



EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON EXPORT PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL FIRMS IN GAZİANTEP PROVINCE*

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the international entrepreneurship (IE) and export performance (EP) of businesses in Gaziantep province. For this aim, data were gathered from companies operating in different sectors in Gaziantep province using convenience sampling method from non-random methods. 263 valid questionnaires were used in the analysis. The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the techniques of the structural equation model. Research shows that IE has a positive and significant effect on EP. In addition, there is a positive relationship between export performance and the sub-dimensions of "international entrepreneurship", "international market orientation", "international learning orientation", "international motivation" and "international network (cooperation) orientation with competitors and non-competitors".

Keywords: International Entrepreneurship, Export Performance, Turkish Firms

JEL Classification: F23, M16, M21

ULUSLARARASI GİRİŞİMCİLİĞİN İHRACAT PERFORMANSI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİN İNCELENMESİ: GAZİANTEP İLİNDEKİ ULUSLARARASI FİRMALARDAN KANITLAR

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada amaç, Gaziantep ilinde ihracat faaliyetinde bulunan işletmelerin uluslararası girişimcilik eğilimi ile ihracat performansları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu amaç kapsamında Gaziantep ilinde farklı sektörde faaliyette bulunan firmalardan tesadüfi olmayan yöntemlerden kolayda örneklem yöntemiyle veriler toplanmıştır. Geçerli olan 263 anket formu analizlerde kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen veriler, yapısal eşitlik modellemesi teknikleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma uluslararası girişimciliğin ihracat performansını pozitif yönde ve anlamlı etkilediğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, uluslararası girişimciliğin "uluslararası girişimcilik yönelimi", "uluslararası pazar yönelimi", "uluslararası öğrenme yönelimi", "uluslararası isteklendirme" ve "rakip olanlarla ve olmayanlarla uluslararası ağ (işbirliği) yönelimi" alt boyutları ile ihracat performansı arasında da pozitif yönde bir ilişki olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası Girişimcilik, İhracat Performansı, Türk Firmaları

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1. INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic life that goes beyond national borders with globalization has directly affected enterprises and paved the way for them to engage in transnational activities. With the industrial revolution, technological developments in the field of technology have contributed to the production of more than the needs of countries, and with this increase in production, enterprises have accelerated their international trade activities by seeking new markets. With the developments on a global scale, enterprises have started in international trade activities to gain more competitive advantages and earn more profits. With the evolution of international trade activities, exports and export performance have become one of the most prioritized areas for enterprises. In order to gain advantage companies have focused on international market performance.

When analyzing the studies on the factors affecting on export performance of business, it may be seen that the first studies on the appropriate export channel identification were conducted based on transaction costs (Klein and Roth, 1990). It can be said that this efficiency-based model is successful in identifying the appropriate export channel. However, firm-specific factors that are believed to be useful in export performance are not considered (Kalinic and Brouthers, 2022). The "resource-based approach" developed by Barney (1991) states that firm-specific resources and competences have a significant impact on firm performance. Based on this approach, Dhanaraj and Beamish (2003) argue that firm-specific resources and competence are important determinants of export performance. The term resource-based view of the firm is defined as tangible and intangible assets that permanently link resources to the firm. Tangible resources are financial capital, physical capital, human capital and organizational capital (Barney, 1991). Human capital that one of the tangible resources of firm makes entrepreneurs more competent and able to find opportunities in the international market (Zahra and George, 2017). It can be said that this model, developed as a model that includes both efficient export channels and firm-specific factors and conceptualized as "international entrepreneurial orientation", has gained a place in the literature in recent years (Cavusgil and Knight, 2009; Jones et al., 2011; Zahra and George, 2017; Kalinic and Brouthers, 2022).

This research attempted to determine the relationship between international entrepreneurship and export performance. For this research, data were collected through questionnaires from the companies, located in Gaziantep province. Turkey's exports are expected to reach 261,9 billion USD in 2024, while the exports of the nine provinces of Southeast Anatolia region, which is one of the most important border regions of Turkey with its important geopolitical location, are around 12,6 billion USD. Meanwhile, the exports of Gaziantep, which is one of the most important industrial centers of Southeast Anatolia region, amounted to 9.90 billion USD in the same period (T.İ.M., 2023). With these figures, Gaziantep province is the 6th province with the highest exports in Turkey by realizing 80% of the exports of the Southeastern Anatolia region alone. This study seeks to answer the question "Is there a relationship between international entrepreneurship and export performance of firms in Gaziantep province?" In the international entrepreneurship literature, there is limited study that examines the link between international entrepreneurship and export performance in Turkey. Altuntaş et al. (2015), Sozuer et al. (2017) and Boukari and İyigün (2022) sampled firms in Turkey. Kurt and Bilge (2016) took only medium and large firms in Manisa organized industrial zone as a sample in their study. Unlike the others, this study focuses on firms in Gaziantep province.

Also, there is no study that examines the link between international entrepreneurship and export performance in Gaziantep province. As part of the research, after the introduction the theoretical and conceptual framework is presented in this section International Entrepreneurship (IE), Export

Performance (EP) and relationship between IE and EP is detailed examined. In the next part, the research method that data collected from the companies operating in Gaziantep province with a questionnaire and analyzed with structural equation modeling techniques will be discussed in detail and then the findings and conclusions are presented.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1. International Entrepreneurship

With globalization, markets have gone beyond national borders and gained an international boundaries, which has led to the often use of the concept of IE in the business life. The concept of IE, which started to be used in the business life, started to be used in the academia after 1980 (Zahra, 1993; Wright and Ricks, 1994; Knight and Cavusgil, 1996; Zahra and George, 2017).

