

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND COMPETITORS –
IMPLICATIONS FOR FIRM'S EXPORT PERFORMANCE**

Vesna Žabkar, Ph.D.

Maja Makovec Brenèè, Ph.D.

Faculty of Economics Ljubljana

University of Ljubljana

Kardeljeva pl. 17

1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tel: +386 1 5892400

Fax: +386 1 5892698

e- mail: vesna.zabkar@uni-lj.si

e- mail: maja.makovec@uni-lj.si

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND COMPETITORS – IMPLICATIONS FOR FIRM'S EXPORT PERFORMANCE

Abstract

Markets' globalisation and competition made foreign markets increasingly viable and natural opportunities for growth-oriented firms. This fact is even more important for firms originating from small national markets. In the global market atmosphere these firms are forced to build their export marketing strategy based on relationships with their customers, suppliers or even competitors in order to be successful in their export market performance.

Considering this fact the basic research question of the paper was to what extent the relationships can influence the firm's performance in foreign markets. Our research framework postulated that the firm's export performance is determined by relationships in addition to the type of industry and firm's internal forces. Three types of relationships were analysed: with customers, suppliers and with competitors. Several industries were compared in terms of their export performance characteristics. The general conclusion of the research was that the indications were not sufficient to claim that firms from a small country developed relationships with customers, suppliers or competitors intensively in order to improve their export market performance.

Introduction

There is no doubt that superior performance is a precondition for the establishment of the key competitive advantages of firms. Specific competencies, skills and capabilities as the origins of resource-advantage view severely influence the firm's performance and are even more important in foreign markets operations, where firms are intensively exposed to diverse competition, reaching goal of high export performance. One of the important sources to gain export growth and to perform well on export markets is the development of relationship and network advantages of firms (Hunt, 1997; Piercy et al., 1998; Styles, Amber, 2000, etc.). Therefore, based on export performance and relationship marketing issues, our basic research question was the extent to which the relationships can influence the firm's performance in foreign markets.

Three types of firm's relationships were analysed: with customers, suppliers and competitors. Export performance as dependent variable was defined by export sales ratio and market share. Export performance was compared in several industry sectors. Influences of internal forces such as knowledge and creativity of human resources, product quality, technology, innovation, location and flexibility were included in the analysis.

Theoretical Background

Role of Relationships and Networks in Internationalisation of Firms

According to the theoretical background the research of export performance has so far mostly focused on factors relating to the firm, marketing strategy and marketing environment (Katsikeas et al., 2000).

Contemporary importance of relationship marketing issues and their implementation brought relational issues into theoretical and empirical marketing research. In majority of cases the research was focused on manufacturer/distributor or buyer/seller relationship (e.g. Anderson and Narus, 1984, 1990; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Brennan, Turnbull, 1998, Halinen, 1998 etc.). Only a few of them were so far analysed within international or export context (e.g. Lee, 1998; Leonidou, Kaleka, 1998; Styles and Amber, 1994). To fill this gap we empirically analysed the impact of three types of relationships on export performance and suggested some managerial implications for export manufacturing firms.

A firm's international development has been viewed as an evolutionary process with identifiable stages covering pre-engagement, initial and advanced levels of internationalisation (Cavusgil, 1982), in which relationships with counterparts in other countries are developed. This was realized in different ways (Johanson and Mattson, 1988) – by forming relationships with counterparts in countries that are new to the firm (international extension), by increasing commitment in already established foreign networks (penetration) and by integrating their positions in networks in various countries (international integration). By developing the Uppsala model (Johansen, Vahlne, 1977) and its adaptations (e.g. Eriksson et al., 1997) different stages of internationalisation theory directly or indirectly incorporated the relationship issues to firm's international growth. By the Uppsala research in Swedish industrial firms, which defined the major marketing problems in firms as establishment, development and maintenance of lasting business relationships with customers, suppliers or other important actors, relationships have become very important research area in marketing.

