

The bottleneck of intrapreneurship: are social positions and held expectations constraints in organizations' entrepreneur process? A conceptual view

A conceptual
view

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Suat Begeç

Türk Hava Kurumu Üniversitesi, Ankara, Turkey, and

Korhan Arun

Namik Kemal Üniversitesi, Tekirdag, Turkey

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to develop conceptual arguments about intrapreneurship relative to role theory.

Design/methodology/approach – The challenge to the intrapreneurship concept is that no single or combination of personality traits, individual characteristics or attitudes can fulfill the causes of the phenomenon, as these factors are context-bound. One explanation for individual- and macro-level contrasting outcomes is the diverging effect of expectations. The structural and interactionist perspective of sociology is used to understand the intrapreneurship concept because intrapreneurs live within a society and shape their course per the expectations of others.

Findings – Intrapreneurs have been trying to infer about what is seen as crucial individually related to interactions within the existing context; more importantly, acting in an intrapreneurship role can be defined and learned by expectations.

Practical implications – With the convenient expectations from other members, families or environments, organization members will value the innovation and self-direction of intrapreneurship more highly than such a taste for an acting role may be an important factor in the decision to become an intrapreneur.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, the paper emphasized for the first time that the consequences of exposure to social expectations for the development of intrapreneur roles, particularly the broad portfolios of skills and motivation, are relevant to intrapreneurship. Previous approaches depend on individuals, organizations or the environment to have different approaches to likely employees to be intrapreneurs. The paper first argues that context is important for understanding how and why context can be linked to individual intrapreneurs and how intrapreneurship can be defined as roles rather than a task or unique potential entrepreneurs.

Keywords Intrapreneurship, Role theory, Corporate venturing, Structural sociology, Intrapreneuring, Corporate entrepreneurship, Context

Paper type Conceptual paper



Introduction

An intrapreneur is an employee of an established company who, on his initiative, becomes entrepreneurial in the sense of his employer (Kuckertz, 2017). Coming from all areas of a company and being not directly responsible for a company's innovation

activities (Hayton *et al.*, 2013; Kuratko *et al.*, 2001; Prexl, 2019), intrapreneurs are the initiatives of employees within organizations to undertake new business activities (Niels Bosma *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, a set of attitudes are not significant predictors of entrepreneurial as well as intrapreneurial performance (Jain *et al.*, 2015). Entrepreneurial and/or intrapreneurial acts can be better understood within organizational, temporal, institutional, spatial and social contexts as these contexts provide individuals with opportunities and set boundaries for their actions. So, the main gap in the literature is how these contexts impact specifically intrapreneurial activities.

Many researchers describe intrapreneurship, until now, as a set of skills (George *et al.*, 2019) or behaviors (Mohedano-Suanes and Benitez, 2018; Rigtering and Weitzel, 2013; Weber *et al.*, 2014). Bosma *et al.* (2011) found that individual and macro-level intentions are different. However, how these behaviors are forming and changing by context could not be explained in the literature. If they are not seen as a destiny, behavioral conception change over time, and role theory may explain the reasons behind this change (Grossman, 2005). The approach to intrapreneurship is a “role” in this paper. The role is a representation of social relations in organizations (Kuper and Kuper, 2003) rather than the behavioral aspects of employees.

The intrapreneurship theory has been absent from the conceptual debates regarding the agent–structure problem (Harnisch *et al.*, 2011). This is one of the main reasons why we seek to elucidate the role of intrapreneurship; a particular pattern of behavior is an unsolved problem in the literature. Another gap in the literature is researched as causality results from the entrepreneurs’ characteristics or the characteristics of entrepreneur organizations (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003). Instead, role theory connects intrapreneurship as a role to interpretations of employees from set expectations of others, and the world around them (Salzman, 2018). Therefore, contextual factors are useful for drawing attention to when, where and how circumstances, situations, conditions and environments constrain or enable expectations (Fletcher, 2016). However, few papers provide information on which and how intrapreneur roles are read by individuals from different scripts and environments (Chlosta, 2016; Spedale and Watson, 2014).

For defining a concept, the distinctions between descriptions and causes are important. The attributional analysis or the analysis of causation deals with the conditions for which correspondent inferences are least likely to be made, precisely, when the behavior violates the operative expectancy (Uleman, 2015). In other words, institutions are characterized by continuity, stability and path-dependence, contrary to these traits of intrapreneurs are transformational and futuristic (Garud *et al.*, 2007; Mahzouni, 2019). These attributional analyses come from impromptu trait inferences, which describe the trait, not the causes of the trait. Spontaneous represents being unintentional and mostly unconscious those traits are not the only concepts that describe behaviors but goals or behavioral gist. When researchers define the intrapreneurs’ traits or organizational context, they are representing the intrapreneurship concept as spontaneous trait transference. In this process, the concept that the researcher tries to reveal becomes associated not with the person who enacts the behavior but with another person (a communicator or informant) who describes that behavior by someone else but does not perform it (Uleman, 2015). From that point of view, intrapreneurship traits may not the causes; instead, they are descriptions.

