

Defining and Creating Entrepreneurial Value: A Multi-Capital, Process and Context Framework

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100700581>

Received: 25 July 2026; Accepted: 30 July 2026; Published: 08 August 2026

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial activity is routinely expected to generate growth, employment, innovation and social improvement, yet entrepreneurship research remains imprecise about what constitutes value, which resources enable its creation and how context shapes its distribution. This conceptual paper addresses that problem by integrating resource-based theory, resource orchestration, effectuation, business-model research, stakeholder exchange and entrepreneurial ecosystem perspectives. It defines entrepreneurial value as a stakeholder-recognised change in economic, social, intellectual-cultural or ecological conditions arising through entrepreneurial action, while distinguishing value creation from capture and value destruction. Entrepreneurial capital is defined as the contextually situated portfolio of tangible and intangible stocks that an entrepreneurial actor can access, mobilise, recombine, renew or deplete. The proposed framework comprises eight forms of capital: cultural, experiential (human), financial, intellectual, manufactured, natural, social and spiritual. Six propositions explain how portfolio diversity, orchestration, process choice, stakeholder recognition, contextual fit and temporal feedback influence realised value. The contribution of this paper is an integrated, testable model connecting resource portfolios, entrepreneurial mechanisms, multidimensional outcomes and ecosystem conditions. The framework also offers a practical diagnostic for entrepreneurs, educators, investors and policymakers seeking to assess value beyond venture growth alone.

Keywords: entrepreneurial value; entrepreneurial capital; resource orchestration; effectuation; stakeholder value; entrepreneurial ecosystems

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is increasingly expected to respond to problems that extend beyond venture creation, including regional inequality, technological transition, environmental pressure and the renewal of local economies. These expectations place entrepreneurial value at the centre of scholarly and policy debate, because the legitimacy of enterprise intervention depends upon the value produced, for whom it is produced and at what cost. However, conventional indicators such as revenue, valuation, firm survival and employment capture only selected economic consequences. They reveal little about knowledge creation, stakeholder wellbeing, cultural continuity, ecological effects or the distribution of benefits and harms. This narrowness restricts both explanation and evaluation.

The conceptual problem is not that entrepreneurship research ignores value, but that different literatures locate it in different parts of the entrepreneurial system. Opportunity perspectives associate value with the discovery or creation of future goods and services (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Strategic management distinguishes the production of use and exchange value from its subsequent appropriation (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; Lepak et al., 2007). Stakeholder and social entrepreneurship research broadens the beneficiaries and consequences considered (Santos, 2012; Zahra & Wright, 2016). Taken together, these perspectives demonstrate the importance of value while leaving its content and causal architecture fragmented.

A parallel fragmentation concerns entrepreneurial resources. Resource-based theory explains why heterogeneous assets may underpin advantage, but possession alone cannot explain how nascent ventures convert constrained portfolios into outcomes (Barney, 1991). Resource orchestration and dynamic capabilities shift attention towards

the structuring, bundling and reconfiguration of resources (Sirmon et al., 2011; Teece, 2007). Effectuation explains how entrepreneurs act with available means under uncertainty, while business-model and exchange perspectives show how activities and stakeholder commitments organise value creation and capture (Chandler et al., 2011; Pinelli et al., 2022; Zott & Amit, 2010). Yet these streams do not share a common account of capital inputs or value outcomes.

Existing uses of *entrepreneurial capital* do not fully resolve this problem. Erikson (2002), for example, conceptualises entrepreneurial capital through the interaction of entrepreneurial competence and commitment. This usefully recognises that resources require motivated action, but it remains centred on the entrepreneur's individual readiness. Organisational reporting offers a broader multi-capital vocabulary covering financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural stocks (IFRS Foundation, 2021). That vocabulary has not been adequately adapted to entrepreneurial agency, cultural embeddedness, venture processes or purpose-led action. Consequently, research lacks an integrative model connecting what entrepreneurs can mobilise, how they mobilise it and which forms of value result.

This paper addresses that gap through three research questions:

1. How should entrepreneurial value and entrepreneurial capital be defined so that they remain conceptually distinct and empirically assessable?
2. Through which entrepreneurial processes are different capital configurations converted into multidimensional value outcomes?
3. How do stakeholder recognition, ecosystem conditions and venture stage shape the creation, capture, distribution and renewal of value?

