

**VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT**

**Tigran Avagyan**  
**MASTER THESIS**

<b>INTRAPRENERIAVIMO STRATEGIJOS IR PRAKTIKOS MAŽOSE IT SEKTORIAUS ĮMONĖSE</b>	<b>INTRAPRENEURING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES IN THE IT SECTOR SMALL BUSINESSES</b>
--	---

**Thesis Supervisor**  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ieva Žebrytė**

**Vilnius, 2026**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	4
LIST OF TABLES	4
INTRODUCTION	5
1. THEORETICAL GROUNDING OF INTRAPRENEURING AS PRACTICE	8
1.1. Practice Theory as Theoretical Framework	8
1.1.1. From Intrapreneurship to Intrapreneuring	8
1.1.2. Bundles of Practice and Site Ontology	10
1.1.3. Sociomateriality and Conceptualization	12
1.1.4. Intrapreneuring as Practice	16
1.2. Operational and Strategic Levels in Intrapreneuring Work	18
1.2.1. Innovation Strategy as Practice	19
1.3. Enablers and Barriers of Intrapreneuring by Small Business Teams	21
1.3.1. Informality in Small Businesses	23
1.4. Conceptual Mapping with Practice Theory	24
2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND DESIGN IN EXPLORING INTRAPRENEURING PRACTICES	29
2.1. Philosophical Foundations, Aim, Approach, Design and Strategy	29
2.2. Research Context and Site - IT Sector Small Businesses within the EU	31
2.3. Data Collection Method	31
2.3.1. Selection Criteria	32
2.3.2. Primary Data Collection and Interview Questions	33
2.3.3. Conducted Interviews	35
2.3.4. Ethical Considerations	36
2.4. Data Analysis Methods	37
2.5. 6-step Thematic Analysis	38
2.6. Limitations	41
2.7. Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Research Process	42
3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF IT SECTOR SMALL BUSINESS INTRAPRENEURING PRACTICES	43
3.1. Bundles of Practice of Intrapreneuring	43
3.1.1. Improvising and Adapting	43
3.1.2. Human Connections and Communication	45
3.1.3. From Team Hack to Company Practice	46

3.2. Sociomaterial Site Arrangements and Settings	48
3.2.1. Tools and Spaces	48
3.2.2. Culture and Feeling	49
3.2.3. People and Power	50
3.2.4. External Pressures and Clients	51
3.2.5. Small Business Settings Shaping Practice	52
3.3. Outcomes and Strategic Impact	53
3.3.1. Measurable Outcomes and Success Tracking	53
3.3.2. Organizational Learning and Adaptation	54
3.3.3. Strategic Shifts	54
3.4. Challenges and Needs for Change	55
3.4.1. Challenges and Constraints of Intrapreneuring Work	55
3.4.2. Narratives of Need and Suggested Change	58
3.5. Research Sub-Questions and Theoretical Model	59
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
Discussion	63
Recommendations	64
REFERENCES	66
SUMMARY	74
SANTRAUKA	76

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Conceptual Map	27
Figure 2: Research Design	29
Figure 3: Theoretical Model	60

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Research Participants	36
--------------------------------	----

## INTRODUCTION

Information technology (IT) sector small businesses have a unique market feature which often allows them to utilize strategic agility, reactivity and adaptability when it comes to quickly addressing challenges, innovating, experimenting, and reacting to other market demands through initiatives led by employees (Edison et al., 2017; Reed, 2021). However, the size-related characteristic, which is often viewed as a strength, also brings up multiple challenges. Large organizations and corporations usually have clearly structured and well-defined processes, dedicated research and development departments, and formal intrapreneurship programs; whereas IT sector small businesses generally must constrain themselves with limited resources, unclearly defined structures and roles, and improvised daily practices (Stachel & Mussante, 2023; Garcia et al., 2023).

Without mechanisms to align these practices with coherent operational and strategic processes, such efforts threaten with a high risk of inefficiency and misalignment. For IT sector small businesses this brings forth a challenge in intrapreneuring, defined as the practice in which employees act entrepreneurially within the organization (Pinchot, 1985), and raises the main research question: **How small businesses in the IT sector intrapreneuring teams experience business process management on operational and strategic levels? How could these processes be improved?** To answer this question, the study investigates the following objectives: **First**, what practices and strategies intrapreneuring teams in small IT businesses employ in their everyday operations, including how these practices contribute to both short-term and longer-term efficiency. **Second**, what barriers and challenges impact intrapreneuring initiatives in these teams. **Third**, how the interplay of barriers, challenges, contextual factors and practices deployed to navigate them feed the conceptual framework of small business intrapreneuring in the IT sector, with an emphasis on how strategic intent is created and reimaged in practice. **Lastly**, how small businesses of the IT sector can use the actionable knowledge produced because of this inquiry, particularly in making informed strategic decisions about business process management. As such, the research illustrates how strategic decision making such as goal setting and resource constraint management are interpreted and utilized in practice by intrapreneuring teams.

Intrapreneurship is a term which generally describes formal and well-defined organizational strategies and structures set up by research and development departments (Itzkovich et al., 2021; Hernández-Perlins et al., 2022). In practice, such principles align relatively poorly with the daily practices of IT sector small businesses.

Existing frameworks do not impartially address the improvisational, socially informal practices that are followed by intrapreneuring practices in small businesses within the IT sector

(Divakara et al., 2019). However, this study follows a practice-based view on intrapreneuring, as this distinction, aligning with Practice Theory, is better suited for day-to-day non-theoretical, informal and applied practices employed in organizations (Nicolini, 2012; Champenois et al., 2019; Gherardi, 2022). For IT sector small businesses where formal structures, hierarchies, and dedicated innovation units are not as common, focusing on intrapreneuring leaves space for a pragmatic exploratory analysis of how organizations are engaged in entrepreneurial processes in practice. However, existing research does not fully apply Practice Theory to studying the intrapreneuring strategies and practices within IT sector small businesses, which leaves a research gap in the understanding of how such strategies and practices can be realistically utilized in the field.

This research uses the term “intrapreneuring” (Lithuanian: „intrapreneriavimas“) rather than the more conventional “intrapreneurship.” This terminological choice is thus deliberate and significant aligning with the gerund-focused lexicon of Practice Theory. The Lithuanian equivalent, intrapreneriavimas, is formed from the analogous term „antprenerystė“ (“entrepreneurship”), following the pattern for creating verbal nouns from English gerunds in academic Lithuanian to ensure conceptual consistency and theoretical precision in both languages of this thesis.

The aim of the research is to explore how intrapreneuring teams in IT sector small businesses engage in business process management practices to develop a better understanding of how these processes can be improved. This brings up four related research objectives aimed to explore intrapreneuring as practice within IT sector small businesses.

1. To identify the practices, on operational and strategic levels, the IT sector small business intrapreneuring teams engage in.
2. To analyze the barriers and challenges faced by these teams during their engaging in intrapreneuring practices.
3. To develop a conceptual framework for better understanding the underlying material, processual and relational aspects of intrapreneuring within the IT sector small businesses.
4. To provide guidelines for improving intrapreneuring team processes on operational and strategic levels in small businesses from the IT sector.

The research site has been chosen to be European Union member states, with a focus on firms in Lithuania and Italy, which have a well stated definition of small business as companies employing less than 50 people with a turnover under 10 million Euros (European Commission, 2003). The selection of Lithuania and Italy leaves space for variations between national contexts while following the European Union regulations and economic network. The criterion for research

participation is people in teams which are engaged in intrapreneuring within qualifying companies.

The study adopts a qualitative research method for exploring these intrapreneuring teams in IT sector small businesses. Semi-structured interviews are chosen as the primary method of data collection. This approach allows for a flexible investigation of the research sub-questions, allowing the participants to describe their practices, challenges, and strategic considerations in their own terms and operational contexts.

Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals currently engaged in intrapreneurial work within IT sector small businesses based in the EU. The interview questionnaire, the backbone of which was constructed with the help of Google Gemini, includes open-ended questions that in relation to the study's four sub questions, and the semi-structured interview method leaves space for flexibility to explore emerging, unexpected or unplanned-for themes, and identify the real-life intrapreneuring in practice. Automated transcription features in Microsoft Teams and iPhone Voice Memos expedited data preparation. All AI-generated content was critically reviewed and corrected or discarded wherever necessary by the researcher. Following the approach of Practice Theory, the interview explores how IT sector small business teams employ strategy, and decision-making practices in their own organizational contexts. Qualitative research design was implemented with the 6-step thematic analysis framework (Caulfield, 2023) aligning with pragmatist paradigm and focus on Practice Theory.

The structure of the thesis follows the progression from theoretical grounding to data analysis and finally to conclusion and actionable insights. The Theoretical Grounding chapter introduces the Practice Theory framework and defines the importance of studying intrapreneuring as practice, supporting objectives 1 to 3. The methodology chapter details the research design and ethical considerations, while the core implications and research analyses are presented on the Research Analysis section addressing objectives 1 and 2, and fulfils objective 3 by the creation of the theoretical model. The discussion section concludes the analysis and implications and provides practical and theoretical recommendations fulfilling objective 4.

# 1. THEORETICAL FOUNDING OF INTRAPRENEURING AS PRACTICE

## 1.1. Practice Theory as Theoretical Framework

### 1.1.1. *From Intrapreneurship to Intrapreneuring*

Intrapreneurship theory was first discussed by authors like Pinchot (1985) describing intrapreneurs as the individuals within a company, who possess and exhibit entrepreneurial behaviors. The characteristics of such individuals has been identified as “intrapreneurial” while the practice itself as “intrapreneuring”.

In recent years, intrapreneurship as a concept has been discussed by many researchers to include different practices and guidelines. Intrapreneurship has been characterized as strategic renewal of companies, applied innovatory behaviors, real measurable growth mitigation, as well as entrepreneurial behaviors particularly inside corporate environments (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022).

Intrapreneurship as a concept has also been commonly used to describe the process of innovation as a behavior brought out from within the company, bottom-up, by employees who are generally chosen or hired for this characteristic unlike entrepreneurs, who usually do not need to be selected (Carrier, 1996). Other research claims that intrapreneurship is an initiative by the employees of a company, which does not necessarily emerge out of a request from a higher-level management and sometimes even arises without specific permission (Vesper, 1984). Taking this into consideration, it is unclear whether we can define intrapreneurship as innovation as a result or as the behaviors that can potentially lead to such results.

Some contemporary authors also use other definitions for intrapreneurship, which may not include the term “innovation” at all, citing it as the development of new business initiatives and strategic renewals (Gawke et al., 2019). This definition may be more prevalent within the IT sector, considering that the definition of innovation is vague for technological companies is usually correlated to the creation or modification of a new venture within the market, rather than the creation or renewal of new strategies, products, processes or practices within company boundaries (Goswami & Mathew, 2005).

An important distinction to identify, is that intrapreneurship, which in practice is generally considered as a concept of applied behaviors within an organization, is not viewed as an organizational-created strategy for achieving innovation and growth. Unlike corporate entrepreneurship, which better corresponds to that description, intrapreneurship is usually defined as a tool of employees themselves who assert entrepreneurial behavior (Yin & Kwon, 2022). This is not to say that those terms have not been used interchangeably (Amo, 2010), but the usage of

those as synonyms might cause further confusion in further research. It is also important to clarify, as the usage of these terms as synonyms, may bring up a question, whether small businesses are even capable of utilizing intrapreneurship strategies or whether those should be reserved only for large organizations with structured processes.

The unclearly defined distinction between corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship is one of the reasons why many researchers such as Lee et al. (2020) have built their conceptual models for intrapreneurship around the idea that those two are synonymous. It is unclear whether due to the definition of intrapreneurship in these studies allows space for those frameworks and models to be transferrable to small business intrapreneuring teams, which leaves a large gap in the field of data that need further analyses and discussions to be considered before additional research can be conducted.

Intrapreneurship generally involves activities such as innovation, calculated risk-taking, proactive opportunity recognition, and continuous self-renewal from within the organization (Moghaddas et al., 2019). These elements represent an entrepreneurial mindset applied inside existing firms which further illustrates the practical, real-life similarity between intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial behaviors. Hence, the more common idea shared in literature suggest that there is a closer relation between intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship, as in the process of creating a business itself, rather than corporate entrepreneurship, which is generally viewed as an organizational-level strategy (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022).

Terminological irregularities are believed to be one of the core reasons intrapreneurship as a concept lacks representation in academic context (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022). Such irregularity makes a specific explanation for what is considered intrapreneurship much harder to define and identify than intrapreneurial behaviors and intrapreneuring as the practices initially conceptualized by Pinchot in his 1985 work.

Current intrapreneurship theories assume resources and structure that small firms often lack (Blanka, 2018). In academic literature the common understanding is that Intrapreneurship is viewed as closely related to corporate entrepreneurship, hence researchers generally associate those practices with larger companies or corporations that have already managed to recognize the rise in entrepreneurial activity within their teams and found ways to use such experiences to foster innovation internally (Bireswari, 2013). While intrapreneurship as a concept allows space for such confusion, the behaviors and practices by intrapreneurs are static, and more commonly shared inside academic literature.

Intrapreneurial is a characteristic of individuals within the organizations who demonstrate entrepreneurial behaviors (Neessen et al., 2018). Intrapreneurial behavior is associated to a human behavior rather than an organizational one, and intrapreneurs are individuals who by strategically

exploiting small opportunities introduce new logic into the whole organization (Abrell & Karjalainen, 2017). Intrapreneurial teams are classified as the groups of people within the organization who are actively involved in intrapreneuring practices including internal innovations that drive organizational success (Seidenschnur, 2019). The practices in intrapreneurial teams in academic literature are shown as the applied contributions which are demonstrated in an individual level within the team (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022) rather than defined strategies made on the organizational level.

This paper follows theoretical foundations provided by Practice Theory scholars, discussed in the following chapter, and because of this there is a crucial need for defining how the word “intrapreneurship” should be used in the research. In praxeological works, the use of a verb form, more specifically gerund is considered the standard for practice theory research (Pouliot & Cornut, 2015; Gherardi, 2015; Grootenboer et al., 2017). This raises the important need of using the practical lens on intrapreneurship through the usage of its gerund form “intrapreneuring” which helps define it as the action and practice, and all activities included in intrapreneuring, rather than the concept itself. This distinction is not merely a play on words but sets the ground for the research theory and defines further methodological foundations.

This terminological choice is subsequently mirrored in the Lithuanian title and terminology as “intrapreneriavimas.” The word is derived from the Lithuanian term for entrepreneurship, antreprenerystė. The construction follows the linguistic pattern for adapting such gerund-based concepts, as evidenced by the Lithuanian term for entrepreneurship, antreprenerystė (*Konsultacijų Bankas VLKK*, n.d.). The suffix -avimas is the closest Lithuanian morphological equivalent to the English -ing gerund. By adopting intrapreneriavimas, the thesis maintains theoretical alignment across languages, keeping the core idea of Practice Theory.

To sum up the prior research discussed in this section, there is an unclear definition for the word intrapreneurship, which can cause confusion in later research. This paper relies on applied and real-life usage of intrapreneuring, the true practices by intrapreneurial teams inside organizations. The usage of the original term “intrapreneuring” as practice, eliminates the need of a structural or hierarchical definition within the organization, and allows us to investigate intrapreneurship, in a practical lens which also is in par with the practice theory framework, further discussed in the next chapter.

### ***1.1.2. Bundles of Practice and Site Ontology***

Practice theory is a theoretical network that defines social phenomena through the lens of real-life human activities (Schatzki, 2002). In this research, Practice Theory is used as theoretical network on the foundations of ideas by scholars such as Theodore Schatzki, Silvia Gherardi, and Davide Nicolini, who are the commonly referenced gurus on this theory.

Practice theory suggests that the social phenomena of how people work, organize, and innovate are fundamentally constituted of repeated, everyday routines, habits and activities which are shaped by tools, places, and social structures (Schatzki, 2016). These practices define and are defined by knowledge (Gherardi, 2019), and are interconnected, which helps understand them in real-life organizational settings (Nicolini, 2017).

The literature review from various praxeological scholars specialized in Practice Theory provides understanding of the theoretical framework of this research, and defined practice not just as a theory, but as the "bundle" of theory, methods and important vocabulary to transform how we study social phenomena. Following the grounding and wording strategies provided by Practice Theory helps us reframe intrapreneurship as concrete practices (intrapreneuring) rather than abstract traits.

This theoretical framework is especially important for studying the actions of intrapreneuring in IT sector small businesses, where traditional organizational models that include strategies like hierarchical decision making do not fully represent the improvisational, adaptable and informal structure of small business innovation.

The works of Theodore Schatzki are generally viewed as the foundation for creating a formalized understanding of Practice Theory in both organizational and philosophical aspects of research. In his work of site ontology he argues that the base of all social phenomenon is practice (Schatzki, 2002).

Importantly, individuals are not the central unit of analysis but are treated as “carriers of practice”. He insists that it is in practices “bundles of doings and sayings” that social phenomena are produced (Schatzki, 2002). This is especially important in considering that a practice is not solely actions or applications by individuals, but everything that surrounds it.

To understand this interconnectedness, Schatzki formulates practice as a bundle that also includes materiality in its core, something which most previous praxeologists have not included in their works, meaning for Schatzki, practices are defined not just as what people do but rather the collection of performances that exist in relation to material arrangements, which can include tools, documents, technologies etc. (Loscher et al., 2019). The concept of “material arrangements” or materiality refers to the whole physical environment in which practices take place, and the physical objects that are required for the practice (Schatzki, 2002). These arrangements are what shape the practice but are also modified and reshaped by the practice itself in daily operations (Schatzki, 2013).

For IT sector small businesses, such material arrangements can include physical materials such as computers, and other physical tools needed for daily practices, and intangible materials such as coworking applications like Emails, Slack or Teams, which are generally set up within IT

companies through an active applied practical experience. Such material configurations that enable and constrain what people can do in the daily practices further demonstrate the importance of Schatzki's lens on practice, which is that nothing is static, and what appears stable is shaped through ongoing practices.

Another important point brought up in Schatzki's works is the insistence on relationality, more precisely between practices and people (Schatzki, 2017). People and practices are interlinked, meaning people can shape and change Bundles of Practice into which they enter. Taking this into consideration, it's important to investigate strategies in practice not as set of rules that practice participants follow, but as pattern that come out of practice because of repeating people's activities.

Another important aspect is Schatzki's concept of site ontology, where he discusses that social phenomena of practice is not solely connected to people's actions, but are "bundles" of all practices and material arrangements in action (Schatzki, 2016). A "site" is not just a location for practice but is a part of the general bundle which constitutes the whole social phenomena. It includes the people, material arrangements, structures, space and time in one nexus, and with practice is how site ontology comes to action.

Schatzki adds to this with the notion of site as a "flat" ontology, which claims that no social phenomena are present on a higher(macro) or lower(micro) level compared to others (Schatzki, 2016). While practices are generally labeled with terms like strategic and operational, their importance lies not on predefined structures but the relation and interaction between those, and none of those practices carries an inherently higher importance compared to the other. This is a particularly important foundation to look at, when dealing with small businesses, where individuals are commonly expected to be able to shift between different practices such as from strategic planning to practical operations within the same project implementation phase. This helps to imagine innovation not as a defined process, but as a flexible flow where the priority can be shifted at any time.

Schatzki's framework is especially useful for consideration when analyzing IT sector small businesses which are generally believed to have strategy, operations and people intertwined into each other (Parra-Sánchez & Talero-Sarmiento, 2023). In this sector work is rarely divided into rigid rules, on the contrary most strategic decision making and practices happen at the same time during daily project implementations.

