



Executing Endeavor: A Theoretical Model of Entrepreneurial Disposition to Choose and the Sequential Emergence of Executory Acumen in Institutional Voids

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial activity in institutional voids unfolds under conditions of persistent uncertainty, weak formal support, and limited enforcement mechanisms. While existing research has examined how entrepreneurial action is initiated, comparatively less attention has been given to how agency is consolidated and sustained once commitment is required. This paper advances Executing Endeavor, a theoretical model that explains how entrepreneurial agency stabilizes through a sequenced process anchored in Disposition to Choose. The model conceptualizes execution as a distinct phase of entrepreneurial emergence, characterized by increasing responsibility attribution, deliberate utility anticipation, disciplined exertion, and path construction under constraint. Rather than treating execution as a mechanical continuation of initiation, Executing Endeavor theorizes it as an effortful and choice-driven accomplishment in which entrepreneurs progressively narrow alternatives, assume ownership of outcomes, and sustain action despite weak institutional support. The paper contributes to entrepreneurship theory by distinguishing execution as an analytically separable dimension of agency, integrating cognitive, attributional, and institutional perspectives into a coherent sequence, and offering an empirically tractable framework for studying entrepreneurial persistence in under-institutionalized contexts.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Agency, Execution, Disposition to Choose, Institutional Voids, Sequential Models, Venture Formation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial action in contexts marked by institutional voids unfolds under conditions of persistent uncertainty, weak formal enforcement, and limited access to legitimating structures. In such environments, entrepreneurs cannot rely on stable rules, predictable markets, or established support systems to guide or sustain action. While these constraints heighten risk, they also foreground the role of individual agency in shaping venture trajectories. As a result, entrepreneurship in institutional voids offers a critical setting for examining not only how entrepreneurial action begins, but how it is carried forward, stabilized, and sustained over time. Extant entrepreneurship research has devoted substantial attention to the initiation of entrepreneurial activity.

Dominant perspectives emphasize opportunity recognition, intention formation, effectual reasoning, and the early mobilization of resources under uncertainty. These streams have yielded important insights into how entrepreneurial action is sparked. Yet, they tend to treat execution as either a technical continuation of intention or a background process that follows naturally once action has commenced. This assumption obscures a critical analytical gap, which suggests, that in under-institutionalized contexts, execution itself constitutes a distinct and demanding phase of entrepreneurial agency, requiring sustained choice, responsibility consolidation, and strategic discipline in the absence of external framework or support mechanisms.

Empirical observations from such environments suggest that many entrepreneurial efforts fail not because actors lack ideas, motivation, or initial action, but because they are unable to sustain commitment, narrow competing alternatives, or endure the cumulative burdens of execution. Decisions must be repeatedly reaffirmed, trade-offs continuously managed, and pathways actively constructed where none are given. These realities call for a theoretical framework that treats execution not as a mechanical outcome, but as an effortful, internally regulated process through which entrepreneurial agency is consolidated.

This paper addresses this gap by advancing *Executing Endeavor*, a theoretical model that explains how entrepreneurial agency stabilizes through a sequenced progression anchored in *Disposition to Choose*. The model conceptualizes execution as a structured yet dynamic process in which entrepreneurs progressively assume responsibility, anticipate utility under constraint, exert disciplined effort, and construct viable paths toward enterprise formation. Rather than focusing on the moment of initiation, *Executing Endeavor* examines how entrepreneurs sustain action once the necessity of choice replaces the possibility of exploration.

By articulating execution as a distinct phase of entrepreneurial emergence, the paper makes three core contributions. First, it introduces *Disposition to Choose* as a foundational construct for understanding how agency is maintained under persistent uncertainty. Second, it models execution as a cumulative sequence of interrelated cognitive, attributional, and behavioral constructs, offering analytical clarity to a domain often treated implicitly. Third, it situates entrepreneurial endeavour within institutional voids as an active process of alignment between belief, judgment, and sustained action, rather than as a function of environmental enablement.

The remainder of the paper develops this argument as follows:

The next section outlines the conceptual foundations of *Executing Endeavor* and clarifies its relationship to existing entrepreneurship theories. This is followed by a detailed exposition of the sequential model and its constituent constructs. The paper then synthesizes the sequence through formal propositions, while positioning the model within broader theoretical debates, and concluding with implications for future research on entrepreneurial agency under constraint.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section synthesizes multiple theoretical traditions that collectively inform the development of *The Endeavor Sequence* as a sequential model of Disposition to Choose and the emergence of Executory Acumen. These traditions illuminate why execution in institutional voids unfolds as a gradual internal consolidation of judgment, rather than as a single rational decision or an immediate response to opportunity. Five interrelated theoretical streams, which includes judgment-based entrepreneurship, cognitive and decisional theories, effectuation and action logics, institutional theory, and embodied cognition, form the conceptual foundation upon which this paper is mounted.

