

**Abstract**

This study develops a research framework to examine the entrepreneurial behavior and export performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Thailand. Prior research on entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has used Covin and Slevin's (1989) concept of conservative and entrepreneurial postures to classify firms, describe their behavior, and examine the performance implications of adopting such postures. Drawing on the EO, organizational theory, and order of entry literature, this study argues that there is a third type of strategic posture (i.e., partial entrepreneurial posture) which has a strategic combination of both conservative and entrepreneurial postures. Accordingly, this study argues that SMEs' choice of strategic posture has important implications for both their export strategies and performance. Moreover, this study also examines the performance implications of the interplay between Porter's generic competitive strategies and the EO construct.

The two primary methods of data collection used are mail survey and telephone interview. The respondents are owners or senior managers of SMEs who are directly responsible for the company's export activities. The survey resulted in 155 observations. The sampled firms are from various industries, with the plastic, food, and garment industries constituting the top 3 industries in the sample. Of 155 firms, there are 16 conservative firms, 74 partial entrepreneurial firms, and 65 entrepreneurial firms. Multiple regression and moderated regression analyses are the two statistical techniques used to perform the analysis and test seven hypotheses.

The findings reveal strong evidence that conservative firms, partial entrepreneurial firms, and entrepreneurial firms differ significantly on export strategies, and such differences have important implications for export performance in both developed-country markets and developing-

country markets. Specifically, entrepreneurial firms, partial entrepreneurial firms, and conservative firms are significantly different in terms of their timing of market entry and product line breadth, and to a lesser extent on product quality and pricing strategy. Moreover, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial firms have superior export performance to partial entrepreneurial firms and conservative firms in both developed-country markets and developing-country markets. Finally, the results do not seem to indicate the interaction effects between EO and any of Porter's generic strategies on export performance.

By examining the behaviors and the performance implications of such behaviors of Thai SMEs from the EO perspective, this study contributes to theory development in both the EO and export marketing literature. In addition, this study provides both managerial implications for exporting SMEs on how to enhance their performance in international markets, and policy recommendations for the Thai government on the development of the SME sector.