Influence of E-Intermediaries on Export Marketing: Case of SMEs in Morocco

Meryem El Assimi

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

Prof. Dr. Ali Hakan Ulusoy
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

Prof. Dr. Melek Şule Akder
Chair, Department of Business Administration

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer
Supervisor

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Cem Tanova

2. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer

3. Asst. Prof. Dr. Murad Abdurahman Bein

ABSTRACT

Instead of relying entirely on traditional networks, technological advancements have enabled small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to turn into dynamic in international market sectors through data innovation (IT)-mediated electronic mediators (e-intermediaries). E-intermediaries can help small and medium-sized businesses compete on the same scale against their bigger competitors. With the help of e-intermediaries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will earn more freedoms to progress current fare exercises and attract new customers. Moreover, the internet gives recent ways to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) so they can increase in size their current export operations or find new international customers. The purpose of this work is to have a deep view of an e intermediary in the framework of the development of e-commerce in export marketing. This study also pursues to uncover the Internet's impact on Moroccan small and medium-sized businesses export revenues by analysing multiple factors that contribute to active Internet and e-intermediary use which includes platform and web capabilities. The determinants we choose here are decided on reviewing the extensive literature review i.e., platform and web capabilities, Product complexity, competitive intensity, export marketing capability and export performance. Data was gathered from Moroccan SMEs through a distributed questionnaire. Analysis has been carried out by using the SPSS software's.

Keywords: SMEs, E-intermediaries, export performance, Morocco

ÖZ

Küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmeler (KOBİ'ler) tamamen geleneksel ağlara güvenmek yerine, teknolojik gelişmeler sebebi ile veri innovasyonu (BT) ve aracılı elektronik aracılar (e-aracılar) ile küresel pazar sektörlerinde dinamik hale gelmelerini sağlamıştır. E-aracılar, küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelere (KOBİ'ler) daha büyük rakipleriyle rekabet edebilecekleri eşit bir ortam sağlama potansiyeline sahiptirler. E-aracıların yardımıyla, küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmeler (KOBİ'ler) mevcut ücret yapılarını ilerletmek ve yeni müşteriler çekmek için daha fazla özgürlük kazanacak.

Ayrıca internet, küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelere (KOBİ'ler) mevcut ihracat operasyonlarını genişletmeleri veya yeni uluslararası müşteriler bulmaları için yeni yollar sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, ihracat pazarlamasında e-ticaretin gelişimi bağlamında bir e-aracı hakkında derinlemesine bir bakış açısına sahip olmaktır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, platform ve web yeteneklerini içeren aktif İnternet ve e-aracı kullanımına katkıda bulunan çoklu faktörleri analiz ederek İnternet'in Faslı küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelerin (KOBİ'ler) ihracat gelirleri üzerindeki etkisini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Burada seçtiğimiz belirleyiciler, kapsamlı literatür taraması sonucunda platform ve web yetenekleri, Ürün karmaşıklığı, rekabet yoğunluğu, ihracat pazarlama yeteneği ve ihracat performansı olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmamızda kullanılan veriler saptanan örneklem çerçevesine göre seçilen KOBİ'lerden anket yöntemi ile elde edilmiştir. Analizler ise SPSS Paket programı kullanılarak yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: KOBİ'ler, E-aracılar, ihracat performansı, Fas.

DEDICATION

To my family

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This work is the result of the combined efforts of many people. I first of all thank Allah, by his grace, allowed me to reach the end of my efforts by giving me health, strength, courage and by making me surround myself with wonderful people for whom I want to record my acknowledgement to.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

As more businesses participate in international operations, small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) are understanding the benefits of expanding beyond their native market. International markets are a popular topic of discussion among practitioners and academics alike, since they allow businesses to become less reliant on local conditions while still stimulating development through increased turnover and boosted profitability. International business activity among corporations is of public and political importance since it may help society and a country's prosperity by creating more jobs.

By making sale and purchase faster, the Internet is transforming the process businesses all over the world perform business. The Internet offers considerable benefits for small and medium companies (SMEs) in international marketplaces, including improved cross-border cooperation with bigger organizations such as international companies. Traditionally, SMEs have entrusted various aspects of their exporting activities, such as finance, logistics, marketing, and credit, to their export intermediaries (Balabanis, 2000).

The Internet appeals to SMEs because it may be used as a low-cost means of globalization.

Previous research has shown that the Internet, especially company websites, can assist customers search for items and prices while also allowing firms to contact prospective overseas buyers; these characteristics may eventually replace some of the services that export intermediaries used to do (Li, 2004). According to recent research, the advent of online platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn offer low-cost venues for SMEs to interact with worldwide consumers and supports their internationalization (Manyika and Lund, 2016).

Both major corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face new problems and possibilities as a result of the twin trends of e-intermediaries and globalization. Small and medium-sized enterprises, especially, are just now beginning to benefit from these recent chances (Tiessen et al., 2001, p. 211). Considering the fact that the Internet is changing the face of SME globalization in reality, academic study in this field is still scarce. There have been few scholarly investigations on this phenomenon. Samiee's (1998a) early work, for example, focused on Internet's effect on exporting.

The impact of the Internet on SMEs' export performance has been studied recently (Morgan-Thomas, 2009; Morgan-Thomas and Bridgewater, 2004; Sinkovics et al., 2013). Ec21.com, Tradeindia.com, Alibaba.com, and Ecplaza.net are the representative IT mediated market intermediates, or e intermediaries, according to Alexa.com. These aren't a typical business-to-business e-businesses where you may purchase and sell goods and services over the Internet. These webpages are export-oriented mediators derived of traditional export mediators, depending on their activities and products. (Peng & Ilinitch, 1998).

An independent market intermediary operating as a B2B electronic marketplace is referred to as an e-intermediary in this context (Clark & Lee, 1999; Martinsons, 2002; Searing, 2001; Soon et al., 2002;). An e-intermediary, more precisely, is a type of virtual world in which qualified members submit buy and sale proposals, and salespersons explore the globe for businesses that can offer or acquire appropriate items, linking traders with overseas clients. (Clark & Lee, 1999). The usage of E-intermediary can support businesses, particularly SMEs. Key benefits include accelerating SMEs' internationalization and lowering expenses. Moreover, e-intermediaries enable competitive SMEs to expand their worldwide market exposure and integrate into the supply chains of bigger customers (Upadhyaya & Mohanan, 2009). Absence of trustworthiness and an untested payment mechanism, on the other hand, might be considered possible hazards of using an e-intermediary.

Despite the fact that this stage of study has increased our comprehension of the internet’s impact on SME internationalization, earlier research has many limitations. To begin with, The Internet's influence on SME export performance is yet unknown., with conflicting outcomes. Several studies have found that using the Internet may help SMEs improve their export performance. (e.g., Sinkovics et al., 2013).

According to certain research, the Internet may not be the direct cause of excellent SME success in foreign markets (Eduardsen and Ivang, 2016). Moon and Jain (2007), for example, claimed that the Internet had little direct impact on export performance. Second, most prior research on the impact of the Internet for SME internationalization has concentrated on companies' website adoption. Houghton and Winklhofer, for example, looked at the impact of website usage on SMEs' relationships with their export intermediaries. But, because SMEs typically don’t have sufficient financial and

information technology resources to manage their websites, they can only employ a limited number of services for exporting (Saban and Rau, 2005). Furthermore, a company's website may have restricted internet traffic and so only be able to attract a small number of visitors. Alibaba, the world's biggest business to business marketplace, for example, provides an effective and efficient avenue for SME internationalization. Furthermore, independent websites have significant maintenance and start-up expenses. Internet platforms have offered SMEs with significant advantages, such as frequent online activity and inexpensive participation and maintenance expenses; they may be an efficient and effective platform for SME internationalization (Manyika and Lund, 2016). Finally, research looked at the various sorts of export channels, such as direct export channels like corporation subsidiaries or overseas distributors, and indirect export channels like agents or export intermediaries (Li et al., 2017). Although a new study indicates that the Internet has an effect on export channel architecture (Li, 2004), empirical data is still lacking.

No study on the elements impacting this process has been conducted in Morocco, where SMEs are pushed to internationalize their activities through coaching techniques and assistance. Since 2000, the country has continued to grow its commercial partners and is now regarded as one of Africa's most competitive nations. The Economic Policy Management Office said in 2006 that Moroccan SMEs represent for 98% of all Moroccan firms and 43% of new positions. They also account for 40% of private investment, 44% of the entire labor, and 31% of the overall value created. However, just 8% of these businesses are deemed exporters, and they mostly deal with textiles, agricultural goods, and fisheries.

European countries, particularly France and Spain, as well as Middle Eastern and African countries, are key partners. The primary goal of this study is to create and test a theoretical framework for the influence of the Internet on Moroccan SMEs' marketing skills and export performance. We conceive and divide Internet capabilities into platform and web capabilities, and examine their various roles in defining export marketing capabilities and performance.

The capacity of SMEs to utilise the different functions and services offered by platforms to facilitate exporting is referred to as platform capability. Our study concentrates on two-sided electronic platforms (also called by electronic markets) that link client and salesman businesses and allow them to bargain and deal (Thomas et al., 2014). Platforms can perform activities such as matching, aggregating, information exchange, and communication, according to prior research (Kaplan and Sawhney, 2000). Joining in digital platforms has provided a cost-effective alternative route for exporting for SMEs with limited resources (Cho and Tansuhaj, 2013). Joining in digital platforms has provided a cost-effective alternative route for exporting for SMEs with limited resources (Cho and Tansuhaj, 2013). The capacity of SMEs to utilize their websites to assist various tasks and activities in exporting is referred to as web capability (Kevin, 2004).

The current study examines how product complexity and competitive intensity influence the impact of internet and platform capabilities on export marketing capabilities in Morocco. Questionnaire online, is used to collect data from Moroccan small and medium sized companies.

