

The Determinants of Export Performance: A Review of the Literature 2006 - 2014

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to synthesize and evaluate recent studies on determinants of export performance.

Design/methodology/approach - Using a vote-counting technique this paper reviews 124 papers published between 2006 and 2014 to assess the determinants of export performance.

Findings - The results indicate that significant progress has been made during these nine years and that: (1) numerous new determinants are identified, (2) data quality and statistical biases have received considerable attention, and (3) interaction and indirect relationships are considered. However, at the same time, the research of export performance is still limited by (1) a lack of synthetic theoretical basis, (2) inconsistent empirical test results, and (3) insufficiency in the research framework and statistical methodologies.

Originality/value - Export performance has received increasing attention over recent decades, but the area is still characterized by fragmentation and diversity hindering theoretical and practical development. This paper integrates the findings of recent studies on export performance and provides further discussion from both theoretical and methodological aspects, and points out the directions for future research.

Keywords Export performance, Internal factors, External factors, Literature review.

Paper type Literature review

The Determinants of Export Performance: A Review of the Literature 2006 – 2014

Introduction

With the rapid growth of international business, exporting plays a key role in many firms' survival and growth. Exporting activities enhance organizational capabilities, which, in turn, generate additional resources that boost the firms' performance (Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009). Hence, a robust understanding of exporting is much called for by researchers, managers, and policy-makers (Leonidou *et al.*, 2007, Sousa *et al.*, 2010). Over the past 50 years, fruitful progress of export performance research has indicated the consistently increasing magnitude of this area. In this study, *export performance* is defined as the outcome of a firm's activities in the export market (Shoham, 1996, Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000).

Several publications have already reviewed the literature of exporting comprehensively and revealed the achievements and limitations in this field (e.g., Bilkey, 1978, Aaby and Slater, 1989, Zou and Stan, 1998, Sousa *et al.*, 2008). So far, the latest integrative literature review of export performance by Sousa *et al.* (2008) includes the publications until 2005. From 2006, increasing attention has been paid to the research of antecedents of export performance, as an increasing number of papers related to export performance are published in top-ranking journals. Despite this increasing interest there has been no recent literature review summarizing these latest developments and pointing out future direction in this field.

Reviewing the recent literature helps to detect the progress of export performance research and identify the conceptual and methodological limitations in previous studies. It improves

the applicability of future research, accuracy of empirical analysis, and reliability in drawing practical implications, which in turn facilitate theory development.

Between 2006 and 2014, three major areas of progress are evident in the export performance literature. Firstly, the increasing application of extant theories and multiple theoretical foundations has provided a more comprehensive and insightful view. Secondly, a considerable number of new factors are introduced as the determinants of export performance. And thirdly, advanced statistical methods are used, which allows for the exploration of the sophisticated relationships between antecedents and export performance (e.g., moderating and mediating relationships, three-way interaction, etc.).

Nevertheless, the research of export performance is still under maturity (Sousa *et al.*, 2008), and still characterized by divergence and discordance (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000, Sousa *et al.*, 2008, Tan and Sousa, 2011). Although a range of theories are considered, each individual theory only provides a fragmented view of export performance. As such, a systematic theoretical basis and framework that could comprehensively explain all of the drivers of export performance remains absent (Lages *et al.*, 2008, Wheeler *et al.*, 2008, Tan and Sousa, 2011). Furthermore, whilst a wide range of determinants are explored, few of these are studied in depth. Indeed, most studies investigate the direct links between the antecedents and export performance, but ignore the interacted and nested relationship among those causes. Notwithstanding some more advanced methodologies are considered, estimation biases still exist. The ignorance of the hypothesis behind the methodology poses a major threat to the validity and reliability of estimation results. After a thorough review of the literature in the recent nine years, we find three major problems in export performance research, including (1) diversity, indicating an excessive number of antecedents developed in various conceptual models, but few in-depth studies; (2) fragmentation, manifested in the variety of analytical

techniques and methodological approaches adopted by different studies; and (3) inconsistency, in that conflicting results are obtained from different studies in terms of the effect of determinants on export performance.

These limitations, constituting serious obstacles to the development of export performance research, indicate the urgency to consolidate the recent literature. Consequently, a review is required to identify the achievements and disclose the crucial theoretical and methodological limitations of recent empirical studies. Our timely literature review synthesizes recent studies in this area and aims to: (1) provide an updated review and synthesize the empirical literature between 2006 and 2014 focused on the antecedents of export performance; (2) summarize the achievements during these nine years, and point out the limitations of current research (including theoretical, methodological and practical aspects); and (3) propose solutions to the current shortcomings and provide directions for future research. Such an endeavour is of particular importance to improve export managers' understanding of the factors leading to export success. In addition to the traditional survey studies, this literature review also examines the studies using secondary data, which provides researchers with valuable insights and facilitates longitudinal analysis in this area.

We first present the scope and analytical approach of this literature review. We then summarize the descriptive assessments of the reviewed studies, including the theoretical, fieldwork, and sampling characteristics, and the statistical methodologies adopted. We also present the conceptual framework and discuss the antecedents of export performance. Finally, the implications and directions for future studies are discussed.

Scope and Analytical Approach of the Literature Review

This review focuses on empirical literature concerning export performance as a dependent variable that was published between 2006 and 2014. It does not include papers that only explore the measures of export performance. Papers published before 2006 are excluded, as they are considered to have been included in previous review articles (e.g., Bilkey, 1978, Aaby and Slater, 1989, Zou and Stan, 1998, Sousa *et al.*, 2008).

Three major selection criteria apply for inclusion of a relevant article, as follows: (1) it must take export performance as the dependent variable; (2) it must test export performance from a micro-business perspective (firm level or export venture level) rather than a macro-economic view; (3) it must be empirical in nature, applying data analysis and statistical tests. Therefore, theoretical studies and case studies are excluded. Consistent with previous review works (e.g., Bilkey, 1978, Aaby and Slater, 1989, Zou and Stan, 1998, Sousa *et al.*, 2008), the current study only considers publications in English.

Eligible studies included in this paper are determined by a systematic process that combines computerized and manual bibliographic search method, primarily using leading marketing and international business academic journals (e.g., *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *International Marketing Review*, *International Business Review*, the detailed information of the reviewed journals is shown in Appendix 1). In total, 124 articles from 30 journals published in the period 2006-2014 are reviewed. This figure is more than that has been achieved in earlier reviews (43 papers in Bilkey (1978); 55 papers in Aaby and Slater (1989) for 1978-1988; 50 papers in Zou and Stan (1998) for 1987-1997; 52 papers in Sousa et al. (2008) for 1998-2005). The increasing publishing intensity in the field of export performance as witnessed

throughout these decades demonstrates the rising importance of the subject, and its continued acknowledgment as an area worthy of academic investigation.

In terms of analytical approach, meta-analysis and vote-counting methods have been widely used in review studies with both methods having merits and shortcomings (Tan and Sousa, 2013, Newbert *et al.*, 2014). While meta-analysis is considered to be statistically superior than vote-counting (Combs *et al.*, 2011), vote-counting is criticized for being too conservative and overlooking the magnitude of effect size (Ostini *et al.*, 2009). However, the interpretability of the results of meta-analysis is dependent on the degree of measurement consensus (Newbert *et al.*, 2014), and given the fact that disparate measures are used by researchers, the results from a meta-analysis “are difficult or impossible to interpret” (Newbert *et al.*, 2014: 147). Moreover, meta-analysis requires more data (e.g., correlation coefficient or effect size) (Hunter and Schmidt, 2004), which is not always available for many studies. As a result, Newbert *et al.*, (2014) suggest that in these cases vote-counting is a more appropriate tool to reveal important theoretical and empirical distinctions. Hence, considering the above points, this study applies a vote-counting technique to review the literature on export performance. This technique provides a simple but clear picture of the probable influence of a set of variables (Tan and Sousa, 2011). The assumptions underlying the vote-counting technique are that: (1) the effect size is equivalent; (2) the sample size is irrelevant to the test result; and (3) the multivariate and bivariate techniques are consistent (Zou and Stan, 1998).

Description of Studies Reviewed

General descriptive summaries of the 124 reviewed studies are listed in Appendix 2, which provides information of each study in respect of theoretical background, country, industrial sector, firm size, data sources, sample size, response rate, respondents, unit of analysis, measures of export performance, and method of statistical analysis. Below we present our assessment of the studies along five dimensions: (1) measures of export performance, (2) theoretical basis, (3) fieldwork characteristics (i.e. country of study, industrial sector, firm size) (4) sampling (i.e., sample size and unit of analysis), and (5) statistical methods.

Measures of Export Performance

The results show a low degree of consensus of measuring export performance. Among the 124 reviewed studies, export performance is measured in 53 ways, with 23 different measures used only once or twice. Although several broad taxonomies are developed (e.g., EXPERF scale, see: Zou *et al.*, 1998), there is still no uniformly implemented conceptualization and operationalization of export performance. The majority of recent literature has only adopted fragmented and uncoordinated measures of export performance. This circumstance impedes the advancement of export performance literature, as it places difficulties in the way of comparing and contrasting the findings within this area (Zou and Stan, 1998, Oliveira *et al.*, 2012).

Among the measures of export performance, economic measures are the most frequently utilized, being seen as export profitability (51), export sales growth (45), export sales (38), and export intensity (36). Non-economic performance measures are less frequently employed,

among which, satisfaction with export performance (25), and export goal achievement (15) are used relatively often to assess performance. Noticeably, there are 41 studies among the reviewed papers that employ only a single indicator of export performance. As export performance is a multi-faceted phenomenon, the use of multiple measures is important to capture the different aspects of the export performance construct and enhance the effectiveness of the indicators.

Theoretical Basis

Theoretical development, through the construction of a systematic set of relationships providing a consistent and comprehensive explanation of phenomena, is a primary objective of academic research (Katsikeas, 2003). We notice that more theories are introduced in the export performance literature between 2006 and 2014, but the absence of any synthetic theoretical support is a serious concern in this research area (Dhanaraj and Beamish, 2003, Singh, 2009).

Among the 124 reviewed studies, 15 papers do not provide information about the underlying theories. The remaining 109 papers consider 41 theories (or paradigms), the most widely used being the resource-based view (RBV) (50 studies), contingency theory (13 studies), institutional-based view (IBV) (12 studies), and organizational learning theory (OLT) (11 studies). These four theories are discussed below in more detail.

