



Do Higher Education Institutions Foster Social Entrepreneurship? Curriculum Analysis at the University of Valencia

Estefanía López Requena¹
¹Universitat de València, Spain

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Abstract

Universities play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurial skills to support students' professional integration. However, in an increasingly complex and dehumanised socio-economic and political context, it is essential to evaluate whether higher education addresses the social dimension of entrepreneurship. This study explores the extent to which social entrepreneurial competencies are embedded in undergraduate curricula at the University of Valencia (Spain). A qualitative content analysis was conducted on 60 degrees verification reports, using proxy indicators to identify the presence of such competencies. Findings reveal a limited and uneven integration of social entrepreneurship skills, with significant variation across academic disciplines.

Keywords: *university; youth; competences; formation; curricula; content analysis; social entrepreneurship.*

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship promotion has acquired growing relevance in modern society. Governments have been fostering entrepreneurship lately, specifically the kind with a social component, due to its potential to develop different countries both socially and economically, as it plays an essential role in local innovation and development (Sullivan & Meek, 2012). Its promotion is introduced as an innovative and sustainable strategy to tackle social and environmental problems, whose aim is to achieve a kind of economy with a more respectful approach towards the common good. An example of this kind of strategy has been recently observed in Spain with the plan "Spain, an Entrepreneurial Nation", set up by a body of 50 measures aimed at propelling the start-up industry. In this context, the incorporation of social entrepreneurship into university education not only addresses employability challenges and sustainability goals (as set out in the 2030 Agenda) but also the mission of forming socially responsible citizens.

Although numerous extracurricular initiatives have emerged in recent years —such as student social entrepreneurship clubs, university volunteering programmes or service-learning experiences with social impact— these opportunities are rarely reflected or integrated into the formal curricula of degree programmes. This mismatch between the growing interest in social entrepreneurship and its weak curricular presence reveals a structural disconnection. Why do these initiatives not translate into formal curricular content? Several interrelated barriers can explain this gap: the rigidity of official study plans, the lack of institutional incentives for educational innovation, and the undervaluation of community engagement in academic assessment systems. Moreover, there is often a disconnect between institutional discourses on sustainability and social commitment and the concrete decisions made in curriculum design and academic coordination.

The reality is that entrepreneurship boosting is reinvigorated in the context of a crisis, like the one we are experiencing now, thus trying to incentivise different strategies that favour the most vulnerable communities. One such group is youngsters, who have been severely punished in the



past few years at a professional level with their precarious jobs and high rates of unemployment, and can be considered one of the groups with a serious risk of social vulnerability (Llaneras, 2021). Different international institutions are aware of this situation, and this is why one of the goals of European Strategy 2030 and its initiative “Youth on the Go” focuses on promoting an entrepreneurial spirit in this group.

In this socioeconomic context, universities play an essential role as training agents that shape the future of youngsters and, at the same time, promote the development of entrepreneurial skills with a socially responsible view. The university acts as a transmitter of knowledge to society, with the possibility of fostering entrepreneurship through the integration of skills and attitudes that can be transferred in students’ learning processes (Glunk & Van Gils, 2010). On this basis, examining the role that universities, as training entities, play in promoting social entrepreneurial skills contributes to the creation of more inclusive and sustainable societies (Mata-Segreda et al., 2014).

Despite the socioeconomic challenges mentioned at the start of this article, 37% of people who undertake social entrepreneurship in Spain are 25 to 34 years old. However, only 7% hold higher education degrees (Velasco et al., 2019). Thus, universities are in a convenient position to foster entrepreneurship among students through knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Sánchez et al., 2011).

Education aimed at entrepreneurship development and social economy in university settings favours the development of skills so that students are ready to react quickly and adequately to the socioeconomic context (Mateescu, 2014). Higher education institutions have submitted to a process of adaptation and renovation after the Bologna Plan, aware of the need to create new knowledge for higher social and economic growth (Bautista & Escofet, 2013; Palomares-Montero, 2014). Skill training has reached every educational sphere.

Specifically, the university institution must transfer supportive, fair, and responsible knowledge, consistent with its responsibility to accomplish the third mission (Carrillo-Velarde, 2020; Bueno, 2005). Hence, there is a need for university agents to commit to social entrepreneurial skill training (SEST) since the promotion of SEST in higher education may contribute to boosting creativity and the initiative to generate an entrepreneurial spirit and develop the capacity and potential to build a more democratic coexistence (Martínez & Carmona, 2009).

The notion of skill, initially related to labour contexts, has been enriched lately, penetrating even the education field. In this case, skill is defined as the personal aptitude, capacities, abilities, and strategies to carry out a task in different contexts. However, what do we understand by the terms “entrepreneurial skill” or “social entrepreneurial skill”? Indeed, they are terms whose definitions have a high degree of complexity, as their terminological boundaries are difficult to set, little consensus has been observed, and multiple indicators converge at both approaches. Thus, in the interest of delimiting these two concepts, we have compiled the different studies that have contributed to shedding light on this question (Kirby, 2004; Martínez & Carmona, 2009; Sáenz & López, 2015; Patino, Alonso, & Cruz, 2016).

