

## EFFECTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDERS IN MALAYSIA

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### Abstract

Often, when organisations encounter abrupt and persistent changes within business environment - firms' entrepreneurial orientation and dynamic capabilities were poised as the pivotal point in rendering firms' success or failure. The effects of three entrepreneurial oriented insights – proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness upon organisational performance have been constantly studied over decades but is indeed, a rare gem in logistics. Intense competition pushes industry players to work in isolation with minimal sharing thus hinder desired progression. Retailers and high-tech giants developed in-house logistics, aspiring for market expansion by acquisition of existing logistics service providers, which, eventually, switched role from customers to competitors. Surpassed by ASEAN peers in Logistics Performance Index, Malaysia's position declined from 32nd to 41st (2016-2018), thereby, an obvious slack in Logistics Service Quality (The World Bank, 2018). From within, logistics hiccups in comprehending manpower shortage, technology know-how, costing, geographical coverage, operational complications. Yet, industrywide, they are facing port and depot congestion, hijacking threats, customs complications, and environmental absurdities, triggering the need for cost efficiency and service delivery effectiveness. Thereby, the study aims to explore the effects of entrepreneurial orientation as in proactiveness, risk-taking, and innovativeness, including the mediating role of dynamic capabilities as in sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring upon organisational performance. Tweaking to collect from 282 respondents only from founders, owners, general managers, and senior executives, working in logistics firms, the data were analysed using Smart PLS and SPSS. Findings show significance of "Risk-Taking" and "Innovativeness" which unleashes insights for the industry to grasp opportunities and incorporate innovativeness to accomplish desired organisational performance. Ultimately, adopting an entrepreneurial stance stimulates a promising outlook for the nation's logistics industry players in overall. Besides, dynamic capabilities in sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring snapped up a strong mediating role in sparkling organisational performance. As such, in contrast to the perception by most industry players that the anticipatory initiatives are trivial, the findings revealed otherwise. Previous literatures on the influence of entrepreneurial initiatives of boldness and ingenuity to drive logistics firms' performance is, thus affirmed. Moving forward, relevant stakeholders could maximise both extrinsic and intrinsic organisational values by acknowledging the cruciality of entrepreneurial orientation and dynamic capabilities in logistics service providers' business performance, development, and industrial competencies in years to come.

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## Keywords

Entrepreneurial Orientation, Dynamic Capabilities, Logistics Service Providers, Organisational Performance

## Introduction

Logistics is the science of management between origins and destinations comprising supply chain integrations such as strategic (vertical and horizontal), corporeal (multimodal and intermodal), and organisational (resources, people, and process) for stakeholders' value-creation and fiscal optimisation (Colin 1987; Marasco 2006; 2008; Poist 1989; Pollit 1998; Song and Panayides 2015). Most researchers classified logistics providers as an organisational 'function', 'system', or 'strategy' instead of the 'entrepreneurial' or 'primary firms' nature' and therefore an empirical dearth (Chopra and Meindl 2010; Koskinen and Hilmola 2008; Mafini and Omoruyi 2013; Meade and Sarkis 1998; Shi, Waseem, and Shahid 2020). Malaysia's position declined from 32<sup>nd</sup> to 41<sup>st</sup> in Logistics Performance Index (2016-2018) being superseded by ASEAN peers (Arvis et al. 2018; ILMIA 2017; The World Bank 2018; Trading Economics 2020) and hence, improvement in Logistics Service Quality is crucial (Ahmad & Melan 2014).