The RBV considers a firm as a unique parcel of valuable tangible and intangible resources, and these controllable resources and capabilities determine a firm's competitive advantage and performance in export market (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000, Barney *et al.*, 2001). The

underlying assumption of the RBV is that the product markets are stable and constant, as the resources cannot be perfectly imitated and transferred (Barney, 1991, Kraaijenbrink *et al.*, 2010). As an illustration, Cadogan *et al.* (2009) reveal the pivotal role of market orientation capabilities in improving export performance. However, we consider that an exporting firm's competitive advantage is not only determined by its resources, but also influenced by the external market and environmental forces which it faces (Peng *et al.*, 2008).

Among the reviewed studies, 12 applied the IBV. As the IBV was not mentioned in any prior reviews, this appearance indicates the increasing consideration of institutional influence in export marketing. The IBV emphasizes the importance of institutional environment, and suggests that institutional forces shape firms' strategic decisions and determine their performance (Dacin *et al.*, 2002). This is particularly important for exporting firms, as export activities are subject to different institutional forces in the host and export markets (Peng *et al.*, 2008). As an example, LiPuma *et al.* (2013) show the importance of institutions to export performance, since high quality of the institutional environment leads to superior export performance. This line of research offers broader theoretical insight into export performance determinants by considering the effect of institutional forces.

Furthermore, the competitive advantage derived from a firm's resources, and influenced by institutions, is neither fixed nor infallible. It is, instead, conditioned by the co-alignment between internal resources and external forces. Contingency theory highlights the fit between strategic factors including marketing strategies and the overall context. Different from the RBV and IBV, this theory considers that superior export performance is generated by the contingent compatibility, which is changeable and individualized to each firm or export venture (Harrigan, 1983). For instance, Hultman *et al.* (2011) find that the effectiveness of export promotion strategy is contingent on a complex interaction between export experience

and external sociocultural distance, where the alignment among strategic decisions, experiences and sociocultural contexts determines export successes. However, contingency analysis only provides descriptive conclusions about individual case of export performance in specific situations, which limits its generalizability and application (Hultman *et al.*, 2011).

In addition, firms' exporting activities are continuing operations. Organizational learning theory (OLT) specifies the encoding mechanism between previous organizational operations and the organization's future behaviour and outcomes (Santos-Vijande *et al.*, 2012, Wei *et al.*, 2014). In an exporting context, export managers learn from past exporting activities and gain a better understanding of the causality among export strategies, surrounding conditions and corresponding export performance (Fiol and Lyles, 1985, Lages *et al.*, 2008). Hence, such knowledge leverages current strategic decisions, and influences future export performance (Ruigrok and Wagner, 2003, Lages *et al.*, 2008). For instance, Lages *et al.* (2008) indicate that export performance of the previous year plays a significant role in shaping the following year's export marketing strategy and export performance through the learning process. It provides a longitudinal view that explains the inter-temporal effect on export performance over time.

Apart from these four theories discussed above, other theories are considered as well, e.g., behavioural theory (five studies), relationship marketing theory (five studies), transaction cost theory (five studies), etc. (see Appendix 2 for a full list of theories). What emerges from this discussion is that no single theory seems to be adequate enough to fully address the complexity of export marketing. And in order to provide a more comprehensive view, researchers tend to integrate theories to support their analysis and arguments. A total of 39 out of the 124 reviewed papers did, in fact, combine two (or three) theories as their research basis.

Fieldwork Characteristics

Country of Study. Developed countries received more research interest than developing countries. Yet, compared with the previous literature, increasing attention was paid to emerging markets, with 44 out of the 124 reviewed studies being focused on the developing economies. However, among the developing countries, only five studies consider African countries (i.e., Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe) (e.g., Matanda and Freeman, 2009, Boso *et al.*, 2013). China receives particular emphasis (19 studies), because it has become one of the largest economies and the biggest exporter in the world (He *et al.*, 2013). Since exporting serves as the primary foreign entry mode for firms in emerging countries (Singh, 2009), more studies are expected to concentrate on these economies.

A valuable progress was that 16 studies collected data from multiple countries. Such cross-national research is able to control for the contextual factors of two or more countries, which helps in increasing the generalizability of the research findings, and in reducing the limitations produced by single-country samples (Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009, Boehe and Cruz, 2010).

Industry Type. The majority of reviewed studies considered multiple industries, which allows a researcher to control for the industry-specific influences and generalize the research results (Sousa, 2004). Consistent with previous reviews, the manufacturing industries were the main focus. Noticeably, other industrial sectors (e.g., service sector) have started to be included (e.g., Sichtmann *et al.*, 2011, Durmuşoğlu *et al.*, 2012). Their exclusion in previous research was considered to represent a large research void in literature (Sousa *et al.*, 2008). However, more studies of non-manufacturing industries are still needed to generalize the industrial influence and provide more comprehensive insight. Especially, the inclusion of the

service sector, which is of increasing importance in international arena, could provide answers to the problems posed by the intangibility characteristics of services.

Firm Size. Among the reviewed studies, 42 studies did not provide detailed information about the size of the firm being investigated, so we infer that they used the full range of firm sizes (small, medium and large firms). However, SMEs (50 studies) increasingly join the global markets in pursuit of opportunities, and play a potentially essential role in providing employment and strengthening future prospects in many countries (Knight, 2000, Nazar and Saleem, 2011). Generally, small firms are likely to have fewer resources, meaning that the use of the RBV does not help in explaining their exporting motivation and internationalizing mechanism (Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009). Considering that exporting is a particularly appropriate entry mode for SMEs, more attention should be devoted to the issue of how such enterprises improve export performance.

Sampling

Sample Size. Among the reviewed studies, 100 papers collected primary data, and 24 studies used the secondary data that are collected by national statistic department or the third institutions. For studies using primary data, the sample size ranged from 52 to 3,141 with an average of 277, and the average response rate is 34.3%. For studies using secondary data, sample size ranged from 141 to 359,874 with an average of 33,975. As expected, the sample size of those studies using second-hand data is significantly larger than those using primary data. In terms of the survey data, the sample size in respect of the most recent nine years is larger than that of previous studies. On average, the increasing sample size improves validity and generalizability, and allows for more sophisticated statistical analysis (Sousa *et al.*, 2008).

Unit of Analysis. Cavusgil and Zou (1994) maintain that the proper unit of analysis in export performance research should be the export venture. Venture-level studies acknowledge more concrete and specific antecedents in exporting assessment (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994, Sousa *et al.*, 2008). Between 2006 and 2014, 54 out of the 124 studies focused on the export venture level in their analysis. Compared with former literature reviews, more venture-level research is seen between the period 2006-2014.

However, two concerns are raised about venture-level studies (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). First, the use of the export venture may fail to capture latent firm-level variables. Second, venture-level measurements of export performance are inappropriate in some instances. Studies that measure export venture performance by using export function instruments may present invalid managerial implications (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). The choice of the unit of analysis should depend on the research questions, and venture-level analysis does not work for all.

Statistical Methods

Consistent with a prior review (Sousa *et al.*, 2008), the majority of studies employed multivariate data analysis, such as structural equation modelling (SEM), the partial least square path model (PLS-PM), factor analysis (FA), and multi-regression analysis. Particularly, a considerable number of studies (63 papers) used structural equation modelling technique (including SEM and PLS-PM) for hypothesis testing.

All the classic multivariate techniques (e.g. multivariate regression, factor analysis, multivariate analysis of variance, discriminant analysis) share the common limitation that they can only examine one relationship at a time (Hair, 2009). As an extension, SEM and

PLS-PM offer an integrated framework, which is able to estimate a synthetic set of relationships and comprise specific measurement properties of latent variables simultaneously with the consideration of all possible information (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005, Hair, 2009).

In addition, both OLS regression and ANOVA see limitation in their assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity (Glass *et al.*, 1972, Judd *et al.*, 1995). Real data, in fact, are normally skewed and kurtic (Judd *et al.*, 1995), which lead to a great concern regarding Type-I and Type-II error rates, thus creating increasing uncertainty about the estimation, and also decreasing statistical power. More attention to the methodological assumptions and the appearance of sample data appearance is thus recommended. Additionally, more robust estimators (e.g. maximum likelihood estimator, M-estimator, bayesian estimator, etc.) should be considered.

Conceptual Framework

Based on our review, we propose the following conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

[Figure 1]

Export marketing strategy functions as an important intermediate variable. It is shaped according to a firm's internal resources and external forces, and directly affects competitive advantage, which determines export performance. The empirical results support the key and direct effect of export marketing strategy on export performance.

Previous reviews of papers have revealed that studies tend to focus on the direct influence of antecedents on export performance, and to ignore the intermediate and interactive influence of them. As an improvement, this review takes a further step to suggest considering more mediation and moderation effects, thereby improving the basic theoretical conceptual framework and providing a more comprehensive view. Furthermore, we summarize the positions of each antecedent in the path model and count the frequency of use for each factor (see Appendix 3). It illustrates the role of these antecedents to export performance and reflects the degree of popularity of each factor in the export performance literature. In this section, we explain the antecedents of export performance, and discuss the mediating, and moderating variables respectively.

Antecedents of Export Performance

A large number of antecedents are found to have significant influence on export performance. In order to fit the proposed framework, we make an effort to classify the constructs based on their underlying measurements. Sousa et al. (2008) identify two distinct aspects of determinants, i.e., internal variables and external variables. Following the classification of the determinants, we sort all the antecedent factors based on their definitions and measurements. Specifically, internal variables consist of firm-level factors which refer to the export marketing strategy, firm characteristics/capabilities and management characteristics. External factors, on the other hand, are sorted into industry-level characteristics and country-level characteristics. The key reason for this reclassification is the different focuses of the underlying theories (e.g., RBV and IBV).

Firm-level Factors.

Among the reviewed papers, firm-level variables are the most studied antecedents to export performance. We categorize the firm-level factors into four subgroups: export marketing strategies, firm characteristics, firm capabilities, and management characteristics.

Export Marketing Strategy. The export marketing strategy-performance relationship has been widely studied. Strategic marketing decisions are driven by a firm's internal resources and capabilities, its managers' characteristics, and the external environment (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006). Whether to standardize or adapt the export marketing strategies is most discussed. However, inconsistent findings emerge in respect of this issue. Katsikeas *et al.* (2006) indicate that export success is determined by the contingency between export strategies and the marketing environment context, and hence, there can be no generalized optimal strategy. Beside the strategy itself, strategic implementation effectiveness and strategic fit are also key determinants of export performance, but are neglected by many studies (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006, Morgan *et al.*, 2012). In addition, we notice that a new stream of export performance research introduces environmentally-oriented strategic behaviour, revealing that the implementation of sustainable marketing strategies in the export market with stringent environmental regulations stimulates export performance (Antonietti and Marzucchi, 2014, Zeriti *et al.*, 2014). Future research should recognize that superior export performance is not only driven by the marketing strategies, but also determined by the strategic fit and the effectiveness of strategic implementation (Dow, 2006, Ramaseshan *et al.*, 2013).