IE is defined by many authors, but also reflects slight differences. Zahra (1993: 8) defines IE as the study of the nature and result of a firm's risk-taking attitude when entering international markets. According to Wright and Ricks (1994: 699). IE is a business-level activity that transcends national boundaries and concentrate on the link between firms and the macro-level environments in which firms operate. According to McDougall and Oviatt's (2000: 903) IE, which is often used in the literature, is expressed as a “combination of innovative, proactive and risk-taking behaviors of firms” to cross the national borders and create value for the organization. More generally, IE may be defined as the process by which businesses exploit opportunities outside national markets through innovative, proactive and risk-taking behavior.

While IE was initially perceived as the “innovation, risk attitude and proactiveness of firms in international markets”, it has become more comprehensive by gaining a wider meaning with the changing process in business life. With the study of Dimitratos et al. (2012), the concept of IE has taken its place in the academically as IE culture and the scale they developed by dividing it into 6 different sub-dimensions has been accepted in the literature. The 6 sub-dimensions of Dimitratos et al.'s study (2012), which is also called IE culture, are expressed as "international entrepreneurial orientation, international market orientation, international learning orientation, international motivation and international network (cooperation) orientation with competitors and non-competitors".

These six dimension are briefly discussed below (Dimitratos et al., 2012; 709-711). IE involves a “firm's innovative, risk-taking, and proactive behavior in international markets”, which enables it to pursue opportunities and gain an advantage over competitors. International market orientation is the firm's attitude and behavior to provide value to foreign customers. International learning orientation is the firm's orientation to actively seek knowledge in foreign markets and use that knowledge to its advantage. International motivation is the process of mobilizing and directing the behavior of organizational members with respect to international initiatives. International networking (with and without competitors) orientation is the degree to which a company acquires resources from partnerships, social networks, and competitors in the external environment to support its operations in international markets.

2.2. Exports and Export Performance

Given the undeniable realities of globalization, firms are now actively pursuing opportunities in international markets. As a result, companies have made "exporting" an important goal, enabling them to expand abroad in the easiest and most cost-effective way. Exports play a significant role on firms' expansion and of countries' economic growth and development. Similarly, the measurement of EP is important for firms' growth and countries' development. Despite the growing number of studies on EP, there is no commonly accepted measure of performance (Zou and Stan 1998).

It has been argued that EP measures should be broadly categorized into financial measures such as sales, growth, and profitability on the one hand, and non-financial measures related to achieving satisfaction goals on the other (Zou and Stan, 1998). EP indicators may be classified as "objective and subjective measurements", using a similar categorization. Indicators that rely primarily on absolute values, such as "export intensity, export sales volume, and export market share", are regarded as objective measures of performance. While, indicators that assess perceptual or attitudinal aspects, such as "perceived export success and satisfaction with export sales", are considered subjective measures of performance (Sousa, 2004, 8). In this study, subjective non-financial performance measures are used as a measure of firms' EP over the past three years.

2.3. International Entrepreneurship and Export Performance

In the international entrepreneurship literature, there are numerous researches on the determinants of factors affecting EP (Aaby and Slater, 1989; Katsikeas and Morgan, 1994; Sousa et al., 2008; Altun, 2017) have been investigated. Studies on factors affecting EP are generally divided into external factors (macro environment) and internal factors (firm and managerial characteristics) (Aaby and Slater, 1989; Man et al., 2002). Studies on external factors affecting EP are generally divided into political environment (Baldauf et al., 2000; Venkateswaran, 2006; Czinkota et al., 2010; Eroğlu et al., 2016; Dabakoğlu ve Bakan, 2021), economic environment (Cavusgil, 1985; Hooper and Kohlhagen, 1978; Fugazza, 2008; Auboin and Ruta, 2011), socio-cultural environment (Cavusgil, 1985; Hollensen, 2010; Czinkota et al., 2010), technological environment (Chetty and Hamilton, 1993; Grossman and Helpman, 1995; Kuemmerle, 1999) and legal environment (Cavusgil et al., 2004; Karapınar, 2012; Li et al., 2013; Xie et al., 2020; Li et al., 2023).

Studies on internal factors affecting EP generally focus on firm size (Reid 1984; Aaby and Slater, 1989; Dean et. al., 2000), firm's international experience (Gripsrud, 1990; Ali and Swiercz, 1991; Dominguez and Sequeira, 1993; Sousa et al, 2008), firm international linkages (Ericsson and Chetty, 2003; Rutihinda, 2008; Freeman, 2012), firm competence (Zou and Stan, 1998; Zahra and Nielsen, 2002; Julien and Ramangalahy, 2003), and manager characteristics and competencies (Brooks and Rosson, 1982; Dubini and Aldrich, 1991; Alvarez and Barney, 2001; Borgersen, 2005).

Recently, studies on the IE orientation of the firm and the firm manager have been widely investigated in the literature (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005; Cavusgil and Knight, 2009; Jones et al., 2011; McDougall et al., 2014; Zahra and George, 2017). However, studies on the relationship between IE and firm internationalization and EP have been found to be limited among developing countries (Nuseir, 2016; Dana et al., 2016; Mostafiz et al., 2021). O'Cass and Weerawardena (2009) examine the relationship between IE, innovation and international market performance in the internationalization of

SMEs. The findings highlight that entrepreneurial SMEs operating in overseas markets exhibit higher levels of organizational innovativeness, which leads to improved market performance.

