

Research report title

International entrepreneurial orientation of South African ventures

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

04 March 2025

ABSTRACT:

The study examines Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) on the internationalisation of South African Ventures focusing on export market participation. EO is investigated in terms of innovativeness, proactivity, and risk-taking, as well as in terms of the moderating influence of environmental factors, including government support expressed as policies, incentives, and infrastructure. Targeting small, medium, and large South African exporting firms, a quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted utilising a standardised research instrument distributed through convenience sampling. Exporters provided data, which was examined to determine how EO characteristics relate to international performance.

Key findings suggest that whilst innovativeness showed an inverse relationship, proactiveness, and risk-taking positively correlated with improved export performance. Government support failed to moderate these relationships, such as policies, incentives, and infrastructure, and enhanced the benefits of EO on internationalisation. The primary challenges in South Africa identified turned out to be institutional support lacking and infrastructural constraints. The study concludes that effective internationalisation depends on both internal entrepreneurial capacities and external institutional elements. Recommendations stress the need to match government export support programs with the requirements of firms to promote sustainable economic development through increased export activity.

KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurial Orientation, Internationalisation, Firms, Government Support, Incentives

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

04 March 2025

Date

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The chapter introduces a research problem that addresses the international entrepreneurial orientation of South African companies when venturing into export markets. It provides a detailed overview of the research problem, the purpose statement, and the significance of the study. Furthermore, it highlights the need to examine environmental factors that influence the internationalisation of firms by explicitly focusing on government support for export activities.

The study examines exporting firms of all sizes. This offers a thorough understanding of export dynamics. A firm's size is considered important as it significantly affects its strategy when it comes to internationalisation. It considers entrepreneurship to involve the introduction of existing or new products and services into new markets, particularly export markets. Finally, the conclusion sets the stage for forthcoming chapters to provide more detail. The forthcoming chapters will provide a comprehensive examination of how entrepreneurial orientation influences the internationalisation of South African companies and the effect of institutional factors on this relationship.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The study investigates how entrepreneurial orientation influences South African ventures seeking export market opportunities. It also examines environmental factors that influence firms' internationalisation by focusing on government support for export activities. The study looks at exporting firms of any size. It considers entrepreneurship to involve the introduction of existing or new products and services into new markets, in particular export markets. International entrepreneurship cannot be considered in isolation because internal and external factors are crucial to success in international markets.

The internal factors partially determine the rate at which firms passively export or actively seek and pursue internationalisation (Ayadi-Frikha, 2015; Belniak, 2015). Moreover, firm resources and capabilities differ according to size, including financial, human, and technological assets (Mostafiz et al., 2021; Prakasa et al., 2021). Small firms might only rely on partnerships for export, whereas established firms usually possess considerable resources to invest in foreign countries through foreign direct investments (Chingwaru,

2022; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Domestic factor markets' development level will also influence firms' choices. South African companies may struggle to adapt to a new competitive environment if the domestic conditions are not adequately developed (Chingwaru, 2022).

Consequently, it is of vital importance to examine entrepreneurship theories as a basis for internationalisation. As a start, entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation, requiring energy and passion to create and implement new ideas and creative solutions (Ott & Hannah, 2024; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). The existing or new markets can be exporting markets, like Born Global firms (Mostafiz et al., 2021; Romanello et al., 2022; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Therefore, the entrepreneur must have an entrepreneurial orientation to develop insights into and explore expansion opportunities.

This means being innovative, proactive, and willing to take risks (Covin & Miller, 2014; Kalinic & Brouthers, 2022; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). More so, in the age of globalisation firms need to internationalise to remain competitive (Buccieri et al., 2021). The changing international economic landscape has given rise to international entrepreneurship, with entrepreneurs looking to expand their businesses beyond their home countries (Buccieri et al., 2021; Crick & Crick, 2024). This has also created a new academic discipline, termed international entrepreneurship or global entrepreneurship (Covin & Miller, 2014; Ghauri, et.al 2021).

At a local level, looking at South Africa, preliminary research seems to show that local firms are often unprepared to grasp new international market opportunities. At the same time, these firms face fierce competition from international players penetrating the domestic market (Anwana & Anwana, 2020; Grosse et al., 2023). Some entities focus their operations and offerings solely on the domestic market and do not adopt a global growth strategy (Jayasuriya & Perera, 2022).

As a result of this inward-looking approach, they are not able to access business opportunities. As such, they cannot contribute to significant economic growth and job creation. While several studies have looked at entrepreneurial orientation (EO) in the context of corporate entrepreneurship, these have not necessarily done so from an international point of view (Hernandez et al., 2022; Urban & Sefalala, 2015). Seemingly, there is very little understanding of how firms can internationalise their businesses and the extent to which the government can play a supportive role.

1.2. Context of the Study

The South African business landscape is an ever-changing and complex environment. The lifting of sanctions in the 1990s and the subsequent democratic dispensation in 1994 meant that South Africa became a member of the global community (Cwaile, 2023). Given its strategic position and economy, it is considered a powerhouse on the African continent (Mapuva & Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2015). Consequently, this also meant breaking out of the cocoon that isolated South African (SA) firms and protected them from facing global competitors at home and abroad (Mapuva & Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2015).

However, domestic markets may not be adequately developed or supported for firms to successfully adapt to this new competitive environment and seize international opportunities (Mapuva & Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2015). This is especially the case with South Africa. Old infrastructure, like the railways, makes it harder to move goods from within the domestic to international markets. The shortage of skills and lack of regional policy coordination are some concerns that need to be addressed.

Accordingly, while local conditions might give South African (SA) firms a home advantage, the same applies to international markets (Enaifoghe, 2024). The business environment is characterised by several challenges, but it also has opportunities for firms aiming to internationalise (Enaifoghe, 2024). This complexity leads local firms to be inwardly focused, with limited engagement on an international scale. This has led to missed opportunities and unrealised potential regarding development and expansion (Enaifoghe, 2024).

Local firms must possess relevant entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and entrepreneurial capabilities (Shree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Also, according to Enaifoghe (2024) the relevant environmental factors must be more dynamic and less hostile. Environmental factors must be shaped or influenced to promote entrepreneurship through a supportive institutional framework, including government policies, incentives, and infrastructure (Urban, 2019; Enaifoghe, 2024). However, for most firms in South Africa, the current macroeconomic environment can be viewed as a constraint on business activities and internationalisation efforts (Prassanath, 2024).

South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) is not growing as much as was expected. As a result, it has been modest, with a trade deficit because of increased imports and declining export activities (Roberts, 2023). Furthermore, the policy environment is largely characterised as hostile and disabling for firms. This has adverse effects on internationalisation, particularly on export activities (Adekunle et al., 2024). Studies on entrepreneurship and small businesses highlight entrepreneurs' challenges in South Africa. Small firms face survival challenges in international markets. This is equally valid for large international businesses, such as export services.

Government support is critical for creating an enabling environment in the local business context and paving the way in international markets (Prasannath, 2024). This will inevitably stimulate economic growth and contribute to job creation. South African ventures have succeeded in foreign markets but have been vulnerable, as in the case of MTN in Nigeria (Abe, 2024). Notwithstanding the need for corporate governance issues, the government's support is crucial for creating a conducive environment for thriving businesses. Most governments engage in bilateral and multilateral agreements to benefit their economies and expand local firms' market base (Gelb & Black, 2017; Bonnici & Sebola, 2021). These trade agreements are often formed to promote countries' trade balance, boost export operations for economic gains, and address domestic challenges.

Growth into new export entry, especially within emerging economies, has recently become a focal point in South Africa (Republic of SA, 2012). As such, the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path, and the Industrial Policy Action Plan emphasised the importance of Africa's economies for South African goods and services. If South African entrepreneurs can grow markets outside the borders and the continent, this will likely increase the primary base. It will also lead to GDP growth and increase remittance into the fiscal, essentially addressing the creation of jobs and eradicating poverty in general. Furthermore, it will address the triple challenge (National Planning Commission, 2012).

More opportunities are yet to be explored since South Africa is a gateway to the African sub-continent. Moreover, South Africa, as a member of BRICS, needs to explore trade opportunities in countries within BRICS, thereby maximising the opportunities in place

within these countries (Nach & Ncwadi, 2024). Enhancing innovation, fine-tuning the regulatory environment to address issues such as red tape and inadequate infrastructure, and improving market access could significantly contribute to exploiting global opportunities (Nach & Ncwadi, 2024). Given these exciting opportunities and challenges, there is a need to understand how entrepreneurial orientation influences the internationalisation of South African venture exporters, with government policies and support playing a moderating role.

1.3. Problem Statement

The importance of entrepreneurship has emerged as a focal point for scholars and practitioners in a progressively interconnected and globalised economy (Ghauri et al., 2021). Being situated in the far south of the African continent, South African companies face unique challenges and opportunities in accessing global markets, often constrained by geographical and institutional barriers (Adekunle, Eniola, & Balchin, 2024). It is primarily due to issues such as low entrepreneurial orientation (EO), inadequate institutional factors, and stringent environmental conditions that the majority of firms are unable to expand into the international market (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015; Mostafiz et al., 2021). This is especially true for South African companies seeking to export to nations whose foreign expansion remains challenging.

The core problem is a lack of empirical research examining how EO influences internationalisation among South African ventures (Wales, Gupta, & Mousa, 2021). EO fundamentally encompasses risk-taking, proactiveness, and innovation, and is considered essential for achieving a competitive advantage in international contexts (Kraus et al., 2023; Velez-Ocampo, 2025). However, the relationship between EO and successful internationalisation is influenced by internal and external factors, including regulatory frameworks, government policies, and access to resources (Zahra et al., 2020). Although government incentives aim to support internationalisation, there is a disconnect between policy initiatives and practical support, worsened by limited data tracking regarding South African ventures' international experiences (van Staden, 2022).

This prevents international entrepreneurial ecosystems from growing.

Given these issues, this research explores the impact of EO and environmental variables, in this instance, government assistance, on the internationalisation process of South African firms. It considers the interaction of drivers and obstacles that affect international performance, and how the contribution of EO to ventures venturing into exporting opportunities and the need for institutional assistance needs to be explored (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2020).

1.3.1. Sub-Problem 1

Scholars such as Ruzzier et al. (2020), and Urban (2019) argue that there is a correlation between EO and internationalisation, which significantly influences a firm's ability to expand internationally. Therefore, there is a need to examine the relationship within the context of South African export ventures.

1.3.2. Sub-Problem 2

According to the literature, environmental factors, including the policy environment, mediate the relationship between EO and internationalisation. Specifically, the research pays attention to the role of government support in creating a conducive climate for firms' internationalisation, particularly concerning export activities (Prasannath et al., 2024). The aim is to determine whether these factors enhance or hinder internationalisation.

1.4. Research Scope

The study explicitly examines the concept of international entrepreneurial orientation (IEO), which pertains to the mindset and behaviours that facilitate a firm's internationalisation efforts (Kraus et al., 2023; Mostafiz et al., 2021). This focus allows a deeper understanding of how South African businesses identify and exploit export market opportunities (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Target population is medium, small, and large exporting companies in South Africa, and while data are gathered from respondents, the company is the unit of analysis, something that is also common in research on international entrepreneurship. The research design used is cross-sectional, where data are gathered at a single point in time, so EO and internationalisation can be captured as a snapshot without measuring temporal change (Creswell, 2014).

In this context, internationalisation is defined as exporting to foreign markets, and domestic-only firms are excluded to analyse better export-specific dynamics (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2020). Throughout this study, terms such as venture, firm, organisation, or company are used interchangeably for conceptual consistency. The research also emphasizes the importance of the institutional context, particularly government support, in moderating the relationship between EO and internationalisation, as institutional environments can significantly shape entrepreneurial outcomes (Cirera & Maloney, 2020; Zahra et al., 2020).

In summary, the research scope thoroughly analyses the influence of EO on the internationalisation of South African ventures, while considering the role of government policies and institutional support mechanisms in facilitating international expansion (Ghauri et al., 2021).

1.5. The Significance of the Study

This multifaceted research study affects three key areas: theory, managerial practice, and policy formulation and implementation.

At a theoretical level, the research updates existing theories. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge by updating and expanding existing theories on EO and its influence on internationalisation. The aim within the South African context is to address a gap in the literature by evaluating how EO functions at the firm level concerning export market opportunities. At managerial levels, the research provides valuable insights about South African ventures leveraging new export market opportunities. This information aims to help managers formulate effective strategies to compete in international markets in order to achieve growth and sustainability. Furthermore, the information serves as a reality check on South African ventures' preparedness. Ultimately, this study highlights gaps that need attention and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that South African ventures face.

At the policy level, the research provides actionable intelligence for policymakers. This assists them in assessing the effectiveness of current policy instruments and incentives designed to support local companies in international markets. The South African government has an export incentive scheme to motivate local companies to compete in international markets. Therefore, this research identifies any disconnect between policy and practice. As such, it facilitates the creation of more pertinent and more effective support mechanisms for South African ventures aiming to expand their export activities. Furthermore, the information assists policymakers in devising instruments that improve circumstances for SA ventures to compete in export markets. It also helps to successfully realise opportunities in the emerging economies of Africa and beyond.

This study is critical because it helps fill key gaps in understanding how entrepreneurship affects international business. It also clarifies the role of government support, what this entails, and its implications for theory, practice, and policy in South African export businesses.

1.6. Assumptions

This research makes fundamental assumptions that underpin the study design and methodology. The first assumption is that the researcher will have adequate time to undertake and finish the research. This is of crucial importance in thoroughly conducting the analysis. The selected firms and individuals are expected to cooperate during the data collection, which is of utmost importance in collecting reliable data. The further assumption is that these firms' systems and operations are functioning effectively. It is also assumed that these firms have internationalised their businesses and that the respondents understand entrepreneurship and internationalisation. A further assumption is that EO is a significant determinant of internationalisation. Therefore, testing the relationship between EO and export opportunities is important. Another assumption is that generalising findings should be applied to a wider context of South African companies, especially those involved in exporting.

1.7. Conclusion

The orientation of South African venture exporters is underpinned and supported by a detailed background on the need to evaluate the internationalisation process. It further emphasises the importance of unpacking EO and its influence on exporting. It considers the effects of environmental factors in relation to government support. A current review of the gaps in the literature regarding international entrepreneurship establishes a foundation for further exploration of the relationship between EO, institutional support, and exporting.

The impact of environmental factors on government support aiding this journey is considered. Ultimately, the aim is to provide a guide on how South Africa can become competitive in global markets, paving the way to local gross domestic product (GDP) growth and a sustainable economy.

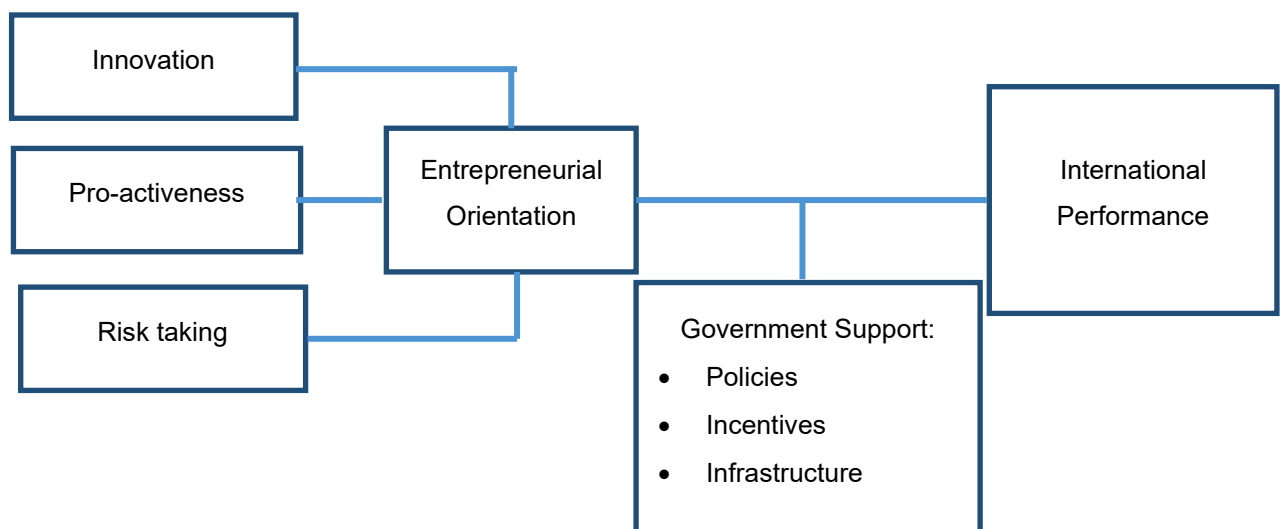
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review of the extant theory related to the problem. It starts by discussing the background of entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship, including internationalisation and performance. Then, it details the sub-problem areas, international entrepreneurial orientation, and environmental factors. Figure 1 provides an overview of the study, explaining the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and environmental factors in the context of South African companies that have ventured into international markets.

Figure 1

Overview of the study



Source: (Author's own model, 2025)

The study is in the field of international entrepreneurship and looks specifically at EO and environmental factors, with the latter focusing on government support. The interchange between these concepts is viewed as dynamic and ever-changing. It determines

international performance and overall competitiveness in the global marketplace. Ultimately, the aim is to evaluate how these factors affect internationalisation efforts. This provides a base for the research questions and hypotheses to follow.

2.2. Background Discussion

This section provides a definitional and conceptual understanding of entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship. The discussion looks specifically at these terms: entrepreneur, entrepreneurial firm, and internationalisation. This is important in setting the scene, providing a foundation for the debate, and interrogating and exploring the theoretical constructs.

2.3. Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurship, as defined, is a process undertaken by individuals and firms whose goal is to create value by utilising resources, exploring opportunities, and providing a unique offering (Stevenson & Jarillo, 2007; Kuratko & Morris, 2008; Alvarez & Barney, 2020; Daspit et al., 2023). According to scholars such as Morris, Kuratko, and Covin (2008), there are two schools of thought that relate to the individual and the firm, respectively.

According to the first school of thought, individuals are seen as visionaries and risk-takers, who have free will and exercise autonomy. They are passionate with a burning urge to change the status quo. Clark and Harrison (2019) and Fillion (2021) argue that these individuals have specific characteristics. They are creative and innovative and perform specific actions. These actions include: (1) identifying new opportunities; (2) starting and managing their enterprises; (3) organising and controlling resources to ensure profit; (4) having the ability to market a concept, product, or service; (5) obtaining the financial means; and (6) being willing to take calculated risks (Tu et al., 2021).

These individual entrepreneurs can be classified as necessity or opportunity-driven (Ruzzier et al., 2006; Pita et al., 2021; Kuratko & Morris, 2018). Necessity entrepreneurs

are perceived to be characterised by survival behaviours and a lack of options, while opportunity-driven entrepreneurs are likely to be innovative and growth-focused (Alvarez & Barney, 2020; Pita et al., 2021). Opportunity-driven entrepreneurs can be argued to match the characteristics put forward by Lumpkin and Dess (1996). They argued that an entrepreneur possesses three main characteristics: innovativeness, proactiveness, and the ability to take risks. These characteristics do not exist in a vacuum but are also influenced by environmental factors such as government support (Ahsan et al., 2020; Hernandez et al., 2022; Urban, 2019).

The second school of thought sees firms as entrepreneurs or showing entrepreneurial behaviours (Daspit et al., 2023; Filion, 2021). This is also taken to mean corporate entrepreneurship, in which the collective actions of individuals achieve firm objectives (Alvarez & Barney, 2020). The literature discusses two dimensions of entrepreneurship: the first one (Ansari et al., 2020; Alvarez & Barney, 2020; Asemokha et al., 2019) is entrepreneurship tied to the founder or individual entrepreneur and completed by a team requiring resources to seize opportunity within a market context. This mainly refers to small firms.

