



From Academic Capital to Market Value: Entrepreneurial Marketing as a Framework for Post-Retirement Enterprise

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Abstract

Background & Problem Statement: Senior academics retain high cognitive capacity post-retirement, yet universities lack mechanisms to capture this expertise, creating the retirement–market value paradox where valuable scholarly capital is prematurely severed. **Purpose & Theoretical Framework:** This manuscript conceptualizes how retiring academics deploy entrepreneurial marketing to commercialize their expertise. Grounded in RBV, Dynamic Capabilities, TPB, Identity Theory, Effectuation, and Contextual Contingency Theory, Entrepreneurial marketing translates academic assets into market value. **Core Theoretical Contributions:** The study (1) defines *Academic Capital* as a multi-dimensional asset; (2) introduces Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness across five dimensions as a mediating dynamic capability; and (3) develops the Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Framework (AEMF). **Propositions & Roadmap:** A five-proposition causal model demonstrates that AEMR mediates academic capital and post-retirement venture creation. An eight-stage roadmap guides the transition from capital audit to enterprise sustainability. **Implications:** Examining Northeast Nigeria as a boundary case, the paper shows how entrepreneurial marketing enables knowledge commercialization in resource-constrained environments. Key recommendations urge institutions to establish Retirement Commercialization Incubators and formal knowledge-retention policies.

Keywords: *Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing, Academic Capital, Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness, Post-Retirement Knowledge Commercialization, Dynamic Capabilities.*

Introduction: The Retirement–Market Value Paradox

Demographic trends within the global higher education sector highlight an increasingly mature academic workforce. Across universities worldwide, senior faculty members frequently retain high levels of intellectual capacity, scholarly authority, and research motivation well beyond official retirement boundaries (Bratianu & Leon, 2015; Cahill *et al.*, 2019). Despite this cognitive and professional vitality, higher education institutions systematically lack structural mechanisms to capture, retain, or convert senior academic expertise into post-retirement organizational or societal value (Kaskie *et al.*, 2017; van Ummersen *et al.*, 2023).

Rather than viewing retirement as an inevitable period of biological or cognitive decline, the literature increasingly conceptualizes late-career academic transition as an institutional artifact. Formal retirement functions predominantly as a rigid institutional exit requirement that prematurely severs senior scholars from formal knowledge production systems (Moen *et al.*, 2017). This abrupt structural disengagement creates a disconnect between the continuous developmental trajectory of academic expertise and the arbitrary operational boundaries enforced by university human resource frameworks (Moloney *et al.*, 2026; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025). Consequently, higher education systems actively induce the retirement challenge by institutionalizing the loss of their most experienced intellectual labor.

The departure of senior academics exposes critical vulnerabilities in institutional knowledge retention and organizational memo-

ry. Knowledge retention research indicates that institutional exit leads to severe organizational knowledge loss, particularly regarding uncoded, tacit knowledge (Daghfous *et al.*, 2023). In university contexts, this tacit knowledge is embedded in specialized competencies such as postgraduate supervision, grant-craft, complex methodology, peer review expertise, and academic leadership (Mpungose *et al.*, 2026). Because universities rarely establish systematically managed repositories or transitional pathways for tacit expertise, formal severance results in the immediate dissipation of these strategic assets.

This structural dynamic creates the core theoretical and practical paradox of this study: the *Retirement–Market Value Paradox*. Higher education institutions invest substantial resources over several decades to cultivate specialized intellectual assets and high-level academic capital within their faculty. However, upon reaching statutory retirement ages, administrative mandates abruptly remove this expertise from productive use within the university. This institutional boundary prevents senior academic capital from flowing into broader socio-economic markets where substantial demand for high-level research, advisory services, executive mentoring, and specialized knowledge commercialization exists.

To bridge the gap between underutilized post-retirement academic expertise and external market demand, this study turns to Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM). Foundational entrepreneurial marketing literature establishes that opportunity-driven, resource-leveraging, and non-traditional marketing paradigms enable actors operating under severe resource constraints or structural ambiguity.

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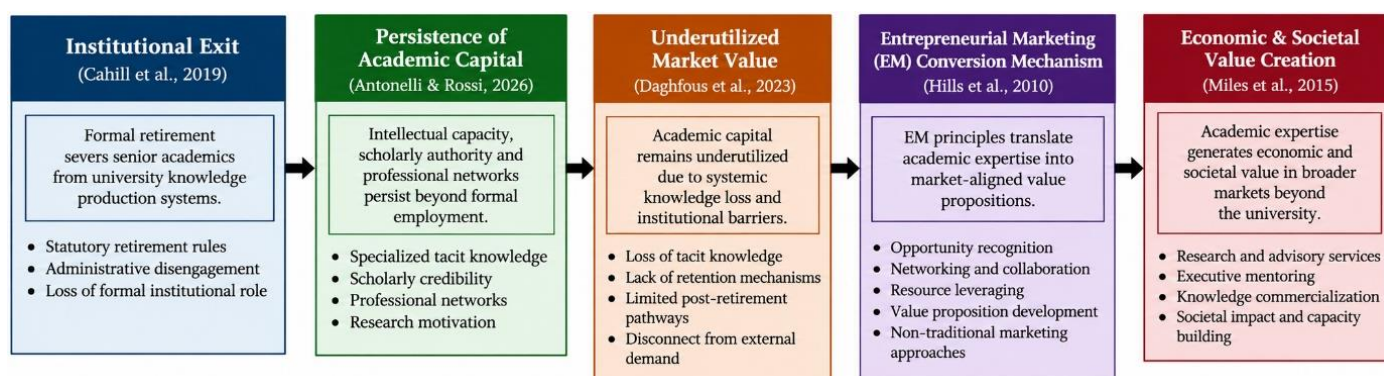


Figure 1. The Retirement–Market Value Paradox Framework

ty to build and capture market value (Collinson & Shaw, 2001; Hills & Hultman, 2008; Hills *et al.*, 2010; Stokes, 2000). Unlike conventional administrative marketing, which relies on corporate budgets, formal market research, and standardized promotional campaigns, entrepreneurial marketing emphasizes proactive opportunity identification, informal networking, value co-creation, and guerrilla resource mobilization (Hills *et al.*, 2010; Stokes, 2000).

In this study, entrepreneurial marketing is positioned not as a conventional corporate promotional tool or generic business start-up guide, but as an interactive conversion mechanism. Entrepreneurial marketing provides the strategic and behavioral repertoire required to translate abstract, highly specialized scholarly assets into market-aligned value propositions. Applying entrepreneurial marketing paradigms to late-career academic transitions shifts the scholarly discourse away from basic self-employment or small business advice toward a theoretical framework for high-knowledge commercialization and post-institutional expertise deployment.

Recent theoretical developments have extended entrepreneurial marketing beyond traditional small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) settings into high-knowledge contexts, professional service firms, non-profit institutions, and late-career transitions (Abbas & Tiberius, 2026; Breit & Volkmann, 2024; Goto *et al.*, 2025; Miles *et al.*, 2015; Sá *et al.*, 2016). Building upon these theoretical extensions, the purpose of this study is to conceptualize and operationalize the mechanisms through which retiring and retired academics can leverage entrepreneurial marketing principles to commercialize their expertise independently or in partnership with external stakeholders.

This paper makes three primary theoretical contributions to the fields of higher education management, organizational knowledge management, and entrepreneurial marketing:

1. *Defining Academic Capital as a Distinct Asset Class*: The study conceptualizes Academic Capital as a specialized, multidimensional asset—comprising institutional prestige, scholarly credibility, specialized tacit know-how, and professional networks—that persists beyond formal employment.
2. *Conceptualizing Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR)*: The paper introduces AEMR as a multi-component construct measuring an academic's cognitive, behavioral, relational, and digital preparedness to transition from institutional scholarly production to market-facing value creation.
3. *Proposing the Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Framework (AEMF)*: The study synthesizes these elements into an integrative framework illustrating the systemic conversion of persistent academic capital into sustained economic and societal value.

The theoretical flow underpinning this paper's core thesis (Figure 1) illustrates the systematic transformation of senior faculty expertise from institutional disengagement to value creation: Institutional Exit → Persistence of Academic Capital → Underutilized Market Value → entrepreneurial marketing Conversion Mechanism → Economic & Societal Value Creation.

As modeled in Figure 1, formal Institutional Exit (Cahill *et al.*, 2019) does not extinguish a scholar's intellectual assets; rather, it triggers the Persistence of Academic Capital (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026) outside formal academic environment. Without dedicated intervention, this capital stagnates as Underutilized Market Value due to systemic knowledge loss and institutional barriers (Daghfous *et al.*, 2023). However, when scholars deploy an entrepreneurial marketing Conversion Mechanism (Hills *et al.*, 2010) characterized by opportunity recognition, networking, and dynamic value proposition development, this underutilized capital is successfully transformed into Economic & Societal Value Creation (Miles *et al.*, 2015).