Relationships present the result of an interaction process where connections have been developed between two parties that produce mutual orientation and commitment (Hakanson, Snehota, 1992/97). As a result of collaboration among different actors, such as customers, distributors, suppliers, competitors or government can ground different business networks as a part of the international environment of firm's business operations. For export-oriented firms networking and building long-term relationships can present a way of internationalisation and international growth of the firm (Chetty, Blankenburg Holm, 2000) and especially for firms originating from small national markets, where export is an imperative, they could be a source of successful export marketing strategies.

In many firms relationships have an overwhelming impact on their economic performance (Hakanson, Snehota, 1992). We could not deny that relationships have always been an important part of business processes, especially on business-to-business markets, but today we are more aware of their influence on firm's performance and creation of competitive advantage than we used to be. Stressed by the IMP group, the process of selling and buying in business is not one action or reaction as thought in transactional marketing, but rather an acting interaction (Ford, 1998), formed as a single interaction among portfolio of relationships that a firm develops with another actor or more of them. Regardless the type of the actor - portfolios of interactive relationships among them present a sound network basis for a firm. This is extremely important in export marketing strategies where not only formal but in majority of cases informal aspects of relationships create positive grounds for successful performance. For example, a positive association between personal contacts and export performance has been found (e.g. Amine, Cavusgil, 1986), also the importance of the distributor relationship to an exporter's performance has been highlighted (Styles, Amber, 1994). Not only theoretical contributions, also empirical evidences and practionists' attitudes support the fact that implementation of relationship marketing in firms brings positive impacts on export performance and international growth of the firms. Therefore we should concentrate on relationship influences in international scope, too.

Internationalisation of Firms and Export Performance

Research on the firm's export performance dates back to early 1960s when Tookey (1964) identified factors of exporting success. Since then numerous studies examined the export performance determinants and outcomes, but till now no uniformly accepted conceptualisation and operationalisation of export performance has been established (e.g. Aaby, Slater, 1989; Cavusgil and Zou, 1994).

In a majority of cases export performance has been measured by using a single indicator approach such as export sales level, export sales growth, export profits, ratio or share of export sales in total sales, export market share etc. On the other hand some authors stress that export performance is a multiconstruct and should not be measured by a single indicator (Cavusgil, Zou, 1994; Bhargava et al., 1994; Katsikeas et al., 2000).

Export performance has been in its broad meaning defined as firm's outcomes achieved in international sales (Shoham, 1998), encompassing financial and strategic aspect of performance, preferably in time. Following Cavusgil and Zou (1994) export performance is defined as the extent to which firm's objectives, both economic and strategic, with respect to exporting a product in a foreign market, are achieved through planning and execution of export marketing strategy. Reaching objectives can be measured either by objective (economic) or subjective (strategic) measures. In our case two measures

have been taken into consideration - export sales ratio (the share of exports in total sales) and export market share for the major product group in the major market. Especially export sales ratio is the most commonly used measure of export performance (see Katsikeas et al. classification, 2000), but often criticised, because it does not necessarily reflect the competitive dimensions of export success (Kirpalani, Belcome, 1987). The export market share is rarely researched mostly because of the difficulty of its measurement. However, by taking it into consideration we upgraded single measure approach and reached some interesting (even contradictory) results, adding also strategic aspects of export success into analysis.