The other dimension by Asemokha et al. (2019) and Daspit et al. (2023) looks at innovation activities within firms, mainly focusing on large firms. However, these two dimensions are similar in that small and large firms can also be considered entrepreneurs, with entrepreneurship as a function and not a role. The entrepreneurial process is undertaken by both individuals and firms (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kuratko, 2008; Ott & hannah et al., 2019). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) and Daspit et al. (2023) see it as a process of pursuing a new venture.

While Lumpkin and Dess (1996) see it as an action of doing something new, a different but complementary dimension is discussed by Shane (2003), who sees it as a stage-based process. Shane (2003) suggests that the entrepreneurial process involves five stages: (1) identifying and evaluating opportunities; (2) deciding whether to exploit those opportunities; (3) making efforts to find resources; (4) organising those resources into a business venture; and (5) developing a strategy for the (new) venture.

Equally the same, Timmons and Spinelli (2003) offer another complementary view. They suggest that it is a process that involves three main elements: (1) the entrepreneur and the founding team, (2) the opportunity, and (3) the resources necessary for the start-up of a new venture. The interest in this discussion is to examine the entrepreneurial firm in the context of international entrepreneurship, where firms are motivated by different reasons to venture abroad, including initiating export activities (Ibrahim & McGuire, 2001; Dana, 2004; Leonidou et al., 2007; Dung & Giang, 2021; Nuhu et al., 2021; Mostafiz et al., 2021).

2.4. International Entrepreneurship

International entrepreneurship (IE) has emerged as an exciting sub-discipline of entrepreneurial studies (Acs, Dana, & Jones, 2003; Covin & Miller, 2014; Nuhu, Owens & McQuillan, 2021; Kalinic & Brouthers, 2022; Jie et al., 2023). International Entrepreneurial Orientation is directly linked to EO, which is about risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness (Ruzzier et al., 2020; Dele-Ijagbulu et al., 2021). The traditional entrepreneurship theory of EO influences this (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Zahra et al., 2014; Wales, 2016; Tu et. al., 2021).

There seems to be consensus on this definition, with further research concentrating on the nature or characteristics of IE and its impact on internationalisation as well as influencing factors and outcomes (Kalinic & Brouthers 2022; Hua et al., 2022). Scholars such as Covin and Miller (2014), Kalinic & Brouthers (2022), and Urban & Sefalafala (2015), who write about international entrepreneurship, identify these themes: internationalisation, global performance, and IEO, as well as the role of environmental factors.

2.5. Internationalisation

Ruzzier (2020) and Buccieri (2020) identify internationalisation as a process of involvement in international operations that is both gradual and sequential. According to Kalinic & Brouthers (2022), internationalisation is the act of businesses increasing participation in international operations taking at least one of these forms: (1) license/franchise; (2) indirect export; (3) direct export; (4) overseas subsidiary; (5) joint venture; and (6) foreign direct investment. It can be argued that the term IE could be

reserved for a merging academic discipline, according to Covin and Miller (2014). However, other scholars consider it synonymous with internationalisation. For example, this suggests that IE is an action or a way of behaving.

Urban and Sefalafala (2015) observe that the phenomenon of internationalisation has been given adequate attention in international business, mainly focusing on large firms. However, it has also become the subject of interest in entrepreneurial studies, mainly focusing on small firms. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) define the entrepreneurial process as the introduction of new or existing goods and services into new markets, including export markets. Considering this definition, it can be argued that this is a process undertaken by both small and large firms.

There are several theories on internationalisation, such as Born Globals, Institutional Theory, Theory of Networks, Theory of Internationalisation, Resource Base View, and Uppsala and U Models (Rogue et al., 2019; Vahlne & Johanson, 2020; van Staden, 2022). It can be argued that these theories provide an understanding of these key elements of internationalisation:

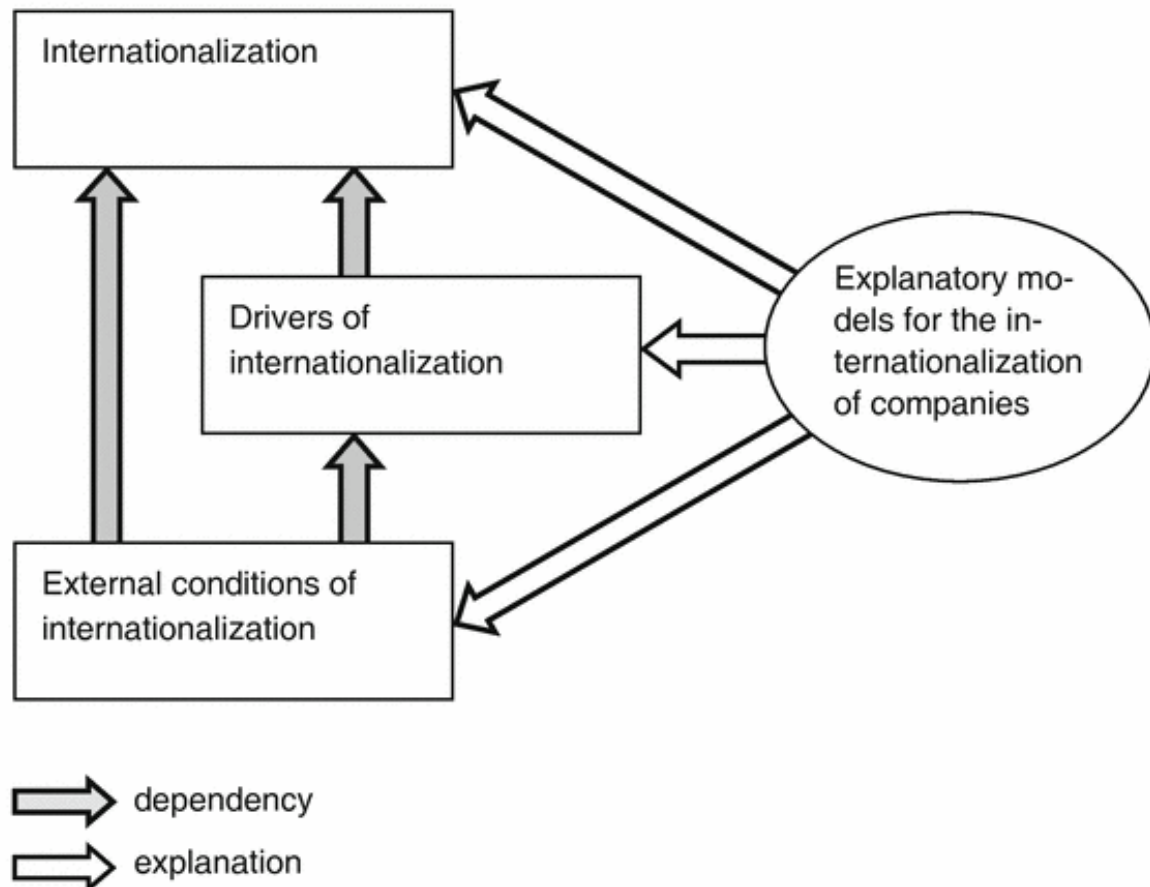
- The drivers or factors influencing internationalisation
- The required resources and capabilities
- The entry modes or strategies used by firms, as well as
- The intended outcomes of internationalisation, also termed international performance

2.5.1. Drivers

The international market was previously dominated by large firms, with small firms primarily operating in the domestic market; however, this is no longer the case (Mostafiz et al., 2021; Asemokha et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) successfully set up activities beyond their home markets (Ruzzier et al., 2006; Ruzzier et al., 2020). Most scholars, such as Yaprak and Karademir (2010), seem to suggest that this process is externally driven. These views of external factors or stimuli are well captured by Grünig and Morschett (2017), who offer a theoretical lens, as illustrated in Figure 3, for understanding the relationship between external conditions and internationalisation.

Figure 2

Internationalisation framework



Source: (Grünig & Morschett, 2017)

According to Jayasuriya and Perera (2022), internationalisation is mainly driven by technological advances connecting people and locations, trade liberalisation, and the geographic expansion of markets. It can be argued that technological advancements have made it easier, faster, and cheaper to communicate and conduct business (Jayasuriya & Perera, 2022). It has also brought “new products, processes, and ways of organising” into existence (Alvarez & Barney, 2020).

At the same time, trade liberalisation has created a level playing field for innovative firms. It also opened new markets and encouraged internationalisation (Yoon et al., 2018; Wahyuni & Sara, 2020). Environmental hostility in the home market has also been cited as a reason for internationalisation (Xing et al., 2018; Urban, 2019). This means factors such as unpredictable, unstable, or saturated domestic demand, competitive pressures from imports, and high production costs have been catalysts in the internationalisation process of SMMEs.

Hernandez et al. (2022) and Hua et al. (2022) argue that the inadequacy or underdevelopment of domestic markets also acts as a push factor for internationalisation. Yaprak and Karademir (2010) adopt Porter's diamond model to suggest that the following four factors influence internationalisation (Rugman & Verbeke, 1993):

- The nature and size of the domestic market as compared to foreign demand
- The nature of competitors at home and abroad
- The presence of supporting industries and supply chains at home and abroad
- And the extent and nature of rivalry among a country's firms compel that country's firms to expand abroad

Leonidas et al. (2007) and Bradley (2005) offer a different but holistic view and argue that firms can be proactive or reactive regarding internationalisation. These motives can also be either opportunistic or deliberate. This is also confirmed by Daspit (2023), who argue that internationalisation can be out of necessity. Bradley (2005) argues that internationalisation includes improved opportunities abroad, shortening product and technology lifecycles, excess capacity, and a desire to follow customers and competitors abroad. Leonidou et al. (2007) argue that factors driving internationalisation, particularly export activities, are internal and external to the firm.

Table 1*Factors driving export activities*

Category	Type of incentive	Motivation
Internal	Human Resources	Active involvement in management matters, utilising management ability, time, and effort, and encouraging foreign managers is essential to export performance, especially if top executives lead strategic international expansion (Manolova et al., 2020).
	Financial	Declining or flattening export sales and profitability may prompt companies to pursue export growth opportunities, using financing benefits or government subsidies to become competitive again (Kahiya, 2020).
	Production	Firms that suffer from seasonality in production, overstocking, or inefficiencies of scale can resort to exports to leverage capacity and gain economies of scale (Paul & Feliciano-Cestero, 2021).
	Research and Development	Scientific knowledge monopoly rights or patented products typically provide the most optimal justification for exports because they allow firms to leverage products' shelf life to the fullest and maintain competitive positions overseas (Hitt et al., 2021).
	Marketing	Being ahead in global marketing, including quickly adapting campaigns, enables firms to capture global audiences effectively (Cavusgil et al., 2022).
External	Domestic market	A saturated, unprofitable, or economically unstable home market—combined with favorable foreign exchange rates—can push firms toward export markets for better returns (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2020).
	Foreign market	Experience with foreign markets and proximity to international regions allows firms to identify and capitalize on rising overseas opportunities (Zander et al., 2015).
	Home Government	Government incentives and trade missions, including support from official agencies, play a vital role in motivating and enabling export initiatives (van Staden, 2022).
	Foreign government	Reduced tariffs and non-tariff barriers in foreign markets can ease entry and increase export activity, especially for small and medium enterprises (WTO, 2022).
	Intermediaries	Support from trade associations, banks, brokers, and distributors is essential in facilitating international trade, especially for resource-constrained firms (UNCTAD, 2021).
	Competition	Applying foreign market knowledge can strengthen domestic competitiveness, especially when home and foreign competition overlap (Brouthers & Hennart, 2021).
	Customers	Firms often receive export orders after trade fairs or unsolicited inquiries, demonstrating how proactive engagement can translate into sales (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2020).
	Miscellaneous	Fulfilling a national duty and operating near key transport hubs (e.g., ports) also influences export decisions and logistical feasibility (Banga & te Velde, 2020).

2.5.2. Entry modes and internationalisation strategies

Various entry modes influence entry into the international markets, as discussed in this part of the study (Edwards, 2008; Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1992; Durmaz *et al.*, 2014; Clark & Harries, 2019). Edwards (2008) examines and identifies various entry modes, including exporting, licensing, joint ventures, direct investment, and unique modes such as management contracts and turnkey projects. Durmaz *et al.* (2014) classify the entry modes into three main categories: export, contractual, and investment. Lu & Beamish (2002) argue that while there are different types of internationalisation modes, each has merits and demerits, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparing methods of internationalisation

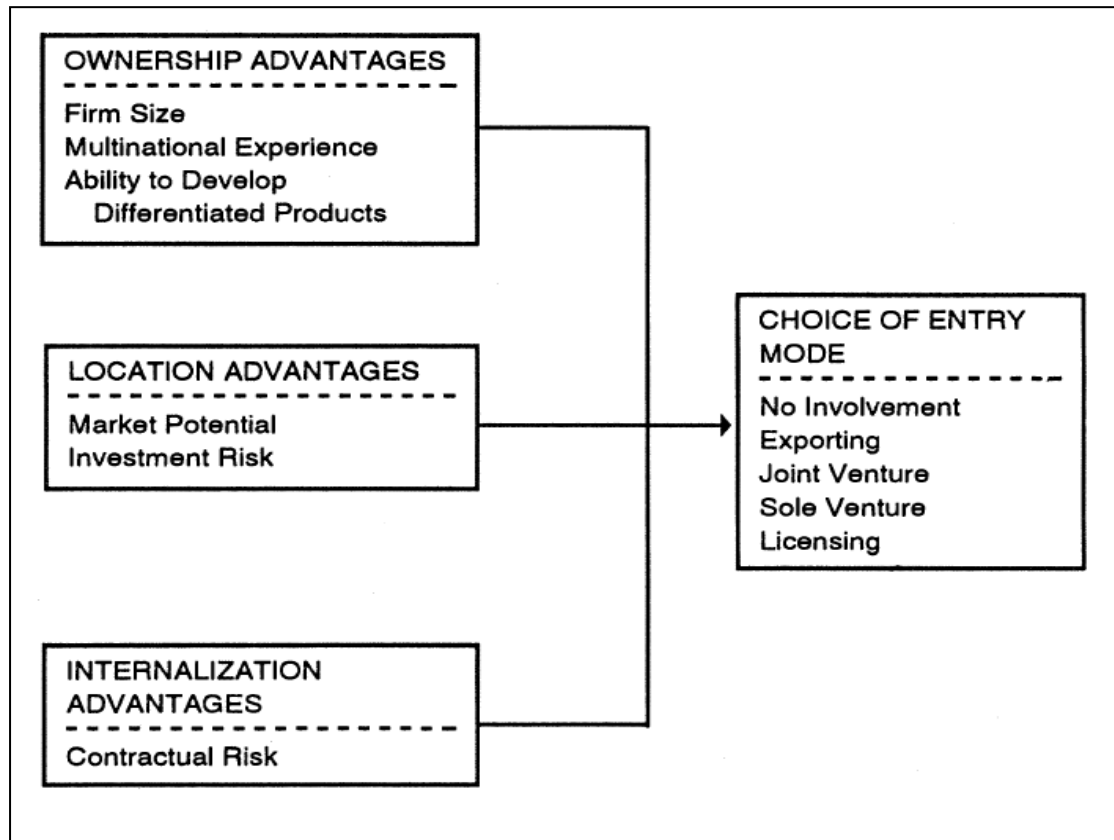
	Exporting	Alliances	FDI
Benefits	▪ Relatively easy, fast ▪ Low investment cost/commitment ▪ Flexible ▪ Lower risk	▪ Requires limited resources and market knowledge	▪ Increased firm competitiveness and growth ▪ Location-based advantages ▪ Development of new knowledge and capabilities ▪ Minimises transaction related risks
Challenges	▪ Possible lack of alignment with foreign sales agents ▪ Tariff and non-tariff trade barriers ▪ Cost of transportation of goods	▪ Identifying the right joint venture partners is critical ▪ Structuring effective partnerships can be tricky	▪ Complex, time consuming ▪ High investment/commitment ▪ Least flexible approach ▪ Higher risk

Source: (Lu & Beamish, 2002)

According to Agarwal and Ramaswami (1992), ownership, location, and internationalisation advantages also influence export firms' choice of entry mode, such as no involvement, exporting, Joint venture, Sole Venture, and Licensing. Figure 3 illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of ownership, location, and internationalisation regarding the entry mode choice.

Table 3

Entry modes



Source: (Agarwal and Ramaswami, 1992)

The market size, degree and type of competition, price, promotional differences, product differences, as well as trade barriers play a critical role in determining the cost-effectiveness of various entry modes (Bradley, 2005). Scholars argue that exporting is the easiest entry mode for several firms (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015; Urban & Sheree, 2012). Exporting can be defined as the process of sending or carrying goods abroad, especially for trade and sales (Baker, 2013).

The firm's goods or services are manufactured in the domestic market or a third country and then transferred to the host market (Driscoll & Paliwoda, 1997). Two export options exist: indirect and direct (Kotabe & Helsen, 2010). Indirect exporting involves products being carried abroad by others, whereas direct exports involve the firm becoming directly involved in marketing its products in foreign markets (Lamb, 2004). Export activities are

argued to increase a firm's performance and contribute to economic growth in the firm's home country (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). The research looks at exporting firms, which are firms directly involved in marketing their products in foreign markets.

2.6. Entrepreneurial Orientation and Export Performance

Entrepreneurial Orientation reflects an organisation's propensity to pursue innovation, take risks, and showcase proactive behaviours (Surin et al., 2023). The Resource-Based View theory framework suggests that an organisation's performance is driven by its resources (Barney, 1991; Surin et al., 2023). This is vital to understanding entrepreneurial orientation, as the organisation secures a competitive advantage through its distinctive valuable resources, which are rare, inimitable, and difficult to substitute. It also affects the ability to attain superior performance and adjust flexibly to market conditions. The resources within various organisations vary, resulting in varied organisational performance.

Consequently, an organisation with a high degree of EO can gain a competitive advantage over its rivals. By integrating EO, scholars can ascertain how a firm's distinct resources, including strategic assets and capabilities, might augment entrepreneurial behaviours (Covin & Wales, 2018; Surin et al., 2023). This results in enhanced innovation and improved business outcomes. In conclusion, the Resource View theory posits that to sustain the organisation's long-term performance, it must have both EO and strategic assets for continual innovation and market adaptability (Surin et al., 2023).

2.6.1. Innovativeness

2.6.1.1. Definition

As one of the main dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), innovation can be explained as an organisation's inclination to pursue and encourage new ideas, novel processes, and trials that lead to the development of new products, services, or business models (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Innovation plays a pivotal role in enabling companies to create competitive strengths and expand their operations into international markets. Innovative companies are more likely to internationalise by creating differentiated products that respond to changing consumer demands. In recent times, applying technology and digitalisation to go global enables firms to create new foreign market entry modes that minimise risks and maximize potential (Petersen, 2024).

2.6.1.2. Innovation and Internationalisation

Innovation has the crucial function of raising a company's internationalisation ability by giving it a competitive advantage, enabling business efficiency, and achieving foreign-market flexibility. This can be achieved through innovation in products and services. Product innovation enables companies to produce diverse products suitable for foreign consumers' needs. Companies that offer innovative products or services can easily expand in foreign markets by offering value differentiation (Javad, 2024). For instance, apple's constant innovation in smartphone technology has enabled it to increase its worldwide market share, particularly in emerging economies.

2.6.1.3. Process Innovation and Efficiency in Global Expansion

Process innovation refers to improving operational effectiveness, lowering costs, and increasing scalability. Such innovation is essential for global growth, as it enables companies to function efficiently in markets (Pirrone & Milotta, 2024). For example, Chinese firms are succeeding in international markets by reducing logistics expenses and helping them expand into new markets at minimal expense.