2.1 Judgment-Based Entrepreneurship and the Problem of Choice

At the core of entrepreneurial execution lies the problem of judgment. Knight's (1921) distinction between measurable risk and true uncertainty establishes judgment as the defining entrepreneurial function in environments where probabilities cannot be calculated. Building on this insight, Foss and Klein (2012) argue that entrepreneurship is fundamentally about owning and exercising judgment over resources when outcomes cannot be contractually specified in advance. In institutional voids, this condition is intensified. Formal mechanisms that ordinarily distribute or absorb uncertainty such as legal enforcement, market intermediaries and regulatory clarity are either weak or absent.

As a result, the entrepreneur cannot defer decision-making to institutions and this demands that judgment be internalized as a matter of necessity. Execution thus depends not merely on opportunity perception, but on the actor's evolving willingness to bear responsibility for irreversible choices.

This perspective reframes execution as a cognitive and moral commitment, not a technical act. It provides the foundational logic for treating Disposition to Choose as a developmental construct rather than a static preference.

2.2 Cognitive Framing, Bounded Rationality, and Decisional Commitment

Classical rational choice models assume stable preferences, full information, and calculable outcomes or assumptions that rarely hold in institutional voids. Simon's (1957) theory of bounded rationality instead positions decision-making as a satisficing process shaped by limited information, cognitive constraints, and environmental ambiguity. From this perspective, choice is not optimized but constructed.

Entrepreneurial cognition research further demonstrates that entrepreneurs rely on heuristics, analogical reasoning, and subjective framing to make decisions under uncertainty (Baron, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2002). These cognitive mechanisms represent adaptive responses to environments where formal guidance is unavailable.

In high-friction contexts, decisional commitment emerges gradually as actors reconcile incomplete information with escalating personal stakes. Each choice narrows future options and increases psychological ownership. This insight supports a sequential view of execution, where early judgments condition later commitments, ultimately culminating in durable executory capability.

2.3 Effectuation, Control, and the Transition from Judgment to Execution

Effectuation Theory (Sarasvathy, 2001) provides a critical bridge between judgment and execution by emphasizing control over prediction. Rather than framing decision-making around optimization under expected returns, effectual logic

emphasizes action grounded in available means and the progressive formation of stakeholder commitments. Yet, while effectuation explains *how* entrepreneurs act under uncertainty, it does not fully account for *why* actors come to assume the burden of decisive execution in the first place. This gap is addressed by integrating McMullen and Shepherd's (2006) two-stage action model, which distinguishes between perceived ability to act and the judgment that action is warranted.

Within institutional voids, these stages are rarely cleanly separated. Instead, effectual engagement, provisional commitments, and iterative decisions recursively strengthen the actor's Disposition to Choose. Execution thus emerges not from a single decisive moment, but from layered acts of control that progressively substitute for absent institutions.

2.4 Institutional Voids, Responsibility Substitution, and Path Construction

Institutional void theory (Khanna & Palepu, 1997; Mair & Martí, 2009) highlights how weak or missing institutions disrupt coordination, trust, and market functioning. In such environments, entrepreneurs cannot rely on institutional frameworks to validate or stabilize their decisions. Instead, they must engage in forms of institutional substitution, assuming responsibilities ordinarily distributed across legal, regulatory, and market actors.

Theories of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) and bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) illuminate how entrepreneurs actively construct pathways through regulatory ambiguity, resource scarcity, and normative misalignment. Execution in these contexts is therefore inseparable from path creation such that to choose is simultaneously to author a route forward.

This theoretical stream justifies treating execution as an endogenous capability, one that develops through repeated engagement with institutional absence, rather than through compliance with pre-existing rules.

2.5 Embodied, Tacit, and Situated Judgment

The culmination of Executory Acumen draws from theories of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966) and embodied cognition (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), which reject the separation of knowing from doing. These perspectives argue that certain forms of judgment cannot be articulated in advance; they are acquired only through situated action and lived consequence.

Applied to entrepreneurship, this implies that the deepest form of executional competence is not propositional but embodied. Entrepreneurs learn what to choose and how firmly to choose it, by inhabiting the consequences of prior decisions. Over time, judgment becomes intuitive, context-sensitive, and action-ready. Executory Acumen, as conceptualized in this paper, is therefore not a trait or skill acquired in advance, but the cognitive residue of having repeatedly chosen, under uncertainty.

