



College of Business

**THE ROLE OF DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES OF EXPORTING
SMEs IN THE UAE ON INTERNATIONALIZATION
SUCCESS: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF
INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION**

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**THE ROLE OF DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES OF EXPORTING
SMES IN THE UAE ON INTERNATIONALIZATION SUCCESS:
THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL
ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION**

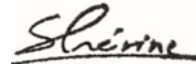


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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to analyze how international entrepreneurial orientation mediates the relationship between influential dynamic capabilities and the internationalization success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Methodology: Adopting a quantitative approach, the researchers designed a questionnaire based on an extensive literature review and used structural equation modeling to ascertain the mediating role of international entrepreneurial orientation in the relationship between influential dynamic capabilities and SMEs' internationalization success.

Findings: The findings of this study indicate that international entrepreneurship orientation mediates the relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalization success, as the indirect impact value is greater than the direct effect value for the relationship. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate mediation type.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by developing and testing a framework based on a comprehensive literature review to include different factors and their constructs that impact the potential internationalization of SMEs in developing economies. This study identifies and addresses a research gap regarding the relationship between internationalization and company performance among UAE SMEs.

ABBREVIATIONS

SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
UAE	United Arab Emirates
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
DC	Dynamic Capabilities
EO	Entrepreneurial Orientation
DCSZC	Dynamic Seizing capability
DCSEC	Dynamic Sensing capability
DCTC	Dynamic Transformation/Reconfiguration capability
DGI	Data Gathering Instruments
IEO	International Entrepreneurial Orientation
IEOR	International Entrepreneurial Orientation
IEOP	International Entrepreneurial Orientation Proactiveness
IEOI	International Entrepreneurial Orientation Innovativeness
IEOCA	International Entrepreneurial Orientation Competitive Aggressiveness
IEOA	International Entrepreneurial Orientation Autonomy
IEOP	International Entrepreneurial Orientation Proactiveness
ISFP	Internationalization Success Financial Performance
ISNFP	Internationalization Success Non - Financial Performance

DECLARATION

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standards required by Abu Dhabi University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

DEDICATION

To my mother and father, to my husband and my family who have always supported me.

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It is my pleasure to express my gratitude to Dr. Jacob Cherian, my esteemed supervisor, for the valuable guidance, support, and instruction he provided me throughout my doctoral studies. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty of the College of Business at Abu Dhabi University for providing me with the resources to pursue graduate studies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In most economies, particularly in developing countries, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up the vast majority of businesses globally and are critical contributors to employment creation and global economic development. They account for around 90 percent of enterprises and more than half of all jobs in the globe. In emerging economies, formal SMEs account for up to 40 percent of national income (GDP). When informal SMEs are included, the numbers are much larger. According to projections, 600 million jobs will be required by 2030 to accommodate the world's rising workforce, making SME growth a top priority for many governments around the world. In emerging markets, most formal jobs are generated by SMEs, which create 7 out of 10 jobs. [Owens, John Vincent and Wilhelm, Lisa (2017)].

However, SMEs in emerging markets and developing countries confront a number of limits and challenges in expanding their enterprises. Internationalization is one of the major issues that SMEs face as they seek to grow and expand. Internationalization may be defined as the expansion of economic activities of a firm over a country 's national borders (Shouvik SANYAL, Mohammed Wamique HISAM, & BAAWAIN, 2020).

Earlier research suggest that an increasing number of SMEs are entering the international marketplace (Luca & Atuahene-Gima, 2007; Moretta and Formisano, 2018; Hazem ALI, Yunhong HAO, & AIJUAN 2020) Due to SMEs'

important contribution to job creation, innovation, economic development, and output growth in both developed and developing countries, such expansion is intrinsically necessary to any economy. (Chandra et al., 2020).

Market globalization, rapid technological improvements, government support, and recent changes to the global economy, such as market and trade liberalization initiatives, have all played a positive role in increasing the internationalization of small and medium enterprises through exporting their products or services (Krammer et al., 2018). International markets are highly competitive, and businesses must compete to the best of their abilities in this dynamic climate. Firms are confronted with international rivals in their internal markets as a result of expanding globalization, and they must investigate and develop commercial prospects abroad, stressing the need of developing appropriate export strategies (Albertina Paula Monteiro, Ana Maria Soares, & Rua, 2019). But studies like Zaki (2019) referred that there is a slightly lower proportion of total export value by SMEs in developing countries when compared to developed countries.

Efforts to improve SMEs' Export Performance (EP) have thus become a great concern for all the stakeholders in the management of every economy. It has become a prominent area of export-related research also. (Imran Ali, Ismail Golgeci, & Arslan, 2020; Albertina Paula Monteiro, Ana Maria Soares, & Rua, 2019).

Existing theories and frameworks provide several perspectives for exploring and analyzing SMEs' internationalization success. The studies show that SMEs' ability to internationalize is dependent on the availability of critical

resources as well as their effective use. The ability of SMEs to effectively use their existing resources is intimately tied to the entrepreneur's dynamic capabilities. It is simple to see how the entrepreneurs' international orientation can affect and, to a large extent, propel their dynamic capacities leading to the success of internationalization efforts of the SMEs.

1.2 Context of the study

In UAE, as of mid-2020, there were 350,000 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). They account for more than 94 percent of the UAE's total number of businesses (73 per cent operated in the wholesale and retail sector, 16 per cent in the services sector and 11 per cent in the industry sector). In 2018, SMEs employed more than 86 percent of the private sector workforce and contributed 52 percent of non-oil GDP. Under the theme of Competitive Knowledge Economy of Vision 2021, it is targeted to increase the percentage of contribution of SMEs to the non-oil GDP to 60 by the year 2021. SME contributions have a significant and noticeable impact on the country's growth. (<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/business/crowdfunding/the-impact-of-smes-on-the-uae-economy>, Updated on 18 Jul 2021).

Small and medium businesses (SMEs) have been receiving special attention from the UAE government since they are important for economic diversification and growth, as well as for the development of national human resources. The UAE believes that entrepreneurship is critical to unlocking nationals' potential and enabling them to be a driving force in the UAE's

economic development through small and medium-sized private businesses.

SMEs in the UAE find support for launching and growth from:

- National SME Programme
- The UAE SME Council
- Operation 300bn, the UAE's industrial strategy
- Khalifa Fund and
- Dubai SME.

In recent years, small enterprises have played a vital role in the UAE's economic diversification. Various programmes and stimulus packages were launched by the government to help small and medium-sized businesses. They have taken numerous attempts to guarantee that local SMEs remain competitive, as well as to enable SMEs in the UAE to operate safely and confidently in foreign markets, thereby positioning the UAE as a worldwide trade and export powerhouse.

However, the business of SMEs in UAE is not free from constraints and hurdles. Unfortunately, small and medium-size businesses in the UAE are having to navigate widespread difficulties – financing issues, pricing confusion, ineffective business links, lack of management skills, political and economic risk, bureaucracy etc. These constraints posed hurdles for the growth as well as internationalization of SMEs in UAE. Edwards, Toby (2017).

The major factors hindering the internationalisation and growth of SMEs in UAE can be explained as follows:

Financing: The biggest challenge for the development of SMEs in UAE is the availability of finance. Finance is an essential component for the development as well as running smooth operations of any company. A survey conducted by Abu Dhabi Council of Economic Development showed that 67% of the entrepreneurs said that the basic deterrent in their setting up business was the unavailability of loans and credit from the banks they approached. Banks are reluctant to provide funds to new businesses as the risk of failure is high. Data provided by Khalifa Fund shows that approximately 50-70 per cent of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) applications for funding are rejected by conventional banks. Loans to SMEs account for just 4 per cent of the outstanding bank credit in the UAE. Conventional lenders are sometimes unwilling or unable to support SMEs given their limited assets or lack of a proven record of company operations. This makes it difficult for SMEs to do business and finance provisions can be expensive or inflexible.

While the number of SMEs desiring to go for internationalisation is high, they are forced to work with limited capital, thereby having limited exposure and access to international markets. The limited working capital of SMEs, insurance costs, delay in payments cause much harm to the efforts, leading the owners searching for loans. But loans too become difficult to get, as gathering required documents become challenging owing to the complexity of international trade.

Regulations: SME's in the UAE are subject to stringent rules, particularly when it comes to exporting. While the rigorous requirements are intended to

assure adherence to international trade standards and quality control, they frequently cause economic hardship.

Ineffective business links: The lack and ineffective status of business links at international as well as domestic markets pose one of the biggest challenges faced by the SMEs in UAE. The businesses are not closely knitted and connected together which could provide the support to the internationalisation of SMEs. It is of utmost importance to the new and upcoming SMEs also.

Lack of dynamic management skills: Another factor which acts as an obstacle to the growth of the SMEs is the lack of dynamic management skills of the entrepreneurs. As the businesses grow in size, broad skills set are required to manage the operations and the employees. Many managers specialize in a certain field but don't have the full range of skills.

In spite of these challenges, 73 percent of the SMEs in the UAE said that in order to grow their business, they need to export more, while 67 percent already prioritise export markets over home markets. 89% of the SMEs expect revenues to grow in the coming three years. As 55 percent of the UAE SMEs believe the Middle East region holds the maximum potential to grow, the government naturally plays a huge role in supporting the small and medium sized companies in this feat.

In fact, SMEs requires vibrant entrepreneurial skills to overcome the constraints and hurdles before them. They are critical to the success in the efforts towards internationalisation. A notable number of entrepreneurs usually do not have such management capabilities to tackle issues of various sorts. Dynamic capabilities with the entrepreneurs are the answer for the SMEs to

focus more on internationalisation. However, SMEs in the UAE have been slow to embrace dynamic capabilities with the entrepreneurial skills. They have a hard time to come up with innovative strategies to further grow the business and increase organizational performance to progress in their internationalisation efforts.

It is in this context, we need to understand more on the relationship between the dynamic capabilities of the SMEs/Entrepreneurs and the success in internalisation efforts. Also, it is imperative to enquire into the mediating role and impact of international entrepreneurial orientation with the small and medium entrepreneurs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

When it comes to UAE, the government, despite the unprecedented growth in the country over the past few decades have recognized that new strategies have to be developed to ensure the continued growth and development. The role of SMEs to attain this objective is well acknowledged and undisputed. SMEs need to go for more internationalization to meet this agenda. To enter into international markets and to survive and thrive, it is argued that UAE SMEs should have to build up more dynamic capabilities and possess better international orientation in their entrepreneurial behavior. (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2011; OECD/EC, 2012; Ricardo Pinto, 2016).

It is a fact that like in other Arab countries, in UAE, thousands of SMEs are still not involved in the internationalization process. There has been a

number of reasons put forward to explain this problem. Some are accusing the mismatch between education and requirements of market-based skills as the major reason. They argue that this mismatch reduced entrepreneurial inclination towards internationalization of SMEs. Some others argue that it is the lack of institutional infrastructure features that assist in the identification, sensing, seizing, and management of opportunities at the international level. Another argument is that, despite SMEs would like to become internationalized with their available competencies and capabilities, it is not possible because of strong global competition. It is very difficult to successfully enter international markets, because SMEs have limitations such as a lack of resources, capabilities and experience compared to the large enterprises (Zayed University, 2013; Ricardo Pinto, 2016, P.41; Nataša Kobal et al.,2018).

It has become high time for UAE to examine the low performance of its SMEs in the process of internationalization. Such an enquiry may make use of two theoretical frameworks, known as the Resource Based View (RBV) and the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV).

The resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes that the ownership of strategic resources enables companies to gain a competitive advantage (Baía & Ferreira, 2019). Recent studies (Khan, Farooq, & Rasheed, 2019; Lima Rua, Musiello-Neto, & Arias-Oliva, 2022) have changed the focus from tangible resources to intangible resources, which are deemed more important from the strategic viewpoint and more relevant for business performance and success. However, understanding how resources provide this competitive advantage

remains unclear and this has been labeled as a “missing link” in the strategic management literature (P. Chatzoglou et al., 2018).

Thus, research has focused on the processes through which resources can be utilized by firms to outperform rivals. These processes include organizations’ competencies and capacities (Teece, 2007; P. Chatzoglou et al., 2018). This approach, known as the *Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)* has emerged in the strategic management field, fundamentally in order to grasp the need for adjustment of firms to environmental changes (Andrea Moretta et al., 2019). This approach explains that firms’ success relies not only on their resources but also on the capability to adapt themselves to the markets and industry in which they operate.

As per Zhou et al. (2019) enterprises may own resources, but they should as well show dynamic capabilities (DCs), otherwise, shareholder value will be destroyed. The DCV is not divergent but rather a significant stream of the RBV to capture how firms can obtain a competitive edge in increasingly demanding environments (Lin and Wu, 2014).

The approach of DCV has helped to understand the international performance determinants of SMEs, mainly in export. Lima Rua, Musiello-Neto, & Arias-Oliva, 2022 pointed out that the approach helps the firms to grasp the process leading to better outcomes in export markets. However, (Albertina Paula Monteiro, Ana Maria Soares, & Rua, 2019) observed that, in spite of numerous research on export performance (EP), this approach is still one of the least understood and most debatable areas of international marketing. Despite many studies on this topic, the contribution of DCs to competitive advantage

and firm performance still ambiguous and insufficient” (Pezeshkan et al., 2016, p. 2950). It has been argued that DCV approach lack a comprehensive and integrative theoretical framework describing EP (Tan & Sousa, 2015).

In this context, many authors (Imran Ali, Ismail Golgeci, & Arslan, 2020; Albertina Paula Monteiro, Ana Maria Soares, & Rua, 2019); Krammer et al., 2018) suggested that we need to consider and analyze the role of mediating variables to receive relevant insights into the direct, indirect and overall impacts of them on the internationalization success (IS).

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has been cited as an important mediating variable in the causal relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalization success. Its essential role as “a driving force behind the organizational pursuit of entrepreneurial activities” has been cited in different studies (William, 2016; Ketut Santra, 2018; Zahra et al., 2019). The literature has confirmed the multifaceted results of EO and how it leads to superior performance (Wales et al., 2020; Teece, 2016).

Building on these confirmations, it would be worth considering to analyze internationalization success of SMEs in the DCV approach and by including the international entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable. It will be enlightening to find the role and impact of IEO mediating the relationship between dynamic capabilities (DCs) and SMEs' internationalization success (IS).

1.4 The Research Gap and Need for the Study

During the few past decades SMEs internationalization has received increasing research attention (Zaki,2019; Junghyun Yoon et al, 2018; Hazem and Ganeshsree, 2017; Saeedi, 2017; Ali Asgary; et al.,2020; (Hazem ALI, Yunhong HAO, & AIJUAN., 2020; Andrea Moretta et al.,2019; Cho and Lee, 2018; Dar and Mishra, 2019; Alex Kevill et al.,2020). Although these studies have contributed to evolving a theoretical system concerning the internationalization process, they could not significantly impact the development of an empirical system ((Albertina Paula Monteiro, Ana Maria Soares, & Rua, 2019; Junghyun Yoon et al., 2018). The limited number of empirical studies have been accused of being developed as a result of research on multinational companies in the context of developed countries (Dabić, et al, 2020). They are challenged on the ground that they are not applicable when studying the SMEs' internationalization in the context of an emerging market or developing countries (Zaki, 2019).

Moreover, when searching for a suitable theoretical framework, it is seen that it is difficult to find a single theoretical perspective that alone can grasp the internationalization processes of SMEs (Coviello and McCauley, 1999; Lu and Beamish, 2001; Dabić, et al, 2020; Andrea Moretta; 2019). This means that the earlier studies may not be enough to understand the internationalization of SMEs and the different factors behind it. Andrea Moretta et al (2019) argue that the traditional theories on competitive advantages, such as the RBV are insufficient to explain the international success of SMEs. The processes through which resources can be used by firms to outperform rivals, i.e., firms'

capabilities and competencies, are to be included for the analysis. Even though a large number of studies regarding internationalization have been carried out, the studies investigating SMEs' internationalization from capability point of view in emerging markets are still insufficient (Ketut Santra, 2018; Kasemsap Kijpokin, 2017).

Many of the earlier studies which examined the relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalization success could not reach concrete findings. Also, many of them could not identify the components of dynamic capabilities and the factors behind the internationalization success (Saeedi, 2017; Araújo, 2018; Garrido et al, 2020, Peteraf et al., 2013). Mixed or conflicting results are often seen when applying existing SMEs' internationalization theories (Sandberg, 2012, p.9). Interestingly, empirical findings in earlier studies (Yeoh, 2014a; Zaki, 2019) have found inconsistent results. While several researchers found a significant positive relationship between internationalization and performance, some other researchers found that the relationship as not significant.

(Helfat & Martin, 2015; Hennart, 2009) acknowledged the importance of owners, managers, and entrepreneurs in internationalization but were unable to provide empirical evidence of their role or the extent to which they influenced the process. Most studies on internationalization have focused solely on export performance and the impact of internal and external factors (Nguyen & Kim, 2020), ignoring the mediating elements that influence performance. Empirical studies on the connection between a firm's dynamic capacities, entrepreneurial spirit, and internationalization success are scant. Few studies have considered all three levels

of mediating factors (dependent, independent, and mediator) and the causal linkages among them. The lack of investigation into how an entrepreneurial mindset influences the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) abroad is both surprising and disappointing.

The gaps, challenges, and difficulties listed above in the research of SMEs' internationalization into global markets all have significant implications that have yet to be addressed. For instance, how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can successfully enter foreign markets. How can the success of SMEs be enhanced in global markets? To what extent do small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need specific skills and competencies? Research that addresses all of the aforementioned issues at once is necessary. Successful internationalization involves many moving parts, and this study has to investigate them all using the capacity viewpoint and the aspects of dynamic capabilities. The mediational role and significance of global entrepreneurial orientation must be considered in the research. The research can shed light on a wide range of open questions. Furthermore, it will be useful in both academic and professional settings.

In order to explain and predict SMEs' competitiveness in uncertain settings, researchers utilize the DC theory in the context of SMEs. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the knowledge and abilities necessary to address the intricate problems and pressures of the current world. The natural world is always developing and altering. Industry 4.0, globalization, digital sovietization, and economic and social difficulties were all recognized as causes of change in the study (Majocchi, Bacchiocchi, & Mayrhofer, 2005; Majocchi & Zucchella, 2003; Manolopoulos, Chatzopoulou, & Kottaridi, 2018). So far, however, there has been little effort put into quantifying the DCs of a small or medium-sized enterprise

(SME), their impact, or their ability to boost performance. Our in-depth review of the literature is an effort to learn more about the authors' SME-related DC theory applications.

As soon as an opportunity is identified, the company must reallocate, refocus, and mobilize extra resources to take advantage of it. Learning that prioritizes the acquisition of new knowledge is key to achieving this goal. The ability to take an opportunity is evidenced by the management of all activities that pave the way for the opportunity to be used to give value to customers (Teece, 2014). There is an emphasis on internal coordination and integration operations, such as learning about and adapting to shifting consumer preferences, market trends, and developing technology (Efrat, Hughes, Nemkova, Souchon, & Sy-Changco, 2018) in order to create novel products. Therefore, the ability to capitalize on opportunities is an essential DC theory managerial skill (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). (Agostini, Caviggioli, Filippini, & Nosella, 2015) state that the deployment of novel configurations of operational capacity is enabled through the incorporation of new information "Into a collective system." While most of an organization's capabilities are the result of its personnel, new and repurposed information must be communicated between departments. (Wilden, Gudergan, Nielsen, & Lings, 2013) argue that digitalization helps SMEs seize opportunities. It is possible to achieve this goal by experimenting with disintermediation and reintermediation of existing value chains. The mobilization of resources to seize the opportunity is grounded in regular procedures. Organizational capacity gaps are closed, and new business models are implemented, thanks to the creation of new capabilities. They help make it possible to develop cutting-edge services and products. According to (Karami &

Tang, 2019), reconfiguration capacity include activities like introducing new components or removing old ones.

Adaptive capacity suggests a firm's ability to rapidly coordinate and reconfigure resources to respond to environmental changes (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004) while maintaining performance (Kaur & Mehta, 2017). Thus, adaptive capacity enables a firm to spot and take advantage of emerging opportunities in the market (Hofer et al., 2015; Tseng & Lee, 2014). Companies with adaptive capacity learn faster (Akgün et al., 2012), and react quickly to changes following business priorities (Wang & Ahmed, 2007). They also integrate external information into the company's knowledge base (Tseng & Lee, 2014).

Understanding the mechanisms by which a business obtains and sustains a competitive advantage is a pivotal inquiry within the realm of strategic management. The concept of competitive advantage, as posited by (Porter & Bigley, 2003), is a fundamental notion in the field of strategic management research, which has a rich and varied historical background. The prevailing rationale commonly employed to account for the sustained economic performance is as follows. According to (Dickson, Weaver, & Hoy, 2006), in order to maintain a competitive advantage, companies need to adopt the DCs strategy to update their valuable assets when there are changes in the external environment. The capacity of organizations to provide commodities and amenities to their clientele is a crucial factor. However, it alone is inadequate for organizations to surpass their competitors in the market in the long run, as stated by (Luo, 2000; Wilden et al., 2013). It is imperative to acquire a competitive edge in this context. The ability of a company to maintain a competitive advantage is closely linked to its capacity to

leverage business opportunities, particularly those that facilitate growth and expansion, and surmount challenges, as posited by (Freixanet, Renart, & Rialp-Criado, 2018). Stated differently, the concept implies that a company has the ability to sustain superior Q gains in comparison to the industry mean (Dhameria et al., 2021).

According to (AlShehhi, Cherian, Farouk, & Al Nahyan, 2022), the maintenance of competitive advantage involves the utilization of iterative and dynamic processes. Academic scholars have suggested that corporations should develop distinctive competencies and engage in continuous learning to maintain their competitive edge in the market (Ferrerias-Méndez, Fernández-Mesa, & Alegre, 2019; Haider, Zubair, Tehseen, Iqbal, & Sohail, 2023; Villar, Alegre, & Pla-Barber, 2014). Consequently, the DCs have multiple objectives to consider. According to (Efrat et al., 2018), the utilization of dynamic capabilities (DCs) can offer a company the potential for growth and increase its likelihood of long-term viability. (Khyareh & Rostami, 2022) expound on the methods that a company can employ to maintain its competitive advantage, especially in novel markets or dynamic settings.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must possess the capacity to endure and react effectively in circumstances characterized by elevated levels of strain, peril, and uncertainty. A number of seminal works on the concept of dynamic capability (di Stefano et al., 2010; Augier & Teece, 2009; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001; Helfat et al., 2009) center on its operation within the context of sizable enterprises, either overtly or covertly. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are well-suited to adopting a complementary perspective to the resource-based view (RBV) explanations. This is due to their typically

limited resources and reliance on robust capabilities to maintain competitiveness, as noted by (Barney, 1991; Collis, 1991; Rao, 1994; Robins & Wiersema, 1995) According to Teece et al. (2016, p. 24), the presence of a hierarchical structure can impede agility. In situations characterized by chaos, strategies and abilities that rely on the concentration and coordination of substantial resources can be excessively cumbersome. There are discernible distinctions between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and larger corporations, as noted by various scholars (Motwani et al., 1999; Saunila, 2017; Verreyne et al., 2019). The structures of their organizations exhibit dissimilarities. Frequently, they encounter a shortage of both human and financial capital resources. Small marketplaces often depend on a limited number of clients, as noted by several scholars (Hausman, 2005; Hudson et al., 2001; Julien, 1993). In contrast, flat organizational structures facilitate flexibility and encourage adaptation and innovation due to their reduced number of hierarchical levels (Qian & Li, 2003; Wolff & Pett, 2006). (Zahra et al., 2006) have noted a scarcity of DC research in start-ups and SMEs. Moccia et al. (2019) posit that the utilization of DC theory can potentially yield enhanced performance and confer a competitive edge. The statement posits that a firm's capacity to effectively compete is contingent upon its aptitude to procure resources that are valuable, rare, distinct, and irreplaceable, as per (Li-Ying, Wang, & Ning, 2016). As per the findings of (Almomani, Al-Abbadi, Rumman, Abu-Rumman, & Banyhamdan, 2019), it is the responsibility of DCs to facilitate the integration of organizational capabilities that enable businesses to effectively respond to potential changes in the external environment.

Indeed, the simplest processes used by SMEs can be more relevant to the identification and rapid reconfiguration of resources. The size of SMEs improves

the ability to recognize that consumer needs and opportunities have changed. For example, this is possible through direct contact with customers or the ability to reconfigure simple resources (Arora & Gambardella, 1994; Eggers, 2020; Kraus et al., 2020). Second, smallness improves the ability to renew new business models. Reconfiguring resources is easier when organizations are agile and less

1.6 Research Questions

The main research questions formulated for the study seek to address are as under:

RQ1: What impact does dynamic capability have on SMEs' internationalization success in U.A.E.?

RQ1-a: How sensing capabilities of entrepreneurs impacts internationalization success.

RQ1-b: How seizing capabilities of entrepreneurs impacts internationalization success.

RQ1-c: How reconfiguring capabilities of entrepreneurs impacts internationalization success.

RQ2: Does international entrepreneurial orientation mediate the relationship between dynamic capabilities and the internationalization success of SMEs operating in the U.A.E.?

RQ2-a: To what extent does the international entrepreneurial orientation mediate the relationship between the sensing capabilities of entrepreneurs and internationalization success?

RQ2-b: To what extent does the international entrepreneurial orientation mediate the relationship between the seizing capabilities of entrepreneurs and internationalization success?

RQ2-c: To what extent does the international entrepreneurial orientation mediate the relationship between the reconfiguration capabilities of entrepreneurs and internationalization success?

1.7 Scope of the Study

The impact of dynamic capabilities on the internationalization success of SMEs is the focus of this study. The study area is the UAE, covering all the seven Emirates. From an Emirati entrepreneurial perspective, the research aims to highlight the significance of DCs in the internationalization success of export-oriented SMEs in UAE. The owners, managers, operators, and heads of the unit of international business of SMEs in the manufacturing, service, and trade sectors that engage in outward international business operations (i.e., export) and operate in the UAE make up the population of this study.

Responsible position holders, such as owners, operators, managers, and heads of international business divisions, can reveal and discuss the success of internationalization. They can also provide specifics about dynamic capabilities and international orientation. As a result, the research's unit of analysis has been chosen to be the owners, managers, and leaders of the unit of international company owners, managers, and operators of SMEs.

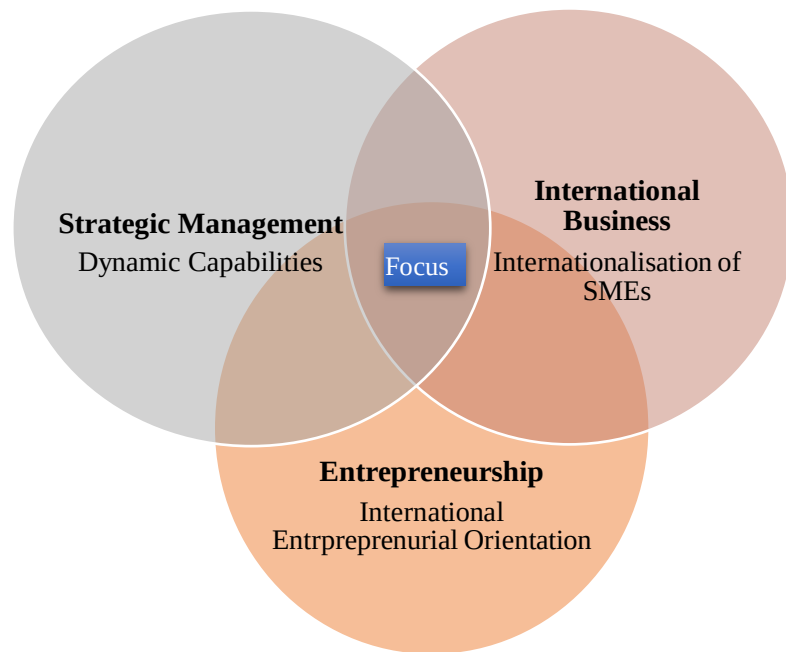
1.8 Focus of the Research

The focus of the present research belongs to three important areas of management:

- International business (i.e., Internationalization of SMEs)
- Strategic management (i.e., Dynamic capabilities)
- Entrepreneurship (i.e., International Entrepreneurial Orientation)

The positioning of this study can be presented in Figure 1

Figure 1
The Positioning of the Research



(Source: Prepared by the author)

As we discussed in earlier sections, the present research draws from the three areas of management science to build up a comprehensive model which can explain the causal impact of dynamic capabilities upon the

internationalization success of SMEs in UAE. The research also focuses on the role of International entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating factor in the causal relationship. The research has used the theoretical framework of *dynamic capabilities view* to explore the causalities and the mediation effects.

Internationalization is a high-value strategy for SMEs' growth and development; however, the term may be applied to a wide range of activities. Lawrence and Reijo (1988), explained that internationalization refers to a firm's involvement in international operations; however, their study focused only on outward-driven activities, such as export. Inward activities, like import, were excluded. Following their approach, the present study focused only on the export while discussing the internationalization of SMEs.

The present study focused on two types of business performance measures found in earlier studies, namely: financial, and non-financial (Zaki, 2019; Yeoh 2013). Chong (2008) and Yeoh (2013), asserted that financial and non-financial performance assist SMEs to gain a broader perspective on measuring and comparing their entrepreneurial performance in overseas markets.

Dynamic capabilities were identified and categorized according to Teece et al. (1997). It was divided into the components capturing the aspects of sensing the market, seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring the organization.

International entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) has a close relationship with a firm's capabilities (McDougall et al., 2003; Wach, 2015). The entrepreneurial orientation construct consists of the dimensions of innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy.

Thus, the present study focuses on the analysis of dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation as antecedents of successful internationalization implementation directed at improving export-oriented SMEs' performance in global markets, with additional focus on the role of owner-managers in SMEs in mediating the relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs internationalization success measured by financial and non - financial performance indicators.

1.9 Importance and Contributions of the Study

This is one of the very few studies that make effort to analyze the process of UAE SMEs' internationalization success. Considering that the focus of this research is placed on the export-oriented UAE SMEs operating in all the three sectors, manufacturing, trade and service sectors, the study shall help to understand the internationalization of SMEs in a more comprehensive yet sector specific ways.

The results of the present research are expected to be of considerable theoretical and scientific importance, in addition to potential practical applications that can benefit enterprises, governments, practitioners, managers, and society as a whole, in addition to its significance to the academics.

This study shall open up new avenues for further research to better understand the complex relationships of internationalization in a dynamic environment. The research may enrich knowledge in the SME sector and fill up deficiency in this field with the Arab library in particular and research body in general.

The study also has practical importance for owners, managers, practitioners, entrepreneurs, and operators of SMEs, the findings gave will provide them with information on how their enterprises sensing and seizing the opportunities, and reconfigure in a dynamic environment, the results may assist them also to improve their organization's capability and competencies that leads ultimately to superior financial and non - financial performance. The study shall assist working-group officials who want to penetrate international markets and support exporting SMEs, by establishing successful international strategies.

The results of this study can be extended to other emerging markets with similar economic structures and legal systems.

Arguably the most outstanding contribution of this study is in the social context. Firms and governments shall utilize the practices covered in this study such that the whole of society may benefit from increased exports, improved economic growth and competitiveness of SMEs in the international arena.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The present study has limitations as applicable to any research study attempting to explore the causal relationships and mediation effects. The limitations are acknowledged, and they should be taken into consideration when applying the findings of the study.

- The study has been done in the UAE and it has been designed to the specificities of the country. The study can be replicated in other

countries or economies only after validating the methods in the respective study areas.

- This study is limited specifically chosen economic activities under three sectors in the economy. Results generalizability may be limited due to the specifications.
- The items and scales used to measure the constructs of the study are specific to the research design of the present study. Though they can be applied to similar studies, their reliability and validity are to be tested in the respective contexts.
- Another limitation of this study is that the data employed in this research are cross sectional. It may carry all limitations common to the type of data. It limits the examination of the inter temporal dynamics of internationalization of SMEs.
- The study banks on the perceptual or self-reported data of firm-level entrepreneurship, organization's capabilities, or international performance may cause some degree of bias. It may be affected by the overvaluation or underestimation Gathering data from a single informant might have caused common method bias.
- Lack of available and/or reliable secondary data has led to limiting analysis scope.
- Language barriers have limited the process of gathering of data and literature for the study.

- Apprehensions of the respondents in revealing data on many aspects of SME business, particularly financial, has put limits on the present study.

1.11 Chapter Scheme

The organization of the study report is given below.

Chapter 2, titled Literature Review, presents the review of the relevant literature that has supported the development of the research problem and identifies the research gap., The chapter is structured as having a section dealing with studies on internationalization, studies on SMEs and internationalization, studies on the dynamic capabilities in the SMEs, and that of entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs. The study derives the necessary research gap for the study to progress with.

Chapter 3 examines and evaluate the available Theoretical Frameworks for the study. It compiles relevant aspects of different frameworks to build up the most suitable framework for the study.

Chapter 4, Research Methodology, presents the research philosophy and methodology used to meet the research aims and objectives. It discusses and justifies the methodological approach used in this study. Subsequently, it elaborates the sample design of the study followed by a discussion on data collection techniques. Methods and challenges and problems accounted during data collection, processing, and analysis are discussed within the later part of this chapter.

Chapter 5 deals with the Sector Status of SMEs in UAE by analyzing the available secondary data. Attempts are made to trace the origin and evolution of SMEs in UAE. The present status of SMEs is discussed with key indicators, and they are compared with the same of other developed and developing countries. This chapter gives an account of Governmental efforts towards the promotion of SMEs in UAE. Also, the chapter tries to narrate the common challenges that the SMEs face at the macro level.

