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- Information, Knowledge and Opportunities Exporting in the 21st Century: The importance of *Market Insight* -

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Abstract

This study aims to chart out the relationships between theoretical concepts that have been developed through previous research. It investigates the importance of information and knowledge for exporting firms' performance. It suggests a model built on market information activities (acquisition, processing, and dissemination) and knowledge based components (market insight, planning, and responsiveness). The basic theory supporting the model is found within the market orientation school of thought. However, new elements are included in the model, both of which are an effect of the information technology revolution: Processing – because of the amount of information available. Market insight – a knowledge based component which does not only incorporate the market relevant knowledge of firm employees but also the knowledge obtained through network contacts.

I order to test the theory a survey was conducted on 112 Norwegian exporting firms. Using regression analysis, the research finds support for seven out of ten hypotheses: In line with previous research it finds that information activities are important activities for establishing and developing the knowledge base from which the firm acts. Furthermore, it confirms that market insight is first and foremost dependent on a combination of accumulated experience and knowledge obtained through networks. Hence, the size and level of market insight grows proportionally with the number of relevant network contacts. The study also finds a strong and positive relationship between market insight and export performance, hence, the cultivation of market insight for exporting firms, this study contends, is central.

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1.0 Introduction

"Marketing as a science is a technological or applied discipline (i.e., an art or applied science) that aims at defining the formal character (general principles) by which to create, promote and deliver need-satisfying products to consumers. It is a science devoted to discovering the means by which to achieve the goal of being alert to opportunities" (Kirkpatrick 1983, 5).

This thesis is about exporting in the 21st century, and it posits that relevant information combined with relevant knowledge constitute the two main building blocks for exporters to succeed in a given market. The questions are then how to acquire relevant information and how to accumulate relevant knowledge? Additionally, how to combine the two so that decision making in the face of the uncertainty related to doing business in a foreign market becomes as appropriate and correct as possible? And lastly, which are the prerequisites for not only "being alert to opportunities", but also being able to act on them.

My aim is to find answers to these questions in existing marketing- and other relevant literature, and based on these findings suggest a simple model for export market behavior.

Based on the above definition, my assumption was that it would be a relatively easy task to identify research relevant to the objectives of this thesis. But; "The paradigm shift (in Marketing) of the 1950s brought about a proliferation of new schools: marketing management; marketing systems; consumer behavior; macro- marketing; exchange; and marketing history. As the discipline fragmented, most schools have developed a life of their own as scholars narrowly focus within their own specialty without regard to other schools or their integration into a unified whole (Bartels 1988). Despite the impressive accumulation of knowledge within particular schools during the past 100 years, the status of marketing thought taken as

a whole appears in more disarray at the beginning of the 21st century than at the beginning of the 20th century" (Shaw and Jones 2005, 33).

In addition to the lack of coherence within the science of marketing, I also found that a major part of the research and literature within the marketing theoretical domain deals with the specifics of the selling of firms' products in a *domestic* context. Hence, it has been a challenge of dimensions to both identify relevant literature and to choose which of the multitude of theories and concepts to use in the context of this thesis. For entrepreneurs, exporters and managers of businesses in general – for whom the science of marketing after all is "made" – it must be close to impossible to make sense of it all, and is possibly the reason why businesses in general do not use academic research, or when they do, they do not trust the findings. As expressed by Professor C. A. Solberg at BI Norwegian Business School in 2003; "Managers and market analysts live in two different worlds."

Because of the difficulties of finding my way through the science of marketing, a primary objective when writing this thesis is to follow the KISS- principle; Keep It Simple Stupid. As part of this, I therefore choose a "machete- approach" in order to cut the theoretical and conceptual jungle down to a manageable- and relevant to this thesis- size. The concepts and schools of thought I am left with, and which I interpret as most appropriate for this research are a) Market Orientation, b) Export Market Orientation (EMO), c) Internationalization theory with a focus on the Uppsala Model, d) Information Behavior and e) Market Insight. Common for all of them is that they identify both Information and Knowledge leading to the attainment of the objectives quoted above. They differ, however, in how they operationalize and weigh the importance of the individual elements linked with information and knowledge. Each of these concepts will therefore be defined and discussed separately, and I will extract elements relevant to the exporting context as interpreted and discussed by the author of this thesis, to each form an element of the suggested export behavior model.

1.1 Purpose of the study & research questions

The overall objective of this thesis is to examine the effect of information activities and knowledge components on exporting firms' performance. This will be tested against the theoretical backdrop of the market orientation concept, and against other relevant concepts and schools of thought. The following research question is put forward:

What is the relevance of market orientation for exporting firms?

How can other concepts and schools of thought complement market orientation and present a unified model for export behavior in the 21st century?

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters: Chapter one starts with an introduction of the research topic and outlines the objective of the study and the research questions. Chapter two reviews relevant literature. The chapter sums up with a research model and hypotheses. Chapter three contains a methodology section, explaining how the study was carried out. Chapter four presents the study's results. Chapter five is devoted to the analysis of the findings. The study concludes in chapter six with a discussion of the results and suggestions for further research.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

2.1 Background: The 21st century, export versus doing business at home

> "The world is in the midst of a historical transformation at the turn of the millennium. Like all major transformations in history, it is multidimensional: technological, economic, social, cultural, political, geo-political. Yet, in the end, what is the real meaning of this extraordinary mutation for social development, for people's lives and well-being?" (Castells 1999, 9).

The "transformation" referred to in this quote, is the one brought on by the "information technology revolution and globalization" (Castells 1999, 9). Furthermore, econometric studies show the close statistical relationship between diffusion of information technology, productivity and competitiveness for countries, regions, industries and firms (Dosi et al. 1988). Marketing as an academic study is more than a hundred years old, and most of the literature, the theories and concepts, the conducted studies and the research are from the times prior to this "transformation" started. One may ask, "what is the real meaning of this extraordinary mutation" for marketing theory? Are all theories still valid? When Mao was asked what he thought was the meaning of the French Revolution, his response was that it was too early to tell. Considering the fact that we are still in the midst of- or most likely in the early stages of a revolution, a revolution that is accelerating in speed and increasing in depth by the month, it is close to impossible to deduce which theories are more or less valid, and how the information technology revolution influences on- and changes firm behavior. What is valid today may be invalid tomorrow.

Another aspect of the same question is how this transformation influences and changes the environment in which the firms operate, in this thesis, the export context? And there is a difference between selling a product in a domestic market compared to trying to sell that same product in a foreign country. A multitude of literature empirically suggesting how different and challenging it can be to be in a foreign country compared to operating at home exist (e.g. Cadogan, Diamantopoulos, and Siguaw 2002), from the

handling of differences in language, to culture to musical expressions, climate, general behavioral codes, etc., that resorting to references makes little sense. The following quote from the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (6th century BC), however, captures, eloquently and- for this thesis- fittingly, the difference between being at home and going abroad; whether it being for vacationing or for exporting,: "Without stirring abroad, one can know the whole world; Without looking out of the window one can see the way of heaven. The further one goes the less one knows."

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 The Marketing Concept – theoretical backbone

The basic theoretical foundation for this thesis is found within the Marketing Management School which addresses the question of how organizations should market their products and services. This school of marketing thought focuses on the practice of marketing viewed from the sellers' perspective (Shaw and Jones 2005, 256). Established in the late 1950s and the early sixties, it is possible to identify two broad concepts that have had, and still have considerable influence within this school of thought. They are the "Marketing Concept" introduced by Robert Keith in 1960 and the "Marketing Mix" expressed by Neil Borden in 1964. The Marketing Concept introduces the customer orientation perspective. In effect this implied that all managerial decisions and all organizational activities should be geared towards satisfying customer needs. In order to be able to act in accordance with those needs, and design products fulfilling those needs, the acquisition of intelligence or information about consumers' and customers' needs was essential. In the concept of the Marketing Mix, the executive is a "decider", a "mixer of ingredients", and the ingredients to decide upon in one suggested "mix" were the four "Ps", Product, Price, Promotion and Place (Shaw and Jones 2005, 256). Although, the concept of the Marketing Mix seems to have been

(marginally) the most influential of the two concepts, this thesis will use the Marketing Concept as its theoretical backbone, as it identifies information (about customers and competitors) and the organization's ability to act in accordance with that information as the central ingredients for a firm to successfully selling its products.

2.2.2 Market Orientation – the implementation of the marketing concept

Despite the importance of the marketing concept and organizations' effort to achieve success through being oriented towards their customers, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that attempts were made to clarify implementation issues (Kotler 1977; Shapiro 1988). Since then, a new perspective for viewing marketing concept as implementation has emerged within the marketing literature. In this context, five different perspectives have been advanced that visualize Market Orientation (MO) as the implementation of a marketing concept. These are: decision-making perspective, market intelligence perspective, culturally based behavioral perspective, strategic perspective, and the customer orientation perspective (Shapiro 1988; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Ruekert 1992; Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993). Market orientation is hence operationalized in different and even competing ways (Cadogan, Diamantopoulos and Mortanges 1999).

In general, however the literature distinguishes between two broad directions: behavioral and cultural ones (Homburg and Pfesser 2000). The behavioral direction focuses on the organizational activities relating to the a) generation, b) dissemination of and c) responsiveness to market intelligence (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). The cultural direction focuses on the cultural norms and values that stimulate market oriented activities (Narver and Slater 1990; Deshpande, Farley and Webster 1993). In their study "Market Orientation and the Learning Organization", Narver and Slater (1995) distinguish between "culture" and "climate" and identify "entrepreneurial drive" and "market orientation" as the culture factors,

while “organic structure”, “facilitative leadership” and “decentralized strategic planning” are identified as the climate factors. The product of “culture” and “climate” constitute the “learning organization” – an organization with a competitive advantage because it is calibrated to capture (acquire) “information from direct experience, the experience of others and from organizational memory”, and learn (Narver and Slater 1995, 64).

When comparing the two broad directions of market orientation, it is clear that information is at the heart of both of them. The main difference can be summarized as a) Market Orientation Behavior is focusing on acquiring information (intelligence) about customers and competitors in order to develop a superior and tailor made product, hence optimal performance as result b) Market Orientation Culture is focusing on acquiring information from a much wider range of sources with learning as a process, knowledge as by-product, and competitive advantage as a result. The introduction of entrepreneurial drive, put on equal terms with market orientation, is another important, and relevant to this thesis, difference.

Despite of the general academic agreement that a business model based on market orientation can be reflected in positive competitiveness and positive profit yields (e.g. Kirca et al. 2005), there also seems to be a general academic agreement that market orientation has its weaknesses and limitations. Critique and debate about what actually constitutes a market orientation and how it should be implemented have been abundant over the years: Market orientation is said to have led to incremental and trivial product development (Bennett and Cooper 1979; 1981), myopic R&D programs (Frosch 1996), confused business processes (MacDonald 1995), loss of industry leadership (Christensen and Bower 1996), and decline in competition within industries (Hayes and Abernathy 1980; Hayes and Realwright 1984). Furthermore, the marketing concept is said to be at odds with the company’s social and ethical responsibilities to consumers (Bell and Emory 1971; Sachs and Benson 1978) and it ignores creativity, uniqueness, and objectives of the firm (Kaldor 1971; Sharp 1991).

The criticism is not concerned with optimal level of market orientation; rather it asserts that being market oriented can be harmful to realization of business objectives. Houston (1996); Slater and Narver (1998; 1999) and Day (1999) responded to this critique and it can be summarized in three statements: 1) Market orientation is not necessarily the best orientation for all organizations in all environments (Houston 1986; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Kotler 1997), 2) A market orientation is not limited to a focus on (current) customers and their expressed needs and wants (Slater and Narver 1998; Day 1999; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990), 3) Market orientation needs to be balanced with creativity and a deep understanding of the firm's unique capabilities and objectives (Houston 1986; Kaldor 1971; Sharp 1991).

Another critique has revolved around the international aspect of market orientation: Market orientation is originally developed for the domestic business environment; hence a direct application in the exporting context may not bring the desired results. The following elements are found to be of relevance also in an exporting context: a) the focus on the acquisition and dissemination of and responsiveness to market relevant information or "intelligence" (Kohli and Jaworski 1990), this thesis posits, are universal and perpetual necessities for all businesses in any context in the age of the information society, b) The focus on learning and knowledge generation, planning processes and entrepreneurial drive as outlined by Narver and Slater and d) The use of information, knowledge and planning to facilitate for rational decision making processes in the face of uncertain outcomes; "responsiveness".

2.2.2.3 Export Market Orientation

Export market orientation refers to the nature of market orientation as applied to an international/ export setting (Souchon and Diamantopoulos 1996). Export market orientation is based on an integration of the two key conceptualizations of market orientation described above: According to Narver and Slater (1990, 20), market orientation is "the organizational

culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers". On the other hand, Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 3) conceptualized market orientation as "the organization-wide generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to market intelligence". Through integrating both of the key theorizations of market orientation, export market orientation has been conceptualized to consist of "various generic activities associated with the generation, dissemination, and response to export market intelligence and are oriented towards export customers, competitors, and exogenous market influences. Such activities are carried out through a coordinating mechanism". (Cadogan, Diamantopoulos and Mortanges 1999, 690).

Summary of the market- and export orientations

Keeping in mind that exporting has been compared with an innovation (Axinn 1988), and keeping in mind that innovation is defined as the ability of the organization to adopt and implement new ideas and processes or products successfully (Burns and Stalker 1961), this thesis posits that neither market nor export orientation capture this dimension. An external focus stimulates new ideas and responsiveness (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Slater and Narver 1994; 1995). Hence, market orientation capture partly the dimension of innovation, which Axinn (1988) argues is comparable with exporting. Narver and Slater's "learning organization" identifying entrepreneurial drive as a cultural component needed to create superior products does not embrace the much wider perspective inherent in innovation (Hurley and Hult 1998, 42). Therefore, the lack of innovation culture is posited as a weakness when market orientation is applied to an export context.

2.2.4 Internationalization and the Uppsala Model

This study finds that the most relevant school of thought in the context of exporting is the Uppsala Model. The Uppsala Model (Johanson and Vahlne 1977) highlights the challenges of operating in cultures different from

one's own and outlines a modality for how companies that want to internationalize their operation may go ahead. There are differences between internationalization and exporting, but at the same time there are also many parallels which make it possible to extrapolate aspects of the Uppsala Model to an exporting context. The Uppsala Model emphasizes that the incremental and experiential learning represent key behaviors with regards to overcoming obstacles represented by foreign and distant cultures. It introduces the concept of "psychic distance" as an example of obstacles. Their study focuses on four Swedish firms that are in various stages of their internationalization process. In order to overcome "psychic distance", they start in markets with cultures similar to their own. This is in order to get the necessary experience to move incrementally and methodologically into more culturally distant markets. Reference is made to Lao Tze earlier in the document.

For exporting firms, this thesis posits that the relevance of the Uppsala Model is the experience- learning- knowledge emphasis, not explicitly highlighted neither by the market orientation concept, nor the export market orientation measure. The Uppsala Model, however, is not flawless, and critique of the model has been rife, especially after the information technological revolution became a global phenomenon (e.g. Forsgren 2002). Forsgren's (2002) main point of critique was that the Uppsala Model focused on only one dimension of learning, the experiential one. In his study, Forsgren refers to new research on learning in light of the information revolution. He stresses that learning is a multi-dimensional construct and that the information revolution also revolutionizes and changes the arenas where learning happens and knowledge is exchanged. In a related study, Andersson, Forsgren and Holm (2002, 979) explore "the importance of relational embeddedness in external networks as a strategic resource for performance and competence development in multinational corporations". In essence they contend that learning and knowledge transfer need being extended beyond experiential and internal to also include the exchange of knowledge in- through- from external networks. By adding this second dimension they suggest that companies can "skip"

certain steps of the establishment chain suggested in the original Uppsala Model and, hence, internationalize much quicker and wider. Based on this, Johanson and Vahlne (2009) revisit their model and "modernize" it, i.e. include the possibilities of learning in and from and through networks. Embeddedness in networks is suggested to reduce perceived psychic distance, while the term "liability of foreignness" is replaced with the term "liability of outsidership". The implications of being outside of networks are best illustrated by the following quote:

> "Those who remain inside [the network] have the opportunity to share and, over time, to increase their chances. Those who drop out, or become switched off, will see their chances vanish" (Castells 1999, iv)

The specificities of the exporting situation include various degrees of not understanding the environment in which one operates. The degree of lack of understanding is decided by factors such as access to relevant information, years of experience in the market, access to- and embeddedness in networks, and resources (Johanson and Vahlne 1977). The size of the information gap combined with own knowledge of the market, or experience from similar markets lead to various degrees of the perception of risk and uncertainty by exporting and internationalizing firms. The export marketing literature highlights the role of information as a tool both to reduce risk and uncertainty as well as a tool to identify emerging opportunities (e.g. Benito, Solberg, and Welch 1993; Leonidou and Katsikeas 1997). Both Johanson and Vahlne (1977), and Seringhaus (1986; 1993) distinguish between objective and experiential information. Objective information embodies published (often statistical) information from secondary or tertiary sources, while experiential knowledge is personally acquired through direct (primary) market or customer contact. Another classification is that between formal and informal information (e.g. Hart, Webb and Jones 1994). Gemünden (1991) specifically dedicates part of his review to the important role of information activity for exporters, as this is the only activity found to have a positive relationship with all three export performance measures used; export profitability, export growth, and export intensity (Voerman, Wedel and Zwart 1998).

