



**HUMANIZED MANAGEMENT IN PANDEMIC TIMES: IMPACTS AND
CONTRIBUTIONS TO COOPERATIVISM**

**GESTÃO HUMANIZADA EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA: IMPACTOS E CONTRIBUIÇÕES
PARA O COOPERATIVISMO**

**GESTIÓN HUMANIZADA EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA: IMPACTOS Y
CONTRIBUCIONES AL COOPERATIVISMO**

JULIANA DA FONSECA CAPSSA LIMA SAUSEN

Student Doctoral

Universidade Regional do Noroeste do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul – Brasil

ORCID: 0000-0003-4146-8294

jucapssa@gmail.com

DANIEL KNEBEL BAGGIO

Doctor

Universidade Regional do Noroeste do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul – Brasil

ORCID: 0000-0002-6167-2682

baggiod@unijui.edu.br

NAIRANA RADTKE CANEPPELE BUSSLER

Student Doctoral

Universidade Nove de Julho – Brasil

ORCID: 0000-0002-4928-7300

nacaneppele@hotmail.com

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo tem como objetivo evidenciar como a gestão humanizada impacta e contribui para o cooperativismo, em tempos de pandemia.

Metodologia: Como metodologia, utilizou-se pesquisa bibliográfica, documental e entrevistas com gestores e colaboradores de quatro cooperativas do Rio Grande do Sul.

Resultados: Os resultados evidenciaram que as estratégias e práticas cooperativistas implementadas nas cooperativas analisadas, são contempladas por todos os pilares da gestão humanizada, sendo que a tecnologia acaba assumindo papel fundamental nesta inter-relação e neste contexto. O estudo permite concluir que a gestão humanizada se constitui como estratégia valorativa e de sustentabilidade, minimizando as consequências negativas geradas pela pandemia, impactando e contribuindo positivamente para o desenvolvimento das cooperativas analisadas e de seus agentes envolvidos, do mercado do cooperativismo e de toda a sociedade.

Contribuições: Apesar do estudo apresentar limitações quanto ao tamanho da amostra e restringir-se a um segmento institucional e contexto específicos, são destacadas suas contribuições teóricas, práticas e sociais quanto a abordagens relacionadas à Covid-19 e demais pandemias, à gestão humanizada e ao cooperativismo e quanto à forma com que tais abordagens impactam nos atores, processos e dinâmicas de desenvolvimento organizacional e territorial, em tempos de complexidade, mudanças e incertezas. Ressalta-se, também, a relevância do estudo para acadêmicos, docentes e teóricos das áreas da gestão, saúde e desenvolvimento, e para gestores e demais *stakeholders* envolvidos nas dinâmicas de atuação e desenvolvimento do cooperativismo.

Originalidade: O estudo preenche, ainda, uma lacuna de investigação quanto à demanda de estudos sobre as contribuições da gestão humanizada para o cooperativismo e sobre esta inter-relação no contexto da pandemia.

Palavras-chave: Gestão humanizada; pandemia; cooperativismo.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This article aims to show how humanized management impacts and contributes to cooperativism, in times of pandemic.

Methodology: As a methodology, bibliographic, documentary research and interviews with managers and employees of four cooperatives in Rio Grande do Sul were used.

Results: The results showed that the cooperative strategies and practices implemented in the analyzed cooperatives are covered by all pillars of humanized management, being that technology ends up assuming a fundamental role in this interrelation and in this context. The study concludes that humanized management is a value and sustainability strategy, minimizing the negative consequences generated by the pandemic, impacting and positively contributing to the development of the analyzed cooperatives and their agents involved, the cooperative market and the whole of society.

Contributions: Although the study has limitations in terms of sample size and is restricted to a specific institutional segment and context, its theoretical, practical and social contributions regarding approaches related to Covid-19 and other pandemics, humanized management and cooperativism are highlighted. as to the way in which these approaches impact on the actors, processes and dynamics of organizational and territorial development, in times of complexity, changes and uncertainties. The relevance of the study for academics, teachers and theorists in the areas of management, health and development, and for managers and other stakeholders involved in the dynamics of action and development of cooperatives is also emphasized.

Originality: The study also fills a research gap regarding the demand for studies on the contributions of humanized management to cooperativism and on this interrelation in the context of the pandemic.

Keywords: Humanized management; pandemic; cooperativism.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este artículo tiene como objetivo mostrar cómo la gestión humanizada impacta y contribuye al cooperativismo, en tiempos de pandemia.

Metodología: Como metodología se utilizó investigación bibliográfica, documental y entrevistas a gerentes y empleados de cuatro cooperativas en Rio Grande do Sul.

Resultados: Los resultados mostraron que las estrategias y prácticas cooperativas implementadas en las cooperativas analizadas están cubiertas por todos los pilares de la gestión humanizada, siendo que la tecnología acaba asumiendo un papel fundamental en esta interrelación y en este contexto. El estudio permite concluir que la gestión humanizada es

una estrategia de valor y sostenibilidad, minimizando las consecuencias negativas generadas por la pandemia, impactando y contribuyendo positivamente al desarrollo de las cooperativas analizadas y sus agentes involucrados, el mercado cooperativo y el conjunto de la sociedad.

Contribuciones: Aunque el estudio tiene limitaciones en cuanto al tamaño de la muestra y se restringe a un segmento y contexto institucional específico, sus aportes teóricos, prácticos y sociales en cuanto a enfoques relacionados con Covid-19 y otras pandemias, gestión humanizada y cooperativismo y en cuanto a la forma en que estas Los enfoques impactan en los actores, procesos y dinámicas del desarrollo organizacional y territorial, en tiempos de complejidad, cambios e incertidumbres. También se enfatiza la relevancia del estudio para académicos, docentes y teóricos de las áreas de gestión, salud y desarrollo, y para gerentes y otros actores involucrados en la dinámica de acción y desarrollo de las cooperativas.

