
**ORGANIZATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF CORPORATE SPIN-OFF
SUCCESS**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the key factors driving the success of corporate spin-off strategies. In particular, it seeks to improve the understanding of entrepreneurial spin-offs as a managerial phenomenon by examining the influence of organizational determinants on spin-off performance within the Tunisian context.

To achieve this objective, a conceptual framework is developed and a set of hypotheses is empirically tested using data collected from spin-off entrepreneurs originating from public enterprises that have adopted the corporate spin-off charter in Tunisia. The empirical analysis relies on a sample of 50 newly established spin-off firms and employs regression techniques to determine the main drivers of spin-off success.

The findings reveal that access to information does not significantly affect the performance of spin-off firms. In contrast, spin-off success is strongly associated with the support provided by the parent firm or dedicated spin-off units, as well as with the strength of the relationship between the parent organization and the spin-off venture.

Keywords: Corporate spin-offs; Information accessibility; Entrepreneurial support; Parent–spin-off relationship.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

For several decades, new venture creation has been recognized as a fundamental driver of economic dynamism, contributing to innovation, job creation, and competitiveness (Zahra et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2021). Among the various forms of entrepreneurial activity, corporate spin-offs have increasingly emerged as a strategic practice that simultaneously addresses employees' entrepreneurial aspirations and firms' organizational challenges, including economic development, value creation strategies, human resource management, and sustainable growth objectives (Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Del Giudice et al., 2020).

The concept of corporate spin-offs originates from the biological metaphor of beekeeping, where swarming bees leave the hive to establish a new colony. In an organizational context, spin-offs follow a similar logic, as employees leave the parent firm to create an independent venture while often benefiting from support provided by their former employer. This research is situated within this framework and focuses on corporate spin-offs as a specific form of entrepreneurship. One of the main outcomes of this practice is the creation of small, flexible ventures operating alongside well-established parent organizations, which can contribute to local economic revitalization and enhance competitiveness through synergies developed across the different entities involved (Klepper, 2001; Wright et al., 2021).

Daval (2000) defines corporate spin-offs as a practice that occurs when an employee decides to create or take over an independent venture while benefiting from various forms of support and assistance provided by the parent firm, with the aim of reducing the risk of failure. Despite this support, entrepreneurs frequently experience uncertainty and periods of doubt during the early stages of venture creation, often leading to discouragement and feelings of isolation (Valéau, 2006; Unger et al., 2011). These challenges underline the importance of identifying the key factors that contribute to the success of corporate spin-offs.

The determinants of entrepreneurial success have attracted considerable scholarly attention across multiple disciplines. Over the past three decades, entrepreneurship researchers have sought to explain the success of corporate spin-offs by emphasizing the role played by the parent firm (Tübke, 2005; Del Giudice et al., 2020). Building on a comprehensive review of the literature, three major organizational factors emerge as critical drivers of spin-off success: information accessibility (Mosey & Wright, 2007; Autio et al., 2018), support provided to the spin-off entrepreneur (Jack & Anderson, 2002; Brinckmann et al., 2010), and the quality of the relationship between the parent firm and the spin-off venture (Clarysse et al., 2009; Wright et al., 2021).

To empirically test the proposed hypotheses, this study relies on a dataset collected from a sample of 50 newly established Tunisian spin-off firms. The analysis aims to assess the effect of organizational characteristics on the success of entrepreneurial spin-offs. The empirical findings indicate that entrepreneurial support and the parent–spin-off relationship constitute two vital factors for the success of spin-off creation, whereas information accessibility does not exert a significant effect, corroborating mixed results found in recent empirical studies (Del Giudice et al., 2020; Zahra et al., 2014).

This article contributes to the growing body of literature on corporate entrepreneurship by providing empirical evidence on the influence of organizational characteristics on corporate spin-off success, building on and extending the seminal framework proposed by Tübke (2005). It also enriches the understanding of spin-off dynamics within an emerging economy context.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The next section presents the literature review and hypothesis development. Section 3 describes the research methodology. Section 4 reports and discusses the empirical results. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper and outlines implications and avenues for future research.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Information Accessibility and the Success of Entrepreneurial Spin-offs

Information is a multifaceted concept that has been extensively examined across management, information systems, and entrepreneurship research. Lesca (1989) defines information in an organizational context as “the process through which a firm gathers knowledge about itself and its environment, and through which it informs its environment about itself.” From this perspective, information can be evaluated according to its purpose, which is critical for strategic steering. Lesca (1989) distinguishes three types of information:

- **Operational information**, which relates to data essential for the daily mechanical functioning of the firm;
- **Influence information**, which aims to shape stakeholder behavior, ranging from internal communications to public relations; and
- **Anticipatory information**, which enables the organization to foresee environmental changes and to exploit opportunities or avoid risks.

