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# El espíritu empresarial y gerencial en Vietnam desde perspectivas ontológicas, epistemológicas y axiológicas

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**Resumen.** Este estudio examina el espíritu empresarial y gerencial en Vietnam a través de tres dimensiones filosóficas fundamentales: la ontología, la epistemología y la axiología. A partir de una síntesis, análisis e interpretación de estudios contemporáneos en conjunción con el contexto socioeconómico de Vietnam, el artículo esclarece cómo las empresas y los actores emprendedores son comprendidos no solo como entidades puramente económicas, sino como actores sociales insertos en instituciones, comunidades y en el distintivo sistema de valores culturales de Vietnam. Desde una perspectiva epistemológica, el estudio demuestra que el conocimiento sobre el emprendimiento y la gestión en Vietnam es de naturaleza contextual e híbrida, configurado a través de la interacción entre modelos modernos de gestión, la experiencia práctica y el conocimiento indígena en una economía en transición. Desde una perspectiva axiológica, el artículo analiza la coexistencia de valores orientados al crecimiento y la eficiencia junto con valores emergentes asociados a la responsabilidad social, la ética empresarial y el desarrollo sostenible, particularmente a través de los marcos de referencia del ESG (Ambiental, Social y de Gobernanza) y de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Los hallazgos confirman que abordar el emprendimiento y la gestión desde una base filosófica integrada no solo clarifica los supuestos teóricos subyacentes, sino que también contribuye teóricamente al ampliar la investigación en emprendimiento y gestión desde un dominio predominantemente económico hacia una perspectiva filosófico-social más amplia. Además, el estudio ofrece implicaciones académicas para la formulación de políticas en educación y gobernanza orientadas al avance de los ODS en Vietnam.

**Palabras clave:** espíritu emprendedor, gestión, ontología, epistemología y Vietnam.

## **Entrepreneurial and managerial spirit in Vietnam from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives**

**Abstract.** This study examines the entrepreneurial and managerial spirit in Vietnam through three fundamental philosophical dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Drawing on a synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of contemporary scholarship alongside Vietnam's socioeconomic context, the article explains how enterprises and entrepreneurial actors are understood not merely as economic entities, but as social actors embedded in institutions, communities, and Vietnam's distinctive cultural value system. From an epistemological perspective, the study shows that knowledge of entrepreneurship and management in Vietnam is contextual and hybrid, shaped by the interaction between modern management models, practical experience, and indigenous knowledge within a transitional economy. From an axiological standpoint, the article analyzes the coexistence of growth- and efficiency-oriented values with emerging values related to social responsibility, business ethics, and sustainable development, particularly through ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) frameworks and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings affirm that approaching entrepreneurship and management from an integrated philosophical foundation clarifies underlying theoretical assumptions and broadens the field beyond a predominantly economic focus toward a wider socio-philosophical perspective. The study also offers academic implications for policymaking in education and governance aimed at advancing the SDGs in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial spirit, management, ontology, epistemology y Vietnam.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the context of deepening globalization and the rapid development of the knowledge-based economy, the entrepreneurial and managerial spirit has increasingly been recognized as a central driver of economic growth, innovation, and organizational competitiveness. However, contemporary transformations indicate that entrepreneurship and management can no longer be adequately understood merely as technical or purely economic activities oriented toward efficiency and profit maximization. Rather, they constitute deeply embedded social practices that both shape and are shaped by broader societal concerns, including social justice, environmental sustainability, ethical responsibility, and institutional legitimacy.

International scholarship has increasingly acknowledged that dominant approaches to entrepreneurship and management are grounded in implicit philosophical assumptions that are rarely examined systematically. These assumptions influence how firms are conceptualized, how managerial knowledge is produced and legitimized, and which values are prioritized in assessing organizational success. Ontological assumptions determine whether enterprises are understood as purely economic entities or as socially embedded actors; epistemological assumptions shape the ways in which entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge is generated, validated, and transmitted; while axiological assumptions establish the ethical norms and normative goals that guide decision-making processes and organizational behavior.

