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Understanding Imagination in Entrepreneurship

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Abstract: Using interviews to explore the role imagination plays in the South American Nikkei phenomenon (a fusion of Japanese haute cuisine with Peruvian ingredients) and employing the alternate templates research strategy to analytically compare three entrepreneurial behaviors (adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation), this case study found that the current theoretical boundary conditions are insufficient to separate the three archetypes. Therefore, based on data, new concepts are proposed to explain entrepreneurial behaviors where they overlap (e.g., creative imagination as a bridging construct of the entrepreneurial process). A novel entrepreneurial trilemma and a behavioral model focused on the conceptual overlaps are introduced to frame the new concepts and to visually depict the relationships between them.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, creative imagination, effectuation, bricolage, haute cuisine

1 Introduction

Despite significant evidence that shows entrepreneurs often explore other paths, teachers at business schools throughout the world tend to adhere to goal-driven logic (Perry et al. 2012). This entrepreneurial path draws on the neoclassical microeconomic theory of business processes, which lock organizations into systematic predictive planning activities (Ansoff 1987) and competitive analyses (Porter 1980) to address risky contexts (Jones and Barnir 2019: 3). Chiles, Blue-dorn, and Gupta (2007: 468) use a more interactive and dynamic definition, describing entrepreneurship as a disequilibrium phenomenon in which innovative entrepreneurs occasionally disrupt an existing market equilibrium to

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create disequilibrium (Schumpeter 1934) and arbitraging entrepreneurs can move a market from disequilibrium toward equilibrium (Kirzner 1973). That is, after a Schumpeterian “creative destructor” disturbs an existing equilibrium, creating disequilibrium, a Kirznerian entrepreneur can take over, making corrections that initiate a convergence toward a new equilibrium.

The Kirznerian entrepreneurial path uncovers what already exists (Kirzner 1973), as entrepreneurs must learn to understand their customers’ wants and needs to effectively discover (and anticipate) any demand (Hayek 1945) not yet realized by their current providers (Zahra et al. 2009). As an alternative to discovery theory, Schumpeterian entrepreneurship allows entrepreneurs to “act as prime movers of innovation and change, engendering ‘gales of creative destruction’ to destroy dated systems, structures and processes to be replaced by newer and more suitable ones” (Zahra et al. 2009: 526). The mountain-climbing versus mountain-building metaphor is well established in the entrepreneurship literature. Some entrepreneurs are good at discovering opportunities (i.e., climbing mountains), while others are better at creating opportunities (i.e., building mountains) (Alvarez and Barney 2007). The whole dualistic framework of discovery versus creation explains most, but not all, entrepreneurial behaviors, as some successful entrepreneurs actually imagine mountains (Cornelissen and Clarke 2010; Kier and McMullen 2018; Thompson 2018a, 2018b).

Shackle (1979: 11) defined imagination as “a mental process by which people choose among thoughts about deeds to be done and moves to be made.” Imagination can also be understood as the generation of hypotheses about how the world might be, look, and act (Gartner 2007: 624). As a conscious and unconscious mental process, imagination involves one’s subconscious ability to blend and unify immediate sensory experiences with memories (Thompson 2018a: 236). Imagination has been increasingly viewed as influential for a range of human phenomena and as a driving force in organizations (including startups and new ventures), as it can have both a conditioning and an enabling effect (Komporezou-Athanasίου and Fotaki 2015: 322). However, recent comprehensive reviews of organizational creativity research reveal that imagination still plays a minor role in contemporary theories (Thompson 2018a: 233). In the entrepreneurship literature, entrepreneurial imagination is rarely examined, much less defined or measured (Kier and McMullen 2018). Contributing to entrepreneurship research in a new way, this study evaluates imagination as a complementary or a necessary condition that coexists with extant discovery and creation theories. Based on inductive and abductive qualitative theorizing, new concepts that explain entrepreneurial behaviors in practice and lie at the intersections of the three theories of entrepreneurship, including creative imagination, are proposed.

2 Three Theories of Entrepreneurial Behavior

Closely related to the Schumpeterian logic of addressing innovations as re-combinations of resources that disrupt the equilibrium of an economy through “creative destruction” (Kier and McMullen 2018: 2268), Baker and Nelson (2005) introduce bricolage as an innovation-driven entrepreneurial behavior. Bricolage involves the creation of something from nothing by exploiting certain physical, social, or institutional inputs that other firms have rejected or ignored. In a resource-constrained context, bricolage offers an opportunity to view innovation as a process of imbuing previously worthless resources with value by making do with what is at hand (Baker and Nelson 2005). Entrepreneurs who engage in bricolage behaviors based on adaptive strategies determine what to do next by minimizing their use of predictive rationality (Wiltbank et al. 2006); they are capable of “managing a process with the resources at hand” (Mishra and Zachary 2015: 258). This entrepreneurial path argues, for example, that spending a great deal of time and energy developing a comprehensive business plan before an opportunity has been created is a waste of resources and could even be misleading (Alvarez and Barney 2007: 15).

Different from the theories of creation and discovery, which are related to adaptive bricolage and strategic planning, respectively, imagination is commonly aligned with transformative effectuation behaviors (Wiltbank et al. 2006: 991). As a cornerstone of the transformation of extant realities into new possibilities, transformative effectuation focuses on “imagination” in a variety of contexts, including new goals, new means, new environments and new institutions (Wiltbank et al. 2006: 991). Transformative effectuation assumes that individuals use a given set of means, i.e., who they are, what they know, and whom they know, “to imagine things they can accomplish” (Wiltbank et al. 2006: 991). As a personal capability related to effectuation behaviors, “imagination provides the entrepreneur with the ability to see things not yet existing”—such as possible new products or various effects that could result from a set of available means (Arend, Sarooghi, and Burkemper 2015: 633). Sarasvathy (2001a: 262) further assumes that in uncertain contexts, an “effectuator” is essentially “an imaginative actor” and that “human imagination” and human aspirations influence and reshape one another continually through economic artifacts. Therefore, before there are products (causation concepts), there is “human imagination,” and before there are markets (economic and management institutions), there are human aspirations (Sarasvathy 2001a: 262).