Building on Bozward's (2026) Eight-Capital Entrepreneurial Capital Model, this manuscript retains the taxonomy and orchestration logic while extending them to multidimensional stakeholder-recognised value, contextual moderation and temporal feedback. The contribution of this paper is threefold. First, it defines entrepreneurial value as a multidimensional, stakeholder-recognised outcome while distinguishing creation, capture and destruction. Second, it advances an eight-capital portfolio comprising cultural, experiential, financial, intellectual, manufactured, natural, social and spiritual capital. Third, it explains conversion through an integrated process model in which resource orchestration, opportunity action, stakeholder exchange and business-model configuration operate under contextual and temporal conditions. The model extends resource-based accounts by specifying mechanisms and outcomes, while extending process theories by identifying the heterogeneous stocks upon which entrepreneurial action depends.

The argument is organised as follows. Section 2 explains the conceptual design and boundary of the synthesis. Section 3 clarifies entrepreneurial value and entrepreneurial capital before specifying the eight-capital portfolio. Section 4 integrates the theoretical mechanisms through which capital may become consequential. Section 5 presents the conceptual model and propositions. Section 6 outlines operationalisation and a research agenda, followed by implications, limitations and conclusions. This structure moves from definitional precision to explanatory mechanism and, finally, to empirical and practical application.

Conceptual Design and Scope

The paper adopts a theory-synthesis and model-building design rather than claiming an exhaustive systematic review. Conceptual research is most useful when it makes its design logic explicit and connects previously separated theoretical elements to offer a more coherent explanation (Jaakkola, 2020). Accordingly, the synthesis draws together six streams selected for their distinct explanatory roles: resource-based theory, resource orchestration and dynamic capabilities, opportunity theory, effectuation, business-model and stakeholder exchange research, and entrepreneurial ecosystem perspectives. Their inclusion reflects conceptual relevance to inputs, mechanisms, outcomes or boundary conditions, rather than citation frequency alone.

The analysis proceeded through four linked tasks. First, the principal constructs were clarified by separating capital stocks, entrepreneurial processes, value outcomes and contextual conditions. Second, theoretical streams were compared according to the element each explains and the element it leaves under-specified. Third, mechanisms were mapped across levels, connecting individual and venture action to stakeholder and ecosystem consequences. Fourth, boundary conditions and feedback effects were introduced to prevent the framework being interpreted as universally linear. This procedure produces propositions suitable for later empirical testing while preserving the explanatory purpose of a conceptual paper.

The framework concerns entrepreneurial action undertaken by individuals, teams or ventures seeking to create new value under conditions of uncertainty. It does not assume that all new firms are innovative, that all entrepreneurial outcomes are beneficial, or that value can be reduced to organisational performance. The focal unit is the entrepreneurial actor's accessible capital portfolio, but outcomes may arise at individual, organisational, stakeholder and ecosystem levels. This multilevel position is necessary because the same activity may create value for one stakeholder, transfer it from another, or generate benefits at one level while imposing costs elsewhere.

Defining Entrepreneurial Value and Entrepreneurial Capital

Entrepreneurial value

Entrepreneurial value is defined here as a stakeholder-recognised change in economic, social, intellectual-cultural or ecological conditions arising through entrepreneurial action. Three elements of the definition are significant. *Change* requires comparison with a credible prior or counterfactual condition; *stakeholder recognition* acknowledges that value depends partly upon use, experience and judgement; and *entrepreneurial action* locates the mechanism in opportunity pursuit, resource recombination and venture organising. The definition is deliberately broader than financial return but narrower than any desirable societal outcome, because the change must be connected plausibly to entrepreneurial activity.

Value creation must be distinguished from value capture and value distribution. Creation concerns the generation of new benefit or reduced harm, whereas capture concerns the proportion appropriated by the venture or another actor (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; Lepak et al., 2007). Distribution concerns how created and captured value is allocated among founders, employees, customers, investors, communities and public institutions. A venture may create substantial customer or social value while capturing insufficient revenue to survive; conversely, it may capture economic returns through transferring costs to workers, communities or natural systems. This distinction prevents venture performance being treated as evidence of total value creation.

The definition also includes the possibility of value destruction. Entrepreneurship may displace livelihoods, intensify inequality, exhaust natural resources or erode trust, even while producing innovation and economic return. Zahra and Wright (2016) similarly argue that the social role of entrepreneurship requires attention to dysfunctional as well as beneficial effects. Entrepreneurial value should consequently be assessed as a portfolio of positive and negative changes across stakeholders, domains and time horizons. This does not require every study to monetise all effects, but it does require researchers to state whose value is being measured, which consequences are excluded and whether observed gains represent creation, capture or transfer.

