



## Research Article

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# Social Entrepreneurship: Toward Understanding an Emerging Force for the Common Good

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## Abstract

Social entrepreneurship combines business innovation with an explicit purpose of positive social and environmental impact, becoming increasingly relevant for analysis from various perspectives. This article presents a systematic review of the literature on social entrepreneurship, aiming to consolidate existing knowledge, identify emerging trends and gaps, and provide an updated guide for researchers and policymakers. The results reveal diverse methodological perspectives, ranging from quantitative research on economic impact and poverty reduction to ethnographies that explore the experiences and strategies of social entrepreneurs. The unique potential of social entrepreneurship to address global challenges is highlighted, necessitating comprehensive strategies to promote it sustainably. Furthermore, education is identified as a fundamental pillar of positive social change due to its role in developing professionals with an entrepreneurial mindset oriented toward social transformation. Finally, the paper emphasizes the need to diversify research lines and initiatives that encourage social impact entrepreneurship in a proactive and innovative manner.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, social impact, systematic review, strategies, education

## 1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship, as an innovative business approach, represents a unique perspective that transcends traditional boundaries between the private, public, and philanthropic sectors. Its essence lies in utilizing entrepreneurial capacity to address social, environmental, economic, health, and various other challenges, directly impacting societal improvement. This emerging sector is distinguished by its commitment to creating positive and sustainable change and adopting scalable and sustainable business models with the explicit purpose of social impact in communities.

The significance of social entrepreneurship extends beyond merely resolving challenges; it also generates employment and fosters professional growth opportunities for those with innovative ideas (Cerro, 2017). This proactive approach recognizes the business as a strategic tool for achieving social goals, always prioritizing collective well-being over economic profits. In a global context where interconnected crises require comprehensive solutions, social entrepreneurship emerges as a vital and holistic response.

Despite its noble purpose, social entrepreneurship faces various obstacles, from resource scarcity to the ongoing challenge of establishing robust leadership structures. However, its relevance has been highlighted by international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020). This recognition emphasizes the fundamental role of social entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable development and building peace in communities, consolidating it as an essential component of the global agenda.

Currently, social entrepreneurship is not only a necessary response to present challenges but also a key agent in shaping the future. Its ability to adapt and find solutions to emerging problems, such as the climate crisis, positions it as a constantly evolving and growing sector. In a world that demands innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility, social entrepreneurship stands as a guiding beacon toward a more equitable and sustainable future.

In this context, the present research represents a crucial effort to consolidate existing knowledge about social entrepreneurship. In addition to providing a literature review, this study seeks to identify emerging trends and gaps, providing an updated guide for researchers, policymakers, and sector stakeholders. The importance of this task lies in the need to thoroughly understand the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship and establish guidelines for the sustainable development of entrepreneurial initiatives with positive social impact, thereby contributing to the construction of a more resilient and equitable future.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This research is based on a systematic literature review, a methodology that entails a rigorous and structured process to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing knowledge on a specific topic (Tranfield et al., 2003). In this case, the subject of study is social entrepreneurship, a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that requires a comprehensive approach to understanding (Dacin et al., 2010). This systematic review allows for the critical collection and analysis of relevant primary studies to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature, as well as to assess the methodological quality of the research (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The final outcome is an integrative synthesis of knowledge that contributes to the theoretical and practical advancement of the field.

### 2.1 Study Selection Process According to the PRISMA Methodology

The review was conducted following the guidelines of the PRISMA statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Page et al., 2021), a set of principles and procedures that ensure the transparency, replicability, and quality of systematic reviews. The study selection process is summarized in the flowchart presented in Figure 1.

**Search strategy:** An exhaustive search was performed in the Web of Science, Scopus, and Scielo databases, which are recognized for their broad coverage and relevance in the field of social sciences and management (Harzing & Alakangas, 2016). The search strategy included the following key terms and their Boolean combinations: ("social entrepreneurship" OR "impact entrepreneurship" OR "social enterprises") AND ("social impact" OR "social value" OR "social innovation") AND ("strategies" OR "business models" OR "scalability") AND ("education" OR "training" OR "competencies"). The search was limited to research articles published in academic journals, excluding other types of publications such as theses, book chapters, and conference proceedings.

**Inclusion criteria:** To ensure the relevance and quality of the included studies, the following eligibility criteria were applied:

Articles that specifically address social entrepreneurship, focusing on its conceptualization, processes, impacts, or enabling factors.

Empirical studies present a clearly defined and replicable methodology, including objectives, research design, data collection, and analysis.

Articles exploring the individual, organizational, or contextual factors influencing the development and success of social entrepreneurship.

Publications in English and Spanish, considering the relevance of both languages in disseminating scientific research.

Articles published between 2018 and 2024 covering a significant period to capture recent field developments.

