



Which Managerial Determinant Is Better For An Export Performance of Firms? A Meta-Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Export is usually the first step toward internationalization. However, it is regarded as a difficult, complex and dynamic process in an environment, sometimes, very competitive and turbulent. This competition requires that firms support a high level of performance in order to ensure their growth and survival. Management is often considered as the major force behind the beginning of development, sustenance and prosperity in exporting. Attitudes, perceptions and managerial characteristics seem to play a significant influence on export performance of firms. Nevertheless, the literature is mainly characterized by a lack of consensus and findings are conflicting. In this study, we classify the managerial determinants into skill-based and attitudinal characteristics and try to link these concepts with export performance. Finally, we suggest a grid of the managerial determinants having a significant impact on export performance. A critical examination of the existing works is required to better understand the managerial determinants of the export performance and to suggest, through a simplification and clarification of the different approaches and precepts, a new conceptual framework for future researches.

Key words: Attachment to parents, Attachment to same ages, Autonomy, Adolescence

INTRODUCTION

There is no right or wrong ways to go abroad. Export constitutes one of the fastest growing economic activities (Lages, Lages, & Lages, 2006) and the most popular, quickest and easiest way to internationalize (Leonidou, Palihawadana, & Theodosiou, 2011), serving as a platform for future international expansion (Kogut & Chang, 1996) because, especially of the lack of resources (Dalli, 1995) and certain degree of market knowledge and experience (Root, 2004). Firm's survival and expansion and the consequent economic growth of numerous countries are strongly contingent upon a better comprehension of the determinants that influence their export performance. Understanding the determinants of export performance in today's business environments has been emphasized by understanding the factors like: the impact of export success and performance on the firms' survival and expansion, the achievement of having competitive advantage in international markets and the development of economy as well as the development and implementation of public policy. There have been numerous

studies published in the past 30 years on the determinants of export performance, but the knowledge is still characterized by a fragmented collection of confusing findings. A major reason for the lack of consensus regarding the determinants of export performance, in spite of the large volume of published studies, is the lack of synthesis and assimilation of the fragmented knowledge. This study focuses on the managerial determinants which are classified into skill-based and attitudinal characteristics. The attitudes, perceptions and characteristics of managers play significant roles in export success of the firms (Maurel, 2009). They are considered as unique resources which allows obtaining and maintaining a greater export performance (Peng, Wang, & Yi, 2008). Despite the fact that many studies evaluated the elements of management characteristics between 1990 and 2012 (Zou & Stan, 1998), the findings are sometimes conflicting. A systematic synthesis on the existing studies and frameworks is needed to understand better the managerial determinants of export performance. To this aim, in light of previous studies, we suggest after this brief introduction, a grid of the managerial determinants having a significant impact on

export performance. Our synthesis model may be used for better understanding of the management factors to contribute in explaining the export performance of the firm. We have used the meta analysis called the method of vote-counting described by (Smith, 1971). The first step consists of encoding the results of studies in ternary form: significant positive relationship (+1), significant negative relationship (-1) and non-significant relationship (Leonidou, Katsikeas, Palinhawadana, & Spyropoulou). The advantage of this approach is to allow inclusion in the meta-analysis of threshold values for the selection of the items according to the degree of significance. The second step allows testing the hypothesis of non-significant relationship between a decision and a variable impact (significant positive total / total number of results). If the relationship between the variables is positive, then the probability of obtaining a significantly positive result is > 0.5 . This is an application of the binomial non-parametric test for the following two assumptions: $h_0: \pi = 0.5$, $h_1: \pi > 0.5$. Here π is the positive proportion estimated from a number of significantly positive results $u / u/k$ (k is the total number of studies). This test consists in calculating the probability of obtaining a number of significantly positive results at least equal to half the number of results observed under h_0 . This probability is equal to the probability that the random variable U "number of positive results" is greater than the observed value u . As h_0 , U therefore follows a binomial distribution $B(k, 1/2)$. For our meta-analysis, we have used 86 publications through electronic means with a manual search. We have recovered 10 published studies and which we had no access through the library loan that our university offers to us. We have recovered the other studies through available databases which are Sciences Direct and EBSCO business source premier, and Google Scholar with as keywords search: managerial practices, management and export performance, and export growth, export advantage, satisfaction with export. The bibliography of (Sousa, Martínez-López, & Coelho, 2008) and (Nazar & Saleem, 2009) that we have used was very useful. The majority of studies were published in Journal of international business studies, journal of marketing, journal of business research, management international review and journal of global marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Management constitutes a resource which can improve the export performance of the firm (Katsikea & Skarmeas, 2003) but the literature is still characterized by a lack of agreement regarding what constitutes the managerial factors in determining export performance (Katsikea & Skarmeas, 2003). As a result, a reasonable question to which we will answer is "which managerial characteristics have a significant influence on export performance of firms?" (Voermon, 2002) showed that it is impossible to comprehensively investigate market if the character of management is not concluded, and if done so, the results may be misleading. Referring to these previous studies, we classify managerial characteristics which influence the export performance into attitudinal and skill-based characteristics. The export performance means the results of the international activities of the enterprise. In this perspective, the export

