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## Soft Skills Training Program as a Moderator on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance

Dr. Loo Yew Liang

Senior Lecturer, Institute of International Education  
New Era University College, Malaysia

### Abstract:

*This study focuses on soft skills training program whereby soft skills refer to a person's ability to relate with others as well as with one's own self (Nayak, 2014). Soft skills are often studied and discussed compared to hard skills of an individual to resolve some technical problem or liaise with intellectual challenges based on their knowledge and ability. The purpose of this paper is to explore the moderating effects of soft skills training program on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking) and channel performance. Soft skills training programs can have a positive impact on entrepreneurship and help to increase channel performance in a number of ways. The methodology of the study was guided most generally by positivist research in using precise, objective measures and is usually associated with quantitative data (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2000). A sample of 320 top-ranked MLM sales agents across the Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) industry in Malaysia was selected to participate in this structured questionnaire. Hierarchical regression analysis is used to test the moderating effect of soft skills training program on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. The findings showed that soft skills training program moderates each of these relationships, which are proactiveness and innovativeness, whereas risk-taking showed the negative impact on channel performance with a moderator effect. This study gives new exploration in MLM industry of Malaysia whereby soft skills training program as a moderator delivers some significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance.*

**Keywords:** *Soft skills training program, entrepreneurial orientation, proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, channel performance*

### 1. Introduction

The changes in business environments require employees to be well-equipped with soft skills practices to face daily work challenges or even long-term organizational goals. Soft skills are considered an accelerator besides hard skills to achieve organizational performance more effectively due to high work pressure and global business challenges (Pulich & Tourigny, 2004). Soft skills training also helps to reduce stress, improve relationships, and increase self-confidence. The objectives and goals of soft skills training may vary based on the needs of the individual or organization. Soft skills are encouraged to be instilled among the youth before stepping into the workplace (Anthony & Garner, 2016) and professionals effectively perform with good soft skills (Garwood, 2012).

Training refers to deliberate actions taken to enhance an employee's performance on a job they now hold or one that is closely related to it. This entails improving a worker's knowledge, skills, and aptitudes (Ariffin, S., Wahab, I. Ab., & Hambali, Z., 2013). Soft skills training is a program designed to help individuals develop and enhance their interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, decision-making, stress management, and other social skills, which are all important skills for entrepreneurs. Soft skills training program can help entrepreneurs develop and refine these skills while also providing them with the knowledge and confidence they need to be successful. Individual performance in an organization is determined by the effective implication of soft skills training program and it is effective to develop friendly and helpful behavior (Hindiarto *et al.*, 2019).

#### 1.1. Soft Skills Training Program

Soft skills ranked highest than GPA (Grade Point Average) and work experiences among recruiter preferences in a survey done at a regional university career (Jones *et al.*, 2016). It also reveals that soft skills could be developed through program as their competitive advantage. Moreover, soft skills are importantly applied to today's workplace for problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and industry to take care of the employees' welfare in various jobs (Ellen, 2011).

The human factor is an essential resource in modern business organizations, and it is treated as one of the activities that raise employees' skills and abilities. Most of the modern business organizations spend a part of their money on training workers to particularly increase their jobs effectively and efficiently. It was also considered as an investment

of employees in the organizations. Delgado (2000), in his study, concluded that the higher level of success among top-ranked MLM sales agents is derived from the higher quality of training program. Basically, training is a continual process and is structured intentionally to recruit a person with skills, good abilities, and knowledge; meanwhile, it could provide individuals with experience and make them feel more confident (Khanfar, 2014). Soft skills refer to a set of personal attributes that enable individuals to interact effectively and harmoniously with others in the workplace. These skills are increasingly important in today's work environment, as they enable individuals to communicate effectively, build relationships, and work collaboratively with others. Many organizations have recognized the importance of soft skills and are investing in training programs to master employees while developing themselves with these skills (Anderson, 1995 & Clements, 1997).

