

**From Social Knowledge to Sustainable Social Enterprises:
Examining the Mediating Role of Social Value Creation**

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Abstract

This paper explores whether social knowledge directly influences social enterprise sustainability while considers whether social value creation acts as a mediator therein. Based on the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), the research hypothesizes a positive relationship between social knowledge and the fact that social enterprises can generate higher levels of social value which in turn increase their level of sustainability. Social enterprises are crucial towards solving the social challenges as well as ensuring that the enterprise is sustainable. In existing, little effort has been done in analyzing the role of social knowledge in terms of social enterprise sustainability and how the relationship works, especially in the developing world.

In current study, positivist paradigm was used to adopt a quantitative research design. The structured questionnaire was used to gather data in terms of social entrepreneurs and management staff of social enterprises in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, Pakistan. A sample of 352 respondents was selected based on power statistics. To measure the constructs in the study, established measurement scales evolved through previous studies were used. The results are that social knowledge significantly and positively influences the sustainability and social value creation of social enterprises. In addition to this, further creation of social value has a large impact on the sustainability of social enterprise. The mediation analysis verifies that social value creation indeed does mediate between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability so that, in social enterprises, social knowledge serves as the means of

transforming their knowledge resources into sustainable outcomes by means of social value creation.

The paper expands the body of writing that exists about social entrepreneurship by taking the Knowledge-Based View and demonstrating that social value creation is a latent mechanism that ties social knowledge to sustainability. The results provide valuable guidance to social entrepreneurs, policy makers, and development agencies, who want to boost both the long-term sustainability and social engagement of social enterprises.

Keywords: Social Knowledge; Social Value Creation; Social Enterprise Sustainability; Social Entrepreneurship; Knowledge-Based View.

1. Introduction

With the increase of population in 15th to 17th century, demand of the products increased tremendously resulting in industrial revolution (Goldstone, 2002). This result in improved quality and quantity of products supply. However, with industrialization, the waste material started destroying ecosystem. Initially, different steps were started from industries for neutralizing the negative impacts of industries including different initiatives under CSR umbrella (Fooks et al., 2013). Later government also stepped in while formulating new laws and regulations. Furthermore, other stakeholders including customers also forced the firms to alter their process for pro-environmental production. These all enterprises have one thing in common; they were planned for earning profit and some portion of that profit was reinjected in community as a part of CSR activity. On the other hand, not-for-profit organizations supported social cases but there was no mechanism for financial sustainability of these enterprises. They were dependent on donations only. To overcome the disadvantages of all these organizations, a new type of enterprises emerged that combined market-based mechanism of for-profit-organizations with social mission of not-for-profit organizations, called as social enterprises (Grassl, 2012). These enterprises maximize shareholder's wealth through market based mechanism for fixing any social cause including creation of jobs, fighting illness and poverty, improving livelihood, protecting environment, and empowering marginalized groups. Thus, the development of such enterprises has become essential for human existence on this plane.

However, most of such enterprises fail to achieve sustainability and vanished away in initial three years (Javed et al., 2019). Thus, it is essential to study different antecedents that contributes to social enterprise sustainability. Social enterprise sustainability is defined as the capability to remain functional over longer period of time (Javed et al., 2019). It has three dimensions including social, financial, and ecological / environmental sustainability (Strezov, Evans, & Evans, 2017). Social sustainability refers to as the wellbeing of society and working for human development (Abbas, 2025). Ecological or environmental sustainability refers to protect natural resources during the operations of the enterprise (Javed, Du, & Islam, 2025). Economic sustainability refers to as the financial viability of the enterprise (Liang, Hussain, & Iqbal, 2025). Social enterprises want to have a consistent impact over a period of time rather than to have a

short term impact (Imanuella, Idris, & Kamaruddin, 2025). Sustainable social enterprise contributes to the SDGs set by the UN, thus resulting in broader development.

