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Managed Ownership Systems: An Integrative Framework of Entrepreneurial Creation, Development, and Expansion

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, and organizational growth research have generated substantial insights into venture creation, firm performance, and scaling processes. However, entrepreneurial ownership remains conceptually fragmented because existing theories primarily emphasize ventures, organizations, or governance rather than ownership as an independent analytical construct. This conceptual paper addresses this gap by proposing the Managed Ownership Systems (MOS) framework, an integrative perspective explaining how entrepreneurial ownership is systematically created, developed, expanded, and sustained through organizational mechanisms. Integrating entrepreneurship theory, franchising research, resource-based and dynamic capability perspectives, resource orchestration theory, organizational learning, and replication research, the framework synthesizes previously disconnected literature into a coherent ownership-centered model. Entrepreneurial ownership is conceptualized as a developmental trajectory comprising four interconnected dimensions: ownership creation, capability development, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability. Six theoretical propositions explain the relationships among these dimensions and the organizational mechanisms driving ownership evolution. The study contributes by elevating entrepreneurial ownership from an implicit outcome to an explicit theoretical construct, offering a unified ownership-centered lens for understanding entrepreneurial development and organizational growth, while establishing a foundation for future empirical research on ownership trajectories and ownership-oriented organizational systems.

Keywords

entrepreneurial ownership; managed ownership systems; franchising; capability development; resource orchestration; organizational scaling

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a critical mechanism for economic development, innovation, organizational renewal, and value creation. Since the emergence of entrepreneurship as a distinct field of scholarly inquiry, researchers have devoted substantial attention to understanding how individuals discover opportunities, mobilize resources, create ventures, and generate economic value (Ireland, 2003; Sarasvathy, 2001; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Over time, this research stream has expanded to encompass entrepreneurial growth, venture scaling, strategic entrepreneurship, and organizational adaptation, producing significant insights into the processes through which entrepreneurial activities contribute to firm performance and competitive advantage (Gilbert *et al.*, 2006; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021; Wiklund *et al.*, 2009).

Despite these advances, contemporary entrepreneurship research continues to evaluate entrepreneurial success primarily through venture-centered outcomes. Venture creation, innovation performance, growth rates, scalability, and competitive advantage remain the dominant indicators used to explain entrepreneurial effectiveness (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Cestino Castilla *et al.*, 2023). While these outcomes are undoubtedly important, they provide only a partial understanding of entrepreneurial development. In particular, the process through which organizational systems systematically create, develop, expand, and sustain entrepreneurial ownership has received comparatively limited theoretical attention. Ownership is frequently assumed to emerge naturally from entrepreneurial action and is therefore treated as an implicit outcome rather than an explicit object of conceptual inquiry.

This omission is increasingly significant because ownership represents one of the most enduring outcomes of entrepreneurial activity. Beyond creating ventures, entrepreneurs establish rights to control resources, make strategic decisions, appropriate value, and participate in future wealth generation (Cestino Castilla *et al.*, 2023). Recent discussions in entrepreneurship and innovation research have also emphasized that entrepreneurial outcomes extend beyond venture performance to include broader forms of economic participation, capability development, and long-term value appropriation (Nambisan *et al.*, 2019; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021). Yet, despite the centrality of ownership to these outcomes, limited effort has been devoted to understanding how ownership opportunities are systematically produced through organizational arrangements.

A similar pattern can be observed within the franchising literature. For several decades, franchising has been examined as an organizational form that facilitates growth, governance efficiency, and resource mobilization (Brickley & Dark, 1987; Lafontaine, 1992; Rubin, 1978). Foundational studies have explained franchising through agency theory, transaction cost economics, and resource scarcity perspectives, emphasizing how franchise arrangements align incentives, reduce monitoring costs, and support organizational expansion (Castrogiovanni *et al.*, 2006; Combs & Ketchen, 1999; Eisenhardt, 1989). Subsequent research has expanded this understanding by investigating franchise governance, plural-form structures, multi-unit ownership, network performance, and franchise capabilities (Bradach, 1997; Dant *et al.*, 2011; Gillis *et al.*, 2020; Perryman & Combs, 2012).

Although these studies have substantially advanced franchising scholarship, their dominant focus remains organizational efficiency and growth. The primary question has traditionally been why firms franchise and how franchise systems can be managed effectively (Combs *et al.*, 2004, 2011). Comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding franchising as a mechanism through which entrepreneurial ownership is intentionally created and expanded. This omission is noteworthy because franchise systems routinely transform employees, managers, and first-time entrepreneurs into business owners through structured organizational arrangements. Rather than merely facilitating market expansion, franchise systems often function as ownership-development platforms that lower barriers to entrepreneurial entry while transferring critical capabilities to novice owners.

Contemporary franchising research increasingly supports this interpretation. Franchise networks rely on codified routines, operational templates, knowledge transfer mechanisms, training systems, and organizational support structures that reduce uncertainty and accelerate entrepreneurial learning (Gorovaia *et al.*, 2023; Pajić *et al.*, 2025). These systems enable individuals with limited entrepreneurial experience to participate in ownership activities under conditions that are considerably less uncertain than those associated with independent venture creation (Gillis *et al.*, 2020; Markin *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, franchising may be viewed not only as a governance arrangement but also as a structured pathway through which entrepreneurial ownership is facilitated, developed, and expanded.

Beyond entrepreneurship and franchising, several adjacent literature streams provide important insights into the organizational mechanisms that support entrepreneurial development. The resource-based view explains how valuable and difficult-to-imitate resources contribute to sustained competitive advantage Barney (1991), while dynamic capability theory emphasizes organizations' abilities to integrate, build, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental change (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Teece *et al.*, 1997). Building on these perspectives, resource orchestration theory highlights the managerial actions required to structure, bundle, and leverage resources effectively to create value (Sirmon *et al.*, 2007, 2011).

Parallel developments have emerged within the organizational learning and knowledge-based literature. Scholars have demonstrated that absorptive capacity, knowledge integration, and capability development are critical drivers of organizational adaptation and long-term performance (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Grant, 1996; Zahra & George, 2002). Research on knowledge transfer further suggests that organizations can systematically diffuse successful routines, practices, and competencies across units and networks (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Szulanski & Jensen, 2006). These insights are particularly relevant because entrepreneurial ownership rarely depends solely on access to opportunities; it also depends on the ability to acquire and apply the capabilities necessary to manage and sustain ownership effectively.

Another important body of literature concerns organizational replication and entrepreneurial scaling. Replication theory suggests that organizations can expand by reproducing proven business templates rather than continuously generating novel innovations (Winter & Szulanski, 2001). Subsequent studies have demonstrated that replication-based growth plays a central role in franchise systems, scalable business models, and multi-unit ownership structures (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Szulanski & Jensen, 2008). More recently, entrepreneurship scholars have argued that scaling should be viewed as a distinct phenomenon requiring dedicated theoretical attention because growth increasingly depends on organizational systems capable of supporting expansion beyond the founder's direct involvement (Genedy *et al.*, 2024; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023).

Although entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, knowledge transfer, and replication research each provide valuable insights, these streams have largely evolved in parallel. Entrepreneurship research focuses on entrepreneurial entry and venture creation. Franchising research emphasizes governance and organizational form. Capability-based perspectives explain resource development and competitive advantage. Replication research examines organizational growth and scalability. Business model research focuses on value creation and value capture mechanisms (Amit & Zott, 2001; Teece, 2010; Zott *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, existing scholarship lacks an integrative framework capable of explaining how these mechanisms collectively contribute to the creation, development, expansion, and sustainability of entrepreneurial ownership.

