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Entrepreneurial well-being research from 1979 to 2022: A comprehensive multimethod bibliometric analysis

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Abstract

PURPOSE: This study aims to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field, addressing its evolution, intellectual structure, and emerging trends. It seeks to fill gaps in prior research, which often focuses narrowly on specific dimensions of well-being, by adopting a multidisciplinary and integrative perspective. The study highlights dominant narratives and offers actionable insights for future research and practice. **METHODOLOGY:** The analysis employs three bibliometric techniques: historiography, document co-citation, and bibliographic coupling. Using 668 primary and 37,951 secondary documents sourced from the Web of Science database, the study spans 1979–2022. Bibliometric tools such as Biblioshiny were applied to identify research clusters, visualise intellectual structures, and assess trends across the field. **FINDINGS:** The study identifies two dominant narratives: hedonic well-being, focusing on subjective satisfaction and positive emotions, and eudaimonic well-being, centred on psychological constructs like autonomy and purpose. Key contributions are concentrated in journals such as *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. The field exhibits fragmentation, with limited interdisciplinary collaboration, though recent years have seen growing diversity in authorship and geographical representation. **IMPLICATIONS:** The findings highlight the need for integrating multidisciplinary frameworks to deepen theoretical understanding and promote practical relevance. Stronger collaborations between researchers and practitioners can address challenges like work-life balance and sustainable development. These partnerships can translate academic insights into actionable strategies, benefiting entrepreneurs and society alike. **ORIGINALITY AND VALUE:** This study's use of three bibliometric techniques offers a unique, comprehensive view of EW research, bridging historical insights with emerging trends. By mapping the field's intellectual structure, it provides a valuable resource for advancing theoretical and practical contributions in entrepreneurial well-being.

Keywords: entrepreneurial well-being, bibliometric analysis, historiography, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, hedonic well-being, eudaimonic well-being, work-life balance, social entrepreneurship.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial well-being (EW) is a relatively new field of study that began gaining prominence in the research agendas of social and economic sciences around 2008 (González-Peña et al., 2023). It differs from general workplace well-being and organisational well-being, as it encompasses specific dimensions of the entrepreneurial experience, such as autonomy, risk perception, financial uncertainty, and work-life balance (Salazar-Altamirano et al., 2025; Stephan, 2018). Unlike organisational well-being, which focuses on employees within formal structures, entrepreneurial well-being is linked to the dynamics of self-employment and new business creation (Wiklund et al., 2019).

The conceptual trajectory of well-being has progressed through multiple phases and viewpoints. It began as a philosophical and introspective inquiry, subsequently turning to the intrinsic dimensions of human existence and the roots of happiness and ultimately gaining broad recognition as a notion linked to the experience of “feeling good” (Salazar-Altamirano et al., 2024). Previous research has shown that entrepreneurs who report higher levels of well-being exhibit greater resilience, higher levels of innovation, and an increased likelihood of sustaining their businesses in the long run (Mercader et al., 2025; Nikolaev et al., 2022). Moreover, entrepreneurial well-being not only influences individual performance but also impacts the economy and society by promoting sustainable businesses and generating employment.

In response to these developments, global leaders have implemented initiatives to position psychological well-being as a fundamental social goal, reflected in official statistics across various countries (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2023). Simultaneously, entrepreneurship and management scholars have shown increasing interest in understanding the causes and consequences of well-being in the entrepreneurial context (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2017; Wiklund et al., 2017, 2019; Stephan, 2018; Shir et al., 2019). Considering the expanding academic literature on entrepreneurial well-being, examining the field’s development through a bibliometric lens becomes a necessary endeavour.

The study of well-being has been addressed from multiple perspectives, including economic (Isham et al., 2021), psychological (Li & Hasson, 2020; Steiger et al., 2021), and sociological (Ostic et al., 2021). While this multidisciplinary approach has broadened the understanding of the phenomenon, it has also resulted in fragmented knowledge, with limited interdisciplinary exchange and a lack of a shared knowledge base (Stephan, 2018). This study employs three bibliometric techniques to map the development of EW, identify its main theoretical streams, and highlight gaps in the literature. By addressing key questions such as “How has knowledge on entrepreneurial well-being evolved?” and “What are the future directions for research in this area?”, the analysis offers an integrated overview of the field’s status and outlines possible trajectories for its future advancement.

The use of bibliometric techniques enables an objective assessment of the existing literature, avoiding subjective biases that may limit traditional narrative reviews. Moreover, by employing co-citation analysis, historiography, and bibliographic coupling, this study provides a detailed overview of the intellectual structure of entrepreneurial well-being, identifying key authors, dominant theories, and gaps in research.

The aim of this study is to conduct an impartial and integrative assessment of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) domain by exploring its current landscape, historical progression, and anticipated directions. Although certain insights may resonate as familiar to experienced scholars in the field, this review delivers a broad and structured synthesis of EW’s conceptual evolution. As such, it serves as a useful resource for researchers aiming to gain deeper insights and identify concrete pathways for future scholarly exploration.

Aligned with these aims, this study seeks to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How has the knowledge domain of entrepreneurial well-being evolved over time?

RQ2: What is the underlying intellectual structure within the knowledge domain of entrepreneurial well-being?

RQ3: Considering the pathways, strengths, and gaps in the structure and evolution of research on entrepreneurial well-being, what are the theoretically and practically relevant future directions?

The remainder of this article is organised as follows. The next section presents a concise overview of the theoretical foundations and prior literature to contextualise the significance of entrepreneurial well-being. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the methodological framework, including the bibliometric techniques applied, the characteristics of the dataset, and the analytical procedures adopted. Subsequently, the results section displays the outcomes of the historiographic mapping, document co-citation, and bibliographic coupling analyses. The discussion then interprets these results, proposing conceptual and practical implications, while also identifying promising directions for future

research. Finally, the conclusion summarises the core contributions, acknowledges the study's limitations, and outlines recommendations for continued scholarly inquiry.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in entrepreneurial research

Entrepreneurial well-being (EW) has been widely examined through two dominant perspectives: hedonic well-being, which focuses on pleasure, satisfaction, and positive affect, and eudaimonic well-being, which emphasises meaning, self-realisation, and psychological growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These perspectives, originally from psychology, have been adapted to the entrepreneurial context to understand how individuals experience well-being in the uncertain and highly demanding nature of entrepreneurial activities.

Hedonic well-being in entrepreneurship is typically measured through subjective well-being indicators, such as life satisfaction, emotional balance, and work-related happiness (Stephan, 2018). Entrepreneurs, however, experience unique emotional fluctuations due to factors such as financial instability, workload variability, and personal investment in their ventures (Uy et al., 2013). Unlike employees in traditional work settings, entrepreneurs face extreme highs and lows, making hedonic well-being more volatile and context-dependent (Wiklund et al., 2019).

Eudaimonic well-being in entrepreneurship refers to the fulfilment derived from personal growth, resilience, and alignment between one's work and intrinsic values (Cardon et al., 2009). Entrepreneurs often derive purpose and satisfaction not just from financial success but also from overcoming challenges, achieving autonomy, and making meaningful contributions to society (Shir et al., 2019). This perspective suggests that entrepreneurial well-being extends beyond momentary happiness, encompassing a deeper sense of achievement and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Although theoretically significant, both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives present measurement limitations within entrepreneurship research. Hedonic well-being often depends on affect-based self-assessments, which might not adequately reflect the enduring psychological consequences associated with entrepreneurial activity (Galvan-Vela et al., 2024). Conversely, eudaimonic well-being, often linked to entrepreneurial passion and identity, is difficult to quantify due to its subjective and evolving nature (Murnieks et al., 2020). Given this complexity, there is a pressing need to adopt more sophisticated methodological strategies, such as longitudinal designs and experience sampling techniques, that can more accurately capture the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial well-being across time.

Alternative conceptualizations of entrepreneurial well-being

While hedonic and eudaimonic well-being remain central to entrepreneurial well-being (EW) research, alternative perspectives highlight additional dimensions that shape well-being experiences. One such perspective is the relationship between well-being and entrepreneurial identity. Entrepreneurs often derive well-being from a sense of self-expression and alignment with their professional roles (Murnieks et al., 2020). However, identity tensions, such as role conflicts or business failure, can negatively impact well-being, suggesting that identity-based well-being requires further empirical investigation (Cardon et al., 2019). Similarly, well-being can be understood as a process of meaning-making, where entrepreneurs find fulfilment not only through financial success but also through the intrinsic value of their work and its contribution to broader societal goals (Shepherd, 2019). This perspective contests the idea of well-being as a fixed condition, proposing instead that it be understood as a fluid and evolving construct shaped by entrepreneurs' lived experiences throughout their journey.

In addition to personal determinants, the socio-material environment exerts a significant influence on the configuration of entrepreneurial well-being. Access to resources, market stability, and institutional support systems influence entrepreneurs' ability to maintain well-being in the face of uncertainty (Welter et al., 2017). This perspective shifts the focus from purely psychological determinants to external environmental factors that shape well-being outcomes. Such alternative perspectives indicate that research on entrepreneurial well-being would benefit from incorporating identity construction, the pursuit of meaning, and contextual socio-material dimensions, thereby fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Future studies could explore these dimensions empirically to refine existing theories and broaden the field's scope.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on entrepreneurial well-being

Entrepreneurial well-being (EW) is an inherently interdisciplinary construct, drawing insights from psychology, sociology, and economics. However, these disciplines conceptualize and measure well-being in distinct ways, leading to epistemological tensions that must be considered when integrating them into a unified framework. From a psychological perspective, well-being is primarily examined through subjective measures, such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and mental health (Diener, 1984). Theories like self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) highlight intrinsic motivations, autonomy, and competence as key determinants of well-being. However, psychological approaches often focus on individual agency, overlooking structural and contextual influences on well-being.