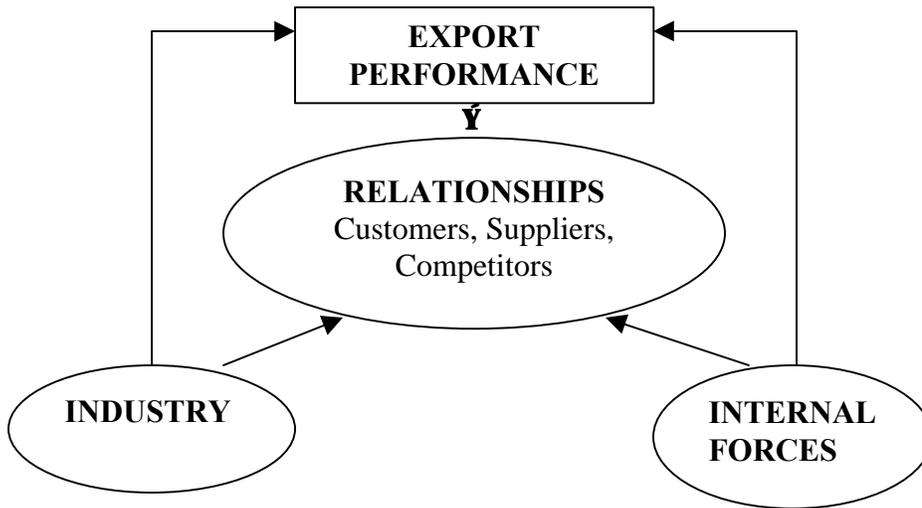
Proposed Research Framework

The proposed conceptual and research framework derives from the theoretical backgrounds explained above. Relationships with customers and suppliers are relatively often analysed, but not those with competitors. Because of growing interactions among competitors in global manufacturing industry, competitive firms are developing different forms or levels of strategic partnerships, alliances, joint ventures and other formal and informal nets to reach internationalisation growth in global markets. Reasons for this mutual interactions and actions on markets are as much economic as strategic. Therefore we wanted to see if firms from a small national market are progressive in this particular relationship and how it influences their export performance.

Due to industry diversity in manufacturing sector, we also analysed firm's relationship specifics in several industries and their influences on export performance. The number of respondents allowed separate industry analysis in textiles and textile products industry, machinery and equipment industry, electrical and optical equipment industry, basic metals and fabricated products industry (see Table 1).

We also added the analysis of internal forces influences to relationship developments and therefore to export success. The idea of including internal forces into the research was developed on the basis of resource - based view and its interrelation and co-existence with relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), supported also by the theory of social networks (e.g. Emerson, 1981; Anderson et al, 1994). Among several possible internal sources we selected knowledge, creativity of human resources, product quality, technology, innovation, location and flexibility as potential forces of relationship developments with different actors.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework Scheme



Research Hypotheses

According to theoretical backgrounds and proposed conceptual framework several research hypotheses were defined:

- H1: Export performance positively depends on relationships (formal and informal) with customers: companies with developed relationships with their customers achieve better export performance.
- H2: Export performance positively depends on relationships (formal and informal) with suppliers: companies with developed relationships with their suppliers attain better export performance.
- H3: Export performance positively depends on relationships (formal and informal) with competitors: companies with developed relationships with their competitors enjoy better export performance.
- H4: Export performance depends on relationships specifics in certain industry sector: industries where developed relationships with buyers, suppliers or competitors are more frequent, achieve better export performance.
- H5: Export performance depends on relationships based on developments of selected internal forces of a firm: the more developed the internal forces of firms, the better the export performance of firms.

Research Design

On the basis of relationship marketing and internationalisation literature an instrument for data collection was developed. Initially, a series of preliminary interviews were conducted with export marketing managers to verify and improve the relevance of the variables suggested. The final, refined questionnaire

contained variables intended to measure influences of customer, supplier and competitor relationships on export performance in addition to the industry sector and firm's internal forces.

Sampling and Data Collection

In October 1999 questionnaires were mailed to 321 export manufacturing companies in Slovenia. Manufacturing and exporting were two criteria for the sample frame. The majority of companies had over 70 % of sales in exporting in 1998 and 1999. With the response rate of 38 % (121 questionnaires) in spring 2000 the research was completed.

The majority of respondents were from textiles and textile products industry, machinery and equipment industry, electrical and optical equipment industry, basic metals and fabricated products industry. The structure of the respondents by the industry was as follows (see Table 1).

Export Performance and Explanatory Variables

Export Performance

As explained above, reaching export objectives can be measured by different measures (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994; Katsikeas et al., 2000). In our case export performance was measured by export sales ratio (the share of exports in total sales) and export market share for the major product group in the major export market of the firm. In this case we used two economic indicators as the most applicable and obtainable ones from Slovenian export manufacturing firms.

