

## Entrepreneurial citizenship: Crafting good and smart ventures with civic character

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### Abstract

This study examines the concept of entrepreneurial citizenship and how it shapes entrepreneurs who embody both integrity and business acumen within the context of citizenship. Employing a qualitative approach with case study methodology, this research explores how the characteristics of civic entrepreneurs contribute to the development of business leaders who integrate civic values with entrepreneurial intelligence. Data collection methods include in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs exhibiting strong entrepreneurial citizenship attributes, participant observation, and the analysis of relevant documents. The findings reveal that entrepreneurs who adopt the principles of entrepreneurial citizenship tend to demonstrate a heightened awareness of social and environmental responsibility, uphold ethical business practices, and engage in sustainable innovation. Furthermore, they actively collaborate with stakeholders across various sectors to generate broader positive impacts on society. These insights contribute value to the discourse on implementing entrepreneurial citizenship to foster sustainable and socially meaningful entrepreneurship. The practical implications of this research include recommendations for entrepreneurship education that is more aligned with civic values, policy support to enhance collaboration between the business and government sectors, and the promotion of an organisational culture that prioritises integrity and social responsibility.

**Keywords: Citizenship, Civic Character, Entrepreneurial.**

### Introduction

Entrepreneurship is often seen as an arena of limitless competition, where innovation and profit are the main priorities. However, behind the hustle and bustle of dynamic economic activity, a concept has emerged that promises personal profit, social responsibility and entrepreneurial citizenship. This concept highlights that entrepreneurs are economic agents and social actors essential in building a more inclusive, just and sustainable society. As a link between business and citizenship, entrepreneurial citizenship offers a new paradigm for those wanting to create a dual economic and social impact.

Entrepreneurial citizenship combines two seemingly contradictory concepts: entrepreneurial excellence and civic character. According to Trihastuti (2021), this concept reflects how individuals can integrate an innovative and proactive entrepreneurial spirit with social responsibility as citizens, creating a balance between economic orientation and social



contribution for the common good. Entrepreneurial excellence includes creativity, courage to take risks and innovation, while civic character demands concern for the public interest, ethics, and societal contribution. When the two are combined, the result is an entrepreneurial approach that focuses not only on profit but also brings moral values and social leadership into business practices (Ariella et al., 2023; Baporikar, 2017; Kasemsap, 2016; Pires et al., 2013). It separates promising entrepreneurs from great ones: the ability to create imaginative ventures with character.

The relevance of entrepreneurial citizenship is increasing amidst complex global challenges, such as social inequality, environmental crises and digital transformation. According to Berten and Kranke (2024) entrepreneurial citizenship describes citizens acting as policy recipients and proactive actors who create innovative solutions to collective challenges. It is in line with the views of Chou et al. (2024), which emphasise the importance of entrepreneurial capacity in forming global citizens who can adapt and contribute amidst the dynamics of social, economic and technological change. This approach offers a new perspective on citizenship as active engagement that integrates local and global values in real action. Modern society requires entrepreneurs who can think beyond profit and loss and understand how their business impacts regional and international communities. In this context, entrepreneurial citizenship is the key to creating solutions that are not only innovative but also responsible. In this way, entrepreneurship can become a vehicle for improving the world rather than simply a tool for enriching individuals.

This concept is relevant for large entrepreneurs and beginners who want to build a business with a solid and sustainable foundation. In an era where reputation and sustainability are integral to business success, a civic vision in entrepreneurship is invaluable. This vision provides a competitive advantage and a meaningful legacy for future generations. According to Jones et al. (2018), this approach allows entrepreneurs to integrate social and environmental values into their business strategies, creating a positive impact beyond financial profits. Thus, entrepreneurial citizenship is essential in creating an inclusive, sustainable, future-oriented business ecosystem.

In an increasingly complex era of globalisation, citizenship education must adapt to a new paradigm combining civic values with entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial citizenship offers an innovative approach to educating individuals to become morally sound and intelligent citizens and create economic opportunities based on civic values. This concept integrates citizenship learning with entrepreneurial skills, such as creativity, innovation, and problem-solving abilities, to answer increasingly complex social and economic challenges in the era of globalisation. This approach aims to equip individuals with competencies that are relevant to their personal lives and also have an impact on strengthening society collectively. According to Yoon (2018), the synergy between citizenship education and entrepreneurship can create citizens who are more active and responsible and can make concrete contributions to social and economic development. Through this approach, citizenship education can encourage the younger generation to become active agents of change, be globally competitive, and have a strong civic character supporting sustainable development.

