Creating social impact: A critical outlook on social entrepreneurship education

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Abstract

Drawing on social cognitive theory, we critically argue that the current focus of social entrepreneurship academic programmes on 'venture creation' limits graduates' potential to create a lasting social impact. We identify four specific limitations in that direction. We propose a novel framework that addresses the identified limitations and provides a mechanism for creating lasting social impact. Our central thesis is that a majority of the students may be ill-prepared to lead ventures upon their graduation. Thus, we propose that academic institutions should focus on nurturing both entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial mindsets, thereby fostering the creation of social ventures and impact-driven organisations, respectively.

1. Introduction

Social enterprises aim to create social impact by addressing grand challenges through innovation and business-like discipline (Kummitha et al, 2025). Grand challenges are those that persist despite relentless efforts by a range of societal actors (George et al., 2016; Kummitha, 2022). Some notable grand challenges of our time include poverty, inequality, and climate change (Drori et al., 2025).

Given their innovative nature and situated at the intersection of the social-business nexus, social enterprises have a particular advantage in addressing grand challenges and creating social impact. We consider the social impact in a broader sense and adopt a definition by Rawhouse et al. (2019), who define it "as beneficial outcomes resulting from prosocial behavior that are enjoyed by the intended targets of that behavior and/or by the broader community of individuals, organisations, and/or environments" (p. 83). The most notable forms of social impact that social enterprises create include skill development and employment generation for disadvantaged groups, addressing market or government failures, and providing products and services to customers at the base of the pyramid (Costanzo et al., 2014).

Given their promise to alleviate the suffering of the marginalised, social entrepreneurship has become integral to entrepreneurship policies in many countries. For instance, in the United

Kingdom, government policies actively promote social entrepreneurship and support the creation of social enterprises to drive sustainable economic and social development (Chell et al., 2007). Accordingly, it is unsurprising that business schools, which have thus far focused largely on business entrepreneurship, have expanded their reach to become the largest providers of social entrepreneurship education by training enthusiasts to initiate social enterprises (Kummitha & Majumdar, 2015).

However, the focus of social entrepreneurship training is currently inclined toward graduate venture creation immediately upon completion of their academic training (Laine & Kibler, 2023), which Wood et al. (2021) metaphorically equate with “Jumping the gun” (p. 6). Although business schools’ interest in promoting ‘graduate venture creation’ is a welcome move, we argue that it falls short of the broader aim of creating lasting social impact. For example, the literature suggests that social enterprises struggle to recruit managers, who are crucial once ventures are initiated (Kummitha, 2022). The academic programmes' intention to promote venturing alone, rather than venture growth, is concerning, as they limit the crucial supply of human resources for these ventures.

Drawing on the social cognitive theory, we argue that graduates' intention to initiate a social enterprise relies on three specific factors – personal, behavioural and environmental, a combination of which influences both actors' self-efficacy and their mindset. However, most social entrepreneurship academic programmes focus on the personal and behavioural levels, overlooking environmental factors. In contrast, growing evidence suggests that environmental factors play a crucial role in entrepreneurial activity (Guerrero et al., 2021). Failure to focus on the environmental level limits graduates' ability to engage in successful venturing and the business schools' potential to create a lasting social impact. This, in fact, also dents the prospects

of universities contributing to their third mission (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). Thus, there is a need to build a robust ecosystem that plays a crucial role at the environmental level, enabling graduates to collaborate and create a lasting shared social impact (Moore, 1993). With this background, this article aims to address the following research question: What key constraints limit the potential of social entrepreneurship education to create lasting social impact, and how can these be overcome*?*

By undertaking a critical review of the literature, we argue that four factors – i) heightened classroom teaching, ii) enforcing immediate venturing, iii) learning disparity and varying expectations, and iv) turning a blind eye towards the external environment – particularly constrain the potential of social entrepreneurship training institutions from creating a lasting impact. On the contrary, a growing body of literature argues that training should instead focus on promoting *students' agency* and nurturing the mindset that enables them to act as agents of change (Macke et al., 2018). Agency refers to actors' potential to "shape the circumstances in which they live" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p. 963).

Building on this assertion, we make two specific contributions in this article. First, we propose that the orientation of academic training institutions should nurture the development of both entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial mindsets. Such a focus allows universities to advance their third mission – societal advancement. Second, we proposed a novel framework to strengthen the role that social entrepreneurship academic programmes play in creating a lasting impact. Our framework particularly calls for incorporating three aspects – community-centred learning, experiential learning, and building a robust ecosystem – to generate impact. We contribute to social entrepreneurship education literature by emphasising how academia can promote the field.

2. Theoretical Framing

The social cognitive theory focuses on the role of the social environment in determining actors' choices, which, in turn, shape the environment (Bandura, 2001; Bandura, 1997). A central thesis of Bandura's work is that actors exercise 'agency' interactively as they engage in actions (Bandura, 1986). As shown in Figure 1 below, human agency functions within a triadic reciprocal causal relationship, where *personal* factors—such as cognition, skills, beliefs, empathy, compassion, emotions, social comparison, goals, outcome expectations, and self-efficacy—interact with *behaviourial* factors, including effort, choices, achievement, persistent, goal setting, strategising, as well as *environmental* factors, external to the individual, such as sociocultural context, classroom, university, ecosystem, feedback - influencing one another (Bandura, 1986).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Drawing on these factors, actors use their cognitive and self-regulatory capabilities to set goals (Schunk and DiBenedetto, 2020). For instance, let us assume that students who choose to join social entrepreneurship academic programmes predominantly aim to become social entrepreneurs. Their intentions, driven by personal factors, to join the training programmes allow them to retain control over their goal (Bandura, 1989). Social entrepreneurship training, as an environmental factor, influences students' personal and behavioural factors (Hoang and Luu, 2024). Environmental factors in the context of social entrepreneurship practice comprise three

interrelated aspects: first, sociocultural context, where local communities reside, that offer a basis for identifying social problems; second, the field of social entrepreneurship, universities and classrooms that offer a space for students to explore the possibility of understanding the real world and potentially initiating a venture. Third, an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides a much-needed boost to entrepreneurial ventures. Given the broader nature of the environment and the crucial role it plays in determining actors' choices, graduates need to actively interact with the environment – particularly with both actors in the sociocultural context and at the ecosystem level - thereby attaining necessary competence, feedback, mentoring, and resources that help draw and redraw strategies towards goal attainment (Schunk, 2012).

2.1 The role of Mindset

Actors mindset ties personal, behavioural and environmental aspects as they exercise their agency, a central premise of Bandura's theory. Mindset enables actors to generate new ideas, solve problems, and seize opportunities (Kuratko et al. 2021). As actors set their goals – such as becoming a social entrepreneur – they monitor their progress toward those goals and adjust their strategies and goals as needed (Bandura, 1997). Mindset here plays a crucial role in the process, as it combines motives, skills, and the inherent thought process (Davis et al., 2016).

Mindset and agency are inherently connected to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to the belief in one's capability to complete tasks and achieve goals (Wood and Bandura, 1989), influencing how individuals approach challenges and pursue objectives across various life domains (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy plays an imperative role in nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset (Chen et al. 1998). Actors, particularly those operating across environments ranging from resource-constrained to resource-rich contexts, set their mindsets in motion to exercise their agency (Bandura, 1997). However, social entrepreneurs operating in environments characterised

by weak institutions, known as institutional voids, tend to respond differently than those in advanced economies, where institutions are strong (Mair and Martí, 2006).

In the context of social entrepreneurship training, participants use their agency, supported by self-efficacy, to determine what they would ideally become by the end of the training and whether to start a venture. Based on the information they possess, their cognitive skills determine the likelihood of successfully engaging in an activity (Bandura, 1989). Actors' choice of whether to have acquired the necessary skills by graduation is influenced by outcome expectancies, which make them agentic (Luszczynska and Schwarzer, 2005). A personal sense of control allows them to adjust or redraw their strategies to achieve their goals (Schunk and DiBenedetto, 2020). Accordingly, self-efficacy remains central as they progress from setting goals to attaining them.

As graduates evaluate their competence and perceive their self-efficacy, those with lower self-efficacy often engage in activities to enhance it. This may, for example, include joining a social enterprise as an employee. Motivation and commitment to achieving the goal remain crucial (Schunk and DiBendedetto, 2020). The new information and skills they acquire help them move up the self-efficacy ladder from being poorly perceived to highly perceived (Richter and Schmidt, 2008). On the contrary, those with higher self-efficacy may initiate social enterprises despite the prevalence of institutional voids. Self-efficacy is particularly influenced by how actors perceive their progress toward their goals and their interactions with the environment. This includes seeking feedback from mentors and investors, peer-based interactions with classmates, and interactions with nascent and heroic social entrepreneurs.

By incorporating Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory, this discussion highlights the complex interplay of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors that influence self-efficacy.

