

Unveiling The Nexus Between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Performance

Mahmood Waleed Al-Najjar¹, Shafazawana Mohamed Tharikh² and Mohamed Khudari³

Abstract

*This study investigates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance within the dynamic landscape of the telecommunications industry. Despite its critical role in driving economic growth, the interplay between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance in this sector remains underexplored, particularly in the context of developing economies. The data collection process for this study involved distributing questionnaires to employees within telecommunications companies in Iraq. A total of 120 questionnaires were successfully distributed and subsequently returned by the respondents. This sample size surpassed the minimum requirement of 62 respondents, as determined by G*power, a statistical software tool commonly used to calculate sample sizes for research studies. The statistical technique used was partial least squares structural equation modeling conducted using the statistical software SmartPLS 4.0. The results indicate a significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance in the telecommunications domain. Through rigorous statistical analyses, it becomes evident that companies imbued with a strong entrepreneurial orientation tend to exhibit markedly superior organizational performance metrics. This empirical evidence corroborates existing literature and extends our understanding of how entrepreneurial orientation influences organizational performance outcomes, specifically within the telecommunications sector and amidst the unique challenges of developing economies.*

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation, Organizational Performance, Telecommunications Industry, Developing Countries.

INTRODUCTION

In today's constantly changing business environment, organizations are required to stay vigilant for opportunities and challenges in their external and internal environments to maintain their competitiveness and growth (Sutrisno, 2019). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is one of the most prominent organizational growth and survival strategies (Dedy et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial orientation guides a company's efforts in capitalizing on business opportunities and enhancing organizational performance (Zhang et al., 2019; Alenzi et al., 2022). This orientation, focused on seeking business opportunities, motivates the company to engage with external actors to leverage external resources for innovation (Carvalho & Sugano, 2016).

The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance remains a subject of great academic interest. This highlights the crucial role of entrepreneurial orientation in promoting innovation, risk-taking, and proactive behaviors within companies, ultimately leading to long-term competitive advantage (Soares & Perin, 2020; Al-Najjar et al., 2024). A recent study highlights this connection's intricate nature, indicating that entrepreneurial orientation's influence on organizational performance is subtle and frequently influenced by internal organizational mechanisms (Ince et al., 2023).

Previous studies have proved that entrepreneurial orientation is an effective tool that assists organizations in maintaining their performance (Adam et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial orientation refers to the process of strategy-making that provides the basis for business decisions and behavior for organizations (Ibarra-Cisneros & Hernandez-Perlines, 2019). Entrepreneurial orientation comprises innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy, key ingredients for organizational success. The studies on Entrepreneurial orientation mainly focus on large companies and SMEs compared to telecommunication

¹ College of Graduate Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia., E-mail: mahmood.w93@gmail.com

² UNITEN Business School, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Muadzam Shah, Malaysia, E-mail: shafa@uniten.edu.my

³ College of Graduate Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia., E-mail: khudari@uniten.edu.my

sectors. Hence, there is a call to examine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on performance in telecommunication sectors.

The telecom companies' leadership is directly responsible for enhancing operational performance. This responsibility entails making decisions, implementing plans, and executing strategies that align with the organization's goals and objectives (Mehralian et al., 2017). Furthermore, telecommunications companies must set quantifiable objectives derived from up-to-date technological data and research. These objectives will assess organizational performance, which has been proven to be a significant determinant of employee engagement and commitment to the company (Singh & Misra, 2021).

Therefore, this study addresses the following research question: How can entrepreneurial orientation enhance organizational performance in the telecommunication sector?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurship has become a key part of economies, and having an entrepreneurial orientation is essential for success. Entrepreneurial orientation is the process, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to a new entry (Rauch et al., 2009; Wales et al., 2013). Entrepreneurial orientation is widely recognized as a crucial competitive tool (Wang et al., 2017) that enables enterprises to make strategic decisions and focus their efforts on seizing business opportunities (Ingram et al., 2022; Van Doorn et al., 2017), even in the face of risks (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014; Luu & Ngo, 2019). Its strategic relevance lies in its ability to guide organizations and their members toward improved organizational performance (Cuevas-Vargas et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial orientation comprises constant behavior to initiate new business, eventually leading to a durable competitive advantage in the long term (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2011).