Sociology, in contrast, situates well-being within broader social structures, emphasizing the role of social networks, institutional environments, and cultural norms (Putnam, 2000). Sociological research on well-being considers how factors such as social capital, community engagement, and systemic inequalities shape entrepreneurial experiences. This collectivist approach challenges the psychological emphasis on individual perceptions, suggesting that well-being is co-constructed within social systems. Economic approaches to well-being focus on objective indicators, such as income levels, financial stability, and employment status (Frey & Stutzer, 2002). In entrepreneurship, economic research often examines how venture success, financial performance, and market conditions influence well-being outcomes. However, this approach has been criticized for overlooking non-monetary aspects of well-being, such as personal fulfilment and work-life balance.

These disciplinary differences create epistemological tensions in EW research. Psychology's reliance on self-reported well-being measures may contrast with economics' preference for objective financial indicators, while sociology's structural analysis may challenge the individualistic assumptions of psychological and economic models. Bridging these perspectives requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates subjective and objective measures, individual and collective dimensions, and micro- and macro-level analyses.

METHODOLOGY

Bibliometric methods, while not novel, have garnered significant attention in recent years. This growing interest can be attributed to the increased availability of online citation databases and the development of advanced analysis software (Wu et al., 2021). As citation analysis forms the foundation of bibliometric methodologies, these methods complement traditional reviews and meta-analyses by offering one of the most objective means of visualising a specific field of knowledge without subjective constraints (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Given the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of research fields, mapping a domain should comprise multiple maps derived from a series of studies employing diverse methodologies. While most scientific mapping studies utilise a single method, greater insights can be gained by triangulating different scientific maps. This approach involves integrating multiple methodologies, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding than any single method applied in isolation (Wen et al., 2016).

This study applies a triangulated methodological design that combines historiographic mapping, document co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling, complemented by a content-based examination of key texts. The use of these three bibliometric strategies allows for a comprehensive review of the entrepreneurial well-being literature, revealing underlying citation structures and thematic groupings. Additionally, the focused analysis of core documents offers deeper insight into the conceptual dialogue shaping the field. The subsequent sections describe the procedures used for document selection from the chosen database, outline the bibliometric techniques employed, and explain the coding process applied during content analysis.

Primary and secondary documents

Bibliometric techniques rely on different types of citation analysis that utilise secondary sources. The notion of „documents” is used broadly in this context, referring to a wide range of written materials, including journal articles, books, book chapters, and similar scholarly outputs. Primary documents are those identified through keyword searches that cite other documents, while secondary documents are those cited by primary documents but are not retrieved through the keyword search itself (Vogel et al., 2020).

The selection of primary documents was carried out through a search in the Web of Science (WoS), specifically within the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), applying no time constraints and limiting the results solely to journal articles. WoS is one of the most recommended and widely used repositories in bibliometric research due to its rigorous selection of high-impact, peer-reviewed journals and its advanced citation indexing capabilities (Donthu et al., 2021). The search utilised keywords in the fields “title,” “author keywords,” and “abstract.” Specifically, the search string “(well-being OR well-being) AND (entrepreneur OR self-employ)” was employed, allowing for the collection of an extensive set of primary documents spanning the entire temporal range.

Subsequently, the search was refined using all categories proposed by WoS, considering only articles written in English. This approach yielded 668 primary documents and 37,951 secondary documents that formed part of their references. This can be considered a more robust dataset than those used in previous reviews on entrepreneurial well-being. However, we acknowledge that the exclusive use of WoS may introduce a geographical bias, as it primarily indexes high-impact journals, many of which originate from North America and Europe. While this selection ensures methodological rigour and high-quality data, it may underrepresent research from non-Western contexts and alternative epistemologies.

Bibliometric methods

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of each bibliometric technique, outlining their analytical focus, treatment of time, distinctive features, methodological procedures, and the criteria used to assess the relevance of documents. Historiographic analysis, co-citation mapping, and bibliographic coupling serve as complementary approaches for examining the structure and evolution of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field.

Historiographic analysis explores the citation links among primary documents to trace the temporal progression and developmental milestones of the field. In contrast, co-citation analysis detects relationships between secondary sources that are frequently cited together, thereby shedding light on the domain’s intellectual framework and key theoretical influences. Bibliographic coupling, in turn, assesses the degree of similarity among primary documents based on overlapping references, which helps to uncover emerging lines of inquiry and central research themes. The combined application of these complementary techniques allows for a thorough and multifaceted exploration of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) domain, encompassing its historical roots, prevailing conceptual structures, and prospective directions for future investigation.

Table 1. Summary of bibliometric techniques

Method	Historiography	Document Co-Citation	Bibliographic Coupling
Focal Point	Primary documents (citing) and their chronological citations to other cited primary documents	Secondary documents (cited) that are cited together in primary documents	Primary documents (citing) that reference the same secondary documents
Temporal Focus	Past (development/evolution of the field)	Past/Present (intellectual structure; theoretical foundations)	Present/Future (research front, emerging topics)
Time Sensitivity	No	Yes	No
Unique Components	Reveals the evolution and dynamics of the EW field, as well as changes in perceptions over time.	Analyses the roots of the EW field and the „invisible colleges” of authors frequently cited together in clusters.	Detects current trends and future priorities in the EW field by examining recent works.
Key Methodological Mechanism	Frequency with which a primary document cites another primary document in its reference list. Knowledge flows from the cited work to the citing work, creating a link between them.	Frequency with which two documents in the EW field are cited together in another document. The more two documents are co-cited, the more likely their content is related.	Frequency with which two documents cite the same references. Overlapping bibliographies indicate greater similarity between documents.
Document Strength/Weight Indicator	„Core” documents = frequency of citations of a primary document by other primary documents.	Co-citation strength = frequency with which two secondary documents are co-cited by primary documents.	Coupling strength = frequency of co-occurrence of secondary documents in the reference lists of two primary documents.
Research Question	How has the knowledge domain of entrepreneurial well-being evolved over time?	What is the underlying intellectual structure within the knowledge domain of entrepreneurial well-being?	Considering the pathways, strengths, and gaps in the structure and evolution of research on entrepreneurial well-being, what are the theoretically and practically relevant future directions?

Source: Developed by the authors based on Vogel et al. (2020).

The combined use of these three bibliometric techniques offers significant advantages, as each operates within a distinct temporal framework. Historiography establishes a chronology, enabling the visualisation of themes, networks, and citations across the historical evolution of a field (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Co-citation analysis investigates the degree of bibliographic intersection by assessing how often two primary sources are referenced together within subsequent literature. By analysing which secondary documents are co-cited and how frequently, co-citation sheds light on the relationships and interactions between researchers, unveiling the intellectual traditions and roots of a field (Vogel, 2012). Lastly, bibliographic coupling focuses on identifying primary sources that share common references to the same secondary literature. This method highlights emerging themes and potential future developments within the literature (van Raan, 2005). Collectively, these three bibliometric approaches offer mutually reinforcing insights into the organisation and positioning of knowledge within the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) domain.

To enrich the quantitative analysis provided by these methods, the content of the 50 most frequently cited documents was coded. These documents were selected based on their citation frequency, ensuring a focus on foundational works. The coding framework included fundamental attributes of each document (such as publication year and source), thematic elements (like the variables examined), methodological features (distinguishing between conceptual and empirical designs, analytical strategies, and units of analysis), and procedural components (such as stated objectives and reported outcomes). Incorporating content analysis in this way enriches the findings obtained through bibliometric methods, contributing to a more holistic comprehension of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) domain.

Historiography

The analysis begins with historiography, a bibliometric approach designed to capture the evolution and dynamics of a field (Garfield, 2004; van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Historiography considers only the relationships among primary documents, which are identified in the database through keyword searches in WoS. For example, two primary documents, Document A and Document B, are connected if Document A cites Document B. For this connection to exist, Document A must be more recent than Document B, allowing historiography to track the development of specific topics over time (van Eck & Waltman, 2014).

The relevance of a primary source grows in proportion to the number of citations it receives, indicating the extent to which it influences subsequent scholarly work. Changes in the citation trajectories of influential documents illustrate how focal themes within the field evolve over time. Consequently, historiography provides insights into dominant paradigms and their transformations (Garfield et al., 2003). Using the Biblioshiny tool within Bibliometrix, 668 primary documents were analysed, focusing on the 50 most-cited documents (7.49% of the total) to visualise key paradigms and their evolution.

Co-citation

Co-citation indicates semantic similarity by tracking pairs of articles cited together in bibliographies. For instance, Documents A and B may both cite references r1, r2, and r3. In this context, r1 and r2 are considered co-cited because they appear in the bibliography of Document A, and similarly, r2 and r3 are co-cited because they appear in the bibliography of Document B (Spinak, 1996).

Co-citation analysis yields two principal outputs: the intensity of co-citation relationships and the graphical representation of clusters formed by frequently co-cited secondary sources. These clusters represent „invisible colleges” of scholars who communicate regarding shared research interests (Vogel, 2012). Additionally, the frequency and regularity with which a cited article appears in other works reduces the distance between nodes in the co-citation network (Ahmi, 2022). Graphically, co-citation relationships can be represented to illustrate the network of connections and groupings within a field (Figure 1).