Nuseir's (2016) study addresses the dimensions of IE, and empirically examines how IE affects the EP of Jordanian SMEs. The empirical analysis underscores the impact of IE on the EP of SMEs, highlighting its crucial role in promoting successful export activities. Furthermore, Dana et al. (2016) explore the impact of IE on the EP of firms in the wine sector. The study examines how IE influences export planning and, ultimately, EP. The study reveals a positive and important link between IE and export outcomes.

The study by Mostafiz et al. (2021) examines the critical role IE orientation in international opportunity process and subsequently improving export performance. As a result of the study, they found that IE orientation of firms in Bangladesh increases the EP and success of firms. Analyzing these limited studies, it can be seen that the studies on Turkey are even more limited (Altuntaş et al., 2015; Kurt and Bilge, 2016; Sozuer et al., 2017; Boukari and İyigün, 2022). While Altuntaş et al. (2015) and Sozuer et al. (2017) sampled SMEs in Turkey, Boukari and İyigün (2022) sampled exporting firms in Turkey. Kurt and Bilge (2016) took only medium and large firms in Manisa organized industrial zone as a sample in their study.

Altuntaş et al. (2015) examine the link between IE and export market performance of exporting firms in Turkey. For this aim, data were collected from enterprises registered in exporters' associations in Turkey. According to the results, it was found that IE orientation significantly affects EP and there is a important link between EP of firms with high level of internationalization and other firms. Sozuer et al. (2017) aimed to investigate the IE of SMEs in Turkey as a determinant of their international market performance. For this purpose, data were collected from firms across Turkey using a survey method. The results showed that there is a positive relationship between IE of SMEs and export market performance. Similarly, Boukari and İyigün (2022) examine the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on EP of firms in Turkey. In order to reveal the relationship between them, data were gathered from international firms in Turkey through survey method. According to the results proactiveness and innovativeness, which are sub-dimensions of entrepreneurship, have a positive relationship with EP.

Kurt and Bilge (2016) aimed to investigate the impact of IE activities of SMEs on export market performance in Manisa province. For this aim data were gathered from firms engaged in foreign trade activities through a questionnaire. As a result, it was observed that there is a link between export market performance and subdimensions of export market performance. By analyzing the global and Turkey-specific studies, it is understood that the EP of firms with high IE orientation is also significantly higher. It is also understood that the sub-dimensions of IE have a positive relationship with EP. In this study, it was hypothesized that IE orientation and sub-dimensions of IE positively affect the export market performance of firms in Gaziantep province and these hypotheses were tried to be tested.

3. METHOD

3.1. Population and Sample

The research sample was selected from a population of companies engaged in export activities in Gaziantep province. The sample was gathered through face-to-face interviews with company owners or senior managers operating in Gaziantep province using the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random methods. This study focuses on the province of Gaziantep. Gaziantep is the most export-oriented city in Turkey, with exports exceeding 10

billion dollars. The southeastern Anatolia region, of which Gaziantep is the center, exports four times more than the sum of the other provinces. This region was therefore deemed worthy of research and constituted the sample of the study. In order to calculate the sample size of the research, the reference table developed by Sekaran (1992) was used. In studies to be conducted with SEM, a sample of 10 times the number of observed variables is considered sufficient if the data are normally distributed. Again, when the data are normally distributed, the minimum sample size for SEM models is 100 and the sample size generally accepted as sufficient is 200 (Meydan and Şeşen, 2015; Gürbüz and Şahin, 2016). In this study, 263 valid questionnaires were obtained. The fact that more than five times the number of valid questionnaires were obtained per variable was considered sufficient for the evaluation (Hair et al., 2016:102). SPSS and AMOS packages were used for analysis. SPSS was used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants. CFA of the scales was performed with the AMOS program. The relationships and effects between the variables were measured. The effect of IE on EP was tested using AMOS program. The maximum likelihood method was used to estimate the parameters of the SEM developed in the study. “ χ^2/df , CFI, RMSEA, GFI, AGFI” and goodness of fit indices were used to evaluate the models tested in the study.

3.2. Model of the Research and Hypotheses

The research model constructs IE as an independent variable and EP as a dependent variable. The theoretical model developed in the research is shown in Figure 1.

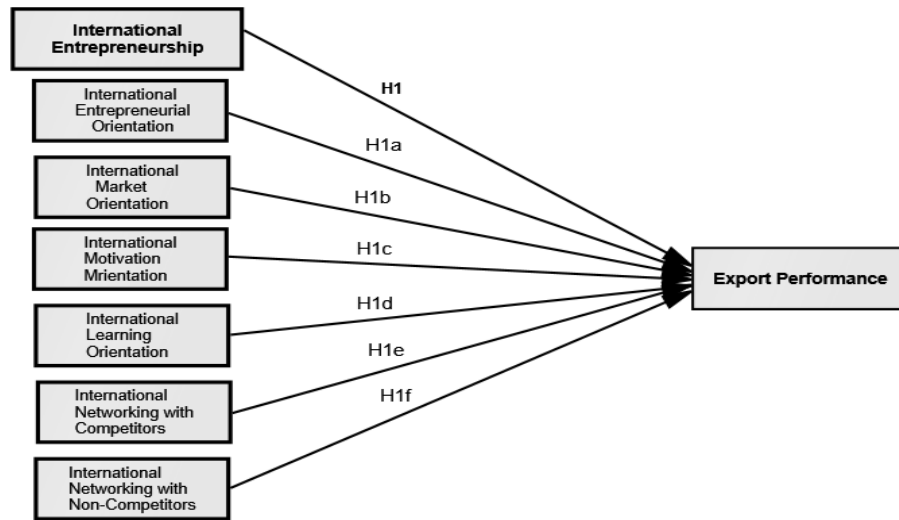


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

The hypotheses developed during the research are presented below:

