

# **How Entrepreneurial Leadership Supports Corporate Social Responsibility: A Systematic Review**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the connection between Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), aiming to determine whether EL can foster or support CSR practices. A systematic literature review was conducted, the research examines how these two factors have been discussed and studied from 2020 to the present. The review found limited research on the connection between EL and CSR during this period, but it revealed that most of the existing studies are quantitative. These studies consistently show that EL supports CSR in different dimensions, such as organizational learning, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

The study synthesizes these findings and categorizes them into key dimensions to offer practical insights for both practitioners and future research. Through thematic analysis, the study presents guidelines for how EL can enhance CSR efforts, ensuring they are implemented sustainably. The research underscores the importance of EL in shaping organizational strategies for CSR, suggesting that entrepreneurial leadership fosters an environment conducive to long-term sustainability and social responsibility. These insights enhance the understanding of EL's role in CSR and lay the groundwork for future academic research and practical implementation.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial leadership, Corporate social responsibility, CSR, Corporate responsibility

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## Introduction

Leadership has long been a critical factor in organizational success, starting with the trait leadership theory (Carlyle, 1840; Stogdill, 1948), which believes leadership is inherent. While other theorists viewed leaders' behaviors as varying based on team relationships, the behavioral leadership theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Lewin et al., 1939) and the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1978) emphasized leaders' choices of expression in different situations. The progressive development of leadership theories has crystallized into a perspective that emphasizes the crucial role of leaders as primary catalysts for organizational success and advancement (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leadership theories are still debated and developed, reflecting the need to drive organizations through modern business models and environments (Musaigwa, 2023).

Entrepreneurial leadership is a style that combines visionary thinking, opportunity foresight, and traditional leadership (Renko et al., 2015). It differs because it promotes innovation, accepts risk, and focuses on driving organizational change. It also focuses on sourcing resources and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders (Gupta et al., 2004). In an era of constant business evolution, entrepreneurial leadership—characterized by its emphasis on adaptability, creativity, and social responsibility—confers a competitive edge by applying the entrepreneurial mindset to broader leadership contexts, thus equipping organizations to anticipate change and navigate the challenges of driving innovation and growth (Kuratko, 2007).

The current social conditions are becoming more complex because the public sector is increasingly aware of social and environmental issues, such as climate issues, nature, inequality, and business ethics, which have become issues that are frequently discussed (Ercantan et al., 2024). Organizations must give more importance and be more proactive in operating with increased consideration of business ethics (Porter & Kramer, 2006) by prioritizing stakeholders, such as customers, employees, investors, and the government. Thus, organizations are compelled to expand their focus beyond the profit and consider the societal implications of their operations (Pfajfar et al., 2022).

Corporate responsibility or corporate social responsibility: CSR has become an essential factor in meeting this need, emphasizing the need for organizations to integrate CSR programs into their strategies (Carroll, 1991). CSR facilitates organizational sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction by aligning corporate objectives with societal values, with research indicating that robust CSR practices can enhance an organization's reputation, foster customer loyalty, and improve overall performance (Pfajfar et al., 2022). In an interconnected world context, organizations prioritizing CSR can address ethical challenges, maintain good relationships with stakeholders, and create positive community dynamics for society (Etikan, 2024).

Organizations have emphasized entrepreneurial leadership as a critical driver of success (Cho & Lee, 2018). It balances performance with socially responsible operations (Avolio et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial leaders promote innovation while creating shared value for stakeholders and communities (Filser et al., 2020). Aligns with the CSR approach in adopting sustainability, environmental, and community-based approaches. Therefore, CSR operations based on the entrepreneurial leadership concept are consistent with and support innovative development and value that will arise through the ethical foundation of good business practices (Ardiansyah & Alnoor, 2024; Chenavaz et al., 2023; Marrewijk, 2003; Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Combining Entrepreneurial leadership and corporate responsibility is an essential foundation of current business research (Bonfanti et al., 2024). In addition to having a proactive attitude, being ready to deal with change, and creating innovation (Renko et al., 2015), the collaboration between entrepreneurial leadership and corporate responsibility should be able to respond to the complex context of operations. Integrating CSR projects into the operational plan can help drive the organization towards becoming a socially aware organization and responding to the needs of stakeholders comprehensively (Kuratko et al., 2007). In addition, the innovative spirit of entrepreneur leaders also stimulates new approaches to CSR activities and creates competitiveness and social impact (Jensen, 2001).

Although entrepreneurial leadership and CSR play essential roles, there is still a lack of scholarly literature at their intersection. Although there is increasing research on both topics, systematic literature reviews to find linkages between them are still rare. Renko et al. (2015) point out that the absence of comprehensive frameworks and studies on the influence of various leadership styles on CSR initiatives highlights a gap in the research, which presents an opportunity to explore further how entrepreneurial leadership can promote corporate responsibility or CSR in today's fast-evolving social environment.

### **Research Questions:**

How does Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL) influence Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through underlying mechanisms, contextual factors, and strategic applications in recent organizational studies?