Why Academic Capital Remains Economically Underutilized

Traditional Perspectives on Academic Retirement

The literature on late-career transitions in higher education has historically been dominated by gerontology, occupational health, and general institutional administration (Davies & Jenkins, 2013; Onyura *et al.*, 2015). Within these frameworks, academic retirement is predominantly conceptualized through three narrow lenses: psycho-social identity adjustment, personal pension and financial planning, or physical and cognitive health management (Davies & Jenkins, 2013; Silver & Williams, 2018). Studies grounding their analysis in these traditional paradigms focus heavily on how senior scholars cope with the loss of daily institutional routines, manage the psychological shift away from professional roles, or navigate the administrative mechanics of superannuation (Cheng, 2026; Davies & Jenkins, 2013).

While these perspectives offer valuable insights into individual well-being, they exhibit a major conceptual flaw: they treat academic retirement primarily as a disengagement process or a health and welfare concern, while ignoring the economic potential of accumulated scholarly assets (Onyura *et al.*, 2015; Silver & Williams, 2018). By viewing retirement as a terminal exit from productive work, traditional retirement literature overlooks how senior academics can actively commercialize, transfer, and deploy their accumulated knowledge assets in the broader marketplace (Cheng, 2026; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025). Consequently, universities and market actors fail to recognize senior scholars as active economic agents, resulting in the systemic erosion and under-

utilization of institutional and field-specific intellectual assets upon formal retirement (Blackmore, 2014; Davies & Jenkins, 2013).

Academic Capital: A Distinct Concept

To address the economic underutilization of senior scholars' expertise, academic capital must be theoretically distinguished from established constructs within Intellectual Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm (Carmona-Lavado *et al.*, 2010; Huynh *et al.*, 2024). While conventional intellectual capital literature categorizes organizational intangibles into human, structural, and relational dimensions, academic capital operates as a specialized, field-bound composite asset (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

Human Capital: Refers to individual-level knowledge, skills, competencies, and general know-how accumulated through education and experience (Carmona-Lavado *et al.*, 2010; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017). While essential, generic human capital excludes field-bound institutional standing, formal scholarly authority, and peer-sanctioned legitimacy (Huynh *et al.*, 2024; Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

Structural Capital: Comprises the codified, non-human knowledge stock of an institution—including software, databases, standard operating procedures, manuals, and institutional infrastructure (Carmona-Lavado *et al.*, 2010; Ociepa-Kicińska *et al.*, 2025). Structural capital remains embedded within the university after an individual's departure but does not capture an individual scholar's tacit expertise or personal standing (Huynh *et al.*, 2024).

Social/Relational Capital: Encompasses the value embedded within interpersonal and organizational networks, resource-sharing ties, and collaborative relationships (Carmona-Lavado *et al.*, 2010; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017). However, relational capital captures connection and access without guaranteeing field-specific scientific authority or formal peer credibility (Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

Intellectual Capital: Represents the overarching, aggregated organizational stock of intangible value, conventionally defined as the triad of human, structural, and relational capital within an enterprise (Carmona-Lavado *et al.*, 2010; Huynh *et al.*, 2024; Ociepa-Kicińska *et al.*, 2025).

Academic Capital: Differs fundamentally from these traditional constructs as a field-specific composite asset (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Broder *et al.*, 2024). It integrates institutionalized academic legitimacy, peer-reviewed scientific credibility, scholarly authority, and specialized methodological mastery (Munro *et al.*, 2018; Wu & Shi, 2025). Grounded in Bourdieu's sociological tradition and strategic resource theory, academic capital is neither reducible to individual skill (human capital) nor bound to university databases (structural capital) (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017). It represents a highly validated, portable asset that carries institutionalized power and scientific authority across institutional boundaries (Broder *et al.*, 2024; Wu & Shi, 2025).

Sources of Academic Capital

Academic capital is built across a scholar's career through distinct professional activities (Chatterji & Kiran, 2017; Ociepa-Kicińska *et al.*, 2025). Higher education capability mapping and academic role studies demonstrate that this construct is synthesized from seven primary source dimensions (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025):

1. *Disciplinary Domain Mastery:* Deep, specialized, niche expertise and theoretical depth acquired through decades of rigorous empirical inquiry and subject-matter specialization (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017).

2. *Research Design Capability:* Advanced methodological mastery, empirical validation skills, analytical protocol design, and high-level grant-writing competence (Chatterji & Kiran, 2017; Wu & Shi, 2025).
3. *Pedagogical and Curricular Competence:* High-level capabilities in instructional design, executive training delivery, postgraduate supervision, and curriculum architecture (Chatterji & Kiran, 2017; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025; Ociepa-Kicińska *et al.*, 2025).
4. *Executive Administrative Experience:* Institutional governance expertise, departmental leadership, accreditation management, quality assurance, and organizational policy administration (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Blackmore, 2014; Ociepa-Kicińska *et al.*, 2025).
5. *Scientific Peer-Reputation:* Peer-reviewed citation standing, editorial board appointments, peer-review authority, and recognized field-specific scholarly legitimacy (Broder *et al.*, 2024; Munro *et al.*, 2018; Wu & Shi, 2025).
6. *Public Policy Advisory History:* A track record of state commissions, legislative testimony, public sector consultancy, and evidence-based policy formulation (Antonelli & Rossi, 2026; Broder *et al.*, 2024).
7. *International Scholarly Networks:* Global collaborative ties, international conference leadership, cross-institutional co-authorship networks, and transnational research consortiums (Mpungose *et al.*, 2025; Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

Why Academic Capital Rarely Becomes Market Value

Despite its high intrinsic value, academic capital rarely translates into post-retirement commercial activity (Davies & Jenkins, 2013; Onyura *et al.*, 2015). The literature highlights four main structural and psychological barriers that prevent this capital from becoming market value (Blackmore, 2014; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017; Silver & Williams, 2018):

- *Rigid Academic Identity and Anti-Commercial Norms:* Senior scholars often internalize traditional academic norms that view commercial activities as a threat to scientific objectivity and scholarly independence (Munro *et al.*, 2018; Onyura *et al.*, 2015). Transitioning to market-facing roles creates identity threat, leading scholars to resist commercial engagement even after formal retirement (Onyura *et al.*, 2015; Silver & Williams, 2018).
- *Lack of Market-Sensing Capabilities:* Long-term exposure to purely academic settings limits scholars' ability to sense market demand, identify commercial applications for their research, or align scholarly outputs with real-world industry needs (Chatterji & Kiran, 2017; Davies & Jenkins, 2013).
- *Absence of Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills:* Most senior academics lack key commercial competencies, such as value proposition design, commercial network development, service pricing, and client relationship management (Blackmore, 2014; Chatterji & Kiran, 2017).

Institutional Failure in Post-Retirement Infrastructure: Universities generally handle retirement as a sudden administrative exit rather than offering transition support (Cheng, 2026; Davies & Jenkins, 2013). The lack of post-retirement incubators, emeritus consulting frameworks, and structured knowledge-transfer channels causes academic capital to dissipate upon formal separation (Cheng, 2026; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025).

Table 1. Academic Capital: Definition, Dimensions, and Market Potential

Capital Construct/ Dimension	Core Definition & Theoretical Scope	Specialized Market Offering/ Commercial Application	Primary Supporting Literature
Human Capital	Generic individual skills, personal expertise, know-how, and competencies acquired through experiential learning; excludes field-specific standing.	Direct technical labor, specialized operational tasks, and generic training delivery.	Carmona-Lavado <i>et al.</i> (2010); Huynh <i>et al.</i> (2024); Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Structural Capital	Codified institutional knowledge embedded in procedures, routines, systems, databases, and intellectual property retained by the university.	Institutional licensing, proprietary database commercialization, and software systems.	Carmona-Lavado <i>et al.</i> (2010); Huynh <i>et al.</i> (2024); Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Social/Relational Capital	Value embedded in relational networks, trust, collaborative ties, and access to external stakeholder channels.	Business development networking, strategic alliance facilitation, and stakeholder mediation.	Carmona-Lavado <i>et al.</i> (2010); Huynh <i>et al.</i> (2024); Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Intellectual Capital	Combined organizational stock of knowledge assets, encompassing human, structural, and relational capitals across the enterprise.	Comprehensive organizational valuation, enterprise-wide knowledge audits, and IP portfolio management.	Carmona-Lavado <i>et al.</i> (2010); Huynh <i>et al.</i> (2024); Ociepa-Kicińska <i>et al.</i> (2025); Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Academic Capital	Field-specific composite construct integrating institutionalized academic legitimacy, peer-reviewed credibility, scholarly authority, and methodological mastery.	High-authority expert witness testimony, elite executive education, high-level institutional advisories, and policy design.	Antonelli & Rossi (2026); Broder <i>et al.</i> (2024); Munro <i>et al.</i> (2018); Wu & Shi (2025)
<i>Dimension 1: Disciplinary Domain Mastery</i>	Niche theoretical depth, field-specific knowledge specialization, and advanced domain expertise.	Specialized niche consulting, expert technical opinions, and specialized industry problem-solving.	Antonelli & Rossi (2026); Chatterji & Kiran (2017)
<i>Dimension 2: Research Design Capability</i>	Methodological mastery, empirical validation protocols, complex data analytics, and grant design.	Contracted research, advanced data analytics, scientific auditing, and commercial grant writing.	Chatterji & Kiran (2017); Ociepa-Kicińska <i>et al.</i> (2025)
<i>Dimension 3: Pedagogical Competence</i>	Instructional design expertise, curriculum development, executive training delivery, and mentoring models.	Executive education programs, digital course creation, corporate learning designs, and curriculum auditing.	Chatterji & Kiran (2017); Ociepa-Kicińska <i>et al.</i> (2025)
<i>Dimension 4: Administrative & Policy Experience</i>	Executive leadership, governance protocols, quality assurance systems, and public policy evaluation history.	Governance advisory, institutional quality auditing, public policy evaluation, and organizational restructuring.	Antonelli & Rossi (2026); Ociepa-Kicińska <i>et al.</i> (2025)