### ***1.1.3. Sociomateriality and Conceptualization***

While Schatzki's theory talks about practice and digs deep into material and space connected to it, Silvia Gherardi extends Practice Theory by still following Schatzki's rejection of dualism (social and material as separate concepts), yet including a new concept called

“sociomateriality”, in which she claims that those concepts are interconnected, and act as the “glue” for everything that practice entails. She challenges the idea of ontological separability of these words, suggesting that when it comes to practice, matters, bodies, and discourses all belong to the one sociomaterial category (Gherardi, 2016).

In her works she illustrates the importance of understanding the bodies and matters, and the discourse between them, clearly defining that practice doesn't include humans and non-humans, but includes them together as one concept, as those are impossible to separate without losing sight of how the practice works.

The sociomaterial and posthumanistic concepts allow space for understanding how IT sector small business operationalize intrapreneuring practices. Her ideas provide an epistemological foundation for this research, challenging that the practice of innovation is dependent on human created strategies and ideas, and allows the understanding that strategies and structures are inseparable from human actions. This means that in resource-constrained environments including IT sector small businesses, intrapreneuring includes not only the people involved in the team, their actions, the material arrangements associated with the process, or the knowledge and results derived from it, but the full process which includes all these sociomaterial aspects at the same time. For this research, Gherardi's Practice Theory provides a pragmatic understanding of intrapreneuring in practice supporting the practical application of intrapreneuring in small businesses.

Further research also highlights the interconnection between knowledge and practice. She argues that practices are not just what people do, rather they are processes where knowing is a part of the doing itself (Gherardi, 2019). Compared to prior traditional notions that claim knowledge to be static and transferrable (Orlikowski, 2002), her research suggests that knowledge is a dynamic practice arriving from real life applications (Gherardi, 2019).

The concept of "agencement", which she defines as the process of heterogenous engineering or arrangement of practices, supports the idea that practices aren't fixed structural processes but ongoing, ever-changing performances where the interaction of various elements can help at modifying or shaping one another (Gherardi, 2019). In the example of IT sector this can be the interaction between old servers, overcomplicated code, brainstorming activities and developers' skills, which illustrates Gherardi's idea that knowledge of how practices are conducted cannot be static but is derived from the daily practice itself.

Another key contribution present in Gherardi's works is the concept of “texture of practices” where she supports the idea that practices are not isolated activities but are interconnected together through different projects or processes from within (Gherardi, 2019, 2022).

These works further shape the pragmatic understanding of practice, as it allows us to consider that in the case of this research, it is safe to assume that intrapreneuring practices should not be solely considered as the results of innovation, but all the processes that were involved into the practice, and other practices that were connected to the processes. This is further analyzed through Davide Nicolini's research works discussed in the following chapter, dissecting the analysis of applied understanding of these internal organizational practices.

Teams of IT sector small businesses often rely on improvised solutions, tacit knowledge, and semi-defined structures, and Gherardi's research illustrates how intrapreneuring strongly depends on team's learning, and knowledge acquiring from practice itself and not just structures and defined responsibility, concepts, which have strong presence in intrapreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship literature.

Her epistemological foundations further prove the importance of studying intrapreneuring as a practice in a pragmatic real-life situation, to create a framework that can be used by both academics and practitioners.

Among the scholars Nicolini's approach to Practice Theory provides the most important methodological grounding for research, especially within the field of organizational studies. He conceptualizes Practice Theory as a "package of theory, method and vocabulary" not just a way of thinking, but a way of doing research (Nicolini, 2012; 2017). Practice is viewed not as the actions conducted by individuals, but as the methodological theoretical orientation by which a pragmatic research work should be conducted (Nicolini, 2017).

Continuing Gherardi's findings Nicolini highlights the importance of interconnection between knowledge and organizational phenomenon. Organizational knowledge is the knowledge derived from practices enacted by a social collective (Nicolini, 2017). This adds to the notion that knowledge is not static and is created from the practice itself.

Case study analysis in Italian construction communities have shown some examples of tacit knowledge that is developed by a collective through practice, emphasizing the importance of social and team organizational knowledge, over the epistemological understanding of formal structures being the culprits of operational strategy and guidelines (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2001; Gherardi et al., 2007). This highlights the importance of IT sector small businesses hybrid environments where collective, practice-based learning can come out organically, rather than relying solely on rigid formal structures and rules, especially as those have relatively fast-paced, innovation minded environments where adaptability and shared tacit knowledge are crucial to achieve organizational success.

Another important concept is the "zooming in" and "zooming out" approach, a framework for analyzing organizational practices through the lens of process details (in) and broad

observations (out) (Nicolini, 2009), which had also set ground for Gherardi's "texture of practices" (2022). Zooming in enables to understand in depth how everyday activities influence intrapreneuring practices in IT sector small businesses, while zooming out helps identify larger factors such as market dynamics and company efforts which affect team innovation and intrapreneuring practices (Nicolini, 2016).

An important point is to recognize potential confusion about the distinction of zooming in and out, which helps understand how practice affects organizations in the small- and large-scale phenomena, and the micro and macro phenomena, which was rejected by Schatzki's flat ontology (2016), as this approach does not support any notion that specifically "bigger" issues causing "large scale" concerns (Nicolini, 2016). It rather supports the pragmatic viewpoint of practice, where we can acknowledge every phenomenon, whether labeled strategic, operational, macro or micro, as being parts of applied real-life situations that shape or are shaped by everyday organizational operations. When looking at large scale phenomenon in research, if utilizing a practice-based approach, Nicolini (2016) argues that objectives of studies should not be abstract ideas such as the market, need or demand, but actual daily practical concerns, which can help to shape the study's research objectives, as well as understand key points to retract from data analysis.

As a unified approach to practice theory is generally missing, there is a high importance of building connection between site ontology (Schatzki, 2016) and knowledge-practice connection (Gherardi, 2019) under the idea of organizational knowledge. Studying contemporary research, organizational life is deemed not as the results of abstract structures or individual decisions, but as something that emerges from real-life practices, influenced by past actions, material arrangements, and society in general (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). This summarizes all practice theory research as critiquing tendencies to treat practices as static activities, arguing instead that they are more like regimes that are kept alive through repetition, adaptations and modifications and usage of tools, spaces, and bodies.

This unified understanding provided by the Practice Theory research helps guide this paper by fundamentally shaping how we should investigate organizational life practices including intrapreneuring and operational strategy-making. Given that these phenomena are not clearly defined and set forward by universal rules, but rather emerging from real-life situations evolving through interaction of knowledge, material arrangements, social relations, and historical trajectories within specific organizational sites (Schatzki, 2016; Gherardi, 2016; Nicolini, 2017), a study approach like qualitative research or case-study analysis becomes the essential choice for this and any practice theory oriented research.

To accomplish such research, praxeology scholars support understanding practice site ontology set by Schatzki (2016), and epistemology set by Gherardi (2016), while Nicolini (2017) proposes four methodological strategies for studying practices:

1. analyzing “orderly scenes of action”
2. tracing the historical development of practices
3. studying how these practices support and interact with each other
4. exploring the interconnections between multiple activities within practices.

The practice theory framework provides the necessary conceptual tools to move beyond abstract models of intrapreneurship and instead investigate how intrapreneuring (following the lexicon of praxeology scholars) takes place within the informal, specific, resource-constrained, and dynamic sites of IT sector small businesses in real-life situations.

#### ***1.1.4. Intrapreneuring as Practice***

Within the last decades, practice theory lens is gaining a particular interest in entrepreneurial research, to better observe the operational and material implications involved in entrepreneurial practices (Thompson et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship-as-Practice (EaP) has been the commonly used term to describe the practice of entrepreneuring, including all activities, material arrangements, knowledge and social factors that are involved in it.

EaP emphasizes the importance of studying entrepreneurship in a practice-based lens, where instead of looking into abstract concept-based understanding of entrepreneurship, we focus on the concrete "doings and sayings" of practitioners, highlighting the processual, relational, and material dimensions of entrepreneurial activities (Champenois et al., 2019). Understanding that entrepreneurship is not a static state, but rather a dynamic and everchanging process which we can call entrepreneuring (following praxeological lexicon) we can highlight the importance of researching practices, social contexts, and material resources associated with this practice (Nicolini, 2017; Champenois et al., 2019).

From the processual perspective, entrepreneuring should be viewed not as a linear, but as an inconsistent path, as initial plans are rarely followed through as guidelines but are rather changed and reshaped over the progression of the practice (Champenois et al., 2019). Practice is inherently, most importantly a processual phenomenon, and studying EaP, even before the term was coined by researchers has always emphasized the actual doing of the practice (practicing) (Gherardi, 2022). In IT for example, professionals working within intrapreneuring teams continuously reshape project plans and overall ideas, depending on client requirements, industry standard changes or even internal factors like resource constraints.

Another important perspective of entrepreneuring is the concept of materiality, which emphasizes the utilization of tools, technology, and spaces of operation in facilitating or

constraining entrepreneurial (both internal and external) operations (Gherardi, 2022). In practice, it is hard to imagine successful intrapreneuring operations within IT sector businesses without highlighting the importance of project management tools, such as Jira or Asana, communication platforms, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, the computers with which employees operate, and the offices (the site) where practice takes place.

Apart from sociomaterial implication of technology and site, an important perspective to follow is also Gherardi's (2016) posthumanistic understanding of the connection between human and non-human bodies. This means that in the materiality dimension, the interaction of these bodies together also entails knowledge which is also considered as a vital part for practice work (Gherardi, 2022).

Finally, relationality, on the other hand, highlights the significance of social interactions and collaboration in the formation of knowledge within the practice (Gherardi, 2022). IT sector intrapreneurs collaborate internally and across different departments, and are also nexuses of sociomaterial interactions, as relationships are often mediated by tools and platforms, as mentioned earlier (Gherardi, 2016).

Intrapreneuring, much like entrepreneuring, can be understood as the dynamic and everchanging bundles of practices that are involved in organizational life (Yin & Kwon, 2022). While the provided sources primarily discuss entrepreneuring (EaP), the principal phenomenon of practice theory can be transferable to the study of intrapreneuring (IaP) within established organizations (De Keyser & Vandenbempt, 2023). The main idea is that both phenomena are not only about individual characteristics or strategic initiatives. They are about the day-to-day activities, interactions, and material arrangements and gathered knowledge with which both individuals and teams participate into bringing forth innovation-related activities (Teague et al., 2021). The main adaptation between EaP and intrapreneuring is the goal of looking into the innovation practice not through the focus of creating a new venture externally, but rather internally.

While the practice of entrepreneuring involves utilizing resources, exploring and planning against the uncertainties in the market, and social activities like networking (Teague et al., 2021), intrapreneuring engages in similar practices within the boundaries of an organization (Champenois et al., 2019). Applying EaP to study intrapreneuring will allow us to explore how innovative activities are operationalized within already established organizational life, which can help construct a conceptual framework for better understanding the underlying material, processual and relational aspects of intrapreneuring within the IT sector small businesses.

## 1.2. Operational and Strategic Levels in Intrapreneuring Work

Within large organizations, the division between operational and strategic levels is usually formalized through documents and rules distributed between departments and teams, making the hierarchies and resource allocation procedures clearly defined for intrapreneuring teams (Lazarević & Ružičić, 2023). However, as discussed, this view is not generally the case within small businesses, especially in the IT sector, where organizational structures are generally flat, and resources (budgets, staff) are limited (Amaechi, 2020).

From a Practice Theory standpoint, strategy and operations are viewed as parts of day-to-day organizational life. When discussing the scholastic understanding of strategy-as-practice, we have highlighted how strategy and strategizing is something businesses “do”, rather than “have” (Nicolini, 2017). This makes the processes of operations and strategizing somewhat intertwined, as with practice theory in mind, we know that with business operations, the doing of business activities, is how strategizing usually occurs, and with strategizing in real time we know how operational activities should work (Matthews et al., 2009).

In IT sector small businesses especially, this phenomenon is particularly relevant, where strategy is brought through by day-to-day activities like brainstorming, client communication activities, backlog and sprint organizing and cleanup, and collaborating with external organizations, which are all part of operational practice. From intrapreneuring research, we have understood that in these operational decisions is in fact where innovation generally takes place (Wixe et al., 2021).

Intrapreneuring work, at both the operational and strategic levels, becomes an intertwined bundle of practices, composed of all the involved people, material arrangements, structures, space and time (Schatzki, 2016). An example of this interconnectedness is how especially in businesses within the IT sector, utilization of a new tool within the day-to-day applied operations can lead to the company-wide adoption in a quick strategic decision, while, the opposite is just as likely, where a strategic decision of utilizing a new tool can change all daily operational practice (Essawy, 2024).

However, modern literature generally fails to explicitly mention the implications of such interconnectedness within IT sector small business environments. Some scholars touch this subject by highlighting the importance of connecting strategic management and intrapreneuring, while skipping the important question of how these are operationalized in practice (Guyen, 2020). Thus, while we know that pairing strategizing and operations together is important in both company culture and individual employee mindset, there is a general gap of guidelines that can help improve how intrapreneuring teams operate and innovate across both strategic and operational levels.

To sum up, while large organizations generally tend to separate operational and strategic levels through formal structures and clearly defined guideline, IT sector small businesses operate in a more flexible and resource-constrained environments where such methods are not pre-created in a top-down approach.

Through the lens of Practice Theory, this research highlights how strategizing and operations in small businesses are intertwined, considering day-to-day practices in which intrapreneuring teams are involved. Current literature lacks in providing knowledge on how strategy and operations work together in real time, especially in IT sector small businesses. By addressing this gap, this thesis aims to offer grounded, practice-based guidelines for improving intrapreneuring team processes on operational and strategic levels especially within small businesses from the IT sector.

### ***1.2.1. Innovation Strategy as Practice***

Following the theoretical foundation of Practice Theory, praxeology scholars are increasingly challenging the idea of innovation strategy as a top-down, clearly defined process unrelated to the everyday realities of organizational life. Research within the Strategy-as-Practice and Practice Theory fields have illustrated that organizational strategy-making is not something organizations have but something they do (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Innovation strategy, from this viewpoint, is created not by some documentation practice as a rulebook but as a bundle of activities, places, communications, material arrangements and most importantly acquired knowledge, involved into the practice. This understanding is particularly important in the context of IT sector small businesses, where strategy often lacks formal articulations, but is rather a part of real-life daily work routines.

Looking into organizational strategies through practice theory lens is a relatively new phenomenon within the also young framework that is practice theory (Lounsbury & Beckman, 2014). Strategy, unlike the traditional understanding of the word, in practice theory represents practices that yield strategy making, oftentimes referred to as “strategizing” (Golsorkhi et al., 2015), following the practice theory trend of using gerund to represent the practice rather than the concept.

An important point of studying strategy as practice is the absence of differentiation between strategizing in a large organization or a small one (Jarzabkowski et al., 2025). Strategizing is viewed as practice that is employed by any organization, differing only in the tactics followed (meaning the actual bundle elements of practice) rather than the overall concept. When talking about IT sector small businesses utilizing innovation strategies as practice, this allows us to understand how intrapreneuring practices interact with strategy making and what are the bundles that benefit the effective practice activities.

Rather than conceptualizing innovation as a centralized or isolated function, researchers such as Seidl and Werle (2018) have shown that strategy work, strategic management and the general practice of strategy is distributed across teams, technologies, and temporalities. There is a significant importance of tools and other materials in strategy making, like in the case of IT sector roadmaps, backlogs, pitch decks, and how these become part of “strategy episodes” where innovation ideas are shaped and discussed (Seidl & Guérard, 2015). This idea aligns with Schatzki’s (2016) notion of Bundles of Practice. In IT sector small businesses these bundles are often managed informally, however they are generally formed as the foundations for innovative outcomes to be shaped.

On practice perspective, looking into the activities present inside strategizing, it is crucial to also point out micro-strategizing (Spender & Kraaijenbrink, 2022), or the everyday actions through which innovation direction is shaped. Within IT sector small businesses these can often include team members discussing priorities during daily stand-ups, sprint-related alignment meetings, or adjusting resource allocation as a reaction to project- or technology-related blockers or client feedback. While these examples seem relatively small inside one project, they have significant influence for how intrapreneuring practices are shaped. Understanding the strategy creation modification processes helps us learn how companies include strategizing into their intrapreneuring activities and how intrapreneuring strategies and practices are operationalized within the IT sector small businesses.

From a practice theory perspective, innovation strategy in IT sector small businesses can be seen as a sociomaterial performance (Gherardi, 2016), as it is shaped not only by people but also by tools, routines, and the general site in which the business teams operate. Taking from the research of conducted research on Practice Theory, we have deduced that knowing and doing are intertwined as part of one another and are parts of day-to-day applied practice performance. Intrapreneuring teams both execute innovation strategy and enact it, through improvised interactions between their practice bundle activities in both material and social environments (Gherardi, 2019).

In recent years, studying strategy under the practice theory-based lens is undergoing a theoretical and paradigm-related shift, due to the inclusion of various outside factors such as the vast adoption of Artificial Intelligence tools, and change in communication behaviors in especially technology-related societies (Jarzabkowski et al., 2025). This raises the importance of studying intrapreneuring and innovation strategies through a pragmatic worldview, where strategy and intrapreneuring are understood as abstract ideas, but include real-life experiences, in this case factors such as practical problem-solving, context-related specificities and the consequences of situation based-action (Saunders et al., 2023).

To sum up, looking into innovation strategy as practice shifts attention away from formal strategy-creation models and documents to a practice-based view of strategizing in action. IT sector small businesses, where formal strategy documents are often nonexistent, strategizing happens as part of routine activities like team discussions, backlog planning, and client feedback gathering.

Strategizing, viewed within a pragmatic and practice-based lens provides a framework for understanding how intrapreneuring within IT sector small business is operationalized not from strategic guidelines, but through the real-life operations of teams.

### **1.3. Enablers and Barriers of Intrapreneuring by Small Business Teams**

Intrapreneuring has traditionally been studied within the context of large firms, usually with an emphasis on formal structures and guidelines, strategic initiatives, or relatively less resource constraints (Abeysekera, 2023). However, this framing is not usually transferrable to be used within a small business ecosystem, particularly in dynamic, resource-constrained environments such as the IT sector.

In small businesses, intrapreneuring tends to be informally organized, not following a top-down clearly defined strategy and distributed across small and multi-functional teams (Ximena et al., 2020). Understanding intrapreneuring in such organizations from a practice theory perspective, fosters creation of a clearer understanding of what a practice really entails, and what challenges can be arisen during those (Gartner, 2016; Nicolini, 2017).

Small businesses usually lack the luxury of a dedicated research and development (R&D) department which allocates resources for intrapreneuring activities, which many large corporations have (Aguilar et al., 2019). This constraint both hinders the small business abilities on innovation management, and helps those companies be more flexible when it comes to responding to an unpremeditated change requirement (Amaechi, 2020). Teams become an important player in intrapreneuring practice, utilizing tacit knowledge into day-to-day applied innovation activities.

In the IT sector specifically, constant technological evolution and client request volumes force small businesses to be ready for many readjustment risks. For this, such businesses need to promote a culture where innovation and risk-taking are celebrated for every employee that does intrapreneurial work (Amaechi, 2020). These organizations, by celebrating the activities associated with intrapreneuring (all bundles of intrapreneuring), rather than solely looking into the results of innovation, showcase real-world practice turn of organizational thinking, highlighting the importance of applied intrapreneuring as practice.