This fragmentation reflects a deeper theoretical issue concerning units of analysis. Entrepreneurship scholars typically focus on ventures, strategic management scholars emphasize firms, and franchising scholars concentrate on governance arrangements. Ownership itself remains dispersed across these domains and is rarely treated as the focal phenomenon connecting them. As a result, scholarly understanding of ownership trajectories remains fragmented, limiting cumulative theory development regarding how ownership opportunities emerge and evolve across organizational contexts (Foss & Saebi, 2017; George & Bock, 2011; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021).

To address this gap, this paper introduces the concept of Managed Ownership Systems (MOS). We define MOS as organizational systems that intentionally create, develop, scale, and sustain entrepreneurial ownership through structured governance arrangements, capability transfer mechanisms, resource orchestration processes, and replication-based growth strategies. Unlike existing perspectives that focus on isolated organizational functions, MOS provides an integrative framework that links entrepreneurial entry, capability development, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability within a single theoretical model.

This paper makes four contributions. First, it elevates ownership from an implicit outcome to an explicit theoretical construct within entrepreneurship and business management research. Second, it integrates previously fragmented literature streams, including entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, resource orchestration, knowledge transfer, and organizational replication. Third, it extends existing theories of entrepreneurial growth by emphasizing ownership development and ownership expansion rather than firm growth alone. Finally, it develops a novel conceptual framework that provides a foundation for future empirical research on entrepreneurial development, scalable ownership structures, franchise systems, and ownership-centered organizational growth.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations underpinning entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, and replication-based growth. The paper then identifies the conceptual gaps motivating the development of the Managed Ownership Systems framework. Building upon this analysis, a new integrative framework and a set of theoretical propositions are proposed. The paper concludes by discussing theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and future research directions.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Entrepreneurship as Ownership Formation

Entrepreneurship research has traditionally focused on how individuals discover, create, and exploit opportunities to generate new economic activities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Sarasvathy, 2001; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Across these perspectives, entrepreneurship is generally conceptualized as a process that transforms opportunities into ventures and ventures into economic value. Consequently, entrepreneurial success has been predominantly evaluated through venture creation, growth, innovation, and performance outcomes (Gilbert *et al.*, 2006; Ireland, 2003; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021).

While this perspective has generated substantial insights, it has also produced a venture-centered bias. Existing theories explain how ventures emerge and grow, yet provide relatively limited explanations regarding how entrepreneurial ownership itself is created, developed, and sustained. Ownership is frequently assumed to exist once a venture is established and therefore remains analytically secondary to the venture itself.

This omission is theoretically significant because ownership constitutes the mechanism through which entrepreneurs obtain control rights, decision authority, and claims over future value creation (Cestino Castilla *et al.*, 2023). From this perspective, entrepreneurship may be interpreted not only as a process of venture creation but also as a process of ownership formation. Such a shift expands the analytical focus from organizational outcomes to the mechanisms that enable individuals to acquire and maintain entrepreneurial positions.

Recent discussions concerning entrepreneurial participation, ecosystem development, and inclusive entrepreneurship further reinforce the importance of examining ownership trajectories rather than venture outcomes alone (Nambisan *et al.*, 2019; Shepherd & Gruber, 2021). However, existing entrepreneurship theories provide limited guidance regarding how ownership opportunities are systematically generated through organizational arrangements.

Accordingly, entrepreneurship theory provides an essential starting point for understanding ownership formation, yet it remains insufficient for explaining how ownership is intentionally facilitated, developed, and expanded within structured organizational systems. This limitation establishes the first theoretical foundation for MOS.

2.2 Franchising as Structured Entrepreneurship

If entrepreneurship explains why ownership emerges, franchising helps explain how ownership can be systematically facilitated. Traditional franchising research has primarily relied on agency theory, transaction cost economics, and resource scarcity perspectives to explain why firms adopt franchise arrangements (Brickley & Dark, 1987; Castrogiovanni *et al.*, 2006; Lafontaine, 1992; Rubin, 1978).

These perspectives collectively portray franchising as a governance solution that aligns incentives, reduces monitoring costs, mobilizes resources, and supports organizational expansion (Combs *et al.*, 2004; Combs & Ketchen, 1999). Although highly influential, these explanations focus predominantly on organizational efficiency and growth rather than entrepreneurial development.

Viewed through an ownership lens, however, franchising represents more than a governance arrangement. Franchise systems create structured pathways through which individuals can enter entrepreneurship without independently developing business concepts, operating systems, brands, or market legitimacy. In contrast to traditional entrepreneurial entry, which often requires substantial uncertainty-bearing and resource mobilization, franchise systems embed ownership opportunities within established organizational architectures.

This distinction is important because it highlights the role of organizational design in reducing entrepreneurial barriers. Franchise systems provide codified routines, operational knowledge, training programs, monitoring mechanisms, and network support structures that facilitate ownership acquisition and development (Combs *et al.*, 2011; Gillis *et al.*, 2020; Gorovaia *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, franchising can be conceptualized as a form of structured entrepreneurship in which ownership creation is intentionally supported by organizational systems.

Recent studies further suggest that franchise networks function as capability-building environments that accelerate entrepreneurial learning and facilitate ownership progression (Markin *et al.*, 2024; Pajić *et al.*, 2025). This interpretation broadens the theoretical relevance of franchising beyond governance and positions it as an important mechanism through which entrepreneurial ownership can be created and expanded.

Accordingly, franchising provides the second building block of MOS by demonstrating how organizational systems can intentionally facilitate entrepreneurial entry and ownership creation.

2.3 Capability Development and Resource Orchestration

Ownership access alone does not ensure entrepreneurial success. Ownership must be accompanied by the capabilities necessary to coordinate resources, make strategic decisions, and adapt to changing conditions. This insight is reflected in the resource-based view (RBV), which argues that sustainable advantage depends on valuable and difficult-to-imitate resources (Barney, 1991).

Subsequent developments shifted attention from resource possession toward capability deployment. Dynamic capability theory argues that organizations must continuously integrate, reconfigure, and renew resources to maintain competitiveness under changing environmental conditions (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Teece *et al.*, 1997). Resource orchestration theory extends this logic further by emphasizing the managerial actions through which resources are structured, bundled, and leveraged to create value (Sirmon *et al.*, 2007, 2011).

A complementary perspective emerges from the knowledge-based view and organizational learning literature. Scholars have consistently shown that absorptive capacity, knowledge integration, and organizational learning play central roles in capability development (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Grant, 1996; Zahra & George, 2002). Knowledge transfer mechanisms facilitate the diffusion of routines, practices, and competencies across organizational units, thereby supporting adaptation and performance improvement (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Szulanski & Jensen, 2006).

Although these perspectives explain how capabilities are developed and deployed, they have rarely been linked explicitly to ownership development. Capabilities are typically examined as determinants of organizational performance rather than as mechanisms that enable individuals to sustain and expand ownership positions.

This distinction is important because ownership sustainability depends heavily on capability accumulation. Recent research on entrepreneurial scaling suggests that growth challenges frequently emerge from managerial and organizational limitations rather than opportunity constraints (Genedy *et al.*, 2024; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, ownership development requires more than access to entrepreneurial opportunities; it requires systematic capability-building processes that transform ownership access into sustainable entrepreneurial participation.

Accordingly, capability development and resource orchestration constitute the third building block of MOS by explaining how ownership opportunities are converted into viable and sustainable ownership outcomes.

2.4 Replication and Scaling as Ownership Expansion Mechanisms

The final theoretical foundation concerns replication and scaling. Traditional theories of organizational growth frequently emphasize innovation, diversification, and market expansion as primary growth mechanisms. However, a growing body of literature argues that organizations can also grow through replication—the systematic reproduction of proven organizational templates across multiple units and contexts (Winter & Szulanski, 2001).

