



Designing the Model of International Networking Capability

Mohamad Reza Hallaj Yosefi¹

Samad Aali²

Naser Sanoubar³

Hakame Niki Esfahlan⁴

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to develop the model of international networking. Based on purpose, this is a basic research. This study used a systematic review method to gather data for identifying, collecting and analyzing the different dimensions and components and the propositions related to international networking. The statistical population is all the research in the area of international networking, which covered by the Scopus database in the period of "open start date (not specified the start date) until the end of January 2021". The search date in this database is January 30, 2021. This research used keywords related to international networking terms in the "Title" and in the subject area of "Business, Management, and Accounting" and document type, limited to "Article" to identify the research on international networking. This search yielded 112 articles. In the following step, after reviewing the abstract of the above-mentioned articles and, applying other indicators, 47 articles remained. This research coded the components and dimensions of international networking in these articles, and classified them into three categories of antecedents, processes and consequences, and, finally, identified the gaps of the previous research on the concept of international

Received: 18/12/2020 Accepted: 18/04/2021

^{1,2} Department of Management, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

² Corresponding Author: samad.aali@iaut.ac.ir.com

³ Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

⁴ Department of Management, Hadishahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hadishahr, Iran

networking as well as provided research suggestions for future researchers.

Keywords *International Networking, Networking, Systematic Review*

Introduction

Following the increase in competition, firms seek to expand their participation in the global economy to survive, compete, share risk and increase income. Taken the financial resources, market knowledge, and limited skills of firms into account, there is further evidence that networking with other actors in foreign markets promote international participation. This provides financial, information and marketing support, which is necessary for easier and faster access to international markets, especially, for those firms that have relations with a few countries (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2020). Firms in order to be faster in responding to customers and increasing changes in the market and consumer needs, more flexibility in Organizations and production need to network (Tayyaran et al., 2019). From the perspective of dynamic capabilities, internal resources and foreign business networks should be used for the success of the company (Peyvasteh Feridooni et al., 2019). Up to now, much research has been conducted on networking but there is still much potential to acquire knowledge in this area (Forkmann et al., 2018). Similarly, the objective of this research is to make a contribution to the research on international networking. The conducted research in the area of networking has, so far, focused more on the issue of individual and organizational networking and less on international networking issues. This research reviewed the articles published in the Scopus database to provide a systematic review of the studies conducted. And at the end, the research addresses the gaps and develops research suggestions for further research to fill these gaps.

Previous research on international networking is few, heterogeneous, and often non-systematic. The studies in this area are not correlated. Despite the few findings, the researchers have not yet attempted to examine the antecedents, processes, and consequences of international networking. Up to now, the conducted studies, due to the interdisciplinary nature of international networking, have used several perspectives in this area. Thus, taking the large number of articles on international networking into account, it is necessary to develop integrated conceptual models and comprehensive theoretical frameworks. Also, previous research papers highlighted the importance of an overview of the research on international networking (Kohtamäki et al., 2018). The principal purpose of this research is to examine these problems in the international networking literature and the importance of developing a comprehensive framework.

Literature Review

Following internationalization orientation, firms across the world are, one after the other, expanding their markets abroad or moving their production bases to the markets of other countries. The internationalization of firms is an inevitable process. Taking the nature of the current market into account, international firms face more problems than the domestic situation (including the liability of foreignness and newness, especially in the high-tech manufacturing industries). Firms will not be capable of surviving in the long run if they do not take into account the risks and opportunities of international or global competition (Peng & Lin, 2019). The internationalization of firms can be examined from different theoretical perspectives. It has been developed in different historical periods. During the 1970s, the Uppsala model was introduced to describe the gradual internationalization of firms. At that time, this model was used for firms that

were developing gradually due to lack of resources. The network model of internationalization was introduced in the 1980s. This model was used by firms that utilized different networks to facilitate their international activities. According to the network model of entrepreneurship and regional development, a firm can compensate for its limited resources by developing its position within the existing network (e.g. creating a cluster of networks), or build new network relationships (Leppäaho & Pajunen, 2018). The impact of networks on internationalization is a rather important issue in the literature (Leite et al., 2016). Various definitions of internationalization have been proposed in the international trade literature. In the international sense, networking defines as the process by which firms create, develop and coordinate various network relationships in foreign markets. International networking theory argues that internationalization is not an individual endeavor. Resources and experiential knowledge that are useful for slow and gradual internationalization of firms can be acquired by achieving optimal network performance in foreign markets. In the process of internationalization, any firm can create a network with customers, competitors, suppliers, distributors, agents, consultants, and also with other government agencies. Networking with relevant partners supports the firms to be capable of overcoming international commitments and shrinkage limitation by accessing resources in each relationship, which accelerates their internationalization (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2020). In his research, Dzikowski (2018), with the aim of investigating scientific research on the phenomena of born-global firms, has, based on bibliometric information, analyzed 453 scientific articles on born-global firms, which were listed in Thompson Reuters Science Database for the period 1994-2016. In their research, Garcia- Lillo et al. (2017) have conducted the bibliometric analysis of 124 articles in the areas of international and entrepreneurial management,

born-global firms and new international ventures firms. In their investigation, Knight and Liesch (2016) have examined the evolution of internationalization research in the course of time. De Clercq et al. (2012), in their study, have provided an overview of the international entrepreneurship literature and specified learning issues and knowledge components as principal components of the antecedents, processes, and early consequences of internationalization. To organize their study, they categorized five types of knowledge acquisition (experiential learning, vicarious learning, search, grafting, and congenital learning). Rialp et al. (2005) have examined 38 investigations between 1993 and 2003 on international new ventures firms and global start-ups.