Table 1: Structure of the Respondent Companies by Industry (Manufacturing)

Manufacturing	Frequency	%
Food, beverages and tobacco	6	4,96
Textiles and textile products	21	17,36
Leather and leather products	4	3,31
Wood and wood products	4	3,31
Paper, publishing and printing	6	4,96
Coke, petroleum, products and nuclear fuel	0	0,00
Chemicals, products and man made fibres	10	8,26
Rubber and plastic products	4	3,31
Other non-metal, mineral products	4	3,31
Basic metals and fabricated products	19	15,70
Machinery and equipment	17	14,05
Electrical and optical equipment	19	15,70
Transport equipment	0	0,00
Other manufacturing	7	5,79
Total	121	100,0

Relationship Variables

Data on relationships with customers, suppliers and competitors were obtained by direct questions about existence of formal and informal forms of relationships with customers, suppliers and competitors. Relationship variables were measured on a dichotomous scale.

From several industries included in the research, the following industries could be analysed separately: manufacturing sector textiles and textile products industry, machinery and equipment industry, electrical and optical equipment industry, basic metals and fabricated products industry (see Table 1). Specifics of these industries and relations to export performance in these industries were analysed.

Internal forces were measured by knowledge, creativity of human resources, product quality, technology, innovation, location and flexibility as potential sources of relationship developments with different actors.

Export marketing managers evaluated their importance by the Likert scale ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important).

Methodology

As a method of analysis, bivariate analysis was used (comparison of different groups of companies across the same measures). On variables with interval/ratio level of measurement, two-sample t-test was used. With nominal level of measurement, two-sample chi-square test was performed. When performing analysis on five different industries, ANOVA and multiple comparison tests (Scheffe, Tukey-b test) were used on variables with interval/ratio level of measurement.

Research Results

Based on relationship variables, the companies in the survey were split into groups. Two groups were formed on the basis of existing formal and informal relationships with **customers (buyers)**. The comparison between the groups on export performance measures revealed that there were no significant differences either in the share of export in the total sales for both groups or in the market share for the major product group in the most important foreign markets (see Table 2). Significant differences were in importance of different internal forces such as knowledge of human resources, product quality, technology, capital price and cost of labor for the competitiveness of companies' products in international markets. Contrary to the proposed hypotheses (H1 and H5), these internal forces were more important not for the companies with relationships with customers, but for those without them.

Table 2: Groups Statistics for Companies with Relationships with Buyers and without Them

Variables	Group	Mean	SE Mean	Scale
Share of Export 99	Customer Relationships	70,0	2,1	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	66,9	4,0	
Market share	Customer Relationships	24,0	2,9	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	25,9	4,1	
Knowledge **	Customer Relationships	5,6	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	6,1	0,2	
Creativity	Customer Relationships	5,2	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,5	0,3	
Product quality **	Customer Relationships	6,1	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	6,4	0,2	
Technology ***	Customer Relationships	5,1	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,8	0,2	
Capital price **	Customer Relationships	4,5	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,1	0,3	
Costs of labor **	Customer Relationships	5,2	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,7	0,3	

Legend: ** 0,01 < significance (2-tailed) < 0,05;

*** significance (2-tailed) < 0,01; n1=87, n2=34

On the basis of existing formal and informal relationships with their **suppliers**, two further groups of companies were formed. The comparison between the groups according to the export performance measures revealed that there were significant differences only in the share of export in the total sales for both groups. There seem to be a support for the proposed hypothesis in the data (H2). Companies with relationships with their suppliers tended to achieve higher export share than the companies without

relationships with their suppliers. Also, companies with relationships were significantly larger than companies without them. In terms of importance of different internal forces, there were significant differences only in capital price (more important for companies without relationships) and in location (more important for companies with relationships with suppliers, see Table 3).