H1: International entrepreneurship positively affects export performance

H1a: International entrepreneurial orientation positively affects export performance

H1b: International market orientation positively affects export performance

H1c: International motivation orientation positively affects export performance

H1d: International learning orientation positively affects export performance

H1e: Networking orientation with competitors positively affects export performance

H1f: Networking orientation with non-competitors positively affects export performance

3.3. Measurement Tools

In this quantitative research design study, it was tried to determine the impact of IE on EP of exporting firms operating in Gaziantep. In the study, a questionnaire was used as a data collection technique. The questionnaire has three sections. The first section is determining the international orientation of exporting firms, the second section is determine their export performance and the third section is descriptive information (trade name of the business, duration of exporting, duration of operation and sector in which the enterprise operates) about the firms.

Dimitratos et al.'s (2012) six-dimensional international entrepreneurship scale, which includes international entrepreneurial orientation and culture, was used. The dimensions of this scale are defined as “international entrepreneurial orientation, international market orientation, international motivation, international learning orientation, international networking orientation with competitors, and international networking orientation with non-competitors”. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin analysis result of the scale was .718 and Barlett's test was significant ($p \leq .0001$). The export performance scale of firms developed by Adu-Gyamfi and Korneliusen (2013) was used. The scale consists of 1 statements and one dimension. The scales used in the study are a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree.” The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined to be .95. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin analysis result of the scale was .925 and Barlett's test was significant ($p \leq .0001$).

In order to ascertain whether the data set under examination conforms to a normal distribution, a normality test was performed. The study proceeded with an examination of the skewness and kurtosis values to ascertain their conformity to the normal distribution. As stated by Mayers (2013), “skewness and kurtosis” values within the range of -2 to +2 indicate that the data align with the normal distribution. The calculated skewness values for the research scales exhibit a range between -1.425 and 0.857. Given that the kurtosis values vary between 0.518 and 0.775, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, SEM can be applied between research variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

3.4. Validity and Reliability Analyses

In this section, the validity and reliability analyses of the international entrepreneurship and export performance scales are conducted, with CFA applied to examine the appropriateness of the measurement instruments for the data. In this context, Figure 2 provides the formal representation of the second confirmatory factor analysis. The findings of the second-level CFA substantiated the six-dimensional structure of the international entrepreneurship scale and the unidimensional structure of the export performance scale utilized in the research. The scales

employed in the research were found to be in accordance with goodness of fit indices (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013; Kurnaz, 2025). The results of the CFA for the scales are presented in Table 1.

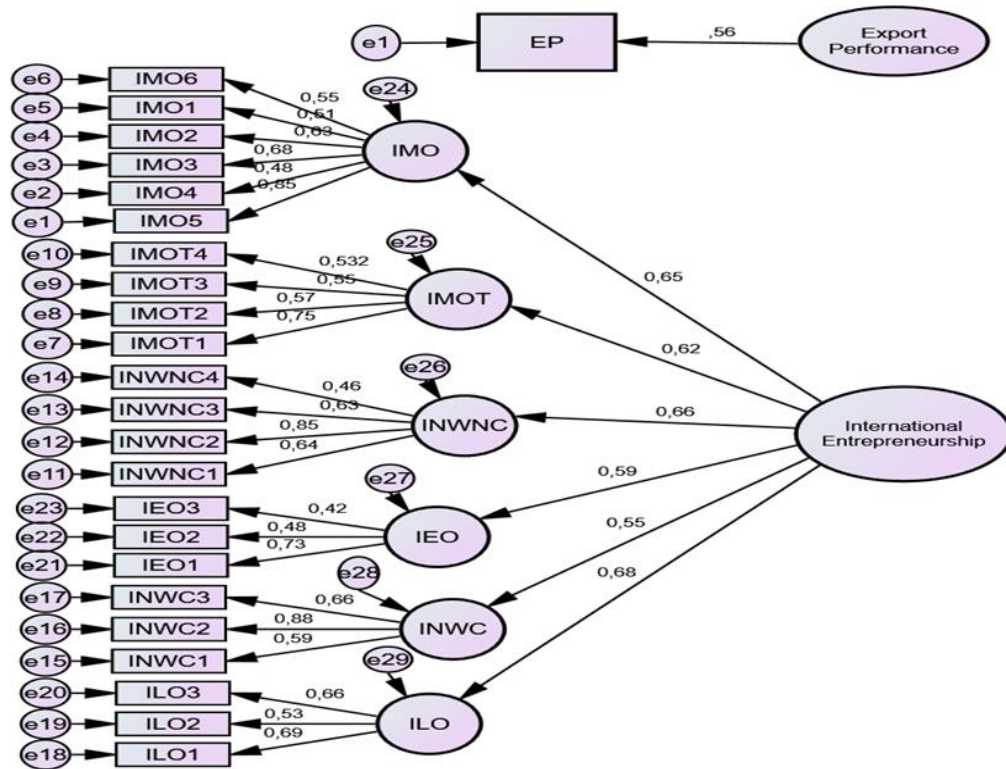


Figure 2. Secondary Level CFA Model for the Scales

In order for the measurement tools utilized in the study to exhibit acceptable fit values, χ^2/df should be situated within the range of '2-5', and RMSEA, GFI and CFI values should be between '0.90-0.99' (Şeşen and Basım, 2010; Özdamar, 2017). As demonstrated in Table 1, it is evident that the measurement tools employed in this study exhibit satisfactory goodness of fit values. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2010) underscored that the reliability coefficient of the measurement tools should exceed 0.70 as a threshold value. In this regard, it can be concluded that the measurement tools employed in this study demonstrated high reliability (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013; Hair et al., 2010; Kurnaz et al., 2024).

