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From Opportunity Recognition to Entrepreneurial Success: An Integrated Behavioural Framework

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Abstract: *This report builds towards a more nuanced, and publication-ready conceptual review linking entrepreneurial opportunity recognition with networking, proactivity, strategic decision-making and adaptability as mutually reinforcing behavioural mechanisms of sustained entrepreneurial success. It synthesizes and simplifies the original draft of the user and incorporates recent empirical and theoretical findings from 2000–2026. The essence of the argument is that entrepreneurial success should be understood not only as an opportunity recognition but as a dynamic opportunity-to-action-to-adaptation process as well. While opportunity recognition starts entrepreneurial behaviour, networking, proactivity, strategic decision-making and adaptability determine whether an opportunity is exploited and continued in the presence of environmental dynamism, technological turbulence and constraints of resources.*

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Introduction

Entrepreneurial opportunities are not the only requirements for a successful business, nor do they ensure a successful business if they are discovered by an entrepreneur. Opportunities, once recognised, need to be assessed, resourced, acted upon and continually adjusted after information and market conditions change. The success of entrepreneurs thus hinges on behavioural skills that translate opportunity recognition into successful opportunity exploitation and sustained adaptation.

Shane and Venkataraman's earlier seminal works brought the opportunity discovery, evaluation and exploitation to the core of the entrepreneurship research and described entrepreneurship as the intersection of opportunities and enterprising individuals. Ardichvili and co-authors expanded this view to highlight the role of opportunity development, alertness, prior knowledge, information asymmetry and social networks. Latter research focus has moved from identifying opportunities towards mechanisms that convert identified opportunities into venture outcomes such as social capital, entrepreneurial orientation, and dynamic capabilities.

Growing evidence supports the need for a process-oriented perspective. The study on entrepreneurs in developing economies (2026) identifies opportunity recognition as a mediator between the relationship between entrepreneurial self-cognition, alertness and self-efficacy on the one hand, and opportunity exploitation on the other, while social capital and social intelligence are highlighted as moderators. Along the same lines, the entrepreneurial orientation, especially the proactiveness, eases the process of opportunity recognition and exploitation, and consequently enhances the new venture performance.

Given all this, this conceptual review suggests an integrated behaviour sequence:

- Opportunity Recognition – Networking and Resource Mobilisation – Proactive Opportunity Exploitation – Strategic Decision-Making – Adaptation and Reconfiguration – Sustainable Entrepreneurial Success.link.

The process is not necessarily linear; there are feedback loops and processes that happen at the same time. Still it offers an analytically convenient model to explore the process by which cognition about opportunity becomes action and action turns into performance.

The Research Questions and Scope

The review responds to five main research questions which are relevant to the current literature on entrepreneurship:

- Explain the role of opportunity recognition in the entrepreneurial action and sustainable entrepreneurial success.
- How does entrepreneurship networking help in converting recognised opportunities to exploitable business opportunities?
- What is the role of proactivity and strategic decision making in exploiting opportunity under uncertainty?
- What is the importance of adaptability in the process of entrepreneurial action transforming into entrepreneurial venture survival and performance?
- What are the effects of environmental dynamism, technological change, institutional conditions and the availability of resources on the connection between opportunity recognition, networking, proactivity, decision-making and entrepreneurial success?

It includes opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial networking and social capital, proactivity as part of entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial decision making under uncertainty (including effectuation), adaptability and dynamic capabilities, and sustainable venture performance. The primary empirical emphasis is on data from actual entrepreneurs and founder–owners and from owner–managers operating business ventures – and that studies of entrepreneurial intentions and of student samples may provide insights into the mechanisms, but should not replace studies of entrepreneurial success.

Conceptual Review Methodology

The integrative conceptual review design was used in this study.