Table 3: Group Statistics for Companies with Relationships with Suppliers and Companies without Them

Variables	Group	Mean	SE Mean	Scale
Share of Export 99 *	Supplier Relationships	70,9	2,2	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	65,8	3,6	
Market share	Supplier Relationships	25,3	3,2	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	23,6	4,0	
Number of employees **	Supplier Relationships	585	110	Ratio
	Without	356	51	
Capital price *	Supplier Relationships	4,5	0,1	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	4,9	0,2	
Location *	Supplier Relationships	4,2	0,2	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	3,8	0,2	

Legend: * significance (2-tailed) < 0,1; ** 0.01 < significance (2-tailed) < 0,05;
*** significance (2-tailed) < 0,01; n1=67, n2=54

Further analysis, basing on the existing formal and informal relationships with their **competitors**, again revealed that there were significant differences in the share of export in the total sales for both groups. Companies with relationships with their competitors tended to achieve higher export share than the companies without relationships with their suppliers. Also, companies with relationships were again significantly larger than companies without them. The differences between the two groups according to another export performance measure (market share) were not significant, there even seem to be a tendency for companies without relationships with their competitors to obtain larger market shares in their most important foreign markets. It seems that there is not enough indication in the data for the support of

the proposed hypothesis (H3). Additionally it should be considered that all significant differences in importance of different internal forces were in favor of companies without relationships with their competitors (importance of knowledge, creativity of work force, innovativeness and capital price, see Table 4).

Table 4: Groups Statistics for Companies with Relationships with Competitors and Companies without Them

Variables	Group	Mean	SE Mean	Scale
Share of Export 99 **	Competitor Relationships	75,0	3,5	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	67,8	2,3	
Market share	Competitor Relationships	17,8	5,1	Ratio, 0-100%
	Without	24,5	2,8	
Number of employees *	Competitor Relationships	721	185	Ratio
	Without	461	76	
Knowledge **	Competitor Relationships	5,3	0,3	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,9	0,1	
Creativity **	Competitor Relationships	4,7	0,3	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,4	0,1	
Innovativeness ***	Competitor Relationships	4,1	0,3	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	5,1	0,2	
Capital price ***	Competitor Relationships	3,8	0,2	1=not important, 7=very important
	Without	4,8	0,2	

Legend: * significance (2-tailed) < 0,1; ** 0,01 < significance (2-tailed) < 0,05;
*** Significance (2-tailed) < 0,01; n1=19, n2=102

According to our hypothesis (H4), export performance should depend on relationship specifics in certain industry sector: industries with several developed relationships with buyers, suppliers or competitors

should achieve better export performance. The analysis of the distribution of companies according to their industry and relationship existence revealed that several relationships with buyers were detected in basic metals industry, machinery and electrical industries whereas relationships with suppliers only in the metals industry. No significant differences in the industry affiliation were found between companies in relationships with their competitors and others. When we compared export performance among the selected industries and others, there was significantly larger average share of export in total sales in electrical industry than in the textile industry, however, this is not a case in the machinery or metals industry (see Table 5). Textile industry was the only industry in our sample without several developed relationships with buyers, suppliers or competitors. Furthermore, in terms of internal forces development, textile industry annotated the least importance to innovativeness. Innovativeness was on the other hand important mostly to the electrical industry. The subsequent results showed that the electrical industry (with several developed relationships with buyers and suppliers) also outperforms other industries in terms of importance of flexibility for international markets.

Table 5: Industry Comparisons

Variable	Industry	Mean	SE Mean
Share of Export 99 *	1 – Textile	64,9	4,1
	2 – Metals	71,9	4,1
	3 – Machinery	72,9	4,6
	4 – Electrical	77,4	4,9
	5 – Other	65,4	3,4
Market Share **	1 – Textile	35,1	8,4
	2 – Metals	28,2	6,0
	3 – Machinery	14,6	5,3
	4 – Electrical	28,6	5,8
	5 – Other	20,2	3,3
Innovativeness	1 – Textile	4,7	0,4
	2 – Metals	5,1	0,3
	3 – Machinery	5,2	0,3
	4 – Electrical	5,3	0,3
	5 – Other	4,8	0,2
Flexibility	1 – Textile	6,2	0,2
	2 – Metals	6,2	0,1
	3 – Machinery	5,9	0,2
	4 – Electrical	6,5	0,1
	5 – Other	5,9	0,1
Price of products	1 – Textile	5,8	0,2
	2 – Metals	6,0	0,2
	3 – Machinery	6,0	0,1
	4 – Electrical	5,6	0,2
	5 – Other	5,9	0,1
Capital price	1 – Textile	5,0	0,2
	2 – Metals	4,6	0,3
	3 – Machinery	5,0	0,3
	4 – Electrical	4,5	0,2
	5 – Other	4,5	0,2