2.6.1.4. Digital Innovation and Global Scalability

Digital innovations have transformed globalisation. Businesses can use digital innovation to broaden their global scope through digital marketing, e-commerce, and web-based service delivery (Petersen, 2024). Netflix for instance, has used digital streaming technology to distribute its services globally without investing in physical structures.

2.6.1.5. Market Entry Business Model Innovation

New companies will redesign their business models for international markets. Companies that re-engineer their business models according to geographical needs will succeed in foreign markets (Aboelmaged et al., 2024). In this case, Uber has rebuilt its price and service model while it expanded to markets with poorer internet penetration and alternative transport infrastructure.

2.6.2. Risk Taking

In the entrepreneurial scenario, risk-taking refers to a firm's or an entrepreneur's tendency to make decisions with great uncertainty but with reward potential. The risk-taking construct in EO by Miller (1983) determines to what extent entrepreneurs and firms take bold actions with unknown results.

2.6.2.1. Risk-Taking in EO

Risk-taking in entrepreneurship involves exploring the unknown. Entrepreneurs often invest in new products, technology, or markets with unknown demand (Kraus et al., 2023). Firms commit substantial financial, human, and material resources to projects that are not necessarily successful (Covin & Slevin, 1989). Firms also make bold strategic steps, including mergers, acquisitions, or innovative leaps, which may entail high financial risks (Hughes & Morgan, 2007). Risk-taking in EO also varies from everyday gambling since it entails conscious and purposeful decision-making, usually based on thorough market research through market surveys, trend analysis, and experience acquired.

2.6.2.2. Risk-Taking in Entrepreneurial Orientation - references

Risk-taking in entrepreneurship is accompanied by varying degrees of intensity. Firms can undertake low risk taking, where preference is given to incremental innovation over radical change, and guaranteed investments in projects that yield positive returns and avoid large expenditures (Kraus et al., 2023). At times, firms can be frugal and go for moderate risk, whereby they gently make expansion plans through strategic alliances to deal with risks when these firms move into uncertain foreign business environments with volatile

environments (Lindner & Kuckertz, 2021). By taking significant financial commitments and investing in new technologies.

Conversely, risky strategies are when companies venture into volatile global economies, investing heavily in trial technologies or non-trial economies (Alonso-Galicia, Fernández-Pérez, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2022). High-performing entrepreneurial companies counteract risk-taking through strategic risk management, utilizing tools like scenario planning, market diversification, and hedging finance to regulate possible shortcomings and increase robustness (Hughes et al., 2020). Through such measures, organizations can maintain adaptability in dynamic world environments, utilizing risk as a foundation of competitiveness (Wales, Gupta, & Mousa, 2021).

Several studies suggest that companies with strong risk-taking orientations are likely to perform better than conservative companies in fast-changing and high-growth sectors (Kraus et al., 2023). Ultimately, risk-taking is the focal construct that drives how firms invest resources, venture into new markets, and invest in a risky world.

2.6.3. Proactiveness

2.6.3.1. Definition

Proactiveness is one of the dimensions of EO that imply the proactive future-oriented action of a firm to react to and take advantage of potential future opportunities in the marketplace instead of reacting to developments in the business environment (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Proactiveness means leading competitors, discovering new untapped markets, and placing the firm strategically in global markets ahead of other firms for international business. Proactiveness enables businesses to seize oncoming opportunities, benefit from pioneer gains, and innovate in fields with greater international competition and dynamism (Nave, Ferreira, & Carneiro, 2024).

2.6.3.2. Role of Proactiveness in Internationalisation

Proactiveness contributes significantly to how businesses enter and expand in the international market. These are the most significant channels through which internationalization is managed:

Aggressive companies enter foreign markets ahead of their rivals and can thus gain brand awareness, form strategic alliances, and establish distribution networks before the competition (Pirrone & Milotta, 2024). These companies do not look to the competition to test and act; they pioneer the expansion, even into risky or untested territories. A proactive plan enables organisations to perceive new customer demands and market opportunities prior to the time they become popular. This has been evident, especially in the high-tech, electronics - microchips, and alternative energy sectors, where innovation is key if one is to remain viable (Ogbaini, 2024). For instance, African FinTech companies Jumo realised the promise of mobile banking and digital payment in the different markets and aggressively entered foreign markets ahead of schedule before the conventional banking sector could enter to fill their space (Mhlanga, 2022).

International networking and strategic alliances are critical for firms to be proactive. Active companies seek to form global alliances that support their expansion process. They do not wait, but form global networks that provide them with access to new resources, technologies, and markets (Nave, Ferreira, & Carneiro, 2024). For example, most technology start-ups enter joint ventures with multinational companies to expand their operations into various countries. Companies following a proactive internationalisation strategy invest in R&D and region-based product development for international markets. They fine-tune business models, value chains, and marketing strategies to match various economic and cultural settings (Ooi & Adeneye, 2025).

A higher level of proactiveness will also be coupled with more risk-taking behaviour. Companies that pursue international opportunities aggressively will have to invest in risky places, create new market strategies, and operate under un-mapped regulatory systems (Kuikka, 2024). For instance, companies from emerging economies, such as Tata forming an alliance with Jaguar and Land Rover.

Proactiveness in entrepreneurial orientation is also necessary for internationalisation because it enables firms to internationalize ahead of others, gain first-mover advantage, feel and notice opportunities, and generate innovation. Proactive firms that pursue a proactive internationalization approach tend to perform better than reactive or risk-averse firms. Nevertheless, firms must counterbalance proactiveness with risk management, market research, and strategic alliances to achieve maximum success.

2.7. Capabilities and Resources

Prior research has established that entrepreneurial behaviour and unique entrepreneurial capabilities (EC) enable firms to enter the international arena (Manolova *et al.*, 2010; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). However, it is not yet fully understood how entrepreneurial intensity leads to increased internationalisation performance. Scholars such as Barney (1991), Shree and Urban (2012), and Urban and Sefalafala (2015) argue that current domestic operations are seen as exploitation activities, while initial internationalisation efforts are exploratory activities. As such, these activities must be matched by the necessary capabilities and resources.

The resource-based view of the firm argues that a firm is a bundle of resources which include human capital, social capital, technological capital, and financial capital (Barney, 1991 in Shree & Urban, 2012; Shree & Urban, 2013; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Shree and Urban (2012) distinguish between capabilities and resources, with the former perceived as intangible and the latter as tangible. Therefore, intangible resources, termed “tacit”, are embedded in employees and business methods, whereas tangible resources refer to physical infrastructure, equipment, and capital (Marcelle, 2004).

According to Obrecht (2004), entrepreneurial capabilities are a broader range of abilities needed to initiate appropriate action in specific organisational situations and should also reflect the capacity to initiate and sustain entrepreneurial dynamism throughout the firm. He argues that there are three forms of entrepreneurial capabilities: human capabilities, social capabilities, and technological capabilities. Shree and Urban (2012) urge that in addition to entrepreneurial capabilities, firms must possess the resources necessary for driving internationalisation.

These resources could be financial or physical. The latter is usually expressed in financial terms. The following sub-section examines human capital, social capital, technological capital, and financial capital concerning internationalisation.

2.7.1. Human Capital

Human capital comprises elements such as education, work experience, entrepreneurial experience, prior knowledge of customer problems, experiential knowledge, productive and efficient potential, business knowledge, and skills (Unger et al., 2009; Venter et al., 2008; Sheree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Human capital determines knowledge about foreign markets and entrepreneurship, which is critical for a firm's success in international markets (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Human capital is a prerequisite for internationalisation but can also be acquired during this process (Cooper, 2012; Sheree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015).

2.7.2. Social Capital

Social capital can be defined as the goodwill, value, and benefit of personal, professional, and business relationships. These are critical for internationalisation by providing institutional support to individuals, and they can be mobilised to facilitate action (Urban, 2011; Sheree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). It comprises social interaction, relationship quality, and network ties (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Sheree and Urban (2012) state that this is critical for gaining scarce resources and technology. It also positions the firm strategically and enables the transfer of skills and reputation management. This helps firms acquire experiential knowledge about foreign markets and can influence their entry into foreign markets (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Sheree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015).

2.7.3. Technological Capital

Researchers such as Urban (2019) and Prakasa et al., (2021) refer to a firm's ability to use technological knowledge effectively to assimilate, use, adapt, and change existing technology. The capital needed can be tangible or intangible. It can be codified in manuals or constantly renewed (Ireland & Hitt, 2000). Urban (2010) proposed that technological

capability influences a firm's internationalisation ability, thereby gaining an advantage in establishing international alliances such as licensing agreements, joint ventures, and marketing.

2.7.4. Financial capital

Financial capital can be categorised as equity capital, debt capital, and venture capital, but not limited to these (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). Financial capital is critical to cover high set-up costs such as researching the market, setting up foreign offices, setting up communication flows, and catering to duties and tariffs (Cooper, Gimeno-Gacson, Woo 1994; Sheree & Urban, 2012; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015).

2.8. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors contribute to the effectiveness of entrepreneurial performance (Urban, 2019). These factors can be either hostile or dynamic (Urban, 2019). While a hostile environment could be argued to stimulate entrepreneurial performance, it is generally perceived to constrain it (Covin & Stevin, 1989; Eniola & Entebang, 2015). On the other hand, a dynamic environment is seen as supportive and enabling (Pita, 2021).

It can be argued that institutional support, particularly government support for entrepreneurship, reduces environmental hostility and enhances dynamism (OECD, 2024; Buccieri et al., 2021). According to Ahsan (2020), "support for entrepreneurship" is given by state institutions, local authorities, and companies. More importantly, government support implies relevant policies and incentives.

2.8.1. Government role in supporting export activities

The role of government in business has always been treated with mixed reactions among academics and business practitioners. It lies on a continuum of arguments ranging from free market thinking, a limited regulatory role, some involvement, and active involvement (Williamson, 1990; van Staden, 2022). However, scholars within institutional economics have alluded to the challenge of market failure and the need for government intervention (Chang & Evans, 2005).

This approach is evident in the Chinese way of doing business. Notwithstanding the different arguments, the government plays a critical role in creating a conducive environment for business and entrepreneurship to thrive and, even more so, stimulating export activities among firms. This is also particularly true for small firms, given their general lack of obtaining credit, are relatively small and have limited access to export markets. This section explicitly discusses government support for export activities. As mentioned, government support includes policies, incentives, and infrastructural support. The discussion starts with policies, followed by incentives and infrastructure.

2.8.2. Policy Environment

Government policies shape the institutional environment where entrepreneurial decisions are made, adopted, and implemented (van Staden, 2022). To sustain a climate conducive to successful and profitable operations for entrepreneurial and business activities, relevant policies must be developed and implemented (OECD, 2024; Minniti, 2008; Obaji & Oluju, 2014). It can be argued that policies for stimulating export activities address the home or export environment (Ahsan et al., 2020; Anwana & Anwana, 2020). First, policies addressing the home environment, also termed “framework conditions,” generally support the ease with which business is conducted (GEM, 2023; OECD, 2024).

This implies that these need to provide business-friendly policy environments. The literature review provided a theoretical foundation on EO and environmental factors, looking at the role of institutional and government support. The next chapter focuses on the research questions and literature supporting the formulated questions or hypotheses.

2.8.3. Incentives

An incentive is “any measurable advantage accorded to specific enterprises or categories of enterprises by (or at the direction of) the government” (UNCTAD, 2003 in the Republic of South Africa, 2012). Incentives are seen as part of government support to promote exports in firms (Sim & Pandian, 2003; Leonidas et al., 2007; Blackburn, 2016; Hausman et al., 2011). However, Leonidu et al. (2007) argue that this is not definitive, and it is very little definitive and there is very little lack of debate on the types and impact of incentives.

He observes that scholars have not given enough attention to this area, and incentives have been used sparingly to encourage export activities.

According to Blackburn (2016), incentives help to minimise tariffs and administrative hurdles. It also restricts the mobility of migrant workers. However, he argues that there is a need for specific incentives rather than others, depending on the targeted sectors and the intended entrepreneurship export ventures. Hausman et al. (2011) suggest that standard incentives take the form of a subsidy payable on the wage bill or the capital cost for new capacity by first-tier suppliers to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

While Belloc and Maio (2011) argue that government-related stimuli for exports include funding, travel support, training funds, and subsidies, they see them as having a relatively moderate aggregate impact. However, this argument is contrary to the findings in South Africa, particularly when it comes to the automotive industry. An example is when looking at the impact of the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP), which has since been replaced by the Automotive Production and Development Programme (APDP) (Kaggwa, 2008; Bronkhorst, Steyn & Stiglingh, 2013; Kajewole, 2023). The APDP has been hailed as a success story, with the automotive sector contributing significantly to manufacturing, especially by strengthening local supply chains, GDP, and job creation.

In South Africa, the government, through the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition DTIC and various agencies, such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), consisting of Khula Enterprise Finance, the South African Micro-Finance Apex Fund, and the Industrial Development Corporation, IDC's small business funding unit, are important programmes. These provide entrepreneurs with incentives for businesses, mainly targeting small firms (Republic of South, 2012; Marcelle et al., 2011; SEFA, n.d.). Entrepreneurs can access the necessary financial support through loans or grants (operational expenditure grants) to make export ventures viable, competitive, and sustainable (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

The assistance is provided to qualifying companies in various sectors of the economy to cater for export development, market access, and foreign direct investment. Subsidies such as loans and grants allow firms to grow over a period, and the business will then be assessed and reviewed. Beneficiaries of loan subsidies are required to pay the loan over time. These grants assist firms with recruitment and training costs, advertisements and

marketing exhibitions, investment seminars and conferences, market research, and bidding requirements.

Empirical studies by Sim and Pandian (2003), Dong et al., (2022) reveal that subsidies such as tax incentives have helped China to grow. Sim and Pandian (2003) argued that restrictive policies on foreign business investments and a lack of supportive travel allowances for export businesses led Taiwanese firms to open companies in China through third parties. In South Africa, export promotion programmes are targeting specific interventions and increase coordination among the various government departments and agencies (Harrison & Poore, 2022). Research shows that export-oriented firms experience increased productivity after entering the international arena (Harrison & Poore, 2022). However, export subsidies could waste resources if exporting does not boost productivity.

2.8.4. Infrastructure

Francois and Manchin (2006), Dong et al., (2022) found that infrastructure was essential in raising trade performance in emerging economies like China, India, and some developing African countries. This is also supported by several scholars who argue that public infrastructure indirectly enhances firms' export productivity (Wood & Robertson, 2000; Holicki & Tladinyane, 2000; Huang, 2006). Infrastructure can take two forms. It can be hard or soft infrastructure, which refers to a country's legal, regulatory, and financial systems. In contrast, complex infrastructure refers to roads, airports and ports, warehousing, and investment land (Belloc & Maio, 2011).

Infrastructure may place one foreign nation in a more favourable position than another, depending on an investor's priorities depending on investor priorities and international exposure (Wood & Robertson, 2000). Huang (2006) posits that a complex infrastructure is more straightforward to identify, unlike a soft infrastructure, which is hard to measure. He further explains that countries must invest massively in soft infrastructure to improve global business activities. Table 4 illustrates the different types of hard and soft infrastructure as derived from various authors (Wood & Robertson, 2000; Holicki & Tladinyane, 2000; Huang, 2006; Belloc & Maio, 2011 Ramokgopa, 2021).

Table 4*Hard and Soft Infrastructure*

Hard Infrastructure	Soft Infrastructure
Transportation (airlines, shipping lines, roads, highways, and rail)	Legal framework
Warehousing (at port of entry and throughout the foreign country)	Market or regional trading blocks
Communication networks and facilities	Tariff structures
Special economic zones or industrial clusters	Quality, environmental and health standards
Geography (the build of the land, climatic conditions and natural disasters potential)	Visa requirements and foreign and travel restrictions in a foreign country

Author's construction from Sources: (Huang, 2006; Belloc & Maio, 2011; Ramokgopa, 2021; Wood & Robertson, 2000).

According to Bougheas et al. (1999), in their research on the European economy, there is a positive correlation between infrastructure and the volume of trade. Interestingly, their findings are in contrast with several previous empirical studies, such as those of Eniola and Entebang (2015), Christ and Green (2004), and Fox and Murray (1993). These authors denied that infrastructure access would be one of the decisive factors for a firm's performance. The results of their research rejected the hypothesis that infrastructure access has a positive effect on a firm's performance. This implies that the performance of firms would not depend on the condition of using public infrastructure such as electricity, main roads, and other means of transportation such as seaports or airports.

Jayanthakumaran (2016) indicates that Special Economic Zones (SEZ) are equally important to promote investment. This considers the level of infrastructure development and the level of involvement of foreign investors in attracting further development in SEZ. Holicki and Tladinyane (2000) state that South African infrastructure is better and comparable to that of other countries in the northern hemisphere. The roads, ports, and telecommunication networks match those of other countries. The financial systems are generally functioning well.

However, there is a need to improve the gap between the social and economic infrastructure of the rich and poor. Authors argue that the failure of the government to create infrastructure facilities and government policies for business has profound implications for business performance (Wood & Robertson, 2000; Huang, 2006; Jayanthakumaran, 2016).

2.9. Internationalisation and Government Policy Framework

The policy environment South African companies face on internationalisation can play an enabling or limiting role in their expansion abroad. The policy environment's significant contribution to the process can be multifaced. The below outlines

2.9.1. Trade and Investment Policies

Bilateral and multilateral Trade Agreements that allow South African participation include the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement, and the AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act), and these agreements shape access to markets (Cherian, 2024). Export Incentives facilitate firms' exports to foreign countries, such as the Government Export Marketing and Investment Assistance (EMIA) Scheme (Motaung, 2024). Governments impose tariffs and import duties. If these are too high, this could affect input costs and render local enterprises non-competitive in other territories, (Ezebunwo & Uchenna, 2025).

2.9.2. Regulatory Environment

Bureaucratic inefficiencies, overregulation, and compliance pressures impact the ease of doing business and the capacity of South African companies to globalise, (Pap, 2024). Weak intellectual property protection policies sometimes deter South African companies from participating in global innovation-intensive sectors (Motaung, 2024). On the other hand, regulations by the Competition Commission influence how South African companies globalise through mergers or acquisitions overseas, (Ezebunwo & Uchenna, 2025).

2.9.3. Financial & Taxation Policies

The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) limits capital flows through its exchange control regulation, influencing companies' overseas investments (Motaung, 2024). A comparatively high corporate tax rate and intricate tax systems influence companies' competitiveness worldwide (Cherian, 2024). Incentives such as the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act have proven to lure foreign capital, which can drive companies to expand overseas (Pap, 2024).

2.9.4. Labour & Immigration Policies

Strict immigration policies such as issuing Visas restrict South African firms from employing foreign skills for international business expansion (Ezeunwo & Uchenna, 2025). There is a lack of efficient skills development and training policies in industries where there are skill shortages in South Africa, impacting the firms' degree of international competitiveness (Pap, 2024).

2.9.5. Infrastructure & Digitalisation Policies

South Africa's logistics and transport infrastructure is old and has not been maintained at a desired level (Ezeunwo & Uchenna, 2025). This includes inefficient road, rail, and port infrastructure. This has raised the cost of transportation, limiting international competitiveness. Unchecked rollout of 5G and expensive data costs prevent digital companies from going global (Pap, 2024).

2.9.6. Political & Economic Stability

Uncertainty around policy on initiatives such as Black Economic Empowerment and uncompensated land expropriation may discourage foreign partners and investors (Motaung, 2024). Uncertainty in the rand exchange rate makes it hard for companies to make long-term plans for foreign investments (Cherian, 2024).

2.9.7. Industrial & Sectoral Policies

Government support for high-growth industries, such as fintech, solar, and manufacturing for example, motor industry stimulus, enables foreign expansion (Ezebunwo & Uchenna, 2025). State Enterprises with inefficient operations, such as Eskom for energy and Transnet for logistics, impact business growth prospects (Motaung, 2024).

