



# INTEGRATING CORPORATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH LEADERSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of corporate entrepreneurship on organisational culture as a means of achieving high organisational performance providing competitive advantage for organisational survival in such a global era.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A literature survey was conducted tracing the origin of the concept of entrepreneurship, starting from Schumpeter's (1942) creative destruction concept, followed by characteristics of entrepreneurial behaviour, followed by providing a link between entrepreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the research explains the corporate entrepreneurship innovation process, and finally provides suggestions on how to integrate corporate entrepreneurship with organisational culture. It does this by proposing a suitable leadership style to guarantee high organisational performance.

**Findings:** The findings demonstrate that organisational structure does have an impact on organisational performance guiding the competitive advantage strategy (i.e. innovative differentiation, cost leadership and/or quick response to market demand). This, in turn, impacts on organisational innovation and creative behaviour, which influences its corporate entrepreneurial process.

**Originality/value:** This study purports valuable contributions by suggesting the integration of the following elements required for corporate entrepreneurship and

organisational culture: 1) risk taking; 2) rewards and motivation; 3) management support; 4) resource availability; and 5) organisational structure. Furthermore, the research provided an adequate leadership style to guarantee high performance through an innovative culture, advocating corporate entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Corporate entrepreneurship; corporate entrepreneurship innovation; organisational culture; organisational performance; leadership style

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## INTRODUCTION

Competitive advantage is a key aspect of organisational survival in the era of globalisation that we are living in today. I believe that, even though not new, the concept of entrepreneurship is becoming a vital factor for organisations who want to achieve high performance through the adoption of a creative and innovative culture. There are various definitions and classifications of entrepreneurship, either individual entrepreneurs, group entrepreneurs or organisational entrepreneurship. Chirani and Hasanzahed (2013) posited that organisations are shifting towards corporate entrepreneurship out of necessity; this has been highlighted by the rapid increase of new competitors in the market. This shift was triggered by the lack of trust in traditional production methods and the increase in individual entrepreneurs who are leaving organisations to work by themselves.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of corporate entrepreneurship on organisational culture as a means of achieving high organisational performance, providing competitive advantage for organisational survival in such a global era. Accordingly, a literature survey was conducted, tracing the origin of the concept of entrepreneurship. This started from Schumpeter's (1942) creative destruction concept, followed by characteristics of entrepreneurial behaviour, followed by providing the link between entrepreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the research explains the corporate entrepreneurship innovation process, and finally provides suggestions on how to integrate corporate entrepreneurship with organisational culture by proposing a suitable leadership style to guarantee high organisational performance.

### *What is Entrepreneurship?*

This section defines the term entrepreneurship and the traits of an entrepreneur as a means of setting the scene for explaining corporate entrepreneurship and the role it plays in enhancing organisational performance.

The term entrepreneur was initially used by Austrian-American economist Joseph A. Schumpeter (1883–1950), in which he explained that entrepreneurs are the main agents for economic growth through the creation of new methods of production, i.e. creating innovations that stimulated economic evolution. In addition, Schumpeter introduced the concept of “creative destruction”; this means that entrepreneurs continually substitute or destroy existing products or methods of products with new ones. Nevertheless, there is a positive result from this creative destruction, which is the creation of new technologies and new products to fit the continual change in customers' needs. These include technological advancements in the telecommunica-

tion field (e.g. computers, telephones and Internet), the transportation field (e.g. automobiles, airplanes, etc.) the production field, and the medical field. Moreover, creative destruction also helps overall economic improvement (Schumpeter, 2011; 1942).

Entrepreneurship is the willingness to take risks, and develop, organise and manage a business venture in a competitive global marketplace that is constantly evolving. Entrepreneurs are pioneers, innovators, leaders and inventors. Erkkila (2000) identified entrepreneurs by the following traits: flexible, creative, autonomous, problem solver, need to achieve, imaginative, believe in controlling one's destiny, leadership, hard-working, initiative, persuasive and moderate risk taker.

Tony et al. (2018) reiterated that entrepreneurship is doing a new thing or transforming an existing business concept into a new venture with the aim of high growth; it therefore contributes immensely by creating new jobs, reducing poverty and generating income for both governments and individuals. In addition, the authors provided the following acronym to the term **entrepreneurship** (Tony et al., 2018, p.127):

**E**:xamine needs, wants, and problems

**N**:ote and narrow down the possible opportunities to one specific "best" opportunity

**T**:otal commitment with high work ethics

**R**:eliable and passionate

**E**:nterprising personality and behaviour

**P**:roactive and pragmatic

**R**:elationship Management expert

**E**:nergetic and competitive by nature

**N**:ever allow reactivity or limiting belief

**E**:mphasise on key performance indicators and critical success factors of the business

**U**:nderstanding of the need for commitment and high work ethics

**R**:ealistic and positive accomplishment and creative destruction

**S**:eized by passion and fixity of purpose to make things happen positively for the business

**H**:ighly focused and motivated

**I**:nnovator with inner drive for success

**P**:ossibility mentality

Entrepreneurship is an important engine of growth in the economy. Sharma and Chrisman (1999) stated that entrepreneurial actions are pathways to competitive advantage. They also improve organisational performance through acts of creativity and innovation that occurs within and outside an organisation. Chesbrough (2003) linked innovation and entrepreneurship by stating that they are interdependent of each other, i.e. innovations are the outcome of a successful entrepreneurship process.