## **Literature Review**

### **Entrepreneurship**

The notion of entrepreneurship has been brought up for a long time in the work of economists such as Schumpeter (1961), who described entrepreneurs as innovators who disrupt markets by introducing new products, methods of production, or business models. Then we have

Arrow (1962), who suggests that entrepreneurship is about the technical information embodied in products and services. Entrepreneurship is typically seen as spotting opportunities, gathering resources, and generating value by creating new enterprises (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

According to Antoncic and Hisrich (2001), the concept of intrapreneurship, which applies entrepreneurial principles within existing organizations, has broadened our understanding of entrepreneurship beyond business founders to include innovators and change-makers in technology, society, and organizational development. In addition, social entrepreneurship has also been mentioned, which refers to entrepreneurs who give importance to society through being leaders in social and environmental change (Peredo & McLean, 2006). To be an entrepreneur, one must operate a business that sees a way to progress, knows market trends, can create economic drive and innovation, and considers society and the environment (Acs, 2006).

Research has found a relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth, especially in the emerging economies dimension (Carree & Thurik, 2010). Entrepreneurship drives competition through innovation, efficiency, and productivity in new businesses and attracts investment that fosters knowledge development and local resources (Audretsch & Keilbach, 2004).

### **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Schumpeter (1961) emphasized the link between entrepreneurship and innovation, viewing innovation as essential to economic progress through new products, streamlined processes, or novel business models. An innovation mindset helps businesses grow and stay competitive (Autio et al., 2014). In today's digital era, technologies like e-commerce and fintech exemplify how innovation drives market transformation (Nambisan, 2017). Entrepreneurs who integrate innovation into their strategies are more likely to succeed (Zahra & Covin, 1995). Moreover, entrepreneurship fosters local economic development by spreading knowledge and strengthening communities to adapt to global change (Acs et al., 2014).

### **Leadership**

Leadership is the ability to influence others to achieve shared goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Early theories, like The Great Man Theory and Trait Theory, viewed leadership as innate (Carlyle, 1840; Stogdill, 1948), but later perspectives recognized that leadership can be learned (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). As theory evolved, focus shifted to behavior, with styles such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire gaining attention (Lewin et al., 1939; Blake & Mouton, 1964). More dynamic models, like Situational and Contingency Theories, emphasized that leadership effectiveness depends on adapting style to context (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Fiedler, 1978).

## **Entrepreneurial Leadership**

Entrepreneurial leadership (EL) is an innovative style that emphasizes motivating change while pursuing business opportunities amid environmental changes (Renko et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial leadership often demonstrates a proactive opportunity-seeking vision (Leitch & Volery, 2017) by orchestrating and energizing a firm's operational systems and human capital to embody core entrepreneurial values—including calculated risk-taking, opportunity seizure, product and process innovation, competitive advantage creation, and dynamic capability enhancement—which are quintessential to the entrepreneurial mindset (Gupta et al., 2004). Renko et al. (2015) also supported that entrepreneurial leadership is characterized by a proactive mindset and a vision that seeks opportunities to drive change even in uncertain situations.

Research has found that entrepreneurial leadership is appropriate for rapidly changing, competitive environments, reflecting the image of new companies or start-ups (Renko et al., 2015). Moreover, entrepreneurial leadership focuses on driving innovation, dealing with uncertain situations, and motivating the team to be ready to find new opportunities (Kuratko et al., 2007). However, entrepreneurial leadership is challenging to apply in bureaucratic organizations that do not support experimentation and risk-taking, which can lead to conflicts (Chen, 2007).

Entrepreneurial leadership, adopted by individuals who understand the necessity of adapting their leadership approach, is crucial for both large and small organizations to maintain global competitiveness (Gupta et al., 2024). By combining strong leadership abilities with an entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial leadership has become an exciting leadership style nowadays (Pauceanu et al., 2021).

## **Corporate Responsibility or Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR**

Corporate responsibility or Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR is the obligation of the organization to balance economic growth, social equality, and environmental sustainability by aiming to reduce the impact on stakeholders and the environment, recognizing that organizations should prioritize the benefits for stakeholders and society, not just maximum profits (Carroll, 1991).

Carroll (1991) introduced a corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework known as Carroll's CSR Pyramid, which consists of 1) Economic Responsibilities, 2) Legal Responsibilities, 3) Ethical Responsibilities, and 4) Philanthropic Responsibilities. This pyramid illustrates a progressive approach; from the base of the pyramid, Economic responsibility focuses on profitability and financial sustainability; Legal responsibility involves compliance with laws and regulations, and Ethical responsibility pertains to doing what is morally right beyond legal obligations. At the top, Philanthropic responsibility encompasses voluntary contributions to societal welfare (Carroll, 1991).

Organizations have different motivations for performing CSR, such as government regulatory support that organizations should organize more CSR activities (Aguilera et al., 2007) and enhance the organization's image to create a competitive advantage (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Consumers will accept products and services that align with their ethical principles (Vogel, 2005). In addition, organizing CSR activities can build morale, encourage employees, attract talent, and reduce turnover (Turban & Greening, 1997).