In an attempt to make a broader delimitation of the term SES, which is important in this research, one can grasp that the fundamental difference between these two terms lies in the development of projects that result in economic growth while increasing social cohesion in a unified project (Martínez, 2011). Thus, the difference between the terms “entrepreneurial skill” and “social entrepreneurial skill” is that the latter is oriented to improve coexistence, defend people’s rights, and boost autonomy (Bolívar & Pereyra, 2006). As Marina (2010) pointed out, it is an ambitious skill that helps complete the training of students from different perspectives: personal aspects (moral and ethical virtue), information processing (intellectual aspects), and social

interaction (needed for coexistence). Among the social entrepreneurial skills, we can compile some indicators that refer to personal and social dimensions for the integral development of people. This aspect cannot be seen at the same level in the definition of entrepreneurial skills (López & Palomares-Montero, 2019).

Table 1. Delimitation between entrepreneurial skill and social entrepreneurial skill (SES)

Entrepreneurial skills		Social Entrepreneurial Skills (SES)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk/error assumption. ▪ Adaptability to change. ▪ Autonomy. ▪ Self-knowledge. ▪ Analytical and organisational capacity. ▪ Creativity. ▪ Commitment. ▪ Communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of opportunities. ▪ Innovation. ▪ Leadership. ▪ Optimism. ▪ Perseverance. ▪ Planning. ▪ Proactivity. ▪ Professionalism. 	<p>The former, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical capacity. ▪ Empathy. ▪ Emotion management. ▪ Integrity. ▪ Mediation. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patience. ▪ Persuasion. ▪ Responsibility. ▪ Solidarity. 	

Note: Adapted from López (2021)

When discussing the term skill, it is essential to emphasise that all three of its typologies, which are basic and general skills, cross-sectional skills, and specific skills, are present within university teaching-learning planning. Among these, study plans often feature generic skills such as entrepreneurial capacity, initiative, and innovation. The European Commission's Education and Training 2010 report underscores the significance of entrepreneurial skills, while the White Book of Economy and Business identifies "entrepreneurial initiative and spirit" as a core generic skill. Furthermore, key components of social entrepreneurial skills, namely teamwork, ethical commitment at work, and communication, are also highlighted in major educational frameworks such as the REFLEX Report, the Tuning Project, and ANECA's White Book (García et al., 2010).

Among social entrepreneurial skills, we observe that many terms can be related to basic and general skills of different university degrees, as they bring knowledge, capabilities, and attitudes to students that will be useful throughout their university time; on the other hand, we can also collect several social entrepreneurial skills that are linked to cross-sectional skills, those related to personal development regardless of the professional sector or academic training studied (García-González et al., 2020; González & Wagenaar, 2003).

In the Spanish context, universities have access to a variety of opportunities aimed to developed entrepreneurial skills, including seminars, conferences, programs, congresses, workshops, competitions, laboratories, academic chairs, grants, incubators, and more (Directorate General of Industry and Small and Medium-Scale Businesses, 2012). However, when it comes to the curricular integration of these entrepreneurial skills into university degree programmes, there remains a notable absence of formal training, along with a lack of support structures for their promotion and development (Melián et al., 2017). Given the growing interest and recognized importance of this area, a rising number of studies are now focusing on analysing the skills related

to social entrepreneurship within the university setting (Álvarez et al., 2016; Rojas et al., 2016).

The role of Spanish universities in fostering social entrepreneurship and promoting collective welfare is fundamental. In this regard, the present article aims to contribute to existing research through a detailed and critical analysis with a descriptive approach. To undertake this investigation, we first relied on findings from an earlier phase of the study, during which a systematic review of the literature on training experiences in higher education related to social entrepreneurship was conducted. Following this, we implemented the Delphi method, which enabled us to define a set of indicators that more accurately capture the characteristics of social entrepreneurship (López & Palomares-Montero, 2019). This article presents the outcomes from the second phase of the research, where we performed a content analysis of the degree study plans offered by the University of Valencia. This analysis was conducted by reviewing the verification reports of those degrees. The general objective of the study is to describe how the prescribed degree curricula at the University of Valencia are structured with respect to the promotion and/or teaching of social entrepreneurial skills. To achieve this overarching aim, several specific objectives were defined:

- a. Describing the presence or absence of indicators associated with social entrepreneurial skills
- b. Identifying the sections in the verification reports that usually contain such indicators
- c. Evaluating the existence of differences in the presence of indicators among the different areas of knowledge analysed.

In this study, we analyse how social entrepreneurial competence is integrated into the curricula of higher education degrees in the field of Social Sciences and Education at the University of Valencia. Specifically, it addresses two key questions: (1) What is the explicit and implicit presence of social entrepreneurial competence in the official study plans of the selected degrees? (2) What institutional and pedagogical opportunities and barriers affect the integration of this competence into the curriculum? The study combines two complementary methodological approaches. First, a documentary analysis was carried out on the official curricula of several undergraduate and master's degrees related to Social Education and Pedagogy. Second, a Delphi study was conducted with a panel of university teachers and experts in educational innovation and social entrepreneurship.

