



## Traditional Sociological Myths and Social Exclusion: Examining the Moderating Role of Education, Media Exposure, and Social Awareness in Sindh

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### Abstract

This paper analyses the effect of the conventional sociological myths on social exclusion in Sindh, Pakistan and explores the moderating abilities of education, exposure to media and social consciousness. Based on a positivist philosophy and quantitative cross-sectional design, a survey was used to collect data on 193 respondents on the basis of a structured survey. The independent variables were measured using seven sociological myths, which were social hierarchy, gender role fixity, moral deviance, cultural incompatibility, economic dependency, social contagion, and religious/cultural justification, and social exclusion was the dependent variable. The analysis was performed with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS. Findings suggest that all the seven myths have a great impact on social exclusion, with social hierarchy and cultural incompatibility having the most significant impacts. The moderation analysis helps to understand that the influence of these myths is reduced by education, media exposure, and social awareness, and their protective effect is revealed. The research highlights the role of awareness, inclusive education and media interventions in the reduction of exclusion and the social equity in Sindh.

**Keywords:** Sociological Myths, Social Exclusion, Education, Media Exposure, Social Awareness, Sindh

### Introduction

Social exclusion has been among the most unending sociological issues across societies and influences inequalities in availability of social, economic, and political resources. Sociologists perceive that exclusion is not simply an aspect of economic deprivation, it is also a fruit of historically immersed beliefs and myths that justify discrimination against one or another group. These myths tend to create strict social orders that justify inequalities and enforce status quo in institutional and social settings. These myths are replicated in social contexts, cultural discourses, and religious explanations that entail the depiction of marginalized groups in most societies as the ones that are inferior and not socially compatible. This leads to a high level of institutionalization of social exclusion, which applies to educational, employment and civic participation. According to the scholars, in order to determine the processes that perpetuate the exclusion in modern societies, it is necessary to understand the sociological roots of these myths (Kozaric, 2024). Studies have also shown that segregation and exclusion have consistently been

rationalized by social constructed discourses that seem natural or normal in the mainstream, dominant discourses (Kantrowitz, 2023). In this regard, the existence of socio-hierarchical beliefs remains influential in the formation of inequality and exclusion tendencies in most societies (Rahu et al., 2025). Moreover, it has been identified that social exclusion is a multidimensional process, which goes beyond poverty, including social, cultural, and institutional marginalization (Aranguiz, 2022). Traditional sociological myths about caste, religion, ethnicity, and gender are very much implicated in the formulation of social exclusion in Pakistan. Old social inequalities that are imprinted in the caste system and ethnic identities remain a factor of privilege and marginalization, especially in areas like Sindh. Those hierarchies tend to create the idea of moral superiority of dominant groups of people and stigmatize marginalized communities. According to research, the caste-based moral discourses have historically affected the social relations and political discussions in Sindh, which solidifies the social stratification in society (Hussain, 2022). Analogously, minority groups in Pakistan often face systemic discrimination and social marginalization because of embedded societal ideologies associating the groups with being culturally or religiously different than the general societal population (Khokhar, 2024). Research also shows that socio-hierarchical forms still influence the relations between the classes and the social privilege within Pakistani society, and that the inequalities within the communities become even more punctuated (Rahu et al., 2025). These cultural and structural processes greatly restrict the inclusiveness of the marginalized groups in the political and economic arena (Gazdar and Mallah, 2024). Consequently, sociological myths of identity and hierarchy perpetuate the processes of exclusion in different areas of social life.

In addition to caste and religion, sociological myths can also influence gender and identity-based groups, such as transgender people and other underprivileged groups in South Asia. The groups are usually characterized by a lot of stigma, discrimination, and alienation because of how they are perceived by the society as being morally weak or socially deviant. Research indicating third-gender community proves that cultural stereotypes and misconceptions are some of the factors that make this group marginalized in both social institutions and social spheres (Al-Mamun et al., 2022). The experiences of Khwaja Sira communities in Pakistan show that the stigmatization and social myths can be so ingrained, that they make the exclusion of the population in the employment, education, and health care systems (Azhar et al., 2024). The same trends of marginalization are followed in most parts of the world, where social myths regarding sexuality and identity continue to discriminate against the minority in various cultural settings (Nelson, 2024). Besides, sociological studies emphasize that those myths are sometimes internalized by the very marginalized communities that further contribute to the cycles of exclusion and restrict social mobility opportunities (Gil-Benumeya, 2023). The above findings show that sociological myths are not abstract beliefs but are strong social forces that give lived experiences of exclusion. Although the sociological myths still prevail, education, media exposure, and social awareness are being increasingly viewed as a significant mode of challenging exclusionary belief. Education can enhance the level of critical thinking and make people challenge the conventional stories that support inequality. According to sociological studies, the social inequalities and structural barriers can be made aware of and shape attitudes toward marginalized groups and minimize the discriminatory perceptions (Lewis and Arday, 2023). On the same note, the media coverage can transform social discourses by capturing various voices and accentuating the voices of the oppressed. The digital media platforms are in many instances the places where the social myths are challenged and alternative inclusion narratives can be created in the modern societies. Moreover, the enhancement of social awareness about inequality and social justice has also been associated with a low level of tolerance toward discriminatory behavior in communities (Siddiqui et al., 2026). Social exclusion needs to be dealt with, however, not merely