Legend: * significance (2-tailed) < 0,1; ** 0,01 < significance (2-tailed) < 0,05;
 *** significance (2-tailed) < 0,01; n1=19, n2=102

The results provide general support for the proposed link between relationships (with suppliers and competitors) and export performance measured by the share of export sales in total sales for several industries. Contrary to the proposed framework, there are no significant influences of relationships with customers on either of the export performance measures. In terms of internal forces, knowledge, creativity of human resources and product quality are more important to firms without relationships with suppliers, customers or competitors. This is another contradiction to the proposed framework. Industry comparison implies differences between textile, electrical and machinery industries in terms of export performance and internal forces as vital sources for firms export marketing success. The general research conclusion is that indications are not sufficient to claim that firms from a small market develop relationships with customers, suppliers or competitors intensively in order to improve their export market performance.

Managerial Implications

By taking the relationship issues into export performance as our point of focus we have established a number of interesting insights into the characteristics of firms who perform on foreign markets and originate from small markets. Some findings from the research show that the links between the relationships and export performance in firms can improve their export performance whereas other show some contradictions. In both cases some tangible outcomes for the marketing orientation and development of export marketing strategy of firms can be given.

Most contradictory and in a way worrying are the research outcomes in relationships with customers. Similarly to relationships with suppliers and competitors (where the proposed link to export performance was supported) we could expect that relationships with customers for firms operating in business to business markets would be at least as much important to export success (Piercy et al., 1997) as other relationships. Even more, firms which do not develop relationships with buyers of any kind do realize the importance of some internal forces, but they might not see them as sources of export development. We could find two reasons for these outcomes – firms are either low-price suppliers on this markets and so compete only with the price of the product or, they do not have enough strategic knowledge to develop and use internal forces for gaining better position on foreign markets (resource – based view), although being aware of their importance. The impression is also that firms do not consider the placement of the products as a part of the firm's inner environment but rather as the "outside world", where no relationship issues are of importance. Somehow this is a common problem of Slovenian manufacturing industry. The underestimation of relationship was proved also by specific industry analysis where only three industries showed significant inclination in relationships with buyers. Therefore this part of analysis leads us to the conclusion that firms are not only not aware of the importance of relationships with buyers and of their

potential influences on their success on foreign markets and they still operate on transactional level. No matter that some marketing actions will be always transactional (Gummesson, 1994), what we stress here is the unawareness of relationships importance in buyer/seller interactions.

A better situation can be found in relationships with competitors and suppliers – the firms which develop relationships with suppliers and competitors gain higher export share (but not the market share), which shows higher level of relationship awareness in firms and its importance to their foreign market success. In both cases larger firms, rather than small ones, developed relationships with competitors and suppliers, which could mean that small firms do not see relationships as a source of export development, either they do not possess enough sources or skills to develop them or, do not know how to use them. Again, the importance of different internal forces was in favour of firms without relationships, which shows the same situation as in relationships with buyers – the lack of strategic development of internal forces to gain better export performance.