Replication depends upon the transferability of organizational knowledge and routines. Firms possessing strong combinative capabilities are better able to reproduce successful practices and maintain consistency across geographically dispersed operations (Kogut & Zander, 1992). As a result, replication enables scalable growth while reducing the uncertainty associated with continuous innovation.

Franchise systems represent one of the most visible manifestations of replication-based growth. Business formats, operational routines, and governance structures are repeatedly transferred across units, creating both organizational expansion and opportunities for entrepreneurial participation (Szulanski & Jensen, 2008). Replication therefore performs a dual function: it supports firm growth while simultaneously increasing ownership opportunities.

Recent scholarship has similarly emphasized scaling as a distinct organizational phenomenon requiring dedicated theoretical attention (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022). Scaling differs from growth because it requires organizational systems capable of supporting expansion without proportional increases in managerial complexity. Founder role evolution, capability accumulation, and organizational design become increasingly important as organizations expand (Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023).

Despite these insights, existing scaling and replication theories remain largely firm-centered. Their primary concern is organizational growth rather than ownership expansion. Consequently, they provide limited explanations regarding how replication systems systematically generate new ownership opportunities or facilitate ownership portfolio development.

From an ownership perspective, replication serves as a mechanism through which entrepreneurial participation can be expanded beyond individual ventures. Every replicated organizational unit potentially represents a new ownership position, while multi-unit arrangements enable existing owners to increase the scale of their ownership activities (Perryman & Combs, 2012).

Accordingly, replication and scaling provide the fourth building block of MOS by explaining how ownership can be systematically expanded through organizational growth mechanisms.

Taken together, these four theoretical foundations reveal a common pattern. Entrepreneurship explains ownership entry, franchising explains structured ownership access, capability development explains ownership maturation, and replication explains ownership expansion. However, these perspectives have traditionally evolved in isolation. The absence of an integrative framework linking these mechanisms creates a significant theoretical gap. Managed Ownership Systems addresses this deficiency by positioning ownership as the central outcome connecting entrepreneurial entry, capability development, scaling, and long-term sustainability.

The preceding review demonstrates that entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, and replication research each explain important aspects of entrepreneurial development. However, these perspectives have evolved largely in isolation, resulting in fragmented explanations of ownership formation, development, and expansion. To address this fragmentation, the present study integrates these complementary theoretical foundations into a unified ownership-centered framework. Figure 1 illustrates how these previously disconnected perspectives collectively contribute to the development of Managed Ownership Systems.

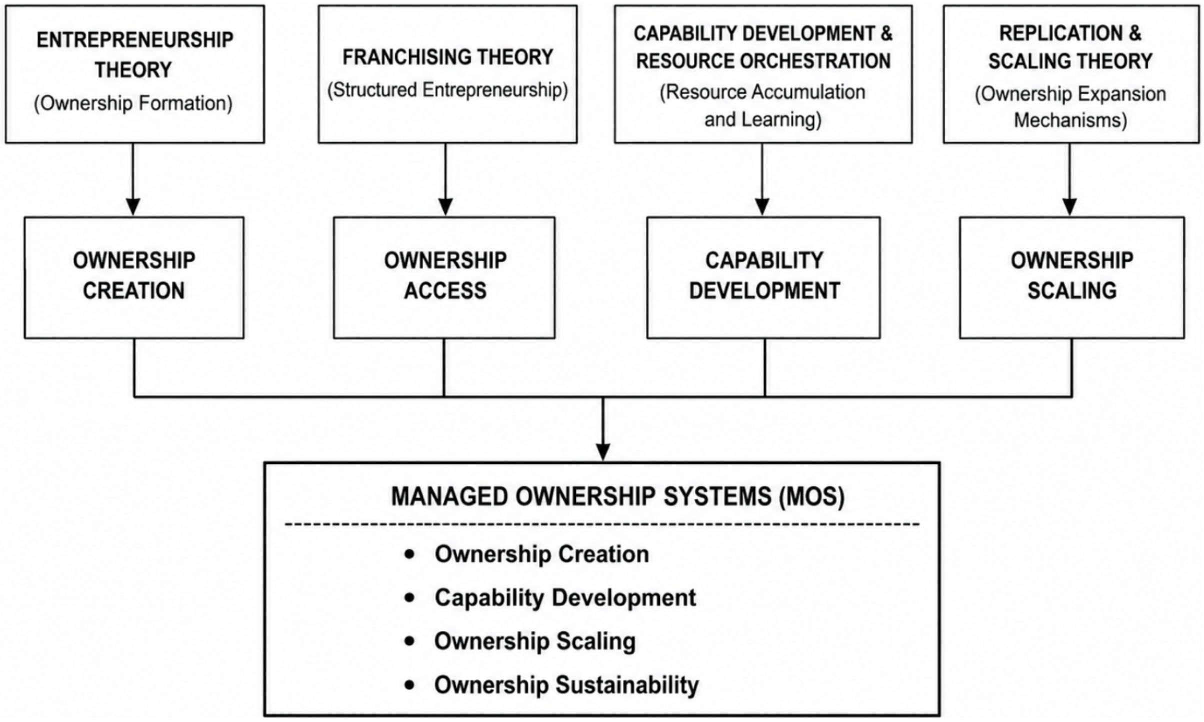

Figure 1. Theoretical Integration Underlying Managed Ownership Systems
Source: Authors' conceptualization based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Barney (1991), Winter and Szulanski (2001), Combs et al. (2004), Sirmon et al. (2011), Shepherd et al. (2021), and Foss and Klein (2023).

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical architecture underlying Managed Ownership Systems. Entrepreneurship theory provides the foundation for understanding ownership creation, while franchising theory explains how organizational systems facilitate structured ownership access. Capability development and resource orchestration perspectives explain how ownership participants acquire and deploy competencies necessary for sustainable entrepreneurial participation. Replication and scaling theories explain how ownership can be expanded through organizational growth mechanisms. By integrating these four theoretical streams, MOS establishes ownership as the central phenomenon connecting entrepreneurial entry, development, expansion, and long-term sustainability.

3. Conceptual Gap Analysis

The preceding review demonstrates that entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, and replication research have generated substantial insights into entrepreneurial activity and organizational growth. However, these literature streams have largely evolved independently, resulting in fragmented explanations of how entrepreneurial ownership emerges and develops over time. While each perspective explains an important component of entrepreneurial development, none provides a comprehensive account of how ownership is systematically created, developed, expanded, and sustained through organizational systems.

A central limitation of entrepreneurship research is its dominant focus on venture-centered outcomes. Existing theories explain how individuals identify opportunities, launch ventures, and achieve growth (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021). However, ownership itself is generally treated as an implicit consequence of entrepreneurial action rather than a focal outcome requiring dedicated theoretical explanation. As a result, entrepreneurship scholarship offers limited insight into how organizational arrangements intentionally facilitate ownership formation and long-term ownership development.

Franchising research addresses part of this limitation by examining organizational structures that facilitate entrepreneurial participation. Yet the dominant concern of franchising scholarship remains governance efficiency, incentive alignment, resource mobilization, and network performance (Combs *et al.*, 2004; Dant *et al.*, 2011; Gillis *et al.*, 2020). Although franchise systems routinely create ownership opportunities, existing explanations rarely conceptualize ownership creation and ownership progression as the primary phenomena of interest. Consequently, franchising research explains how ownership is governed but provides less insight into how ownership evolves.

