

## **O SENSO DE PERTENCIMENTO NO EMPREENDEDORISMO: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DA LITERATURA**

### *THE SENSE OF BELONGING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW*

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**Comunicação:**

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## **O SENSO DE PERTENCIMENTO NO EMPREENDEDORISMO: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DA LITERATURA**

### **Objetivo do estudo**

O senso de pertencimento impacta diversas áreas da vida humana, incluindo o empreendedorismo. Este artigo tem como objetivo investigar a literatura para identificar quais temas se destacam na relação entre o senso de pertencimento e o empreendedorismo.

### **Relevância/originalidade**

A literatura acadêmica tem negligenciado amplamente a relação entre o senso de pertencimento e o empreendedorismo. Esta pesquisa apresenta uma abordagem original e holística, integrando perspectivas de várias disciplinas, como psicologia, sociologia e estudos de gênero.

### **Metodologia/abordagem**

Uma revisão sistemática da literatura, identificou publicações, autores e conceitos, e categorizamos os temas de pesquisa encontrados em agrupamentos. Realizada em janeiro de 2024 usando as bases de dados ISI Web of Knowledge e Scopus, selecionando artigos publicados entre 2019 e 2023.

### **Principais resultados**

Identificamos sete grupos de pesquisa: imigração, gênero, psicologia, inovação, relações sociais, estudantes e empreendedorismo social. Destacam o interesse acadêmico em pesquisas sobre imigrantes, e enfatizam a ideia de que um sentimento de não pertencimento pode ser positivo para mulheres empreendedoras.

### **Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas**

A metodologia aplicada nesta revisão sistemática da literatura se mostrou eficaz em fornecer uma visão clara e replicável dos estudos existentes, permitindo a identificação de lacunas no conhecimento e oportunidades para futuras pesquisas.

### **Contribuições sociais/para a gestão**

Oferecemos direções claras e implicações práticas para formuladores de políticas, educadores e líderes empresariais. Promover um ambiente inclusivo incentivando o senso de pertencimento pode ser uma estratégia eficaz para fomentar o empreendedorismo sustentável e inovador, em tempos de incerteza econômica e social.

**Palavras-chave:** Empreendedorismo, Segurança psicológica, Senso de pertencimento, Imigrantes, Revisão sistemática da literatura

## *THE SENSE OF BELONGING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW*

### **Study purpose**

The sense of belonging impacts various areas of human life, including entrepreneurship. This paper aims to investigate the literature to identify which themes stand out in the relationship between the sense of belonging and entrepreneurship.

### **Relevance / originality**

The academic literature has largely overlooked the relationship between the sense of belonging and entrepreneurship. This research presents an original, holistic approach, integrating perspectives from various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and gender studies.

### **Methodology / approach**

Through a systematic literature review, we identified publications, authors, and concepts, and categorized the research themes found into clusters. The search was conducted in January 2024 using the ISI Web of Knowledge and Scopus databases, selecting articles published between 2019 and 2023

### **Main results**

We identified seven research clusters: immigration, gender, psychology, innovation, social relations, students, and social entrepreneurship. highlight the academic interest in research on immigrants, and the idea that a sense of non-belonging can be positive for female entrepreneurs is emphasized.

### **Theoretical / methodological contributions**

The methodology applied in this systematic literature review proved effective in providing a clear and replicable view of existing studies, allowing the identification of gaps in knowledge and opportunities for future research.

### **Social / management contributions**

We offer clear directions and practical implications for policymakers, educators, and business leaders. Fostering an inclusive environment by encouraging a sense of belonging can be an effective strategy for fostering sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship in times of economic and social uncertainty.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Psychological safety, Sense of belonging, Immigrants, Systematic literature review

## **THE SENSE OF BELONGING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Introduction**

The sense of belonging impacts various areas of human life, including entrepreneurship (Redhead & Bika, 2022). Maslow (1943) suggests that belonging to a group or community provides individuals with a sense of security and support, encouraging the innovation and creativity needed to undertake entrepreneurial activities (Filstad et al., 2019). Perez-Encinas et al. (2021) highlight that a sense of belonging is closely linked to entrepreneurial success, promoting an environment where entrepreneurs feel valued and motivated to achieve their goals. This research aims to investigate which themes stand out in the relationship between the sense of belonging and entrepreneurship in the literature.

The inclusion and social connection provided by the feeling of belonging to a group are crucial for the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs (Mkhize et al., 2020), positively influencing their ability to handle the challenges and risks inherent to entrepreneurship (Erogul et al., 2021). This dynamic relationship between belonging and entrepreneurship is evident in contexts where community support and social networks play critical roles in the development and sustainability of businesses (Redhead & Bika, 2022; Filstad et al., 2019).

Baixinho et al. (2022) describe the sense of belonging as a perception of acceptance, connection, and inclusion of the individual within a group or community, which serves as a source of motivation (Maslow, 1943). Understanding belonging provides insights into political, cultural, and gender structures in entrepreneurship (Redhead & Bika, 2022). Perez-Encinas et al. (2021) emphasize the relevance of the notion of belonging in entrepreneurial communities, influencing their success and sustainability (Mkhize et al., 2020), while Erogul et al. (2021) discuss the evolution of belonging in entrepreneurship as a factor in the shift from material to affective aspects.