Mintzberg (1994) highlighted that leaders or managers need to be equipped with effective communication skills, which refer to soft skills while thinking critically and creatively to meet their objectives. In contrast, hard skills are described as the abilities and technical knowledge acquired to perform specific job-related tasks more formally stated in the job description and it showed that developing soft skills were not necessary for managers and employees as long as they could complete their tasks in the past (Muir, 2004). Even though past work revealed that training methodologies and performance have concentrated on hard skills, yet the progressive development of soft skills such as problem-solving, relationship skills and leadership also shows improvement in terms of project, organizational success, and work performance (Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin, & Bakare, 2017). Unlike soft skills, it considers that attitudes and behaviors displayed in interactions among individuals affect the outcomes of encounters. However, soft skills are the enhancement or successor of interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills; it brings an individual the capability to deal with any problem behaviorally (Nayak, 2014).

Some organizations were funding in proving soft skills training programs internally and externally to build up a management team for those able to lead the sales team towards higher level performance, especially to increase the sales revenue or sustain the organizational performance. For instance, PepsiCo, as a global market leader in fast-moving consumer goods, required powerful leaders to achieve its goals successfully. To retain and attract the best people, PepsiCo plays a strategic role in designing their organization with Career Growth Model, which is equipped with processes, training, and tools to drive a broad-based development culture. It indicates that the talent of people is critical to business growth and becomes a determinant of successful organizations. Meanwhile, it shows that training program, especially in soft skills dimension of life at work, is important to be organized in developing a top management team or top-level managers to direct the organization for future success.

### *1.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance*

Entrepreneurial skills help improve decision-making, communication skills and interpersonal skills, which lead to business growth as manifested by the opening of new branches, thus getting into new markets, bringing the aspect of innovation performance in the firm (Odhiambo *et al.*, 2016). Covin and Slevin (1989) propelled the concept of the relationship between a top manager's entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. The recommended measurement for entrepreneurial style through the level of managers' favorite innovative activities is inclined to take business-related risks and compete proactively with other firms. Entrepreneurial orientation is basically perceived as a trigger of organizational growth, especially when it is associated with firm performance on a long-term basis (Wójcik-Karpacz, Karpacz, & Ingram, 2015). Entrepreneurship as a research area explores the idea of entrepreneurial orientation (EO).

Entrepreneurial orientation refers to firms having the propensity to pursue entrepreneurial processes, practices, and decision-making meanwhile identifying and exploiting the market opportunities which influence organizations' performance. Entrepreneurial orientation is a strategic construct (Covin, Green & Slevin, 2006) and is considered a partially organizational behavior that indicates the ways of acting (Gawel, 2012). By pursuing an entrepreneurial orientation, an organization has a better chance to rebuild its activities by introducing and marketing new products into new markets, implementing new processes, and shifting to other better business strategic plans. Mustafa, Kakakhel, and Shah (2019) mentioned and suggested that company owners and senior officials acknowledge the essence of entrepreneurial capabilities in firm success. To become more competitive organizations or individuals, entrepreneurial behaviors should be practiced, outperforming rivals regarding product innovation and initiating unique business plans to become the first movers in the industry. The culture of entrepreneurial orientation represents the norms, values, and mental framework of the individuals living in the given society nowadays.

Entrepreneurial orientation has been examined empirically in studies that have defined this construct at the firm level. It is probably Miller (1983) that has provided a useful starting point for the concept of entrepreneurial orientation. He suggested that an entrepreneurial firm is one that "engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors to the punch" (1983: 771). Accordingly, he used words like 'innovativeness,' 'risk-taking,' and 'proactiveness' to characterize a firm that is entrepreneurial. Later-coming researchers have adopted an approach based on Miller's (1983) original conceptualization (e.g., Covin & Slevin, 1989; Ginsberg, 1985; Morris & Paul, 1987; Naman & Slevin, 1993; Schafer, 1990). For example, the frequently-cited piece by Covin and Slevin (1989) investigated entrepreneurial firms' performance in hostile and benign environments. In their study, the concept of "entrepreneurial strategic posture" was measured using a scale that ranked firms as entrepreneurial if they were innovative, risk-taking, and proactive.