Despite the growing emphasis on sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and ESG-oriented governance, much of the existing literature continues to privilege instrumental and technocratic approaches. As a result, entrepreneurship and management are often analyzed through fragmented lenses that fail to illuminate their deeper philosophical foundations. The absence of an integrated philosophical framework has constrained contemporary research in capturing the complex social implications of entrepreneurial and managerial practices, particularly in institutional contexts characterized by hybridity and rapid transformation.

This limitation is especially evident in transitional economies such as Vietnam. Since the launch of the renovation Era in Vietnam, Vietnam has undergone profound structural transformations, including the rapid expansion of the private sector, the emergence of entrepreneurial ecosystems, and the increasing adoption of global management models. At the same time, Vietnam's socialist-oriented market economy entails distinctive expectations regarding the role of the state, corporate social responsibility, and the linkage between economic development and community welfare. These dynamics have generated a unique context in which global governance models intersect with local institutions and indigenous cultural values.

Although a growing body of research has addressed entrepreneurship, management, and sustainable development in emerging economies, studies that explicitly engage with the philosophical foundations of these phenomena remain limited. In particular, there is a paucity of research that systematically integrates ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions to interpret entrepreneurship and management as value-laden social practices. This gap not only constrains theoretical advancement but also leads to partial and reductive interpretations of the social roles of enterprises and managers.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to make a conceptual and theoretical contribution by analyzing the entrepreneurial and managerial spirit in Vietnam through an integrated philosophical framework encompassing ontology, epistemology, and axiology. By synthesizing contemporary international scholarship and situating it within Vietnam's socio-economic context, the study reconceptualizes entrepreneurship and management beyond narrow economic rationality, emphasizing them as social practices constituted through systems of knowledge and value commitments.

This approach enables the paper to contribute to academic discourse by extending entrepreneurship and management research into the domains of social philosophy of science and critical management studies. At the same time, it offers important theoretical implications for policymaking, management education, and responsible leadership practices aligned with ESG principles and sustainable development in transitional economies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Research on entrepreneurial and managerial spirit in contemporary social sciences**

Entrepreneurial and managerial spirit has long been a central subject of inquiry in economics, management studies, and the social sciences. Classical research conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a process of discovering and exploiting economic opportunities (Venkataraman,

1997), or as a set of individual capabilities associated with innovation, risk-taking, and proactive behavior (Gartner, 1988; Hisrich et al., 2017). Management, by contrast, has traditionally been approached as the activity of organizing, coordinating, and directing resources to achieve an organization's collective goals (Teece, 2010).

Since the early twenty-first century, research trends have shifted from predominantly economic perspectives toward more social and interdisciplinary approaches, emphasizing the role of entrepreneurship and management in addressing social, environmental, and sustainability challenges (Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Spigel, 2017). From this perspective, enterprises are no longer viewed solely as profit-generating units but also as social actors bearing responsibilities toward communities and the surrounding ecosystems (Freeman, 1984).

### **Ontological approaches in research on enterprises and management**

Ontology addresses questions concerning the nature of existence of social entities, including firms and organizations. Burrell and Morgan (2019) argue that organizational theories invariably embody distinct ontological assumptions, which shape how researchers understand and interpret organizational reality. From a traditional perspective, the firm is viewed as an objective economic entity that exists independently of values and social contexts. More recent scholarship, however, emphasizes the relational and social nature of enterprises, conceptualizing firms as products of social relations, institutions, and power structures (Morrell & Dahmann, 2022).

In the field of entrepreneurship, Heinonen and Ruotsalainen (2016) propose an approach of "entrepreneurship as practice," emphasizing that entrepreneurship is not merely an individual act but a socially embedded process situated within specific contexts. This perspective broadens the ontological understanding of entrepreneurship from an individual-centered phenomenon to one grounded in ecosystems and communities. Research on entrepreneurial ecosystems further demonstrates that firms and entrepreneurs exist within complex networks of relationships involving the state, markets, and civil society (Spigel, 2017; O'Shea et al., 2019).

### **Epistemology and knowledge of entrepreneurship and management**

Epistemology focuses on how knowledge is formed, legitimized, and applied. In entrepreneurship research, Mitchell et al. (2002) emphasize the role of cognition and entrepreneurial thinking, viewing entrepreneurial knowledge as the product of subjective interpretation under conditions of uncertainty. Sarasvathy's (2001) theory of *effectuation* has significantly reshaped conventional understandings of business knowledge by arguing that entrepreneurs rely not solely on prediction, but on their capacity for control and adaptation.

