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The profile of the manager as a main determinant of the entrepreneurial orientation of Algerian SMEs

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial orientation was first and foremost described by Miller (1983) as a strategic posture characterised by a high level of commitment to risk-taking, innovation and proactivity. Other studies have been developed to examine and demonstrate the relationship between a manager's profile and the entrepreneurial orientation of his or her company. In the same vein, the aim of our study of SMEs is to propose a model (using SPSS software) of the relationship between the profile of the owner-manager and entrepreneurial orientation, and also to highlight the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance.

Introduction

The creation of added value and the achievement of a competitive advantage are only the results of entrepreneurial activities. These ensure a shift from a managerial logic to an entrepreneurial logic, thus representing the entrepreneurial orientation of the company. This concept is defined by three dimensions: innovation, proactivity and risk-taking. Achieving these determinants is based on an entrepreneur's achievements. Entrepreneurial actions are influenced by the culture and behaviour of the entrepreneur-manager. Empirical articles have dominated EO research over the last sixteen years (384 articles). The topical analysis highlighted five main determinants (ranked in order of importance): management, external environment, employee characteristics, resources/capabilities and corporate strategy. The five consequences identified are: performance, innovation, apprenticeship, growth and behavior. (Chebbi, Sellami, & Saidi, 2018)

Entrepreneurial activity can lead to new activities within organisations or transform organisations through a variety of entrepreneurial initiatives (Guth & Ginsberg, 1990) , it therefore proves interesting to study entrepreneurship in terms of organisational behaviour (Slevin & Covin, 1990) in SMEs because of its lack of resources and the fragility of its competitive position. The managerial aspect emerges as the main determinant of EO.

It has been discussed in 149 articles (Chebbi, Sellami, & Saidi, 2018). Indeed, the position/involvement of the manager and the incentive system he puts in place seem to have an important role (Li, Zhao, Tan, & Liu, 2008). Thus, research has quantitatively demonstrated that the more management is involved and open to employee proposals, the more innovative, proactive and committed the company is in risky approaches (Marchesnay, 2002).Particular emphasis has been given to the role of entrepreneurial culture in this context (Brettel, Chomik, & Flatten, 2015)

Ultimately, the aim of our conceptual work is to propose a multidimensional model of EO. Our contribution is important for two reasons. First, it has theoretical implications in the field of entrepreneurial orientation. Secondly, it provides a better understanding of the impact of the manager's profile on the EO of SMEs, which is our subject of study.

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1. Origins and definitions of entrepreneurial orientation

(Khandwalla, 1997) and (Miller, 1983) were the first authors who defined the notions of the concept of EO. To define it, (Miller, 1983) identified three dimensions: the will to innovate, the propensity to act autonomously and risk-taking. Thus, the entrepreneurial firm is defined as one that "invests in product-market innovation, engages in risk-taking projects, and is considered active in proactive innovation" (Miller, 1983) Product-market innovation refers to the ability to offer new products/services or to penetrate new markets (Miller & Friesen, 1982). Proactive decisions are those taken by the company to develop its environment and think ahead (Miller & Friesen, 1982). Furthermore, risk-taking decisions are made in a context of uncertainty and unexpected change. (Miller, 1983) therefore asserts that these three characteristics are at the core of entrepreneurial orientation and are often combined as one indicator enabling the company to create value. (Slevin & Covin, 1990) define it as "a behaviour or posture that the company adopts", while (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001) see it as "a set of entrepreneurial processes, practices and activities". As for (Rauch, Wiklund, & Friesen, 2004), "EO is defined as a mindset with which the company engages in the pursuit of entrepreneurial activities". For (Rauch, Wiklund, & Friesen, 2004), "EO is defined as a strategic orientation with which the firm grasps entrepreneurial practices", (Ma & Tan, 2006) believe that "EO is defined as a specific mindset that fosters creativity, innovation and change", and for (Covin, Green, & Slevin, 2006), "EO is defined as a strategic construct in relation to the preferences, beliefs and behaviours of top management".