Entrepreneurial orientation, as mentioned, basically relates to the persons who display a high degree of proactiveness, confer innovativeness activities, and have a high tolerance for risk which will contribute to the enhancement of firm performance. However, Miller (1983) developed the conceptualization of entrepreneurial

orientation mostly focused on firm-level whereby the organization performs well if it continuously behaves proactively, displays product innovation, and takes risks in modern business environments. Subsequently, there were many researchers who argued that the values of entrepreneurial orientation also could be applied to the individual level (Carland, Hoy & Carland, 1988; Gartner, 1985; Stewart, 1996). In other words, entrepreneurial orientation is not only pursued by managers or top management but anyone who bears the high responsibility and commitment to lead the organizations to a higher stage of performance. Furthermore, Aloulou and Fayolle (2005) studied the view of entrepreneurial orientation towards the individual level and noticed that individual leaders of the entrepreneurial firm tended to practice the characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking for the purpose of firms to grow further and lead the markets.

Miller (1983) conceptualized entrepreneurial orientation mainly in the context of firm-level behavior whereby organizations are considered to perform well when they consistently demonstrate proactive behavior, engage in product innovation, and take risks in the modern business environment. However, Several researchers, including Carland, Hoy, and Carland (1988), Gartner (1985), and Stewart (1996), have argued that entrepreneurial orientation can also be applied at the individual level, implying that it is not limited to managers or top management, but can be practiced by anyone who assumes a high level of responsibility and commitment to leading organizations towards improved performance. Aloulou and Fayolle (2005) conducted a study on the perspective of entrepreneurial orientation at the individual level and found that leaders of entrepreneurial firms tend to exhibit the characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking in order to facilitate further growth and market leadership. Entrepreneurial orientation is primarily associated with individuals who exhibit proactive behavior, engage in innovative activities, and have a high tolerance for risk, which can positively impact firm performance.

Channel performance refers to the effectiveness of a distribution channel in delivering products or services to customers. A well-performing channel can increase sales, enhance customer satisfaction, and improve brand image. On the other hand, a poorly performing channel can lead to lost sales, dissatisfied customers, and damaged reputation. A study by Lina Saari and Antti Sihvonen at the University of Turku in Finland examined the impact of channel design on channel performance. The study found that the design of the distribution channel, such as the number of intermediaries and the degree of integration, significantly influenced channel performance. Specifically, the study found that shorter and more integrated channels tend to perform better than longer and less integrated channels. Another study by Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt at the Australian National University in Australia looked at the impact of channel management on channel performance. The study found that effective channel management practices, such as frequent communication, mutual trust, and goal alignment, can enhance channel performance and foster long-term relationships between channel partners. Furthermore, a study by Javier Aguilera-Caracuel and David Cruz-González at the University of Granada in Spain examined the impact of channel incentives on channel performance. The study found that channel incentives, such as sales commissions and bonuses, can motivate channel partners to perform better and enhance channel performance.

As for this study, channel performance as the dependent variable was assessed to measure the effectiveness of relationships in teamwork in network marketing. Specifically, channel performance (economic benefit) refers to the degree to which this relationship results in productive personal sales, profitable network sales, and a broader network of MLM agents (Skarmeas *et al.*, 2002; Msweli-Mbanga, 2001; Bucklin & Sengupta, 1993). Despite the limited attention given to the study of channel performance in the network marketing field, this study aims to investigate channel performance as a significant outcome in the context of the MLM industry in Malaysia (Salciuviene, Reardon, and Auruskeviciene, 2011). In conclusion, channel performance is critical to the success of any business. By designing effective channels, managing them well, and providing appropriate incentives, companies can enhance channel performance and achieve their business goals.

### 1.3. Statement of the Problem

In today's rapidly evolving workplace, possessing technical skills alone is not enough to succeed. Employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, in achieving business goals and building strong relationships with clients and colleagues. However, many employees and job seekers lack the necessary soft skills to excel in their roles, leading to communication breakdowns, conflicts, and reduced productivity. The problem, therefore, is how to effectively provide soft skills training that meets the needs of employees across diverse industries, job functions, and levels of experience and delivers measurable improvements in performance and job satisfaction. The lack of soft skills in the workforce can have a significant impact on an organization's bottom line. A study by the Harvard Business Review found that employees with strong, soft skills are more productive, have higher job satisfaction, and are less likely to leave the company (HBR, 2015). On the other hand, a lack of soft skills can lead to increased turnover, lower employee engagement, and reduced customer satisfaction.

