

Executing Tenacity: A Theoretical Model of Entrepreneurial Disposition to Sustain and the Sequential Emergence of Business Sustainment in Institutional Voids

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial ventures operating within institutional voids face persistent uncertainty, weak regulatory enforcement, fragile market-supporting institutions, and limited access to continuity-enabling infrastructures. While prior research has extensively examined venture creation, opportunity exploitation, and early survival under constraint, less attention has been devoted to how organizational continuity and business sustainment are progressively constructed in such environments. Drawing deductively from literature on organizational growth, dynamic capabilities, organizational learning, stakeholder governance, and strategic renewal, this paper introduces the Executing Tenacity Sequence, a theoretical model that conceptualizes sustainability as a developmental and sequenced organizational capability anchored in Disposition to Sustain. The model explains how entrepreneurs progressively systemize infrastructure, validate operational scalability, embed improvement discipline, institutionalize operational excellence, construct ethical foundations, consolidate stakeholder governance, develop strategic foresight, and reinforce continuity through sustainable reinvestment, culminating in Business Sustainment. By treating sustainability as an internally constructed and organizationally embedded process rather than merely a performance outcome, the framework advances theory on firm continuity and organizational durability in institutionally fragile environments, while providing a foundation for empirical investigation of enterprise longevity under persistent structural constraint.

Keywords: Business sustainment; Institutional voids; Disposition to sustain; Firm continuity; Organizational durability; Stakeholder governance; Organizational resilience.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial activity in environments characterized by institutional voids unfolds under conditions of structural fragility, weak enforcement regimes, fragmented intermediaries, and unreliable support systems (Khanna & Palepu, 1997; 2010; Mair & Marti, 2009). In such contexts, firms cannot rely on predictable regulatory protection, contract enforcement, or stable ecosystem support to guarantee continuity (North, 1990; Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008). While these conditions increase venture vulnerability, they simultaneously elevate the importance of entrepreneurial agency in determining whether firms merely survive episodically or evolve into enduring organizational entities. Consequently, institutional void settings provide an important empirical and theoretical context for examining not only how ventures emerge, but how business continuity becomes stabilized and organizationally embedded despite persistent environmental instability.

Extant entrepreneurship research has generated substantial insights into venture formation, opportunity recognition, and execution under uncertainty (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Sarasvathy, 2001; Eckhardt & Shane, 2003). Dominant perspectives have emphasized entrepreneurial cognition (Mitchell et al., 2007), effectuation logic (Sarasvathy, 2001), bricolage under constraint (Baker & Nelson, 2005), dynamic capabilities (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Teece, 2007), and entrepreneurial judgment under uncertainty (Knight, 1921; Foss & Klein, 2012). While these streams have significantly advanced understanding of venture emergence and execution, they often treat long-term sustainability as either a residual outcome of effective management or a downstream consequence of competitive advantage. Such assumptions obscure an important theoretical gap based on the understanding that within institutional voids, sustainability itself represents a distinct developmental challenge requiring deliberate structural consolidation (Penrose, 1959), operational stabilization (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), governance institutionalization (Williamson, 1985), and strategic renewal (Cyert & March, 1963).

Evidence from institutionally fragile environments suggests that many ventures achieve temporary stability yet fail to transition into durable enterprises. Operational improvements often remain founder-dependent, routines fail to institutionalize, governance structures remain informal, and growth frequently outpaces organizational consolidation (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Obloj, 2008). As a result, continuity becomes vulnerable to leadership transitions, environmental shocks, and internal inefficiencies. Business sustainment therefore must be understood not as passive endurance but as an actively constructed organizational condition requiring system building, governance embedding, and adaptive reinvestment (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). These realities call for a theoretical framework that conceptualizes sustainability as a developmental organizational capability rather than a residual performance condition.

This paper addresses this gap by advancing the Executing Tenacity Sequence, a theoretical model explaining how entrepreneurial agency matures through Disposition to Sustain into Business Sustainment. The model conceptualizes sustainability as a structured developmental progression through which entrepreneurs progressively institutionalize continuity by building operational systems, embedding efficiency cultures, constructing ethical and governance safeguards, strengthening stakeholder alignment, and developing strategic reinvestment mechanisms. Rather than focusing primarily on survival or growth, the Executing Tenacity Sequence explains how entrepreneurs transform continuity intention into organizational permanence under institutional fragility.

Through the articulation of sustainability as a distinct developmental phase of entrepreneurial maturation, this paper makes three primary contributions. First, it introduces Disposition to Sustain as a foundational construct explaining how entrepreneurial commitment to continuity becomes internally regulated despite environmental volatility. Second, it models business sustainment as a cumulative progression of interrelated structural, operational, cultural, governance, and strategic constructs, thereby providing analytical clarity to sustainability processes often treated implicitly within resilience and dynamic capability research (Teece, 2007; Duchek, 2020). Third, it situates firm continuity in institutional voids as an active process of internal institutionalization rather than as a passive outcome of favorable environmental conditions (Dess & Beard, 1984).

