Directiva
Journal of Corporate and Creative Business Management

e-ISSN: 3125-1137
Vol. 1 I Issue 2 I June 2026
Pages 40-72

DOI
https://doi.org/10.66203/directiva.01202

Structured Entrepreneurship: Reframing Entrepreneurial Entry Beyond Independent Venture Creation

Novrizal Ahmad Fauzi[1]*
Sansan Fardan Hamdani[2]

***Corresponding Mail:**
novrizal@poltektriguna.ac.id

Abstract

Entrepreneurship research has traditionally conceptualized entrepreneurial participation as a process centered on opportunity exploitation through independent venture creation. While this perspective has generated substantial theoretical advances, it provides limited explanation for entrepreneurial entry that occurs through organizationally enabled pathways such as franchising, social franchising, licensing systems, and other structured ownership arrangements. This article addresses this limitation by examining the theoretical bias toward independent venture formation and identifying key gaps related to entrepreneurial entry, organizational enablement, structure–agency relationships, and ownership access. Drawing on entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurial entry literature, organizational learning, capability development, and franchising research, the article develops the concept of Structured Entrepreneurship as a distinct form of entrepreneurial participation occurring through pre-established organizational systems that provide business templates, capability transfer mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and ownership opportunities while preserving entrepreneurial agency. A multidimensional conceptual framework is proposed to explain how structured organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial readiness, ownership formation, and entrepreneurial growth outcomes. The article contributes to entrepreneurship theory by broadening the conceptualization of entrepreneurial entry, integrating fragmented research streams, introducing ownership formation as a distinct entrepreneurial outcome, and establishing a foundation for future research on organizationally enabled pathways into entrepreneurship.

Keywords

structured entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial entry; ownership formation; capability transfer; entrepreneurial agency; franchising

Article History:
Submitted: 11-03-2026
Approved: 14-05-2026
Published: 01-06-2026

[1] Banking and Finance Study Program, Politeknik Triguna Tasikmalaya, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia
[2] Banking and Finance Study Program, Politeknik Triguna Tasikmalaya, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a critical mechanism for economic development, innovation, job creation, and social mobility. Over several decades, entrepreneurship research has largely conceptualized entrepreneurial activity as a process through which individuals identify, discover, or create opportunities and subsequently establish independent ventures to exploit them (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Eckhardt, 2003; Gartner, 1985; S. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This dominant perspective has shaped much of the field's theoretical development, influencing research on entrepreneurial intentions, opportunity recognition, venture emergence, resource mobilization, and firm growth (Davidsson, 2015; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Krueger *et al*., 2000)

Within this tradition, entrepreneurs are commonly portrayed as actors who create organizations under conditions of uncertainty, assemble resources independently, establish legitimacy, and develop business systems from the ground up (Baker & Nelson, 2005; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001). Consequently, entrepreneurship has become closely associated with venture creation and organizational emergence, reinforcing the assumption that entrepreneurial participation primarily occurs through the founding of independent firms.

Although this perspective has generated substantial theoretical advances, contemporary entrepreneurial activity increasingly occurs through organizational arrangements that differ significantly from the conventional startup model. Individuals frequently enter entrepreneurship through franchise systems, business-format networks, licensing arrangements, social franchising models, platform-mediated business systems, and hybrid entrepreneurial pathways that provide access to established organizational infrastructures, operational routines, training mechanisms, and market legitimacy (Dada *et al*., 2015; Folta *et al*., 2010; Giudici *et al*., 2020; Ketchen *et al*., 2011; Tracey & Jarvis, 2007). These arrangements enable individuals to obtain ownership positions and participate in value creation without necessarily creating entirely new organizational systems.

This development reflects a broader transformation in how entrepreneurial participation is enabled within contemporary economies. Entrepreneurship scholars increasingly acknowledge that entrepreneurial action is deeply embedded within institutional, social, and organizational contexts rather than being determined solely by individual characteristics or opportunity recognition processes (Autio *et al*., 2014; Welter, 2011). Research on human capital, social capital, and entrepreneurial ecosystems similarly demonstrates that entrepreneurial entry is facilitated by access to knowledge, networks, role models, legitimacy structures, and learning opportunities (Bosma *et al*., 2012; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Marvel *et al*., 2016). Yet despite these advances, entrepreneurship theory continues to devote relatively limited attention to organizational systems that actively structure and enable entrepreneurial entry.

This omission is increasingly important because a growing proportion of entrepreneurial participation occurs through organizational pathways that reduce entry barriers, transfer capabilities, and provide access to ownership opportunities. Recent studies suggest that entrepreneurial entry is influenced not only by intentions and opportunity perceptions but also by access to organizational infrastructures that shape perceived feasibility, capability acquisition, and entrepreneurial readiness (Liguori *et al*., 2020; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). In franchise contexts, for example, entrepreneurial participation is often facilitated through established business models, support systems, and legitimacy mechanisms that substantially reduce uncertainty while preserving entrepreneurial responsibility and ownership incentives (Croonen *et al*., 2022; Watson *et al*., 2020)

However, existing entrepreneurship theory lacks a conceptual framework capable of explaining entrepreneurial entry through such structured organizational systems. The dominant venture-creation paradigm implicitly assumes that entrepreneurs create organizations before becoming owners. As a result, entrepreneurship research remains primarily concerned with organizational formation rather than with the mechanisms through which individuals gain access to ownership opportunities. This creates what may be termed an independent venture bias—a tendency to privilege entrepreneurship through startup creation while underrepresenting entrepreneurship that emerges through organizationally enabled pathways.

The limitations of this perspective become evident when examining franchising and related business-format systems. Extensive research has investigated franchising through the lenses of agency theory, resource scarcity, governance mechanisms, and network performance (Castrogiovanni *et al.*, 2006b, 2006a; Combs *et al.*, 2004; Lafontaine, 1992). More recent studies have explored franchisee intentions, entrepreneurial characteristics, capability development, and performance outcomes (Croonen *et al.*, 2022; Dada, 2023; Watson *et al.*, 2020). Nevertheless, much of this literature remains disconnected from broader entrepreneurship theory, causing franchising to be treated primarily as a business format rather than as a structured pathway into entrepreneurship.

This article argues that the central theoretical gap is not whether franchisees are entrepreneurs, but rather whether entrepreneurship theory adequately explains how organizational systems create entrepreneurial participation. Existing theories provide sophisticated explanations of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, venture creation, and organizational emergence, yet they offer limited insight into how organizational infrastructures facilitate ownership entry, capability transfer, legitimacy acquisition, and entrepreneurial readiness.

To address this gap, this article introduces the concept of Structured Entrepreneurship. Structured Entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial entry through pre-established organizational systems that provide business templates, capability-development mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and operational infrastructures while preserving ownership opportunities and entrepreneurial agency. Unlike conventional entrepreneurial models that emphasize organizational creation under high uncertainty, Structured Entrepreneurship conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a process that may be organizationally enabled without eliminating entrepreneurial discretion, risk assumption, or value-creation responsibilities.

The article contributes to entrepreneurship literature in three ways. First, it broadens prevailing understandings of entrepreneurial entry by recognizing structured organizational pathways as legitimate forms of entrepreneurship. Second, it integrates insights from entrepreneurship, franchising, organizational learning, capability development, and entrepreneurial entry research into a unified conceptual framework. Third, it introduces ownership formation and ownership access as theoretically meaningful constructs capable of extending entrepreneurship theory beyond its traditional focus on venture creation.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial entry, followed by a discussion of franchising and alternative entrepreneurial pathways. The article then identifies key conceptual gaps and develops the concept of Structured Entrepreneurship. Building on this conceptualization, a theoretical framework and a series of propositions are proposed to explain how structured organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial entry, ownership formation, and entrepreneurial growth. Finally, the article discusses theoretical implications, future research opportunities, and the broader significance of recognizing structured pathways within entrepreneurship theory.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Entrepreneurship as Venture Creation

Entrepreneurship scholarship has historically been dominated by the venture creation paradigm, which conceptualizes entrepreneurship as the process through which individuals identify, discover, or create opportunities and subsequently establish organizations to exploit them. Since Gartner's (1985) seminal work on new venture creation, entrepreneurship has been largely defined through activities associated with organizational founding, including opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, organizational emergence, and firm growth. This perspective was further reinforced by S. Shane & Venkataraman (2000), who positioned entrepreneurship as the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities, thereby establishing opportunity-based venture creation as the central focus of entrepreneurship research.

Subsequent theoretical developments expanded this perspective while maintaining its underlying assumptions. Opportunity discovery theories suggest that entrepreneurial opportunities exist objectively and are identified by alert individuals, whereas opportunity creation theories argue that opportunities emerge through entrepreneurial action and interaction (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Although these perspectives differ regarding the origins of opportunities, both assume that entrepreneurial activity ultimately results in the establishment of new ventures. As a consequence, entrepreneurship has become closely associated with organizational founding regardless of whether opportunities are discovered or created.

The venture creation paradigm has also been strengthened by research emphasizing uncertainty and entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurs are commonly portrayed as actors who initiate economic activity under conditions of uncertainty, make decisions with incomplete information, and construct organizational systems through experimentation and adaptation (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001). Similarly, research on entrepreneurial bricolage highlights how entrepreneurs overcome resource constraints by creatively recombining available resources during the venture creation process (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Collectively, these perspectives reinforce the image of entrepreneurs as individuals who create organizations from the ground up.

Research on legitimacy and organizational emergence further supports this view. New ventures must establish credibility among stakeholders, secure access to resources, and gain acceptance within institutional environments before they can survive and grow (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; (Delmar & Shane, 2004). Consequently, much of entrepreneurship research has focused on understanding how entrepreneurs overcome the liabilities associated with organizational newness and uncertainty.

The venture creation perspective has generated substantial theoretical advances and remains one of the most influential foundations of entrepreneurship theory. However, it also embeds an implicit assumption that entrepreneurial participation and organizational creation are inseparable. Entrepreneurship is typically understood as something that begins when individuals establish organizations and subsequently become owners. This assumption has directed scholarly attention toward explaining how organizations are created rather than examining how individuals gain access to entrepreneurial ownership through alternative organizational arrangements.

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized that entrepreneurship is embedded within broader institutional and contextual environments that shape entrepreneurial opportunities and behavior (Autio *et al.*, 2014; Welter, 2011). These developments suggest that entrepreneurial participation may occur through mechanisms that extend beyond independent venture creation. Nevertheless, existing entrepreneurship theory remains strongly anchored to the venture creation paradigm, leaving important forms of entrepreneurial entry insufficiently theorized.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Entry Theory

Alongside the venture creation tradition, a substantial body of research has examined entrepreneurial entry. Entrepreneurial entry refers to the process through which individuals decide to pursue entrepreneurial careers and transition into entrepreneurial roles. Unlike venture creation research, which focuses primarily on organizational outcomes, entrepreneurial entry research seeks to explain why individuals choose entrepreneurship and what factors influence this transition.