A similar pattern can be observed within capability-based and organizational learning perspectives. Resource-based theory, dynamic capability theory, and resource orchestration theory explain how organizations develop and deploy resources to achieve competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Sirmon *et al.*, 2011; Teece *et al.*, 1997). Likewise, knowledge transfer research explains how capabilities are disseminated and accumulated across organizational contexts (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Zahra & George, 2002). However, these perspectives primarily focus on organizational performance and adaptation. They provide limited explanations regarding how capability development contributes to ownership progression, ownership expansion, and ownership sustainability.

Replication and scaling research exhibit a similar limitation. Existing studies have demonstrated how organizations grow by reproducing successful business models and organizational templates (Szulanski & Jensen, 2008; Winter & Szulanski, 2001). More recent work highlights scaling as a distinct organizational challenge involving capability development, founder evolution, and structural adaptation (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023). Nevertheless, the dominant unit of analysis remains the organization rather than the owner. Consequently, existing theories explain organizational expansion more effectively than ownership expansion.

Taken together, these observations reveal a broader problem of theoretical fragmentation. Entrepreneurship research explains entrepreneurial entry. Franchising research explains structured access to entrepreneurship. Capability-based perspectives explain capability development and adaptation. Replication research explains growth and scalability. Yet ownership—the phenomenon connecting these processes—remains theoretically dispersed across multiple domains.

More importantly, existing literature lacks an explanation of how these mechanisms interact as part of a developmental ownership trajectory. In practice, entrepreneurial ownership rarely emerges through a single event. Individuals gain access to ownership opportunities, acquire capabilities necessary to manage ownership, expand ownership through growth and replication mechanisms, and sustain ownership through adaptation and resource orchestration. Existing theories explain isolated stages of this process but not the process as a whole.

This gap reflects a deeper issue concerning the dominant units of analysis employed across entrepreneurship and management research. Entrepreneurship scholars typically focus on ventures, strategic management scholars focus on firms, and franchising scholars focus on governance structures (Foss & Saebi, 2017; George & Bock, 2011). Ownership remains embedded within these perspectives but rarely serves as the central analytical construct. As a result, cumulative theory development concerning ownership trajectories remains limited.

Accordingly, a significant theoretical opportunity exists to develop an ownership-centered framework capable of integrating these fragmented explanations. Such a framework should explain not only how ownership is accessed, but also how ownership is developed, expanded, and sustained through organizational systems. Addressing this deficiency requires a shift from firm-centered and venture-centered explanations toward a process-oriented understanding of ownership development.

To address this gap, the present study proposes the MOS framework. MOS integrates entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, resource orchestration, and replication theory into a unified explanation of how organizations intentionally create, develop, scale, and sustain entrepreneurial ownership. By positioning ownership as the central outcome linking these previously disconnected research streams, MOS provides a new conceptual lens for understanding entrepreneurial development and organizational growth.

To clarify the theoretical fragmentation identified in the preceding discussion, Table 1 summarizes the dominant literature streams that contribute to understanding entrepreneurial development. Although each perspective offers valuable insights, they focus on different units of analysis and outcomes, leaving entrepreneurial ownership insufficiently theorized as an integrated developmental phenomenon.

Table 1. Fragmentation of Existing Literature and the Need for Managed Ownership Systems

Literature Stream	Primary Focus	Unit of Analysis	Main Contribution	Missing Ownership Perspective
Entrepreneurship	Venture creation and opportunity exploitation	Individual / Venture	Explains entrepreneurial entry and venture formation	Ownership progression
Franchising	Governance, incentives, and network growth	Franchise system / Firm	Explains structured entrepreneurial access	Ownership development
Capability Development	Learning, knowledge acquisition, and adaptation	Firm / Organization	Explains capability accumulation and performance improvement	Ownership capability formation
Replication and Scaling	Organizational expansion and growth	Organization	Explains replication-based growth and scalability	Ownership expansion
Business Model Innovation	Value creation, delivery, and capture	Firm	Explains adaptation and long-term competitiveness	Ownership sustainability
Managed Ownership Systems (MOS)	Ownership development trajectory	Multi-level system	Integrates ownership creation, development, scaling, and sustainability	—

Source: Developed by the authors based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Barney (1991), Winter and Szulanski (2001), Combs et al. (2004), Teece (2010), Foss and Saebi (2017), Shepherd et al. (2021), and Foss and Klein (2023).

Table 1 demonstrates that existing literature streams provide valuable yet partial explanations of entrepreneurial development. Entrepreneurship research emphasizes venture creation, franchising focuses on governance and access, capability perspectives explain learning and adaptation, while replication and business model research address growth and sustainability. However, ownership remains dispersed across these perspectives. The MOS framework addresses this fragmentation by positioning ownership as the central outcome linking entrepreneurial entry, development, expansion, and long-term sustainability.

4. The Managed Ownership Systems Framework

The conceptual gap identified in the preceding section suggests that existing theories explain important components of entrepreneurial development but fail to provide an integrated explanation of ownership trajectories. Entrepreneurship research explains entrepreneurial entry, franchising research explains structured access to ownership, capability-based perspectives explain learning and adaptation, and replication research explains organizational growth. However, no existing framework explains how these mechanisms collectively contribute to the creation, development, expansion, and sustainability of entrepreneurial ownership.

To address this limitation, this paper proposes the concept of Managed Ownership Systems (MOS). MOS is defined as:

> *organizational systems that intentionally create, develop, scale, and sustain entrepreneurial ownership through structured governance arrangements, capability transfer mechanisms, resource orchestration processes, and replication-based growth strategies.*

The central premise of MOS is that ownership should not be viewed as a static legal condition or a by-product of entrepreneurial activity. Rather, ownership represents a developmental process that unfolds through a sequence of interconnected organizational mechanisms. From this perspective, entrepreneurial ownership is neither purely individual nor purely organizational. Instead, it emerges from the interaction between individual agency and organizational systems that facilitate ownership access, capability accumulation, growth, and adaptation.

Unlike existing perspectives that focus on isolated stages of entrepreneurial development, MOS conceptualizes ownership as a cumulative trajectory. This process-oriented view aligns with recent calls for greater attention to entrepreneurial pathways, scaling processes, and capability evolution rather than discrete entrepreneurial events (Andreini *et al.*, 2022; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023).

4.1 The Developmental Logic of Managed Ownership Systems

The MOS framework comprises four interdependent dimensions: Ownership Creation, Capability Development, Ownership Scaling, and Ownership Sustainability, that collectively explain how entrepreneurial ownership is initiated, developed, expanded, and maintained over time. Rather than representing isolated stages, these dimensions function as mutually reinforcing mechanisms that shape the trajectory of ownership development, enabling individuals to access entrepreneurial opportunities, accumulate capabilities, scale ownership activities, and sustain long-term participation within ownership-based organizational systems.

The Managed Ownership Systems framework conceptualizes entrepreneurial ownership as a developmental process rather than a static outcome. To clarify the internal structure of the framework, Table 2 summarizes the four core dimensions of MOS, their theoretical foundations, organizational mechanisms, and the ownership outcomes generated through each stage of ownership development.

Table 2. Core Dimensions of Managed Ownership Systems

MOS Dimension	Definition	Theoretical Foundation	Organizational Mechanism	Primary Ownership Outcome
Ownership Creation	The process through which individuals gain access to entrepreneurial ownership opportunities through structured organizational arrangements.	Entrepreneurship Theory; Franchising Theory	Opportunity access, governance structures, legitimacy provision, entrepreneurial entry support	Ownership Entry

MOS Dimension	Definition	Theoretical Foundation	Organizational Mechanism	Primary Ownership Outcome
Capability Development	The accumulation of managerial, operational, and strategic competencies necessary to manage ownership effectively.	Resource-Based View; Dynamic Capability Theory; Organizational Learning	Knowledge transfer, training systems, mentoring, resource orchestration, capability building	Ownership Competence
Ownership Scaling	The expansion of entrepreneurial ownership through replication, multi-unit development, and portfolio growth mechanisms.	Replication Theory; Organizational Growth Theory	Business format replication, routine transfer, multi-unit expansion, portfolio development	Ownership Expansion
Ownership Sustainability	The ability of owners and ownership systems to maintain viability, adaptability, and long-term value creation over time.	Dynamic Capability Theory; Business Model Innovation; Resource Orchestration Theory	Adaptation, business model renewal, capability reconfiguration, strategic resource deployment	Long-Term Ownership Viability

Source: Developed by the authors based on Barney (1991), Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Winter and Szulanski (2001), Sirmon et al. (2011), Shepherd et al. (2021), Foss and Klein (2023), and related literature.