Despite the increasing popularity of CSR, there are criticisms that CSR can be considered greenwashing, in which organizations tout their social responsibilities solely for marketing purposes (Delmas & Burbano, 2011), resulting in a loss of trust among consumers and stakeholders. Another challenge is that the expected profits from CSR are often long-term and do not meet organizations' financial needs; when organizations must choose between profits and CSR activities, they often choose profits first (Friedman, 2007).

CSR is integral to sustainable development, focusing on managing societal, environmental, and economic impacts, thereby promoting organizational sustainability (Dahlsrud, 2008). Organizations that integrate CSR plans into their strategies often have better social performance, better stakeholder relationships, and a green corporate image (Montiel & Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). Moreover, CSR activities are crucial in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supporting business practices prioritizing global sustainability. This alignment helps strengthen the impact of CSR in driving sustainable development within organizations and the broader community (Mio et al., 2020).

### **Entrepreneurial Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility**

Entrepreneurial leadership is essential to support CSR because this type of leader tends to view social and environmental challenges as opportunities for innovation rather than constraints (Ercantan et al., 2024). By applying the above concepts, entrepreneurial leadership can integrate CSR actions' values with the organization and society (Porter & Kramer, 2007). In addition, the ability to take risks and invest in technology will help meet customer needs in terms of social responsibility (Leitch & Volery, 2017).

Combining the concept of entrepreneurial leadership with CSR creates a challenge in managing the business approach that focuses on creating innovation for short-term profits and creating sustainability in the form of CSR activities, which may cause conflicts (Filser et al., 2020). However, driving CSR together through the entrepreneurial leadership approach can promote sustainability by integrating CSR strategies with business strategies (Siltaloppi et al., 2021). Organizations can close this gap by making CSR one of the goals in the organization's vision and strategy to reflect the organization's long-term success (Ardiansyah & Alnoor, 2024).

Entrepreneurial leadership drives CSR by encouraging businesses to embed social and environmental goals into their core value-creation process, transforming corporate responsibility into a source of competitive advantage, innovation, and profitability rather than treating it as a disconnected initiative (Morris et al., 2005). In addition, promoting a culture of innovation and social responsibility within the organization will help create a sense of ownership for the CSR project for employees and can eventually become deeply rooted in the organization's culture (Avolio et al., 2009).

Within the corporate responsibility framework, entrepreneurial leadership necessitates cultivating robust stakeholder engagement and networks encompassing employees, customers, investors, and local communities (Carroll, 1991). Leaders must be able to influence internal and external stakeholders to support the organization's CSR initiatives (Renko et al., 2015). Entrepreneurial leaders build partnerships with NGOs, governments, and other organizations to provide them access to resources and expertise to enhance their CSR potential (Miragaia et al., 2015).

## **Methodology**

A literature review offers a historical overview of a field and highlights potential directions for future research (Colicchia & Strozzi, 2012). Moher et al. (2010) described the systematic literature review (SLR) approach as a clear and systematic examination of the research question using the guidelines of identifying, selecting, critically evaluating the overall relevant research, and systematically analyzing all the collected data. SLR has a similar format to integrative literature reviews, which synthesize diverse research on a topic, combining theoretical and empirical studies to offer comprehensive insights (Torraco, 2016) and scoping reviews, which map the breadth of existing research on a topic, identifying key concepts, gaps, and areas for further study (Wang, 2019). Using SLR helps identify, analyze, and synthesize existing research systematically, making the SLR comprehensive and free from bias. Grant and Booth (2009) emphasized that the advantages of SLR support an extensive search through critical evaluation and integration of various study approaches, as well as ensuring that all relevant studies are considered in terms of dimensions, resulting in an understanding of the contexts of the study, in this case, the contexts related to entrepreneurial leadership and CSR.

This study employed the PRISMA framework's SLR approach to identify the steps of data gathering, inclusion, and exclusion criteria (Moher et al., 2010). A framework was used to help organize and filter the research data systematically searched on entrepreneurial leadership and CSR.



## **The Search and Review Protocol**

This systematic literature review employed a comprehensive search strategy, utilizing multiple electronic databases, including ProQuest, Semantic Scholar, Emerald Insight, and ScienceDirect. These databases were selected based on their accessibility through the institutional subscription of the affiliated university, which provided a practical limitation on the scope of accessible academic resources. The search protocol was designed to identify relevant literature by examining titles, abstracts, and keywords. To ensure a focused and exhaustive search, Boolean operators were utilized to construct the following search string: "entrepreneurial leadership" AND ("corporate social responsibility" OR "CSR" OR "sustainable development").

## **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

A set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established to ensure alignment with the study's objectives, adhering to established protocols for systematic literature reviews (Moher et al., 2010; Torraco, 2016). This methodological approach facilitated the rigorous selection of relevant articles for analysis. The inclusion criteria were:

(a) Studies published between 2020 and 2024, the time period was selected to ensure the inclusion of the most recent and up-to-date articles in the field, reflecting current developments and scholarly attention to entrepreneurial leadership and CSR.