A strong team dynamic is paramount to successful innovation work. Hurst (2022) highlights the importance of emotions, namely positive emotions like trust, social dependability among team members, which allows them to be more successful in work environments. In a small business context where errors can carry significant costs, having a psychologically safe space to test and fail within the team becomes a crucial for intrapreneuring. This plays a significant role within intrapreneuring-as-practice theories, supporting that relationality is an important part of innovative practices over time. In this sense, it is not just the skills or roles of individuals that matter, but the relationality that supports the practices of intrapreneuring.

The presence of reliable objects and material arrangements for small businesses is also viewed as an important player for successful operations. Materiality is a factor that positively influences intrapreneurial practice and supports collaborative practices within organizations (C. Lee & Amjadi, 2014). Following the sociomaterial significance in defining the practice itself (Gheraldi, 2016), it can be illustrated as an example of intrapreneuring practice bundle involving materiality in its core.

In the case of IT sector small businesses, these materials can include high-tech computers, that inherently can hinder or foster innovation capability, networking tools that allow real-time fast communication between team members and external stakeholders, project management tools etc. Intrapreneuring practice includes materiality (Champenois et al., 2019) meaning utilizing appropriate tools can be crucial for innovation work.

Small business intrapreneuring also tends to interconnect internal and external activities. As these businesses often operate closer to end-users, teams regularly gather knowledge feedback or collaborate with clients directly, as a part of their intrapreneuring activities (Gilboa et al., 2019). An example from the IT sector could be a client requesting a substantial change in the system or a creation of a new product specially for them. These practices sometimes lead to scenarios where the intrapreneuring team does not seek a formal decision from a top-down chain, nor has specific guidelines to follow on how to correctly implement the new venture. Studies suggest that small business teams that are actively engaged in this kind of external knowledge gathering are more likely to identify and act upon potential innovation opportunities (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2010; Wixe et al., 2021).

To sum up, within IT sector small businesses, intrapreneuring is not a structured, top-down process but rather a dynamic and situation-dependent practice operated by small and sometimes under-staffed teams within resource constrains. Without clearly defined R&D structures and dedicated budgets and resources that are more common in larger firms, small business teams heavily depend on shared tacit knowledge and flexibility, which is also their biggest strength. Sociomateriality, namely relationality like trust and psychological safety, and material

arrangements like machinery and digital tools play an important role in enabling innovation within the intrapreneuring practices. Intrapreneuring also often extends beyond organizational boundaries, where external collaboration support innovation ideas, and provide an example of informal practice within intrapreneuring teams.

Studying such companies through a practice-oriented lens allows us to understand and discuss all the factors that are included in intrapreneuring work in action, and a pragmatist paradigm supports viewing the real-life considerations when conducting the research (Champenois, 2019).

### ***1.3.1. Informality in Small Businesses***

Informality in small businesses is characterized by unwritten or semi-defined rules, tacit structures, and flexible role responsibilities (Ram et al., 2019). Unlike formal structures that rely on documented procedures and hierarchical decision-making processes, informal practices are implemented through mutual adjustments among team members.

In the context of Practice Theory, these informal practices are core principles to organizational life. They represent the phenomenon of applied activities within the organizational life in a way that allows us to explore real-life examples without having to rely on written practices (Polese, 2021).

In small business environments, intrapreneuring team members might organize and plan processes through spontaneous conversations rather than formal project plans (Coetzer et al., 2017). Decisions are made in real-time through day-to-day experience, and often require less hierarchical bureaucracy, like submitting requests for change that need to be approved through multiple departments, than their larger counterparts (Maurer et al., 2023). This informality allows for flexibility and quick responsiveness, allowing such teams to adapt quickly to client requests or market demands.

While informality allows these firms to be more adaptable to unprecedented requirements, it also hinders these companies and presents challenges. The lack of formal structures can result to unclear division in responsibilities, making it difficult to hold individuals accountable or to know or to recognize talent in specific areas (Sheikh & Bhaduri, 2021). In business process management practices, for example, the absence of standardized procedures can lead to errors, miscommunications or wasted valuable time (Ko et al., 2009), as different team members can have different approaches to their practice.

Project scope misalignment is also a major risk that can be caused by not formalizing important practices and strategies. Reliance on tacit knowledge and unwritten norms usually slow down the onboarding process of new employees, as they may struggle to navigate how each operation within the organization works (Brødsjø et al., 2023).

However, informality can also foster innovation within companies. Role flexibility, culture of taking ownership of your project instead of relying on guidance, experimentation of processes with “what works and what doesn’t” mentality, strongly present in informal settings such as IT sector small businesses are key drivers of creativity and generation of new ideas (Sharma & Dahlstrand, 2023). In IT sector small businesses, where constant technological evolution is unavoidable, the ability to act quickly and implement new solutions without bureaucratic delays is a significant market advantage.

The importance of interconnection between informality and structured practices are exemplified through the widely utilized frameworks in IT sector businesses, most notably within the Agile methodology. While Agile frameworks provide a set of principles and practices, their implementation inherently relies on informal communication, notably daily stand-ups (scrum meetings) or syncs, which are usually not defined into the business structures, but are shaped and reshaped according to the team’s context (Tenedez et al., 2018). This interconnection of formal and informal practices aligns with Practice Theory’s emphasis on the situation dependent practice ideology.

This research will also draw importance on understanding what practices, on operational and strategic levels specifically IT sector small businesses follow, which can also inform us whether such businesses tend to follow Agile and other methodologies in a way that is semi-structured and modified to be best-fit with the business essence rooted in informality, or whether they attempt to follow such methodologies in a structured and predefined way, which would allow us to draw comparisons between the practice itself and the team goals.

The reliance on informality also means that innovative practices may lack recognition within the organization (Sheikh & Bhaduri, 2021). Without formal mechanisms to identify and celebrate those successful innovations, valuable insights may stay within the internal teams or employees who stumbled across failing to provide information to foster broader organizational learning.

Informality in small businesses is a phenomenon that leads to both opportunities and challenges. From a Practice Theory perspective, informality is a fundamental aspect of how operations take place in real-life settings. Recognizing and understanding the role of informal practices can provide valuable insights when conducting research within small business environments.

#### **1.4. Conceptual Mapping with Practice Theory**

The literature review puts importance on studying the complex idea of intrapreneurship within IT sector small businesses. It highlights the common academic ambiguity about the

phenomenon of “intrapreneurship” which in many studies is commonly described synonymous with either corporate entrepreneurship or companies’ internal innovation procedures. Because of the definition inconsistency of intrapreneurship, many academic researchers have come to different conclusions when it comes to defining how intrapreneurship works in organizations (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022).

This thesis however shifts the focus of viewing intrapreneurship as a structured concept to viewing it as real-life and applied set of processes and actions, studying the more practice-based phenomenon of “intrapreneuring”. Intrapreneuring, as a practice, better reflects the ongoing and everchanging reality of entrepreneurial action within established firms. The literature emphasizes the idea that intrapreneurial activity in IT sector small business contexts should not be studied as a top-down, well-defined and structurally stable phenomenon, but rather study it understanding that intrapreneuring in small businesses usually has minimal structural formality, and innovation comes through everyday work rather than documented processes.

To support this perspective, the study follows the theoretical foundation of Practice Theory, where drawing on the work of Schatzki, Gherardi, and Nicolini, it follows the intrapreneuring phenomenon as a practice, where it is viewed as bundles of doings and sayings, with the human aspect being the carrier of practice (Schatzki, 2002). Practice Theory lens, through the notion of “site ontology” also helps us understand that action, material arrangements, and meaning making in the formation of social practices (Schatzki, 2016). Intrapreneuring hence cannot be viewed as a singular process, rather a combination of multiple aspect that interconnect and result to its practice.

The concept of sociomateriality further supports the understanding of this interconnectedness by rejecting the idea of dualism and supporting the connection between human and nonhuman elements involved in practice (Gherardi, 2016). The epistemological turn of practice also highlights that knowledge is not a static well-defined part of practice, but rather something that is shaped and reshaped through real-life applied practice processes (Gherardi, 2022). This view is crucial to highlight for IT sector small businesses, where strategies and actions are usually defined within the scopes of project later than in advance.

On the methodological site, to be able to understand how those phenomena can be studied praxeologists suggest the idea of zooming in and out of practice (Nicolini, 2016), where researchers can analyze the larger and smaller practices inside the organization and identify the interconnectedness of those.

Taking Practice Theory as the theoretical framework to follow, it is crucial to also study how strategy is built as practice in organizations. Within small businesses specifically, strategy is rarely defined through formal documentation as a tool to suggest how internal processes should

be conducted, or by following specifically designed pathways of innovation (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Strategy-development (or strategizing) especially in small business environments is often created real-time through day-to-day operations, tools, client feedback etc.

Intrapreneuring, as practice, is also shaped by sociomaterial dynamics present within different organizational contexts (Gherardi, 2016). In IT sector small businesses, where formal research and development teams or strategies are generally lacking compared to their larger counterparts, innovation often comes out through day-to-day team processes, such as daily sprints, client feedback or communication sessions, or the applied tools involved in practical processes, meaning that both human and nonhuman factor play an important role in both influencing each other and supporting innovation practices within organizations.

The literature identifies three important aspects for understanding such practices: material, relational and processual. Material aspect highlights the importance of tools, space and software that can be used in IT sector small businesses, while relational aspect discusses how team communication, psychological safety of the employees and overall company culture allows space for innovation to take place in organizations (Bireswari, 2013; Champenois, 2019; Gherardi, 2022). Finally, the processual aspect highlights the importance of performances, emphasizing that processes are not usually linear, and can follow a rather messy paths especially in innovation (Champenois, 2019)

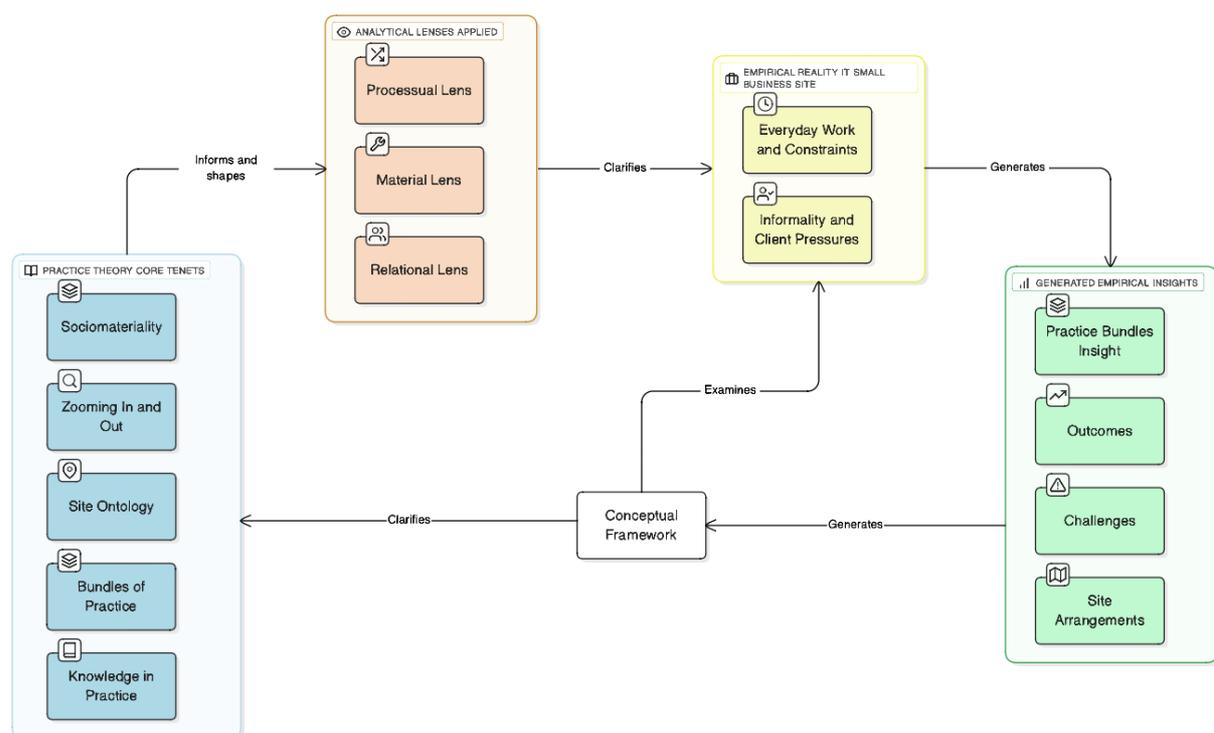
Another significant factor that is discussed in the literature is the significance of informality in small business environments. Informal practices such as tacit knowledge, unwritten rules, or hierarchical flexibility, are a situation with both benefits and drawbacks (Ko et al., 2009; Brødsjø et al., 2023). They allow for quick adaptations and responses. Especially within the IT sector environments, such practices generally help companies with quick reactions to needed developments in the market.

Companies following informal practices have a possibility to quickly adapt to client demands without the need of a hierarchical decision-making processes, where strategic decisions must come top-down rather than bottom up. This also allows for employees to illustrate intrapreneuring initiatives and take ownership of their projects, which is not as common with formal companies. However such practices can also hinder the company when it comes to responsibility management, as it is harder to find who is responsible for what decision or action that has taken or should be taking place, knowledge management, as teams are less likely to keep clear documentation, and onboarding of new staff, where many new employees report to have struggles with orientation within such companies.

The literature also points the importance of the interconnection between operational and strategic levels within intrapreneuring practices, particularly in small business environments. It showcases how small businesses, particularly IT sector ones, show high overlapping factors between those two (Matthews et al., 2009). As defined by the chapter strategizing within practice theory lens, it is common to see strategic decision making arise from day-to-day practice, however when understanding how operations directly intertwine with strategies within the practice, we have found that even though this interconnection has been widely confirmed and discussed within academic research papers, no particular guidelines and frameworks have been offered to discuss the how to improve the processes within this practice, especially within resource-constrained small business environments (Güven, 2020). This results to a key objective in this study, aiming to address this gap.

The study is guided by the theoretical model (see **Figure 1**) derived from the literature analysis, providing us with the understanding of the main flow of logic that will support us in the abductive thinking of the research.

**Figure 1**  
Conceptual Map



Source: Compiled by the author.

The core tenets of Practice Theory, which are sociomateriality, zooming in and out, site ontology, Bundles of Practice, and knowledge-in-practice shape the analytical operation where they are operationalized through the processual, relational and material lenses to focus on

empirical reality. The application of these lenses with the reality of IT sector small businesses generates specific empirical insights which help us in generating the conceptual framework that will explain the IT sector small business context and clarify the theoretical understanding for future research in the field. The model's purpose is epistemological supporting theoretical concepts' translation into analytical tools that can in turn support both theory and practice justifying the abductive nature of the research.

The literature research provides grounds to allow for further analyzes into the small businesses especially within the IT sector, which are generally under-researched in academic contexts. Most of current studies highlight intrapreneuring within well-defined and hierarchical structures with formal strategies that are better aligning with larger organizations rather than generally informal small businesses. This academic review points out the gap in current research and provides the theoretical framework with which this thesis will approach the methodological part of the research.

This study by following Practice Theory, aims to contribute to further theory in these contemporary studies, as well as provide practical approach to how the study can be used in real life. The conceptual shift from intrapreneurship to intrapreneuring, which better matches with praxeologist lexicon (Pouliot & Cornut, 2015; Gherardi, 2015; Grootenboer et al., 2017), allows a more thorough exploration of how IT sector small business teams operationalize intrapreneuring, and use their practices for strategizing.

The theoretical foundations from literature analysis supports the aim of this thesis and sets grounds to better define its research methodology and analysis in the following chapters.

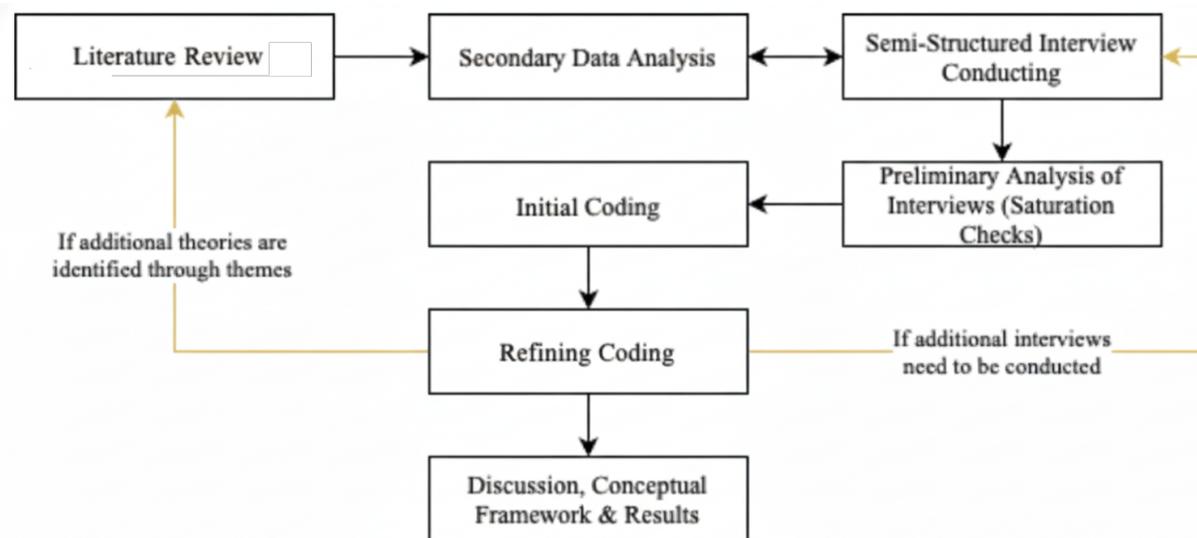
## 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND DESIGN IN EXPLORING INTRAPRENEURING PRACTICES

This research adopts a qualitative research methodology to best align with its aim and purpose. This chapter contains the philosophical foundations and methods of the study, the research design and strategy, description of the site, the sampling criteria.

The research design of this study is illustrated in the **Figure 2** structured to follow qualitative research approach. The intensive literature review supports the development of research methodology and a preliminary concept as a backbone for the research. Primary data is gathered through semi-structured interviews, followed by qualitative research using thematic analysis to identify the patterns and themes. Secondary data like public databases on small businesses within the IT sector in the European Union have been used to support the sampling process of the research. During abductive coding stage returning to previous steps to gather additional participants to gain more insights, and to collect more literature to understand emerging themes has been utilized, illustrated by the yellow arrows.

**Figure 2**

Research Design



Source: Compiled by the author.

### 2.1. Philosophical Foundations, Aim, Approach, Design and Strategy

Research philosophy lays the foundation for the assumptions on which new knowledge has been brought into the research, in turn shaping the methodological grounds on which how the data is collected and analyzed is based on (Saunders et al., 2023). For this thesis, it is important to identify the research philosophy on which the research has been based on.

The research philosophy of this thesis is based on **pragmatist** paradigm, which focuses on the importance of concepts primarily through their applied usefulness (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008). Pragmatism avoids the selection between objectivism vs. subjectivism or realism vs. relativism, as it considers how knowledge is constructed through interaction in real life, using the tools necessary to understand each specific context (Saunders et al., 2023). This paradigm is particularly well suited to the **aim** of this research: **to explore how intrapreneuring teams in IT sector small businesses engage in business process management practices, in order to develop a better understanding of how these processes can be improved**. Pragmatism supports a flexible, practice-oriented approach that aligns with the exploratory and applied nature of the research aim. It also enables the study to focus on how intrapreneuring practices are enacted and shaped by material, relational, and processual factors in specific organizational contexts, as informed by practice theory (Champenois, 2019).