Entrepreneurial orientation is a concept combining strategies and entrepreneurial mindset. It enables the shift from strategic behaviour to entrepreneurial behaviour in the company (Ireland, Hitt, Camp, & Sexton, 2001) (Miller, 1983) in order to define the strategic position of a company as entrepreneurial or conservative (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011); (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996) precise that "EO refers to the processes, practices and decision-making methods that lead to the creation of a new activity.... This implies that the intentions and actions of key actors lead to a dynamic production process that aims to create a new activity...". Two new dimensions are then added to the first three proposed by Miller (1983) which are, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy "the tendency to be aggressive towards competitors and to be relatively proactive to market opportunities" (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). These five dimensions of the concept vary independently of each other and are all dependent on a single environmental and organizational context.

In other words, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) reflects the strategic entrepreneurial decisions-making of firms (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996); (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Thus, any company characterized by risk-taking, innovativeness and proactivity has an EO, hence the multidimensional nature of this concept.

This concept still remains at the centre of debates and discussions without a definitive conclusion despite the substantial number of works carried out, particularly on the determinants of the company's commitment to the EO process, The mobilization of multidisciplinary theories in the study of EO, the methodological choice of empirical study and the impact of EO on the company's performance or failure.

2. The entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs

In an SME context where the ability to adapt to market changes is a distinctive skill compared with large companies, few studies have focused on the entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs (Zahra, Neubman, & Huse, 2000) (Messeghem, 2002) (Eddleston, Kellermanns, & Sarathy, 2008). It is therefore interesting to look at the entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs.

(Zahra & Pearce, 1994) pioneered the study of EO in the context of SMEs. According to (Carrier, 1994), research on EO in the context of SMEs has its own characteristics, and it cannot always adopt the same theoretical approaches as those developed for large companies. (Torrès, 1999) suggests that: "SMEs are now the reference business model and entrepreneurship is becoming the dominant business philosophy. The salutary aspect of the SME, often presented as a model for adapting to the crisis, is similar to the phenomenon of 'small is beautiful'. The proverb "small is beautiful" is becoming more and more common in large companies, which are trying to find ways of transforming themselves into smaller units to ensure flexibility and proactivity in the face of increased changes in the environment, by encouraging the creation of small companies by their former managers or by outsourcing many activities...

The study of EO has aroused the interest of many studies, and has taken into account several levels: EO at an individual level which focuses on the personal characteristics and objectives of the entrepreneur-manager, at a strategic level to study the relationship between EO and certain functions of the company, such as marketing and management, but also at a company level where the interest focuses more on entrepreneurial activities, practices and behaviours within the company. (Cherchem & Fayolle, 2010).

In our work we focus on EO as a result of the entrepreneur's individual behaviour because we consider that the will to innovate, the ability to take risks and the capacity to anticipate in the discovery of new opportunities in order to maximise profits are all related to the involvement of the individual's personal and psychological traits, According to (Miller, 1983), an entrepreneurial company is a company that engages in product or market innovation, undertakes

somewhat risky projects and is the first to propose "proactive" innovations, thus staying ahead of its competitors. A non-entrepreneurial company is one that innovates very little, is highly risk averse and imitates the moves of competitors rather than leading the way. We can provisionally consider entrepreneurship as a composite weighting of these three variables, and we are therefore going to study the impact of the profile and behaviour of the manager of the EO of an SME.

3. Characteristics of the owner-manager

The entrepreneur-manager is recognized as being the main, or even the only, decision-maker in the SME (Julien, 1994). As such, (Covin & Slevin, 1991) place him at the "centre of all strategic behaviour in the firm". For them, the choice of an "entrepreneurial posture" is a strategic decision for the company, and this choice is then influenced by the philosophy, beliefs and values of its manager. Also, the development of a GE strategy by SMEs depends on its resources, but to a large part on the personal characteristics of the leaders (Baldauf & Rank, 2005).

The owner-manager of an SME has a central position and is the main internal factor to be taken into consideration. Referred to as an entrepreneur, he is often described as complex with a unique personality (Gasse, 1998), (Filion, 1991) describes him as an imaginative person, characterized by an ability to set and achieve objectives in order to maintain a high level of sensitivity for detecting business opportunities and taking moderately risky decisions aimed at innovation. The temperament, ideologies and objectives of the business leader are therefore important elements in understanding the nature of the company's innovation strategy. Some managers consider innovation to be "a natural state of business" (Miller & Friesen, 1982), and therefore seek their competitive advantage in remarkable, up-to-date and widespread innovations across all product ranges, as well as in product design, by taking and accepting the associated risk. Whereas other managers think that innovation would be costly and likely to disrupt the efficiency of production. For this reason, they only innovate if it is very necessary i.e. in the event of a pressing threat from competitors, or major losses of market share (Miller & Friesen, 1982) or in the event of obsolescence of their products.

