European Business Review

Examining knowledge gap and Psychic Distance Paradox interdependence: An exploratory inquiry

Symeon Mandrinos Nik Malini Nik Mahdi

Received 5 November 2014
Revised 2 September 2015
Accepted 5 September 2015

Examining knowledge gap and Psychic Distance Paradox interdependence

An exploratory inquiry

Symeon Mandrinos and Nik Malini Nik Mahdi
Department of Entrepreneurship and Business, University Malaysia Kelantan, Kota Bharu, Malaysia

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the Knowledge Gap (KG) and Psychic Distance Paradox and to explain the three dominant factors; experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses an inductive multiple case study methodological approach.

Findings – This research found that the KG has an interdependent relationship with the Psychic Distance Paradox; however, this interdependence does not exist in isolation; rather there is a distinct "time-continuum" nexus running through and enveloping these two theoretical frameworks and the three factors of experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia.

Research limitations/implications – This paper provides a deeper understanding to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between the KG and Psychic Distance Paradox and the emerging factors.

Originality/value – This study is the first to examine the interdependence between the three factors of experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia and KG and Psychic Distance Paradox. This examination provides new ideas to practitioners and researchers relating to the advancement of export process in neighbour countries.

Keywords European union (EU), Knowledge gap (KG), Neighbouring non-EU countries, Protected designation of origin (PDO), Psychic distance paradox

Paper type Research articles

1. Introduction

The international market as a platform for firms to perform exports is a field where time-honoured, nascent or empirical knowledge can deliver learning in diverse ways (Casillas *et al.*, 2009; Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Fletcher *et al.*, 2013). Within this field, the level of sharing of information is also critical to the achievement of market objectives (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Kasper *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, learning and knowledge play an important role in influencing the objectives of the firms to become active in foreign markets, and export models encourage the development and deployment of processes. O'Grady and Lane (1996) suggest that with export knowledge, key information emerges that is of learning which is beneficial to firms. Petersen *et al.* (2008) thus argued that when firms are deprived of knowledge there is a disadvantage because lack of knowledge can disclose gaps in learning, stifles creativity and therefore impede on effective export processes.

European Business Review
Vol. 28 No. 1, 2016
pp. 96-114

0955-534X
DOI 10.1108/EBR-11-2014-0079

Knowledge gap seeks to acknowledge the existing movement of knowledge within firms, with the net effect of placing boundaries in their international involvement (Alvesson, 2011); thus, firms may find themselves unable to reach their anticipated expectations (Petersen *et al.*, 2008). Tichenor *et al.* (1970) noted that the discovery of a gap between expectations and reality demonstrates that new knowledge and information acquisition is of paramount importance. It follows that knowledge gap is important, as it captures the level of foreign involvement in export processes, enabling or disabling firms to either directly or indirectly assess the market situations and ascertain vital differences (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Petersen *et al.*, 2008; Yamin and Sinkovics, 2006). Surprisingly, in previous international business literature, little effort has been made to explore what influences the firms' knowledge gaps. Petersen *et al.* (2008, p. 1110) stated:

> One consequence may be that it is clear to firms that a knowledge gap exists, and that they have to do something about it. This may have influenced our results. It would be interesting to study what factors influence knowledge gaps if researchers study these gaps in a much more uncertain context in the future.

On top of that, Salk and Lyles (2007) claim that there are a number of under-researched topics and issues encouraging researchers to shed further light on the international business domain. The scholars support the notion that international business literature shapes a sense of cumulative knowledge and organisational learning sharing, which is as critical today as it was in the past (Salk and Lyles, 2007). Prior to Salk and Lyles (2007), Johanson and Vahlne (1977) suggest that firms need accurate market knowledge, often coming from direct experience in the foreign market but there are some factors preventing or disturbing them from learning the international milieu. O'Grady and Lane (1996) found that due to Psychic Distance Paradox phenomena, firms' export processes can be disturbed, consequently resulting in failure when they internationalise in a country physically close to the home country. This very same failure inhibits the actual direct experience, and learning on different modes of adaptation affects the actual learning outcomes. O'Grady and Lane (1996) argued that when operations in neighbouring countries close to each other are not easily manageable, it substantiates the Psychic Distance Paradox phenomena. According to them what emerges to be physically close (foreign markets) is actually more distant than expected (O'Grady and Lane, 1996).

For many years, predominant scholars have maintained the idea that due to empirical knowledge and learning, firms are more likely to start their export processes in physically close destinations and then gradually move to countries more physically distant (Johanson and Wiedersheim, 1975; Johanson and Vahlne, 1977, 2006; Vahlne *et al.*, 2011). In stark contrast, O'Grady and Lane (1996) suggest that operating in a physically and psychically close distant country creates barriers to learning considering that information and assumptions are present in the managers' mind whatever the business reasoning. Given that managers' critical thinking will take place whatever the scenario, fertile knowledge and learning should lead them to analyse each part of the process, assess it for quality and finally improve it. But as decision-makers are imperfect human beings, embedded in complex environments they may display limited organisational analytical capacity (Alvesson and Karreman, 2001; Alvesson, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). On the merit of knowledge and learning disparities, Evans and Mavondo (2002) argue that the Psychic Distance Paradox has a positive relationship with managers' organisational performance. According to them, managers' logical conclusions, when achieved on the basis of evidence through extensive research, will ultimately lead to business efficiency. However, when managers' knowledge is grounded within psychically close distance markets, flawed conclusions of market disparities may also surface and such results therefore may prove misleading (Evans and Mavondo, 2002; Pedersen and Petersen, 2004; Yamin and Sinkovics, 2006) This occurs when existing knowledge is used without reference to direct information and previously accumulated learning, leading to erroneous inferences and corroborating the KG reasoning and thus suffering from a myopia in learning (Levinthal and March, 1993; Sutcliffe, 1994).

