

Unfolding Resilience: A Theoretical Model of Disposition to Produce and the Sequential Emergence of Entrepreneurial Acumen in Institutional Voids

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial agency in institutional voids confronts environments defined by persistent constraint, fragmented systems, and absent formal support. Prevailing theories of opportunity recognition and adaptation offer limited insight into how such agency is not merely initiated but regenerated and sustained. Synthesizing theoretical foundations from adaptive self-efficacy, enactment, relational attribution, and collective action, this paper advances the Resilience Sequence, a process model that explains the evolution of entrepreneurial agency through structured engagement with constraint. Anchored in the construct of Disposition to Produce, the model delineates a dialectical progression from perceived feasibility and adaptive enactment, through bilateral attribution and interdependent exertion, toward collective imagination and prototype emergence. This sequence culminates in Entrepreneurial Acumen, a regenerative capacity to transform constraints into catalytic inputs for venture development. The framework contributes a coherent theoretical account of resilience as an endogenous, structuring logic of entrepreneurial action, explaining how agency escalates and stabilizes within under-institutionalized contexts.	Review Paper *Corresponding Author: <i>Nura S. Akilu</i> Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto How to cite this paper: Nura S. Akilu (2026). Unfolding Resilience: A Theoretical Model of Disposition to Produce and the Sequential Emergence of Entrepreneurial Acumen in Institutional Voids. <i>Middle East Res J Econ Management</i>, 6(2): 32-41. Article History: Submit: 16.04.2026 Accepted: 19.05.2026 Published: 30.05.2026
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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial activity in contexts of institutional absence or fragility poses a persistent challenge to dominant theories of venture formation. Much of the entrepreneurship literature presumes the availability of enabling infrastructures such as clear rules, enforceable contracts, accessible markets, and supportive intermediaries, within which opportunity recognition and exploitation unfold. Yet, across large paths of the global economy, entrepreneurs operate under conditions where such institutional frameworks are partial, unreliable, or entirely absent (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Mair & Martí, 2009). In these settings, entrepreneurial emergence is not primarily a matter of identifying opportunities, but of sustaining productive action amid constraint.

Existing theoretical approaches offer only partial accounts of this reality. Models centered on opportunity recognition, intention formation, or effectual choice illuminate how entrepreneurs decide to act, but they provide limited insight into how production itself is

sustained when formal supports are weak. Even resilience-oriented perspectives often conceptualize resilience as a psychological attribute or as an outcome of adversity, rather than as an ongoing mode of productive agency. Consequently, the micro-processes through which entrepreneurs continue to produce, adapt, and regenerate enterprise under persistent constraint remain under-theorized.

This paper addresses this gap by advancing a theoretical framework grounded in the construct of Disposition to Produce (DTP). Departing from intention or choice-based accounts of entrepreneurship, the model foregrounds producing as the central analytic problem. It extends prior theorizing on Disposition to Act and Disposition to Choose (Akilu, 2026a, 2026b) by shifting analytical attention from initiation and selection toward the dynamics of productive endurance. The resulting framework conceptualizes entrepreneurial agency as a capacity that unfolds through sustained engagement with constraint, rather than as a discrete decision or moment of execution.

The proposed Resilience Sequence traces how DTP evolves through a dialectical progression of cognitive, relational, and exertive processes. As such, the paper reconceptualizes resilience as a structuring logic that leads to acquirement of entrepreneurial acumen rather than a post-hoc response to adversity. It also advances a process model that centers dispositional tendency to produce under constraint, thus offering a perspective that diverges conceptually from the opportunity based and intention-centric accounts of entrepreneurial emergence. Accordingly, the paper provides a parsimonious and empirically tractable sequence that clarifies how entrepreneurial acumen is cultivated through lived engagement with institutional voids.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section Two reviews the theoretical foundations that inform the proposed framework. Section Three introduces and defines the core constructs of the Resilience Sequence. Section Four synthesizes these constructs into a dialectical process model and advances a set of formal propositions. Section Five situates the framework within broader entrepreneurship and institutional theory debates and discusses its theoretical implications. Section Six outlines directions for future research, and Section Seven concludes the paper.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This section explores multiple theoretical traditions that collectively inform the Resilience Sequence as a developmental model of Disposition to Produce and the emergence of Entrepreneurial Acumen in institutional voids. Together, these traditions explain why entrepreneurial resilience manifests not as episodic endurance or reactive coping, but as a cumulative capacity for sustained production under constraint.

