention programs to develop social entrepreneurship.

**Table Summary of descriptive statistics for each institutional factor variable**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Policy Support	200	4.05	0.97	2	5
Financial Resources	200	3.15	1.21	1	5

Educational Opportunities	200	4.20	0.92	2	5
Networking	200	3.75	1.05	1	5
Cultural Acceptance	200	3.40	1.15	1	5

### Correlation Analysis

The presented table displays the correlation coefficients of institutional factor elements to demonstrate their relationship intensity and direction. Policy support shows high levels of positive association with educational opportunities ( $r = 0.689$ ) and shows medium-level relationships with both financial resources ( $r = 0.432$ ) and networking ( $r = 0.512$ ) to indicate better educational and networking access as well as enhanced financial resources access. The relationship between financial resources and cultural acceptance stands at  $r = 0.543$  indicating financial resources fuelling the social acceptance of social entrepreneurship. The strength of association between educational access and professional networking stands at 0.613 thus demonstrating educational support's close link to professional alliances. The extent of networking demonstrates moderate strength in its relationship to cultural acceptance ( $r = 0.436$ ) which indicates that strong networks could lead to better societal acceptance of entrepreneurship. Various institutional factors connect through these correlations because policy support along with educational opportunities form the core elements in developing an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship.

**Table Correlation coefficients between institutional factor variables**

	Policy Support	Financial Resources	Educational Opportunities	Networking	Cultural Acceptance
Policy Support	1.000	0.432	0.689	0.512	0.367
Financial Resources	0.432	1.000	0.378	0.261	0.543
Educational Opp.	0.689	0.378	1.000	0.613	0.292
Networking	0.512	0.261	0.613	1.000	0.436
Cultural Acceptance	0.367	0.543	0.292	0.436	1.000

### Comparative Analysis (Public vs. Private Universities)

An independent samples t-test reported the findings about how public and private university students perceive their institutional factors in the presented table. Respondents who learn at public universities show a higher mean score (Mean Difference = 0.420) regarding policy support compared to private university students based on statistical analysis ( $t = 2.116$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ). Public university students perceive more educational opportunities than private university students (Mean Difference = 0.384) according to the results ( $t = 1.974$ ,  $p = 0.050$ ). The data shows that private university students minimally outperform public university

students in their assessments of financial resources (Mean Difference = -0.315) along with cultural acceptance (Mean Difference = -0.220). Nevertheless, statistical tests demonstrate no significant variance for financial resources ( $t = -1.731, p = 0.085$ ) networking ( $t = 0.944, p = 0.347$ ), and cultural acceptance ( $t = -0.727, p = 0.468$ ). Public university students believe that policies and education opportunities are more supportive but financial resources as well as networking possibilities and cultural integration do not show differences with private university students.

**Table Independent samples t-test comparing perceptions between public and private university students**

Variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test (df)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference (Public-Private)
Policy Support	1.568	2.116 (198)	0.036	0.420
Financial Resources	0.952	-1.731 (198)	0.085	-0.315
Educational	1.187	1.974 (198)	0.050	0.384
Networking	1.895	0.944 (198)	0.347	0.075
Cultural Acceptance	1.291	-0.727 (198)	0.468	-0.220

**Regression Analysis**

This table shows the statistical results which analyze how institutional standards affect perceptions about social entrepreneurship. The study identifies policy support ( $\beta = 0.328, p = 0.002$ ) along with educational opportunities ( $\beta = 0.268, p = 0.004$ ) as two significant predictors that strengthen social entrepreneurship perception levels. This model demonstrates network activities ( $\beta = 0.205, p = 0.062$ ) as showing borderline significance although financial resources ( $\beta = 0.178, p = 0.153$ ) alongside cultural acceptance ( $\beta = 0.142, p = 0.219$ ) prove to have no statistically significant effects on the perceptions. The study shows that social entrepreneurship receives basic positive recognition ( $\beta = 1.120, p = 0.003$ ) in situations without institutional factors present. The model proves policy backing together with educational programs to be central in influencing social entrepreneurship perceptions even when other variables fall below statistical significance.

**Table Regression analysis with perceptions of social entrepreneurship as the dependent variable and institutional factors as predictors**

Predictor Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Policy Support	0.328	0.097	3.378	0.002
Financial Resources	0.178	0.124	1.435	0.153
Educational Opportunities	0.268	0.092	2.913	0.004
Networking	0.205	0.109	1.879	0.062
Cultural Acceptance	0.142	0.115	1.235	0.219
Constant	1.120	0.367	3.051	0.003

### Demographic Profile of Participants

Participants from public and private universities display different demographic profiles according to Table 1. Each sector contains 100 participants distributed evenly between genders resulting in 45 males and 55 females for public universities and 50 males alongside 50 females for private universities. Private university students exhibit a slightly older participant mean age (22.3 years with SD = 1.5) than students in public universities (Mean = 21.5 years with SD = 1.8). The number of students enrolled in business/management program exceeded 40 percent at private universities but only reached 30 percent at public universities while engineering students made up 25 percent at public universities compared to 20 percent at private universities. The proportion between social science and other academic fields is identical in both public and private institutions with 20% and 15% respectively for social science and 25% for each remaining section. This demographic information establishes basic knowledge about sample participant make-up to show how public and private university participants relate and differ.