Table 2 demonstrates that entrepreneurial ownership develops through a sequence of interrelated mechanisms rather than a single entrepreneurial event. Ownership creation provides access to entrepreneurial participation, capability development transforms access into competence, ownership scaling expands participation through growth mechanisms, and ownership sustainability ensures long-term viability. Together, these dimensions establish a comprehensive framework for understanding ownership trajectories across organizational contexts.

While Table 2 clarifies the core dimensions of Managed Ownership Systems, it does not fully capture the dynamic relationships among them..

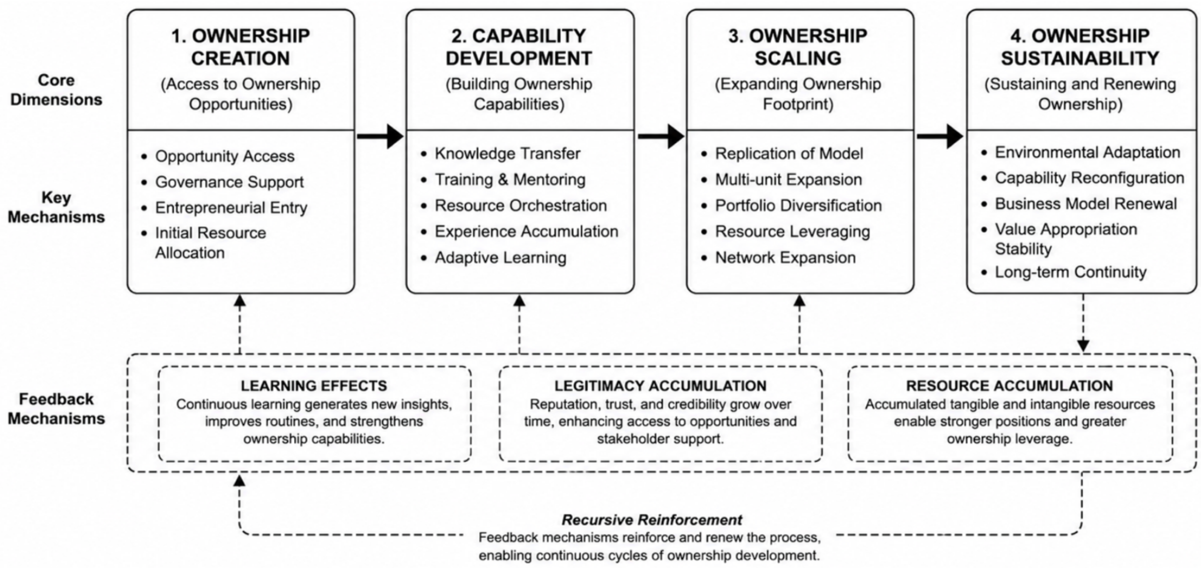

Figure 2. Managed Ownership Systems Framework

Source: Authors' conceptualization based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Barney (1991), Winter and Szulanski (2001), Sirmon et al. (2011), Shepherd and Patzelt (2022), Van Lancker et al. (2023), and Foss and Klein (2023).

Figure 2 illustrates the developmental logic of Managed Ownership Systems. Entrepreneurial ownership begins with access to ownership opportunities, progresses through capability accumulation, expands through replication and scaling mechanisms, and is sustained through adaptation and resource renewal. Importantly, ownership sustainability generates learning, legitimacy, and resource accumulation that reinforce future ownership creation. Consequently, MOS conceptualizes entrepreneurial ownership as a recursive developmental process rather than a discrete entrepreneurial event.

Unlike linear stage models, MOS assumes that these dimensions are mutually reinforcing. Progression from one stage increases the likelihood of advancement to subsequent stages, while successful ownership sustainability strengthens future ownership creation through organizational learning, legitimacy accumulation, and replication effects.

Consequently, ownership development is conceptualized as a recursive process rather than a one-time entrepreneurial event.

4.2 Ownership Creation

Ownership Creation refers to the organizational mechanisms through which individuals gain access to entrepreneurial opportunities and ownership positions.

Traditional entrepreneurship theories assume that entrepreneurial entry occurs through opportunity recognition and venture creation (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). MOS extends this logic by proposing that ownership opportunities are frequently embedded within organizational structures rather than emerging solely from individual opportunity discovery.

Structured organizational arrangements such as franchise systems, licensing networks, and other business-format systems reduce barriers to entrepreneurial entry by providing legitimacy, established routines, governance structures, and operational support. These mechanisms lower uncertainty while simultaneously preserving entrepreneurial incentives.

The theoretical significance of Ownership Creation lies in shifting attention from opportunity discovery to opportunity access. While opportunities may exist within markets, ownership opportunities often depend upon organizational systems capable of making those opportunities accessible to prospective owners.

Ownership Creation therefore represents the entry mechanism through which individuals become participants in entrepreneurial ownership systems.

4.3 Capability Development

Access to ownership does not automatically generate entrepreneurial success. Individuals must acquire the capabilities necessary to manage resources, coordinate activities, and adapt to evolving business environments.

Capability Development refers to the processes through which ownership participants accumulate managerial competencies, operational knowledge, strategic decision-making skills, and learning capabilities.

This dimension integrates insights from the resource-based view, dynamic capability theory, organizational learning, and resource orchestration theory (Barney, 1991; Sirmon *et al.*, 2011; Teece *et al.*, 1997). Collectively, these perspectives suggest that sustained performance depends not only on resource possession but also on the ability to deploy and continuously reconfigure resources.

MOS extends these arguments by proposing that capability accumulation functions as a developmental mechanism for ownership progression. Ownership opportunities become viable only when individuals possess the competencies necessary to utilize and expand them effectively.

Knowledge transfer mechanisms play a central role in this process. Training systems, mentoring relationships, codified routines, and organizational learning structures facilitate the transfer of capabilities from organizations to owners (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Gorovaia *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, capability development serves as the bridge between ownership access and productive ownership participation.

4.4 Ownership Scaling

The third dimension concerns the expansion of ownership beyond initial entrepreneurial entry.

Existing growth theories primarily conceptualize scaling as an organizational phenomenon characterized by increasing size, market reach, or operational capacity (Gilbert *et al.*, 2006; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022). MOS introduces a complementary perspective by focusing on ownership scaling.

Ownership Scaling refers to the process through which entrepreneurial ownership expands through replication, multi-unit development, portfolio growth, and related expansion mechanisms.

The theoretical foundation for this dimension derives from replication theory and organizational growth research (Szulanski & Jensen, 2008; Winter & Szulanski, 2001). These perspectives demonstrate that organizational expansion frequently depends upon the reproduction of proven business templates and transferable routines.

MOS argues that replication generates two simultaneous outcomes. First, it increases organizational scale. Second, it expands ownership opportunities. New organizational units create additional ownership positions, while existing owners may leverage accumulated capabilities to acquire and manage multiple units.