Rather than treating resilience as an outcome variable or personality attribute, the theoretical streams engaged here position it as an endogenous capability that develops through repeated engagement with feasibility judgments, productive action, relational interdependence, and outcome-based learning. Six interrelated theoretical traditions have been explored and these include adaptive self-efficacy, enactment and agency theory, attribution and institutional work, collective action, sociocultural imagination, and learning-based capability development, all of which form the conceptual foundation upon which this paper is mounted.

2.1 Adaptive Self-Efficacy and the Problem of Feasibility

At the core of sustained dispositional tendency to produce under constraint lies the problem of feasibility. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy

establishes perceived capability as a central determinant of action persistence, particularly under adverse conditions. Within institutional voids, feasibility judgments assume heightened importance, as actors cannot rely on external validation, formal supports, or stable infrastructures to confirm their capacity to produce.

Entrepreneurship research has long emphasized perceived feasibility as a precursor to action (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; McGee *et al.*, 2009), but largely in contexts where institutional scaffolding remains available. In void conditions, feasibility becomes internally constructed and continuously recalibrated through lived engagement with constraint. This perspective provides the foundational logic for treating Disposition to Produce as a developmental orientation grounded in adaptive efficacy rather than in opportunity perception alone.

2.2 Enactment, Agency, and Productive Engagement

The transition from feasibility towards producing is illuminated by theories of enactment and agency. Weick's (1979, 1995) enactment theory demonstrates how actors shape their environments through action, generating structure and meaning through engagement rather than prior analysis. Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conception of agency further situates action as a practical-evaluative process embedded in temporal and contextual contingencies.

Within institutional voids, productive engagement functions as a mechanism of control and orientation. Through doing in terms of crafting, assembling and producing, entrepreneurs often establish feedback channels that render uncertainty manageable. These theories collectively justify a sequential view in which action is not a downstream consequence of clarity, but a formative process through which productive capacity begins to consolidate.

2.3 Attribution, Responsibility, and Institutional Embeddedness

As production extends beyond individual effort, attribution and institutional theories explain how responsibility and agency become socially distributed. Attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1985) highlights how actors interpret causality and responsibility within social interaction, shaping expectations of cooperation and accountability.

Institutional work theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) complements this perspective by demonstrating how actors actively construct coordination mechanisms in contexts where formal institutions are weak or absent. In such environments, production depends on recognizing interdependence and

negotiating shared responsibility. This stream establishes the theoretical grounding for understanding resilience as relationally anchored rather than individually sustained.

2.4 Collective Action and Interdependent Production

The scaling of production under constraint is informed by theories of collective action and community-based entrepreneurship. Ostrom's (1990) work on governing shared resources demonstrates how coordinated effort can emerge without hierarchical control, particularly under conditions of scarcity. Entrepreneurship research extends these insights to contexts where value creation depends on pooled labour, shared knowledge, and mutual commitment (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006).

These perspectives position interdependent exertion as a mechanism through which productive capacity expands despite limited resources. Resilience, in this view, develops through coordinated strain or shared effort that distributes risk while amplifying collective output.

2.5 Imagination, Meaning, and Adaptive Recombination

The transformation of coordinated effort into innovation draws on theories of sociocultural imagination and narrative sensemaking. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the collective formation of meaning and possibility, while narrative scholarship highlights how shared stories enable actors to envision and legitimize new futures (Boje, 2001).

In constrained environments, imagination operates as a productive resource, enabling actors to recombine limited inputs into novel configurations. This theoretical stream grounds the role of collective ideation in enabling resilience to move beyond repetition toward adaptive recombination.

2.6 Learning, Capability Development, and Resilient Systems

The consolidation of resilience as an enduring capability is informed by learning theory and dynamic capability perspectives. Sitkin's (1992) small-wins framework demonstrates how incremental outcomes provide diagnostic feedback that guides adaptation, while entrepreneurship research emphasizes experimentation and iterative learning as mechanisms of capability development (Shepherd *et al.*, 2015; Ries, 2011).

Dynamic capability theory (Teece, 2007) situates these learning processes within broader systems of sensing, reconfiguring, and sustaining production over

time. Within volatile environments, such capabilities enable ventures to absorb shocks and adapt productively. This stream establishes the conceptual grounding for understanding Entrepreneurial Acumen as a cumulative, regenerative capacity rather than a static skill set.

