

Internationalization Decision of a Born Global: the Case of Information Technology Companies

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Abstract

Internationalization of companies is becoming a necessity on purpose to play an active role in the market and maintain a competitive advantage. A rapid rise of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) on an international level has been interpreted like a born global phenomenon.

An operating trajectory of born global companies is characterized by a rapid expansion outside the country, as quickly as possible after company establishment. Dynamism, orientation to technology, entrepreneurship, and flexibility helps gain a competitive advantage against traditional companies. Partnerships and networking become internationalization accelerators of the born global companies. As a matter of fact, the internationalization decision of born global companies is especially relevant in today's research.

The article presents a framework showing how born global companies internationalize their activities. The framework has been approved in the Lithuanian information technology companies. The empirical research results have revealed the expression of the internationalization decision making of Lithuanian SMEs. Theoretical and empirical results are beneficial for born global SMEs, seeking to internationalize their activities.

Keywords: internationalization, born global company, entrepreneurship, information technology industry.

Introduction

With the growth of international business integration and globalisation, the internationalisation of company activities has become a necessity seeking to survive and develop own business, regardless of company size, managed resources, and the nature of activities (Dib, Rocha and Silva, 2010; Kontinen and Ojala, 2012; Kuvykaite and Alimiene, 2012). With the advent of economic globalization, internationalization has become one of the most important strategies for many firms that seek opportunity to achieve further growth (Zeng et al., 2009). Today's environment determines that companies have to be able to adapt to rapid business environment

changes, to envisage new trends, and to operate not only in local market (Gonzalez and Sieglinde, 2012). Changes in the international business environment influence the emergence of born global companies, their international activities, and decision-making.

Firms that undertake international business from an early stage in their development have been emerging worldwide, in significant numbers (Weerawardena et al., 2007). Born global firms are entrepreneurial, focusing on technology, and dynamic; they can adapt to a constantly changing environment, make flexible decisions, build innovation into business strategy, and gain competitive advantage in an international market since the day of establishment (Alimienė, 2012; Kontinen and Ojala, 2012).

Recent studies have shown the importance of born global companies in terms of their features, activity in international markets, ability to provide innovations, growth, etc. (Weerawardena et al., 2007; Gabrielsson et al., 2008; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010). Several studies have sought discovering forms and obstacles of internationalization by seeking to unveil factors influencing their performance, comparing born global to traditional companies (Sheppard and McNaughton, 2012; Kontinen and Ojala, 2012). Alimiene (2012) has analysed the standardization and adaptation of marketing decisions in the context of internationalisation of company activities, and Casas and Dambrauskaite (2012) have analyzed the impact of external business environment factors on the internationalization of Lithuanian born global companies, to mention just a few. Features affecting organizational entrepreneurship have been analysed by a number of researchers, e.g., Hisrich (2009), Harris and Wheeler (2005).

The problem of internationalization decision making has been mainly analyzed in the traditional company case (Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010; Alimiene, 2012). The circumstances prevailing a business environment, managers' abilities to analyze, to understand the environment, to predict the opportunities and threats, or personal relationships affect the decision-making of global-born companies (Meyer and Peng, 2005; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to highlight the internationalization assumptions, affecting incoming operating decisions of born global companies.

It has been revealed that the research, which analysed activity solution internationalization in born global

companies is relevant, but quite fragmented. There is no general research methodology for the born global companies internationalization decisions investigation. In With the aim to answer problem questions, formulated in this paper, the methodological approach of this investigation refers to the aspects of market search and selections (Lewin et al., 2008; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010). It has already been indicated that there is lack of such research in Lithuania. A better understanding and closer analysis of the problem can help understand born global internationalization phenomenon in a small emerging country like Lithuania. The research problem can be defined along the following question: what are the preconditions for internationalization decisions, which underlie the operating of born global companies?

The aim of the paper is to reveal what strategic decisions-making is undertaken by born global firms, seeking to internationalize their operations. In achieving the goal, an internationalization decision making conceptual framework of born global companies is developed. The framework is further tested in a dynamic information technology (further IT) sector.

The following research methods are employed: systematic and comparative analysis of scientific literature, qualitative research, employing a semi – structured interview, and content analysis research methods.

In the first part of the article, the features of born global companies are discussed. The second part introduces the development of the model. The third part of the article provides research methodology, and the final part presents research results, based on the internationalization decision making of the born globals.

Features of the born global companies

Companies, which start the activity in international markets quite soon after the establishment, have been widely investigated in the frame of numerous studies on the same phenomenon under different concepts: high technology start-ups, international new ventures, international entrepreneurs. It has been noticed that most of the researchers analyzing activities of these companies describe them like born global (Weerawardena et al., 2007; Gabrielsson et al., 2008; Casas and Dambrauskaitė, 2011; Alimiene, 2012). Alimiene (2012) has found out that born global companies are often called the phenomenon of internationalization, because they are exceptional, disproving the hitherto prevailing perception that a firm should gradually carry out internationalization only after a relatively long time, having developed a strong position in the local market.