Extending these conceptualizations, Buckland (1991) proposes three complementary views of information: as a process of communicating knowledge, as knowledge itself interpreted in context, and as a thing—a document or artifact that clarifies meaning. Similarly, Reix (2005) argues that information “alters our view of the world and reduces our uncertainty about phenomena,” while Stvilia et al. (2007) emphasize that information becomes meaningful only through contextual interpretation, enabling uncertainty reduction and informed decision making.

Collectively, these perspectives suggest that information is a strategic resource akin to physical, financial, or human resources, which organizations must accumulate and manage to sustain development and competitiveness (Auriac et al., 1995; Choo, 2016). In this regard, Lemoigne (1997) highlights information as vital to organizations of all types and sizes.

Within the context of corporate spin offs, information accessibility plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial performance. Spin off founders leverage information obtained from personal networks, organizational knowledge bases, and interactions with the parent firm to identify opportunities, mobilize resources, and navigate post formation uncertainty (Koukou Doukou, 2001; Tübke, 2005; Monino, 2013). Recent empirical studies reinforce the strategic importance of information flows for spin off performance. For example, Poehlmann et al. (2021) identify commercial knowledge inherited from the parent firm as a significant predictor of spin off success, reflecting the role of informational assets. Oliveira et al. (2023) demonstrate that the transfer of organizational resources—including knowledge embedded in processes and information systems—positively affects performance outcomes in corporate spin offs. Additionally, qualitative research suggests that the enactment of tacit organizational knowledge in spin off practices contributes to their competitive positioning and survival (Spinning Them Off, 2016).

Moreover, theoretical frameworks on organizational knowledge transfer highlight that the accessibility and circulation of relevant information—through mechanisms such as absorptive and desorptive capacities—enhance inter organizational learning, innovation, and competitive

advantage, thus supporting higher probabilities of spin off success (van Doren et al., 2021; Clarysse et al., 2014).

Based on this body of literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Information accessibility has a positive impact on the success of entrepreneurial spin offs.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Support and Venture Success

Entrepreneurial support has long been recognized as a critical component of entrepreneurial processes (Boulayoune, 2012). Paul (2010) defines support as “a space in which a professional creates conditions for an individual to identify and articulate their situation, jointly construct the problem, determine existing and needed resources, explore how to mobilize these resources within a given environment, express choices, exercise decision making power, and develop concrete agency.” From this perspective, the primary objective of support is to guide and assist entrepreneurs in resolving issues encountered throughout the venture creation process, including prototype testing, project development, business plan preparation, negotiation, and actual firm establishment.

Verstraete (2000) further describes entrepreneurial support as “the follow up of a venture creation process through the provision of various material and immaterial resources.” Consistent with this view, Laviolette (2005) categorizes support into three main forms: methodological (global) support, technical support, and psychological support. Methodological support focuses on assessing the fit between the entrepreneur and the project, including an evaluation of the founder’s strengths, weaknesses, and resource needs, both psychological and technical. When gaps are identified, targeted technical and psychological support helps the entrepreneur strengthen competencies (Laviolette, 2005).

Technical support often involves supplementary training that enhances operational skills, resolves technical challenges, improves productivity and quality, and expands the venture’s capacity to introduce new products or services (Masmoudi, 2007). This form of support typically addresses concrete business needs, including financial, legal, and market related aspects (Cuzin & Fayolle, 2006). Psychological support addresses the emotional dimensions of entrepreneurship, helping founders navigate doubts and uncertainties, build confidence in their capabilities, and clarify their motivations and project aspirations (Viland, 2010; Unger et al., 2011).

In the context of corporate spin offs, support provided by the parent organization is considered an indispensable condition for success. Daval (2000) defines corporate spin offs as practices in which employees create or take over independent ventures while receiving various forms of assistance from the parent firm to mitigate entrepreneurial risks. This highlights the central role of the parent in supplying support and guidance to spin off founders.

