# THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND FIRM PERFORMANCE: MEDIATING ROLE OF OPEN INNOVATION, STUDY OF FURNITURE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN MALAYSIA

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A thesis submitted in

fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Technology Management and Business

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my Father and Mother. I also dedicate this thesis to my family members:

Fazli Haleem

Dr. Fazli Wadood Advocate. Fazal Aziz

My sweet daughter: Aafia

This is in recognition of their myriad perseverance during my long absence. I love you all and may Allah bless our lives.



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ربِّ زِدْنِي عِلْماً My Lord, increase me in knowledge.

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent the most Gracious, Praise be to Him Who sustained my life to this moment to accomplish this work.

Alhamdulillah rabbil aalamin.

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Your endurance and sacrifice are greatly acknowledged.

May Allah reward everyone in the best of ways

#### **ABSTRACT**

Entrepreneurship and innovation are topics of great interest for the scientific community, firms and for all major governments worldwide. Malaysian furniture industry play an important role in economic development and income growth. However, increasing business competition has placed Malaysian furniture companies in a vulnerable position especially by cheap furniture producing countries like Vietnam and China. Undoubtedly, their success in responding to the challenges of their business environment depends, in great part, on their strategy for engaging in entrepreneurial behaviours and openness to innovation. The aim of the study was to empirically examine entrepreneurial orientation and open innovation dimensions that can be used by owner/managers/entrepreneurs whenever deciding whether or not to introduce innovation into the Malaysian manufacturing sector. The research used mixed-method research design in a QUAN-qual context to administer survey questionnaires and interviews of furniture manufacturer's managers and owner's in Johor state respectively. In the quantitative strand, a purposive sampling strategy was used to administer questionnaires to a total of 150 furniture firms' owner/managers in Johor state. A total of 82 questionnaires were finally used in the analysis. The low response rate was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however according to GPower sampling measures these response were adequate. Using a purposive case sampling strategy, a total of 5 furniture firm's managers/owners were purposefully selected from three different locations in Johor Malaysia to participate in the interview. The quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling Software, SmartPLS 3.2.6. The qualitative data was coded, categorised and then later analysed through Thematic NetworkAnalysis. The research findings strengthens understanding of the EO and IO concept and their relations to firm performance within a context to those reported in prior studies. The R-square value for firm performance reached 0.409, for inbound innovation 0.308, and for outbound innovation were 0.268, accordingly. Even then, the overall R-square value for firm performance is 0.409, implying that the study's independent variables can demonstrate 40.9 percent of the variance in firm performance. Independent entrepreneurial orientation constructs can describe 30.8 percent of inbound innovation variance and 26.8 percent of outbound innovation heterogeneity. The study's empirical findings provide the basis for recommendations for furniture industry in enhancing their EO and IO for policy-makers to design entrepreneurship and innovation support programs and initiatives for theindustry.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Umumnya, keusahawanan dan inovasi merupakan topik yang sangat menarik bagi komuniti sejagat, firma dan semua kerajaan di seluruh dunia. Industri perabot di Malaysiamemainkan peranan penting dalam pembangunan ekonomi dan pertumbuhan pendapatan. Namun begitu, persaingan perniagaan yang semakin meningkat telah meletakkan daya saing syarikat-syarikat perabot di Malaysia dalam kedudukan yang terdedah terutamanya dari negara pengeluar perabot murah seperti Vietnam dan China. Dalam usaha untuk mencetuskan perbincangan mengenai kemungkinan menyediakan budaya keusahawanan yang boleh digunakan untuk menangani inovasi dan kelebihan daya saing ke atas negara-negara persaingan dalam industri yang sama, Penyelidikan ini menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kaedah bercampur dalam konteks quan-qual untuk mentadbir soal selidik dan temuduga kepada pengurus dan pemilik firma pengeluar perabot di negeri Johor. Dalam kaedah kuantitatif terkandas, strategi persampelan rawak pelbagai peringkat digunakan untuk mentadbir soal selidik kepada 150 pemilik dan pengurus firma perabot di negeri Johor, Malaysia. Sebanyak 82 borang soal selidik akhirnya digunakan dalam analisis. Dengan kadar maklum balas yang rendah adalah disebabkan pandemik Covid-19. Dengan menggunakan strategi persampelan kes yang purposif, seramai tiga orang pengurus dan pemilik firma perabot telah dipilih dari tiga lokasi berbeza di Johor untuk menyertai temuduga tersebut. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) dan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling Software, SmartPLS 3.2.6. Data kualitatif telah dikodkan, dikategorikan dan kemudian dianalisa menggunakan Thematic Network Analysis. Dapatan kajian telahmengukuhkan pemahaman tentang konsep EO dan IO serta hubungannya dengan prestasi yang dilaporkan dalam konteks kajian terdahulu. Tambahan pula, ini merupakan kajian EO dan IO yang pertama dalam industri perabot di Malaysia yang sekurang-kurangnya menggabungkan kaedah penyelidikan kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Dengan mengintegrasikan kaedah campuran, kajian ini membolehkan penyelidik memberi penerangan yang sangat jelas, mendalam dan menyeluruh untuk menjawab semua persoalan kajian. Nilai R-kuasa dua untuk prestasi firma mencapai 0.409, untuk inovasi masuk 0.308, dan untuk inovasi keluar adalah 0.268, sewajarnya. Walaupun begitu, nilai R-kuasa dua keseluruhan untuk prestasi firma ialah 0.409, membayangkan bahawa pembolehubah bebas kajian boleh menunjukkan 40.9 peratus varians dalam prestasi firma. Hasil kajian empirikal telah menunjukkan asas yang disyorkan untuk industri perabot bagi meningkatkan EO dan IO kepada pembuat dasar dalam reka bentukkeusahawanan dan program sokongan inovasi serta inisiatif kepada industri.