2.10. Conclusion

The literature review chapter examined the intricate relationship between EO, internationalisation, and the moderating role of external factors, especially government support. The literature review study has emphasised that EO, defined by innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking, is essential for firms seeking to penetrate and thrive in international markets.

It has been determined that environmental factors, particularly government policies, incentives, and infrastructural support, play a significant role. Therefore, they have been evaluated in terms of how they shape and enhance firms' EO in export activities. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that success in international markets depends not only on internal entrepreneurial attributes but is also profoundly affected by the external institutional environment.

South African businesses attempting to internationalise must contend with a complex policy environment. Trade agreements, incentives for export, and industrial policy are aspects of this environment that facilitate expansion. Regulatory shortages in skills and infrastructure, on the other hand, are usually hindrances. A better business-friendly and more predictable policy environment would position South African businesses globally on a stronger competitive platform.

This assessment builds a strong theoretical framework. It puts the study within the broader field of international entrepreneurship and informs scholars of important knowledge gaps in understanding how these dynamics affect South African firms. Ultimately, this chapter highlights the necessity for a comprehensive body of knowledge regarding the interplay between entrepreneurial behaviours and external support mechanisms to foster effective international market engagement. It provides a foundation for an empirical exploration in the following chapters. This chapter broadens the academic discourse on international

entrepreneurship and inform South African export policymakers and practitioners seeking to foster export activities in South Africa.

The next chapter is a summarised version of this chapter. It directs the next section regarding the research question and hypothesis and is followed by the research methodology. This ensures a focused investigation into the influences of EO and government support on firms' internationalisation processes.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTION

3.1. Introduction

Most recently, international entrepreneurship has appeared as the focus of entrepreneurship scholars (Covin & Miller, 2014; Buccieri et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial orientation has been an interesting focal area concerning international entrepreneurship (Stevenson & Jarillo, 2007; Wahyuni & Sara, 2020). The influence of EO on internationalisation has been of particular interest in this regard (Urban & Sefalala, 2015; Nuhu et al., 2021; Kalinic & Brouthers, 2022).

These studies have paid more attention to EO on an individual level than a firm level (Covin & Miller, 2014). While these studies are applied globally, the applicability of their findings to the local context is unknown. A few studies have addressed the local context, such as those of Urban and Sefalafala (2015). However, there is still a dearth of information on how EO influences internationalisation and the role of the institutional environment, particularly government support.

3.2. Research Question

This study's central research question investigates the relationship between EO influences, internationalisation, risk-taking, innovation, pro-activeness, and environmental factors, specifically within South African exporting ventures (Neneh & Zyl, 2017; Roux & Bengesi, 2014).

Business practitioners lack information on developing strategies to seize export market opportunities and to compete internationally. At the same time, policymakers also lack information on how to develop relevant policy instruments, incentives, and infrastructure to improve their assistance of South African ventures seeking export markets.

How does EO impact the internationalisation of South African ventures in pursuing export market opportunities, and how do environmental factors, particularly government support, affect this relationship (Asemokha et al., 2019; Robb et al., 2020; Ruzzier et al., 2020; Kropp et al., 2006; Urban & Sefalafala, 2015)?

A summary of the hypotheses and theoretical framework for the study is provided.

The study tested the following hypotheses:

H₁: Innovativeness influences international performance and an inverse relationship exists

H₂: Proactiveness influences international performance

H₃: Risk-taking influences international performance

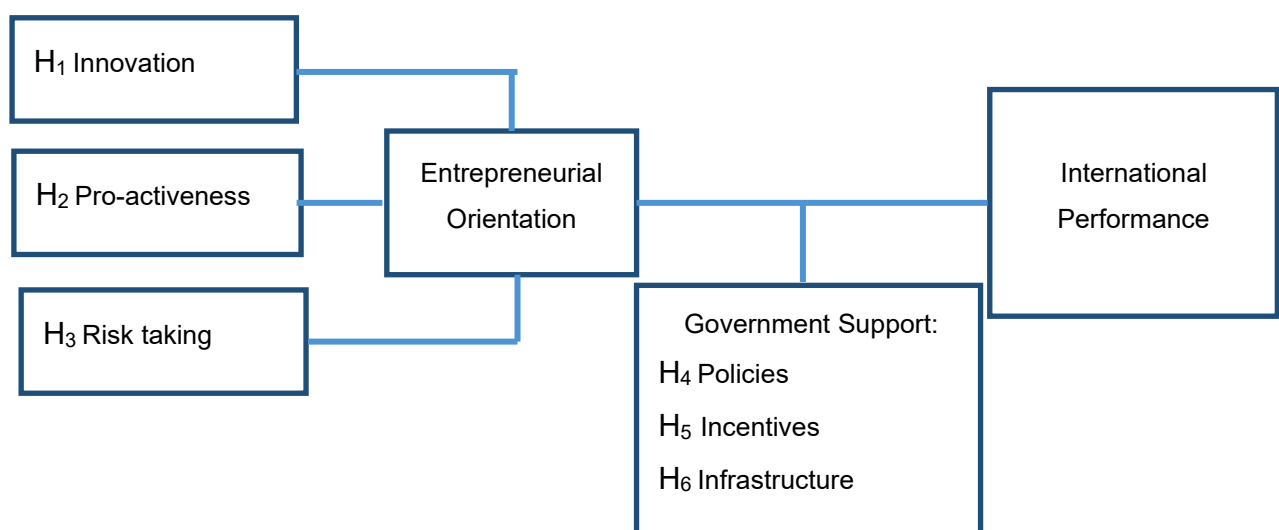
H₄: Government policy has a moderating effect on international performance

H₅: The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and export performance is moderated by incentive support. The relationship is weaker under conditions of low infrastructure support and stronger under conditions of strong incentive support.

H₆: The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and export performance is moderated by infrastructure support, and the relationship is weaker under conditions of low infrastructure support and stronger under conditions of strong infrastructure support.

Table 5:

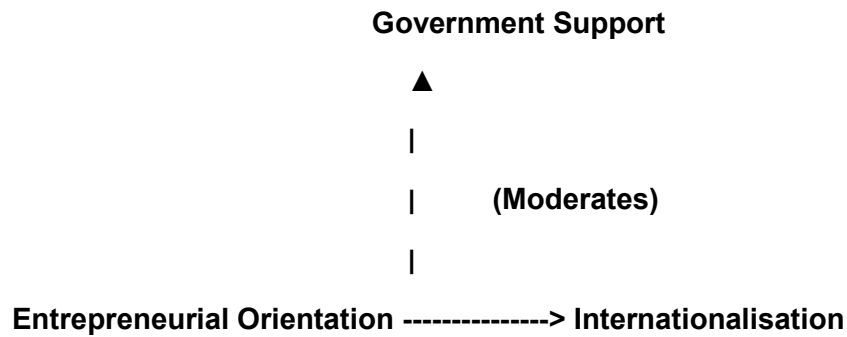
Overview of the study with hypothesis



Source: (Author's own model, 2025)

Figure 3:

Graphical presentation of the study



Source: (Authors own model, 2025)

Table 6

Levels of constructs

Variable type	Level 1 construct	Level 2 construct
Independent Variable (IV)	EO	Innovativeness, Proactiveness, Risk-taking
Dependent Variable (DV)	International performance	Margins from global sales, increase in headcount, increase in international revenue, increase in global market share
Moderator	Government support	Government policy, government incentives, government infrastructure
Control	Size Age of company Age of export activities	

Source: (Author's own table, 2025)

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The literature review provided a theoretical foundation regarding international EO and environmental factors, looking at the role of institutional and government support. This chapter presents the research methods used to address the research problem stated in Chapter One. The chapter explains clearly and comprehensively why particular research methods were preferred over others.

4.2. Research Design & Philosophy

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), research design specifies how data is collected, analysed, and measured. The research design is a survey method. Creswell (2014) emphasises that surveys relate to a study's purpose rather than the design. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) describe survey studies as the broadest category of nonexperimental designs and delineate them into descriptive, explorative, and comparative designs. This research is descriptive, as it seeks to measure and describe the characteristics of export ventures by finding the extent to which variables are associated with each other and making specific predictions regarding numerical values (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

4.3. Research Approach

The study is positivist and quantitative (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The positivist paradigm seeks to explore social reality objectively (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, proper knowledge is based on the experience of the senses and can be obtained through observation and experimentation. Quantitative research methods are those in which the observed data exist numerically (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Deductive research is a research approach that begins with a general theory or hypothesis and tests associated with quantitative testing, ultimately to support or refute assumptions based on the results. This is widely used to derive meaningful insights from the theoretical frameworks (Bailey, 2008).

4.4. Research Methodology

4.4.1. Population

According to Rahi (2017), a population is the group from which an empirical study can be derived. In the framework of this study, the population consists of South African Venture exporters actively involved in export activities spanning manufacturing, agriculture, mining, services, and technology (Adekunle, Eniola, & Balchin, 2024; Grosse, Behr, & Mahlalela, 2023). These companies range in size from small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to major multinational companies—and are chosen depending on their participation in international trade (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015). This varied population helps the study to present a whole picture of export dynamics and entrepreneurial orientation (EO) inside the South African corporate scene (Buccieri, et al., 2020).

Specifically in identifying the effect of EO and environmental influences, including government assistance, on internationalisation strategy and export performance, the research maintains generalisability of results and enables cross-sectoral comparison using ventures from a range of industries (Leonidou, et al., 2007; Hernandez, Reiche, & Cardon, 2022). Reflected in the heterogeneity of firms doing business in different institutional, economic, and competitive contexts in South Africa's export-based economy, such a population features prominently in the mitigation of research purposes (Urban, 2019; Adekunle et al., 2024).

4.4.2. Sample and Sampling Method

According to Rahi (2017), survey research chooses a sample of respondents before asking them questions or talking to them to discover their beliefs, attitudes, values, habits, ideas, demographics, feelings, opinions, plans, and beliefs. A sample is a smaller part of the population (Creswell, 2014; Rahi, 2017).

Rahi (2017) defines survey research as choosing a sample of responders from a specified demographic before using research instruments like questionnaires or interviews. The aim is to compile objective statistics about their views, opinions, values, practices, ideas, demography, emotions, perceptions, intentions, and beliefs. Based on data from a smaller sample, this method allows researchers to test theory, examine trends, and make

inferences about a larger population. According to Creswell (2014), a sample is a representative portion of the population chosen with care to reflect the diversity and characteristics of the entire group being studied. Using a clearly defined sample ensures the dependability of data, and the validity and usability of research results are enhanced. Thus, empirical research of good quality relies on the sampling process and survey instrument choice to a great extent (Creswell, 2014; Rahi, 2017).

The sample includes exporters from various export databases such as (1) the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC), (2) the Export Council, (3) the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI), (4) the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission; (5) LinkedIn sources; (6) the Export Credit Insurance Corporation of South Africa (ECIC); and (7) business associations. Therefore, senior or executive management in exporting companies knowledgeable about export practices and performance within their ventures were targeted.

4.4.3. Sampling technique

Probability and non-probability are two classifications for sampling designs (Rahi, 2017; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Rahi (2017) defines probability sampling as a method that guarantees that every case or element in the population has a known and equal probability of being chosen. Ensuring that the sample is representative of the population is essential for supporting the validity of generalisations made from the sample to the broader population.

Therefore, if the probability of each chosen case is important, then probability sampling is considered. Otherwise, a non-probability sample might be considered. As defined by Rahi (2017) and Saunders et al. (2016), nonprobability sampling asserts that “the probability of selecting each case from the overall population is unknown”. A nonprobability sampling technique was used for this study. Five main techniques can be used to select a non-probability sample: quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection, and convenience, but the choice depends on the research question and objectives (Rahi, 2017; Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

The researcher employed the convenience sampling method because of the logistical aspects involved with gaining access to South African export firms from various industries. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that enables researchers to reach individuals who are easily reachable and willing to be involved, especially where time, accessibility, and resource limitations exist (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Since the study targeted export companies' senior managers, who are sometimes difficult to reach for reasons of time and geography, convenience sampling made it possible for the researcher to collect data efficiently from expert participants in formulating export decisions. The method facilitates the research question and aims to explore how entrepreneurial orientation and government support influence internationalisation performance.

The advantages of convenience sampling, namely prompt and usable access to respondents, outweighed the advantages of probability sampling from the entire sampling frame, which may be unavailable for all exporting companies in South Africa. In addition, convenience sampling is suitable for exploratory research when one's interest is to achieve early insights into previously unexplored settings, e.g., the internationalisation of South African companies (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

According to Coldwell and Herbst (2004), the convenience technique is used when respondents willing to participate in the research are conveniently selected. The sampling frame was collected from various exporting databases such as (1) the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC), (2) the Export Council, (3) the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI); (4) the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission; (5) Investment Promotion Agencies, such as WESGRO, Gauteng Growth Development Agency, GGDA (6), LinkedIn sources; (7) the Export Credit Insurance Corporation of South Africa (ECIC); (8) industry associations; and (9) personal contacts.

According to Brassington and Pettit (2006), a sampling frame is the means of accessing the population to be surveyed; it is a list from which the names of respondents can be drawn.

4.4.4. The Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to conduct the survey. The questionnaire was adapted from Urban and Sefalafala (2015) and modified to align with the constructs of this research. It consists of four sections, as illustrated in Table 2. Section A comprises questions related to the demographic aspects associated with the control variables. The other sections, B to D, have multi-item sub-scales. Section B has two sub-scales for the entrepreneurial orientation construct. Section C examines internationalisation motives, markets, and profitability items grouped into this section, and Section D pertains to environmental factors focusing on government policies, incentives, and infrastructure.

A perceptual measure of a self-report was used, and respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction using the five-point Likert-type scale. A five-point Likert-type scale measures sections B to D, ranging from one = very dissatisfied to five = very satisfied, enabling more responses (Zhang, Zhou, & Savalei, 2023).

Table 7

Sections of the survey instrument

Segments	Sub-section	No. of items	Question
A. Demographics	Demographic questions	15	1-16
B. Entrepreneurial Orientation	Risk Taking	8	31-38
	Innovation	9	17-25
	Pro-activeness	5	26-30
C: Internationalisation		8	39-46
D. Environmental Factors	Government Support	8	
	Policy	6	47-52
	Incentives	5	53-57

	Infrastructure	5	58-62
Total		62	

Source: (Author's own model, 2025)

4.5. Procedure for data collection

Data collection involved an online survey questionnaire. There are growing privacy concerns considering data security. Online surveys still enjoy perceived anonymity and are effective. Also, online surveys efficiently gather data from big samples due to automation, cost-effectiveness, speed, and the ability to reach a geographically diverse target group (Wegner et al., 2017; Sefalafala, 2012). The questionnaire consists of a five-point Likert-type scale. Many responses were obtained through data gathered in Google Forms.

4.6. Data analysis and interpretation

This study's data analysis and interpretation methods are adopted from Sefalafala (2012). It followed the following steps:

1. Regression analysis
2. Moderator effects
3. Regression assumptions and
4. Descriptive statistics

Table 8*Description of Analytical Approaches*

Analytical Approach	Description
Descriptive statistics	Analyse numerical data for continuous variables, means, standard deviations, variance, skewness, etc.
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis	Analyse the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables.
Moderator effects	This study evaluates the interaction between these variables in predicting a dependent variable.
Regression assumptions	Assumptions for linearity, multivariate normality, independence of error, homoscedasticity, heteroscedastic

Source: (Sefalafala, 2012)

4.7. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability assess research quality. Validity refers to the degree to which a measure accurately assesses what it is intended to measure, whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement over time (Bryman, 2004). Hair et al. (2013) and Sürücü & Maslakci (2020) posit that it is important for the researcher to improve reliability and validity.

4.7.1. Validity and Reliability Concepts

Validity: Has the researcher gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of participants? Pre-test instrument wording was done by an expert who examined the survey. Tried and tested scales to measure constructs were used. Finally, the comments of the researcher's supervisor were considered to test the instrument. Research has been guided by the theory on internationalisation.

4.7.2. Internal validity

According to Ansari and Khan (2023), construct validity is the extent to which test items accurately represent the researcher's intended notion. The study instrument is factor-analysed. Convergent validity refers to the match of scale scores with a single factor, while discriminant validity measures the degree to which scale scores do not correlate with other measures (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). According to Podsakoff et al. 2003, the component structure helped to verify that scores were not influenced by shared method variance.

1. The selection of factors with *eigenvalues* greater than 1.0.
2. A predetermined number of factors are based on prior research.
3. Enough factors to meet a specified percentage (60%) of variance explained.
4. A combination of the above three criteria was used for validity checks of the data-derived factor solution.

4.7.3. External Validity

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define external validity as the ability of data to be generalised over the population, settings, and time period. To guarantee external validity, respondents from a wide spectrum of exporting and South African enterprises were chosen. Results from convenience samples have been extrapolated.

The data's ability to be generalised across persons, settings, and times.

1. Sample respondents were obtained from various sources with export ventures.
2. It was important to get a high number of respondents.

4.7.4. Reliability

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define reliability as the degree to which a measurement is error-free and produces consistent results. To ensure this, different researchers made similar observations on different occasions. The measures' internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlation, and inter-item correlation to ensure their dependability (Hair et al., 2013). Scale consistency is gauged by Cronbach's alpha (α). According to Hair et al. (2013), a Cronbach α value greater than 0.7 reflects acceptable internal consistency, confirming the study's reliability.

However, a lower threshold of 0.6 is considered acceptable in exploratory research. On the other hand, the dependability of internal consistency if Cronbach's α is less than 0.6 is viewed as poor. One software tool that was used for analysis was IBM-SPSS software. The author is the only person who has given an interpretation of the research results to minimise the risk of observer error and bias.

4.7.5. Generalisability

How likely are ideas and theories generated in one setting to apply in other settings?

The generalisability and transferability of the findings in this research are limited to the setting experiences of the SA export venture participants. They may not apply to other SA firms with different settings, (Easterby-Smith et al 2021).

4.8. Limitations

This study has some inherent limitations:

- The quantitative research designs do not distinguish people and social institutions from the world of nature; the measurement processes are artificial and lack a sense of precision and accuracy.
- The reliance on instruments hinders the connection between research and everyday life (Bryman & Cramer, 2004).
- The primary challenge in this research is the lack of comprehensive sampling frames. For example, e-mail listings may be outdated or not exclusive to specific user groups. The Protection of Personal Information Act was promulgated in 2013 and enforced in 2021 (Roos, 2023). It prevents institutions like the DTIC, SACCI, WESGRO from freely sharing data, making it very difficult to contact respondent and with heavy reliance on institutions to distribute the survey.
- The study was conducted inside the context of South African ventures, thereby maybe limiting the generalisability of the results to other countries.
- The single-country focus might suggest a certain amount of ethnocentrism in the findings (Coviello & Jones, 2004).

- The study is based on self-report data, which reveals the possibility of common method bias and is prone to social desirability bias among other possible biases.
- The survey was conducted anonymously and did not seek classified information.
- The respondents are directors, Executives, managers, Export managers, and key personnel involved in exporting.
- One member of middle to top management per venture was surveyed. Another study examining all senior management team members may yield different outcomes.

4.9. Conclusion

The research methodology chapter outlined the methods and approaches used in the study. This offered a positivist and quantitative research approach applying structured methodologies to assess a correlation between EO and internationalisation among South African ventures. Employing a cross-sectional design, it registers the EO and its impact on export activities. Data collection methodologies have been clearly articulated, focusing on small to large companies, allowing for comparative analysis and the study's breadth.