This study aims to contribute to the field of higher education and social entrepreneurship on both theoretical and practical levels. From a theoretical standpoint, the research offers a framework of proxy indicators for identifying social entrepreneurial competencies within formal university curricula. This framework is grounded in previous scholarly work and shaped by expert consensus obtained through the Delphi method. It can serve as a reference point for future comparative analyses between institutions and across national contexts. On a practical level, the study provides empirical evidence regarding the current degree of integration of social entrepreneurial skills in university curricula. This information is valuable for curriculum designers, educational policymakers, and academic institutions that seek to cultivate graduates with a strong sense of social responsibility. By pinpointing existing gaps and areas of opportunity, the study supports efforts to redesign academic programs that are better aligned with pressing societal needs—such as youth unemployment, social innovation, and the broader mission of universities to contribute to the common good.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there has been growing interest in how higher education institutions (HEIs) contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship education has become a strategic priority in many universities, particularly in the context of employability, innovation, and economic competitiveness. Traditionally, entrepreneurship has been associated with business

creation and economic value generation. However, this conception has evolved to include broader forms of entrepreneurship, notably social entrepreneurship, which emphasises the creation of social value, sustainability, and systemic impact (Zahra et al., 2009).

Social entrepreneurship (SE) represents a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon. It combines entrepreneurial innovation with a social mission, often aiming to address complex societal challenges such as inequality, poverty, exclusion, and environmental degradation (Mair & Martí, 2006). As such, SE is aligned with global agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). In this regard, universities have a pivotal role in shaping future professionals capable of promoting transformative change through entrepreneurial action.

Several authors argue that entrepreneurial education should not only foster economic competencies but also encourage civic engagement, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility (Fayolle & Redford, 2014; Bacq & Janssen, 2011). Within this framework, the concept of social entrepreneurial competencies (SECs) has emerged to define the specific skill set required for social entrepreneurs. These include empathy, collaboration, ethical leadership, social innovation, systemic thinking, and the capacity to identify and address social problems creatively (Lackéus, 2015). However, despite the theoretical consensus, there is a notable gap between discourse and curricular practice.

Multiple studies have highlighted the limited integration of social entrepreneurship in university curricula, especially outside business schools or innovation hubs (Torrents et al., 2018; Terán & Aguirre, 2021). In many cases, SE is offered as an elective or extracurricular activity, rather than as a core component of degree programs. Moreover, there is considerable disciplinary bias: programs in social sciences and education are more likely to adopt critical approaches to social issues. In contrast, STEM and business programs may focus on market-based solutions or technical entrepreneurship. This uneven landscape raises concerns about equity, interdisciplinarity, and the actual reach of SE education within HEIs (Santos, 2012).

A further limitation lies in the lack of institutional commitment to embedding social purpose in educational strategies. While many universities promote values such as sustainability, inclusion, and social responsibility in their mission statements, these values are not always reflected in formal curricula or assessment criteria (Brock & Steiner, 2009). In this sense, the curriculum acts as both a mirror and a filter of institutional priorities: what is included and emphasised in syllabi and program documents often reveals deeper cultural and political dynamics within academia (Ball, 2003).

Research on curriculum analysis as a tool to evaluate the presence of SE is still emerging. Most existing literature is qualitative and based on case studies or program evaluations. Some authors have proposed the use of proxy indicators to identify whether social entrepreneurship competencies are explicitly or implicitly addressed in official documents (Lackéus, 2015; Maritz et al., 2016). These indicators may include the presence of terms like "social innovation," "community engagement," "ethical leadership," or "sustainability" within learning outcomes, competences, or pedagogical approaches.

In the Spanish context, there is growing awareness of the relevance of SE, but national educational policy and university legislation have not yet fully incorporated this perspective into accreditation and quality assurance processes. According to recent reviews, only a small number of Spanish universities offer structured programs or official degrees in social entrepreneurship, and even fewer integrate these competencies systematically in undergraduate curricula (Sáez-López et al., 2020). The fragmentation of efforts, lack of interdepartmental coordination, and institutional inertia are often cited as key barriers.

Despite these challenges, some promising experiences have emerged. For instance,

interdisciplinary service-learning programs, innovation labs, and collaborative projects with NGOs and social enterprises are being implemented in various universities across Europe and Latin America. These initiatives often emphasise experiential learning and community-based education as vehicles to develop both technical and social competencies (Boni & Lozano, 2007; Rieckmann, 2012). However, these practices remain peripheral in many institutions and are not always aligned with official curricula or credit-bearing courses.

In this scenario, a content analysis of curriculum documents becomes a valuable method to explore how SE competencies are being addressed – or neglected – in higher education. By examining degree verification reports, syllabi, or accreditation documents, researchers can gain insight into institutional priorities and pedagogical orientations. Moreover, such analyses can reveal disciplinary trends, institutional gaps, and areas of potential improvement. They can also inform policy recommendations for curriculum reform and faculty development in the field of social entrepreneurship education.

Although there is a growing recognition of the need to foster social entrepreneurial competencies in higher education, the actual integration of these skills in official curricula remains limited and uneven. Universities continue to face tensions between market-driven models of entrepreneurship and socially oriented approaches. In this context, empirical research on curriculum content – especially at the program and institutional level – is essential to bridge the gap between educational discourse and pedagogical reality.