Specific industry analysis proved how different the situations in certain industry are. The results in textile industry e.g. showed the existing strategies of Slovenian textile companies to enter foreign markets. In majority of cases subcontracting with low level of partnership is a prevailing method to enter foreign market and the relationships/internal forces analysis results proved this (low level of innovativeness, flexibility, price of product and capital). On the other hand electrical industry shows a progressive level of foreign direct investments, acquisitions, strategic partnerships and other developed methods of entering foreign markets, which include also a high level of innovativeness, flexibility etc. These examples show that the specific industry analysis was necessary for better understanding of the proposed links within the entire manufacturing sector. It also gave some direct explanations of relationship and internal forces contradictions explained above and confirmed the main findings of the research - low awareness level of relationship importance in certain industries, unused internal forces for relationships developments due to the lack of strategic marketing knowledge and relationship marketing issues and, consequently, underestimated influence of relationships on export performance growth in majority of firms. These findings give reasonable support to the fact that the development of relationship marketing and resource-based view in firms should be more intensive, especially in firms from growth-oriented industries.

Future Research

Firstly, the dependent variable – export performance - can be defined with other variables such as export sales ratio growth, export profitability or some non-economic measures such as product-related measures (e.g. new products exported) or market related measures (Katsikeas et al., 2000). By including different (or multiple) measures of export performance in the research, wider scope of export performance contents

could be brought into analysis and the influences that relationships have on single or multiple export performance variable approach could be compared.

Secondly, the analysis of three types of relationships was based on opinion (attitude) measurements in firms. From strategic point of view it would be interesting to obtain the behavioural data of developed relationships among firms or other actors with whom firms interact on their markets. E.g. the analysis of different forms of interactions, such as strategic partnerships, networks etc. would upgrade the meaning of the research presented. If analysed in specific industry, it would give another aspect of relationships importance.

Thirdly, the research show that the understanding of relationship issues in firms is in general at relatively low level. From this point of view the implementation of managerial knowledge should be considered and also internal forces developments (especially knowledge, creativity and human resource flexibility) should be analysed dynamically. By taking these observations into account we could provide better explanations of relationships currently developed and give more detailed implications for their strategic position in export growth.

References

1. Aaby, Nils-Erik and Slater, Stanley F. (1989), "Management Influences on Export Performance: A Review of the Empirical Literature 1978-88," *International Marketing Review*, 6 (Winter), 7-26.
2. Amine, L.S. and Cavusgil, S. (1986), "Export Marketing Strategies in the British Clothing Industry," *European Journal of Marketing*, 20 (7), 21-33.
3. Anderson, James and Narus, James (1984), "A Model of the Distributor's Perspective of Distributor/Manufacturer Working Relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 48 (Fall), 62-74.
4. Anderson, J.C. and Narus, J.A. (1990), "A Model of Distributor Firm and Manufacturer Firm Working Partnerships," *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (January), 42-58.
5. Anderson, J.C. and Hakanson, H. and Johanson, J. (1994), "Dyadic Business Relationships within a Business Network Context", *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (4), 1-15.
6. Bhargava, M. and Dubelaar, C. and Ramaswami, S. (1994), "Reconciling Diverse Measures of Performance: A Conceptual Framework and a Test of Methodology," *Journal of Business Research*, 31, 235-246.
7. Brennan, Ross and Turnbull P.W. (1998), "Adaptations in Buyer-Seller Relationships", in *Network Dynamics in International Marketing*, Naude, P. and Turnbull, P.W., eds. Oxford: Elsevier Science, p.26-41.
8. Cavusgil, S. Tamer and Zou, Shaoming (1994), "Marketing Strategy-Performance Relationship: An Investigation of the Empirical Link in Export Marketing Ventures", *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (January), 1-21.
9. Cavusgil, S.T. (1982), "Some Observations on the Relevance of Critical Variables for Internationalization Stages," in *Export Management: An International Context*, Czinkota, M.R. and Tesar, G., eds. New York: Praeger, p. 276-285.
10. Chetty, Sylvie and Blankenburg Holm, Desiree (2000), "Internationalization of Small to Medium-Sized Manufacturing Firms: A Network Approach," *International Business Review*, 9 (1), 77-93.
11. Emerson, R. (1981), "Social Exchange Theory," in *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, Rosenberg, M. and Turner, R., eds. New York: Basic Books.
12. Eriksson, K. and Johanson, J. and Majgard, A. and Sharma, D.D. (1997), "Experiential Knowledge and Cost in the Internationalization Process," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28 (2), 337-360.