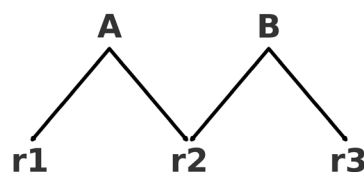


Figure 1. Document co-citation

The underlying assumption supporting this analysis is that when two secondary documents are co-cited, they share content similarities (Small, 1973). Nodes sharing the same colour tend to exhibit thematic commonalities, which are represented in a network graph. Document co-citation is a dynamic measure that evolves over time as older documents accumulate more citations (Batistic et al., 2017). Beyond measuring the intensity of shared citations, co-citation analysis also generates visual groupings that illustrate the interconnections among frequently cited documents.

The dimensions of interest in co-citation networks include: (1) the centrality and periphery of nodes, (2) their proximity and distance, (3) the strength of connections, (4) clusters, and (5) bridging contributions (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Co-citation strength, regarded as a marker of scholarly relevance, denotes how often two secondary sources are jointly cited within primary literature. The greater the co-citation strength of a document, the more likely it is to be semantically related to other documents, and the more critical its role in the field becomes (Small, 1973). Additionally, betweenness centrality quantifies the frequency with which a node serves as an intermediary on the shortest paths linking other nodes, thereby reflecting its role as a key connector within the network structure.

The *Biblioshiny* software tool was employed to organise secondary documents within a two-dimensional similarity matrix. In this type of visualisation, nodes with stronger relationships are placed in proximity, whereas those with weaker connections appear more distant. The software subsequently groups documents into clusters, each comprising tightly linked nodes. To illustrate the co-citation network, *Biblioshiny* assigns distinct colours to indicate the cluster membership of each secondary source.

Bibliographic coupling

Bibliographic coupling contributes analytical value that complements and extends beyond what document co-citation reveals by presenting a more current perspective on the field. While co-citation analysis concentrates on secondary sources and draws on citation patterns that emerge over extended periods, thus reflecting the intellectual foundations of the past, bibliographic coupling redirects attention toward primary documents and the sources they reference, allowing for an analysis rooted in the contemporary structure of the literature. Since primary documents containing citations are more recent than the secondary documents they reference, bibliographic coupling analysis is particularly effective for detecting priority trends in the field (Vogel et al., 2020; Donthu et al., 2021).

The purpose of bibliographic coupling analysis is to examine the extent to which primary documents share common references, thereby identifying connections between sources based on overlapping bibliographies. This method examines whether two primary documents share at least one secondary reference (Kessler, 1963). More shared references between two primary documents indicate a stronger bibliographic coupling or greater document weight. For instance, if documents A and B both include sources C, D, and E in their bibliographies, their coupling strength would be three, representing the number of common references cited by both.

This study utilised the same dataset for bibliographic coupling as was used in the other two bibliometric techniques. From the 668 primary documents analysed, a minimum citation threshold of five was established, resulting in a subset of 50 documents. The data were visualised through *Biblioshiny*, applying the same procedures as in the co-citation analysis. The resulting clusters reflect groups of documents with strong thematic connections, each visually distinguished by a specific colour.

RESULTS

In response to the research questions, the findings are organised around three analytical dimensions: first, the temporal evolution of the entrepreneurial well-being knowledge domain; second, the underlying intellectual structure that supports this field; and third, future research paths of theoretical and practical relevance, identified through patterns and gaps observed in the analysis.

Historiography technique results

As a starting point for tracing the development of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field and the transmission of its knowledge over time, the analysis uncovers 12 clusters composed of thematically interconnected documents. However, as illustrated in Figure 2, a dominant cluster appears in turquoise (Cluster 1), representing the earliest documents in this

field of study. From this foundational cluster, three other clusters: purple, dark green, and light green (Clusters 7, 4, and 8, respectively) branch out and form part of the primary evolutionary trajectory of EW alongside Cluster 1. While these clusters eventually merge into the main discourse, it is worth noting that the dark green cluster, despite emerging later, has played an active role in recent years.

Based on this structure, the following analysis focuses on identifying the core themes represented in Cluster 1 and examining how these themes have developed over time. Among the identified clusters, the dark green group (Cluster 4) is the most extensive, encompassing 14 primary documents. The historical roots of Cluster 1 revolve around practical aspects of entrepreneurial well-being, including comparative studies between self-employment and conventional employment, as well as notable gender-based distinctions in various well-being dimensions.

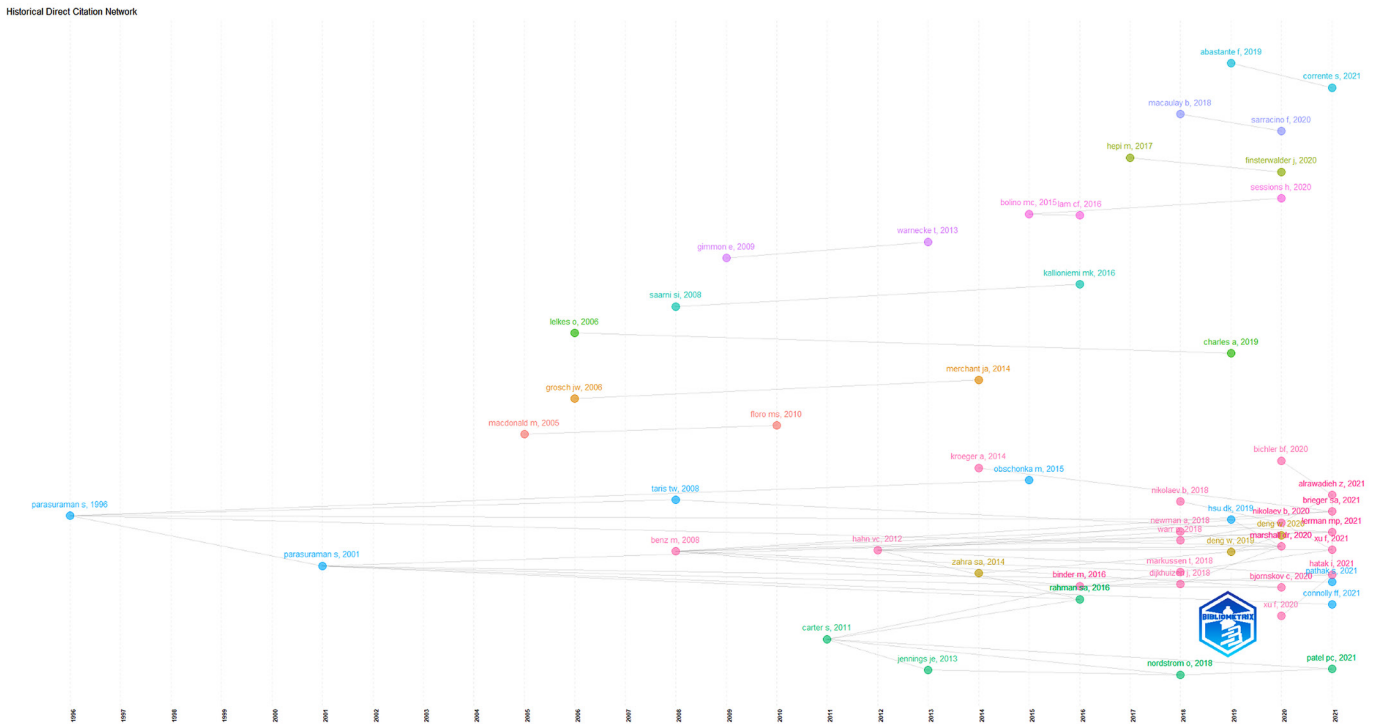


Figure 2. Historiography

The foundational work on entrepreneurial well-being (EW) begins with Parasuraman et al. (1996), who explore the influence of work and family variables on entrepreneurial success and psychological well-being. The findings underscore the influence of gender by revealing how professional achievement and stress among entrepreneurs are strongly shaped by the interaction between work and family responsibilities. Continuing in this vein, Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) investigate the effects of work and family role characteristics on work-family conflict and psychological well-being indicators across genders, comparing self-employed individuals and organisational employees. They suggest that while self-employment offers certain advantages, such as autonomy and flexibility, it is not a panacea for balancing work and family responsibilities. Self-employed individuals enjoy greater participation and job satisfaction, but they also report higher levels of work-family conflict and lower family satisfaction compared to employees.

Subsequent studies further illuminate these dynamics. Taris et al. (2008) examine the relationship between work addiction, manifested as excessive working hours and an inability to disconnect and perceived health outcomes, including exhaustion, physical discomfort, and professional efficacy. Their results indicate that the difficulty in detaching from work emerges as the factor most closely linked to adverse effects.

In 2008, a new perspective emerged, represented in the dark green cluster, with Benz and Frey (2008) taking self-employment as a significant case of independence. They demonstrate that self-employed individuals derive greater job satisfaction than employees, irrespective of income or working hours. Entrepreneurs value not only outcomes but also the processes leading to those outcomes, a concept referred to as „procedural utility.” Binder and Coad (2016) revisit this

line of inquiry, building on the work of Hahn et al. (2012), who differentiate between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Using indicators such as life satisfaction and vigour, they affirm the self-regulation framework, showing that eudaimonic well-being is a critical dimension influencing proactive entrepreneurial behaviour.

In this context, Binder and Coad (2016) distinguish between voluntary and involuntary self-employment. Engaging in self-employment by choice has been linked to favourable outcomes, such as enhanced life satisfaction, improved health, and greater job satisfaction within the initial three years. In contrast, self-employment motivated by unemployment does not produce comparable benefits. Nonetheless, both voluntary and involuntary forms of self-employment are associated with a gradual decline in satisfaction with leisure time over extended periods.