2.6 Integrative Justification for the Model

Taken together, judgment-based entrepreneurship, bounded rationality, effectuation, institutional theory, and embodied cognition converge on a common insight, which suggests that entrepreneurial execution in institutional voids is not the product of isolated decisions, but of a sequential consolidation of judgment, responsibility, and commitment.

Existing theories illuminate fragments of this process but stop short of offering a structured account of how choice evolves into executional mastery under persistent uncertainty. The Endeavor Sequence addresses this gap by providing a developmental architecture linking early cognitive discrimination, escalating decisional ownership, and the eventual emergence of Executory Acumen.

This theoretical foundation sets the stage for the construct sequence that follows, in which Disposition to Choose unfolds through identifiable antecedent–consequence pairings, culminating in the entrepreneur's full assumption of executional authority within the venture.

3. PRESENTING THE CONSTRUCT SEQUENCE

The Executing Endeavor Sequence advances the Endeavor framework by theorizing how entrepreneurial choice becomes executional capacity under institutional voids. Where as *Unfolding Endeavor* (Akilu, 2026a) examined the emergence of action from latent agency, the present sequence interrogates a deeper problem. that is how entrepreneurs learn to choose in ways that reliably produce outcomes when formal structures, enforcement mechanisms, and predictive cues are absent. This section introduces the construct sequence through which Disposition to Choose is progressively transformed into Executory Acumen. The sequence is not a chronology of activities, but a dialectical progression of agency states, each resolving a limitation inherent in the prior stage. Choice is treated here not as preference selection, but as agentic discrimination under constraint. In institutional voids, the problem is rarely whether options exist; it is whether the entrepreneur can discern, commit to, and enact options whose consequences remain opaque and weakly supported. The Executing Endeavor Sequence therefore models execution not as implementation, but as a learned capacity for consequential choice.

Each construct in the sequence functions as either an antecedent condition that expands choice-capacity or a consequential state that consolidates execution-capacity. Together, they form a structured arc through which creative discretion is disciplined into reliable delivery. The sequence culminates in Executory Acumen, a tacit, embodied competence that allows the entrepreneur to consistently convert judgment into outcomes despite institutional friction.

3.1 Thoughtful Improvisation (TI)

Thoughtful Improvisation (TI) constitutes the initiating condition of the sequence. *It is defined as the deliberate probing of uncertain environments through purposive action, undertaken not to resolve ambiguity immediately, but to surface its structure.* Unlike reactive improvisation, TI reflects an intentional engagement with indeterminacy, where action precedes clarity in order to generate it. The construct is grounded in Weick's (1998) theory of improvisation as sensemaking under ambiguity, but departs from purely emergent adaptation by introducing intentional curiosity as its defining feature.

It also resonates with effectual logic (Sarasvathy, 2001), particularly the premise that means-driven action can reveal latent ends. However, TI precedes effectuation proper: it is not yet about acting toward a venture, but about learning what can be acted upon.

Functionally, TI transforms the Disposition to Choose from a latent decisional capacity into an exploratory orientation geared toward probing the range of feasible decisions. In institutional voids, where rules are incomplete and signals unreliable, this probing activity is indispensable. TI reframes uncertainty from an executional hazard into an epistemic resource, allowing the entrepreneur to feel the contours of constraint before committing to direction.

3.2 Creative Thoughts (CT)

Creative Thoughts (CT) emerge as the first cognitive consolidation of insight generated through Thoughtful Improvisation. *It refers to the synthetic recombination of fragmented observations into novel yet contextually grounded venture possibilities.* Creativity here is not expressive ideation, but constraint-induced cognition, the ability to imagine alternatives that are plausible precisely because they are shaped by friction.

The construct is anchored in Amabile's (1996) componential theory of creativity, particularly the interaction between domain-relevant knowledge, creative cognition, and intrinsic motivation. Yet CT repositions creativity away from abundance-based novelty toward feasible originality under limitation. In institutional voids, ideas that ignore friction are not creative; they are naive.

CT performs a critical dialectical function, it translates experiential disturbance into ideational form. Where TI generates questions through action, CT produces *selectable options*. It therefore marks the transition from exploratory engagement to cognitive differentiation, enabling the entrepreneur to progress from situational sensemaking toward the identification of viable courses of action.

3.3 Smart Effectuation (SE)

Smart Effectuation (SE) represents the first disciplining of creative cognition through executional logic. *It is defined as the strategic enactment of means-driven experimentation that deliberately constrains risk, pace, and exposure.* While rooted in Sarasvathy's (2001) effectuation theory, particularly affordable loss, SE advances the concept by foregrounding discernment rather than mere action.