Originalidad: El estudio también llena un vacío de investigación sobre la demanda de estudios sobre las contribuciones de la gestión humanizada al cooperativismo y sobre esta interrelación en el contexto de la pandemia.

Palabras clave: Gestión humanizada; pandemia; cooperativismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

The uncertain and constantly changing pandemic scenario (WHO, 2020) has presented impacts on people's physical and emotional health and routines (Hassan, Hollander, Van Lent, & Tahoun, 2020; Nasciutti, 2020), on market and organizational dynamics (Rossoni, 2020; Yazbek, Raichelis, & Sant'Ana, 2020) and on the socioeconomic development of the most diverse populations around the world (Fernandes, 2020; França Filho, Magnelli, & Eynaud, 2020).

Moreover, in a scenario that involves the organizational and territorial dynamics of development, and in an economy where innovation is an essential element of competitiveness (Tidd & Bessant, 2015), strategies and practices emerge to ensure the survival and the sustainability of organizations and their areas of operation.

In a context of growth of an economy based on knowledge and technology, new discussions have emerged focusing on the development and maintenance of human capital in organisations (Karolczak & Souza, 2017; Trentin, 2021). The importance of the human factor, and human resources management strategies, are also highlighted, implementing a new management concept geared towards people, based on a new paradigm of labour relations that has contributed to making organisations more sustainable (Li, 2019; Paixão, Silveira, & Nascimento, 2019; Trentin, 2021).

In this scenario, the company is seen as a work community, emphasising the possibility of creating organisational cultures of humanisation that revolve around principles of human dignity and the common good, allowing members of the organisation to blossom, and projecting the fundamental role of institutional leadership in the formation and maintenance of a moral organisational character (Monaci, 2020).

From this point on, humanised management is seen as a valuable and competitive advantage in the context of organisational and territorial dynamics. Thus, against this background of strategic management - allied with innovative processes within organizations - developing human potential and building humanised organizations becomes a valuable competitive advantage for organizations that want to stand out and contribute to the market and society, valuing the integral construction of people by society and of society by people. (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013 e 2018; Sisodia, 2009).

Through an appropriate culture for people in development, considering companies as communities becomes an ethical requirement, in the sense of projecting them as a pillar for the social life, in which the only correct attitude is cooperation between companies and society and concern for the common good, seeking to achieve greater moral quality in people, human virtues between people and organisations, and more efficient communities (Melé, 2003).

But with markets that are increasingly competitive and unpredictable, a well-planned and implemented humanised management - even if impacted by this context - can be a fundamental strategic tool for companies to maintain their performance and overcome existing challenges, as preserving human values has never been so latent as it is in the current context, prompting managers and professionals to reflect, rethink and reinvent themselves as they work towards a higher purpose (Mackey & Sisodia, 2018).

In this context of pandemic and crisis, and reflection on the importance of human values, cooperatives play a notable role. The basic proposal of bringing people together to cooperate with each other for the common benefit of all demonstrates the systemic importance of cooperatives (Frantz, 2012; Sausen, Baggio, Roveda, & Brizolla, 2020). Cooperatives also contribute to job creation, social and economic inclusion, better income distribution, and the socio-economic development of the communities around them (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012).

In view of the emergence of studies on humanised management and its relevance for organizations and territories (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013 and 2018; Sisodia, 2009), the importance of cooperative, conscious and humanizing practices in uncertain and complex times, such as those of the pandemic (França Filho et al, 2020; Nasciutti, 2020), the relevance of cooperatives for territorial development (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012; Frantz, 2012) and the demand for studies on humanised management and cooperativism in the context of the pandemic, this article brings the following research question: how does humanised management impact on and contribute to cooperativism in times of pandemic?

In order to demonstrate how humanised management impacts on and contributes to this scenario and context, the qualitative approach was used (Gil, 2019); for the data collection, bibliographic research, documentary research and interviews with managers and employees of four cooperatives in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul was used. For the analysis and interpretation of data, the method of content analysis by categories was used (Bardin, 2018).

The results demonstrated that cooperative strategies, and the practices implemented in cooperatives, may cover every pillar of humanised management, with technology playing a fundamental role in this interrelationship and context.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill gaps in the research, meeting the demand for studies on the applicability of a systemic, evaluative, and sustainable model of organisational management, as well as studies addressing the contributions of humanised management to cooperativism, bringing this interrelationship into the context of pandemic.

Thus, in this scenario of complexity, changes, uncertainties, and demands for human values, humanised management is a strategy of value and sustainability, positively and systematically impacting on and contributing to the development of cooperatives, the cooperative market and society.

The article is organized in six sections. The first is this introduction. Section two presents the theoretical background, including Covid-19 and its socio-economic and organisational impacts, humanised management and its foundations and applications, and the relevance and performance of cooperatives in times of pandemic. Section three presents the methodological procedures, and section four introduces the results and discussions, highlighting the interrelationship between humanised management and the strategies implemented by cooperatives within this context. At the end, the conclusion and references are given.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 COVID-19: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ORGANISATIONAL IMPACTS

Announced in January 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), within a short space of time, COVID-19 went from the status of a disease to the status of a pandemic, triggering an emergency crisis situation and generating social, economic, physical and mental health consequences in populations around the world.

Not only has the seriousness of the situation led researchers in the medical and biological fields to devote their attention to combating the disease; it has also required other areas, including those linked to the social sciences, to reflect on the consequences of this unprecedented threat (Rossoni, 2020). Likewise, organisational and business studies are still digesting the possible impacts of a sudden slowdown in the economic activity and the change in the dynamics of interaction between people.

The changes brought by Covid-19 affect all dimensions and levels, including health, economic, political and social systems (Nasciutti, 2020), impacting on the production chain, operational dynamics of human resources, and employment links, and generating a general climate of anxiety and insecurity, both subjectively and in professional, social and family interpersonal relationships (Hassan *et al.*, 2020).