For achieving sustainable, social enterprises have to work with different factors. One of those factors is social knowledge which is defined as the combination of information, experience, norms, and way problem-solving (Robinson & Held, 2025). There are three types of social knowledge including tacit, codified, and relational knowledge (Liu et al., 2026). Tacit knowledge deals with needs in a particular culture where as codified knowledge is related with best practices and relational knowledge deals with partners and stakeholders (Malakar, Brent, Jeanneret, & Gardner, 2025). Enterprises consider social knowledge as a strategic resource (Dixit, Kumar, Aashish, & Zohair, 2025) which help in identifying social needs, formulating strategy to fulfil the needs and reduce information asymmetries. Thus, social knowledge works as double edge sword, at one side it helps in identifying social needs and on other hand it ensures protection from mission drift.

At one side social knowledge helps enterprises achieve sustainability and on other side it also helps in social value creation (SVC). SVC is defined as the process in which enterprises convert their tangible and intangible inputs into social-wellbeing outputs for targeted population (Ferraris, Cerquitelli, & Petrocelli, 2025). SVC is at the heart of social enterprises (Javed et al., 2019) and it determines the success or the failure of social enterprises (Lorenzo-Afable, Lips-Wiersma, & Singh, 2025). SVC is expressed in multiple forms aligned with the social mission of the enterprise. It also acts as a legitimacy signal for the funders, regulators and beneficiaries (Jakob & Sundermeier, 2026), thus helping in uplifting and sustainability of social enterprise.

SVC has different drivers and at the same time it also drives different variables including social enterprise sustainability by effecting social, economic, and ecological performances. By addressing unmet social needs, social enterprises build trust, legitimacy and supports relationships that results in social sustainability of enterprise (Quaye et al., 2026). This also attracts funders, shareholders, impact investors, and customers, thus improving economic resilience of social enterprise (Volosiuk et al., 2025). Furthermore, SVC also supports environmental sustainability by setting the mission of optimal resource utilization, waste reduction, and green innovation, thus helping in environmental sustainability of social enterprise. Based on above arguments, SVC is tested as mediating variable in current study. The argument is that SVC is the function of outcome of social knowledge and this knowledge alone is not sufficient for sustaining enterprise, rather it helps attract customers, impact investors, and shareholders by translating social knowledge into demonstrable social outcomes. On the other side, social knowledge directly influences sustainability of a social enterprise (Javed & Yasir, 2019). However, much of its effects are indirect and through SVC. Therefore, this study is set to test the mediating role of SVC in the relationship of social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability.

The study focuses on collecting data from managers and owners of social enterprises working in KPK and Islamabad. Managers and owners are the decision makers in social enterprises. These individuals have strategic knowledge and operative authority to work

for the sustainability of social enterprise. No such studies used empirical data from the above mentioned population, thus the population gap will be filled by current study. Existing literature has proven link among social knowledge, SVC and social enterprise sustainability. However, there is no empirical evidence that researched on the social knowledge→SVC→social enterprise sustainability in the context of Pakistan. Most of the existing studies has worked on financial performance only while neglecting social and ecological performances. To fulfil this gap, current study is set to test the impact of social knowledge on social enterprise sustainability and SVC. The study also tests the impact of SVC on social enterprise sustainability. Finally, the mediating role of SVC in the relationship of social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability is also evaluated.

The paper is divided into different section. The introduction is followed by literature review which is then followed by methodology section. Next is analysis section and final section is conclusion and discussion.

2. Literature review

Detailed literature review is given as under:

2.1. Social Knowledge

Social Knowledge is the sum of the knowledge, experiences, skills, information and lessons learned that are obtained from other people and organizations in the social world (Lahtinen, 2013). It includes those things that can be written down and passed on, as well as tacit knowledge which are internalized through social experiences and practices (Zhan et al., 2016). Theory of Knowledge advocates that knowledge is one major advantage that most organizations have in the strategy they can utilize as it helps them in being innovative, problem solving and achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Iqbal et al., 2026).

Social knowledge has a special relevance in social enterprises, given that they are social enterprises based on a social mission and that are also created with a social purpose (Juusola et al., 2026). Often knowledge from communities, stakeholders, beneficiaries, volunteers and partner organizations are key to helping social entrepreneurs understand social issues and provide them with a good product or service (Yuda et al., 2026). Social enterprises continually engage with stakeholders to learn about social needs, how to mobilize resources and more creative solutions for tackling social issues (Quaye et al., 2026; Moghadam & Shariati, 2026).

