

Community Disagreement and Social Enterprise Performance in Pakistan: An Exploratory Configurational Analysis

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Abstract: Pakistan-based social enterprises depend on communities for information, legitimacy, and implementation support, yet disagreement may either reveal useful feedback or create pressure. This study examines how community disagreement, community value-obligation, and community conflict pressure relate to social service expansion and commercial performance. Survey data from 400 chief executive officers and social entrepreneurs were analysed using confirmatory factor analysis, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), and complementary ordinary least squares regression. The fsQCA results were assessed across seven calibrations and alternative analytical thresholds. No condition was necessary for either outcome. High disagreement combined with high conflict pressure appeared as a post hoc, calibration-sensitive pathway to social service expansion. Disagreement alone was the most recurrent condition associated with commercial performance and was positively associated with both outcomes in the regression models. Community disagreement should be treated as stakeholder evidence rather than automatically suppressed or obeyed. Its implications vary across social and commercial outcomes, supporting separate performance monitoring and a structured response process for Pakistani social enterprises and support agencies.

Key Words: Pakistan, Social Enterprise, Community Disagreement, Stakeholder Voice, Community Pressure, Social Service Expansion, Commercial Performance, fsQCA

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Introduction

Pakistan's social enterprises have developed in response to unmet social needs and gaps between public provision and services that vulnerable communities can afford. They operate through diverse organisational forms, including companies, not-for-profit companies, non-governmental organisations and civil-society organisations, because social enterprise remains primarily an activity-based category rather than a distinct legal form. Policy and ecosystem reports describe a sector that is entrepreneurial but institutionally fragmented, with continuing needs for recognition, finance, managerial capacity and evidence (Ahmed et al., 2020; Ali & Darko, 2015; SDPI & British Council, 2016). Peer-reviewed Pakistan research separately identifies institutional uncertainty, contextual constraints and stakeholder collaboration as important features of the sector (Qamar et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2024; Yunis et al., 2020). In this setting, community relationships are not peripheral to organisational strategy. They provide access to beneficiaries, local knowledge, implementation cooperation and the legitimacy needed to deliver a social purpose (Raghubanshi et al., 2021; Spanuth & Urbano, 2024).

These relationships, however, do not guarantee agreement. Communities may challenge beneficiary selection, programme priorities, the location or scale of services, the conduct of organisational representatives, or the balance between social purpose and income generation. For managers, the practical problem is difficult: ignoring disagreement can weaken trust and participation, while responding to every demand can exhaust scarce resources, privilege the most vocal actors and pull the organisation away from

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its mission. Community disagreement is therefore a governance issue rather than merely a communication problem.

Community disagreement can be interpreted as resistance, poor alignment or declining legitimacy. It may also expose programme shortcomings, unmet needs or differences between managerial assumptions and community experience. Its performance implications may therefore depend on the relational conditions surrounding it. This study distinguishes community value-obligation—the value received from a community and the felt obligation to respond—from community conflict pressure, which captures argument and anticipated consequences when views diverge. A social enterprise may recognise disagreement without facing serious pressure, or feel obligated to a community without confronting open conflict. Earlier work identifies compliance pressure as a distinct challenge for social entrepreneurs when stakeholder demands and anticipated consequences make noncompliance difficult (Liaqat, 2024).

Research has explained how social enterprises manage hybrid goals, mission drift and accountability to multiple stakeholders (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Doherty et al., 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014). Pakistan-focused peer-reviewed studies have examined institutional challenges, contextual constraints and stakeholder collaboration, but have offered less organisation-level evidence on how managers interpret disagreement with target communities (Qamar et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2024; Yunis et al., 2020). Policy reports have meanwhile centred on finance, regulation, incubation and scale (Ahmed et al., 2020; Ali & Darko, 2015; SDPI & British Council, 2016). Those priorities are important, yet the capacity to receive, diagnose and act on stakeholder voice is also necessary for socially legitimate growth.

A configurational approach is appropriate because the relevance of disagreement may change in the presence of obligation or pressure. Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) examines combinations of conditions, allows more than one pathway to an outcome and does not assume that the explanation of high performance is the inverse of low performance (Ragin, 2008; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). The method is used here as an exploratory tool. The stability of observed pathways is assessed across alternative calibration and truth-table decisions, and complementary regressions show whether the conditions also have average net associations with performance.

The empirical analysis draws on 400 Pakistan-based chief executive officers and social entrepreneurs. Social service expansion and commercial performance are analysed separately because an organisational response that broadens mission delivery may not produce immediate commercial gains, while commercially useful feedback may not expand social provision. The results identify community disagreement as the most consistently relevant condition. High disagreement combined with high conflict pressure emerges as a post hoc candidate pathway to social service expansion under certain analytical specifications, whereas disagreement alone is more prevalent for commercial performance. Neither result is sufficiently stable to be treated as a universal recipe.

The paper makes four contributions. First, it provides Pakistan-specific organisation-level evidence on a neglected managerial problem: how social enterprises interpret disagreement with the communities on which they depend. Second, it distinguishes disagreement from the value-obligation and pressure surrounding it. Third, it compares social and commercial performance rather than combining them into one broad outcome. Fourth, it converts the empirical findings into a practical response framework and a policy agenda for incubators, funders, support organisations and public agencies. The theoretical framework develops an exploratory account of average associations, contingent relevance, outcome specificity and causal asymmetry through three research questions. The Discussion subsequently develops emergent propositions for future testing. The central claim remains deliberately bounded: community disagreement may be informative or constraining, and its organisational significance depends on the outcome considered and the relational context in which it occurs.