3. Methodology

We adopted a systematic literature review approach to develop a conceptual model for social impact education. Literature review allows attaining conceptual clarity and creates a theoretical framework (Paul, 2020). Snyder (2019) highlights that the literature review is "a critical component of creating theoretical frameworks and building conceptual models" (p.333). We include publications that explicitly investigate social entrepreneurship and/or social innovation and refer directly to education and/or training. The review does not include papers on social entrepreneurship or social innovation, focusing instead on solutions or cases from the education sector. It is primarily concerned with education and/or training in social entrepreneurship and/or social innovation, delivered at academic institutions, professional settings, or lifelong learning centres.

A keyword search in Scopus using the search phrases such as social entrepreneurship, OR social innovation, OR social enterprise, OR social business, OR social venture AND education AND training, and limited to the years 2000 to September 2022, generated a total of 421 papers. We have chosen this specific time bracket because social entrepreneurship, as an academic and research field, has grown significantly over the last two decades. The results of the inclusion/exclusion process were based on three stages: abstract screening, introduction screening, and full paper screening.

The 421 articles were first screened based on their abstracts to exclude irrelevant and duplicate articles. This stage resulted in excluding articles that did not focus directly on social entrepreneurship education as the main research theme. The first and second authors

independently reviewed the articles and excluded those that did not appear relevant to this study. As a result of this stage, 174 articles were included for further filtration.

The second stage of introduction screening involved a thorough reading of the introductions of the articles by both authors simultaneously to filter out irrelevant ones, such as the articles that investigate the motivation of nascent social entrepreneurs (Germak & Robinson, 2014), or education policy (Bonnafous, 2014). This stage identified 93 articles for further filtration. At this stage, we decided not to include literature reviews, as they do not provide any new empirical evidence.

The third and final stage of screening involved the three authors reading the full text of all 93 articles to further identify the most relevant articles. A full paper screening is important to ensure that the included papers are the most relevant ones to the study (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, reading the full text was considered to ensure that only articles focused on education and/or training about social entrepreneurship and/or social innovation as their primary research theme were included for critical review. For instance, included articles can be those that explore different learning theories in social entrepreneurship education (Kickul et al, 2010; Hockerts, 2018), develop a framework for social entrepreneurship education (Pache and Chowdhury, 2012; Huq and gilbert, 2013; Elmes et al, 2012; Kickul et al, 2012), or investigate the impact of social entrepreneurship education (McNally et al, 2020; Kwong et al., 2012). As a result of this final stage, 57 articles were finally included for further analysis.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1 summarises the 57 selected studies on social entrepreneurship training. This summary follows the review pattern suggested by Greenwood *et al.*, (2011) who use four main factors to review the selected article accordingly: 1. author(s), publication year. 2. level of

analysis, time frame, empirical setting. 3. method(s), and 4. key findings. We have further added one additional factor: 5. Theory.

3.1 Analysis

Analysis of the theories and concepts used in research shows that a greater proportion of papers draw on learning theories, with a particular focus on experiential learning, including service learning and design thinking. This may be in response to frequent criticism that management education, particularly entrepreneurship education, does not incorporate learning that reflects the complexities of working life. Therefore, recent research in social entrepreneurship has examined the effectiveness of experiential learning.

Our review initially focused on understanding the status and evolution of academic programmes in social entrepreneurship. Upon understanding the emergent dynamism, which we discussed in section 4 below, our review turned to the limitations that constrain social entrepreneurship training from creating a lasting impact. We looked for a recurring pattern in the literature that emphasises these limitations. Our review found four specific aspects: heightened classroom teaching, immediate venturing, differential learning and expectations and ecosystem-level constraints. We have taken notes every time the reviewed literature focused on one or more of these constraints, which we used in section 4.1 below, where we discussed the four limitations in detail.

In the third stage, we examined the best practices used across different learning environments. As we identified the constraints earlier, we focused on best practices this time. The best practices we identified helped us develop a novel framework that emphasises the

importance of transforming social entrepreneurship education to create a lasting impact. Section five accordingly discusses this novel finding in detail.

4. Current focus of social entrepreneurship education

Literature suggests that social entrepreneurship training plays a crucial role in nurturing and developing social entrepreneurial talent. This is indicative of business schools' focus on training individuals to become social entrepreneurs (Kickul, Janssen-Selvadurai and Griffiths, 2012; Klapper and Farber, 2016; Mehta *et al.*, 2016; Hockerts, 2018). Social entrepreneurship training enhances actors' competence to address social problems. The reviewed literature revealed that such training can include building necessary skills and knowledge (Al Taji and Bengo, 2018; Cheah, Amran and Yahya, 2019; Halberstadt *et al.*, 2019; Solomon, Alabduljader and Ramani, 2019), enhancing self-efficacy (Smith and Woodworth, 2012; Baden and Parkes, 2013) and advancing compassion and empathy (Bennett and McWhorter, 2019), which are crucial for creating social ventures.

Upon completion of the training, the literature claims that social entrepreneurs typically establish ventures, assemble resources by influencing other institutions in the ecosystem, develop strategies, and recruit human resources (Bacq and Eddleston, 2016). In several of the reviewed papers, social entrepreneurship training is suggested to motivate individuals to start ventures. This engagement is demonstrated by developing specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to prepare future founders to effectively manage social enterprises (Awaysheh and Bonfiglio, 2017). The training prepares future leaders with the managerial competencies (Miller, Wesley and Williams, 2012) needed to address challenges related to organisational mission, financial

resources and human resources (Al Taji and Bengo, 2018), and organisational performance (Cheah, Amran and Yahya, 2019). Furthermore, training is expected to equip individuals with the necessary skills to manage organisations with dual missions (Smith et al., 2012; Al Taji and Bengo, 2018) and to create social and economic value (Solomon, Alabduljader and Ramani, 2019).

Another element that has received attention in the literature is the ecosystem, which plays a significant role in facilitating entrepreneurial activity (Spigel 2017). Social entrepreneurs would ideally map their ecosystem, including the actors involved, environmental conditions, and the relationships among them (Bloom & Dees, 2008). For instance, Tracey and Philips (2007) highlight that social entrepreneurs need the skills to bridge connections among key stakeholders in the ecosystem. Whereas at last, social entrepreneurs must embed themselves in the community culture and create social impact (system level). The literature reviewed articulated the engagement of social entrepreneurship training at the ecosystem level. In this literature, social entrepreneurship training connects individuals with the ecosystem through, for example, enhancing the competencies related to the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, such as measuring social impact (Miller, Wesley and Williams, 2012), building strategic partnerships with NGOs, other social enterprises, government, etc. (Kickul, Janssen-Selvadurai and Griffiths, 2012), and idea communication through systems to create a lasting social change (Weber, 2012).

Bloom and Dees (2008) articulate that for creating "significant and long-lasting changes, social entrepreneurs must understand and often alter the social system that creates and sustains the problems in the first place" (p. 47). Thus, we propose that it is not only the agency's awareness of the social context that matters, but also its acquisition of the necessary skills to navigate the social system. Kickul et al. stress the need for students to be exposed to community

experience because social entrepreneurship is "a process of social value creation", which is not just about venture creation, but also about combining resources in innovative ways to address social problems (2012, p. 458).

Overall, the literature reviewed tends to emphasise venture creation, in which actors are expected to display their heroic traits. However, we argue that agency roles in social entrepreneurship practice are not merely reflected in the heroic agent (Collinson and Tourish, 2015), but also across the ecosystem, which plays a pivotal role. On the contrary, current social entrepreneurship training, with its limited focus on venture creation, fails to adopt a holistic view of society and its potential contributions. We specifically refer to four limitations we identified in the literature.

4.1 Four limitations of social entrepreneurship education

As the focus tends to emphasise venture creation, social entrepreneurship academia overlooks four critical factors across the multi-layered external environment that help create robust social impact (see Figure 2 below). These limitations highlight a growing disparity between entrepreneurs who initiate ventures and those involved in or around them (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2015). The four issues we highlight include i) heightened classroom teaching, ii) interest in immediate venturing, iii) learning disparity and varying expectations, and iv) ecosystem-level constraints. We explain each of these issues in detail below.

Insert Figure 2 about here

4.1.1 Heightened classroom training

Opportunity identification and exploitation are the central engines of the entrepreneurial process (Shane & Venkatraman, 2000). Both self-compassion, related to the personal experience of suffering, and other-regarding compassion, related to the actor's understanding of a given

social problem and those experiencing it, play a role in helping actors choose which social problems to address (Yitshaki et al., 2022). However, most social ventures aim to alleviate others' problems and are based on other-oriented compassion. Accordingly, identifying a social problem requires a strong rootedness in the societal context, which is the outer layer of the environment, as shown in Figure 2. When the process of opportunity identification is based on one's societal learning, where students are guided to believe that the process of knowledge accumulation is relative and is constructed in the social world out there, then there is a higher possibility that the social interventions proposed would be grounded in the societal context (Neck, & Greene 2011). For example, Wilson (2016) argues that social entrepreneurs learn effectively outside the academic system.

