

# NETWORKING AS INHERENT DIMENSION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

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## Abstract

*Entrepreneurial Orientation is a distinct concept within the field of entrepreneurship that aims to explain various types of entrepreneurial behaviour and has been studied in detail by various scholars. Emerging from strategic-choice perspective, entrepreneurial orientation is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct which characterizes and distinguishes key entrepreneurial processes. The original conceptualization of entrepreneurial orientation was done by Miller (1983) and included the dimensions of innovativeness, risk-taking and proactiveness. Subsequently, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) augmented the constitution of entrepreneurial orientation by adding two more dimensions of autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. Simultaneously, they suggested that although all five dimensions are central to understanding the entrepreneurial process, they may occur in different combinations, depending on the type of entrepreneurial opportunity a firm pursues. The basic objective of the addition of two more dimensions to entrepreneurial orientation and the contention that any combination of the dimensions, and not necessarily all together, could explain entrepreneurial behaviour was thus to enhance the elucidatory capacity of entrepreneurial orientation for a wider range of entrepreneurial events.*

*The extant configuration of entrepreneurial orientation forms a suitable construct to study firms in developed economies. This article forms the departure point to understand entrepreneurial orientation primarily in emerging economy context, where more than the existing five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation are exhibited by firms. One such construct that clearly emerges in the intentions and actions of firms operating in economies where institutional voids exist, is networking. Research on networks in the field of entrepreneurship has led to a deeper understanding of networks and the processes associated with the dynamics of their content, structure and governance. This understanding leads us to the cognizance that networking is a fundamental explanator of entrepreneurship in certain contexts like international entrepreneurship. Though evidence exists that entrepreneurs had always known the importance of networks in new venture creation, it is the advancement of network theories that is consistently unravelling the criticality of networking in entrepreneurship to business scholars. This forms the primary motivation for the authors to contend that the pent-dimensional entrepreneurial orientation construct is an incomplete framework for explaining all kinds of entrepreneurship, in all types of economies.*

*Using theoretical arguments and by building on supporting literature from strategic management, entrepreneurship and network theories, the authors try to make a conceptual advancement towards this research gap. With an objective to improve the comprehensiveness of entrepreneurial orientation, this article thus argues that networking is an inherent dimension of entrepreneurial orientation. Propositions are drawn in this regard. Contribution is thus made to the entrepreneurship literature by positing that entrepreneurial orientation, with the inclusion of networking as the sixth dimension, is equipped to better explain a broader portfolio of entrepreneurial events. In addition to this, contribution to the entrepreneurial orientation-firm performance model is also made, as the inclusion of networking as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation renders those models to be more comprehensive and robust while being parsimonious. Future research may look into empirical evidence with regard to the propositions forwarded in this article. Also, with changing business practices and theoretical advancement, further upgradation of the composition of entrepreneurial orientation might become requisite, which may lead to another stream of future research.*