In this spirit, this study shows that despite the fact that existing literature has explored a number of scholarly outcomes, it leaves gaps in understanding in a systematic fashion. For instance, what are those specific factors causing gaps in knowledge and understanding, and how does the Psychic Distance Paradox interact with this reasoning? Thus, this study contributes to the understanding of how the above reasoning relies on the relationship between the KG and Psychic Distance Paradox.

This conceptual paper sheds light on an unexplored context. Due to the multidimensional nature of the export process, i.e. the foreign countries, various entry modes, types of firms involved, the role of context is instrumental. To reflect this richness, academics indicate the various contexts in their research. For instance, sensitive to case selection (Poulis *et al.*, 2013; Douglas and Craig, 2011) whereby organisational knowledge unlocks cognition (Zigan, 2013; Cavusgil, 1984) or is important for organisational learning (Meyer, 2007). Gunawan and Rose (2014) propose that different contexts like food- and beverage-sensitive industries tend to report lower levels of international empirical knowledge relative to high-tech industries. High-tech industries have the capacity to assimilate organisational knowledge because they can easily access information (Paul and Gupta, 2014). Likewise, scholars have examined the health and fashion SME industries respectively, with the former revealing that specific knowledge measurement allows managers to learn effectively (Zigan, 2013) while the latter emphasises how one consequence of knowledge can be a difficulty in learning (Lin and Piercy, 2013). This mixed backdrop demonstrates the variation between knowledge and learning within different industries whereby the degree of knowledge absorption either ameliorates the knowledge flow or exhibits shortcomings (Sanchez-Sellero *et al.*, 2014).

In a similar vein, in the literature, there is a high volume of empirical research in mainstream business such as the high-tech areas, but knowledge is limited when peripheral industries are investigated. For instance, Sakellariou *et al.* (2014) showed that very little research deals with the particularities of the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. For the scholars, the FMCG industry has not been either clearly or extensively mapped (Sakellariou *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, in international business academic outcomes, there is a lack of specific understanding of the FMCG designation of origin context. However, there is a present system in place for the same that stresses the importance of this regulatory scheme of the intellectual property rights by way of supranational institutions culminating under the umbrella and hegemony of the European Commission (EC, 2014). The main objectives of this scheme are to encourage export activities, and to increase expectations of financial outcomes as a result of market coupling. Designation of origin firms preserves the profitability of the agri-food sector; in particular, in the vulnerable areas of the same which may account in half or more of a country's total production volume. Consequently, the value of this scheme is dependent upon an "inter-interplay" between the firms, the sector and a group of countries who work together under a politico-economic union, in particular the European Union, to successfully compete in the international arena. To reach the research outcome, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and large enterprises are used in this investigation therein.

There are three research objectives in this study. First to examine the dominant factors that come into play causing the presence of KG. Second is to investigate the interdependence and interaction between the KG and Psychic Distance Paradox phenomena. Third this study aims to focus on an area where empirical research demonstrates there has been less scholarly attention. The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: initially, it is the theoretical background followed by the method of investigation. Next, in the findings section; evidence is provided and the approaches of the KG and Psychic Distance Paradox are discussed. Limitations of the study as well as the implications for future research and practitioners are thus stated in the final section.

2. Theoretical background

International business literature overwhelmingly emphasise the organisational specific or managerial specific influences among others, affecting or even prevailing against the firms' export processes. In academic articles, managerial and organisational factors are not easily defined and they often overlap with each other (Poulis and Poulis, 2011). These factors have attracted the attention of prominent scholars and primarily refer to a firm's internal characteristics such as management and knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Katsikeas, 1996; Lane and Lubatkin, 1998; Leonidou *et al.*, 2007). According to Welch *et al.* (2002) the term "management" includes people with high status and volitional control who take the final decisions on behalf of the stakeholders. The management is therefore liable for firms' activities and managers may fail for a variety of reasons including knowledge discrepancies, market inconsistencies or unanticipated conditions. For example, a management's knowledge deficit for a given market may control the firms' propensity to act, and therefore cause significant delays to any successful export development processes (Petersen *et al.*, 2008).

What actually stimulates firms to internationalise may differ to a certain extent according to their acquired knowledge. For instance, what type of knowledge may trigger managers' export awareness, and therefore make firms favourably predisposed to exports (Lane *et al.*, 2012)? This question promotes the idea that before something is managed and set, it must be first questioned and recognised (Schultze and Stabell, 2004). (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012) proposes that knowledge is asymmetrical. The knowledge reservoir is constantly restocked by new insights and it may even lead to an uncritical attitude and ignorance. Thus, though knowledge may be manifested through diverse parameters, knowledge can be limited or passive, according to the idiosyncratic behaviour of the management. According to Fletcher *et al.* (2013), knowledge potentially influences actions if firms can answer the what, why, where and when of the export experience. However, not all types of firms can see *where* to go, or *when* to follow and successfully internationalise. In fact, for small family-owned-type firms, the owner or managing director is at the same time accountable for export development, quality control, marketing and other functions (Lages *et al.*, 2009), and this can often deter exporting. These types of firms have intrinsic disadvantages and may suffer from the liability of foreignness or smallness. Liability of foreignness is the additional costs that a foreign firm must incur that a local firm does not, while liability of smallness is the additional costs that a small firm must incur over a large firm (Zaheer, 1995; Cheng and Yu, 2008). To connect these points, scholars have stated that firms' liability of foreignness is contingent on the stakeholders' degree of knowledge and commitment (Hennart, 2007; Majocchi and Strange, 2012). That is, knowledge in relation to meaning and understanding is not only difficult to manage (Alvesson and Karreman, 2001) but also difficult to study (Kasper *et al.*, 2013). Toften and Olsen (2003) propose that when firms are appropriately administrated, knowledge helps to accumulate a deeper meaning and understanding of the market. Meaning and understanding emerge from the crossing point between information and export development (Toften and Olsen, 2003) or from changes in the organisation's knowledge via the interpretation of past history and routines to draw out creative knowledge and accurate information (Lyles and Salk, 2007). Of course firms feeling the brunt of the development in the export market may "come and go", but knowledge resource and information accuracy are more enduring (Zack, 1999).

