AGE AT INITIAL INTERNATIONAL ENTRY: A META-ANALYTIC REVIEW OF ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES (SUMMARY)

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AGE AT INITIAL INTERNATIONAL ENTRY: 
A META-ANALYTIC REVIEW OF ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

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Principal Topic

Over the last 25 years, International Entrepreneurship (IE) developed into a unique field of study. Despite many accomplishments to date, recent reviews raise important questions about what we know about the antecedents and consequences of age at entry decisions, highlighting that “many knowledge gaps, theoretical inconsistencies, and conflicting predictions limit our understanding of IE” (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009: 601) and that “potential contradictions arise” with the effects of key antecedents (networks) on age at entry (Jones et al, 2011: 638).

Method

We developed a comprehensive list of phenomenon-specific keywords, conducted searches in Business Source, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, and culled all studies citing works by Oviatt and McDougall (1994, 2005) and Cavusgil (1994a, 1994b) as well as all papers in the Journal of International Entrepreneurship. To be included, each study had to contain a measure of the venture's age at entry, an antecedent (e.g., prior knowledge) or outcome (e.g., international scope), and correlations. We then used meta-analysis to aggregate the evidence. Meta-analysis yields a weighted average effect ($r$) of the size of a relationship (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004) which minimizes the impact that sampling and measurement error have on any given studies’ results.

Results and Implications

Results suggest that some key theoretical antecedents may not hold. Surprisingly, the greater the prior knowledge of the founder(s), the later the venture internationalizes. Although characteristics of the market entered did not influence when a venture internationalized, these characteristics influence the venture's post-entry international scope. Similarly, greater prior knowledge and an earlier age at entry lead to greater post-entry growth.

Our study takes a step toward resolving ambiguity in IE in three interrelated ways. First, the effects of antecedents on the age at entry decision may differ in counterintuitive ways from their effects on the outcomes of early entry. Second, our study suggests more research is needed to develop a more holistic theory of the drivers of age of initial international entry. Finally, a methodological focus on sampling on the dependent variable may have outlived its usefulness.

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