The remainder of the paper develops this argument as follows. The next section outlines the theoretical foundations of the Executing Tenacity Sequence and clarifies its relationship to organizational growth theory, dynamic capabilities, stakeholder governance, and strategic sustainability literatures. This is followed by a detailed presentation of the construct sequence and its developmental logic. The paper then synthesizes the progression through formal propositions, positions the model within broader theoretical conversations on organizational continuity, and concludes with implications for future research on business sustainment under institutional constraint.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section synthesizes foundational theories that collectively inform the development of the Executing Tenacity Sequence as a sequential model of Disposition to Sustain and the emergence of Business Sustainment. These theoretical streams explain why sustained entrepreneurial engagement in institutionally fragile environments evolves not merely through persistence or profitability, but through progressive structural, cultural, governance, and strategic embedding.

Five major theoretical traditions form the conceptual foundations of this paper. These include organizational growth and infrastructure theory, learning and operational excellence perspectives, stakeholder and governance theory, strategic foresight scholarship, and sustainable value creation research.

2.1 Organizational Growth and Infrastructure as Foundations of Continuity

At the core of Disposition to Sustain lies the question of how entrepreneurial effort becomes organizational continuity. Classical growth theory emphasizes that firm expansion depends not merely on opportunity exploitation but on the development of administrative and structural capacity. Penrose (1959) demonstrated that firm growth depends fundamentally on the development of internal administrative structures capable of coordinating expanding activity. Chandler (1962) further established that sustainable growth requires alignment between strategy and organizational structure.

More recent dynamic capability research reinforces this structural perspective by demonstrating how organizational processes and infrastructure enable firms to maintain continuity under changing conditions (Helfat & Martin, 2015; Helfat & Raubitschek, 2018). Infrastructure therefore becomes not merely an efficiency tool but a continuity mechanism.

In institutional voids, where workforce instability and informal coordination dominate, systemised infrastructure functions as organizational memory. Codified routines preserve knowledge despite personnel turnover and environmental instability. This theoretical stream therefore provides the structural foundation of the Executing Tenacity Sequence, grounding sustainability as systematized continuity rather than prolonged founder dependence.

2.2 Organizational Learning and the Pursuit of Operational Excellence

A second theoretical foundation emerges from organizational learning and operational excellence scholarship. Sustainability requires not only structural stability but adaptive improvement. Senge (1990) conceptualized learning organizations as entities capable of continuous adaptation through collective learning processes. More recent scholarship confirms that learning cultures significantly enhance resilience and adaptive performance in uncertain environments (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2019; Edmondson, 2018).

Operational excellence research complements this perspective by demonstrating how continuous improvement produces reliable performance outcomes. Deming (1986) established that quality consistency and process refinement form the basis of durable competitive strength. Contemporary operations management research further shows that operational excellence strongly predicts organizational longevity and customer trust (Ketokivi & Turkulainen, 2018; Tortorella et al., 2021).

Within institutional voids, where regulatory protections are weak and contractual enforcement uncertain, operational reliability becomes a substitute for institutional guarantees. Continuous improvement therefore functions not merely as efficiency enhancement but as a survival mechanism. This theoretical stream grounds the progression from Improvement Culture to Operational Excellence, illustrating how sustainability becomes embedded in organizational behavior and performance discipline.

2.3 Stakeholder Ethics and Governance as Mechanisms of Organizational Stability

Sustained organizational continuity also depends on normative stability. Stakeholder theory provides an important foundation for understanding how ethical consistency contributes to long-term survival. Freeman (1984) argued that firms achieve durability by managing stakeholder relationships responsibly rather than prioritizing short-term gains.

Recent work in stakeholder governance further demonstrates that ethical infrastructures and stakeholder engagement significantly improve organizational resilience and long-term value creation (Crane et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2020). Governance research also shows that accountability systems become particularly important in environments where formal regulatory enforcement is weak (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003; McGahan, 2021).

In institutional voids, ethical frameworks often function as internal substitutes for absent external enforcement. Stakeholder governance structures provide monitoring, legitimacy, and accountability where formal institutions fail to do so. This stream provides the theoretical grounding for the transition from Ethical Framework to Stakeholder Governance, explaining how sustainability becomes protected through distributed oversight rather than individual vigilance.

2.4 Strategic Foresight and Adaptive Preparedness

Beyond structural and governance stability, long-term organizational continuity requires anticipatory capacity. Strategic foresight theory emphasizes the importance of preparing organizations for uncertain futures rather than reacting to disruptions after they occur. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) emphasized the importance of future-oriented strategic positioning, while more recent foresight scholarship demonstrates how scenario planning enhances organizational resilience under uncertainty (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018; Vecchiato, 2019).

In institutional voids, where reliable forecasting systems are often absent, foresight functions as a substitute for environmental predictability. Organizations rely on preparedness rather than prediction accuracy. Scenario thinking allows firms to maintain continuity despite institutional unpredictability. This theoretical stream grounds the progression from Strategic Foresight to Sustainable Reinvestment by demonstrating how anticipation must translate into resource allocation decisions that strengthen long-term capability. Sustainability thus becomes anticipatory discipline rather than reactive adjustment.