Consequently, ownership scaling represents a distinct outcome that cannot be fully captured through traditional measures of firm growth. Growth may occur without ownership expansion, and ownership expansion may occur without proportional organizational growth. MOS therefore identifies ownership scaling as an independent dimension of entrepreneurial development.

4.5 Ownership Sustainability

The final dimension concerns the long-term viability of entrepreneurial ownership.

Ownership Sustainability refers to the capacity of owners and ownership systems to maintain competitiveness, adaptability, and economic viability over time.

This dimension integrates insights from business model research, dynamic capability theory, and resource orchestration perspectives (Foss & Saebi, 2017; Ilyas *et al.*, 2024; Teece, 2010). These literatures consistently suggest that long-term success depends upon continuous adaptation rather than the preservation of existing routines.

MOS extends this logic by proposing that sustainable ownership requires ongoing capability renewal, resource reconfiguration, and business model adaptation. Ownership structures that fail to adapt to changing competitive conditions become increasingly vulnerable to decline, regardless of their initial success.

Importantly, ownership sustainability extends beyond financial survival. It encompasses the ability of ownership systems to maintain relevance, create value, and support continued entrepreneurial participation across changing environmental conditions.

Ownership Sustainability therefore represents the culmination of the ownership development process while simultaneously creating the conditions for future ownership creation.

4.6 Integrating the Four Dimensions

The principal contribution of MOS lies not in the individual dimensions themselves but in their integration.

Entrepreneurship theory explains ownership entry but provides limited explanations regarding ownership progression. Capability-based perspectives explain learning and adaptation but do not explicitly address ownership development. Replication theory explains growth but largely overlooks ownership expansion. Business model and resource orchestration perspectives explain sustainability yet rarely connect adaptation to ownership outcomes.

MOS integrates these fragmented explanations into a single developmental framework.

Within the framework, Ownership Creation provides access to entrepreneurial participation. Capability Development transforms access into competence. Ownership Scaling transforms competence into expansion. Ownership Sustainability transforms expansion into long-term viability. Together, these dimensions explain how ownership evolves from an initial opportunity into a sustainable entrepreneurial trajectory.

By positioning ownership as the central outcome linking entrepreneurial entry, capability accumulation, scaling, and adaptation, MOS shifts attention from firms and ventures toward ownership systems themselves. In doing so, the framework offers a new conceptual lens through which entrepreneurial development, organizational growth, and scalable ownership structures can be understood and investigated.

5. Proposition Development

The MOS framework conceptualizes entrepreneurial ownership as a developmental process rather than a discrete entrepreneurial event. Building upon the theoretical foundations presented earlier, the framework proposes that ownership emerges through a sequence of interconnected mechanisms involving access, capability accumulation, expansion, and long-term adaptation. The propositions developed below articulate the causal relationships that connect these dimensions and establish the theoretical architecture of MOS.

5.1 Ownership Creation as the Foundation of Entrepreneurial Participation

The first stage of MOS concerns ownership creation. Traditional entrepreneurship theories emphasize opportunity recognition and venture creation as primary drivers of entrepreneurial entry (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). However, the MOS perspective suggests that entrepreneurial participation is frequently shaped by organizational systems that reduce barriers to entry and facilitate access to ownership opportunities.

Structured entrepreneurial systems provide legitimacy, operational support, governance arrangements, and established business formats that lower uncertainty and increase accessibility. Such mechanisms reduce the resource and knowledge requirements associated with entrepreneurial entry, thereby enabling broader participation in ownership activities (Combs *et al.*, 2011; Gillis *et al.*, 2020).

From an ownership-centered perspective, entrepreneurial participation is therefore not solely a function of individual opportunity recognition but also a function of access to organizational pathways that facilitate ownership acquisition.

Proposition 1 (P1).
Structured organizational mechanisms that reduce entrepreneurial entry barriers positively influence ownership creation.

5.2 Capability Development as the Mechanism of Ownership Progression

Although ownership access creates entrepreneurial participation, ownership alone does not ensure productive entrepreneurial engagement. Individuals must develop the competencies necessary to manage resources, coordinate activities, and respond to environmental challenges.

Capability development represents the mechanism through which ownership opportunities are transformed into viable ownership positions. Organizational learning research suggests that knowledge transfer, training, mentoring, and absorptive capacity development enhance individuals' abilities to acquire and apply relevant knowledge (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Zahra & George, 2002). Similarly, resource orchestration theory emphasizes that value creation depends on the effective deployment and integration of resources rather than resource possession alone (Sirmon *et al.*, 2011).

Within MOS, capability accumulation serves as the developmental bridge between ownership access and ownership effectiveness. Owners who acquire greater managerial and operational capabilities are more likely to successfully utilize ownership opportunities and sustain entrepreneurial participation.

Proposition 2 (P2).
Capability transfer mechanisms positively influence ownership development by strengthening the competencies required for effective entrepreneurial participation.

5.3 Capability Development and Ownership Scaling

The MOS framework further proposes that capability development serves not only as a mechanism of ownership effectiveness but also as a prerequisite for ownership expansion.

Ownership scaling introduces greater organizational complexity. As ownership portfolios expand, individuals must coordinate larger resource bases, oversee multiple activities, and manage increasingly complex organizational arrangements. Recent research on entrepreneurial scaling suggests that growth challenges are frequently driven by managerial and organizational capability constraints rather than by limitations in market opportunities (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023).

Accordingly, capability accumulation creates the foundation for ownership growth. Owners who possess stronger managerial, strategic, and organizational capabilities are better positioned to pursue expansion opportunities while maintaining operational effectiveness.

Proposition 3 (P3).
Higher levels of capability development positively influence ownership scaling.

5.4 Replication as a Mechanism of Ownership Expansion

While capability development enables expansion, replication mechanisms provide the organizational infrastructure through which ownership scaling occurs.

Replication theory suggests that organizations can expand efficiently by reproducing proven routines, business formats, and organizational templates across multiple units and locations (Winter & Szulanski, 2001). Such mechanisms reduce uncertainty because expansion relies on validated practices rather than continuous experimentation.

From the perspective of MOS, replication generates a dual effect. It supports organizational growth while simultaneously creating opportunities for ownership expansion. New units create new ownership positions, whereas existing owners may leverage replication systems to expand their ownership portfolios. Consequently, replication transforms ownership scaling from an isolated entrepreneurial effort into a structured organizational process.

Proposition 4 (P4).
Effective replication mechanisms positively influence ownership scaling by increasing the transferability and scalability of entrepreneurial ownership opportunities.

5.5 Resource Orchestration and Ownership Sustainability

Ownership expansion does not guarantee long-term viability. As ownership systems mature, sustaining competitiveness becomes increasingly dependent on the effective coordination and renewal of resources.

Resource orchestration theory argues that managers create value by continuously structuring, bundling, and leveraging resources in response to changing environmental conditions (Sirmon *et al.*, 2007, 2011). Dynamic capability research similarly emphasizes the importance of adaptation and resource reconfiguration for sustaining organizational effectiveness over time (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece *et al.*, 1997).

Within MOS, resource orchestration functions as a stabilizing mechanism that enables ownership systems to maintain effectiveness despite environmental uncertainty. Owners capable of continuously realigning resources are more likely to preserve competitiveness and sustain entrepreneurial participation over time.

Proposition 5 (P5).
Resource orchestration capabilities positively influence ownership sustainability.

5.6 Business Model Adaptability and Ownership Sustainability

The final stage of MOS concerns the ability of ownership systems to remain viable under changing environmental conditions.

Business model research suggests that organizational sustainability depends on the continuous alignment of value creation, value delivery, and value capture mechanisms with evolving market conditions (Amit & Zott, 2001; Teece, 2010). More recent studies further demonstrate that business model adaptability enhances long-term competitiveness by enabling organizations to respond to technological, competitive, and institutional changes (Andreini *et al.*, 2022; Ilyas *et al.*, 2024).