A substantial body of research indicates that entrepreneurial support positively influences new venture survival and performance. Early empirical work shows that supported ventures exhibit higher survival rates than unsupported ones (Chrisman & McMullan, 2004). Similarly, structured support systems, including mentorship, advisory services, and coordinated resource provision, enhance entrepreneurs’ capabilities and increase success likelihood (Luc et al., 2002;

Cuzin & Fayolle, 2006). Letowski (1998) reports five-year survival rates of approximately 81 % for ventures with multiple advisors, compared to significantly lower rates without support. More recent studies confirm that sustained support improves long term performance and business continuity (Messeghem et al., 2013; Stam & van de Ven, 2021), suggesting that both the quality and duration of support matter for entrepreneurial outcomes.

In the specific case of corporate spin offs, empirical research underscores the importance of structured support in reducing early-stage failure and enhancing performance. For example, support mechanisms that integrate strategic guidance, managerial coaching, and access to resources are associated with higher growth and innovation outcomes among spin offs (Poehlmann et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2023). These findings align with frameworks that conceptualize entrepreneurial support as a dynamic capability enabling founders to navigate uncertainty, leverage parent firm resources, and build competitive advantage (Autio et al., 2018; Del Giudice et al., 2020).

In light of the above theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Entrepreneurial support provided to the spin off founder has a positive impact on the success of corporate spin offs.

2.3 Parent–Spin Off Relationship and Spin Off Success

After the establishment of a spin off venture, the founder often maintains ongoing support and assistance from the parent organization. According to Daval (2000), the entrepreneur may continue to receive advisory support across various domains of business management, including legal, fiscal, and human resource matters. In subsequent work, Daval (2001) further explains that this support can take multiple forms, such as technical assistance (e.g., business plan preparation), psychological or moral encouragement, financial support, and social facilitation (e.g., establishing contacts with suppliers). Daval (2001) characterizes this ongoing interaction as post creation accompaniment, encompassing diverse commercial, professional, and industrial relationships between the parent firm and the spin off venture.

A substantial body of literature emphasizes the importance of sustained supportive relationships between parent firms and their spin offs for enhancing entrepreneurial success. Luc et al. (2002) argue that mutual trust and the maintenance of harmonious relationships between the leadership of the parent organization and the spin off founder are key determinants of spin off success. These authors suggest that “relationships nourished by mutual respect facilitate, especially for the spin off leader, the faster achievement of established objectives.” They further contend that the more comprehensive the support provided by the parent firm, the higher the likelihood of the spin off attaining success. While financial assistance may initiate the relationship between the parent and the spin off, Luc et al. (2002) note that technical and administrative guidance plays a more critical role in enhancing the performance of newly created firms.

Similarly, Tübke (2005) confirms that collaboration after organizational separation positively influences the growth trajectory of the spin off and, consequently, its overall success. More recent research on corporate spin offs also highlights that the quality of parent–spin off relationships—particularly ongoing communication, shared strategic planning, and resource

exchange—strengthens performance outcomes such as innovation, market entry, and competitive positioning (Spithoven et al., 2019; Oliveira et al., 2023).

Additionally, studies on inter organizational networks suggest that strong relational governance characterized by trust, reciprocity, and long-term engagement facilitates the flow of knowledge and resources, which in turn underpins firm performance in spin off contexts (Clarysse et al., 2014; Autio et al., 2018). These relational mechanisms enable spin offs to leverage parent firm capabilities while maintaining strategic autonomy, thus fostering sustainable growth (Stam & van de Ven, 2021).

Drawing on this body of theoretical and empirical evidence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: The quality of the parent–spin off relationship has a positive impact on the success of corporate spin offs.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology involves connecting theory to practice. In this regard, Gauthier (2003) states that “research methodology encompasses both the structure of thought and the form of research, as well as the techniques used to implement this thought and form...”

In our study, we adopt a quantitative approach to analyze the influence of organizational variables on the success of entrepreneurial spin-offs in the Tunisian context.

3.1 Sample Construction

Empirical validation of hypotheses is a cornerstone of rigorous scientific research. In this study, data were collected from a sample of 50 firms that are signatories of the corporate spin-off charter and have formal agreements with the Tunisian Ministry of Industry, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 2005-56 (July 18, 2005) concerning economic spin-offs.

A structured questionnaire was administered to spin-off entrepreneurs to capture relevant organizational and operational data. The sample primarily comprises spin-offs originating from major public enterprises, including STEG, SONEDE, ONAS, and GCT. This selection ensures that the study reflects diverse organizational contexts and provides insights into the factors influencing spin-off success within the Tunisian economic environment.