On the contrary, most social entrepreneurship training programmes keep their students engaged in classroom-based learning, which represents an immediate layer of the environment. Students are sometimes expected to address social problems they may not have experienced firsthand or understood by directly engaging with the affected communities (Chang et al., 2014). Ideally, students should apply the skills they have gained in the classroom to a specific societal context to address a social problem (Harlam et al., 2017). On the contrary, classroom teaching and peer discussions set the benchmark for venture creation. Although classroom teaching has merits, it limits students' potential to benefit from exposure to a societal context. For example, Hockerts (2018) argues that connecting with suffering communities helps students understand the local context and encourages them to work from firsthand information they gather. On the contrary, teaching problem-solving skills in a classroom setting may be counterproductive, as the problems social entrepreneurs face are often deep, intractable, and ingrained in communities

(Light, 2006). However, although classroom training nurtures one's potential and behavioural factors, limits exposure to the broader environment.

As a result, solely relying on classroom-based teaching blinds students to opportunities, leading them to rely on assumptions and perceptions they consider absolute. It limits their potential to obtain first-hand information about the relevant social context. Unrealistic expectations from course organisers often lead students to pursue grand challenges that they have no means to address (Gordon and Papi-Thornton 2016). For example, Martin and Osberg (2016) highlight how budding social entrepreneurs often take social realities for granted, particularly when they aim to address problems in areas with which they have limited prior exposure. Kickul et al. (2018) also join the critique by emphasising that students face social problems in a dynamic environment, often with inadequate data, and that the grand challenges they are expected to address often extend beyond the conventional knowledge they gained in classrooms. Classroom teaching, peer pressure to create ventures, and stories about social problems they were told may shape a social vision and drive the graduate's intention to initiate ventures.

Social entrepreneurs' substantive formal rationality, referred to as actors purposefully believing that they have efficient means to meet the ends based on their training (Cockerham et al., 1993), may most likely fail to result in optimal outcomes, as the social contexts vary across different geographical locations (Bull & Ridley-duff, 2019). In most cases, social realities clash with classroom-based learning. For example, when several social work graduates from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu approached rural communities in Rajasthan to address local problems, they first realised that the knowledge they had acquired in the classroom sharply contrasted with the local realities. Then, they adopted three approaches to address the challenges – unlearning, relearning, and learning by doing (Kummitha, 2017). Unlearning entails

recognising that the knowledge acquired through formal education is not absolute. Thus, they should avoid bringing the mental frames developed by their formal training into the communities of practice. Relearning involves understanding local realities through community knowledge to develop a context-specific understanding, whereas learning by doing focuses on enriching local understanding through collaboration with local communities. Forty years after adopting these approaches, this social enterprise's success now extends to 87 countries across Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. However, if social entrepreneurship training does not sufficiently emphasise the local context and continues to push solutions based on classroom learning, such interventions will fail to achieve the intended societal impact.

4.1.2 Immediate Venturing

Beyond restricting learning to the classroom, training programmes expect their graduates to launch ventures as part of the training (at least as pilot projects) or immediately after completion. The social entrepreneurship academic sector is often criticised for overtly promoting immediate graduate venturing. For example, Harlam et al. (2017) argue that most social entrepreneurship programmes in business schools emphasise business plans and venture creation. The notable reasons for such an eagerness to promote graduate venturing include i) creating immediate social impact, and ii) showcasing that their training model is a successful one. Although initiating ventures sounds promising for creating social good, we outline two problems with this approach, which adversely affect the growth of the social entrepreneurship field (fourth layer in figure 2) – i) shortage in human capital accumulation at the entrepreneur level and ii) shortage of human capital at the venture level.

i) Shortage in human capital accumulation at the entrepreneurial level: Successful venturing is likely the result of venture teams comprising individuals with prior training and

those who have acquired prior industry-specific experience (Molloy & Barney, 2015). According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy varies significantly among individuals and is shaped by interactions among personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, as well as by the resulting mindset that sustains individuals' interest in venturing. Consequently, actors' preparedness upon completion of their training is expected to vary. Research on human capital emphasises the importance of prior experience and its role in developing entrepreneurial skills (Pache & Chowdhury, 2012). We argue that entrepreneurial opportunity discovery and exploitation are closely tied to entrepreneurial familiarity with local contexts and their prior exposure to the problems they aim to address. The mastery experience gained from personal success during their earlier engagement in societal interventions claimed to offer superior performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989; Volery et al., 2013). For example, Neck and Greene (2011) emphasise that the experience supersedes education. Accordingly, there have been calls to promote experience-based pedagogy in social entrepreneurship (Mueller et al. 2015). Rezky and Hasan (2025), based on their study in Indonesia, for example, claim that those with prior experience tend to exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy and therefore have a greater propensity to become social entrepreneurs.

Based on this premise, when business schools encourage students to launch ventures solely based on classroom training, such ventures may fall short of their intended impact. Although social entrepreneurship training may help students identify necessary social problems, the course design may not guarantee an increase in competence levels (García-González and Ramírez-Montoya, 2021), which are crucial for both venture creation and growth (Kummitha, 2022). When budding social entrepreneurs launch ventures without practical experience or community engagement, it may lead to two complex scenarios. First, when social entrepreneurs'

human capital is limited, they may fail to recognise the optimal combination of competencies required to exploit opportunities to create social impact. Second, they might clash with the aspirations of training institutions and the local realities in societies.

ii) Shortage of human capital at the venture level: Research shows that social enterprises struggle to recruit and retain talent (Intellecap, 2012; Field, 2016). Talented employees are crucial to the growth of ventures (Kummitha, 2022). Although a range of social enterprises benefits from volunteers and other enthusiasts who support them, a shortage of professional talent constrains their growth. Training programmes that address talent gaps and provide continuous support through mentorship and guidance can cultivate self-efficacy among trainees, potentially leading to a more qualified talent pool for deployment in the sector. However, the prevailing push for immediate venture creation by social entrepreneurship training institutions may overlook the need for long-term talent-building strategies.

4.1.3 Differential Learning and Expectation

Similarly, it is counterproductive to expect everyone who undergoes social entrepreneurship training to start a social enterprise. Not everyone who attends the same entrepreneurship training programmes gains similar competencies, let alone those who attend different programmes. Hart (2019) argues that opportunities are unequally distributed among individuals, with inequalities playing a crucial role in this process. For example, boys tend to benefit more than girls, and the self-efficacy of those who attend training at a young age is significantly higher than that of older adults (Oosterbeek et al., 2010). When participants reach different learning levels due to their varying learning capabilities, it is not sensible to expect all of them to become social entrepreneurs. Alternatively, trainees' perceptions of starting a venture may change after attending the course, as they realise that initiating social ventures is risky,

given that most ventures fail (Neck & Greene, 2011). For example, Neil Patel, who frequently writes for Forbes, opines that about 90 per cent of ventures fail before they even take off[1]. Furthermore, given the range of social and commercial activities typically undertaken by social ventures, the competence required to manage them varies (Kummitha, 2022). It is also common for students to compare themselves with classmates to gauge their progress and determine whether they are developing the necessary competence to launch a venture. Social cognitive theory also notes that vicarious experience—observing others' successes and failures—affects self-efficacy. When students perceive that their peers perform better, they may doubt their own abilities, which can lead to lower self-efficacy and reduced entrepreneurial action. Additionally, cultural differences impact how students assess their own self-efficacy. Students in Western contexts tend to report higher levels of self-efficacy, whereas in non-Western contexts they tend to report lower levels (Schunk and DiBenedetto, 2020).

The social backgrounds of the graduates also need to be taken into consideration. Although the social entrepreneurial trait is often perceived as heroic, those who overcome unforeseen problems in creating social impact, as well as the uncertain conditions young entrepreneurs face, especially during their initial period, may find it challenging. Suppose social entrepreneurs come from deprived backgrounds, they are more likely to struggle to make a living, support their families, and run a venture[2]. Neck and Corbett (2018) particularly advocate social entrepreneurship training that focuses on teaching life skills necessary for a productive life, even if one decides not to start a social venture.

[1] https://www.forbes.com/sites/neilpatel/2015/01/16/90-of-startups-will-fail-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-10/#45cb00b76679

[2] For example, in India, social norms expect children from underprivileged financial backgrounds to support their parents once they complete their education by attaining a dignified job.

4.1.4 Ecosystem-level constraints

Following Spiegel (2017), an ecosystem can be conceptualised as an interplay of various elements—social, political, economic, and cultural— that collectively facilitate social entrepreneurship. Given our emphasis on social impact, we use the term "ecosystem" broadly to encompass any actor or entity that seeks to create social value. The ecosystem is a critical environmental factor, offering essential resources through investors, mentors, role models, and supportive policies.