through structural change, but also by transforming cultural discourses that perpetuate exclusionary ideologies. In this regard, investigations of the role of education, exposure to media and social awareness in moderating the role of traditional sociological myths becomes critical in understanding the paths on the way to a more inclusive society especially in areas like Sindh that past hierarchies still inform social relations.

### **Aim of the Study**

This paper will focus on analyzing how traditional sociological myths have played a role in social exclusion in Sindh, Pakistan. The research also seeks to examine the moderating effect of education, media exposure, and social awareness on the relationship between sociological myths and social exclusion, in a bid to establish the possible avenues of mitigating the exclusionary attitudes and enhancing social inclusion.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To explore how the traditional sociological myths have caused social exclusion in Sindh.
2. To examine how the myth of social hierarchy determines social exclusion.
3. To examine gender role fixity myths as a cause of social exclusion.
4. To investigate the role played by moral deviance myths in leading to social exclusion.
5. To determine the role that cultural incompatibility myths play in social exclusion.
6. To test the effect of myths of economic dependency on social exclusion.
7. To focus on understanding how religious or cultural justification myths become key in the process of constructing social exclusion.
8. The study will examine whether education will moderate the relationship between sociological myths and social exclusion.
9. To test the mediating effect of media exposure in the association between social myths of sociology and social exclusion.
10. To examine the moderating effect of social awareness in relation between the sociological myths and social exclusion.

### **Literature Review**

Social exclusion has been a common analysis topic in the literature in sociology where it has been studied as multidimensional process where individuals or groups are excluded systematically in social, economic and political life. According to scholars, structural inequalities are not the sole causes of exclusion but also the existence of culturally ingrained beliefs to justify unequal treatment. Studies reveal that ethnic isolation and suppression are frequently attacked with the assistance of narratives that are produced socially, according to which some groups are inherently inferior or incompatible with the mainstream society (Kantrowitz, 2023). In the same vein, research points to social exclusion as tending to take an institutional form, the cultural stereotyping of social groups, and social stigmatization which impairs access to resources and opportunities (Aranguiz, 2022). Evidence of empirical studies on the population of Muslims in Western countries produces evidence that perceptions that are based or shaped by prejudice and cultural myths are the major factors that lead to discrimination and marginalization (Kozaric, 2024). Moreover, sociological interpretations indicate these stories tend to be recreated through the daily life activities and hegemonic cultural things in enforcing structural inequalities in societies (Lewis and Arday, 2023). South Asian cultures especially in Pakistan often define social exclusion through hierarchy of the past concerning caste, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Research on the Pakistani society has shown that the socio-hierarchical structures still affect the access to education, employment, and political participation. A study that investigates the caste-based relationships in Sindh emphasizes the role of the privileged caste morality and identity

politics to strengthen the social stratification and marginalization of the lower caste populations (Hussain, 2022). Equally, minority groups like Christians and other religious groups tend to be discriminated against on the basis of the social entrenched beliefs that depict them as outsiders in the national social structure (Khokhar, 2024). There is also evidence of social exclusion within the context of gender and identity-related minorities in which stigma and cultural misperceptions are among key causes of marginalization (Al-Mamun et al., 2022). The experienced conditions of Khwaja Sira communities in Pakistan prove that the stigma and discrimination restrict the right to education, employment, and healthcare, which also contributes to social exclusion (Azhar et al., 2024). All these findings point to the fact that sociological myths that are entrenched in cultural narratives are still perpetuating exclusionary practices in society.