In contrast to undifferentiated effectual behavior, SE introduces selection intelligence into experimentation. Drawing also on March's (1991) exploration-exploitation framework, SE acknowledges that experimental actions vary in both informational value and survivability within institutional voids. Its distinguishing feature lies in the selective calibration of what to test, the extent of testing, and the timing of disengagement. Functionally, SE acts as a filter. It narrows the ideational field produced by Creative Thoughts by exposing options to incremental reality checks. In doing so, it converts imaginative possibility into execution-relevant knowledge, progressively aligning choice with survivability rather than aspiration alone.

3.4 Idea Initiatives (II)

Idea Initiatives (II) mark the first moment where choice becomes publicly consequential. *This is defined as small-scale, observable commitments undertaken to validate a selected idea in situ, often without formal endorsement or protection.* These may include informal pilots, reputation-bearing declarations, or resource-light launches that expose the idea to social and material response.

The construct draws from McMullen and Dimov's (2013) work on entrepreneurial judgment and proximal action, but reframes initiative-taking as a structural necessity in contexts lacking institutional validators. In institutional voids, legitimacy cannot be borrowed; it must be provoked. Idea initiative performs a decisive transformation in the sequence such that it shifts choice from cognitive preference to behavioral stance. The entrepreneur no longer merely selects

among ideas; they stand behind one. This exposure generates feedback that is qualitatively different from simulation or experimentation, it carries social, reputational, and emotional consequence, thereby deepening commitment and learning.

3.5 Iterative Bricolage (IB)

Iterative Bricolage (IB) represents the operational learning engine of the sequence. *It is defined as the recurrent recombination of limited resources across successive cycles of trial, error, and refinement, guided by feedback from prior initiatives.* While grounded in Bricolage Theory (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Baker & Nelson, 2005), IB introduces temporal intentionality as its distinguishing feature.

Where classic bricolage emphasizes “making do,” IB emphasizes making better over time. It transforms bricolage from a survival tactic into a developmental mechanism. Each cycle not only adapts the venture configuration but also sharpens the entrepreneur’s executional judgment.

Functionally, IB stabilizes the relationship between choice and consequence. Through repetition, the entrepreneur begins to recognize which adaptations generate traction and which merely absorb effort. This iterative exposure gradually converts situational improvisation into proto-expertise, preparing the ground for more consequential commitment.

3.6 Decisive Efforts (DE)

Decisive Efforts (DE) mark the escalation point at which execution becomes irreversible. *This is defined as targeted, high-salience commitments of capital, time, credibility, or identity that materially constrain reversal.* Drawing on Gimeno et al. (1997) and theories of commitment escalation (Staw, 1981), DE reframes sunk costs not as cognitive traps, but as executional signals. In institutional voids, where contracts are weak and enforcement unreliable, commitment must be made visible to be credible.

DE therefore functions relationally, it attracts collaborators, deters opportunism, and reorganizes expectations around the entrepreneur’s seriousness. Dialectically, DE resolves the ambiguity that persists even after bricolage. It resolves residual ambiguity by converting provisional engagement into an embodied state of commitment. Choice is no longer provisional; it becomes directional, reorganizing both the venture and the entrepreneur around a chosen path.

3.7 Honed Expertise (HE)

Honed Expertise (HE) emerges through sustained exposure to consequence. *It is defined as context-calibrated mastery developed through repeated execution under institutional friction.* Drawing on deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2006) and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), HE reframes expertise as adaptation to conditions, not optimization of technique.

In institutional voids, mastery is not about efficiency within stable systems, but about precision amid volatility. HE reflects the entrepreneur’s growing ability to anticipate friction, adjust tactics in real time, and execute with minimal waste despite uncertainty.

Functionally, HE initiates the final phase of the sequence by transforming accumulated experience into executional fluency. Decisions become faster, errors less costly, and adaptations more anticipatory than reactive.

3.8 Effective Actions (EA)

Effective Actions (EA) represents the visible expression of honed expertise. *This is defined as goal-advancing behaviors that reliably produce cumulative traction under constraint.* Informed by goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002) and dynamic capability perspectives (Zahra et al., 2006), EA emphasize momentum rather than isolated success. Crucially, effectiveness here is not measured by scale or formal performance metrics, but by compound gains i.e. credibility, continuity, resilience, and strategic room to maneuver.

EA signal that execution has become patterned rather than episodic. Functionally, EA convert individual competence into venture-level motion. They make execution legible to others and sustainable over time, preparing the ground for the final transformation of agency.

