

Understanding Accidental Entrepreneur - A Conceptual Review of Entrepreneurial Emergence and Sustainability

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ABSTRACT: Accidental entrepreneurship is a significant yet an under-explored type of entrepreneurship in the broader entrepreneurial research study. The traditional entrepreneurial types focus on entering the business field with a deliberate intention, strategic planning, opportunity recognition and clearly defined goals. In case of accidental entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurship occurs as a result of situational triggers, personal interests, peer pressures, evolving circumstances and hobbies. This paper gives an extensive literature review on accidental entrepreneurship, the differences and uniqueness with the chosen categories of entrepreneurs, the emergence and the sustainability phases of the accidental entrepreneurs through the theories of effectuation and bricolage. The paper proposes two conceptual models - the Accidental Entrepreneur Emergence Model and the Accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model. The Accidental Entrepreneur Emergence Model focuses on how the different types of triggers combined with the community interactions and enabling environmental conditions lead the individuals into unplanned entrepreneurial entry by gradually recognizing the opportunities and participating in the commercial marketplace. The Accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model extends this understanding by including the theories of Effectuation and Bricolage to determine the decision making strategies, resource utilization behaviors, resilience techniques and sustainability practices under uncertain and constrained environments. The developed conceptual models give an understanding of the progression of accidental entrepreneurs from emergence to sustainability. The paper provides recommendations for policymakers, incubators, educational institutions and other entrepreneurial support systems to design and implement ecosystems that will help in recognizing and nurturing the accidental entrepreneurial pathways. Future research can focus on extending this study across various demographics, industries and geographies.

KEYWORDS : Accidental Entrepreneur, Effectuation Theory, Bricolage Theory, Flexible Entrepreneurship, Adaptive Venture

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a business process that has evolved from an economic activity to a dynamic force of multidimensional processes which includes recognizing the opportunities, combination of resources, managerial competencies and transformations in the socio-economic factors. Various research show entrepreneurship as an important contributor of sustainability (Salmivaara & Kibler, 2019), as an innovative process which is a combination of opportunities and developments (Prince, Chapman & Cassey, 2021) and as a catalyst that drives the modern economic development (Mokkaya S O, 2012). This expanding domain of entrepreneurs have been classified into diverse categories by the scholars that show the diversity of the entrepreneurial activities, their distinct paths, motivations and growth trajectories (Ruiz, et al, 2019; Gutterman, 2020; Barot, 2015).

Amid theses established classification, the concept of accidental entrepreneurs emerged as an underexplored area of inquiry. Unlike the major entrepreneurship types such as opportunistic, necessity, innovative and traditional which are characterised by intentionality and strategic planning, accidental entrepreneurs are those who enter the business unintentionally and without a strategic plan (Shah & Tripsas, 2007). The accidental entrepreneurs start the business journey by turning their personal interests into innovative ventures exploring the areas with low opportunity costs and niche, turbulent markets. This particular type of entrepreneurs are characterized by reactive decision making, self determination, situational triggers, adaptive learning and identity development (Ripolles & Blesa, 2025; Prak, Ritala & Velu, 2020; Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011).

To understand the behaviour of the accidental entrepreneurs, the Effectuation theory and the Bricolage theory act as valuable lens in understanding the action related strategies and decision related strategies. The effectuation theory enables the entrepreneurs to make decisions in areas of uncertainty through affordable loss, by forming strategic alliances, exploiting the pre-existing knowledge and being flexible (Sarasvathy, 2001). Bricolage theory emphasizes the entrepreneurs on taking action with the available resources

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under constraints for new purposes (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Together these strategies as given by (Fisher, 2012) provide a solid foundation for determining how accidental entrepreneurs initiate, adapt, make decisions and sustain their ventures despite limited resources and planning.

1.2. Research Gap

While various research have explored the motivations, attributes and the contextual trigger points of accidental entrepreneurs, there remains a lack in determining the emergence of the accidental entrepreneurs and their sustainability of those ventures. Limited attention has been given to the after effects of being an accidental entrepreneur - the transitions from unplanned entry to sustainable business practices, their responses to the financial, managerial, economic and environmental constraints, the cognitive and behavioral practices that influence the persistence and growth developments. This paper aims to address these research gaps by integrating the literature review with the formation of conceptual models for better understanding of the accidental entrepreneurial ventures.