According to Hagen et al. (2012), dynamic companies appear to start their activities in international markets very fast right after their establishment, getting involved in activities in many foreign countries and taking on serious commitment for those countries very quickly almost from the beginning of their activities. The main characteristics of the born globals are:

1. *Early and rapid internationalisation.* Despite deficiencies in human, financial, and tangible resources,

born globals internationalize rapidly, compared to traditional organizations. Typically, born globals enter the foreign market place within the first three years of domestic establishment (Freeman and Cavusgil, 2007; Hartsfield, Johansen, and Knight, 2008; and Freeman, Hutchings and Chetty, 2012). According to Saarenketo et al. (2004), most of born global companies are smaller, formed by entrepreneurs or a few employees, have limited resources, and are established in a small-market country. These companies, fostering a global vision and presentation of the company to the world as one big market from firm's inception (Gabrielsson et al., 2008), are mostly found in high-technology – based sectors (Kontinen and Ojala, 2012; Cavusgil and Knight, 2009).

2. *Niche oriented.* In comparison with traditional firms, born global companies are more specialised and niche oriented with unique, innovative products that are either more custom made, or more standardised (Dib et al., 2010; Freeman et al., 2012). They target a narrow customer segment which might be geographically distributed (Aspelund and Moen, 2010). Offering new and distinctive products to niche markets contributes to superior international performance of these born globals; this happens by creating a buffer against competition, allowing these firms to have a type of monopolistic advantage (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004). Born global firms see themselves as owning or possessing a source of competitive advantage in foreign markets by way of their expertise, unique product features, better technical service, knowledge competences, or a combination thereof (Evangelista, 2005; Kudima, Yip and Barkema, 2008). According to Knight and Cavusgil (2004), it is likely that knowledge competency of born globals is built up through that acquisition of knowledge-based resources and learning in foreign markets. Further, well-built knowledge competency may serve to prevent limited resources from restricting the potential growth opportunities of born globals in their internationalization process, thus providing a competitive basis for international success. Many born globals are focusing on the attribute of quality in their products and services to achieve a competitive advantage (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004).

3. *Entrepreneurship.* According to Cavusgil et al. (2008) and Gabrielsson et al. (2008), born globals have unique entrepreneurial characteristics. International entrepreneurship of these companies is associated with international orientation and experience, with proactive, risk – taking behaviour that crosses national borders, level of technical and know-how knowledge (Dib et al., 2010; Hartsfield et al., 2008). Firm's entrepreneurial orientation contributes to its ability to create processes, practices, and decision making activities that are linked with successful entrance into foreign markets (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Roudini and Osman, 2012). The managers of firms that follow an international entrepreneurial orientation stress the importance of having a proactive and innovative approach to operating in international markets. This orientation in foreign environments supports firm's awareness of key strategic initiatives that enable international success (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004). Pro-

activeness means acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes and implies taking the initiative, aggressively pursuing ventures, and being at the forefront of efforts to shape the environment in ways that benefit the firm (Thai and Chong, 2008). Risk taking reflects the propensity to devote resources to projects that entail a substantial possibility of failure, but also chances for high returns. The risk decreases with the maturity of the company (Gabrielsson et al., 2008).

In an effort to perform well in foreign markets, the early internationalizing small firms often capitalize on networks. Both social and business aspects of networking are important for the understanding of firm's international development (Gabrielsson et al., 2008). Networks can help the firms acquire the knowledge, capabilities, and routines that enable them to overcome their resource limitations (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004). According to Fan and Phan (2007) and Freeman et al. (2012), most of born global companies belong to strong industrial clusters, strategic alliances or networks with the operating company concentrated in one place, but serving customers throughout the global market.

Knight and Cavusgil (2009) have found that these companies, taking the advantage of their managerial competence, establish social networks much faster than large companies uptake global market information and use it effectively in their operational development. The existing networks (such as customers, importers, suppliers, etc.) may help born global companies expand their market in other countries and find better market opportunities (Zeng et al., 2009). Mainela and Puhakka (2011) have found out that a network can also provide small companies with the competitive advantage due to potentiality of resource sharing and getting the knowledge from the network members which might enable them to reduce the disadvantages and be helpful in enjoying a successful internationalization process. According to research, we can learn that networking and partnership become accelerators of companies which have entrepreneurial characteristics.

Internationalization decision of a born global company model development

Internationalization decisions are described as one-sided, influenced by the expanding business opportunities and knowledge. The company which starts international activities must be interested in both national and international economy. It is important to evaluate the risk of the business activity in a particular country, to take investment decisions, to determine the size and the characteristics of various markets, and to use the resources of the company in the most efficient way (Langviniene, Sekliuckiene and Vengrauskas, 2010). Brouthers and Hennart (2007) indicate that decision-making is strict and accurate conduct as well as successful strategy formation. The circumstances prevailing in a business environment, the ability of managers to analyze, understand, and predict the emerging opportunities or threats and personal relationships are the factors which influence the decisions of born global companies (Meyer and Peng, 2005; Slotte-

Kock and Coviello, 2010). According to Alimiene (2012), the company acting in accordance with the international market, adopts strategic business development solutions which depend on company's experience and activities carried out in the domestic market. Decisions related to international business are dependent on company's unique competencies, developed over time (Korsakiene and Tvaronaviciene, 2012).