In the context of this thesis, pragmatism offers flexibility in exploring intrapreneuring practices in IT sector small businesses from both theoretically supported and practically relevant perspectives. The aim of the research is to identify and understand what practices work, in what contexts, and why.

The study is also following the Practice Theory approach in understanding everyday activities of intrapreneuring teams, focusing on what these activities entail and how are they shaped and reshaped over time.

By integrating Practice Theory with a pragmatist paradigm, this research can capture the Bundles of Practice as implemented and operationalized within organization, while also drawing real life implications and outcomes associated with it. This combination allows for a thorough understanding of how intrapreneuring practices emerge and evolve within the specific contexts of IT sector small businesses.

As through theoretical analysis it was found that there is a significant gap in research of the IT sector small businesses within intrapreneuring as practice theories, this research highlights the usage of Practice Theory as a backbone for the research while allowing for an **inductive** approach, which provides us knowledge to develop a further conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2023).

In alignment with the pragmatist paradigm and the application of Practice Theory, the research is designed to explore intrapreneuring as a context-dependent, ever-changing set of practices. To guide this exploration, the study identifies the following research **objectives**:

1. To identify the practices, on operational and strategic levels, the IT sector small business intrapreneuring teams engage in.

2. To analyze the barriers and challenges faced by these teams during their engaging in intrapreneuring practices.
3. To develop a conceptual framework for better understanding the underlying material, processual and relational aspects of intrapreneuring within the IT sector small businesses.
4. To provide guidelines for improving intrapreneuring team processes on operational and strategic levels in small businesses from the IT sector.

## **2.2. Research Context and Site - IT Sector Small Businesses within the EU**

Small business literature described small business teams as dynamic and multifunctional teams that are characterized by high levels of independence when it comes to decision making, informal structures and flexible role responsibilities (Kelliher & Henderson, 2006; Jhas, 2025). Due to small business characteristics, these teams tend to collaborate closely together and be quick and adaptable when it comes to responding to client or industry demands.

More specifically teams operating in small businesses within the IT sector have high levels of autonomy, as such companies usually lack strong hierarchical structures and R&D departments, which are responsible for creating formal structures specifically when it comes to strategic management and innovation procedures (Amaechi, 2020). Teams tend to multitask different projects, and team members may be involved in more than one team. Responsibilities may also be unclearly defined or blurred together making some employees take tasks that are generally not part of their job description (Suija-Markova et al., 2020).

This research concentrates on studying intrapreneuring strategies and practices specifically within small business team that operated in IT sector. To define small businesses, as legislation on whether a company is considered small or not differs within different countries, the study follows the legislation by European Union, where small businesses are defined as companies, which have less than 50 employees and a turnover under 10 million Euros (European Commission, 2003).

To conduct the research, this thesis utilizes public government and non-government sources, such as [rekvizitai.vz.lt](http://rekvizitai.vz.lt) for Lithuania and [registroimprese.it](http://registroimprese.it) for Italy, to identify and reach out to organizations that are reported to match this criterion and relies on organizations and teams who self-report their company as a small business under the provided standards.

This research concentrates on sampling professionals actively employed at IT companies within the European Union.

## **2.3. Data Collection Method**

Primary data for this thesis has been collected through semi-structured interviews which ensures that the data collected from participants is in correspondence to the specific experiences

of the interviewed participants within their applied working contexts teams (Saunders et al., 2023). This will ensure compatibility with the pragmatist paradigm of the study, as well as Practice Theory on which it is grounded.

The interview structure consists of open-ended questions, mapped out of each research sub-question defined above. The flexibility offered by the open-ended questions allows moving between research themes and collecting additional data that may not have been initially anticipated but is relevant to the real-life experiences of intrapreneuring teams (Saunders et al., 2023). This ensures that emerging topics can be investigated deeper, which can provide richer data and a more nuanced understanding of practice. It also enables participants to express their working strategies and faced challenges in their own terms, further aligning the research with pragmatist philosophy and Practice Theory.

The interviews have been conducted online with help of end-to-end encrypted video conferencing platforms such as Google Meets and Microsoft Teams. As the research has been conducted in multiple countries, this method offers flexibility in geography, allowing participation from small IT business teams from various European Union member states, such as Lithuania, Poland and Italy. As the interview participants have been working professionals, this approach also ensures allows participants to accommodate minimum possible time in their schedules. Finally, the calls can be recorded, transcribed and securely stored in cloud-based services automatically, ensuring that no information is missed along the way.

Apart from the primary data, some secondary raw structure data have been used from public EU and national databases of small businesses operating within IT sector. For additional supplementary information for the primary interview data, some secondary data sources are to be consulted, including supporting data as inspiration for constructing interview questions, organizational materials including roadmaps, project documents or project plans, company internal reports and EU reports.

This data can help in understanding context factors influencing the responses by participants, which in line can help align the research outcomes with Practice Theory and pragmatism foundations of the study.

### ***2.3.1. Selection Criteria***

This study utilizes a mixed sampling strategy between purposeful and snowball sampling. Prioritizing collection of participants who have direct and proven experience with intrapreneuring activities in IT sector small businesses.

The study acknowledges that real world role examples of role definitions, especially within IT sector small businesses, might differ or not fully represent the responsibilities the professionals undertake. Therefore, the research focuses on any profession where there is a proven record of

intrapreneuring, including but not limited to product owners, project managers, developers, quality assurance specialists. Participants have been recruited through the researcher's own professional network, snowball referrals by already participating interviewees, and cold messaging using LinkedIn and work forums.

The selected sample size for this research has been 20 semi-structured interviews, taking into consideration prior research in related contexts, like Abid and Polo's study (2025) in the field of French SMEs and Burkholder and Hulsink's study (2022) in healthcare field which conducted similar semi-structured interviews and received saturation point in 22 and 12 interviews respectively. The choice of targeting 20 interviews is in accordance with data sampling standards for a group that has been analyzed collectively in a non-probability sampling strategy (Saunders et al., 2023).

### ***2.3.2. Primary Data Collection and Interview Questions***

The primary data for this research was collected through twenty semi-structured interviews conducted between October and December 2025. The interview structure was divided into five sections each with three open ended questions (15 in total), aligned with the research objectives and Practice Theory's analytical lens to explore all the major aspects discussed in the literature analysis, as well as to make sure that the interviewees share as much relevant information as possible. Further drill-down questions were asked in an improvised manner depending on the interviewees' answers and need of a deeper analysis.

The first section involved introductions and site description. This section aimed to understand participant's role, company information and teamwork, in accordance with Schatzki's site ontology (2016) where practices take place. The questions in this section included but were not limited to the following:

- Could you start by telling me a bit about your role and how long you've been there?
- How would you describe your company? (e.g., size, products, services, culture)
- Could you describe the team you work in? (What is its main purpose, and how would you characterize the way you work together?)

The second section focused on concrete examples and stories from everyday operations. The main goals of this section were to identify the intrapreneurial practices and to encourage participants to share about the elements of "doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2002). This section included questions such as:

- Beyond specific projects, what does a typical week look like for your team?
- Think about the last time your team came up with a new idea or a better way of doing things. Could you walk me through that story?

- How do you typically communicate when working together on these new ideas?

The third section explores the barriers and enablers of intrapreneuring work that the participants have stumbled across. This section asks separately about resources, structures and rules, and culture, to tackle the connection of the dimensions of site arrangements (Schatzki, 2016) and sociomateriality (Gherardi, 2016). Questions in this section included the following:

- What makes it easy or difficult for your team to act on new ideas?
- How about company structure or rules? Are there any processes that help or hinder your team's intrapreneurial work?
- Thinking about your team's culture, what is the attitude towards taking risks or potential failure? Can you give me an example?

The fourth section aims to connect team operations to strategy, to identify strategizing practices born from intrapreneuring work (Seidl and Werle, 2018) and the interplay of daily practice to the larger, overall company strategic outcomes, in accordance with Nicolini's (2016) zooming in and out. Interviewees were asked questions including the following to trace such practices:

- How does your team's day-to-day innovative work connect to the bigger goals of the company?
- Can you recall a case when a small daily practice from your team evolved into a strategic change?
- How do you track or measure the success of these new ideas or process improvements?

The fifth and final section concluded the interview by asking questions about improvements and recommendations based on the participants' experiences to connect to the research objective on actionable guidelines. These questions were asked in a comparatively more relaxed and semiformal manner to allow the interviewees to be honest and open about their own personal ideas and lived experience. Such questions included:

- If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about how your team operates, what would you change and why?
- Based on your experience, what advice would you give to another small IT company that wants to get better at innovating or process improving from within its teams?
- Is there anything we haven't talked about regarding how your team operates that you think is important for me to understand?

While these core questions provided a reliable skeleton for the interviews, significant time was also spent on spontaneous drill-down questions and discussions according to each

participant's provided information. For example, when the participant mentioned a change, they would like to have with the magic wand, a common follow up question was “Why would you need a magic wand for that? Why isn’t it possible currently?” to allow for more information on challenges and barriers they are facing.

### **2.3.3. Conducted Interviews**

Interviews were conducted online via video conferencing tools (Google Meets, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp) and lasted between 15 and 60 minutes. The decision to cap the number at twenty interviews was guided by the principle of informational saturation (Saunders et al., 2023). By the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> interview, the narratives concerning core Bundles of Practice and key challenges were becoming redundant and were generating no major new codes or unique insights.

The conversational tone aimed to create a relaxed, open atmosphere, to attract honest reflections about sensitive topics like failure, conflict, or management mistakes. Many participants have joined the interview during lunch breaks or on a weekend morning. The interview structure was designed with consideration for the professional constraints and autonomy of the participants. Since most interviewees were working professionals often scheduling the interviews during lunch breaks or between meetings, the initial time allocation was planned for approximately 30-40 minutes of questioning. This target duration was established to respect participants' time while allowing sufficient time for getting answers to the main questions.

It was also important for ethical reasons to have buffer periods at both the beginning and end of each interview session. A dedicated 5-minute introductory buffer was allocated prior to the formal questioning and transcription to clearly explain the research purpose and answer any questions or concerns raised by the interviewee. A 5-minute concluding buffer was also reserved after the end of the transcription to allow participants to ask follow-up questions or to exercise their right to request the redaction of any information they felt they overshared or posed a confidentiality risk.

In practice, both the mean and median durations of the transcripts have been between 36 and 37 minutes. All interviews were conducted with the participants' time in mind, and no interview has been cut short due to lack of time. The specific data on each research participant’s location, number of retrieved codes, field of work, team responsibility and the duration of each interview (only the parts that were transcribed, excluding the indicated 10-minute buffer periods) are illustrated on **Table 1**.

**Table 1**

## Research Participants

<b>ID</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Duration</b>
N1LT	Lithuania	43	Cybersecurity	Project & Sales	40:09
N2LT	Lithuania	33	SaaS (B2B)	Project	49:35
N3PL	Poland	36	Fintech	Account & Success	24:24
N4LT	Lithuania	44	Fintech	Project	31:05
N5SK	Slovakia	55	Fintech	Project	46:12
N6PL	Poland	63	Fintech	Account & People	57:01
N7DE	Germany	57	SaaS (B2C)	Product	33:47
N8DE	Germany	34	SaaS (B2B)	Project	15:42
N9DE	Germany	56	SaaS (Pharmaceutical)	Marketing Project	33:30
N10NL	The Netherlands	39	SaaS (AI)	Development	22:48
N11BE	Belgium	44	Web Services (Legal)	QA & Development	37:28
N12IT	Italy	45	SaaS (Medical)	Project	23:05
N13IT	Italy	89	Fintech	Project	47:17
N14FR	France	25	SaaS (B2B)	QA	19:22
N15DE	Germany	44	Web Services (Legal)	Project	36:05
N16SE	Sweden	68	SaaS (Mobile)	Product & Scrum	59:54
N17IT	Italy	34	SaaS (Mobile)	Development	46:59
N18IT	Italy	36	Fintech	Project	52:13
N19M T	Malta	32	Fintech	Product	46:52
N20SL	Slovenia	21	iGaming	Marketing Project	18:37

Source: Compiled by the author.

### **2.3.4. Ethical Considerations**

This research followed specific ethical guidelines for qualitative research prioritizing participant confidentiality and data security in accordance with GDPR, as well as consent, and information on how the information has been used. Prior to each interview, all participants received verbal information about research purpose and procedure, and consent was received from participants to transcribe using the platform built-in transcription tool or record the conversation with the promise to delete the recording immediately after successful transcription.

Interviews were conducted using Google Meets, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp tools. Each transcript provides the information on which tool the call was conducted with and how long the recording was. For all conversations conducted not on Microsoft Teams voice memos were

recorded on iPhone with its built-in audio recording functionality the “Voice Memos”, which also automatically transcribes the recordings. Because of privacy risks, all personal information including names and sensitive company information like product names, processes, client or partner names, financial numbers were redacted from the interview transcripts. These redactions are marked with 6 asterisks \*\*\*\*\* in the final transcripts to maintain transparency about editorial changes.

Even with thorough anonymization, the combination of a participant's role, company size, project descriptions, specific technical challenges and personal complaints about colleagues and managers can make them identifiable to others within their specialized professional community, due to the niche markets some of these companies operate in. To address this risk, several measures have been implemented.

Firstly, all recordings were transcribed and then permanently deleted from the author’s iPhone and iCloud immediately after transcription was checked for accuracy.

Secondly, although transcripts were depersonalized, they will not be made publicly available as part of the thesis appendices.

To access the raw, anonymized transcripts the thesis supervisor or examination committee members will be requested to sign a declaration of confidentiality. This agreement will explicitly prohibit the sharing, copying, or use of the transcript data for any purpose beyond the assessment of this thesis and allow accessing the data only through the author’s password encrypted iCloud folder. These files will be retained in the password encrypted folder for a period according to Vilnius University practices.

## **2.4. Data Analysis Methods**

This research follows qualitative thematic analysis as the primary data analysis method. This choice aligns with the research pragmatist philosophical foundation and the theoretical grounding in Practice Theory, which highlights understanding real-life practices within social and organizational contexts.

Thematic analysis is applied to the studying the recordings and transcripts from semi-structured interviews. This choice aligns with both Practice Theory and the pragmatist paradigm as it allows to have flexibility in identifying and analyzing the Bundles of Practice emerging from research participants’ descriptions of everyday work, allowing real world significance of those patterns, and leaving space to move back and forth between data, codes and themes, in accordance to practice theory context of zooming in and out (Nicolini, 2017). In the example of this study, it also allows understanding the results of the analysis in a manner, where we can find themes that appear in common (Saunders et al., 2023), which in this case helps us create a conceptual

framework and notice patterns within practices and challenges faced by IT sector small business teams. Abductive explorative approach allows us to retrieve themes from the results, while keeping the flexible and open-minded approach of the research, as well as connecting the data with the theoretical analysis.

Qualitative research methods, and specifically semi-structured interview are generally the most suited research approach capturing detailed applied practice data, and context specific knowledge which the restrictive approach of quantitative research methods might overlook (Saunders et al., 2023). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for thorough insight gathering into both operational and strategic aspects of intrapreneuring.

Previous studies on intrapreneurship and innovation in small firms have also generally relied on qualitative approaches to better gather context specific and situational behavior in teams and organizations (Bireswari, 2013; Champenois et al., 2019). Therefore, this methodological approach, apart from being theoretically supported, is also commonly practiced in other scholar research studies.

Thematic analysis, supported by abductive coding approach provides structure for the study while maintaining methodological flexibility, which will allow further academic research to be conducted through this study. This ensures that the insights generated are both empirically grounded and conceptually meaningful, making this method the most appropriate for achieving the aims and objectives of the research.

## **2.5. 6-step Thematic Analysis**

The analysis is conducted through Braun and Clarke's 6-step approach (Caulfield, 2023) to thematic analysis, with adaptations to incorporate Practice Theory concept and to be able summarize the detailed interview data.

During the first “Familiarization” stage the interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Teams’ built-in transcription tool for the conversations held with the application, but since most conversations were being held with platforms like Google Meets and WhatsApp, iPhone built-in “Voice Memos” tool started to be used more often which also resulted in higher accuracy with its built-in transcription tool. During this phase, preliminary notes were made about recurring ideas, interesting quotations, and patterns in how participants described their work practices.

Upon finishing the first batch of the interviews (the first 12) the second “Coding” stage was initiated in parallel with conducting the remaining interviews, and familiarization stage. The first codes were created with traditional process coding in mind, focusing exclusively on verbs and actions (in gerund) (Theron, 2015), however after reanalyzing the Bundles of Practice (Schatzki, 2016; Gherardi, 2019) as well as the Intrapreneuring-as-Practice theory (Champenois

et al., 2019) the coding approach used in this study was changed to be more comprehensive, in order to capture multiple dimensions of practice as suggested by Practice Theory. Specifically, the codes capture the Processual Dimension through actions, activities and processes, Material Dimension through material and site arrangements like tools and office styles, and Relational Dimension through characteristics social relations. Coding was done through MAXQDA platform. 395 unique (non-repeating) initial codes were created.

Third stage included generating the initial themes, first divided within the following themes with no sub-themes:

- Small Business Characteristics - (i.e. nature of small businesses and their descriptions)
- Processual Arrangements of intrapreneuring – (i.e. how intrapreneuring happens as a daily practice)
- Sociomaterial Arrangements of intrapreneuring – (i.e. social and material arrangements in Bundles of Practice)
- Relational and Cultural Context – (i.e. personal relations and communication)
- Challenges and Constraints – (i.e. issues raised by interviewees)
- Outcomes and Strategic Impacts – (i.e. information about how the company functions with and measures intrapreneuring practices)
- Recommendations – (i.e. requests, needs, and wishes that interviewees raised for more successful intrapreneuring)
- Unused – (i.e. codes that didn't belong in any of the themes)

The fourth stage included reviewing and developing those themes. During this stage it was identified that the initial themes had been limiting, but at the same time not very descriptive of what are under each parent code. Through further parallels with the theory further sub-themes were. Memos were created for each theme and sub-theme, and codes were moved around from one to the other to ensure that all themes accurately represented the coded extracts and that all relevant data were included. During this stage duplicate and similar codes have been merged, code names have been modified to better explain the extracts and misperceived or wrongful codes have been unassigned or removed.

Some themes have also showed theoretical inconsistencies. Even though they showed good hierarchical structure and were in accordance with the research questions, they missed aspects like bundling practices and split aspects like processuality, even though it had a separate theme.

After deeper analyses of the codes and literature the themes were renamed and further defined, with some of the codes being rearranged in stage 5. Each theme was precisely defined,

with attention to relationship to Practice Theory, what the theme's core ideas are and what they include, as well as splitting or merging themes that were not completely clear with what they included.

