

Impact of Network Relationship Management Capability towards International Opportunity Recognition for Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness: Cross Organizational Knowledge Integration in China

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Article Info

Volume 83

Page Number: 12259 - 12270

Publication Issue:

March - April 2020

Abstract

In this study, the authors use the term "born global firms" as a special term to describe such "accelerated" small and medium-sized enterprises that carry out international operations, and use the relationship network as the main research perspective and analysis framework. Although studies have shown that the relationship network as an opportunity recognition carrier plays a significant role in the accelerated international development of enterprises, it is important to identify and develop international opportunities for how born global firms build and manage relationship networks. Then it affects the key issues such as international market development and performance improvement. There is still a lack of further argumentation in the existing literature. The main innovations in this research paper are: (1) In the research of born global firms, domestic and foreign scholars often from the perspective of static relationship network structure, content, characteristics, quality to do research on the phenomenon of accelerated internationalization of new firms. This research paper adopts the viewpoint of opportunity in entrepreneurship, overcoming the lack of opportunity research in international and born global firm research by dividing international opportunities into two dimensions: the identification of international opportunities and the development of international opportunities, further deepened the theoretical interpretation of international opportunities in the development of born global firms.

Article History

Article Received: 24 July 2019

Revised: 12 September 2019

Accepted: 15 February 2020

Publication: 18 April 2020

Keywords: International Opportunities ; Internationalized Performance ; Born Global Firms.

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship network of an organization is not bornly owned, firms need to make efforts to plan, build, maintain and manage a good relationship network to obtain specific network value results in order to serve the internationalization of the company (Anil Kumar Goswami, 2019; Law et al. 2019c; Rennie 1993). This research paper postulates

that the activities and efforts of the firms for the construction of the relationship network are the prerequisites for the realization of the value of the subsequent relationship network results. Therefore, this research paper tries to discuss the influence mechanism of the previous efforts and subsequent results of the relationship network on the international performance of the born global firms in the relationship network planning, construction and

management behavior. Some foreign scholars have tried to analyze the content of international business and international entrepreneurship from the perspective of opportunity research and found that international opportunities are often described as abstract in international entrepreneurship research, and the research of the concept of opportunity is also relatively narrow from a theoretical point of view. Through the analysis of the intersection of different knowledge on the theoretical level and the practical operation level, this research paper forms a certain theoretical contribution and practical significance to the research expectations of the international management of born global firms.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of firm internationalization is the most important topic in international business research from the beginning, and the analysis of firm internationalization has always been the driving force for the development of international business research (Almor, T. 2008; Anil Kumar Goswami, 2019; Busenitz et al., 2003; Du Jingjing, 2014; Law at al., 2019c). However, although the term has been widely used, there is still no unified consensus on the concept of internationalization (Huang Sheng, Huang Zhoujingbo, 2013; Loane, S. and Bell, J., 2006). The study of firm internationalization can be roughly divided into three theoretical research perspectives: (1) The economic perspective of OFDI theory; (2) Behavioral perspective of the internationalization phase model; (3) The relationship perspective of network theory. Since then, some scholars have also believed that with the emergence of more rapid internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises, based on these three major theoretical perspectives, there is also a fourth theoretical perspective to study firm internationalization through international entrepreneurship. The theory involved in the economic perspective is mainly the theory of OFDI by large multinational groups. In OFDI, these large multinational companies choose the best structure for each stage of production by assessing

economic transaction costs. In order to facilitate the organization form and location chosen by the enterprise, it is possible to minimize the overall transaction costs. Vernon (1966) proposed the International Product Life Cycle Theory in 1966, which describes the process of enterprise internationalization from export to OFDI by focusing on market expansion and technological innovation. Buckley and Casson (1976) proposed the theory of internalization in 1976. Based on these three advantages, the OLI model answers why, where and how the enterprise conducts OFDI. Ownership specific advantages, such as having unique technological and innovative advantages, answer why enterprises should "go out" to operate;