The purpose of the intrapreneurship behaviors does not solely depend on individuals but also depend on dictations from social factors and organizational expectations. These are behavioral levels of analysis that define behavioral effects exclusively in terms of changes in elements from the environment that cause behavioral changes (Gieseler *et al.*, 2019) on

intrapreneur. By contrast, the underlying mental processes that are triggered by elements within the environment and are responsible for subsequent changes in an intrapreneur behavior need process-level analysis. Delanoë-Gueguen and Fayolle (2019) researched the mindset theory of action phases that are the transition from a motivational phase to a volitional phase for implementation. They show that there is a Rubicon point, where the role of entrepreneurial intention becomes irrelevant, and the intrapreneur process can continue without disruption. In other words, to some point, intrapreneurs process or play the roles, which are expected from them. However, they still did not mention how the intention or motivational phase started or causes of this deliberate mindset (Delanoë-Gueguen and Fayolle, 2019). In this case, intrapreneurship has expected behaviors or roles, which are in the set of role theory.

Role theory is about how roles are emerging in social life and their relations to behavior patterns (Biddle, 1986). The theory implies that individuals should play roles by socializing (Mead and Strauss, 1997; Strauss, 1956). From this perspective in organizations, members play a role by interpreting the perceptions of roles from interacting individuals to control him and on whom he depends. So, in this paper, intrapreneurship is taken as a role that also has many organizational and environmental characteristics.

Apart from the level of economic development, the institutional context also influences the substitution intrapreneurship (Bosma *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, how employees accomplish or get entrepreneurial roles and how contextual factors have connected with the process to the role within the organization are never genuinely exposed to academic research. Some researchers commented on behavioral characteristics or personality traits (Brännback, 2016; Rauch and Frese, 2007). Others researched institutional, evolutionary and time-geography as entrepreneurial agents (Stam, 2016). The others defined (or designed) roles, expectations are also based on players' role performances and further formulated through a collective belief system beyond the boundaries and limits (Kelly, 2005). Still, current literature has not constructed causality relations (Gawke *et al.*, 2019).

Blanka (2018) positioned intrapreneurship as an individual-level concept. Literature generally involves the manipulation or adaptation of intrapreneurs to context (Welter and Gartner, 2016). Most context-related research within the entrepreneurship field has focused on the 'objective' side of context because what are assumed to be "objective" constructs is easy to identify (Welter, 2016). However, organizations are layered structures and subjective, and role specialization differs at each level (individual, team, organization; Yukl, 2013). When it comes to culture, the literature refers to meaningful interactions between individuals but does not refer to the conditions affecting the individual (Mangone, 2018). In general, the way to improve performance in a new venture team or innovation is to be a part of the strong team as possible. Intrapreneurs, who attempt to create a new venture within the context of an existing corporation, will find themselves on the unfamiliar ground (Shatzer and Schwartz, 1991). However, at the singular level, it is about organizing activities and designing jobs for increasing efficiency and the best use of employees' skills (Okun *et al.*, 2020). This paper will study one main research question – "as a role rather than individual or organizational characteristics how these dimensions can be connected on intrapreneurial roles" – and three related questions. These questions are as follows:

- (1) How expectations from different organizational subunits affect an intrapreneurship role?
- (2) How the intrapreneurs' roles have been affected by these unlike expectations?
- (3) Are grouped or organizational level expectations on intrapreneurs' roles distinctive from individual interactions?

Even though many relationships, even in the more studied theory of entrepreneurship (Rauch and Frese, 2006), in intrapreneurship research are heterogeneous or are not direct, as a natural result, how the context of the organizations is related to the employees' expression is still missing in the intrapreneur literature.

The main problem behind intrapreneurship is the issue of context and understanding of the theoretical causality that connects the context to the intrapreneurship process. The intrapreneurial process is seen as a set of activities composed of identification, exploration and development of an innovative opportunity (Bourgogne *et al.*, 2013; Neessen *et al.*, 2017). We contribute to the intrapreneurship literature in three foremost areas. Previous researches used two main scales. First, they measured the firm's general orientation toward entrepreneurship. Second, scales measured engagement levels of the organizations in the entrepreneurship activities (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001). The first scale measures how organizational, entrepreneurial culture effect these organizational entrepreneurship processes, namely, how intrapreneurship and innovation process is being managed proactively (Taneja, 2010). The second scale includes rewards, venturing, R&D and self-renewal activities directly (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001) or in organizational management issues such as intellectual property, talent management, long-term orientations, compensating creativity. As a process, intrapreneurship contributes to continuously feed innovative activities and constitutes a systematic and collaborative approach led by an individual or a group of individuals who take the time to gather around an idea that they recognize as a business opportunity (Puech and Durand, 2017). Role theory is based on acting as an intrapreneur, and these roles are shaped by expectations related to the environmental and organizational context that only role theory can explain the intersection of these two scales.

