

Entrepreneurial Experience and Its Influence on Export Performance in International Business

Zhang W.K. & Novak I.P.

Department of Pulmonary Sciences, Hong Kong Clinical University, Hong Kong, China
Department of Respiratory Medicine, Bratislava Health Academy, Bratislava, Slovakia

Keywords: Export-preneurialbehaviours, Export experience, Business performance.

Abstract

The work argued that foreign market opportunities, firm resources and entrepreneurial ideologies influenced business performance of export firms but queried the exporter experience. Three hundred and ninety-five owner-managers of selected non-oil export firms were surveyed after selecting them purposively. A validated questionnaire was utilized to collect primary data, after reliability testing was conducted. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the moderating effect of export experience on the export-preneurial behaviours and business performance. From the results, the study concludes that export experience does not significantly moderate the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance. The paper recommends that managers should focus efforts on adaptation and adopting of export-preneurial behaviours in engendering improved business performance.

Introduction

Business performance ascent has remained a universal dilemma for entrepreneurial firms. With the saturation of home-based markets, entrepreneurs tend to seek foreign markets through exports by leveraging on customer needs and opportunities with value-addition as a driving force (Gatawa and Dalhatu, 2017) to improve business performance indices. On the economic front, developing countries have been seen to channel incentives backed by public policies instruments to drive active internationalization (Gilaninia, Monsef, & Mosaddegh, 2013a; Nik & Nnabuike, 2017) and enhance performance. Yet performance in sales seems largely driven by an expansion in customer base that is conditioned on entrepreneurial ideology, improved network interactions along the value chain, trust and market knowledge gained from experience (Asghari & Rostami, 2017; Kabagambe, Ogutu, & Munyoki, 2017; Nuseir, 2016).

The glaring declining performance is a challenge for the Nigerian export-preneurs and over time has been attributable to lack of understanding of the customers' expectation, uncompetitive and unattractive packaging, distrust, thereby resulting in the erosion of customer base and a corresponding decline in sales parameters (Monogbel & Okah, 2017). Nworu (2017) added incapacitations within the distribution and logistics of delivery processes as well as bureaucratic delays in the social networks from support context. Despite the studies (Alexandra & Orlando, 2018; Josee, Mark, & Armand, 2013; Kamitewoko, 2013; Nik & Nnabike, 2017; Nuseir, 2016; Sanjo & Ibrahim, 2017; Yazeed, 2017) that have reviewed business performance stimulators from various divergent view-points, Ahimbisibwe and Abho (2013); Darus, Yunus, and Rahman (2017) and Mbaegbu (2016) identified a gap in literature on the moderating role of export experience on the entrepreneurial behaviours and business performance relationship.

In addition, concerted government efforts through policy formulations with the enactment of the Export (incentives and miscellaneous provisions) act (1992) which brought about the Export Expansion Grant (EEG), Export Adjustment Scheme Fund (EASF) and Export Development Fund (EDF) geared towards non-oil exports, a truncation occurred in 2013 due to misappropriation of the grants (Monogbe & Okah, 2017; Okon, 2018). This singular action was identified by Okon (2018) as instrumental to the declining sales since then. The Real Sector Support Facility (RCCF) in 2014 and the Small and Medium Enterprises Investment Schemes (SMEIS) also in 2014 have not been seen to make any progressive impact either (Monogbe & Okah, 2017; Okwu, Dada, & Owolabu, 2013). The x-raying of data from National Bureau of Statistics (2017) indicated a general decline in total exports in Nigeria from ₦15,262bn (2013) to ₦8,835.60bn (2016), and a paltry sales figure of ₦1,130.2bn recorded in 2013 for non-oil exports which further dipped to ₦656.8bn in 2016.

The general view that experience would drive growth in customer base and sales has also failed to orchestrate itself in this Nigerian context (Mbaegbu, 2016). Hence, this study sought to investigate the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours (measured as entrepreneurial orientation, social networks, distribution logistics, entrepreneurial mindset, packaging and trust) and business performance, as well as examine the moderating effect of export experience on this relationship. This position is to challenge and expand existing knowledge in the field and authenticate the claims export-experience is vital to business performance in South-Western

Nigeria. Following the introduction, section two of the paper considered the review of literature; section three reflected the methodology; section four captured the data analysis, results and discussions; and section five contained the conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Export-preneurial behaviours have been described by Hamilton (2015) and Nuseir (2016) as the practices and tactics which export desiring entrepreneurs adopt and display. Earlier scholars (Michael & Araujo, 1985; Reid, 1981) have defined export-preneurial behaviours as attitudinal dispositions targeted at export-market entry and growth in export performance arising from an agile response to the orientation and mind-set of the entrepreneur. Cadogan, Morgan, and Story (2006) however expanded this definitional discourse from the foreign market-context with reference to customer base growth, opportunity oriented moves capable of engendering general success of the export enterprise. Export-preneurial behaviours have been classified into two: the export entrepreneurial-oriented behaviour and the export market-oriented behaviour (Pickernell, Jones, Thompson, & Packham, 2016).

