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Entrepreneurial Strategy and Firm Performance at Inter Entreprise in Tlemcen

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ABSTRACT

This study examines entrepreneurial strategy and performance at Inter Entreprise, a subsidiary of the Kherbouche Group in Tlemcen, Algeria. It uses a qualitative case study supported by descriptive indicators reported from company records. The case account relates innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking to the firm's strategic activities and considers how planning supports their implementation. Reported turnover increased between 2021 and 2023, while internal customer satisfaction indicators also improved. These observations are consistent with the proposed relationship between entrepreneurial strategy and performance, but they do not establish a causal effect or statistical significance. The interpretation is limited by the single-case design, incomplete documentation of the interview process and the lack of independent verification of company indicators. The study identifies strategic partnerships, learning and better performance monitoring as areas for managerial attention.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial strategy brings together entrepreneurship and strategic management. Firms seek opportunities while developing the resources and activities needed to create competitive advantage (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003). In uncertain environments, managers must decide which opportunities to pursue, what risks to accept and how to support innovation.

Organisational performance includes financial results as well as outcomes such as process quality and customer satisfaction. Managers therefore need to consider how the firm uses its resources and how its activities respond to market conditions. Growth in one indicator does not necessarily imply improvement in all aspects of performance.

This research examines the relationship between entrepreneurial strategy and organisational performance at Inter Entreprise in Tlemcen, Algeria. The firm forms part of an established business group. The case provides a basis for discussing entrepreneurial practices within that organisation; it does not represent newly founded firms or the Algerian economy as a whole.

2. Literature review

Strategic entrepreneurship concerns the relationship between seeking opportunities and developing competitive advantage. The literature considers how firms combine resources, entrepreneurial behaviour and managerial decisions to create value (Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2003). These ideas provide the framework for examining the activities of Inter Entreprise.

This study focuses on entrepreneurial orientation and strategic planning. Entrepreneurial orientation concerns

how firms approach innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking. Planning concerns the analysis of the environment, the setting of objectives and the allocation of resources. The two concepts are related, but they should not be treated as interchangeable measures.

Research also shows why the relationship needs to be examined in context. Jallad and Karadas (2024) study absorptive capacity and industry type in Palestinian manufacturing SMEs. Nofirda and Azhari (2025) examine technology and competitive intensity in Indonesian SMEs. These studies address mechanisms and settings that may differ from those of an Algerian infrastructure contractor. Their findings inform the discussion without providing direct evidence about Inter Entreprise.

3. The concept of entrepreneurial strategy

3.1. *Theoretical foundations*

Entrepreneurial strategy concerns how firms identify opportunities and organise the activities needed to pursue them. In their literature review, Allammari and Taqi (2023) discuss innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness as recurring dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs. These dimensions provide a useful starting point for examining strategic behaviour.

Covin and Slevin (1989) examine entrepreneurial strategic posture through innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) develop a broader framework that also includes autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. The present case discussion focuses on the three commonly used dimensions. The resource-based view provides a complementary explanation of competitive advantage through resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and without strategically equivalent substitutes (Barney, 1991).

Entrepreneurial strategy therefore links the pursuit of opportunities to decisions about resources and competitive positioning. Whether these decisions improve performance remains an empirical question, rather than an outcome implied by the definition.

3.2. *Value creation and knowledge*

Innovation can contribute to new products, services and processes, but firms also need ways to share and use knowledge. Qasim et al. (2025) report a mediating role for knowledge sharing in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance in Jordanian telecommunications companies. Their study concerns innovation performance in a specific setting and does not establish an automatic improvement in every aspect of organisational performance.

Kusa et al. (2024) examine information management and knowledge management alongside entrepreneurial orientation. Their findings support attention to how firms manage knowledge when seeking better performance. In the present case, knowledge management provides a possible explanation for the value of learning and resource sharing, rather than a measured mediating variable.

3.3. *Dimensions of entrepreneurial strategy*

Strategic entrepreneurship combines opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking activities (Ireland et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007). Entrepreneurial mindset, culture and leadership help explain how firms organise these activities. Innovation and strategic planning provide further areas for analysis.