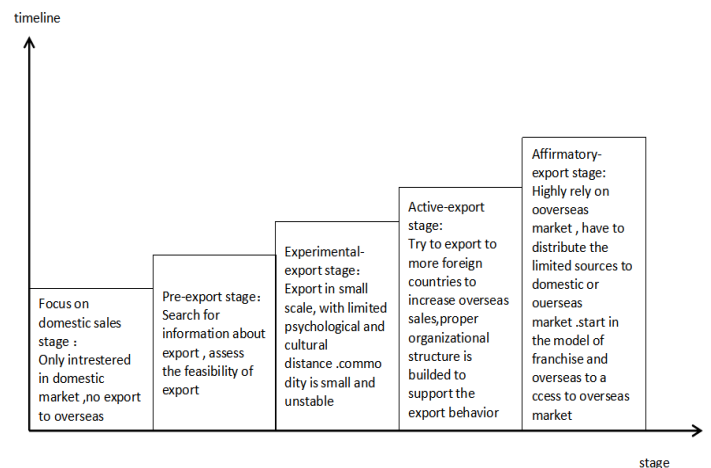


Figure 1. Five-stage model

Figure 1 shows the five-stage model. In the first phase, companies focused only on the domestic market, and export sales were basically zero. Next, for the pre-export phase, enterprises assess the possibility of starting exports. At this stage, the export sales rate is still about 0; the third phase is the pilot phase. Exports are still an marginal behavior of the company, and export sales are only between 0-9 %; The fourth stage is the active internationalization phase. Exports have become a regular behavior of companies, with export sales between 10 and 39 %. The fifth stage is the full internationalization of companies involved in the phase. Companies are highly dependent on overseas markets and their export sales exceed 40%. In this situation, the

company and the environment it operates have become highly international. Because the international community has acquired a high degree of international knowledge from some international relations networks, their internationalization tends to be driven by "strategic use of network positions." The high degree of internationalization of such companies can give them many advantages in international operations.

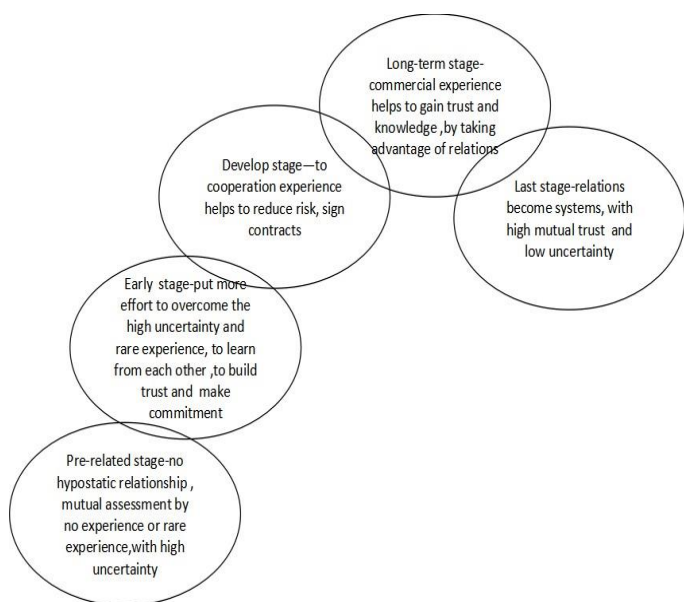


Figure 2. Source: Ford 1980; Five phases of relationship development

For smaller mature markets (such as Nordic countries), formal business relations networks are more important for the internationalization of SMEs (McAuley, A., 2010; Zhou, L., Wu, W.-P., Luo, X. 2007), and for the internationalization of SMEs in emerging economies (Nummela, N., Saarenketo, S., Jokela, P. et al., 2014), the role of informal social relations networks may be more significant (Johanson & Mattsson 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Lin et al. 2001).