According to Miocevic and Crnjak-Karanovic (2011), the export entrepreneurial-oriented behaviour which are largely owner manager specific attitudes and capabilities exhibited by the firm owner to disarm competition due to its distinct qualities. Academic positions of various scholars (Abiodun & Rosli, 2014; Pickernell, et al., 2016) have described this export entrepreneurial-oriented behaviour as influenced by the entrepreneurs' vision, bundle of heterogeneous skills, and communication capabilities. Prominent export entrepreneurial-oriented behaviours as highlighted by Boehe (2013) and Boso, Cadogan, and Story (2012) are foresightedness, experience gained from field relations, innovativeness, mind-set, risk-taking propensity. Others include trust-worthiness, individual's knowledge and skills, commitment, social network relations, communication capability, and cultural tolerance (Bouazza, Ardjouman, & Abada, 2015; Murray, Gao, & Kotabe, 2011).

This study classified export entrepreneurial-oriented behaviours as entrepreneurial orientation (EO), social networks (SN), entrepreneurial mind-set (EM), and trust (TR). Amongst these entrepreneurial-oriented behaviours constructs, entrepreneurial orientation and mind-set are person-specifics. However, the social networks and trust were looked upon as relational behaviours, with social networks addressing the relationship existing between the suppliers as the sources of export products, and governmental institutions that provide export advice and support for documentary requirements, whereas trust speaks to the relationship which engenders reliability and dependability of agreements and contracts entered into.

On the other hand, export market behaviours are the behaviours that allow swift response by firms to foreign market needs and preferences (Boso, *et al.*, 2012). It offers superior value creation for foreign market customers and keeps the export-preneur ahead of other less market-oriented foreign market rivals (Murray, *et al.*, 2011). Some of these export market behaviours are pricing, product packaging, market-space product promotion through online marketing, logistics, distribution, brand visibility (Kwon, & Arenius, 2010; Murray, *et al.*, 2011). Export market behaviours are itemized as distribution logistics (DL) and packaging (PG). Distribution logistics was seen as the delivery mode and the logistic infrastructure which facilitate the movement of products to the foreign buyers' while packaging deals with the protective covering which attracts buyers and provides requisite information that can aid export sales. Hence, the study opines that export-preneurial behaviours is the combination of export market behaviours and entrepreneurial-oriented behaviour targeted at enhancing foreign market entry.

Business performance

The concept of business performance has been defined as the extent of a firm's financial objective achievement (Cavuşgil & Zou, 1994). Rogo, Shariff and Hafeez (2017) and Wilden, Gudergan, Nielsen, and Lings (2013) have expanded this definition to incorporate the meeting of profitability and sales goals, as well as non-financial measures considered from the standpoints of competitors. In the same vein, other scholars (Pulka, Ramli, & Bakar, 2018; Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009) have argued that it is the whole gamut of financial performance, product market performance and shareholders' return expectations. This study examined business performance from the outlook of export performance. Internationalization literature (Jalali, 2012; Nusier, 2016; Roxo, 2014; Shamsuddoha & Ali, 2006) has little consensus for a uniform export performance definition. Where Jalali (2012) considers it as a significant measure to predict the direction of operations towards the success of entrepreneurs in a foreign market, Roxo (2014) posited it as the spontaneous effect of export-preneurial behaviours when firm-specific and environment-specific circumstances are combined together. Nusier (2016) views it as measure of adaptability, effectiveness and efficiency unveiled by an entrepreneur in comparison to rivals in the export market.

Kabagambe, Ogutu, and Munyoki, (2017) defined export business performance based on the strategic and financial measures; and management satisfaction arising from their views of the characteristics which are related to monetary indicators such as sales income, profit margins, market share as stated by Nik & Nnabuike (2017). Export business performance helps to breed confidence to the investors, and various stakeholders of the company when it is incremental in nature (Kabagambe et al., 2017). It maintains and improves competitive advantage of a firm; and is known to improve the brand visibility of the firm and goodwill too. Export business performance of firms within a nation has been known to contribute positively to the foreign reserve of the receipt country for the foreign inflows. Despite its inherent benefits, if it is not properly managed, could lead to loss of valuable resources, and goodwill. For this study, export business performance shall be investigated from sales growth, profitability, firm size and customer base. Consequently, this study defines business performance as the efficient use of unique heterogeneous resources by export firms to that can guarantee maximum output across sales, returns and profitability, as a result of attained competitive advantage.

Export experience

Export experience, according to Yeoh (2004) is the knowledge and learning accretion gathered over a given time frame within a firm. Navarro, Losada, Ruzo, and Diez (2010) defined export experience as the directional compass utilized by firms in information gathering on foreign market operations. Other scholars (D'Angelo, Majocchi, Zucchella, & Buck, 2013; Di Maria & Ganau, 2014) have regarded export experience as the combination of idiosyncratic and explicit knowledge gain as result of repeated export relations, with little regard for the firm age. According to internationalization literature, export experience is assessed as a combination of gained work experience, a grasp of foreign cultural demands, and past knowledge of a country's export process gathered over time (Rahimnezhad & Alipour, 2015).