# CONTENTS

	TITL	E	I
	DEDI	CATION	ii
	ACK	NOWLEDGEMENT	iii
	ABST	TRACT	iv
	ABST	TRAK	v
	CON	TENTS	vi
	LIST	OF TABLES	xi
	LIST	OF FIGURES	xi
	LIST	OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
	LIST	OF APPENDICES	XV
CHAPTER 1	1.1	RODUCTION Introduction	<b>1</b> 1
	1.2	Background to the study	2
	1.3	Research problem	7
	1.4	Research questions	10
	1.5	Research objectives	10
	1.6	Significance of the research	11
	1.7	Scope of the study	12
	1.8	Organisation of the thesis	12
	1.9	Definitions of key terms	13
	1.10	Summary	15
CHAPTER 2		RATURE REVIEW	16
	2.1	Introduction	16
	2.2	Firm Performance	17
	2.3	Open Innovation	20

	2.4	Conce	pt of open innovation	21
		2.4.1	Inbound open innovation	24
		2.4.2	Outbound open Innovation	25
		2.4.3	Criticism of open innovation	27
	2.5	Entrep	preneurship	28
	2.6	Entrep	oreneurial Orientation	31
	2.7	Entrep	oreneurial Orientation Dimensions	34
		2.7.1	Autonomy	35
		2.7.2	Innovativeness	37
		2.7.3	Risk-Taking	39
		2.7.4	Proactiveness	41
		2.7.5	Competitive Aggressiveness	42
	2.8	Devel	opment of theoretical framework	48
		2.8.1	Recourse-Based View	51
		2.8.2	Dynamic capability theory	53
		2.8.3	RBV and DC supporting this research	55
	2.9	Resear	rch Framework	56
		2.9.1	Research assessment model and hypotheses	
			development	57
		2.9.2	Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation	
			dimensions and Firm Performance	58
		2.9.3	Relationship between open innovation and firm	
			performance	64
		2.9.4	Relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and	
			open innovation	70
		2.9.5	Mediation effects of open innovation on entrepreneur	ial
			orientation and firm performance	74
	2.10	Summ	ary	78
CHAPTER 3			METHODOLOGY	80
	3.1	Introd		80
	3.2		rch process flowchart	81
	3.3	Resear	rch philosophy	82