One of the most influential perspectives within this literature is entrepreneurial intention theory. Entrepreneurial intentions are widely regarded as one of the strongest predictors of entrepreneurial behavior because entrepreneurial action is generally preceded by deliberate decision-making processes (Krueger et al, 2000). Building on the Theory of Planned Behavior, entrepreneurial intention research emphasizes perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and behavioral control as critical antecedents of entrepreneurial participation (Ajzen, 1991). Meta-analytic evidence further confirms that entrepreneurial intentions are shaped by attitudes, social norms, self-efficacy, and perceived entrepreneurial competence (Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014).

Entrepreneurial entry has also been explained through human capital and social capital perspectives. Human capital theory suggests that education, experience, and knowledge increase the likelihood of entrepreneurial participation by enhancing individuals' ability to recognize and exploit opportunities (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Marvel *et al.*, 2016) Social capital research similarly highlights the importance of networks, role models, and social relationships in facilitating entrepreneurial entry (Bosma *et al.*, 2012; Nanda & Sørensen, 2010). Individuals embedded within supportive social environments are more likely to perceive entrepreneurship as feasible and attainable.

Research on entrepreneurial cognition provides additional explanations for entrepreneurial entry. Entrepreneurs differ in how they process information, recognize patterns, evaluate opportunities, and make decisions under uncertainty (Baron, 2006; Grégoire *et al.*, 2010; Mitchell *et al.*, 2007) These cognitive processes influence whether individuals perceive entrepreneurial opportunities and whether they subsequently choose to pursue entrepreneurial careers. More recent studies also emphasize the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, career motivations, and entrepreneurial identity in shaping entrepreneurial participation (Liguori *et al.*, 2020)

Collectively, entrepreneurial entry theories have significantly enhanced understanding of why individuals become entrepreneurs. However, most explanations remain centered on individual-level antecedents such as intentions, cognition, human capital, and social influence. Consequently, entrepreneurial entry is primarily conceptualized as an individual decision-making process rather than as a process that may be facilitated or structured by organizational systems.

This limitation becomes increasingly important in contemporary economies where access to entrepreneurship is often mediated by organizational infrastructures. Existing entrepreneurial entry theories provide valuable explanations regarding entrepreneurial motivation and readiness, yet they offer limited insight into how organizational arrangements influence access to entrepreneurial participation, ownership opportunities, and entrepreneurial development. As a result, entrepreneurial entry remains largely theorized as a precursor to independent venture creation rather than as a broader process involving multiple pathways into business ownership.

2.3 Franchise Entrepreneurship and Alternative Entrepreneurial Pathways

The limitations of conventional entrepreneurial entry theories become particularly evident when examining franchising and other organizationally enabled forms of entrepreneurship. Franchising represents one of the most widespread mechanisms through which individuals gain access to business ownership while operating within established organizational systems. Despite its importance, franchising has often been studied separately from mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

Early franchising research focused primarily on governance issues, contractual relationships, agency problems, and resource scarcity explanations for franchise expansion (Castrogiovanni *et al.*, 2006b, 2006a; Combs *et al.*, 2004b; Lafontaine, 1992). These studies generated important insights regarding network governance and organizational performance but paid comparatively little attention to entrepreneurial entry and ownership formation.

Subsequent research increasingly recognized the entrepreneurial dimensions of franchising. S. A. Shane & Hoy (1996) argued that franchising may represent a form of cooperative entrepreneurship, while Ketchen *et al.* (2011) explicitly questioned whether franchising should be considered entrepreneurship. More recent studies suggest that franchisees exhibit entrepreneurial characteristics, entrepreneurial motivations, and entrepreneurial behaviors despite operating within structured organizational environments (Croonen *et al.*, 2022; Dada *et al.*, 2015; Watson *et al.*, 2020) Research has further shown that franchise systems influence entrepreneurial outcomes through capability development, training support, legitimacy transfer, and organizational learning mechanisms (Dada, 2018, 2023).

Importantly, franchising is not the only example of entrepreneurship occurring within organizational structures. Hybrid entrepreneurship demonstrates that entrepreneurial participation may coexist with wage employment, allowing individuals to transition gradually into entrepreneurial careers rather than immediately committing to independent venture creation (Folta *et al.*, 2010; Thorgren *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, intrapreneurship highlights entrepreneurial behavior within established organizational settings, while social franchising illustrates how entrepreneurial participation can emerge through replicable organizational templates designed for social value creation (Giudici *et al.*, 2020; Parker, 2011; Tracey & Jarvis, 2007)

These developments collectively suggest that entrepreneurship increasingly occurs through organizational systems that provide predefined business architectures, legitimacy structures, capability-development mechanisms, and ownership opportunities. Such systems reduce entry barriers, facilitate entrepreneurial learning, and lower uncertainty while preserving entrepreneurial participation and value-creation responsibilities.

Nevertheless, existing entrepreneurship theory lacks an integrative framework capable of explaining these organizationally enabled pathways as a distinct form of entrepreneurial entry. Franchising, hybrid entrepreneurship, social franchising, and related phenomena continue to be treated as separate research streams despite sharing common mechanisms involving organizational support, capability transfer, legitimacy access, and ownership participation. The absence of a unifying conceptual framework limits the ability of entrepreneurship scholarship to explain how organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial entry.

This limitation creates an important theoretical opportunity. If entrepreneurial participation can emerge through organizational systems that transfer capabilities, legitimacy, and ownership opportunities while preserving entrepreneurial agency, then entrepreneurship theory requires a broader conceptual lens capable of explaining such pathways. The next section addresses this issue by identifying the major conceptual gaps that have prevented entrepreneurship scholarship from fully recognizing structured pathways into entrepreneurship.

3. Conceptual Gap Analysis

The preceding review demonstrates that entrepreneurship research has generated substantial theoretical insights regarding opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial cognition, venture creation, organizational emergence, and business growth. Collectively, these perspectives have significantly advanced understanding of how entrepreneurial activity develops and how individuals engage in entrepreneurial action. Nevertheless, the review also reveals an important limitation. Despite considerable theoretical diversity, existing entrepreneurship scholarship remains strongly anchored to the assumption that entrepreneurial participation primarily occurs through independent venture creation.

This assumption has shaped the conceptual boundaries of entrepreneurship research for several decades. Consequently, entrepreneurship theories have focused predominantly on explaining how individuals identify opportunities, establish organizations, acquire resources, and achieve venture growth. Far less attention has been devoted to understanding how organizational systems themselves facilitate entrepreneurial participation and provide access to business ownership. As a result, several important forms of entrepreneurial entry remain insufficiently represented within mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

This section identifies four interrelated conceptual gaps that collectively justify the development of Structured Entrepreneurship as a new theoretical construct.

3.1 Gap 1: The Independent Venture Bias

A fundamental limitation within contemporary entrepreneurship theory is its persistent emphasis on independent venture creation as the dominant pathway into entrepreneurship. Foundational theories consistently conceptualize entrepreneurship as a process that culminates in the formation of new organizations (Eckhardt, 2003; Gartner, 1985; S. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Whether opportunities are viewed as discovered or created, entrepreneurial participation is generally assumed to involve the establishment of an independent venture controlled by the entrepreneur (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Davidsson, 2015)

This perspective has produced what may be described as an independent venture bias. Entrepreneurship is frequently evaluated through indicators such as venture formation, venture survival, and venture growth, while alternative forms of entrepreneurial participation receive comparatively limited attention. Consequently, individuals who enter business ownership through organizational systems rather than through organizational founding are often positioned at the margins of entrepreneurship theory.

The limitations of this bias become increasingly apparent in contemporary economies where entrepreneurial participation frequently occurs through established organizational arrangements. Franchisees, social franchise operators, licensing partners, and other organizationally embedded entrepreneurs invest capital, assume business risks, allocate resources, manage employees, and pursue growth opportunities. Yet their entrepreneurial status often remains theoretically ambiguous because they do not create organizational systems entirely from scratch (Croonen *et al.*, 2022; Ketchen *et al.*, 2011)

More importantly, the independent venture bias directs scholarly attention toward explaining how organizations are created while overlooking how entrepreneurs are created. Existing entrepreneurship theories provide sophisticated explanations of venture formation but offer comparatively limited insight into the mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurial participation through organizationally enabled pathways. Consequently, the diversity of entrepreneurial entry modes remains insufficiently captured within current theoretical frameworks.

3.2 Gap 2: The Assumption of Unstructured Entrepreneurial Entry

A second limitation concerns the widespread assumption that entrepreneurial entry necessarily occurs under conditions of high uncertainty, resource scarcity, and organizational ambiguity. Entrepreneurship scholars have long emphasized uncertainty as a defining characteristic of entrepreneurial action (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001) Entrepreneurs are commonly portrayed as actors who identify opportunities, acquire resources, establish legitimacy, and develop organizational systems under conditions of incomplete information.

This assumption has contributed significantly to understanding entrepreneurial behavior. However, it also implies that entrepreneurial entry is inherently unstructured and that entrepreneurs must independently develop the capabilities required for business ownership. As a result, entrepreneurial competence is often conceptualized as emerging primarily through individual experience, experimentation, and learning.

Yet many contemporary forms of entrepreneurship operate within environments that substantially reduce uncertainty prior to entrepreneurial entry. Franchise systems provide established brands, proven business models, standardized operating procedures, training programs, and ongoing support mechanisms. Similar characteristics can be observed within social franchising systems, licensing arrangements, platform-mediated business models, and other organizationally enabled entrepreneurial contexts (Giudici *et al.*, 2020; Tracey & Jarvis, 2007)

These systems do not eliminate entrepreneurial risk or responsibility. Rather, they moderate uncertainty by providing access to organizational infrastructures that facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Existing entrepreneurship theories, however, offer limited explanations regarding how such organizational arrangements shape entrepreneurial entry. Most theories focus on how entrepreneurs respond to uncertainty rather than how organizational systems actively reduce uncertainty before entrepreneurial participation occurs.

Consequently, an important dimension of entrepreneurial entry remains theoretically underdeveloped. Entrepreneurship scholarship lacks a framework capable of explaining entrepreneurial participation under structured conditions where organizational support mechanisms coexist with entrepreneurial agency and ownership responsibility.

3.3 Gap 3: The Structure–Agency Dichotomy

A third conceptual limitation emerges from the tendency to position entrepreneurship and organizational structure as competing rather than complementary phenomena. Entrepreneurship is traditionally associated with autonomy, innovation, experimentation, flexibility, and opportunity exploitation, whereas organizational structures are often associated with standardization, control, predictability, and constraint.

This implicit dichotomy has influenced how scholars evaluate organizationally embedded forms of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activity occurring within established organizational systems is frequently perceived as less entrepreneurial because organizational structures constrain individual discretion and reduce uncertainty. Consequently, entrepreneurship research has often privileged contexts characterized by organizational independence and high uncertainty.

However, evidence from franchising, hybrid entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and social franchising challenges this assumption. Entrepreneurs operating within structured systems continue to make strategic decisions, allocate resources, manage relationships, pursue growth opportunities, and adapt business activities to local market conditions (Dada *et al.*, 2015; Watson *et al.*, 2020) Entrepreneurial agency therefore remains present even when organizational structures provide substantial support.