Literature Review and Research Framework

Social Enterprise and Community Governance in Pakistan

The social enterprise ecosystem in Pakistan blends market-based approaches with social and environmental goals through a variety of organisational structures. Policy and ecosystem reports identify substantial overlap among social enterprises, NGOs, nonprofits, mission-oriented companies, and service



organisations (Ali & Darko, 2015; SDPI & British Council, 2016), while peer-reviewed research describes weak institutional support and uneven ecosystem development as ongoing constraints (Qamar et al., 2020). The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan provides avenues for corporate and non-profit organisations, including those under section 42, but these regulations do not automatically confer a separate social enterprise status (SECP, 2026). An activity-based definition is therefore more suitable for research on organisations that pursue explicit social objectives while seeking financial sustainability (Austin et al., 2006).

Diversity in the industry enhances the importance of community legitimacy. There are many organisations that operate in environments where beneficiaries lack market choices, and service delivery depends on cooperation with local leaders, families and other community networks. The community can identify the problem, ensure access and assess whether intervention is needed. Evidence from India indicates that community-level alliances and mutually acceptable relationships with local leaders can be central to gaining access and implementing inclusive initiatives (Raghubanshi et al., 2021; Spanuth & Urbano, 2024). Beneficiary-centred research further cautions that social value should be assessed from the perspective of those served rather than inferred solely from managerial accounts (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020). Community engagement thus needs to be judged not only by the level of consultation but also by whose voices are included and how objections are noted.

Policy studies on Pakistan emphasise the need for clearer recognition, stronger information, access to finance and better coordination (Ahmed et al., 2020; SDPI & British Council, 2016). Peer-reviewed Pakistan research separately underscores the importance of stakeholder collaboration among enterprises, support institutions and beneficiaries (Raza et al., 2024). Stakeholder-governance capacity belongs within the same agenda. Scaling without credible procedures for receiving and assessing community input can weaken legitimacy, whereas automatic compliance with external pressure can distort strategy and disadvantage less visible groups. Managing community disagreement is therefore relevant to both mission delivery and organisational sustainability.

Performance must also be recognised as multidimensional. Commercial performance supports organisational continuity, whereas social performance concerns mission fulfilment, coverage and service provision (Gulshan & Liaqat, 2023; Liaqat, 2023). Although these dimensions may complement one another over time, they can diverge in the short run (Agrawal & Sahasranamam, 2016; Luke, 2016; Luke et al., 2013; Nicholls, 2009). A credible community-governance process should therefore consider social and commercial consequences separately.

Community Disagreement and its Relational Conditions

Community disagreement refers to the perceived divergence between organisational views and the target community's opinions or objectives. This kind of divergence can lead to problems in areas where an organisation's success depends on the involvement, accessibility, or moral legitimacy of the participants. The divergence could even increase the complexity of decision-making due to the diversity of community expectations.

Disagreement may nevertheless represent voice rather than withdrawal. According to Hirschman (1970), the difference between 'voice' and 'exit' is that dissatisfied people may raise their voices because they remain invested in the relationship. In social enterprises, dissatisfaction among community members may indicate programme misalignment, unmet needs or unexpected effects. Beneficiary-centred research in a developing-country setting similarly shows that the meaning of social value can differ when it is examined from the perspective of vulnerable beneficiaries rather than defined only by organisational actors (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020).

Organisational learning theory suggests that discrepancies between expected results and experienced conditions can prompt reassessment of established processes (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Accountability can support such learning when feedback informs subsequent decisions, but it can become performative when organisations focus mainly on demonstrating compliance (Ebrahim, 2005; Lall, 2019). The usefulness of disagreement therefore depends on whether it is interpreted as evidence and incorporated into organisational judgement.



When community members remain engaged, disagreement may reveal information relevant to both service delivery and market-facing activity. The analysis therefore examines its average associations with both performance dimensions while leaving open whether the surrounding relational conditions alter those associations.

A second relational condition is community value-obligation, a compound appraisal comprising (a) the perception that the target community has provided valuable experience and (b) the perception that this contribution creates an obligation to respond. The concept is deliberately descriptive: it does not imply affective attachment or treat the two components as interchangeable manifestations of a single latent construct.

Receiving value may cause managers to see community issues as credible, while obligation may make them more morally and relationally relevant. This line of reasoning is consistent with downward accountability, in which beneficiaries can influence the prioritisation and definition of performance (Connolly & Kelly, 2011; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Sanzo-Pérez et al., 2022). However, obligation can also confine discretion when strong alliances press for actions that exceed organisational capacity or run contrary to the interests of less conspicuous beneficiaries. Hence, CVO is examined as a potentially enabling and constraining appraisal rather than assumed to be beneficial.

Because received value and felt obligation can encourage responsiveness while also constraining managerial discretion, their influence cannot be assumed to be uniformly positive. Their possible role is therefore examined alongside disagreement and conflict pressure.