Summarizing the concepts discussed thus far, the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior are shown in Table 1. Different from the theories of discovery and creation, this study includes transformative effectuation—in line with imagination

theory—as a third behavior and aligns its naming convention to particular streams of research (driven by three seminal and emblematic scholars): Schumpeterian creation (harbinger of disruption), Kirznerian discovery (equilibrator), and Weickerian imagination (uncertainty bearer). Following Chandler et al. (2011) and Fisher (2012), Table 1 distinguishes between bricolage and effectuation by associating imagination with effectuation and bricolage with Schumpeterian creation. Discovery theory, in turn, is related to “causation,” a term coined by Sarasvathy (2001a) and contextualized in entrepreneurship as strategic planning processes (Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker 2016: 7). The research design thus maintains Fisher’s (2012) trinity of effectuation, bricolage, and causation (or strategic planning) while elaborating a new theoretical framework and strategic approach for each. Individually, the three theories fail to adequately explain the observed patterns of entrepreneurial behaviors; however, when they are combined, a complete picture can be revealed by investigating the fuzzy boundaries where they overlap (at the intersections of the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior).

As reported in Table 1, the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior are often associated with three specific environments: creation theory (measured by adaptive bricolage behaviors) applies to the creations of opportunities in resource-constrained environments; discovery theory (measured by strategic planning

Table 1: Three theories of entrepreneurial behavior.

	Adaptive bricolage	Strategic planning	Transformative effectuation
<i>Theoretical framework</i>	Creation theory Schumpeter (1934)	Discovery theory Kirzner (1973)	Imagination theory Weick (1979)
<i>Decision-making context</i>	Resource constrained	Risky	Uncertain
<i>Strategic approach</i>	Adaptive Alvarez and Barney (2007)	Planned Ansoff (1987)	Transformative Wiltbank et al. (2006)
<i>Relevant concept</i>	Make do by combining the resources at hand to apply to new problems and opportunities.	Take an effect as given and focus on the means to create that effect.	Take a set of means and focus on selecting between possible effects that can be created.
<i>Entrepreneurial behaviors</i>	Resources at hand Making do Combination of resources Baker and Nelson (2005)	Business plan Model development Competitive analysis Porter (1980)	Means over goals No planning Ignore competition Sarasvathy (2001)

The conceptual language used for the “strategic approach” category resembles that of Wiltbank et al. (2006). For measuring purposes, the term “entrepreneurial behaviors” used in Table 1 is taken from Fisher’s (2012) methodology. Similar to the typology presented by Zahra et al. (2009: 523), the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior do not capture all potentially observable types of behaviors.

behaviors) applies to the discoveries of opportunities in risky decision-making contexts since opportunities present themselves as competitive imperfections that arise from exogenous changes in an environment; and imagination theory (measured by transformative effectuation behaviors) applies to the detections of opportunities in uncertain contexts.

2.1 Opportunities for Conceptual Development

Given the high level of uncertainty entrepreneurs face, opportunities are bound by the limits of an entrepreneur's imagination (Jones and Barnir 2019: 8) and emerge through a process of effectuation (Sarasvathy 2009) since uncertain contexts enable entrepreneurs to develop unexplored visions of the future (Thompson 2018b). Chandler et al. (2011: 375) empirically “show that causation measures are negatively related to measures of uncertainty and the experimentation sub-dimension of effectuation is positively related to measures of uncertainty.” Similar to effectuation through uncertainty, Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker (2016, 9) highlight how the most crucial assumption in the bricolage framework is the backdrop upon which entrepreneurial actions occur—to create something from nothing in a context of scarce resources—since resource constrained contexts serve as sources of creativity and innovation (Fisher 2012). In practice, however, nearly all entrepreneurial ventures must face resource scarcity at some level: “so, scarcity is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to consider an actor a bricoleur” (Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker 2016: 11). When an entrepreneur is in a resource-constrained environment, this does not imply that they will rely solely on adaptive bricolage behaviors according to creation theory; this entrepreneur may also use transformative effectuation—in line with imagination theory.

In addition to weak assumptions related to specific contexts (that transformative effectuation and adaptive bricolage tend to be associated with uncertain and resource-constrained contexts, respectively, while strategic planning tends to apply to risky and decision-making contexts), the resolution of competitive imperfections associated with strategic planning behaviors arguably requires some imagination. This implies that without imagination, the behaviors of adaptive bricolage and the planning process would be homogenous—eliminating the basis for any competitive advantage—since entrepreneurial behaviors would be the same across new ventures. From this perspective, imagination is key to enabling unique discovery and creation behaviors; thus, it seems impossible that strategic planning (discovery) or adaptive bricolage (creation) can be successful without effectuation (imagination). Digging even deeper into the weak assumptions regarding the boundaries that separate the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior, the overlap between transformative effectuation and adaptive bricolage further implies that the classical definitions of bricolage

(to make do by combining the resources at hand and applying them to new problems and opportunities) and effectuation (to harness a set of means and focus on selecting from the possible effects that can be created) are indistinguishable in practice. After all, are resources not means? Are “possible effects” not the same as “new problems and opportunities”? Are the bricolage-related entrepreneurial behaviors of “making do” and using the “resources at hand” the same as encouraging “means over goals” and “not planning”?

Therefore, although the three theories and the three behavior concepts have been presented as alternatives, new empirical evidence suggests that there are overlaps (necessary complementarities) in their abilities to explain entrepreneurial behaviors. Following the logic of problematization (to identify and challenge the underlying assumptions in existing literature) to generate research questions (Alvesson and Sandberg 2011), this paper critically addresses some of the theoretical assumptions underpinning these constructs, given the lack of acknowledgments of or theories about the overlaps (necessary complementarities) between the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior in the literature. To demonstrate how different entrepreneurial behaviors overlap and to explain these overlaps, this study uses empirical data to propose new concepts—at the fuzzy boundaries between the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior.