2.2.5 Information Behavior

Information behavior has been described as "how people need, seek, manage, give, and use information" (Pettigrew, Fidel, and Bruce 2001, 44). Information behavior within the marketing domain has been defined by Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1998, 145) as "the organizational level ability to capture information and the impact of this information on decision making". General information behavior compared to that outlined in the market orientation literature is that it consists of the same activities (acquisition, dissemination, and response), but that the focus related to acquisition is wider in scope. It does not only focus on acquisition of customer and competitor intelligence, but focuses more on the sources available and types of information needed than the above discussed theories do.

In their investigation of sources available to exporting firms, Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1998) identified three information sources: export marketing research, export assistance, and market intelligence. Marketing research is carried out by the firm and pertains to researching the foreign target market "for the purpose of reducing uncertainty surrounding international marketing decisions" (Cavusgil 1984, 262). It is characterized as a "formal, systematic, and objective" process and is carried out either by the firms itself or by a consultant /agency.

Export assistance includes direct or indirect governmental export promotion. This includes mostly standardized or customized information typically aimed at small-and medium sized firms seeking to strengthen their knowledge pool necessary to embark on their internationalization process. It has been found to be of negligible importance to exporting firms because it is not considered specific enough to fulfill managers' export knowledge requirements (Reid 1984).

The third source, market intelligence constitutes the mode in which everyday information is obtained by face-to-face personal contact and communication with the firm's foreign agents, distributors and other business relevant relations (network).

Each of these above discussed sources deliver different "types" of information. Birley (1985) and Hart, Webb and Jones (1994) distinguished between formal and informal. Peters and Brush (1996) distinguished between personal and professional documented sources. Similarly Kotabe and Czinkota (1992) classified information into either objective or experiential information sources. Objective information comprises published, primary, or secondary (often statistical) data. Experiential information (knowledge) refers to information obtained from direct contact with partners, customers and other network contacts.

2.2.6 Information Activities

The previous section has reviewed the following relevant concepts and schools of thought: Market orientation (cultural/ behavioral), Export Market Orientation, the Uppsala Model, and Information Behavior. Common for all of them is the identification of information as a determinant for export success. The difference between them is that they emphasize different aspects related to information and complement each other when examining marketing in the export context. The market orientations emphasize information combined with learning, however, with a focus on customers and competitors. Internationalization emphasizes learning obtained from experience, while information behavior focuses on information sources, each of which constitutes facets of export behavior relevant to this thesis. Keeping in mind that the backdrop of this thesis is the ongoing information technology revolution, as discussed above, the following information activities are presented:

Information acquisition

Information does not only flow into the organization by itself. The acquisition of information should to the extent possible be a result of planned acquisition activities. For example, Leondiou and Theodosiou (2004, 15) contend that "Information acquisition is the collection of information for the purpose of detecting and/or solving a specific

marketing problem. Obviously, this process is closely connected with the previous stage of identifying information needs and is expressed in terms of the sources available when gathering this information".

Solberg (2012) argue that the potentially most important information for an exporting firm in the process of entering a new market is that related to potential partners; their reliability, trustworthiness, reputation etc. using this as an example of the complexity related to acquiring pertinent information one may assume that anyone not trustworthy or reliable is doing their best to hide such facts. For exporting firms with no contacts, experience, and limited knowledge of the given foreign market, it can be a formidable task to establish "the truth", exemplified by e.g. Telenor's operations in Russia. Information needs may change depending on the time in the market (Solberg 2001)

In line with Wiedersheim-Paul, Olson, and Welch (1978), this thesis posits that management need to define what kind of information is needed and to the extent possible identify which sources (both personal/ impersonal) that hold this information. Although the mentioned article focuses on information as a pre-export activity, information acquisition remains important throughout the firms' operations in a given market, but the need for types of information may change over time (Solberg 2001). Information acquisition requires both planning and resources and subsequent acquisition activities. In line with both market orientation and internationalization theory this thesis identifies information acquisition as a prerequisite for successful internationalization and export. Hence, it suggests acquisition as the first information activity in the research model.

Information Dissemination

According to Leonidou and Theodosiou (2004, 16), "Information dissemination is the degree to which information is diffused among relevant users, not only within the marketing department, but also within the organization as a whole. They furthermore describe the ways in which information is disseminated; bottom-up, top-down, horizontally, diagonally, formally and informally.

In short, dissemination of information is about getting the information to where it is supposed to get. Kohli and Joworski (1990) distinguish between formal and informal dissemination channels where the first is related to newsletters, formal meetings, reports, emails etc. the second is related to the sharing of informal information. Despite sparse research on the effects of informal information dissemination the importance of this factor is well recognized by managers (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). One example of this type of dissemination is "hall-talk" (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). Keeping in mind that the distinction made in the information behavior section between formal and informal information and the sources related to their acquisition it is possible to surmise that it is highly unlikely that informal information will come through formal acquisition channels. This means that a network contact or a partner will share information (knowledge) directly with the contact in the firm. The challenge for the firm is to make this form of information available to all relevant users. This thesis suggests (below) *planning* as a tool to capture this form of information. With regards to formal information the main challenge is not necessarily related to the dissemination per se, but that too much information is disseminated. As pointed out by Souchon et al. (2003, 111) "too much information may cause processing problems and/or confusion for the decision maker (Cavusgil 1985); therefore, information overload may negatively affect the extent to which decision makers are able to use available information properly". Cavusgil identified this as a challenge already in 1985. In 2012, in light of the information technology revolution, one may safely assume that this challenge is accentuated. Therefore, this thesis introduces "information processing" and suggests that it is executed between acquisition and dissemination of information.

Information Processing

Because of the potential for information overload described above this thesis suggests information processing consisting of the following activities, based on H. Van Dyke Parunak et al. (2005): 1) sifting of information to reduce quantity, 2) sorting of information to reduce entropy,

and 3) analysis. One development which shows that this is becoming a major challenge is the proliferation of programs sorting and sifting "unnecessary" information based on parameters defined by the firm, for instance the *SIFT System* (siftsystems.com). However, sifting can be done both by programs and by people. The analysis part, however, is still left for people to do. Based on the study by H. Van Dyke Parunak et al. (2005) their thesis suggests that analysis of the remaining information after sifting and sorting is an important activity before the information is disseminated. This to facilitate for especially objective or formal information being put into context prior to information reaching decision makers. It is possible that the information is re-analyzed in subsequent brain-storming and planning sessions etc. Research shows that resources allocated for separate information analysis/ market research is dependent on firm size and resource base (e.g. Benito, Solberg, Welch 1993).

2.2.6 Knowledge Components

> "Comparing the internationalization process literature with the market orientation literature, the common denominator is the importance attached to information gathering and knowledge generation" (Gripsrud, Solberg and Ulvnes 2006, 378).

This statement underlines the qualitative distinction between information acquisition (gathering) and the generation of knowledge in order to make adequate use of the gathered information.

In the previous chapter the importance of information for exporting firms was highlighted and discussed. Three activities were identified from relevant marketing theory and suggested for exporting firms to get involved with: Information acquisition, processing and dissemination. In this thesis these are referred to as "objective" information activities. This is because in principle they do not need to entail that the personnel involved with them have first hand, intimate knowledge of the market as such. Provided, this thesis posits, the firm has been able to provide a framework for what kind of information is wanted and needed, a trained "bureaucrat" will be able to acquire, sift and disseminate according to some general rules.

Knowledge, however, this thesis posits, is "subjective", and is held by individuals in the firm. One talks about "organizational (or institutional) memory", but as far as the author of this thesis knows, not about "organizational knowledge." The British philosopher Bertrand Russell in his entry "Theory of Knowledge" in the 1926 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica suggests that Knowledge is the "agreement" between "fact" and "belief." In this thesis the "fact" constitutes the information (objective) while "belief" constitutes the entirely subjective opinion of the person prior to him/ her having to compute the "fact". Hence, when belief computes fact, it becomes knowledge. The problem, however, according to Russell, is that "no one knows what a belief is, and no one knows what fact is, and no one knows what sort of agreement between them would make a belief true." This illustrates the difficulty of defining "knowledge," and to date there is no single agreed upon definition of knowledge existing. This thesis has no ambition to define or explain "knowledge", but knowledge constitutes a central and complex component of human- and organizational behavior and of all literature relevant to this thesis, indeed Narver and Slater (1995, 63) identify "the (organizational) knowledge driven behavior change" as a prerequisite for creating a competitive advantage. Hence "knowledge" needs being elaborated upon in order to become theoretically valid in the context of the research model of this thesis.

The Uppsala Model stresses the importance of knowledge obtained from experience. This type of knowledge is labeled "knowledge a posteriori" meaning knowledge acquired after the effects of a particular situation are understood and absorbed. "A posteriori" means afterwards, and that means that it has a counterpart, and that is the knowledge that existed prior to the situation. This form of knowledge is called "knowledge a priori". In an organizational (exporting) context it is of vital importance to capture and record the knowledge created- or generated a posteriori, the product of old knowledge ("belief") combined with learning from market specific situations (Johanson and Vahlne 1977). In order to achieve this, Narver and Slater (1995) outline the framework within their "learning organization" marketing orientation. Of at least equal importance is it to capture and to

the extent possible, record, the relevant knowledge of others, both inside and outside of the organizational framework, i.e. from networks (Castells 1999; Johanson and Vahlne 2009), so that one may extrapolate from other peoples' knowledge, adapt it to fit in the contexts in which the firm operates. "The essence of the situation is action according to opinion, of greater and less foundation and value, neither entire ignorance, nor complete and perfect information, but partial knowledge" (Knight 1921, 87). It is impossible to obtain "perfect and complete" information, and it is impossible to acquire more than a smaller or larger degree of "partial knowledge", hence it is vital for the firm to recognize this, and organize itself in ways which aim at capturing the bits and pieces of relevant knowledge held by their key individuals, in- and outside of the firm, so that decision making and subsequent action to the extent possible reflect the total relevant knowledge available. This thesis has identified the following three Marketing related theoretical knowledge based concepts as appropriately covering the above outlined aim: "Market Insight", "Planning" and "Responsiveness".

Market Insight

This thesis has, through the use of literature, suggested that there is no such thing as perfect and complete information and there is no such thing as exhaustive knowledge. The main reason is, of course, that nothing is static, because every person on this planet makes daily decisions and executes a huge number of acts based on incomplete information combined with a personal level of limited knowledge. Keeping in mind the objective of Marketing as a science; the establishment of "general rules" and the discovery of means by which achieving "being alert to opportunities", this thesis postulates that "Market Insight" constitutes one of the general building blocks needed for an exporting firm in order to "deliver need-satisfying products to consumers". Additionally, Market Insight, this thesis posits, is a concept incorporating the dimension of "being alert to opportunities". Hence, Market Insight is a bi-dimensional concept of which

one dimension can be empirically supported, while the other, related to the identification of opportunities may only be logically supported.

There are several more or less identical definitions of the term "insight." In this context, the following one is chosen:

1. the ability to perceive clearly or deeply; penetration
2. a penetrating and often sudden understanding, as of a complex situation or problem
3. Psychology
  a. the capacity for understanding one's own or another's mental processes
  b. the immediate understanding of the significance of an event or action (thefreedictionary.com).

In the context of this thesis, points 1 and 3a above are interpreted to capture the dimension of being able to "deliver need satisfying products to customers," while points 2 and 3b capture the dimension of "being alert to opportunities". This is an important distinction in this thesis, because it interprets the "ability to deliver needs satisfying products to customers" as a more or less linear process. One has a product, it is exported, people buy it, and then, based on information, one changes and adapts modes of selling and the product based on regular feedback. This is the "business as usual" dimension, and may be empirically suggested. The dimension of "being alert to opportunities", is something entirely different, as it stipulates a "void", in this context it could be a market segment not yet targeted by others, a "need" not satisfied by any other product on the market, etc. The value of being able to "see" any one of the two is clearly above questioning. "Market Insight: A truth which until now has not been leveraged, but if leveraged will generate revenue" (Brandrants.com 2008). These "truths" or "opportunities" exist only because no one has access to all information and because knowledge is limited among all the competitors. The "Black Swan" theory (Taleb 2010) provides a brilliant

example of what this entails. In the context of this study, this definition is interpreted such that there are plenty of "truths", or "Black Swans" or unidentified opportunities out there in the market, and they just are there, waiting to be discovered and "leveraged" for the company that accepts their real existence and organizes itself accordingly; meaning to "see" them and to grasp them. "Grasp" in this context means both intellectually and operationally.

In unpublished work on Market Insight conducted by Professor Solberg at BI Norwegian Business School on the prerequisites for building Market Insight, he identifies experience and knowledge as the main building blocks with size of relevant network contacts as the "moderator". One may postulate that the chances of "having" market insight(s) increase proportionally with number of network contacts putting their own personal knowledge and experience available for the decision-makers of the firm. One may argue that these are tenets of both market orientation and of Internationalization theories as well as of information behavior. This thesis agrees that all of them to a certain extent implicitly incorporate the linear dimension of Market Insight. The second dimension, however, the non-linear or asymmetrical "epiphany" dimension, this thesis contends, is not captured by either of them, hence, the bi-dimensional concept of Market Insight represents a key to fulfilling the aims of the science of Marketing in an exporting context in the context of the 21st century. The challenge, however, is that these "opportunities" cannot be found using statistics or through applying scientifically established "general rules" for behavior, hence no attempt has been made to measure this dimension in this research. The fact, however, that such opportunities or "truths" cannot be identified using the scientific method; observation, quantification and generalization, is also, this thesis posits, precisely why they exist. This will be further elaborated upon in the chapter "Emerging Opportunities."

Planning

In a business context there is little academic proof that strategic planning is positively and directly correlated with performance (e.g. Greenley 1986; Samiee and Walters 1990). In a behavioral market orientation context (Kohli and Jaworski), planning is implicitly part of the responsiveness to market intelligence, and results in a design catering to the perceived needs of the customers. Narver and Slater on the other hand explicitly identify "decentralized strategic planning" as part of their Climate- construct directly and positively impacting on "organizational learning" capacities. Planning is in general identified as an important activity of most all relevant literature, hence it is surprising that research shows that the general picture among exporters is that they engage very little in formal and hierarchical planning activities (Samiee and Walters 1990). Though their study identifies differences between the larger and the smaller firms (the larger are more prone to plan, and they suggest that more access to information is one reason), the general picture is somehow "planless", at least with regards to the big and formal plans. This does indicate that the "great and visionary plans" may not be important at all. This is in line with Solberg (2009) who instead suggests "a bit of strategic thinking" as a substitute for making big and resource demanding plans. The essence of a plan is to control some specific future event, or to influence on a future event so that it "ends up" in a scenario that is desirable by the planner(s). The basis for a plan is information, current knowledge combined with predictions. A plan defines objectives which are to be reached in accordance with a specified timeline, and it allocates resources and responsibilities accordingly. Planning as a tool is a manifestation that information is never full and complete, that knowledge is limited, hence, planning processes are often executed by many individuals deemed as being "owners" of information and knowledge (insight) relevant to the objectives of the plan.

This thesis posits, in line with most all relevant literature, that planning is an important "knowledge- capturing" tool for the modern exporting firm. It also posits, in line with Solberg (2009) that a "bit of strategic thinking"

constitutes in most cases, a sufficient substitute for the big, resource demanding, “visionary”, strategic plans. However, this thesis, postulates that the regular brainstorming sessions, the problem solving discussions and the short term action planning in order to solve the “business as usual” problems, constitutes one important planning dimension. This may not be defined as “planning” per se by the respondents in this research, but, in fact it is. These sessions capture the knowledge and insights of many, and eventual new information is interpreted in light of different bits and pieces of knowledge related to the firm and to the market, and if this form of planning has no direct and positive effect on export performance, it does have an influence on responsiveness.
Another dimension of planning is the potential to capture and institutionalize the market relevant knowledge of its main employees. Keeping in mind that the potential main brunt of “knowledge” of the firm in fact is situated outside of the firm, in the network relations “owned” by individuals in the firm, planning is suggested as a tool which may be used to map and record the network contacts of its organization, and agree upon activities in order to maintain the relations even when their primary contacts in the firm leaves the firm. This includes activities such as “hand over”, “overlap”, mapping and recording.

F. D. Roosevelt is credited with the words “the plan is nothing, planning is everything.” This indicates very strongly that a plan, in the form of a document, is worth as much (or less) as the paper on which it is written. Planning is a continuous process, and most of the time it boils down to informal brainstorming sessions described above in order to deal with the daily hick ups of dealing with the unexpected snags and blows distributed by the future when it turns into present and past, and which are typically not incorporated in the Master Plan (which is lying in some shelf collecting dust). Therefore, this thesis contends that planning as dynamic process will assist companies in a) turning individually “owned” market relevant knowledge into organizational property, acting as foundation for organizational market insight b) mitigate uncertainty and risk and at the

same time it can function as an enabler in creating the flexibility necessary to not only identify opportunities, but grasp them as well.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is action in the face of change (e.g. Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser 2007). Therefore, in order to keep action in the right perspective of knowledge- or the lack thereof the following is of importance:

> "It probably occasions surprise to most persons the first time they seriously consider what a small portion of our conduct makes any pretense to a foundation in accurate and exhaustive knowledge of the things we are dealing with" (Knight 1921, p. 210).

In 2002 the Nobel Prize Committee awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences to Daniel Kahnemann and Amos Tversky (posthumously) for their work showing that "people are incapable of fully analyzing complex decision making processes when the future consequences are unknown" (Royal Swedish Academy of Science 2002, 1).