3.3.1. Entrepreneurial mindset

An entrepreneurial mindset involves recognising possible opportunities and considering how to pursue them under uncertainty (Ireland et al., 2003). Managers must assess the resources and risks involved as they explore alternatives.

3.3.2. Entrepreneurial culture

An entrepreneurial culture supports the discussion of new ideas, experimentation and the pursuit of opportunities (Ireland et al., 2003). It concerns the values and practices through which members of an organisation interpret and act on those possibilities.

3.3.3. Entrepreneurial leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership concerns how managers encourage opportunity-seeking while maintaining direction and coordinating resources (Covin & Slevin, 2002). Leadership can support this process, but its contribution must be examined alongside the conditions in which the firm operates.

3.3.4. Strategic management of innovation

Schumpeter (1942) places innovation at the centre of economic change. At the firm level, managers must consider how an innovation relates to the resources needed to develop and sustain a competitive position (Barney, 1991). Innovation alone does not guarantee lasting advantage.

3.3.5. Entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation concerns the firm's approach to innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking. Wiklund and Shepherd (2005) show the importance of considering financial resources and environmental dynamism alongside this orientation. Rauch et al. (2009) report a positive overall association with performance in their meta-analysis, while also identifying contextual influences.

3.3.6. Strategic planning practices

Strategic planning gives managers a means of analysing conditions, setting priorities and reviewing decisions. Brinckmann et al. (2010) find that the planning-performance relationship depends partly on context and discuss the value of combining planning with learning. Planning systems also differ across firms (Kukalis, 1989). Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) examine environmental scanning, planning flexibility, planning horizon, participation in planning and control practices.

Table 1 summarises planning practices relevant to the discussion. It describes concepts from the literature rather than classifying Inter Entreprise or dividing all

firms into fixed conservative and entrepreneurial categories.

Table 1 Strategic planning practices relevant to entrepreneurial activity

Practice	Meaning	Relevance to entrepreneurial activity
Environmental scanning	Examining developments in the firm's environment.	Supports the recognition of opportunities and threats.
Planning flexibility	Revising plans when conditions or opportunities change.	Allows managers to reconsider priorities and actions.
Participation in planning	Involvement of people at different organisational levels.	Allows knowledge from across the organisation to inform plans.
Strategic controls	Reviewing strategic activities and their longer-term implications.	Provides a basis for assessing progress beyond short-term financial results.

Source: Author's summary based on Barringer and Bluedorn (1999).

These dimensions provide a framework for exploring how a firm links opportunities to action. The case analysis focuses on entrepreneurial orientation and planning, while recognising that culture, leadership and resources may influence their relationship with performance.

4. The concept of firm performance

Performance measures can combine financial results with indicators of customers, internal processes and learning (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). In this case, turnover provides an indicator of business activity. It does not establish profitability or cash generation. The resource-based view relates sustained competitive advantage to the characteristics of a firm's resources (Barney, 1991).

Human capital provides another consideration when evaluating the capacity of a firm to perform (Dess & Picken, 1999). Hitt et al. (2011) also discuss strategic entrepreneurship in relation to value creation for individuals, organisations and society. These broader outcomes require their own evidence and cannot be inferred from a single financial indicator.

An assessment of the firm should therefore distinguish current reported results from its prospects for growth and continuity. It should also distinguish financial indicators, operational rates and perceptions of service quality.

5. Entrepreneurial strategy and firm performance

Research on entrepreneurial orientation offers reasons to expect a relationship with performance, but it also shows that the association varies with resources and environmental conditions. Entrepreneurial behaviour can support the pursuit of opportunities while exposing the firm to costs and uncertainty.

Covin and Slevin (1989) examine small firms in hostile and benign environments, linking strategic posture to its organisational context. Wiklund and Shepherd (2005) likewise argue that considering entrepreneurial orientation alone gives an incomplete explanation of performance. These studies support an examination of how entrepreneurial practices fit the circumstances of the firm.

Rauch et al. (2009) find a positive overall relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance across prior studies. Their meta-analysis provides broader empirical evidence; it does not demonstrate that the same effect occurs at Inter Entreprise. The present case examines whether its reported activities and indicators are consistent with that proposed relationship.