The third condition, community conflict pressure, captures active argument and the anticipated organisational consequences of maintaining a different view. It differs from disagreement itself: disagreement identifies divergence, whereas conflict pressure reflects the urgency and perceived cost attached to that divergence. Stakeholder salience increases when claims are regarded as urgent or consequential (Mitchell et al., 1997). In community-dependent Pakistani social enterprises, such pressure may make a contested issue difficult to defer.

Pressure is not intrinsically linked to learning. Organisational systems can make symbolic concessions, elevate coercion or increase service offerings mainly for conflict-avoidance purposes. Hybrid organisations face several, possibly conflicting, pressures, making defensive reactions rational (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013). A qualitative study of social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka similarly documents stakeholder pressures arising from differing expectations and objectives (Fernando et al., 2023). Conflict pressure is therefore treated as a contextual condition whose relationship with organisational performance requires empirical examination.

Conflict pressure may amplify the organisational salience of disagreement, especially when managers must decide whether to expand or relocate social services. The analysis examines this possibility without assuming that pressure necessarily produces learning or a beneficial response.

Configurational Reasoning and Research Questions

Configurational reasoning also requires attention to the outcome being explained. The study distinguishes social service expansion from commercial performance. Social service expansion concerns increased service provision and geographical reach, whereas commercial performance includes revenue generation, organisational activity and customer satisfaction. A community-responsive decision may strengthen mission delivery without producing immediate commercial gains, while commercially useful feedback may not expand social provision. Managers and funders therefore need to know whether community-related conditions coincide with one outcome, the other or both.

Configurational reasoning asks whether combinations of conditions are subsets of an outcome rather than estimating only average independent associations. The same condition may be part of one sufficient combination, absent from another or have no consistent role (Ragin, 2006; Furnari et al., 2021). It also recognises causal asymmetry: the conditions associated with high performance need not be the inverse of those associated with its absence.



The study is exploratory because the questionnaire items were originally developed for a broader doctoral model and no externally validated qualitative thresholds were available for set membership. The analysis therefore asks whether candidate patterns recur across reasonable analytical decisions rather than treating a single favourable solution as definitive. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions.

- RQ1.** Which combinations of community disagreement, community value-obligation and community conflict pressure are associated with high social service expansion and high commercial performance among Pakistani social enterprises?
- RQ2.** Do community relationship conditions operate differently across social service expansion and commercial performance?
- RQ3.** Are the configurations associated with outcome absence different from those associated with outcome presence?

Research Methodology

Research Design, Sample and Measures

The study used a cross-sectional survey conducted in Pakistan in 2019. The sampling frame was provided by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability, an umbrella network of more than 600 Pakistan-based development and social-purpose organisations. Purposive sampling was used because the original study required respondents who were responsible for strategic decisions and had knowledge of both social-purpose and resource-sustainability demands.

Eligibility was defined by organisational activity rather than legal form. Respondents were required to represent an organisation that addresses social needs while pursuing financial self-sufficiency or an income-generating activity. The survey instructions asked respondents to consider the operation of a social enterprise in the form of a company, NGO or civil-society organisation. Participation was restricted to chief executive officers and self-identified social entrepreneurs, and one response was obtained from each organisation.

Questionnaires were distributed to 630 organisations. A total of 417 were returned, yielding a response rate of 66.2%, and 403 were classified as usable. The archived dataset contains 400 complete cases used in the present analysis. The organisations reported between 11 and 30 permanent employees ($M=18.45$, $SD=4.67$). Verified sector, legal-form and geographic labels were not retained in the archived dataset and are therefore not inferred. Table 1 summarises the verified sample design and organisational characteristics.

Table 1

Verified Sample Design and Organisational Characteristics

Characteristic	Verified information
Sampling frame	TDEA network of more than 600 Pakistan-based development and social-purpose organisations
Eligibility criteria	Explicit social purpose plus financial self-sufficiency or income-generating activity
Respondents	Chief executive officers and self-identified social entrepreneurs
Unit of analysis	Organisation; one key informant per organisation
Questionnaires distributed	630
Questionnaires returned	417 (66.2%)
Usable questionnaires	403
Final complete sample	400 organisations
Permanent employees	$M=18.45$; $SD=4.67$; range=11–30
Data-collection period	2019

Note: The sample was defined by organisational activity and respondent responsibility, not by a single legal form. Sector, legal-form and regional categories could not be verified from the archived dataset and are not reported.



The predictor items were developed in the original doctoral study (Liaqat, 2020) through theoretical operationalisation of Festinger's (1957) arguments concerning disagreement, group value and social pressure. The instrument was pretested by 10 academic and nonprofit-sector reviewers, including 3 nonprofit chief executives, and the wording was revised to reduce technical language and ambiguity. A pilot survey produced 66 valid organisational responses. The performance items were developed in the original doctoral instrument with reference to the multidimensional nonprofit-performance approach used by Coombes et al. (2011); the exact wording is specific to this study and is not presented as a direct reproduction of the Coombes scale. All retained items used a seven-point extent scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (to a very great extent). Appendix A reproduces the exact English wording. The available records do not document a separate translation or back-translation procedure, nor does any such claim appear.