3 Research Design and Sample

This study responds to Fisher’s (2012, 1047) call to provide a deep, rich analysis of entrepreneurial behaviors by focusing on a single case, using an alternate template methodology. Because the Osaka Group’s multinational restaurant chain represents an unusual phenomenon, where Nikkei haute cuisine is internationalized, and an excellent example of a vibrant haute cuisine movement, a theoretical sampling of this single case is appropriate. In a single case study, the challenge of discovering “rich qualitative data” can be addressed by presenting a relatively complete rendering of its story (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007: 29). This story typically consists of narratives that are interspersed with quotations from key informants (Gartner 2007). Narratives tend to work for one case because narratives focus on contextual details (Langley 1999: 695), which is ideal in the case of Osaka’s restaurants.

3.1 Context for this Study (The Osaka Group)

The Osaka Group’s restaurants fully capture and express a creative fusion of traditional Japanese techniques and excellent Peruvian flavors and ingredients;

this fusion is called Nikkei (e.g., duck gyozas with a huancaína sauce or a wasabi ceviche). The origins of Nikkei restaurants can be traced back to chef Minoru Kunigami (1918–2004) in the 1950s and to chefs Nobuyuki Matsuhisa (Nobu) and Toshiro Konishi in the 1970s. The Osaka Group did not invent the Nikkei concept, nor is its location in Lima considered the best; this honor belongs to Maido and chef Mitsuharu Tsumura. However, the Osaka Group has succeeded in exporting Nikkei cuisine throughout Latin America while maintaining a gourmet level of excellence that is rarely seen in cases of such rapid international growth. The Osaka Group has restaurants in Lima, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Sao Paulo, Quito, Bogotá, and Asunción. A Miami location opened in 2020, and a London location will open in 2022. Additionally, locations in Chicago, Dubai, Washington, and Singapore are also planned (“at most, only one per year to preserve the creative fusion’s level of excellence”). The menus of all the Osaka Group’s locations are approximately 80% the same. The remaining 20% varies, based on the availability of local ingredients (e.g., fresh abalone in Chile) and the idiosyncratic tastes and preferences of specific locations (e.g., raw sea urchins in Santiago).

The Osaka Group is not growing through franchising. It is a complex alliance of strategic equity partners who are chosen based on their local know-how (“networks, markets, suppliers, labor, and taxes”). Thus, to grow without franchising, the Osaka Group currently opens foreign restaurants only with local partnerships, ideally with a 50/50 ownership ratio. Other than local partnerships, the strategic alliances of each restaurant’s location include “clients, friends, suppliers, and sponsors,” in addition to a manager, a head bartender, a chief of service, Itamaes (sushi chefs), and can also include competitors. Itamaes are particularly important because they are difficult to find, and it can take several months or “even years” to train them. Years ago, before opening the Osaka Santiago restaurant, the Osaka Group made its most valuable investment by recruiting chef *Ciro Watanabe* as a key strategic partner for growing beyond Lima and Buenos Aires.

3.2 Focal Units of Analysis (Three Entrepreneurs)

Because effectuation and bricolage focus heavily on the actions of entrepreneurs (Parker et al. 2021; Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker 2016), this study focuses on the stories of three exceptional entrepreneurs: the two founding owners of the Osaka Group and their corporate chef. Owners *Diego Herrera* (DH) and *Diego de la Puente* (DLP) and chef *Ciro Watanabe* (CW) participated in six rounds of interviews between 2016 and 2018. These three key informants are relevant to the case in this study because they have been the Osaka Group’s most important decision-makers since the venture began. Access to these key informants was made possible

through a long-term friendship between the author of this paper and DH (which began in the early 1990s, when they were college roommates). This situation established familiarity and increased the willingness of the respondents to freely express their ideas and differences. Morgan (1993) argues that observing subjects in a familiar environment is crucial to understanding the intrinsic meaning of a specific phenomenon because a familiar environment enables a researcher to become close enough to his or her respondents to obtain valid data. This is particularly important when discussing sensitive topics, such as culinary innovations, with information gatekeepers.

Sarasvathy (2001a: 247) argues that an entrepreneur's journey can be the result of a wide variety of serendipitous events. The case of DH is not an exception. After just graduating from college in 1996, Mr. Herrera started on a journey that included surfing in Indonesia for many years. To pay his expenses, he often worked at sushi bars, where he initially conceived the idea for the Osaka Group's restaurants. DLP has a similar story. Following DLP's initiative, the Osaka Group and "4Ocean" (a global movement to remove trash from the Pacific Ocean and inspire people to work together for cleaner oceans) recently made joint efforts toward increasing the sustainability of marine life. CW (1980–2020) had an entirely different story. CW embodied the Nikkei concept: he was Peruvian by birth but had a strong Japanese heritage. He first started cooking at a traditional Japanese sushi restaurant called Matsuei. Like many before him, CW experimented with Peruvian ingredients and techniques, producing what is commonly known as Nikkei cuisine. He joined the Osaka group in 2005. Although he resided in Santiago de Chile from 2009 to 2019 and was part owner of the award-winning Santiago restaurant, CW also served as the corporate chef of the Osaka Group.

Of the three entrepreneurs, CW was the artist—the culinary innovator. Indeed, artistry and innovation are common among haute cuisine chefs. In task- or craft-based organizations, such as haute cuisine enterprises, creativity tends to be aimed at creating customized products through incremental innovation, skilled craftsmanship, and artistic style (Stierand 2015: 602). Haute cuisine, which is a craft business composed of professional organizations with chefs who typically undergo long and difficult practical training that involves the refinement of their five senses for professional cooking, entails creating truly novel culinary concepts (Stierand 2015). The culinary innovations that were implemented by CW have brought the Osaka Group's cuisine to the point of potentially receiving a Michelin star.

3.3 Phenomena of Interest (Entrepreneurial Behaviors)

Given the replicable nature of the research strategy of this study, the concepts shown in Table 2 are measured as entrepreneurial behaviors. This implies that the study focuses on capturing the intricacies of the firm founding process by analyzing the actions taken during the emergence of a new firm, using each observable behavior of entrepreneurs as an individual phenomenon of interest (Fisher 2012). Entrepreneurial behaviors are useful, common observable actions that can be employed “to compare and contrast the prominent emerging theoretical approaches for entrepreneurship research”, such as effectuation and entrepreneurial bricolage (Fisher 2012, 1020). The measurable items used to operationalize the behaviors that underlie adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation, which are reported in Table 2, are consistent with those used by Chandler et al. (2011).