The objective of this research is to determine the importance of e-intermediaries to SMEs. So, we can design a conceptual model in defining the influence of e-intermediaries on their marketing effectiveness in the export market. This research is considered crucial as it will encourage SMEs to use e-intermediaries to market their products or services for export so they can increase their productivity and improve their technology. Also, SMEs may enter in international marketing to prosper from the business prospects in other nations are available. The following questions have been suggested in response to the study's goal:

- Does platform capability affect export marketing capability?
- Does web capability affect export marketing capability?
- Does Moroccan export marketing capability affect Moroccan export performance?
- Does the relationship among online capabilities and Moroccan export marketing is governed by competitive intensity capability?
- Is there a link between platform capability and Moroccan export marketing capability that is driven by competitive intensity?
- Is the correlation between platform capability and Moroccan export marketing capabilities driven by product complexity?
- Is the correlation between platform capability and Moroccan export marketing capabilities driven by product complexity?
- Is there any evidence that a demographic factor influences one of these variables or the possible connection between them?

There are five chapters in this research paper. The topic is introduced in Chapter I, which is followed by a literature review in Chapter II. The framework for this study,

as well as the research objectives, are presented in Chapter III. The research and data methodology will be the subject of Chapter IV. In Chapter V, the results and findings will be examined, followed by a conclusion of the findings.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part is discussing the following variables from previous studies; Moroccan SMEs, platform capability, web capabilities, Product complexity, competitive intensity, The correlation between export marketing competence and export performance them. Based on the literature review, I'll use constructs to show the link between them. Furthermore, the literature review reveals that similar constructs in this composition have not been studied in the same way as I have here for the influence of E-intermediaries on export marketing for Moroccan SMEs.

2.1 Moroccan SMEs

The acronym SME refers to a small to medium-sized enterprise. Furthermore, the explanation of a SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) is dependent on who is doing the definition. The size of a business might perhaps be classified dependent on the quantity of workers, yearly revenue, assets, or any combination of these factors, depending on the country. It may also differ from one industry to another. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are companies with fewer than 250 employees. International organizations such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations use the word "SME".

Moroccan SMEs are critical to the economic and social progress of the country. In reality, small business owners make up for a lack of major investment by creating a core economic fabric that helps the progress of all these nations (Ferrier, 2002).

Additionally, The Moroccan SME sector is regarded as a key income generator and employment. One of the most prevalent problems that governments confront is defining the SME. Because of this ongoing definitional issue, most academics are more aware of Moroccan SMEs and do not devote as much time to them. In reality, most multinational companies define themselves using quantitative criteria like the number of workers, turnover, and financial sheet (Centre d'études et de perfectionnement de l'artisanat et des métiers 1987).

Moroccan SMEs were given a legal definition for the first time in 1983, when the investment legislation was approved in January. The SME definition was solely connected on the needs of national and international organizations, along with financial institutions, based on a number of qualitative factors. The Law 53-00 of SMEs charter established a uniform explanation build on quantitative definition on July 23, 2002.

This definition was created using the quantity of core stuff and the turnover or balance sheet total. SMEs, according to the OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), are non-subsidiary, autonomous businesses with fewer than a particular number of workers. The upper boundary for recognizing a SME varies by nation, however the most frequent upper limit is:

- Micro enterprises have1 to 4 and in Morocco, we must differentiate extremely very small micro companies with 1 to 3 workers and micro enterprises with more than 3 employees; Those with four to nine employees (Hamdouch et al. 2004).
- Very small enterprises have from 5 to 19 employees and in Morocco, are the companies with less than 10 workers.

- Small enterprises: 20 to 99 workers.
- Medium enterprises:100 to 500 workers.

Finally, according to a 2006 report by the Economic Policy Management Office, SMEs account for 98 percent of all Moroccan businesses and 43 percent of new jobs. They also account for 40% of private investment, 44% of the entire labor, and 31% of the overall value created. However, just 8% of these businesses are deemed exporters, and they mostly deal with textiles, agricultural goods, and sea products.

The goal of Morocco's new industrial acceleration plan (2014-2020) (Minister of Industry, Trade, and Digital Economy 2014) is to increase the country's GDP from 14 percent to 23 percent. However, the contribution of industry to Morocco's GDP is low (14 percent) and does not reflect Morocco's aspiration to turn into a major industrial power in North Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, this strategy aims to bring 500.000 employment for young (Commission Economique pour L'Afrique 2016). Indeed, this approach is built on the presumption that industrial SMEs with a high level of efficiency and innovation can help absorb new firms into the labor market and increase national competition (Bouhdoud, M). Morocco implements a variety of policies and measures aimed at improving the competitiveness and productive capacity of businesses, particularly SMEs (represent more than 90 percent of the industrial activities). Morocco is concerned about supporting the progressive integration of very small businesses by establishing a public industrial investment fund, banking sector engagement, and the creation of links between major businesses, small, very small and medium businesses.

As stated by information from the Federation of SMEs in Morocco – associated with the CGEM (Confédération Générale des Enterprises du Maroc) –, SMEs play a key role in Morocco's economic fabric, accounting for more than 95 percent of businesses (about 70.000). Furthermore, it employs 50% of the workforce and account for 51% of domestic investment, as well as 40% of output and 31% of exports, are at the heart of the economy. However, compared to 60 percent in certain nations, its contribution to GDP is just approximately 20 percent. SME appears in each and every area of the Moroccan economy., according to the Agence Nationale pour la Promotion des Petites et Moyenne Enterprises (MarocPME), with a rate of 98 percent: industry, handicrafts, construction, trade, and lastly services, counting tourism and financial services. A balanced economic growth in a growing nation like Morocco need a policy for regional planning that can be accomplished with the actively participating of SMEs. Furthermore, the development literature in Morocco pays little attention to the challenge of small and medium companies.

2.2 Platform Capability

Digitalization, or the use of digital technology, is receiving a lot of academic attention (Frishammar, Cenamor, Cavalli-Björkman, Hernell, & Carlsson, 2018; Jahanmir & Cavadas, 2018; Viglia, Pera, & Bigné, 2018), especially in the case of entrepreneurship in small and medium sized businesses (Bi, Davison, & Smyrnios, 2017; Giotopoulos et al., 2017; Li, Su, et al., 2017).

Information and communication technology (ICT) is the foundation of numerical development. (ICT) systems that standardize data and enable companies to swiftly create, store, codify, and disseminate growing volumes of awareness, that is growing ever more diverse (Markus, Steinfield, Wigand, & Minton, 2006; Williams, Dwivedi,

Lal, & Schwarz, 2009). For the past two decades, researchers have studied how ICT and by increasing operational efficiency, digital technology may improve overall performance. (e.g., by improving inventory management) and customer service (e.g., by more precisely matching market demands;(Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Melville et al., 2004). through this situation, technological developments have resulted in the emergence and rapid spread of more complex technologies known as digital platforms (Parker et al., 2016). Traditional business proposals are being challenged by technical aspects like hardware or software devices with functions that may be extended via complementary modules, as well as a set of rules, conventions, and method of organization to manage third parties and adopters. (De Reuver, Srensen, & Basole, 2018; McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Correspondingly, As a result, digital platforms are modular systems made up of core and changeable modules, and also the governance that goes alongside them. (Tiwana, 2014). Firms may seek both scalability and evolvability using a platform design, which allows them to centralize and integrate common functionality in core modules and reconfigure replaceable components (Wareham, Fox, & Cano Giner, 2014). Platform ecosystem operators, for example, may exchange and exploit shared resources and expertise while also building new complementary modules, you could allow usage unique resources. In this regard, recent advances in information collection, analysis, and interpretation have encouraged the use internet and information management are at the center of numerous company models, due to the use of digital platforms as interaction facilitators (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2012; Van Alstyne, Parker, & Choudary, 2016).

The capacity of SMEs to utilise the different functions and services offered by platforms to facilitate exporting is referred to as platform capability. Our study focuses

on two-sided electronic platforms that connect seller and buyer and give them permission to bargain and deal (Thomas et al., 2014). Platforms can perform activities such as matching, aggregating, information exchange, and communication, according to prior research (Kaplan and Sawhney, 2000). Participating in online platforms has provided a cost-effective alternative route for exporting for SMEs with limited resources (Cho and Tansuhaj, 2013).

2.3 Web Capability

The significance of digitization has grown. Digitalization has evolved from a technological issue to a strategic management problem that has an influence on the core of the product offering (Li et al., 2017). The core of production of value has shifted from the conventional linear value chain to interwoven networks due to the huge increasing utilisation of web platforms (Karimi & Walter, 2015; McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Firms are increasingly relying on connections and information flows through departments inside the firm including partners in order to create value. Because of their lack of resources, SMEs are particularly vulnerable to this scenario (Lin & Lin, 2016; Parida, Pesämaa, Wincent, & Westerberg, 2017).

Platform integration, additionally, it is possible that both communication and coordination will improve. Creating an integrated architecture that centralizes and defines internal flows of information is one of the numeric platform competencies. (Dominguez Gonzalez & Massaroli de Melo, 2018; Helfat & Raubitschek, 2018). In this regard, having a digital platform allows SMEs to increase their capacity to connect with external partners as well as better gather and manage structured data from them.

2.4 Export Marketing Capability

Academics have given much thought to the role of marketing operations and capability distribution in enhancing industrial organization success (e.g., Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008; Morgan, Slotegraaf, & Vorhies, 2009; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Weerawardena & Mavondo, 2011). Export marketing activities have been shown to assist increase performance, according to academics in the subject of export marketing research (e.g., Cadogan, Kuivalainen, & Sundqvist, 2009; Diamantopoulos, Ring, Schlegelmilch, & Doberer, 2014; Ellis, Davies, & Wong, 2011; Lisboa, Skarmeas, & Lages, 2013; Ottosson & Kindström, 2016). Prior study has looked at the effects of different On the impact of export marketing efforts (like export data usage and export market-oriented behavior) on export performance (e.g., Chung, 2012; Diamantopoulos et al., 2014; Souchon & Diamantopoulos, 1996).

The majority of empirical research on export marketing capabilities are based on data from market businesses in developed economies (Ellis et al., 2011; Zou, Fang, & Zhao, 2003). Given the importance of export marketing capabilities in generating export success, a crucial and unsettled the question however is that market responsiveness or capability for product development alone is sufficient to improve export success. According to Cadogan's (2012) article, these talents may should be in harmony (or merged) in order for their full advantages to be achieved. Other academics have advocated for more integrated methods to researching how companies' customer-related and product-innovation skills may create new market offers to improve their capacity to meet defined consumer demands and resist competitor actions. Menguc and Auh (2006), for example, believe that a business strategy based on the balanced

bundling of market-response and product-innovation skills is a key driver of excellent success.