1.3. Research Approach

This study involves the development of two conceptual models - the Accidental Entrepreneur Emergent Model and the Accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model. The Accidental Entrepreneur Emergent Model shows the development of the accidental entrepreneurs, their transition through unplanned entries and situational paths. The Accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model explains the factors influencing the survival of the venture and sustainability across different stages by drawing insights from the Effectuation theory and the Bricolage theory. These theories provide key inferences on the decision making strategies and the action related strategies of the accidental entrepreneurs. By integrating this literature review and the proposed models, the paper aims in providing a better understanding of accidental entrepreneurship as a distinct yet a hybrid category within the entrepreneurial landscape. It also provides a foundation for the adaptive decision making patterns, the emergence and sustainability tactics of the accidental entrepreneurs. The proposed models provide a foundation for developing evaluation benchmarks and support mechanisms for the accidental entrepreneurs, thereby facilitating better decision making in policy formulations, entrepreneurial education and training programs for the government policymakers, business incubators, investors, educational institutions and other key stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the identification of **business-related opportunities** through a process of using existing, new or a recombination of resources in an innovative and creative way (Raten, 2023). (Berglund, et al., 2020) view entrepreneurship as a process of creating a new venture and a development process where a new thought about the development of a business is taken as an idea and then it is validated at the time of its creation. This shows entrepreneurship as a structured transformation of novel ideas into viable ventures. (Long, 1983) proposes that entrepreneurship is about working within a business environment which involves adapting the required managerial skills along with being creative and ready for taking risks. This definition underscores entrepreneurship as an **innovative process** of economic development, managerial competencies and risk taking. Further adding on to this, (Mokkaya S O, 2012) says that entrepreneurship helps in the representation of the modern economy by acting as a catalyst for business and economic development which initiates many innovative businesses. This stresses the role of entrepreneurship as being the main stimulus for **shaping the modern economy**. (Baron A R, Shane A S, 2007) view Entrepreneurship from a **process perspective** as the essence of valuable opportunities and enterprising individuals by recognizing the individual micro and macro perspectives. In contrast to this individual perspective, (Crocì, 2016) conveys that Entrepreneurship was formed through **interdisciplinary** nature and needs several disciplines to remain viable and can never be truly an independent domain. This **opportunity oriented view** of entrepreneurship was further advanced by (Raten, 2023) viewing entrepreneurship as a combination of opportunities and innovative processes. (Prince, et al., 2021) extend this discussion by analyzing entrepreneurship as more aligned towards the nature of the new thoughts and ideas and developing those ideas by validating them with the other ideas obtained from various sources. Similarly, (Gartner, 1990) proposes that entrepreneurship reflects the robustness of a new field, budding with new ideas and thoughts with a diversity of perspectives, all competing for a prominent place in some future orthodoxy. There are also many perspectives that connect entrepreneurship with **socio-political agendas**. According to (Salmivaara & Kibler, 2019), entrepreneurship plays various roles in different versions of feasibility from being a receiver to a giver and then an opportunity driver in different contexts of sustainability. This shows the growing recognition of the role of entrepreneurship in addressing the various challenges globally. (Kuratko, D. F. & Hodgetts, C., 1998) describe entrepreneurship as the dynamic process of creating **incremental wealth** by individuals assuming major risks in equity, time, career commitment of providing value for some product.

The proposed definition integrates the various perspectives by grounding itself in classical and modern frameworks. (Barot, 2015) defines entrepreneurship as the combination of five factors - introduction of new product, introduction of new method of production, opening a new market, conquest of a new source of supply, carrying out a new organization. (Guterman, 2020) expands this by showing entrepreneurship as a business process that includes the identification and appraisal of opportunities, exploiting or selling

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those opportunities, efforts to acquire resources for exploitation, development of appropriate strategy and design of a new project or business model.

This literature reveals that the definition of entrepreneurship have evolved from an economic activity to a dynamic force of recognizing the opportunities, sustainability, managerial competencies and socio-economic change.

2.2. Categories of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship has been conceptualized into various categories that helps in understanding the heterogeneity of the entrepreneurial activities and the diverse entrepreneurial paths. (Ruiz, et al., 2019) categorize the entrepreneurship based on the individual small ventures to large-scale corporate renewal efforts as **traditional entrepreneurship, scalable technology based enterprises, social entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship through acquisition**. Traditional entrepreneurs focus on serving the local markets, Scalable technology based enterprises which are also known as startups serve the global markets with a technical element, social entrepreneurship look for building the business by creating solutions to social problems, intrapreneurship deals business opportunities within a company and entrepreneurship through acquisition is focused on acquiring and existing business (Ruiz, et al., 2019).

(Guterman, 2020) expands this discussion on categories by identifying **potential entrepreneurs, nascent entrepreneurs, expected entrepreneurs and new business owners** on the basis of the individuals at different stages of readiness and engagement with the entrepreneurial activities. Potential entrepreneurs are those with the abilities and resources to start a business in the chosen area, Expected entrepreneurs are those who have expressed a concern to start a business in the future, Nascent entrepreneurs are the early stage business owners and New business owners are those who have emerged from the nascent stage (Guterman, 2020). These types focus on the characteristics of intention, opportunity and actions, thereby emphasizing on the lifecycle of entrepreneurship.

Considering motivation as an element, entrepreneurs have been classified as **Opportunity based entrepreneurs and necessity based entrepreneurs** by (Barot, 2015) for the development of the economy. Opportunity based entrepreneurs pursue the business to proactively exploit the various market gaps that are available to them while Necessity based entrepreneurs are compelled into business due to unavoidable circumstances and lack of other alternatives, thereby playing a crucial role in their livelihoods.

Another way to distinguish entrepreneurship is by analyzing them into two categories as **innovation driven entrepreneurship and small business entrepreneurship**. This analysis was given by (Aulet.M & Murray.F, 2013) by focusing on the entrepreneurial goals, competitiveness and survival strategies. This explains that innovation driven entrepreneurs focus on the high growth, technology-enabled ventures with scalability while the small business entrepreneurs often prioritize stability and the local impact on their businesses.

(Welter F, et al., 2016) distinguish entrepreneurship as **high growth business, technology enabled business and venture capital backed business** on the basis of everyday entrepreneurial activities and diversity. Adding on to this (Morris H, et al., 2016) have classified the entrepreneurial ventures into four categories as survival ventures, lifestyle ventures, managed growth ventures and aggressive growth ventures. Survival ventures provide the basic subsistence and existence for the entrepreneur, lifestyle ventures provide a workable business model with a stable income and maintenance approach, managed growth ventures focuses on ongoing business developments with a stable growth and aggressive growth ventures also known as gazelles are technology based ventures with innovation capabilities (Morris H, et al., 2016)

These perspectives show that entrepreneurship is understood through various categories, demonstrating its pluralistic phenomenon that encompasses all kinds of traditional and modern forms. These categorizations enrich the understanding of entrepreneurship's diversity and its role in varied economic and social contexts (Ruiz, et al., 2019)