Challenges are abounded even from within, logistics hiccups experienced in Malaysia comprehending manpower shortage, technology know-how, costing, geographical coverage, operational complications (Govindan and Chaudhuri 2016; Nik Abdullah, Yaakub, and Subhan 2015; Rahmat and Faisol 2016; Zuraimi, Mohd Rafi, and Mohd Dahlan 2013). Yet, externally, logistics players are facing port and depot congestion, hijacking threats (Ahmad, Melan, and Zakaria 2015; Karim, Abdul Rahman, and Syed Johari Shah 2018), customs complications (Ali, Jaafar, and Mohamad 2008); and environmental absurdities (Abbasi and Nilsson 2016; Rodrigue, Slack, and Comtois 2001), triggering the need for efficiency in cost and effectiveness in functional services (Batarlienè and Jarašūnienè 2017). In the midst, intense logistics competition causes logistics players to work in isolation with minimal sharing thus hinder progression (Ahmad et al. 2017: 181). Retailers and high-tech giants developed in-house logistics, aspiring market expansion such as acquisition of logistics service providers, which, eventually, switched role from customers to competitors (PWC 2014: 12).

However, today, logistics is recognised as the sovereign field and critical factor of industrial competency (Muhammad et al. 2014). The logistics sector serves as the key enabler for other segments in facilitating goods mobility and global trading. The symbiosis of logistics reinforces the economic pillar while economy accelerates logistics demand (Feng, Chen, and Yao 2010; Gao et al. 2018: 27; Lean, Huang, and Hong 2014). Logistics firms are adapting and improvising their competencies to sustain success and survival (Dess, Lumpkin, and Eisner 2007). For example, surging containerisation, quicksilver supply and demand, noteworthy domestic development (Jeevan et al. 2015: 85) provide attractive landscape for their businesses. The Malaysian logistics landscape is fragmented with ample players with visibly consolidated state (Figure 1) (Mordor Intelligence 2020) of two categories – namely huge corporations with market capitalisation, and niche players with market concentration (PwC 2018).



Figure 1: Malaysia's Freight and Logistics Market Concentration and Market Snapshot  
 Source: Mordor Intelligence (2020)

More than half (57%) of Malaysia's total trade value was transported by sea while the value of air-freight cargoes accelerated at the fastest pace at 8.2% from 2015 to 2019. Land transport remains stagnant at 13.8% averagely in a year (Figure 2) (Müller 2020).

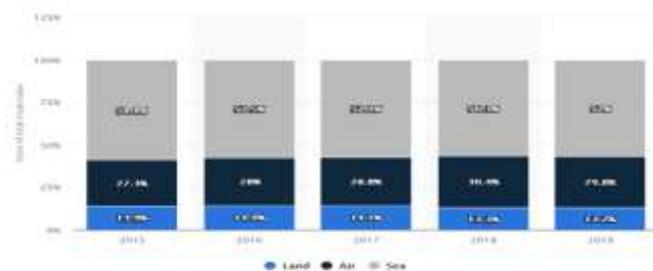


Figure 2: Distribution of the Trade Value (by Mode of Transport) in Malaysia from 2015 to 2019. Source: Müller (2020)

Malaysian firms' performance needs a leap in entrepreneurial firms' behaviours and service competence (Arshad et al. 2014; Batarlienė and Jarašūnienė 2017; Cowling, Liu, and Zhang 2018: 95; Economic Planning Unit 2015: 24), thereby, a reason for this study. Literature wise, there is scarcity of entrepreneurial insights and dynamic capabilities studies (Figure 3) on service segment despite their cruciality, especially in emerging economies (Singh, Kurian, and Napier 2018) (Figure 7).

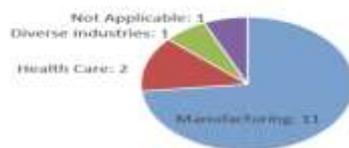


FIGURE 3. CLASSIFICATION OF ARTICLES BY INDUSTRY, 2000-2015

Figure 3: Scarcity of Entrepreneurial Insights and Dynamic Capabilities Studies on Service Segment

Source: Singh, Kurian, and Napier (2018: 163)

Studies emphasised that entrepreneurial tendency is stronger for antagonistic and technologically sophisticated sectors (Walter, Auer, and Ritter 2006; Wu 2007). Also, organisational entrepreneurial traits are not generalised (Andersén, Ljungkvist, and Svensson 2015). For example, firms might be innovative in marketing yet conservative on service development (Garcia and Calantone 2002: 113). Empirical investigation and theoretical

development in generative mechanisms underlying entrepreneurial orientation and organisational performance are inadequate (Wales, Gupta, and Mousa 2013). It remains ambiguous what capabilities firms should generate to enhance performance (Cui et al. 2018). As such, a deeper understanding of the effects of entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities upon logistics firms' performance are probed.