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the Scales

Scales	χ^2/df	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
International Entrepreneurship	2.745	0.92	0.94	0.92	0.071
Export Performance	2.865	0.91	0.93	0.90	0.065

To ensure the validity and reliability of the entire questionnaire, CFA with AMOS was used to determine whether the existing factor decompositions were appropriately provided. Several goodness-of-fit criteria are used to determine the appropriateness of the CFA analysis. In the study, the measurement model was tested by creating covariances between all variables

and attempting to achieve significant levels for the loadings that comprise the factors. As previously stated, loadings between 0.3 and 0.4 are deemed acceptable at the minimum level, while factors at the 0.5 level are considered practically significant (Hair et al., 2010; Haydaroglu and Besler, 2021). The factor loadings of all statements in the model ranged from 0.527 to 0.893. In this study, “ χ^2 /df, GFI, RMSEA, CFI, and AGFI” indices were used. The fit index results of the model were “ χ^2 /df: 2.337; RMSEA: 0.070; CFI: 0.912; GFI: 0.902 and AGFI: 0.913”. These indices show that the model has a good fit. No latent variable was dropped from the model. The final measurement model of the scale is shown in Figure 3.

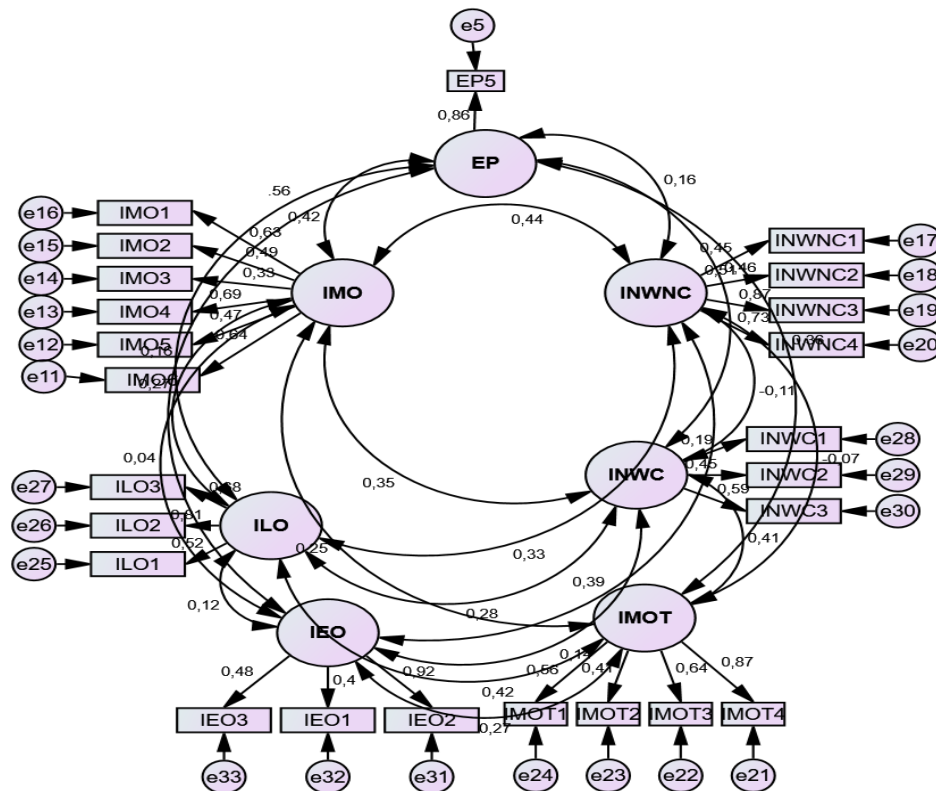


Figure 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for all Variables

4. FINDINGS

The demographic information of the companies and participants in the sample group was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. When analyzing the demographic variables, it is analyzed that the majority of the 263 enterprises in the sample group are limited liability companies (51.7%), the operating period of the enterprises is mostly over 21 years (36.8%), the important part of the sector in which the enterprises operate is textile (46.4%), the export period of the enterprises is mostly 11-20 years (31.2%). The demographic information of the enterprises in the sample group is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants and Enterprises

Trade Name of the Business	Frequency	%	Duration of Operation	Frequency	%
Incorporated Enterprise	103	39.2	1-5 years	41	15.6
Limited Enterprise	136	51.7	6-10 years	52	19.8
Person Enterprise	24	9.1	11-20 years	73	27.7
			21 years and above	97	36.8
Total	263	100	Total	263	100
Duration of Exporting	Frequency	%	Sector in which the Enterprise Operates	Frequency	%
1-5 years	77	29.2	Carpet	45	17.1
6-10 years	52	19.8	Grain	36	13.7
11-20 years	82	31.2	Textile	120	45.6
21 years and above	52	19.8	The Other	62	23.6
Total	263	100	Total	263	100