Entrepreneurial Marketing as a Theory of Knowledge Commercialization

Evolution of Entrepreneurial Marketing

The conceptual emergence of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) reflects a foundational paradigm shift within marketing and entrepreneurship literature, evolving from an empirical description of informal, ad-hoc small business practices to a recognized theoretical framework positioned directly at the interface of these two disciplines (Collinson & Shaw, 2001; Hills & Hultman, 2008; Miles *et al.*, 2015). Early marketing scholarship historically relied on normative corporate models that assumed established administrative structures, abundant capital equity, formal market research, and long-term planning horizons (Collinson & Shaw, 2001; Lewis Reynolds, 2002). However, empirical observations of small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) revealed that smaller, resource-constrained ventures consistently bypassed textbook marketing conventions, relying instead on intuitive market sensing, informal networking, word-of-mouth promotion, and interactive owner-manager involvement (Bjerke & Hultman, 2000; Collinson & Shaw, 2001).

Initial scholarship sought to document these unconventional practices, framing them as pragmatic adaptations to severe resource constraints and environmental uncertainty (Carson *et al.*,

2002; Collinson & Shaw, 2001). Collinson and Shaw (2001) traced this historical trajectory, demonstrating how early SME marketing research highlighted the fundamental mismatch between formal administrative marketing theories and the lived realities of owner-managers. Subsequently, Lewis Reynolds (2002) and Bjerke and Hultman (2000) challenged the dominance of classic administrative paradigms, arguing that conventional marketing models failed to capture how entrepreneurial firms proactively create markets through bottom-up, organic engagement rather than top-down analytical market research.

As the field matured, scholars elevated entrepreneurial marketing from a collection of informal SME tactics to a distinct theoretical paradigm (Abbas & Tiberius, 2026; Breit & Volkmann, 2024; Deacon *et al.*, 2015). Hills and Hultman (2008) and Carson *et al.* (2002) established that entrepreneurial marketing represents a distinct methodology characterized by opportunity pursuit, innovativeness, risk management, and value creation under extreme uncertainty. By integrating the opportunity-seeking logic of entrepreneurship with the customer-centric focus of marketing, entrepreneurial marketing established its identity as an established academic domain that explains how individuals and organizations commercialize ideas without relying on traditional corporate infrastructures (Abbas & Tiberius, 2026; Hills & Hultman, 2008).

MARKETING APPROACHES (Adapted from Collinson & Shaw, 2001; Miles et al., 2015)		
Dimension	Classical Administrative Marketing	Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM)
Strategic Orientation	Linear, analytical, and structured	Opportunity-driven, iterative, and flexible
Market Intelligence	Dependent on formal market research	Action-oriented and continuous experimentation
Resource Requirements	Requires dedicated capital budgets	Resource-leveraging and bootstrapped
Assumptions and Context	Assumes organizational stability	Operates under extreme market uncertainty

Figure 2. Comparison of Classical Administrative Marketing and Entrepreneurial Marketing

Major Perspectives and Definitions

The literature distinguishes classical administrative marketing from entrepreneurial marketing (see Figure 2) across structural, cognitive, and operational dimensions (Collinson & Shaw, 2001; Lewis Reynolds, 2002; Miles *et al.*, 2015). Classical administrative marketing is predicated on formal, linear, and highly analytical processes (Collinson & Shaw, 2001). It relies on systematically gathering market intelligence, conducting formal segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP), and executing predetermined marketing plans supported by allocated institutional budgets (Lewis Reynolds, 2002). This administrative perspective assumes relative environmental stability, clear organizational boundaries, and predictable resource access (Miles *et al.*, 2015).

In contrast, entrepreneurial marketing is conceptualized as an opportunity-driven, action-oriented, iterative, and resource-leveraging decision-making paradigm (Miles *et al.*, 2015; Sá *et al.*, 2016). Rather than relying on secondary market research to identify existing demand, entrepreneurial marketing actors actively sense, shape, and create opportunities through direct market engagement and continuous experimentation (Hills & Hultman, 2008; Sá *et al.*, 2016). Miles *et al.* (2015) highlighted that entrepreneurial marketing operates across multiple organizational loci, functioning as a strategic, opportunity-focused mechanism rather than a set of promotional tactics. Synthesis and scale development studies by Eggers *et al.* (2020) and Sadiku-Dushi *et al.* (2019) operationalized entrepreneurial marketing as a multidimensional construct, demonstrating that firm performance under environmental turbulence is driven by an enterprise's ability to act proactively, innovate continuously, and leverage external resources.

Recent comprehensive reviews and bibliometric analyses further reinforce EM's role as a bridge between effectuation and market creation (Abbas & Tiberius, 2026; Breit & Volkmann, 2024). Alqahtani and Uslay (2020) and Breit and Volkmann (2024) emphasized that contemporary entrepreneurial marketing synthesizes market orientation with an entrepreneurial orientation, allowing actors to maintain customer value focus while dynamically adapting to volatile market conditions. Furthermore, Abbas and Tiberius (2026) demonstrated that entrepreneurial marketing has expanded from its initial SME focus into a comprehensive theoretical framework that explains how actors across diverse settings navigate ambiguity, formulate value propositions, and achieve competitive advantage through non-traditional marketing behaviors.

Core Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Marketing

The multidimensional structure of entrepreneurial marketing offers a robust analytical framework for understanding individual context dynamics, particularly for senior and retiring academics transitioning out of tenured institutional roles into sole-practitioner enterprises or independent consulting firms (Becherer *et al.*, 2012; Hanaysha *et al.*, 2024; Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019). When applied to academic knowledge commercialization, the core dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing operationalize the conversion of specialized human and academic capital into commercial market offerings (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Eggers *et al.*, 2020; Hills & Hultman, 2008):

- **Opportunity Focus:** In an academic context, opportunity focus entails the systematic identification and evaluation of unaddressed market demand for scientific expertise, research findings, and technical methodologies (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Hills & Hultman, 2008). Exiting academics reframe their scholarly output—moving beyond peer-reviewed dissemination to actively identify industry and policy pain points that can be solved through applied scholarly knowledge (Hills & Hultman, 2008; Miles *et al.*, 2015).
- **Customer Intensity:** This dimension requires a fundamental cognitive shift from traditional academic peer orientation toward a client-centered value creation focus (Becherer *et al.*, 2012; Peterson & Crittenden, 2020). Rather than measuring success by citations or journal impact factors, the retiring academic prioritizes client satisfaction, relational trust, and the tangible economic or operational utility delivered to external stakeholders (Becherer *et al.*, 2012; Peterson & Crittenden, 2020).
- **Innovation:** Innovation involves packaging abstract, highly complex theoretical insights and empirical data into accessible, user-friendly services, decision-support tools, executive training modules, or commercialized advisory products (Eggers *et al.*, 2020; Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019). It bridges the gap between scholarly rigor and commercial usability (Li *et al.*, 2026).
- **Resource Leveraging:** Resource leveraging is critical for academics entering sole-practitioner enterprise without substantial equity capital (Bjerke & Hultman, 2000; Deacon *et al.*, 2015). Retiring scholars bootstrap their ventures by deploying accumulated institutional reputation, scholarly credentials, intellectual authority, and open-access research repositories to establish market presence without incurring heavy overhead costs (Deacon *et al.*, 2015; Gliga & Evers, 2023).

Table 2. Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions Applied to Retiring Academics

Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimension	Senior Academic Contextual Practice	Key Supporting References
Resource Leveraging	Bootstrapping advisory firms using institutional credibility, scholarly reputation, and open-access research platforms.	Bjerke & Hultman (2000); Deacon <i>et al.</i> (2015); Gliga & Evers (2023)
Customer Intensity	Translating complex theoretical jargon and scientific findings into actionable, client-focused solutions.	Becherer <i>et al.</i> (2012); Peterson & Crittenden (2020)
Proactiveness	Preemptively pitching research-backed solutions to industry and government pain points before formal tenders are issued.	Alqahtani & Uslay (2020); Hanaysha <i>et al.</i> (2024)
Opportunity Focus	Identifying unexploited commercial demand for specialized academic research, policy analysis, and technical training.	Hills & Hultman (2008); Miles <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Innovation	Packaging empirical methodologies and scientific datasets into proprietary advisory toolkits, executive workshops, or software products.	Eggers <i>et al.</i> (2020); Sadiku-Dushi <i>et al.</i> (2019)
Networking	Transforming scholarly contacts, co-authorships, alumni associations, and professional networks into commercial client pipelines.	Carson <i>et al.</i> (2002); Gliga & Evers (2023)
Calculated Risk-Taking	Transitioning from guaranteed institutional salaries to fee-for-service consulting models and sole-practitioner equity.	Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha (2023); Mas-Tur <i>et al.</i> (2015)

- *Networking*: This dimension centers on transforming professional, institutional, and scholarly contacts into commercial client pipelines (Carson *et al.*, 2002; Gliga & Evers, 2023). Exiting academics activate their legacy networks—including former doctoral students, conference collaborators, industry partners, and professional association members—to sense market demands and secure consulting contracts (Carson *et al.*, 2002; Gliga & Evers, 2023).
- *Calculated Risk-Taking*: Stepping outside institutional security, tenure, and regular university salaries into sole-practitioner enterprise involves calculated personal and financial risk (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023; Mas-Tur *et al.*, 2015). Academics manage this transition by evaluating affordable loss, diversifying service portfolios, and leveraging their academic reputation as a risk-mitigating asset (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023; Mas-Tur *et al.*, 2015).