Method

Based on the conceptual propositions and definitions of international networking in the conducted investigations, this research presents the model of international networking. Therefore, based on purpose, this is a basic research. The main tool for data collection in this research is the library research method. This research used the systematic review method to search the identified components of the concept of international networking in the body of literature. To conduct a systematic review, this research used the seven-step method of Wright et al. (2007). Figure 1 presents the steps of conducting the research.

Findings

Step 1 - Formulating the Research Question

In accordance with the subject of this research, the research question is: What is the model of international networking?

Step 2 - Developing the Protocol

Once the necessity of a systematic review has been understood and the objectives have been determined, the search was conducted in the "Scopus" database. This database has a fairly good coverage of reputable magazines in the long run. Therefore, the statistical population of this study is all research in the area of international networking, which are covered by the Scopus database in the period of "open start date (not specified the start date) until the end of January 2021".

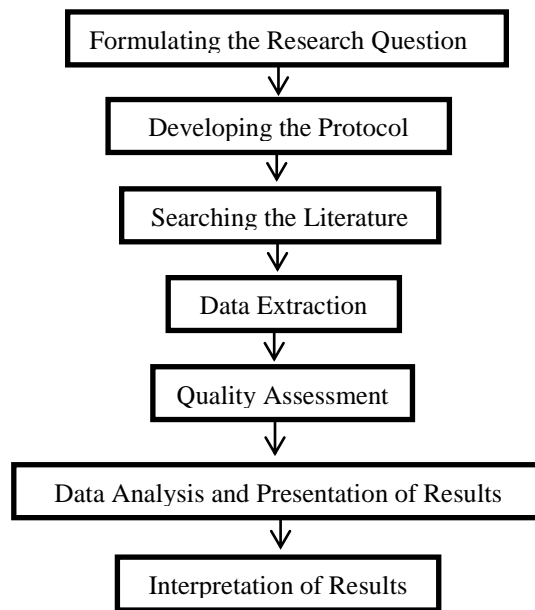


Figure 1. Steps of systematic review (Wright et al., 2007)

This research, to identify the research on international networking, used the keywords "network" and "networking" in the "Title, Abstract and Keywords", and used the "OR" relational operator between those two words and "AND" operator and the word "international" and with an open start date (not specified the start date) until the end of January 2021 in the subject area

of "Business, Management and Accounting" and the type of document, limited to "Article" and searched the source type limited to "publications", source title and keywords and countries "all items" and language limited to "English". Therefore, the entry criteria are the mentioned items. Exclusion criteria are: subject area other than "Business, Management, and Accounting" and type of document other than "Article", source type other than "Publications", source title and keywords and countries "other than all items" and "Non-English" language. It is necessary to point out that the time period of this research is the second half of 2020 and the search for articles in the Scopus database was conducted on January 30, 2021.

Step 3 - Searching the Literature

After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, this search yielded 112 articles. By reviewing the abstract of the above-mentioned (112) articles the non-relevant ones were excluded in the next phase. As a consequence, 47 articles remained. Finally, the abstracts were reviewed three times to ensure that all non-relevant articles were excluded and the mentioned documents were included in the in-text study. Since only the abstracts of articles are covered by the Scopus database, so we refer to the site of those journals to study the full text of the articles.

Step 4 - Data Extraction

In this step, the data gathered from the previous step were categorized in a table which includes data citation: title, first and last name of the authors, year of publication, method and objective of research, data of main findings, results and findings of the research.

Step 5 - Quality Assessment

Once the articles have been reviewed to match the study criteria, the methodological quality of the studies was assessed in the next step. The purpose of this step was to discard articles owing to a lack of reliability of their findings. To this end, the tool "Critical Appraisal Skills" was used. This tool includes ten questions as follows: 1- objectives of research, 2- logic in research methodology, 3- design of research, 4- method of sampling, 5- collecting the data, 6- generalizability of results, 7- observe ethical considerations, 8- accuracy of data analysis, 9- explicit expression of findings and 10- value of research. Using this tool, the researcher assigned a score of zero to 5 to each question and excluded any research with a total score of less than 30 (Finfgeld, 2003). In this research, the minimum score that articles have received was 32 and the maximum was 48. All articles selected in step "C" have received a score of more than 30, so none of the 47 articles were excluded.

Step 6 - Data Analysis and Presentation of Results (Findings)**Demographic Description**

47 articles were published in the time period of 1999 to 2021, of which 1 article (0.02) was published in 2021 and 6 articles (0.13) were published in 2020, 5 articles (0.10) in 2019 and 2 articles (0.04) in 2018 and 3 articles (0.06) in 2017. This indicates the increasing trend of publishing articles in the area of international networking in last few years. Of course, it should be noted that the less number of articles in 2021 is due to the fact that only the first month of the year is considered in this study. "International Entrepreneurship" (with 4 articles) is the journal with the most articles. "Xiao, Lew and Park" are the authors who have published the most articles in the area of international networking.