Chapter 6 and *Chapter 7* discuss the results of Data Analysis carried out using the primary data. Chapter 6 discusses the Dynamic Capabilities and Internationalization Success in the Selected SMEs and Chapter 7 discusses the Mediating Role of International Entrepreneurial Orientation.

Chapter 8 titled Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations summarizes the major findings of the study, spell out the conclusions drawn and suggest actionable recommendations for enhancing the internationalization success of SMEs in the UAE.

1.12 Project Plan, Timeline- Schedule & Resources

	Phase-1	Phase-2	Phase-3	Phase-4	Phase-5	Phase-6	Phase-7	Phase-8	Phase-9	Phase-10	Phase-11	Phase-12	Phase-13	Phase-14	Phase-15
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Background reading															
Chapter 1 (Introduction) Write up															
Chapter 2 (Literature Review) Write up															
Chapter 3 (Research Methodology) Write up															
Instrument Design & IRB approval															
Pilot questionnaire															
Review and finalize questionnaire															
Data Collection															
Chapter 4 and 5 (Analysis and Findings) Write up															
Chapter 6 (Conclusion) Write up															
References, Figures, Tables and Formatting															

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A review of the literature on the major topics related to the present study is attempted in this chapter. It examines the definitions, content and status of different concepts in the topics along with the relevant studies conducted on the topics so far.

The review suggests that there is much confusion as well as debate at the theoretical level as to what constitutes internationalization and how best it can be achieved by the SMEs. A large number of macro and micro level studies have been undertaken so far by various scholars, institutions, NGOs, and intelligentsia highlighting various aspects of internationalisation of firms at international, national, and regional levels. But not many studies are found on internationalisation of SMEs, particularly in UAE. Again, studies are available on the concept and relevance of dynamic capabilities as well as international entrepreneurial orientation, but not on SMEs and in the context of UAE economy. The major studies on the topics are reviewed in this chapter.

This review is subdivided into four heads, viz., (1) SMEs in UAE, (2) Internationalization of SMEs, (3) Dynamic Capabilities in the SMEs and (4) International Entrepreneurial Orientation in SMEs. Also, the review attempts to identify the research gaps, which vindicate the need for the present study.

2.2 SMEs in UAE

In this section, an attempt is made to explore the essential aspects of UAE economy and business sector, explain the definition and classification of SMEs on the UAE and to examine the relevant studies on the SMEs in the UAE.

2.2.1 The UAE Economy

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven emirates that became an independent nation in 1971 with the union of six emirates on December 2, 1971, and the addition of the seventh emirate on February 10, 1972. (UAE Government, 2016). The UAE's capital is Abu Dhabi, but Dubai, the country's most populous city, has "become a prosperous commercial centre for the whole Gulf region" (Nydell 2014, p.205).

The UAE has the second highest per capita income in the Gulf, after Qatar. Oil and natural gas account for 85 percent of the UAE's revenue. Despite this, the country has begun to diversify its economy in recent years, including construction, metal and textile production, and a substantial service industry. The UAE also depends heavily on foreign workers, referred to as 'expats', who comprise around 99 percent of the total work force, of which around 67 percent are from South Asia (Nydell, 2014).

The greater integration of emerging economies into the global economy has created new competitive landscapes for enterprises operating in these regions as well (Kotabe and Kothari, 2016). A significant feature of emerging markets is that they are undergoing economic, social, and political changes,

which provide the foundation for enterprises from these countries to compete in international marketplaces. (Hernandez and Guillén, 2018). The UAE is considered an emerging market in this respect, as it has been developing its economic, social, and political environment since the 1970s (Nydell, 2014). It is also the most developed country in the GCC's emerging markets, as well as the region's leader in terms of global competitiveness. (Schwab 2017). Indeed, “As emerging markets continue to drive the global economy, the UAE’s proximity to the Middle East, Africa, India, and the Far East means worldwide organisations are increasingly choosing the country as a dynamic and well-placed meeting point” (Lawes 2014, p.163).

Despite the global economic recession, fluctuations in oil prices and regional instabilities, the UAE remains as one of the most dynamic economies in the world, having achieved rapid and remarkable growth in various sectors while also providing a safe, attractive, and stable economy (Lawes 2014). Because of the UAE's strategic location between Europe, Asia, and Africa, Chinese businesses, Indian traders, Latin Americans, and Western citizens use the country, particularly Dubai, as a gateway to these three regions and the rest of the world (Kuntze and Hormann 2008; UAE Government, 2016). The low cost of labour available from the Indian Subcontinent, primarily in the construction business, and South Asia, primarily in the tourism and hospitality sector, is one of the UAE's economic benefits (Explorer Group, 2015). Furthermore, Western expats relocate to the UAE to benefit from tax-free benefits, greater wages in all sectors, and a pleasant living afforded by the rising

service economy, while millions of visitors from across the world visit the UAE each year to experience this unique destination (Lawes, 2014).

Abu Dhabi began producing and exporting oil in 1957, with Dubai following in 1969 and Sharjah in 1973. The massive revenues generated by this propelled the industry to the forefront of the UAE economy (Dubai Chamber 2015), transforming former fishing towns into modern cities with skyscrapers (Nydell, 2014). The UAE now has the world's seventh largest oil and natural gas reserves, accounting for 4% of global oil reserves and 3.5 percent of global gas reserves (UAE Government, 2016). The UAE government has been able to undertake social and economic development as well as build the country's infrastructure and industries thanks to revenue from the oil and gas business, which today accounts for over 67 percent of the country's GDP (UAE Government 2016). Banking and finance, construction, hospitality and tourism, aviation, healthcare, commerce and logistics are the important non-oil businesses in the UAE (Explorer Group, 2015).

The UAE's GDP in 2016 was USD 371.4 billion, with a GDP per capita of USD 37,677.9. (Schwab, 2017). Although the UAE is still regarded as a tax-free haven, a 5% value added tax (VAT) was implemented on January 1, 2018. Despite this, some goods and services are free from VAT, and business profits and private incomes are not taxed (UAE Ministry of Finance, 2017). The UAE is ranked 17th in the Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018, continuing to lead the Arab World in competitiveness (Schwab, 2017). This is based on ranking and scores for the 12 pillars composing the Global Competitiveness Index, among which the UAE ranks very well in goods market efficiency (rank

3), institutions (rank 3), infrastructure (rank 3), labour market efficiency (rank 11), and business sophistication (rank 13) (Schwab, 2017).

The UAE is "one of the most multicultural countries in the world," as well as "one of the most progressive, open-minded countries in the area," thanks to its strategic location in the heart of the Middle East and its population of more than 200 nationalities (Lawes, 2014, p.3). Even if there are still niches and holes in the market that need to be filled, the country draws many investors and entrepreneurs due to its stability, strategic location between East and West, lack of taxation, ongoing business development, and other perks (Lawes, 2014). The key incentives and enablers offered by the UAE to foreign investors include: 1) No personal or corporate income tax, (2) Tax holiday on profits, (3) 100 percent foreign ownership of companies in Free Trade Zones (FTZs), and (4) 100 percent repatriation of profits and capital with respect to foreign enterprises in FTZs (BLOOVO Middle East, 2016).

Over 30 free trade zones exist in the UAE, each specialising in a different type of activity and offering specific benefits to businesses that register there, such as exemption from corporate taxes and export or import duties, full foreign ownership, and 100 percent profit repatriation, to name a few (UAE Government, 2016). Free trade zones have their own set of rules and processes for forming businesses, and they attract foreign investment by charging hefty annual fees (Lawes, 2014). Each free trade zone focuses on a certain activity (such as media, information technology, research and engineering, textiles, healthcare, and so on) and is managed independently by its own government. However, businesses registered in a free trade zone cannot conduct business in

the UAE mainland market without locally appointed distributors or specific additional licenses (Lawes, 2014).

As of mid-2020, the UAE had 350,000 SME's (SMEs). They make up more than 94 percent of all enterprises in the UAE (73 per cent operated in the wholesale and retail sector, 16 per cent in the services sector and; 11 per cent in the industry sector). SMEs accounted for almost 86 percent of the private sector workers in 2018 and 52 percent of non-oil GDP. It is hoped that by 2021, the share of SMEs contributing to non-oil GDP will have risen to 60 percent, as part of the Vision 2021 theme of Competitive Knowledge Economy. The contributions of small and medium-sized businesses have a major and visible impact on the country's economic development.

2.2.2 Definition and Classification of SMEs in UAE

SME definitions have remained elusive (Darshana Mudalige et al., 2016), and have mostly been designed to serve the unique objective of an institution. From country to country, and even within a country, there are significant variances in how a SMEs is classified. Different institutions use various definitions as well.

There is a dearth of official data on the number of SMEs in Abu Dhabi and the UAE in general, as well as an official definition of a small business that is used by all emirates in the federation. According to some non-government estimates, Abu Dhabi has roughly 32 percent of the UAE's total SMEs population, followed by Dubai (45 percent) and much ahead of Sharjah (16 percent). As a result, the UAE's three major emirates account for 93 percent of

the country's total SMEs (Wilson, 2014). Based on the number of employees, businesses in Abu Dhabi are classed as micro, small, medium, or large: 5 employees is regarded micro; 5-19 employees is considered small; 20-49 employees is considered medium; and >50 employees is considered large (Wong & Aspinwall, 2005).

An SME is defined as any entity engaged in a lawful economic activity that meets the standards of employee headcount and turnover as stated in Table 1, according to a department of economic development agency in the emirate of Dubai (Wilson, 2014). In contrast to Abu Dhabi, Dubai's definition of SME uses number of employees and annual sales turnover to identify three categories of SMEs, *Micro*, *Small*, and *Medium*, across the three major sectors of trading, manufacturing, and service (Table 2).

The maximum number of employees for a small UAE SME in the trading industry is 35, and the turnover must be less than AED 75 million. A medium sized business in the trade sector can have no more than 250 employees and a turnover of AED 10 million. A small manufacturing SME can have up to 100 employees and AED 10 million in revenue, whereas a medium SME can have up to 250 employees and AED 250 million in revenue. A small firm in the service industry must have no more than 100 workers and AED 100 million in revenue, whereas a medium SME in the UAE must have no more than 250 employees and AED 250 million in revenue.

Table 1
Definitions of SMEs by Dubai SME Agency

	Trading		Manufacturing		Services	
	Max. Employees	Max Turnover (AED)	Max. Employees	Max Turnover (AED)	Max. Employees	Max Turnover (AED)
Small	35	50 Mn	100	100 Mn	100	25 Mn
Medium	75	250 Mn	250	250 Mn	250	150 Mn

(Source: Dubai SME, 2012)

Cabinet Resolution No. 22 of 2016 provides the most widely utilized framework for defining SMEs in the UAE (Wignaraja, 2003). Although Resolution 22's framework for SMEs is comparable to Dubai's, the criteria for classifying micro, small, and medium firms in the trading, manufacturing, and service sectors are different. Resolution 22 defines a micro trading firm as one with no more than six employees and an annual revenue of AED 3 million, whereas Dunleavy (2003) defines it as one with no more than 10 employees and an annual turnover of AED 9 million.

Given the aforementioned disparities in criteria, it is obvious that the UAE and other nations lack a common definition of SMEs. The researcher used the definitions in UAE Cabinet Resolution No. 22 of 2016 for the purposes of this study because it clearly refers to the rules governing SMEs in the emirates and probably applies wherever the term "SME" is used in UAE law. As a result, a small business is defined as one with 6 to 50 workers and less than AED 50 million in annual sales, while a medium business is defined as one with 51 to 200 employees and less than AED 250 million in annual revenue in this study. The same definition is applied to all sectors: trade, manufacturing and service where export-oriented SMEs in the UAE are also included (Dubai SME, 2017).

Table 2

Definition of SMEs in the UAE according to Cabinet Resolution No. 22 of 2016

	Trading	Manufacturing	Services
Small	6-50 Employees; or ≤ AED 50 Million Annual Revenue	10-100 Employees; or ≤ AED 50 Million Annual Revenue	6-50 Employees; or ≤ AED 20 Million Annual Revenue
Medium	51-200 Employees; or ≤ AED 250 Million Annual Revenue	101-250 Employees; or ≤ AED 250 Million Annual Revenue	51-200 Employees; or ≤ AED 200 Million Annual Revenue

(Source: Silver, 2016: p.13)

The expanding number of SMEs across the UAE, as well as their contribution to the recruitment and training of new employees, demonstrates the importance of SMEs as the backbone of the UAE economy, replacing the oil and gas sector. According to the Dubai SME (2012), the UAE's SMEs account for 95 percent of all businesses registered in the nation, employ 86 percent of the workforce, and generate 40 percent of the country's annual revenue.

2..2.3 Studies on SMEs in UAE

There are only a few studies connected to the SME sector in the UAE, which could be owing to a lack of data. Apart from a few papers by government agencies describing the growth and contribution of SMEs to the economy, there is a significant gap in scholarly efforts to provide a comprehensive sector status analysis of SMEs in UAE. Not to mention the fact that many SMEs-specific issues go ignored in academia.

It can be found that the business studies and literature in UAE context relate mostly to the large businesses. Miniaoui and Schilirò (2017) and Acs (2017) in their studies point out that it had been the major concern for the business sector of UAE that large organizations dominated the business domain. But SMEs also had been positively contributing to sustainable growth in the market in a big way. With this positive and original contribution, SMEs have also become the key actors in various markets, but their problems remain unexamined to a great extent.

Studies like Schilirò (2015) examined the profile of SMEs in the UAE. According to the study, the SME sector accounts for 92% of all businesses and contributes up to 50% of total GDP. Furthermore, it has been discovered that the UAE's 200,000 SMEs provide up to 85% of the private sector's jobs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for nine out of 10 job openings in the UAE.

Study by D'Souza and Taghian (2018) stated that the SME has been successful in UAE but their ability to innovate and its propensity adapt to the changes is still low.

Study by Al-Ansari, Pervan and Xu (2013) examined the behavior of SMEs and their strategies to face the new market domains. According to the study, SMEs in the UAE have emphasized structure adjustment, continual improvement, and the adoption of new technologies in their business processes. However, this strategy has not allowed companies to improve profits, lower costs, or move cautiously into new market domains

Study by Zimmermann and Thomä (2016), states that SMEs are still seen as job creators and a vital source of competitiveness in the economy, but their importance has waned in recent years due to a lack of resources to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions. As a result, rules that encourage the adoption of new techniques are needed in the SME sector to ensure that SMEs continue to expand.

It is a fact that the dearth of thorough and issue-specific studies on SMEs in the UAE makes it difficult to develop policy packages tailored to them and track their progress in a variety of areas, including internationalization.

2.3 Internationalization of Firms

This section attempts to address the concept and definition of internationalization, explain theories on internationalization, examine how far internationalization can be explained by exports, and review studies on internationalization of SMEs in the UAE.

2.3.1 The Concept and Definition of Internationalization

Internationalization is a high-value strategy for SMEs' growth and development; nevertheless, because the term can be applied to a wide range of activities, it is necessary to specify how it is used in this study.

The majority of prior studies on internationalization focus on two main areas: the factors leading to internationalization, and the internationalization process (Saeedi, 2017; Andrea Moretta et al., 2020; Özlem & Ece, 2015). The present internationalisation concept is ambiguous because it incorporates different perspectives and variables. As a result, the definitions produced differ

depending on which factors are chosen to reflect the real-world business situation. (Özlem & Ece, 2015).

Coviello and McAuley (1999) described how several definitions of internationalization evolved over time based on theories proposed by a distinct set of international business researchers. Penrose's (1959) perspective on internationalization focused on the firm's core skills and opportunities in a foreign setting, whereas Dunning (2015) defined internationalization as the process of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). Melin (1992) defined internationalization as a development process, whereas Johanson & Vahlen (1977) defined it as a commitment process in international markets. Internationalization, according to Johanson and Vahlen (2002), is a business network of business relationships, as well as a process of international transactions in foreign marketplaces.

Internationalization, according to Andersen et al., (2018), is described as the process through which businesses raise their understanding of the direct and indirect effects of international transactions on their future, as well as establish and implement interactions with other countries. The two basic types of internationalization, according to some international business academics, are inner and outward internationalization (Andersen et al., 2018). Table 3 summarizes some of internationalization definitions and perceptions mentioned in the literature.

Table 3
Internationalization Definitions

Definition	Source
The process in which firm increases its involvements in international operations.	Welch and Luostarinen, (1988: p.36)
The operational involvement across the international markets. A process by which firm increases its awareness of direct and indirect influences of international transactions on its future as well establish and conduct transactions with other countries.	Hosseini and Brege (2018).
Continuous development process by which the firm increases its international participation and knowledge and market commitment.	Mtigwe (2005)
A sequential learning process of increased international involvement and gradual resource commitment	Olivier and Ana (2015)
A process of adapting firm's operations (strategy, structure, resources, etc.) to international environments.	Calof and Beamish (1995: p.116)
The process of adapting exchange transaction form to international market characteristics.	Andersen, O (1997)
A set of operations that facilitate the building more stable relations among a firm and international markets through learning process of growing international involvement and patterns of development that may be internal and external alike	Rialp and Rialp (2001)
A highly sophisticated process that continuously redefines the degree of international involvement and commitment adopted by a firm.	Welch and Loustarinen (1988)

The process of adapting company's operations (strategy, structure, resources) to international environments.	Calof and Beamish (1995: p.116)
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Internationalization of the firm is achieved through many internal activities such as by engaging for direct and indirect imports and creating inward strategic alliances by licensing, cooperative manufacturing, and purchasing (Özlem & Ece, 2015). Outward internationalization covers a wide range of modes such as direct and indirect exports, outward licensing, franchising, strategic alliances, and FDA (Saeedi, 2017). In outward internationalization, the firm's revenue is realized through a variety of different outward modes (ibid). In the study by Welch and Luostarinen (1988), internationalization referred to a firm's involvement in international operations; however, their focus is only on outward-driven activities, such as export.

In the present study, the inward activities, like import, remain excluded. The performance of export-oriented SMEs in internationalization depends on the elements of outward-driven operations, which is a dependent variable in this study.

2.3.2 Theories on Internationalization of Firms

In the new global economy, the firms' internationalization is considered as an essential part of their activities. To study SMEs' internationalization, it is necessary to understand related theories; this is especially important if the researcher is to identify appropriate internationalization theory from a diverse range of theories within various functional areas in international business.

Earlier studies have adopted several theories in explaining the business internationalization phenomenon since the traditional theory of international trade was introduced by Mundell (1957). Most researchers conducted studies through the perspective of large firms' internationalization between 1950 to 1960 (Mitja Ruzzier et al., 2006). Research on SMEs internationalization emerged more rapidly when early researchers Oviatt and McDougall (1994), McDougall and Oviatt (1997), and Knight and Cavusgil (2004) introduced the theory of international new venture (INV). However, theories explaining SMEs' internationalization are still in their early stages, and there is no consensus among scholars in explaining the phenomenon (Brynn Deprey et al., 2012, p.38).

2.3.2.1 International Entrepreneurship Theory (IET)

The term international entrepreneurship (IE) was coined by Morrow in 1988. According to Morrow (1988), technological developments, reduced cultural barriers, and increased cultural awareness have opened previously closed international markets to a wide range of businesses, including small businesses, new enterprises, and established businesses. "Shortly thereafter, McDougall's (1989) empirical study comparing domestic and international new businesses paved the road for academic research in international entrepreneurship" (McDougall & Oviatt, 2005, p. 537).

International entrepreneurship is the study of cross-border entrepreneurial behavior that focuses on how actors identify, enact, assess, and exploit opportunities in the development of new goods and services. McDougall and Oviatt (2000, p. 903) defined international entrepreneurship as a "combination

of inventive, proactive, and risk-taking behavior that crosses national borders and is meant to create value in enterprises." This is one of the most often used definitions. Following that, they accepted a broader definition of entrepreneurship, which they defined as the discovery, implementation, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities beyond national borders to generate future commodities and services (McDougall & Oviatt, 2005). The term "discovery" refers to the process of looking for new ideas. Enactment refers to taking proactive steps to take advantage of opportunities and gain a competitive advantage. To interpret the acts made in order to build experience and knowledge, evaluation is required. "International entrepreneurship theory argues that individual and firm entrepreneurial behavior is the basis of foreign market entry" (Mtigwe, 2006, p. 16).

Researchers and academics have taken a keen interest in international entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur, according to IET, is today's key to internationalization. He is the one who has the skills and adequate information to assess market opportunities, as well as the capacity to build and maintain strong relationships with other businesses, suppliers, customers, the government, and the media. He could be the one with both subjective and experiential knowledge. He can commit resources efficiently to attain competitive advantage since he is a risk taker. According to the international entrepreneurship theory, an entrepreneur must be an opportunity seeker with international expertise in order to exploit market opportunities and commit to them through entrepreneurial actions, which are translated as entrepreneurial services. International new ventures (INVs), which are closely tied to each

other, are an important aspect of the discussion regarding international entrepreneurship theory. The following section expands on this theory.

2.3.2.2 International New Ventures (INVs) / Born Global

INVs have sought a considerable competitive advantage from the use of their resources and the selling of their outputs in various nations since their formation (McDougall & Oviatt, 1994). As a result, they do not display incremental behavior when it comes to internationalisation. INVs in general refer to entrepreneurial firms that seek to internationalize very early in their life cycle and whose expansion into international markets occurs much more quickly than predicted by earlier theories of the internationalisation process, according to (Middle East Investment Initiative, 2019).

INVs have flexible operating procedures that enable them to respond quickly to constantly changing environments, and the CEO / owner / manager / founder frequently conducts business deals personally and makes decisions on the spot, so foreign market commitments are less likely to be influenced by organizational routines and internal politics in INVs than in established firms (Middle East Investment Initiative, 2019). INVs are the products of a global network of companies that assists them in developing and distributing products to various markets (Holmlund et al., 2007). INVs have used a variety of tactics and entry approaches to quickly expand into various international markets and well-established industries since their inception.

INVs are global by birth which means it has resource - commitments in various countries from the beginning. SMEs do not go through the steps (process) that were confirmed in the U-model to fulfil internationalisation since

they gradually develop as traditional enterprises that start their activities in the local market and later seek to expand into international markets. INVs are the result of a global network of companies that assists them in developing and distributing products to various markets.

INVs use a variety of strategies and entry modes to quickly expand into various foreign markets, and a well-chosen strategy can reduce the risks of internationalisation. As a result, the step-by-step process (U-model) is most likely to stymie INVs' internationalisation and thus may not be useful for their successful expansion (Moen & Rialp-Criado, 2018). On other hand , Costa et al. (2017), Jeong et al. (2017), and Mejri & Ramadan (2017) stated that SMEs replicate internationalisation modes of their peers based on business network relationships. SMEs tend to internationalise by making use of information received from business, social, and intuitional networks. It suggests network theory may explain internationalisation better than the U- model. The network theory of internationalisation is reviewed in the following section.

2.3.2.3 Network as Theory in Internationalization of the Firm

According to network theory, enterprises can achieve faster internationalization by leveraging the experience and resources of network partners (Mitgwe, 2006). Networks serve as a bridging method for internationalization (Mitgwe, 2006). In the topic of SMEs internationalization, network theory (Coviello & Munro, 1997) has received significant application and acceptance as a complement to older models such as the Uppsala model (Andersson et al., 2018; Morais & Ferreira, 2020; Oehme & Bort, 2015). This thesis asserts that SMEs engage on internationalisation by using their existing

networks, relationships, and collaborations (Morais & Ferreira, 2020). It emphasises the importance of networks in SMEs' internationalisation by claiming that quick internationalisation is fuelled by formal and informal network ties, which have a significant impact on overcoming internationalisation barriers, resulting in SMEs' international growth and success (Costa et al., 2017).

The network approach emphasises the use of information gathered over time by the firm through close relationships with clients, industry, government and public institutions, and other market actors (e business networks), as well as friends and family members of the management team (e social networks) (Jeong et al., 2017). Many authors claim that SMEs' competitive advantages must encompass not just their own capabilities, but also those shared with their networks (Costa et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2017; Mejri & Ramadan, 2017; Morais & Ferreira, 2020). SMEs can use a variety of intermediaries to improve their international success, including business networks (suppliers, competitors, strategic partners, and customers), social networks (family, friends, colleagues, and employees), and institutional networks (governments, incubators, research institutes, agencies for international development, and business associations) (Costa et al., 2017).

Many previous studies have shown that SMEs can benefit from their network relationships (Costa et al., 2017; Mejri & Ramadan, 2017; Oehme & Bort, 2015), and that SMEs imitate their peers' internationalisation modes based on formal business network relationships to reduce risks and improve international performance. Institutional networks, according to Oparaocha

(2015), have a favourable impact on SMEs' internationalisation and success (e.g., speed up export entry).

Castellacci (2013) explains that business networks and collaborations in service firms are important to foster decisions to enter foreign markets, whereas Cannone and Ughetto (2014) observe that business network relationships built up by entrepreneur are one of the key drivers for an early internationalisation and international expansion, thereby international performance.

However, it is contested whether the network model is empirically difficult to study due to the complexity of transnational networks and their affecting variables, as well as the difficulty in interpreting research results (e.g., case studies) (Morais & Ferreira, 2020; Schweizer et al., 2010). Because of the complex nature of the network's structure, researchers and academics must devote more time and resources to investigating the network-based internationalisation process. Because longitudinal fact-finding research is time-consuming and thus expensive, empirical research on network perspectives frequently provides "spotlights" of network structures (Andersson et al., 2018).

In brief, the network theory states that SMEs' internationalisation is dependent on their network of contacts and partnerships, implying that connecting with networks of relationships or partnerships can take time for a SME to internationalise.

2.3.2.4 Transaction Cost Theory

Despite the fact that transaction cost theory and stage theory appear to be similar in terms of risk management through cross-border activities, they differ

at one step (Ruzzier et al., 2006, p. 481). While the stage method focuses on a progressive process of diversifying into international markets through the acquisition of knowledge and commitment, transaction cost theory focuses on economic factors of internationalization (Abdullah & Zain, 2011a).

As a factor in business internationalization, transaction cost theory focuses on minimizing overall transaction cost and maximizing profit and production (Coviello & Martin, 1999; Abdullah and Zain, 2011b). Despite the fact that this theory is useful for explaining outward foreign direct investment, it has the drawback of only indicating economic and oligopolistic views. It does not consider behavioral and human elements that influence organizations' internationalization, such as owners' and managers' global perspectives and entrepreneurial orientations.

2.3.3 Need for a dynamic capability approach over RBV.

Dynamic capability theory was developed as part of the Resource Based View (RBV) to shed light on the relationship between company success and competitive advantage. When comparing the SME context to the large business context, (Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Szymaniec, 2012; Glunk & Wilderom, 1998) find that DCs have higher empirical evidence than RBV and other strategic management research philosophies such transaction cost theory (Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer, & Narayanan, 2016).

The global economy and the market power game are not friendly to the survival of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Due of their significance, researchers and experts are paying increasing attention to how well SMEs are doing (Shah & Ahmad, 2019). Previous studies have shown that SMEs face

many challenges (Doern, 2009; O'Dwyer et al., 2009; xu et al., 2007). Current economies also put them in danger due to what some researchers have called hyper-competitive or High-Velocity settings (D'Aveni & Gunther, 2007; Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988). Strategic management in this context involves making efforts to ensure the continued legality, competitiveness, and safety of these businesses (Keonig, 2004, p. 4). To address these responsibilities, strategic management has developed a set of ideas and techniques based in organizational behavior that aim to boost competitiveness.

Business agility and the ability for strategic reconfiguration are necessary to gain and maintain a competitive edge over the long term (Ahmadi & Osman, 2020). Strategic management scholars have dug deep into an organization's strategic competences to better grasp what makes it competitive. How its survival and growth depend on the resources and skills it needs to thrive is made clear (Barthod-Prothade, 2014). The resource-based view (RBV) posits that the primary source of competitive advantage is the possession of unique, rare, and inimitable resources that enable some companies to perform better than their rivals (Barney, 1991, 2001; Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). This argument is commonly criticized for its inflexibility, risk of tautology, and lack of strategic competency (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2017; Priem & Butler, 2001). In order to get a more complete picture, researchers are now taking into account the role of dynamic capacities (DC) in maintaining a competitive edge. Over the past two decades, the significance of DCs has steadily increased (Bitencourt et al., 2020). One of the primary objectives of strategic management is to keep the organization's

capabilities in line with external needs (Learned et al., 1969; Miles et al., 1978). Beyond that, DCs are a relatively new feature of the academic world. They originally debuted in the second half of the 1990s. Therefore, they allow the company to restructure its assets to better adapt to its surroundings (Teece & Pisano, 1994; Zott, 2003). It follows that DCs help organizations accomplish strategic goals that give them a long-term advantage in the market.

The major models of internationalisation can be summarised as follows:

2.3.4 Innovation – Related Internationalization Models (I – Model) / Incremental Approach

Internationalization processes are categorized into two major streams (Wach, 2015), i.e. Uppsala internationalization models (U - Model) and innovation–related models (I - Model). Internationalization is a process, and incremental in its nature for both models (Anderson, 1993). However, I - Model is developed based on a variance-based approach, and limited to SMEs (Dominguez et al., 2017). The I - Model views internationalization as a process in which the steps are similar to that of new product adoption (Simin Lin, 2010). This model is supported by many researchers (e.g. Bilkey & Tesar, 1977; Cavusgil, 1980; Czinkota, 1982; Reid, 1981) who consider the internationalization decision as an innovation for the firm.

For Bilkey and Teasar (1977), Cavusgil (1980) and Reid (1981), each subsequent step of the process is an innovation for the firm. To a certain degree, their models are evolved on the basis of the U - Model (Andersen 1993), concentrating on the learning sequence in connection with the adoption of

innovation. Consequently, in I - Models, internationalization is viewed as a development by steps and an innovation for the firm (Simin Lin, 2010).

The decision to start the international activities and the motivation of exporting the products are interpreted differently in the models of Bilkey and Tesar (1977) and Czinkota (1982) from the models of Cavusgil (1980) and Reid (1981). According to different points of view in I-Models, the decision of internationalization is affected either by “push” or by “pull” forces. The mechanism of “push” is an external change that initiates the export decision and the mechanism of “pull” is an internal change that explains the shift from one step to another.

Different steps of the I-Model are related to the export ratio in proportion to the turnover of the enterprise. This relation represents the degree in which the enterprise engages itself to export (Gankema et al., 2000). Leonidou and Katsikeas (1996) consider that the different processes in I-Models can be essentially generalized into three main stages:

Pre-export stage: The enterprise is interested only in domestic market; the enterprise searches for information and evaluates the feasibility of export activities; the enterprise has already exported on limit basis but exports no more.

Export trail stage: The enterprise starts to export irregularly when it has the potential to extend its activities in foreign markets.

Advanced export stage: The enterprise exports regularly with extended experiences to foreign markets and conceives other forms of commitments to international markets.

The I-Model explains how the process of internationalization begins, the role of the decision-makers and the factors influencing the decisions (Collinson & Houlden, 2005). Reid (1981) indicates that the attitude, the experiences, the motivation and the expectations of the decision-makers will exert a significant impact on the internationalization process. Reuber and Fischer (1997) also perceive that the knowledge level and the international experiences of the entrepreneur (or the management team) may help SMEs to jump over the first two steps of internationalization. The participation into the international market and the export activities can thus be considered as the innovation inside the enterprise.

Based on the examination of Cavusgil's model (1980), Gankema et al. (2000) suggest that the degree of SMEs' international commitment will increase in time, but the differences exist significantly from case to case. Some SMEs jump over the steps immediately and others may stop the internationalization process before arriving at the final step in order not to be too dependent on the international market. Torres (1999) indicates that SMEs export more and more in an early stage and the internationalization process can be observed in SMEs during the time of their establishment or even at the beginning of their creation.

Most researchers believe that the stage approach can be widely applied in explaining SMEs' internationalization process and different stage models can be served as examples for SMEs to follow in their export process. But more and more researchers have begun to question the generality of the stage approach as exceptions have been successively found with the evolution of the economic environment and in-depth studies on these models (Gankema et al., 2000; Axinn

& Metthyssens, 2002). According to Julien et al. (2004), some SMEs enter the foreign markets directly and their international development does not necessarily follow the progressive process model of internationalization. These researchers argue that the stage models of export, particularly the U-Model, need to be adapted to explain the internationalization process of SMEs (Gankema, Snuif & Zwart, 2000). Some researchers also point out that the I-Model is built on a one-way pattern of development which neglects the dependency of the business actors. In addition, the I-Model does not hold for SMEs that are international from inception (McDougall & Oviatt, 1994). However, integrating I – Model with other perspectives, such as the network view and RBV, could be an effective way to explain accelerated internationalization in SMEs, as Freeman and Cavusgil (2007) did in their study. The increased discrepancies of the stage approach in explaining certain international behaviors of SMEs require the introduction of other internationalization approaches, particularly the network approach and the international entrepreneurship approach (Freeman & Cavusgil, 2007).

2.4.1 Internationalization and Export Performance

We have discussed that internationalization referred to a firm's involvement in international operations; but the focus is only on outward-driven activities, such as export. Therefore, success in internationalization is gauges through the performance in exports.

Rapid technical advancements, market globalization, government assistance, and recent developments in the global economy (such as market and

trade liberalization initiatives) have all contributed to SMEs' internationalization through exporting their products, services, and goods (Mejri and Ramadan, 2017). Because SMEs provide such a significant contribution to job creation, innovation, and economic recovery (Mehra et al., 2010), attempts to improve SMEs' export performance (EP) have gained prominence in the field of export-related research.

Exports remain one of the most important vehicles of access into international markets (Moen & Rialp-Criado, 2018). When compared to other options, like as joint ventures or acquisitions, exports are a more attractive way to access international markets. According to Mehra et al. (2010), exporting does not entail large risks or obligations, and it allows for greater flexibility in altering the volume of goods to different export markets. Some businesses can only internationalize by exporting, according to Moen and Rialp-Criado, (2018). Market performance is, in general, an important expected result of exceptional company capabilities.