2.3. Accidental Entrepreneurs

The concept of accidental entrepreneurship has attracted prominence in the recent scholarly articles. This particular concept of entrepreneurship shows the departure of the entrepreneurs from the traditional, intentional, opportunity and necessity driven models of entrepreneurial activity. (Prak, et al., 2020) define accidental entrepreneurs are those who react to a situation or need they encounter, and venturing into entrepreneurship might be a consequence of their initial reactive actions. This shows that accidental entrepreneurship is an **emergence of the responses** rather than proactive planning. (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011) describes accidental entrepreneurs are those with **low initial desire but high perceived feasibility**, forming entrepreneurial intentions after recognizing a viable market opportunity. Hence, feasibility outweighs motivation and the decision to pursue a business arises by recognizing the realistic market conditions. Further insights are offered by (Shah & Tripsas, 2007) who highlight that accidental entrepreneurs are described by their **informal nature** and the absence of conventional business creation methodologies. Accidental entrepreneurs are defined as those people who weren't born into a business family, who never expected to be self employed and never thought of becoming an entrepreneur but find themselves one due to a chance or a reluctant choice and gradually learn the business to make it a success (Brown, 2008). Accidental Entrepreneurs are also distinct as they are the people who do not focus more on the ultimate success of the ventures but utilize the opportunities that come on the way and apply their potential to achieve success (Gorling & Rehn, 2008).

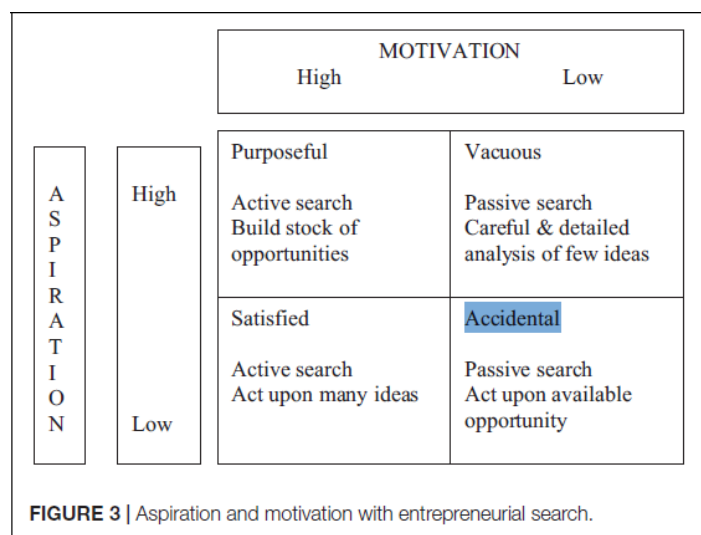
The proposed definition based on these insights show accidental entrepreneurs as those individuals who unintentionally enter into

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entrepreneurship by turning their personal use or enjoyment driven innovations into business, emerging under low opportunity costs within small scale niche and turbulent markets through gradual ideas, feedback and resources (Shah & Tripsas, 2007).

2.4. Attributes

The study on accidental entrepreneurs extends beyond the definition to understanding the distinct attributes that shape their unplanned entrepreneurial journey. (Shah & Tripsas, 2007) describe accidental entrepreneurs are those working in turbulent markets with low opportunity costs and focusing primarily on the small scale, niche markets. These type of entrepreneurs follow an informal nature without any built-in business plans or strategies and consider their joy and satisfaction as their driving forces to take the venture forward. Further building on this, (Boateng, 2022) explains from a family business context, showing how the social media, innovative business practices and the changing traditional family roles have carved more opportunities for accidental entrepreneurs to evolve. (Gorling & Rehn, 2008) argue that accidental entrepreneurs rely on risk, luck and new opportunities, reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurial success can stem from material and contextual circumstances rather than strategic foresight. Complementing these attributes, (Demetry, 2017) emphasizes that hobbies and identity development play an important role in shaping the entrepreneurial ventures through personal passions. (Minarcine & Shaw, 2016) note that various factors like organizational politics, lack of job satisfaction, innovative mindset, pursuit for knowledge and training, search for success, autonomy and meaningful work leads to the rise of accidental entrepreneurs. This shows accidental entrepreneurship arises not though long term business planning but for a search for innovation and identity driven action. In the same way, (Ripolles & Blesa, 2025) explain that accidental entrepreneurs are those who do not set out to enter business but they utilize the unique capabilities of the various platforms that are available to them to build a market and gradually turn that interest into a potential venture.. The accidental entrepreneurs' business journey gets built through their engagement with social media and environmentally sustainable practices with unintentional use of the various social media platforms. (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011) explore the psychological aspects and the intentions in these types of entrepreneurs, explaining that accidental entrepreneurs do not aspire to become a businessperson initially but start their actions once the opportunities become visible, showing limited interest but high feasibility. Extending this thought, (Zhou & Wu, 2021) focus on the factors that lead to the birth of these new entrepreneurs which include the search for new opportunities, the drive to gain wealth and the motivation to innovate, that can be the result of either purposive actions or accidental decisions. Taken together, the various studies illustrate that accidental entrepreneurs are those who are shaped by a blend of enjoyment, coincidences, digital platforms, social contexts and adaptive motivations. They enter into the business field informally, driven by viability and opportunity rather than strong initial intentions.



The reasons behind accidental entrepreneurship has been explored with relation to motivation and aspiration. (Zhou & Wu, 2021) present a framework that distinguishes entrepreneurial entry with respect to two dimensions: motivation and aspiration. According to this model, the entrepreneurs with high motivation and high aspiration has a purpose for starting the business with active search and building a stock of opportunities for future endeavors. Accidental entrepreneurs emerge at the intersection of **low motivation and low aspiration**. These individuals do not actively seek out entrepreneurship but act upon the available opportunities that align with their circumstances. This leads to a fact that accidental entrepreneurship is more of a reactive process that is caused by situational feasibility and possibility and not by long term vision.