This part of the theoretical analysis will mainly rely on the analysis of enterprise resource-based view, knowledge-based view, dynamic capability view, so as to build a web-based capability based enterprise internationalization performance impact path model (Zhou, L., Wu, W. P., Luo, X., 2007; Wangzengtao, Zhangyuting, Jiangmin, 2017). The

internationalization process theory believes that the

Base	Relation network type	Author (year)
Level	Interpersonal and organization Social and Business Dodestic and International	Johanson, Mattsson (1988) Easton, Hakansson (1996) Burt (2000)
Degree	Strong relation Weak relation	Granovetter (1972) Prasha & Yong (2011)
Structure	Secondary Position Core Position	Wasserman & Faust (1994)
Form Way	Active Passive	Johanson & Mattsson (1988)
Source	Structural social capital Relational social capital Cognitive social capital	Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998), Lin et al. (2001) Prashantham (2008)

internationalization of enterprises is gradually

Table 1: Types of relational networks

carried out through a series of evolutionary stages.

In the field of international business, many empirical studies have used the theory of internationalization process to study the process, path and location of enterprise internationalization. The definition of a born global firm is defined as follows: First, a company must start international operations within three years of its establishment. Second, in the first three years, companies must have at least 25 % of their turnover from the international market. Third, the enterprise must be independent (i.e. initial operation or separation from other enterprises and exclusion of existing subsidiaries).

Table 2 : Different standards of judgment for born global firms

Author	Export earnings as a proportion of total income	Time
McKinsey & Co., 1993	> 76%	≤ 2 Years

Knight & Cavusgil, 1996	≥ 25%	≤ 3 Years
McAuley, 1999		≤ 1 Years
Zahra, 2000	≥ 5%	≤ 6 Years
Moen, 2002	≥ 25%	≤ 3 Years
Knight & Cavusgil, 2004	≥ 25%	≤ 3 Years
Mort & Weerawardena, 2006	≥ 25%	≤ 3 Years
Servais et al., 2007	≥ 25%	≤ 3 Years

Source: Summary based on relevant literature

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the research motives, this research paper identifies key aspects such as born global firms (Law et al., 2019d), international entrepreneurship (Kirzner I M, 1973; Lin Song, 2005; Liujuan, Pengzhengyin, Wangweiwei, 2014; Liweining, Zouliai, 2010), relationship networks (Law et al., 2019b; Liweining, Zouliai, 2010; Moeljadi, M., Khusniyah, I. N., & Sumiati, S., 2017; Pletnev, D., Fink, O., & Dyachenko, O., 2020), network ability (Zhou, L., Wu, W.-P., Luo, X., 2007; Zhang Baojian, 2015; Wangzengtao, Zhangyuting, Jiangmin, 2017; Tolstoy, Daniel, and Henrik Agndal, 2010; Pletnev, D., Fink, O., & Dyachenko, O., 2020), and international opportunities (Oyson, M. J., & Whittaker, H., 2015), and on this basis, systematically collect and comb relevant documents at home and abroad. Thus, we can grasp the historical context and the latest progress of the overall research, further clarify the correlation between the various topics and summarize the missing parts of the research, and then determine the scope and entry point of this research paper. The data required in the empirical part of this research paper are based on questionnaire survey method on non-listed firm-level data, which cannot be obtained from public

data. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain corresponding data through questionnaires. In order to ensure the scientific and rational nature of the questionnaire, an initial questionnaire on the basis of a large number of relevant literature studies, and revised the questionnaire through many discussions, consultations, and small sample tests until the final questionnaire was formed.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The accuracy of the data analysis results is based on the premise that the sample data should be credible and valid (Yang Zhong, Chen Zhangxiao, Chen Yang, 2007; Gaojing, Hechangzheng, 2015). Therefore, the usual view of the statistical community is that the results generally obtained through measurement tools, such as the data obtained by the questionnaire survey used in this article, often require corresponding reliability and validity analysis. The validity analysis is intended to assess the validity of the questionnaire and whether the questionnaire scale can accurately measure the researcher's ideas (Gaojing, Hechangzheng, 2015); Whether each sub item in the same scale is examining the same variable; Whether there are significant differences between different variables, these contents can be reflected by different validity indicators, such as content validity, flag association validity, or construction validity (Dib, L, A., da Rocha, A. and Ferreira da Silva, G, 2010). Because the scale of this paper is based on the construction of many scholars 'related studies, it is relatively mature, so it has a certain degree of guarantee in content validity.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, loading, cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE

Constructs	Item	Loading (> 0.7)	M	SD	α (> 0.7)	CR (> 0.7)	AVE (> 0.5)
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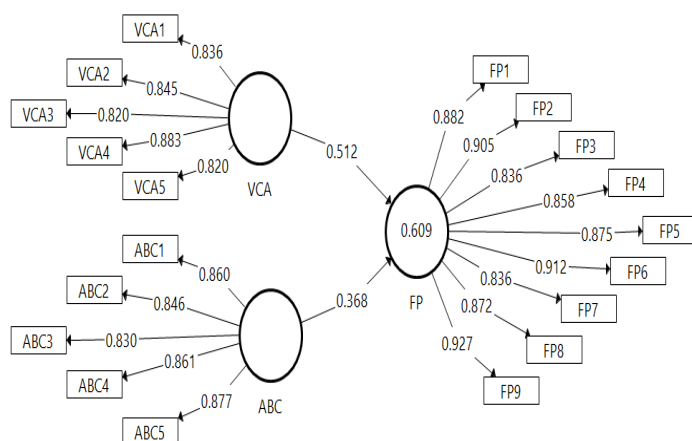
Network Relationship Management (VCA)	VCA1	0.836	3.69	0.76	0.897	0.924	0.707
	VCA2	0.845					
	VCA3	0.820					
	VCA4	0.883					
	VCA5	0.820					
International Community Recognition (ABC)	ABC1	0.860	3.62	0.92	0.908	0.931	0.731
	ABC2	0.846					
	ABC3	0.830					
	ABC4	0.861					
	ABC5	0.877					
Firm's Efficiency (FP)	FP1	0.882	3.74	0.91	0.963	0.968	0.772
	FP2	0.905					
	FP3	0.836					
	FP4	0.858					
	FP5	0.875					
	FP6	0.912					
	FP7	0.836					
	FP8	0.872					
	FP9	0.927					

Note: M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Key: VCA: value chain analysis, ABC: activity-based costing, FP: firms' performance.

4.1 Structural Equation Model

In the field of social science, it is often necessary to study the causal relationship between variables in a quantitative manner (Guohongdong&Ding Gajie, 2012). Some variables can be observed directly, called explicit variables; Some variables cannot be directly observed or measured, called latent variables. Traditional statistical methods cannot effectively deal with latent variables or study the relationship between multiple causes and multiple results at the same time, and structural equations can solve this problem well, so it is called "statistical reform." Theoretical basis: The effective conclusion of the structural equation first depends on the establishment of the relationship between the various variables, that is, the use of correct theory to build a model of the measurement equation part, including the selection of indicators, the assumption of the variable relationship, the setting of parameters, etc. Each step requires clear theoretical definition and careful logical reasoning. The research hypothesis and mechanism put forward in this paper are based on the theoretical results of previous studies. They cover the key variables to be examined under the subject of target research and have a solid theoretical basis.



4.2 Analytical tools

The more popular analysis of structural equations currently includes AMOS, LISREL, and EQS. The structural equation model construction tool chosen in this paper is AMOS software. The main advantage of AMOS is that it is powerful and intuitive, and its operation is flexible and simple. In the graphics environment of AMOS, both explicit and latent variables can be directly assigned to modeling, evaluated and calculated through the construction of a clear path map, and rich comprehensive results are obtained. At the same time, the software also has a powerful extension function, which can be used for regression analysis, factor analysis and other situations.

Table 6-6 shows that the KMO value for international opportunity identification and

development is 0.892, which is greater than 0.7; and the Bartlett statistic value is significantly different from 0, indicating that the sample data meets the criteria for factoranalysis.