### **Hypotheses Development**

Conventional sociological myth usually creates strict social classes that justify oppression of the less represented. The social hierarchy myth states that some communities are known to be inherently superior to others and, as such, unequal treatment in social institutions have become normal. According to sociological studies of the Pakistani society, the access to opportunities and the ongoing social inequality still have hierarchical social structures based on caste and ethnicity (Hussain, 2022). These types of hierarchical attitudes cause systematic marginalization of the marginalized communities in terms of political, economic and social participation. The literature on social stratification also shows that hierarchical narratives can be used to legitimize the discriminatory practices and attitudes of people in societies (Rahu et al., 2025). Thus, the continuation of the hierarchical myths is bound to increase the level of social marginalization faced by the marginalized groups. The sociological myths based on gender are also of a vital role in the development of patterns of social exclusion. The gender role fixity myth presupposes that the male and female genders have to be bound by strict and pre-destined social roles and, therefore, this limits the involvement of women and gender minorities in education, employment, and decision-making. Social studies note that cultural conventions-based gender stereotypes tend to maintain inequalities in the availability of social and economic opportunities (Lewis and Arday, 2023). These myths support patriarchal structures of marginalization to women and other gender-diverse groups in most societies.

South Asian experiences demonstrate that strict gender norms are still affecting social participation and representation in the institution (Al-Mamun et al., 2022). As a result, gender-based myths can be followed, which can play a significant role in creating social exclusion in societies. The other notable sociological myth concerns the views of moral deviance that are linked to the marginalized groups of people. This myth represents some communities as being socially or morally dysfunctional thus justifying discrimination and marginalization by the mainstream society. It has been shown that moral stigmatization tends to come up as a result of cultural stereotypes and social discourses that describe minority populations as deviant or dangerous (Enaikele et al., 2022). These types of stigmatizing attitudes may cause social ostracism and institutional discrimination against stigmatized groups. Literature review on marginalized identities demonstrates that the impact of moral stigma on shaping the attitudes of the population is also important, as well as influences the self-perception and social mobility of the marginalized individuals themselves (Gil-Benumeya, 2023). Consequently, the myth of moral deviance has the potential to play a major role in supporting social exclusion.

The myths of cultural incompatibility also strengthen the practices of exclusion by demonstrating the inferiority of certain communities as having the potential to become part of the mainstream society. These myths tend to put the cultures of minorities into a different light so as to make

them seem fundamentally different or incompatible with the core social values. Studies on ethnic and cultural isolation indicate that this type of narrative is often used to defend discriminatory policies and practices that restrict the interaction between the communities (Kantrowitz, 2023). These perceptions may strengthen the social boundaries and solidarity in an ethnically and religiously diverse society where a society that is ethnically or religiously diverse may need to establish boundaries between groups to ensure social solidarity. Research also shows that cultural myths are one of the factors that lead to the marginalization of minority populations, namely, limited access to social institutions and the life of society (Kozaric, 2024). Consequently, the development of cultural incompatibility is expected to reinforce the tendencies of social exclusion.

Myths of economic dependency also lead to marginalization of the disadvantaged communities. This myth is that the marginalized groups are in a state of dependency to social support systems and they are not in a position to be productive to the society. Sociological studies indicate that there are usually structural inequalities that lead to the emergence of such perceptions and are supported by the stereotypes, which depict marginalized people as economically unproductive (Aranguiz, 2022). These perceptions in most situations affect societal views to social welfare and prospects of employment to the underprivileged groups. Studies also indicate that economical stereotypes may create discriminatory employment and narrowing of economic resources access (Gazdar and Mallah, 2024). As a result, the economic and social exclusion might be aggravated by the myth of economic dependency.

Lastly, myths of religious or cultural justification tend to justify discriminatory actions as belonging to traditional/moral values. These stories often are based on selective understandings of cultural or religious practices to justify exclusionary practices against minority groups. The research studies on identity politics in Pakistan indicate that in some instances, cultural discourses and religious explanations are employed to uphold the social hierarchies and marginalization (Hussain, 2022). Likewise, the minority studies point to the fact that the excluding practices are frequently supported with the help of cultural discourse that depicts the marginalized populations as socially undesirable (Khokhar, 2024). Such arguments are not only encouraging discriminatory behavior but also create institutionalized segregation in society. Hence, culturally or religiously justified myths can be a major contributor to the continuation of social exclusion.

### **Direct Relationship Hypotheses**

H1: Social exclusion is dramatically positively influenced by the myth of social hierarchy.

H2: Gender role fixity myth is a strong positive determinant of social exclusion.

H3: The myth of moral deviance affects social exclusion by having a strong positive impact.