MOS extends these arguments by proposing that ownership sustainability depends not only on operational effectiveness but also on adaptive capacity. Ownership systems that remain rigid are likely to experience declining competitiveness, whereas adaptive systems are better positioned to sustain entrepreneurial participation over time.

Proposition 6 (P6).
Business model adaptability positively influences ownership sustainability.

5.7 Integrated Developmental Logic of Managed Ownership Systems

Taken together, the six propositions describe a developmental ownership trajectory.

Ownership begins with access to structured entrepreneurial opportunities (P1). These opportunities become productive through capability development mechanisms (P2), which subsequently create the conditions necessary for ownership expansion (P3). Replication mechanisms provide the organizational infrastructure that facilitates ownership scaling (P4). As ownership systems mature, long-term viability depends on effective resource orchestration (P5) and continuous business model adaptation (P6).

Collectively, these relationships suggest that entrepreneurial ownership is neither a singular event nor a static condition. Rather, ownership evolves through a cumulative sequence of organizational processes that transform access into capability, capability into expansion, and expansion into sustainability. This developmental logic constitutes the central theoretical contribution of the Managed Ownership Systems framework and provides a foundation for future empirical investigation of ownership-centered entrepreneurship.

To complement the developmental logic presented in Figure 2, Figure 3 summarizes the causal relationships proposed within the MOS framework. The figure integrates the six propositions developed in this study and illustrates how ownership creation, capability development, scaling mechanisms, and sustainability outcomes are theoretically connected.

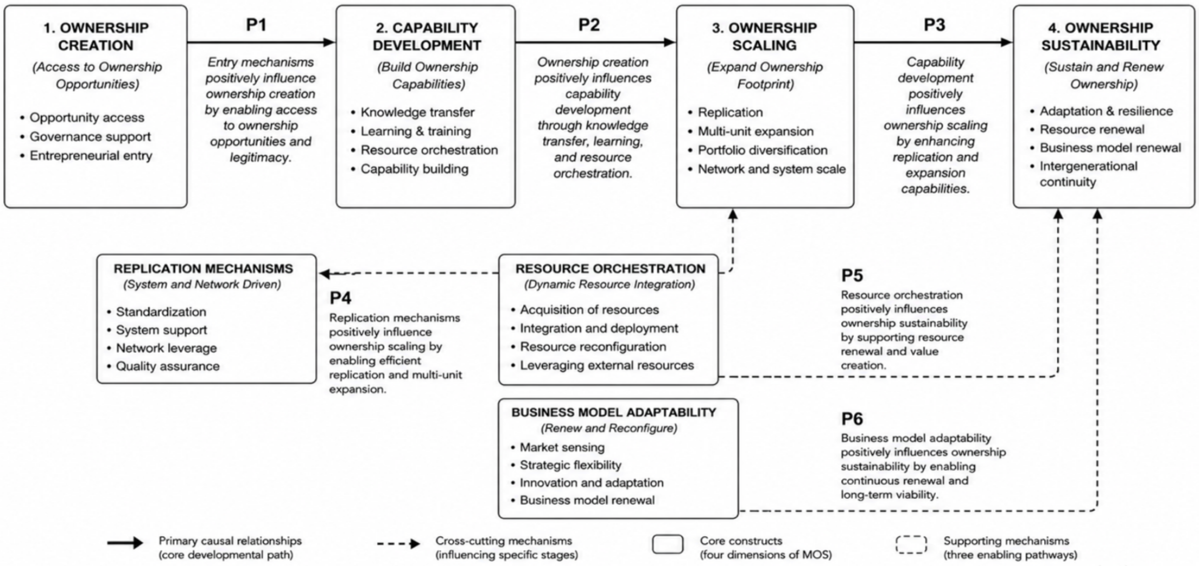

Figure 3. Propositional Architecture of Managed Ownership Systems
Source: Developed by the authors based on Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Barney (1991), Winter and Szulanski (2001), Sirmon et al. (2011), Shepherd and Patzelt (2022), and Foss and Klein (2023).

Figure 3 presents the theoretical architecture of the MOS framework through six interconnected propositions. Structured entry mechanisms facilitate ownership creation, which subsequently supports capability development and ownership scaling. Replication mechanisms strengthen ownership expansion, while resource orchestration and business model adaptability contribute to ownership sustainability. Together, these relationships explain how entrepreneurial ownership evolves through a coherent and cumulative developmental process.

6. Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this paper was to address a persistent theoretical fragmentation across entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, and organizational growth research. Although these streams have generated substantial insights into entrepreneurial participation, organizational performance, knowledge transfer, and scaling processes, they have largely evolved independently. As a result, scholarly understanding of how entrepreneurial ownership is systematically created, developed, expanded, and sustained remains limited.

The MOS framework was developed to address this limitation. By integrating insights from entrepreneurship, franchising, organizational learning, resource orchestration, business model innovation, and replication theory, the framework positions ownership as the central phenomenon connecting previously disconnected domains. In doing so, MOS shifts attention from firms, ventures, and governance structures toward ownership trajectories and the organizational systems that shape them.

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

1) Ownership as a Distinct Outcome of Entrepreneurial Systems

The first contribution of this paper is the repositioning of ownership as an explicit theoretical outcome of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship scholarship has traditionally emphasized opportunity recognition, venture creation, innovation, and firm growth (Ireland, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021). While these outcomes remain important, they provide only a partial understanding of entrepreneurial development. The MOS framework argues that ownership itself represents a distinct outcome that deserves dedicated theoretical attention.

This shift is important because ownership influences resource control, strategic decision authority, value appropriation, and long-term entrepreneurial participation (Cestino Castilla *et al.*, 2023). By treating ownership as a developmental phenomenon rather than a static condition, MOS extends entrepreneurship research beyond venture creation and introduces a new perspective through which entrepreneurial trajectories can be examined.

More broadly, this perspective aligns with emerging discussions concerning entrepreneurial participation and the organizational mechanisms that enable broader access to entrepreneurial opportunities (Nambisan *et al.*, 2019). Rather than focusing exclusively on venture founders, MOS recognizes that ownership opportunities may be intentionally facilitated through organizational systems that lower barriers to entrepreneurial participation.

2) Integrating Fragmented Research Streams

The second contribution concerns theoretical integration.

Existing literature explains important but isolated aspects of entrepreneurial development. Entrepreneurship research explains entrepreneurial entry, franchising research explains structured access to ownership, capability-based perspectives explain learning and adaptation, and replication research explains organizational expansion. However, ownership remains theoretically dispersed across these domains.

MOS integrates these perspectives into a single developmental framework. By linking ownership creation, capability development, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability, the framework provides a process-oriented explanation of entrepreneurial ownership that extends beyond the boundaries of any individual theory.

This integrative contribution responds to long-standing calls for greater theoretical synthesis within entrepreneurship and strategic management research, particularly in areas where organizational phenomena span multiple disciplinary traditions.

3) Extending Capability and Resource Orchestration Perspectives

A third contribution lies in extending capability-based theories.

Resource-based theory, dynamic capability theory, and resource orchestration theory have traditionally focused on explaining organizational performance and competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Sirmon *et al.*, 2011; Teece *et al.*, 1997). MOS broadens the application of these perspectives by demonstrating that capabilities do not merely support organizational effectiveness; they also support ownership development.

Within the framework, capability accumulation functions as a developmental mechanism that enables individuals to transform ownership access into sustainable entrepreneurial participation. This interpretation introduces ownership progression as an additional outcome of capability development and resource orchestration processes.