Table 4: Opportunity Identification and Development KMO and Barlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling Adequacy		.892
Barlett's test of Sphericity	Approx.Chi-Square	510.617
Global performance ← International opportunity recognition	df	49
Internationalized Performance ← International Development	sig.	.000
Assume regression path	Standardized path coefficient	Whether assumptions are supported
Internationalized performance ← International opportunity recognition	0.407***	Yes
Internationalized Performance ← International Opportunities Development	0.364***	Yes

Table 5: Fit advantage index

X ² /df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMS EA	IFI
2.771	0.915	0.924	0.907	0.910	0.035	0.934

Note : *** P<0.001, ** P<0.01, * P<0.05

4.3 Overall Model Fitting and Parameter Estimation

On the basis of the above verification of the relationship between the various variables, the independent variables, dependent variables and intermediate variables are put together to build a comprehensive framework of network competency-

international opportunity recognition and development-international performance, and use AMOS software for overall fitting. The fitting results are shown in Table 5. The overall fitting effect of the model is within the scope of acceptance, but some indicators are not ideal. Relative fitting indicators GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and IFI were 0.899, 0.902, 0.911, 0.889, and 0.874, respectively, which were higher than the acceptable standard 0.8 but the absolute fitting index card index / df2 <UNK> was 3.053, Less than minimum acceptable standard 5, higher than a better critical indicator 3; RMSEA was 0.062, less than 0.1, but was above a better threshold of 0.05, indicating that there was room for further modification of the model.

Table 6: Preliminary parameter estimates for the overall model

Assume regression path	Path Coefficient	Standard error	Significant Probability
International Opportunity Identification ← Network Vision Capacity	0.223	0.035	0.013*
International Opportunity Identification ← Network Building Capability	0.301	0.041	0.004**
International Opportunity Identification ← Network Relations Management Capacity	0.207	0.068	0.000**
International Opportunity Identification ← Network Capability	0.015	0.072	0.512
International Opportunity Identification ← Communication Capacity within the Network	0.241	0.127	0.032*
International Opportunities to Develop the Network Vision Capacity	0.026	0.094	0.203
International Opportunities Development ← Network Building Capacity	0.209	0.047	0.027*
International Opportunity to Develop Network Relations Management Capacity	0.235	0.214	0.003**
International Opportunities Development ← Network Building Capacity	0.057	0.187	0.41

International opportunity to develop intra-network communication capacity	0.317	0.093	0.004*
Internationalized Performance ← Network Vision Capability	0.033	0.039	0.201
Internationalized Performance ← Network Building Ability	0.224	0.121	0.003*
Internationalized Performance ← Network Relations Management Capability	0.229	0.072	0.004*
Internationalized Performance ← Network Capability	0.028	0.041	0.175
Internationalized Performance ← Network Communication Capabilities	0.307	0.105	0.003*
Internationalized performance ← International opportunity recognition	0.327	0.126	0.005*
Internationalized Performance ← International Opportunities Development	0.234	0.094	0.085*

Table 7: Fit advantage index

χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMS EA	IFI
3.053	0.899	0.902	0.911	0.889	0.062	0.874

Note : *** P<0.001, ** P<0.01, * P<0.05

V. CONCLUSION

With the development of economic globalization and integration, enterprises are paying more and more attention to the relationship network (Law et al. 2019d; Anil Kumar Goswami, 2019; Yang Zhong, Chen Zhangxiao, Chen Yang, 2007; Zhang Baojian, 2015; Zhoujingbo, Huang Sheng, 2010; Zhou, L., Wu, W.-P., Luo, X., 2007; Loane, S. and Bell, J, 2006). How to actively build the network, manage the network and give full play to the value of the relationship network (Yang Zhong, Chen Zhangxiao, Chen Yang, 2007; Zhang Baojian, 2015; Zhoujingbo, Huang Sheng, 2010; Zhou, L., Wu, W.P., Luo, X., 2007; Loane, S. and Bell, J, 2006). Then from the partners to obtain information, knowledge and various resources for their own use, without the cost of enterprises to actually Network

