

Research Article

What are we talking about when we refer to humane entrepreneurship?

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Abstract

Purpose: To detail the foundations that underpin the concept of Humane Entrepreneurship (HumEnt) and to present the evolution of studies on this topic. **Problem:** Humane entrepreneurship is a novel concept within the field of entrepreneurship, and distinct approaches have discussed the phenomenon, often obscuring its understanding. **Method:** A Systematic Literature Review guided by the PRISMA protocol, using Rayyan software for study screening and Bibliometrix and VOSviewer for systematic and bibliometric analysis of 32 articles selected from the Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald, and ScienceDirect databases. **Main results:** the data showed that HumEnt does not have clearly defined boundaries but highlights its evolution and associated topics such as entrepreneurial education, ecosystems, social, community, and creative entrepreneurship, in addition to criticisms of the model. Issues such as religion and digitalization were also debated within HumEnt. **Theoretical contributions:** we present an integrated and systematized view of HumEnt, contributing to the definition of its contours and applicability in different contexts, facilitating its recognition and expansion. We also propose an agenda for future research, encouraging the continuation of academic debate and exploration of new dimensions of HumEnt. **Relevance/Originality:** HumEnt is an emerging concept that provides an opportunity to reflect on humanized entrepreneurial practices. **Social/management contributions:** The study may encourage entrepreneurs to adopt management styles focused on human, social, and environmental capital, promoting governmental actions for entrepreneurship aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. For Brazil and other Global South countries, the practice of HumEnt can leverage human capital and promote economic and social development in these contexts.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Humane Entrepreneurship, Systematic review.

Do que estamos falando quando nos referimos ao empreendedorismo humanizado?

Resumo

Objetivo: Detalhar os fundamentos que embasam o conceito de Empreendedorismo Humanizado (HumEnt) e apresentar a evolução dos estudos neste tema. **Problema:** O empreendedorismo humanizado é um conceito recente no campo do empreendedorismo, e diferentes abordagens têm discutido o fenômeno, muitas vezes dificultando a sua compreensão. **Método:** Revisão Sistemática da Literatura guiada pelo protocolo PRISMA, com uso do software Rayyan para triagem dos estudos e apoio do Bibliometrix e VOSviewer na análise sistemática e bibliométrica de 32 artigos selecionados das bases Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald e Science Direct. **Principais resultados:** Os dados mostraram que o conceito de HumEnt não tem fronteiras claramente definidas, mas evidenciam a evolução dos estudos e tópicos associados, como educação empreendedora, ecossistema, empreendedorismo social, comunitário e criativo, além de críticas ao modelo. Também foram debatidas questões como religião e digitalização no HumEnt. **Contribuições teóricas:** Apresentamos uma visão integrada e sistematizada sobre o HumEnt, contribuindo para a definição de seus contornos e sua aplicabilidade em diferentes contextos, viabilizando seu reconhecimento e expansão. Propomos também uma agenda para futuras pesquisas, incentivando a continuidade do debate acadêmico e a exploração de novas dimensões do HumEnt. **Relevância/Originalidade:** Não foi identificada outra revisão de literatura sobre o HumEnt, um conceito emergente que oportuniza refletir sobre práticas empreendedoras humanizadas. **Contribuições sociais/de gestão:** O estudo pode estimular empreendedores a adotarem gestões focadas no capital humano, social e ambiental, incentivando ações governamentais para um empreendedorismo alinhado aos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável. Para o Brasil e demais países do sul global, este estudo pode incentivar a prática do HumEnt e, consequentemente, alavancar o capital humano e promover o desenvolvimento econômico e social nesses contextos.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo, Empreendedorismo Humanizado, Revisão sistemática de literatura.

INTRODUCTION

In a context marked by social, economic, and cultural transformations, entrepreneurship has been constantly revisited by new approaches that question its traditional model, which has historically focused on the generation of wealth and jobs (Kirby et al., 2022). This dominant view, centered on profit maximization and productive efficiency, has been criticized for disregarding the social, environmental, and human dimensions of the entrepreneurial process (Marins, 2019).

Given this, it is argued that the traditional model of entrepreneurship tends to neglect human capital by adopting a productivist perspective that exclusively values the creation of value in terms of tangible and intangible benefits aimed at economic performance (Shane et al., 2003). In response to these limitations, alternative approaches have emerged, such as Social Entrepreneurship (Bacq & Janssen, 2011), Eco-entrepreneurship (Kainrath, 2009), Sustainopreneurship (Iyigun, 2015), and, more recently, Humane Entrepreneurship (HumEnt) (Kim et al., 2018; Parente et al., 2018), which promotes practices more aligned with human well-being and sustainability.

The term HumEnt, first introduced in 2016, has been gaining prominence in the field of entrepreneurship. It is defined as the integration of business growth and human development, with the goal of building sustainable organizations (Parente et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2021). The HumEnt approach seeks to reduce the dissonance between traditional entrepreneurship by prioritizing the distribution of value among stakeholders (Kim et al., 2018). In this sense, it is similar to traditional entrepreneurship in recognizing the importance of economic growth and profit generation (Parente et al., 2018), but it goes further by emphasizing value distribution and social and environmental aspects.

Although it shares characteristics with social entrepreneurship, which focuses on resolving social or environmental problems through sustainable business models (Bacq et al., 2016), HumEnt broadens this perspective by placing human well-being and the improvement of people's quality of life at the center of organizational practices (Santos & Machado, 2023). This includes employees, customers, and the community at large.

While sustainable entrepreneurship prioritizes environmental and economic sustainability, HumEnt broadens this view by including care for people and society as pillars of a humane business practice (Kainrath, 2009; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Kim et al., 2018; Parente et al., 2018). This perspective represents an evolution in the way entrepreneurship is understood, moving from focusing solely on profit to including social and environmental concerns, and human well-being as central elements of entrepreneurial activity (Cucino et al., 2023; Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldeger, and Bou Nader, 2024).

This reflects a growing awareness of the interdependence between business and society, reinforcing that profitability can and should be aligned with people's quality of life and the planet's sustainability (Aboalhool et al., 2024). However, despite the recent progress in HumEnt research, studies that deepen its conceptual and theoretical foundations, as well as its consolidation as a field of research, are still limited.

Considering this gap and the still early-stage development of the HumEnt concept, we conducted a systematic literature review (SLR). Since it is a recent concept, we noticed that studies mainly explore its effects on organizations, which may justify the absence of an SLR on the topic until now. However, we believe that the diffusion of the topic also depends on a debate about its development.

For this reason, we designed the present research to answer the following question: What foundations underpin the HumEnt concept and how has the evolution of academic production on this topic been structured? Our goal is to detail the foundations that underpin the concept of Humane Entrepreneurship and to describe the evolution of studies on this topic.

Our research is justified by four aspects. First, because new topics, such as HumEnt, lack a synthesis of academic discussions and, according to Liñán and Fayolle (2015), there is a need to organize this research to advance the field, identifying central themes, gaps, and new directions, especially when they have not been covered by an SLR (Torraco, 2016). Second, because it is timely to foster discussions about the concept within the academic sphere and beyond, as HumEnt presents itself as a proposal to face current challenges regarding economic, social, environmental, and human issues.

Third, we extend an invitation to entrepreneurship researchers for the need to broaden knowledge on the topic, in order to capture the multifaceted aspects of HumEnt. Finally, because it is a concept capable of combining diverse areas of entrepreneurship, business innovation, and sustainability (Kim et al., 2021), it is justifiable to present it for academic discussions in the Brazilian context, as well as internationally.

Furthermore, we present theoretical and practical contributions to the study of HumEnt. Regarding the theoretical aspects, we provide an integrated view of HumEnt, offering the opportunity to reflect on possible contributions that are still needed to strengthen the concept, in order to expand analytical perspectives.

Practically, this SLR can encourage entrepreneurs to adopt management styles focused on human, social, and environmental capital. We believe that the debate surrounding HumEnt can influence policymakers regarding the need for strategic actions that enable entrepreneurship to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such policies can stimulate HumEnt and the emergence of entrepreneurs oriented toward developing businesses that value quality of life and employee well-being, without disregarding the economic and social issues that impact the context in which they are embedded.