Table 2 maps the core dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing directly to the strategic and operational practices of senior academics transitioning into independent post-retirement enterprise (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Becherer *et al.*, 2012; Eggers *et al.*, 2020; Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019).

Entrepreneurial Marketing Beyond SMEs

Although entrepreneurial marketing originated in small-business contexts, contemporary scholarship demonstrates its theoretical applicability across professional services, corporate entrepreneurship, lawtech, edu-preneurship, and knowledge markets (Goto *et al.*, 2025; Leicht, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2026; Miles & Darroch, 2006). This is illustrated in Figure 3. Miles and Darroch (2006) showed that large firms and established organizations systematically adopt entrepreneurial marketing processes to foster corporate entrepreneurship, renew competitive advantage, and commercialize internal innovations under conditions of market disruption. Similarly, in high-uncertainty and knowledge-intensive sectors, such as international new ventures and professional service firms, entrepreneurial marketing serves as a core decision-making mechanism (Cumming & MacIntosh, 2001; Kowalik, 2020). Cumming and MacIntosh (2001) and Mas-Tur *et al.* (2015) established that professional advisory services rely heavily on knowledge-transfer processes, where reputation, expert networks, and client-tailored value creation determine venture survival.

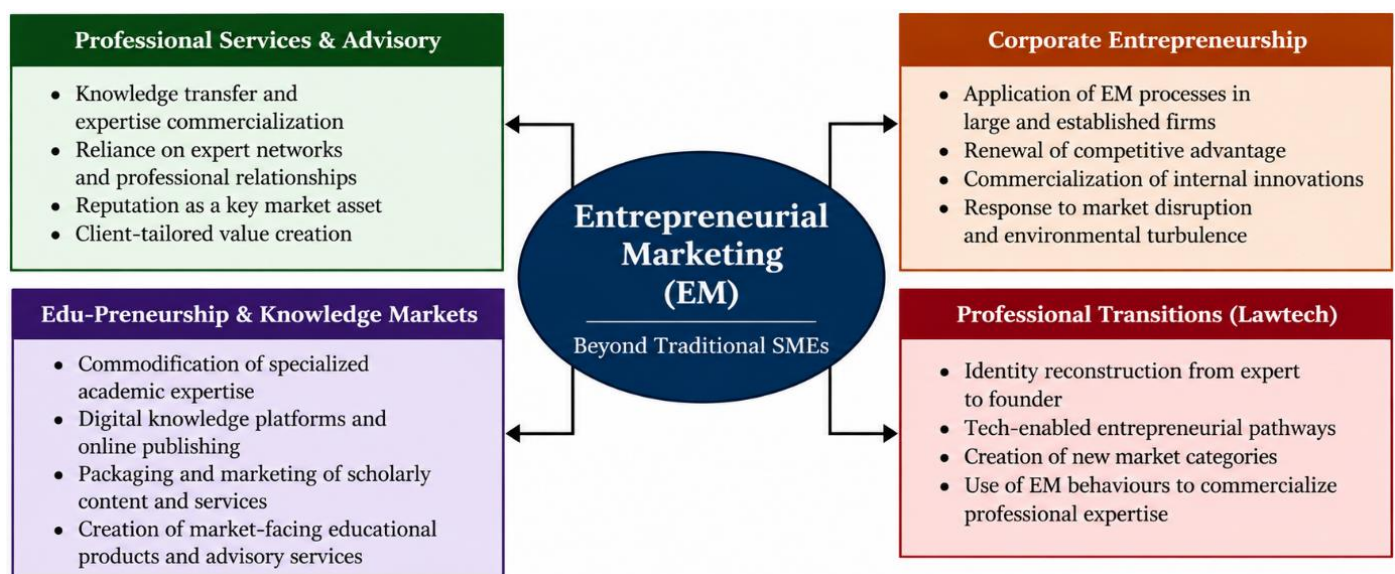


Figure 3. Entrepreneurial Marketing Beyond Traditional SMEs

Recent literature extends entrepreneurial marketing directly to individual professional career transitions and the commodification of specialized knowledge (Goto *et al.*, 2025; Kowalik, 2020; Leicht, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2026). Leicht (2016) highlighted how macro-economic shifts and market fundamentalism have restructured professional work, compelling highly specialized knowledge workers to operate as entrepreneurial sole practitioners. Kowalik (2020) and Sá *et al.* (2016) demonstrated that individual professionals operating in turbulent knowledge markets rely on effectual decision-making and entrepreneurial marketing dimensions to navigate uncertainty and commercialize intellectual assets.

This broadening of entrepreneurial marketing is clearly evidenced in the legal and educational sectors (Goto *et al.*, 2025; Li *et al.*, 2026). Goto *et al.* (2025) examined the identity construction of lawtech founders, illustrating how legal professionals transition into tech-enabled entrepreneurs by reconfiguring their professional identity and deploying entrepreneurial marketing behaviors to create new market categories. Furthermore, Li *et al.* (2026) analyzed the marketization of academic knowledge and edu-preneurship, showing how specialized scholarly expertise is systematically packaged, advertised, and sold across digital knowledge platforms.

Collectively, these studies establish entrepreneurial marketing as a dynamic theoretical bridge for knowledge commercialization (Abbas & Tiberius, 2026; Breit & Volkmann, 2024; Kowalik, 2020; Li *et al.*, 2026). For individual professionals—particularly senior academics transitioning out of formal university structures—EM provides the conceptual logic and behavioral toolset required to convert tacit expertise, institutional credibility, and scholarly networks into viable, market-facing commercial enterprises (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Deacon *et al.*, 2015; Gliga & Evers, 2023; Hills & Hultman, 2008).

Conceptualizing Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR)

Why Readiness Matters

Extensive literature on entrepreneurial capabilities demonstrates that entrepreneurial intention or raw theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient to guarantee venture creation and successful market entry (Lau *et al.*, 2012; Panakaje *et al.*, 2026). While senior scholars frequently accumulate substantial Academic Capital—characterized by scholarly credentials, peer recognition, deep domain expertise, and institutional authority—this capital does not automatically translate into economic enterprise or commercialized solutions. Academic capital is inherently field-bound, governed by institutional norms of knowledge production rather than market demand.

To transform static research outputs and tacit scholarly expertise into market-facing services or commercial entities, an additional behavioral mechanism is required. Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR) serves as this critical psychological, cognitive, and behavioral transition bridge (Lau *et al.*, 2012; Panakaje *et al.*, 2026). Readiness operationalizes the transition from latent potential to active market engagement by equipping senior scholars with the actionable competencies needed to overcome the operational and psychological barriers associated with post-retirement academic entrepreneurship.

Defining Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness

Conceptualizing AEMR requires an integrative theoretical synthesis drawing from the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

(Ajzen, 2001; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014), identity theory (Goethner *et al.*, 2012; Guo *et al.*, 2019), and individual-level dynamic capabilities in academic settings (Clarysse *et al.*, 2011; Thomas *et al.*, 2020). TPB provides the cognitive framework for understanding how perceived behavioral control and locus of capability shape action, while identity theory illuminates the internal role reconciliations required during professional transitions. Dynamic capabilities theory further explains how individuals reconfigure personal knowledge assets to address changing environmental opportunities.

Synthesizing these theoretical streams, Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR) is defined as *the cognitive, relational, and behavioral capability of academics to recognize, package, position, communicate, and commercialize academic capital using entrepreneurial marketing principles*.

AEMR must be explicitly demarcated from existing constructs in the entrepreneurship literature:

- *Differentiation from Entrepreneurial Intent (TPB)*: Generic entrepreneurial intent measures an individual's attitudinal willingness or prospective desire to start a business (Ajzen, 2001; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). In contrast, AEMR is an execution-oriented, domain-specific capability set that captures actual preparedness, domain literacy, and behavioral competence necessary to execute market actions.
- *Differentiation from Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)*: Entrepreneurial Orientation is fundamentally an organizational-level strategic posture characterized by firm-wide risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness (Clarysse *et al.*, 2011; Thomas *et al.*, 2020). AEMR operates at the individual level, serving as a micro-foundational, personal dynamic capability that enables individual scholars to navigate career off-ramps and post-retirement commercialization.

Dimensions of AEMR

AEMR is a multidimensional construct comprising five distinct sub-dimensions. Together, these dimensions address both the internal psychological adjustments and external market capabilities needed for academic commercialization.