D'Angelo, *et. al.* (2013) and Love, Rope, and Zhou (2016) have revealed that number of years in export may be an indirect indicator of export experience. The export experience concept presents a quagmire in literature similar to the "chicken-egg" riddle as Love et al. (2016) explain that knowledge is only gained from continuous export over a time frame, while a firm's age in export is only confirmable when it has remained in export operation over time in order to acquire knowledge that forms experience. Export-preneurial firms irrespective of their unique resources depend on fore-knowledge of the international market to get into serviceable export contracts, as the lack of export experience stifles business performance opportunities (Rahimnezhad & Alipour, 2015; Roper, & Malshe, 2013). Following the aforementioned prescriptions, this study defined export experience as the number of years in export capable of engendering practical knowledge accumulation.

Export-preneurial behaviours, export experience and business performance

Roberts and Ingram (2002) explained that a positive significance was observed when knowledge transfers moderated the relationship between the business performance and export-preneurial behaviours measured as supplier social networks, as improvement was observed across sales growth indices of the wine companies in New Zealand and Australia.

Positive relations were also observed in the relationship export-preneurial mind-set and internationalization performance when influenced by the combination of export experience measured as bias and tacit knowledge (Perks & Hughes, 2008). A mixed result was observed in the study of enterprises in Yorkshire and Humberside carried out by Laforet (2012). The study observed that when export experience moderated the export-preneurial orientation and performance relations, but found no significant effect of export experience (firm age) on export-preneurial innovative behaviour and business performance outcomes (customer base and market share) (Laforet, 2012).

Chugan and Singh (2014) indicated that information availability within the business network predicted firm-level export performance. The study further highlighted the importance of knowledge gained as result of repetitive action and information gained as seen as a unique resource rare, non-substitutable, and valuable to a firm's performance. A divergent result from the study of Hagsten and Kotnik (2014), revealed export experience measured as age of the firm, played no moderating role in mind-set and sales performance relationship, as it found that the younger firms grew their the export numbers more, when compared to older firms expected to have more export experience and knowledge of the foreign markets. It also showed that the age variable indicates that the younger the firm the larger the exports (export intensity/ performance). Other studies revealed positive moderating effects of export experience on the relationship between organizational factor (firm size, trade experience and export commitment) significantly affected export performance (Gilaninia, Ganjinia & Jelodarloo, 2012) and firm characteristics (entrepreneurial orientation, social relationship, and mind-set), environmental characteristics (distribution logistics network), international experience and international commitment on higher levels export performance (Erdil & Özdemir, 2016).

Pickernell, Jones, Thompson, and Packham (2016) results showed that positive moderating determinants of exporting of SMEs measured with firm age on the relationship between the owner-manager behaviours of the exporters (measured with innovativeness, human capital investments, and intellectual property) on export performance, while the moderated effect of firm age with export-preneurial innovativeness and business performance showed no growth focus in terms firm size from the firm turnover context. Martinović and Matana (2017) found that entrepreneurial export experience influenced the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours from the institutional government trade support view-point and business performance of the respective firms in Croatia. Export experience, export distribution channel and export performance from the context of sales growth and profitability indicated significant positive relations, after an investigation by Rahimnezhad & Alipour (2015) of tea companies in Iran.

The influence of experience reveals from theory, a continuous unique deployment of capabilities in completing of processes tending to adopt a repetitive approach capable of affecting performance as proscribed by the Experience effect theory (Day & Montgomery, 1983). Henderson (1974) explained that the repetitive action intentionally improves performance by a factor referred to as progress ratio. This has been seen to be effective in enhancing growth in performance as the theory embraces cost reduction, technological adoption in processes, product redesign, network effects, labour efficiency, and resource capability mix change differences (Henderson, 1973). The practicality of the results of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) are similar to the adoption of export-preneurial behaviours viewed from the lenses of entrepreneurial orientation, social networks, distribution logistics, entrepreneurial mind-set, trust and packaging, which embrace learning and engender improved performance.

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to obtain perception-based data from the various stakeholders, in investigating the moderation effect of export experience on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance. This design is consistent with the following studies: Ajayi (2016); Holtgrave and Onay (2017); and Navarro-García, (2016). Three hundred and ninety-five firms (395) owner/managers of active non-oil firms in South-Western Nigeria were the unit of analysis of the study. This region holds 73.7% of active registered non-oil export firms in Nigeria (NEPC, 2017), with the busiest ports/borders in terms of international boundaries (Apapa seaport, Tin-can Island seaport, Port Terminal Marine Ltd (PTML), Idiroko land border, Owode-Apa land border, Seme border, and the first international airport, Muritala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja).

Complete census method was utilized, due to the meager population for the study and desire to increase the confidence level of the sample size. The respondents’ selection criterion was anchored on owner/managers mainly because they are responsible for export decisions. The adapted questionnaire was informed from diverse literature (Agbawodikeizu, 2018; Arokodare, 2018; Cates, 2007; Covin& Wales, 2011; Gilaninia, Monsef, & Soleymani, 2013; Hoang, 2015; Holtgrave & Onay, 2017; Ogunnaike & Kehinde, 2013; Williams, 2011; and Zhou, 2002) along the constructs with sections covering demographic data, export-preneurial behaviour predictors and business performance indicators using a six-point likert scaling from *very high* (6) to *very low* (1).

