

# Corporate Entrepreneurship: A Strategic and Structural Model

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## ABSTRACT

There has been a going concern in the use of corporate entrepreneurship as a means for corporations to enhance the innovative abilities of their employees and increase in corporate success through the creation of new corporate ventures. However, the creation of corporate activity is difficult since it involves radically changing internal organizational behavior patterns. Recent studies examined the effect of a firm's strategy, organization and external environment. It shows that the environment plays a profound role in influencing corporate entrepreneurship whereas there is consensus that the external environment is an important antecedent of corporate entrepreneurship. Looking at the environment, the literature highlights two research questions that deserve examination. First, how do firms that compete in different environments vary in the corporate entrepreneurship activities? Second, which corporate entrepreneurship activities are conducive to superior performance in different environments? This paper develops the theoretical foundation of these questions also looking at the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship and strategic management in an integrating model of corporate entrepreneurship, giving special attention to the strategic behavior and corporate context.

**Keywords:** Corporate Entrepreneurship: A Strategic and Structural Model

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite consensus that corporate entrepreneurship concerns activities and processes that promote the renewal of existing corporations, no commonly applied definition of corporate entrepreneurship exists. Activities and processes have commonly been described as “intrapreneuring” or “corporate venturing” (Block & MacMillan, 2019; Burgelman, 2019; Hornsby, Naffziger, Kuratko, & Montagno, 2019; Pinchot, 2014) or as those by which individuals or groups attempt to initiate some form of renewal within corporate organizations. Early researchers in corporate entrepreneurship (e.g. Hill & Hlavacek, 2009; Peterson & Berger, 1971) often adopted somewhat ambiguous views on what constituted the domain of corporate entrepreneurship.

This is in the sense that what was considered entrepreneurial about the phenomenon was either implicitly defined or not differentiated from other phenomena commonly associated with innovation in organizations—for example, new product development (Corbett et al., 2013). Over the years that followed, several different definitions of corporate entrepreneurship were introduced and the literature has continued to include a number of diverse definitions, which may to a certain extent have had negative effects on knowledge accumulation in the field (Schmitt et al., 2018). The absence of a common definition and conceptual framework may also have made it difficult to maintain a sense of common identity among corporate entrepreneurship researchers (Brazeal & Herbert, 1999; Davidsson, Gartner, & Zahra, 2006), with further implications for scholarly attraction and legitimacy in the wider domains of entrepreneurship research and business studies more generally (Pfeffer, 2019).

**Table 1. Some existing foundational definitions**

Authors	Definitions of Corporate Entrepreneurship
Burgelman (2019)	Corporate entrepreneurship refers to the process whereby the firms engage in diversification through internal development. Such diversification requires new resource combinations to extend the firm's activities in areas unrelated, or marginally related, to its current domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set (p. 1349).
Covin & Sievin (2020)	Corporate entrepreneurship involves extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through internally generated new resource combinations (p. 7. quoting Burgelman, 2019. p. 154).
Guth & Ginsberg (2020)	Corporate entrepreneurship encompasses two types of phenomena and the processes surrounding them: (1) the birth of new businesses within existing organizations, i.e.. internal innovation or venturing; and (2) the transformation of organizations through renewal of the key ideas on which they are built, i.e. strategic renewal (p. 5).
Zahra (2020; 2020)	Corporate entrepreneurship – the sum of a company's innovation, renewal, and venturing efforts. Innovation involves creating and introducing products, production processes, and organizational systems. Renewal means revitalizing the company's operations by changing the scope of its business, its competitive approaches or both. It also means building or acquiring new capabilities and then creatively leveraging them to add value for shareholders. Venturing means that the firm will enter new businesses by expanding operations in existing or new markets (2020, p. 227; 2020, p.1715).

**Source:** Our elaboration based on Sharma and Chrisman (1999)

According to Zahra (2020) corporate entrepreneurship refers to the process of creating new business within established firms to improve organisational profitability and enhance a firm's competitive position or the strategic renewal of existing business. Burgelman (2019: 154) conceptualises the definition of corporate entrepreneurship as a process of “extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through internally generated new resource combinations”.