1. Identity Transition Readiness

Moving from academia into commercial enterprise requires navigating complex micro-transitions and resolving identity threats (Bousfiha & Berglund, 2025). Senior scholars often experience intense identity friction when transitioning from the role of a “pure scholar”—focused on disinterested discovery and traditional peer dissemination—to that of a “scholarly entrepreneur” who seeks financial returns and commercial impact. Identity transition readiness represents the psychological capability to reconcile these competing professional role logics, establishing role harmony and framing entrepreneurial activity as an authentic extension of academic calling rather than a compromise of scholarly integrity (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

2. Market Orientation Readiness

Academic environments often foster a form of “marketing ignorance,” wherein researchers assume superior scientific rigor automatically guarantees market adoption. Market Orientation Readiness adapts classical MKTOR and I-MARKOR frameworks to academic settings. It reflects an academic's cognitive readiness to systematically gather, process, and respond to commercial market intelligence, understanding customer pain points and competitive dynamics beyond institutional walls (Sisay *et al.*, 2022).

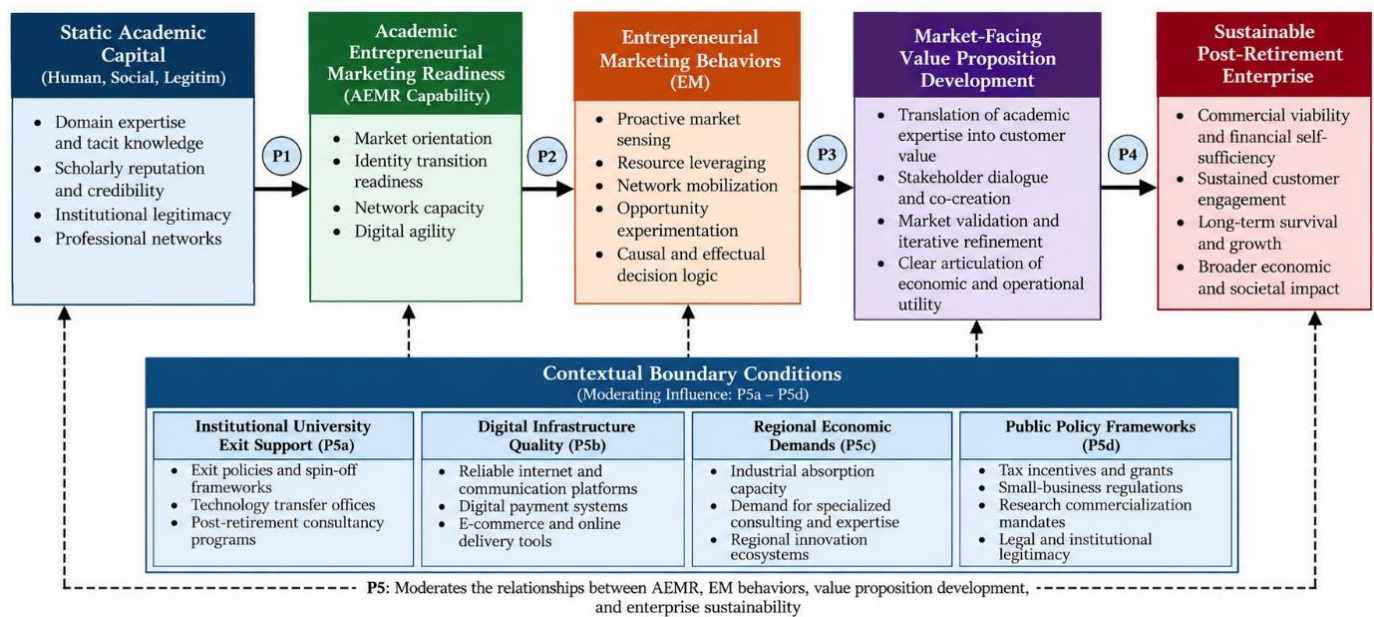


Figure 4. Conceptual Schematic of the Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Framework

3. Value Proposition Readiness

Raw research findings, methodologies, and scholarly publications are rarely consumable by commercial clients in their native academic form. Value Proposition Readiness is the behavioral capability to translate abstract, technical academic capital into structured, client-centric value propositions. This dimension captures the scholar's ability to re-package complex methodologies into scalable service models, advisory products, or actionable commercial solutions that address specific industry requirements (Li *et al.*, 2025).

4. Networking Readiness

Commercializing academic expertise depends on mobilizing external boundary-spanning networks. Networking readiness describes an academic's capability to build, maintain, and activate social capital beyond traditional academic circles. It involves bridging academic networks with professional, industry, and investor ecosystems to secure complementary resources, validate market opportunities, and establish commercial trust (Sousa-Ginel *et al.*, 2017).

5. Digital Readiness

Modern commercialization increasingly relies on digital platforms for market sensing, brand positioning, and service delivery. Digital Readiness reflects an academic's technological agility and readiness to deploy digital communications, social media platforms, and specialized digital tools to package scholarly authority (Salisu *et al.*, 2026), reach target audiences, and operate flexible post-retirement consultancies or ventures (Li *et al.*, 2025).

Identity reconciliation and market orientation serve as foundational prerequisite dimensions within this construct: without resolving internal identity conflicts and overcoming marketing ignorance, senior scholars rarely engage the secondary tactical dimensions of networking, digital deployment, and value proposition design.

Positioning AEMR within Entrepreneurial Marketing Theory

Positioning AEMR within broader Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) theory extends entrepreneurial marketing into individual late-career transitions. Traditionally, entrepreneurial marketing

theory has focused on firm-level strategies deployed by SMEs operating under extreme resource constraints (Alqahtani & Usley, 2020). By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2001; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014), dynamic capabilities, and dynamic role identity perspectives, AEMR translates entrepreneurial marketing logic into a micro-foundational, cognitive framework for individual actors.

In post-retirement transitions, senior academics operate under conditions analogous to early-stage entrepreneurs—facing high uncertainty, role ambiguity, and limited formal institutional marketing infrastructure. AEMR conceptualizes how senior academics deploy dynamic cognitive and behavioral capabilities to sense market opportunities, leverage relational networks, and reconfigure personal knowledge assets into commercial value. In doing so, AEMR establishes that entrepreneurial marketing is not merely an organizational strategy for young ventures, but a personal dynamic capability that enables senior professionals to convert accumulated academic capital into sustained post-retirement economic enterprise.

Mechanisms and Propositions of the AEMR

Overview of the Framework

The AEMF provides an integrative theoretical model explaining how senior academics transform static intellectual and institutional capital into viable, market-facing commercial ventures upon retirement. Grounded in theoretical models connecting resource stocks, dynamic capabilities, decision-making logic, and venture creation outcomes, the framework establishes that individual knowledge assets do not directly yield sustainable commercial enterprises. Instead, value creation relies on dynamic reconfiguring processes that bridge internal asset positions with external market opportunities.

Drawing on foundational frameworks of dynamic capabilities and knowledge asset conversion, the AEMF conceptualizes venture formation as a moderated, multi-stage causal chain (Carlucci & Schiuma, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Nonaka *et al.*, 2000; Teece *et al.*, 1997). As visualized in Figure 4, the core causal sequence posits that Static Academic Capital is converted through AEMR, which catalyzes Entrepreneurial Marketing

Behaviors, leading to the co-creation of Market-Facing Value Propositions, and ultimately resulting in a Sustainable Post-Retirement Enterprise.

Mechanism 1: Academic Capital → AEMR (Proposition 1)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) and dynamic capabilities literature establish that static resource stocks—regardless of their rarity or valuable nature—cannot generate sustained economic performance without integrative capabilities (Carlucci & Schiuma, 2007; Münter, 2025). Academic capital represents an intangible resource stock encompassing accumulated domain expertise, scholarly reputation, institutional legitimacy, and professional networks. However, these stocks remain dormant within administrative and scholarly domains unless activated by specialized capabilities.

Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR) functions as the mediating dynamic capability bundle that unlocks static academic capital. AEMR integrates cognitive market orientation, identity transition readiness, networking capacity, and digital agility (Salisu *et al.*, 2026). Without high levels of AEMR, an academic's intellectual assets fail to translate into entrepreneurial momentum, leaving high-value expertise uncommercialized upon retirement.

Proposition 1 (P_1): *Academic Capital does not exert a direct, positive effect on post-retirement enterprise creation; its conversion into commercial activity is fully mediated by the academic's level of Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR).*

Mechanism 2: AEMR → Entrepreneurial Marketing Behaviour (Proposition 2)

Extending behavioral decision theory and effectuation logic under resource constraints, AEMR provides the operational readiness required to execute entrepreneurial marketing behaviors (Breit & Volkmann, 2025; Gyepi-Garbrah & Preko, 2026; Schmidt & Heidenreich, 2018). Retiring academics transitioning into commercial roles face extreme market uncertainty and resource asymmetries. Rather than relying strictly on administrative, causation-based marketing models, market entry requires combining causation (goal-directed positioning and planning) with effectuation (means-driven experimentation, affordable loss, and strategic alliances) (Breit & Volkmann, 2025; Schmidt & Heidenreich, 2018).

Academics with elevated AEMR proactively engage in entrepreneurial marketing behaviors—including proactive market sensing, resource leveraging, network mobilization, and continuous opportunity identification (Breit & Volkmann, 2025; Gyepi-Garbrah & Preko, 2026). AEMR lowers the cognitive and behavioral barriers to adopting non-traditional, agile marketing approaches in late-career transitions.