Four outcome domains provide sufficient breadth without treating every consequence as a separate construct. Economic value includes income, productivity, resilience, employment quality and sustainable financial return. Social value includes inclusion, wellbeing, capability, trust and community benefit. Intellectual-cultural value includes knowledge, learning, innovation, identity and the preservation or renewal of cultural meaning. Ecological value includes resource efficiency, regeneration, emissions reduction and the avoidance of environmental harm. These domains may complement one another, but trade-offs are possible. Their use should therefore preserve disaggregated measures before any composite assessment is attempted.

Entrepreneurial capital

Entrepreneurial capital is defined as the contextually situated portfolio of tangible and intangible stocks that an entrepreneurial actor can access, mobilise, recombine, renew or deplete through venture processes. The word *portfolio* signals interdependence rather than a simple inventory, while *access* recognises that entrepreneurs may use resources they do not own. *Mobilisation* separates potential from realised contribution, and *renewal or depletion* introduces temporal consequences. This definition extends Erikson's (2002) competence-and-commitment account from individual readiness towards a broader portfolio while retaining the premise that capital becomes entrepreneurial only through purposive action.

The portfolio draws partly upon the six-capital architecture used in integrated reporting, where capitals are treated as stocks increased, decreased or transformed through organisational activities (IFRS Foundation, 2021). However, direct transfer into entrepreneurship would overlook two features. First, entrepreneurial action is culturally situated: dispositions, legitimacy codes and locally recognised practices influence opportunity interpretation and resource access (Bourdieu, 1986). Second, some entrepreneurs mobilise purpose, ethical commitment or transcendent meaning as a persistent source of direction and sacrifice. The framework therefore adds cultural and spiritual capital, while treating the latter as a proposed and comparatively under-validated category requiring careful empirical discrimination.

Table 1 specifies each capital according to its resource content and principal entrepreneurial function. The categories are analytically distinct but empirically connected. A patent is intellectual capital, for example, while the technical judgement required to use it is experiential capital and the relationships needed to commercialise it are social capital. Manufactured capital covers the physical and digital infrastructure through which activity occurs, whereas natural capital concerns biophysical stocks and ecosystem services used or affected. The purpose of classification is not to force every resource into a single box, but to expose dependencies, omissions and conversion mechanisms.

Table 1. The eight forms of entrepreneurial capital

Form of capital	Working definition	Principal entrepreneurial function	Primary boundary risk
Cultural	Embodied dispositions, symbolic codes, practices and credentials that shape interpretation and legitimacy	Frames opportunity recognition and enables navigation of field-specific norms	Confusion with social ties or general identity
Experiential (human)	Skills, education, tacit knowledge, judgement, health and capability developed through learning and experience	Supports evaluation, execution, learning and adaptation	Double counting codified knowledge as intellectual capital
Financial	Cash, credit, investment capacity, insurance and risk-bearing headroom	Funds experimentation, operation, scaling and loss absorption	Treating finance as sufficient rather than enabling
Intellectual	Codified knowledge, intellectual property, data, routines, designs and proprietary methods	Enables novelty, replication, protection and knowledge recombination	Confusion with individual competence
Manufactured	Physical and digital infrastructure, equipment, premises, platforms and productive technology	Makes production, coordination, delivery and scaling possible	Ignoring dependence upon external infrastructure
Natural	Land, materials, energy, biodiversity and ecosystem services used or affected by the venture	Supplies biophysical inputs and conditions long-term viability	Recording extraction without depletion or regeneration

Social	Relationships, trust, reputation, network position and access to collective resources	Enables information, legitimacy, commitment and resource mobilisation	Treating network size as equivalent to usable trust
Spiritual	Purpose, ethical commitment, meaning and transcendent motivation that orient entrepreneurial action	Sustains direction, sacrifice and normative consistency	Overlap with culture or psychological capital; weak validation

Boundaries, convertibility and configuration

Capital is entrepreneurial only when it is accessible and potentially relevant to opportunity pursuit. General education that cannot be applied, an investor contact who will not provide access, or equipment unavailable at the required time may exist without forming part of the effective portfolio. This boundary avoids relabelling every personal or organisational attribute as entrepreneurial capital. It also directs measurement towards control, accessibility, quality and timing rather than nominal possession. The distinction is especially important for resource-constrained ventures, whose apparent asset scarcity may coexist with substantial relational, cultural or experiential access.