In the initial stage of internationalization, the decisions on access, entrance, and business methods to international markets are being made. Born global companies often take internationalization decisions being infant, according to their evaluation of motivation, goals, and available resources. At a later stage of development, the firm makes a decision about the potential of development of the local market through product adaptation, through the product line development as well as through the creation of new products or services for specific local market needs. After the adoption of these decisions for increasing efficiency, operations in the local markets are coordinated, equal mechanisms are created for the coordination of a general strategy and its integration in different international markets. The solutions of company's expansion into international markets allow the transfer of knowledge, experience, and competitive advantages from one national market to another (Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010; Alimiene, 2012). According to Lewin et al. (2008), the following are the aspects of market search and selections, mostly discussed and decision-bearing: 1) company's readiness for internationalization, 2) the eligibility of products and services in foreign markets, 3) the selection of countries and attractive target market, 4) the evaluation of the demand of products in the sample of target market, 5) the selection of qualified business partners, distributors, suppliers and service providers, 6) expected sales by market. It is useful to identify potential sales volumes and possible obstacles which would help company face lower barriers in the market selection process. In the market selection and search process firms make relationships with partners and get involved in networking for successful adaptation to a new market.

Active monitoring of the business environment and cooperation with partners can help retain the market position and network; it can help create a new product and the successful development of company's internationalization process which is adapted to the newly-formed business environment (Vaiginiene, 2009; Cavusgil and Knight, 2009). It is crucial for an organizations to seek to discover new markets and opportunities that would better adapt and compete in a global environment. The expansion into international markets gives companies opportunities for growth and creates value (Gonzalez and Sieglinde, 2012). According to Korsakiene and Tvaronaviciene (2012), company's ability to enter foreign markets is associated with firm's tangible and intangible resources. A company with valuable, rare and hardly imitable resources has a competitive advantage not only in local, but also in an international market. Solutions related to international business are dependent on company's unique competencies which were developed over time.

Kalinic, Sarasvathy and Forzos (2013) indicate that entrepreneurs are able to take high commitment and to perform effective international operations. Entrepreneurship has an impact on the success of financial and strategic activities in the international market as well as on the born global firms operating decisions taken (Zhang, Tansuhaj and McCullough, 2009).

The choice of the internationalization decision can be influenced by external opportunities, threats, or company's internal weaknesses which get highlighted after a strategic analysis (Valentinavicius, 2009). According to Sekliuckiene (2013), companies are forced to internationalize their activity due to unfavourable conditions in the local market (large concentration in the market, small markets, absence of demand, the policy implemented by the government towards local companies). Other factors functioning in the international market and host market foster companies to undertake the internationalization process. Pull motives are related to the aim of foreign countries to attract as many direct foreign investments as possible to the country. Consumer needs, behavior, geography are also important to born global companies' decisions to internationalize operations.

Alimiene (2012), Kalinic et al., 2013 have noticed that effective decision-making is influenced by managers and employees' flexibility and their ability to adapt to external changes. Nielsen and Nielsen (2011) indicate that the effectiveness of international strategic decisions of the leader depends on his/her background and experience. Managers should encourage their employees to take the initiative and not to be afraid to make mistakes. According to theoretical arguments, the internationalization decision model of born global companies is formed and presented below (Figure 1).

Decisions to internationalize company activities through the process of market search and selection as well as through the forms of intervention make influence on company's outcomes which postulate further plans in the international market. The evaluation of the international performance effectiveness and its results is one of the most important instruments for checking the sustainability of the selected enterprise strategies and solutions for international activities. According to Valentinavicius (2009), performance assessment is based on the determination of the key indicators of economic performance (sales, profits, etc.).