The dark green cluster concludes with two significant contributions. The first is Pathak’s (2021) work, which empirically tests a model combining individual-level psychological theories such as the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions and human and social capital theories. Pathak explores the indirect influence of social well-being on entrepreneurship through national self-expression values. Drawing on secondary data from 44 countries provided by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and the World Values Survey, Pathak performs a multi-level, cross-cultural analysis. The study reveals that social well-being is positively linked to self-expression values, which in turn mediate the connection between collective and individual well-being and the propensity to engage in entrepreneurial activity.

The second notable contribution is by Connolly et al. (2021), who examine the relationship between business size and various dimensions of subjective well-being, including life satisfaction and emotional well-being, among small business owners. The analysis focuses on the potential benefits, such as financial satisfaction, as well as the disadvantages, including time pressure, associated with business size. The findings indicate that financial satisfaction shows a stronger relationship with overall life satisfaction, whereas time pressure exerts a greater influence on emotional well-being.

These investigations offer a historical perspective on research related to entrepreneurial well-being, with particular emphasis on its practical dimensions within entrepreneurial settings and on comparisons between the well-being of self-employed individuals and that of salaried workers. Notably, the dark green and blue clusters primarily consist of research conducted in European contexts. For instance, Benz and Frey (2008) empirically show that self-employed individuals derive greater satisfaction from their activities than employees, viewing self-employment as a significant step toward independence. Similarly, Kroeger and Weber (2014) develop a conceptual framework related to the satisfaction of social entrepreneurs within different socioeconomic and institutional contexts, published in the *Academy of Management Review*.

Broadly speaking, additional studies examine themes that encompass physiological well-being, psychological functioning, and overall life satisfaction, as well as entrepreneurial performance, thereby expanding the empirical scope to countries such as China, Turkey, Australia, and India. Comparative analyses at the European and international levels, often utilising meta-analytic methods, further enrich this area of research. In contrast, the other clusters (2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12) deal with scattered and loosely connected subjects, lacking consistent development in subsequent scholarly contributions. Table 2 outlines the documents with the most local citations from the blue (1), dark green (1), and purple (7) clusters.

Table 2. Most important documents for each cluster in the historiography analysis

Cluster	Reference	Year	Local Citations	Global Citations	Title
1	Parasuraman S, 1996, J VOCAT BEHAV DOI 10.1006/JVBE.1996.0025	1996	13	425	Work and family variables, entrepreneurial success and psychological well-being
1	Parasuraman S, 2001, J ORGAN BEHAV DOI 10.1002/JOB.102	2001	13	235	Type of employment, work-family conflict and well-being: A comparative study
1	Taris TW, 2008, WORK STRESS DOI 10.1080/02678370701758407	2008	13	106	The effects of job demands associated with social and economic change on well-being among self-employed workers
1	Obschonka M, 2015, J PERS PSYCHOL DOI 10.1027/1866-5888/A000128	2015	13	40	“I wish I had a regular job”: An exploratory study on entrepreneurial regret
1	Hsu DK, 2019, J BUS RES DOI 10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2018.11.006	2019	12	16	Entrepreneurial regret and its impacts on psychological well-being
4	Benz M, 2008, ECONOMICA DOI 10.1111/J.1468-0335.2007.00594.X	2008	13	105	Being independent is a great thing: Subjective evaluations of self-employment and hierarchy
4	Binder M, 2016, J HAPPINESS STUD DOI 10.1007/S10902-015-9698-2	2016	13	33	Are self-employed workers happier? Utility of procedure in their professional lives

Cluster	Reference	Year	Local Citations	Global Citations	Title
4	Hahn VC, 2012, ENTREPR THEORY PRACT DOI 10.1111/J.1540-6520.2011.00490.X	2012	13	38	Happy and proactive? The role of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in entrepreneurial initiative
4	Nikolaev B, 2020, ENTREPR THEORY PRACT DOI 10.1177/1042258719830314	2020	11	45	Entrepreneurship and subjective well-being: The mediating role of psychological functioning
7	Djkhuizen J, 2018, J HAPPINESS STUD DOI 10.1007/S10902-017-9914-6	2018	13	35	Well-being, entrepreneurial success, and business performance: A longitudinal study
7	Carter S, 2011, ENTREPR THEORY PRACT DOI 10.1111/J.1540-6520.2010.00422.X	2011	13	37	Family-owned enterprises: Exploring income, wealth, and economic well-being of entrepreneurial households
7	Jennings JE, 2013, FAM RELAT DOI 10.1111/FARE.12013	2013	12	31	When families are entrepreneurs: Is family involvement good for entrepreneurial ventures?
7	Rahman SA, 2016, SOC INDIC RES DOI 10.1007/S11205-015-0951-4	2016	13	27	Entrepreneurship and well-being: The role of private organisations
7	Nordstrom O, 2018, ENTREPR THEORY PRACT DOI 10.1177/1042258717749236	2018	12	25	Entrepreneurial well-being: Insights into family businesses and their impact on family satisfaction
7	Patel PC, 2021, ENTREPR THEORY PRACT DOI 10.1177/1042258720936984	2021	11	15	Senior entrepreneurship and subjective well-being: Balancing self-employment, income, and leisure time

The application of historiography techniques reveals two principal observations. First, the most influential documents over time are organised into two main clusters: the blue cluster and the dark green cluster, with an emerging trajectory represented by the purple cluster. These two main clusters form the backbone of research in the field, while the other clusters contain isolated information that did not lead to significant subsequent lines of inquiry.

Second, the field of entrepreneurial well-being (EW) originated primarily from empirical investigations. Over time, the need to develop substantive theories to underpin this empirical evidence became evident (e.g., Carter, 2011; Zahra et al., 2014; Binder & Coad, 2016; Marshall et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2021; Pathak, 2021). However, relying solely on historiographic analysis would limit a comprehensive understanding of the intellectual structure of this field. To address this limitation, the results from the document co-citation analysis are presented below.

Results from the document co-citation technique

The information summarised in Table 3 and Figure 3 highlights the concentrated results of document co-citation analysis. From this analysis, it is evident that the year with the highest volume of publications on the topic was 2000, with six documents being co-cited. Furthermore, 78% of the documents were published between 2000 and 2020, reflecting a significant concentration of research activity during this period.

The dominant journals, as identified by the PageRank metric (which measures the direction and weight of connections), are the *Academy of Management Review* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. It is worth noting that co-citation analysis may present certain biases. A limited number of journals tend to concentrate most frequently co-cited documents, whereas the vast majority contribute only a few co-cited articles.