This observation suggests that structure and agency should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Instead, organizational structures may function as enabling mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurial participation by transferring knowledge, reducing entry barriers, accelerating learning, and enhancing legitimacy. Such a perspective aligns with broader organizational scholarship that views structure and agency as mutually reinforcing rather than inherently contradictory.

Despite this possibility, entrepreneurship theory has devoted limited attention to explaining how organizational structures enable entrepreneurial action. Existing frameworks provide few conceptual tools for understanding entrepreneurial participation within environments where organizational support and entrepreneurial discretion coexist. As a result, the relationship between organizational structure and entrepreneurial agency remains insufficiently theorized.

3.4 Gap 4: The Absence of an Ownership Access Perspective

The most significant gap concerns the absence of a theoretical framework explaining ownership access. Entrepreneurship research has devoted substantial attention to opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, venture creation, organizational emergence, and business growth. However, comparatively little attention has been directed toward understanding how individuals gain access to business ownership itself.

Most entrepreneurship theories implicitly assume that ownership emerges as a consequence of venture creation. Individuals create organizations and subsequently become owners. While this pathway remains important, it represents only one mechanism through which ownership may be achieved. Increasingly, individuals gain ownership positions through organizational systems that provide access to established business architectures, legitimacy structures, and operational infrastructures.

This omission is theoretically significant because ownership constitutes one of the defining characteristics of entrepreneurship. Ownership involves risk assumption, residual claims, resource allocation authority, and participation in value creation. Yet entrepreneurship scholarship rarely examines ownership access as a distinct process worthy of theoretical attention.

Franchise systems illustrate this limitation particularly well. Individuals become business owners without independently creating organizational systems. Similar dynamics can be observed in social franchising, licensing arrangements, platform-based entrepreneurial models, and other organizational contexts that facilitate ownership participation through established structures. Existing entrepreneurship theories provide limited guidance regarding how such ownership pathways emerge, how they operate, and how they influence entrepreneurial outcomes.

Consequently, entrepreneurship research remains heavily focused on entrepreneurial formation while paying considerably less attention to entrepreneurial access. This imbalance restricts the field's ability to explain how organizational systems create opportunities for entrepreneurial participation and ownership acquisition.

3.5 Toward Structured Entrepreneurship

Taken together, the four gaps identified above reveal a common theoretical limitation. Existing entrepreneurship theories are highly effective in explaining entrepreneurial behavior associated with independent venture creation, but they are considerably less effective in explaining entrepreneurial participation through organizationally enabled pathways.

Specifically, entrepreneurship scholarship continues to exhibit an independent venture bias, assumes that entrepreneurial entry occurs primarily under unstructured conditions, maintains an implicit separation between organizational structure and entrepreneurial agency, and lacks a framework capable of explaining ownership access as a distinct entrepreneurial process. Collectively, these limitations prevent entrepreneurship theory from adequately capturing forms of entrepreneurial participation that emerge through structured organizational systems.

Addressing these shortcomings requires a broader conceptualization of entrepreneurial entry. Rather than defining entrepreneurship exclusively through organizational founding, entrepreneurship theory must also account for organizational systems that facilitate entrepreneurial participation by transferring legitimacy, capabilities, business templates, and ownership opportunities. Such systems do not eliminate entrepreneurial agency; instead, they create conditions that make entrepreneurial participation more accessible.

To address this challenge, the next section introduces Structured Entrepreneurship as a new conceptual lens for understanding entrepreneurial entry through organizationally enabled pathways. Structured Entrepreneurship proposes that entrepreneurial participation may emerge through organizational systems that simultaneously provide support structures and preserve entrepreneurial ownership, responsibility, and agency. In doing so, it extends entrepreneurship theory beyond its traditional venture creation paradigm and toward a more comprehensive understanding of how entrepreneurs enter and participate in economic value creation.

4. Structured Entrepreneurship: Concept Development

4.1 Introducing Structured Entrepreneurship

The conceptual gaps identified in the previous section reveal an important limitation within contemporary entrepreneurship theory. Existing frameworks provide sophisticated explanations of opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, venture creation, and entrepreneurial action, yet they offer limited insight into entrepreneurial participation that emerges through organizationally enabled pathways. Consequently, entrepreneurship scholarship lacks a conceptual vocabulary capable of explaining how individuals become entrepreneurs through organizational systems that facilitate ownership, capability development, and legitimacy acquisition.

To address this limitation, this article introduces Structured Entrepreneurship as a new conceptual construct.

Structured Entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial entry through pre-established organizational systems that provide business templates, capability-development mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and operational infrastructures while preserving ownership participation, risk assumption, and entrepreneurial agency.

This definition expands prevailing conceptions of entrepreneurship by recognizing that entrepreneurial participation does not always require the creation of entirely new organizational systems. Instead, entrepreneurship may emerge through organizational arrangements that facilitate access to ownership while simultaneously reducing many of the barriers traditionally associated with entrepreneurial entry.

Importantly, Structured Entrepreneurship should not be interpreted as a substitute for independent entrepreneurship. Rather, it represents an additional pathway through which entrepreneurial participation occurs. Independent entrepreneurs create organizational systems before becoming owners, whereas structured entrepreneurs gain access to ownership through organizational systems that already exist. In both cases, entrepreneurial agency, risk assumption, and value creation remain central.

The concept therefore shifts theoretical attention from organizational creation alone toward the broader process through which entrepreneurial participation becomes possible.

4.2 The Core Logic of Structured Entrepreneurship

The central argument underlying Structured Entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurial participation may be organizationally enabled rather than purely individually constructed.

Traditional entrepreneurship theories generally assume that entrepreneurs must independently assemble resources, establish legitimacy, acquire capabilities, and develop business systems before engaging in entrepreneurial activity. Structured Entrepreneurship proposes an alternative logic. Organizational systems themselves may provide many of these enabling conditions before entrepreneurial entry occurs.

Under this perspective, entrepreneurial participation becomes the outcome of an interaction between organizational support structures and entrepreneurial agency.

Organizational systems reduce barriers to entry by transferring resources, knowledge, routines, legitimacy, and business models. Entrepreneurs, in turn, exercise discretion in utilizing these resources, adapting business practices, managing operations, and pursuing growth opportunities. Entrepreneurship therefore emerges not from the absence of structure but from the interaction between structure and agency.

This logic challenges the traditional assumption that organizational structure necessarily constrains entrepreneurship. Instead, structure may function as an enabling mechanism that facilitates entrepreneurial participation while preserving entrepreneurial responsibility.

Consequently, Structured Entrepreneurship conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a process that is simultaneously organizationally supported and entrepreneurially enacted.

4.3 Distinguishing Structured Entrepreneurship from Related Concepts

A critical requirement in concept development is establishing conceptual distinctiveness. Structured Entrepreneurship shares characteristics with several existing concepts but remains theoretically distinct from each of them.

1) Independent Entrepreneurship

Independent entrepreneurship involves the creation of new ventures through entrepreneur-driven opportunity exploitation, resource mobilization, and organizational formation (S. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Structured Entrepreneurship differs because organizational systems already exist prior to entrepreneurial entry. The entrepreneur enters, adapts, and develops the business rather than creating the organizational architecture from scratch.

2) Intrapreneurship

Intrapreneurs engage in entrepreneurial activities within established organizations (Parker, 2011)

However, intrapreneurs typically do not possess ownership rights or residual claims. Structured entrepreneurs, by contrast, participate directly in ownership and assume business risks associated with ownership positions.

3) Hybrid Entrepreneurship

Hybrid entrepreneurs simultaneously maintain wage employment while engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Folta *et al.*, 2010)

The defining characteristic of hybrid entrepreneurship is occupational duality. Structured Entrepreneurship is distinguished by organizational enablement rather than employment status.

4) Franchising

Franchising represents one of the most visible empirical manifestations of Structured Entrepreneurship. However, Structured Entrepreneurship is broader than franchising.

The concept includes any organizational arrangement that provides entrepreneurial access through pre-established systems while preserving ownership participation and entrepreneurial agency. Consequently, franchising should be viewed as one context in which Structured Entrepreneurship occurs rather than as the concept itself.

These distinctions establish Structured Entrepreneurship as a theoretically independent construct rather than a re-labeling of existing concepts.

To establish conceptual distinctiveness, Structured Entrepreneurship must be differentiated from several related concepts that have been extensively discussed within entrepreneurship literature. Figure 1 summarizes the positioning of Structured Entrepreneurship relative to independent entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, hybrid entrepreneurship, and franchising. The comparison illustrates that Structured Entrepreneurship represents a unique entrepreneurial pathway characterized by organizationally enabled ownership participation rather than independent organizational creation.

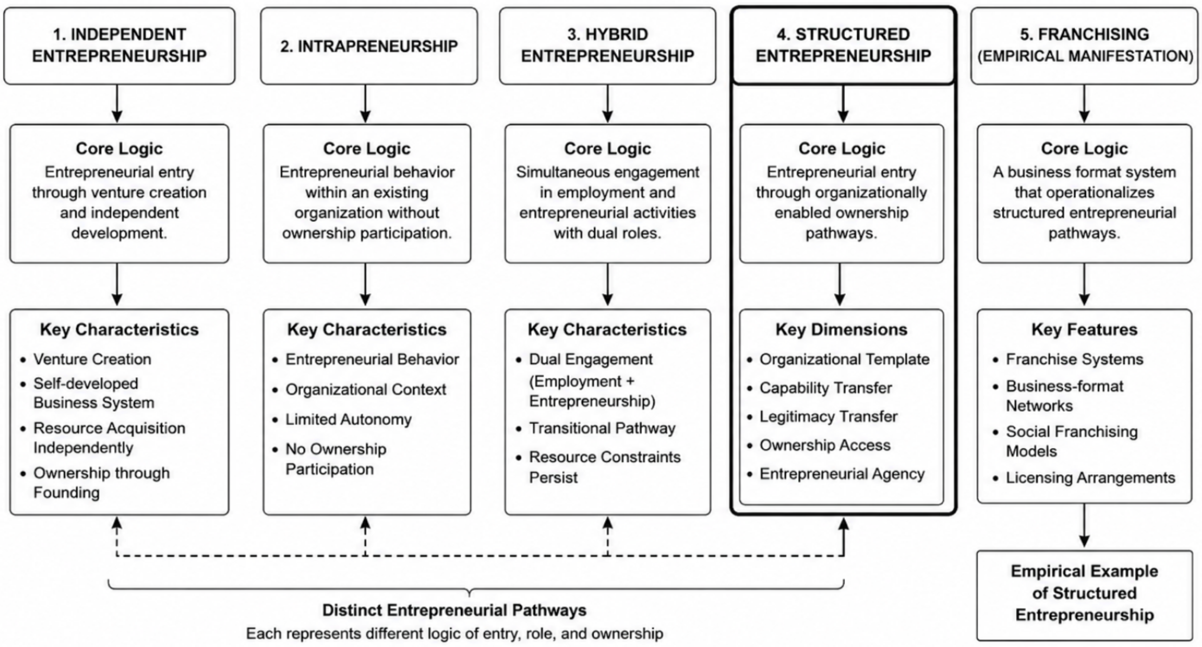

Figure 1. Independent versus Structured Entrepreneurship Pathways

Source: Developed by the authors based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Folta et al. (2010), Parker (2011), Ketchen et al. (2011), Dada et al. (2015), and the present conceptual development.