A well-structured ecosystem fosters collaboration among diverse stakeholders, ensures resource availability, and establishes institutional mechanisms that support the growth and sustainability of social enterprises (Al Issa et al., 2025). Furthermore, such an ecosystem enhances the integration of shared values, a robust infrastructure, and resource interdependence. By enabling distributed and coordinated efforts, ecosystems allow social enterprises to build ventures that are resilient and scalable while minimising excessive dependence on external actors, thereby ensuring long-term societal impact (Savageta et al., 2024; Thompson et al., 2018).

Access to a robust ecosystem and networks, along with emotional and physiological states such as resilience and motivation, plays a crucial role in shaping graduates' self-efficacy and enhancing their ability to identify and leverage opportunities in their local contexts. Accordingly, graduates must have access to a supportive ecosystem that provides extensive networks and resources (Longva, 2021).

Actors operating within the ecosystem play a crucial role in the growth of the social entrepreneurship field (Hendriana et al., 2025). For instance, corporations and multilateral organisations have the capacity to influence the field. Barefoot College, a well-known rural

social enterprise in India, benefited from the World Bank when its President visited the organisation out of his personal interest. Although the World Bank was not directly involved in the organisation, its success story inspired the president to visit it during a dispute with the regional government in India. The President's visit helped the organisation gain external legitimacy, which it used to fight corrupt local politicians (Kummitha, 2017).

Given the ecosystem's role, stakeholders must possess the necessary passion and interest to foster the growth of the social entrepreneurship field. However, social entrepreneurship training plays only a limited role in strengthening the ecosystem, thereby limiting its potential to create a lasting impact. Ideally, universities that provide social entrepreneurship training should play a pivotal role in shaping the social entrepreneurial ecosystem (Chen and Shabbir, 2025). This can be achieved by actively building an ecosystem that provides the networks and resources graduates need to successfully establish and sustain their enterprises, or by integrating students into existing ecosystems to create social impact. In the latter case, students can benefit from a supportive environment that enhances the growth and scalability of their social enterprises. By fostering such connections, universities need to help develop a dynamic, sustainable infrastructure that empowers aspiring social entrepreneurs (Chen and Shabbir, 2025). Furthermore, by building strong entrepreneurial ecosystems, universities can contribute to their ‘third mission’, which encompasses their economic and social missions and their broader contributions to communities and societies (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). The realisation of the third mission requires universities to situate their dynamic capabilities within the societal context, thereby contributing to the creation of a robust ecosystem (Guerrero and Menter, 2024). In fact, the greater the contributions to strengthening the third mission, the greater the potential

to deliver both the first and second missions, i.e., education and research (Lundqvist and Williams-Middleton, 2024).

Literature argues that universities maintain close relationships with the key stakeholders in the ecosystem (Weber, 2012), which are necessary as they help "students with an opportunity to engage with social complexities that are nearly impossible to replicate in the classroom alone" (Thomsen et al., 2019, p. 20). However, maintaining close ties is different from playing a crucial role in building a strong ecosystem. In the context of commercial entrepreneurship, evidence indicates that universities act as institutional entrepreneurs by building networks and contributing to the creation of local impact at the policy and practice levels (Raagmaa and Keerberg, 2017). However, there is little evidence to suggest the university's role in fostering a strong social entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The four issues we highlighted emphasise the need to transform social entrepreneurship training to create a more meaningful and lasting social impact. We propose a framework that would tap into nurturing mindsets to promote both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.

5. A novel framework for creating social impact

Our novel framework, as outlined in Figure 3 below, seeks to reconsider venture-creation intentions in social entrepreneurship training, calling upon training institutions to take a central role in encouraging graduates to pursue 'impact-oriented' roles or 'social impact careers' (Sandhu, 2016). Ditkoff and Kelley (2017), for example, propose a refined role for social entrepreneurship education 2.0, in which the training should "prepare a broader, blended range of student talents for social impact work across social and private sectors" (p. 9). Our framework further emphasises the role of academic institutions in social entrepreneurship in building an ecosystem conducive to creating a great impact. Academic institutions should recognise that

creating social impact requires a variety of stakeholders with different levels of knowledge to come together, playing a vital role in the social entrepreneurship field and across various environmental layers (Mir Shahid & Alarifi, 2021).

Insert Figure 3 about here

5.1 Social Entrepreneurship Training

Social entrepreneurship training needs to focus on three aspects: i) positioning communities at the center of what they do, ii) engaging in experiential learning, and iii) building a strong ecosystem.

5.1.1 Positioning Communities at the Center:

As a first step, social entrepreneurship training should explicitly incorporate a significant level of community-based engagement into the curriculum to enhance students' mastery and vicarious experiences. Central to this argument is that academic institutions should incorporate more community-related aspects into the curriculum. While doing this, classroom teaching should also discuss concrete cases of social concern. For example, Pischetola et al. (2024) argue that, in their study of Brazilian universities, students exposed to greater levels of social problems showed enhanced empathy and a more proactive attitude. Students may be asked to participate in community projects to identify and address social problems in their local community. It is also important to recognise that students entering social entrepreneurship academic training come from diverse backgrounds and thus have different levels of motivation. Thus, positioning communities at the center helps attain both mastery and vicarious experience, which will enhance their motivation levels. While students gain mastery experience by addressing a social problem, which enhances their confidence and competence, vicarious experience is achieved by observing others' success, such as that of role models (Bandura 1997). For example, Maziriri et al. (2024) study concludes that connecting with role models has a positive impact on students' self-efficacy and subsequent venture creation.

Creating a safe, open space characterised by trust, cultural sensitivity, and diverse stakeholder involvement is necessary (Smith et al., 2012). Such a supportive context enables the exchange of ideas and perspectives among individuals with varying commitments to social and commercial goals, which is typically found in social enterprises. By fostering

dialogue and inclusivity, students gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of social entrepreneurship practice and explore innovative integration methods (Al Taji and Bengo, 2019). Training institutions must provide opportunities for students to understand community concerns by engaging in their routines. Direct engagement with the communities enhances their mastery experience. For example, in the Social Innovation Design Lab, a course offered at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California, students are encouraged to spend at least 60 hours with community members and adopt a design thinking approach to propose ideas that solve problems in the nearby Greater Los Angeles area. Community members are informed that this is part of a learning experiment, and that students may be unlikely to implement solutions (Harlam et al., 2017). Vicarious experience, by contrast, is attained by visiting successful organisations and interacting with their members to gain new insights (Kickul et al., 2010). For example, Mooney and Cockburn (2024) demonstrate how a five-day site visit to Mexico, as part of a social entrepreneurship course at Northern Illinois University, helped students refine or renew their plans to create social impact and deepen their social entrepreneurial intentions.

Furthermore, training institutions may involve experts who specialise in the broader social context. For example, in Hong Kong, experts' involvement has significantly helped develop skills that enable students either to become social entrepreneurs themselves or join the social impact industry, including consulting and investing (Wang and Horta, 2025).

5.1.2 Experiential learning:

Recent research highlights the need to encourage business school educators to take a leading role in community affairs (Lumpkin et al., 2018). However, business schools often lack the necessary connections and expertise to address the complex social fabric typically found at the community level. Thus, it is essential that they actively collaborate with social

science disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and political science, which are generally well-positioned to address community concerns. Community-based learning should complement classroom-based learning.

There have been growing calls to promote a transdisciplinary orientation in training students in social entrepreneurship (Nandan and Scott, 2013). Experiential learning promotes lasting change in students' mindsets (Hockerts, 2018), as knowledge gained from social entrepreneurship education offers avenues for actors to transform their own mindsets to address social challenges (Teklehaimanot et al., 2025). Experiential learning, as defined by Kolb, is a process through which individuals create knowledge by both acquiring and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984). It strengthens the interplay between personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, thereby enhancing how actors engage with the external world (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). While various skills can be introduced in classroom settings, experiential learning through field projects takes students beyond the classroom and immerses them in real-world engagement, going through four phases: “active experimentation, reflective observation (part of the experiential learning process), concrete experience, and abstract conceptualisation (part of transforming experience” (Mukesh et al., 2024). This hands-on approach equips students with the necessary competencies and enhances their self-efficacy to navigate challenges, adapt to dynamic ecosystems, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable social impact (Awaysheh and Bonfiglio, 2017).
We propose adopting experiential learning to enhance students' motivation to learn. Experiential learning in education is particularly instrumental, given that both diverging and accommodating learning styles are involved. The Diverging learning style allows students to view situations from multiple viewpoints. It enables them to gather information effectively from diverse cultural backgrounds and to demonstrate their enthusiasm for brainstorming ideas. Actors with this learning style are also imaginative and emotional, qualities that are

necessary for connecting with communities in need. In contrast, those with an accommodating learning style gain knowledge and experience through engaging in practice. They enjoy novel problem-solving approaches and rely on intuition rather than logic or rationality (Kolb, 2011). For example, Al Issa et al. (2025) report that experiential learning tools, such as business plan development and group work, have been instrumental in promoting social entrepreneurial intentions among Malaysian students. Other avenues to enhance experimental learning include value-creation extracurricular activities (Mukesh et al. 2024), internship programmes, cross-sector project collaborations, or even innovation-based community service (Rezky and Hasan, 2025) and a curriculum that includes multimedia tools such as comics, visuals, texts, and sounds, which enhance actors' visual memory and comprehension (Chandra and Jin, 2023). Furthermore, Thomsen et al. (2019) identify two models of experiential learning: action research, which provides students with a space to work *with* an organisation, and service learning, which enables students to work *for* an organisation or engage in community projects in a consultancy capacity. Both models differ from traditional internships and have been shown to enhance students' competencies and maturity, particularly when accompanied by structured reflection. Ng et al. (2024) also emphasise the value of service learning as a form of experiential education in social entrepreneurship, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts while engaging with advanced technological tools such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and game development.