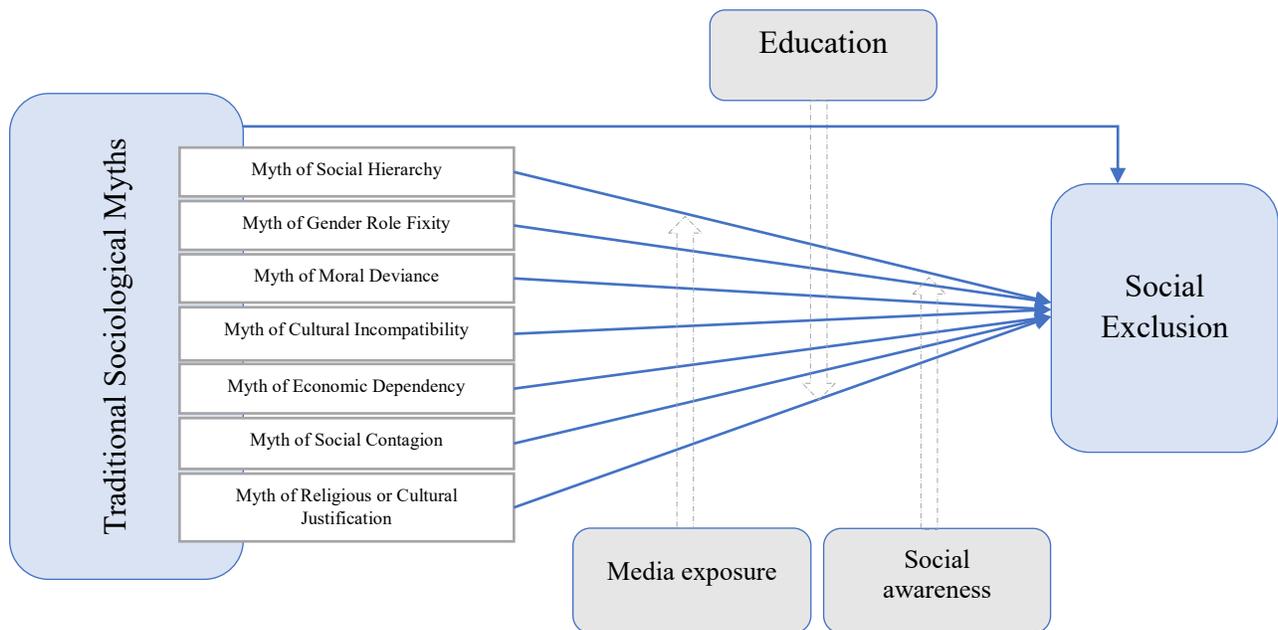
H4: The myth of cultural incompatibility plays a major positive role on social exclusion.

H5: Social exclusion is positively impacted by the myth of economic dependency with a significant effect.

H6: Social contagion myth produces a significant positive impact on social exclusion.

H7: The myth of justification whether religious or cultural has a strong positive impact on social exclusion.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**



*Source: Formulated by author(s) of the studies after review of existing literature*

**Moderating role of Education, Media exposure and social awareness**

It has been accepted that education is a vital element in the development of social attitudes and minimizing the discriminatory beliefs. An increased level of education subjects the individuals to various views, critical thinking, and information on equality and human rights. According to sociological studies education has the potential to break the traditional myths and stereotypes through rational understanding and social awareness. The environmental studies of higher education indicate that exposure to education tends to prompt people to challenge the strict social structures and discriminative standards that are ingrained in society (Lewis and Arday 2023). Education can also be helpful in societies where the social hierarchies are deeply rooted and the beliefs of exclusion are accepted. This fact also implies that the more educated people are, the less likely they are to believe the sociological myths that support the idea of discrimination, thus diluting the association between sociological myths and social exclusion. Media coverage is also significant because it contributes to creating an impression and disrupting the conventional social scripts. The contemporary media spheres can be seen as an avenue in which alternative voices and inclusive discourse can circulate among more people. According to sociological studies, media representations may either perpetuate stereotypes or foster societal awareness of the marginalized groups by influencing the social perception of such groups. Research on the topic of discrimination and minority representation proves that media presence can make people more aware of the plight that a minority group is going through and can promote more welcoming social practices (Kozaric, 2024). In most modern societies, the digital media has helped to give a voice to marginalized groups and bring out issues of discrimination and inequality. Thus, more media coverage can undermine the power of classical sociological myths in social exclusion.

Social awareness is another factor that is significant and can determine the relationship between sociological myths and exclusionary attitudes. The knowledge about social inequalities, human rights, and diversity can enable people to understand the negative effects of discrimination and

social stigmatization. Social research studies indicate that those who have a better level of social consciousness have a more significant chance to oppose discriminatory actions and adopt inclusive social norms (Siddiqui et al., 2026). The consciousness campaigns, civil society struggles, and education campaigns can help in changing the traditional beliefs that perpetuate the exclusion practices. In the social contexts and society where social hierarchies are historically rooted, the heightened concern of equality and social justice can make a tangible impact in terms of modifying the way the society is socially perceived. Consequently, social awareness can minimize the effects of the sociological myths on the continuation of social exclusion.

