

Julia Christofo

Antecedents of Venture Firms' Internationalization

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Entrepreneurship

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„Entrepreneurship“ ist ein noch relativ junger Forschungszweig, der jedoch in Wissenschaft und Praxis stetig an Bedeutung gewinnt. Denn Unternehmensgründungen und deren Promotoren nehmen für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung einen zentralen Stellenwert ein, so dass es nur folgerichtig ist, dem auch in Forschung und Lehre Rechnung zu tragen.

Die Schriftenreihe bietet ein Forum für wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Entrepreneurship-Thematik. Ziel ist der Transfer von aktuellen Forschungsergebnissen und deren Diskussion aus der Wissenschaft in die Unternehmenspraxis.

Julia Christofor

Antecedents of Venture Firms' Internationalization

A Conjoint Analysis of International
Entrepreneurship in the Net Economy

With a foreword by Prof. Dr. Tobias Kollmann

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Foreword

The objective of *Julia Christofor's* thesis is to analyze and explain the propensity of firms and their respective entrepreneurs to internationalize. The focus of this thesis is primarily on firms with information-technology-based business models, i.e. Electronic-Business-Firms, which create value via digital networks. Such firms are often referred to as „Born Globals“. It can therefore be assumed that on the basis of the distinct characteristics of the world wide web and because the market participants are globally interconnected via digital networks, these newly founded firms are more likely to internationalize early in their life cycle.

Furthermore, because there have been fundamental changes in the technological, economic and societal spheres, the internationalization process and the propensity of these firms to offer their products on international markets may not necessarily be explained with the help of classical theories of internationalization. At the same time, the management of the newly founded E-Business firms, which are active in and pressured to thrive in a global competitive environment, are confronted with completely new challenges. The theoretical foundations presented from the academic internationalization literature stream only go some way to explaining the internationalization behavior of young E-Business-firms. This is especially due to the fact that these approaches basically relate to international, multinational and established firms.

Julia Christofor approaches these extensive shifts in internationalization behavior by integrating both the entrepreneurship and internationalization literature streams: Firstly, the basic parameters of the internationalization decision of newly founded firms are identified. Secondly, a theoretical framework of internationalization propensity is derived and, lastly, the theoretical propositions are empirically assessed. In this manner, prototypical profiles of entrepreneurs, who react differently with respect to the internationalization decision, are highlighted. By means of a comprehensive statistical methodology and based on a representative sample of Net Economy firms, the joint influence of international market orientation, protection of proprietary rights, resource commitment, scalability and digitalization of products and processes as well as the international personal network of the

parties are pointed out. In addition, this thesis combines the new research field “International Entrepreneurship” and “Corporate Entrepreneurship” for testing the hypotheses and an exploratory analysis of the impact of the “Entrepreneurial Orientation” on parameters of internationalization propensity is carried out. It is demonstrated that different levels of entrepreneurial orientation, i.e. a different relation of innovation, risk and proactivity of firms, also comprise different levels of internationalization propensity.

In summary, with her thesis *Julia Christofor* attempts and accomplishes a contribution which is highly significant for newly found Electronic Business firms as well as for entrepreneurship and computer sciences theories. I believe this doctoral dissertation deserves to capture a broad readership and attention in science as well as in practice and I wish *Julia Christofor* all the best in her future endeavors.

Prof. Dr. Tobias Kollmann

Aknowledgements

As the breadth of the World Wide Web and its technological applications continues to increase globally, knowledge-based firms with digital business models are able to internationalize earlier and at a faster pace in comparison to firms with traditional business models. This phenomenon suggests that a shift in the decision-makers attitude towards internationalization may occur because of the borderless, digital context the firms are active in. The internationalization decision takes on particular importance because these Net-Economy-Firms are resource-poor, manager-driven and are active in market niches. While the internationalization decision determines the future growth development of the firm, the decision arises early in the firm's life-cycle. With a focus on this epistemological interest this thesis aims to contribute to the field of International Entrepreneurship research.

This PhD-project was pursued during my tenure as research assistant at the chair for E-Business and E-Entrepreneurship, initiated at the Multimedia Campus in Kiel (Christian-Albrechts-University) and completed at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. During the completion of this doctoral dissertation I am grateful to have received helpful and sincere assistance.

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Dr. Julia Christofer

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List of Abbreviations

ACA	Adaptive Conjoint Analysis
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CA	Conjoint Analysis
cf.	Compare
e.g.	Exempli gratia (<i>for example</i>)
ed.	Edition
EO	Entrepreneurial Orientation
etc.	and so forth
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
i.e.	id est (<i>that is to say</i>)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IE	International Entrepreneurship
IP	Internet Protocol
IPO	Initial Public Offering
IT	Information Technology
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
N.N.	Nomen nescio
OLS	Ordinary Least Square
OR	Opportunity Recognition
PC	Personal Computer
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PLC	Product Life Cycle
pp.	Pages
R&D	Research and Development
s	Standard deviation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TCP	Transmission Control Protocol
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
viz.	Namely
wLANs	wireless Local-Area-Networks
WWW	World wide web