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How Socio-Edupreneurship can Moderate the Impact of Academia–Industry Gaps, Social Pressure, and Training Deficits on the Employment Challenges of Social Science Graduates

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ABSTRACT

The growing gap between educational preparation and the demands of the labor market has exacerbated the job search difficulties of social science graduates. The research was focused on investigating the potential of socio-edupreneurship to reduce the effects of academia-industry mismatch, social stigma and training shortage on graduate employability via its two dimensions of self-efficacy and social capital. There were 312 master students at Hyderabad and Jamshoro enrolled in public and private universities who were used to gather the data. An organized questionnaire was used and data were processed by Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) in Smart-PLS. The findings showed that academia-industry gap has a high impact on employment issues, both directly and indirectly, by putting a pressurizing social pressure and training shortage. Socio-edupreneurship turned out to have a close negative impact on employment issues and moderate the influence of academia-industry gaps and social pressure, thus lessening their negative influence. Moreover, self-efficacy and social capital were identified to increase the total impact of socio-edupreneurship with social capital having a sizeable direct impact as well. The implications of the findings include implications to universities, policymakers, and students, whereby, curriculum reform, more focused partnerships with the industry, and institutionalization of socio-edupreneurial programs will enable sustainable graduate employability.

Keywords: *Socio-edupreneurship; Academia–industry gap; Social pressure; Training deficits; Self-efficacy; Social capital; Employment challenges; PLS-SEM; Graduate employability*

INTRODUCTION

In most developing nations, social science graduates have had a consistent challenge in securing jobs despite the official qualification. An increasing amount of literature is indicating structural

incompatibility between university education and industry needs, as well as social and cultural pressures that limit career options (Ahmed et al., 2023; Alam et al., 2025). Moreover, lack of practical training, including restricted internships, pedagogies out of date, and exposure to industry practices, exposes graduates to poorly preparedness to the changing job markets (Mussa et al., 2024). All these are contributing to the high unemployment rates, underemployment and dissatisfaction with the job among the graduates and therefore it is important that we come up with new solutions.

One of the most important barriers that are recognized is the academia-industry gap. The lack of the necessary skills of the graduates, which employers are more and more concerned about communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and problem-solving, undermines employability (Ahmed et al., 2023). In addition to this structural disconnect, other social factors can influence career paths: family, peer, and social expectations usually force graduates into narrow or inappropriate career paths, leading to stress and low confidence (Uddin, 2023). Besides, the lack of training, such as poor hands-on training and old-fashioned curricula, makes the issue even more severe as it does not allow graduates to correspond with industry requirements (Mussa et al., 2024). All these obstacles increase the employment problem of the social science graduates.

It is on this background that socio-edupreneurship can be seen as a viable direction. It is conceptually a framework that incorporates entrepreneurial thinking into education and focuses on social impact, enabling students to become innovative in and outside of the conventional career paths (Osei & Amponsah, 2023). Notably, socio-edupreneurship is not merely an ameliorating factor that softens the adverse impact of structural and social obstacles, but also a facilitating factor of employability. Socio-edupreneurship empowers graduates by providing them with social capital (networks and relationships and shared resources) and self-efficacy (confidence in their abilities to succeed) to establish psychological resilience and practical chances of success in the job market (Tung and Huong, 2023).

It has been found that self-efficacy helps graduates to overcome the unpredictable labor markets because it helps them to be more adaptable and innovative and persistent to seek job opportunities or self-employment (Bandura, 2023; Tung and Huong, 2023). In the meantime, information, referrals, and career opportunity access can be achieved with the help of social capital, access to professional networks, mentors, and collaborative communities that can help graduates to overcome structural gaps (Putnam, 2023; Osei and Amponsah, 2023). Combined as socio-edupreneurship with the aim of guiding higher education, both dimensions not only alleviate the damaging consequences of the mismatches between academia and industry, the social pressure, and training gaps, but enhance employability directly.

The paper then examines the role of socio-edupreneurship in terms of its two facets of self-efficacy and social capital in both direct and indirect effect on employment difficulties as well as in dampening the adverse effects of academia-industry mismatch, social influence, and training shortage. These findings by analyzing these associations among social science graduates have dual contributions to the employability literature: (a) conceptually, through the extension of socio-edupreneurship as a direct and mediating variable in the employability model; and (b) in practice, by providing institutions of higher learning and policy makers with information on how incorporating entrepreneurial education and the building of social capital can alleviate employment pressure on the graduate.