4.1. Evaluation of Measurement Model

Before the structural model of the study, the mean scores of the variables and dimensions are shown in Table 2. In the dimensions of international entrepreneurship, the mean score of international entrepreneurial orientation (IEO) is (3.37), the mean score of international market orientation (IMO) is (2.90), the mean score of international motivation orientation (IMOT) is (3.95), the mean score of international learning orientation (ILO) is (2.95), the mean score of international networking with competitors (INWC) is (3.15) and the mean score of international networking with non-competitors (INWNC) is (3.10). The mean value of export performance is (3.67). Correlation analysis shows that export performance, which is the dependent variable of the research, is positively related to international entrepreneurial orientation ($r = 0.12$; $p \leq 0.01$), international market orientation ($r = 0.26$; $p \leq 0.01$), international motivation orientation ($r = 0.26$; $p \leq 0.01$), international learning orientation ($r = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$), international networking orientation with competitors ($r = 0.25$; $p \leq 0.01$) and international networking orientation with non-competitors ($r = 0.26$; $p \leq 0.01$). The average variance explained (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values are calculated to verify structural validity. AVE values above 0.50 and CR values above 0.70 are accepted values (Hair et al., 2010). The reliability of the scales used in the study can be expressed by the Cronbach's alpha value. The closeness of this value to 1 indicates structural reliability. Cronbach's alpha values for both scales were above 0.85. This indicates the reliability criterion of the scales (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Both AVE and CR values provided the desired values for all variables and the content validity of the questionnaire was proven. Thus, the results of the CFA analysis confirm both the reliability, and the validity of the scale used. The reliability, AVE and CR values of the scales are shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Correlations of the Constructs.

Constructs	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. IEO	3.37	0.63							
2. IMO	2.90	0.67	0.315**						
3. IMOT	3.95	1.05	0.261**	0.166**					
4. ILO	2.95	1.15	0.322**	0.186**	-0.067*				
5. INWC	3.15	0.92	0.252**	0.200**	0.117**	0.137**			
6. INWNC	3.10	0.93	0.266**	0.232**	0.127**	0.274**	0.373**		
7. EP	3.67	0.95	0.124**	0.114**	0.297**	-0.252**	0.121**	0.171*	

Notes: n = 263; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01.

Table 4: Results of the Research Measurement Model.

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
International Market Orientation (IMO)	IMO1	0.627			
	IMO2	0.681			
	IMO3	0.536			
	IMO4	0.645	0.72	0.72	0.61
	IMO5	0.527			
	IMO6	0.775			
International Motivation Orientation (IMOT)	IMOT1	0.460			
	IMOT2	0.690	0.71	0.74	0.59
	IMOT3	0.672			
	IMOT4	0.608			
International Networking With Non-Competitors (INWNC)	INWNC1	0.893			
	INWNC2	0.892	0.75	0.78	0.65
	INWNC3	0.821			
	INWNC4	0.811			
International Learning Orientation (ILO)	ILO1	0.719	0.72	0.71	0.63
	ILO2	0.817			
	ILO3	0.839			
International Networking With Competitors (INWC)	INWC1	0.725			
	INWC2	0.871	0.71	0.81	0.60
	INWC3	0.860			
International Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO)	IEO1	0.852			
	IEO2	0.811	0.74	0.83	0.77
	IEO3	0.820			

In order to assess the discriminant validity of each variable, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied. In order for the square root of the average variance explained to be greater than the other elements in the same column, it must be demonstrated that it is the most dominant variable in that particular column. As evidenced in Table 5, IE (0.87), EP (0.82), IMO (0.84), INWNC (0.85), ILO (0.83), INWC (0.78), IEO (0.81) and IMOT (0.75). In accordance with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, it is evident that all variables satisfy discriminant validity. This is evidenced by the fact that the AVE square root of each variable exceeds its highest correlation with other variables. Consequently, the model is deemed to possess discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Çavuşoğlu, 2021). Factor analysis was used to assess the validity and reliability of the export performance scale. The factor loading of Export Performance (EP1) was 0.802. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was determined to be 0.864. Bartlett's

Sphericity test was analyzed as " $\chi^2 = 2524.366$, $df = 45$, $Sig < .000$ ". In general, a factor loading of ≥ 0.70 indicates that the item adequately represents the construct (Hair et al., 2010). The results of the export performance measurement model are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Measurement Model of Export Performance

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading
Export Performance (EP)	EP1	0.802

Table 6. Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.IE	0.87							
2.EP	0.80	0.82						
3.IMO	0.73	0.59	0.84					
4.INWNC	0.69	0.57	0.62	0.85				
5.ILO	0.62	0.55	0.60	0.53	0.83			
6.INWC	0.59	0.54	0.58	0.50	0.49	0.78		
7.IEO	0.57	0.51	0.53	0.48	0.45	0.43	0.81	
8. IMOT	0.55	0.48	0.49	0.46	0.44	0.40	0.38	0.75

4.2. Structural Model and Testing of Hypotheses

In order to proceed with the model test, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the measurement tools in order to assess their construct validity. Following this, correlation analysis was performed in order to examine the relationships between the variables in the study. The results of the analyses revealed that there were significant relationships between the variables. This study examines the influence of firms' international entrepreneurial activities (IE) on their export performance (EP). Figure 4 illustrates the results of the structural equation model (SEM) regression analysis, which assesses the impact of IE on EP. The model parameters are standardized and demonstrate an acceptable level of fit.