2.7 Integrative Justification for the Model

Taken together, these theoretical traditions converge on a shared insight: entrepreneurial resilience in institutional voids develops through a sequential consolidation of feasibility beliefs, productive engagement, relational coordination, collective imagination, and outcome-based learning.

While existing theories illuminate discrete aspects of this process, they do not offer a structured account of how production-oriented resilience accumulates over time under persistent constraint. The Resilience Sequence addresses this gap by integrating these perspectives into a developmental architecture that explains how Disposition to Produce evolves into Entrepreneurial Acumen.

This theoretical foundation prepares the ground for the construct sequence presented in the following section, where these dynamics are specified through distinct antecedent–consequence pairings.

3. PRESENTING THE CONSTRUCT SEQUENCE

This paper advances a third sequential model of entrepreneurial agency in institutional voids by introducing a construct sequence anchored in Disposition to Produce, which represents a forward-oriented intentionality centered on sustained value generation under constraint. Whereas prior models examined how entrepreneurs initiate action or *Disposition to Act* (Akilu, 2026a) and assume decisional responsibility or *Disposition to Choose* (Akilu, 2026b), the present framework shifts analytical focus to how entrepreneurs persistently produce in contexts where institutional support is fragmented, unreliable, or absent (Mair & Marti, 2009; Webb *et al.*, 2009).

We term this framework the Resilience Sequence. It conceptualizes resilience not as episodic endurance or psychological coping, but as a regenerative production process through which entrepreneurial capacity accumulates over time (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2011; Ducheck, 2020). The sequence traces how feasibility beliefs are translated into productive engagement, how production becomes socially embedded, and how collective effort and learning culminate in scalable, adaptive systems of output. The sequence ultimately culminates in Entrepreneurial Acumen, understood here as an integrated capability to convert constraint into production-centered advantage (Teece, 2007; Helfat *et al.*, 2007).

Each construct in the sequence is specified as part of an antecedent–consequence pairing, forming a dialectical progression in which earlier conditions enable, shape, and constrain subsequent developments (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). While the sequence maintains structural continuity with earlier work on entrepreneurial emergence in institutional voids (Akilu, 2026a; 2026b), it advances an independent theoretical logic centered on regenerative production rather than strategic execution.

3.1 Perceived Feasibility (PF)

Perceived Feasibility refers to the entrepreneur's situated belief in their capacity to generate tangible outputs within prevailing constraints. Unlike conventional feasibility assessments that rely on market signals or institutional validation, PF is internally constructed and dynamically recalibrated through lived engagement with adversity (Bandura, 1997; Williams & Shepherd, 2016). It reflects a judgment that productive effort, however modest, is possible despite environmental friction.

Within the Resilience Sequence, PF functions as the initiating antecedent that anchors Disposition to Produce. It marks a cognitive shift from assessing the possibility of action to affirming the possibility of production. In institutional voids, where external confirmation is scarce, PF operates as a self-referential orientation grounded in adaptive experience rather than formal legitimacy (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; McGee *et al.*, 2009; Mair *et al.*, 2012).

3.2 Enacting Activity (EA)

Enacting Activity denotes deliberate, outcome-oriented productive behaviors that translate feasibility belief into engagement with the environment. These actions are not exploratory tests or symbolic gestures; they are purposeful attempts to generate material outputs in terms of assembling, fabricating, cultivating, or delivering under conditions of uncertainty.

EA represents the first behavioral expression of Disposition to Produce. Through enactment, entrepreneurs stabilize aspects of their environment while generating feedback that informs subsequent adjustment. In this way, activity functions not merely as execution, but as a mechanism through which structure, meaning, and momentum are co-produced (Weick, 1979, 1995; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Particularly in institutional voids, enactment allows entrepreneurs to partially substitute action for missing formal coordination mechanisms (Garud *et al.*, 2014).

3.3 Bilateral Attribution (BA)

Bilateral Attribution is the mutual recognition of agency and responsibility between the entrepreneur and other actors within the institutional void. Rather than attributing outcomes unilaterally to personal effort or external obstruction, BA reflects an interpretive shift toward shared causality and interdependence (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1985).