The importance of and the separate quality/ characteristic/ uniqueness of responsiveness, however, seems to be increasingly acknowledged by academia, although it is still a new and relatively under-researched phenomenon (e.g. Gunasekaran 1998; Yu 2001; Tan 2006; Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser 2007). While responsiveness as part of a market orientation is customer focused, other authors define responsiveness in a broader context as a vital component for organizational management and development, ranging from operational- to strategic management (e.g. Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser 2007). One example of a broader definition is presented by Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser (2007, 1574) who explain responsiveness as "the ability of firms to quickly respond to changes in their external environments". Responsiveness is also explained as the extent to which a firm responds to market changes, and it results from a firm's proactive interaction with its external environment (Homburg, Grozdanovic and Klarmann 2007).

In this thesis, responsiveness represents an exporting firm's ability to act on market relevant information. Keeping in mind Kahnemann and Tversky, (limited) knowledge (Knight 1921, 210; Von Mises 1962, 34) combined with limited information, decision making is the precursor for action, and is in this thesis part of the responsiveness concept. Hence, responsiveness consists of two factors, decision making and action, both of which, this thesis posits, are "subjective" knowledge based expressions. Independently of how many people are involved in the decision making process, and independently of who are the people having to enact the decisions, the decisions done by one (or more) people are based on the product of the subjective interpretation of (possibly) many and are, in addition to being based on insufficient information and limited knowledge, biased and restricted by social bonds (bounded rationality). In the press release for Herbert A. Simon's Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978 (Royal Swedish Academy of Science, 1978, paragraphs a-b) it is stated:

> "What is new in Simon's ideas is, most of all that he rejects the assumption made in the classic theory of the firm of an omniscient, rational, profit-maximizing entrepreneur. He replaces this entrepreneur with a number of cooperating decision-makers, whose capabilities for rational action are limited, both by a lack of knowledge about the total consequences of their decisions, and by personal and social ties".

Hence, responsiveness needs being both moderated, controlled and "built". This thesis posits that the two other knowledge founded, subjective concepts, Market Insight and Planning are seen – and used, as outlined and elaborated upon in their respective paragraphs, as precursors to responsiveness in order to maximize the probability that decisions and actions, to the extent possible are based on total relevant knowledge available.

Emerging Opportunities

The following quote is retrieved from an article in which he presents a theoretical foundation for marketing based on the Austrian School of Economics:

> "The relations are not constant among human actions because of the axioms of consciousness and free will. All economic phenomena, such as a rise in supply and the fall in price, are the result of human action. All human action is produced by internally generated and freely chosen goals; particular actions—generated by, say, a decline in the intensity of many consumers' desires to buy a given product and/or an increase in the intensity of desire of producers to supply the same good—happen to have occurred at this point in time and space, but they do not have to occur again in another time and space, nor are they likely to occur. Free will precludes the possibility of mathematical measurement or prediction" (Kirkpatrick 1983, 2)

The Austrian School of Economics rejects the statistical and experimental methods of the physical sciences as a means to verify theory in the social sciences. It may seem a paradox that this thesis, which largely builds on the method rejected by the Austrians, quotes them in the context of this thesis, but it will, in the subsequent discussion use their logic to make a point important for this study. As discussed in previous chapters and paragraphs, people are not completely rational beings because we act "subjectively" based on insufficient information combined with inadequate knowledge. Additionally our actions are limited by social bonds, as suggested by at least one Nobel Laureate, something which moderates the rationality of our actions even more profoundly compared to "unbound" actions based on complete information and knowledge.

This thesis posits that some general rules for export behavior can be identified based on the scientific method on which this thesis is founded, but the establishment of general rules which will enable an exporter to mathematically identify "opportunities" in the market is impossible; simply because of the explanation given above. If this (establishment of "rules" for behavior in order to identify market opportunities) was possible, it would mean static conditions, perfect competition and omniscient consumers and marketers. If such rules should come into existence, it would mean that all competitors would know the same more or less at the same time, and hence, create perfect competition and static conditions. But, this thesis

contends, it is precisely because of imperfect information, imperfect knowledge, imperfect decision making and imperfect action combined with "free will" that "opportunities" or "truths" emerge. "Hence it is our imperfect knowledge of the future, […] which is crucial for our understanding of our problem" (Knight 1921, 198). Further,

"We live only by knowing something about the future; while the problems of life or of conduct at least, arise from the fact that we know so little" (Knight 1921, 199). Everybody lives with more or less the same imperfect knowledge of the future, and these distinctions form the basis for the opportunities which will emerge more or less randomly: More randomly if a firm does not accept their existence (intellectually), and does not organize itself in a way which increases the chances of identifying them; less randomly if a firm accepts their existence, and organize themselves accordingly. This thesis is, based on available literature, suggesting one way of achieving that (information activity components- knowledge activity components). But, it is not only about laying a foundation for "spotting" opportunities" less randomly, (and more frequently) than the competition, it is also about being able to grasp the opportunities in a physical way. This plays back to the responsiveness concept. A company needs being "tuned" to act on emerging opportunities, and that entails a conscious decision by management to being "open", flexible and adaptable when opportunities are identified ("emerge"). Since one does not know exactly what kind of opportunities will emerge when, the "entrepreneurial drive" – culture (Narver and Slater 1990) needs being cultivated, the "Carpe Diem" culture (Solberg 2003) needs being cultivated, networks need being cultivated (e.g. Johanson and Vahlne 2009) and a hierarchical and rigid planning culture needs being de-cultivated (Narver and Slater 1990; Solberg 2003).

2.2.7 Export Performance

It is suggested in this thesis that the information activities and knowledge components have a positive impact on export performance, to a smaller or

larger extent. Hence, it is important to explain export performance. Export performance is a complex phenomenon and despite widespread research with export performance being the dependent variable, to date there is no consensus on a unified measure of performance in academia. Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan (2000, 493) highlights this conundrum in the following statement: "Export performance is one of the most widely researched but least understood and most contentious areas of international marketing". Several different methods or measures have been applied (e.g. sales, profit, growth, success perception, satisfaction, goal achievement, composite scales), making it hard to compare and contrast findings from different studies (Zou and Stan 1998). There are two principal ways of measuring export performance: Economic and non- economic measurements. For example, Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan (2000) posited performance as consisting of three dimensions: 1) Economic measures, pertaining to sales- and profit related measures of performance, 2) Non-economic measures, pertaining to market- and product, and several other miscellaneous measures (e.g. years of exporting), and 3) Generic measures, pertaining to the perceived export success, achievement of export goals, and satisfaction with export performance. Similarly, Zou, Taylor and Osland's (1998) see export performance as consisting of 1) Financial performance, 2) Strategic objective of performance, and 3) Satisfaction with performance by the management. In this study the impact of the various independent variables on export performance are measured by non-economic measures, i.e. satisfaction, following Solberg and Olsson 2010.

2.3 Research model

Based on the on the literature review above the research' problem can be clarified in a causal research model, illustrating how the variables and concepts in the study (information activities and knowledge components) are related (Table 1).

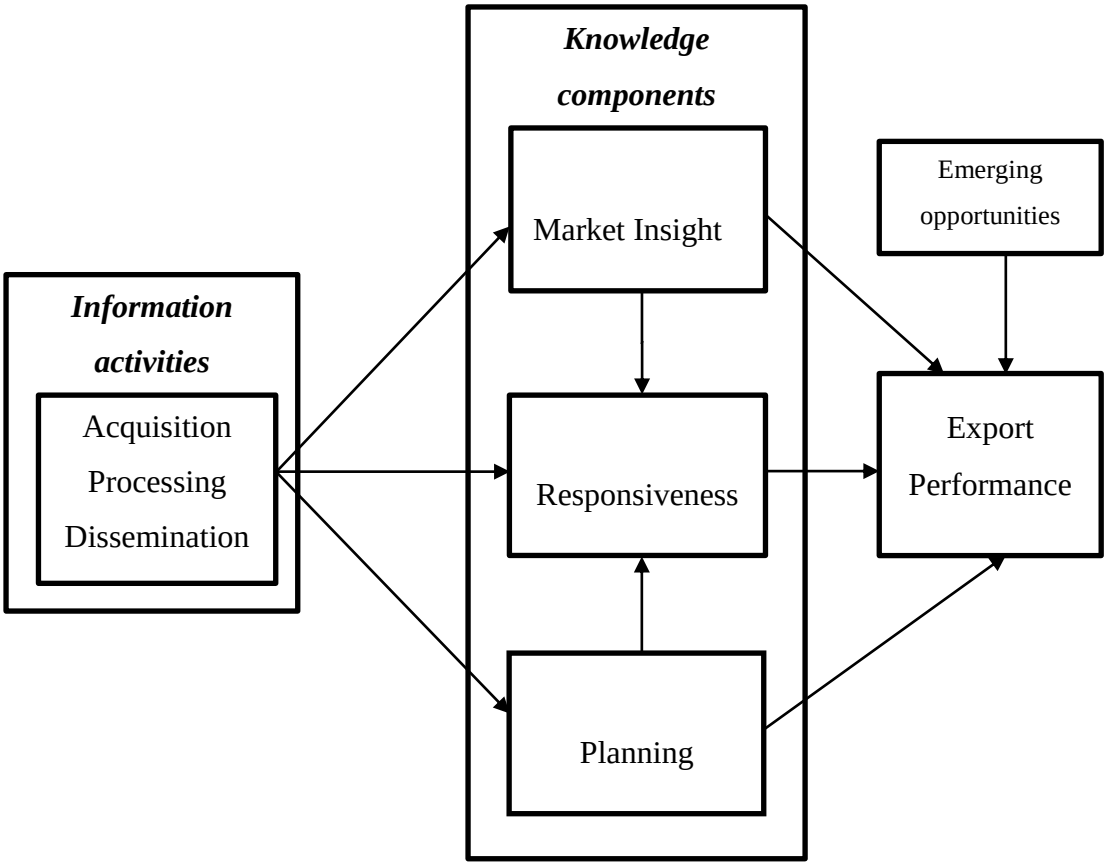


Table 1: Causal research model

2.4 Hypotheses

A vast number of studies have stressed the importance of information/ information acquisition activities in successful export (e.g. Benito, Solberg, Welch 1993; Walters 1996; Souchon and Diamantopoulos 1998, 1999; Leonidou and Theodosiou 2004). O'Reilly (1980) suggests that the impact of information on organizational performance is substantial. In an export context, given the complexity and uncertainty associated with exporting firms' decision-making, information is considered a vital tool to minimize the likelihood of failure (e.g. Souchon and Diamantopoulos 1998; Samiee and Walters 1990). Czinkota (2000) suggests that "Information and its management is even more important in the international setting, where entirely new parameters and environments are encountered." This thesis is

built on the assumption that acquired information should be processed (sifted and sorted), and disseminated and linked with knowledge in order to have any significant and meaningful impact. Market insight is an organizational asset obtained by accumulated experience and learning, combined with market relevant knowledge from employees and network contacts. It constitutes a precursor to both planning and to adequate response, hence the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1a) *Information activities (acquisition, processing, and dissemination) are positively related with market insight*

Market insight comprises the knowledge of many, both inside and outside of the firm (through networks). Personally acquired knowledge put at the disposal of an individual in the firm by a network contact is posited to have a greater impact on market insight than objective, undigested, formally acquired information. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H1b) *Market insight is more positively related with information acquired from networks than information acquired from other sources*

Information is the raw ingredient for planning. Hence, this thesis aims at measuring the effect of information activities on planning. Therefore the following hypothesis is put forward:
H1c) *Information activities (acquisition, processing, and dissemination) are positively related with planning*

In line with previous research (e.g. Kohli and Jaworski 1990) information without acting (i.e. responding) on the information is meaningless. This thesis posits that response to information consist of two actions; decision-making and implementation of the decisions. If the decision is not to act on information it is also a response. Hence, the below hypothesis is proposed:
H1d) *Information activities (acquisition, processing, and dissemination) are positively related with responsiveness*

It is posited in this thesis that market insight influences on the appropriateness of decisions. The more extensive market insight, the more appropriate are the decisions. Hence,

H2) *Market insight is positively related with responsiveness*

This thesis also posits that planning, among other things, can function as a means of quality control and the structured capturing of market insight combined with information. Reference is made to the literature review where research shows that a) "people are incapable of fully analyzing complex decision-making processes when the future consequences are unknown" (Royal Swedish Academy of Science 2002, 1). With this as a backdrop it is posited that a structured planning process prior to decision-making reduces the number of potential future outcomes, hence making people more capable of logic and appropriate decision-making, b) "[…] a number of cooperating decision-makers, whose capabilities for rational action are limited, both by a lack of knowledge about the total consequences of their decisions, and by personal and social ties" (Royal Swedish Academy of Science, paragraphs a-b). The second part of this quote is related to restrictions in the decision-making capabilities because of social and personal ties, this thesis posits that can to some extent be de-restricted by a proper well-documented planning process (quality control). Hence, this thesis posits:

H3) *Planning is positively related with responsiveness*

As mentioned above, this thesis posits that market insight influences on the appropriateness of decisions. The more extensive market insight, the more appropriate are the decisions. The level of market insight reflects the firm's total learning and knowledge available about the market (environment, customers, culture etc.). The level of market insight is also a determinant for the firm's ability to identify new opportunities in the market. Hence,

H4) *Market insight is positively related with export performance*

Hoyt, Huq, and Kreiser (2007, 1573) contend that responsiveness (i.e. the ability of firms to quickly respond to changes in their external environment) has become a primary determinant of firm performance. This corresponds with previous research which finds an empirical link between information and responsiveness, and a link further on to performance (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar 1993). There is a general lack however of studies suggesting an empirical link between responsiveness and performance in a contemporary export context. This thesis posits that decisions and the implementation of the decisions outside of the planned framework constitute responsiveness (organizational adaptations not foreseen in existing plans). A response could be an adaptation of existing plans to fit with changes in the market. However, when the response is targeting the new situation without adapting existing plans accordingly it will have a direct influence on export performance. An effect of the response on export performance is not necessarily measurable, as the end result could actually be to maintain status quo. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H5) *Responsiveness is positively related with export performance*

Planning is in general identified as an important activity of most all relevant literature; hence it is surprising that research shows that the general picture among exporters is that they engage very little in formal and hierarchical planning activities (e.g. Samiee and Walters 1990). In a business context there is little academic proof that planning is positively and directly correlated with performance (e.g. Samiee and Walters 1990). In this research, planning is seen as important because it is a tool used to direct actions and balance available resources accordingly. The plan is built upon information and knowledge. To the extent that plans are made and planning is done to revise the plan in face of change, planning do influence positively on performance. Hence,

H6) *Planning is positively related with export performance*

As discussed in the literature review planning for opportunities is impossible since one does not know exactly what kind of opportunities will emerge when, hence the “entrepreneurial drive” - culture (Narver and Slater 1990) needs being cultivated, the “Carpe Diem” culture (Solberg 2003) needs being cultivated, networks need being cultivated (e.g. Johanson and Vahlne 2009) and a hierarchical and rigid planning culture needs being de-cultivated (Narver and Slater 1990; Solberg 2003).

H7) *Emerging opportunities have a positive effect on export performance*

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design

Research designs are classified as exploratory, descriptive, and causal (Churchill and Iacobucci 2009). Descriptive design provides an accurate description of a phenomenon. This is in contrast to the exploratory design, which is chosen in cases where the problem area is not well understood or researched at the outset (Selnes 1999). In a descriptive design the problem statement/research question is rooted in, and reflects one or more variables of the study and the possible relationship between these (Selnes 1999) However, as pointed out by Selnes (1999), one may test the relationship between variables, but one cannot obtain evidence for *causal relationships*. Thus, as a complement to descriptive design, a causal design, allowing for investigation of the existence of direct causal relationships between the study's variables, can be fruitful (Selnes 1999). I have a clear view of which variables I want to examine and how they explain the research problem, hence a descriptive study design is chosen. An exploratory design is insufficient for this research. As the study seeks to explore these causal relationships and how the variables are related to- and impact on each other, a causal design is a necessary complement to the descriptive approach. The causal research model is a reflection of these relationships and will serve as a guideline throughout the study.

The choice of the quantitative methodology corresponds with the study's design and objective, which is to draw conclusions on behalf of a large group by studying a smaller group. A quantitative approach, as opposed to a qualitative approach, enables the researcher to generalize across a population, in this case Norwegian exporting firms, and identify a pattern of behavior. In contrast, a qualitative methodology reveals specific events (Holme and Solvang 1996).

3.2 Selection of respondents

The sample frame for this research is Norwegian exporting firms with 10 million to >500 million NOK in annual revenue. In selecting the sample for

this study, a general view on exporting firms was applied. The study does not distinguish between industries or types of exporting firms. The firms in the sample were randomly selected and contacted by phone or invited by email containing a link to the survey when I was unable to reach the right person by phone. Phoning was used to establish personal contact in an attempt to increase the participation rate (Dillman 2007).

3.3 Data collection

A questionnaire was used for collecting data for this survey. This was both created and distributed in *Confirmit*, a market research program accessible to students through BI Norwegian Business School. The respondents were asked to rate items related to the firm's information activities on a seven point Likert Scale. The survey's target contact was the firms' export marketing manager, marketing manager, chief executive officer, or the person that was identified as best suited to answer and that could provide the requested information. The survey was emailed to the firms that agreed to participate, as an electronic link via Confirmit. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study as attached. Reminders were sent after two and four weeks, respectively, to those who had not answered, also via Confirmit.