vii

	3.3.1	Philosophical worldview	84
3.4	Justifi	cation for choosing Pragmatism as a research worl	dview86
3.5	Resea	rch approach	87
3.6	Overv	riew of mixed methods research	87
	3.6.1	Mixed methods typology	89
	3.6.2	Justification for the choice of Explanatory Seque	ntial
		Mixed Method	93
3.7	Resea	rch design	94
3.8	Unit o	of analysis	95
3.9	Popul	ation of the research	95
3.10	Samp	le design	95
	3.10.1	Sample frame	96
	3.10.2	Sampling technique	96
	3.10.3	Sample size	97
3.11	Metho	ods of data collection	101
	3.11.1	Quantitative data collection	102
	3.11.2	Qualitative data collection	104
3.12	Metho	ods of data analysis	105
	3.12.1	Qualitative data analysis	105
	3.12.2	Quantitative data analysis	107
3.13	Media	ation Analysis	108
3.14	Valida	ation of research instruments	110
3.15	Filot t	est result	111
3.16	Relial	pility analysis	112
3.17	Sumn	nary	114
CHAPTER 4 DA	TA ANA	LYSIS AND RESULTS	116
			116
4.2	_		116
4.3		•	117
	4.3.1	Missing value analysis MVA	117
	4.3.2	Diagnosis of outliers	119
	4.3.1	Test of data normality	122
	3.5 3.6 3.7 3.8 3.9 3.10 3.11 3.12 3.13 3.14 3.15 3.16 3.17 CHAPTER 4 DAY 4.1	3.4 Justifi 3.5 Resea 3.6 Overv 3.6.1 3.6.2  3.7 Resea 3.8 Unit of 3.9 Popul 3.10 Samp 3.10.1 3.10.2 3.10.3 3.11 Metho 3.11.1 3.11.2  3.12 Metho 3.12.1 3.12.2  3.13 Media 3.14 Valida 3.15 Pilot t 3.16 Reliab 3.17 Summ  CHAPTER 4 DATA ANA 4.1 Introd 4.2 Quest 4.3 Prelin 4.3.1 4.3.2	3.5 Research approach 3.6 Overview of mixed methods research 3.6.1 Mixed methods typology 3.6.2 Justification for the choice of Explanatory Seque Mixed Method 3.7 Research design 3.8 Unit of analysis 3.9 Population of the research 3.10 Sample design 3.10.1 Sample frame 3.10.2 Sampling technique 3.10.3 Sample size 3.11 Methods of data collection 3.11.1 Quantitative data collection 3.11.2 Qualitative data collection 3.12 Methods of data analysis 3.12.1 Qualitative data analysis 3.14 Validation Analysis 3.15 Pilot test result 3.16 Reliability analysis 3.17 Summary  CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS 4.1 Introduction 4.2 Questionnaire administration 4.3 Preliminary data analysis MVA 4.3.1 Missing value analysis MVA 4.3.2 Diagnosis of outliers

	4.4	Comm	non Method Variance	123
		4.4.1	Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents	124
	4.5	Descri	ptive analysis	126
		4.5.1	Innovativeness responses	126
		4.5.2	Proactiveness responses	127
		4.5.3	Risk-Taking responses	129
		4.5.4	Competitive aggressiveness responses	130
		4.5.5	Autonomy	131
		4.5.6	Inbound open innovation responses	132
		4.5.7	Outbound open innovation responses	133
		4.5.8	Firm performance responses	134
	4.6	Valida	ation of research assessment model	135
		4.6.1	Assessment of measurement (inner) model	137
		4.6.2	Structural (outer) model evaluation	144
		4.6.3	Evaluation of mediators	152
	4.7	Hypot	heses testing	158
	4.8	Qualit	ative data analysis	165
	4.9	Intervi	iew	166
		4.9.1	Readiness to employ entrepreneurial orientation	172
		4.9.2	Readiness and implementation of open innovation	180
	4.10	Summ	ary	188
CHAPTER 5	<b>5 DISC</b> 5.1	USSIO Introd	N, RECOMMENDATIONA & CONCLUSIONS uction	<b>190</b>
	5.2	Resear	rch overview	190
		5.2.1	Research question one	192
		5.2.2	Research question two	196
		5.2.3	Research question three	200
		5.2.4	Research question four	202
		5.2.5	Research question five	204
	5.3		rch implication and contribution	209
		5.3.1	Academic contribution	209
		5.3.2	Management and Firm implications	211

ix

	5.3.3	Policy implication	212
	5.4	Limitations and recommendations for future research	213
5.4.1	Limita	ations of research	213
	5.4.2	Recommendations for future research	214
5.5	Concl	usion	215
REFERENCES			217