Studies with a single case study were excluded due to their limited generalizability, as were articles not directly related to social entrepreneurship but rather related to peripheral or tangential topics.

**Study Selection:** The selection process was conducted in several stages, following the PRISMA flowchart. Initially, 3250 studies were identified in Web of Science, 4251 in Scopus, and 263 in SciELO. After removing duplicates, the titles and abstracts of 401 unique studies were reviewed, applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. In this phase, 324 studies that did not meet the eligibility criteria were excluded. Subsequently, a full-text evaluation of the 87 potentially relevant studies was conducted, of which 50 were ultimately included for meeting all the established criteria.

**Data Extraction and Analysis:** Two researchers independently extracted relevant information from the 50 selected studies using a standardized form that included details on methodology (design, sample, instruments, analysis), the factors analyzed, and the main results and conclusions. The extracted data were recorded in a relational database to facilitate subsequent analysis and synthesis.

Thematic coding techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were used to identify recurring patterns and emerging themes in the findings of the studies. This inductive process involved iterative reading of the data, generation of initial codes, theme searches, and review and refinement of themes. Additionally, a bibliometric analysis (Zupic & Čater, 2015) was conducted to map the intellectual structure of the field, identifying the most influential publications, the networks of collaboration among authors and institutions, and the evolution of research trends over time. The results of both analyses were integrated into a narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006), highlighting the main contributions, areas of consensus and design, and implications for the theoretical and practical development of social entrepreneurship.

The methodological rigor of this systematic review is enhanced by the adoption of PRISMA guidelines, the application of predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, the involvement of multiple researchers in the selection and data extraction process, and the use of both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. These elements contribute to the transparency, reproducibility, and quality of the results obtained, strengthening their contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field of social entrepreneurship.

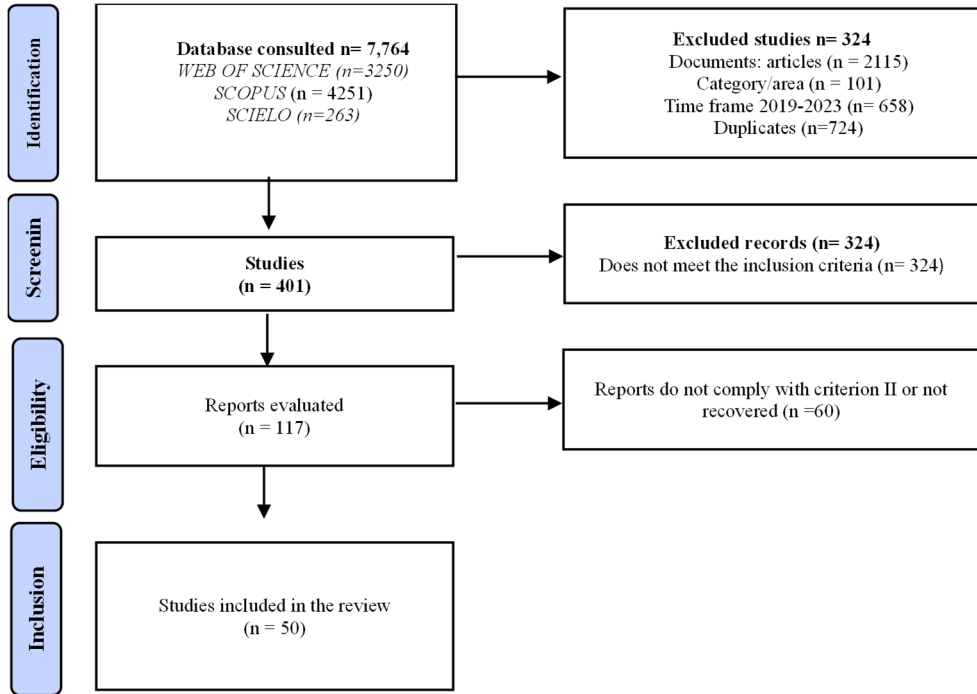


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart

Table 1. Number of documents consulted

Source	Number of Files
Web Of Science	13
Scopus	27
Scielo	09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Documents by year. Diachronic quantification of social entrepreneurship.

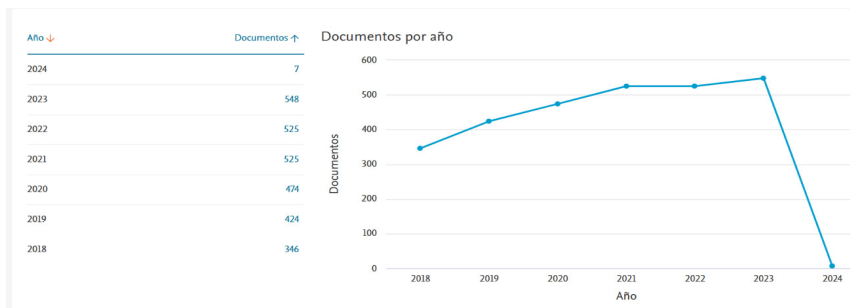


Figure 1. Distribution of publications by year

The scientific output in question has been indexed on the Scopus website since 2018 and has experienced a consistent upward trend over time, as illustrated in Figure 1. However, in 2019 and 2020, the numbers slightly plateaued and remained at the same level. In 2022 and 2023, there was notable consistency, with 525 documents indexed each year; ultimately, an increase of 28 additional documents was observed in 2023.