Coding Process

This research reviewed the full text of the documents, especially the introduction, theoretical foundations, discussion and conclusion to identify the dimensions of international networking or propositions that help to clarify its meaning. Then, to better analyze and codify the process, the definitions and conceptual propositions about international networking were exported to a Word file. During the coding process- i.e. text mining, interpretation, and integration- we sought to identify themes with significant data on international networking. Once all the data have been pre-coded and collected, the analysis is organized into themes at a larger level than the code. At this step, the codes are parsed and focus is on how the various codes are combined to form the base theme. It is obvious that a set of codes may not be included in any theme or some codes may be excluded. We re-assess and refine the themes further to make them specific, distinguish, and non-repetitive as well as large enough to include the set of ideas presented in some sections of the text. This reduces the data to a set of important, acceptable, and controllable themes that represent a summary of the original text. Decisions on how to group themes are based on content and, if necessary, on theoretical foundations (Arabyon et al., 2020). The final step begins when the researcher has reached to the satisfactory content. In this case, the proposed themes for data analysis can be defined and modified and the data can be analyzed based on them. Since, this research integrated and created the concepts based on the semantic similarities between the codes, so it used "Kappa" coefficient to maintain the quality of the study and to measure the reliability of the designed model. Thereby, another professor of management, without knowing how to integrate the codes and concepts created by the researchers, has categorized the codes into concepts. The concepts developed by the researchers are, then, compared with the concepts

provided by this person, and finally, according to the number of similar concepts created and different concepts created, the "kappa" coefficient is calculated. Researchers have developed 16 and other expert 15 concepts, of which 14 are common concepts, as shown in Table 1. As indicated in the following, the value of the Kappa coefficient is calculated to be 0.8816, which is at a high agreement level according to Table 2 (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Table 1.

Research Reliability

| | | Researchers' opinions | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|------|
| | | Yes | No | No |
| Another experts' opinions | Yes | A=14 | B=1 | 15 |
| | No | C=2 | D=0 | 2 |
| | Sum | 16 | 1 | N=17 |

$$\text{Agreements observed} = \frac{A+B}{N} = \frac{14+1}{17} = 0.8823$$

Table 2.

Kappa Index Status (Landis and Koch, 1977)

| Kappa Index | < 0.00 | 0.00-0.20 | 0.21-0.40 | 0.41-0.60 | 0.61-0.80 | 0.81-1.00 |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Strength of Agreement | Poor | Slight | Fair | Moderate | Substantia | Almost Perfect |

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Chance agreements} &= \frac{A+B}{N} \times \frac{A+C}{N} \times \frac{C+D}{N} \times \frac{B+D}{N} \\ &= \frac{14+1}{17} \times \frac{14+2}{17} \times \frac{2+0}{17} \times \frac{1+0}{17} = 0.0057 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Kappa Index} &= \frac{\text{Agreements observed} - \text{Chance agreements}}{1 - \text{Chance agreements}} \\ &= \frac{0/8823 - 0/0057}{1 - 0/0057} = 0/8816 \end{aligned}$$

Figure 2 displays the proposed framework of this research. As demonstrated, the model of international networking consists of three main categories of antecedents, processes and consequences. The main category of antecedents comprises of six secondary categories, including market, resources, competition, importance of learning, need to overcoming liabilities, and knowledge. The main category of processes comprises of three secondary categories, which include creation of international network, international network penetration, and international network integration. The main category of consequences comprises of eight secondary categories, including value, product, performance, innovation, promote the firm capabilities, entrepreneurship and capability. Each secondary category comprises of a number of concepts.

Step 7 - Interpretation of Results

Figure 2 displays the proposed framework of this research, which is based on the codes obtained from the documents on international networking. We will explain each of the components of the model as follows:

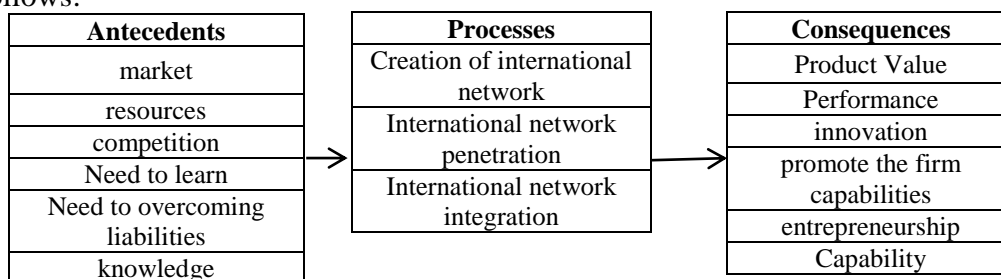


Figure 2. International networking model

Figure 3 displays the antecedents of International networking. Following their interactions, firms obtain such benefits as resources, knowledge and legitimacy. Emerging firms, due to their relatively Low reputation, often have little legitimacy in their industry and are with relatively limited resources. One method that emerging firms can use for addressing these shortcomings and facilitate the growth and performance of new ventures is to create and use networking capabilities. Networking capability means abilities to initiate, maintain and utilize relationships with other network partners (Bai et al., 2016; Laurell et al., 2017; Mort & Weerawardena, 2006). To go international, firms use networks to access social capital, and to overcome the constraints of resource / capability and barriers that small scale create (Lin et al., 2020; Zardini & Cecilia, 2013).