EP has been the subject of much debate in the past, but researchers have yet to agree on a single definitive description. EP stands for the extent to which a company achieves its exporting goals. EP is defined as the achievement of a company's goals and the result of its activity in international markets. As a result, this definition encompasses a wide range of concepts and relates to a firm's evaluation and export activities, which rely on a variety of marketing and strategic goals (Middle East Investment Initiative, 2019).

EP can be used as a tool for businesses to assess their success in both domestic and international markets. As a result, there are significant differences

in how EP has been conceptualized and quantified across the literature. Previous studies defined EP by measuring economic and strategic objectives (i.e. export sales, profits, sales ratio, tendency to export, and export intensity, export variety, acceptance of product, export involvement, and export orientation (Michael et al., 2002) and satisfaction (Middle East Investment Initiative, 2019). Moreover, according to Mehra et al., (2010), approaches to operationalizing EP involve objective measures (like sales volumes or market share), and subjective indicators (like perceived export success or perceived satisfaction with sales in export markets). It is evident from the foregoing that export studies in general use multi-dimensional measures.

Despite the large number of measures (nearly 50), the Middle East Investment Initiative's (2019) review concluded that the intensity of export (i.e., share of exports in total sales), export sales' growth, export profits, export market share, satisfaction with EP in general, and perceived export success are the most frequently used. Based on 124 pieces of literature spanning the years 2006 to 2014, Moen & Rialp-Criado (2018) concluded that there were (about 53) techniques of measuring EP in different nations.

This indicates that there are different terms of EP measured in prior studies. It is evident that most measured economic performance at export sales growth, the intensity of exports and profit. A limited number of studies measured non-economic performance based only on objectives' achievements. Besides, (Michna, 2018) reviewed prior studies of EP from the year 1998 to 2004 and likewise found that the intensity of export, the growth of export sales,

export profits, and export market shares are the terms mostly employed in a try to measure EP.

Non-economic and economic measurements have been expanded and used in the prior studies, however, it yet still a theme open for discussion between researchers (Ping & Lin, 2019), this is due to the multi - faceted construct and it cannot be represented by one indicator only. This indicates that in all studies there is no one particular indicator is applicable. However, (Pavlou & El Sawy, 2011) considered the perception of management as both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Hence, the EP can be measured in objective and subjective methods.

Considering the growth of SMEs' international activities for exporting, the related literature covers relatively a wide domain of fields involving the selection among direct or indirect exporting for internationalization (Ping & Lin, 2019), the decision to create a new export venture and issues related to this solution (Pehrsson, 2016) and the selection of markets' location (Huett et al., 2014), export and innovation (Ping & Lin, 2019), the team management effect on the decision to internationalize (Reuber & Fischer, 2002), decisions on entry timing to the market and the resource constraints. The SMEs export growth is discussed in the literature of international entrepreneurship also. They discussed the intensity of exporting, and growth of small companies at a higher level in an international entrepreneurship framework.

2.4.2 Internationalization of SMEs in UAE

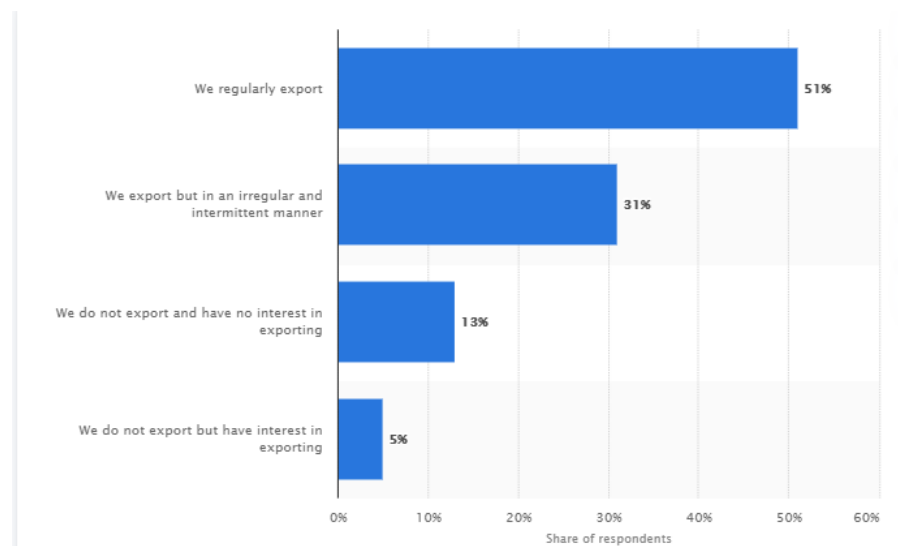
More than 51% of SMEs in UAE are export-oriented SMEs (Dubai SME, 2017; UAE Government (2019) indicating that they have some part of their

revenues coming from regional and international markets (as compared to 44% in EU and 18% in New Zealand). Also, a high proportion of SMEs (60% of SMEs exporters) have more than 20% of their sales revenues deriving from international markets. From a sectoral perspective, trading SMEs are inherently more export-oriented as compared to manufacturing and service SMEs (68% of trading SMEs indicated that they have revenues from international markets/customers, as compared to 53% and 37% of manufacturing and services SMEs, respectively).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Asia-Pacific and African countries are the key international markets / export destinations for SMEs in UAE (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). Nearly three-fourths of SME exporters are currently exporting to these countries without having a physical presence in these markets, while 18% businesses have either set up offices or have entered into strategic alliances in other countries (such as Europe countries) (Dubai SME, 2017) implying that export SMEs in developing countries such as UAE are operating in a highly competitive and dynamic international market where more competitive advantages are required so as to survive in existing foreign market or acquire foreign market share.

On another side, in spite of severe roadblocks remain, SMEs in the UAE experiencing sharp exporting growth, as per to a survey entitled "trends in exports among SMEs in the UAE " in 2020 carried out among UAE's SMEs revealed that, 51 % of respondents reported regular exports, 31% they export but in an irregular intermittent manner, 5% don't export but have interest in exporting (Statista Research Department, 2020) as shown below.

Figure 2
Trends in exports among SMEs in the UAE



Source: Statista Research Department (2020)

Further , in a study to Schweizer et al., (2010) on 800 SMEs from developed and emerging markets, including 100 UAE SMEs businesses, examines the trade patterns and obstacles encountered by SMEs. The findings show that 91% of SMEs businesses doing foreign trade in the UAE are concentrating on global growth, and look forward to export revenues to growth over the next few years, as per to research conducted by “online freight service Shipa Freight (2019)”, and 85% of UAE SMEs' state that technology is one of the most significant sectors that allow them to operate internationally , regarding UAE SMEs international growth, the study reveals that 67% of are preferring export markets rather than the local market , the results indicates that the middle east (55%) market is the most probable for growth and exporting.

In addition, the UAE SMEs are the most export-focused in the world and classifying top as per to the results of a recent study carried out by Zurich's export study " entitled "challenges, risks and opportunities for SMEs” surveyed

more than 3,250 SMEs across 12 countries, 250 of which were located in UAE. The study shows that (25%) of UAE SMEs expanded their export operations over the few past year.

The percentage of UAE SMEs that extended their overseas activities through the last 12 months was double that of the 13% reported between other surveyed countries, the 26% ratio be more impressive when compared with established exporting countries (e.g., Switzerland (15%), Germany (8%) and Brazil (8%). Moreover, to targeting international growth, 30% of UAE SMEs reported an increased effort to target new local customers during the past year, compared to a global average of only 23%. The UAE's SMEs are also the most optimistic in the world in terms of future exports, 28% of UAE SMEs cited expansion into international markets as biggest commercial opportunity over the next 12 months.

Particularities of UAE relevant to SME internationalisation as emphasized in various studies can be summarised as:

- Its strategic location between Europe, Asia and Africa (UAE Government, 2016);
- Opportunities in the market, such as the low cost of labour from Asia, lack of taxation, higher per capita incomes, booming service industry, continuous business development, stability, good infrastructure, and excellent business support services (Lawes, 2014);
- A high level of internationalisation and multiculturalism (Dubai Chamber, 2015), with over 200 nationalities, making the UAE one of

the most open-minded and progressive countries in the Middle East (Lawes, 2014);

- A particular business culture based on Arab culture and the Islamic religion, requiring continuous interaction with key customers and building long-term relationships, where personal and business networks are extremely important to the success of a business (Explorer Group, 2015; Marsh, 2015; Nydell, 2014);
- A traditional and conservative society but a relatively liberal legal system for this region (Nydell, 2014);
- Oil and gas resources are the primary source of government revenue but with a diversified economy including other industries (Lawes, 2014; Nydell, 2014);
- The most robust economy in the Middle East region, bringing further confidence to foreign businessmen and investors (Al Muhairi, 2015);
- One of the most dynamic economies in the world, with a rapid growth in investment, finance, commerce, industry, services, and oil and gas, with a safe and stable economy despite the current global economic recession (Dubai Chamber, 2015);
- The UAE's superior risk profile compared to most other countries in the Middle East and other emerging markets worldwide (Kuntze & Mormann, 2008);
- The institutional voids in UAE, as in all emerging markets, which represent challenges for some business, but opportunities for other

businesses that can take advantage of these gaps (Rogmans, 2012) to create niche markets.

2.5 Dynamic Capabilities in SMEs

The primary international business theories were examined in Section 2.3; and it was concluded that none of them are capable of fully explaining internationalisation in the context of SMEs. When it comes to rapid environmental change, the problem may be more complicated. In this context, the dynamic capacities paradigm has been found appropriate to explain internationalisation by considering environmental change and other difficulties that businesses confront (Teece, 2016).

Also, it has been stated by Teece (2014) that the nature of dynamic capabilities is closely associated with organizational capabilities. Moreover, based on the internationalization theories in the previous section, it was revealed that the dynamic capability in an international business is still a "black box"(Saeedi, 2017, p.61). Therefore, to find the specific factors of dynamic-based firm advantages in international business, it is necessary to evaluate the related literature on the dynamic capabilities view (DCV), which is attempted in the following section as the key theoretical perspective for the present study.

2.5.1 The Concept and Definitions

The DCs perspective, defined by Tartaglione et al., (2019) aims to understand a firm's growth and survival. A firm's growth and survival within a dynamic business environment is ensured by its competitive advantages and firm performance, which can be gained through DCs (Teece, 2018b). Table 4

shows some of key definitions of DCs emerging from previous empirical literature.

Table 4
Dynamic Capabilities: Key definitions

Definition	Author
Firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments.	Teece, 2018
Firm's processes that use resources – specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources – to match or even create market change.	Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000
A global dynamic capability is the creation of difficult-to-imitate combinations of resources, including effective coordination of inter-organisational relationships, on a global basis that can provide a firm with a competitive advantage.	Griffith and A1 - Harvey, 2001
Change-oriented capabilities that help firms redeploy and reconfigure their resource base to meet evolving customer demands and competitor strategies.	Zollo and Winter, 2002
The ability to sense and then seize new opportunities, and to reconfigure and protect knowledge assets, competencies, and complementary assets with the aim of achieving a sustained competitive advantage.	Tartaglione et al., 2019
Firm's ability to improve, adapt, adjust, reconfigure, refresh and renew a business process better than the competitors	Keillor, 2007a
Second-order competences – routines by which firms can build and reconfigure their resource and capabilities base.	Armstrong, 2006

Capabilities that are created through path-dependent learning and engaged in the purposeful or deliberate creation, extension or modification of a firm's resource base, are open to both exogenous and endogenous drivers of change	Aminu and Mahmood, 2015
Firm's orientation to integrate and reconfigure its resources and processes and, even more importantly, transform its processes in response to foreign environments to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.	Armstrong, 2006
Specific strategic and organizational routines, through which companies reach new resource settings that create value in dynamic markets, or even cause a market change.	Aminu and Mahmood, 2015
Firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure diverse capabilities, both inside and outside the firm, in response to changing environmental conditions	Creswell and Creswell, 2017
DCs at the organizational level was defined as a firm's capacity to merge, construct, and reshape internal and external competencies to encounter rapidly changing environments, while, at an individual level, DCs refers to "the capacity to modernize, growing, adapt competencies over time, which considered as a cornerstone for executives, owners, managers, to make useful resources usage, leading business growth and development in a changing environment.	Acosta, A. S., Herrero Crespo, Á., and Collado Agudo, 2018; Blaikie and Priest, 2019; Smith et al., 1999

It is noticed from the above table that there are slight differences between researchers when defining the term 'DCs'. For instance, (Zollo & Winter, 2002) makes a distinction amongst different definitions by grouping them in to three

categories: (1) focusing on the results of DCs (Griffith & A1 - Harvey, 2001), (2) focusing on the presence of external conditions e.g. (Tartaglione et al., 2019), (3) focusing on abilities or activities that make a firm dynamic.

However, the vast majority of researchers see DCs as a firm's change-oriented capabilities to reconfigure its resource base so that the firm can respond better to changes occurring in its dynamic business environment in order to remain competitive (Kim et al., 2011). Moreover, several definitions highlight the fact that dynamic capability is not an ad hoc problem-solving event or an intentional change of a firm's resource base (Saeed & Ziaulhaq, 2018). For example, Castellacci (2013), implies that it is the capacity of an organization to purposefully create, extend, and modify its resource base so as to solve problems created through sensing opportunities and threats, making timely and market-oriented decisions and changing its resource base.

Additionally, Griffith and Harvey (2001), define DCs in a global context. For example, (Gerschewski et al., 2015) defines global dynamic capability as the formation of difficult-to-imitate combinations of resources, such as effective coordination of inter-organisational relationships, on a global basis that can provide a firm with a competitive advantage. According to Swoboda and Olejnik (2016b), DCs are core capabilities by which exporting firms can build and reconfigure their export capabilities base, which are needed for the adaptation of product and services, recognition of opportunities, building and maintenance of network ties, obtaining market knowledge, development of internationalization knowledge, and innovating processes.

Helfat and Raubitschek, (2018) proposed that these core capabilities include the ability to sense and pursue opportunities, the ability to learn, the ability to integrate new knowledge into operational capabilities, and the ability to coordinate and deploy resources, tasks, and activities in reconfigured operational capabilities. The view of Saha et al. (2017) is similar to Sundqvist, S., Kyläheiko, K., Kuivalainen, O., & Cadogan, (2012), who defined DCs as the ones include the sensing opportunities and threats, seizing opportunities, and transforming assets and processes.

The empirical reviews of dynamic capability related studies are provided in Table 5.

Table 5
Empirical Review of Dynamic Capabilities View

Author (s)	Country, Sector, Sample size	Variable & Measurement	Findings	Recommendation
Liu & Kang (2020)	China, 303 firms' overseas investment s projects	Adaptive capabilities (Firm size, Prior international experience, Investment advisor, international diversification .	findings confirm that an emerging market enterprise's adaptive dynamic capability that are contingent upon industry and institutional actors influence its international entry mode strategic choices	Managers could try to acquire more international experience, as it enhances the firms' adaptive dynamic capability
Ledesma-Chaves	Spain ,145 Spanish export firms.	Dynamic marketing capabilities	The results lead to two main conclusions:	It demonstrates that the policies

et al. (2020)		International expansion Export performance	(1) in times of economic crisis, the dynamic marketing capability plays a mediator role between the increase of the number of international markets served and the international and national results; (2) the dynamic marketing capabilities bring about learning effects in the internationalisation process,	developed to favour a move into international markets must not be uniquely concentrated on the mere fact of the internationalisation process and its phases, rather the strengthening of the policies and the training for the development of the dynamic marketing capabilities is necessary
Gölgeci et al. (2019)	Turkey, 254 firms from multi-industries.	Innovativeness, supply-chain agility, and adaptability International performance Institutional development and distance	The study finds that the linkages between three innovation-related dynamic capabilities (innovativeness, supply-chain agility, and adaptability) and international performance are positively and negatively moderated by institutional development and	This study's findings indicate that developing dynamic capabilities of operant and entrepreneurial nature are vital for emfs to achieve enough evolutionary fitness to flourish in foreign markets

			institutional distance	
Petricevic & Verbeke (2019)	US 76 firms in the electronics and electrical equipment industry and in the chemicals and pharmaceuticals industry	Sensing and seizing capabilities inter-organizational contexts (international alliances vs broader network relationships)	The findings support conceptualizing dynamic capabilities as four distinct subsets, deployed for sensing or seizing purposes, and across the two different inter-organizational contexts	The authors show that firms differ in their subsets of dynamic capabilities for pursuing different types of inter-organizational, boundary-spanning relationships (such as international alliances vs broader network relationships)
Mudali et al. (2019)	Sri Lanka 197 SMEs from manufacturing, service, and trade industries.	Sensing, learning, transforming capabilities Owner specific dynamic capabilities (i.e. entrepreneurial orientation, human capital and social capital) Learning capabilities.	The findings established that owner-specific dynamic capabilities have a positive influence on both firm dynamic capabilities and internationalization, and firm dynamic capabilities positively influence internationalization.	This research will provide some insights for policy makers in designing and providing the incentives for SME sector in South Asia to enter global market. A significant relationship among the variables should encourage SME to cultivate an organization environment that is conducive for higher order learning and entrepreneurship behaviour

Hernández-linares et al. (2018)	Spain 509 SMEs having 10 to 249 employees	Sensing, learning, integrating, and coordinating capabilities Market orientation	Suggest that not all DC dimensions are equally important for SME performance. Further found that market orientation to significantly moderate the relationships between both the sensing capability and the learning capability and firm performance	SME managers should focus on promoting those capabilities that contribute to superior firm performance that is, learning and integrating. Learning, for instance, can be developed by promoting informal communication in order to make the transmission of tacit knowledge easier or by promoting “learning by doing
Tallott & Hilliard (2015)	Ireland A single case study in timber and vegetation sector	Sensing, seizing and transforming capabilities Internationalization	Dynamic capabilities can be identified as sensing, seizing and transforming. They are capable of intentional development by managers through strategic decision making and deliberative learning, within a path-dependent evolution	The dynamic capability concept has been criticized for being of little practical use to managers. This research shows the process of intentional dynamic capability development, offering insights to practicing managers.

Swoboda & Olejnik (2016)	Germany 604 international SMEs	Sense opportunity and threats; the propensity to make timely decisions; the potential to systematically solve problems as compared with trial-and- error learning; the propensity to reconfigure the resource base of the firm entrepreneurial orientation	Entrepreneurial orientation completely mediates the relationship between scanning and planning and international performance. Moreover, the results implicate a bidirectional relationship between processes and international entrepreneurial orientation.	SME managers learn that (1) scanning and planning are crucial to a firm's international success because of their international entrepreneurial orientation and that (2) they, as managers, have two main channels by which to influence the probabilities that they succeed in international markets
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Source: Compiled by the Author from various sources.

Having reviewed findings of recent dynamic capabilities theory-related empirical studies in Table 2.2, various types of DCs could be identified (e.g., sensing, seizing, integrating learning, coordinating, transformation/reconfiguration, marketing-related, product-related, owner specific capabilities etc.).

2.5.2 Role of dynamic capability and internationalization

The significance of dynamic capabilities (DCs) for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the context of exporting has been underscored in recent research (Efrat et al., 2018; Albertina Paula Monteiro, Soares, & Rua, 2019) .

The understanding of the reasons behind the fluctuations in business performance is reliant upon the pivotal role played by DCs. As per Teece's (2014) assertion, dynamic capabilities are instrumental in bolstering the competitive advantage of any organization, thereby facilitating its future growth. The degree to which a company internationalizes and the manner in which it does so to enhance its performance is primarily determined by its distribution centers (DCs). The present model posits that the internationalization and development of a SME are influenced by the DCs at the corporate level. Furthermore, in alignment with the reasoning of DC, it is contended that the expansion of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) is positively correlated with its degree of internationalization and its involvement in external collaborations and research and development (R&D) expenditures (Nunes, Serrasqueiro, & Leitão, 2012; Swoboda, Meierer, Foscht, & Morschett, 2011) . Research and development as well as teamwork initiatives have been identified as dynamic capabilities (DCs) by scholars such as (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) and (Helfat, 1997) . These capabilities function at the organizational level and facilitate enhanced utilization of resources by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) when exporting to one or multiple foreign markets.

According to (Chang & Wang, 2007), the augmentation of global markets is a fundamental element of commercial expansion tactics. As a result, the DC perspective places emphasis on the long-term performance and growth of a company. The cited literature pertains to the manner in which organizations leverage their global resources to sustain or improve their operational efficacy (Altintas, Ambrosini, & Gudergan, 2022). DCs have received significant

attention in scholarly works on strategic management and global management, as evidenced by the studies conducted by (Arikan, 2022) and (Drnevich & Kriauciunas, 2011). (Matysiak, Rugman, & Bausch, 2018) expound on the existing international business theory regarding the performance implications of firm- and country-specific advantages. This theory serves as the decision-making framework that forms the basis of the rationale underlying the deployment of dynamic capabilities (DC) in both large corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This finding holds great significance as it not only highlights the role of diversified capabilities in facilitating the sustained performance of multinational enterprises, but also underscores their capacity to do so.

While DCs may prioritize the transformation of corporate or business-level strategy, the differentiation between these two subjects is not commonly observed in existing literature (Wilden, Devinney, & Dowling, 2016). Corporate-level decision-making centers (DCs) oversee the extent of vertical and/or horizontal integration, as well as the extent of related and unrelated diversification. The determination of the SME's internationalization level within its context is also a factor in achieving the overall development objective, as determined by these DCs. The enterprise-level implementation of DC involves the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and strategically modifying the exporting combination of a small and medium-sized enterprise. This pertains to the scope of market diversification of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), encompassing both domestic and international export markets. In order to sustain or enhance export sales in comparison to domestic

sales, a decision is made regarding the feasibility and location of exporting, as well as the possibility of modifying the export mix and/or emphasis. In contrast, business-level diversified companies facilitate strategic modifications in particular product or country markets, where small and medium-sized enterprises can leverage their resources. This can be achieved by implementing market-specific product configurations and/or marketing and sales capabilities to stimulate revenue expansion in these targeted markets. As per the theoretical framework, the corporate-level dynamic capabilities (DCs) have a significant impact on the internationalization level of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The business-level DCs, such as reasoning, research and development (R&D) intensity, and collaborative intensity, act as facilitators to execute the outcomes of corporate-level DCs. The local reconfiguration activities are instrumental in realizing the consequences of corporate-level DCs, which ultimately determine the level of internationalization of SMEs (Hawass, 2010). The present study posits that research and development (R&D) facilitates the exploration, procurement, and tailoring of product and/or service offerings to more effectively cater to the demands of distinct export markets. In contrast, collaborations facilitate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in recognizing, assessing, and leveraging opportunities and challenges in specific overseas markets. The aforementioned DCs function at the business level as opposed to the corporate level, as they afford small and medium-sized enterprises the opportunity to customize their export operations to suit a specific market.

As a result, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ the use of data centers (DCs) in order to adjust their resource utilization, as noted by (Arend, 2014) and (Randhawa, Wilden, & Gudergan, 2021). The utilization of DCs enables the generation of economies of scope and scale via internationalization, wherein the resources of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) are employed across a suitable range of global markets (Teece, 1980). As a result, Distribution Channels (DCs) assist Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in effectively assessing the feasibility and scope of internationalization, and in optimizing their resource allocation by devising export strategies that are customized to the unique market conditions prevailing in different countries. (Matysiak et al., 2018) have classified situational awareness into three distinct categories: perceiving, seizing, and strategic. By means of these competencies, enterprises seek to acquire knowledge to identify potential opportunities and risks, and to make judicious decisions. The process of configuring involves significant alterations to the manner in which small and medium-sized enterprises capitalize on opportunities, specifically changes to the degree of their internationalization.

Initially, the process of sensing allows small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to detect any deficiencies in their portfolio regarding internationalization. To exemplify unique sensing capabilities, sensing takes place during the exploration of strategies for utilizing products in established or novel international markets, as well as during the monitoring of market expansion. By means of environmental sensing and monitoring, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can identify prospects for expanding their

sales in international markets they have previously served, as well as in new international markets. This can be achieved by leveraging their understanding of external developments and their potential impact. Proficient SMEs possess the ability to identify (1) prospects for expanding their business globally, (2) deficiencies in their range of international markets, and (3) feasible remedies (such as exporting) to address these gaps. According to Prange and Verdier (2011), it is imperative that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are adequately educated on the distinct advantages they may gain from exporting in terms of their firm, home, and host countries.

2.6. Dynamic Capabilities and Internationalization

There are various studies relating the dynamic capabilities to the success of internationalization, which is measured by export performance in many instances.

Several studies reviewed in Table 2.5 have considered the effect different type of DCs in international contexts, by not fully adopting dynamic capability framework of Teece (1997, 2007). For example, Mu, Thomas, & Peng (2017) studied the effect of sensing, learning, and transformation capabilities on internationalisation of SMEs in isolation and stressed for future researchers to use different operationalization definitions of DCs available. Particularly, they have omitted the potential effect of seizing capability on SME internationalization in isolation even though it vital for international expansion Monteiro, Soares, & Rua, (2019) through the demonstration of the ability of selecting product architectures and business models, and selecting enterprise

boundaries and decision making protocols in international market (Nedzinskas, Pundziene, Buožiute-Rafanavičiene & Pilkiene, 2013).

Also, the study of Darshana Mudalige (2018) examined the effect of sensing, learning, integrating, and coordinating capabilities on organizational performance, while Petricevic & Verbeke (2019) the effect of sensing and seizing capabilities on international alliances and broader network relationships, showing they have ignored the effect of transformational capabilities, which are critically imperative for refining or implementing new business models in a dynamic international business environment.

In contrast, the study of Gölgeci et al. (2019) focused on the linkages between three innovation-related DCs (innovativeness, supply-chain agility and adaptability) and international performance, while the study of Barbara Kump et al. (2019) limited to examining the link between dynamic marketing capabilities on international expansion, thereby ignoring the most important type of DCs required for international expansion as recommended by (Knight & Liesch, 2016).

According to Liu & Kang (2020) DCs are multi-faceted, and firms will not necessarily be strong across all types. A firm might excel at sensing new opportunities but be relatively weak at identifying new business models to exploit them. Or a firm might be good at developing new business models yet be ordinary at implementing and refining them. Therefore, Teece (2018: p. 43) profoundly point out that “Strong DCs” generally mean strong (relative to competitors) in all relevant areas of sensing, seizing, and transforming.

Pehrsson (2016) aimed to present the effect of a set of internal capabilities on EP of SMEs, with the mediating role of EO conditioned upon the proactive or reactive behavior of the companies to external stimuli. Questionnaire-based survey of managers from plastic manufacturing SMEs operating in Portugal, revealed that dynamic capabilities promote SMEs' performance in international markets and particularly EP.

Pechlaner and Innerhofer (2016), in their study stated that introducing entrepreneurial orientations and dynamic capabilities are the key variables that are necessary to improve the EP of SMEs.

Study of Imran et al., (2017) investigates the determinants of SMEs' EP in Pakistan, employed a survey method to gather responses from SMEs' manufacturing firms through E-mail survey. The study involved four determinants of SMEs' EP (entrepreneurial orientation (EO), total quality management (TQM), business network (BN) and export market orientation (EMO)). Findings revealed a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and SMEs' EP.

Tan and Sousa (2015), explains the determinants of EP and how firms can leverage their capabilities so as to be more effective than competitors in meeting their consumers' needs and promote their international competitiveness.

Dhanaraj and Beamish (2003) indicated that resources and capabilities are perfect predictors of export strategy. Likewise, Morgan et al. (2004) affirms that EP is strongly linked with the positional advantage of the company in foreign market and that this is directly connected to the availability of resources and capabilities for external markets.

Albertina Monteiro et al. (2019), investigated the impact of intangible resources and EO in EP, by examining the mediating impact of DCs. A survey of 265 Portuguese exporting firms revealed that DCs and EO directly effect on EP, this result indicates to the significance role of DCs, also highlighting the role of EO to leverage business' EP.

Masnan et al. (2018) assessed the implications of DCs and international opportunity recognition on EP of manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia, specifically, examined the actual and expected relationship between DCs and EP. Results indicates that there is a positive relationship between DCs and SMEs' export performance in Malaysia.

Dissatat Prasertsakul (2013), investigated the effect of DCs on the performance of Thai exporting firms. The results indicate that DCs of contextual ambidexterity significantly affected the level of export performance of the participating firms.

Channappa and Bala (2020) analyzed the different drivers' and its effect on the export entrepreneurship (EE) of SMEs by a conceptual framework has been tested through analysis a sample of 102 internationalized SMEs of the engineering industry in the Bangalore district, Karnataka, India. Findings indicate that companies with younger entrepreneurs who have industry-specific experience and different social ties are capable to fulfill higher performance. The results confirm the significance of entrepreneurial capabilities to successfully formulate and strategize their international efforts to fulfill better performance in the global market.

Al-Aali and Teece (2013) argue that the Ownership Location Internalization (OLI) model suggested by Dunning (1988) on the internationalization of the firm is still effective as a theoretical model to explain internationalization, but the emphasis should be placed on the dynamism of the organization for sustainable international presence. This dynamism includes adopting transformation capabilities such as selectively phasing out old products, changing business models, methods, and culture. Al-Aali and Teece (2013) suggested incorporating entrepreneurship and dynamic capabilities into the OLI model.

Schweizer, Vahlne and Johanson (2010) endorse that DCs perspective is relevant to explain internationalization. They state that “DCs perspective adds a new dimension to the internationalization literature” and can enhance existing internationalization theories. Further, Teece (2006) compares more recent dynamic capabilities-based contributions and claims that the DCs approach can be improved. Moreover, according to the process view of internationalization, dynamic capability factors (e.g., organizational learning) are also important for the international growth of the firm (Zucchella, Palamara & Denicolai, 2007).

When firms internationalize, they need to maintain both exploration and exploitation capabilities balanced (i.e ambidexterity which is considered as a dynamic capability). Otherwise, there is a risk that the firms may build core rigidities (i.e either spending too much time exploring the possibilities without learning from the experience to exploit opportunities or vice versa) (Prange & Verdier, 2011).

There is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities and international entrepreneurship studies (Lanza & Passarelli, 2014). For example, opportunity search processes are essential for both approaches. Many international entrepreneurship and dynamic capabilities studies share the common themes of resource mobilization, combination and renewal as key input to SME capability development (Kuuluvainen, 2012). Teece (2007) argued that entrepreneurship is about sensing and understanding opportunities and hence entrepreneurship itself is a key dynamic capability.

Teece (2014) mentions that dynamic capabilities particularly such as learning, and capability augmentation are neglected in traditional internationalization theories especially in transaction cost theory and process theories. The dynamic capabilities framework for internationalization should take an entrepreneurial approach that underlines the importance of (unique) business processes, both internally and also in linking the organization to external partners. Luo (2000) argues that classical theories such as OLI theory (Dunning, 1988) highlighted the importance of resources but if dynamic capabilities are absent liabilities of foreignness or newness cannot be mitigated. His qualitative research found that capability deployment and capability upgrading is equally important in internationalization as capability possession.

Though empirical evidence is rare, many scholars have argued that international new ventures internationalize mainly due to internal capabilities (Autio, 2000; Zahra et al., 2000). As per Falahat, Migin, & Chuan (2015), Prange and Verdier (2011) and Gassmann and Keupp (2007) current

understanding of the dynamic capabilities and its potential to explain internationalization is incomplete and lacking.

2.6.1 Criticism and Defense of Dynamic Capabilities

Despite the importance of dynamic capability theory in terms of competitive advantages and internationalisation, it is subjected to certain criticism (Mark Easterby-Smith, Lyles & Peteraf, 2009). Despite the wide usage of the dynamic capabilities construct, a universally accepted definition has been slow to emerge (Ledesma-chaves & Arenas-gait, 2019). This may be due, in part, to the fact that the definition provided by (Hernández-linares, Kellermanns, & López-fernández, 2018) was broad enough to provide opportunities for others to refine, reinterpret and expand the concept. Hakala, (2010) defined DCs as the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments (1997, p. 516). This definition, while providing a start, left open the questions of what constitutes such abilities, what their attributes are, how they can be recognized, and where they originate from.

On the other hand, Eisenhardt & Martin (2000) take a very different view of DCs, asserting that they represent best practices and exhibit equifinality. As such, they argue, DCs cannot always be a source of competitive advantage or superior firm performance. (Masoud Karami, 2019) counters these claims by responding that, while best practices will not lead to competitive advantage, they are unlikely to constitute DCs.

There are investigations that question the coherence and validity of this emerging conceptual perspective or its inconsistent theoretical justification still

emerging in the literature. Arend & Philip (2009) find 4 points for DCs are inconsistent .(1); they consider that it is not clear what additional value is created through the DCs approach compared to existing theories such as RBV (Barney , 1991), knowledge – based approaches or evolutionary economics(Zollo & Sidney ,1999); (2) , there is a lack of coherence in the theoretical foundations; (3), there is a lack of empirical support that shows the positive effects of DCs on organizational performance;(4), the managerial implications of a DCs approach are unclear(Gorgól, 2017)

Specifically, some researchers have pointed out the lack of clarity and the lack of consensus on the basic elements of the construct. Problems that could hinder development and diminish its potential to be a theory of impact in strategic management (Barreto, 2010). In addition, the variability of the theoretical behind the DCs approach (Di Stefano et al., 2014) can complicate the selection of appropriate research methods. Finally, emerging DCs literature and its role in creating value is riddled with inconsistencies, overlapping definitions and outright contradictions (Zahra et al., 2006). That is, DCs approach suffer from inherent conceptual contradictions (Schreyogg & Kliesch – Ebrel, 2007). Other authors have understood that DCs have tautological character (Williamson, 1999).