I used various ways in order to increase the response rate throughout the data collection: As mentioned, phoning was used to establish a personal contact and increase the chances for collaboration (Dillman 2007). In addition the classic "baiting trick" was used, namely a financial incitement: Those responding to the questionnaire have the opportunity to win a traveler check worth NOK 5.000. In addition, the participants have been informed in the cover letter that they will receive a report with the findings when this is finalized. Moreover, the topic of the study may be of interest to the respondents as it deals with issues directly related to what they may consider daily operational challenges. BI School of Business being a brand name with a high level of credibility in Norway, could act as a response motivation enhancer, hence the name of the institution was well visible on

the cover letter. Finally, internet was used to disseminate the survey. Using the internet compared with using the old- fashioned postal system is less time consuming and less expensive (McDaniel and Gates 2010), important factors in the context of the preparatory phases for this study.

3.4 Data analysis

Due to the number of variables presented and treated in this study, several tests were completed in order to analyze the data. SPSS was the mode of determining results. Descriptive statistics, assessing skewness and kurtosis, was the first step. Subsequently, assessment of construct validity (i.e. convergent and discriminant validity) of the independent and the dependent variables, respectively was done conducting factor analysis. I used Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation, and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) to assess the data. Nomological validity, checking for multicolinearity was assessed in a correlation matrix. Finally, a reliability analysis was conducted looking at Chronbach's Alpha. Testing the hypotheses was done using multiple and linear regression.

3.5 Pre-testing

The questionnaire was pre-tested on one respondent (manager) prior to its official dissemination. Additional to this, it was tested on my supervisor. This resulted in some minor modifications, especially related to wording and measurability of some of the items in the questionnaire.

3.6 Operationalization of constructs

Operationalization refers to *"formulating the theoretical constructs into a measurable variable"* (Selnes 1999, 210). The survey is a manifestation of this process. In the survey, the respondents were asked to consider and grade several statements on a seven-point Likert Scale, ranging from 7,

Strongly agree to 1, *Strongly disagree*. All scales/items are presented in the Appendix (see Appendix 1 D).

Six main constructs were operationalized:

1. Information activities (Acquisition (four sources form which exporting firms acquire information), Processing, and Dissemination)
2. Responsiveness
3. Market Insight
4. Planning
5. Emerging opportunities
6. Export performance

1. Information activities

a) Acquisition

The questions listed below are developed to examine whether information management/ activities influence on various knowledge components in firms (market insight, responsiveness, and planning). The first activity, information acquisition, was measured using a 20-item Likert Scale developed by Professor Solberg. The scale is divided into four sub-scales capturing acquisition from different sources of information available to and used by exporting firms as suggested by Professor Solberg. The scale was also influenced by the MARKOR scale developed by Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993) and the export market orientation (EMO) scale developed by Cadogan, Diamantopoulos, and Mortanges (1999).

Regarding the first information source, *information acquired from network*, the respondents were asked to grade their answer on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

1. We discuss market trends and the competitive situation with our most important customers

2. We have an extensive network which frequently updates us on market trends
3. Our decisions are most often based on advice from credible network contacts

For the second source, *information acquired form market research (consultants/ organizations)*, the following questions were proposed. The respondents were asked to grade the answers on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

1. We frequently receive reports from an external agency, which update us on the market situation and development in this market (e.g. price development, market share, competition etc.)
2. The company conducts in-house market research prior to making important market decisions.
3. We often use external consultants/ organizations to conduct market research and analysis on our behalf
4. External consultants provide a large brunt of the relevant information related to new markets
5. Our firm does not use external consultants because they are not sufficiently updated on our industry and have too little knowledge about our company's specific needs in international markets

Measuring *information acquired from foreign partner* the following questions were proposed on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

1. Our representatives (e.g. sales office, agents, distributors) abroad report regularly about developments in the market
2. We are frequently in touch (telephone/email) with our representatives in this market – several times weekly
3. We often visit our representatives in this market
4. Vi har ennå ikke utviklet et nært tillitsforhold til vår lokale representant i dette markedet

5. It is primarily our representatives abroad who provide us with information about the developments in the market

Concerning information acquired from the internet, the items were adapted from Lu and Julian (2007). The following questions were proposed on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

1. The internet constitutes an irreplaceable tool assisting us in following market developments
2. The internet is a useful source to access market surveys- and analysis of international markets
3. The internet is of assistance when it comes to being updated on developments in our industry
4. The internet is enhancing direct feedback possibilities from foreign customers

b. Processing

Information processing refers to sifting, sorting, and analysis (primarily of formal) information. The questions attempts to capture the organizational systems and routines in place, as well as the resources allocated to analyze incoming information, and distinguish relevant from irrelevant market information. The questions are influenced by H. Van Dyke et al. (2005). The respondents were asked to grade the following questions on a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree).

1. We work systematically and structured with distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information
2. We have allocated sufficient resources to secure a proper interpretation/analysis of acquired market information
3. A person and/or department in the company work exclusively with interpreting/analyzing information from different sources

c. Dissemination

In measuring dissemination, questions related to how the respondents share information were developed. The items are adopted from the market orientation (MARKOR) scale developed by Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993). In this research, the questions attempt to capture the communication across departments and layers of the organization, as well as the systems and routines that facilitate efficient communication and sharing of information between them. The respondents were asked to grade statements such as "important information is distributed immediately to different/various departments as soon as we have it", with 1 representing strongly disagree, and 7 strongly agree.

1. Important information is distributed immediately to different/various departments as soon as we have it
2. Efficient systems and routines secure that central decision makers are always updated on changes in the market
3. Different departments in the organization meet at least once every three months to discuss market trends- and development

Market Insight

The notion of market insight has not yet been applied in a study of exporting firms, and the questions were adapted from Professor Solberg's unpublished work. The respondents were asked to grade the following questions on a 7-point Likert Scale.

1. We have considerable insight into the buying behavior and decision making processes in this market
2. We are familiar with the competition situation including how our most important competitors react on our initiatives in this market.
3. We are well informed about / familiar with the public regulations in this market
4. We have considerable insight into the supplier preferences of our most important customers.

Planning

Measuring planning is done by identifying the importance of the market plan in the decision-making process, the time and effort spent to developing solid market plans, or the lack thereof. The questions were adapted from Professor Solberg and proposed on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

1. The market plan is one of the firms' most important decision-making tools
2. We spend considerable time developing solid market plans
3. The work with developing a solid market plan is often neglected

Emerging Opportunities

According to Professor Solberg planned activities are not necessarily the "road to success" in exporting firms. Opportunities may as well arise/ emerge without, or in spite of a market plan. In order to measure emerging opportunities and examine to which extent these might explain export "success" I adopted items developed by Professor Solberg. Questions concerning the lack of planned activities were proposed on a Likert scale ranging from 1-7 where 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree:

1. Our experience is that opportunities arise as much as a result of coincidence as because of planned activities
2. The firm's positive development in this market is often a result of coincidences
3. Our presence in this market can best be described as follows: "Happy go Lucky".

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is defined (in the most narrow sense) as the decisions and actions taken in response to information (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). In measuring responsiveness the items related to responsiveness in the

MARKOR scale developed by Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993) were adapted. The following factors were used to measure responsiveness:

- Speed of response
- Ability to adapt and revise the marketing plan according to changes in the external environment/ market
- Interdepartmental cooperation and coordination: The "organization-wide response design". i.e. planning and coordination of response
- The routines in place, and resources allocated for an efficient implementation of response.

In all the questions the respondents were asked to grade to which extent they agreed or disagreed on a 7- point Likert Scale.

1. We respond to and adapt quickly to changes in the market
2. We revise and adapt our market plan according to new incoming information
3. We have efficient routines securing effective implementation of decisions
4. The different departments in the organization are well coordinated on the firm's export activities
5. Experience helps us respond quickly and accurately to changes in the market

Export performance

Through measuring responsiveness and market insight relative to perceived performance it is possible to uncover the effect of these knowledge components on firms' export performance. In this study the impact of the various independent variables on export performance are measured by non-economic measures, i.e. satisfaction, in line with Solberg and Olsson 2010. In consultation with my supervisor, the following questions regarding were proposed. The respondents were asked to grade their answers on a 7-point Likert scale.

4. We are very satisfied with the profitability in this market

5. We are very satisfied with the last two years' growth (compared with the industry average) in this market
6. We are very satisfied with the market share in this market

4.0 Data analysis & results

4.1 Data collection

The respondents were collected from a pool of exporting firms attained from *Kompass Norge AS*, a leading Norwegian industry directory, ranging from small (NOK revenue 10-25 million) to large (NOK revenue >500 million) firms. The firms that fit the requirements were contacted by phone, a pre-survey preparation strategy believed to improve managers' willingness to participate in the survey (Dillman 2007). The purpose with the phone call was to present myself, the study, and its purpose. By explaining to the managers why they should assist in the study I hoped to increase the response rate.

The point of contact was an individual in the firm that had been central in the export process, i.e. the export marketing manager, sales or marketing manager, top manager, or other decision makers in export operations/ activities. Following Dillman (2007), identifying the informant who can provide, and is authorized to provide the requested information can improve respondent cooperation. The individuals who agreed to participate received an email with a cover letter and a link to the questionnaire in Confirmit immediately or shortly after (Appendix 1A). In cases where the contact person indicated that he or she was not the right person to answer the questionnaire, I requested the email to be forwarded to the right person. Invitations were also emailed directly without the initial phone call (Appendix 1B). An invitation was sent to approximately 350 eligible firms. A reminder was sent after three weeks after the first invitation to non-respondents (Appendix 1C). A second reminder was sent to those that had not responded after two additional weeks. A total of three reminders were sent. Despite several reminders, there were a large number of non-respondents after the second and third rounds. This can be explained by the fact that the respondents had a tight time schedule and receive many similar inquiries from students and organizations. One could not expect

them to prioritize this particular survey. The questionnaire can be found in appendix 1D.

4.2 Sampling

A list of 788 Norwegian-based exporting firms was attained from Kompass Norge's data base. Approximately 250 of these were contacted by phone. The database did not specify whether the firms had current export activity, hence calling was in many cases the only way to find out if the firms fit the requirements. Approximately 40 firms were discarded after some initial control questions which revealed they had no international operations. 22 firms declined the invitation, of reasons ranging from lack of time, to non-survey policy.188 of the firms which were contacted by phone agreed to participate in the survey and received an invitation with a link to the questionnaire shortly after the conversation. Additionally, an email invitation with a cover letter and a link to the questionnaire was sent directly (without prior phone call) to 146 of the firms in the database. I used this strategy due to time constraint and to ensure that the large number of firms to be contacted was "absorbed". However, emailing was "earmarked" those firms that I believed to be least relevant for the study and those I did not manage to reach by phone. Emailing was also used in cases where the right personnel were not available after several attempts of phoning. In total, 286 invitations were sent.

After three rounds of reminders, 112 out of the 286 invited firms had answered the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 37.5 %. I received an email from 12 firms stating they did not wish to participate after either having a) looked at the survey and decided that they did not fit as a respondent, or b) did not have time, or available personnel to answer the questionnaire, or c) were concerned about the survey's confidentiality (See appendix 1E).

4.3 Descriptive statistics

Description of respondents

The descriptive statistics (Appendix 2) show that basic figures such as years of export, export share, annual turnover, and geographic dispersion vary widely among the respondents. On average, the respondents have an export share of 66 % and an annual turnover of NOK 850 million. The average turnover in the most important export market is NOK 260 million. The firms have on average been exporting or been operating abroad for 25 years, ranging from 2 to 110 years. The majority of the respondents (mean score of 1.34) had operations in, or exported to two or more destinations/ continents. Some of the respondents did not indicate the number of years they had been exporting, or the exact number of total turnover. This will, however, not have anything to say for the testing of hypothesis later in this study. Hence, the responses from these firms will be assessed as normal and in conjunction with the other responses.

Test of normalities

The statistical measures of Skewness and Kurtosis, i.e. test of normality, were also considered in order to check how the variables in the study behave with respect to one another. Normality testing is an assessment of the distribution of the variables/ scores in the data set (Pallant 2010), in which the values for skewness measure the symmetry of the distribution (if the distribution is skewed), while the values for kurtosis measure the peakedness/ flatness of the distribution (e.g. Pallant 2010; Hair et al. 2011). A skewness and kurtosis value of zero indicate a perfectly normal distribution and the larger value, the larger skewness (asymmetry) or peakedness of the distribution (Hair et al. 2011). In other words, the smaller the value, the greater the stability of the distribution. According to Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao 2004, as a rule of thumb, values of both skewness and kurtosis should fall in the range from +2 to -2 if data are normally distributed. Values between +-1 are considered excellent.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error

Network	112	-1,268	,228	2,109	,453
Foreign_Partner	112	-1,439	,228	1,755	,453
Internet	112	-,208	,228	-,320	,453
Market research	112	,005	,228	-,095	,453
Market_Insight	112	-,543	,228	,460	,453
Information_Processing	112	,384	,228	,115	,453
Information_Dissemination	112	-,496	,228	-,189	,453
Planning	112	-,608	,228	-,031	,453
Responsivenss	112	,002	,228	-,254	,453
Emerging_opportunities	112	,302	,228	-,771	,453
Export_Performance	112	-,165	,228	-,465	,453
Valid N (listwise)	112				

Table 3: Descriptive statistics & Test of normality

Looking at the SPSS output presented in table 3 we can see that skewness is not a problem, and that all values are within an acceptable range, except for Network which has a mediocre skewness value (1.755). The kurtosis value for Network also exceeds the requirements (2.109). Nevertheless, the results indicate that the distribution is symmetric, meaning that the values are relatively evenly distributed on both sides of the mean (Pallant 2011)

4.3 Validity and reliability

Construct validity

As the central task in any scientific research is to explore the correlation between different concepts, construct validity is essential (Gripsrud, Olsson, and Silkoset 2010). Construct validity is "the extent to which the constructs or a set of measured items actually reflects the theoretical latent construct those items are designed to measure" (Hair et al. 2009, 776). In order to assess construct validity, the following measures will be examined: face validity, nomological validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In convergent ad discriminant validity analysis the relationships between the variables are explored in order to assess which of the variables

that converge or share a high proportion of variance (Hair et al. 2009). Assessing convergent and discriminant validity requires that the independent and dependent variables are distinguished. Moreover, construct validity for the two constructs; Information activities and Knowledge activities will be analyzed separately.

Convergent validity

Convergent validity is a test of how well a variable actually measures the concept it was set to measure (Gripsrud, Olsson, and Silkoset 2010). High correlation indicates that the variables explain the concept well (Hair et al. 2006). Convergent validity is assessed using factor analysis. By looking at the factor loadings of each variable one can 'reduce' or summarize the data into a smaller set of factors or components (Pallant 2010, 181) extracting the factor loadings that are statistically significant (Hair et al. 2009). According to Pallant (2010) extraction of factors should balance two opposing needs: a) to provide a simple solution and generate as few factors as possible and b) to explain as much of the variance as possible.

The following statistical tests of statistical significance of the variables, Bartlett's test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO), were carried out in SPSS. The Barlett's test of Sphericity claims significance at $p<0.05$, whereas the KMO claims statistical significance at 0.6 minimum. However, according to Hair et al. (2009) a rule of thumb is that standardized loading estimates should be at least <0.5, or ideally <0.7.

The suitability of the data for factor analysis can also be assessed looking at the sample size. N=112 which exceeds the rule of thumb of 100 subjects as a minimum sample size in factor analysis (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe 2009).

Analysis of convergent validity of the independent variables

Although the sample size is somewhat low, the KMO index and the Bartlett's test of Spericity shows satisfactory results and indicate that factor analysis is appropriate for this data: the p-value is significant (0.00) for both the independent and the dependent variables and the KMO is above 0.7 which is well above the recommended minimum value for a good factor analysis. Principal component analysis (PCA) was then conducted in SPSS. In order to aid the interpretation of the results, a Varimax rotation was applied. Varimax rotation assumes that the factors in the analysis are uncorrelated, thus producing a simpler factor solution, minimizing the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor (Pallant 2010). To aid interpretation of the results further values lower than 0.4 were excluded. This is below the absolute/ minimum value of 0.5.

a. Information activities construct

The results for the convergent analysis of the independent variables are shown in table 4.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Info from partner4	,833					
Info from partner3	,815					
Info from partner1	,800					
Info from partner2	,776					
Info from partner7	,739					
Info from internet3		,865				
Info from internet2		,835				
Info from internet1		,832				
Info from internet4		,698				
Processing4			,792			
Processing3			,717			
Processing2	,414		,645			
Processing1			,639			
Info from market research2			,589			
Dissemination1				,863		
Dissemination2				,819		
Dissemination3				,691		
Info from market research4					,845	
Info from market research1					,772	
Info from market research3			,448		,687	
Info from network2						,861
Info from network1						,805
Info from network3						,719

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 4: Analysis of construct validity for the information activities construct

The results prove high level of construct validity: All the variables for information from internet, information from network, information from foreign partner, and information dissemination load on one factor respectively and have loadings well above the requirement on at least 0.5. The variables *Processing2* and *Info from market research3* load on two factors, but since the factor loadings here are < 0.5 this will not impact on their validity.