# LIST OF TABLES

1. 1: Market Shares of the Major Countries by Percentage, (CSIL, 2015)	4
2. 1: Definition by different author'	21
2. 2: Different Author's definition of Entrepreneurship	30
2. 3: Definitions of Entrepreneurial Orientation by different authors	33
2. 4: Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation Adapted from (Lumpkin	
& Dess, 1996)	35
2. 5: Taxonomy of previous research on entrepreneurial orientation	44
2. 6: Theories used in different studies	49
2. 7: Taxonomy of conceptual and empirical literature on EO and	
performance	58
2. 8: Taxonomy of open innovation and firm performance	66
3. 1: Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice	83
3. 2: Research Paradigm (Saunder et al., 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005)	84
3. 3: Designs for mixed methods research (Cameron, 2009; Caracelli &	
Greene, 1997)	89
3. 4: Major Mix method design types (Cameron, 2009; Creswell & Plano	ı
Clark, 2007)	90
3. 5: Guidelines for sample size determinants for qualitative interview	101
3. 6: Questionnaire items	103
3. 7: Reliability analysis of the questionnaire scales	113
4. 1: Analysis of questionnaire administration	117
4. 2: Descriptive Statistics	120
4. 3:Residuals Statistics	122
4. 4: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents	125
4. 5: Respondents response towards innovativeness	126
4. 6: Respondents response towards proactiveness	128
4. 7: Respondents response to risk-taking	129

	xvii
4. 8: Respondents response to competitive aggressiveness	130
4. 9: Respondents response to autonomy	131
4. 10: Respondents response to inbound open innovation	132
4. 11: Respondents response to outbound open innovation	134
4. 12: Respondents response to firm performance	135
4. 13: PLS-SEM model evaluation criteria	136
4. 14: Reliability of measurement model	140
4. 15: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)	144
4. 16: Path coefficients	147
4. 17: Coefficient of determination (R2) of endogenous constructs	148
4. 18: Mediation effect of inbound innovation	155
4. 19:Mediation effect of outbound innovation	156
4. 20: Results of hypotheses testing	161
4. 21: Results from the interview conducted with respondents	167
4. 22: Results from the interview conducted	182
4. 23: Summary of quantitative and qualitative findings	188
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKS	

# LIST OF FIGURES

1.	. 1: The Main Furniture Exporting Countries 2009-2014, USD Billion	
	(CSIL,	4
2.	. 1: Circumscribing the domain of business performance adapted from	Į
	(Murphy et al., 1996)	18
2.	. 2: Research framework of the study	56
3.	. 1: Research Process Flowchart	81
3.	. 2: Mixed Methods Research Designs (Creswell, 2013b)	91
3.	. 3: Flowchart of the Proposed Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods	s 92
3.	. 4:Screen shot of G-Power interface showing the required sample size	100
3.	. 5: Structure of a Thematic Network Source: Attride-Stirling (2001)	107
3.	. 6: Hoyle and Kenny's (1999) mediation test	109
3.	. 7: Multiple Mediation representation Source:	110
4.	. 1: Measurement model loadings and AVE	139
4.	. 2: Composite reliability of model	142
4.	. 3: The structural model indicating the t-values of the respective path	
	coefficients and factor loadings	146
4.	. 4: R-square of endogenous constructs	150
4.	. 5: Effect size (f2)	151
4.	. 6: Mediation analysis of inbound innovation (t-statistics)	154
4.	. 7: Mediation analysis of outbound innovation (t-statistics)	157
4.	. 8: Effect of entrepreneurial orientation on performance. Source Inter-	view
	survey (2021)	173
4.	. 9: Effect of open innovation and firm performance. Source: Interview	V
	Survey (2021)	184

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EO **Entrepreneurial Orientation** 