Figure 3. Antecedents of international networking

| Secondary categories | Concept |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| market | Market orientation |
| | Need to develop the market |
| | Market goals |
| | Market sharing |
| resources | Requires resource dynamics |
| | Resource -based view |
| | Resource constraints |
| | Need to access resources |
| | Need to use social networks |
| | Resource sharing |
| | Acquisition resources |
| | Resource optimization |
| competition | Complete resources |
| | Competitiveness |
| | Competitive Advantage |

DESIGNING THE MODEL OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Sustainable advantage |
| Need to learn | Co- Learning |
| | Organizational Learning |
| Need to overcoming liabilities | Foreignness |
| | Newness |
| | small scale |
| knowledge | Use of external knowledge of partners |
| | Information |
| | Knowledge-based perspective |
| | Market knowledge |
| | Knowledge of competitors |
| | Customer knowledge |
| | Knowledge co-creation |

Firms often lack production capabilities and marketing channels and are limited to smaller markets. These weaknesses make firms (especially in emerging economies) need networking to innovate and develop (Lin et al., 2020). Networking increases liabilities between network partners, which in turn help them to pursue opportunities across borders, enabling them to overcome their liabilities and compete in foreign markets successfully through developing the related networks and strengthening their position in networks (Karami & Tang., 2019). According to the resource-based view, heterogeneous resources and capabilities can be the source of competitive advantage. Resources are tangible or intangible assets, including fixed assets, brands, equipment, intellectual property, human capital, and networks (Jeong et al., 2019; Coviello & Cox, 2006; Ogasavara et al, 2016). By diversifying their operations, firms are likely to succeed in expanding their markets internationally and improving their international performance (Lin et al., 2020). Experiential learning refers to the process of transforming firm experiences into applied knowledge (particularly through reflections upon

both local and international experiences). Experiential learning enables firms to learn from their own experiences, as well as the experiences from suppliers, customers and competitors in international markets. This facilitates their adaptation to the new environment. Therefore, experiential learning can promote small and medium-sized enterprises' exploitation of international opportunities and promote their international performance (Karami & Tang., 2019; Ogasavara et al, 2016). The internationalization of firms is grounded on this basic assumption that they face changes during internationalization in international markets and do not have enough knowledge to solve problems in the process of internationalization (Freund et al., 2020; Hughes et al, 2019; Jin & Jung, 2016; Kasornbua & Phimolsathien, 2017; Mort & Weerawardena, 2006; Peng & Lin, 2019). The concept of dynamic internationalization capacity is defined as a firm's ability to enhance, combine, or reconfigure extant various resource bundles and capabilities to address rapidly changing global environments. Networking in international marketing is the dynamic internationalization capability of organizations to realize sustainable competitive advantage. This requires organizations to continuously consolidate foreign relations with partners, suppliers, and customers, and hence adapt their resources and routines, for which they are heavily dependent on foreign knowledge (Peng & Lin, 2019). Moreover, smaller firms are often attracted to international networks because of participatory opportunities (Lin et al., 2020). To produce and test new technology, international networking enables scientific collaboration and capacity building and accelerates the transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies. A strong network makes access to the global market possible, thus, multinational cooperation is essential for technological competition. Global networks maximize participation in science, technology and innovation and expand knowledge to affect sustainable development across

the world. To transfer technology successfully, the first and most important requirement is to access new markets using local wisdom because adaptation to local conditions can minimize undesirable outcomes (Berawi et al., 2016). Firms need to strengthen their contextual intelligence. Contextual intelligence is the firms' ability to understand the limitations of their own knowledge and to adapt this knowledge to foreign markets (Karami and Tong, 2019). Social networks are expanding as one of the main elements of internationalization. Social media can help a firm create a good reputation and thus take advantage of international opportunities. According to the results, social networks are important for the entrepreneurial business and their development and maintenance (Leite et al., 2016; Barczyk & Duncan, 2012; Crowne et al., 2015; Felzensztein & Gimmon, 2009; Mort & Weerawardena, 2006; Nowiński & Rialp, 2016; Sasi & Arenius, 2008). Moreover, collaborative relationships provide opportunities for flexible and fast achievement of new capabilities by increasing the resources and skills of other parties (Berawi et al., 2016). Since it is dynamic, trust and commitment gained in networks can create new business opportunities. Relationships are sources of political and business learning; therefore, it is very important for entrepreneurs and firms to have knowledge about internationalization (Leite et al., 2016). Resource dynamics as a necessity made the firms to build international networking (Laurell et al., 2017; Coviello & Cox, 2006). Training facilitates international networking and promotes exports (Mahmoodi Mehrizi & Schøtt, 2014). Orientation to risks and networking with domestic and international partners increases the likelihood of the firm to become a micro-multinational corporation (Dimitratos et al., 2014). According to the evidence, international trade relations are crucial to the competitiveness of firms and their long-term success. In fact, many researchers believe that firms' competitiveness depends not only on

themselves but also on their ability to build and maintain high quality business relationships (Johnston et al., 1999). The internationalization of firms is an inevitable process. Given the nature of the current market, the problems faced by international firms are more acute than the domestic situation (including liability of foreignness and newness, especially in the manufacturing and high-tech industries). Firms will not be capable of surviving in the long run if they do not take into account the risks and opportunities of international or global competition (Peng & Lin, 2019; Laurell et al., 2017).

Figure 4 displays the processes of international networking. Networking affects the process of internationalization of firms through three sequential levels, including "networking", "network penetration" and "network integration". Firms, in the first case, establish networks in the international market (networking) and then develop the networks created (network penetration) and finally coordinate the various networks created in different countries (network integration). Andersson and Mattson (2006) showed that these levels can increase the internationalization of the firm. They argued that creating the network promotes network penetration and also increases network integration and subsequently affect the internationalization of firms. This sequential view, apparently, shows that all levels are equally important because each affect the other to create international networks. Thereby, they have a significant impact on the process of internationalization of firms (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2020).