3.4 Research Strategy (ATS)

The alternate templates strategy (ATS) was popularized by Allison (1971) in his study on decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. When using the ATS, a researcher first proposes several alternative interpretations of the same phenomenon, based on different but coherent sets of *a priori* theoretical perspectives (e.g., the theories of discovery, creation, and imagination in entrepreneurship). The researcher then assesses the extent to which each theoretical template contributes to a satisfactory explanation (Langley 1999). This strategy has often been used for studying entrepreneurial decision processes (Fisher 2012) because of the difficulty involved in developing a unique model of decision-making; indeed, it functions as a powerful research tool that can be used to derive insights from a single rich case (e.g., the Osaka Group) because different theoretical interpretations provide a basis for the necessary comparisons (Yin 1981). The ATS tends to provide an effective platform for comparing theories in a given context. As such, in this study the ATS was used to provide an accurate comparison of the examined theories and show how these theoretical lenses are related to the entrepreneurial behaviors of adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation.

Following Fisher’s (2012) methodology, creation was measured by the bricolage behaviors that are used to create something from nothing, which tend to follow adaptive strategies of low prediction. Discovery was aligned with the causation model of strategic planning, and imagination was measured by the effectuation behaviors of transformative strategies. The adaptive bricolage

Table 2: Entrepreneurial behaviors (used for matching purposes).

Adaptive bricolage		Strategic planning		Transformative effectuation	
<i>Resources at hand</i>		<i>Business plan development (opportunity identification)</i>		<i>Means over goals</i>	
– Possesses a set of odds and ends, which may be physical artifacts or ideas that are accumulated on the principle that they may come in handy at any time;	– Identifies and assesses opportunities, making resource allocation decisions based on probabilities and expected returns before developing anything;	– Begins with three categories of means: who he or she is (own abilities and tastes), what he or she knows (knowledge corridors), and whom he or she knows (social networks);			
– A bricoleur (someone engaged in bricolage) encourages the use of amateur and self-taught skills that would otherwise go unapplied;	– Makes and compares financial projections regarding firm growth and conducts net present value analyses to choose between alternatives;	– Tends to imagine things that he or she can accomplish, including the creation of new means, new environments, and new institutions;			
– Uses goods on hand (rather than seeking resources from outside) to create solutions to problems.	– Expresses a vision and/or goals for the venture and produces a written business plan (mainly for potential investors).	– Commits only limited amounts of resources to one venture at a time, limits the resources committed to what could be lost, and develops products or services using only personal resources.			
<i>Making do</i>		<i>Business model development (and implementation)</i>		<i>No planning (flexibility/experimentation)</i>	
– Is biased toward action and actively engaging with problems and opportunities rather than lingering over questions of whether a workable outcome can be reached;	– Develops a project and marketing plan to implement and monitor products/services;	– Changes products or services and the revenue models of ventures as new opportunities arise;			
– Consciously and consistently tests conventional limitations, insisting on testing solutions and dealing with the results;	– Organizes and implements quality and cost control processes;	– Adapts what he or she is doing by consciously rejecting courses of action that will lock him or her in;			
– Works around rules and standards.	– Establishes an internal reporting structure and designs and implements a clear organizational structure.	– Develops multiple variations of a product or service to arrive at an offering and experiments with different ways to sell and/or deliver it.			

Table 2: (continued)

Adaptive bricolage		Strategic planning	Transformative effectuation
<i>Combining resources for new purposes</i>		<i>Ongoing competitive analysis</i>	<i>Ignore competition</i>
–	Reuses resources for different applications than those for which they were originally intended or used;	– Gathers and reviews information about market size and growth (e.g., blue/red ocean strategies);	– Negotiates with other parties prior to having a fully developed product/service while entering into agreements with customers, suppliers, and other organizations;
	Implies that institutional or technological changes often follow logic that may be creative;	– Analyzes and uses data about competitors as an input of key decisions (e.g., Porter's competitive forces);	– Focuses on building partnerships rather than on performing systematic competitive analyses;
	Drives continuous innovation by combining existing resources.	– Gathers information about customer needs to identify gaps (e.g., consumer behavior marketing strategies).	– Uses strategic partners as a way to reduce and/or eliminate uncertainties.

behaviors were mainly based on Baker and Nelson's (2005: 363) classical definition of "making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities." The behaviors related to the discovery perspective are standard strategic planning behaviors, while the three counterintuitive anomalies of transformative effectuation shown in Table 2 (from "no planning," to consider "means over goals" when making decisions, to "ignore the competition") were based on Arend, Sarooghi, and Burkemper (2015: 643).

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Analysis

Two research assistants and the author independently developed a full detailed case history that captured—using all the data at their disposal—the intricacies of the firm-founding process. Fifteen open-ended questions designed by Fisher (2012) were utilized to begin developing the case history. These questions are reported in Appendix (Table A1). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007: 28) argue that semistructured interviews are a highly efficient way to gather rich empirical data, especially for phenomena of interest that are episodic and infrequent, such as the Osaka Group's creative fusion concept. In addition to these interviews, data were collected from documents, observations (e.g., occasional dining experiences), and secondary sources, such as local newspapers, magazines, and company websites. The informants also provided news clippings and photographs.

Five rounds of semistructured interviews, which were each approximately six months apart, were performed between 2016 and 2018 to capture the decisions and actions of the Osaka Group's entrepreneurs as they created and developed their new venture. These interviews were conducted with the three entrepreneurs in one of their restaurants. By conducting most of the interviews at one of the informants' restaurants, the researcher was able to observe their work setting directly. These on-site visits enabled the researcher to observe normal operations and talk informally with the informants and their employees. Consistent with the work of Chiles et al. (2013: 284–286), cointerpreting and coconstructing meaning with the entrepreneurs played an active role in the second phase of the interview process. The informants were asked to retell parts of the Osaka Group's story, but during the second phase they were asked to use entrepreneurial imagination as an interpretive lens. Given that the intention was not to lead the informants to agree with the theory, the entrepreneurs were explicitly asked, for example, whether the theoretical lens of imagination failed to resonate with any part of their venture's story. When this was the case, the entrepreneurs were asked to aid the researcher to better understand their views,

which encouraged them to engage in cointerpretations and coconstructions of meaning.