Additionally, the variable *Info from market research2* loads together with Information Processing in factor 3. Nevertheless, it satisfies the requirement of factor loadings on at least 0.5. After scrutinizing the question for the variable, "*Prior to making important marketing decisions we do our own market research"*, it may be interpreted as relating to processing of information: This can be explained by the fact that it is a result of an internal processing of the information available, an information gap has been identified supposedly to be filled by a targeted market research.

b. Knowledge components construct

The construct validity for the knowledge components construct presented in table 5 also shows satisfactory results: The KMO is 0.703, and the p-value is 0.00. All the variables for market insight load on one factor and have factor loadings higher than 0.5. As for the planning variables *Planning3* has a negative factor loading below 0.4 and loads on three factors. The question for this variable, *"The marketing plan builds on continuous acquisition of information about the firm's most important markets"* is a statement that is related with information acquisition and distinguishes from the other planning variables which indicate to which extent the respondents make plans. The variable will hence be excluded from further analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
Market insight1	,873		
Market insight2	,870		
Market insight4	,854		
Market insight3	,560		
Emerging opportunities2		,889	
Emerging opportunities3		,882	
Emerging opportunities1		,847	
Planning3			
Planning1			,946
Planning2			,911

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Table 5: Convergent validity for the knowledge components construct

Convergent validity of the dependent variables

Bartlett's test of Sphericity shows adequate levels for the dependent variables: The KMO is at 0.689 and the model is significant at the 0.00 level. Hence, factor analysis is appropriate also for these variables. Looking at table 6, all the variables show satisfactory results. The factor loadings are well above the requirements of 0.5, and are loading on only one factor.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
Responsiveness3	,851	
Responsiveness5	,807	
Responsiveness1	,793	
Responsiveness2	,679	
Responsiveness4	,667	
Performance2		,899
Performance1		,843
Performance3		,842

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 6: Analysis of construct validity for the dependent variables

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity differs from convergent validity in the sense that the measures are considered in relation with each other, this to ensure that there is no overlapping between them and that the factor they represent are truly distinct from one another (Hair et al. 2009). Discriminant validity is assessed using factor analysis applying the same requirements as for the convergent analysis: The factor loadings should be significant, the difference between two factor loadings for one variable should be at least 0.1 and the loadings should be 0.5 or higher, or ideally 0.7 or higher.

a. Discriminant validity – Information activities construct

Assessment of discriminant validity is done by excluding the variables that did not pass the convergent analysis to get a "cleaner" result. None of the variables from the convergent validity assessment for the information activities construct were excluded, however, hence the results are the same for the discriminant validity (KMO=0.707, and p=0.00). In table 7 we can see that all the variables (Except for the variables *Info from market research3* and *Processing2*) are loading on one factor, respectively, and have factor loadings above 0.5/ 0.7. This indicates high discriminant validity for the constructs.

Six factors have been extracted based on the discriminant analysis: In factor 1, all the variables for information acquired from foreign partner are providing satisfactory results. These items were intended to measure information acquired from foreign partner; hence factor 1 is labeled Info from Foreign Partner. The variables for internet, network, and dissemination all load on one factor and have loading >0.5. We can say that the variables are measuring what they were intended to measure, hence factor 2 is named Info from Internet, factor six is labeled Info from network, and factor 5 is coined Dissemination.

When looking at the variable *Info from market research2*, we find that this variable loads together with factor 3, Processing like in the convergent analysis. This can be explained by the fact that both variables are concerned with sifting, sorting, and analysis of information. The question for this variable is *"Prior to making important marketing decisions we do*

our own market research", which may contain a processing component. The variable is above the absolute value of 0.5 hence it will count for factor 3, Processing. The rest of the variables for market research load on one factor and have significant loadings, hence this factor is coined Info from market research.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	Info from foreign partner	Info from internet	Processing	Info from market research	Dissemination	Info from network
Info from partner6	,891					
Info from partner5	,857					
Info from partner4	,830					
Info from partner3	,813					
Info from partner7	,760					
Info from partner1	,752					
Info from partner2	,734					
Info from internet3		,865				
Info from internet1		,833				
Info from internet2		,833				
Info from internet4		,697				
Processing4			,791			
Processing3			,716			
Processing2			,653			
Processing1			,639			
Info from market research2			,596			
Info from market research4				,852		
Info from market research1				,774		
Info from market research3				,678		
Dissemination1					,864	
Dissemination2					,818	
Dissemination3					,689	
Info from network2						,857
Info from network1						,803
Info from network3						,723

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 7: Analysis of discriminant validity of the information activities construct

b. Discriminant validity – Knowledge components construct

The variable that did not pass the convergent analysis, *Planning3*, is excluded from the analysis of discriminant analysis for the knowledge activities construct. The results from the Bartlett's test of Sphericity and KMO tests indicate satisfactory levels: the KMO is 0.708 and the p-value is significant at the 0.00 level. In table 8 we can see that all the variables are loading on one factor, respectively, and have factor loadings above 0.5/

0.7. This indicates high discriminant validity for the constructs. Two factors have been extracted: In factor 1, all the variables for Market Insight are providing satisfactory results, intended to measure Market Insight, hence factor 1 is labeled Market Insight. The variables for Planning are measuring planning hence the factor is coined Planning.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	Market Insight	Emerging Opportunities	Planning
Market insight1	,877		
Market insight2	,866		
Market insight4	,860		
Market insight3	,574		
Emerging opportunities3		,889	
Emerging opportunities2		,887	
Emerging opportunities1		,849	
Planning1			,944
Planning2			,917

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Table 8: Discriminant validity of the knowledge components construct

c. *Discriminant validity for the dependent variables*

All the dependent variables proved satisfactory results in the convergent analysis and none of them were excluded, hence the results in the discriminant analysis are the same. Factor 1 is named Responsiveness, and factor 2 is named Export Performance, as shown in table 9.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	Responsiveness	Export performance
Responsiveness3	,851	
Responsiveness5	,807	
Responsiveness1	,793	
Responsiveness2	,679	
Responsiveness4	,667	
Performance2		,899
Performance1		,843
Performance3		,842

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 9: Discriminant validity of the dependent variables

Nomological validity

Nomological validity indicates whether it is appropriate to draw conclusions about covariance based on statistical analysis (Gripsrud, Olsson, and Silkoset 2010). It is tested by assessing the correlations in the constructs, which indicate how the constructs behave in relation with each other. This to check for multicolinearity. Values between 0 and 0.30 are considered weak (weak correlation), values between 0.31 and 0.60 are considered moderate, and >0.60 are considered strong (Gerber and Finn 2005). The values either confirm or moderate our perception on the connection between the dependent and independent variables.

The correlation matrix in table 10 shows that that inter-variable correlation is not a problem since none of the factor loadings exceeds 0.6. The highest correlation is found between the variables *Planning-Processing* (0.519). This can be explained with the emphasis put on processing by managers (i.e. analysis) prior to making plans. Secondly, there is a high correlation between the variables *Market_Insight-Responsiveness* (0.448). This is due to the fact that understanding/insight is closely associated with the ability and capacity to respond. Furthermore, there is a high correlation between the variables *Planning_Info from market research* (0.440) and *Planning-Dissemination* (0.438). This may be for the same reasons as for Planning-Processing; natural steps prior to planning include dissemination of information and market research. All the factor loadings are within the requirements; hence there is not a problem with multicolinearity in the data.

Correlations

Acquisition_ Network	1										
Acquisition_Internet	,121	1									
Acquisition_Market_ Research	-,008	,254**	1								
Acquisition_Foreign Partner	,233*	,062	,196*	1							

Processing	,180	,160	,411**	,197*	1						
Dissemination	,151	-,095	,303**	,197*	,369**	1					
Market_Insight	,324**	-,036	,049	,101	,233*	,319**	1				
Planning	,127	,188*	,440**	,406**	,519**	,438**	,067	1			
Responsiveness	,086	-,054	-,078	-,184	-,153	,241*	,448**	-,016	1		
Emerging_opportunities	-,128	-,090	-,045	-,215*	-,353**	-,465**	-,239*	,298**	,047	1	
Export_Performance	,084	-,060	,113	,197*	,123	,175	,290**	,244**	,131	-,065	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10: Correlation matrix

Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is a test of internal consistency, that is, how closely related the different sets of items are as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used as evidence that the items measure an underlying (or latent) construct (Hair et al. 2009). A common measure of reliability is Chronbach's Alpha. According to Pallant (2010) the Chronbach's alpha coefficient should be >0.7, although the requirements may vary. Some contend that >0.6 is sufficient; others that values should not be too high (Hair et al. 2009). Nevertheless, as a rule of thumb, the alpha score should be at least 0.7 for the scale to be reliable.

Concept	**α-level**	**Number of items**
Acquisition_networks	0.756	3
Acquisition_internet	0.839	4
Acquisition_foreign partner	0.868	5
Acquisition_market research	0.798	3
Dissemination	0.769	4
Processing	0.774	3
Responsiveness	0.804	5
Market Insight	0.810	5

Planning	0.887	2
Emerging Opportunities	0.868	3
Export Performance	0.830	3

Table 11: Reliability analysis

The results presented in table 11 indicates that the alpha values have high scores (>0.7). Hence there is no problem with reliability with any of the eight factors.

4.4 Test of hypotheses

Testing of the hypotheses will be performed using regression analysis. With regards to the information activities, I have tested the information sources individually against Market Insight, and merged them and tested them as one unit/ variable (coined *Acquisition_total*) against the other knowledge components/ variables, together with dissemination and processing (i.e. not differentiated between the sources in these tests). Reference is made to the literature review and the distinction made in the information behavior section between formal and informal information and the sources related to their acquisition. This thesis contends that it is highly unlikely that informal information will come through formal acquisition channels; rather, it contends that a network contact or a partner will share information (knowledge) directly with the contact in the firm. Hence, distinction is only made between the sources in testing against Market Insight. This is also reflected in the testing of the hypotheses. The results from the regression analysis can be found in appendix 3.
The measures applied in the testing of hypotheses include:

1) R square: a measure of how much of the variance of the dependent variable that is explained by variance in (or the explanatory power of) the independent / predictor variable. It varies between 1 and 0, where 1 is perfect correlation and 0 is no correlation;

2) Adjusted R square: a modified and more “reliable” alternative of R square as it provides better estimate of the true population value, especially

convenient in research with small samples (Pallant 2010, 161). The significance level indicates whether or not one should reject the null hypothesis. The significance level in this research is set at 0.10. P-values below 0.10 indicate a significant correlation, i.e. that the relationship between the independent and dependent variable can be established with 90% certainty;

3) F statistic: the F value is decisive for whether or not one can reject the null hypothesis (Hair et al. 2009). The requirements for the F value when the significance level is 0.10 is set at 2.68.

4) Regression coefficient (B): A measure of the effect/ explanatory power of the independent variables in their relationship with the dependent variable (Hair et al. 2009). It is assessed as the amount of change in the dependent variable caused by a one unit increase in the independent variable.
Beta values are assessed when comparing the effects of each of the different independent variables on the dependent variable. The largest Beta coefficient signifies the strongest contribution to explaining the dependent variable, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for (Pallant 2010, 161).

H1a) Information activities (acquisition, processing, dissemination) are positively related with responsiveness

The relationship between information activities and responsiveness is significant. The model has a $p > 0.1$, the adjusted R square is as high as 13.9% and the F value (6.981) is well above the requirements. However, it is only the dissemination part of the information activities construct that is supported and that shows a positive effect on responsiveness with a regression coefficient of 0.226. The relationship between information acquisition and information processing and responsiveness is negative, showing regression coefficients of -.001 and -.155, respectively. Hence, information acquisition and information processing have no effect on responsiveness.

However, the values are satisfying, ergo one can reject the null hypothesis and keep hypothesis 1.

H1b) Information activities are positively related with market insight

In the analysis of hypothesis 1b one can see that information dissemination is the only variable that has an effect on market insight with a regression coefficient of 0.226. Nevertheless, the model is significant ($P < 0.1$), and the F value is at 6.981, which is well above the requirements. The adjusted R square shows that the independent variables in the information activities construct are explaining 13.9% of the variation of the dependent variable. These results are sufficient to support the rejection of the null hypothesis. Hence, the hypothesis is supported.

H1c) Market Insight is more positively related with information acquired from Network than information acquired from other sources

Information acquired from networks shows a positive relation with market insight compared with the other information sources (internet, foreign partner, or market research) and is the only significant variable among the independent variables. The regression coefficient for network, B, shows 0.219, while the standardized coefficient, Beta, shows 0.274, and $p < 0.1$. The F value for the model as a whole is 4.214, and the adjusted R square is 8.3%. The numbers indicate that there is a qualitative difference between information from other sources compared to what is acquired through networks. Hence the hypothesis is supported.

H1d) Information activities are positively related with planning

The hypothesis is supported; Information activities have a positive impact on planning with a regression coefficient of 0.360. The p-value is significant (0.000) and the adjusted R square tells that acquisition, processing, and dissemination of information explains 36.5% of planning, which is high. The F value is satisfactory with 23.279. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H2) Planning is positively related with responsiveness

No support was found for this hypothesis in the regression analysis. The p-value > 0.10 indicate that the correlation is not significant. Furthermore, the adjusted R square at 0.4% indicates that planning has a marginal effect on responsiveness. The negative regression coefficient of 0.060 also confirms this. Hence, the null hypothesis is kept.

H3) Market insight is positively related with responsiveness

The relationship between market insight and responsiveness is significant ($p < 0.10$) with a regression coefficient of 0.421 and a Beta of 0.449. This suggests that those firms that have some degree of market insight will have a higher level of responsiveness than firms with less market insight. The adjusted R square is 19.5% and the F-value is satisfying the requirements at 27.834. These are solid estimates; hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

H4) Responsiveness is positively related with export performance

Assessing the responsiveness variables as a group one can see that the model is not significant, with $p > 0.10$ and F showing 2.514. When assessing the independent responsiveness variables individually, the model is significant (0.037) and the adjusted R Square is 5.6%. This due to the single variable *Responsiveness5* – Experience, which is the only highly significant variable in the group, with $p < 0.10$, and a regression coefficient of 0.395. The F value for this model, however, is rather low – 2.649, which is below the critical value of 2.68 (Hair et al. 2009). One can therefore not reject the null hypothesis. The hypothesis is not supported.

H5) Planning is positively related with export performance

As was assumed in the hypothesis planning has an effect on performance. The results support this assumption: The regression coefficient shows 0.195, the significance level $p < 0.10$, and the adjusted R square is 5.1%. The F value is also satisfying the requirements at 6.954. Despite the relatively low explanatory power of planning, the hypothesis is being kept and the null hypothesis is rejected.

H6) Market insight is positively related with export performance

Market Insight shows a positive effect on export performance with the regression coefficient showing 0.414 and a significance level of 0.002. Hence, as was assumed, firms with a high level of market insight are more likely to perform better than firms with a lower level of market insight. The F-value also shows satisfactory results at 10.078, and the adjusted R square indicates that market insight explains 7.6% of export performance. This is relatively low; nevertheless the values are satisfactory and one can reject the null hypothesis.

H7) Emerging opportunities have a positive impact on export performance

The relationship is not significant with a p value at 0.493. In other words, emerging opportunities have nothing to say for export performance.

Summary of results

Hypothesis	Predicted effect	Actual effect	Significance
H1a	+	Support for dissemination.	Partly supported
H1b	+	Support for dissemination	Partly supported
H1c	+	+	Supported
H1d	+	+	Supported
H2	+	÷	Not significant
H3	+	+	Supported
H4	+	÷	Not significant
H5	+	+	Supported
H6	+	+	Supported
H7	+	÷	Not significant

5.0 Discussion

H1a: Information activities & Responsiveness

The market orientation- and export marketing literature suggest that information, and especially the *management* of information is vital in an international context where new parameters exist (Czinkota 2000). Management of information is operationalized to consist of three *activities*; acquisition, processing, and dissemination of information. These are consecutive stages and dissemination of the processed information is the stage prior to information reaching the knowledge based component of responsiveness. The results from show that information dissemination is a prerequisite act in order for the information to reach where it is supposed to reach, i.e. it is positively related with responsiveness showing a positive regression coefficient. The results also show that information acquisition and processing have a negative effect on responsiveness. This can be explained by the fact that only information reaching the decision makers has an effect on their ability to respond, and that the other two elements are prerequisite precedents and part of the "information transporting system". Hence, information is positively related with the knowledge based component of responsiveness.

H1b: Information activities & Market Insight

The link between information activities, or management, and market insight was also tested and a positive relationship was found. In this thesis, market insight is interpreted as a two-dimensional construct as based on previous literature (i.e. 1) as accumulated knowledge over time → Uppsala Model, and 2) as an "epiphany" dimension). This latter dimension is not measured or accounted for in hypothesis H1b. Hypothesis H1b is only about information as a means to deepen market insight. Nevertheless, the analysis confirms the hypothesis that disseminated (processed) information has a positive effect on firms' market insight.

H1c: Market Insight & Information from networks

The findings approve the hypothesis that there is a quantitative difference on the impact between information acquired from other sources (internet, foreign partner, market research) compared to information from networks. Information from networks is in fact the only source which impacts on market insight. Hence, one can surmise that there is a qualitative difference between information from other sources compared to what is acquired through networks. The information acquired from networks is direct and personal and is not going through the formal acquisition-processing-dissemination channels before it reaches the "owners" of market insight. In accordance with literature discussed previously in this thesis one can in fact argue that it is not only information, but also knowledge which is transferred from the network channels.

H1d: Information activities & Planning

Hypothesis H1d also approve that there is a positive relationship between information activities and planning. Interestingly, it is the processing component of information that is the one component with the highest effect on planning. This may be a sign that many firms do not have separate information processing capacities, but process the acquired information as part of their planning process. Secondly, in the firms which do have separate processing capacity it is likely that the disseminated and processed information is re-processed as part of a planning process.