Community disagreement (CD) used SIO1 and SIO2 and captured disagreement or opinion misalignment with the target community. Community conflict pressure (CCP) used SIE1 and SIE2 to capture arguments and anticipated consequences when opinions differed. Social service expansion (SSE) used PSP1 and PSP3, referring to increased social-service provision and expansion to additional locations. Commercial performance (CP) used PCP1-PCP3, referring to revenue growth, organisational activity and customer satisfaction.

Community value-obligation (CVO) was calculated as the equal-weighted mean of SIA1 and SIA2. The two items are non-interchangeable components: one records valuable experience received from the community, while the other combines received help with an obligation to conform. Equal weighting preserved the original index construction and avoided unsupported differential weights. The items were not modelled as separate fsQCA conditions because each captures only part of the compound appraisal and a three-condition model remained interpretable. This choice is transparent but remains a measurement limitation.

Analytical Strategy

Confirmatory factor analysis assessed CD, CCP, SSE and CP as reflective constructs. CVO was excluded because it was treated as an observed index. Equal-loading constraints were imposed on the two-indicator factors for identification. Model fit was assessed using chi-square, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR; composite reliability and AVE assessed internal consistency and convergent validity, and HTMT assessed discriminant validity (Brown, 2015). Because three factors were represented by only two constrained indicators, the global fit indices were interpreted cautiously rather than as conclusive validation.

FsQCA was conducted in R 4.6.0 using the QCA package. The principal analysis examined the presence and absence of SSE and CP. A supplementary single-item analysis of beneficiary-reach growth is reported in Appendix B and is not part of the central model.

Calibration at the original scale values 2, 4 and 6 placed most cases above the crossover and provided little differentiation. Because external qualitative standards were unavailable, seven distribution-sensitive calibrations were used to examine dependence on set construction. Six direct calibrations applied the 5th-50th-95th, 10th-50th-90th and 20th-50th-80th percentiles, with the crossover positioned slightly below and slightly above tied medians. An empirical-rank calibration provided an additional specification. These calibrations are sensitivity devices, not claims that sample percentiles constitute universal set boundaries (Ragin, 2008; Cangialosi, 2023).

With three conditions, each truth table contained eight possible configurations. Frequency cut-offs of 5, 10 and 15 were combined with consistency cut-offs of .80, .85 and .90 and PRI cut-offs of .65, .70 and .75. The four main outcome states produced 756 specifications; the supplementary beneficiary analysis added 378, for 1,134 specifications in total. Necessity was assessed against a .90 consistency benchmark. Sufficiency was evaluated using consistency, PRI and raw coverage.

Pathway recurrence was calculated against all 189 planned specifications for each outcome, including runs that produced no minimised solution. This denominator avoids overstating stability by considering only solution-producing specifications. Sensitivity to calibration and truth-table decisions was treated as part of the substantive result (Nikou et al., 2024; Thiem et al., 2016). The analysis therefore identifies candidate patterns within this Pakistan sample rather than generalisable configurational laws.



Ordinary least-squares models were estimated as complementary net-effect analyses. CD, CVO and CCP were mean-centred before forming all two-way and three-way interaction terms. HC3 heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors were used (MacKinnon & White, 1985), and variance inflation factors were examined for multicollinearity. The models assess average associations and are not interpreted as statistical reproductions of set-theoretic sufficiency (Meuer & Rupietta, 2017).

Results

Measurement and Preliminary Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, correlations, and measurement assessment.

Panel A: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2a

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and measurement assessment

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. CD	5.26	1.20	–				
2. CVO	5.21	1.02	–.011	–			
3. CCP	5.28	1.05	.008	–.043	–		
4. SSE	5.37	1.22	.235***	–.027	.131**	–	
5. CP	4.72	1.40	.392***	.109*	.025	.132**	–

Panel B: Measurement-Model Assessment

Table 2b

Construct	Indicators	Loading(s)	Reliability/diagnostic	AVE	Treatment
CD	SIO1, SIO2	.739–.765	.723	.566	Reflective
CVO	SIA1, SIA2	–	r=.516; VIF=1.36	–	Equal-weighted observed index
CCP	SIE1, SIE2	.729–.762	.714	.556	Reflective
SSE	PSP1, PSP3	.751–.777	.737	.583	Reflective
CP	PCP1–PCP3	.745–.835	.838	.633	Reflective

Note: N=400. Pearson correlations are reported. CFA fit: chi-square(24)=13.17, $p=.963$, CFI=1.000, RMSEA=.000 and SRMR=.022. Maximum HTMT=.504. The global fit indices should be interpreted in light of the constrained two-indicator factors. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$.

Community disagreement was positively correlated with SSE ($r=.235$) and CP ($r=.392$). Correlations among the three community conditions were negligible. All reflective loadings exceeded .70, composite reliability ranged from .714 to .838 and AVE ranged from .556 to .633. The largest HTMT ratio was .504. These results support use of the measures in the exploratory analysis, while the restricted two-indicator structure and observed CVO index warrant caution. Table 3 reports the reference calibration anchors and membership diagnostics.