The leader's age, personal life planning, place of control, personality, family dependence, initial training and professional experience help to characterise the company's orientation, decisions and objectives (Lorrain, Belley, & Ramangalahy, 1994)

The entrepreneur's individual learning process, acquired over time through his family background, work experience, training and relationships, enables him to develop his own way of doing business, innovating, taking risks and thus dealing with his environment in order to achieve the objectives he has set.

4. Achieving the executive's objectives as a variable for measuring performance

(Robichaud, McGraw, & Roger, 2005) assert that performance assessment tends to be based on economic performance criteria. However, some managers may consider their company to be performing very well, even if the financial indicators show average or even low values.

(Kaplan & Nortonon, 1996) consider that traditional financial measures of performance only provide information on the company's past performance and do not take into account the parameters that are critical to this performance, such as the company's long-term investment capacity or its relationships with customers. Consequently, they are inadequate for a proper evaluation of a company's performance (Kaplan & Nortonon, 1996).

In the case of SMEs, the literature has not yet reached a consensus on the definition and evaluation of performance (Wiklund, 1998) so each author uses a different measure (St-Pierre, 2005) points out that performance must necessarily take account of the influence of the owner-manager, particularly on his willingness to maintain a certain rate of growth for his company.

5. Theoretical model and development of the research problem

Based on the findings developed above, we propose (Figure 1) a theoretical model, based in part on (Covin & Slevin, 1991), which links managerial profile to entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance.



From this model, we developed the following research question: what is the impact of the manager's profile on the entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs?

5.1. Research methodology

As part of our empirical research, we opted for an analysis of individual and organisational variables based on the study of Algerian SMEs in all sectors of activity, run by owner-managers. We distributed 60 questionnaires in the Tizi-Ouzou region, obtaining a total of only 20 valid answers. We focused our study on SMEs because in developing countries like Algeria, they are the most present and dynamic sector, or even the driving force behind growth, innovation and sustainable development.

The sample obtained shows the following independent variables in percentage terms: the age of the owner-manager (of which 20% are between 18 and 35 years old, 50% between 35 and 50 years old, 20% between 50 and 65 years old and the 10% representing managers over 65 years old), marital status (70% are married and 30% single); level of education (65% have a higher level of education, 25% secondary and 5% average); studies carried out in their field (40% answered yes and 60% no); other variables based on a Likert scale, namely the importance attached to religious values, family values, regulations and the feeling of personal and relational success, as well as the number of years' experience in the field. The study demonstrates the effect of these independent variables on the entrepreneurial orientation (dependent variable) represented through the degree of innovation, risk-taking and responsiveness, which is re-exploited as an independent variable in order to determine its impact on the manager's objectives (dependent variable).

6. Modeling

Our sample follows a normal law. There are two types of normality test in SPSS: The Kolmogrov-Smirnov test, which is representative for large samples (greater than 50), and the Shapiro Wilk test, which is representative for small samples (less than 50).

In our work we used the Shapiro Wilk test given the sample in our study

- Significance

If $p \geq 0.05$: follows the normal law; If $p \leq 0.05$: does not follow the normal law

The Shapiro Wilk test shows that the following variables follow a normal law

- Age
- importance_religion
- importance_family
- importance_regulation

In this study, we will test the relationship between each individual characteristic and the entrepreneurial orientation of managers. To do this, the first parameter used is ANOVA, which is used to look for a difference between groups ranging from 3 to more. In the case where our sample is composed of only two respondent groups, we will use the T test

NB: there are two types of ANOVA test

- 1.Anova respecting homogeneity (equality of variances)
- 2. Anova without respect for homogeneity. In this case we used Welch's correction

- If $p \geq 0.05$: homogeneous; If $p \leq 0.05$: heterogeneous

6.1. Independent variables and their effects on entrepreneurial orientation

6.1.1. Age

To study this variable, we used the ANOVA test

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
1,366	3	16	,289

$p \geq 0.05$: variable age= homogeneous

ANOVA

Orientation Entrepreneuriale

	Sum of squares	ddl	Median square	F	Sig.
Intergroups	14,874	3	4,958	12,744	,000
Intra-group	6,225	16	,389		
Total	21,099	19			

F(3,19)= 12.74 ; p≤0.05 = difference between groups
So, in relation to the age variable, entrepreneurial orientation differs from one age to another.