Referring to hypothesis 1c (network vs. market insight) one can surmise that personal information (knowledge from networks) relevant to a particular planning process absorbed separately and continuously by *people* involved with the planning process, and what is "remaining" is the undigested formal information, i.e. market research etc. And, this type of information is (re)-processed/ analyzed in light of existing knowledge, and this is part of planning.

H2: Planning & Responsiveness

Testing the effect of planning on responsiveness, the results show that the relationship is insignificant. This corresponds with previous research that

many exporting firms engage little in formal planning. However, in light of the strong interrelationship between information and planning (H1d), when planning is done it is a precursor to *response*: decision-making and subsequent actions. Since H1d proves that the firms use information in their planning processes it is difficult to accept at face value that decision-makers just sit and plan and that the planning does not result in decisions and actions, as the findings suggest.

One reason why the hypothesis is not supported is possibly related to the questions in the questionnaire: The questions related to planning refer mostly to the marketing plan, and no questions correspond with the frequent "business as usual" adaptations and adjustments needed for their market operations. Another reason is that the respondents may not consider their frequent brainstorming sessions as planning per se, while this thesis considers this as the possibly most important planning process in a firm. Hence, despite of the results this thesis upholds the hypothesis that planning is positively impacting on responsiveness.

H3: Market Insight & Responsiveness

The relationship between market insight and responsiveness is significant and positive. It is possible to talk about "organizational market insight", but as discussed in the literature review, unless market insight is captured from individuals as a planned learning process, market insight as such belongs to a few individuals in the organization. Looking at hypothesis H1c one reason is because these are the ones with direct access to networks and foreign partners and have typically worked in the organization over a period of time, accumulating experience and relevant knowledge, and knowledge which leads to different levels of market insight. The people with market insight are very often at the managerial level and are in fact often in charge of decision-making processes. Hence, the positive relationship between market insight and responsiveness.

H4: Responsiveness & Export Performance

Export performance is determined by a vast number of factors. To measure the effect of responsiveness only on export performance as such does not

make much sense. This is probably the reason why the relationship is found insignificant in this thesis. However, it is possible to deduce some few postulations because of the lack of correlation: Responsiveness is decision-making and action in the face of changing market conditions, hence the findings herein could indicate that the respondents are operating in stable markets with stable conditions. Many of the respondents are exporters of raw materials, for instance fish, and demand is high. Another major segment of respondents do export refined products, fertilizer, and oil-industry related products, both of which are characterized by high demand. The typical Norwegian technology producing firm is often very small and is producing and exporting highly specialized, need-designed niche products, very often to the international offshore oil industry. These are also characterized by stable markets. Hence, another possible conclusion why responsiveness was found to be uncorrelated with export performance could be that the main brunt of Norwegian exporting firms does not have to be responsive in the present situation. Another possible conclusion is that Norwegian firms in general deliver highly competitive products. The lack of correlation between the variables could be interpreted that the respondents do not consider the regular operational adjustments as responsiveness per se. While this thesis contends that these are in fact one facet of responsiveness.

Lastly, this thesis contends that the effect of responsiveness only on export performance is when a situation occurs which is of such potential positive or negative magnitude that the effect on export performance can be traced directly back to action taken or lack of action taken. For example, when the firm identifies a new market segment for its product and is able to respond accordingly and sell its products to that market segment before anyone else. The other variation would be if/ when the firm identifies a need not filled by any other product and is able to develop a product corresponding to the need before anyone else. If any of the two above mentioned scenarios happened, one can assume that this would result in a significant sales or profit peak which could be traced back to one of the above mentioned specific scenarios or situations. Empirically, this is difficult to

capture using the scientific quantitative method. One of the main effects of the daily "responsiveness" is reflected in more or less stable performance measures.

H5: Planning & Export performance

Interestingly, planning shows a positive relationship with export performance and the hypothesis is confirmed. Interestingly because research shows that exporting firms engage little in formal planning. In this research more than 60 % of the respondents report that they engage in planning processes (see appendix 3, Hypothesis 5). This research distinguishes between actions resulting from the overarching plans, and actions resulting from changes in the market environment. The first are planned activities (market plan scale), and the second are activities outside of the framework of the long-term plans. This latter set of activities is incorporated in the responsiveness scale/ concept (Question 2: "We are quick to adapt and change the market plan in light of new information". The findings confirming this hypothesis strengthens the analysis of the previous hypothesis; the respondents are to a large extent operating under stable market conditions. Keeping in mind that this thesis postulates that planning captures and institutionalizes market insight the longer term overarching plans in fact is a product of market insight combined with firm resources strengthens the notion that the respondents are mainly working or operating under stable and predictable market conditions.

Another possible explanation is that responsiveness constitutes the adaptation of the overarching planning frameworks, hence subsequent actions after the plan is "changed" becomes "planned" actions. When responsiveness and planning are put together in a regression analysis both of them are significant and positively related with export performance, while separately only planning is significant and positive (See appendix 3, H5). This can be interpreted in the following ways: The planning frameworks are wide and "loose"; that decision-making and responsibilities are decentralized, hence the respondents most often decide

and act (respond) inside of the existing planning frameworks. Another possible explanation is that the response in fact is the changing of the plan(s), as described above, so that subsequent action happens inside of the adjusted planning framework. The form of planning which would indicate instable and volatile market conditions would be contingency planning, which is a form of planning addressing sudden and major and unexpected (not previously planned for) occurrences. Reference is made to the discussion on the relationship between responsiveness and export performance in hypothesis H4.

H6: Market Insight & Export performance

Market insight shows a strong positive relationship with export performance. Keeping in mind, as discussed above and in the literature review, this thesis has defined market insight as a two-dimensional concept. It is interpreted as highly unlikely that the "epiphany dimension" has a significant impact on the measurement. Reference is made to the discussion regarding responsiveness and export performance related to opportunities in hypothesis H4. Hence, experience, the accumulation of knowledge, combined with access to the knowledge of network contacts is strongly and positively related with the export performance resulting from the day to day running of the firm.

H7: Emerging opportunities & Export performance

There were no support for the relationship between emerging opportunities and export performance. This is in line with the postulation in the conceptual framework that emerging opportunities cannot be identified using the scientific method. Additionally, if /when such "truths" are identified they will not show or have a direct impact on export performance. Contingent on their identification they need to be "leveraged", i.e. they need to be acted upon. Hence, their effect on export performance will only be indirectly visible while it is in fact the firm's ability to take advantage of the opportunity, by quickly (enough)

developing corresponding strategies and plans and implement accordingly which will have a direct effect on export performance.

6.0 Concluding remarks

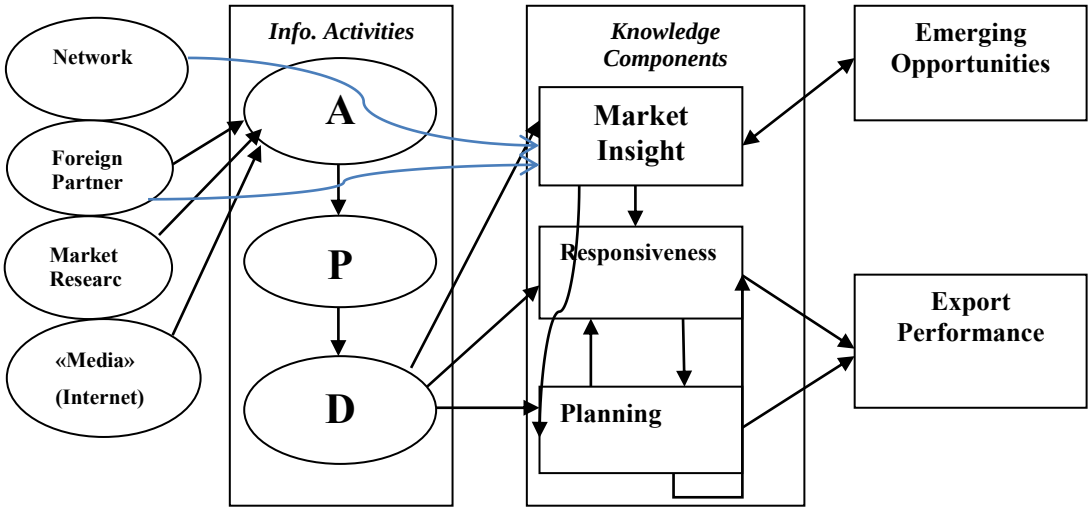
The main tenet of this thesis is that relevant information, combined with relevant knowledge constitute the two main building blocks for exporters to succeed in a given market in the 21st century. It is against this backdrop that the thesis specifically examines the relevance of market orientation. A main conclusion is that market orientation is still a valid direction of marketing also for exporters. Keeping in mind that the Marketing Concept was launched some sixty years back, and that the main implementation modalities, the behavioral- and the cultural one- saw the dawn of light only in the early nineties, in the embryonic stage of the information technology revolution, it is obvious that certain aspects of market orientation need to be adapted to fit with today. However, the *orientation towards the Market*, this thesis suggests, is valid and crucial for exporters; *information* from the market and *learning* about- and from the market constitute the basic constructs of the two market orientations discussed in this thesis (Kohli and Jaworski, Narver and Slater). Hence, the conclusion is that market orientation is valid and relevant for exporters in the 21st century.

This thesis has discussed thoughts of school within marketing; and investigated them with the aim of identifying useful insights and concepts which could be "inserted" into market orientation. The Uppsala Model adds the focus on experiential learning, and the revisited Uppsala Model describes how knowledge can be acquired from networks, both of which put new knowledge and nuance into the culturally focused MO of Narver and Slater. Information behavior focuses on sources and types of information, both of which add necessary width and depth to the intelligence focus of the market orientation of Kohli and Jaworski. Market insight represents the construct where information, learning and *knowledge from networks* meet, hence, this thesis posits that market insight represents the product both market orientations discussed, as well as it encompasses

the experiential learning component of the Uppsala Model and the knowledge component identified in the revisited Uppsala Model. Market insight, this thesis argues, represents the key to being competitive in an exporting context.

Not only is market insight a prerequisite for the day to day smooth running of the firm, it also constitutes a meta platform from which firms discover or identify new market opportunities. There is, however, this thesis posits, a potential downside to market insight and that is that it needs to be controlled and captured (institutionalized) in order for the firm to ensure that, to the extent possible, that market insight is owned by the organization and not by individuals. Planning (and coordination) is suggested as a tool to achieve this. Responsiveness constitutes the final important variable in the model: Decision-making and implementation of decisions are found to be strongly influenced by market insight. Planning was found not to influence on responsiveness. However, in light of empirical findings related to bounded rationality and decision-making under pressure, planning is suggested as a tool to "rationalize" and document decision-making processes.

This thesis set out with suggesting a model for export behavior. However, the discussion of concepts and schools of thought, combined with the study findings indicate that the following model outlines a more correct picture of how export behavior could be:



7.0 Suggestions for future research

The suggested relationship between networks, market insight, and the possibilities of identifying emerging opportunities is an assumption based on logical argument and deduction, combined with theory, especially from the Austrian School of Economics. This relationship is specifically suggested for future research as the identification of methods to identify opportunities less randomly and more frequently is at the heart of the objective of the science of marketing. Market Insight and its nurturing do perhaps represent the Holy Grail of marketing; the “means by which to achieve being alert to opportunities”?

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Appendix 1 A – Cover letter in Confirmit with a link to the survey

Hei,

Takk for at du vil delta i denne undersøkelsen. Undersøkelsen har som formål å kartlegge norske bedrifters bruk av informasjon i forbindelse med eksport og internasjonal virksomhet. Målet er å øke kunnskapen om norske bedrifters internasjonalisering. Prosjektet er et samarbeid mellom undertegnede og Institutt for Markedsføring ved BI.

For å komme til spørreskjemaet trykker du på linken nedenfor, følger instruksjonene på skjermen og fyller ut spørreskjemaet. Dette vil ta rundt 10-12 minutter. Alle bedriftsidentifiserende opplysninger vil bli anonymisert.

Funnene fra undersøkelsen vil bli brukt i en rapport som skal komme forskning og næringsliv i Norge til gode. De vil i tillegg danne grunnlaget for min masteroppgave. En rapport som oppsummerer funnene fra undersøkelsen vil bli sendt til alle som deltar og ønsker det så snart den foreligger.

Alle som sender inn skjemaet i utfylt stand vil være med i trekningen av et reisegavekort fra Ving til en verdi av kr 5000.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Marit Owe Tryggeset (Tlf. 48030808)
Forskningsassistent og Masterstudent ved Handelshøyskolen BI

Trykk på linken for å komme til spørreskjemaet:

https://confirmit.bi.no/wix/p7551754.aspx?__sid__=y_k_fl-BCbrOdlFiw6Nu8Xmdk8JkG7-uWvldXjHFjNCrJ2LiQAdF1raFSC11nhsz4rQyaTdPattHPFXMykREXXmG1kIOZ9YY6oA0a7yDFCtwO57M0

Appendix 1 B – Invitation to the study in Confirmit with an introduction and a link to the survey

Hei,

Handelshøyskolen BI gjennomfører en undersøkelse om bruk av informasjon i norske eksport-bedrifter/bedrifter som opererer internasjonalt. Formålet med denne undersøkelsen er å bidra til økt forståelse om forhold knyttet til norske bedrifters internasjonalisering. Prosjektet blir utført av undertegnede i samarbeid med professor og veileder Carl Arthur Solberg ved Institutt for Markedsføring. Funnene fra undersøkelsen vil bli brukt i en rapport som skal komme forskning og næringsliv i Norge til gode. I tillegg vil de danne grunnlaget for min masteroppgave ☺

Å delta i prosjektet innebærer å fylle ut et elektronisk spørreskjema. Du kommer direkte til skjemaet ved å trykke på linken nedenfor. Spørreskjemaet tar rundt 10-12 minutter å besvare. Undersøkelsen vil fokusere på hvordan din bedrift innhenter og bruker informasjon, og hvilke kilder som er av betydning for beslutninger. Det er ingen andre enn min veileder og jeg som vil få tilgang til de bedriftsidentifiserende opplysningene i denne undersøkelsen. Vi er underlagt taushetsplikt og opplysningene vil bli behandlet strengt konfidensielt.

Dersom du ønsker å delta i undersøkelsen klikker du på linken nedenfor, følger instruksjonene på skjermen og fyller ut spørreskjemaet. Alle som sender inn skjemaet i utfylt stand er med i trekningen av et reisegavekort fra Ving til en verdi av kr 5000,-

Dersom du har spørsmål i forbindelse med denne henvendelsen eller ønsker å bli informert om resultatene fra undersøkelsen når de foreligger kan du gjerne ta kontakt med meg på denne e-mail adressen. En rapport som oppsummerer funnene fra undersøkelsen vil bli sendt til alle som deltar og ønsker det så snart den foreligger.

Med vennlig hilsen og på forhånd takk for hjelpen!

Marit Owe Tryggeset (Tlf. 48030808)
Forskningsassistent og Masterstudent ved Handelshøyskolen BI

Trykk på linken for å komme til undersøkelsen:

https://confirmit.bi.no/wix/p7551754.aspx?__sid__=y_k_fl-BCbrOdlFiw6Nu8Xmdk8JkG7-uWvldXjHFjNCrJ2LiQAdF1raFSC11nhsz4rQyaTdPattHPFXMykREXXmG1kIOZ9YY6oA0a7yDFCtwO57M0

Appendix 1 C – Reminder sent to the respondents 2-3 weeks after they accepted to participate in the study

Er du en av dem som har mottatt spørreskjemaet til BI-undersøkelsen "Innhenting og bruk av markedsinformasjon" og som ennå ikke har besvart?
***Dersom du allerede har svart, eller av ulike årsaker ikke kan svare, beklager vi denne henvendelsen.**

Spørreskjema ble i løpet av mai sendt til alle norske bedrifter som eksporterer til utlandet/opererer internasjonalt. Vi kan ikke se å ha registrert ditt svar enda. Vi sender derfor en påminnelse om at siste frist for å besvare undersøkelsen er **31.05.2012.**

- Dersom årsaken til at du ikke har svart er at du ikke har hatt tid, eller at du ikke har mottatt skjemaet tidligere ber vi deg fylle ut skjemaet så snart som mulig. Dette gjøres ved å trykke på linken nedenfor.

- Dersom årsaken til at du ikke har svart er at du ikke føler du har riktig kompetanse for å besvare spørsmålene ber vi deg videresende skjemaet til rette vedkommende.

Hensikten med undersøkelsen er å få kunnskap om hvordan markedsinformasjon blir innhentet og brukt av norske eksport-bedrifter/norske bedrifter som opererer internasjonalt. Målet er å bidra til økt forståelse om forhold knyttet til norske bedrifters internasjonalisering. Funnene fra undersøkelsen vil bli brukt i en rapport som skal komme forskning og næringsliv i Norge til gode. I tillegg vil de danne grunnlaget for min masteroppgave ☺

Vennlig hilsen og på forhånd tusen takk for hjelpen!

Marit Owe Tryggeset, Forskningsassistent og masterstudent (Tlf. 48030808)

Trykk på linken for å komme til undersøkelsen:

https://confirmit.bi.no/wix/p7551754.aspx?__sid__=-haemITtxn0s0Qr59XAvSoDawTeWOHjuvYLIZ_MENCNpZ0E_gb61i5cbd2vPi2OqMSZpXmfUPTlwBxNOYGLCs0y_xWTi3OPAiZSC_kWaMmdQp4U70

Appendix 1D

The Questionnaire

Page1

i4

Takk for at du vil delta i denne spørreundersøkelsen om innsamling og bruk av markedsinformasjon i internasjonale markeder. Undersøkelsen vil ta rundt 10-12 minutter å svare på. Vær vennlig å oppgi det viktigste eksport/utenlandsmarkedet (land) bedriften opererer i for øyeblikket, og relatere dine svar til dette spesifikke markedet.

q43

[*Open Text*]

Hvilket marked gjelder det?