According to a survey conducted by LinkedIn, 92% of talent acquisition professionals and hiring managers agree that soft skills are equally or more important than technical skills when it comes to hiring decisions (LinkedIn, 2019). Similarly, a study by the National Soft Skills Association found that 75% of surveyed executives believed that their employees' soft skills were deficient (NSSA, 2021). However, a significant number of employees and job seekers lack the necessary soft skills, leading to poor communication, low morale, and decreased productivity in the workplace. Moreover, as the workplace becomes more diverse and global, the need for soft skills has become more critical. A study by Deloitte found that 90% of global executives identified soft skills as a top priority for their organizations, with cross-cultural communication and collaboration being the most crucial skills (Deloitte, 2017). The problem, therefore, is how to effectively provide soft skills training that meets the needs of employees across diverse industries, job functions, and levels of experience and delivers measurable improvements in organizational growth and performance.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study has theoretically framed entrepreneurial orientation, which includes proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking, as three independent variables through a review of relevant literature. The dependent variable in this study is channel performance, and the study examines how entrepreneurial orientation influences channel performance with the effects of soft skills training program as a moderator. Drawing from Covin and Slevin's (1989) conceptual framework, these three dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking) are seen as part of the organizational culture perceived by top management. This allows firms to strategically rebuild their business activities by creating new products, entering new markets, and implementing new processes.

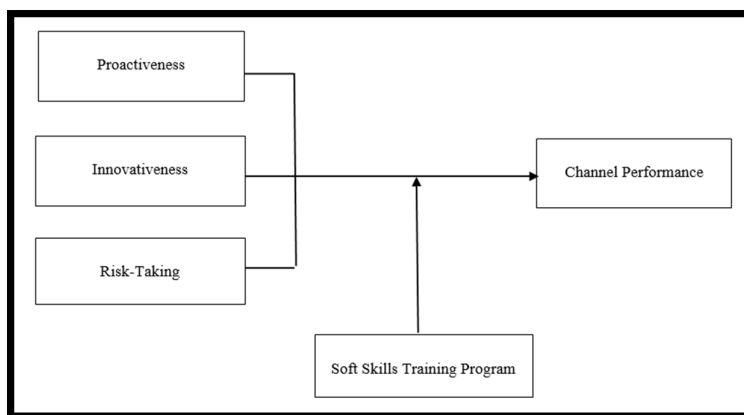


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

## 3. Research Design

The research design for this study is a quantitative cross-sectional survey. The study aims to investigate the effects of soft skills training program as a moderator on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking) and channel performance. The research design involves collecting data from employees through a well-structured questionnaire to gather information on their perceptions of entrepreneurial orientation towards channel performance through the practice of soft skills training program. A probability sampling design was approached whereby purposive sampling technique was pursued to select the participants for this study. Purposive sampling is more appropriate because this sampling method can target the top-ranked MLM sales agents, whoever on the best position to contribute the requisite information.

In this positivist research, well-structured questionnaires were used to collect the data and it is the most applicable in dealing with a large number of respondents. Thus, the study was carried out by selecting 134 MLMOs registered with Direct Sales Association of Malaysia (DSAM, 2022). Data were collected by mailing 320 sets of structured questionnaires to the selected 134 MLMOs. Data analysis was completed with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, Version 28. The respondents are identified as top-ranked MLM sales agents who certainly have the credibility to present their accurate inputs to justify the behaviors or characteristics which have been practiced by them. A sample size of at least 300 respondents is estimated based on the desired level of statistical power and effect size. The measurement of all variables was completed by using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from '1 = strongly disagree' to '5 = strongly agree' for each item.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1. Correlation and Regression Analysis