To find out where the differences lie, we will use the post hoc test (complementary test to ANOVA).

Multiple comparisons :
Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial orientation
Tukey significant difference

(I) Age	(J) Age	Average difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.	Confidence interval at 95%	
					Lower terminal	Upper terminal
18-35	35-50	-,625000	,369006	,359	-1,68073	,43073
	50-65	-1,515000*	,441046	,016	-2,77684	-,25316
	>=65	-3,065000*	,540169	,000	-4,61043	-1,51957
35-50	18-35	,625000	,369006	,359	-,43073	1,68073
	50-65	-,890000	,369006	,115	-1,94573	,16573
	>=65	-2,440000*	,483142	,001	-3,82228	-1,05772
50-65	18-35	1,515000*	,441046	,016	,25316	2,77684
	35-50	,890000	,369006	,115	-,16573	1,94573
	>=65	-1,550000*	,540169	,049	-3,09543	-,00457
>=65	18-35	3,065000*	,540169	,000	1,51957	4,61043
	35-50	2,440000*	,483142	,001	1,05772	3,82228
	50-65	1,550000*	,540169	,049	,00457	3,09543

*. The average difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
- When *p ≤0.05*= difference

We note the following
Between age groups:
- (18-35) (35- 52): there is no significant difference in orientation
- (18-35) (50-65): there is a difference
- (18-35)≥65: there is a difference

This can be explained more clearly in the second table by looking at the column (the average difference I-J), where the figure is negative, J≥I, (I= reference age; J= comparison age).
The comparison shows the older the entrepreneur are, the better is their entrepreneurial orientation.
p ≤0.05= différence

6.1.2. Level of studies

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
,418	1	16	,527

p≥ 0.05: variable level of studies= homogeneous

ANOVA

Entrepreneurial orientation

	Sum of squares	ddl	Median square	F	Sig.
Inter-groupes	5,155	3	1,718	1,724	,202
Intragroupes	15,944	16	,996		
Total	21,099	19			

F=1.7 with a significance of 0.2, so there is no difference and entrepreneurial orientation is not really affected by level of education in our sample.

6.1.3. Importance of religion

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
3,661	4	14	,031

Non-homogeneous sample, so ANOVA is excluded; we will use Welch's correction.

Robust tests of equality of averages

Entrepreneurial orientation

	Statistics[a]	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
Welch	1,530	4	4,287	,338

a. F asymptotically distributed,

P ≥0.05 = the difference is not significant. In our sample, religion does not influence the entrepreneurial orientation of the manager.

6.1.4. importance attached to family values

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
4,142	3	16	,024

Non-homogeneous sample, so ANOVA is excluded; we will use Welch's correction.

Robust tests of equality of averages

Entrepreneurial orientation

	Statistics[a]	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
Welch	,674	3	6,034	,599

a. F asymptotically distributed,

P ≥0.05 = the difference is not significant. In our sample, family values do not influence the entrepreneurial orientation of the manager.

6.1.5. Importance attached to regulation

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
,658	2	16	,531

p≥ 0.05 : variable importance given to regulation= homogeneous

ANOVA

Entrepreneurial orientation

	Sum of squares	ddl	Median square	F	Sig.
Intergroupes	3,866	3	1,289	1,197	,343
Intragroupes	17,232	16	1,077		

Total	21,099	19			

P ≥0.05 = the difference is not significant. In our sample, the importance attached to regulation does not influence the entrepreneurial orientation of the manager.

6.1.6. Feeling of professional success

Test for homogeneity of variances

Entrepreneurial orientation

Levene's statistics	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
3,398	3	16	,044

Non-homogeneous sample, so ANOVA is excluded; we will use Welch's correction.

Robust tests of equality of averages

Entrepreneurial orientation

	Statistics[a]	ddl1	ddl2	Sig.
Welch	1,317	3	6,931	,343

a. F asymptotically distributed,

P ≥0.05 = the difference is not significant. In our sample, Feeling of professional success do not influence the entrepreneurial orientation of the manager.

6.1.7. Marital situation

The use of the T-test is justified by the fact that we have a sample of only two respondent groups.

