

The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship Participation on Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Entrepreneurial Motivation among University Students: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review explores the impact of social business participation on university students' development in leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation. Drawing from 35 peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2024, the review critically examines how experiential engagement in social business initiatives cultivates essential competencies for socially responsible leadership and innovation. The analysis reveals that participation fosters transformative learning outcomes, including enhanced self-efficacy, ethical leadership, collaborative problem-solving, and opportunity recognition. Despite these positive effects, the review identifies significant gaps in the literature: a lack of longitudinal research, underrepresentation of diverse cultural and regional contexts, and limited integration of interdisciplinary frameworks. Adopting a systematic PRISMA-based methodology, the study ensures transparency in selection, inclusion, and thematic synthesis. Findings underscore the need for more nuanced, context-sensitive research and institutional strategies that embed social entrepreneurship within higher education curricula. This review contributes to advancing theory and practice at the intersection of social innovation and student development, offering implications for educators, policymakers, and university leadership globally.

Keywords: social business, university students, leadership skills, critical thinking, entrepreneurial motivation, student development

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social entrepreneurship and social business initiatives have gained prominence as transformative forces in higher education. These initiatives transcend conventional academic boundaries by engaging students in addressing multifaceted societal challenges such as poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability, and social inequality (Adro & Fernandes, 2022; Aljuhani, 2024). More than just vehicles for generating social impact, social business projects have become powerful pedagogical tools for developing key competencies critical to students' holistic growth namely leadership, communication, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation (Ambad, 2022; Bonfanti et al., 2024).

Universities are increasingly embedding social business models within their curricula to promote experiential learning, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world contexts (Baptiste et al., 2022; Huang & Do, 2021). This approach not only deepens students' understanding of pressing social issues but also fosters a strong sense of social responsibility, equipping them to become active, ethical leaders in their communities (Arroyave & Redondo Cano, 2021). In parallel, Cosa and Urban (2023) emphasize the importance of robust performance measurement systems to evaluate and enhance the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship efforts in academic environments.

Despite these advancements, a notable research gap persists concerning the specific developmental outcomes of student participation in social business programs. While participation is often linked to improved leadership and entrepreneurial competencies, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its influence on critical thinking and

entrepreneurial motivation, especially across diverse cultural and institutional contexts (Ambad, 2022; García et al., 2022). However, emerging studies suggest that engagement in social ventures enhances students' collaborative leadership and ethical decision-making, enabling them to navigate complex stakeholder relationships and social challenges with greater effectiveness (Badibanga & Ohlson, 2021; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022). Moreover, involvement in such initiatives is associated with the development of strong communication skills, vital for advocating social change and managing socially driven enterprises (Cardella et al., 2021; Roslan et al., 2022). Experiential engagement in social entrepreneurship further cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills by challenging them to assess societal needs, devise innovative solutions, and adapt within unpredictable, evolving contexts (Anh et al., 2022; Montes-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). These experiences are foundational for nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset capable of embracing complexity and ambiguity (Teasdale et al., 2023). Notably, such participation also boosts students' entrepreneurial motivation and confidence, empowering them to pursue ventures that balance social value creation with economic sustainability (Bonfanti et al., 2024; Talukder & Lakner, 2023).

Nonetheless, several challenges remain. There is a clear need for longitudinal research that explores the lasting impact of social business engagement on student competencies beyond their academic journey. Additionally, the role of cultural and institutional contexts in shaping these outcomes remains underexplored, limiting the broader applicability of current findings (Klarin & Suseno, 2023; Rukmana et al., 2023). In response to these gaps, this systematic literature review synthesizes recent empirical studies published between 2021 and 2024 to examine how participation in social business initiatives contributes to university students' development of leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation. By consolidating existing insights and identifying future research directions, this review aims to guide educators, policymakers, and academic institutions in designing more impactful, socially conscious learning environments.

Research Problem

Although social business initiatives are increasingly integrated into higher education as experiential learning platforms, existing research remains fragmented and lacks a cohesive framework to assess their impact on student competency development. Most studies rely on short-term, cross-sectional designs, limiting insights into the long-term sustainability of skills such as leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation. Additionally, current literature is predominantly Western-centric, with minimal exploration in diverse cultural contexts, undermining broader applicability. Institutional support mechanisms such as mentorship and curriculum integration are often acknowledged but insufficiently examined in terms of their effectiveness. Moreover, the interplay among key competencies remains underexplored. These gaps hinder the formulation of evidence-based educational strategies to effectively nurture socially responsible and entrepreneurial graduates.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this systematic literature review is to consolidate and critically evaluate recent empirical research on the impact of social business participation on university students. Specifically, this study aims to:

This systematic literature review aims to:

1. Evaluate the impact of social business participation on university students' leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation.
2. Identify research gaps related to long-term effects, cultural diversity, and institutional support.
3. Offer recommendations to enhance social entrepreneurship education in higher education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) as its primary research design to rigorously investigate the empirical relationship between university students' participation in social business initiatives and the development of key competencies, namely leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation. The SLR methodology was chosen due to its structured, transparent, and replicable approach to synthesizing existing research evidence. By employing this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current academic discourse while identifying gaps in knowledge and directions for future research. This design enhances the reliability of findings by minimizing selection bias and ensuring methodological consistency across sources.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar, chosen for its broad interdisciplinary coverage and comprehensive access to peer-reviewed academic publications across fields relevant to social entrepreneurship and higher education. A systematic keyword strategy was implemented, utilizing Boolean operators such as AND and OR to capture studies intersecting key themes of social business participation, student development, and educational outcomes. Search terms included, but were not limited to, combinations such as "social business participation" AND "university students," "social entrepreneurship education" AND "leadership skills," "critical thinking development" AND "student engagement," and "entrepreneurial motivation" AND "higher education." This approach ensured a targeted yet inclusive retrieval of pertinent literature for the review.

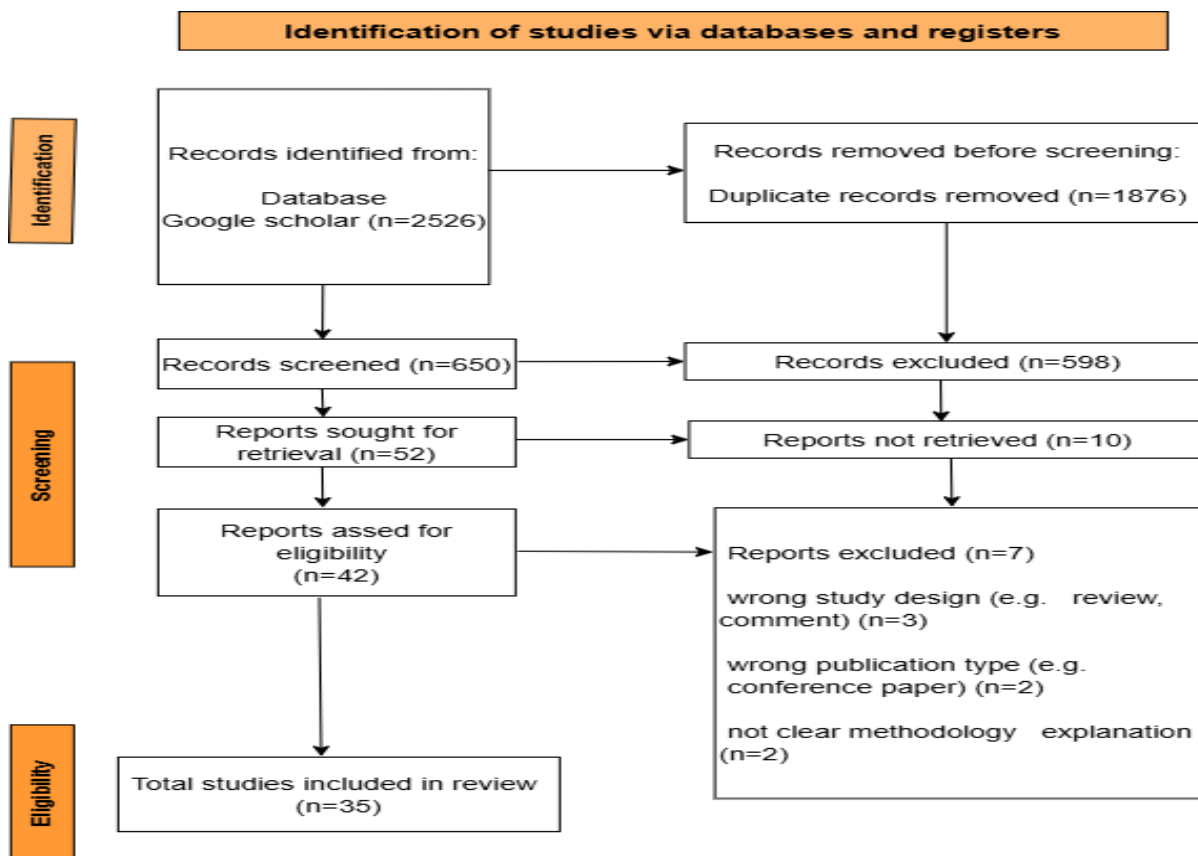


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart

The PRISMA flowchart illustrates that a total of 2,526 records were initially identified through Google Scholar. After removing 1,876 duplicate entries, 650 records remained for screening based on their titles and abstracts. Of these, 598 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria. The remaining 52 articles were retrieved for full-text review; however, 10 could not be accessed due to unavailability or access restrictions. Subsequently, 42 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. During this stage, 7 articles were excluded for the following reasons: incorrect study design (e.g., review or commentary articles; n = 3), inappropriate publication type (e.g.,

conference papers; $n = 2$), and lack of a clear methodology ($n = 2$). Ultimately, 35 studies met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final review.

Publication Sources

To ensure the academic rigor and credibility of the review, only studies published in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals were included. All selected articles were drawn from journals indexed in reputable academic databases and published by internationally recognized scholarly publishers. These include Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, Emerald Publishing, and MDPI. The inclusion of sources from these publishers ensures that the reviewed studies adhere to robust peer-review standards and maintain high methodological quality. Moreover, these publishers are well-established within the fields of education, business, and social sciences, thereby reinforcing the scholarly relevance, empirical validity, and disciplinary alignment of the final literature sample.