This construct marks the transition from individual production to socially embedded production. By acknowledging that others both influence and are influenced by productive outcomes, entrepreneurs recalibrate expectations of cooperation, accountability, and reciprocity. Such attributional shifts are critical in environments where coordination depends on negotiated rather than formalized rules, aligning BA with theories of institutional work and collective responsibility formation (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Battilana *et al.*, 2009).

3.4 Relationship Building (RB)

Relationship Building refers to the intentional cultivation of trust-based alliances that support and stabilize production under institutional fragility. These relationships—formed with collaborators, community actors, informal regulators, or resource holders—function as substitutes for missing formal infrastructures (Khanna & Palepu, 2010; Mair & Marti, 2009).

RB operationalizes Bilateral Attribution by transforming mutual recognition into sustained commitment. In institutional voids, such relationships constitute productive infrastructure: they reduce coordination costs, buffer uncertainty, and enable access to distributed resources necessary for continued output (Uzzi, 1997; Larson, 1992). Relationship building thus embeds production within social systems capable of sustaining effort over time.

3.5 Interdependent Exertion (IE)

Interdependent Exertion denotes coordinated productive effort in which labor, knowledge, and resources are pooled among actors with shared stakes in production outcomes. This construct reflects a shift from solitary exertion to collective strain, characterized by role differentiation and reciprocal dependence.

IE represents a scaling inflection point in the sequence. Production capacity expands not through capital deepening or formal organization, but through synergistic collaboration under constraint. This logic aligns with theories of collective action and community-based entrepreneurship, which demonstrate how shared effort enables value creation in resource-scarce environments (Ostrom, 1990; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). By distributing effort and risk, interdependent

exertion amplifies productive reach while preserving adaptability.

3.6 Collective Imagination (CI)

Collective Imagination refers to the joint generation of production possibilities through shared narratives, co-created visions, and collaborative sensemaking. It emerges from sustained interaction and coordinated exertion, enabling actors to envision new configurations of resources, roles, and outputs (Vygotsky, 1978; Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010).

CI transforms coordinated effort into adaptive innovation. Under conditions of scarcity, imagination operates as a productive asset, allowing actors to recombine limited inputs into feasible pathways forward. Narrative and imaginative processes thus enable resilience to move beyond repetition toward creative recomposition (Boje, 2001; Garud *et al.*, 2011).

3.7 Generated Outcomes (GO)

Generated Outcomes are tangible, observable outputs in terms of products, services, or impacts that result from the preceding processes. These outcomes are not final achievements but micro-validations that provide feedback on the viability of the production system (Sitkin, 1992). GO performs a diagnostic function within the sequence. Outcomes inform learning, guide recalibration, and signal whether production configurations warrant continuation, adjustment, or expansion. In this sense, outcomes function as inputs into resilience development rather than endpoints of success, consistent with learning-based views of entrepreneurial adaptation (Shepherd *et al.*, 2015; Ries, 2011).

3.8 Prototype Emergence (PE)

Prototype Emergence denotes the material consolidation of production learnings into scalable, adaptive models. It reflects a transition from episodic output to systematic production, where processes become replicable and resilient to environmental volatility.

PE signals that the venture has moved beyond improvisational survival toward regenerative sustainability. Prototypes absorb feedback, accommodate shock, and evolve under pressure, embodying resilience as a structural property of the production system (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Sarasvathy, 2001). This marks the emergence of patterned capability rather than isolated competence.

3.9 Entrepreneurial Acumen (EA)

Entrepreneurial Acumen represents the integrated capability to transform constraint into sustained productive advantage. It encompasses the ability to design, adapt, and govern systems of

production that not only endure adversity but improve through it (Teece, 2007; Duchek, 2020).

As the culmination of the Resilience Sequence, Entrepreneurial Acumen is not a discrete skill or trait, but the accumulated residue of feasibility judgment, enacted production, relational embedding, collective effort, imaginative recombination, and learning-driven adaptation. It constitutes the mature expression of Disposition to Produce an enduring capacity for regenerative entrepreneurship under institutional constraint.