2.5. Difference and Uniqueness

The different types of entrepreneurship discussed reflect the variations in motivation, opportunity orientation, growth aspirations and contextual influences by giving a structured path to understand the diverse ways for an individual to take up business. Accidental

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entrepreneurs differ from these established types but also intersect with them in various relations through unplanned entry, adaptive learning and opportunity utilization (Brown, 2008).

2.5.1. Innovative Entrepreneurs

Innovative Entrepreneurs are those who seek new market opportunities, drives growth with agility, takes risks, solves problems, plans strategically, **innovates through restructuring**, and embraces challenges in diverse markets (Baltar & Coulon, 2014). The focus is mainly on discovering something new, reintegrating functions, turning a problem into a business opportunity and bringing the entrepreneurial visions to life (Faltin, 2001). Accidental entrepreneurs have an **indirect relation** to these innovative entrepreneurs as innovation occurs unexpectedly after entering into business unintentionally, thereby highlighting the adaptive and opportunistic side of accidental entrepreneurship (Boateng, 2022).

2.5.2. Necessity Entrepreneurs

Necessity Entrepreneurs are those who decided that their “need” for self-actualization could be fulfilled only by starting a business of their own, where entrepreneurship becomes the only available livelihood alternative and a response to the socioeconomic **constraints** (Giacomin, et al., 2023). (Donnell, 2021) further describes them as necessity entrepreneurs are the individuals who escape unemployment, focus on obtaining prestige, obtaining social recognition, meeting the family expectations and perpetuating the family traditions. Accidental entrepreneurs often resemble necessity entrepreneurs in that their entry into business is unplanned and shaped by external circumstances, though their focus is not always survival but also seizing opportunities that arise along the way (Zhou & Wu, 2021).

2.5.3. Opportunistic Entrepreneur

Opportunistic Entrepreneur are the persons who are drawn into entrepreneurship by a **prior discovered entrepreneurial opportunity** and with acquired competencies by making use of the various circumstances that come during their entrepreneurial journey (Block & Wagne, 2010). (Fairlie, et al., 2018) also describe that opportunistic entrepreneurs are characterized by high entrepreneurial alertness, strong human capital, risk taking with quick decision making and high ability to leverage resources. Accidental Entrepreneurs align with this particular type of entrepreneurs according to (Baron & Shane, 2007) when, after unplanned entry into the business, they scan the market and the target segment for exploiting the opportunities during their entrepreneurial journey.

2.5.4. Traditional Entrepreneur

Traditional entrepreneurs are explained with a **structured development framework** and deliberate preparation. (Zhuravlev & Cheremenskaia, 2023) describe the traditional entrepreneurs are the business owners that make and implement autonomous decisions to search for and use the opportunities in the existing markets for the subsequent receipt of a profit rate characteristic of that particular market. Their characteristics include strict development framework, replicating the products and services, not prioritizing the growth rates but calculating the development risks for long term success. Accidental entrepreneurs have a **complete contrast vision** and goal setting. (Prak, et al., 2020) explain that the entry of the accidental entrepreneur is spontaneous and reactive with no intentional preparation setting them apart from traditional entrepreneurs who are in deliberate pursuit of business opportunities.

This literature shows that accidental entrepreneurs share commonalities with necessity and opportunistic entrepreneurs but diverge from traditional ones. While innovative and opportunistic elements may arise after accidental entry, necessity factors often explain their initial motivations. This highlights that accidental entrepreneurship is best understood as a **hybrid category**, overlapping with but distinct from established entrepreneurial types. Their entrepreneurial journey is characterized by adaptive learning, flexibility, experimentation, utilizing the unexpected opportunities and ability to respond to the changing circumstances. For a better understanding of the decision making patterns and action related strategies, the theories of Effectuation and Bricolage help in providing strong theoretical foundations.

2.6. Effectuation Theory

Effectuation Theory that was introduced by (Sarasvathy, 2001) focuses on determining the available means and creating best possible outcomes with that available resources, gradually allowing the goals to emerge during the course of time rather than having predetermined goals. This approach is very relevant in those environments of the entrepreneurs with high level of uncertainty where thinking, acting and making decisions are difficult and unreliable as supported by (Atrup, et al., 2023). The effectuation set of means given by (Pacho & Mushi, 2020) enable the entrepreneurs in raising the resources and shaping the opportunities, allowing in the reconstruction of their preferences, creating experience in the functional areas and developing social networks. During the course of this entrepreneurial education, the effectuation theory has gained eminence as a flexible and an adaptive framework that helps in supporting innovation and opportunity creation in a resource constrained environment (Dawa & Marks, 2023).

2.6.1. Cognitive Foundation

The effectiveness of the effectuation theory does not focus just on the four principles but also on the underlying cognitive processes that guide the entrepreneurial behavior of those unplanned people. As per (Atrup, et al., 2023), effectuation theory enhances the entrepreneurial thinking skills, flexibility, collaboration and decision making skills in uncertain circumstances that leads to the

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development of cognitive flexibility which is the ability to easily adapt and switch between the changing circumstances, mindsets, concepts and perceptions. This gradually leads to multiple representations, cognitive restructuring, task switching and cognitive inhibition. (Zhang & Burg, 2020) emphasize that the business education plays an important role in understanding this through action, reaction, interaction, transformation and co-creation. The purpose of this theory is to create values and originality that will help in leading to new ends and improvising the existing solutions. Thus effectuation plays a crucial role in strengthening these cognitive abilities, thereby fostering the creative thinking and flexibility, by enabling the entrepreneurs with a mindset to navigate the uncertainties effectively (Pacho & Mushi, 2020).