Other academics have advocated for more integrated methods to researching how companies' customer-related and product-innovation skills may create new market offers, as an illustration, Menguc and Auh (2006) believe that A company's ability to combine market-response and product-innovation talents is a key driver of great performance. enhancing their capacity to respond to defined consumer demands and counteract competitor actions.

Furthermore, export marketing capabilities are recognized as a crucial organizational capacity that aids in the transformation of a firm's data-intensive capabilities into export performance (Murray et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2012). As a result, this study contends that diverse Internet capabilities can improve export marketing capabilities, which impact export performance.

Previous research has emphasized the relevance of export marketing capabilities in translating data-intensive competencies like market orientation into high export performance (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003). Murray et al. (2011), for example, the influence of market orientation on export success was shown to be moderated by export marketing skills.

2.5 Product Complexity

Many academics have developed numerous simplification and techniques to product complexity based on the study' goal, scope, and data available; nevertheless, Product complexity has no universally accepted or used definition or measurement. In addition, there is already a minimal improvement in setting up a proactive complexity dimension

technique. The majority of researchers that tried to objectively assess product complexity concentrate on evaluating current product designs and initiatives (Barclay & Dann, 2000) and (Pahl & Beitz, 1996).

Variety is often used to convey product complexity; in fact, some people use As somewhat of a common term for product complexity, the term "variety" is used. According to MacDuffie et al. (1996), "diversity" refers to what firms provide customers like part of a marketing plan for a product, while "complexity" refers to one dimension of the manufacturing jobs that emerge from that plan. When the benefits of variety surpass the drawbacks in terms of quality, production, cost, and efficiency, it is termed "good." Different methods to product complexity was already been studied in product design and development, manufacturing and assembly, and supply chain, in addition to diversity.

Product complexity is an essential component in the product design and development process since it is closely linked to product quality, cost, manufacturing period for a cycle, and customer satisfaction (Zhang & Luo, 2007). Several studies in this field focus on the design process or development project rather than the product itself. But, because complex products may lead to complex product design and development processes, knowing the procedures may aid comprehension of product's complexity.

Product/service complexity, according to Salminen et al. (2000), make reference to the requirement to fulfil a wide range of client demands. As a result, the number of product offerings is used to characterize product complexity. Pahl and Beitz (1996) propose a design simplicity criterion based on the assumption that simple designs are preferable to complicated designs. The number of functions, processes, and components used to

evaluate design simplicity. The less complexity there is, the fewer pieces there are and the greater the level of standardization. Even though several researchs have linked a growth in the number of parts in a product to an increase in complexity, some have suggested that decreasing part counts would also enhance product complexity. Fagade et al. (1998), for example, suggest that the functions of component elimination and the use of product platforms can frequently result in enhanced, small quantity, and more geometrically complex elements.

Increasing product diversity has created challenges in the procedure and administration of assembly and manufacturing systems, unfavourably influencing assembly system efficacy in terms of both quality and productivity, as empirical data and simulations have demonstrated (MacDuffie, Sethuraman, & Fisher, 1996) and (Fisher & Ittner, 1999). The influence of utilizing product platforms on product complexity in production and manufacturing has seldom been examined, identical to the influence of product platforms and groups on product design and development complexity Few studies have shown a link between supply chain management decisions and product complexity. According to Perona et al. (2004)'s research, there is a significant relationship between engaging in supplier partnerships and lowering the complexity rating, and lowering complexity improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the supply chain system. Earlier studies have shown that product complexity is a key source of internal uncertainty that necessitates data processing (Kim et al., 2005).

2.6 Competitive Intensity

According to several research, environmental turbulence or dynamism is a key motivator of creativity (Jantunen, 2005; Liao, Welsch, & Stoica, 2003; Maes & Sels,

2014; Martinez-Conesa, SotoAcosta, & Carayannis, 2017). When a market's competitive intensity rises, rivals' marketing efforts become more frequent and aggressive, and a company must discover a means to gain a competitive edge and catch consumers. that might be accomplished by providing innovative items or products at a cheaper cost, which can be accomplished by lowering costs, that might be achieved by integrating innovation into manufacturing processes. When competition is low and steady, on the other hand, a company may be hesitant to launch dangerous, expensive, and time-consuming technologies.

However, in times of severe rivalry, a business may be unwilling to make innovations if competitors can quickly match the innovator's offerings and readily copy inventions. Nonetheless, it is predicted that a firm's innovativeness would increase as its competitive intensity rises. In a competitive market, Zahra (1993, p. 324) underlined the necessity for a company to concentrate on innovation and mentioned that "When rivalry is fierce, companies must innovate in both products and processes, explore new markets, find novel ways to compete, and examine how they will differentiate themselves from competitors".

Competitive intensity and radical innovation are related, according to Zhou and Li (2012). "Small firms must invest in innovation, preferably when competitive forces are more intense," according to (Hernandez-Espallardo and Delgado-Ballester 2009, p. 470). Jansen, Faj, and Volberda (2006) discovered that competition intensity has a moderating effect on exploitative inventions, indicating that in more competitive marketplaces, financial performance is better when exploitative inventions are used. Firms that enhance their intensity of competition have a better chance of increasing sales and profit margins. Because most sectors are under intense rivalry and are

experiencing unprecedented technological development (Bettis & Hitt, 1995; D'Aveni, 1994), companies can achieve better performance by detecting and uncovering new competitive possibilities on a regular basis (Hayek, 1949; Kirzner, 1973). Firms that notice chances to provide higher value on a regular basis are better positioned to develop new competitive advantages. through the timeframe competitors react to their activities, these companies have created fresh transitory advantages and are therefore able to stay ahead of the competition (D'Aveni, 1994).

A company's performance is the result of a sequence of competitive activities taken over time (Smith et al., 2001). Each new competitive activity provides a temporary advantage or weakens the market positions of competitors (Young, Smith, & Grimm, 1996). By negating the impact of rivals' activities or limiting effective countermeasures, a series of actions tends to overwhelm them. Because the success of a company is the consequence of a succession of strategic decisions made by time, (D'Aveni, 1994; Grimm & Smith, 1997; Hambrick et al., 1996), Companies that use numerous competitive and strategic initiatives to aggressively "target" competitors win more revenues and market share. (D'Aveni, 1994; Ferrier et al., 1999; Smith et al., 2001; Young et al., 1996). However, due to time-compression inefficiencies, introducing additional competing behaviours typically raises development costs (Pacheco-de-Almeida, 2010). Firms' expenses rise exponentially as they reduce the time it takes to create new competitive activities (Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Scherer, 1967).

2.7 Export Performance

Export performance is one of the more studied areas of international marketing and sales. According to Katsikeas et al. (2000, p. 493), “export performance is one of the

most widely researched but least understood and most contentious areas of international marketing". This is due to the growing trend of economic globalisation, market liberalisation, and economic and monetary unions, as well as the fact that a large number of nations rely on export performance to achieve economic development (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994). As a result, not just for scholars, but also for managers and policymakers, this field of management is critical (Katsikeas et al., 2000; Sousa, 2004). Regardless of the fact that this is a well-studied topic, there is a major disagreement and synthesis in fact related to its conceptualization, operationalization, methodology, as well as its drivers and performance measurements (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994; Katsikeas et al., 2000; Shoham, 1998; Sousa, 2004; Zou, et al., 1998).

For the last four decades, researchers have been trying to understand the phenomena of export performance (Diamantopoulos, 1998). The researchers looked for "organizational, managerial, environmental, and strategic drivers of export performance" in their research (Diamantopoulos and Kakkos, 2007). Export performance, according to Diamantopoulos (1998), is the consequence of export behaviour when subjected to various firm-specific and environment-specific situations. Export performance, according to Cavusgil and Zou (1994, p.3), is "a strategic reaction by management to the interaction of internal and external forces". Moreover, these writers define it as "the extent to which a firm's economic and strategic objectives with respect to exporting a product into a foreign market are realized through marketing strategy planning and implementation" (Id. p. 4).

Shoham (1998, p.62) argues that export success is best understood as the sum of a company's international sales. In this sense, he sees the idea as a three-dimensional construct, with export sales, export profitability, and performance change as its

characteristics. Besides that, the performance of exports is complex and cannot be represented by a single metric. (Diamantopoulos, 1998, p.3), demonstrating the importance of using a multidimensional approach when defining the measurement for assessing export performance instead of a single-item measures, which are insufficient for any strong evaluation (Shoham, 1998).

Everything taken into account, it is reasonable to infer that export performance is a unique concept, with each conceptualization, operationalization, and measure formulation customized to the study's reality, the type of company studied, and its circumstances. (Greve, 1998; Katsikas et al., 2000; Sousa, 2004,) Furthermore, past study on the Internet and export performance has shown conflicting findings. Morgan-Thomas and Bridgewater (2004), for example, found no correlation between the complexity of Internet use for exporting and export performance. As a result, previous study has advocated for greater investigation into the impact of the Internet on export performance (Mathews et al., 2016; Eduardsen and Ivang, 2016).

2.8 Proposed Conceptual Model

The ability of SMEs to utilise the different functions and services offered by platforms to facilitate exporting is referred to as platform capability. Our study focuses on two-sided electronic platforms that connect buyers and sellers' companies and allow them to bargain and deal (Thomas et al., 2014). Joining in online platforms has provided a cost-effective alternative channel for exporting for SMEs with limited resources (Cho and Tansuhaj, 2013). Platforms can perform services such as matching, aggregating, information exchange, and communication, according to past research (Kaplan and Sawhney, 2000). The ability of SMEs to use their websites to assist various operations and activities in exporting is referred to as web capability (Kevin, 2004). Previous

research has shown that websites can help SMEs with publishing, interactivity, transactions, and process optimization (Saban and Rau, 2005). Moreover, export marketing capabilities have been identified as a vital organizational competency that contributes in the transformation of a firm's information capabilities to export performance (Murray et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2012). As a result, this study contends that varied Internet capabilities can improve export marketing capabilities, which in turn affects export performance. Furthermore, past research has revealed that the impact of IT capabilities is influenced by either internal and external influences (Wong et al.,2011; Dong et al., 2009).

As a result, the moderating effects of product complexity and competitive intensity on the influence of web and platform capabilities on export marketing capabilities are explored in this study.