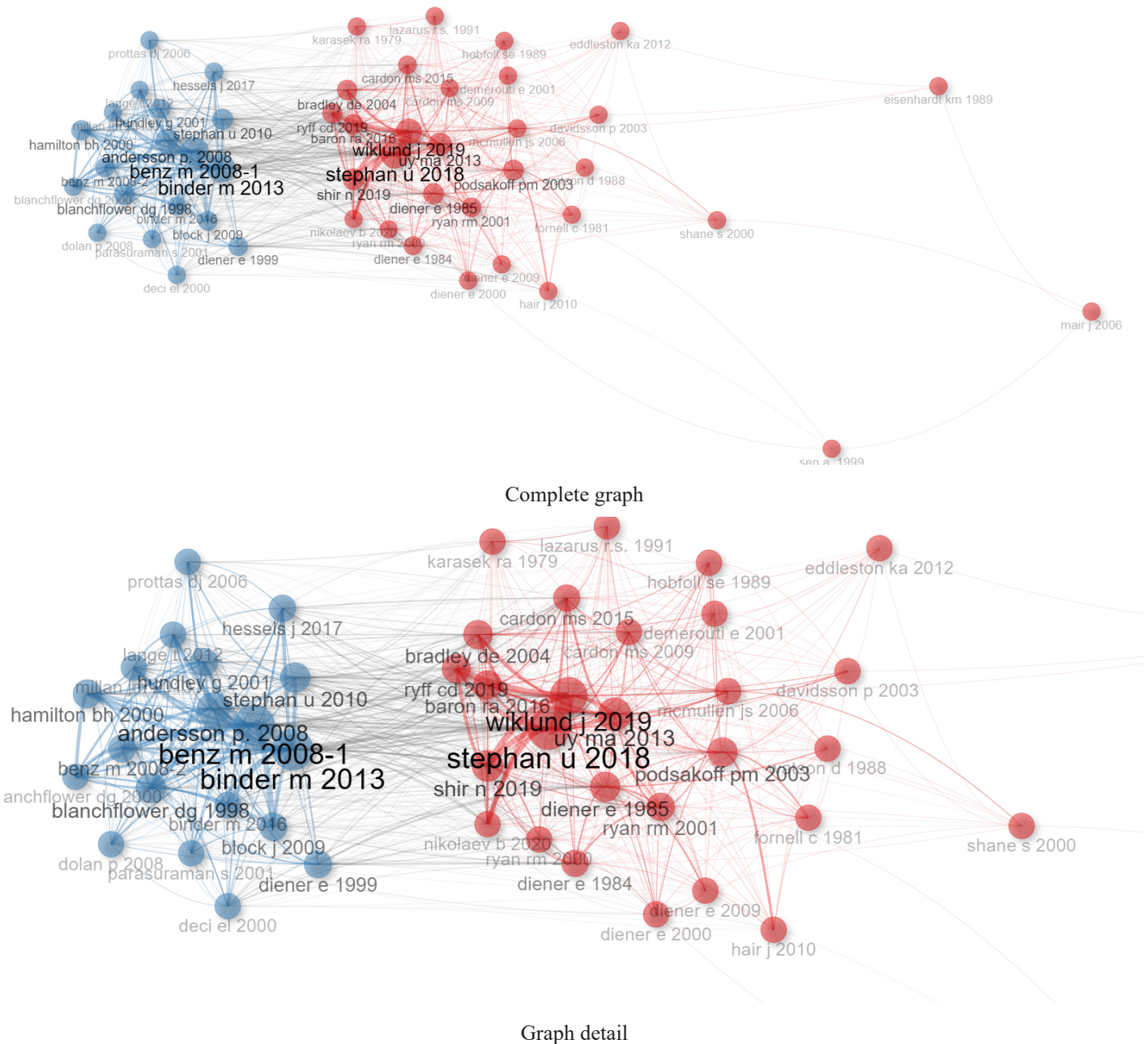


Figure 3. Co-citation analysis

The largest nodes correspond to the documents identified as the most frequently cited within the dataset, making them the most influential, with a high level of interrelation and thematic similarity. These include Stephan (2018), Wiklund et al. (2019), and Uy et al. (2013) in the red cluster, Binder and Coad (2013), Benz and Frey (2008), and Andersson (2008) in the blue cluster. Nodes with high betweenness centrality (values exceeding 100) are also identified, primarily within the blue cluster. These nodes serve as critical connectors between major groups within the network, making them accessible from multiple perspectives.

For instance, the study by Diener et al. (1999) (120.08) revisits the evidence from Wilson (1967) and discusses modern theories of subjective well-being, emphasising dispositional influences, adaptation, goals, and coping strategies. Similarly, Block and Koellinger (2009) (103.74) illustrates that entrepreneurs value not only outcomes but also the processes leading to them. Additionally, Benz and Frey (2008) (100.52) underscore the significance of procedural utility in understanding economic behaviour, demonstrating that the process leading to a decision impacts satisfaction with its outcome.

With lower betweenness centrality (values below 100), Stephan (2018) (70.30) in the red cluster outlines a framework for developing a dedicated theory of entrepreneurial work, where mental health and entrepreneurial well-being are dynamic, socialised, context-sensitive, and account for the variability and fluidity in entrepreneurs' life domains. This document's importance is attributed to two main factors: its originality in conceptualising entrepreneurial well-being and its practical relevance to the real-life experiences of entrepreneurs. Table 4 provides a detailed description of the various indicators analysed for the top five articles per cluster, ranked according to their PageRank results derived from co-citation analysis of the documents and their respective scores.

Table 4. Key articles based on document co-citation analysis

Cluster	Year	Node	Betweenness	Closeness	PageRank	Title
1	2018	Stephan U 2018	70.30270896	0.01123596	0.04062045	Entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being: A review and research agenda
1	2019	Wiklund J 2019	44.19281642	0.01123596	0.03665338	Entrepreneurship and well-being: Past, present, and future
1	2013	Uy MA 2013	30.69050506	0.01098901	0.03329534	Joint effects of prior start-up experience and coping strategies on entrepreneurs' psychological well-being
1	2019	Shir N 2019	43.23962329	0.01123596	0.02665366	Entrepreneurship and well-being: Past, present, and future
1	2001	Ryan RM 2001	13.86219877	0.01030928	0.02626487	On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being
2	2008-1	Benz M 2008-1	100.5202787	0.01123596	0.03563125	Being independent is a great thing: Subjective evaluations of self-employment and hierarchy
2	2013	Binder M 2013	68.47907305	0.01052632	0.03354702	Life satisfaction and self-employment: A matching approach
2	2008	Andersson P 2008	16.74420992	0.00952381	0.02636518	Happiness and health: Well-being among the self-employed
2	1998	Blanchflower DG 1998	4.423548091	0.00900901	0.02565116	What makes an entrepreneur?
2	2008-2	Benz M 2008-2	5.310291207	0.00934579	0.02334446	The value of doing what you like: Evidence from the self-employed in 23 countries

The two most influential documents from each cluster are Stephan (2018) from the red cluster and Benz and Frey (2008) from the blue cluster. These references exhibit the highest values across the three analysed indicators: PageRank, betweenness centrality, and closeness centrality. They are the most co-cited references, and therefore, the most influential within their respective clusters. These works introduce key aspects that have shaped the trajectory of knowledge on entrepreneurial well-being (EW). Stephan (2018) emphasises the importance of mental health and well-being in entrepreneurs' lives and work, while Benz and Frey (2008) demonstrate how entrepreneurial decision-making autonomy impacts individual well-being, highlighting not only the outcomes but also the processes leading to these results (procedural utility).

In general, the red cluster encompasses 31 out of the 50 most impactful contributions within the entrepreneurial well-being literature. Most of these works focus on theoretical research on subjective and psychological well-being, happiness, entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurship-related stress, and the development and validation of scales for measuring positive and negative affect (e.g., PANAS scales) and life satisfaction. Empirical studies in this cluster predominantly address the context of European countries, although American and Asian studies also appear.

The oldest document in this cluster is Karasek (1979), „Job Demands, Job Decision Latitude, and Mental Strain: Implications for Job Redesign,” published in *Administrative Science Quarterly*. This study formulates and empirically evaluates a stress management framework using data from Sweden and the United States. It proposes that psychological strain arises from the interplay between work demands and autonomy in decision-making. When individuals experience limited decision latitude alongside elevated job demands, the outcome is increased mental distress and reduced job satisfaction.

These concepts have influenced subsequent works, gaining prominence in recent years. For instance, Stephan (2018) reviews the literature and proposes new research directions on mental health and entrepreneurial well-being, while Shir et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of individual self-organisation in entrepreneurial work, which makes entrepreneurship more beneficial in terms of fulfilling basic psychological needs compared to other employment alternatives.

Of the 31 documents in the red cluster, only five were published in the *Journal of Business Venturing*, making it the journal with the highest number of co-cited documents in this cluster (16.13%). Three of these were published in 2019, coinciding with a surge in publications on entrepreneurial well-being. These documents primarily focus on the present state of entrepreneurship and well-being, its past developments, and future research directions, as well as specific aspects of well-being, including the eudaimonic well-being approach and its application to entrepreneurial science.

In this journal, Davidsson and Honig (2003) revisited the themes of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs. Similarly, Uy et al. (2013), drawing on coping and entrepreneurial theories, examine the combined effects of prior start-up experience and active and avoidance coping strategies on entrepreneurs' psychological well-being. The second journal with the most contributions was the *Academy of Management Review* (12.90%), followed by *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* and *American Psychologist* (9.68%).

Two subgroups emerged within the red cluster. The first comprises 28 references connected at various levels of betweenness and closeness centrality, as ranked by PageRank. In contrast, the second subgroup consists of three references located on the periphery, with zero betweenness centrality, far removed from the main group. This is logical, as these references pertain to highly specific research methodologies, such as Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Eisenhardt (1989). Meanwhile, Mair and Martí (2006) offer a distinct perspective on social entrepreneurship, viewing it as a process that catalyses social change and addresses significant societal needs. Unlike other forms of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship prioritises social value creation and development over direct financial benefits for entrepreneurs.

The blue cluster, in comparison, contains 19 documents, with the most prominent being Blanchflower and Oswald (1998) and Diener et al. (1999). Over half of these documents (10) were published between 2000 and 2010, with the year 2000 yielding the highest number of works (3). The year 2017 marks the final period of joint citations on entrepreneurial well-being for this cluster. This group encompasses a broader range of journals from both *Business & Management* and *Psychology* categories, with *Small Business Economics* having the highest number of co-cited documents (15.79%). Notably, there is little concentration of research within a single journal across both clusters.

Findings from the co-citation analysis indicate that foundational studies have played a central role in shaping the development of the entrepreneurial well-being field. On entrepreneurial well-being, distinguishing two main lines of inquiry: hedonic (subjective) well-being and eudaimonic (psychological) well-being. The red cluster emphasises literature reviews aimed at proposing integrative or holistic models of well-being. Conversely, the blue cluster focuses on comparative empirical studies between entrepreneurs and salaried workers, examining specific variables and domains such as health, performance, outcomes, happiness, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, stress, independence, work-family conflict, and individual or social well-being. An essential contribution in this cluster is the review of economic literature on subjective well-being and happiness, commonly referred to as the „economics of happiness,” published in the *Journal of Economic Psychology* by Dolan et al. (2008). Although co-citation analysis provides a meaningful understanding of the structural foundations of the entrepreneurial well-being field, its retrospective nature makes it necessary to supplement it with bibliographic coupling. This complementary method emphasises the detection of emerging trends and prospective directions within the domain.

Results from the bibliographic coupling technique

In terms of overall structure, bibliographic coupling identified four clusters. The documents with the highest coupling strength are summarised in Table 4 and visualised in Figure 4. Among these, 26% were published in the *Journal of Business Venturing*, while 10% appeared in *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* and *Small Business Economics*, and 6% in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* and the *Journal of Business Research*. These journals collectively dominate the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field, representing 58% of the publications. Notably, 72% of the documents were published between 2019 and 2022, with 24% and 26% corresponding to 2021 and 2022, respectively. However, 50% of the articles in the *Journal of Business Venturing* were published in 2019.