Kraatz and Zajac (2001, P.653) for their part, affirmed that “although the concept of DCs is attractive, it is quite vague and elusive, having proved to be largely resistant to observation and measurement. Newbert (2007) in his literature review study found a low level of support in his sample of empirical studies that use the DCs approach in relation to any competitive advantage or

performance, indicating that the field of study was still in a very early phase. Empirical studies on DCs is limited (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Baia & Ferreira, 2019). Despite this, several empirical studies report a significant positive relationship between the DCs and firm performance (Schilke, 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Garrido et al., 2020; Yassien, 2015; Arifin, 2015).

Helfat and Peteraf (2009) respond to the theoretical criticisms that DCs have received arguing that the terminological and conceptual verity simply reflects the complexity of the phenomena under study and that they require multiple theoretical visions. In the opinion of these authors, any field of research that is in the development phase requires continuous exploration of the fundamental questions and empirical validation.

The literature indicates that not enough attention is paid to the process of developing and deploying capabilities for internationalization success and organizational performance, particularly in internationalized (exporting) SMEs (Mudalige et al., 2019; Y. Peng & Lin, 2017; Tartaglione et al., 2019). Erickson (2013), in his study reviewing the literature on 142 studies, indicates that research in methodological terms suffer among others from a lack of methodological adjustment and a more rigorous sample selection, and mixed methodological approaches should be considered to advance in the DCs approach and perform longitudinal and cross-sectional studies to understand the evolution of the concept.

2.7 International Entrepreneurial Orientation in SMEs

Entrepreneurship and internationalization together have been themes of attention for academicians, scholars, businessmen, and policy-makers all over the world. In this section, attempts are made to define the concept and review the studies related to the topic.

2.7.1 The Concepts and Definitions

International entrepreneurship (IE) is a relatively new research area in internationalization studies, with most empirical studies focusing on entrepreneurial orientation (EO) while internationalizing (Anderson et al., 2015; Covin & Miller, 2014). However, entrepreneurship and internationalization have not been examined combined as frequently (Narayanan, 2017, p.10; Rodriguez-Gutiérrez et al., 2015), and internationalization has generally concentrated on studies of large multinational enterprises. Entrepreneurship has traditionally centered on new initiatives and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Narayanan, 2015a; Taylor, 2013). However, in recent years, this tendency has waned, and both entrepreneurship and internationalization are now studied together (Oviatt & McDougall, 2000).

The term "international entrepreneurship" (IE) may be traced back to a 1994 article by Oviatt and McDougall, which focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their road to internationalization. Later studies shifted away from a focus on small businesses and attempted to conceptualize IE from a more generalized and broader viewpoint. This shift in emphasis was apparent in Oviatt and McDougall's 1997 and 2000 research, which shifted

away from a focus on the firm's size and age. In 2003, the definition of IE shifted once further, with the emphasis shifting to opportunity recognition, bringing IE closer to the entrepreneurial paradigm (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009). Based on Oviatt & McDougall (2005), Kiss et al., (2012) defined IE as “the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services”.

They further define IE as a combination of two fields of study: "behavior of EO actors, such as organizations, groups, or people, and comparative examination of entrepreneurship based on distinct national parameters" (Kiss et al., 2012). According to Young et al. (2003) and Junghyun Yoon et al. (2018), IE has been heavily influenced by two research perspectives: (1) a research-based view, which considers key factors that contribute to improved firm performance; and (2) a network perspective, which discusses alliance formation in international activities (Young & Dimitratos, 2003).

Continuous research over the last two decades has aided in the development of IE in a variety of areas such as international business (IB), entrepreneurship, strategic management, network, and marketing (Peiris et al., 2012). According to McDougall and Ovitt (2000) and Covin and Miller (2014), IE is not only a synthesis of two business disciplines, namely economics and management (Brouthers et al., 2015), but also of non-business fields “as diverse as sociology, economic geography, political science, development economics, and psychology” (Wach, 2015).

IE is largely concerned with research in the disciplines of international business, entrepreneurship, and strategic management (Brouthers et al., 2015;

Anderson et al., 2015; Narayanan, 2017). According to McDougall-Covin et al. (2014), IE is a cross-functional study of entrepreneurship and international business. Zucchella and Sciabini (2007) brought a new perspective to the subject by depicting IE as a three-faced study of entrepreneurship, international business, and strategic management. Strategic entrepreneurship (Figure 3) is characterized in both strategic management and entrepreneurship (Wach & Wehrmann, 2014).

Figure 3

International Entrepreneurship as the Amalgamation of Three Fields



Source: Wach, K., and Wehrman (2014, p.12) adapted from Zucchella and Sciabini (2007, p.22; Narayanan, 2017, p.11).

Entrepreneurship is defined as an act of a new entry, the new entry can be either an entry to a new market or to an existing market with a new product or service (Narayanan, 2017, P.12). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is primarily

identified as the process, practices, and decision-making actions that had led to the development of the new entry (Dess & Lumpkin, 1996).

The roots of entrepreneurial orientation that explain a firm's entrepreneurial and strategic intent can be traced back to the early works of Khandwalla (1977) and Mintzberg (1979). The works of these scholars help us to understand the difficulties of the external environment in which a firm act and the difficulties the strategy makers face within the firm. Miller (1983) in his study defined an entrepreneurial firm as “engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures”. He was the first to coin the statement “proactive” innovations, beating competitors to the punch”. These definitions were the first in the direction of providing a unified definition of EO (Etemad, 2015).

Miller related EO to strategy, emphasizing that organizations that are entrepreneurial are more proactive, strive for more innovation, and accept a certain degree of risk while seeking chances. Firms might be classed as entrepreneurial, or conservative based on their EO. This may be seen in how they make judgments, their managerial philosophy, and their strategic behaviors that correspond with entrepreneurial thinking. Entrepreneurial temperament can be best represented by three characteristics: I innovativeness, (ii) proactivity, and (iii) risk taking (Miller 1983; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Despite research academics' disagreements over the definitions and implementations of EO, it is generally observed that firms with a higher degree of EO outperform conservative firms (Anderson et al., 2015).

The relevance of EO is that it can be measured at firm level across industries and cultures thus making comparative studies possible (Covin & Miller, 2014). As such the term entrepreneurship is a term that is ambiguous in nature and is multi-faceted term. But in general, and broader sense, the term entrepreneurship is understood as entrepreneurial orientation. This has helped us to use the concepts of entrepreneurship theory in international business. The literature (Taylor, 2013) identifies two schools of thought when discuss firm level entrepreneurship namely (i) entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and (ii) corporate entrepreneurship (CE).

Some authors identify EO as potential intentions and attitudes of the firm and CE as the actual entrepreneurial activities done by the firm. Some authors believe that these two constructs actually complement each other (Wach, 2015). EO explains how the firm acts strategically to collect competitive advantage. The difference between EO and other theories of entrepreneurship is that EO focuses on the firm-level processes. The earlier theories focused on individual-level variables (Rauch & Frese, 2009). Many authors have provided their definition of EO and have tried to provide a framework for it. Most of them have agreed on one aspect that EO is to be treated as a firm level phenomenon (Wach, 2015). Table 6. Selected previous definitions of (or relating to) entrepreneurial orientation.

Table 6

Selected Definitions of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Definition	Author
“A set of distinct but related behaviors that have the qualities of innovativeness, proactiveness,	Pearce et al. (2010)

competitive aggressiveness, risk taking, and autonomy” (p. 219).	
“The top management’s strategy in relation to innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking" (p. 27).	Cools and Van den Broeck (2007/2008)
“EO constitutes an organizational phenomenon that reflects a managerial capability by which firms embark on proactive and aggressive initiatives to alter the competitive scene to their advantage” (p. 567)	Avlonitis and Salavou (2007)
A firm-level disposition to engage in behaviors [reflecting risk taking, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness] that lead to change in the organization or marketplace” (p. 1134).	Voss et al. (2005)
“The discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities—across national borders—to create future goods and services” (P.63).	McDougall et al. (2003)
“The sum total of a firm’s radical innovation, proactive strategic action, and risk-taking activities that are manifested in support of projects with uncertain outcomes” (p. 124)	Zahra and Neubaum (2000)
“The processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new entry” as characterized by one, or more of the following dimensions: “a propensity to act autonomously, a willingness to innovate and take-risks, and a tendency to be aggressive toward competitors and proactive relative to marketplace opportunities” (pp. 136-137)	Lumpkin and Dess (1996)

“The firm’s degree of proactiveness (aggressiveness) in its chosen product-market unit and its willingness to innovate and create new offerings” (p. 41)	Wiklund (1999)
“Entrepreneurial firms are those in which the top managers have entrepreneurial management styles, as evidenced by the firms’ strategic decisions and operating management philosophies. Non-entrepreneurial or conservative firms are those in which the top management style is decidedly risk-averse, non-innovative, and passive or reactive” (p. 218).	Covin and Slevin (1998)
“An entrepreneurial firm is one with decision-making norms that emphasize proactive, innovative strategies that contain an element of risk” (p. 249).	Morris and Paul (1987)
“An entrepreneurial firm is one that engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with ‘proactive’ innovations, beating competitors to the punch” (p. 771).	Miller (1983)
“The entrepreneurial model applies to firms that innovate boldly and regularly while taking considerable risks in their product-market strategies” (p. 5).	Miller and Friesen (1982)
“The entrepreneurial [management] style is characterized by bold, risky, aggressive decision-making” (p. 25)	Khandwalla (1976/1977)
“In the entrepreneurial mode, strategy-making is dominated by the active search for new opportunities” as well as “dramatic leaps forward in the face of uncertainty” (p. 45)	Mintzberg (1973)

Source: Adapted from Covin and Wales (2011, p. 679).

Empirical studies done in countries like the United States, China, Thailand, Vietnam, indicate that EO is positively correlated to firm performance. It would make sense for firms to understand the characteristics of the firm that promotes EO. Covin and Slevin (1991) study indicate that EO is made up of the firm's organizational culture. This study makes a valid point that the organizational culture is made up of attitudes and behaviors of individuals that are shared across the organization (Engelen et al., 2014). However, the expression of EO having a positive relationship with firm performance has had mixed results in empirical studies.

Results have shown that EO on performance has varied depending on the type of external environment the firm has been exposed to. Also, it has been found that entrepreneurial strategies need financial resources to be successful (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). In today's competitive world, EO is getting important irrespective of the nature, size, age or industry sector to which the firm belongs to. In a study based on 310 service firms from Austria, it was found that there existed a clear influence of EO on the corporate performance of the firms. It was also seen that of the different dimensions of EO, innovative behavior was identified as the most important sub-dimension (Karus, 2013).

Firms that possess a high degree of EO come up with innovative ideas frequently, take risks and act in a proactive way when presented with opportunities. Thus, EO can be summed up as the process of getting a competitive advantage by looking out for new possibilities, pushing for

demands in an aggressive and proactive way, risk taking ability and bringing out new and innovative products in the market (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rauch & Frese, 2007). EO is generally classified as whose decision-making styles have proactive, risk taking and innovative (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996), along with these characteristics, the other important contributors include the environment in which the firm operates in (external) and the organizational values (internal) play a significant role especially the external factors.

External environment is a source of uncertainty as well as an option for new possibilities for the firm (Cruz & Nordqvist, 2012). Firms that exhibit EO characteristics come up with innovative products and often get the first mover advantage or can target premium segments (Engelen et al., 2014).

2.7. 2 Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation

In a study in 2001, Lumpkin and Dess attempted to find the relationship between the two-dimensional constructs of pro-activeness and competitive aggressiveness. There has been a debate among scholars that both of these constructs are similar. This study proved otherwise. As a part of the study, 124 executives were interviewed from 96 firms. It was found that both constructs were distinct and played different roles. For the success of firms in a nascent stage, pro-activeness played an important role. Competitive aggressiveness on the other hand was an important strategy for firms that were more matured and had to fight of fierce competition for survival (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001).

In explaining the concept of EO, Miller (1983) and later on Covin and Slevin (1989), came up with a three-dimensional concept that explained the

qualities of EO namely (1) proactive, (2) innovative, (3) and risk-taking characteristics of the firm. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) added two more, which are (4) competitive aggressiveness and (5) autonomy to the above three qualities and proposed a five-quality multidimensional construct. In practice, researchers still tend to use the three dimensional one. The same can be explained by Table 7 (Wach, 2015).

Table 7
The Construct of Entrepreneurial Orientation

No.	Basic Dimensions	Composite Qualities
<i>Three-dimensional construct of EO</i>		
1	Risk taking	Decisions in uncertainty (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005) Implementation of projects entailing significant chances of costly failure (Davis et al., 1991; Khandwalla, 1977; Miller & Friesen, 1984)
2	Innovativeness	Openness to new ideas (Frishammar & Horte, 2007) Process and product creativity (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005) Pursuit of creative or novel solutions (Knight, 2001)
3	Pro-activeness	Predicting future market changes (Rauch et al., 2009) Opportunity creation vs. opportunity identification (Sundqvist, Kylaheiko & Kuivalainen, 2012; Covin & Slevin, 1989)
<i>Multi-dimensional Construct of EO</i>		
4	Autonomy	Independent human activities (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005) Self-acting (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996)
5	Competitive aggressiveness	Competitive advantage over competitors (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005)

		Aggressive posturing relative to competitors (Knight, 2001)
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Source: Wach (2015, p. 16)

EO in principle addresses the process of making new entries to markets or bringing new products to existing markets. The primary EO dimensions that are defined in the literature like pro-activeness, innovativeness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy may be exhibited by the firm while making a new entry. It can also be possible that for successful entry only some of these factors may be present. The reason for this may be because of the interaction between the EO dimensions with the internal and external factors in which the firm conducts the business (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

2.7.2.1 Competitive aggressiveness

Competitive aggressiveness can be expressed as the aggressive stand a firm takes against its competition in an intensive market situation (Lomberg et al., 2017). This combative posture is done to wade of competition either to survive or to dominate the market (Lyon et al., 2000; Belás et al., 2016a). According to Mathew and Morganb (2007), competitive aggressiveness is the effort the firm puts to outdo and outmaneuver its competitors. Competitive aggressiveness also represents the high intensity and aggressive posture new entrants more often need to display when facing competition from existing rivals (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kozubíková et al., 2017). From the perspective of new entrants, competitive aggressiveness is an important EO dimension because new entrants are much more likely to fail than mature and established

businesses (Grühn et al., 2017). Thus, for new startups, taking an aggressive stand and intensifying the competition is essential for survival (Lee & Peterson, 2001; Linton & Kask, 2017).

2.7.2.2 Innovativeness

Innovativeness refers to the trait of coming up with new ideas and indulgence in experimentation and striving for technological leadership in both products and processes. Such traits help the firm to get a first-mover advantage and/or target premium segments (Lyon et al., 2000). Innovativeness also captures the bias the firm has towards experimentation and development of new products and processes (Mathew & Morganb, 2007; Linton, 2019). According to Schumpeter (1942), wealth is created in a market when the existing structure is disturbed by launching new products or services. For firms, innovativeness is the key to the long-term survival of the firm (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014). It is also seen that new and younger firms have a higher urge to innovate than established firms (Zellweger & Sieger, 2012).

2.7.2.3 Pro-activeness

Pro-activeness refers to the ability to anticipate future possibilities and threats alike and start taking actions either to exploit opportunities or prevent failures and threats (Lyon et al., 2000; Covin & Miller, 2014; Lumpkin & Dess, 2000; Kozubíková et al., 2017). In order to establish and sustain in international markets, firms must act in a proactive way so as to find opportunities in different markets (Boada-Grau et al., 2016). This also includes making bold decisions as to launching new products or services often providing the firm with the first

mover advantage (Dúbravská et al., 2015). Ideally such proactive firms actively search for foreign markets so that they have a higher spread in the international markets compared to its competition (Kozubíková et al., 2017). Being highly proactive comes with a cost. Firms need to collect specific market knowledge, information about customers, suppliers and partners and all this involves money (Dai et al., 2014; Ključnikov et al., 2016).

2.7.2.4 Risk taking

Risk taking attribute of the firm would mean taking high risks like borrowing heavily or committing a huge number of resources on projects with unclear outcomes (Lyon et al., 2000; Belás et al., 2015). Risk taking dimension shows the ability of the manager to take considerable risk with the intention to pursue a potential opportunity with reasonable possibility of attaining the desired goals at the same time when there exists a possibility for a costly failure (Ireland et al., 2003; Linton, 2019). The essence in defining entrepreneurship is the ability to find undiscovered opportunities and to take risks to convert those opportunities to successful ventures (Macko & Tadeusz, 2009; Demirkan et al., 2019). The amount of risks an entrepreneur faces in an international environment is multitude when compared to the domestic market (Antoncic et al., 2018). This is also clear that the firms that take risks only realize the dream of internationalization (Kozubíková et al., 2017; Zhang, Ma & Wang, 2012; Zhang, Ma, Wang, Li, & Huo, 2016).

2.7.2.5 Autonomy

Autonomy means encouraging teams or individuals to come up with and establish new ideas, concepts, or visions (Lyon et al., 2000; Wright 2007). The history of firm-level entrepreneurship is made of events of self-determined pioneers who have pursued new, novel, or better ideas and have made a business case for it (Swoboda & Olejnik, 2016). In general, entrepreneurship has grown and prospered because of the independently thinking individuals who have left the shores of safety and comfort in the search of finding and promoting new ideas or new ventures (Gelderen, 2016). The same thing can be seen within organizations also (ibid). The freedom is given to individuals to pursue and champion ideas are the key driver for firm-level entrepreneurship and this freedom to pursue ideas is often referred to as autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ibrahim Al-Jubari et al., 2017).

Van Dooran et al. investigated the effect of the senior team of a firm on EO and its relationship with firm performance. It was found that the senior team provides the heterogeneity needed and helps in the screening process and selection of initiatives. They also serve as guides for the EO process to prosper thus fulfilling the autonomy dimension (Van Doorn, Jansen, Bosch & Volberda, 2013).

2.6 The Research Gap

The review of literature on the specific topics related to the present study shows the gaps in the literature which could be summarized as follows:

- SMEs internationalization has received increasing research attention during the few past decades (Zaki,2019; Junghyun Yoon et al, 2018; Hazem and Ganeshsree, 2017; Saeedi, 2017; Ali Asgary; et al.,2020; Hazem ALI, Yunhong HAO, & AIJUAN., 2020; Andrea Moretta et al.,2019; Cho and Lee, 2018; Dar and Mishra, 2019; Alex Kevill et al.,2020).
- Literature can be found on the theoretical system concerning the internationalization process, but not much on the empirical system (Monterio et al, 2019; Junghyun Yoon et al., 2018).
- The limited number of empirical studies that have been produced are mostly in the context of developed countries (Dabić, et al, 2020)
- Even though a large number of studies regarding internationalization have been carried out, the studies investigating SMEs' internationalization from capability point of view in emerging markets are still insufficient (Ketut Santra, 2018; Kasemsap Kijpokin, 2017).
- Many of the earlier studies which examined the relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalisation success could not reach concrete findings. Also, many of them could not identify the components of dynamic capabilities and the factors behind the internationalization success (Saeedi, 2017; Araújo, 2018; Garrido et al, 2020, Peteraf et al., 2013).
- Mixed or conflicting results are often seen when applying existing SMEs' internationalization theories (Sandberg, 2012, p.9).

Interestingly, empirical findings in earlier studies (Yeoh, 2014a; Zaki, 2019) have found inconsistent results.

- Most internationalization research has focused primarily on export performance and the influence of internal and external factors (Njinyah, 2018) without including the mediating factors that affect the performance.
- Very few empirical studies have examined the congruence or fit of dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurship and internationalisation success. Very few studies have considered the causal relations and the mediating factors together.
- Moreover, it is equally unfortunate and surprising that there has been no known study that explored the role of entrepreneurial orientation in the internationalization success of SMEs within the UAE context.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to review the literature on the important topics related to the present study. The topics included SMEs in UAE, Internationalization of SMEs, Dynamic Capabilities in SMEs, and International Entrepreneurial Orientation in SMEs. In each topic, the concept and definitions were examined from the earlier studies. The theoretical and empirical studies related to each of them were explored. Attempts were made to identify and understand the studies related to the topics in the context of the SMEs in the UAE. The review ends up with the summarization of gaps found in the literature, which pave way for the present study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In order to identify and quantify the impact of dynamic capabilities on the internationalization success of firms, particularly on SMEs, we need to have clear cut theoretical perspectives and theoretical as well as conceptual frameworks.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to gather and put together the concepts and definitions of key variables, that was discussed in detail in Chapter 2, and to identify the most appropriate theoretical framework for analyzing the causal relationship between the dynamic capabilities and internationalization success. Also, we need to make sure that the theoretical framework can easily accommodate the role of entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable in the causal relationship. Based on the theoretical models developed and used by the earlier studies with similar objectives, attempt is made to arrive at the most appropriate one for the present study and develop a conceptual framework unique to the particular content and context of the study.

3.2 Dynamic Capabilities and Internationalization Success

The foremost objective of the present study is to examine and quantify the causal relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalisation success of SMEs. Fortunately, the literature is enriched with development and application of theoretical frameworks, empirically establishing the causal relationship.

The focus of DC's research has been on its impact on organizational performance and achieving a long-term competitive advantage (Wu, He & Duan, 2013). However, the DCV has previously been used in a number of previous research to understand the internationalization of SMEs (Darshana Mudalige, 2016; Paul, Parthasarathy & Gupta, 2017; Peng & Lin, 2019; Andrea Moretta et al., 2019). On the theoretical importance of DCs for SMEs internationalization, there is widespread agreement among the researchers (Villar, Alegre, & Pla-Barber, 2013). Internationalization is supported and facilitated by DCs, according to the literature (Francesco et al., 2020). The study of Darshana Mudalige (2016) empirically established that organizational DCs positively influence internationalization.

DCs are crucial for a company's survival in highly turbulent international business contexts, according to Hazem & Selvachandran (2017). According to Griffith and Harvey (2001), global DCs are the resource adaptation, integration, and reconfiguration competencies that allow a company to attain both worldwide uniformity and enough recognition of the uniqueness of each country's environment (Zahra et al., 2006). In order to enter and survive in international markets, DCs are required (Moretta & Formisano, 2018). Teece (2007) emphasizes the necessity and utility of DCs in internationalization, mentioning the global business environment in particular.

According to recent research, dynamic capabilities have a crucial impact in export performance (Alexis & Teyssier, 2020). In a recent quantitative study, Villar, Alegre, and Pla-Barber (2013) discovered that DCs have a mediating role in knowledge management practices and in its relationship with export

performance. In a case study of SMEs in Finnish IT industry, Kuuluvainen (2012) revealed that DCs are a critical determinant of internationalization success. According to Knudsen and Madsen (2002), absorptive capability and informational architecture are significant DCs in understanding international expansion.

A study by (Kump et al., 2019b) looked at the role of DCs in the growth and success of gradual global SMEs in international markets and found that the ability to perceive opportunities and threats in an international context, seize opportunities through adaptability, reactivity, and reconfiguration and transformation ability were all critical for the international success of the analyzed firms.

Management cognitive abilities and organizational adaptability, according to Erikson (2013), are important generators of DCs in international expansion. Al-Aali and Teece (2014) argue that the most important goal of modern internationalization research should be to examine the characteristics that enable managers to not only internationalize, but also to construct a corporation that can sustain an internationalization advantage over time. Weerawardena, Mort, Liesch, and Knight (2007) presented a model to comprehend the creation of a "strategic set of dynamic capabilities" as a key condition for internationalization in a conceptual paper focusing on entrepreneurial enterprises.

Now, in the present study, the definition of DCs is based on (Paul et al., 2017) definitions because they have been defined in the context of exporting or international business environments where change-oriented capabilities are

required to respond to changes that provide both opportunities and threats to an internationalised or exporting firm.

It is noted that their definition as to DCs commonly emphasises on three elements such as sensing, seizing, and transformation capabilities (Teece, 1997; Teece, 2007), which are critical for internationalisation of SME. In view of that, in the present study, DCs are referred to as the capacity to sense and shape opportunities and threat, seize opportunities, and transform/reconfiguring resources, competences, and processes so as to adapt to changing international/exporting business environment (Osakwe, C. N., Chovancova, M., & Ogbonna, 2016).

As a result, the current study focuses on three essential dynamic capacities, such as sensing, seizing, and transformation / reconfiguration, to better understand the influence of DCs on export SMEs. The importance of focusing on the impact of these three dynamic capabilities in a single study is justified by the fact that most studies have not empirically examined the effects of all three DCs on internationalisation success in a single study Peng, M. Y. P., & Lin, (2019), despite the dynamic capability framework of Teece (1997, 2007) claiming their unique importance. According to Pehrsson (2016), holding difficult-to-replicate assets is insufficient for firms functioning in complex competitive contexts to establish a competitive edge. With a large number of operations to handle throughout the globe, those businesses require unique DCs with sensing, seizure, and transformation capabilities.

The DCs as defined by (Teece, 2007), are meta-processes that vary from better practices, standard capabilities, and competencies in several aspects,

these latter notions concentrate on a specific task's performance and point out "doing things right" (Tallott, M., & Hilliard, 2016). More specifically, DCs concentrates on decisions concerning (Teece, 2007): sensing opportunities (sensing capabilities), preparing the firm to seize opportunities (seizing capabilities), and maintain such circumstances to mold and adjust in the face of dynamic conditions (re-configuring capabilities). Based the study objective, this study builds on, models that classified DCs into : Sensing Capability (SNC), Seizing Capability (SZC), and Transformation/reconfiguration Capability (TC) (P. Armstrong, 2006; L. Kendall, 2008; Kump et al., 2019a; Maklan & Klaus, 2011).

Let us see each dynamic capability in detail.

Sensing capabilities are defined as "the abilities to scan, filter and shape opportunities, understand customers' tastes and preferences, change in relevant markets and industries, and respond to suppliers' and competitors' actions" (Teece, 2007). In their research on DCs and firm internationalization, Prange and Verdier (2011) indicated that the internationalization process can be viewed as a path a firm decides to follow in order to seize worldwide opportunities. Bogodistov (2013) argued that managers who possess effective sensing capabilities can sense business opportunities and ensure a firm's growth as well as enhance the firm's competitiveness. Similarly, Zahra et al (2006) argued that SMEs are capable of perceiving current business opportunities through creating and using DCs.

At a comprehensive level, Teece (2007) indicated that sensing capability involves different activities such as scanning, learning, creating, and

interpreting activities (Teece 2007), monitoring and reacting to new information in relevant markets (Teece, 2014). Various scholars stressed the influential role of dynamic capabilities in enhancing firms' abilities to identify and exploit business opportunities (Zahra et al., 2006; Hazem Ali et al., 2020; Hazem Ali & Selvachandran, 2017).

Seizing capability - Seizing refers to developing and selecting business opportunities that fit with the organization's environment and its strengths and weaknesses (Teece, 2007). According to (Paul et al., 2017), seizing indicates business opportunities' evolving and pick out which are consistent with the Firm's environment and its strengths and weaknesses. In this sense, to improve their international performance and success, SMEs' have to be exploit international market opportunities in a success manner, and that threats are evade. After sensing an international opportunity, SMEs' owners/ managers need to possess seizing capabilities to shape and evaluate such opportunities. Seizing capabilities pertain to creating new products or services as well as new business models, which can transform recognized opportunities into valuable outcomes (Teece, 2007; Yi et al., 2018; Moretta & Formisano, 2018). Further, seizing capabilities involve securing access to financial and human capital resources, which require forging new relations and networks with customers, suppliers, co-operators, and distributors (Teece, 2011).

To seize opportunities, Barreto (2010) indicated that firms need to make timely as well as market-oriented decisions. Similarly, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) emphasized the propensity to make timely decisions indicating that there might be some potential for competitive advantage by acting sooner than

competitors. Barrales, Bustinza and Gutiérrez (2012) stressed the importance of seizing capabilities such as decision-making abilities regarding prioritization and resource allocation as well as seizing business opportunities. Further, seizing capabilities involve securing access to capital and skilled human resources, creating new products or services as well as new business models, which can transform recognized opportunities into valuable outcomes (Teece, 2007). This often demands forging new relations with customers, co-operators, suppliers, and distributors (Moretta & Formisano, 2018; Hazem Ali et al., 2020).

Teece (2018) indicated that many firms sense the opportunity, but may not seize it properly, which hinders the internationalization process. Swoboda and Olejnik (2016) found a strong bidirectional relationship between seizing capability and SMEs internationalizations success. Jantunen et al. (2012) stated that SZC enables SMEs to adjust and incorporate knowledge and use for outward-driven commercial activities. Seizing capability enables firms to set up strategies for integrating resources, open new markets, create value, and; enhances their international performance (Kump et al., 2019b). Seizing capability helps firms design business models, customer solutions, external investments, and international activities (Teece, 2007). The empirical study of (Nedzinskas et al., 2013) on 360 SMEs operating in Lithuania showed the link between SZC, and non-financial performance of SMEs by supporting that DCs, such as seizing capability, have significant effect on SMEs non-financial performance in developed countries.

Re-configuring Capability refers to the ‘ability to recombine and to reconfigure assets and organizational structures as the enterprise grows, and as markets and technologies change’ (Teece, 2007: p.1335). Basically, dynamic capabilities are needed to link organizational internal resource configurations with the surrounding environment as stated by Teece et al (1997). Reconfiguring capabilities are associated with preventing organizational inertia through managing threats and reconfiguring assets and organizational structure (Teece, 2009). Lee and Kelly (2008) argued that reconfiguring activities involve the integration of know-how within and outside the organization and devising new ways to assemble and integrate organizational resources. In addition to emphasizing resource reconfiguration, Teece (2009) and Andrea Moretta et al. (2019) argued that reconfiguring capabilities demand setting procedures for integrating and sharing knowledge and proper learning in a collaborative setting. Accordingly, Hazim Ali et al. (2020) argued that dynamic capabilities may contribute to clear identification of organizational internal strengths and weaknesses that lead to anticipating external opportunities and threats.

Teece (2007) explained that dynamic capabilities ensure long-term advantages since they allow firms to match external opportunities with internal strengths derived from reconfiguring its internal resources. SMEs can enhance their export performance by incorporating, integrating, and reconfiguring their external and internal marketing capabilities to reach and compete global markets (Moretta & Formisano, 2018).

In the literature, a few recent studies have considered the interrelation between reconfiguration capabilities and internationalisation success in the

context of export SMEs. For example, by empirically surveying the entrepreneur of the business and the owner at 197 SMEs from Export Development Board of Sri Lanka, Mudalige et al. (2019) found that integration and transformational capabilities affect internationalisation of export SMEs operating in manufacturing, service, and trade categories of Sri Lanka, a developing country. They also found that development of transformation capability in Sri Lankan export industry is influenced by owner specific dynamic capabilities, such as social and human capital, entrepreneurial orientation of international SMEs.

Hernández-linares et al. (2018) found that transforming resources and processes in line with environmental dynamics enable Spain SMEs to improve their organisational performance. Moreover, Teece (2018) argues that transformational capabilities are critical for refining or implementing new business models in a dynamic international business environment and their performance, hence firms in the present internationalised business environment requires strong transformational capabilities with other capabilities.

Accordingly, this study proposes that dynamic capabilities i.e., sensing capability, seizing capability, and reconfiguration capability, have significant positive effects on SMEs' internationalization success. The effects are to be analyzed in the framework of a causative model where internationalization success has to be treated as the outcome (dependent variable) whereas the dynamic capabilities as input (independent) variables.

3.3 The Mediating Effect of International Entrepreneurial Orientation

Many scholars and researchers (Lori Kendall, 2014; Murphy et al., 2007; Saeedi, 2017b) defined IEO from two perspectives: the first, from an internationalization perspective, and the second, from an attitudes perspective. IEO has a close relationship with a firm's capabilities (Moschis, 1994a). Generally, the IEO tends to be linked to personal's characteristics of (he/she) who willingness to establish new firms, businesses, or ventures. In this regard, the IEO is not limited to personal capabilities, but also an inherent feature in the organization as a whole. Hence, the IEO significantly impacts operational skills as well as organizational resources (Sen & Haq, 2010). In another sense, IEO is unlike the definition of competencies that business organizations possess. Wilson (2014) confirmed that stronger the EO, greater the organizational abilities.

The literature indicates that the adoption of an entrepreneurial mindset has a positive impact on a company's competitiveness. (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) and (Nguyen & Kim, 2020) assert that entrepreneurship can enhance competitive positioning and create value by recognizing and pursuing opportunities. According to scholarly research, entrepreneurship is widely believed to enhance the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in both domestic and international settings. This view is supported by various studies, including those conducted by (Smallbone, Saridakis, & Abubakar, 2022; Steinhäuser, Paula, & de Macedo-Soares, 2021), and (Falahat, Ramayah, Soto-Acosta, & Lee, 2020; Kuivalainen, Sundqvist, Saarenketo, & McNaughton, 2012; Suddaby, Coraiola, Harvey, & Foster, 2020). However, it is worth noting

that some research has indicated that the association between entrepreneurship and performance may not always be favourable (Zahra, Ireland, & Hitt, 2000) . The latest empirical findings have shed light on the inconsistencies observed in prior research, revealing that the correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and achievement follows a U-shaped pattern in nascent enterprises, while it maintains a linearly positive trend in established firms (Kuivalainen et al., 2012; Suddaby et al., 2020).