(1) _____

q7

Hvordan er bedriften representert i dette markedet?

- ❑ Distributør/importør (som kjøper og videreselger i egen regning) (1)
- ❑ Agent (som selger på vegne av din bedrift) (2)
- ❑ Eget salgskontor (3)
- ❑ Andre (4)_____

q40

[*Open Text*]

Hvor lenge har bedriften operert i/eksportert til dette markedet? (Ca. antall år)

(1) _____

q41

[*Open Text*]

Hvor stor er omsetningen til bedriften i dette markedet? (Ca. mill. NOK)

(1) _____

q38

[*Open Text*]

Hvor lenge har bedriften solgt til utlandet totalt? (Ca. antall år)

(1) _____

q42

[*Open Text*]

Hvor stor er bedriftens totale omsetning? (Ca. mill. NOK)

(1) _____

q39

[*Open Text*]

Hvor stor andel av bedriftens totale salg går til utlandet/land utenfor Norge? (Ca. %)

(1) _____

End of Page1

Page3

i13

I fortsettelsen bes du ta stilling til en del påstander. Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q12

[*Randomized answerlist*]

Markedssituasjonen

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dette markedet er i konstant endring (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Dette er et svært komplekst marked (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Dette markedet er likt det vi er vant til i Norge (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Dette markedet er veldig anderledes fra det vi er vant med i andre markeder bedriften opererer i/eksporterer til (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Våre konkurrenter i dette markedet er relativt svake (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Det er hard konkurranse i dette markedet (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page3

Page2

i44

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q22

Informasjon fra våre nettverk

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi diskuterer markeds- og konkurransesituasjonen med våre viktigste kunder i dette markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi har et godt utviklet nettverk som vi aktivt benytter for å oppdatere oss om trender i markedet (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Våre beslutninger baserer seg i stor grad på troverdige nettverkskilder (kunder, kontakter o.l.) i	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
markedet (3)							

q23

Informasjon fra Internett

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Internett er en uvurderlig hjelp for oss når det gjelder å følge med på trender i dette markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Internett er en nyttig kilde til markedsundersøkelser og analyse av utenlandske markeder (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Internett hjelper oss å holde oss oppdatert om utviklingen i vår bransje (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Internett som verktøy bidrar til nyttig feedback fra utenlandske kunder (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page2

Page4

i45

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q24

Informasjon fra eksterne konsulenter og organisasjoner

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi mottar regelmessig rapporter fra et eksternt byrå som holder oss oppdatert om situasjonen i dette markedet (f.eks. prisutvikling, markedsandel, konkurranse osv.) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi utfører markedsanalyser på egenhånd i forkant av viktige markedsbeslutninger (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi benytter oss ofte av eksterne konsulenter som gjennomfører markedsanalyser for oss (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Eksterne konsulenter har mye å si for tilgangen til relevant informasjon om nye markeder (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Eksterne konsulenter er for lite oppdaterte om vår industri og har for lite kunnskap om vår bedrifts spesifikke behov i internasjonale markeder til at vi benytter oss av deres tjenester (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

q25

Informasjon fra representanter i utlandet

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Våre representanter (f.eks salgskontor/agent/distributør) i utlandet rapporterer regelmessig til oss om utviklingen i markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Det er i sin helhet våre representanter i utlandet som forsyner oss med informasjon om utviklingen i markedet. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi har kontakt med våre representanter i dette markedet flere ganger i uken over telefon/mail (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi besøker ofte våre representanter i dette markedet (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page4

Page5

i46

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q26

Markedsinnsikt

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi har betydelig innsikt i våre viktigste kunders kjøpsadferd og beslutningsprosesser i dette markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi er godt kjent med konkurransesituasjonen og hvordan våre viktigste konkurrenter reagerer på våre utspill (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi er godt kjent med de offentlige forskriftene i dette markedet (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi er godt kjent med hvordan våre viktigste kunder tenker mht. preferanser og valg av leverandører (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

q27

Tolkning av informasjon

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi opplever ofte at vi får for lite relevant informasjon om dette markedet til å ta gode beslutninger i rett tid (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Det kan være vanskelig å orientere seg i "havet" av informasjon som vi har tilgang til (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Det kan være vanskelig å tolke informasjon om markedssituasjonen i dette markedet (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page5

Page6

i47

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q28

Bearbeidelse av informasjon

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi arbeider systematisk og strukturert med å skille relevant fra irrelevant markedsinformasjon (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi bruker store ressurser (HR, teknologi o.l) på å bearbeide markedsinformasjon (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi har en egen ansatt og/eller avdeling som har som hovedoppgave å bearbeide markedsinformasjon fra ulike kilder (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi arbeider systematisk og strukturert med analyse av innhentet markedsinformasjon (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

q29

Distribusjon av informasjon

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Her i bedriften blir viktig informasjon umiddelbart distribuert til ulike avdelinger når den foreligger (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Effektive systemer og rutiner sikrer at sentrale beslutningstakere blir raskt oppdatert om endringer i markedet (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ulike avdelinger møtes minst en gang i kvartalet for å diskutere trender og utvikling i markedet (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page6

Page7

i48

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q31

Markedsplanlegging

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Markedsplanen er et av bedriftens viktigste verktøy i prosessen med å fatte beslutninger (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi bruker mye tid på å utvikle solide markedsplaner (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Arbeidet med å utvikle en god markedsplan for dette markedet blir som regel neglisjert (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi opplever at muligheter oppstår like mye som et resultat av tilfeldigheter som av planlagte aktiviteter (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Bedriftens fremgang i markedet styres ofte av tilfeldigheter (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Utviklingen i dette markedet kan best beskrives som følger: "Veien blir til mens du går" (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

q51

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi responderer raskt på og tilpasser oss hurtig endringer i markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Når ny informasjon foreligger er vi raske med å revidere og tilpasse markedsplanen i tråd med denne (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Bedriften har gode rutiner som sikrer effektiv iverksettelse av beslutninger (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
De ulike avdelingene i bedriften er godt koordinerte hva angår aktiviteter knyttet til eksport (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Erfaring gjør oss i stand til å respondere raskt på endringer i markedet (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page7

Page8

i49

Vær vennlig å angi i hvilken grad du er helt uenig (1) eller helt enig (7) i disse påstandene

q32

Bedriftens lønnsomhet

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vi er meget tilfreds med lønnsomheten i dette markedet (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi er meget tilfreds med de to siste års vekst (sammenliknet med gjennomsnittet for bransjen) i dette markedet (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Vi er meget tilfreds med markedsandelen i dette markedet (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

End of Page8

Page9

i34

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningspanel

i36

Handelshøyskolen BI foretar fra tid til annen ulike analyser av internasjonalisering av norsk næringsliv, der spørreskjemaundersøkelser (à la denne) står sentralt. Vi vil i denne sammenheng spørre om du på din bedrifts vegne er villig til å delta i slike undersøkelser opptil to ganger i året (vår og høst). Dette gir oss i så fall muligheten til å sammenligne bedriftens utvikling fra det ene året til det andre. Vår målsetting er hele tiden å bedre forståelsen for allmenngyldige og kritiske forhold i norske bedrifters internasjonalisering. Deltagerne vil få tilsendt en rapport som oppsummerer funnene fra undersøkelsene. Vi vil også invitere deltagerne i panelet til å delta i et seminar der resultatene av disse undersøkelsene presenteres, og der vi også vil presentere resultater fra andre prosjekter innen internasjonalisering av norsk næringsliv.

q33

❍ Ja, jeg deltar gjerne i et slikt panel (1)

❍ Nei, jeg ønsker ikke å delta (2)

i52

Dersom du har sendt inn spørreskjema i utfylt stand og ønsker å være med i trekningen av et reisegavekort til en verdi av kr 5000, og/eller ønsker å få tilsendt en rapport som presenterer funnene fra undersøkelsen krysser du av her

q53

❑ Reisegavekort (1)

❑ Rapport (2)

End of Page9

email

[*Background variable* ◆ *Not required*]

Email

Appendix 1E

Selection of e-mails received regarding the survey

Hei,

Vi har ikke svart fordi bedriften ikke driver med import eller eksport, og spørsmålene dermed ikke var relevante.

Mvh

XXXX

Hei Marit,

Som nevnt på telefon, er vi nok ikke helt i målgruppen din.

Vi er ikke en norsk bedrift som eksporterer, men en del av en internasjonal bedrift med hovedsete i Tyskland. Etter en kjapp titt på første side av undersøkelsen, blir det ganske tydelig at det blir feil å besvare dette fra vårt perspektiv; vi har ikke helt dataene du er ute etter, rett og slett.

Lykke til videre med masteroppgaven, og ta gjerne kontakt i en annen anledning!

Mvh,

XXXX

Hei Marit.

Jeg har videresendt henvendelsen din opp i systemet for å avklare våre retningslinjer på dette.

Dessverre har Jotun en policy som sier at vi ikke utleverer denne type informasjon til undersøkelser/studier som du jobber med.

Beklager at jeg da ikke kan hjelpe deg videre.

Med vennlig hilsen

XXXX

Hei.

Kom bare inn på første side av spørreskjema, men dette ser lite relevant ut for oss. Vi er infrastruktureier (eier ledningsnett), og har ingen eksport.

Mvh

XXXX

Hei,

Spørsmålene er av en slik karakter at vi ikke vil besvare undersøkelsen.

Vennlig hilsen / Regards

XXXX

Hei

XXXX får mange henvendelser å svare på masteroppgaver og lignende.

Vi kan dessverre ikke bistå alle, og må derfor svare nei på din henvendelse.

Du står imidlertid fritt til å benytte opplysninger du måtte finne på vår hjemmeside: XXXX

Vi beklager dette, og ønsker deg lykke til med oppgaven.

Med vennlig hilsen

XXXX

Hei,

Jeg har sett på undersøkelsen, men ser med en eksport andel på under 5 % (pr. dato)så tror jeg ikke vårt bidrag vil være av verdi.

Hovedvirksomheten vår med utlandet er import.

Om du fremdeles mener vi kan gi deg verdifull informasjon, så gi meg et signal så skal vi svare på undersøkelsen.

Lykke til med oppgaven !

Vennlig hilsen/Best regards

XXXX

Dear Marit,

We will not be able to fill this out but would like to wish you good luck with your research.

Best regards,

XXXX

Appendix 2 – Description of respondents

Descriptive statistics

		Years export to most important market	Revenue most important market_million NOK	Number of years exporting	Revenue_million NOK	Export_share	Number of continents
N	Valid	112	112	112	112	111	96
	Missing	0	0	0	0	1	16
Mean		24,90	256,63	34,54	851,46	65,90	1,34
Median		21,00	100,00	30,00	300,00	75,00	1,00
Range		148	2998	110	9996	100	1
Minimum		2	2	0	4	0	1
Maximum		150	3000	110	10000	100	2
Sum		2789	28743	3869	95363	7315	129

Appendix 3 – Testing of hypotheses

H1a: Information activities vs. Responsiveness

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,403[a]	,162	,139	,81785

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing, Dissemination, Acquisition_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14,008	3	4,669	6,981	,000[a]
	Residual	72,239	108	,669		
	Total	86,248	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing, Dissemination, Acquisition_total
b. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,194	,325		15,970	,000
	Processing	-,155	,075	-,214	-2,072	,041
	Dissemination	,226	,062	,348	3,664	,000
	Aqcuisition_total	-,001	,000	-,211	-2,137	,035

a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

H1b: Information activities vs. Market Insight

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,403[a]	,162	,139	,81785

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing, Dissemination, Acquisition_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14,008	3	4,669	6,981	,000[a]
	Residual	72,239	108	,669		
	Total	86,248	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing, Dissemination, Acquisition_total
b. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,194	,325		15,970	,000
	Processing	-,155	,075	-,214	-2,072	,041
	Dissemination	,226	,062	,348	3,664	,000
	Acquisition_total	-,001	,000	-,211	-2,137	,035

a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

H1c: Market Insight vs. Information from Network

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,341[a]	,116	,083	,90065

a. Predictors: (Constant), Acquisition_foreign partner, Acquisition_internet, Acquisition_market research; Acquisition_network

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11,398	4	2,850	3,513	,010[a]
	Residual	86,796	107	,811		
	Total	98,194	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Acquisition_foreign partner, Acquisition_internet, Acquisition_market research; Acquisition_network
b. Dependent Variable: Market Insight_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,054	,507		7,989	,000
	Acquisition_network	,266	,076	,332	3,519	,001
	Acquisition_internet	-,068	,067	-,096	-1,009	,315
	Acquisition_market research	,017	,022	,073	,762	,448
	Acusitition_foreign partner	,010	,064	,015	,160	,873

a. Dependent Variable: Market Insight_total

H1d: Information activities vs. Planning

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,627[a]	,393	,376	1,33148

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing, Disssemination, Acquisition_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	123,809	3	41,270	23,279	,000[a]
	Residual	191,467	108	1,773		
	Total	315,277	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Processing , Disssemination, Acquisition_total
b. Dependent Variable: Planning_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,360	,530		,681	,497
	Processing	,424	,122	,306	3,487	,001
	Dissemination	,328	,100	,264	3,264	,001
	Acquisition_total	,002	,001	,259	3,081	,003

a. Dependent Variable: Planning_total

H2: Planning vs. Responsiveness

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,115[a]	,013	,004	,87963

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,135	1	1,135	1,467	,228[a]
	Residual	85,113	110	,774		
	Total	86,248	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning_total
b. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,749	,219		26,305	,000
	Planning_total	-,060	,050	-,115	-1,211	,228

a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

H3: Market Insight vs. Responsiveness

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,449[a]	,202	,195	,79103

a. Predictors: (Constant), Market Insight_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17,417	1	17,417	27,834	,000[a]
	Residual	68,831	110	,626		
	Total	86,248	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Market Insight_total
b. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,224	,439		7,349	,000
	Market Insight_total	,421	,080	,449	5,276	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness_total

H4: Responsiveness vs. Export performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,149[a]	,022	,013	1,33547

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4,484	1	4,484	2,514	,116[a]
	Residual	196,182	110	1,783		
	Total	200,667	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness_total
b. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,912	,802		3,632	,000
	Responsiveness_total	,228	,144	,149	1,586	,116

a. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

H5: Planning vs. Export performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,244[a]	,059	,051	1,30988

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11,932	1	11,932	6,954	,010[a]
	Residual	188,735	110	1,716		
	Total	200,667	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning_total
b. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,373	,325		10,363	,000
	Planning_total	,195	,074	,244	2,637	,010

a. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Frequency statistics - Planning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	6	5,4	5,4	5,4
	1,50	4	3,6	3,6	8,9
	2,00	11	9,8	9,8	18,8
	2,50	9	8,0	8,0	26,8
	3,00	7	6,3	6,3	33,0
	3,50	7	6,3	6,3	39,3
	4,00	14	12,5	12,5	51,8
	4,50	13	11,6	11,6	63,4
	5,00	10	8,9	8,9	72,3
	5,50	8	7,1	7,1	79,5
	6,00	11	9,8	9,8	89,3
	6,50	7	6,3	6,3	95,5
	7,00	5	4,5	4,5	100,0
	Total	112	100,0	100,0	

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,796	,868		2,070	,041
	Planning_total	,211	,073	,264	2,878	,005
	Responsiveness	,274	,140	,180	1,957	,053

a. Dependent Variable: Export performance_total

H6: Market Insight vs. Export performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,290[a]	,084	,076	1,29272

a. Predictors: (Constant), Market Insight_total

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16,842	1	16,842	10,078	,002[a]
	Residual	183,825	110	1,671		
	Total	200,667	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Market Insight_total
b. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,924	,717		2,684	,008
	Market Insight_total	,414	,130	,290	3,175	,002

a. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

H7: Emerging opportunities vs. Export performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,065[a]	,004	-,005	1,34775

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emerging_opportunities

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,859	1	,859	,473	,493[a]
	Residual	199,807	110	1,816		
	Total	200,667	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emerging_opportunities
b. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,358	,306		14,258	,000
	Emerging_opportunities	-,060	,087	-,065	-,688	,493

a. Dependent Variable: Export_performance

Preliminary Thesis Report

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GRA 1902 – Thesis Preliminary Thesis Report

Programme:
Master of Science in International Management

Introduction

An important assumption for this research is that market information is central in explaining export success: information reduces uncertainty as it contributes to "improved plans and organizational responses" (Koh 1991) and higher decision-making certainty (Moorman 1995). A second assumption is that information and knowledge must be used and used efficiently to support decision-making (Diamantopoulos and Souchon 1996). Finally, optimized decision-making through effective information use is assumed to result in higher performance.
Export information or information behavior have been explored by many scholars in relation with export success. *"Information has always been regarded as a critical component in making effective and efficient marketing-decisions"* (Leoniduo and Theodosiou 2004, 12). Without information about customers, competitors, or technology, it is difficult to run a profitable export business. Obtaining information, and *relevant* information, however is not a straight-forward process. Today information is everywhere and more or less available to all simultaneously (e.g. in big part facilitated by the Internet) and in this information "jungle" it can be difficult to determine which one is essential and which one is not essential. Moreover, obtaining information can be costly. This is especially true for newcomer firms with limited resources and experience which have to compete against established companies (Julien and Ramangalahy 2003).