- **Integrative Conceptual Review Design**

The review takes an integrative conceptual approach instead of systematic meta- analysis. The goal is not to estimate pooled effect sizes across studies but theory integration and framework development. This design is suitable due to the fact that pertinent evidence is spread throughout a number of somewhat independent research traditions:

  - Recognizing and cognition entrepreneurial opportunities
  - Social capital and entrepreneurial networking
  - Entrepreneurial orientation (innovativess, proactiveness, risk-taking)
  - Entrepreneurial decision making, effectuation and causation.
  - Adaptability and dynamic capabilities of the entrepreneur
  - Performance and sustainability of firms and entrepreneurship success

These strands can be woven together in integrative reviews, which permit the researchers to look for common mechanisms and to develop multi-construct propositions without being limited by the heterogeneity of the measures and research designs provided in the individual studies.

- **Suggested Search Strategy for Empirical Extension**

The suggested search strategy for empirical extensions is as follows.The suggested search strategy to find empirical extensions is the following.

In future empirical studies or a systematic review, a clear search protocol must be adhered to in the major databases such as Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, ABI/INFORM or Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar for the time span of 2000 to 2026, with earlier seminal works considered. Some of the best keyword pairs are:

- Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition" AND performance
- Opportunity recognition' AND networking
- Entrepreneurial networking" AND social capital
- Opportunity recognition AND "entrepreneurial proactivity"
- Entrepreneurship AND “strategic decision making”
- Entrepreneurial adaptability AND performance
- Effectuation" AND opportunity exploitation"
- Dynamic capabilities" AND entrepreneur* AND "new venture"

Studies that include practising entrepreneurs and ventures should be given priority. The study of entrepreneurial intention among students can aid in theory development, but should be interpreted with care when drawing inferences about mechanisms of realised venture success.

Opportunity Recognition as a starting point

- **Definitions and Core Processes**

Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition: The process of discovering a setting where market gaps, unmet needs or changing trends can be filled with innovative new product, service or venture; and of being able to see an opportunity for value creation. These can be due to shifts in consumer tastes and preferences, new technologies, regulation, population change, inefficiencies in the market or new social and environmental issues.

Classical opportunity research is the difference between the objective existence of opportunity and the entrepreneur's ability to perceive opportunity. Ardichvili and colleagues stress that entrepreneurial alertness, prior knowledge, social networks, information asymmetry and personality characteristics in particular influence opportunity development, and that this happens in complex ways. Later research emphasizes pattern recognition, in which the entrepreneurs recognize that similar events, trends, and information, which appear to be unrelated, fit together using cognitive frameworks developed from experience.

Opportunity recognition is therefore more than an episode of idea generation and is a multi-component capability including:

- Scanning and searching for information about the environment
- Unmet demand and stakeholder needs identified
- Identifying patterns in changes in technology, regulation and the market
- Practical implementation of technology in the company
- Combination of information that has not been previously related
- Valuation of potential customer value and competitive advantage
- Assessment of the feasibility and actionability within resource and institutional limitations.

- **Opportunity Recognition and Exploitation**

One of the major differences is between opportunity recognition (EOR) and opportunity exploitation (EOE). Recent research shows that EOR mediates relationships between cognitive factors (entrepreneurial self-cognition, alertness, self-efficacy) and contextual factors (social capital, social intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation) on the one hand, and EOE on the other. In this perspective, identifying a good opportunity is a condition but not a sufficient one: entrepreneurs often see a good opportunity but do not act upon it because of resource constraints, uncertainty, or institutional factors or strategic choices.

The first proposition of the framework is, therefore:

- **P1: Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition positively affects the entrepreneurial success mostly when they transform recognised opportunities to actual opportunity exploitation.**

If they are going to play a part in the enhancement of continuous entrepreneurship performance, recognised opportunities must thus be integrated in larger behavioural processes.

Entrepreneurial Networking and Social Capital

- **The Importance of Networks for Opportunity Conversion**

It is an acceptable fact that the majority of entrepreneurial ventures start with a shortage of resources, both financial and know-how, or a lack of market legitimacy, employees, suppliers or customer access. Social capital theory views networks as stores of actual and potential resources embedded in the relationship structures, trust and shared norms that entrepreneurs can draw upon for business uses.journals.