OI Open Innovation

OBI Outbound Open Innovation

INI Inbound Open Innovation

FP Firm Performance

EOA -Entrepreneurial Orientation Autonomy

EOCA -Entrepreneurial Orientation Competitive Aggressiveness

EORT -Entrepreneurial Orientation Risk-Taking

EOP **Entrepreneurial Orientation Proactiveness** 

TUN AMINA! EOI Entrepreneurial Orientation Innovativeness

PLS Partial Least Square

SEM Structural Equation Modelling

SPSS -Statistical Program for Social Sciences

Quan -Quantitative

Qual Qualitative

MMR -Mixed Methods Research

HTMT -Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio

R&D -Research and Development

RBV -Resource Based View

DC **Dynamic Capability** 

SMEs -Small and Medium Enterprises

MFA -Muar Furniture Association

EFA **Exploratory Factor Analysis** 

KMO -Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin

Composite Reliability CM

# LIST OF APPENDICES

A	APPENDIX TITLE	PAGE
<b>A</b>	Anniliantian to magnest commonly's information	200
A	Application to request company's information	290
В	Survey Questionnaire	291
C	Expert Validity	300
D	Missing value analysis	321
E	Common Method Bias	322
F	Convergent Validity of Measurement Model	323
G	Univariate Normality	324
Н	Multivariate Normality	337
I	Cross Loadings	342
J	Vita	344

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

In today's complex and changing business world, innovation and entrepreneurship have become key concepts for sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic, social and environmental development is important to the performance of the organization (Bilevičienė & Bilevičiūtė, 2015; Rezk, Ibrahim, Tvaronavičienė, Sakr, & Piccinetti, 2015). Hence, Organizations must respond to changing business environments, technological capabilities and customer needs (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009). In other words, organizations must innovate to increase competitiveness and achieve sustainable business performance (Kumar, Boesso, Favotto, & Menini, 2012; Rezk *et al.*, 2015; Tvaronavičienė, 2014; Laužikas, Tindale, Tranavičius, & Kičiatovas, 2015).

In the current economic environment, measuring business performance (BP) through the impact of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and open innovation(OI) is a key issue for academic scholars and entrepreneurs in practice (Akbar *et al.*, 2020; Carvalho, 2016). In recent years, many disciplines have shown great interest in the three main constructs used in many empirical studies (Kraus *et al.*,2018; Akbar *et al.*, 2020). Entrepreneurial-oriented and open innovation can be seen as a new trend in assessing company performance (Kollmann & Stöckmann, 2014; Ventor, 2014; Spithoven, Vanhaverbeke, & Roijakkers, 2013; Carvalho & Sugano, 2017; Ranasinghe, Yajid, Khatibi, & Azam, 2018). Organizations are transforming their business model from a traditional vertical integration model with internal R & D activities to an open business model. Another words, the organizations are adopting

open innovation and entrepreneurship strategies.

Then again, according to West, Salter, Vanhaverbeke, & Chesbrough, (2014), although open innovation research has been widely cited and influenced the direction of innovation research, it has had a significant impact on the broader management and economics disciplines. Entrepreneurship is among the most important management topics, as highlighted by (Hossain, 2013). This topic becomes more significant because, according to Soriano & Huarng, (2013), in recent years, the interrelationships between innovation, entrepreneurship, and new business creation have become apparent in an active research trend that incorporates knowledge of different academic methods.

# 1.2 Background to the study

With the advent of globalization, the business environment has become more uncertain and complex. The environment is constantly changing and the needs of the market and customers are constantly changing (Prajogo & Ahmed, 2006; Cámara, 2018). Organizations are forced to learn new knowledge to develop new products to meet the needs of new markets and new customers. As a result, organizations can gain a competitive advantage by pursuing innovation in marketing and entrepreneurial activities (Barsh, Capozzi, & Davidson, 2013; Chapman & Hyland, 2004). Entrepreneurship, innovation, environment, sustainability and internationalization are topics of great interest to the scientific community, businesses and all major governments and government agencies worldwide (Cámara, 2018). This is even more pronounced today due to the deepening global business cycle and the economic cycles of the countries where companies operate (Fabian, Molina, & Labianca, 2009; Raymond, St-Pierre, Uwizeyemungu, & Le Dinh, 2014).