For Brazil and other countries in the Global South, the practice of HumEnt, even in the face of resource limitations, can be an opportunity to leverage human and organizational capital and promote economic and social development in these contexts. Notably, De Angelis and Vesci (2024) demonstrated that HumEnt-oriented business models generate multiple values by integrating accessibility, social inclusion, and urban regeneration.

TRADITIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP VERSUS HUMANE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The origins of entrepreneurship are complex and multifaceted, dating back to the eighteenth century, with the first formulations of classical and neoclassical economic theories. This traditional approach emerged from different schools of thought—such as the American, Austrian, British, French, and German—that interpreted entrepreneurship in distinct ways, especially concerning the role of the entrepreneur, innovation, profit, and risk (Kirby et al., 2022).

The earliest records of this traditional view come from Richard Cantillon, who defined the entrepreneur as a risk-taker who seeks profit in contexts of uncertainty, without necessarily innovating (Kirby et al., 2022). This perspective evolved until Schumpeter (1943), who broke with previous understandings and began to treat the entrepreneur as an agent of innovation.

From then on, entrepreneurship became strongly associated with innovation (Drucker, 1985), until it reached a more consolidated definition with Shane and Venkataraman (2000), who describe it as the connection between lucrative opportunities and entrepreneurial individuals. Although this opportunity-based approach significantly influenced the field, the emergence of the effectuation approach (Sarasvathy, 2008) highlighted the entrepreneur's agency.

Recently, entrepreneurship centered only on profit has been questioned, given the need to place the human being at the center of entrepreneurial practices (Alves & Gilroy, 2021; Dębicka et al., 2022). The concept of HumEnt represents an approach that integrates entrepreneurship and humanism. It is based on theories

and approaches from traditional entrepreneurship and expanded by theories of leadership, human capital, and sustainability (Kim et al., 2018; Parente et al., 2018).

In the field of traditional entrepreneurship, HumEnt revisits the notion of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), as proposed by Covin and Slevin (1989), which involves a disposition to innovate, take risks, and act proactively in the face of opportunities. This conception finds older roots in Schumpeter's (1943) theory of creative destruction, which viewed the entrepreneur as an agent of change and innovation, and in Drucker's (1985) approach, which positioned innovation as the specific function of the entrepreneur.

In the field of leadership theories, HumEnt finds support, especially in servant leadership, proposed by Gregory Stone et al. (2004), which shifts the leader's role toward empowering people, teams, and communities. This perspective aligns with transformational leadership (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004) and connects with Motivation Theory (Locke & Latham, 2004; Latham & Pinder, 2005) by valuing purpose and human development.

In the human capital dimension, HumEnt is anchored in the foundations of strategic human resource management, such as those advocated by Pfeffer (1998), emphasizing practices that promote equity, continuous development, and recognition of human singularities as essential elements for organizational sustainability. This view is strengthened by authors such as Lepak and Snell (1999) and Barney and Wright (1998), who position human resources as strategic assets for creating organizational value.

From an ethical and relational perspective, it is similar to humanistic management (Melé, 2003), which values dignity and the common good. In the field of sustainability, HumEnt integrates the pillars of corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1979; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 2010; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Phillips et al., 2003), and Sustainable Orientation (SO) (Elkington, 1994; Parente et al., 2018), incorporating economic, social, and environmental concerns into the business model.

The manifestation of HumEnt as a new theoretical approach emerged from internal debates among members of the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) in 2013; however, as previously cited, the term was only effectively used in 2016, according to records in the White Book (Kim, 2016). Subsequently, Kim et al. (2018) and Parente et al. (2018) began using this term to describe the HumEnt model, based on two approaches.

The first of these addresses the Humane Resource Orientation (HRO), which seeks to integrate leadership, entrepreneurship, and human resource management. This model suggests an approach focused on human resource management aimed at developing practices that promote employee well-being, equity, empathy, and training in organizations. For Kim et al. (2021), organizational practices aimed at humanization result in sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation within companies.

The second approach addresses the Entrepreneurial Strategic Posture (ESP), which has been divided into three dimensions: Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Sustainable Orientation (SO), and Human Resource Orientation (HRO). For Parente et al. (2018), these dimensions reflect strategic entrepreneurial behaviors that guide the creation and integration of a business model that considers care for people, society, and the environment as a central part of the business strategy.

Both models have evolved in theoretical debates in pursuit of conceptual consolidation. Generally, studies (e.g., Le, 2022; Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldegger, and Bou Nader, 2024) have adopted the dimensions proposed by Parente et al. (2021), where there is a consensus on the need to refine HEO based on the dimensions suggested by Kim et al. (2021): empathy, equity, training, and empowerment. However, to date, a validated scale to measure HumEnt has not been identified.

Although HumEnt represents an advancement over previous concepts by proposing management centered on the human being, the business, and social impact, its implementation reveals significant tensions, especially concerning the balance between entrepreneurs' work and personal life (Palumbo, 2022). Recent studies have pointed out that, by simultaneously taking on economic, social, and human responsibilities, the entrepreneur can become overburdened and experience work-life conflicts.

HumEnt suggests that entrepreneurs consider the impact of their actions on people and society, seeking a balance between financial goals and human values (Cucino et al., 2023; Sanda, 2024). This represents a challenge for entrepreneurs, who also need to take care of their personal well-being (Palumbo, 2022). On the other hand, Alves and Gilroy (2021) state that the practice of HumEnt enables a human-centered approach, promoting the development and engagement of employees compared to traditional models.

Adopting a humanistic perspective in entrepreneurship implies recognizing that, although the traditional model focused on innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity may lead to success, it does not, by itself, guarantee sustainable and inclusive results (Alves & Gilroy, 2021). The integration of a human-centered entrepreneurial orientation, which goes beyond leadership and traditional entrepreneurial principles, combined with human resource management, is seen as essential for the survival of companies in volatile business environments (Le, 2022; Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldegger, and Bou Nader, 2024).

METHOD

This study adopted a multi-method systematic review, integrating bibliometric analysis into the SLR, as proposed by Marzi et al. (2024). The process followed the guidelines of Kraus et al. (2020) to answer the research question, and was structured based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Moher et al., 2009), utilizing VOSviewer (Eck & Waltman, 2011) and Bibliometrix tools for data analysis and visualization.

The SLR followed the guidelines proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) and the PRISMA recommendations, structured into three main stages: (1) planning the review; (2) conducting the review; and (3) reporting the results. Stage 1 involved defining the objectives, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the preparation of a research protocol, as detailed in Table 1.

To complement the research protocol, Figure 1 illustrates the study selection process for the SLR, following the PRISMA flow diagram.

In Stage 2 (conducting the review), we selected articles containing the term "Humane Entrepreneurship," based on the need to ensure conceptual focus and theoretical rigor, as the searches were conducted in two distinct periods: May 2023 and December 2024, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of searches conducted across the databases