Past research has pointed out that knowledge sharing and social learning is critical in the success of organizations (Al Zoubi et al., 2026; Jahed & Abdekhoda, 2026; Ting, 2023). Social knowledge is about the improvement of the decision making process, the strengthening of stakeholder relations as well as adaptation to new environmental situations and shifts (DeCaro et al., 2017). Social networks help in the establishment and transmission of the intellectual capital (knowledge and expertise) that is crucial to the organizational performance (Ghoshal and Nahapiet, 1998). Likewise, it has been suggested by scholars (like see: Castro Laszlo & Laszlo, 2002; Juusola, Venkitachalam, Kleber, & Popat, 2026; Shaik et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2026 and others) in the field of knowledge management that those organizations that can gather and apply social

knowledge, will be better equipped to develop novel solutions and attain long term sustainability.

For a social enterprise, social knowledge enables the understanding of the needs of the beneficiaries, the design of social programs suited to these needs, and a significant contribution to society. According to Quaye et al. (2026), social enterprises build their knowledge through engaging stakeholders and learning together, leading to a better understanding of local issues and better value creation and sustainability.

2.2.Social Enterprise Sustainability

Social enterprise sustainability is about how they can continue to pursue their social mission, be economically sustainable and still continue to function as effective organizations over the course of time (Javed et al., 2019). According to Gabhane and Radhakrishnan (2025), social enterprises have a dual purpose to sustainability i.e. maximize financial return and develop social impact (compared to traditional profit-driven businesses). Thus, sustainability in social enterprises refers to both economic as well as social and organizational aspects.

With the relevance of social enterprises to solving such problems in society as poverty, unemployment, environmental issues and social exclusion, the concept of 'sustainability' has increasingly drawn attention (Javed et al., 2021). A successful and sustainable social enterprise can perform social function and provide resources to run itself and develop.

They have determined that there are several factors which affect social enterprise sustainability, namely leadership competences (Muthukrishnan & Bhattacharyya, 2025), resource access (Majeed et al., 2025), stakeholders support (Jenner, 2016), innovativeness (Picciotti, 2017), organizational learning (Prugsamatz, 2010) and knowledge management (Maalaoui, Le Loarne-Lemaire, & Razgallah, 2020). In this, knowledge resources have proven to be important conditions for sustainability, achieving long-term benefits (Li, & Huang, 2023). Knowledge can be acquired, shared and utilized more effectively by organizations to make them more resilient in the face of environmental change, responsive to stakeholder expectations, and innovative in developing responses.

According to the RBV, valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources are linked to sustainable organizational performance (Zvarimwa, & Zimuto, 2022). Social knowledge can be seen as such a strategic asset since it contributes to the improvement in the capacities and activities of the organizations and to continuous value creation (Rastogi, 2002). For this reason, it is easier for social enterprises that can effectively and appropriately use social knowledge to sustain themselves in the long run.

The importance of sustaining financial performance is complemented in recent literature by the understanding that an organization's sustainability also relies on its social legitimacy, stakeholder trust and societal impact (like see: Crossley, Elmagrhi, & Ntim, 2021, Moneva et al., 2007; Perrini et al, 2011). Therefore, it is still significant research area to understand the mechanisms on how social knowledge can help to attain sustainability.

2.3.Social Value Creation

Social value creation involves delivering or achieving positive social impact which brings positive results in the well-being levels of people, communities and society (Brieger et al., 2021). It is the main objective of social enterprises and what makes them so different from the for-profit enterprises. Social value could be reduced poverty (Nasution et al., 2024), better education (Chan & Hu, 2021), better access to health care (Khatri & Assefa, 2022), protecting the environment, social inclusion, social development and empowerment of disadvantaged groups (Javed et al., 2019).

Social value creation is a key element in the literature around social entrepreneurship. Social Entrepreneurs are according to Dees (1998) change agents that develop and maintain social value through innovative solutions to societal problems. Likewise, Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006) suggest that the points of social enterprises lie in the generation of social value and the use of entrepreneurial models to effect this. The ability of an organization to understand social needs and mobilize resources is critical to social value creation (Altinay, Sigala, & Waligo, 2016). This process can involve a significant amount of collaboration, communication and engagement. Social knowledge is an underpinning tool to explain society's problems and develop innovative practice that has a meaningful social impact.