The content validity was carried out and constructs determined through Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO)> 0.5, Barlett’s test> 0.05, Composite reliability > 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted> 0.5 and the reliability established with scores from Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficients> 0.7 after a pilot testing. The retrieved data from the three hundred and ninety-five owner/managers by field enumerators that were well training on effective data collection methods and the objective of the study was subjected to various diagnostic tests of normality, homoscedascity and multi-collinearity to reduce possible errors, as well as confirm the statistical fitness of the model. The econometric model developed along the dependent, moderator and independent constructs of the study and the data was analysed using hierarchical regression analysis.

3.1 Econometric Model Specification of the study

BP = f (EB, EE) -----Functional Equation

BP = (SG, PR, CB, FS)

EB = (EO, SN, DL, TR, EM, PA)

BP = β₀ + β₁EB + β₂EE + β₃EB*EE + μ_i -----Model of the study

Where

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| BP: | Business Performance | EB: | Export-preneurial Behaviours |
| EE: | Export Experience | EO: | Entrepreneurial Orientation |
| SN: | Social Networks | DL: | Distribution Logistics |

TR: Trust
 PA: Packaging
 CB : Customer Base
 EM: Entrepreneurial Mind-set
 SG: Sales Growth
 EB* EE = Interaction between export-preneurial behaviours and export experience
 μ_i = Capturing other variables not explicitly stated in the model (Error term)
 β_0 = Intercept of the regression equation
 β_1 - β_3 = Regression coefficients estimates which showed the effect of EB, EE and EB*EE on BP respectively.

Export-preneurial behaviours is represented as a blend of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), social networks (SN), distribution logistics (DL), entrepreneurial mindset (EM), trust (TR) and packaging (PG). These constructs (x_1, \dots, x_n) as earlier stated interact in this study to explain the engendering of business performance with export-preneurial behaviours although export experience is seen to moderate this relationship. Hence, prevailing knowledge is tested and enlarged with the assumption of this study which is represented as ($BP = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 EB + \beta_2 EE + \beta_3 EB*EE + \mu_i$). The Experience effect theory explains the moderating interaction which experience in exporting could have as a catalyst to export-preneurial behaviours-performance relationship amongst the non-oil export enterprises. Hence, this study utilized econometric models prescribed in hierarchical regression form as it will depict the catalytic role of experience in the relationship between the predictor and the output variable, as well as its strength and direction. As such, the apriori expectation is that if results reveal a $p \leq 0.05$ and $\beta_i \neq 0$ (where β_i represents $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$, and β_6); a rejection of the hypothesis would be favoured.

Ethical considerations was observed in conducting this research as secrecy and anonymity were ensued strictly during the design of the questionnaire to encourage voluntary responses. Also, benefits to the respondents were clearly outlined, while efforts to ensure the avoidance of plagiarism were adopted to make for originality of the research work. Despite the obvious limitations inherent in the choice of methodology used (time-constraint, confidentiality and adapted questionnaire), it was mitigated by the use of trained field enumerators to ensure faster coverage, moral suasion in order to ensure that more respondents attend to the questionnaire, and pilot testing to confirm relevance of the instrument to the study, in order to further minimize any biases that could have arisen, thereafter.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As previously stated, the objective of this work was to investigate the moderating effect of experience on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance. Of 395 respondents surveyed, only 52.7% response rate was recorded and confirmed satisfactory as Boso et al. (2016) observed similar response rate of 49.4% in his study of owner/managers. 19.7% had export experience of less than or equal to 5 years, 24.5% had 6-10 years export experience, 21.6% had export experience of 11-15 years, 16.3% had 16-20 years, and 17.8% had export experience of above 20 years. The formulated econometric model was subjected to tests using hierarchical regression analysis. The results are as presented in Table 1 respectively.

Table 1 Regression Results for the Moderating Effect of Export Experience on the Relationship between Export-preneurial Behaviours and Business Performance

N	Model	β	Sig	R Square	Adjusted R ²	R ² Δ	F Statistics
208	Constant	.016	.978	.199	.195	.199	51.048
	EB	.938	.000				(1, 206)
	Constant	.044	.937	.235 ^b	.227	.036	
	EB	.845	.000				31.443
	EE	.130	.002				(1, 205)
	Constant	-.498	.648	.236 ^c	.225	.001	
	EB	.971	.000				21.006
	EE	.348	.358				(1, 204)
	EB*EE	-.050	.562				

Predictors: (Constant), Export-preneurial Behaviours

Predictors: (Constant), Export-preneurial Behaviours, Export Experience

*Predictors: (Constant), Export-preneurial Behaviours, Export Experience, Export-preneurial Behaviours*Export Experience*

Dependent Variable: Business Performance

Source: Author's Computation, 2018; underlying data from Field Survey

Table 1 illustrates the summary of the hierarchical regression results of the export experience moderating effect on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance of selected enterprises in

South-Western Nigeria. The model 1 reveals export-preneurial behaviours regressed on business performance of selected enterprises in South-Western Nigeria and the results are as stated at ($R^2 = 0.199, p < 0.05$). It indicates that export-preneurial behaviours accounts for 19.9% of the variability in business performance of the selected non-oil enterprises, while the balance is accounted for by other variables not considered in this study.

