

# **The Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation, Business Networks Orientation, Export Market Orientation and SME Export Performance: A Proposed Research Framework**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study proposing a research framework of the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Export Market Orientation (EMO), Business Network Orientation (BNO) and SME export performance. This framework developed based on extensive literature. There are few studies have attempted to investigate the combined effect of EO, EMO and BNO in a framework with SME export performance, especially in the context of Pakistan. Literature failed to find the consistency relationship between EO, EMO, BNO and SME export performance. This study delivers useful information and adds knowledge to the literature pointing to increase their business performance.

**Keywords:** Business Network Orientation, SME export performance, Export Market Orientation, Entrepreneurial Orientation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this challenging business environment, the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can not be denied (Raju & Rajan, 2015). SMEs considered the backbone of the country's economy (Soomro & Aziz, 2015). Importantly, SMEs contributed in employment generation, initiator of innovation and the main contributor of the country's exports (Advani, 1997; Akingunola, 2011; Khaskheli & Jun, 2016; Soomro & Aziz, 2015). Demirbag, Lenny Koh, Tatoglu, and Zaim (2006) evaluated that SMEs contribution has a significant effect on the economic growth in both developed and developing countries. Asia region includes Japan 50%, South Korea 49.4% and Indonesia 57.8% (Yoshino & Wignaraja, 2015), Taiwan 85% (Jabri, 2016), China (60%) and

Singapore (50%) (OECD, 2014), are rapidly growing as a result of the SMEs significant contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

According to the McKinsey and International Finance Corporation 2010 survey, the total numbers of the SMEs worldwide are between 420 & 510 million, and 360 to 440 million are located in developing countries (North & Varvakis, 2016). In developed countries, i.e. European union, SMEs contributes 66.9% to employment, 57.8% in annual GDP of the country and 33.3% contributed in country total export (Patrice Muller & Cox, 2015). Consequently, United State of America's SMEs contributed in 52.4% in employment, 44.4% of annual GDP and 34% of total export revenue in the country (Patrice Muller & Cox, 2015; Shahin Firoozmand, 2015). In upper middle countries, i.e. China, SMEs contribute 64.7% in employment, 60% of annual GDP and 41.5% in total export of the country, while in lower income countries, for example, India, the contribution of SMEs stand at 37.5% of annual GDP, 57.28% in employment and 42.4% in total export of the country (Patrice Muller & Cox, 2015; Shigehiro Shinozaki, 2014).

Given that several empirical studies (For instance, (Hussain, Rahman, and Shah (2016); Rehman (2016));(Boso, Oghazi, Cadogan, and Story (2016); Nuseir (2016); Osman, Ahmad, Rashid, and Hussain (2011); Yan, He, and Cheng (2016)) have linked different success factors with SMEs export performance such as Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), Business Network Orientation (BNO), Export Market Orientation (EMO). Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) reflects a firm's degree of risk-taking, proactiveness and innovativeness (Covin & Slevin, 1989). Export market orientation (EMO) encompasses a firm's organizational-wide generations of export market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it (Cadogan, Diamantopoulos, & Mortanges, 1999). Business network orientation is a firm strategy that stresses effective and efficient locations of network partners, management of business network relationships to leverage the knowledge and resource access, transfer and creation generate competitive advantage (Mu & Di Benedetto, 2011). However, a finding of these studies was contradicting. Such as, some of the studies found positive results between EO and SMEs export performance (Ajayi, 2016; Boso et al., 2016; Cadogan, Boso, Story, & Adeola, 2016). Some of studies found the insignificant result (Feder, 2015; Felzensztein, Ciravegna, Robson, & Amorós, 2015; Mutlu & Aksoy, 2014).