Firm Characteristics. The firm's basic characteristics are widely considered. Specifically, export size and firm export experience are the most commonly studied variables, and empirical evidence widely supports the positive impact of these two variables on export

performance. In addition to examining the direct relationship between firm characteristics and export performance, recent studies have begun to consider that the relationship between export marketing strategy and export performance is conditional on these idiosyncratic resources (e.g., Bertrand, 2010, LiPuma *et al.*, 2013). Bertrand (2010) reveals that export experience augments the positive effect of outsourcing on export performance. In a global market, export marketing strategic decisions are intertwined with firm characteristics to respond to export performance (LiPuma *et al.*, 2013). Future research on the interaction role of firm characteristics could have valuable implications for policy-makers, and furnish export managers with a better understanding of export success.

Firm Capabilities. Firm capabilities have been a central theme of international business research, which are recognized as one of the pivotal elements in driving sustainable competitive advantage and shaping export performance (Barney *et al.*, 2001, Lages *et al.*, 2009). With respect to firm capabilities, export market orientation, as an emerging key determinant of export performance identified by Sousa *et al.* (2008), has received increasing interest between 2006 and 2014. For instance, Cadogan *et al.* (2009) investigate the quadratic relationship between export marketing orientation and performance, which indicates that the market orientation does not always has a positive impact on export performance. Additionally, other novel strategic orientations are studied (e.g., technology orientation), and found to significantly influence a firm's international behaviour and its corresponding export performance (Hortinha *et al.*, 2011). Thus, as firm capabilities are a main source of the firm's performance advantage and central to the firm's continued survival (see Knight and Cavusgil, 2004, Yalcinkaya *et al.*, 2007), future studies are encouraged to pay adequate attention to these factors

Management Characteristics. Management factors are also crucial to business success. Export managers make decisions and strategies to enhance and expand the overseas market, which will inevitably influence the firm's export performance (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000). Particularly, managers' international experience, which is a key determinant of export performance, is widely explored. However, some studies indicate the insignificant influence of managers' experience on export performance (Lages *et al.*, 2008). Clearly, the inconsistent findings in respect of management factors highlight the need for further in-depth studies of managerial influences. Such studies enable a better understanding of the key role of managers, including their perceptions and behaviors, in improving export performance, and would provide normative implications for export firms.

Industry-level Characteristics.

Industrial factors are rarely studied in the period 2006-2014, the exception being industrial characteristics, industry adaptation, industry concentration and technological related variables. Technological developments will improve commitment within the whole industry and, may eventually lead to increase export performance of individual firms. Future research should consider the domestic industrial developments, as these may also be related to improvements in firms' international image and commitment.

Country-level Characteristics.

Differences between the domestic market and foreign market pose inevitable uncertainties and opportunities for firms engaged in exporting activities (Sousa and Novello, 2014). According to the IBV, institutional factors play an important role in strategic decisions, and

these strategies in turn have further influence on export performance (Peng *et al.*, 2008). We discuss country-level characteristics separately from domestic-market factors and foreign-market factors.

We identify six domestic factors, including domestic demand, export assistance, local market characteristics, infrastructure quality, legal quality and institutional environment, all of which are found to impact export performance.

Among foreign market factors, competitive intensity attracts the most interest with mixed empirical results. For instance, Katsikeas *et al.* (2006) reveal a positive relationship between competitive intensity and marketing strategy standardization, whereas in contrast, Sousa and Novello (2014) detect an insignificant association between competitive intensity and price adaptation. Compared with the earlier focus on the market distance and similarity, studies between 2006 and 2014 showed more evidence of attention being paid to psychic distance. In this connection, empirical studies illustrated psychic distance to be positively associated with marketing mix strategy adaptation but not significantly linked to export performance (Sousa and Lengler, 2009, Sousa *et al.*, 2010). Researchers are thus encouraged to continue their exploration of more environmental factors (e.g., institutions). The majority of current studies concentrate on the influence of firm-level resources, but neglect the significance of country-level characteristics. Future studies on the external environment would shed new light on the driving determinants of export performance from contextual aspects, thereby illuminating that both firm resources and environmental factors are influential in this respect.

Mediating Variables

Mediators intervene between predictors and consequence. Mediating effects could explain the indirect relationship between determinants and export performance, highlighting how and why such links exist (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Export marketing strategy functions as an important internal mediator that bridges the relationship between internal and external factors and export performance. The strategic exporting decisions are made based on the firm's resources, management characteristics, and external forces, and directly influence the export performance.

Although a considerable number of studies use marketing strategies as mediators in their conceptual models, they do not directly acknowledge or test mediating effects in their studies (e.g., Matanda and Freeman, 2009). This omission leads to incomplete theorization and empirical bias in the results of the hypotheses testing. For instance, Sousa and Novello (2014) indicate that environmental difference has a positive influence on price adaptation, and price adaptation in turn has an inverted quadratic effect on export performance. In this case, directly estimating the link between environmental difference and export performance hides the intermediate effect of price adaptation strategy, and may lead to biased results.

Based on the above arguments, we suggest that further studies consider the mediating effect of factors such as export marketing strategies in an effort to improve research accuracy and reliability, and to explore the internal mechanisms associated with the empirical links.

Moderating Variables

Moderating variables were largely ignored in the literature before 1998 (Sousa et al. 2008), yet by considering these, it is possible to place them into more developed conceptual models to establish mechanisms considering conditions for maximal effectiveness of certain determinants for superior export performance (Baron and Kenny, 1986). In fact, Sousa et al.

(2008) find that between 1998 and 2005, only three variables that were studied as moderators (i.e., firm size, international experience and environment turbulence). Among the reviewed papers in this study, 49 variables are studied about the moderating effects upon the link between the predictors and export performance. Particularly, recent studies (e.g., Boso *et al.*, 2013, Magnusson *et al.*, 2013) start to develop hypotheses only focusing on the moderating effect. The growing inclusion of interaction effects reflects the more comprehensive and authentic view of the nested relationship between antecedents, and provide a further in-depth analysis related to export performance.

Moderators represent the appropriate conditions that validate/invalidate the investigated relationships (Yeoh and Jeong, 1995). The identification of moderating variables offers a feasible explanation for the inconsistent empirical results. For example, a significant relationship in one context may be insignificant in another as a result of the moderation effect of contextual differences.

In future research, more effort should be made to identify additional moderating factors, for example institutional contexts. Such effort would improve our understanding of the relationships between the antecedents and export performance, and enrich the extant marketing theories.

Discussion and Implications

Compared with studies examined in earlier reviews (Bilkey, 1978, Aaby and Slater, 1989, Zou and Stan, 1998, Sousa *et al.*, 2008), those featuring in the more recent export performance literature show that important progress has been made in the last nine years. The

research on export performance has achieved some progress in recent decades. However, empirical studies still reveal divergence, their findings being fragmented and conflicting. This may arise from the absence of a synthetic theoretical basis, and from inconsistency in research methodologies. More efforts are needed if the export performance literature is to reach maturity in the future. Possible future directions are discussed below (summarized in Appendix 4).

Theoretical Issues

A meaningful and sufficient theory is important and desirable to provide a better understanding of export success (Katsikeas, 2003). However, such a composite theory that can comprehensively explain the co-ordination and magnitude of all antecedents in international business is not yet available (Singh, 2009).

Although widely adopted in the literature, the RBV is still subject to some important limitations. Specifically, it is restricted in its ability to explain variance in the export performance of firms that share similar resources endowments (Kraaijenbrink *et al.*, 2010). In addition, due to the underlying assumptions of the RBV (i.e., inimitability and stability of resources), the theory is considered to be static in nature, and this causes two problems. Firstly, the RBV cannot adequately explain how and why some firms have sustained competitive advantage in changeable and volatile markets (Peng *et al.*, 2008, Villar *et al.*, 2014). Secondly, the RBV cannot explain the mechanism of the non-resource-produced transformation that a prior resource outcome later changed into sustained competitive advantage (Kraaijenbrink *et al.*, 2010).

To address these limitations, emerging theories or new perspectives in international business should be considered as potential means of progressing beyond current theoretical discourse, and contributing to theoretical development. For instance, dynamic capability theory extends the RBV in addressing the first shortcoming of the RBV that is its static nature (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Dynamic capability theory argues that sustained competitive advantage depends on being able to provide more prompt, accurate and proper strategic reactions to the market than competitors (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). It builds up a new resource configuration and explains competitive advantage in high-velocity markets (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Future research based on this view may, therefore, offer an insightful view of export success in unpredictable environments.

Moreover, relevant theories from other research areas, e.g., economics, are also worthy of consideration to advance the study of export performance. For example, Antràs (2003) proposes a model that determines the pattern of intra-firm international trade and boundaries of multinational firms. The international dimension of intra-firm transactions accounts for a considerable proportion of world trade but is largely ignored by international business studies (Antràs, 2003, Bertrand, 2010). The extension and application of Antràs's model to export performance research could provide a novel view on the firm's export decision. Additionally, Melitz (2003) develops a dynamic industry model incorporating firm heterogeneity, and explaining the effects of trade on firm export performance. The model illustrates how the exposure to international trade leads to exporting successes and failures. Particularly, it provides an explanation of the mechanism behind international exit behaviour, which is paramount to future export success but is little understood in the international business area (Sousa and Tan, 2015).

In addition, a few novel studies on export performance consider the past export performance as an antecedent of strategic change and managerial behaviour (e.g., Lages *et al.*, 2008). This kind of strategic adaptation in response to the past performance is difficult for the RBV to predict (Tsinopoulos *et al.*, 2014). As a potential solution, OLT provides a theoretical basis for longitudinal studies in export performance. Longitudinal analysis is urgently needed for the future research since it explores the hysteresis influence of antecedents on export performance. OLT lays the theoretical foundation that illustrates how export firms shape long-term competitive advantages, and experience radical changes in export performance over time.

Furthermore, the integration of multiple theories provides a valuable synthesis of the views expressed in individual theories, and makes for the formulation of more plausible hypotheses. Our review indicates that the RBV and IBV are integrated in various studies. Such efforts to combine the RBV and IBV can provide a dyadic perspective of to the determinants of export performance from the aspect of both firm-level resources and country-level institutions, which is particularly insightful in emerging economies. In terms of individual theory, the RBV alone cannot properly explain the internationalizing mechanism of small firms in emerging economies, as small firms from such economies are likely to have limited resources (Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009, Yi *et al.*, 2012). Emerging economies always have more salient institutions as the scope and the pace of institutional transitions are unprecedented, which post more challenges to export firms, and firms in emerging economies tend to be small (Pla-Barber and Alegre, 2007, Singh, 2009). The IBV highlights the influence of institutional forces (Peng *et al.*, 2008). However, previous studies treat formal and informal institutions merely as ‘background’, which is taken for granted, and insufficient in itself to explain the strategic behaviour of firms and their export performance (Peng *et al.*,

2008). The IBV indicates that the domestic and foreign institutions shape the export strategies and performance as firms should comply with institutional requirements in and out of the home country (Peng *et al.*, 2008). Given the abilities and limitations of both views, it can be seen that by integrating IBV and RBV, the complex and changeable relationships between organizations and institutions can be captured, and a better explanation of the export performance of small firms in emerging markets can be obtained (LiPuma *et al.*, 2013).