The second contribution of this theoretical argument is about why a person chooses to be an intrapreneur or behave according to entrepreneurially (Elert *et al.*, 2019) at the micro or individual levels. So, the other research question about the paper is if intrapreneurial roles are reflected appraisal (Bordens and Horowitz, 2002) of individuals rather than a reflection of organizational culture. In other words, are intrapreneurs act on expectations of a source of social information involving our view of how other organizational members (Hassard, 1995) react to us rather than organizational cultural expectations. Intrapreneur, as actors of the role incumbents, use several sources of social information to forge their self-concept. This notion of a working self-concept can vary from one situation to another depending on the transformation of the behavior by transfer of the knowledge domain of the role senders. The sending process of the intrapreneurship behavior can endure over time (Redding, 1993) to the acting on the intrapreneur function in a role. Unfortunately, the part of individual self-concept or intrapreneurship comes from their membership in groups depending on potential inter-firm relations for access to accumulated resources. However, intrapreneurs' networks consist of family, colleagues and kin ties (Anderson *et al.*, 2005; Bratković Kregar and Antončič, 2016).

Finally, this paper connects the "social" and "psychological" characteristics of intrapreneurship by role theory. Psychology studies the individual intrapreneur from self-serving cognitions view that intrapreneurs should tend to attribute positive outcomes of their behavior to internal, dispositional factors and negative outcomes to external organizational expectations. On the other hand, intrapreneurs act like the role, in this case, take the role, the exterior (social) context in which they are functioning. Philosophically, rather than seeing the social world as an external context (Anderson and Ronteau, 2017), we tried to explain how intrapreneurs know self or roles. Several sources of social information define to forge intrapreneurship self-concept or taking roles. Indeed, in this commentary, we

argue that communal context mediates the relation between an individual intrapreneur and the social layer. So, assumptions of the role theory contribute to theory acceptance of intrapreneurship.

To ensure the paper is rigorous and valid, the main papers are selected scholarly and peer-review articles. The terms and their combinations (North, 2015) included in the search were “corporate entrepreneurship,” “corporate ventures,” “entrepreneurship + large corporation,” “internal corporate entrepreneurship,” “internal corporate venturing,” “intrapreneuring,” “intrapreneurship,” “new venture department,” “new venture division” and “new ventures + entrepreneurship.” This first search for articles in scholarly and peer-review results generated 765 articles for which the individual search terms had generated multiple, overlapping hits for the past five years (2014 till June 2019). There are 40 journals in the WoS database related to entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, study characteristics are important (e.g. year of publication, study quality), so, we eliminated some of them depending on study quality. In several cases, articles with titles or abstracts containing any combination of the search terms addressing themes other than corporate entrepreneurship and were excluded from the sample (Mgammal, 2019). At the same time, articles addressing aspects of corporate entrepreneurship (e.g. corporate ventures, corporate venture capital funding and knowledge sharing) but only in secondary roles in the analysis of other focal concepts and units were also excluded (Agarwal and Shah, 2014; Braunerhjelm *et al.*, 2018; Franco and Pinto, 2017; Gentry *et al.*, 2013; Khan *et al.*, 2019; Lukes and Stephan, 2017).

Intrapreneurship

Even if the definition of intrapreneurship is not clear in the literature (Moghaddas *et al.*, 2020), the concept resembles some process of entrepreneurship within the existing corporate environment (Løwe Nielsen, 2012). The term first was used to describe the entrepreneur individual who plays the role of an intrapreneur within the existing organization (Pinchot, 1985). Different terms used for intrapreneurship: internal corporate ventures (Garrett, 2015), internal entrepreneurship (Ma *et al.*, 2016) and corporate entrepreneurship (Azami, 2013; Birkinshaw, 2003; Sharma and Chrisman, 1999; Hitt *et al.*, 2001; Zahra, 1991). These terms refer to groups’ or employees’ entrepreneurial activities within the formal organization and explicitly supported resources (Taneja, 2010).

Previous research has identified Intrapreneurship under entrepreneurship via three ramifications (Nielsen *et al.*, 2017). These include emerging of new units, strategic renewal (Guth and Ginsberg, 1990) and innovation. However, the cultural and social environment is also crucial within which intrapreneurial activities develop creative cultural mentalities (Julian Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2002; Sorokin and Richard, 2017). These approaches support the view of intrapreneurship that it is a dispersed internal process that can be different among organizations regard to broad internal processes (Burgelman, 1983, 1984).