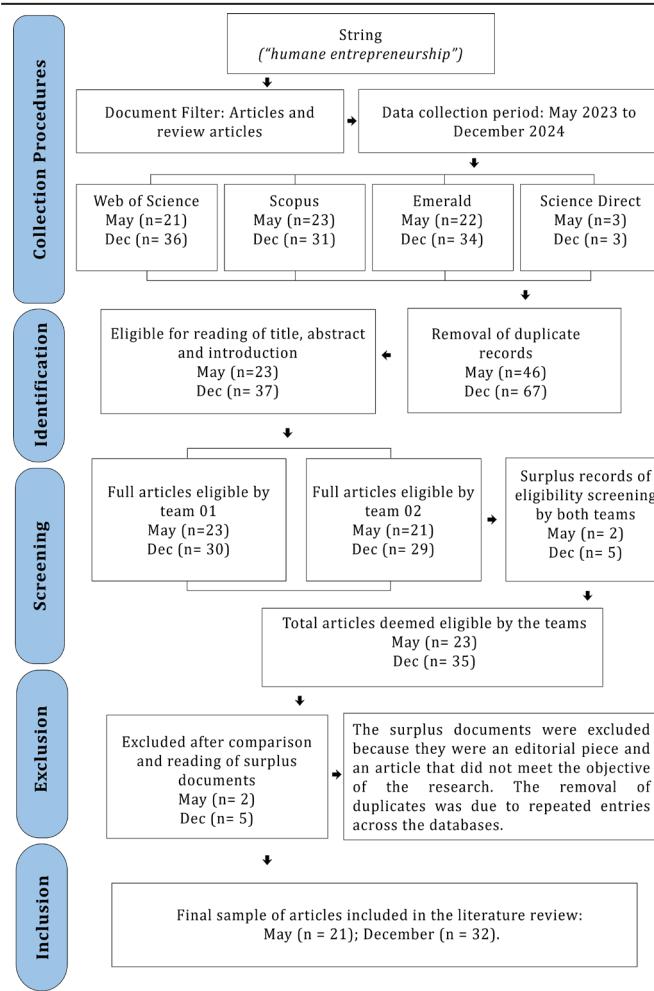
Filters	Database	May 2023	December 2024
"Humane entrepreneurship"	WoS	21	36
(1) Topic, (2) article, review article, (3) and editorial material.	Scopus	23	31
	Emerald	22	34
	Science Direct	3	3
Total		69	104

Note: Research Data (2025)..

Table 1*Systematic Research Protocol*

Defined Procedures	Detailed Description
Database	Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald and Science Direct
Publication Type	Editorial material and peer-reviewed journals
Article Language	Only articles in English
Data Interval	There was no temporal limit, but the search returned studies published between the period of 2018 (Kim et al., 2018) and 2024 (De Angelis & Vesci, 2024).
Search Filter	Articles, review articles, early access articles, and editorial material
Pilot Test with Search Terms	Terms such as ("humanized entrepreneurship", "human-centered entrepreneurship", "empathetic entrepreneurship", "conscious entrepreneurship") and related expressions ("human welfare", "stakeholder orientation", "social entrepreneurship") that refer to different concepts, often with distinct theoretical bases, focuses, or disciplinary fields (e.g., sustainability, social responsibility, well-being, or Stakeholder Theory). We excluded these terms because they did not directly focus on the theme Humane Entrepreneurship (HumEnt).
Combinatorial Key	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("humane entrepreneurship")
Inclusion Criteria	The articles were exported to the Rayyan software, which was used for systematic screening and selection of studies. The inclusion of documents followed the following criteria: presence of the terms humane entrepreneurship or humane perspective, in the title or abstract; theoretical or practical studies, editorial material, and studies published in any time period.
Exclusion Criteria	Studies that did not present data or results directly related to the HumEnt models were excluded. As this study focuses primarily on HumEnt, as defined by Parente et al. (2018), studies that approach the humanization of entrepreneurship from other perspectives, such as that of Matytsin et al. (2023), were not considered because they deal with distinct foci. As a systematization strategy, we excluded studies that did not explicitly address HumEnt or that presented tangential approaches to the central theme, as well as those that did not specifically deal with humane entrepreneurship. This is due to the objective of this study, which is oriented towards understanding the concept of HumEnt.
Data Selection Process	The data selection was conducted by two independent teams, each composed of two researchers. Both teams analyzed the documents previously exported from the databases, rigorously following the inclusion and exclusion criteria previously defined in the Rayyan software interface. A final reconciliation round was carried out between the two teams to ensure rigor and reliability in the selection.
Data Analysis Synthesis	Rayyan (to clean duplicate bibliographic records obtained from the databases), Microsoft Excel (for portfolio organization and structuring), VOSviewer and Bibliometrix (for thematic and bibliometric analyses), and Mendeley (for managing bibliographic references).

Note: Research Data (2025).

Figure 1*PRISMA Protocol*

Note: Elaborated according to Moher et al. (2009)

In the data collection conducted in May 2023, 69 articles were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, then made available on Google Drive so that each researcher, independently and individually, could perform the analyses. The researchers in Group 1 deemed 43 documents eligible (n=43) and the researchers in Group 2 deemed 41 documents eligible (n=41).

Next, the final filter was performed, involving the reading of the two surplus documents based on the eligibility comparison conducted by the researchers. Both were excluded: one because it was editorial material not directly focused on the theme, and the other because it only mentioned the term humane entrepreneurship without a contextualized discussion of the phenomenon (e.g., Kirby et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2023). These documents briefly reported that HumEnt was emerging in academic discussions in the field of entrepreneurship, without further depth regarding the orientation given to the topic or the published works. Following this, we removed the duplication of articles with identical "title + year" combinations, which resulted in a final sample of 21 documents that were analyzed.

In December 2024, we updated the search and exported 104 documents in RIS format, which were analyzed using Rayyan software. After removing 64 duplicates, the screening resulted in 31 documents eligible by Team 01 (two researchers) and 29 by Team 02 (two researchers), who marked 4 articles as 'maybe include.' After a full reading of the surplus documents by all researchers, it was decided that only one of these would be included (Santos et al., 2021), as it was a study that explored human orientation, personal values, and entrepreneurship, consistent with the HumEnt concept. The final sample comprised 32 documents.

The data were organized in an Excel spreadsheet, which allowed for the synthesis of information on title, objective/problem, methodology, main authors mentioned, context, justification, main results, conclusions, and suggestions for future research. The researchers conducted the descriptive analyses jointly, following the guidelines for SLR outlined by Torracca (2016), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3*Guidelines for the Literature Review*

Adopted Guideline	Expected Outcome	Categories and Element of Analysis
Critical analysis of the literature	Critical approaches to the topic.	Theoretical manifestation of HumEnt, evolution of the concept, discussions from its lens, critiques and proposals for new studies.
Synthesis of knowledge about the topic	Models, scales – suggestion, replication.	Concept of HumEnt
Logical and conceptual reasoning	Evolution of the topic	
Agenda for future research	Suggestion for new research based on the consulted studies.	

Note: Developed based on Torraco (2016).

For the bibliometric analyses, Bibliometrix and VOSviewer software were used. They assisted in generating reports on the authors' collaboration network, the most cited authors, and the most relevant institutional affiliations in the field. The thematic analysis was conducted based on the methodological principles of Braun and Clarke (Byrne, 2022).

The documents were jointly analyzed and classified by the researchers, resulting in the identification of four main themes: (1) genesis and consolidation of the HumEnt concept, (2) theoretical evolution of HumEnt, (3) entrepreneurship and management topics through the lens of HumEnt, and (4) complementary approaches. The themes were identified inductively, guided by the research question and objective, aimed at understanding the emergence, constitution, and theoretical consolidation of the HumEnt concept.

In Stage 3, the SLR report was prepared, with the results organized in a structured manner and comprising bibliometric analyses, thematic analysis of the studies, and the proposition of an agenda for future research. This study thus integrated bibliometric analysis into the SLR, in line with recent publications that adopted similar procedures, such as Lang et al. (2024) and Vivaldini and Corrêa (2025).

RESULTS

Sample profile

Table 4 shows a synthesis of the 32 studies, detailing the profile of each study in relation to the study type, data collection, sample type, and context investigated.

In Table 4, a growing diversification of methodological approaches in the field is observed, featuring qualitative empirical studies, such as interviews and case studies (e.g., Khurana et al., 2021a, 2021b; Buratti et al., 2022), and quantitative methods, such as questionnaires and secondary data analysis (e.g., Canestrino et al., 2023; Le, 2022). Despite the presence of both qualitative and quantitative studies, only Dębicka et al. (2022) employed mixed methods.

Furthermore, most studies are cross-sectional, which creates opportunities for long-term investigations into the impacts of HumEnt. Another aspect concerns the concentration of empirical analyses in emerging economies (India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Turkey), which suggests a relationship between HumEnt and the pursuit of sustainable development in these contexts, as explored, for instance, from the perspectives of Le (2022) and Aboalhool et al. (2024).

Bibliometric Analysis

We begin the analysis with the profile of the journals that published articles on HumEnt, as presented in Table 5.