### **Moderation Hypotheses**

**H8:** Education modulates the relationship between traditional sociological myths and social exclusion where higher education dilutes the relationship between sociological myths and social exclusion.

**H9:** There is an interaction effect between traditional sociological myths and social exclusion by media exposure in that increased media exposure dilutes the interaction between sociological myths and social exclusion.

**H10:** There is a moderating effect of social awareness on the relationship between traditional sociological myths and social exclusion in that the more the social awareness, the weaker the relationship between sociological myths and social exclusion.

### **Methodology**

This research study is based on a positivist research philosophy and follows a quantitative research methodology to study the correlation between the traditional sociological myths and social exclusion in Sindh, Pakistan. The research design used is an explanatory and cross-sectional study because it will examine the causal relationships between the independent variables (sociological myths) and the dependent variable (social exclusion) at one point in time. The main instrument of data collection is structured survey questionnaire, which will allow measuring the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards sociological myths and the use of exclusionary practices with the necessary degree of systematicity. The study population will include people living in Sindh that have various social and demographic characteristics. The data is collected on the basis of non-probability convenience sampling, and it is one of the most common methods of data collection in the social science research when it is necessary to access a diverse and wide population. The number of valid responses collected reached 193 and was applied in the final analysis of data.

To analyze the collected data the study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to study the hypothesized relationships between the variables and test the study hypotheses. Data analysis is performed with the help of SPSS and SmartPLS programs that are widely used in social science studies in order to analyze latent constructs and multifaceted structural relations. Cronbach (alpha), composite and average variance extracted (AVE) are used to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Also, the discriminant validity is measured by FornellLarcker criterion and HTMT ratio. Interaction terms in the structural model are used to determine moderating roles of education, media exposure and social awareness. This method of analysis allows making a general evaluation of practices of traditional sociological myths on the processes of social rejection and how factors related to awareness can weaken or strengthen this correlation in the framework of the social culture of Sindh.

*Measures:* All items in this study are measured on multi-item scales on a five point Likert scale, where 1 (strongly disagree) through 5 (strongly agree). The scale of the construct of social

exclusion consists of 8 items based on the modification of previous research on marginalization and exclusion in social life (Aranguiz, 2022; Gazdar and Mallah, 2024). The measurement of the myth of social hierarchy is based on 5 items which were modified based on the research on the caste hierarchy and social stratification in Pakistan (Hussain, 2022). Recidivism of the myth of gender role is tested on the 4 items modified and based on the literature addressing gender stereotypes and social inequality (Lewis and Arday, 2023). The 4-item scale used to measure the myth of moral deviance is based on sociological research of deviance and stigma (Enaikele et al., 2022). Cultural incompatibility myth is evaluated using 4 items that are based on the findings of ethnic segregation and cultural exclusion research (Kantrowitz, 2023). The 4 items used to measure the myth of economic dependency are based on the studies on poverty and structural inequality (Aranguiz, 2022). The 4 items used to measure the myth of religious or cultural justification are based on the research conducted on discrimination against minority communities (Khokhar, 2024). In the case of the moderating variables, education level will be assessed with the help of 3 items, media exposure with the help of 4 items, social awareness with the help of 4 items, based on the works devoted to the awareness of social inequality and the perceptions of discrimination (Siddiqui et al., 2026; Kozaric, 2024). The scales applied to measure these scales are taken to guarantee the reliability and validity of the constructs employed in the research.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research is based on descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, certain analysis is performed and given as under.

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic traits of the respondents are crucial in the social science research as it gives us perspectives on the background of the participants and allow seeing the study findings in perspective. The demographic data like gender, age, level of education, and occupation may affect the perceptions and attitudes of the people towards sociological myths and social exclusion. Thus, gathering demographic information will help the researcher to measure the diversity of the sample and whether the respondents are representatives of various strata of society. In the current study, 193 respondents who live in Sindh were used to gather demographic data because it was necessary to make the sample representative of all social backgrounds.

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	104	53.9
	Female	89	46.1
Age	18–25 years	62	32.1
	26–35 years	71	36.8
	36–45 years	38	19.7
	46 years and above	22	11.4
	Education	Intermediate	34
	Bachelor’s Degree	81	42.0
	Master’s Degree	59	30.6

	MPhil/PhD	19	9.8
Occupation	Student	55	28.5
	Private Sector	63	32.6
	Public Sector	41	21.2
	Self-employed	34	17.7

As shown in Table 1, the sample represents the respondents who have different social and professional backgrounds. Most of the respondents were males (53.9%), with females making up 46.1% of the sample population, which shows fairly equal gender representation. Regarding the age, the majority of participants were aged 26-35 years (36.8%), then the age group 18-25 years (32.1%), which indicates that the participants were mostly young and early-career people. In terms of education, most of the respondents had Bachelor's degree (42.0%), Master degree holders were next with a total of 30.6 percent and this implies that the sample was relatively educated and was able to respond to questions of the survey. In terms of occupation, the majority of the respondents (32.6%), were office workers but a good percentage of them (28.5) are students which is an indication of a combination of work-related people and academic people. Altogether, a demographic composition indicates that the data were gathered by the respondents representing different education and professional statuses contributing to the validity of the results and their generalizability.