2.5 Sustainable Value Creation and Organizational Longevity

The final theoretical foundation emerges from research on sustainable value creation and organizational longevity. Long-term survival depends not merely on generating profits but on reinvesting them in ways that maintain organizational relevance. Lazonick and O'Sullivan (2000) demonstrated how reinvestment strategies shape long-term firm viability, while more recent work emphasizes the role of patient capital and reinvestment discipline in sustaining innovation capacity (Kattel & Mazzucato, 2018; Mazzucato, 2021).

Organizational longevity research further reinforces this perspective. De Geus (1997) conceptualized enduring firms as adaptive living systems capable of regeneration, while contemporary resilience research shows that long-lived organizations share the capacity for continuous renewal (Duchek, 2020; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021).

In institutional voids, where uncertainty often encourages short-term extraction, sustainable reinvestment represents a critical differentiator between temporary ventures and enduring enterprises. Business Sustainment therefore emerges as the institutionalization of reinvestment discipline combined with structural, cultural, and governance stability.

2.6 Integrative Justification for the Model

The combined insights of these theoretical traditions demonstrate that sustained entrepreneurial engagement under institutional constraint is not reducible to profitability alone or isolated operational success. Instead, sustainability evolves through sequential consolidation, first as structural stabilization, then as operational refinement, subsequently as ethical and governance embedding, followed by strategic preparedness, and ultimately as regenerative organizational continuity. While existing theories illuminate fragments of this process, organizational growth, learning capability, governance stability, foresight capability, and sustainable value creation, they do not provide a sequential architecture linking Disposition to Sustain to Business Sustainment within institutional voids. The Executing Tenacity Sequence addresses this gap by integrating these traditions into a developmental model that specifies how sustainability matures into enduring organizational continuity through identifiable structural, operational, governance, strategic, and economic consolidations. This theoretical grounding prepares the foundation for the construct sequence that follows.

3. Presenting The Construct Sequence

The Executing Tenacity Sequence advances the broader construct-sequence program that conceptualizes entrepreneurial development as ordered progressions of dispositional maturation under institutional voids. Building on prior models tracing the evolution from Disposition to Act to Venture Cognizance, from Disposition to Choose to Executory Acumen, from Disposition to Produce to Entrepreneurial Acumen, from Disposition to Excel to Managerial Acumen, and from Disposition to Persist to Profitable Venture (Akilu, 2026a, 2026b, 2026c, 2026d, 2026e), this framework extends the cumulative architecture of agency development beyond venture viability toward organizational continuity.

Here, the focus shifts to Disposition to Sustain (DTS) and its evolution into Business Sustainment (BS). In contexts characterized by institutional instability, leadership discontinuity, and environmental volatility, long-term advancement depends not only on the ability to generate profit but on the ability to institutionalize continuity. The sequence theorizes how sustainability becomes progressively embedded, first structurally through Systemised Infrastructure, then operationally through Scalable Operations, subsequently culturally through Improvement Culture and Operational Excellence, normatively through Ethical Framework and Stakeholder Governance, and ultimately strategically through Strategic Foresight and Sustainable Reinvestment, culminating in Business Sustainment as the organizational institutionalization of disciplined continuity. The Executing Tenacity Sequence therefore specifies how sustained commitment to continuity under institutional constraint is transformed into durable organizational longevity, consolidating sustainability as a generative mechanism of enterprise perpetuation within fragile institutional environments.

3.1 Systemised Infrastructure (SI)

Systemised Infrastructure refers to the deliberate design and implementation of codified processes, technological systems, routines, and organizational structures capable of functioning reliably independent of individual effort. In institutional voids, where operational continuity is frequently threatened by personnel instability, weak documentation practices, and reliance on informal coordination, infrastructure becomes the primary mechanism through which organizational memory is preserved.

Within the Executing Tenacity Sequence, SI functions as the initiating structural consolidation that anchors Disposition to Sustain. It represents the transition from effort-driven continuity to system-driven continuity. As Penrose (1959) established, administrative structures form the foundation upon which firm growth becomes possible. More recent research further demonstrates that process formalization and digital integration significantly enhance organizational resilience and continuity under uncertainty (Helfat & Martin, 2015; Bresciani et al., 2021). Sustained entrepreneurial engagement gradually produces procedural clarity. Repeated problem solving becomes standardized workflow. Individual improvisation becomes organizational protocol. Over time, these accumulated operational refinements crystallize into infrastructure that stabilizes performance despite environmental volatility. Thus, SI represents tenacity embedded as structure. Sustainability ceases to depend solely on founder vigilance and becomes embedded in operational architecture.

3.2 Scalable Operations (SO)

Scalable Operations denote the venture's capacity to increase output, organizational complexity, and market reach without proportionate increases in coordination breakdown, cost escalation, or performance deterioration. Where Systemised Infrastructure establishes operational stability, SO demonstrates its growth viability.