vision capabilities have a significant positive impact on international opportunity recognition (Sigrist, B.,1999; Shepherd, D.A. & De Tienne, D.R., 2005; Vaghely, P. Julien, 2010; Zaefarian, R., Eng, T. Y., &Tasavori, M., 2015; Zhang Hong, Zhang Gebaoshan, 2014). Network vision capabilitieside. Network relationship management capability has a significant positive impact on international opportunity recognition. This result demonstrates that born global firmss have further developed and deepened their mutual trust and close cooperation with partners through their network relationship management capabilities, and that trust can help to improve or create a range of necessary conditions related to knowledge exchange. This affects the exchange, sharing and integration of knowledge (Shepherd, D.A. & De Tienne, D.R, 2005; Muqadas, F., Rehman, M., Aslam, U. and Ur-Rahman, U., 2017; MohammadbashirSedighi, Sander van Splunter, Fardad, Frances Brazier, 2017; Moeljadi, M., Khusniyah, I. N., &Sumiati, S., 2017; Li Gang, Li Chenjingjing, and Yangxue, 2017; Fahad M. Alsaadi., 2018). In addition, the relationship management ability also affects the continuity of the cooperation time between the company and the external organization. The longer the cooperation relationship between the company, the easier it is for the two parties to reach an agreed goal, reduce the frequency and intensity of conflicts, and increase mutual obligations. It helps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-organizational knowledge integration, which promotes innate global business identification and creatively constructs opportunities for overseas marketexpansion (Law et al. 2019a; Oyson, M. J., & Whittaker, H., 2015).

The ability to communicate within the network has a significant positive impact on international opportunity recognition (Zhoujingbo& Huang Sheng., 2010; Zhou, L., Wu, W.P., Luo, X., 2007). This proves that a born global firms with good Internet-based communication capabilities can exchange knowledge and information among its

subordinates, departments and members, understand each other's knowledge needs, and increase the efficiency and scope of external knowledge acquisition. It enhances the absorption, digestion and integration of knowledge acquired from outside the network within the organization, which can help enterprises better identify and creatively construct international opportunities.

VI. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Due to the limitation of time and the inadequacy of the current level, there are many limitations in this study, which need to be further discussed and improved in the future research. Based on relational network theory, knowledge management theory, dynamic capability theory, international entrepreneurship theory, etc., this study constructs the theoretical analysis framework of "network capability -- international opportunity recognition and development-international performance", but this research is still only preliminary. Whether or not there are other important intermediate and adjustment variables in this influence model needs to be further explored and studied.

Due to time and conditions, the sample data used in this paper are cross-sectional data. Compared with panel data, cross-sectional data cannot reflect the dynamic relationship between network capacity and international performance in different stages of development. Therefore, the longitudinal study on the time dimension needs to be further studied. For the consideration of the actual data that can be collected, this study mainly selected Zhejiang Province to distribute the questionnaire, and took the newly created small and medium-sized enterprises with international business as the object of study, although the number of samples met the requirements of statistical analysis. The theoretical model has also been well verified, but it cannot cover enterprises in other provinces in China. It also needs more extensive research and more empirical research on sample distribution.

6.1 Future Research Prospects

According to the limitations of this study, the future research direction is as follows:

The existing research on network capacity is less concerned with the analysis of the causes of network capacity. Ritter [80] Based on the internal perspective of the organization, four factors that affect the ability of the network are proposed, including the availability of resources, the network-oriented nature of human resources, the integration of corporate communication structures, and the openness of corporate culture. It also focuses on the role of the alliance management of enterprises on network capabilities, pointing out that the more alliances the enterprise participates in, the more obvious the improvement and enhancement of its network capabilities. Generally speaking, the research on the influence factors of network capacity is still relatively thin, and the conclusions of the current research also have large differences. Therefore, how to study the influence factors of network ability in a better depth and system, so as to make the related enterprises more accurate and effective to improve the enterprise's network ability, there is more space in the future research.

The internationalization of born global firms is composed of the process of identifying and developing international entrepreneurial opportunities. Network capabilities can have an impact on the identification and development of international opportunities. The efficiency and effectiveness of international opportunity identification and development determine the internationalization performance of enterprises. In the follow-up study, we can further explore the dynamic relationship between the three, that is, as born global firms gradually transition from the founding period to the initial growth period and maturity period, what kind of dynamic evolution relationship these three will show with the development of the company. At the same time, it is also necessary to try to obtain support data from a wider range of

regions to further test the universality of the research model.

This paper only reveals the mechanism of network capability, international opportunity recognition and development on the international performance of born global firms, and further research can deeply explore the contextual factors that regulate the relationship between network capability, international opportunity recognition and development, and international performance.

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