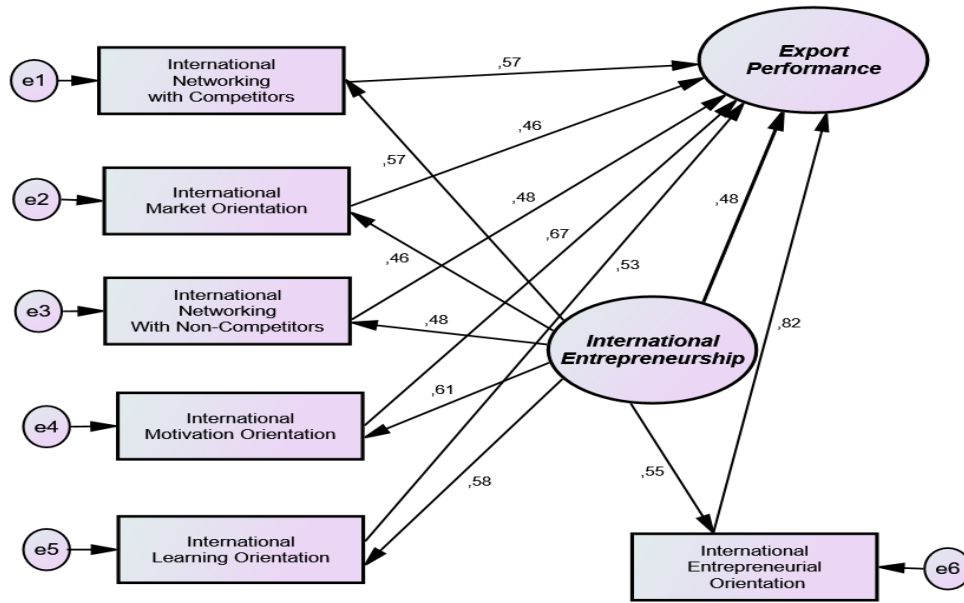


Figure 4. Structural Research Model

Table 7. The Results of the Structural Model

Hypotheses	Proposed effect	Path coefficient	Estimate	t-values	Results
IE→EP	+	0.48	.43	5.880	Supported
IEO→EP	+	0.82	.44	3.325	Supported
IMO→EP	+	0.46	.41	2.525	Supported
IMOT→EP	+	0.67	.52	4.494	Supported
ILO→EP	+	0.53	.41	3.472	Supported
INWC→EP	+	0.57	.39	2.612	Supported
INWNC→EP	+	0.48	.31	1.983	Supported

When Table 7 and Figure 4 are analyzed; it is seen that the β effect of international entrepreneurship (IE) on export performance (EP) is (0.48). In this case, it is determined that IE has a positive and significant effect on EP. When the R^2 values in the model are analyzed, it is seen that 36% of the change in EP is explained by IE. With these effects, hypothesis H1 is supported. When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the β effect of IE dimensions, IEO on EP is (0.82) ($\beta=0.82$; $p<0.001$). In this case, H2 hypothesis is supported. The β effect of IMO on EP is (0.46) ($\beta=0.46$; $p<0.001$). In this case, hypothesis H3 is supported. The β effect of IMOT on EP is (0.67) ($\beta=0.67$; $p<0.001$). In this case, hypothesis H4 is supported. The β effect of ILO on EP is (0.53) ($\beta=0.53$; $p<0.001$). In this case, hypothesis H5 is supported. The β -effect of INWC on EP is (0.57) ($\beta=0.57$; $p<0.001$). In this case, hypothesis H6 is not supported. The β effect of INWNC on EP is (0.48) ($\beta=0.48$; $p<0.001$). In this case, hypothesis H7 is supported.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The study found that IE has a positive and significant effect on EP. In conclusion, there is a positive and moderately strong relationship between the sub-dimensions of "international entrepreneurship orientation", "international market orientation", "international learning orientation", "international motivation" and "international network (cooperation) orientation with competitors and non-competitors" and export performance. The results show that the export market performance of firms with high international entrepreneurship orientation is also high. The findings of this study are similar to similar studies (Navarro-García and Peris-Ortiz, 2014; Altuntaş et al., 2015; Kurt and Bilge, 2016; Dana et al., 2016; Sozuer et al., 2017; Asghari and Rostami, 2017; Mostafiz et al., 2021; Faroque et al., 2021; Santhosh, 2021; Boukari and İyigün, 2022). For example, O'Cass and Weerawardena (2009) demonstrated that international entrepreneurial orientation enhance the export performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. Similarly, Mostafiz et al. (2021) found that firms with high international entrepreneurship orientation achieved greater success in export activities.

This study contributes to this literature by emphasizing the role of international market orientation, international learning orientation, and international networking orientation in enhancing export performance. This supports the international entrepreneurial culture model proposed by Dimitratos et al. (2012). Additionally, the study highlights the unique impacts of each sub-dimension of IE on export performance, further enriching the existing body of knowledge.