Existing researches like Dess and Sauerwald (2014), Ortiz, Donate, and Guadamillas (2018), and Daud and Yusoff (2010) suggests that a stronger knowledge resource is associated with an organization's ability to create social value (SVC). Knowledge helps social enterprises to chart new needs in society, create the relevant program and effectively assess social impacts (McLoughlin et al., 2009). SVC is thus an effect of knowledge Usage and a key contributor to the relation between resources of a given organization and sustainability.

This link between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability has been extensively explored in the field of knowledge management (Maalaoui, Le Loarne-Lemaire, & Razgallah, 2020) and therefore in the field of social entrepreneurship. Social knowledge offers essential information and insights for strategic decision-making, innovation and stakeholder engagement in organizations (Alshukri, Seun Ojekemi, Öz, & Alzubi, 2024). These are some of the skills that can be directly applied to sustainability. Social knowledge is useful for getting a better understanding of social conditions (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025) and the needs of beneficiaries to social enterprises. This knowledge can help guide the creation of successful interventions, gain support from stakeholders, and adjust to shifting conditions. Studies have shown that many organizations with a strong knowledge-sharing culture perform better with regard to the achievement of sustainability and performance.

In addition to this, knowing more socially improves the organizational learning and innovation capacity, critical for maintaining social impact in the long-term (Alshukri, Seun Ojekemi, Öz, & Alzubi, 2024). Social entrepreneurs can use knowledge gained in the social networks and with stakeholders to continually develop their programs/services (Kaggwa et al., 2024). Hence, the effects on sustainability of social enterprises are expected to be positively related to social knowledge.

Social knowledge is crucial to the creation of social value as it underpins the understanding of the social problem and the identification of social issues where

intervention can help (Trickett & Espino, 2004). Input from stakeholders, communities and social networks can help translate into design solutions to meet actual community needs (Dietrich et al., 2023). Research on social innovation has shown that the sharing of knowledge and collaborative learning make a major contribution to the capacity of the organization to add social value (like see: Chaudhuri et al., 2025; Nugroho 2018; Sita Nirmala Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2012). Social enterprises generally have a wider variety of stakeholders and make proper use of social knowledge if they can create innovative and impactful solutions (Quaye et al., 2026). Therefore, social knowledge is said to be one of the fundamental factors that is required to create social value. Furthermore, knowledge-oriented approaches propose that the ability of organizations to turn knowledge into useful social outcomes is a critical means by which organizations achieve their social missions (Sahibzada et al., 2024). Based on this a positive effect of social knowledge to social value creation is expected.

2.4. Social value creation and social enterprise sustainability

Social value creation is an important part that determines sustainability of a social enterprise (Knife et al., 2014). The capacity of 'to make a difference' increases stakeholder confidence (Alshukri et al. 2024), increases organization legitimacy (Spanuth & Urbano, 2024) and brings in the resources the organization needs for survival (Robb, Brownell, Brännback, & Rumi, 2025).

It has been found that social enterprises that have clear social value and have shown their positive impact are more likely to attract funding from various sources including donors, investors, government, communities (Bugg-Levine, Kogut, & Kulatilaka, 2012). This support helps to maintain financial stability and continuity in operations. Furthermore, social value creation supports the improvement of reputation and stakeholder commitment, strengthening sustainability even more (Biggemann, Williams, & Kro, 2014). In the stakeholder theory, when such an organization successfully fulfills the needs of its stakeholders, this, in turn, can result in greater relationships and legitimacy (Díez-Martín, Prado-Roman, & Blanco-González, 2013), and thus sustainability. Thus we can safely conclude that positive social value creation have a positive impact on social enterprise sustainability.

2.5. Mediating role of social value creation

Mediating role of social value creation can be elucidated in the light of knowledge-based and stakeholder views. Social knowledge on its own might not directly ensure sustainability (Källström & Ljung, 2005), but rather if there is the ability to turn knowledge into useful social results in the organization.

Social knowledge is used in social enterprises to know the need of communities (Eversole, Barraket, & Luke, 2014), recognize opportunities for the community to be intervened (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011) and create innovative remedies (Westley, 2013). These activities result in social value co-creation, and this in turn, influences stakeholder support, legitimacy, and organizational sustainability. So, social value creation acts as a tool by which social knowledge brings social outcomes.