3.1.1 Documents by source according to the Scopus database

Figure 2 illustrates that regarding production by means of sources, the journal "Swiss Sustainability" leads the list, with 391 articles published, 67 documents in the year 2023, and a total of 259,774 citations in the same year. The following are the "International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research" (total articles published: 166, 36 documents and citations in the year 2023), the "Frontiers in Psychology" journal (total articles published: 147, 13 documents and 130,469 citations in the year 2023), the "Journal of Social Entrepreneurship" (total articles published: 130, 38 documents and 7,033 citations in the year 2023), and "Contributions to Management Science" (total articles published: 103, 6 documents and 1,064 citations in the year 2023) according to the CiteScore per year from the Scopus database.

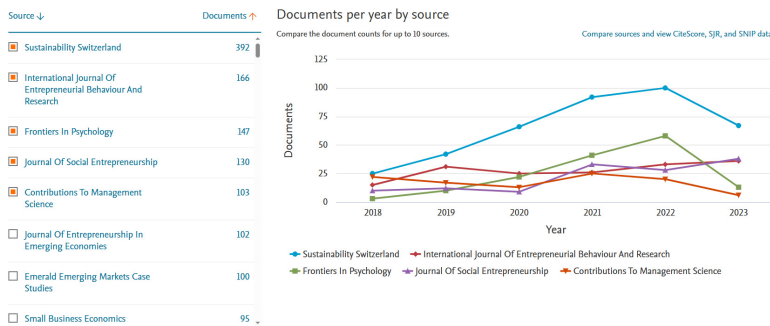


Figure 2. Representativeness of journal articles

3.2 Keyword analysis using VoSviewer with the Scopus database

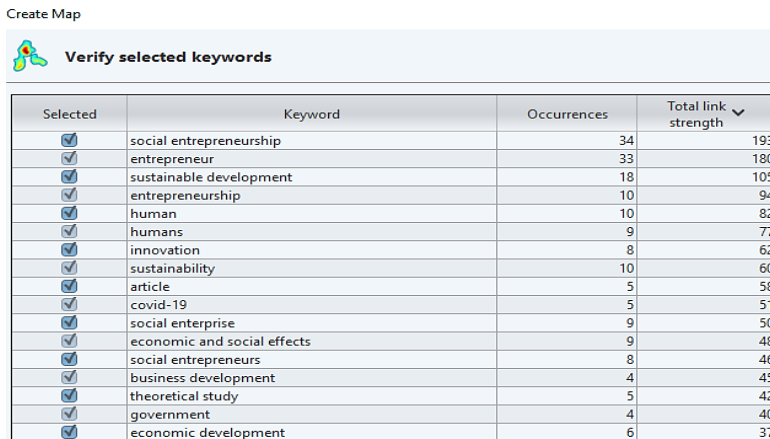


Figure 3. Keywords and co-occurrence detection

In the context of this literature review, VOSviewer software, which is renowned for its ability to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, was used. This tool enables the detection of cooccurrences, identifying the frequency with which keywords are used in relevant documents (see Figure 3). In this way, the most significant keywords in the analysis are highlighted.

The analysis of keywords using VOSviewer provides a valuable perspective on the structure and relationships in the reviewed literature. This software tool facilitates the identification of cooccurrences of key terms, revealing connections and underlying patterns in the research. The density of connections between keywords indicates the frequency with which they are used together in the reviewed documents, providing insights into the most relevant and prominent thematic areas in the field of study.

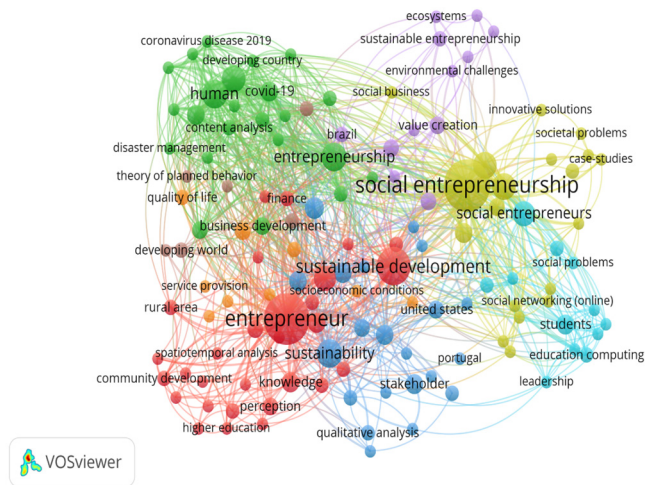


Figure 4. Cluster identification

By observing the figure generated by VOSviewer (see Figure 4), conclusions can be drawn about the strongest interconnections between the selected keywords. The interpretation of keywords with VOSviewer not only contributes to the visual organization of information but also enriches the understanding of the thematic landscape in the reviewed research. In the present study, the most prominent keywords are social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship.