The new structure includes the following themes and sub-themes:

- The Bundles of Practice of Intrapreneuring
  - Improvising and Adapting
  - Human Connections and Communication
  - From Team Hack to Company Practice
- Site Arrangements of Intrapreneuring
  - Tools and Spaces
  - Culture and Feeling
  - People and Power
  - External Pressures and Clients
- Challenges
  - Human and Relational Constraints
  - Structural and Processual Constraints
  - Resource and Time Constraints
- Outcomes and Strategic Impact
  - Measurable Outcomes and Success Tracking
  - Organizational Learning and Adaptation
  - Strategic Shifts
- Recommendations and Actionable Guidelines by Participants
  - Process and Structural Improvements
  - Resources and Time
  - Cultural and Leadership Changes
- The Small Business Context Reported by Participants
  - IT Sector Small Business Characteristics
  - Comparisons
- Unused

Some codes that were previously grouped under one theme/sub-theme were spread out. For example, following Schatzki's site ontology (2016), tools were spread out between two themes, as active participants in practices (The Bundles of Practice of Intrapreneuring) and as part of the material arrangements that constrain or enable the site (Site Arrangements of Intrapreneuring). This separation allows us to examine both how tools are used in practice and how tool availability affects what practices are possible.

Finally with the sixth stage the final writing of the analysis from the data has been conducted. This included shaping the themes into a narrative that addresses the research question and sub-questions. This narrative structure follows Nicolini's (2016) "zooming in and out" approach including the detailed descriptions of specific Bundles of Practice and how they are performed, and then the analysis of how these practices relate to the broader organizational goals and strategies.

## **2.6. Limitations**

All interviews conducted for this qualitative study were carried out in English. As the majority of interviewees were non-native English speakers, this may have limited their ability to fully articulate their ideas and experiences. Some research participants have experienced loss of vocabulary trying to articulate their thoughts, sometimes pausing and using a translator tool during the interview. As a result, the data collected may be less detailed than what could have been obtained if the interviews had been conducted in the participants' native languages with a comparable number of study participants. In some cases, participants also struggled to express their thoughts coherently, which required the researcher to rely on contextual cues during the coding and thematic analysis processes. This may have affected the depth and interpretation of the data.

Another limitation of this study is that not all participating companies were asked identical questions. While this was an expected characteristic of the semi-structured interview design, it nonetheless posed challenges for direct comparability across cases. Although all companies operated within the IT sector and were classified as small firms, there were meaningful differences in how they functioned in practice. Some were startups, while others were formally small organizations but operated more like micro-sized companies or, vice versa, closer to medium-sized companies. These differences affected organizational practices and influenced which questions were relevant in each context. As a result, a pragmatic and practice-theory perspective have been adopted in the analysis. Categorizing all firms as a single, homogeneous company type and assuming that suggested framework would apply uniformly across them would be misleading and inaccurate.

The implications of the research thus are deeply contextual within IT sector small businesses in the EU countries. This research cannot suggest an assumption of scalability into contexts outside the existing ones, such as non-IT sectors or large organizations. The research context of EU countries is rooted in shared legislative definition of small businesses and not the cultural aspect, which may have yielded potential differences in human behavior.

The research also relies on self-reporting, which is subject to biases and idealization. The interviewees may present their experience in an overstated manner or provide complaints rooted in personal issues. The interview method is designed on story-telling and real-life examples but can also yield emotional responses.

## **2.7. Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Research Process**

Multiple Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter AI) and other digital tools have been used for the technical aspects of the study.

During the preliminary research design stage Google Gemini language model was used to refine the interview guide. AI suggested potential question phrasings according to the sections of the semi-structured interview backbone, which were then manually filtered and rephrased to align with the theoretical model of Practice Theory and the IT small sector niche taken from the researcher's personal experience. Some of the discarded questions were initially saved as potential drill-down questions, later removed since they were unnecessary during the interview phase.

For data preparation the study used automated transcription services, including the built-in real-time transcription feature from Microsoft Teams, and the automated transcription feature from iPhone Voice Memos app. Every transcript was manually reviewed to remove personal data and other sensitive information to ensure privacy and data security.

MAXQDA was used for the coding process as the primary qualitative research tool. The software also offers AI features including memo generation and paraphrasing tools. Those were tested but were discarded from the final analysis due to their inconsistencies and the overall vague deductions. All paraphrasing done by the tool have been undone and removed but some memos have been kept unused in the raw data. Since MAXQDA AI Assist is relatively new as of the time of this research, future researchers may need to consider tracking whether improvements in the platform have deemed as more substantial as a supporting tool or not.

### **3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF IT SECTOR SMALL BUSINESS INTRAPRENEURING PRACTICES**

The structure of this analysis is guided by the methodological principles of Practice Theory. Firstly, the analysis zooms in (Nicolini, 2016) to describe the core Bundles of Practice (Schatzki, 2016) that come out of the everyday work of intrapreneuring in IT sector small businesses. The interconnected patterns (Bundles of Practice) in the first theme allow us to recognize the doings (Schatzki, 2002) of intrapreneuring work. Secondly, the analysis zooms out (Nicolini, 2016) to identify the site arrangements in terms of the material, culture and power related structures that with which the practices are taking place, probing sociomaterial elements (Gherardi, 2016) that shape what is possible. The zooming out stage also includes the analyzing of strategic outcomes and the impact of these intrapreneuring practices as well as the general characteristics of IT sector small businesses identified that affect intrapreneuring practices and strategizing efforts. Finally, the analysis identifies challenges and constraints that affect IT sector small business intrapreneuring and breaks down the efforts that were identified as enablers and needs during the conducted research.

#### **3.1. Bundles of Practice of Intrapreneuring**

Following Schatzki's "Bundles of Practice" (2016) analysis of the interview data reveals three main bundles that comprise the core of intrapreneuring-as-practice. The identified sub-themes are "Improvising and Adapting", "Human Connections and Communication", and "From Team Hack to Company Practice".

##### ***3.1.1. Improvising and Adapting***

This bundle showcases the fast-paced and resource-constrained nature of IT sector small business operations and intrapreneuring work. Common codes in this bundle included attention to quick actions over long term planning and lack of or minimal bureaucratic processes.

Speed and agility were described as core elements for both organizational and team culture. Codes like "No need for approvals for new processes most of the time" (Freq. 4), "New decisions get acted out immediately" (Freq. 3) and "On demand works directly between teams" (Freq. 2), "Whoever comes up with the idea does it" (Freq. 2) and "Do the work then ask questions" (Freq. 1) showcase the sociomaterial environment of the interplay between structure and action (Adrot et al., 2021). This is characterized with the example of a research participant where they mentioned "right now I'm working on something that I introduced myself and proposed myself and I'm completely doing it alone." (N10NL, Pos. 50). Another example of this practice is N19MT's case where a subordinating team took an initiative to create a new internal dashboard after an internal

discussion of team availabilities and task requirements which was set to cut down the need for most of another team's escalations. These examples illustrate how teams improvise and adapt to emerging technical challenges while also keeping an agile collaborative dynamic.

Another core aspect of improvisation was the available flexibility in many small organizations and teams interviewed. "Deadlines are not strict, adjustable" (Freq. 4) and "Quick scheduling" (Freq. 1) as well as "Voluntary decision in process change" (Freq. 2), which showcase the dynamic and flexible nature of the IT sector and the need for agility.

This bundle also showcases the sociomaterial enablers in terms of intrapreneuring practice. The code "Low decision threshold via CEO access" (Freq. 9) represents how exactly the organizations function intrapreneuring in a flat hierarchy, which showcases the material and relational specificity that also results to a semiformal and speedy process. One of the research participants shared "I would say it makes it a little bit faster even because uh, we just decided something like next day I can call the CEO. We agree, and then immediately I'm writing in our chat that we should start working on it. So, it's, these approvals and confirmations happen very quickly, so. I would say instead of hindering, it kind of helps us." (N7DE, Pos. 28). Another example of the successful sociomaterial enabler mentioned by many interviewees was the availability of "Regular (daily, weekly etc.) meetings for team coordination" (Freq. 17). These are organized regular conversation times, as temporal rhythms, within the teams where they can report on their work, discuss challenges and needs, and discuss new ideas entangling the material aspects (tools, platforms, agendas, Jira tickets) with social relations. Research participants also mentioned the importance of those meetings for successful intrapreneuring work in their specific site. An example from a research participant "...I do believe that with daily and weekly basis, um, like meetings are quite important because the feedback, uh, is crucial in our work in every work, but especially ours. Because each day we're changing codes, we're changing new. Uh, our, we can change our strategy. So, we need some brainstorming for new ideas and for facing some problems. But of course, we face on daily basis. So, I would say that not ignoring this, um, daily and weekly meetings, but we should have would be a good start." (N14FR, Pos. 25).

"Self-management, independence, responsibility" (Freq. 12) is also emphasized to illustrate the importance of intrapreneuring team members to be able to draw conclusions, take initiatives and make decisions themselves without involving additional people. This is in line with the theoretical network provided by Schatzki (2002) regarding employees' positioning as "carriers of practice" and probes the importance of responsibility in individuals and giving freedom of decision-making from upper management. This often leads to "Personal experience creates personal approach" (Freq. 2) and a focus on "Using in house solution and team" (Freq. 1), reinforcing a culture of internal resourcefulness over external dependency. In the example of

N16SE the practice led to a specialist in the team raising an internal initiative where the new in-house solution not only cut costs from outsourcing, sped up the process but also led to team satisfaction since much of the money saved for outsourcing would be divided to helping volunteers from the team as additional bonuses. “That's it. Perfect. Everybody's happy. Our payroll is happy. Our people who get a bonus is happy. Our developers are happy because they just develop quickly. Nobody's unhappy about this” (N16SE, Pos. 38).

### ***3.1.2. Human Connections and Communication***

This bundle provides the relational side of intrapreneuring, providing further on how intrapreneuring is done, over what exactly is done from the first bundle. Communication and social behaviors of the organization are strongly connected to intrapreneuring-as-practice (Teague et al., 2021) and this bundle analyzes what specific ways these are present in IT sector small business teams.

As discussed in the theory, informality is deeply embedded into small business cultures, thus it was common to hear about informal and formal communication division from research participants. Interviewees emphasized the importance of informal, friendly and interpersonal relationships between other employees through codes like “Well developed interpersonal relationships” (Freq. 2), “Friendly, Semi-casual team” (Freq. 4), “Being close friends leads to no/minimum conflict” (Freq. 2), and “Everyone knows each other, casual team” (Freq. 3). This informality often blurred the boundaries between professional and personal environments, with workplaces described as a “Company like a friend group” (Freq. 2).

This relational aspect was sometimes mentioned to be deliberately created by the teams or managers themselves with examples such as “Informal, non-work-related coffee breaks” (Freq. 2), which N12IT and N20SL both provided as an example of social practice that became an introduced change in the whole company. “Team building activities to build up communication” (Freq. 5) were mentioned as core activities organized to hold the intrapreneuring practice together similar to Gherardi's sociomaterial glue (2016). That creates a safe space showcasing “informal meetings allow for intrapreneuring discussions” (Freq. 2). Interviewees showcased the importance of those informal meetings and activities over more formalized ones especially in terms of trust building and confidence in communications: “I think it's important uh, the team building part, uh, because um, I would not, um, uh, discuss with my team, uh, bringing my ideas if uh, I wasn't confident to talk to them, uh, about that. So, uh, we, we had a Christmas raffle. We have, uh, you know, um, a Mario Kart tournament. We go to Escape Room, paid by the company, and so stuff like that, and these are, it seems stupid, but is very important to let us know each other, even beyond work. And so I'm more confident to talk to them about my ideas, about what they think of their work, about, and they would think about my work, and what can I improve about that? My

company does also this skill review, which are a little cringe to me because it's like your PM [Project Manager] tells you for a half an hour. What you could, how, uh, could you improve as a person, as a worker? No, I don't know if that's the right way to handle human resources. But I will say more team building and less less skill review.” (N17IT, Pos. 37).

The data also links successful intrapreneuring to the quality of communication within the company. “Successful communication important for intrapreneuring” (Freq. 5) and “Interpersonal communication as driver for successful intrapreneuring” (Freq. 5) were explicit conclusions drawn by research participants. “If there is some nice idea we are happy to share, but we are also very happy to listen what's going on our friends’ site and sometimes this is very good way of implementing new stuff. I can say that here in in Polish office we are quite proud because few of our ideas were implemented in the in the few other locations.” (N3PL, Pos. 38). This communication bundle also includes “Clear communication between team members” (Freq. 10), which interviewees elaborated as encompassing collaborative ideation, transparent task management, and structured follow-ups. This importance was explicitly highlighted in some interviews: “There is sometimes some discussions together, like they will come to me and say, hey, if I do this, something will break or something will change. But, uh, you know, we uh, it's all about communication. We need to make sure that we talk to each other freely.” (N7DE, Pos. 7). This aligns with Gherardi’s (2019) view that knowing is not possessed but emerges from collective practice, showcasing how knowledge and intrapreneuring activities emerge from communication acts and strategies. In a hybrid or remote setting, this often meant insisting on “Calls with cameras on” to preserve relational depth.

### ***3.1.3. From Team Hack to Company Practice***

The final bundle captures the dynamic processes of IT sector small businesses through which team-level innovations start to influence the broader organization. It utilizes Nicolini’s (2016) concept of zooming out to analyze where teams’ micro-level activities produced macro-level strategic effects.

Since these companies usually lack centralized R&D departments, intrapreneuring efforts, most specifically process improvements and innovative ideas commonly appeared through practical solutions created to tackle immediate problems. Some examples included “Trainings organized after new changes” (Freq. 1) where the participant’s team immediately took ownership over organizing trainings for another team to learn additional responsibilities after a poor restructuring decision from upper management, and other “Internal team initiatives” (Freq. 10) which were born from clients’ needs, internal feedbacks and complaints, and needs for structure and documentation.

For some of these team hacks to become company practice, it required a process of presentations, negotiations, and translation to upper management. During these meetings and discussions “Multiple level discussions about new idea” (Freq. 5) interviewees mentioned what questions are usually asked. For example: “they asked me 1st, uh, do you think this is a good idea? Do you think there's a better way to do this? Do you think there's a, uh, someone that already done that as soon we can, uh, we can, like, coffee or, uh, uh, do something similar that they, they've done because, uh, uh, uh, maybe just don't really invent the wheel, you know?” (N17IT, Pos. 15). A participant also gave a common example being their team’s initiative to move to Jira platform for task tracking with clear demonstrated benefits, leading to its adoption across the organization (N13IT, Pos. 42), such examples are coded under “Example of a practice that became strategic change” (Freq. 8).

The final goal of many of the cases in this bundle often were the processes of creating new structures or team strategies. Many study participants highlighted a “Need for structure, defined steps, documentation” (Freq. 7). Some informal knowledge resting in people’s heads within a team becomes codified into a “Introduction of a new clearly defined process” (Freq. 7), such as a standardized client onboarding process (N4LT) or a “Dedicated release calendar” (Freq. 3). This is where strategy emerges from practice (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). However, an important point raised during the interviews was the need for recognition and communication in these processes. It can break down if the “Strategic change from team practice wasn't heard and recognized” (Freq. 2), leaving innovators feeling unacknowledged and killing organizational learning.

Some participants also mentioned internal operational changes that became general practice such as introduction of new formal frameworks “Adoption of a Principle/structure/framework” (Freq. 11) coming out of general team learning or a process of “Self-imposed documenting, structuring and organizing” (Freq. 5). This was a common situation in the participants’ teams, since the lack of official documentation halted many team operations, leading to more time spent for information gathering: “...for me to get to know about how everything works. I needed so much time because nothing gets written down and that's a nightmare. So I've been writing it down, lately, because I know that we will hire new people, because, uh, they need to do that” (N13IT, Pos. 17). Such practices also helped to formalize practices outside the team setting. Examples from “Process formalization that became a strategic change” (Freq. 3) included structural guidelines for incidence reporting and “Regular check-ins for alignment” (Freq. 3) between company’s teams.

## **3.2. Sociomaterial Site Arrangements and Settings**

The Bundles of Practice analyzed above are performed within and shaped by specific “site arrangements” (Schatzki, 2016) such as tools, spaces, rules, and culture. In the IT sector small businesses studied, four key dimensions of the site were particularly recognized the Tools and Spaces, Culture and Feeling, People and Power, and External Pressures and Clients.

### ***3.2.1. Tools and Spaces***

The sociomaterial context of these businesses is defined by a reliance on digital tools and platforms, the spread of the company’s team and operations, and their interrelation, connected to Schatzki’s site ontology (2002) and Gherardi’s sociomaterial arrangements (2016).

Majority of research participants mentioned their primary material arrangement to be the usage of several digital platforms together. “Slack/Teams/Asana/Jira and other tools used” (Freq. 15) or other unspecified “Internal communication channels” (Freq. 2) were mentioned creating the sociomaterial aspect of intrapreneuring work. These are especially important as many participants explicitly mentioned to be working in a “Remote team” (freq. 6) or a “Hybrid team” (freq. 2). These tools actively shape practices, for example Jira, Asana and similar platforms are commonly used for task management and visibility and Slack, Teams and even WhatsApp, mentioned as being used by some of the organizations especially due to its free nature, can define the style and mode of communication. “Email for official communication, chat for quick solutions” (Freq. 2) show specifically how the communication is affected by material arrangement, implying strong sociomaterial enablement or constraint towards the Improvising and Communication bundles. This also showcases a constraint while mentioned simply as a matter of fact by the interviewees that “Many tools are not commonly accessible for small companies” (Freq. 3) or that there is a “Need for free/affordable platforms/tools” (Freq. 1), while some participants also showcased an “Example of a newly introduced tool” (Freq. 6) some of which either directly cut time and expenses from team’s operations, or are forecasted to do it with long term use.

The physical office, where it exists has been characterized with “Open plan sitting” (Freq. 1), “Separate rooms office” (Freq. 1) or “Cubicle style office” (Freq. 1) which due to low frequencies and diverse answers did not provide a significant information to the research. Mandatory “On-site working” (Freq. 2) has not been as commonly mentioned as hybrid and remote working, however one participant also mentioned “Slow or partial introduction of Offices” which showcases while the opposite has not been observed. Companies having an “International team” (F: 10) are common. All these aspects have made the existence of platforms and tools

especially used for communication and planning essential sociomaterial compensations for the loss of co-located, spontaneous interaction.

### **3.2.2. Culture and Feeling**

The culture of these organizations presents a complex and sometimes contradictory picture, forming a powerful affective backdrop for intrapreneuring.

A significant enabler cited by many was a culture of psychological safety and support closely following relational aspect of intrapreneuring in organizations (Bireswari, 2013; Champenois, 2019; Gherardi, 2022). “Supportive/Friendly team” (Freq. 10) cultures and “Laid back, calm environment” (Freq. 3) were common examples. Participants often mentioned how the supportive, welcoming and respectful environment in the company and teams helped them in collaborating and teamwork. This also explains attitudes toward risk and failure which were often constructive with mentions of “Failures aren't scary” (Freq. 5), “No punishment for mistakes/failures” (Freq. 4), and even “Failures celebrated/considered good things” (Freq. 4).

“There is, in my eyes, there's 2 types of failures. There is a reckless failure and there is smart failure. Reckless failure is when you do something stupid and you bomb the whole tool. In this case, it's, who screwed it up situation. But of course, we don't ask this. We never ask who screwed it up. We check who screwed it up internally, and we try to fix it, and we go and check with them more, how we can fix it rather than pointing fingers and saying shame on you or whatever. But there is also these smart failures, when something we tried. We were sure that it would work. It just didn't. And now we know, what was the issue and it supports us with learning. I think failing is a very important thing in product management. If you don't fail, you're not going to learn anything new and you're not going to build anything new”. (N19MT, Pos. 35)

The participant directly insisted multiple times the need to not blame anyone about a failure that happened either as a reckless mistake or as a deliberate attempt to check if the effort will yield a positive result. This underscores the cultural practice of psychological safety in intrapreneuring work (Champenois, 2019), while the internal checkups allow for pragmatic and direct mitigation of issues rather than blaming. This shows also a connection to independence and responsibility highlighted in the Bundles of Practice, since team members take ownership in correction of mistake over delegating it to the original source. The division of smart versus reckless failures highlighted by the interviewee also showcase how practices generate internal criteria for evolution, where “smart” failures indicate a learning behavior from risking, while “reckless” failures allow for creation of practice of mistake correction.