Previous studies on social entrepreneurship focus on the need for all types of resources to be mobilized and used effectively to effect social change (like see: Desa, 2012; Perrini & Vurro, 2006; Li & Bosma, 2025 etc). Therefore, knowledge regarding social

value creation is expected to provide a mediating influence between social knowledge and sustainability of social enterprises.

2.6. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

It could be inferred from the literature that social knowledge serves as a strategic organizational resource and it helps the social enterprise to produce social value (Diochon & Anderson, 2009; Husted, Allen & Kock, 2015; Jae-Eun, 2025; Moizer & Tracey, 2010). Social value generation, in turn, builds relationships (Husted, Allen, & Kock, 2015), credibility (Becker, Waldner, Nitsch, & Trautwein, 2023), and funding with stakeholders (Agrawal, Kaushik, & Rahman, 2015), resulting in increased sustainability (Gray, 2006; Li et al., 2022; Lashitew et al., 2022). Diagrammatically, it is shown in figure 1.

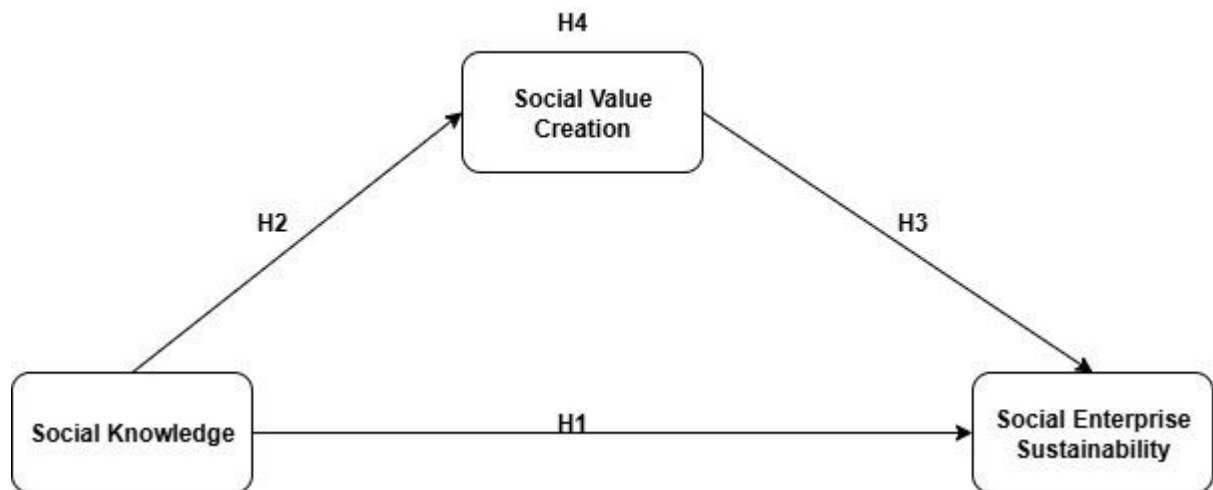


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Thus the following hypotheses are put forward:

H1: Social knowledge have a positively relationship with social enterprise sustainability.

H2: There is a positive relationship between social knowledge and social value creation.

H3: Entrepreneurs who create social value contribute positively to the sustainability of their social enterprise.

H4: There exists a relationship between social value creation and the relationship between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability mediated by social value creation.

3. Research Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature, the basic philosophy that underlie the research of this study is positivism. Data was gathered from social entrepreneurs and social enterprise's management from KPK and Islamabad, Pakistan. According to data available on internet, total population of current study was 4133. Based on Cochran (1977) formula used for determining the sample size. The required size of the sample was determined as 352 respondents (at 95 confidence level). For the present study survey technique was used to collect the data. The structural scales were modified and adapted from previous studies when data was collected.

Questionnaire was designed based on the study of White (1994) for the measurement of social knowledge. It was a six item, five point Likert scale. There were six questions adapted from the research done by Khan et al., (2021) were asked to measure the social value creation. Social enterprise sustainability questions were adapted from Javed, Yasir, and Majid (2019) who used aggregate construct that. Everyone was asked to indicate their answer on a spectrum from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). To determine content validity of the scale, opinions of some experts were obtained prior to the data collection.