In terms of the global economy, in a best-case scenario, the growth in GDP would be affected by 3% to 6%, depending on the country, with an average decline in Brazil GDP in 2020 of -2.8%, and a decline of 10% to 15% in other countries. Each month of the crisis has cost 2.5% to 3% of the global GDP, with negative impacts particularly on service economies, countries that depend on tourism and foreign trade (Fernandes, 2020), and in countries that are already in political and economic crises, as it is the case of Brazil (Nasciutti, 2020).

Regarding the labour market, unemployment in Brazil reached more than 12% at the end of the first quarter of 2020 (Nasciutti, 2020). To this we can add job insecurity and instability, the growth of informal work, wage cuts, outsourcing, and fixed-term contracts (Yazbek *et al.*, 2020).

It is also a fact that in the conjuncture of social distancing measures (WHO, 2020) and the increased number of people working from home (Losekann & Mourão, 2020, Rossoni, 2020), the crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic has been changing the way businesses operate. This change is mainly apparent in the role of technology in virtualising communication, especially as a strategy for supplying demands and optimising administrative processes, and for providing organisational services. Thus, there has been a significant increase in investments on and use of this technology (Barbosa, 2020; Castro, 2020; Cruvinel, 2020; Galindo Neto *et al.*, 2020).

Dealing with the contingencies that arise in this dynamic environment is a challenge, and solutions and strategies to reverse or even alleviate this situation are essential. Managers should not only review, understand and update their risk management options, but also: create problem-solving planning; offer different services (special or discounted services); negotiate new terms with suppliers; negotiate and renegotiate loans and credit lines; find and experiment new technologies and applications; build relationships with both local and wider networks; transparently communicate their strategies to all those involved in the internal and external dynamics of the organisation; and ensure fair working conditions (Rossoni, 2020).

Finally, it is necessary to analyse the problem itself, based on a resilience strategy. Alongside this, and in addition to social and health protection measures, a support network needs to be created at all levels, focusing on multidisciplinary and on dialogue with different sectors of society (Nasciutti, 2020).

That said, the big questions are how the prevailing modes of management will remain, and how to rethink the relationship between the economy and society, so as to glimpse a relationship between economy and development that does not compromise life in society. We are tasked with thinking about the economic aspect in a different way, giving rise to a renewed set of public action practices at the border between economy, solidarity, democracy, and territoriality. Politics must be globalised and the economy democratised. After all, this pandemic is not only a health crisis leading to an economic crisis, but also a humanitarian crisis (Rossoni, 2020).

Added to this conjuncture of global health and sustainability demands - and because the need to preserve human values has never been so evident - humanised management provides an emerging and consistent alternative for organisational studies, and a valuable and competitive organisational and territorial strategy, at the interface between economy and society.

2.2 HUMANISED MANAGEMENT: FUNDAMENTALS AND APPLICATIONS

According to the origin of the word "humanism" and the concept of "humanitas", from which the former originates, management is humanistic or humanised when it focuses on common human needs and on the development of human virtue, in all its forms and to its full extent (MELÉ, 2003b).

An initial approach to humanised management was developed in the mid-20th century and was centred on human motivations. A second approach emerged in the 1980s and was centred on organisational culture. This took a broader approach to the human condition, taking into account the influence of culture on behaviours and decision-making. However, both approaches were incomplete, and there was more interest in how human behaviour could be motivated to improve outcomes than in investigating the human being as an individual and social being.

Considering social capital as a resource arising from relationships between individuals, organisations, communities or societies, Melé (2003b) contributes a third approach to humanised management, which sees the organisation as a real community of people. However, it is from the Conscious Capitalism movement that the humanised management becomes a more effective practice, contemplating people, organisations and society (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013 e 2018; Sisodia, 2009).

Conscious Capitalism came to reconfigure the dynamics of organizational management, placing the flourishing of the human being at the centre of corporate business, bringing to the fore the importance of universal human values. Active in six other countries, including Brazil, it was consolidated in 2008, in the United States, by marketing professor and business consultants Rajendra Sisodia and John Mackey (founder of Whole Foods Market).

In this scenario, humanised organisations governed with passion and purpose improve their performance, uniting stakeholder engagement and happiness with excellent economic results (Kislansky, 2018), adhering to four pillars: higher purpose, stakeholder integration, conscious leadership, and conscious culture (Mackey & Sisodia, 2018).

Through the higher purpose and its categories - good (serving others, improving health, education, communication and quality of life), true (discovering and deepening human knowledge); beautiful (excellence and creating beauty) and heroic (doing what is right to change and improve the world) – conscious companies are clear about why they exist and about the difference they want to make to the world, even going beyond profit (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018).

In relation to stakeholder integration, conscious companies recognise the importance of each stakeholder and the interconnections between them, treating each one as an integrated whole. In addition to good relationships with the media, governments and advocacy groups, they seek to create loyal and trusting customers, passionate and inspired employees, persevering investors, innovative and collaborative suppliers, thriving and welcoming communities and a healthy and vibrant environment (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Laloux, 2017).

Conscious leadership – which is linked to the organisation's purpose and actions to improve the world, leaning towards solid integrity - is interrelated with four categories (Barrett, 2017, Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018):

- Analytical Intelligence: Present in high levels in most conscious leaders, and a prerequisite for efficient leadership.
- Emotional Intelligence: Combines intrapersonal intelligences (capacity for self-knowledge) and interpersonal (understanding the intentions and desires of others)
- Spiritual Intelligence: Enables individuals to access their most intense perceptions, values, goals, and motivations, to have the moral capacity to distinguish right from wrong, and to practice kindness, truthfulness, beauty and compassion.
- Systemic Intelligence: Leaders who work with a holistic approach, coordinating individual purposes towards a higher, collective purpose.