As a creative and innovative activity, entrepreneurship involves individuals introducing something new to the market (Ratten & Usmanij, 2021). In a 2022 report from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), Professor Donna Kelley states: "Entrepreneurs are not only reshaping the business landscape but also driving significant social and environmental advancements." Entrepreneurship creates new businesses and products (Dalhoum & Jarboui, 2016), motivating individuals to profit (Davidsson et al., 2011), although it involves risks with potential adverse consequences (Adrovic, 2013).

Mkhize et al. (2020) argue that the sense of belonging is likely to impact the success and sustainability of community entrepreneurship. In the challenging context of entrepreneurship, coupled with scarce resources, Thorgren & Omoredede (2018) show that developing entrepreneurs' motivation and resilience is crucial. In these environments of continuous economic disruption, fostering a sense of belonging can strengthen the stability and support necessary for new businesses to thrive in times of uncertainty (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Such dynamics and processes in entrepreneurial activities, when related to social values, lack detail (Redhead & Bika, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to improve the understanding of these social integrations and the outcomes in businesses (Peng et al., 2022). This research proposes to investigate which topics are highlighted in the literature on the sense of belonging and entrepreneurship, addressing the following research question: What themes are highlighted in the literature regarding the relationship between the sense of belonging and entrepreneurship?

The systematic literature review (SLR) methodology was adopted for its transparency and replicability, as per Littell et al. (2008). The search was conducted in the ISI Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases in January 2024, covering articles published between 2019 and

2023. Initially, 825 articles were identified. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 132 articles were selected for detailed analysis. These articles were examined to identify the main journals and authors dedicated to the themes, the topics addressed, and the concepts cited, providing a comprehensive and up-to-date view of this area of research.

Although academic research on entrepreneurship dates back to 1920 (Ferreira et al., 2015), its association with the sense of belonging began in 2009 with the study by Despina Nazou (Nazou, 2009). The sample analysis reveals seven main research clusters: immigration, gender, psychology, innovation, social relations, students, and social entrepreneurship. Studies on immigrant entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurs are particularly prominent, highlighting how the sense of belonging can influence the choices and challenges faced by these groups. The sense of belonging not only enhances psychological well-being and job satisfaction but also promotes innovation and resilience in entrepreneurs facing adversity.

This research contributes by incorporating the concept of belonging into the field of entrepreneurship, traditionally explored in psychology and sociology studies. We reveal the need to investigate how different cultural and economic contexts influence the perception of belonging among entrepreneurs of various ethnic and social backgrounds. We also highlight the lack of longitudinal studies that track the effects of belonging over time on the development and success of entrepreneurs, corroborating Baker & Welter (2020) and Jones & Warhuus (2017).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Sense of Belonging**

The need to belong can be described as a "strong desire to form and maintain lasting interpersonal bonds," a need for "frequent and pleasant interpersonal interactions within the context of a stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's well-being" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 522). The feeling of being connected, accepted, and included in a group or community (Jin et al., 2023) positively influences environmental awareness and community connection (Bukhari & Rosyidah, 2023). Associated with an individual's subjective well-being (Haim-Litevsky et al., 2023), its benefits extend to the workplace, where quality social relationships and effective commitment lead to greater satisfaction and well-being (Abigail, 2023).

Hagerty et al. (1996, p.92) conceptualize the construct of belonging as the need for "an experience of personal involvement in a system or environment, making people feel an integral part of that system or environment." Feelings of belonging to groups perceived as social categories arise from perceived intragroup similarity, while the quality of interpersonal bonds predicts belonging to groups perceived as networks (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2013). Although Block (2018) finds growing social isolation, there is an interest in individuals building community, and there seems to be an awareness of the need to create places of belonging, as stated by Eshel et al. (2023). Perceived belonging negatively predicts social and individual resilience and positively predicts symptoms of distress, mediating the effects of demographic variables on psychological variables. (Eshel et al., 2023).

The definition of the construct of belonging is not consensual. Deci and Ryan (2012) warn that, on the one hand, the desire to belong is recognized as one of the most fundamental psychological needs (self-determination theory); on the other hand, it is considered synonymous with other constructs, such as connectedness or affiliation. Humans need frequent personal contact or conflict-free interactions with others. Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that it is the perception of an interpersonal bond marked by stability, affective concern, and continuity into the future, even in the absence of the other person. Checa and Oberst (2021) contest these thoughts, stating that belonging is a need for affiliation that is highly satisfied



through personal contacts. However, belonging requires individuals to believe that these personal contacts care about them.