Moreover, in terms of the relationship between BNO and SME export performance, (Jin & Jung, 2016; Serrano, Acero, & Fernandez-Olmos, 2016; Torrens, Amal, & Tontini, 2014; Yan et al., 2016) found positive associations between the variables, while (Babakus, Yavas, & Haahti, 2006; Kenny & Fahy, 2011a, 2011b; Papastamatelou, Busch, Ötken, Okan, & Gassemi, 2016) found insignificant relationship. While, Singh and Mahmood (2013); Abiodun and Mahmood (2015); Pascucci, Bartoloni, and Gregori (2016) found the strong positive relationship between EMO and SME export performance, and they considered the critical success factors of SME export performance. In contrast, Godwin Ahimbisibwe and Abaho (2013) investigated the EMO and SME export performance and found an insignificant relationship.

Therefore, the contradictory finding regarding the EO, BNO, EMO and SME export performance, relationship reported in the literature, might be the absence of underlying moderating variables. The moderating variable explaining, when and how EO, BNO and EMO relate to SME

export performance. This relationship has not been well investigated, either theoretically and empirically. Therefore, to introduce the moderating variable to confirm the relationship between EO, BNO, EMO and SME export performance is positive or negative.

Resource Based View (RBV) that entrepreneurial orientation, business networking orientation and export market orientation can be described as firm- level's abilities to leverage resources through a mixture of innovativeness, proactiveness, and relationship with stakeholders, targeting the customer need and demands in the international arena (Mu & Di Benedetto, 2011; Pascucci et al., 2016; Yan et al., 2016).

Therefore, this paper's objective is to suggest EO, BNO and EMO behaviours under the guide of resources based theory that can be adequately used as an important tool to improve the export performance of SMEs. However, limited studies have investigated the combined effect of EO, BNO, and EMO with SME export performance. There is need to develop a comprehensive framework for the improvement of SME export performance, especially in context of Pakistan.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Overview of SMEs in Pakistan**

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are considered as the backbone of the economy of Pakistan. Recent statistics showed that approximately 3.2 million small and medium enterprises exist in Pakistan. SMEs in Pakistan distributed into service, manufacturing and agriculture sector, including such as 600,000 units in service, 400,000 units in manufacturing and 10,00000 units in trading (retailers) (GALLUP, 2004). They employ up to 90 percent of all private enterprises in the industrial sector and almost 78 percent of the non-agriculture labour force (Yoshino & Wignaraja, 2015). Besides giving out 35 percent in manufacturing value added products, their contribution is around 30 percent of the GDP and contributes 25 percent share in the exports of manufactured products (Yoshino & Wignaraja, 2015).

SMEs in Pakistan spread all around the country, such as share of Punjab province more than other provinces which are (65.4%), the share of Baluchistan province is smaller than other provinces which are (2.3%), While those of Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa are (18%) and (14.3%) respectively (Thaver & Alamgir, 2014). Furthermore, SMEs divided into different clusters, such as the textile cluster around Faisalabad, the engineering, pharmaceutical, and textile clusters around Karachi, and the light engineering/sports goods cluster in the Sialkot, Gujarat, and Gujranwala triangle (Mahmud, Ahmed, Hamid, & Rahim, 2010). In manufacturing and other sectors, 87 percent of SMEs employ less than five people while 98 percent employs either 10 persons or less than it (Jasra, Hunjra, Rehman, Azam, & Khan, 2011).

Jasra et al. (2011) highlighted that SMEs are contributing quite effectively in industrial employment and export of different manufacturing goods and manufacturing sector of Pakistan consists 85% of SMEs business. Therefore, SMEs development most critical for economic development and employment generation in the context of Pakistan, as well as in World (Thaver & Alamgir, 2014).

## **2.2 Export performance**

Export performance is a degree in which firm achieved their strategic and financial objectives when firm export the product in the international market (Cavusgil & Zou, 1994). Researchers explained determinants of export performance in two aspect of factors such as internal and external determinants of export performance (Beleska-Spasova, 2014; Carneiro, Rocha, & Silva, 2011; Dueñas-Caparas, 2007; La, Patterson, & Styles, 2005; Lages, 2000; Maurel, 2009; Nazar & Shaikh, 2011; Torrens et al., 2014; Zou & Stan, 1998). Such as internal factors divided into firm characteristics, competencies, product characteristics, management attitude, and perception, while the external factors consist of industry's characteristics, domestic market characteristics and foreign market (Chen et al., 2016).