In Stam, Arzlanian and Elfring's meta-analysis, the overall relationship between entrepreneurial social capital and small-firm performance is found to be positive, and network diversity and structural holes are shown to be more influential than network size. Later research elaborates that entrepreneurial social capital works in two ways: a resource mechanism, which is connected to the size and diversity of the network and provides quantity and variety of resources, and an exchange mechanism, which is connected to network cohesion and relational quality, and which enables fluid exchange of resources among network members.

There are two primary ways in which networks enable opportunity-related processes:

- **Pre-recognition:** Exposure to various acquaintances, networks and other types of information, problems and technologies will improve the opportunity recognition of entrepreneurs.
- **Post-recognition:** Networks offer resources and legitimacy to take advantage of opportunities that are recognised – capital, expertise, suppliers, distribution channels, knowledge/partnerships.

- **Strong and Weak Ties, Network Diversity**

Classic network theory makes a distinction between strong ties (those with a lot of trust and frequent contact and emotional support) and weak ties (those that are less frequent and more distant in nature, yet provide new information). Weak ties, structural holes and network diversity have all been found to be positively associated with the performance of small firms, suggesting that they expand the range of information and opportunities that an entrepreneur can access that lie outside of his or her personal network.

Concurrently, strong relationship is vital for commitment, reciprocity and dependable support, particularly in resource-poor environments. Entrepreneurial networking is therefore less a matter of the number of contacts one has, and more of the combinations of trust, diversity and relevance to resources that one can create during the right context.

This chapter explores how networking can serve as an opportunity conversion mechanism.

- **Entrepreneurs who have a great idea may not have the means to take advantage of it. Networking can supply**

Financial capital/investors:

- The ability to lead, manage, and supervise staff and/or volunteers.
- Suppliers and distribution channels

Knowledge of the market and customers' access

- Legitimacy and endorsements
- Talent and team members
- Strategic advice and mentoring

- **Collaborative Partners and co-Creators**

Studies conducted in emerging and resource-scarce contexts suggest that both relational capital and social capital have beneficial effects on opportunity recognition and exploitation, while bricolage and recombination of resources in networks mediate the relationship between relational and social capital and both recognition and exploitation. Social capital therefore enhances the relationship between entrepreneurial cognition and exploitation of opportunities, especially in uncertain and resource limited contexts.

The next proposition is as follows:

- **P2: Entrepreneurial networking is a process that is the mediator between opportunity recognition and opportunity exploitation, and it provides access to information, resources, legitimacy and the ability to collaborate.**

Proactivity: Recognize and Act on Time.

- **A sense of proactivity in Entrepreneurial Orientation is manifested in the following 6 characteristics**

Proactivity is self-initiated behaviour that is anticipatory, that is, it is used to affect future conditions, rather than just react to them. Among the constructs of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), proactiveness reflects a firm's tendency to act in anticipation of future needs and move ahead of competitor's in offering new products and services.

In the entrepreneurial markets, timing is a key factor. Opportunities may become less attractive as other people start acquiring them, the technology may change, and customer preferences may change; entrepreneurs who have only spotted the opportunity may not be rewarded. Proactiveness is one of the dimensions of EO that has been related most consistently with better performance through evidence gathered from meta-analytic and review studies, which help companies to respond to new developments in the market and to gain first-mover advantage.

- **Proactive influence mechanisms**

Being proactive could impact entrepreneurial success in the following ways:

- Being an early player in new markets and niche areas
- Environmental scanning and opportunity search is an ongoing process.
- Beginning to establish relationships and partnerships with stakeholders
- Piloting prototypes and experimentation with business models
- Acquisition of resources in anticipation of constraints becoming more severe.
- Quick response to changing demands of customers and competitors
- Prompt resolution of operational and/or strategic issues that arise.

If, however, the level of proactivity is too high, resources can become dispersed and strategic overextension can result if entrepreneurs overestimate the number of opportunities that they have the time to evaluate. The effect on performance of proactivity thus hinges on how it is combined with strategic judgement and prioritisation.