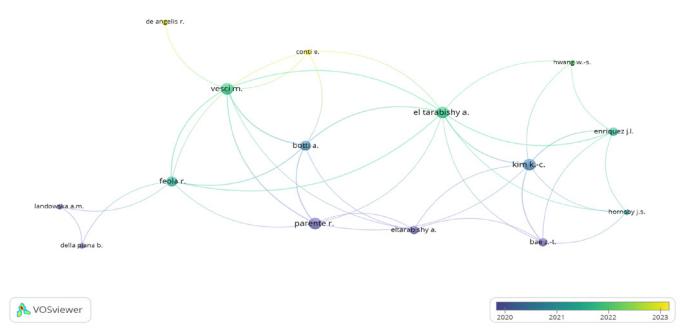
Table 5 shows that half of the scientific production is concentrated in journals classified in Quartile 2 (HICSB, JSBED, MRR, and Journal of Entrepreneurship). Among these, the journal that published the largest number of articles is JICSB. In Quartile 1, the publication of six articles (18.76%) was identified, demonstrating the novelty of the topic. Figure 2 details the temporal distribution of publications.

Figure 2*Temporal Distribution of Publications per Journal*

Note: Research Data (2025).

The three journals that stood out for recurrence over time were: 1) JICSB—11 total publications; 2) JSBM—7 publications; and 3) JSBED—4 publications. The years that represented peaks of interest in the topic were 2021 and 2022, with 8 publications each, followed by 2024 with 7 publications. These publications appeared in diverse journals, including those in areas such as intellectual capital, circular economy, and sustainability, which demonstrates the expansion of the debate into interdisciplinary and emerging fields.

We highlight that seven journals began publishing on the topic starting in 2023, such as the Journal of Intellectual Capital (Canestrino et al., 2023), MRR (Cucino et al., 2023), Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development (Vesci et al., 2023), Sustainability (Aboalhool et al., 2024), JICSB (Talim, 2024), European Journal of Innovation Management (Le et al., 2024), and Circular Economy and Sustainability (De Angelis & Vesci, 2024). This indicates the expansion of the HumEnt approach and may foster co-authorship relationships in the field, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3*Co-authorship Network*

Note: Generated using VOSviewer.

Table 4

Profile of the Analyzed Sample

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Authors	Objective	Study Type	Data Collection	Sample	Context
Kim et al. (2018)	Develop a new theory integrating entrepreneurship, human resource management, and leadership to address the global problem of wealth creation and quality employment.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Parente et al. (2018)	Propose a new theory called HumEnt and an agenda for future research.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Bae et al. (2018)	Expand research on HumEnt and identify the underlying dimensions of the concept based on empirical data.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Parente (2020)	Discuss how digitalization can facilitate the evolution of corporate social responsibility toward the adoption of HumEnt strategies.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Canestrino et al. (2023)	Investigate how more "Humane Entrepreneurial Ecosystems" emerge in different cultural contexts.	Quantitative - Ward K-means Method	Secondary data from the GLOBE Project, GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), EPI (Environmental Performance Index), and ISSP (International Social Survey Program).	36 countries	Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, and Oceania.
Khurana et al. (2021a)	Examine the impact of religion on HEO.	Qualitative	Interviews	Entrepreneurs	India
Khurana et al. (2021b)	Analyze how HumEnt is guided by the entrepreneur's religious background.	Qualitative	Interviews	Entrepreneurs	India
Landowska et al. (2020)	Discuss the role of the Theory of Morality as Cooperation in the HumEnt model.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Alves and Gilroy (2021)	Establish a theoretical convergence between the theory and practice of HumEnt as an approach that empowers the millennial workforce.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Anggadwita et al. (2021)	Explore the potential of Islamic boarding schools as spaces to support and strengthen the economy and increase student participation in entrepreneurial activities, applying the HumEnt approach.	Qualitative	Interviews	Students	Indonesia
Dębicka et al. (2022)	Analyze the perception and practice of assumptions of the HumEnt concept in Polish companies and identify the characteristics of firms with a high degree of concept implementation.	Mixed	Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI)	Small, medium, and large companies	Poland
Nam et al. (2022)	Examine the mediation of organizational trust (OT) between corporate entrepreneurship (CE) and turnover intention (TI) and test the moderation of top talent management between CE and OT, considering the human elements in entrepreneurial companies.	Quantitative with multilevel approach	Secondary data from the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training	Manufacturing sector employees	Korea
Kim et al. (2021)	Propose a framework for changing business culture and establishing engagement between organizations and their employees based on the HumEnt framework.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Parente et al. (2021)	Address preliminary issues for developing a measurement scale to validate HEO.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Parente and Kim (2021)	Introduce the special issue "Contemporary Perspectives on Social and Humane Entrepreneurship" Journal of Small Business Management.	Editorial	-	-	N/A
Santos et al. (2021)	Examine the role of entrepreneurial intentions and motivations in the interaction between human-oriented personal values and entrepreneurial behavior.	Quantitative	Secondary data from the Longitudinal Study on the Process of Emergence of High-Impact Entrepreneurs (ELITE)	Potential or nascent entrepreneurs	Spain
Buratti et al. (2022)	Investigate, based on HumEnt, how community ventures operating in depleted contexts manage to survive while achieving multiple, often conflicting, goals.	Qualitative with a case approach	Interviews	Community enterprises: Valle dei Cavalieri (VdC) and I Briganti di Cerreto (IBdC)	Italy
El Tarabishy et al. (2022)	Examine the innovative nature of the HumEnt model for developing people-centered policies for small and medium-sized enterprises.	Quantitative with linear multilevel approach	Secondary data from Korea Enterprise Data (KED)	Small, medium, and large manufacturing companies across all sectors.	Korea

Note: Research Data (2025).

Table 4

Profile of the Analyzed Sample

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Authors	Objective	Study Type	Data Collection	Sample	Context
Le (2022)	Analyze the dark side of HumEnt regarding entrepreneurs' ability to manage the interaction between work and personal life.	Quantitative	Secondary data from the 6th edition of Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)	Self-employed entrepreneurs from 27 European countries	European Countries
Muldoon et al. (2022)	Present a case report on the adoption of a startup education model in an impoverished region of Texas, USA.	Qualitative with a case report approach	Observation	Students involved in the Adopt a Startup (HIS-E) model	USA
Palumbo (2022)	Present the characteristics of an HEO (strategic posture) framework in small and medium-sized enterprises.	Qualitative with a case study approach	Interviews and direct observations	Entrepreneurs and executive managers of small and medium-sized enterprises	Italy
Robles (2022)	Explore the relationship between HumEnt, green market orientation, and sustainable corporate performance in small and medium-sized enterprises in Turkey.	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Managers of small and medium-sized enterprises	Turkey
Vesci et al. (2023)	Analyze how the HumEnt model is applied within the overall corporate strategy and business model of SMEs.	Qualitative with a case study approach	Interviews	Management teams and executives of a family-owned small and medium-sized enterprise in the winter sports sector	Switzerland
Aboalhool et al. (2024)	Explore the practical impact of humane entrepreneurship on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), demonstrating how adopting an HEO can significantly improve financial performance, employee engagement, and environmental sustainability.	Quantitative	CAWI	Executives of small and medium-sized enterprises in the technology and service sectors	Switzerland
Bjelic, Schmitt, and Baldegger (2024)	Investigate the role that the two dimensions of HumEnt (OE and HEO) play in developing a company's capacity for relational embeddedness with different categories of stakeholders.	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Founders or executive directors of small and medium-sized enterprises	Italy
Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldegger, and Bou Nader (2024)	Explorar o impacto prático do empreendedorismo humano em pequenas e médias empresas (PMEs), demonstrando como a adoção de uma HEO, pode melhorar significativamente o desempenho financeiro, o engajamento dos funcionários e a sustentabilidade ambiental.	Quantitativo	CAWI	Executivos de pequenas e médias empresas dos setores de tecnologia e serviço	Suíça
Cuncino et al. (2023)	Investigar o papel que as duas dimensões do HumEnt (OE e HEO), desempenham no desenvolvimento da capacidade de uma empresa para o enraizamento relacional com diferentes categorias de stakeholders.	Quantitativo	Questionários	Fundadores ou diretores executivos de pequenas e médias empresas	Itália
De Angelis and Vesci (2024)	Analyze whether social value creation can be qualified in circular business models (CBMs) and how the relationship between HumEnt and CBMs can be understood.	Qualitative with a case study approach	Interviews and secondary data	Director and co-founder of a social enterprise	United Kingdom
Le et al. (2024)	Assess the role of HumEnt in sustainable competitive advantage and business performance, considering the mediation of sustainable business model innovation and the influence of knowledge management in MSEs.	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Middle and senior managers in small and medium-sized enterprises	Vietnam
Rosales and Silveyra (2025)	Examine whether spirituality and well-being can improve entrepreneurial performance among different entrepreneur archetypes.	Conceptual	-	-	N/A
Sanda (2024)	Explore the human-oriented factors that predict the personal characteristics, perceived status, and emotions of creative entrepreneurs.	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Entrepreneurs in the creative industry	Ghana
Talim (2024)	Explore factors that can be considered determinants influencing the successful implementation of HumEnt in small and medium-sized enterprises.	Qualitative	Questionnaires	Owners or employees of small and medium-sized enterprises	Indonesia

Note: Research Data (2025).