There is no agreement among the researchers about export performance operationalization (Navarro, Losada, Ruzo, & Díez, 2010). Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan (2000); Sousa (2004); divided the export performance into three groups measures, economic measure (sales related measure, profit measure and market share related measure), non-economic measure (product related measure, market related measures and miscellaneous related measures), and generic measures (perceived export success, achievement of export objectives, satisfaction with export performance, strategic export performance). Similarly, a recent study conducted by (Beleska-Spasova, 2014) agreed on that export performance is multi-dimensional in nature. (Zou, Taylor, & Osland, 1998) EXPERF scale for export performance covered the both financial and non-financial measures with both objectives and subjective measures of export performance as well. Moreover, the author explained the EXPERF scale is a multidimensional and its dimensions are financial, strategic and satisfaction with the export venture. This scale has been empirically validated the many studies in different contexts (Beleska-Spasova, Glaister, & Stride, 2012; Styles, 1998; Zou & Stan, 1998). Therefore, we can analyse the EP on the (Zou et al., 1998) operationalized the concept as three dimensions of EP in multidimensional approach for reliable results.

The export performance of the firm can be perceived from resource base view (internal factors) and contingency approach (external factors) (Maurel, 2009; Torrens et al., 2014). The resources base view is intended to export firm achieve the competitive advantage to using the in-hand resources uniquely comparatively their competitor (Barney, 1991). Whereas, the contingency theory recommended that the environmental factors incline export performance and firms' strategies (Chen et al., 2016).

## **2.3 Entrepreneurial Orientation**

According to management literature, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) defines as the firm level process, practices and decision-making styles of entrepreneurial firms (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Many studies suggested that EO is the important tool to achieve competitive advantages and increased the maximum profit of the firm (Zahra & Covin, 1995).

Most of the researchers operationalized the EO as three main core components, namely innovativeness, risk taking and proactiveness (Covin & Slevin, 1989). Innovativeness shows firm ability to accept new ideas, encourage experiments and favour to change (Hurley & Hult, 1998). Risk taking is the level of firms to take bold actions and assign resources to avail the

opportunities in a dynamic environment (Davis, Morris, & Allen, 1991). Proactiveness is the third component of the EO that refers the process to take the forward-looking step according to the change in business environment and entering in new marketing to enhance and create products/service of the first movers (Davis, 2007; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

However, some authors have been operationalized the entrepreneurial orientation via five dimensions such as innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, aggressiveness, and autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In addition, regarding EO construct dimension, Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, and Frese (2009); Saeed, Yousafzai, and Engelen (2014) reviewed the previous studies and found the majority of the studies, operationalized the EO constructs as one-dimensional. However, numerous studies conducted on firm performance that adopted the three dimensions with unidimensional approach of EO (Ajayi, 2016; Altinay, Madanoglu, De Vita, Arasli, & Ekinci, 2016; Amin, Thurasamy, Aldakhil, & Kaswuri, 2016; Anderson & Eshima, 2013; Asad, Sharif, Mohd, & Alekam, 2016; Boso et al., 2016; Cadogan et al., 2016). Therefore, we can analyze the EO on the Covin and Slevin (1989), the operationalized concept as three dimensions of EO as a unidimensional construct for a better result.

### **2.3.1 The relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Export Performance**

Most of the SMEs are domestic-oriented and fulfil the domestic needs (Davari, Walley, & Haycox, 2011). They are not willing to participate in export business due to uncertainty and high risk to lose the local market share. Even those firms involved in export business, their business growth is better than non-export firms (Baldwin & Gu, 2003). According to Dadfar, Dahlggaard, Afazeli, and Brege (2015) found that export performance enhanced the firm local market performance. The researcher from the field of business management, such as (Anderson and Eshima (2013); Eggers, Kraus, Hughes, Laraway, and Snyckerski (2013); Laukkanen, Nagy, Hirvonen, Reijonen, and Pasanen (2013); Reijonen, Hirvonen, Nagy, Laukkanen, and Gabrielsson (2015)) found that EO enhanced the firm ability toward risk-taking, innovative and proactiveness.