Similarly, a combination of the RBV and contingency theory can improve the unilaterality of the RBV, shifting the focus from firm resources/capabilities to the contingency between those resources/capabilities and the environment. Contingency theory offers a heuristic view that emphasizes the fit between internal resources/capabilities and environmental forces, which indicates that successful export performance is conditional upon the co-alignment of organizational and external influences (Hultman *et al.*, 2011). The same set of export marketing strategies may not be universal for all environmental contexts (Robertson and Chetty, 2000). Superior strategy and performance is not only dependent on objective resources and conditions, but also on the fit between them. Integrating the RBV and contingency theory provides the answers to several questions associated with export activity, such as “what contextual factors strengthen/weaken the strategic effect on export performance, and how?” In addition, the RBV alone is insufficient to explain the poor export performance or even export failure of some export firms with abundant resources. Hence, this theoretical combination can provide researchers with new angles to address previously challenging issues.

It is also important to acknowledge that the adoption of contingency theory strongly suggests the inclusion of moderating factors. Some reviewed studies use contingency theory to develop their conceptual frameworks, without considering moderating effects (e.g.,

Navarro *et al.*, 2010). The moderation variables specify the contingent context that statistically represent the arguments of contingency theory. To prove the contingency hypothesis, researchers must demonstrate that the internal and external antecedents interact to affect export performance (Hartmann and Moers, 1999). The conceptual model without moderation effects is insufficient to explain the contingent relationships. In future research involving the application of contingency theory, researchers should develop moderating hypotheses and test moderating variables, since the external forces may moderate the links between firm resources and export performance, and the firm capabilities may also influence relationships between the institutions and export performance.

However, despite the encouragement to combine theories, each one has a different focus and the results derived by integrating theories may be inconsistent or even conflicting, especially in respect of theories with incompatible objects (Conner, 1991). Extra attention should, therefore, be paid when researchers intend to integrate two or more theories into one conceptual framework. In this respect, researchers must thoroughly understand the considerations of the relevant theories before developing their conceptual frameworks.

Methodological Issues

Fieldwork. More attention should be paid to those less considered countries, particularly, to the fast-growing developing countries (e.g., South Africa, Brazil), which play increasingly important roles in global economy (Tan and Sousa, 2011). As the institutions of emerging economies significantly differ from those in developed countries, a focus on these countries provides a better understanding to researchers and export managers of the key determinants of export performance in emerging economies.

In addition, multi-national approaches should be undertaken in future research studies. This would allow for comparative results to be obtained in which the similarities and differences in terms of the determinants of export performance in different cultural contexts could be identified (Calantone *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, the multi-national study can assess the generalizability of the theory and improve the validity of the model (Sousa *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, such studies generate particularly valuable information when national differences directly lead to different export performance (Dhanaraj and Beamish, 2003).

With respect to industry type, more studies of non-manufacturing industries are still needed to fill the research voids and generalize the industrial influences on export performance. In particular, service exports have shown rapid growth in recent decades, but still received little attention in export performance research. The emphasis on the service industry is crucial as the nature of services and manufactured goods is different (Sichtmann and Selasinsky, 2010). The nature of commercial services is intangible; the inseparability of production and consumption of service requires direct reciprocity between service employee and customers, which highlights the importance of the relationship dimension in the export performance of service firms (Sichtmann and Selasinsky, 2010, Droge *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, a focus on the service sector may help to advance our theoretical understanding of the crucial role of intangibility in explaining export performance. As the nature of goods and services is not the same, services face a unique set of challenges when entering foreign markets. It is plausible that export performance in a service setting is likely to be driven by some service-specific factors which need to be acknowledged in the theory development.

Data Sources. Data quality is crucial to the accuracy of research findings. The primary data are collected based on the conceptual model. It obtains more flexible, unique and

detailed data, which may be not available from secondary sources (Morgan and Sonquist, 1963). Moreover, survey data are considered particularly appropriate to identify and measure managerial perceptions (Hult *et al.*, 2008).

However, survey data are likely to raise questions of validity and reliability. As respondents hold various opinions, survey results may appear to have cognitive problems, social desirability, and attitudinal problems (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2001). In addition, the attempt to use subjective data may generate invalid and unreliable results, because of the possibility of measurement errors (e.g., non-response bias and common method bias).

Common method variance (CMV) is a great threat to survey data since it limits the validity of research findings about the links between variables (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). CMV can be controlled in two main ways, these being in the design of research procedures (*ex-ante*), and in the statistical methods (*ex-post*) adopted (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). At the *ex-ante* stage, collecting the information from different sources is recommended to reduce the threat of CMV, as CMV is more likely to happen when collecting the dependent and independent variables from the same respondent (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003, Chang *et al.*, 2010). At the *ex-post* stage, the most widely used statistical test, Harman's single-factor test, is not recommended due to its unwarranted assumptions (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). As improvements, some potential statistical remedies are listed, such as partial correlation techniques (including marker-variable analysis), single-method-scale-score approach, single-method-factor approach and multiple-method-factor approach, of which the latter is the strongest statistical method (Lindell and Whitney, 2001, Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Nevertheless, all of these methods have advantages and disadvantages. To control for CMV, researchers should tailor the methods they adopt to match the specific research setting (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

Estimating non-response bias is an important element in determining whether a sample can be attributed as representative of the population (Armstrong and Overton, 1977), since research findings cannot be generalized to the total population, if the people who respond to a survey are significantly different to those who do not (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). It is noticeable that non-response bias has been largely acknowledged in studies with survey data. The majority of test results suggest the non-significant influence of non-responses. However, when securing longitudinal data through repeated questionnaire surveys of the same group of respondents, the non-response bias should be particularly noticed. As poorly-performing firms are more likely to withdraw from exporting activities, it is likely that a significant potential non-response bias might occur from one survey to another, and the respondents who remain will tend to be firms that perform well.

The issues regarding secondary data concern unit and adaptability. It is rather difficult to obtain secondary data at the venture level, and certain data may be out-dated (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000). In addition, secondary data are fixed and may not be suitable for a specific conceptual model. Nonetheless, secondary data are often objective and come from large sample sizes with time axes, all of which are advantages that make them more suitable for time-series or panel-data analysis (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000).

Statistical Methods. As exporting is a cross-country activity, the determinants of export performance are correlated, interacted and hysteretic. To provide a better understanding, researchers are encouraged to consider more advanced statistical analysis such as moderated mediation, mediated moderation, and higher level interaction (three-way interaction). Further recommendations on statistical methodologies are given from both the polynomial dimensions and the analysing time scale.

The majority studies reviewed in this paper only considered the linear relationship by using simple linear regression. However, the extensive uncertainties in exporting activities suggest that the relationship between the interested construct and the response variable may not be only limited to a linear one. Five studies made efforts to explore the non-linear relationship between the antecedents and export performance by using polynomial regression, and revealed the quadratic effects of informational capabilities, price adaptation, and customer orientation on export performance.

The verification of a higher-order relationship could explain why inconsistent findings emerged from the literature with respect to the effect of determinants on export performance. However, little has been done to examine the higher-order relationship between the constructs. Future research should consider how to estimate the non-linear relationship in a robust way, so that not only quadratic but also higher-order connections between exporting antecedents and export performance can be identified. In turn, such identification could interpret the elasticity and evaluate the tendency of the effect in a more accurate way.

The dominant studies used static modelling, which explains the relationship between variables and the effects of factors at the same time point. Nonetheless, it is much recommended that longitudinal models be used in export performance research in order to capture the dynamic and hysteretic relationships between determinants and export performance from a longitudinal viewpoint (Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009, Sousa *et al.*, 2010, He *et al.*, 2013).

A noticeable feature is the inclusion of time-lag variable which is starting to be considered in the literature. For instance, Lages *et al.* (2008) find that the preceding year's export performance satisfaction has a positive effect on the current year's export performance.

However, while introducing previous performance as an explanatory variable, the classic statistical method (e.g., OLS regression) may be threatened by the endogeneity problem (Flannery and Hankins, 2013). As a direction for future research, advanced economic panel models are suggested since these provide robust estimation results and advance the methodological development in respect of export performance. For example, the dynamic panel model with generalized method of moments is considered a remedy for the endogeneity problem (Flannery and Hankins, 2013). The combined propensity score matching and difference-in-difference model addresses the self-selection issue, and evaluates the causal effect of antecedents on export performance (De Loecker, 2007, Fabling and Sanderson, 2013). Above all, longitudinal thinking is essential for export performance research that explores the influence of the antecedents through time. The higher-order time lags model is suggested for future research to accommodate the contingency that earlier influences on performance may have waned, or at least not be consistent in their power to impact upon it.

Managerial Implications

This paper highlights important implications for practising managers. The conceptual framework developed in this study shows that export marketing strategies function as important instruments which transform firms' resources and capabilities into export performance. When venturing abroad, export managers must carefully consider whether to adapt or standardize their marketing strategies (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006). Product adaptation strategy is widely recommended to export managers since the effective adaptation of their products' brand names and packaging is known to improve export performance (Brouthers *et al.*, 2013). At the same time, export managers also need to pay particular attention to the price

adaptation and export- oriented strategy, which may only influence export performance to a certain degree. Some studies suggest that adapting price or investing in export market-oriented behaviour is likely to bring about a negative outcome (Cadogan *et al.*, 2009, Sousa and Novello, 2014), since the exporting strategy leads to superior export performance only to the extent that there is successful co-alignment between the strategy implemented and external contextual factors (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006). The differences between home country and exporting country in terms of the institutional environment, culture, and customer characteristics drive the deployment of strategic adaptation (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006, Sousa and Lengler, 2009, Brouthers *et al.*, 2013). Meanwhile, the degree of these differences determines the degree of marketing strategy adaptation. Hence, in light of this study, whether and how to adapt the exporting strategies is an important issue to export managers, which is worth considering in future research.