The coding scheme was developed using an iterative approach, and internal validity was ensured as new data were incorporated into the emerging categories. As suggested by Chiles et al. (2013: 289), when new data revealed inconsistencies among the existing categories, the coding scheme was modified to address these. This process was repeated until theoretical saturation was achieved. The fit between the data and a theory was assessed as strong if it was evident that the entrepreneurs' answers (as captured by the case history) matched the entrepreneurial behaviors associated with a corresponding theory. This process entailed matching the patterns in the interview-based data to the entrepreneurial behaviors (adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation) associated with each theoretical stream (creation, discovery, and imagination), as reported in Tables 1 and 2.

If the data were clear and unlikely to be contested and if a strong fit between the data and the strategic behaviors associated with a particular theory was identified, the data were marked "AB," "SP," or "TE" (for adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation, respectively). Examples of "strong fits" between the interviews and entrepreneurial behaviors are reported in Table A1. A fit between the qualitative data in the case history and the behaviors associated with each theory provided evidence that a theory was relevant for explaining the emergence of the associated venture. In the other cases, if the evidence was not as strong, that is, if it required some interpretation or was not supported by multiple data sources, the data were marked "WD" (weak data). Moreover, in some cases, when it was impossible to infer from the data whether the answers of the entrepreneurs were aligned with a specific strategic behavior that is associated with one of the three theories, the outcome was marked "NE" (no evidence).

4 From Data to Theory

Langley (1999: 708) raises concerns about persistent calls for codifying qualitative methods, which can reach a point of diminishing returns because it is impossible to identify and articulate the origin of critical insights. In this case, it took the researcher five rounds of coding and recoding to realize that at least three theories, including imagination, are required to understand the haute cuisine entrepreneurial phenomenon, and only then did the researcher become aware of hidden anomalies that were deeply embedded in the data (e.g., creative imagination as a conceptual overlap that bridges adaptive and transformative strategies).

4.1 The Three Entrepreneurs

The three entrepreneurs had unique and intriguing entrepreneurial approaches. The narrative of chef *Ciro Watanabe* (CW) scored very high on the adaptive bricolage template (seven questions out of fifteen were coded as “AB”), which is typical of highly creative professions. Nikkei cuisine is adaptive by nature; it represents the fusion of two ancient cultures (Inka and Japanese). CW acknowledged many times that he was more than happy to adapt and integrate local ingredients that had hardly ever been used before in Peru or Japan (e.g., stone crabs or Florida lobsters). His answers to the question of whether he had stretched society’s expectations by bringing a new product or service to market were coded mostly in accord with the classical definition of bricolage, namely, “applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities” (Baker and Nelson 2005: 363). However, instead of “combinations,” he frequently used the term “synergies of Peruvian and Japanese” cuisine. Moreover, when asked how he created the first iteration of the venture’s product or service, CW answered, “By the time we opened the first *Osaka-Santiago* (in 2009), we already had an established Nikkei reputation (in Lima). Fortunately, for us, the people in Santiago had a good understanding of Peruvian food. For many years, Peruvian ‘*nanas*’ have been cooking in the kitchens of rich Chilean families.”

Extending this line of questioning, when asked how they would describe the early competitive advantage of their venture, their most repeated answer (mainly by CW) was that it was “authentically Peruvian.” CW pointed out that while Nikkei cuisine is found all over the world, only the brands exported from Peru are considered to represent authentic Nikkei cuisine. DLP, in contrast, argued in favor of copying and improving, mainly in the context of marketing principles (such as branding and design), when he was asked the following question: Where did the opportunity emerge from? Describe the opportunity emergence process. In DLP’s words, “Let’s do what *Matsuei* does—put the same Peruvian touches, slightly more flavor, and not so traditional—but let’s make a trendy restaurant. One that invites you to stay, where the service is spectacular; that makes you feel good, where you find beautiful architecture and good music, atmosphere, and design.” This discussion of competitive advantage revolved around industry and branding, which are the bases for the definition of the differentiation strategy measured in this study via the ongoing competitive analysis entrepreneurial behaviors of strategic planning that are reported in Table 2 (Table A2 reports a summary of the percentages of distribution, per entrepreneur, across the five coding categories).

Despite the researcher's initial intuition that DLP, who had a more traditional business sense, would give answers that would be coded mostly in accord with the strategic planning ("SP") template, the raw data revealed another story. More than two-thirds of DLP's answers were distributed between "TE" and "SP" (the remaining inputs were coded as "AB" and "NE"). Instead of the typical "strategic planner," DLP was better suited to the visionary entrepreneurial prototype that is based on strategic projections. According to Wiltbank et al. (2006: 990), a visionary emphasizes the construction of an organization and its environment by imagining future possibilities and proactively bringing them to fruition. This definition explains DLP's vision of international growth. During our conversations, DLP rarely missed an opportunity to either discuss future Osaka Group restaurant openings in new and exciting cities or to move beyond the Osaka Group to share new ventures that were developing organically in Lima (e.g., a Japanese grill restaurant, an Asian fast-food chain, and a "regional street food" concept).

DH had a similar story, but he was slightly more influenced by the transformative effectuation measures. Indeed, DH's coded answers were roughly divided as follows: more than half of the answers were coded as "TE" (eight out of fifteen questions), one-third of the answers were coded as "AB," and the remaining answers were coded as "NE" and "SP." The typical transformative effectuation behaviors of DH, which were mainly based on the "means over goals" principle, can be summarized by the following statement: "Despite the huge differences between the reopening of Osaka-Santiago (2018) and the [opening of the] first Osaka near the beach (2002 in Lima), we have always applied what we knew. First, we learned how to roll sushi; then, we rode the Nikkei wave all the way." The idea of a formal business plan was ridiculous to DH. Once, responding to a follow-up question that asked if he was testing the menu for the future Miami location with multiple focus groups, his answer was a quick and definite "no." Moreover, on October 13, 2017, when queried about early competitive advantages, DH stated the following: "All of our business decisions come from our gut feelings; we never use any formal business plans or market research. We also have good partners most of the time and hire great team members." However, as mentioned above and reported in Tables A1 and A2, not all of DH's answers were coded as "TE." For example, when asked if the competitive advantage of the venture had changed over time, he answered [as an example], "We never open a restaurant in a country that already has a strong culinary history; for now, we cannot compete against the local cuisine in Madrid, Paris or Rome." This answer was classified as "SP" even though it did not involve a formal document or spreadsheet.