Chandler's (1962) work established that enterprise expansion depends on the alignment of structure with growth demands. Contemporary scholarship further positions scalability as the defining transition from entrepreneurial survival to organizational durability (Nambisan, 2022; Reuber et al., 2021). Within institutional voids, scalability acquires an additional meaning beyond efficiency. It reflects the ability to maintain reliability while expanding into environments characterized by regulatory gaps, logistical unpredictability, and coordination challenges. Scaling therefore becomes a test not only of efficiency but of resilience. At this stage, Disposition to Sustain becomes visible as operational elasticity. The venture demonstrates that its systems can absorb expansion without systemic failure. Sustainability thus becomes growth-capable rather than merely stability-oriented.

3.3 Improvement Culture (IC)

Improvement Culture refers to the institutionalization of continuous learning, experimentation, and refinement as expected organizational behaviors rather than episodic managerial initiatives. It represents the cultural embedding of Disposition to Sustain. Senge's (1990) concept of the learning organization established continuous adaptation as the foundation of organizational endurance. More recent research shows that organizations with embedded learning cultures demonstrate superior adaptive performance and resilience under environmental turbulence (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2019; Edmondson, 2018).

In institutional voids, improvement culture functions as an adaptive necessity rather than a managerial preference. Because environmental predictability is limited, internal adaptability must compensate. Continuous improvement allows the organization to detect shifts early and respond incrementally rather than through crisis-driven transformation.

Here, sustainability becomes behavioral. Employees do not merely execute tasks, they continuously refine them. Organizational persistence becomes a shared expectation rather than a leadership burden. Improvement culture therefore represents tenacity expressed as collective learning. The organization sustains itself by continuously upgrading its own competence.

3.4 Operational Excellence (OE)

Operational Excellence represents the consistent achievement of superior performance across key processes through reliability, efficiency, quality assurance, and waste minimization. It represents the measurable manifestation of Improvement Culture. Deming (1986) established quality consistency as the foundation of competitive durability. Contemporary operations research confirms that operational excellence strongly predicts customer retention, cost stability, and long-term organizational survival (Ketokivi & Turkulainen, 2018; Tortorella et al., 2021). In institutional voids, operational excellence functions as a substitute for absent institutional protections.

Where regulatory enforcement is weak and contractual safeguards unreliable, customers depend primarily on demonstrated reliability. Consistent delivery becomes the primary trust mechanism. At this stage, Disposition to Sustain becomes performance credibility. Sustainability becomes observable through consistency rather than intention. Excellence becomes not merely a competitive tool but a survival defence.

3.5 Ethical Framework (EF)

Ethical Framework refers to the codified and consistently applied principles governing organizational decisions regarding stakeholders, resources, and conduct. Within environments characterized by regulatory inconsistency and moral hazard exposure, ethical clarity provides decision stability. Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory established the importance of balancing stakeholder interests for long-term value creation. Recent research further demonstrates that strong ethical

infrastructures significantly reduce organizational risk exposure and enhance long-term resilience (Crane et al., 2019; Harrison et al., 2020).

Within institutional voids, ethical frameworks often function less as normative aspirations and more as strategic safeguards. Weak enforcement environments increase vulnerability to opportunism, corruption pressures, and reputational fragility. Ethical consistency reduces these risks by creating internal behavioral predictability despite external uncertainty. Thus, EF represents tenacity expressed as principled continuity. The venture sustains itself by choosing long-term credibility over short-term opportunism.

3.6 Stakeholder Governance (SG)

Stakeholder Governance denotes the formal and informal mechanisms through which stakeholders participate in organizational oversight, ensuring accountability, transparency, and alignment of interests. Aguilera and Jackson (2003) demonstrated how governance structures reflect institutional environments. More recent research shows that participatory governance improves organizational resilience, trust formation, and long-term performance stability (McGahan, 2021; Pitelis, 2022).

In institutional voids, governance often substitutes for absent regulatory enforcement. Stakeholder monitoring can provide the accountability normally provided by formal institutions. Governance thus becomes a continuity safeguard. At this stage, Disposition to Sustain becomes distributed accountability. Sustainability is no longer protected solely by founders but reinforced through governance structures that embed continuity expectations across stakeholders.

3.7 Strategic Foresight (SF)

Strategic Foresight refers to the organizational capacity to anticipate multiple plausible futures and prepare adaptive responses to emerging risks and opportunities. It represents the anticipatory embedding of sustainability. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) emphasized competing through future positioning rather than present advantage. Recent research highlights foresight capability as essential for navigating technological disruption and institutional volatility (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018; Vecchiato, 2019).

Within institutional voids, foresight compensates for the absence of reliable forecasting infrastructure. Rather than relying on prediction accuracy, organizations rely on preparedness breadth. Scenario thinking becomes a substitute for institutional certainty. Here, tenacity becomes anticipatory. The organization sustains itself not only by responding to shocks but by preparing for them. Sustainability becomes proactive rather than reactive.

3.8 Sustainable Reinvestment (SR)

Sustainable Reinvestment denotes the disciplined allocation of surplus resources toward capability renewal, innovation, and organizational strengthening rather than short-term extraction. Lazonick and O'Sullivan (2000) demonstrated how reinvestment patterns determine firm longevity. Recent work reinforces the role of reinvestment discipline in building adaptive capacity and long-term competitiveness (Kattel & Mazzucato, 2018; Mazzucato, 2021).