This study questionnaire is adapted from previously validated questionnaires which are discussed earlier. However, as the target population in the present study was different from previous studies, it was essential to evaluate the appropriateness of the instrument in the present study. Hence a pilot study was carried out with 20 social entrepreneurs. This pilot test helped to assess the validity of the questionnaire and gave acceptable results. It was also used to gain advantages on the line sequence and final word adjusting to upgrade lucidity and understand ability. Cronbach's alpha statistics were examined for each measurement scale to assess the internal consistency of these scales. Malhotra and Birks (2007) noted that a good exploratory research is when the results of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70. At the end, the collected data was analyzed with SPSS version 26.0 and it showed that all the constructs obtained at least the recommended internal consistency threshold. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the variables of the study are as shown in the following table 1:

Table 1, Measurement of Reliability and validity

	Factor loadings	Alphas	A.V.E	C.R			
Social knowledge							
Sk1	0.81						
Sk2	0.79						
Sk3	0.84	0.801	0.657	0.919			
Sk4	0.77						
Sk5	0.86						
Sk6	0.79						
Social value creation							
SV1	0.79						
Sv2	0.77						
Sv3	0.87	0.824	0.652	0.917			
Sv4	0.91						
Sv5	0.76						
Sv6	0.73						
Social enterprise sustainability							
SES1	0.81						
SES2	0.79	0.806	0.674	0.964			
SES3	0.79						

SES4	0.73
SES 5	0.89
SES6	0.91
SES 7	0.93
SES8	0.87
SES9	0.77
SES10	0.79
SES11	0.81
SES12	0.76
SES13	0.80

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts and questions were separated with proper headings and instructions to make it understandable to the respondents and avoid fatigue. The first part emphasized social knowledge, the second part included items on social value creation and the third part measured sustainability of social enterprises.

In addition, Fornell and Larcker (1981) method was applied to assess the discriminant validity. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct was compared to the respective shared variance between constructs. Results supported the inter-construct discriminant validity since the AVE of all constructs were greater than the shared variance. Factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha (α) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to check the convergent validity. All factor loadings were above the accepted value of 0.40 as recommended by Hair et al. (2013) as seen in Table 1. Moreover, all the values of CR and Cronbach's alpha for the items were > 0.70 , and the values of AVE for the items were > 0.50 , which is the minimum value provided by Hair et al. (2014). Satisfactory evidence of convergent validity was found. Face validity, on the other hand, was achieved with expert judgments, which were the opinions of three professors who had rich experiences in the field of research.

Table 2, *Summary of model fit indexes*

Model	χ^2	Df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	SRMR
Three Factor Model	128	102	0.03	0.97	0.95	0.04

RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; For all χ^2 , $p < 0.01$

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to test the suitable fit of the proposed measurement model. Several goodness of fit indices were used to gauge model fit, which are chi-square statistic (χ^2), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

A non-significant chi-square value (with a p value > 0.05) reflects an acceptable fit of a model as a whole (Barrett, 2007). RMSEA provides an index of the difference

between the obtained and implied covariance matrices while taking complexity of the model into account. Values below 0.06 are said to be indicative of a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and those up to 0.07 are still good (Steiger, 2007). The CFI compares the fit of the proposed model with a model which assumes that all variables are unrelated to each other, known as the null model, which shows the magnitude of how well the proposed model fits. In the same way, the GFI evaluates not only whether variance on each observed variable is accounted for by the moments in the model but also the role played by moments involving observed variables in accounting for the covariance among them. A general guideline for GFI values for good model fit is 0.90 or above.

In the current study three models were compared to the proposed three-factor model (M3) for choosing the best fit representation of data from the three models-M1, M2 and M3. Results showed a better fit for the three-factor model with the following values: $\chi^2 = 135$, $df = 565$, $CFI = 0.98$, $SRMR = 0.05$, and a RMSEA of 0.04. All of the values are within the recommend values and it is concluded that the proposed three factor model fits the observed values very well.