5.1.3 Building a supportive ecosystem

Further, we also emphasise that universities need to build a robust ecosystem to promote social entrepreneurship (McDaniel et al. 2025). They need to coordinate with the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem to ensure the success of graduate ventures (Wright et al., 2017) and to create lasting social impact (Roncancio-Marin et al., 2022). They must act as

institutional entrepreneurs and foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem within the universities. While universities in developed countries have been reported to have robust university-based entrepreneurial ecosystems (Miller and Acs, 2017), evidence from developing countries indicates a concerning trend. For example, Pham and Huynh (2025) argue that in Vietnam, the lack of a strong ecosystem results in university students often lacking financial resources, structured mentorship programmes, and incubation centres. This is disturbing, as social entrepreneurial interventions are particularly relevant in these contexts. Universities can play a crucial role in building social entrepreneurial ecosystems by fostering partnerships (Ng et al., 2024), networking, forming alliances, collaborating with other universities to share resources, and engaging in outreach activities such as hackathons, coaching and mentoring, and policy advocacy (Diaz-Gonzalez and Dentchev, 2022). They may also create internal avenues to promote social capital among students. To that end, they may organise student engagement clubs, mentorship programmes, student-led initiatives, and collaborative opportunities (Pham and Huynh, 2025). Furthermore, they need to garner support from a wide range of actors, including corporations, public agencies, regional actors, alumni, and investors, among others, and provide incubation support (Wright et al., 2017).

Universities may also build the ecosystem, in addition to working directly with it, to support student-led ventures. Universities play a crucial role in shaping future social entrepreneurs by helping students engage with a robust ecosystem that supports their learning and development. A well-structured ecosystem exposes students to competing demands and enhances their ability to navigate complex and often contradictory expectations (Al Taji & Bengo, 2019). This skill involves recognising and embracing competing demands as simultaneously valid, even when they appear inherently in conflict (Smith et al., 2012). It requires cultivating an abundance mentality, which enables entrepreneurs to integrate social and commercial demands without drifting from their mission. This mindset helps them focus

on dual objectives while building networks that bridge social and commercial domains—an essential factor in mitigating risks associated with conflicting stakeholder expectations. Moreover, managing stakeholders' diverse and often contradictory demands in the ecosystem requires an abundance mentality that fosters openness to different perspectives and approaches. Personal attributes, such as cognitive skills, beliefs, and self-efficacy, interact with behavioural factors, including persistence, goal setting, and strategic thinking, as well as with external influences such as the sociocultural context, university support, and the broader ecosystem (Bandura, 1986). A well-structured ecosystem that provides meaningful feedback and hands-on experiences equips students with the competencies to sustain and grow social enterprises while balancing social impact and financial sustainability.

Mendelow's Power–Interest Matrix (1991) offers a concise way to assess the effectiveness of a university's social entrepreneurship ecosystem. By mapping stakeholders—students, faculty, administrative units, partners, and community actors—by their level of power and interest, the university can quickly identify strengths, blind spots, and areas requiring further support. This helps determine whether key influencers are sufficiently engaged and whether highly interested groups lack the influence or resources they need. Using this matrix can therefore guide more inclusive and strategic ecosystem development.

5.2 Outputs

As actors engage in extensive community interaction through experiential learning, they are exposed to social problems firsthand. At this juncture, environmental factors influence decisions regarding personality development and one's preparedness to engage in social entrepreneurship (behaviour). Mutual influencing factors provide cues for actors to assess their preparedness to engage in social entrepreneurship. Our framework emphasises that there will be two pathways. As actors engage their minds, bolstered by their self-efficacy, we

believe some will develop an entrepreneurial mindset and be willing to initiate social ventures. Shepherd et al. (2010) define entrepreneurial mindset as "the ability and willingness of individuals to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize in response to a judgmental decision under uncertainty about a possible opportunity for gain" (p. 62). In the context of social entrepreneurship, it refers to the creation of a social enterprise to address a stubborn social problem.

If educators aim to assess the impact of the social entrepreneurship training proposed in this study on students' social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, they may use the scale developed by Hockerts (2015), which has been widely adopted and validated in multiple studies. The measure consists of three items that capture individuals' perceived capability to address societal challenges: "I am convinced that I personally can make a contribution to address societal challenges if I put my mind to it," "I could figure out a way to help solve the problems that society faces," and "Solving societal problems is something each of us can contribute to." These items are typically assessed using a five-point Likert scale, allowing students to indicate their level of agreement and enabling educators to quantitatively evaluate changes in self-efficacy.

A second set of actors is those who develop an intrapreneurial mindset and aim to join the growing social impact industry as employees. It refers to actors who act entrepreneurially within the existing organisations (Carrier, 1996). In other words, these actors strive to initiate new products or services to benefit the organisation where they work. This cadre of individuals acts as catalysts for social change by leveraging their *agency* across different organisations – non-profit, for-profit, and public sector. A classic example of this genre of social entrepreneurship is a Course (Course Number 1602) offered at the Harvard Business School titled *"Transforming Education Through Social Entrepreneurship,"* which emphasises its role in training graduates to take on impact-oriented roles that transform the industry,

rather than simply training graduates to become social entrepreneurs. The extract from the publicly available course outline reads, “This course is designed for students who are interested in the intersection of education (K-12 and higher education) and business — whether that means starting a business in the education sector or being a board member or investor, to someone who wants to make a difference in the education sector while pursuing a career in other industries”. Thus, we expect actors with low levels of self-efficacy and preparedness to be more likely to enter employment. Recent evidence, for example, indicates that this dual outcome path has been predominantly adopted in Hong Kong (Wang and Horta 2025).

5.3 Outcomes

We show two paths for venture creation. By the end of training, those who foster an entrepreneurial mindset may initiate ventures with support from the well-established ecosystem. Higher self-efficacy remains instrumental in their path to venture creation, driven by positive personal, behavioural, and environmental interactions.

Conversely, those who develop an intrapreneurial mindset will pursue employment in the impact industry. In doing so, they will navigate four robust scenarios as they enter the workforce. First and foremost, they will be able to neutralise the societal constraints that some graduates from deprived backgrounds experience. This includes earning a living for the family, building additional savings, enhancing their own human capital, and contributing to social impact within existing organisations (Sorensen & Fassiotto, 2011; Fowler et al., 2017). Second, when they join social enterprises as employees, they can help address the industry's talent shortage. The field of social entrepreneurship has a significant talent shortage, especially at the second-line leadership level. A study conducted by the British Council (2016) in South Asian countries found that more than 50 per cent of the social enterprises

studied reported a shortage of managerial personnel. As a result, encouraging students to take managerial positions in existing social enterprises would help the industry grow.

Third, a novel combination of prior training and industry-specific work experience helps those in existing organisations polish their knowledge. Zhu et al. (2016) emphasise that such learning facilitates the creation of blended value, which encompasses social (and/or environmental) and commercial value. Evidence indicates that graduates with prior work experience have greater opportunities for learning and are more inspired to address stubborn social problems. For example, Sorensen and Fassiotto (2011) highlight that existing organisations help potential entrepreneurs by providing the necessary knowledge and skills, establishing beliefs and value systems, building social capital, and creating new opportunities. As Dees once argued, "Even if they have an intriguing idea, the timing may not be right, they may not have the experience or skills to lead the venture, or they may have trouble attracting the necessary resources". As a result, he emphasises that "many MBAs and other graduates are better suited to different roles" in the industry (Worsham & Dees, 2012, p. 450).

Fourth, as they enter the workforce, they help strengthen the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. With this approach, actors can create social impact by leveraging their agency in any sector they choose to work. For instance, if they decide to join a non-profit organisation, they may be able to leverage their entrepreneurial competence to enhance accountability and transparency. They may be able to use their skills to commercialise the non-profit's activities. Instead, if they join a for-profit, they may help channel resources to social enterprises through their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Alternatively, if they enter the public service sector, they may help develop effective policies that support social entrepreneurship.