The current literature on belonging is vast and spans a variety of disciplines. Mahar et al. (2013), summarizing the literature up to that point, present characteristics and understandings of the feeling of belonging:

- A personal feeling or perception of an individual, measured through relationships or interactions with others in a group or system.
- Feeling needed, important, integral, valued, respected, or feeling in harmony with the group or system. There must be connectivity and a perception of cohesion with a group.
- The contextual nature of the sense of belonging, its fluidity, and its evolution as a passive or active experience.
- Feeling valued, respected, and the influence of an individual's opinions and interactions with the group.
- A sense of reciprocity, the exchange of feelings or beliefs between the individual and the group of interest, a sense of acceptance by the group.
- The influence of the environment: an individual may feel a sense of belonging to more than one relational group, system, or entity simultaneously, with each situation encompassing a unique sense of belonging to that relationship.
- Multiplicity and conflict in the sense of belonging may be internalized by the individual through adaptation to certain environments or contexts and may, therefore, be better characterized as a fluid or transient feeling.

Hagerty and Patusky (1995, p. 174) propose two fundamental characteristics of belonging: (i) the person expects to be valued, needed, or important in relation to other people, groups, objects, organizations, environments, or spiritual dimensions; (ii) the person expects an alignment or congruence with other people, groups, objects, organizations, or spiritual dimensions through shared or complementary characteristics. Similarly, Jena and Pradhan (2018) highlight the relevance of the social environment where these relationships occur.

The need for belonging is essential, as maintaining the personal motivation of team members to overcome interpersonal barriers is vital. Feitosa and Salas (2021) add to this by showing the difficulty of developing team spirit, a sense of identification, without team members developing a strong sense of belonging (Schaubroeck & Yu, 2017). Dixon (2017, p. 6) specifies: "Teams that build routines, including periodic face-to-face meetings, maintain a level of psychological safety that supports learning behaviors and increases connectivity and belonging."

## **2.2 Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is the process of starting a new business or venture, involving creativity, innovation, and the ability to identify and seize opportunities (Bandur, 2023). It is characterized by the development of a business model, acquisition of resources, and the entrepreneur's full assumption of the success and failure of the venture (Mulyanita, 2021). According to Tiessen (1997), there are two primary functions of entrepreneurship: generating variety through innovation and leveraging resources, both internally and externally to the business.

Ferreira et al. (2015) distinguish the seminal articles by Knight (1921) and Schumpeter (1934) as the starting points of entrepreneurship studies, gaining prominence in the 1980s with the work of Kent et al. (1982) in the Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship. Cornelius et al. (2006) highlights the growing interest in the topic during the 1970s and 1980s, driven by the oil crisis,

market globalization, and economic recessions. They show that entrepreneurship, by 2006, is moving towards maturity, overcoming the dilemmas of novelty.

Based on a bibliometric analysis, Meyer et al. (2014) present the constant evolution of studies in the 1990s, confirming Cornelius et al. (2006), as they state that entrepreneurship became a consolidated academic discipline by the late 2000s. The authors propose a taxonomy with five groupings of knowledge areas in entrepreneurship research. The themes of this SLR are included in Group B: demographic and personality determinants of entrepreneurship. In this group, we find studies that relate entrepreneurship to gender, social, ethnic, and migrant entrepreneurship.

Shane and Venkataraman (2000) highlight the dilemmas in conceptualizing entrepreneurship, attempting to relate the presence of profitable opportunities and entrepreneurial individuals. McKelvey (2004) defines entrepreneurship as the creation of a new order, involving out-of-equilibrium dynamic processes with many interacting parts and more complex causality. Dimov (2020) views entrepreneurship as a process in which several related activities occur sequentially. They offer a framework that integrates the existence, perception, and investigation of possibilities with the intervention of individuals in a business creation environment.

Entrepreneurs possess strengths in psychological capital, human capital, and social capital, which are essential for creating and implementing new ideas (Shanimon et al., 2020), playing a crucial role in promoting economic development, creating employment opportunities, and contributing to social change (Tripathi et al., 2022). Shepherd and Haynie (2009) state that entrepreneurs are distinct in some way, and this is a central theme in entrepreneurship literature. According to some authors, entrepreneurs satisfy their psychological need for distinction at the expense of another basic psychological need, the need for belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1985).

### 3. Methodology

Systematic literature reviews (SLRs) provide a methodology that allows for the creation of a comprehensive article based on a literature review of a topic without the need for empirical data collection (Kraus et al., 2020). An SLR should summarize and integrate existing knowledge in the literature on a subject, always in an objective and clear manner (Rowley & Slack, 2004). Okoli & Schabram (2010) specify that an SLR aims to answer a research question about the status quo of a field of study (Kraus et al., 2020).

The temporal scope considered will be from January 2019 to December 2023, using the Scopus and ISI Web of Knowledge databases. As an inclusion criterion, we adopted the characteristics of belonging presented by Mahar et al. (2013), where the sense of belonging is defined as a relationship between the individual and the group to which they belong. Therefore, only studies that fit this definition of the sense of belonging were analyzed. Seeking to encompass all publications related to the topic, we defined a comprehensive search algorithm (string) based on the wording of the objective: ("entrepren\*") AND ("belong\*").