Figure 4. Processes of international networking

| Secondary categories | Concept |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Creation of international network | Creating external liabilities through internal stimuli |
| | Creating external liabilities through external stimuli |
| | Identify the relevant network |

DESIGNING THE MODEL OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Establishment of various network relations in international markets |
| International network | Recreate resources and capabilities |
| penetration | Development of various network relations in international markets |
| International network | Coordination of various network relations in international markets |
| integration | |

The rich body of literature on internationalization explains how firms transfer from the outside into inside of international networks and join networks by developing relationships and increasing resource liabilities over time. To strengthen internationalization, the process of transfer from outside the network into inside of it consists of four related steps, including, (1) creating external liabilities through internal/external stimuli; (2) identify the relevant network; (3) re-building resources and capabilities; and (4) achievement, management, and utilization of identified opportunities in the new network. In the international sense, networking defines as the process by which firms create, develop and coordinate various network relationships in foreign markets (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2020; Kasornbua & Phimolsathien, 2017).

Figure 5 displays the consequences of international networking. Networking with domestic and international partners is the organizational variable that has attracted the most attention in the emerging literature on multinational corporations (Dimitratos et al., 2014). For the dynamic capabilities, firms should have superior flexibility and adaptability to deal with a dynamic and uncertain environment they face and develop their capabilities needed to do so by identifying the best practices (Peng & Lin, 2019). Acquiring knowledge supports firms to deal with uncertain and changing market conditions and to expand internationally. Both theories of the process of internationalization and international new ventures research have highlighted the role of learning and knowledge accumulation in the

internationalization of firms. Firms can formally gather information on foreign markets and actively combine the knowledge of individuals, companies, or wider networks to update their knowledge (Lin et al., 2020; Stoian et al., 2017; Tolstoy, 2010). The international networking by firms may optimize the sharing resource and market further (Karami and Tang, 2019). Another consequence of international networking is the creation and exploitation of social capital and access to external resources and the identification and exploitation of new opportunities (Lin et al., 2020). International networking, due to sharing the different experiences in network relations, can develop new markets, knowledge, customers, skills and processes, and thus support future performance and decision making (Peng & Lin, 2019). Innovation is essential for technology development. This is produced everywhere and is enriched with local wisdom to solve problems in certain areas to increase the human's well-being. Thus, technology development becomes a dynamic system of relationships between different stakeholders, and this requires mutual cooperation and collaboration. Technology partnerships become a network model formed by stakeholders that have common knowledge, activities and resources, and create future strategic options and solutions of alternative, efficient, effective and sustainable product. It is the results obtained from technology, inventors, and researchers in various laboratories and firms that translate the ideas into prototypes, which can then be transformed into value-added products or projects to address different needs

and goals (Berawi et al., 2016; Fang & Pigneur, 2010; Freund et al., 2020; Kollmann & Christofor, 2014; Musteen et al, 2014; Patel et al, 2014; Perks & Jeffery, 2006).

Figure 5. Consequences of international networking

| Secondary categories | Concept |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Value | Create value |
| | value co-creation |
| Product | New product development |
| | Product Reconfiguration |
| | Product level upgrades |
| Performance | Facilitate the cooperation of firms at the international level |
| | Strategic performance |
| | International performance |
| | Financial performance |
| innovation | Facilitate innovation |
| | Sustainable innovation |
| | Open innovation |
| | Joint innovation |
| promote the firm capabilities | Strengthening the contextual intelligence of firm managers |
| | Increase adaptive capability |
| | Creating mutual commitment in relationships |
| | Becoming a small multinational corporation |
| | Responding to an uncertain and changing market position |
| entrepreneurship | Participatory scale opportunities |
| | entrepreneurial orientation |
| | Discover opportunities |
| | Take advantage of the opportunity |
| Capability | Market opportunities |
| | Dynamic |
| | manufacturing |
| | Marketing |
| | Networking |

Leaders' global mind-set and international entrepreneurial orientations have a direct impact on firm's international networking and knowledge acquisition activities (Lin et al., 2020). A positive relationship there is between international networking relationships, dynamic internationalization capabilities, and international performance (Peng & Lin, 2019). According to the previous research, networking with local partners increases

international performance during the internationalization process (Chang & Wang, 2008; Karami and Tang, 2019; Crowne et al., 2015; Hughes et al, 2019; Jin & Jung, 2016; Kenny & Fahy, 2011; Mort & Weerawardena, 2006; Stoian et al., 2017; Van Aduard de Macedo-Soares, 2010; Ogasavara et al, 2016). International networking makes possible the positive performance in international markets and the external performance of learning and awareness by direct the firm's position in the area of internationalization (Williams et al., 2020). The networking perspective supports the integration of resource sharing through relationships and social interaction with domestic organizations and host countries to promote growth in international markets. Entrepreneurial firms that seek and take advantage of learning opportunities through networks are experiencing significant international growth. Firms that actively acquire knowledge from relationships with other firms and disseminate this knowledge in their organizations are eligible to participate in successful relationships (Dimitratos et al., 2014; Mainela & Puhakka, 2011; Mort & Weerawardena, 2006; Nowiński & Rialp, 2016; Roolah, 2006; Schreier et al., 2020; Van Aduard de Macedo-Soares & Gouvêa de Mendonça, 2010). Absorption capacity positively modulates the relationship between international networking relationships and international performance. Most importantly, these findings suggest that firms should regard vigilance as a factor that affect competitive in relation to the complementary effect of international performance (Peng & Lin, 2019; Freund et al., 2020). Networking with other successful firms in or outside the home country is another consequence that supports firms to address different commitments. Networking increases the value of extant objectives of firms and translates them into valuable resources. This allows them to develop their extant resources further and activate the dissemination of necessary information and knowledge to achieve the firms' objectives (Karami and

Tang, 2019). International networking creates valuable information channels that can make decisions more informed and reduce uncertainty (Lin et al., 2020). Mutual commitment in relationships leads to increased productivity and competitiveness through improvement processes and thus leads to access to more resources and markets (Berawi et al., 2016). The ability of organizations to achieve competitive advantage depends on their adaptive capabilities (Iranban., 2019).