Figure 6 illustrates a timeline of the concept under study, structured into four phases:

Phase 1 — Genesis of the Concept. This phase marks the formal beginning of the theoretical construction of HumEnt, starting with two studies published in 2018. One, developed by authors Ki-Chan Kim, Ayman ElTarabishy, and Zong-Tae Bae, is titled "Humane Entrepreneurship: How Focusing on People Can Drive a New Era of Wealth and Quality Job Creation in a Sustainable World," and the other, published by Roberto Parente, Ayman ElTarabishy, Massimiliano Vesci, and Antonio Botti, is named 'The Epistemology of Humane Entrepreneurship: Theory and Proposal for Future Research Agenda.' This phase is marked by the proposition of theoretical constructs, typologies, and normative foundations, without direct empirical application.

In Phase 2 — Expansion of the Conceptual Framework. This phase is marked by efforts to broaden and enrich the theoretical scope of HumEnt. Notably, Parente (Parente, 2020) discusses digitalization as a facilitating element, while Landowska et al. (2020) propose incorporating the Theory of Morality as Cooperation as Cooperation into the model. These contributions illustrate an interdisciplinary expansion of the HumEnt discussions.

Phase 3 — Initial Empirical Exploration. In this stage, the concept is applied and contextualized across different settings (India, Indonesia, Poland, Korea, and Spain), emphasizing the relationship between human values and business practices. The literature also highlights themes such as religion (Khurana et al., 2021a, 2021b), the millennial generation (Alves & Gilroy, 2021), and the refinement of construct measurement scales (Parente et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021).

Phase 4 — Expansion and Empirical Validation. The most recent phase is defined by the diversification of contexts (Ghana, Vietnam, Switzerland, United Kingdom), the empirical validation of scales, and the integration of HumEnt with emerging topics in management and sustainability. These include ecosystems (Canestrino et al., 2023), resilience in community-based enterprises (Buratti et al., 2022), public policies in Korea (El Tarabishy et al., 2022), sustainable performance (Le, 2022; Cucino et al., 2023; Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldegger, and Bou Nader, 2024; Le et al., 2024), and human and organizational factors that influence this type of entrepreneurship (Sanda, 2024; Talim, 2024). While this phase reveals significant conceptual expansion, it also reflects thematic dispersion, which may hinder consolidation due to the lack of clearly defined boundaries.

Thematic Analyses

The Manifestation of HumEnt as a Theoretical Approach

Parente et al. (2018) and Kim et al. (2018) are considered co-founders of the concept, although some researchers have classified the former authors' work as an extension of the latter authors' work. It is worth noting that Parente et al. (2018) attribute the genesis of the HumEnt concept to the International Council of Small Business (ICSB) in 2013, in a debate concerning a new definition of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior, with a focus on global social issues.

As mentioned earlier, several theories provided support for the construction of the HumEnt approach. Kim et al. (2018) based their work on studies in human resources (Pfeffer, 1998) and the principles of humanistic management (Melé, 2003), considering a human-centered approach that results from the integration of entrepreneurship, leadership, and human resource management theories.

Parente et al. (2018), in turn, broadened the HumEnt concept by integrating the theories of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) (Covin & Slevin, 1989), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001), and Servant Leadership Theory (SLT) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

The main difference between the two lies in the focus of analysis. The model by Kim et al. (2018) focuses on the individual by combining entrepreneurship with human resource management practices aimed at job creation, with an emphasis on empathy, equity, empowerment, and training. The model by Parente et al. (2018), in contrast, addresses organizational and individual levels, classifying external, internal, and individual factors that influence the strategic posture. Although theoretical diversity enriches HumEnt, this duality also makes establishing boundaries difficult. Integrating these approaches, as suggested by Bjelic, Schmitt, and Baldegger (2024), requires efforts to consolidate a more coherent and structured theoretical basis.

Theoretical Development of HumEnt

A significant milestone for the legitimization of the HumEnt concept was the publication of a special issue on the topic by the Journal of Small Business Management, as well as the mention of the theme by the Journal of Management History. The inclusion of HumEnt in these prestigious academic journals has facilitated its insertion into current debates on humane entrepreneurship.

Other studies have sparked an interesting discussion on the matter. For instance, Landowska et al. (2020) proposed the inclusion of the Theory of Morality as Cooperation Morality Theory (MAC) into the HumEnt model. The authors highlighted the need to integrate ethical demands into entrepreneurship, pointing to the concept as a missing link in the studies. For these authors, analyzing moral values and types of cooperation helps clarify the "moral entrepreneur".

The model's adjustment was also subject to discussion by Parente et al. (2021); in reviewing their own model, they suggested improving the original model for HumEnt measurement based on the dimensions of humane entrepreneurial orientation, sustainable orientation, and entrepreneurial orientation. They emphasized the possibility of coexistence between different forms of measurement and the need for conceptual alignment regarding unidimensionality or multidimensionality.

Subsequent studies introduced additional elements, such as high-performance work systems (Kim et al., 2021) and turnover intentions and talent management (Nam et al., 2022). Furthermore, focusing on the individual level of HumEnt analysis, Santos et al. (2021) sought to understand whether individuals with humane beliefs, values, and feelings would be more likely to start, manage, and expand businesses. They concluded that the interaction between personal values, motivations, and socioeconomic context are essential for understanding human entrepreneurial behavior.

The legitimization of the concept in the field of Entrepreneurship can be noted by the introduction of the concept of Humane Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (Canestrino et al., 2023), as well as by the debate on this topic within entrepreneurial education, championed by Anggadwita et al. (2021) and Robles (2022).

This type of entrepreneurship model, focused on valuing the human aspect, has demonstrated positive effects on performance. For example, El Tarabishy et al. (2022) analyzed the relationship between investment in human resources, R&D, and the profitability of HumEnt-oriented companies, concluding that the humane orientation and innovation dimensions positively influence company performance.

Validity was also tested in small businesses, demonstrating an expansion of relational capacity with stakeholders, improvement in sustainable performance, and promotion of employee well-being (Cucino et al., 2023; Aboalhool et al., 2024; Bjelic, Schmitt & Baldegger, 2024). Heilmann et al. (2020) emphasize the relevance of the human perspective in entrepreneurship for SMEs, which benefit from the advantage of stakeholder proximity. Talim (2024) also emphasized the application of HumEnt in SMEs, based on the model suggested by Kim et al. (2021), and concluded that

the effectiveness of its implementation depends on leadership, innovation, ethics, flexibility, and continuous learning among entrepreneurs.

Additionally, Bjelic, Schmitt, and Baldegger (2024) developed a strategic matrix to evaluate companies against the dimensions of HumEnt, integrating the conceptual dimensions (EO, SO, HRO, and HEO) of the two HumEnt models. The proposed matrix offers a detailed view of companies' positioning regarding their human, social, and environmental actions, facilitating the understanding and analysis of HumEnt in the studied context.