For organisations to become entrepreneurial they need to advocate a learning environment that encourages employees' behaviour to act creatively, i.e. advocate a learning culture towards corporate entrepreneurship. In this environment, managers are responsible for developing organisational conditions and providing motivational mechanisms of risk taking and innovative behaviour. Accordingly, Johnson (2001) suggested the following entrepreneurial behaviours that are required to encourage and support an entrepreneurial learning culture within the organisation:

- motivation to achieve and compete;
- taking ownership and being accountable;
- making independent and self-directed decisions;
- being open to new information, people and practices;
- being able to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty;
- creative and flexible thinking, problem solving and decision making;
- the ability to see and capture opportunities;
- awareness for the risks attached to choices and actions;
- the capacity to manage and ultimately reduce risks;
- persistence and determination in the face of challenge or lack of immediate reward;
- considering, discussion and formulating a vision; and
- the capacity to make an impact.

I believe that leadership plays a role here by identifying those entrepreneurial behaviours among their employees and providing all the possible support to spread the entrepreneurial culture.

### *What is Corporate Entrepreneurship?*

This section links entrepreneurship and the role played by corporate entrepreneurship, which is dependent on the generated innovations of organisational employees. It starts by providing a definition of corporate entrepreneurship followed by the various types of corporate entrepreneurship that could be adopted by organisations, the five dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship orientation, and finally identifies the structural characteristics required by an organisation demonstrating entrepreneurial behaviour.

Zahra (1991) defined corporate entrepreneurship as an organisation's set of activities that enables it to enhance its innovative ability through risk taking and seizing opportunities in the market place, i.e. it targets both new business establishments and new market allocation. This is a reiteration from Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) who posited that corporate entrepreneurship relates to internal development leading to diversification of organisational internal activities. Accordingly, new resources are required to enable organisations from seizing new opportunities. In such cases diversification enables the process of individual entrepreneurship leading the organisation towards corporate entrepreneurship.

Thornberry (2001) suggested the adoption of the following four types of corporate entrepreneurship:

#### 1. Corporate Venturing:

This type is identified by starting a new venture relevant to the organisation's core business. It is attractive to organisations that utilise vertical integration strategy.

#### 2. Organisational Transformation:

This type focuses on enhancing organisational operational efficiencies.

#### 3. Intrapreneuring:

This type focuses on identifying employees that have entrepreneurial aptitude and provides them with support to grow and utilise their innovative potential.

#### 4. Industry Rule Bending:

This type is relevant to organisations that can identify innovative products and processes that provide them with a first mover status in the market leading to a high market share.

Furthermore, Dess and Lumpkin (2005) emphasised the following five dimensions for organisations to foster corporate entrepreneurship:

1. **Autonomy:** in this dimension employees are encouraged to become a project champion who is capable of negotiating a new process with the aim of bringing a new product to the market.
2. **Innovativeness:** the organisation should be investing in research and development in new products.
3. **Proactiveness:** the organisation should have a future orientation by investing in trend analysis of viable opportunities.
4. **Competitive Aggressiveness:** organisation should engage with competition through predatory tactics to gain market share.
5. **Risk Taking:** the organisation should have a clear understanding of the risks associated with the business and its finances.

On the other hand, Slevin and Covin (1990) suggested the following structural characteristics to identify entrepreneurial behaviour in an organisation:

1. practising varied operational styles under the leadership of experienced top management;
2. being flexible towards environmental changes;
3. concentrating on results more than processes in their operations;
4. practising a cooperative, friendly culture with informal control;
5. advocated flexibility within teamwork behaviour;
6. concentrating on teamwork creativity; and
7. practicing free communication.

Miller (1986) and Miller and Shamsie (1996) provided the following explanation for four types of organisational structures: *simple structure* (strategies are set by top management), *machine bureaucracy* (many formal rules, policies and procedures with high levels of power centralisation), *organic* (very flexible with limited hierarchy), and *divisional* (composed of several independent groups).

Accordingly, I believe that organisational structure does have an impact on organisational competitive advantage strategy (i.e. innovative differentiation, cost leadership and/or quick response to market demand). In turn, this impacts on organisational innovation and creative behaviour, which influences its corporate entrepreneurial process. This all depends on top management's support in fostering a culture of corporate entrepreneurship throughout all organisational activities.