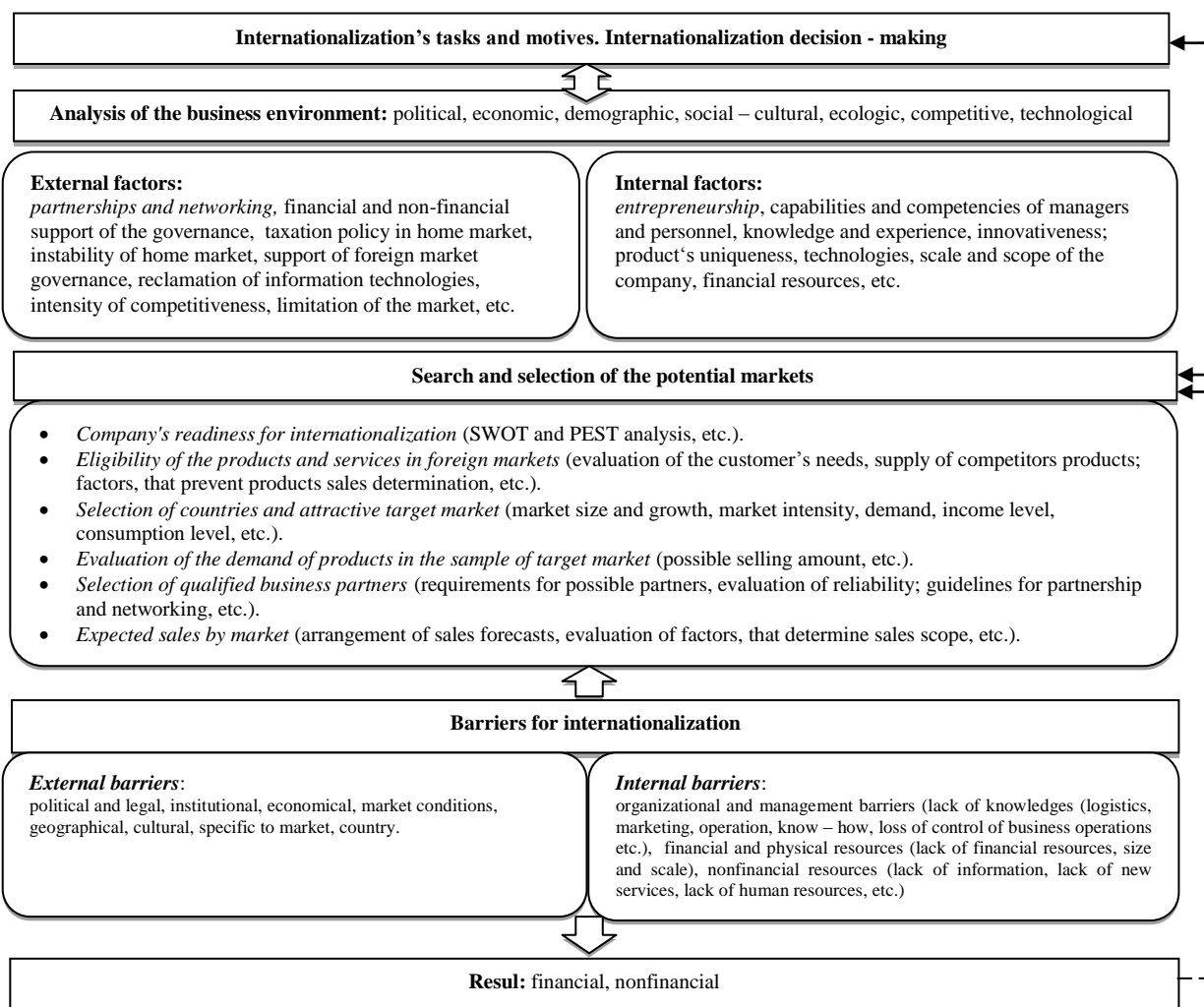


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for internationalization decision of born global

However, it is also important to evaluate non-economic outcomes which are implemented for the investment strategy (for example, the increase of company prestige, the improvement of working conditions and customer service conditions, ect.). When good performance is reached, companies again start considering the options for further development, carry out the search and the selection of the new markets. The number of foreign countries and their characteristics is also one of the basic indicators for international activities effectiveness of born global companies.

Research methodology

The aim of the empirical research has been exploring the operating decisions of internationalization at Lithuanian born global in information technology (IT) companies. The research has been grounded on the relevant literature analysis (Lewin et al., 2008; Korsakiene and Tvaronaviciene, 2012; Kalinic et al., 2013; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010, Alimiene, 2012). In order to generate empirical data, a survey has been designed. The following investigating blocks have been formed:

- motives and factors that have impact on involvement of born global firms in international activities;
- search and selection of potential markets;
- barriers for internationalization;
- factors affecting the decisions and entrepreneurship of the companies;
- the importance of partnership and networking in born global companies activities;
- results and effectiveness of born global companies.

Primary data collection has been carried out among 28 information technology companies managers. Companies are located in the largest towns of Lithuania: Kaunas, Siauliai, Klaipeda, and Vilnius. For the study, semi – structured interview has been used, built on the following criteria and characteristics of born global companies: 1) the company carries out international activities, 2) company's definition is consistent with that of SMEs; 3) the income derived from foreign markets makes up to over 25 percent. Referring to the created framework and the criteria elaborating them, the semi - structured questionnaire has been formulated.

The results of the study have shown that the income from international markets in several companies is 100 percent, that is why these companies are solely oriented only to foreign markets. Characteristic data of the researched organizations have revealed that in the majority of companies there work quite few employees: 11 companies involved in the research had up to 10 working employees, 8 companies had from 14 to 50 employees, the remaining researched companies had up to 80 employees, and only one company had 210 workers. The selected companies provide information technology services. For the investigation results, process Statistical Package for Social Sciences, content analysis, and ordinal variables have been applied. The strength of the relationship between ordinal variables has been studied by using Spearman's correlation coefficient. For the statistical

hypothesis verification, the significance level of 0,05 has been chosen. The empirical study was carried out in April – May 2013.