3.2 Model Specification

To empirically test our research model, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using SPSS 20. The model incorporates three independent variables: information accessibility, entrepreneurial support, and parent–spin-off relationship, to estimate their impact on the success of corporate spin-offs.

The regression model can be formally expressed as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_4 A_i + \beta_5 ACCOMP_i + \beta_6 REE_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

- Y_i = Dependent variable, representing the success of the corporate spin-off;
- β_0 = Intercept;
- AI = Information accessibility;
- ACCOMP = Entrepreneurial support for the spin-off;
- REE = Parent–spin-off relationship;
- I : 1 \rightarrow 50 observations;
- ϵ_i = Error term.

3.3 Measurement of Variables

The measurement instruments translate the research hypotheses into operational variables, assessed through questions of various formats to confirm or refute them. Our hypothetico-deductive approach relies on multiple constructs integrated into a model designed to explain the success of corporate spin-offs.

Each variable is operationalized using validated scales from the literature, ensuring reliability and construct validity. The questionnaire was structured to capture quantitative data on information accessibility, entrepreneurial support, and the parent–spin-off relationship, as well as on the performance outcomes of the spin-off ventures.

Dependent Variable: The dependent variable in our research model is entrepreneurial success. Following Dafna (2008), entrepreneurial success is measured using three items: firm longevity, revenue growth, and employee growth, all assessed via a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/very low) to 5 (strongly agree/very high).

Independent Variables:

- **Information Accessibility:** To measure this variable, we adopted a scale inspired by Tübke (2005). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with five items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
- **Entrepreneurial Support (Accompaniment):** For this variable, we developed our own scale based on exploratory interviews conducted with corporate spin-off managers. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), respondents indicated their level of agreement with the following items regarding support received during the creation of their spin-off venture:
 1. Received all forms of technical, financial, and commercial assistance and support.
 2. Guaranteed a first client until the development of a client portfolio.
 3. Received paid leave.
 4. Received bonuses and benefits associated with the spin-off program.
- **Parent–Spin-off Relationship:** To measure this variable, we used a scale inspired by Tübke (2005), which has demonstrated dimensional validity and reliability in prior studies. Respondents rated items reflecting the quality and intensity of the ongoing relationship with the parent firm on a 5-point Likert scale.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is the most commonly used descriptive method for scale purification and validation (Evrard et al., 2009). This procedure should be conducted prior to reliability testing. The main objective of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is to determine the dimension(s) of a pre-constructed variable by identifying the underlying factor(s) of its scale. This ensures that the scale measures precisely and exclusively the intended construct.

PCA reveals a factorial structure in which the identified component(s) are clearly associated with specific items. It considers the total variance of the items and extracts multiple factors from the correlation matrix to explain as much variance as possible with the fewest number of items.

Before performing PCA, the data must be metric and factorable. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity are used to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. In our study, we first conducted a unidimensionality test of the scales, followed by an assessment of the reliability of the measures.

Table 1: Explained Variance, Cronbach's Alpha, and KMO

Factor	Cronbach's α	Explained Variance (%)	KMO
Information Accessibility	81,393%	0.878	0.806
Entrepreneurial Support	71,023%	0.778	0.622
Parent-Spin-off Relationship	56,847%	0.734	0.798
Spin-off Success	73,228%	0.783	0.690

The table above demonstrates that the variables exhibit satisfactory explained variance, strong reliability, and an adequate factor structure, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of 0.690, confirming the appropriateness of the factor analysis.

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

To assess the significance of the relationship between each organizational determinant and the success of entrepreneurial spin-offs, a Student's t-test was performed on each regression coefficient. This test allows the elimination of explanatory variables whose contribution to the regression model is not significant. Thus, the Student's t-test leads to a more "parsimonious" model (Evrard et al., 2009).

To estimate the contribution of each explanatory variable to the overall model, the standardized Beta regression coefficients were calculated. According to Giannelloni and Vernet (2001), this coefficient represents the expected change in the dependent variable when an independent variable changes by one unit while all other explanatory variables are held constant. The standardized coefficient expresses the explanatory power of an independent variable on the dependent variable. The higher its absolute value (ranging from +1 to -1), the greater the influence of that variable.

The following tables summarize the information used to verify the significance of the relationships between these organizational variables and the success of entrepreneurial spin-offs.