When actors exhibit agency in other organisations, arising from the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986), their engagement often

extends beyond prescribed job roles, leading to prosocial activities that contribute to a positive and healthy work environment. Individuals trained with a broader orientation towards 'social impact' are more likely to adopt impact-oriented roles, contributing to social impact across multiple levels within and beyond their employing organisations. These routes may promote social entrepreneurship and create lasting social change. Bloom and Dees (2008) argued that social entrepreneurship educators should introduce students to ecosystem mapping expertise. This approach helps students understand how various stakeholders can play critical roles in building the field and helps them choose their own roles, as we demonstrated in our framework. Furthermore, this advances our progress toward building an entrepreneurial society (Audretsch, 2014).

6. Discussion

Amid growing concerns about the role social entrepreneurship training needs to play to facilitate lasting social impact in society and for the universities to contribute to their third mission, we argue the need for developing both entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial mindsets among the trainees, to allow them to either start ventures themselves or join the ventures initiated by others. The novel framework we proposed thus emphasises the dual paths that social entrepreneurship training graduates may take, shaped by interactions among personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, resulting in varying levels of self-efficacy and agency (Wang and Horta, 2025). Those who develop an entrepreneurial mindset may be helped to start their own ventures immediately after graduation. However, they may need to build their competence stock to run their ventures, as these are generally different from those required to initiate ventures (Please refer to Kummitha, 2022, to learn the competencies required to manage social ventures).

However, those inclined towards intrapreneurship may be encouraged to pursue employment that offers opportunities to interact with environmental factors, which we

believe will benefit them in four ways. First, by taking up employment, graduates help business schools in building a robust ecosystem; second, they help social enterprises by filling the human resource gap; third, the employment will help those graduates who come from deprived backgrounds to secure their financial future; fourth, help contribute to enhance their own skills and competence, thereby strengthening the human capital stock of the graduates. When actors trained in social entrepreneurship enter employment, they will contribute to creating impact across various organisations. Wilson (2016) writes, "Every social enterprise needs an army of well-educated employees – marketing directors, accountants, and others – who have earned a university degree" (p. 1). It is not just about how many social ventures are launched by the end of the training period, but also about how many graduates enter the industry and contribute to greater social impact. Accordingly, Porter has long emphasised that students trained in the field should become catalysts for social transformation and work with practitioners as consultants, advisors, and mentors, building a supportive system for social entrepreneurs to lead social impact (Driver, 2012). For example, graduates who taught with Teach for America later launched charter schools, served as foundation heads, became school principals, and even ran for political office. Regardless of the path graduates take, they eventually make a lasting impact by exercising their agency to determine what is good for society (Bandura, 1986). As actors use personal factors such as motivation, compassion, and social comparison to interact with the environment—including the classroom, peers, the university, and the larger ecosystem—their behaviours form. Hence, the behaviours are not predetermined, as actors choose to participate in social entrepreneurship training; rather, they are forged through these interactions. Our novel framework promotes a similar context and enforces greater interaction among personal, behavioural and environmental factors. We encourage social entrepreneurship training

institutions to adopt our framework to educate and prepare a broader, more diverse range of student talent for social impact work across the social and private sectors.

To enable this transition, academic institutions must go beyond their stipulated roles by transforming how they operate their training and interact with the environment. Particularly during their training, the curriculum requires the incorporation of experiential learning, which aims to enhance student-community interactions. Furthermore, training institutions need to build a strong ecosystem by nurturing an intrapreneurial mindset among graduates, which, in turn, supports an entrepreneurial mindset as graduates launch their own ventures (Al Taji & Bengo, 2019).

6.1 Contributions

Our research contributes twofold to social entrepreneurship literature, which we believe will help transform the academic sector and create lasting social impact. First, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of entrepreneurship in advancing social impact (Rawhouse et al. 2019; Bacq and Eddleston, 2018) by addressing grand challenges (Kummitha, 2025). However, the literature on social entrepreneurship education suggests the focus has always been on venture creation, rather than on social impact creation (Driver, 2012). In response to this critique, we adopted social cognitive theory to argue for the importance of integrating three crucial factors – personal, behavioural, and environmental – to facilitate an impact-oriented mindset among the graduates (Bandura, 2001; Bandura, 1997). We identify four limitations in the current venture-creation intentions of the social entrepreneurship academia. We demonstrate that not all graduates will share the same level of self-efficacy upon graduation. As a result, graduates may develop either an entrepreneurial or an intrapreneurial mindset by graduation. Academic institutions in social entrepreneurship need to ensure that those with an entrepreneurial mindset are encouraged to launch ventures upon graduation. In

contrast, individuals with the intrapreneurial mindset may be encouraged to pursue wage employment. This arrangement contributes to creating social impact at multiple levels. We accordingly call on social entrepreneurship educators to ensure greater integration of the personal, behavioural, and environmental factors that drive social impact (Guerrero et al., 2021). Such a role for universities allows them to fulfil their third mission by contributing to societal advancement (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020).

Second, we propose a novel framework to create lasting social impact through social entrepreneurship training programmes. Our framework particularly calls for incorporating three aspects: community-centred learning, experiential learning, and the development of a robust ecosystem. Adopting these aspects will enhance students' self-efficacy. Early literature suggests that experiential learning plays a crucial role in enhancing actors' self-efficacy (Hockerts, 2018) and highlights the importance of a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem as a prerequisite for creating a lasting impact (Kwong et al., 2022). Thus, our framework strengthens these narratives and offers avenues to promote social impact through social entrepreneurship training programmes. Our framework further emphasises the need to diversify student outcomes, enabling them to contribute more effectively. In particular, when students with low self-efficacy enter wage employment, more frequent interactions among personal, behavioural, and environmental factors lead to the adoption of agency roles within their organisations.

6.2 Limitations

Our paper is not without limitations. We believe these limitations will pave the way for future research. First, while we provided a robust review of the academic literature on social entrepreneurship education, several assertions in this paper may require further investigation due to the lack of correlated data. Thus, we encourage future empirical research to probe the

arguments we made in this paper. Second, we think that another aspect that may be studied is whether those employed in various workplaces become social entrepreneurs themselves. This is a valid assertion that needs to be proved, as the human capital literature claims that the combination of prior education and experience offers a robust context for actors to initiate ventures. Third, we are also unsure whether our framework will retain validity across both developed and developing countries. Thus, we encourage empirical research that probes our framework to determine whether the variables we proposed remain valid across diverse contexts.

6.3 Conclusion

The paper builds on social cognitive theory to argue that academic social entrepreneurship programmes must focus on three key factors – personal, behaviourial and environmental – as they train the students to create social impact (Bandura, 2001; Bandura, 1997). Based on the literature we reviewed, we discussed four specific problems with the current venture creation intentions of the academic programmes, which include heightened classroom teaching (Gordon and Papi-Thornton, 2016; Kickul et al., 2018), immediate venturing (Harlam et al., 2017), differential learning (Hart, 2019), and ecosystem-level constraints. These limitations effectively constrain the ability of the social entrepreneurship academic programmes to create a lasting impact. In response, we proposed a novel framework that calls on academic institutions to adopt three key aspects: positioning communities at the center, promoting experiential learning, and actively assuming an institutional entrepreneurship role to build a robust social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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S. No	Author(s), Publication Year	Level of analysis, time frame, empirical setting	Methods	Theory	Key findings
1	Smith, W.K., Besharov, M., Wessels, A.K., & Cherkot, M., 2012	Classroom (students), field (social entrepreneurs)	Conceptual based on literature and two award-winning educational programmes for SE	Paradox theory	The Conceptual model that connects the organisational challenges (demand side) with the individual skills required (supply side), and suggests pedagogical tools (Challenges and skills)
2	Kwong, C.C.Y., Thompson, P., & Cheung, C.W.M., 2012	Students from business and management courses at a UK higher education institution	• Literature review summarises social economy education. • In-depth interviews with students	Experiential learning	1. Typologies of Existing Business /Entrepreneurship and Third Sector Management Education Programs. 2. This paper argues that the use of a social business plan as a pedagogical tool in social-related courses has benefits compared to the case study approach. 3. Students taking the social business plan stream seem better equipped for nurturing a narrower focus on a particular local social economy issue and created more innovative ideas than students who took the case study approach.
3	Miller, T.L., Wesley, C., & Williams, D.E., 2012	1. Practitioners in the social entrepreneurship field: entrepreneurs and top managers of their organisations 2. SE course syllabus	• literature review on managerial competences • survey to practitioners • Content analyses of	Competences	The top-10 most important competencies rated and ranked by SE practitioners and the top-10 taught in classwork.