In management studies, Eisenhardt (1989) and Zollo and Winter (2002) demonstrate that managerial knowledge is generated not only through theory but also through practice, organizational learning, and dynamic capabilities. DeWitt and Schickore (2011) add a philosophy-of-science perspective, emphasizing that all knowledge is embedded in particular worldviews and socio-historical contexts. This insight is especially relevant for transitional economies, where managerial knowledge often takes a hybrid form, combining global standards with indigenous experience.

### **Axiology, business ethics, and sustainable development**

Axiology addresses questions concerning the goals and normative standards by which entrepreneurial and managerial activities are evaluated. Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory laid the foundation for an ethical approach to governance by conceptualizing the balancing of stakeholders' interests as a core requirement of modern management. Shrivastava (1994) and Rodgers (2011) further extended this perspective by emphasizing ecological responsibility and environmentally oriented management.

Philosophical theories on environmental education Environmental education is based on a set of philosophical traditions that help explain how individuals perceive, interpret, and act on environmental issues. These theories provide a conceptual basis for understanding the formation of ecological awareness, environmental attitudes, sustainable behaviors, and the broader relationship between human well-being and the natural environment. The following sections present the main philosophical approaches that guide contemporary environmental education (Nguyen Viet Thanh, Luong Thi Hoai Thanh, 2026). As societies develop, human dependence on nature deepens and the relationship between humans and the natural environment becomes increasingly interdependent. As Pham Thi Ngoc Tram (1997) observed, "the inherent components of nature are not only essential elements for human life but also constitute inexhaustible resources for social development, provided that humans know how to exploit and utilize them wisely and rationally" (Pham Thi Ngoc Tram, 1997, pp. 71–72). This viewpoint underscores the axiological shift from a purely anthropocentric and growth-oriented logic toward value frameworks that integrate environmental stewardship, ethical responsibility, and long-term sustainability.

Within contemporary entrepreneurship and management studies, these axiological concerns are increasingly articulated through concepts such as corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, and ESG-oriented governance. Together, they reflect a redefinition of organizational success that transcends short-term economic performance and incorporates ethical legitimacy, social well-being, and environmental sustainability as fundamental evaluative criteria.

In recent years, research on ESG and the SDGs has become a central focus of axiological inquiry in management studies. Brooks and Oikonomou (2018), Chen et al. (2023), and Rao et al. (2023) identify a positive relationship between ESG practices, firms' financial performance, and their social legitimacy. From a philosophical perspective, Lalu Rahmat Sohdi et al. (2024) argue that ESG should be understood not merely as a measurement tool but as an expression of a value shift from short-term profit maximization toward long-term sustainable development.

Similarly, Marxist-Leninist theory provides a robust framework for understanding the interdependence between humans, society, and nature. In the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), Karl Marx emphasized that the natural world is both the origin and determinant of human activity; thus, actions hostile to nature are ultimately detrimental to humanity itself (Marx, K., & Engels, F, 2004, Vol. 20). Engels further elaborated that "in the natural world, nothing happens alone. This phenomenon affects other phenomena and vice versa" (Marx, K., & Engels, F, 2004, Vol. 42), highlighting the interconnectedness of all elements in the ecological system. These insights laid a theoretical foundation for analyzing contemporary environmental challenges and the ethical imperatives of ecological stewardship.

Engels' Dialectics of Nature also distinguishes between humans and animals in their capacity to transform the environment. He cautioned against overexploitation, reminding humanity that "we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood, and brain, belong to nature, and exist within its midst" (Marx, K., & Engels, F, 2004, Vol. 42). Despite these warnings, industrialization and environmental degradation have demonstrated the urgent relevance of Engels' perspective.

The negative externalities of the market economy have also contributed to the prioritization of economic interests above environmental considerations. In many cases, monetary value has been absolutized, leading individuals to believe that material accumulation equates to security, happiness, and social superiority. Such perspectives often encourage disregard for environmental laws and ecological boundaries. Engels emphasizes the essential concept of adaptation, asserting that "No living entity, including humans, can exist outside the biosphere" (Marx & Engels, 1995). Human existence is fundamentally dependent on nature, which provides the material foundation for survival and development.

