

# *Drivers of SMEs' exporting activity: a review and a research agenda*

Article

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Tables

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**Table I**  
Drivers of internationalisation (Leonidou *et al.*, 2007)

<b>INTERNAL FACTORS</b>	
<i>Human resource</i>	Special managerial interest/urge Utilisation of special managerial talent/skills/time Management trips overseas
<i>Financial</i>	Stagnation/decline in domestic sales/profits Potential for extra sales/profits from exporting Potential for extra growth from exporting Possession of financial competitive advantage
<i>Production</i>	Accumulation of unsold inventory/overproduction Achievement of economies of scale Availability of unutilised production capacity Smoothing production of a seasonal product
<i>Research and development</i>	Possession of proprietary technical knowledge Possession of a unique/patented product / product innovation Extending life-cycle of domestic products
<i>Marketing</i>	Possession of a marketing competitive advantage Ability to easily adapt marketing to foreign market
<b>EXTERNAL FACTORS</b>	
<i>Domestic market</i>	Saturation/shrinkage of domestic market Need to reduce dependence/risk of domestic market Possibility of reducing power of domestic custom Unfavourable state of domestic economy Favourable foreign exchange rates
<i>Foreign market</i>	Possession of exclusive information on foreign markets Identification of better opportunities abroad Close physical proximity to foreign markets
<i>Home government</i>	Government export assistance/incentives Ministry of Commerce/trade mission activity Encouragement by government agencies
<i>Foreign government</i>	Relaxation of foreign rules and regulations in certain foreign markets Reduction of tariffs/non-tariffs in certain overseas countries
<i>Intermediaries</i>	Encouragement by industry, trade, and other associations Encouragement by banks/financial institutions Encouragement by brokers/agents/distributors
<i>Competition</i>	Intense domestic competition Initiation of exports by domestic competitors Entry of a foreign competitor in the home market Gaining foreign expertise to improve domestic competitiveness
<i>Customers</i>	Receipt of unsolicited orders from foreign custom Receipt of orders after participation in trade fairs
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	Proximity to international ports/airports Patriotic duty of local firms

**Table II**  
Synthesis of results

DRIVERS	COVERED TOPICS	
	Traditional topics	New/Emerging topics
<b>Internal drivers</b>		
<i>Human resources</i>	Competences/skills	Personality/ subjective characteristics Socio-demographic factors (age, gender, nationality, family membership) HR management procedures
<i>R&amp;D, innovation and productivity</i>	Possession of proprietary technical knowledge Product innovation	Process innovation
<i>Marketing/sales</i>	Marketing capabilities	Internet/web marketing
<i>Purchasing</i>		Purchasing experience
<b>External drivers</b>		
<i>Home country</i>	Saturation/shrinkage of domestic market Need to reduce dependence/risk of domestic market	
<i>Host country</i>	Export promotion programs (EPPs) Identification of better opportunities abroad Potential for extra growth Potential for extra sales/profits Close physical proximity to foreign markets	
<i>Network</i>		Personal networks Business networks (customers, intermediaries)

**Table III**  
 Future research directions

<b>DRIVERS</b>	<b>FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS</b>
<b>Internal drivers</b>	
<i>Human resources</i>	Competences, skills and personality of key internal actors (entrepreneur, family members, export manager) HR management practices
<i>R&amp;D and innovation</i>	Design capabilities Formalized R&D (R&D/Engineering units, project management skills)
<i>Production</i>	Upgrading of production (quality control, "lean approach")
<i>Marketing</i>	Adoption of internet/web technologies Organization of international sales
<i>Purchasing</i>	Involvement of purchasing in exporting activities
<b>External drivers</b>	
<i>Network</i>	Formal multilateral cooperation (export consortia, R&D projects) Trade associations/government agencies Consultants / intermediaries Customers/suppliers