The Entrepreneurial Orientation model serves as organisational strategic pace in assimilating diverse capacities (Teece, Pisano, and Shuen 1997), while dynamic capabilities complements firms' competitive drift by stimulating market actions to surpass opponents (Gold-Bernstein and Ruh 2005), ultimately influencing organisational performance (Porter 1996). Examining 'the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled' outlined by entrepreneurial decision-makers in forming better and elastic organisations within evolving environmental changes; further echoed these behaviours from personal to firm-level (Stevenson and Gumpert 1985) on what entrepreneurs do in the firm instead of what they are (Baker and Sinkula 2009; Gartner 1988; Huang et al. 2010).

The five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation as in Figure 4 are Proactiveness, Risk-taking, Innovativeness, Competitive Aggressiveness, and Autonomy (Figure 4) (Covin and Slevin 1989; Dehghan, Farsi, and Rezaadeh 2013: 27; Mason et al. 2015: 1650-1651):

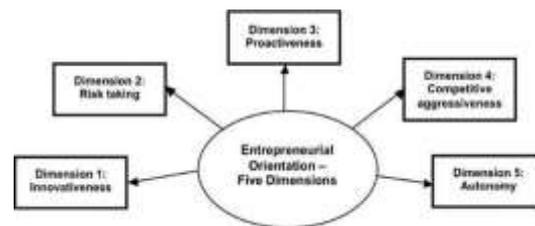


Figure 4: The Entrepreneurial Orientation of Proactiveness, Risk-Taking, Innovativeness, Competitive Aggressiveness, and Autonomy. Source: Covin and Slevin (1989); Dehghan, Farsi, and Rezaadeh (2013: 27); Lumpkin and Dess (1996; 2001); and Prabhu (2020)

Majority of studies have engaged on the three entrepreneurial insights - Proactiveness, Risk-Taking, and Innovativeness to elaborate the variance in the construct (Covin and Slevin 1989, 1990, 1991; Dess, Lumpkin, and Covin 1998; Filser et al. 2014; George and Marino 2011; Lomberg et al. 2017; Miller 1983; Morris and Sexton 1996; Rigtering et al. 2017; Wiklund 1999; Wiklund and Shepherd 2005; Zahra 1993) as replicated in this study but much limited in logistics service providers.

Crant (2000: 436) defined "Proactiveness" as the organisational behavioural in 'taking initiative in improving or creating new circumstances by challenging the status quo rather than passive adaptation (Fay and Sonnentag 2002; Parker et al. 2006). Proactive firms capitalise opportunities through 'first-mover advantage' given better predictability (e.g., advanced product or services launching, technology, or organisational processes) (Dada and Fogg 2014; Lumpkin and Dess 1996: 146; Miller 1983: 771), procuring market intelligence aligning with trending industrial and consumers' demand (Keh et al. 2007; Lieberman and Montgomery 1988; Tang, Kacmar, and Busenitz 2012). Proactiveness serves as key factor that distinguish star performers from average rivals (Kollmann and Stockmann 2014; Tang, Tang, and Katz 2014) hence, pioneering industrial positions and organisational success (Ardichvili, Cardozo, and Ray 2003; Caputo and Massimiliano 2019: 91; Covin and Slevin 1989; Li et al. 2010; Ok and Ahn 2019: 6).

The second entrepreneurial insight, “Risk-taking” resembles personal, social, psychological risks associating with organisations’ motion, capacity, and inclination of venturing into the unknown when dealing with uncertainties (Baird and Thomas 1985; Gunawan, Jacob, and Duysters 2015; Lumpkin and Dess 1996; Wang et al. 2001). It is also associated with tolerance of uncertainty (Gunawan, Jacob, and Duysters 2015), or risk-return and trade-off – the probability of loss (Lechner and Gudmundsson 2014) notwithstanding degree of hazardous or potential deficiency and reasonable chance of costly failures (Lyon, Lumpkin, and Dess 2000; Miller and Friesen 1978: 923; Wang and Yen 2012).