Table 1 presents all the parameters used in the searches, ensuring transparency and replicability, as per Pollock and Berge (2018).

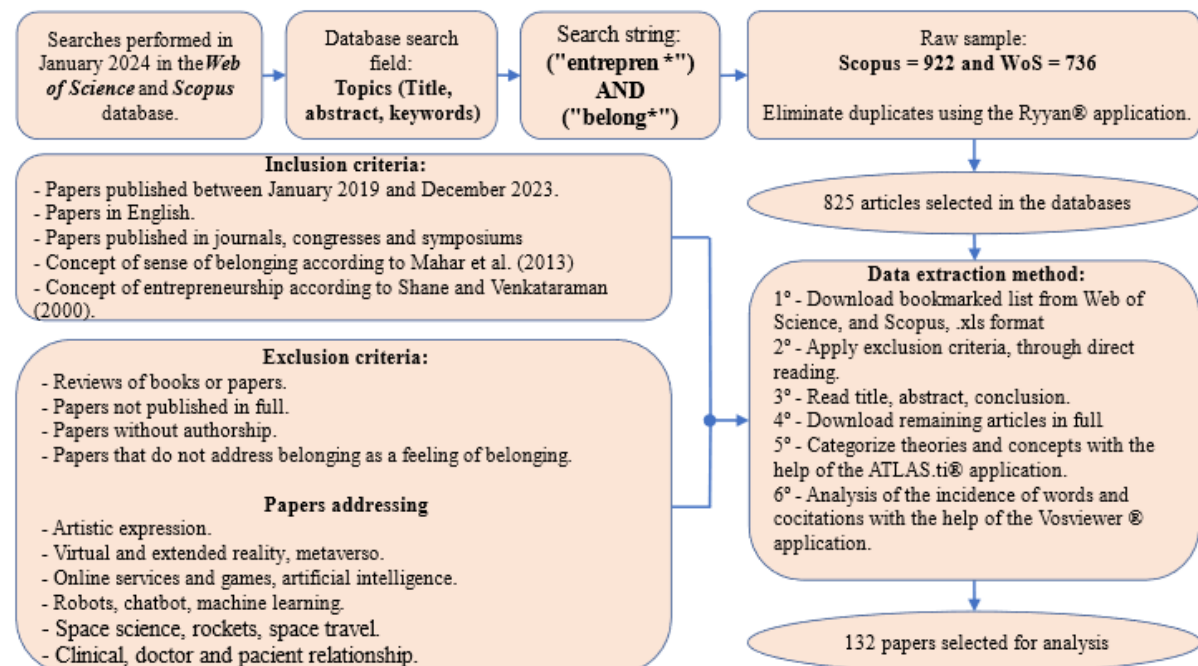
Table 1:  
Search parameters

Parameters defined for searches	
Time interval:	January 2019 until December 2023
Date of searches:	January 2024
Data bases:	Web of Scienc and Scopus
Search field in	Topic - Title, abstract, keywods
Search string:	("entrepren*") AND ("belong*")
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	
Papers published between January 2019 and December 2023.	
Papers in English.	
Papers published in journals, congresses and symposiums.	
Concept of sense of belonging according to Mahar et al. (2013).	
Concept of entrepreneurship according to Shane and Venkataraman (2000).	
<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	
Reviews of books or papers	
Papers not published in full	
Papers without authorship	
Papers that do not address belonging as a feeling of belonging	
<b>Exclusion criteria, papers that refer to:</b>	
Artistic expression.	
Virtual and extended reality, metaverse	
Online services and games, artificial intelligence	
Robots, chatbot, machine learning	
Space science, rockets, space travel	
Clinical, doctor and pacient relationship	

Source: the authors, adapted from Pollock and Berge (2018).

Figure 1 provides a research protocol based on Pollock and Berge (2018):

Figure 1:  
Analysis protocol



Source: the authors, adapted from Pollock and Berge (2018).

#### 4. Results

The database search returned 825 articles, of which 132 were selected after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Table 2 presents the 45 journals that published the listed studies. We highlight the wide dispersion of publications across various journals, although a journal dedicated to ethnic and immigration themes represents 8% of the articles published during the analysis period, suggesting the relevance of studying these associated themes.