Research Objectives

a) To investigate the effects of academia industry, social pressure, training gaps on the employment issue of social science graduates in the public and private sector universities of Hyderabad and Jamshoro.

b) The research aims at determining the direct impact of social-edupreneurship on the employment issues of social science graduate at the identified universities.

c) To examine how socio-edupreneurship moderates the negative impact of academia-industry gap, social pressure and training deficit on employment issues.

d) To assess the role of self-efficacy and social capital as the two aspects of socio-edupreneurship as determinants of the employability of graduates.

e) To contrast differences between Hyderabads and Jamshoros in the public and private sector universities in regards to the role played by social-edupreneurship, social pressure, academia-industry gaps, and training deficits in employment issues.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Academia–Industry Gap and Employability: A large amount of research evidence suggests that the growing disconnect between higher education programs and industry demands is a significant cause of employment difficulties amongst graduates. As an example, Khurram Khan Alwi & Karim (2025) discovered that curricula that do not include industry-relevant competencies (particularly, soft skills, communication, teamwork, leadership) have a significant negative effect on industry preparedness of graduates, discrediting employability. Equally, Ahmed, Tariq, and Warraich (2023) in Pakistan reported that there was an overall lack in the skills and competence of the public sector university graduates in communication, critical thinking, and practical skills, which are perceived by the employer as the key sources of inability to perform the job roles. Through these studies, it is evident that the academia-industry gap is not one that is on paper only but it has practical implications on graduate employment opportunities.

Training Deficits and Practical Skill Gaps: Very closely linked to the academia-industry gap is lack or inadequacy of experience-based learning, internship, project work, mentoring and training in line with the prevailing technological and industry practices. The survey of graduates conducted by Whalley, Imbulpitiya, Clear, and Ogier (2024) revealed that despite the importance attached to the capstone projects, a significant number of graduates did not receive sufficient exposure during their internship, and they did not have any other professional development, which is needed to facilitate the transition between a student and a working professional. In South Asia, researchers of entrepreneurship education in Karachi have demonstrated that, despite having a strong theoretical foundation, academic programs that incorporate the development of practical skills (business knowledge, mentorship, innovation cultivation) significantly increase the ability of the graduates to start employment (or self-employment) and move through the labor market more resiliently (Azeem, Khaskheli, and Solangi, 2025).

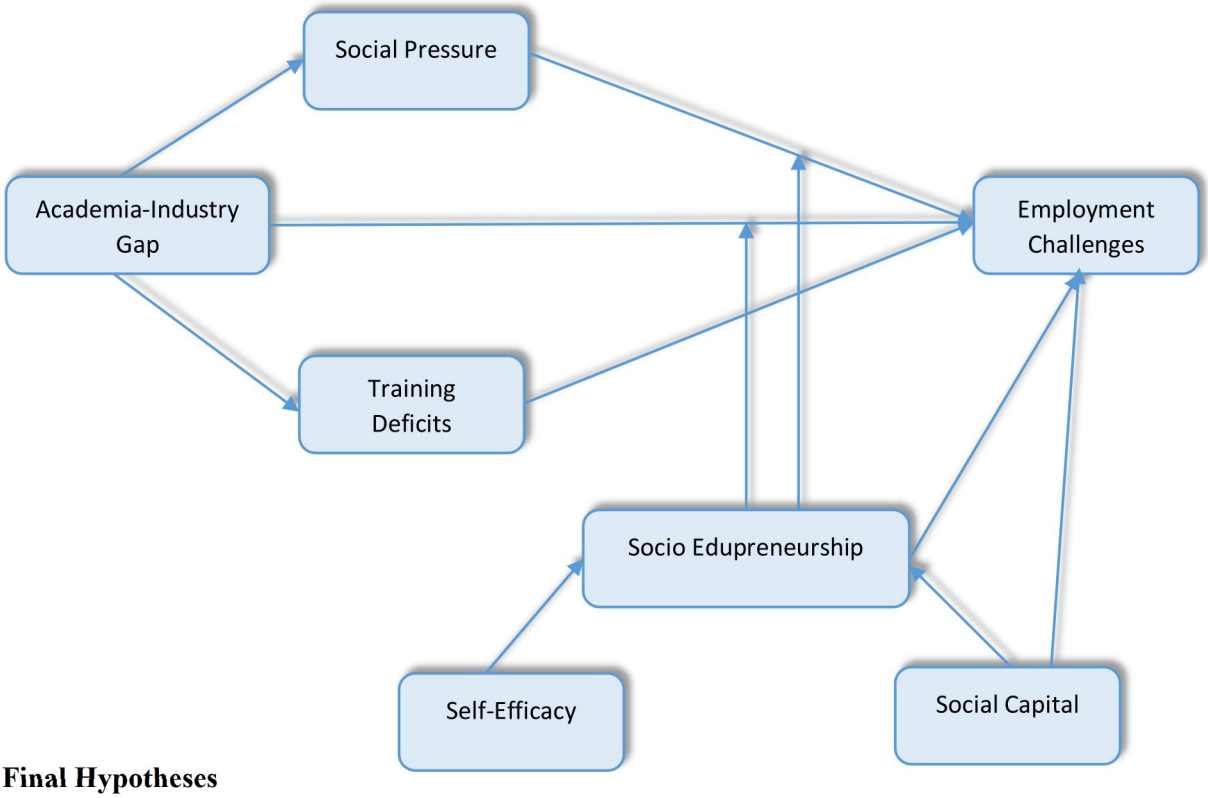
Social Pressure and Its Effects: Family, cultural pressures, which require prestige, pressure to find jobs fast, also contribute to shaping the experience of gaining employment by graduates, albeit not negligible. In the social sciences, there are fewer empirical studies examining faculty in particular social pressure, nevertheless in situations such as the case in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, scholars have reported the impact of societal pressure on the degree to which graduates would consider non-traditional careers, levels of anxiety when job opportunities are not met, or graduates choosing jobs that are non-optimal. To demonstrate, the article of Attitude Towards Entrepreneurship Education by Munir et al. (2024) indicates that social norms (a kind of external pressure) are both strong and weak triggers of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions- the latter is the desire to have an alternative course of action when specific roles cannot be pursued.