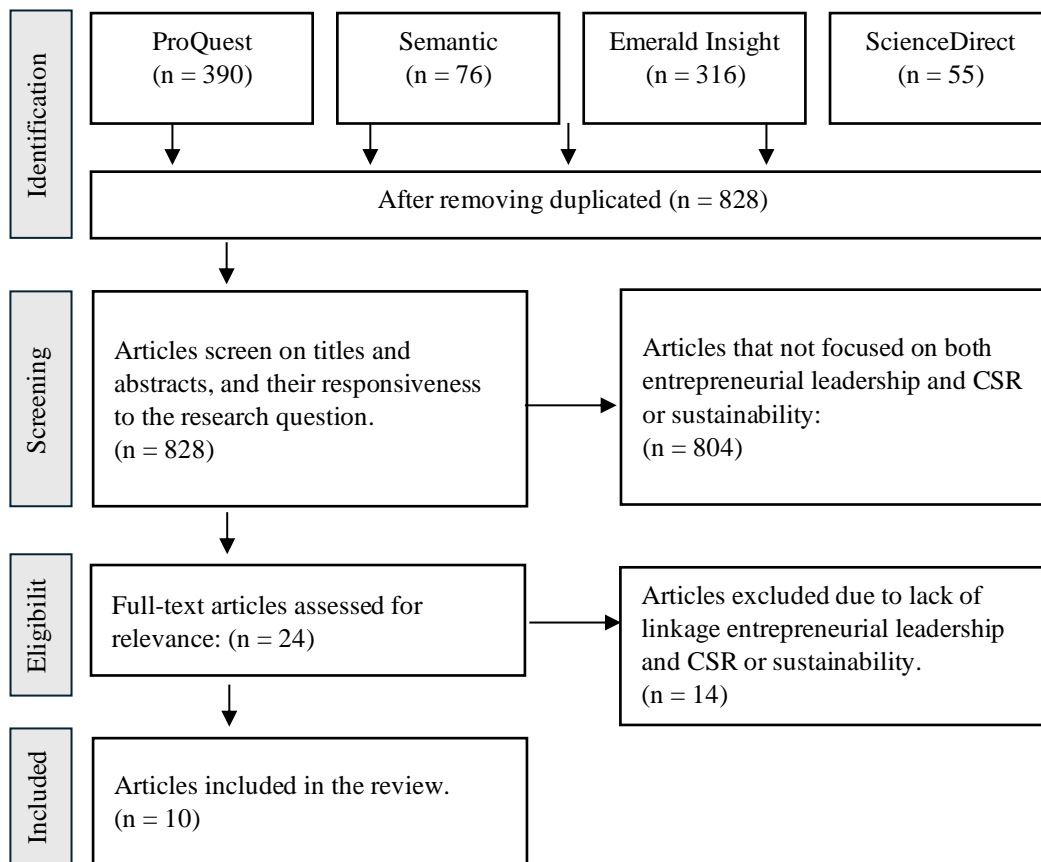
(b) Peer-reviewed journal articles,

(c) Studies that explore the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and CSR,

(d) Research that examines leadership behaviors, strategies, and CSR outcomes, and

(e) Studies published in English.



**Figure 1** PRISMA flow diagram for systematic literature review

The exclusion criteria were: (a) Studies focusing solely on leadership or CSR without linking the two concepts, (b) studies lacking methodological rigor or not peer-reviewed, and (c) research that focuses on entrepreneurial or organizational contexts.

The search yielded 390 articles from ProQuest, 76 from Semantic Scholar, 316 from Emerald Insight, and 55 from ScienceDirect. After removing duplicates, 828 articles remained. A four-step process was applied to screen these articles based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria:

1. Title and Abstract Screening: screened the titles and abstracts of all 828 articles.
2. Exclusion of Irrelevant Articles: 804 articles that did not mention entrepreneurial leadership, CSR, or sustainable development (direct or indirect) and did not answer the research question were excluded.
3. Responsiveness to the research question: The remaining 24 articles were further screened for a link between entrepreneurial leadership and CSR or sustainable development.

4. Articles linking entrepreneurial leadership to CSR or sustainable development: 14 articles were excluded because they did not align with the defined scope or did not have a relationship between factors.

Lastly, 10 articles remain. These studies fulfilled all the inclusion criteria and aligned with the research focus. They offered thorough and detailed assessments, contributing essential data and insights that support the goals of our systematic review.

### **Data extraction and analysis**

After applying the PRISMA framework to select articles that passed the systematic screening, it filtered the 10 articles using Kitchenham et al. (2009)'s guidelines, focusing on fundamental research questions and their answers. Then used thematic analysis (Bernard et al., 2016) to identify patterns in the data. Coding was employed to find relevant themes (Strauss & Glaser, 1967) to uncover the connection between entrepreneurial leadership and CSR or sustainable development.

To ensure the reliability of the coding process, each theme was reviewed multiple times to confirm consistency. When ambiguities or redundancies occurred between codes, they were resolved through reflective analysis and comparison with the context of the original article. This approach helped to strengthen the trust in the research results and ensure that the identified themes accurately represented the underlying data.