Table 2:  
 Journals that published the selected articles

Journals	
Qtd	Qtd
11 JOURNAL OF ETHNIC AND MIGRATION STUDIES	2 INTERN. JOURNAL OF RETAL & DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT
8 ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS REVIEW	2 INTERN. SMALL BUSINESS JOURNAL RESE ARC ENTREPRENEURSHIP
8 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTS MANAGEMENT	2 JOURNAL OF ENTERP. COMMUNITIES-PEOPLE AND PLACES
7 JOURNAL OF BUSINESS VENTURING	2 JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EMERGING ECONOMES
6 SOCIAL INCLUSION.	2 JOURNAL OF GLOBAL FASHION MARKETING
6 2017 2NDINT. CONE. ON EDUCATI& OENDU . RESEARCH	2 JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDEES
5 ANTIPODE	2 JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR
4 BALTIC JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	2 JOURNAL OF POLITICAL MARKETING
4 CHILDRENS GEOGRAPHIES	2 JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENT
4 CITZENSHP STUDIES	2 JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE FINANCE & INVESTMENT
4 CRAFTRESEARCH	2 MANAGEMENT DECISION
3 CRITICAL ASLAN STUDES	2 PERSONAL AND UBIQUITOUS COMPUTING
3 EDUCATION AND TRAINNG	2 POLAR-POLITICAL ANDLEGAL ANTHROPOLOGY REVIEW
3 EMOTION SPACE AND SOCIETY	1 PROCEED. OF THE 1STINT. CONF. ON ECONOMICSB,US ., ENTREP.
3 FASHION THEORY-THE JOURNAL OF DRESS BODY & CULTURE	1 RAE-REVISTA DE ADMINISTRACAOE EMPRESAS
3 FRONTIERS INPSYCHOLOGY	1 REGIONAL STUDEES REGIONAL SCENCE
3 GEOFORUM	1 SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMICS
2 GLOBALPOLICY	1 SOCLAL & CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
2 IDENTITES-GLOBAL STUDIES IN CULTURE AND POWER.	1 SOCLAL ENTERPRISE JOURNAL
2 INDUSTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION	1 SOCLAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE
2 INTERN. ENTREPREURSHIAPND MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	1 TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
2 INTERN. JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEUBERHAIVIAORL & RESEARCH.	1 ZEITSCHRIFT FUR PERSONALFORSCHUNG
2 INTERN. JOUNAL OF GENDER AND ENTREPRENEURSHP	

Source: the authors, compiled from Web of Science and Scopus

Table 3 shows which categories of Web of Science and Scopus encompass the studies. Although it is not surprising to see the incidence of 43% of articles in the Business and Economics category, it is significant to highlight that 20% of the articles are present in the geography (11%) and Demography and Ethics Studies (9%) categories, reinforcing the academic relevance of research on ethnic and immigration issues.

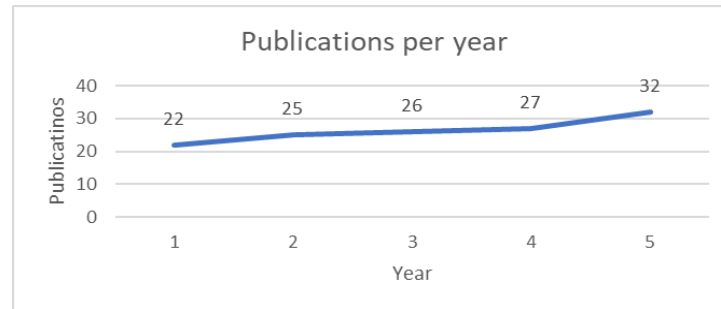
Table 3:  
 Web of Science and Scopus Categories

Web of Science and Scopus Categories	
Qtd	%
43 Bussiness & Economics	43%
20 Geography	11%
15 Demography; Ethics Studies	9%
9 Arts & Humanities	6%
9 Education	6%
8 Psychology	6%
7 Cominication	4%
6 Environmental Sciences	4%
5 Goverment & Law	2%
5 Science & Technology	2%
2 Social Issues	2%
1 Anthropology	2%
1 Arts & Humanities	2%
1 Cultural Studies	2%

Source: the authors, compiled from Web of Science and Scopus

Figure 2 shows the evolution over time of the number of publications, demonstrating that during the analyzed period, the number of published articles is relevant and growing, with a 45% increase in publications.

Figure 2:  
 Graph of the evolution of the number of publications in the years researched



Source: The authors

Table 4 compiles scientific methodologies and approaches in the selected articles. We adopted Creswell's (2010) conceptual and empirical categories to categorize the approaches. We highlight that 50% of the works address qualitative methodology, 27% are theoretical papers, and only one SLR is present in the sample.

Table 4:  
 Methods and approaches.

Qtd	Method	Approach
35	Theoretical	Not applicable
21	Quantitative	Survey
18	Qualitative	Case study
16	Qualitative	Interviews
14	Qualitative	Survey
11	Qualitative	Ethnography
9	Theoretical	Grounded Theory
6	Qualitative	Est. Multiple Cases
1	Qualitative	Literature Review
1	Quantitative	Mixed Methods

Source: the authors

Table 5 shows which topics are most covered. For this analysis, we defined the following steps: (i) analysis of keywords and editor keywords (Keyword plus); (ii) elimination of the words: *entrepren\**, *intrapren\**, and *belong\**; (iii) then we grouped the subjects by incidence. Table 5 presents the focus of the analyzed articles. A quarter of the sample is composed of studies involving immigration, again suggesting an interest in research. We also highlight research involving the entrepreneur's gender, with 15% of the sample, indicating the relevance of these investigations.

Table 5:  
 Focus of the articles analyzed.