Marx expressed this relationship clearly in the Economic–Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, stating that: "Nature—specifically, nature in and of itself, not as the body of man—is man's inorganic body. Man lives by nature. This means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in constant interchange in order to live. To say that the physical and mental life of man is linked to nature is simply to say that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature" (Marx & Engels, 2004). This perspective emphasizes the intrinsic relationship between enterprises and the natural environment, highlighting the necessity of maintaining ecological balance as a prerequisite for sustainable human development.

These catastrophic events reflect the warnings articulated by Engels more than a century ago: "These events have reminded us every hour, every minute that we cannot dominate nature as an invader dominates another nation, as someone who lives outside of nature" (Marx & Engels, 2004). Similarly, Nguyen Trong Chuan (2016) highlights that the destructive responses of nature have in the past "turned prosperous nations into desolate lands or even wiped out entire civilizations," emphasizing the need for continuous reflection on humanity's relationship with the environment (Nguyen Trong Chuan, 2016).

Harmonizing the relationship between economic development and environmental protection is a fundamental requirement of sustainable development. This entails promoting green economic growth characterized by low waste generation, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and low-carbon development; encouraging circular economy models to ensure the integrated and efficient use of production outputs; and resolutely eliminating projects that cause environmental pollution, while safeguarding environmental quality, biodiversity, and ecosystems, and building a green, circular, and environmentally friendly economy (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). Although the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Vietnamese State have consistently emphasized the need to link economic growth with environmental protection, this principle has not been fully realized in practice. Environmental pollution and violations of environmental protection laws have become increasingly complex, employing various methods that generate public anxiety, adversely affect people's livelihoods, and undermine social

stability. The cultural and social environment continues to be degraded by social evils, corruption, and negative practices.

It can be argued that the further industrialization and modernization advance, the faster economic growth becomes. However, this also means that the process of industrialization and modernization exerts tremendous pressure on the natural environment. Poorly managed entrepreneurship and governance can destroy the environment, devastate ecosystems, transform fertile fields into decertified and salinized lands, and cause productive sugarcane fields and maize uplands to collapse into rivers as a result of illegal sand mining carried out day and night. Environmental pollution caused by many companies and projects is even more severe, ultimately imposing harsh and long-lasting consequences on human beings themselves.

Notably, a significant number of enterprises, projects, and investors have conducted superficial and irresponsible environmental impact assessments, deceived public opinion, and, once exposed, have been strongly condemned by society. As Marx and Engels observed, “all our mastery over nature consists in the fact that, unlike all other creatures, we can learn its laws and apply them correctly” (Marx & Engels, 1994, Vol. 20). Regrettably, Engels’s insights on this issue have long failed to receive due attention; as a result, humanity is likely to pay a heavy price, accompanied by profound regret and remorse.

### **Research gaps and the paper’s analytical orientation**

Although research on entrepreneurship, management, and sustainable development has expanded significantly over the past few decades, most existing studies continue to approach these phenomena from empirical, instrumental, or policy-oriented perspectives. Within such studies, ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions often remain implicit presuppositions and are rarely examined in an explicit and integrated manner.

This research gap becomes particularly pronounced in transitional economies such as Vietnam, where global governance models, modern managerial knowledge, and indigenous cultural–political value systems coexist and interact in complex ways. The absence of an integrated philosophical framework risks producing partial and reductive interpretations, in which entrepreneurial and managerial spirit is reduced to technical phenomena, detached from their social and value-based foundations.

The conceptual contribution of this paper lies in proposing and applying a three-dimensional philosophical framework—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—to restructure the study of entrepreneurship and management. Rather than treating these dimensions as discrete categories, the paper demonstrates that they constitute an interactive conceptual structure that jointly shapes how enterprises are understood, how managerial knowledge is constructed, and which developmental values are pursued.

Through this framework, the study extends entrepreneurship and management research beyond the economic–managerial domain into a broader philosophical–social sphere. In doing so, it elucidates the underlying modes of thought that govern business practices in Vietnam’s context of globalization and international integration.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research approach

This study adopts a qualitative–philosophical approach grounded in theoretical analysis and scholarly interpretation, with the aim of elucidating the philosophical presuppositions that shape perceptions and practices of entrepreneurship and management in contemporary Vietnamese society.