Of the four clusters, the red cluster exhibited the highest impact (4.14), followed by the green cluster (3.4), the blue cluster (2.28), and finally the purple cluster (1.88), which also displayed the lowest frequency. The oldest document, dating back to 2012, belongs to the green cluster (Hahn et al., 2012). Interestingly, 60% of the most-cited documents in

this cluster are relatively recent, published between 2020 and 2022. The blue cluster is the most contemporary, with 80% of its documents published in 2022.

The red cluster stands out due to two pivotal documents published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* (2016 and 2021), with the former being the most cited (12.72). The articles within this cluster primarily focus on entrepreneurs' subjective well-being. In contrast, the blue cluster emphasises eudaimonic well-being, while the purple cluster, which has the least impact, centres on social entrepreneurs and their work-related well-being.

Table 4 provides detailed information on the five most influential documents in each cluster. The cited theories span organisational, individual, and social domains, contributing to the development of both management practices and psychological frameworks.

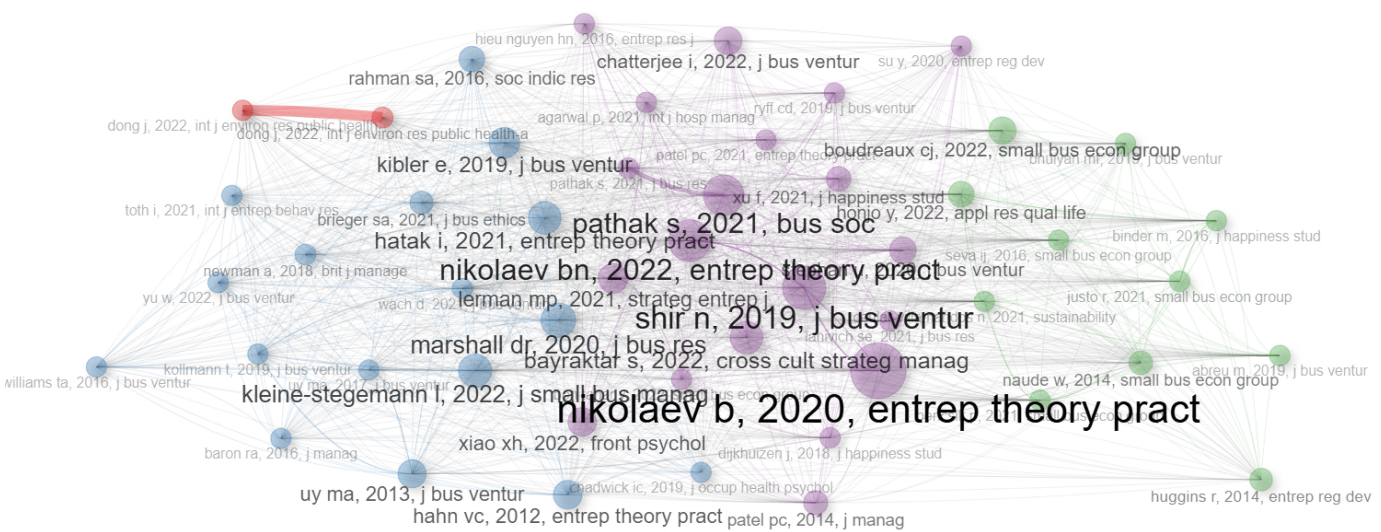


Figure 4. Research front of the EW field (based on bibliographic coupling)

Table 4. Most important documents for each cluster in the bibliographic coupling analysis

Cluster	Reference	Description	Frequency	Local Citations (Normalized)
1	Binder, M. (2016). <i>Journal of Happiness Studies</i>	Analyses the effects of self-employment on well-being, apart from monetary aspects, and highlights satisfaction with life, job satisfaction, and health.	13	12.72
	Xu, F. (2021). <i>Journal of Happiness Studies</i>	Proposes a multi-level theoretical framework explaining relationships between social and institutional factors and entrepreneurial well-being.	13	1.85
	Honjo, Y. (2022). <i>Applied Research in Quality of Life</i>	Investigates indirect positive effects of entrepreneurial experience on subjective well-being via risk and debt considerations.	13	1
	Rojas, M. (2022). <i>Applied Research in Quality of Life</i>	Examines life satisfaction and its relationship with entrepreneurs' emotional and sensory experiences.	13	1
	Abreu, M. (2019). <i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>	Studies entrepreneurial well-being differences between urban and rural settings.	13	0.94
2	Nikolaev, B. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice</i>	Explores how psychological functioning mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship and subjective well-being.	15	9.26
	Rahman, S. A. (2016). <i>Social Indicators Research</i>	Examines entrepreneurial success at the base of the pyramid, highlighting the role of organisational support and shared information.	15	1.73
	Nikolaev, B. N. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice</i>	Demonstrates that self-employed individuals are more likely to report higher levels of eudaimonic well-being (EWB), such as autonomy, competence, and purpose, compared to employees.	15	1
	Chatterjee, I. (2022). <i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>	Investigates women's well-being in entrepreneurial programmes, linking job and family support to realistic entrepreneurial goals.	15	1

Cluster	Reference	Description	Frequency	Local Citations (Normalized)
3	Hahn, V. C. (2012). <i>Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice</i>	Discusses the relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being and entrepreneurs' proactive behaviours.	17	8.44
	Dijkhuizen, J. (2018). <i>Journal of Happiness Studies</i>	Analyses the links between entrepreneurial performance, subjective well-being, and personal resilience over time.	17	6.05
	Lerner, M. P. (2021). <i>Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal</i>	Expands entrepreneurial well-being research by exploring factors such as challenges and support systems.	17	4.62
	Marshall, D. R. (2020). <i>Journal of Business Research</i>	Highlights access to resources and resilience as predictors of entrepreneurial well-being.	17	1.68
	Kleine Stegemann, L. (2022). <i>Journal of Small Business Management</i>	Explores the importance of balancing entrepreneurial demands to improve work-life harmony and well-being.	17	1
4	Breiger, S. A. (2021). <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Examines social value creation and its impact on entrepreneurs' well-being, focusing on work satisfaction and emotional health.	5	2.77
	Hatak, I. (2021). <i>Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice</i>	Studies entrepreneurial motives and the relationship between socio-economic and biological factors in well-being.	5	2.77
	Dong, J. (2022). <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>	Examines the impact of social motivation on health and well-being, linking satisfaction with financial health and entrepreneurial success.	5	1
	Dong, J. (2022). <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>	Analyses the relationship between prosocial intentions, health, and financial satisfaction in entrepreneurial exit strategies.	5	1
	Kibler, E. (2019). <i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>	Explores the interplay between prosocial motivation and subjective well-being in social entrepreneurship.	5	0.94

The red cluster (Coupling 1)

The red cluster addresses entrepreneurial well-being (EW) through the lens of hedonic well-being, focusing on life satisfaction, job satisfaction, health, and financial aspects. The most cited document in this cluster is Binder and Coad (2016), which establishes a framework for conceptualising entrepreneurs' work, centred on overall life satisfaction. In contrast, Xu et al. (2021) proposed a multilevel theoretical framework examining the relationships between social and institutional factors and entrepreneurial well-being. In 2022, Honjo et al. (2022) highlighted the influence of financial motives on entrepreneurial well-being, while Rojas et al. (2022) analysed the relationship between life satisfaction and the affective and sensory experiences of entrepreneurs. The oldest document in this cluster, Abreu et al. (2019), investigates variations in well-being between urban and rural areas.

The blue cluster (Coupling 2)

The blue cluster consists of 15 documents and integrates both conventional and alternative approaches to entrepreneurial well-being. The most influential work is Nikolaev et al. (2020), which presents a model where psychological functioning mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship and subjective well-being. This cluster also includes studies on the well-being of women entrepreneurs in India, emphasising the role of family support and prior experience (Chatterjee et al., 2022). Additional works explore the connection between business success and well-being at the base of the pyramid (Rahman et al., 2016), as well as Nikolaev et al. (2022). Key publications in this cluster originate from journals such as *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* and the *Journal of Business Venturing*.

The green cluster (Coupling 3)

The green cluster contains 17 documents and focuses on eudaimonic well-being and proactive behaviour among entrepreneurs. The oldest and most frequently cited work is Hahn et al. (2012), which links affective well-being with personal initiative. Most publications in this cluster are empirical, framed within socio-cognitive theories and job demands frameworks. High-impact journals such as *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, and the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* dominate this group.

The purple cluster (Coupling 4)

The purple cluster comprises five articles that emphasise the well-being of social entrepreneurs and prosocial motivation. Kibler et al. (2019) argue that prosocial motivation can negatively impact the subjective well-being of social entrepreneurs. Dong et al. (2022) explore how health and financial satisfaction influence social entrepreneurs' exit intentions. Key publications in this cluster are found in journals such as the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* and the *Journal of Business Ethics*.

The bibliographic coupling results reveal current trends in the EW field. The four clusters highlight distinct approaches: subjective well-being, psychological well-being among entrepreneurs, eudaimonic well-being, and the well-being of social entrepreneurs. Additionally, the *Journal of Business Venturing* emerges as a key journal across all clusters. These findings reflect both established and emerging perspectives in entrepreneurial well-being, offering a comprehensive view of the field's development.

Results of the content analysis technique

This study explored both the historical progression and emerging directions of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field by analysing the most influential publications. It contrasted prominent contributions identified through co-citation analysis (the 50 most frequently cited works) with those highlighted via bibliographic coupling (the 50 most recent documents). Drawing on the framework developed by Rajagopalan and Huff (1999), gaining insight into "the conversation" that unfolds within an academic domain is vital for understanding its development. Beyond the main research questions, the content analysis employed here aims to examine this scholarly dialogue by addressing the following specific questions within the EW literature:

Q1: Where is the conversation in EW taking place?