### **Findings**

The systematic literature review (SLR) revealed that most studies focused on examining the relationships between various factors, with only one study using the SLR method to identify relevant factors (Albérico Travassos & Raimundo, 2024). Research has applied entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and CSR approaches in different ways; in this research, these approaches are grouped into Direct and Indirect categories. For EL, indirect ones include entrepreneurship, leadership, and EL skills or competencies, and the direct mention is EL. Across these studies, the internal content consistently shows that EL-related contexts influence dependent variables. CSR is used to communicate the idea of social responsibility, linking internal content to sustainability and CSR dimensions. Similarly to EL, in the CSR context, various terms-such as sustainability, SDGs, green initiatives, and intellectual capital- fall into the indirectly mentioned group, and CSR falls into the directly mentioned group.

**Table 1** Summary findings from the systematic literature review

No.	Author	Topic type		Topic area	Article type	EL-mentioned		CSR-mentioned		Findings
						Direct	In-direct	Direct	In-direct	
1	Al-Abbadi and Abu Rumman (2023)	Consider the influence of the factors.	the of	Innovation, green HRM, sustainable performance	Quantitative research paper		•		•	Entrepreneurship positively impacts sustainable performance by enhancing its economic, social, and environmental aspects. This article highlights the need for a stronger focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, and green human resource management, as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainability.
2	Al Koliby et al. (2024)	Consider the interplay and influence between the factors.	the and	Entrepreneurial competencies, Knowledge management, Sustainable performance, SMEs	Quantitative research paper		•		•	Through entrepreneurship competency, EL helps provide environmental and social performance in sustainable performance.

No.	Author	Topic type		Topic area	Article type	EL-mentioned		CSR-mentioned		Findings
						Direct	In-direct	Direct	In-direct	
3	Chaudhuri et al. (2024)	Consider the influence of the factors.	the of	Corporate entrepreneurial leadership, CSR, dynamic capabilities, SDGs, social performance	Quantitative research paper	•		•		Corporate entrepreneurial leadership fosters both an entrepreneurial and a CSR orientation, which enhances social performance and contributes to achieving sustainable development goals.
4	Cucino et al. (2024)	Consider the influence of the factors.	the of	Humane entrepreneurship, Stakeholders, Relational embeddedness, SMEs, Business ethics and sustainability	Quantitative research paper		•		•	Entrepreneurial orientation can foster social embeddedness when human resources orientation serves as a mediator.
5	Freze et al. (2023)	Consider the influence of the factors.	the of	Business resilience, leadership, sustainability,	Quantitative research paper		•	•		A company's director or general manager and its owner positively influence the implementation of CSR initiatives. This may be because business owners

No.	Author	Topic type		Topic area	Article type	EL-mentioned		CSR-mentioned		Findings
						Direct	In-direct	Direct	In-direct	
				corporate social responsibility, COVID-19						typically prioritize the sustainability and long-term legacy of their own companies. SMEs will find it challenging to drive CSR compared to large organizations.
6	Kafetzopoulos and Gotzamani (2022)	Consider the interplay between factors.	the and the	Talent management, Sustainability, Leadership	Quantitative research paper	•		•		Transformational leadership had a strong positive effect on all areas of sustainability. Entrepreneurial leadership had the most significant effect on economic sustainability, followed by environmental sustainability. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, was only significantly connected to social and environmental sustainability.
7	Nor-Aishah et al. (2020)	Consider the interplay influence	the and	entrepreneurial leadership; entrepreneurial bricolage; manufacturing	Quantitative research paper	•		•		Entrepreneurial leadership positively influences environmental sustainability performance (ENSPF). The study highlights that leaders are vital in promoting sustainable practices,

No.	Author	Topic type		Topic area	Article type	EL-mentioned		CSR-mentioned		Findings
						Direct	In-direct	Direct	In-direct	
		between factors.	the	SMEs; sustainable performance; sustainability						improving organizational efficiency, and enhancing a green reputation.
8	Razzaque et al. (2024)	Consider the influence of the factors.	the of	Corporate sustainable development, Firm performance, Entrepreneurial leadership skills	Quantitative research paper	•		•		Entrepreneurial leadership skills, such as passion and motivation, positively impact corporate sustainable development and overall firm performance, while innovativeness negatively influences CSD and firm performance.
9	Rosário and Raimundo (2024)	Identify relevant factors.		Entrepreneurship, sustainability, education	SLR	•		•		EL enhances innovation through continuous learning, which in turn promotes social entrepreneurship aimed at fostering sustainability.

No.	Author	Topic type		Topic area	Article type	EL-mentioned		CSR-mentioned		Findings
						Direct	In-direct	Direct	In-direct	
10	Thongyai and Potipiroon (2022)	Consider	the	Entrepreneurial Leadership, Intellectual Capital, Financial Performance	Quantitative research paper	•		•		EL qualities are crucial in shaping their firms' strategic choices by fostering intellectual capital and innovation capabilities and building strong relationships with key external stakeholders.