The capitals can be converted, combined and, in some circumstances, substituted. Cultural legitimacy may facilitate social access, social trust may unlock finance, and financial investment may acquire manufactured or intellectual resources. However, convertibility is neither automatic nor neutral. Conversion may take time, depend upon institutional acceptance and alter the stock from which it draws. Excessive reliance on a single capital can also produce fragility: finance without legitimacy may fail to secure stakeholder commitment, while dense social ties may constrain novelty or exclude external knowledge. The analytically relevant question is consequently not how much capital exists, but whether its configuration fits the opportunity and context.

This configurational position distinguishes the framework from additive index models. Eight high scores should not be presumed superior to a smaller but coherent portfolio, because marginal utility, bottlenecks and complementarity will vary. A digital service may require modest manufactured capital but intensive intellectual and social capital; a rural food venture may depend heavily upon natural, cultural and logistical resources. Taken together, this suggests that empirical work should test combinations and threshold effects rather than estimating only independent linear associations. It also establishes the basis for the conversion mechanisms examined next.

Theoretical Mechanisms of Capital Conversion

From resource possession to orchestration

Resource-based theory explains why valuable and difficult-to-imitate assets may support advantage, but its principal weakness for entrepreneurship is the distance between possession and action (Barney, 1991). New ventures rarely begin with complete portfolios, stable routines or control over complementary assets. Resource orchestration addresses this limitation by focusing on how managers structure, bundle and leverage resources across organisational levels and lifecycle stages (Sirmon et al., 2011). Within the present framework, orchestration is the primary conversion mechanism: it determines whether separate capital stocks are assembled into a configuration capable of supporting opportunity pursuit.

Dynamic capabilities add a temporal mechanism through sensing, seizing and reconfiguring activity (Teece, 2007). Their relevance is greatest where the value of a capital configuration changes as technology, institutions or stakeholder expectations shift. However, capabilities should not be treated as a ninth capital. They are patterned capacities for changing the portfolio and its deployment, rather than resource stocks in their own right. This distinction preserves causal clarity: capitals supply potential, orchestration activates and combines it, and dynamic capabilities modify the configuration as conditions evolve. Failure may arise from inadequate stock, weak activation or slow reconfiguration, each requiring a different explanation.

Opportunity action under uncertainty

Opportunity theories differ over whether opportunities are discovered in existing conditions or created through entrepreneurial interaction (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Alvarez & Barney, 2010). The framework does not require one universal ontology. Instead, it treats opportunity conditions as influencing which capitals and processes are appropriate. Where objectives, demand and causal relations are comparatively knowable, causal planning can direct finance, expertise and infrastructure towards specified goals. Under greater uncertainty, effectual action begins with available means, limits affordable loss and builds commitments that reshape both the opportunity and the capital portfolio (Sarasvathy, 2001).

Effectuation is consequently a mode of capital activation rather than an alternative resource theory. It explains how entrepreneurs work from cultural, experiential, social and financial means when future outcomes cannot be predicted reliably. Causation and effectuation should not be reduced to opposites or matched mechanically to venture type; empirical research indicates that they can be measured as distinguishable processes and may coexist (Chandler et al., 2011). This suggests that process choice moderates capital conversion: a portfolio creates greater value when the entrepreneur's decision logic fits the uncertainty, commitment structure and reversibility of the focal action.

Stakeholder exchange and business-model configuration

Entrepreneurial value is rarely produced by the entrepreneur alone. Customers contribute use contexts and feedback, employees contribute skill and judgement, investors supply risk-bearing capacity, and communities or institutions confer legitimacy and infrastructure. Service-dominant and exchange perspectives therefore locate value in reciprocal resource integration and fulfilled stakeholder commitments (Pinelli et al., 2022; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Social and cultural capital are particularly significant because trust, shared meaning and legitimacy affect whether stakeholders commit their own resources. Nevertheless, co-creation does not guarantee equitable capture, making distribution a separate empirical question.

The business model organises these exchanges into an activity system that connects value proposition, delivery and capture (Amit & Zott, 2001; Teece, 2010; Zott & Amit, 2010). Its theoretical role in the framework is architectural: it specifies which actors perform activities, which capitals they contribute, how complementarities are created and how returns or costs are allocated. A technically valuable innovation may fail where the business model cannot secure complementary infrastructure, stakeholder adoption or viable capture. Conversely, a well-configured activity system can amplify limited capital through partnerships, platforms or shared assets. Business-model design therefore mediates between portfolio activation and realised outcomes.