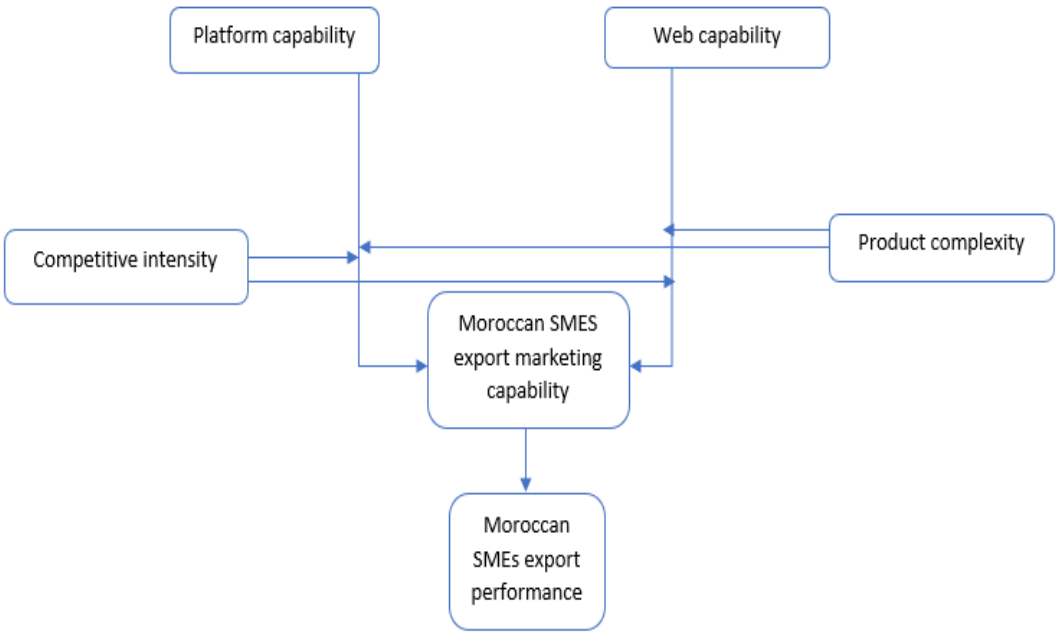

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual model

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Purpose

We can utilize a variety of approaches to conduct the study, depending on the research potential problem. Exploratory, Explanatory, and Descriptive researches are the three types of research that may be used to solve an issue;

- Exploratory: is used when an issue isn't clearly defined or understood, or when the problem's true field is unknown. When a subject is complicated, however, most researchers choose to do exploratory study. This research got the objective to identify, explain, and comprehend curiosity in order to analyze an issue in a new light. This sort of research can benefit from techniques such as expert interviews (Yin, 1994).
- Explanatory: Also termed as causal research, this type of study is used to identify and show the nature of cause-and-effect relationships. Researchers, on the other hand, utilize this sort of study to determine the link between the independent and dependent variables. This study is valuable in demonstrating how one variable influence or reduces the value of other factors (Zikmund, 1994).
- Descriptive: In contrast to exploratory research, when the problem is unknown, descriptive research has a known problem. However, is used to gather information about variables or circumstances in order to explain what exists. Researchers in this study must identify and clarify the research problem

because they are unfamiliar with the circumstance. Descriptive research does not provide an explanation for any of the problem's findings; instead, it just answers questions like what, where, who, and how (Yin, 1994).

This study investigates and explain the problem's existing state, respond to research questions in the form of what, and focus on the most significant elements that impact Moroccan export performance when utilizing E-intermediaries.

3.2 Research Approach

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches are the two sorts of research methods. A quantitative approach to research is gathering and translating data into numerical form as part of an exploratory study. However, inferences may be taken from the outcomes, which are based on data and calculated statistics. It aids in the development of research ideas and hypotheses. By quantifying factors such as attitude, opinion, and behavioural quantitative method may be used to obtain findings from a wide population. In addition, the quantitative method involves data gathering through surveys (online, mobile, and paper surveys), face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, and longitudinal research. The qualitative method, on the other hand, focuses on describing an event using words rather than figures. It assists us in translating and comprehending the complicated realities of a particular situation. For example, in a qualitative method, an open-ended inquiry allows the participant to respond to the questions using his or her viewpoint.

The main objective of this study is to look at the elements that affect Moroccan SMEs' export performance. Various criteria have developed and are being empirically examined to see how successful they are in promoting the use of E-intermediaries. The

quantitative method is seen as a suitable strategy to utilize in this topic because all of the study findings are given in numbers and statistical analysis has been done.

3.3 Research Design

The study's purpose is to identify the causality of presumed variables that is established based on hypotheses derived from observation and current theories. Casual research is a form of study that looks at the casual link between more than two variables in order to understand the influence of changes in the fluctuation of values in one or more variables. As a result, the quantitative approach is chosen for this study. We chose the respondent from websites that make databases of Moroccan SMEs who have a valid e-mail address. Convenience sampling method was used, where the respondents were chosen from websites. E-mails were sent to 210 SME owner/managers. After editing the replies there were 121 answers to be analyzed with a 57.6% response rate.

Because the focus of this study is on export marketing, the research will include a survey of Moroccan SMEs. A questionnaire had been used to collect data. As a result, I favor businesses that are privately held, employ 5 to 250 full-time employees, make physical goods or provide services, and are also involved in productive business activities (Boso et al., 2013).

All of the variables in our study are operationalized using multi-item scales with a seven-point Likert Scale format. The platform capability scale is based on Kaplan and Sawhney's five-point scale (2000). The scale reflects the extent to which SMEs employ the various functions and services provided by platforms. According to Kevin (2004), there are eight items that may be used to assess web capability. The web capability construct measures how well SMEs use their websites to support certain export

operations and activities. Moreover, there is a second-order construct of export marketing capabilities, which includes development of new products, pricing capability, and marketing communication capability follows up on the work of Murray et al. (2011). In addition, the three-item scale of export performance is based on research by Cadogan et al. (2005). The three-item product complexity scale is based on Son and Benbasat (2007) prior work. The scale measures how complicated a product is and how much information is needed to define its qualities. Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) four-item scale for assessing competition intensity in the export market has been adapted.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

We take a theoretical perspective from the RBV in IT business value research to study the influence of the Internet on SME export performance. Because the barriers to imitation and acquisition by other businesses are generally low, the RBV of IT business value study, which is based on the traditional RBV, shows that IT alone cannot represent a firm's competitive advantage (Wade and Hulland, 2004; Powell and Dent-Micallef, 1997). Only when IT-related resources and capabilities (in our instance, platform and web capabilities) are integrated into higher level organizational skills, a competitive advantage can be established (in our case, export marketing capabilities) (Wade and Hulland, 2004). Previous research has emphasized the relevance of export marketing capabilities in translating data-intensive competencies like market orientation into high export performance (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003). As a result, the focus of this study is on Moroccan export marketing capabilities as key higher-order organizational capabilities that will translate the information benefits provided by Internet capabilities, such as platform and web capabilities, into successful performance outcomes in export industries. According to Murray et al.

(2011) Export marketing capabilities, such as new product creation capability, price capability, and marketing communication capability, were regarded as second-order organizational capabilities. The capacity of a company to create and manage new goods and services to satisfy the demands of export customers is referred to as product development competence (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003). The capability of a company to utilize marketing communication to manage the value propositions of export customers is referred to as marketing communication capability (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003). The adequacy of a company to utilize price techniques to adapt to changes and enhance revenue in export markets is referred to pricing capability (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003).

3.5 Conceptual Model - Hypotheses

The conceptual model below summarizes the proposed hypothesis:

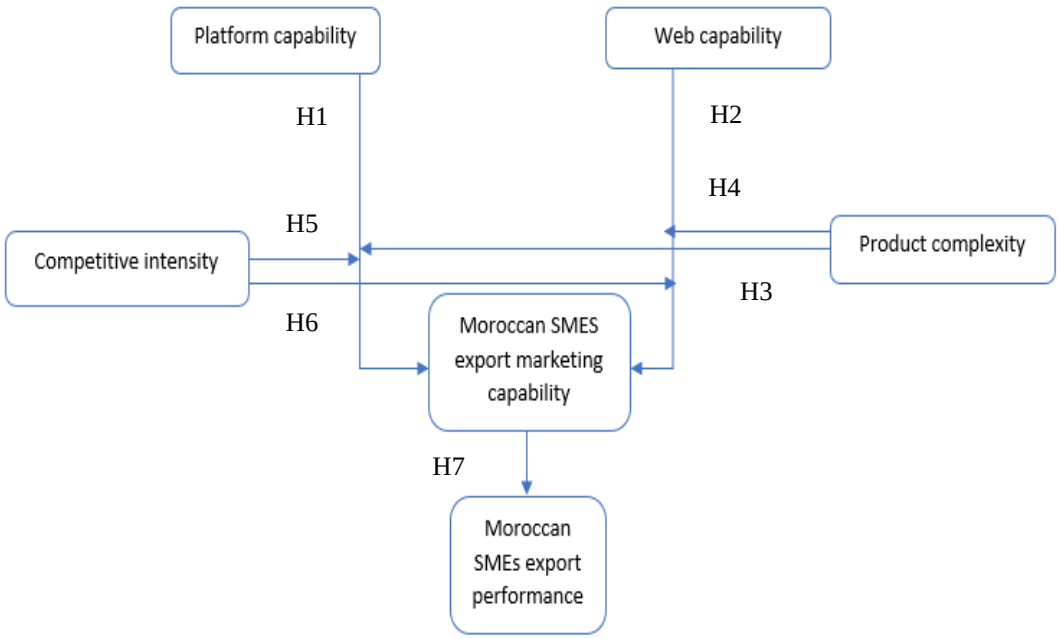

Figure 2: Conceptual model – hypotheses

3.6 Hypothesis

3.6.1 The impact of Platform and Web Capabilities on Export Marketing Capability

The impact of Internet capabilities, particularly platform and web capabilities, on the growth of export marketing capacities is said to be as follows. A platform, firstly, provides certain key activities including product displaying, aggregation, matching, communication services, and export trend analysis (Grewal et al., 2001; Kaplan and Sawhney, 2000). The matching feature enables exporters in comprehending client quotation requests and improving price strategies in response to customer preferences. Furthermore, the aggregation function facilitates in the gathering of a large number of buyers and sellers, allowing exporters to better understand overseas rivals as well as consumers' requirements and preferences, which supports in the development of new goods. Moreover, the communication and showcasing services assist businesses in more successfully promoting and communicating their value propositions to clients in international marketplaces. The export trend analysis tool gives current international market and industry trends, as well as information that helps companies develop new goods, utilize better pricing methods, and manage marketing communication programs in other countries. Secondly, companies' websites provide a variety of features, including information, engagement, and transactional operations, as well as process optimization (Saban and Rau, 2005). The functionality provided by a company's website is anticipated to boost the company's export marketing capabilities. A website can also provide consumer feedback and discussion services, which help businesses better understand their customers' needs and enhance their product development (Kevin, 2004; Zhu and Kraemer, 2002). Previous research has shown that a company's

website may help with various export marketing strategies and capabilities (Gregory et al., 2007; Prasad et al., 2001).