Table 3

Reference Calibration Anchors and Membership Diagnostics

Set	Full non-membership	Crossover	Full membership	Cases <.50	Cases >.50
CD	3.95	5.525	6.50	244	156
CVO	3.50	5.525	6.00	280	120
CCP	4.00	5.525	6.05	249	151
SSE	4.00	5.525	6.50	211	189
CP	2.33	5.017	6.00	205	195

Note: Q10_Plus_Q90 reference calibration. Complete calibration diagnostics and the full condition-by-negation necessity results for the reference specification appear in Appendix B.

Set membership changed when the crossover was moved around tied median values, confirming calibration sensitivity. Across the seven calibrations, no condition or its negation reached the .90 necessity



benchmark for SSE, CP or their absence. The highest observed consistency was .802 for CD in relation to CP. No necessary condition was identified.

Configurational and Regression Results

Table 4 summarises the principal configurational results across the sensitivity grid.

Table 4

Principal Configurational Results and Recurrence across the Sensitivity Grid

Outcome	Recipe	Consistency	PRI	Raw coverage	Complete-grid recurrence	Calibrations	Assessment
High SSE	CD*CCP	.765–.853	.610–.703	.427–.600	33/189 (17.5%)	5/7	Post hoc; calibration-sensitive
High CP	CD	.806	.712	.737	48/189 (25.4%)	6/7	Recurrent; threshold-sensitive
~SSE	–	–	–	–	0/189	0/7	No sufficient solution
~CP	~CD*~CVO	–	–	–	6/189 (3.2%)	1/7	Empirical-rank only

Note: For CD*CCP, consistency, PRI and coverage are ranges from direct sufficiency tests across seven calibrations. High-CP values are from the Q10_Plus_Q90 reference solution (n.cut=10, consistency=.85, PRI=.70). The symbol ~ denotes absence.

For SSE, CD*CCP appeared in 33 of 189 specifications and under five calibration schemes. Consistency ranged from .765 to .853 and coverage from .427 to .600. The recipe disappeared under the strictest consistency and PRI thresholds and under two calibrations. It is therefore a post hoc candidate pattern rather than a stable sufficient pathway.

For CP, CD was the most recurrent result, appearing in 48 of 189 specifications and under six calibrations. In the reference analysis, consistency was .806, PRI was .712 and coverage was .737. The solution weakened at the strictest cut-offs and was absent under empirical-rank calibration. No sufficient solution emerged for the absence of SSE, and the only low-CP recipe was confined to six empirical-rank specifications. The presence and absence results were not mirror images, but the evidence for asymmetry remains limited because the positive solutions themselves are sensitive.

In response to RQ1, the analysis identified no stable multi-condition recipe across the complete sensitivity grid. The most notable candidate was the post hoc CD*CCP combination for social service expansion, whereas community disagreement alone was the most recurrent commercial-performance result.

The outcome comparison provides a provisional response to RQ2: social service expansion was associated with a tentative conjunction, whereas commercial performance was most often associated with disagreement alone. Regarding RQ3, the absence results did not reproduce the inverse of the positive results. Both conclusions remain provisional because the positive solutions were themselves sensitive to calibration and threshold choices.

Frequency cut-offs had little influence because the relevant truth-table rows already contained at least 17 cases. Calibration, consistency and PRI decisions were more consequential. CD*CCP appeared in 17.5% of all social-service-expansion specifications and CD in 25.4% of all commercial-performance specifications; neither survived the strictest thresholds. The findings are therefore reported as exploratory patterns rather than robust configurational laws. Table 5 reports the complementary regression estimates.



Table 5*Ordinary Least-Squares Models with HC3 Standard Errors*

Predictor	SSE	CP
Constant	5.369*** (.059)	4.713*** (.065)
CD	.257*** (.053)	.495*** (.069)
CVO	-.019 (.056)	.164* (.072)
CCP	.129 (.067)	.049 (.076)
CD × CVO	-.031 (.055)	-.161* (.082)
CD × CCP	.054 (.057)	-.072 (.065)
CVO × CCP	.046 (.054)	-.080 (.088)
CD × CVO × CCP	.063 (.058)	-.011 (.089)
R ²	.083	.186
Adjusted R ²	.067	.172
Model F	5.08***	12.80***
N	400	400

Note: Unstandardised coefficients are reported with HC3 standard errors in parentheses. Predictors were mean-centred before forming interactions. Maximum VIF=1.23. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

CD was positively associated with SSE ($b = .257$, $p < .001$) and CP ($b = .495$, $p < .001$). CVO was positively associated with CP ($b = .164$, $p = .022$), while the CD × CVO interaction was negative ($b = -.161$, $p = .048$). No interaction predicted SSE, including CD × CCP. The regressions therefore reinforce the relevance of disagreement but do not confirm the post hoc set-theoretic conjunction identified in some SSE specifications.

Discussion

Interpretation of the Findings and Emergent Propositions

The results do not establish a general rule that disagreement improves performance. They identify community disagreement as the most persistent condition while showing that its role differs across outcomes. This distinction is important in Pakistan, where social enterprises often rely on communities for information, access and legitimacy but operate with limited resources and across heterogeneous organisational forms.