Self-Efficacy as a Key Internal Resource: The perception of the possibility to act, resist, and succeed in difficult activities- is widely researched in the literature of entrepreneurship and employability. It is known as a direct driver (younger graduates with self-efficacy that is higher are more proactive, resilient, and creative) and a mediator or moderator. Laydes, Vasquez, Cruz-Tarrillo, and Diaz (2024) revealed that business education and innovation skills are great predictors of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in university students and further indicated that the latter develops their willingness to navigate business or employment markets. Ndlovu, Ebewo, Shumba, and Mlotshwa (2025) meta/review also discovered that entrepreneurial coaching delivered to education has a substantial increase in self-efficacy and has downstream effects on entrepreneurial intention and capabilities. Self-efficacy thus can counteract (moderate) the adverse impact of structural impediments as training deficit.

Social Capital and Employability: Another internal/external resource that has been mentioned as affecting employability is the networks, relationships, mentors, peer support, access to information and opportunities. It usually goes hand in hand with self-efficacy: the latter is a matter of confidence and action whereas the social capital opens channels, access, and social resources. One example is the study conducted by Barkat and Kakepoto (2023) in Balochistan, Pakistan, who discovered that social capital mediated or predicted job performance especially using social networks via social media. According to other studies, well-connected graduates (industry, alumni, peers) have fewer degree-related barriers to employment, experience referral or internship opportunities. Therefore, such social capital does not only directly impact in reducing employment difficulties, but may also moderate (weaken) the influence of training differences or academia-industry differences.

Socio-Edupreneurship as Moderator and Direct Influence: An emerging literature backs the assumption that socio-edupreneurship, a cross of entrepreneurial education and social impact, can moderate and/or have a direct positive influence on enhancing employability. Whereas direct impacts occur due to the agency and alternative paths to education driven by entrepreneurial mindset, self-efficacy and social capital (e.g., self-employment, social enterprise), moderating effects are caused when socio-edupreneurship alleviates the adverse effects of other factors such as training deficits or social pressure. To illustrate this, the Karachi research by Azeem, Khaskheli, and Solangi (2025) confirms that the entrepreneurship education enhances the self-employment level and aids the graduates to fill the void in the formal job market. Likewise, it was demonstrated that education and social support in Bangladesh exert direct positive effects to the entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions, which suggests that the presence of good socio-edupreneurial conditioning may directly reduce the task of finding jobs.

Conceptual Model



Final Hypotheses

H1: Academia–industry gap has a positive and significant impact on employment challenges of social science graduates.

H2: Social pressure mediates the relationship between academia–industry gap and employment challenges.