**EL: Direct and Indirect mentioned**

*Indirectly mentioned - entrepreneurship, or entrepreneurial leadership skill, or entrepreneurial leadership competency.*

This research group will approach entrepreneurial competence as a set of skills and behaviors demonstrated by individuals, specifically linked to innovation, creating new ventures or solutions, and possessing the ability to embrace risks and adapt to change. These competencies are reflected through behaviors and practices, highlighting entrepreneurial qualities, emphasizing proactive, innovative, and risk-taking actions that drive entrepreneurship (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Al Koliby et al., 2024; Cucino et al., 2024; Razzaque et al., 2024; Rosário & Raimundo, 2024).

*Indirectly mentioned – Leadership in a different style*

The group focusing on leadership will broadly examine leadership's role in fostering innovation, driving change, and guiding organizations toward sustainable development. While the study may not explicitly focus on entrepreneurial leadership (EL), the findings will link leadership to EL, recognizing it as one of the leadership styles that can effectively support sustainability initiatives and organizational progress (Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Freze et al., 2023; Kafetzopoulos & Gotzamani, 2022).

*Directly mentioned – Entrepreneurial Leadership*

The group focusing on Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL) will examine EL as a central factor, exploring behaviors and practices that reflect EL's role in promoting sustainability and CSR. This research will explore how specific entrepreneurial leadership actions contribute to advancing sustainable initiatives and supporting CSR efforts within organizations (Nor-Aishah et al., 2020; Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022)

**CSR: Direct and Indirect mentioned**

*Indirectly mentioned – sustainability, SDGs, green initiatives*

The group that incorporates the context of sustainability will primarily focus on the organization's sustainability and then extend its analysis to the external context. Their research will encompass all three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social performance, linking them to many aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach supports the development of social sustainability by emphasizing how organizations can contribute to broader societal goals through sustainable practices (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Al Koliby et al.,

2024; Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Cucino et al., 2024; Kafetzopoulos & Gotzamani, 2022; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020; Razzaque et al., 2024; Rosário & Raimundo, 2024).

#### *Indirectly mentioned – intellectual capital*

This research emphasizes intellectual capital, highlighting the critical role of cultivating strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Strengthening these relationships is viewed as a crucial factor in driving organizational sustainability. Developing intellectual capital in this context provides a foundation for long-term success and resilience, reinforcing the organization's efforts to achieve its sustainable development goals. (Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022).

#### *Directly mentioned – CSR*

The group focusing directly on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investigates the connections between implementing CSR activities within organizations and the role of EL. Specifically, this research explores whether support from EL contributes to the success and advancement of CSR initiatives, examining how EL influences the development and execution of CSR efforts (Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Freze et al., 2023).

#### **EL for fostering CSR and sustainability**

The analysis of the ten articles reveals an interesting pattern regarding support for driving CSR initiatives and processes related to the sustainable development of entrepreneurial leadership (EL). The support approaches that can help promote CSR in the organization can be categorized as follows:

- **Organizational learning processes:** Support from research shows that creating such processes within an organization, with appropriate support from leaders, is one factor that leads to the success of CSR projects within an organization. To achieve sustainability through CSR initiatives, educational institutions play a vital role by creating employee knowledge, competencies, and skills, which are supported by strategic human resources planning (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Cucino et al., 2024; Rosário & Raimundo, 2024).
- **Internal resource support:** This refers to the provision of necessary resources for CSR implementation. Leaders should actively allocate the necessary resources to support CSR initiatives by translating organizational vision and policies into practice. These resources may include financial contributions, such as funding, donations, or budget allocation, as well as non-financial support, including employee volunteering, training programs, or community engagement efforts. To do so effectively, leaders must have a comprehensive understanding of both financial and non-financial dimensions of CSR (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Cucino et al., 2024; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020; Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022).

- Passion and motivation support: The study found that leaders with those abilities, starting with ELs themselves, will create confidence in further development, create motivation, and support personnel to have skills and motivation in CSR operations (Al Koliby et al., 2024; Razzaque et al., 2024).
- Sustainability and green organization approach: EL should support this dimension because research findings confirm that EL leadership is crucial in driving CSR activities. If the leader has a green organization concept, it will help the organization in the same direction (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Al Koliby et al., 2024; Freze et al., 2023; Kafetzopoulos & Gotzamani, 2022; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020).
- Social dimension support: entrepreneurial leadership will help support sustainability in the social dimension, resulting in sustainable performance because it considers abstract thinking, quality of life, and various cultures in society (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Kafetzopoulos & Gotzamani, 2022).
- Stakeholder engagement support: Entrepreneurial leadership must manage internal and external stakeholders so that the CSR development process can drive and truly reflect sustainability needs (Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022).

The categories identified in the previous systematic literature review reveal that entrepreneurial leadership can facilitate and promote Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability initiatives through two primary mechanisms. First, internal support fosters these efforts within the organization by encouraging learning processes, cultivating a culture that prioritizes CSR and sustainability, and emphasizing these issues. Second, external support involves leveraging social networks and engaging with stakeholders to enhance CSR and sustainability projects.