While internally mistakes and failures may be recognized as practices encouraging organizational learning, in some cases like in highly regulated fields like healthcare and

pharmaceutical connected IT firms, the principle that “Externally no failures allowed” (Freq. 3) is deemed highly important over all work, as the product must be perfect for the end-user. N9DE, who works in an SaaS company targeting pharmaceutical organizations, mentioned an “80/20 principle” on delivery process where 80% is delivered first, and 20% is fixed later, but also mentioned “To the customer ... if something goes out to the customers [it] has to be 100% perfect. I mean that's something most companies want I guess, but in our case ... it's a requirement because if we do a mistake, it could cost person's life, for example in the worst case. So this is something we can't do mistakes...” (N9DE, Pos. 70-72). This industry pressure can create a contradicting friction with the internal fast-but-not-perfect culture.

Furthermore, not all cultures were supportive. Some companies suffered from a “Lack of specific company culture/unclear culture” (Freq. 3) or more damagingly, a “Toxic environment” (Freq. 3) and “Presence of blaming from management” (Freq. 3), which directly poison the relational infrastructure needed for intrapreneuring. Interviewees mentioned that these environments directly impact their will to initiate any intrapreneuring projects themselves. One of the participants indicated that the company culture “killed” their creativity saying “So the responsibility of is not employee shoulder. But on on the decision maker's shoulder. So from this perspective, the culture here requests the employees to be passive, not active.” (N6PL, Pos. 125). In a separate case an employee mentioned that their intrapreneuring ambitions may threaten their employment while also highlighting personal characteristics that allow them to continue trying by saying “I have a very phlegmatic approach to work, to be honest, when it comes to my personal work, and that maybe has to do with my generation. That's what many people tell me, but worst they can do is fire me that they are not going to do. So, if you are coming and blaming and pointing fingers, that makes you feel better. Do it. Like I don't give a \*\*\*\*. What I give a \*\*\*\* about is to fix things.” (N13IT, Pos. 38). The research participant also mentioned the importance of people in leadership positions such as themselves to “shield” subordinates from blames that may be coming from other teams or upper management. It showcases how crucial psychological safety of employees in organizations is, when it comes to intrapreneuring, even if the employee themselves experiences struggles with cultural elements, fostering a “Team culture different from company culture” (Freq. 2).

### ***3.2.3. People and Power***

Authority and people’s relational arrangements are key aspects in site arrangements. The nature of “Flat Hierarchy” (Freq. 7) was commonly highlighted in the interviews. Many research participants showcased how their CEO or director may be playing roles of a general manager, a member in a team (“CEO/Owner takes a role in the team” Freq. 2) or the person connecting multiple teams and this enabled the direct access and quick decision-making highlighted in

Bundles of Practice of the analysis. The data also showed that teams required “Confirmation/Acceptance needed” (Freq. 8) from a manager or the CEO in many cases where decisions could not be fully handled by the independent teams. This reveals a site where power is concentrated in fewer individuals and exercised through personal relationships versus impersonal bureaucratic processes.

At the same time many teams showcased the importance of “Multiple team/level involvements” (Freq. 8) in decision making processes. Some of these may be initiated also by customers who may sometimes request involvement from another team for reasons of additional trust or information, for example “especially if the client requests more calls involving older other stakeholders, for example legal, AML, whatever is needed. So usually, it's depended on the the client and then we have weekly calls with” (N4LT, Pos. 9). In many cases it was explicitly stated that internal teams having communication with client organizations could initiate “Client communication after approvals” (Freq. 4). This illustrates company processes created for mitigating failures and maximizing client trust.

During this part of the interview upper management was commonly mentioned by interviewees through codes like “Upper management doesn't want change” (Freq. 1), “Upper management cares only about goals being met not how” (Freq. 1), “No involvement from upper management in intrapreneuring practices” (Freq. 1), “Upper management/CEO gives a decision making power to another person” (Freq. 1) where the CEO gave a veto power to a trusted employee, and even cases of upper management’s ideas dismissed by teams “Example of disagreement from upper management” (Freq. 1) or conversely teams’ ideas dismissed by upper managers “Example of a disagreement about a product decision” (Freq. 3). This showcases the overwhelming presence of relational aspect in practice in line with power dynamics of Schatzki’s (2016) flat ontology and Gherardi’s (2016) sociomaterial perspective.

### ***3.2.4. External Pressures and Clients***

Many companies indicated direct client participation in the intrapreneuring site. Their needs are a primary driver in intrapreneuring work “Focus on only clients' needs” (Freq. 5) and some participants mentioned how “In small companies ideas come from clients' needs” (Freq. 2). Client feedback is also a success metric (“Client feedback as measurable success” Freq. 13), and considerable time is devoted to “Client status meetings” (Freq. 8) to maintain trust, even if sometimes they are not deemed necessary (“Unnecessary status meeting to keep client trust” Freq. 2). This client-centric culture shapes the practice site, putting the client needs as highest priority sometimes at the expense of internally generated, strategic product development. This while being the biggest strength for many small organizations also causes issues in terms of employees’ intrapreneuring efforts. “... I would say overall company culture is like, ‘let's sacrifice ourselves

to make clients happy’, which is a sad thing” (N13IT, Pos. 7). However, in separate cases the client-centric culture yielded results that show successful intrapreneuring efforts and organizational learning born with the support of clients themselves, for example “...we had to implement a new feature of encryption, which was totally new for the customer, and I never, I, At the moment, I didn't have any experience in implementing that feature. But talking with the with the project manager of that customer, in particular, we, he, he supported me in my idea of going that way. And he also, as a matter of fact, involved another colleague to help me implementing it.” (N18IT, Pos. 25) However with this case particularly it is apparent that intrapreneurial efforts can be especially successful when the role division is well defined and does not hinder an internal effort as a sacrifice for client, since N18IT’s role is focused on specific singular client projects at a time. It is important to highlight that clients as well as external regulations (“Adapting practices due to external regulations” Freq. 2) can both help and hinder employees’ intrapreneurial efforts, depending on both the internal rules and structures and the external expectations and goals, which are further analyzed in the “Human and Relational Constraints” section.

### ***3.2.5. Small Business Settings Shaping Practice***

This theme defines characteristics from IT sector small businesses, that give additional information on how those businesses function in terms of their situation and background knowledge.

An important note is that the IT sector small businesses often function with a high level of role fluidity and structural flexibility. Many research participants noted that commonly "one team/role wears multiple hats" (Freq. 4) in their organization, which a situation that directly impacts intrapreneurial practice where this situation contradicts the commonly noted role rigidity present in larger firms. Ideas are often "expected from a specific team" (Freq. 3), creating a localized pressure for innovation for such teams, who may experience that their everyday activity is exactly what strictly shapes the company strategy (“Daily practice to strategic change is by default for small companies” Freq. 1). Depending on the size of the small business, it is also crucial to mention that many employees may be exactly entrepreneurs rather than intrapreneurs, meaning they had direct influence in the creation and maintaining of the company and not only of intrapreneurial practice (“Everyone in very small businesses is an entrepreneur” Freq. 1). This also connects to the company goals of “growth” (Freq. 1) specifically that makes the company attractive for "acquisition by a larger company" (Freq. 3).

When compared to larger or more established businesses, these smaller or younger companies sometimes appear to have "less problems to deal with" (“Younger companies have less problems to deal with” Freq. 1) and experience less "resistance" to change (“Resistance is larger in companies that are already set up”, Freq. 2). This flexibility also allows for a competitive

advantage where it makes it "easier to get confirmations ... than in larger companies" (Freq. 1) or to "improve processes" (Freq. 1). However, this environment also requires "more knowledgeable people" (Freq. 1) who can navigate the lack of or the inability to follow formal frameworks ((Small businesses can't follow specific framework completely" Freq. 1).

### **3.3. Outcomes and Strategic Impact**

This theme analyzes how teams and organizations recognize, measure, and learn from the outcomes of their intrapreneuring work. This directly aligns with the pragmatic nature of the research, and it aims to explore how strategizing happens with the strategy-as-practice lens (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015).

#### ***3.3.1. Measurable Outcomes and Success Tracking***

Due to the absence of formal R&D metrics in most small businesses, success is oftentimes judged by pragmatic indicators that directly tie with business core goals or client satisfaction. The most significant and frequently cited measure of success was "Client feedback as measurable success" (Freq. 14) showcasing this exact assumption in practice. A new feature, process improvement, or internal tool was deemed successful by many participants primarily if it led to positive client reactions (oftentimes noticed during calls), reduced number of support tickets, or reduced churn rate. This directly connects to the common codes in both "Bundles of Practice" and "site arrangements" referring to the client-centric nature of company culture and intrapreneuring practices. "KPIs and other measurements" (Freq. 5) that were well defined, have also been present in some organizations, but oftentimes used only for sales or marketing reasons, and only two of the cases directly connected KPIs to the success tracking of innovative practices. However, many participants mentioned using other "Numeric success tracking – non-defined" (Freq. 6) created internally in an informal manner to understand client acceptance. These examples included duration of implementation keeping in mind the project nuances, how much time each customer spent in the new platform/page etc.

In terms of business goals, some measurable success points have been identified including relational aspects such as "Internal feedback as measurable success" (Freq. 3) and "Team retention as measurable success" (Freq. 2) which were in cases of intrapreneuring projects closer connected to process improvement or a new tool introduction than innovative projects concerning clients. Some material aspects were also highlighted including "Higher revenue as measurable success" (Freq. 3), "Spending less money/time as measurable success" (Freq. 2), and "Deadline meeting as success tracker" (Freq. 2). A research participant highlighted the importance of concentrating on two types of success, which are user related success and material related success. "When it's about not things for users, it's mostly our time or money. If we are gaining more money because we are

spending less money on something stupid or some spending less ... time, let's say, in activities that are not needed.” (N16SE, Pos. 38) while also mentioning the importance of relational success saying, “So the bigger goal of the company as any every company is to have some good profits, but also having a company culture is very important” (N16SE, Pos. 32). These examples highlight the importance of tracking the three success points, processual in terms of client satisfaction, relational in terms of employee involvement, and material in terms of profit and time maximization.

### ***3.3.2. Organizational Learning and Adaptation***

The small business context, especially in IT, commonly highlight the need for practice-based form of organizational learning, where knowledge is generated through intrapreneurial activities and the results coming from those.

“Failures help learning” (Freq. 10) was a strongly communicated principle by research participants. Commonly these were mentioned in a way which illustrated together with the cultural arrangement of "Failures aren't scary" showcasing the importance of a failure-tolerant environment to achieve organizational learning. Many cases involved also loss of material arrangements including time and money, some of which were taken from higher management in a supportive and punishment-avoidant manner. In some cases, this learning was made explicit through “Writing down about failures” (Freq. 1) or discussed in “Example of failure handled calmly” (Freq. 2).

Intrapreneuring practices also leave space for processual changes and organizing, with “Example of a clearly defined approach” (Freq. 9) born from intrapreneuring activities were heavily emphasized by many research participants, together with explicit mentions of success indicators like “Documentation will help new hires” (Freq. 2), “KPIs help with introductions of new ideas” (Freq. 1), “New tools widen the range of industries of customers” (Freq. 1), “Organizing helps for reporting to higher ups” (Freq.1).

### ***3.3.3. Strategic Shifts***

The most visible outcomes are those where intrapreneuring practices lead to strategic changes, providing direct examples of strategizing as an activity born in the context of intrapreneuring practice itself.

One of the most significant strategic changes has been the development of “different approach for each project type” (Freq. 7) which was derived from the situated experience of teams’ past projects. This created a practice for many organizations in multiple levels to estimate the efforts for each client taking into example past projects. Some of these have been informal, with cases of seeing similar patterns between projects, but also formal, having tracked estimations for

each project. This change in how work is estimated has also been connected to the action of reshaping the division of responsibilities (“Creating clear division of responsibilities” Freq. 8) within these teams. Rather than following a rigid manual, intrapreneuring teams took ownership of the process, having to take additional role responsibilities to approve scenarios or client onboarding processes, or having to get involved in separate roles as the support body, considering their past personal experiences. For example, some project managers carried out development team support or team training initiatives to resolve time or other resource constraints. The formalization process of middle management—seen in the practice of “going less and less to talk to CEO” (Freq. 2). In some growing companies, a strategic shift was observed also where teams were “Going less and less to talk to CEO” (Freq. 2), indicating a formalization of middle management and a change in the power and relational arrangement.

### **3.4. Challenges and Needs for Change**

#### ***3.4.1. Challenges and Constraints of Intrapreneuring Work***

An important part of the research included analyzing any challenges, barriers or hinderances that participants had stumbled across in their intrapreneuring work. This theme aims to connect and analyze the interaction of Bundles of Practice with the constraining or contradictory elements of their site arrangements discussed in previous subchapter. To analyze this, three separate sub-themes were identified including Human and Relational Constraints, Structural and Processual Constraints, and Resource and Time constraints.

Human and Relational Constraints included several common issues both on the side of management behavior, and the side of team members in the companies. “Management micromanagement/dictatorship” (Freq. 6) was one of the most common issues that was both hindering team intrapreneuring efforts as well as causing failure in some instances. The example mentioned by one of the participants: “I have two times where I feel that it was a big risk to take some decisions, but because high level wanted to push, we did it and we have this problem.” (N4LT, Pos. 31), illustrates how upper management involvement and “veto power” over the decision making from teams can lead to issues internally. Many clients work with small businesses considering their ability to influence internal work through the client-centric culture of those organizations, which is also sometimes heavily pushed by management. However, we can see in cases like the example provided that even though this ability provides a strength in the market, micromanagement and not hearing team concerns can lead to failures, and in many cases also “No motivation for innovation” (Freq. 6) in the teams. “We are not too much creative, mainly because this creativity was successful. Killed as I have mentioned. So there is no point of being creative and there's no reason. Why? Why you should be creative because you know my creativity,

creativity ideas were killed quite a few times, so I would rather choose ... to be creative in other areas of my life.” (N6PL, Pos. 147).

Another common issue in this category was dismissal of ideas with participants providing “Example of upper management shutting down ideas” (Freq. 4). In many transcripts this code existed in parallel with “No motivation for innovation” and explicitly mentioning how those affected their willingness to continue to put effort in intrapreneuring work. N6PL from the latest example compared it to “acting as a soldier” where intrapreneurs are expected to fight for their ideas with upper management, showcasing also a lack of psychological safety for intrapreneuring work. N13IT compared the importance of listening to their subordinates’ ideas to research analysis “If I came to you with some stupid ideas, you would still need to add me in your research, right? You would maybe take it as an outlier, but it's still something that I'm telling you, you will have to hear the whole transcript and take some part from it anyway. Yeah? You wouldn't just dismiss me because ... I sounded stupid to you.” (N13IT, Pos. 54). This highlights the importance of communication and relational side of intrapreneuring practice.

“Communication issues or lack thereof” (Freq. 5) was a common relational constraint faced by small business teams, leading to loss of documentation or causing a halt in operations that require multiple people’s or teams’ involvement. Some participants also mentioned getting stuck on issues and not even knowing who to contact for support initiating a halt in communication chain themselves. This issue is understandably close to the issue raised by some where they mentioned “Each team mostly for their own” (Freq. 4) showcasing how lack of inter-team communication also results to issues of communication between said teams. For example, N10NL mentioned both issues present within their company and later elaborated: “But it's like not your fault that you're stuck with it. It's somebody else from somebody, some other team did something that makes you stuck and it just there is no communication whatsoever between the teams and that doesn't help at all.” (N10NL, Pos. 98). While the previous relational constraints showcased the importance of communication in terms of listening to each other, these constraints highlight how communication especially between teams need to be arranged in a manner that teams will not work in their “own silos” but rather work together to reach a common goal of organizational success.

The final major relational constraint is individuals’ own willingness to be intrapreneurs within their teams. “Disinterest to do innovative work” (Freq. 3) separate from the motivation related constraint, highlighted comfort zone, laziness, and comfort with current work as reasons for individuals to refuse to participate in intrapreneuring work which may result to process improvement or innovation. This showcases connection with sociomaterial arrangements and psychological safety in intrapreneuring as practice, which was found to be mitigated sometimes

with changes the involvement of younger people in intrapreneuring teams, as “Young people are more open to change” (Freq. 2) and “Younger people are more idealistic to process changes/innovations” (Freq. 2) were commonly mentioned in regards to the comfort zone of current employees, or “Voluntary decision in process change” (Freq. 2), where those employees were provided a choice to get involved in projects or not.

The informality that enables speed and adaptability also becomes a source of significant constraints as the organization encounters complexity, growth, or the need for coordination beyond the immediate team. The celebrated absence of bureaucratic procedures, structures and rules have been commonly mentioned to also create “Unclear communication structures and rules” (Freq. 5) resulting to loss of information, especially in terms of responsible bodies as well as general work ethic. “we have big problem because it [product in development] was affecting our setups and there was no clear communication who was making what and which was the point that we needed to set up” (N4LT, Pos. 25). When practices are not documented and processes remain tacit, knowledge becomes siloed and person-dependent, especially when those leave the company. This leads to a “Lack of information” (Freq. 4) where critical knowledge about practice operations resides only in people’s heads, creating inefficiency especially regarding new hires getting knowledge of those operations, and people who need to grab information in a quick manner like account managers and customer support.

Many research participants mentioned explicit examples about how the “Boundaries of role responsibilities aren't kept” (Freq. 4) for their work positions, which has been one of the core themes present in parallel with “Overloading/self-sacrifice expected by top management” (Freq. 2), “Unnecessary trainings” (Freq. 1), and the explicit example of “When innovation is outsourced to individuals nobody does it” (Freq. 1), since the division of role responsibilities also allows for the sense of responsibility for intrapreneurs.

Finally, the most immediate and visible constraint comes from the fundamental economic reality of the small business site, which is scarcity and bricolage. The scarce resources of small businesses are visible through the common mentions of “Money constraints” (Freq. 10) and “Time constraints” (Freq. 15) oftentimes leading to both improvisation efforts, and halting teams from their full potential. Common derivations from these also include “Lack of people involved/talent” (Freq. 11), “Lack of retention” (Freq. 2) and material arrangements like “Lack of Infrastructure, platform, tools” (Freq. 7).

“Overtime working/overloading” (Freq. 8) has also been a common issue mentioned by the research participants, since many people experience exhaustion which also directly correlates with their willingness to participate in intrapreneuring activities. These challenges are very intersected as many people mentioned lack of available people as a reason why they feel

overloaded with work. In cases when the company hires new people or rearranges responsibilities, the issue doesn't always get easily solved due to the lack of time available also "... There is nobody to give this responsibility to. It's going to stay with us until I can train everybody and it's on my shoulders. I have to train people. That's not gonna happen like in a day. I'm so ... busy for that..." (N13IT, Pos. 21). It shows a common trend of interconnectedness within all sociomaterial arrangements in practice, which seems to be completely in line with Gherardi's (2016) sociomaterial "glue".