As per a prior research, an entrepreneurial mindset may have an impact on the evaluation and strategizing procedures. Empirical studies conducted by (Zahoor, Al-Tabbaa, Khan, & Wood, 2020) have indicated that entrepreneurial orientation serves as a precursor to market orientation and various business processes. (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) research indicates that entrepreneurial orientation has a noteworthy impact on market orientation, which is commonly referred to as customer-oriented market intelligence. (A. P. Monteiro, Soares, & Rua, 2017) posits that an entrepreneurial outlook with a global perspective fosters the cultivation of strategic proficiency, preparedness for internationalization, and acquisition of technology. The concept of international entrepreneurial orientation is perceived as a dynamic capability that not only facilitates the transformation of business processes, leading to enhanced returns, but also shapes and designs such processes. The tendency to participate in forward-thinking, proactive, and daring actions is commonly referred to as "international entrepreneurial orientation" (IEO). From this viewpoint, the global entrepreneurial orientation enables enterprises to ascertain the appropriate allocation of time, finances, and other resources towards a specific

undertaking. Processes can function as a foundation for both managerial decisions and global behavior, as well as entrepreneurial behavior. Jones and Coviello (2005) posit that the organizational level factors are influenced by innovativeness, initiative, and risk-taking. The assertion is corroborated by the overarching theoretical framework of entrepreneurship as held by (Swoboda & Olejnik, 2016). In the given hypothetical scenario, which of the two comparable planning procedures holds the competitive advantage? The establishment and modification of scanning and planning procedures to identify and capitalize on global opportunities will fall under the purview of the company's responsibility. The aforementioned dynamic capability is facilitated through the implementation of a worldwide entrepreneurial strategy. Firms with an entrepreneurial mindset can leverage knowledge-generating processes to their advantage. Furthermore, (Teece, 2014) posit that there exists an intermediary variable that accounts for the variations in effect sizes observed across studies investigating the impact of planning on performance. Previous research suggests that the entrepreneurial mindset may also have an impact on the scanning and planning processes. Empirical research indicates that entrepreneurial orientation takes precedence over numerous business processes as well as market orientation (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Teece, 2014). (Freixanet et al., 2018) posit that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive impact on market orientation, which is also referred to as customer-oriented market intelligence. (Kuivalainen et al., 2012) posits that possessing an international entrepreneurial outlook facilitates the development of strategic proficiency, preparedness for internationalization, and acquisition of

technology. The dynamic capability of international entrepreneurial orientation is observed to have a transformative effect on business processes, resulting in increased returns and the shaping of processes. The disposition to participate in inventive, forward-thinking, and daring actions is commonly referred to as the "international entrepreneurial orientation" (IEO). This perspective posits that global entrepreneurial orientation facilitates the determination of the allocation of resources, including time and financial investments, for a particular undertaking. Processes can serve as the fundamental basis for both managerial decision-making and global conduct, as well as entrepreneurial conduct. (Hayes, 2018) posit that organizational level factors are influenced by innovativeness, proactivity, and risk-taking. This assertion is substantiated by the overarching conceptual framework of entrepreneurship as posited by (Becker, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2018).

In this hypothetical scenario, which company possesses a competitive advantage in terms of their planning procedures when compared to the other? The establishment and modification of scanning and planning procedures to identify and capitalize on global opportunities will fall under the purview of the company's responsibility. The global entrepreneurial strategy offers a dynamic capability. Entrepreneurial orientation can be leveraged by firms to facilitate knowledge generation processes. Furthermore, (Swoboda et al., 2011) posit that the existence of an intermediary variable accounts for the variations in effect sizes observed in studies investigating the impact of planning on performance. Moreover, the literature has identified four aspects of the IEO: proactive behavior, innovativeness, risk-taking behavior for successful

internationalization, and internationalization vision (Čirjevskis, 2019a). Hitt et al (1997), pointed out that many capabilities, including managerial capability, marketing capability, technological capability, production and operations management capability, and dynamic capabilities, compose IEO. Armstrong (2006) and Yin (2011) also emphasized the importance of IEO.

It is clear that EO is intimately linked to company capabilities, with the existence of a requirement that the Firm's resources can be actively integrated, redesigned, transformed, and transferred based on entrepreneurial characteristics. Entrepreneurs have a critical role in improving corporate efficiency, resource utilization, and other organizational competencies (Elmansori & Arthur, 2015a). (Dabi et al., 2020b; Karami & Tang, 2019b) defined IEO as the ability to find, enact, appraise, sense, and seize opportunities, as well as the ability to turn those opportunities - across national borders - into innovative goods, products, and services for the future. At the same time, IEO specifically examines and prioritises the entrepreneur's role as a key factor in the Firm's internationalization process, especially SMEs (Daszkiewicz & Wach, 2012).

According to Acosta et al. (2018), IEO refers to a company's overall innovativeness, responsiveness, and risk-taking propensity in the pursuit of foreign markets, which are the three key components reflected in IEO literature. Other authors, such as Saha et al. (2017) and Sundqvist et al. (2017), have addressed several additional dimensions (2012). Sundqvist et al. (2012: p.205) define IEO as “a set of behaviours associated with the potential creation of value, which manifest themselves as proactive and innovative methods, risk taking

activity, autonomous actions, and an emphasis on outperforming rivals, all variously aimed at discovering, enacting, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities across national borders”.

Saha et al. (2017) recently confirmed this point of view by identifying autonomous, proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness as the appropriate five variables for empirical investigations of EO. Recent evaluations of EO and internationalisation, on the other hand, have focused on three common features of EO, such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Engelen et al., 2014; Karami & Tang, 2019; Mudalige et al., 2019).

Internationalization, according to the IEO, is a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behaviour that spans national lines and is designed to provide value to enterprises (Karami & Tang, 2019). IEO, on the other hand, necessitates finding, grabbing, and reorganising a firm's resources in international marketplaces, emphasising the need of dynamic talents in successful international entrepreneurship (Swoboda & Olejnik, 2016). According to Zucchella and Scabini (2007), worldwide business venture creates a standard internationalisation measure grouping that starts with situation recognition and ends with corporate execution. A substantial role is played by asset assembly and dynamic capacities.

Recent work (Deutscher et al., 2016; Hernández-linares et al., 2018; Knight & Liesch, 2016) has highlighted the paucity of study on the significance of strategic orientations like IEO and postures in international SMEs' performance. In this regard, Hagen et al. (2017) state that while findings from

all streams show that a firm's strategic orientation is critical to surviving and prospering in a domestic competitive environment, only a small amount of research has been done on the role of strategic orientation, such as IEO, in determining the success of SMEs in internationalisation.

In general, the empirical evidence available has supported the positive effect of IEO on performance in foreign markets.

Dana et al. (2016) revealed a mixed result of the effect of IEO on export performance of Italian SMEs in the wine sector: the entrepreneurs' innovativeness had a distinctly negative impact on their Firm's export performance; their pro-activeness did not appear to have any influence; only the entrepreneurs' propensity for risk-taking exerted a positive influence. Frishammar and Andersson (2009) studied a sample of Swedish manufacturing SMEs active on the international markets and revealed a positive association between pro-activeness dimensions of IEO and the firms' international performance.

Mudalige et al. (2019) found that the relationship between IEO and internationalisation confirms the expected theoretical explanation that internationalisation is an act of IEO, inferring that risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactive characteristics of an entrepreneur are main factors of SME internationalisation by surveying the export SME sector in South Asia. Furthermore, Mudalige et al. (2019) discovered that dynamic capabilities including sensing, learning, and transformational capacities have a strong impact on owner-specific dynamic capabilities like IEO.

According to the findings of (Yoon et al., 2018b), IEO has a considerable impact on SMEs' worldwide performance. The traits of CEOs/owners/managers who desire internationalisation (innovativeness, reactivity, proactivity, and risk-taking) have a substantial impact on SMEs' internationalisation success. Furthermore, the stronger SMEs' stakeholder networks are, the better their worldwide performance. A survey of 117 Chinese SMEs highlighted the importance of EO in facilitating their internationalisation process, as well as the impact of several characteristics of entrepreneurial orientation on the internationalisation success of Chinese SMEs (Smith et al., 1999).

The authors (Acosta, A. S., Herrero Crespo, & Collado Agudo, 2018) found that in Fiji, management competency and entrepreneurial orientation push SMEs to internationalise. A sample of 164 internationalising SMEs in New Zealand supported the direct effect of IEO on international SMEs' performance (Dana, L., Grandinetti, R., & Mason, 2016). Entrepreneurial orientation has a direct and indirect effect on SMEs' profitability as a result of globalisation, according to (Daszkiewicz, N. & Wach, 2012). According to the findings of Deutscher, F., Zapkau, F. B., Schwens, C., Baum, M., and Kabst (2016) on US and UK firm surveys, SMEs perform better internationally when their entrepreneurial approach is linked with the firm's dynamic capabilities.

According to the findings of Engelen, A., Kube, H., Schmidt, S., and Flatten (2014), (1) firms' international learning effort and entrepreneurial orientation are positively associated with internationalization intent; (2) intensive knowledge renewal and exploitation of foreign markets that entrepreneurs possess towards SMEs' internationalization will have a positive

impact on SMEs' internationalization; (3) firms with entrepreneurial competences and mindsets (such as proactiveness, risk-taking, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness) are more likely to establish long-term success on the international arena.

The results of a survey conducted in Pakistan with a sample size of (258) gathered from born global firms that achieve higher international performance and success, using SEM and mediation to test the proposed hypotheses, showed that IEO is positively associated with export promotion programmes, and firm's international performance and success (H. Hakala, 2010). The ideas listed above, according to (Jantunen, A., Ellonen, H. K., & Johansson, 2012), disregarded fundamental aspects such as IEO, managers' foreign experience, innovation, and risk-taking. These elements may have a considerable impact on the creation of internationalized company strategies and the firm's performance in the global marketplace.

It was discovered in an empirical study for (Masoud Karami, 2019) that marketing competency and EO had a substantial relationship. This outcome can be linked to the peculiarities of the global entrepreneurial trend. IEO, in particular, is critical for increasing and maintaining a company's marketing efficiency. An IEO-equipped firm is ready to investigate a new market entry opportunity and delicately communicate with clients' wants and demands.

In a similar manner, Knight, G. A., and Liesch (2016) stated that EO has an indirect impact on organizational performance rather than directly impacting it. This implies that the global entrepreneurial trend serves as a model for internationalization and basic organizational capacities and competencies (e.g.

network competency, marketing competency, and technological competency, or any outward international activities).

IEO has a considerable impact on SMEs' worldwide performance, according to Ledesma-chaves, P, and Arenas-gait (2019). Furthermore, the more SMEs' networks with other stakeholders are strong, the better their international performance.

A quantitative study of 117 Chinese SMEs revealed the significance of EO facilitating their internationalization efforts and revealed that different EO influences Chinese SMEs' internationalization (Liu, Y, & Kang, 2020). The authors (Ledesma-chaves, P., & Arenas-gait, 2019; Liu, Y., & Kang, 2020; Monteiro, A. P., Soares, A. M., & Rua, 2019) found that SMEs internationalization in Fiji is driven by management competence and EO. (Mu, J., Thomas, E., Peng, G., 2017) after examining the effect of EO in the context of SMEs' international performance in a sample of 164 internationalizing SMEs in New Zealand supported the direct effect of IEO on international SMEs' performance. Darshana Mudalige (2018) concluded that EO has a direct and indirect effect on SMEs' profitability.

Osakwe, C. N., Chovancova, M, and Ogbonna (2016) reviewed an example of 258 Pakistan firms using SEM and mediation analyses showed that IEO is positively associated with export promotion programs and internationalisation performance. Paul, J., Parthasarathy, S., and Gupta (2017) investigated the role of DCs that owners/managers have in promoting SMEs' internationalization and the moderating effects of environmental dynamism on the relation between DCs and SMEs' internationalization.

According to Pehrsson (2016), in conceptualizing DCs and IEO, proposed that they have a strong relation between them. IEO and DCs has important role in reshaping organizational resources to adapt to environmental changes, with expectations of challenges and obstacles in global markets' business environment.

According to Etemad (2015), the major factor influencing global execution is the CEOs'/supervisors'/proprietors' EO, and they asserted that internationalization is entirely dependent on EO (in particular, development, proactive, hazard taking). According to Junghyun Yoon et al. (2018), firms with a higher EO are more aggressive in seeking new possibilities to reach global markets, as well as efficiently performing internationalization efforts.

Teece (2007) testing the relation between EO and performance, showed that EO can improve learning and competitive advantage. Ann-Kristin Ridder (2013) stated that EO is vital to react to the quick volatile business environment because a leading marketing strategy based on EO improves better international performance since CEOs/managers/owners with a stronger EO tend to promote essence competencies, thus improving international performance. Tallott, M and Hilliard (2016) concluded that EO which comprises in risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactive, positively impacts international performance.

Zucchella, A., and Scabini (2007) studied internationalization success determinants of Italian SMEs, concluded that promoting capacity, mechanical ability and network capacity were critical factors in improving their internationalization achievement. Besides, he found that by interfacing with the

EO, these capacities enable them to enter new worldwide business sectors and improving the SMEs' global exhibition.

(Yoon et al., 2018b) found that organizational competencies and EO boost a firm's international performance when they investigated the determinants of internationalization. The network capability aids export-oriented SMEs in lowering transaction costs and making critical resources such as money and information more accessible. SMEs with insufficient resources should build strategic plans to reach new global markets and strengthen their organizational and individual capabilities in volatile conditions and competitive business environments.

Study of (Čirjevskis, 2019b) explores the firms' characteristics, and investigates thoroughly the connections between EO and internationalization. Results showed that (1) international innovative direction significantly affects global execution, (2) the more grounded the organizations that SMEs have with different partners, the higher their worldwide exhibition, (3) networks assume a directing job in the connections between worldwide enterprising direction and global execution.

Čirjevskis (2019b) analyzed the characteristics of the enterprises and the linkages between EO and internationalization in depth. The findings revealed that (1) international innovative direction has a significant impact on global execution, (2) the more firmly rooted SMEs' have higher global exhibition, and (3) networks play an important role in the connections between global entrepreneurial direction and global execution.

Eldahamsheh (2019) discovered that Chinese international firms' marketing competencies, which they established and promoted, had a favorable impact on their worldwide performance. Managers' expertise and knowledge also have a favorable impact on a company's international performance. Sen and Haq (2010) used data from 217 assembly companies to investigate the impact of EO and a company's ability to reconfigure its worldwide execution. The findings reveal that a company's inventive direction and re-organization capabilities have a significant impact on its global exhibition and provide experimental support for the firm's formidable ability.

A Study by Murphy et al. (2007) revealed that the EO, exploring, exploiting, and reconfiguration capabilities jointly had a positive impact on performance. Also, the findings showed that DCs partially mediated the respective effects of EO on performance.

Karami and Tang (2019) revealed a direct impact of IEO on international performance of SMEs in New Zealand and a mediating role of experiential learning and networking capability in such focal relationship. The study demonstrated a significant relationship effect between dynamic capabilities and IEO whereas he found that dynamic capabilities are more critical for incumbent firms than for small firms.

It can be argued that IEO mediate in the impact of dynamic capabilities of exporting SMEs on their internationalization success.

Study of Ruzzier et al. (2020b) proposes a DCs model spotlighting SMEs' internationalization. The model argues DCs (namely, sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) enhance SMEs' internationalization. Also, the study suggests

that environmental dynamism "mediate" the relationship between SMEs' executives /owners/managers DCs' and SMEs internationalization success. International entrepreneurial orientation (innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness) mediates the relationship between dynamic capabilities (sensing capability, seizing capability, and reconfiguration capability) and SMEs' internationalization Success.

3.4 Research Model of the Present Study

Now, based on the theoretical frameworks offered by the earlier studies (Deutscher et al., 2016; Henri Hakala, 2010; Mu et al., 2017; Anders Pehrsson, 2016), the present study would depend on a theoretical frame including the various aspects and variables under consideration. The study examines how international entrepreneurship orientation (IEO) is likely to affect the causal relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalization success of exporting SMEs. By studying the mediation effect of IEO on internationalization success, this study attempts to identify how export-oriented SMEs can have an internationalization success through their decision-making tendencies and behaviour towards being an international entrepreneur.

Based on a review of extant theoretical and literature foundations, the proposed research framework contains the key variables, and their dimensions as follows:

- Dynamic Capabilities - Independent Variable
- International Entrepreneurial Orientation - Intermediate Variable

- Internationalization Success - Dependent Variable

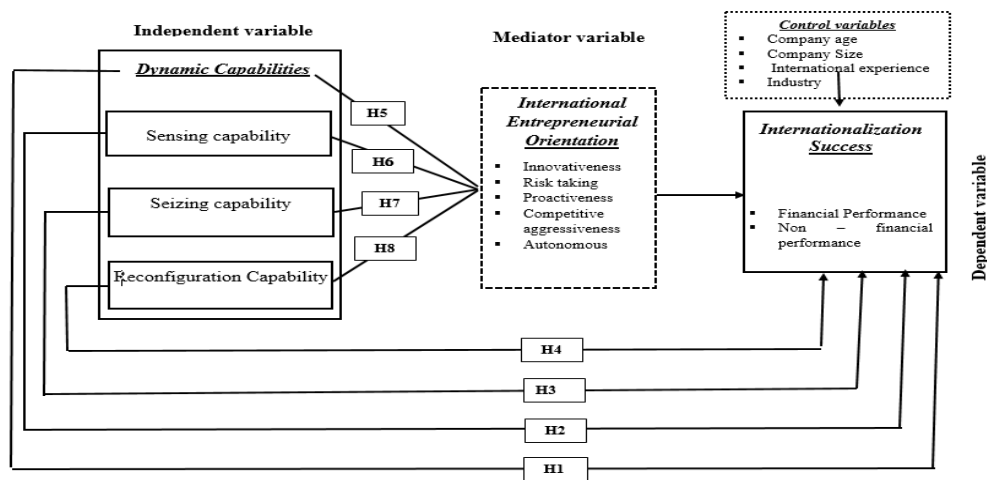
Dynamic Capabilities is conceptualized as a construct composed of three sub constructs including Sensing Capability, Seizing Capability, and Reconfiguration Capability. Each of these sub-constructs are conceptualized as summation of more than one observable or response variables.

International Entrepreneurial Orientation, the intermediate or mediating variable is conceptualized as a construct which is composed of five different sub constructs, namely, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness. These sub-constructs also are conceptualized as summative figures of more than one observable or response variables.

Internationalization Success, the dependent variable is another construct to be read from more than one response variable relating to the financial and non-financial performance experience of the SMEs.

The proposed model visualizes the causal relationships between dynamic capabilities, internationalization success of exporting SMEs through the mediating effect of IEO on such relationship. The research model and proposed hypotheses are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Research model



Source: Prepared by the Author

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt was made to develop an appropriate conceptual framework for the present research study. It was attempted through reviewing earlier studies on the topic which used different conceptualizations and theoretical frameworks.

From the theoretical literature and the approaches, it is clear that enough developments have been made in shaping theoretical frameworks to analyze the impact of dynamic capabilities on the internationalization success of SMEs. Those theoretical frameworks could assess and quantify the mediating role of international entrepreneurial orientation on the causal relationship between DCs and internationalization.

This study will be making use of combination of frameworks to proceed with the enquiries. Depending heavily on the study by Ruzzier et al. (2020b), the dynamic capabilities are measured by three sub constructs whereas the

internationalization success will be measured by the constructs on financial and non-financial performance experiences of SMEs. The mediating variable is conceptualized as a construct of five different aspects namely, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness. The relationships between the concepts are visualized as causative relations and will be quantified using appropriate statistical tools and techniques.

3.6 The Hypotheses

The research model was developed based on an in-depth literature study, and the following research hypotheses were formulated to test the research model.

The following are the hypotheses of the research:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Dynamic Capabilities have significant positive effects on internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Sensing capability has a significant positive effect on internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Seizing capability has a significant positive effect on internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Reconfiguration capability has a significant positive effect on internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 5 (H5): International Entrepreneurial Orientation mediates the relationship between dynamic capabilities and internationalization Success.
- Hypothesis 6 (H6): International entrepreneurial orientation mediates the relationship between sensing capability and internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 7 (H7): International entrepreneurial orientation mediates the relationship between seizing capability and internationalization success.
- Hypothesis 8 (H8): International entrepreneurial orientation mediates the relationship between reconfiguration capability and internationalization success.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the methodology used to conduct the present study. The context and research problem behind the study has been discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Also, the chapter gave a briefing on the earlier studies done on the topic and the research gap. The need for the present study was vindicated and the objectives, general as well as specific, were spelt out. Based on the objectives of the study and the research questions, formal hypotheses of the study were announced. After a detailed review of literature, the key concepts were clearly defined in Chapter 2 and an appropriate theoretical framework has been identified for the study in Chapter 3. Now, here we attempt to discuss the methodology of the research study as we plan to proceed with.

Research methodology can be defined as; “The assumptions, postulates, rules, and methods—the blueprint or roadmap—that researchers employ to render their work open to analysis, critique, replication, repetition, and/or adaptation and to choose research methods” (Schensul, 2008a, p. 516). Baker and Foy (2008, p.109) proposed that “having identified a research issue or question one should pick a research strategy and suitable methodology for information gathering that will clarify the research problem.” A badly set methodology will produce a bad-conceived analysis, results, and discussions (ibid).

Therefore, this chapter discusses comprehensively different methodological aspects of the study step by step.

4.2 Research Steps

Leedy (1993), Aktan (2016) and Coy (2019) identified the steps of research studies as follows: (a) it starts with a problem; (b) It terminates with a conclusion; (c) the whole process is based upon visible actualities named data; (d) it is logical and orderly; (e) it is guided by a hypothesis; (f) it accepts or rejects the sensible guess on the basis of facts only; (g) it leads to a conclusion on the basis of what the data and only the data dictate; (h) the conclusion resolves the problem.

Every research problem is unique and needs a particular affirmation and approach (Pardede, 2018). One way to face the uniqueness of every problem is to tailor the research work according to individual needs (ibid).

However, in practice, there is a sequence of steps called research process that have to be followed while conducting research (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Crabtree & Miller, 1999): (1) Specify the problem of the research; (2) literature review; (3) formulation of the hypotheses; (4) design of the research; (5) tools and sampling; (6) gathering of data; (7) analysis of data; (8) conclusion; (9) review of hypotheses.

Earlier studies in the area of internationalization of SMEs in developing countries mostly have followed the research steps mentioned above. (Zaki, 2018, p.1). The present research study also seeks to follow the similar steps such that the study could provide a greater understanding of internationalization success of export-oriented SMEs in UAE. These steps are discussed from Section 4.3 to 4.12.

4.3 Problem Formulation

In the research process, determining and defining the problem of the research is the first step (Pardede, 2018). The problem does not certainly mean that some matter is earnestly wrong in the existing situation and requires to be corrected right away (Kabir, 2016). Sekaran (2003); Sridhar, (2018) explain that the problem could refer to an issue where finding the right answers and solutions might improve the current situation.

The problem for this research was formulated keeping the above points in consideration. The overall purpose of this study is to explore and understand the effect of DCs (sensing capability, seizing capability, and reconfiguration capability) on SMEs' internationalization success (financial and non-financial Performance) with an emphasis on the mediating impact of international entrepreneurial orientation. The research problem is explained in detail in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.

4.4 Literature Review

A literature review is the documentation of the survey of published and unpublished studies from secondary sources in the areas particular to the researcher's interest (Snyder, 2019; Baumeister & Leary, 1997). The aim of the literature review is to make sure that no significant variable is neglected that has, in the past, been found to have a role in the research problem.

The literature review also may provide a theoretical basis for the proposed study, substantiate the presence of the research problem, justify the research as one that contributes something new to the accumulated knowledge, or validate

the methods and approaches for the proposed study (Levy & Ellis, 2006). Mulrow (1994) denoted that it creates a solid starting point for all members of the community, interested in a particular area or topic of research.

Books, journals, newspapers, magazines, conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations, master's theses, government publications, and other reports were referred in the literature review for the present study. It not only made it easier to include all of the relevant major and sub-variables in the research, but it also allowed for the creative integration of data from prior studies. In addition, scientific research methodologies, constructing the theoretical framework, interactions between variables, building the research tool, and analysis methods, among other things, have all helped the current study. In addition, the literature review aided in the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework upon which the study's hypotheses were based.

The literature review done for the present study is presented as Chapter 2.

4.5 Hypotheses Formulation

A hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables; it is always expressed as a declarative sentence, and it connects variables in some way, either generally or specifically (Dayanand, 2018). For 'good' hypotheses and their formulation, there are two criteria. Hypotheses are, first and foremost, statements concerning the relationship between variables; second, hypotheses have clear consequences for testing the stated relationships (Heun, 2018). These two criteria suggest that hypothesis statements must

include two or more quantifiable or potentially measurable variables, as well as a description of how the variables are related (Dayanand, 2018, p.78).

Moreover, there are four evaluation criteria that a hypothesis must meet (Sekaran, 2003; Heun, 2018; Levy & Ellis, 2006; De Vaus, 2001). The qualifications include (1) It must state an expected relationship between variables, (2) It must be testable and falsifiable; researchers must be able to test whether a hypothesis is true or false, (3) It should be consistent with the existing body of knowledge; (4) It should be stated as simply and concisely as possible.

Here, in the present study, the hypotheses are non-directional because the relationship directions between the variables (positive/negative) are not specified. There would be a significant relationship between two variables (dynamic capabilities and internationalization success), however, the researcher is not able to say whether the relationship would be positive or negative.

Non-directional hypotheses are formulated because there have been conflicting findings in previous research studies on the variables as discussed in Chapters 2, and hence there is no basis for indicating the direction. In some studies, a positive relationship is found, while in others, a negative relationship is traced. Hence, the researcher might only be able to hypothesize that there would be a significant relationship, the direction might not be clear. Based on the above and from the literature survey in Chapter 2, the hypotheses were formulated in order to find out the significant relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs' internationalization success through the mediating effect of international entrepreneurial orientation. The hypotheses are presented in Chapter 1, Section 1.7.

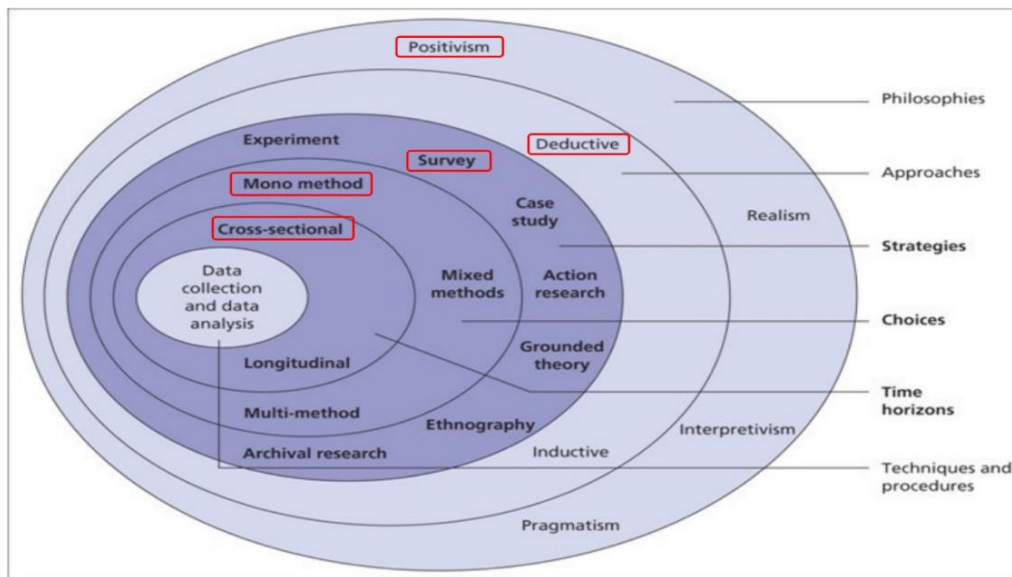
4.6 Research Design

The research design is a plan of how the study will justify the research objectives. Research design addresses the formulation of scientific inquiry - designing a strategy for finding out something (Babbie, 2004; Bowen et al., 2017).

Cooper et al. (2007) suggested that it can be difficult to choose a suitable research design because there are several methods, techniques, procedures, protocols, and sampling plans. Wilkinson (1979) the research design is the glue that holds a research project together. The aim of the research design is to structure the research and to ensure that all the main components of the research project work collectively address the central research questions and objectives.

In other words, research design comprises various aspects of the study and the how they are going to be processed in the course of executing the study. Figure 5 shows the research design and process used by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), which has been adopted in the present study too.

Figure 5
Research Onion



Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.108

The various aspects involved in the research design are discussed below:

4.6.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is characterized by the ideas, beliefs, and relationships expressed among researchers about how problems should be felt and addressed (Goddard & Melville, 2004). Kothari (2004) noted that the research philosophy comprehends crucial statements about in what manner the scholar outlooks the domain, which drives the strategy and methods adopted by research (Loru & Rose, 2020). It mainly focuses on addressing three questions:

1. What is the nature of the authenticity? (Ontological enquiries)?
2. How do you know something (Epistemological questions)?
3. How do you find it? (Method query)?

Sekaran and Bougie (2014) proposed that, research ontology relates the natural side of certainty or being, epistemology focuses on the relationship

between the research subjects and what is known, and methodology concerns how knowledge is created.

As we know, positivism is linked with quantitative research approach assuming that there is one true reality discoverable through means of strong empirical study (Baker, 2000). The positivism paradigm is associated with the objectivism and enable hypothesis testing (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, in this study, the paradigm of positivism was selected as the most appropriate research perspective based on objective reality.

In view of that, this study was designed to scrutinize the relationship between variables, such as dynamic capabilities, international entrepreneurial orientation, and internationalization success of exporting SMEs in the UAE. By following the positivism philosophy, the researcher has adopted existing theories, such as dynamic capability theory, resource-based view theory, and competence-based view theory, in order to develop the research framework and hypotheses. In the similar vein, there are previous studies that also adopted the above theories to investigate the causal associations amongst the dynamic capabilities, worldwide entrepreneurship orientation, and firm performance. They also have espoused the positivism paradigm to conduct their studies (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

4.6.2 Research Approach

The research approach describes how the study intends to answer its research problem or questions. Ragab and Arisha (2018) denoted there are two main research methods: induction or deduction. The deductive research

methods use theory to guide research design and interpret the results (Creswell, 2014; & Almalki, 2016) while the inductive approach tries to arrive at a theory from observations.

This study espouses the deductive approach because it empowers the scholar to suggest a theory, develop the hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Ragab & Arisha, 2018).

4.6.3 Research Strategy

There are many research strategies, such as survey research, experimental research, ethnography, grounded theory, action research, observation, case study, and ethnography. The type of study, such as exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory, influences the strategy chosen (Musiliu, 2020; Silva, 2017; Langkos, 2014). As a result, research questions and aims, current knowledge, and the availability of other resources all factor into approach selection (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The current study is explanatory in character, attempting to assess underlying relationships among variables of inquiry (Mayring, 2015). As a result, a survey strategy is used in this study, which is connected with a deductive research approach. Many empirical studies that investigated the relationship between the variables, such as dynamic capabilities and internationalization of SMEs, also support the use of survey as the most suitable research strategy.

4.6.4 Research Choices

Research choice means the selection of the appropriate method for the research study. It can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods (Sekaran &

Bougie, 2016; Bastos, 2016). Multi-method studies involve different combinations of data collection technique, used with associated analysis techniques, restricted within either a quantitative or qualitative method (Zaki, 2018). A multi-method quantitative study involves the use of multiple quantitative methods of data collection (e.g. the use of both inquiry forms and structured observation). A multi-method qualitative study, on the other hand, involves the collection of qualitative data by using several methods (e.g. in-depth interviews and focus group discussion) and analysing them using qualitative procedures (Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Thomas (2001); Musiliu, 2020; Hair et al., 2014) reported, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures in single research is known as mixed method.

This study uses mixed-method approach, guided by qualitative as well as quantitative strategies for data gathering and analysis. The choice of a quantitative method is suitable for testing existing theories and hypotheses while qualitative methods can reveal in-depth reasons behind the causal and mediation relationships. This approach has already been applied in dynamic capabilities research to identify the perceptions of exporting SMEs' owners towards entrepreneurial orientation and internationalization research.

4.6.5 Time Horizons

According to Boussard (1971) and Iovino & Tsitsianis (2020), the most important question for researchers is on the time horizon of the study. The study can be *cross-sectional*, during which data are collected one time like a snapshot

or *longitudinal* during which data are collected systematically over time. This study is set to be a cross-sectional one, investigating the phenomena at a particular time (during the year 2021), using a survey research strategy as it was considered to be most appropriate method for meeting the research objectives of the study.

4.6.6 Techniques and Procedures

As per Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), the next phase of research is the selection of techniques and procedures related to data collection and analysis.

The steps related to this aspect of research are discussed in the following sections from 4.7 to 4.12.

4.7 Data Sources

To ensure that the research design is consistent with the research objectives, this study made use of both primary and secondary data.

Secondary data were gathered about UAE exporting SMEs, through the internet, published material and formal reports. Secondary data were examined to understand the status of UAE exporting SMEs, their geographical dispersion, economic status of affairs of UAE, and government policy on supporting exporting SMEs' growth and their internationalization success. Also, data were gathered regarding factors impacting UAE's exporting SMEs' internationalization success and performance through available literature.

The sources of secondary data include:

- National Bureau of Statistics (UAE)
- Dubai statistics centre

- Abu Dhabi Statistics Chamber
- Ministry of Economy, UAE
- Ministry of Foreign trade UAE
- Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA)
- Dubai SME.

The primary sources of data for the study comprises:

- Owner/Chief Executive of exporting SMEs (data gathered through structured interview schedules),
- Key informants, i.e., experts or persons with sectoral knowledge (through key informants' interview), and
- Stakeholders in the business of exporting as SMEs (through focus group discussions).