			the SE course syllabus		
4	Kickul, J., Janssen-Selvadurai, C., & Griffiths, M.D., 2012	University curriculum	• Conceptual paper	Blended value; self-efficacy.	1. Conceptual model based on blended value (social and commercial) for SE education. 2. Recommendations for educators on how to implement this model
5	Nandan, M., London, M., & Bent-Goodley, T., 2015	Social work administrators and practitioners	• Qualitative data	N/A	The important set of skills practitioners were required with during university study or they should have learned to become SE 1. critical thinking skills 2. Data management. 3. budgeting and finance skills. 4. macro and micro practice courses and fund development skills
6	Elmes, M.B., Jiusto, S., Whiteman, G., Hersh, R., & Guthey, G.T., 2012	Action research: Cape Town	• Case study; • literature review	The four-frame model	This paper discusses the use of place to enrich students' understanding of the WaSH-related innovations and implications for a new approach to teaching social entrepreneurship and innovation
7	Klapper, R.G., & Farber, V.A., 2016	• Pro and post-test survey of an educational programme in Peru. • Postgraduate students	Quantitative analysis	Alain Gibb's theory of entrepreneurial behaviors	This shows how experiential learning can influenced the short-term students' intention to start their own business to a greater degree than traditional teaching based on lectures and case studies. The study also highlights the role of beliefs that may, in turn, be linked to personality traits.
8	Mehta, M., Zappe, S., Brannon, M.L., & Zhao, Y., 2016	Students and Faculty across Penn State working on a SE based on tech in Kenya	A mixed methods approach	The eplum model	This article describes the genesis, foundational philosophies, programmatic learning outcomes, and course mechanics of the HESE Program.
9	Awaysheh, A., & Bonfiglio, D., 2017	Case study of a program run by Emzingo, a leadership development	In-depth case study	Experimental learning	1. Educating future managers about social entrepreneurship through experiential learning adds to an MBA program.

		company, and IE Business School			2. Experiential learning has some limitations, such as time and the assessment process.
10	Parris, D.L., & Mcinnis-Bowers, C., 2017	Design a curriculum and their impact on students	Literature review; design curriculum; collect Reflective essays from students	Design thinking, entrepreneurial thinking and action, effectuation.	1. Introduce 4 innovations to the business course. 2. This foundational course shapes the students' expectations for how business can be a positive change agent
11	Wu, Y., & Martin, J., 2018	SE course Curriculum and evaluate the impact on students	A mixed methods approach	The bottom of the pyramid	1. The personal interactions with the BOP community significantly impact the students' design of the entrepreneurial venture. 2. The short-term service trip is effective in training students to evaluate their relationships with people in poverty. This paper find out that course experience also increases students' attitudes toward social entrepreneurship
12	Hockerts, K., 2018	Master students at Scandinavians country and MOOC courses	Quantitative analysis	Experimental learning	1.Social entrepreneurship education indeed has a positive impact on a student's intention to start a social enterprise, as well as on his or her self-efficacy and perceived social support. 2. The more students engage in experiential learning activities, the larger the observed effects.
13	Halberstadt, J., Timm, J., Kraus, S., & Gundolf, K., 2019	interviews with lecturers on their view of service learning and entrepreneurship education and analysing learning diaries	Qualitative analysis	Service learning	1. Service learning approach has an increased impact on students' competencies. 2. The main impact was on communication and interaction skills. 3. The SL seminars seemed to address a broader variety of social entrepreneurial competences. However, it remains unclear whether the traditional

		as well as their evaluation of the students' progress and competence development			seminar may have led to deeper competence development.
14	Thomsen, B., Muurlink, O., & Best, T., 2019	Ethnographic case study, that included participant observation, fieldwork and survey	A mixed methods approach: Qualitative and Quantitative	Experimental learning	Increase experiential learning opportunities between students and third sector organizations could escalate the acquisition of knowledge about SE by providing students an opportunity to engage with social complexities that are nearly impossible to replicate in the classroom alone
15	García-Morales, V.S., Martín-Rojas, R., & Garde-Sánchez, R., 2020	Questionnaire and interviews with instructors and undergraduate students	A mixed methods approach: Qualitative and Quantitative	Learning Theory and Absorptive Capacity	1. Learning CSR has a positive effect on the relationship between absorptive capacity and social entrepreneurship. 2. Web 2.0 strategic support and Web 2.0 technology use in business schools increase students' absorptive capacity. 3. Social entrepreneurship is promoted through learning CSR at higher education institutions that facilitate the transformation of absorbed knowledge of CSR into social entrepreneurship
16	Jensen, T.L., 2014	Data collected from students who enrolled in the 'International Business Communication' program at the University of Southern Denmark.	Mixed method approach: Quantitative evaluations, qualitative interviews and observation	Learning theory	This paper understands the assessment and Impact of SE education experiences between training programs and the daily life of the students
17	Kummitha, R.K.R., & Majumdar, S., 2015	N/A	Conceptual paper	N/A	This paper discusses how the SE learning model proposed by TISS inspired students to address social problems

18	Cheah, J., Amran, A., & Yahya, S., 2019	181 Malaysian and Singaporean SE organisations were analysed by using SEM (Structural equation model)	Cross-nation quantitative study between Malaysia and Singapore	Resource dependence theory (RDT)	This study's findings reveal that financial and training support are needed for business planning in order to generate significant organisational performance
19	Chang, J.Y.C., Benamraoui, A., & Rieple, A., 2014	This study Based on 87 undergraduate students reflective logs were analysed by using principles of qualitative thematic analysis	Qualitative analysis	N/A	This paper discusses the importance of experiential learning in the form of income-generating projects as an effective method of teaching SE
20	Penin, L., Staszowski, E., & Brown, S., 2015	N/A	Conceptual	N/A	This paper discusses how pedagogical training is helpful for the future generation to address the social and political issues
21	Ngui, K., Voon, M., & Lee, M., 2017	This study based on reviewing the 60 student logbook entries. Analytically this paper adopted a deductive content analysis approach	Qualitative analysis	Transformative learning theory	This paper discusses how service-learning experience can help students engage in instrumental, dialogic and self-reflective learning
22	Al Taji, F.N.A., & Bengo, I., 2019	This study based on in-depth interviews and observation of 3 Italian social incubators /accelerators. Analytically this study conducted Thematic analysis.	Qualitative analysis	Paradox Theory	This study addresses the managerial skills of social ventures, particularly the importance of organisational mission, financial resources and human resource skills needed for employees to manage hybrid organisations.

23	Mcnally, J.J., Piperopoulos, P., Welsh, D.H.B., Mengel, T., Tantawy, M., & Papageorgiadis, N., 2020	This paper based on dataset of 153 SE Course syllabus from 13 countries and various universities and quantitative data based on 186 British university students participated in online survey	Mixed method approach	Expectancy-value (EV) theory	This study found that, over time, SE education has shifted from instructor-oriented to learner-centred teaching.
24	Solomon, G.T., Alabduljader, N., & Ramani, R.S., 2019	Data collected from USA National survey of Entrepreneurship education and Canadian study of entrepreneurship education by using online self-report survey distributed various universities faculty members who offers entrepreneurship course. A total of 226 unique responses received and exploratory approach analysis used in this study.	Cross-nation Quantitative study	N/A	This paper assesses the importance of SE education in the USA and Canada and finds that the demand for SE continues to rise in these 2 countries.

25	Pache, A., & Chowdhury, I., 2012	N/A	Conceptual	N/A	This study proposes a model of social entrepreneurship education that allows students to operate across various institutional worlds. This model, in addition to teaching students "about" social entrepreneurship to allow them to acquire the knowledge and expertise required to successfully engage in social entrepreneurial activities, educates students "for" social entrepreneurship, by allowing them to acquire the skill of bridging three distinct and sometimes competing institutional logics: the social-welfare logic, the commercial logic and the public-sector logic
26	Howorth, C., Smith, S.M., & Parkinson, C., 2012	Data collection included field notes, multiple transcribed interviews, e-mails, on-line discussion posts, evaluation questionnaires, and secondary data such as documents and presentations given by the delegates who participated in this Two Programs	Qualitative analysis	Social Theories of Learning	This study discusses two programmes, LD (Integrated Learning programme) and VP (capacity building programme). These two programmes are compared, and the implications of social and commercial entrepreneurs learning together are examined.
27	Kickul, J., Griffiths, M., & Bacq, S., 2010	Students from New York University's Stem School of Business travel to India and interact with the partnered organizations, their employees, customers and stakeholders	Conceptual with some sort of unexplained qualitative interviews	Experiential learning	The paper discusses why experiential learning is important for social entrepreneurship training