Publication Date Range

To ensure the review captures the most recent advancements and contemporary insights into social business education and student development, the literature search was limited to publications from January 2021 to April 2024. This specific timeframe reflects a period marked by intensified scholarly focus on social entrepreneurship within educational settings, coinciding with the increasing adoption of experiential and impact-driven learning models in higher education institutions. The distribution of the included studies by publication year is as follows: five studies were published in 2021, thirteen in 2022, eleven in 2023, and six in the first four months of 2024. This upward trend highlights a growing academic interest in assessing the educational outcomes associated with student participation in social business initiatives, particularly in response to global socio-economic transformations and the rising integration of sustainability and social innovation into university curricula.

Number of publications per year (2021-2024)

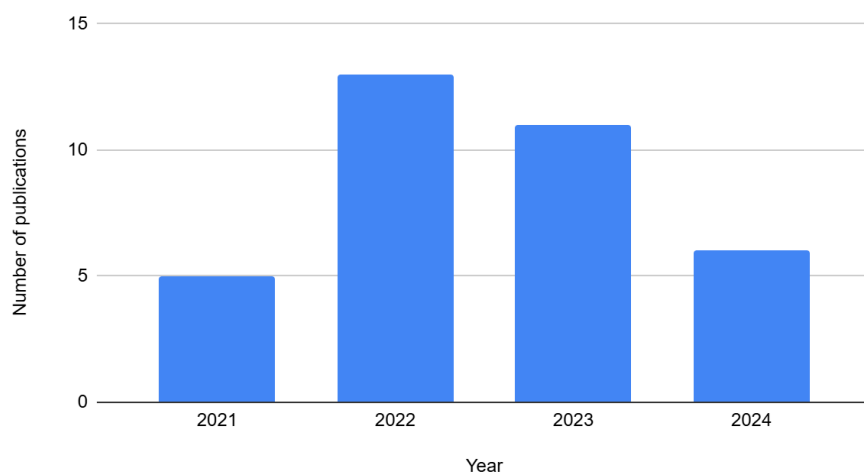


Figure 2. Number of articles by publication year

Thematic Synthesis Procedure

Following data extraction, a structured thematic synthesis procedure was employed to analyse and integrate findings across the 35 included studies. This process unfolded in three sequential stages, drawing on the framework proposed by Thomas and Harden (2008) for thematic synthesis in systematic reviews. In the first stage, open coding was applied to the results and discussion sections of each article. Meaningful units of text, such as descriptions of student outcomes, pedagogical mechanisms, and contextual moderators, were assigned initial descriptive codes. This process was conducted independently by two members of the research team to reduce interpretive bias, with a final inter-rater agreement of 84% achieved using Cohen's kappa before reconciliation.

In the second stage, descriptive codes were grouped into candidate themes through an iterative process of comparison, clustering, and refinement. Candidate themes were tested against the full dataset to ensure internal coherence and external differentiation. Themes were considered saturated when no new conceptual content emerged from additional studies. Three overarching themes were ultimately confirmed: (1) leadership development, (2) enhancement of critical thinking and problem-solving, and (3) entrepreneurial motivation and career aspirations. A fourth cross-cutting theme concerning institutional and contextual influences was retained as a moderating dimension given its relevance across all three primary outcomes.

In the third stage, divergent and contradictory findings were systematically documented and examined rather than dismissed. Where studies reported conflicting results—for instance, cases where social business participation did not improve entrepreneurial intention, or where critical thinking gains were context-dependent—these were treated as meaningful data points informing the identification of moderating factors such as institutional infrastructure, cultural context, and program design. These contradictions are reflected in the discussion of institutional and contextual influences in Section 4.5 and have directly informed the research gaps identified in Section 3.0. This transparent handling of divergent evidence strengthens the analytical rigour of the review and ensures that the thematic synthesis is both empirically grounded and theoretically generative.

Existing Studies and Research Gap

The growing integration of social business initiatives within higher education has attracted significant scholarly attention, emphasizing their potential to foster essential competencies such as leadership, critical thinking, communication, and entrepreneurial motivation among university students. This systematic literature review synthesized findings from 35 empirical studies published between 2021 and 2024, which collectively underscore the positive influence of social business participation on students' personal, academic, and professional development. Most studies consistently report that active engagement in social business projects cultivates collaborative leadership styles, enhances ethical decision-making, and improves practical communication skills vital attributes for managing social ventures and advocating sustainable change (Badibanga & Ohlson, 2021; Cardella et al., 2021; Roslan et al., 2022). Additionally, experiential learning in social entrepreneurship encourages the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as students tackle complex social challenges and devise innovative, impact-driven solutions (Anh et al., 2022; Montes-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). Participation also tends to strengthen students' entrepreneurial motivation and self-efficacy, often inspiring them to launch or support ventures that balance social goals with economic sustainability (Bonfanti et al., 2024; Talukder & Lakner, 2023).