4.8 Sample Design

Several procedures are included in the research sample designing (Cooper et al, 2007; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005, p.151). They include answering to the following questions such as:

1. what is the target research population;
2. what is the size of the sample;
3. what is the type of sampling and procedure.

These issues are discussed in the following sub sections.

4.8.1 The Study Population

Study population can be defined as “the overall number of people in a group, events, or things of interest that the researcher willingness to investigate”

Ghuri and Gronhaug (2005, p.147). In the present study, the population refers to the SMEs in the UAE involved in international business activities like exporting.

The study population of all the SMEs in UAE across all sectors and economic activities totals to 127286. The summary of the study population is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Economic Activity wise Number of SMEs in UAE as the Study Population

N o.	Economic Activity	Sm all	Med ium	Total SMEs	% SM E
1	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	54	1	55	0.04
2	Mining and quarrying	97	29	126	0.10
3	Manufacturing (Transformative Industries)	8120	1241	9362	7.35
4	Electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply	153	52	205	0.16
5	Construction	21820	3828	25648	20.15
6	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	43831	3072	46903	36.85
7	Transport and storage	7071	1142	8213	6.45
8	Accommodation and food service	10357	913	11270	8.85
9	Information and Communication	1447	140	1587	1.25
10	Financial and insurance	909	297	1206	0.95
11	Real estate	1446	174	1620	1.27
12	Professional, scientific, and technical	5607	543	6150	4.83
13	Administrative and support services	6404	665	7069	5.55

14	Education	912	310	1222	0.96
15	Human health and social work	1748	201	1949	1.53
16	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1686	115	1801	1.41
17	Other service activities	2872	30	2902	2.28
18	Total	114534	12752	127286	100.00

4.8.2 Determination of Sample Size

Now, to make the study population more targeted, the present study specified following criteria for the firms to be included in the study.

1. The enterprise should SME in UAE as per the Resolution Number 22.
2. The enterprise must have Emirati ownership and based in UAE.
3. The firm must involve in either manufacturing, trade or service sector
4. The firm must be from the specified economic activity category
(*Manufacturing (Transformative Industries) or Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles or Construction*)
5. The firm must have involved in outward global business activities (i.e., export).

As per the criteria, the targeted study population has a total of 81912 SMEs from all the emirates of UAE, from the three sectors (Manufacturing, Trade and Service). The SMEs were considered from the economic activities with the highest percentage from each sector. This consideration gives the targeted study population as given in Table 9.

Table 9
The Targeted Study Population

N o.	Economic Activity	Sm all	Med ium	Total SMEs	% SM E
1	Manufacturing (Transformative Industries)	8120	1241	9362	11.4
2	Construction	21820	3828	25648	31.3
3	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	43831	3072	46903	57.3
	Total	73771	8141	81912	100.00

The task of sample design is to draw a representative sample of SMEs from UAE giving proportionate representation to each Emirate and to each economic activity selected from the three sectors. An adequate and appropriate sample size has to consider the confidence level and confidence interval along with population.

The study planned to determine the sample size at the 99 percent of confidence level and 5 being the confidence interval. The population size is 81912. Now the sample size was determined by solving the formula:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

where:

SS= Sample Size

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level, 2.576 for 99% confidence level)

p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for

sample size needed)

c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., $\pm 5 = .05$)

Solving for the formula, the sample size required was found as 660.

The sample size from each Emirate with due respect to the sector / economic activity and size (small and medium) was drawn proportional to the corresponding population figures. The number of samples according to the targeted study population are given in Table 10.

Table 10

Distribution of Sample Size across Emirates, Size of SMEs and Economic Activities

No .	Emirates	Category	Economic Activity			
			Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale & retail trade	Total
1	Abu Dhabi	Small	10	23	72	105
		Medium	1	5	4	10
		Total	11	28	76	115
2	Dubai	Small	23	85	161	269
		Medium	2	7	8	17
		Total	25	92	169	286
3	Sharjah	Small	21	30	55	106
		Medium	5	13	9	27
		Total	26	43	64	133
4	Fujairah	Small	1	8	6	15
		Medium	1	0	1	2
		Total	2	8	7	17
5	Ajman	Small	8	23	46	77
		Medium	1	4	3	8
		Total	9	27	49	85
6	Umm-Al-Quwain	Small	1	1	3	5
		Medium	0	0	0	0
		Total	1	1	3	5
7	Ras-Al-Khaimah	Small	2	5	10	17
		Medium	0	1	1	2
		Total	2	6	11	19
8	UAE	Small	66	175	353	594
		Medium	10	30	26	66
		Total	76	205	379	660

Source: Calculated by the Author.

4.8.3 Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure for the study followed a multistage stratified sampling procedure which can be summarized as in the following stages:

Stage 1: The sample was drawn proportional to their population figures in each Emirate. Emirates formed the first level of strata.

Stage 2: From small and medium categories of SMEs, sample was drawn proportional to their population figures. Size (small and medium) was the second level of strata.

Stage 3: From each sector/economic activity, sample was drawn proportional to their population figures. Category/Economic Activity was the third level of strata.

Stage 4: From the list of SMEs from each stratum, the required number of samples (as given in Table 4.3) were selected by random sampling. Random numbers were generated using statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics.

4.9 Data Gathering Instruments (DGIs)

Appropriate data collection instruments enable reliable and valid data collection process. The present study created three different data collection instruments:

- Interview Schedule for primary survey among SMEs
- Key Informants' Interview Schedule for qualitative data collection from key informants
- Focus Group Discussions Format for collecting qualitative data from FGDs

These DGIs are given as Appendix 1 to 3.

4.9.1 Research Measures

All dimensions of the measurable aspects of the study were developed based on the earlier studies and on the theoretical frame adopted for the study. The approach has been used by SMEs-related studies to measure internationalisation performance of SMEs.

There are three major constructs in the present study. They include Dynamic Capabilities (the independent variable), International Entrepreneurial Orientation (the mediating variable), and Internationalization Success: Financial Performance and non-Financial Performance (the dependent variable) (Zeng et al., 2009). These constructs are latent variables that cannot be measured directly. It is measured using a set of alternative questions or statements designed in the survey form.

Dynamic capabilities (DCs) as formerly eminent, is a multi-dimensional construct (Sensing capability, seizing capability, and Transformation/Reconfiguration capability) are the 3 dimensions of DCs was adopted from the model. Accordingly, in this study, Sensing Capability (DCS) is measured using 6 questions (DCS1, DCS2, DCS3, DCS4, DCS5, DCS6), Seizing Capability (DCZ) using 5 questions (DCZ1, DCZ2, DCZ3, DCZ4, DCZ5) and Reconfiguration Capability (DCT) using 6 questions (DCT1, DCT2, DCT3, DCT4, DCT5 and DCT6). Altogether, DCs dimensions are measured using 17 questions. The measures have already been established for SMEs (Maklan & Klaus, 2011).

The mediating variable in the study is International Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO). The indirect effect of DCs on Internationalisation Success

(IS) is measured through IEO. IEO is measured through five dimensions (i.e., Autonomy, Competitive aggressiveness, Proactiveness, Innovativeness, and Risk taking).

Autonomy (EOA) is measured using 3 questions (EOA1, EOA2, EOA3), Competitive aggressiveness (EOC) using 4 questions (EOC1, EOC2, EOC3, EOC4), Innovativeness using 3 questions (EOI1, EOI2, EOI3), Proactiveness (EOP) using 4 questions (EOP1, EOP2, EOP3, EOP4), Risk - taking (EOR) using 3 questions (EOR1, EOR2, EOR3). Altogether the IEO dimensions are measured by 17 questions in total.

The study dependent variable is Internationalisation Success (IS). IS is measured through 2 dimensions (i.e., Financial Performance and Non - Financial Performance). Financial Performance (IPF) is measured using 5 questions (IPF 1, IPF 2, IPF 3, IPF 4, and IPF 5), Non - Financial Performance (IPO) using 6 questions (IPO 1, IPO2, IPO3, IPO4, IPO5, and IPO6). Altogether, IS is measured using 11 questions. These 11 performance measures distributed amongst 2 internationalisation success dimensions are weighted by multiplying the levels of successfulness for each measure, as indicated by the respondents (1=completely unsuccessful and 5=completely successful) (Zaki, 2018).

The non-quantifiable (qualitative) aspects of the study are captured by the DGIs for qualitative data collection, i.e., Key Informants' Interview Schedule and Focus Group Discussion Format.

4.9.2 Instrumentation

As mentioned in Section 4.9, the present study has three Data Gathering Instruments, each one having specific purpose and design.

The interview schedule was designed to extract data concerning:

- Characteristics of owner/ managers of SMEs (i.e., innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness)
- Characteristics of SMEs (i.e., dynamic capabilities - sensing capability, seizing capability, and transforming/reconfiguration capability),
- Perceptions that would affect the internationalization success and performance of exporting SMEs which is measured by financial and non - financial Performance.

The interview schedule has been developed with five parts. *Part 1* enquires about the Profile of the enterprise. *Part 2 to 4*, focus on the dynamic capabilities (Sensing, Seizing, and Reconfiguration) that probably impact exporting SMEs' internationalization success. *Part 5 to 9* deals with the characteristics of the owner/chief executive on the international entrepreneurial orientation. *Part 10 and 11* deals with the SMEs' internationalization success (including financial and non-financial Performance). *Part 12* attempt for a general assessment and finally, *Part 13* tries to identify the attributes of the respondent.

The response to each question or statement, except for the questions on attributes, was designed to be received in five-point *Likert Scales*. The usage of Likert Scales has been recommended as the most appropriate interval scale that could measure behavioural variables (El-Gohary, 2009). In the present study, the Likert Scale was set to range from 1=*Strongly Disagree* to 5=*Strongly Agree*. Frequency Verbal Scales were used to understand the participants' profile and geographical distribution of the enterprises in the present research.

It is well accepted that all aspects of the study could not be measured statistically. Therefore, qualitative data collection using key informants' interview schedule and focus group discussion format was attempted to support quantitative data collected through interview schedules.

4.9.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study may be conducted on a small sample to examine the instrument quality utilized for the research prior to the real data gathering begins (Maxwell, 2005). Pilot testing is essential to check questionnaire reliability, questionnaire items and language used in the items (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000). There are numerous advantages of performing pilot testing before carrying out actual survey such as, test the questionnaire wording, check structure of items, attaining familiarity with respondent, estimating response rate of the targeted sample and examine the potential problem of the research method or the design prior the main research.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2012) denoted, it is always useful to carry out a pilot study before data collection. In addition, Sekaran (2003) stated that

a pilot study is performed to correct any inadequacies in the instrument prior to data collection. Copley and Ziviani (2007) states that pilot study is used mainly to help the researcher in constructing pertinent lines of questioning and to achieve a faultless questionnaire so that it would be possible for the researcher to take all the necessary modifications accordingly. The pilot study has to be done by administering the questionnaire on a small sample of the population.

Consequently, 30 participants were randomly selected from different SMEs and the link of online survey has been emailed to them with a covering letter explaining the study, its objectives, confidentiality of answers, demographics, associated risk. The duration of the data collection for the pilot study was 7 working days.

4.9.4 Reliability and Validity of DGIs

It is essential to discuss the reliability, and validity of the scales in the interview schedule to have a solid understanding on their appropriateness and adequacy to conduct meaningful analysis of data generated by them.

The present study uses three multidimensional scales consisting of ten subscales. Since we need to consider the sub-scales separately, we end up with a total of thirteen scales (3 multidimensional scales and 10 unidimensional scales). Now, the present study has to examine the reliability and validity of all the thirteen scales.

The results of reliability examination using Cronbach's α gives value greater than 0.8 for all the thirteen scales. It means that all scales can be treated as reliable measures of the intended constructs. The examination of the detailed

reliability analysis result gives the information that the scales are well explained by the items and dropping of none of the items can improve Cronbach's α . In short, the reliability analysis confirms the consistency of the scales such that further analysis can be built up on them with confidence. We did not to remove or modify any of the items in any of the scales after reliability analysis alone.

Validity of a scale refers to how well it measures what it claims to measure. In other words, validity is the assessment of a scale's accuracy. (Boateng, et al., 2003). Using the data from pilot survey, validity tests, namely: *face and content validity*, and *construct validity* were examined.

Face and Content validity seeks to answer the question of whether the current scale covers all relevant items needed to answer the research question. *Construct validity* is the degree to which the scale actually measures what the theory claims. There are two kinds of construct validity: (a) convergent validity and (b) discriminant validity. A convergent construct validity exists when what is expected to be correlated indeed turns out to be correlated. Discriminant validity exists when the constructs that are not supposed to be related are actually unrelated.

The present study examined the face and content validity by seeking the opinion of a small group of non-experts and experts on the items included in the questionnaire. The group could give qualitative assessment of the scales which was found satisfactory to ensure the face and content their validity. Construct validity was examined with Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which is the most commonly used technique to assess construct validity, despite the fact that there are other techniques also for the purpose. (Kline, R. B., 2010). Results was

not feasible mainly due to the small sample size, but we may expect construct validity for the scales when the more data come in and the examination becomes feasible.

4.10 Data Collection

Data was collected by visiting offices of each SMEs selected for the study and also by visiting the key informant at a place and time of their convenience. Focus Group discussions were carried out at pre-fixed locations arranged at the convenience of the participants.

4.11 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected was put through the process of validation, data entry and data cleaning. The data was analysed using statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28.0 and IBM SPSS Amos Version 28.0. The qualitative data was analysed using the software NVivo Version 12.0.

Different statistical tools were used for analyzing the data. They included: simple averages and percentages, cross tabulations, chi square test, 't' test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent sample Kruskal-Wallis test, correlation analysis and multivariate techniques like factor analysis, multiple regression and mediation analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used for conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

The chi-square test was performed to test the association between variables. 't' test and one-way ANOVA were used for testing the differences in mean values. Non-parametric tool Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare distributions of non-normal variables. Factor analysis was used to identify the

major factors behind important phenomena. Descriptive statistics tools were used to calculate indices and to analyse them. Various charts like scatter plots, bar charts, pie diagrams, clustered bar charts, radar charts and area charts were used to visually present data and to support data analysis results.

4.12 Research Conclusions and Review of Hypotheses

The last step in the research methodology asks for drawing conclusions by answering all the research questions. The conclusions are expected to meet the research objectives set for the study. The present study fulfills the final step satisfactorily. All the research objectives are met, research questions remain answered, and all the hypotheses are tested and give conclusive results.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter attempted for the discussion on research methodology from the initial step of problem formulation to the final step of receiving research conclusions. Each step in the research process is discussed in detail.

Chapter 5: Confirmatory Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This is an approach used in research to check research instrument validity and reliability before starting a planned extensive study. The CFA testing process is a prerequisite before the commencement of the main study as this step helps the researcher to examine the research instrument. A process not only saves time but also the wastage of other resources e.g., finance. The CFA testing is also very important in the case of an adopted or adapted questionnaire for data collection. This whole activity does not enhance the author's confidence level as a high score on validity and reliability leads to the generalizability of sample results to the whole population. Therefore, it's common in social research to employ confirmatory factor analysis in order to test the knowledge of the researcher's hypothesis and the items of his survey questionnaire to support its variables utilised in hypothesis. According to the hypothesis of the variable model, confirmatory factor analysis aims to examine the data's fit and validity with other psychometric features. It is necessary to conduct a variety of statistical tests to ensure that a model is accurate. CFI, chi-square goodness of fit (CMIN/DF), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), the root mean square error of approximation RMSEA, and Tucker-Lewis coefficient are some of the main metrics used to evaluate the model's fit (TLI). In most cases, it falls anywhere between 0 and 1. Check to see if there are any discrepancies between how well your model fits your

data and how well your data fits. According to statistics, the chi square/degree of freedom illustrates the statistical data's ability to accurately predict covariance matrices. For model fitness, the optimal Chi square / degree of freedom value should be between 3 and 5, or less. CFI is used to examine the hypothesised discrepancy between the data and model. Chi-square tests and normed fit indexes are used to alter sample sizes (NFI). If a model has a CFI of 0.95 or 1, it has the best model fit. GFI is used to assess the model's fit to the observed covariance matrix, and the number of indicators of latent variables is utilised to influence the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI). Models with GFI values of 0.95 or above are considered to be the most fit. Sample size, parameters for estimates, and population covariance matrix are all concerns that may be avoided through root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). For the best fit of the model, it should be 0.08 or less (Bentler&Bonett, 1980; Hu &Bentler, 1999; Carmines & McIver, 1981).

The root mean square residual (RMS) measures the discrepancy between your model's predicted variances and covariances and the actual variances and covariances observed. Smaller is preferable (Wuensch, 2013). With RMR = 0, the optimal match was found by the UCDHSC Center for Nursing Research (2006a). Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1995), McAulay, Zeitz, and Blau (2006), and Roh, Ahn, and Han (2005) all proposed values that have been met. Chi-square and GFI, which are known as absolute fit measures, were employed to evaluate the model, as was CFI, an incremental fit measure, as well as Normed Chi-square and

AGFI, which are sparse fit measures (Keramati et al., 2010). The results of CFA testing are mentioned in next section 5.2. After satisfying the validity of the scale and reliability of the questionnaire responses, the researcher's next step was data collection.

5.2 Results of Confirmatory Analysis

5.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for DCSZC

There are FIVE (5) components to this structure. Figure 6 and Table 12 below demonstrate how each item is tested and explained.

Figure 6
Confirmatory Factor Analysis for DCSZC

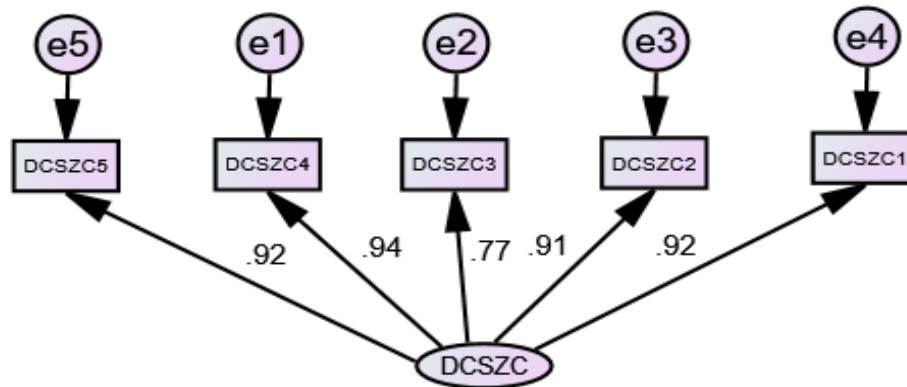


Table 11
Factor Loading for DCSZC

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	DCSZC 1	0.92	Included
	DCSZC 2	0.91	Included
	DCSZC 3	0.77	Included

	DCSZC 4	0.94	Included
	DCSZC 5	0.92	Included

Table 13 shows DCSZC's CFA with or without the inclusion or exclusion of FIVE items. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). DCSZC has factor loadings over 0.4 for FIVE items, hence all of these things were included in the final questionnaire and are practically significant.

Table 12
Model fitness index for DCSZC

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for DCSEC

These SEVEN (7) components make up the whole structure. Figure 7 and table 14 below test and explain the validity of each item.

Figure 7
DCSEC Components

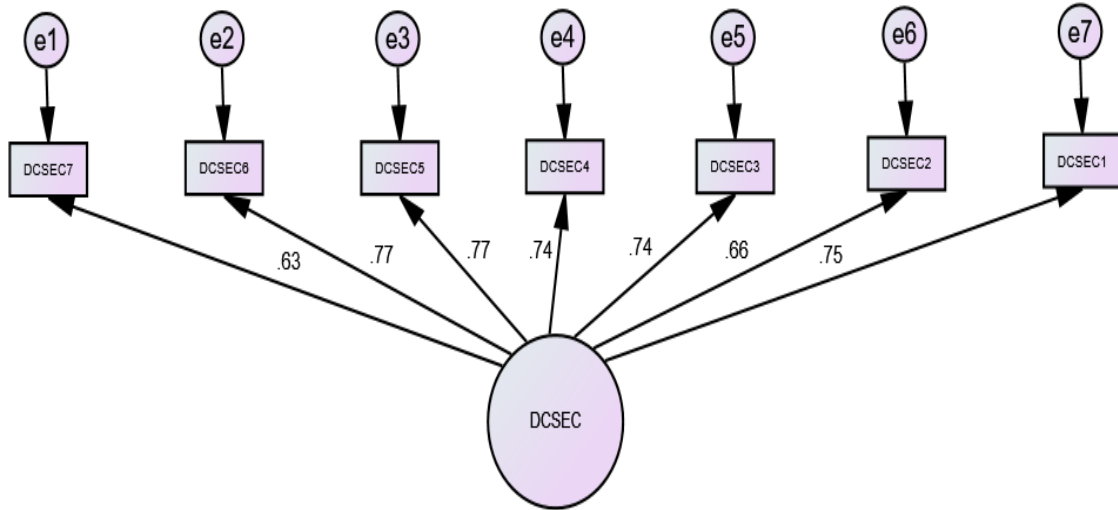


Table 13
Factor Loading for DCSEC

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	DCSEC 1	0.75	Included
	DCSEC 2	0.66	Included
	DCSEC 3	0.74	Included
	DCSEC 4	0.74	Included
	DCSEC 5	0.77	Included
	DCSEC 6	0.77	Included
	DCSEC 7	0.63	Included

Table 15 shows DCSEC's CFA with or without the inclusion or exclusion of SEVEN items. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). When factor loadings are over 0.4,

DCSEC is considered to be statistically significant for SEVEN out of ten questions in the final survey questionnaire.

Table 14
Model fitness index for DCEC

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for DCTC

These SEVEN (7) components make up the whole structure. Figure 8 and table 16 below test and explain the validity of each item.

Figure 8
DCTC Components

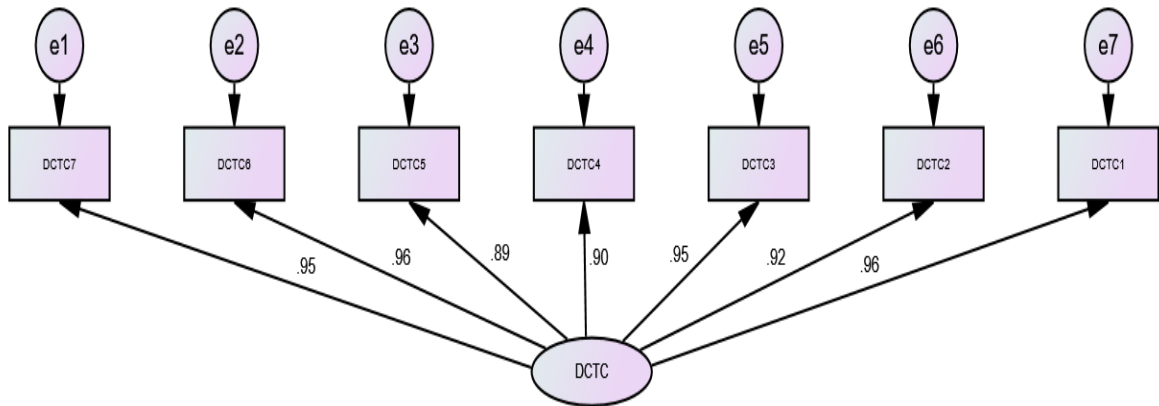


Table 15
Factor Loading for DCTC

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	DCTC 1	0.96	Included
	DCTC 2	0.92	Included
	DCTC 3	0.95	Included
	DCTC 4	0.90	Included
	DCTC 5	0.89	Included
	DCTC 6	0.96	Included
	DCTC 7	0.95	Included

Table 17 the CFA shows the standardised estimates and the inclusion or exclusion of a total of SEVEN elements from DCTC Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). DCTC has factor loadings over 0.4 for SEVEN items, hence all of these questions were included in the final survey questionnaire and are considered to be practically meaningful.

Table 16
Model fitness index for DCTC

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IEOB

This construct consists of SEVEN (7) items. Validity of each item is tested and explained with the help of figure 9 and table 18 given below

Figure 9
IEOB Components

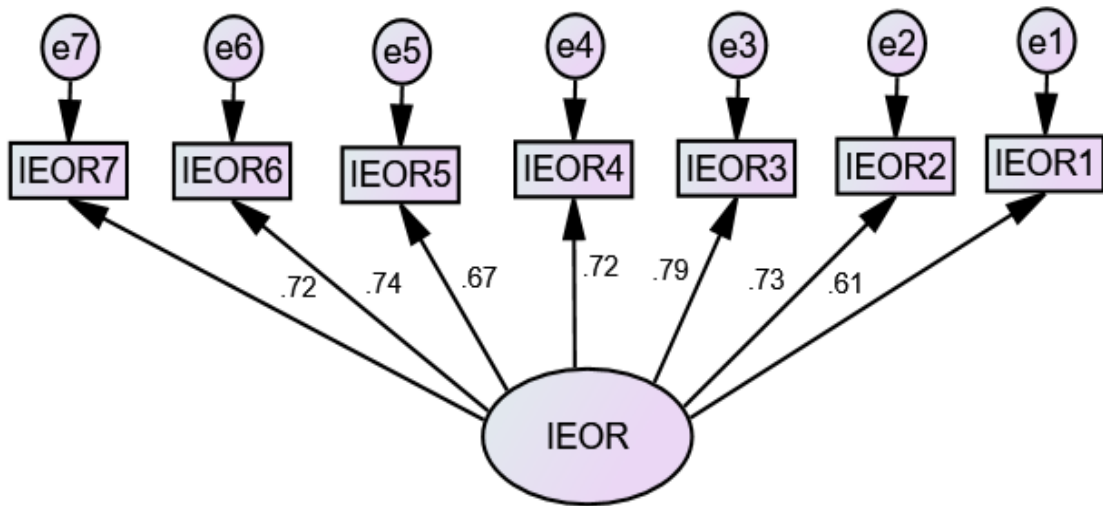


Table 17
Factor Loading for IEOB

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	IEOB 1	0.61	Included
	IEOB 2	0.73	Included
	IEOB 3	0.79	Included
	IEOB 4	0.72	Included
	IEOB 5	0.67	Included
	IEOB 6	0.74	Included
	IEOB 7	0.72	Included

Table 19 the CFA shows the standardised estimates and the inclusion or exclusion of a total of SEVEN elements from DCTC Factor loadings greater than

0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). DCTC has factor loadings over 0.4 for SEVEN items, hence all of these questions were included in the final survey questionnaire and are considered to be practically meaningful.

Table 18
Model fitness index for IEOR

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IEOP

This construct consists of SEVEN (7) items. Validity of each item is tested and explained with the help of figure 10 and table 20 given below

Figure 10
IEOP Components

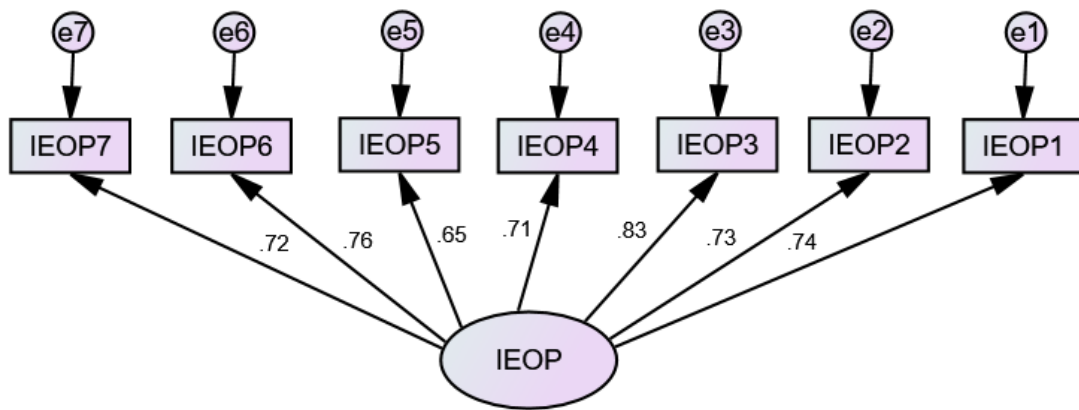


Table 19
Factor Loading for IEOP

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	IEOP 1	0.74	Included
	IEOP 2	0.73	Included
	IEOP 3	0.83	Included
	IEOP 4	0.71	Included
	IEOP 5	0.65	Included
	IEOP 6	0.76	Included
	IEOP 7	0.77	Included

Table 21 includes or excludes SEVEN IEOP components in its CFA and shows the typical estimates. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). IEOP has factor loadings over 0.4 for SEVEN items, meaning that they were all included with the completed survey's form and are thus significant statistically.

Table 20
Model fitness index for IEOP

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IEOI

Eight (8) elements make up this structure. Figure 11 and Table 22 below demonstrate how each item is assessed and explained.

Figure 11
IEOI Components

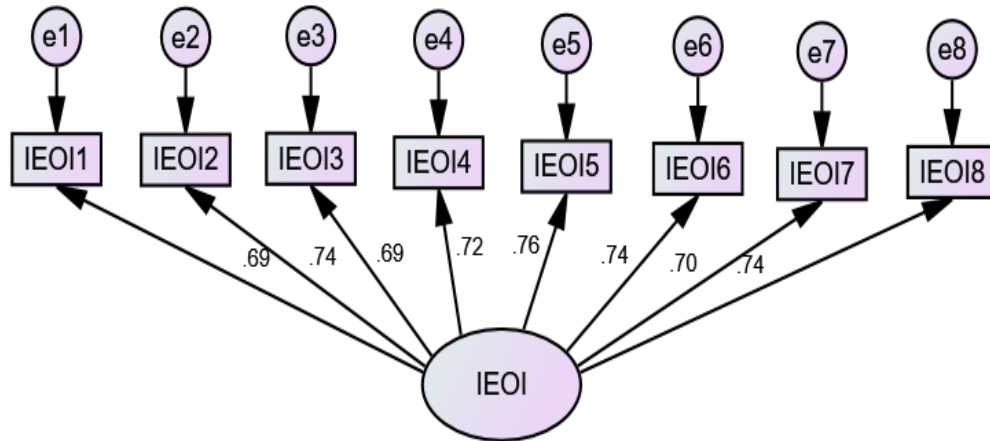


Table 21
Factor Loading for IEOI

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	IEOI 1	0.69	Included
	IEOI 2	0.74	Included
	IEOI 3	0.69	Included
	IEOI 4	0.72	Included
	IEOI 5	0.76	Included
	IEOI 6	0.74	Included
	IEOI 7	0.70	Included
	IEOI8	0.74	Included

IEOI's CFA includes or excludes EIGHT elements in its standardised estimations, as shown in Table 21. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to

be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). IEIOI has factor loadings over 0.4 for EIGHT items, meaning that they were all included with the final survey's question and are thus statistically significant.

Table 22
Model fitness index for IEIOI

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IEOCA

SIX (6) components make up this structure. Figure 12 and Table 24 below demonstrate how each item is assessed and explained.

Figure 12
IEOCA Components

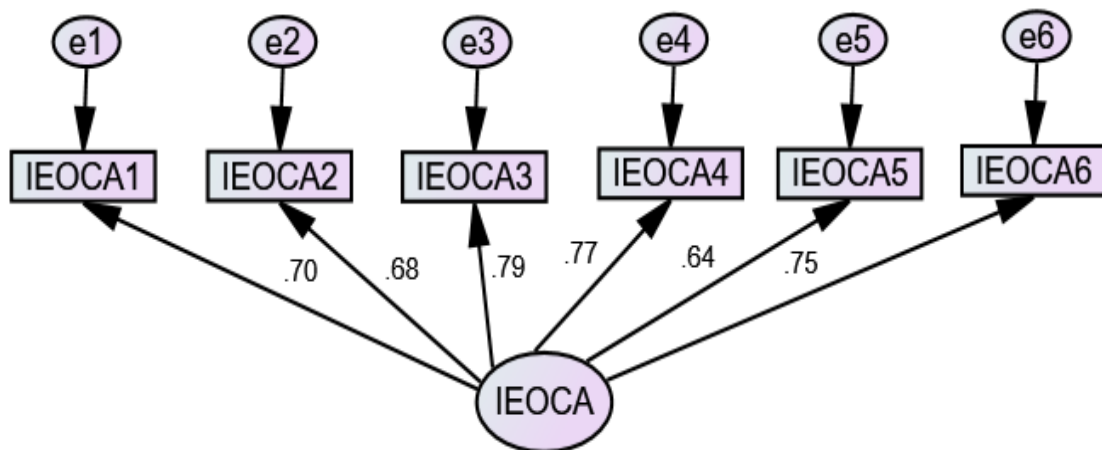


Table 23
Factor Loading for IEOCA

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	IEOCA 1	0.70	Included
	IEOCA 2	0.68	Included
	IEOCA 3	0.79	Included
	IEOCA 4	0.77	Included
	IEOCA 5	0.64	Included
	IEOCA 6	0.75	Included

As shown in Table 25, the IEOCA CFA includes or excludes standardised estimates for SIX elements. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). A factor loading of at least 0.4 was required to include SIX items in the final survey questionnaire, therefore all of these items are practically significant.