Figure 1 demonstrates that Structured Entrepreneurship occupies a distinct theoretical position within the entrepreneurship domain. Unlike independent entrepreneurship, which relies on venture creation and ownership through founding, Structured Entrepreneurship enables entrepreneurial participation through pre-existing organizational systems. It also differs from intrapreneurship because ownership participation remains central, and from hybrid entrepreneurship because the defining characteristic is organizational enablement rather than employment duality. Franchising is positioned as a prominent empirical manifestation of Structured Entrepreneurship rather than the concept itself. This distinction reinforces the novelty of the proposed construct and clarifies its contribution to entrepreneurship theory.

While Figure 1 visually positions Structured Entrepreneurship relative to related concepts, a more detailed comparison is necessary to clarify the distinct assumptions underlying different entrepreneurial entry pathways. Table 1 summarizes the major conceptual differences across entrepreneurial forms.

Table 1. Comparative Perspectives on Entrepreneurial Entry Pathways

Dimension	Independent Entrepreneurship	Intrapreneurship	Hybrid Entrepreneurship	Structured Entrepreneurship
Primary Entry Mechanism	Venture creation	Organizational role	Dual employment–entrepreneurship	Organizationally enabled ownership
Organizational System at Entry	Created by entrepreneur	Pre-existing	Mixed	Pre-existing
Ownership Participation	High	None	Variable	High
Capability Source	Self-developed	Organizational learning	Mixed	Organizational capability transfer
Legitimacy Source	Self-established	Organizational affiliation	Mixed	Legitimacy transfer
Uncertainty Level	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Entrepreneurial Agency	High	Moderate	High	High
Central Outcome	Venture formation	Innovation within organization	Entrepreneurial transition	Ownership formation and growth

Source: Developed by the authors based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Folta et al. (2010), Parker (2011), Ketchen et al. (2011), Dada et al. (2015), and the present conceptual development.

Table 1 highlights that Structured Entrepreneurship differs from other entrepreneurial pathways primarily through its combination of organizational enablement and ownership participation. Unlike intrapreneurship, ownership remains central, while unlike independent entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial entry is facilitated through pre-existing organizational infrastructures. This positioning reinforces the theoretical distinctiveness of the proposed construct.

4.4 The Five Dimensions of Structured Entrepreneurship

Structured Entrepreneurship is proposed as a multidimensional construct consisting of five interrelated dimensions. Together, these dimensions explain how organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial participation.

4.4.1 Organizational Template

The first dimension is the presence of an organizational template.

An organizational template refers to a pre-established business architecture consisting of operational routines, business processes, governance mechanisms, and strategic guidelines that shape entrepreneurial activity.

Organizational templates reduce ambiguity during entrepreneurial entry by providing a proven framework for business operation. Rather than designing organizational systems independently, structured entrepreneurs gain access to organizational architectures that have already been developed, tested, and refined.

This dimension reflects the organizational infrastructure that makes entrepreneurial participation more accessible.

4.4.2 Capability Transfer

The second dimension is capability transfer.

Capability transfer refers to the systematic transmission of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, routines, and managerial competencies from an organizational system to the entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship research has consistently recognized the importance of human capital and learning for entrepreneurial success. Structured Entrepreneurship extends this perspective by emphasizing that entrepreneurial capabilities may be deliberately transferred through training programs, mentoring arrangements, operational support systems, and organizational learning mechanisms.

Capability transfer therefore functions as a bridge connecting organizational resources and entrepreneurial readiness.

4.4.3 Legitimacy Transfer

The third dimension is legitimacy transfer.

Legitimacy transfer refers to the provision of organizational credibility, reputation, brand recognition, and stakeholder acceptance through affiliation with an established organizational system.

Independent entrepreneurs must establish legitimacy independently, often facing substantial liabilities of newness. Structured entrepreneurs gain access to pre-existing legitimacy structures that reduce barriers associated with market acceptance and stakeholder trust.

Legitimacy transfer accelerates entrepreneurial entry by reducing the time and resources required to establish organizational credibility.

4.4.4 Ownership Access

Ownership access constitutes the defining dimension of Structured Entrepreneurship.

Ownership access refers to the organizational mechanisms through which individuals gain participation rights, residual claims, decision authority, and economic interests associated with business ownership.

This dimension differentiates Structured Entrepreneurship from conventional employment arrangements. Although organizational systems provide support and structure, participants ultimately become owners rather than employees.

Ownership access transforms organizational participation into entrepreneurial participation.

4.4.5 Entrepreneurial Agency

Structured Entrepreneurship is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct rather than a single entrepreneurial attribute. The concept emerges from the interaction of five complementary dimensions that collectively enable entrepreneurial participation through organizationally supported ownership pathways. Figure 2 summarizes the proposed dimensional structure of Structured Entrepreneurship.

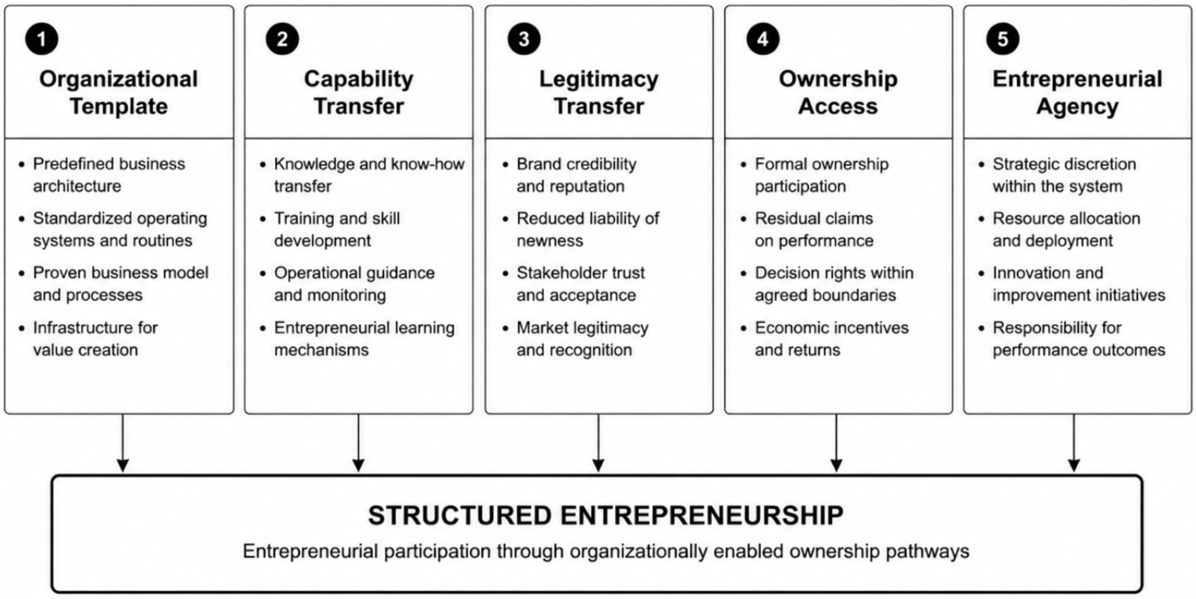

Figure 2. The Five Dimensions of Structured Entrepreneurship

Source: Developed by the authors based on Davidsson and Honig (2003), Politis (2005), Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Ketchen et al. (2011), Dada (2018), Croonen et al. (2022), and the present conceptual development.

Figure 2 illustrates that Structured Entrepreneurship is formed by five interrelated dimensions. Organizational templates provide operational architectures, capability transfer develops entrepreneurial competence, legitimacy transfer reduces barriers associated with market acceptance, ownership access enables entrepreneurial participation, and entrepreneurial agency preserves entrepreneurial discretion and value-creation responsibility. Collectively, these dimensions distinguish Structured Entrepreneurship from both conventional employment and independent venture creation.

The fifth dimension is entrepreneurial agency.

Entrepreneurial agency refers to the entrepreneur's capacity to exercise judgment, make decisions, allocate resources, adapt business practices, and pursue growth opportunities within organizational boundaries.

This dimension is critical because it ensures that Structured Entrepreneurship remains fundamentally entrepreneurial. Organizational systems may provide guidance and support, but entrepreneurs continue to influence outcomes through their decisions and actions.

Consequently, organizational structure and entrepreneurial agency coexist rather than compete.

4.5 Boundary Conditions

For conceptual clarity, it is important to define what Structured Entrepreneurship does not include.

First, conventional employment is excluded because employees do not possess ownership rights or residual claims.

Second, managerial positions without ownership participation are excluded because managerial authority alone does not constitute entrepreneurship.

Third, passive investment arrangements are excluded because investors do not actively engage in entrepreneurial decision-making and business operation.

Accordingly, Structured Entrepreneurship exists only when three conditions are simultaneously present:

1) Participation occurs through a pre-established organizational system.
2) Individuals possess ownership participation and assume business risk.
3) Individuals retain meaningful entrepreneurial agency.

These boundary conditions distinguish Structured Entrepreneurship from both traditional employment and independent venture creation.

4.6 A New Perspective on Entrepreneurial Entry

The concept developed above proposes a fundamental shift in how entrepreneurial entry is understood. Existing entrepreneurship theories generally conceptualize entrepreneurial entry as the transition from non-entrepreneur to venture founder. Structured Entrepreneurship proposes a broader perspective in which entrepreneurial participation may emerge through organizational systems that facilitate access to ownership, legitimacy, capabilities, and business infrastructures.

Under this view, entrepreneurial entry becomes not only an individual process but also an organizationally enabled process. Entrepreneurship is shaped not merely by intentions, cognition, or opportunity recognition but also by organizational systems that make entrepreneurial participation possible.

Consequently, entrepreneurship should be understood as a phenomenon that is simultaneously enacted by individuals and enabled by organizational structures.

The next section develops a conceptual framework explaining how Structured Entrepreneurship facilitates entrepreneurial readiness, ownership formation, and entrepreneurial growth outcomes.

5. Proposed Conceptual Framework and Proposition Development

5.1 Conceptual Framework

Building upon the concept of Structured Entrepreneurship developed in the previous section, this article proposes a framework explaining how organizationally enabled entrepreneurial pathways facilitate entrepreneurial participation, ownership formation, and entrepreneurial growth. The framework integrates insights from entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurial learning, organizational capability development, and franchising research to explain a process that remains insufficiently represented within existing entrepreneurship scholarship.

Traditional entrepreneurship models generally assume that entrepreneurial participation emerges through a sequence involving entrepreneurial intentions, opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, and venture creation (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Krueger *et al.*, 2000; S. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Under this logic, entrepreneurs bear primary responsibility for establishing legitimacy, developing capabilities, and creating organizational systems.