### **Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis.**

Descriptive statistics give the picture of the central tendencies of the variables under study and assist in interpreting the general trend of the responses of the participants. The mean values represent the overall perception of the respondents towards a given construct, and standard deviation measures the variations in the respondents. Also, the reliability analysis is done to determine the internal consistency of the measurement scales employed in the research. An example of Cronbach alpha use in social science research is to assess the reliability of multi-item constructs when the value of alpha exceeds 0.70 is generally acceptable in research. The table that is below shows the mean, standard deviation, and alpha value of Cronbach of all the variables included in the study.

**Table 2 Central Tendencies and Reliability Analysis**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Myth of Social Hierarchy	3.68	0.74	0.82
Gender Role Fixity	3.54	0.79	0.80
Moral Deviance Myth	3.47	0.76	0.78
Cultural Incompatibility Myth	3.61	0.72	0.81
Economic Dependency Myth	3.43	0.75	0.79
Social Contagion Myth	3.38	0.77	0.77
Religious/Cultural Justification Myth	3.59	0.73	0.83
Social Exclusion	3.71	0.69	0.85
Education	3.66	0.71	0.76
Media Exposure	3.74	0.68	0.79
Social Awareness	3.81	0.65	0.84

As can be observed in Table 2, the descriptive statistics, the reliability results indicate that the means of all constructs are moderate to high, which proves that respondents tend to admit that there are sociological myths, social exclusion in society. The standard deviation levels are rather moderate and indicate that the perceptions of respondents within the sample were relatively similar. In addition, all constructs have alpha of larger than 0.70 which is the recommended value of alpha to show good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales. Specifically, the reliability of such constructs as social exclusion ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) and social awareness ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) is strong, which implies that the measures of the constructs are very consistent. In general, the results of reliability analysis indicate that the measurement tools applied in this paper are suitable to conduct further statistical analysis and testing of hypothesis.

### Outer Loadings

The outer loading table is designed in such a way that each item is loaded on a specific construct based on the diagonal, which demonstrates the strength of the relationship to exist between the items and their latent variable. Higher loadings (usually greater than 0.70) represent the good measure of the construct it represents. This would also be easily used to identify weak items since empty (or -) cells indicate that each item has only one variable that it is intended to be associated with.

**Table 3. Outer Loadings of Measurement Items**

Variable / Item	Myth of Social Hierarchy	Gender Role Fixity	Moral Deviance	Cultural Incompatibility	Economic Dependency	Social Contagion	Religious/Cultural Justification	Social Exclusion	Education	Media Exposure	Social Awareness
SH1	0.82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SH2	0.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SH3	0.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SH4	0.79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SH5	0.83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GR F1	-	0.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GR F2	-	0.82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GR F3	-	0.78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GR F4	-	0.79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MD 1	-	-	0.77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MD 2	-	-	0.79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MD 3	-	-	0.78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MD 4	-	-	0.76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CI1	-	-	-	0.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CI2	-	-	-	0.79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CI3	-	-	-	0.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

CI4	–	–	–	0.78	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
ED	–	–	–	–	0.77	–	–	–	–	–	–
1											
ED	–	–	–	–	0.78	–	–	–	–	–	–
2											
ED	–	–	–	–	0.79	–	–	–	–	–	–
3											
ED	–	–	–	–	0.76	–	–	–	–	–	–
4											
SC1	–	–	–	–	–	0.75	–	–	–	–	–
SC2	–	–	–	–	–	0.77	–	–	–	–	–
SC3	–	–	–	–	–	0.76	–	–	–	–	–
RCJ	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.82	–	–	–	–
1											
RCJ	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.83	–	–	–	–
2											
RCJ	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.81	–	–	–	–
3											
RCJ	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.80	–	–	–	–
4											
SE1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.84	–	–	–
SE2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.85	–	–	–
SE3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.83	–	–	–
SE4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.82	–	–	–
SE5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.81	–	–	–
ED	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.79	–	–
U1											
ED	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.78	–	–
U2											
ED	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.77	–	–
U3											
ME	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.80	–
1											
ME	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.81	–
2											
ME	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.79	–
3											
ME	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.78	–
4											
SA1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.82
SA2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.83
SA3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.81
SA4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.82

Table 3 shows that the level of outer loading by measurement items across the board is high with the highest being 0.85, which is a strong representation of the constructs by the measurement items. The diagonal positioning verifies that all items only load their respective intended latent construct meeting convergent validity criteria. Such constructs as social exclusion (0.810.85) and religious/cultural justification myth (0.800.83) have a particularly strong loading, which supports

their validity to be further used as structural modeling. There are no cross-loadings in the off-diagonal cells and it supports the discriminant validity as well as indicates that the measurement model is strong and suitable to analyse the SEM.