In the export information literature information a three-fold classification of market information is often used, namely market research, export assistance, and market intelligence (Diamantopoulos and Souchon 1996). These are "modes" from which firms obtain information when entering in foreign markets. Similarly, some classify information as "formal" and "informal" collection modes (e.g. Solberg 2006). A central theme among scholars is which of these modes yield the highest result and findings indicate different patterns in the use, usefulness, and preference for the different modes, relative to various exogenous factors, which I will explain later (e.g. Walters 2007). While some scholars found that an structured,

analytical, formalized approach to information (read: conducting market research) was absolutely essential for a understanding the market and thereby succeed (Samiee and Walters 1999; Koh 1991), others found that few firms conduct strategic or planned information analysis and that this is not at all a determinant of success (Solberg 2006). Market research has in fact been found to be too broad and general to be of use to exporting firms while export assistance has been found to be insufficient in helping firms make sound marketing decisions (Reid 1984).

Rather, it is the informal face-to-face communication approach which is the preferred method of capturing information in exporting firms. Findings indicate that firms largely rely on their network, or their agents or distributors, or "foreign channels partner" to obtain the relevant information and understand how the market works (Solberg 2006). Several studies have indeed highlighted the essential role of inter firm relations. All over the world, economic activity is embedded in layers of networks of interpersonal- and organizational relations. According to scholars such as Johanson and Vahlne (2009), cultivating business networks and social ties with other actors in the market is essential for firm performance and learning. New theories and concepts have emerged as a response to the business networking trend. Examples are the network approach, the business network view, social exchange theory, and relationship marketing, referring to *"establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges"* (Morgan and Hunt 1994, 20).

This research aims to assess the impact of different information behavior and the impact on successful exporting. The focus of this research will be on the information behavior of Norwegian exporting firms, and more specifically on the impact of "informal" vs. "formal" information acquisition modes on export success.

Literature review

Findings from the market orientation research literature point out that market oriented firms perform better than non-market oriented firms (e.g. Kohli and Jaworski 1990). Export market orientation (EMO) behavior is defined as intangible *"export market information generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to export market intelligence"* (Cadogan, Kuivalainen, and Sundquist 2009). Market orientation has been identified as an important determinant of competitive advantage as market oriented activity as a firm resource or capability *"helps firms to achieve positions of sustainable competitive advantage and, thus, superior business performance*" (Cadogan et al. 2009). It is still unclear if this research will focus on market orientation, or just use it as a point of departure.

Several scholars discuss the market information behavior or processing in exporting firms: Information behavior is defined as the organization-level ability to capture information and the impact of this information on decision making (Diamantopoulos and Souchon 1998, 145). Information behavior can also defined as *"actions taken by the firm in identifying, sourcing, disseminating, and using information about export markets"* (Leonidou and Theodosiou (2004, 14). Similarly, Moorman (1995) distinguishes between *information acquisition, transmission, utilization*, and *implementation*. In the attempt to assemble the different phases of export information behavior that have been identified in the export information literature Leonidou and Theodosiou (2004) created "the export marketing information system", constituting the following phases: *information determination, information acquisition, information dissemination, and information utilization.* Information determination refers to *"the actual identification of the marketing manager's needs"* and initiates the information processing in firms (Leonidou and Theodosiou 2004, 15). An overall assumption in the export information literature is that information, reducing uncertainty, impacts positively on internationalization and export performance.

Several studies have assessed how different sources of information (information acquisition) impact on information use. Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1998) identified three information sources, or modes from which firms acquire information /sources of market information available to and used by exporting firms. These are *export marketing research*, *export assistance*, and *export market intelligence* and vary in terms of nature, and use. Market research is carried out by the firm and pertains to researching the foreign target market (or the home market for that sake) *"for the purpose of reducing uncertainty surrounding international marketing decisions"* (Cavusgil 1984, 262). It is characterized as a *"formal, systematic, and objective"* process and is carried out either by the firms itself or by a consultant /agency. Independent market research consists of defining, identification, gathering, assessment, and distribution of information, which is costly and generic (Rangan 1988).

Export assistance includes direct or indirect governmental export promotion. This includes mostly "standardized or customized information" typically aimed at small-and medium sized firms seeking to strengthen their knowledge pool necessary to embark on their internationalization process. The final source, export market intelligence, constitutes *"an informal approach to information acquisition through contact with customers, distributors, and competitors etc"* (Diamantopoulos and Souchon 1996, 51) in which everyday information is obtained by face-to-face personal contact and communication with the firm's foreign agents and distributors.

The usefulness of these different export information sources – export marketing research, export assistance, or export market intelligence – has been assessed by several studies (e.g. Walters 2007). Diamantopoulos and Souchon (1999) distinguish between *conceptual*, *instrumental*, and *symbolic use* of information and found that information use is largely reflected by the choice or "mode" of information acquisition, and which information acquisition mode that is chosen. Other studies have also

attempted to assess the usefulness of different information sources / categories, namely *market feasibility, adaptation information*, and *country background information* indicating low scores on the use of market research (Hart, Webb, and Jones 1994). Other studies assess market information use according to the level of information formality (Benito, Solberg, and Welch 1993). Also here, the results point to the little use of formal, analytical intelligence acquisition tools and systems. Aggregate findings conclude that exporting firms rarely conduct / engage in market research about external markets (Schlegelmilch et al. 1993). Moreover, export assistance has been found to be little helpful / useful to firms *"because it is not considered specific enough to fulfill managers' export knowledge requirements"* (Reid 1984).

According to Benito, Solberg, and Welch (1993) firms prefer informal information channels. "Using the network" and the more informal approach to in acquiring information represent the absolute dominant and preferred way to obtain ad use information by exporting firms. Benito et al. (1993) found that information obtained from the firm's network, e.g. agents, customers, and through face-to-face communication prevail over other more informal sources, such as market research. However, information acquisition and use are also found to be dependent on certain firm characteristics, such as size, level of export dependence, and experience. For example, larger firms prefer more informal information acquisition modes than smaller firms (Benito et al. 1993).

Concerning managers' information use and preferences evidence suggest that they prefer to rely on their intuition instead of "objective" data / market research (Solberg 2006). Intuition constitutes years of market experience; testing, and feedback that the manager has learnt from through the years, including the market insight obtained from foreign partners. Market research thus sometimes becomes superfluous or secondary, although of interest (when used symbolically) by the manager in case when the information /data corresponds to his or her managerial principles or previous decisions. Managers' low use of and skepticism to market

research or formal information "modes" has been explained with the diverging natures of "scientific research" and business, which after all represent two very different "worlds" (Solberg 2006; Caplan, Morrison, and Staumbagh 1975).

Indeed, empirical data indicate that market research is of little importance: Hart and Diamantopoulos (1993) found that structured market research did not have any significance for company performance (Hart and Diamantopoulos 1993).
Nevertheless, the effects of information has been argued to not only be a matter of the source, but how good it is; its quality and relevance for the firm, and how efficiently it is used by the organization: The ability to acquire relevant information or exploit or manage information in firms has been explained by the relationships with foreign channel partners, more precisely by the exporter's level of trust in this partner (Gripsrud, Solberg, and Ulvnes 2000). The level of trust between the partners is a parameter of information capturing or knowledge creation and learning outcomes / effects. Gripsrud, Solberg, and Ulvnes (2000) found that the higher the exporter trust in their foreign partner, the more it uses this partner as a source of information about local conditions. The length of the relationship was also found to be related to the use of information: the longer the relationship, the more positively related to the exporting firms' ability to develop viable strategies (Gripsrud, Solberg, and Ulvnes 2000). Market research on the other hand was found to correspond negatively with performance when the relationship between the exporting firm and its foreign partner was weak. Vice versa, it was positively associated with export performance when the relationship was mature. As a result of strong, long-lasting foreign partner relations, as explained by Solberg (2006) the ability to identify the relevant research issues / problem formulations in the local market increase (read: identify the right research questions, thus being able to distinguish between essential/ relevant and non-relevant information). This highlights the importance of good and reliable relations with the foreign partners for exporting firms, also in developing an ability to comprehend and understand foreign market

conditions, and to respond to changing consumer needs (Gripsrud, Solberg, and Ulvnes 2000).

A long with the firm's resource base, the level of trust in the foreign channel partner represent the main determinants for information use / acquisition (Solberg 2006). Trust can be obtained through formal contracts (Granovetter 1985), legislation (Zucker 1986), and long-term "trusting" relationships (e.g. Morgan and Hunt 1994) and are all possible governing bodies. The latter however is the focus of this research: Trustful relationships or inter-firm networks have been portrayed as more fruitful in creating / identifying business opportunities for firms than formal market research (Rangan 1998). According to Granovetter (1973) networks help in obtaining or accessing relevant information as they connect actors with mutual interests and complementary information.

The benefits of networks represents a key strength by internationalizing firms, which instead of engaging in costly market research and relying on generic market information, can consult their networks and extract relevant, up-to-date information. In the context of the "information society" in which distinguishing between essential and non essential information, Burt's (1992) observes that the network has become helpful in distinguishing between what is relevant and what is *not* relevant. The ability to spot essential information from the rest is equally important as obtaining any information.

An important contribution to the research on market information from networks is Solberg's (2006) work and 'typology of exporter information behavior'. This model illustrates the information use with regards to different typologies of firms / firm features; use of objective market research vs. level of network relations vary with certain firm characteristics (the small beginner, the established beginner, the network oriented firm, and the international firm). This research will draw on this model in the attempt to unravel the effects of networks on market information acquisition and use. Similarly, the effects of trust, opportunistic behavior,

and "asymmetric information" in network relations are something that will also be taken into consideration throughout the research project and will be explained in more detail in the final literature review and

Research objective and research questions

The aim of this research is to investigate and assess the information behavior of Norwegian exporting firms and unravel which of information behaviors / "modes" (formal vs. informal information channels) that is most related to export success. The point of departure is that decision-making based on information made available from networks reduces the risk of decisions being wrong and increases the chances of obtaining *relevant* or right information. An overall assumption for the research is that the more *relevant* information the firm has about the market to which it exports the more it reduces risk and uncertainty. Relevant information constitutes that information which will have significance in the marketing decisions in exporting firms. Thus, the ultimate aim is to reduce the amount of information on the decision makers' desk to what is relevant.

This research will not focus on the export marketing information system as such, and on how information is disseminated throughout the organization. It does not intend to assess the effect of information / knowledge management on organizational learning. The focus of this research will be on information acquisition and information use, but will also stress *information determination* as these are closely linked. As Solberg (2006) has pointed out, theories and models on information behavior often look at information behavior from a firm- or organizational level. This makes them limited in this research, which will merely focus on the "inter-organizational" aspect of information behavior.

In a recent study Solberg (2011) also points out that in addition to market information acquisition and market insight is the ability to *"follow up on the leads or the information"*. According to Solberg this accounts for more of the export success/ performance than the actual information planning

and this is where the results are revealed. Merely possessing information is not enough, *"it is how effectively you use it and how relevant and good the information is that decides the impact of information"* (Hart and Diamantopoulos 1993). A secondary aim is thus to explore to which extent information is regarded as a strategically important resource by Norwegian exporting firms and to which extent a marketing information system is institutionalized (pertaining to information determination; the first stage in the "export information marketing system", or the ability to identify which information is needed).

Preliminary research questions

These are suggestions for research questions. They are preliminary and will in all likelihood be modified during the research process.

R1: *What is the effect of different information behavior on successful exporting?*

R2: *What is the relative impact of formal vs. informal information acquisition on export performance?*

R3: *Which strategic approaches (methods / instruments / tools facilitating knowledge creation through the processing of externally available explicit information) have Norwegian exporting firms developed or institutionalized in order to achieve sound decision-making and hence succeed in their export markets?*

Theoretical perspectives

There are many possible theoretical perspectives that can be used in the analysis of firms' export information behavior. This is a suggestion for the theories I intend to apply in this research. An implicit theoretical basis for

this study is a behavioral model dealing with internationalization theory, as internationalization and experiential learning is the point of departure and a "predecessor" for export information and knowledge acquisition. I intend to use the Uppsala Internationalization Process Model by Johanson and Vahlne (1977) and the extended /revised Uppsala Model ("the Network relations theory") (Johanson and Vahlne 2009; Johanson and Mattson 1992), the latter explaining the role and importance of networks in obtaining information.

In brief, the first Uppsala Model contains that internationalization is a process of gradual acquisition, integration, and use of knowledge about foreign markets and operations, reflecting, subsequently, a gradual increasing commitment to these markets / operations as uncertainty and "psychic distance" (read: liability of foreignness) are reduced. As a response to changes and developments in the market and theoretical advances in the 20th century, however, the revised Uppsala Model takes into consideration one of the biggest trend in international business today, namely networking. Reflected by the recognition that no business is an island, international market expansion is increasingly measured by participation in networks. The business environment is viewed as a web of relationships, a network, rather than as a neoclassical market with many independent suppliers and customers (Johanson and Vahlne 2009). A network can be defined as *"links involving economic performance, technology transfer, diffusion of know-how and expertise, and forging or exploitation of trust and the flow of legitimacy"* (Thorelli 1994, 447).

Networks and business relationships represent an important source of information and knowledge, and are seen as the main way to learn and thereby trough which increasing commitment occurs. In line with Solberg 2001: *"The main argument is that social and professional networks facilitate information search / flows, and that this is made available/possible with networks".* Thus, developing strong network positions enable strategically beneficial actions (Johanson and Mattson 1992). As a result, and in contrast the original model the root to uncertainty

in international business today is not so much psychic distance, but to remain an "island"; operating independently from other firms or relevant networks, and thereby missing out on important information, knowledge, and learning. This represents the "liability of outsidership".

An implicit aspect of the network relations theory (or participating in networks / business relationship or relations) is "social capital". Social capital can be defined as *"the norms and values people hold that result in, and are the result of, collective and socially negotiated ties and relationships"* (Luo 2007). In all social interaction and also in inter firm relations/ exchange there are certain social norms governing behavior. As mentioned in the literature review, trust is crucial in order to establish durable and reliable relationships. Corresponding to this, new features included in the revised Uppsala model are trust-building and knowledge creation, the latter out of recognition that new knowledge is created and developed in relationships. Trust-building is also the essence of "the relational exchange paradigm" (Heide 1994) which asserts that *"by using norms, trust, and other governance mechanisms firms can foster inter firm cooperation, commitment, and loyalty to weather environmental uncertainties".* Inter-organizational governance in marketing channels are this way embedded in the shared norms of the parties, dictating both their expectations, their behavior and the collective goals of the group (Alston 1989). Lack of these governing principles, and as a result of discrete and arm's length business transactions, firms are more likely to use contracts as their "governing principle". The affective and emotional dimension of networks will also be an explicit focus in the research on information behavior of exporting firms: as *"the commitment and trust inherent in networks ensures the reliability of the information provided"* (Solberg 2006).

Another relevant perspective in relation to network theory is Agency Theory, which explains the principal-agent problem or dilemma which can emerge when a principal (exporter) hires and agent (foreign partner) (Eisenhardt 1989). The exporter (principal) and the foreign channel partner

(agent) might have diverging goals (conflict of interest or moral hazard) and have different toleration of risk (risk aversion). These problems or dilemmas arise because of incomplete information ("information asymmetry") or bounded rationality between the principal and the agent. Various mechanisms might be used to align the interests of the exporter and the foreign partner, and enhance the level of trust between them. Agency theory is a relevant perspective for this research as the levels and benefits of information acquired from the foreign partner (agent) are largely reflected by the vigor of their relationship.

Methodology

The method that will be used in this research is primary a quantitative approach, but I also intend to complement with qualitative research. This can be in debt interviews / a case study. The main instrument for data collection will be survey, however. The first step in this regard is to develop a sound questionnaire in which the respondents can give proper data /information about their information behavior and preferences.

Sample, population, and participants

The sample for this research is Norwegian exporting firms (small, medium sized and large firms). The research draws on data collected by Carl Arthur Solberg. The data has been collected with the purpose of assessing information behavior in Norwegian exporters and can thus be considered as handy background data for my own research. This data will be supported by additional structural data. The sample, population, and participants (many of the participants from the first data collection round) will be asked to participate in the second data collection round.

Data collection

The sample frame will be the *Kompass Norge's* entire database of Norwegian exporting firms. All firms in the sample will be contacted by telephone or mail to ensure contact details were correct, determine firms and respondents eligibility, and obtain cooperation in the study. The target contact will be the export marketing manager, marketing manager, chief executive officer, or person that the firm's representative/ reception officer says know most about the firm's exporting activities (thereby increasing reliability and validity). Firms agreeing to participate will be emailed at a later stage, with a questionnaire and a cover letter explaining the study. Ten days after the initial mailing, a reminder will be sent to each non-respondent. Seven days after the reminder cards are emailed a second questionnaire and cover letter will be emailed to non-respondents.

Data analysis procedures

As for the statistical tools used to analyzing the data collected in this research I intend to use regression and a correlation analysis. The exact choice of analysis tool will depend in big part on the findings from the data analysis and is not clear to this date.

Plan for data collection and thesis progression

Date	Focus area	Status
December-January	Overview of topic + reviewing the literature - Central theories and introduction Preliminary thesis report hand in	In progression
February	Methodology / questionnaire development + hypotheses	Started
March-April	Collection of data	Not started

June	Discussion/ Analysis	Not started
August	Conclusion - Theoretical implications, managerial implications, future research issues - Layout	Not started
September		Hand in

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