4. SYNTHESIZING THE RESILIENCE SEQUENCE: A DIALECTICAL PROGRESSION FROM DISPOSITION TO ENTREPRENEURIAL ACUMEN

The Resilience Sequence presents a generative framework that explains how entrepreneurial agency advances within institutional voids through regenerative production under persistent constraint. Extending the theoretical foundations of the *Endeavor Sequence* (Akilu, 2026a, 2026b), this model articulates how the Disposition to Produce (DTP) matures through adaptive cycles of feasibility assessment, relational leverage, exertive collaboration, and prototype development, thus culminating in a resilient state of Entrepreneurial Acumen (EA). The sequence operationalizes DTP as an emergent form of situated agency that converts constraints into catalytic levers for sustained entrepreneurial output. Each construct unfolds not as a linear step, but through dialectical tension between antecedent conditions and consequential adaptations, producing a cumulative system of agentic escalation.

4.1. From Latent Capacity to Operational Adaptation: PF → EA

The Resilience Sequence begins with *Perceived Feasibility (PF)*, a conviction grounded in adaptive self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994). Unlike traditional feasibility analyses premised on infrastructural support, PF in institutional voids is self-referential, improvisational, and heuristic. It reflects the individual's perception that action remains viable despite the absence of formal validation. This belief activates the Disposition to Produce by providing a psychological anchor that affirms feasibility under non-ideal conditions. From this sense of adaptive possibility arises *Enacting Activity (EA)*, a behavioral manifestation of operational adjustment. Entrepreneurs begin manipulating their limited environment to exert control over uncertainty (Wood *et al.*, 2014). This includes modifying routines, shifting work structures, or creatively using existing tools. EA signifies more than action it is the active molding of constraints into a pliable terrain of effort. The dialectic here suggests that

feasibility is affirmed considerably by the agent's ability to enact resilience through adaptive control.

4.2. Generating Shared Agency: BA → RB

Once the entrepreneur begins enacting possibilities, resilience requires more than effort and tilts heavily towards relational anchoring. Thus, *Bilateral Attribution (BA)* emerges as a recognition that sustainable action depends on mutual dependencies, not heroic autonomy. Therefore, rather than internalize success or failure solely as individual outcomes, the entrepreneur begins to attribute progress to trust-based reciprocities and shared accountability (Molm, 2003; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). This is a vital shift in institutional voids, where lone agency is often insufficient and vulnerable.

From BA arises *Relationship Building (RB)*, which is considered a deliberate cultivation of alliances and trust-rich networks. Accordingly, RB functions as an institutional buffer, replacing absent formal supports with social capital and relational commitment (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986). It anchors the DTP by shifting the entrepreneurial posture from isolated exertion to co-produced advancement. This dyadic movement from attribution to alliance marks the transformation of resilience from personal conviction to interdependent orchestration.

4.3. From Coordinated Effort to Collective Creativity: IE → CI

As the relational substrate strengthens, the entrepreneur enters a phase of *Interdependent Exertion (IE)*, which represents a collaborative pooling of effort, skill, and risk across informal teams or resource-sharing networks (Katila & Shane, 2005). This stage recognizes that in voids, production is rarely solo; instead, it is the cumulative output of loosely coordinated actors with overlapping stakes.

This exertion gives rise to *Collective Imagination (CI)*, a construct denoting the shared ideation and innovation that emerge from these interdependencies. CI enables entrepreneurs and collaborators to envision possibilities beyond what any one actor could conceive alone (Sawyer, 2006; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). In contrast to formal innovation

systems, CI in voids is grounded in lived constraints, but elevates creativity through distributed cognition. Here, DTP evolves through co-invention, making imagination an emergent property of collaboration under pressure.

4.4. From Validation to Regenerative Design: GO → PE

With momentum now grounded in collective ideation, the entrepreneur begins encountering *Generated Outcomes (GO)*. This translates as micro-successes, small wins, or emergent signs that prior adaptations are yielding fruit (Weick, 1984). These outcomes, though modest, offer crucial psychological and strategic validation. GO functions as a feedback mechanism that signals viability under constraint and sustains entrepreneurial persistence (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2006).

The micro-validations catalyze *Prototype Emergence (PE)*, which represents the surfacing of tangible, often rough-hewn models of what resilient production looks like in practice (Ries, 2011; Thomke, 2003). PE may take the form of makeshift products, informal systems, or adaptive routines that are viable precisely because they are anti-fragile—capable of evolving under duress (Taleb, 2012). This culmination reveals how resilience becomes materially encoded. DTP has matured into an iterative, regenerative system of production that does not merely survive the void but begins to leverage it.