Despite these encouraging findings, several notable research gaps persist, limiting the breadth and generalizability of current knowledge. First, there is a clear scarcity of longitudinal studies that examine the persistence of leadership capabilities, critical thinking skills, and entrepreneurial motivation beyond the university setting. Most existing research adopts cross-sectional or short-term designs, making it difficult to determine the long-term impact of social business engagement on students' career paths and civic behaviors post-graduation (Klarin & Suseno, 2023). Second, research remains largely concentrated in Western and developed country contexts, with limited empirical work examining how cultural, societal, and institutional factors shape student outcomes in more diverse or underrepresented regions. As such, the contextual applicability of existing findings is constrained, and there is a pressing need for culturally nuanced studies in emerging economies and Global South settings (Rukmana et al., 2023; Ambad, 2022).

Third, while some literature acknowledges the importance of institutional support mechanisms such as mentorship, resource availability, and curriculum integration empirical evidence on effective models and best practices for optimizing these supports is limited. The absence of comparative studies further hinders the ability to identify which institutional strategies most effectively enhance student learning in social business contexts (García et al., 2022). Finally, there is a lack of investigation into the interrelationship among key competencies developed through social business participation. Specifically, how leadership development may reinforce entrepreneurial motivation, or how critical thinking contributes to ethical decision-making within social ventures, is underexplored. This indicates the need for more integrated conceptual and analytical frameworks that capture the multidimensional nature of student transformation through social entrepreneurship. In summary, while current empirical evidence affirms the educational value of social business engagement, addressing these

gaps through longitudinal, culturally diverse, and institutionally grounded research is essential. Doing so will enable educators, program designers, and policymakers to develop more effective, inclusive, and impactful curricula that prepare students to become socially conscious, resilient leaders equipped to navigate complex global challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background of the Selected Articles

The final sample for this systematic review consisted of 35 peer-reviewed empirical studies published between 2021 and early 2024. These studies span diverse geographic regions and demonstrate the growing global interest in social business education. As illustrated in Figure 3 (Geographic Distribution of Reviewed Studies (2021–2024)), the majority of studies (55%) originated from North America and Europe, followed by 30% from Asia, and 15% from Latin America and Africa. While this indicates increasing international engagement with the topic, the distribution suggests a concentration of research in developed countries. This points to a significant opportunity for further exploration in underrepresented regions such as Africa and Latin America (Aljuhani, 2024; Vallaeys et al., 2022).

Geographic Distribution of Selected Studies

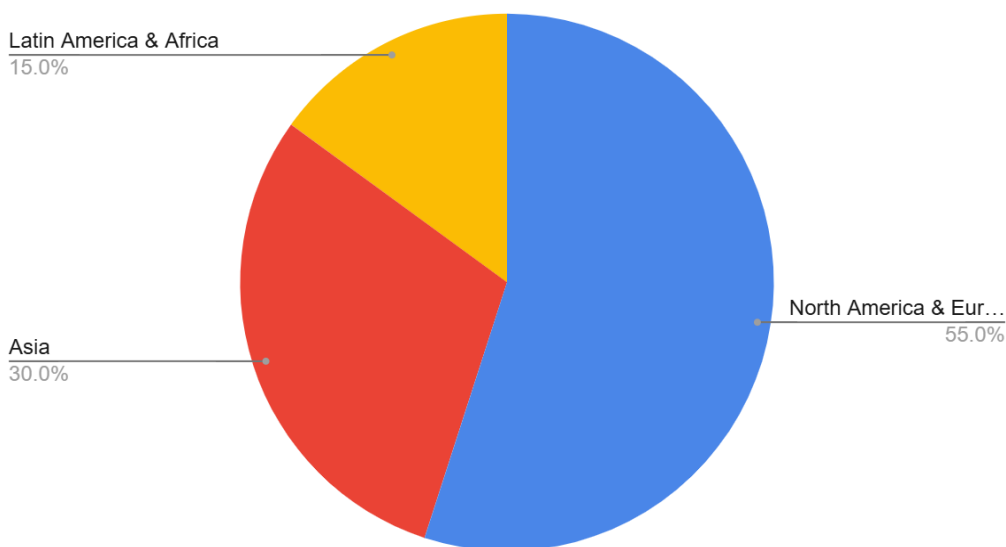


Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Reviewed Studies (2021–2024)

In terms of research methodology, the studies utilized a mix of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches. As shown in Figure 4 (Methodological Approaches Used in Reviewed Studies), quantitative methods dominated the literature, comprising 60% of the sample. These studies primarily relied on structured surveys using validated instruments to measure key constructs such as leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation (Ambad, 2022; Klarin & Suseno, 2023). Meanwhile, qualitative studies represented 30%, employing interviews, focus groups, and case studies to provide deeper insights into student experiences and institutional environments (Anh et al., 2022; Kozar, 2023). The remaining 10% of studies used mixed methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative data to enhance the validity and richness of findings (Roslan et al., 2022). The selected studies span various academic disciplines, including business and management, education, psychology, and social entrepreneurship, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of this research field. Most of the studies were conducted within university settings, often involving social entrepreneurship curricula, extracurricular projects, and university-based incubation programs. These contexts emphasize applied and experiential learning, which is central to the development of leadership and entrepreneurial capabilities (Cardella et al., 2021; Arroyave & Redondo Cano, 2021).