Table 24
Model fitness index for IEOCA

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.8 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for IEOA

This construct consists of SEVEN (7) items. Validity of each item is tested and explained with the help of figure 13 and table 26 given below

Figure 13
IEOA Components

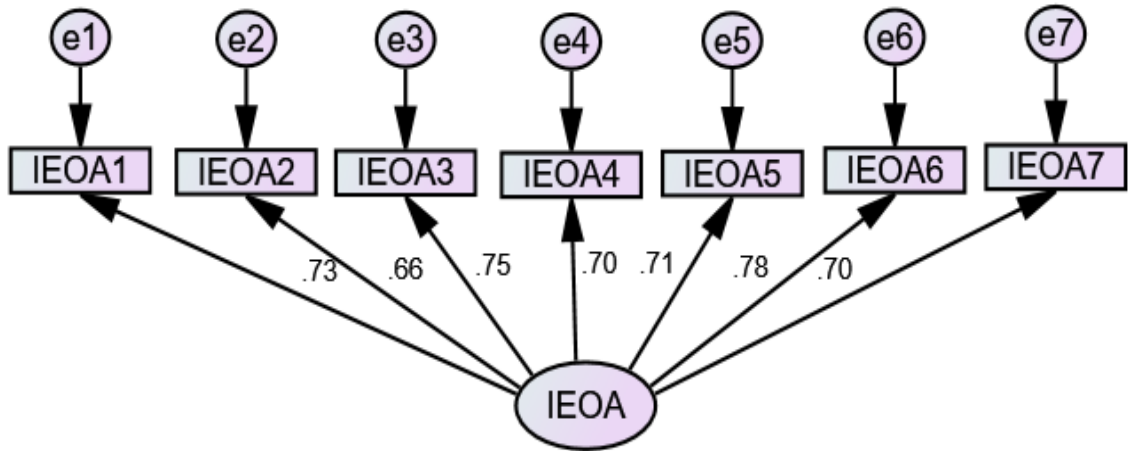


Table 25
Factor Loading for IEOA

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	IEOA 1	0.73	Included
	IEOA2	0.66	Included
	IEOA3	0.75	Included
	IEOA4	0.70	Included
	IEOA5	0.71	Included
	IEOA6	0.78	Included
	IEOA7	0.70	Included

Table 27 displays the standardised estimates and the inclusion or exclusion of SEVEN elements of IEOP in its CFA, as well as their inclusion or exclusion from the CFA. According to Cua et al. (2001), a construct with factor loadings more than 0.4 is regarded to be a practically important construct. For SEVEN items, IEOA has factor loadings more than 0.4, indicating that all of these items were included in the final survey questionnaire and are statistically significant in nature.

Table 26
Model fitness index for IEOP

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for ISFP

This build is made up of FIVE (5) different parts. The validity of each item is checked and explained with the assistance of the illustrations in figure 14 and table 28 provided further down.

Figure 14
ISFP Components

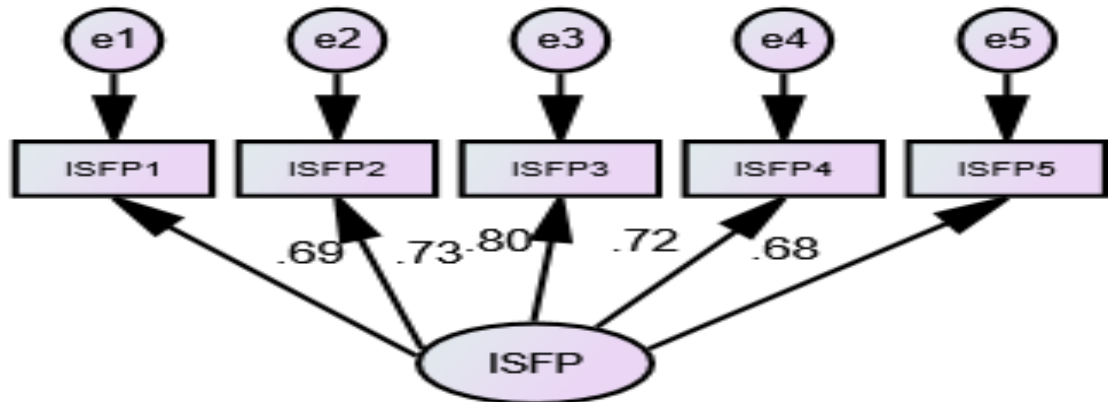


Table 27
Factor Loading for ISFP

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	ISFP 1	0.69	Included
	ISFP 2	0.73	Included
	ISFP 3	0.80	Included
	ISFP 4	0.72	Included
	ISFP 5	0.68	Included

It is seen in Table 29 that the CFA of ISFP includes or excludes FIVE elements. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are regarded to be practically important, according to (Cua et al., 2001). ISFP has factor loadings over 0.4 for FIVE items, meaning that they were all included in the final survey's questionnaire and are thus statistically significant.

Table 28
Model fitness index for ISFP

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.10 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for ISNFP

This build is made up of SEVEN (7) different parts. This is shown and discussed with the assistance of figure 15 and table 30, which are both provided in this section.

Figure 15
ISNFP Components

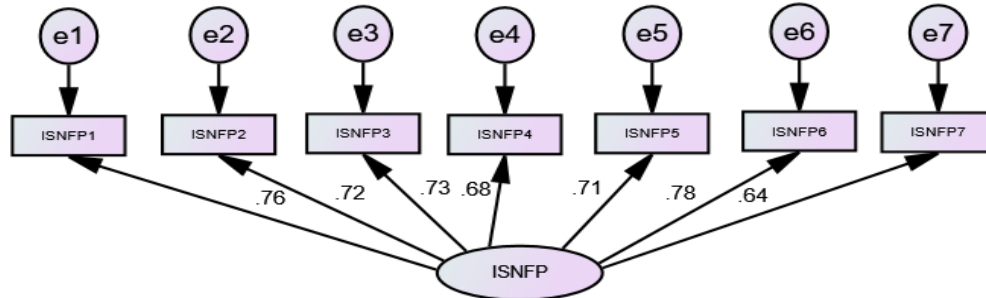


Table 29
Factor Loading for ISNFP

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Decision
	ISNFP 1	0.76	Included
	ISNFP 2	0.72	Included
	ISNFP 3	0.73	Included
	ISNFP 4	0.68	Included
	ISNFP 5	0.71	Included
	ISNFP 6	0.78	Included
	ISNFP 7	0.64	Included

Table 31 depicts the standardized estimates and including or excluding of SEVEN items of ISNFP in its CFA. According to (Cua et al., 2001) a construct having the factor loadings above 0.4 are considered as practically significant construct. For SEVEN items, ISNFP has factor loadings above 0.4, so that all these items were included in questionnaire for final survey and are practically significant.

Table 30
Model fitness index for ISNFP

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
---------	--------	---------	--------

CMIN	31.907	Df	14
Chi-square/df	31.907	p-value	0.004
GFI	0.95	AGFI	0.90
TLI	0.956	CFI	0.97
RMSEA	.079	RMR	.047

(GFI= Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI, Adjusted goodness of Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, NFI, Norms Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean Square of Approximation)

5.2.11 Average Variance Extracted:

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is computed once the factor loadings are determined to be within an acceptable range. The following formula is used to calculate AVE in MS Excel since it cannot be calculated in AMOS (because of a limitation).:

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2}{n}$$

Where standardised factor loadings are denoted by the symbol λ_i . Number of things is denoted by n. As a result, the AVE is computed by dividing the number of items by the sum of the squares of all factor loadings corresponding to a single construct. If the average convergent validity is more than 0.50, then the convergent validity is considered sufficient, as held by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 31

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for DCSZC

Items	Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
DCSZC 1	0.92	0.85

	DCSZC 2	0.91	0.83
	DCSZC 3	0.77	0.59
	DCSZC 4	0.94	0.88
	DCSZC 5	0.92	0.85
$\sum_1^5 \lambda = 4.00$			
Average Variance Extracted = 4.00 /5 = 0.80			

Table 32
Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for DCSEC

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	DCSEC 1	0.75	0.56
	DCSEC 2	0.66	0.44
	DCSEC 3	0.74	0.55
	DCSEC 4	0.74	0.55
	DCSEC 5	0.77	0.59
	DCSEC 6	0.77	0.59
	DCSEC 7	0.63	0.40
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 3.68$			
Average Variance Extracted = 3.68 /7 = 0.53			

Table 33
Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for DCTC

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	DCTC 1	0.96	0.92
	DCTC 2	0.92	0.85

	DCTC 3	0.95	0.90
	DCTC 4	0.90	0.81
	DCTC 5	0.89	0.79
	DCTC 6	0.96	0.92
	DCTC 7	0.95	0.90
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 6.10$			
Average Variance Extracted = 6.10 / 7 = 0.87			

Table 34

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for IEOR

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	IEOR 1	0.61	0.37
	IEOR 2	0.73	0.53
	IEOR 3	0.79	0.62
	IEOR 4	0.72	0.52
	IEOR 5	0.67	0.45
	IEOR 6	0.74	0.55
	IEOR 7	0.72	0.52
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 3.56$			
Average Variance Extracted = 3.56 / 7 = 0.51			

Table 35*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for IEOP*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	IEOP 1	0.74	0.55
	IEOP 2	0.73	0.53
	IEOP 3	0.83	0.69
	IEOP 4	0.71	0.50
	IEOP 5	0.65	0.42
	IEOP 6	0.76	0.58
	IEOP 7	0.77	0.59
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 3.87$			
Average Variance Extracted = $3.87 / 7 = 0.55$			

Table 36*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for IEOI*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	IEOI 1	0.69	0.48
	IEOI 2	0.74	0.55
	IEOI 3	0.69	0.48
	IEOI 4	0.72	0.52
	IEOI 5	0.76	0.58
	IEOI 6	0.74	0.55
	IEOI 7	0.70	0.49
	IEOI8	0.74	0.55
$\sum_1^8 \lambda = 4.18$			
Average Variance Extracted = $4.18 / 8 = 0.52$			

Table 37*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for IEOCA*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	IEOCA 1	0.70	0.49
	IEOCA 2	0.68	0.46
	IEOCA 3	0.79	0.62
	IEOCA 4	0.77	0.59
	IEOCA 5	0.64	0.41
	IEOCA 6	0.75	0.56
$\sum_1^6 \lambda = 3.14$			
Average Variance Extracted = $3.14 / 6 = 0.52$			

Table 38*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for IEOA*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	IEOA 1	0.73	0.55
	IEOA2	0.66	0.53
	IEOA3	0.75	0.69
	IEOA4	0.70	0.50
	IEOA5	0.71	0.42
	IEOA6	0.78	0.58
	IEOA7	0.70	0.59
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 3.62$			
Average Variance Extracted = $3.62 / 7 = 0.52$			

Table 39*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for ISFP*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	ISFP 1	0.69	0.48
	ISFP 2	0.73	0.53
	ISFP 3	0.80	0.64
	ISFP 4	0.72	0.52
	ISFP 5	0.68	0.46
$\sum_1^5 \lambda = 2.63$			
Average Variance Extracted = $2.63 / 5 = 0.53$			

Table 40*Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Calculation for ISNFP*

Items		Standard Estimate/Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)
	ISNFP 1	0.76	0.58
	ISNFP 2	0.72	0.52
	ISNFP 3	0.73	0.53
	ISNFP 4	0.68	0.46
	ISNFP 5	0.71	0.50
	ISNFP 6	0.78	0.61
	ISNFP 7	0.64	0.41
$\sum_1^7 \lambda = 3.61$			
Average Variance Extracted = $3.61 / 7 = 0.52$			

It can be seen that AVE for all constructs is above 0.50 and in case of DCSZC and DCTC it is above 0.80. These results are indicative of notion that the error term tends to partially explain the variance, while most of the variance is explained by latent component. In simple words the latent components tend to explain the more variance when compared to error term. The main reason for this is the value of

extracted variance, as in cases where the value extracted variance is greater than 0.50. the results for all the cross-load are less than 1 latent variables, there is no need for removing the items. All of the results of AVE for the research constructs indicate presence of convergent validity since the value of AVE in for all constructs is above critical value of 0.50 as stated by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The results further apply that all of the constructs are not only theoretically related to each other but are also observed to be statistically related to each other. The statistically results prove per initial theory as there is statically significant connection between the convergent validity and construct validity as held by (Gregory, 2007).

5.2.12 Construct Reliability

Another approach to gauge the validity of a concept is to look at its reliability. In AMOS, it is not possible to compute the reliabilities of structures. Therefore, MS Excel may be used to calculate it using the formula:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum_{i=1}^n \delta_i^2)}$$

The factor loadings are denoted by the letter i. There are several different types of error variations (=1-Item Reliability). Item Reliability is equal to the square root of each factor loading. To determine build reliabilities, the total of squared factor loadings and the sum of error variances for the constructions are added together. When the construct reliability estimate is 0.7 or above, the estimate is deemed trustworthy. It is possible to accept a model's reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 if the model's construct validity is good based on other indices.

Table 41*Construct Reliability Calculation for DCSZC*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
6	DCSZC 1	0.92	0.85	0.15
7	DCSZC 2	0.91	0.83	0.17
8	DCSZC 3	0.77	0.59	0.41
9	DCSZC 4	0.94	0.88	0.12
1	DCSZC 5	0.92	0.85	0.15
			$(\sum \lambda_1)^2 = 19.89$	$\sum \delta_1 = 1.00$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 19.89 / (19.89 + 1) = 0.95$$

Table 42*Construct Reliability Calculation for DCSEC*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	DCSEC 1	0.75	0.56	0.44
9	DCSEC 2	0.66	0.44	0.56
1	DCSEC 3	0.74	0.55	0.45
1	DCSEC 4	0.74	0.55	0.45
1	DCSEC 5	0.77	0.59	0.41
1	DCSEC 6	0.77	0.59	0.41
1	DCSEC 7	0.63	0.40	0.60
			$(\sum \lambda_1)^2 = 25.60$	$\sum \delta_1 = 3.32$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 25.60 / (25.60 + 3.32) = 0.89$$

Table 43*Construct Reliability Calculation for DCTC*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	DCTC 1	0.96	0.92	0.08
9	DCTC 2	0.92	0.85	0.15
7	DCTC 3	0.95	0.90	0.10
7	DCTC 4	0.90	0.81	0.19
7	DCTC 5	0.89	0.79	0.21
7	DCTC 6	0.96	0.92	0.08
7	DCTC 7	0.95	0.90	0.10
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 42.64$	$\sum \delta_i = 0.90$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 42.64 / (42.64 + 0.90) = 0.98$$

Table 44*Construct Reliability Calculation for IEOB*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	IEOB 1	0.61	0.37	0.63
9	IEOB 2	0.73	0.53	0.47
1	IEOB 3	0.79	0.62	0.38
1	IEOB 4	0.72	0.52	0.48
1	IEOB 5	0.67	0.45	0.55
1	IEOB 6	0.74	0.55	0.45
1	IEOB 7	0.72	0.52	0.48
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 24.80$	$\sum \delta_i = 3.44$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 24.80 / (24.80 + 3.44) = 0.88$$

Table 45*Construct Reliability Calculation for IEOP*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	IEOP 1	0.74	0.55	0.45
9	IEOP 2	0.73	0.53	0.47
1	IEOP 3	0.83	0.69	0.31
1	IEOP 4	0.71	0.50	0.50
1	IEOP 5	0.65	0.42	0.58
1	IEOP 6	0.76	0.58	0.42
1	IEOP 7	0.77	0.59	0.41
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 26.94$	$\sum \delta_i = 3.13$

Construct Reliability= $26.94/(26.94+3.13) = 0.88$

Table 46*Construct Reliability Calculation for IEOI*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
9	IEOI 1	0.69	0.48	0.52
1	IEOI 2	0.74	0.55	0.45
1	IEOI 3	0.69	0.48	0.52
1	IEOI 4	0.72	0.52	0.48
1	IEOI 5	0.76	0.58	0.42
1	IEOI 6	0.74	0.55	0.45
1	IEOI 7	0.70	0.49	0.51
1	IEOI8	0.74	0.55	0.45
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 33.41$	$\sum \delta_i = 3.82$

Construct Reliability= $33.41/(33.41+3.82) = 0.90$

Table 47*Construct Reliability Calculation for IEOCA*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
7	IEOCA 1	0.70	0.49	0.51
8	IEOCA 2	0.68	0.46	0.54
9	IEOCA 3	0.79	0.62	0.38
1	IEOCA 4	0.77	0.59	0.41
1	IEOCA 5	0.64	0.41	0.59
1	IEOCA 6	0.75	0.56	0.44
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 18.75$	$\sum \delta_i = 2.86$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 18.75 / (18.75 + 2.86) = 0.87$$

Table 48*Construct Reliability Calculation for IEOA*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	IEOA 1	0.73	0.55	0.47
9	IEOA2	0.66	0.53	0.56
1	IEOA3	0.75	0.69	0.44
1	IEOA4	0.70	0.50	0.51
1	IEOA5	0.71	0.42	0.50
1	IEOA6	0.78	0.58	0.39
1	IEOA7	0.70	0.59	0.51
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 = 25.30$	$\sum \delta_i = 3.38$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 25.30 / (25.30 + 3.38) = 0.88$$

Table 49*Construct Reliability Calculation for ISFP*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
6	ISFP 1	0.69	0.48	0.52
7	ISFP 2	0.73	0.53	0.47
8	ISFP 3	0.80	0.64	0.36
9	ISFP 4	0.72	0.52	0.48
1	ISFP 5	0.68	0.46	0.54
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 =$ 13.10	$\sum \delta_i = 2.35$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 13.10 / (13.10 + 2.35) = 0.85$$

Table 50*Construct Reliability Calculation for ISNFP*

Items		Factor Loadings (≥ 0.4)	Reliability (λ^2)	$\delta=1$ - Item Reliability
8	ISNFP 1	0.76	0.58	0.42
9	ISNFP 2	0.72	0.52	0.48
1	ISNFP 3	0.73	0.53	0.47
1	ISNFP 4	0.68	0.46	0.54
1	ISNFP 5	0.71	0.50	0.50
1	ISNFP 6	0.78	0.61	0.39
1	ISNFP 7	0.64	0.41	0.59
			$(\sum \lambda_i)^2 =$ 25.20	$\sum \delta_i = 3.39$

$$\text{Construct Reliability} = 25.20 / (25.20 + 3.39) = 0.88$$

Reliability mainly relates to precision of the statistical measures and its ability to be repeated over, without variation on results and construct reliability mainly relates to connection amongst the purpose of research and data and tools chosen to validate or reject the research statistics (Mausner & Kramer 1985). The

degree to which a test assesses a theoretical concept that is supposed to be tested is referred to as its construct validity.

The results of Construct Reliability for all of the constructs of the research indicate that are statistically reliable as their reliability is above greater than 0.7, as indicated by Larcker (1981) in his index. Given that the value for all the constructs is above 0.7 and their mean value above 0.8, this proves the unidimensionality of the constructs as held by (Karen Fitzner 2007). As (Karl,2012) had stated that in case of social sciences research the high construct validity indicates the ability of questioner to measure the abstract concept which is also the case in present research as the internationalization is abstract concept due to high values of construct reliability. The results of construct reliability are in line with the of Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014), according to whom the higher construct reliability indicates all items of the construct basically measure the same construct, which in term were extracted from the detailed review of exiting literature on the subject.

5.2.13 Reliability

Reliability testing of the model's variables and constructs may be done using the following criteria. It is possible to achieve internal consistency when the Cronbach Alpha coefficient (calculated in SPSS) is above 0.7, and it is possible to reach degree of acceptability when the Cronbach Alpha coefficient (calculated in SPSS) is above 0.6. (Calculated in SPSS). As shown in the Table, Cronbach Alpha values varied from 0.86 to 97 (SPSS), followed by Cronbach's correlation coefficients

(CRs) in the ranges of 0.87–0.95; and Cronbach's AVE values ranged from 0.51–0.83 (see Table, which was computed in SPSS) (refer to Table below).

5.3 Discussion of Results

The study started by investigating the reliability and validity of the instrument used for the hypotheses tests. To test the reliability and validity of the instrument, the study deployed Cronbach-Alpha and item-to-total correlation to observe the acceptable scale measurements. The study found an acceptable value of the items in explaining the investigated factors (Cronbach-Alpha) ranged from 0.801 to 0.971. The results show that the value of Cronbach-Alpha are higher than the generally accepted value in the research area. Hence, the reliability of the instruments is highly satisfied for testing the research hypotheses. In next step validity of questionnaire was accessed. The first stage was concerned with calculation of factor load of each construct. Factors load of each item of constructs included in this study was higher than threshold value i.e. 40. Hence the author included whole items of construct for this study. The second part of this stage of confirmatory analysis test was concerned with AVE calculation. The value of AVE for each construct is higher than threshold value i.e., 50 which leads to consistency. Finally, regarding the researcher calculated CR for each construct. These calculation results were also higher than threshold value i.e., 90. Hence variable of this study were contain valid construct reliability. Thus, there is a good reason for conducting the analysis part by deploying an advanced statistical technique through path analysis in SEM.

Table 51
Summary Table

Variable	Number of Items	AVE	Cronbech Alpha	CR
DCSZC	5	0.83	0.94	0.95
DCSEC	7	0.53	0.84	0.89
DCTC	7	0.87	0.97	0.98
IEOA	7	0.52	0.91	0.88
IEOCA	6	0.52	0.88	0.87
IEOI	8	0.52	0.90	0.90
IEOR	7	0.51	0.94	0.88
IEOP	7	0.55	0.88	0.88
ISFP	5	0.53	0.91	0.85
ISNFP	7	0.52	0.86	0.88

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presents confirmatory data analysis collected from survey questionnaires research participants towards identifying valid and reliable research samples. Confirmatory analysis was conducted using statistical tools including AMOS. Based on the analysis it was observed that the instrument used for this study was reliable and valid. Hence the result of this study generalizable.

Chapter 6: Hypothesis Testing

6.1 Introduction

This section of the study involves the examination of information obtained from survey participants. The hypothesis of this study was tested using structural equation modelling after data validity and reliability. The researcher then interpreted and discussed the hypothesis' findings.

An AMOS Graphic model was used by the researcher to better understand the connections between variables (known as latent constructs). This programme, as opposed to others, can construct path diagrams by utilizing drawing tools instead of entering equations or inputting instructions. In addition, the study was conducted quickly, efficiently, and in a way that everyone could understand. After completing the CFA, the researcher used SEM to examine the correlations between variables.

Scholars disagree on the minimal number of samples needed for SEM analysis. According to Hair et al (2010; see also Awang, 2014, p. 24), the following criteria are the general rule of thumb for sample needs: If there are more than three items in each latent construct, the sample size is larger than 100; if there are more than three items in each of the seven or fewer latent constructs, the sample size is larger than 150; if there are more than seven or fewer of these latent constructs, the sample size is larger than 500. This model explores five latent constructs, each of

which includes more than three items, according to the sample criteria outlined above. Consequently, the study's sample size of 218 was adequate.

The AMOS programme was used to determine the path coefficient value of each linear regression among the variables in order to test hypotheses using SEM. Using data from prior research in marketing, this study conducted a SEM test (e.g., Westhead et al., 2004). The following part explains how to do a structural equation test.

The measurement model and the structural model were both used in the SEM analysis, which was completed in a single run of the programme. First, the researchers developed a measuring model to illustrate the links between answer items and the latent conceptions that underlie those responses. Prior to testing the hypotheses in SEM, the researcher evaluated the model for its uni-dimensionality, validity, and reliability in this study. It was necessary to do Confirmatory Factor Analysis in order to analyse the measurement model (CFA). The factor loading for each item, as well as the fitness indices for the construct, were investigated by the researcher. The items with a low factor that resulted in poor fitness indexes were removed from the model used to assess fitness. Second, the researcher used the structural model to illustrate the interrelationships between the constructs in the model, which was a significant contribution. In this investigation, all theorised variables were in positions to relate to one another in order to satisfy the assumptions that were developed. The visual representation depicts the results of the analysis and the output that resulted from it.

6.2 Results of Data Analysis

Table 52
Results of Data Analysis

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
DCSEC	1.71	5.00	3.4607	.73871	.093	-.712
DCSZC	1.40	5.00	3.7053	.87322	-.674	-.396
DCTC	1.71	5.00	3.3578	.89214	-.170	-1.299
IEOA	1.63	5.00	3.5921	.87817	-.696	-.683
IEOCA	1.17	5.00	3.6171	.93246	-.530	-.589
IEOI	1.50	5.00	3.6619	.87994	-.576	-.514
IEOR	1.50	5.00	3.5723	.85977	-.625	-.500
IEOP	1.57	5.00	3.3314	.83819	-.207	-.860
ISFP	1.57	5.00	3.7395	.73819	-.871	.230
ISNFP	1.43	5.00	3.6413	.80110	-.634	-.082

In table above, the researcher explains the descriptive stats of each variable. The mean score for all the constructs was also expressed. The mean score for DCSEC, DCSZC, DCTC, IEOCA, IEOA, IEOI, IEOR, IEOP, ISFP and ISNFP was 3.4607, 3.7053, 3.3578, 3.5921, 3.6171, 3.6619, 3.5723, 3.3314, 3.7395 and 3.6413 respectively which was above 3.

Furthermore, the standard deviation of this construct falls between 0.70 and 1, demonstrating the information that respondent's answers towards the constructs of study are scattered and discovered near the mean worth; in this way indicating stable deviations. This was additionally confirmed through the estimations of the skewness and kurtosis which reaffirm the way that the reactions are similarly disseminated

6.3 Discussion of Study

6.3.1 Structural Equation Modelling

Researchers in SEM have employed a variety of Fitness Indexes to determine how well-fit a model is. Researchers have not come to an agreement on the fitness indexes to utilise. For example, the root mean square of error approximation (RMSEA), the goodness of fit index GFI, comparative fit index (CFI), and incremental fit index have all been employed in fitness index calculations (IFI). Table following illustrates the need for a four-model fit.

Table 53
Model Fit Index Category and the Level of Acceptance

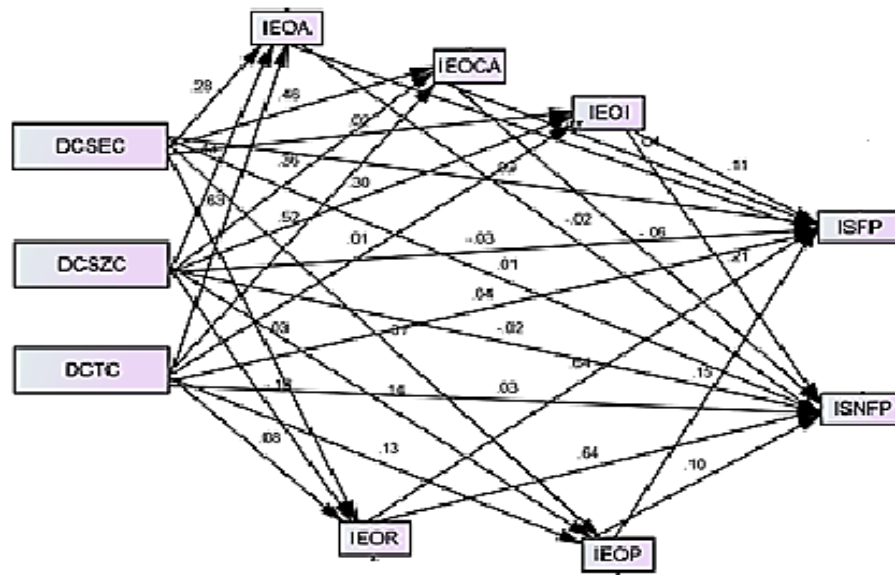
Name of Index	Level of Acceptance	Acceptability criterion	Cited by Literature
RMSEA	RMSEA less than 0.08	Range from 0.05 to 0.1 is acceptable	Browne and Cudeck (1993)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	GFI more than 0.90	GFI 0.95 is a good fit	Joreskog and Sorbom (1984)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	CFI more than 0.90	CFI 0.95 is a good fit	Bentler (1990)
Incremental fit index (IFI)	IFI more than 0.90	IFI 0.95 is a good fit	Bollen (1989a and 1989b)

As shown in Table 1, an adequate level of acceptance was observed for RMSEA (0.05–0.1), CFI (higher than the generally accepted value of 0.90) and IFI (0.961). Additional (over 0.90) is unacceptable. Listed below are the reliability test findings from this study.

Table 54
Result of Reliability Test of the Study

RMSEA	GFI	CFI	IFI
0.1	0.927	0.935	0.961

Figure 16
Results of Regression Weights



In the end, it was discovered that each path relationship in Model yielded a different set of findings, as seen in the figure and table below. There are several statistically significant links between dependent and independent variables, but only one link is statistically significant (also called as exogenous and endogenous construct relationship in SEM). Correlations between variables that are statistically significant can be observed in the following examples:

(p-value=0.107) were all considerably lower than the mean. There is a considerable positive correlation between one independent variable (DCSEC) and the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP when the mediation factor (IEO) is used, whereas the other independent variable (DCTC) has a negligible positive correlation with the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP. IEO's role in influencing the internal aspects that contribute to organisational performance is more beneficial than looking at IEO's role in influencing those internal elements.

Table 55
Summary of structural model testing

	Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t Statistic	p-value	Decisions
IEOA <---	DCSEC	.280	.038	5.483	***	Significant
IEOCA <---	DCSEC	.458	.041	8.427	***	Significant
IEOI <---	DCSEC	.023	.229	.279	.781	Not significant
IEOR <---	DCSEC	.033	.094	.381	.704	Not significant
IEOP <---	DCSEC	.370	.080	4.662	***	Significant
IEOA <---	DCSZC	.425	.036	8.333	***	Significant
IEOCA <---	DCSZC	.359	.038	6.607	***	Significant
IEOI <---	DCSZC	.296	.215	3.543	***	Significant
IEOR <---	DCSZC	-.176	.089	-2.059	.039	Significant
IEOP <---	DCSZC	.143	.075	1.805	.041	Significant
IEOA <---	DCTC	.633	.037	12.345	***	Significant
IEOCA <---	DCTC	.523	.040	9.567	***	Significant
IEOI <---	DCTC	.005	.225	.063	.950	Not significant
IEOR <---	DCTC	.082	.093	.952	.341	Not significant
IEOP <---	DCTC	.129	.079	1.613	.107	Not significant
ISFP <---	DCSEC	.093	.076	2.355	.003	Significant
ISNFP <---	DCSEC	.011	.065	3.159	.001	Significant

ISFP	<---	DCSZC	-.034	.072	-1.487	-.034	Significant
ISNFP	<---	DCSZC	-.015	.061	-.222	-.015	Significant
ISFP	<---	DCTC	.042	.080	2.572	.042	Significant
ISNFP	<---	DCTC	.029	.068	2.393	.029	Significant
ISFP	<---	IEOA	-.069	.083	-1.238	.001	Significant
ISNFP	<---	IEOA	-.024	.071	-.424	.002	Significant
ISFP	<---	IEOCA	-.044	.078	-.837	.032	Significant
ISNFP	<---	IEOCA	-.058	.066	-1.103	.010	Significant
ISFP	<---	IEOI	.111	.013	3.532	***	Significant
ISNFP	<---	IEOP	.095	.033	2.701	.007	Significant
ISNFP	<---	IEOI	.210	.011	6.661	***	Significant
ISFP	<---	IEOP	.153	.039	4.356	***	Significant
ISNFP	<---	IEOR	.642	.027	20.035	***	Significant
ISFP	<---	IEOR	.637	.032	19.959	***	Significant

6.3.2 Testing Direct and Indirect Effects of Variables in Model

There were also non-significant results for various tests of correlation between variables. According to the path analysis, the following relationships are discovered: A p-value of 0.781 for DCSEC to IEOI, IEOR, DCSEC to IEOR, and DCSEC to IEOR was obtained. Another case showed that DCTC to IEOI (p-value = 0.950) was significantly lower than the mean, while IEOR (p-value = 0.340) and IEOP (p-value = 0.107). There is a considerable positive correlation between one independent variable (DCSEC) and the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP when the mediation factor (IEO) is used, whereas the other independent variable (DCTC) has a negligible positive correlation with the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP. IEO's role in influencing the internal aspects that contribute to organisational performance is more beneficial than looking at IEO's role in influencing those internal elements.

There were also non-significant results for various tests of correlation between variables. According to the path analysis, the following relationships are discovered:

A p-value of 0.781 for DCSEC to IEOR, DCSEC to IEOR, and DCSEC to IEOR was obtained. Another case showed that DCTC to IEOR (p-value = 0.950) was significantly lower than the mean, while IEOR (p-value = 0.340) and IEOP (p-value = 0.107). There is a considerable positive correlation between one independent variable (DCSEC) and the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP when the mediation factor (IEO) is used, whereas the other independent variable (DCTC) has a negligible positive correlation with the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP. IEO's role in influencing the internal aspects that contribute to organisational performance is more beneficial than looking at IEO's role in influencing those internal elements.

There were also non-significant results for various tests of correlation between variables. According to the path analysis, the following relationships are discovered: A p-value of 0.781 for DCSEC to IEOR, DCSEC to IEOR, and DCSEC to IEOR was obtained. Another case showed that DCTC to IEOR (p-value = 0.950) was significantly lower than the mean, while IEOR (p-value = 0.340) and IEOP (p-value = 0.107). There is a considerable positive correlation between one independent variable (DCSEC) and the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP when the mediation factor (IEO) is used, whereas the other independent variable (DCTC) has a negligible positive correlation with the dependent variables ISFP and ISNFP. IEO's role in influencing the internal aspects that contribute to organisational performance is more beneficial than looking at IEO's role in influencing those internal elements.

Fourth, the study looked at the role of IEOR in the DCSEC-ISFP interaction between the two devices. The direct impact ($0.033 * 0.21 = 0.007$) was calculated by multiplying the route from DCSEC to IEOR and IEOR to ISFP by the direct effect

($0.033 * 0.21 = 0.007$). In comparison to the direct effect of the link between DCSEC and ISFP, the indirect effect of the link between DCSEC and ISFP (0.093). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Not to be overlooked is the indirect impact on the situation. As a result, the findings of the study suggested that the IEOP had no effect on the relationship between DCSEC and ISFP. In the fifth phase of the investigation, the role of IEOP as a mediator between DCSEC and ISFP was investigated. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the path from DCSEC to IEOP and the road from IEOP to ISFP (the indirect effect = $0.37 * 0.642 = 0.238$) and the path from IEOP to ISFP (the direct effect = $0.37 * 0.642 = 0.238$). The relationship between DCSEC and ISFP has both a direct and indirect impact on each other's outcomes (0.093). According to the findings of the study, IEOP mediates the link between DCSEC and ISFP because the value of the indirect impact is larger than the value of the direct influence. Because the mediator has no direct impact on the model when he or she arrives, we must apply comprehensive mediation in this situation.