This results in the third proposition:

- **P3: Proactivity has a positive effect on the exploitation of opportunities, and specifically, proactivity alone, without the strategic evaluation and the prioritisation of resources, is not enough for the success of the entrepreneur.**

Uncertainty and Limits to Strategic Decision Making

- **Uncertainty, Effectuation and Causation**

Entrepreneurial decision making is a situation in which the entrepreneur faces Knightian uncertainty and incompleteness of information and has to allocate resources. Entrepreneurs are required to make choices on entering markets, amount of capital to invest, technologies, when to hire, when to partner, when to grow, when to pivot, and when to exit.

Traditional strategic planning is based on the premise that future states can be predicted well enough to compare alternatives. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, may take place in such a setting that predicting with certainty is not possible and therefore the effectiveness of classical planning is reduced. Sarasvathy's effectuation framework suggests that expert entrepreneurs with high uncertainties employ means-driven decision logics that are based on partnership and affordable-loss, i.e., "Who am I?" "What do I know?" "Whom do I know?" "What can I afford to lose?" instead of pursuing optimal predictive strategies.

The results from simulation show that effectuation works best until a certain level of predictability (around 75 percent) is reached; beyond that point, the performance of causation starts to outperform effectuation. Process research on venture creation also reveals that there is a dynamic process whereby entrepreneurs alternate between effectual and causal logics over time, experimenting and planning as uncertainty unfolds.

- **Strategic Flexibility and Commitment**

So, effective entrepreneurial decision making is a balance of make decisions in time and be flexible. Without commitment, implementation and learning may not occur and with commitment under uncertainty, escalation of commitment can lead to ineffective strategies and lock-ins.

The research on entrepreneurial decision-making and external social networks suggest that the greater external networks provide a greater scope for strategic flexibility as well as schemas of opportunity discovery, which enable rethinking and adaptive decision-making in an evidence-based manner. Entrepreneurial adaptation in emerging markets has been studied, revealing that strategic entrepreneurial decisions and adaptation capabilities complement each other in creating growth and profitability in the context of institutional and resource constraints.

The fourth proposition is that:

- **P4: When entrepreneurs make timely commitments and are willing to reassess and strategically flex based on evidence, it positively impacts entrepreneurial success. onlinelibrary.**

Adaptability and Entrepreneurial Survival

- **The concept of Adaptability and Dynamic Capabilities.**

Opportunity recognition can lead to good decision making, which may create a successful strategy, but the changing environment can make it unsuccessful. Adaptability is the ability to change products, services, market positioning, resource configuration, business models, operational practices and strategic priorities as new information and environmental changes are received onlinelibrary.

The dynamic capabilities perspective elaborates this adaptability in terms of sensing, seizing and transforming: sensing opportunities and threats, seizing them through resource commitments, and transforming or reconfiguring resources and capabilities to maintain competitive advantage. Dynamic capabilities in entrepreneurship (DyCE) highlight the need for ongoing integration, accumulation and reconfiguration of capabilities in entrepreneurial firms to maintain performance in an environment with dynamism.

Based on empirical research in emerging markets, this paper proposes the notion of entrepreneurial adaptation, which refers to a set of cognitively based action-oriented strategic decisions that develop adaptive capabilities and maintain entrepreneurship despite the lack of resources and weak institutions. Adaptive capability is positively correlated with business performance, especially in markets that are turbulent and growth is continuous and necessitates strategic shifts.

- **Adaptation versus Persistence and Pivoting**

It's important to differentiate between adaptability and persistence. Persistence is the ability to keep trying to achieve a goal; adaptability is the ability to change the way of achieving a goal, but not the goal itself. Although target customers, technologies, prices, distribution channels, partnerships or core products may change, entrepreneurs can still be described as being adaptive persistent in their quest to build successful ventures.

Business model pivoting is the most obvious form of adaptability. Market evidence may lead entrepreneurs to pivot by changing the elements of the business model without losing valuable resources and learning. A tendency to refuse to pivot can be a sign of negative rigidity as opposed to positive resilience.