performance is the extent to which the company achieved its objectives when exporting a product in a foreign market (Navarro, Losada, Ruzo, & Díez, 2010).

Several theories defined the export performance. According to the theory of contingency (Nutt, 2002), the performance is opposed to the principle of the "one best way" and can be summed up by the formula "it all depends". It is often synonymous with efficiency choices in material or reduction of uncertainty, of structural adjustment, formulation of strategy and competitive positioning. According to the decision's theory (Miller, Hickson, & Wilson, 1996), the performance is synonymous with efficiency (cost/benefit) and/or efficiency (good choice) of the decision. The entrepreneurial theory (Hartman, Tower, & Sebora, 1994) defines the performance as the competitiveness and the profitability. The theory of organizational learning (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) defines the performance as a magnitude and sustainability of the competitiveness. It is often characterized by the ability to learn, to respond quickly and on the basis of the learning path effectively to innovate technologies, structures and organizational practices. Finally, according to the resource based theory and dynamic capabilities (Newbert, 2007);(Barney, 1991), performance (Grant, 1991) directly depends on the competitive advantage that has a business. Also, the relationship between the resources and the performance of an organization is not direct but rather characterized by the mediating role of competitiveness. An organization is a combination of resources and competencies and competitiveness is the ability of a company to combine.

THE MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS ATTITUDINAL CHARACTERISTICS

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Researchers have consistently found that management commitment to exporting is positively associated with export performance (Alvarez E, 2004);(Nazar & Saleem, 2009);(Jalali, 2012);(Serra, Pointon, & Abdou, 2012) (Gilaninia, Ganjinia, & Jelodarloo, 2012);(Navarro et al., 2010). Sousa et al. (2008) explained that all studies revised by them had similar findings; except (Evangelista, 1994) which states that commitment does not influence on export performance. The management commitment can be defined as the general willingness to allocate the required resources to export. This includes participating in public export promotion programs, trade shows or gathering information on foreign markets (Maurel & Viviani, 2010), thus, higher export performance results are likely to be attained (Stoian, Rialp, & Rialp, 2011).

Management commitment allows a firm to aggressively go after the export market opportunities, avoid international threats and undertake effective marketing strategies that improve its export performance (Julian & Nhat, 2007). When managers are committed to an export venture, they carefully plan to entry the export markets and allocate sufficient managerial and financial resources to the ventures (O'Cass & Julian, 2003), which reduce uncertainty and enhances export performance (Mohammadi, Gilaninia, & Ganjinia, 2012).

MANAGEMENT'S INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

It allows the company to be on alert and listening to its customers (Q, Lockshin, & Quester, 2006), and better identify and benefit from emerging international opportunities and avoid threats (Sousa et al., 2008) helping the company to overcome the cultural barriers of international markets and especially the problem of the asymmetry of information, the opportunistic behaviour and uncertainty. The findings of (Olsson & Solberg, 2010) proved that export performance increases with export orientation, which was confirmed by (Mavrogiannis, 2008), (Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005);(Peng et al., 2008);(Cadogan, Kuivalainen, & Sundqvist, 2009);(Nazar & Saleem, 2009). Management's international orientation has been conceptualized as the process and decision-making activities used by managers that leads to new entry and support of business activities (Kropp, Lindsay, & Shoham, 2006) which enhances export performance.