Qtd	Cluster	%
32	Immigration	24%
20	Genre	15%
17	Psychology	13%
12	Innovation	9%
11	Social relationships	8%
10	School/Students	8%
7	Social Entrepren.	5%
23	Others	17%

Source: the authors

Recognizing the dispersion of the sample across various areas of knowledge, we adopted a co-citation analysis in Table 5, using the Vosviewer® application configured for author co-citation research. Table 6 presents the concentration of citations in the gender cluster, regarding identity as a challenge, with notable contributions (Marlow & McAdam, 2013) and Helene Ahl (Ahl, 2002).

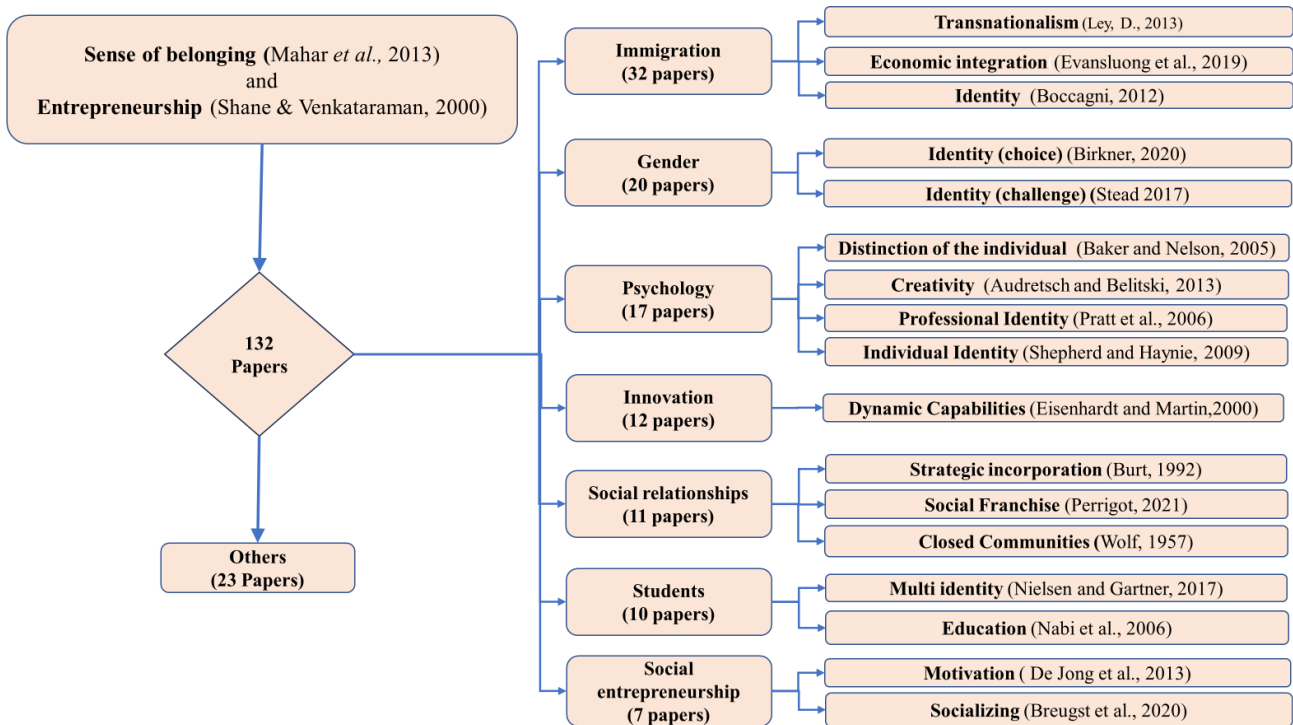
Table 6:  
Summary of author co-citation analysis.

<b>Immigration</b>			<b>Gender</b>			<b>Psychology</b>			<b>Innovation</b>			<b>Social relationships</b>			<b>S</b>
Author	Quotes	Bond strengt	Author	Quotes	Bond strengt	Author	Quotes	Bond strengt	Author	Quotes	Bond strengt	Author	Quotes	Bond strengt	Author
<b>Transnationalism</b>			<b>Identity (challenge)</b>			<b>Distinction of the individual</b>			<b>Dynamic Capabilities</b>			<b>Strategic incorporation</b>			<b>Mu</b>
Ley, D	4	24	Marlow, S	11	100	Turner, Jc	5	44	Helfet, Ce	7	39	Granovetter, M	4	5	Chatterton,
Ehrkamp, P	3	13	Ahl, H	14	97	Brewer, Mb	6	41	Teece, Dj	6	38	Johanson, J	5	5	Smith, Dp
Snel, E	3	16	Stead, V	5	49	Baumeistier, Rf	4	31	Zahra, As	6	15				
Staeheli, La	3	9	Cope, J	5	25										
Walters, JI	3	18				<b>Creativity</b>						<b>Social Franchise</b>			<b>E</b>
			<b>Identity (choice)</b>			Audretsch, Db	4	20				Perrigt, R	6	0	Nabi, G
			Lewis, P	8	67	European, Com	4	12							
<b>Economic integration</b>			Essers, C	6	62	<b>Professional Identity</b>			<b>Closed Communities</b>						
Berry, Jw	4	44	Bruni, A	5	52	Pratt, Mg	4	32	Thomas, K	4	0				
Jones, T	3	18				Bhansing, Pv	4	20							
Portes, A	8	66				<b>Individual Identity</b>									
Ram, M	3	36				Ashforth, Be	4	12							
Waldinger, R	4	39				Bonanno, Ga	4	12							
<b>Identity</b>															
Boccagni, P	3	15													
Carling, J	3	18													
Haugen, Ho	3	12													

Source: the authors

Figure 3 offers a summary of the research, presenting the seven clusters found, showing within each cluster authors who developed the theories and concepts addressed.