Miller (1983) pioneering work indicates that an entrepreneurial organization constantly generates innovations, assumes risky business opportunities, and is the market leader in introducing proactive innovations ahead of competitors. As a result, he underlines three major dimensions that establish entrepreneurial orientation, namely innovativeness, pro-activeness, and risk-taking – which have been prominent dimensions of EO that were investigated empirically in the literature on entrepreneurship (Al-Ansari et al., 2014; Beliaeva, 2014; Ejdy, 2016; Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016; Omisakin et al., 2016; Rauch et al., 2009).

Lumpkin and Dess (2001) identified two further dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation: Competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. Many authors have used these additional dimensions to measure EO (Duru et al., 2018; Kaunda, 2013; Sriprasert, 2013). Furthermore, it has been noticed that several research studies on entrepreneurial orientations were accomplished using entrepreneurial orientation dimensions in various combinations (Soininen, 2013). Therefore, the four dimensions of innovativeness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy were selected to measure entrepreneurial orientations in this study:

Innovativeness is defined as a firm's willingness to contribute to creativity and experimentation through the development and the launch of novel products/services as well as process and business model innovation leadership via its activities in research and development (Pérez-Luño et al., 2011). Another viewpoint conducted by Lomberg et al. (2017) examined the definition of innovativeness to encompass a company's engagement in research, experimentation, and developing new products, systems, or technologies.

The second dimension of entrepreneurial orientation is risk-taking, described as the firm's inclination and tendency to allocate a substantial amount of resources in endeavors where the cost of failure can be very high or the outcomes are uncertain (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2011). The role of risk-taking within the entrepreneurial orientation framework has garnered significant attention in research, shedding light on its pivotal importance in determining the success of companies. This comprehensive literature review provides an in-depth exploration of risk-taking, emphasizing its multifaceted dimensions and profound implications for organizational performance and growth.

The third dimension is competitive aggressiveness. This dimension seeks to preserve and grow existing resources in response to competitive threats (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Competitive aggressiveness is a firm's

inclination to confront its competitors directly and intensely to establish a new market position or enhance its existing one (McKenny et al., 2018). This aggressiveness requires companies to respond promptly to market changes and persistent demand. It is not limited to an aggressive demeanor but represents a passionate pursuit of outperforming significant competitors (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014).

The final dimension of entrepreneurial orientation is autonomy, which refers to the freedom and empowerment necessary for the realization and exploitation of opportunities through the application of business concepts (Lumpkin et al., 2009). According to a study conducted by Bratianu et al. (2023), entrepreneurial autonomy refers to the ability to make decisions regarding a company's business plan and implementation. This concept holds significant value in the entrepreneurial context and is frequently cited as a primary motivator for individuals to initiate and operate businesses (Jankelová, 2022).

Organizational Performance

The ultimate goal of any organization is to enhance their performance. As a result, organizational performance and its enhancement are considered the core of corporate strategic management, and thereby, most of their efforts are poured into this area (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Tseng & Lee, 2014). Organizational performance refers to a company's results as measured against its strategic goals. It also has been described as the process of action efficiency and effectiveness (Sardi et al., 2020). Organizational performance is one of the important factors for determining why some organizations succeed while others fail. Business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs must know the performance level of their organizations and take appropriate steps.

In today's hypercompetitive business landscape, where rapid technological advancements and evolving market dynamics present opportunities and challenges, organizations must continuously strive to enhance their performance to stay relevant and competitive. Moreover, as stakeholders increasingly scrutinize corporate sustainability and social responsibility, organizational performance extends beyond financial gains to encompass environmental stewardship, ethical practices, and societal impact. Therefore, understanding, measuring, and enhancing organizational performance are strategic imperatives and ethical obligations for businesses seeking long-term viability and success in a dynamic global marketplace.

Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Performance

Over the years, the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance has received much attention. Magaji (2019), asserted that entrepreneurship is one of the fastest-growing fields in management literature, particularly in recent decades. Scholars and popular media have suggested that entrepreneurial activities significantly and positively improve performance (Amofah et al., 2020). Andersen (2009) argued that the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance is complex and ambiguous. At the empirical level, past studies have shown a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance (Lee et al., 2001; Wiklund et al., 2011; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Several studies have revealed a positive impact of entrepreneurial orientation on performance (Alegre & Chiva, 2013; Hakala, 2013). Thus, it may be beneficial to adopt an entrepreneurial orientation because entrepreneurial strategies are regarded as being related to better firm performance. Because of that, the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance has been at the forefront of entrepreneurship literature for many years (DeepaBabu & Manalel, 2016).

The following relationship is hypothesized.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Entrepreneurial orientation is significant to organizational performance.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The population for this study comprises Asia, Korek, and Zain telecom companies in Iraq. The sample for this study was the employees in the headquarters offices of three Asia, Korek, and Zain telecom companies in Iraq. These main branches have 1250 employees. That divided owners, senior/general managers/deputy general

managers, department managers, unit team leaders, supervisors, and other employee departments in Iraq (Refer to Table 1)

Table 1 Population of The Employees In Headquarters Branches Of Telecom Companies In Iraq.

No.	Company	Headquarter office employees
1	Asiacell	550
2	Korek telecom	400
3	Zain-Iraq	300
Total		1250

G*Power statistical software was utilized to determine that for a desired power of 0.80, an effect size of f^2 of 0.15 (medium), and three predicting variables, the sample size necessary for this study was 120. Therefore, G*Power is used in this research to set the sample size. G*Power is recommended for sample size and power calculations for various statistical methods (F, t, χ^2 , Z, and exact tests) because it is easy to use and free. Based on G*Power, the minimum sample size in this study is 62.

A survey questionnaire was used to gather data for hypothesis testing. This research utilized the 5-point Likert scale to measure the entrepreneurial orientation questionnaire. According to the 5-point Likert scale, all the items were anchored according to the following: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

Variable And Measures

Entrepreneurial orientation: To measure EO, the items comprised innovativeness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy, according to the scale proposed by Zehir, Gurol, Karaboga, and Kole (2016).

Organization performance: To measure organization performance, the question was adapted from Ahmed and Shafiq (2014), who employ a balanced scorecard approach, which includes a financial perspective, customer perspective, internal business perspective, and learning and growth perspective.

Data Analysis

The statistical technique used was partial least squares structural equation modeling conducted using the statistical software SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2022). PLS-SEM, a second-generation statistical technique, was chosen due to its suitability for working with small sample sizes and nonparametric tests that address potential issues related to data normality (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, there has been a growing trend in various scientific fields, including computer sciences, engineering, environmental sciences, medicine, psychology, sociology, and political sciences, where researchers using SEM prefer PLS-SEM over CB-SEM. PLS-SEM is favored because “it offers a wide range of advanced analysis techniques and complementary methods, facilitating the handling of complex analytical tasks” (Becker et al., 2023). It also allows for the simultaneous consideration of reflective and formative models (Becker et al., 2012).

This study implemented PLS-SEM by estimating the model as a hierarchical component model Type II (reflective-formative mode) (Becker et al., 2012; Lohmöller, 1989). The two-stage embedded approach technique was employed, as recommended by Becker et al. (2012), Ringle et al. (2012) and Sarstedt et al. (2019).

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The demographic profile of the survey respondents provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample population. Regarding gender, 31.7% are female, while 68.3% are male. The majority of respondents fall within the 23-36 age group, comprising 64.2% of the sample, followed by the 37-52 age group at 30.8% and those aged 53 and above at 5.0%. Regarding marital status, single individuals represent 48.3% of the sample, while married individuals constitute 50.0%, with a small percentage reporting as divorced. Analyzing years of

experience, 41.7% of respondents have 1-5 years, 31.7% have 5-12 years, and 26.7% have 13-20 years, indicating a mix of junior, mid-level, and senior experience within their respective companies.