6. Entrepreneurial strategy at Inter Entreprise

6.1. *The firm studied*

Inter Entreprise (SPA) is part of the Kherbouche Group in Tlemcen. The group's company profile identifies 1976 as its founding year and describes activities in agro-industry, water engineering and hydraulic works (Groupe Kherbouche, n.d.). The case concerns the subsidiary's building and hydraulic infrastructure activities. It examines entrepreneurial practices within an established organisation.

6.2. *Research methodology*

The research uses a qualitative single-case approach supported by descriptive company indicators (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Semi-structured interviews provide the account of entrepreneurial and planning practices. Company documents provide contextual figures, including turnover and internal customer indicators for 2021-2023.

The analysis relates the reported practices to entrepreneurial orientation and strategic planning, then compares them with the available performance indicators. It does not estimate a causal model or test statistical significance. Interview sample size, interview dates and a coding protocol are not reported, which limits the traceability and reproducibility of the qualitative interpretation. The underlying company records and survey responses have not been independently verified.

The principal proposition is that entrepreneurial strategy is associated with the performance of Inter Entreprise. Two related propositions guide the discussion:

Ha1: Entrepreneurial orientation, expressed through innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking, is associated

with firm performance.

Ha2: Strategic planning practices are associated with firm performance.

6.3. *Qualitative findings*

The case account describes a combination of entrepreneurial behaviour and planning practices. It identifies innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness in the firm's efforts to adapt to market developments.

The reported expansion into Senegal in 2019 illustrates the pursuit of opportunities beyond the domestic market. It is treated here as a reported example of internationalisation. The available material does not isolate its contribution to turnover or measure the commercial outcome of that project.

The qualitative account also describes the use of technology, environmental scanning and flexible planning. These practices may help managers respond to uncertainty, but the case does not measure their individual effects on performance.

Resource sharing within the group, the development of human capital and managerial leadership are further themes in the case account. They offer possible explanations for the firm's capacity to carry out its activities, rather than separately tested determinants.

Taken together, these themes describe how the firm combines opportunity-seeking with the organisation of resources. They provide the basis for interpreting the descriptive performance indicators below.

6.4. *Contextual factors*

The interpretation considers organisational factors, including structure, culture and human capital; environmental factors, including competition and market conditions; and the role of managerial leadership. The study does not estimate the relative contribution of these factors. They identify relevant context for the case and possible questions for further research.

6.5. *Performance assessment*

The available indicators describe turnover, project activity and internally reported customer outcomes. The following assessment distinguishes what the figures show from explanations that would require additional evidence.

Turnover

Table 2 compares forecast and realised turnover for 2021-2023. Realised turnover increased from 31,200 MDA in 2021 to 38,500 MDA in 2023. The firm fell short of its forecast in 2021 and exceeded it in 2022 and 2023. These figures describe nominal turnover and performance against internal forecasts. They do not show profitability, inflation-adjusted growth or the effect of entrepreneurial strategy.

The forecast achievement rate is calculated as realised turnover divided by forecast turnover, multiplied by 100. The variance equals realised turnover minus forecast turnover. MDA denotes millions of Algerian dinars (DZD).

Table 2 Forecast and realised turnover for 2021 to 2023

Year	Forecast turnover MDA	Realised turnover MDA	Variance MDA	Forecast achievement %
2021	32,500	31,200	-1,300	96.0
2022	35,000	36,100	1,100	103.1
2023	38,000	38,500	500	101.3

Source: Company figures reported by the author. Variances and forecast achievement rates recalculated from the stated amounts. Underlying records have not been independently verified.

The case account reports activity of approximately 12-15 projects per year, a project completion rate of about 88% and on-time delivery of 70-80%. These figures describe different aspects of operations. The reporting period, project counts used as denominators and definitions of completion and timeliness are not supplied. The rates therefore remain descriptive and cannot establish improvement over time or performance relative to competitors.

The account also reports cost overruns of 10-20% and annual signed contracts valued at DZD 2.5-3.5 billion. No comparable sector benchmark is established. Contract awards and recognised turnover concern different measures, and their relationship depends on the timing and scope of projects. These amounts cannot be reconciled with annual turnover without further information on contracts and revenue recognition.