MANAGEMENT'S CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

Management's customer orientation is the determinant that few researchers have examined in recognizing its relationship with export performance. Management's international orientation requires a continuous positive disposition towards customers (Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, & Niles-Jolly, 2005) and it's necessary to develop appropriate products or services to the needs and demands of foreign customers. By leveraging their customer knowledge, firms can become aware of market opportunities and improve their existing processes and resources (Yalcinkaya, Calantone, & Griffith, 2007) which contributes to sales growth and enhance export performance (Katsikea & Skarmeas, 2003); (Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005). Totally, it can be used as a key strategy to achieve higher export performance (Cadogan et al., 2009); (Asikhia, 2010; Nazar & Saleem, 2009); (Nor Shahrul Nizam Bin Muhamad, 2011);(Kaleka, 2012).

MANAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS REGARDING EXPORT STIMULI AND BARRIERS

These perceptions are the important forecasters of export performance (Nazar & Saleem, 2009);(Hutchinson, B., & Alexander, 2006). The extent to which a firm is motivated to export by sales/profit goals is largely contingent to upon the decision maker's perceptions about the export markets (Junyeon & Haksik, 1990);(Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005);(Leonidou et al., 2007). Ogunmokun and Ng (2004) assert that as higher the decision maker's perception about the export barriers as negative the effect about the export performance, which was confirmed by (Wilkinson & Brouthers, 2006);(Singh, Gaur, & Schmid, 2010);(Pinho & Martins, 2010);(Koksai & Kettaneh, 2011);(Ortiz, Ortiz, & Ramirez, 2012). Companies that perceive fewer risks in and barriers to exporting usually have a positive attitude towards it which, and as a consequence is reflected in their export performance (Donthu & Sang Hyeon, 1993). Export barriers are mostly caused by inadequate exchange of information about export markets (Al-Ali, Lim, & Al-Ali, 2012). So it is necessary for managers to concentrate on the advantages

instead of barriers in exporting and keep the positive attitude toward the prospect of exporting (Zou & Stan, 1998).

SKILL-BASED CHARACTERISTICS EXPORT EXPERIENCE

The manager, through his previous international experience can already benefit from the existence of an international network to develop its knowledge for expansions into new international markets and can manage relationships and activities in new environments, improve the ability of dealing with foreign markets and customers, enjoying good insights of customer needs, reduced relationship development and economies of learning, which improves export performance of the firm (Manolova, 2002);(Gray, 1997);(Sapienza, Autio, George, & Zahra, 2006). Dominguez and Sequeira (1993) noted that export experience had a positive effect in export performance and the review by (Sousa et al., 2008) showed that managers with international experience are more successful in exporting. These outcomes were confirmed by (Julian & Nhat, 2007),(Spence & Crick, 2009);(Tang & Liu, 2011);(Kaleka, 2012);(Gilaninia et al., 2012). In contrast, (Das, 1994);(Bodur, 1994);(Louter, Ouwerker, & Bakker, 1991);(Kaynak & Kuan, 1993);(Naidu & Prasad, 1994), (Ibeh, 2003); (Brouthers & Nakos, 2005) identified a negative association. Some scholars reported that younger firms obtained better exporting results in terms of intensity and sales (Baldauf, Cravens, & Wagner, 2000) and are more opened to international development and business practice. (Mavrogiannis, 2008), (Stump, Gerald, & Caterine, 1998). Lastly, (Katsikeas, Piercy, & Ioannidis, 1996) concluded that export performance is not important for achieving the export goals.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Katsikeas et al. (1996); (Krowles, Mughan, & Lyod-Reason, 2006) demonstrate that there is a very strong positive relationship between foreign language proficiency and export performance. They found that the greater likelihood of a manager being able to speak a foreign language is linked to a higher degree of export involvement. Previous studies revealed that business in the foreign market is based on foreign language proficiency, and without this proficiency trade becomes very hard, so managers with foreign language proficiency are able to cause better success in exports (Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005);(Sousa et al., 2008);(Jalali, 2012). Zarin and Zazife (2009) noted that the problem of languages causes misunderstandings on both by negotiators in business meetings. Indeed, foreign languages proficiency facilitates social contacts, assists in understanding the ethos and business practices of a market, and improves communication to and from markets. Moini (1995);(Kaynak & Kuan, 1993), (De Luz, 1993) assert that speaking languages does not influence export performance.