### Variance and validity Analysis.

Meanwhile, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion), R<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> effect sizes were computed in order to make sure that the measurement and structural model are reliable and valid. When the AVE is greater than 0.50 convergent validity is confirmed and this implies that a latent construct accounts more than half of the variance of indicators of the construct. Discriminant validity is used to make sure that the constructs are different and in this case, the square root of the AVE of each construct is larger than the correlation of the construct with the other constructs thus the Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to achieve this requirement in this study. R<sup>2</sup> values denote the variance of the predictors on the dependent variable, whereas f<sup>2</sup> values denote the effect size of each of the independent variables or moderators in the dependent variable with a 0.02 (small), 0.15 (large), and 0.35 (large) thresholds.

**Table 4 AVE, Discriminant Validity, R<sup>2</sup>, and f<sup>2</sup>**

Construct	AVE	√AVE (Fornell-Larcker)	Correlations with Other Constructs	R <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>
Myth of Social Hierarchy	0.68	0.82	–	–	0.12
Gender Role Fixity	0.64	0.80	–	–	0.10
Moral Deviance Myth	0.61	0.78	–	–	0.09
Cultural Incompatibility	0.65	0.81	–	–	0.11
Economic Dependency	0.62	0.79	–	–	0.08
Social Contagion	0.59	0.77	–	–	0.07
Religious/Cultural Justification	0.68	0.82	–	–	0.10
Social Exclusion	0.72	0.85	0.82–0.81	0.63	–
Education	0.60	0.77	0.45	–	0.05
Media Exposure	0.61	0.78	0.48	–	0.06
Social Awareness	0.70	0.84	0.52	–	0.07

*Note:* Off-diagonal correlations for Fornell-Larcker are shown in range for brevity (0.45–0.52).

Table 4 results show that all constructs meet the criterion of convergent validity as AVE values are greater than 0.50, and √AVE values are greater than theirs with other constructs, which proves the criterion of discriminant validity. The R<sup>2</sup> of the dependent variable, social exclusion, is 0.63, which indicates that the seven sociological myths and three moderating variables account for about 63% of social exclusion. The f<sup>2</sup> values also suggest that the majority of independent variables produce small to medium effects on social exclusion, with the myth of social hierarchy (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.12) and cultural incompatibility (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.11) having rather more significant effects. All in all, the findings support the measurement and structural model and confirm its applicability to test the hypothesized relationships with the help of SEM.

### Path Coefficient Analysis

PLS-SEM Path coefficient analysis enables one to test the hypothesized causal relationships between independent variables, moderators, and the dependent variable. The path coefficients (β) are standardized and show the strength and direction of the relationships, t-values are to test

whether the paths are significant, and p-values show whether they are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$  is significant). The analysis will assist in determining which sociological myths are the most influential when it comes to social exclusion and the moderating variables (education, media exposure, social awareness) will weaken or deepen the effects of the myths.

**Table 5 Path Coefficient Analysis for Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Path	B	t-value	p-value
H1	Myth of Social Hierarchy → Social Exclusion	0.25	4.21	0.000
H2	Gender Role Fixity → Social Exclusion	0.18	3.12	0.002
H3	Moral Deviance Myth → Social Exclusion	0.16	2.98	0.003
H4	Cultural Incompatibility → Social Exclusion	0.22	3.85	0.000
H5	Economic Dependency → Social Exclusion	0.14	2.67	0.008
H6	Social Contagion → Social Exclusion	0.12	2.44	0.015
H7	Religious/Cultural Justification → Social Exclusion	0.20	3.45	0.001
H8	Education × Sociological Myths → Social Exclusion	-0.11	2.15	0.032
H9	Media Exposure × Sociological Myths → Social Exclusion	-0.13	2.62	0.009
H10	Social Awareness × Sociological Myths → Social Exclusion	-0.15	3.01	0.003

Table 5 results reveal that both the direct effect of all the sociological myths on social exclusion (H1 to H7) are statistically significant and positive, and the myth of social hierarchy ( $\beta = 0.25$ ) and cultural incompatibility ( $\beta = 0.22$ ) are the ones that have the strongest effect. This proves the fact that these myths are the key to the exclusionary attitudes in Sindh. Moreover, the moderation effects (H8-H10) of education, media exposure, and social awareness are negative and significant, which implies that the stronger the levels of these moderators, the less the effect of sociological myths on social exclusion. Of them, the strongest moderator is the social awareness ( $\beta = -0.15$ ), which, in other words, implies that the promotion of awareness and inclusive values can significantly mitigate the exclusionary impact of sociological myths. In general, the path coefficient analysis gives a strong justification to the proposed hypothesized relationships and proves to be valid in the conceptual model.