3.9 Executory Acumen (XA)

Executory Acumen (XA) is the culmination of the sequence. *It is defined as the embodied, tacit capacity to consistently translate strategic choices into viable outcomes under institutional friction.* XA synthesizes judgment, timing, commitment, and adaptation into a single executional disposition.

Grounded in Polanyi’s (1966) tacit knowledge and Mintzberg’s (1994) notion of strategy-as-craft, XA is not reducible to skill, routine, or decision rule. It is a *way of acting* that has been earned through traversal of the entire sequence.

XA represents the full realization of Disposition to Choose. Choice is no longer deliberative or anxious; it is confidently consequential. In institutional voids, Executory Acumen stands as the functional equivalent of operational excellence not imposed by systems, but generated endogenously through disciplined engagement with constraint.

4. SYNTHESIZING THE ENDEAVOR SEQUENCE: A DIALECTICAL PROGRESSION FROM DISPOSITION TO CHOOSE TO EXECUTORY ACUMEN

The Executing Endeavor Sequence presents a coherent conceptual framework that explains how entrepreneurial executional capacity emerges and stabilizes within institutional voids. It operationalizes the broader construct of Endeavor by unpacking execution into an ordered, dialectical progression of cognitive, judgmental, and behavioral constructs. At its core, this sequence reflects a transition from Disposition to Choose (DTC), the capacity to discriminate, commit, and assume responsibility under uncertainty to Executory Acumen (XA), the embodied, tacit mastery of execution in the absence of institutional support. Each stage builds upon and is catalyzed by the tension between antecedent discernment and consequential commitment, forming a self-reinforcing structure through which judgment is consolidated into reliable execution under constraint.

4.1 From Exploratory Engagement to Cognitive Differentiation: TI → CT

The sequence begins with Thoughtful Improvisation (TI), a deliberate engagement with uncertainty through purposive action aimed at surfacing the structure of indeterminate environments. TI reflects an early executional orientation in which action precedes clarity, allowing the entrepreneur to probe institutional gaps and frictions without committing prematurely (Weick, 1998; Miner, Bassoff, & Moorman, 2001). On its own, however, TI remains exploratory. While it generates experiential input, it does not yet enable discrimination among alternatives.

This limitation is resolved through Creative Thoughts (CT), which represent the cognitive consolidation of insights generated through improvisational engagement. CT involves the recombination of fragmented observations into novel yet contextually grounded possibilities (Amabile, 1996; Ward, 2004). The transition from TI to CT marks the activation of the Disposition to Choose by transforming experiential ambiguity into cognitively selectable options. At this stage, the entrepreneur advances from exploratory sensemaking to the articulation of viable courses of action within prevailing constraints.

4.2 Structuring Possibility, Assuming Discernment: CT → SE

With differentiated possibilities now present, Creative Thoughts (CT) provide imaginative breadth but remain insufficient for execution. In institutional voids, unfiltered creativity can amplify exposure rather than reduce uncertainty. Consequently, Smart Effectuation (SE) emerges as the disciplining mechanism that converts ideational possibility into execution-relevant logic. SE involves means-driven experimentation guided by selective judgment over scope, risk, and reversibility (Sarasvathy, 2001; Read et al., 2009).

This stage represents the consolidation of discernment, where the entrepreneur assumes responsibility not merely for acting, but for choosing *which* ideas to advance and *how far* to advance them. SE heightens the Disposition to Choose by framing experimentation as an exercise in judgment rather than action for its own sake. Consistent with bounded rationality (Simon, 1957; March, 1991), executional intelligence here lies in constraining choice under uncertainty rather than optimizing among imagined alternatives.

4.3 From Discernment to Public Stance: SE → II

Smart Effectuation structures experimentation, yet, it remains largely provisional and internally contained. Execution, however, requires exposure. This transition occurs through Idea Initiatives (II), small-scale, observable commitments that render choice socially and reputationally consequential. II may take the form of informal pilots, early offerings, or public declarations that invite response without formal protection (McMullen & Dimov, 2013; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001).

The movement from SE to II marks the first moment where Disposition to Choose becomes externally legible. Choice is no longer merely strategic; it becomes positional. By standing behind a selected idea, the entrepreneur converts judgment into stance, exposing themselves to feedback that carries emotional, social, and legitimacy-bearing consequences (Suchman, 1995). This stage transforms cognitive selection into accountable executional presence.