2.1 Information

In this spirit, access to accurate information is vital (Gunawan and Rose, 2014), as knowledge provides conditional access to information. Knowledge may reveal gaps, potentially delaying the successful promotion of firms' export process (Petersen *et al.*, 2008). This insight regarding the interaction between knowledge and information reveals some key points. Knowledge is the processed information in managers' minds, and it is driven by certain knowledge foundations (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). Knowledge must exist before information to formulate further knowledge and to give managers the capacity to interpret incoming information for decision-making purposes. Yet, within the minds of individuals, processed knowledge – as personalised information does not necessarily generate accurate observations, unique facts or useful procedures but rather knowledge often discloses gaps in its progression.

These observations on knowledge and access to information are in line with the KG theory built by Tichenor *et al.* (1970). According to this theory, when individuals are engaged with a higher level of information, they develop a pool of knowledge. The acquisition of information further accelerates the KG between those who have access to information from those who are restricted (Tichenor *et al.*, 1970). Although the theory is concerned with how individuals' suffer from the side effects of KG, the same equally applies to firms since knowledge is also an internal organisational factor for businesses (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). Unlike other firms' organisational factors, knowledge is not easily purchased in a tailor-made form. Therefore, export engagement can boost the confidence of a firm to integrate the new knowledge together with the existing knowledge through experimentation.

2.2 Experiential knowledge

International business scholars promote the idea that experiential knowledge assists companies to be competent at manoeuvring businesses on the international platform.

The more this knowledge is utilised, the more important it turns out to be, creating a self-reinforcing cycle (Onetti *et al.*, 2012; Pla-Barber and Alegre, 2014). The findings of Johanson and Vahlne (1977) suggest how empirical knowledge inventories can guide firms to expand into distant markets. For example, when management's empirical knowledge is used to secure relationships, it provides the much needed consistency among stakeholders enabling knowledge to be used ambidextrously (Batjargal, 2007). These activities intensify knowledge and diminish the reluctance of firms in allocating a mix of resources on the international level (Petersen *et al.*, 2008) which, in turn, help the same to detect new business openings. In considering how experiential knowledge and knowledge may complement each other *per se*, Alvesson (2011), Levinthal and March (1993) support the notion that while on one hand experiential knowledge as a knowledge source can boost cognition and endorse markets' familiarity; on the other hand, it can equally hurt the firm. The latter study aptly illustrate on one hand how the same mechanisms of knowledge and experiential knowledge inventories that can lead to improvement, at the same time, the same can also decrease export development and firms tendencies to see the larger picture (Levinthal and March, 1993). In cases the managers place emphasis on diverse markets, but only in keeping with to their status quo, the management of the same firms may suffer from a learning myopia (Levinthal and March, 1993; Sutcliffe, 1994).

2.3 Learning myopia

According to Levinthal and March (1993), leaning myopia is a condition, whereby firms' learning skills actually become impediments. When firms suffer from this tendency, the management becomes overconfident or complacent, ignoring the need for market adaptation, and in the worst scenario, it makes them powerless to listen to the market, to prevent incoming problems and to sense its surroundings (Miller and Chen, 1996; Alvesson, 2011; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). Alavi and Leidner (2001) suggest that if management has a good mindset where information is vigorously processed, through analytical and coordinated techniques, learning can thus be useful. Similarly, overconfidence can be useful in sustaining learning exploration because learning produces confidence and confidence produces favourable interpretations of outcomes; however, this type of learning has its own pitfalls. Learning may presume the correct interpretation of the outcomes or interpretation may be relatively poor, *vis-à-vis* the firms' error diagnostics. This phenomenon is referred to as learning myopia (Levinthal and March, 1993). According to scholars, learning myopia is often caused by research avoidance, the misconception of problems or unwillingness to raise doubts about new strategies, uncertain tactics or manoeuvres. Due to the firms' difficulty in achieving effective diagnosis, operational hardships and uncertainty are created within their environment (Poulis *et al.*, 2011) whilst further barriers to move beyond domestic boundaries are developed. O'Grady and Lane (1996, p. 326) stated:

> The success of a decision making process relies on the accuracy of information and the knowledge of those making the decisions […] If the pre-entry aspect of the decision making process is faulty, the remainder of the process is unlikely to be effective.

To recapitulate, experiential knowledge, information deficiency and learning myopia form the elements of KG. This paper is concerned with the right of firms to make decisions on the use of organisational resources such as knowledge and information in order to achieve their desired outcomes. Additionally, with the appropriate level of reflection, there is also a strong likelihood of better performance in their country of origin with regard to economic growth and other social integration consequences.

3. Methodology

This investigation follows a qualitative approach (Crotty, 2003; Creswell, 2009) within the realism paradigm and the case study method. According to Gerring (2004) and Yin (2009), the case study provides more contextual information, and the same method is good to explore and investigate information when there is limited knowledge of a concept. This study initially examined six cases for its preliminary research (Welch *et al.*, 2002; Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Cross-cases' examination via semi structure in-depth interviews, documents and direct observations was implemented. Due to the fact that the majority of firms of origin were SMEs, two types of the same were thus chosen from the Hellenic Milk Organisation database which was three medium and three small SMEs. The unit of analysis includes the firms where the key representatives provided the making and selection of export decisions (Hackett and Dilts, 2008, Yin, 2009). Two owners, two export managers, one export agent and one sales director were interviewed. For the core investigation, there were two main reasons not to use small firms. First, small firms being highly influenced by the domestic environment became secretive and reluctant due to fear of leaking proprietary information. Second, these firms did not have export departments, and consequently, they were not directly engaged with exporting. Contrariwise, these firms internationalise via market agents, in sharp contrast to medium and larger firms in the same field. In this research, the main objective was to opt for information-rich cases (Gerring, 2004) and to search for disparities across cases with an intention of replication logic how these they internationalise. Therefore, the sampling reasoning of SMEs, changed in medium and large units of analysis.