Based on the reviewed literature, this study is grounded on the assumption that university curricula not only transmit knowledge and skills but also reflect deeper institutional values and priorities. Consequently, analyzing curriculum documents can reveal to what extent social entrepreneurial competencies (SECs) are structurally integrated into higher education. Drawing from the conceptual contributions of authors such as Lackéus (2015), Maritz et al. (2016), and Ball (2003), we adopt a qualitative content analysis approach informed by proxy indicators that signal the presence of SECs. These indicators include references to values such as sustainability, ethical leadership, community engagement, and social innovation. This framework leads to the following research questions: To what extent are social entrepreneurial competencies explicitly or implicitly present in the official undergraduate curricula of the University of Valencia?

- In which sections of the degree verification reports are these competencies more likely to be addressed?
- Are there differences across disciplinary areas in the integration of SECs?

These questions guide the analytical process and help link the theoretical discussion with empirical evidence, contributing to a deeper understanding of how universities respond to the challenge of educating future social entrepreneurs.

RESEARCH METHOD

To achieve the study's objective, we applied a descriptive qualitative content analysis with deductive logic, complemented by a quantitative frequency analysis of the coded indicators. This hybrid approach is well-suited to examining the presence or absence of predefined competencies in official curriculum documents. Following López-Aranguren (2000), this method is both descriptive, aiming to map the existing curricular content, and inferential, enabling conclusions about the extent and distribution of social entrepreneurial competencies. It draws from Krippendorff's (1990, 2004) model of content analysis as a systematic, objective technique for interpreting meaningful textual data.

Rather than a bibliometric approach—which typically involves citation analysis—we adopted a qualitative content analysis strategy rooted in educational research. This methodological

approach allows for the systematic examination of how competencies are embedded in curricular documents through the interpretation of textual content.

This study constitutes a social research technique applied to the educational field, specifically focused on analysing curriculum texts and detecting the explicit or implicit presence of social entrepreneurship competencies. This analysis is also applicable to make observations about the presence or absence of such terms, as is the case in this investigation. Alternatively, even possible to evaluate the conditions in which this knowledge has manifested (Gervilla, 2000; Porta & Silva, 2019). The methodological strategy applied in this content analysis consists of four key stages, by the model established by Krippendorff (2004):

a. Stage 1:

Analysis planning design. This stage consisted of planning and estimating the time for the analysis (academic year 2019-2020) and the resources needed to carry it out.

b. Stage 2:

Sample selection. A purposive sampling strategy was applied to select the curricular documents relevant to this content analysis. Specifically, we collected the verification reports of undergraduate programs offered by the University of Valencia during the academic year 2019–2020. These documents are publicly available and represent the official curricular design of each program, making them a rich and appropriate source for analysing the integration of social entrepreneurship competencies.

Verification reports were chosen over syllabi or course outlines because they are standardised institutional documents that comprehensively outline the objectives, competencies, structure, and educational planning of entire degree programs. They are approved at a national level and include essential information about intended learning outcomes, making them highly suitable for detecting overarching transversal competencies such as social entrepreneurship. However, one limitation of using only verification reports is that they may not fully reflect how competencies are enacted in classroom practices or course-specific materials. Future research could complement this analysis with syllabi or actual teaching materials to provide a more comprehensive view.

A total of 60 verification reports were included in the sample. This number corresponds to all undergraduate degrees offered by the university at that time, excluding dual degrees and the degree in Data Intelligence and Analytics, whose reports were unavailable on the university website at the time of data collection. This exclusion is not expected to affect the results, as the included sample already spans a broad and diverse set of disciplinary areas, including social sciences, humanities, sciences, engineering, and health-related programs.

This purposive and exhaustive sampling within the institutional context ensures data sufficiency and coverage for the research objectives, as it enables a comprehensive analysis of how (and whether) social entrepreneurship competencies are incorporated across all formal undergraduate curricula in the university under study.

The next step was to define the units of context. For that purpose, we made an initial analysis of the structure of these verification reports and defined six sections of analysis: a) justification of the degree; b) objectives; c) skills; d) access and admission of students; e) teaching planning; and f) planning and management of students' mobility. Additionally, we defined the register units considering three dimensions: i) processing of information, ii) personal aspects, and iii) social interaction, as defined by Marina (2010), for the integral training of students (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Units of study in the content analysis

Adapted from López (2021)

The 24 indicators linked to entrepreneurship and/or social entrepreneurship were divided into these three dimensions (see Table 2), the distribution of which was made at the researcher's discretion.

Table 2. Indicators for Integral Training of a Social Entrepreneur by Dimension.