Methodology Approaches

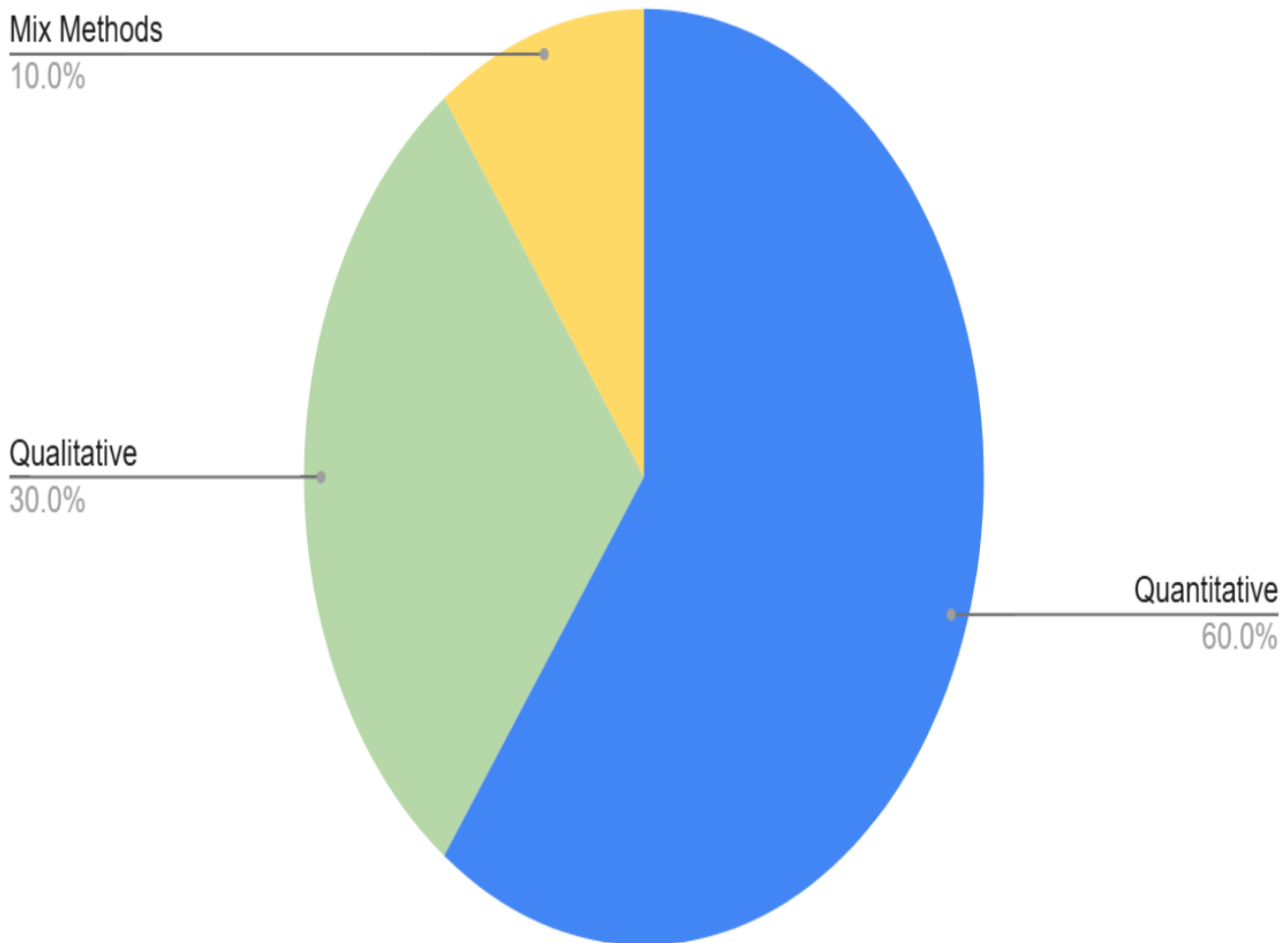


Figure 4. Methodological Approaches Used in Reviewed Studies

Impact on Leadership Development

Participation in social business initiatives meaningfully contributes to the development of leadership capabilities among university students. The reviewed studies support the idea that hands-on engagement fosters transformative learning and social consciousness (Meissner et al., 2024; Vallaeys et al., 2022). Arroyave and Redondo Cano (2021) illustrated how social entrepreneurship education instills ethical leadership grounded in social justice and inclusion. Their study revealed that students developed a deeper awareness of societal inequalities and were more inclined to lead with empathy and civic responsibility. These value-oriented leadership qualities are vital for fostering inclusive innovation and equity-driven problem-solving in social ventures. Cardella et al. (2021) highlighted the rise of distributed leadership models, where decision-making is shared and collective ownership is encouraged. This style is especially relevant in social business, where collaboration, trust, and co-creation are essential for navigating complex community-based projects. Distributed leadership empowers students to lead without positional authority, preparing them for flat organizational structures common in startups and NGOs.