Depending on the ideas presented above, we believe that Internet skills, namely platform and web capabilities, may help SMEs improve their export marketing capabilities:

H_1: the platform capability is favorably linked to export marketing capabilities of SMEs.

H_2: the web capability is favorably linked to export marketing capabilities of SMEs

3.6.2 Effects of Platform and Web Capabilities on Export Marketing Capabilities, Boundary Conditions

H_1 and H_2 indicate that SMEs' Internet capabilities can help them promote their exports more effectively. We also explore which variables have the greatest impact on SMEs' export marketing capabilities while using the Internet.

3.6.2.1 Product Complexity

The degree to which a product necessitates substantial information exchange and engagement in order to solve functional difficulties connected to the product's delivery and installation is referred to as product complexity (Solberg, 2008). When completing activities in export markets, product complexity is a key cause of internal uncertainty for businesses (Solberg, 2008). When the goods of SME exporters are more complicated, more information and interaction are important to present the product specifications and details. Platforms are distinguished by significant web traffic and the ability to give a thorough online product presentation, resulting in a high data processing capability that assists purchasers in interpreting and synthesizing information about complex products (Rochet and Tirole, 2003).

Moreover, platforms may provide real-time engagement services, allowing businesses to react to client questions about complicated goods in real time. When businesses' products are complicated, platforms may provide greater information processing capability, such as coordination and communication capabilities. According to IPT, platform capability's information processing capacity fits the information processing demand produced by product complexity. When a company's products are complex, its platform capacity becomes more effective in enhancing export marketing capabilities.

SME exporters' websites, on the other hand, typically provide simply a publication function with minimal information on the webpages due to resource restrictions (Saban and Rau, 2005). Previous research has found consistent results in this area (Saban and Rau, 2005; Korchak and Rodman, 2001). SME exporters, for example, may afford to utilize just low-level website functionalities, according to Saban and Rau (2005). As a result, when SMEs' goods are complex, their websites can only provide one-way, restricted information processing capability, which is frequently insufficient to display complex product characteristics.

According to IPT, the information processing capacity supplied by web capabilities does not match the information processing demand produced by product complexity. As a result, complicated goods may highlight inefficiencies on a company's website. As a result, when items are complicated, the impact of online capability on export marketing capacities may be minimized. As a outcome, the following hypotheses are provide:

H_3: the influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by product complexity.

H_4: The influence of web capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by product complexity.

3.6.2.2 Competitive Intensity

Competitive intensity (John et al., 2003; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) relates to how severe the rivalry is in the export market. External uncertainty is created by competitive intensity, which may influence the efficacy of Internet capabilities (Dong et al., 2009). When competition in the export market is fierce, SMEs may face dysfunctional elements of competition, such as counterfeiting and price wars (Li and Atuahene-Gima, 2001). This issue is particularly prevalent in emerging economies due to a lack of institutional support and inadequate intellectual property protection (Li and Atuahene-Gima, 2001). The fact that internet platforms have an anonymous nature, may lead to more problems. Price wars and counterfeiting are common on online platforms, which are characterized by fierce rivalry (Pavlou et al., 2007; Pavlou and Gefen, 2004; Rochet and Tirole, 2003). According to previous research, platforms are characterized by intense online rivalry, including price wars and counterfeits.

IPT would confirm that, in the face of severe export competition, platforms' information processing capability is less effective and cannot satisfy the information needs. As a result, when export market rivalry is fierce, the impact of SMEs' platform capabilities on export marketing capacities may become weak. A company's website may help in dealing with tough competition and enhancing export marketing capabilities. To begin with, unlike platforms that frequently offer identical functions and services to all users, such as product showcase websites, SMEs' websites may have unique functions or services, such as an online supplier connection (Zhu and Kraemer, 2002). As a result, in a highly competitive export environment, SME web capabilities

may outperform platform capability in terms of providing information processing capacity to manage environmental unpredictability. Furthermore, unlike platforms that provide external control over most information system activities, SMEs' websites are typically managed internally. As a conclusion, in a competitive export market, a company's online capability provides significant information processing capacity, reducing uncertainty and increasing the efficacy of export marketing capabilities. As a consequence, the following hypotheses are provided:

H_5: The influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by competitive intensity.

H_6: The influence of online capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by competitive intensity.

3.6.3 Effect of Export Marketing Capabilities on Export Performance

For the following reasons, export marketing capabilities are important to improve export performance. Firstly, strong product development capabilities may help you win new consumers and market share in international marketplaces. Furthermore, improving product development capabilities might increase existing customers' share of wallet and earn more income (Kaleka, 2012; Morgan et al., 2004). Secondly, pricing capabilities enable businesses to respond more quickly to the activities of rivals and to set competitive prices in order to earn income (Kaleka, 2012). Customers' preferences and requirements are better understood with marketing communication capabilities, which reduces ambiguity and increases customer satisfaction and value (Morgan et al., 2004).

According to the RBV, capabilities are essential to a company's capacity to succeed to compete in export markets (Morgan et al., 2004). Previous research has also shown

that export marketing capabilities can improve a company's export performance (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al., 2003; Kaleka, 2012). As a result, we provide the following hypothesis:

H_7: Export performance is positively linked to SMEs' export marketing capabilities.

3.7 Questionnaire Design

In a marketing survey, the questionnaire design may be characterized as a structural approach for gathering data. Most researchers, on the other hand, use questionnaires as a quick and easy way to gather data with less time and effort. Questionnaire design may help to establish a relationship between the responder and the researcher, as well as help in data collecting. The three major aims of the questionnaire allow participants to lead the study in the appropriate direction. To start, the responses will provide all necessary facts regarding the study's difficulty. Next, in order to avoid boredom, provide the recipient an interesting question. Finally, to eliminate answer error, provide the respondent with a proper questionnaire format that is free of complexity.

3.7.1 Identifying the Information Required

Verifying that the information obtained addresses all aspects of the problem and the approach, particularly the study questions and hypothesis, and focusing on the information required. In order to be led to the proper answers, we need to know what data we need to collect. In order to be led to the proper answers, we need to know what data we need to collect. For our data collection, knowing the sample for the questionnaire is also crucial. Moroccan exporters who work with SMEs will be our sample in this study.

3.7.2 Identifying the Content

Questions should be written in such a way that they provide the necessary information for the topic being investigated; no question should be included unless it serves the

research's aims or hypothesis. Questions must be structured and organized in such a way that responders can finish them without difficulty, confusion, or distraction.

3.7.3 Choosing a Framework for Questions

There are two sorts of questions that may be used to structure a questionnaire: structured questions and unstructured questions. The first are structured questions, in which the respondent chooses one of the researcher's many responses to answer the question. For instance, consider multiple-choice questions. Unstructured questions, on the other hand, allow the respondent to answer the question in his or her own terms with no predetermined response. This sort of question, often known as open ended questions, requires the reply to express their thoughts freely.

In our study, we used structural questions in which respondents could only pick one response from a list of options. It can also take the form of scale questions, such as Likert scale questions, in which respondents must reply to the topic using a scale.

3.7.4 Choosing the Order in which the Questions Should be Answered

The major objective of the questionnaire is to allow our respondents to provide accurate responses to the questions. They should not feel obligated to complete this questionnaire, but they should enjoy it as much as they like reading an entertaining magazine. All of this, however, is dependent on the sequence in which the questions are asked; as a researcher, we should begin the questionnaire by asking respondents about their opinions in order to establish mutual trust between the researcher and the respondent. Although the sequence of the questions is essential because the responder will be answering each question one at a time rather than jumping from one thought to the next, it is also crucial because the respondent will be following each question in a logical order.

3.7.5 Scaled Questions

All of the variables in our study are operationalized using multi-item scales with a seven-point answer format.

According to (Grewal et al., 2001; Kaplan and Sawhney,2000), we deducted ***five items*** for the platform capability:

- Increase the number of international customers.
- Match with international customers, use the platform's match function.
- Recognize market and product trends.
- Distribute product and service details.
- Share information with international customers and arrange product/price/delivery/payment details.

According to (Saban and Rau, 2005; Zhu and Kraemer, 2002) we deducted ***six items*** for the web capability:

- Gives product details as a product page.
- Assist consumers in recognizing product consistency, dependability, and functionality.
- Offer details about the company's history/overview.
- Offer answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ).
- Offer customer service or contact via instant messaging.
- Give feedback form to clients.

According to (Murray et al., 2011; Zou et al.,2003; Kaleka, 2012). we deducted ***three dimensions*** about export marketing capability:

- Product development capability (***five items***)
    - Export market surveillance of competing goods.
    - New product development for our export clients.
    - Exploiting R&D investment by creating new export venture goods.
    - Releasing new export venture goods with success.
    - Developing and releasing new export business goods as quickly as possible.
- Pricing capability (***five items***)
    - Reacting the price strategies of the competitors.
    - Informing clients about pricing mechanisms.
    - Using our pricing expertise to react appropriately to any changes in consumer demand.
    - Doing an effective job of pricing the export venture products.
    - Being creative in "bundling" pricing deals.
- Communication capability (***four items***)
    - Creating successful export advertisement and marketing programs.
    - Originality of promotion and advertising.
    - Marketing interactions are used expertly.
    - Foreign marketing communications systems must be properly managed.

According to (Son and Benbasat (2007)), we deducted ***three items*** about product complexity:

- To characterize the products, a huge amount of data is necessary.
- To characterize the products, several characteristics are necessary.

- The product characteristics are rather lengthier than those of other items we provide.

According to (Jaworski and Kohli (1993)), we deducted ***three items*** about competitive intensity:

- Our export markets are known for fierce rivalry among businesses.
- There is substantial competition among companies in our export markets.
- In our export market, there are several “promotion war”.