For social service expansion, high disagreement combined with high conflict pressure appeared as a candidate pathway under some calibrations and thresholds. One interpretation is that disagreement identifies a service problem while pressure makes inaction difficult. In a community-dependent setting, managers may expand or relocate services to maintain participation and legitimacy. The data do not measure learning, attention or decision processes, however. The same pattern could reflect short-term accommodation, elite pressure or defensive expansion. Its sensitivity and the non-significant CD × CCP regression interaction require it to remain an exploratory pattern requiring future testing.

For commercial performance, disagreement alone was the most recurrent set-theoretic result and the strongest average predictor. Community objections may expose dissatisfaction, unmet demand or weaknesses in an organisation's offering, which is consistent with research that treats beneficiary and community relationships as sources of legitimacy and problem-relevant information (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Spanuth & Urbano, 2024). Reverse ordering is also plausible: commercially active organisations may be more visible and therefore experience more disagreement. The cross-sectional design cannot distinguish these accounts.

The regression results also provide a limited interpretation of CVO. Its positive association with CP indicates that perceived value received from the community and a corresponding obligation were associated with stronger commercial performance when the other centred predictors were at their means. However, the negative CD × CVO interaction indicates that the positive association between disagreement and CP weakened as CVO increased. One possible interpretation is that strong felt obligation can narrow managerial discretion or encourage accommodation, reducing the extent to which disagreement is



processed as independent market-facing information. This interpretation remains tentative because CVO is an observed two-item index, one component is double-barrelled and no decision process was measured (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Sanzo-Pérez et al., 2022).

Taken together, the different patterns for SSE and CP reinforce a multidimensional view of social-enterprise performance. This separation is consistent with earlier research on Pakistan-based nonprofits that conceptualised social and financial performance as distinct organisational outcomes (Gulshan, 2020). Community-responsive action can expand mission delivery without improving commercial performance, while market-relevant feedback may strengthen revenue or customer outcomes without extending service coverage. Prior research on nonprofit performance in a turbulent setting likewise indicates that external relationships and knowledge translate into social and financial performance through context-dependent mechanisms rather than uniform effects (Gulshan & Liaqat, 2023). Pakistani managers, funders and support organisations should therefore avoid treating social and commercial performance as interchangeable.

This interpretation reframes community disagreement as contested feedback. Disagreement can threaten legitimacy but can also communicate information from stakeholders who remain engaged enough to exercise voice (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Hirschman, 1970; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020). The evidence supports neither a uniformly negative nor a uniformly positive interpretation.

The study also separates disagreement from the pressure attached to it. Conflict pressure concerns argument and anticipated consequences, not simply divergent opinions. The weak and unstable conjunction shows that theoretical plausibility does not establish configurational sufficiency. The exploratory findings nevertheless motivate three mechanism-oriented propositions for prospective testing.

Emergent Proposition 1: In community-dependent social enterprises, high community disagreement combined with high community conflict pressure may be associated with social service expansion when unresolved disagreement makes organisational inaction difficult.

Emergent Proposition 2: Community disagreement may have a more direct association with commercial performance than with social service expansion because it can reveal market-facing dissatisfaction and unmet demand.

Emergent Proposition 3: The performance implications of community disagreement depend on the outcome considered and should not be inferred from an aggregated measure of social-enterprise performance.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers four theoretical implications for research on social enterprise, stakeholder governance and configurational performance. First, it reframes community disagreement as contested stakeholder voice rather than treating it only as relational failure or declining legitimacy. Research on social-enterprise hybridity has mainly examined competing institutional logics, mission drift and accountability to funders, boards and other organisational stakeholders. The present findings extend this discussion to target communities by showing that disagreement may simultaneously threaten relational alignment and provide information about unmet needs, service deficiencies and market-facing dissatisfaction. The theoretical implication is not that disagreement is inherently beneficial, but that its meaning depends on how organisations interpret and process it.

Second, the study distinguishes community disagreement from the relational conditions surrounding it. Community disagreement captures divergence in views, community value-obligation captures perceived value received and felt responsibility to respond, and community conflict pressure captures urgency and anticipated consequences. These distinctions suggest that stakeholder influence should not be conceptualised as a single undifferentiated pressure construct. The results indicate that disagreement had the most consistent association with performance, whereas value-obligation played an ambiguous role and conflict pressure became relevant mainly in conjunction with disagreement. Theoretically, stakeholder influence may therefore operate through distinct informational, relational and pressure-based mechanisms.



Third, the findings reinforce an outcome-specific view of social-enterprise performance. Community disagreement was associated with both social service expansion and commercial performance, but the configurational patterns differed across the two outcomes. Disagreement appeared as a more independently relevant condition for commercial performance, whereas its association with social service expansion was more closely linked to accompanying conflict pressure. This indicates that theories of stakeholder responsiveness should specify the performance dimension being explained rather than assuming that social and commercial outcomes share the same antecedents.

Fourth, the sensitivity analysis contributes to configurational theorising by showing that theoretically plausible combinations are not necessarily stable sufficient pathways. The combination of disagreement and conflict pressure appeared under some calibrations and thresholds but disappeared under stricter analytical decisions. This finding cautions against interpreting a single fsQCA solution as a general causal recipe. Configurational explanations of social-enterprise performance should therefore incorporate calibration sensitivity, threshold dependence and outcome specificity into the theoretical interpretation of sufficient conditions.