For the core study, two types of firms from the Hellenic Milk Organisation database were chosen. Thirteen firms showed interest in participating in this investigation but finally only nine firms decided the list of sample respondents. The firms decided the chosen list, and the perception of managers' selection was not random but purposeful (Patton, 1990). Interviews conducted from 1 owner, 3 country's general managers (USA–Bulgaria–Romania), 11 export managers/directors, 6 export area managers, 3 export assistants and 1 marketing manager (Table I).

The interviews ranged from 40 to 80 minutes (Bernard, 2000; Patton, 2002); all conducted in native (Greek) language to avoid language barriers (Krave and Brinkmann, 2008). The researchers of this study promised not to disclose any information to other participants in the same industry and outside the industry, and conditions of anonymity were assured. All interviews were recorded, verbatim transcribed, translated and then analysed. Interviews via Skype were conducted and recorded on those responders unable to be interviewed in person on account of business obligations or overseas subsidiary geographical locations (Table II).

Following translation, we proceeded with the coding process (Table III).

Initially, the coding was done manually as the researchers' main focus was to understand the data. Cross-case comparison were used to analyse the data to elucidate the cases and increase generalisability (Ragin, 1987; Miles and Huberman, 1994,

Company	Firm's age (yrs)	Interviewee	No. of employees	Export countries
C1	20>	Owner	<250	EU/Non-EU
C1	20>	General Director	<250	EU/Non-EU
C2	50>	Export Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C2	50>	Export Economic Director	<250	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C3	20>	Export Manager	<250	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C3	20>	Export Sales Director	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C4	50>	Export Director	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C4	50>	Export Department	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C5	60>	Export Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C5	60>	Export Area Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C5	60>	Export Area Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C6	50>	Export Director (IBDM)	<250	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C6	50>	Export Area Manager	<250	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C7	60>	Marketing Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C7	60>	Export Area Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C7	10>	Bulgaria Market Director	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C7	<10	USA Market Director	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C8	20>	Export Manager	<250	EU/Non-EU
C8	20>	Export Area Manager	<250	EU/Non-EU
C8	20>	Export Department	<250	EU/Non-EU
C9	50>	General Director/Export Consultant	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C9	10>	Romania Market Director	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C9	30>	Export Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C9	30>	Export Area Manager	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)
C9	30>	Export Department	250>	EU/Non-EU (Asian countries incl.)

Table I. Cases general information

Cases	Enterprise category	Location of interview	Time lapse between first and final approach
C1	Medium-sized	Head office	4 months
C2	Large	Head office/virtually	4 months
C3	Medium-sized	Head office/virtually	3 months
C4	Large	Head office	4 months
C5	Large	Head office	4 months
C6	Medium-sized	Head office/virtually	3 months
C7	Large	Head office/virtually	4 months
C8	Medium-sized	Head office	2 months
C9	Large	Head office/virtually	4 months

Table II. Interviews

Gerring, 2004). NVivo code description were used to analyse the same (Robson, 2011). Based on the thematic structure of this research, coding themes were developed (Mason, 2008) using the NVivo. Nodes, family nodes and themes were created to explore coding and get insights. Afterwards, pattern matching or open and axial coding was developed (Gerring, 2004; Saldana, 2009). Axial coding is the act of relating concepts or categories

Table III.
Method

Method	Approach						Time lapse
Transcription	Software express scribe used for interviews	Verbatim transcription	500 pages were transcribed				Seven months to complete
Translation	Software MS-Office for verbatim translation	Error check via data cleaning	Word accuracy check via external sources (PhD researchers)				Seven months to complete
Coding	Procedure for data reduction	Critical evaluations formed from data	Critical evaluation changed into code and broken down into smaller parts				Four months to complete
	NVivo code description	Nodes, family nodes and themes	Data divided into sections and various factors	Open and axial coding: a wide range of sub-factors derived from first attempt	Firm specific Internal factors	Firm specific internal factors: managerial-organisational	
	Excel mega matrix code description	Factors of the context and constructs were vertically summarised; Different roles on specific conditions were compared by looking across rows	Constructs separated from categories to subcategories via axial coding in order to identify all possible dimensions and properties of each category	First level construct with internal/external environment; Second level construct with firm/industry/country specific factors			
		Condensed data clustered into relevant partitions	Essential elements carefully investigated via relevant data	Summary-tables for analysis and comparison	Peripheral and significant categorisation		

to each other. In open, coding the data are collected and divided into sections after examination; both open and axial coding are interrelated. Next, the Mega Matrix technique was used for the description of codes to understand the flow and connection of the events and identify all possible dimensions of every category built (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009).

Then factors that emerged from the NVivo analysis were used to expand analysis into Mega-Matrix series (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The primary step was to group cases inside phases by coherently reducing the overall amount of information from the interviews. Afterwards the data were condensed in "Relevant Data" in accordance to how precise and distinctive it was. Then the "Summary-Tables" for every factor were built to display data for further comparison and analysis purposes (Sobh and Perry, 2006). This enhanced understanding to organise and categorise the data, and to develop a valid and reliable conceptual analysis.