According to (Gerpott and Jakopin, 2005; Özsomer and Simonin, 2004; Gabrielsson et al.; 2012; Shoham, 1999) we deducted ***three items*** about export performance:

- In general, our overall revenue a year ago was.
- How pleased you are with your export performance for the previous year?
- Last year's results Regarding our export performance targets.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Information

A total of 121 Moroccan SMEs responded to the survey, representing a diverse range of industries. The following tables illustrate the demographic distribution of respondents and their characteristics.

4.1.1 Gender

A total of 121 respondents completed the questionnaire as part of the study. Males made up 78 of the participants, according to the findings (64.5 percent). Females made up 43 of the participants (35.5 percent).

Table 1:Gender frequency table

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Female	43	35.5%
Male	78	64.5%

4.1.2 Age

According to the age distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that the number of participants whose age (18-25) were 20 with a percentage of 16.5%. 68 participants were between age (26-35) with a percentage of 56.2%. 26 participants were between age (36-45) with a percentage of 21.5%. 6 participants were between age (46-55) with

a percentage of 5.0%. Finally, the lowest number of participants was 1 participant with a group age (+60) and a percentage of 0.8%.

Table 2: Age frequency table

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	20	16.5%
26-35	68	56.2%
36-45	26	21.5%
46-55	6	5.0%
+60	1	0.8%

4.1.3 Sector

According to the sector distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that the number of participants whose food sector were 43 with a percentage of 35.5 percent. 29 participants were on textile sector with a percentage of 24.0 percent. 25 participants were on sea products sector with a percentage of 20.7 percent. 8 participants were on sector of agriculture with a percentage of 6.6 percent. Also 8 participants were found on art sector with a percentage of 6.6 percent. Finally, 8 participants were on other sectors with a percentage of 6.6 percent.

Table 3: Sectoral distribution of the sample

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Food	43	35.5%
Textile	29	24.0%
Sea products	25	20.7%
Agriculture	8	6.6%
Art	8	6.6%
other	8	6.6%

4.1.4 Legal Status

According to the legal status distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that the number of participants who are working on a sole proprietorship were 68 with a percentage of 56.2 percent. 34 participants were on partnership company with a percentage of 28.1 percent. 4 participants are working in multinational company with a percentage of 3.3 percent. 3 participants were on a joint venture company with a percentage of 2.5 percent. Finally, 12 participants were on other type of companies with a percentage of 9.9 percent.

Table 4: Legal status

Legal status	Frequency	Percentage
Sole proprietorship	68	56.2%
Partnership	34	28.1%
Multinational company	4	3.3%
Joint venture	3	2.5%
other	12	9.9%

4.1.5 Sector Percentage in Relation with Legal Status

According to figure 3, we can see that there is 75 percent of partnership companies in agriculture sector and 25 percent of sole proprietorship. In art sector, all companies are sole proprietorship. In food sector, there is 2.3 percent of joint venture, 7 percent of multinational companies, 14 percent of partnership companies, 65.1 percent of proprietorship and 11.6 percent of other type of companies. In sea products sector, we have 8 percent of joint venture companies, 56 percent of partnership companies, 32 percent of sole proprietorship companies and 4 percent of other type of companies. In textile sector, we have 13.8 percent of partnership companies, 65.5 percent of sole proprietorship companies and 20.7 percent of other type of companies. Finally, in other

sectors we have 12.5 percent of multinational companies, 50 percent of partnership companies and 37.5 percent of sole proprietorship companies.

Table 5 : Sector percentage in relation with legal status

	What is the legal status of your company?					Total
	Joint venture	Multinational company	others	partnership	Sole proprietorship	
Agriculture	0	0	0	6	2	8
	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	75,0%	25,0%	100,0%
Art	0	0	0	0	8	8
	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Food	1	3	5	6	28	43
	2,3%	7,0%	11,6%	14,0%	65,1%	100,0%
Other	0	1	0	4	3	8
	0,0%	12,5%	0,0%	50,0%	37,5%	100,0%
Sea products	2	0	1	14	8	25
	8,0%	0,0%	4,0%	56,0%	32,0%	100,0%
Textile	0	0	6	4	19	29
	0,0%	0,0%	20,7%	13,8%	65,5%	100,0%
Total	3	4	12	34	68	121
	2,5%	3,3%	9,9%	28,1%	56,2%	100,0%

4.1.6 Position

According to the legal status distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that the number of participants who are production managers were 32 with a percentage of 26.4 percent. 25 participants are marketing managers with a percentage of 20.7 percent. 25 participants are general managers with a percentage of 20.7 percent. 13 participants are marketing assistants with a percentage of 10.7 percent. 10 participants are HR managers with a percentage of 8.3 percent. 8 participants are export managers with a percentage of 6.6 percent. Finally, 8 participants were others of these positions with a percentage of 6.6 percent.

Table 6: Position of the respondent

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Production manager	32	26.4%
Marketing manager	25	20.7%
General manager	25	20.7%
Marketing assistant	13	10.7%
HR manager	10	8.3%
Export manager	8	6.6%
Other	8	6.6%

4.1.7 Web Page Use

According to the legal status distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that the number of participants who use a web page were 119 with a percentage of 98.3 percent. 2 participants are not using a web page with a percentage of 1.7 percent.

Table 7: Web page frequency

Does your company have a web page	Frequency	Percentage
No	2	1.7%
Yes	119	98.3%

4.1.7 E-mail Address Use

According to the legal status distribution of our 121 respondents, it has found that all of participants have an e-mail address with a percentage of 100 percent.

Table 8: E-mail address frequency

Does your company have e-mail address	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	121	100.0%
No	0	0.0%

4.1.8 Personal Experience

According to personal experience frequency table, it has found that the minimum of years' experience of respondent is one year and the maximum years' experience of respondent is 25 years.

Table 9: Personal experience frequency

Number of years	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	7	5,8	5,8	5,8
2	8	6,6	6,6	12,4
3	13	10,7	10,7	23,1
4	6	5,0	5,0	28,1
5	35	28,9	28,9	57,0
6	13	10,7	10,7	67,8
7	7	5,8	5,8	73,6
8	3	2,5	2,5	76,0
9	1	,8	,8	76,9
10	16	13,2	13,2	90,1
11	2	1,7	1,7	91,7
12	1	,8	,8	92,6
13	1	,8	,8	93,4
15	3	2,5	2,5	95,9
20	4	3,3	3,3	99,2
25	1	,8	,8	100,0
Total	121	100,0	100,0	

4.2 Reliability Test

Reliability analysis can be used to investigate the features of measuring scales and the items that make up the scales. The Reliability Analysis method generates a number of commonly used scale reliability metrics as well as data on the connections between individual scale components.

We can conclude from the reliability test that we have acceptable values of web capability, platform capability, product development, product complexity, competitive intensity and export performance since the Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.7.

For pricing capability, we have Cronbach's alpha is less than 0.7 so, the value is questionable.

For the all variables, we have Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7 that is excellent value. So, we can say that the data is valid.

Table 10: Reliability test

Cronbach's alpha	N of items
.913	35

4.3 Independent T-test

We want to end up knowing more if the responses change according to the gender or legal status.

Since we do not have enough observations for Joint Venture and multinational companies, we'll investigate whether there's a substantial difference amongst Partnership SMEs and Sole Proprietorship SMEs. Therefore, we used independent t-test. We accept the Null Hypothesis for all the variables that there is no difference between two types of ownership (legal status) of the SMEs in Morocco. Also, we can conclude that gender doesn't affect the responses. We can say that gender and legal status doesn't affect the responses and maybe there are other factors that influence our results.

4.4 Correlation Among Variables

The purpose of correlation analysis is to figure out how strong and in which way two parameters have a linear connection. (Pallant J., 2010). The Pearson correlation coefficient determines how strong a linear link exists between two variables (Sedgwick, 2012).

A correlation of 1.0 implies perfect positive correlation, -1.0 shows perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation at all. However, there are certain principles that may be used to explain the values between 0 and 1. Cohen (1988), quoted in Pallant (2010, p. 126), indicated that values between 0.10 to 0.29 indicate a weak correlation. Medium correlation is indicated by values between 0.30 and 0.49, whereas strong correlation is shown by values between 0.50 and 1.0.

We have chosen the critical significance level as 0.05.

- Platform capability

According to correlation table, we can say that there is a statistically significance ($P<0.05$), medium and positive connection amongst platform capability and web capability as well as platform capability and export marketing capability, also platform capability and export performance since the correlation for these variables are 0.384, 0.416 and 0.325 respectively. Moreover, we can see a strong and positive relationship between platform capability and export marketing pricing capability, also between platform capability and product development. Then between platform capability and competitive intensity since the correlation for these variables are 0.619, 0.611 and 0.527 respectively.

- Personal experience

For personal experience and export performance we can see that significant value is .006 that is less than 0.05. We can conclude that statistically, a significance ($P<0.05$), weak linear link exist between personal experience and export marketing since the correlation coefficient is 0.250.

- Web capability

We can notice that a statistically significance, weak and positive relationship exist amongst web capability and export marketing capability, as well as web capability and export marketing pricing, also, web capability and competitive intensity since the correlation of these variables is 0.228, 0.278 and 0.249 respectively. Also, a medium and positive connection exist between web capability and product development, as well as web capability and product complexity since the correlation of these variables is 0.403 and 0.305. finally, a strong and positive relationship between web capability and export performance since the correlation of these variables is 0.520.

- Export marketing capability

We can notice that there is a statistically significance, medium and positive relationship between export marketing capability and export marketing pricing capability as well as export marketing capability and product development, also, between export marketing capability and competitive intensity, besides export marketing capability and export performance since the correlation of these variables is 0.469, 0.432, 0.347 and 0.324 respectively. Finally, a weak and positive relationship between export marketing capability and product complexity with a correlation of 0.250.

- Pricing capability

We can see that there is a statistically significance, strong and positive relationship between pricing capability and product development, as well as between pricing capability and export performance with a correlation of 0.654 and 0.510. also, a medium and positive link remain amongst pricing capability and competitive intensity since the correlation is 0.488.

- Product development

We can notice that there is a statistically significance, strong and positive relationship between product development and export performance with a correlation of 0.611. Also, a medium and positive connection between product development and competitive intensity with a correlation of 0.470.