Structured Entrepreneurship follows a different pathway. Entrepreneurial participation is facilitated through organizational systems that provide business templates, legitimacy structures, capability-development mechanisms, and ownership opportunities. Consequently, entrepreneurial entry emerges from the interaction between organizational support and entrepreneurial agency rather than from organizational creation alone.

The proposed framework consists of five sequential components:

1) Structured Organizational Systems
2) Capability Transfer
3) Entrepreneurial Entry Readiness
4) Ownership Formation
5) Entrepreneurial Growth Outcomes

Building on the concept of Structured Entrepreneurship, the proposed framework explains how organizationally enabled entrepreneurial pathways facilitate entrepreneurial participation and growth. The framework identifies capability transfer and entrepreneurial readiness as key developmental mechanisms linking structured organizational systems to ownership formation, while entrepreneurial agency influences the extent to which ownership is translated into entrepreneurial growth outcomes.

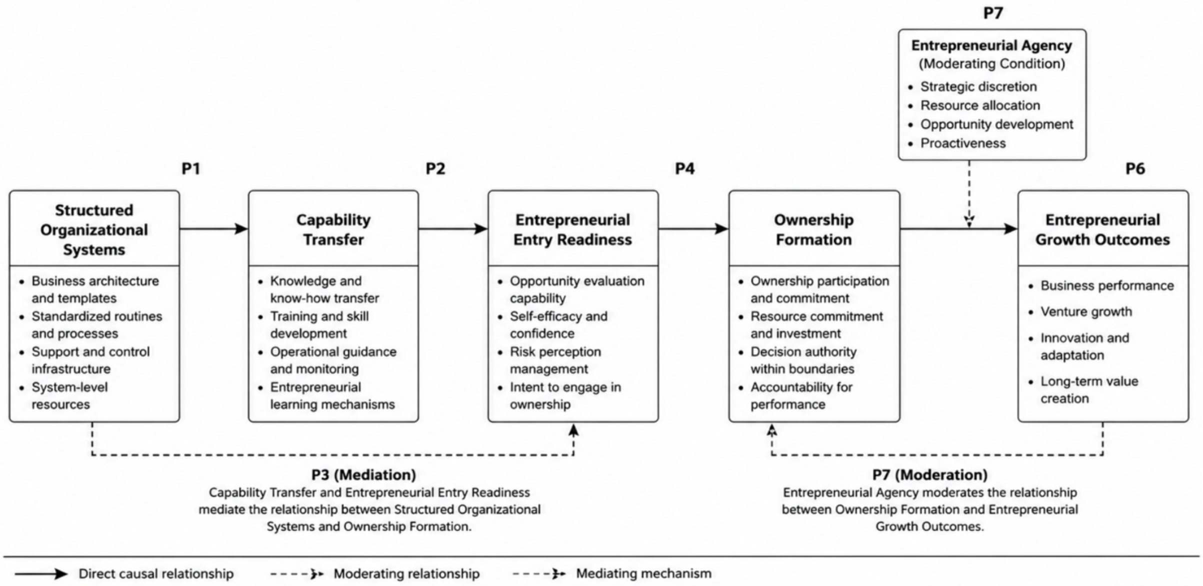

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Structured Entrepreneurship

Source: Developed by the authors based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Davidsson and Honig (2003), Politis (2005), Welter (2011), Autio et al. (2014), Dada (2018), Croonen et al. (2022), and the present conceptual development.

Figure 3 illustrates the proposed causal sequence underlying Structured Entrepreneurship. Structured organizational systems provide enabling infrastructures that facilitate capability transfer, which subsequently enhances entrepreneurial entry readiness. Increased readiness encourages ownership formation, while entrepreneurial agency influences the extent to which ownership participation is converted into entrepreneurial growth outcomes. The framework therefore positions entrepreneurial development as a process jointly shaped by organizational support structures and entrepreneurial action.

5.2 Structured Organizational Systems as Entrepreneurial Enablers

The framework begins with structured organizational systems.

Structured organizational systems consist of pre-established business architectures that provide entrepreneurs with operational routines, governance mechanisms, business templates, training infrastructures, support services, and legitimacy structures. Unlike independent startup environments, these systems reduce the complexity associated with entrepreneurial entry by transferring accumulated organizational knowledge and proven business practices.

Entrepreneurship research has traditionally emphasized individual-level determinants of entrepreneurial participation, including opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, and entrepreneurial cognition (Baron, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2007). While these factors remain important, the Structured Entrepreneurship perspective argues that organizational systems themselves constitute important antecedents of entrepreneurial participation.

Organizational systems reduce entry barriers by lowering information asymmetries, decreasing uncertainty, facilitating learning, and providing access to established business models (Combs *et al.*, 2004b; Croonen *et al.*, 2022; Dada, 2018) As a result, individuals may become willing to pursue entrepreneurial careers despite lacking many of the resources typically required for independent venture creation.

This argument is consistent with broader institutional and contextual perspectives suggesting that entrepreneurial behavior is shaped not only by individual attributes but also by organizational and environmental conditions that influence opportunity access and entrepreneurial feasibility (Autio *et al.*, 2014; Welter, 2011).

Proposition 1
P1: *Structured organizational systems positively influence entrepreneurial entry by reducing uncertainty and lowering barriers associated with independent venture creation.*

5.3 Capability Transfer as the Central Mechanism

A central premise of Structured Entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurial participation is facilitated through capability transfer.

Entrepreneurship scholars have long recognized the importance of human capital, entrepreneurial learning, and experience in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Marvel *et al.*, 2016; Politis, 2005). However, existing theories generally assume that entrepreneurs develop capabilities independently through prior experience, experimentation, and learning-by-doing.

Structured Entrepreneurship proposes an alternative mechanism. Organizational systems actively transfer entrepreneurial capabilities through training programs, mentoring arrangements, operational support structures, codified routines, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms. Consequently, entrepreneurial competence becomes partially embedded within organizational infrastructures rather than residing solely within individuals.

Capability transfer is particularly important because it bridges organizational support and entrepreneurial action. Access to business knowledge, operational routines, managerial competencies, and industry expertise increases entrepreneurs' confidence and preparedness for business ownership.

Recent franchising research similarly suggests that franchisee performance and survival depend heavily on knowledge transfer, learning mechanisms, franchisor support, and capability development processes (Dada, 2023; Watson *et al.*, 2020)

Proposition 2
P2: *Capability transfer mechanisms positively influence entrepreneurial readiness by increasing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and operational competence.*

Capability transfer also explains how structured organizational systems influence entrepreneurial participation.

Proposition 3
P3: *Capability transfer mediates the relationship between structured organizational systems and entrepreneurial entry readiness.*

5.4 Entrepreneurial Entry Readiness and Ownership Formation

The next stage of the framework concerns entrepreneurial entry readiness.

Entrepreneurial entry readiness refers to the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as capable of assuming entrepreneurial responsibilities. Existing entrepreneurial entry theories emphasize the importance of perceived feasibility, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, human capital, and opportunity evaluation in shaping entrepreneurial participation (Douglas & Shepherd, 2002; Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014)

The Structured Entrepreneurship perspective extends this literature by arguing that entrepreneurial readiness is not solely an individual characteristic. Instead, readiness is partially shaped by organizational systems that transfer capabilities, reduce uncertainty, and provide access to support mechanisms.

As entrepreneurial readiness increases, individuals become more willing to pursue ownership opportunities. The transition from readiness to ownership represents a critical stage within the entrepreneurial process because ownership participation transforms entrepreneurial intention into entrepreneurial engagement.

Unlike traditional venture creation pathways, ownership formation occurs through access mechanisms embedded within organizational systems rather than through independent organizational founding.

Proposition 4
P4: *Entrepreneurial entry readiness positively influences ownership formation.*

Moreover, entrepreneurial readiness functions as the mechanism through which organizational support structures translate into entrepreneurial ownership.

Proposition 5
P5: *Entrepreneurial entry readiness mediates the relationship between structured organizational systems and ownership formation.*

5.5 Ownership Formation as a Distinct Entrepreneurial Outcome

One of the primary theoretical contributions of the proposed framework is the explicit recognition of ownership formation as a distinct entrepreneurial outcome.

Existing entrepreneurship theories generally treat ownership as a consequence of venture creation. Entrepreneurs establish organizations and subsequently become owners. As a result, entrepreneurship scholarship has focused extensively on venture formation while devoting comparatively limited attention to ownership access itself.

Structured Entrepreneurship proposes a different perspective. Ownership may emerge through organizational systems that facilitate access to entrepreneurial opportunities without requiring entrepreneurs to independently create organizational architectures.

Ownership formation involves more than legal ownership status. It encompasses risk assumption, residual claims, resource allocation authority, strategic decision-making responsibility, and direct participation in value creation. Consequently, ownership formation represents a meaningful entrepreneurial outcome in its own right.

By emphasizing ownership formation, the framework broadens entrepreneurship theory beyond organizational creation and redirects attention toward mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurial participation.

5.6 Entrepreneurial Agency and Growth Outcomes

Although organizational systems provide substantial support, entrepreneurial outcomes ultimately depend on entrepreneurial agency.

Entrepreneurial agency refers to the entrepreneur's capacity to interpret opportunities, make strategic decisions, allocate resources, solve operational problems, and pursue growth opportunities. Research on entrepreneurial cognition and entrepreneurial behavior consistently demonstrates that individuals differ in how effectively they utilize available resources and respond to environmental challenges (Baron, 2006; Grégoire *et al.*, 2010).

Within Structured Entrepreneurship, agency remains critical because organizational systems cannot fully determine entrepreneurial outcomes. Entrepreneurs operating within similar organizational environments frequently achieve different performance outcomes because they vary in initiative, adaptability, decision-making quality, and growth orientation.

Entrepreneurial agency therefore functions as a moderator that strengthens the relationship between ownership participation and entrepreneurial growth.

Proposition 6
P6: *Entrepreneurial agency positively influences entrepreneurial growth outcomes.*

Proposition 7
P7: *Entrepreneurial agency positively moderates the relationship between ownership formation and entrepreneurial growth outcomes.*

5.7 Theoretical Implications of the Framework

The proposed framework contributes to entrepreneurship theory in several important ways.

First, it expands prevailing models of entrepreneurial entry by recognizing structured organizational systems as legitimate antecedents of entrepreneurial participation. Rather than treating entrepreneurial entry exclusively as an individual-level phenomenon, the framework highlights the role of organizational infrastructures in enabling entrepreneurship.

Second, the framework introduces capability transfer as a central mechanism linking organizational systems and entrepreneurial participation. This contribution integrates insights from entrepreneurship, organizational learning, and capability-development research into a unified explanation of entrepreneurial entry.

Third, the framework positions ownership formation as a theoretically meaningful outcome rather than merely a by-product of venture creation. This shift broadens the scope of entrepreneurship scholarship and introduces ownership access as an important object of inquiry.