4.5. Culminating in Entrepreneurial Acumen

The final construct, *Entrepreneurial Acumen (EA)*, represents a distilled capacity to convert systemic constraint into adaptive advantage. This is not resilience in the narrow sense of survival, but resilience as mastery. In other words it is the ability to enact regenerative, scalable, and contextually grounded production models (Teece, 2007; Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011). EA thus emerges from lived entanglement with instability. It reflects a tacit understanding of how to mobilize effort, trust, imagination, and iteration as instruments of strategic endurance. In this sense, Entrepreneurial Acumen becomes the defining trait of those who can fold constraint into capacity, crafting ventures that are not simply viable but vibrantly anti-fragile.

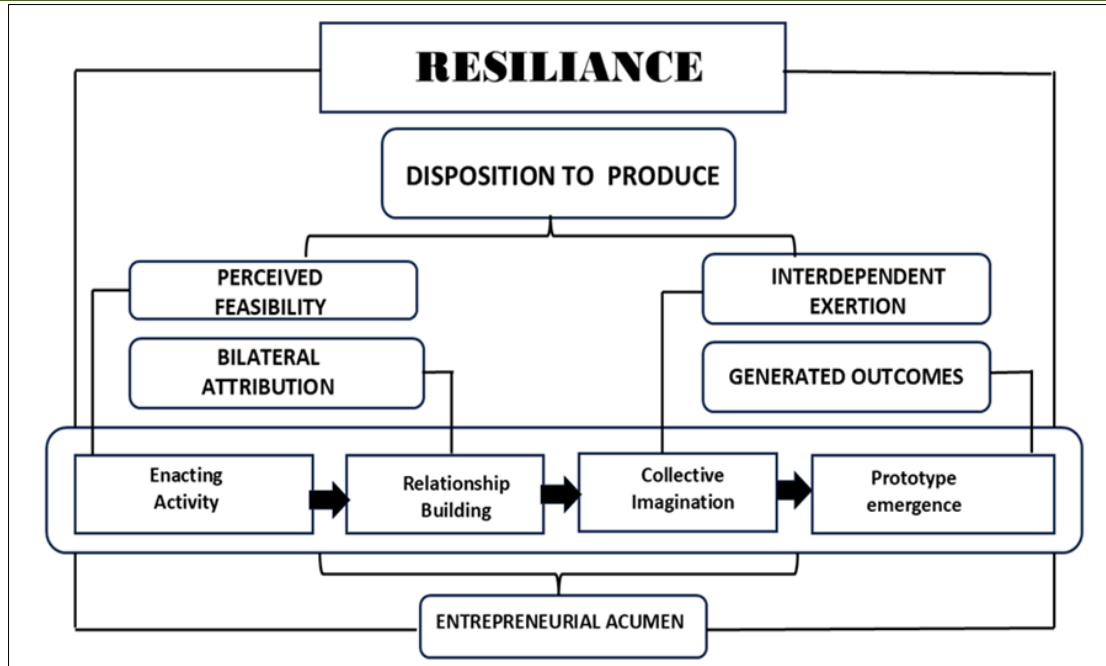


Figure 1.0: Phases of Disposition to Produce in Unfolding Resilience Sequence

Source: The Author

4.6. Propositions of the Resilience Sequence

4.6 Propositions of Unfolding Resilience Sequence

Building on the foregoing synthesis, the following propositions formalize the expected relationships among the constructs of the Resilience Sequence. Together, they articulate how the Disposition to Produce (DTP) advances through successive adaptive transformations under conditions of persistent institutional constraint. Thus:

Proposition 1: Higher levels of Perceived Feasibility increase the likelihood of Enacting Activity (EA), as adaptive self-efficacy under constraint motivates entrepreneurs to translate belief in viability into operational adjustment.

Proposition 2: Sustained Enacting Activity increases Bilateral Attribution, as continued engagement with constraints prompts entrepreneurs to recognize the relational dependencies involved in productive effort.

Proposition 3: Stronger Bilateral Attribution enhances Relationship Building, as shared responsibility and mutual recognition catalyze the deliberate formation of trust-based alliances.

Proposition 4: More robust Relationship Building increases Interdependent Exertion, as relational infrastructures enable coordinated pooling of effort, skill, and risk.

Proposition 5: Higher levels of Interdependent Exertion strengthen Collective Imagination, as collaborative engagement under constraint generates shared ideation beyond individual cognitive limits.