## **Discussion and Recommendation**

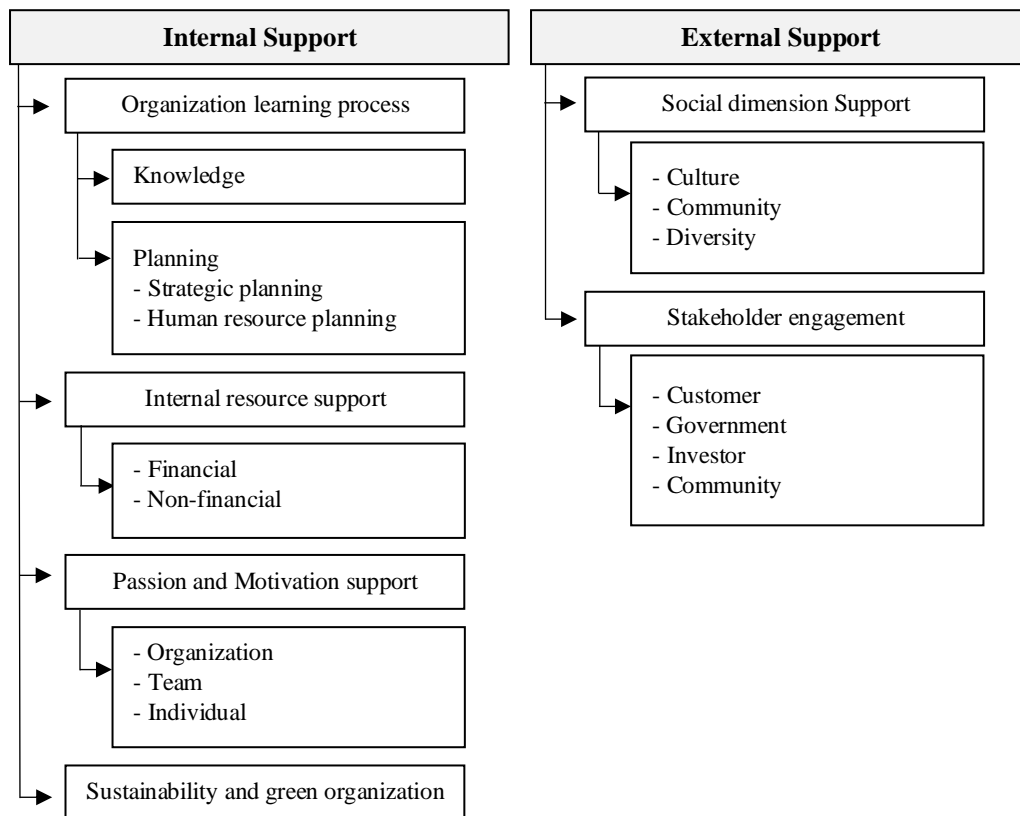
The study examined how Entrepreneurial Leadership (EL) can stimulate and drive CSR and organizational sustainability, finding that from 2020 to the present, there has been limited research on this topic. The findings from the SLR process reflect not only a small number of studies but also a variation in how factors are defined despite a shared focus on similar contexts, as shown in Table 2. This aligns with Renko et al. (2015), who noted that a clear definition of EL remains underdeveloped. Nevertheless, this research highlights the significant role EL plays in driving CSR, both by directly supporting resources within organizations (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023; Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020) and by serving as a role model (Razzaque et al., 2024). Consistent with Renko et al. (2015) suggestion, for organizational members to adopt effective practices, EL must demonstrate exemplary leadership.

**Table 2:** Factors that are related and have similar meanings to entrepreneurial leadership

Factors	Meanings
Entrepreneurship	Contributes to sustainability by enhancing local capacities for development and sustainable economic growth, with many entrepreneurs proving their role in advancing sustainable development, especially in developing regions (Acs, 2006; Audretsch & Keilbach, 2004; Shiferaw et al., 2023).
Entrepreneurial leadership skills	Skills that balance responsibility, emotional intelligence, innovation, risk-taking, and efficient resource use help entrepreneurial teams integrate key qualities, enhancing their effectiveness and potential for success (Barney, 1991; Kuratko, 2007; Roomi & Harrison, 2011).
Entrepreneurial leadership competency	

Furthermore, EL plays a crucial role in supporting CSR by aligning it with appropriate HR planning guidelines and business strategies. This SLR emphasizes that EL should help organizations develop internal learning processes. For instance, Al-Abbadi and Abu Rumman (2023) highlight the importance of HR management plans aligned with CSR operations. Cucino et al. (2024) stress the need for a clear strategic direction and vision, while Nor-Aishah et al. (2020) emphasize that considering CSR stakeholders is essential, too. Besides that, EL can focus on social sustainability to enhance intellectual capital (Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022). This aligns with Porter and Kramer (2006) argument that organizations must integrate CSR with their core values and practices to be effective. Carroll's CSR Pyramid also supports this by addressing Philanthropic Responsibilities (Carroll, 1991), enhancing an organization's image as one that prioritizes CSR (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Montiel & Delgado-Ceballos, 2014), which will promote sustainability in the future.

The study identified two main themes regarding how EL can enhance CSR efforts: internal support and external support. Each theme includes specific elements that serve as key considerations for future actions, as illustrated in Figure 1. These themes provide a structured approach to understanding how entrepreneurial leadership can effectively contribute to CSR development within and outside the organization.