Descriptive statistics and regression allow for a robust analysis to uncover patterns and make reliable conclusions regarding the influence of EO and environmental factors on internationalisation. The validity and reliability of the research instruments were ensured through measures that affirm the credibility of the findings and their generalisability within the SA context. Despite the study exhibiting specific limitations, measures have been implemented to guarantee trustworthy sources, which are verifiable and serve as a foundation for future studies.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methods and techniques for collecting and analysing data addressing the research methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to present the data from a quantitative survey. Online interview instrument was utilised as the data collection method and participants were drawn from the various sources of South African export venture firms. The chapter starts by giving a demographic overview of the respondents and their export firms. This is followed by the presentation of descriptive data. It concludes with a summary of key findings.

5.2. Demographic Profile of Respondents:

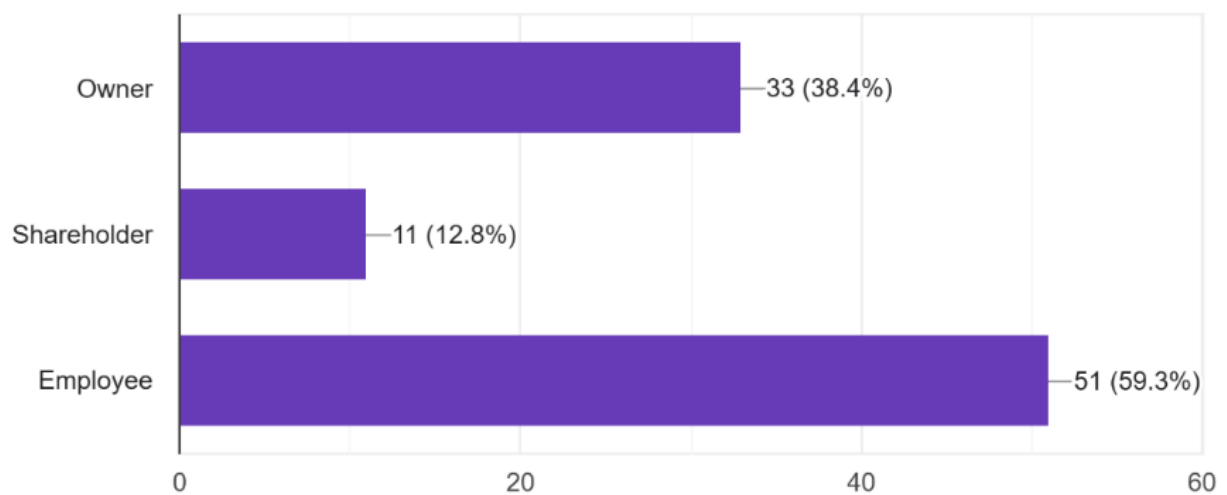
The demographic profile of the respondents provides an exhaustive description of the characteristics and profiles of individuals in the survey. Most respondents are employees at 59.3%, followed by owners and shareholders at 38.4% and 12.8%, respectively. In terms of gender, women have a slightly higher proportion at 58.1% to men at 40.7%. The educational level of the respondents varies as 39.5% possess a degree, 26.7% a matriculation, and 12.8% an honours degree. The respondents also vary in their industries, with the most prominent being manufacturing at 25.581% and wholesale and retail trade being the second most frequent at 8.14%.

5.2.1. Status Owner – Employee

Figure 3

Involvement in firm

Figure 3 illustrates the more balanced composition of respondents who completed the survey. 51,2% of respondents were owners and shareholders of firms, and 59,3% of responses were from employees.

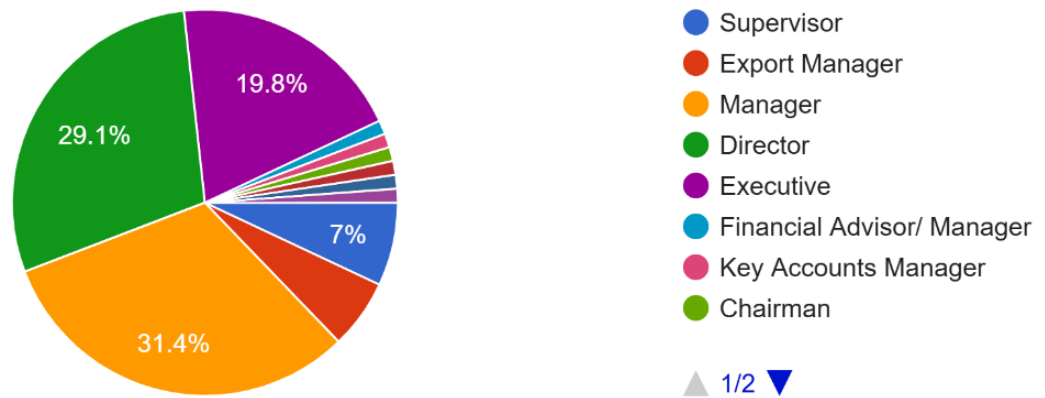


5.2.2. Position in company

The most responses for positions in the company came from Supervisors, at 29.1%, and Export Managers, at 31.4%. Other staff members who took part in the survey were in Managerial-level positions like Financial Advisor/Manager and Key Accounts Manager, Director, at 7%, and Manager, at 19.8%. There was a varied range of responses from specialists and other respective levels who play a role in exporting.

Figure 4

Position in company

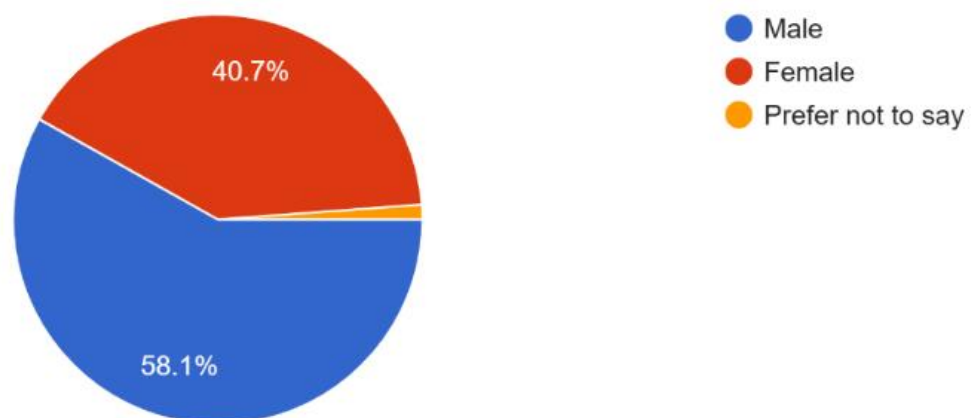


5.2.3. Gender

Most respondents were females, with 58.1% representation, and male respondents represented 40.7%. A very small percentage, if any, did not wish to give their gender.

Figure 5

Response by Gender

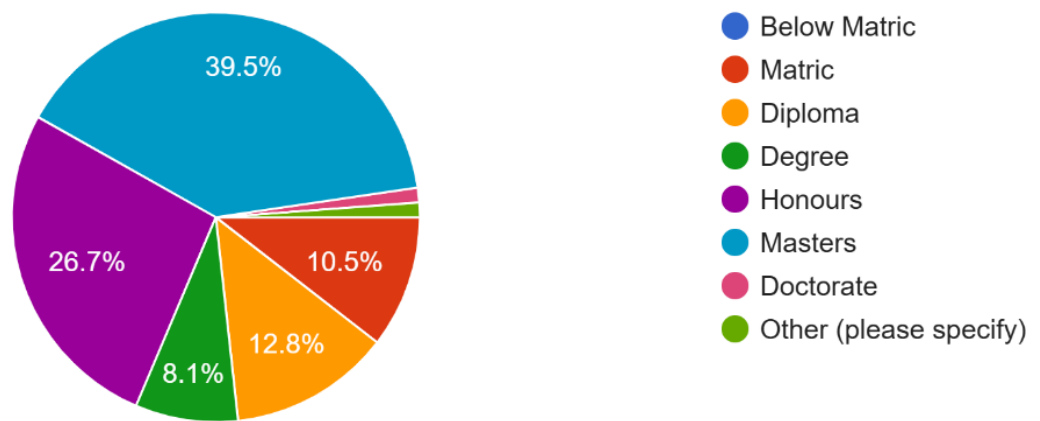


5.2.4. Level of education

The most qualified responders hold a degree at 39.5% and an honours level at 12.8%. Those with diplomas are at 10.5%, master's at 8.1%, and Matric and below at 29.0%. This indicates that a highly educated workforce is necessary for competency and knowledge for internationalisation.

Figure 6

Distribution of respondents by qualification



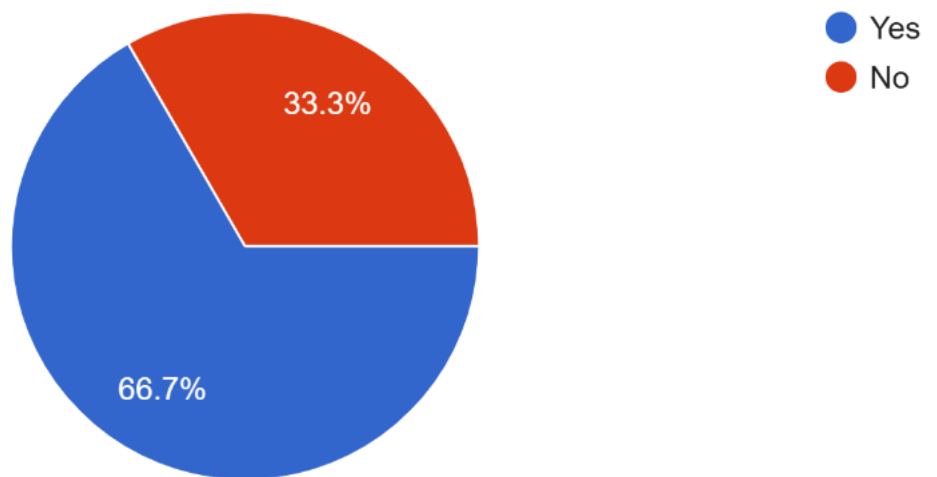
5.2.5. Demographics of firms

5.2.5.1. Exporters, non-exporters

The chart shows data on the exportation of products or services by businesses to other countries, out of 129 responses. 66.7% of the respondents replied with a “Yes” indicating to be exporting to international markets and 33.3% replied with a “No” as non-exporting firms.

Figure 7

Firms exporting goods or services



5.2.5.2. Industry sector where firms are based

The largest and most common sector of exporters is manufacturing, comprising 25.58% of the responses. This is followed by wholesale and retail trade, at 8.14%. Other sectors, such as Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply, Mining and Quarrying, and Real Estate and Business Services, each account for approximately 3.5%. This highlights the diversity of the industries with great importance in the manufacturing and trade sectors.

Table 9

Industry sector categorisation

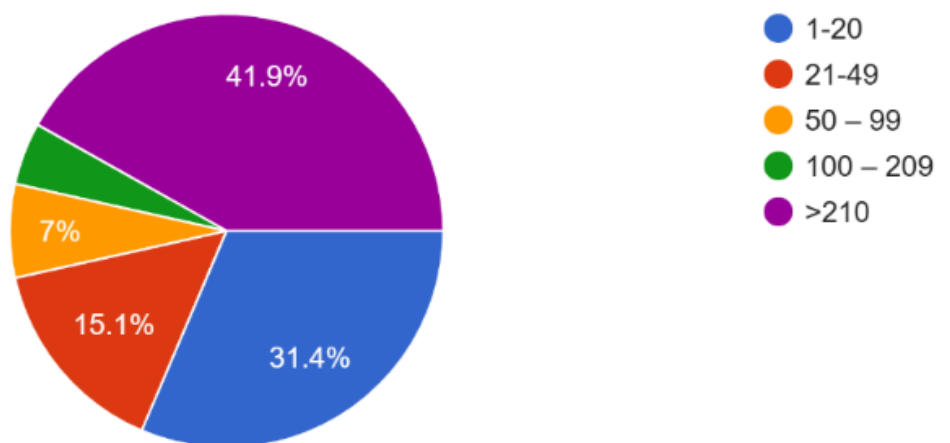
Frequencies for 5. In which industry sector is the company based?				
5. In which industry sector is the company based?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agriculture	14	16.279	16.279	16.279
Agriculture,	1	1.163	1.163	17.442
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing, Manufacturing, Mining and quarrying, Construction,	1	1.163	1.163	18.605
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing, Mining and quarrying	1	1.163	1.163	19.767
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing, Mining and quarrying, Transportation	1	1.163	1.163	20.93
Agriculture, Manufacturing	1	1.163	1.163	22.093
Agriculture, Manufacturing, Wholesale and retail trade	1	1.163	1.163	23.256
Agriculture, Transportation, Real Estate and Business Services	1	1.163	1.163	24.419
Automotive	2	2.326	2.326	26.744
Communication	2	2.326	2.326	29.07
Construction	1	1.163	1.163	30.233
Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply	3	3.488	3.488	33.721
Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply, Construction	1	1.163	1.163	34.884
Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply, Construction, Transportation, Communication	1	1.163	1.163	36.047
Financial, Insurance Services	4	4.651	4.651	40.698
Healthcare	1	1.163	1.163	41.86
IT	1	1.163	1.163	43.023
Information Technology	1	1.163	1.163	44.186
Logistics services	1	1.163	1.163	45.349
Manufacturing	22	25.581	25.581	70.93
Manufacturing, Mining and quarrying	1	1.163	1.163	72.093
Manufacturing, Transportation	2	2.326	2.326	74.419
Medical Products	1	1.163	1.163	75.581
Mining and quarrying	3	3.488	3.488	79.07
Pharmaceutical	1	1.163	1.163	80.233
Real Estate and Business Services	3	3.488	3.488	83.721
Survey & Town planning	1	1.163	1.163	84.884
Textile	1	1.163	1.163	86.047
Transportation	4	4.651	4.651	90.698
Wholesale and retail trade	7	8.14	8.14	98.837
Wholesale and retail trade, Financial, Insurance Services	1	1.163	1.163	100
Missing	0	0		
Total	86	100		

5.2.5.3. Number of employees in firms

The largest proportion of the number of employees is 41.9%, in the category of firms with more than 210 employees. The second largest segment, at 31.4%, is made up of firms that have 1–20 employees, reflecting the presence of small firms. The 15,1% are of mid-sized firms employing between 21 and 49 workers. 50–99 workers are at 7%. The smallest composition is with firms employing 100–209 employees, representing a minute proportion of the population. From here it can be inferred that there are a considerable number of small as well as large firms that engage in internationalisation.

Figure 8

Distribution of employees in firm



5.2.5.4. Number of years in business

51.2%, had exported 0–3 years, reflecting the fact that the majority of the companies are newly emerging exporters. A further 19.8% had exported 16 or more years and these represent longer established exporters. Lower percentages find themselves in the middle ranges: 8.1% for 4–7 years, 14% for 8–11 years, and 7% for 12–15 years.

This is a reflection of a combination of new and established exporters, with a significant representation of recently established exporters to export to international markets.

Table 10

Number of years a firm has been in business

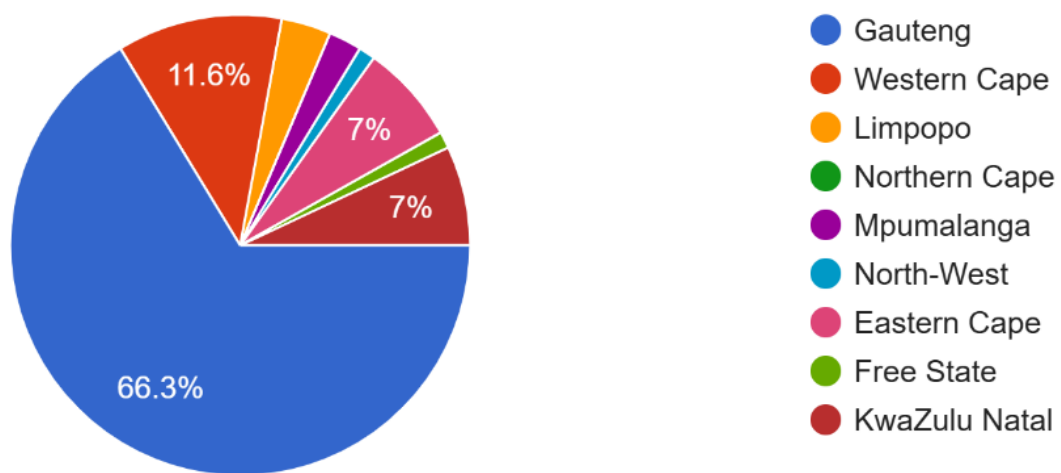
Number of years in business:	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0 - 3 years	6	6.977	6.977	6.977
12 - 15 years	7	8.14	8.14	15.116
16 years & more	44	51.163	51.163	66.279
4 - 7 years	17	19.767	19.767	86.047
8 - 11 years	12	13.953	13.953	100

5.2.5.5. Region where the firm is located

Most of the firms are based in the Gauteng province at 66,3% while 11.6% are in the Western Cape. The rest are distributed in KwaZulu Natal (7.0%), Eastern Cape (7.0%), Limpopo (3.5%), Mpumalanga 2,3%, North West tying with the Free State at 1.2% each. There was no response from the Northern Cape.

Figure 9

Firm location



5.2.5.6. Nature of international business

40.7% of the responding firms are exporting firms while 26.7% are wholly owned subsidiary firms and 11.6% have strategic alliances. Firms with joint ventures are at 8.1%, while a few firms have agreements at 7% through licensing or franchising.

Figure 10

Nature of International Business

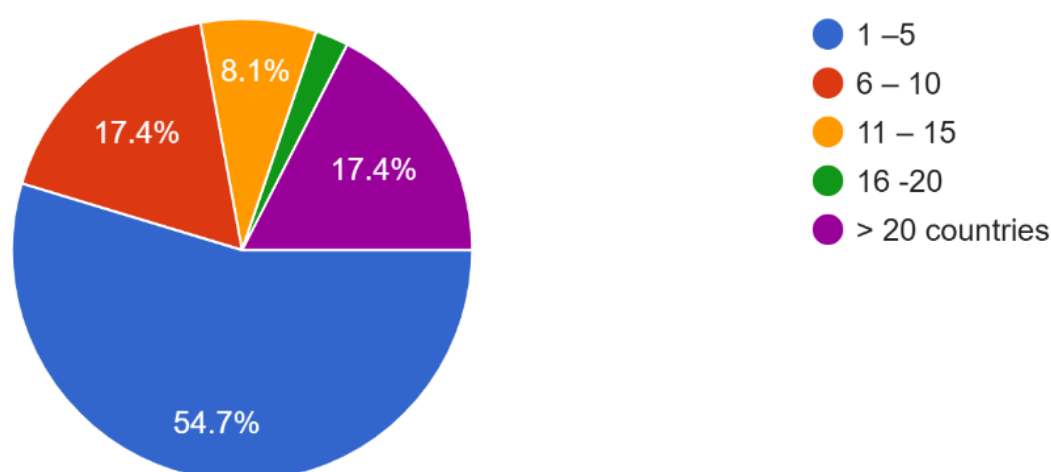


5.2.5.7. Scope of internationalisation

The percentage of countries to which firms sell their products or services, the most frequent category, 54.7%, is selling to 11–15 countries, is indicative of an average level of foreign market penetration. 17.4% sell to 6–10 countries, and another 8.1% sell to 1–5 countries. This implies that most firms have significant international presence, as many have export activities in numerous nations. It demonstrates diversified export schemes and market reach by these firms.