The evidence for causal asymmetry remains limited. Although the configurations associated with outcome absence were not simple inverses of the positive patterns, the absence solutions were weak and unstable. Causal asymmetry should therefore be treated as a proposition requiring replication rather than as an established theoretical contribution of the present study.

Practical Implications for Pakistani Social Enterprises

The findings support a disciplined approach to community disagreement. Managers should neither suppress disagreement nor assume that the most forceful demand is the most legitimate. The practical task is to convert stakeholder voice into evidence while protecting mission coherence and scarce resources. Beneficiary-centred research supports checking whether organisational interpretations of social value reflect the experience of those served, including less visible groups (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Sanzo-Pérez et al., 2022).

Table 6 presents a four-stage response framework. The framework is not an empirically tested intervention; it translates the study's distinction among disagreement, value-obligation and conflict pressure into a usable management process.

Table 6

Community-disagreement Response Framework for Pakistani Social Enterprises

Stage	Managerial questions	Possible actions	Decision safeguard
1. Map the voice	Who is disagreeing? Which beneficiary groups are represented or absent?	Record the objection; map affected groups; seek views from less visible beneficiaries.	Do not treat one leader or vocal group as the whole community.
2. Diagnose the issue	Is the disagreement about need, access, quality, location, conduct or mission? What consequences are anticipated?	Separate disagreement from conflict pressure; verify evidence; identify the cost of action and non-action.	Distinguish credible service feedback from coercive or politically motivated pressure.
3. Select a proportionate response	Can the concern be addressed through explanation, redesign, negotiation, pilot testing or expansion?	Choose a response matched to evidence, mission and capacity; document reasons for accepting or declining the demand.	Responsiveness does not require compliance with every request.
4. Monitor dual outcomes	Did the response improve service provision, legitimacy, revenue, costs or organisational continuity?	Track social and commercial indicators separately; review unintended consequences and distributional effects.	Avoid declaring success from beneficiary numbers or revenue alone.

Source: Developed from the study findings and the distinction among community disagreement, community value-obligation and community conflict pressure.



The framework can be implemented through simple records rather than expensive systems. A community-disagreement log can document the issue, groups represented, evidence received, organisational response and subsequent social and commercial outcomes. Boards can review recurring disagreements and identify whether the organisation repeatedly responds to the same powerful actors while overlooking other beneficiaries. Small pilot changes can be used when the evidence is credible, but the cost of full expansion is uncertain.

Policy Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan-focused policy reports have emphasised recognition, finance, incubation, regulation and evidence-building (Ahmed et al., 2020; SDPI & British Council, 2016). Peer-reviewed Pakistan studies separately identify institutional support gaps and the importance of collaboration among social enterprises, support actors and beneficiaries (Qamar et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2024). The present study adds stakeholder-governance capacity to that agenda. Policies that help organisations start or scale should also help them determine whose voice influences expansion and whether community-responsive decisions strengthen social impact, commercial sustainability, or both.

First, incubators, universities, funders and support organisations could include community-feedback governance in training programmes. Modules should cover stakeholder mapping, grievance systems, conflict diagnosis, negotiation, representativeness and the separate assessment of social and commercial consequences. This would complement conventional training in business planning, finance and impact measurement.

Second, funders and provincial or federal development programmes could create small adaptation grants for beneficiary consultation, independent needs assessment and limited service-redesign pilots. Such grants would allow organisations to test a community-informed response before making costly or irreversible expansion decisions.

Third, grant, incubation and procurement evaluations could require balanced performance dashboards. Beneficiary reach, service expansion, service quality, revenue, costs and organisational continuity should be reported separately. A single growth indicator can obscure trade-offs and may encourage organisations to expand visible outputs without sufficient attention to sustainability or depth of impact.

Fourth, support programmes can set minimum expectations for community participation without requiring consensus. Organisations should be able to show how complaints are gathered, how representativeness is assessed and how responses are justified. Safeguards are necessary because informal social expectations and pressure from powerful actors may conflict with the interests of women and other less visible groups (Yunis et al., 2020).

Finally, agencies involved in enterprise support and regulation – including SMEDA, relevant planning and development bodies, provincial social-welfare institutions and SECP – could support a shared evidence base on social enterprises and their stakeholder-governance practices. Existing policy proposals have already called for clearer recognition and improved sector data (SDPI & British Council, 2016; Ahmed et al., 2020). Adding community-governance indicators would help distinguish organisations that merely claim social purpose from those that maintain credible processes for beneficiary voice and accountability.

Limitations and Future Research

The cross-sectional, single-informant design limits causal interpretation and is vulnerable to perceptual and common-source bias. Future studies should combine managerial reports with beneficiary data, objective indicators and longitudinal observation of how disagreement is processed.

The scale needs to be refined further. The community conditions have been reconstructed through measures created by the author himself and meant to be used as part of a larger doctoral theory. The CVO scale consists of two elements that are not interchangeable, one of which is double-barreled, and some reflective measures have only two indicators. Future studies need to develop a multi-item scale for each concept.



Distribution-sensitive calibration was used because fixed-scale anchors produced unbalanced membership, whereas sample percentiles do not constitute externally validated qualitative thresholds. The observed recipes are within-sample candidate patterns. Replication should use substantive anchors derived from sector standards, longitudinal benchmarks or independent expert assessment.