The intrapreneurship process begins as a result of the action between organizational and individual characteristics, namely, the cumulative sum of the environment (Gundogdu, 2012), with the help of a precipitating event. Distinctive characteristics include focusing, process and timing. The precipitating event can be an opportunity, perception and culture that links them. In other words, the precipitating event provides the impetus to act as entrepreneurial when the other conditions are conducive to the intrapreneurship behavior (Hornsby *et al.*, 1993, 2009). However, intrapreneurship is not just an output from the function of opportunity, individual and context, but it is as a function of perception of that opportunity regard to environmental context (Birkinshaw, 2003; McKenzie *et al.*, 2007; Welter, 2016, 2019).

Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) investigated nearly a hundred studies but identified that only four found the link between intention and actual behavior. We can narrate different contexts play a vital intrapreneurship causality. So, instead of studying antecedents and outcomes separately or too narrowly, studying entrepreneurship from a holistic approach and focused areas from broader concepts will much add to the concept (Spinelli *et al.*, 2012). This approach is also applicable to intrapreneurship that using sets from social science is more useful than trying to divide and study these layers as much as possible.

Pinchot claimed in his work that intrapreneurs are.

- employees who do for corporate innovation what an entrepreneur does for his or her start-up;
- the dreamers who do;
- self-appointed general managers of a fresh idea, intrapreneurs; and
- drivers of change to make the business a force for good (Pinchot, 2017).

On the other side, Bager *et al.* (2010), in their research, found interesting differences between intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs in several areas. First, intrapreneurs act more strongly to get the venture/business started. Second, intrapreneurs are more experienced and draw more on knowledge-intensive networks. Third, the projects' intrapreneurs are starting to seem to have a higher knowledge and innovation component. Fourth, intrapreneurs embrace risk at the general level, but more limitedly, than entrepreneurs at the personal level do. Fifth, intrapreneurs see themselves as effective starters to a more significant degree than entrepreneurs. Sixth, intrapreneurs are more growth-oriented than entrepreneurs are (Bager *et al.*, 2010; Nielsen *et al.*, 2017).

Researches in the intrapreneurship literature studied individual characteristics, new ventures in an existing organization and the organizations or environments as intrapreneurship dimensions (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003; Duane Ireland *et al.*, 2006).

Hornsby *et al.* (1993) defined individual characteristics risk-taking propensity, desire for autonomy, goal orientation and internal *locus* of control. As a member of the organizations, intrapreneurs create new businesses for the organization to enhance the organizations' competitive ability (Gawke *et al.*, 2017). Hans Schollhammer classified administrative, opportunistic, acquisitive, imitative and incubate intrapreneurship (Taneja, 2010). Key behavioral aspects of intrapreneurship are personal initiative, active information search, out-of-the-box thinking, voicing, championing, taking charge, finding a way and some degree of risk-taking (De Jong *et al.*, 2008). Different than the individual entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs should underutilized organizational or corporate resources, extract further value within the existing potential, apply pressure to internal resource holders and spread the risk and cost of development (Covin and Kuratko, 2010). Perception opportunity by singular intrapreneur can be identified when they can exploit existing competency to the new context or applying new to existent context, which is leveraging (Tidd and Taurins, 1999). Furthermore, intrapreneurs can learn new skills both inside and outside the organization but learning new skills by the help of an organization is much more plausible.

From an organizational-level perspective, Bridge *et al.* (2009) saw organizations as contraptions to provide for intrapreneurial needs. Even if these needs are depending on circumstances, lower-order needs (i.e. ideas for enterprise, money, resources) were prerequisites until satisfied (Kraus, 2010). Additionally, networking skills effectively to build support and necessary technical skills are related to the organizational context (Jones *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, each organization has unique legitimacy, rigidity and indifferences. Here, legitimacy defines the direction of the intrapreneurship process as from

top-down or bottom-up (Nielsen *et al.*, 2017). Organizational rules, inertia and pressure are rigidity issues (Ma *et al.*, 2016). Open, gray and neglected areas in organizations are indifference issues that are technically and organizationally related to the technical skills of intrapreneurs.

The intrapreneurship field accepts the possibility that organizations try to arrange necessary conditions or adapt their employees to existing organizational structure to behave like entrepreneurially (de Villiers-Scheepers, 2011). That is why, highly entrepreneurial culture has high potential to exercise intrapreneurship initiative and ingenuity (Foreman-Peck and Zhou, 2010). Organizations' social structure exposes members to cumulative experiences and normative expectations that have a lasting impact on their subsequent intrapreneurship choices. The main differences between entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship can be seen in Table 1.

