

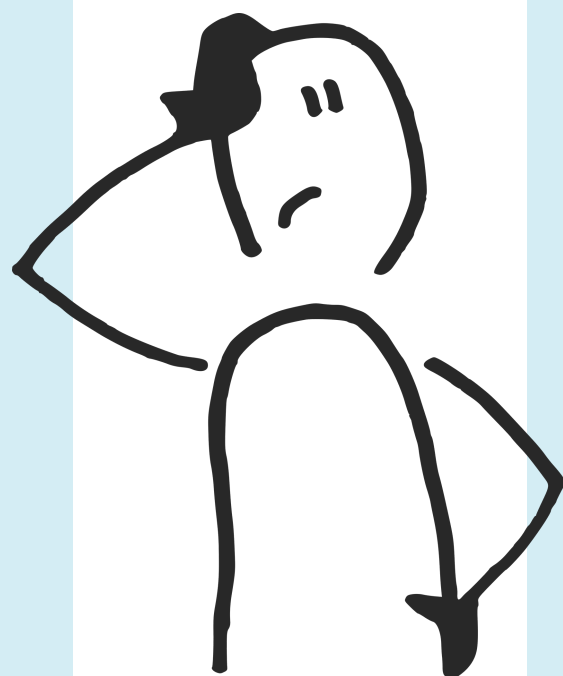
Adapting Decision Models In High-Tech Startups: A contingency-Based Framework

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Introduction & Problem

High-tech startups face intense **uncertainty** and rigidly applying single **decision models** (e.g., Effectuation, Lean) often falls short. They must adaptively **combine** approaches based on their unique **context** and evolving **stage**.
Goal: To develop a contingency-based framework explaining this practical hybridity.



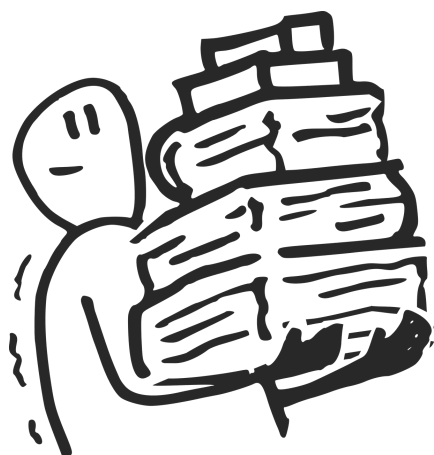
Research Questions

- When and why do startups blend decision models?
- How do context and lifecycle stages shape this dynamic?
- What gaps do existing models present, and how does a hybrid, contingency-based view address them?



Methodology

Qualitative multi-case study: 10 Belgian high-tech startups
In-depth **interviews** with Founders/CEOs
Gioia Methodology for thematic analysis:
1st-Order Concepts → 12 2nd-Order Themes → 5 Aggregate Dimensions
Focus: Decision-making under uncertainty.



Key Findings: The Contingency Framework for Hybrid Decision-Making

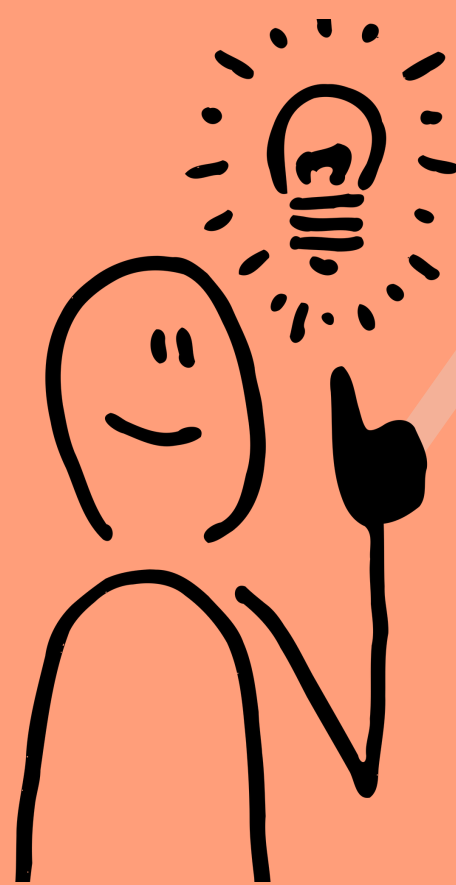
Venture Context
& Contingencies

Founder Influence
& Orientation

Strategic
Decision Logics
& Responses

Entrepreneurial
Learning & Process
Adaptation

Organizational
Capabilities &
Structure



- **Hybridity is Pragmatic:** Startups mix elements (e.g., Effectuation + Lean) based on situational needs.
- **Context Dictates:** Industry (e.g., MedTech vs. SaaS), market readiness, and uncertainty heavily shape approaches.
- **Learning Fuels Adaptation:** Iterative testing and evolving processes refine strategy.
- **Founder as Key Interpreter:** Mindset and experience influence decision logic selection

✦ **Hybrid decision-making is not random but an adaptive, contingent response to the dynamic interplay of these internal and external factors.**



✦ **High-tech startups thrive by dynamically adapting their decision models. Strategic entrepreneurship is about skillfully blending approaches to fit the evolving moment and context.**