Proposition 2 (P_2): *High levels of AEMR enable retiring academics to engage in entrepreneurial marketing behaviors—specifically proactive market sensing, resource leveraging, and network mobilization—by fostering a dynamic blend of causal and effectual decision logics.*

Mechanism 3: Entrepreneurial Marketing → Value Proposition Development (Proposition 3)

Entrepreneurial marketing behaviors drive value co-creation, business model communication, and user-driven value proposition design (Ali *et al.*, 2026; Baldassarre *et al.*, 2017; Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013; Xu & Koivumäki, 2019). Raw academic knowledge is frequently abstract, highly technical, and difficult for non-academic stakeholders to interpret. Entrepreneurial marketing behaviors bridge this gap by establishing continuous stakeholder

dialogue and iterative market engagement (Corner & Wu, 2012; Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013).

Through effectual networking, customer intensity, and agile experimentation, retiring academics communicate, test, and refine their offerings alongside prospective clients and industry partners (Ali *et al.*, 2026; Xu & Koivumäki, 2019). This collaborative process converts scholarly capability into a legible, market-validated value proposition that clearly articulates economic and operational utility (Baldassarre *et al.*, 2017; Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013).

Proposition 3 (P_3): *Entrepreneurial marketing behaviors facilitate stakeholder dialogue and customer co-creation, transforming abstract academic expertise into market-validated, commercially legible value propositions.*

Mechanism 4: Value Proposition → Sustainable Enterprise (Proposition 4)

Venture survival and performance depend on the alignment between market-validated value propositions, continuous customer engagement, and flexible business model design (Anning-Dorson *et al.*, 2025; Corner & Wu, 2012; Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Sharmelly & Ray, 2021; Winterhalter *et al.*, 2017). In post-retirement ventures, where financial reserves may be limited and risk tolerance is low, market validation prevents capital misallocation.

A well-articulated, customer-tested value proposition allows late-career enterprises to deploy frugal business models, achieve early revenue validation, and build client trust (Sharmelly & Ray, 2021; Winterhalter *et al.*, 2017). Sustained customer engagement and adaptive capability deployment ensure long-term venture viability, commercial performance, and financial self-sufficiency (Anning-Dorson *et al.*, 2025; Morgan *et al.*, 2009).

Proposition 4 (P_4): *Market-validated value propositions, supported by continuous customer engagement and frugal business model deployment, positively influence the commercial viability, revenue generation, and long-term survival of post-retirement academic enterprises.*

Boundary Conditions (Proposition 5)

Contextual contingency theory indicates that structural and environmental factors moderate the efficacy of organizational processes and dynamic capabilities (Adelowo & Surujlal, 2021; Jaeger *et al.*, 2025; Muscio *et al.*, 2016; Musleh *et al.*, 2025; Nordling & Schmutzler, 2026; Romero-Sánchez *et al.*, 2025; Temitayo *et al.*, 2025). The conversion of AEMR and entrepreneurial marketing behaviors into sustainable ventures is contingent upon four key boundary conditions:

1. **Institutional Exit Support:** Formal university exit policies, spin-off policies, technology transfer offices, and post-retirement consultancy frameworks strengthen the transition process (Adelowo & Surujlal, 2021; Muscio *et al.*, 2016).
2. **Digital Infrastructure Quality:** Access to reliable digital communication platforms, digital payment gateways, and e-commerce tools enables low-cost customer acquisition and service delivery (Nordling & Schmutzler, 2026; Temitayo *et al.*, 2025).
3. **Regional Economic Demands:** Local industrial absorption capacity and market demand for specialized academic consulting amplify venture performance (Jaeger *et al.*, 2025; Romero-Sánchez *et al.*, 2025).
4. **Public Policy Frameworks:** Supportive tax incentives, small-business regulation, and national research commercialization mandates provide legal legitimacy and reduce operational friction (Musleh *et al.*, 2025; Temitayo *et al.*, 2025).

Table 3. Conceptual Propositions and Suggested Empirical Validation Methodologies

Proposition	Core Pathway	Primary Constructs	Theoretical Grounding	Empirical Methodologies
P_1	Academic Capital → AEMR → Venture Creation	IV: Academic Capital Med: AEMR DV: Enterprise Formation	Resource-Based View (RBV); Dynamic Capabilities Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM); Mediation Analysis via Covariance-Based SEM
P_2	AEMR → entrepreneurial marketing Behaviors	IV: AEMR DV: entrepreneurial marketing Behaviors (Resource Leveraging, Network Mobilization)	Effectuation Theory; Behavioral Decision Theory	Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM); Policy-Capturing/ Scenario Experiments
P_3	EM Behaviors → Value Proposition Development	IV: entrepreneurial marketing Behaviors DV: Market-Validated Value Proposition	Value Co-Creation Theory; Business Model Communication	Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA); Multi-Case Comparative Analysis
P_4	Value Proposition → Sustainable Enterprise	IV: Value Proposition DV: Enterprise Sustainability & Survival	Dynamic Marketing Capabilities; Frugal Innovation	Longitudinal SEM; Event- History/Survival Analysis
P_5	External Moderation of AEMF Causal Chain	IV: AEMRo/entrepreneurial marketing Behaviors Mod: Institutional Support, Digital Infra, Regional Demand, Policy DV: Enterprise Outcomes	Contextual Contingency Theory; Regional Innovation Ecosystems	Hierarchical Moderated Regression/Moderated Mediation Modeling; Mixed- Methods Case Designs

Proposition 5 (P_5): *The relationships between AEMR, entrepreneurial marketing behaviors, value proposition development, and enterprise sustainability are positively moderated by external boundary conditions, such that the relationships are stronger under conditions of high institutional university exit support (P_{5a}), robust digital infrastructure (P_{5b}), strong regional economic demand (P_{5c}), and favorable public policy frameworks (P_{5d}).*

Structural Mapping of AEMR Propositions

Table 3 outlines the five core propositions (P_1 – P_5) that operationalize the AEMR framework, detailing the underlying theoretical foundations, operational constructs, and recommended empirical methodologies for testing each causal pathway.

A Theory-Derived Roadmap for Post-Retirement Enterprise

Translating senior academic expertise into post-retirement commercial ventures requires bridging linear commercialization models and agile, resource-constrained entrepreneurial behaviors. Traditional university spin-off frameworks often assume stage-gated, linear technology transfer pathways that depend heavily on institutional infrastructure (Thamäe *et al.*, 2016). However, late-career academic entrepreneurship operates under distinct conditions characterized by the transition of personal identity, variable institutional support, and non-linear venture development (Gómez & Rodríguez, 2016; Halilem *et al.*, 2022). To capture these dynamics, this roadmap integrates stage-based venture creation logic (Thamäe *et al.*, 2016) with iterative decision-making (Haneberg *et al.*, 2022; Sajadi *et al.*, 2025), lean startup experimentation (Corner & Wu, 2012), and digital business model effectuation (Xu & Koivumäki, 2019; Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013). This integrated approach structures post-retirement enterprise creation into an eight-stage progression that reduces market risk while deploying accumulated academic capital.

Roadmap Stages

Stage 1: Audit Academic Capital

The enterprise process begins with an inventory of the retiring scholar's knowledge assets and professional relationships (Bratianu & Leon, 2015). This stage converts tacit, uncoded expertise—such as methodological domain mastery, specialized subject matter authority, and administrative insights—into explicit, commercially viable assets. Simultaneously, scholars map their relational capital, including institutional connections, industry contacts, alumni networks, and editorial affiliations, to identify immediate post-exit stakeholder channels (Thamäe *et al.*, 2016).

Stage 2: Build the AEMR

Transitioning from a traditional academic position to an entrepreneurial role requires both psychological realignment and capability building (Guo *et al.*, 2019). Stage 2 focuses on workplace identity transition, helping retiring scholars reconcile the identity of a pure researcher or educator with that of a market-oriented consultant or service provider (Gómez & Rodríguez, 2016). This includes targeted training in market orientation, basic financial management, digital tool adoption, and commercial communication skills to build foundational readiness before market entry.

Stage 3: Recognize Opportunities

Leveraging enhanced AEMR, scholars engage in active market sensing to identify high-value operational and knowledge gaps across industry, public policy, and civil society sectors (Xu & Koivumäki, 2019). Rather than relying on speculative business ideas, opportunity recognition stems from systematic problem identification in settings where academic rigor solves immediate applied challenges (Corner & Wu, 2012; Haneberg *et al.*, 2022).