To increase trustworthiness and validate results, the pilot study and multiple sources of evidence were used. The internal validity is supported by deriving the conceptual categorisation from the current literature and supported with data triangulation (interviews, secondary data and data analysis process). This triangulation method was used to validate results acquired from different methods. For example, interviews were triangulated with other sources, such as documents (annual reports, press releases, published newspaper articles) and direct observations, essential for a case study (Gerring, 2004). The secondary material helped the researchers of this study to verify the timing of different events mentioned in the interviews and also provided further details. The collected data provided evidence in the form of quotations from the field notes gathered. Thus, through cross-pattern matching, the intrinsic coherence of findings was assured, showing how these concepts are systematically connected (Riege, 2003) and the same are generalised onto other situations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). From the case study protocol, in various rounds of data analysis, the chain of evidence was maintained. The case study protocol (entrant cases, interviewees' selection, interview guide) was designed and discussed jointly with the researchers of this study whom had equally participated in the research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. This credibility through case study protocol, and case study database was carried out in accordance to the principles of good practice to minimise the error and bias in the study (Yin, 2009).

4. Findings

This part of the paper investigates the relationship between KG and Psychic Distance Paradox within an unexplored context. The KG emerges from the interplay between experiential knowledge, information, learning myopia and the export process. In particular, although firms had been exposed to some neighbouring countries, the answers provided by export executives demonstrate that managers of the firms had no direct trading experience in the region.

The home country where this research was conducted is a neighbour with Non-European Union countries. This research examines the FMCG product called "feta", a name that totally resembles one of the Home country's archetypical designations of the product of origin. The same name is also used within the neighbouring countries of the host country. Nevertheless, for cases of C1-C3-C5-C9, the views on how the firms envisage or evaluate these foreign markets differ in relation to how rival products are called in neighbouring countries. For example, respondents claimed that they were unable to articulate an exact answer on how products are called in neighbouring countries, due to the limited measurable volume of data results – albeit previously in their interviews they had confirmed their firms' direct involvement with substitute producers in neighbouring markets. For the Owner of C1 and the International Business Development Manager of C6, although they explained that their firms had experiential knowledge in the case of non-Union neighbouring countries, nevertheless they did not know how substitute products are called in these markets. Some representative quotes goes as follows:

> Because feta has a specific cost, and in these countries they produce their own local cheaper cheeses. (*How they are called*?) […] I do not know […] (*In this case more cheese called feta is being produced in Greece or abroad?*) […] In Greece, in Greece (Owner).

> Different, they have different names, I am not aware to tell you for the local cheeses but white cheeses in essence and they are produced with sheep's milk (International Business Development Manager).

Incidentally, the C8 is established very close to the borders of the neighbouring countries of the home country. Yet, despite this fact, the export area manager did not know how substitute products are labelled and if more substitutes are produced in home or host countries regardless the products' authentication:

> Now, if they have specific names for this product I do not know […] Now, if this is more than the original feta, which can be produced only in Greece, I think it is difficult to cross (Export Area Manager).

This research found that the investigated firms suffer from dissonance, as learning is not grounded within real experience through time. The pilot study demonstrates that none of the small firms had been exposed to any neighbouring destinations, although the respondents claimed they had an entrepreneurial spirit and understanding of export activities. All stay within the certain comfort zone of the EU, a group of countries who work together under the politico-economical unification. Similarly, the core study shows that the managers of medium and large firms claimed they had adequate knowledge of exports within and outside the Union boundaries. Counter to their claims, most of the respondents had limited knowledge and information on the profound disparities or similarities apparent in neighbouring countries. In a similar fashion, all the medium and large firms have had many years of international experience in Asian countries such as China and India in which these two countries exhibit small product category consumption or countries such as the USA and Australia with large product category production. The aforementioned corroborates the idea of experiential knowledge as a solid case. Over time, the respondents' views support the notion that firms follow an effective process that gathers knowledge and learning with regard to what works or does not work in trade as firms have a long tradition with exports. Even so, firms developed a learning myopia through their past experiential knowledge and learning that have created a strong "trade discipline in time" against neighbouring destinations.

5. Discussion

This research demonstrates as within the perimeters of the firms involved in this study – how empirical knowledge, information and learning myopia instil export deficiencies in neighbouring countries. Because Home respondent firms created a strong "trade discipline" against neighbouring destinations, they ultimately become less neighbourly than they could be. However, neighbouring destinations are particularly important, specifically for companies who have made their presence felt over time which is essentially a time-based process in neighbouring local areas, whilst from the perspective of the country they are in, preserving good market relationships via engagement with neighbours is also of like importance. Thus, engagement is the key requirement for experiential knowledge to establish and develop meaningful links, to broaden the cognitive map of the decision makers and to improve knowledge and export repertoires (Hooijberg, 1996; Eriksson *et al.*, 1997; Hadley and Wilson, 2003). These further echoes the viewpoint that learning is self-discovered, as firms may acquire the opportunity or the encouragement for engagement; yet, learning belongs ultimately to the learner firm. Hence, firms can thus discover more about a problem, in particular how to develop meaningful links with neighbours as they try to solve the problem through knowledge flow (Moorman *et al.*, 1993) which is a time-dependent process (Eriksson *et al.*, 1997; Li *et al.*, 2013; Fletcher *et al.*, 2013).

Yamin and Sinkovics (2006, p. 343) stated that "firms' entry into different foreign markets is subject to a time gap". Time shapes various phases in gaining knowledge on how to develop links with the focal markets. Given a sufficient length of time, these links can be studied and together with prior experiential knowledge, the sum knowledge can be applied to ameliorate export operations. This interaction over time is an elegant and effective process that gathers knowledge and learning with regard to what works or what does not work. Learning is among others; translated and operationalised through tactics such as noticing failures, mistakes or problems (Cegarra-Navarro *et al.*, 2014). These types of tactics provide firms with the opportunity to think outside of the box or alternatively explore their own firm's comfortable state of being.