- Product complexity

For product complexity, we can see that it has a weak and positive connection with export performance with a correlation of 0.208.

- Competitive intensity

For competitive intensity, we can notice that it has a medium and positive relationship with export performance with a correlation of 0.305.

Table 11: Correlation

		Personal Experience	Platform Capability	Web Capability	Export Marketing Capability	Export Marketing Pricing	Product Development	Product Complexity	Competitive Intensity	Export Performance
Personal Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	-,170	-,081	-,050	-,031	,025	-,012	-,091	,250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,062	,378	,587	,735	,788	,897	,320	***,006***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Platform Capability	Pearson Correlation	-,170	1	,384**	,416**	,619**	,611**	,124	,527**	,325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,062		***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	,174	***,000***	***,000***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Web Capability	Pearson Correlation	-,081	,384**	1	,228*	,278**	,403**	,305**	,249**	,520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,378	***,000***		***,012***	***,002***	***,000***	***,001***	***,006***	***,000***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Export Marketing Capability	Pearson Correlation	-,050	,416**	,228*	1	,469**	,432**	,250**	,347**	,324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,587	***,000***	***,012***		***,000***	***,000***	***,006***	***,000***	***,000***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Export Marketing Pricing	Pearson Correlation	-,031	,619**	,278**	,469**	1	,654**	,057	,488**	,510**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,735	***,000***	***,002***	***,000***		***,000***	,534	***,000***	***,000***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Product development	Pearson Correlation	,025	,611**	,403**	,432**	,654**	1	,039	,470**	,611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,788	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***		,668	***,000***	***,000***

	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Product Complexity	Pearson Correlation	-,012	,124	,305**	,250**	,057	,039	1	,013	,208*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,897	,174	***,001***	***,006***	,534	,668		,885	***,022***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Competitive Intensity	Pearson Correlation	-,091	,527**	,249**	,347**	,488**	,470**	,013	1	,305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,320	***,000***	***,006***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	,885		***,001***
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
Export Performance	Pearson Correlation	,250**	,325**	,520**	,324**	,510**	,611**	,208*	,305**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	***,006***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	***,000***	***,022***	***,001***	
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121

4.5 Testing Hypothesis

Regression analysis is employed to evaluate the connection between two or more variables with cause-and-effect relationships, as well as to make subject predictions based on the relationship.

Univariate regression analysis is used when there is only one independent variable, but multivariate regression analysis is utilized when there are several independent variables (Tabachnick,1996, Büyüköztürk, 2002).

4.5.1 Testing Hypothesis H_1 and H_2

We are going to test the hypotheses H_1, H_2;

H_1: The platform capability is favorably linked to export marketing capabilities of SMEs.

H_2: The web capability is favorably linked to export marketing capabilities of SMEs.

Multiple regression method was used to test the following relations;

- Export Marketing Capability is a dependent variable.
- Platform Capability and Web Capability are independent variable.

➢ Model summary

Table 12: Model summary (H_1, H_2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,423[a]	,179	,165	,78433

- ANOVA

Table 13: ANOVA (H_1, H_2)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15,776	2	7,888	12,823	,000[b]
	Residual	72,590	118	,615		
	Total	88,366	120			

- Coefficient

Table 14: Coefficient (H_1, H_2)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,813	,437		8,731	,000
	Platform Capability	,302	,071	,385	4,261	,000
	Web Capability	,049	,055	,081	,891	,375

Hypothesis H_1 tests if platform capability has a positive influence on export marketing capability. The dependent variable export marketing capability was regressed on predicted platform capability to test the hypothesis H_1. Platform capability significantly predicted export marketing capability, $F(2,118) = 12.823$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that platform capability can play a significant function in export marketing capability ($b = .302$, $p < 0.05$). these results clearly direct the positive affect of the platform capability. Also, the R square = .179 depicts that the model shows 17.9% of the variance in export marketing capability.

The hypothesis H_2 tests if web capability has a positive impact on export marketing capability. The dependent variable export marketing capability was regressed on predicted web capability to test the hypothesis H_2. These results shows that web capability doesn't have a significant role in export marketing capability.

We can see that when we carry out the multiple regression on platform capability and web capability, we find that web capability is not significant. So, we tried the analysis of variables separately.

Table 15 : Web capability regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,211	,308		16,895	,000
	Web Capability	,140	,055	,228	2,559	,012

Web capability significantly predicted export marketing capability, F (1,119) =6.548, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that web capability can play a significant role in export marketing capability ($b = .140$, $p < 0.05$). these outcomes obviously direct the positive affect of the web capability.

Table 16: Platform capability regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,931	,416		9,450	,000
	Platform Capability	,326	,065	,416	4,989	,000

Platform capability significantly predicted export marketing capability, F (1,119) =24.894, $p < 0.05$, that indicates that platform capability can play a significant role in export marketing capability ($b = .326$, $p < 0.05$). these results visibly direct the positive affect of the platform capability.

We can say that when we carry out the analysis separately, the results are significant and web capability should be analyzed separately.

4.5.2 Moderated Regression

According to (Aguinis, Edwards, & Bradley, 2017, p.2) a moderating variable "influences the nature (e.g., size and/or direction) of the effect of an antecedent on the outcome" If the value of a moderator affects the connection amongst an independent and a dependent variable, it is called moderation (Dawson, 2014).

In the presence of a moderating effect, two variables (X and Y) have different relationships depending on the value of a third variable (Z), which is referred to as a moderator (Zedeck, 1971). Two least-squares regression equations are compared in a moderated multiple regression analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In the presence of a dependent variable (Y), an independent predictor (X), and a second independent predictor (X) that is predicted to act as a moderator.

Prior to constructing any regression equations, the predictor and moderator variables should be normalized if they are measured on a scale that is 53ontinuous. These variables should be centered, according to some statisticians. It eliminates issues related with multicollinearity (i.e., strong correlations) among variables in the regression equation by centering them (Cohen et al., 2003; Cronbach, 1987; Jaccard et al., 1990; West et al., 1996). After the variables have been standardized, product terms

representing the interaction between the predictor and the moderator must be constructed. Using the recently coded categorical variables or standardized continuous variables, simply multiply the predictor and moderator variables together to produce product terms (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen et al., 2003; Jaccard et al., 1990; West et al., 1996).

4.5.2.1 Testing Hypothesis H_3

We are going to check the hypothesis H_3;

H_3: The influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by product complexity.

We have product complexity is a moderator variable which has an impact on the relation between platform capability and export marketing capability.

After standardizing variables, we will use multiple regression to test the following relations;

- Export Marketing Capability is a dependent variable.
- Platform Capability, product complexity and the multiplied variable are independent variable.

➢ Model summary

Table 17: Model summary (H_3)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,466[a]	,217	,197	,89586175

- ANOVA

Table 18: ANOVA (H_3)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26,100	3	8,700	10,840	,000
	Residual	93,900	117	,803		
	Total	120,000	120			

- Coefficient

Table 19: Coefficients (H_3)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,014	,083		,169	,866
	Multiplied variable	-,114	,135	-,074	-,844	,400
	Zscore(Product Complexity)	,213	,084	,213	2,543	,012
	Zscore(Platform Capability)	,365	,088	,365	4,158	,000

According to those tables, we can see that there is no significant impact of the interaction variable. So, we can conclude that the moderator variable (product complexity) does not affect the relation between platform capability and export marketing capability.

4.5.2.2 Testing Hypothesis H_4

We are going to check the hypothesis H_4:

H_4: The influence of web capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by product complexity.

We have product complexity is a moderator variable which has an influence on the relation amongst web capability and export marketing capability.

After standardizing variables, we will use multiple regression to test the following relations;

- Export Marketing Capability is a dependent variable.
- web Capability, product complexity and the multiplied variable are independent variable.

Table 20**:** Model summary (H_4)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,312[a]	,097	,074	,96227725

Table 21: ANOVA (H_4)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11,661	3	3,887	4,198	,007
	Residual	108,339	117	,926		
	Total	120,000	120			

Table 22: Coefficients (H_4)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,030	,092		-,331	,741
	Zscore(Product Complexity)	,200	,092	,200	2,171	,032
	Zscore(Web Capability)	,190	,094	,190	2,010	,047
	Multiplied variable	,100	,091	,099	1,099	,274

According to those tables, we can see that there is no significant impact of the interaction variable. So, we can conclude that the moderator variable (product complexity) does not affect the relation between web capability and export marketing capability.

4.5.2.3 Testing Hypothesis H_5

We are going to test the hypothesis H_5;

H_5: The influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by competitive intensity.

We have competitive intensity is a moderator variable which has an impact on the relation between platform capability and export marketing capability.

After standardizing variables, we will use multiple regression to test the following relations;

Export Marketing Capability is a dependent variable.

- platform Capability, competitive intensity and the multiplied variable are independent variable.

➢ Model summary

Table 23: Model summary (H_5)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,446	,199	,178	,90640873

➢ ANOVA

Table 24: ANOVA (H_5)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23,876	3	7,959	9,687	,000
	Residual	96,124	117	,822		
	Total	120,000	120			

- Coefficients

Table 25: Coefficients (H_5)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,027	,091		-,296	,767
	Zscore(Platform Capability)	,400	,148	,400	2,696	,008
	Zscore(competitive intensity)	,180	,097	,180	1,844	,068
	Multiplied variable	,052	,075	,097	,693	,490

According to those tables, we can see that there is no significant impact of the interaction variable. So, we can conclude that the moderator variable does not affect the relation between platform capability and export marketing capability.

4.5.2.4 Testing Hypothesis H_6

We are going to test the hypothesis H_6;

H_6: The influence of web capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is negatively moderated by competitive intensity.

We have competitive intensity is a moderator variable (competitive intensity) which has an impact on the relation between web capability and export marketing capability. After standardizing variables, we will use multiple regression to test the following relations;

- Export Marketing Capability is a dependent variable.
- Web Capability, competitive intensity and the multiplied variable are independent variable.

Table 26: Coefficients (H_6)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,006	,088		,068	,946
	Zscore(competitive intensity)	,303	,091	,303	3,331	,001
	Multiplied variable	-,024	,083	-,027	-,289	,773
	Zscore(Web Capability)	,146	,091	,146	1,608	,111

According to those tables, we can see that there is no significant impact of the interaction variable. So, we can conclude that the moderator variable (competitive intensity) does not affect the relation between web capability and export marketing capability.