Single Source Bias Assessment

Harman Single-Factor Test

This study used Harman's single-factor test to detect the common method bias. This test entered all the constructs' items into the principal component analysis (PCA) with the unrotated factor solution. This is to assess if a single factor emerges or a single general factor accounts for the majority of the co-variation among constructs (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Aulakh & Gencturk, 2000; Greene & Organ, 1973; Krishnan et al., 2006; Schriesheim, 1979; Steensma et al., 2013). The results revealed that the first factor captured only 29.510% of the variance in data. Additionally, no single factor had emerged, and most of the variances were not produced by the first factor, as shown in Table 2. Thus, common method variance is not a serious issue in this study.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues ^a			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	24.793	45.273	45.273	24.793	45.273	45.273

Estimation Of Higher-Order Constructs (HOC) In PLS-SEM Through Repeated Indicator Approach

Using the repeated indicator approach, the higher-order construct could be constructed by specifying a latent variable that describes all the items of the underlying first-order construct (Lohmöller, 1988; Becker et al., 2012). Thus, the entrepreneurial competencies as a second-order construct constitute four dimensions, including innovativeness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy, as underlying lower-order constructs, each with their particular manifest variables, as shown in Table 3. Therefore, entrepreneurial competencies as a second-order latent variable can be specified using all (16) manifest variables of the underlying domains taken as lower-order constructs. As a result, the manifest variables have been used twice: (i) for the first-order latent variables, where they indicate primary loadings, and (ii) for the second-order latent variable, where they represent the secondary loadings. Thus, the outer model was specified this way.

Table 3 Indicator of Constructs

Entrepreneurial Orientation (First order Construct)	Manifest Variable of First-Order Construct	Number of Manifest Variables
Innovativeness	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4	4
Risk Taking	RT1, RT2, RT3	3
Competitive Aggressiveness	CA1, CA2, CA3	3
Autonomy	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6	6
4 Construct		16

Assessment of Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed for convergent validity, which was evaluated through composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018). The CR of each construct in this model (see Table 4) is > 0.70, sufficient for high-level study. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) value assesses the constructs' convergent validity. For validating the concepts, an AVE value ≥ 0.5 is appropriate (Refer to Table 4).

Table 4: Reliability and Validity Results

Variable	Item	Initial model Outer Loading ≥ 0.70	Modified model Outer Loading ≥ 0.70	Internal Consistency Reliability		Convergent validity AVE ≥ 0.50
				Cronbach's Alpha α ≥ 0.70	Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70	
Innovativeness	IN1	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.92	0.74

	IN2	0.88	0.88			
	IN3	0.85	0.85			
	IN4	0.84	0.84			
Risk Taking	RT1	0.81	0.81	0.86	0.92	0.78
	RT2	0.77	0.77			
	RT3	0.73	0.73			
Competitive Aggressiveness	CA1	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.89	0.74
	CA2	0.88	0.88			
	CA3	0.86	0.86			
Autonomy	A1	0.83	0.83	0.91	0.93	0.69
	A2	0.87	0.87			
	A3	0.85	0.85			
	A4	0.84	0.84			
	A5	0.74	0.74			
	A6	0.84	0.84			

In assessing the discriminant validity of the variables, the heterotrait-monotrait criterion (HTMT) proposed by Henseler was employed. The HTMT criterion suggests that for discriminant validity to be established, the correlations between constructs (heterotrait correlations) should be lower than the correlations between items measuring the same construct (monotrait correlations), with a cut-off point typically set at 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).