Intrapreneurship literature has been directed to explanations of observed behaviors from other members or entrepreneurs (e.g. risk-taking or proactive behaviors; Gawke *et al.*, 2017). In the organization's environment, emphasizing social closure processes can be strong (Hogg and Vaughan, 2018). Exposure to and familiarity with intrapreneurs in the organizational environment may raise self-entrepreneurship rates by increasing the perceived viability of intrapreneurship as a role acting option.

Role theory as a new framework in the intrapreneurship concept

Organizational members may not necessarily be more likely entrepreneur minded than others to try to be intrapreneurs; rather, they may be more distinctly possible to succeed in entering intrapreneur roles. The *distinguishing* characteristic of the intrapreneurship concept is determined by exposure of potential intrapreneur members to organizational culture, and the resources and privileges are being derived from the social position rather than self-endeavors. However, studying distinguishing characteristics of the intrapreneurship concept can be a mistake because the research of empirically corroborated intrapreneur models avoids the issue in abstracting from the very problem that requires explanation (Mckelvey, 1997). In other words, empirical research cannot know *what* a distinctive feature is unless intrapreneur characteristics have been observed within the environment involved and of the existents from which they are differentiated (Rand *et al.*, 1990). Intrapreneurship is the sum of the individual knowledge, skills and abilities of the organizational human resources rather than idiosyncratic differences or similarities

Context	Entrepreneurship	Intrapreneurship
Environment	Economic Conditions	Access to organization's financial or social capital (Sorensen, 2007), organization type
Community	Culture of the entrepreneurs	Institutional or organizational culture
Organizational population	Population structure and niches	Organizational identity
Organization	Organizational structure	Organizational process, norms and culture
Interpersonal networks	Social capital: resources	Organizational networks
Individual	Entrepreneurial motivation generally depending on internal locus of control	Expectations from the organization, networks and family

Source: Adapted from Ruef and Lounsbury (2007)

Table 1.
Multilevel
framework of main
differences between
entrepreneurship and
intrapreneurship

(Alpkan *et al.*, 2010; Valka *et al.*, 2020). Unfortunately, the qualities of an intrapreneur we mentioned are conducive to the success of an entrepreneurial initiative; for example, neither competitive nor motivated employees may not be entrepreneurial. The prognostic relevance of these characteristics is therefore limited; it is not possible, for instance, to conclude from the combination of high achievement motive strength, high uncertainty tolerance and high internal control conviction that an employee to a company will become active as an intrapreneur. The concept of individual role-taking is much more helpful here. This perception, which was originally developed for the social interaction level, can be transferred back to the individual level. The advantage of this approach is that it no longer talks about more general, psychological characteristics, unsteady focuses on precisely those characteristics on an individual who, in the end, can translate organizational context or overall expectations into intrapreneur activity. Then we can give rise to two propositions:

PIa. Intrapreneurship can be defined as an organizational role.

PIb. Intrapreneurship is an interpretation of organizational context rather than solely individual psychology.

Role theory came forward as an influential aspect, which must be integrated into the concept of intrapreneurship because intrapreneurs develop via the social process and by interaction; the social process is made possible by communication (Stryker, 2006). Additionally, not all but some universally relevant and vital external factors do have an influence on intrapreneurship (Aparicio, 2017; Valka *et al.*, 2020). However, it is not clear how intrapreneurs' vision is affected by these factors or which factors do they related.

Role theory predicts that employees behave depending on their respective social identities and the situation (Biddle, 1986), and the choice is part of the human condition; its content is contained in the subjective experience of the person emerging in and through the collective process (Stryker, 2006). In addition to the difficulty of being able to predict entrepreneurial behavior solely from the character, there is also the problem that character from a psychological point of view is relatively stable and solidifies comparatively early in life. Management is reaching its limits: character can only be learned to a limited extent. Nevertheless, the often-voiced assumption that entrepreneurial individuals are born and not made is too pessimistic. While it is challenging to learn to do business when the willingness is not there, it is always possible to learn or predict what intrapreneur roles are Kuckertz (2013).

Intrapreneurship role is learned, but if the role is vital in the self-concept, the performance of that role will be strong because the learning process may demand high cognitive activity by the novice. If an employee is in a high involvement situation, he or she may have not yet developed a specific script to intrapreneurship. So, employees will attempt to employ existing scripts similarly structured, such as other intrapreneurs in the company or expectations from others, even from TV (Solomon *et al.*, 1985). In other words, an employee can be very creative; however, this novel script as an intrapreneur is filled with behavioral options depending on individual repertoire. Nevertheless, expectations may provide specific guidance for appropriate intrapreneur role behavior. Intrapreneurs' functions may seem more effective when adjusting behavior in particular settings, which is why distinct behaviors from intrapreneurs are contingent. In a nutshell, we can say that different subunits tend to change the entrepreneurship course of action because they have been dealing with authentic selected problems. Another aspect of role theory says that roles are personal. Employees learn their roles (Turner, 2001); merge, namely, by the internalization

of attitudes and beliefs appropriate to those roles; and transition (Allen and van de Vliert, 1984) regarding the roles. We can assume other propositions:

P2a. Intrapreneurs' selective perception is related to expectations.