This article attempts to dig deeper into how entrepreneurial citizenship can be practically applied in various types of business. This article aims to inspire and guide entrepreneurs, academics, and policymakers in creating a better business ecosystem by exploring core principles, case studies, and implementation strategies. During an ever-growing entrepreneurial landscape, it is time for us to reconsider the role of entrepreneurs as responsible global citizens and tireless innovators.

The contribution of entrepreneurial citizenship in citizenship education lies in transforming the curriculum to be more oriented towards real action and social impact. Project-based learning programs focusing on social innovation, ethical startups, or community development are essential for forming individuals who can connect personal success with

collective prosperity. In this way, citizenship education is an instrument for forming national identity and a medium for producing a generation of entrepreneurs with integrity, empathy and social responsibility. This approach becomes relevant in creating an inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable global citizenship ecosystem.

## Method

The method used in this research is a qualitative case study, which is used to understand the phenomenon of civic value-based entrepreneurship. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques. *First*, in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs with strong entrepreneurial citizenship characteristics, such as integrity, social empathy, and commitment to sustainability. This interview aims to explore their views, motivations and decision-making processes in building a business that is not only economically profitable but also contributes to the welfare of society. *Second*, participant observation was carried out by involving researchers in business activities to understand how civic values are applied in daily practice. Third, analysis of related documents, such as sustainability reports, business plans, or promotional materials, complements data from interviews and observations. These documents provide an objective picture of the strategy and social impact generated by the venture. The collected data was then analysed thematically to identify patterns, dynamics and challenges in integrating civic values into entrepreneurial practice. This method provides a holistic and in-depth understanding of entrepreneurial citizenship and produces insights that are relevant for the development of action and entrepreneurship-based citizenship education

## Results and Discussion

Research findings show that entrepreneurs who successfully apply the Entrepreneurial Citizenship concept have high social awareness, which aligns with the theory of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the idea of active citizenship. From a CSR perspective, entrepreneurship is oriented towards profit and a balance between the economic, social and environmental (Elkington, 1997). Awareness of social and ecological responsibility in entrepreneurial practices shows they pursue business growth and sustainability. It strengthens the view that entrepreneurs with a civic character prioritise community welfare as an integral part of their business strategy.

The integrity in business demonstrated by these entrepreneurs reflects essential elements of the ethical leadership theory, which emphasises the importance of moral behaviour in decision-making (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Entrepreneurs with high integrity tend to build trust with their stakeholders, such as customers, business partners, and communities. In this context, integrity is the basis for business success and a component that strengthens social relations and ensures business sustainability.

The ability to innovate continuously is also an essential factor in this research. This is relevant to the triple helix model theory (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000), which explains how innovation can develop through interactions between academia, industry, and government. Entrepreneurs categorised as entrepreneurial citizens tend to utilise innovation to create sustainable solutions in their products and business processes. This innovation strengthens their market position and increases the positive impact on society.

The findings of this research confirm that entrepreneurial citizenship is a key concept that contributes to the success of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who apply this concept demonstrate a high awareness of social and environmental responsibility, which is essential in building a sustainable business reputation. This awareness encourages them to not only focus on economic profits but also create a positive impact on the community and surrounding ecosystem. Thus, entrepreneurial citizenship bridges business interests with social interests in harmony.

Integrity in business is another characteristic of entrepreneurs who apply this concept. They tend to uphold ethics in running their business, ensuring that business practices are carried out transparently and responsibly. This integrity builds customer trust and strengthens relationships with business partners and communities. In the long term, integrity creates a solid foundation for business growth because companies trusted by the public tend to develop and face challenges more easily.

So, citizenship entrepreneurship is an emerging approach that empowers citizens to actively engage in their communities to address local and global challenges (Langfermann, 2024). This concept is rooted in various theoretical frameworks, including Ostrom's commons theory, innovation as a social good, and the capabilities approach developed by Sen and Nussbaum (Mitra et al., 2020; Pillay & Mitra, 2015). One of the key aspects of citizenship entrepreneurship is empowerment and engagement. CE encourages citizens to participate in the entrepreneurial process, enabling them to respond to local needs and create sustainable solutions (Ibrahim et al., 2024). This engagement can be facilitated through various methods, such as participatory research approaches and utilising digital platforms that foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among community stakeholders.