Some of the studies found that EO dimensions namely innovativeness, risk taking and proactiveness influence the SME export performance (Ajayi, 2016; Boso et al., 2016; Cadogan et al., 2016; Celec, Globocnik, & Kruse, 2014; Godwin Ahimbisibwe & Abaho, 2013; Jalali, 2012; Samson & Mahmood, 2015). The explanations of findings that firm is focusing on international opportunities introduce the innovative products and competitive strategies' and proactively react the international market and experienced the firm high export performance. Furthermore, (Feder (2015); Felzensztein et al. (2015); Mutlu and Aksoy (2014)) found an insignificant relationship between EO and export performance of SMEs. Because managerial attitude is negative towards innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking activities, then firm experience low export performance.

Moreover, Abiodun and Rosli (2014) from Nigeria with the sample of 201 manufacturing, exporting SMEs, reported a significant relationship between EO and SME export performance and indicated the positive mediating relationship of reconfiguring capabilities between EO and export performance. Another study Fernández-Mesa and Alegre (2015) investigated the relationship of EO and export intensity with the mediating role of innovation and organisational



learning to use the 150 ceramic tile SMEs from Spain and Italy. The survey questionnaire used for data collection and structural equation modelling method used to analyse the primary data. The finding of the study reported the positive relationship of EO and export intensity and found full mediation of innovation and organisational learning between EO and export intensity. Therefore, we found limited studies between EO and SME export performance and especially in the context of Pakistan. Additionally, we find mixed finding between EO and firm performance relationship need to be further validated to confirm the relationship most especially in the context of exporting SMEs where research is still limited.

## **2.4 Business Networks Orientation**

Business network refers to firm behaviours, like practices/routines/activities, which enable a firm to make sense of and capitalise on their networks of direct and indirect business relationship (Thornton, Henneberg, & Naudé, 2014). The network is considered as one of the most influential resources since it provides access to information, technologies, knowledge, power and capital (Ahuja, 2000; Axelsson & Easton, 2016; Ginting, 2015; Javalgi & Todd, 2011; Li & Zhou, 2010; Naudé & Rossouw, 2010). Networks divided into two broad categories, namely (1) personal networks (Jin & Jung, 2016) or informal contacts (Coviello, Ghauri, & Martin, 1998) or social relationship (Coviello & McAuley, 1999) or informal networks (Shaw, 2006) and (2) inter-firm networks (Manolova, Manev, & Gyoshev, 2010) or formal contacts (Hutchinson, Quinn, & Alexander, 2006) or business networks (Jin & Jung, 2016) or organizational networks (Premaratne, 2001).

Regarding the informal, personal networks define it's as an informal structure of personal relations formed through schooling, family, marriage, living experience in foreign countries (Zhao & Hsu, 2007). In the view of formal networks referred as close and long-lasting relationship with the firm's important suppliers, customer, trade unions, competitors, government institutions (Axelsson & Easton, 2016; Ginting, 2015; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). According to Huggins (2010) that investment in calculative relations by firms to gain access to knowledge to enhance the expected economic return. Most of SMEs firms hire the foreign experienced managers, consultant and participate in trade exhibitions to develop the business networks (Fletcher & Harris, 2012; Loane & Bell, 2006; Measson & Campbell-Hunt, 2015; Torrens et al., 2014).