### 3.2.1 Production by the author

The use of VOSviewer provides a detailed view of the interconnections and collaborations in the analyzed literature. This software enables the visualization of the coauthorship network, highlighting the relationships and the frequency with which authors have collaborated on reviewed documents. By observing the figure generated by VOSviewer, one can identify the nodes (authors) and their connections, indicating the strength and frequency of their collaboration. The density of connections between the nodes reveals the intensity of collaboration among authors, which facilitates the identification of research groups or scientific communities within the studied field. Furthermore, visualizing the coauthorship network contributes to identifying the relative importance of each author in terms of influence and joint contributions.

The results indicate the participation of four authors who are the most cited (20 citations each), suggesting that they belong to the same research group or collaborating entity, all within a single cluster.



Selected	Author	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	carlos-arroyo, martina	5	20	12
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	cruz-sandoval, marco	5	20	12
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	vázquez-parra, josé carlos	5	20	12
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	roy, michael j.	4	20	7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	alonso-galicia, patricia esther	2	3	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bonfanti, angelo	3	2	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	franco, mário	2	8	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	oliveira, cidália	2	8	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	rodrigues, margarida	2	8	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	silva, rui	2	8	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	teasdale, simon	4	13	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	de bruin, anne	3	16	5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	de crescenzo, veronica	2	1	5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	loza adauí, cristian r.	2	1	5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	cicellin, mariavittoria	2	5	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	consiglio, stefano	2	5	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	harvey, charles	2	1	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	maclean, mairi	2	1	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	mion, giorgio	2	1	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	molobi, victor sannvboy	2	2	4

