

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

Article

Accepted Version

Tables

Francioni, B., Pagano, A. and Castellani, D. ORCID:  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1823-242X> (2016) Drivers of  
SMEs' exporting activity: a review and a research agenda.  
Multinational Business Review, 24 (3). pp. 194-215. ISSN  
1525-383X doi: 10.1108/MBR-06-2016-0023 Available at  
<https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/66857/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

Published version at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/MBR-06-2016-0023>

To link to this article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MBR-06-2016-0023>

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

[www.reading.ac.uk/centaur](http://www.reading.ac.uk/centaur)

**CentAUR**

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

**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

<b>DRIVERS</b>		<b>COVERED TOPICS</b>	
		<b>Traditional topics</b>	<b>New/Emerging topics</b>
<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