2.6.2. Affordable Loss Principle

This principle of affordable loss focuses on potential losses rather than the expected returns. This mainly evaluates the entrepreneur's risk tolerance and acceptable losses for their pursuit of sustainability (Dawa & Marks, 2023). (Saravathy, 2001) identifies this principle as a strategy that enables the creators to identify the opportunities in uncertain environments rather than looking for maximizing the immediate profits and investing in predicted future resources. (Ferrari & Vasconcellos, 2024) further support this principle by saying that entrepreneurs shift their focus from prediction of future gains to limiting the potential risk and losses that allows them to experiment with new strategies and proceed despite unpredictable circumstances. This affordable loss principle is extremely relevant in situations where the outcomes are uncertain and active adaptation with the available resources and opportunities are necessary for sustaining the business. Affordable loss can be understood as two components as given by (Martina, 2018) into the ability component that includes the level of risk that the entrepreneur is ready to endure and the willingness component that includes the particular things that the entrepreneur is ready to lose during those specific investments. This affordable loss principle provides a practical framework for entrepreneurial action by balancing risk with control and enabling the entrepreneurs to remain resilient and adaptive by pursuing new opportunities without overexposing towards potential failures.

2.6.3. Crazy Quilt Principle

This principle is about forming strategic alliances rather than competitive analysis which involves forming partnerships to gain new resources. (Saravathy, 2001) emphasize that strategic alliances and stakeholders' pre-commitments enable the entrepreneurs to navigate the situations of uncertainty and help in removing the entry barriers. (Dawa & Marks, 2023) further complement by saying that entrepreneurship helps in sustaining by extending the collaborations with environmental organizations, community members, suppliers, customers and social impact entities. This enables in leveraging the relationships for advancing the sustainability goals. The Crazy quilt principle is about a dynamic social exchange process as given by (Dutta & Packard, 2024) which is not just about forming partnerships but building trust and commitment over time along with charisma that enables the various stakeholders to invest in the resources with analyzed affordable loss. This collaborative approach fosters co-creating new opportunities, pooling resources, expanding capabilities and sharing risks that is essential for addressing complex challenges, thus contrasting with the traditional approach of competitive strategies.

2.6.4. Bird In Hand Principle

The Bird In hand principle is about exploitation of contingencies rather than exploitation of resources which involves creating solutions and utilizing the opportunities that arise over time. (Saravathy, 2001) emphasizes that rather exploiting the pre-existing knowledge which forms the basis for competitive advantage, it is essential to exploit the unexpected eventualities that happen during the course of the business. This improves the agility, adaptability and sustainability of the entrepreneurs in their quest to achieve their objectives by adjusting to the changing market, societal and environmental conditions (Dawa & Marks, 2023). This enables the entrepreneurs to embrace these unexpected events and utilize the opportunities rather than looking at them as obstacles. It improves their resilience and adaptability by remaining flexible and responsive. Further, (Saravathy, 2006) states that this principle acts as a means driven approach where the entrepreneurs begin with who they are, what they know and whom they know and gradually the opportunities are created with regard to the actions and interactions with the available resources. This leads to the development of a commercial concept with a creative approach that is beyond their limited knowledge, skills, capital and social networks (Atrup, et al., 2023). Hence this principle targets on leveraging the current capabilities that is critical for the growth and sustainability of the business in dynamic markets rather than predicting the future outcomes.

2.6.5. Lemonade Principle

The lemonade principle also known as the flexibility principle describes about controlling an unpredictable future rather than predicting an uncertain one. 'When life gives you lemons, make a lemonade', this phrase captures the essence of utilizing the mistakes and surprises as opportunities. (Saravathy, 2001) implies that this principle holds true in areas where human action acts as the predominant factor for achieving the future goals. The entrepreneur will define his target market and commit enough resources and talents to sustain that instead of defining a universal market with possible customers. (Dawa & Marks, 2023) further highlights the resourcefulness of the entrepreneurs by focusing on their ability to leverage their accumulated knowledge, environmental expertise, social networks, experiences and personal preferences to drive sustainable innovations. This principle provides with strategies that allow the entrepreneurs to change with the changing circumstances and take strategic action of the favorable

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circumstances that occur during this endeavors (Atrup, et al., 2023). By doing so, the entrepreneurs are able to adjust their actions and directions based on the situations that will help in shaping and influencing the outcome of the venture that is developing instead of following a fixed plan (Prashantham, et al., 2018). Hence uncertainty is not a challenge but is a source of potential advantage when it is approached with the right flexible mindset.