Stage 4: Develop Customer Value Propositions

Once an opportunity is identified, scholars translate domain expertise into market-facing service descriptions. Following value-co-creation principles, scholars directly consult prospective clients in the private or public sectors to co-design customized service offerings (Corner & Wu, 2012; Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013). This

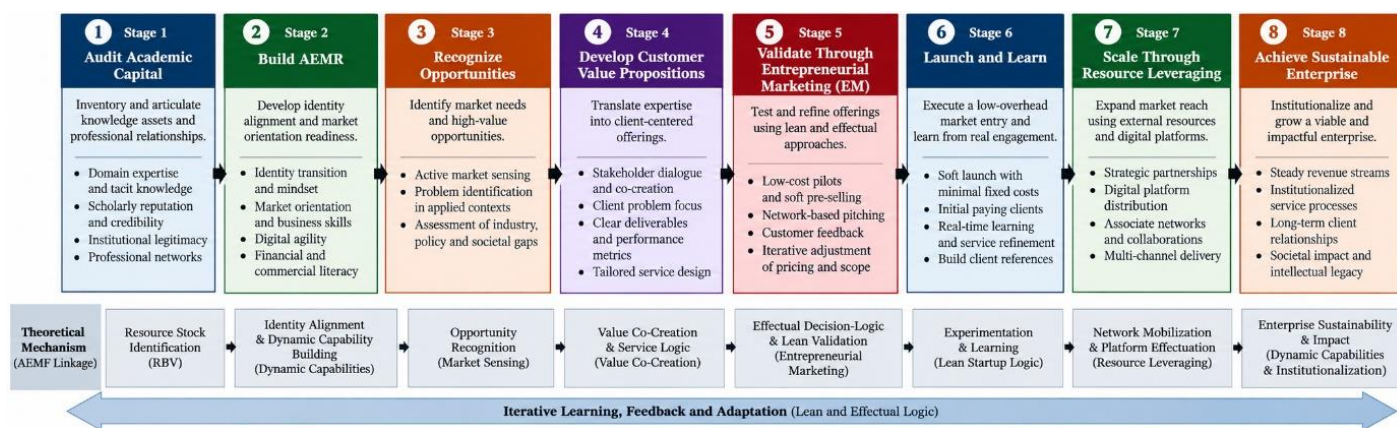


Figure 5. Theory-Derived Roadmap for Post-Retirement Enterprise

collaborative formulation ensures that academic output is structured around client problems, explicit performance metrics, and actionable deliverables rather than abstract research papers.

Stage 5: Validate Through Entrepreneurial Marketing

To manage financial risk and market uncertainty, scholars apply entrepreneurial marketing practices anchored in lean experimentation and effectuation (Breit & Volkmann, 2025; Sajadi *et al.*, 2025). Scholars test value propositions using affordable loss principles—minimizing upfront capital expenditures and relying instead on low-cost pilot projects, network pitching, and soft-pre-selling to gauge market demand (Xu & Koivumäki, 2019). Direct customer feedback at this stage informs rapid adjustments to pricing, service scope, and delivery formats (Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019).

Stage 6: Launch and Learn

Following successful pilot validation, scholars execute a low-overhead soft launch of their consultancy, executive training, or publishing services (Halilem *et al.*, 2022). Operating with minimal fixed costs, this soft-launch phase emphasizes operational agility and real-time learning. Feedback from initial paying engagements helps refine service delivery workflows, establish client satisfaction benchmarks, and build initial commercial references (Corner & Wu, 2012; Sajadi *et al.*, 2025).

Stage 7: Scale Through Resource Leveraging

To expand market reach without proportional increases in overhead or personal labor, scholars leverage external resources, digital platforms, and collaborative networks (Xu & Koivumäki, 2019). Enterprise growth is driven by partnerships with professional bodies, white-label instruction on digital learning platforms, and associate networks comprising junior scholars, former graduate students, and peer consultants (Halilem *et al.*, 2022; Li *et al.*, 2026).

Stage 8: Achieve Sustainable Enterprise

The final stage transforms the venture into a sustainable enterprise characterized by steady cash flows, measurable societal impact, and intellectual legacy preservation (Thamae *et al.*, 2016). By institutionalizing service processes, establishing long-term advisory retainers, and embedding knowledge assets into scalable digital products or advisory firms, retiring academics secure post-retirement income while contributing their expertise to economic and institutional development (Bratianu & Leon, 2015).

Figure 5 illustrates the sequential progression across the eight roadmap stages, explicitly mapping each operational phase to its underlying theoretical mechanisms within the AEMF.

Table 4 maps literature-supported academic business models to their foundational capabilities, key entrepreneurial marketing mechanisms, primary target markets, and structural delivery mechanisms.

Boundary Conditions and Transferability

Why Northeast Nigeria Matters

Rather than serving as a purely descriptive case setting, Northeast Nigeria operates as an acute boundary condition that tests the extreme limits of academic entrepreneurship models. The region is defined by severe structural disruptions, persistent institutional voids, deep capital market constraints, and a critical demand for post-conflict economic reconstruction and institutional capacity building (Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012). Historically, formal venture support mechanisms—such as science parks, early-stage venture capital, state-backed seed funds, and structured business incubators—have remained largely absent or functionally fragmented across the region. Consequently, traditional Western-centric commercialization models that depend on mature Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) and institutionalized venture capital pipelines encounter significant operational bottlenecks (Oyinola *et al.*, 2024).

However, these institutional voids are counterbalanced by two key catalysts: a high demand for applied human capital development and an expanding digital connectivity footprint (e.g., mobile banking, asynchronous messaging platforms, and social commerce tools). Under these specific boundary conditions, formal administrative marketing structures are ineffective. Instead, resource leveraging, bricolage, and effectuation emerge as essential Entrepreneurial Marketing mechanisms. When formal university support systems and risk capital are thin, senior academics cannot rely on institutional push mechanisms; they must leverage personal social capital, improvise value propositions around immediate regional problems, and adopt effectual logic—treating affordable loss and strategic partnerships as primary drivers of venture creation (Adelowo & Surujlal, 2021; Oyinola *et al.*, 2024). Northeast Nigeria thus exemplifies a high-friction environment where AEMR acts not merely as an asset-enhancement framework, but as a critical survival and value-realization mechanism.

Table 4. Illustrative Portfolio of Academic Enterprises

Academic Business Model	Core Academic Capital & Capability Base	Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimension & Mechanism	Target Market & Client Segment	Operational & Delivery Channel
Executive Education & Professional Coaching	Pedagogical expertise, executive mentoring skills, and advanced domain curriculum design	Customer Intensity & Value Creation: Customized executive learning, direct interaction, and performance coaching (Sadiku-Dushi <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	Corporate executives, mid-level managers, public administrators, and industry associations	On-site corporate workshops, hybrid masterclasses, and executive coaching sessions
Research Consultancy & Policy Advisory	Advanced research design, quantitative/qualitative analytics, and policy synthesis capabilities	B2B Networking & Proactiveness: Relational pitching, policy network mobilization, and expert positioning (Halilem <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development partners, and corporate strategy teams	Contracted technical reports, advisory retainer agreements, and policy briefs
Digital Courses & Publishing Instruction	Specialized disciplinary knowledge, scholarly writing expertise, and pedagogical instructional design	Digital Capability & Resource Leveraging: Multi-channel content repurposing and digital platform distribution (Li <i>et al.</i> , 2026; Xu & Koivumäki, 2019)	Early-career researchers, postgraduate students, global scholars, and lifelong learners	On-demand digital platforms (e.g., Udemy, Teachable), webinars, and digital instructional ebooks
Grant-Writing & Academic Editing Services	Methodological mastery, peer-review experience, and grant compliance fluency	Freelance Service Marketing & Opportunity Focus: Specialized technical service targeting and quality signaling (Wallnöfer & Hacklin, 2013)	Universities, research institutes, early-career academics, and research grant applicants	Direct freelance consultancy, remote editorial service platforms, and institutional service contracts

Beyond Northeast Nigeria (Global Transferability)

To evaluate the broader generalizability of the proposed framework, it is necessary to separate its core transferable mechanisms from its context-dependent moderators across three comparative organizational settings: Sub-Saharan Africa, emerging markets, and mature Western higher education systems (see Figure 6).

The theoretical core of the framework remains invariant across geography and institutional type:

1. *AEMR Assessment*: The multi-capital conversion logic—evaluating and reconfiguring human, structural, social, and academic capital—applies universally to senior academics transitioning into post-retirement or advisory roles (Vega-Gómez *et al.*, 2020).
2. *Identity Transition*: The psychological and professional shift from a purely scholarly specialist to a market-facing knowledge entrepreneur is a universal micro-foundation of academic commercialization (Vega-Gómez *et al.*, 2020).
3. *EM Value Proposition Design*: The necessity of packaging tacit academic expertise into accessible, market-validated offerings (e.g., executive training, policy diagnostics, specialized consulting) transcends regional context (Sedkaoui *et al.*, 2021).

The operationalization of these core mechanisms is moderated by regional and institutional factors:

- *Institutional Governance and TTO Maturity*: In mature Western higher education systems, formal university IP policies, technology transfer protocols, and equity-holding spin-off rules dictate commercialization pathways (Muscio *et al.*, 2016). In contrast, across Sub-Saharan Africa and many emerging market contexts, formal TTOs are frequently under-resourced or absent, requiring academics to rely on informal networking and direct service monetization (Jafta & Uctu, 2013; Oyinlola *et al.*, 2024).

- *Venture Capital and Support Networks*: In resource-dense ecosystems (e.g., Silicon Valley or Western European university hubs), academics can offload marketing, funding, and scaling tasks to structured venture networks (Nordling & Schmutzler, 2026; Romero-Sánchez *et al.*, 2025). In emerging economies, such as Latin America or North Africa, scholars must internalize these entrepreneurial marketing activities, using bricolage to bridge gaps in formal support (Achiquen-Millán *et al.*, 2023; Sedkaoui *et al.*, 2021).
- *Digital Infrastructure*: The delivery channel for academic value offerings varies with regional digital maturity. While mature markets leverage institutional knowledge-management platforms and corporate portals, emerging economy contexts lean heavily on mobile-first, lightweight digital communications and direct relationship networks (Sedkaoui *et al.*, 2021).