INDICATORS	
Information Processing	Planning, Organisation, Analysis, Management
	Project Development, Project Deployment
	Adaptation to Context
	Self-knowledge, Self-criticism
	Critical evaluation, Critical Sense and/or Reasoning, Critical Capacity
	Decision Making
	Risk Assumption
	Anticipation, Prevision
	Positive Attitude towards Change and Innovation
	Autonomy, Initiative, Entrepreneurship
Personal Aspects	Perseverance, Tenacity, Spirit of Improvement, Effort
	Bravery, Courage
	Responsibility, Confidence
	Creativity, Flexibility
	Emotional Control, Self-control
	Ethical Commitment, Professional Ethics
Soc.	Social Responsibility

INDICATORS
Team-work
Cooperation, Collaboration
Leadership
Negotiation, Dialogue
Assertiveness
Communication, Transmission, Diffusion, Presentation
Exchange, Mobility

Source: Adapted from [López \(2021\)](#).

c. **Stage 3:**

Specification of the coding instructions. In this case, we drafted a spreadsheet that consisted of a list of indicators for revision in its vertical axis and the six sections according to the aforementioned structure of the verification reports in the horizontal axis.

d. **Stage 4**

Interpretation of results. Here, we carried out an analysis trying to address the three secondary objectives defined for this investigation: i) To what extent, within the official curriculum, the indicators related to social entrepreneurship from this study are integrated; ii) what elements of the prescribed curriculum cover, to a larger extent, the inclusion of indicators associated with social entrepreneurship, and iii) if there are significant differences in the presence or absence of indicators about the knowledge areas under revision.

Following [Krippendorff's \(2004\)](#) model, we conducted a descriptive and inferential content analysis combining qualitative categorisation and fundamental frequency analysis. Each verification report was manually examined to detect the presence or absence of the 24 predefined indicators (see Table 2), which had been previously grouped into three overarching dimensions: information processing, personal aspects, and social interaction. The unit of analysis was the indicator, and the coding rule was binary (presence/absence). Codification was structured via a matrix: rows represented the indicators and columns the six defined sections of the reports. A value of "1" was assigned if an indicator was explicitly present in a given section, and "0" if absent. This allowed us to compute frequency counts by section, indicator, and dimension.

The inferential component of the analysis was based on cross-tabulation and comparison of patterns across knowledge areas (e.g., Humanities, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, etc.), allowing us to identify thematic trends and assess which dimensions of social entrepreneurship were more or less represented depending on the discipline. The analysis also included a descriptive mapping of recurrent patterns in the most frequently coded indicators.

This approach provided both quantitative insights (in terms of indicator distribution and frequency) and qualitative understanding (by analysing the narrative context in which indicators appeared), allowing us to address the three secondary objectives of the study. To enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of the content analysis, several strategies were implemented. First, a peer review process was conducted: an independent

researcher, with experience in educational content analysis, reviewed the coding scheme and verified a sample of the data matrix to check for coherence and consistency in the identification of indicators across the six sections of the verification reports.

Additionally, the coding spreadsheet and interpretation framework were developed collaboratively and refined through iterative testing with a subset of five randomly selected reports, which helped clarify ambiguous indicators and refine definitions to minimise subjective interpretation. While full intercoder agreement metrics (such as Cohen's Kappa) were not calculated, efforts were made to ensure consistency through continuous discussions and adjustments during the coding process. This reflexive approach, combined with a transparent coding structure and classification criteria, contributes to the credibility of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative content analysis, complemented by quantitative techniques such as frequency counts and percentages, to examine the presence of social entrepreneurship indicators across 60 verification reports of university degree programs at the University of Valencia. The data obtained from this analysis enabled the identification of how social entrepreneurship is embedded within the prescribed curricula, while also offering insights into the pedagogical approaches used to train students in this domain. As a result, the study provides a clearer understanding of the educational strategies and frameworks related to social entrepreneurship currently in place at the University of Valencia. In the subsequent sections, we aim to address each of the specific objectives outlined earlier in this investigation, offering a detailed response grounded in the empirical findings.

In line with the specific objectives previously outlined, this section presents findings related to the presence or absence of indicators associated with social entrepreneurial skills within the analysed documents. The results indicate that a notable proportion of these indicators is indeed integrated into the verification reports examined. Among the three dimensions, the "Information Processing" category demonstrates the highest representation, accounting for 55% of all identified indicators. This figure is approximately three times higher than the representation of indicators found in the "Personal Aspects" dimension, which comprises less than 15% (see Figure 2).

These dimensions—Information Processing, Personal Aspects, and Social Interaction—are derived from the theoretical framework developed by [López and Palomares-Montero \(2019\)](#). The framework categorises social entrepreneurship competencies according to their cognitive, affective, and interpersonal characteristics. This classification not only reinforces the interpretive validity of the findings but also aligns with well-established literature in the field. Although no inferential statistical analyses were performed—given the descriptive nature of the research—basic frequency distributions and percentage calculations provide a robust understanding of how each dimension is represented across the university degree programs under study. These metrics help to elucidate the extent and nature of curricular integration of social entrepreneurial competencies at the University of Valencia.

It is worth highlighting that the dimensions of Personal Aspects and Social Interaction, despite being central to the development of social entrepreneurship skills, appear less frequently in the curriculum. Indicators such as ethics, confidence, emotional control, or effort are mentioned to a lesser extent across all knowledge areas, with percentages below 15% of total indicators. Moreover, after examining the location of the indicators within the verification reports, we observed that they appear most frequently in three sections:

- Skills (basic and general): between 27% and 58% of mentions,
- Learning outcomes: between 8% and 17%,

- Contents: between 10% and 13%.