The term “new resource combinations” is interpreted to be synonymous with innovation in the Schumpeterian sense. Thus corporate entrepreneurship is conceived of as the effort to extend an organisation’s competitive advantage through internally generated innovations that significantly alter the balance of competition within an industry or create entirely new industries. Corporate entrepreneurship is a process of organisational renewal (Sathe, 2020) that has two distinct but related dimensions: innovation and venturing, and strategic stress creating new business through market developments on by undertaking product, process, technological and administrative innovations. The second dimension of corporate entrepreneurship embodies renewal activities that enhance a firm’s ability to compete and take risks (Miller, 2019). Renewal has many facets, including the redefinition of the business concept, reorganisation, and the introduction of system-wide changes for innovation.

According to Kuratko et al. (2020) the need to pursue corporate entrepreneurship has arisen from a variety of pressing problems including:

1. required changes, innovations, and improvements in the marketplace to avoid stagnation and decline (Miller and Friesen, 2019);
2. perceived weakness in the traditional methods of corporate management; and
3. the turnover of innovative-minded employees who are disenchanted with bureaucratic organisations. However, the pursuit of corporate entrepreneurship as a strategy to counter these problems creates a newer and potentially more complex set of challenges on both a practical and theoretical level. The identification of the various dimensions or factors of corporate entrepreneurship, of course, is a broad arena to consider and the principal objective of this paper is to extend the theory of entrepreneurship by providing a conceptual model on corporate entrepreneurship in organisations and on strategic process.

### **1.1. The development and domains of research on strategic entrepreneurship**

Within the domains of entrepreneurship and strategic management, scholars have proposed to combine certain aspects of both fields to create a new concept—strategic entrepreneurship—even if its exact nature has remained elusive (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). To clarify the different perspectives on strategic entrepreneurship and previous research on the subject, the following discussion provides an overview of the perspectives and, later, a review of empirical studies on strategic entrepreneurship. The first perspective focuses on strategic management, a process of guiding how a company approaches its basic work, ensures its continuous renewal and growth, and, more particularly, cultivates a setting for developing and implementing strategies that drive its operations (Schendel & Hofer, 2001). Strategic management of course involves strategy, or how a company plans to become what it wants to become (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009).

Throughout an organization, strategy creates a sense of unity and consistency in action. When coupled with entrepreneurship—that is, the search for new competitive advantages via product, process, and market innovations—strategic management becomes a process by which companies establish and exploit competitive advantages within particular contexts. The integration of strategic management with entrepreneurship has two critical components: entrepreneurial strategy and strategy for entrepreneurship (Morris et al., 2008).

Whereas entrepreneurial strategy involves applying creativity and entrepreneurial thinking to the development of a firm's core strategy, strategy for entrepreneurship involves developing strategies to guide a firm's particular entrepreneurial activities and, in turn, determining how entrepreneurial the firm wants to be and how it will achieve that level of entrepreneurship (Morris et al., 2008). Among researchers working at the intersection of strategy and entrepreneurship, Covin & Kuratko (2008) have discussed strategic entrepreneurship within the realm of corporate entrepreneurship. In their analysis, strategic entrepreneurship refers to a broader array of entrepreneurial phenomena that may or may not result in the addition of new businesses within a corporation.

Later, Ireland, Covin & Kuratko (2009) applied an organizational lens in modelling corporate entrepreneurship strategy (CES) and synthesized key elements within CES's intellectual domain as antecedents, elements, and outcomes. Elaborating upon the implications of strategic entrepreneurship, Monsen & Boss (2009) examined how managers and staff reacted to strategic entrepreneurship in a diversified healthcare organization, specifically regarding department-level entrepreneurial orientations (e.g. taking risks, being proactive, and innovating), degree of role ambiguity, and intention to quit. Their results suggest that strategic entrepreneurship can affect management and staff differently and thus requires a correspondingly customized design.