The role of community and collaboration is a crucial element in the success of citizenship entrepreneurship. This approach emphasises community-led initiatives and the establishment of social and public enterprises. The success of citizenship entrepreneurship projects largely depends on cooperation among various stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, and community organisations. By fostering strong and inclusive networks, citizenship entrepreneurship has the potential to drive sustainable social change and generate positive impacts across different societal layers.

Continuous innovation is the main characteristic of entrepreneurs with an entrepreneurial citizenship orientation. According to St-Jean and Mathieu (2015), entrepreneurs, this approach focuses on economic profits and social and environmental responsibility to create sustainable, positive societal change. They can develop creative solutions relevant to the current market and consider resource sustainability for the future. This innovation often combines technology with an environmentally friendly approach, creating competitive value in the global market. This shows that sustainability and innovation are strategies and core philosophies in their business.

The application of the concept of entrepreneurial citizenship also reflects entrepreneurs' awareness of global dynamics, including issues of climate change, social inequality and the need for economic justice, according to Karliani et al. (2024), taking an active role in overcoming global challenges, creating positive impacts, and building a more just and sustainable future for local communities and the world. In this case, the concept of entrepreneurial citizenship tends to adopt an inclusive approach in their business, both in terms of the products produced and the production process. This kind of entrepreneur understands that being successful in business in the era of globalisation cannot be separated from their contribution to global issues relevant to human values.

This research shows that entrepreneurial citizenship is a paradigm that encourages more responsible, ethical and sustainable business practices. According to Rahmawati et al. (2024), entrepreneurial citizenship responsibility includes prioritising community welfare, protecting the environment, and ensuring that every business decision reflects the values of justice and transparency. This approach integrates economic interests with efforts to create positive social impacts so that business becomes a tool for making profits and advancing global sustainability. Entrepreneurs who adopt these values are economically prosperous and significantly contribute to social and environmental development. These findings provide important insights for stakeholders, including government, academics and business people, to support the development of competitive entrepreneurship with a broad positive impact.

The tendency to collaborate with various stakeholders reflects the principles of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010). In this theory, the success of a business is determined not only by the capital owner but also by the ability to involve various parties in the business ecosystem, including the government, community and non-governmental organisations. Collaboration carried out by entrepreneurs with a civic character allows for synergy in solving complex social problems and increasing the capacity of their businesses to create a broader positive impact.

The findings of this research emphasise the importance of integrating civic values in entrepreneurship as an essential element for achieving sustainable development. Entrepreneurial citizenship is a paradigm that can be adopted to balance business success and contribution to society. This research provides implications for policy development, citizenship education, and entrepreneurship development to develop individuals who are not only business-competent but also socially and civically responsible.

This research provides important insights into how the practice of Entrepreneurial citizenship can contribute to the development of sustainable and socially meaningful entrepreneurship. In this context, entrepreneurship is seen as an effort to create economic value and as a means to solve social and environmental problems. This approach integrates civic values into business practices, making entrepreneurs agents of change capable of positively impacting society. This research emphasises that entrepreneurial citizenship is not just a normative concept but a concrete strategy for balancing economic sustainability and social responsibility.

The practical implications of these findings include several essential recommendations. *First*, entrepreneurship education needs to be designed to be more oriented towards civic values, such as integrity, empathy and social responsibility. This can be achieved through experience-based educational programs that involve students in real social projects. *Second*, public policy must support collaboration between the business sector, government and society to create an inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem. Organizational culture must also value integrity, social innovation and sustainability as core elements of long-term success.

Entrepreneurial citizenship can be the basis for broader social transformation through entrepreneurship. The findings of this research can be analysed from the perspective of entrepreneurship and citizenship theory, which emphasises the critical role of entrepreneurs in building a better society. Stakeholder theory provides an essential framework for understanding entrepreneurial citizenship, stressing that business is responsible to shareholders and all stakeholders, including society and the environment (Freeman, 2010). In this context, entrepreneurial citizenship practices include social and environmental responsibility integrated into business strategy. This is relevant to the finding that successful entrepreneurs pursue profits and create meaningful value for the community.