Table 2: Regression Coefficients of Entrepreneurial Spin-Off Success in Relation to Organizational Factors

Independent Variable	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	Significance
Information Accessibility (AI)	0.043	0.269	0.738 ns
Entrepreneurial Support (ACCOMP)	0.337	2.159	<0.05
Parent–Spin-Off Relationship (REE)	0.037	2.019	0.050

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results of Entrepreneurial Spin-Off Success in Relation to Individual Factors

Dependent Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df	Significance (p)
Entrepreneurial Spin-Off Success	0.613	0.375	0.305	5.291	5, 45	0.001

Note: a. Predicted values include constants.

Contrary to expectations, our results indicate that in the Tunisian context, information accessibility does not have a significant effect on entrepreneurial spin off success. This finding diverges from earlier research suggesting that information accessibility is a key determinant of spin off performance (Tübke, 2005). One possible explanation is that the ability to detect and utilize relevant information depends strongly on the entrepreneur’s absorptive capacity—that is, their ability to identify, assimilate, and apply information effectively (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Recent research confirms that entrepreneurs’ knowledge processing capabilities, rather than mere access to information, are critical for leveraging information for competitive advantage (Zahra & George, 2002; Gupta & Mirchandani, 2020). In this regard, Monino (2013) also emphasized that an entrepreneur will outperform competitors if they possess the right information at the right time, whether related to market knowledge, legal frameworks, or technological and regulatory insights.

In contrast, our findings show that entrepreneurial support provided by the parent firm significantly contributes to spin off success. This result aligns with contemporary literature highlighting the importance of tailored support mechanisms including mentoring, managerial coaching, and resource transfer in enhancing new venture performance (St Jean & Audet, 2019; Scandura & Williams, 2000). Parent firm support not only provides technical guidance but also facilitates access to strategic resources and social capital, which are essential in the early life of a new venture (Clarysse et al., 2014; Colombo et al., 2019). Laviolette (2005) argued that managers in parent firms are highly motivated to provide methodological support, and their experience enables them to respond effectively to specific technical challenges. Moreover, consistent with Bertherat (1989), recent empirical evidence suggests that the failure rate of spin offs decreases as the quality and intensity of support increase (Venkataraman et al., 2017;

Wright et al., 2021). Support mechanisms facilitate learning and may generate synergistic benefits when aligned with the needs of the spin off entrepreneur (Autio et al., 2018). As Daval (2001) aptly noted, “the major strength of spin offs lies in the support provided by the parent firm to its employee throughout the entrepreneurial process.”

Additionally, our results indicate that stronger parent–spin off relationships including ties in purchasing, production, marketing, distribution, and financial interactions are positively associated with spin off success. This finding is consistent with studies showing that relational governance mechanisms, such as trust and reciprocity, enhance inter firm knowledge transfer and strategic alignment, leading to improved performance outcomes (Gulati, 1995; Kale et al., 2000; Spithoven et al., 2019). Strong interpersonal and inter organizational ties make it easier to mobilize resources and resolve operational challenges that spin off founder’s face in the early stages of venture development (Adner & Kapoor, 2010; Stam & van de Ven, 2021). In this regard, Luc et al. (2002) highlight that mutual trust and the maintenance of harmonious relationships between corporate leaders and spin off entrepreneurs are key determinants of spin off success, echoing more recent findings on the role of network quality and strategic embeddedness in entrepreneurial ecosystems (Kraus et al., 2020; Spigel, 2017).

5.0 CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to analyze and determine the impact of organizational characteristics on the success of entrepreneurial spin-offs in the Tunisian context. To test our research model, a quantitative study was conducted with a sample of 50 Tunisian spin-off entrepreneurs.

Our results indicate that information accessibility does not have a significant effect on the success of spin-off ventures. In contrast, spin-off success is significantly influenced by the support provided to the spin-off entrepreneur by the parent firm or the spin-off unit, as well as by the quality of the parent–spin-off relationship. These findings highlight the crucial role of organizational support mechanisms and relational ties in enhancing the performance of newly created enterprises.

Several managerial implications can be drawn from this study. First, the results provide guidance to employees of public or private firms that are members of the Corporate Spin-off Charter and who wish to establish their own ventures. The study aims to offer these employees a clear and simplified understanding of the spin-off phenomenon and to identify the organizational factors that contribute to spin-off success.

Consequently, employees can use the findings of this research as a practical guide to better understand the success factors of entrepreneurial spin-offs, reduce the risks of failure, and prepare effectively before transitioning into entrepreneurship. By focusing on support and relational mechanisms, parent firms can enhance the survival and growth prospects of spin-offs, ultimately fostering local economic development and innovation.

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