Furthermore, export managers should take both the firm's internal characteristics and its external environment into consideration since these jointly determine export performance. In respect of the internal characteristics, it is found that the presence of an experienced managerial team consistently exerts a positive influence on export performance; consequently, export managers are encouraged to gain export experience and build up their export commitment (Sousa and Bradley, 2008). Furthermore, firm size is also an important contributing variable to effective export performance. Firms can achieve good performance in international markets as long as they implement exporting strategies consistent with their resources (Pla-Barber and Alegre, 2007). Export managers in small firms are recommended to concentrate on fewer markets to improve export performance (Brouthers *et al.*, 2009), while those in large firms are encouraged to expand the number of different export markets in their portfolio (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2014).

As far as the external environment is concerned, several factors moderate the relationships between firm-level resources and export performance. Specifically, export managers in technology-intensive industries are recommended to focus more on developing innovation capability, which will improve their ability to compete in international markets (Pla-Barber and Alegre, 2007, Filatotchev *et al.*, 2009). They should also think comprehensively, not only considering their internal capability, but also taking account of the institutional environment, cultural diversity, psychic distance, and export market dynamism (Sousa and Lengler, 2009, Combe *et al.*, 2012, Bradley *et al.*, 2013).

Policy Implications

This paper also offers valuable insights for policy-makers who are keen to enhance the cohort of exporting successes and improve the economic prosperity. To the policy-makers, exporting could be viewed as a way of accumulating foreign exchange reserves, enhancing the employment percentage, improving productivity, and consequently leading to societal prosperity (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2000, Sousa *et al.*, 2008). Other than firm internal idiosyncratic resources/capabilities and management characteristics, our findings highlight the importance of the external institutional environment. Generally, firm export performance benefits from the presence of high-quality institutions (Li *et al.*, 2013, LiPuma *et al.*, 2013). Thus, improving the overall institutional quality should be an aim of public policy-makers when considering policy reform and investment environment. This is particularly important to emerging economies, as institutions in developing countries tend to be far less robust than those in developed countries (LiPuma *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, recent empirical studies emphasize the need for co-alignment of export firms' internal characteristics and the external institutional environment, since such alignment influences the effectiveness of export marketing strategies, and thereby determines the export performance (Katsikeas *et al.*, 2006). These findings indicate that the influence of government intervention varies among export firms according to their different characteristics, like firm size, ownership (e.g., Lu *et al.*, 2009, LiPuma *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the envisaged intervention is suggested to be customized in terms of targeting firm characteristics. For instance, the government support to smaller sized export firms could enable them to overcome the resource gap that may limit their exporting expansion and successes. Such a customized approach seems more sensible for policy-makers wishing to facilitate export performance (Wheeler *et al.*, 2008).

To sum up, to enhance the efficacy of exporting support programmes and stimulate export performance, policy-makers should commit themselves to improving the general institutional quality, and tailor the government provisions in terms of firm heterogeneity.

Conclusion

This paper has assembled 124 reports of studies related to export performance published between 2006 and 2014, and offered a synthesis of the literature involved. It is clear that much effort has been made during this period in identifying the determinants of export performance, and that increasing consideration has been given to searching for an appropriate theoretical basis to interpret the findings. Indeed, multiple theoretical bases are found to have been applied. In addition, new antecedents of export performance are identified. Particularly, an increasing number of studies were seen to take the interaction and indirect relationships

into consideration, since these are known to foster more contingent and pragmatic structural relationships. Furthermore, researchers have paid more attention to the quality of the data in their studies (e.g., CMV).

However, despite these advances, current research efforts and outcomes remain fragmented, diverse, and inconsistent. And, although a considerable number of antecedents are investigated, a comprehensive framework that would induce an inclusive and general conceptual structure has yet to be generated. The structured models used in the reviewed studies tend to be static, and the absence of longitudinal studies limits the contributions of the empirical findings as well as the practical implications. A dynamic theoretical model and advanced statistical methods are needed to explore the antecedents of export performance in a changing market over time. An increasing focus on the provision of these tools would improve the aforementioned methodological, theoretical, and conceptual shortcomings.

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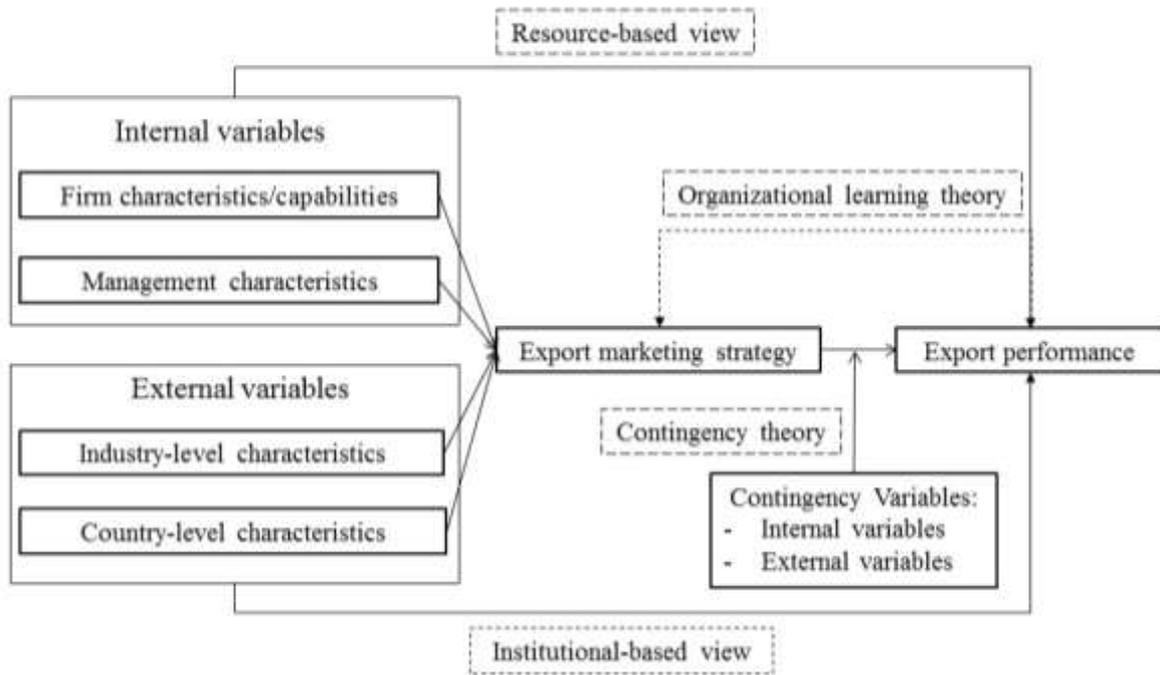
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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Export Performance



Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Journal of the Reviewed Literature

Journal	Frequency
Journal of International Marketing	18
International Business Review	15
International Marketing Review	13
Journal of World Business	10
Journal of International Business Studies	8
Industrial Marketing Management	6
Journal of Business Research	6
Journal of Global Marketing	6
International Small Business Journal	5
Management International Review	5
Small Business Economics	4
Advances in International Marketing	3
Journal of Small Business Management	3
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	3
European Journal of Marketing	2
Journal of Marketing Research	2
Thunderbird International Business Review	2
British Journal of Management	1
Ecological Economics	1
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	1
International Journal of Production Economics	1
Journal of Business Ethics	1
Journal of International Management	1
Journal of Management	1
Journal of Marketing Management	1
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1
Review of International Economics	1
Scandinavian Journal of Economics	1
Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal	1
Strategic Management Journal	1

Appendix 2: Descriptive Summaries of Studies Reviewed

Papers using survey data												
	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Respondents Position	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
1	Calantone et al. (2006)	RBV, IO	UK, Japan, South Korea,	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	685	39.35%	PM	EV	ExS	CFA, SEM
2	Chelariu et al. (2006)	IBV	US	M	SML	Q(M)	188	51.00%	EM	EV	GAC(ES, PR, EG)	SEM
3	Dow (2006)	BT	Australia	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	100	48.00%	ED	EV	ESG, PR, SAT, ExS	MLR
4	Katsikeas et al. (2006)	FT	UK	M	SML	Q(M)	171	33.00%	CAI	EV	ES, ESG, NS, PR, ROI, PRG, CSAT, CuT	SEM
5	Morgan et al. (2006)	RBV	Germany/UK	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	150/189	25%/42%	EM	EV	MSG, ANC, ES, ESG	LR
6	Wilkinson and Brouthers (2006)	RBV	US	M(I)	SMEs	Q(M)	105	14.00%	TM/VP/GM	F	SAT	LR
7	Balabanis and Spyropoulou (2007)	CoT, SOT	UK	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	82	18.50%	MD	F	ESG, PR, ROI, OP	MSR
8	Gertner et al. (2007)	-	Brazil	M	SML	Q(M)	114	18.40%	EE	F	EI, ES, EG, PEE, OP, GAC	MLR
9	Katsikea et al. (2007)	SMT	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	234	26.00%	ESM	EV	ES, MS, PR, CSAT	CFA, SEM
10	Kuivalainen et al. (2007)	-	Finland	M(I)	ML	Q(M)	783	81.00%	EM/ED	EV	ESG, SAT(ES, MS, ID, PR), PR, ROS	HR
11	Moon and Jain (2007)	TCT	US	M	SML	Q(M)	208	19.20%	CEO	F	PR, MS	LR
12	Nes et al. (2007)	TCT, AT	40 countries	M(I)	SML(I)	I(SQ)	120	74.53%	EM/PM	EV	ESG, PR, PRG	CFA, SEM
13	Pla-Barber and Alegre (2007)	RBV	France	BT	SML(I)	Q(E/F)	121	55.00%	RDM	F	EI	CFA, SEM
14	Racela et al. (2007)	SET	Thailand	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	279	100.00%	EM	EV	ES, MS, PR, SAT	FA, SEM
15	Smith (2007)	ITT	Japan, Germany, US	ES	SML(I)	Q	1,246	25.40%	-	F	EI	ANN
16	Zhou et al. (2007)	SNT	China	M	SMEs	I(SQ)	129	51.60%	TM	F	EG, PRG, ESG	FA, SEM
17	Armario et al. (2008)	RBV, BT	Spain	M	SMEs	Q(M)	112	7.55%	IMM	F	ES, PR, ESG, PRG	EFA, SEM
18	Lages et al. (2008)	OLT	Portugal	M(I)	SMEs	Q(M)	519	22.00%	P/MD/EMD	EV	EI, SAT, GAC	CFA, SEM
19	Ling-yee and Ogunmokun (2008)	CCT, CoT	China	M(I)	SML	Q(M)	222	39.60%	MiM/SM	EV	PRG, MSG, RC, CUG, NP, TN	EFA, MLR, HR, SA