Discussion and Conclusion

The review of research articles indicates that despite the increasing trend of research in the area of international networking, a concise concept is not agreed upon by researchers. Since the existence of a concise concept and structure helps to promote the theorization and generalizability of the findings, the purpose of this research is to use the systematic review method for identifying important and relevant articles related to international networking and analyzing components of definitions or propositions related to international networking. This research used the systematic literature review method to summarize, combine, and present worldwide empirical findings of 47 empirical studies on the antecedents, processes, and consequences of international networking. In accordance with the developed framework, we present the topic of future research with a precise and comprehensive classification. Moreover, we highlighted the least used theories/perspectives as well as contextual gaps due to the contextual sensitivity of the area. Following explains some of the uses that this research may have for policymakers. Governments can support firms to access international networks. Specifically, the government should constantly support small and medium-sized enterprises to participate in international trade fairs and exhibitions. These exhibitions may be valuable in supporting

firms to identify main network audiences who may not only be potential customers but also potential investors or suppliers. Governments can take measures to train managers to enter international markets and to acquire the necessary skills for identifying, coordinating, and developing international networks. Governments can support firms to overcome the obstacles that they are faced to enter into international markets. Governments should encourage firms to enjoy the benefits of internationalization and foreign markets. As mentioned, one of the tools for firms to go international is the use of social media networks. Due to political reasons, some governments restrict access to these networks in their own country. It seems often unnecessary to impose these restrictions. To facilitate the international networking of firms, it is therefore suggested that governments review their laws in this area. Both governments and private investors, which fund technology development and transfer, make a significant contribution by supporting development strategies and policies as well as providing adequate incentives in the market. As mentioned, training can have a significant impact on the success of international networking by firms. Thus, firms that has aim to enter the international market should receive the necessary training in this regard and the government allows people who their academic degree as well as field of study is related to business in order to work in the international business. Governments and universities can adopt public policies and greater investment to strengthen entrepreneurship and firms' entry into international networking. The following are the managerial uses of this research. Managers of firms that currently operate only in their own domestic markets should strive to enter into the international markets to take advantage of international markets. One of the reasons why companies do not enter into the international markets is the lack of a global mind-set of the firms' managers. Global mind-set is a cognitive structure characterized by

openness to multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local levels, and cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across different environments. The global mind-set enables an individual to be aware of the needs of the market and to build a cognitive bridge between these needs and the capabilities and experiences of the global market of one's own firm (Lin et al., 2020). Therefore, it is suggested that firm's managers change their mind-set in this area and enter into international markets. Firms with the aim of entering into international markets should try to enter markets of countries with which their institutional logic is the same and the institutional distance is not large. For example, firms should enter markets of neighboring countries, with which they usually have cultural, economic and political similarities. Firm executives need to be vigilant in identifying new networks in both domestic and foreign markets to expand the achievement of important information and other resource complementarities. It would be useful for firm managers to realize their benefits effectively and to build existing network relationships in domestic and foreign markets by establishing regular interactions with their colleagues.

References

- Ahimbisibwe, Godwin Mwesigye, Ntayi, Joseph Mpeera, Ngoma, Muhammed, Bakunda, Geoffrey, Kabagambe, Levi Bategeka (2020). The internationalization of small to medium-sized enterprises: do all levels in international networking matter?, *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 27 (5), 817-837. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-09-2019-0313>.
- Arabyon, Abolghasem, Mobini Dehkordi, Ali, Selajgeh, Niloufar (2020), The concept of entrepreneurial action, *Journal of entrepreneurship development*, 12(2), 260-241. 10.22059/jed.2019.270544.652814.
- Bai, Wensong, Holmström, Lind, Christine, Johanson, Martin (2016). The performance of international returnee ventures: the role of networking capability and the usefulness of international business knowledge,

- Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, 28 (9-10), 657-680. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2016.1234003>.
- Bai, Wensong, Johanson, Martin (2018). International opportunity networks, *Industrial marketing management*, 70, 167-179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.07.004>.
- Barczyk, Casimir C., Duncan, Doris G. (2012). Social networking media: An approach for the teaching of international business, *Journal of teaching in international business*, 23 (2), 98-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2012.718703>.
- Berawi, Mohammed Ali, Suwartha, Nyoman, Kusri, Eny, Kartohardjono, Sutrasno, Suryanegara, Muhammad, Putra, Nandy, Zagloel, Yuri M. (2016). Accelerating technology development: Engaging stakeholders and international networking, *International journal of technology*, 7 (7), 1128-1131. <https://doi.org/10.14716/ijtech.v7i7.7162>.
- Chang, Hsin-Hsin, Wang, I. Chen (2008). The relationship between network structure and international channel performance: A moderating effect of E-business activity, *Service industries journal*, 28 (2), 255-274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060701843595>.
- Coviello, Nicole, Cox, Martin (2006). The resource dynamics of international new venture networks, *Journal of international entrepreneurship*, 4 (2-3), 113-132. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-007-0004-4>.
- Crowne, K.A., Goeke, R.J., Shoemaker, M. (2015). Enhancing international assignees' performance with online social networks, *Journal of global mobility*, 3 (4), 397-417. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-09-2014-0045>.
- De Clercq, D., Sapienza, H. J., Yavuz, R. I., & Zhou, L. (2012). Learning and knowledge in early internationalization research: Past accomplishments and future directions. *Journal of business venturing*, 27(1), 143-165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2011.09.003>.
- Dimitratos, Pavlos, Amorós, José Ernesto, Soledad Etchebarne, María, Felzensztein, Christian (2014). Micro-multinational or not? International entrepreneurship, networking and learning effects, *Journal of business research*, 67 (5), 908-915. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.07.010>
- Dzikowski, P. (2018). A bibliometric analysis of born global firms. *Journal of business research*, 85, 281-294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.054>.
- Fang, Gang, Pigneur, Yves (2010). The configuration and performance of international innovation networks: some evidence from the Chinese software