4. Analysis and results

Using Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation analysis approach, the mediation analysis was conducted. Simple and multiple regression techniques were used to analyses the four necessary conditions of the Baron and Kenny framework, using the results of the mediation tests, shown in Tables 3 and 4. Before undertaking the analysis, all the requirements for testing mediation were met.

Table 3 shows the results of this hypothesis test, which revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 7.34$, $p < 0.001$), thus accepting the hypothesis based on the available empirical evidence. This is also true for the second condition, as reflected in Table 2, social value creation is found to be significantly and positively affected by social knowledge ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 9.51$, $p < 0.001$), resulting in accepting H2. Finally, the third criterion of Baron and Kenny mediation model is met, i.e. social value creation affects social enterprise sustainability significantly ($\beta = 0.29$, $t = 14.07$, $p < 0.001$) and so H3 is also accepted.

Table 3. Regression analysis

Independent factors	Social value creation					Social enterprise sustainability				
	R ²	S.E	β	t-value	Si g.	R ²	S.E	β	t-value	Si g.
Social Knowledge	0.2	0.0	0.3	9.51	**	0.1	0.0	0.3	7.34	**
Social Value Creation (Mediator)	--	--	--	--	--	0.2	0.0	0.3	14.0	**
	--	--	--	--	--	9	27	8	7	*

Note: *** = sig<0.001

Multiple regression was used to investigate Baron and Kenny's (1986) fourth condition of mediation. A variety of regression models have been developed to perform this task. In model-A, social knowledge was directly related to social enterprise sustainability ($\beta = 0.17$, $SE = 0.049$).

Model-B added the mediating variable to test whether it played a role in the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. When the social value creation is added to the model to explain the relationship between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability, the direct path of social knowledge to social enterprise sustainability is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.15$, $SE = 0.049$), but the path between social value creation and social enterprise sustainability remains statistically significant ($\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.041$). These results indicate that from the perspective of these two variables (social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability) social value creation is a full mediator. Thus, it is found that H4 of the study is accepted.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis

Independent Variable	Model-A		Model-B	
	β	SE	β	SE
Social knowledge	0.17**	(0.049)	0.15	(0.049)
Mediating variables				
Social value creation			0.33**	(0.041)

Note: SNSs A= SNSs Addiction

Baron and Kenny (1986) method only can determine whether mediation exists or not, but cannot test the extent or strength of mediation effect. Thus, for the evaluation of the strength of mediation, normal theory approach was utilized and the corresponding results are given in the Table 5.

Table 5. Total, direct, and indirect effect

Mediation model	Total_effect			Indirect_effect (Normal-test- approach)			Indirect_effect		
	B	T	P	B	t	p	B	Z	p
SK→SVC→SES	0.39	8.31	0.00	0.05	0.71	0.61	0.34	4.12	0.00

The effect of direct relationships of social knowledge on the social enterprise sustainability is findings show the results to be statistically insignificant ($B = 0.05$, $t = 0.71$). Accordingly, the normal theory test findings ($Z = 4.12$, $p < 0.001$) verify the significant mediation effect in the relationship between the variables of social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability through social value creation. The indirect effect was also computed by subtracting the direct effect from it ($B = 0.39 - 0.05 = 0.34$), providing additional evidence by virtue of which social value creation plays a mediating role. Based on this, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted.

5. Discussion

The main goal of this study was to explore the association between social knowledge and social enterprise sustainability as well as examine the mediating role of social value creation. The results give significant support to the conceptual framework presented and give valuable evidences about how social enterprises can sustain their long-term existence by utilizing the knowledge and create values.

From the results, it can be seen that social knowledge positively affects SES ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 7.34$, $p < 0.001$), which then supports the Hypothesis 1. The results indicate that social enterprises, which are effectively able to acquire, share and use knowledge from various actors occurring at the level of stakeholders, communities, partners and networks, are stronger in being able to deliver sustainable solutions and results. Social knowledge can help businesses recognize developing social needs, better-informed decision-making, enhance innovation potential and build relationships with stakeholders. This is in line with Knowledge-Based View (KBV) which says knowledge is a strategic asset in the organization that leads to sustainable competitive advantage in the long run and long term performance. The results also mirror the previous research which have made focus on the importance of knowledge resources to the adaptability, effectiveness and sustainability of organizations (like see: Juusola et al., 2026; Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2019; Rani et al., 2026).