Papers using survey data												
	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Respondents Position	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
20	Lu and Julian (2008)	-	Australia	M	SMEs	Q(M)	133	42.20%	-	EV	EXPERF	PCA, MLR
21	Moen et al. (2008)	-	Denmark/Norway	M	SMEs	Q	308/327	13%/13%	SM	F	ESG, MS, PR, OP	CFA, SEM
22	Shoham et al. (2008)	IBV, FT	Slovenia	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	167	23.00%	GM	F	EXPERF	CFA, SEM
23	Sousa and Bradley (2008)	RMT, CoT	Portugal	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	301	34.40%	SM	EV	CoR, EI, ESG, EXP, PR	CFA, SEM
24	Zhang et al. (2008)	RBV	China	IT	SMEs	I(SQ)	99	55.00%	TM	F	ES, ESG, GC, MSG, PR, SS	PLS-PM
25	Brouthers et al. (2009)	OLT	Greece/Caribbean countries	M	S	Q(M)	119/83	30%/27%	EM	F	ES, PR	LR
26	Cadogan et al. (2009)	RBV	Finland	M	M	Q(M)	783	81.00%	CEO	F	SAT(ES, ME, MS), ESG	PR
27	Filatotchev et al. (2009)	RBV, IBV, KBV	China	HT	SMEs	Q(M)	711	38.79%	CEO	EV	SAT (ESG, MS, PR)	EFA, ProM
28	Foedermayr et al. (2009)	PT	Austria	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(O)	86	12.50%	SM	F	ES, PR, MS, EG, IE, SAT	PLS-PM
29	Hultman et al. (2009)	CoT, OLT	Sweden	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	341	60.80%	ED/ SD/ MD/ CEO	EV	MPe, FPe, CPe	LR
30	Lages et al. (2009)	RBV	Portugal	M	SML	Q(M)	112	26.70%	ED & QD	EV	RQ, CuP, CuL, ES, MS, PR, EI	PLS-PM
31	Matanda and Freeman (2009)	RBV, SET	Zimbabwe	M(I)	SME(I)	I(FtF)	262	58.22%	SM	EV	PR, PM, ROA	CFA, SEM, ML
32	Sousa and Bradley (2009)	RBV	Portugal	M	SMEs	Q(M)	287	34.50%	SM	EV	CoR, MS, SAT	CFA
33	Sousa and Lengler (2009)	RBV	Brazil	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	201	20.10%	GM	EV	EI, MS, EXP	CFA, ML
34	Ural (2009)	RDT, RMT, RAT	Turkey	M(I)	SMEs	I(SQ)	300	100.00%	CAI	EV	EXPERF	CFA, SEM
35	Beleska-Spasova and Glaister (2010)	-	UK	M	SML	Q(O)	356	23.70%	EM/ED	F	EXPERF	LoR
36	Boehe and Cruz (2010)	RBV, IBV	Brazil	M	SML	Q(M)	252	7.50%	CD/EM	F	ES, MP, OP, PR	CFA, SEM
37	Hughes et al. (2010)	RBV	Mexico	HT	SMEs	I(T)	260	19.80%	ExM/ExD/CEO	EV	MSG, ESG, PR, ROI, ROS, PM, RtP, TN, NS	SEM
38	Li (2010)	TRT	China	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	389	51.90%	EM	EV	SAT, EXP, ExS	CFA, SEM, ML
39	Manolova et al. (2010)	IT, IO	Bulgaria	M	S	Q	623	-	-	EV	EI	LR
40	Martín-Tapia et al. (2010)	RBV	Spain	F	SMEs	Q(FtF)	123	10.00%	CEO/GM	F	EI	MLR
41	Navarro et al. (2010)	CoT	Spain	M	SML(I)	I(SQ)	150	8.65%	SM	F	ESG, FI, PR, MS, IE	PLS-PM
42	Orser et al. (2010)	LFT, SFT	Canada	M+S	SMEs	Q(F)	3,141	38.72%	O/EM	F	Epr, EI	LoR, MR

Papers using survey data												
	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Respondents Position	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
43	Papadopoulos and Martín Martín (2010)	BT, RBV	Spain	M	SML	Q(M)	140	68.63%	GM/IMM	EV	PR, ES, SP	PLS-PM
44	Sichtmann and Selasinsky (2010)	RMT	Germany	M+S	SMEs	Q(O)	285	16.20%	EM	EV	EXPERF	PLS-PM
45	Sousa et al. (2010)	ST	Spain	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	208	17.00%	DM	EV	SS, GC, CoR	CFA, SEM, ML
46	Spyropoulou et al. (2010)	RBV	Greece	M	SME(I)	Q(M)	311	45.20%	EM	EV	ROI, ROS, PM, GAC	
47	Carneiro et al. (2011)	CoT	Brazil	M	SML	Q(M)	414	15.50%	-	EV	SAT(ES, ESG, PR), FEP	CLA, MANOVA
48	Coudounaris (2011)	EMP	Cyprus	M	SMEs	Q(FtF)	52	26.00%	EM	EV	ES, MS, PR, CSAT	PLS-PM
49	He and Wei (2011)	RBV	China	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	230	45.90%	CEO/MD	EV	PR, ESG, SAT, GAC	HLoR, SEM, ML
50	Hortinha et al. (2011)	OLT	Portugal	M	SML(I)	Q(O)	170	22.79%	EM & RDM	EV	ES, ESG, PR	PLS-PM
51	Hultman et al. (2011)	CoT, OLT	Sweden	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	336	60.00%	CAI	EV	MPe, FPe, CPe	CFA, SEM
52	Kaleka (2011)	RBV	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	312	35.30%	CAI	EV	MS, PR, OP, GAC, NS	CFA, SEM
53	Lisboa et al. (2011a)	OLT	Portugal	M(I)	SMEs	Q(O)	262	20.60%	CAI	F	PR	CFA, SEM
54	Lisboa et al. (2011b)	RBV, OLT	Portugal	M	SMEs	Q(O)	254	19.98%	CEO/EM	F	ESG, MSG, ANC	SEM
55	Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic (2011)	IT	Croatia	M	SMEs	Q(M)	125	24.00%	CAI	EV	EXPERF	PLS-PM
56	Murray et al. (2011)	RBV	China	M	SML(I)	Q(FtF)	491	37.00%	SM	EV	ES, PR, EG, SP, PP	CFA, SEM
57	Obadia and Vida (2011)	RET, BT	France/Slovenia	M	SML	Q(O)	283/224	27%/27%	EM	EV	GAC(ES, PR, MS, EG)	SEM
58	Sibanda et al. (2011)	-	Zimbabwe	M+S	SML	Q(M/E)	105	21.00%	EM/MM/MD	EV	-	DA
59	Sichtmann et al. (2011)	CT	Germany	M+S	SML	Q(O)	129	16.20%	TM	EV	EXPERF	PLS-PM
60	Sousa and Lengler (2011)	-	Brazil	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	201	20.10%	SM	F	ES, EI, MS, SAT, EXP	SEM, ML
61	Spyropoulou et al. (2011)	RBV	Greece	M	SMEs	Q(M)	311	74.22%	EM	EV	MS, ANC, ESG, PM, ROS	CFA, SEM
62	Stoian et al. (2011)	RBV	Spain	M(I)	SMEs	Q(E)	146	34.50%	DM	F	EI, ID, SAT	CFA, SEM
63	Beleska-Spasova et al. (2012)	RBV	UK	M+S	SML	Q(E)	356	23.70%	EM/ED/TM	EV	EXPERF	EFA, CFA, SEM
64	Chung (2012)	SNT	New Zealand	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	100	26.00%	SML(I)	EV	SP	FA, HR
65	Chung et al. (2012)	CoT	Western Europe (Four countries)	M+S	SML	Q(M)	151	22%	EM, SM	F	ESG, MS	MANOVA
66	Combe et al. (2012)	ROT	Finland	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	783	81.00%	EM	F	SAT (ES, MS)	CFA, SEM

Papers using survey data												
	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Respondents Position	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
67	Durmuşoğlu et al. (2012)	-	Turkey	M+S	SMEs	Q(M)	143	28.60%	EE	EV	GAC	CFA, MANOVA, MR
68	Eibe Sørensen and Koed Madsen (2012)	RBV	Denmark	M	SMEs	Q(M)	249	31.48%	CEO	F	ExS	MR
69	Freixanet (2012)	-	Spain	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	272	22.48%	ED	F	ER, PL, GC, ID	Corr
70	Ganotakis and Love (2012)	HCT	UK	HT	SML	Q (M)	412	10.30%	En	F	PV	ProM, TRM
71	Hagen et al. (2012)	RBV	Italy	M	SMEs	Q(M)	148	17.41%	CEO/CAI	F	EI, EIG, SAT, MS, PP	CLA
72	Kaleka (2012)	RBV	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	268	30.28%	CAI	EV	MS, PR, NS	CFA, LR
73	Morgan et al. (2012)	DCT	UK	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	219	39.00%	EM	EV	MSG, ESG, ANC, PR, ROI, PM, GAC	CFA
74	Okpara (2012)	RBV	Nigeria	M	SMEs	Q	178	62.00%	CAI	F	EG, PR, OP	EFA, CFA, CLA
75	Robson et al. (2012)	HCT	Ghana	M+S	S	Q(FtF)	432	59.00%	O/DM	F	EI	HEMR
76	Souchon et al. (2012)	OLT	Philippines	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	354	28.00%	EM	F	EG	CFA, SEM
77	Sundqvist et al. (2012)	RBV	Finland	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	783	81.00%	ED/EM/CEO/MD	F	SAT(PR), PR	CFA, SEM
78	Ahamed and Skallerud (2013)	RMT	Bangladesh	RMG	SML	Q(FtF)	180	36.00%	CAI	EV	EXPERF	PLS-PM
79	Bloemer et al. (2013)	RBV, RMT	Netherland	M(I)	S	Q(E)	134	3.50%	-	F	ES, PR, ESG, PRG	EFA, PLS-PM
80	Boso et al. (2013)	RBV, CoT, SNT	Ghana/Bosnia and Herzegovina	M	SMEs	Q(M)	164/117	49%/21%	CEO/MD/SD	F	PR, PRG, PM, ES	CFA, SEM
81	Brouthers et al. (2013)	IBV	China/Romania	M	SML(I)	Q + I(FtF)	72/34	35%/37%	CEO/EM	F	SAT (ES, GAC, OP)	HR
82	He and Wei (2013)	RBV, NT	China	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	230	30.00%	CEOs/MDs	F	PR, ESG, SAT, GAC	CFA, SEM, ML
83	He et al. (2013)	RBV, IBV	China	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	195	38.90%	CEO	F	OP, ESG, PR, GAC	LoR
84	Lengler et al. (2013a)	RBV	Brazil	M(I)	SML(I)	Q(M)	197	19.70%	SM	EV	ESG, PR	LR
85	Lengler et al. (2013b)	-	Brazil	M	SML(I)	Q(M)	197	19.70%	SM	EV	ESG, MS, PR, EXP, SAT	PLS-PM
86	Leonidou et al. (2013)	RBV, IV	Greece	M	SMEs	Q(M)	216	41.30%	CAI	F	PR, ES, EI, ROS, ROI, ROC	SEM
87	Lisboa et al. (2013)	RBV, OLT	Portugal	M	SML(I)	Q(O)	267	21.00%	CAI	F	PR, ROS, ROI, PM	SEM
88	Magnusson et al. (2013)	RBV	US	M(I)	SME(I)	Q(O)	91	29.00%	EM	EV	CoR, CSAT, PR, ESG, SS	PLS-PM