To understand the dominant venues for the EW conversation, the type of publication was coded (restricted to English-language articles). While earlier documents included a greater proportion of books (excluded from this analysis), more recent works predominantly appear in academic journals. The most prominent publication, across both the co-citation and bibliographic coupling analyses, is the *Journal of Business Venturing*. Historically, key journals included the *Academy of Management Review* and *American Psychologist*, whereas in the present, leading journals include *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Small Business Economics*, and *Journal of Happiness Studies*. This evolution reflects a shift in the platforms that dominate the EW discourse over time.

Q2: Who are the key experts in the field of EW?

To determine the dominant voices in EW, the frequency of first authors across the 50 most significant documents was analysed. In the bibliographic coupling analysis, the most relevant authors included Dong, Nikolaev, Patel, Pathak, and Uy, each contributing two documents. Their works are concentrated within specific clusters: Patel, Pathak, and Uy in the green cluster, Nikolaev in the blue cluster, and Dong in the purple cluster. Conversely, in the co-citation analysis, the most influential author was Diener, with five cited works spanning 1984 to 2009. Benz, Binder, Blanchflower, Cardon, Ryan, and Stephan followed with two cited documents each. Benz, Binder, and Blanchflower were associated with the blue cluster, while Cardon, Ryan, and Stephan belonged to the red cluster.

Additionally, the analysis reveals that in more recent documents, the diversity of authors has increased, reflecting a broader array of contributors to the EW conversation. Nonetheless, most of the leading contributors remain based in the United States, indicating a geographical concentration of expertise in this field.

Q3: What is the content of the conversation among dominant documents in EW?

To uncover prevailing themes and theories, the documents were grouped according to their thematic focus. In the co-citation analysis, two principal groups emerged, each reflecting distinct approaches to EW. Conversely, the bibliographic coupling analysis, which emphasises more contemporary contributions, reveals a notable change in the thematic orientation of the scholarly discourse. Key themes include: 1) Subjective or Hedonic Well-being: Centred on life

satisfaction and positive and negative emotions, this theme explores the affective dimensions of entrepreneurial well-being. 2) Eudaimonic or Psychological Well-being: Offering a more philosophical perspective, this theme conceptualises EW as a deeper, purpose-driven form of fulfilment. 3) Work-Life Balance and Performance: This theme examines the intersection of work, life, and performance as indicators of entrepreneurial well-being. 4) Social Entrepreneurship and Prosocial Motivation: This focus addresses the well-being of social entrepreneurs, particularly their motivation to generate social impact beyond financial gain.

DISCUSSION

This section offers a reflective analysis of the results in relation to the three central research questions addressed in this study: first, the temporal evolution of the entrepreneurial well-being knowledge domain; second, the intellectual foundations that support it; and third, the prospective theoretical and practical directions emerging from the identified trends and research gaps. The entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field remains conceptually fragmented, highlighting the need for a more integrated framework to support its continued advancement. This bibliometric study addresses several limitations found in prior systematic reviews and meta-analyses, which often focus narrowly on specific aspects of well-being, use inconsistent definitions, and restrict their scope to a limited number of journals or time periods. While such restrictions are defensible in terms of parsimony and scientific progress (Glynn & Raffaelli, 2010), they hinder a comprehensive understanding of the field's theoretical evolution and constrain the ability to guide future research. To overcome these limitations, we employed three bibliometric approaches—historiography, document co-citation, and bibliographic coupling (Zupic & Čater, 2015)—to assess the evolution, current state, and future directions of EW.

This analysis incorporated two key features: (1) broad temporal coverage, spanning from 1979 to 2022, to enable an exhaustive examination of the field's evolution, and (2) diverse inclusion of sources, incorporating a wide range of influential documents, including those not commonly reviewed in existing literature or written in languages different from English.

The present analysis advances the literature on entrepreneurial well-being (EW) in three key dimensions. First, it offers a thorough and objective account of how the field has progressed over time. Second, it delivers an inclusive and balanced overview of the current landscape, focusing on its intellectual foundations and patterns of scholarly communication. By examining both the historical development and present configuration of the field, the study identifies prevailing trends and existing research gaps. Third, it proposes well-founded and actionable suggestions to inform future investigations. These suggestions involve reinforcing established areas of inquiry, delving into topics that remain insufficiently explored, and reconsidering the methodological and theoretical approaches used to examine EW. In the following section, the findings are discussed in relation to these contributions and the guiding research questions concerning the field's current status, its historical trajectory, and its potential future directions.

One of the principal contributions of this review lies in its broad and impartial analysis of the evolution of entrepreneurial well-being (EW). The findings allow for several key insights: first, the dissemination of knowledge within the field has primarily been shaped by two dominant narratives; second, the field initially emerged from practical concerns; and third, foundational well-being theories serve as the conceptual basis of the EW discourse.

The historiographic analysis highlights a dominant group of studies that initiated and shaped the EW knowledge trajectory over time. The transmitted knowledge in EW has primarily evolved around a paradigm that seeks holistic well-being for entrepreneurs in their professional and family lives, examining its societal influence and the impact of institutional frameworks. This prevailing line of thought features influential scholars like Diener, whose theoretical contributions are central to the field, along with the significant impact exerted by *the Journal of Business Venturing*.

While this integration and alignment have advanced the field, the concentration of research in a narrow range of journals and authors may have limited the inclusion of alternative perspectives. The EW discourse generally focuses on entrepreneurship and organisational behaviour, but there is significant scope to incorporate multidisciplinary frameworks. In particular, while EW research has benefited from contributions in psychology and economics, its integration with fields such as sociology, public policy, and cultural studies remains limited. Expanding the scientific dialogue to include a broader range of contributors could generate innovative perspectives, novel theories, and practical insights.

Historiographic analysis traces the origins of EW research, revealing that co-citation studies have predominantly focused on longitudinal field experiments exploring well-being development within and beyond entrepreneurial organisations. In this regard, future research should adopt alternative approaches, such as constructivism, critical

theory, and pragmatism, which require deeper interactions with organisations and institutions to foster both individual entrepreneurial well-being and broader social well-being.

Aligned with these trends, the future of EW lies in fostering strong partnerships between research and practice, such as co-creation labs or collaborative communities. These partnerships aim to bridge tensions between academic and practical stakeholders, promoting collaboration that leverages diverse perspectives. Such a model can generate research that addresses the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurial organisations while maintaining a scientific, innovative, and experiential focus, thus supporting both EW research and practice.

The results also indicate that promoting greater interdisciplinary integration is essential to deepen both the conceptual and applied comprehension of entrepreneurial well-being. Psychology, sociology, and economics each contribute distinct conceptualizations of well-being, yet their integration remains challenging due to epistemological tensions. Psychological research predominantly frames well-being in subjective terms, focusing on emotional states, cognitive evaluations, and self-determination (Diener, 1984; Deci & Ryan, 2000). In contrast, sociological perspectives emphasize structural and relational factors, such as institutional support, social capital, and collective resilience (Putnam, 2000). Meanwhile, economic approaches focus on objective measures, including financial performance, employment stability, and income levels (Frey & Stutzer, 2002). These disciplinary differences create methodological and conceptual tensions, particularly regarding how well-being is operationalized in entrepreneurial contexts.

This analysis indicates that psychological perspectives on well-being have gained prominence in EW research in recent years. However, this shift may reflect broader socioeconomic transformations, evolving entrepreneurial practices, or policy-driven initiatives promoting mental health and well-being in business settings. Future research could benefit from mixed method approaches that integrate bibliometric techniques with qualitative analyses, such as expert interviews and policy document reviews, to further explore these connections.

Such collaborative efforts also create opportunities to investigate complex and transformative issues within the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) domain. These include questions such as how EW theory and practice can foster a sense of purpose, whether innovative EW strategies can address global challenges like climate change or sustainable consumption, and to what extent EW can directly support the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This influence may extend beyond entrepreneurial organisations, empowering individuals to apply their leadership abilities in family and community settings. Additionally, attention should be given to how the physical environment and infrastructure shape EW processes and their associated outcomes.

These represent just a few of the pivotal questions that hold value for both the academic and professional communities. Collaborations between researchers and practitioners enable the development of relevant organisational studies that reflect the goals of the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field. Such initiatives can apply experimental designs, quasi-experimental strategies, and comprehensive qualitative approaches to investigate the drivers and consequences of EW across multiple analytical levels.

In addition, our findings contribute to the literature by identifying how the structure and intellectual evolution of EW research align with, diverge from, or expand upon prior studies. Unlike previous systematic reviews that focus on specific aspects of EW (e.g., Sánchez-García et al., 2018; Usai et al., 2020), our study offers a broader, more integrative perspective through bibliometric techniques. This allows us to validate existing frameworks while uncovering overlooked connections between research clusters, thereby contributing to the theoretical advancement of the field.

An additional key insight from this study is the acknowledgment of the importance of fostering deeper interdisciplinary integration within entrepreneurial well-being (EW) research. While prior literature (e.g., Nikolaev et al., 2020) has acknowledged the role of psychology and economics in shaping EW, our findings suggest that sociology, public policy, and organisational studies must also be incorporated to develop a more holistic framework. Bridging these disciplines will not only enrich the theoretical landscape of EW but also enhance its practical applications by considering broader social, economic, and institutional influences on entrepreneurial well-being.