The fifth proposition is that:

- **P5: Entrepreneurial adaptability is a positive way to affect the long-term success of entrepreneurship because it enables entrepreneurs to change their assumptions and/or resources if the environment they expect or project has not occurred.**

Integrated Behavioural Framework

- **Opportunity-to-Action-to-Adaptation Sequence**

Drawing on the foregoing, entrepreneurial success can be seen as a recursive behavioural process and not as a single event. The suggested order is:

- Entrepreneurs are alert and act on information, use their prior knowledge, recognize patterns, and scan information through their network and identify market gaps and unmet needs, technological possibilities, and emerging trends.
- Entrepreneurial Networking: Entrepreneurs mobilize and build networks to improve the understanding of opportunities, gain knowledge, obtain resources, establish legitimacy and develop collaborative relationships.
- Strategic Evaluation and decision making – Entrepreneurs assess: Opportunity attractiveness, Risk and uncertainty, Mix of effectual and causal reasoning, Resource allocation and strategic commitment.
- Proactive Opportunity Exploitation: Entrepreneurs behave in an anticipatory, initiative-driven manner to pursue opportunities early, mobilise resources, experiment and respond quickly to the market signals.
- Opportunity Exploitation and Market Feedback: Ventures enter markets, products and services are offered, and feedback in the form of sales, customer responses and competitive reactions are generated.
- Adaptability and Reconfiguration: Entrepreneurs make sense of feedback, learn and reconfigure strategies, offerings and resource bases, both pivoting and making incremental moves.
- Sustainable Entrepreneurial Success: In the long run, the opportunity recognition, exploitation and adaptation process can be repeated, leading to venture survival, financial viability, innovation, competitive adaptability and long-term growth.

This is not a linear Opportunity Recognition to Success model, but rather one that suggests that success is developed from interacting behavioural processes that are layered in the ongoing context.

- **Theoretical Integration**

The framework incorporates a number of theoretical perspectives:

Opportunity Recognition Theory: Is the explanation of how entrepreneurs recognize opportunities from alertness, prior knowledge, networks and cognitive interpretation.

- **Social Capital Theory:** Considers value in networks and relationships that can help in identifying and exploiting opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurial Orientation:** Emphasises the roles of proactiveness and innovativeness as behavioural attributes that connect the opportunity perception to the opportunity pursuit and performance.
- **Effectuation Theory:** Provides a logic for action under uncertainty which focuses on affordable loss, partnerships and means driven action.\
- **Dynamic Capabilities Perspective:** Sensing, Seizing, Transforming capabilities as a bridge between entrepreneurial behaviour and sustained performance of the firm.

These perspectives are complementary, opportunity recognition to sensing, networking, proactivity and strategic decision-making to seizing, adaptability to transforming.

Subjunctive Mood and Circumstances of Modality

- **Core Propositions**

Based on the integrated framework, eight interrelated propositions are proposed for empirical test:

- **P1:** In the process of turning recognised opportunities into actual opportunity exploitations, the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities has a positive impact on entrepreneurial success.
- **P2:** Entrepreneurial networking mediates the opportunity recognition–opportunity exploitation relationship by providing information, resources, legitimacy and partnerships.
- **P3:** Entrepreneurial proactivity has a positive impact on opportunity exploitation, especially where there is a supportive entrepreneurial activity in the form of strategic prioritisation.

- **P4:** Strategic decision-making has a positive impact on entrepreneurial performance if entrepreneurs make timely commitment and re-evaluate their strategies based on evidence and are flexible to change them accordingly.
- **P5:** Entrepreneurial adaptability positively contributes to entrepreneurial success in the long-term via strategic and resource reconfiguration.
- **P6:** Networking increases adaptability by providing entrepreneurs with a variety of information, knowledge and other potential strategic solutions.
- **P7:** Opportunity exploitation is a mediator between opportunity recognition, networking, proactivity and strategic decision-making and entrepreneurial success.

The opportunity recognition – entrepreneurial success relationship is reinforced by environmental dynamism and technological turbulence through a networking, strategic flexibility and adaptability lens.

- **Environmental Dynamism and Technological Turbulence**

Environmental dynamism is the speed and volatility of market, competition and regulation changes. Whereas, in more stable settings, formal planning might work, in more dynamic settings, an entrepreneur's flexibility and continuous information updating are more valuable – in that sense, adaptability and network-informed sensing are more valuable.