DH's answers to two questions demonstrate his controlling approach, which is a clear indication of "TE" behavior (Wiltbank et al. 2006): How would you describe the decision-making approach used in the early days of the venture? Did the decision-making process change over time? If so, how? According to DH, "At the beginning, we grew so fast that everything was chaotic. Some of our franchising experiences were not going smoothly since we had no control over the operation. Our foreign franchises were implementing their menus, which were quite different from the creative fusion in the restaurants we had control over ... Our growth strategy is determined by not losing control over our product/service." That is, "Since it is nearly impossible to franchise innovation-driven, high-quality daily service, we decided to open only one restaurant per year." Exponential growth through franchising was out of the question. In any Japanese restaurant, implementing standard cost-reducing inventory procedures when using raw seafood as a key ingredient is extremely challenging. When asked whether their strategy development process had changed over time, and if so, how, DH stated the following on December 5, 2017: "First, we tried to grow with franchisees, charging a 5% royalty fee on total sales and a one-time fee of 80 thousand (USD). However, since it is nearly impossible to franchise the level of quality that took us to where we are right now, we decided to change the strategy. Santiago, Miami, Lima, and London are now partnerships, and each local partner provides local know-how on networks, markets, suppliers, labor, and taxes. Cash and culinary expertise are secondary. This is the ideal scenario to grow and to preserve the best experiences possible."

Imagination helps explain the success of the Osaka Group's Santiago de Chile restaurant, as measured by international culinary awards; this location has been more successful than the other South American locations, including the two Osaka Group restaurants in Lima. Notably, the Santiago restaurant is where CW worked. Moreover, Santiago de Chile offers stronger institutions than other cities in South America. However, this is not the whole story. Eventually, it became clear that Osaka-Santiago's success was due to more than chef Watanabe's innovative creations or Chile's history of institutional successes: Osaka-Santiago had and has DH's transformative effectuation imprint all over it, mainly in small but very important details, such as music and lighting. This was not evident to the researcher until the travel logs were analyzed, which showed that DH's number of business trips to Santiago was almost double that of DLP's. A serendipitous, nonbusiness-related reason (a typical trait of effectuation) for DH's business trips to Santiago was his interest in snowboarding in the Chilean Andes.

4.2 Entrepreneurial Trilemma

Although inductive reasoning was mainly used to compare and contrast the case histories given by the three entrepreneurs in their responses to the fifteen questions involving the entrepreneurial behaviors of adaptive bricolage, strategic planning, and transformative effectuation, it was also necessary to use opportunistic abductive reasoning to discern the hidden information embedded in the data. Abduction theory is relevant only to the extent that, in contrast to observed patterns (e.g., entrepreneurial behaviors), it may serve as for “surfacing anomalies” that demand further explanation (Bamberger 2018: 3). Thus, while following the trail of evidence and narrowing the range of alternative explanations, creative imagination—which was hidden within the narrow bridge that links creation theory with imagination theory—resurfaced from the data as a plausible, missing element of entrepreneurship theory that is not easily explained by the extant theories of discovery, creation, or imagination (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1: Entrepreneurial trilemma.

Evidence from the data shows that when some behaviors are emphasized, others must be sacrificed, which is the logic of the entrepreneurial trilemma shown in Figure 1. Based on this trilemma, three bridging constructs surfaced from the data: (1) to imagine and discover (e.g., strategic projection), (2) to discover and create (e.g., planned emergence), and (3) to create and imagine (e.g., creative imagination). The notion of creative imagination effectively mirrors Thomas Edison’s words: “to invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk” (Chiles, Bluedorn, and Gupta 2007: 476). The first half of Edison’s statement applies to entrepreneurial imaginativeness, while the phrase “pile of junk” applies to adaptive bricolage entrepreneurial behaviors. Creative imagination serves not only as “the wellspring of the dynamism, uncertainty,

heterogeneity, and indeterminacy” that characterizes the complex world of entrepreneurs but also enables the creation of novelty through forward-looking imagination, meaning that entrepreneurs can create opportunities through their expectations of an imagined future (Chiles et al. 2013: 278). Following Lachmann (1986) logic that entrepreneurs form plans based on their subjective knowledge and expectations and are thus oriented toward an unknowable future, Chiles, Bluedorn, and Gupta (2007) further argue that entrepreneurship is an inherently “creative” act; entrepreneurs must “imagine” possible futures and choose from a variety of subjective mental creations. Therefore, because individuals act on plans based on their subjective knowledge of the past and their expectations of the future, creative imagination is defined as the “creation of opportunities through human imagination directed toward an envisioned future” (Chiles, Bluedorn, and Gupta 2007: 473).

4.3 Conceptual Overlaps

Despite the conceptual overlaps between the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior, each of these concepts has been developed through and into its own literature stream; they have rarely been examined together. Accordingly, building upon the logic of collapsing the creative imagination edge that is applied in the trilemma and following Welter et al.’s (2016) bridging models of entrepreneurial behavior, Figure 2 is introduced to vividly illustrate the relationships between the constructs. Other models exist; indeed, planned emergence, strategic projection, and creative imagination do not represent the only ways to describe how an entrepreneur can create value. This constitutes a limitation of this study.

Similar to the “creative imagination” entrepreneurial construct bridge shown in Figures 1 and 2, several streams of research point to “planned emergence” or “planned adaptation” as a conceptual overlap between planning and adaptive strategic behaviors (Wiltbank et al. 2006: 986). Planned emergence focuses on predictive strategies that not only foster rapid adaptation but also, simultaneously, plan and develop systems that facilitate innovation and change (e.g., the evaluation and pursuit of emergent opportunities). Planned emergence strategies prepare ventures for major decisions as new, real-time information becomes available (Wiltbank et al. 2006: 986). In contrast, strategic projection reflects predictive efforts that support a particular vision and a consistency between communication and resource commitments (Rindova and Fombrun 1999; Wiltbank et al. 2006: 991).