Results

The investigation has aimed at revealing what part of the researched IT companies start their activity immediately after their establishment as a company, and when IT sector companies start cross-border activities. Most of the companies involved in the study (32 percent) start international activities from the very beginning of their establishment, 21 percent of participants indicated that the activity was started after 1 year from the establishment date. 25 percent of surveyed participants claimed that the internationalization activity in their firm started 2-3 years after the establishment of the company, the rest said it was after 4-5 years, or later than 5 years after the establishment. The study results demonstrate that all the companies started international operations at their own expense. Only one firm took a bank loan, while the other two companies had benefitted from the structural funds of the European Union.

Lithuanian IT sector companies operate in different parts of the world: the United States, European Union countries, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. Most of the companies offer their information technology services to the United States, Latvian, and German markets. The results have shown that companies export services to different countries in order to diversify business risk and to protect themselves from possible economic crisis and currency depreciation. It has turned out that companies work in various markets for different period of time, which shows that Lithuanian IT sector of international development keeps growing.

Motives and factors influencing the involvement of born global companies in international activities. The pursuit of profit prompts Lithuanian IT sector enterprises to initiate international activities. The very small Lithuanian market also serves as a “push” motive, since companies do not have a possibility to expand their business and to find a segment of the market for the services provided (“*In Lithuania there was no market which can be oriented for the services...*”; “*Simply, the Lithuanian market is too small for us...*”; “*small Lithuanian market...*”; “*In Lithuania we did not find our market segment...*”). For the Lithuanian IT sector companies, the aim to base in foreign markets is not so important, and the least important thing relates to competitors operating in local market. The analysis of the results, calculated using Spearman's correlation coefficient, has determined that there is a moderate relationship between risk distribution and small market of Lithuania ($r=0,431^*$, $p=0,022$, $p>0,5$). Based on this data, it may be assumed that a small Lithuanian market and risk distribution are interrelated motives which predispose company internationalization. If one factor strengthens, respectively, the importance of another factor in international activity also grows.

The analysis of the data surveyed has shown that the external factors, compared to the internal ones, do not have a significant impact on the international start-up activity of born global Lithuanian IT sector companies. Information technology spread has the worst impact on firms; it may be considered to contribute to accelerating firm's presence in the foreign markets, their ability to compete with much larger companies. Partnership also affects company internationalization. It is evident that networking and cooperation with partners provide valuable knowledge for Lithuanian born global IT sector companies and make it easy to start-up internationally, predisposes joint-ventures start-up. Partially, the beginning of the international activities of an enterprise is driven by the increasing competition in the internal market.

Exploring the dependency between these factors, it has been noted that the connection between the three groups of factors exists. The strongest link is between these three factors: the development of information technology and non-financial support of public institutions ($r=0,527^{**}$, $p=0,04$, $p<0,05$). Among these factors there is a moderate, reliable to population connection. It can be assumed that the accelerating development of information technologies leads to greater support of non-financial public institutions and, as a result, companies are learning on their own more often. It has been noticed that a statistically reliable link exists between factors such as the development of information technologies and networking ($r=0,525^{**}$, $p=0,04$, $p<0,05$). The interaction between these two links is medium, which allows claiming that the accelerating pace of information technologies predisposes born global IT sector companies to connect to networking.

The search and the selection of potential markets. The obtained results have shown that the Lithuanian IT sector companies in the stage of preparedness for internationalization carefully evaluate potential markets and investment opportunities. It has turned out that only few companies perform SWOT and PEST analysis of the environment. In products and services for foreign markets period, companies become aware of the factors, likely to interfere with the sale of services in the new markets. Only a part of companies analyzes consumer needs during the market selection period; however more attention is given to competitors' analysis. It has been noted that the political environment does not affect company decision making, because the Lithuanian IT sector companies do not analyze government powers. In the period of selection of countries and target markets, companies become aware of potential market growth forecast and intensity of the market (purchasing power, income level). The level of consumption is less evaluated by the firms. In a meantime, most of the born global companies do not evaluate political risk and country's susceptibility to exports. In the search of markets, born global companies analyze potential sales amounts in a new market and establish contacts with partners. Only few companies consider requirements for partners before establishing the relationship. Survey results have revealed that, in the period of product and service demand evaluation, the companies examine the factors likely to impede the sales of products and services in the

potential market. However, firms do not always consider potential entry into the market barriers. None of the companies carry out substantial potential market evaluation. This fact demonstrates that companies do not spare so much time and attention to the selection process, as it is recommended in scientific literature. Most of the companies involved in the study, prior to the selection of markets for cross-border activities, discuss the factors likely to affect sales, and develop sales forecast. Market size and cultural similarities make the biggest influence on the market choice. Distance is less valuable; cooperation with partners and networking are appreciated.