4.4 Navigating Executional Friction and Locking Choice: IB → DE

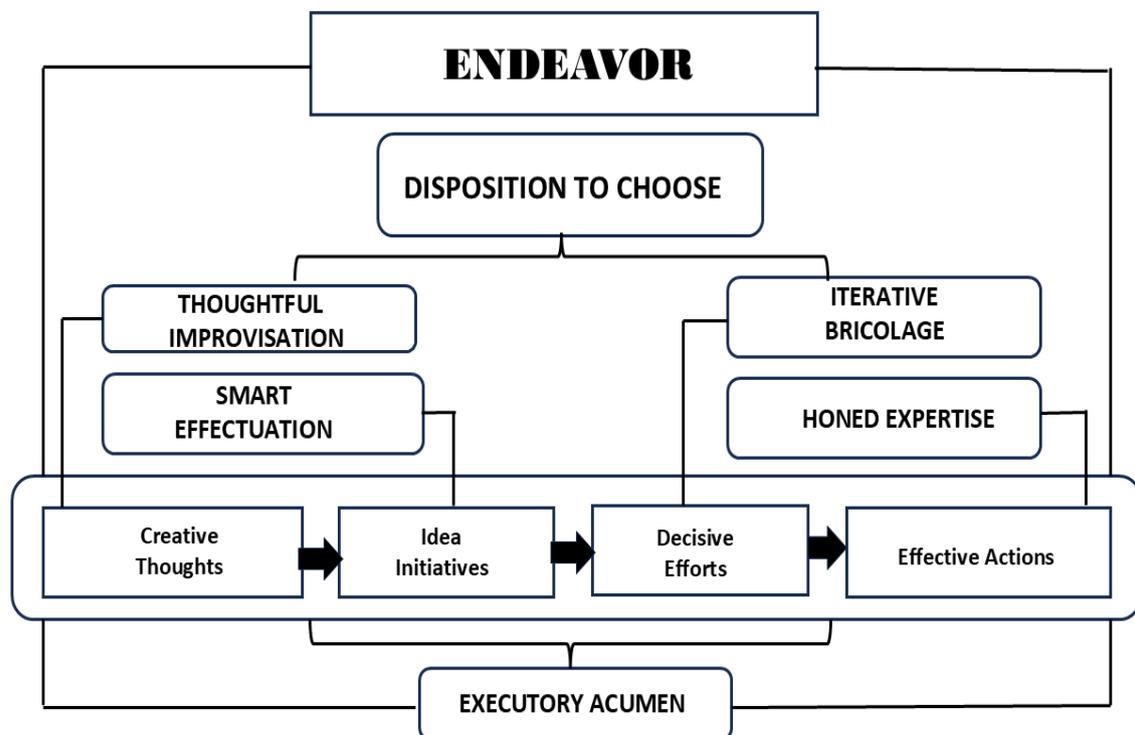
Institutional voids render execution fragile and adaptive rather than linear. As initiatives encounter resistance, Iterative Bricolage (IB) becomes essential. IB involves the recurrent recombination of limited resources across successive cycles of adjustment, allowing the entrepreneur to learn how execution responds to constraint over time (Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Baker & Nelson, 2005). This stage represents the operational deepening of Disposition to Choose, where judgment is refined through repeated confrontation with consequence.

However, adaptation alone does not resolve commitment. Excessive flexibility can sustain ambiguity regarding direction. This tension is resolved through Decisive Efforts (DE), high-salience, difficult-to-reverse commitments of time, capital, credibility, or identity (Staw, 1981; Gimeno et al., 1997). DE signifies the moment when choice becomes binding. In institutional voids, such commitments substitute for formal enforcement, reorganizing expectations and anchoring execution around a chosen path.

4.5 Becoming Execution: Culminating in Executory Acumen

The final construct, Executory Acumen (XA), represents a non-reducible, embodied capacity for execution developed through sustained traversal of the full sequence. XA is not merely the ability to act, but the tacit mastery of choosing, committing, and adapting in ways that reliably generate outcomes under institutional friction. It is grounded in theories of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966) and enactive cognition (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), positioning execution as lived competence rather than procedural skill. Executory Acumen transforms the entrepreneur from a decision-maker managing execution into the locus of execution itself. Choice becomes confidently consequential, timing becomes intuitive, and commitment becomes calibrated rather than hesitant. Execution is no longer dependent on external systems; it is generated endogenously through disciplined engagement with constraint. In this state, the entrepreneur does not merely run the venture, the venture's executional logic is internalized as an extension of self.