Group statistics

	statut marital	N	Moyenne	Ecart type	Moyenne erreur standard
Orientation Entrepreneuriale	Célibataire	6	3,40667	,540617	,220706
	Marié	14	4,33571	1,109821	,296612

There is difference. To explain this difference, we used Levene's test.

Independent samples test

		Levene's test of equality of variances		t-test of equal averages
		F	Sig.	t
Entrepreneurial orientation	Hypothesis of equal variances	3,703	,070	-1,932
	Hypothesis of unequal variances			-2,513

p≥0.05, so the variable is homogeneous

Independent samples test

		t-test for equality of averages		
		ddl	Sig. (bilatéral)	Average difference
Entrepreneurial orientation	Hypothesis of equal variances	18	,069	-,929048
	Hypothesis of unequal variances	17,462	,022	-,929048

t(18)=-1.932, p=0.069≥0.05 = no difference, so marital status does not influence the entrepreneurial orientation of the manager in our sample..

6.1.8. Professional experience

Normality tests

In this case we used the R

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	ddl	Sig.	Statistics	ddl	Sig.
Professional experience	,179	20	,094	,883	20	,020
Entrepreneurial orientation	,196	20	,043	,881	20	,018

Our variable does not follow the normal law because p≤0.05, so we used Spearman's Rho method.

a. Lilliefors significance correction

a. Based on workspace memory availability

Correlations

			Professional experience
Spearman's Rho	Professional experience	Correlation coefficient	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	.
		N	20
	Entrepreneurial orientation	Correlation coefficient	,953**
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000
		N	20

R=0.953, p=0.000

There is a strong relationship between professional experience and entrepreneurial orientation, of the order of 95%.

6.2. Relationship between the EO and the achievement of objectives

By using the Regression method

Introduced/eliminated Variables

Modèle	Introduced Variables	eliminated éliminées	Method
1	Entrepreneurial orientation[b]		Introduce

a. Dependent variable : Objective Achievement

b. All the variables requested have been introduced. Using the R-two index of determination, we have the following table:

Summary of models

Model	R	R-two	R-two ajusted	Standard error of estimation
1	,997[a]	,995	,994	,113403

R-two= 0.995 which explains that the variation in EO determines 99.5% of the variation in the achievement of objectives and the remaining 0.05 is due to chance.

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Orientation

6.3. Conclusion of the research model

Variation of the variable

ANOVA[a]

Model		um of squares	ddl	Medium square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42,377	1	42,377	3295,185	,000[b]
	Residual	,231	18	,013		
	Total	42,608	19			

p≤0.05= Anova is significant

a. Dependent variable: Goal Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial orientation.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Non-standardised coefficients		standardised coefficients	
		B	Standard error	Bêta	t
1	(Constant)	-,686	,103		-6,636
	Entrepreneurial orientation	1,417	,025	,997	57,404

Coefficients[a]