Conscious culture, meanwhile, involves the incorporation of values, principles and practices underlying the social fabric of a company, connecting the stakeholders with the purpose of the organisation through seven qualities, according to Sisodia, Henry and Eckschmidt (2018):

- Trust: Humanised companies enjoy high levels of trust, both internally - between the leadership and the frontline staff, and the leadership and diverse teams - and externally - organisation and customers, suppliers, partners, communities, investors, and government.
- Authenticity: Consists in appropriating the organisation's purpose, skills, and cultural values by transforming them into innovative strategies, practices and resources that can produce long-term competitive and evaluative advantage for all.
- Caring: Humanised companies adopt attitudes of care, attention, kindness, respect, and compassion with their stakeholders, treating them as family, and in return they cultivate a genuine concern for these companies.
- Transparency: humanised leaders share more information with their team, contributing to the development of trust among all and increasing productivity.
- Integrity: Through conscious culture, organizations commit to expressing the truth and are usually guided by what they consider to be ethically correct, not only by what is required by the legal system or is socially acceptable.
- Learning: Humanised companies transmit their purpose to their teams every day, and invest in skills and development through training, lectures, and incentives in courses, contributing to productivity and performance.
- Empowerment: Accountability with high levels of autonomy and self-management, and flexibility and freedom in decision-making and carrying out procedures.

Awareness, purpose and humanisation are essential for effective sustainability (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013 e 2018; Sisodia, 2009). Therefore, in this scenario of pandemics and the preservation of human values (França Filho *et al.*, 2020), humanised management, while being impacted by this context, has the potential to minimise the negative impacts of the pandemic (Mackey & Sisodia, 2018). And given that human values are preserved in the community, which enables the effectiveness of collective action (Nasciutti, 2020), cooperatives play an important role in this scenario.

2.3 COOPERATIVISM: RELEVANCE AND PERFORMANCE IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

In the competitive and dynamic context, organizations are agents for the promotion of development, and cooperativism is highlighted as an agent of endogenous, economic, and social development. In this scenario, cooperation is defined as the ability to plan, manage, and execute strategies and actions simultaneously.

Thus, cooperation enhances human relations, increases trust and credibility, results in learning and identities, defends common interests, strengthens brands, generates gains of scale, enables access to markets, expands competitiveness and invigorates institutional arrangements, producing internal and social benefits (Büttenbender, 2017).

Cooperatives, which have cooperative development at their core, act as agents of territorial development (where members are owners and participate in the business management), enabling the conjunction of social, financial, and human capital. Thus, the cooperative movement is conceived as a place for the reconstruction of living conditions, considering the human economy as its foundation, stimulating cooperation and protecting the interests of those who are part of this movement (Frantz, 2012).

Considering the balance between economic and social indicators as a performance measure (Sartor & Knuppel, 2016), cooperatives are institutions that generally seek to enable economic solutions for people, distribute income, and bring about social benefits; they can also contribute to the progress of municipalities and localities where they find the ideal environment to thrive and develop. (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012).

In order to reaffirm its positioning and ensure its sustainability, each cooperative should be guided by the following cooperative principles, which have been revisited in congresses coordinated by the International Cooperative Alliance - ICA, advocated in 1995 and referenced in the Financial Cooperative Portal (2020):

- 1) Free and Voluntary Adherence: Cooperatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and assume the responsibilities as members, with no sex/gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination whatsoever.
- 2) Democratic Management: Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in the policy formulation and decision-making and are responsible for the applicability of these practices.
- 3) Economic Participation: Members equitably contribute to the capital of their cooperative and democratically control it. Part of this capital is common property of the cooperative. If economic and financial conditions are met, members can receive remuneration on the paid-in capital.
- 4) Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, mutual aid organisations controlled by their members. If they either make deals with other organisations or raise external capital, they shall do so under conditions ensuring the democratic control of the members and maintaining the autonomy of the cooperative.
- 5) Education, Training, and Information: Cooperatives shall promote the education and training of members, elected representatives and workers so that they can effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives.
- 6) Intercooperation: Cooperatives effectively serve their members and strengthen the cooperative movement, by working together through a variety of local, regional, national and international structures.
- 7) Community Interest: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by members.

These principles reflect an equitable stance among various organisational actors and should be used to put into practice the values of cooperatives as a guide for their practices. Therefore, the narrative must be aligned with the characteristics of the context, with the decisions made, and with the practices implemented.

In addition to the important role of cooperativism for territorial development (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012; Frantz, 2012), the essence of cooperativism lies in cooperation (Büttenbender, 2017) and in the balance between the economic and social dimensions (Sartor & Knuppel, 2016) given the close link between cooperative principles (ICA, 1995) and humanised management (Mackey & Sisodia, 2018). Such aspects make cooperativism relevant in times of pandemic, in view of the impacts and contributions of humanised management.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This study is a social and qualitative approach. Social, because its fields of investigation are the social reality and aspects related to the being in its multiple relationships with other beings and social institutions; qualitative, to the extent that through the objective to be achieved by the research, the study sought to delve into the world of meanings (Gil, 2019), using unstructured methodology, providing insights and understanding the context of the problem

Regarding the study objectives, this research is exploratory and descriptive. Exploratory, because it enables the investigation of new findings and perspectives, conducted in an area in which there is a lack of accumulated and systematized knowledge (Gil, 2019).

Thus, this study opens precedents for further academic-scientific exploration on humanised management and its applicability in cooperatives, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is descriptive because it depicts the characteristics of the phenomenon in question, establishing relationships between variables (Gil, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection tool, together with bibliographic research, mainly in books and articles from national and international sources, and documentary research in cooperative reports, seeking to identify, analyse and present the ways in which humanised management impacts on and contributes to the cooperative movement in times of pandemic.

The interview script included questions based on the socioeconomic and organisational landscape of the pandemic (Nasciutti, 2020; Rossoni, 2020), on the pillars of humanised management (Mackey & Sisodia, 2018), on the principles (ICA, 1995) and on the territorial relevance of cooperativism (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012; Frantz, 2012).