Proposition 6: Greater Collective Imagination increases the likelihood of Generated Outcomes, as co-

produced ideas are translated into observable micro-results and provisional achievements.

Proposition 7: More frequent Generated Outcomes increase Prototype Emergence, as iterative validation encourages the materialization of adaptive, context-specific production forms.

Proposition 8: Advancing Prototype Emergence increases Entrepreneurial Acumen, as repeated cycles of adaptive design consolidate tacit mastery over production under constraint.

Proposition 9 (Sequential Mechanism): The Resilience Sequence operates as a cumulative, ordered mechanism in which each antecedent-consequence relationship incrementally strengthens the Disposition to Produce, ultimately culminating in Entrepreneurial Acumen as a resilient form of entrepreneurial mastery in institutional voids.

5. THEORETICAL POSITIONING AND IMPLICATIONS OF DISPOSITION TO PRODUCE IN THE RESILIENCE SEQUENCE

The Resilience Sequence advances a distinct yet complementary strand of theorizing within entrepreneurial cognition in institutional voids. Where the Endeavor Sequence elaborated the evolution of agency through *Disposition to Act*, and *Executing Endeavor* modelled decision-based enactment via *Disposition to Choose*, the present work situates its inquiry around *Disposition to Produce*, that is, the resilient impulse to generate value under constraint through adaptive, regenerative output. This section positions the Resilience Sequence within five

foundational theoretical traditions and articulates its contributions to the entrepreneurship literature.

5.1. Anchoring Self-Efficacy in Perceived Feasibility

The first phase of the Resilience Sequence that is *Feasibility* → *Momentum*—is anchored in the individual's perception of feasibility as a psychological threshold that activates *Disposition to Produce*. This builds on Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy but nuances it by emphasizing adaptive self-belief under institutional ambiguity rather than formal task competence. In this view, *Perceived Feasibility* is not only cognitive but also contextually shaped by an individual's situated interpretations of what is practically possible despite the absence of institutional support. This expands Self-Efficacy Theory by embedding it within entrepreneurial environments where resource volatility is the norm, not the exception (Mair & Marti, 2009). The consequence, *Enacting Activity*, reflects how feasibility beliefs are operationalized into iterative, low-stakes actions that build early momentum, supporting recent claims that small wins often serve as inflection points in venture emergence (Weick, 1984).

5.2. Mutual Attribution and Distributed Agency

The second phase that is *Attribution* → *Leverage* quite reinterprets traditional attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1985) through the lens of *Bilateral Attribution*. Unlike *Unilateral Attribution* in earlier models (Akilu, 2026a), this construct foregrounds shared agency, wherein entrepreneurs ascribe partial causality for outcomes to collaborators, community actors, or informal partners. This reframing mirrors work in relational sociology (Emirbayer, 1997) and collaborative entrepreneurship (Montgomery *et al.*, 2012), suggesting that in institutional voids, resilience is not achieved through isolated agency but through mutually constructed pathways. The emergence of *Relationship Building* as a consequence solidifies this distributed agency by establishing trust-based alliances as institutional buffers. Here, the model contributes to institutional theory by conceptualizing informal interpersonal ties as substitutes for absent formal structures (Puffer, McCarthy, & Boisot, 2010).

5.3. Resilience as Collective Exertion and Imaginative Labor

The third phase that is *Exertion* → *Innovation*, revisits exertion not as individualized sacrifice but as *Interdependent Exertion*, wherein resource pooling, coordinated labor, and joint accountability become the logic of resilience. This echoes Elinor Ostrom's (1990) theory of collective action and recent work on communal entrepreneurship (Korsgaard *et al.*, 2015), while also integrating insights from bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005). However, the sequence extends beyond resource improvisation toward *Collective Imagination*, a

construct that captures the generative creativity emerging from shared adversity. This aligns with and extends cultural-cognitive theories of innovation (Suddaby, 2010) by suggesting that institutional voids, while constraining, may paradoxically foster a deeper form of adaptive ideation rooted in mutual struggle and shared purpose.