Technological turbulence is a special type of dynamism. Technological innovations may at the same time open new markets, render old advantages obsolete, change the cost structure and change consumer expectations. In such settings, opportunity recognition is not a one-time thing, but is a continuous process and networking and dynamic capabilities are important in order to keep up-to-date with technological trajectories and complementary assets.

- **Resource scarcity and institutional conditions**

Networking and bricolage are particularly important in emerging and developing economies, where resources are scarce and institutional weaknesses prevail. Those entrepreneurs who cannot acquire all the capabilities they need can do so through partnership, social network, shared infrastructure, investors and alliance. Thus, social capital partly replaces the ownership of internal resources.

Behavioural competencies can be transformed into outcomes, depending on the institutional conditions, such as regulatory, financial, infrastructural and societal attitudes to entrepreneurship. Limits in proactivity and opportunity recognition will have limited effect when entry barriers, corruption or restrictive regulations hamper the entrepreneurial action significantly. Behavioural capabilities are not therefore a complete "counterweight" for structural factors.

Sustainable Entrepreneurial Success

- **Multidimensional Conceptualisation**

Entrepreneurial success has been defined conceptually in many different ways including sales, profit, employment, firm survival, growth, market share, innovation, entrepreneur satisfaction and internationalisation. Based on this review, it is recommended that the concept of success should be regarded as a multi-faceted process with at least five dimensions:

- **Economic Sustainability:** Venture has enough revenue and resources to sustain and develop.
- **Strategic Sustainability:** The venture has enough room to react to the competition and environmental change.
- **Innovation Sustainability:** The entrepreneur is still able to find and apply new ideas, products, services or processes which are relevant.
- **Relational Sustainability:** Relationships with customers, suppliers, employees, investors and partners are robust to ensure access to resources and collaboration.

The venture learns and reconfigures capabilities in response to feedback and changing conditions: Adaptive sustainability.

In this perspective, entrepreneurial success does not lie in the one-time discovery of an opportunity but lies in the continual discovery, exploitation and adaptation of opportunities over time.

- **Dynamic Capabilities and Long-Term Performance**

The research on dynamic capabilities indicates that companies that can sense opportunities, seizing them with the right investments, and reconfiguring their resource base to fit new conditions are more likely to maintain a competitive advantage and superior performance. Thus, entrepreneurial companies with good sensing, seizing and transforming capabilities are more likely to be high growth and high profitability and to be more resilient when turbulence occurs.

This dynamic capabilities logic is reflected in the integrated behavioural framework; opportunity recognition is related to the process of sensing; networking, proactivity and strategic decision-making is related to the process of seizing; adaptability is related to the process of transforming. Entrepreneurial success, therefore, is regarded as a dynamic process of converting an opportunity and reconfiguring capabilities rather than a level of performance.

Theoretical Contributions

The concepts have undergone a thoroughly refined conceptual review, which has in five major ways added to the entrepreneurship literature:

- **Opportunity Recognition to Opportunity conversion:** Moves perspective from opportunity recognition as an end state to opportunity conversion as a multi stage process involving recognition, exploitation and adaptation.
- **Networking Across Opportunity Stages:** It demonstrates how the networking of entrepreneurs is related both to the front end (opportunity recognition) and back end (opportunity exploitation) of opportunity development, with a mediation and a moderation role for social capital.
- **Proactivity and Strategic Judgement Integration**: It is a combination of proactivity and strategic judgement, with the view that both go together; without initiative, there is risk of over-extending, and without judgement, there is potential for paralysis.
- **Adaptability as Post-Exploitation Capability:** It considers adaptability and dynamic capabilities as post-exploitation means rather than as end of the entrepreneurial path, since market feedback leads to learning, pivoting and reconfiguration necessities.
- **Explicit Link to Dynamic Capabilities:** It provides a link between entrepreneurial behaviour at the individual level and firm competitiveness by linking opportunity recognition and networking with sensing and seizing and proactivity and decision-making with adaptability, and transforming with firm level entrepreneurial processes.