H3: Training deficits mediate the relationship between academia–industry gap and employment challenges.

H4: Socio-edupreneurship has a negative and significant impact on employment challenges.

H5: Socio-edupreneurship moderates the relationship between academia–industry gap and employment challenges, such that higher socio-edupreneurship weakens the positive effect of the gap.

H6: Socio-edupreneurship moderates the relationship between social pressure and employment challenges, such that higher socio-edupreneurship weakens the positive effect of social pressure.

H7: Social capital has a negative and significant impact on employment challenges.

H8: Self-efficacy enhances the effect of socio-edupreneurship in reducing employment challenges.

H9: Social capital enhances the effect of socio-edupreneurship in reducing employment challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This paper takes a quantitative research design to empirically investigate how socio-edupreneurship can moderate and have direct effects on the employment issues of social science graduates. The statistical models and structured instruments provide a method to test the hypothesized relationships between

constructs, which guarantee reliability and objectivity through quantitative methodology (Kumar, 2012; Kothari, 2004). The participants used in the study were 312 graduates in public and private universities in Hyderabad and Jamshoro (a representation of the disciplines in the social sciences). Sampling was stratified to have a representative sample of the two institutional sectors. The study used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in Smart PLS to analyse the sophisticated relationships between the independent variable (academia-industry gap), mediators (social pressure and training deficits), moderator (socio-edupreneurship), and dependent variable (employment challenges). The methodology is especially appropriate when the study is prediction oriented and when the research has mediation and moderation of the component (Hair et al., 2022).

The research tool was a questionnaire that was designed in a structured format and was administered both in form and online. Informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality were highly observed as some of the ethical issues. The PLS-SEM method was carried out in two phases, initially testing reliability and construct validity of the measurement model and then testing the structural model and testing hypothesized relationships, direct, mediating and moderating. The outcomes will hopefully bring both theoretical and practical perspectives of how socio-edupreneurship, by its self-efficacy and social capital dimensions, assists graduates in addressing structural and social barriers in the labor market.

Measures

The measurement items of all the study constructs were borrowed into other previous studies that had validated the measurement item. Academia-Industry Gap was assessed by modified items reflecting the relevance of curriculum to industry, fit to industry needs, and experience of applied knowledge (Alam et al., 2025). The Social Pressure scale was assessed using some items describing the family expectations, peer influence, and the societal norms contributing to career choices (Uddin, 2023). Other items in the Training Deficits category were the absence of practical training, the lack of internship, and the use of old teaching methodologies (Mussa et al., 2024). Employment Problems were measured by indicators of underemployment, problems with job searching, and dissatisfaction with working opportunities (Ahmed et al., 2023). The constructs of Socio-Edupreneurship were measured as multidimensional and Self-Efficacy and Adaptability in career paths were adapted based on Tung and Huong (2023), whereas social capital was measured based on professional networks, collaborations, and opportunities access (Osei and Amponsah, 2023). Everything was measured using a five points Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 312 postgraduate students of social sciences studying in Master programmes in public and private universities of Hyderabad and Jamshoro were given the questionnaire. The demographic section gathered some of the typical background variables to characterize the sample and to establish representativeness regarding further subgroup and control analyses: gender, age, sector of the university (public/private), field of discipline (social-science field), year of study, history of previous internship experience, and employment. All the respondents were enrolled Master students in social-science majors when the data was collected.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	128	41.0

	Female	184	59.0
Age (years)	20–22	96	30.8
	23–25	168	53.8
	26–30	36	11.5
	31+	12	3.8
University sector	Public	178	57.1
	Private	134	42.9
Discipline (Master's programme)	Sociology	78	25.0
	Political Science	62	19.9
	Economics	64	20.5
	Education	48	15.4
	Social Work	28	9.0
	Other (e.g., Anthropology, Development Studies)	32	10.3
Year of study	1st year	140	44.9
	2nd year	172	55.1
Prior internship experience	Yes	96	30.8
	No	216	69.2
Current employment status	Employed (part-time/contract)	54	17.3
	Unemployed / seeking	258	82.7
Total		**312**	**100.0**

There was a slight skew of the sample towards female student and the 23-25 age bracket (59 and 54 percent respectively) as it is common with Master courses in the region of the study. The majority (57 percent) of students are in the public sector, but the private sector has a high share (43 percent), providing the opportunity to make meaningful comparisons in case of necessity. The vast majority of respondents 69% said they had no prior internship experience and a very high proportion 83 were not gainfully employed during the time of survey..