Operationalization of BNO, still underdeveloped, different author operationalized differently in different context. Such as Jin and Jung (2016) operationalized the BNO as network with former employers/employees, existing clients and business associates. In other study relationship Nyuur, Brečić, and Simintiras (2016) operationalized as ties with the customer, supplier, competitors and government officials. Furthermore, (Mu and Di Benedetto (2011); Mu, Thomas, Peng, and Di Benedetto (2016)) investigated the business network as finding a network partner, managing network relationship and leverage network relationship. Thornton et al. (2014) operationalized the BNO in four constructs such as information acquisition, opportunity enabling, strong-tie resource mobilisation and weak-tie resources mobilisation. First, information acquisition refers to a firm's tendency to use both strong-tie and weak-tie relationships to obtain desired information for making informed decisions. Secondly,

opportunity enabling relates to a firm's awareness, acts to sense the opportunities by strategically interacting with relevant parties in its network. Thirdly, strong-tie resource mobilisation is utilised by a firm to adjust, transfer and pool resources across various established relationships to address certain firm challenges. Finally, weak-tie resource mobilisation refers to the ability to mobilise resources that are linked to firms' less established relationships.

Moreover, Thornton, Henneberg, and Naudé (2015) found the positive relationship of BNO four constructs such as information acquisition, opportunity enabling, strong-tie resource mobilisation and weak-tie resources mobilisation with firm performance such as firm profitability. According to previous literature, Thornton et al. (2014) scale of BNO measurement is more reliable. Therefore, we can adapt the Thornton et al. (2014) scale in the context of the international market to investigate the relationship between BNO and SME export performance.

#### **2.4.1 The Relationship between Business Networks Orientation and Export Performance**

Linh, Quynh, and Chi (2016) stated that firm cannot operate without business networks among within company departments and external relationship with suppliers, distributors, strategic partnership units, government, trade unions. According to Kusumawardhani, McCarthy, and Perera (2009) stressed that firms access to resources through networking. Moreover, small and medium business strongly depended on external entities and cooperate with partners to improve their performance (Lin & Lin, 2016). Maina, Marwa, Waiguchu, and Riro (2016) proved that business networking is a vital element for SMEs to get a competitive advantage and found that network intensity and range influence the manufacturing SME performance, especially in the context of developing country such as Kenya.

Exporting activity has been considered a key for internationalisation of the SMEs firms. Ajayi (2016) examined the relationship of business network capability and SME export performance in the context of developing countries, such as Nigeria and found that strong positive relationship between networking and export performance. Furthermore, in the context of the Nordic countries and investigate the domestic and international business networking and SME export performance. The result of the hypothesis support of international networking and export performance of the SMEs and reject the hypothesis between domestic business networking and SME export performance (Babakus et al., 2006). In another study Brouthers, Nakos, and Dimitratos (2015) conduct the study in UK and USA and investigated the relationship network alliance in term of research and marketing information alliance and SME export performance and presented that SMEs have higher export performance under the research and market alliance. According to Ginting (2015) investigated the firm relationship in term of network resources, namely access to opportunity, access to knowledge, co-innovation and firm export performance. The authors reported the positive relationship between the network resource and Indonesian SMEs firm financial and non-financial performance. Moreover, Jin and Jung (2016) examined the influence of personal and business network on the export performance of SMEs in the USA. To use the 105 SMEs used for analysis and found that

personal networks have an impact than business network on the export performance of SMEs in the USA.

Furthermore, (Kenny and Fahy (2011a), 2011b)) conducted a study in Ireland and examined the relationship of network characteristics, network operation, network resources and export performance of SMEs. The result of the study shown the positive relationship between networks strong ties, network coordination, human capital resources and export performance of the SMEs. Moreover, found the no support between weak ties, trust, network initiation, cooperation sensitive resources, relational capability, network learning, information sharing and firm financial, market and satisfaction export performance. Moreover, above inconsistency result due to a low degree of information and motivation between, inter-firm relationship high control relationships also become the reason of insignificance of the result. (Torkkeli, Puumalainen, Saarenketo, & Kuivalainen, 2012). In another study of Shneor et al. (2016) examined the network competence in the domestic and intentional market and found that network competence influence the international growth of SMEs and network competence do not support to SMEs growth in domestic market.

Ou-Yang, Chaisingharn, and Nguyen (2016) investigated the moderating role of market orientation on the relationship between managerial ties and export performance of the Chinese small and medium firms. The study supported the hypothesis of the relationship between managerial ties and the export performance and market orientation moderating the relationship of managerial ties and profit, market share and satisfaction of exporting firms.