Practical Implications

- **Entrepreneurship Education and Training**

Entrepreneurship education needs to focus on opportunity recognition, as well as behaviours for opportunity exploitation and adaptation. Programmes can ask students to: rather than just coming up with business ideas

  - Test customer requirements in the field and by experimentation
  - Reach out to new prospects and partners
  - Establish and tap into professional networks for information and support
  - Define and prioritise the need for resources
  - Compare and contrast various options without knowing all the facts.
  - Make resource-allocation decisions using mixes of effectual and causal logics
  - Iterate business models and make changes in response to feedback.

Some of the training components should include social capital building, proactive behaviour, decision-making under uncertainty and adaptive strategy, all through the use of case studies, simulations, and experiential projects.

- **Incubators, Accelerators and Policy Programmes**

Programs of entrepreneurial support organisations need to be tailored to:

- Promote network building between investors, technologists, experienced entrepreneurs, customers, industry organizations, universities and government programmes
- Mentor in the application of effectual and causal decision making and entrepreneurs' understanding of when to proceed using a forecasting approach and when to experiment is appropriate

Provide resources for an adaptive strategy, such as pivot frameworks, assessment of lean experimentation and dynamic capabilities.

Policy interventions in emerging economies need to pay attention to social capital and adaptive capacities in resource-strapped and institutionally fragile environments, and should foster entrepreneurship ecosystems that deliver structural reforms and relational infrastructure.

Future Research Directions

The integrated behavioural framework points to various opportunities for empirical future research:

- **Opportunity recognition and exploitation:** Studies ought to clearly distinguish between recognition and exploitation, and not between idea generation and entrepreneurial success.
- **Longitudinal Process Research:** Process dynamics can be captured only by longitudinal designs, because they are not possible to capture with cross sectional surveys.
- **Network Quality and Configurations:** The research focus should be network quality attributes – diversity, tie strength, trust, resource relevance, international reach – as well as network size; configurations of social capital that enable opportunity conversion should be examined.
- **Nonlinear Effects of Proactivity:** Research should examine possible curvilinear effects of proactivity, in which having very low proactivity might lead to missed opportunities and very high proactivity to too much experimentation and resource dispersion.
- **Decision Speed/Quality:** Research should address the trade-off between decision speed and quality of decisions as a function of levels of uncertainty and dynamism, and look at the situations in which fast decisions improve performance.
- **Adaptability versus Persistence, Resilience and Innovation**: Empirical studies need to distinguish between adaptability and related constructs, and their unique and joint contribution to entrepreneurial outcomes.
- **Sectoral and Contextual Variations:** Technological sectors and emerging markets are particularly relevant as they are characterized by high dynamism, turbulence and institutional constraints, which may greatly increase the relevance of networking, opportunity recognition and adaptability.
- **Configurational Approaches:** Configurational approaches like qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) can investigate how a combination of opportunity recognition, networking, proactivity, decision-making and adaptability contributes to success and that there are multiple paths to success, thereby acknowledging the differences in entrepreneurial outcomes.

Conclusion

Recognizing business opportunities is a necessary first step to the entrepreneurial process, and it does not in itself provide an explanation of entrepreneurial success. It is the ability to act proactively, to make strategic decisions under uncertainty and to adapt as market information becomes available that is the value of the recognised opportunities while mobilising resources through networks.

Hence the integrated behavioural framework of this review suggest the pathway:

- Opportunity Recognising, Networking, Proactive action, Strategic decision making, Opportunity exploiting, Feedback, Adaptability, Sustainable entrepreneurial success.
- Networking can offer information and resources while proactivity can be a way to turn intention into timely action, strategic decision making can offer direction as to which opportunities warrant commitment and how limited resources are to be used, and adaptability can allow entrepreneurs to adjust their assumptions, strategies and business models based on feedback. All these behaviours, together, render entrepreneurial opportunities as cognitive perceptions to ongoing processes of organisation and economy in dynamic environments.

- The challenge for entrepreneurship scholars is to shift the focus from 'How do entrepreneurs recognise opportunities?', to 'How do entrepreneurs turn recognised opportunities into sustainable entrepreneurial success by interacting with networks, actions, strategic choices and adaptations?'. This question can be answered only through multi-level research that takes into account all process-related, social, strategic and contextual aspects at the same time.

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