Table 3 reports customer satisfaction rates of 85%, 88% and 90% for 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively. Complaint rates are 6%, 5% and 4%. The reported satisfaction rate rose by five percentage points over the period, while the complaint rate fell by two percentage points. The survey questions, sample sizes and denominators are not documented, so these internal rates cannot be treated as independently validated or necessarily comparable measures.

Table 3 Reported internal customer indicators

Year	Reported customer satisfaction %	Reported complaint rate %
2021	85	6
2022	88	5
2023	90	4

Source: Internal indicators reported by the author. Underlying survey responses and calculation methods have not been independently verified.

Corporate image

The qualitative account links the firm's reputation to materials, technical standards and relations with clients and institutional partners. Participation in tenders and project delivery may contribute to visibility. These statements describe the case account's interpretation of corporate image; the study includes no separate external measure of reputation.

7. Discussion

7.1. *Entrepreneurial orientation and performance*

The reported innovation and internationalisation activities are consistent with Ha1. They indicate opportunity-seeking behaviour, but the case does not quantify entrepreneurial orientation or separate its effect from market conditions and other influences. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) provide a framework for considering these contingencies. The observations therefore provide a qualitative basis for discussion rather than confirmation of a causal hypothesis.

7.2. *Strategic planning and performance*

The account of environmental scanning and flexible planning, together with the reported turnover results, is consistent with Ha2. Ireland et al. (2003) offer a conceptual basis for considering how managers organise resources around opportunities. However, the reported completion and cost rates lack defined observation periods and independent benchmarks. They cannot demonstrate that formal planning caused better performance.

7.3. *Overall interpretation*

The principal proposition remains consistent with the case account, but it is not statistically validated. No comparison group, causal model or significance test is presented. Table 4 summarises the observations and the limits of the interpretation.

Table 4 Interpretation of the study propositions

Proposition	Reported observations	Interpretation
Ha1 Entrepreneurial orientation	Innovation, opportunity-seeking and reported internationalisation.	Qualitatively consistent with Ha1; no isolated effect or significance test.
Ha2 Strategic planning	Environmental scanning, flexible planning and turnover against forecasts.	Qualitatively consistent with Ha2; causality and benchmarks are not established.
Principal proposition	Entrepreneurial practices coexist with favourable reported indicators.	Consistent with the proposed association; not statistically validated.

Source: Author's interpretation of the reported case material.

7.4. *Performance indicators and possible improvements*

The interview account indicates that managers see value in the existing indicators while recognising a need for measures better suited to their activities. A more useful monitoring system would define each indicator's reporting period, calculation method and data source. It would distinguish turnover from profitability and contract awards, and define project completion and on-time delivery against clear denominators.

The interviews also identify strategic partnerships, shared experience and updated working methods as possible areas for improvement. Technology adoption may support these aims when managers connect it to specific operational needs and assess the costs and results.

These proposals are managerial implications of the case discussion. The study does not test the effectiveness of the proposed changes or establish that they will produce a particular performance gain.

8. Conclusion

This case study examines entrepreneurial strategy and performance at Inter Entreprise. The qualitative account describes innovation, opportunity-seeking and planning practices alongside increased reported turnover and improved internal customer indicators during 2021-2023. These observations are consistent with a relationship between entrepreneurial practices and performance.

The study does not establish the size, statistical significance or causal direction of that relationship. Resource sharing, leadership and market conditions remain possible influences. Managers may use the discussion to examine how entrepreneurial initiatives connect to planning and to the indicators used to assess their results.

The interpretation has several limits. It concerns a single established firm and cannot be generalised to other firms or to the Algerian market. The interview process is incompletely documented, access to organisational records was limited, and company figures have not been independently verified. Undefined operational measures and undocumented customer survey methods further limit comparisons. Nominal turnover growth also provides no direct evidence of profitability or real growth.

Further research could examine multiple firms, document interview sampling and analysis, and use independently verifiable indicators with consistent definitions. A design that considers competing explanations and changes over time would provide a stronger basis for assessing how entrepreneurial strategy relates to firm performance.

Declarations

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Conflicts of Interest. The author(s) declare no conflicts of interest.

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