### ***3.4.2. Narratives of Need and Suggested Change***

Since a major part of the research was to also identify the main recommendations as well as the needs research participants had regarding their intrapreneuring work, this section analyzes and identifies the theme as "missing pieces" for the participants required to turn their current habits into a more stable organizational system.

The recommendations for processual and structural improvements focus on moving away from current informal and "messy" structure onto a more specialized and independent way of working. Participants highlighted a strong "need for more independence" (Freq. 6), which suggests that as the company grows, the current reliance on centralized decision-making, where participants need everything approved by a singular person, generally the CEO, creates a significant halt in intrapreneuring practice. This is closely tied to the "need for a well-defined plan/action after decisions" (Freq. 4) since many decisions made in these companies seem to get lost due to lack of processual arrangements, but also relational arrangements caused by miscommunication. By establishing a "specific team for internal development" (Freq. 2) or a "dedicated person for responsibilities" (Freq. 2), the organization can transform informal intrapreneuring activities into more well-defined set of actions, where responsible bodies are easier identified. In larger companies this is usually done by specific R&D departments, while in smaller organizations these either get neglected, or done only during free time since the priority is generally only client projects.

Regarding material arrangements, the participants heavily emphasized the "need for a better platform/more tools" (Freq. 8) especially due to constant updates in software required for effective intrapreneuring. This material need is also supported by a "need for training and learning" (Freq. 4) where participants indicated the importance of developing new competences to match the company's growth. Time has also been a major constraint in intrapreneuring work as discussed under the challenges section, which is why "Need for more time" (Freq. 2) and "Need for quicker legal processes" (Freq. 1) have been mentioned as major needs by the research participants.

Cultural and leadership shift recommendations also outline the social and relational arrangements that directly affect intrapreneuring practice. There is a clear "need for better

communication" (Freq. 3) and "more collaboration" (Freq. 3) showcased largely in the challenges and site arrangements as well, since communication problems or lack thereof have also been common causes for intrapreneuring failures. To keep the practice of "failures help learning" alive, participants identified the "importance of psychological safety" (Freq. 2) and "need for more courage in culture" (Freq. 2) many participants also mentioned fear of failure or even fear of unemployment crippling intrapreneuring activities in their team.

### **3.5. Research Sub-Questions and Theoretical Model**

The analysis conducted for this research follows Practice Theory's zooming in and out strategies (Nicolini, 2016) in data collection and exploration. It first uncovered the core practices by zooming in and then situated them with their enabling or constraining contexts by zooming out. The implications present intrapreneuring as a situated sociomaterial practice (Gherardi, 2016) and as a set of doings and sayings (Schatzki, 2002) bundled in IT sector small business everyday workflow. In relation to research sub-questions, the study explored and analyzed following points:

#### **Sub-question 1: What practices and strategies do intrapreneuring teams in small IT businesses employ for everyday operations?**

In IT sector small businesses Intrapreneuring is generally characterized by creating strategy from practice rather than relying on formal documentation. Primary practices identified have been **Improvising and Adapting**, which highlighted the low-decision threshold (directly accessing CEO etc.), acting first and formalizing later, self-management, regular coordination meetings as sociomaterial rhythms, and general approach of continuous action to solve immediate operational breakdowns. Strategy is born from this practice bundle through agile and iterative activity. **Human Connections and Communication**, which supports the relational aspect of sociomaterial Bundles of Practice. Small businesses often lack rigid bureaucratic processes, making teams rely on interpersonal relationships and patten-spotting to coordinate intrapreneuring work. Communication becomes the main enabler of work and emerges to become strategic when done as a routine. Finally, **From Team Hack to Company Practice** showcases the how intrapreneuring work scales in company. Strategy and practice begin from simple team activities "hacks" to solve immediate client or internal operational problems or deliver a product/service. The strategic practice involves translating these hacks into a change for all the organization and codifying this tacit knowledge to become processual.

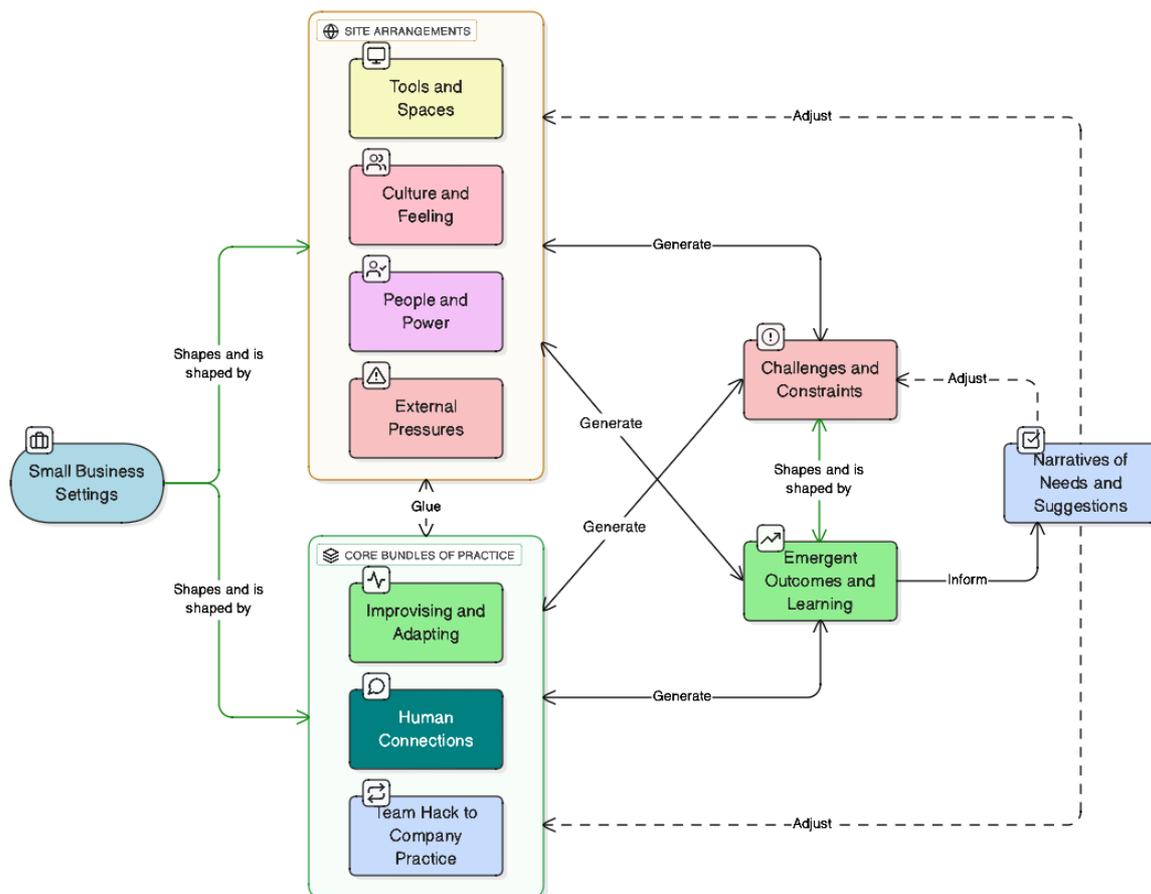
#### **Sub-question 2: What challenges and barriers hinder the success of intrapreneuring initiatives in these teams?**

Main challenges and constraints that were identified have been connected to tensions within the site arrangements contextualizing practices: **Human and Relational Constraints**,

including micromanagement and idea dismissal from upper management which lower psychological safety and kill motivation. Communication issues and team silos hinder the collaborative intrapreneuring work. Individual disinterest or comfort zones also play a large role but are heavily affected by psychological safety. **Structural and Processual Constraints**, the informality and flat hierarchy in IT sector small businesses supports quick solution-making, however it also results to unclear roles, lack of documentation and knowledge kept in people's minds. These create inefficiencies especially for new hires and for collaboration between teams. Many initiatives also get lost or forgotten due to lack of book-keeping. Finally, **Resource and Time Constraints** – limited money, time and talent lead to overloading and exhaustion for many employees, and prioritization of only immediate client work over internal innovation or process improvement demotivates people from changing any practices. Lack of access to affordable, powerful tools further hinder intrapreneuring work.

**Sub-question 3: How can the interplay of practices, challenges, and contextual factors help create a theoretical model for small business intrapreneuring in the IT sector to follow?**

**Figure 3**  
Theoretical Model



Source: Compiled by the author.

The information allows us to create a visual model that showcases the pragmatist practice theory based theoretical model of the research analysis in **Figure 3**. Green arrows represent shaping influence into business practice aspects, while dashed arrows represent potential adjustments but not direct generative flow.

The theoretical model derived from the research suggests a non-linear continuous connection between the practices, site arrangements, challenges and outcomes. The narratives of need and suggestions and small business settings themes received from research participants help understanding where intervention is needed.

The model does not have a starting or ending point and shows a web of bidirectional arrows. Bundles of Practice shape Site Arrangements and the opposite, similar to the sociomaterial glue suggested by Gherardi (2016). E.g. a culture of psychological safety (Culture & Feeling) enables the relational risk-taking required for the Human Connections bundle, and when a team adopts a tool through internal initiatives (From Team Hack to Company Practice), it changes the Tools & Spaces dimension of the Site.

Challenges generate new practices for mitigation of emergent problems in a quick manner and may also require adoption of a new tool or shape the relational arrangements, while also be born due to an improvised practice, utilization of a tool or lack thereof or external pressure. This illustrates the need of a bidirectional connection to both Site Arrangements and Bundles of Practice since they can generate and be generated by both at the same time.

Emergent Outcomes, like a new formalized process or feedback directly modify the Site Arrangements by adding a new processual structure while also affect future Practices since strategies are born from intrapreneurial action and reshape the practice at the same time, through strategizing as practice. This loop is continuous and requires a bidirectional connection to both Site Arrangements and Bundles of Practice at the same time, similar to Challenges.

Narratives identified in the research through the outcomes of emergent practices and strategic flow, support the introduction of new Site Arrangements or change in how Practice is done, while also informing what the challenges are regarding intrapreneurial work and adjusting those as needed.

Finally, the Small Business Settings act as conditions that shape and are shaped by how intrapreneuring is done in the company and what those companies are like in terms of their sociomaterial arrangements.

This model provides aligns to the theory with the following main principles of Sociomaterial Entanglement (Gherardi, 2016), through the glue between the social and material arrangements, Site Ontology (Schatzki, 2002), through the glue between practices and

arrangements since those cannot exist without one another, and Strategy-as-Practice (Jarzabkowski, 2009), proving that strategy is emergent of practices within a site.

#### **Sub-question 4: What actionable guidelines can optimize intrapreneuring processes for small IT businesses?**

The expressed needs and recommendations from participants point out targeted actions to support intrapreneuring practices through the following:

**Improvements in Structure and Processes:** Formalize processes in a selective manner. Introduce clearer role boundaries, and document core processes to reduce chaos inside the company and keep team morale. Support team independence by not micromanaging each task and supporting lower-level decision making. Create action plans after each decision for each participating body.

**Improvements in Resources, Time, Material Arrangements:** Invest intentionally in the sociomaterial arrangements. Address tool limitations and introduce new tools and platforms together with necessary training to not hinder practice. Consider the importance of long-term planning in terms of time saving process improvements. Prioritize process improvements during times when client projects can be done in a smaller scale.

**Improvements in Culture, Relationships and Power:** Decentralize decision making and prioritize psychological safety. Design communication flows and social spaces that actively bridge teams to encourage collaboration. Empower middle-level management to make decisions without creating a bottleneck at the CEO or upper management levels.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Discussion

The research set out to explore how intrapreneuring practices and strategies function within the daily work of IT sector small businesses. Practice Theory has been utilized as the core theoretical lens, moving the research beyond the current existing literature in the field, which has been dominated mostly by studies of large organizations with formal well-defined R&D structures. Existing theoretical and conceptual models offer little explanatory power to the informal, resource-constrained and improvisational contexts of small businesses. This thesis provides context of theoretical misfit and offers a reconceptualization of the phenomenon reframing intrapreneurship as **intrapreneuring**, which in the gerund form emphasizes the ongoing action, and provides a new theoretical perspective for understanding intrapreneuring in small business contexts. The shift reflects the importance of understanding what teams do when they conduct intrapreneuring activities and allows us to see strategy as an emergent phenomenon born from everyday practices, providing space to discuss a conversation on Intrapreneuring-as-Practice.

The Practice Theory has been applied to the empirical context of EU-based IT sector small businesses examining the niche of innovation-oriented environments. Prior to this study, many lived experiences of intrapreneuring (flat hierarchy, digital tools, client pressure etc.) have been described without theoretical framing. This research, following Practice Theory theoretical grounding of Site Ontology (Schatzki, 2002), Sociomateriality (Gherardi, 2016), Zooming in and out (Nicolini, 2009) explores how intrapreneuring teams in IT sector small businesses engage in business process management practices to develop a better understanding of how these processes can be improved.

To understand this, a theoretical model has been created from the data analysis. This model is the core contribution of the research addressing the absence of a framework that reflects the dynamic and ever-changing environment of small business intrapreneuring. The model integrates core **Bundles of Practice**, sociomaterial **site arrangements**, **challenges** that arise from those, and the **strategic outcomes** they provide. It provides both researchers and practitioners a tool to analyze intrapreneuring within the organization helping to for example trace issues to potential root causes in the site. While client-centricity is often noted as a feature of small businesses, this study also opens a new conversation about the boundaries of the organization. It shifts the understanding from seeing client pressure as a market condition to be managed, to recognizing it as a sociomaterial site arrangement that continuously shapes the Bundles of Practice of innovation from within.

The thesis addressed its aim and research sub-questions by showcasing the dynamic interconnection of strategy and practice in IT sector small businesses as shown in the theoretical model and answers the research sub-questions:

1. It identifies the interconnected bundles of everyday intrapreneurial practice in **improvising and adapting**, sustained by **human connections and communication**, evolving strategically from **team hacks to company practice**.
2. It analyzes the relational, material and processual constraints from organization's own structure, highlighting issues such as micromanagement, lack of documentation and resource scarcity arising from issues between Bundles of Practice and site arrangements.
3. It provides a theoretical model illustrating the dynamic relationship between what teams do, contexts in which they operate and strategic outcomes that emerge.
4. It provides actionable guidelines directly derived from the model focusing on strategic adjustments of material, relational and processual factors to better enable Bundles of Practice of intrapreneuring.

## **Recommendations**

As part of the final objective, recommendations for both business practitioners and for future researchers have been combined in the bullet list below:

### **For Practitioners**

- Auditing site arrangements: Conduct regular checks of four site arrangements: **Tools and Spaces** highlighting the importance of up-to-date time and effort supporting platforms and internal communication channels, **Culture and Feeling**, highlighting the importance of psychological safety, **People and Power**, highlighting decision making distribution and collaborative environment, **External Pressure and Clients**, allowing for strategic innovation prioritization when possible.
- Formalize processes in a selective manner: Identify and improve key processes and create clear structure, documentation and responsibility division to reduce chaos and loss of information, while supporting new hire onboarding.
- Lead with psychological safety in mind: Reward "smart" risk-taking and avoid blaming processes for failures. Act as a shield for your teams protecting them against external blame (clients or upper management).
- Institutionalize communication: Create clear communication strategies both between team members and different team silos. Highlight the importance of interpersonal communication and relationship management for a collaborative environment.

**For Future Researchers:**

- Conduct longitudinal studies: Apply the theoretical model in longitudinal research to observe how practices and site arrangements change through the growth of small businesses. This can potentially support where to draw attention during the transitional stages.
- Comparisons in other contexts: Test and modify the model in different cultures or in other small business fields to identify scalability of theoretical model in other contexts.
- Role of Artificial Intelligence: Identify how material arrangements are shifting through, as of the time of this research, the newly emerging and increasingly popular AI tool integration efforts. Do they change anything regarding sociomaterial site of intrapreneuring?
- Mixed or Quantitative method research: Validate the strength of Bundles of Practice or quality of site arrangements through hypothesis testing in quantitative method research.

## REFERENCES

- Abeysekera, I. (2023). Innovation and business performance in Australia: Role of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in a crisis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1126313>
- Abid, K., & Polo, F. (2025). Talent development through intrapreneurship: a human-capital approach in French SMEs. *European Journal of Training and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ejtd-11-2024-0162>
- Abrell, T., & Karjalainen, T. (2017). The early stage of internal corporate venturing: entrepreneurial activities in a large manufacturing company. *Journal of Enterprising Culture, 25*(01), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1142/s0218495817500017>
- Adrot, A., De Longueval, O. S., & Largier, A. (2021). A Practical Perspective on Resilience in Organizations: The Interplay Between Structure and Action. In *Towards Resilient Organizations and Societies* (pp. 117–142). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82072-5\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82072-5_5)
- Aguilar, S., Vengrouskie, E. F., & Lloyd, R. A. (2019). Driving Organizational Innovation as a form of Intrapreneurship within the Context of Small Businesses. *Journal of Strategic Innovation and Sustainability, 14*(3). <https://doi.org/10.33423/jsis.v14i3.2103>
- Amaechi, E. (2020). Understanding culture and success in global business: Developing cultural and innovative intrapreneurs in small businesses. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 205–224). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-60296-3\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-60296-3_9)
- Amo, B. W. (2010). Corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship related to innovation behaviour among employees. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing, 2*(2), 144. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijev.2010.034819>
- Belitski, M., Guenther, C., Kritikos, A. S., & Thurik, R. (2021). Economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on entrepreneurship and small businesses. *Small Business Economics, 58*(2), 593–609. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-021-00544-y>
- Bireswari, V. R. (2013). Intrapreneurship and organizational knowledge in the corporate environment: A Theoretical perspective. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2210738>
- Blanka, C. (2018). An individual-level perspective on intrapreneurship: a review and ways forward. *Review of Managerial Science, 13*(5), 919–961. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-018-0277-0>
- Brødsgjøl, V., Sandøy, B., & Hustad, E. (2023). Exploring onboarding processes for IT professionals: The role of Knowledge Management. *European Conference on Knowledge Management, 24*(1), 148–158. <https://doi.org/10.34190/eckm.24.1.1370>