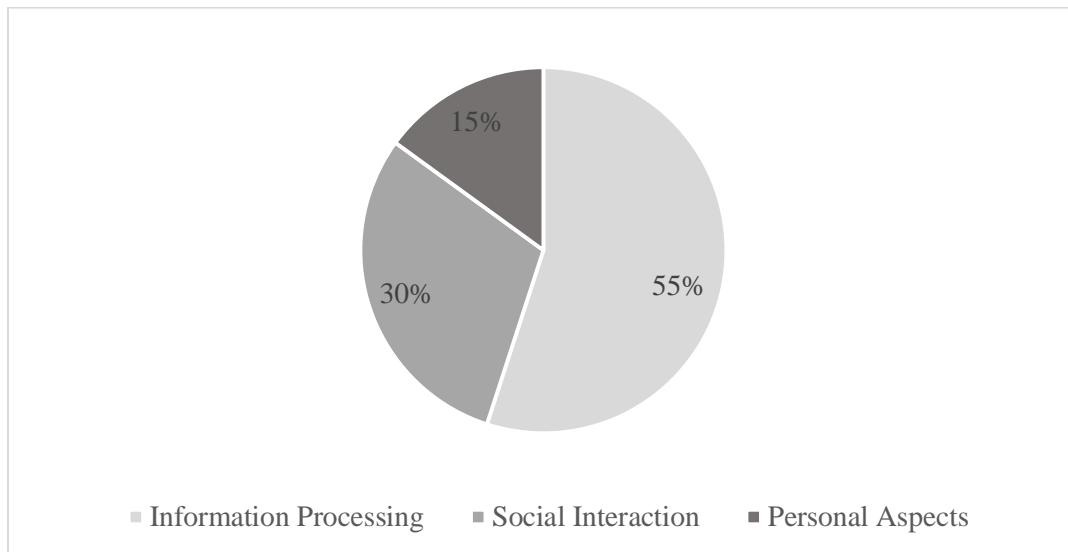


Figure 2. Distribution of Indicators Per Unit of Registration

Source: [López \(2021\)](#)

These results suggest a certain coherence with prior studies, such as the study by [García et al. \(2010\)](#), which emphasized the general/basic nature of these skills. When analyzing the presence of indicators by area of knowledge, the Social and Legal Sciences show the highest average number of mentions (1,162 per degree), followed by Architecture and Engineering (834). While the internal distribution of dimensions (Information Processing, Personal Aspects, Social Interaction) remains similar, the average values differ significantly among the areas (see Figure 3 and Table 3). Regarding the evaluation of the existence of notorious differences in the presence of indicators based on the analysed areas of knowledge, it is worth mentioning that the area of Social and Legal Sciences contains an average number of mentions, hitting 1,162 per degree. In contrast, the second area with the most mentions is Architecture and Engineering, with 834. Thus, the existence of a similar distribution regarding the units of registration (Information Processing, Personal Aspects, and Social Interaction) is evident, but there are indeed differences among the areas when we analyse the average values of mentions of each area separately (see Figure 3 and table 3).

The area of Social and Legal Sciences brings together the highest number of indicator mentions in its degrees, especially in the following: Economics, Tourism, Administration and Business Management, Sociology, Social Services, Labour Relations, Teaching, Pedagogy or Physical Activity and Sport. However, a more thorough analysis per degree shows that the area of Social and Legal Sciences has the lowest levels of mentions per degree at the University of Valencia in the following degrees: Information and Documentation, Journalism or Audiovisual Communication, Political Sciences, Geography and Environment, and Finance and Accounting.

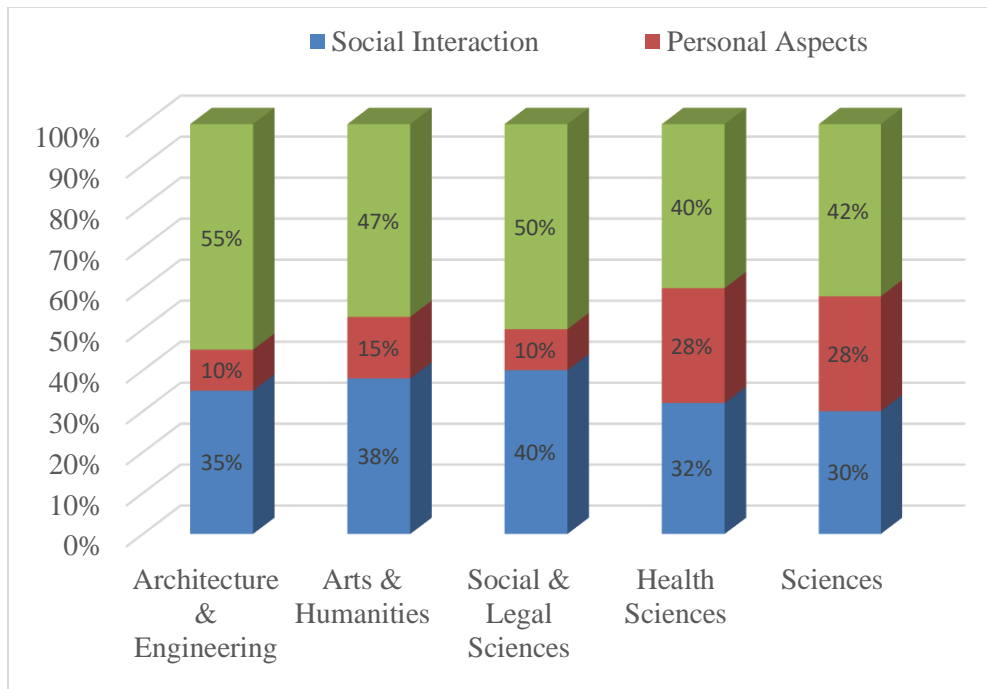


Figure 3. Distribution of indicators per unit of registration and area of knowledge.