FIGURE 1.0: PHASES OF DISPOSITION TO CHOOSE IN ENDEAVOUR SEQUENCE



Executing Endeavor Sequence interacts within the broader logic of entrepreneurial execution in institutional voids:

Proposition 1 (TI → CT): Higher levels of Thoughtful Improvisation (TI) increase the likelihood that an entrepreneur will generate Creative Thoughts (CT), as deliberate probing of uncertain environments surfaces novel interpretations and executional possibilities under constraint.

Proposition 2 (CT → SE): Stronger Creative Thoughts (CT) enhance Smart Effectuation (SE) by providing differentiated cognitive options that enable selective judgment, constrained experimentation, and means-driven action.

Proposition 3 (SE → II): Greater Smart Effectuation (SE) increases the likelihood of initiating Idea Initiatives (II), as disciplined experimentation encourages early-stage, observable commitments that expose ideas to feedback and social consequence.

Proposition 4 (II → IB): Higher levels of Idea Initiatives (II) strengthen Iterative Bricolage (IB) by engaging execution in repeated cycles of resource recombination and adaptive learning in response to environmental feedback.

Proposition 5 (IB → DE): More sustained Iterative Bricolage (IB) increases the likelihood of Decisive Efforts (DE), as repeated adaptive cycles clarify viable execution paths and encourage high-salience, binding commitments.

Proposition 6 (DE → HE): Greater engagement in Decisive Efforts (DE) enhances Honed Expertise (HE) by providing cumulative exposure to consequences, refining context-sensitive judgment, and embedding executional skill through practice.

Proposition 7 (HE → EA): Higher levels of Honed Expertise (HE) increase the frequency and quality of Effective Actions (EA), as accumulated mastery allows the entrepreneur to convert insight and judgment into reliable, goal-advancing behaviours under constraint.

Proposition 8 (EA → XA): Stronger Effective Actions (EA) increase the emergence of Executory Acumen, enabling the entrepreneur to consistently translate strategic choice into viable outcomes, integrating timing, commitment, and adaptation.

Proposition 9 (Sequential Mechanism): The Executing Endeavor Sequence operates as a cumulative, ordered mechanism in which each antecedent–consequence dyad increases the probability of progression to the next stage, ultimately giving rise to Executory Acumen (XA) as the culmination of Disposition to Choose in institutional voids.

These propositions collectively reinforce the internal coherence of the Executing Endeavor Sequence and provide the analytical foundation for its subsequent integration into the intended overarching model. The next section situates the sequence within wider debates on the emergence of executional capacity in contexts of institutional absence.

5. THEORETICAL POSITIONING AND IMPLICATIONS OF DISPOSITION TO CHOOSE IN THE EXECUTING ENDEAVOR SEQUENCE

The Executing Endeavor Sequence advances entrepreneurial theory by shifting analytical focus from the emergence of entrepreneurial agency to the mastery of executional judgment under constraint. Whereas Unfolding Endeavor Sequence (Akilu, 2026a), explains how individuals transition into entrepreneurial being through Disposition to Act, this paper theorizes a subsequent and distinct Disposition to Choose, through which entrepreneurs learn to select, commit, and execute effectively within institutional voids. In contexts characterized by fragmented markets, weak enforcement mechanisms, and volatile opportunity structures (Khanna & Palepu, 1997), execution rather than ideation becomes the primary locus of entrepreneurial differentiation. This section positions the Executing Endeavor Sequence in relation to foundational theories of cognition, action, and learning, and elaborates its broader theoretical implications.

5.1. From Improvisation to Structured Creativity in Action

At its foundation, the Executing Endeavor Sequence resonates with theories of improvisation and creativity in action (Weick, 1998; Miner et al., 2001), particularly through the constructs of Thoughtful Improvisation (TI) and Creative Thoughts (CT). Unlike views that treat improvisation as spontaneous or reactive behavior, the model conceptualizes TI as a deliberate cognitive stance an active engagement with uncertainty that balances exploration and restraint. Creative Thoughts emerge not as abstract ideation but as execution-relevant insights generated through contextual probing. This framing extends creativity theory by situating novelty generation within ongoing action, rather than prior to it, emphasizing creativity as an executional resource rather than a purely cognitive event.

5.2. Advancing Effectuation toward Executional Selectivity

While Effectuation Theory (Sarasvathy, 2001) foregrounds action under uncertainty, it largely emphasizes initiation over refinement. The Executing Endeavor Sequence extends this logic through Smart Effectuation (SE), which introduces selectivity, judgment, and discrimination into means-driven action. By linking SE to Idea Initiatives (II), the model illustrates how entrepreneurs move beyond indiscriminate experimentation toward intentional, feedback-exposing commitments. This contribution reframes effectuation as a progressive competence rather than a static logic, demonstrating how repeated execution sharpens the entrepreneur's capacity to choose among alternatives rather than merely act upon them.