Furthermore, Table 1 shows $\beta = 0.938, p < 0.05$ when export-preneurial behaviours is in the model alone. These results indicate that for every unit increase in export-preneurial behaviours, business performance of selected enterprises increased by 0.938. The overall model was also positively significant ($F = 51.048, p < 0.05$). In model 2, export experience was introduced, and a significant improvement of the effect of export experience on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance of selected enterprises ($R^2 = 0.235, p < 0.05$). Export-preneurial behaviours and export experience explain 38.6% of the variation in business performance of selected export-enterprises. The F value was positive and statistically significant ($F = 9.685, p < 0.05$) and the influence of the independent variable and the moderators were significant in the model. Table 1 shows β of export experience ($\beta = 0.130, p < 0.05$); and export-preneurial behaviours ($\beta = 0.845, p < 0.05$); that is for every unit increase in export experience and export-preneurial behaviours; business performance of selected enterprises increases by 0.130 and 0.845 respectively.

The interaction term (export-preneurial behaviours*export experience*business performance) was introduced in the model 3. All the variables of export-preneurial behaviours, export experience, the interaction term and business performance were entered in the regression model. Table 1 revealed a change in R^2 from 0.235 to 0.236 ($R^2 \Delta = 0.001$) after the introduction of the interaction term. The change was not statistically significant as the p -value = 0.562 > 0.05.

From Table 1, the results depict statistically insignificant relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and export experience and the interaction term ($F_{(1,204)} = 21.006, p > 0.05$). The F changed from 31.443 to 21.006 showing a drop when the interaction was introduced. The F ratio shows that the regression of export-preneurial behaviours and export experience on business performance of selected enterprises is not statistically significant. The β values reveals that β of the model parameters are negative and statistically insignificant at more than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). The results in Table 1 (Model 1) show statistically significant regression β for export-preneurial behaviours ($\beta = 0.938, p < 0.05$) indicating that there exists a linear dependence on business performance of selected enterprises on export-preneurial behaviours. In model 2, export experience was also statistically significant knowledge ($\beta = 0.130, p < 0.05$). With the addition of the interaction term, β was -0.050 meaning that for every unit change in interaction term, performance of selected SMEs decreases by 0.050. Furthermore, the interaction term showed a negative effect ($\beta = -0.050, p > 0.05$) that was not statistically significant. The established econometric equation from the results is stated as follows:

$$BP = -0.498 + 0.971EB + 0.348EE - 0.050EB*EE \dots\dots\dots \text{Working Regression Model}$$

Where:

BP = Business Performance

EB = Export-preneurial Behaviours

EE = Export Experience

EB*EE = Interaction of Export-preneurial Behaviours and Export Experience

The results indicate that export experience has no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance of the selected enterprises in South-Western Nigeria. These results are consistent with the findings of Laforet (2012) who studied 96 managers in Yorkshire, and Humberside and observed that export experience had no significant moderating effect on export-preneurial behaviours from the innovativeness outlook; on business performance.

The divergence in the results has been seen in studies carried out by many scholars (Haghighi, Firouzian & Najafi, 2008; Haluk, Köksal, & Özgü, 2010; Neneh, 2012; Pickernell, Jones, Thompson, & Packham, 2016; Roberts & Ingram, 2002), whose views portrayed various indicators of export-preneurial behaviours. Haghighi, Firouzian and Najafi (2008) investigated export food stuff production companies in Tehran province and indicated significant moderation of export experience on the relationship between direct export distribution channels and business performance. Köksal and Özgü (2010) also observed that experience gained from acquired knowledge positively moderated the packaging, conceptualized as brand image and product quality, which influenced export profitability. Furthermore, Neneh (2012) after investigating SMEs in South-Africa posited that entrepreneurial mind-set and performance relationship was moderated by export experience garnered through continuous education. Pickernell, Jones, Thompson and Packham (2016) found that age of the firm and formal education moderated the export orientation and performance relationship after examining in the United Kingdom. They explained from their findings that graduates tended to have better entrepreneurial

orientation targeted at export and required in enhancing SMEs' export performance. Roberts and Ingram (2002) explained that a positive significance was observed when knowledge transfers moderated the relationship between the business performance and export-preneurial behaviours measured as supplier social networks, as improvement was observed across sales growth indices of the wine companies in New Zealand and Australia.

Based on the results of the study as at the time, it implies that export experience is not a facilitator for application of export-preneurial behaviours that can engender incremental business performance. It suggests that while export experiences may be viewed as an edge which firms may be used as an advantage in enhancing the export-preneurial behaviours and business performance relationship; this may not be applicable in the Nigerian context with the South-Western Zone in particular. This may be as a result of differences in the representation of indicators which measure the concepts of the study or even the geographical location. Although according to theory, the repetitive tendency of an action enables an export-preneur adopt enhanced behaviour that can improve performance, this study challenges the theoretical assumptions as it negates its tenets.