Fourth, the framework challenges the traditional assumption that organizational structure constrains entrepreneurship. Instead, it demonstrates that organizational systems and entrepreneurial agency may operate as complementary forces that jointly facilitate entrepreneurial participation and growth.

Most importantly, the framework establishes a foundation for future empirical research capable of examining how structured organizational systems create entrepreneurs, facilitate ownership access, and contribute to entrepreneurial development across diverse organizational contexts.

6. Discussion

6.1 Reframing Entrepreneurial Entry Beyond Venture Creation

The primary objective of this article has been to challenge the long-standing assumption that entrepreneurship necessarily begins with independent venture creation. Although this assumption has shaped entrepreneurship scholarship for several decades and generated substantial theoretical advances, it has also narrowed the conceptual boundaries of the field. As a result, entrepreneurial participation occurring through organizationally enabled pathways has received considerably less attention than entrepreneurial participation through startup formation.

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship addresses this limitation by introducing a broader understanding of entrepreneurial entry. Rather than defining entrepreneurship exclusively through organizational founding, the concept recognizes that entrepreneurial participation may emerge through organizational systems that provide business templates, capability-development mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and ownership opportunities.

Under this perspective, entrepreneurship is not solely a process of creating organizations; it is also a process through which individuals gain access to entrepreneurial ownership and participate in value creation.

This shift is important because contemporary entrepreneurial activity increasingly occurs within environments where organizational infrastructures facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Franchise systems, social franchising arrangements, licensing networks, platform-based business systems, and other organizational forms enable individuals to become entrepreneurs without independently constructing organizational architectures. Consequently, entrepreneurship theory must move beyond a singular focus on venture creation and develop explanations capable of accounting for multiple pathways into entrepreneurial participation.

The Structured Entrepreneurship perspective therefore reframes entrepreneurial entry as a process that is simultaneously individual and organizational. Entrepreneurial participation remains dependent on entrepreneurial agency, yet it is also shaped by organizational systems that influence access to capabilities, legitimacy, and ownership opportunities.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

6.2.1 Expanding the Domain of Entrepreneurship Theory

The first contribution of this article lies in expanding the conceptual domain of entrepreneurship theory.

Historically, entrepreneurship research has concentrated on opportunity recognition, opportunity creation, entrepreneurial intentions, resource mobilization, venture emergence, and organizational growth (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Davidsson, 2015; Gartner, 1985; S. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). These perspectives have produced a rich body of knowledge concerning entrepreneurial behavior but have generally assumed that entrepreneurship begins when individuals create organizations.

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship broadens this perspective by recognizing organizationally enabled ownership pathways as legitimate forms of entrepreneurial participation. Under this view, entrepreneurship is not defined solely by organizational creation but by active participation in value creation through ownership, risk assumption, and entrepreneurial agency.

This contribution expands the boundaries of entrepreneurship theory by introducing entrepreneurial access as an additional object of inquiry. Rather than focusing exclusively on how entrepreneurs create organizations, researchers may also investigate how organizational systems create entrepreneurs. Such a shift opens opportunities for new research examining entrepreneurial participation, entrepreneurial inclusion, ownership mobility, and entrepreneurial development across diverse organizational contexts.

More broadly, the concept contributes to ongoing efforts to develop more pluralistic and context-sensitive theories of entrepreneurship that better reflect contemporary entrepreneurial realities.

6.2.2 Bridging Entrepreneurship and Franchising Research

A second contribution involves the integration of entrepreneurship and franchising scholarship.

For many years, franchising research has developed as a relatively independent research stream focused primarily on governance mechanisms, agency relationships, organizational control, resource scarcity explanations, and network performance. While these perspectives have generated important insights, they provide only limited explanations regarding the entrepreneurial significance of franchise participation.

At the same time, entrepreneurship scholars have periodically questioned whether franchisees should be considered entrepreneurs. Despite these discussions, franchising has remained largely peripheral within mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

The Structured Entrepreneurship framework provides a theoretical bridge between these domains. Rather than treating franchising solely as a governance arrangement or business format, the framework conceptualizes franchise systems as organizational mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Through capability transfer, legitimacy transfer, and ownership access, franchise systems enable individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activity while benefiting from organizational support structures.

This integration contributes to both literatures. Entrepreneurship scholars gain a broader understanding of entrepreneurial entry, while franchising scholars obtain a stronger theoretical foundation for positioning franchise participation within entrepreneurship research. More importantly, the framework demonstrates that franchising is not an exception to entrepreneurship theory but rather evidence of a broader phenomenon involving organizationally enabled entrepreneurial pathways.

6.2.3 Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Structure and Agency

A third contribution concerns the long-standing relationship between organizational structure and entrepreneurial agency.

Entrepreneurship research has traditionally associated entrepreneurial activity with autonomy, experimentation, innovation, and flexibility, while organizational structures have often been associated with standardization, control, and constraint. This implicit dichotomy has influenced how entrepreneurial behavior is conceptualized and evaluated across numerous studies.

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship challenges this assumption by proposing that organizational structures may function as entrepreneurial enablers rather than entrepreneurial constraints. Structured systems provide resources, knowledge, routines, legitimacy, and capability-development mechanisms that reduce entry barriers while preserving entrepreneurial discretion and responsibility.

Under this perspective, entrepreneurship and structure are not opposing forces. Instead, they represent complementary mechanisms that jointly facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Organizational systems provide the conditions that make entrepreneurial entry possible, while entrepreneurial agency determines how opportunities are interpreted, resources are utilized, and growth is achieved.

This reconceptualization contributes to entrepreneurship theory by demonstrating that entrepreneurial behavior can flourish within structured environments. Entrepreneurial outcomes therefore depend not only on individual initiative but also on the organizational architectures through which entrepreneurial participation occurs.

6.2.4 Introducing Ownership Formation as a Core Entrepreneurial Outcome

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this article is the introduction of ownership formation as a central entrepreneurial outcome.

Existing entrepreneurship theories frequently treat ownership as an implicit consequence of venture creation. Entrepreneurs establish organizations and subsequently become owners. Consequently, theoretical attention has focused primarily on opportunity recognition, venture formation, and organizational growth rather than on the mechanisms through which ownership becomes accessible.

The Structured Entrepreneurship framework proposes an alternative perspective. Ownership formation is conceptualized as an outcome that can be achieved through multiple pathways, including organizationally enabled pathways that facilitate entrepreneurial entry without requiring independent organizational creation.

This contribution introduces ownership access and ownership formation as theoretically meaningful constructs within entrepreneurship research. Ownership is no longer viewed merely as a legal status or residual outcome of venture creation. Instead, ownership becomes a central mechanism through which individuals participate in entrepreneurial activity, assume risk, allocate resources, and engage in value creation.

Recognizing ownership formation as a distinct entrepreneurial outcome broadens the analytical scope of entrepreneurship scholarship. Future research may examine how organizational systems facilitate ownership access, how ownership opportunities are distributed, and how ownership participation influences entrepreneurial development and growth.

The contribution of Structured Entrepreneurship becomes clearer when viewed against the limitations of existing entrepreneurship theories. Table 2 summarizes the major conceptual gaps identified in the literature and illustrates how the proposed framework addresses each limitation.

Table 2. Theoretical Gaps and Contributions of Structured Entrepreneurship

Existing Limitation	Dominant Assumption	Consequence	Contribution
Independent Venture Bias	Entrepreneurship begins with venture creation	Alternative ownership pathways overlooked	Recognizes organizationally enabled entrepreneurial entry
Unstructured Entry Assumption	Entrepreneurs develop capabilities independently	Organizational support mechanisms under-theorized	Explains capability transfer before ownership entry
Structure–Agency Dichotomy	Structure constrains entrepreneurship	Structured contexts seen as less entrepreneurial	Reframes structure as an entrepreneurial enabler
Absence of Ownership Access Perspective	Ownership follows venture creation	Ownership acquisition remains unexplained	Introduces ownership access and ownership formation as theoretical constructs

Source: Developed by the authors based on the conceptual gap analysis presented in this article.

Table 2 demonstrates that the primary contribution of Structured Entrepreneurship is not merely the introduction of a new entrepreneurial category, but the development of a broader theoretical lens capable of explaining how organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial participation. By addressing four major limitations in existing theory, the framework extends entrepreneurship scholarship beyond its traditional focus on venture creation.

By shifting attention toward ownership formation, the framework establishes a foundation for a new stream of entrepreneurship research centered on entrepreneurial access rather than entrepreneurial creation alone.

6.3 Implications for Entrepreneurship Research

The proposed framework creates several opportunities for future theoretical and empirical development.

First, future research can investigate whether entrepreneurial outcomes differ systematically across independent and structured entrepreneurial pathways. Existing studies frequently assume that entrepreneurial processes are relatively homogeneous. Structured Entrepreneurship suggests that different entry pathways may generate different patterns of learning, capability development, risk exposure, resilience, and business growth.

Second, researchers can examine the relative importance of the five dimensions proposed in this article: organizational templates, capability transfer, legitimacy transfer, ownership access, and entrepreneurial agency. Understanding how these dimensions interact may provide deeper insights into entrepreneurial participation and entrepreneurial success.

Third, scholars may explore the applicability of Structured Entrepreneurship beyond franchising. Similar mechanisms may be observed in licensing systems, platform-mediated business models, cooperative ownership arrangements, social franchising systems, entrepreneurial partnerships, and community-based enterprise structures.

Fourth, future research may investigate the role of structured pathways in expanding entrepreneurial participation among individuals facing constraints related to resources, experience, legitimacy, or market access. Such research may contribute to broader discussions concerning entrepreneurial inclusion, entrepreneurial mobility, and access to business ownership.

Collectively, these opportunities suggest that Structured Entrepreneurship represents more than a single conceptual construct. It provides the foundation for a broader research agenda capable of extending entrepreneurship theory in multiple directions.

6.4 Toward a More Inclusive Understanding of Entrepreneurship

The broader implication of this article is that entrepreneurship should not be understood exclusively through the lens of independent startup formation. While venture creation remains a vital component of entrepreneurship, it does not fully capture the diversity of pathways through which entrepreneurial participation occurs in contemporary economies.

Organizational systems increasingly facilitate entrepreneurial entry by providing legitimacy, capabilities, business infrastructures, and ownership opportunities. Ignoring these systems risks producing an incomplete understanding of how entrepreneurship operates in practice. Entrepreneurship scholarship must therefore recognize that entrepreneurial participation may emerge through multiple organizational pathways rather than through organizational creation alone.

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship offers a more inclusive perspective capable of accommodating this diversity. By recognizing organizationally enabled ownership pathways, the framework broadens the scope of entrepreneurship theory while remaining consistent with the field's central concern: understanding how individuals participate in the creation and capture of economic value.

Ultimately, the value of the Structured Entrepreneurship perspective lies not only in explaining franchising or other organizationally embedded forms of entrepreneurship, but also in encouraging a broader reconsideration of how entrepreneurial participation occurs. In doing so, the framework provides a foundation for a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of entrepreneurship in contemporary organizational environments.