Barriers for internationalization. The analysis of the investigation results suggests that the Lithuanian IT sector companies do not face serious handicaps, when starting international activity. The examination of the survey results has shown that the lack of international experience and company's lack of finance constitute major Lithuanian IT sector internal barriers to internationalization. In the words of the respondents, during the period of international activity, companies have to cope with cultural differences and with the high costs of research of the markets. It can be assumed that in carrying out the research and gaining a better understanding of cultural differences, Lithuanian born-global IT sector companies are able to avoid hardship and adapt more effectively to new markets at the time of internationalization. The surveyed companies also noted some more obstacles which were not identified in the questionnaire: the time gap ('When we have a day, in America it is already night, so there is a little 'update' in our employees work schedule...'), the existence of stereotypes ('Often the customer thinks that small company is unreliable company. It complicates international activities...') and corruption in one of the foreign markets ('Nigeria is booming with very high corruption...'). The analysis of the data has shown that there is a strong, statistically reliable link between the information on international markets and a lack of customer needs ($r=0,759^{**}$, $p=0$, $p<0,05$). That is, in the absence of information about international markets, companies do not seek information about clients; as a consequence, it becomes a root cause of barriers to internationalization. Usually companies with international activities carry out services by exporting or setting up branches in other countries, as well as participating in networking.

Factors affecting company's activity decisions and entrepreneurship. The data has revealed that the Lithuanian IT sector companies systematically collect information about customers, competitors, and service sales. Only few companies in foreign markets perform research. It can be assumed that this is due to high costs of investigations. One Lithuanian IT sector company provides cheaper service, another company has higher prices; however it has been noticed that companies focus more on quality than on price. Company's decisions undertakings are mostly influenced by the international environment. Cooperation with partners and networking as well as local market influence decisions only partially. The biggest part of the Lithuanian IT sector companies entered international market quickly and immediately. These companies have

entrepreneurship characteristics: the ability to respond quickly to changing customer needs and environmental factors, the ability to take risky decisions, interest in future forecasts, etc.

The importance of partnership and networking in born global company activities. Survey data has revealed that born global IT companies collaborate with various organizations. Most of the researched subjects have stated that they collaborate with foreign market (where their firm operates) companies (*'Our main partners are foreign companies...'*; *'We have lots of benefits from the cooperation with foreign market companies...'*). Also, many Lithuanian born global companies cooperate with Lithuanian firms, operating in Lithuania (*'Cooperation with Lithuanian companies helps compete abroad...'*; *'When task-specific knowledge is needed, then we appeal to Lithuanian companies who have the necessary expertise for that...'*; *'We cooperate with a business support agency...'*). Less than a half of survey participants (respectively 46 percent and 43 percent) cooperate with clients when providing services (*'Our customers are our partners, since partnering with them improves our quality of the service provided...'*; *'Clients help us figure out pros and cons of the services provided in the most efficient way...'*; *'In collaboration with clients, we create new products...'*) and educational institutions (*'We take various projects in collaboration with universities, and it brings benefits to all the parties: the company, students, and the university...'*; *'One of our main partners is Kaunas University of Technology...'*; *'I think that collaboration with universities brings us considerable benefits...'*; *'Cooperating with educational institutions, we organize surveys...'*). The most popular method for born global IT companies to find partners is the Internet and recommendations of friends and acquaintances. An active search is performed in Lithuanian institutions which provide business support and affiliate search engines. A small part of the Lithuanian born global IT sector companies is looking for partners in international exhibitions, fairs, and conferences. The analysis of the study has shown that 13 out of 28 surveyed subjects participate in networking. Then, 3 to 7 companies usually run in the network, few companies are involved in networking with 14-15 firms. The data has shown that the Lithuanian IT sector companies see a number of advantages in networking. Acting in the network with other companies, the companies gain a competitive advantage on local and foreign markets. A networking effect promotes and stimulates innovation which is very important seeking to maintain a competitive advantage in local and foreign markets.

Born global companies results and effectiveness. The investigation has been carried out to determine the effects of the internationalization process upon born global company activities. On the basis of the survey data, it can be noted that almost all the subjects have indicated that with the start of service providing internationally their company profits had grown up to 50-70 percent. However, there are firms, the profit of which had doubled (*'The first year turnover grew +100 percent, the second year +180*

percent...'). One subject indicated that he had a temporary decline in profit (*'Initially, the profit declined because internationalization requires direct investments, but after, company's indicators significantly went up...'*). Internationalization has positive values not only for enterprise profitability, but also for the employee development, because they are constantly involved in various workshops, conferences in order to consolidate company position in the Lithuanian market. Since the majority of the surveyed companies started their international activities from the very beginning of the company establishment, they were unable to capitalize on positive or negative effects of the internationalization on the company operations (*'...Since internationalization was carried out as soon as possible, there is no comparison ...'*; *'... our company immediately engaged in international activities ...'* *'... activities of the company from the very beginning were international...'*; *'... as it was immediately focused from the very beginning not only towards the Lithuanian market, but also international, there was no difference...'*; *'... We did not feel any difference because we worked internationally from the beginning...'* *'...we immediately began to engage in international activities, so I do not have a standard of reference...'*).

It was noted that the majority of the surveyed Lithuanian born global IT sector companies plan business development in the near future and endeavour strengthening their position in foreign markets, where they were acting before: the Eastern countries, the countries of the European Union, the United States. More than half of the survey participants have indicated that, in their opinion, company profitability indicators should grow in the short term. Companies intend to increase the number of employees in order to increase the efficiency of services in Lithuanian and foreign markets.