The interviews were conducted individually, with managers and employees, as these are the people who experience the reality of the processes and dynamics of organizational management. Therefore, professionals in the role of Marketing Manager, Communications Advisor, Business Assistant and Occupational Health Psychologist were interviewed, within four different types of cooperatives - agricultural & industrial, energy, credit union and health – operating in different municipalities of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The cooperatives analysed were selected based on their relevance and representativeness within the communities where there operate, and in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

Data published in 2019, by the “*Expressão do Cooperativismo Gaúcho*” report, of the Ocergs-Sescoop/RS System, highlights that the state of Rio Grande do Sul has more than 2.9 million members of cooperative, that is, more than half of the state’s population is involved some kind of cooperative.

There have been record sales of R\$48.2 billion and R\$15.8 billion in net worth, with an increase of over 12% compared to the previous year; an increase of 7.34% in assets, reaching R\$ 74.3 billion; the generation of 63.8 thousand direct jobs and a growth of 18.49% in surplus. This data demonstrates the importance of the cooperative movement in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and at national level.

For the data analysis and interpretation, the method of content analysis was used, through categories, which consists of breaking down the content into units and analogically regrouping it, highlighting the categorization, the description of the categories, and the inferences and interpretation of the results (Bardin, 2018). Figure 1, below, summarizes the research steps.

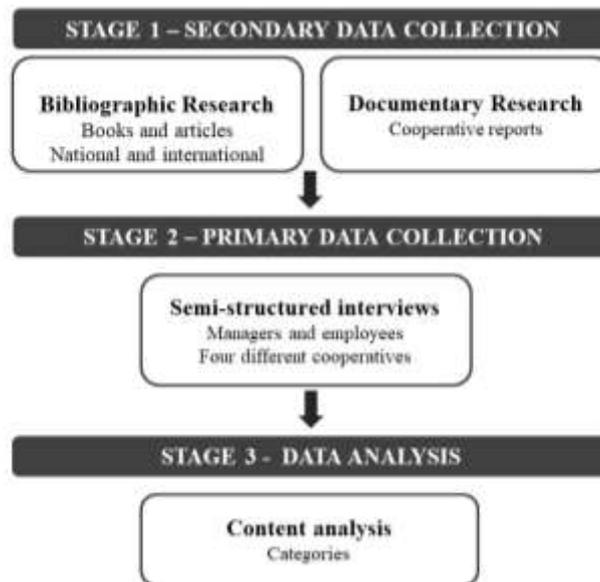


Figure 1. Design of the research
Source: Developed by the authors (2020).

The objectives of the study - the consequences of the socio-economic panorama in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the foundations and applications of humanised management and the cooperative principles - were interrelated with the data collected, with emphasis on the responses of the interviewees belonging to the cooperatives. The four pillars of humanised management, summarized in Figure 2, are the categories that guided the entire analysis of the research.

Categories	Description
Higher purpose	Clear definition of why companies exist and what difference they want to make in the world.
Stakeholder Integration	Importance and contribution of segments and agents involved in the organizational dynamics of business; global value creation.
Conscious Leadership	Leading through the search for self-knowledge and understanding of others and the world (analytical, emotional, spiritual, and systemic skills).
Conscious Culture	Incorporating values of trust, authenticity, caring, transparency, integrity, learning and empowerment into organisational practices.

Figure 2. Description of the pillars of humanised management
Source: Mackey and Sisodia (2018).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the theoretical foundation presented, and on the methodology employed for the research, this section brings the results and discussions that guide the strategies and practices of the cooperatives studied, creating an interrelationship with the four pillars of humanised management. The results and discussions below are divided into four approaches: the *raison d'être* of cooperatives; stakeholders as means and ends; management skills of cooperatives, and humanising values in cooperatives.

4.1 THE RAISON D'ÊTRE OF COOPERATIVES

The higher purpose - the first pillar of humanised management - states that conscious companies are clear about why they exist and what sort of a difference they want to make in the world (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018). Humanisation, on the other hand, gives maintenance to the higher purpose (Barrett, 2017). Thus, the purpose is presumably applied in the cooperatives' strategies.

Referring to this principle, and considering the relevance of internal actions reflected on a wider scale, as well as the promotion of socio-economic development in their communities and territories of operation (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012; Frantz, 2012; Sartor & Knuppel, 2016); cooperatives are quite aware of the cooperative principle of interest in the community (ACI, 1995).

In accordance with the report *Expressão do Cooperativismo Gaúcho* (2019) and the *Anuário Brasileiro do Cooperativismo* (2020), strategies and actions aimed at social and sustainable collective demands stand out, as they seek the common good, as well as the positive transformation and development of society and of those involved with it.

However, due to social distancing guidelines (WHO, 2020) as preventive measures in the face of the pandemic, community activities were hampered.

The cooperative holds annual meetings in the communities, but these meetings had to be suspended. Other events, such as inaugurations of work sites and social actions were also postponed (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020).

Meetings with elderly groups, businesses, schools, hospitals, chambers, all suspended (Credit union Business Assistant)

Community actions, public events, all of them were postponed (Occupational Health Psychologist at the health cooperative, 2020).

The cooperatives' concerns with this segment lead to the strategies and actions for improvement and actions to meet community demands.

We had some smaller initiatives; the community has reduced its contact with the cooperative a little, and the board of directors does not look favourably on this. It is something we think about: how we can address and improve? (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

It's time to show society how much the cooperative contributes to development, and also the difference of being a client in a cooperative. In this sense, actions are being developed to boost the municipality and the local economy, helping the health sectors. The annual action to help non-profit entities was changed and focused on hospitals and health units, and all municipalities in which the cooperative operates received resources for investment in health (Business Assistant of the credit union, 2020).

It is evident, therefore, that despite the suspension and postponement of community activities due to the pandemic situation, the cooperatives analysed sought, as far as possible, to remain focused on their higher purpose (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018), and seeking to meet the demands of their communities (Bialoskorski Neto, 2012; Frantz, 2012; Sartor & Knuppel, 2016).

4.2 STAKEHOLDERS AS MEANS AND ENDS

Regarding the second pillar of humanised management, conscious companies recognize stakeholders as means and ends contributing to create global value, who need to flourish in order to enhance the business (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Laloux, 2017).