Variables	Mean	St. Dev	CP	PRO	INNO	RT
CP	4.40	0.59	1	0.557**	0.531**	0.574**
PRO	4.33	0.52	0.557**	1	0.897**	0.857**
INNO	4.34	0.54	0.531**	0.897**	1	0.883**
RT	4.34	0.55	0.574**	0.857**	0.883**	1

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

\*\* Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CP = Channel Performance, PRO = Proactiveness, INNO = Innovativeness, RT = Risk-Taking

Table 1 provides a summary of the correlation analysis results for the variables. In order to examine the hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which entrepreneurial orientation, as an independent variable, accounted for the variance in channel performance. According to the results, there is a significant correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. Specifically, proactiveness (measured by PRO,  $r = 0.56$ ,  $n = 210$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), innovativeness (measured by INNO,  $r = 0.53$ ,  $n = 210$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and risk-taking (measured by RT,  $r = 0.57$ ,  $n = 210$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found to be positively and moderately strongly correlated with channel performance. This implies

that higher levels of entrepreneurial orientation are linked with higher levels of channel performance. The hypotheses of H1 to H3 are summarized below:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Proactiveness is positively related to channel performance.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Innovativeness is positively related to channel performance.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Risk-taking is positively related to channel performance.

Entrepreneurial Orientation	PRO	INNO	RT
CP	0.28*	- 0.07	0.39**
R	0.59		
R Square	0.35		
Adjusted R Square	0.34		
F	36.38***		

Table 2: The Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance

Note: Significant Levels: \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ ; \*\* $P < 0.01$ ; \* $P < 0.05$ ; + $P < 0.10$

CP = Channel Performance, PRO = Proactiveness, INNO = Innovativeness, RT = Risk-Taking

The regression analysis reveals that 34 percent of the variance in channel performance can be explained by entrepreneurial orientation, with high statistical significance at the 0.001 level. The findings suggest that while innovativeness (INNO) was not significantly associated with channel performance, proactiveness (PRO) and risk-taking (RT) had a positive and significant relationship with channel performance (PRO, beta = 0.28,  $p < 0.05$ ; RT, beta = 0.39,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, hypotheses H1 and H3 are supported, while H2 is not supported.

#### 4.2 Moderating Effects of Soft Skills Training Program on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the moderating effect of soft skills training program on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. In each case, outliers were identified and removed using a case-wise approach. The R<sup>2</sup> change and the F-change are significant at a 10% level with the introduction of the interaction items, indicating that soft skills training program significantly influences the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on channel performance. On the other hand, this study also used the PROCESS developed by Andrew F. Hayes, which examines the interaction between independent and dependent variables. The results of moderated regression analyzing the moderating effect of soft skills training program on entrepreneurial orientation and channel. The moderator hypotheses of H4 to H6 are summarized below:

- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between proactiveness and channel performance.
- Hypothesis 5 (H5): Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between innovativeness and channel performance.
- Hypothesis 6 (H6): Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between risk-taking and channel performance.

Table 3 displays the moderating role of soft skills training program on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. For the interaction effect, the results indicated that the interaction terms between proactiveness and soft skills training program (PRO\*SSTP) are potentially significant (R<sup>2</sup> Change = 0.01,  $p = 0.07$ ) as well as the innovativeness and soft skills training program (INNO\*SSTP; R<sup>2</sup> Change = 0.01,  $p = 0.07$ ). Therefore, it could be concluded that soft skills training program does moderate the relationship between proactiveness and innovativeness on channel performance.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Entrepreneurial Orientation					
		Proactiveness (PRO)		Innovativeness (INNO)		Risk-Taking (RT)	
Channel Performance	Model Summary	1	2	1	2	1	2
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.53	0.54	0.54
	R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.53	<b>0.01</b>	0.52	<b>0.01</b>	0.54	0.01
	F Change	114.81	3.34	112.22	3.25	119.56	2.28
	Sig. F Change	0.00	<b>0.07</b>	0.00	<b>0.07</b>	0.00	0.13
	Interaction Terms (PROCESS)	P Value					
	PRO X SSTP	<b>0.0213*</b>					
	INNO X SSTP	<b>0.0368*</b>					
	RT X SSTP	0.0771					