7. Implications and Future Research Directions

7.1 Implications for Entrepreneurship Theory

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship carries several important implications for the future development of entrepreneurship theory.

Most notably, it challenges the longstanding tendency to equate entrepreneurship with independent venture creation. Although venture creation remains a central entrepreneurial pathway, the arguments developed in this article suggest that it represents only one mechanism through which entrepreneurial participation occurs. Contemporary entrepreneurial activity increasingly emerges through organizational systems that facilitate access to ownership, capabilities, legitimacy, and business infrastructures.

Recognizing these pathways broadens the conceptual boundaries of entrepreneurship research and encourages scholars to reconsider how entrepreneurship is defined, measured, and theorized. Rather than conceptualizing entrepreneurship exclusively as organizational creation, future research may increasingly view entrepreneurship as participation in value creation through ownership and entrepreneurial agency. Such a perspective allows entrepreneurship theory to accommodate a wider range of entrepreneurial experiences without abandoning its core focus on opportunity exploitation, value creation, and risk assumption.

The concept also contributes to the growing movement toward more pluralistic and context-sensitive theories of entrepreneurship. By acknowledging organizationally enabled entrepreneurial pathways, Structured Entrepreneurship extends existing theories while providing a framework capable of explaining entrepreneurial participation across diverse organizational environments.

7.2 Implications for Franchising and Business-Format Research

The proposed framework also has important implications for franchising and business-format research.

Historically, franchising studies have concentrated on governance mechanisms, contractual relationships, agency theory, organizational control, and network performance. While these perspectives remain valuable, they provide limited explanations regarding the role of franchise systems in entrepreneurial development and ownership formation.

Structured Entrepreneurship offers an alternative perspective by positioning franchise systems as entrepreneurial enabling mechanisms rather than merely organizational expansion tools. Through capability transfer, legitimacy transfer, and ownership access, franchise systems facilitate entrepreneurial participation while reducing barriers associated with independent venture creation.

This perspective encourages franchising scholars to move beyond governance-centered explanations and examine how franchise systems influence entrepreneurial readiness, entrepreneurial learning, entrepreneurial identity formation, ownership mobility, and entrepreneurial growth trajectories. Such a shift may generate a richer understanding of franchising as an entrepreneurial development system rather than solely a business-format arrangement.

More broadly, the framework may also be applied to other business-format systems that combine organizational structure with entrepreneurial participation, thereby extending the scope of future franchising research.

7.3 Implications for Management and Organizational Studies

Structured Entrepreneurship additionally contributes to broader management and organizational scholarship.

Management theories have traditionally emphasized the role of organizational structures in promoting efficiency, coordination, and control. Entrepreneurship theories, by contrast, frequently emphasize flexibility, innovation, experimentation, and autonomy. These perspectives have often been treated as competing explanations of organizational behavior.

The framework proposed in this article suggests a more integrated perspective. Organizational structures can simultaneously provide stability and enable entrepreneurial participation. Through capability-transfer mechanisms, legitimacy structures, and ownership-access pathways, organizations may function as platforms that facilitate entrepreneurial development rather than merely constraining entrepreneurial action.

This insight creates opportunities for future research on organizational design, capability development, organizational learning, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Researchers may investigate how organizations can be intentionally designed to facilitate entrepreneurial participation while maintaining operational consistency and strategic coherence.

Consequently, Structured Entrepreneurship provides a bridge between entrepreneurship research and broader organizational theories concerning learning, capability development, institutional support, and organizational enablement.

7.4 Practical Implications

The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship also carries practical implications for business practitioners, franchise developers, entrepreneurship educators, and policymakers.

1) For Franchise and Business-Format Organizations

Organizations operating franchise, licensing, or business-format systems may benefit from recognizing their role not merely as growth mechanisms but also as entrepreneurial development platforms. Viewing participants as entrepreneurs rather than system operators may encourage greater investment in capability development, mentoring, entrepreneurial learning, and long-term growth support.

Such investments may strengthen participant performance while simultaneously improving system sustainability and network growth.

2) For Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education has traditionally focused on startup creation, opportunity recognition, business planning, and venture development. While these topics remain essential, the Structured Entrepreneurship perspective suggests that entrepreneurship curricula should also address alternative pathways into ownership.

Students may benefit from learning about franchise entrepreneurship, licensing systems, cooperative ownership models, platform-enabled entrepreneurship, and other organizationally supported pathways into entrepreneurial participation. Such an expansion would provide a more comprehensive representation of entrepreneurial opportunities available in contemporary economies.

3) For Policymakers

Entrepreneurship policies frequently focus on startup formation and new venture development. However, entrepreneurial participation may also be enhanced through organizational systems that reduce entry barriers and facilitate access to ownership opportunities.

Policies supporting entrepreneurial capability development, ownership access, and structured entrepreneurial pathways may complement traditional startup support programs. Such initiatives may be particularly valuable for individuals who possess entrepreneurial aspirations but face constraints related to experience, resources, legitimacy, or market access.

7.5 Future Research Directions

Research Direction 1: Scale Development and Construct Validation

The most immediate priority is the development and validation of measurement instruments for Structured Entrepreneurship.

Future studies should operationalize and empirically validate the five dimensions proposed in this article:

1) Organizational Template
2) Capability Transfer
3) Legitimacy Transfer
4) Ownership Access
5) Entrepreneurial Agency

The development of a multidimensional scale would enable empirical testing of the framework and facilitate comparative research across different entrepreneurial contexts.

Research Direction 2: Comparative Entrepreneurial Pathways

Future research should compare structured and independent entrepreneurial pathways.

Several important questions remain unanswered:

1) Do structured entrepreneurs exhibit different growth trajectories than independent entrepreneurs?
2) Does structured entrepreneurial entry influence business survival and resilience?
3) How does entrepreneurial learning differ across entry pathways?
4) Are structured entrepreneurs more likely to persist in entrepreneurship than independent founders?

Addressing these questions would clarify whether entrepreneurial pathways produce systematically different entrepreneurial outcomes.

Research Direction 3: Capability Transfer Mechanisms

Capability transfer represents one of the central mechanisms within the proposed framework.

Future studies should investigate:

1) How entrepreneurial capabilities are transferred through organizational systems.
2) Which support mechanisms are most effective.
3) How organizational learning influences entrepreneurial readiness.
4) Whether capability transfer accelerates entrepreneurial development and growth.

Such research may deepen understanding of how organizations contribute to entrepreneurial formation and performance.

Research Direction 4: Ownership Access and Entrepreneurial Mobility

The concept of ownership access introduces a new line of inquiry concerning entrepreneurial mobility.

Future research may examine:

1) How individuals transition from employment to ownership.
2) What barriers constrain ownership access.
3) How organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial mobility.
4) Whether structured pathways expand entrepreneurial participation among underrepresented groups.

This stream has the potential to connect entrepreneurship research with broader discussions concerning economic mobility, entrepreneurial inclusion, and access to business ownership.

Research Direction 5: Structured Entrepreneurship Beyond Franchising

Although franchising provides the primary empirical inspiration for this article, Structured Entrepreneurship is not limited to franchise systems.

Future studies should explore the applicability of the framework in contexts such as:

1) Licensing systems,
2) Social franchising,
3) Cooperative enterprises,
4) Platform-enabled entrepreneurship,
5) Entrepreneurial partnerships,
6) Community-based enterprise systems,
7) Creator and digital entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Such investigations would help establish the generalizability of the concept and identify context-specific variations in how structured entrepreneurial pathways operate.

Research Direction 6: Boundary Conditions and Contextual Influences

Future research should also examine the boundary conditions of Structured Entrepreneurship.

The effectiveness of structured entrepreneurial pathways may vary across institutional environments, industries, cultures, and economic conditions. Researchers should therefore investigate:

1) When Structured Entrepreneurship is most effective.
2) Which contextual conditions strengthen or weaken its effects.
3) Whether certain industries are more conducive to structured entrepreneurial pathways.
4) How institutional environments influence ownership access and entrepreneurial agency.

Understanding these boundary conditions will improve theoretical precision and strengthen the explanatory power of the framework.

7.6 Toward a New Research Stream

Collectively, the implications and research opportunities identified in this article suggest that Structured Entrepreneurship should be viewed not merely as a single conceptual construct but as the foundation of a broader research stream.

By integrating entrepreneurship, franchising, organizational learning, capability development, legitimacy transfer, ownership access, and entrepreneurial agency, the concept provides a platform for future theoretical and empirical advancement. More importantly, it encourages scholars to reconsider how entrepreneurial participation occurs and to recognize that entrepreneurship may emerge through multiple organizational pathways rather than through independent venture creation alone.

The long-term significance of this perspective lies in its ability to broaden entrepreneurship theory while remaining consistent with the field's central concern: understanding how individuals become participants in the creation, management, and capture of economic value. As entrepreneurship continues to evolve within increasingly complex organizational environments, recognizing structured pathways into ownership may become essential for developing theories that accurately reflect contemporary entrepreneurial realities.

8. Conclussion

This article set out to address an important limitation in contemporary entrepreneurship scholarship: the persistent tendency to equate entrepreneurship with independent venture creation. While existing theories have generated substantial insights into opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intentions, venture emergence, and firm growth, they have devoted comparatively limited attention to how individuals gain access to entrepreneurship through organizationally enabled pathways. As a result, forms of entrepreneurial participation that occur through franchise systems, social franchising arrangements, licensing structures, platform-enabled business models, and other organizationally supported ownership pathways remain insufficiently integrated within mainstream entrepreneurship theory. The objective of this study was therefore to develop a conceptual framework capable of explaining how entrepreneurial entry may occur through pre-established organizational systems that simultaneously provide support structures and preserve entrepreneurial ownership, risk assumption, and agency.

The study contributes to the literature by introducing Structured Entrepreneurship as a novel conceptual lens for understanding entrepreneurial participation beyond the traditional venture-creation paradigm. Unlike existing perspectives that primarily focus on the creation of organizations by entrepreneurs, the proposed framework shifts attention toward the organizational mechanisms through which entrepreneurship becomes accessible. In doing so, the study identifies and addresses four interrelated theoretical limitations within the literature: the independent venture bias, the assumption of unstructured entrepreneurial entry, the structure–agency dichotomy, and the absence of an ownership-access perspective. By integrating insights from entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurial entry research, franchising scholarship, organizational learning, and capability-development literature, the article advances a more inclusive and context-sensitive understanding of entrepreneurial participation that better reflects the realities of contemporary entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Theoretical advancement is achieved through the development of a multidimensional conceptualization of Structured Entrepreneurship consisting of organizational template, capability transfer, legitimacy transfer, ownership access, and entrepreneurial agency. Collectively, these dimensions explain how organizational systems facilitate entrepreneurial participation without eliminating entrepreneurial discretion and responsibility. The proposed framework further extends existing knowledge by positioning capability transfer and entrepreneurial readiness as key developmental mechanisms linking structured organizational systems to ownership formation, while entrepreneurial agency influences the conversion of ownership participation into entrepreneurial growth outcomes. Most importantly, the framework reconceptualizes ownership formation not merely as a consequence of venture creation but as a distinct entrepreneurial outcome that deserves independent theoretical attention. This repositioning broadens the analytical scope of entrepreneurship research and introduces ownership access as a meaningful object of inquiry within the field.