- industry, *International journal of learning and intellectual capital*, 7 (2), 167-187. DOI: 10.1504/IJLIC.2010.030796.
- Felzensztein, Christian, Gimmon, Eli (2009). Social networks and marketing cooperation in entrepreneurial clusters: An international comparative study, *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 7 (4), 281-291. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-009-0041-2>.
- Finfgeld, D. L. (2003), *Metasynthesis: The State of the Art—So Far*, *Qualitative health research*, 13(7), 893–904. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732303253462>.
- Forkmann Sebastian, Henneberg, Stephan C., Mitrega, Maciej (2018). Capabilities in business relationships and networks: Research recommendations and directions, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 74, 4-26.
- Freund, David, Lee, Robert, Tüselmann, Heinz, Cao, Qi (2020). International high-tech SMEs innovative foreign knowledge inflows: effects of host country weak network ties and absorptive capacity. *Multinational business review*, 28 (3), 333-354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.07.007>.
- Garcia-Lillo, F., Claver-Cortés, E., Úbeda-García, M., & Marco-Lajara, B. (2017). Exploring the intellectual structure of research on “born globals” and INVs: A literature review using bibliometric methods. *Journal of international entrepreneurship*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-017-0213-4>.
- Hughes, Mathew, Cesingerb, Beate, Cheng, Cheng- Feng, Schuesslerd, Felix, Krause, Sascha (2019). A configurational analysis of network and knowledge variables explaining Born Globals' and late internationalizing SMEs' international performance, *Industrial marketing management*, 80, 172-187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.12.001>.
- Iranban, S. (2019). The effect of supply chain integration on operational efficiency and value creation. *Journal of system management*, 5(2), 107-132.
- Jeong, So Won, Ellie Jin, Byounggho, Jung, Sojin (2019). The temporal effects of social and business networks on international performance of South Korean SMEs, *Asia pacific journal of marketing and logistics*, 31 (4), 1042-1057. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.10.014>.
- Jin, Byounggho, Jung, Sojin, (2016). Toward a deeper understanding of the roles of personal and business networks and market knowledge in SMEs' international performance, *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 23 (3), 812-830. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-08-2015-0104>.
- Johnston, Wesley, ELewin, Jeffrey, ESpekman, Robert (1999). International industrial marketing interactions: Dyadic and network perspectives, *Journal*

- of business research, 46 (3), 259-271. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(98\)00036-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(98)00036-8).
- Karami, Masoud, Tang Jintong (2019). Entrepreneurial orientation and SME international performance: The mediating role of networking capability and experiential learning, *International small business journal: Researching entrepreneurship*, 37 (2), 105-124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242618807275>.
- Kasornbua, Thichakorn, Phimolsathien, Thepparat (2017). International networking capability on international marketing performance of Thai garment entrepreneur in CLMV market, *International journal of applied business and economic research*, 15 (21), 105-114.
- Kenny, Breda, Fahy, John (2011). Network resources and international performance of high tech SMEs, *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 18 (3), 529-555. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14626001111155691>.
- Knight, G. A., & Liesch, P. W. (2016). Internationalization: From incremental to born global. *Journal of world business*, 51(1), 93–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2015.08.011>.
- Kohtamäki, Marko, Rabetino, Rodrigo, Möller, Kristian (2018). Alliance capabilities: A systematic review and future research directions, *Industrial marketing management*, 68, 188–201.
- Kollmann, Tobias, Christofor, Julia (2014). International entrepreneurship in the network economy: Internationalization propensity and the role of entrepreneurial orientation, *Journal of international entrepreneurship*, 12 (1), 43-66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-013-0118-9>.
- Landis, J. R., & Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *biometrics*, 33(1), 159-174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2529310>.
- Laurell, H el ene, Achtenhagen, Leona, Andersson, Svante (2017). The changing role of network ties and critical capabilities in an international new venture's early development, *International entrepreneurship and management journal*, 13 (1), 113-140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-016-0398-3>.
- Leite, Y akara Vasconcelos Pereira, Moraes, Walter Fernando Ara ujo de, Salazar, Viviane Santos (2016). Expressions of relationship networking in international entrepreneurship, *Journal of international entrepreneurship*, 14 (2), 213-238. DOI: 10.1007/s10843-016-0166-z.