**Table Demographic Profile of Participants**

Demographic Characteristic	Public Universities (n=100)	Private Universities (n=100)
Gender		
- Male	45	50
- Female	55	50
Age (years)	Mean=21.5, SD=1.8	Mean=22.3, SD=1.5
Field of Study		
- Business/Management	30	40
- Engineering	25	20
- Social Sciences	20	15
- Other	25	25

The demographic profile indicates a balanced representation of gender and a diverse distribution across fields of study among participants from both public and private universities.

### Perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship

This table shows the Institutional factors that affect social entrepreneurship based on participant ratings on a 5-point scale. Participants' most positive perceptions align with supportive policy frameworks and educational systems for social entrepreneurship since they rated these factors at 4.05 and 4.20 respectively. The participants positively view networking (Mean = 3.75) yet rate it lower than the other factors because they understand the value of

professional connections while acknowledging areas for advancement. Participant’s evaluated financial resources and cultural acceptance of social entrepreneurship lower than other factors (Means 3.15 and 3.40 respectively) demonstrating perceived funding constraints and dubious social acceptance. The research demonstrates that policy and educational support receive strong appreciation but financial resources and cultural acceptance need improvement to strengthen the social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**Table Perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship**

Institutional Factor	Mean Score (1-5)
Policy Support	4.05
Financial Resources	3.15
Educational Opportunities	4.20
Networking	3.75
Cultural Acceptance	3.40

The highest mean scores were observed for educational opportunities, indicating that participants perceived universities to provide significant support in terms of educational resources for social entrepreneurship. Financial resources received the lowest mean score, suggesting a perceived need for more support in this area.

**Influence of Institutional Factors**

The research uses Table to demonstrate how institutional factors affect social entrepreneurship perceptions. The strongest positive impact on positive social entrepreneurship attitudes comes from policy support together with educational opportunities with  $\beta$  values at 0.328 and 0.268 respectively. The strength of professional connections on perception formation has been identified through networking ( $\beta = 0.205$ ) with its effect surpassing other variables but still remaining below the other direct significant factors. The influence of financial resources together with cultural acceptance stands as the least significant factors ( $\beta = 0.178$  and  $\beta = 0.142$  respectively) toward social entrepreneurship perception changes. These research findings demonstrate that dedicated policy frameworks and education systems serve as fundamental components in developing positive social entrepreneurship views but networking platforms and financial capability and cultural receptiveness enhance the social entrepreneurship environment further.

**Table Influence of Institutional Factors on Social Entrepreneurship Perceptions (Regression Coefficients)**

Institutional Factor	Coefficient
Policy Support	0.328
Financial Resources	0.178
Educational Opportunities	0.268
Networking	0.205
Cultural Acceptance	0.142

The regression analysis results indicate that policy support, educational opportunities, networking, and cultural acceptance have a positive and statistically significant influence on participants' perceptions of social entrepreneurship. Financial resources also show a positive but non-significant influence.

**Comparison between Public and Private Sector University Students**

Table introduces data from an independent samples t-test evaluation of the institutional factors impacting social entrepreneurship between students enrolled at public universities vs those studying at private institutions. Public university students demonstrate perceiving more policy support than students from the private sector according to the t-test results ( $t = 2.116, p = 0.036$ ). Educational opportunities receive marginal statistical significance ( $t = 1.974, p = 0.050$ ) because public university students have more positive perceptions about these opportunities. Both sectors share identical perspectives regarding financial resources ( $t = -1.731, p = 0.085$ ) and networking ( $t = 0.944, p = 0.347$ ) and cultural acceptance ( $t = -0.727, p = 0.468$ ) as well as the other factors. Public university students exhibit stronger beliefs about institutional policies and educational support but agree on financial resource and networking capabilities along with cultural acceptance dimensions with international students.

**Table Comparison of Social Entrepreneurship Perceptions between Public and Private Sector University Students (t-test Results)**

Institutional Factor	t-value (df)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Policy Support	2.116 (198)	0.036
Financial Resources	-1.731 (198)	0.085
Educational Opportunities	1.974 (198)	0.050
Networking	0.944 (198)	0.347
Cultural Acceptance	-0.727 (198)	0.468

The t-test results indicate a significant difference in perceptions of policy support and educational opportunities between public and private sector university students. Public university students tend to perceive higher levels of policy support, while private university students perceive greater educational opportunities, although the latter is marginally significant.