Source: López (2021)

Table 3. Number of Indicators Mentions Per Area of Knowledge.

Area of knowledge	Number of degrees	Number of mentions	Average of mentions
Sciences	8	4,759	595
Health Sciences	11	9,108	828
Social and Legal Sciences	20	23,236	1,162
Arts and Humanities	11	8,772	797
Architecture and Engineering	7	5,838	834

Note: Extracted from López (2021).

Due to the singular character of this area, we decided to perform a more extensive analysis on the results obtained per degree in Social and Legal Sciences, and we have indeed observed significant differences; therefore, there is a lack of internal coherence in the concreteness of the verification reports from different degrees of the said area. A possible explanation for this would be that this area possesses a greater number of degrees (21), and such an aspect may complicate homogeneity and consensus in the distribution of indicators.

A more thorough degree-level analysis within Social and Legal Sciences reveals important internal inconsistencies. Some degrees—such as Economics, Tourism, Administration and Business Management, Sociology, Social Services, Labour Relations, Teaching, Pedagogy, or Physical Activity and Sport—register a high number of mentions. In contrast, others, such as Information and Documentation, Journalism or Audiovisual Communication, Political Sciences, Geography and

Environment, and Finance and Accounting, reflect the lowest levels of mention within the area.

These disparities point to a lack of internal coherence in the concretisation of verification reports across degrees. A possible explanation could be the higher number of degrees (21) in this area, which may complicate homogeneity and consensus regarding the integration of indicators. A broader comparison shows that Architecture and Engineering are the areas with the lowest average mention rates of social entrepreneurship indicators. Given that these indicators are primarily associated with Social Interaction and Personal Aspects, this may reflect a limited emphasis in these fields on competencies now increasingly valued for both professional development and holistic student formation (Alania-Contreras et al., 2019; González & Martínez, 2020). In any case, there is no cohesive or unified strategy for embedding these indicators in a defined section of the curriculum, unlike the general and basic competencies, which are consistently articulated.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to analyse the curricular integration of social entrepreneurial skills in the undergraduate degree programs at the University of Valencia, to assess how these competencies are fostered in higher education. The results show that, although there is a noticeable presence of related indicators, there is a clear imbalance in their integration. The "Information Processing" dimension dominates, accounting for 55% of the indicators, while the "Personal Aspects" and "Social Interaction" dimensions are underrepresented, comprising only 15% and 30%, respectively. This uneven distribution indicates that the curriculum prioritises technical and conceptual skills over essential personal and social competencies, which are critical for the comprehensive development of students and the effective promotion of social entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the analysis by fields of knowledge reveals significant variation across disciplines, with Social and Legal Sciences showing a higher presence of these indicators. In contrast, fields such as architecture and engineering show less emphasis. This suggests a lack of consensus and coherence in defining and promoting social entrepreneurial skills across academic areas. These findings directly relate to the research objectives, which sought to identify the presence, distribution, and consistency of social entrepreneurial competencies in university curricula. The evidence confirms an urgent need to balance and strengthen the curricular integration of these skills, particularly in the personal and social domains, to promote a more holistic development of students.

The university must promote a series of skills to improve coexistence, a responsibility to reach its third mission (Bueno, 2005). Fostering social entrepreneurial skills in higher education helps boost creativity and the initiative to generate an entrepreneurial culture, as well as the development of humane capabilities and potential needed for democratic coexistence (Martínez & Carmona, 2009). The promotion of social entrepreneurial skills among university students, mostly young audiences, contributes to their social and responsible input in transmitting knowledge with a positive impact on the socioeconomic landscape. However, as stated by Marina (2010), it is not worth training entrepreneurial skills if personal and social objectives are not set, hence the interest in promoting these skills, which should be a part of an ethical project, a unified strategy for fostering an economic and social model like the one described as Social Economy.

Nevertheless, from a global analysis of the results shown, the lack of relevance of the indicators that best define social entrepreneurship (social entrepreneurial skills) is evident in the analyzed verification reports, which could be associated with a lack of commitment to meet this training need in a prescribed manner (Detienne & Chandler, 2004; Honig, 2004; Marina, 2010). As stated by Gimeno (1991), if the prescribed curriculum does not manifest the need for training the said skills, we are still a long way from accomplishing the task of fostering social entrepreneurship in the university context.