Unlike empirical studies that focus on variable measurement or hypothesis testing, this paper approaches entrepreneurial and managerial spirit as complex socio-cultural phenomena simultaneously conditioned by economic–institutional structures, systems of managerial knowledge, and ethical–social values. Accordingly, the study employs a three-dimensional philosophical framework—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—as its central analytical lens.

### Philosophical foundations of the research methodology

From an ontological perspective, the study is based on the view that enterprises and managerial activities are not merely objective economic entities but also social actors constituted through relations of power, institutions, culture, and social norms. This approach enables entrepreneurship and management to be analyzed as social practices embedded in Vietnam’s specific historical and cultural context.

From an epistemological perspective, the study conceives entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge as a process of social construction. Knowledge is not regarded as independent or value-neutral; rather, it is continuously formed through interpretation, experience, practice, and particular value frameworks. Consequently, the study does not seek “universal truths” but aims to clarify how managerial knowledge is produced, legitimized, and applied within a transitional economy.

From an axiological perspective, the study acknowledges that all analyses of entrepreneurship and management inherently embody value orientations. On this basis, the paper examines the phenomena under study in relation to values such as social responsibility, business ethics, and sustainable development, as well as global normative frameworks such as ESG and the SDGs.

### Specific research methods

To operationalize the above analytical framework, the study employs a combination of the following methods:

### Theoretical analysis and synthesis

The study conducts a systematic analysis of international and domestic scholarly works related to entrepreneurial spirit, modern management, the firm as a social actor, business ethics, and sustainable development. On this basis, key arguments are synthesized and restructured along three philosophical dimensions to construct a coherent analytical framework, thereby avoiding fragmentation between economic, social, and ethical perspectives.

### **Interpretive method**

The interpretive method is applied to elucidate the philosophical and socio-social meanings of key concepts and theories of entrepreneurship and management. Through interpretation, the study not only describes scholarly viewpoints but also identifies the underlying philosophical presuppositions embedded in each approach, the differences among schools of thought, and the degree of applicability of international theories when adapted to the Vietnamese context.

### **Comparative method**

The study employs comparative analysis to contrast philosophical approaches to entrepreneurship and management in Vietnam with those in selected Asian countries, thereby clarifying differences between governance models grounded in purely market-oriented logic and those emphasizing social responsibility and the role of the state. This method facilitates the identification of Vietnam's specific characteristics in the process of international integration and highlights the analytical value of a philosophical approach to management studies.

### **Data sources**

The study primarily relies on secondary data, including classical works of Marxism–Leninism; official documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam; scholarly articles published in reputable international journals (Scopus, Web of Science, ESCI); academic monographs on the philosophy of social science, management, and entrepreneurship; international reports related to ESG, the SDGs, and sustainable development; as well as selected policy documents and research materials concerning Vietnam's socio-economic context. The selection of sources is conducted selectively, with priority given to works that provide foundational theoretical contributions and high scholarly reference value.

### **Value and limitations of the research methodology**

The philosophical approach adopted in this study enables an in-depth exploration of the foundational layers of thought, thereby elucidating the assumptions that shape perceptions and practices of entrepreneurship and management—dimensions that are often difficult to capture through empirical research. However, the study does not aim at statistical generalization or quantitative prediction.

Accordingly, the conclusions of the paper are theoretical and normative in nature, serving as an academic foundation for subsequent empirical research, as well as for policymaking, educational development, and managerial practice in the Vietnamese context.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Ontological findings: positioning entrepreneurship and enterprises in the Vietnamese context**

The analysis reveals a clear shift in how enterprises and entrepreneurial activities are positioned within studies on entrepreneurship and management in the Vietnamese context. Rather than being understood primarily as purely economic entities, enterprises are increasingly de-

scribed as actors embedded in broad networks of social relations, including interactions with the state, communities, markets, and the natural environment.

Within the framework of a socialist-oriented market economy, the literature indicates that the ontology of enterprises is often associated with multiple, coexisting functions, encompassing economic, social, and institutional roles. This is reflected in the way production and business activities are frequently pursued alongside social objectives such as job creation, livelihood stabilization, and contributions to local communities.