Figure 11

Distribution of countries that firms export to



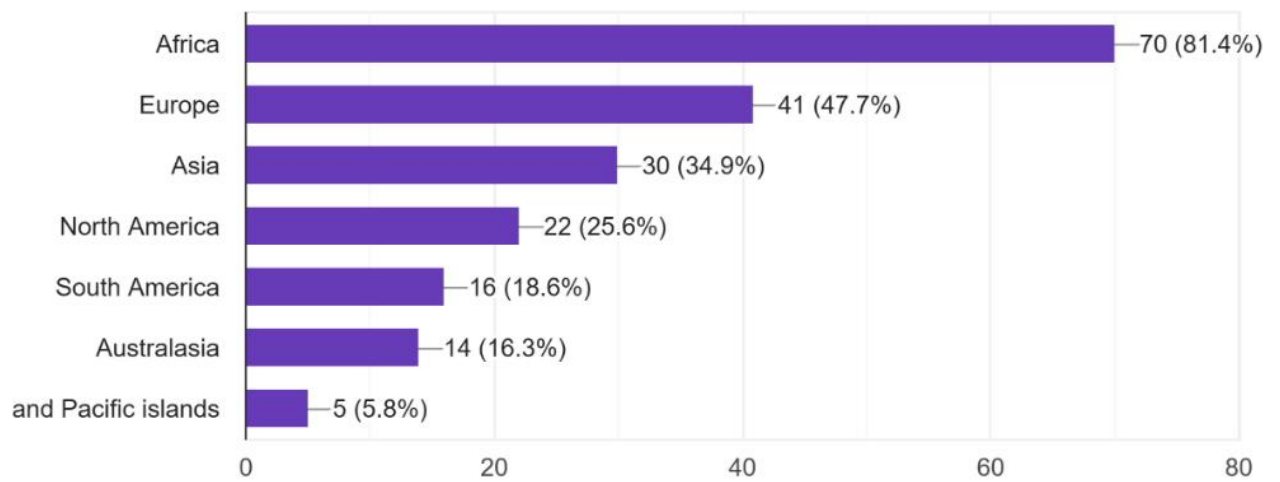
5.2.5.8. Continents the firms are exporting to

The most prominent continent is Africa at 47.7%, indicating a very high regional market concentration. Europe comes in second at 34.9%, indicating significant trading links with European countries. The continent with the third-highest concentration is Asia, at 25.6%, highlighting the significance of Asian markets. North America and South America top the lowest percentages with 18.6% and 16.3% respectively, while Australasia and Pacific islands have the lowest percentage of 5.8%. The percentages indicate that 81.4% of the firms export to one or more of the listed markets, reflecting the global reach of the

companies being surveyed. The trend also indicates strategic export prioritisation with African and European countries being given top priority.

Figure 12

Distribution of exports by continent



5.2.5.9. International Intensity

Most firms, at 51.2%, are in the lower turnover range of less than R150,000. A smaller percentage, 17.4%, have turnover bands between R 2m and R 4.5m, while 16.3% are in the turnover range of between R 46m and R 50m. 10.5% of the firms have turnovers exceeding R 50m. This distribution indicates that most of the companies covered in the survey are small and medium-sized companies with comparatively low annual turnovers, while the minority consists of larger established companies.

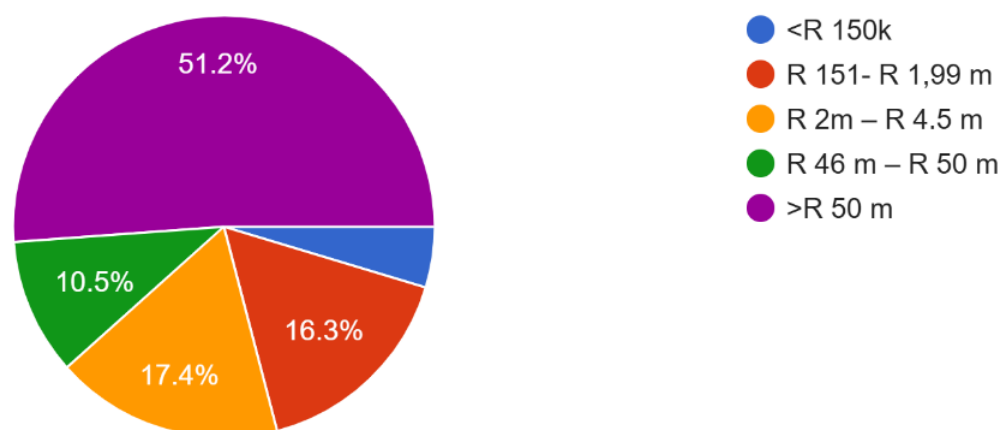
Table 11

Company's annual turnover

7. What is the company's annual turnover?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<R 150k	4	4.651	4.651	4.651
>R 50 m	44	51.163	51.163	55.814
R 151- R 1,99 m	14	16.279	16.279	72.093
R 2m . R 4.5 m	15	17.442	17.442	89.535
R 46 m . R 50 m	9	10.465	10.465	100
Missing	0	0		
Total	86	100		

Figure 13

Export Turnover in Rands

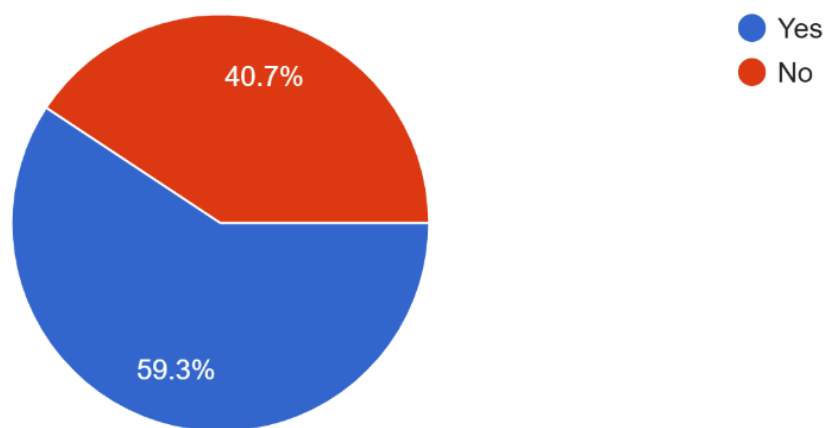


5.2.5.10. Profitability from foreign sales

The data indicate that 59.3% of the respondents replied with a "No," meaning that foreign sales are no more profitable for most companies than domestic sales. Similarly, 40.7% of the respondents replied "Yes," which means that the majority of companies do have foreign sales that are more profitable. The split reflects the divided perception on profitability in international over domestic markets. The findings can represent different market situations, levels of competition, and operational efficiencies in regions.

Figure 14

Probability of high sales



5.3. Measurement of variables of the model

5.3.1. Validity

Table 12

Constructs	KMO Statistic	Explained Variation	No. of Significant Factor Loadings
Innovativeness	0.870	52.43%	8
Proactiveness	0.797	55.05%	5
Risk Taking	0.870	55.70%	8
Policy	0.821	53.93%	6
Incentives	0.753	41.40%	5
Infrastructure	0.726	47.24%	5
International Performance	0.753	40.16%	5

All constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of validity as the factors loaded onto a single dimension. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, (KMO) measure, or sampling adequacy, is more significant than 0.7 for each construct. Risk-taking and innovativeness exhibit the highest KMO values (0.870), indicating sufficient sampling adequacy. The variation ranges from 40.16% to 55.70%, while the highest explained variation is possessed by Risk Taking (55.70%), and the lowest is held by International Performance (40.16%). Factor loadings differ among constructs, ranging from a maximum of 8 for Innovativeness and Risk Taking to 5 meaningful factor loadings for Proactiveness, Incentives, Infrastructure, and International Performance.

5.3.2. Reliability

Table 13

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items	Removed Items
Innovativeness	0.891	8	1
Proactiveness	0.852	5	0
Risk Taking	0.909	8	0
Policy	0.869	6	0
Incentives	0.764	5	0
Infrastructure	0.811	5	0
International Performance	0.749	5	3

All constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability as the Cronbach Alpha score was greater than 0.70 in all cases. Cronbach's Alpha, an internal consistency measure, also evaluated concept validity. The scales indicate that the constructs are extremely to adequately reliable, from 0.749 to 0.909 Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The most internally consistent were Innovativeness (0.891) and Risk-Taking (0.909). Proactiveness (0.852), Policy (0.869), Infrastructure (0.811), and Incentives (0.764) are all acceptably reliable. International Performance has the lowest Cronbach's Alpha of 0.749 but remains within acceptable parameters.

5.3.3. Descriptive Statistics: Constructs

5.3.3.1. Independent Variables: Entrepreneurial Orientation

5.3.3.1.1. Innovativeness

Table 14

		16. The company has an emphasis on introducing new technology:	17. The company has a strong focus on Research & Development activities:	18. The company invests heavily in new product development:	19. The company is open to outside ideas that can lead to new business opportunities:	20. Innovation and creativity are part of the business strategy:	21. Employees are encouraged to come up with new ideas:	22. CEO and leaders are involved in fostering innovation:	23. There is a reward system for creative and innovative individuals:	24. The company is leading in introducing new technology:
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	4.02	3.84	3.83	4.23	4.21	4.21	4.31	3.53	3.26
	Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
	Mode	5	4	5	4	5	5	4 ^a	4	4
	Std. Deviation	0.894	1.016	1.150	0.792	0.935	0.799	0.707	1.037	1.129
	Skewness	-0.451	-0.767	-0.600	-1.025	-1.319	-0.682	-0.739	-0.192	-0.273
	Std. Error of Skewness	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
	Kurtosis	-0.773	0.121	-0.729	0.987	1.479	-0.264	0.134	-0.857	-0.713
	Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

Among 86 responses which were found valid, the mean scores for items range between 3.26 and 4.31, indicating generally a positive response about the attention given by the company to R&D, technology, and innovation. The top-rated item at 4.31 is, "CEO and leaders are driving innovation," suggests that there is a high degree of commitment to innovation among the leaders. The bottom rated item at 3.26 is "The company is at the forefront of adopting new technology," suggests that improvement can be made here. With a median of 4.00 and modes of 4 and 5, most items have these patterns according to the median and mode values. The responses are moderately heterogeneous according to standard deviation values of 0.707 and 1.150. With slight negative skewness and different levels of kurtosis, the values of skewness and kurtosis indicate that most of the data are normally distributed. Overall, the findings validate that the efforts of a company in being innovative are appreciated positively with stress laid on most engaged company management and worst technology leadership.

5.3.3.1.2. Proactiveness

Table 15

		25. The company is leading in new market identification:	26. The proactive individuals within the company are being rewarded:	27. The company always strives for market share through proactive sales:	28. The company always strives to introduce new products or services ahead of competitors:	29. The company always foresees potential environmental changes and future demands ahead of competitors:
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.52	3.64	4.06	3.72	3.65
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		1.176	1.005	0.787	1.059	0.930
Skewness		-0.546	-0.572	-0.844	-0.693	-0.859
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		-0.491	-0.196	0.827	-0.290	0.483
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Mean ratings for proactiveness vary from 3.52 to 4.06. This reflects a positive opinion regarding the proactive initiatives of the company. The highest mean rating (4.06) is on "The company constantly strives for market share through proactive sales," reflecting market growth orientation. The lowest mean of 3.52 is for "The company is at the forefront in developing new markets," suggesting that there is room for improvement in finding new emerging markets. Each item has a median and mode of 4.00, suggesting central consensus. Standard deviations between 0.787 and 1.176 suggests a low spread in response, with highest active sales effort showing the least spread. The measures have negative skewness values ranging from -0.546 to -0.859.

5.3.3.1.3. Risk Taking

Table 16

		30. The company shows a great deal of tolerance for high-risk projects and rewards individuals for taking calculated risks.	31. Employees are encouraged to take action on their new ideas:	32. The company structure supports a proactive division through a recognition system:	33. The company's research and design division have a culture of introducing new products in the complex market:	34. The company commits significant resources to ventures in uncertain conditions:	35. The company takes bold actions by venturing into unknown business environments:	36. The company shows a great deal of tolerance for high-risk projects and rewards individuals for taking calculated risks:	37. The company strives to be the "first" in the market with new services while the future remains unknown. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements?
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.51	3.76	3.52	3.64	3.43	3.42	3.35	3.47
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Mode		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		0.991	0.945	0.930	1.005	1.046	1.090	1.015	1.059
Skewness		-0.441	-1.031	-0.519	-0.643	-0.315	-0.345	-0.268	-0.545
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		-0.361	1.186	0.042	0.142	-0.516	-0.554	-0.475	-0.080
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The mean score varies from 3.35 to 3.76, indicating moderate level of agreement with the statements. The maximum mean score of 3.76 goes to "Employees are encouraged to act on their new ideas," showing positive environment for employee-initiated projects. The lowest mean of 3.35 is for "The company is very tolerant of high-risk projects and pays individuals for taking risk-prudent approaches," meaning to be cautious in making high-risk investments. Most items both possess a median value and a mode value of 4.00, which means there is strong central tendency to agree. Standard deviation scores are 0.930 to 1.090, indicating moderate response variation, with employee encouragement and firm structure questions exhibiting the lowest variation of responses. Skewness scores for all items are negative, from -0.268 to -1.031, which signify a mild leftward skewing of data distribution. The results show that, as much as the firm supports staff-initiated innovation and proactivity, the firm is risk-averse when exploring risky endeavours and new business environments.

5.3.3.2. Moderating Variables: Government Support

5.3.3.2.1. Policy

Table 17

		46. The government has policies that support exporting at national level.	47. The government has policies to support exporting at the provincial level.	48. The government has policies to support exporting at local levels.	49. Trade agreements, including bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with other countries, assist in opening opportunities for exporting firms.	50. South Africa's monetary policy (e.g., inflation targeting, interest rates, currency exchange) promotes internationalisation.	51. The import duty/tariffs in place support international business activities for South African-based firms.
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.50	3.34	3.13	3.62	3.09	3.05
Median		4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		4	4	3	4	3 ^a	3
Std. Deviation		1.038	0.978	0.968	1.008	1.036	1.051
Skewness		-0.615	-0.341	-0.103	-0.644	-0.125	-0.095
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		-0.098	-0.313	-0.271	0.083	-0.660	-0.637
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Mean score ranges between 3.05 to 3.62 and indicate moderate agreement to the statements. The most significant mean score is for "Trade agreements, including bilateral and multilateral agreements with other nations, are helpful in providing exporting opportunities to exporting companies," at 3.62, which suggests that trade agreements are considered the most helpful factor for international business. The lowest mean responses 3.05 and 3.09 for "The import duty/tariffs in force facilitate international business activity by South African-based companies" and "South Africa's monetary policy promotes internationalisation" indicate that individuals disagree with these questions less.

Medians of 3.00 or 4.00 and modes of 3 or 4, indicating a general leaning towards agreement. The standard deviation results range from 0.968 to 1.051. Findings suggest that trade agreements are the best way for the government to help facilitate exports, followed by tariffs on imports and regulated duties, then monetary policy.

5.3.3.2.2. Incentives

Table 18

		52. The company is aware of the Government's incentive programs to encourage South African firms to enter export markets.	53. The incentives provided by Government have enabled the firm to pursue internationalisation activities.	54. Trade exhibitions and fairs assist in providing opportunities in export markets.	55. The export market and investment assistance scheme assist the company to open up export opportunities.	56. The government should continue advertising and providing leads for opportunities in export markets.
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.57	3.12	3.71	3.24	4.28
Median		4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Mode		4	4	4	3	4
Std. Deviation		0.965	1.034	0.931	0.945	0.730
Skewness		-0.565	-0.173	-0.545	-0.083	-0.860
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		-0.078	-0.633	-0.081	-0.459	0.684
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The results indicate that government advertising and exhibitions should be continued. The mean ratings are between 3.12 to 4.28, indicating a moderate to strong agreement with the statements. The highest supporting mean level at 4.28 is "The government should persist in advertising and generating leads on opportunities in export markets," that supports strongly current government activity on this front. The lowest mean score of 3.12 is "The government incentives offered have allowed the firm to conduct internationalisation activity,". This suggests is that government incentives are seen as being less useful in encouraging direct internationalisation.

5.3.3.2.3. Infrastructure

Table 19

		57. The Government has invested in transport infrastructure such as Roads, Airports, and Ports to enable the free flow of goods/services.	58. The Government has invested in manufacturing infrastructure such as IDZ, Special Economic Zones, Innovation, and Incubation hubs.	59. The Government has supported the establishment of bonded warehouses at Ports in South Africa and in international markets.	60. The Government is also influencing international markets, particularly Africa, to improve their infrastructure through agencies such as IDC and DBSA, & SOE's such as Eskom & Transnet.	61. The Government has invested in standardisation facilities, e.g., SABS certification.
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.86	3.28	3.45	3.33	3.77
Median		3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Mode		3	3	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		1.190	1.113	0.954	1.068	0.863
Skewness		-0.067	-0.262	-0.614	-0.451	-0.875
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		-0.950	-0.544	0.434	-0.244	1.340
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The mean ratings range from 2.86 to 3.77, which indicates moderate agreement with the statements. Highest mean score of 3.77 is on "The Government has invested in standardisation facilities, e.g., SABS certification," which reflects that the efforts of the government in this regard are greatly appreciated. In contrast, lowest mean score (2.86) is on "The Government has invested in transport infrastructure such as roads, airports, and ports to enable the free flow of goods/services," i.e., investment in transport infrastructure is perceived to be insufficient and has been lacking refurbishment. The standard deviations vary from 0.863 to 1.190, indicating that the responses are spread. Government investment in standardisation facilities and bonded warehouses is considerably welcomed. There is scope for improvement in transport infrastructure and investment in manufacturing to further encourage international trade and economic activity.

5.3.3.3. Dependent Variables

5.3.3.3.1. International Performance

Table 20

		38. The motive to internationalise is driven by perceived opportunities.	39. It is necessary to sell in international markets for the company's survival.	40. The company only sells in international markets:	41. It was part of the strategic long-term plan for the company to consider international markets:	42. The company's scope of internationalisation is above expectation:	43. The company is satisfied with profits derived from international markets:	44. Export sales have increased over the past years:	45. Market share growth is above expectation from export markets:
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.05	4.01	2.07	4.24	3.29	3.47	3.69	3.15
Median		4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode		4	5	2	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		0.957	1.000	1.082	0.781	0.981	1.070	1.055	1.133
Skewness		-1.085	-0.747	1.227	-0.916	-0.158	-0.673	-0.999	-0.056
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		0.803	-0.484	0.985	0.605	-0.633	-0.175	0.404	-0.960
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown									

The results indicate that internationalisation is motivated by planning and the perception that opportunities exist. The firm is predominantly domestic market-oriented but somehow content with its growth and profits. The scores range from 2.07 to 4.24, indicating how much the respondents agree with the statements. The mean value of 4.24 points indicates that internationalisation is quite in line with the company's strategic objectives. The mean score of 2.07 indicates that the company transacts most of its business within home markets, or home and foreign markets. The standard deviation values ranging from 0.781 to 1.133 indicate that the responses are moderately varied.

5.4. Tests of the Model:

5.4.1. Assessing normality

Table 21

		Innovation	Pro-activeness	Risk Taking	International Performance	Policy	Incentives	Infrastructure
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.908	3.718	3.511	3.132	3.286	3.583	3.337
Median		4.125	3.800	3.625	3.200	3.333	3.600	3.400
Mode		4.000	4.000	4.000	3.400	3.000	3.000	3.000 ^a
Std. Deviation		0.708	0.791	0.789	0.752	0.787	0.664	0.787
Skewness		-0.835	-0.721	-0.668	-0.007	-0.325	-0.093	-0.279
Std. Error of Skewness		0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260
Kurtosis		0.320	0.186	0.499	-0.034	-0.077	0.179	0.184
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.514
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown								

Skewness and kurtosis – the number has to be between -1 and 1

Refer to appendix for further histogram graphs.

This indicates that the distribution of the data follows a normal distribution. The models' main constructs being measured for descriptive statistics were innovation, proactiveness, risk raking, international performance, policy, incentives, and infrastructure—for the 86 usable responses. The mean ratings are between 3.132 and 3.908 and show high to moderate agreement on the constructs. There is strong to moderate agreement on the constructs, as indicated by the range of mean scores from 3.132 to 3.908.