## Discussion

The research conclusions of this paper indicate that the traditional sociological myths play a very important role in causing social exclusion in the Sindh region of Pakistan. All seven myths (social hierarchy, gender role fixity, moral deviance, cultural incompatibility, dependence on the economy, social contagion and religious/cultural justification) had statistically significant and positive effects on social exclusion. The myth of social hierarchy and cultural incompatibility were the best predictors among them, showing the ubiquity of structural and cultural discourses on marginalization (Hussain, 2022; Kantowitz, 2023; Rahu, Mangrio, and Baloch, 2025). These findings correspond to the previous literature showing that strict ideas of social order, caste, and cultural patterns justify exclusionary actions and deny opportunities to the marginalized groups (Khokhar, 2024; Enaikele, Adeleke, and Adeoye, 2022). The results indicate that the exclusion is supported not only on the institutional level but also on the cultural and interpersonal ones which proves the presence of the myths and the ways to maintain inequality on various social levels (Kozaric, 2024; Al-Mamun et al., 2022).

There is even more evidence in the moderation analysis of the fact that education, media exposure, and social awareness are effective buffers against the impact of the sociological myths. An increased educational attainment dilutes the belief in the hierarchical and stereotypical nature, thus softening the attitudes of exclusion (Lewis and Arday, 2023; Bukh and Gul, 2024). On the same note, the more the media is exposed, the more accessibility to alternative points of view and inclusive stories becomes, and the less the impact of the myths on the exclusion of society (Kozaric, 2024; Talpur et al., 2025). The strongest moderator was identified as social awareness, and it was noted that the understanding of social inequality and marginalisation is paramount in lessening the effects of exclusionary beliefs (Siddiqui, Narijo, and Kibria, 2026; Azhar et al., 2024). These outcomes imply that educational programs, awareness campaigns, and media interventions may be useful interventions to confront traditional sociological myths and alleviate social exclusion in Sindh.

### **Implications**

The results of this research have significant practical implication on the policies, education and social development programs. Policymakers can use the knowledge about the contribution of sociological myths to the advancement of exclusion to design programs that would ensure that marginalization is minimized and equity is promoted at social, cultural, and economic levels. The social interventions may be further customized to tackle those myths that contribute to exclusion the most, including beliefs in hierarchical and cultural incompatibility.

Educationally, these results are important in that critical thinking, equality, and social justice education should be included in the school and university programs. Awareness programs on discrimination, inclusivity and challenge stereotypes can help people to challenge destructive beliefs and practices. On the same note, media campaigns where marginalized groups are visible and where celebrations of exclusionary narratives are disrupted would be useful in bringing social change. Through education, media, and awareness-raising campaigns, the communities can unite in order to curb the exclusion and promote social cohesion.

### **Limitation and Future directions.**

This study has some limitations although it has made contributions. Cross-sectional design limits the capacity to make definite causal relationship because data were taken at one point in time. Besides, the research was based on convenience sampling that can reduce the external validity of the results to the population of Sindh in general. Although the sample was heterogeneous in terms of social backgrounds, probability sampling or longitudinal research designs would be used in future to increase representativeness and address time-related changes.

More moderators and mediators that might show the relationship between sociological myths and social exclusion may also be investigated in the future research. As an illustration, social capital, community involvement or policy intervention might be analyzed as probable factors affecting exclusion moderating or intensifying it. A comparative study in the various provinces or countries might also give an insight on how the cultural, ethnic or regional differences determine the influence of sociological myths. The perspective of the research can be broadened into the study of the experiences of exclusion in a qualitative approach as well, providing a clearer picture of the lived consequences of exclusion.

### **Conclusion**

This paper outlines the widespread prevalence of traditional sociological myths on social exclusion in Sindh, Pakistan, and shows how education, exposure to the media, and social

awareness is helpful in alleviating the problem. The results imply that exclusion is a complex phenomenon that is supported by cultural, social, and structural ideologies. The effects of exclusionary myths can be decreased by promoting awareness, inclusive education, and representation in the media, which will create a more equitable and inclusive society. The research has a solid basis in the future study and intervention that would alleviate a social exclusion and encourage social cohesion.

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