We have also observed a notable challenge in submitting unified plans that promote and boost the same skill structure in the different areas of knowledge, given the placement of the collected indicators in the verification reports. However, they are fundamentally located among general and basic skills (García et al., 2010). Regarding the results obtained in this investigation per degree, it is worth mentioning that they agree with most experiences collected in the scientific literature concerning the fostering of social entrepreneurship, usually located in Social and Legal Sciences (López, 2021).

This investigation has performed a transversal analysis of the training offer received by all undergraduates in their degrees at the University of Valencia. Thus, it has primarily focused on analyzing the curricular training, an aspect that excludes any extracurricular training. Although the university voluntarily facilitates a set of initiatives for boosting social entrepreneurship among its students (like Aula Empresarial, UVemprén, Motivem, etc.), efforts must be made more vigorously regarding its curricular integration, as this is the only way to ensure that this training reaches the maximum number of students. These are some conclusions about the situation:

- a. Approach to entrepreneurial skills is missing: the lack of curricular integration of social entrepreneurship at universities means that many students are not exposed to training and development of entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, leadership and troubleshooting. These skills are fundamental to developing innovative ideas and facing social challenges effectively.
- b. Loss of opportunities to solve social problems: social entrepreneurship focuses on dealing with social problems and challenges using innovative and sustainable solutions. Its lack of curricular integration in the university system means that many opportunities to resolve social problems creatively and effectively are being missed.
- c. Limitations on social impact: the university system is a favourable environment for the generation of innovative ideas and projects. The scarce integration of social entrepreneurship limits the positive social impact that the students and professors can make in their communities.
- d. Difficulties for emergent social entrepreneurs: those students interested in developing social entrepreneurship may face additional obstacles because they lack specific training in the area. The lack of proper support and curricular structures may make their projects face difficulties in growing and succeeding.
- e. Loss of economic opportunities: not only does social entrepreneurship have a social impact, but it can also be a source of economic growth. The curricular integration of social entrepreneurship at universities could boost the creation of jobs and contribute to the sustainable development of the economy.
- f. Disconnection between theory and practice: the lack of curricular integration of social entrepreneurship may lead to a disconnection between academic theory and real-world practice. The students may learn more about social issues in the classroom, but they may lack the practical experience to implement their knowledge and solve real problems.

Likewise, the results from this study have contributed to the discussions and debates that the curricular integration of skills associated with social entrepreneurship has generated, aiming to discern some criteria that could shed some light on this question. In this case, although there is no observable consensus and the indicators associated with social entrepreneurial skills are not mentioned in the same way in the different areas of knowledge, they would indeed be located among the general and basic skills of university degrees.

The results indicate that the university should undertake curricular reforms that explicitly include social and personal skills linked to social entrepreneurship, ensuring a cohesive and

transversal institutional strategy. This would better leverage students' potential to generate social and economic impact, bridging the current gap between theory and practice and supporting the development of innovative and sustainable social projects. Additionally, there is a notorious presence of indicators related to the Information Processing dimension. This aspect should be modified or balanced to ensure that other important aspects for the integral development of students, encompassing Social Interaction and Personal Aspects, are also adequately addressed. Moreover, this matters to companies too, as they are claiming this type of solution in the present socioeconomic scenario and in this new socioeconomic paradigm, which is, in turn, educational, where skill development is a priority.

This study provides a critical perspective that challenges current understandings of social entrepreneurship integration in higher education. Although the literature highlights the importance of these competencies, our findings reveal that their incorporation is fragmented and unsystematic, limiting their effectiveness in shaping agents of social change. Therefore, this research refines the theoretical framework by emphasizing the need for a more holistic and balanced approach that values not only technical skills but also explicitly integrates personal and social competencies into university curricula.

In conclusion, advancing social entrepreneurship education at the university level requires educational institutions to develop clear and coherent policies that foster the integral formation of students, overcoming existing limitations and promoting an educational model responsive to the social and economic demands of the 21st century.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

To reach more solid conclusions, reproducing the study with larger samples is a must. Thus, one of the future lines of research lies in the analysis of verification reports from a larger number of universities, which could allow us to clarify the curricular integration of social entrepreneurial skills across different Spanish universities, regardless of their ownership. Moreover, it would be desirable to develop theoretical and practical frameworks based on a review of data or teaching-learning models to foster social entrepreneurial skills. In this way, universities could work toward the development of good practice teaching guides to apply these skills in the classroom ([Velasco et al., 2019](#)).

Factors that boost or hinder the incorporation of social entrepreneurship in the university system, including institutional, cultural, economic, and pedagogic barriers, are also subject to further investigation. Continued research and evaluation could explore the impact of integrating social entrepreneurship into university study plans, particularly regarding the development of entrepreneurial skills, the promotion of social innovation, and the advancement of sustainable solutions to social problems. These research lines could significantly contribute to improving the curricular integration of social entrepreneurship in higher education and enhancing the training of a new generation of leaders committed to sustainable development and the resolution of social issues through innovation and entrepreneurship.

The scarce curricular integration of social entrepreneurship in the university system represents a loss of opportunities to foster entrepreneurial skills, address social problems, create positive societal impact, and support sustainable economic growth. It is therefore fundamental that universities recognise the importance of incorporating social entrepreneurship into their academic programs and commit to providing a supportive environment for the development of socially oriented projects and initiatives.

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