Figura 5a. Producción por autores

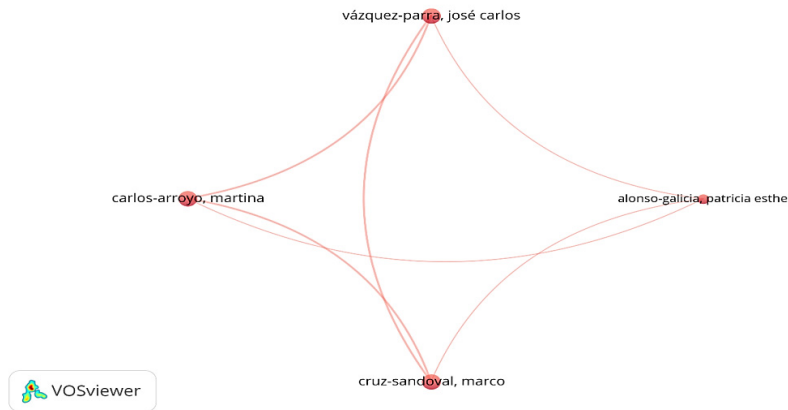


Figura 5b. Análisis de cocitas

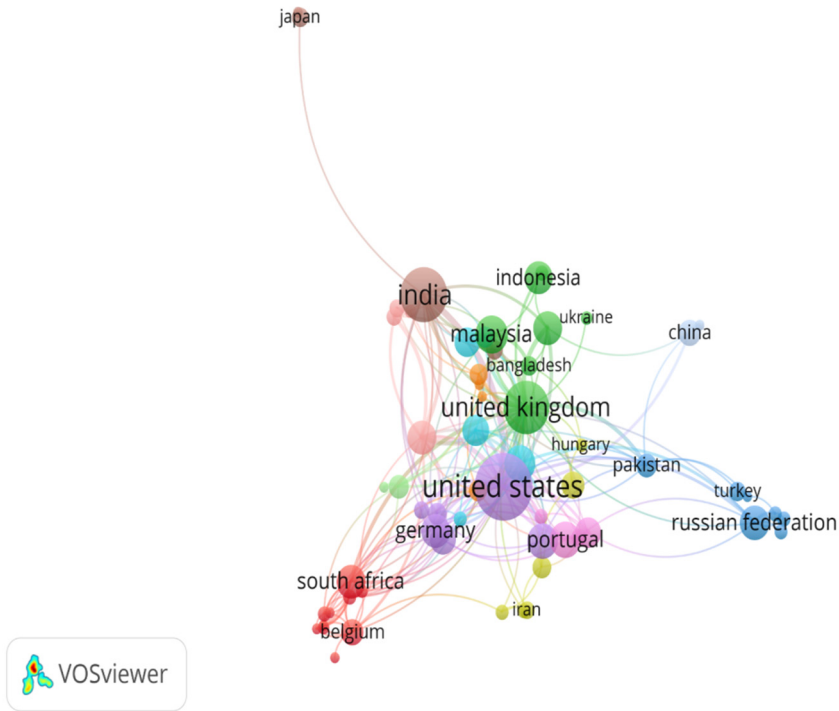
### 3.2.2 Production by country

VOSviewer offers an enlightening perspective on international collaborations and the geographical distribution of research in the examined area. By using this tool, one can visualize the network of collaborations between institutions and authors associated with different countries, providing a graphical representation of global cooperation in the field of study.

The figure generated by VOSviewer reveals nodes representing countries and the connections between them, indicating the frequency and strength of international collaborations. The density of connections between countries highlights the intensity of associations in the reviewed research, allowing for the identification of potential geographical clusters or areas of shared specialization.

The network is composed of 62 items across 12 clusters. The countries with the greatest number

of publications are cluster 1 with 10 items, cluster 2 with 7 items, cluster 3 with 7 items, cluster 4 with 6 items, cluster 5 with 6 items, cluster 6 with 6 items, and cluster 7 with 4 items; cluster 8 with 4 items; cluster 9 with 4 items; cluster 10 with 4 items; cluster 11 with 2 items; and finally, cluster 12 with 2 items. The countries with the most publications are the United States, the United Kingdom, and India.



**Figure 6.** Distribution by country

3.3 *Analysis of the methodology used in the studies and type of methodological approach*

3.3.1 *Methodology analysis of 20 articles from 2024 from the Scopus database*

As shown in Table 2, several studies provide quantitative evidence on the positive impact of social entrepreneurship in areas such as economic development, poverty reduction, and stabilization of consumption (Song et al., Lanchimba et al., Abukari et al., Wijaya & Said). This underscores the importance of social entrepreneurship as a tool for development.

**Table 2.** Methodology used and type of methodological approach

Research Topic and Author(s)	Methodology
"From fossil fuel energy to hydrogen energy: Transformation of fossil fuel energy economies into hydrogen economies through social entrepreneurship" Garzón Baquero & Bellon Monsalve, 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative, descriptive. Approach: Case study, documentary analysis.
"Exploring the impact of digital inclusive finance on consumption volatility: Insights from household entrepreneurship and income volatility" (Song et al., 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Econometric analysis, regression models, use of national surveys.



Research Topic and Author(s)	Methodology
"Social innovation in university-community partnerships in Latin America: Exploring collaborative models" (Cobo-Gómez, 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Case studies, analysis of university-community collaboration models.
"Franchising and country development: evidence from 49 countries" (Lanchimba et al., 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Econometric modeling with panel data from 49 countries
"Sight unseen: The visibility paradox of entrepreneurship in an informal economy" (Nason et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Ethnography, interviews, field observation.
"Knowledge development in nonfungible tokens (NFT): a scoping review" (Behl et al., 2024)	Methodology: Systematic review Approach: Mapping and analysis of literature in academic databases.
"Scientific mapping and thematic progression of digitalization of social entrepreneurship in developing countries" (Chebo & Dhliwayo, 2024)	Methodology: Bibliometric review. Approach: Literature analysis with scientometric methods.
"The ideathon as an instrument for entrepreneurial education in university contexts" (García-Castanedo et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Case study, interviews, observation.
"Investigating how social context moderates the relationship between intentions and behaviors in student entrepreneurship: Case of Tunisian students" (Inoubli & Gharbi, 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Surveys, statistical analysis (PLS-SEM)
"Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions: Do entrepreneurial self-efficacy, alertness and opportunity recognition matter?" (Otache et al., 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Quasixperimental design with surveys, t tests, mediation analysis.
"Achieving competitive advantage through bricolage: A small business perspective" (Abukari et al., 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Surveys, structural equation modeling
"An investigation on social impact performance assessment of the social enterprises: Identification of an ideal social entrepreneurship model" (Nuchian et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Case studies, interviews, focus groups
"Shaping entrepreneurial gender play: Intersubjectivity and performativity among female entrepreneurs" (Le Loarne et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Ethnography, participant observation
"To be more different or just the same? Means versus ends in hybrid organizational legitimacy" (Gauthier et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Narrative analysis
"Sustainable entrepreneurship: Factors influencing opportunity recognition and exploitation" (Sarma et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: Semistructured interviews.
"Immigrant business in transnational contexts: a multifocal understanding of the breakout process" (Onyima et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: In-depth interviews
"Convergence between absorptive capacity and knowledge appropriation: A new methodology Mapping the hidden links" (Cuéllar et al., 2024)	Methodology: Systematic review Approach: Literature mapping and analysis.
"Fearful pathways to social entrepreneurship intention: A fuzzy-set qualitative content analysis" (Donaldson et al., 2024)	Methodology: Qualitative Approach: fsQCA analysis
"Connecting entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation. Grasping at straws or hitting a home run?" (Chaudhary et al., 2024)	Methodology: Systematic review Approach: Content analysis, literature mapping.
"The mediating role of sustainable supply chain management on entrepreneurship strategy, social capital and SMEs' financial and nonfinancial performance" (Wijaya & Said, 2024)	Methodology: Quantitative Approach: Surveys, structural equation modeling