5.3. Bricolage, Iteration, and the Deepening of Commitment

The sequence builds on Bricolage Theory (Baker & Nelson, 2005) by embedding Iterative Bricolage (IB) within a developmental executional arc. Here, bricolage is not treated as a survival tactic but as a learning mechanism through which repeated recombination clarifies feasibility boundaries. The transition from IB to Decisive Efforts (DE) marks a critical theoretical shift: execution moves from adaptive tinkering to binding choice. This progression highlights how commitment is not an initial entrepreneurial trait but an emergent property of repeated engagement with constraint, thereby contributing to debates on escalation, sunk costs, and persistence in entrepreneurship.

5.4. Expertise Formation and Action Reliability under Constraint

Through the constructs of Honed Expertise (HE) and Effective Actions (EA), the Executing Endeavor Sequence aligns with theories of expertise development and deliberate practice (Ericsson et al., 1993), while adapting them to institutional void contexts. Expertise here is not domain mastery in stable environments but situational competence forged through consequence-laden decisions. Effective Actions represent the translation of this competence into reliable execution despite ambiguity and volatility. This perspective advances entrepreneurial learning theory by foregrounding reliability rather than optimization as the core outcome of executional maturity.

5.5. Executory Acumen and Situated Judgment

The culmination of the sequence in Executory Acumen (XA) contributes to judgment-based theories of entrepreneurship (Foss & Klein, 2012) and situated cognition (Suchman, 1987). XA represents a non-codifiable capacity to choose well under pressure, integrating timing, commitment, and adaptation. It is not reducible to skill, experience, or cognition alone; rather, it is an emergent form of practical wisdom grounded in repeated execution. In institutional voids, where formal decision heuristics often fail, Executory Acumen becomes the entrepreneur's primary source of strategic advantage.

5.6. Summary of Theoretical Contributions

The Executing Endeavor Sequence contributes to entrepreneurial theory by:

- i. Theorizing Disposition to Choose as a distinct and necessary phase in entrepreneurial development beyond initial action;
- ii. Reconceptualizing execution as a developmental process rather than a mechanical application of plans;
- iii. Advancing effectuation and bricolage theories by embedding them within a progressive executional logic;
- iv. Explaining how expert judgment and commitment emerge endogenously through repeated execution under constraint;
- v. Extending institutional voids literature by modeling how entrepreneurs develop executional mastery despite structural instability, rather than merely adapting to it.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Executing Endeavor Sequence advances entrepreneurial theory by explaining how executional capacity emerges and stabilizes in institutional voids through the transformation of Disposition to Choose into Executory Acumen. While deductively derived, the framework invites empirical testing, comparative analysis, and theoretical extension.

Future research can operationalize the sequence's constructs and examine their ordering using longitudinal or process-based designs, shifting attention from opportunity recognition to executional judgment under constraint. Qualitative and comparative studies across sectors and institutional contexts may further refine construct boundaries and reveal heterogeneity in executional trajectories.

The model also carries implications for entrepreneurship education and policy by suggesting that interventions should prioritize executional judgment, selective experimentation, and commitment formation rather than ideation alone. Finally, the framework invites integration with judgment-based, effectuation, bricolage, and institutional theories by repositioning execution as an embodied, developmental competence.

In sum, the Executing Endeavor Sequence offers a plausible account of how reliable execution emerges endogenously under institutional constraint, providing a foundation for cumulative research on entrepreneurial action.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper theorizes execution as a learned and embodied capacity rather than a downstream application of entrepreneurial intent. By introducing the Executing Endeavor Sequence, it explains how entrepreneurs operating in institutional voids progressively transform Disposition to Choose into Executory Acumen through a structured yet non-linear progression of judgmental and behavioral states. Execution is thus reconceptualized as a developmental achievement forged through repeated engagement with constraint, consequence, and commitment.

The framework contributes to entrepreneurship theory by shifting analytical focus from opportunity formation to executional mastery under uncertainty. It integrates insights from improvisation, effectuation, bricolage, expertise, and judgment-based perspectives into a coherent model that accounts for how reliable outcomes emerge despite weak institutional support. In doing so, it challenges views of execution as mechanical implementation and instead positions it as a form of practical wisdom cultivated over time.

Ultimately, the Executing Endeavor Sequence offers a generative lens for understanding entrepreneurial action where formal systems fail to scaffold choice. It highlights how disciplined engagement with uncertainty can substitute for institutional stability, enabling entrepreneurs not merely to act, but to choose, commit, and execute with consequence.

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