The study also finds that social knowledge has a positive and significant impact on SVC ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 9.51$, $p < 0.001$), thus, supporting Hypothesis 2. This finding underscores the significance of knowledge as a basis for creating positive social change. Social enterprises which involve stakeholders in solving social problems depend on information, experiences and insight gained from the interactions with the other stakeholders as heavily as on the social problems themselves. It was concluded that a greater amount of social knowledge will help an organization understand community needs and mobilize innovative efforts that will produce social benefits. The discovery is consistent with the literature like Campos-Climent, and Sanchis-Palacio, (2017), Chua, (2002), and Huang and Liu (2019) on social entrepreneurship, which highlights the importance of knowledge learning and actor-manipulation for social innovation and value creation.

Further, the findings show that SVC has a positive impact on the sustainability of the social enterprise which help the Hypothesis 3 is validated ($\beta = 0.29$, $t = 14.07$, $p < 0.001$). This has confirmed that social value creation plays a focal role in the ingredients of long term social enterprise success. Reliably producing positive social consequences can help social enterprise win the trust and legitimacy of stakeholders and gain community support and resources. These benefits are also enormous for the improvement of enterprise sustainability, both from a financial, social, and stakeholder standpoint. This aligns with the Stakeholder Theory which argues that businesses which can meet the expectation of their stakeholders, build better relationships and succeed in the long-term. Similar results are also reported by Grieco, Michelini, and Iasevoli (2015), Kassim and Habib (2020), and Li at al., (2022).

Most importantly, the study revealed the significant mediator role that social value creation played in the relationship between social knowledge and sustainability of social enterprise which supports the Hypothesis 4. This result indicates that the effects

of social knowledge on sustainability are not just a straight path but via the organization's knowledge to social value. That is to say, social enterprises use social knowledge to help them understand social issues; generate novel solutions and implement positive social change which in turn help to support the ongoing sustainability of the enterprise. This mediation process can help to understand better the ways and means through which knowledge resources create sustainable benefits in social enterprises.

On the bases of above discussion, we can conclude that the mediation result is significant for the social entrepreneurship literature as it posits value creation in a social context to be an important explanatory mechanism between the knowledge resources and sustainability results. Prior research has studied knowledge and social value impacts separately, the current research shows the interaction and effects between constructs on sustainability in the organization. Increased value is created through effective knowledge resources, which was one of the knowledge-based view's conclusions and which is also being reinforced in this finding with regard to their transformation into the good of other people.

6. Contributions of the study

The study has important theoretical and practical contributions discussed as below:

6.1. Theoretical contributions

There are three contributions to the theory. *First*, it brings an empirical illustration of how the intangible (knowledge) contributes to sustainability via the tangible process (value creation) in the context of the KBV and RBV concepts for the social enterprise. *Second*, it connects the social entrepreneurship and stakeholder legitimacy theory; revealing legitimacy as an important path to sustainability through social value. *Third*, it offers empirical data from Pakistan; a place where the social enterprise landscape is nascent, and we know little about the hybrid form and its dynamics, and hence, promoting comparative understanding of hybrid constructions globally.

6.2. Practical implications

In terms of practitioners, these findings indicate that sustainability is not just about funding or cutting operational costs or expenses; it is about a continuous process where practitioners can translate social knowledge into tangible social value. Significant efforts must be made by managers/owners on mechanisms to learn about and better use knowledge, for example through establishing stakeholder engagement platforms, engaging beneficiaries in feedback loops or through community co-creation processes. Concurrently, they should construct robust impact measurement mechanisms that can measure social value, and so provide additional resource access and legitimacy. The results indicate that the capacity development programs should look beyond knowledge development and also include the competence in value delivery, where applicable, for policy-makers and support organizations.

7. Conclusion

The study can be concluded that the overall the findings proves that social knowledge is an important resource for the sustainability of social enterprises and that the impact of this is strongly mediated via social value creation. Operationally, social enterprises which actively seek to continuously learn and improve through acquiring, embedding

and using knowledge to create credible value for society are more likely to be long term in their sustainability. This reiterates the fact that, the strategic knowledge management and conscious value creation processes are as important as the success of hybrid organizations as any other factor.

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