In Nigeria, there is a genuine and urgent need to drive non-oil exports and so entrepreneurs who understand the needs in any foreign market, may not necessarily need experience gained based on continuous repetitive action. As such, export-preneurs with clear understanding of the expectations of the foreign buyers in terms of preferences, specifications and packaging, who have been able to build trust, leverage on their social capital along the export value chain, and can effectively manage their distribution logistics may be able to improve their businesses and grow their sales, customer base, profitability and expand their firm size as performance measures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to investigate the moderating effect of export experience on the relationship between export-preneurial behaviours and business performance. The result from this study challenges the finding of previous literature on the moderating role of export experience plays in the adoption of export-preneurial behaviours utilized by firms to improve their performance. The study observed that export-preneurial behaviours are imperative for business performance of export firms but found a negative and insignificant relationship, in the interference of export experience in the relationship. Hence, export-preneurs who already have idiosyncratic knowledge do not need to have previous experience based on the number of years in export, as it is seen as irrelevant in engineering business performance in South-Western Nigeria as at the time of the study. In addition, export-preneurs do not require prior experience to win a customer, make sales, expand firm size or even improve on its profitability.

From the aforementioned conclusions, the paper acknowledged the need for adopting export-preneurial behaviours in driving the performance of non-oil export firms, but advocated for export experience as evident in theoretical and empirical contributions suggested. In addition, entrepreneurial orientation and mindset, social capital enhanced by network, trust, and packaging could have been the behaviours driving performance of the non-oil export firms, instead of export experience. The results of this study could also have been affected by the environment in which it was carried out, and as such may not make for generalization in other developed economies. Thus, this paper suggests further studies be carried out to investigate the role of governmental support and system trust in engendering business performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is very grateful to Prof A. J. Egwakhe, Director, Babcock Centre for Executive Development for his mentorship, supervision and constant motivation to write more scholarly papers. Gratitude goes out to Engr. Ugochukwu C. Ariguzo who solely sponsored this research. Also thanks goes to the School of Postgraduate Studies of Babcock University, for inspiring the research zeal.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Vivian Adaobi Ariguzo (Mrs) is a doctoral student of Business Administration with specialization in entrepreneurship at Babcock University, Nigeria. She holds a B.Sc. (Accountancy) and M.Sc. (Human Resources Management). Her research interests include export trade development behaviours, social network relationships, strategy and change management. She is investigating export-preneurial behaviours and business performance of selected enterprises in South-West Nigeria in her doctoral thesis. She has authored many papers. **Address:** P. O. Box 5016, Festac Town, Lagos, Nigeria. Email address: ada.ariguzo@gmail.com

Johnson A. Egwakhe is a Professor of Business Administration in the School of Management Sciences at Babcock University. With over eighteen years of scholarly input in academic research and mentoring, He has authored a book titled *Self Efficacy and Entrepreneurship Tendency* and has made many other academic

contributions by way of article publications. He has also supervised many doctoral and masters students in the department of Business Administration and Marketing. He has worked in Kenya, Philippines, Rwanda, and Tanzania from 2008 to 2016. He is presently the Director, Babcock Centre for Executive Development. Email address: jegwakhe@gmail.com

Dr. Adesoga Adefulu is an Associate Professor of Business Administration in the School of Management Sciences at Babcock University and a fellow of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria [NIMN]. He has held many leadership roles such as Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship of Babcock University, acting Head of Department. Currently, the Departmental Co-ordinator of Postgraduate programs, the editorial secretary of Babcock Journal of Management & Social Sciences (BJMASS) and Babcock Business and Marketing Review (BBMR). His work is widely published in accredited journals both locally and internationally and has won postdoctoral research fellowship award for two years at the University of South Africa and also won the research output award at the College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS) in 2016.

Email address: adefulua@babcock.edu.ng

References

- [1] Abiodun, T. S., & Rosli, M. (2014). The mediating effect of reconfiguring capabilities on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and export performance of small and medium enterprises. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(34), 345-356.
- [2] Agbawodikeizu, J. (2018). Innovation-adoption and performance of selected SMEs in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. (Unpublished masterthesis), Babcock University, Ilishan, Nigeria.
- [3] Ajayi, B. (2016). The impact of entrepreneurial orientation and networking capabilities on the export performance of Nigerian agricultural SMEs. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, 2(1), 1-23.
- [4] Alexandra, F., & Orlando, L. R. (2018). Relationship between intangible resources, absorptive capacities and export performance. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 14(1), 94-107.
- [5] Arokodare, M. A. (2018). Strategic entrepreneurship and performance of selected oil and gas service firms in Lagos and Rivers states, Nigeria. (Unpublished Mphil dissertation), Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria.
- [6] Asghari, E., & Rostami, A. R. R. (2017). The role of export entrepreneurship effective factors in export performance. *Engineering, Technology & Applied Science Research*, 7(4), 1855-1862.
- [7] Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99-120.
- [8] Boehe, D. (2013). Collaborate at home to win abroad: How does access to local network resources influence export behaviour? *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51(2), 167-182.
- [9] Boso, N., Cadogan, J. W., & Story, V. M. (2012). Complementary effect of entrepreneurial and market orientations on export new product success under differing levels of competitive intensity and financial capital. *International Business Review*, 21, 667-681.
- [10] Bouazza, A. B., Ardjouman, D., & Abada, O. (2015). Establishing the factors affecting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in Algeria. *American International Journal of Social Science*, 4(2), 101-115.
- [11] Cadogan, J. W., Morgan, R. E. & Story, V. M. (2006). Factors facilitating and impeding the development of export market-oriented behavior: A study of Hong Kong manufacturing exporters. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 35(5), 634-647.
- [12] Cates, M. S. (2007). Corporate entrepreneurship assessment instrument (CEAI): Refinement and validation of a survey measure. (Unpublished thesis), Air Force Institute of Technology.
- [13] Cavusgil, S. T., & Zou, S. (1994). Marketing strategy-performance relationship: An investigation of the empirical link in export market ventures. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(1) 1-21.
- [14] Chugan, P. K., & Singh, S. (2014). Taxonomy for firm-level determinants of export performance. *Universal Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 2(1), 6-12.
- [15] Covin, J. G., & Wales, W. J. (2011). The measurement of entrepreneurial orientation. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 1, 677-702.
- [16] Day, G. S., & Montgomery, D. B. (1983). Diagnosing the experience curve. *Journal of Marketing*, 47(2), 1-39.
- [17] Dess, G. G., Lumpkin, G. T., Eisner, B. A., McNamara, G., & Kim, B. (2012). *Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education Publishers.
- [18] D'Angelo, A., Majocchi, A., Zucchella, A., & Buck, T. (2013). Geographical pathways for SME internationalization: Insights from an Italian sample. *International Marketing Review*, 30, 80-105.