In summary, it can be observed that there is still no refinement of the HumEnt concept, particularly concerning forms of measurement and constituent elements. However, interest in the topic is demonstrated by the model's applicability in several cited studies, also emphasizing its applicability in SMEs. Next, we demonstrate the proximity of the HumEnt focus to entrepreneurship through its relationship with themes from the field.

Entrepreneurship and Management Topics Under the Lens of HumEnt

Our results indicate that HumEnt is explored in traditional entrepreneurship topics, such as education (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Robles, 2022) and ecosystems (Canestrino et al., 2023), in addition to being analyzed under perspectives like social, community, and sustainable entrepreneurship (Buratti et al., 2022; De Angelis & Vesci, 2024).

For example, the study by Robles (2022) presents the entrepreneurial education program developed by the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) and the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship (RCVCOBE) use, which is titled "Adopt a Startup (AaS-Up)," as a model of humane entrepreneurship based on sustainable innovation (HIS-E). This program combines the themes of entrepreneurial education, sustainability, ecosystem, innovation, and the quintuple helix model. Robles (2022) concluded that the program improved students' well-being and could be incorporated into the institution's entrepreneurial education.

Nam et al. (2022) investigated the human elements and their relationships with corporate entrepreneurship (CE), organizational trust (OT), and talent management (TTM). They found that CE influences OT, while TTM positively impacts individual attitudes toward organizations. The authors concluded that developing employees, promoting well-being, and supporting them are essential actions for sustainability.

Associated with creative entrepreneurship, HumEnt research has shown that the personality traits, perceived status, and emotions of creative entrepreneurs influence humane practices (Sanda, 2024). Vesci et al. (2023) also identified the influence of Italian entrepreneurs' personal values on humane entrepreneurial orientation.

Another entrepreneurship topic associated with the humane approach is small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Bjelic, Schmitt, and Baldegger (2024), Bjelic, Schmitt, Baldegger, and Bou Nader (2024), and Talim (2024) analyzed factors that contribute to the implementation of HumEnt in SMEs. Additional studies focused on the use of HumEnt in the green technology market (Aboalhool et al., 2024) and another on HumEnt's influence on stakeholder integration in companies' value chains (Cucino et al., 2023).

Regarding management, specifically focusing on leadership, Buratti et al. (2022) investigated the influence of servant leadership inspired by religious teachings in community-based enterprises (CEs) in rural regions of Italy. The study revealed that CEs emerged in areas where for-profit companies withdrew due to high costs or lack of profitability, giving way to businesses focused on community and well-being. They concluded that an integrated HumEnt logic must start from the idea of community and extend to that of enterprise.

Still on human resource management, Dębicka et al. (2022) analyzed HumEnt in traditional Polish companies. The authors concluded that, despite the high perception of HumEnt's assumptions, the implementation of compatible activities requires greater support, especially in micro and small enterprises, which should focus more on human resources.

Another management topic associated with the discussion of the theme by Parente (2020) was Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), highlighting how digital entrepreneurship has driven the evolution of this practice by integrating innovation and social responsibility. The author argued that new digital technologies are compatible with HumEnt. Knowledge management, another management topic, also showed a positive relationship with HumEnt in sustainable business models (Le et al., 2024).

Sustainability is another management theme explored in studies on the HumEnt. Le (2022) addressed sustainable supply chain management and the circular economy, highlighting the positive impact of humane management on sustainable corporate performance. De Angelis and Vesci (2024) identified an intersection between the circular economy and HumEnt in the context of small social enterprises. They concluded that circular business models generate diverse forms of social value, create job opportunities, and are HumEnt-oriented.

In summary, the entrepreneurship themes explored in conjunction with the theme under study, identified in our literature review, include ecosystems, entrepreneurial education, social entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship, community entrepreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship, and digital or creative entrepreneurship. Regarding management, the prominent themes are servant leadership, corporate social responsibility, sustainable supply chain management, knowledge management, and sustainable business models. Most of these represent frontier topics, evidencing the need for further research to define the epistemological boundaries of HumEnt.

Complementary Perspectives

Religion is a complementary theme identified in four studies. Specifically, humane values in entrepreneurship were investigated in conjunction with religious precepts. For instance, Anggadwita et al. (2021) analyzed the Al-Ittifaq Islamic boarding school (Ent) by evaluating the similarity between HumEnt with the Islamic vision, which values leadership, respect, and commerce. They concluded that, despite not prioritizing profit, the boarding school promotes well-being, belonging, and the development of skills and entrepreneurial innovation.

Two other studies discussed religion (Khurana et al., 2021a, 2021b), selecting entrepreneurs from Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, and Sikhism and concluded that the entrepreneur's religious background played a significant role in humane orientation. Rosales and Silveyra (2025) also argued that the integration of spiritual values—that is, an emphasis on the spiritual well-being of entrepreneurial ecosystems—can be fundamental to overcoming challenges and ensuring long-term success.

Two studies offer distinct perspectives. The first, by Alves and Gilroy (2021), advocates for HumEnt as a response to the challenges faced by the millennial generation. They argue that this generation is marked by difficulties and pressures that hinder adaptation to labor market rules and adopting HumEnt can include and boost this generation, promoting entrepreneurship that benefits all stakeholders.

On the other hand, Palumbo (2022) presents a critical perspective on HumEnt, especially regarding the work-life relationship of entrepreneurs. He analyzed HumEnt's impact on work-life balance and concluded that, although engagement and subjective well-being can mitigate conflicts, the lack of long-term regulation can lead entrepreneurs to emotional exhaustion.

Synthesis of Results

In order to synthesize the analytical elements of this literature review, we developed [Figure 7](#) for a better understanding of the conceptual trajectory of the HumEnt approach.

[Figure 7](#) shows that HumEnt is a recent approach that has gained traction in the field of entrepreneurship over the last six years. This debate was based on two originating approaches—entrepreneurial orientation and sustainable orientation—which also incorporate elements of management and human resource policies. The body of analyzed publications demonstrates that the approach permeates issues associated with the entrepreneur and organizations, and seeks to impact the economic, social, and institutional context.

The theoretical discussions revealed a fruitful debate, illustrating HumEnt's effects on entrepreneurs and companies but which, at the same time, bring contradictions to the surface, such as the emotional overload of entrepreneurs. Our results further showed that HumEnt has been incorporated into entrepreneurship topics, such as entrepreneurial education and ecosystems, but additional studies will be necessary to distinguish the approach's boundaries from others associated with sustainability and leadership. Finally, it is important to highlight two aspects that emerged in the texts—morality and religiosity—which require close attention.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical implications

This study systematized and explained the principles of HumEnt. By addressing HumEnt as an evolving theoretical construct, we highlight the difficulty of implementing measurement and empirical validations of two distinct HumEnt models given that the seminal works by Kim et al. (2018) and Parente et al. (2018) do not address the issue of concept measurement.

We identified significant obstacles to the consolidation of HumEnt, especially due to its interdisciplinary nature, which involves overlapping knowledge areas such as social and sustainable entrepreneurship presenting a challenge for the approach. Furthermore, studies have emphasized the influence of subjective factors such as morality and religion, which make its application even more complex. These challenges, in turn, redirect the discussion and open space for new interpretations.

Thus, we emphasize that, in addition to conceptual similarities, studies on HumEnt have adopted complementary approaches in an attempt to legitimize the concept. For instance, authors drawing on the model by Kim et al. (2021) propose measuring it with an emphasis on humane-oriented human resource management, meaning they focus on employee well-being and development. Meanwhile, followers of the Parente et al. (2021) model seek to measure HumEnt with an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurial orientation, meaning they concentrate on companies and their innovative performance.