Therefore, the integration of stakeholders is another pillar that cooperatives strive to implement in their activities and routines. To optimise this integration, management strategies and practices try to include all stakeholders in their internal and external dynamics. With this in mind, such strategies and practices are also included in the report *Expressão do Cooperativismo Gaúcho* (2019) and in the *Anuário Brasileiro do Cooperativismo* (2020).

The close link between this pillar and the cooperative principles of inter-cooperation and democratic management (ICA, 1995) is also evident, based on the relevance of interpersonal relationships and the important role of each member of the cooperative.

In the complex context of the global health crisis, the relationship between the agents involved with the routines and services provided by the cooperatives was definitely impacted by the pandemic.

The main impact of the coronavirus was on relationship actions among the cooperative, its managers and employees, and with its target audience, the members (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020).

Due to the WHO (2020) guidelines, the suspension of face-to-face events and meetings also impacted other segments, in addition to the community.

With the cancellation of meetings between members, the opportunity to get to know the physical and economic structure of the cooperative was gone. Meetings involving a larger number of people were suspended. The assemblies, besides being transferred, had to be reformatted so that they could take place (Communications advisor from the energy cooperative, 2020).

Visits were suspended and so was the follow-up of indicators on the increase of products to members (Credit Union Business Assistant, 2020).

We keep the project, although lectures, training, a Marathon Day, which we would have had, all those events have been postponed (Psychologist of the health cooperative, 2020).

Our Governing Council did not hold any face-to-face meetings for about 90 days. We have a core leader training that always takes place after the assembly, and it just did not happen. Another meeting of young milk producers has also been suspended. We have a committee made up of thirty women, which meets periodically; their last meeting was during the fair, and no more meetings after that. Some events to present raw materials did not take place. Basically, the actions aimed at training, gathering of people, some kind of event, were all suspended (Marketing Manager of the agricultural and cattle raising and industrial cooperative, 2020).

In-person services were also impacted.

In-person services were reduced (Credit Union Business Assistant, 2020).

Procedures and surgeries were cancelled, examination schedules were reduced and, as a result of hospital beds allocated exclusively for Covid, there was a reduction in hospital capacity. 95% of the appointments that used to be in person are remote today" (Psychologist of the health cooperative, 2020).

The biggest changes were in relation to face-to-face service. The cooperative had to prioritise remote service (Assessor of Communication of the energy cooperative, 2020).

In view of this, remote work is highlighted, not only as a consequence of the pandemic but also as an alternative for the continuity of the activities by managers and employees, of the services provided to the associates and of negotiations with partners. (Cruvinel, 2020; Losekann & Mourão, 2020; Rossoni, 2020).

There was a reduction in the number of employees, leading each branch to organise a new flow of services and processes (Business Assistant of the credit union, 2020).

Employees in the high risk group have been relocated, to provide their services from the safety of their homes (Communications Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020).

It impacted on the reduction of the employees' timetable. Some work from home, while others take turns (Psychologist of the health cooperative, 2020).

It's been about 80 days with colleagues working from home, we have a significant commercial volume and this volume, along with the most different suppliers, has been done remotely (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

In regard to the integration of stakeholders (Barrett, 2017; Honeyman, 2017; Laloux, 2017), with the suspension of meetings and gatherings and the reduction of face-to-face services brought about by the pandemic, cooperatives were forced to reconfigure the relationship dynamics among their various segments.

4.3 MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF COOPERATIVES

Viewing conscious leadership as the ability to lead coherently, through the continual search for self-knowledge and understanding of others and the world, peace and happiness for individuals, and respect and solidarity for communities (Barrett, 2017; Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018), the management of the analysed cooperatives considers all intelligence skills: analytical, emotional, spiritual, and systemic.

Analytical intelligence considers not only the awareness of symptoms, prevention and care in relation to Covid-19, but also the situation of the cooperatives and their stakeholders and the ability to develop and implement strategies and actions in this context.

The idea is that people can really take precautions so that they can value their health a bit more (Psychologist at the health cooperative, 2020).

The pandemic required a rapid shift from face-to-face and personal service, so characteristic of cooperatives (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020)

Therefore, although analytical intelligence is an important skill for the performance of cooperatives, emotional, spiritual, and systemic intelligence - contemplated by the cooperative principles of inter-cooperation and democratic management (ICA, 1995) – are highlighted as fundamental skills to meet the demands of latent human values in this context.

These intelligences are fundamental for the effective transmission of processes and dynamics conducted by the company in this pandemic scenario, through the relevance of humanised management practices - aimed at the well-being and the emotional and spiritual development of managers, employees, associates and suppliers, considering their contexts and demands, and also impacting on the community.

As far as emotional intelligence is concerned, putting oneself in the other's shoes has been fundamental through this period.

There was no reduction in staff due to dismissal, but rather relocation (Psychologist at the health cooperative, 2020).

When the Senate approved the extension of financing, we created a task force to call everyone who had a credit line, informing them that it could be extended. For savers, the cooperative has sought other forms of applications to offer (Business Assistant of the credit union, 2020).

In relation to the spiritual intelligence, the cooperatives have adopted various approaches.

From the beginning, the board of directors has shown great concern for people; the workforce (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

So as not to leave people waiting outside, due to employees' demands, we adopted the strategy of assisting people before regular opening hours. Calls were also increased, to make the cooperative available to help in cases of need (Credit union Business Assistant, 2020).

These skills (emotional and spiritual) lead to internal transformations which, in turn, are reflected in more concrete and wider transformations towards the development of cooperatives, the cooperative market and society itself.

Thus, the basis of strategic planning is systemic intelligence, reflected in practices that aim to optimise one of the main objectives of cooperativism: delivering the mission, seeking to contemplate all stakeholders, as presented in the report *Expressão do Cooperativismo Gaúcho* (2019) and the *Anuário Brasileiro do Cooperativismo* (2020).

The interview with the Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative (2020) summarises systemic intelligence as part of the DNA of cooperativism, when referring to a pandemic contingency plan created by the cooperative

Although this context was new to everyone, we managed to structure a plan that was accepted and followed. The success of this plan was not only down to the board, or to the Covid prevention committee; it was thanks to everyone who engaged in the plan.