Figure 3:  
 Schematic view of the research clusters found in the sample



Source: the authors

## 5. Discussion

Although academic interest in entrepreneurship dates back to 1920 (Ferreira et al., 2015), research associated with the sense of belonging is more recent, dating back to 2009 in the Scopus database, with the study by Despina Nazou (University of the Aegean), where the author relates tourism to the individual's identity (Nazou, 2009). In the Web of Science database, we found an article by Pawan Dhingra, published in 2010, where the author addresses the sense of belonging associated with immigrant entrepreneurship, a recurring theme in this research (Dhingra, 2010).

To answer the research question, we adopted a systematic literature review methodology, starting with a sample of 825 works from which we selected 132 after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The searches in the Web of Science and Scopus databases were conducted in January 2024, covering articles from the last five years, from January 2019 to December 2023.

Academic publications are dispersed across 45 journals, with a concentration of 54% of the works in two categories: Business and Economics, and Geography (Table 2). We highlight the clear interest in ethnic studies linked to immigration, evidenced by the journal that published the most articles, eleven in total, the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, a fact corroborated both by the 15 articles in the Demography: Ethnic Studies category (Tables 1 and 2), as well as the presence of eleven ethnographic studies in the sample (Table 3).

The growing number of publications in the five years researched shows the relevance of the topic for academics (Figure 2). The search for characteristics and factors in the association between the themes is evident in the fact that 26% of the studies in the sample used questionnaires, another 12% used interviews, combined with 50% of the studies addressing

qualitative methodology, reinforcing this idea. The presence of 34% of theoretical articles may suggest a search for the construction of theories and concepts involving the themes.

The segmentation into clusters presents the variety of interests in research on the topics (Table 4), again highlighting the theme of immigration and immigrants, although we now notice gender issues, where the focus is on female entrepreneurs, with their choices and challenges. Table 5 shows that there is no concentration of co-citations in the clusters, except for two authors highlighted in the gender cluster, concerning identity as a challenge for female entrepreneurs: Susan Marlow (University of Nottingham) and Helene Ahl (University of Jönköping), cited 11 and 14 times respectively in all articles in this segment, both showing prominence in the study of the topics.

Issues of immigration, present in 32 articles, 25% of the total (Table 4), are supported by the tripod of transnationalism, economic integration, and identity (Table 5). Transnationalism is presented by Ley (2013) as encounters and experiences of migrants in more than one national territory. Basch et al. (1994, p. 28) specify it as: “migrants, through their ways of life and everyday practices, [who] reconfigure space so that their lives are lived simultaneously in two or more nation-states.”

The idea of immigrant identity is shown by Solano et al. (2020), pointing out that international migrants are known for preserving and cultivating networks of relatives, friends, and other acquaintances in their countries of origin and, often, maintaining active roles in the economies, policies, and cultures of their societies of origin. Boccagni (2012) emphasizes that these relationships and interactions “here and there” shape the identities of migrants, leading them to develop multiple and multi-allocated forms of belonging, crossing national borders (Ehrkamp, 2005).

Zhang et al. (2024) cite Aldrich & Waldinger's (1990) research as seminal in the study of immigrant entrepreneurship, addressing the influence of ethnic and cultural differences among immigrant entrepreneurial groups. Aldrich & Waldinger (1990) discuss immigrant entrepreneurship based on five key factors: adaptation to available resources, opportunity structure, interethnic competition, emerging strategies, and group characteristics. They conclude by highlighting the importance of ethnic networks in facilitating access to financial and human resources and recognizing that ethnic solidarity and family support are fundamental to business sustainability.

On the theme of gender, present in 20 articles, 15% of the total (Table 4), we highlight two perceptions of identity, both centered on women:

- Identity as a choice for women: When women seek alternatives to build their entrepreneurial identities. Far from being oppressed by the male-centered doctrine of entrepreneurial identity, they are potentially liberated by this ability to create their own entrepreneurial identities (Birkner, 2020). Smith (2014, p. 466) states: "A female entrepreneur, unlike her male counterparts, is not forced to adopt the persona of the 'non-conformist, conformist' because she has more options available to construct an entrepreneurial identity."
- Identity as a challenge for women: As Stead (2017) presents, "women's identification as entrepreneurs is restricted, so their ability to belong to a business or entrepreneurial community is compromised." (p. 68). "Women reinforce and challenge gender norms through the strategic and measured use of legitimacy practices and identity work" (p. 61). The author takes a closer look at the developed understanding of "doing entrepreneurship and doing gender" (Stead, 2017).