Additionally, qualitative insights from Roslan et al. (2022) and Suriyankietkaew et al. (2022) emphasized that leadership development through social business is not confined to formal roles, it often emerges informally as students assume responsibility in dynamic, unpredictable scenarios. This informal leadership fosters self-efficacy, initiative-taking, and emotional resilience, particularly when addressing real-world challenges such as poverty or climate change. However, the impact of such engagement is moderated by institutional support

structures. Huang and Do (2021) stress the importance of embedding university social responsibility (USR) frameworks to amplify student outcomes. Baptiste et al. (2022) also highlight the role of mentorship and interdisciplinary collaboration in strengthening leadership growth. Despite promising findings, challenges remain in standardizing assessment and ensuring equitable access to leadership-building experiences, especially in under-resourced academic settings (Rukmana et al., 2023; Cosa & Urban, 2023).

Enhancement of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Engagement in social business initiatives challenges students to think critically and solve problems creatively. Social enterprises, by nature, operate in resource-constrained, uncertain environments where conventional business solutions often fall short. Thus, students must analyze root causes of societal issues, reframe problems, and develop innovative solutions. Adro and Fernandes (2022) observed that students involved in social entrepreneurship are pushed to question status quo assumptions and engage in "design thinking" approaches that emphasize empathy, ideation, prototyping, and iteration. This promotes deep cognitive flexibility, enabling students to view problems from multiple perspectives. Anh et al. (2022) highlighted the role of resource constraints in enhancing analytical thinking and resilience. When faced with limited financial or infrastructural resources, students develop adaptive strategies that are frugal, sustainable, and context-sensitive. This experience mirrors the operational reality of many social businesses, especially in emerging economies.

Roslan et al. (2022) demonstrated that experiential learning environments—such as student-led ventures, community immersion, and interdisciplinary collaboration—serve as real-world laboratories for problem-solving. These contexts allow students to apply theory in practice while navigating ambiguity, stakeholder tensions, and social complexities. As a result, students not only improve their cognitive reasoning skills but also learn to deal with uncertainty and risk—core attributes of entrepreneurial problem-solvers. These findings align with earlier reviews (Sottini et al., 2024; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022) that position social entrepreneurship as a pedagogical tool for cultivating critical thinking and innovation through community-centered learning.

Entrepreneurial Motivation and Career Aspirations

Social business involvement significantly shapes students' entrepreneurial motivation and career aspirations, particularly by aligning their personal values with broader social missions. Several studies noted that this values alignment plays a key role in fostering intrinsic motivation—a psychological drive that fuels long-term commitment to social innovation. Ambad (2022) reported that students who resonate with the mission of social enterprises demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial intentions. This is especially evident when students perceive their ventures as tools to meaningfully address community and environmental challenges. Aljuhani (2024) emphasized that immersion in social entrepreneurship ecosystems comprising mentorship, incubators, and exposure to role models boosts students' confidence and perceived feasibility of launching their own ventures. This hands-on exposure demystifies the entrepreneurial process and cultivates a proactive, "can-do" mindset.

Moreover, Klarin and Suseno (2023), and Montes-Martínez and Ramírez-Montoya (2022), found that students' entrepreneurial aspirations are not only driven by economic opportunity but by a deep desire to effect social change. Many students committed to developing business models that integrate profit with purpose, citing their participation in innovation-focused social business projects as a critical influence. Notably, some continued working on their ventures after graduation or joined social startups, suggesting that social business engagement not only influences short-term behavior but also shapes long-term career identity centered on sustainability and impact.

Institutional and Contextual Influences

While the positive effects of social business participation are widely reported, several institutional and contextual factors shape these outcomes. One of the most pressing research gaps is the absence of longitudinal studies that track the sustainability of student competencies beyond the academic environment. Most studies rely on short-term or cross-sectional designs, making it difficult to assess whether leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation persist post-graduation (Klarin & Suseno, 2023). Another concern lies in the lack of geographic and cultural diversity in existing research. A large proportion of studies are based in Western or

developed countries, limiting the applicability of findings to regions with different institutional infrastructures or socio-cultural norms. Scholars like Rukmana et al. (2023) and Aljuhani (2024) have called for more empirical work in the Global South to better understand how diverse contexts influence outcomes.

Institutional support mechanisms also play a pivotal role in maximizing student development. Baptiste et al. (2022) and Huang and Do (2021) underscore that mentorship programs, interdisciplinary course offerings, and project-based curricula are vital in nurturing competencies gained through social business. However, few comparative studies exist to determine which models are most effective across educational settings. Islam (2022) and Gupta et al. (2023) pointed to the underutilization of emerging tools like digital platforms, crowdfunding, and AI-driven learning to scale impact. Integrating such technologies into social business education could enhance engagement and learning personalization. Finally, Bhardwaj and Srivastava (2024) recommended incorporating dynamic capabilities such as agility, resilience, and innovation as core learning outcomes in entrepreneurship curricula. These competencies are increasingly critical for equipping students to lead and adapt in volatile global environments.