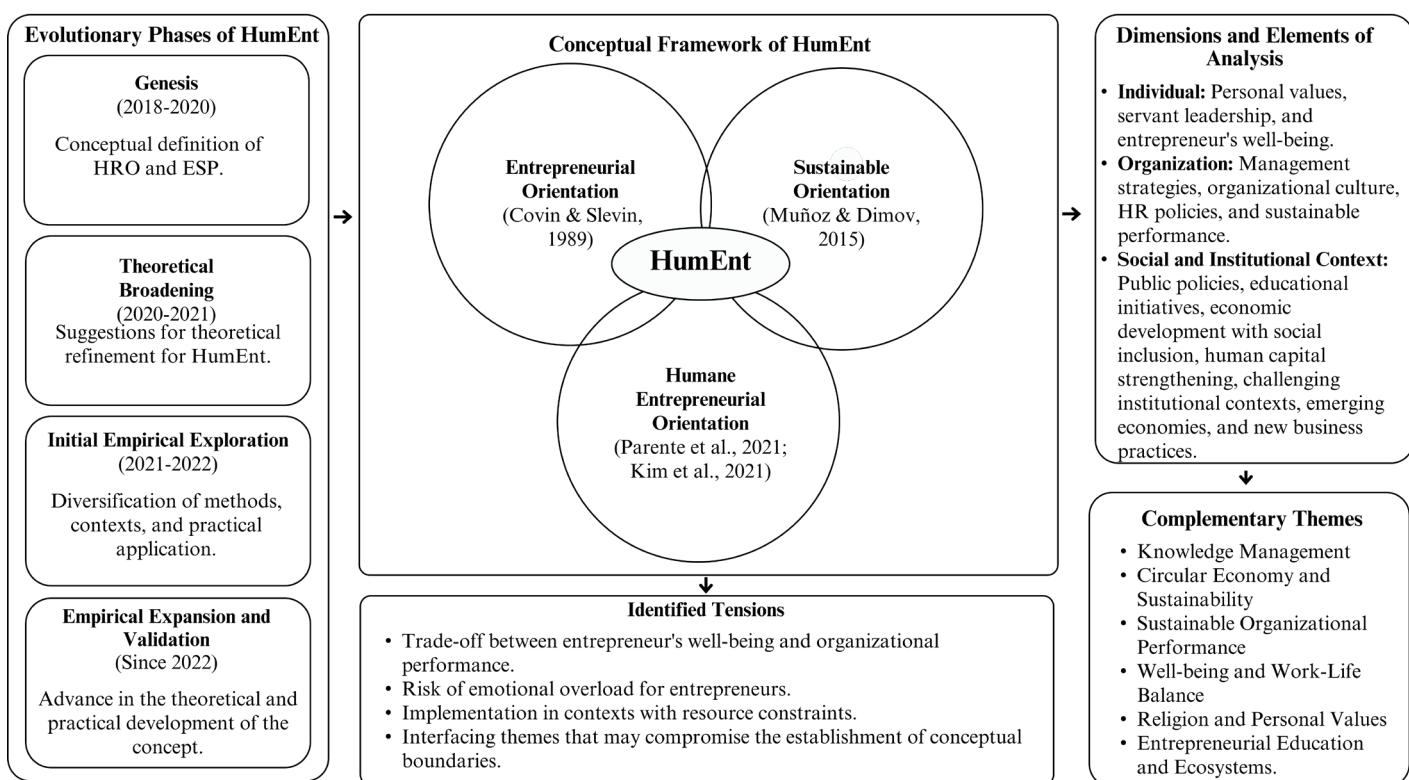
Finally, this SLR positions HumEnt as an invitation to critically review traditional conceptions of entrepreneurship, promoting a plural and inclusive research agenda. We thus encourage the development of future investigations that seek to measure, empirically validate, and apply the HumEnt model in different contexts, contributing to the theoretical and practical advancement of the field.

Practical Implications

The first practical implication of this study lies in the discussion of the HumEnt concept as an alternative to the dominant economic model. HumEnt proposes a business approach that does not solely aim for profit but rather for the creation of shared value, integrating economic, social, and environmental objectives (Aboalhool et al., 2024; Cucino et al., 2023).

Figure 7

Synthesis of the Conceptual Trajectory of HumEnt



Note: Research Data (2025).

The adoption of HumEnt principles such as empathy, equity, training, and empowerment can inspire more inclusive, collaborative, and innovative work environments (Palumbo, 2022; Bjelic, Schmitt & Baldegger, 2024). Such organizational values, though theoretically derived, have the potential to inform public policies, entrepreneurship programs, and private initiatives aimed at the humanization of business.

This study may also guide entrepreneurial education to go beyond the technical-instrumental logic incorporating ethical, social, and environmental values that prepare individuals to act ethically and responsibly in the business context (Robles, 2022). Complementarily, it emphasizes the relevance of humane entrepreneurial ecosystems (Canestrino et al., 2023)—capable of offering support, collaboration networks, and policies that stimulate practices aligned with HumEnt principles.

Limitations

This SLR presents some limitations. The selection of articles was restricted to the Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald, and ScienceDirect databases which may have excluded studies published in other databases. Furthermore, the exclusion of databases considered part of gray literature (such as Google)—which do not consider peer reviewed or indexed documents—limits the scope of the results.

Additionally, the inclusion criteria privileged studies focused on the HumEnt concept which may have excluded complementary conceptual approaches. Finally, we recognize that, as an emerging concept, the amount of available literature is limited. Future investigations should continue to explore the theme's evolution given that our results indicate that the concept is still in the phase of theoretical consolidation.

Future Research Agenda

With the aim of advancing academic investigations, we present structuring propositions across the theoretical, empirical, contextual, and methodological dimensions that can contribute to the future of HumEnt and facilitate dialogue with different researcher profiles.

a) Absence of Critical Studies

The literature on HumEnt still lacks critical studies making it essential to deepen the structuring propositions across the following dimensions:

Theoretical: Can incorporating other elements, like Morality Theory (Landowska et al., 2020), and employee engagement (Palumbo, 2022) broaden the understanding of HumEnt? How might these elements interact to enrich the theoretical debate?

Empirical: What are the effects of HumEnt on the entrepreneur's physical and emotional health? Investigating these aspects can provide valuable insights for the well-being of those involved in the entrepreneurial process.

Contextual: Under what conditions can HumEnt fail? Can cultural and institutional factors distort or challenge HumEnt principles in different contexts? How might different national realities impact its implementation?

Methodological: What dialectical approaches can be applied to map the paradoxes of HumEnt and deal with its complexities? Research needs to explore how different methods can address these paradoxes.

b) Practical Dimension

There is a vast field to explore the operationalization of HumEnt especially regarding the application of practical interventions. Some propositions include:

Theoretical: Are the key elements—empathy, equity, training, and empowerment—sufficient to measure the effectiveness of HumEnt? Can these pillars be expanded?

Empirical: Can HumEnt be considered a new paradigm in the field of entrepreneurship? How does it represent an advancement over traditional approaches?

Contextual: What is the role of public policies in the dissemination and adoption of HumEnt? Are there governmental actions that facilitate or hinder its implementation? How might the cultural and economic context favor or restrict HumEnt practices?

Methodological: How can the effectiveness of HumEnt be tested? What instruments and metrics can be developed to measure its impact? Are there possibilities to unify the two instruments suggested by researchers?

c) Technological Dimension

Studies have indicated that HumEnt connects with digitalization (Parente, 2020). Digitalization, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and automation offer new opportunities to humanize work practices, but they also impose challenges, which can be explored through propositions that include the following dimensions:

Theoretical: How can innovation models be associated with HumEnt practice? What strategies can be devised for incorporating new technologies and promoting HumEnt?

Empirical: How can HumEnt manifest in different types of entrepreneurship, such as technological entrepreneurship? What are the negative effects of technological entrepreneurship on HumEnt, and what alternatives can mitigate them?

Contextual: How can technological sectors apply HumEnt principles? What alternatives can be included in innovation ecosystems to prioritize HumEnt?

Methodological: What methods can be used to simultaneously capture technological and human impacts?

Although the literature lacks concrete evidence on HumEnt's impacts on AI, recent studies—such as Matytsin et al. (2023)—are beginning to explore how technology can contribute to more humane working conditions.

d) Social Dimension

HumEnt proposes an advancement in the entrepreneurship paradigm, prioritizing the distribution of value among stakeholders and incorporating fundamental ethical values (Kim et al., 2018). We suggest exploring the following aspects in this dimension:

Theoretical: How does HumEnt distinguish itself from other approaches to social and sustainable entrepreneurship? What are the epistemological boundaries between human resource management and HumEnt? Is there a relationship between ethical, moral, and religious values and HumEnt principles?