Context and entrepreneurial ecosystems

Entrepreneurial action is embedded in regional, sectoral, cultural and institutional conditions that influence both resource access and recognised forms of value. Entrepreneurial ecosystem research demonstrates that productive entrepreneurship depends upon interconnected actors, networks, institutions and material conditions rather than isolated founder attributes (Stam, 2015). Bozward (2022) similarly argues that opportunity recognition in rural and agricultural regions depends upon interactions among regional capital, governance, connectivity, natural resources, social networks and wider ecosystem conditions. A resource may be abundant but inaccessible because of exclusionary networks, regulatory barriers or weak absorptive capacity. Alternatively, shared infrastructure, universities, professional services and public procurement may allow ventures to mobilise capabilities beyond their ownership. Context operates consequently as a mechanism and boundary condition, not merely as descriptive background.

Ecosystems also shape which outcomes acquire legitimacy. Employment growth may dominate policy assessment in one region, while ecological regeneration, cultural continuity or inclusive access may be prioritised elsewhere. Such variation affects investment, stakeholder commitment and the visibility of created value. However, contextualisation must not become an explanation for every difference. The framework specifies four observable contextual dimensions: institutional reliability, ecosystem resource accessibility, sectoral technology

and market conditions, and socio-cultural norms. These dimensions should be measured separately and tested as moderators of portfolio availability, process feasibility and outcome recognition.

An Integrative Model of Entrepreneurial Value Creation

The proposed model connects four domains: the capital portfolio, activation and orchestration mechanisms, multidimensional value outcomes, and contextual-temporal conditions. Capital stocks supply potential but do not determine results. Entrepreneurial processes configure those stocks into stakeholder exchanges and business-model activities. Outcomes are assessed as created, captured, distributed or destroyed value across economic, social, intellectual-cultural and ecological domains. Context affects every connection, while realised outcomes feed back into later capital stocks. Figure 1 presents this logic as an iterative system rather than a single-direction production function.

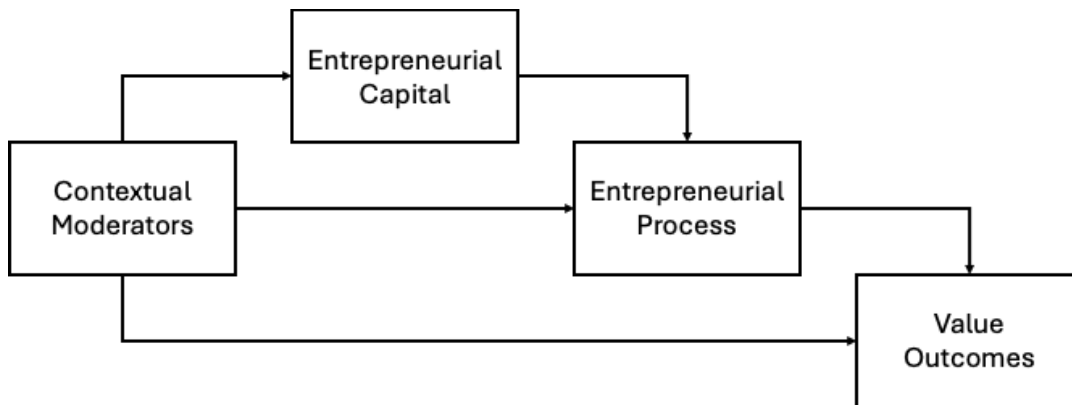


Figure 1. The multi-capital, process and context model of entrepreneurial value creation.

The portfolio enters the model as a configuration rather than a sequence of independent inputs. This matters because an entrepreneur may compensate for limited ownership through access, partnership or conversion, while a single unavailable resource may constrain an otherwise strong portfolio. The activation domain represents the actions through which these dependencies are addressed, including acquisition, bundling, experimentation and stakeholder commitment. Business-model configuration then connects those actions to a repeatable activity system. In this account, value is not an inherent property of a resource or opportunity; it is a realised consequence of coordinated use under specific conditions.

The model also preserves differences of level and time. Capital may be located with an individual, team, venture, partner or ecosystem actor, while value may be experienced by customers, employees, investors, communities or natural systems. Outcomes recorded at one level cannot be assumed to represent net value at another. Similarly, short-term capture may coexist with longer-term depletion, and early social legitimacy may later improve financial or intellectual access. These distinctions explain the feedback pathway and require empirical studies to specify the focal actor, beneficiary, observation period and counterfactual against which change is judged.