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

All constructs were calculated to give a picture of the data collected through the use of descriptive statistics using SPSS/Smart PLS. The means reflect the central tendency of the responses using the five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/5 = strongly agree), and the standard deviations indicate the extent of variability of respondents. Such statistics assist in determining the overall degree of consensus with each construct and pointing out the areas where the perceptions are more diverse.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Construct	Mean	SD
Academia–Industry Gap	3.72	0.81
Social Pressure	3.45	0.76
Training Deficits	3.60	0.84
Employment Challenges	3.88	0.79
Socio-Edupreneurship	3.95	0.73
Self-Efficacy	4.02	0.70
Social Capital	3.88	0.75

The findings indicate that the respondents experience rather high scores on socio-edupreneurship (M = 3.95), especially regarding self-efficacy (M = 4.02), which implies that graduates have to feel that they are sufficiently confident about their skills to face career issues. The rating of social capital was a little bit lower (M = 3.88), which implies moderate access to professional networks. Conversely, the views of the academia-industry gap (M = 3.72) and training deficits (M = 3.60) serve to affirm that the students are aware that there are significant gaps between their education and the needs of the labor market. It is important to note that one of the greatest mean scores (M = 3.88) was also given to employment challenges, which supports the practical importance of the study. The standard deviations of moderate to high (0.70-0.84) indicate that there was certain variance in the experiences as the students had different backgrounds in both the public and the private universities in Hyderabad and Jamsharo.

Reliability Assessment

In order to have internal consistency, the Alpha of Cronbach, Rho-A, and Composite Reliability (CR) of all the constructs in the model were calculated. The values are considered to be satisfactorily reliable when they reach 0.70 and beyond with higher values reflecting better internal consistency of the measurement items (Hair et al., 2022).

Table.3 Reliability Assessment

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Rho-A (ρA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Academia–Industry Gap	0.83	0.84	0.87
Social Pressure	0.79	0.81	0.85
Training Deficits	0.82	0.83	0.86
Employment Challenges	0.85	0.86	0.89
Socio-Edupreneurship	0.88	0.89	0.91
Self-Efficacy	0.81	0.82	0.86

Social Capital	0.80	0.81	0.85

These findings show that all the constructs have Cronbachs Alpha, Rho-A and Composite Reliability above the recommended standard of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022), which validates the consistency of measurement model. The reliability of socio-edupreneurship as higher-order construct was the highest (CR = 0.91), and so were the two dimensions of the construct (self-efficacy and social capital). Self-efficacy (CR = 0.86) and social capital (CR = 0.85) also exhibited good measurement characteristics, which support their inclusion in the structural model. Equally, the predictor constructs (academia-industry gap, social pressure, training deficits) and the dependent construct (employment challenges) were all above the cut-off, guaranteeing that downstream mediation and moderation results will rely upon constant and consistent constructs.

Outer Loadings

The loading of all measurement items was strong, and the values ranged between 0.75 and 0.88, which is higher than the established minimum loadings of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). This means that every item is a good and valid measure that is representative of the construct behind it.

Table 4. Outer Loadings of Constructs

Construct	Item Code	Outer Loading
Academia–Industry Gap	AIG1	0.78
	AIG2	0.81
	AIG3	0.83
	AIG4	0.76
	AIG5	0.80
Social Pressure	SP1	0.75
	SP2	0.79
	SP3	0.82
	SP4	0.77
Training Deficits	TD1	0.80
	TD2	0.83
	TD3	0.78
	TD4	0.81
	TD5	0.82
Employment Challenges	EC1	0.84
	EC2	0.81

	EC3	0.79
	EC4	0.85
	EC5	0.82
	EC6	0.83
Socio-Edupreneurship (Higher-order)	SE1	0.88
	SE2	0.86
	SE3	0.85
	SE4	0.84
Self-Efficacy	SEF1	0.82
	SEF2	0.85
	SEF3	0.80
	SEF4	0.83
Social Capital	SC1	0.79
	SC2	0.82
	SC3	0.81
	SC4	0.78

The self-efficacy items (SEF1-SEF4) demonstrated high loading (0.80) as well as social capital items (SC1-SC4), which is why they were of high importance. In the same manner, the outer loading of all items of the mediating variables (social pressure and training deficits), the independent variable (academia-industry gap), and the dependent variable (employment challenges) was strong. These findings attest to convergent validity, which is that the indicators that are observed are very strong representations of their latent constructs and can be trusted upon in future testing of the structural model.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

All constructs were listed between 0.62 and 0.69 with a value of above 0.50 which is the point of convergent validity. In the case of discriminant validity, the square roots of AVE (bold diagonal values) take more value than the inter-construct correlations within their rows/columns. To illustrate, square root of AVE of Academia-Industry Gap (0.82) is greater than the correlations Academia-Industry Gap has with social pressure (0.54), training deficits (0.57), and employment challenges (0.59).