P2b. The greater the amount of expectations, the more intrapreneur be employees.

Different subunit expectations change or transfer the roles of employees as intrapreneurs. Sociological social psychology studies the effects of cultural structures on individuals and the mutual affection of individuals and communication on social structures (Stryker, 2006). As a natural result, these different structures in society make it an evolving entity that is continuously changing with the interactions of its members. Complete integration of the interpersonal perspective with motivational, developmental, object-relations and social theories of intrapreneur behavior is needed. In other words, intrapreneurship is a version of a social comparison process rather than introspection (Bordens and Horowitz, 2002), which defines their understanding of behaviors and attitudes. So, intrapreneurship behavior can emerge not just from self-arise within individual members but also from interruptions in the flow of activities, or problems, in social, organizational and other layers of cultural issues (Stryker, 2006). As a result, employees, as individuals, carry out the characteristics of the macro-cultural environment, a nationally representative sample of the population, to their organization (Yijälä *et al.*, 2012). These explanations may help to question: "How does the differentiation among subunits change the intrapreneurship role expectations?" Intrapreneurs are part of their organization by definition. As a result, firm-specific heterogeneity is effective in innovative capacity (Blundell *et al.*, 1995) that should be considered under the term. Thus, they reflect the cultural environment of a larger population that they interact with, as they may carry out distinguishing characteristics from the others; intrapreneurs tend to solve the problems and take action following the macro-group itself. The other proposition we can give rise:

P3a. Each cultural and subcultural environment has different expectational impacts on intrapreneurs.

Antoncic (2007) looked to the intrapreneurship concept from the environment and organizational view. He found that organizational characteristics, such as communication, formal controls, environmental scanning, corporate support, competition-related values and person-related values, are positively related to intrapreneurship. However, organizations have many divisions and subcultures so that these shared characteristics can be different from one another. Social exchanges are important because they facilitate the development of innovative ideas (Fried *et al.*, 2007). Interactional role theory is the patterning of social interaction among individuals and groups of individuals. Consequently, social interactions in each group can be quite different from those in a society of organizations. Roles arise initially and recurrently out of the dynamics of interaction (Turner, 2001). However, individuals in cultures that emphasize the collective self are also less likely to view themselves as the focus of attention in social interactions, and individual-self societies emphasize self-fulfillment goes counter to the communal relationships (Nisbett *et al.*, 2001; Ross and Nisbett, 2011). However, situational factors will determine which expectation is controlling, no matter the dominant sense of an intrapreneurship role in each cultural group. So, there are the broad ranges of valued identities as antecedents of spontaneously emerged favorite roles. In that situation, organizational members can play different roles, specifically intrapreneur roles that are not formalized in organizational structures formed by groups that intrapreneur belongs or perceived

themselves as belonging to. This quote is the answer to the third research question of this paper. We can assume other propositions:

- P3b.* The greater the topology within organizations, the greater the heterogeneity within intrapreneurs' expectations.
- P3c.* The effects of expectation heterogeneity on the characteristics of intrapreneurs' are stronger when the relative power of each layer of the organization is factored into the computation of heterogeneity.

Intrapreneurs' role has been affected by different expectations despite the attempts to link individual-level intrapreneurship, and measurable positive outcomes for the employing organizations are rare (North, 2015). Role acting in intrapreneurship means fulfilling the expectations of the organization, colleagues from other industries, family and personal interests. Intrapreneurs should manage self or roles carefully through expectations from events in the social world, depending on how they perceive those events to be. Self-evaluation maintenance theory explains how the behavior of other people effects via a social process, especially when intrapreneurs should perform some behavior that is important to your self-conception (Bordens and Horowitz, 2002; Stryker, 2006). From this point of view, in the role literature, the roles are the result of environmental manipulation that depends on the ability of the individual to establish stimulus-response contingencies (Biddle, 1979). In other words, in the social or organizational context, the role is a characteristic of a set of expectations or a script that is written by different expectations (Coser, 2017; Coser, 1975). This point of view is related to structural theories, rooting the collectivist level of role behavior (Turner, 2001). Consequently, in human social structures, occupying specific positions have expected obligatory and optional behaviors. This is the degree of role congruence, and it has two dimensions: intra- and inter-role congruence. Intra-role congruence is the degree of the reflection of the organization's conception of that role in the intrapreneur conception. This process is determined by experience and the amount of interactions in that role. So, the volume of communication about role expectations is an important mediator (Davis, 1969; Solomon *et al.*, 1985). Another dimension in the role congruence that is related to effectiveness is an inter-role, which is the degree of sharing the standard definition of intrapreneurship. In this dimension, group dynamics or the organizational chain of command impedes the ability of intrapreneur effectiveness because it is related to the psychosocial interventions based on members' understanding of role expectations (Fletcher, 2016). In organizations, managers or teams may expect different criteria from intrapreneurs, e.g. innovativeness or new venturing, which affects role assignment effectiveness (Solomon *et al.*, 1985). Each person is a social actor who acts according to some characterizing behavior patterns or social roles. Each social role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviors that a person has to face and fulfill (Zhao *et al.*, 2014). In this context, role players are guided by a set of expectations that are either internalized or experienced from an external source or both, and they are judged and judge themselves according to how well they conform to these expectations. However, there are several limitations to these presumptions. First, most of the intrapreneurship facets have been developed from entrepreneurship. So, many behaviors are subsumed under the same aspects. Second, there are always other groups in which the intrapreneurs have been involved, of course, not only in workgroups. In other words, when the environments of the intrapreneurs are more layered, their role interdependence between these layers increases. The last propositions we can assume:

- P4. The degree of intrapreneurship role interdependence increases as the number of levels of conceptualization increases, e.g. intra-individual, dyadic, group, organization, national and cluster.

In a more differentiated social structure, intrapreneurs, being exposed to more contradictions, must be able to develop a higher degree of individuation and flexibility (Coser, 1975). Roles can have, through their distribution, external effects (Blau, 2017). More clearly, for instance, if most of the inside group members are oriented toward entrepreneurial intentions or new ideas, this will have not only the effect of increasing the status of the group but of influencing the real intrapreneur's performance. The chart of general conceptual frames can be seen in Figure 1.

Results, discussion and limitations

The relationship between intrapreneurship at the micro (individual) level as well as at the macro (national, organizational, social) level has never been clearly connected to our knowledge. It is crucial to gather role theory and intrapreneurship process from three perspectives.

First, role theory states that people establish identities via their roles and that individuals are defined by the roles to which they have been assigned (Franzese, 2013). Nevertheless, the theory may be somewhat limiting because it pays little attention to the processes by which individuals select their roles and prioritize the salience of the various roles they occupy (Biddle, 1979). Yet, the benefits of role accumulation are not universal and reflect structural factors, including access to high quality and desirable roles (Carr and Umberson, 2013). Indeed, previous research shows that contextual factors are important determinants of employee intrapreneurship (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018). For instance, work responsibilities within the institution are organized into roles, as is participation in groups and organizations (Turner, 2001). Thus, intrapreneurial behaviors in social or formal organizational contexts are organized (Sanne Johanna Leontien, 2020), and it acquires meaning in terms of roles. Using role theory as a guide and intrapreneurship as a process of studying the relevance and importance of different roles for facilitating change could be a significant contribution to work with individuals, groups and organizations as systems and work concerning changes in such cultures. For example, intrapreneurial ideas and opportunities are mostly identified during daily tasks (Puech and Durand, 2017). Nevertheless, Wetten (2020) found that time-

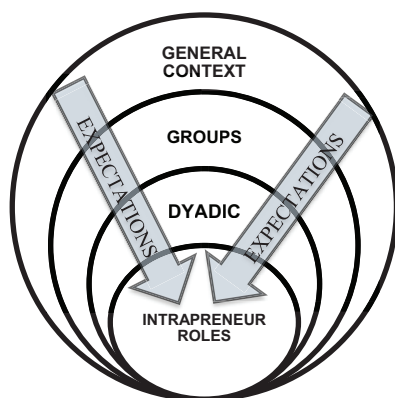


Figure 1.
Illustration of the
conceptual
framework

and location-independent work and management on output on intrapreneurship are not statistically relevant.

Second, in role theory, considerations might be approached from an unconscious perspective (Miner, 2011); however, an understanding of the conscious part will add a new perspective to theory. The measurement of institutionalized roles can also be possible. Third, role theory predicts that, while individuals respond to expectations in general (Frink and Klimoski, 2004), these responses differ from original intentions when intrapreneur conditions were developed.

Khan *et al.* (2011) described intrapreneurs as having a great sense of self-motivation. However, this is not the case; these characteristics of the situation prompt some statue's characteristics, and these characteristics are primarily based on the structure of a role and resources existent in an organization (Badura *et al.*, 2018; Mannix and Sauer, 2006). There are many positive relations between the culture, environment, organization and intrapreneurship, and some researchers found organizational culture crucial for intrapreneurship (Benitez-Amado *et al.*, 2010; Srivastava and Srivastava, 2010). Intrapreneurship can be a role that allows employees to be innovative without neglecting the roles already exists. It is true that not employed employees necessarily must be made an intrapreneur. This is because of the intrapreneurial management style. If managers become intrapreneurs, they manage to move initiatives efficiently through the corporate bureaucracy. Even if no results are achieved, the in behavior is quickly adapted. At the same time, these intrapreneurs have expectations clearly carry to their employees how things could look in the future and what needs to be done to be more innovative.