In Table 5, the HTMT values for all variables were computed and examined. The obtained HTMT values ranged from 0.59 to 0.88, all falling below the HTMT 0.90 cut-off point. This indicates that the correlations between different constructs are lower than those within the same constructs, confirming the distinctiveness of the variables.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

	Autonomy	Competitive Aggressiveness	Innovativeness	Organizational Performance	Risk Taking
Autonomy					
Competitive Aggressiveness	0.63				
Innovativeness	0.59	0.76			
Organizational Performance	0.75	0.88	0.77		
Risk Taking	0.78	0.79	0.71	0.78	

Assessment Of Second-Order Construct

Hair et al. (2017) and Ramayah et al. (2018) have recommended three basic steps in the assessment of the formative measurement model, including (i) examining the convergent validity, (ii) assessing the collinearity issues, (iii) and analyzing the significance as well as the relevance of formative items.

When evaluating formative measurement models, researchers need to test whether the formatively measured constructs are highly correlated with a reflective measure of the same construct. This is known as redundancy analysis (Chin, 1998). In this regard, performing redundancy analysis means that a construct shall have formative

and reflective indicators to be captured in the questionnaire survey. Based on the results shown in Table 6 all four dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation yield a path coefficient of 0.29 for Innovativeness, risk-taking at 0.25, competitive aggressive at 0.21, and autonomy at 0.43.

Collinearity is determined by the variance inflation factor (VIF). Since the study deals with a reflective formative Type II second-order latent variable, the inner VIF values were considered to evaluate the collinearity issues. Hair et al. (2017) revealed that the threshold value of VIF should be less than five. As in Table 6 below, all VIF values are less than the recommended value.

Table 6: Convergent Validity and VIF Results

Variable	Item	Weight	Path coefficient	VIF < 5
Innovativeness	IN1	0.28	0.29	2.82
	IN2	0.29		3.04
	IN3	0.28		2.32
	IN4	0.30		2.23
Risk-taking	RT1	0.40	0.25	2.21
	RT2	0.38		2.67
	RT3	0.36		1.99
Competitive Aggressiveness	CA1	0.37	0.21	1.78
	CA2	0.37		2.12
	CA3	0.43		1.77
Autonomy	A1	0.21	0.43	2.59
	A2	0.23		3.02
	A3	0.21		2.80
	A4	0.19		2.61
	A5	0.17		2.02
	A6	0.20		2.57

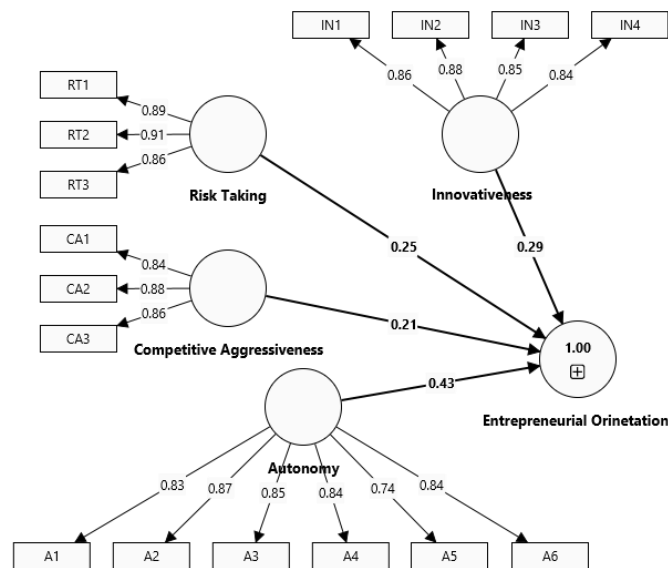


Figure 1: Measurement model

Lastly, the bootstrapping procedure evaluated the indicators' weight significance, expressing their relative importance through loadings (Hair et al., 2011). Smart PLS was employed to evaluate the items' weight significance and relevance. The bootstrapping procedure for 1000 resamples (Chin, 2010; Ramayah et al., 2018) was used to evaluate the formative indicators' weight significance. Lohmöller (1989) recommended that a weight of >0.1 expressed significance for an indicator. The outcome showed that all weights were above the suggested value of 0.1. Table 7 and Figure 2 illustrate significant t-values in all the weight of formative indicators that delivered empirical support to keep all indicators (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2011).