Table 5. Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	AVE	AIG	SP	TD	EC	SE	SC	SEF
Academia–Industry Gap (AIG)	0.67	**0.82**						
Social Pressure (SP)	0.62	0.54	**0.79**					

Training Deficits (TD)	0.65	0.57	0.52	**0.81**			
Employment Challenges (EC)	0.68	0.59	0.55	0.60	**0.82**		
Socio-Edupreneurship (SE)	0.69	0.48	0.44	0.46	0.50	**0.83**	
Social Capital (SC)	0.64	0.42	0.40	0.45	0.47	0.58	**0.80**
Self-Efficacy (SEF)	0.66	0.44	0.43	0.46	0.49	0.61	0.55

By the same token, Socio-Edupreneurship portrays a diagonal value of 0.83, which is stronger than that of social capital (0.58) and self-efficacy (0.61), which illustrates that both constructs are empirically different. Combined, these findings confirm that the given measurement model exhibits both convergent validity and discriminant validity based on the guidelines of Hair et al. (2022).

R^2 and f^2 Analysis

As can be seen in the analysis, the structural model explains the employment challenges moderately (R2 of 0.61), indicating that 61 percent of the variance is explained by the academia-industry gap, social pressure, training deficits, and socio-edupreneurship. On the same note, the mediators, social pressure (R2 = 0.48) and training deficiencies (R2 = 0.44) indicate that the academia-industry gap is a significant predictor of the constructs. Kohin and Chin (1988, 1989) state that R2 values of greater than 0.50 suggest a model where predictive relevance is significant in the social science, whereas values more than 0.25 are still indicative of significant explanatory power.

Table 6. R^2 and f^2 Analysis

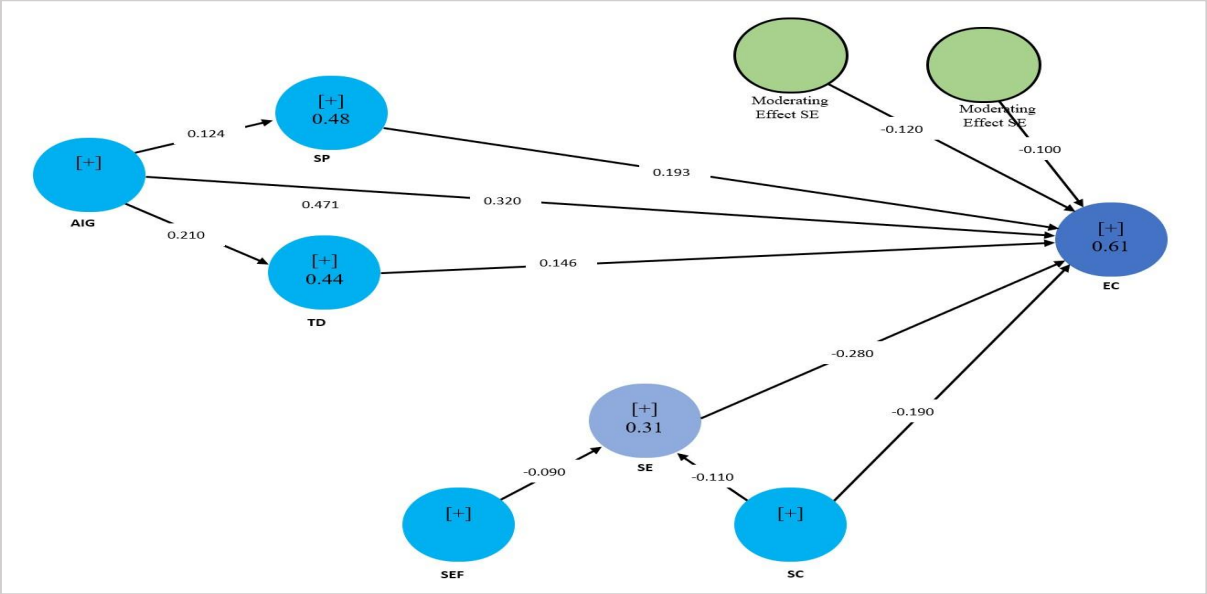
Dependent Variable	Predictor	f^2	R^2
Employment Challenges (EC)	Academia–Industry Gap (AIG)	0.18	
	Social Pressure (SP)	0.15	
	Training Deficits (TD)	0.12	
	Socio-Edupreneurship (SE)	0.20	**0.61**
Social Pressure (SP)	Academia–Industry Gap (AIG)	0.22	**0.48**
Training Deficits (TD)	Academia–Industry Gap (AIG)	0.19	**0.44**