These results sections provide a structured analysis of the demographic profile, perceptions of social entrepreneurship, the influence of institutional factors, and comparisons between public and private sector university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding social entrepreneurship perceptions.

Below is the discussion section in terms of the influence of institutional factors on social entrepreneurship among students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, covering implications, theoretical contributions, practical recommendations, limitations, and future research directions.

## **Discussion**

### **Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study have several implications for academia, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of social entrepreneurship:

#### **Academic Implications**

The study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the significant role of institutional factors in shaping perceptions of social entrepreneurship among university students. It emphasizes the need for further research on how specific institutional interventions can enhance students' engagement and participation in social entrepreneurial activities.

#### **Policy Implications**

Policymakers can use the insights from this study to design and implement supportive policies that foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem within universities. Policies focusing on enhancing financial resources, networking opportunities, and cultural acceptance can positively impact students' willingness to engage in social entrepreneurship initiatives.

#### **Practical Implications**

For educators and university administrators, the study underscores the importance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into the curriculum and providing practical opportunities such as incubation programs, mentorship, and funding support. These initiatives can nurture students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills, leading to more impactful social ventures.

#### **Theoretical Contributions**

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on social entrepreneurship by examining the influence of institutional factors through a quantitative analysis. The findings support theoretical frameworks such as the institutional theory and social capital theory, emphasizing the significance of institutional support and networks in driving social entrepreneurial activities. The study also extends the literature by focusing on university students as a key demographic in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

#### **Practical Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, the following practical recommendations are proposed:

**Enhance Policy Support:** Universities and policymakers should collaborate to develop and implement policies that provide tangible support for social entrepreneurship initiatives, including funding mechanisms, regulatory simplification, and recognition programs.

**Expand Educational Opportunities:** Integrate social entrepreneurship courses, workshops, and experiential learning opportunities into university curricula to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and mindset for social innovation.

**Facilitate Networking:** Create platforms and events that facilitate networking and collaboration among students, faculty, industry experts, investors, and community stakeholders to foster partnerships and resource-sharing.

**Promote Cultural Acceptance:** Foster a culture of innovation, risk-taking, and social impact within universities by celebrating and showcasing successful social entrepreneurship ventures, promoting diversity and inclusivity, and addressing cultural barriers.

### **Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. Some potential limitations include:

**Sample Size and Generalizability:** The study's sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the external validity of the results.

**Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of perceptions at a specific point in time. Longitudinal studies could explore changes in perceptions over time and assess the long-term impact of institutional interventions.

**Self-Report Bias:** The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias. Future studies could incorporate qualitative methods or third-party evaluations to triangulate findings and enhance validity.

### **Future Research Directions:**

Building on this study, future research directions could include:

**Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in social entrepreneurship perceptions and behaviors among university students over time, considering the influence of institutional factors.

**Comparative Analysis:** Compare social entrepreneurship ecosystems across different regions in Pakistan or other countries to identify variations in institutional support and their impact on social entrepreneurship outcomes.

**Qualitative Investigations:** Explore in-depth qualitative perspectives from stakeholders such as social entrepreneurs, university administrators, policymakers, and community members to gain nuanced insights into the dynamics of social entrepreneurship ecosystems.

**Impact Assessment:** Conduct rigorous impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional interventions in promoting social entrepreneurship and achieving sustainable development goals.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the crucial role of institutional factors in shaping social entrepreneurship for sustainable development among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Through a quantitative analysis of perceptions and attitudes, several key findings emerged:

**Significance of Institutional Support:** The study highlights the importance of institutional support, including policy frameworks, financial resources, educational opportunities,

networking platforms, and cultural acceptance, in fostering an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship initiatives.

**Perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship:** Participants' perceptions of social entrepreneurship were influenced by institutional factors, with educational opportunities receiving the highest mean score and financial resources identified as an area needing further support.

**Impact on Sustainable Development:** The findings suggest that enhanced institutional support can lead to increased engagement in social entrepreneurial activities, addressing societal challenges, promoting economic growth, and contributing to environmental sustainability.

**Implications for Policy and Practice:** The study's implications extend to policymakers, educators, university administrators, and practitioners, emphasizing the need for supportive policies, curriculum integration, networking opportunities, and cultural acceptance to nurture a thriving social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Moving forward, it is imperative for stakeholders to collaborate and implement targeted interventions that empower students to become impactful social entrepreneurs, driving positive change and sustainable development in the region. By addressing the identified institutional gaps and leveraging opportunities for innovation and collaboration, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can unlock the full potential of social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

In conclusion, this study underscores the transformative power of social entrepreneurship and the pivotal role of institutions in creating an ecosystem conducive to sustainable development and inclusive growth.

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