With regard to entrepreneurial spirit, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship is identified not merely as an individual, economically driven act, but as a process of social embeddedness shaped by institutional contexts, social norms, and cultural value systems. These patterns reflect an ontological perspective that conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a socially situated phenomenon linked to specific conditions of existence, rather than as a universal and context-free behavior.

### **Epistemological findings: characteristics of entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge**

From an epistemological perspective, the findings indicate that knowledge of entrepreneurship and management in the reviewed literature does not exist as a unified or universal system. Instead, managerial knowledge is portrayed as the outcome of interactions among modern management theories, practical experience, and context-specific cultural and social factors.

International management models, business strategies, and managerial tools, when applied in the Vietnamese context, typically undergo processes of adaptation and reinterpretation. As a result, the managerial knowledge that emerges is contextual in nature, shaped by institutional environments, levels of economic development, and the capacities of organizational actors.

The analysis further reveals a differentiation in the types of managerial knowledge that are prioritized. The majority of studies focus on technical and instrumental forms of knowledge, while reflective, ethical, and long-term orientations receive comparatively less attention or are not systematically integrated. This pattern reflects the structural characteristics of managerial knowledge in a transitional economic context.

### **Axiological findings: values shaping entrepreneurial and managerial practices**

The analysis indicates that studies on entrepreneurship and management in Vietnam reflect the simultaneous coexistence of multiple value systems. On the one hand, values associated with economic growth, efficiency, and profit generation continue to occupy a central position. On the other hand, values related to social responsibility, business ethics, and sustainable development are increasingly evident in academic discourse and policy frameworks.

Conceptual frameworks such as ESG and the SDGs are recognized as emerging value reference systems used to describe and evaluate the activities of enterprises and managers. However, the findings suggest that these values are primarily articulated at the normative and aspirational levels, while their degree of internalization into managerial behavior varies across sectors and actors.

The coexistence of multiple value systems reflects a transitional axiological state of entrepreneurial and managerial practices, particularly in the context of economic transformation and international integration.

### **Synthesized findings: the interactive structure of the three philosophical dimensions**

The synthesized findings indicate that the ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions reflected in studies on entrepreneurship and management are closely interconnected components. The way enterprises and entrepreneurship are ontologically positioned is intrinsically linked to how managerial knowledge is constructed, as well as to the value systems employed to evaluate business activities.

These results demonstrate that analyzing entrepreneurial and managerial spirit requires an integrated analytical framework in which the three philosophical dimensions are not treated in isolation but understood as a unified and interactive structure.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Repositioning Vietnamese enterprises from an ontological perspective: from economic entities to social actors**

The findings suggest that approaching entrepreneurship and management solely as economic activities is insufficient to fully explain the role of enterprises in contemporary Vietnamese society. From an ontological perspective, enterprises increasingly manifest themselves as social-political actors, directly participating in the shaping of labor relations, community structures, and environmental impacts.

In the Vietnamese context, where the state plays a developmental and socialist-oriented guiding role, enterprises do not exist independently of broader social objectives such as poverty reduction, social security provision, and sustainable development. This creates a fundamental distinction from enterprise models grounded in a purely free-market logic. From this perspective, the Environmental (E), Social (S), and Governance (G) pillars of ESG should not be understood merely as technical criteria, but rather as reflecting an ontological shift in how enterprises are perceived by society.

### **Epistemological perspectives on managerial knowledge in a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration**

Discussion from an epistemological dimension indicates that knowledge of entrepreneurship and management in Vietnam is hybrid in nature, combining global management models, local practical experience, and indigenous cultural-political values.

Within this context, the adoption of ESG and the SDGs cannot be limited to the mere “copying of international standards,” but instead requires processes of interpretation and the reconstruction of knowledge that align with Vietnam’s institutional conditions, level of development, and social objectives. This view is consistent with a social constructivist epistemology, which holds that managerial knowledge is not a collection of universal formulas, but rather the outcome of learning, adaptation, and social negotiation.

Vietnamese practice shows that many enterprises approach ESG primarily as a tool for image enhancement or compliance with international market requirements, while deeper cognitive engagement with social responsibility and sustainable development remains limited. This situation reflects a gap between instrumental managerial knowledge and value-oriented managerial knowledge, underscoring the need for fundamental reforms in management education and training.