EDUCATION LEVEL

Gumed and Rasmussen (2002); (Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005); (Jalali, 2012);(Serra et al., 2012);(Sousa et al., 2008); (Mavrogiannis, 2008) have identified a positive correlation between education level and export performance.

A higher level of education helps the company to develop its commercial orientation and knowledge related to marketing strategy, thus, managers can utilize their knowledge better in deciding and planning the export market (Zou & Stan, 1998);(Julien & Ramangalahy, 2003);(Brodrechtova, 2008), thus export performance will be attained. Concerning manager’s levels of formal education, about a third of the studies found that this has a positive effect on export sales, growth and profits. Overall, it can be concluded that firm’s export performance benefits from having educated managers.(Kaynak & Kuan, 1993); (Evangelista, 1994) assert that education level has no influence on export performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The reviews of articles between 1990 and 2012 attempted to assess the management determinants of export performance. Researchers such (Zou & Stan, 1998) and (Sousa et al., 2008) summarized and reviewed the determinants of export performance. This review is focused on the empirical literature concerning the managerial determinants of export performance published between 1990 and 2012. Publications before 1990, case studies and non-English studies are not evaluated in this research. Although many studies evaluated the elements of management characteristics (Suarez-Ortega & Alamo-Vera, 2005),(Sousa et al., 2008), both theoretically and empirically, the relationship between management and export performance remains controversial. The conceptual framework below (Figure 1) is proposed to ensure that export performance is affected by managerial determinants (Zou & Stan, 1998);

(Nazar & Saleem, 2009) which are classified into attitudinal and skill-based characteristics.

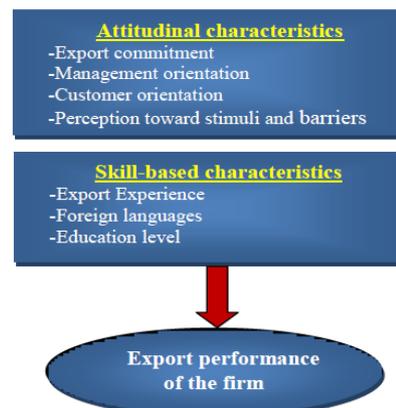


Figure1. A proposed Conceptual Framework Conclusion, benefits, limits and implications for future researches

To achieve this conceptual framework, we have used the method of vote counting that allows us to synthesis the summaries and conclusions dealing with the relationship between management and export performance. To make precise the method of vote counting described by (Smith, 1971), studies are sorted into three categories (significant positive link, significant negative link, no significant link). Essentially, the vote-counting approach summarizes, for each independent factor, the number of studies that report a significant positive effect, a significant negative effect, or a non-significant effect on export performance. The number of studies reporting significant positive, negative, and non-significant findings is summarized in table 1.

Table1. Summary of proposed determinants by literatures

Determinates	Researchers / years	Significant Positive Link (+1)	No Significant Link (-1)	Negative Significant link(n.s)
Management Commitment	Cavuşgil and Zou, 1994	*		
	Navarro et al., 2010	*		
	Julian and Nhat, 2007	*		
	Alvarez, 2004	*		
	Nazar and Saleem, 2009	*		
	Serra, Pointon and Abdou, 2012	*		
	Stoian et al.,2010	*		
	Ali Mohammed et al., 2012	*		
	O’Cass and Julian, 2003	*		
	Sousa et al., 2008	*		
	Jalali, 2012	*		
	Gilaninia et al., 2012	*		
	Wilkinson and Brouthers, 2006	*		
	Haghighui and Ataei, 2010	*		
	Kropp, Lindsay and Shoham, 2006	*		
Wang, 2008	*			
Evangelista, 1994			*	
Management International Orientation	Mavrogiannis et al., 2008	*		
	Solberg and Olsson, 2010	*		
	Codagan et al., 2009	*		
	Nazar and Saleem, 2009	*		
	Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera, 2005	*		
	Beaujanot et al., 2006	*		
Sousa et al., 2008	*			
	Piercy, Katsikeas and Skarmas, 2003	*		