On the other hand, qualitative and ethnographic studies (Nason et al., Onyima et al., Le Loarne et al.) are useful for understanding the experiences, challenges, and strategies used by social entrepreneurs in challenging contexts and informal economies. They provide deep insights that cannot be obtained through traditional methods.

Case studies on specific models and projects of social entrepreneurship (Garzón Baquero & Bellon Monsalve, Nuchian et al., Cobo-Gómez) highlight significant innovations, such as the use of new technologies, university-community collaboration models, and hybrid business models.

Systematic reviews map current knowledge and identify emerging and potential areas in social entrepreneurship, such as digital finance (Behl et al., Chebo & Dhliwayo, Chaudhary et al., Cuéllar et al.).

In summary, the articles cover diverse methodological approaches that enrich the understanding of social entrepreneurship from multiple perspectives.

### 3.4 *Grouping of papers by themes, components and typologies of social enterprises.*

#### 3.4.1 *Social entrepreneurship - concepts and theory*

Social entrepreneurship is a methodology focused on creating businesses and organizations with the primary objective of addressing social and environmental problems. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, which is focused on profit generation, social entrepreneurship combines innovation and business efficiency with a mission for social and environmental impact (Adikaram and Razik, 2023).

Social entrepreneurs seek sustainable solutions to challenges such as poverty, education, health, gender equality, and environmental conservation. A distinctive feature is their emphasis on social benefits over financial profits. While not disregarding economic sustainability, social enterprises reinvest their surplus in their impact mission instead of distributing dividends (Melsalasa et al., 2023).

For this reason, social entrepreneurship has become a fundamental component of inclusive economic growth, social innovation, sustainability, and community transformation. The previously analyzed studies cover this phenomenon from multiple perspectives, providing quantitative evidence of its impact and a deep understanding of the experiences and strategies used by social entrepreneurs in various contexts.

Social entrepreneurship theory is distinguished by its emphasis on exploring novel solutions to social and environmental challenges, incorporating sustainable business models to address these issues, and prioritizing social impact over economic gains (Ramírez et al., 2021). It is sometimes used to describe philanthropic or mutualist activities, without the constitution of for-profit organizations.

Social entrepreneurship requires joint support between the entrepreneur and other actors, as the success of these projects does not depend solely on the individual (Pacheco-Ruiz et al., 2022). Social entrepreneurs are change agents who use innovative approaches to improve environmental and social realities, distinguishing themselves from conventional entrepreneurs in their motivation for impact on economic gain. They collaborate with various actors, measure their success in terms of social improvement, seek to empower communities, and promote alternatives that improve quality of life in a sustainable way.

#### 3.4.2 *Social entrepreneurship and environmental commitment*

Social entrepreneurship, when merged with a strong commitment to environmental sustainability, emerges as a formidable driving force for positive change in today's society. Businesses and entrepreneurs embracing this philosophy not only aim for economic gains but also seek to make a significant impact on social and environmental issues. These initiatives not only focus on economic viability but also incorporate sustainable business practices, such as waste reduction, the adoption of sustainable energies, and the promotion of social equity.

Recent studies have explored the role of social entrepreneurship in addressing global challenges such as the energy transition and the COVID-19 pandemic. Garzón Baquero and Bellon Monsalve (2024) suggested that social development could facilitate the transition from economies reliant on fossil fuels to those centered on hydrogen by uniting socioeconomic actors. They present a model to guide this process, emphasizing social entrepreneurship as a key element. In response to the economic impact of the pandemic, Méndez Bravo et al. (2022) and Calánchez et al. (2022) highlighted the contribution of social enterprises to the revitalization and support of vulnerable sectors through innovative solutions. Additionally, Mendoza Aranzamendi et al. (2021) explored the experiences of women entrepreneurs during the pandemic, identifying financial and gender-related challenges and thus underscoring the need to strengthen equality in this field. Collectively, these studies underscore the potential of social entrepreneurship in tackling both global and local issues, proving to be crucial in each context.