Integrative Conceptual Framework

Building upon the thematic synthesis presented in Sections 4.2 through 4.5, this section proposes an Integrative Competency Development Framework (ICDF) for social business education. This framework moves the review beyond consolidation toward theory-building by explicitly modelling the dynamic interrelationships among the three core student outcomes, which are leadership development, critical thinking enhancement, and entrepreneurial motivation, as mediated by experiential engagement in social business activities and moderated by institutional and contextual factors.

The ICDF posits that social business participation functions as a transformative pedagogical stimulus operating through three interrelated mechanisms. First, the real-world complexity and resource-constrained nature of social ventures activate deep cognitive processing, directly stimulating critical thinking and reflective judgment (Adro & Fernandes, 2022; Anh et al., 2022). Second, the collaborative and stakeholder-intensive character of social business creates conditions for distributed, values-driven leadership to emerge particularly as students navigate ethical dilemmas, assume shared responsibility, and advocate for social change (Arroyave & Redondo Cano, 2021; Cardella et al., 2021). Third, the mission-aligned nature of social enterprise fosters intrinsic entrepreneurial motivation by connecting students' personal values to tangible social impact, thereby reinforcing self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, and venture intention (Ambad, 2022; Aljuhani, 2024).

Critically, the ICDF proposes that these three outcomes do not develop in isolation, they are mutually reinforcing. Enhanced critical thinking supports more nuanced ethical leadership by enabling students to evaluate competing stakeholder interests more rigorously. Conversely, leadership experiences that expose students to organizational complexity deepen their analytical repertoire. Similarly, the development of entrepreneurial motivation reinforces leadership agency: students motivated by a social mission are more likely to take initiative, persist through setbacks, and motivate others, all hallmarks of effective leadership (Klarin & Suseno, 2023; Montes-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). The feedback loop between entrepreneurial motivation and critical thinking is also significant: students driven to create social impact are intrinsically motivated to engage in deeper problem analysis and to generate creative solutions.

The ICDF further specifies that these developmental pathways are moderated by institutional and contextual factors identified in Section 4.5. Specifically, the presence of structured mentorship, interdisciplinary curriculum integration, and access to resources amplifies all three outcome domains. Cultural and geographic contexts moderate the relative salience of different outcomes: for instance, collectivist contexts may prioritise collaborative leadership over individual entrepreneurial motivation. This moderating layer also explains the divergent findings documented across studies from different regions, providing a theoretical basis for the gaps identified in the Global South literature. Future research should empirically test the ICDF using longitudinal, multi-site designs across diverse cultural settings, ideally incorporating structural equation modelling to validate the proposed directional relationships among variables.

Table 1. Literature Review Matrix

Title of the paper	Journal	Authors	Year
1. Systematic review of social entrepreneurship in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Trends, challenges, and future directions.	International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies (IRJEMS)	Aljuhani, F.	2024
2. Dynamic capabilities of social enterprises: A qualitative meta-synthesis and future agenda	Journal of Social Entrepreneurship	Bhardwaj, R., & Srivastava, S.	2024
3. Convergences and divergences in sustainable entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship research: A systematic review and research agenda	Journal of Business Research	Bonfanti, A., De Crescenzo, V., Simeoni, F., & Adauì, C. R. L.	2024
4. Social entrepreneurship and social innovation: A bibliometric review and research agenda	European Management Journal	Sottini, A. C. M., Zupic, I., & Giudici, A.	2024
5. Exploring the role of narrative in social enterprise and social innovation	Social Enterprise Journal	Meissner, N., McNeill, J., & Allen, M.	2024
6. An integrated path framework of tourism and hospitality social entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Zhang, Y., Xu, H., & Yang, H.	2024
7. A systematic review of performance measurement systems and their relevance to social enterprises	Journal of Social Entrepreneurship	Cosa, M., & Urban, B.	2023
8. Sustainable entrepreneurship and legitimacy building in protected areas: Overcoming distinctive barriers through activism	Business Strategy and the Environment	Dawo, H. L. A., Long, T. B., & de Jong, G.	2023
9. Crowdfunding for social entrepreneurship: A systematic review of the literature	Journal of Social Entrepreneurship	Hussain, N., Di Pietro, F., & Rosati, P.	2023
10. Pathways to social value and social change: An integrative review of the social entrepreneurship literature	International Journal of Management Reviews	Hietschold, N., Voegtlin, C., Scherer, A. G., & Gehman, J.	2023
11. An integrative literature review of social entrepreneurship research: Mapping the literature and future research directions	Business & Society	Klarin, A., & Suseno, Y.	2023
12. Toward green social enterprises: Identifying key areas of greening and future research directions	Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization & Management	Kozar, Ł. J.	2023