Management Customer Orientation	Nazar and Saleem, 2009	*	
	Cadogan et al., 2009	*	
	Olalekan, 2010	*	
	Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera, 2005	*	
	Muhamad Nur, 2011	*	
	Kaleka, 2012	*	
	Schneider, Ehrhat, Mayer, Saltz, Niles-Jolly, 2006	*	
	Brown et al., 2002 Yalcinkaya, Clantone and Griffith, 2007	*	
Perceptions about barriers	Koksal and Kattaneh, 2011		*
	Halikias and Panayotopoulou, 2003		*
	Ortiz, Ortiz and Raminez, 2012		*
	Wilkinson and Brouthers, 2006		*
	Pinho and Martin, 2010		*
	Singh et al., 2010		*
	Alvarez, 2004		*
Perceptions about stimuli	Moon and Lee, 1990	*	
	Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera, 2005	*	
	Leonidou et al., 2007	*	
	Donthu and Kim, 1993	*	
	Zou and Stan, 1994	*	
	Tang and Liu, 2011	*	
	Spence and Crick, 2009	*	
Export Experience	Sapienza, Autio, George and Zahra, 2006	*	
	Dominiguez and Squeira, 1993	*	
	Chetty, Eriksson, and Lindbergh 2006	*	
	DiMaggio and Powell 1983	*	
	Chetty, Eriksson, and Lindbergh, 2006	*	
	Delios and Henisz 2003	*	
	Julien and Nhat, 2007	*	
	Gray, 1997	*	
	Gilaninia et al., 2012	*	
	Kaleka, 2012	*	
	Lages, Jap, and Griffith 2008	*	
	Manolova et al., 2002		*
	Kaynak and Kuan, 1993		*
	Bodur, 1994		*
	Brouthers and Nakos, 2005		*
	Mavrogiannis et al., 2008		*
Stump, Athaide and Axinn, 1998		*	
Foreign Language Proficiency	Katsikeas and Skarmas, 2003	*	
	Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera, 2005	*	
	Krowles et al., 2006	*	
	Sousa, 2008	*	
	Jalali, 2012	*	
	Zarin and Zarif, 2009	*	
	Moini, 1995		*
	Kaynak and Kuan, 1993		*
De Luz, 1993		*	
Education level	Gumed and Rasmussen 2002	*	
	Brodrechtova, 2008	*	
	Souse, 2008	*	
	Mavrogiannis et al., 2008	*	
	Serra, Pointou and Abdou, 2012	*	
	Jalali, 2012	*	
	Zou and Stan, 1998	*	
	Julian and Ramangalahy, 2003	*	
Kaynak and Kuan, 1993		*	
Evangelista, 1994		*	

Assuming that a positive true effect of a factor on export performance would result in a high probability of empirical studies reporting a significant and positive effect, the null hypothesis of No effect should be rejected if the number of positive significant findings is larger than a critical value, which depends on the total number of studies. Hence, the vote-counting method offers a simple and clear picture to readers with regard to the likely sign of the true effect of a factor. Remember all of the available studies (or only those results with degrees of low meanings ($\alpha \leq 0.1$, $\alpha \leq 0.05$ or $\alpha \leq 0.01$), it can be concluded that there is a significantly positive link between the management and the export performance ($p < 0.01$). The signs test shows a positive result between each of the determinants in our research and export performance. We give an example of the sign test about the relationship between the experience to export and export performance in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of signs test (Example of relationship between export experience and export performance)

Studies Includes	No threshold	$\alpha \leq 0.1$	$\alpha \leq 0.05$	$\alpha \leq 0.01$
Number of results with a positive link	13	12	11	9
Number of results	19	17	14	12
Signs test	0.68	0.71	0.79	0.75
Probability to obtain the proportion p sub h_0	0.03178	0.024520	0.00646	0.01928
Result of signs test	Reject h_0	Reject h_0	Reject h_0	Reject h_0

CONCLUSION

This paper helped to develop a conceptual framework and understand the managerial determinants of export performance of firms. Attitudinal characteristics are classified into export commitment, management international

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