This investigation demonstrates decoupling of links between firms and their neighbour countries. The findings of this study confirm that due to the presence and interdependence of KG and the Psychic Distance Paradox "firms often fail to identify and absorb valuable new external knowledge because they are hampered by their embedded knowledge base, rigid capabilities and path dependent managerial cognition" (Todorova and Durisin, 2007, p. 777). This research shows that experience is a poor teacher in which the investigated firms via wrong assumptions have the tendency to overlook neighbouring markets successes or failures; thus, these firms exhibit a type of learning myopia in that they fail to adapt to neighbouring environments.

In addition, this research supports the notion of Psychic Distance Paradox phenomena where wrong assumptions prevent the firms from raising doubts on their prior knowledge and from giving a critical evaluation on market differences. It demonstrates that the Psychic Distance Paradox outcomes from the present academic theory are somehow incomplete. The time parameter which is a new instrumental component emerging from this research has not been underlined in the present theory. The message that O'Grady and Lane (1996) promote through Psychic Distance Paradox theory is that there comes a time where decision makers will find it essential to revise their export assumptions and perceptions rather than to continue operating according to their initial mode. The scholars did not show if the time parameter stimulate the managers' wrong assumptions or any knowledge gaps and if so, what type of trigger it is. Time, it seems, is multifaceted; and, in this research, time has the tendency to generate a behaviour that discourages firms from learning. However, although time can be a multifaceted concept (Kuivalainen *et al.*, 2012), it is one of the best investments the firms can make in their existence because it delineates the distinction between export decisions and processes triggered by further streams of actions (Jones and Coviello, 2005). For the firms to gauge the effectiveness of processes over time, information, experiential knowledge and learning are vital. For instance, the time lapse between a problem's prediction and its ultimate presence may not be adequate for the firms to develop the knowledge needed to overcome the same or to accumulate the experiences in order to respond effectively (Levinthal and March, 1993). Similarly, it is arguable from this research that past information outcomes may produce a lack of focus in learning and dissonance on what is important and what is not important. Consequently, this could affect the firms' cognition in terms of how they spend their time, and how they can allocate resources to build systems to facilitate transformation of learning into action in a smooth and reliable way.

As a result of the above, this research found that, although the KG has an interdependent relationship with the Psychic Distance Paradox, however, this interdependence does not exist in isolation, rather there is distinct "time-continuum" nexus running through and enveloping these two theoretical frameworks and the three factors of experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia therein (Figure 1).

In short, this analysis gives rise to two important insights among others:

(1) Businesses located in politico-economic unification areas (e.g. the European Union) should clarify the reasons for not pursuing internationalisation with neighbouring independent countries outside the auspices of the Union. This will allow them to explore and understand their knowledge inventories and to avoid the KG and the Psychic Distance Paradox phenomena.

(2) Where firms spend enough time to investigate neighbouring independent countries outside the auspices of the Union, it will narrow the KG and lead to export opportunities. In contrast, when exposure to the reality of neighbour markets is limited, the capacity to engage in critical reflection is reduced.

5.1 Theoretical contribution

This research intends to serve not only the academics but also business practitioners and to help clarify practical implications so that they may better run their organisations

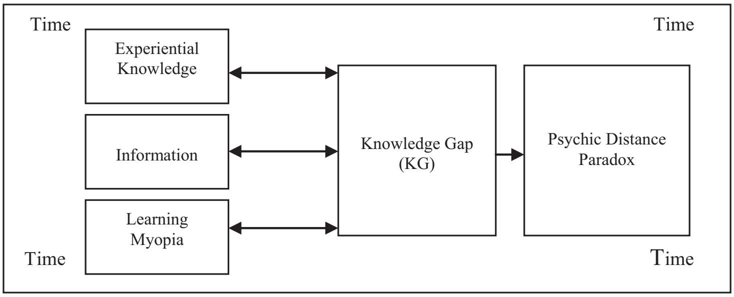

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

(Cuervo-Cazurra *et al.*, 2013). Overall, this research point towards two important contributions; first, it investigate the mechanisms coming into play causing the presence of KG. This study shows that within the perimeter and ambit of the investigated firms in the study, KG is often masked by the dominant factors of experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia. The study also demonstrates that the KG is both time based (neighbour countries) and time dependent (firm). Second, this analysis confirms the Psychic Distance Paradox phenomenon and shows why its conclusions of prior academic findings are incomplete. This study complements the existing prominent studies by showing how firms drift from their knowledge horizon they should be due to their strong "trade discipline in time" against neighbouring destinations. In addition to the three dominant factors of experiential knowledge, information and learning myopia, the time parameter is an instrumental component of the Psychic Distance Paradox phenomenon, a component that the phenomenon seems to miss in its outcomes. In addition, experiential knowledge in time accumulates the knowledge of firms; as such, awareness of relevant particulars is much needed for firms to sustain their adaptability in new and challenging destinations. On the other hand, time reveals barriers that block neighbouring opportunities through a knowledge gap. There is a self-reinforcing momentum in all sizes of firms that distorts information and prevents the emergence of good reasons for internationalisation.

5.2 Operational contribution

This exploratory study is based on a small qualitative sample and identifies some conditions in which knowledge can be detrimental through generating erroneous inferences. Past assessments may suffer from lack of focus and dissonance; therefore, export companies should not only measure markets' outcomes but also their internal processes in time as KG may increase or decrease the potential negative outcomes in the firms' economic growth and export development. Thus, it is important to understand the KG and knowledge flow, as knowledge as a learning platform has much to offer in terms of the development of firms export processes (Fletcher *et al.*, 2013).