2.7. Bricolage Theory

The theory of entrepreneurial bricolage refers to the process where the entrepreneurs make do that is they take action using whatever resources they have rather than waiting for the ideal sources and combining those existing sources for new purposes. (Baker & Nelson, 2005) conceptualize this theory as creating something from nothing across multiple domains, refusing to accept limitations under resource constraints. This enabled the firms to determine the environmental resource limitations and then enact to those skillfully, improving their bricolage capabilities for growth. Building on this foundation, (Senyard, et al., 2009) provides an understanding on the impact of the bricolage theory at various stages in the development of the firm. The entrepreneurial bricolage has a positive effect in making progress during the creation of the firm. However when the firms are established and becomes operational, this entrepreneurial bricolage will have a negative effect in the performance of the firm. Further, (Li, et al., 2024) also imply that entrepreneurial bricolage has a positive effect on the growth of new ventures, by enabling the firms to know the importance of combining various resources in new ways to create business values, utilizing the brief opportunities, overcoming the resource constraints and preparing thoroughly for future growth possibilities. This enables the firms to find the new opportunities and solve any escalating problems. (Frese & Gielnik, 2022) look at bricolage from a process perspective which shows that entrepreneurs use this bricolage for the combining the acquired external resources with the available internal resources gradually leading to the advancement in the growth of the firms through incubation programs and grants. Entrepreneurial bricolage forms an important part in the entrepreneurial action. Further, (Puertas, et al., 2025) research on the role of the bricolage theory on the entrepreneurial activities. The effect of this entrepreneurial bricolage has a positive impact on the discovery activity and the exploitation activity. The level of innovation acts as a mediating factor to enhance the relationship between the bricolage effect and the discovery, exploitation activities through specific dimensions like questioning about the applications of the existing sources, observing the underutilized values in the existing resources, experimenting those applications through market testing and networking with the suitable stakeholders for resource transformations. The relationship between entrepreneurial bricolage and innovation has been further researched by (Wu, et al., 2016) who imply that bricolage has a positive effect on new product creativity and new product development speed. According to this paper, the consistent use of Bricolage helps in speeding up the product development, but its effect on creativity is limited and hence over-usage can have a negative impact. (Bhardwaj, et al., 2023) expand the understanding of this theory by analyzing the bricolage capabilities. These include making do, refusing to enact to limitations, networking with stakeholders, improvising, enhancing the financial sustainability, expanding the resource base, persuasion, sensibilization, sourcing from local traders, commodification through storytelling and growing the knowledge base. (Fisher, 2012) provides a comparative perspective by bringing together the fundamental similarities of effectuation and bricolage theories. Both these theories focus commonly on the concepts that center around the actionable opportunities, individual or team-oriented actions, resource constraints and entrepreneurial communities.

Based on the insights gained from this literature, we can conceptualize bricolage theory as the mechanism by which the entrepreneurs navigate in the emerging stage of the firm by acting with the available resources, recombining the existing resources for new purposes and refusing to accept limitations, thereby enabling the progress and supporting the development of opportunity discovery and exploitation activities.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A detailed and a conceptual literature review has been done to determine the definition and the attributes of the accidental entrepreneurs. The relevant articles and the empirical studies about entrepreneurship, the different types of entrepreneurs, accidental entrepreneurs, effectuation theory and bricolage theory were reviewed from scholarly databases, peer reviewed journals, research books and academic articles. Through this literature review, the research gaps, behavioral patterns of the accidental entrepreneurs and the ongoing business practices associated with accidental entrepreneurship were analyzed which helped in the development of two conceptual models explaining the emergence and the sustainability pathways of the accidental entrepreneurs.

3.1. Conceptual Model Development

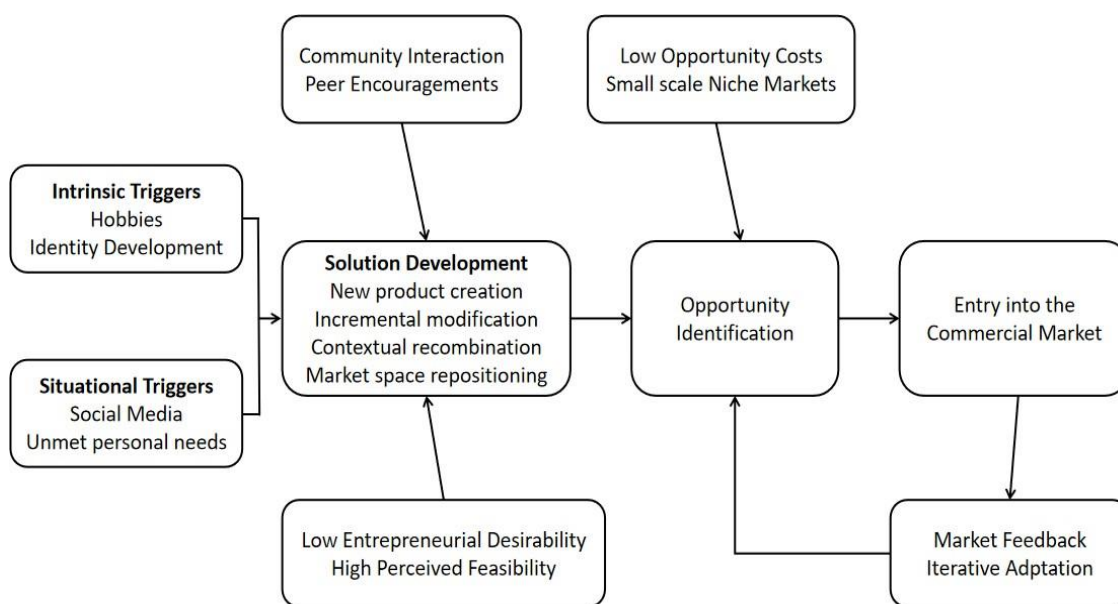
With the insights developed from the literature review of accidental entrepreneurs, two conceptual models have been developed to explain the emergence and the sustainability phase of the accidental entrepreneurs. The prior research have studied the motivations, driving factors, key attributes and the influences of the accidental entrepreneurs. The proposed models address the various combinations of triggers, cognitive evaluations, adaptive actions and the sustainability reasons.

3.1.1. Accidental Entrepreneur - Emergence Model

This emergence model of accidental entrepreneur is an integrated framework that includes the key factors identified in the literature

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study which prompts the individuals to enter into the business field, the adaptive behaviors after unintentional entry into the business venture and the contextual influences that shape their entrepreneurial pathway. This model serves as an interaction between the individual, environmental, situational and community paths presented in a structured and a coherent way.