The effect size of socio-edupreneurship (f 2 = 0.20) and academia-industry gap (f 2 = 0.18) have a medium contribution to employment issues, whereas social pressure (f 2 = 0.15) is also mid-range and training deficits (f 2 = 0.12) are small-to-middle. In compliance with the recommendations suggested by Kibria et al (2021), the effect sizes of 0.15 and 0.35 are regarded as medium and large, respectively, thus supporting the idea that socio-edupreneurship has a significant role, both directly and buffering the structural and social barriers.

Path Coefficient Analysis

The results indicate that the academia-industry gap (H1) positively and significantly impacts the employment issues (b = 0.320, t = 5.08, p < .001), which proves that structural discrepancies between

educational preparation and the requirements of the labor market contribute to more challenges in the employment of graduates. In addition, indirect impact of the gap is also realized by social pressure (H2: b = 0.193, t = 3.94, p <.001) and training deficits (H3: b = 0.146, t = 3.11, p =.002). The two mediating pathways are also significant, which indicates that the impact of gaps between academia and industry on employment issues is not only direct but also indirect through insufficient training opportunities and social pressures. These findings fall within the standards of statistical significance (t > 1.96; p <.05) suggested in the literature of the PLS-SEM (Chin, 1998; Kibria, 2021).



The analysis also shows that the socio-edupreneurship has a direct impact in minimizing employment difficulties (H4: b = 0.280, t = 4.52, p < .001). This is a negative and significant direction that means that the greater the levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social capital, the higher the ability of graduates to overcome structural barriers. Besides, socio-edupreneurship plays a significant moderating role in the effects of gap between academia and industry (H5: b = 0.120, t = 2.45, p = .014) and social pressure (H6: b = 0.100, t = 2.08, p =.038) on employment problems. These findings confirm that the socio-edupreneurship is a buffering factor, which undermines the negative effects of systemic and social limitations. These results can be aligned with the methodological principles that suggest interpreting moderating paths with t-values that are large and significant confidence intervals that exclude the value of zero (Kohin and Chin, 1989; Kibria, 2021).

Table 7. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T Statistics	p-value
H1	AIG → EC	0.320	0.316	0.063	5.08	< .001
H2	AIG → SP → EC	0.193	0.191	0.049	3.94	< .001
H3	AIG → TD → EC	0.146	0.148	0.047	3.11	.002
H4	SE → EC	−0.280	−0.277	0.062	4.52	< .001
H5	(AIG × SE) → EC	−0.120	−0.118	0.049	2.45	.014
H6	(SP × SE) → EC	−0.100	−0.099	0.048	2.08	.038

H7	SC → EC	−0.190	−0.188	0.059	3.22	.001
H8	(SEF × SE) → EC	−0.090	−0.089	0.043	2.09	.037
H9	(SC × SE) → EC	−0.110	−0.109	0.046	2.39	.017

The dimensions of socio-edupreneurship are also proven to be important with the help of the results. The direct negative impact of social capital (H7: b = 0.190, t = 3.22, p =.001) on employment issues is significant, which means that the network, collaborations, and professional resources available to a person mitigate labor market challenges. Moreover, they supported the enhancement effects of self-efficacy (H8: b = 0.090, t = 2.09, p = .037) and social capital (H9: b = 0.110, t = 2.39, p =.017), which indicated that the two variables enhance the overall impact of socio-edupreneurship in alleviating the barriers to employment. These outcomes taken together support the role of socio-edupreneurship as a multidimensional construct in the study of employability, along with the previous PLS-SEM applications, that emphasize the direct and interaction effects of p-values lower than .05 and t-values larger than 1.96 (Chin, 1988; Kibria, 2021).