13. Ford David (1998), "Two Decades of Interaction, Relationships and Networks", in *Network Dynamics in International Marketing*, Naude, P. and Turnbull, P.W., eds. Oxford: Elsevier Science, p.3-16.
14. Gummesson, E. (1994), "Making Relationship Marketing Operational," *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Bradford, 5 (5), 5-20.
15. Hunt, Shelby D. (1997), "Competing Through Relationships: Grounding Relationship Marketing in Resource-Advantage Theory," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13, 1-15.
16. Hakanson H. (ed.) (1982), "International Marketing and Purchasing of Industrial Goods: An Interaction Approach", Chichester: John Wiley.
17. Hakanson H. and Snehota I. (1992/97), "Analyzing Business Relationships," in *Understanding Business Markets*, Ford D., ed. London: Dryden Press, p.151-176.
18. Halinen Aino (1998), "Time and Temporality in Research Design: A Review of Buyer-Seller Relationship Models", in *Network Dynamics in International Marketing*, Naude P. and Turnbull, P.W., eds. Oxford: Elsevier Science, p.112-139.
19. Johanson, J. and Mattsson, L.G. (1988/1997), "Internationalization in Industrial Systems – A Network Approach", in *Understanding Business Markets*, Ford D., ed. London: Dryden Press, p.194-214.
20. Johanson, J. and Vahlne, J. (1977), "The Internationalization Process of the Firm: A Model of Knowledge Development and Increasing Foreign Commitments," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 8, 23-32.
21. Katsikeas, Constantine S. and Leonidou, Leonidas, C. and Morgan, Niel A. (2000), "Firm-Level Export Performance Assessment: Review, Evaluation and Development," *Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (4), 493-511.
22. Kirpalani, V. H. and Belcome, D. (1987), "International Marketing Success: On Conducting More Relevant Research," in *Managing Entry and Expansion: An International Context*, Rosson, P.J and Reid, S.D., eds. New York: Praeger.
23. Lee, Dong-Jin (1998), "Developing International Strategic Alliances between Exporters and Importers: The Case of Australian Exporters," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 15 (4), 335-348.
24. Leonidu, L.C. and Kaleka, A.A. (1998), "Behavioural Aspects of International Buyer-Seller Relationships: Their Association with Export Involvement," *International Marketing Review*, 15 (5), 373-397.

25. Morgan, Robert and Katsikeas, Constantine S. (1998), "Exporting Problems of Industrial Manufacturers", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 27 (2), 161-176.
26. Morgan, Robert and Hunt, Shelby (1994), "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (July), 20-38.
27. Morgan, Robert and Hunt, Shelby (1999), "Relationship-Based Competitive Advantage: The Role of Relationship Marketing in Marketing Strategy," *Journal of Business Research*, 46, 281-290.
28. Piercy, Nigel F. and Kaleka, Anna and Katsikeas, Constantine S. (1998), "Sources of Competitive Advantage in High Performing Exporting Companies", *Journal of World Business*, 33 (4), 378-393.
29. Piercy, Nigel F. and Katsikeas, Constantine S. and Cravens, David W. (1997), "Examining the Role of Buyer-Seller Relationships in Export Performance," *Journal of World Business*, 32 (1), 73-86.
30. Shoham, Aviv (1998), "Export Performance: A Conceptualization and Empirical Assessment," *Journal of International Marketing*, 6 (3), 12-36.
31. Styles, Chris and Ambler, Tim (1994), "Successful Export Practice: The UK Experience," *International Marketing Review*, 11 (6), 23-47.
32. Styles, Chris and Ambler, Tim (2000), "The Impact of Relationship Variables on Export Performance: An Empirical Investigation in Australia and the UK," *Australian Journal of Management*, 25 (3), 261 – 281.
33. Tookey, D.A. (1964), "Factors Associated with Success in Exporting," *Journal of Management Studies*, 1 (March), 48-64.