Finally, “Innovativeness” reflects the firms’ readiness, openness, and tendency to engage in new-fangled ideas and creative resolutions to discover, assimilate, and exploiting inventiveness, information-technology, product-service aspects (Pratono et al. 2013; Wang et al. 2001), which may result in new products or services (Miller and Friesen 1982). Organisational innovation is conceptualized as the process of value-creation from ideas (Tidd and Bessant 2014), involving the generation of new or significantly advanced concepts in their implementation (Amabile et al. 1996; Damanpour 1991; Van de Ven and Angle 1989).

Tang et al. (2014) indicated that each of the studied dimensions are correlated (i.e., Proactiveness drives Risk-taking and Innovativeness (Meutia 2017: 130). Kaur and Mantok (2015) validated that predictive power for Innovativeness and Risk-taking is weaker than Proactiveness. Joshi et al. (2013) concluded while risk-taking is directly related to service innovativeness, proactiveness has an inverted-U relationship. Proactiveness and innovativeness are the determinants for organisational edge in risk-taking tendency (Aloulou and Fayolle 2005).

Dynamic capabilities serve as the ‘foundation of enterprise-level competencies’ (Gupta, Dutta, and Chen 2014; Teece 1997; 2007: 1341) which integrate, build, and reshape existing resources in retaliating against competitive and uncertain settings in safeguarding organisational performance (Barney 1991; Danneels 2010: 1; Eisenhardt and Martin 2000: 1107; Jantunen et al. 2005: 225; Jantunen et al. 2018; Makkonen et al., 2014; Raza et al. 2018; Teece, Pisano, and Shuen 1997: 515). Organisations acclimatise their sensing and seizing capabilities to enhance current competencies (Teece 2007: 1319) through exploitation of market opportunities (Anderson and Eshima 2013: 414; Li, Huang and Tsai 2009: 441; McGrath and MacMillan 2000). In addition, enterprises reconfigure or reintegrate capabilities to redefine resources, systems, and strategies in creating dynamic capabilities, leading to sustainable competencies over rivals (Ambrosini and Bowman 2009; Barreto 2010; Helfat and Peteraf 2009; Helfat et al. 2007; Johnson et al. 2017: 119; Lockett et al. 2009; Pavlou and El Sawy 2011; Wang and Ahmed 2007; Teece 2007: 1319; Teece 2018). Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997; 2007) envisioned sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring as linear order of dynamic capabilities which focused on concurrent and parallel presence of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring capabilities (Hung et al. 2010; Wu 2006) within organisational instead of at product level. The study adapts the reflective constructs which orbits the firms’ level assessments since business inauguration.

Academicians (Eeche 2007; Lin and Wu 2014: 407-413; Luu 2017; Martínez-Climent, Rodríguez-García, and Zeng (2019) proposed that the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and organisational performance is reinforced by Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities theories; especially when the firms’ resources are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN), organisations can build capabilities conducive to



population and sample are the founders, owners, director, and managerial, and senior-executives in Malaysia-based logistics service providers. They were given authority to make firms-related decisions and formulate strategies to maximise firms' resources and market potentials, thus owners and managers are vital characters in this study (Augier and Teece 2009; Ireland, Hitt, and Sirmon 2003).

The conceptual framework in Figure 6 shows the relationship and hypotheses of the tested variables.