In volatile institutional environments, firms often prioritize extraction due to uncertainty. Sustainable ventures resist this pressure by converting present profits into future capabilities. Reinvestment therefore becomes the financial mechanism through which Disposition to Sustain becomes regenerative. At this stage, sustainability becomes cyclical strengthening. Each market cycle leaves the organization stronger rather than depleted.

3.9 Business Sustainment (BS)

Business Sustainment represents the culmination of the Executing Tenacity Sequence, the organizational condition in which the venture possesses self-renewing capacity to maintain relevance, performance, and identity across leadership transitions, market cycles, and institutional disruptions. De Geus (1997) described enduring firms as living systems capable of adaptation across generations, while Starbuck (1965) emphasized adaptive growth as the basis of organizational survival. Contemporary resilience research similarly shows that long-lived organizations share the capacity for continuous capability regeneration (Duchek, 2020; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021).

Within the present sequence, BS represents the full institutionalization of Disposition to Sustain. The founder's commitment to continuity is here translated into organizational systems, culture, governance, and strategic renewal capacity. The enterprise continues not because individuals sustain it, but because the organization has learned how to sustain itself. Business Sustainment therefore represents tenacity completed. Sustainability has been transformed from personal discipline into organizational permanence.

4. Synthesizing The Executing Tenacity Sequence: A Dialectical Progression from Disposition to Sustain to Business Sustainment

The Executing Tenacity Sequence presents a coherent conceptual framework explaining how disciplined commitment to continuity under institutional voids matures into stabilized organizational sustainment. It operationalizes Tenacity by unpacking it into an ordered, dialectical progression of infrastructural, operational, governance, and strategic constructs. At its core, the sequence traces the transformation of Disposition to Sustain (DTS) from an internal continuity orientation into Business Sustainment (BS), a structurally stabilized and regenerative enterprise outcome.

Each stage emerges through the resolution of tensions between fragility and stability, improvisation and systemization, operational strain and performance discipline, and short-term survival and long-term continuity. Tenacity is progressively structured, optimized, institutionalized, and strategically reinforced. What begins as continuity commitment becomes institutionalized sustainment (Teece, 2007; Mair & Marti, 2009).

4.1 From Continuity Commitment to Systemised Infrastructure

The sequence begins with Disposition to Sustain (DTS), the disciplined commitment to venture continuity despite operational fragility, environmental shocks, and institutional uncertainty. In institutional voids, where organizational collapse is often linked to overdependence on founder intervention, DTS prevents structural stagnation and premature decline (Khanna & Palepu, 1997). Yet commitment alone does not produce sustainability; it must become structural.

This structural transformation occurs through Systemised Infrastructure (SI). Here, repeated operational engagement under constraint refines routines, coordination patterns, and administrative processes into standardized systems. What was initially dependent on improvisation becomes embedded in repeatable organizational processes. Through sustained interaction with operational uncertainty, entrepreneurs develop structured coordination mechanisms that reduce volatility and preserve institutional memory (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Barney, 1991). Tenacity thus becomes structurally embedded in organizational infrastructure. What begins as continuity intention becomes operational architecture.

4.2 From Infrastructure to Operational Validation

Systemised Infrastructure generates the basis for Scalable Operations (SO). Scalability emerges when infrastructure consistently supports expansion without proportional increases in operational breakdown, coordination strain, or quality erosion. In fragile environments, scalability often rests on process reliability, adaptive coordination, and the ability to replicate performance despite infrastructural limitations (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997).

However, scalability must be demonstrated to become organizationally meaningful. This demonstration occurs through Operational Excellence (OE), the consistent delivery of quality, efficiency, and reliability across activities. Excellence reflects the validation of operational maturity through performance consistency (Porter, 1985). This consistency stabilizes internal expectations and reduces operational uncertainty. The movement from SO to OE marks a critical shift: tenacity is no longer expressed merely through continuity of activity; it becomes validated through continuity of performance.

4.3 From Operational Discipline to Governance Stability

With operational reliability established, the entrepreneur enters the institutional phase of the sequence. Ethical Framework (EF) reflects the establishment of guiding principles that regulate decisions, stakeholder engagement, and organizational conduct. These principles are not symbolic declarations but behavioral anchors that reduce opportunistic drift and internal inconsistency (Suchman, 1995). As ethical discipline becomes routinized, it evolves into Stakeholder Governance (SG), the development of accountability structures built on transparency, responsibility, and balanced stakeholder consideration. Governance reflects the structural protection of organizational stability through oversight and procedural clarity (Aguilera et al., 2008). At this stage, sustainability is no longer dependent solely on operational discipline; it becomes institutionally protected through governance structures. The entrepreneur's commitment to continuity becomes embedded within organizational control systems, reducing vulnerability to internal disruption.