The evidence suggests that the growth in the export performance of firms is largely attributable to three key factors: international market orientation, international networking with competitors, and international learning orientation. The findings indicate that firms seeking to enhance their export performance may benefit from fostering greater international entrepreneurial orientations. The findings of the study indicate that international entrepreneurship has a positive impact on export performance. Thus, firms seeking to enhance their export performance may benefit from focusing on their international entrepreneurial orientations. Furthermore, firms aiming to gain a competitive advantage in the international market and expand their market share may prioritize their entrepreneurial and innovative characteristics.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Gaziantep is a prominent industrial and export hub in Turkey, with notable strengths in the textile, food, and carpet sectors. The research findings suggest that firms operating in Gaziantep with a higher degree of international entrepreneurial orientation exhibit enhanced export performance. Moreover, the capacity of firms in the region to establish international networks is identified as a pivotal factor in maintaining export success.

The study further proposes that firms in Gaziantep should adopt innovation and technological advancements to achieve competitiveness in global markets. The integration of

digitalization and e-commerce strategies has been identified as a key factor in enhancing export process efficiency and providing a competitive advantage. In light of the research findings, the following recommendations are put forward for managers and policymakers:

Strengthening International Market Strategies: It is recommended that firms develop more effective strategies for entering international markets to enhance their export performance. Observations indicate that firms with high international entrepreneurial orientation exhibit a faster and more successful adaptation to new markets.

Enhancing International Networks and Collaborations: The findings highlight the positive impact of international networking orientation on export performance, and therefore the fostering of collaborations between firms and increased participation in international trade fairs can be beneficial.

Increasing Innovation and Technology Utilization: In order to boost competitiveness in international markets, firms should enhance their innovation capacities. Investments in digitalization and e-commerce can significantly improve firms' export processes.

Supporting Export Policies: The development of supportive policies at the local and national levels can facilitate firms' entry into international markets. Government incentives, low-interest export loans, and tax benefits can encourage firms to expand globally.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

In this study, a sample of firms from different sectors in Gaziantep is examined. By examining the industrialization and EP of Gaziantep province, it is found that it is positively different from the provinces in the region. It can be said that IE is an important determinant of this differentiation. Since this study focuses solely on firms operating in Gaziantep, conducting similar research in other regions of Turkey will enhance the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, conducting comparative studies across different regions to examine regional variations, utilizing qualitative research methods to gain in-depth insights from managers and business owners regarding international entrepreneurship processes, exploring the effects of digitalization, sustainability, and green entrepreneurship on export performance, and investigating the influence of macroeconomic variables and government policies on firms' international entrepreneurship will provide more comprehensive insights.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the impact of international entrepreneurship tendencies on export performance among exporting firms in Gaziantep. The findings suggest that firms aiming to succeed in international markets should further develop their entrepreneurial, innovation, and networking capabilities. Furthermore, the study offers important implications for policymakers and support institutions to help firms overcome challenges in the internationalization process.

Ethical Statement

Based on the decision dated 04.05.2021 and numbered 2021/4-1 taken by the Mardin Artuklu University Ethical Evaluation Board, the questionnaire used within the scope of the study was accepted as appropriate in terms of scientific research and publication ethics.

Contribution Rate Statement

All authors of the study participated in all processes from study design to manuscript preparation and read and approved the final version.

Conflict of interest

This study did not lead to any individual or institutional/organizational conflict of interest.

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Extended Abstract

Examining The Effect of International Entrepreneurship on Export Performance: Evidence from Turkish International Firms

Aim: With the developments on a global scale, enterprises have started in international trade activities to gain more competitive advantages and earn more profits. With the evolution of international trade activities, exports and export performance have become one of the most prioritized areas for enterprises. In order to gain advantage companies have focused on international market performance. This study addresses international entrepreneurship as one of the important determinants of export performance. This research mainly attempted to determine the relationship between international business orientation and export performance.

Method: The sample of the research was selected from the 263 companies that are engaged in export activities in Gaziantep province. The sample of the research was collected from the companies operating in Gaziantep province by using convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random methods. SPSS and AMOS package programs were used to analyze. SPSS was used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants. CFA of the scales were performed with the AMOS program. The relationships and effects between the variables were measured. The effect of IE on EP was tested using AMOS program.

Findings: The demographic information of the companies and participants in the sample group was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. When analyzing the demographic variables, it is analyzed that the majority of the 263 enterprises in the sample group are limited liability companies (51.7%), the operating period of the enterprises is mostly over 21 years (36.8%), the important part of the sector in which the enterprises operate is textile (46.4%), the export period of the enterprises is mostly 11-20 years (31.2%).). Correlation analysis shows that export performance, which is the dependent variable of the research, is positively related to international entrepreneurial orientation ($r = 0.12$; $p \leq 0.01$), international market orientation ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.01$), international motivation orientation ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.01$), international learning orientation ($r = 0.32$; $p < 0.01$), international networking orientation with competitors ($r = 0.25$; $p < 0.01$) and international networking orientation with non-competitors ($r = 0.26$; $p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: The study found that IE has a positive and significant effect on EP. In conclusion, there is a positive and moderately strong relationship between the sub-dimensions of "international entrepreneurship orientation", "international market orientation", "international learning orientation", "international motivation" and "international network (cooperation) orientation with competitors and non-competitors" and export performance. The results show that the export market performance of firms with high international entrepreneurship orientation is also high. The findings of this study are similar to similar studies (Navarro-García and Peris-Ortiz, 2014; Altuntaş et al., 2015; Kurt and Bilge, 2016; Dana et al., 2016; Sozuer et al., 2017; Asghari and Rostami, 2017; Mostafiz et al., 2021; Faroque et al., 2021; Santhosh, 2021; Boukari and İyigün, 2022).