A second perspective focuses on entrepreneurship. After examining its varying definitions, Ronstadt (2019, p. 28) summarized entrepreneurship as "the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. This wealth is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time, or career commitment of providing value for some product or service. The product or service itself may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by securing and allocating the necessary skills and resources". In that vein, Ireland, Hitt, Camp, & Sexton (2001) have argued that, in established firms, entrepreneurial actions seek to find new markets or competitive space for the firm as a way of creating wealth. Companies that find new ways of doing business will disrupt an industry's rules about competition and precipitate new business models and competitive advantages that could create additional wealth (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009). The degree to which companies act entrepreneurially—pursuing innovation, taking risks, and being proactive—thus relates closely to dimensions of strategic management. Understanding the critical intersections of domains such as innovation, organizational learning, governance, and growth allows entrepreneurs to take higher-quality entrepreneurial and strategic actions (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2009).

A third perspective focuses on economic policy. In economics, the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth has a long tradition. Following Jean-Baptiste Say and Joseph Schumpeter's work on how entrepreneurship affects economic development (Ronstadt, 2019), entrepreneurship has re-emerged as a focal point of economic policy, primarily as an instrument for generating growth, jobs, and economic development (Baumol, 2020; Carree & Thurik, 2008; Thurik, Audretsch, Carree, & van Stel, 2008). The strategic management of places, or what has been termed economic development policy, has thus concentrated on supporting strategic entrepreneurship to foster regional innovation and growth (Agarwal, Audretsch, & Sarker, 2007). In empirical research from the third perspective, scholars have focused on venture capital as well as international entrepreneurship, among other themes (Fernhaber & McDougall-Covin, 2008; Walske & Zacharakis, 2008).

Despite the appealing features of strategic entrepreneurship, its nature and the ways in which firms can achieve it remain poorly understood (e.g. Ireland et al., 2003; Luke & Verreynne, 2006; Monsen & Boss, 2009; Upson, Ketchen, & Ireland, 2007). Nevertheless, it is clear that strategic entrepreneurship, representing corporate innovation in its broadest sense, seeks the creation of competitive advantage and the means to continue creating such advantage. Moreover, in depending upon conditions and processes conducive to achieving wealth creation and corporate or general economic growth, strategic entrepreneurship can be designed as well as cultivated.

## **2. CORPORATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

The strategy literature identifies three types of corporate entrepreneurship. One is the creation of new business within an existing organisation - corporate venturing or intrapreneurship as it is called (for example, Burgelman, 2019; Kuratko et al., 2020; Guth & Ginsberg, 2020). Another is the more pervasive activity associated with the transformation or renewal of existing organisations (Stopford & Fuller, 2019). The third is where the enterprise changes the rules of competition for its industry in the manner suggested by Schumpeter and implied by Steensens and Gumpert (2014). Changes in the pattern of resource deployment - new combinations of resources in Schumpeter's terms - transform the firm into something significantly different from what it was before - something 'new'.

This transformation of the firm from the old to the new reflects entrepreneurial behaviour. Corporate venturing, or new business development within an existing firm, is only one of the possible ways to achieve strategic renewal. Strategic renewal involves the creation of new wealth through new combinations of resources. This includes actions such as refocusing a business competitively, making major changes in marketing or distribution, redirecting product development, and reshaping operations (Guth and Ginsberg, 2020).

According to Burgelman (2019) relatively little is known about the process through which large, complex firms engage in corporate entrepreneurship. To Burgelman the corporate entrepreneurship refers to the process whereby firms engage in diversification through internal development. Such diversification requires new resources combinations to extend the firm's activities in areas unrelated, or marginally related, to its current domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set. In the Schumpeterian sense, diversification through internal development is the corporate analogue to the process of individual entrepreneurship (Russell, 2020). Corporate entrepreneurship, typically, is the result of the interlocking entrepreneurial activities of multiple participants.