It has been determined that entrepreneurial orientation plays an important role in the success of global entrepreneurs (Aziz, Mahmood, Tajudin, & Abdullah, 2014). The entrepreneurial phenomenon is on the rise and ever growing (Aziz *et al.*, 2014; Camara, 2018). With the creation of new enterprises, the world has become an entrepreneurial economy, and entrepreneurs are hailed as the new heroes of economic development and competing companies (Entebang, 2011; Sathe, 2004). In

a highly competitive and rapidly changing environment, it is necessary to incorporate entrepreneurial methods into the foundations of strategic management (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). Therefore, a great deal of research on entrepreneurial orientation has made people realize that entrepreneurial orientation is an important component in strategic management and the literature on entrepreneurship (Ireland, Kyratko, & Morris, 2002). Entrepreneurial orientation refers to decisions about companies adopting strategies that are innovative, proactive, risk-taking, autonomous, and competitively motivated (Gartner & Shane, 1995; Thornton, 1999; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Cools & Van den Broeck, 2007). Entrepreneurial orientation contribute to performance from the perspective of company development and financial performance. This situation presents the challenge of determining the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on company performance, confirming previous research related to the study and noting the impact, if any, on inadequate entrepreneurial knowledge or management in the business environment.

Furniture Market size exceeded USD 545.78 billion in 2020 and is estimated to exhibit 5.4% CAGR from 2021 to 2027. The industry is forecast to cross 62,496.5 Kilo Tons volume by 2027, growing at around 4.8% growth rate (Global Market Insight, 2020). This amount corresponds to 1.09% of the World Trade of Manufacturers. This value has increased at a steady rate of 4% since 2009 (CSIL, 2015; MS, 2018). In exporting furniture China has overtaken Italy since 2009 (MS, 2018). Formerly, Italy and Germany were important furniture exporters. Since 2009, Germany and Italy have been battling in terms of furniture export value. As shown in Figure 1.2, China has risen swiftly in comparison to Germany, Italy, Poland, Vietnam, and the United States.

Table 1.1 divides the world's 70 most prominent countries into three groups: High Income Countries, Middle Income Countries, and Low Income Countries. The highest contributors to furniture manufacturing and export include seven of the highest High Income Countries and four of the highest Middle and Low Income Countries.

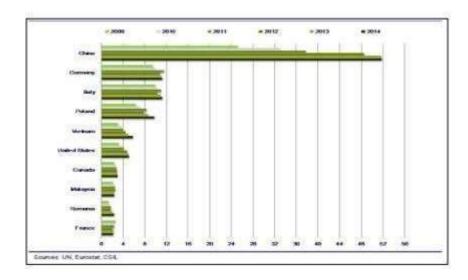


Figure 1. 1: The Main Furniture Exporting Countries 2009-2014, USD Billion (CSIL, 2015)

It's indeed worth noting that between 2005 and 2014, both production and export value of High Income Countries decreased. The growing countries, particularly China, saw a large growth. Nonetheless, the percentage of High Income Countries has fallen by 20%, while China's exports have climbed from 16.6% to 36.2 percent. Vietnam, that was formerly ranked lower than Malaysia in terms of global furniture export value before 2009, rapidly overtook Malaysia to become the fifth largest furniture exporting country in 2014, surpassing the United States. After a downturn in 2009 owing to the crisis, global furniture consumption has regained its upward trend. Furniture consumption is expected to increase by 3.6 percent in real terms globally, with low growth in South America and Europe and continued rapid growth (over 5%) in Asia (CSIL, 2015).

Table.1.1: Market Shares of the Major Countries by Percentage, (CSIL, 2015)

	Production		Exports			
	2005	2014	2005	2014		
By High Income Countries / Middle and Low Income Countries						
High Income Countries						
Major Industrial Countries						

Table.1.1: Market Shares of the Major Countries by Percentage, (CSIL, 2015) (continued)

Canada	3.5	1.9	5.4	2.1
France	3.2	1.9	3.0	1.6
Germany	6.5	4.8	9.1	7.9
Italy	8.2	4.2	12.7	7.9
Japan	4.5	2.2	0.6	0.5
United Kingdom	3.5	2.1	1.6	0.9
United States	21.7	10.0	3.6	3.6
Subtotal G7	50.9	27.0	36.1	24.4
Other High Income Countries	21.3	15.2	30.4	23.0
Total High Income Countries	72.2	42.1	66.5	47.5
Middle And Low Income Countries	L			
Major Furniture Exporting Mi	ddle and Lov	w Income Co	untries	
China	14.6	45.0	16.6	36.2
Vietnam	0.7	1.5	2.2	4.1
Malaysia	0.9	0.8	2.4	1.7
Turkey	1.3	1.3	0.7	1.5
Other Middle and Low Income Countries	10.2	9.3	11.5	9.1
Total Middle and Low Income Countries	27.8	57.9	33.5	52.5
World (70 Countries)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
By Geographical Region	l	•	•	l
EU (28) of which:	37.0	23.2	55.8	41.2
Old EU Members (15)	30.9	17.6	41.0	27.0
New EU Members (13)	5.3	5.0	13.6	13.5
Norway, Switzerland, And Iceland	0.8	0.5	1.2	0.7
Central-East Europe Outside The EU And Russia	2.6	2.6	1.4	2.5
Asia And Pacific Of Which:	30.1	57.7	29.4	47.5
China	14.6	45.0	16.6	36.2
Japan	4.5	2.2	0.6	0.5
Other Asia And Pacific	11.0	10.6	12.2	10.8
Middle East And Africa	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0
North America Of Which:	26.2	12.4	10.7	7.2
United States	21.7	10.0	3.6	3.6
Canada	3.5	1.9	5.4	2.1