Table 3: The Moderating Effect of Soft Skills Training Program between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance

Note: Significant Levels: \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ ; \*\* $P < 0.01$ ; \* $P < 0.05$ ; + $P < 0.10$

Figures 2 & 3 illustrate the moderating impact of soft skills training program on the relationship between proactiveness and innovativeness to the channel performance. The interaction term between proactiveness (beta = -0.153,  $p < 0.05$ ) and innovativeness (beta = -0.148,  $p < 0.05$ ) with the soft skills training program were added to the regression model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in channel performance. Examination of the interaction plot showed that as the proactiveness and innovativeness of soft skills training program increased, so did the channel performance. Thus, it can be concluded that soft skills training program moderates the relationship between proactiveness and innovativeness on channel performance. Identically, H4 and H5 are supported, while H6 is not supported.

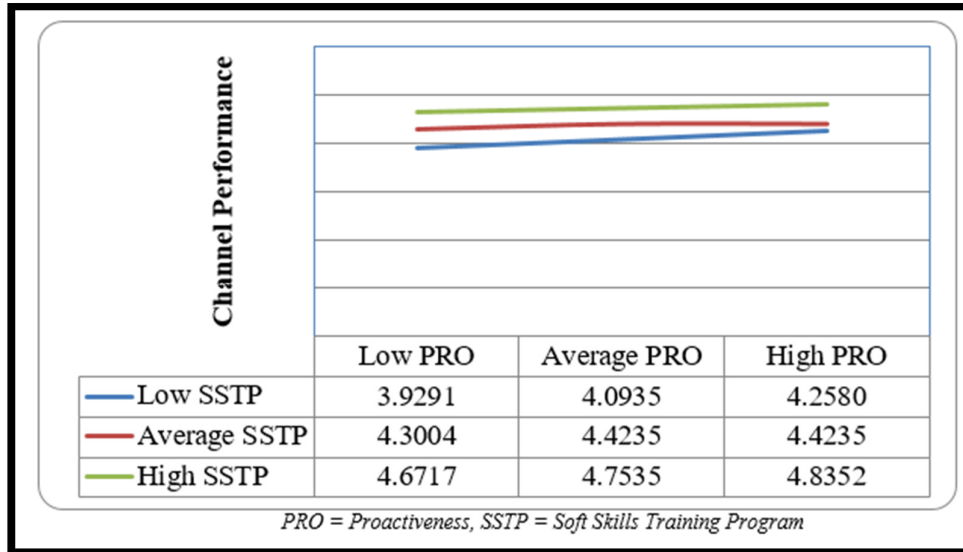


Figure 2: The Impact of Soft Skills Training Program on the Relationship between Proactiveness and Channel Performance  
 PRO = Proactiveness, SSTP = Soft Skills Training Program