Furthermore, our results suggest that despite the increasing diversification of authorship and research methodologies in recent years, EW remains concentrated in a few influential journals and regions. This finding extends discussions by Pathak (2021) and highlights the necessity of greater geographical and thematic diversity in future research.

Finally, this analysis identifies distinct research clusters that contribute to different intellectual traditions and theoretical frameworks shaping entrepreneurial well-being (EW). These clusters provide crucial insights into the field's conceptual development and highlight emerging theoretical perspectives. Specifically, the findings suggest three key implications for advancing theory in EW research.

To begin with, foundational theoretical frameworks have been instrumental in guiding the development of research on entrepreneurial well-being. The widespread use of psychological constructs such as self-determination theory, positive psychology, and the job demands resources model reflects the strong influence of individual and cognitive perspectives within the field. While these theories provide a strong foundation for understanding entrepreneurial well-being at the personal level, they may not fully account for the social and institutional factors that shape well-being in entrepreneurial contexts. This highlights the need for a broader theoretical lens that incorporates external influences beyond the entrepreneur's psychological state.

Second, the integration of sociological and economic perspectives is gaining traction in EW research. Certain research clusters reflect a growing interest in institutional influences, social capital, and economic stability as key determinants of EW. This shift suggests an ongoing transition toward multi-level models that account for both individual and systemic determinants of well-being. Such an approach aligns with broader interdisciplinary discussions advocating for a more holistic understanding of entrepreneurship, recognizing that well-being is influenced not only by personal resilience and psychological traits but also by market conditions, regulatory environments, and social support systems.

Third, epistemological tensions between research traditions highlight the need for hybrid theoretical models. The fragmentation of research clusters underscores a persistent divide in EW studies. Research that focuses on subjective well-being (psychological lens) often operates separately from studies examining financial well-being (economic lens). This theoretical divide limits the development of integrative models that consider both individual experiences and structural conditions. Future research should prioritize hybrid theoretical frameworks that incorporate insights from psychology, sociology, and economics, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of how entrepreneurial well-being is shaped across multiple levels of analysis.

By identifying these key theoretical trends, this study not only maps the existing knowledge structure of EW but also provides a foundation for advancing interdisciplinary research that bridges conceptual gaps. Moving forward, greater integration of these perspectives will be essential for developing more inclusive, robust, and practically relevant models of entrepreneurial well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to deliver a thorough, unbiased, and integrative examination of the scholarly work on entrepreneurial well-being (EW). Through the application of three bibliometric techniques, it explored how the field has developed over time, its present intellectual dynamics, structural foundations, and evolving areas of interest. Furthermore, an analysis of the content within the most impactful publications was conducted to gain deeper insight into the ongoing academic discourse on EW.

The findings reveal a distinct set of future research directions, which can be categorised into three main areas: (1) research themes within the existing framework that explore hybrid models, (2) research themes that revisit proposed yet underrepresented or disconnected contributions, and (3) research themes that systematically analyse how to implement findings into practice using existing models.

It is expected that future investigations guided by these proposed research directions will meaningfully contribute to the continued expansion and distinctiveness of the entrepreneurial well-being literature. In addition, these contributions are intended to promote the refinement of best practices in the field, supporting both theoretical progress and real-world implementation.

As is common in academic inquiry, this research presents some inherent constraints.

First, while the selected keywords are believed to have face validity, the specific choice of keywords to describe the entrepreneurial well-being (EW) field may have influenced the results (Batistic & van der Laken, 2019). However, the strength of the bibliometric methodology lies in its use of citation patterns to determine whether these topics are indeed dominant within the field.

Second, the selection of a citation threshold ensures feasibility but may introduce bias, particularly affecting smaller clusters (B. Vogel et al., 2020). To mitigate this, we followed Batistič and van der Laken's (2019) guidelines by comparing different thresholds, finding no substantial differences. Despite this limitation, our review remains extensive and objective, incorporating a broad range of key documents identified through citation counts.

Third, bibliometric techniques rely on citation data, which, while valuable for mapping intellectual structures, do not necessarily reflect the intrinsic quality or real impact of research contributions. Citation behaviours can be influenced

by self-citation, strategic citation, and preferential citation of mainstream journals, shaping the perceived evolution of the field. Self-citation can inflate the prominence of certain authors, strategic citation may align research with journal expectations, and preferential citation of high-impact journals might reinforce dominant narratives while marginalizing alternative perspectives.

Additionally, bibliometric approaches do not account for the motivations behind citation behaviours, such as self-legitimation, micropolitics, or critiques of specific works (Zupic & Čater, 2015). While some argue that self-citation is an organic part of the process (Glänzel, 2004; Glänzel et al., 2006), future research should explore how these behaviours shape the field of EW through qualitative assessments, such as expert evaluations or content analysis.

Fourth, the exclusive use of Web of Science (WoS) introduces a potential Western-centric bias. While WoS is a widely recognized database, its coverage is primarily focused on high-impact journals, many of which originate from North America and Europe. As a result, research from non-Western regions and indigenous epistemologies may be underrepresented, shaping theoretical frameworks and research priorities predominantly through a Western lens. Entrepreneurial well-being is a multidimensional concept that may vary significantly across cultures, with some contexts emphasizing communal well-being over individual autonomy. The omission of these perspectives could constrain the generalizability of EW theories across diverse entrepreneurial environments. To address this, future studies should incorporate multiple databases (e.g., Scopus, Google Scholar, regional repositories) to improve representation. Additionally, qualitative meta-analyses of non-Western research could provide deeper insights into alternative conceptualizations and cultural dimensions of entrepreneurial well-being.

This research enhances the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurial well-being (EW) by presenting a bibliometric overview of its intellectual progression. In contrast to conventional systematic reviews, which tend to concentrate on subdomains, this study delivers a broad and impartial evaluation of the entire scholarly landscape. The findings reveal a convergence of perspectives from psychology, economics, and organisational studies within EW research, while also uncovering theoretical gaps that warrant further exploration. Moreover, the results emphasise the importance of adopting interdisciplinary frameworks that incorporate contributions from management, behavioural science, and public policy in order to construct more integrative conceptual models.

Entrepreneurs and business leaders can leverage the insights from this study to understand the factors influencing their well-being and make informed decisions that foster a healthier entrepreneurial ecosystem. By recognising the evolving trends in EW research, organisations can implement strategies that enhance resilience, work-life balance, and long-term business sustainability. Additionally, the study offers meaningful implications for investors and entrepreneurial support systems, enabling them to design more focused strategies to enhance entrepreneurs' well-being.

The results of this study carry important implications for policymakers aiming to promote entrepreneurial well-being. The identification of prominent research patterns points to the relevance of public policies that support mental health, financial stability, and balanced work conditions as key contributors to enhancing well-being among entrepreneurs. Moreover, the study underscores the necessity of adapting policy measures to the demands of each industry, given that different sectors face distinct sources of stress and well-being influences. Looking ahead, policy development should incorporate evidence-based approaches designed to assist entrepreneurs throughout various phases of their business journey, thereby fostering a more resilient and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

We acknowledge that entrepreneurial well-being (EW) can vary significantly across different industries and national contexts. However, given that our study is designed as a bibliometric analysis of the field, incorporating a sectoral or cross-national comparison falls outside the scope and methodological design of our research.

Nevertheless, future research should further explore how EW manifests in various sectors, such as high-tech, healthcare, financial services, and social work. These industries present unique challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurs, particularly in how they navigate work-life balance, innovation pressures, and regulatory landscapes. Comparative studies across these sectors could help identify industry-specific determinants of EW and inform tailored policy interventions.

Additionally, longitudinal and comparative studies could provide deeper insights into the factors shaping EW across different geographical regions and cultural contexts. The role of institutional frameworks, labor market regulations, and cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship should be considered when analyzing differences in EW. Future investigations could also assess the impact of external shocks, such as economic crises, geopolitical conflicts, or technological disruptions, on entrepreneurial well-being. Given the increasing prevalence of automation, AI-driven decision-making, and digital work environments, understanding how technological change affects entrepreneurs' psychological and economic stability is a critical avenue for future research.

Moreover, a growing research agenda should address the tensions between entrepreneurial practices, sustainable development goals (SDGs), and institutional barriers. While entrepreneurship is often associated with economic growth and innovation, many traditional business models conflict with sustainability objectives, particularly regarding environmental impact and social equity. Institutional constraints, such as inconsistent regulatory frameworks, limited access to impact-driven investment, and insufficient policy incentives, often hinder the adoption of sustainable entrepreneurial practices. Future research should explore how hybrid business models (e.g., social entrepreneurship, circular economy ventures) can reconcile economic viability with sustainability commitments, as well as how governments and financial institutions can facilitate the transition to responsible entrepreneurship.

Finally, future research should adopt interdisciplinary methodological frameworks to investigate entrepreneurial well-being from diverse perspectives. While quantitative methods continue to be essential, qualitative approaches such as ethnographic inquiry, expert interviews and participatory action research can offer deeper insights into the lived realities of entrepreneurs. Moreover, the incorporation of big data analytics and machine learning into EW studies may facilitate the identification of patterns and predictive variables, generating new knowledge about the evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems over time.

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Authorship contributions statement

Cristina Sierra Casanova: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Esthela Galván-Vela:** Conceptualisation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Mario Alberto Salazar-Altamirano:** Editing for Style and Academic Tone, Translation, Adaptation to Journal Guidelines, Writing – Review & Editing.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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