- Leppäaho, Tanja, Pajunen, Kalle (2018). Institutional distance and international networking, *Entrepreneurship and regional development*, 30 (5-6), 502-529. DOI: 10.1080/08985626.2017.1407365.
- Lin, Zhibin, Cao, Xuebing, Cottam, Ed (2020). International networking and knowledge acquisition of Chinese SMEs: the role of global mind-set and international entrepreneurial orientation, *Entrepreneurship and regional development*, 32 (5-6), 449-465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2019.1640459>.
- Mainela, Tuija, Puhakka, Vesa Johannes (2011). Role of networks in emergence of international new ventures, *International journal of entrepreneurial venturing*, 3 (1), 5-25. DOI: 10.1504/IJEV.2011.037855.
- Mahmoodi Mehrizi, Mahsa, Thomas, Schøtt (2014). Education coupled with international networking: Benefits for exporting in Middle East and North Africa, *International journal of entrepreneurship and small business*, 23 (1-2), 110-126. DOI: 10.1504/IJESB.2014.065311.
- Mort, Gillian Sullivan, Weerawardena, Jay (2006). Networking capability and international entrepreneurship: How networks function in Australian born global firms, *International marketing review*, 23 (5), 549-572. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330610703445>.
- Musteen, Martina, Datta, Deepak, Francis, John (2014). Early internationalization by firms in transition economies into developed markets: The role of international networks, *Global strategy journal*, 4 (3), 221-237. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gsj.1077>.
- Nowiński, Witold, Rialp, Alex (2016). The Impact of social networks on perceptions of international opportunities, *Journal of small business management*, 54 (2), 445-461. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12149>.
- Ogasavara, Mário Henrique, Boehe, Dirk Michael, Cruz, Luciano Barin (2016). Experience, resources and export market performance: The pivotal role of international business network ties, *International marketing review*, 33 (6), 867-893. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-10-2013-0247>.
- Patel, Pankaj, Fernhaber, Stephanie, McDougall-Covin, Patricia, Have Robert (2014). Beating competitors to international markets: The value of geographically balanced networks for innovation, *Strategic management journal*, 35 (5), 691-711. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/smj.2114>.
- Peng, Michael Yao-Ping, Lin, Ku-Ho (2019). International networking in dynamic internationalization capability: the moderating role of absorptive capacity,

- Total Quality management and business excellence, Published online: 04 Sep 2019. DOI: 10.1080/14783363.2019.1661239.
- Perks, Helen, Jeffery, Richard (2006). Global network configuration for innovation: A study of international fibre innovation, R and D management, 36 (1), 67-83. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9310.2005.00416.x.
- Peyvasteh Feridooni, M., Sohrabi, T., Shadnoush, N. (2019). Technology assessment model with dynamic capabilities approach in small and medium enterprises. Journal of system management, 5(3), 23-48.
- Rialp, A., Rialp, J., & Knight, G. A. (2005). The phenomenon of early internationalizing firms: what do we know after a decade (1993–2003) of scientific inquiry? International business review, 14(2), 147–166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2004.04.006>.
- Roolaht, Tõnu (2006). The company's involvement in international networks as an entrepreneurial decision, Baltic journal of management, 1 (1), 102-115. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17465260610640903>.
- Sasi, Viveca, Arenius, Pia (2008). International new ventures and social networks: Advantage or liability?, European management journal, 26 (6), 400-411. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2008.09.008>.
- Schreier, Claus, Scherrer, Sylvie, Udomkit, Nuntana, Farrar, Jillaine (2020). Trustworthy small and medium-sized enterprise network partners: Small and Medium-sized enterprise partnerships in the international entrepreneurial process, Global business review, 21 (1), 88-107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150919850414>.
- Stoian, Maria-Cristina, Rialp, Josep, Dimitratos, Pavlos (2017). SME networks and international performance: Unveiling the significance of foreign market entry mode, Journal of small business management, 55 (1), 128-148. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12241>.
- Tolstoy, Daniel (2010). Knowledge combination in networks: Evidence from the international venturing of four small biotech firms, International entrepreneurship and management journal, 6 (2), 183-202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-010-0148-x>.
- Tayyaran, S., Toloie-Eshlaghy, A., Radfar, R., Purebrahimi, A. (2019). Agent-based model developed to assess supply chain agility (Case study: Institute of higher education, Science and research branch of Tehran). Journal of system management, 5(1), 1-18.
- Van Aduard de Macedo-Soares, Diana Diana, Gouvêa de Mendonça, Alexandre (2010). Strategic implications of alliances and other linkages of leading

- telecom operators in Brazil: Network and international perspectives, *Latin american business review*, 11 (1), 45-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10978521003769686>.
- Williams, Christopher, Du, Juana, Zhang, Hongzhong (2020). International orientation of Chinese internet SMEs: Direct and indirect effects of foreign and indigenous social networking site use, *Journal of world business*, 55 (3), art. no. 101051. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2019.101051>
- Wright R.W., Brand R. A., Dunn W., Spindler K. P. (2007). How to write a systematic review, *Clin orthop relat res*, 455, 23-9. DOI: 10.1097/BLO.0b013e31802c9098.
- Xiao, Shufeng Simon, Lew, Yong Kyu, Park, Byung Il, (2020). International network searching, learning, and explorative capability: Small and Medium-sized enterprises from China, *Management international review*, 60 (4), 597-621. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-020-00426-7>.
- Xiao, Shufeng Simon, Lew, Yong Kyu, Park, Byung Il (2021). International new product development performance, entrepreneurial capability, and network in high-tech ventures, *Journal of business research*, 124, 38-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.11.048>.
- Zardini Alessandro, Cecilia, Marco (2013). Network perspective for a borderless international structure: The experience of an Italian entrepreneurial SME in Morocco, *Global business and organizational excellence*, 33 (1), 6-18. DOI: 10.1002/joe.21520.