Sustainable development theory provides another foundation that strengthens the relevance of entrepreneurial citizenship in modern entrepreneurship (Brundtland Commission, 1987). This theory emphasises that sustainable development must meet the needs of the present without compromising the capabilities of future generations. Research findings show entrepreneurs who adopt entrepreneurial citizenship values can integrate sustainability into their innovation, addressing key challenges in an increasingly competitive and complex global business world.

The practical implications of this research reflect the need for a holistic approach to entrepreneurship education. Experiential learning theory suggests effective learning occurs through direct experience (Kolb, 2015). Therefore, entrepreneurship education should be designed to incorporate civic values, such as social responsibility and integrity, into real-life experiences, such as community projects or socially oriented business simulations. In this way, future entrepreneurs will be technically skilled and have a strong ethical and social awareness.

The practical implications of this research emphasise the importance of a holistic approach in entrepreneurship education to produce entrepreneurs who are not only technically competent but also have high social responsibility. This approach is relevant to experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015), emphasising that effective learning occurs through direct experience. In this context, entrepreneurship education can be integrated with real experience through community projects, socially oriented business simulations, or social impact-based startup development. This approach allows students to understand the complexities of the business world while being aware of their decisions about ethical and social impacts.

This hands-on, experience-based entrepreneurship education opens up opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning, integrating technical knowledge with a deep understanding of social and environmental issues. With this approach, students are invited to understand theory and apply it through tangible projects. For example, they can be challenged to identify pressing social problems, such as unequal access to education or environmental pollution, and then design sustainable business solutions. This process trains their critical and creative thinking skills simultaneously as Bhambra & Santos (2017) explained. Furthermore, Stickley (2021), this experience-based approach also enriches students' emotional and empathetic aspects, building deeper connections between them and the communities they serve. Thus, entrepreneurship education not only forms technically competent entrepreneurs but also individuals who have high social awareness and are sustainability-oriented.

It is also important for educational institutions to collaborate with the business sector and civil society to provide students with practical experience. This collaboration can be realised through an internship program, a partnership in social business development, or a social impact-based innovation competition. In this way, students learn theory and understand how social responsibility and integrity are applied in the real world. This partnership also allows students to get guidance from experienced practitioners in integrating sustainability and ethics into their businesses.

Entrepreneurship education based on experiential learning theory produces competitive individuals in the business world and can also become agents of change who positively impact society. This approach ensures that future entrepreneurs are focused on personal profit and creating socially meaningful and sustainable value. Thus, entrepreneurial education based on civic values is an important investment to build a business ecosystem that is more inclusive, responsible and has a broad impact.

Apart from education, policy support is also an important element that is strengthened by the entrepreneurship ecosystem theory (Isenberg, 2011). This theory emphasises that successful entrepreneurship requires support from various actors in the ecosystem, including the government, the business sector, and civil society. With policies encouraging collaboration between the business sector and government, such as incentives for social business or proactive environmental policies, Entrepreneurial Citizenship can develop more widely and have a more significant impact.

The importance of an organisational culture that values integrity and social responsibility can be analysed through the corporate values theory (Hofstede, 1980). This theory shows that a strong organisational culture can shape the behaviour of organisational members. In this context, promoting entrepreneurial citizenship values in organisational culture will help create a work environment that supports sustainable innovation and business ethics. Therefore, this research makes an important contribution to connecting key theories with socially meaningful and sustainable entrepreneurial practices.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that entrepreneurial citizenship is an effective paradigm for balancing business success and social contribution. This concept encourages integrating civic

values such as social responsibility, integrity and sustainability into entrepreneurial practices. These findings are relevant in responding to global challenges, such as the environmental crisis and social inequality, and offering a more holistic approach to developing entrepreneurship with positive economic and social impacts. Practical suggestions for implementing this concept include integrating citizenship values into the entrepreneurship education curriculum, supporting policies encouraging cross-sector collaboration, and establishing an organisational culture prioritising integrity and social responsibility. With these steps, entrepreneurial citizenship can become the foundation for creating an inclusive, innovative and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem

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### Authors' contributions

MT research planning, implementation, and analysis. BP reviewed the text and language.

### Competing interests

The authors have declared no competing interests.