13. Optimizing the role of business incubators in higher education: A review of supporting factors and barriers	West Science Business and Management	Rukmana, A. Y., Meltareza, R., Harto, B., Komalasari, O., & Harnani, N.	2023
14. Exploring the landscape of social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding: A bibliometric analysis	Sustainability	Talukder, S. C., & Lakner, Z.	2023
15. The (R)evolution of the social entrepreneurship concept: A critical historical review	Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly	Teasdale, S., Bellazzecca, E., de Bruin, A., & Roy, M. J.	2023
16. Social entrepreneurship and social innovation: Looking inside the box and moving out of it	Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research	Adro, F. D., & Fernandes, C.	2022
17. A systematic literature review on social entrepreneurial intention: Citation, thematic analyses and future research directions	Social Entrepreneurs: Mobilisers of Social Change	Ambad, S. N. A.	2022
18. Sustainable development of social entrepreneurship: Evidence from Vietnam	International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business	Anh, D. B. H., Duc, L. D. M., Yen, N. T. H., Hung, N. T., & Tien, N. H.	2022
19. A systematic review of university social responsibility in post-conflict societies: The case of the Great Lakes region of East Africa	Social Indicators Research	Baptiste, H. J., Cai, Y. G., Atiquil Islam, A. Y. M., & Wenceslas, N.	2022
20. A two-level, longitudinal investigation into the effects of employee social entrepreneurship orientation and top management team decisions on product innovation	Technological Forecasting & Social Change	Cheng, C. C. J., & Shiu, E. C.	2022
21. Theoretical review of entrepreneur and social entrepreneurship concepts	Journal of Administrative Science	García, M. D. M., Meneses, J. M. M., & Sandoval, K. V.	2022
22. Research on index construction of sustainable entrepreneurship and its impact on economic growth	Journal of Business Research	Gu, W., & Wang, J.	2022
23. Systematic mapping: Educational and social entrepreneurship innovations (2015–2020)	Education + Training	Montes-Martínez, R., & Ramírez-Montoya, M. S.	2022
24. Social entrepreneurship in higher education: Challenges and opportunities	Asia Pacific Journal of Education	Espinosa-Jaramillo, N. Roslan, M. H. H., Hamid, S., Ijab, M. T., Yusop, F. D., & Norman, A. A. T.	2022

25. Sustainable leadership practices and competencies of SMEs for sustainability and resilience: A community-based social enterprise study	Sustainability	Suriyankietkaew, S., Krittayaruangroj, K., & Iamsawan, N.	2022
26. State of the art of university social responsibility: A standardized model and compared self-diagnosis in Latin America	International Journal of Educational Management	Vallaes, F., Oliveira, M. L. S., Crissien, T., Solano, D., & Suarez, A.	2022
27. Student commitment to social responsibility: Systematic literature review, conceptual model, and instrument	Roderic	Arroyave, F., & Redondo Cano, A.	2021
28. Millennials' leadership skills for promoting flow and profit in a business simulation	Journal of Leadership Studies	Badibanga, A., & Ohlson, M.	2021
29. Social entrepreneurship research: Intellectual structures and future perspectives	Sustainability	Cardella, G. M., Hernández-Sánchez, B. R., Monteiro, A. A., & Sánchez-García, J. C.	2021
30. Social entrepreneurship and values work: The role of practices in shaping values and negotiating change	Journal of Business Venturing	Chatterjee, I., Cornelissen, J., & Wincent, J.	2021
31. Review of empirical research on university social responsibility	International Journal of Educational Management	Huang, Y. F., & Do, M. H.	2021
32. The contribution of manufacturing companies to the achievement of sustainable development goals: An empirical analysis of the operationalisation of sustainable business models	Business Strategy and the Environment	Bonfanti, A., Mion, G., Brunetti, F., & Vargas-Sánchez, A.	2023
33. The role of entrepreneurial skills as a vehicle for business growth: A study in Spanish start-ups	Management Decision	Botella-Carrubi, D., Ribeiro-Navarrete, S., Ulrich, K., & Blanco Gonzalez-Tejero, C.	2022
34. Social impact scaling strategies in social enterprises: A systematic review and research agenda	Australian Journal of Management	Islam, S. M.	2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reviewed literature, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of social business participation in higher education. Universities should embed social entrepreneurship into the curriculum through dedicated courses and project-based learning to promote experiential engagement with real-world challenges. Establishing structured mentorship systems involving faculty, alumni, and industry experts—alongside peer support networks—can provide continuous guidance and foster a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Access to financial resources, co-working spaces, and administrative support is also essential to empower students in transforming ideas into impactful ventures. Moreover, implementing robust impact assessment tools to evaluate both cognitive and affective outcomes can

guide continuous improvement. Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration across faculties can enrich students' problem-solving abilities, while advocating for institutional and national policy support ensures long-term scalability and alignment with broader sustainability goals. Collectively, these strategies offer a comprehensive pathway to strengthen student engagement, skill development, and the societal impact of social business initiatives within higher education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of leadership, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial motivation among university students through social business participation can be significantly strengthened by adopting strategic institutional measures. By embedding social entrepreneurship into academic curricula, providing structured mentorship, ensuring access to necessary resources, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, universities can create an enabling environment for experiential learning and innovation. Furthermore, the use of robust impact assessment tools and supportive policy frameworks is vital for ensuring continuous improvement and long-term sustainability of these initiatives. These integrated efforts not only enhance students' competencies but also prepare them to become ethical, socially responsible entrepreneurs equipped to address complex global challenges. To maximize the transformative potential of social business education, higher education institutions must prioritize inclusive, well-supported, and outcome-driven programs that align with broader sustainability and development goals.

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