Consequently, the framework contributes to a growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of capability accumulation across entrepreneurial growth trajectories rather than solely at the firm level.

4) Reconceptualizing Replication and Scaling

The fourth contribution concerns replication and scaling.

Existing replication research has primarily conceptualized replication as a mechanism for organizational growth and efficiency (Szulanski & Jensen, 2008; Winter & Szulanski, 2001). MOS extends this perspective by arguing that replication simultaneously functions as a mechanism for ownership expansion.

From this perspective, replication systems generate not only new organizational units but also new ownership opportunities. Ownership scaling therefore emerges as a theoretically distinct phenomenon that cannot be fully captured through traditional firm-growth frameworks.

This reconceptualization contributes to recent discussions regarding entrepreneurial scaling by highlighting that growth may occur not only through organizational expansion but also through the expansion of ownership participation and ownership portfolios (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2022; Van Lancker *et al.*, 2023).

6.2 Managerial Implications

The MOS framework also offers several practical implications for organizations seeking to develop scalable entrepreneurial systems.

First, organizations should recognize that ownership development requires more than access to business opportunities. Long-term ownership success depends heavily on capability-building mechanisms, including training systems, mentoring arrangements, knowledge transfer processes, and organizational learning structures. Investments in these mechanisms are likely to improve ownership sustainability and long-term entrepreneurial performance.

Second, organizations pursuing growth through franchising, licensing, or related business-format arrangements should view ownership development as a strategic objective rather than merely an operational consequence of expansion. Growth systems that simultaneously facilitate ownership creation and capability development may generate stronger long-term outcomes than systems focused exclusively on outlet expansion.

Third, entrepreneurship development programs may benefit from adopting a broader perspective on entrepreneurial success. Traditional programs frequently emphasize venture launch activities, whereas MOS suggests that ownership development, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability represent equally important dimensions of entrepreneurial progress.

6.3 Future Research Opportunities

The framework opens several promising directions for future research.

The most immediate opportunity concerns empirical validation of the MOS framework and its proposed relationships. Future studies may develop measurement scales for the four dimensions of MOS and examine their interrelationships across franchising systems, entrepreneurial ecosystems, incubators, licensing arrangements, and other ownership-oriented organizational settings.

A second opportunity involves comparative research across organizational forms. Although franchising provides an important empirical context, the underlying logic of MOS may extend to broader ownership systems. Future studies could investigate whether similar ownership trajectories emerge within platform ecosystems, cooperative organizations, family business networks, and portfolio entrepreneurship contexts.

A third opportunity concerns multi-level investigations of ownership development. Future research may examine how individual characteristics, organizational structures, and ecosystem conditions interact to influence ownership creation, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability. Such work could significantly advance understanding of ownership as a dynamic phenomenon operating across multiple levels of analysis.

Finally, the framework provides a foundation for the development of a broader ownership-centered perspective on entrepreneurship. Future theoretical work may explore how ownership trajectories differ from venture trajectories, how ownership capabilities evolve over time, and how ownership systems contribute to entrepreneurial participation and long-term value creation.

Collectively, these opportunities suggest that ownership represents a promising yet underdeveloped domain of entrepreneurship and management research.

6.4 Concluding Reflection

The broader implication of this paper is that entrepreneurial development may be understood not only through the creation and growth of firms but also through the creation and evolution of ownership itself. Existing theories provide valuable explanations of entrepreneurial action, organizational growth, capability development, and scaling. However, ownership has remained largely embedded within these explanations rather than serving as their focal point.

The Managed Ownership Systems framework addresses this omission by positioning ownership as the central outcome linking entrepreneurial entry, capability accumulation, organizational expansion, and long-term adaptation. By integrating previously fragmented research streams into a unified developmental framework, MOS provides a foundation for a more ownership-centered understanding of entrepreneurship, organizational growth, and scalable entrepreneurial participation.

7. Conclusion

This study began with the observation that entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, organizational learning, resource orchestration, and replication research have collectively generated substantial knowledge regarding entrepreneurial participation, organizational growth, and value creation. However, despite these advances, scholarly understanding of entrepreneurial ownership remains fragmented. Existing theories explain how opportunities are discovered, ventures are created, capabilities are developed, and organizations scale, yet they provide limited insight into how ownership itself is systematically created, developed, expanded, and sustained through organizational systems. As a result, ownership has largely remained an implicit outcome embedded within broader theories rather than an explicit construct worthy of dedicated conceptual attention.

To address this gap, this paper introduced the MOS framework as an integrative perspective on entrepreneurial ownership. The framework advances the argument that ownership should not be viewed merely as a legal status, a governance arrangement, or a by-product of venture creation. Instead, ownership is conceptualized as a developmental process shaped by interconnected organizational mechanisms that facilitate ownership creation, capability development, ownership scaling, and ownership sustainability. By positioning ownership as the focal phenomenon connecting previously fragmented research streams, MOS provides a process-oriented explanation of how entrepreneurial participation evolves over time.

The novelty of the framework lies in its ownership-centered orientation. While prior research has predominantly adopted venture-centered, firm-centered, or governance-centered perspectives, MOS redirects analytical attention toward ownership trajectories and the organizational systems that support them. This shift generates several theoretical advances. First, it elevates ownership from an implicit assumption to an explicit outcome of entrepreneurial systems. Second, it integrates insights from entrepreneurship, franchising, capability development, resource orchestration, and replication theory into a unified explanatory framework. Third, it extends existing understandings of entrepreneurial growth by distinguishing ownership scaling from conventional measures of firm growth. Finally, it offers a developmental logic that links entrepreneurial access, capability accumulation, expansion, and long-term sustainability within a coherent theoretical architecture.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, the framework also provides practical implications for organizations, entrepreneurial support systems, and business development initiatives. The MOS perspective suggests that sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes require more than opportunity access or venture creation alone. Ownership development depends upon organizational mechanisms that facilitate learning, capability transfer, adaptation, and scalable expansion. Consequently, organizations seeking to cultivate entrepreneurial participation should view ownership development as a strategic process requiring deliberate design rather than an incidental consequence of growth. In this regard, MOS offers a conceptual foundation for designing systems that not only create businesses but also create and sustain owners.

At the same time, several limitations should be acknowledged. As a conceptual study, the framework has not yet been subjected to empirical validation. The proposed dimensions and propositions therefore remain theoretical and require systematic testing across different organizational contexts. In addition, the framework was developed primarily through the integration of entrepreneurship, franchising, and management literatures. Future studies may refine, extend, or challenge its assumptions by examining alternative ownership arrangements, institutional environments, and organizational forms. These limitations, however, reflect opportunities for theoretical advancement rather than weaknesses in the conceptual logic itself.

Future research should therefore focus on operationalizing the dimensions of MOS, validating the proposed relationships empirically, and examining how ownership trajectories vary across organizational settings. Comparative studies involving franchising systems, entrepreneurial ecosystems, platform-based organizations, family businesses, cooperatives, and portfolio entrepreneurship may provide valuable insights into the boundary conditions and broader applicability of the framework. Further theoretical work may also explore ownership capabilities, ownership ecosystems, and ownership-based measures of entrepreneurial development as emerging directions for scholarship.

In conclusion, this paper argues that entrepreneurial development is not solely a story of venture creation, organizational growth, or market expansion. It is equally a story of how ownership is created, cultivated, expanded, and sustained through organizational systems. By introducing Managed Ownership Systems as an integrative and ownership-centered framework, this study opens a new avenue for understanding entrepreneurship, organizational growth, and entrepreneurial participation. More importantly, it invites scholars to reconsider ownership not as a peripheral consequence of entrepreneurship, but as one of its most fundamental and enduring outcomes.

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