28	Rae, D., 2010	NA	Conceptual	NA	The paper argues that the crisis results in responsibility and has helped create the social entrepreneurship industry
29	Wu, Y.C., Kuo, T., & Shen, J., 2013	Business schools that teach social entrepreneurship	Quantitative analysis	Experiential learning, community service, forums, workshop, symposia, and teamwork.	Studies how social entrepreneurship has been taught around the world
30	Baden, D., & Parkes, C., 2013	Two universities in the UK	live case study-based workshop	Experiential learning, social learning theory	The paper discusses different approaches adopted by two UK signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education
31	Waghid, Z., 2019	Pre-service teachers in South Africa	Quantitative analysis	NA	The paper studies the relevance of social entrepreneurship in secondary education
32	Bennett, E.E., & Mcwhorter, R.R., 2019	NA	Conceptual	NA	This paper articulates the importance of design thinking for understanding the communities in need
33	Morakinyo, A., & Akinsola, O., 2019	Jumpstart Dream Foundation	Qualitative analysis	Social impact assessment theory	This paper studies Jumpstart Dream Foundation education programme
34	Calvo, S., Morales, A., & Wade, J., 2018	Future learn Social Enterprise Program	mixed-method Approach	Freeth/Kirkpatrick's evaluation model	Studies the effectiveness of an open online course on social entrepreneurship
35	Kickul, J., Terjesen, S., Bacq, S., & Griffiths, M., 2012	Interview with Muhammad Yunus	Qualitative analysis	NA	Social entrepreneurship does not need to be connected to entrepreneurial element, whereas social business is about the combination of social and commercial elements
36	Plaskoff, J., and Harris, S., 2012	Interview with Sarah Harris	Qualitative analysis	Situated learning theory	Learning by presence that involves storytelling, collaboration, community based relationship building help enhance students learning propensity

37	Weber, J.M., 2012	Interview with Frances Westley	Qualitative analysis	NA	Emphasises the importance of institutional entrepreneurs, where the root cause of the problem needs to be addressed
38	Smith, I.H., & Woodworth, W.P., 2012	NA	NA	Social identity theory	Discusses how social entrepreneurship projects can have a significant level of impact on students and society.
39	Huq, A., & Gilbert, D.H., 2013	Assesses the importance of work-based learning model that enhances graduate employability	Quantitative analysis	NA	Highlights that world-based learning is important for social entrepreneurship students
40	Zhu, Y., Rooney, D., & Phillips, N., 2016	NA	Conceptual	NA	Develops a curriculum matrix to help students in appropriate skills that help them draw upon competing logics
41	Passarelli, M., Bongiorno, G., & Corrado, N., 2025	ENACTUS in Italy	Qualitative	Paul Ricoeur's ethical framework	The paper discusses that social entrepreneurship training at individual level emphasise on self-respect, and self-efficacy, at team level it foucses on respect for others and solicitude, whereas at ecosystem level graduates may be able to contribute by attaining ethical objectives.
42	Al Issa, H., Thai, M.T.T., & Saad, S., 2025	Two Malaysian universities	Quantitative	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between experiential learning and social entrepreneurial intentions
43	Hendriana, E., Bhinekawati, R., & Farransahat, M., 2025	Indonesia	Quantitative	Theory of Planned Behaviour	The paper discusses that the attitude towards social innovation results in social entrepreneurial intentions. Furthermore, both social entrepreneurship education and prior experience equally contribute to the positive social entrepreneurial orientation.

44	Rezky, M.I., & Hasan, M., 2025	Indonesia	Quantitative	Social cognitive theory	Prior experience dealing with social issues significantly influence social efficacy and outcome expectancy.
45	Teklehaimanot, M.L., Shanka, M.S., & Gebrekidan, A.H., 2025	Ethiopia	Quantitative	NA	The study argues that social entrepreneurship education transforms actors mindset to address growing social problems
46	McDaniel, M., Kouassi, S., & Leger, M., 2025	Ghana; Kenya; and South Africa	Qualitative	Resource scarcity and embeddedness	The authors argue that contextualisation of social entrepreneurship education is a crucial factor for the training to be effective.
47	Pham, V.K., & Huynh, A.V., 2025	Vietnam	fsQCA	Social cognitive career theory	The paper proposes to design a holistic, value-based education to foster ethical entrepreneurial opportunities among social entrepreneurship students
48	Wang, Y., & Horta, H., 2025	Hongkong	Qualitative	Curriculum theory	Social innovation education initiatives in Hong Kong dominated by leading fourth and training up.
49	Mgueraman, A., & Abboudi, M.E., 2024	Morocco	Quantitative	Theory of Planned Behaviour	The research shares that interacting with supporting institutions substantially enhances students expertise, knowledge and information necessary to start a social enterprise.
50	Maziriri, E.T., Nyagadza, B., & Maramura, T.C., 2024	South Africa	Quantitative	NA	Role models positively influence students self-efficacy and thus contribute to advance their social entrepreneurial
51	Mukesh, H.V., Shetty, J., Kenny, B., & McGuirk, H., 2024	India	Quantitative	NA	The authors discuss the importance of value creation-based extracurricular activities that help promote social entrepreneurial intentions among the students.

52	Pischetola, M., & Martins, L.S.S., 2024	Brazil	Qualitative	Deweyan perspective	Students exposed to the local problems tend to show greater levels of empathy and proactive behaviour
53	Chandra, Y., & Jin, Q., 2023	Hong Kong	Mixed-methods	Cognitive theory	The study concludes that comics, compared to textbooks, boost learners' self-efficacy and the intentions to engage in social entrepreneurship
54	Singh, A., Chakraborty, S., & Patoju, S.K.S., 2023	India	Qualitative	NA	The authors argue that both employment generation and venture creation lead to a larger social impact, thus contributing to the success of the social entrepreneurship academic programmes
55	De Sousa-Filho, J.M., Granados, M.L., & Fernandes, J.A.L., 2023	Brazil	Quantitative	NA	The research argues that experientially based teaching programmes help form empathy, enhance self-efficacy and identify social opportunities.
56	Seyoum, B., Chinta, R., Mujtaba, B., & Mujtaba, B.G., 2021	USA	Quantitative	NA	The research clarifies those higher levels of social support result in higher entrepreneurial intentions
57	Kwong, C., Cheng, C,. Bhattarai, C., & Fieldhouse, S., 2022	USA	Quantitative	NA	The findings argue that universities with strong presence of entrepreneurial ecosystem tend to develop students as socially responsible citizens.

Table 1: List of papers reviewed

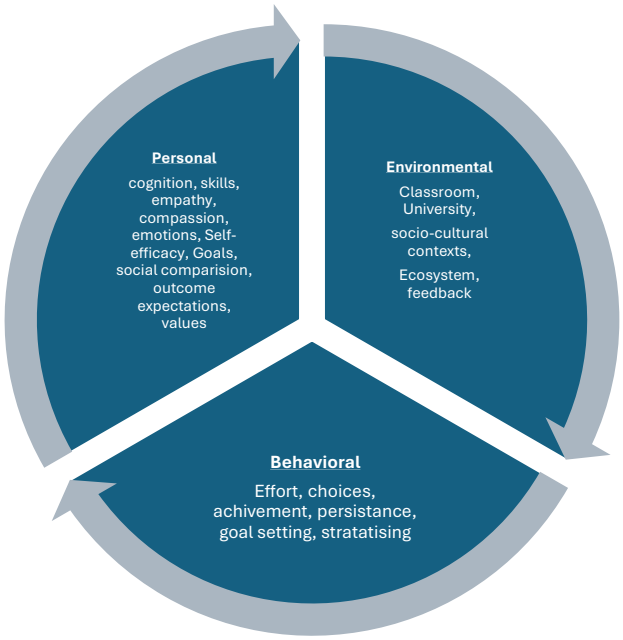

Figure 1

Key factors part of Bandura's social cognitive theory
Partly adapted from Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020)

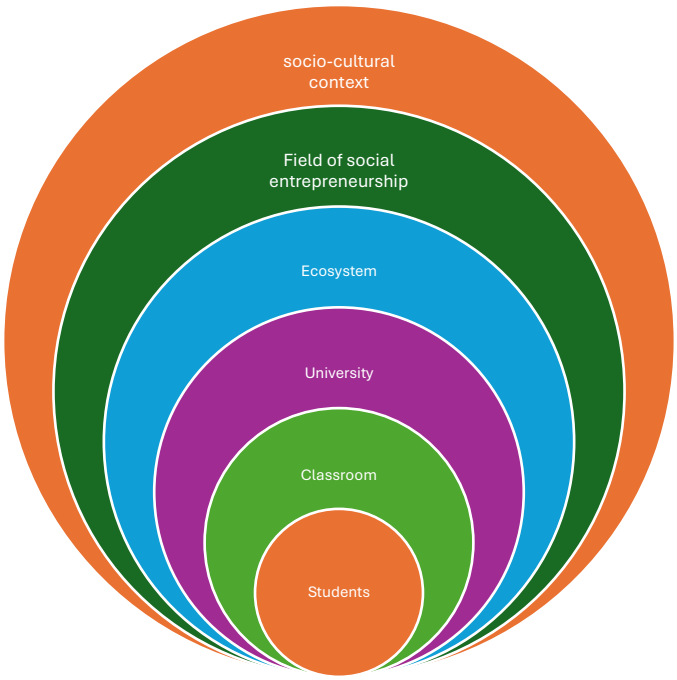

Figure 2
The multi-layered environment

Figure 3
A framework for social entrepreneurship training for creating lasting impact