- [19] Di Maria, E., & Ganau, R. (2014). Driving a firm's export propensity and export intensity: The role of experience, innovation, and international marketing strategy. Marco Fanno Working Paper no. 175, University of Padova.
- [20] Erdil, T. S., & Özdemir, O. (2016). The determinants of relationship between marketing mix strategy and drivers of export performance in foreign markets: An application on Turkish clothing industry. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 235, 546-556.
- [21] Export Act (1992). Export (incentives and miscellaneous provisions) act of 1992. <https://nlipw.com/export-incentives-miscellaneous-provisions-act/>
- [22] Gatawa, N. M., & Dalhatu, L. A. (2017). An impact analysis of export-led growth strategy in Nigeria (1980 – 2015). *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Economics and Public Sector Management*, 5(2), 157-189.
- [23] Gilaninia, S., Ganjina, H., & Jelodarloo, S. N. A. (2012). The impact of organizational factors on export performance of export firms located in Tabriz. *Journal of Basic Applied Science Resources*, 2(9), 9230-9234.
- [24] Gilaninia, S., Monsef, S. M. S., & Soleymani, F. (2013). Effect of packaging quality on performance of Saffron export. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business*, 4(12), 459-463.
- [25] Hagsten, E., & Kotnik, P. (2014). ICT as facilitator of internationalisation in small and medium-sized firms. OECD, 1-23. http://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/6_2_eva_hagsten.pdf
- [26] Hamilton, M. (2015). How to lead the export-preneur revolution. Mash Direct Newsletter of 12/08/2015. <http://www.freshbusinessstinking.com/how-to-lead-the-export-preneur-revolution/>
- [27] Henderson, B. D. (1973). The experience curve – Reviewed II: History. Perspective. The Boston Consulting Group Inc. 125,1-2. Retrieved from http://image-src.bcg.com/Images/BCG_The_Experience_Curve_II_History_Jan_73_tcm9-139711.pdf
- [28] Henderson, B. D. (1974). The experience curve reviewed: V. Price Stability. Perspectives. The Boston Consulting Group Inc.
- [29] Hoang, P. B. (2015). Relationship of export market orientation, selected export strategy, and export performance: An empirical study. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: E-Marketing*, 15(6), 1-9.
- [30] Holtgrave, M., & Onay, S. M. (2017). Success through trust, control, and learning? Contrasting the drivers of SME performance between different modes of foreign market entry. *Administrative Sciences Journal*, 7(9), 1-24.
- [31] Josee, B., Mark, P., & Armand, O. (2013). The impact of communicative competence on export performance: A relationship management approach. *Journal of Communication*, 9, 167-176.
- [32] Kabagambe, L. B., Ogutu, M., & Munyoki, J. M. (2017). Firm competencies and export performance: A study of small and medium manufacturing exporters in Uganda. *European Scientific Journal*, 8 (12), 48-67.
- [33] Kamitewoko, E. (2013). Determinants of entrepreneurship success: An examination of Chinese-owned businesses in Congo Brazzaville. *Scientific Research*, 2 (3), 113-120.
- [34] Köksal, M. H., & Özgül, E. (2010). The export competitive advantages of Turkish manufacturing companies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 28(2) 206 – 222.
- [35] Kwon, S. W., & Arenius, P. (2010) Nations of entrepreneurs: A social capital perspective. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25(3), 315-330.
- [36] Laforet, S. (2012). Organizational innovation outcomes in SMEs: Effects of age, size, and sector. *Journal of World Business*, 1, 1-13.
- [37] Love, J. H., Rope, S., & Zhou, Y. (2016). Experience, age and exporting performance in UK SMEs. *International Business Review*, 25(4) 806-819.
- [38] Martinović, M., & Matana, E. (2017). Influence of perceived export barriers on the export intensity of the Croatian manufacturers. *Ekonomika Praksis*, 26(1), 107-128.
- [39] Michael, J. T., & Araujo, L. (1985). Theories of export behaviour: A critical analysis. *European Journal of Marketing*, 19(2), 42-52.
- [40] Miočević, D., & Crnjak-Karanović, B. (2011). Cognitive and information-based capabilities in the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises: The case of Croatian exporters. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 49(4), 537-557.
- [41] Monogbel, T. G. & Okah, O. J. (2017). Export promotion, import substitution and economic integration in Nigeria. *iBusiness*, 9, 134-148.
- [42] Murray, J. Y., Gao, G. Y., & Kotabe, M. (2011). Market orientation and performance of export ventures: The process through marketing capabilities and competitive advantages. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39, 252-269.
- [43] Navarro-García, A. (2016). Drivers of export entrepreneurship. *International Business Review*, 25, 244-254.