Model		Sig.
1	(Constant)	,000
	Entrepreneurial orientation	,000

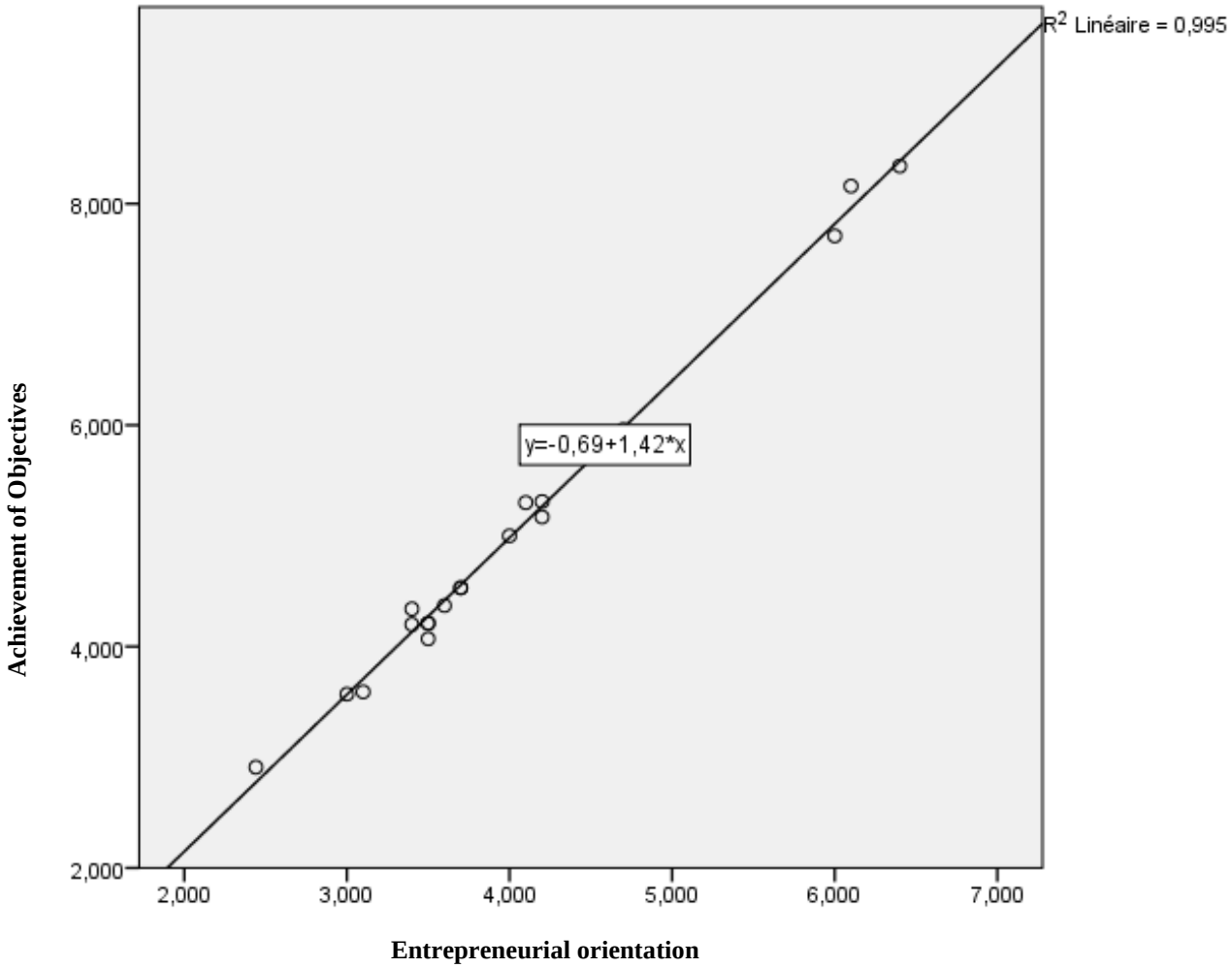
From the data in the last table, we arrive at the representative linear model specific to our research:

Y= 1.42x-0.86

(X= entrepreneurial orientation; Y= achievement of objectives).

If the entrepreneur's experience and/or age, which represent the coefficient of the EO, namely (a) in the model (y=ax+b), increases by one year, the EO will be better and the achievement of entrepreneurial objectives will increase by 1.42.

Graph 1: Graphical representation of the research model



Conclusion

The relationship between the profile of the owner-manager and EO, as presumed in our research question, is confirmed by the results obtained. In fact, EO is influenced by the characteristics of the manager with a view to achieving very specific objectives; our correlation results between EO and performance or the achievement of objectives show that our research is consistent with certain points in the literature. (Covin & Slevin, 1991), (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003) (Zahra, Neubman, & Huse, 2000) (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005)qui ont, elles aussi établi que l'OE avait un impact sur la performance de l'entreprise.

The aim of this article is to propose an original theoretical model linking the profile of the manager to EO, in the context of SMEs through a sample comprising exclusively owner-managers in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. Based on a review of the literature on entrepreneurial orientation and its indicators, we developed a conceptual model adapted to our empirical study. The results were then statistically modelled using SPSS software. However, despite the exactitude of the results obtained, our research sample of around twenty entrepreneurs could not be completely exhaustive; having said that, a larger sample would more likely lead to results that could be more generalisable.

To conclude, we can say that Algerian SMEs are faced with the imperatives of innovation and competitiveness, which lead them to consider that innovation should not be approached solely from a technological perspective, but also from the point of view of the values, traits and behaviours of managers.

We believe that this contribution, which sheds light on the role of the leader's profile in the entrepreneurial dynamic of the company, will open up a number of new lines of research for the entrepreneurship research community.

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