### *Corporate Entrepreneurship Innovation*

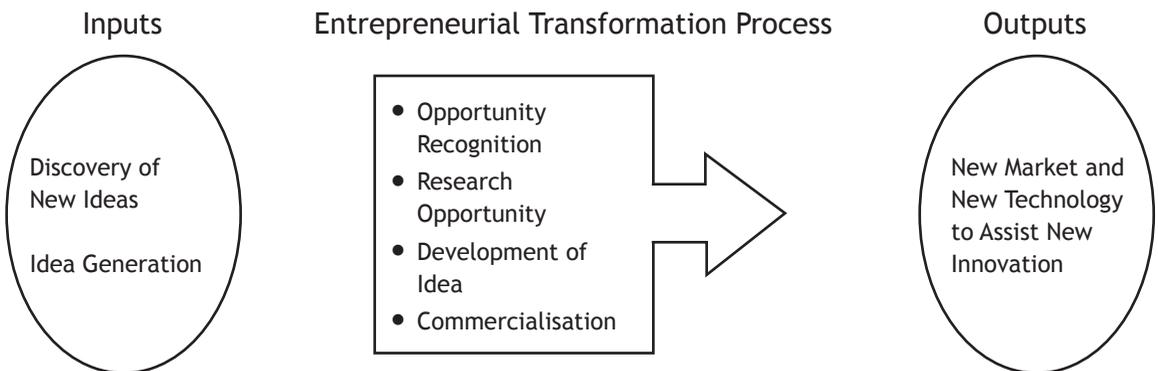
There are various types of innovation in organisations: product and process innovation (Blumentritt, 2004; Damanpour, 1991); and administrative and technical innovation (Damanpour and Evan, 1984; Knight, 1963; Madrid-Guijarro et al., 2009). Tidd et al. (2005) explained that process innovation concerns changes in the ways in which products/services are created and delivered. On the other hand, technical innovation refers to products, services and production process technology (Damanpour and Evan, 1984; Knight, 1963). Furthermore, Laforet and Tann (2006) indicated that administrative innovation represents the procedures that enable innovation to be an inherent part of organisational operations.

Research conducted by Shaw et al. (2005) provided a new model combining corporate entrepreneurship and innovation, and provided the following definition as a means of linking both components:

*“Corporate entrepreneurship can be defined as the effort of promoting innovation in an uncertain environment. Innovation is the process that provides added value and novelty to the organisation and its suppliers and customers through the development of new procedures, solutions, products and services as well as new methods of commercialisation. Within this process the principal roles of the corporate entrepreneur are to challenge bureaucracy, to assess new opportunities, to align and exploit resources and to move the innovation process forward. The corporate entrepreneur’s management of the innovation process will lead to greater benefits for the organization”* (p. 394).

This definition unifies the concept of corporate entrepreneurship innovation with the role and activities of the entrepreneur within the innovation process. Shaw et al.’s (2005) study suggests a conceptual model (refer to Figure 1) that comprises inputs, entrepreneurial transformation process and outputs of new innovation in the market place. Furthermore, the authors also suggest that organisations need to recognise the importance of the roles of the creative thinker, the corporate entrepreneur and the manager within an organisation towards a corporate entrepreneurship innovation.

### *Integrating Corporate Entrepreneurship with*



**Figure 1** Corporate Entrepreneurship Innovation Process  
 Source: Author’s figure adapted ideas from Shaw et al. (2005)

### *Organisational Culture*

Chandradewini (2017) explained that organisational culture influences how organisations compete through their practices. That organisational culture can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage was further reiterated by Barney (1986). On the other hand, Antony and Bhat-tacharyya (2010) defined business performance as an organisational success measure that relates to creating and delivering value to its internal and external customers.

I believe that in order to support an organisational culture of corporate entrepreneurship with the aim of enhancing organisational performance, organisational leaders should have a focused approach on advocating change and encouraging individual entrepreneurship. This approach would foster new ideas, providing opportunities, risk taking and general entrepreneurial behaviour throughout the whole organisation via spreading an informal structure leading to a creative and innovative culture.

Denison (1996) posited that organisational culture emanates from its values and beliefs; this is reflected in employees' attitudes, behaviour and performance. On the other hand, Schein (1992) explained that organisational ceremonies, stories, heroes and rituals are indicators of organisational culture. Furthermore, Hofstede (2011) suggested studying organisational culture through the analysis of five dimensions, mainly power distance, uncertainty avoidance, past versus future orientation, masculinity versus femininity, and individualism versus collectivism.