Table 7 Testing of The Significance of Weights

	Std. Beta	Std. Dev	T value	P values
Autonomy -> Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.43	0.03	17.15	<0.000
Competitive Aggressiveness -> Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.21	0.01	14.65	<0.000
Innovativeness -> Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.29	0.02	14.44	<0.000
Risk Taking -> Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.25	0.02	15.96	<0.000

Structural Model Analysis

The path coefficients and their accompanying t-values were created using the bootstrapping technique of Hair et al. (2011) with 500 re-samples. The results reveal that Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted, as indicated by a significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.69$) with a high t-value of 7.51** at $p < 0.000$ significance level. This finding suggests a strong positive relationship between the independent (entrepreneurial orientation) and the dependent (organizational performance) variables.

Table 8 Bootstrapping Results – Hypotheses Testing (Direct Relationship)

	Std. Beta	Std. Dev	T value	P values	Decision
Entrepreneurial Orientation -> Organizational Performance	0.85	0.03	29.12	<0.000	Accepted

DISCUSSION

The link between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance has become a key issue of interest in previous studies. These studies have shown that entrepreneurial orientation remains a prominent factor that potentially influences organizational performance and could extensively improve organizational performance (Ahmad, 2017; Hoque, 2018; Umrani et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2019; Adebisi et al., 2019; Ambad & Wahab, 2016; Barrett & Weinstein, 2015). Based on the findings, it was found that entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance have a significant effect $\beta = 0.85$, $t = 29.12^{**}$ at $p < 0.000$ significance level. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

These results align with prior research by Matloob et al. (2020), Alqahtani and Usay (2020), and Dewan et al. (2023), emphasizing the pivotal and positive role of entrepreneurial activities in enhancing organizational performance. Specifically, considering the entrepreneurial orientation dimensions, namely innovativeness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy, these studies corroborate our findings, providing a robust foundation for the critical link between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational success.

The telecom industry giants under scrutiny, namely Zain Iraq, Asiacell, and Korek Telecom, play instrumental roles in propelling mobile telephony and internet services across Iraq. The study highlights a substantial effect ($\beta = 0.85$, $t = 29.12^{**}$) between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance, with innovativeness emerging as a critical driver. These telecom powerhouses have consistently demonstrated a commitment to innovation by introducing cutting-edge technologies and pioneering new service offerings. Implementing advanced communication solutions has set them apart in the market and significantly elevated customer satisfaction, thereby positively impacting overall organizational performance.

Investigating the relationship of entrepreneurial orientation with organizational performance in this study sheds light on how entrepreneurial behavior within telecommunications firms affects their ability to adapt to changing market conditions, innovate, and stay competitive. Understanding the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance can also highlight the balance between risk-taking and resilience in the telecom sector, particularly in the face of technological disruptions and market uncertainties (Ashal et al., 2021; Alenzi et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study significantly contributes to the entrepreneurship literature by providing additional evidence supporting the positive correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance,

particularly in an under-examined context within developing economies. This research fills a notable gap in the literature, as studies have been scarce exploring this relationship within such contexts. By investigating the telecommunications industry, which is a vital sector in many developing economies, this study offers valuable insights into how entrepreneurial orientation impacts organizational performance in a unique setting.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this research offers practical implications for various stakeholders, including practitioners, investors, entrepreneurs, board members, and fund providers. It provides a framework for appraising the success of telecommunications companies, offering guidance on strategic decision-making and resource allocation. Practitioners can leverage the findings to enhance their understanding of the factors driving telecom sector performance and refine their strategies accordingly. Investors and fund providers can use this research to inform their investment decisions and risk assessments, recognizing the significance of entrepreneurial orientation in predicting the performance of telecommunications firms. Additionally, entrepreneurs and board members can draw upon the insights from this study to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture within their organizations, fostering innovation, agility, and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market landscape.

Overall, this study advances scholarly knowledge by expanding the empirical evidence on the entrepreneurial orientation and organizational performance relationship and provides actionable insights that can inform strategic practices and investment decisions in the telecommunications industry and beyond.

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