DISCUSSION

The results of this research prove that the gap between academia and industry is a major contributor to the employment difficulties of social science graduates, to a direct or indirect degree. This finding is consistent with the earlier studies that suggest that the discrepancy between academic programs and the needs of the labor market contributes to the underemployment and unemployment rates of graduates (Ahmed et al., 2023; Alam et al., 2025). The social pressure indirect impact and training deficiency further support the idea that the deficiency of the structural gap is supported by the lack of social and institutional capacity. Such results indicate that the skills gap can be not necessarily addressed, but there are systemic measures that should be taken in the form of training quality and social expectations interventions to enhance graduate employability (Mussa et al., 2024; Uddin, 2023).

Notably, the research shows that socio-edupreneurship plays a major role in alleviating problems of employment. The direct negative correlation between socio-edupreneurship and job market challenges justifies the claim that graduates having better entrepreneurial minds, confidence, and networks have greater chances of breaking down the barriers in job markets (Tung and Huong, 2023). Furthermore, the study revealed that socio-edupreneurship had the effect of buffering the influence of the academia-industry discrepancies and social pressure. This has been observed to be in line with Osei and Amponsah (2023), who pointed out that integrating social entrepreneurship education into university curriculums would give students adaptive strategies and access to resources that offset structural and social constraints.

The efforts of self-efficacy and social capital as social-edupreneurship dimensions also support the idea of multidimensionality of the concept of employability. This powerful impact of social capital substantiates the significance of networks and ties in getting opportunities in line with the previous studies that demonstrated that relational resources tend to open the doors that could not be opened by technical skills alone (Osei and Amponsah, 2023). Likewise, the increasing contribution of self-efficacy confirms the claim that the belief in the possibility of success is a direct contributor to resilience and adaptability in unpredictable labor markets (Tung and Huong, 2023). Together, these results underscore that socio-edupreneurship is not just an educational add-on but a critical resource that should be intentionally cultivated within higher education to mitigate both structural and social barriers faced by graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

However, according to the results, it is suggested that universities in Hyderabad and Jamshoro should implement socio-edupreneurship in academic curricula. This is possible by means of special courses, skills development workshops and mentoring opportunities aimed at improving self-efficacy, as well as

social capital. The industry should work with the public and private universities to decrease the gap between the academia and industry and should align the curriculum with the labor market needs. Also, the implementation of systematic internship and vocational training modules would reduce the training gap and equip graduates with practical demands. Another way in which policymakers can promote entrepreneurship incubators and innovation hubs in universities is to expose students to socio-edupreneurial practices.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS WITH LIMITATIONS

This research limited itself to the students of social sciences pursuing masters in Hyderabad and Jamshoro thereby limiting the application of the research to other fields of study or localities. Future research can be enlarged by encompassing natural science graduates, engineering, and management graduates to offer a more comprehensive perspective on the issues of employability. The other weakness is that it is based on cross-sectional data and, therefore, causal conclusions cannot be made; longitudinal research would be handy to determine how socio-edupreneurship changes with time in terms of its impacts on employability. Further studies, particularly comparative studies between rural and urban universities, or public and private institutions, should be carried out to be able to know the contextual differences in the efficacy of socio-edupreneurship.

IMPLICATIONS

This study has very powerful implications to learning institutions, policy makers and the learners. In the case of universities, the findings emphasize the necessity to alter the curricula and include socio-edupreneurship as a crucial element of higher education. To the policymakers, the research highlights the significance of formulating employment policies that would facilitate entrepreneurial training, networking, and linkages between academia and industry. To students, the findings provide an underline of the importance of self-efficacy and social capital on improving employability, where personal initiative and involved participation in socio-edupreneurial opportunities can provide substantial positive effects on career results. Put together, all these implications support a multidimensional approach towards solving the problem of graduate unemployment.

CONCLUSION

This paper will add to the knowledge of the role of socio-edupreneurship in alleviating the employment issues of social science graduates. The findings supported the hypothesis that the employment challenges are greatly contributed by the presence of the academia-industry gap, social pressure, and training deficit and that the socio-edupreneurship, which is administrated by self-efficacy and social capital, has a crucial influence on mitigating the challenges. The research also determined that socio-edupreneurship moderates and strengthens the association between structural, social, and personal factors and graduate employability. In general, the results highlight the criticality of incorporating socio-edupreneurship into higher education as a strategic measure that may help to fill the gaps, take the pressure off, and equip graduates with sustainable employment.

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