The role of entrepreneurial activity is to provide the required diversity. Whereas order in strategy can be achieved through planning and structuring, diversity in strategy depends on experimentation and selection. The task of strategic management is to maintain an appropriate balance between these fundamentally different processes. These insights have implications for design of organisational arrangements and for the development of strategic managerial skills. Miller and Friesen (2019) created a distinction between the concepts of corporate entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial strategy.



An entrepreneurial strategy is define as the frequent and persistent effort to establish competitive advantage through innovation, while corporate entrepreneurship can describe any attempt, even if infrequent, to implement innovation. Corporate entrepreneurship is to a great extent a social process in which innovations are socially constructed through a series of trial-and-error learning episodes (Van de Ven, 2014). Theses episodes constitute a complex network of interpersonal transactions involving an increasing number of people and volume of information as the process unfolds over time.

### 2.1 Strategic Behaviour And Corporate Entrepreneurship

Burgelman (2019) asserted that corporate entrepreneurship represents an important source of strategic behaviour. Autonomous corporate entrepreneurship ventures are initiated by the owner or the other members of the organisation other than the small business manager. Burgelman (2019) has proposed an inductively derived model of the dynamic interactions between different kinds of strategic behaviour, corporate context processes, and a firm's concept strategy. This model below can be used to elucidate the nature and the role of corporate entrepreneurship.

**Table 2: Researcher model 2021**

<b>AUTONOMOUS STRATEGIC BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>STATEGIC CONTEXT</b>	<b>CONCEPT OF CORPORATE STRATEGY</b>
<b>INDUCTED STRATEGIC BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>STRUCTURAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>CONCEPT OF CORPORATE STRATEGY</b>

Researcher model 2021

In this model, the current concept of strategy represents the more explicit articulation of the firm's theory about the basis for its past and current successes also failures. It provides a more shared frame of reference for the strategic actors in the organisation, and provides the basis for corporate objective-setting in terms of its business portfolio including resource allocation. The model proposes that two generic categories of strategic behavior can discerned in such large, complex firms.

**Inducted strategic behavior:** uses the genus provided by the current concepts of strategic to identify opportunities in the "enactable environment". Being consistent with the existing genus used in the strategic planning system of the firm, such strategic behavior generates little equivocally in the corporate context.

**Autonomous Strategic Behaviour:** introduces new genus for the definition of opportunities. ntrepreneurial participants, at the product/market level, conceive recent business opportunities, engage in project championing efforts to mobilise corporate resources for these recent opportunities, also erform strategic forcing efforts to mobilise corporate resources for theses new opportunities, also perform strategic forcing efforts to create momentum for their further development.

**Structural Context:** refers to the various administrative mechanisms which top management can manipulate to influence the perceived interests of the strategic actors at the operational and middle levels in the organisation. It intervenes in the relationship between induced strategic behaviour and the concept of strategy, and operates as a selection mechanism – a diversity reduction mechanism, on the stream of induced strategic behaviour.

**Strategic context :** looked at the political mechanisms through which middle managers question the new concept of strategy, also provide top management with the opportunity to rationalise, retroactively, successful autonomous strategic behaviour.

### 3. A FRAMEWORK FOR MAPPING CORPORATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Several studies have appeared to advance the development of a theory of corporate entrepreneurship. Zahra (2020) developed a model of corporate entrepreneurship based on environmental, strategic and organisational variables and empirically tested the model. Russell and Russell (2019) have also developed and tested a model of intrapreneurship based on environmental, structural, strategic, and cultural variables. Hornsby et al. (2019) have proved an interactive model of the decision to act intrapreneurially, which is focused on individual and organisational variables.

Covin and Slevin (2020) analysed strategic and structural variables and tested the relationship between intrapreneuring and firm performance. Their model surveys much of the literature on corporate entrepreneurship and includes the following variables: entrepreneurial posture, external (environmental and industry measures), internal (structural and cultural measures), and strategic (mission strategy and competitive tactics).