Therefore, above discussion, we find inconsistency result between business networking and SME export performance, and limited studies in the context of Pakistan, need to validate the relationship in detail.

## **2.5 Export Market Orientation**

Market orientation (MO) is essential for a firm because it captures the ability to anticipate, address and take advantage of market changes in customer needs in order to achieve superior performance (Styles, Gray, Kropp, Lindsay, & Shoham, 2006). MO from a different perspective, i.e. (Kohli and Jaworski (1990); Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993)) sees MO as behavioural activities and Narver and Slater (1990) sees the MO as an aspect of organisational culture. The cultural perspective MO defined by Narver and Slater (1990) on the base of three components, which are (1) Customer orientation (2) Competitor orientation (3) inter-functional coordination. Kohli et al. (1993) defined three constructs of MO, which is (1) market intelligence; this is an ability of firms in which firms identify the customer's future needs, (2) intelligence dissemination; in this step organizations distribute the market information within organization formally and informally, (3) responsiveness; in this step take the action to response intelligence. However, MO refers to the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer need, dissemination of the intelligence across the department, and the organization-wide responsiveness to it" (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Kohli et al., 1993).

However, if a firm possesses a strong market orientation in its domestic market not mean such firm has a high degree of market orientation in export activity (Cadogan, Paul, Salminen, Puumalainen, & Sundqvist, 2001). Cadogan et al. (1999) conceptualised the MO the



international market as an export-focused generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to export market intelligence in international markets.

The operationalization of EMO, used the Kohli et al. (1993) (MARKOR) measurement scale by Cadogan et al. (1999) in export context with some modification. However, many researcher validate the Kohli et al. (1993) after Cadogan et al. (1999) in their export performance research, such as (Abiodun & Mahmood, 2015; Chang & Fang, 2015; Kayabasi, Kayabasi, Mtetwa, & Mtetwa, 2016; Lin, Huang, & Peng, 2014; Navarro, Acedo, Losada, & Ruzo, 2011; Singh & Mahmood, 2013) in one-dimensional and multi-dimensional perspective. The current study will be used the Cadogan et al. (1999) scale to investigate the relationship between EMO and SME export performance.

### **2.5.1 The relationship between export market orientation and export performance**

Considerable portions of literature have carried out an examination of EMO and SME export performance. Among of them is Singh and Mahmood (2013) who examined export market orientations and export performance of SMEs in the context of Malaysia and found the significant positive relationship between export market orientation and export performance outcome namely profitability, sales volume, market share and new markets. Also, Abiodun and Mahmood (2015) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between export market orientation, learning orientation and export performance in a turbulent environment. They collected data from 201 Nigerian' SMEs. Based on their results, export market orientation and learning orientation positively influence export performance. This means firms should have the market capability for superior competitive advantage and business performance.

In a related study, Godwin Ahimbisibwe and Abaho (2013) investigated the relationship between export market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation (innovation), and performance of exporting firms in Uganda. The finding revealed the insignificant result between export market orientation and export performance and found the strong relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (innovation) and export performance. The insignificant relationship between export market orientation and export performance due to Uganda firms that are more focused on innovation than export market orientation.

Therefore, according to the above literature, it is postulated that there will be an insignificant relationship between export market orientation and export performance, needs to validate in detail.