Based on the reports of the respondents, and on what leads to conscious leadership (Barrett, 2017; Kofman, 2018; Laloux, 2017; Reiman, 2018), in fact, all the management skills - analytical, emotional, spiritual and systemic - are covered in the strategies and practices implemented by the cooperatives analysed during the pandemic period.

4.4 HUMANISING VALUES IN COOPERATIVES

Conscious culture, the last pillar of humanised management, is also present in the strategies and practices implemented in the co-operatives, in line with other co-operatives that make up the report *Expressão do Cooperativismo Gaúcho* (2019) and *Anuário Brasileiro do Cooperativismo* (2020) - to the extent that the seven qualities mentioned by Sisodia, Henry and Eckschmidt (2018) are contemplated: trust, authenticity, care, transparency, integrity, learning and empowerment

Regarding authenticity - appropriation and transformation of innovative strategies, practices, and resources - co-operatives increased and reinvented the use of technological tools, platforms and applications for communication and service provision (Barbosa, 2020; Castro, 2020; Cruvinel, 2020) during the pandemic. Regarding the internal public:

Meetings involving a larger number of people started to be held with the use of virtual platforms, especially those out of the co-operative and the municipality (Communications Advisor of the energy co-operative, 2020).

WhatsApp is widely used in the co-operative. Team meetings are held through Google Meet and social networks. Everything is done there, by email (Psychologist of the health co-operative, 2020).

All the work is done remotely, through e-mail, telephone, WhatsApp, and other tools, such as Google Meet and Skype for online meetings and live streaming. The co-operative has a videoconferencing system, including connections with the field team and agronomists in its unit, the central office, superintendence and two dissemination coordinators who work with these programmes and technological resources (Marketing Manager of the agricultural co-operative).

It is also worth highlighting the internal communication systems.

Everything is done by the system, when a patient is discharged, when there is a new contract, a health plan is sold (Psychologist of the health co-operative, 2020).

We were working on a portal, and it has been on for about two weeks, including different internal processes related to the employee and his/her benefits, selection processes, recruitment and selection, interaction between HR and other areas, résumés, HR's perception of the employee, as well as spaces for observations and request, application and promotion of tests by the manager. We have a large technical staff of about ninety agricultural engineers, as well as field technicians and agricultural technicians. It turns out the reality of these people has changed a lot. Therefore, the employees are reinventing themselves, making use of digital tools, to interact with our public (Marketing Manager of the agricultural co-operative, 2020).

Regarding services for members:

The cooperative needed to prioritise remote services, redirecting this kind of work to telephone calls and online channels, expanding the use of the call centre (Communication Advisor of the energy co-operative, 2020).

The cooperative has used corporate WhatsApp and video conferencing (Credit Union Business Assistant, 2020).

Social media made sense (Psychologist at the health cooperative, 2020).

We are starting to sell online, first to supermarkets, then shops. We have a portal aimed at the producer, which can be used by smartphone, where our members have access to information from the cooperative; for example, which seeds and inputs were purchased, the amount paid, the delivery forecast, etc. All this information and operation management can be done there (Marketing Manager of the agricultural co-operative, 2020).

In terms of strategies and actions directly aimed at containing the pandemic spread, it is worth highlighting the plan of the agricultural cooperative.

One of the actions we took quickly was the creation of a Covid-19 prevention committee. We have a routine meeting in which we analyse all the cases catalogued in the previous week, including the situation in each of the state's geographic areas. We met with the board, positioning the president, the vice president, and superintendents about the situation and, from there, they decide either to maintain or include measures (Marketing Manager, 2020).

As for learning - related to the cooperative principle of education, training, and information (ICA, 1995), effectively contributing to the development of cooperatives and society - the technological adaptations due to the pandemic period should be emphasized (Barbosa, 2020; Castro, 2020; Losekann & Mourão, 2020).

Adhesion to these means is usually positive for members.

The veterinary and technical departments have been strongly demanded by producers, through mobile phones and WhatsApp. So, there was a good use of these tools, what really surprises us is the rural producer being very connected (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

The big challenge was to make the population aware about the use of these tools, since in their minds these channels were used only to communicate power supply problems, especially during bad weather and out of the working space (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020).

With regard to the internal public, the learning around technological adaptation was even more positive.

The admission of managers and employees on social media is very good (Psychologist at the health cooperative, 2020).

In the management group of the cooperative, online tools are seen as positive, especially for holding external meetings and conferences, since there is no longer need for travel, and for reducing the costs of transport, accommodation and meals for managers and employees (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative, 2020).

With the changes brought by the pandemic, remote work and services (Cruvinel, 2020; Losekann & Mourão, 2020; Rossoni, 2020) and the greater use of technologies (Barbosa, 2020; Castro, 2020; Cruvinel, 2020; Galindo Neto et al, 2020) have facilitated the empowerment of agents involved in the cooperative scenario, this value being associated with the cooperative principles of autonomy and independence and democratic management (ICA, 1995), such as the commitment and active participation of each of these individuals to the processes and dynamics of the cooperative.

The member has innovated and the self-service is more latent, providing more autonomy.

The rural producer asks and even suggests that we use some technological tools (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

We have a platform where the bank account is accessed by mobile phone and computer, and people realized the convenience and ease of the application. During the pandemic there was a significant increase in demand and access to the platform (Business Assistant of the credit union, 2020).

Also, with easy access to a number of technological artifacts, especially with the need for guidance on symptoms, prevention and care with Covid-19, the value of transparency in the strategies of cooperatives became apparent.

Communication with companies via email, phone, Facebook, Instagram, explaining a little bit about Covid. A telephone number was made available for people to ask specific questions about Covid (Psychologist from the health cooperative, 2020).

Over the last few months, the Customer Service and the Communication sectors have focused on informing members about the possibilities offered by the remote channels (Advisor for Communication at the energy cooperative, 2020).