On the theme of psychology, present in 17 articles, 13% of the total (Table 4), we observe a division into four topics: individual distinction, creativity, professional identity, and individual identity. Individual distinction is based on the idea that entrepreneurs are distinct in some way, in which individuals identified as entrepreneurs perceive the opportunity to meet their demand for differentiation (Baker & Nelson, 2005). On the other hand, Tajfel and Turner (1986) highlight the negative possibilities of identity distinction. Although creating and growing a business can satisfy the psychological need to be different, it may do so at the expense of another basic psychological need, the need to feel like we belong (Turner, 1985)

Pratt et al. (2006) develop a theoretical model to understand the construction of professional identity. They highlight the importance of considering the integrity of work identity as a motivator for identity construction. Kyratsis et al. (2017) explored various topics, including how professionals construct their identity (Pratt et al., 2006), how changes in professional identity are legitimized over time (Goodrick & Reay, 2010), and how individuals balance their social and professional identities (Kreiner et al., 2006).

The need to "be distinct," fundamental to the construction of an individual's identity, is emphasized in the seminal work of Snyder and Fromkin (1980) (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). Being perceived as different and unique is central to the psychological well-being of all human beings (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Previously, the authors had already demonstrated that distinction is a central point for an individual's emotional well-being and physical health.

The literature focusing on entrepreneurship as a career choice highlights that one of the reasons individuals become entrepreneurs is to establish a unique identity—being in some way differentiated within their community, industry, or society (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009).

Innovation, present in twelve studies (9%), is linked to the concept of dynamic capabilities. Teece et al. (1997) define this as a higher-order ability, bringing changes in lower-order capabilities driven by organizational routines. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) connect dynamic capabilities to deliberately developed transformative organizational processes and the rules that guide these processes. It can be explained as the company's ability to purposefully alter its resource base to achieve a high degree of alignment with rapidly changing environmental conditions (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000), aiming to improve or at least maintain its market position (Teece et al., 1997).

Social relations, revealed in seven articles (5%), are associated with incorporation, social franchises, and closed communities. Burt (1992) defines "strategic incorporation" as a broker, connecting previously disconnected players to obtain information and control benefits, stating that the "sense of investing in people with whom you think good things can happen before you are sure what they are captures the essence of brokerage" (Burt, 2007, p. 95).

Social franchising (Perrigot, 2021) refers to a particular type of franchise, with social objectives as well as commercial or profit-making goals. It is "the application of commercial franchising methods and concepts to achieve socially beneficial ends" (Temple, 2011, p. 3). Social franchising involves offering quality basic products and/or services at affordable prices to customers who would not normally have access to such products/services.

The first social dimension of social franchising is, therefore, related to customers (Perrigot, 2021). Wolf (1957) developed the concept that corporations can, in fact, produce closed communities, in which an association can be strongly protected amid legal and moral uncertainties, and how a moral economy based on a property regime can be relatively flexible. In articles that relate research topics to students, the subjects are concentrated along two lines: multi-identity and education.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between sense of belonging and entrepreneurship. Through an analysis of 132 articles selected from an initial sample of 825, this research identified and categorized the main research themes and approaches in this field. We revealed the growing academic interest in entrepreneurship and its link with sense of belonging (Figure 2), with a diversity of publications distributed across 45 different journals. The concentration of publications in areas such as Business and Economics, Geography, and Demographic and Ethical Studies reflects the multifaceted importance of the topic, encompassing economic, social, and cultural aspects.

The analysis revealed seven main research clusters: immigration, gender, psychology, innovation, social relations, students, and social entrepreneurship. The emphasis on studies on immigrants and female entrepreneurs indicates the relevance of investigating how a sense of belonging can influence the choices and challenges faced by these specific groups. In particular, the research shows that a sense of belonging not only improves psychological well-being and job satisfaction, but also promotes innovation and resilience among entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the methodology applied in this systematic literature review proved effective in providing a clear and replicable overview of existing studies, allowing the identification of knowledge gaps and opportunities for future research. We highlight the need for longitudinal studies that track the effects of belonging over time on the development and success of entrepreneurs. It will be essential to explore how different cultural and economic contexts influence the perception of belonging among entrepreneurs from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study not only contributes to the academic literature by providing a synthesis of existing knowledge, but also offers clear directions for future research and practical implications for policymakers, educators and business leaders. Fostering an inclusive environment by encouraging a sense of belonging can be an effective strategy to foster sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship, especially in times of economic and social uncertainty.

With these conclusions, we hope to encourage more research and practices that recognize and value the crucial role of a sense of belonging in the success and sustainability of ventures, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive entrepreneurial environment. This study has some limitations. The sample was reduced due to articles being only partially available, preventing their inclusion in the sample. Although clusters are defined by the occurrence of words, other possible groups may exist. The analysis did not address possible intersections between clusters.

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