### 3.4.3 *Strategies to promote social entrepreneurship*

Social entrepreneurship strategies aim to generate positive impacts by creating an innovative organizational culture, strong corporate governance practices, efficient financial management, and innovative business processes. Strategic alignment with social entrepreneurship activities, such as careful participant selection and optimization of approval processes, is essential. The comprehensive implementation of these strategies yields economic, social, and environmental benefits, highlighting their contribution to sustainability and the importance of integrating social entrepreneurship into organizational decision-making.

Atahau et al. (2022) and Poluan et al. (2024) investigated strategies to foster sustainable social entrepreneurship and its benefits. Poluan et al. (2024) found that an organizational vision and mission supporting women's groups are crucial. Key elements include organizational culture, corporate governance, financial management, and business processes that are innovative and aligned with social entrepreneurship. The benefits span economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Moreover, Poluan et al. (2024) demonstrated the fundamental role of local wisdom in the development of social enterprises to ensure the sustainability of rural microfinance. They suggest that considering local knowledge, government policies and conducive environments should enhance this type of entrepreneurship. Both studies highlight the relevance of comprehensive strategies, aligned with the organizational mission and local context, to generate sustainable social enterprises with wide-ranging benefits.

### 3.4.4 *Education and social entrepreneurship*

The synergy between education and social entrepreneurship emerges as an essential catalyst for the formation of change agents, nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset centered on positive social impact. This pedagogical model focuses on more than the mere dissemination of business knowledge, encouraging students to devise innovative solutions to social challenges and cultivating values of responsibility and community awareness. Through practical experience and collaborative projects, students are trained not only to apply entrepreneurial skills but also to dedicate them to prevailing social causes. The deep integration of education and social entrepreneurship not only equips individuals for business success but also empowers them to contribute significantly to the well-being and progress of society as a whole.

Education for social entrepreneurship is defined as a pedagogical approach aimed at enhancing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address social and environmental challenges through entrepreneurial solutions. Baltador and Grecu (2023) presented a conceptual framework that establishes links between education for social entrepreneurship and dimensions of sustainability, including economic, social, and environmental aspects. They argue that this form of education can raise students' awareness of sustainability issues, motivate them to drive positive change, and provide them with the necessary tools and methods to design and implement sustainable business models.

The convergence of education geared toward social and sustainable entrepreneurship, as well as training in social and sustainable leadership, is seen as a promising pathway for preparing students for their future roles. Although these training streams belong to distinct research domains and adopt specific pedagogical approaches, their outcomes underline a common goal: to shape change agents through authentic, collaborative, and experiential learning processes that challenge students to create value for society. While education in social and sustainable entrepreneurship focuses on generating social value, education in social leadership addresses students' personal development. The findings presented by van Rijnsoever et al. (2023) highlight the pressing need to transform pedagogies and adjust how we interact with students, staff, and educational infrastructures to achieve impactful training of change agents.

Despite the entrepreneurial strategies promoted by universities, Silva-Peralta et al. (2022) argue for the urgent need to implement a more systematic plan to address the social, labor, and educational

needs of the community. This more systematic approach will not only reinforce the correlation between education and professional field demands but also contribute to creating a stronger network between the academic institution and the community, thereby maximizing the positive impact of higher education on society.

Studies by García González et al. (2020) contribute to social entrepreneurship by effectively integrating social entrepreneurship competence into the higher education curriculum through the development of an instrument that was validated and constitutes a reliable and consistent tool to measure the skills and knowledge necessary for social entrepreneurship. Similarly, Osorio-Novela et al. (2022) and Grisales Ocampo (2020) proposed and validated pedagogical models and tools to promote social entrepreneurship in higher education. These models aim to develop entrepreneurial competencies, an ethical and solidarity sense in students, through strategies such as curricular integration, action research, service learning, and continuous support. The results show the potential of these proposals to train social entrepreneurs capable of generating positive impacts in their communities.

Moreover, the research by Solomon et al. (2019) provides valuable insights into the participation, offerings, and trends of education in social entrepreneurship at universities in the U.S. and Canada. This indicates a high demand among students, opportunities for improvement in course offerings, and an optimistic view of the field's growth. On the other hand, Syahid et al. (2023) identified key factors influencing young people's intentions to engage in social entrepreneurship, including self-efficacy, social support, attitudes, values, passion, and training, highlighting the importance of education in promoting youth involvement. Both studies emphasize the potential and growing importance of education in social entrepreneurship.

In summary, various recent quantitative studies have analyzed the factors influencing social entrepreneurship intentions among students. Pandey et al. (2023) found that personality traits and social support are positively related to entrepreneurial intention, regardless of gender, suggesting a focus on these factors in educational programs. Naznen et al. (2023) revealed that altruistic and traditional values impact personal normative beliefs in innovative social enterprises, highlighting ethical and cultural considerations. They also found that individual responsibility is relevant in this context. Lukman et al. (2021) examined determinants of entrepreneurial intentions in Ghanaian students. A sense of social responsibility and service learning were significantly related. Institutional support moderates the relationship between attitudes and entrepreneurial intention. Collectively, these studies provide evidence on key factors shaping social entrepreneurship intentions in students, emphasizing the role of personality, values, social responsibility, institutional support, and learning experiences.