Furthermore, Park *et al.* (2014) mentioned the importance of communication for voluntary intrapreneurs. Other researchers studied environmental effects on intrapreneurship (Antonicic, 2007; Augusto Felício *et al.*, 2012; Rae, 2006). However, the researchers have not related the intrapreneurship effectiveness to any organizational control over environmental factors. Succinctly, the literature on intrapreneurship has researched three main areas, which are extra-organizations, organizations and individuals. Every three approaches to intrapreneurship have their point of view that is socially bounded to role theory. The interactionist approach tries to create and modify the conceptions of self and other roles as a critical orienting process in social interaction. Role theory says that intrapreneurship, regardless of the other factors, is a role, and this process can be learned from different expectation senders.

This paper has some limitations: first, we perpetuate that prescriptive behavioral expectations associated with a role reflect the actual behaviors of the majority of organizations. In that sense, it can be asked whose experiences serve as the basis for these normative intrapreneur behaviors. Second, role theory's inadequate perception of human psychology elucidates the fact that some individuals actively resist mutual expectations. As already mentioned, opposition to cultural norms is not addressed in terms of resistance on the part of the individual to power inequalities but rather in terms of deviance.

Conclusion

The main effort of this paper is to help develop a better theory of intrapreneur action. Intrapreneurs have more resemblance to the entrepreneurs than other employees. However, intrapreneurship is likely to depend on the level of macro impact and national institutions (Bosma *et al.*, 2011). We defined role theory as the connective element of these different levels. In the role theory approach, first, intrapreneurship role emerges through interaction and task orientation (functionalization), and second, that role formed from expectations

historically through personality and play style, depending on role validation and integration in the context.

Intrapreneurship needs entrepreneurs in organizations, and we may not find them. Previous literature explained the characteristics of intrapreneurs or organizations and environments that help members to become intrapreneurs. However, according to the role theory, not only the proximal determinants of intrapreneurial behavior but also the more distal influences of culture and social structure contribute to variability in this behavior. In other terms, intrapreneurship characteristics or skills can be defined without reference to other states in the system. However, role theory more commonly accepts that self-definition is contingent upon comparison with others. In other words, intrapreneurship can be regarded as not individual behaviors or skills; alternatively, it is a cultural role that depends on negotiated performances. Cultural context can define intrapreneurship roles for individuals as collective positions/roles, preferably, and those roles serve to create social positions for individuals as intrapreneurs.

Role learning has actors and system dimensions. Therefore, organizations should hire leader intrapreneurs or simple inventors to demonstrate examples or promote intrapreneurs as figureheads because intrapreneurs' roles are transferable.

Another implication of this article is to help organizations develop or improve intrapreneur programs. Role theory expresses that organizational role conceptions are partly derived from domestic values and organizational culture (Harnisch *et al.*, 2011). If so, decision-makers, organizational employees and society should be in broad agreement on these role conceptions. Incorporating social agencies, such as families, communities and NGOs, into these programs, is also necessary. Consequently, not only internal factors (behavior) but also external factors (environment) for accomplishing these programs are necessary.

Intrapreneurship is an option for top managers to collect and transform knowledge across the boundaries of the organization (Chao and Sheu, 2009). Further, organizations can create groups in which every individual has intrapreneur properties instead of having to train every employee.

Using a role approach, organizations may gain time and effort instead of trying disparate approaches. The underlying assumption here is that management can use the resources of innovation more effectively based on the knowledge gained. For example, executives can recognize which groups within the company are capable of innovation. Depending on organization-specific innovation roles, a comparison with the "best practices" of the industry or other industries may be relevant. In general, a targeted approach to strategy adaptation is possible if how to make intrapreneurship a role is known. Another strategical approach to connect different expectations according to propositions, in organization mobility options or planning, should be considered. Since mobility is related to innovation (Braunerhjelm *et al.*, 2018) and organization mobility programs, have never been considered in intrapreneurship literature.

For future research, topology or more precise definition of expectations can be studied. Role theory has three main aspects: roles, social relations, namely, context and expectations. As we defined, the intrapreneurship role, context can be different – from organizations to families – but we did not define clearly what the expectation is. The forms, intensity, capacity, duration, formalization and interpretation differences of the expectations are potential research areas.

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Corresponding author

Korhan Arun can be contacted at: korhanarun@gmail.com

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