Strategic leaders Influence Corporate Entrepreneurship: Guth and Ginsberg (2020) included, here, the following factors:

- a) The management style of top managers affects the level and performance of new corporate ventures;
- b) Middle managers effectiveness at building coalitions among peers and higher-level managers in support of their entrepreneurial ideas affects the degree of success in their implementation;
- c) Banks that are more innovative are managed by more highly educated teams, who are diverse with respect to their functional areas of expertise. Many would argue that entrepreneurial behaviour in organisations is critically dependent on the characteristics, values/beliefs, and visions of their strategic leaders. The role of both individual managers and management teams in corporate entrepreneurship warrants considerable further research. Since innovation is an uncertain, incremental process, strategic managers cannot apply traditional planning techniques to attempt to control entrepreneurial venturing (Quinn, 2014).

Corporate Entrepreneurship Influences Performance: Guth and Ginsberg (2020) refer, in this category three factors:

- a) Scale of entry in new product introductions affects performance;
- b) Independent, venture-backed start-ups, on average, reach profitability twice as fast and end up twice as profitable as corporate start-ups;
- c) Early entry in new-product markets does not affect performance. It is clear that new ventures often take several years to turn into contributors to overall corporate profit performance. Organisational re-creations may often have short-run negative performance consequences.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The connection between firm's external environment and corporate entrepreneurship activities has been a combat of interest in the literature (Zahra, 2019; Miller, 2014; Russel & Russel, 2019; Slevin & Covin, 2020; Veciana, 2020). Whereas there is consensus that external environment is an important percussion of corporate entrepreneurship (Guth & Ginsberg, 2020; Gautam & Verma, 1997), there has been little empirical research on the methods of the specific associations between these two variables. and previous studies have focused on few environmental dimensions as the predictors of corporate entrepreneurship, presenting only a fragmented view of their potential associations.

Future studies may explore the potential causal chain among these variables (Keats & Hitt, 2020), testing whether the impact of environment, strategy, and structure on corporate entrepreneurship is consecutive rather than simultaneous. Further, the impartt of motivational and organisational factors on the level of entrepreneurship over time needs to be fully explored. As observed by Schollhammer (2019) there is a need for longitudinal studies to analyse the effectiveness of various internal entrepreneurial strategies.

The changes in internal entrepreneurship relative to operating conditions, and the effect of specific external environmental developments and the internal organisational context on various entrepreneurship strategies, have to be observed carefully. The volume and diversity of research on the topic of corporate entrepreneurship is already impressive. At the same time, some important issues are largely unexplored. This paper concludes with three questions/implications for future researches, as follows:

- a) conceptual and field work is necessary in order to articulate the area of corporate entrepreneurship. As recent comprehensive reviews suggest, definitional problems continue to plague this "young" area of research (Zahra & Covin, 2020). Of particular interest is whether corporate entrepreneurship is a multidimensional or unitary concept (Slevin & Covin, 2020; Miller & Camp, 2014), little effort has been made to identify each of these dimensions and show how they attached to each other.
- b) There is a need to develop a comprehensive framework for studying the predictors and outcomes of corporate entrepreneurship. There is a need to explore how the relevant environmental dimensions of the proposed model influence corporate entrepreneurship.



- c) Management and leadership styles are more effective in creating an entrepreneurial context. The “entrepreneur” plays a main role in the entrepreneurship process. An entrepreneur is most often regarded as an innovative and creative person suitable to manage a firm that emphasises innovation. The proactiveness of a firm indicates that it seeks for new opportunities, may be reflecting these characteristics of the entrepreneur. Strategic leaders can also enhance the organisational context for entrepreneurship by reinforcing an innovation-supporting culture also creating the organic structures.

To crown it all, corporate entrepreneurship would seem to depend both on the capabilities of operational level participants to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities also on the perception of corporate management that there is a need for entrepreneurship at the particular moment in its development. From the view of top management, corporate entrepreneurship is not likely to be a regular concern, non an end in itself. instead it is a kind of “insurance” a “safety valve” for internal tensions resulting from pressures to create opportunities for expansion.

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