5.3 Limitations and further research

In a nutshell, the findings as per the sample in this very research are certainly not exhaustive, for it was not possible to expect every gap to be mapped in the same; consequently, the current investigation has its limitations. It is proposed hereby that because this was a small sample size, it might not be possible to consider whether the outcomes of the paper could be applied to other contexts *per se*, as it is not appropriate to give the reader the impression that the findings should be extrapolated, let alone be applied, to current or future practice. Further investigation is required to be conducted in order to corroborate if the findings can help explore in greater detail the influence of other characteristics due to the exploratory nature of this study, which was based on a small qualitative sample. Conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews within a specific industry has created further limitations. The case study approach within the realism paradigm yields an analytical and not statistical generalisation. It is suggested that future investigation via an applied deductive approach will expand the study's findings and improve research trustworthiness and reliability therein.

References

Alavi, M. and Leidner, D.E. (2001), "Review: knowledge management and knowledge management systems: conceptual foundations and research issues", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 107-136.

Alvesson, M. (2011), "De-essentializing the knowledge intensive firm: reflections on sceptical research going against the mainstream", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 48 No. 7, pp. 1640-1661.

Alvesson, M. and Karreman, D. (2001), "Odd couple: making sense of the curious concept of knowledge management", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 38 No. 7, pp. 995-1018.

Alvesson, M. and Spicer, A. (2012), "A stupidity-based theory of organizations", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 49 No. 7, pp. 1194-1220.

Batjargal, B. (2007), "Network triads: transitivity, referral and venture capital decisions in China and Russia", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 38, pp. 998-1012.

Bernard, H.R. (2000), *Social Research Methods: Qualitatitive and Quantitative Approaches*, Sage Publications, London.

Casillas, J.C., Jose, Moreno, A.M., Acedo, J.F., Gallego, M.A. and Ramos, E. (2009), "An integrative model of the role of knowledge in the internationalization process", *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 311-322.

Cavusgil, S.T. (1984), "Organisational characteristics associated with export activity", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 3-23.

Cegarra-Navarro, J.-G., Eldridge, S. and Wensley, A. (2014), "Counter-knowledge and realised absorptive capacity", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 165-176.

Cheng, H.-L. and Yu, J.C.-M. (2008), "Institutional pressures and initiation of internationalization: evidence from Taiwanese small- and medium-sized enterprises", *International Business Review*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 331-348.

Cohen, M.W. and Levinthal, A.D. (1990), "Absorptive capacity: a new perspective on learning and innovation", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 128-152.

Creswell, W.J. (2009), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Crotty, M. (2003), *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspectives in the Research Process*, Sage Publications, London.

Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Caligiuri, P., Andersson, U. and Brannen, Y.M. (2013), "From the editors: how to write articles that are relevant to practice", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 44, pp. 285-289.

Douglas, P.S. and Craig, C.S. (2011), "The role of context in assessing international marketing opportunities", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 150-162.

EC (2014), *Fact and Figures About the EU's Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)*, European Commission, Brussels.

Eriksson, K., Johanson, J., Anders, M. and Sharma, D.D. (1997), "Experiential knowledge and cost in the internationalization process", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 337-360.

Evans, J. and Mavondo, F. (2002), "Psychic distance and organizational performance: an empirical examination of international retailing operations", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 515-532.

Fletche, R.M., Harris, S. and Gienn, R.R., Jr. (2013), "Internationalization knowledge: what, why, where, and when?", *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 47-71.

Gerring, J. (2004), "What is a case study and what is it good for?", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98 No. 2, pp. 341-354.

Gunawan, J. and Rose, L.E. (2014), "Absorptive capacity development in Indonesian exporting firms: how do institutions matter?", *International Business Review*, Vol. 23, pp. 45-54.

Hackett, M.S. and Dilts, M.D. (2008), "Inside the black box of business incubation: study B – scale assessment, model refinement, and incubation outcomes", *Journal of Technology Transfer*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 439-471.

Hadley, D.R. and Wilson, I.H. (2003), "The network model of internationalisation and experiential knowledge", *International Business Review*, Vol. 12 No. 6, pp. 697-717.

Hennart, J.F. (2007), "The theoretical rationale for a multinationality-performance relationship", *Management International Review*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 423-452.

Hooijberg, R. (1996), "A multidirectional approach toward leadership: an extension of the concept of behavioural complexity", *Human Relations*, Vol. 49 No. 7, pp. 917-946.

Johanson, J. and Vahlne, J.E. (1977), "The internationalization process of the firm: a model of knowledge development and increasing foreign market commitments", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 23-32.

Johanson, J. and Vahlne, J.E. (2006), "Commitment and opportunity development in the internationalization process: a note on the Uppsala internationalization process model", *Management International Review*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 1-14.

Johanson, J. and Wiedersheim, P. (1975), "The internationalization of the firm: four Swedish cases", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 305-322.

Jones, M.V. and Coviello, N.E. (2005), "Internationalisation: conceptualising an entrepreneurial process of behaviour in time", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 284-303.

Kasper, H., Lehrer, M., Muhlbacher, J. and Muller, B. (2013), "On the different 'worlds' of intra-organizational knowledge management: understanding idiosyncratic variation in MNC cross-site knowledge-sharing practices", *International Business Review*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 326-338.

Katsikeas, S.C. (1996), "Ongoing export motivation: differences between regular and sporadic exporters", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 4-19.

Krave, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2008), *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Sage Publications, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi.

Kuivalainen, O., Saarenketo, S. and Puumalainen, K. (2012), "Start-up patterns of internationalization: a framework and its application in the context of knowledge-intensive SMEs", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 372-385.

Lages, L.F., Silva, G. and Styles, C. (2009), "Relationship capabilities, quality, and innovation as determinants of export performance". *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 47-70.

Lane, J.P. and Lubatkin, M. (1998), "Relative absorptive capacity and interorganisational learning", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 461-477.

Lane, H., Maznevski, M., Distefano, J. and Dietz, J. (2012), *International Management Behavior: Leading with a Global Mindset*, Wiley, London.