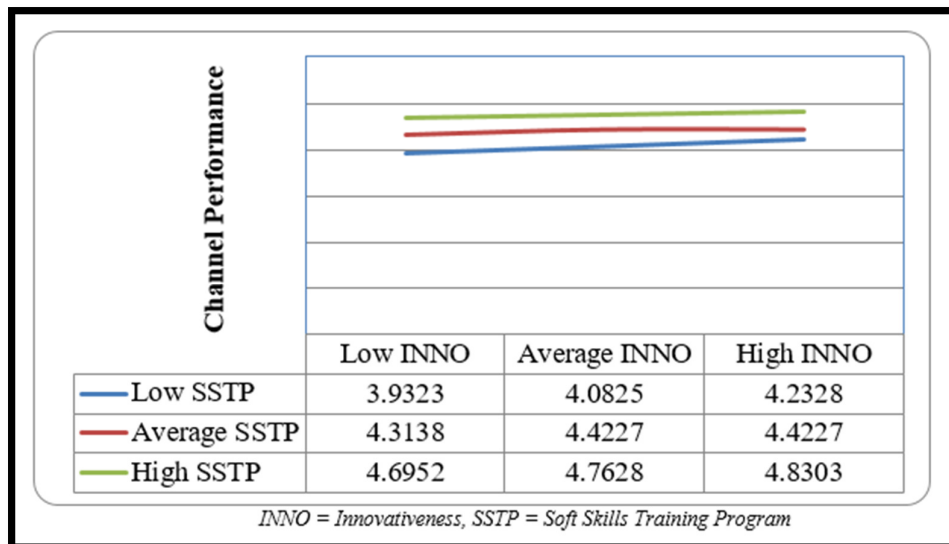


Figure 3: The Impact of Soft Skills Training Program on the Relationship between Innovativeness and Channel Performance  
 INNO = Innovativeness, SSTP = Soft Skills Training Program

H1: Proactiveness is positively related to channel performance.	ACCEPTED
H2: Innovativeness is positively related to channel performance.	NOT SUPPORTED
H3: Risk-Taking is positively related to channel performance.	ACCEPTED
H4: Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between proactiveness and channel performance.	ACCEPTED
H5: Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between innovativeness and channel performance.	ACCEPTED
H6: Soft skills training program moderates the relationship between risk-taking and channel performance.	NOT SUPPORTED

Table 4: Summary of Hypotheses Testing on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Channel Performance

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. Specifically, the results show that proactiveness and risk-taking are key antecedents of channel performance, while innovativeness does not have a significant relationship with channel performance. These findings have important implications for organizations seeking to enhance their channel performance, as they suggest that a focus on developing and promoting proactiveness and risk-taking may lead to improved performance. Moreover, the regression analysis indicates that entrepreneurial orientation explains 34% of the variance in channel performance, which highlights the significant impact of this factor on channel performance. The findings also suggest that organizations should not rely solely on innovativeness to improve channel performance but rather focus on developing a more comprehensive approach that includes proactiveness and risk-taking. Certainly, soft skills training program can be introduced as a moderator variable to further enhance the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. According to the study by Beigi *et al.* (2016), soft skills training can have a significant positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation, which in turn can improve organizational performance. This suggests that a well-designed soft skills training program can complement the development of proactiveness and risk-taking skills, thereby further enhancing channel performance. Similarly, a study by Naderi *et al.* (2019) found that soft skills training can improve the ability of individuals to communicate effectively, manage conflicts, and develop a positive attitude, all of which are important for success in entrepreneurial endeavors. Therefore, introducing a soft skills training program may help individuals in an organization to develop the necessary skills to effectively apply their entrepreneurial orientation, resulting in improved channel performance.

For instance, a study by Brem *et al.* (2016) found that soft skills training improved the entrepreneurial orientation of participants, leading to increased innovation and competitiveness. Therefore, organizations may benefit from incorporating a soft skills training program that complements their efforts to develop and promote proactiveness and risk-taking. By enhancing employees' soft skills, organizations may further strengthen their ability to leverage entrepreneurial orientation for improved channel performance. Furthermore, a study by Kostopoulos *et al.* (2018) highlights the importance of considering the context in which entrepreneurial orientation is developed and applied. Specifically, they found that the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance was stronger in environments with high levels of turbulence and dynamism. Therefore, it may be important to consider the external environment in which an organization operates while designing and implementing a soft skills training program to complement the development of entrepreneurial orientation. In addition to the factors identified in the study as antecedents of channel performance, a soft skills training program may serve as a moderator that can further enhance the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and channel performance. Research suggests that soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership are crucial for success in the modern workplace (Brown & Posner, 2001) and may play an important role in improving channel performance.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of entrepreneurial orientation, proactiveness, and risk-taking in achieving channel performance. In addition, incorporating a soft skills training program may serve as a moderator that can further enhance the relationship between these factors and channel performance. These insights provide valuable guidance for organizations seeking to improve their competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth over the long-term. In conclusion, while the present study demonstrates the importance of entrepreneurial orientation for channel performance, it is important to consider the role of a well-designed soft skills training program as a potential moderator. By developing a comprehensive approach that includes the development of both key antecedents of channel performance and soft skills, organizations can position themselves for long-term success in their respective markets.

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