Empirical: How do factors like gender, religion, and perceived status influence adherence to HumEnt? Which social groups benefit (or are overburdened) when adopting this model?

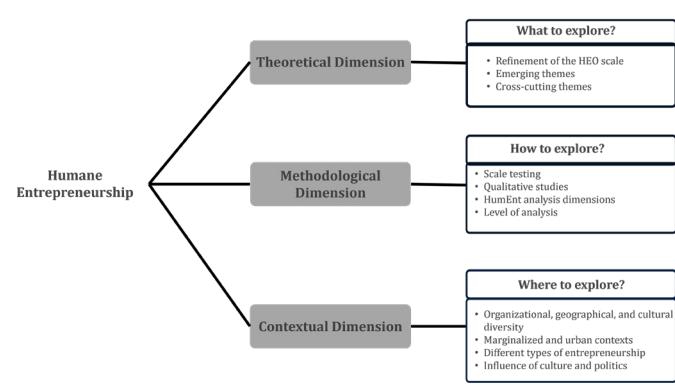
Contextual: How does HumEnt apply in contexts of economic inequality or informality? What effects does HumEnt produce in the economic and social context?

Methodological: What are the perceptions of multiple stakeholders regarding the impact of HumEnt?

This social dimension illustrates HumEnt's potential effect on marginalized groups, such as women, immigrants, and youth in peripheral communities. Adopting HumEnt in less developed places could contribute to explore the impact of the context of scarcity. These and other interrelationships and gaps in HumEnt can also be explored by following the conceptual map presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Conceptual Map of HumEnt based on the Analyzed Studies



Note: Research Data (2025).

Figure 8 illustrates a starting point for additional studies on the topic, based on the contributions of previous research. For example, in the theoretical dimension, we highlight the call by Parente et al. (2021) for the refinement of the HEO scale, recommending its validation and the conduct of new studies aimed at identifying the factors that act as antecedents and consequences of this construct.

Regarding emerging themes, Kim et al. (2021) indicate that organizational ambidexterity can foster innovation without compromising employee well-being, a central element of HumEnt. However, the effects of ambidexterity on HumEnt should be explored more broadly.

We also emphasize the role of emotions and psychological aspects in entrepreneurship. In particular, HumEnt proposes a model that values well-being, empathy, and emotional balance—elements that still lack greater empirical investigation, as suggested by Palumbo (2022) and Sanda (2024). This demonstrates the need to understand how emotions influence HumEnt.

Studies such as those by Robles (2022) and Anggadwita et al. (2021) indicate that educational programs based on HumEnt can generate a positive impact on student well-being and train more socially and ethically conscious entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how entrepreneurial education can include precepts aligned with HumEnt.

Le et al. (2024) suggest that the strategic use of organizational knowledge can enhance the positive effects of HumEnt, promoting decisions more aligned with human and sustainable principles. Thus, there is a need to explore strategies for capturing organizational knowledge to guide HumEnt.

Regarding cross-cutting themes, Canestrino et al. (2023) introduce the concept of Humane Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and point to the need to understand how HumEnt connects to broader territorial, cultural, and institutional dynamics. This demonstrates the importance of investigating contextual factors and their influence on HumEnt.

Studies such as those by Le (2022) and De Angelis & Vesci (2024) demonstrate HumEnt's potential to strengthen business practices aimed at environmental, social, and economic sustainability, but there are still gaps regarding this relationship across different sectors and contexts. In this sense, future studies can explore whether the HumEnt approach can foster the adoption of sustainability and circular economy models, both in small and large companies.

In the methodological dimension, testing scales involves the creation and refinement of instruments to measure HumEnt (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Buratti et al., 2022). Furthermore, empirical tests of HEO's effects in different organizational configurations can reveal HumEnt's impact on diverse types of companies, and longitudinal studies could allow for analyzing the evolution of HumEnt and its effects over time (Palumbo, 2022; Rosales & Silveyra, 2025).

Regarding levels of analysis, various possibilities can be explored. At the micro level, it is important to investigate how entrepreneurs' emotions, values, motivations, and well-being influence their engagement with HumEnt (Palumbo, 2022; Rosales & Silveyra, 2025; Sanda, 2024). At the meso level, we suggest analyzing how organizations—including family, technological, traditional, social, and sustainable businesses—apply HumEnt (Anggadwita et al., 2021). In turn, at the macro level, we recommend exploring HumEnt's impacts on economic, social, and environmental aspects and its effects on local economic development, social inclusion, and sustainability (c). Furthermore, multilevel approaches can broaden the theoretical understanding of HumEnt.

In the contextual dimension, we propose exploring organizational and geographic diversity, as well as the influence of cultural, political, and contextual factors (Anggadwita et al., 2021). It is important for future studies to explore HumEnt in different types of organizations, such as family businesses, with their own dynamics and values; social ventures, focused on collective impact; and sustainable ventures, committed to environmentally responsible practices, as well as technological ventures.

We further emphasize the importance of expanding the geographic and cultural variety of studies, with investigations in European companies (Dębicka et al., 2022), emerging economies (Le, 2022; De Angelis & Vesci, 2024), and countries with distinct levels of innovation, in order to understand how context influences the adoption of HumEnt (Canestrino et al., 2023). We also suggest conducting research in marginalized urban contexts and studies focused on exploring failure experiences, to evaluate how HumEnt manifests in scenarios of greater vulnerability (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Buratti et al., 2022).

Finally, regarding the cultural context, we highlight the need to investigate the influence of culture and politics, recognizing that cultural factors shape the practices and perceptions of HumEnt (Dębicka et al., 2022; Canestrino et al., 2023), including its relationship with the well-being of entrepreneurs and stakeholders (Rosales & Silveyra, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study detailed the foundations and evolution of Humane Entrepreneurship (HumEnt), revealing its structure, inconsistencies, and gaps. The results indicate that HumEnt is an emerging field, still in the consolidation phase, with diverse theoretical approaches, such as the human resource orientation and entrepreneurial strategic posture models, which have recently integrated the humane entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, we observed that some authors have suggested variables complementary to the initially proposed models, such as morality and religion. This may obscure HumEnt's theoretical contours and hinder its application in academic and business contexts.

Although discussions on HumEnt are still incipient, this study demonstrates that this approach has introduced a new dimension in entrepreneurship studies by bringing issues related to the environment, society, and individuals to the center of the debate. The analysis enabled us to identify four distinct phases of conceptual evolution, reflecting growing academic interest and thematic diversification surrounding the phenomenon.

As a theoretical contribution, this study reinforces the academic debate on an emerging theme in the field of entrepreneurship, pointing out its limits and weaknesses. At the same time, our study contributes to illustrating the evolution of a new approach in this field of study. While we present the convergences and aspects being explored in the study of HumEnt, we also highlight divergent aspects in the concept's definition, attesting to the need for further evolution of studies.

Finally, the results of this SLR can guide researchers and scholars interested in the topic, situating them in relation to its development and the gaps to be explored in future research. We hope the discussions presented here serve as a reference for different types

of entrepreneurs who seek to adopt practices aligned with the principles of humane entrepreneurship. Ultimately, our review may encourage and raise awareness among public policy formulators to promote initiatives and programs that stimulate entrepreneurship from an inclusive perspective.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' statement of individual contributions

Roles	Contributions			
	Santos J. M.	Machado H. P. V.	Pereira G. S.	Santos S. C.
Conceptualization	■	■	■	
Methodology	■			
Software	■	■	■	■
Validation	■	■		
Formal analysis	■	■		
Investigation	■	■		
Resources				■
Data Curation			■	
Writing - Original Draft	■			
Writing - Review & Editing	■	■	■	
Visualization	■	■	■	■
Supervision		■		
Project administration	■	■		
Funding acquisition	■	■	■	■

Note: Acc. CRedit (Contributor Roles Taxonomy): <https://credit.niso.org/>

Open Science: Data availability

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study was published in the article itself.

Badge Description



The entire dataset supporting the results of this study was published in the article itself.



Not applicable



Not applicable



<https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.esbj.e2497pr>



Not applicable

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