The model advances six propositions. These are not presented as universal predictions of positive performance. They specify mechanisms and boundary conditions that can be tested through longitudinal, multilevel and configurational research. Table 2 shows how each proposition connects the model's constructs, while the following discussion explains its theoretical basis and expected significance.

Table 2. Propositions and explanatory mechanisms

Proposition	Focal connection	Mechanism	Principal boundary condition
P1	Capital portfolio → value potential	Complementarity and bottleneck reduction	Opportunity requirements

P2	Orchestration → realised value	Structuring, bundling and leveraging	Managerial capability and timing
P3	Process-context fit → conversion effectiveness	Alignment of causation/effectuation with uncertainty	Predictability and reversibility
P4	Stakeholder recognition → realised value	Commitment, resource integration and use	Power and distributional conflict
P5	Ecosystem accessibility → capital conversion	Access to external resources and legitimacy	Institutional and network openness
P6	Outcomes → later capital stocks	Accumulation, depletion and feedback	Venture stage and time horizon

Portfolio diversity can widen the actions available to an entrepreneur, but diversity is valuable only where capitals complement one another and address opportunity-specific bottlenecks. Financial resources may have limited effect without experiential judgement, manufactured infrastructure or stakeholder legitimacy. Equally, unnecessary variety may increase coordination cost and diffuse attention. The model therefore predicts a contingent rather than uniformly positive association.

Proposition 1: Entrepreneurial capital configurations will generate greater value potential when their component capitals are complementary and aligned with opportunity requirements; unmatched diversity will not independently improve outcomes.

Orchestration converts potential into action by acquiring missing resources, bundling complementary stocks and leveraging them through venture activities. The same nominal portfolio can produce different outcomes because entrepreneurs vary in sequencing, coordination and willingness to reconfigure. This mechanism also explains why finance or human capital may show inconsistent direct effects in empirical studies: the consequential variable may be their deployment rather than their presence.

Proposition 2: The association between entrepreneurial capital and realised value will be mediated by the effectiveness with which the portfolio is structured, bundled, leveraged and reconfigured.

Entrepreneurial decision processes influence conversion effectiveness because different conditions demand different commitments. Causal planning can coordinate substantial investment where goals and consequences are sufficiently knowable, whereas effectual action can limit exposure and attract stakeholder commitments when uncertainty is higher. Neither logic is intrinsically superior, and ventures may combine them across activities or stages. What matters is alignment between process, uncertainty and reversibility.

Proposition 3: Capital portfolios will be converted into greater realised value when the balance of causal and effectual action fits the uncertainty, reversibility and commitment structure of the focal entrepreneurial activity.

Value becomes realised only when relevant stakeholders can use, experience or recognise the change created. Stakeholder engagement contributes information and complementary resources, but differences in power can distort whose judgement is recorded and who captures the return. A venture may secure investor recognition while externalising costs to less powerful groups. Recognition must consequently be plural and distribution-sensitive.

Proposition 4: Stakeholder resource integration and recognition will strengthen the conversion of entrepreneurial activity into realised value, but concentrated stakeholder power will increase divergence between total value creation and its capture or distribution.

Ecosystem conditions influence whether entrepreneurs can access external capital stocks and whether new combinations gain legitimacy. Open professional networks, reliable institutions, universities and shared infrastructure may compensate for limited ownership, while exclusion or institutional instability can make

apparently available resources unusable. The same internal portfolio may consequently produce different results across places and sectors.

Proposition 5: Accessible ecosystem resources and reliable institutions will strengthen capital conversion by expanding complementary access and legitimacy; nominal resource abundance without accessibility will not produce the same effect.

Entrepreneurial outcomes alter the portfolio from which later action proceeds. Revenue can replenish finance, learning can strengthen experiential and intellectual capital, and fulfilled commitments can build social legitimacy. Evidence that direct and vicarious entrepreneurial experience is associated with different horizons of entrepreneurial intention suggests that experiential capital may shape both entrepreneurial readiness and the timing of subsequent action (Bozward & Rogers-Draycott, 2024). However, activity can also deplete founder health, stakeholder trust, financial headroom or natural resources. These feedback effects make venture stage and time horizon integral to explanation rather than control variables added after the event.

Proposition 6: Realised entrepreneurial outcomes will feed back into later capital stocks, producing reinforcing or depleting trajectories whose direction varies by value domain, venture stage and time horizon.