4.5.3 Testing Hypothesis H_7

We are going to test the hypothesis H_7;

H_7: Export performance is positively linked to SMEs' export marketing capabilities.

We will use regression to test the following relations.

- Export Marketing Capability is an independent variable.
- Export performance is a dependent variable.

Table 27: Correlation (H_7)

		Export Performance	Export Marketing Capability
Pearson Correlation	Export Performance	1,000	,324
	Export Marketing Capability	,324	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Export Performance	.	,000
	Export Marketing Capability	,000	.
N	Export Performance	121	121
	Export Marketing Capability	121	121

Table 28: ANOVA (H_7)

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29,175	1	29,175	13,998	,000
	Residual	248,024	119	2,084		
	Total	277,199	120			

Table 29: Coefficients (H_7)

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations		
	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1,580	,927		1,705	,091			
	Export Marketing Capability	,575	,154	,324	3,741	,000	,324	,324	,324

The hypothesis H_7 tests if export marketing capability has a positive impact on export performance. The dependent variable export performance was regressed on predicted platform capability to test the hypothesis H_7. Export marketing capability significantly predicted export performance, $F(2,119) = 13.998$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that export marketing capability may have a big impact on export performance ($b = .575$, $p < 0.05$). These findings demonstrate the favorable impact of export marketing capabilities. Also, the R square = .105 depicts that the model explains 10.5% of the variance in export performance.

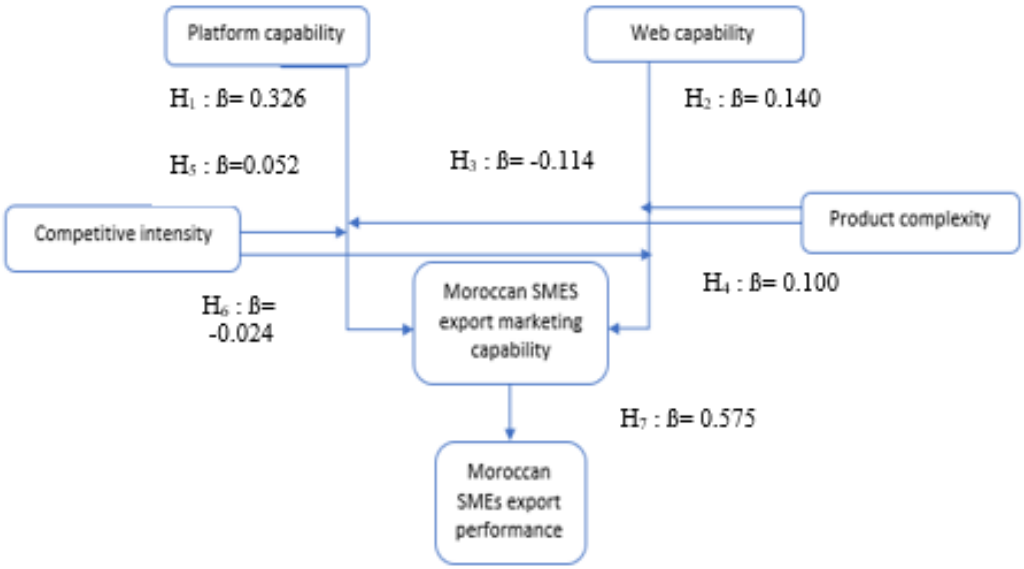

Figure 3: Regression weights pertaining the model

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The following findings interpretations may be formed based on the analysis of the conducted experiment data and in relation to the study questions and hypotheses mentioned in previous chapters.

The ***first hypothesis*** proposed stated that platform capability have a favorable effect on Moroccan export marketing capability. Similarly, the acquired empirical data revealed that platform capability enhance Moroccan export marketing capability with coefficient of $b=0.326$ ($p<0.05$). we can say that the first hypothesis is supported.

The ***second hypothesis*** proposed stated that web capability have a favorable influence on Moroccan export marketing capability. Similarly, the acquired empirical data revealed that web capability enhance Moroccan export marketing capability with coefficient of $b=0.140$ ($p<0.05$). we can say that the second hypothesis is supported.

The ***third hypothesis*** proposed stated that the influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by product complexity. the acquired empirical data revealed that the link amongst platform capability and

Moroccan export marketing capability is unaffected by product complexity with coefficient of b=-0.114 (p>0.05). we can say that the third hypothesis is not supported.

The ***fourth hypothesis*** proposed stated that the influence of web capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by product complexity. the acquired empirical data revealed that product complexity does not affect the relationship between web capability and Moroccan export marketing capability with coefficient of b=0.100 (p>0.05). we can say that the fourth hypothesis is not supported.

The ***fifth hypothesis*** proposed stated that the influence of platform capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by competitive intensity. the acquired empirical data revealed that competitive intensity does not affect the relationship between platform capability and Moroccan export marketing capability with coefficient of b=0.052 (p>0.05). we can say that the fifth hypothesis is not supported.

The ***sixth hypothesis*** proposed stated that the influence of web capability on SMEs' export marketing capabilities is positively moderated by competitive intensity. the acquired empirical data revealed that the link between web capability and Moroccan export marketing capability is not influenced by competitive intensity with coefficient of b=-0.024 (p>0.05). we can say that the sixth hypothesis is not supported.

The ***seventh hypothesis*** proposed stated that Moroccan export marketing capability have a positive impact on Moroccan export performance. Similarly, the acquired empirical data revealed that Moroccan export marketing capability enhance Moroccan

export performance with coefficient of b=0.575 ($p<0.05$). we can say that the seventh hypothesis is supported.

5.2 Implications

This study has significant implications for practitioners. It illustrates how and under what conditions SMEs may take use of the Internet's export market potential. Managers should not exaggerate the advantages of the Internet, but they should recognize the need of improving export marketing capabilities. SMEs' Internet capabilities boost exports when embedded in certain higher order export marketing skills, such as product creation, pricing, and marketing communication. Additionally, the data show that both platform and online capabilities can help enhance export marketing capabilities. As a result, managers should be aware of the implications of various Internet capabilities in order to effectively and efficiently fulfill their firms' potential in terms of delivering superior export performance.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

5.3.1 Language of the Questionnaire

The official language in Morocco is Arabic, and French holds a significant position since it is taught universally and is the primary language of Morocco. Because of this not every person who filled out our survey completely comprehended the questions.

5.3.2 Method of Collecting the Data

The people who took the time to fill out our survey did so willingly. Many others, on the other hand, declined to respond.

5.3.3 The Study's Few Factors and Future Research Direction

The findings of this study should be evaluated in light of a number of limitations. To begin, we concentrate on only two sorts of Internet capabilities: platform and web capabilities. Other sorts of Internet capabilities may be investigated in future study.

Future study might also look at other organizational capabilities that could act as mediators in the relationship between Internet capabilities and Moroccan export performance. Future research might look at other variables including technical uncertainty, market dynamism, and institutional circumstances, all of which could influence the connections between Internet capabilities, marketing capabilities, and export performance.

5.4 Conclusion

To summarize, internet capability has a significantly positive effect on the export marketing capability and export marketing capability has a positive effect on export performance. On the other hand, the link among internet capacity and export marketing capability is unaffected by product complexity and competitive intensity.

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APPENDIX

Survey Items Used in the Study (Questionnaire)

**	**Platform Capability**	**Minimal use**						**Great use**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Increase the number of international customers							
2	Match with international customers, use the platform's match function.							
3	Recognize market and product trends.							
4	Distribute product and service details.							
5	Share information with international customers and arrange product/price/delivery/payment details							
**	**Web Capability**	**Not at all**						**All the time**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Gives product details as a product page							
2	Assist consumers in recognizing product consistency, dependability, and functionality.							
3	Offer details about the company's history/overview.							
4	Offer answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ).							
5	Offer customer service or contact via instant messaging.							
6	Give feedback form to clients							
**	**export marketing capability**							
*	**Product development**	**Much worse**						**Much better**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Export market surveillance of competing goods							
2	New product development for our export clients							
3	Exploiting R&D investment by creating new export venture goods.							
4	Releasing new export venture goods with success.							
5	Speedily developing and launching new export venture products.							
*	**Pricing**	**Much worse**						**Much better**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Reacting the price strategies of the competitors							
2	Informing clients about pricing mechanisms							

3	Using our pricing expertise to react appropriately to any changes in consumer demand							
4	Doing an effective job of pricing the export venture products.							
5	Being creative in "bundling" pricing deals.							
*	**Communication Capability**	**Much worse**						**Much better**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Creating successful export advertisement and marketing programs							
2	Originality of promotion and advertising							
3	Marketing interactions are used expertly							
4	Foreign marketing communications systems must be properly managed.							
**	**Product Complexity**	**Strongly disagree**						**Strongly agree**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	large amount of information is required to describe the products							
2	Many attributes are required to describe the products.							
3	The specifications of the products are relatively longer than other products we offer.							
**	**Competitive intensity**	**Strongly agree**						**Strongly disagree**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Our export markets are noted for competition between companies							
2	There is substantial competition among companies in our export markets							
3	Competition among companies in our export markets is intense.							
4	In our export market, there are many "promotion war".							
**	**Export Performance**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	In general, our overall revenue a year ago was	**Extremely poor**						**Extremely well**
2	How pleased are you with your export performance for the previous year?	**Strongly dissatisfied**						**Strongly satisfied**
3	Last year's results Regarding our export performance targets	**Far below expectation**						**Far above expectation**

1.Age:

2. gender:

3. What is the number of full-time employees in your firm? Male: Female:

4. What is the number of part-time employees in your firm? Male: Female:

5. In which category is your business? (IF you know Please write down your NACE Code) IF NOT write your sector:

6. When was your company established?

7. What is your position: (i.e.: Marketing Manager, Production Manager, HR Manager, General Manager)

8. Your personal experience in the sector? (Number of Years):

9. What is the legal status of your company?

A. partnership B. Sole proprietorship c. Multinational company d. Joint venture e. others

10.Does your company have

Facebook (if yes number of followers):

Twitter (if yes number of followers):

Instagram (if yes number of followers):

11. Does your company have web page? Yes No

If yes Do you believe that you are using it effectively for marketing?

If not. Write down the reason

12. Does your company have e-mail address? Yes No