Table.1.1: Market Shares of the Major Countries by Percentage, (CSIL, 2015) (continued)

Mexico	1.1	0.5	1.7	1.5
South America	2.2	2.4	1.5	0.5
World Total (70 Countries)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Understanding of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation are essential characteristics of business development and broader economic growth (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rodriguez-Gutierrez, Fuentes-Fuentes, & Rodriguez-Ariza, 2013), both for their contribution to the solution to unemployment (Rambe & Mosweunyane, 2017; Cámara, 2018), and as well as the development of technological innovations (Hisrich, 1988; Acs & Audretsch, 2005; Fellnhofer, 2018). According to Campos, la Parra, & Parellada, (2012), entrepreneurial orientation has received considerable conceptual and empirical attention and represents one of the few areas for which entrepreneurial research has accumulated knowledge. In this context, it is not surprising that theliterature has conducted numerous studies to study the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance of SMEs (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Avlonitis & Salavou, 2007; Wang, 2008; Rauch *et al.*, 2009; Martin & Javalgi, 2016; and Cámara, 2018).

Similarly, innovation management is an area that requires more research from the scientific community (Birkinshaw, Hamel, & Mol, 2008; Carvalho & Sugano, 2017; Cámara, 2018). Several constructs have emerged in this area of research. The key of these appeared in 2003 and was labeled "Open Innovation". Identify this construct through collaboration and knowledge flow to accelerate the innovation process in the literature (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Powell, Koput, & Smith-Doerr, 1996; Granstrand, Patel, & Pavitt, 1997; Chiesa & Manzini, 1997; Dalotă & Grigore, 2010; Veugelers & Cassiman, 1999). Open innovation has been considered a hot topic in the scientific community over the past decade (Chesbrough & Bogers, 2014; Cámara, 2018).

Thus, a question that arises is what is the relations concerning entrepreneurial orientation, open innovation and firm performance in Malaysian furniture industry? As a thesis, we expect that the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation are drivers

to the macro-process of open innovation, partaking both positive influence on firm performance. Additionally, we expect that the macro process of open innovation could utter a superior influence on firm performance than the entrepreneur-oriented dimension, because entrepreneurs are positioned longer than open innovation.

# 1.3 Research problem

Furniture manufacturing is the fastest growing sub-sector in Malaysia's timber industry, accounting for nearly 8% of Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) (Akbar, et al., 2017). Malaysia's furniture business has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the country's economy. However, furniture companies, on the other hand, must design and implement their strategy by engaging in entrepreneurial behaviors in order to survive and prosper in a dynamic business climate. Nonetheless, in recent times, Malaysian furniture manufacturers had been under increasing competition from other cheap furniture producers, particularly China and Vietnam (Jegatheswaran Ratnasingam et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important that Malaysian furniture manufacturers implement strategies to boost efficiency, and innovation (Akbar et al., 2017). Performance management is the key to success for any manufacturing sector. This study has taken into consideration the performance in various stages in furniture manufacturers by employing EO and open innovation. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a popular strategy-making paradigm in strategic management and entrepreneurship. EO has been discovered as impacting business performance in prior studies, both conceptually and statistically (Akbar et al., 2020; Camara, 2018).

As a result, it is believed that EO will improve the performance of the Malaysian furniture industry, especially given the country's scarcity of resources. Additionally, other research have not been able to identify a substantial and favorable relationship between EO and business performance, according to the open innovation literature (Carvalho, 2017 and Camara, 2018; Osman *et al.*, 2018a). The notion that multiple studies have revealed little or no relation between EO, OI, and company performance implies that more research is needed.