4.4 From Governance to Strategic Reinforcement

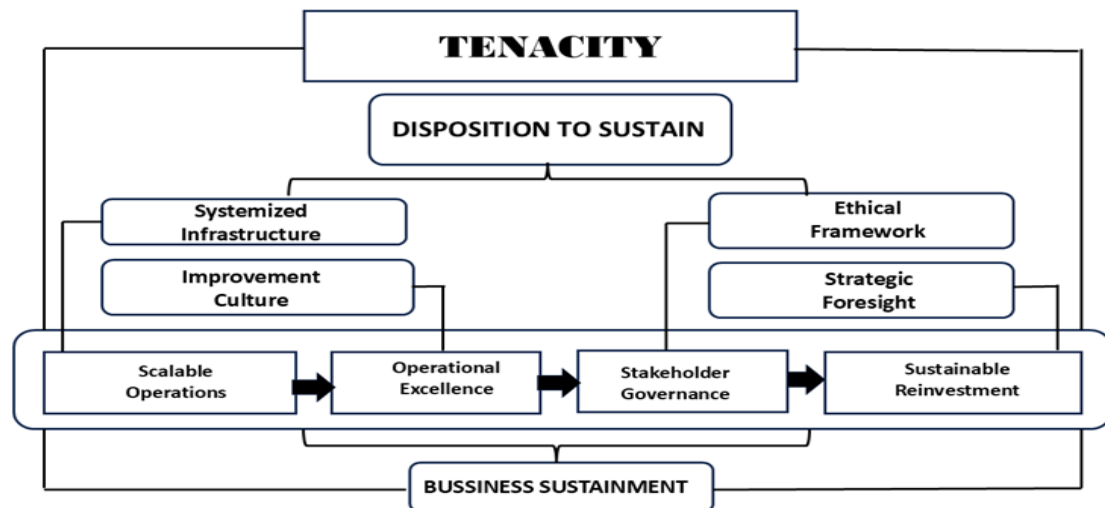
Governance stability enables sustainability at a higher strategic order. Institutional discipline creates the foundation for Strategic Foresight (SF), the ability to anticipate environmental shifts, prepare for uncertainty, and position the venture for long-term relevance. Foresight reflects the movement from reactive management to anticipatory leadership (Gavetti, 2012). When strategic awareness is consistently translated into resource allocation decisions, Sustainable Reinvestment (SR) emerges. Reinvestment reflects the disciplined allocation of surplus toward capability strengthening, operational resilience, and future competitiveness. Sustainability here becomes economically reinforced rather than operationally maintained (Lepak, Smith & Taylor, 2007; Teece, 2007). This progression marks the strategic consolidation of tenacity with the implication that continuity becomes reinforced through forward-looking discipline rather than reactive adjustment.

4.5 Culmination: Institutionalized Business Sustainment

The sequence culminates in Business Sustainment (BS), the state in which continuity has been fully architected into a regenerative organizational structure. Sustainment here is not episodic survival but durable organizational viability produced through embedded infrastructure, validated operational excellence, structured governance, and strategic reinvestment discipline.

At this stage, Disposition to Sustain is no longer reactive commitment. It has been transformed into institutionalized continuity within the venture's architecture. The enterprise no longer survives because the entrepreneur sustains it; it sustains itself because the structure itself embodies disciplined continuity (North, 1990; Teece, 2007). Thus, the Executing Tenacity Sequence demonstrates how commitment to continuity, when progressively structured and institutionally reinforced, matures into durable business sustainment. It specifies the dialectical pathway through which tenacity under institutional constraint becomes organizationally self-sustaining within institutionally fragile environments.

Figure 1.0: Phases Of Disposition to Sustain in Unfolding Tenacity Sequence



Source: The Author

4.6 Propositions of the Executing Tenacity Sequence

Building on the foregoing synthesis, the following propositions formalize the expected relationships among the constructs of the Executing Tenacity Sequence. Together, they articulate how the Disposition to Sustain (DTS) advances through successive structural and strategic consolidations under conditions of persistent institutional constraint. Thus:

Proposition 1: Higher levels of Systemized Infrastructure increase Scalable Operations, as codified routines and formalized processes create the structural stability necessary for expansion without proportional increases in coordination failure within institutional voids.

Proposition 2: Stronger Scalable Operations enhance Improvement Culture by necessitating continuous learning and adaptive refinement to maintain efficiency and reliability under increasing organizational complexity.

Proposition 3: Greater Improvement Culture increases Operational Excellence, as institutionalized learning and continuous refinement translate into measurable gains in quality consistency, efficiency, and performance reliability.

Proposition 4: Higher levels of Operational Excellence strengthen Ethical Framework development, as performance discipline reinforces the need for principled conduct to preserve credibility, reduce opportunism, and maintain stakeholder trust.

Proposition 5: Stronger Ethical Framework increases Stakeholder Governance, as codified ethical commitments encourage the development of participatory oversight mechanisms that reinforce accountability and organizational stability.

Proposition 6: Greater Stakeholder Governance increases Strategic Foresight, as governance stability enables longer-term orientation, structured environmental scanning, and anticipatory strategic thinking.

Proposition 7: Stronger Strategic Foresight increases Sustainable Reinvestment, as future-oriented preparedness encourages the disciplined allocation of surplus resources toward capability renewal and long-term competitiveness.