Operationalisation and Research Agenda

Empirical testing requires measures that preserve the distinction between stocks, processes, outcomes and context. Capital measures should assess quality, accessibility, control, convertibility and depletion rather than simple possession. Process measures should capture orchestration behaviour, decision logic, stakeholder exchange and business-model configuration. Outcome measures should report created, captured, distributed and destroyed value across relevant domains. Context should be represented by specific institutional, ecosystem, sectoral and socio-cultural variables. Table 3 translates these requirements into an initial measurement architecture.

Table 3. Initial operationalisation architecture

Domain	Illustrative indicators	Preferred evidence	Key validity risk
Capital stocks	Accessible finance; applicable experience; IP and data; infrastructure access; network trust; resource condition	Audited records, portfolio mapping, network data, validated scales and interviews	Nominal possession mistaken for usable access
Activation processes	Acquisition, bundling, leveraging, experimentation, affordable-loss decisions and reconfiguration	Repeated surveys, event histories, decision logs and process interviews	Retrospective rationalisation
Stakeholder exchange	Commitments, resource contributions, fulfilment, use and perceived change	Matched stakeholder surveys, contracts, transaction records and qualitative accounts	Founder-only reporting and power bias
Value outcomes	Economic, social, intellectual-cultural and ecological changes; capture and distribution	Administrative, financial, operational, environmental and stakeholder data	Combining incompatible units prematurely
Context	Institutional reliability, ecosystem accessibility, sector conditions and socio-cultural norms	Regional datasets, policy records, network measures and comparative case evidence	Treating place labels as explanatory variables
Temporal feedback	Accumulation, conversion or depletion of each capital stock	Longitudinal panels, milestone histories and repeated portfolio audits	Survivor bias and inconsistent observation periods

The first research priority is construct validation. The eight-capital taxonomy should be assessed through expert review, cognitive interviewing and comparative fieldwork before large-scale scale development. Particular attention is required for the boundaries between experiential and intellectual capital, cultural and social capital,

and spiritual and psychological or cultural resources. The spiritual category should be retained only if it demonstrates discriminant validity and explanatory value beyond purpose, identity and commitment. This staged approach avoids creating a visually comprehensive but empirically redundant measure.

The second priority is longitudinal process research. A matched panel of ventures and stakeholders could measure capital configurations at formation, subsequent orchestration events and outcomes at regular intervals. Such a design would permit stronger temporal ordering than cross-sectional founder surveys and reveal depletion as well as accumulation. Nested sampling across incubators, sectors or regions would also test whether ecosystem accessibility moderates conversion. Qualitative process tracing should accompany quantitative measurement where opportunity formation, stakeholder conflict or contextual change cannot be inferred reliably from periodic scores.

The third priority is configurational and comparative analysis. The framework predicts complementarity, bottlenecks and equifinality, making methods such as qualitative comparative analysis, latent profile analysis or interaction models more appropriate than a single additive index. Comparisons should examine whether different portfolios generate similar value outcomes and whether similar portfolios diverge across contexts. Studies should also disaggregate outcome domains to identify trade-offs. A high-growth venture with ecological depletion, for example, should not be classified uncritically as high value without making the basis of that judgement explicit.

Implications for Practice, Education and Policy

For entrepreneurs and venture teams, the framework offers a portfolio diagnostic rather than a generic checklist. Teams can identify the value outcome sought, map the capitals required, distinguish owned resources from accessible resources and identify the principal bottleneck. They can then select an activation strategy: acquire the missing stock, form a stakeholder partnership, redesign the business model or alter the opportunity scope. Repeating the assessment at venture milestones would expose depletion in founder capability, trust, finance or natural resources before it becomes a viability problem. The practical emphasis is configuration and renewal, not maximising every capital.

For investors, accelerators and incubators, the model suggests that selection and assistance should move beyond founder traits and financial projections. Due diligence can examine whether the capital portfolio fits the proposed activity system, whether stakeholder commitments are credible and whether value capture is sufficient without transferring unacceptable costs. Incubator intervention can then be differentiated: some ventures require finance, others legitimacy, infrastructure, technical knowledge or network access. Outcome monitoring should retain economic discipline while including the social, knowledge and ecological changes explicitly claimed by the venture.

For entrepreneurship educators, the eight-capital framework can connect individual learning, venture design and ecosystem awareness. Students can map their accessible portfolios, test how different capital configurations shape opportunity choices and examine who contributes to, recognises and captures value. Project-based assessment can require evidence of stakeholder use and resource conversion rather than rewarding business-plan presentation alone. However, educators should avoid implying that deficits reside only in the learner. Unequal access to networks, finance, infrastructure and institutional legitimacy must be analysed as ecosystem conditions that shape what individual agency can achieve.