Conclusions

In the theoretical framework of an internationalization decision of a born global, the following strategic decision steps have been distinguished: analysis of the environment, monitoring of external and internal company factors, decision-making for company internationalization and objectives related to the internationalization of company activities, the market search and selection process, decisions concerning the penetration form, and the evaluation of company's achieved outcomes.

The results of the empirical research, performed at the information technology companies on the basis of the theoretical framework, have shown that the Lithuanian IT sector born global company internationalization is determined by external (IT development, partnership, and networking) and internal factors (manager knowledge and skills, firm's innovation, unique service) which become a catalyst for motives to emerge. Before accessing international markets, companies carry out certain actions in the market search and selection processes. They face various obstacles, such as financial and information deficiency, lack of international experience, or stereotypes. Involved in international activities, companies

systematically collect information about the market and rivals; they accept a wide range of solutions which depend on the company head's entrepreneurship, his/her abilities and qualities, and on the financial resources of the company.

The networking effect and partnership support between born global companies and their partners becomes an accelerator, enabling internationalization. It allows competing successfully in international markets. Partnership with different institutions strengthens company positions in the international markets, helps acquire knowledge and skills. Internationalization influences an effective implementation of corporate activity, profit growth, staff and service quality improvement. Networking enhances cooperation between enterprises, development and implementation of new projects, and also customer search; it provides an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, to learn from partners. All of that empowers companies to compete successfully in the international markets.

Further studies on internationalization strategic decision making should be oriented towards the detection of specifics of the born global IT sector companies, the formation of the internationalization decision making specifics, and it should include a larger sample of the surveyed parties.

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Gimusių globalių kompanijų internacionalizacijos sprendimai: informacinių technologijų kompanijų atvejis

Santrauka

Kompanijų internacionalizacija tampa būtinybe siekiant aktyviai veikti rinkoje ir išlaikyti konkurencinį pranašumą. Smulkių ir vidutinių įmonių greitas iškilimas tarptautiniu mastu aiškinamas gimusių globaliomis kompanijų fenomenu. Gimusių globaliomis kompanijų veiklos trajektorijos pasižymi sparčia plėtra už konkrečios šalies ribų, vos tik pradėjus veiklą. Gimusios globaliomis kompanijos – tai smulkios ir vidutinės įmonės, kurioms būdinga ankstyva internacionalizacija, tinklaveika, vadovų bei darbuotojų turima tarptautinė patirtis bei antreprenerystė. Dinamiškumas, orientacija į technologijas, antrepreneriškumas bei lankstumas tampa šių įmonių konkurenciniais pranašumais prieš tradicines kompanijas. Partnerystė ir tinklaveika tampa gimusių globaliomis kompanijų internacionalizacijos akseleratoriais. Todėl gimusių globaliomis kompanijų internacionalizacijos sprendimų tematika itin aktuali pastarųjų metų tyrimuose.

Pastaruosiu metu padaugėjo tyrimų, kuriuose analizuojami gimusių globaliomis organizacijų bruožai, veikla tarptautinėse rinkose. Šią problematiką tyrė Knight (1996); Weerawardena et al. (2003); Gabriellsson et al. (2008); Sui (2009); Slotte-Kock ir Coviello (2010) ir kt. Sheppard ir McNaughton (2012); Kontinen bei Ojala (2012), Slivinski (2012) ir kt., savo tyrimuose analizuoja veiksmus, lemiančius gimusių globaliomis organizacijų internacionalizaciją, internacionalizacijos formas, barjerus, lygina jas su tradicinėmis kompanijomis ir pan. Lietuvoje gimusių globaliomis įmonių specifika analizavo Alimienė (2012), tyrusi gimusių globaliomis ir tradicinių įmonių marketingo sprendimus; Časas ir Dambrauskaitė (2012) domėjosi išorinių veiksmų įtaka Lietuvos globalioms kompanijoms ir kt. Antrepreneriškumo pasireiškimo organizacijoje problematiką tyrinėjo Duobienė (2006), Pundzienė (2006), Vaitkevičius (2007), Wunderer (2001), Hisrich, Antonic (2003), Cartier (2007) ir kt.

Internationalizacijos sprendimų priėmimo problematika daugiausia analizuojama tradicinių kompanijų atvejais (Chetty ir Campbell-Hunt, 2004; Slotte-Kock ir Coviello, 2010; Alimienė, 2012). Aplinkybės, susiklosčiusios verslo aplinkoje, vadovų gebėjimai analizuoti, suvokti aplinką ir nuspėti atsirandančias galimybes ar grėsmes, asmeniniai ryšiai turi įtakos gimusių globaliomis kompanijų sprendimų priėmimui (Meyer ir Peng, 2005; Slotte-Kock ir Coviello, 2010). Todėl itin svarbu išryškinti internacionalizacijos prielaidas, sąlygojančias priimamus gimusių globaliomis kompanijų veiklos sprendimus.