**Figure 1:** Findings on how EL can support CSR through thematic analysis

The internal support theme focuses on fostering CSR initiatives within the organization, with EL playing a key role in creating sustainable CSR practices. The study identified four critical processes within this theme:

1. Organizational learning includes personnel knowledge, strategic planning, and HR management. EL can drive CSR learning processes by developing strategies, operational plans, and human resource initiatives incorporating CSR as a core component. As can be referred to Sitaloppi et al. (2021) and Ardiansyah and Alnoor (2024) supported that aligning CSR efforts with an Entrepreneurial Leadership approach can foster sustainability by seamlessly integrating CSR strategies with overall business strategies.
2. Internal resource support that covers both financial and non-financial aspects. EL's role extends beyond merely providing funding for CSR projects. Leaders can also support CSR by allocating resources such as time, space, and other necessary provisions to ensure the smooth and convincing execution of CSR initiatives.
3. Passion and motivation, with organizational, team, and individual subcategories. Leadership action naturally leads to follower response. Here, EL must serve as a role model, inspiring employees to engage in and support CSR projects and fostering a motivated environment for sustainability efforts.

4. Sustainability and green policies, EL can clearly define the organization's stance on sustainability. By embedding CSR into the organization's identity, leaders align their actions with contemporary environmental concerns, helping shape a corporate identity that reflects a commitment to sustainability. Promoting a policy about social responsibility in the organization will create a sense of ownership for CSR projects for employees (Avolio et al., 2009).

For the External support theme, two key processes were identified:

1. Social dimension support includes subcategories such as culture, community, and diversity. A deep understanding of social dynamics is essential for practical CSR actions. Recognizing and addressing various social differences helps ensure that CSR initiatives align with community needs, fostering trust and confidence in the organization's long-term sustainability efforts. It is consistent with the investment approach to develop processes or products that do not harm the environment, reflecting the dimension of social responsibility (Leitch & Volery, 2017).
2. Stakeholder engagement encompasses subcategories like customer perspectives, government agencies, investors, and the community. Building strong partnerships with stakeholders is crucial for successful CSR. By maintaining good relationships and leveraging networks, organizations can implement appropriate CSR practices and expand their reach, further enhancing the impact of their sustainability initiatives. As suggested by the previous study, EL requires fostering strong stakeholder engagement, including employees, customers, investors, and communities, while building partnerships with NGOs and governments to enhance CSR efforts through resource access and influence (Carroll, 1991; Miragaia et al., 2015; Renko et al., 2015).

For future implications, it is recommended that practitioners begin by establishing a clear definition of EL to build a more solid foundation for EL knowledge and development. The findings of this study can serve as a framework for creating guidelines on how EL can effectively drive and foster CSR efforts. Integrating this study's emerging themes and categories into organizational processes can provide a more comprehensive understanding of EL's role in supporting CSR initiatives. However, it is not necessary to apply all the identified factors. Instead, selectively applying the most relevant factors to the organization's context will help determine which aspects truly influence the promotion of CSR activities.

Regarding theoretical development, researchers should prioritize creating clear guidelines, especially in defining the concept of EL, to expand the existing knowledge base. This clarity will enhance understanding of how applying EL-related factors can foster CSR activities across different

contexts. Moreover, considering the limited research on EL's role in promoting CSR, the data from this study can help highlight current findings and identify areas for future research to investigate further.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite the growing number of research studies on entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and corporate social responsibility (CSR), the systematic literature review (SLR) revealed a limited number of studies in the past five years that have examined the direct relationship between these two factors. This highlights the need to explore additional factors beyond the direct connections between EL and CSR. While the SLR identified articles that indirectly referenced these dimensions, the results were comparable to those found in studies focusing directly on the relationship (Nor-Aishah et al., 2022; Thongyai & Potipiroon, 2022). However, the scarcity of direct studies on both factors suggests that the current data may not fully capture all dimensions of their relationship (Chaudhuri et al., 2024; Freze et al., 2023). Future research should investigate mediating or moderating variables, such as organizational culture, stakeholder dynamics, or innovation capacity, that may explain or enhance the link between EL and CSR.

The overview of this SLR is that most of the articles are quantitative studies focusing primarily on examining relational dimensions without delving deeply into the underlying factors or broader impacts within specific contexts or phenomena. Consequently, a qualitative approach may offer valuable insights by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions and effects often overlooked in quantitative analyses. Qualitative methods could enhance the depth of analysis and offer a more nuanced perspective on the factors influencing the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and CSR. Most reviewed studies focused on corporate settings, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore other contexts, such as non-profits or public organizations, where leadership dynamics and CSR practices may differ. This could provide a broader understanding of how EL influences CSR across sectors.

For future research, exploring this relationship by developing more complex models or incorporating additional factors such as social dimension support, stakeholder engagement, and innovation would be valuable. Researchers could also consider examining other leadership styles, including servant, transformational, and transactional leadership, to determine which are most effective in driving CSR and promoting sustainability in today's evolving social environment.



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