Although open innovation is one of the hottest topics in innovation research, there are still some criticisms of the paradigm. Hossain (2013) points out that open innovation overlaps with other concepts, such as user generation, crowdsourcing, and distributed innovation. Huizingh (2011) emphasizes more that open innovation has become an umbrella that covers, connects and integrates a range of existing activities. Finally, it has been established that entrepreneurial orientation is closely related to open innovation, and a lot of research has been done in recent years (Chaston & Scott, 2013; Carvalho, 2016; Ahn, Minshall, & Mortara, 2017; Schmelzle & Tate, 2017; Cámara, 2018). These investigations find that entrepreneurial orientation facilities open innovation processes (Ju, Chen, Yu, & Wei, 2013; Ritala, Henttonen, Salojarvi, Sainio, & Saarenketo, 2013; Carvalho & Sugano, 2017). The relationship between OI and performance depends on the type of open innovation strategy the company pursues (Cámara, 2018; Akbar et al., 2020). Significantly, open innovation strategies can be defined as inbound or outbound, and Ju et al., (2013) and Carvalho, (2016), discover that inbound strategies affect performance, while outbound strategies do not. These findings indicate that more and more research is needed to verify the extent to which the types of strategies adopted by open innovation affect different types of performance (Cámara, 2018). In this research both kinds of strategies (inbound and outbound) are considered to influence the firm performance.

The theoretical lenses for this study used resource-based view (RBV) that focuses on the use of dynamic capability theory (DC). Both theories have pointed to the industry's limited resources and capabilities as the basis of the problem, implying that scholars should take a resource-based approach. Despite the fact that there is ample evidence that intense rivalry is a cumulative element driving the industry climate. Although the Resource-Based View (RBV) of a firm's competitiveness and performance emphasizes the firm's internal resources and capabilities (Barney, 2001; Barney *et al.*, 2001), the dynamic capability theory asserts that a firm's competitiveness and thus performance is determined by the competition environment's characteristics and the firm's ability to achieve a powerful strategic position through planned effective competitive strategies. Significantly these capabilities can be dynamic and modified or renewed (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen,

1997). Finally, it also shows that the company's dynamic capabilities and its level of entrepreneurial orientation directly affect performance (Monteiro, Soares, & Rua, 2017; Cámara, 2018; Carvalho, 2016).

Lack of research was reported on problems encountered by furniture industry such as inability or difficulty in finding access to financing and working capital (Osman *et al.*, 2018a) and low returns in research and development (R&D) due to lack of entrepreneurial skills because of the hefty amount of investments required to realize it (Ambad *et al.*, 2020; Osman *et al.*, 208b). Lack of knowledge among entrepreneurs in the utilization of technology (innovation) which is still relatively low poses and becomes another problem or serves as a constraint for entrepreneurs to move forward to enhance their business growth and sustainability (Ratnasingam *et al.*, 2018). In the furniture industry, there is also limited research on firm's performance in building the capacity and capability of an entrepreneur to achieve success, growth, and competitiveness of its performance measurement (Ratnasingam *et al.*, 2018; Osman *et al.*, 208b).

The problem with these firms is that of management best practices and entrepreneur characteristic that are performed by the SMEs in the furniture industry. In developing countries such as Malaysia, most research on entrepreneurship and open innovation are based on small businesses (Ambad & Wahab, 2013a; Cascio & Montealegre, 2016; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2011). Fundamentally, the challenges facing large companies are different from those facing smaller companies. This is usually because both types of companies have different organizational design and management styles (Ambad & Wahab, 2013a; Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). Research finds that manufacturing and innovation strategies adopted by large and small companies are also different (Wagner & Hansen, 2005; Müller & Bostrom, 2016; Emőke–Szidónia, 2015; Theriou & Chatzoudes, 2015). Accordingly, it is important to conduct separate studies on the mediating effect of open innovation on entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance according to firm size.

This is because it is questionable whether the results of studies on small firms can be generalized to larger firms. Furthermore, to date there is no significant study of EO, OI, and their association with firm performance in Malaysia, particularly in furniture industry Malaysia. Inconclusive findings of EO-firm performance with

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