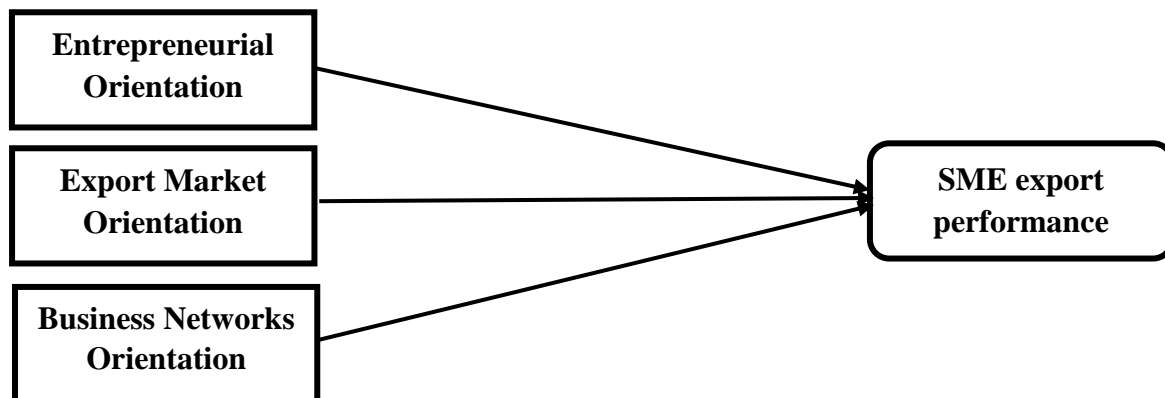
### **3. Proposed Research Framework**

The research framework has been proposed by reviewing the extensive literature. The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, export market orientation, business network orientation and SME export performance have been explored by extensive literature review. The research framework has three independent variables, which will represent of SMEs valuable resources, namely EO, EMO and BNO. The SME export performance serves as the dependent variable.

This study focuses on SME export performance. To introduce the strategic resources, this will be used to increase the SME export performance, especially in the context of Pakistan. The

resource base view theory is providing the theoretical background to validate the proposed research framework. According to RBV, strategic resources such as EO, EMO, and BNO is valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable, and then these resources give the sustainable competitive advantage, which will lead to high export performance (Barney, 1991).

### 3.1 Research Framework



Consequently, based on above-reviewed literature, a new conceptual model (research framework) has been proposed. Therefore, on the behalf of above discussion regarding the research framework, we are proposing the following proposition.

**Proposition 1:** There is a significant relationship between Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and SME export performance.

**Proposition 2:** There is a significant relationship between export market orientation (EMO) and SME export performance.

**Proposition 3:** There is a significant relationship between business networks orientation (BNO) and SME export performance.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed research framework developed on the behalf of previous literature. Where to propose the relationship between EO, EMO, BNO and SME export performance. We used the conceptual modelling methodology in this current study. Moreover, for a conceptual framework, we analysed the more than 100 conceptual and empirical papers of famous authors. Additionally, publications from famous newspapers, SMEDA, Ministry of finance and official's websites of various national and international institutions have been reviewed. These sources have been reviewed to have a comprehensive insight of any potential gaps in the previous studies.

### 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The proposed variables in this study have developed for decades of years, but still there are no regular and exact definitions of these variables, even many of researchers has been done about the effects and influence of entrepreneurial orientation, export market orientation and

business network orientation on SME export performance, however, many areas are still needed to further be explored in the future.

In this current study, the relationship between EO, EMO, BNO and SME export performance has been explored. Previous literature has shown that EO, EMO and BNO have a positive relationship with SME export performance (Abiodun & Mahmood, 2015; Ajayi, 2016; Jin & Jung, 2016). Some of the researchers, represented the insignificant relationship between EO, EMO, BNO and SME export performance (Feder, 2015; Godwin Ahimbisibwe and Abaho (2013); Papastamatelou et al., 2016). Therefore, need to further investigate the relationship between EO, EMO, BNO and SME export performance, especially in context of Pakistan, there are very limited studies to be done.

Moreover, proposed framework has several critical contributions regarding SME export performance. If the proposed framework is validated, the finding of research will provide important information to owners/managers into the significant role of the EO, EMO and BNO in improving the SME export performance. Secondly, the finding of proposed framework will also contribute to country GDP and employment and especially reduce the trade deficit of the country. For example, owners/managers can apply this proposed framework, finding to improve the SME export performance, which will be increased the country exports, foreign exchange, and reduced the trade balance, which is a burden for the country's economy.

Future studies should look this proposed framework in empirically, especially in the context of Pakistan.

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