Figure 6: The Research Framework for Entrepreneurial Orientation, Dynamic Capabilities, and Organisational Performance for Malaysia's Logistics Service Providers Constructed by: Author (2020)

### Results and Discussion

After preliminary determination of the construct measures as valid and reliable, seven hypotheses (Table 3) were tested in line with the three research objectives. Results indicate model's predictive power of exogenous constructs on 'Organisational Performance' is moderate ( $R^2$  at 0.467) while predictive power of 'dynamic capabilities' is also considered moderate ( $R^2$  at 0.47). The structural model relationship (hypothesis testing) based on the inner model constructs (refer Figure 7 below) was analysed using bootstrapping by simulation of five thousand subsamples and is conducted on parameters of two tailed test with confidence interval of 95% (significance level 0.05).

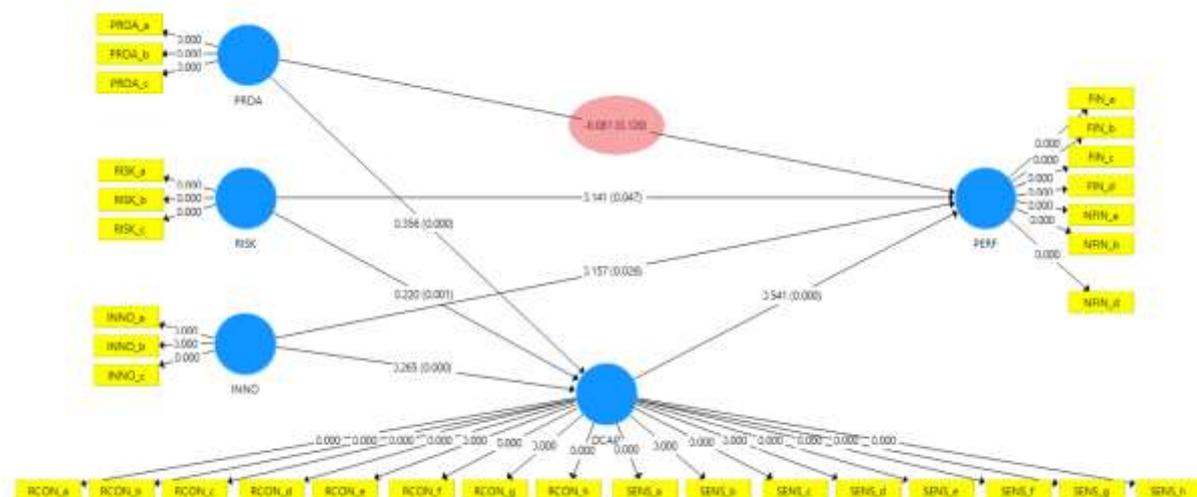


Figure 7: Inner Model Structural Construct in this Study

Herein, discussion is focused on the tested hypotheses (refer Table 1) in line with the three research objectives (RO) to identify the effect of three independent variables as in - RO1 – “To determine the effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation dimensions of Proactiveness, Risk-taking, and Innovativeness upon Organisational Performance”; RO2 – “To examine the effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation dimensions of Proactiveness, Risk-Taking, and Innovativeness upon Dynamic Capabilities”; RO3 – “To examine the mediating role of Dynamic Capabilities between Entrepreneurial Orientation dimensions of Proactiveness, Risk-Taking, and Innovativeness upon Organisational Performance”.

RO	Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-statistics ( O/STDEV )	p-value (p)	Decision
RO1	H1	Proactiveness (PROA) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	-0.081	1.157	0.129	Not Supported
RO1	H2	Risk-Taking (RISK) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	0.141	1.986*	0.047	Supported
RO1	H3	Innovativeness (INNO) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	0.157	2.226*	0.026	Supported
RO2	H4	Proactiveness (PROA) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP)	0.356	5.199***	0.000	Supported
RO2	H5	Risk-Taking (RISK) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP)	0.22	3.264***	0.001	Supported
RO2	H6	Innovativeness (INNO) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP)	0.265	4.614***	0.000	Supported
RO3	H7 (Mediation Effects)	Proactiveness (PROA) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	0.193	4.628***	0.000	Supported
RO3		Risk-Taking (RISK) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	0.119	2.758***	0.006	Supported
RO3		Innovativeness (INNO) -> Dynamic Capabilities (DCAP) -> Organisational Performance (PERF)	0.143	3.798***	0.000	Supported