Integrity is also valued in the cooperatives, whether as a result of transparency - based on clear communication about the reality of the pandemic and the cooperatives to stakeholders - or in relation to labour rights. About home office:

We have about 200 employee contracts on partial pay based on the total exemption and the need to fulfil the workload (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative, 2020).

As a consequence of the strategies and practices reinforcing transparency and integrity values, the stakeholders' confidence among one another and in relation to the cooperatives which they are part of was also evident.

And when it comes to health, the value of caring is indispensable.

Technical services were maintained with diligent care for the health and safety of employees. Employees included in the risk group were relocated so that they were working from the safety of their homes. Spaces in the offices were resized to ensure the minimum distance, and hygiene and prevention actions were reinforced, with the supply of alcohol gel and masks for employees and associates (Communication Advisor of the energy cooperative).

Our contingency plan from the point of view of health measures has worked very well. We are working with schedules; we have adopted the measures to change the habit of the branches and everybody is carrying out the safety measures (Marketing Manager of the agricultural cooperative).

We have a health prevention sector that carries out home visits. The professionals are prepared, equipped with all safety, so that the elderly don't need to go to the hospital or run greater risks (Psychologist of the health cooperative).

Thus, at the time of the pandemic, the strategies and practices implemented by the cooperatives were guided by the principles and values of a humanised and conscious culture (Sisodia, Henry, & Eckschmidt, 2018).

Based on the results and discussions presented so far, Figure 3 shows the categories of analysis of this stage, the references corresponding to each category and the strategies and actions implemented in each cooperative, through the perceptions of the respondents.

Categories	References	Agricultural cooperative	Credit Union	Energy cooperative	Health cooperative
The <i>raison d'être</i> of cooperatives	Barrett (2017), Honeyman (2017), Kofman (2018), Laloux (2017), Reiman (2018), ACI (1995), OMS (2020).	Suspension of community activities. Concern for the community.	Suspension of community activities. Resources for health.	Suspension of community activities.	Suspension of community activities.
Stakeholders as means and ends	Barrett (2017), Honeyman (2017), Laloux (2017), ACI (1995), OMS (2020), Cruvinel (2020), Losekann e Mourão (2020), Rossoni (2020).	Suspension of meetings and gatherings. Reduction of face-to-face meetings. Working from home.	Suspension of meetings and gatherings. Reduction of face-to-face meetings. Working from home.	Suspension of meetings and gatherings. Reduction of face-to-face meetings. Working from home.	Suspension of meetings and gatherings. Reduction of face-to-face meetings. Working from home.
Management skills of cooperatives	Barrett (2017), Kofman (2018), Laloux (2017), Reiman (2018), ACI (1995), OMS (2020).	Systemic: Covid-19 prevention committee plan.	Emotional: facilities in services. Spiritual: assistance at different times, consultancy calls.	Analytical: adaptation to the context. Spiritual: concern with people and the staff.	Analytical: Health care. Emotional: taking turns.

(Continuation)

(Conclusion)

Humanising values in cooperatives	Sisodia, Henry e Eckschmidt (2018), Barbosa (2020), Castro (2020), Cruvinel (2020), ACI (1995), Losekann e Mourão (2020), Rossoni (2020), Galindo Neto <i>et al.</i> (2020).	Authenticity: technologies, committee actions. Learning: technological adaptations. Empowerment: self-service. Integrity: labor rights. Trust: stakeholders and cooperative. Care: prevention and safety measures.	Authenticity: technologies. Learning: technological adaptations. Empowerment: self-service. Trust: stakeholders and cooperative. Care: prevention and safety measures.	Authenticity: technologies. Learning: technological adaptations. Transparency: Covid-19 guidelines. Trust: stakeholders and cooperative. Care: prevention and safety measures.	Authenticity: technologies. Learning: technological adaptations. Transparency: Covid-19 guidelines. Trust: stakeholders and cooperative.
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Figure 3. Categories of analysis, references, and actions of the cooperatives
Source: Research data (2020).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the emergence of studies on humanised management, their importance for organisations and territories, the importance of cooperative practices, conscious and humanising practices in times of pandemic, the importance of cooperatives for development to occur, and the demand for studies that interrelate humanised management and cooperativism in the context of the pandemic, this work has fulfilled its objective.

It was found that, in the face of the unpredictable, dynamic and complex context of the pandemic that generated negative socio-economic impacts on individuals, organisations and even cooperatives, the cooperative strategies and practices implemented cover all pillars of humanised management, with technology playing a fundamental role in this interrelationship and in this context.

In this scenario, where the demand for human values is so latent, humanised management becomes a strategy of value and sustainability as it minimises the negative consequences generated by the pandemic, positively impacting on and contributing to the development of cooperatives, their agents, the cooperative market, and society as a whole.

In this complex scenario of changes, uncertainties and demands for human values, humanised management becomes a strategy of value and sustainability, as it positively, systematically impacts and contributes to the development of the cooperatives mentioned, the cooperative market, and society.

This study provides a conceptual contribution, by addressing a differentiated, systemic, evaluative, and sustainable model of organizational management, as well as adding to studies on the pandemic. Its highlights are its theoretical, practical, and social contributions regarding approaches related to Covid-19 and other pandemics, humanised management and cooperativism, and these approaches impact on actors, processes, and dynamics of organizational and territorial development in times of complexity, change and uncertainty.

It is important to highlight the relevance of the study for academics, professors, and theorists in the areas of management, health and development, and for managers and other stakeholders involved in the dynamics of cooperative action and development.

Finally, the simple size, and the fact that the study is restricted to a specific institutional segment and context, are some limitations of the study; in order to complement and deepen the study, research is suggested on the performance of humanised management on larger territorial scales and in other branches of cooperatives. For a more differentiated approach, the possibility of studies on the theme considering the perceptions of other segments, such as associates, partners and community members, as well as studies directed at other types of organisations and institutions, are all recommended, involving the due quantitative and qualitative research.

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