Papers using survey data

	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Response Rate (%)	Respondents Position	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
89	Sinkovics et al. (2013)	RBV, TCT	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	115	11.50%	MM/EM/SD	F	ESG, ES, PR, NP, OP	SEM
90	Theodosiou and Katsikea (2013)	RBV, IBV	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	160	19.80%	EM	EV	MSG, ESG, ROI, ROS, PM, GAC, TN, NP	SEM
91	Diamantopoulos et al. (2014)	-	Austria	M(I)	SML	Q(O)	173	89.18%	SE	F	CSAT, ES, PR, ESG, SP	PLS-PM
92	Freeman and Styles (2014)	RBV	Australia	M(I)	SMEs	Q(M)	150	14.00%	-	EV	SP, SAT	PLS-PM
93	Griffith and Dimitrova (2014)	RBV	US	M	SML(I)	Q(O)	151	23.36%	EM	F	SAT (RP)	SEM
94	Nakos et al. (2014)	-	US/UK	M+S	SMEs	Q(M)	162	27.00%	CEO/O/TM	EV	ESG, MS, ROI, PR, SAT	TRM
95	Navarro-García et al. (2014)	CoT	Spain	M	SML(I)	Q(E)	212	17.70%	EM	F	ESG, Epr, SAT	PLS-PM
96	Sousa and Novello (2014)	RBV, CoT	Italy	M	SMEs	Q(M)	154	18.20%	SM/EM	EV	SP, SAT	CFA, SEM
97	Sousa et al. (2014)	CoT	Portugal	M	SMEs	Q(M)	273	34.10%	O/CEOs/EM/GM	F	EI, ES, EXP, CoR	PLS-PM
98	Villar et al. (2014)	RBV, KBV	Spain/Italy	CT	SMEs	Q(M)	95/62	50%(a)	-	EV	EI	CFA, SEM
99	Yeoh (2014)	UET	Malaysia	HT	SMEs	I(FtF)	110	23.50%	CEO	F	EG, PRG, TSG, SAT(ID)	LR
100	Zeriti et al. (2014)	CT, FT	UK	M	SMEs	Q(M)	217	35.00%	EM/MM/QM	EV	PR, PM, GAC, ESG, MS, NS	LR, RA
Papers using secondary data												
	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Data Feature	Time (Interval)	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
101	Beise-Zee and Rammer (2006)	HMT	Germany	M+S	S(I)	SD	3,272	Cross-s	1999	F	EI	LR
102	Fernández and Nieto (2006)	ET, RBV	Spain	M	SMEs	SD	10,579	Panel	1991-1999	F	EPr, EI	ProM, ToM
103	Styles et al. (2006)	EG, OLT	US	M	SML	SD	43,707	Cross-s	2002	F	EPr	LoR
104	Ter Wengel and Rodriguez (2006)	-	Indonesia	M	SML	SD	18,132	Panel	1996, 2000	F	EI	LoR
105	Buck et al. (2007)	ET	China	M	L	SD	7,697	Panel	1998-2001	F	EPr, EI	ToM, ProM
106	Girma et al. (2009)	-	China	M	SML(I)	SD	142,909	Panel	1999-2005	F	ES	ToM
107	Lee et al. (2009)	RBV, IO	Korea	M	SML	SD	283	Panel	1994-2000	F	EI	GLSR
108	Lu et al. (2009)	IBV, PPP	China	M	SML	SD	562	Panel	2002-2005	F	EI, Epr	LoR
109	Singh (2009)	RBV	India	M	SML(I)	SD	3,542	Panel	1990-2005	F	ES	G2SLS
Papers using secondary data												

	Authors	Theory	Country	Industry Sector	Firm Size	Data Collection	Sample Size	Data Feature	Time (Interval)	Unit of Analysis	Export Performance	Analytical Method
110	Bertrand (2010)	RBV, TCT	France	M	SML(I)	SD	2,000	Cross-s	1999	F	ES	LR
111	Gao et al. (2010)	ET	China	M	L	SD	7,697	Panel	2001-2005	F	EPr, EI, ROS	LoR, ToM
112	Anwar and Nguyen (2011)	ET	Vietnam	M	SML	SD	10,710	Cross-s	2000	F	EPr, EI	HEMR
113	Higón and Driffield (2011)	-	UK	M	SMEs	SD	3,731	Cross-s	2004	F	EPr	ProM
114	Lin et al. (2011)	BT	Taiwan	HT	SML(I)	SD	179	Panel	2000-2005	F	ROA	GLSR
115	Ricci and Trionfetti (2012)	NNT	32 countries	M	SML	SD	7862	Cross-s	2000,...,2005	F	EPr	LR, ProM
116	Yi et al. (2012)	RBV, IBV	China	M	SML(I)	SD	359,874	Panel	2005-2007	F	EI	HMR, GMM
117	Eberhard and Craig (2013)	NT, SNT	Australia	M	SMEs	SD	1304	Panel	1995-1998	F	EI	LR
118	Li et al. (2013)	IBV	China	M	L	SD	198,143	Cross-s	2005	F	ES	LR
119	LiPuma et al. (2013)	IBV	56 countries	M(I)	SML	SD	7,494	Cross-s	1999-2000	F	ES	HEMR
120	Raymond and St-Pierre (2013)	RBV, CoT	Canada, France	M	SMEs	SD	213/79	Cross-s	2006	F	EI, ID	CFA, CLA, MANOVA
121	Wang et al. (2013)	RBV, IBV	China	M	SML(I)	SD	141	Panel	2000-2006	F	EI,ESG,PR,MS	ToM
122	Agnihotri and Bhattacharya (2014)	UET	India	M	SML(I)	SD	450	Panel	2002-2012	F	EI	ToM
123	Antonietti and Marzucchi (2014)	FHT	Italy	M	SMEs	SD	850	Panel	2001-2006	F	EPr,EI	SEM, ProM
124	Gashi et al. (2014)	NGT, OLT, TCT	Six countries	M(I)	SMEs	SD	17,962	Panel	2002; 2005; 2008/2009	F	EI	ToM

- ❖ Codes for theory: AT = Agency theory; BT = Behavioural theory; CCT = Competence and capability theory; CT = Control theory; CoT= Contingency theory; DCP = Dynamic capabilities theory; EG = Economic geography; EMP = Export managerial psychology theory; ET = Eclectic theory; FHT = Firm heterogeneity theory; FT = Fit theory; HMT = Home-market theory; HCT = Human capital theory; IBV = Institutional-based view; IO = Industrial Organization-based theory; IT = Internationalization theory; ITT = International trade theory; IV = Industry-based theory; KBV = Knowledge-based view; LFT = Liberal feminist theory; NGT=New growth theory; NNT = New-new trade theory; NT = Network theory; OLT = Organizational learning theory; PPP = Principal-principal perspective; PT = Pricing theory; RAT = Reciprocal action theory; RBV = Resource-based view; RET = Rational exchange theory; RDT = Resource dependency theory; RMT = Relationship marketing theory; ROT = Real options theory; SET = Social exchange theory; SFT = Social feminist theory; SMT = Sales management theory; SNT = Social network theory; SOT = Stakeholder orientation theory; ST = Schwartz's theory; TCT = Transaction cost theory; TPB = Theory of Planned behaviour; TRT = Threat-rigidity theory; UET = Upper echelons theory.
- ❖ Codes for industrial sector: BT = Biotechnology; CT = Ceramic tile industry; ES = Engineering service; F = Food industry; HT = High technology industry; M = (Manufacturing) multi-industry; M(I) = Inferred multi-industry; RMG = Ready-made Garment industry; S = Service.
- ❖ Codes for firm size: S=Small size; M = Medium size; L = Large size; SMEs = Small and medium size; SME(I) = Inferred small, medium size; ML = Medium and large firms; SML = Small, medium and large size; and SML(I) = Inferred small, medium and large size because no information was provided.

- ❖ Codes for data collection: I(D) = In-depth interview; I(SQ) = Interview based on structured questionnaires; I(FtF) = Face-to-face interview; I(T) = Telephone interview; Q = questionnaire without indicating distribution approach; Q(E) = Questionnaire collected by Email; Q(F) = Questionnaire (Fax); Q(E/F) = Questionnaire (Email/fax); Q(M) = Questionnaire collected by mail; Q(M/E) = Questionnaire (Mail/Email); Q(O) = Questionnaire collected online; SD = Secondary data.
- ❖ Sample size is the number of firms in sample set.
- ❖ Codes for response rate: (a) approximate value, as the paper does not provide the accurate figures.
- ❖ Codes for key informant: ‘-’ = No information about the key informant; ‘&’ = Double informants; ‘/’ = Or; CAI = Confirmed appropriate individual; CEO=Chief executive officers; CD = Company directors; DM = Decision maker of export operations; ED = Export directors; ExD = Executive directors; EE = Exporting executives; EM = Export managers; En = Entrepreneur; ESM = Export sales manager; ExM = Executive managers; GM = General managers; IMM = International marketing managers; MD = Marketing director; ME = Marketing executives; MiM = Middle manager; MM = Marketing manager; O = Owner; P = President; PM = Product manager; QD = Quality director; QM = Quality manager; RDM = R&D manager; SD = Sales director; SE = Senior executives; SM = Senior managers; TM= Top manager; VP = Vice president.
- ❖ Codes for unit of analysis: F = Firm; EV = Export venture; BU = Business unit.
- ❖ Codes for export performance measures: Composite scale: EXPERF = Generalized export performance scale (including profitability, export sales, export sales growth, global competitiveness improve, strengthen strategic position, market share growth, satisfaction, meeting export expectations, exporting successes);
Individual scales: ANC = Acquiring new customers; CoR = Competitor rate export performance; CPe = Customer performance; CSAT = Customer satisfaction; CUG = capacity utilization growth; CuL = Customer loyalty; CuF = Customer referral; CuP = Customer reputation; CuT = Customer retention; EG = Export growth; EI = Export intensity; EIG = Export intensity growth; EPr = Export propensity; ER = Economic results; EXP = Meeting export expectations; ExS = Exporting successes; ES = Export sales; ESG = Export sales growth; FEP = Expected future export performance; FI = Image of firm in foreign markets; FPe = Financial performance; GAC = Export goal achievement; GAC(...) = Export goal achievement on (...); GC = Global competitiveness; ID = Internationalization degree; IE = International expansion; ME = Export market entry; MP = Market participation; MPe = Market performance; MS = Market share; MSG = Market share growth; NC = New customer; NP = New products; NS = New product sales; OP = Overall export performance; PEE = Perceived export experience; PL = Export planning; PM = Profit margins; PP = Product performance; PR = Profitability; PRG = Profitability growth; PV = Productivity; RC = Reduced cost; ROA = Return on assets; ROC = Return on capital; ROI = Return on investment; ROS = Return on sales; RP = Relationship performance; RQ = Relationship quality; RtP = Responding to competitors; SAT = Satisfaction with export performance; SAT(...) = Satisfaction with (...);SNN = Successful new products' number; SP = Strategic performance; SS = Strengthen strategic position; TN = Time to market for new export venture products; TSG = Total sales growth.
- ❖ Codes for data feature: panel = panel data; cross-s = cross sectional data.
- ❖ Codes for analytical method: ANN = Artificial neural network; CA = Correlation analysis; CCA = Canonical correlation analysis; CFA = Confirmatory factor analysis; CLA = Cluster analysis; CPA = Comparative analysis; Corr = Correlation matrix; DA= Discriminant analysis; EFA = Exploratory factor analysis; FA = Factor analysis; G2SLS = Generalized two-stage least square; GLSR = Generalized least square regression; GMM = Generalized method of moments; HEMR = Heckman effects model regression; HLoR = Hierarchical logistic regression; HMR = Hierarchical moderated regression; HMM =