Consequently, while local institutional policies and capital depth moderate the speed and form of venture delivery, the underlying driver—converting senior scholarly capital into economic and societal value through entrepreneurial marketing mechanisms—is fully transferable across global higher education systems.

Theoretical, Policy and Managerial Implications

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical contributions of this framework synthesize cross-disciplinary streams—integrating Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM), the Resource-Based View (RBV), Dynamic Capabilities, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and career transition literature—to offer a unified understanding of late-career academic value creation.

- *Entrepreneurial Marketing*: classical entrepreneurial marketing theory has primarily focused on firm-level strategies, resource leveraging, and market sensing within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Breit & Volkmann, 2024; Miles *et al.*, 2015). This study expands entrepreneurial marketing beyond firm strategy to encompass individual professional identity transitions and knowledge commercialization. It demonstrates that entrepreneurial marketing dimensions—such as opportunity focus, value proposition development, and network mobilization—operate effectively at the micro-level of individual scholars navigating late-career and post-retirement transitions.
- *Academic Entrepreneurship*: previous research in university commercialization predominantly emphasizes structural organizational outputs, including university spin-offs, patenting, and technology transfer offices (Clarysse *et al.*, 2011). This study moves beyond spin-offs and patents to highlight post-retirement individual enterprise creation, consulting ventures, and knowledge-brokerage models. In doing so, it addresses theoretical gaps surrounding the career exit point, reframing retirement not as a loss of expertise, but as a structured pathway for individual-driven academic entrepreneurship.
- *Resource-Based View*: drawing on RBV and dynamic capabilities logic (Teece *et al.*, 1997), this research conceptualizes *Academic Capital* as a distinct, non-fungible resource stock. It asserts that academic capital—comprising scholarly authority, credentialized reputation, and deep tacit knowledge—cannot generate market value passively. Instead, it requires dynamic marketing capabilities (captured via Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness [AEMR]) to activate, reconfigure, and deploy this resource stock into viable market offerings.

Policy Implications

Grounded in institutional policy, retirement frameworks, higher education governance, and national funding agency literature (e.g., TETFund), this study provides concrete policy mandates for Universities, Polytechnics, Funding Agencies, and Government Bodies:

1. *Establishment of Institutional “Retirement Commercialization Incubators”*: Higher education institutions and national funding bodies must move beyond traditional administrative pre-retirement workshops (Kaskie *et al.*, 2017; van Ummersen *et al.*, 2023). Policy mandates should establish specialized Retirement Commercialization Incubators or dedicated tracks within university innovation hubs. These programs should provide senior scholars with pre-exit training in value proposition design, intellectual property commercialization, digital business models, and enterprise structuring 2–5 years prior to their formal exit date.
2. *Formulation of Knowledge-Retention and Succession Policies*: Universities and polytechnics experience severe knowledge loss when senior academics exit without structured transfer mechanisms (Moen *et al.*, 2017; Mpungose *et al.*, 2025, 2026). Institutions must implement formal post-retirement contracting, adjunct re-hiring frameworks, and commercial mentorship appointments. By retaining retired faculty as commercial mentors, research leads, or senior consultants, institutions retain tacit know-how, preserve critical industry ties, and ensure smooth academic succession.

Managerial Implications

The findings translate into actionable operational guidance grounded in academic workforce management, mentorship models, and university career transition literature:

- *Actionable Guidance for Retiring Academics*: Senior scholars approaching retirement should undertake systematic “Personal Capital Audits” to evaluate their human capital (specialized knowledge), relational capital (industry networks), and academic capital (reputational authority) prior to their formal exit date (Kaskie *et al.*, 2017). Scholars must proactively build their Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR) by converting tacit research into advisory modules, expanding industry networking, and adopting digital engagement tools to ensure a smooth identity transition from traditional academic to commercial practitioner.
- *Actionable Guidance for University Managers & Incubators*: University administrators and incubator directors should construct formal Intergenerational Knowledge-Transfer Networks (Moloney *et al.*, 2026). Institutional leaders can pair senior retiring faculty—who possess rich domain authority, wisdom, and industry networks—with early-career scholars who contribute digital agility and execution bandwidth. These intergenerational pairings can establish joint commercial consulting ventures, co-develop training programs, and launch spin-offs, simultaneously mitigating institutional knowledge loss and providing mentorship to emerging scholars.

Conclusion & Cross-Cutting Theoretical Synthesis

Cross-Cutting Theoretical Synthesis

The AEMF synthesizes complementary theoretical paradigms to explain how senior scholars convert long-accumulated scholarly authority into sustainable market ventures. Rather than relying on a single theoretical lens, the framework operates as an integrative system, spanning static knowledge stocks, dynamic capabilities, cognitive mechanisms, identity reconstruction, and market-facing conversion logics.

- *Resource Stocks and Knowledge Assets*: The Resource-Based View (RBV) and Knowledge-Based View (KBV) establish that senior scholars possess a rare, valuable, non-fungible asset stock defined as *Academic Capital* (Carlucci & Schiuma, 2007; Münter, 2025; Nonaka *et al.*, 2000). However, RBV/KBV logic demonstrates that passive knowledge stocks generate no external market value without proactive deployment mechanisms.
- *Capability Activation*: Dynamic Capabilities (DC) theory bridges static academic capital with market execution (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece *et al.*, 1997; Thomas *et al.*, 2020). Through sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring mechanisms, dynamic capabilities explain how scholars transform static intellectual capital into dynamic readiness capabilities that respond to shifting market needs.
- *Cognitive and Behavioral Intent*: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides the micro-foundational mechanism translating favorable entrepreneurial attitudes and perceived behavioral control into concrete commercial actions (Ajzen, 2001; Goethner *et al.*, 2012; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). Within this framework, Academic Entrepreneurial Marketing Readiness (AEMR) functions as the core cognitive mechanism that activates entrepreneurial intent.

Table 5. Theoretical Synthesis

Theoretical Paradigm	Primary Role in Paper's Argument	Key Supporting References
Resource-Based View & Knowledge-Based View	Conceptualizes Academic Capital as a rare, valuable, inimitable knowledge asset stock.	Carlucci & Schiuma (2007); Münter (2025); Nonaka <i>et al.</i> (2000)
Dynamic Capabilities	Explains how static Academic Capital is reconfigured and transformed through dynamic readiness capabilities.	Eisenhardt & Martin (2000); Teece <i>et al.</i> (1997); Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2020)
Theory of Planned Behavior	Underpins AEMR as the cognitive/control mechanism translating favorable attitudes into commercial action.	Ajzen (2001); Goethner <i>et al.</i> (2012); Schlaegel & Koenig (2014)
Identity & Social Identity Theory	Explains the psychological role transition from “academic scholar” to “scholarly entrepreneur”.	Bousfiha & Berglund (2025); Guo <i>et al.</i> (2019); Wang <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Entrepreneurial Marketing	Provides the core operational conversion logic (proactiveness, resource leveraging, customer intensity, co-creation).	Alqahtani & Uslay (2020); Breit & Volkmann (2024); Hills <i>et al.</i> (2010); Miles <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Effectuation Theory	Explains decision-making logic under high uncertainty and severe resource constraints in post-retirement environments.	Breit & Volkmann (2025); Gyepi-Garbrah & Preko (2026); Schmidt & Heidenreich (2018)

- *Psychological Role Transition*: Identity and Social Identity Theory explain the psychological transition from “institutional scholar” to “scholarly practitioner” (Bousfiha & Berglund, 2025; Guo *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2022). Reconstructing professional identity allows retiring academics to reconcile academic integrity with commercial enterprise.
- *Market Conversion and Resource Logic*: Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) supplies the primary operational conversion logic—leveraging proactiveness, resource optimization, customer intensity, and co-creation (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Breit & Volkmann, 2024; Hills *et al.*, 2010; Miles *et al.*, 2015). Concurrently, Effectuation Theory explains decision-making under high uncertainty, showing how scholars rely on affordable loss, strategic alliances, and means-driven action in post-retirement environments (Breit & Volkmann, 2025; Gyepi-Garbrah & Preko, 2026; Schmidt & Heidenreich, 2018).

Theoretical Synthesis Matrix

The synthesized literature provides a unified theoretical mapping across the manuscript.

Concluding Argument

Academic retirement requires a fundamental theoretical re-conceptualization. Rather than representing the terminal dissipation of scholarly productivity or an institutional loss of expertise, formal exit marks the strategic transition from institution-bound knowledge creation to market-enabled value creation. Grounded in Entrepreneurial Marketing and dynamic capabilities logic, the AEMF offers both the theoretical mechanics and practical roadmap required to convert long-accumulated Academic Capital into sustainable, high-impact post-retirement enterprises. By establishing structured pathways for knowledge commercialization, higher education systems can preserve institutional wisdom, drive socioeconomic development, and empower senior scholars to achieve sustained professional relevance beyond retirement.

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