For organisations to achieve high performance that could be obtained through business excellence, which Dahlgaard and Dahlgaard (1999) claimed could be achieved through the 4Ps, i.e. excellent people, excellent partnerships, excellent processes and excellent products. I concur with the authors that to achieve high performance through business excellence, there should be a drive from the organisational leadership to foster a culture of creativity and innovativeness among its employees by rewarding their entrepreneurial activities.

This research proposes that organisations should concentrate on specific elements as a means of spreading an organisational culture, which plays a vital role through its employees' behaviour and practices in the success of organisational performance through corporate entrepreneurship. These elements have the potential of enhancing organisational performance through the adoption of corporate entrepreneurship. The following Table 1 provides the required elements, their explanation and the suggested fitting leadership style.

**Table 1 Elements Required for Integrating Corporate Entrepreneurship with Organisational Culture and Leadership Style**

<i>Organisational Element</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Leadership Style</i>
Risk Taking	I believe that this is one of the main factors that should be given utmost priority over all the other elements. A great deal of literature describes an entrepreneur as a risk taker, i.e. a person who is capable of thinking outside the box. For an organisation to be called a corporate entrepreneurial organisation, it needs to have people who are risk takers by being creative in their thinking to provide new ideas that have the potential of taking their organisations to another higher transformational level. All this creativity cannot be achieved without taking risk.	Transformational Leadership would be the most suitable leadership style for this element as it advocates change for the best, risk taking and entrepreneurial activities to achieve higher level of performance.  Samson and Daft (2012) stated that transformational leaders have the ability to lead change within organisations via its mission, strategy, structure and culture by promoting innovation in products and technologies.

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>Organisational Element</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Leadership Style</i>
Rewards and Motivation	This is a vital element to be adopted by organisations due to the importance of rewards and motivation on employees' performance. People innovate because they either have passion about what they do, or because they are expecting to be appropriately rewarded by their organisation as a result of their innovative activities. Accordingly, management has to set up robust reward and incentives systems to motivate their employees to become more innovative in support of corporate entrepreneurship. This has been the core of many studies by psychologists that have been used in the business discipline, e.g. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Hersberg's Two Factor's Theory.	Charismatic leadership would be suitable here as this style of leadership tends to motivate followers to go beyond their normal duties and even surprise themselves with their achievements. A reward system should be in place to keep the follower's trust in their leadership to sustain their positive influence on their followers accordingly.
Management Support	Top management hold all the cards in their hands and they are the movers and shakers who have the power of moulding organisational culture and steering it in the required direction. Accordingly, their support is essential as they can facilitate activities and provide both financial and non-financial support to render the required employee behaviour that supports a corporate entrepreneurship culture within the organisation.	This element concentrates more on the managerial aspects within the organisation. Accordingly, I believe that Fielder's contingency theory would be the most suitable as it balances between the leader's style if it is relationship oriented (concerned with people), or task oriented (concerned with task completion and outcomes).  Samson and Daft (2012) stated that Fielder's Contingency Theory examines the relationship between the leadership style, situational favourability and group task performance.
Resource Availability	Following on from the previous element, management have the final say in resource allocation, i.e. the steering power towards the required route they want their organisation to follow. Accordingly, their support with all the needed resources, e.g. manpower, budget, training, time allocation, etc. would be a main factor of success for advocating a corporate entrepreneurial culture within the organisation.	Transformational leadership is vital here since they lead change in organisations, they will allocate the required resources to make sure new innovative ideas and technologies are adopted. This style of leadership nurtures a culture of corporate entrepreneurship that leads to high performance and competitive advantage.
Organisational Structure	Organisational structure is the pictorial manifestation of the hierarchal lines of authority within an organisation and the flow of information between different levels of management.	A combination of leadership styles is required to fit the various hierarchy levels within the organisational structure. Each level requires a different leadership style to both

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Organisational Element	Explanation	Leadership Style
	<p>Furthermore, it shows the lines of communication, duties and rights in the organisation. It determines how the roles, power and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated.</p> <p>Accordingly, choosing the right person for the right job in the right hierarchical level would be an essential factor for success, i.e. choosing the right people with the right attitude, behaviour, beliefs and values that fits with the organisational innovative culture.</p>	encourage a culture of corporate entrepreneurship and fit with the diversified employees' requirements.

Source: Author's Figure

## CONCLUSIONS

This research investigated the role of corporate entrepreneurship and organisational culture on organisational performance. It traced the origin of the concept of entrepreneurship, starting from Schumpeter's (1942) creative destruction, followed by characteristics of entrepreneurial behaviour, providing the link between entrepreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship.

Finally, the research suggested the integration of the following elements required for corporate entrepreneurship and organisational culture: 1) risk taking; 2) rewards and motivation; 3) management support; 4) resource availability; and 5) organisational structure. Furthermore, the research provided the adequate leadership style to guarantee high performance through an innovative culture advocating corporate entrepreneurship.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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