Proposition 8: Higher levels of Sustainable Reinvestment increase Business Sustainment, enabling the emergence of regenerative organizational capacity capable of maintaining continuity across leadership transitions, environmental shocks, and institutional disruptions.

Proposition 9 (Sequential Mechanism): *The Executing Tenacity Sequence operates as a cumulative, ordered mechanism in which each antecedent–consequence progression increases the probability of advancement to the subsequent stage, ultimately giving rise to Business Sustainment (BS) as the culmination of Disposition to Sustain within institutional voids.*

These propositions collectively reinforce the internal coherence of the Executing Tenacity Sequence and provide the analytical foundation for its subsequent integration into the broader construct-sequence program explaining how entrepreneurial dispositions mature into enduring organizational capabilities within institutionally fragile environments. The next section extends this logic by situating the sequence within wider theoretical discussions on enterprise continuity and organizational longevity under conditions of institutional constraint.

5. Theoretical Positioning and Implications of Disposition to Sustain in The Executing Tenacity Sequence

The Executing Tenacity Sequence contributes a novel framework to the literature on entrepreneurial continuity, particularly within institutional void contexts typically characterized by weak regulatory enforcement, unstable support systems, and fragmented market coordination (Khanna & Palepu, 1997). While prior research has examined organizational resilience (Duchek, 2020), dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2007), and institutional adaptation (Mair & Marti, 2009), emerging scholarship increasingly emphasizes sustainability as a capability built through organizational learning, technological adaptation, and strategic resilience rather than as a static performance outcome (Mhlanga & Dzingirai, 2024; Rashed et al., 2025; Feng & Wu, 2026).

However, these perspectives often treat sustainability as an outcome variable rather than as a developmental process rooted in entrepreneurial disposition. The Executing Tenacity Sequence integrates these perspectives into a sequential and dialectical model showing how sustainability emerges progressively through structural consolidation, operational discipline, governance embedding, and strategic renewal. This section positions the model in relation to five foundational theoretical traditions and discusses its theoretical implications.

5.1 Integrating Organizational Growth with Structural Continuity

At its structural foundation, the Executing Tenacity Sequence aligns with classical theories of firm growth and administrative development (Penrose, 1959; Chandler, 1962). Systemised Infrastructure (SI) reflects the transformation of entrepreneurial effort into organizational architecture capable of sustaining activity beyond individual intervention.

Contemporary resilience and capability research reinforces this structural logic by demonstrating that organizational continuity depends on the development of adaptive infrastructures, digital integration, and flexible resource configurations capable of sustaining performance under uncertainty (García-Valenzuela et al., 2023; Rashed et al., 2025).

However, unlike traditional growth perspectives that emphasize expansion as the primary outcome, this model demonstrates how infrastructure first functions as a continuity mechanism before becoming a growth mechanism. Sustainability is therefore not treated as a passive byproduct of growth but as an intentional structural achievement. This perspective extends growth theory by showing how Disposition to Sustain transforms administrative structure into a continuity safeguard within environments where organizational fragility is often the norm rather than the exception.

5.2 Advancing Organizational Learning through Continuous Improvement Discipline

The model also contributes to organizational learning theory (Senge, 1990; Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2019) by demonstrating how Improvement Culture (IC) and Operational Excellence (OE) function not merely as performance enhancers but as survival mechanisms within institutionally fragile environments. Evidence from sustainability and innovation research further demonstrates that organizational learning capability, innovation orientation, and continuous improvement systems strongly predict resilient performance and long-term firm stability under uncertainty (Alshukri et al., 2024; Gustantini et al., 2026).

While learning organization theory emphasizes adaptation, the Executing Tenacity Sequence shows how continuous improvement becomes institutionalized as behavioral discipline necessary for organizational endurance. Operational Excellence emerges not simply as efficiency achievement but as trust production in environments where formal guarantees are weak. This reframing positions learning not only as adaptation capability but as continuity discipline. Sustainability here becomes behavioral before it becomes financial.

5.3 Extending Stakeholder Theory through Governance as Stability Architecture

The sequence further extends Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and governance scholarship (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003) by demonstrating how Ethical Framework (EF) and Stakeholder Governance (SG) function as organizational substitutes for weak institutional enforcement. Parallel work in sustainability governance shows that stakeholder engagement systems, transparency practices, and responsible management infrastructures significantly strengthen organizational resilience and

long-term value creation, particularly where formal regulatory systems remain weak or inconsistent (Alshukri et al., 2024; Mhlanga & Dzingirai, 2024).

Rather than treating governance as compliance response to regulation, the model demonstrates how governance emerges internally as a stability architecture that protects organizational continuity. Ethical clarity reduces opportunistic drift, while stakeholder governance distributes accountability beyond founders. This perspective advances institutional theory by showing how entrepreneurs construct micro-institutions inside their ventures when macro-institutions are unreliable. Governance therefore becomes not merely regulatory alignment but entrepreneurial institution-building.