The triggers explained in the model are those that initiate the entrepreneurial action not through deliberate intentions but that ignite the behaviors and the activities of the individuals to acquire the required potential to embark on this entrepreneurial journey.

- Intrinsic Triggers that focus on the internal driving factors of the individuals lay the foundation for new creative, innovative and productive activities leading to entrepreneurial thinking and action. The hobbies emphasize their search for innovation and self determination which stems with (Demetry, 2017). The identity development given by (Minarcine & Shaw, 2016) encourages the spirit for skill development, independence, achievement and meaningful work.
- Situational Triggers focus on the potential opportunities in the existing environment, the current trends and the changing circumstances. Social Media acts a powerful tool in shaping the track of these accidental entrepreneurs through powerful role of the digital platforms (Ripolles & Blesa, 2025). The unmet personal needs are the results of the interaction with external circumstances and situational analysis.

The transition from these triggers to entrepreneurial action are influenced by the factor and the condition that create an enabling environment for those individual to explore these kind of entrepreneurial opportunities without any planning, commitment, intentions and risk.

- Community interaction and peer encouragement foster mutual growth, actionable recommendations, balancing the social and economic value creations while addressing various other challenges (Lenz, A.K., et al, 2025)
- Low entrepreneurial desirability and high perceived feasibility is the critical condition that shows entrepreneurial actions arise when the opportunities become visible even in the absence of any strong objectives. This passive search for opportunities outweighs the aspiration and motivation as given by (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011).

The solution development which occurs as a result of the intrinsic and situational triggers, the factor and the condition is usually the transformation of the informal, unplanned activities into potential business offerings. This particular stage includes,

- New product creation which involves developing an entirely novel, original and innovative product to address a particular need or a problem
- Incremental modification involves making changes or improvements to the existing product or service to improve its value
- Contextual recombination is the process of combining the existing resources to make a new product or create a new solution
- Market space repositioning involves presenting the existing product to a different target market in a new way that adds value

As these solutions evolve, the individuals begin to identify the opportunities and the potential advantages of utilizing them in a commercial space. This stage acts as a preliminary step before entering the commercial marketplace, marking the transition from an unplanned activity to a structured business engagement. An enabling environment is created for the individuals at this stage through low opportunity costs and small scale niche market conditions. (Shah & Tripsas, 2007) describe this as an enabling environment that encourages the accidental entrepreneurs to explore the various business opportunities with reduced risks, lower commitments, practicable circumstances, continued iterations and flexible participation.

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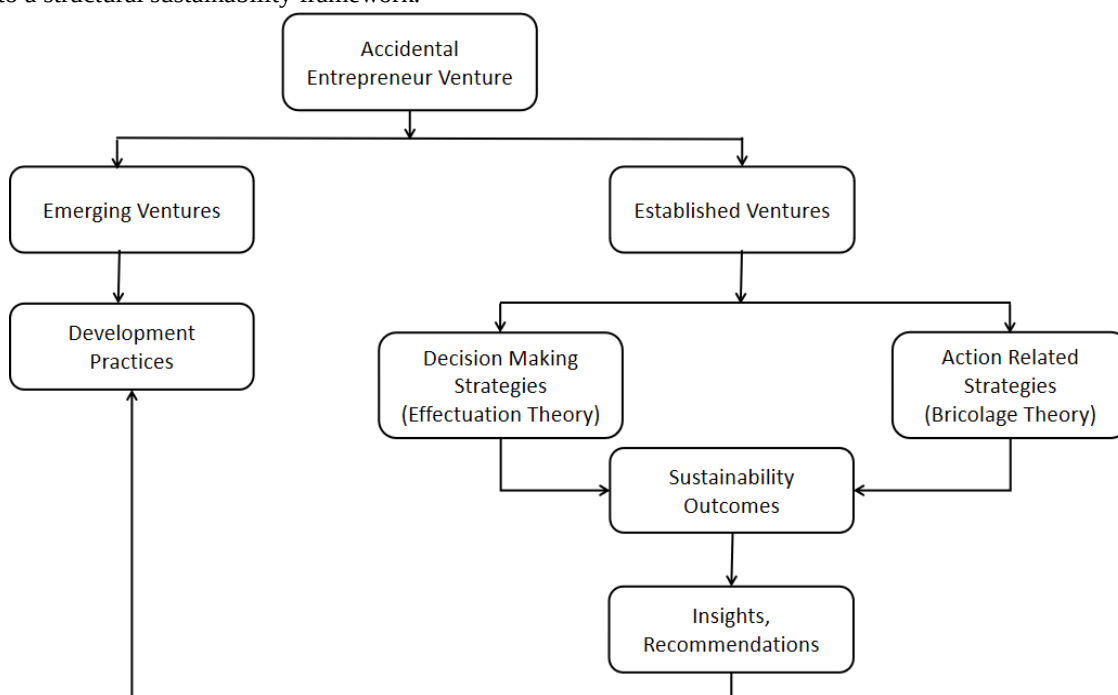
After the identification of the opportunity, the entry into the commercial marketplace provides insights about the customer needs, wants, demands, pricing, competitions, market gaps, distribution channels, feedback and value proposition. This gives the individuals an active market participation and moving towards a more structured business engagement.

A market feedback and iterative adaptation concludes the model with a loop that enables for product refinement, incorporating the customer feedback, new learning, adjusting the market offerings, enhancing the value chain and adapting to the changing competitions. This continuous interactions helps in developing strategies and plans for the survival and sustainability of the business.

- ✓ This model consolidates the scattered ideas and attributes of an accidental entrepreneur into a structured framework with stages that shows the emergence of an accidental entrepreneur.
- ✓ The model show the shift from an unintentional activity and simple interest to a structured income generating venture.