- Burkholder, P., & Hulsink, W. (2022). Academic intrapreneurship for health care innovation: the importance of influence, perception, and time management in knowledge commercialization at a University's Medical Centre. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-022-09974-6>
- Carrier, C. (1996). Intrapreneurship in Small Businesses: An Exploratory study. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 21(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104225879602100101>
- Caulfield, J. (2023, June 22). *How to Do Thematic Analysis | Step-by-Step Guide & Examples*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>
- Champenois, C., Lefebvre, V., & Ronteau, S. (2019). Entrepreneurship as practice: systematic literature review of a nascent field. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 32(3–4), 281–312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2019.1641975>
- Coetzer, A., Kock, H., & Wallo, A. (2017). Distinctive characteristics of small businesses as sites for informal learning. *Human Resource Development Review*, 16(2), 111–134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484317704291>
- De Keyser, B., & Vandenbempt, K. (2023). Processes of practice in the realm of theory: Unveiling the dynamics of academic intrapreneurship. *Technovation*, 126, 102811. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102811>
- Divakara, S., Sema, Faculty of Commerce and, Sanath Divakara, Sema Singhe, D.M., Surangi, & H.A.K.N.S. (2019). A LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTRAPRENEURIAL CONSTRAINTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES. *International Journal*. <https://journalcra.com/sites/default/files/issue-pdf/37296.pdf>
- Edison, H., Wang, X., Jabangwe, R., & Abrahamsson, P. (2017). Innovation Initiatives in Large Software Companies: A Systematic Mapping study. *Information and Software Technology*, 95, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2017.12.007>
- Essawy, D. (2024, May 5). 5 Real business Examples of Digital Transformation for Business Growth | ProfileTree. *ProfileTree Web Design and Digital Marketing*. <https://profiletree.com/business-digital-transformation/>
- Garcia, R. G., Franzoni, A. M. B., & Becker, M. (2023, August 30). *The use of intrapreneurship and internal startups as corporate innovation accelerators*. . <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/the-use-of-intrapreneurship-and-internal-startups-as-corporate-innovation-accelerators.pdf>
- Gartner, W. B. (2016). *Entrepreneurship as organizing: Selected Papers of William B. Gartner*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Gawke, J. C., Gorgievski, M. J., & Bakker, A. B. (2019). Measuring intrapreneurship at the individual level: Development and validation of the Employee Intrapreneurship Scale (EIS). *European Management Journal*, 37(6), 806–817. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2019.03.001>
- Gherardi, S. (2015). To start practice theorizing anew: The contribution of the concepts of agencement and formativeness. *Organization*, 23(5), 680–698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508415605174>
- Gherardi, S. (2016). Sociomateriality in posthuman practice theory. In *The Nexus of Practices* (1st ed., Issue 1, pp. 38–51). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315560816-11>
- Gherardi, S. (2019). Practice as collective knowledgeable doing. In *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks* (pp. 34–55). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788973564.00009>
- Gherardi, S. (2022). Under what conditions is a domain-specific practice theory of entrepreneurship possible? In *Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks* (pp. 21–39). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788976831.00008>
- Gherardi, S., & Nicolini, D. (2001). Il pensiero pratico. Un'etnografia dell'apprendimento. *Rassegna Italiana Di Sociologia*, 42(2), 231–255. <https://doi.org/10.1423/2566>
- Gherardi, S., Nicolini, D., & Strati, A. (2007). The passion for knowing. *Organization*, 14(3), 315–329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407076146>
- Gilboa, S., Seger-Guttman, T., & Mimran, O. (2019). The unique role of relationship marketing in small businesses' customer experience. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 51, 152–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.06.004>
- Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl, D., & Vaara, E. (2015). Introduction: what is strategy as practice? In *Cambridge University Press eBooks* (pp. 1–30). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139681032.001>
- Goswami, S., & Mathew, M. (2005). DEFINITION OF INNOVATION REVISITED: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON INDIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 09(03), 371–383. <https://doi.org/10.1142/s1363919605001307>
- Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Choy, S. (2017). Practice theory and Education: diversity and contestation. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 1–21). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3130-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3130-4_1)
- Güven, B. (2020). The Integration of Strategic Management and Intrapreneurship: Strategic Intrapreneurship from Theory to Practice. *Business and Economics Research Journal*, 11(1), 229–245. <https://doi.org/10.20409/berj.2020.247>

- Heinze, K. L., & Weber, K. (2015). Toward organizational pluralism: Institutional intrapreneurship in Integrative medicine. *Organization Science*, 27(1), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.1028>
- Hernández-Perlines, F., Ariza-Montes, A., & Blanco-González-Tejero, C. (2022). Intrapreneurship research: A comprehensive literature review. *Journal of Business Research*, 153, 428–444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.08.015>
- Huang, L., Lin, S. Y., & Hsieh, Y. (2021). Cultivation of Intrapreneurship: A Framework and Challenges. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.731990>
- Hurst, M. J. (2022). *We get them running through walls: crafting emotion work through strategizing* [Thesis (PhD), University of Warwick]. <http://webcat.warwick.ac.uk/record=b3884430>
- Itzkovich, Y., Heilbrunn, S. and Dolev, N. (2022), "Drivers of intrapreneurship: an affective events theory viewpoint", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 51 No. 4, pp. 1449-1470. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-09-2019-0483>
- Jarzabkowski, P., Kaplan, S., Seidl, D., & Whittington, R. (2015). On the risk of studying practices in isolation: Linking what, who, and how in strategy research. *Strategic Organization*, 14(3), 248–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127015604125>
- Jarzabkowski, P., Lê, J. K., Seidl, D., & Vaara, E. (2025). Two decades of Revolutionizing Strategy Research: How Strategy-as-Practice illuminates the complex, dynamic and consequential ways of doing strategy. *Academy of Management Collections.*, 4(2), 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amc.2023.0005>
- Jarzabkowski, P., & Spee, A. P. (2009). Strategy-as-practice: A review and future directions for the field. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1), 69–95. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2008.00250.x>
- Jhas, H. (2025), "Using Tuckman's theory to manage small business teams in a time of rapid change", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-03-2024-4408>
- Kelemen, M. L., & Rumens, N. (2008). An introduction to critical management research. SAGE.
- Kelliher, F. and Bernadette Henderson, J. (2006), "A learning framework for the small business environment", *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol. 30 No. 7, pp. 512-528. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090590610704385>
- Ko, R. K., Lee, S. S., & Lee, E. W. (2009). Business process management (BPM) standards: a survey. *Business Process Management Journal*, 15(5), 744–791. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14637150910987937>

- Konsultacijų bankas - Valstybinė lietuvių kalbos komisija.* (retrieved Jan 5, 2026).  
<https://vlkk.lt/konsultacijos/5736-entrepreneryste-antrepreneryste>
- Lazarević, M., & Ružičić, M. M. (2023). Organizational structure and organizational culture. *Economic Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.28934/ea.23.56.2.pp39-53>
- Lee, A. C., Nascimento, D. M. D., Facó, J. F. B., & Gaspar, R. (2020). Intrapreneurship: A conceptual model and its dimensions. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering Research and Science*, 7(6), 408–416. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijaers.76.51>
- Lee, C., & Amjadi, M. (2014). The role of materiality: Knowing through objects in work practice. *European Management Journal*, 32(5), 723–734. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2014.01.004>
- Loscher, G., Splitter, V., & Seidl, D. (2019). Theodore Schatzki's practice theory and its implications for organization studies. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 115–134). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429279591-7>
- Lounsbury, M., & Beckman, C. M. (2014). Celebrating organization theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(2), 288–308. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12091>
- Matthews, C. H., Schenkel, M. T., Ford, M. W., & Human, S. E. (2009, January 21). *Comparing nascent entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs and expectations of firm growth*. <https://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/jsbs/article/view/115>
- Maurer, M., Bach, N., & Oertel, S. (2023). Changes in formal structure towards self-managing organization and their effects on the intra-organizational communication network. *Journal of Organization Design*, 12(3), 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41469-023-00143-z>
- Moghaddas, S. Z., Tajafari, M., & Nowkarizi, M. (2019). Organizational empowerment: A vital step toward intrapreneurship. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 52(2), 529–540. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000619841658>
- Moore, S. B., & Manring, S. L. (2008). Strategy development in small and medium sized enterprises for sustainability and increased value creation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 17(2), 276–282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2008.06.004>
- Neessen, P. C. M., Caniëls, M. C. J., Vos, B., & De Jong, J. P. (2018). The intrapreneurial employee: toward an integrated model of intrapreneurship and research agenda. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 15(2), 545–571. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-018-0552-1>
- Nicolini, D. (2013). *Practice theory, work, and organization: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press, USA.

- Nicolini, D. (2016). Is small the only beautiful? Making sense of ‘large phenomena’ from a practice-based perspective. In *The Nexus of Practices* (1st ed., Issue 1, pp. 98–113). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315560816-11>
- Nicolini, D. (2017). Practice Theory as a Package of Theory, Method and Vocabulary: Affordances and Limitations. In *Methodological Reflections on Practice Oriented Theories* (pp. 19–34). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52897-7\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52897-7_2)
- Parra-Sánchez, D. T., & Talero-Sarmiento, L. H. (2023). Digital transformation in small and medium enterprises: a scientometric analysis. *Digital Transformation and Society*, 3(3), 257–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/dts-06-2023-0048>
- Pinchot, G., III. (1985). *Intrapreneuring: Why you don't have to leave the corporation to become an entrepreneur*. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1496196](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1496196)
- Polese, A. (2021). What is informality? (Mapping) “the art of bypassing the state” in Eurasian spaces - and beyond. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 64(3), 322–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2021.1992791>
- Pouliot, V., & Cornut, J. (2015). Practice theory and the study of diplomacy: A research agenda. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50(3), 297–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715574913>
- Ram, M., Edwards, P., Meardi, G., Jones, T., & Doldor, S. (2019). The roots of informal responses to regulatory change: non-compliant small firms and the national living wage. *British Journal of Management*, 31(4), 856–871. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12363>
- Ramos-Rodríguez, A., Medina-Garrido, J., Lorenzo-Gómez, J., & Ruiz-Navarro, J. (2010). What you know or who you know? The role of intellectual and social capital in opportunity recognition. *International Small Business Journal Researching Entrepreneurship*, 28(6), 566–582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242610369753>
- Reed, J. (2021). Strategic agility in the SME: Use it before you lose it. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 31(3). <https://doi.org/10.53703/001c.29734>
- Schatzki, T. (2002). *The site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*. Penn State Press.
- Schatzki, T. (2013). The edge of change: On the emergence, persistence, and dissolution of practices. In *Sustainable Practices* (1st ed., Issue 1, pp. 31–46). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203071052>
- Schatzki, T. (2016). Practice theory as flat ontology. In *Practice Theory and Research* (1st ed., Issue 1, pp. 28–42). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/978131565690>
- Schatzki, T. (2017). Practices and people. *Teoria E Prática Em Administração*, 7(1), 26–53. <https://doi.org/10.21714/2238-104x2017v7i1-32735>

- Seidenschnur, T. (2019). The Logic of Innovation: A study on the narrative construction of intrapreneurial groups in the light of competing institutional logics. *Historical Social Research*, 44(4), 222–249. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.44.2019.4.222-249>
- Seidl, D., & Guérard, S. (2015). Meetings and workshops as strategy practices. In *Cambridge University Press eBooks* (pp. 564–581). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139681032.033>
- Seidl, D., & Werle, F. (2017). Inter-organizational sensemaking in the face of strategic meta-problems: Requisite variety and dynamics of participation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 830–858. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2723>
- Sharma, G., & Dahlstrand, Å. L. (2023). Innovations, informality, and the global south: A thematic analysis of past research and future directions. *Technology in Society*, 75, 102359. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2023.102359>
- Sheikh, F. a. S., & Bhaduri, S. (2021). Policy space for informal sector grassroots innovations: towards a ‘bottom-up’ narrative. *International Development Planning Review*, 43(1), 115–137. <https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2019.34>
- Spender, J., & Kraaijenbrink, J. (2022). The Paradox of Strategizing: Embracing Managerial Agency without Throttling it. *Journal of Business Strategy Finance and Management*, 04(01), 12–37. <https://doi.org/10.12944/jbsfm.04.01.03>
- Stachel, R., & Mussante, L. (2023). Corporate Entrepreneurship: innovation in global, corporate environments. In *Business, management and economics*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.111805>
- Suija-Markova, I., Briede, L., Gaile-Sarkane, E., & Ozoliņa-Ozola, I. (2020). Multitasking in knowledge intensive business services. *Emerging Science Journal*, 4(4), 305–318. <https://doi.org/10.28991/esj-2020-01233>
- Teague, B., Tunstall, R., Champenois, C., & Gartner, W. B. (2021). Editorial: An introduction to entrepreneurship as practice (EAP). *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 27(3), 569–578. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijebr-04-2021-872>
- Tendedez, H., Ferrario, M. a. M., & Whittle, J. (2018). Software development and CSCW. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 2(CSCW), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3274440>
- Thompson, N. A., Verduijn, K., & Gartner, W. B. (2020). Entrepreneurship-as-practice: grounding contemporary theories of practice into entrepreneurship studies. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 32(3–4), 247–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2019.1641978>

- Vaara, E., & Whittington, R. (2012). Strategy-as-Practice: Taking social practices seriously. *Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 285–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2012.672039>
- Vesper, K. H. (1984). Three Faces of Corporate entrepreneurship: a pilot study. University of Washington. Graduate School of Business. [https://books.google.it/books/about/Three\\_Faces\\_of\\_Corporate\\_Entrepreneurshi.html?id=0OtStwAACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.it/books/about/Three_Faces_of_Corporate_Entrepreneurshi.html?id=0OtStwAACAAJ&redir_esc=y)
- Wixe, S., Nilsson, P., Naldi, L., & Westlund, H. (2021). The role of collaboration and external knowledge for innovation in small food firms. *The Annals of Regional Science*, 70(1), 135–155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00168-021-01087-6>
- Ximena, S. T. D., Magaly, C. R. G., & Fabián, R. M. W. (2020). Intrapreneurship in small Organizations: Case studies in small businesses. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3788218>
- Yin, Y., & Kwon, J. (2022, June 1). *Two decades of research on corporate entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and corporate venturing*. DBpia. <https://www.dbpia.co.kr/Journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE11284337>

**INTRAPRENEURING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES  
IN THE IT SECTOR SMALL BUSINESSES**

**TIGRAN AVAGYAN**

**Master Thesis**

***Business Process Management***

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration,

Vilnius University

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ieva Žebrytė

Vilnius, 2026

**SUMMARY**

77 pages, 3 figures, 1 table, 87 references.

Keywords: Intrapreneurship, Practice Theory, Small Business Operations, IT Sector

IT (Information Technology) sector small businesses are often in the spotlight for their agile, adaptable and dynamic characteristics. However, this size-related advantage comes with drawbacks, as it also accompanies limited resources, informal structures and improvised operational practices, which can hinder their business process management. While intrapreneurship has typically been associated with formal structures and guidelines in larger organizations, IT sector small businesses lack such structures, making their intrapreneuring practices contextually distinct. This makes available research on intrapreneuring hard to be transferable to IT sector small business contexts as within the academy there is a significant gap about studies of intrapreneuring as a practice employed by teams in such organizations.

This Master thesis investigates how intrapreneuring teams in IT sector small businesses engage in business process management practices on both operational and strategic levels, with the aim of understanding how these processes emerge in practice and how they can be improved. Grounded in Practice Theory, the study adopts a practice-based lens to examine intrapreneuring as a set of everyday activities shaped by material, relational, and processual arrangements. The research is guided by four objectives: (1) identifying intrapreneuring practices at strategic and operational levels, (2) analyzing the barriers and challenges faced by intrapreneuring teams, (3) constructing a conceptual framework illustrating intrapreneuring as practice, and (4) offering practice-based recommendations for improving business process management in IT sector small businesses.

The empirical research was conducted across selected IT sector small businesses within the European Union. Primary data was collected through twenty semi-structured interviews with professionals actively engaged in intrapreneuring work. The interviews were analyzed using an abductive coding approach and thematic analysis supported by MAXQDA. This qualitative

methodology enabled an in-depth exploration of how intrapreneuring practices are enacted, sustained, and translated into organizational outcomes in small business settings.

The findings reveal that intrapreneuring in IT sector small businesses is largely driven by informal coordination, improvisation, and close human interaction, with strategic outcomes often emerging from everyday team-level practices rather than from formal planning processes. At the same time, structural constraints, resource limitations, and unclear role boundaries create persistent challenges for sustaining intrapreneuring efforts. The thesis concludes by presenting a practice-based theoretical model and actionable recommendations aimed at supporting more coherent and effective business process management in IT sector small businesses.

# INTRAPRENERIAVIMO STRATEGIJOS IR PRAKTIKOS MAŽOSE IT SEKTORIAUS ĮMONĖSE

TIGRAN AVAGYAN

**Magistro baigiamasis darbas**

*Verslo Procesų Valdymas*

Ekonomikos ir Verslo Administravimo Fakultetas

Vilniaus Universitetas

Darbo vadovas: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ieva Žebrytė

Vilnius, 2026

## SANTRAUKA

77 puslapiai, 3 paveikslai, 1 lentelė, 87 literatūros šaltiniai.

Raktažodžiai: Intrapreneurystė, Praktikų teorija, Mažų įmonių operacijos, IT sektorius

IT (informacinių technologijų) sektoriaus mažosios įmonės dažnai išskiriamos dėl savo lankstumo, gebėjimo prisitaikyti ir dinamiškumo. Tačiau šis su įmonių dydžiu susijęs pranašumas taip pat turi ir trūkumų, kadangi jį lydi riboti ištekliai, neformalios struktūros ir improvizuotos veiklos praktikos, kurios gali apsunkinti verslo procesų valdymą. Nors intrapreneurystė dažniausiai siejama su formaliomis struktūromis ir gairėmis didelėse organizacijose, IT sektoriaus mažosios įmonės tokių struktūrų dažniausiai neturi, todėl jų intrapreneriavimo praktikos yra stipriai priklausomos nuo konteksto. Dėl šios priežasties esami intrapreneriavimo tyrimai sunkiai pritaikomi IT sektoriaus mažųjų įmonių kontekste, o akademinėje literatūroje išlieka reikšminga spraga, susijusi su intrapreneriavimo kaip komandų taikomos praktikos tyrimais tokiose organizacijose.

Šiame magistro baigiamajame darbe analizuojama, kaip intrapreneriavimo komandos IT sektoriaus mažosiose įmonėse taiko verslo procesų valdymo praktikas tiek operaciniu, tiek strateginiu lygmenimis, siekiant suprasti, kaip šie procesai formuojasi praktikoje ir kaip jie galėtų būti tobulinami. Remiantis praktikų teorija, tyrime taikoma praktika grįsta perspektyva, leidžianti nagrinėti intrapreneriavimą kaip kasdienių veiklų visumą, formuojamą materialinių, santykinių ir procesinių išdėstymų. Tyrimą nukreipia keturi tikslai: (1) identifikuoti intrapreneriavimo praktikas strateginiu ir operaciniu lygmenimis, (2) išanalizuoti kliūtis ir iššūkius, su kuriais susiduria intrapreneriavimo komandos, (3) sukurti konceptualų modelį, iliustruojantį intrapreneriavimą kaip praktiką, ir (4) pateikti praktika grįstas rekomendacijas verslo procesų valdymui IT sektoriaus mažosiose įmonėse gerinti.

Empirinis tyrimas buvo atliktas pasirinktose IT sektoriaus mažosiose įmonėse Europos Sąjungoje. Pirminiai duomenys buvo surinkti atlikus dvidešimt pusiau struktūruotų interviu su specialistais,

aktyviai dalyvaujančiais intrapreneriavimo veiklose. Interviu duomenys buvo analizuojami taikant abdukcinio kodavimo pagrįstą teminę analizę, naudojant MAXQDA programinę įrangą. Šis kokybinis metodas leido išsamiai ištirti, kaip intrapreneriavimo praktikos yra įgyvendinamos, palaikomos ir paverčiamos organizaciniais rezultatais mažųjų įmonių kontekste.

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidžia, kad intrapreneriavimas IT sektoriaus mažosiose įmonėse daugiausia grindžiamas neformaliu koordinavimu, improvizacija ir glaudžia tarpasmenine sąveika, o strateginiai rezultatai dažnai kyla iš kasdienių komandų praktinių veiklų, o ne iš formalių planavimo procesų. Tuo pačiu metu struktūriniai apribojimai, riboti išteklių ir neaiškios vaidmenų ribos sukuria nuolatinius iššūkius intrapreneriavimo praktikų tvarumui. Darbas baigiamas pristatant praktika grįstą teorinį modelį bei taikomas rekomendacijas, skirtas nuoseklesniam ir efektyvesniam verslo procesų valdymui IT sektoriaus mažosiose įmonėse.