Hierarchical multi-nominal model; HR = Hierarchical regression; LR = OLS regression; LoR = Logistic regression; MANOVA = Multivariate analysis of variance; ML = Maximum likelihood; MLR = Multiple linear regression; MR = Multivariate regression; MSP = Median-split regression; NBR = Negative binominal regression; SEM = Structural equation modelling; PCA = Principal components analysis; PLS-PM = Partial least squares path model; PR = Polynomial regression; ProM = Probit model; RA= Residual analysis; SA = Subgroup analysis; ToM = Tobit model; TRM = Truncated regression model.

Appendix-3 Classification of Antecedents of Export Performance

Firm level														
<i>Export marketing strategy</i>														
Price adaptation	AI	9	Using consultancy program	A	3	Business strategy	A	1	Green tangible investment strategy	A	1	Outsourcing strategy	A	1
Promotion adaptation	AI	9	Distribution support	I	2	Competitive positioning	A	1	Hybrid strategy	A	1	Relationship marketing activities	I	1
Product adaptation	AI	8	Eco-friendly marketing strategy	AI	2	Customer integration	M	1	Implementation effectiveness	I	1	Segments strategy	I	1
Distribution strategy adaptation	AI	7	Market tactics adaptation	A	2	Degree of born-globalness	I	1	Influence strategy	I	1	Service adaptation	A	1
Cost leadership strategy	AM	3	Strategic fit	AI	2	Differentiation focus strategy	A	1	International Internet marketing strategies	I	1	Strategy development modes	A	1
Differentiation strategy	A	3	Adaptation to customers	I	1	Distribution strategy	A	1	Long-term contract strategy	M	1	Sustainable export marketing strategy adaptation	I	1
Promotion strategy	A	3	Branding strategy	A	1	Export strategy	I	1	Market entry mode	M	1	Work process standardization	I	1
<i>Firm characteristics</i>														
Firm size	AIM	22	Competitive advantages	AI	4	Sales volume	A	2	Export activity stage	A	1	Organizational slack	M	1
Firm export experience	AIM	18	Knowledge-based resources	AI	4	Tangible assets	A	2	Export divisions	A	1	Outside director ratio	A	1
Export commitment	AI	17	Relationship performance	AI	4	Targeting performance	AI	2	Export personnel	A	1	Production subsidies	A	1
Financial resources	A	10	Export dependence	AI	3	Technological resources	A	2	Export policies	A	1	Productivity-enhance spillovers	A	1
Internationalization degree	AIM	10	Export intensity	AIM	3	Training	AI	2	Export regularity	A	1	Reception of unsolicited orders	A	1
Cost leadership	AI	9	Product/Service quality	AI	3	Attainment discrepancy	M	1	Export segmentation	I	1	Region oriented	A	1
Ownership	AM	9	Productivity	A	3	Brand advantage	I	1	Firm location	A	1	Representative autonomy	A	1
Human capital resources	AI	8	Scale resources	A	3	Business partnerships	A	1	Firm relational resources	A	1	Representatives' support	A	1
Firm age	AIM	6	Trust	AI	3	Centralization	A	1	Foreign direct investment	A	1	Service advantage	I	1
product life cycle stage	A	6	Cultural resources	A	2	Channel characteristics	A	1	Formalization	A	1	Skill level of employees	A	1
Affiliation	AM	5	FDI spillover	A	2	Communication quality	A	1	Green export-related resources	A	1	Strategic focus	M	1

Innovation product	AI	5	Past performance	AM	2	Coproduction instructions	I	1	Importer role performance	I	1	Structural organicity	M	1
Positional performance	AI	5	Product characteristics	AM	2	Cultural sensitivity	I	1	Investment support	A	1	Value of imported inputs	A	1
<i>Firm capabilities</i>														
Market orientation	AIM	13	Relationship capability	AI	5	Market research capability	A	2	Finance exporting capability	A	1	Manufacturing flexibility	I	1
Network capability	AIM	9	Marketing capability	AI	4	Quality capability	A	2	Human resource development capability	A	1	Market responsiveness	A	1
Innovative capability	AI	8	Planning capability	AI	4	Technology orientation	A	2	Image enhancement	A	1	Physical presence	I	1
R&D expenditure	A	7	Technological capability	A	4	Adaptability to changes	A	1	Information and communication technology	A	1	Power	I	1
Information capability	AI	6	Advertising expenditure	AI	3	Complementary capability	A	1	International orientation	M	1	Pricing capability	I	1
Communication capability	AI	5	Control	A	3	Customer acquisition	A	1	IT proficiency	A	1	Resources inimitability	A	1
Coordination	AIM	5	Customer orientation	A	3	Differentiation competencies	A	1	Knowledge acquisition	I	1	Response to export information	I	1
Entrepreneurial orientation	AM	5	R&D intensity	AM	3	Differentiation competencies	A	1	Learning capabilities	A	1	Strategic orientation	A	1
Product development capability	AI	5	Knowledge management	AI	2	Export memory	M	1						
<i>Management characteristics</i>														
International experience	AM	8	Cross-cultural skills	IM	2	Frequency of visiting foreign market	A	1	Management team heterogeneous	A	1	Rewards	A	1
Propensity	AI	6	Foreign language skills	A	2	Global mind set	I	1	Managerial orientation	A	1	Sales manager performance	I	1
Education	A	4	Gender	AM	2	Immigrant	A	1	Manager's performance	I	1	Self-enhancement	A	1
Managerial commitment	A	4	Managerial cooperation	AI	2	International knowledge	A	1	Morale level	A	1	Shareholding	A	1
Age	A	3	Managerial ties	M	2	Job satisfaction	A	1	Relatives	A	1	Strategic thinking	A	1
Time spent abroad	A	3	Risk-taking	A	2	Knowledge transfer	A	1	Returnee	A	1	Tenure	A	1
Conservation value	A	2	Cultural intelligence	M	1	Management control	A	1						
<i>Industry-level characteristics</i>														
Technological turbulence	AM	4	High-tech industry	A	1	Industry adaptation	A	1	Industry technological intensity	M	1	Technology assistance	A	1
Industry concentration	AI	3	Industrial export orientation	M	1	Industry export orientation	A	1	Sector (good/service)	A	1	Technology gap	A	1
Technological	A	3												

environment

Country-level characteristics

Domestic market

Domestic demand	AM	2	Local market characteristics	IM	2	Infrastructure quality	I	1	Institutional environment	A	1	Legal quality	A	1
Export assistance	A	2												

Foreign market

Foreign market														
Competitive intensity	AM	18	Geographical distance	AM	3	Market development	A	2	Customs and traditions	A	1	Location level factors	I	1
Psychic distance	AM	10	Information availability	A	3	Regulative distance	AM	2	Economic environment	A	1	Market foreignness	A	1
Market dynamism	AM	9	Infrastructure	A	3	Sociocultural environment	A	2	Financial crisis	M	1	Market industrialized level	A	1
Regulatory environment	AM	6	Cultural environment	AM	2	Bilateral trade	M	1	Government intervention	A	1	Market munificence	A	1
Cultural distance	AM	4	Environmental conditions	AM	2	Business distance	A	1	Government relationship	M	1	Normative distance	M	1
Customer characteristics	AIM	4	Environmental volatility	AI	2	Business environment	A	1	Infrastructure distance	A	1	Potential demand	A	1
Environmental difference	A	4	Export barriers	AI	2	Customer familiarity	A	1	Language distance	A	1	Public environmental concern	M	1
Economic environment	A	3	Institutional environment	AM	2									

- ❖ The number after each construct indicates the frequency.
- ❖ A - Antecedents; I - Intervening variable; M - Moderator.

Appendix 4: Directions for Future Studies

		Directions for future studies
Theoretical issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theories from other disciplines (e.g., Economics) could provide a guidance to advance the theoretical development, but researchers need to be particular vigilant about the compatibility of such theories.• Integrating two or three current international business theories could be a direction for future studies, e.g., combing RBV and IBV, combing RBV and contingency theory, but researchers need to be aware of the potential conflicts between theories
Methodological issues	Field work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing country need to receive more attention (e.g., African countries).• Multi-country study are encouraged.
	Industry type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-manufacturing industries needs to receive more research attention in future studies (e.g., service sector).
	Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study with survey data: researchers need to address validity and reliability issues when using primary data (e.g., common method bias). In addition, the primary data is normally characterized by small sample size, which limits the research generalizability.• Study with secondary data: the secondary dataset tend to have bigger sample size, and is characterized by greater objectivity. However, the concerns of using secondary data are about the unit of analysis and adaptability.
	Statistical methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future studies are encouraged to explore higher-order nested and interaction relationships among antecedents and the effect on export performance (e.g., three-way interaction).• Longitudinal studied are called for in future research, with relevant advanced statistical methods (e.g., dynamic panel model with generalized moment of method).• Statistical remedies in response to the endogeneity and self-selection problems should be addressed in future studies.