It was found that IEOP was a mediator between DCSZC and ISFP in the sixth phase of the investigation. For the direct effect, DCSZC was divided by the IEOP and the ISFP were multiplied by 0.42 when computing the distances (the indirect effect was computed as -0.069). When comparing the direct and indirect effects of the DCSZC-ISFP connection (-0.034). (-0.034). This led to the discovery that IEOP serves as a mediator between DCSZC and ISFP. This condition necessitates full mediation, as the presence of the mediator does not significantly alter the model's direct consequences.

In the seventh study, the role of IEOCA as a mediator between DCSZC and ISFP was investigated. The indirect impact ($0.359 * -0.044 = -0.016$) was calculated by multiplying the pathways from DCSZC to IEOCA and from IEOCA to ISFP, and then dividing the result by two. In contrast to the indirect impact of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP, the direct effect of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP (-0.034). Because the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value, the researchers discovered that IEOCA is a mediator in the relationship between DCSZC and ISFP, according to their findings. Consequently. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

In this study, the role of IEOI as a mediating factor in the relationship between DCSZC and ISFP was also investigated. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the path from DCSZC to IEOCA and IEOI to ISFP (the indirect effect = $0.296 * 0.111 = 0.023$) by the number of steps in the path from DCSZC to IEOCA and IEOI to ISFP. In contrast to the indirect impact of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP, the direct effect of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP (-0.034). According to the findings of the study, IEOI mediates the correlation between DCSZC and ISFP since the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value in this relationship. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

Finally, the researchers looked at the role of IEOR as a mediator between DCSZC and ISFP in the study. The indirect impact was calculated by multiplying the

path from DCSZC to IEOR and the path from IEOR to ISFP (the indirect impact = $-0.176 * 0.21 = -0.057$). In contrast to the indirect impact of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP, the direct effect of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP (-0.034). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. It was discovered that the presence of IEOR in foreign markets had no effect on the relationship between DCSZC and ISFP.

In this study, the role of IEOP as a mediating factor in the relationship between DCSZC and ISFP was also investigated. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the path from DCSZC to IEOP and the path from IEOP to ISFP (the indirect impact = $0.1423 * 0.642 = -0.034$) and the path from IEOP to ISFP (the direct impact = $0.1423 * 0.642 = 0.034$). In contrast to the indirect impact of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP, the direct effect of the connection between DCSZC and ISFP (-0.034). In the study, it was discovered that the interaction between DCSZC and ISFP is mediated by IEOP since the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value of the relationship. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

In the eleventh study, the role of IEOA as a mediator between DCTC and ISFP was investigated. The direct influence was calculated by multiplying the distance between DCTC and the IEOA by the distance between the IEOA and the ISFP. The outcome of the indirect influence is compared to the relationship between DCTC and ISFP's direct effect (0.044). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a

given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. Therefore, it was demonstrated that the IEOA had no influence on the relationship between DCTC and ISFP in foreign markets.

Finally, the study looked at the role of IEOCA as a mediator in the DCTC-ISFP interaction between two proteins. The path from DCTC to IEOCA and from IEOCA to ISFP had a direct effect of $0.523 * -0.044 = -0.023$, which was determined by calculating the route from DCTC to IEOCA and IEOCA to ISFP. The outcome of the indirect influence is compared to the relationship between DCTC and ISFP's direct effect (0.044). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. As a result, the study concluded that the IEOCA did not serve as a mediator between the DCTC and the ISFP in foreign markets.

For the purpose of determining the role of IEOI in the DCTC-ISFP link, thirteen investigations were carried out. The direct influence was calculated by multiplying the DCTC to IEOCA and the IEOI to ISFP by 0.005 and 0.111, respectively. The outcome of the indirect influence is compared to the relationship between DCTC and ISFP's direct effect (0.044). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. As a result, we got to the following conclusion: IEOI does not play a mediating function in international markets in the relationship between DCTC and ISFP.

IEOR was also investigated for its potential significance as a mediating factor in the relationship between DCTC and ISFP in this study. The direct impact was

calculated by multiplying the path from DCTC to IEOR and IEOR to ISFP by the direct effect ($0.082 * 0.21 = 0.042$) to arrive at the direct impact. The interaction between the DCTC and ISFP results in a comparison of indirect effects with respect to direct effects (0.044). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. In other words, according to the findings of the study, the IEOR in foreign markets did not modify the connection between DCTC and ISFP in the study's sample.

The final part of the research looked on the role of IEOP as a mediator in the relationship between DCTC and ISFP. Calculated by computing the path between DCTC and IEOP, as well as the route between IEOP and ISFP (direct effect = $0.129 * 0.642 = 0.042$); The outcome of the indirect influence is compared to the relationship between DCTC and ISFP's direct effect (0.044). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. Therefore, the research found that the IEOP had no effect on the relationship between DCTC and ISFP in foreign markets.

Table 56
Indirect Path & Direct Pat comparison

ISFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCSEC	0.28	-0.069	-0.019	0.093	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCSEC	0.458	-0.044	-0.020	0.093	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCSEC	0.023	0.111	0.003	0.093	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCSEC	0.033	0.21	0.007	0.093	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCSEC	0.37	0.642	0.238	0.093	Mediation Exist

ISFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCSZC	0.425	-0.069	-0.029	0.044	Mediation Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCSZC	0.359	-0.044	-0.016	0.044	Mediation Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCSZC	0.296	0.111	0.033	0.044	Mediation Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCSZC	-0.176	0.21	-0.037	0.044	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCSZC	0.143	0.642	0.092	0.044	Mediation Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCTC	0.633	-0.069	-0.044	0.042	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCTC	0.523	-0.044	-0.023	0.042	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCTC	0.005	0.111	0.001	0.042	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCTC	0.082	0.21	0.017	0.042	Not Exist
ISFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCTC	0.129	0.642	0.083	0.042	Mediation Exist

As a first step, IEOA was examined for its role in DCSEC and ISNFP's connection. The direct effect was determined by multiplying the path from DCSEC to IEOA and IEOA to ISNFP (the indirect effect = $-0.024 * 0.28 = -0.007$). The link between DCSEC and ISNFP has an indirect impact, which is compared to the direct effect (0.011). The indirect effect's value is therefore smaller than the direct effect's value. In addition, the correlation between the indirect and direct effects is important. Thus, the study concluded that the IEOA did not moderate the link between DCSEC and ISNFP.

IEOCA served as a mediator between DCSEC and ISNFP, according to the findings of the study. We arrived at the direct impact by multiplying DCSEC's path with the IEOCA's path, and then adding the IEOCA's journey to the ISNFP's path. Indirect effects are compared to the direct effects of DCSEC and ISNFP's connection (0.011). The indirect effect's value is therefore smaller than the direct effect's value. In addition, the correlation between the indirect and direct effects is

important. As a result, the study revealed that the IEOCA did not act as a mediator between DCSEC and ISNFP.

Thirdly, the study examined the role of IEOI as a mediator in the DCSEC-ISNFP interaction. We were able to determine the direct effect by multiplying the distances between DCSEC and IEOCA and IEOI and ISNFP, and then subtracting that result from that. Indirect effects are compared to the direct effects of DCSEC and ISNFP's connection (0.011). As a result, the indirect effect's impact is less significant than its direct effect. It's also important to note the indirect influence. Thus, the study concluded that the IEOI does not moderate the link between DCSEC and ISNFP.

Fourth, the researchers looked at the role of IEOR in the interaction between DCSEC and ISNFP. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the path from DCSEC to IEOR and the path from IEOR to ISNFP (the indirect effect = $0.033 * 0.153 = 0.005$) by the direct effect. In contrast to the direct effect of the DCSEC-ISNFP link, the indirect effect of the connection is discussed (0.011). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Not to be overlooked is the indirect impact on the situation. As a result, the researchers came to the conclusion that the IEOI had no effect on the relationship between DCSEC and ISNFP.

According to the results of the statistical analysis in the case of UAE-based SMEs, the dynamic sensing and risk-taking capabilities of entrepreneurs have an insignificant impact on the international Entrepreneurial orientation, given that

(Mintzberg, 1973) had expressed that entrepreneurs tend to take decisions related to dynamic capabilities at individual level and innovativeness and risk-taking decisions are more to do with the personality of the entrepreneurs. Most entrepreneurs operating SMEs are risk-averse simply because they lack the skill set and financial resources to take higher risks. Especially after the 2008 financial crisis, the bank and other financial institutions are usually reluctant to finance business ventures deemed too risky. Besides this, the skill set of such entrepreneurs is also limited as they lack the human resources to identify potential business opportunities when they arise. In terms of going global, Lumpkin and (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) argue that penetrating a new market is an entrepreneurial venture. Instead, the processes, methods, and decision-making activities that lead to that new market entry are described from an entrepreneurial perspective.

Our results also indicate that dynamic reconfiguration capabilities have an insignificant impact on the international Entrepreneurial proactive regarding innovation, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial proactiveness. The main reason for these results could be related to the fact that UAE-based SMEs operate in a closed network, and the strength of bonds within a closed network is influenced by various factors, such as the duration, intensity, and reciprocal services that characterize a member's relationship. The closed network confers benefits to its members by facilitating the unrestricted dissemination of superior information, technical expertise, and the provision of specific resources. The dense network approach characterizes the extent of interconnectivity among members through the density

level. According to (Fainshmidt, Pezeshkan, Lance Frazier, Nair, & Markowski, 2016) increasing trust can foster knowledge sharing by reducing competitive advantage risk. According to (Matysiak et al., 2018), closed entrepreneurial networks are established through entrepreneurs' collaborative and collective endeavours. The findings suggest that the industry might benefit from strengthening its networks and considering strategic collaborations to gain a competitive edge. Researchers in the future should adhere to the same variable structure and parameters.

To conclude, the researchers looked at whether or not the ISNFP may act as a mediator between DCSEC and ISNFP. There was a direct effect, which was estimated by multiplying the paths from DCSEC to IEOP and from IEOP to ISNFP (the indirect impact, which was calculated to be $0.37 * 0.637$), and an indirect effect, which was calculated to be $0.37 * 0.637$. In contrast to the direct effect of the DCSEC-ISNFP link, the indirect effect of the connection is discussed (0.011). In the study, it was discovered that the interaction between DCSEC and ISNFP is mediated by IEOP since the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value of the relationship. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

Finally, the researchers investigated the role of IEOA in the DCSZC-ISNFP relationship. When the path from DCSZC to IEOA and the path from IEOA to ISNFP were multiplied, a direct effect of $0.42 * 0.024 = -0.010$ was seen. As a

comparison to the indirect effect of the relationship, the direct effect of the DCSZC-ISNFP link is discussed (-0.015). In part because the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value, the researchers discovered that IEOA acts as a mediator between DCSZC and ISNFP. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

The role of IEOCA as a mediator in the DCSZC-ISNFP interaction was investigated in the seventh study. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the route from DCSZC to IEOCA and the route from IEOCA to ISNFP (the indirect effect was -0.021). It has both a direct and an indirect impact on the relationship between DCSZC and ISNFP (-0.015). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. It has been demonstrated that the IEOCA does not act as a middleman between DCSZC and ISNFP on foreign markets.

Finally, the researchers looked at the possibility of IEOI acting as a mediator in the DCSZC-ISNFP connection. Calculated by calculating the two pathways from DCSZC to IEOI and from IEOI to ISNFP (the indirect impact = $0.296 * 0.095 = 0.028$) and averaging the results. It has both a direct and an indirect impact on the relationship between DCSZC and ISNFP (-0.015). According to the findings of the study, IEOI mediates the correlation between DCSZC and ISNFP since the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value in this relationship. Because the

existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

As a putative mediator in the relationship between DCSZC and ISNFP, IEOR was also investigated, according to the findings of the study. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the path from DCSZC to IEOR and the path from IEOR to ISNFP (the indirect effect was $-0.176 * 0.153 = -0.027$) by the path from DCSZC to IEOR. It has both a direct and an indirect impact on the relationship between DCSZC and ISNFP (-0.015). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. Thus, the study indicated that the IEOR in foreign markets does not act as a mediating factor in the DCSZC-ISNFP relationship.

In the eleventh stage of the investigation, the role of IEOP as a mediator between DCSZC and ISNFP was investigated. The path from DCSZC to IEOP and from IEOP to ISNFP was multiplied by the direct effect (-0.091) to arrive at the indirect impact ($0.1423 * 0.637$), which was calculated as follows: It has both a direct and an indirect impact on the relationship between DCSZC and ISNFP (-0.015). In the study, it was discovered that the interaction between DCSZC and ISNFP is mediated by IEOP since the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value of the relationship. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no

significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

The eleventh study looked on the role of IEOA as a mediator in the interaction between DCTC and ISNFP. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOA and IEOA to ISNFP (the indirect effect was calculated by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOA and IEOA to ISNFP). A comparison is made between the indirect effect of the DCTC-ISNFP link and the direct effect of the relationship (0.029). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. In this way, the findings of the study demonstrated that the IEOA in foreign markets had no effect on the relationship between DCTC and ISNFP.

The role of IEOCA as a mediating factor in the link between DCTC and ISNFP was also investigated in this study. We arrived at the direct effect by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOCA and IEOCA to ISNFP (the indirect impact = $0.523 * 0.058 = -0.03$) and the paths from IEOCA to ISNFP. A comparison is made between the indirect effect of the DCTC-ISNFP link and the direct effect of the relationship (0.029). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. According to the study's findings, the IEOCA in foreign markets did not act as a moderator of the DCTC-ISNFP relationship.

Thirteen investigations were carried out in order to investigate the involvement of IEOI in the DCTC-ISNFP interaction between the two genes. We got at the direct effect by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOCA and IEOI to ISNFP (the indirect impact = $0.005 * 0.095 = 0.000$) and arriving at the direct effect by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOCA and IEOI to ISNFP (0.029). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. As a consequence, the study discovered that the IEOI in foreign markets had no effect on the DCTC-ISNFP relationship. –

IEOR was also investigated for its potential significance as a mediating factor in the relationship between DCTC and ISNFP in this study. The direct effect was calculated by multiplying the paths from DCTC to IEOI and IEOI to ISNFP (the indirect effect = $0.082 * 0.13$) and the path from IEOI to ISNFP. A comparison is made between the indirect effect of the DCTC-ISNFP link and the direct effect of the relationship (0.029). Thus, the indirect influence has a less impact than the direct effect on a given situation. Furthermore, there is no association between the indirect effect and the direct effect of a given intervention. It was demonstrated that the presence of IEOI in foreign markets had no effect on the DCTC-ISNFP connection.

Finally, the study looked at the role of IEOP in the interaction between DCTC and ISNFP. This value was obtained by multiplying the path from DCTC to ISNFP and then multiplying the path from IEOP to ISNFP by the direct effect to arrive at 0.082

(the indirect effect is calculated as $0.129 * 0.637 = 0.082$). The indirect impacts of DCTC and ISNFP on each other are compared to their direct effects on each other (0.029). It was found as a result of the research that IEOP mediates the relationship between DCTC and ISNFP because the indirect impact value is bigger than the direct effect value. Because the existence of the mediator in the model has no significant impact on the model's direct effects, full mediation is the most appropriate sort of mediation in this situation.

Table 57

Direct & Indirect Path comparison (Dependent Variable ISNFP)

					Path a	Path b	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	Decision
ISNFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCSEC	0.28	- 0.024	-0.007	0.011	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCSEC	0.458	- 0.058	-0.027	0.011	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCSEC	0.023	0.095	0.002	0.011	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCSEC	0.033	0.153	0.005	0.011	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCSEC	0.37	0.637	0.236	0.011	Mediation Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCSZC	0.425	- 0.024	-0.010	-0.015	Mediation Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCSZC	0.359	- 0.058	-0.021	-0.015	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCSZC	0.296	0.095	0.028	-0.015	Mediation Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCSZC	-0.176	0.153	-0.027	-0.015	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCSZC	0.143	0.637	0.091	-0.015	Mediation Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOA	<-	DCTC	0.633	- 0.024	-0.015	0.029	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOCA	<-	DCTC	0.523	- 0.058	-0.030	0.029	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOI	<-	DCTC	0.005	0.095	0.000	0.029	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOR	<-	DCTC	0.082	0.153	0.013	0.029	Not Exist
ISNFP	<-	IEOP	<-	DCTC	0.129	0.637	0.082	0.029	Mediation Exist

6.4 Conclusions

This chapter examines survey questionnaires completed by 518 participants in order to identify study samples that are legitimate and trustworthy. Additionally, descriptive information on the level of internationalization of SMEs as well as performance metrics are included in this chapter. The descriptive inquiry was carried out through the use of frequency and cross-tabulation techniques.

Following an assessment of the SMEs profile, it was discovered that the research SMEs were a mix of both freshly globalized firms and those that had been steadily increasing their global reach. According to the results of this study, the vast majority of participants were CEOs/owners and managers. Therefore, the findings are more reliable because the study only covers respondents who are actively involved in assisting small firms in their international expansion efforts. However, according to the findings of this study, the majority of research SMEs had only been internationally competitive for a few years.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The integrated conceptual model initially provided by Coviello and McAuley (1999) is the foundation for SME internationalisation research. This paradigm incorporates traditional stage theory, network perspective, global entrepreneurialism, transaction costs, and institutional theory, all of which are integrated together. According to the findings, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) thinking about expanding internationally should examine the ethical implications of their decisions as well. Ethical considerations have been incorporated into the integrative conceptual model in order to better explain the adoption of internationalisation by SMEs in the United Arab Emirate and to better understand their behaviour. The findings of this study complement those of past investigations carried out by Coviello and Munro (1997), Korsakiene and Tvaronaviciene (2012), Abdullah and Zain (2011); Ahmad (2014); hashim and hassan (2008); and hashim and hassan (2013). (2008). (2015). Taking as its starting point the aforementioned current research concentration, this chapter summarises the contributions, implementations, restrictions, and recommendations for future work that have been made.

This chapter provides an overview of the research contributions on SME internationalisation that have been made to date. Later, the research presents the implementations to academics and practitioners, after which it engages in a debate of the limitations and makes recommendations for future research.

7.2 Contributions of the Study

Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are the subject of this research, which gives insights into the reasons why SMEs in this country are hesitant to expand internationally. There are theoretical, methodological, and methodological contributions to the subject mentioned here, as well as contributions to the literature. The contributions of the research will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

7.2.1 Contribution 1

In the United Arab Emirates, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are thriving (UAE). Internationalization has been thoroughly researched by Johansson and Vahlne (1990), Johansson and Mattson (1988), Prahalad and Hamel (1994), Dunning (1980), Suh and Kim (2014), Majocchi & Zucchella (2003), and others, with varying degrees of success. However, the findings are not consistent. Because of this, the current study investigated and enhanced understanding of the relationship between internationalisation adoption and the performance of United Arab Emirate SMEs, notably in terms of financial and non-financial variables, in the United Arab Emirates. A first step toward acquiring a better understanding of the phenomena in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates is the subject of the current study on the relationship between internationalisation and corporate success.

According to the findings of this study, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates have experienced a significant improvement in their financial performance. When a company decides to internationalise, it can expect to see an increase in profits, including profit from international operations, gross profit margin, and net profit from international operations. It can also expect to see an increase in total sales, sales in foreign markets, and market entry. As a result, the findings of this study demonstrate that adopting an internationalisation strategy has a positive impact on financial performance. In addition to Yeoh (2013), Westhead et al. (2004), Zhou et al. (2007), Zahra et al. (2000), Pangarkar (2008), Kuivalainen and Sundqvist (2007), and Gregorio et al. (2007), there have been a number of previous studies that have looked at this problem (2009). Researchers Zahra and colleagues (2000, 2001) identified a positive relationship between the worldwide diversity and method of market access and the commercial performance of new initiatives, as measured by the rate of sales growth.

Non-financial measures that have a significant impact on United Arab Emirate SMEs include foreign marketing know-how, technical knowledge, international knowledge, new ideas about products and services, and business methods; enhancement of the company's managerial capabilities; gaining access to lower-cost or better-value factors of production; enhancement of production; development of economies-of-scale in production costs. As a result, the findings of this study corroborate those of prior research, which found that internationalisation adoption has a positive impact on non-financial performance in corporations.

According to Yeoh (2014), previous researchers who have studied this topic include Fletcher and Harris (2012), Fletcher and Ibeh (2014) and Kasem (2014), Ibeh and Kasem (2014), Musteen et al. (2013), Cavusgil et al. (2011), Lu and Beamish (2011), Musteen et al. (2013), Cavusgil et al. (2011), and Lu and Beamish (2011). (2006). (Yeoh, 2013), for example, found a significant relationship between internationalisation of family companies and an improvement in the company's capability to manufacture and manage goods.

The findings demonstrate that small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirate (UAE) profit from a strategy of worldwide expansion. A research gap existed in the relationship between internationalisation and company performance among SMEs operating in the United Arab Emirates, and our discovery filled it.

7.2.2 Contribution: Methodological Contribution

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to gain a better understanding of the elements impacting the internationalisation of SMEs in the United Arab Emirates. The methodological triangulation approach was used to address the research questions in this study. Cronbach's alpha analysis, multiple regression, simple linear regression, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modelling (SEM), and the one-sample t-test were all utilised to analyse quantitative data in the current study, and they were all found to be effective.

On the basis of an evaluation of past works in the subject issue that was carried out, it was revealed that there is a scarcity of research being carried out in the United Arab Emirate that employs the triangulation technique. Therefore, there is a paucity of past research in the issue field that has combined many analytic methodologies in a single study, such as regression analysis using SPSS, clustering factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM) utilising AMOS. This study has made a significant addition to the field of data analysis research as a result of the findings it produced.

7.3 Research Implications

The research has several implications to both academic and practical world. The implications are discussed in the next following section

7.3.1 Academic Implications

The following are the ramifications of the current research for the academic world, as summarised by the authors:

1. Several factors that impact the internationalisation of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have yet to be discovered.
2. Identifying the several factors that contribute to the internationalisation of small and medium-sized firms in the United Arab Emirates (SMEs). Compared to previous research, this one compare internationalisation

variables across industries, whereas previous studies only looked at manufacturing.

3. The scope of research in firm performance measurement has broadened from a narrow focus on financial performance to encompass nonfinancial performance as well as financial performance.
4. Consequently, the findings of this study will contribute to the advancement of current information about the elements that impact the internationalisation of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs).
5. Develop a new framework for analysing small and medium-sized enterprises' internationalisation in the United Arab Emirates.

7.3.2 Implications for Managers & other Professionals

Simple, practical recommendations are provided by the findings of this study for small enterprises considering international expansion. Governments and business support organisations may be better positioned as a consequence of the findings of this research to give SMEs with the help they require to grow their operations on a worldwide scale.

Prior to accessing global markets, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) owners and managers might benefit from the guidelines for practitioners provided by the World Bank. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can use the findings of this study as a roadmap to strengthen internal skills, such as entrepreneur/human capital and company attributes, before entering new foreign

markets. For United Arab Emirates businesses wishing to grow into overseas markets, interacting with potential clients in other countries and other business connections, such as governmental or private organisations, may be beneficial in both formal and informal network situations. Because of their extensive networks, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) may profit from improved global market expertise. Consequently, firms have gained valuable insight into worldwide markets as a result of the internet and other communication technologies that have emerged. Most small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) who are expanding overseas rely on the internet and government officials who work in international markets, such as those at MATRADE, as their major sources of information on foreign markets. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) pursuing international expansion are encouraged to strengthen their cognitive capabilities, such as their international entrepreneur orientation, which is defined as being innovative, productive, and willing to take risks in the global marketplace. As a result, SMEs in the United Arab Emirate will be able to acquire a more global attitude, which will be critical for their long-term survival and competitive edge in international markets.

Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) may be able to take use of internet and communication technology in order to extend their worldwide markets. It is essential that every organisation has access to effective communication technology in order to accelerate the process of

internationalisation. Furthermore, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are encouraged to invest in research and development (R&D) in order to provide differentiated goods and services, which in turn gives the companies a competitive advantage. The government of the United Arab Emirates gives help in research and development through a number of export promotion programmes, among other avenues. Also potential for UAE SMEs is the development of human capital and management talents, which will result in increased efficiency as well as more trust, credibility, and reputation with both local and international clients.

When it comes to the environmental effect of their operations, SME owners and managers can take advantage of globalisation trends such as free trade agreements such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). It also makes greater use of the internet and communication technology infrastructure that has been provided by the government. In order to reach a global audience, small companies in the United Arab Emirate should take advantage of the technology that is available to them by developing an interesting corporate website, implementing e-commerce, and accepting online payments.

The practical consequences of this study for the government may be realised by providing SMEs with support guidelines, which will result in the establishment of more competitive United Arab Emirate firms. As a consequence of government initiatives to strengthen infrastructure for SME participation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may be encouraged to expand their operations into

international markets. A more efficient transportation infrastructure as well as other R&D support to promote SMEs' competitiveness and stabilise the United Arab Emirates' Dirham currency should be included in the infrastructure improvements. Furthermore, this will be beneficial.

Small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are becoming increasingly important in the UAE's economy (SMEs). Government-backed marketing activities in China and Europe are now ongoing to promote and assist small and medium-sized firms, according to information provided to the Federal National Council by the Minister of Economics. All of these steps are intended to mitigate the detrimental effects of the drop in oil prices on the economy.

As of June 2014, the Federal Law No. 2 of 2014 on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs Law) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) went into force, providing incentives for the expansion of locally held SMEs. Under the SMEs law, the "SMEs Council" is responsible for supporting UAE small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as maintaining track of the country's "National Programme for SMEs." SMEs that take part in the Program will benefit from a range of advantages, including decreased licencing fees and simpler business procedures, among other things. In addition, the federal government has promised to source 10 percent of its goods and services from small and medium-sized businesses.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

Like every study this study also suffers from few limitations which are listed as below.

7.4.1 Time and Financial Limitations

One of the major limitations of the research relates to the limited finances of the incumbent as, the questioners were delivered to the respondents via email, but incumbent had to follow up with phone calls and reminders. Meanwhile incumbent also had to travel to different part of UAE to convenience many businessmen and managers to take part in the survey. The cost of constant travelling and meeting was curtailed by adopting online meeting platforms which to some extent limited the number of respondents resulting limited sample size for the present extensive research.

7.4.2 Methodology and Research Sample Limitations

Regarding methodology limitation, this research mainly relied upon primary data and analysis based upon use of qualitative techniques, in future researchers can incorporate qualitative aspects using interviews and other qualitative analysis tools and techniques. Another limitation relates to sample size as sample size of research was above 500, but was limited to just UAE, in future researchers can conduct cross sectional analysis for determining the mediating role of different factors for promotion of internationalisation.

7.5 Future direction of Research

In future researchers can also focus of specific industries such as hotel and tourism, construction etc. for similar research. Small and medium-sized firms' adoption of internationalisation has been shown to be influenced by a new factor: ethical considerations (SMEs). As a result, greater study is required in order to have a deeper understanding of this ethical dilemma. Future research may include qualitative methodologies such as case studies and substantial data collection in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. Considering that structural equation modelling (SEM) has been employed sparingly in prior research in this subject area, more investigation into the function of internal variables in moderating the relationship between external determinants and the adoption of internationalisation by United Arab Emirate SMEs is needed. In the future, it will be more advantageous to do research on the role of internationalisation adoption in regulating the relationship between factors and corporate performance in the United Arab Emirate.

Future studies, particularly in developing countries and small and medium-sized firms, should make use of the triangulation research approach, according to the authors (SMEs). By combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the danger of bias in study results is reduced because they are complementary to one another.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Questioner

Emirate:	AD	DU	SH	FU	AJ	UM	RA		Serial No.
Sector:	Manufacturing	Construction	Trading						

Linking Dynamic Capabilities and SMEs' Internationalization Success:

The Mediating Impact of International Entrepreneurial Orientation

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

The survey is carried out as a part of a research work leading to the award of Doctorate (DBA) Degree in Management Sciences from Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Information collected through this survey will be used only for research purpose and not for any other purpose.

Your kind co-operation is requested

MOZA

DBA Student, Department of Management Sciences,

Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Part 1 Profile of Enterprise

1	Name of enterprise			
2	Category of enterprise	☐ Small	☐ Medium	
3	Type of ownership	☐ Proprietorship	☐ Partnership	☐ LLC
4	Year in which the SME was established			
5	Number of employees in 2020-21			
6	How many years has SME been exporting			
7	Investment capital of SME a on 2020-21			
8	Annual cost for 2020-21			
	Human resources			
	Raw materials			
	Others			
	Total			
9	Annual turnover for 2020-21			
10	Revenue from exports for 2020-21			

In the next sections of this survey, I am asking you a few questions related to the export business efforts taken by small and medium enterprises like yours. The questions are related to various aspects of the capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation and performance of your enterprise in international business.

You are welcome to share your experience, the challenges you faced and; possible suggestions to improve international business of small and medium enterprises in UAE.

Please give your responses by putting ✓ mark in the appropriate columns

Part 2 Dynamic Capabilities of the Enterprise: Sensing Capability - القدرة على الاستشعار

No	Questions الأسئلة	Strongly Disagree أعارض بشدة	Disagree أعارض	Neutral محايد	Agree موافق	Strongly Agree موافق بشدة
DCS1	Our company knows the best practices in the export market					
DCS2	As a company, we know how to access new information					
DCS3	Our company systematically searches for information on the current market situation					
DCS4	Our company is up-to-date on the current export market situation					
DCS5	We sense opportunities and threats in export markets					
DCS6	Our company always has an eye on our competitors' activities					

Part 3 Dynamic Capabilities of the Enterprise: Seizing Capability - الاستيلاء على القدرة

No	Questions الأسئلة	Strongly Disagree أعارض بشدة	Disagree أعارض	Neutral محايد	Agree موافق	Strongly Agree موافق بشدة
DCZ1	Our company can quickly relate to new knowledge from the outside					
DCZ2	We recognize what new information can be utilized in our company					
DCZ3	Our company is capable of turning new technological knowledge into process and product innovation					
DCZ4	New information leads to the development of new products or service					
DCZ5	We make investments to seize sensed opportunities					

Part 4 Dynamic Capabilities of the Enterprise: Transformation Capability - القدرة على التحول

No	Questions الأسئلة	Strongly Disagree أعارض بشدة	Disagree أعارض	Neutral محايد	Agree موافق	Strongly Agree موافق بشدة
DCT1	We can respond quickly to export market changes					
DCT2	We can respond quickly to the actions of competitors					
DCT3	We can successfully implement plans for changes in our company					
DCT4	Decisions on planned changes are pursued consistently in our company					
DCT5	In our company, change projects can be put into practice alongside the daily business					
DCT6	In the past, we have demonstrated our strengths in implementing changes					

Part 5 International Entrepreneurial Orientation: Autonomy – استقلال

No	Questions الأسئلة	Strongly Disagree أعارض بشدة	Disagree أعارض	Neutral محايد	Agree موافق	Strongly Agree موافق بشدة
EOA1	Our employees have job autonomy in our existing business operations.					
EOA2	We allow employees to independently develop new business ideas and execute them.					
EOA3	We encourage employees to be self-directed in pursuit of business opportunities in target markets.					

Part 6 International Entrepreneurial Orientation: Competitive Aggressiveness - العدوانية التنافسية

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
EOC1	We take aggressive steps to exploit potential opportunities					
EOC2	We typically adopt an "outperform-the competitor" strategy in our target markets					
EOC3	We adopt an offensive (vs. defensive) posture when dealing with our competitors					
EOC4	Our actions toward competitors can be termed as aggressive					

Part 7 International Entrepreneurial Orientation: Innovativeness - ابتكار

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
EOI1	We promote new, innovative products/services in our business.					

EOI2	Our business provides technological leadership in developing new products/services					
EOI3	We constantly experiment with unique new processes and methods of production to seek unusual, novel solutions					

Part 8 International Entrepreneurial Orientation: Pro-activeness - الاستباقية

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
EOP1	We usually act in anticipation of future problems, changes, needs ahead of our rivals					
EOP2	We look forward to seize initiatives whenever possible in our target market operations					
EOP3	We act opportunistically to shape the business environment in which we operate					
EOP4	We try to introduce various methods to hold a dominant position in the international market					

Part 9 International Entrepreneurial Orientation: Risk Taking - المخاطرة

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
EOR1	Our business, in general, tends to invest in high-risk projects					
EOR2	We like to carry out risky ventures to improve international performance					
EOR3	Our business shows a great deal of tolerance for venturing into the unknown					

Part 10 Internationalization Success: Financial Performance - الأداء المالي

No	Questions الأسئلة	Very Bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very Good
IPF1	International sales volume					
IPF2	International sales growth					
IPF3	International profitability					
IPF4	Overall international performance					
IPF5	Return on investment (ROI) from international business					

Part 11 Internationalization Success: Non-Financial Performance - الأداء غير المالي

No	Questions الأسئلة	Very Bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very Good
IPO1	Market share in international markets					
IPO2	Number of successful new products/services in international markets					
IPO3	Global reach (i.e., presence in strategically located countries worldwide)					
IPO4	Sustainability in international markets					

IPO5	Gaining a foothold in international markets					
IPO6	International reputation of the firm					

Part 12 General Assessment

- 1 Do you think the internationalization / export business attempts by your enterprise is a success? Why?

- 2 What are the challenges faced by enterprises like yours in the attempts for internationalization?

- 3 In your opinion, what are the possible suggestions to improve the internationalization of SMEs in UAE?

Part 13 Profile of Respondent

- 1 Name of Respondent

- 2 Designation

- 3 Contact No.

4 Email

THANK YOU!