5.4. Micro-Wins and the Logic of Emergent Prototyping

The fourth phase- *Outcomes* → *Traction* conceptualizes *Generated Outcomes* as validation signals of internal system robustness. In contexts where scalability is not immediately viable, the model emphasizes "micro-wins" as signals of adaptive fit (Bryan, 2020). These outcomes serve as triggers for *Prototype Emergence*, where resilience becomes materialized in small-scale but replicable systems. This framing intersects with literature on lean experimentation (Ries, 2011) but diverges by showing how experimentation is driven by existential necessity, communal iteration, and anti-fragile design (Taleb, 2012). The entrepreneur becomes in this sense, a regenerative producer who iterates toward viability through structurally grounded feedback loops.

5.5. Toward Entrepreneurial Acumen as Antifragile Capacity

The Resilience Sequence culminates in *Entrepreneurial Acumen*, conceptualized here as the capacity to transform constraint into a site of productive leverage. Drawing from Teece's (2007) dynamic capabilities framework and Taleb's (2012) notion of antifragility, *Entrepreneurial Acumen* is here considered regenerative rather than adaptive.

In this sense, the model contributes to capability theory by showing how dynamic capabilities in institutional voids are not firm-level assets but human-level dispositions, evolved through a sequential dialectic of feasibility, relational leverage, cooperative exertion, and emergent validation. Importantly, this acumen is tacit, embodied, and enacted, making it a lived capability and not just a strategic asset.

5.6. Summary of Theoretical Contributions

- i. The Resilience Sequence theorizes entrepreneurial resilience not as a personality trait but as a sequenced capacity developed through contextual adaptation.
- ii. It advances attribution theory by introducing *Bilateral Attribution*, emphasizing the mutual construction of agency in voids.
- iii. It contributes to the literature on bricolage and collective entrepreneurship by modelling *Interdependent Exertion* and *Collective Imagination* as innovation drivers.

- iv. It reconceptualizes traction through Generated Outcomes and Prototype Emergence, positioning micro-wins as strategic proofs of regenerative viability.
- v. It extends the notion of entrepreneurial acumen to include antifragility, highlighting how entrepreneurs in voids transform disruption into leverage through iterative, co-produced systems.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Resilience Sequence reconceptualizes entrepreneurial agency in institutional voids as a regenerative process of production under constraint. By foregrounding Disposition to Produce (DTP), it reframes entrepreneurial emergence as a commitment to generate value despite systemic limitations, positioning production as a primary entrepreneurial act rather than a derivative outcome of opportunity recognition. The model advances entrepreneurship theory by treating resilience as a structuring principle of action, extending resource-based and dynamic capability perspectives through an emphasis on mobilization over endowment, and advancing institutional work by framing entrepreneurial production as a form of institutional repair. It also bridges organizational resilience and entrepreneurial cognition by conceptualizing resilience as a forward-driving creative force.

Practically, the sequence offers a roadmap for mobilizing production in fragmented institutional environments, shifting policy and development interventions from capital provision toward cultivating relational leverage, adaptive control, and collective ideation capacities. It further provides a foundation for entrepreneurial training programs aimed at helping founders navigate executional tensions and convert small, emergent outputs into scalable prototypes.

Future research may empirically validate the sequence across diverse institutional voids using longitudinal, ethnographic, or comparative designs, examine variation across rural and urban informal economies, and test whether targeted interventions accelerate progression through the sequence. Interdisciplinary engagement with development economics, anthropology, and systems engineering may further extend the model's applicability to broader socio-technical systems where resilience is both a production and governance challenge.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has advanced a theoretical model of entrepreneurial emergence in institutional voids through the lens of the *Disposition to Produce* and its unfolding within the *Resilience Sequence*. By articulating a phased

antecedent–consequence chain, spanning feasibility, attribution, exertion, and outcomes, we have shown how entrepreneurial actors move beyond survivalist adaptation to develop regenerative capacities that transform constraints into competitive advantage. Each construct in the sequence reflects a dialectical progression in which productive action does not merely respond to environmental frictions but actively reorganizes them, yielding systems that are adaptive, anti-fragile, and capable of sustained value creation.

The *Resilience Sequence* contributes to entrepreneurship theory by reframing resilience as a generative process rooted in sustained production under constraint rather than as static trait or reactive capacity. It complements prevailing models of entrepreneurial behavior in resource-rich or institutionally stable environments by highlighting the mechanisms through which production itself becomes a platform for strategic adaptation, relational leverage, and innovation in contexts marked by infrastructural opacity, weak enforcement, and regulatory fragmentation.

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