Mokslinių tyrimų analizė atskleidė, jog tyrimai, analizuojantys internacionalizacijos veiklos sprendimus gimusiose globaliomis kompanijose yra aktualūs, tačiau ganėtinai fragmentiški. Gilesnis problemos suvokimas ir išsamesnė analizė gali padėti geriau pažinti gimusių globaliomis organizacijų fenomeną mažoje greitai augančioje šalyje, tokioje kaip Lietuva. Straipsnyje siekiama atsakyti į probleminį klausimą: kokie yra gimusių globaliomis kompanijų internacionalizacijos sprendimai? Straipsnio tikslas - atskleisti, kokių strateginių sprendimų imasi gimusios globalios įmonės, siekdamos internacionalizuoti savo veiklą. Tikslu siekiama parengiant konceptualų internacionalizacijos sprendimų priėmimo modelį gimusios globaliomis kompanijoms. Parengtas modelis testuojamas pasirinktame dinamiškame informacinių technologijų (toliau - IT) sektoriuje. Modelis padeda atskleisti veiksmus, kurie svarbūs tokių šalių kaip Lietuva informacinių technologijų bendrovėms, įsitraukiančioms į tarptautinę veiklą.

Straipsnio autorės detalai teoriškai pagrindžia gimusių globaliomis kompanijų bruožus: sparčią ir greitą internacionalizaciją, orientaciją į nišines rinkas, antrepreneriškumą, rizikos prisiėmimą. Parodoma tinklaveikos, kaip įgalinančios intrernationalizaciją prielaidos svarba, kadangi gimusios globaliomis kompanijos dažniausiai į užsienio rinką įeina pasitelkdamos tinklaveiką ir partnerystes.

Internationalizacijos prielaidų įgalintos kompanijos priima sprendimus dėl veiklos tarptautinėse rinkose. Brouthers ir Hennart (2007) nurodo, jog sprendimų priėmimas yra griežta, tiksli elgsena ir sėkmingas strategijos formavimas. Aplinkybės susiklosčiusios verslo aplinkoje, vadovų gebėjimai analizuoti, suvokti aplinką ir nuspėti atsirandančias galimybes ar grėsmes, asmeniniai ryšiai turi įtakos gimusių globaliomis kompanijų sprendimų priėmimui (Meyer ir Peng, 2005; Slotte-Kock ir Coviello, 2010). Todėl straipsnyje pagrindžiami internacionalizacijos sprendimų priėmimo etapai ir pateikiamas modelis, parodantis gimusių globalių kompanijų internacionalizacijos sprendimų seką bei

integruojantis veiksnys, svarbius gimusioms globaliomis kompanijoms internacionalizuojant veiklą.

Atliktas empirinis tyrimas, atskleidė, kokių strateginių sprendimų imasi Lietuvos gimusios globaliomis informacinių technologijų sektoriaus įmonės, siekdamos internacionalizuoti savo veiklą. Žvalgomajame tyrime dalyvavo 38 IT įmonių vadovai, kurių įmonės veikia didžiuosiuose Lietuvos miestuose: Vilniuje, Kaune, Klaipėdoje ir Šiauliuose. Organizacijos, atrinktos tyrimui, atitiko šiuos kriterijus bei gimusių globaliomis kompanijų bruožus: 1) įmonė vykdo tarptautinę veiklą, 2) įmonė atitinka smulkios ir vidutinės įmonės (SMEs) kompanijos apibrėžimą; 3) pajamos, gaunamos iš užsienio rinkų, sudaro daugiau nei 25 % visų gaunamų pajamų. Atrinktos įmonės teikia informacinių technologijų paslaugas. Empirinio tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad stipresnę įtaką tarptautinės veiklos pradžiai turi vidiniai nei išoriniai veiksniai. Tarptautinę veiklą įmonės dažniausiai vykdo paslaugas eksportuodamos ar įkurdamos padalinį kitose šalyse, dalyvaudamos tinklaveikoje.

Potencialių rinkų paieškos ir atrankos procesas susideda iš etapų, kurių metu priimami sprendimai dėl rinkų atrankos: analizuojamos potencialių rinkų augimo prognozės ir intensyvumas, preliminarios pardavimo apimtys naujoje rinkoje, mezgami santykiai su partneriais. Priimamiems sprendimams daugiausiai įtakos vadovo antrepreneriškumas, gebėjimai ir žinios, darbuotojai įmonės inovatyvumas bei informacinių technologijų plėtra, tarptautinė rinka. Pradėdamos tarptautinę veiklą, įmonės susiduria su finansų ir informacijos apie tarptautines rinkas stoka, kultūriniais skirtumais. Partnerystė su skirtingomis institucijomis stiprina įmonių pozicijas tarptautinėse rinkose, padeda įgyti žinių bei gebėjimų. Internacionalizacija sąlygoja efektyvesnį įmonių veiklos įgyvendinimą, pelno augimą, darbuotojų ir paslaugų kokybės tobulinimą.

Tolimesni internacionalizacijos strateginių sprendimų tyrimai turėtų būti orientuoti į gimusių globalių IT kompanijų specifiškumo atskleidimą, internacionalizacijos sprendimų formavimo specifiką bei turėtų apimti didesnę tiriamųjų imtį.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: internacionalizacija, gimusios globaliomis kompanijos, antreprenerystė, informacinių technologijų sektorius.

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