- [44] Navarro, A., Losada, F., Ruzo, E., & Diez, J. A. (2010). Implications of perceived competitive advantages, adaptation of marketing tactics and export commitment on export performance. *Journal of World Business*, 45, 49-58.
- [45] Neneh, B. N. (2012). An exploratory study on entrepreneurial mindset in the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector: A South African perspective on fostering small and medium enterprise (SME) success. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(9), 3364-3372.
- [46] NEPC (2017). Nigerian Export Promotion Council performing exporters list.
- [47] Nik, A-h.N. & Nnabuike, I. C. (2017). Entrepreneurial orientation impact on export performance of Nigerian agricultural SMEs. *International Journal of Management Research & Review*, 7(4), 424-438.
- [48] Nuseir, M. T. (2016). Analysing the influence of international entrepreneurship on the SMEs exporting performance using structural equation model: An empirical study in Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 11(2), 153-163.
- [49] Nworu, O. C. N. (2017). Export: Improving Nigerian government revenue base and economic diversification. *Human Resource Management Research*, 7(1), 65-73.
- [50] Ogunnaike, O. O., & Kehinde, O. J. (2013). Social networking and business performance: The case of selected entrepreneurs in Ota, Nigeria. *Journal of Business Administration and Management Sciences Research*, 2(25), 116-122.
- [51] Penrose, E. T. (1959). *The theory of the growth of the firm*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [52] Perks, K., & Hughes, M. (2008). Entrepreneurial decision making in internationalization: Propositions from mid-size firms. *International Business Review*, 17(3), 310-330.
- [53] Pickernell, D., Jones, P., Thompson, P., & Packham, G. (2016). Determinants of SME exporting insights and implications. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 17(1), 31-42. <https://doi.org/10.5367/ijei.2016.0208>.
- [54] Pulka, B. M., Ramli, A. B., & Bakar, M. S. (2018). Marketing capabilities, resources acquisition capabilities, risk management capabilities, opportunity recognition capabilities and SMEs performance: A proposed framework. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(1), 12-22.
- [55] Rahimnezhad, S., & Alipour, H. (2015). Identify the determining factors of export performance of tea exporting companies. *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences*, 5(6), 1298-1306.
- [56] Reid, S. D. (1981). The decision-maker and export entry and expansion. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 12(2), 101-112.
- [57] Richard, P. J., Devinney, T., Yip, G., & Johnson, G. (2009). Measuring organizational performance: Towards methodological best practice. *Journal of Management*, 35(3), 718-804.
- [58] Roberts, P.W., & Ingram, P. (2002). *Vertical linkages, knowledge transfer and export performance: The Australian and New Zealand wine industry, 1987-1999*. New York, NY: Columbia University.
- [59] Rogo, H. B., Shariff, M. N. M., & Hafeez, M. H. (2017). Moderating effect of access to finance on the relationship between total quality management, market orientation and SMEs performance: A proposed framework. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, *Econjournals*, 7(1), 119-127.
- [60] Roper, S., & Malshe, A. (2013). *The mighty middle – Growth and opportunity in the UK's mid-market*. London: GE Capital/Warwick Business School.
- [61] Sanjo, O. M., & Ibrahim, M. O. (2017). The effect of international business on SMEs growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 9(3), 67-80.
- [62] Wilden, R., Gudergan, S. P., Nielsen, B. B., & Lings, I. (2013) Dynamic capabilities and performance: Strategy, structure and environment. *Long Range Planning*, 46(1-2), 72-96.
- [63] Williams, D. A. (2011). Impact of firm size and age on the export behaviour of small locally owned firms: Fresh insights. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 9, 152-174.
- [64] Yazeed, M. (2017). The effect of entrepreneurial characteristics on the profitability of micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Kaduna State. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Development, Education and Science Research*, 4(2), 139-148.
- [65] Yeoh, P.-L. (2004). International learning: antecedents and performance implications among newly internationalizing companies in an exporting context. *International Marketing Review*, 21(4/5), 511-535.
- [66] Zhou, W. (2002). *Different Scenarios for Borås as a Regional Logistics Center*. (Unpublished masters' thesis), Göteborg University.