The constructs possess strong to moderate agreement, which is attested by the mean values ranging from 3.132 to 3.908. Innovation is the dimension having the maximum mean value of (3.908), reflecting significant focus on innovation within the firm, while International Performance is having the least mean value (3.132) reflecting comparative lesser international market performance or satisfaction.

The moderate response variability is seen with standard deviations from 0.664 to 0.791, the lowest being for Incentives (0.664) and the highest for Proactiveness (0.791). Overall, the findings emphasise that innovation is the most robust construct, and International Performance lags, while the remaining constructs reflect moderate agreement and consistency.

5.4.2. Assessing Linearity:

Table 22

		Innovation	Pro-activeness	Risk Taking	International Performance	Policy	Incentives	Infrastructure
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	1	.735**	.696**	.231*	.227*	.394**	.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.032	0.036	0.000	0.002
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Pro-activeness	Pearson Correlation	.735**	1	.853**	.456**	.216*	.284**	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.045	0.008	0.001
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Risk Taking	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.853**	1	.476**	0.203	.250*	.335**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.061	0.020	0.002
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
International Performance	Pearson Correlation	.231*	.456**	.476**	1	0.119	0.065	0.184
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.032	0.000	0.000		0.275	0.555	0.090
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Policy	Pearson Correlation	.227*	.216*	0.203	0.119	1	.544**	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.036	0.045	0.061	0.275		0.000	0.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Incentives	Pearson Correlation	.394**	.284**	.250*	0.065	.544**	1	.550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.008	0.020	0.555	0.000		0.000
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Infrastructure	Pearson Correlation	.329**	.360**	.335**	0.184	.552**	.550**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.090	0.000	0.000	
	N	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

There are linear relationships between the constructs meeting the regression assumptions of the linearity. Innovation, Proactivity, Risk-Taking, International Performance, Policy, Incentives, and Infrastructure are the most significant components of the model. The findings suggest that there are several strong positive correlations. Innovation is also highly related to being proactive ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.01$) and risk-taking ($r = 0.696$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that they are highly related. Being proactive and risk-taking have a very high positive relationship ($r = 0.853$, $p < 0.01$), indicating how they relate and influence actions in firms. There is a moderate relationship between international performance and proactiveness ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between risk-taking ($r = 0.476$, $p < 0.01$). This means that proactiveness and risk-taking are positively associated with international performance.

Policy, Incentives, and Infrastructure have extremely high correlations. The maximum correlations were between Policy and Infrastructure ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$) and Incentives and Infrastructure ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that government policies and incentives are closely related to constructing infrastructure, and in turn, it facilitates

organizations to perform their work. There is a weak relation between International Performance and Policy, Incentives, and Infrastructure. The figures indicate that Innovation, Proactivity, and Risk-Taking are all interconnected. Whilst policy, incentives, and infrastructure are three distinct sets of variables that contribute to internationalisation.

5.5. Hypothesis Testing:

Table 23

	International Performance						
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4
Control Variables							
Employees	0.125		0.076		0.068		0.014
Turnover	-0.140		-0.025		-0.019		0.066
Age of Business	-0.130		0.009		0.019		-0.043
Age of Export Activities	-0.001		0.034		0.035		0.052
Independent Variables							
MC_Innovation			-0.294		-0.275		-0.545 **
MC_Pro-activeness			0.334		0.330		0.472 **
MC_Risk Taking			0.404	**	0.394	**	0.408 **
Moderator							
MC_Policy					0.040		0.090
MC_Incentives					-0.069		-0.097
MC_Infrastructure					0.038		0.063
Interaction Effects							
Policy_MC_Innovation							-0.219
Policy_MC_Pro-activeness							0.196
Policy_MC_Risk Taking							0.152
Incentives_MC_Innovation							0.223
Incentives_MC_Pro-activeness							-0.396
Incentives_MC_Risk Taking							-0.083
Infrastructure_MC_Innovation							-0.332
Infrastructure_MC_Pro-activeness							0.210
Infrastructure_MC_Risk Taking							0.221
F-Statistic	0.599		4.246	***	2.906	**	2.197 **
R ²	0.029		0.276		0.279		0.387
Δ R ²	0.029		0.247		0.003		0.108

†p<.10, *p<.05, **<.01, ***<.001

Table 23 shows the moderated regression results. The first model focuses on the influence of the control variables on international performance. The results highlight that this base model explains only 2.9% of the variation in the dependent variables. The control effect of size of the business (employees, turnover), age of the business and age of export activities was found to be non-significant.

The second model emphasizes the inclusion of the independent variables capturing entrepreneurial orientation. The inclusion increases the variation explained by 24.7%, and this shows that entrepreneurial orientation is able to be used for forecasting international performance. The results of regression show that Risk Taking alone has a significant association with international performance in the second model with a β coefficient of 0.404 and the corresponding p-value less than 0.05.

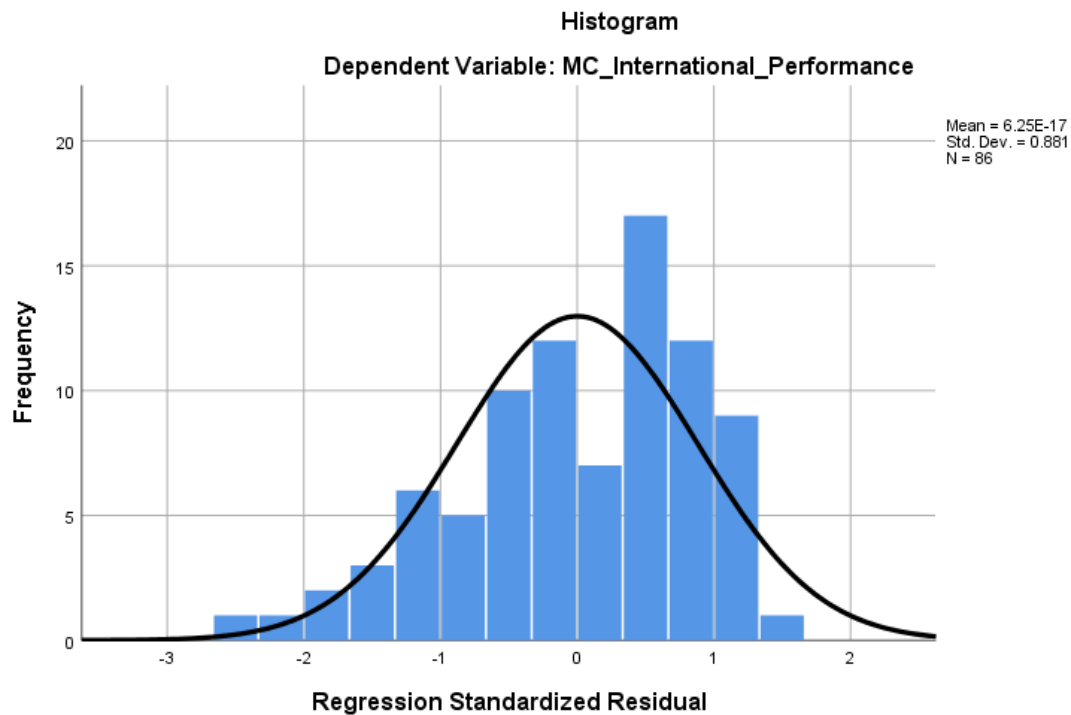
The third model includes the moderator variables of government support factors. This adds only a 0.03% to the variation explained by the model. This indicates that the moderator variables cannot explain international performance variation directly and none of the three moderator variables are having any significant relationship with the dependent variable.

The final model includes the control, independent, moderator and interaction variables. The explained variation of the final model is 38.7% and highlights that some variables can impact financial performance. In summary, it was found that:

- H1: Innovativeness influences international performance, and an inverse relationship exists ($\beta = -0.545$; $p < 0.05$)
- H2: Proactiveness influences international performance, and a direct relationship exists ($\beta = 0.472$; $p < 0.05$)
- H3: Risk-taking influences international performance and a direct relationship exists ($\beta = 0.408$; $p < 0.05$)
- H4: Government policy does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance
- H5: Government incentive does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance
- H6: Government infrastructure does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance

5.6. Regression Assumptions

Figure 14

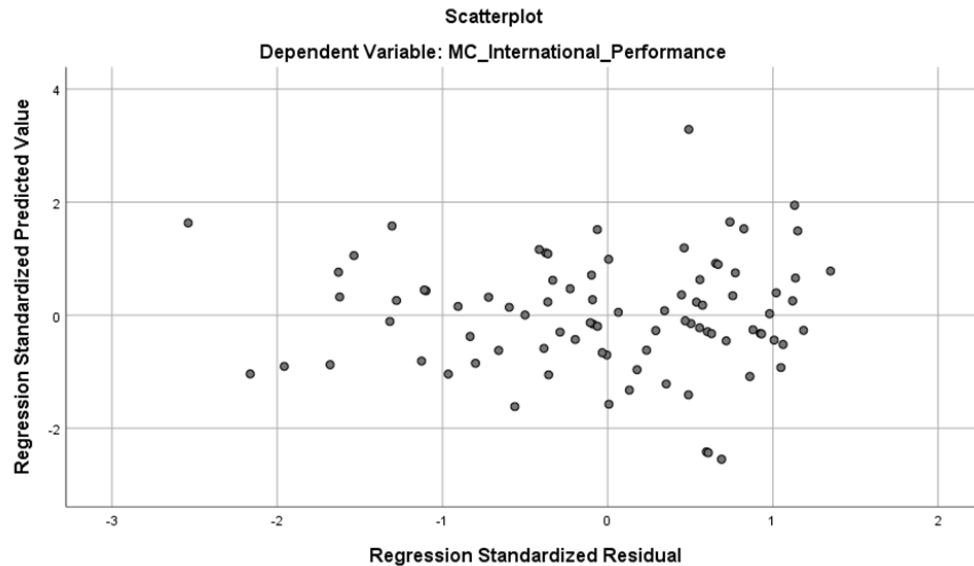


There is a bell shape curve on the histogram – the residuals are normally distributed.

The histogram indicates the distribution of the regression-standardised residuals for the dependent variable, mc_international_performance. The mean of the residuals is close to zero (6.25E-17), which indicates that the residuals are grouped around zero, a desirable level in regression analysis. The standard deviation of the residuals is 0.881, indicating that the residuals are closely grouped around the mean. Sample size (n) is 86, which means the number of observations that were included in the study. The histogram shows normality of the residuals.

Figure 15

Regression Chart



The graph shows a random scatter of the residuals – the assumptions of heteroskedasticity is met. The scatterplot plots the residuals of the regression against the fitted values of the dependent variable `mc_international_performance`. This is a common plot used to verify the assumptions of linear regression. It seems that the plot points are randomly scattered and not in some kind of order. This means the residuals are likely be approximately normally distributed.

5.7. Summary of the Findings

Table 24

Hypothesis	Research Construct	Supported
Innovativeness influences international performance	Innovativeness	Yes
Proactiveness influences international performance	Proactiveness	Yes
Risk-taking influences international performance	Risk-taking	Yes
Government policy does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance	Government Policy	No
Government incentive does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance	Government Incentive	No
Government infrastructure does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance	Government Infrastructure	No

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented the quantitative survey findings from South African export business firms, outlining respondents' demographic profiles, descriptive statistics, and the determination of major factors in the model. The demographic assessment revealed a diverse set of respondents, characterised by high employee representation, gender equality, and a highly educated workforce. The descriptive statistics highlighted the export activities of the firms, industry segments, and overseas performance, with an emphasis on the role of innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking for internationalisation.

Validity and reliability tests confirmed that all constructs satisfied the criteria and therefore guaranteed a strong measurement model. Correlation studies ensured high correlations between innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking and moderate correlations between these measures and international performance. Government support factors including policy, incentives, and infrastructure did not have moderating impacts on international performance.

The hypothesis test indicated that international performance was affected significantly by proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking, with innovativeness having a negative correlation. Government policy, incentives, and infrastructure did not affect the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and international performance. Regression assumptions were met, with the residuals being normally distributed. The results emphasise the central role played by entrepreneurial orientation in enhancing global performance, with government support, while being crucial, incapable of significantly shaping such a connection. The results have important policy implications for businesses that desire to enhance their global position and for policymakers who want to support export-oriented businesses.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

The discussion of results presents the findings within the backdrop of the research objectives, theoretical framework, and existing literature. This chapter aims to present and discuss the extensive quantitative survey results analysis, emphasising interaction between Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), government support variables, including policy, incentives, and infrastructure, and the global performance of South African export venture companies. Key results including demographic profile of respondents, descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing are examined. The discussion is structured to discuss the main findings, contrast them with the literature review, and show their significance for theory and practice.

6.2. Discussion of Results Findings

6.2.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of respondents was a varied set of respondents with a notable concentration of employees (59.3%), followed by owners (38.4%) and shareholders (12.8%). With 40.7% male and 58.1% female respondents, the gender distribution was somewhat equal. Respondents had a solid educational background; 39.5% had a degree and 12.8% had an honours degree. This implies that the respondents were well-educated, which is essential for comprehending and applying worldwide corporate tactics.

With 25.58% of the companies in the manufacturing sector, wholesale and retail trade came second followed by other sectors. This suggests that South Africa's export activities are greatly influenced by manufacturing. The companies ranged in size, 41.9% had more than 210 staff, demonstrating a mix of big and small businesses. Most companies, with 51.2%, had been exporting for 0–3 years, suggesting a quite new arrival into foreign markets. Africa (47.7%) and Europe (34.9%) were the main export destinations, therefore underlining the relevance of regional markets for South African companies.

Key research constructs such as innovation, proactiveness, risk-taking, international performance, policy, incentives, and infrastructure were highlighted by the descriptive statistics. The average scores for innovation ranged from 3.26 to 4.31, indicating generally positive feedback on the company's innovative focus. With "CEO and leaders are involved in fostering innovation" (4.31), which shows strong leadership endorsement for innovation, the highest mean score was ascribed. With a 3.26 mean score, "The company is leading in introducing new technology" had the lowest mean score suggesting possible improvement in technical leadership.

Being proactive produced positive results; mean scores fell between 3.52 and 4.06. With "The company consistently strives to enhance market share through proactive sales" (4.06), which shows a strong focus on market expansion, the highest mean score was ascribed. Risk-taking had mean values ranging from 3.35 to 3.76; "Employees are encouraged to take action on their new ideas" at 3.76 earns the highest score. This suggests that even if businesses support employee-driven innovation, they exhibit more caution over high-risk projects.

Mean ratings for foreign performance ranged from 2.07 to 4.24; the statement "It was part of the strategic long-term plan for the company to consider international markets" (4.24) received highest score. This means that the strategic goals of the business complement internationalisation. With a 2.07 lowest score, "The company only sells in international markets" indicates that most companies still rely on home markets.

6.2.2. Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability tests confirmed that every construct met the required criteria. For every construct, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy surpassed 0.7, therefore indicating that the data was suitable for component analysis. From 0.749 to 0.909, the Cronbach's Alpha values indicated either acceptable to high internal consistency or low. Although international performance recorded the lowest (0.749), though within reasonable limits, innovativeness (0.891) and risk-taking (0.909) showed the highest dependability scores.

6.2.3. Correlation Analysis

Among innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking, the correlation study revealed strong favourable links. Innovation showed a substantial association with risk-taking ($r = 0.696$, $p < 0.01$) and proactiveness ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.01$). Risk-taking and proactivity showed a strong, positive connection ($r = 0.853$, $p = 0.01$). These results suggest that these factors are linked and thereby improve the entrepreneurial attitude of a company together.

With regard to proactivity ($r = 0.456$, $p = 0.01$) and risk-taking ($r = 0.476$, $p = 0.01$), international performance had modestly favourable associations. International performance and government support variables—that is, policy, incentives, and infrastructure—had weak or negligible associations. This implies that despite government support factors have no direct impact, entrepreneurial spirit greatly influences international performance.

6.2.4. Testing hypotheses

The findings of hypothesis testing offer a deeper understanding of the relationships among the constructs. Comprising only control variables such as employees, turnover, firm age, and export activity age, the first model explained just 2.9% of the variance in international performance. This suggests that these control factors do not significantly affect international performance.

Comprising the independent variables of innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking, the second model explained 27.6% of the variance in international performance. While innovation showed a negative link ($\beta = -0.294$, $p < 0.05$), risk-taking showed a significant positive correlation with international success ($\beta = 0.404$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that although risk-taking enhances international performance, innovation may be negative, maybe because of the significant expenses and uncertainty involved.

Including the moderating elements of policy, incentives, and infrastructure, the third model explained just another 0.3% of the variance in global performance. The lack of a substantial link between any moderating factors with international performance suggests that aspects of government support do not directly influence international performance.

Incorporating interaction effects, the last model explained 38.7% of the variance in international performance. Non-significant interaction effects between government support components and entrepreneurial orientation imply that government aid did not change the link between entrepreneurial orientation and international performance.

6.3. Discussion of Research Questions

The South African ventures under focus in this study have a distinct drive to invest in international markets, with the majority holding the belief that opportunities exist elsewhere outside of the country (Ibrahim & McGuire, 2001; Dana, 2004; Leonidou et al., 2007; Dung & Giang, 2021; Nuhu et al., 2021; Mostafiz et al., 2021). For others, internationalisation is not just a strategy for growth but also survival for the company, with possible saturation or limitation in the domestic market (Ruzzier et al., 2006; Pita et al., 2021; Kuratko & Morris, 2018).

6.3.1. The inter-relationships among Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), government support, and international performance.

The evidence from the literature suggests that entrepreneurial orientation (EO), which is characterised by innovativeness, proactivity, and risk-taking, is among the main drivers of international performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Zahra, 2021; Tu et al., 2021). Establishing competitive advantages in international markets relies on innovation, which enables companies to keep up with evolving consumer preferences and technological innovation (Petersen, 2024). While risk-taking can enable companies to enter new markets, proactivity can enable them to grab opportunities in foreign markets ahead of their rivals (Kraus et al., 2023; Nave et al., 2024).

The findings indicate that proactivity ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.05$) and risk-taking ($\beta = 0.408$, $p < 0.05$) are highly critical for international performance. Contrary to the present figures, innovativeness negatively affected world performance ($\beta = -0.545$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that, mainly when risk and cost are higher than benefit, innovation is not always positive to enhance world performance even if it is strictly necessary. The study concurs on risk-taking and proactiveness to enhance international performance. However, the results contradict past knowledge by establishing that innovativeness can be ineffective in boosting world performance sometimes, apparently because of the costs and risks

associated with creation, (Lumpkin & Dess 1996, Zahra et al. 2014; Tu et al. 2021; Kraus et al. 2012; Nave et al. 2024).

6.3.1.1. International performance and the value of risk-taking

Risk-taking is an integral part of entrepreneurial orientation and most important in situations where companies are venturing into foreign markets with uncertainty (Kraus et al., 2023; Covin & Slevin, 1989). Calculated-risk-taking companies are bound to succeed in the international market. The findings strongly support the literature, which establishes that risk-taking was positively related to international performance ($\beta = 0.408$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that risky companies are going to perform internationally. The literature agrees on the importance of risk-taking driving international performance (Kraus et al. 2012; Covin & Slevin 1989).

6.3.1.2. Proactiveness and Market Entry

Proactiveness allows companies to identify and capture opportunities in international markets before their competitors. Proactive companies are more likely to reap first-mover advantages and develop powerful market positions (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Nave et al., 2024).

The findings reveal that proactiveness has a significant influence on international performance ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.05$). Firms which actively seek market opportunities shall be more likely to attain international success. The findings support previous studies, substantiating proactiveness as a contributor to global success (Lumpkin & Dess 1996; Nave et al. 2024).