Table 1: Summary of tested hypotheses and the results

In overall, Table 1 shows that RO1 tested through H1, H2, H3 depicts a significant positive relationship for ‘Risk-Taking’, ‘Innovativeness’, but not for ‘Proactiveness’. The significant findings are consistent with past researchers’ work whereby similar cultural behaviours were evident (Barroso and Martin 1999; Bromiley 1991; Shapira 1995; Tan and Tan 2005). Although “Proactiveness” is insignificant in the direct relationship with organisational performance, it was significant when mediated by “Dynamic Capabilities” as tested in H7.

The second research objective (RO2) tested through H4, H5, H6 is significant. This concurs with findings by Martelo-Landroguez et al. (2011) that dynamically competent firms can create capabilities through market orientation, knowledge management, and customer relationship management which maximise customer value and competencies. This unique ability to exploit, reconfigure, and develop resources and capabilities is in congruence with the tested concept of “Dynamic Capabilities”. Finally, as in Table 2 below, the third research objective (RO3) tested through H7 on the mediating effect of “Dynamic Capabilities” is significant for all three

dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation upon organisational performance. This supports the findings of past researchers whereby the change-driven norm induced by higher risk-propensity and innovative ventures assures sustainable growth and competencies (Jakopin 2013: 98-99; Pšeničný et al. 2014: 64).

Mediation Path	Relationship	Direct Effect (β)	95% Confidence Interval of the Direct Effect	t-value (t)	Significance (p <.05)?	Indirect Effect (β)	95% Confidence Interval of the Indirect Effect	t-value (t)	Significance (p <.05)?
1	PROA -> PERF	-0.081	[-0.186, 0.020]	1.517	0.129 (NO)	0.193	[-0.002, 0.120]	4.628** *	0.000 (YES)
2	RISK -> PERF	0.141	[-0.010, 0.271]	1.986*	0.047 (YES)	0.119	[0.043, 0.209]	2.758** *	0.006 (YES)
3	INNO -> PERF	0.157	[0.021, 0.295]	2.226* *	0.026 (YES)	0.143	[0.075, 0.222]	3.798** *	0.000 (YES)

Table 2: Mediation effects of “Dynamic Capabilities” upon the tested relationships in ROI (H1-H3)

Abbreviation: PROA = Proactiveness; RISK = Risk-taking; INNO = Innovativeness; DCAP = Dynamic Capabilities; PERF = Organisational Performance

### Conclusion

Overall, a rarely explored area of entrepreneurial orientation in terms of risk-taking, and innovativeness is found to have significant effects upon organisational performance of logistics service providers in Malaysia. As such, there need not be a single and generic definition for entrepreneurial orientation (Pukkinen 2018: 192) or any presumed limitations of its prowess by industry. In addition, incorporation of “dynamic capabilities” as the mediator reinforced the antecedents’ stimulus towards the dependent variable in the study. Notably, the sparks of dynamic capabilities spur enterprises to systematically observe and compare alternative methods for firms’ identification and pursuance of opportunities to reshape and renew capabilities (Johnson et al. 2017: 119-120; Teece, Pisano, and Shuen 1997). Thus, empirical evidence supports the role of entrepreneurial orientation as well dynamic capabilities to impact and facilitate organisational performance in the logistics industry. Further, findings reaffirmed both the significant influence of risk-taking and innovativeness and mediating effect of dynamic capabilities towards organisational performance. Although, the role of proactiveness on its own is insignificant, this is immediately reversed when mediated by dynamic capabilities whereby it roars to significantly impacts and facilitates organisational performance. The propensity to take risk is affirmed as an imperative element in enhancing organisational performance on its own yet it has significantly complemented with dynamic capabilities in the same context. Similarly, innovativeness stakes its impact on organisational performance besides complementing dynamic capabilities significantly in the same stance. While the direct effect of proactiveness upon organisational performance is insignificant, other unexplored unique external and internal factors in the specific logistics service providers industry could be a reason.

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