After a thorough analysis of the results presented in the systematic review, several thematic axes can be identified that highlight the transformative potential of social entrepreneurship and its ability to address complex challenges at global and local scales.

First, studies such as those by Garzón Baquero & Bellon Monsalve (2024) suggest that social entrepreneurship could play a crucial role in the transition toward more sustainable economies based on clean energy, such as hydrogen. This finding highlights the capacity of social entrepreneurs to catalyze systemic changes by articulating the efforts of diverse socioeconomic actors around common sustainable development goals.

On the other hand, in the context of the pandemic, the research by Méndez Bravo et al. (2022) and Calánchez et al. (2022) highlights the fundamental role that social entrepreneurship has played in economic reactivation and support for vulnerable populations. These studies show the resilience and adaptability of social entrepreneurs to respond to unexpected crises, generating innovative solutions that address the pressing needs of society.

Similarly, the work of Mendoza Aranzamendi et al. (2021) sheds light on the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in times of crisis, such as financial and gender barriers. This finding underscores the importance of promoting gender equity in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem by recognizing and addressing the structural disparities that limit the potential of women

entrepreneurs.

From an educational perspective, the studies analyzed highlight the need to strengthen training in social entrepreneurship in higher education institutions. Contributions such as those of García González et al. (2020), who developed a validated instrument to assess key competencies, and proposals for innovative pedagogical models by Osorio-Novela et al. (2022) and Grisales Ocampo (2020) evidence a growing interest in integrating social entrepreneurship into university curricula. In addition, Solomon et al.'s (2019) analysis of the educational offerings and trends in this field provides a valuable overview to guide future academic initiatives.

The results of this systematic review highlight the strategic importance of continuing to research and promote the sustainable development of social entrepreneurship initiatives. The findings not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon but also lay the groundwork for the design of public policies and institutional strategies that enhance the positive impact of social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the diversity of methodological and thematic approaches presented in the studies analyzed suggests the need to adopt an interdisciplinary and collaborative perspective in future research to capture the complexity and dynamism inherent to social entrepreneurship.

#### 4. Conclusions

Social entrepreneurship is revealed as a dynamic and essential force capable of addressing the most pressing challenges of today's society. This study has contributed to a greater understanding of this emerging phenomenon and its theoretical and practical implications for generating positive social impacts.

The research on social entrepreneurship is characterized by its diversity of perspectives and methodological approaches, ranging from quantitative impact studies to ethnographies that deeply explore the experiences of entrepreneurs. This methodological richness not only nourishes a comprehensive understanding of social entrepreneurship but also highlights the inherent complexity of the phenomenon and its impact on society.

In this regard, methodological diversity offers opportunities to develop more holistic and contextually relevant theories on social entrepreneurship, considering the multitude of factors that influence the success and sustainability of these initiatives.

Moreover, the relationship between education and social entrepreneurship suggests the need for more adaptive educational theories that can incorporate training in entrepreneurial and ethical skills. This implies a constant review of pedagogical models and greater integration of education oriented toward social entrepreneurship in academic programs.

Additionally, multiple factors, such as personality traits, values, social responsibility, institutional support, and service-learning experiences, predict social entrepreneurship intentions in youth and students. Identifying these factors offers opportunities to design specific education and support programs that encourage a tendency toward social entrepreneurship from early stages. This implies the need to establish policies that promote social responsibility in educational institutions and government support for service-learning initiatives.

It is crucial to foster greater synergy between academia, the public sector, the private sector and civil society organizations. This implies establishing platforms for dialog and collaboration that enable the exchange of knowledge, resources and best practices, as well as the cocreation of innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges. In addition, interdisciplinary research efforts should be strengthened by combining perspectives from fields such as economics, sociology, psychology and management to obtain a more holistic understanding of social entrepreneurship and its impacts. It is also essential to develop robust metrics and evaluation frameworks to effectively measure and communicate the social value generated by ventures, which will help to attract impact investments and guide strategic decision making. From the educational sphere, it is recommended that social entrepreneurship be integrated transversally into curricula, fostering the development of

competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy and resilience. This should be complemented with experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, impact projects and mentoring, which allow students to apply their knowledge in real contexts and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset oriented toward the common good. Finally, it is vital to promote public policies and regulatory frameworks that provide an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship to flourish, including tax incentives, access to financing, support networks and specialized incubation and acceleration programs. By adopting these recommendations, it will be possible to foster a dynamic and sustainable social entrepreneurship ecosystem capable of generating positive and lasting transformations in our societies.

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