Figure 2: Conceptual overlaps of entrepreneurial behaviors.

5 Discussion and Implications

Although there is evidence of the three templates described by the behaviors in the Osaka Group, the boundary conditions suggested by Fisher (2012) appear to be insufficient to distinguish between the three archetypes. Therefore, using inductive and abductive qualitative theorizing, new concepts (creative imagination, strategic projection, and planned emergence) that lie at the intersections of the three theories of entrepreneurial behavior are proposed. Two models are used to understand these overlaps as necessary complementarities. The first is a trilemma with three vertices (the theorized entrepreneurial behaviors) and, between them, edges that are drawn during the abduction process. Each edge provides an explanation that the associated vertices lack. For example, the data from the case study reveal that CW was a highly creative Nikkei chef who used adaptive bricolage behaviors to develop his award-winning fusion recipes, while DH tended to follow transformative strategies and effectuation behaviors that focused on building partnerships. The combination of CW and DH formed the creative imagination effect, which seems to be the best-suited construct for explaining the haute cuisine entrepreneurial phenomenon.

Creative imagination describes an area in which transformative effectuation and adaptive bricolage overlap amid an absence of strategic planning and may, “in

practice, represent situations outside the economic sphere in which effectuation is applied and informed by bricolage” (Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker 2016: 12). Similar to the fusion of Japanese and Peruvian techniques and ingredients in Nikkei haute cuisine, both types of entrepreneurial behaviors (transformative effectuation and adaptive bricolage) unite through the notion of using means that are close at hand. Adaptive bricolage emphasizes that these means should be used in novel ways. The unmarked area in Figure 2 represents the overlap of all three types of entrepreneurial behaviors. These are situations in which an effectual decision model requires making do with what is on hand in novel ways while pursuing an exploitation of recently discovered opportunities (Welter, Mauer, and Wuebker 2016: 12); this represents an empirical question for future research.

5.1 Future Research and Limitations

Future research should further investigate the following questions: Are the overlaps, potentially, forms of necessary complementarity among the three theories of entrepreneurial behaviors, and if effectuation is essentially an idea with a sense of purpose (e.g., effectuation.org), do successful bricolage and even strategic planning require some level of effectuation? In a similar vein, future research could differentiate the behaviors that are nonpredictive from planned behaviors by aligning imagination with the “form” of the execution of actions while aligning creation with the “types” of actions. Using this conceptualization, adaptive bricolage (based on creation theory) would be analyzed from a qualitative dimension—perhaps using the “seven effective entrepreneurial actions in creation contexts” framework formulated by Alvarez and Barney (2007: 17)—while transformative effectuation (based on imagination theory) would thus be analyzed primarily from a quantitative dimension.

Furthermore, a significant limitation of studying imagination in an entrepreneurial context is that the entrepreneurs who are interviewed have to use their imaginations to answer questions about their past behaviors, which elicits memories and creates narratives of their stories and about their past thoughts. However, by analyzing imagination as the interplay between the mind’s role in the creation of everyday perception, which blends and unifies sense impressions with memories, and its equally important role in the conscious creation of images, as suggested by Thompson (2018a, 2018b), the validity of the data produced in this study could be subjective or even misrepresentative of actual entrepreneurial behaviors. Another methodological limitation stems from

examining a complex phenomenon with positive and negative aspects by interviewing the same successful entrepreneurs who created it and asking them to recount what happened years ago (using Fisher's questions). The problem with employing retrospective sensemaking and data narrativity is that recollections change over time, smoothing out the ups and downs of any process. These are limitations that are beyond the scope of this study, but they should be noted for future research.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

A comparative analysis of three entrepreneurs in the entrepreneurial haute cuisine phenomenon, which was narrated and coconstructed by key players, was used to create a path for a third view of the entrepreneurial process through the notion of imagination. Entrepreneurial behaviors were associated with the three theories of entrepreneurship (creation, discovery, and imagination) to evaluate the following novel mapping: (1) creation is characterized by adaptive bricolage, (2) discovery is characterized by strategic planning, and (3) imagination is characterized by transformative effectuation ("is characterized by" does not presume causality or implication in either direction). Through abductive reasoning, creative imagination surfaced as a missing element and a bridging (between the bricolage behaviors of the adaptive strategies found in creation theory and the effectuation behaviors of the transformative strategies found in imagination theory) construct of a novel entrepreneurial trilemma (shown in Figure 1). Creative imagination is defined as the "creation of opportunities through human imagination directed toward an envisioned future" (Chiles, Blueborn, and Gupta 2007: 473). The logic of the trilemma, which underlines the model's edges rather than its vertices, implies that since some entrepreneurial behaviors are emphasized, others must be sacrificed. Furthermore, based on the logic of the trilemma and with theoretical grounding in Welter et al.'s (2016) bridging model, a new model of entrepreneurial behaviors that focuses on conceptual overlaps is introduced (shown in Figure 2) to visually demonstrate the relationships between the constructs and to reflect what practical actions entrepreneurs take. As a conceptual overlap, creative imagination supports the research of scholars such as Ludwig Lachmann and Todd Chiles rather than that of Alexander Kier and Jeffery McMullen, who tend to separate imaginativeness from creativity.

Appendix

Table A1: Questions used to develop the case study.