6.3.1.3. Innovation and its role in international performance

Innovative firms are best suited to address the needs of world markets and stand out (Petersen, 2024; Javad, 2024). There is evidence that innovativeness is negatively associated with international success, as evidenced by the literature ($\beta = -0.545$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that innovation does not necessarily improve international performance, especially if the cost and risk of innovation is high. The literature documents the positive impact of innovation on internationalisation; however, the results deviate from this point

by demonstrating how innovation can impair international performance. This deviation is due to the South African business context, where it is costly and risky to innovate (Petersen 2024); Javad 2024).

There is a strategic view of international markets in the long term, with their planning encompassed in the company's overall strategy. In addition, the respondents' internationalisation attempts are positively tested and have indicated that most of the internationalisation scope has been better than they had expected. This can be said even for profitability within international business, export sales as well as market share increases in the previous couple of years, and therefore there is some level of accomplishment in international operations that calls for further examination on the driver behind such success, including the possibility of contribution by both their internal EO as well as the external environment.

6.3.2. How do environmental factors, particularly government support, affect this relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and internationalisation of South African ventures?

The decision and subsequent success of South African ventures in pursuing export market opportunities are not solely determined by internal strategic orientations, particularly Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO). The external environment, which consists of many variables, has a strong impact on this relationship. Among the environmental factors, government support is a possible influential variable that can either facilitate or complicate the impact of a firm's innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking on its international performance.

The quantitative findings provide useful data on what South African exporting firms think about drivers to internationalise, international performance satisfaction, and the options of government intervention available to them. In addition, it provides the hypothesis test that examines directly the moderating effect of government policy, incentives, and infrastructure on the relationship between EO and international performance (Ahsan et al., 2020; Hernandez et al., 2022; Urban, 2019).

6.3.2.1. Government Support and International Performance Review

The study focuses on government support, either in the form of policies, incentives, or infrastructure, as an enabler of internationalisation. Government incentives and policies are seen as a tool to overcoming entry barriers to foreign markets (Ahsan et al., 2020; Urban, 2019). Infrastructure, particularly communications and transport infrastructure, is taken to be the focal point in the smooth trading of goods and services across frontiers (Francois & Manchin, 2006; Huang, 2006).

Empirical evidence suggests that the government support variables (policy, incentives, and infrastructure) were unable to create significant moderation impacts on entrepreneurial orientation-international performance relationship. No significant impact was provided by any of the government support variables to international performance by the regression analyses.

The literature stresses the role of government assistance in driving internationalisation; however, the evidence suggests that government assistance has no influence on the performance of South African companies at the global level. This is probably due to the study context where companies rely more on internal capacities than on government assistance, (Ahsan et al. 2020; Urban 2019; Francois & Manchin 2006; Huang 2006).

Descriptive findings bring to the fore the different ways through which the South African government seems to facilitate exporting firms. Facilitating is done at different levels with policies at National, Provincial, and Local levels aimed at facilitating and promoting international trade (Ahsan et al., 2020; Anwana & Anwana, 2020). The existence of trade agreements, both bilateral and multilateral, is acknowledged as a significant factor in opening up opportunities for exporting firms by reducing trade barriers and fostering economic cooperation with other countries (Cherian, 2024).

Moreover, the respondents believe that South Africa's monetary policy, encompassing elements like inflation targeting, interest rates, and currency exchange, generally promotes internationalisation. Even the presence of import duties and tariffs is seen by some as potentially supporting international business activities for South African-based

firms, possibly by creating a more competitive domestic environment that encourages outward expansion (Ezebunwo & Uchenna, 2025).

Beyond broad policies and agreements, the surveyed ventures demonstrate an awareness of specific government incentive programs that encourage South African firms to enter export markets (Sim & Pandian, 2003; Leonidas et al., 2007; Blackburn, 2016; Hausman et al., 2011). Surprisingly, most confirm that these incentives have allowed their companies to undertake internationalisation activities, implying a real benefit gained from direct government assistance.

The contribution of trade fairs and exhibitions to offering worthwhile opportunities in export markets is also acknowledged, alluding to the government's facilitating role in market access and networking. In addition, the incentives program and export market are seen as helpful in these firms' access to export markets. The same respondents also indicate a need for the government to aggressively promote and generate leads for export market opportunities, showing an enduring need for information and promotional assistance (Motaung, 2024).

6.3.2.2. International trade is enhanced through infrastructure

The South African government's investment in infrastructure is another vital aspect of its internationalisation support. This involves substantial investment in transport infrastructure like roads, airports, and seaports, which are needed for effective and affordable transportation of goods and services across borders (Belloc & Maio, 2011). Investment in manufacturing plants, such as Industrial Development Zones (IDZs), Special Economic Zones, and incubation and innovation centers, is also vital to making South African firms competitive in the global economy (Jayanthakumaran, 2016; Huang, 2006). The establishment of bonded warehouses within ports in South Africa and elsewhere also eases trade logistics.

The study reveals that international trade is enhanced through transport infrastructure, ports, and communications networks (Francois & Manchin, 2006; Huang, 2006). The findings suggest that infrastructure is not a significant moderator of international performance. That is, while infrastructure has a significant impact, it was not the key variable for international success for South African firms. The literature is focused on the

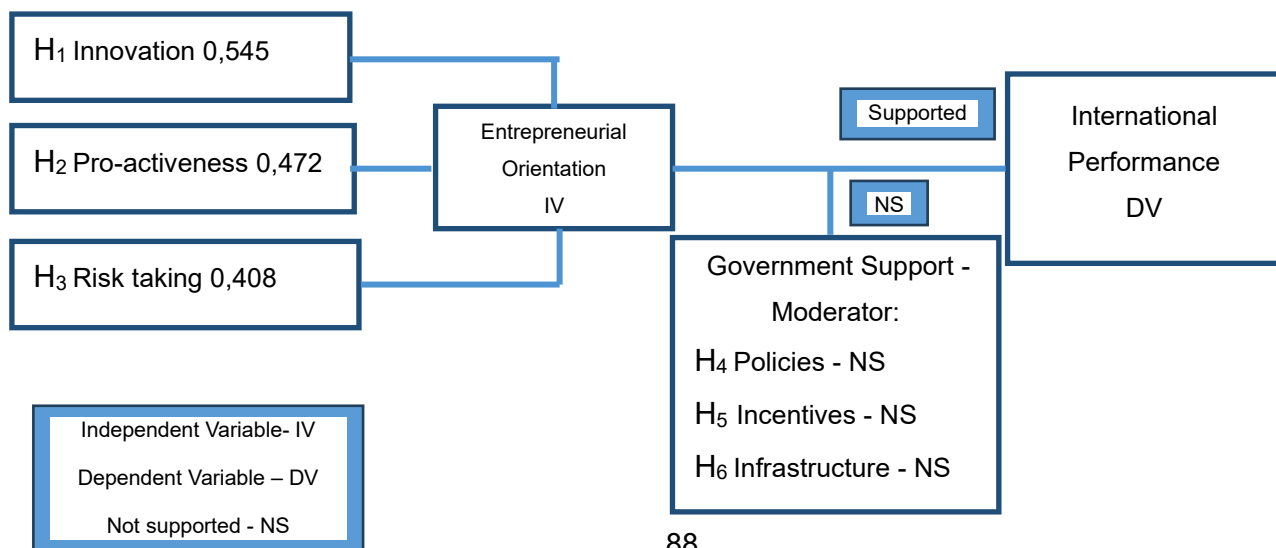
primary contribution of infrastructure in ensuring international trade; however, the evidence indicates that infrastructure has no bearing on international performance (Francois & Manchin 2006; Huang 2006).

Finally, investments in standardisation facilities, such as the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) certification, contribute to ensuring the quality and international recognition of South African products (Ramokgopa, 2021). However, despite the perceived presence and benefits of various forms of government support, the results of the hypothesis testing (H4, H5, and H6) indicate that government policy, incentives, and infrastructure do not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between EO and international performance for the surveyed South African ventures. This implies that the effect of a firm's internal EO on its international performance is not greatly enhanced or diminished by the degree of government support it enjoys.

This rather counterintuitive result can be accounted for in several ways. It may be that the intrinsic motivation and competences induced by a high EO are so universal as to largely drive international performance regardless of the support climate beyond. Alternatively, it may imply that although government support is appreciated and used, its ability to directly impact the EO-performance relationship is limited. Maybe the support is too general, not venture specific, or that more powerful moderating variables are in the external environment.

Table 24

Summary of the Study findings:



6.4. Conclusion

This chapter provides in-depth descriptive results of quantitative survey data for South African export firms. The study examined the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and international performance, with a particular focus on the moderating influence of government support, including policy, incentives, and infrastructure (Kraus et al., 2023). The findings confirm that proactiveness and risk-taking are strongly associated with international performance, as previous studies would have suggested are required in foreign market business (Mostafiz et al., 2021; Wales et al., 2021).

The inverse relationship between internationalisation and innovativeness contradicts conventional wisdom by suggesting that innovation's cost and resource-intensive nature are adequately compensated for in some settings (Zahra et al., 2020). Unanticipated government support does not support EO's influence on international performance (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015; Cirera & Maloney, 2020). The finding suggests that South African firms do not essentially rely on external support but on internal competencies when expanding abroad. The study validates the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory by highlighting the supremacy of internal strategic resources over external factors (Barney, 1991; Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2020). Subsequent research must explore such relationships in multi-site environments with other possible moderating variables like market conditions and cultures.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the study and integrates the study findings on International Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), South African venture exporters and how its moderated by government support (Urban & Sefalafala, 2015; Cirera & Maloney, 2020). Additionally, it explains the contributions of the research to the scholarly community in general, particularly how it formulates international entrepreneurship, risk management, and innovation theories in emerging economies. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the study's limitations, including its reliance on self-reported measures and its specificity to the South African context, and provides recommendations for future research to address these gaps and further develop the findings. Finally, the study aims to bridge the gap between practice and theory, offering critical insights for scholars and practitioners engaged in international business.

7.2. International Entrepreneurial Orientation Findings

The study examined how Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) affects the global performance of South African companies seeking export market opportunities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Zahra et al., 2014). It focused on three main dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation: innovativeness, proactivity, and risk-taking. Emphasis was placed on generating and adopting creative ideas and technologies, actively pursuing future opportunities, and showing a considerable tolerance for calculated risks in their business activities; the surveyed South African companies displayed strong features across all three dimensions.

The results revealed an unexpected inverse correlation between international performance and innovativeness (Petersen, 2024; Javad, 2024). The companies that participated in the survey gave research and development, as well as new product development, top priority for innovation. However, higher innovativeness proved less successful for South African ventures in international markets. This contradictory result suggests prospective challenges for South African firms in successfully bringing new ideas into international markets. Likely factors include the significant costs associated with

innovation, the potential lack of direct transferability or adaptability of these innovations to international market demands, or the delay before the benefits of innovation become evident in international performance.

The study found a direct and relatively strong association between being proactive and export success. South African firms that actively sought new markets deliberately launched products before their competitors and had a strong inclination to identify and capitalize on potential international success (for example, the Discovery Vitality Scheme). This realisation emphasises the need for a proactive, opportunity-oriented approach for companies from South Africa to join international markets. These companies were more likely to achieve outstanding international performance by aggressively identifying and pursuing export opportunities and adapting their tactics to meet international expectations.

The study revealed a direct and notable favourable association between risk-taking and performance internationally. South African companies that showed a higher inclination to embrace uncertainty, allocate funds to projects with uncertain outcomes, and take bold actions in foreign business environments typically achieved better degrees of global success. This indicates that managing the inherent uncertainty of international markets and seizing potential profitable prospects relies on a willingness to take calculated risks. The study highlights the different effects of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) on the international performance of South African firms, highlighting that being proactive and risk-taking are advantageous, while innovativeness exhibits an unexpected negative correlation.

The link between government support characteristics and global performance suggests that firms should not rely solely on government help for internationalisation. Instead, they should focus on improving their own resources, including financial assets, technical skills, and human capital, including those related to technology. This could mean supporting creative technology, making human development investments, and getting money for international expansion.

The findings of this study are quite important for daily life. The strong positive link between risk-taking and international performance suggests that businesses should welcome measured risks when they start international operations. This could mean developing

new products, investing in developing countries, or forming strategic alliances with foreign partners. The inverse relationship between innovation and international performance suggests that businesses should carefully evaluate innovation's costs and benefits before starting its application. Particularly in unpredictable international markets, innovation might involve large investments and risks even if it may provide a competitive advantage. For firms entering new markets, then, incremental innovation should take front stage over radical innovation.

7.3. Summary of key findings

Although innovation is typically seen in a positive light, it exhibits a negative correlation with international success, indicating that organisations must meticulously assess its costs and advantages (Zahra et al., 2020). Proactiveness positively correlates with international success, suggesting that enterprises should undertake proactive measures to enter and expand in global markets (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Nave et al., 2024). Risk-taking exhibits a robust positive correlation with foreign performance, indicating that enterprises should embrace measured risks when entering international markets. Government support factors such as policy, incentives, and infrastructure exert minimal influence on international performance, suggesting that enterprises ought to prioritise the enhancement of their internal capacities over-dependence on external assistance.

7.4. Practical Implications

Enhancing international market intelligence capabilities and mindsets is needed to facilitate the active pursuit of export opportunities that will assist South African firms in augmenting value (Mostafiz et al., 2021). This pragmatic approach calls for allocating resources for market research, training staff in international business development, and fostering the discovery of new export markets. These companies can achieve a more sustainable international presence and get a first-mover advantage in lucrative markets by transitioning from a reactive to a proactive stance. Employing structured risk management for global expansion enables companies to address the intrinsic

uncertainties of international markets through comprehensive risk assessment and mitigating techniques (Kraus et al., 2023).

This entail conducting a comprehensive due diligence on target markets and potential partners, formulating scenario planning for various risks (for example, political instability, currency fluctuation), and establishing clear protocols for the management and mitigation of identified risks. This methodical approach will enable companies to protect international operations and engage in strategic risks essential for growth.

Due to the complexity of international markets, South African companies must focus innovative efforts on developing products and services that specifically address the particular needs and preferences of the target export markets. This involves incorporating research on international markets into the first stages of the innovation process, including altering existing products or developing new ones intended for international customers. This market-oriented innovation approach is yielding successful international market entry and performance.

Government incentives provide advantages despite the potential limitations of the moderating influence of government support. South African companies ought to actively seek and engage with the several government initiatives run at national, provincial, and local levels. This entails examining prospective incentives, participating in trade missions and government-sponsored events, and using export assistance programs. By proactively using these resources, businesses can reduce costs and risks associated with internationalisation while gaining market access and support.

Forming strategic alliances with international distributors, agents, and other strategic partners can assist South African companies in actively addressing the challenges of international markets. This pragmatic measure entails invest of time and money in identifying and strengthening trust-based partnerships with appropriate collaborators who possess local market expertise and distribution capacity. These types of agreements streamline the process of entering growing market which in turn lowers risk associated with high costs. Integrating internationalisation into the corporate strategy should be a fundamental component of the overall strategic direction. This means clearly including international market objectives and strategies into the basic business strategy, assigning

particular financial and human resources for overseas activities, and making sure that every department of organisation is in line with the internationalisation goals.

Such kind of strategic integration will create to a more coherent and successful international development strategy. International operations are dynamic and requires a dedication to ongoing education and adaptation. South African companies must closely monitor international market trends and competitive environments, remain adaptable in changing products, services, marketing strategies, and operational processes to keep up with the changing market dynamics and set systems for gathering feedback from international customers and partners. This flexible and adaptive strategy is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the export markets and for consistent success.

7.5. Contribution to Academia

Strategic proactiveness enables firms in emerging economies, such as South Africa to understand the development of proactive practices and impact on international performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Examining the South African business landscape improves proactive behaviour theories in internationalisation. Risk management theories in developing economies should include comprehensive risk-taking strategies to improve internationalisation theoretical frameworks by clarifying South African firms' risks and the efficacy of the mitigating strategies.

Promoting strategically oriented innovation will enhance the discussion on innovation and international performance, especially in emerging markets where resource constraints and market peculiarities may require a different approach to innovation. Despite its minimal moderating influence in this study, the emphasis on proactive government support can enhance ideas for government to encourage exports from emerging countries.

Future research should examine why the moderating effect is minimal and explore ways to enhance government support systems to amplify the impact of EO on international performance. To comprehend the impact of networks effect on internationalisation and performance, South African companies entering foreign markets must analyse the most significant and beneficial networks. The theory of international business network can benefit from advisory services in cooperative partnership.

The demand for internationalisation in fundamental corporate strategy can advance strategic management theories by revealing how emerging market companies strategically navigate and oversee international expansion, contrasting this with those in developed economies. Continuous learning and adaptation meet the dynamic capabilities model, indicating that South African firms require these organisational capabilities to compete globally. Effective South African exporters' learning tactics and adaptable tools can be examined.

7.6. Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were observed that might affect the generalisability and impact of the results and findings:

- The study's results relied on the responses of a specific sample of South African exporting companies.
- Evaluating Entrepreneurial Orientation and views on government support, the study relied on respondents' agreement with various statements. This is inherently subjective and prone to response bias, including recollection bias and social desirability bias.
- The subjective evaluation accurately reflects the EO levels, international performance, and the authentic influence of government actions, which may be a limitation. Different results could have come from objective measurements of these structures (Podsakoff et al., 2003).
- Collecting data at a single point in time reduces the ability to identify understudied causal links between variables. For example, even if the study might have discovered a relationship between proactiveness and international performance, it cannot prove plainly that proactiveness generates better international performance.
- The longitudinal study method would be more suitable for tracing businesses over time to determine the direction of causality and the dynamic interaction among these factors.
- While government support is a significant component of the external environment, making it a priority over EO in the study can possibly overlook other significant environmental variables influencing the interaction between EO and

internationalisation. Other significant moderation factors may include levels of international rivalry, target market economic situation, cultural dissimilarity, technological development, and the overall international economic situation.

- The results are generalizable only to the South African context, which has its own distinct characteristics regarding government policies and support mechanisms and special economic, political, and socio-cultural characteristics.

7.7. Recommendations for future research

1. Future studies might examine the relationships between entrepreneurial orientation, government support, and international performance in different countries and sectors (Zahra et al., 2021). This could provide a more complete understanding of the factors influencing international performance.
2. Later research might use longitudinal data to examine the causal relationships among entrepreneurial orientation, government backing, and international performance (Covin & Miller, 2014).
3. This could provide an understanding of how these interactions have changed over time.
4. Subsequent studies may investigate the impact of additional factors, including cultural disparities, market conditions, and firm size, on international success. This could provide a more sophisticated understanding of the components enabling effective globalisation.
5. In addition to the three components of government support, policy, incentives, and infrastructure, this study focused on three elements of entrepreneurial orientation: innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking. Future studies might examine other facets of entrepreneurial orientation and government support, including the regulatory environment and competitive aggression.
6. Later research may use objective measures of international performance, such as market share or export sales, to reduce the potential for bias.

Conclusion

This study clarified the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, government support, and international performance within South African venture exporters (Urban &

Sefalafala, 2015; Zahra et al., 2021). The results indicate that entrepreneurial orientation, especially risk-taking, is crucial in improving international success. Nonetheless, innovation may have adverse outcomes, and governmental assistance does not affect international success much. These findings have significant implications for theory and practice, establishing a basis for future research in this domain.

This study enhances the existing literature on international entrepreneurship by offering empirical information regarding the connections among entrepreneurial orientation, government support, and global performance. The results underscore the significance of entrepreneurial attitude in enhancing international performance and indicate that companies should prioritise cultivating their internal capabilities above dependence on external assistance. Subsequent research should investigate these linkages further across diverse contexts and incorporate additional variables to better comprehend the elements affecting international performance.

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APPENDICES

Ethical Clearance

Research Instrument