For policymakers, the framework challenges programmes that equate ecosystem performance with start-up counts or aggregate investment. Policy can strengthen value creation by improving access to shared infrastructure, knowledge institutions, professional networks, patient finance and reliable regulation. Yet provision is insufficient where resources remain inaccessible to particular communities or sectors. Programme evaluation should specify the value domain pursued, the stakeholders affected and the mechanism through which intervention changes capital access or conversion. This produces a more credible connection between enterprise policy, regional conditions and public outcomes than undifferentiated support for entrepreneurial quantity.

DISCUSSION

The framework makes a theoretical contribution by separating four elements frequently conflated in entrepreneurship research. Entrepreneurial capital concerns accessible stocks; entrepreneurial process concerns their activation and reconfiguration; entrepreneurial value concerns stakeholder-recognised outcomes; and context concerns the conditions shaping availability, conversion and recognition. This separation clarifies why studies using financial input, founder education, venture growth and regional ecosystem quality cannot treat these variables as interchangeable measures of entrepreneurship. It also creates a causal sequence that can be challenged and tested without assuming that resources automatically produce beneficial outcomes.

A second contribution is the portfolio conception of entrepreneurial capital. Erikson's (2002) competence-and-commitment formulation directs attention to action readiness, while integrated reporting demonstrates the value of recognising multiple stocks (IFRS Foundation, 2021). The present model adapts and extends these insights to entrepreneurial agency by adding cultural embeddedness, purpose-led action, accessibility, convertibility and depletion. Its novelty lies less in claiming that each capital is individually unknown than in specifying their configuration, boundaries and conversion into distinct value domains. This reduces the risk that entrepreneurial capital becomes merely another label for heterogeneous resources.

A third contribution is the integration of resource, process and ecosystem explanations. Resource orchestration identifies how portfolios are assembled; effectuation and causation explain decision logic under different conditions; stakeholder exchange and business-model design organise co-creation and capture; and ecosystem conditions shape access and legitimacy. No single theory is asked to explain the whole phenomenon. Instead, each occupies a defined role in the model. Taken together, the synthesis offers a mid-range explanation that connects individual behaviour, organisational practice and wider ecosystem conditions while retaining empirically observable mechanisms.

LIMITATIONS

The framework has several limitations. It is a conceptual synthesis rather than a systematic review, and its theoretical selection may omit alternative accounts of power, institutions or materiality. The eight-capital classification also creates boundary challenges, particularly where one resource has cultural, social and intellectual properties simultaneously. These issues are not resolved through definitional assertion. They require construct validation, competing measurement models and empirical tests of incremental explanatory value. The spiritual category is especially provisional and should be revised or removed if it cannot be distinguished consistently from purpose, identity, values or psychological capital.

The model also simplifies causality. Feedback, reciprocal influence and stakeholder disagreement make entrepreneurial value creation less orderly than the figure suggests. Attribution will remain difficult where ecosystem actors jointly produce outcomes or where changes emerge over long periods. Moreover, multidimensional assessment introduces normative choices about beneficiaries, weights and trade-offs. The framework responds by requiring disaggregation and transparency, but it does not supply a universal welfare function. Its appropriate role is to organise explanation and evidence, not to eliminate contested judgements about what value should count.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurial value cannot be understood adequately through venture growth, founder competence or ecosystem provision in isolation. It emerges when contextually situated capital stocks are mobilised and recombined through entrepreneurial processes, recognised through stakeholder use and distributed across actors and time. The proposed framework makes these connections explicit by defining entrepreneurial capital as an accessible, convertible and depletable portfolio and entrepreneurial value as multidimensional change rather than organisational return alone. It also distinguishes the creation of value from its capture, distribution and destruction.

The contribution of this paper is an integrated model linking eight forms of capital to orchestration, decision logic, stakeholder exchange, business-model architecture and ecosystem conditions. Its practical relevance lies in diagnosing fit, bottlenecks, access and renewal rather than assuming that more resources or more start-ups are necessarily better. Its scholarly value will depend upon empirical discipline: construct validation, longitudinal observation, stakeholder-level evidence and contextual comparison. Those tests can establish whether a multi-capital perspective offers a more precise explanation of how entrepreneurs create value, for whom and under which conditions.

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