	Example of data (strong fit)	Entrepreneur	Matching behaviors	Codes
1. What was the context prior to founding? Discuss this context with respect to you and the market.	The gastronomic scene has progressed tremendously in Santiago over the years. In 2010, only Boragó, La Mar, Baco and us, as well as just a few others, were internationally recognized. Today, (October 18, 2018) the list of competitors is long.	DLP	Analyzes and uses data about competitors as an input of key decisions; Gathers and reviews information about market size and growth.	SP
2. Where did the opportunity emerge from? Describe the opportunity emergence process.	Despite the huge differences between the reopening of Osaka-Santiago (2018) and the [opening of] the first Osaka near the beach (2002 in Lima), we have always applied what we knew. First, we learned how to roll up sushi, then we rode the Nikkei fusion wave all the way.	DH	Begins with three categories of means: who he or she is (own abilities and tastes), what he or she knows (knowledge corridors), and whom he or she knows (social networks)	TE
3. How did you create the first iteration of the product or service?	By the time we opened the first Osaka-Santiago (2009), we already had an established Nikkei reputation. Fortunately, for us, the people in Santiago had a good understanding of Peruvian food. For many years, Peruvian <i>nanas</i> have been cooking in the kitchens of rich Chilean families.	CW	Uses goods on hand (rather than seeking resources from outside) to create solutions to problems.	AB
4. Where did the resources for the initial development of the	At the beginning, the resources came mostly from family and close friends. Now, the cash invested	DH	Commits only limited amounts of resources to a venture at a time, limits the resources	TE

Table A1: (continued)

	Example of data (strong fit)	Entrepreneur	Matching behaviors	Codes
opportunity come from?	into every new partnership comes from the Holding's surplus and debt from financial institutions and family offices. Ideally, local partners should provide know-how on networks, taxes, suppliers, labor, and their markets, not just cash.		committed to what could be lost; Uses strategic partners as a way to reduce and/or eliminate uncertainty.	
5. How did you develop and implement a strategy to initially take the product or service to market?	We hardly use any long-term strategic planning in our decisions. We have always been more interested in continuously improving the quality by innovating through the creative fusion of Nikkei and focusing on the overall experience (food, great service, warm architecture and design, and music).	CW	Drives continuous innovation by combining existing resources.	AB
6. Did the strategy development process change over time? If so, how?	Yes, many times. And it is always changing and evolving. Everything is happening very fast for the culinary industry in South America. If you don't change, you die! Our strategy now is to grow throughout the US, Europe, and the Middle East.	DH	Changes products or services and the revenue models of ventures as new opportunities arise; Alters what he or she is doing by consciously rejecting courses of action that will lock him or her in.	TE
7. How did you initially market the new product or service?	Our marketing strategy has always been based on word-of-mouth marketing. We usually don't rely on micromanagement in our day-to-day activities. We tend to react instead of plan. Now that we have a name in the industry and a	CW	Is biased toward action and actively engaging with problems and opportunities rather than lingering over questions of whether a workable outcome can be reached.	AB

Table A1: (continued)

	Example of data (strong fit)	Entrepreneur	Matching behaviors	Codes
	mix of in-house and out-sourced standardized processes, we are focusing more on the big numbers.			
8. Did the marketing approach change over time? If so, how?	We have always aimed for our quality to do the marketing for us. For example, we waited almost two years between the time we closed our first Osaka-Santiago and the official opening of the second. Before opening, everything had to be perfect: service, food, bar, music, architecture. We tested the second with several open houses until we finally nailed it.	DH	Develops multiple variations of a product or service to arrive at an offering and experiments with different ways to sell and/or deliver it.	TE
9. How did you find and recruit people to work in the emerging organization?	Although turnover is a factor in the industry, we invest heavily in training to the point that important team members eventually become partners. Ciro (CW) is an example of this.	DLP	Uses strategic partners as a way to reduce and/or eliminate uncertainty	TE
10. Did the recruitment process change over time? If so, how?	Yes, namely, because the idiosyncrasies of foreign locations are very different. In Bogotá, for example, hiring a good chief of service is quite easy, whereas training an Itamae is much easier in Peru.	CW	Uses goods on hand (rather than seeking resources from outside) to create solutions to problems.	AB
11. How would you describe the decision-making approach used in the early days of the venture?	At the beginning, we grew so fast that everything was chaotic. Some of our franchising experiences were not going smoothly since we had no control over the	DH	Tends to imagine things he or she can accomplish, including the creation of new means, new	TE

Table A1: (continued)

	Example of data (strong fit)	Entrepreneur	Matching behaviors	Codes
	operation. Our foreign franchises were implementing their own menus, which were quite different from the creative fusion of the restaurants we originally imagined.		environments, and new institutions	
12. Did the decision-making process change over time? If so, how?	Now we are thinking of other markets beyond South America, like Saudi Arabia, and other concepts, like Dondoh, a Japanese grill with a whisky bar atmosphere of blues and rock and roll.	DLP	Identifies and assesses opportunities, making resource allocation decisions based on probabilities and expected returns before developing anything.	SP
13. Did you stretch society's expectations when bringing the new product or service to market?	Yes. Nikkei fusion is relatively new. It is only a few decades old. And just recently, maybe fifteen years or so, it became known outside Peru. Nikkei mainly combines Peruvian ingredients and Japanese techniques. These synergies of ingredients and techniques have become a Peruvian cultural phenomenon.	CW	Reuses resources for different applications than those for which they were originally intended or used.	AB
14. How would you describe the early competitive advantage of the venture?	First, I (DH) think we were really lucky. We were at the perfect place and time with the ideal product. And second, all of our business decisions come from our gut feelings; we never use any formal business plan or market strategy. We also have good partners most of the time and hire great team members.	DH	Focuses on building partnerships rather than on performing systematic competitive analyses; Uses strategic partners as a way to reduce and/or eliminate uncertainty.	TE

Table A1: (continued)

	Example of data (strong fit)	Entrepreneur	Matching behaviors	Codes
15. Did the competitive advantage change over time? If so, how?	We never open a restaurant in a country that already has a strong culinary history; for now, we cannot compete against the local cuisine in Madrid, Paris or Rome. For now, we are only thinking about the Miami location and then maybe London.	DH	Identifies and assesses opportunities, making resource allocation decisions based on probabilities and expected returns before developing anything.	SP

Table A2: Percentage of distributions per entrepreneur.

	CW	DLP	DH
Strategic planning (SP)	13.3%	33.3%	0.07%
Transformative effectuation (TE)	13.3%	33.3%	53.3%
Adaptive bricolage (AB)	46.7%	13.3%	33.3%
Weak data (WD)	0.07%	0.07%	0%
No evidence (NE)	20%	13.3%	0.07%

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