5.4 Reframing Strategic Foresight as Continuity Preparedness

The model also contributes to strategic management literature by positioning Strategic Foresight (SF) as a continuity mechanism rather than simply a competitive positioning tool (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018). Strategic management research increasingly shows that foresight capability, leadership adaptability, and strategic flexibility significantly strengthen venture resilience and long-term performance under conditions of environmental volatility (Zahra & Wright, 2023; resilience capability research, 2026).

Within the Executing Tenacity Sequence, foresight represents the transition from operational survival toward anticipatory stability. Entrepreneurs move from reacting to shocks toward preparing for them. This shift represents the maturation of Disposition to Sustain from persistence into preparedness. By linking foresight directly to Sustainable Reinvestment (SR), the model further demonstrates how anticipation must translate into resource discipline to produce durable outcomes. Strategy therefore becomes not only positioning logic but continuity insurance.

5.5 Organizational Longevity as Regenerative Capability

Finally, the culmination of the sequence in Business Sustainment (BS) contributes to organizational longevity research (De Geus, 1997; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021) by conceptualizing sustainability as regenerative capability rather than static survival. Work on organizational resilience increasingly conceptualizes longevity as a dynamic process involving capability renewal, innovation absorption, and continuous strategic adaptation rather than simple duration of survival (resilience evolution research, 2024; adaptive capability studies, 2026). BS therefore represents the condition where the venture develops the capacity to renew itself across leadership transitions, environmental volatility, and institutional disruption.

This reflects the transformation of tenacity from personal persistence into organizational self-renewal capacity. This perspective moves beyond static survival models by showing how sustainability emerges as a developmental outcome of sequential organizational consolidation. The firm does not merely survive; it develops the capability to continue surviving.

5.6 Summary of Theoretical Contributions

The Executing Tenacity Sequence contributes to entrepreneurial and organizational theory by:

- i) Integrating structural, operational, governance, and strategic constructs into a unified developmental model of business continuity;
- ii) Demonstrating how sustainability emerges through dialectical consolidation, where each stage resolves vulnerabilities produced at earlier stages;
- iii) Positioning Disposition to Sustain as a foundational entrepreneurial orientation that transforms persistence into institutionalized organizational continuity;
- iv) Reconceptualizing business sustainability as an organizational capability emerging from sequential internal development rather than external environmental stability;
- v) Extending institutional voids scholarship by demonstrating how entrepreneurs construct internal continuity mechanisms to compensate for absent external institutional supports.

6. Implications and Directions for Future Research

The Executing Tenacity Sequence advances the study of entrepreneurial continuity in institutional voids by modeling how business sustainment emerges through interlinked structural, operational, governance, and strategic consolidations. While deductively developed, the framework invites empirical testing, contextual comparison, and theoretical elaboration.

Future research may operationalize the constructs within the sequence and examine their interactions using quantitative scale development, process research, or longitudinal firm studies. Case-based and ethnographic investigations within institutionally fragile environments may further illuminate how Systemised Infrastructure, Operational Excellence, Stakeholder Governance, and Strategic Foresight evolve in practice and how entrepreneurs transition from founder-dependent survival toward system-dependent continuity. Comparative studies across industries, firm sizes, and emerging versus mature ventures could further assess the generalizability of the model and identify possible nonlinear or recursive sustainment pathways.

The framework also carries implications for entrepreneurship development, management training, and enterprise policy. By highlighting sustainability as a staged developmental process, the model suggests the importance of interventions that strengthen organizational system building, operational discipline, governance formation, and reinvestment capabilities, particularly in environments where institutional supports remain weak. Future theoretical work may also connect the Executing Tenacity Sequence with related perspectives such as dynamic capabilities, organizational resilience, and strategic renewal theory to further embed the model within broader conversations on firm longevity.

In sum, the Executing Tenacity Sequence offers a parsimonious yet generative explanation of how entrepreneurial commitment to continuity becomes transformed into organizational sustainment capacity, providing a foundation for cumulative, multi-method research on enterprise longevity under institutional constraint.

7. Conclusion

This paper has advanced the Executing Tenacity Sequence as a theoretically grounded framework for understanding how business sustainability emerges in contexts characterized by institutional fragility. Centered on the construct of Disposition to Sustain, the model explains how entrepreneurial commitment to continuity evolves through successive structural, operational, governance, and strategic consolidations, culminating in Business Sustainment. Unlike perspectives that treat sustainability primarily as financial endurance or market survival, the Executing Tenacity Sequence conceptualizes sustainment as the progressive institutionalization of continuity within organizational systems, culture, and strategic practice. The framework highlights the often invisible organizational work required to transform fragile ventures into enduring enterprises where formal institutional protections remain limited.

The model contributes to entrepreneurship and management scholarship by integrating insights from organizational growth theory, learning organization research, stakeholder governance, strategic foresight, and organizational resilience into a coherent and empirically examinable developmental progression. By specifying distinct constructs and their sequential relationships, it provides a foundation for future theoretical refinement and practical application, particularly within emerging and institutionally constrained environments. Ultimately, the Executing Tenacity Sequence reframes business sustainability as a developmental achievement rather than a residual outcome—an unfolding process through which entrepreneurial tenacity becomes organizational permanence through disciplined continuity, structured adaptation, and regenerative renewal.

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