Leonidou, C.L., Katsikeas, S.C., Dayananda, P. and Stavroula, S. (2007), "An analytical review of the factors stimulating smaller firms to export Implications for policy-makers", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 735-770.

Levinthal, D. and March, J. (1993), "The myopia of learning", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 95-112.

Li, L., Qian, G. and Qian, Z. (2013), "Breadth and depth of international diversification: interactions, trade", *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 3-25.

Lin, S. and Piercy, N. (2013), "New product development competencies and capabilities", *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 61-77.

Lyles, A.M. and Salk, J. (2007), "Knowledge acquisition from foreign parents in international joint ventures: an empirical examination in the Hungarian context", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 38, pp. 3-18.

Majocchi, A. and Strange, R. (2012), "International diversification: the impact of ownership structure, the market for corporate control and board independence", *Management International Review*, Vol. 59 No. 6, pp. 879-900.

Mason, B.R. (2008), "Management actions attitudes to change and perceptions of the external environment: a complexity theory approach", *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 34, pp. 37-53.

Meyer, K.E. (2007), "Contextualising organisational learning: Lyles and Salk in the context of their research", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 38, pp. 27-37.

Miles, B.M. and Huberman, A.M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis An Expanded Sourcebook*, Sage Publications, CA, London, Greater Kailash.

Miller, D. and Chen, M.-J. (1996), "The simplicity of competitive repertoires: an empirical analysis", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 419-439.

Moorman, C., Deshpande, R. and Zaltman, G. (1993), "Factors affecting trust in market research relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 81-102.

O'Grady, S. and Lane, W.H. (1996), "The psychic distance paradox", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 309-333.

Onetti, A., Zucchella, A., Jones, M. and Mcdougall-Covin, P. (2012), "Internationalization, innovation and entrepreneurship: business models for new technology-based firms", *Journal of Management and Governance*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 337-368.

Patton, Q.M. (1990), *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Patton, Q.M. (2002), *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Paul, J. and Gupta, P. (2014), "Process and intensity of internationalization of IT firms – Evidence from India", *International Business Review*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 594-603.

Pedersen, T. and Petersen, B. (2004), "Learning about foreign markets: are entrant firms exposed to a 'shock effect'"?, *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 103-123.

Petersen, B., Pedersen, T. and Lyles, A.M. (2008), "Closing knowledge gaps in foreign markets", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 39, pp. 1097-1113.

Pla-Barber, J. and Alegre, J. (2014), "The role of knowledge and learning in internationalization", *International Business Review*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 1-3.

Poulis, K. and Poulis, E. (2011a), "Promotional channels of FMCG firms and tourism: A standardisation/adaptation perspective", *Euromed Journal of Business*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 5-23.

Poulis, K., Poulis, E. and Plakoyiannaki, E. (2013), "The role of context in case study selection: an international business perspective", *International Business Review*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 304-314.

Ragin, C.C. (1987), *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, California University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

Riege, M.A. (2003), "Validity and reliability tests in case study research: a literature review with hands-on applications for each research phase", *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 75-86.

Robson, C. (2011), *Real World Research: A Resource for Users of Social Research; Methods in Applied Settings*, Wiley, Chichester.

Sakellariou, E., Karantinou, K. and Poulis, K. (2014), "Managing the global front end of NPD: lessons learned from the FMCG industry", *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 61-81.

Saldana, J. (2009), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Sage, London.

Salk, J. and Lyles, A.M. (2007), "Gratitude, nostalgia and what now? Knowledge acquisition and learning a decade later", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 38, pp. 19-26.

Sanchez-Sellero, P., Rosell-Martınez, J. and Garcıa-Vazquez, J.M. (2014), "Absorptive capacity from foreign direct investment in Spanish manufacturing firms", *International Business Review*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 429-439.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007), *Research Methods for Business Students*, Prentice Hall, Edinburgh Gate, Essex.

Schultze, U. and Stabell, C. (2004), "Knowing what you don't know? Discourses and contradictions in knowledge management research", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 549-573.

Sobh, R. and Perry, C. (2006), "Research design and data analysis in realism research", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 40 Nos 11/12, pp. 1194-1209.

Sutcliffe, K.M. (1994), "What executives notice: accurate perceptions in top management teams", *Academy of Management*, Vol. 37 No. 5, pp. 1360-1378.

Tichenor, P.J., Donohue, G.A. and Olien, C.N. (1970), "Mass media flow and differential growth in knowledge", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 159-170.

Todorova, G. and Durisin, B. (2007), "Absorptive capacity: valuing a reconceptualization", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 774-786.

Toften, K. and Olsen, O.S. (2003), "Export market information use, organizational knowledge, and firm performance: a conceptual framework", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 95-110.

Vahlne, J.-E., Ivarsson, I. and Johanson, J. (2011), "The tortuous road to globalization for Volvo's heavy truck business: extending the scope of the Uppsala model", *International Business Review*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 1-14.

Welch, C., Marschan-Piekkari, R., Penttinen, H. and Tahvanainen, M. (2002), "Corporate elites as informants in qualitative international business research", *International Business Review*, Vol. 11 No. 5, pp. 611-628.

Yamin, M. and Sinkovics, R.R. (2006), "Online internationalisation, psychic distance reduction and the virtuality trap", *International Business Review*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 339-360.

Yin, K.R. (2009), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Sage Publication, London.

Zack, H.M. (1999), "Developing a knowledge strategy", *California Management Review*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 125-145.

Zaheer, S. (1995), "Overcoming the liability of foreignness", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 341-363.

Zigan, K. (2013), "A contingency approach to the strategic management of intangible resources", *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 79-99.

Further reading

Poulis, K., Mo, Y. and Poulis, E. (2011), "Domestic firms competing with multinational enterprises: the relevance of resource accessing alliance formations", *International Business Review*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 588-601.

Corresponding author

Symeon Mandrinos can be contacted at: smandrinos@gmail.com