### **Axiology: ESG, the SDGs, and value shifts in management and entrepreneurship**

From an axiological perspective, ESG and the SDGs signify a shift from a value system centered on profit maximization toward one that emphasizes social responsibility, equity, and sustainability. For Vietnam, this transition is particularly significant as the country confronts challenges related to climate change, social inequality, and the quality of economic growth.

The analysis indicates that when guided by ESG-oriented values, entrepreneurial and managerial spirit can become a critical driver for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to decent work, responsible consumption and production, and environmental protection. However, in the absence of a solid value foundation, ESG risks being reduced to a set of formal indicators that fail to generate substantive changes in managerial behavior.

Overall, the discussion highlights the value of a philosophical approach in clarifying the implicit assumptions that shape managerial practice, linking global normative frameworks (ESG and the SDGs) with socio-cultural and ethical contexts, and extending entrepreneurship and management research beyond the economic domain into a broader philosophical–social sphere.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study examines entrepreneurial and managerial spirit in Vietnam through an integrated philosophical framework encompassing three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship and management cannot be fully understood as neutral or purely economic activities; rather, they should be conceptualized as embedded social practices shaped by evolving institutions, systems of knowledge, and value regimes.

From an ontological perspective, the study identifies a shift in the conceptualization of enterprises and entrepreneurial actors—from autonomous economic entities to social agents embedded within networks of relations involving the state, communities, and the natural environment. Epistemologically, managerial and entrepreneurial knowledge in Vietnam is shown to be contextual and hybrid, emerging from the interaction between global management models, practical experience, and cognitive frameworks rooted in specific cultural and institutional settings. Axiologically, the analysis reveals a gradual transformation in value orientations, as goals of growth and efficiency increasingly coexist with commitments to social responsibility, business ethics, and sustainable development, particularly through the adoption of ESG and SDG frameworks.

By integrating these three philosophical dimensions, the article offers a theoretical reconceptualization of entrepreneurial and managerial spirit that moves beyond instrumental and technocratic approaches. This analytical framework makes explicit the implicit assumptions

shaping both managerial practice and academic inquiry, thereby enhancing the field's reflexive capacity in entrepreneurship and management research.

### **Theoretical implications**

This study offers several important theoretical implications. First, it advances entrepreneurship and management theory by placing philosophical foundations at the center of analysis, enabling scholars to more clearly identify the normative orientations and inherent limitations of prevailing theoretical models. By foregrounding ontology, epistemology, and axiology, the study moves beyond implicit assumptions and renders visible the philosophical underpinnings that shape both theory construction and empirical interpretation.

Second, the proposed integrated philosophical framework helps bridge previously fragmented streams of research in entrepreneurship, sustainable management, and critical management studies. Conceptualizing ESG and the SDGs as expressions of an underlying shift in value systems—rather than merely as managerial tools—enriches ongoing theoretical debates on responsible management and sustainable development, and opens space for more reflexive and normative forms of inquiry.

Third, the study underscores the need for context-sensitive theorizing in transitional economies characterized by institutional hybridity and cultural diversity. The philosophical analytical framework developed in this article provides a foundation for future empirical research aimed at examining how underlying philosophical assumptions influence organizational behaviors and outcomes, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and contextually grounded body of entrepreneurship and management theory.

### **Policy and practice implications**

From a policy perspective, the study highlights the need to design entrepreneurship and business development policies grounded in a broader understanding of the firm as a socially responsible actor with ethical and environmental obligations. Integrating ESG principles into institutional frameworks should not be treated merely as a compliance requirement, but as part of a process to reorient normative standards in economic governance.

In terms of management education and practice, the findings suggest moving beyond training models focused solely on technical skills and short-term performance. Embedding philosophical thinking, critical reasoning, and sustainability—oriented values into management curricula can help cultivate entrepreneurs and managers with heightened social responsibility and long—term vision.

As a conceptual and philosophical study, this research does not aim for empirical generalization. Future studies may extend this analytical framework using qualitative or quantitative methods to examine how ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions are operationalized in organizational behaviors and performance outcomes.

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