The activity-based eligibility criteria support a social-enterprise interpretation, but verified legal form, sector, income composition, province and beneficiary group were unavailable in the archived dataset. Future Pakistan studies should document these features and compare how disagreement operates across nonprofit, Section 42, company, and hybrid arrangements. The CD*CCP candidate pathway should be tested prospectively in an independent sample and through qualitative process research.

Conclusion

Community disagreement was the most persistent community condition across the analyses, but its relationship with performance differed between social service expansion and commercial performance. The combination of disagreement and conflict pressure emerged as a tentative pathway to service expansion under certain analytical decisions, whereas disagreement alone was more frequent for commercial performance. Neither result was stable enough to support universal sufficiency. For Pakistan, the practical contribution lies in treating community disagreement as evidence to be diagnosed rather than noise to be suppressed or a demand to be obeyed automatically. Social enterprises need processes that establish who is speaking, what the disagreement concerns, how much pressure accompanies it and whether the response improves social and commercial outcomes. Incubators, funders and public support bodies can strengthen the sector by making this stakeholder-governance capability part of training, financing and performance assessment.



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Appendix A: Retained Survey Items and Measurement Treatment

The wording below is reproduced from the archived English questionnaire. Grammatical irregularities are retained to avoid presenting edited wording as the administered instrument. Table 7 lists the retained items and their measurement treatment.

Table 7

Retained Survey Items and Measurement Treatment

Construct / item	Exact questionnaire wording	Original basis	Treatment
CD / SIO1	Disagreement with target community on some issue or some opinion	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Reflective indicator
CD / SIO2	That target community has a different opinion compared to your organization objectives	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Reflective indicator
CVO / SIA1	That target community has provided you a valuable experience	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Index component: received value
CVO / SIA2	That target community has help you accomplished much in life and you should conform to her	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Index component: value and conformity obligation
CCP / SIE1	That target community starts arguing if you have a different opinion and organizational approach towards problems	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Reflective indicator
CCP / SIE2	That your organization will face consequences if you have a different opinion to particular community	Author-developed from Festinger (1957)	Reflective indicator
SSE / PSP1	We have been providing more social services	Context-adapted; informed by Coombes et al. (2011)	Reflective indicator
SSE / PSP3	We have been expanding social service to different locations	Context-adapted; informed by Coombes et al. (2011)	Reflective indicator
CP / PCP1	We have been experiencing an increase in revenue	Context-adapted; informed by Coombes et al. (2011)	Reflective indicator
CP / PCP2	We have been engaging in more organizational activities	Context-adapted; informed by Coombes et al. (2011)	Reflective indicator
CP / PCP3	We have been achieving the customer satisfaction	Context-adapted; informed by Coombes et al. (2011)	Reflective indicator

Note: All items used a seven-point extent scale from 1=not at all to 7=to a very great extent. The performance-item wording is specific to the archived doctoral instrument and was not reproduced verbatim from Coombes et al. (2011). The original doctoral study specified the social-influence conditions as formative dimensions; the present exploratory article reassessed CD and CCP as narrow two-item reflective measures and treated CVO as an observed index.



Appendix B: Reference Necessity Analysis and Supplementary Beneficiary–Reach Results

Table 8 reports the complete necessity analysis for the reference calibration.

Table 8

Complete Necessity Analysis for the Reference Calibration

Outcome	Condition	Consistency	RoN	Coverage
SSE	CD	0.702	0.797	0.753
SSE	CVO	0.617	0.729	0.652
SSE	CCP	0.656	0.710	0.658
SSE	~CD	0.511	0.704	0.566
SSE	~CVO	0.583	0.757	0.658
SSE	~CCP	0.516	0.757	0.617
CP	CD	0.737	0.833	0.806
CP	CVO	0.638	0.750	0.687
CP	CCP	0.641	0.708	0.655
CP	~CD	0.493	0.699	0.556
CP	~CVO	0.553	0.745	0.634
CP	~CCP	0.544	0.779	0.662
~SSE	CD	0.530	0.648	0.474
~SSE	CVO	0.635	0.681	0.560
~SSE	CCP	0.616	0.633	0.515
~SSE	~CD	0.724	0.757	0.669
~SSE	~CVO	0.605	0.712	0.568
~SSE	~CCP	0.591	0.744	0.589
~CP	CD	0.509	0.636	0.445
~CP	CVO	0.602	0.661	0.518
~CP	CCP	0.654	0.643	0.534
~CP	~CD	0.778	0.777	0.703
~CP	~CVO	0.637	0.720	0.585
~CP	~CCP	0.578	0.732	0.563

Note: Q10_Plus_Q90 reference calibration. No condition or negation reaches the .90 consistency benchmark. RoN=relevance of necessity.

Supplementary Beneficiary–Reach Growth Analysis: Beneficiary reach was represented by PSP2 as a single observed outcome. No sufficient configuration was identified for high beneficiary–reach growth in any of the 189 planned specifications. The most recurrent recipe for its absence, ~CD*~CVO*~CCP, appeared in 63 specifications (33.3%) and under five calibrations, but the result was highly sensitive to the treatment of tied scores around the crossover. It was excluded from the main theoretical model.