The study offers several important theoretical contributions. First, it expands the conceptual boundaries of entrepreneurship theory by recognizing organizationally enabled ownership pathways as legitimate forms of entrepreneurial participation. Second, it provides an integrative bridge between entrepreneurship and franchising research, demonstrating that franchise systems are not simply governance arrangements or expansion mechanisms but also entrepreneurial development systems. Third, it challenges the conventional assumption that organizational structures necessarily constrain entrepreneurship by showing that structure and agency may operate as complementary forces that jointly facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Fourth, it establishes ownership formation as a theoretically significant entrepreneurial outcome, thereby opening new opportunities for research on entrepreneurial access, ownership mobility, and entrepreneurial inclusion. Together, these contributions provide the foundation for a broader research agenda that extends entrepreneurship scholarship beyond its traditional focus on organizational founding.

The framework also carries meaningful practical implications. For organizations operating franchise, licensing, platform-based, and other business-format systems, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial development should be viewed as a strategic outcome alongside growth and expansion objectives. Investments in capability transfer, mentoring, legitimacy enhancement, and entrepreneurial support mechanisms may strengthen ownership participation and long-term entrepreneurial success. For entrepreneurship educators, the framework highlights the need to expose aspiring entrepreneurs to multiple pathways into ownership rather than focusing exclusively on independent startup formation. For policymakers, the study suggests that initiatives designed to expand entrepreneurship may benefit from supporting structured ownership pathways that lower entry barriers while preserving entrepreneurial incentives and value-creation opportunities.

At the same time, several limitations should be acknowledged. As a conceptual study, the proposed framework has not yet been subjected to empirical testing, and the relationships among its dimensions remain theoretically specified rather than empirically validated. In addition, the framework draws heavily on insights from franchising and related business-format systems, which may limit immediate generalizability across all entrepreneurial contexts. Furthermore, the relative importance of the proposed dimensions may vary across industries, institutional environments, cultural settings, and stages of entrepreneurial development. These limitations, however, should be viewed as opportunities for theoretical refinement and empirical advancement rather than weaknesses of the proposed perspective.

Future research should focus on validating the multidimensional structure of Structured Entrepreneurship, developing reliable measurement scales, and empirically examining the causal relationships proposed in the framework. Comparative studies between structured and independent entrepreneurial pathways could provide valuable insights into differences in entrepreneurial learning, resilience, growth trajectories, and business performance. Additional research should investigate the mechanisms through which capability transfer, legitimacy transfer, and ownership access influence entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial outcomes. Scholars may also explore the applicability of Structured Entrepreneurship across a wider range of contexts, including platform-mediated entrepreneurship, cooperative ownership systems, creator economies, social enterprises, and digitally enabled entrepreneurial ecosystems. Finally, future work should examine contextual contingencies and boundary conditions that influence the effectiveness of structured entrepreneurial pathways in facilitating entrepreneurial participation and ownership formation.

In conclusion, this article argues that entrepreneurship should no longer be understood solely as the process of creating organizations, but also as the process through which individuals gain access to ownership, opportunity, and value creation through organizationally enabled pathways. By introducing Structured Entrepreneurship, the study provides a new theoretical vocabulary for understanding how entrepreneurial participation is facilitated, developed, and expanded within contemporary organizational environments. As entrepreneurial activity increasingly unfolds through interconnected systems, platforms, networks, and business architectures, recognizing structured pathways into entrepreneurship becomes essential for developing more comprehensive, inclusive, and theoretically robust explanations of entrepreneurial participation. The concept of Structured Entrepreneurship therefore represents not only a new framework for understanding entrepreneurial entry, but also a foundation for reimagining how entrepreneurship itself is conceptualized in the twenty-first century.

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Alvarez, S. A., & Barney, J. B. (2007). Discovery and creation: alternative theories of entrepreneurial action. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, *1*(1–2), 11–26. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.4

Autio, E., Kenney, M., Mustar, P., Siegel, D., & Wright, M. (2014). Entrepreneurial innovation: The importance of context. *Research Policy*, *43*(7), 1097–1108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2014.01.015

Baker, T., & Nelson, R. E. (2005). Creating Something from Nothing: Resource Construction through Entrepreneurial Bricolage. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *50*(3), 329–366. https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.3.329

Baron, R. A. (2006). Opportunity Recognition as Pattern Recognition: How Entrepreneurs “Connect the Dots” to Identify New Business Opportunities. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *20*(1), 104–119. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2006.19873412

Bosma, N., Hessels, J., Schutjens, V., Praag, M. Van, & Verheul, I. (2012). Entrepreneurship and role models. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *33*(2), 410–424. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2011.03.004

Castrogiovanni, G. J., Combs, J. G., & Justis, R. T. (2006a). Resource Scarcity and Agency Theory Predictions Concerning the Continued Use of Franchising in Multi-outlet Networks. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *44*(1), 27–44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2006.00152.x

Castrogiovanni, G. J., Combs, J. G., & Justis, R. T. (2006b). Shifting Imperatives: An Integrative View of Resource Scarcity and Agency Reasons for Franchising. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *30*(1), 23–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2006.00108.x

Combs, J. G., Michael, S. C., & Castrogiovanni, G. J. (2004a). Franchising: A Review and Avenues to Greater Theoretical Diversity. *Journal of Management*, *30*(6), 907–931. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.006

Combs, J. G., Michael, S. C., & Castrogiovanni, G. J. (2004b). Franchising: A Review and Avenues to Greater Theoretical Diversity. *Journal of Management*, *30*(6), 907–931. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.006

Croonen, E., van der Bij, H., Perrigot, R., El Akremi, A., & Herrbach, O. (2022). Who wants to be a franchisee? Explaining individual intentions to become franchisees. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, *40*(1), 90–112. https://doi.org/10.1177/02662426211013669

Dada, O. (Lola). (2018). A Model of Entrepreneurial Autonomy in Franchised Outlets: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Evidence. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *20*(2), 206–226. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12123

Dada, O. (Lola). (2023). Curbing franchisee failure: A systematic review of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *61*(4), 1991–2037. https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2021.1883039

Dada, O. (Lola), Watson, A., & Kirby, D. (2015). Entrepreneurial tendencies in franchising: evidence from the UK. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *22*(1), 82–98. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-11-2011-0021

Davidsson, P. (2015). Entrepreneurial opportunities and the entrepreneurship nexus: A re-conceptualization. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *30*(5), 674–695. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2015.01.002

Davidsson, P., & Honig, B. (2003). The role of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *18*(3), 301–331. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(02)00097-6

Delmar, F., & Shane, S. (2004). Legitimating first: organizing activities and the survival of new ventures. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *19*(3), 385–410. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(03)00037-5

Douglas, E. J., & Shepherd, D. A. (2002). Self-Employment as a Career Choice: Attitudes, Entrepreneurial Intentions, and Utility Maximization. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *26*(3), 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/104225870202600305

Eckhardt, J. (2003). Opportunities and Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Management*, *29*(3), 333–349. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(02)00225-8

Folta, T. B., Delmar, F., & Wennberg, K. (2010). Hybrid Entrepreneurship. *Management Science*, *56*(2), 253–269. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1090.1094

Gartner, W. B. (1985). A Conceptual Framework for Describing the Phenomenon of New Venture Creation. *Academy of Management Review*, *10*(4), 696–706. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1985.4279094

Giudici, A., Combs, J. G., Cannatelli, B. L., & Smith, B. R. (2020). Successful Scaling in Social Franchising: The Case of Impact Hub. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *44*(2), 288–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258718801593

Grégoire, D. A., Barr, P. S., & Shepherd, D. A. (2010). Cognitive Processes of Opportunity Recognition: The Role of Structural Alignment. *Organization Science*, *21*(2), 413–431. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0462

Ketchen, D. J., Short, J. C., & Combs, J. G. (2011). Is Franchising Entrepreneurship? Yes, No, and Maybe So. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *35*(3), 583–593. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2011.00442.x

Krueger, N. F., Reilly, M. D., & Carsrud, A. L. (2000). Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *15*(5–6), 411–432. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(98)00033-0

Lafontaine, F. (1992). Agency theory and franchising: Some empirical results. *RAND Journal of Economics*, *2*(23), 263–283.

Liguori, E., Winkler, C., Vanevenhoven, J., Winkel, D., & James, M. (2020). Entrepreneurship as a career choice: intentions, attitudes, and outcome expectations. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, *32*(4), 311–331. https://doi.org/10.1080/08276331.2019.1600857

Marvel, M. R., Davis, J. L., & Sproul, C. R. (2016). Human Capital and Entrepreneurship Research: A Critical Review and Future Directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *40*(3), 599–626. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12136

McMullen, J. S., & Shepherd, D. A. (2006). Entrepreneurial Action And The Role Of Uncertainty In The Theory Of The Entrepreneur. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*(1), 132–152. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.19379628

Mitchell, R. K., Busenitz, L. W., Bird, B., Marie Gaglio, C., McMullen, J. S., Morse, E. A., & Smith, J. B. (2007). The Central Question in Entrepreneurial Cognition Research 2007. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *31*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2007.00161.x

Nanda, R., & Sørensen, J. B. (2010). Workplace Peers and Entrepreneurship. *Management Science*, *56*(7), 1116–1126. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1100.1179

Parker, S. C. (2011). Intrapreneurship or entrepreneurship? *Journal of Business Venturing*, *26*(1), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.07.003

Politis, D. (2005). The Process of Entrepreneurial Learning: A Conceptual Framework. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *29*(4), 399–424. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2005.00091.x

Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and Effectuation: Toward a Theoretical Shift from Economic Inevitability to Entrepreneurial Contingency. *Academy of Management Review*, *26*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4378020

Schlaegel, C., & Koenig, M. (2014). Determinants of Entrepreneurial Intent: A Meta–Analytic Test and Integration of Competing Models. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *38*(2), 291–332. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12087

Shane, S. A., & Hoy, F. (1996). Franchising: A gateway to cooperative entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *11*(5), 325–327. https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026(96)00059-6

Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The Promise of Entrepreneurship as a Field of Research. *Academy of Management Review*, *25*(1), 217–226. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.2791611

Thorgren, S., Nordström, C., & Wincent, J. (2014). Hybrid entrepreneurship: the importance of passion . *Baltic Journal of Management*, *3*(9), 314–329.

Tracey, P., & Jarvis, O. (2007). Toward a Theory of Social Venture Franchising. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *31*(5), 667–685. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2007.00194.x

Watson, A., Dada, O. (Lola), López-Fernández, B., & Perrigot, R. (2020). The influence of entrepreneurial personality on franchisee performance: A cross-cultural analysis. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, *38*(7), 605–628. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242620914520

Welter, F. (2011). Contextualizing Entrepreneurship—Conceptual Challenges and Ways Forward. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *35*(1), 165–184. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00427.x

.