3.1.2. Accidental Entrepreneur - Sustainability Phase Model

The accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model explains the development of the venture after emergence which includes the characteristics, strategies and plans for stabilizing, adapting and sustaining over time. The existing literature focuses on the entry and the characteristics of accidental entrepreneurs, this model addresses the gap by integrating the theories of effectuation and bricolage into a structural sustainability framework.



The model begins with accidental entrepreneur venture that has been started through unplanned and unintentional pathways explained in the previous emergence model of accidental entrepreneurs. The ventures will be divided into two categories based on the size, demographic characteristics, type, scale of operations and industry experience.

- Emerging Ventures - These are the early stage business and startups that are informal and have experimental business activities
- Established Ventures - These are the business that are beyond the early stage with a structured, consistent and an operational business model

For the established ventures, the sustainability depends highly on more structured strategic approaches and business models. This model includes two important strategies for the key dimensions.

➤ Decision Making Strategies (Effectuation Theory)

This theory enables the entrepreneurs to make decisions at times of uncertainty by making the maximum usage of the available resources (Sarasvathy, 2001). This approach allows the entrepreneurs to take decisions in developing partnerships with stakeholders for sustained collaboration (Dawa & Marks, 2023), in exploiting the current knowledge and events for flexible strategies (Atrup, et al., 2023) and pursuing new opportunities with a risk tolerance. This enables the accidental entrepreneurs to remain resilient and adaptable to the changing, uncertain circumstances and make decisions with the right flexible and responsive mindset.

➤ Action Related Strategies (Bricolage Theory)

This theory is about how the entrepreneurs take action with the available resources in hand by creating new products, services or any combination of resources rather than waiting for the ideal sources to move forward (Baker & Nelson, 2005). This concept given by (Li, et al., 2024) allows the entrepreneurs to operate efficiently at all circumstances despite any resource constraints, environmental limitations or any other rising problems. Hence, bricolage oriented actions emphasize the entrepreneurs to support

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innovation, creativity and operational continuity.

The integration of effectuation (decision logic) and bricolage (action logic) helps in the development of the strategies for smooth running of the business which gradually leads to the sustainability outcomes. This mainly includes the operational continuity, adaptive growth techniques, long term stability plans and stable business functions. The resilience, adaptability, flexibility and continuous improvements of the entrepreneurs lead to the sustainability of their ventures. This iterative progress emphasizes the scaling, profitability, sustainability and a steady progress under changing conditions.

For emerging ventures, the sustainability mainly depends on the development practices which involves continuous experimentation, learning by doing things, skill enhancements, informal decision making processes and iterative improvements in their innovating behaviour. These practices align with the concept of adaptive learning and improvisation where the resource constraints, environmental changes, market uncertainties and competitive pressures will help in developing sustainability practices for evolving the venture.

The contribution of this model is the insights and the recommendations which develops as a feedback loop to strengthen the development practices for the emerging ventures, thereby strengthening the cycle of continuous improvements. The sustainability outcomes of the established ventures provide practical business insights, strategic recommendations, managerial implications, steady growth guidelines and resource optimization approaches. These suggestions influence the emerging ventures to integrate those decision and action plans with their development practices for a better structured growth. It also creates a cyclical learning system where the market experience knowledge helps in the continuous refinement of business practices. The feedback loop highlights that sustainability is not just about being linear and achieving the objectives, it is an iterative and a continuous learning driven development process.

- ✓ This model explains the post emergence phase of the accidental entrepreneurs by extending beyond the entry into the long term venture development and the sustainability of the business
- ✓ The model provides a holistic explanation about the behaviors of the accidental entrepreneurs through the integration of the effectuation theory and the bricolage theory.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Findings

This research mainly looks into the insight of an accidental entrepreneur and the transformation from the emergence to the sustainability of the business. The previous research was completely focused on the attributes, characteristics and motivations of an accidental entrepreneur. This paper contributes to the existing study by developing conceptual models which explains the emergence process of an accidental entrepreneur and the sustainability phase of their business venture.

Through an extensive review of literature, this study identifies that an accidental entrepreneur is someone who unintentionally enters into the business field by turning their hobbies or passion driven innovations or any situational influences into business through peer iterations. Based on this definition for an accidental entrepreneur, two conceptual models were developed to explain the emergence phase of the accidental entrepreneurs and their subsequent development and sustainability phase of the business venture. The Accidental Entrepreneur Emergence Model explains how the various triggers lead to the development of an accidental entrepreneur who emerge in an environment with low opportunity costs and finally enter the commercial marketplace. The Accidental Entrepreneur Sustainability Phase Model further extends this understanding by looking into the practices for development and the survival of the business venture in the long run through the combination of the effectuation theory and the bricolage theory. Together, these models bring a holistic understanding about the navigation of accidental entrepreneurship from emergence to development to sustaining while adapting to the various circumstances of uncertainty, constrained resources and other external conditions. The models also emphasize on the resilience, adaptability, flexibility and learning driven progression of the accidental entrepreneurs.

4.2. Implications

This study on accidental entrepreneurship will provide valuable insights for the policymakers, government bodies, incubators and educational institutions to develop policies and programs tailored for the nurturing of accidental entrepreneurs. This non-linear and unplanned nature of these ventures will help in designing entrepreneurial ecosystems inclusive for the accidental entrepreneurs. Accidental entrepreneurship can be viewed as a distinct yet a hybrid type of entrepreneurship where unplanned activities lead to a structured business venture. Future research can work on validating these models in different industries, contexts, demographics and geographies as the current study is conceptual in nature. This integrated emergence and sustainability conceptual models will provide the foundation for deeper understanding of accidental entrepreneurship in an adaptive, resilient and an evolving business environment.

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